

K.S.L.

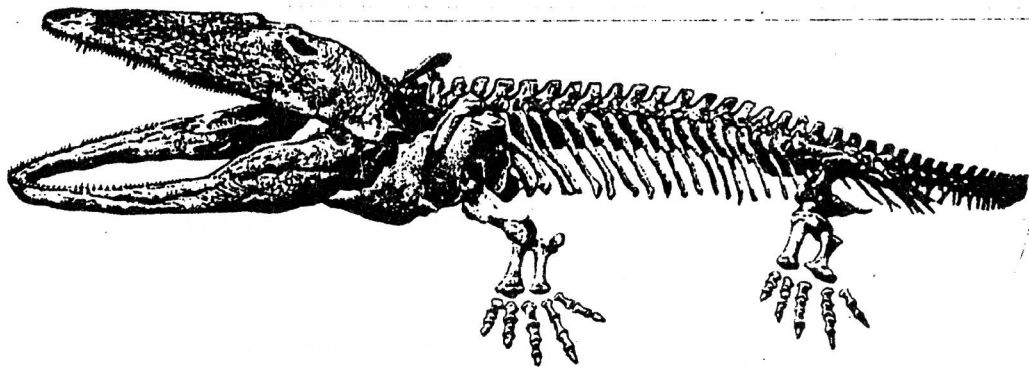
BULLETIN OF THE KATE SHARPLEY LIBRARY no. 1 50p

THE PURPOSE OF HISTORY

THE KATE SHARPLEY LIBRARY, created some years ago but dormant for want of premises, has been re-vamped and will be operative from November 1991.

It will contain the archives of domestic and international Anarchist activism and research into its past history with a view to influencing its future.

Details of its progress will be given in this and future bulletins



Draft Statutes of the (reconstituted) Kate Sharpley Library

1. The library, originally set up in 121 Railton Road by comrades since moved to Australia, and named in memory of a workingclass anarchist militant, is for the preservation of records of the anarchist struggle in Britain and so far as possible elsewhere. It aims to help activists in their current struggles, to diffuse the knowledge of anarchism and to help prepare for genuine anarchist research and a comprehensive history of anarchism.

2. To prevent its becoming either a personal library or to be used for the building of an esoteric cult, Trustees will ensure continuity of the original policy and the assets of the library.

3. The service will be free to members of various activist groups wishing to make use of same. All however are invited to pass over books, records and ephemera in the knowledge that this will be preserved as part of the records of the movement.

4. Material cannot be lent by post but studied at any time convenient to whoever is staffing the library at the time, and the user. Photocopying will be possible when resources allow. It is hoped to begin in November 91.

5. Individuals and institutions wishing to engage in academic anarchist research but not involved in anarchist struggle may have access to the archives as Outside Subscribers on the same conditions on payment of \$10 p.a. (£50 to institutions). In the interests of security, certain material may be classified and withheld from all viewers, and will be kept elsewhere.

6. The range of the library will be anarchism, syndicalism, libertarian and council communism, class struggle history, and related subjects where helpful to the study of same - e.g. Marxism, Fascism (history where relevant), Suffragism, Capitalism and Imperialism (history in particular) and resistance.

7. In addition to the Trustees there will be a list

of Sponsors who will be asked to attend an annual meeting to confirm the Library is fulfilling its originally intended function. Such Sponsors need not necessarily be in agreement with the principles or programme of anarchism, but should wish to preserve its history and prevent its becoming a cult interest.

8. Among the Trustees there will be a working committee.

9. Purchases to the library will be made from time to time, and to avoid any appeals for financial contributions, other than from Subscribers, for the maintenance, upkeep, acquisitions to and insurance for the library, books redundant to requirements will be sold. It is hoped that all those anxious to preserve the history of the struggle will contribute books, videos, documents, posters etc and also sociological books which may supplement our list.

10. An occasional bulletin (of which this is the first) will be published to keep all informed of our activities, for which a small subscription will be made.

11. The library will be kept separate in a private room. Its whereabouts will not be publicly advertised until it has its own premises, and is insured, but may be viewed in the meantime, by appointment (after November 91).

The draft constitution of the KSL speaks for itself. What is the necessity for a library? The purpose of this library is to make history as well as record it. The distortion of what has happened in the past, the deliberate neglect of the working class contribution to its own theory and history, mean that the academics can mould a new and different and reactionary movement out of the debris of our ideas. The anarchist movement has suffered most from this but we will not let them get away with it any longer.

Real Anarchism is not the cult of a few "well known" quasi-father figures of the past, any more than real Buddhism is the worship of Gautama Buddha as a god. Anarchists in practice do no more care about what such persons said or wrote unless they happen to have said something with which they agree. The cult of researching their acquaintanceships, personal life and influences upon them is a deliberate ploy by State-sponsored academics, but it has nothing to do with us. The personality cult, the worship of individuals and the imposition of bourgeois ideas lead to a phoney anarchism which may flourish but is not the real thing.

We need to record and research the history of anarchist working class movements, and have already gathered material (yet to be classified) on the history of the anarchist movement in countries as far apart as Roumania and China, incidents ranging from the Italian struggles against Mussolini to the time Cerrada Santos tried to bomb Franco from the air at a fishing fleet regatta, from the spread of syndicalist ideas in Britain to the rise and fall of the movement in Korea. Publishing it all to a wider audience is a far greater task than we could achieve at the KSL (as at present constituted) but the material will be there for those who can do it

It is sometimes said that if you don't learn from history you make the same mistakes again. But it is also true that if you are taught your own history by outside influences, you are doomed to make the mistakes they want you to make.

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BM\HURRICANE, LONDON W.C.1. 3XX

The story of the Moscow gold

How the Spanish war was lost

Francisco Olaya 'El Oro de Negrin' (Ediciones Madre Tierra, _Mostoles 1990)

This book is the product of almost thirty years investigation, involving examination of thousands of books and pamphlets, around a million documents, and the combing of 32 archives in Spain and beyond. Olaya's work is an attempt to come up with a satisfactory explanation of the denouement of the Spanish civil war. He is highly critical of the leadership of the PSOE (Socialist Workers Party of Spain, now in power) during the civil war.

In great and documented detail Olaya examines the whole topic of what has hitherto been known as the 'Moscow gold' and which he re-christens 'Negrin's gold'. gold to the tune of 5,500 million pesetas (1937). About half of this sum wound up in the Soviet Union. A small portion went to France. The remainder passed to the republican government's purchasing commissions, set up by Indalecio Prieto of the PSOE to obtain war material.

In 1954 Jose Peirats was commissioned by the CNT-in-exile to write his monumental five volume 'La CNT en la revolucion espanola'. In the course of his researches he was accorded access to documentation belonging to the CNT and in London in the keeping of Polgare. When Polgare died in 1957, access to the documents was offered to Olaya by CNT colleagues aware of

his researches. Among the documents, he discovered copies of 52 letters written to Negrin by his special agent, identified only as 'C'.

One of the reports from 'C' is an account of an exchange between Salvador de Madariaga (the philosopher and original war-time Ambassador to Britain) and the British Foreign Minister, in which British preoccupation with helping the Francoist side was evident. Olaya, using textual clues, attempted to identify 'C'.

At first Olaya suspected one Calvino, who had figured in all the Purchasing Commissions ('C' had complained of corruptions by these commissions). Calvino however denied this and further investigations led Olaya to conclude 'C' had been PSOE luminary Celestino Alvarez. This was confirmed to him by two agents who had been operating on behalf of the CNT-FAI in Paris at the time. Further inquiries led Olaya to records from Turkish customs and cargo checks by a French secret agent) of shipping that passed through the Dardanelles en route to Spain with foodstuffs and war materials. Olaya lists this information in an appendix to his book.

A record of the accidental discovery (at the bottom of a crate of goods being returned to the USSR as defective or unusable) of gold led Olaya to query the conventional account of the shipment of Spain's gold reserves to the USSR 'for safe keeping'. Other seemingly unrelated evidence led to the conclusion that, aside from the usual shipments, gold was removed from Spain via the diplomatic pouch to Prague and also, unrecorded, aboard other vessels.

Olaya holds that the war was lost by the republic due to corruption in the Purchasing Commissions plus the failure of Negrin and Prieto (when so informed by 'C') to take remedial action.

Olaya argues that half of the gold

reserves were sent to the USSR and half to France, partly for the use of the Purchasing Commissions and partly to open accounts in the name of specific individuals... an account in Negrin's name held 390 million francs, one in the name of Julio Lopez Masegase held 198 millions. Olaya's book details all these. He says that so far no account has been taken of the assets seized from Franco's supporters, reckoned at almost three times the value of the gold held in Spain's treasury.

Franco was later able to recover a part of what had been described as Negrin's personal treasure. Negrin's ability to realise the value of his gold in France makes nonsense of the claim that gold had to be removed to the USSR for safekeeping. Olaya states: 'I wanted to check out everything said by C who was Negrin's informant on activities taking place abroad but I wanted confirmation from other sources. To my surprise, I was to amass a wealth of documents that confirmed and expanded upon the whole business'.

In 1988 Olaya's book in manuscript was a finalist for the 'Espejo de Espana' prize awarded by Planeta publishers. However, Planeta refused to publish it, as did all of the other major publishers in Spain. As a result, the book has been issued by Ediciones Madre Tierra (Mother Earth) of Mostoles. Its author claims: 'The book is based on documents and we are not championing any interests or making partisan propaganda, merely telling the whole truth'.

The book's appearance has coincided with a PSOE desire to sell itself to the electorate under the slogan of '100 years of integrity with the Socialist Party'. Olaya himself has explained 'it may appear that the book has emerged at an opportune time, but no, that is mere coincidence'.

Paul S.

Was Tolstoy An Anarchist?

The two caricatures of Anarchism

Government is Violence: Essays on Anarchism and Pacifism, by Leo Tolstoy (as edited by David Stephens) Phoenix Press

There may be an obvious answer as to why those who think Tolstoy the greatest mind of the century assume they know better than he did himself as to what he believed. In an introduction to a new selection of Tolstoy's essays, David Stephens trashes Black Flag for saying he wasn't an Anarchist (nor was he as supposed a Christian or a Pacifist). Stephens cites Woodcock to prove his case, wow, that's us squashed. A few pages later we read Tolstoy never called himself an Anarchist, but how would he know what he was? (He never read Prof. Woodcock).

Stephens also admits Tolstoy attacked the Church - and was excommunicated for his opposition to Christianity as generally understood. But how would the Church know? They hadn't read Woodcock either. (Read his 'Resurrection' for a bit of superb blasphemy, he wasn't half as bad as admirers of his writings make you think).

There is no mention of his not being a Pacifist in this book as his writings on guerrilla warfare are dismissed as belonging to the time when he was a 'dissolute novelist'. (Consider Shakespeare's philosophy, but you must start from King Lear! When he wrote Hamlet he was still a dissolute playwright).

Stephens thinks rejection of the Count as an Anarchist is because of an 'antipathy' existing between aspects of anarchist thought - a typical liberal pacifist remark (usually they put it down to personal antipathy, never to fundamental political differences: they have no politics). 'Uncompromising rejection' of Tolstoyans - rather than Tolstoy - he thinks, finds no echo among Anarchists in other countries and he cites Germany, though the kingdom-of-love-within-you-resist-not-evil crap gets very short shrift there in anarchist circles unless you count the Anglo-American influenced peace-firsters as anarchists when they're not voting Green.

What did Tolstoy really think about Anarchism? In 'On Anarchy' he writes: "The Anarchists are right in everything...they are mistaken only in thinking that Anarchy can be instituted by revolution". In this edition, inserted before the word revolution is [violent, Ed]! Ignoring the editorial advice that Tolstoy didn't mean what he said, the message is plain and later made plainer. The transformation to anarchy, used as a synonym for the Kingdom of Heaven, is within you, transform your lives, do as you would be done by, rulers and rulers alike obey the teachings of Jesus and ignore those laid down by Christianity and the State. Live under tyranny but do not join it. You can't

change it (not just by "violence" but at all) but you can change yourself.

This is Anarchism turned inside-out and made into its opposite. In other hands it is an excuse to attack Anarchism, but nothing else, as 'violent' (echoed by the media and judges, ignoring Tolstoy's comments on government) unless accepting impossible conditions. It plainly differs from anarchism as conceived by working people in terms of struggle. It doesn't work - Tolstoy's own life was a testimony it didn't, as also shown by the neo-Tolstoyans who worship their State hand outs and reject revolution, or the drop-out middle class woolly-hats/woolly-minds regarding themselves as peasants. It is the alternative caricature of Anarchism to the mindless-violent caricature it originated.

The politico most influenced by Tolstoy was Gandhi, neither an Anarchist, a Christian nor precisely a Pacifist (he didn't mind people getting killed for his glory so long as they didn't kill). Tolstoy's problem was the old 'Buddhist' one: when he said stop worshipping Jesus and instead listen to what he had to say, his followers worshipped Tolstoy instead and never listened to him either (not that it was always worthwhile doing so).

Another lasting minor Buddha was Mary Baker Eddy. There are Christians who are scientists, but her philosophy of Christian Science is neither scientific nor (as normally understood) Christianity. It is a magic cult. Similarly, it is not to say pacifists (as the term is normally understood) or Christians could not possibly be Anarchists. They could. But the words Christian anarchism or Anarcho-Pacifism are usually synonyms for a type of liberalism, often the worst kind.

A.M.

ANARCHIST LITERATURE

"IT MUST BEGIN AGAIN"

In preparing material for the Kate Sharpley Library, we came across a large number of books and pamphlets, none of which have ever been available in English before. In cases where these are by French, Italian or Spanish authors, they have been translated, typewritten and in one or two cases even typeset! Only all that ever gets into print is "The Libertarian Thought of an Obscure Pacifist" or "Cor What a Barney."

Unpublished books include Facerias, actually proof-ready. There are also introductions to anarchist thinkers (usual lines, usual people), an outstanding book on Fascism, another on the Tejero coup, as well as material on various aspects of anarchism, Spanish and

Mexican revolutions, Magon etc, security services, assassination of Ben Barba, etc

The autobiography of Makhno is awaiting publication, but Elephant were going to do it.. Investigative Researchers Handbook etc well deserve to be re-published. Well, more than a lot that is. But we need to publish so much.

This is in addition to the two original pamphlets and one reprint I have input. Also the two volumes of Peirats on the History of the CNT have been translated but not printed, and there are print ready pamphlets on Bakunin etc

We haven't prepared all the titles but there is a wealth of anarchist material

Intelligently written and it's bloody criminal that all we get printed in England are FP's reprints - the best of which is the second part of Berkman's ABC (somewhat outdated when it was written 65 years ago - for instance, his comparison of Anarchism with Bolshevism - both want the same thing but Anarchism by free agreement! Stalin was already in power!).

What can we do about it? The problem with publishing oneself is some nit says the price is too high, photocopies it on a university machine and gives it away free, then wonders why independent anarchist publishers go broke despite a successful record of publishing.

Are there any genuine unsubsidised anarchist publishers still active? Or genuine commercial publishers who will handle anarchist stuff?

LIBRARY NEWS

Three hundred titles have already been catalogued in English-language pamphlets and leaflets (there are more to get round to plus a host of foreign languages). Books are also being catalogued, and we hope for a partial list in Bulletin No. 2. The KSL Library now includes the Black Flag archives, and much International First of May Solidarity Movement material is being sorted out from various sources. Cienfuegos\Refract hopes to regain its archives and place them at our disposal. The library collection also includes letters and documents from the war-time AFB, runs of countless Anarchist magazines and papers, posters, pictures (though we're still short on video cassettes).

We ask our groups within our movement to contribute material that would otherwise be lost so that our traditions can be preserved for future generations who may be able to complete the work we've started. So much can finish in the trashcan that would encourage the movement when it's really got the opportunity to go ahead.

We will publish in future issues a list of what we need right now but books, periodicals, leaflets, discs tapes, badges, posters, folders, trial proceedings, summonses, minute books can build up our collection.

We intend to publish George Cores's "British Anarchists and their Movement 11883-1939" as the first KSL publication.

correspondence

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES
SUR L'ANARCHISME
avenue de Beaumont 24,
CH - 1012 Lausanne,
Switzerland August 27th 1991

Dear Friend,

Thank you for sending information about the Kate Sharpley Library, and our best wishes for this young sister. We shall certainly mention it in our next Bulletin. You are welcome to visit us at any time if you are interested in the way we shelve and catalogue and solve the periodicals problem.

Fraternally

Marie-Christine

Correspondence for the Bulletin is invited, also anarchist research complementary to that contained in the KSL. The Bulletin will be produced quarterly.

Bulletin subscription - (Home) £2.50, (abroad) £5.00. including postage for five issues.
c/o B.M. Hurricane, London, W.C.1 3XX

NEXT ISSUE

How Newcastle fought fascism in 1930s (and its lessons for today)

First Catalogue Listings