



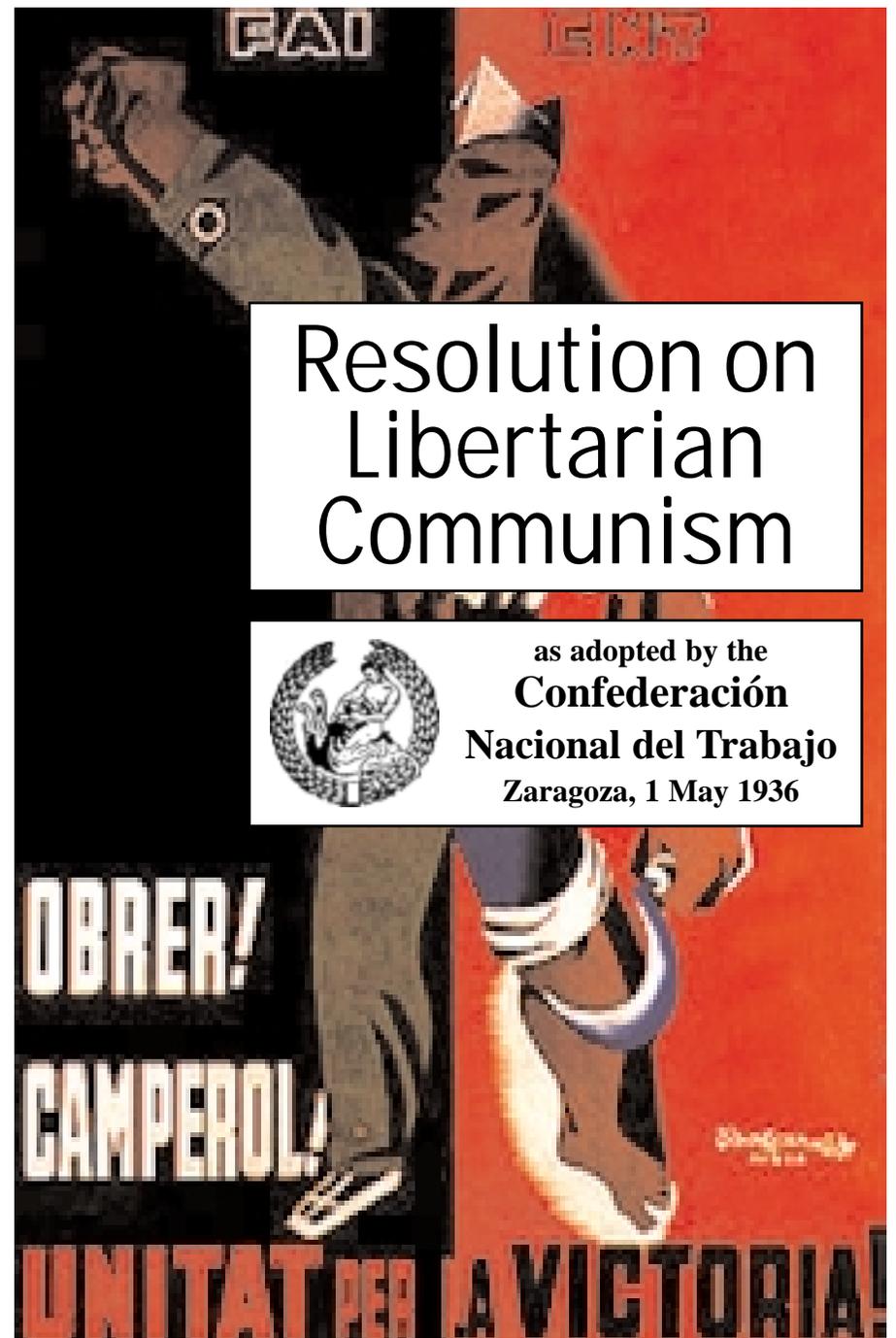
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Post: Postnet Suite 116, Private Bag X42,
Braamfontein, 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa

E-Mail: zababooks@zabalaza.net

Website: www.zabalaza.net/zababooks



Resolution on Libertarian Communism



as adopted by the
**Confederación
Nacional del Trabajo**
Zaragoza, 1 May 1936

OBRER!

CAMPEROL!

UNITAT PER LA VICTORIA!

Footnotes

1. These formed the core of his pamphlet *Finalidad de la CNT: el comunismo libertario*, Barcelona, 1936, a work that was taken as a blueprint for anarchist communism and was subsequently translated into numerous languages.
2. Along with Puente, the working party which produced this motion consisted of Carbó, García Oliver, López and Montseny.
3. A reference to the schism between trientismo and faísmo.
4. It must be remembered that in the thirties eugenics was regarded by right and left alike as having enormous potential.

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Confederación Nacional del Trabajo
(National Confederation of Labour - Spain)
<http://www.cnt.es/>



Finally, let us consider the motion passed titled 'The confederal concept of libertarian communism' and which was added to the CNT's programme, alongside the declaration of principles and objectives adopted at the La Comedia congress.

The most prominent militants were deeply preoccupied by the need to define the Confederation's ideological aims in an extensive programme. In the early days of the Republic the question of a programme had been discussed and its absence had been driven home by the various attempts at insurrection sponsored by the CNT. In those turbulent times the bourgeois press carried all manner of essays regarding the ideological aspirations of the Confederation. On this point, the contributions of Dr Puente deserve special mention.¹

This is the lengthy motion which was accepted:²

'It is no secret to any of the delegations that there are two schools of thought concerning the nature of the post-revolutionary economy and that these schools of thought are locked in a frantic battle with one another.³ Without question, this pluralism of tendency can be attributed to doctrinal and philosophical considerations which have left their marks upon the thinking of our militants and have created two unmistakable schools of thought which seek to shape policy and mark out a channel for the two tendencies.

Now, were it not for the fact that the natural struggle for pre-eminence eats into the energies of the Confederation, there would be no problem with this. But this tenacious, consistent mental aspiration will, of necessity, display itself with renewed vigour within our ranks, creating, as the contest continues, grave threats to the unity which we have just sealed at this congress. It is for this reason that, in drafting the proposition, this working party, with the equanimity and awareness needed to shoulder the historical responsibility of the hour, has sought a formula which may accommodate the spirit and thinking of both currents, elaborating therein the foundations of the new life.

So, therefore, we declare that:

1. in laying the cornerstone of this proposition, we seek to build upon these two currents - the individual and the union - with an austere sense of harmony which might allow scope for the parallel development of the two currents.
2. by way of ensuring this harmony, we accord implicit recognition of

the sovereignty of the individual. With this authority, which prizes freedom above all else, we will build the various institutions that will determine and articulate social needs.

And with all society's wealth brought under social ownership, with usufruct of the instruments of production assured and with labour a duty for all those who wish to enjoy the right to consume, the anarchist principle of free agreement will regulate social contracts and agreements. So it is that the individual, the unit of legal identity, the basis of liberty and the jurisdiction of federation, will assemble the bricks and mortar of the new society.

All of us must agree that it would be absurd to structure the society of the future with mathematical precision, since there is very often a real abyss separating theory from practice. So let us not fall into the error of the politicians who offer hard and fast solutions to every problem, solutions which fail spectacularly in practice as they fail to take into account the evolution of human life itself.

We, who have a higher vision of social problems, will not do that. In sketching the norms of libertarian communism, we do not offer it as a finished programme that cannot be amended. Logically, amendments will follow depending on both the needs and experiences of the day.

Though it may perhaps appear to be venturing somewhat beyond the mandate given to us by congress, we feel the need to be specific about both our concept of revolution and the most salient features which, in our estimation, it should display.

The contention that the revolution is nothing but a violent episode through which the capitalist system is sloughed has been given undue tolerance. In fact, it is merely the phenomenon which effectively clears the way for a state of affairs which has slowly taken shape in the collective consciousness.

The revolution, therefore, has its origins in the moment when the gulf between the state of society and the individual conscience is realised, when the latter finds itself, either through instinct or through analysis, obliged to react against the former.

So, in a few words, our belief is that revolutions come about:

1. as a psychological phenomenon opposed to a given state of affairs which stands in contradiction to individual aspirations and needs;
2. as a social phenomenon, whenever that response takes collective shape and clashes with the capitalist system;
3. as organisation, whenever the need is felt to create a force capable of imposing the realisation of its biological objective.

In the external order, these factors deserve to be stressed:

- (a) breakdown of the ethic which serves as the foundation of the capitalist system;
- (b) the economic bankruptcy of that system;

olution is finally consolidated, these are not going to be melted down for conversion into work tools. We commend the necessity of retaining planes, tanks, armoured vehicles, machine guns and anti-aircraft cannon, for it is in the air that the real danger of foreign invasion resides.

Should that come to pass, the people will mobilise rapidly to stand up to the enemy, returning to their workplaces as soon as they may have accomplished their mission of defence. This general mobilisation will apply to all individuals of both sexes who are fit to fight and who may involve themselves in the fray by carrying out the multifarious missions needed in combat.

The confederal defence cadres, covering the centres of production, will be the most-valued auxiliaries in consolidating the gains of the revolution and in equipping producers for large-scale battles in its defence.

This being so, we declare:

1. The disarming of capitalism implies the surrender of weaponry to the communes, which will be responsible for ensuring that defensive means are effectively organised nationwide.
2. In the international context, we will have to mount an intensive propaganda drive among the proletariat of every country so that it may make an energetic protest, calling for sympathetic action against any attempted invasion by its government. At the same time, our Iberian Confederation of Autonomous Libertarian Communes will render material and moral assistance to all the world's exploited so that these may free themselves forever from the monstrous control of capitalism and the state.

Last words. Our work ends here, but before concluding we deem it our duty to stress that in this historic hour it should not be assumed that this report is something definitive that may serve as an inflexible norm in the constructive tasks of the revolutionary proletariat.

This working party's intentions are much more modest. It would be content were congress to look upon this as a broad outline of the initial plan that the producers will implement, as mankind's point of departure in its march towards full liberation.

May we improve upon our work in a spirit of intelligence, daring and ability.'

healthy.

The aim is that in libertarian communist society, the producers are not to be divided into toilers or intellectuals, but that they may all be simultaneously toilers and intellectuals. When individuals have completed their daily work and fulfilled their mission as a producer for the community, they are to have free access to the arts and science.

There are needs of a spiritual nature which run parallel to material needs and which will become more prominent in a society in which humanity is emancipated.

Since evolution is a continuous line, the individual will always have aspirations and ambitions to get on, to outdo his parents, outstrip his fellows and improve himself.

All such drives to better oneself, to experiment, to create - be it artistically, scientifically, or in a literary way - cannot, under any circumstances, whether material or general, be cast aside by a society based upon wide freedom: it will not thwart them, as presently happens, but instead will encourage and cultivate them in the belief that humanity does not live by bread alone and that a humanity living by bread alone would be a disgrace.

It is not logical to suppose that in this new society humanity might lack the desire for leisure. Consequently, in the autonomous libertarian communes there will be days set aside for general recreation, as the assemblies may indicate by choosing and fixing symbolic dates from history and from nature. Likewise, hours will be allocated daily to exhibitions, theatrical works, the cinema, cultural lectures, which will give pleasure and amusement to all.

Defence of the revolution. We acknowledge the necessity to defend the advances made through the revolution because we reckon that there is more revolutionary potential in Spain than in any of the neighbouring countries. It is to be anticipated that capitalism in those countries will not passively accept the dispossession of the interests it has acquired in Spain over the years.

So, until the social revolution may have triumphed internationally, the necessary steps will be taken to defend the new regime, whether against the perils of a foreign capitalist invasion, as outlined, or against counter-revolution at home. It must also be remembered that a standing army constitutes the greatest danger to the revolution, since its influence could lead to dictatorship, which would necessarily kill off the revolution.

In time of battle, when the forces of the state may join forces, in part or in whole, with the people, these organised forces will lend a helping hand in the streets in the defeat of the bourgeoisie. Once the bourgeoisie has been overwhelmed, their role will have ended.

The people armed will be the best assurance against any attempt to restore the system destroyed from either within or without. There are thousands of workers who have passed through the barracks and are conversant with modern military techniques.

Let each commune have its weapons and means of defence, since, until the rev-

(c) failure of its political manifestations, whether the democratic system or, in its ultimate expression, state capitalism or, to all intents and purposes, authoritarian communism.

When these factors coincide at a given point and time, a violent act is needed to lead into the truly evolutionary phase of the revolution.

In the belief that we are now at the precise point when the convergence of all those factors may bring about this tantalising possibility, we deem it necessary to frame a proposition which, in broad outline, profiles the basic pillars of the future social edifice.

Constructive conception of the revolution. Our understanding is that our revolution should be organised on a strictly equitable basis.

The revolution cannot be based on mutual aid, on solidarity, or on the archaic notion of charity. In any case, these three formulae, which historically have sought to compensate for the deficiencies of rudimentary social models which left the individual defenceless in the face of a concept of arbitrary law, ought to be recast and refined into the new norms of social coexistence which find their clearest expression in libertarian communism. In other words, all human needs are to be met with no limitations other than those imposed by the requirements of the new economy.

Just as all roads pointing to Rome lead to the Eternal City, so all forms of labour and distribution pointing towards an egalitarian society will lead to the realisation of justice and social harmony.

In consequence, we believe that the revolution should be founded upon the social and ethical principles of libertarian communism:

1. that the needs of each human being be met with no limitations other than those imposed by the economy's capabilities;
2. that each and every human being be urged to make the greatest possible effort to meet the needs of society in accordance with their own physical and intellectual circumstances.

Organisation of the new post-revolutionary society. The first steps of the revolution. Once the revolution has moved beyond its violent phase, the following will be abolished: private property, the state, the principle of authority and, consequently, the classes which divide humanity into exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed.

With wealth socialised, the unfettered organisations of the producers will assume charge of the direct administration of production and consumption.

Once the libertarian commune has been established in each locality, we shall set the new mechanisms of society to work. The producers of each sector or trade, organised in their unions and workplaces, will freely determine the manner in which this is to be organised.

The free commune is to confiscate whatever was formerly possessed by the bourgeoisie in the way of provisions, clothing, footwear, raw materials, work tools, etc. Such tools and raw materials pass into the hands of the producers so that the latter may administer them directly in the interests of the collectivity.

Firstly the communes will see to it that all the inhabitants of each district are housed with as many amenities as possible, with specific attention being guaranteed to health and education.

According to the fundamental principle of libertarian communism, as we have already mentioned, all able-bodied individuals must work, assisting the collectivity proportionate to their strength and capabilities. Once labour is free, work will become a true right and, in return, the commune will fulfil its obligation by meeting the needs of all.

It is necessary to explain that the initial stages of the revolution will not be easy and that each individual will need to give of their best efforts and consume only what productive capabilities can afford. Every period of construction requires sacrifice and the acceptance of individual and collective restraints geared to improving the work of social reconstruction.

The producers' organisational plan. The economic plan will be tailored to the most rigorous principles of social economy in all spheres and directly administered by the producers through their various organs of production, which are to be appointed at general assemblies of all organisations and which will be under their constant supervision.

In the workplace, the union, the commune, in every agency regulating the new society, the producer, the individual, will be the most fundamental unit, the cell and the cornerstone of all social, economic and moral creations.

The point of liaison within the commune and in the workplace will be the workshop and factory council, which will form agreements with other work centres.

The liaison organs between unions will be the statistical and production councils which will federate with one another until they comprise a network of all the producers within the Iberian Confederation.

In the rural context, the basic unit will be the producer in the commune, which will have usufruct of all the natural assets within its political and geographical boundaries.

The liaison body will be the cultivation council, which, composed of technical personnel and workers from the agricultural producers' associations, will be responsible for the intensification of production by selecting the most suitable lands.

These cultivation councils are to build up the same network of liaison as the workshop, factory, production and statistical councils, thereby complementing the free federation of the commune as a political jurisdiction and geographical sub-division.

For as long as Spain remains the only country to have effected its social transformation, the industrial producers' associations and the agricultural producers' associations alike are to federate at national level if, of course, they deem this prop-

to be a vigorous and systematic assault upon illiteracy. It is an obligation of restorative social justice incumbent upon the revolution that learning be restored to those who have been dispossessed of it, since just as capitalism has appropriated and arrogated society's wealth to itself, so the cities have appropriated and arrogated learning and education for themselves.

Restitution of material wealth and culture are the fundamental objectives of our revolution. How? By expropriating capitalism in the material sphere and by restoring access to all.

Consequently, our educational drive will be divided into two phases. We have an educational target to achieve in the wake of the social revolution and a general humane task before us once we have created our new society. Our immediate task is to organise elementary education among the illiterate population, consisting of, say, reading, writing, arithmetic, physical culture, hygiene, the historical processes of evolution and revolution, some theory regarding the non-existence of god, etc. This work will be done by a huge number of educated young people through a voluntary cultural service of one or two years under the supervision and guidance of the national educational federation which will be responsible for all teaching centres and the standards of professional and voluntary teaching staff immediately after the institution of libertarian communism. The national educational federation will dismiss all who may be intellectually and, especially, morally, incapable of adapting to the demands of free pedagogy. Similarly the choice of primary and secondary teachers alike will be made on the sole basis of their success in practical exercises.

Education, as a pedagogical mission prepared to educate a new humanity, is to be free, scientific and equal for both sexes and equipped with whatever it may need to cater for any branch of productive activity and human learning. Hygiene and child rearing are to be awarded special status, with woman being trained for motherhood while in school.

Similarly, special attention is to be paid to sex education, the basis of refinement of the species.

We deem it a primary function of pedagogy that it should help mould men with minds of their own - and let it be clear that we use the word "men" in the generic sense - to which end it will be necessary for the teacher to cultivate every one of the child's faculties so that the child may develop every one of its capacities to the full.

In the context of the educational system which libertarian communism is to put into practice, any schedule of punishments and rewards is to be repudiated once and for all, since those two precepts are at the root of all inequality.

Cinema, radio, educational missions - books, sketches, film strips - will be superbly effective aids to the rapid intellectual and moral transformation of present generations and to the growth in the personalities of the child and adolescent growing up under libertarian communist arrangements.

Apart from the merely educational aspect, libertarian communism will guarantee access to science, art and all manner of research compatible with the pursuit of the production of necessities, thereby ensuring that human nature will be balanced and

some individual suffer from anti-social or pathological conditions, pedagogical therapy will cure any imbalance or lunatic inheritance and stimulate an ethical sense of social responsibility.

The family and relations between the sexes. It ought not to be forgotten that the family was the first civilising nucleus of the human species and that it has performed most admirable functions in the cultivation of morality and solidarity, that it has survived the evolution of the family itself, through clan, tribe, people and nation and that it is likely that it will survive for a long time to come.

The revolution ought not to employ violence against the family, except in those instances of family incompatibility, wherein the right to quit the fold is to be acknowledged and supported.

The first step in the libertarian revolution consists of ensuring that all human beings, without distinction of sex, are economically independent. Thus it is understood that both sexes are to enjoy equality of rights and duties alike and the economic inferiority between man and woman will thereby disappear.

Libertarian communism proclaims free love regulated only by the wishes of the man and the woman, with offspring being assured of the care of the collectivity and the latter being spared human aberrations through the application of eugenic-biological principles.⁴

Likewise, good sex education at school will lead to selective breeding according to the aims of eugenics and conscious procreation, with the intention of producing healthy and beautiful offspring.

Regarding problems of a moral nature which love may engender in the libertarian communist society, such as those arising out of amorous contretemps, the community and liberty have but two means of ensuring that human and sexual relations follow their normal course. Those males who may desire forcible or bestial love, and for whom advice regarding respect for the rights of the individual proves inadequate, will face a change of surroundings, water and air, as this is commendable in the case of many ailments. For lovesickness, which becomes an ailment when it turns into stubbornness and blindness, a change of commune will be recommended, with the sick person being removed from the surroundings which cause their torment, although it is unlikely that such cases of exasperation will occur in a context of sexual freedom.

The religious question. Religion, a purely subjective facet of the human being, will be acknowledged as long as it remains a matter of individual conscience, but in no instance may it be regarded as a form of public display or moral or intellectual coercion.

People are to be free to hold whatever moral notions they deem fit, but with no ceremonies.

Concerning pedagogy, art, science and the freedom to experiment. A radical approach will have to be adopted to the question of education. Firstly there will have

er for the fruitful running of the economy. There will a similar federation among those services whose characteristics require this as a means of facilitating logical and necessary liaison between libertarian communes throughout the peninsula.

It is our view that the new society will eventually equip every commune with all the agricultural and industrial accoutrements required for it to be autonomous, according to the biological principle that the individual is most free when they need least from their fellow individuals.

The libertarian communes and their operation. We must erect the political expression of our revolution upon the triple base: individual, commune and federation.

Within a scheme of activities reaching into every facet of the peninsula, the administration will be of an absolutely communal nature.

Consequently, the foundation of this administration will be the commune. These communes are to be autonomous and will be federated at regional and national levels to achieve their general goals. The right to autonomy does not preclude the duty to implement agreements regarding collective benefits.

In this way, a consumers' commune without any voluntary restrictions will undertake to adhere to whatever general norms may be agreed by majority vote after free debate. In return, those communes which reject industrialisation, the naturists and nudists, for instance, may agree upon a different model of co-existence and will be entitled to an autonomous administration released from the general commitments. Since such naturist/hudist communes (or communes of some other sort) will be unable to satisfy their own needs, however limited these needs may be, their delegates to congresses of the Iberian Confederation of Autonomous Libertarian Communes will be empowered to enter into economic contacts with other agricultural and industrial communes.

In conclusion, we propose that the commune be created as a political and administrative entity and that the commune be autonomous and confederated with other communes.

Communes are to federate at county and regional levels, and set their own geographical limits, whenever it may be found convenient to group small towns, hamlets and townlands into a single commune. Amalgamated, these communes are to make up an Iberian Confederation of Autonomous Libertarian Communes.

To handle the distribution side of production and so that the communes may be better able to support themselves, supplementary agencies designed for such purposes may be set up. For instance there might be a confederal council of production and distribution with direct representation from the national federations of production and from the annual congress of communes.

The commune's mission and internal workings: the commune will have a duty to concern itself with whatever may be of interest to the individual.

It will have to oversee organising, running and beautification of the settlement. It will see that its inhabitants are housed and that items and products are made available to them by the producers' unions or associations.

Similarly it is to concern itself with hygiene, the keeping of communal statistics and with collective requirements such as education, health services and the maintenance and improvement of local means of communication.

It will orchestrate relations with other communes and will take care to stimulate all artistic and cultural pursuits.

So that this mission may be properly fulfilled, a communal council will have to be appointed, with representatives on it from the cultivation, health, cultural, distribution and production, and statistical councils.

The procedures for choosing the communal councils are to be determined according to a system that provides for differences such as population density, taking account of the fact that metropolitan areas will be slow to decentralise politically and to form federations of communes.

None of these posts will carry any executive or bureaucratic powers. Apart from those who may perform technical or merely statistical functions, the rest will perform their role as producers coming together in session at the close of the day's work to discuss the detailed items which may not require the endorsement of communal assemblies.

Assemblies are to be summoned as often as required by communal interests, upon the request of members of the communal council or according to the wishes of the inhabitants of each commune.

Liaison and exchange of produce. As we have outlined, our organisation is federalist and guarantees the freedom of the individual within the group and the commune, as well as the freedom of the communes within the federations and the federation's rights within the confederations.

So we proceed from the individual to the collective, guaranteeing all individual rights, thereby maintaining the principle of liberty.

The inhabitants of a commune are to debate among themselves their internal problems regarding production, consumption, education, hygiene and whatever may be necessary for the moral and economic growth of the commune. Federations are to deliberate over major problems affecting a county or province and all communes are to be represented at their reunions and assemblies, thereby enabling their delegates to convey the democratic viewpoint of their respective communes.

If, say, roads have to be built to link the villages of a county or any matter arises to do with transportation and exchange of produce between agricultural and industrial counties, then naturally every commune which is implicated will have the right to have its say.

On matters of a regional nature, it is the duty of the regional federation to implement agreements which will represent the sovereign will of all the region's inhabitants. So the starting point is the individual, moving on through the commune, to the federation and right on up finally to the confederation.

Similarly, discussion of all problems of a national nature will follow a like pattern, since our organisms will be complementary. The national agency will regulate international relations, making direct contact with the proletariat of other countries

through their respective bodies, linked, like our own, to the IWA. *

As far as the interchange of produce between communes is concerned, the communal councils are to liaise with the regional federations of communes and with the confederal council of production and distribution, applying for whatever they may need and any available surplus stocks.

By means of the network of liaisons established between the communes and the production and statistical councils set up by the national federations of producers, this problem will be resolved and simplified.

As for the communal aspect of this question, the producers' cards issued by the workshop and factory councils, which will entitle holders to acquire whatever they need to meet their requirements, will suffice. The producers' card constitutes the basis of exchange and will be subject to two conditions: firstly, that it is non-transferable; secondly, that a method be adopted whereby the card records the labour value in working units, a value which will be valid for the acquisition of products for a maximum period of one year.

Members of the non-active population are to be issued with consumer cards by the communal councils.

Naturally we will not prescribe a hard and fast norm. The autonomy of the communes ought to be respected, although they may, should they see fit, adopt some other arrangement for internal distribution, provided that these new procedures do not in any way trespass against the interests of other communes.

The individual's duties towards the collectivity and the notion of distributive justice. Libertarian communism is incompatible with any system of castigation, something which thus implies the disappearance of the current system of correctional justice and of the instruments of punishment (jails, penitentiaries, etc.).

In the estimation of this working party, social circumstances are the principal cause of so-called offences in the present state of affairs and consequently, once the causes underlying the offence have been removed, then, as a general rule, crime will cease to exist.

So, it is our considered opinion:

1. That man is not naturally evil and that crime is the logical outcome of the circumstance of social injustice in which we live.
2. That in supplying man's needs and also providing him with scope for rational and humane education, these causes will disappear.

Thus we understand that whenever the individual fails to perform his duties, whether morally or as a producer, popular assemblies will arrive at some harmonious and just solution to the problem.

So, libertarian communism will found its "corrective action" upon medicine and pedagogy, the sole preventive measures acknowledged by modern science. Should