

# Tales from the planet

Fifth Estate Collective

1990

## Anarchist Black Cross

At a conference of the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) (the first in twenty years) held in April 1989 in Bradford, England, member groups decided to activate one of the ABC's original functions by establishing the Emergency Response Network (ERN) which will mobilize anarchists internationally to respond to immediate crises. A call to action would have demands such as the immediate release of anarchist prisoners, the dropping of charges, the cessation of torture, meeting the demands of hunger strikers or prisoner hostage-takers, etc. The meeting in Bradford decided that the ERN would only be activated in defense of anarchists.

The conference participants stress that the ERN is not an organization, but an autonomous network bound together only by an agreement to act in common defense. Optimally, a response should occur within 24 hours of a crisis and to that end the North American organizers of the effort, ABC Toronto, ask that interested people contact them with a telephone number and address. Write them at POB 6326, Stn. A, Toronto, Ont. M5W 1P7, Canada.

As the international anarchist movement is once again on the rise, more official repression can be expected in response. Support efforts such as the ABC may prove to be crucial in the future. The FE has agreed to be the Detroit ERN contact and we urge others to join the network.

The Anarchist Black Cross, an international defense network for anarchist prisoners and revolutionaries, has after a seventy year gap returned to its country of origin. We have received news that preparations are being made to set up a section of the ABC in the Soviet Union and that a section in Poland is also being organized.

The Black Cross was first set up in Russia under Tsarist rule to assist and support anti-Statist revolutionaries. The October 1917 Revolution was soon followed by the Bolshevik counter-revolution and thousands of revolutionaries were imprisoned in concentration camps or executed in the resultant terror, while others were sent into forced exile or subjected to blacklisting and repression.

The Black Cross was outlawed, its members jailed and all avenues of support closed off. Under Stalinism the isolation of anarchists and other anti-statist revolutionaries intensified. One anarchist activist, Aaron Baron, was kept in confinement for over 20 years, then "disappeared," despite many attempts by comrades in exile to get through to him.

Revolutionaries associated with the Black Cross moved to Germany and Italy and then on to North America, where some helped found the Alexander Berkman Fund (ABF), which performed many of the tasks of the ABC, particularly in respect to providing aid to the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists in Italy and Germany, finally Spain, in their war against Fascism.

The ABF worked alongside the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) to publish the plight of comrades trapped by the Bolshevik tyranny, but with the outbreak of World War II and the victory of Franco, the emphasis changed and it was the anarchist Resistance in the post-Franco era that came to the fore.

It is momentous, and historic, that the Black Cross has returned to the Soviet Union. There it suffered its greatest repression. We are excited by the prospects of its revival in that country and later in the year will make direct contact, out of which we hope to establish a permanent channel of communication.

— From *Black Flag*

## Oh, That It Would Be So Department

Is Libya's Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi the newest convert to anarchism? You might think so from his statements in September at a celebration in Tripoli of his twenty years in power: Qaddafi declared that Libya will pursue an "international revolutionary program" to rid the world of "government and classes, Parliaments and parties." One can only guess what effect such rhetoric had on the attending rulers such as Assad of Syria and Ortega of Nicaragua or those who covet the power of the state such as Yasir Arafat. Probably no more than when they utter revolutionary platitudes at their own celebrations of power.

Still, Qaddafi went a little beyond the usual. He announced: "Governments and classes, parliaments and parties will disappear. Armies and the police, all instruments of repression will disappear. The masses alone will take their place."

Sounds great, but it bodes a poor beginning that Qaddafi insisted that all attending his celebration rally wear t-shirts with the exalted leader's face emblazoned on them. Those who refused, like a group of German autonomes, were relegated to a ship in Tripoli harbor for the duration of the festivities.

We like Qaddafi's ideas, so maybe as a first step towards their realization could we humbly suggest—suicide?

## Where There's A Draft...

*FE Note:* Due to an editing and typesetting error only the second half of this article was published last issue. It appears here in its entirety.

It would be laughable if it was not so tragic to hear apologists for Israel's continuing brutal tactics refer to that country as the "only democratic state in the Middle East." In the Israeli occupied "security zone" in Lebanon, young men are regularly gang-pressed into Israel's mercenary puppet militia, the South Lebanon Army, by Israeli soldiers terrorizing towns in the border region.

The May 28, 1989 *New York Times* described an incident in mid-May where Israeli soldiers drove into the town of Jezzín firing machine guns in the air. They used loudspeakers to call upon men ages 19 to 35 to report to the nearest recruiting station and then kidnapped forty young men who were packed into trucks and taken directly to the militia training camps.

Needless to say, hatred is increasing for the Israeli occupiers even among the Christian villages which dot Lebanon's border with Israel.

In the other occupied Territories the intifada continues despite Israel's murderous policies of repression against the Palestinians which has left 500 dead, 20,000 wounded and 25,000 imprisoned mostly without charges and held under concentration camp conditions in hell holes such as Ansar II and III. A compliant media in the U.S. mostly ignores the daily killings and brutality (including torture) which are part of the official Israeli plan for halting the uprising.

One can only speculate how many 12-year-olds would have to be killed in Poland or the like before the news would be front-page shock/horror material. When it happens in Israel, however, world opinion accepts that children can be executed with assault rifles for the "crime" of throwing a rock.

In contrast, South Korean student demonstrators attack police with rocks, sticks, iron bars and molotov cocktails (see FE, Winter 1988) often causing injury to the cops but firearms are rarely used against them.

Within Israel itself, opposition to the occupation continues. As of April, 75 Israeli soldiers have been jailed for refusing to serve in the occupied territories, many of them imprisoned for a second and third term. These refuseniks form the backbone of Yesh Gvul ("There is a Limit"), the grass-roots protest movement of Israeli reserve soldiers:

As more soldiers refuse to serve and are sent to jail, the government is using harsher methods to intimidate the movement. Several Yesh Gvul activists have been arrested and the movement leaders are facing charges of “incitement to mutiny.” Moreover, according to a new official policy, immediately upon their release from prison, Yesh Gvul’s refuseniks will be called again to ‘serve in the occupied territories and jailed again if they refuse.

Last year the General Security Service (SHABAK, formerly the notorious Shin Bet) launched an investigation of Yesh Gvul based on publication of the Soldier’s Guidelines No. 2. The government maintains that it may constitute incitement and aid to mutiny. We can only say, “We hope so!”

The Vietnam war had to be stopped in good part because of the widespread mutinies and resistance among war-weary American GIs; it would be only fitting justice if the same happened to Israel. Write Friends of Yesh Gvul, 1678 Shattuck Ave.; Box 6, Berkeley, CA. 94709 for more information.

**Where a military draft exists**, there is draft resistance and refusal—even under apartheid. At six press conferences held in separate cities across South Africa in September, 780 whites of military age pledged not to serve in that country’s armed forces. The number included not only those awaiting conscription but also many in the reserves along with 49 officers who said they would ignore their yearly call-up.

The effort was organized by the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) which has been banned under the state-of-emergency decrees, so the effectiveness of the nationwide announcement shocked the ruling white majority dependent on well-equipped armies and police to enforce minority rule on the overwhelming black majority. Also startling was the presence of 61 resisters from the Afrikaan sector of white society which normally sees military service as a patriotic obligation and are the core of the career officers in the repressive forces.

In response to South Africa’s new president, F.W. DeKlerk’s attempts at “softer” apartheid as a tactic to neutralize the demands for total participation in the country by all races and an end to segregation, the ECC announced it will resume its work of encouraging more open draft resistance.

Contact them through: ECC, Khotso House, 42 DeVilliers Road, Johannesburg, 2001 S.A.

**In Spain, a frighteningly high death toll in the armed forces** has draft age youth looking for an escape. The socialist government of Felipe Gonzales defends the right of the state to force young men into involuntary servitude.

The “Mili’s” reputation for brutality and horrible conditions is borne out by the fact that army recruits last year experienced 185 deaths including 24 suicides, while 672 suffered serious injuries with an additional 109 suicide attempts. In the last six years, 162 suicides by draftees have been recorded.

These casualty figures have led to a call by a wide spectrum of political parties for elimination of the one-year obligatory military service. Many Spanish youths spend their late teens figuring out ways to avoid the draft, often abetted by their families who fear the worst for their sons. Postponements for studies are temporary, but attempts such as phony medical ailments or leaving the country are often used by those from wealthy families.

Those who dream of a “socialist” party (why the quote marks?) can see its realization in Spain. Once they became the government, the socialist critics of power acted no differently in defense of the state than the worst conservative party. Those who wave the red flag in Spain realize no less than the royalists at the state cannot exist without the coercive agencies of the army and police.

Fuck all armies! Oppose the draft everywhere!

**Ever get a gut feeling that something is terribly wrong in this world?** Well, so do a lot of other people as indicated by the fact that the world’s largest-selling prescription drug is the anti-ulcer medicine Zantac. Life under capitalism upsets people to such a degree that ulcers are at an epidemic level, allowing Glaxo Holdings, PLC, a British drug company, to profit from people’s misery to the tune of \$2 billion a year in sales. Still, Glaxo is worried that competitors such as SmithKline Beecham’s Tagamet might cut into their profits.

Cute, eh? They make us sick with their routinized, stressed-filled, demeaning, meaningless jobs, then sell us the cure through which they get even richer. This is known as the circulation of capital.

**The jaguar drawing and poem** which appears on page 14 is available as an 11 X 17 inch poster. Send \$5 to Gena Trott, POB 646, Reserve NM 87830.

## **In the real World Series, nature bats last**

by Herrada (female symbol)  
The Great Equalizer:  
No class structure  
No discrimination  
No system of any kind  
The Earth will rule  
And disrupt our status quo  
We are all subordinate  
To her  
Even anti-authoritarians  
Will be forced to kneel  
Before her  
Without question  
We will be set free  
By the destruction of a sick society  
But there will always be  
Our Mother Earth  
To answer to

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Fifth Estate Collective  
Tales from the planet  
1990

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Fifth Estate #333, Winter, 1990

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