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It is a small part in showing the true nature of anarchism; for many people still believe it is a utopian dream advocated by a tiny number of extremists or a state of chaos brought about by fanatical terrorists (both images being maintained by the media). The recent history of Spain shows conclusively that not only can anarchism become a large and potent expression of working-class militancy but that it can also be put into practice by those same people.

With the rebirth of the CNT in the 70's and a slow but gradual re-emergence of anarchism around the world, we may once again see a large and powerful international anarchist movement capable of contributing to the destruction of capitalism and finally creating a free and equal world.

Front Cover: CNT-FAI Militia in Barcelona

THE SPANISH REVOLUTION



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Anarchism in Action

people joining the CNT and it is the only union growing at the moment (the UGT and CCOO are declining fairly quickly) though only a small percentage of workers are in any union at all. The CNT may once again become a large and influential organisation amongst the working class and hopefully it and the FAI have learnt the lessons of the past and will get it right next time.

THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

Anarchism in Action

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broke out. The dictatorship soon collapsed and bourgeois democracy was returned, unions being made legal in the spring of 1977.

That the CNT reappeared after thirty-six years of fascism was no doubt due to the tireless work of the militants who had maintained its existence throughout the dictatorship. (In other countries where large anarcho- or revolutionary syndicalist unions were smashed by fascism, they either failed to reappear after the dictatorship [Portugal, Argentina] or took some time to become small unions [France, Italy, Germany, Japan]). During 1978/79 strikes and demonstrations swept the country as workers voiced the grievances of the last thirty years and attempted to bring working and living conditions into the twentieth century.

The CNT's membership rapidly grew to 150,000, though for the first time in its history it was not the majority union in the country. The Socialist-backed UGT, the Communist controlled Workers Commissions (CCOO) and the ex-Catholic USO were all much larger, mainly because of their large and regular incomes from home and abroad and also because of the lesser repression directed at them under Franco. The CCOO had been allowed to function and develop under fascism through the vertically organised, state controlled workers syndicates since they offered no opposition to the regime and Communism was encouraged so that rebellious workers would align with the CCOO rather than the CNT. Both the Socialist and Communist unions received all the money, premises and facilities taken from them by Franco in 1939 but the CNT received nothing at all. Since it is the only potentially effective organised opposition to Spanish capitalism it is unlikely to receive anything and the small and poor anarchist movements elsewhere in the world are unable to provide any large amounts of money for it to get re-established.

Since its re-emergence (along with the FAI, Mujeres Libres and the FIJL), the CNT has been beset with many problems. Apart from the usual repression from the state, they also lack experienced union militants (nearly 90% of its memberships is under 30 and the other 10% are over 55 and lack the energy to be very active. Between the ages of 30 and 55 there are few members since this is the generation that grew up under Franco which experienced few social struggles - the only things that produce active anarchist militants in large numbers). There was also the problem of whether the CNT should participate in the Workers Commissions that still exist (boards made up of the unions and management). It was also infiltrated by Maoists, Trotskyists and Catholics either trying to take over or destroy the unions but they found it impossible to do due to the Confederations structure. Instead they engineered a split, supposedly over the Workers Commissions, to dominate the section breaking off and becoming known as the Renovados CNT. This remained a lot smaller than the CNT-AIT and made contact with the PSOE and gradually disappeared. The CNT also lost a lot of members due to the Scala affair - in which CNT members were accused of blowing up other CNT and UGT members in a theatre hall but this was later attributed to a police agent provocateur. Membership reached a low of 30,000 around 1984 but has since risen quite rapidly and it now has unions in every region and in most industries as it at last begins to find its legs. The election of the PSOE in 1981 and its attacks on the working class since has resulted in more

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CNT and guerrilla bases and set up an efficient propaganda printing and distribution service.

Waves of arrests occurred time and time again as the anarcho-syndicalists built up their bases and continued to work towards the downfall of the dictatorship. By 1950, the CNT had built up its membership to 50,000 in Barcelona alone, and the organisation gradually began to channel the discontent of the masses into effective actions as street demonstrations became more and more successful. In 1951, a demonstration in Barcelona developed into a strike against the tram owners and rapidly escalated into a general strike throughout Catalonia. It was put down, however, by drafting thousands of armed police into the region and arresting thousands of strikers.

The MLE continued to exist in exile in Toulouse (the CNT had 30,000 members in France alone), claiming to be the sole representative of the Spanish libertarian movement but in fact being just a bureaucratic and reformist organisation committed to anti-fascism and little else and made up mainly of CNT members who had collaborated with the government during the Civil War. In 1945 Francisco Sabate (better known as El Quico) and others began to oppose the inactivity of the MLE and started the guerrilla campaign in Spain. To do so meant almost certain death and few of them escaped the bullets of the Guardia Civil; but the MLE denounced them as terrorists as it continued to strive for respectability in the eyes of various bourgeois democracies. They constantly hampered the Anarcho-Syndicalist Groups set up by Sabate whilst they continued to do nothing but argue and pass useless resolutions.

Sabate was the best known and most successful of the guerrillas and continued the campaign against the fascists for fifteen years despite the continual repression directed against him and the many others he worked with. They had considerable support amongst the working class and it was this that helped them to survive for so long. The guerrillas worked as closely as possible with the anarcho-syndicalists living inside Spain and helped to maintain the existence of the CNT and fund its propaganda and activity. When Sabate was finally gunned down by the police, the workers in Barcelona heard about his death with stunned disbelief, thinking it to be a police hoax to demoralise them. Sabate and the other guerrillas were an inspiration to many working class people, and it was partly through the activity of the ASG that the workers were able to build up resistance to Franco's reign of terror.

★ FALL OF THE DICTATORSHIP

Franco died in 1975 after ruling Spain for thirty-six years. During the reign of fascism it had been hard to protest about anything, though a number of important strikes had broken out in Catalonia and the Basque regions. The social, political, cultural, and intellectual repression had been stifling and strictly maintained throughout the dictatorship and after his death the masses decided they'd had enough. Unions and political parties began to openly organise and many strikes and demonstrations

★ INTRODUCTION

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★ ORIGINS OF THE SPANISH ANARCHIST MOVEMENT

Throughout Spain in the Medieval Ages there were many peasant revolts, and it was these risings and struggles along with the means employed that were the foundation of Spanish anarchism as well as the expression of 400 years of dissatisfaction with the state. Almost always people chose to rise up against persecution and oppression rather than emigrate or suffer and it was this attitude that was carried on

amongst the first workers as industry slowly built up in the 19th century.

The first labour unions were formed around 1840, following the ideas of Francisco Pi y Margall ('the father of Spanish anarchism') and Pierre Joseph Proudhon ('the father of French anarchism') as well as from the recent experiences of the Spanish workers. The first workers school was set up in Madrid by Antonio Cervara who also printed periodicals that reached workers all over the country, and it was from the ideas of free association, municipal autonomy, workers control and collectivisation that Margall developed his anarchist and federalist theories.

In 1855, during a general strike in Barcelona, the workers federations first contacted the International Working Mens Association in London. It was quickly realised that the Spanish workers organisations were closer to the ideas of Bakunin's Alliance (Mikhail Bakunin was the most prominent anarchist in the International and Marx's main rival) than to the authoritarian ones of Marx.

In 1868 Guiseppe Fanelli, a close friend of Bakunin, visited Madrid and Barcelona and was warmly welcomed by the workers there. The following year Spanish sections of the IWMA and Bakunin's Alliance were set up. The IWMA section known as the Spanish Regional Federation held the first national workers conference in 1870. It had a membership of 30,000 in which craft workers were a majority and put forward a specifically anarchist programme advocating social revolution, federalism, opposition to the state and political parties and direct action as a means of obtaining their demands rather than using parliament. It had groups throughout Spain.

In 1873 Marx took control of the IWMA at the Hague Congress (and later destroyed it by moving it to New York when he felt he was losing control of it), and the SRF left as a result of this and joined the International Organisation of Libertarian Socialist Groups which was set up by anarchists at the congress. By this time the SRF had 300,000 members and played a prominent part in the first attempt at a bourgeois revolution by Spanish capitalists who set up the First Spanish Republic. For the working class the height of this was the Cartagena commune. Whereas the Paris Commune had had municipal socialism as its main programme, the Cartagena commune was based on workers councils; a federal union of these councils ran the community. After the fall of this, the anarchist movement was forced underground and continually persecuted (the Republic fell in 1875). In 1882 it was reorganised at a convention and a series of national anarchist federations were maintained till 1909 - their numbers never falling below 200,000.

During the 1880's a small group of Marxists split from the main body to form the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) that soon became a reformist party. It also set up its own union - the General Union of Workers (UGT); a bureaucratic and reformist organisation controlled by the PSOE. In 1888 it had a membership of about 3,000 and grew only very slowly.

Around the turn of the century, anarchists participated in many assassination attempts on Spain's rulers in response to the increasing amount of repression directed against them. This was followed by even more persecution and more killing by both sides. A decline in the movement occurred around this time due to the repres-

ably the largest exodus in Spanish history occurred as hundreds of thousands of workers fled the country. Large numbers of these ended up in concentration camps in France, but small groups of Spanish anarcho-syndicalists appeared in many countries throughout the world. Some continued the fight against fascism by fighting with the various resistance groups in WW2 against the Nazis, a number ending up in their concentration camps and others betrayed to the Spanish authorities were deported by the British and French governments after the War.

For those that stayed in Spain the repression was terrible - Franco had more people killed after the Civil War than died during it (over half a million according to some sources). One in ten of the workers in each factory were taken out and shot (Franco's fascists killed more Spaniards than Hitler killed German Jews) and thousands ended up in concentration camps and prisons for their political views. Although not a fascist himself, Franco used the ideas of the Falange - Spain's largest fascist party - as the only way to crush the rebellious Spanish proletariat. Along with genocide he instituted fully-fledged fascism - unions incorporated into the State apparatus, an end to free speech and elections and greatly increased police powers. Strikes and independent workers organisations were banned, women were virtually confined to the home and the reactionary views of the Catholic Church and the Monarchy once more dominated society.

A constant orgy of murder and terror lasted until the end of WW2. With the fall of the two fascist powers that helped him to power - Germany and Italy - Franco began to ease off the repression thinking the Allies might turn on him for aiding their enemies. However the 2nd World War had been an imperialist war, not one against fascism; and rather than try to topple the regime these governments often helped it. Once again Franco unleashed a wave of terror against the working class - the prisons filled up again (for simply belonging to the CNT punishment was a 30 year prison sentence) and any strikes that occurred were brutally crushed.

★ RESISTANCE TO FASCISM

Despite the fascist repression, the CNT (now returned to anarcho-syndicalist principles) continued to exist and organise workers, though illegally. This was done by groups of anarcho-syndicalists working underground (something they had much experience at) but who faced either the firing squad or a long prison sentence if caught. They were greatly aided by small groups of anarcho-syndicalists, mainly based in France, who carried on a guerrilla campaign against the fascist regime from 1945 onwards. Amongst these militants were Francisco Denis, Jose Lluís Facieras and Francisco and Jose Sabate - all veterans of the Civil War and members of the CNT. Their names became household words in Spain and they continued to plague the authorities for years. They assassinated the more hated figures of the Franco regime, released prisoners and expropriated banks, capitalists and fascists. The money was used to buy transport, to hide arms and explosives, organise operational

they generally got what they wanted.

A lack of solid theory and the tactical mistakes resulting from this had resulted in the position the CNT and FAI found themselves in towards the end of the war. A determined effort to form an alliance with the rank-and-file of the UGT and the establishment of revolutionary societies in Aragon, Catalonia and Levante would probably have produced better results, though the lack of arms may still have resulted in a victory for the fascists. Instead many CNT-FAI members turned to the State to defeat the fascists and were taken in by the Communist slogan - 'First the war, then the revolution'. Some came up with the absurd idea that the revolution could be carried out from above and that the state could be used for the benefit of the working class and the creation of an anarchist society. CNT participation in the State helped to destroy the revolution and left them in no better a position to defeat the fascists.

In July 1937, the FAI held a plenum at which the Peninsular Committee (by now also paid full-timers) proposed to reorganise the FAI by disbanding the affinity groups of which it had always been made up of, and create the structure of a political party instead. The leadership of the FAI had set their sights on political power - seeing themselves as the political wing of the CNT and hoping to use the latter's influence amongst the working class to pursue their ambitions in government. This idea was met with determined resistance from a large minority of the FAI's 150,000 members and many of them maintained their affinity groups.

The rank-and-file of the CNT and FAI, remaining true to the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism, began to openly oppose their leadership throughout 1938, especially over their continued collaboration with the Communists, and a number of strikes were provoked by the actions of the government (in which the CNT was once more participating in) including the attempt to reintroduce management in industry. In January 1939, the Republican government declared a state of war and ordered a general mobilisation of all workers. This was met with much opposition by CNT members and the war was as good as over anyway.

The decline of the CNT and FAI once they began to participate in the State is ironically a testament to the ideas of anarchism. Those who participated in it soon lost touch with the masses and the 'corruption of power' took hold of them almost right from the start, despite the fact that these people were aware of the corrupting influence of political power and some even believed they were above it simply because they were 'anarchists'. The Spanish Revolution showed once and for all that no government (not even one with 'anarchists' in it) can be of any use to the working class. Far from joining the state, it should have been totally smashed (extending the Aragon example), for only in this way would the revolution have any chance of success.

★ FASCISM AND GENOCIDE

By April 4th, the fascists had conquered the whole of Spain. Many working class people decided it was too dangerous to stay and try their luck with fascism and prob-

sion and the fact that it was organising illegally.

★ FORMATION OF THE CNT

In June 1909 spontaneous demonstrations and a series of strikes broke out in Barcelona in opposition to the war in Spanish Morocco in which many young working class conscripts were being slaughtered. Solidaridad Obrera (Workers Solidarity), the workers federation in Catalonia, called a general strike, which turned into an uprising known as 'Red Week' in which churches were burnt and barricades erected on the streets. The authorities declared martial law; Catalonia was isolated from the rest of Spain and the uprising put down. The Maura government then instituted a wave of repression against the working class. The authorities needed a scapegoat and decided that Francisco Ferrer - a pioneer of libertarian education and therefore particularly hated by the Catholic Church - was the ring-leader and along with a number of other anarchists he was put on trial and eventually executed. This resulted in an international backlash against the Maura government, which subsequently collapsed.

At a national congress in Barcelona called by Solidaridad Obrera it was realised that the lack of a national organisation had hindered the workers cause and allowed the death of Ferrer. As a result of this the National Confederation of Labour (CNT) was formed - a specifically anarcho-syndicalist organisation; strongly influenced by the revolutionary syndicalism of the French CGT (which was also set up by anarchists) and with unions in every region in Spain. Its initial membership was around 450,000.

In the autumn of 1911, the PSOE organised a metalworkers strike in the Bilbao mining region and the CNT was outlawed until the eve of World War I for showing solidarity with the strikers. Despite this the CNT remained active and organised an important strike of 100,000 textile workers whilst underground.

Legalised in 1914, the CNT campaigned against the war - although Spain remained neutral - and held an international anti-militarist conference in Galicia despite it being banned. During WWI the Spanish economy expanded since it was supplying both sides of the war. By mid-1916 the PSOE was moving leftwards and a general strike was called, against a rise in prices, by it and the CNT. In August 1917 the CNT and UGT formed an alliance and called for another general strike throughout Spain. The government sent in the troops and soon stifled the strike.

At a congress in July 1918, the CNT adopted a policy of *sindicato unico* (single unions) to avoid rivalry between unions of the same trade and sent speakers on a propaganda tour throughout remote parts of the country - most of whom were later arrested. Soon the CNT had more than a million members.

In February 1919, a well-organised general strike took place against the powerful *la Canadiense* electric company in Barcelona. It was very successful and marked the high point of the anarcho-syndicalist expansion at this time. The bosses

responded by organising the Federacion Patronal (Owners Federation) and with it the beginning of pistolismo - the most extreme weapon used by them against the union militants. They began to hire gunmen to shoot anarcho-syndicalists, so the latter responded by shooting the bosses - the only way to protect themselves. In November 1919, faced with a series of militant strikes the Owners Federation resorted to the lockout and many workers were turned out of factories and onto the streets. The lockout lasted until January 1920 and ended in a humiliating defeat for the working class.

In December 1919, the CNT held its National Congress in Madrid; it rejected the idea of industrial unions, reaffirmed its commitment to libertarian communism (anarchism), and provisionally joined the Red Labour International - set up by the Bolsheviks - pending a report by a delegate (Angel Pestana) sent to Moscow to see if the International was as revolutionary as it sounded.

After the defeat of the lockout in Barcelona the authorities intensified repressive measures against the anarcho-syndicalists. Unions were shut down, activists arrested, and Salvador Segui - the General Secretary of the CNT - was shot and wounded. The anarcho-syndicalists replied by killing the head of the Owners Federation, Graupera, along with other bosses.

In January 1920, another anarcho-syndicalist stronghold - Saragossa - launched an uprising but this was quickly put down by the authorities and only a general strike prevented a number of CNT members being executed. Severe repression followed the defeat of the uprising.

In August 1921 a big campaign in the Moroccan war was lost. Allende Salazar was forced to resign and Maura was made head of the government. He then went about intensifying the repression against the working class, but was also forced to resign in March 1922, after failing to please the Catalan bourgeoisie. Sanchez Guerra replaced him and restored constitutional guarantees in April 1922. Because of this the bosses in Saragossa imported pistolismo from Barcelona and once more went on the offensive against the CNT. Another general strike was launched in Saragossa to free confederals on trial for shooting the hired gunmen of the bosses. It was a complete success and as a result union activity was revived.

Meanwhile in Barcelona, the repression continued and 64 union officials were arrested and deported. A general strike broke out in protest and the CNT was declared illegal. The UGT refused to join the general strike and the CNT-UGT pact fell apart. Many confederals were deported to other parts of the country. At this time the police began to use the 'ley de fuego' that is shooting prisoners whilst 'escaping'. Prisoners were released and shot down on their way home by gunmen of the 'Free Union' employed by the bosses.

In the spring of 1920, the Young Socialists left the PSOE to form the Spanish Communist Party and were later joined by a minority of the PSOE in April 1921, along with some prominent members of the CNT such as Andres Nin and Joaquin Maurin. However, the CNT decided not to join the Third International at its National Congress in Saragossa in June 1922 after delegates informed the congress that Russia consisted of a one party dictatorship that was ruthlessly exploiting the work-

★ CRISIS IN THE LIBERTARIAN MOVEMENT

The May Day's events in Catalonia not only resulted in the end of the revolution there and a period of reaction instituted by the Communists but also in a profound crisis within the anarcho-syndicalist movement. (The militarisation of the militias had also caused grave concern amongst the confederals and the invasion of Aragon further enhanced their hatred of the Communists). Up to this time the CNT, FAI and FIJL had all accepted the 'democratic collaboration' of the CNT-FAI's participation in the government, although a significant minority in all three were opposed to it right from the start. The rank-and-file of the CNT had not been too concerned with the newly-formed leaderships participation in politics (seeing it as a temporary tactic, made necessary by the difficult circumstances), preferring to get on with their work in the collectives or fighting on the fronts since the government had virtually no effect on their lives during the first few months of the war. This began to change with the militarisation of the militias and the attacks by the Communists on the collectives, and morale began to drop amongst the workers and peasants as they saw the revolution being destroyed. Disillusionment often turned to anger and the Communists were some times the victims of it. The Communists held nearly all the officer positions in the Peoples Army and would often send anarcho-syndicalist brigades into suicidal battles resulting in heavy losses. As a result the confederals often shot their Communist officers and fighting between the FAI and the Communists was not uncommon.

The Catalan section of the FIJL was the first to officially return to the true principles of anarchism in May 1937. A number of its members had been murdered after the May Days events and it also broke off from the pact between the FIJL and JSU (Unified Socialist Youth - taken over by the Communists). The rest of the FIJL stayed in the pact however. The FIJL, which had about 100,000 members, made up a high proportion of the militiamen and women and took a heavy toll as a result. As with the CNT and FAI, the more 'extreme' members tended to be fighting on the fronts whilst those still in the towns and cities, and participating in the decision-making, were more liberal and tended to accept the 'democratic collaboration' idea.

The participation of 'anarcho-syndicalists' in the government had resulted in the CNT becoming a reformist union. The initial compromise of forming the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias had led to one more after another until the leadership was so entangled in the state machine that it neither could or would leave the political field. It had gradually destroyed the federalist and decentralised structure of the CNT and replaced it with a hierarchical and bureaucratic structure and at the extended plenum of the CNT in Valencia in January 1938, the National Committee (by now paid full-timers, some holding State positions) sought to further centralise the union and take over all the CNT's publications - some of which were openly attacking the leadership. This was met with some resistance from the delegates but

'Long live Madrid without a government'. The Durruti Column arrived to relieve Madrid and during fierce fighting Durruti was killed (over half a million people turned out for his funeral in Barcelona). This offensive was beaten back as was another launched soon after from the south-east to cut off Madrid from Valencia. A third attack was made in the north-east in March 1937 but despite using a heavily armed division of Italian troops the fascists were resoundingly beaten at the Battle of Guadalajara.

After the Communist invasion of Aragon, they decided to launch an offensive at Tereul (in Aragon) in October 1937 to link up with the north (not previously done since nearly all the fighters on the front were CNT members and the Republicans had no intention of arming them until they controlled Aragon), which was quickly falling to the fascists. This diverted the fascist attack on Madrid but proved to be a complete disaster. The other groups in the Republican zone had wanted to attack the fascists to the south of Madrid in Estramadura to cut the Nationalists in two, but for unknown reasons the Communists attacked the heavily fortified positions at Tereul which the confederal divisions initially took but were then lost to the counter-attack launched by the fascists after they recovered from the shock of being attacked in such a stupid place. The fascist troops quickly poured across Aragon, along the River Ebro across half of Catalonia and into Valencia by April 38, taking advantage of the disastrous manoeuvre made by the Communists and occupying the coastal corridor between Castellon and Sagunta which had been threatened since 1936.

In June 1938 the fascists took large parts of Estramadura but the Communists continued to concentrate their attack in the north-east. In November 1938 they launched the battle of the Ebro - the largest battle of the war. Both sides were heavily armed and had large forces there - the Republicans lost over 70,000 fighters and also lost the battle. Franco then launched his general offensive the next month and on January 29th a starving and demoralised Barcelona fell to the fascists, as did the rest of Catalonia by the end of February. The Communist high command had managed to lose Aragon, Levante, Catalonia, half of Valencia and large parts of Estramadura within a few months and it is possible that this was done deliberately (Russia stopped supplying arms to the Republicans in the middle of the war) since Stalin signed the Russian-German Pact of August 1939 with Hitler, and wanted to extricate Russia from the war in Spain so that he could be on better terms with Germany (who was still arming Franco's troops) and so sign the pact. This left the central zone isolated and without the war industries of Catalonia, the war was as good as lost.

In March 1939, the fascists launched a final offensive in the central region to take the rest of Andalusia and Estramadura but were initially stopped. They finally took Madrid on the 28th after more heavy fighting and the Republicans then went about negotiating an end of the war with Franco as his forces moved towards Valencia and Alicante which were reached in early April.

ing class, jailing anarchists for their beliefs and manipulating the International for their own ends. Instead the CNT joined the International Workers Association (IWA) - the revolutionary syndicalist international, which was set up in Berlin in 1922.

At the time the CNT was still being suppressed in Barcelona. Many of its militants were jailed or shot, including Angel Pestana after he returned from Moscow and Salvador Segui. In response to Segui's murder, Cardinal Archbishop Juan Soldevil y Romero (who employed pistoleros in Saragossa) and ex-governor Fernando Gonzales Regueral were assassinated. As a result of Pestana's wounding, Martinez Anido, the Governor of Barcelona, was forced to resign and the CNT began to reorganise and go on the offensive. Glassworkers, transit workers and truckers went on strike in the summer of 1923. Around this time an attempt to set up a national anarchist federation was made. Amongst those involved was Buenaventura Durruti.

★ THE PRIMO DE RIVERA DICTATORSHIP

In the midst of the strike wave, General Primo de Rivera announced his pronunciamiento in Barcelona on 13th September and then went on to Madrid where King Alfonso XIII made him dictator. After the disastrous campaign in Morocco in 1921, evidence had come to light that the King and the Generals were largely responsible for the defeat. A dossier showing this was to be handed to Parliament, but the King acted first and appointed 'a Mussolini-type dictator' to take charge with the backing of the army.

The CNT was still disorganised from the severe repression it had endured over the last few years but attempted to launch a general strike to prevent the dictatorship. However it was left isolated (the UGT and PSOE submitted to the dictatorship) and the repression had been too much for it to organise effectively so soon. The strike was a failure, and the lack of arms prevented it from escalating. The CNT was outlawed, its unions shut down, thousands of its members imprisoned, its publications and committees were suppressed and some militants fled the country. It held its last National Congress in May 1924 and then went underground.

However, many anarcho-syndicalists remained active, bank robberies were pulled off to fund the CNT, army barracks raided for arms and bosses shot. An attempt was made on Alfonso's life and a number of attempts to restore bourgeois democracy were made by politicians, sometimes with the help of the more moderate members of the CNT.

In November 1926, strikes were banned and industrial disputes had to be taken to the Arbitration Boards set up by the state, which of course always sided with the bosses. Despite this the CNT maintained its clandestine activities and in 1927 the organisation began to redevelop and expand. This was because the UGT and PSOE had collaborated with the dictatorship and the CNT, as usual, had remained the only

effective opposition to the state and the ruling class.

In July 1927, the Iberian Anarchist Federation was launched at a picnic on a beach near Valencia. It was a national organisation of anarchist affinity groups made up of mainly CNT members committed to strengthening and expanding the Confederation and maintaining its anarchist aims and tactics, as well as co-ordinating anarchist actions across Spain and Portugal, it spread anarchist ideas and tactics through periodicals - the main one being *Tierra y Libertad (Land & Liberty)*.

By 1929, most people had had enough of the dictatorship; strikes broke out in Barcelona and students began to revolt. By March 1930, Rivera had realised that the King was losing faith in him and he appealed to the army to help him, but the King dismissed him when he found out. The monarchy and dictatorship were beginning to collapse when an amnesty for politicians who had been in jail was declared, but not for the workers. The CNT came out of hiding and began to reorganise its unions; it was finally legalised in April 1930, and many of its members were released from prison. *Solidaridad Obrera* - the paper of the CNT in Barcelona - reappeared as a daily paper. Some of the CNT unions were prevented from organising at first in an attempt to divide the workforce, but this obstacle was soon overcome due to the determination and experience of the confederals. After so many years of repression, strikes broke out everywhere including successful general strikes in Barcelona and Madrid.

In December 1930 the Jaca coup was prepared by a broad group of Republicans, after signing the Pact of San Sebastian, along with some army officers, the CNT and the UGT. However, most of the politicians and army officers withdrew from the plan at the last moment, the UGT failed to strike and the CNT was prevented from doing so.

Once again the prisons were filled with workers as repression was let loose on the working class yet again. However, Alfonso had been abandoned and he instructed Admiral Aznar to form a government and prepare elections for April 1931. The monarchy lost the elections, the King fled the country and the Second Republic was declared on April 14th 1931.

★ THE SECOND REPUBLIC

The Republic was swept in on a tide of enthusiasm amongst the working class who held a deep hatred of the monarchist regime. It had been a bloodless coup designed to end the feudal relations of the Monarchy, the Catholic Church and the Army, to produce a fully-fledged capitalist regime. The new government was dominated by a broad coalition of Bourgeois Republicans, Socialists, Catalan Separatists and Basque Separatists on the left, along with right-wingers such as Lerroux's Radical Party. It was headed by Azana (a Republican), Prieto and Caballero (both PSOE).

Largo Caballero was head of the PSOE and General Secretary of the UGT. Up

Communists resulted in poor harvest results since the people realised that most of it would end up in government hands, and the return to capitalism from anarchism was too much for many to bear and interest in the harvest was completely lost. The collectives were once more suppressed after the harvest was brought in.

For the first time in the war, the confederal divisions on the Aragon front were equipped with modern weapons and in large numbers since the government felt it was safe to do so with the suppression of the CNT-FAI in Catalonia and Aragon and a series of advances were made into the Nationalist zone despite bad tactical planning by the Communist Officers.

★ DEFEAT OF THE WAR

The invasion of Aragon by the Communists marked the end of the revolution in Spain but the war continued for another year and a half. Faced by a well-equipped and trained army, the war had never gone well for the poorly armed revolutionary and Republican forces (especially whilst being stabbed in the back by so-called allies). The militias were too poorly armed to make many advances and the Peoples Army which replaced them was too bureaucratic and inefficient; its battles fought more for political than military reasons, so that, despite being better armed, it lost much ground to the fascists. The Peoples Army was almost fully controlled by the Communists since they held most of the Officer positions and made up the War Committee. Their control of the war effort was marked by a series of defeats, inexplicable attacks and the final abandonment of the war and a victory for fascism.

By October 1937, the North had been overrun by fascists despite the fierce resistance put up by the Basque and Asturian workers who were better armed than the workers elsewhere. They had been surrounded by the fascists since July 1936 and the Nationalist army gradually closed in around them taking Bilbao in June, Santander in August and finally Gijon in October. After conquering the North, the fascists once more turned towards Madrid which they had surrounded on three sides as early as November 1936, but were unable to capture due to the determination of the resistance put up by the working class there. The CNT-FAI had never been large in Madrid but had grown at the expense of the UGT in 1935 and early 1936, which had forced the UGT to move left in order to keep its members. Initially, the PSOE and Communists had tried to control Madrid without the CNT-FAI but were unable to and an agreement was reached between the CNT and the UGT. The unions were largely responsible for arming the people of Madrid, but the revolutionary gains made by the proletariat were never as far reaching as in Aragon, Catalonia and Levante where the CNT-FAI were much stronger.

In November 1936 the central government fled Madrid and went to Valencia (and to Barcelona in November 1937) as the capital had been surrounded on three sides and the fascists had launched a major offensive from the north. A council of parties and unions took over the running of the city and the CNT-FAI launched the slogan

★ INVASION OF ARAGON

Aragon had been a de facto anarchist society since the beginning of the revolution. The CNT-FAI was the only force of any significance in the region and a stateless and classless society was soon constructed.

At Bujarroz in October 1936, delegates from all the towns, villages and militias decided to set up a Regional Federation of Collectives run by a Regional Defence Council to consolidate the revolutionary gains made by the masses and protect the liberated part of Aragon from Statist forces. Due to the economic and military pressure on the area, the Council was forced to accept the participation of Popular Front groups in December but the anarcho-syndicalists remained in a majority and the life of the people of Aragon remained the same. These groups had insufficient forces in the area to destroy the collectives and these collectives along with the defence committees were the only true bases of power. They were federated together to form the Defence Council that was subject to the same conditions as the other revolutionary bodies set up by the people.

By August 1937, the front line was roughly in the same place it had been 12 months before (55% of Aragon being controlled by the workers and peasants). The existence of an anarchist society for a year had resulted in the collapse of the UGT and all the political parties in the region - the decentralised and non-hierarchical bodies had effectively put them out of business since centralised and statist organisations were unable to survive in such an environment; they were unable to gain power or influence and the people saw no need for them. Therefore when the Communists felt powerful enough to take over Aragon it was impossible for them to do it from within. At the end of June a column of Civil Guards had attempted to invade Aragon from Catalonia, but were routed by the defence committees and forced to withdraw. However on the 10th of August, four Army divisions, controlled by the Communists, marched into Aragon and carried out an orgy of destruction that was so severe that even some Communists criticised it. Militants were arrested and the collectives smashed - the land, produce and hardware were returned to their former owners (often fascists!) - the peasants and workers were too poorly armed to put up any effective resistance to such a terrible onslaught and many anarcho-syndicalists were shot.

The peasants and workers immediately went on strike against the new rulers and since they were supplying the Aragon front with food and supplies the Communists had to let them reorganise the collectives so that the harvest could be gathered for they were planning an offensive on the Aragon front once the CNT-FAI had been smashed in Aragon. They were also forced to release the many prisoners they took. However, enthusiasm for collectives diminished with the Communist invasion and the number of collectives and those participating within them was reduced, and the presence of an invading force made things even more difficult. Before the invasion the harvest looked as though it would be one of the best on record but instead much of it was not collected. The disorganisation and low morale brought about by the

to this time the PSOE and UGT had both been small organisations with little influence amongst the working class, though, as both had submitted to the dictatorship and worked with it, they had begun to expand in the late 1920s. At the beginning of the Republic the UGT had about 200,000 members but unlike the CNT, which was made up of only workers and peasants, it accepted self-employed and middle-class people as well as having a bureaucracy similar to other reformist trade unions. It was the 'economic wing' of the PSOE and subject to the latter's decisions. The PSOE had the most seats in the new government and Caballero was appointed as Minister of Labour by Azana and as a result the UGT became a kind of government-sponsored union, and therefore of no use to the working class. Privileges were heaped upon it by the government and its membership grew rapidly. It also organised scabbing against CNT strikes. The main purpose of this was to increase the PSOE's influence amongst the working class (and hence decrease that of the CNT) so as to make the latter subservient to the State and maintain the PSOE's politicians privileged position in society. It also fitted into the Republicans attempt to create a kind of social-democracy to save Spanish capitalism by increasing the power of the state to safeguard the Republic from the army and Church on the right, and the CNT on the left.

The Army had been the bastion of the monarchist regime and the Azana government attempted to make it subservient to the Republic by retiring reactionary officers and replacing them with ones loyal to the new government. Amongst those was Francisco Franco. This policy was a total failure and only made the army officers more antagonistic towards the new regime as they saw their 'beloved institution' being tampered with and made less effective.

The Catholic Church was one of the richest, most powerful and most reactionary institutions in Spain; it was particularly hated by the working class, as shown by their readiness to burn down churches and convents during uprisings. It had a virtual monopoly on the education system, which Azana tried to stop by banning religious orders from running schools. The Catholic Church got around this by forming capitalist organisations that bought and ran the schools. The State hadn't enough money to prevent this and education stayed the same as ever - firmly in the hands of Catholic reaction.

Another problem for the Republican government was the question of land reform. There were about four and a half million farm workers in the country (compared with two million industrial workers and one million unemployed) most of whom lived in dire poverty, often starving and being unemployed for most of the year. There were also one million peasants the vast majority of whom were extremely poor. Most of the land was made up of large estates belonging to wealthy landowners - over 50% of whom were aristocrats. No attempt was made to break up the estates - a policy of renting bits of land out to peasants and farm labourers was instituted instead, but this was done very slowly and on a very small scale. It proved to be totally inadequate and didn't change the desperate plight of the poor Spanish rural workers.

Despite being illegal and severely persecuted under the dictatorship, the CNT came out of it with about 500,000 members and increased this to over 800,000 by

July 1931 - attracting workers with its militant tactics and effective strikes. It set about organising its unions and resurrecting its press, CNT became a daily paper in Madrid. However it faced a number of serious problems. Firstly the problem of the PSOE and UGT. Largo Caballero was using the UGT to divide the working class and attract workers away from the revolutionary struggle and direct action towards reformism, so that the PSOE could dominate the working class. Caballero brought in anti-working class labour laws that effectively outlawed the CNT as they made the principles of anarcho-syndicalism illegal. Strike dates had to be announced before hand, arbitration boards were set up and the unions had to submit to a certain amount of State control. The UGT fully submitted to the laws, but the CNT totally disregarded them and since the government didn't dare dissolve the CNT, it resorted to a vicious campaign through the media directed against the CNT and particularly the FAI. Combined with this the Socialists gave extra powers to the police and created the Assault Guards, specifically to suppress the CNT! Many anarcho-syndicalists were jailed or shot with the approval of the Socialists.

The second problem was that the Republic had come about without bloodshed and was initially very popular with the working class. This threw the revolutionary ideas of anarcho-syndicalism into some doubt and a reformist trend developed within the CNT headed by Pestana, Lopez and Peiro. Called the 'treintistas' (named after the thirty signers of a document which advocated collaboration with the Republic), they called for the suppression of the FAI (which had 30,000 members by now) and attacked certain CNT delegates in the bourgeois press contrary to the rules of the CNT. The 'direct action wing' characterised by the FAI lists stuck to their revolutionary ideas and at the National Congress of the CNT in June 1931 accused the treintistas of signing the pact of San Sebastian and trying to bypass the working class. The conflict was left unresolved, as was the renewal of the idea of setting up industrial unions. This congress left the CNT deeply divided and hindered the activity of the unions.

The first clash between the CNT-FAI and the Republic occurred on May 1st, when an indecisive shoot-out between the Civil Guard and CNT members followed the May Day parade. This was followed in June by a strike at the Telephone Company in which 2,000 strikers were imprisoned and UGT members organised to scab on the strike, after the strike was made illegal and the Civil Guard sent in to intimidate the strikers. As a result of this, strikes and uprisings broke out all over the country, and churches and monasteries were burnt down as usual. A general strike broke out in Seville in Andalusia (an anarchist stronghold) in support of an agricultural workers strike. The Civil Guard shot many strikers and destroyed the CNT's union buildings there in an attempt to crush the strike. General strikes also broke out in Saragossa, Granada and Santander. Peasants began to seize the land in many regions. Confidence was high amongst the working class with the fall of the dictatorship but the Republican government just replied with repression, arrests, imprisonment and murder (shooting militants whilst 'escaping'). Throughout this time the UGT fell in line with government policy and opposed strikes and occupations. The CNT-FAI bore the brunt of this repression as they either organised or supported

demoralisation amongst the workers) as bitter fighting carried on throughout the city. The CNT-FAI Ministers Garcia Oliver and Federica Montseny arrived from Valencia to placate the CNT-FAI members, but they were no longer trusted by the workers and were also ignored. The street fighting continued for five days and whilst it was going on the Madrid government took advantage of the uprising and sent 5,000 troops to Catalonia to take control of the region, which had been autonomous since July.

After numerous ceasefires, communiqués and negotiations the CNT-FAI members left the barricades on May 7th 1937, totally demoralised by the role played by the CNT-FAI leadership and feeling they were no longer in a position to take on the police and the army which arrived in Barcelona by now. The arrival of the troops sparked off a wave of repression by pro-capitalist factions (military, police and army) against the forces of revolution. Collectives were invaded and anarcho-syndicalists jailed and shot.

The fighting had left 500 dead and over 1,000 wounded, but worse was to come as the communists unleashed a wave of terror across Catalonia organised by the GPU. This was similar to that carried out by their predecessors - the Cheka - after the defeat of the Kronstadt Commune in Russia in March 1921. Numerous anarcho-syndicalists and POUMists were tortured in the GPU prisons, shot, imprisoned or went 'missing'. The CP carried out a systematic and brutal witch-hunt against the partisans of the revolution - everyone but the government forces was disarmed, searches carried out and full-scale assaults launched against CNT-FAI buildings. The May Day fighting signified the end of the revolution in Catalonia; the Communists had felt confident enough to take on the CNT-FAI and launched a full-scale attack against it in order to take full control of the region and destroy the revolutionary gains of the working class. The workers still managed to keep control of a lot of the industry in Catalonia, but with few arms and severely demoralised the revolution was over.

After these events the CNT-FAI was expelled from the government and decided not to participate in it anymore. Instead, they tried to organise a pact with the UGT but the latter was split into three factions, two of which were controlled by the Communists and little was agreed upon. In July, Largo Caballero was forced to resign from the Cabinet and a new government was formed headed by the Communist, Negrin. A new wave of repression was launched against the CNT-FAI, FIJL and POUM. In August the Communists set up the Military Investigation Service (SIM) which was supposedly a counter-espionage network set up to catch fascists. In fact it was a spy network, controlled by the GPU, to follow enemies of the CP in the Republican zone. Even the police were scared of SIM agents, and all SIM agents were watched by other SIM agents. The secret of its success was terror and torture - its torture chambers were nicknamed 'chekas' and the tried and tested techniques of the GPU (and formerly the Cheka) were used with the same enthusiasm as in Russia. Also concentration camps, modelled on those in Russia, were set up and packed with anarcho-syndicalists and POUMistas.

were fascist agents deliberately sabotaging the war effort and forcing peasants to form collectives at gun-point amongst many other lies).

In Catalonia the revolution had almost entirely been destroyed by the State, and the Communists in particular, by the end of April 1937. The revolutionary gains made by the workers in July 1936 had slowly been eroded, the police and army had been recreated and the courts were once again filling the prisons with anarcho-syndicalists. Torture was being increasingly used by the GPU and militant workers began to 'disappear'. The collectives were being harassed, starved of money and materials and the district and defence committees slowly destroyed. The CNT-FAI leadership complained bitterly about this (not wishing to take physical action which might destroy anti-fascist unity), and the fact that fascists were freely walking the streets whilst anarcho-syndicalists were being shot. The workers had slowly seen all their gains destroyed and the revolution crushed and they began to get more and more angry. By the beginning of May they had had enough.

★ MAY DAYS FIGHTING

The usually massive May Day parade in Barcelona was cancelled because of the tension between the CNT-FAI and the Communist Party. The holiday was also cancelled and instead of celebrating, CNT-FAI members were all harassed, searched and disarmed by the police.

On the 2nd of May 1937, the Assault Guards tried to take the Telephone Exchange in Barcelona from the CNT-FAI on the orders of a Communist Minister, but were repelled by the workers who had collectivised it. However, they were left surrounded by government forces, so they quickly told the unions and within two hours the workers had once more taken to the streets and erected barricades throughout Barcelona. Previously, the CNT-FAI had tended not to retaliate to Communist provocation (though some FAI members shot Communists whenever possible), but the Telephone Exchange was an important stronghold since it was a very useful communications centre. It also came at a time when the Catalan proletariat had taken enough from the Communists and the incident sparked off a general uprising against the government throughout Catalonia.

On the one side were the CNT, FAI, FIJL (Federation of Libertarian Youth in Iberia) and POUM and on the other the PSUC, UGT (now taken over by the Communists) and the bourgeois Republican Parties. The government resigned but the fighting that had immediately broken out continued. The renewed district committees organised the fighting and initially the workers made gains as they took control of large parts of the city away from the police and army. The leadership of the CNT-FAI, by now totally reformist and unrepresentative of the membership, called for a ceasefire in the name of anti-fascist unity; but the workers were fighting fascists - those of the Communist Party rather than Franco's. The CNT-FAI radio, controlled by the bureaucracy, also called for a ceasefire but was ignored (though causing

the fightbacks.

At a regional congress in Catalonia, the treintistas were asked to leave the CNT and those refusing were expelled because they had attacked the CNT delegates in public contrary to the rules of the CNT. Some of them formed the Syndicalist Party, which remained small and insignificant. Despite the efforts of the Catalan bourgeoisie to create a bosses union to attract the unions that were expelled or left as a result of this decision, they remained independent but the schism in the CNT had caused deep wounds.

★ THE ERA OF INSURRECTIONS

With the beginning of 1932, the strikes and occupations escalated into insurrections as confidence further increased amongst the workers and peasants. The government response was more repression, more shootings and more arrests. The CNT-FAI was at the heart of this revolutionary activity and received the worst of this repression.

The first of these insurrections was in the mining area of northern Catalonia on January 9th when an armed uprising of miners during a strike there seized the mines, dispersed the police and owners and declared libertarian communism. The government sent in the troops who took five days to put down the revolt. Sympathy strikes broke out around the country and a wave of arrests followed the defeat of the rising. Around one hundred of the most active anarcho-syndicalists were placed on the 'Buenos Aires' ship without a trial, and deported to West Africa (amongst these were Durruti and Ascaso). Protest strikes broke out across Spain against this action and armed uprisings occurred throughout the following months. Again the troops were sent in to suppress these attempts at libertarian communism, and more and more confederals were imprisoned. The strikes and demonstrations reached a peak in May and as a result of this General Sanjurjo launched a fascist coup against the Republic in August. It failed in Madrid but succeeded in Seville until the CNT quickly mobilised its members and routed the fascists without much trouble. The government in return made the CNT illegal in Barcelona, closing down its union buildings and banning its publications - no doubt scared by the show of strength made by the CNT. The fascists were let off with light sentences.

The deported anarcho-syndicalists were finally returned to Spain in September and released. The CNT by now had 1,200,000 members. Workers had become thoroughly disillusioned with the Republican/Socialist government and turned to the libertarian communism of the CNT - well publicised by the uprisings and despite the repression directed towards it. Strikes continued throughout the rest of the year and at a National Plenum of the CNT it was decided to set up a National Committee for Defence that was to co-ordinate the armed defence of CNT members on strike. The bosses were resorting to the lockout once again besides shooting strikers and using arbitrary imprisonment and deliberately increasing the number of unemployed

(already high because of the economic recession that had hit Spain) in order to weaken the working class.

Towards the end of the year, many anarcho-syndicalists believed the time for revolution was ripe - more and more workers were rallying to their cause despite the repression and the threat of a fascist coup that was always present. In January 1933 the FAI co-ordinated and launched an insurrection which broke out in Catalonia, Andalusia and Levante. The authorities, who were expecting the uprising, quickly put it down - only in Andalusia was it of any significant success. The reaction following the defeat was particularly brutal and over 9,000 confederals were jailed. Despite this anarcho-syndicalism continued to flourish as the prisons became 'schools of revolution' and before long the authorities were forced to release the confederals due to a wave of protest strikes.

With the rise of unemployment, the CNT began to organise an Unemployed Union which carried out rent strikes and forced bosses to give overtime work to the unemployed (no dole money existed in Spain and still doesn't). The FAI tried to discourage individual theft by the unemployed and instead organised collective expropriation or forced shopkeepers to give credit.

In November 1933 elections were held. At a National Plenum of the CNT it was decided to mount a big 'No Vote' campaign and push towards a revolution instead. The workers and peasants abandoned the Socialist/Republican government that had oppressed them rather than represent them and abstained in large numbers. The right-wing CEDA coalition led by Lerroux's Radical Party easily won the elections as the middle-classes, who feared revolution, voted for it in large numbers and the 'bienio negro' (black biennial) began. The CNT-FAI responded with a big propaganda campaign advocating seizure of the factories, farms and mines by the working class, and in December this was followed up with an armed insurrection, co-ordinated by the FAI, and centred on Aragon, Navarre and Jioja for Catalonia; Andalusia and Levante were still suffering the repercussions of the last insurrection. The insurrection was started with a general strike, and due to effective planning and organisation was successful in Saragossa, Barcelona, Huesca, Valencia, Seville, Cordova, Granada, Cadiz, Badajar and Gijon. However it was only partial in Asturias and Bilbao - both Socialist strongholds - and confused in Madrid where the CNT was still small. The insurrection failed to spread and the army besieged the liberated cities. The authorities began to suppress the uprising and the CNT-FAI decided to call off the revolt to avoid further loss of life on the workers side. Once more the prisons were filled with confederals (over 16,000) as oppression swept the country in the wake of the defeat. In Saragossa a general strike lasting four months forced the local authorities to release all the prisoners there except for the Revolutionary National Committee that had planned the insurrection.

The PSOE had been decimated at the elections and was now being persecuted by the laws it had set up to persecute the anarcho-syndicalists. The right-wing was reversing the limited reforms made by the left and was increasing the power of the Church and Army; releasing those involved in the Sanjurjo coup, encouraging Fascists to organise and arm themselves as well as oppressing anarcho-syndical-

stronghold was Catalonia but even here it was a lot smaller than the FAI and had a lot less influence. It was led by Andres Nin who had been Trotsky's secretary. His previous Party had been affiliated to Trotsky's International Left Opposition, but had left after refusing Trotsky's orders to enter first the Communist Party and then the PSOE. Instead they had tried to take over the CNT in Catalonia but had got nowhere. In 1934 it combined with Maurin's Workers and Peasants Bloc and other anti-Stalinist Marxist groups to form the POUM, which set about infiltrating the UGT with limited success. In 1936, it supported the Popular Front government at the February elections.

The POUM initially opposed the revolutionary uprising in July (presumably because they couldn't control it) but joined in any way because they were then 'with the masses'. It found itself, however, in a situation that didn't fit in with Marxist theory. The masses had not only by-passed the 'Revolutionary party' but had also missed out the 'transitional period of state socialism' and formed an anarchist society instead. It also opposed the communes and collectives and advocated 'workers control through the state' on Bolshevik lines. Its expulsion from the Catalan government was disguised as a 'political incident' and marked the beginning of its destruction by the Communists who were determined to wipe out 'Trotskyism' and any criticism of the Soviet Union by Marxists.

By the end of 1936, the Communist Party claimed a membership of one million. It had managed to do this by recruiting heavily from the former middle and upper classes (only 10% of its membership were workers or peasants). Fascists stranded in the revolutionary areas flocked to the Communist Party since they soon realised it was trying to return the country to capitalism and it provided relative safety from the 'anarchist hordes'. Expropriated landowners and shopkeepers and also Army officers joined in large numbers as they saw it as the force most likely to defeat the anarcho-syndicalists. Many officers also joined the Communist Party when it set up the Fifth Regiment and took control of the Peoples Army so that they could get high positions within them.

In December the Communist Party began to organise the International Brigades, which provided the Comintern with a big propaganda boost abroad and also helped the Communists to control even more of the fighting units. Previously, foreign volunteers (including a large number of Italian Anarchists fleeing from Mussolini's regime) had joined the militias, but the International Brigades started to end this along with the creation of the Peoples Army. The CNT-FAI had requested foreign anarcho-syndicalists and anarchists to stay in their 'own countries' and spread the struggle internationally, but the Comintern encouraged Communists to go to Spain so they could control the fighting there.

The Communist Party's opposition to the militias and collectives and its support for private property and 'law and order' attracted large numbers of reactionaries and those that had been expropriated by the working class. As it began to gain strength and confidence, it started to attack the revolution. Armed squads were sent to attack the collectives, militant workers were shot and it began to take over the Socialist press and continue its campaign against the CNT-FAI and POUM (claiming that they

was imminent and wanted to keep it away from Russia so that Russia could remain a spectator and pick up the pieces afterwards. When the revolution broke out in Spain he saw a chance of keeping the war limited to Western Europe. Also Russia had imperialist interests in Spain that they wanted to get back from the workers and also there was the chance that Spain could become a friendly power if the CP there took power.

Likewise, Germany and Italy who heavily armed Franco's troops gained economic interests during the civil war. They were also able to almost surround France with Fascist powers and thus pose a very serious threat to it. They were also able to test their new planes, tanks and arms and train their troops in preparation for the big European conflict they were gearing up for.

The Communists had joined the Popular Front government and won 14 seats at the February elections. After the uprising in July they united with the Catalan Socialists to form the PSUC (Catalan Unified Socialist Party). In the areas where the CNT was strong, the Socialists tended to be weak and more right wing and the Communists found the PSOE easy to infiltrate and take over. The Communist Youth also merged with the Socialist Youth Movement to form the Unified Socialist Youth with over 200,000 members. Before 1936, they had tried to infiltrate the CNT but found it impossible because of its anarcho-syndicalist structure. Instead they set about taking over the UGT, which they found a lot easier, and at the same time exploited a wide division within the PSOE.

To make their Party strong the Communists exploited every political, military and economic opportunity that arose. To do this a large group of specialists in political intrigue were sent by the Comintern under the guise of advisors and technicians - among them were many agents of the GPU (forerunners of the KGB). The establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and the Republican government in August 1936 helped this (the Mexican government was the only other government to side with the Republicans).

The Communist 'advisors' soon gained influence over Largo Caballero and in early October the Madrid government received a large supply of tanks, planes, arms and ammunition from Russia though many of these were old and unreliable. In return for this the Communists were given important positions in the government and Army. This enabled the Republicans to disband the militias, set up the police and harass the collectives whilst the Communists took control of the Carbineras and gradually began to take over the government and army.

Before October, the Communists had carried out a vicious campaign of lies and slander directed against the CNT-FAI and POUM. Once they had control of a large number of arms and positions, the verbal attacks turned to physical ones. The CNT-FAI were too strong to take on effectively at first, so they set about annihilating the much weaker POUM whom they labelled 'social fascists'. The POUM were dismissed from the Catalan government at the request of the Communists and POUM members began to be shot or imprisoned in secret prisons created by the Communists.

The POUM was a Marxist-Leninist Party of less than 10,000 members - its

ists, Socialists and Republicans. The PSOE, as with all left-wing political parties out of power, began to sound more radical and decided to seize power through force (Caballero was now being called the 'Spanish Lenin'), but realised it needed the support of the working class to do so. However, the CNT was still the most influential force amongst the workers and the PSOE decided to create a Workers Alliance to put it in power. The Alliance was made up of the PSOE, UGT, independent unions, independent Communist parties and other small labour groups. At this time the CNT-FAI was trying to set up an alliance with the rank-and-file of the UGT to create a united working class but the PSOE was using the latter as a stage army for its own ends and prevented the workers in the UGT from replying to the CNT's communiqués. It even set up Vigilance Committees to stop UGT members from coming into contact with CNT-FAI members and their literature.

Despite this the CNT in Asturias managed to sign a pact with the UGT since there the Socialists were closer to the CNT than elsewhere. They were at first reprimanded for lack of discipline by a National Plenum of the CNT but the pact was accepted when the Asturians defended it since it was in keeping with what the CNT was trying to achieve.

In May 1934, most of the confederal prisoners were released after a series of strikes broke out calling for their release, but the CNT was still effectively illegal and without any of its publications, whilst the PSOE was able to function fairly normally and in Catalonia and the Basque provinces it formed an alliance with the separatist movements there despite its own centralist tendencies.

On October 4th, the government shifted further to the right as the openly monarchist CEDA became more powerful. The next day the Socialists, having secured various alliances, launched their coup to regain power but it had been pathetically organised. A general strike was proclaimed and armed confrontations occurred in Madrid where the troops resisted the coup. The UGT and CNT both came out on strike but the confederals refused to fight on the streets just to create a change in government, especially for one that had spent over two years persecuting it. The rising was put down and the strike was called off. In most cities the coup was quickly put down due to the lack of planning, organisation and support.

Only in the Basque provinces, Catalonia and the Asturias did the coup achieve any success. In the Basque regions the strike was general but the UGT ran it and prevented the CNT from taking any effective part in it. Due to their inexperience and sectarianism the strike was defeated; the Basque separatists played no part in the action.

In Catalonia a general strike was declared by the Workers Alliance on the 5th. In Catalonia a strong separatist movement existed amongst the middle-classes and bourgeoisie since it contained Spain's largest city and port - Barcelona - as well as the vast majority of Spain's industry. The Catalan bourgeoisie felt strong enough to create its own state and declared it on the same day as the coup.

The night before the coup many CNT-FAI activists were arrested and imprisoned and the next day the Assault Guards forced the confederals out on strike at gunpoint. Because of this the CNT/FAI refused to have anything to do with the strike, although

in some smaller towns in Catalonia the coup was so badly organised that the CNT took it over and gave it a specifically revolutionary direction. The troops put down the rising quite easily and the government organised a systematic repression against the CNT-FAI, closing down its union buildings and suppressing its press once more.

In Asturias the coup escalated into a full-scale social revolution which took the Socialist leaders completely by surprise, but even here they attempted to exclude the CNT-FAI from organising anything and tried to bring the uprising under their control. They had shipped in arms in preparation for the revolt but prevented the CNT-FAI from getting any of them. Despite this the whole of the Asturias was taken by the workers, and the mines and factories were put under their control where libertarian communism was declared in CNT strongholds (e.g. Gijon, La Felguera), whilst the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was proclaimed in the Socialist strongholds (e.g. Oviedo).

Asturias was the centre of arms manufacturing in Spain and the munitions factories went into full-scale production after workers control was established. Even this was not enough to equip the 40,000+ strong workers militias. General Franco launched his attack against the Commune at Gijon (a strategically weak point for the workers) after two army attacks had been beaten back there by the workers. The Navy bombarded the town and port whilst the army landed nearby on the 7th. The workers were poorly armed and munitions were rushed to it from the arms factories at La Felguera. On the 10th, Gijon fell to the Foreign Legion and Moroccan troops. The troops then moved across Asturias meeting stiff opposition most of the way until Oviedo was taken by Legionnaires and Moors on the 17th after a fierce battle between the workers and troops. The last places to fall were the mines on the 19th.

Throughout this time Asturias had been isolated from the rest of Spain and a news blackout had been maintained so no one knew what was happening there. The revenge wreaked on the insurgents was terrible as thousands were shot and/or raped, houses looted and many more imprisoned as the troops occupied the region. For the first time in its history the UGT faced the same problems as the CNT - its unions closed down, its press banned and its militants imprisoned. After the defeat of the coup the number of militants in prison was over 30,000.

The PSOE didn't seem too concerned at the turn of events (no uprising in Spain had any chance of success without the active participation of the CNT-FAI, and continued its search for parliamentary power as it was still able to work openly and legally. CNT members were so used to being forced underground that they continued to build up their unions, organise prisoners aid, produce underground papers and carry on building towards the revolution. The non-hierarchical and decentralised structure of the Confederation greatly facilitated this and a campaign of general strikes, boycotts and sabotage was maintained against the regime, as well as armed resistance to fascist attacks against the anarcho-syndicalists. The PSOE and the Communist Party were considering forming a Popular Front, but the masses were drifting away from reformism; the Asturian uprising had shown the way forward and more and more workers turned towards the revolutionary ideas of the CNT.

Robles and Zamora (right-wing leaders of the government) had refused to hand

Caballero did a deal with the Communist Party and agreed to buy a large supply of arms, tanks, planes etc. from Russia using the gold in Madrid. They used these to strengthen the Peoples Army (this was increasingly controlled by the Communists) and in early October they issued a decree that made the militias illegal and incorporated them into the Peoples Army. Most of the CNT-FAI militias resisted this, but the government starved them of pay, food, and supplies as well as arms wherever they could, and many were forced to submit to the decree. Some left the front preferring to work in the collectives, rather than submit to the degrading discipline and Communist tyranny in the Army. Many knew that the revolution couldn't be won without revolutionary fighting units and weren't prepared to die to save a capitalist regime. The militarisation decree greatly demoralised the fighters and enthusiasm began to decline among the masses.

The CNT-FAI Cabinet Ministers accepted the decree since they were promised arms, but received very few and the anarchist brigades were always the most poorly armed after the militarisation. Garcia Oliver, by now totally divorced from the masses, called for iron discipline and submission to all orders from the new Officers. He knew that the revolution could not succeed without winning the war, but he was sacrificing the revolution to win the war.

However, centralising the war effort only made things worse. Whilst the militias existed and were armed they had made some early gains, but by the end of 1936 the war was going badly for the Republicans.

The Asturias, where nearly all the arms factories were, was defending courageously, but was a victim of a pincer movement by the fascists and was slowly being overrun. In much of Andalusia, the peasants and workers were massacred as Franco's army moved northwards through Estramadura towards Madrid. In Malaga the anarcho-syndicalists gained the upper hand but the government starved it of supplies, money and arms and it fell to the fascists. In the Basque region, the 'autonomous government' had fled, more afraid of the CNT than the fascists and Irun fell before the year was out. Only in Catalonia, Aragon and Levant - the most revolutionary areas - were the fronts holding their own. In Madrid the CNT and UGT worked together pushing the revolution forward, but Madrid was surrounded on three sides by the fascists who were moving closer all the time.

★ RISE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

At the beginning of the Republic in 1931 the Spanish Communist Party had about 1,000 members. By July 1936 this had risen to 3,000 (30,000 according to the Communists) but still had very little influence amongst the working class except in Seville and parts of Asturias. It was a pro-Moscow and strongly Stalinist Party and in 1936 a major tool of Stalin's foreign policy. In Spain, as elsewhere, Stalin had ordered the Communist Party to form a popular front anti-fascist alliance with 'progressive sections of the middle and upper classes'. Stalin knew that a European war

★ WORKERS MILITIAS

Even before the revolutionary outbreak workers were organising themselves into armed militias. With the initial success of the revolutionary forces across two-thirds of Spain, militias sprang up everywhere. Most of these were made up of CNT-FAI members, usually young men and women who were the most able workers - thus placing extra strain on the collectives with their departure to the front. In Barcelona, the militias were 12,000 strong within four days of the rising and already on the way to Saragossa. The militias organised the defence of the cities and the collectives, and routed out fascists and any enemy forces left in the liberated regions.

It was generally believed by the proletariat that the forces fighting the war had to be in keeping with the new society being created, and so the militias were decentralised, self-governing and democratic. There were no uniforms, no officers, no marching or saluting, no barrack-style discipline and no enforced conscription. The militias elected delegates and formed part of a century that also elected a delegate. The centuries made up assemblies and the delegates of the assemblies made up the war committee of a column. The delegates were chosen to lead the various forces but had to fight alongside the rest of the militia, were immediately recallable and received no special privileges, as in all revolutionary bodies.

Initially there was great enthusiasm for the militias and over 150,000 confederals enlisted for them; they relied on self-discipline, revolutionary enthusiasm and an understanding of what they were fighting for to keep them going. The militias were quickly trained - often by Republican Army officers who were kept under close scrutiny by workers committees - and helped to consolidate and extend the revolutionary gains of the masses. All manoeuvres and battles were discussed by everyone beforehand and the militias only followed orders from the delegates when they could see the sense of them. However the militias suffered from a chronic lack of arms and ammunition and were only able to fight sporadically.

The CNT-FAI were the only organisations to fully support the militias, but as the leadership became more and more involved with the State they began to accept the idea of a 'Peoples Army', initially proposed by the Communists. The Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias opposed the conscription decree advocated by the central government and set up voluntary enlisting, though many workers went straight to the front and joined the column of their choice. It also set up a military school that became the base of the Peoples Army in Catalonia. Garcia Oliver was head of the war committee and helped to set up the school; surrounded by politicians and officers, no longer a worker and not having to consult the masses he began to lose contact with the working class and the corruption of power set in upon him.

The Madrid government starved the militias of arms; whilst weapons were secretly hidden by the Republicans and arms garrisons kept under heavy guard by troops loyal to the government in areas with a weak anarcho-syndicalist influence.

As the Republican government regained its strength by recreating the police and the army, they began to physically oppose the militias. In late September, Largo

complete power over to the bourgeoisie, and the latter had decided to launch a coup d'etat to take over the country, and crush the rebellious workers who had survived all the repression thrown at them so far, and who had continued to escalate the struggle against capitalism. However, they couldn't decide who was to lead the coup. Eventually Zamora was forced to dissolve parliament and call elections for February 1936.

The elections were easily won by the Popular Front - a coalition of socialists, communists and republicans. The CNT had issued a manifesto saying that the right-wing would try to seize power by force if they lost at the polls and that building a revolutionary alliance with the rank-and-file of the UGT was more important than getting a left-wing government in. No actual call to abstain was made (the manifesto was more opportunistic than anarcho-syndicalist) and many workers voted for the Popular Front in order to secure the release of the 30,000 prisoners and to prevent fascism although a considerable number of confederals stuck to their principles and abstained. Many people began to feel that the revolution was imminent and a climate of tension began.

After the Popular Front victory many prisoners were liberated by the collective action of working class people since they had little faith in the promises of politicians. The bosses refused to rehire the released prisoners and strikes broke out all over the country in protest. The peasants began to seize the land and collectivise it since they mistrusted the new government and the Popular Front didn't dare move against them. Neither did they act against the army, church and right-wing parties who were openly preparing a coup. The government was powerless to do anything as full-scale class war broke out between the workers and bosses. Between February and June, hundreds of churches were burnt down; there were 113 general strikes, over 200 other strikes, numerous gun battles, assassinations and bombings. When the CNT held its National Congress in Saragossa in May, it had 1,600,000 members (the UGT had 1,500,000), and everyone knew the revolution was inevitable as the country's population turned their attention to the Congress.

The Congress was for once united on all important issues; it supported the expropriation of the land by the peasants, continued to push towards the revolution and an alliance with the rank-and-file of the UGT and maintained its commitment to libertarian communism.

During June and July, 10 - 20 strikes broke out every day (there were usually over 100,000 workers on strike every day) and 95% of these were successful. Through years of agitation, propaganda and action the CNT-FAI had managed to create and maintain a pre-revolutionary climate and factories and land were occupied everywhere as the bosses and landowners fled. 'Law and order' began to disintegrate, more and more clashes occurred between the workers and the authorities and faced with the continuing onslaught of the working class, the bosses had no choice but to resort to fascism.

As the bourgeoisie put the finishing touches to its plans for a coup, the CNT-FAI began to prepare for the revolution. It placed informers in the barracks and began to practice a strategy of guerrilla warfare. Arms were seized whenever possible

(often from churches where the monks and priests hid them for the fascists) and on the 19th July the workers took to the streets, poorly armed but determined to stop the fascist coup which they heard was about to be launched.

★ REVOLUTION BREAKS OUT

At 5am, General Mola launched the right-wing coup to destroy the Republic and impose fascism on the workforce. In Barcelona, the CNT-FAI rose up against the army - the infantry, who had been told they were defending the Republic, formed the mainstay of the coup - and beat the troops. Some soldiers shot their officers after they found out what was really happening and joined the workers. The Carbineros and Artillery were also used against the workers but these too were routed; the Assault Guards eventually joined the revolutionaries and the Civil Guard remained largely neutral throughout the fighting. The CNT set up an operational base and conducted the last battles from it - within 33 hours the working class was in control of the whole city. Red-and-black flags flew everywhere and revolutionary euphoria broke out amongst the masses. A feeling of solidarity and comradeship existed throughout the city and soon the whole of Catalonia was in the hands of the working class.

District and defence committees sprang up everywhere to organise arms and food distribution. The army barracks that were still occupied were bombarded with leaflets announcing the defeat of the coup and the workers militias moved into them as the soldiers surrendered. A wave of assassinations swept the city as workers took their revenge on bosses, torturers, priests, fascists and other enemies. The prisons were opened and the prisoners released.

In Madrid, the government had dithered in the face of the rising - the workers had demanded arms from them but received nothing. Here the CNT was the minority union but their militant tactics had succeeded in shifting the UGT to the left in order to keep its members. Eventually some soldiers began to supply the communists and socialists but the CNT/FAI received nothing, so they ambushed the trucks taking arms to them and set about routing the fascists. The army barracks were surrounded and forced to surrender. General Molas troops failed to reach the capital and Madrid was soon in the hands of the working class. Here too the prisons were emptied as pressure was put on a series of short-lived governments to concede a number of demands made by the workers.

Elsewhere, the Nationalists took Morocco where the rising had begun and Seville, Granada and Cadiz in the South. In Seville, the communists had some influence amongst the workers and used it to attack the CNT so that battles between rival groups of workers were quite common and the fascists took the city due to the fact that the working class there was deeply divided. In Andalusia, the peasants and farm workers were too poorly armed to beat the troops but still put up fierce resistance to the coup, often with scythes and pitch-forks, and when finally defeated they were

things - anarchism or fascism.

The leadership of the CNT-FAI had joined the Catalan government to get arms, raw materials and money from the central government since they considered that this was the only way of defeating fascism under the unfavourable conditions they found themselves in. The Madrid government of course refused to arm the workers or supply them with raw materials despite having the 2nd largest gold reserve in the world. Therefore, Durruti and the railway workers union made a plan to seize the gold from the Bank of Spain in Madrid, using 3,000 CNT-FAI militia men and women, transporting it back to Barcelona by rail. However Santillan informed the National Committee of the CNT about the plan who then sabotaged it on the grounds that it would have created civil war between Barcelona and Madrid - a highly unlikely outcome.

On the 4th November, the CNT-FAI entered the central government. Four ministers were chosen by Horatio Prieto - the General Secretary of the CNT - without consulting anyone else in the organisation. Juan Peiro and Juan Lopez - both reformists - were chosen along with two members of the FAI - Federica Montseny and Juan Garcia Oliver. The latter refused to join at first, but arms were promised to the CNT if they did, but few were delivered once they had. The entry of the CNT-FAI into the two governments was a disaster for the war and especially the revolution. Neither government gave them many arms and whilst the working class was pushing the revolution forward - organising communes and collectives, forming defence militias and generally creating a libertarian society - the newly formed leadership was holding them back, siding with the state, and allowing it to increase its power with which it started to suppress the working class and the revolutionary gains it had made. Those that entered the government thought that they could use the state for the benefit of the workers and the revolution, but 'anarchists' make poor politicians and they were continually outmanoeuvred and outwitted by those that had spent a lifetime learning the 'art' of politics.

The Republican government wanted to wait a while before winning the war, since a quick victory over the fascists would ensure victory for the revolution and leave the workers in control of the country. Instead of this the Popular Front parties wanted to re-establish their position of power and then launch an attack on the fascists to once more rule the whole of Spain. The Republicans, Socialists and Communists spent all their initial efforts in regaining power, which effectively meant the destruction of the revolution, before turning to the problem of the war which the workers had been trying to fight right from the start. The incorporation of the CNT-FAI into the two governments was essential to them for the success of this plan because of the large influence the anarcho-syndicalists had amongst the working class.

However, the collaboration in the two governments and the suppression of the CNT's federalist structure began to create divisions within the CNT-FAI and many of its membership began to actively oppose the leadership (a majority of the Catalan anarchist youth [FIJL] were opposed to collaboration by November 1936) in wanting to return to the days of July and finally destroy the state once and for all.

real power within the district and defence committees. After the fall of Badajoz to the fascists in Aragon, the CNT-FAI decided to scrap it and form a Revolutionary Council with the UGT instead, but Largo Caballero refused to let the UGT co-operate with them since this would give too much power to the workers and the situation would rapidly move out of the hands of the state. Added to this, the Republican government would be less likely to get arms from France or Britain to re-establish control of the country. The CNT-FAI were thus forced to scrap this plan as well since they weren't strong enough to launch an all-out libertarian revolution in places like Madrid.

On 4th September, Caballero replaced Giral as head of the Republican government and on the 26th the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias was dissolved and the Catalan government established. The UGT and CNT representatives formed a minority in it and the political parties began to strengthen their position by rearming the state. This act was carried out by the newly-emerged leadership of the CNT without consulting the membership; for the first time in its history the CNT was developing a bureaucracy which was rapidly becoming divorced from the rank-and-file and at the same time destroying the federalist structure of the organisation to do so (the CNT leadership was turning the Confederation into a reformist body). *Solidaridad Obrera* had also been taken over by reformists, and began to describe the government as a 'workers government' since it was made up of members of the CNT and UGT. However, these 'representatives of the working-class' began to see problems from the state's point of view, rather than from the peoples and since the two are in continual conflict (and the fact that the state is reactionary by its very nature), the entry of the CNT-FAI into the government did irreparable damage to the revolution.

The rank-and-file of the CNT-FAI were generally unhappy with or ignorant of (due to poor communications and unreliable press distribution) the collaboration and many were so involved with the militias and collectives, that they were unaware of what was happening. Also the most active and militant anarchists had all departed to the fronts, leaving the more moderate members behind in Catalonia who were less inclined to verbally or physically oppose the new leadership. The FAI which had originally been set up to maintain the anti-political nature of the CNT, had slowly turned into an organisation devoted to activity (mainly within the CNT - where its ideas were readily accepted) with theory being pushed into the background. This effectively resulted in the FAI being dominated by the CNT (rather than the other way round as many of its opponents claimed). When the revolution broke out, the FAI actually encouraged the CNT to strengthen its position in the government, once it had joined, rather than work towards the state's destruction - as it should have done.

The July uprising had initially been an anti-fascist one and had escalated into a social revolution mainly because of the lack of an effective state power throughout two thirds of Spain. Some CNT members saw the CNT entry into the government as a temporary move to defeat fascism, after which they could continue the fight for an anarchist society (an idea actively encouraged by the communists). Alas not realising that the fight against fascism was inextricably linked with the fight for a revolutionary society; for once the revolution had broken out there could only be one of two

butchered in their thousands. Some of Andalusia was taken over by the workers and peasants but fascism was quickly imposed on the rest of it. Franco's army then carried on its march northwards through Estramadura and on towards Madrid. In the north, the nationalists took Galicia and some of Aragon including Saragossa, Tereul and Valladoid. The nationalists failed to take the Basque region and only took Oveido in Asturias - the rest of the region was taken over by the workers.

The sailors in the Navy also rose up and executed much of the hated officer class. The republicans and socialists had quite a lot of influence amongst the sailors but failed to use it as the large number of ships stationed at Gibraltar could have quite easily stopped Franco's troops from crossing the Straits from Morocco into Spain. Valencia, Castille and Levante all 'remained loyal to the Republic'.

★ COMPROMISE AND CONSOLIDATION

By the 21st of July, Catalonia was literally in a state of anarchy. The police and army no longer existed and the state was thus powerless. The prisons were empty, district committees were distributing food and other essentials and people were even burning money in the streets. The workers had begun to run the factories and transport, and the bosses had either fled or been shot. Everywhere people were celebrating - singing, dancing and burning churches.

However, a few politicians led by Luis Companys (once a lawyer for the CNT but now a republican and President of Catalonia), had taken refuge in the palace of the Generalitat of Catalonia. The revolution had failed to destroy this now powerless symbol of capitalism and Companys took advantage of this. He intended to regain his position of power but knew he had to gain favour with the CNT-FAI to do so. He called a meeting of all the political parties and unions in Catalonia and at this he made a fawning speech to the CNT/FAI members present, saying that they had been wrongly persecuted in the past, that they had gloriously defeated the fascists in Catalonia and that now a new era of co-operation with the CNT-FAI could begin and that he and his party would be a valuable contribution to defeating fascism in the rest of Spain. The CNT FAI members seemed to naively accept his offer and attended the meeting as observers - not being able to make decisions without the ratification of all the local groups and unions.

At the meeting were representatives from Esquerra Republicana, the Rabassaires, the Republic Union (all bourgeois republican parties), the PSOE and the United Marxist Workers Party (POUM). Companys suggested setting up a Militia Committee to be led by his party that would organise the fight against fascism in the rest of Spain. All the parties of the Popular front accepted this except for the POUM that realised that any decision made without the CNT-FAI (80% of the workers in Catalonia were in the CNT), was worthless and waited for a decision from them. The CNT-FAI members at the meeting left to make a report to a Regional Plenum of the CNT on the same day.

At the Plenum there was a clash of viewpoints. Durruti and a number of other delegates insisted that there should be no collaboration with political parties and the state, and that the revolutionary society that had been created should be consolidated and extended to the rest of Spain. The majority view, proposed by Santillan, Vasquez and Garcia Oliver amongst others, however, was that Catalonia was isolated from the rest of Spain, much of which had been taken over by the fascists including the anarcho-syndicalist strongholds of Saragossa and Andalusia and the situation was unclear elsewhere. Little help could be expected from the international proletariat which was either controlled by social democracy or enslaved to fascism; and added to this was the fact that they considered the workers in Catalonia were too poorly armed to face the well-organised and better equipped Nationalist Army on their own and that if the CNT-FAI fought them in isolation they would be massacred.

They proposed that a Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias should be set up in Catalonia and made up of the CNT, FAI, POUM, UGT, PSUC (Catalan Socialist Party and Communist Party united together), and the bourgeois Republican parties. The UGT and PSUC would have as many representatives as the CNT and FAI despite being tiny organisations in Catalonia because the UGT was nearly as large as the CNT throughout the rest of Spain and this would create a more harmonious committee. Also the UGT was the majority union in Madrid where six million pounds worth of gold was kept in the banks and this could be used to buy arms, heavy artillery, planes and tanks to fight the fascists with. The majority at the Plenum naively believed that the Madrid government might actually fully arm the workers in Catalonia if they could give the impression that 'democracy' - and not anarchy - existed in Catalonia. The Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias would help to give this impression.

The majority view at the Plenum was accepted by the political parties despite the fact that Companys wanted his party to control the Committee, but with no power base he had to back down. However, the formation of the Committee was a backward step for the revolution (and the first break from anarcho-syndicalist ideas by the CNT) and was to prove fatal to the revolution and the CNT-FAI. It provided the political parties with a base from which they could begin to regain their lost power, for without it they would have been completely powerless to do anything. It effectively created a situation of dual power (the workers controlled industry and agriculture, whilst the workers and the political parties controlled the armed groups), and one in which the Communists could gain a foothold and begin their counter-revolution.

The Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias was immediately set up and began to run the war and organise defence etc. Despite their compromise the CNT-FAI tried to decentralise the Committee as much as possible and urged the working class to organise themselves and take as much responsibility away from it as possible since they realised the danger of the body they had just helped to set up. They had found themselves in a difficult position and were trying to steer a dual course - but in the end only one of them could be successful.

Meanwhile, the general strike that had been declared on the 19th began to wind down as workers started to collectivise the hospitals, railways, docks, trams, buses

centres for them (training for new jobs etc). This wasn't very successful though and some prostitutes even chased off the pimps and brothel owners, collectivised their brothels and applied to affiliate to the CNT.

Despite this women never really became equal to men during the revolution though if it had succeeded no doubt this would have eventually occurred. (The revolution did create a high point in women's liberation in world history and was probably the most advanced period up to that time). Sexist attitudes often remained and childcare facilities were never extensively organised. Women continued to work in trades traditionally reserved for them and marriage continued in areas with little anarcho-syndicalist influence. What few gains were made, were reversed as the Popular Front government began to consolidate and strengthen its position - rolling back the revolutionary conquests and re-establishing the traditional roles of men and women under capitalism.

★ MINISTERIAL COLLABORATION OF THE CNT-FAI

After two weeks of fighting in Aragon, the CNT-FAI columns had advanced to within 20 miles of Saragossa and had liberated a number of towns and villages on the way despite being poorly armed and facing the superior firepower of the enemy. However by the beginning of August they had run out of ammunition (they even sent empty shells back to Barcelona to be refilled), and between 20,000 and 30,000 militiamen and women were left idle. Many participated in setting up the collectives in Aragon whilst waiting for more weapons. Durruti and the other commanders appealed to the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias for more arms but the latter had decided to mount campaigns to spread the revolution internationally - either in Morocco to cut off Franco's bases and supply of soldiers or to Portugal and France. However, no significant help was to come from the international proletariat - in France the once great syndicalist union, the CGT, was now controlled by communists and offered no help, whilst the once large and powerful anarcho-syndicalist CGT in Portugal was being decimated by the fascist regime installed in 1934 - and all these plans came to nothing. Also the Madrid government refused to arm the workers and the only arms the CNT-FAI militias could get were those from raids into enemy territory. The metallurgical and chemical centres in Barcelona lacked the raw materials to make sufficient arms and had no money with which to buy them from abroad; this left the militias in a desperate position, unable to attack the fascists and only just able to defend the collectives.

Despite having helped to set up the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias, few confederals had much faith in it and many were aware of the fact that it could quite easily result in the re-establishment of capitalism. Even CNT-FAI members within it encouraged workers to organise independently of it, remain armed and keep

sation spread to all the anarcho-syndicalist strongholds. Its initial aim was to raise 'women's issues' in the CNT-FAI and to increase the number of women activists in the movement. However, its aims soon broadened to encompass a general raising of women's self-consciousness and to increase women's cultural and intellectual awareness.

Mujeres Libres was always a specifically working-class organisation committed to destroying capitalism and patriarchy. Few of its members had even heard of feminism and those that had, had a very low opinion of its largely middle-class and separatist orientation. Its members saw themselves as having an important educational function, working to emancipate women from the traditional passivity, ignorance and exploitation that enslaved them and towards a real understanding between men and women so that they could work together.

Illiteracy was high amongst the workers and peasants and even higher amongst women since the Catholic Church saw little point in 'educating girls destined to be housewives'. Many children started work as early as the age of 8 and it was not unknown for girls and boys under ten to be anarchists and CNT members. For these people, and especially girls, the only places of learning were *ateneos* - libertarian schools/cultural centres set up in working-class districts by the unions to promote literacy and class-consciousness. It was at these centres that Mujeres Libres was born - created by women who were virtually nurtured on the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism.

In the initial period after the July uprising, women played an important part in consolidating the revolutionary gains. Mujeres Libres rapidly grew into a federation of over 30,000 women. By the end of September it had seven union sections - Transport, Public Services, Nursing, Textiles, Mobile Brigades for non-specialists, and brigades able to substitute for men fighting the war. The federation organised women to make the maximum contribution to whatever practical work had to be done.

Abortion was made available for the first time during the revolution as well as contraception and advice on birth control. Previously women were rarely seen with men in public but during the revolution men and women openly mixed in cafes and on the streets; women began to wear trousers for the first time and traditional sexual roles began to be broken down. In place of marriage, anarcho-syndicalists favoured a free union based on mutual trust and shared responsibility but monogamy was usually the norm - women objecting to open relationships more than the men.

Mujeres Libres campaigned against problems of particular concern to working-class women - illiteracy, economic dependence, ignorance about health care, child care and sexuality. They were particularly active in the libertarian schools that were created everywhere and in improving health facilities as well as raising women's consciousness along with improving women's standing in industry, raising wages and creating childcare facilities so that women were no longer economically dependent on men. However, the idea of the family was never really challenged - in agricultural collectives a 'family wage' was often paid.

Also Mujeres Libres campaigned against prostitution and set up rehabilitation

and factories and the metallurgical and chemical plants were put on a war footing as the workers modified the factories to make rifles, bullets, armoured cars and other arms (most of the munitions factories were in north-west Spain) for the revolution. The farms in Catalonia were collectivised and communal stores created to feed the towns and cities. Workers militias picked off the last fascist snipers; and district committees organised the expropriation of shops and stores (hotels and bakeries were collectivised). The revolutionary defence and district committees were federated on a decentralised basis to form a Co-ordinating Committee. These committees - self-managed working-class organisations - and the CNT unions which were now running industry, were the only effective power in Catalonia besides the militias - either controlled by the parties or by the unions and the FAI. The state existed in name only.

Some CNT-FAI members were disgusted at the creation of the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias but felt powerless to do anything about it immediately, since it had been a majority decision that had made it. Amongst these was Durruti and he proposed the idea of liberating Saragossa, which would then clear the path to the north controlled by the CNT and UGT and isolated from the rest of 'Republican Spain', where most of the arms factories were. The Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias could then be disbanded as the link-up with the north would leave the fascists with all their strength in the south-west and the workers movements better armed and controlling the vast majority of Spain including most of the large cities and nearly all the industry and agriculture.

The fall of Saragossa to the fascists had been a bitter blow to the anarcho-syndicalists; it was their second largest stronghold (after Barcelona), a large military garrison and in a key geographical position. In Saragossa the CNT-FAI had been promised arms by the Governor on the eve of the coup but had received none. They had hoped that a general strike would be enough to defeat the coup - not realising the extreme nature of it. The strike was completely solid but it soon became clear that the Right was trying to impose fascism as they systematically searched working-class districts, rounded up anarcho-syndicalist militants and shot them on the spot. Therefore the anarchists tried to escalate the strike but a lack of arms and the fear created by the fascists amongst the workers prevented them from doing so. The bureaucracy of the UGT tried to negotiate with the military and their members began to go back to work. Most of the towns and over half of Aragon's countryside fell to the fascists, despite working-class and peasant resistance almost everywhere. As the strike began to crumble, the workers began to get demoralised, the Civil Guard continued to shoot militants (the troops had been confined to barracks as the nationalists didn't trust them), and the authorities spread rumours that the rest of Spain had fallen to fascism. The strike was finally called off by the CNT and fascism quickly imposed on the workforce; militant workers were either shot or fled.

Soon after the creation of the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias of Catalonia, plans were made to liberate Aragon and Saragossa in particular. Three armoured columns were organised by the CNT-FAI and a fourth by the Committee and within five days, 12,000 anarcho-syndicalists were on their way to Aragon along with another 3,000 fighters in the fourth column. The structure of the columns had

been worked out by the militias and the active and able militants had enlisted to fight for the revolution. Durruti was put as head of the 3,000-strong column that was to try and liberate Saragossa while the other columns were to flank it and liberate smaller towns. Before going, Durruti appealed to the masses to provision the columns so that the former would maintain enthusiasm for the revolution, despite the fighting, and so that through taking responsibilities on themselves they would become more aware that only through collective struggle, and self-activity would the revolution be successful.

The Durruti column left Barcelona on the 24th and within two days was only 20 miles from Saragossa, liberating a number of towns and villages on the way and helping to form agricultural collectives in them. However, the other columns (the Red-and-Black and the Karl Marx columns) were behind it and it was necessary to wait for them to cover their flanks. This wasted valuable time and it was during these days that the strike in Saragossa began to collapse. Durruti began to grow impatient for he knew that war turned even the best revolutionaries into 'irresponsible killers' (Makhno - a Russian anarchist who had fought the Reds and Whites had described to Durruti the effect war had on his Insurrectionary Army), and therefore the war had to be won as quickly as possible; but after two weeks of fighting they had completely run out of ammunition despite being hastily supplied by the newly converted munitions factories in Barcelona.

★ REVOLUTIONARY LIFE IN SPAIN

In the areas of Spain uncontrolled by the fascists - Catalonia, Asturias, the Basque regions, part of Aragon and Andalusia, Levante and Castille a new pattern of life had begun. In the first few weeks after the uprising, there was a general belief that a new world had been born and that capitalism was gone forever. Old rivalries were forgotten and replaced by a feeling of solidarity and mutual aid. Capitalist ways of life and thinking began to disappear and a feeling of respect for others as well as for oneself began to appear. Greed and enmity were becoming things of the past as the material conditions of life changed and as people began to work collectively and take control of their own lives. With the end of the class system and the beginning of communal ownership 'crime' started to end (particularly theft) and this, combined with the greater individual liberty created, caused a massive decline in 'violent crime'.

★ INDUSTRIAL COLLECTIVES

As far as industry was concerned, the anarcho-syndicalist concept of workers self-management was put into practice wherever possible - the fact that most of the bosses had fled made this easier to achieve.

food supply and also fed the 20,000 strong militias on the Aragon front. Collectives were meant to pay taxes to the central Government, supposedly to fund the war, but most refused and supplied the militias directly instead.

In Catalonia, many farmers were organised into reactionary agricultural unions and actively opposed the collectives and peasant unions. They were spurred on by the communists who often attacked the collectives, shot militants and stole food and machinery. Elsewhere, the various governments did their best to stifle them, often attacking them, making them illegal, trying to implement a policy of divide-and-rule or just preventing the collectives from getting essential needs.

★ WOMEN IN THE REVOLUTION

As in all capitalist countries, women played a subordinate role to men in Spanish society. The reactionary influence of the Catholic Church made this even more so, and conditions of life for women prior to 1936 were oppressive and stifling. Work was long, hard and poorly paid (male wages were usually higher), and this added to the burden of bringing up children and doing the housework. Many women worked whenever possible, since only one wage-packet was usually inadequate to bring up a family.

After 1931, the Republic had begun to introduce divorce and had given women the vote, as well as making education more available to women (despite strong objections from the Catholic Church). These limited reforms began to encourage women to take a more active interest in politics.

Despite being committed to women's emancipation in theory, the CNT-FAI had done very little towards this end and it was generally considered by anarcho-syndicalists that this problem would be sorted out after the revolution. Sexism was common amongst Spanish anarchists, and only a few made any effort to confront it or to break down traditional sex roles, although the economic circumstances made it difficult to do so. Most opted for marrying or living with an anarchist woman who would bring up the children and look after the house, so that he could spend his spare time involved in political activity.

However, many women were members of the CNT-FAI and a number of women such as Teresa Claramunt, Soledad Gustavo and Frederica Montseny did become respected and influential figures in the anarcho-syndicalist movement. To combat the lack of women activists in the CNT-FAI, a number of women got together and set up *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women) in 1934. At first some women opposed its formation since they thought it would create disunity amongst the anarcho-syndicalist movement (the desire for unity was always a strong one amongst CNT and FAI members), but the lack of willingness amongst their male comrades to do much about the inequality of the sexes, convinced them that its formation was necessary. Initially groups were formed in Barcelona and Madrid and based on the affinity group structure of the FAI, but soon the enthusiasm for an autonomous women's organi-

In each region, a Regional Federation of Collectives was set up along anarchist lines (collectivists were fiercely democratic and kept a close eye on the delegates). These were run by Regional Defence Councils that were subject to the same conditions as the Administrative Councils of the collectives. The purpose of the Federations was to organise the defence of the collectives, even-out the difference in wealth between them, distribute the unused land and eliminate competition between them.

Besides working the land, the collectives took over the general running of their local area. After getting new machinery, fertiliser, seed, etc. the collectives used their various resources for other purposes. Before the revolution health and education had been non-existent for many people and the collectives began to build clinics, hospitals and libertarian schools. They also built roads, libraries, bookstores, museums, agricultural schools and experimental centres, electrical power plants, flour mills, irrigation systems, olive presses, food processing centres, etc. as well as setting up communal kitchens, eating places and child care places/crèches.

Generally, life in the collectives was a lot easier and more prosperous than under capitalism; racism and sexism began to disappear and people were more considerate towards each other now that the class system had been destroyed. Crop yields were usually increased - the workers knew how to run agriculture far better than the landowners, and the absence of police and supervisors combined with the fact that people were enjoying the fruits of their own labour created a greater enthusiasm for work. Life began to be based on mutual aid and solidarity rather than on the 'dog-eat-dog' philosophy of capitalism. 'Crime' was almost non-existent and few people were expelled from the collectives: the rules of the collectives were made by the people in them and since these were based on a mutual respect for each other, rather than geared to protecting private property as capitalist laws are, they rarely needed enforcing. Most people joined the collectives for they saw the immense benefits of doing so, however those that didn't - known as 'individualists' - were allowed to farm their own land as long as they didn't use hired labour or let their land remain unused. Many of the 'individualists' later joined the collectives, usually because they found it was much better to live communally than to 'go it alone'.

All this was done despite enormous difficulties. The CNT and FAI were the only organisations to support the collectives and communes whilst most other groups tried to actively suppress them, especially the Communists. Although the CNT, FAI and UGT all had peasant sections, most of the collectivists didn't belong to any of these though many joined after July 1936. The CNT-FAI had never placed much emphasis on organising peasants and farm workers, but a strong collectivist tradition made it easy for them to spread their ideas through the countryside.

Their propaganda drive had been stepped up after the February elections when rural workers began to seize the land, and this was especially so in Aragon. After July 19th, the only real forces present in Aragon were the CNT and the FAI, and full-scale collectivisation was put into effect and defended from communist and fascist attacks by the CNT-FAI militias. The land in Aragon was very fertile and the collectives supplied the whole of the liberated part of Aragon, contributed to Barcelona's

However, many had fled with their company's money and the workers were faced with many problems in organising industry. To enable them to organise production and distribution the unions of the CNT found it necessary to change from a trade basis to an industrial one. Workers control was established through the unions, something the CNT had always advocated, even printing literature for the workers on how to run their particular industry once the revolution had broken out.

Since most of Spain's industry was in Catalonia and that it was also the stronghold of the CNT-FAI, it was there that most of the industrial collectives were formed. The CNT and FAI were the only organisations to support the collectives and communes set up across the country and their members were the most active participants in them. Officially the UGT was opposed to the collectives but many workers and peasants in it ignored the orders of their bureaucrats and participated in setting up and running them. The collectives were more libertarian in character in CNT-FAI strongholds than where the UGT was stronger. The latter made more concessions to management and tended towards nationalisation and 'workers control' through the state.

In Catalonia management was swept away completely and incorporated into the workforce in most industries. Workers committees were elected on the shop floor to administer the running of the industry. Their form varied from industry to industry and throughout the region but generally the committees were made up of half workers and half technical experts all of whom were elected, subject to immediate recall and were only allowed to serve a limited time on the committee. They were also expected to work the same hours as the rest of the workforce, do a similar amount of work and received the same wages. Initially the collectives tried to do without money but with the setting up of the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias it was found necessary to maintain the wages system and taxes had to be paid to the Government, supposedly to fund the war. Wages were generally raised and an attempt made to equalise them; although this was sometimes found difficult to achieve because of the situation they found themselves in.

The committees were elected at general assemblies of the workforce and had to report regularly to the assemblies. They were in charge of improving health and safety at the workplaces, co-ordination between the different sections of an industry and of increasing the efficiency of the industry (though not at the expense of the workforce). Generally decisions were made at the assemblies and the committee expected to carry them out. The creation of industrial unions within the CNT helped to eliminate competition between factories and helped to co-ordinate and develop co-operation instead.

In Barcelona, the hospitals, bakeries, docks, railways, trams, buses, water, gas and electric systems were all collectivised. Generally efficiency and safety were greatly improved and the industries gave a much better service to the public than under capitalism. Workers actually began to enjoy working in the more relaxed and libertarian environment and many worked without pay at the weekends and in the evenings to help the war effort. The work was easier, safer and more rewarding - the absence of management allowed a greater amount of freedom and the spur of

trying to win the revolution created enthusiasm amongst the workforce. In some places they decided to shorten the working week, in others they increased it to help the war effort. Many of the factories in Barcelona were turned into arms production and were even able to equip the Durruti Column before it left for Aragon on July 25th, since the CNT had published literature and organised courses for workers on how to run industry.

Much of industry in Spain was owned by foreign companies and in some factories they found it impossible to put self-management into practice (the threatening presence of British warships off the Catalan coast forced concessions on the proletariat). Instead they created a form of 'workers control' in which management were supervised (and sacked if they abused their position) and the accounts inspected regularly by assemblies. This was necessary to gain money and raw materials from the foreign parent company as well as to maintain foreign markets. (If the revolution had spread internationally this wouldn't have been necessary, but little help came from the international proletariat especially in the form of industrial action). However, many foreign capitalists tried to sabotage the revolution by increasing the prices of raw materials or withholding them altogether and by putting up trade barriers to Spanish goods. Despite this and the sabotage and hindrance of the political parties - especially the Communist Party - against the collectives and the fact that a war was waging around them, they managed to maintain better and more efficient services than the capitalists had (co-operation produced better results than competition did). Some collectives even had to resort to self-sufficiency to maintain self-management though many couldn't because of the international nature of their industry.

★ AGRICULTURAL COLLECTIVES

Spain's economy was largely dependant upon the land and a majority of the workforce worked in agriculture either as farm labourers or as peasants. The revolution was more thorough-going on the land than in the towns and cities as communes and collectives sprang up everywhere - the ideas of anarchism were deeply engrained amongst many of the villagers and these ideas were quickly put into practise after July 19th.

Before the revolution, Spanish agriculture had been in a complete mess. Despite being a potentially rich agricultural society, much produce was imported that could easily have been grown at home. In many places feudalism remained intact and peasants worked the land. Only a small number of them had enough land to support a family - most had only smallholdings and starved on the land for many months of the year. Besides the peasants, there were also small tenant farmers, but most of the land was made up of medium and large estates. Often these were left fallow, used for hunting or for raising fighting bulls. In some provinces less than 50% of the agricultural land was farmed whilst thousands of people starved, since the landowners refused to let their land be worked.

The left-wing Republican government began to slowly distribute land to the peasants in 1931 but this was returned to the big landowners by the right-wing government in 1933. After the February elections in 1936 the peasants took matters into their own hands and expropriated over five and a half million hectares within a few weeks; landowners fled as they were helpless to do anything about it. Even before July 19th, many towns and villages had confiscated the land of large landowners, chased off the police, cut all ties with the government and declared libertarian communism. In these communes money was abolished and a communal store created in which the produce and hardware of the commune was kept. The wage system was abolished and people took what they needed - oppression and exploitation were thus ended.

After the July revolution many more communes were set up, but in most towns and villages they chose a collective system of production and consumption. Collectives sprang up in nearly every town and village in revolutionary Spain. In Aragon there were 400, 900 in Levante, 300 in Castille and many others in Andalusia, Asturias and Catalonia. The collectives were made up of most of the local population, individuals were free to leave or join as they pleased, the land, machinery and food were collectively owned. The form and running of the collectives varied a great deal, but most were run by an Administrative Council that was elected at the general assembly of the collective. These met regularly (usually weekly, fortnightly or monthly) and all decisions were made at the assemblies, which were made up of all the members of the collective. The Administrative Council carried out the decisions of the assembly and made regular reports to them. Council members and other delegates were subject to instant recall, served limited terms of office, were expected to do their fair share of the work and thus received the same 'wage' as anyone else.

At first some of the collectives tried to work without money, but due to the war and the presence of the State they found that this wasn't practical. Instead they abandoned State money and printed their own vouchers, coupons, tokens or consumer booklets. The wage system varied greatly; some collectives paid a family wage, some paid the same amount to everyone and some paid according to the amount of work done (variations were due to the uneven influence of anarchism across the country). Very few people chose to remain idle - most worked with enthusiasm in the newly won freedom and prosperity - but those that did or those that were unable to work usually received the same as those that worked. Full sick pay and holiday pay were paid by the collectives. Generally however, people put in the amount of work they considered necessary and took whatever they needed from the collective store.

Churches were usually used to store food and machinery since they made ideal warehouses; collectivists usually had a booklet showing what they put into the store and what they took out. Most of the collectives produced a surplus of goods and these were sold or exchanged with other collectives. Some collectives set up stores in the cities to sell their surplus produce, thus cutting out the wholesalers and selling their produce at a reduced price.