

# Spanish Prisoners

Fifth Estate Collective

1982

A large, well-produced poster titled *Libertarians* found its way to our office not long ago. It is chiefly a translation of a text written in Spanish by “The International Friends,” denouncing the detention of more than fifty libertarians in Spanish prisons (as of September 1980) for alleged participation in armed activities. It contains a summation of the predicament of these libertarian and autonomous comrades, an analysis of the modern Spanish state (“the tardy reconciliation of all the victors of the counter-revolution”), criticism of the reconstituted CNT which “feels some real discomfiture in this affair. It is not out of indifference or prudence that it was brought to remain silent. The leaders of the CNT want to be an axis of regroupment of libertarians on a trade-unionist basis, in fact moderated and acceptable to the established order. The comrades who have resorted to expropriations represent, by this fact alone, an absolutely opposite axis of regrouping. If some are right, the others are wrong. Each person is the offspring of their works, and one must choose between these or the others by examining the meaning find the finality of their actions...” It then urges practical action to free the imprisoned libertarians, “those [actions] that create the most Scandal [being] the best.”

Unfortunately, the text offers the dubious argument that the libertarians have “rendered a very great service to the cause of the revolution” by getting themselves jailed (!) for armed activities, because “By their initiative they are sparing you the trouble of seeking, through long and difficult discussions, what would be the best way of beginning to take action. There can be no better one than this, as it is very right in theory and very fine in practice.”

The author(s) propose that libertarians everywhere take up the cause of freeing these comrades. Their hope is that such a campaign will bring about the reappearance of an active libertarian current. These arguments, however, lack force. Far from being “right in theory and very fine in practice,” armed actions outside the context of a generalized uprising are usually futile and suicidal gestures. And as for the hope that “autonomous actions” to free the imprisoned libertarians will provide a rallying cry for the libertarian movement, such an instrumental view of these comrades’ plight smells of the martyrology school of political mystification.

Inexplicably, the publishers do not provide even an address to which inquiries regarding aid can be sent—thus defeating the purpose of the poster. But after inquiring we have found this address to which money and inquiries can be sent: BM BIS, London WCIV 6XX, England.

At last word, the libertarians and other prisoners were on a hunger strike. It is our sincere hope that readers of this appeal will quickly send aid, and that these comrades will soon be on the streets again.

For a free copy of the poster, send \$1.00 postage and handling to the FE, or request it with book orders.



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