

For those wishing to delve into “crowd psychology”, the people’s songs and anthems are a rich field to study.

In the whirlwind of history in which we find ourselves, revolt shows itself in the people’s poetry and song. This is a symptom that carries a certain value. Among the best known subversive songs of late, there is the song “*Lenin is a-coming*” in which the soldier, the ashen-faced prostitute and the convict’s son invoke Lenin who is referred to as “a beacon of justice and freedom”, all of it wrapped up in two clichéd thoughts and formats.

There is no point pressing a popular singer too hard and, given his good intentions and the zeal evident in his verses, we can readily forgive him his venial poetical sins. But as I see it, we must prevent the spread of songs that can peddle certain false notions of revolution. One such notion, indeed, is the very one encapsulated by the refrain of “*Lenin is a-coming*”. We have always had a tendency to highlight the thought and actions of the individual rather than the collective and to resist the rigid, one-sided historical materialism of those Marxists who tread the byways of determinism and arrive at a sort of fatalistic view of the deeds and handiwork of peoples. Not that this means standing in the way of a Carlyle who turned the history of peoples into a collection of famous lives that reduced the complex, far-reaching factors in revolution and evolution

to the genius and handiwork of heroes. And if we acknowledge that apostles, heroes and martyrs and the greatest agitators of ideas and men, we nevertheless know, and would have the crowd know also, that they should not be looking to the top of a rostrum nor to the scaffold for redemption, but rather to themselves, as the message would be like the seed cast upon stony ground and among weeds, as mentioned in the Gospel parable, unless it reaches minds and hearts prepared to absorb it and make it their own, since redemption would still be left as a potentiality unless the masses have the good will and spirit of sacrifice to carry it out. We must avoid a situation where the masses wait for Lenin like some red prophet, or await a human redeemer the way the Jews wait for their son of God-redeemer, since waiting for a redeemer amounts to thinking of redemption as something that comes from without and independently of the will and sacrifice on the part of those craving it. The masses have not yet understood that one does not wait for the revolution to arrive; if we want it, we want it and we make it.

“*Lenin is a-coming!*” is on a par with “*The Revolution is a-coming!*”; both are nonsensical, albeit that they are rooted in the fatalism of Italians and in that underlying religious sense of expectation that is one of the most powerful factors preserving the current state of affairs. The working man needs to be told that Lenin will not be crossing the Alps like some *great red bear*



to liberate Italy, to borrow the by now stereotypical and unfortunate oratorical phrase Bombacci is so fond of repeating, and that he ought not to wait for the revolution to sweep across the Alps the way the people used to hope for liberation from the armies of foreign tyrants back in the feudal times, but rather lay the groundwork for it and carry it through in Italy with all our might and all our creative daring.

[Camillo Berneri, Translated by Paul Sharkey]

*Published, unsigned, in *Il grido della rivolta* (Florence) 26 June 1920, under the title above. The attribution to Berneri is based upon these factors: Camillo Berneri was the main compiler of the paper that published it, the allusions to crowd psychology and the ideas of Carlyle are two themes that the writer was forever investigating, the critique of wait-and-see revolutionism or pseudo-revolutionism turns up in other writings of his as well. In the article *Considerazioni inattuali* published in the *Almanacco sociale illustrato per 1925*, Berneri himself was to write: "Mussolini is Duce because of the cry 'Lenin is a-coming!'" Reliance upon a liberator conjures up a tyrant." [note from reprint in Berneri anthology] ■ Image: Phil Ruff (*Black Flag* v.6, n.1). See also *Bloodstained: One Hundred Years of Leninist Counterrevolution* edited by The Friends of Aron Baron: (which contains Barry Pateman's great 'Cries in the Wilderness: Alexander Berkman and Russian Prisoner Aid')

<https://www.akpress.org/bloodstained.html>

Anarchism in the 1980s: an interview with another ex-member of Bristol Class War

Can you tell us a bit about where you came from?

I grew up in a town in the west of England during the 1970s. It was an industrial town going through de-industrialization at this time. Large factories like the Wagon Works and the aircraft factory where my grandparents had worked were closed or closing down. My family was solid Labour and my Grandad, who was Glaswegian, was a life-long socialist and union shop steward who'd helped build up the sheet metal workers union in the area. He'd been politicised after being given 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' by an older worker as a 14 year old apprentice.

What did the world look like then?

Life seemed good in the 70's. People's living standards were improving and that 1960s optimism was still there. It seemed like we lived in a country where everyone mattered. My town also had a vibrant youth culture... Punk was massive, as was Northern Soul and the whole Rasta thing.

I remember Thatcher's election victory in May 79 being received like the Grim Reaper had just moved

into No.10. An evil shadow had been cast over the land. How history has been rewritten since her death, presenting her as a national treasure is beyond contempt. Most of the country despised her. Looking back, a crossroads had been reached and the bright egalitarian future of the post-war years was over.

The early 80's were a seriously grim time and watching the evening news was like witnessing the slow death of a nation. The manufacturing industry collapsed, unemployment skyrocketed, the hunger strikers died, Northern Ireland went up in flames followed by rioting across the UK in July 81, the SPG [Special Patrol Group] patrolled the cities, there was the horrific Falklands War, the Brighton Bomb and the violent, year long Miners' Strike. Most terrifying of all was the very real threat of a nuclear holocaust. Thatcher had sanctioned the basing of American nuclear armed Cruise missiles on British soil and cold war tensions with the USSR reached fever pitch. A 'Protect and Survive' leaflet was produced for every household in the country informing us how to survive a nuclear winter by painting our doors white. It was a terrifying time. A lot of us genuinely didn't expect to see adulthood. I remember being sat in school one afternoon and they tested out the local WW2 air raid siren and we all thought it was the 4 minute warning. It is now known that on at least 2 occasions in 1983 we were only minutes away from a full scale nuclear war which would have been the end of civilization.

On top of all this there was mass youth unemployment. Everyone I knew left school at 15 or 16 and we went either straight onto the dole or into youth training schemes – YOPs or YTS's. There was a lot of heavy drinking and violence where I lived and the local paper was always full of stories of assaults or suicides. It really did seem like there was No Future.

How did you get involved in the Anarchist Movement?

Punk was a real political education for tens of thousands of kids in the late 70s and early 80s. Punk taught a whole generation utter contempt for authority. We learnt to question and have opinions on everything. As punk started to die out, Crass appeared and took the rebellion to a whole other level. They introduced Anarchism as a serious political philosophy. A hardcore critique of the society we lived in and there was no doubt they were genuine. A lot of punks hated them and saw them as posh hippies but for at least the first couple of years, before Steve Ignorant got elbowed out, they were seriously popular and had a big influence politically. They sold their records for pennies and played in little towns where no-one else would go. Outside a Crass gig in Birmingham one time a gang of older Brummie skins looked after us and gave us leaflets on the British Movement and then we went inside and got leaflets on Anarchism from Crass. It was very like this polit-

ically at the time. Teenagers, particularly ones who had come through the punk movement, were looking for radical alternatives. Some of them, including friends of mine, were unfortunately won over by the far-right. To their credit, Crass were willing to talk to anyone and they attracted many, many thousands to Anarchism, breathing new life into an old ideology.

By 1985 punk was long dead. Unemployment went over 3 million and many young people including me were unemployed. The future looked bleak and riots again broke out again across the country. The miners' defeat and walk back to work on the news was pitiful. It hit me as it hit many people that there was something seriously wrong with society and someone had to do something about it. If not us, then who? I dug out and listened to the album 'Yes Sir I Will' by Crass and began to get really angry and political. I went to London, found Freedom Bookshop and Housmans and read through all the books, leaflets and papers I could get my hands on. Loads of it was unreadable, boring stuff, but I loved Errico Malatesta among the old Anarchist writers. His writing was clear and convinced me of Anarchism as an idea. I found *Crowbar*, BM Blob, *Spectacular Times* (all brilliant), *Virus* and *Direct Action*. Then there was Class War..... Ian Bone and Class War were all over the newspapers. We were supposed to think 'how terrible', but many people just thought 'fucking brilliant!'. There was none of your boring, whiny, condescending 'look how terrible things are' of most of the Left. It wasn't preaching to you and it was funny, very funny, with pictures, and it explained politics in a language anyone could understand. It didn't make you feel like a victim...because who wants to feel like a victim? It made you feel confident and strong. It wasn't us who should be worried. It was them! 'Behold Your Future Executioners!' I was in, flat out involved with Class War from then on.

I'd gone down to the Wapping Strike on the Printers' Union coaches. It was the Miners' Strike part 2. The 3 horsemen of the Apocalypse – Thatcher, Murdoch and the Metropolitan Police versus the people. Blatant class war. They had declared it. We just called it what it was. They were intent on rolling back all the political gains the working class had made after the War. The first anniversary of the strike was unbelievable. Pitch black, in the east end of London. Police searchlights scanning the crowds. It was brutal, like a medieval battle. Someone died. The riot went on for hours in the cold, us chucking concrete, railings, bits of wood and the police repeatedly charging the crowd on horseback and on foot. Batons whistling past your ears, running with your heart in your mouth never knowing if you were going to catch one on the back of the head. When hundreds of police finally charged into the park you genuinely feared for your life. They were clubbing anyone they could get their hands on – old women, old men who'd been listening to Tony Benn or someone.

There were terrified screams everywhere. It was a surprise more people didn't die.

It seems hard to believe now but it really did seem in the mid-80s that we were close to social breakdown in this country. On top of this, the Unions had been defeated, the Labour Party had rolled over and died, and much of the revolutionary Left was an embarrassment. For a while, fired up by the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War and the changing face of politics, it felt like Class War might create a mass movement. As well as being constantly in the media, Class War was selling 20,000 copies an issue at this time... a lot of it to the general public. There were groups in every major city and I moved to Bristol to be part of the action. In Bristol, we had 2 groups, North and South. More riots had broke out in Bristol in 86 and CW were there on the frontline. Things were dynamic. There were packed meetings in working class pubs. We were at every meeting, demo or strike. We didn't sell papers to the Left or to students. We were selling in the city centre in the rush hour, outside the shops and in council estate pubs on a Friday night. Almost everyone knew of Class War. The revolution never happened, but the language and attitude had a deep impact on popular culture. Dislike of politicians, police and 'Yuppies' spread everywhere.

What was your relation to the paper? Was it a 'London production', or something made by the whole of Class War?

As for the CW paper, I think in the early days it was produced by a small group around Ian Bone and Martin Wright. By the time I was active in 86/87 each issue was produced by a different CW group on a rotational basis – about 4 a year maybe. I produced one issue along with other members of the Bristol group and I remember spending a weekend in London as a delegate looking over an issue which London had produced. Rotating was more democratic but I think it watered down the quality a bit as I still think the early issues were by far the best.

I know you were involved in the fight against the Poll Tax. What were your experiences?

The fight against the Poll Tax was electrifying. After a decade of defeats people were spoiling for a fight. I had returned to my home town and it was the talk in every pub. A meeting in my local community centre had people standing in the corridor because it was that full. It felt revolutionary. Working class men and women, old and young, across the country were saying 'No Pasaran'.

The day of the riot in March 1990 was a day to remember for life. Ten years of fear and anger were released. It was a beautiful sunny day with clear blue skies and a carnival atmosphere. I went down from Bristol and I think I'm right in saying 50 coaches left that day. We reached Downing Street and there was

already a crowd there refusing to move. We were right there when it all kicked off. I remember a group of young Yorkshire miners were shouting at No. 10 – really aggressive. It was massively defended by rows of police whose arms were linked behind waist high barriers. The fencing was dragged away and loads of punches and kicks and truncheon blows were exchanged. The anger was palpable and the crowd had no fear of the police. There was a sense of righteousness which is probably there when revolutions break out. Eventually the police wall broke and they started lashing out wildly but the crowd wasn't backing down. The touch paper had been lit. People started flooding back from the Mall. The police may have panicked that we'd get to No.10. The horses started charging, batons were swinging and rocks were flying. A full scale riot erupted. The rest is history. One of the funniest memories of the day was stepping out of the window of a looted off licence carrying two bottles of whiskey and bumping into Fergal Sharkey and his girlfriend who were standing there watching in disbelief.

The riot rocked the Establishment. It was pivotal in bringing down Thatcher. But the campaign of non-payment was what made the Tax unenforceable and made sure it was scrapped. Make it cost them more than it costs us. Violent and non-violent disobedience working together. Millions refused to pay and many went to jail. I refused to pay and refused to turn up in court. I was sentenced in my absence, eventually arrested and after turning down the offer to pay, served a month in prison. 'Toy Town Revolutionaries' Kinnock called us, but we proved that traitor wrong.

And could you tell us how you finished with politics?

Things had seemed revolutionary for a while but in 87 we were shocked when Thatcher won a third General Election. It was very demoralising at the time but easy to understand in retrospect. Selling people their council houses for peanuts, selling off our national utilities and deregulating the banks so they flooded the country with credit (debt), meant that many people thought they were loaded for a short while. It was a fantasy of course – the 'Loadsamoney' era. Myself and many others got decently paid jobs on building sites as a debt fuelled property boom started. All the national assets the working class had won after the war were being sold off and we were all being enslaved by a mountain of debt, but no-one could see it at the time. They just saw the money in their pockets.

Later that year the South Bristol group which I belonged to split from Class War. We wanted to attract and influence working class people with the paper – to give people a voice and a positive narrative. We wanted Anarchism to be the religion of the working class in Britain. Like it was in Spain in the early 20th Century. The religion of ordinary people, not a fringe

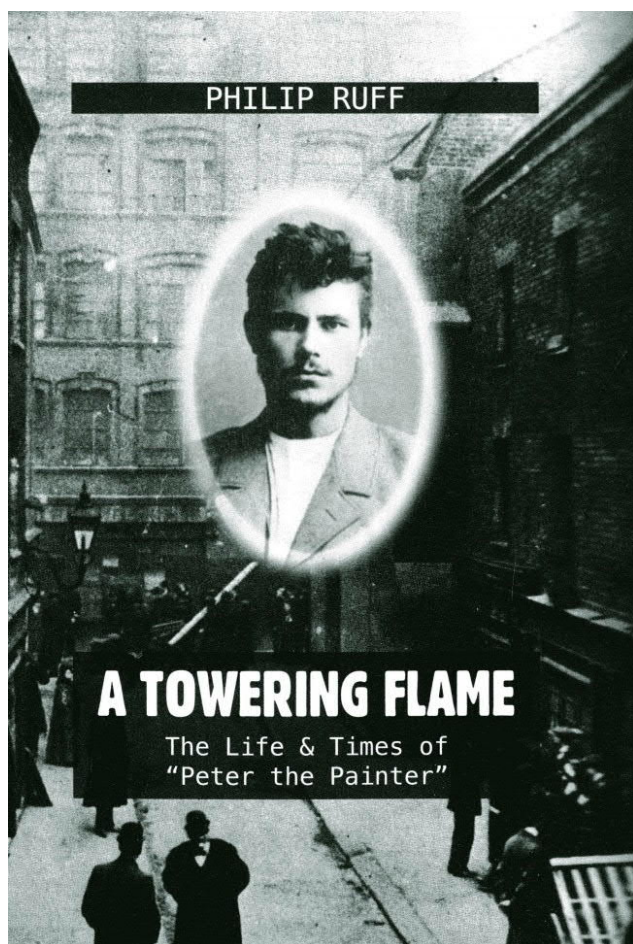
identity for people who weren't comfortable with their own. But the liberal-left identity politics which destroyed so much of the traditional working class movement and still dominates it today began to take over. Many university students (university was a far more elitist institution in the 80s) and even people who had been privately educated began to join CW and we didn't think this was a good thing (not that they were necessarily bad people at all). And because these people had more cultural capital – the ability to write, to speak in public, to expect people to listen to them etc, then they naturally came to dominate organizations. That is how it is. This has happened to most of the Left. Maybe the Unions escaped it a bit. Self-identity is a big part of why people get attracted to a political movement. It is very important. People will join a movement to feel they belong. When they feel that it represents their interests or who they are. If it doesn't do that, then they are not going to be interested. Period. And most people weren't going to be attracted by a group of scruffy punks wearing black rags or by a sanctimonious, posh voiced student lecturing them on how racist or sexist they were. Anyway, we lost the argument or we didn't express ourselves very well and we were expelled from Class War at the national conference in Bradford that year. We did a couple of issues of a free paper called Class Anger but I think history was moving on by then and it went nowhere.

On top of this, Anarchism had been reduced to defending the Post-War Consensus. We always preached to people not to vote but most of our fighting was done to protect the achievements of the 1945 Labour Government. As important as this was, inevitably we were going to lose because Capital will always eventually roll back any reformist social gains which are made. To me, I was always concerned that Anarchism wasn't presenting concrete economic answers to concrete economic problems. And it is always about economics. Political structures grow from the economic organization of society not the other way around and Anarchism or any Left ideology needs to concentrate on making capitalism economically redundant.

Anyway, by the early 90s, like many others I was disillusioned and gave up on politics. The working class had been defeated politically but like a phoenix from the ashes it began to win culturally. Rave and free party culture was born allowing hundreds of thousands of us to flip the finger to 9 to 5 consumer capitalism and enjoy a brief period of drug fuelled liberty, equality and fraternity. ■

Credit

This issue produced by the KSL collective, summer 2018. Tried for a better layout with more pictures but they had to make way for words. Feedback welcome. As are more anarchist memories.



Portrait of the artist as a wanted man: Philip Ruff's search for Peter the Painter

Three London policemen are shot dead by anarchist burglars in December 1910. Two weeks later, two of the anarchists are tracked down but hold the police at bay with their Mausers, while Winston Churchill calls up soldiers, machine guns, artillery.... Add the mysterious Peter the Painter, 'the one who got away' and it's hardly surprising that the Houndsditch murders and Siege of Sidney Street became the stuff of legend.

Philip Ruff has been looking for the truth about Peter the Painter since 1986, off and on. When he started, there was still a Soviet Union and he had to interview the KGB (rather than the other way round) about the Latvian revolutionary movement. Over the years, Ruff has searched archives and tracked down relatives of those involved around the world. He's had time to develop and drop two plausible but incorrect theories, before conclusively identifying Jānis Žāklis (Zhaklis) as Peter the Painter. In *A Towering Flame* he recounts Žāklis's astonishing life before and after the tragic events in London. The tsarist secret police never made the connection between 'the seditious draft dodger from Lutrin' and the Latvian Scarlet Pimpernel he became. [p58] Now Ruff has unearthed the facts to tell the whole story.

For all of his obsessive searching, Ruff isn't possessive about his historical turf. Despite being a 're-

tired anarchist' he clearly respects copper-turned-historian Donald Rumbelow, who saved the police files on the Houndsditch case when they were put out for burning. That made this book possible, even if they must agree to disagree on key interpretations. Ruff's desire to write social history, rather than just solve a murder mystery allows him to put events in a much broader (and more violent) context.

The chain of events that would lead to Sidney Street began in 1905. The Russian empire was convulsed by revolts, and in Latvia the struggle was at its bitterest. 'In the countryside, with political meetings outlawed, village churches became a natural focus of revolutionary agitation At one of these church demonstrations a local baron, incensed by the revolutionary speeches, pulled out a pistol and opened fire on the congregation. And when a socialist in the audience took the gun off him to stop him shooting anybody else, the man who *disarmed* the baron was arrested and received four years in prison where he died. The baron walked away scot-free.' [p66-67] Ruff, in his account of revolt met with state terror, shows why the revolutionaries adopted such fierce resistance. The picture that stayed with me was Ruff's pen portrait of one of Žāklis's comrades: 'into the room came the tall, skinny figure of Jēkabs Dubelšteins (Jēpis); twenty-three years old, poorly dressed in a flat cap, scarf and overcoat, into which his hands were thrust (the overcoat pockets had been cut away to allow him to keep both hands on the two heavy Mauser pistols he invariably carried slung beneath his coat).' [p101-2] Žāklis was a central figure in this resistance, and led a group of fighters to break into Riga's central prison to save two comrades from execution. As if that wasn't enough, he also took part in the attack on the Riga headquarters of the secret police (containing 160 soldiers) to liberate six more.

When the socialist movement 'stepped back' to try parliamentary tactics, Žāklis and his comrades broke with them and formed the Latvian anarchist movement. Ruff quotes an article by Žāklis from the summer of 1906, 'summarised in the files of the Riga police department as, "a sarcastic attack on the Social Democratic idea of calling a meeting after the revolution to draw up the laws of a new society, and putting forward instead the anarchist idea of a society without laws (or private property, or private or state privileges, state power, etc.)"' [p126] As well as the war of words with the socialists, the anarchists were also involved in a shooting war. Ruff describes a siege in Riga which could be the template for the one at Sidney Street: 'While still firing his Mauser, [Kārlis] Krieviņš hung a red cloth from the window, like a banner, and the soldiers outside could hear the defiant anarchists inside singing revolutionary songs at the tops of their voices. When the police finally burst into the flat, the wounded Krieviņš shot himself. Anna Caune, already mortally wounded, was shot dead by the police where she lay.' [p130]

Even in exile in London, the Latvian anarchists took the same approach. Ruff reports their offer of 'armed assistance to the strike committee at some London East End factory' being turned down in 1909. They 'had been conditioned by the workers' struggle in Latvia to see the class war as literally just that: *war*. The inability (or refusal) to accept that different social conditions require different methods of struggle contributed in no small measure to the tragic outcome of the events that lay ahead of them.' [p186]

Reading about anarchism and political violence, I sometimes find myself thinking that revenge becomes tempting when you believe there'll be no justice. In this case, the police got their revenge (three dead anarchists for three dead policemen) but were stymied by that very fact in trying to bring anyone else to book. Ruff points out that 'it is doubtful whether all of the people acquitted would have been' had all the evidence in police hands been used in the Houndsditch trial. 'The judicial murders of Svards and Sokolov posed a problem of arithmetic for the court. The prosecution claimed that four men and a woman had been at Houndsditch. If the defendants were guilty as charged, then the men who died at Sidney Street must have been innocent. The political implications for Home Secretary Churchill were too catastrophic to contemplate.' [p229-30] It's hard not to agree that the prosecution 'threw' the trial in order to spare Churchill's blushes. This also goes some way to explaining the notoriety of Peter the Painter. The London police had no further interest in him, but didn't announce the fact, so feeding the legend.

A Towering Flame has a large cast, from artists and political leaders-to-be to a KGB atom spy. At times, following the lives of those caught up in the London events gives us a Latvian history of the twentieth century: both Jēkabs Peterss (Jacob Peters), acquitted in 1911 and Žāklis's old comrade Kristaps Salniņš (Christopher Salnin) went on to play major roles in the soviet regime after 1917. I was glad of the photo section as well as the list of principal characters (and their many aliases). After reading *A Towering Flame* you'll end up knowing more Latvian words than you do now. Ruff has found two unpublished memoirs of Latvian revolutionaries in the Latvian National Archives. Both confirm that it was Žāklis who was known as *Pēteris Mālderis*, Peter the Painter. But *mālderis* isn't 'painter' in the sense of painter and decorator, or portrait artist. *Mālderis* means 'crude dauber' 'implying that he wasn't a very good artist, or may have believed himself to be better than he was.'! [p24]

In telling the story of Jānis Žāklis, the 1905 revolution in Latvia, and the anarchist movement it spawned, Ruff avoids the traps of simplistic celebration or condemnation. It's a marvellous work of historical rediscovery. The story of how Ruff unearthed the truth about Peter the Painter is fascinating in itself. It could almost be done as an Ealing comedy:

'The Englishman who came looking for dynamite, interviewed the KGB and ended up finding love': Ruff describes his wife Irene Huls as his 'secret weapon' in his search. It's fitting that this book, having been a bestseller in Latvia is now available in English. But there's still a twist: this is a limited edition aimed at tempting a publisher into producing a regular UK edition. When will we see it in libraries?

And what of Peter the Painter? The mystery man has kept some of his secrets, but Ruff has discovered the where and how of his last disappearance. The final words of the book reflect on Žāklis's fate, but also show what Ruff has learned himself: 'survival can demand as much bravery as the willingness to die for a noble cause'.

John Patten

A Towering Flame : The Life & Times of 'Peter the Painter' by Philip Ruff

Riga: Dienas Gramata, 2018. Revised and updated from the 2012 edition (which was translated into Latvian). 350 pages. ISBN 9789934546563 €10.85 Available from

<https://www.janisroze.lv/en/gramatas/dailliteratura/memuarliteratura-biografiski-apraksti/towering-flame-a-the-life-times-of-peter-the-painter.html> ■

The Anarchists in London 1935-1955 : a Personal Memoir by Albert Meltzer [Review]

This account of London's anarchist movement, originally published in 1976, has just been reprinted by Freedom Press. There's an extra short introduction and epilogue (bravely trying to sum up the last forty years of British anarchism in two pages).

I found it a pleasure to read and interesting to see some familiar themes again: Albert was often underwhelmed by intellectuals, and always keen to record the contribution of unknown militants who made up the backbone of the movement. Here he also frequently laments the lack of structures – even cultural ones – to keep militants in touch (something the Anarchist Black Cross and *Black Flag* were obviously meant to remedy).

Some of it is very quotable: 'most English barristers are utterly useless at anything but fixing their wigs and collecting their guineas' (p73).

A memoir like this won't be the last word, but it provides many interesting threads to pull. It's not been footnoted which on balance seems the right choice. Unfortunately the OCR gremlins have turned Emidio Recchioni into 'Ernidio' (Something to fix in the *next* printing).

This edition includes a note that Albert's use of 'communism' refers only to Marxist-Leninism but lacks one saying that 'libertarian' here refers to the anti-authoritarian wing of socialism. That might have been useful.

When the second edition of *The Albert Memorial* was being put together, I recall one of Albert's comrades saying 'I miss the old rascal'. Now we have a chance to enjoy some of his work again.

The Anarchists in London 1935-1955 : a Personal Memoir by Albert Meltzer. Freedom Press, 2018
ISBN 9781904491293 (£7)

<https://freedompress.org.uk/store-2/products/the-anarchists-in-london-1935-55/> ■

Anarchist History Roundup July 2018

The Rag-Pickers' Puigcerdá Manifesto: Fight for History

The writing of Anarchist history is a scene of conflict. Antonio Gascón and Agustín Guillamón declare:

'Faced with the growing bringing of the profession of historian into disrepute, and in spite of whatever honorable and outstanding examples there may be around, we, Antonio Gascón and Agustín Guillamón, abjure the description 'historian' in the aim of averting undesirable and unpleasant confusion: grounds enough for us lay claim to the honest pursuit of **collectors of ancient testimonies** and papers: rag-pickers of history.'

You can read the manifesto at

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/4tmqmn>. Their piece Antonio Martín Escudero (1895-1937), 'The Durruti of the Cerdaña', which will give you the background to the manifesto is at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/cc2h2r>.

Tyneside Anarchist Archive

There's a growing number of anarchist archives online (see <http://spiritofrevolt.info/> and <http://www.thesparrowsnest.org.uk/> for starters). Now there's one devoted to the North East of England at

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

Some of the items here are tantalising – we only get to see the cover of the dissertation on 'Anarchism in North East England (1886-1990)' – but the commentary shows it's done by people who know what they're talking about (see the comments about anarchists from different groups working together against the Poll Tax). It might even become the regional equivalent of the Irish Anarchist History collection (<https://irishanarchisthistory.wordpress.com/>).

Working Class History Podcast: John Barker Interview

Working Class History is a podcast devoted to a history from below approach: 'History isn't made by kings or politicians, it is made by us: billions of ordinary people.' This is a two-part interview with John Barker. It covers not just his own background but the general 1960s context of working class 'hedonism

and audacity' and capitalist offensive to restore order. Thankfully, in discussing the Angry Brigade John Barker has a sense of proportion and humour (he's open about the lack of 'criminal nous') rather than striking a nostalgic radical pose (no 'Look at me, I was an urbane gorilla').

Barker is good on the importance of the trial: both the effort the defendants put into explaining their anti-elitist politics and why a jury trial made that important.

The thing I found most interesting was his reflections on the collapse of the post-war consensus: "My mum and dad and a lot of others they fought this war. They fought this war for the state.

- World War Two?

Yes, World War Two, they fought this, right? And in a way they had to be rewarded. And us, the kids, we got the reward. We got free university education and all this. And this...

- Without fighting the war

Without fighting the war. And this was a reward for the children of the parents who'd done it. I only think about this in retrospect but I'm sure this was the case and, you know, in a certain time around 1975 the ruling class suddenly said 'Fuck this, we've paid you off now, you're not having any.' Because, you know, you could say, 'Oh well, maybe, from one point of view, you could say we took the piss, actually.' [laughter] Having this relatively easy situation we took the piss but this was a whole, you know, this wasn't just a few, you know, dropout layabouts, this was, I think, the young working class actually was assertive."

The WCH team have put in footnotes. There's a nice bit where North American comrades are told that 'dustman' is British English for 'garbage collector' – but we also learn that the South Wales terms was 'ashman'.

The first part of the interview is at

<https://workingclasshistory.com/2018/03/07/episode-2-the-angry-brigade-part-1/>

Sparks of Hope (reflections on early anarchist papers) by Barry Pateman

You can now get it as a digital album

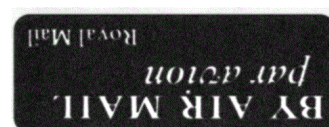
<https://goodfriendrecords.bandcamp.com/album/sparks-of-hope-reflections-on-early-anarchist-papers>

Anarchist history on screen

Video footage of Leah Feldman, Albert Meltzer, Leo Rosser and Phil Ruff can be seen at

https://archive.org/details/@kate_sharpley.

These are unedited tapes from an anarchist history project involving Leo Rosser filmed in the 1980s. Phil Ruff talks about the Siege of Sidney Street in the very early stages of his researches which led to his book *A Towering Flame : The Life & Times of 'Peter the Painter'* (2018) [reviewed in this issue]. ■



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