

Oswaldo Bayer is Dead

One of Argentina's most highly respected intellectuals, the journalist and historian Oswaldo Bayer has died. His revisionist approach to labour's struggles and the repression of the organized workers introduced a watershed into the interpretation of Argentina's history. The slaughter of the *peons*, featured in his investigation *Rebellion in Patagonia*, maybe his best-known book. For that and for other research cataloguing the repression enforced by Argentina's ruling classes and patrician families, he was censured, harassed and threatened. He was forced into exile and was one of the voices outside the country denouncing the state repression of the most recent civilian-military dictatorship. Upon coming home in the 1980s, he stood by his beliefs. He published his articles in *Pagina/12*. He showed up at every protest by workers, peasants and native communities. Championship of ethics and human rights was his forte. He was 91 years of age. His oeuvre and his example are as relevant as ever.

The news of Bayer's death was confirmed by his daughter Ana on the writer's Facebook page; "Some very sad news; my Dad has died." This was also spelled out in German and in Italian, in recognition of the ties that the author of *Rebellion in Patagonia* had to the countries where he had spent part of his life.

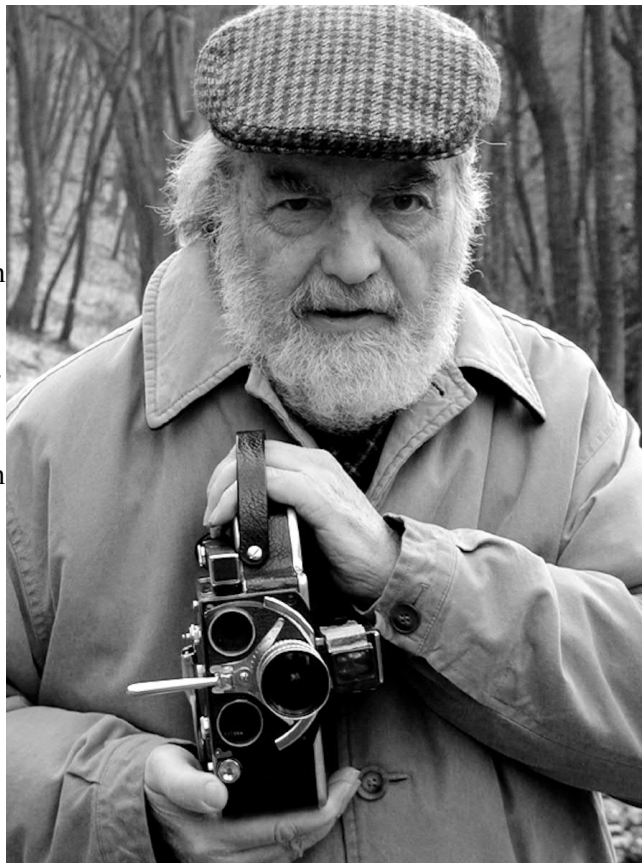
Anarchist, historian, journalist, Oswaldo was born on 18 February 1927 in Santa Fe province, Argentina. He studied History at Hamburg University in Germany and the very first articles shaping what became his profile were published in *Noticias Gráficas* and in *La Chispa*, the latter being the Patagonian paper he founded during the 1950s. He also worked for *Clarín*. From 1959 until 1962 he headed the Press Union and was until recently honorary secretary of the Press Employees' Union of Buenos Aires (SIPEREBA).

His activism led to his being targeted by the Triple A (Argentinean Anti-Communist Alliance) during the government of Maria Estela Martínez de Perón and in 1975 he left for exile in Berlin. Some of his books carried titles such as *The Anarchist Expropriators*, *Severino Di Giovanni: Violent Idealist*, *Argentinian Football, Rebellion and Hope*. He also wrote the screenplay for *La Patagonia Rebelde*, the movie directed by Héctor Olivera exposing the massacre of Patagonian peasant labourers.

In 2008 he wrote the screenplay and illustrated book published by *Pagina/12*. Called *Awka Liwen* and co-produced with Mariano Aiello and Kristina Hille, it reported on the confiscation of the lands of native and peasant communities and on the destruction of the soil. Because of it he was prosecuted (unsuccessfully) by the family of the dictatorship's Economy minister, José Martínez de Hoz, which later prompted the making of another documentary, *Martinez de Hoz*.

In 1963 in the town of Rauch (Buenos Aires) he sponsored a popular campaign to have the town's name altered, from the name of that Prussian colonel (Friedrich/ Federico Rauch) to 'Arbolito', the name of the Ranquel Indian who claimed his life. That led to his being arrested. The order for his arrest came from a General Juan Enrique Rauch, the dictatorship's Interior minister and great-grandson of Federico Rauch.

In addition to human rights activities and campaigning to have the genocides carried out by the recent military dictatorship acknowledged, there was another campaign that made him one of the most emblematic spokesmen; his campaign to have the Monument to Roca sited on the Diagonal Sur (a tribute to the Argentinean ex-president who ordered the slaughter of thousands of native communities which the



official histories record as “the Conquest of the Desert”) relocated. Bayer asked for a monument to be erected to native women instead. In 2007, on foot of that campaign, the council of the town of Rojas (Buenos Aires) renamed the erstwhile Julio Argentino Roca Street “Native Peoples” Street. Lobbying had come from the pupils at local schools, prompted by Bayer’s researches. There are currently many such projects under way.

In 1984 Bayer was awarded the Konex Prize and in 2003 the Universidad Nacional del Centro awarded him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa on the basis of his human rights record, his literary writings and his journalism. He received the same award from the national universities in Córdoba (2009), Quilmes (2009), San Luis (2006), Del Sur (2007), Del Comahue (1999) and San Juan (2011).

Given his ill health he turned up in a wheelchair to support the recent 24 March demonstration. He had suffered a few household accidents and age-related afflictions. But even so, there was a never-ending parade of students, writers, journalist and anyone else so minded calling on him at his home in the Belgrano district of Buenos Aires – which his friend, the writer and journalist Osvaldo Soriano once dubbed “The Shack”.

From *Pagina/12*, reprinted on the rojoynegrodigital website, Trans. Paul Sharkey. Image credit Eduardo Montes-Bradley https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Osvaldo_Bayer.jpg ■

Oswaldo Bayer 1927-2018: In Memoriam.

I was not acquainted with Osvaldo Bayer himself but I did translate *Rebellion in Patagonia* (a synthesis of his 4-volume *Avengers of Rebel Patagonia*) into French. That was a project eagerly backed by some (Paris-based) friends, Jorge Peries and Eduardo Colombo. Since they were unfamiliar with quite a number of *gaucho* jargon terms used in the book, I turned to Osvaldo Bayer who very kindly clarified the meanings for me.

When the translation was finished in 1990, I offered the book to all the French publishing houses with a record of publishing books on Latin America. They either failed to respond or ruled it out: “Unfortunately, the topic of the book is far removed from today’s concerns and from French historical and literary interests”, to quote Annie Morvan from the Le Seuil publishing house back on 17 October 1990.

That was pure business argument: the Berlin Wall had come down and the shop windows were swamped with books about the other face of really existing socialism. Latin America had fallen out of fashion.

In the end I managed to get two anarchist imprints

– Acratie and Atelier de creation libertaire – to bring the book out (in French) in January 1996 as *Rebel Patagonia (1921-1923): Chronicle of a Farmworkers’ Revolt in Argentina*.

Later on, in conversation with Maria Esther Tello, I found out that Bayer had contacted the Argentinian anarchist publishers of *La Protesta* asking for assistance in making contact with some former expropriators. At the time, Bayer was a journalist contributing to the review *Todo es Historia*, run by Felix Luna. Given the slant of that review, not the best credentials. Maria Esther, being a member of the *La Protesta* publishing board, took the line that Bayer, as a journalist with an interest in anarchist activities, deserved a definite answer and she supplied Bayer with contacts with Emilio Uriondo. Like her children, Maria Esther had known Uriondo for years as they were all anarchists from La Plata.

While I was visiting Buenos Aires and La Plata, I made no attempt to meet up with Osvaldo Bayer because he was part of the circle around [Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo] Hebe de Bonafini and unduly deferential towards her and the president, Kirchner. I know that in 2012 Osvaldo severed his connections with Hebe and her crowd and that struck me as excellent, albeit belated.

Obviously, having read and translated *Rebellion in Patagonia*, I was a fan of Osvaldo’s contribution and rescue efforts, not merely in the form of his books but in terms of his disinterested assistance to ventures and projects related to libertarian matters in Argentina.

There is no separating Osvaldo Bayer’s output from the annals of Argentinean and world anarchism, as is evident from the titles:

Severino Di Giovanni, Violent Idealist

The 4 volumes of *Avengers of Tragic Patagonia*

The Anarchist Expropriators and Other Essays.

Frank Mintz, 24.12.18 Trans. PS ■

Alan MacSimoin 1957-2018

The Kate Sharpley Library collective are saddened to pass on news of the death of Irish anarchist and historian Alan MacSimoin. Coming from Irish Republicanism to anarchism in the 1970s, he belonged to the Murrays Defence Committee, the Dublin Anarchist Group, the Anarchist Workers Alliance and helped found the Workers Solidarity Movement in 1984.

The Workers Solidarity Movement said “The WSM are shocked and deeply saddened to learn of the death of Alan MacSimoin, one of our founder members, a friend, and a key central figure in building the anarchist movement in Ireland for over four decades. Alan had not been a member of WSM for some years but remained politically active right to the end. His last Facebook post on November 29th was supporting the locked out bricklayers at Mary’s

Mansions. Alan will be sorely missed by all in the WSM and we offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.”

Some of his historical work can be seen at his Irish Anarchist History project website

<https://irishanarchisthistory.wordpress.com/>

We at the KSL send our condolences to his family, friends and comrades

Sources:

<https://comeheretome.com/2018/12/05/alan-macsimoin-1957-2018-dublin-historian-and-political-activist/>

<https://www.wsm.ie/c/alan-macsimoin-rest-in-power>
Tributes on libcom:

<http://libcom.org/forums/news/alan-macsimoin-06122018>

An interview (2012) about the Irish Anarchist History project

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/n02wh1> ■

Anarchy: A Definition

What is anarchism?

Anarchism is the movement for social justice through freedom. It is concrete, democratic and egalitarian. It has existed and developed since the seventeenth century, with a philosophy and a defined outlook that have evolved and grown with time and circumstance. Anarchism began as what it remains today: a direct challenge by the underprivileged to their oppression and exploitation. It opposes both the insidious growth of state power and the pernicious ethos of possessive individualism, which, together or separately, ultimately serve only the interests of the few at the expense of the rest.

Anarchism promotes mutual aid, harmony and human solidarity, to achieve a free, classless society – a cooperative commonwealth. Anarchism is both a theory and practice of life. Philosophically, it aims for perfect accord between the individual, society and nature. In an anarchist society, mutually respectful sovereign individuals would be organised in non-coercive relationships within naturally defined communities in which the means of production and distribution are held in common.

Anarchists, are not simply dreamers obsessed with abstract principles. We know that events are ruled by chance, and that people’s actions depend much on long-held habits and on psychological and emotional factors that are often anti-social and usually unpredictable. We are well aware that a perfect society cannot be won tomorrow. Indeed, the struggle could last forever! However, it is the vision that provides the spur to struggle against things as they are, and for things that might be.

Whatever the immediate prospects of achieving a free society, and however remote the ideal, if we value our common humanity then we must never

cease to strive to realise our vision. If we settle for anything less, then we are little more than beasts of burden at the service of the privileged few, without much to gain from life other than a lighter load, better feed and a cosier berth.

Ultimately, only struggle determines outcome, and progress towards a more meaningful community must begin with the will to resist every form of injustice.

In general terms, this means challenging all exploitation and defying the legitimacy of all coercive authority. If anarchists have one article of unshakeable faith then it is that, once the habit of deferring to politicians or ideologues is lost, and that of resistance to domination and exploitation acquired, then ordinary people have a capacity to organise every aspect of their lives in their own interests, anywhere and at any time, both freely and fairly.

Anarchism encompasses such a broad view of the world that it cannot easily be distilled into a formal definition. Michael Bakunin, the man whose writings and example over a century ago did most to transform anarchism from an abstract critique of political power into a theory of practical social action, defined its fundamental tenet thus: In a word, we reject all privileged, licensed, official, and legal legislation and authority, even though it arise from universal suffrage, convinced that it could only turn to the benefit of a dominant and exploiting minority, and against the interests of the vast enslaved majority.

Anarchists do not stand aside from popular struggle, nor do they attempt to dominate it. They seek to contribute to it practically whatever they can, and also to assist within it the highest possible levels both of individual self-development and of group solidarity. It is possible to recognise anarchist ideas concerning voluntary relationships, egalitarian participation in decision-making processes, mutual aid and a related critique of all forms of domination in philosophical, social and revolutionary movements in all times and places.

Elsewhere, the less formal practices and struggles of the more indomitable among the propertyless and disadvantaged victims of the authority system have found articulation in the writings of those who on brief acquaintance would appear to be mere millenarian dreamers. Far from being abstract speculations conjured out of thin air, such works have, like all social theories, been derived from sensitive observation. They reflect the fundamental and uncontainable conviction nourished by a conscious minority throughout history that social power held over people is a usurpation of natural rights: power originates in the people, and they alone have, together, the right to wield it.

Stuart Christie■

A beautiful idea: history of the Freedom Press anarchists by Rob Ray

[Book review]

Rob Ray's book begins with the disarming confession that he imagined writing a 'relatively short pamphlet' (p3). 300 pages later you've been given a whistle-stop tour of *Freedom's* history (both newspaper and publishing house). Thankfully, while he draws on previous histories, he includes some new accounts and comments from other people connected with Freedom Press.

There are two places where he might have made more of *Freedom's* achievements. The 1915 'International Anarchist Manifesto On The War' doesn't get a mention, despite *Freedom* being central to putting it together and publishing it.[1] Freedom Press books and pamphlets get a brief mention on page 15. It's not completely clear what time period is being discussed, or what they actually published: they never did *The conquest of bread*, for example. Giving more titles and dates might have shown the importance of Freedom Press as the largest English-language anarchist publisher between 1900 and at least the First World War.

Thinking about *Freedom's* conflicts

Freedom has regularly been a source of conflict within the British anarchist movement. If we want to learn about and from the past these conflicts give us the opportunity to see what people thought was important.

Those running *Freedom* (from the Fabian Charlotte Wilson on) were often keen to guard their autonomy from 'the movement'. The intellectuals were not going to be held to account by the militants! In some ways, fair enough, let them go their own way. But the same people expected to be seen as the intellectual leadership of the movement. Why, for example, are people from *Freedom* involved in the removal of David Nicoll from the editorship of the *Commonweal* (in 1893)? (p26)

Tensions around class and tactics come through in Ray's quote of the report in *Freedom* of an 1897 conference:

'*Freedom* was described as a philosophical, middle-class organ, not intelligible to the working classes, not up to date in late information and in O'Shea's eyes less revolutionary than *Comic Cuts* ... It was edited and managed by an inaccessible group of arrogant persons worse than the Pope and his seventy cardinals and written by fossilised old quilldrivers.' (p31) John Quail's verdict on this seems relevant: 'since the emphasis in the movement was so much on propaganda, the sole remaining

Anarchist paper had assumptions thrust upon it which it was not only designed to disappoint but which it hardly seemed to recognize.' [2]

1944-45 split. The split between the Freedom Press Group and some anarcho-syndicalists in the Anarchist Federation of Britain (who would go on to form the Syndicalist Workers' Federation) revolved around control of *Freedom*. We may never know the full story. There are materials on this in the Vernon Richards papers in Amsterdam, though you would expect it to be covered in Tom Brown's missing memoirs too.[3] Albert Meltzer at this point stuck with *Freedom*, though he bitterly regretted it later.[4]

1952 executions. 1952 saw a large trial of militants from the anarchist resistance in Barcelona. The main text quotes Philip Sansom's account in *Freedom: A Hundred Years* which concentrates on who came to speak at the London protest meeting: 'A couple of weeks later we heard that the wave of shooting had been halted. It's wonderful what you can do with a few big names!' (p101). The London protest took place after five men had been shot, and was part of a wider campaign with an earlier protest in London and meeting in Paris, addressed by Breton, Camus and Sartre. There's an unmentioned connection with *Freedom* here: one of those saved from the firing squad was Miguel Garcia, later of *Black Flag* and the Anarchist Black Cross who spoke at a meeting at Freedom Press after his release.[5]

1963 executions. In the issue of 24 August 1963, *Freedom* reprinted a leaflet from the Notting Hill Anarchist Group protesting against the judicial murder of the anarchists Granado and Delgado and calling for a tourist boycott. Since Vernon Richard (who owned and controlled Freedom Press) led tours to Spain, this was followed by an editorial on the benefits of tourism. The NHAG replied, saying that there was no way they could have 'insisted' on the leaflet being reprinted: 'We have been told enough times by the editors that *Freedom* has never been, is not, and never will be the organ of the anarchist movement in this country'. [6]

The Wooden Shoe, or When did Albert give up on *Freedom*?

Ray reports the idea that Albert Meltzer's differences with *Freedom* arose from him being refused space in their building for the Wooden Shoe Bookshop, (p143) though he downgrades it from a 'cause' to a 'final straw'. (p146) The Wooden Shoe Bookshop was started by the *Cuddon's Cosmopolitan Review* group. The only issue of their magazine announces that 'Ted Kavanagh is in charge (process servers from Camden Borough Council, note)' [7] which shows the precarious state of their finances, and that it was not simply Albert's project. The refusal might have happened: presumably there would be evidence in the Freedom Press archives in Amsterdam if so. There are curious echoes here of Albert's offer to

share space with Emma Goldman in Frith Street in 1939.[8] Either way, it sounds a rather convenient explanation for a broader conflict. Let's look at a couple of pieces from Freedom's more-theoretical supplement *Anarchy* in 1966 and 1967: John Pilgrim declared that 'the majority of the working class today are more interested in defending their higher living standard than in freedom or justice' which Albert Meltzer derided as a hangover of Christian Socialist attitudes: 'unless the working man became moral, he could not hope for economic or social betterment.'[9]

There's an issue of movement-defining here: who gets to say 'you're nothing to do with us'? It's also a replay of the perennial tactical debate: physical or moral force? To only talk about Albert ignores Stuart Christie's role in energising and polarising the British anarchist movement after his return from Spain. Their partnership was more than the sum of its parts: in Mark Hendy's words 'Albert before 1967 was Albert without Stuart. From late 1967 onwards he was Albert with Stuart – two very different beasts!'[10]

The conflict between *Black Flag* and *Freedom* (and others) shows fundamental disagreements about what anarchism could be in the 1960s. They are laid out in *Black Flag*'s statement to the 1968 conference of the Anarchist Federation of Britain.[11] *Black Flag* had no problem acknowledging the validity of Vernon Richards' critique in *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* of unaccountable exiled bureaucrats like Federica Montseny of the CNT. The problem was they saw him occupying a similar position in the British movement.[12]

His verdict

Ray tries to 'close off' some of these historic disagreements. He laments that Richards and Meltzer couldn't take a step back and have a 'gentler personal relationship'. (p148) Unfortunately he himself 'steps back' from assessing Richards on the grounds that he never knew him. The historian isn't obliged to take sides but this misses the chance to ask what political factors were at work in people falling out with Richards – and in people happily involving themselves in what was always *his* project.

Where Ray does recognise political divisions, he feels that *Freedom* did more good than harm (though, as you can see, he's not blind to some of the faults)

'In places the old issues of *Freedom* are so dry and dense as to be barely readable to a layperson. There is often listless navel-gazing, sometimes a tendency towards smugness and pontification largely academicised away from anything that would much benefit working-class people. I have a powerful distrust of any anarchist endeavour that can be dictated to by a boss, and of any approach that becomes overly concerned with gaining plaudits from intellectuals. None of the above, however, even in the most

villainous renditions, could have significantly slowed a genuine direct action anarchism from emerging under its own steam and in fact it manifestly didn't. [...]

'There is a separate value in fostering the sort of thoughtful analytical work that characterises the best of Freedom Press's output through the second half of the 20th century, and at least some in having allies with access to the platform afforded by "respectability" (at least when brave enough to avoid repudiating rabble rousers).' (p96-97)

This from a comrade who has had to climb over unsold boxes of the *Raven* (p213), yet believes that 'the money it swallowed... would not have found its way to other front lines in the press's absence' (p97) – an interesting claim, given that *Freedom* was financially supported by veteran Italian-American *Galleanisti*. [13]

Twentieth century British class-struggle anarchism certainly defined itself against *Freedom*'s 'liberal' approach. Rob Ray acknowledges but possibly doesn't fully appreciate the anger that still exists about the role that Freedom Press played. But then, rather than being unaware, perhaps he's made a deliberate choice to keep his account upbeat? Unfortunately, minimising these conflicts means we get less context for *Freedom*'s story.

I liked Rob Ray's own account of the challenges of publishing a fortnightly paper – and spending 15 years 'trying to get other people to do it instead'! (p215) I enjoyed some of the stories he's gathered, like Martin Peacock's account of 'being woken in the early hours by two men trying to smash their way into the building. [...] They were repelled by books dropped from the third floor. I particularly remember Leval's *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution* doing significant damage.' (p171). *A beautiful idea* is thought-provoking (especially where I disagree with his conclusions) but best read with a critical eye: I think it may not be the final word on the history of Freedom Press.

Notes

- 1, see NO DESPONDENCY: The International Anarchist Manifesto On The War February 1915 <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/mpg5xs>
- 2, John Quail, *The slow burning fuse* p212
- 3, see <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/4xgzk7>
- 4, Mark Hendy, email to the author 28 December 2018.
- 5, Nine members of the anarchist resistance were sentenced to death. Four (Miguel Garcia Garcia, Domingo Ibars Juanias, José Corral Martin and Antonio Moreno Alarcon) had their sentences commuted the night before the executions. Pedro Adrover Font, Santiago Amir Gruanas, Jorge Pons Argiles, Jose Pérez Pedrero and Gines Urrea Pina were shot on the 14th of March, 1952. See '1952: Barcelona

executions, global protests' in this issue and <http://kslnotes.wordpress.com/2012/05/04/a-leaflet/> Reports about the protest campaign appear in *Freedom* from 16 February 1952 onwards (see <https://freedomnews.org.uk/archive>). The London protest meeting took place on 27 March. Miguel's tribute to Jose Pérez Pedrero is at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/7m0d65>. There's a report on Miguel's meeting in *Freedom* 21 February 1970. Stuart Christie says 'Don't know where they got that about John Rety reading out Miguel's talk. I interpreted for him that night and he certainly never had any speech prepared, all his talks were extempore, he was a natural.' (email to the author, 23 January 2019). See also Stuart Christie's tribute: <https://kslnotes.wordpress.com/2010/11/28/remembering-miguel-garcia-by-stuart-christie/>

6, 'Tourism and Spain: A Rejoinder from the Notting Hill Group' *Freedom* 21 September 1963. Joaquin Delgado Martínez and Francisco Granado Gata (often referred to as Granados and Delgado) have been called 'the Spanish Sacco and Vanzetti'. Octavio Alberola says they were executed (despite their innocence) 'to show, above all, that State security was working and that it would show no mercy to those daring to oppose the regime' (*Revolutionary activism: the Spanish resistance in context*, KSL 2000). If you doubt that Richards 'surrounded himself with people who were more than capable of putting a degree of venom into their copy when required', (p148) you should read Philip Sansom's attack on the NHAG in *Freedom*, 28 Sept. 1963.

7, 'Genesis of our group' *The wooden shoe* no.1 p10 (summer 1967) at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/83bmcw> (thanks to CIRA Lausanne).

8, A copy is in the folder (134) of Nicolas Walter's papers in Amsterdam devoted to Albert Meltzer.

9, John Pilgrim 'Salvation by the working class: is it an outmoded myth?' p291 *Anarchy* 68, October 1966 p289-300; Albert Meltzer 'Anarchism and the working class: a reply' p41 *Anarchy* 72, February 1967 p39-49

10, Mark Hendy, email to the author 28 December 2018.

11, Statement by the Black Flag Group to the Liverpool Conference of the Anarchist Federation of Britain, Sept., 1968

12, See 'In-joke for anarchists' *Black Flag*, v.2, no.12, (June 1972) and the review of *Lessons* in *Black Flag* v.2, n.13 (30 July 1972)

13, followers of Luigi Galleani (anti-organisational anarchist communist): they had been associated with the newspaper *L'Adunata dei refrattari*.

Corrections and queries

There are some unsupported opinions and factual errors in the book. Such errors can become 'received wisdom' if left unchallenged.

6 Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library

16 Kropotkin's 'hostility towards propaganda by the deed' may have been known privately but 'Never once in all his revolutionary career has our comrade passed judgment on those whom most so-called revolutionists had only too willingly shaken off – partly because of ignorance and partly because of cowardice – those who had committed political acts of violence' (Emma Goldman in the December 1912 *Mother Earth* celebrating his 70th birthday). Indeed his letters to Berkman (imprisoned for his attempt to assassinate Frick) in prison always had the title 'political prisoner' in the address and he tried to see him in the Western Penitentiary but was refused.

17 Bloody Sunday 1886 is described as a 'boost'. John Quail (*The slow burning fuse*, p72) describes it as 'a defeat but this did not in itself represent a defeat for a policy of riot.'

22 There were no 'Walsall bombings'. Coulon the provocateur only arranged for the casting of a shell which could be used to make a bomb.

23 The May Day protest (1892) was not part of the campaign for Mowbray and Nicoll. John Quail sees the number of anarchists speaking that day as 'an indication of growing Anarchist strength' (*The slow burning fuse*, p129)

25 Don't rely on Ford Madox Ford too much: 'William Michael was not her Majesty's Secretary to the Inland Revenue but rather a clerk in the Excise Office' (Jennifer Shaddock's intro to the reprint of *A Girl Among the Anarchists* p.vii)

31 In 1891 Emma Goldman was an active supporter of the German language anarchist paper *Die Autonomie: Anarchistisch-Communistisches Organ* which republished parts of *The Conquest of Bread*. Meeting Kropotkin (in 1895) may well have refined her understanding but she was an anarchist communist well before she met him.

37 Heiner Becker in *Freedom: A Hundred Years* says Turner did 'no more than lend his name for the letterhead' of the Voice of Labour ie he took the official role of publisher (p12). I assume this is where the idea Turner has his name 'on the masthead as publisher' comes from? [At the bottom of the last page of each issue is 'Printed and published for the proprietor by T. H. Keell, 127 Ossulton St, London N.W.']

42 W. C. Owen was writing from Hayward, California – not Mexico.

50 'Senex' here isn't Mark Schmidt but William C. Owen reappearing under a pen name.

57 *Freedom Bulletin* ended in 1932 (not 1937).

59 Emidio Recchioni did finance plots against Mussolini. 'Allegedly' is better reserved for cases where we really can't tell. See

<https://christiebooks.co.uk/2012/02/the-story-of-king-bomba-emidio-recchioni-1864-1934/>

63 Why is it untypical for Nettlau to support Montseny?

66 *Workers in Uniform* wasn't the official bulletin

of the Anarchist Federation of Britain, but rather a secret bulletin for the armed forces.

87 Frank Leech lived for 8 years after the end of the War, dying in 1953; The new *Freedom* did have a change of title. It became *Freedom through Anarchism* rather than *Freedom: A journal of Anarchist Communism*.

119 *Anarchy* second series was not only edited by Phil Ruff – see his account in this issue

139 The raid on *Freedom* in February 1968 was on the same explosives warrant used to search the home of Stuart Christie because a mortar was found facing the Greek embassy in January. This and other raids were not related to Northern Ireland (British troops were deployed there 18 months later).

153 The Angry Brigade was not the only post-war anarchist ‘illegalist revolutionary group’. See the First of May Group, the Second of June Movement and the MIL (Iberian Liberation Movement), amongst others.

167 To mention the Direct Action Movement without discussing the miners’ strike or anti-poll tax campaign seems shortsighted.

280 Freedom Press organised a protest meeting after five CNT members were executed in Barcelona. That some death sentences were commuted was due to a broader protest campaign. See note five above.

A Beautiful Idea: history of the Freedom Press anarchists by Rob Ray. 300 pages. Freedom Press, 2018, ISBN 9781904491309, £9.50
<https://freedompress.org.uk/product/a-beautiful-idea-history-of-the-freedom-press-anarchists/> ■

Statement by the Black Flag Group to the Liverpool Conference of the Anarchist Federation of Britain, Sept., 1968

Anarchism is a revolutionary method of achieving a free non-violent society, without class divisions or imposed authority. Whether this is a “utopian” achievement or not is irrelevant; the Anarchist, on any normal definition, is a person who, having this aim in mind, proceeds to get rid of authoritarian structures, and advances towards such a society by making people independent of the State and by intensifying the class struggle so that the means of economic exploitation will be weakened and destroyed.

Confusion

There should be no confusion between anarchism and liberalism however militant the latter might be (e.g. movements towards national liberation). The

liberal seeks greeter freedom within the structure of society that he finds himself; he rejects the methods of class struggle which relate to the economic divisions of society. Since there *is* such a confusion, however, we find that there are now TWO contrary conceptions of anarchism.

There are not “as many conceptions as there are anarchists” nor “a thousand fragments” but there are TWO, both of which are probably represented at this Conference. One, which we support and intend to give coherence to as an organisation, is what we are obliged to call *Revolutionary Anarchism* (though anarchism should not need such a qualification) which says that there can be no compromise with the State; that there is a class struggle, and that there is nothing to be gained to [by] adapting to class society. There can only be a revolution, in the streets and in the factories. The other conception we call *Liberal Anarchism* (though it may regard itself as revolutionary, while more usually deriding the word) which seeks to adjust to present day society, without the need for overthrowing the State (regarded as an unlikely contingency). Such adjustment could, of course, be to Capitalism or even in some circumstances to State Communism; and there are many different ways in which it could be main [made].

Peace Movement

In the main, so far as this country is concerned, such social-liberal ideas have come into the Anarchist Movement by way of the Peace Movement which has questioned, or perhaps never understood, certain basic anarchistic conceptions. In saying this, we are not denying that pacifists can be anarchists (though for the sake of coherent action we would exclude them from our own group). So long as their viewpoint does not become a mainstream tendency we can no doubt work with them within the AFB.

We regard the principle of pacifism as irrelevant and on the whole unanarchistic (as would be making a cult of temperance or vegetarianism or taking pot or ‘dropping out’ – these are all matters for personal decisions, and while often escapes from the main social issues, only become absurd when made into a cult that all are exhorted to follow, and elevated to becoming the main social issue among ourselves and within society as a whole, with matters such as the class struggle relegated or ignored.) Even so, the issue we face in this conference is NOT pacifism as such but the fact that it has opened the door for so many liberal assumptions. For instance, that prisons can be reformed and are incapable of abolition (Vine[1]; Willis); that we should go to the extent of collecting money for policemen injured on demonstrations (Featherstone)[2]; that the police are a necessary crutch to society (Rooum)[3]; that criminals are the only free people but that we should call on the services of the police if necessary (Schweitzer-Mariconi)[4].

Liberalism

Once one accepts that “anarchism must be related to contemporary society”, capitalism ([Colin] Ward) one may accept participation in management (Topham through to Ostergaard)[5]; or the necessity for psychological and sociological adjustments to living in the rat race (various, *Anarchy*); or that taxation is necessary to help the poorer classes ([Vernon] Richards); or that we need merely be in a condition of permanent protest against abuses within society (Sydney Libertarians); adjusted to non-violent methods (*Peace News*) or to such authoritarian bodies as the Catholic Church ([Ammon] Hennacy) or even make our peace within the Communist State (Jeff Robinson)[6].

Anarchism so diluted may be recognised by the monarchy ([Sir Herbert] Read) or be compatible with voting Labour ([George] Melly); or it can be reduced to a mere imaginary mind process leading to intellectual salvation (various, *Minus One*)[7]. Those who reject the revolutionary concept may have various views, ranging from a rejection of contemporary values and a mere ignoring of the State hoping it will go away (hippies, diggers) to deliberate provocation of it to use its full repressive powers without, however, preparing for any effective resistance (some at least of the Provo-Situationists).

We do not recognise what we call Liberal Anarchism to be genuine Anarchism, but since it exists, we are obliged to describe ourselves as Revolutionary Anarchists. We do not know to what extent there is general agreement with us in the AFB. Our present intention is to be a membership organisation, within the AFB and local groups. If on the other hand we represent the bulk of the membership of the AFB there is no reason why the organisation cannot take over our programme. Those who have followed controversies in the Libertarian Press, at least, will know what this leaflet is about. Those who have, by reason of their contemporary experience, rejected the name anarchist, thinking they would identify themselves with what we here call Liberal Anarchist, are invited to re-think their position

International

The situation internationally, has similarities with Britain except that there the tendency to fit into the framework of society comes from an institutionalised syndicalism, or where exile movements have become bureaucratised. This is what the clash at Carrara[8] was about. But it was also a clash between a revolutionary policy and one of “fitting in”. We aim to work out a revolutionary programme, as a group having no preconceived programme of working-class organisation but accepting the principle of direct action and working with people on the basis of their beliefs and actions rather than on the mere labels they give themselves, although retaining our own identity.

(Original signatories) A. Meltzer, Ross Flett,

Adrian Derbyshire, Stuart Christie, Roger Sandell, Mike Walsh, Jim Duke, Ted Kavanagh

Comments are invited upon the draft “Aims & Principles of Anarchism”.

Issued by the BLACK FLAG GROUP, 735 Fulham Road, London, S.W.6.

The first conference of the “Black Flag” group will be held in Brighton in the autumn. Discussion on the formation of another anarchist newspaper

Notes

As the text makes clear, it’s responding to various disputes in the anarchist press, especially *Freedom* and *Anarchy*. I’ve not been able to identify everyone, nor track down all statements.

1, Ian Vine wrote on on crime and the law in *Anarchy* 59 & ‘Anarchism as a realist alternative’ *Anarchy* 74

2, See Godfrey Featherstone’s letter in *Freedom*, 20 April 1968 and the response in the following issue

from Stuart Christie, Adrian Derbyshire, James Duke, Ross Flett, Albert Meltzer and Martin Page

3, in Donald Rooum’s account of the Challenor case ‘I’ve dislodged a bit of brick’ in *Anarchy* 36

4, Jean-Pierre Schweitzer’s ‘Prolegomena to an Anarchist Philosophy: 3 – Politics’, *Minus One* no.13 talks about ‘the criminal is the (an)archist “par excellence”’

5, Tony Topham (Institute for Workers Control) was not an anarchist; Geoffey Ostergaard wrote about Workers’ Control in *Anarchy* nos.2 and 80.

6, I’ve not seen anything by Jeff Robinson saying this. His ‘A statement’ (including ‘Inner freedom is possible in the modern world even in a prison cell’) *Freedom* 29 July 1967 wound up Albert Meltzer:

‘The division is between those who see Anarchism as a living force, and those who think it an exciting name to use when talking about the need for children’s playgrounds.’ ‘An Understatement’ *Freedom* 19 August 1967.

7, *Minus One* (“Individualist Anarchist Review”) see <https://www.unionofegoists.com/journals/minus-one-1963/>

8, Carrara International Anarchist Congress, 31 Aug.- 3 Sept. 1968. ■

New on our site

Alexander Nakov obituary

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/3r23gn>

The Lost Memoirs of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Isaak Tarasiuk <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/2jm776>

Tsoyrif, Dina Isaakovna (1900-1937) by Nick Heath

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/tb2t3j>

On the web

Lidiap List of digitized anarchist periodicals has been updated

<http://www.bibliothekderfreien.de/lidiap/eng/index.html> ■

1952: Barcelona executions, global protests (Case number 658-IV-49)

In 1949 the Francoist political police unleashed a wave of repression against the anarchist resistance in Catalonia.[1] Miguel Garcia was one of those arrested. 'That had been 21 October 1949, the greatest day in the history of the political police (*Brigada politica y social*) of Barcelona. All over the town the brigade had been taking people into custody. Every one of the resistance organizations – with only a few exceptions – had been smashed. Some had shot it out, some had been taken by surprise, some had been shot down. Ten had been shot in ambush, four of them in accordance with the traditional *ley de fuga* (shot while trying to escape). Over 200 people were arrested that day, of whom 53 were kept in custody. Seven were summarily tried and executed – they were those who belonged to the group organized by José Cul-ebra. Eleven who slipped the net that day were subsequently caught and added to our number. That made fifty-seven to come up for trial, in three groups of eleven, sixteen and thirty.' [2]

Miguel was one of the thirty tried (Case number 658-IV-49) before the military tribunal on the 6-7 February 1952. The president of the court, Pedro Regalado Sanz, had an iron cross from his time with the Division Azul.[3] Miguel was one of the nine condemned to death.[4] Here's his account of hearing he was not to be shot the next day:

'Your death penalty has been commuted to life.' That meant thirty years. The protests must have been of some avail!

I had been called to the prison director's office early on the morning of 13 March 1952. Thirty-eight days had passed since I had been sentenced to death.

I did not want to show any emotion in front of him. And I remembered my fellow-prisoners.

'All of us?' I asked eagerly.

'You are not here to ask questions,' he replied coldly. I was marched back to my cell.

'Who else?' I asked the guard. He did not reply. When he had slammed the door, I began frantically tapping on the walls to my next-door neighbour, Jose Corral Martin. 'I am commuted, who else?'

'I too. There are four of us. The other five are to be shot at dawn.'

'Who? Who?'

We began tapping along the condemned row.

'I am commuted to thirty years,' said Domingo Ibars Juanies. 'Antonio Moreno Alcarcon is still with the director. He must be the fourth.' We fell silent. There was no more tapping for a while as we thought of the five friends whose fate was sealed. Then one of them broke the silence.

'Are there only four to be commuted?' asked

Adrover, hopefully.

'Only four.'

Later the guards came and took the four who had been spared death up to the first floor. We did not sleep that night. We lay on the floor, our ears straining to hear every sound from below. One of the officers, a former Republican functionary, was friendly, and would give us information when the other guards were not present. We waited anxiously for his shift to come round, and meanwhile heard the last of our friends at midnight, when the guards came to take them to the chapel. They called their names. 'Adrover!' 'Pedrero!' And so on until they came to Urrea. He anticipated them. As they came to his cell, he let out a magnificent shout, '*Viva la FAI! Viva la Resistencia!*' The guards shouted for silence. We called back, as his shout echoed through the gloom of the prison. '*Viva la FAI!*' Then the noise faded away. The prisoners had been taken to the chapel where they remained for seven hours while priests urged them to confess their sins. None of them obliged, the ex-Republican prison officer told us later. He was on duty when they were taken from the chapel to the *campo de la bota*. It was a field on the beach just outside the city, where ropes stretched out to buoys and youngsters learned to swim. Now, because of its remoteness, it was the place of execution. They all died bravely. José Perez Pedrero was the youngest, twenty-three years old. He asked the officer of the execution squad to give his silk handkerchief to his mother.

One of the Political Squad officers present shouted roughly, 'None of that, don't play the martyr!' The army officer turned to him and told him to be quiet. 'You have no say here. I give the orders. This is a matter for me.' He took the handkerchief from the boy, saying he would see his mother got it.

It was a harrowing experience for us back in the cells.[5]

What protests were there? Miguel had been able to get word to family in France, who were able to contact anarchist exiles. A key figure was José Ester Borrás (who had survived the Nazi concentration camp at Mauthausen). While the CNT in exile was divided, Ester Borrás could mobilise public opinion through FEDIP (Federación Española de Deportados e Internados Políticos). Also involved were Fernando Gomez Pelaez (director of *Solidaridad Obrera* [see folder 288 of his papers in Amsterdam]) and Martin Villarrupla (inter-Continental Secretary of the orthodox CNT in exile).[6]

The executions of 1952 took place at a time when the Francoist regime was trying to overcome international pariah status and the exiles had to come to terms with the fact that governments, especially that of the USA, no longer felt bound by anti-fascist propaganda from the Second World War. Plus exiles in France were under pressure following a failed armed robbery in 1951.[7] The need to mobilise public

opinion outside Spain against Francoist repression would recur (right up to the last days of the regime). A revolutionary rather than democratic approach led to further campaigns like those of the First of May Group.[8]

Notes

1, For an account of the repression, and an early response to it, see 'The attack on Spain's embassy in Genoa in 1949' by Antonio Téllez

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/44j22p>

2, Miguel Garcia, *Franco's prisoner* p14. (Saturnino Culebras Saiz was shot on the 24 February 1950 alongside Manuel Sabaté. Gregorio Culebras had his death sentence commuted to thirty years.) For more on Miguel Garcia's life see Stuart Christie's tribute: <https://kslnotes.wordpress.com/2010/11/28/remembering-miguel-garcia-by-stuart-christie/>

3, The Division Azul fought for Hitler on the eastern front. See p189 of *Prisionero de Franco* (translated and annotated by José Ignacio Álvarez Fernández; Anthropos, 2010).

4, The sentences were:

Pedro Adrover Font 'El Yayo' (shot)

Ignacio Aligué Soler (12 years) + Released from Malaga's geriatric prison 6/7/1958 (b. 1895).

Santiago Amir Gruaños 'El Sheriff' (shot)

Abel Benedicto Serrano (1 year) + released early under terms of Holy Year grant of remission (1952).

Antonio Bravo Soler (12 years and a day) + received ¼ remission of sentence under Holy Year grant.

José Corral Martí/Martín (death sentence commuted to thirty years) + released on licence 21/7/1967.

Manuel Fornes Marin (30 years) (b. 1930) As a minor at the time of the offence, he ought not to have been eligible for this sentence.

Miguel Garcia Garcia (death sentence commuted to thirty years) released October 1969.

Justina González Valverde (charges dropped)

Manuel Guerrero Motas (26 years) Freed in 1962.

Domingo Ibars Juanias (death sentence commuted to thirty years) released on licence 10/1/1969.

José Iglesias Paz, 'El Gallego', 'Pineiro' (death sentence commuted to thirty years) released after serving 11 years/moved to Switzerland.

Manuel Lecha Aparisi 'El Artillero' (four years, six months and a day. Died in prison.) Ineligible under Holy Year remission scheme due to a prior 30-year sentence for civil war-time offences.

Pedro Lopez Tapia (six months)

Ramon Loscos Viñas (charges dropped)

Juan Martinez Requena (6 years) Sanchez Agusti states 6 months and 1 day/benefited from Holy Year remission scheme.

Pedro Meca Lopez (25 years) served 12 years.

Manuel Montañes Bernat (30 years) developed stomach ulcer in prison and freed on licence 2/3/1962.

Eusebio Montes Brescos (30 years) served 13 years.

Gregorio Montserrat Girona (2 years) released under Holy Year remission of sentence scheme.

Esperanza Moreno Agrela (12 years) sentence cut by 1/3 under Holy Year remission scheme.

Antonio Moreno Alarcon 'Cejablanca' (death sentence commuted to thirty years) granted release on licence in 1964.

Pedro Obiols Ribo (6 months) ineligible for remission under Holy Year scheme due to prior conviction for "military rebellion".

José Pérez Pedrero 'Tragapanes' (shot)

José Piñol Doucet (12 years) freed on licence from Guadalajara Central Male Prison on 26/9/1953, sentence expired 26/3/1956. In 2003 last surviving accused of the 1952 trial.

Jorge Pons Argiles 'Tarantula' (shot)

Eduardo Roca Sales (2 years) benefited from Holy Year remission scheme.

Miguel Rodriguez Alarcon (12 years) released from El Dueso prison on licence 16/7/1964; sentence expired 1/5/1975.

Antonia Saborit Carralero (charges dropped)

Ginés Urrea Piña (shot)

[Names and sentences from losdelasierra.info; additions from Ferran Sanchez Agusti *El Maquis anarquista* (2006) thanks to Paul Sharkey; MGG release date from Stuart Christie *Edward Heath Made Me Angry* p113. There is a thesis on the case: Marie Viader *La justice franquiste face aux mouvements anarchistes : La Causa Sumarísima 658-IV-49 (1949-1952)*. Not seen.]

5, *Franco's prisoner* p46-48

6, See, Alicia Quintero Maqua, *Los presos libertarios y el exilio militante contra Franco (1945-1952)* [https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/media/www/pag-13888/Alicia%20QUINTERO%20-%20Los%20presos%20libertarios%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/media/www/pag-13888/Alicia%20QUINTERO%20-%20Los%20presos%20libertarios%20(1).pdf) (and the letter from Miguel Garcia in the Ester Borrás papers that she quotes).

7, 'The robbers were anarchists and this was sufficient excuse to mount a vicious hate campaign against the CNT in France.' *Sabaté, guerrilla extraordinary* by Antonio Téllez p109.

8, see *The International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement: First of May Group* edited by Albert Meltzer (and the works of Antonio Téllez).

A chronology of the protests, 1952

[Probably incomplete, since there seems to have been no consistent way of referring to the case. The shorthand that would have called them 'The Barcelona Nine' seems to have arisen in the USA in the 1940s, but not become worldwide until later.]

19 February, London. A 'Songs and Dances of Spain' festival promoted by Spanish ambassador Miguel Primo de Rivera was disrupted by leafleting and shouting. This was reported in the *Daily Graphic* of 20 February 'As the curtain was about to rise on the first performance of Songs and Dances of Spain

at the Stoll Theatre last night, thousands of anti-Franco leaflets were scattered from the upper circle, the dress circle and boxes by members of the Spanish National Confederation of Labour' (quoted in *Franco's Tänzerinnen auf Auslandstournee* By Cécile Stephanie Stehrenberger). *Le Libertaire* (29 February [archive at <http://archivesautonomies.org/spip.php?article77>]) reported cries of 'Down with Franco the murderer!' and that the demonstrators escaped before the police arrived. See also *Freedom* on 23 February 1951 [ie1952] (v.13 no.8) via

<https://freedomnews.org.uk/archive/>. This is probably the event where the 'Nine trade unionist executed in Barcelona' leaflet was used: see

<https://kslnotes.wordpress.com/2012/05/04/a-leaflet/>

22 February, Paris, Salle Wagram. Meeting organised by Ligue des droits de l'homme; speakers Georges Altman, André Breton, Albert Béguin, Albert Camus, Louis Guilloux, Jean-Paul Sartre, René Char, Ignacio Silone (and other intellectuals). Poster: <https://placard.ficedl.info/article3406.html> Breton's speech is reprinted in *Le Libertaire* on 7 March. His notes can be read at

<http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100144480>. A special issue of *Volonta* reproduced the speeches in Italian: *Spagna martire*

<http://www.rebal.info/vufind/Record/ASF2515>.

29 February *Le Libertaire* (weekly) reports protests mentioned above, also one in Washington.

6 March, Nimes. Meeting at Fetes du Foyer Commun inc. comrade Lapeyre (*Le Libertaire*, 28 March)

8 March, Grenoble. Protest march, leafleting (*Le Libertaire*, 28 March)

9 March, Glasgow. Meeting at Central Hall, money raised forwarded to the committee in France (Report in *Freedom* 29 March).

23 March, St Etienne. 500 at protest meeting (*Le Libertaire*, 28 March)

24 March, New York. *Labor Action* [Independent Socialist League] reports founding of Committee to Defend Franco's [Labor] Victims on 17 March (including Norman Thomas, Spanish-speaking anti-fascist organisations, the Independent Socialist League, the IWW, the Catholic Worker group and the General Defense Council). Also announces picketing of the Spanish consulate, 20, 21, 24 and 25 March, with meeting at Freedom House on the latter date. Photos and reports in their issue of 31 March, archive at

<https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/labor-action-ny/1952/index.htm> Sam Dolgoff was involved in the Committee: He blamed Thomas for bowing out of the campaign under political pressure. See *Fragments* by Sam Dolgoff and *Left of the Left* by Anatole Dolgoff.

24 March, Toulouse. *Ruta* devotes its front page to the executions

https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/ppc/ruta/ruta_a1952m3d24n339.pdf

25 March, Paris, Salle Wagram. Amis de la République Espagnole protest rally. Speakers include Georges Fontenis. (*Labor Action*, 26 May, *Le Libertaire*, 28 March; poster:

<https://placard.ficedl.info/article3440.html>)

25 March, Mexico City. Teatro Iris de Mejiro 'large meeting of protest against the Franco terror, organized by the Spanish CNT' (*Labor Action* 26 May. See also *Ruta* 7 April report of this and the London meeting of the 27 March

https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/ppc/ruta/ruta_a1952m4d7n341.pdf)

27 March, London. 'An Appeal to the Public Conscience' Protest meeting. Speakers included Augustus John, Henry Moore, H.N. Brailsford, Kingsley Martin, Fenner Brockway, Herbert Read, Michael Foot and Prof. J. Bronowski. *Labor Action* 26 May reprinted an account from *Tribune* from 4 April. The speeches from the meeting were printed in *Freedom* on 5 April (with an editorial bemoaning the minimal newspaper coverage). Herbert Read's article 'Franco, the ape of Hitler' had been published in *Freedom* 29 March. Read had invited Benjamin Britten (see

<https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/2014/03/benjamin-britten-herbert-read/>)

28 March, Lyon. Fontenis speaks (*Le Libertaire* 28 March)

1 April, Paris, Palace of Chaillot. Disruption of performance by Falangist dance troupe: 'hundreds of people spread anti-Franco leaflets among the audience'. *Labor Action* 26 May

29 April, Toulouse. A grenade was thrown at the car of the Spanish consul in Toulouse, blowing off its roof and destroying the seats, but leaving the consul unscathed. The thrower evaded pursuing passersby and the police. Through *Le Libertaire*, the National Committee of the (French) Anarchist Federation expressed support for the attacker. (*Le Libertaire*, 9 May).

3 May, Chicago. Spanish consulate picketed: Independent Socialist League, Socialist Youth League, IWW, Socialist Party, YPSL, student clubs and Libertarian Socialist League. *Labor Action* 26 May.

9 May *Le Libertaire* article "Is the Eucharistic Congress Going to Cover Up Franco's Terror?" despairing of any real protest on the part of the Catholic church and faithful.

Undated events

Tel Aviv. Formation of Committee to Aid the Victims of Franco reported, *Labor Action* 26 May. They distributed protest leaflets before the Franco consulate in Jerusalem. *Le Libertaire* 28 March also reports leafleting and student demonstration in Tel Aviv.

Rome. Demonstration, leafleting (*Le Libertaire*, 28 March)

Sweden. Protest poster (Syndicalist Youth)

<https://placard.ficedl.info/article7547.html> ■

The Invisible Dictatorship [a short history of Anarchy magazine (second series)]

[Rob Ray's *A Beautiful Idea: history of the Freedom Press anarchists* (2018) mentions the Second series of *Anarchy* 'Helmed by Phil Ruff, this was spun off and became an independent production, briefly working out of Angel Alley again in the 1980s.' (p119). Phil Ruff has written this short account of *Anarchy*.] Humbled as I am to be awarded the position of Great Helmsman of the *Anarchy* Collective, the historical facts are rather different.

Colin Ward's *Anarchy* was wholly owned by Freedom Press, and viewed as private property rather than an organ of 'the movement'. When Ward relinquished the editorship in 1971, a 'Second Series' was launched by a new 'Anarchy Collective', of younger, more activist comrades based in Bethnal Green. For the first year of the new series *Anarchy* was printed on a commercial basis by 'Express Printers', a printing press owned by Freedom Press, and the new collective continued to use Freedom's address for mail. The editorial in *Anarchy* 7 points out that half the work was done by Anarchy Collective and half commercially. This is reflected in the style of the magazine.

The big sea-change came with *Anarchy* 10, by which time the break with *Freedom* was complete. *Anarchy* moved to a squatted four-storey house at 29 Grosvenor Avenue, in Newington Green, north London. The house was home to a 'commune' of people active in many other anarchist, feminist and community struggles (not all of them legal), and achieved notoriety as 'Angry Brigade headquarters' (according to Lewisham police) after being raided by the Bomb Squad and Special Branch in search of evidence to convict Jake Prescott and Ian Purdie, and the Stoke Newington Eight. More importantly, by this time *Anarchy* now had its own printing press (which was housed in the basement), purchased by Chris Broad from a family inheritance. Though many comrades passed through the Anarchy Collective over the years (including SN8 defendant Kate McLean, Dave Coull, Kathy Perlo, Dave Morris and Martin Wright) it was Chris Broad and his partner Charlotte Baggins, who really were the twin anchors of the editorship and production of *Anarchy* throughout the 1970s and into the 80s. They were also the people who transformed the basement press into 'Little @' printers. By the mid-1970s, 29 Grosvenor Avenue had ceased being a squat, the 'commune' moved on, and Chris and Charlotte rented the house from the council. But Anarchy Collective still used the address for meetings, which were open to all-comers, and a 'minutes book' was scrupulously kept (now in the possession of KSL), until the late 1970s, when the council saw the pro-

spect of making money by turning the property into flats. Chris and Charlotte moved out and Little @ press was transferred to rented premises in a dock-land warehouse in Wapping. After the copy for *Anarchy* 29 was done, the Anarchy Collective folded.

A year later, winter 1979, a few people decided to resume publication of *Anarchy*, including two members of the 'old' collective. *Anarchy* 29 was printed and published. It was the worst issue ever. Anarchy Collective then endured a succession of new people joining and leaving, while managing to publish *Anarchy* 30, 31 and 32. Charlotte Baggins, the last of the 'old collective', finally called it a day in November 1981. Those who remained brought out two issues, *Anarchy* 33 and 34 (October 1982). But the reduced collective faced insurmountable problems and could no longer continue publication. Rather than see *Anarchy* disappear, they approached me and asked if I could take over publication.

I had been loosely associated with *Anarchy* since 1973 (while a member of the Anarchist Black Cross and *Black Flag* groups), and while never a member of the 'old' Anarchy Collective had worked closely with Chris and Charlotte and other members of *Anarchy* during the Murray Defence Group campaign in 1975/76. And in the summer of 1977 I moved in to 29 Grosvenor Avenue as a lodger. The 'new' Anarchy Collective which assembled at the end of 1982 had a somewhat fluid membership (including Chris Broad, tempted out of retirement) but was composed at its core of myself, Vince Stevenson (ex-Rising Free and Persons Unknown) and Robyn Miles (Anarchist Black Cross); with contributions from among others Iris Mills and Ronan Bennett (Persons Unknown), Albert Meltzer, Stuart Christie, Martyn Everett and Ros Kane. Collectively we published *Anarchy* 35 (early 1983), *Anarchy* 36 (summer 1983), *Anarchy* 37 (winter 1983/84) and *Anarchy* 38 (1985); as well as publishing *Stefano Delle Chiaie: Portrait of a "Black" terrorist* by Stuart Christie (1984). Everything we published (with the exception of *Anarchy* 38, which was printed abroad) was printed by Little @ press at Wapping. For most of that time we received correspondence via a post box at Freedom Press, but absolutely no other assistance from them. And eventually we were told by *Freedom* to go elsewhere and please never darken their doors again.

No formal decision was ever taken to cease publication. Those of us in Anarchy Collective simply turned our attention to other things, and a rather long pause has ensued. So be careful, or *Anarchy* will be back!

Philip Ruff, November 2018.

Links to photos The online version of this article at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/pc87wq> has links to images of *Anarchy* 36, Chris Broad (with others), Charlotte Baggins, Vince Stevenson and 'The Great Helmsman' Phil Ruff himself. ■

News from the Kate Sharpley Library, February 2019

Co-publishing news: two on the way with AK My Eighty-One Years of Anarchy: A Memoir by May Picqueray

May Picqueray (1898-1983) missed none of the major events in history during her lifetime. In 1921, she sent a parcel bomb (it exploded without casualties) to the US ambassador in Paris, to protest against the infamous conviction and death sentence of Sacco and Vanzetti. In November 1922 she was commissioned by the CGTU Metal Federation at the Congress to attend the Red Trade Union International in Moscow, where she stood on a table and denounced the congress for feasting while the Russian workers starved. She then refused to shake hands with Leon Trotsky, to whom she had come to ask for the pardon of anarchist political prisoners. Years later, she was closely involved in the movements of May 1968 and the Fight for Larzac in 1975. Picqueray's story is closely entangled with those of Sébastien Faure, Nestor Makhno, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Marius Jacob, and Buenaventura Durruti, among so many others. Her autobiography, *My Eighty-one Years of Anarchy*, is available here in English for the first time, translated by Paul Sharkey. (due March 2019) <https://www.akpress.org/my-eighty-one-years-of-anarchy.html>

Sons of Night: Antoine Gimenez's Memories of the War in Spain, edited by The Gimenologues

A fascinating memoir of the Spanish Civil War as well as a new approach to writing history, *The Sons of Night* is two books in one. First is Antoine Gimenez's *Memories of the War in Spain*, a compelling and lyrical account of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War. The other is *In Search of the Sons of Night* by the Gimenologues, a group of friends who became historians over the twelve-year adventure of publishing Gimenez's memoir. The second book, a profoundly innovative form of historiography, records the fascination Gimenez's account held for the group and the many branching paths of inquiry it led them down. The latter begins with eighty-two "endnotes" to the memoir, each the equivalent of a chapter that follows a particular historical thread or explores a question raised by Gimenez's text. This is followed by the biographies of various people appearing in the memoir, many based on the friendships the historians formed with the now-elderly revolutionaries. The book closes with an Afterword discussing theoretical issues raised by the memoir and seven appendices. It also includes an Introduction by Dolores Marín Silvestre. (due February 2019) <https://www.akpress.org/sons-of-night.html>

Feedback welcome. If you send a donation with your

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sub, say if you already have our May '68 pamphlet!

Also forthcoming

A Towering Flame: The Life & Times of the Elusive Latvian Anarchist Peter the Painter by Philip Ruff is to be published in England by Breviary Stuff Publications in 2019. More details at <https://www.breviarystuff.org.uk/philip-ruff-a-towering-flame/> (review from *KSL Bulletin* 95 at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/6t1h62>) ■

David Porter

With great sadness we have to announce the death of David Porter who died on December 29 aged 79. Like Osvaldo Bayer, David was a fine man and a fine historian. His book *Vision On Fire* (2006 new edition) collected Emma Goldman's letters on the Spanish Revolution and through them highlighted some compelling arguments about it, while his *Eyes On The South* (2011) offers a brilliantly nuanced understanding of French anarchist responses to the struggle of Algerian independence. You can get them both through AK Press. He was the author of several other works also. We keep saying this, but losing people of his calibre is hard. We offer solidarity to his family and friends. ■

The Massana Gang

This was a group led by Marcelino Massana Vancell aka *Panxo* aka *Gras* (Catalan for Fatty), a native of the town of Berga in the foothills of the Pyrenees in the province of Barcelona; over the years during which it operated, roughly late 1944 to 1951, its membership included the following: Federico Arcos Martínez, aka *Fede*; Manuel Benítez Jiménez; Joan Busquets Vergés aka *Senzill*; Francesc Comardons Riera aka *Panella*; Francisco Martínez Marqués aka *Paco*; José Pérez Pedrero aka *Tragapanes*; "El Perinales"; Artur Perpiñá Sala; "El pometa"; Jordi Pons Argilés aka *Tarantula*; Jaume Puig Costa aka *Tall-aventres*; "El Rana"; César Saborit Carreleró; Francisco Sánchez Berenguer; Saturnino Sanz Velilla aka *El Tempranillo*; Antonio Torres Molina aka *Gachas*; Josep Vancell aka *Pepe Blanco*; and Ramón Vila Capdevila aka *Passos Llargs*.

This was a group active primarily in the Bergueda comarca, where a number of its members had been born, and in adjacent comarcas. Like most of the Catalan groups operating in that area, they lived in France, crossing the border to mount raids and retreating to the relative safety of France. Marcelino Massana was the only significant leader of the action groups in Catalonia who made it through alive, thanks to the fact that his modus operandi was not to brief either his own men or the CNT leadership in exile on the timing and location of his border crossings as it was known, or at any rate suspected, that

the police had men planted inside the Organization; not only that, but his was possibly the only group of any vintage that suffered no losses and that was a real rarity; his life was also spared because after he had disarmed some customs officers in France, he was charged and was then banished far from the French-Spanish border and was not deported.

Before joining the guerrilla campaign *Panxo* spent two years as a smuggler around El Borni de Peguera, as a result of which he knew the local trails like the back of his hand. In December 1944 he carried out his first raid, on a farmstead in Gasol, alongside Francesc Comardons and Artur Perpiñá, with whom he mounted another operation; in the summer of the following year, now using arms and explosives furnished by the CNT, they carried out a hold-up at the Espinalbet hermitage and, on the way back to France, blew up some electricity pylons at La Nou in the Berguedá. Among other operations, we might cite the hold-ups at the 'Lignitos de Serchs' company on 15 November 1946 and 17 March 1947, another hold-up in La Nou on 26 August that year and another the following month in Les Lloses. During 1948 he married such guerrilla operations with work as a guide; they carried out a hold-up in Guixers; that summer they blew up electricity pylons and mounted raids in Olván and Figols; On 15 September, in the course of a robbery at the Comellas café, the Falangist Rafael Corominas was killed and a civilian wounded; five days after that they blew up a 110-metre pipe-line belonging to 'Carbueros de Berga'. In January 1949, they carried out two armed robberies in Les Lloses and Aviá; that May they blew up the Barcelona-to-Sant Joan de las Abadesses railway line, planting five devices that brought down two pillars and a stretch of track. On 25 June they kidnapped Pedro Fontfreda in Pont de Vilomara and on 5 July, in the course of a Civil Guard dragnet operation, Guard Isidoro Pérez Herrera was killed when he tangled with Massana in the Rocafort district. The forces of repression also accused the gang of having killed the married couple, the Alpens, plus the priest Lorenzo Vilacis, although there is no firm proof of this. In November, an abortive raid on the wages van from the Cerchs mines resulted in the wounding of two people. On 23 August 1950, *Panxo* and César Saborit and *Gachas* abducted Josep Pey Santamaría from a boarding-house in Casrellar del Riu; he was exchanged for 100,000 pesetas and that was their last raid on Catalan soil. The group's last operation was to serve as guides for two delegates from the CNT of the Interior; they picked them up in Esterri d'Àneu, but, once on French soil and foraging for food they were intercepted by four French customs officers in the town of Coflens; even though they came through this unscathed by announcing that they were from the Spanish resistance, the French courts were forced to act and *Panxo* was banished far from the border at that point. Some of the group's members then went

on to join the urban guerrilla campaign, but with little luck, as late 1949 proved to be a bloodbath as far as the libertarian resistance in the cities were concerned. *Senzill* joined the 'Los Primos' group and was arrested and went on to serve 20 years in Francoist prisons; *Paco* was to be murdered by the police on 24 October; *Tragapanes* joined José Sabaté's group, only to be arrested on 5 November and would be shot in 1952 along with *Tarantula* who had joined the 'Talión' group. César Saborit perished in 1951 alongside Facerías. All of this occurred in Barcelona city. In 1947 Saturnino Sanz and Francisco Sánchez, who had set up a group of their own, were also captured following a hold-up and a sabotage attack and were tried and sentenced to 12-year prison terms.

Finally, apropos of this group some mention has to be made of the fact that the police circulated a book entitled *Habla mi conciencia* (Speak, Conscience Mine), allegedly written by a certain 'Francisco' in order to defame and criticize the libertarian resistance, but this was just another weapon in the armoury of the regime in discrediting and attempting to bring the guerrilla war into disrepute.

By 'Imanol', Trans PS. Article from <https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/blogs/imanol/partida-massana.html>

The article reprints a facsimile of a letter sent from Paris by Josep Ester on 6 March 1950 to Massana at 15, Rue Stalingrad, Toulouse, part of which reads;

"(...) Above all, Marcelino, my friend, play it safe: yet again I urge you to take every precaution in preparing your excursion. Trust NO ONE, ABSOLUTELY NO ONE. See to it that even GOD does not know the date or the hour, let alone the itinerary of your outing. If you reckon that the objectives they indicate or may indicate to you are known to a few people, refuse to carry them out. I point the finger at no one, but the events in Barcelona counsel me to urge this advice upon you (...) Put your pride to one side, as none of those who might accuse you of lack of courage on this occasion, have accomplished one iota of your splendid efforts.

"To conclude this matter, and without wishing to influence you in any way in what you decide, I shall limit myself to telling you or, rather, reiterating to you, what I have said and written to you before: CARRY ON WRITING YOUR DIARY OF STRUGGLE AGAINST THE FRANCO DICTATORSHIP, UNDER THE MOTTO YOU HAVE DISPLAYED THUS FAR: "That bandit Massana does not kill; he robs the rich in order to feed the poor." JUSTICE at all times and NEVER TERRORISM.

"Your handiwork is popular because it is humane, and everything humane prospers and bears fruit. Do you think that our ideas could have put down such deep roots into our people, had they been devoid of such humanistic principles and purposes?

(...) CAUTION!" ■

Thoughts on ‘What everyone should know about state repression’ by Victor Serge

Victor Serge was a very good writer as well as an interesting historical figure. This short book collects pieces written in the 1920s (when he was a Bolshevik) after studying the archives of the Tsarist secret police, the Okhrana. He’s best looking at the practical details of what the political police do. Cue discussions of secret codes, informers and social network analysis carried out with pen and ink. The book’s an evocation of the Russian revolutionary tradition which gives it a certain amount of derring-do: see the advice on ‘ingenuity’. ‘A comrade arrives at a watched house and goes up to the fourth floor flat. He barely gets to the stairs, when three suspicious-looking characters start following him. They are going the same way. On the second floor the comrade stops, knocks at a doctor’s door and asks about surgery hours. The coppers carry on.’ (p57) His advice about arrest sounds like personal experience: ‘As a matter of principle: *say nothing*. Explaining yourself is dangerous; you are in the hands of professionals able to get something out of your every word. Any “explanation” gives them valuable documentation. Lying is extremely dangerous: it is difficult to construct a story without its defects being too obvious. It is almost impossible to improvise. Don’t try to be cleverer than them: the relationship of forces is too unequal for that. Old jailbirds write this strong recommendation on prison walls, for the revolutionary to learn from: “Never confess!”’ (p55)

Optimism

The ‘how history works’ parts have aged less well. There’s plenty of ‘history is on our side’ optimism, the kind of thing you could say in the 1920s, trusting that world war one was the inevitable final agony of capitalism. And yet, to be fair, who could disagree with: ‘there is no force in the world which can hold back the revolutionary tide *when it rises*’ (pVIII, emphasis added: there’s the rub). One of Serge’s arguments is that there’s only so much the law can achieve:

“They would manage, for example, to “liquidate” the Riga Social-Democratic organisation. Seventy would be taken prisoner, beheading the movement in the area. Imagine for one moment what total “liquidation” means. No-one escaped. And then?

“For a start, the imprisonment of the seventy did not go unnoticed. Each of the members was in contact with at least ten people. Seven hundred people, at least, were suddenly faced with the brutal fact of the seizure of honest, brave people, whose only crime was to strive for the common good ... The trial, the sentences, the private dramas involved, brought

about an explosion of interest and support for the revolutionaries. If even one of them was able to make his impassioned voice heard from the dock, it could be said with certainty that the organisation, at the sound of this voice, would rise again from the ashes. It was only a question of time.’ (p37-8)

Might we not also say that there’s only so much the revolutionaries can do on their own? Confidence is a weapon, sure. But I’m not sure that over-confidence (because you think that history has chosen you, or that good intentions guarantee results) helps.

An ounce of prevention...

Serge defines his subject: ‘to study the main instrument of all reaction and all repression, that is, the apparatus for strangling all healthy revolt known as the police.’ (pVII) We live in (somewhat) different times now. Capitalism doesn’t only rely on the police.* A ‘common sense’ is actively pushed every day to make revolt unthinkable.

Serge himself fell victim to the dictatorship built on the idea that only the Party could liberate the proletariat. Yet he managed to escape both physically and ideologically. He might get less stick from anarchists had he ‘come back’ to the movement rather than trying to make his own libertarian socialism! It doesn’t help that Serge is often used by Leninists as an alibi for their good intentions. But the man himself is worth reading not to simply cheer or sneer at. It’s possible to read history like a teacher marking a quiz, ticking off ‘correct answers’. But probably not as productive as asking questions. If this was a mistake, how did it come to happen? How could it be done differently? It’s not a bad idea to ask yourself what mistakes you might have made, too.

How to reach a free society is still subject to discussion and experiment (and opposition!) This book is a starting point if you want to think about how political repression works (and also how it breaks down). The text is available from the Marxists Internet Archive

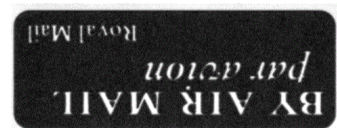
(<https://www.marxists.org/archive/serge/1926/repression/index.htm>).

Note

* If you’re interested in recent disclosures about British political policing, see <https://policespiesoutoflives.org.uk/pitchfordinquiry/>, <http://undercoverresearch.net/> and <http://campaignopposingpolicesurveillance.com/>

Our friends at Past Tense have a new pamphlet: *Alice Wheeldon: framed by spycops for resisting World War I*. A 1917 conspiracy against anti-war socialists from Derby £1.50 from <http://past-tense.org.uk> ■

P6 n5 correction: “John Rety may well have read out Miguel’s speech: [when freed] he lost his voice for around 6 or 7 months (possibly psychological).” [SC]



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