sumably in America, well certainly I'm not in the business of party building, but over the last twenty odd years or so there has been a definite move toward self-help organizations and self-help Although these in themselves may not be anarchistic, they are areas in which anarchists can be and are most effective in getting their ideas across. My own opinion is that it's useless to talk in terms of a national party type structure if you have no base in the community where you live and work. Getting your ideas across to people is a slow hard slog, there's no easy way around it. Some people believe that all you have to do is get small groups of like-minded people up and down the country to form a national organization and this will some how speed up the process of social progress. It won't. All it will succeed in doing is divorcing still further those, groups from the very people they hope to influence. Basically, all a revolutionary can do and the most important thing, is to make his or her influence felt wherever they are, especially in those fields where they exact some influence, extending Anarchist ideas amongst their friends, neighbors, workmates. And demonstrating in whatever way they can that there is a workable alternative in Anarchy and the anti-authoritarian society.

Q. A common perception in America is that Anarchism in Britain is "class struggle Anarchism", and thus obviously centered on the workplace and working class, whereas, we in America are supposed ly environmentally oriented. Do you agree with this view and if so, what is "class struggle anarchism?"

A. Class struggle anarchism is in this country. The issues that are clear and simple we have grown up in a trade union tradition. Basically, conflict between employer and employee in the same tradition of small land owners self-employed and the old artisan class that existed in pre-revolutionary Europe. Because of industrialization, there are very frew people self-employed. And there are very few self-employed people in the Anarchist movement now. Therefore, the strength of the Anarchist movement comes from people who come from industry and trade union backgrounds.
Presumably in the States, they come from what I imagine it was like in Britain in the 60's when people flocked to the pacifist and ecologically oriented organizations. The roots then were not in class struggle type organizations, such as the trade unions, communist party or Labour Party. They came from peripheral type organizations.

Q. So then you don't see any difference in Anarchist ideas, only in the emphasis?

A. The ideas are the same, it's just that the people concerned have different priorities. I mean the people (in America) presumably do not work in industry so therefore they have no base in industry; they can only exact their influence in places where they do work, which may be the offices. But the people in those offices may not be particularly receptive to those particular revolutionary ideas. So the only other place where they can make their ideas heard is within those political organizations in which they are active – ecological organizations of the pacifist/peace movement.

Q. What exactly is the story behind your arrest in Spain when apparently you intended to take Franco's life?

A. When the Anarchist Federation of Britain was founded in 1963 I had already made contact with the clandestine Anarchist resistance movement in Spain. It was called the Iberian Liberation Council.

Q. Do they have roots in the Civil War?

A. Yes. It had its origin in the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth which formed the Iberian Liberations Council and was the moving force since 1932, before the Civil War. I made contact moving force since 1932 before the Civil War. I amde contact with moving force since 1932, before the Civil War. I made contact with them and a secret section of the Council which was charged with organizing and coordinating active resistance to the Franco Regime both inside and outside of Spain and the Defense of the Interior. I had just turned 18. The Council was a bit dubious of this aspect but as I was very eager to help they accepted me without a further clue. There was the further advantage of my youth. Not even Len Deighton or John Le Carce together could have dreamed up a scenerio of a young Scotsman in his kilts marching across with a rut sack full of plastic explosives. But I walked into it with open eyes – and knew perfectly well what the risks were. Once the arrangements had been made for the job, I was contacted in London. I travelled to Paris where I picked up the explosives, received some training and my final instructions and then left for Spain. I wasn't armed but had been offered a gun but rejected it thinking that if I did have one I might panic and use it needlessly. I don't suppose I ever gave serious consideration to a shoot out before then, in the long run the decision not to carry a gun was a wise one. About half an hour before I was finally arrested, I knew I had walked into a trap. Earlier, I had an intuition that this might be the case in Barcelona, but stupidly, I put this down to nerves and imagination. Anyway, when I got to the American Express offices in Madrid to pick up my final instructions for establishing contact, I went into the offices I knew definitely it was a trap. I looked everywhere and there were plainclothes policemen trying to pass themselves off as bystanders or passersby. But they weren't very good actors and there wasn't anyway they could convince me they were anything other than what they were. It was quite funny and I had to laugh that they had seen too many Bogart films. Particularly one who tried to pass himself off as a taxi driver, cruising along beside me thinking I would pick him up. Anyway they moved in immediately. Immediately they realized I knew it was a trap. As I made it to a busy corner and was about to make a run for it when I was grabbed and thrown spread-eagle against the wall and hand-cuffed. And there was a gun in my back. I tried to brace myself and act like the harassed Briton abroad and demanding an explanation for their behavior. And I said I would report it to the British ambassador at the first opportunity in a suitable angry tone of voice but that had no effect. They seemed to know everything there was to know about me. They even had photographs of me in London. It really came as a surprise that the British police work in such close collaboration with the secret police, of an overtly fascist regime – and on reflection, you can say this was the beginning of my self-education. It was an education which was to last three and a half years for my stay in prison.

Q. As Anarchism is supposed to be an anti-authoritarian ideology, coercion is not supposed to be used, and simple coercion then out of existence – how do you justify taking the life of any person such as Franco?

A. There is no way you can justify killing. Killing is killing. In the case of General Franco, he was the prime motivator behind torture, murder and trade unionism, and none of the international agencies were prepared to do anything. Franco had done more or less what he had wanted for the previous 22 years since the end of the Spanish Civil War, and no international pressure made any affect whatso-ever on the interior policies of the Franco regime. So the only alternative I could see was to do away with the prime mover.

Q. What do you think would have happened if you had succeeded in assasinating Franco?

A. If the action had been successful it is difficult to say. At that particular time I hoped it would bring an end to the assasinations. To the murder and torture of anti-fascists. On relection today, in the experience and knowledge I've gained since then, I doubt that would have been the case. It is impossible to forsee the consequences of an action like that. They can go anyway. They can have a positive effect or a negative effect. Most probably a negative effect.

Q. So with what you now know you would not attempt a similar act?

A. I certainly wouldn't have done it the way I did it.

Q. You would not have hitchhiked in a kilt?

A. I would have gone about it in a very different way, a more professional manner.

Q. In light of your attempt on Franco's life and your knowledge of Spain and its traditions, how do you see the recent take-over of parliament by Fascists and the Fascist take-over of the Barcelona bank? Do you see these actions as a threat to Spain today?

A. The treat to Spain is that there are so many disaffected members of the military and the Civil Guard and others of the political right in Spain that are desperate for some opportunity to return to the days of Francoism, and these are just manifestations of the strength of the Fascist movement in Spain. Which is lurking below the surface and can arise at any moment. The danger is to what extent the Fascists are backed by the so-called democratic forces, including Juan Carlos. There are strong reasons to believe that Juan Carlos was aware that the coup was about to take place. Certainly Saurez was aware and that's the reason Saurez resigned. We just received a communique from Spain. (reading from the communique) "the king seeing his thrown shaking called a meeting of Saurez and the Captain generals of all military meetings. As the meeting got under way, the king arranged to get himself called away to answer an important phone call. While he was at the phone the generals suggested to Saurez that he resign. Saurez replied with his usual bullshit that he was democratically elected and could they give him single valid reason why he should resign. General Maric Couger said this is a reason, drawing his pistol. Whereupon, Saurez instantly changed his mind and agreed the general's reason was valid. When the king returned back, Saurez offered his resignation which was accepted by the monarch. The king then gave his generals the go-ahead for the coup and they asked Tejero when he'd like to give the performance at the congress. And that's when the whole thing got underway. Why did the coup fail? After Tejero had done his thing, Lt. General Milan in Valencia also had done his part of the bargain. The king then phoned Gisgard D'istang and Schmidt to tell them about the coup and how well he had just pulled it off to his surprise. He got a severe reprimand from both of them and was sternly advised this was no time to rock the boat. That England and France would quickly follow the Spanish Military Establishment's example. The king , disconcerted by this hostile reaction and their total lack of sympathy, then did what he'd always done when he's in trouble. He phoned his father to ask him what to do. Daddy, between his habitual sips of whiskey, told him to put things back as they were. Then Juan Carlos betrayed his own officers, deauthorized Milan and Tejero and kept the others from joining the coup. Another note is: General Meres' behavior in Seville that day (10 a.m., February 23). He was all ready dressed in the uniform of General of the Legion to heighten his theatrical appeal on proclaiming the uprising that evening. And he started to drink to give himself courage. As he drank and drank, he got drunk. He was supposed to put on his act at 7:00 p.m. but by 6:00 p.m. he was so pissed out of his skull that his aides had to put him to bed and he never found out what went wrong." That comes from a fairly reliable source.

Q. In the Spanish Anarchist Movement?

A. Yes.

Q. Should a fascist take-over be affected in Spain, do you think a Civil War will break out, with an Anarchist uprising as in the 30's?

A. Well that's a very difficult question to answer. The anarchist movement isn't as well organized as it was in 1936. It doesn't have the same degree of rank and file support, although it is pretty extensive. I mean the world has changed from 1936 to the extent conditions for history repeating itself would lead to a civil war are difficult to say. Certainly it would rock the boat so far as Europe was concerned. And there is a very stong possibility that it would give rise to civil war. Certainly, there would be uprisings in certain sections, areas, of Spain, Basque Country, and Catalonia.

Q. Supposing there was a fascist take-over and then an Anarchist uprising, what do you think the Anarchist Movement at large should do? Should we go and fight or propagandize and organize where we are?

A. Well, I think there are enough Anarchists and militant revolutionaries in Spain who could resist. The most important thing anarchists and revolutionaries outside of Spain could do would be organize and sabotage propagandize an intelignece network. In that they undermine the new regime and its supporters.

It's silly to supply cannon fodder to the new Spanish right. It would achieve nothing. The effects of those who went in '36 was negative.

Q. What about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade?

A. It was a propaganda coup on the part of the Communist Party. And as a result of that a large number of militants became disillusioned and lost their lives. I mean basically what it did was consolidate the control of the Spanish Communist Party. Which was non-existent at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and by the end it was very important. It had beome a predominate force in Spanish Parlimentary Politics. At the expense of the Spanish Anarchists.