

Salvador Puig Antich: verdict overturned

Salvador Puig Antich was killed, garrotted, by the Spanish State on the 2 March 1974. ‘Since that sad 2nd of March, 1974, when the executioner cut short our brother’s life, we have sworn, practically without words, that we would defend Salvador’s name, as an idealistic youth with a good heart and a great sense of justice, who took responsibility for his convictions and was profoundly committed. We could never let him go down in the history books as a murderer and bandit, which is how the Francoist regime presented him in the media in those treacherous days. That lie only served to cover up their own brutal cruelty.’[1]

After years of campaigning by his sisters, the Spanish government overturned the verdict on the 16th October 2024. “‘We have been fighting for this for 50 years. For the dignity of our brother Salvador. This moment is very important for us, we are touched and without words,” said his sister Imma Puig Antich.’[2]

Remembering Salvador is important to his political comrades too. The Memoria Libertaria campaign of the Confederación General del Trabajo have issued a statement ‘[R]egardless of what a minister does today, it is the judicial power that must annul, extinguish, render void and communicate to the public that, in compliance with the Law, the Court Martials and their sentences are repealed, that Francoist legislation is invalidated and that it has taken us more than 80 years to carry this out, how long Francoism seems to us. Every trace of Francoism must be eradicated from any judicial body. Without this step, everything we can do institutionally in the field of Truth, Justice and Reparation will be “siren songs”, clearly ineffective and with the sole purpose of clearing consciences, not of practising true equity and equality with “all the victims of Franco’s fascism”.’[3]

Those comrades were widespread: Salvador was connected to activists in France and to London’s Centro Iberico and the Anarchist Black Cross. ‘When we learnt the news of the execution of Salvador Puig Antich in March 1974, it hit those of us in and around the Anarchist Black Cross with the force of a hammer blow. To be more precise we learnt of his cold-blooded garroting at the hands of the Spanish state whose determined cruelty and malevolence shocked even the most experienced of us. The Spanish and international campaign created to save his life had failed and, as a consequence of this state murder, Puig Antich entered the list of our mar-

tyrs. The date of his execution can be commemorated on Facebook with the requisite sad faces. That simply won’t do.’ [...] ‘Puig Antich’s murder stands out for its brutal cruelty but this volume challenges in every way the image of him as a victim frozen in time. His ideas and those of the comrades around him still need to be thought about and reflected on. I see him and his friends and comrades as those who realized, in the words of British anarchist George Barrett written well before they were born, that “In some near future more of us will see the beauty of the days we let slip so uselessly.” I like to think that they sensed that beauty and went to try to keep it alive and growing.’ [4]

Notes

1, p63 ‘Salvador’s memory (in Mnemosyne’s shadow) by Imma, Montse, Carme and Merçona Puig Antich in *Salvador Puig Antich : Collected Writings on Repression and Resistance in Franco’s Spain* edited by Ricard de Vargas Golarons, translated by Peter Gelderloos.

<https://www.akpress.org/salvadorpuigantich.html>
 (Mnemosyne was the Greek goddess of memory)

2, Spain overturns Francoist death sentence against anarchist Puig Antich after 50 years

<https://www.catalannews.com/culture/item/spain-overturns-francoist-death-sentence-against-anarchist-puig-antich-after-50-years>

3, El ministro de Memoria Democrática anula la sentencia de Salvador Puig Antich

<https://memorialibertaria.org/el-ministro-de-memoria-democratica-anula-la-sentencia-de-salvador-puig-antich/>

4, “An Affirmation of that for which I have fought.” by Barry Pateman [a review of *Salvador Puig Antich: Collected Writings on Repression and Resistance in Franco’s Spain*] In KSL: Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library No. 104, November 2021

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/66t2x1>

The Kate Sharpley Library published a pamphlet devoted to *Salvador Puig Antich and the MIL* in 2008. You can read it online at

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

Inside: Kate Austin; Anarchist Libraries; Anarchists and the Miners;

Some recent additions

To be frank that title is a misnomer. What it really should say is something like “some items that have just about made it to the catalogue – well nearly anyway!” That is a bit ungainly so the shorter version will have to do. When we talk about cataloguing please don’t think it is a sharp and smooth operation at the KSL. If it were only that simple!! Let me give you an example. One of the writers we mention below is the writer and literary critic Louis Adeane. He published a book of poems called “**The Night Loves Us**” **Delphic Press, 1948**. There you go, then. Just put the correct details in the correct fields and it is all done. Catalogued into existence. But wait, your cataloguer muses fingers poised over the keys. Didn’t Albert McCarthy have something to do with the Delphic Press? I believe he did. And didn’t Albert McCarthy publish a catalogue of jazz music? And haven’t we got some of the volumes on the shelves? Five hours later your cataloguer is attempting to answer the question what were the colour of Kropotkin’s trousers that he wore at a meeting in 1897 and the Adeane sits there, still waiting for love.

Bearing that in mind here are some items that have made or nearly made the catalogue:

The Unstoppable Anarchist Ersilia Cavedagni and Her Selected Writings

There is no publisher on this 40pp pamphlet but you can download it on-line from the Louise Crowley Library which is doing some great work preserving the memories and effects of anarchism in the Puget Sound region of the US. This pamphlet is part of that work and it challenges what we think we know about Italian anarchism in the United States from the 1890s onwards. Women suddenly appear as militants and, guess what, some Italian anarchist men come across as utter fuckwits. Cavedagni’s writings are perceptive and thoughtful tinged with a healthy dose of anger. One senses there is more to be found and it will be an exciting journey discovering it.

Plain Words: The “Good War” of Italian Immigrant Anarchists in the United States 1914-1920 Roofdruk, roofdruk@riseup.net, 2024

This covers some similar territory to the pamphlet listed above. This 334 page book (no author is identified) is translated from the Italian and is an account of the actions of some anarchists around the newspaper “**Cronaca Sovversiva**” as attacks on Italian anarchists by the police became more frequent. Some of these events appeared in Paul Avrich’s “**Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background**” (1991) but there is some new and interesting material here. Written from the perspective of the anarchists this book offers unwavering support for these comrades throughout the pages. Some may find this a difficult book but it is essential reading. There is also a troubling Appendix on

the role of Mario Buda with concerns that his role as an agent of the state may have gone much deeper than Avrich suggests.

Poetry and Poverty No 1 (London) and Poetry and Poverty No 3 (London).

Produced in the late 1940s and early 1950s these two volumes feature the poetry of Louis Adeane in Volume One and some critical writing by D.S. Savage in Volume 3. By Volume Three the journal was far more professionally produced. Both were anarchist writers and literary critics who, with others, attempted to delineate a theory of anarchist literary criticism. If that sounds a bit on the periphery I think that reading their overall work makes you think again. It has a surprising relevance to it, I sense. The same donor who gave us these titles also gave us the book of Adeane poems mentioned above and some interesting Free Age Press pamphlets by Tolstoy. Thank you!!

Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis Archief. Uitgave Van Het F.D.N.-Fonds, Amsterdam 1956, 79pp.

A catalogue of Domela Nieuwenhuis’ work which, I guess by it’s date of publication is probably out of date. That said it is a good place to begin to think about this prolific Dutch anarchist writer. Freedom Press published the pamphlet **The Pyramid of Tyranny (1909)** which we scanned and put on the website recently [<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/v9s6xb>] and there seems to be a lot more interesting material that has yet to make it into English.

Edwin Hughes. An Apostle of Freedom: A Tale of the Anarchists. J.W.Arrowsmith, Bristol, 1895.

As far as we can tell there was a whole genre of pot-boiler fiction featuring anarchists published in England during the 1890s. This is no better or worse than the rest of them. The anarchists are unreal there is a romantic interest (lots of looks, little touching) and an unlikely plot with underdeveloped characters. Perhaps that’s why this cataloger enjoyed reading it so much. Some lovely illustrations though.

So, as the sun sinks below a pile of papers and the cataloger sits sniffing some books and pondering did Malatesta like fried bread we wish you well in your reading and thinking.

Barry Pateman

Licia Pinelli (1928-2024)

On the morning of November 11, 2024, Licia Rognini Pinelli left us. We will surely remember her great determination and extraordinary commitment throughout her life in the struggle for truth and justice – not only regarding the fate of her husband Pino Pinelli – that made her an outstanding figure in the history of twentieth-century Italy.

For fifty years this determination also manifested

itself in the painstaking collection of all the newspaper articles that spoke of that story “almost only hers,” of Pino’s murder, bombs, plots and State mystifications; we want to thank her again for allowing us to collect and digitally preserve the fruit of her efforts.

We will do everything we can to continue to preserve and tell the story of Pino and Licia, a founding part of our archive. A story not only ours, but everyone’s. Our thoughts are with their daughters Claudia and Silvia and their families, to whom we send a big hug.

From the Centro Studi Libertari / Archivio G. Pinelli di Milano, <https://centrostudilibertari.it/>

Archivio Licia Rognini Pinelli

A very important collection of the project “Pinelli: a history” is represented by the Licia Rognini Pinelli Archive (1969-2024), widow of Giuseppe (Pino) Pinelli. The archive consists of two series: “Correspondence” (1969-2024) and “Press Clippings” (1969-2015).

The “Correspondence” series includes the correspondence held by Licia during the same time frame with different subjects, including a good part of the letters she herself sent. The latter is not currently available for consultation for privacy reasons.

The “Press Clippings” series, which has been digitized and published online, includes thousands of articles pertaining to the investigations into the Piazza Fontana massacre, the trials, the inquiries regarding Pinelli’s assassination, the demonstrations, the trial and private vicissitudes of Pietro Valpreda; in a word, any article published in the main Italian newspapers (but also some minor and movement ones) from 1969 to 2015 that concerned Giuseppe Pinelli and the events of Piazza Fontana. The press clippings are arranged chronologically within subseries named after the newspapers’ mastheads.

Browse the archive:

<https://omeka.bida.im/s/pinelli/item/130>

Anarchist Communist Memories of the Miners Strike [Pamphlet Review]

Miner Conflict – Major Impact : an Anarchist Communist perspective on the Miners’ Strike 1984-85 by Dreyfus

In August 2024 we put a lot of thoughts and reports on the miners’ strike in our bulletin. We also asked ‘Would you like to write your account or notes on what was done in your area?’[1] This response comes from a comrade who was in the Careless Talk Collective (Stoke-on-Trent).

Careless Talk were part of a network of anarchist/council communist solidarity that’s hardly known now ‘because our aim was community and solidarity in

class struggle not the self-promotion and recruitment practiced by the capitalist left.’[p.9]

In the early days, ‘With such a strong sense of solidarity and trust in their union the NUM, we were welcomed politely, but not with great interest.’[p.6] An appendix from the time praising the women’s support groups shows some of the tensions between union structures and more radical perspectives that the strike threw up. It’s interesting to see how these critics of trade unionism got on with the most radical miners. I enjoyed the account of a visit to Fitzwilliam (West Yorkshire): ‘This was a very challenging moment to me! I was not just about to “out” myself and others as queer in a hall full of striking miners, but as anti-Labour, anti-union and critical of the leadership of their much revered Arthur Scargill.’[p.26]

The visitors were told “‘We don’t know yet whether you are good lefties or bad lefties and we’ve seen a lot! So long as you remember that this is OUR strike and you are here on our terms. If you behave yourselves and don’t criticise the strike or the Union, I’m sure we’ll all get along just fine”.

[...] ‘We hadn’t drafted anything but knew there was no value to our visit unless we could be honest and transparent no matter what the outcome. Respect and clarity was what we had agreed. It was my turn and remember it well:

“‘Thank you for your welcome. We have no idea whether you will see us as good lefties or bad lefties but we are not here to preach or deceive or to tell anyone how to run a strike. But we should be clear that we have a vested interest in its outcome.

“‘We are not here to lick your arses because you are striking miners. Most of us are queer, unemployed, poor and under attack. Much of what you have experienced here has been experienced in our communities for years.

“‘We are here to share our struggles in solidarity with yours because if you win, our lives get better, and if you lose, our lives get worse. And if we have something we think or want to say about this strike or your union we will do you the honour and courtesy of telling you to your face.”

‘To our surprise and joy we got a rapturous enthusiastic round of cheers and applause followed by a raucous rendition of an Irish republican song! In being invited to sing one back we launched into Tom Robinson’s queer anthem “Glad to be Gay”. [...] We taught them to sing it!’[p.27-28]

Dreyfus shows how and why the anarchists were involved. ‘This wasn’t altruism or an act of goodwill to support our mining communities. [...] This was the instinctive yet enlightened self-interest of class solidarity.’[p.4] Impressionistic in places, ‘Misty early morning picket lines took on a surreal air against the back drop of growing ghost towns’[p.18], elsewhere there’s a comic moment from heckling Kinnock at Hanley, ‘I remember one steward shouting to another “You get him!”, pointing to one of our number. After a

second thinking about it, he responded “No way, YOU get him!” We were secure.’ [p.30]

It’s good to have an anarchist communist view, and one from the potteries. Most importantly, this is history that means something: ‘What remains an enduring impact for me is the experience that class struggle changes people.

‘The lessons the “Left” drew were administrative and all about leadership. They pushed the lessons that the TUC can’t be trusted, that Labour Party is not a friend of our class while continuing to try and infiltrate and take over both. Political memories of that sort of thing are relatively short-lived.

‘What those involved will not unlearn is what it feels like to break with the normality of life under capitalism and, the experience of genuine community and solidarity. This for me was the highpoint. The key point. It continues to point the way forward.’ [p.39-40] *Miner Conflict – Major Impact : an Anarchist Communist perspective on the Miners’ Strike 1984-85* is at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/wstswm>

Note

1, ‘Invisible or just underrated? Thoughts on anarchist solidarity with the Miners’ Strike of 1984-85’ In *KSL: Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library* No. 114-115, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/6q58vk>

[The Freedom Press Library in 1979: Plans and problems]

If money – or rather, the lack of it – limits our activities in Angel Alley, a shortage of collaborators runs it a close second.

We have in mind the Freedom Press Library, which as pointed out in these Notes, must remain inoperative so long as we cannot find a comrade, preferably a librarian, sufficiently interested in the potential of an anarchist library to assume the responsibility of organising it on a long term basis. We have had over the past twenty years so many enthusiasts who have been more concerned with going through the library for their own ends, generally leaving it in greater disarray than it was before they started, that we now appear to some friends as dogs in the manger when we do not automatically welcome with open arms every newcomer who wants to get the library operational in double quick time! That we do want to have a working anarchist library no one can surely doubt seeing that we have never stopped adding contemporary material to it. But what form should an anarchist library take? What purpose should it serve? Who are the kind of people we should seek to attract? Indeed what kind of material should it house? And how should the material be classified?

These and many more questions come to mind if one sees an anarchist library not as a happy hunting ground for the ever-growing number of sociology graduates in search of subjects for their theses but as a

centre generating anarchist ideas and research.

As we see it, the librarian(s) for such a library should be less concerned with librarianship (though it is an essential ingredient) and more with using the library themselves as a means of stimulating their own political imagination and in turn communicating their thoughts to editors and other propagandists, through meetings, discussions, duplicated bulletins at regular intervals, and of course articles for publication. Students in search of a thesis – that is who have time but few ideas – would then be most welcome, our librarian taking the place of their professors too busy entertaining on TV quiz programmes, or churning out more pot-boilers for the commercial market, to have the time to think and to stimulate their students.

An anarchist library in our opinion should not even attempt to emulate the established socio-political libraries. Assuming, materially, that it could, we doubt whether the results would justify the effort and money involved. For those of us who have followed the growth and development of the universally acclaimed Institute of Social History in Amsterdam from its very beginnings it, alas, now points to everything that an anarchist library should avoid if we keep ends always to the forefront. On the other hand the C.I.R.A. (International Centre for Anarchist Research) in Geneva with which our anarchist library would wish to establish close links, lacks funds and staff, and apart from producing its bulletin, the last issue of which is reduced to listing what the professionals call ‘accessions’, nothing emerges to stimulate anarchist propaganda.

Should our anarchist library relegate the autobiographies and biographies to the basement and fill its shelves with books dealing with self-management, land use and ownership, economics, production and distribution, education, housing, etc. ...?

To all those of you who favour the idea of an anarchist library we pose the kind of questions we have been posing ourselves in the hope that you will send us your views.

If the response is encouraging we will certainly arrange a meeting later in the year. All letters will be answered.

‘News From Angel Alley’ *Freedom* (16 June 1979) [See also ‘Rebel Voices Archive; Anarchist Library Project’ <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/612m8b> for Anarchist/ radical libraries in seventies London]

Racism : knowing our enemies [1985]

Only natural?

Racism, that set of dogmatic, cruel and derogatory attitudes that claims one ‘race’ is somehow superior to another, is a huge con worked by the ruling class on the rest of us. There’s nothing natural about it, it’s an artificial attitude that we are taught, and we are taught

it for a reason.

Everywhere in the world, society is divided into classes. While the rich enjoy luxury and privilege, the workers suffer deprivation, repression and degradation. Inevitably, the strains and pressures caused by this system lead to frustration and anger. What better way for the rich to safeguard their system of exploitation than to make sure we take these feelings out on each other instead of our rulers?

Divide and rule

Racists instead of attacking the real enemies prefer to blame other workers who happen to be black or speak a different language. In this way we are always disorganised to fight the real enemy and win the final overthrow of this chaotic system imposed by capitalism.

Sources of infection

Like so many other harmful attitudes, racism starts early, in the home, with ideas we may pick up from our parents and other adults who influence us.

Next comes school, where many racist attitudes are fostered, both openly and implicitly. Books and comics seem to be only about white people – when blacks and asians do appear they have stereotyped images as slaves, servants, street-sweepers, etc. Their behaviour is uncivilised, dirty, aggressive, stupid and sly.

One step on from comics, the gutter press is just as bad, with frequent hysterical outbursts portraying black immigrants, for example, as a life-threatening invasion of colossal magnitude.

People easily absorb these opinions and ideas, forgetting that they benefit only the ruling class.

Proud to be a patriot?

What about patriotism and national pride? Surely a love of country and our national culture are positive feelings? Maybe not. Our simple enjoyment of our own land and language are easily twisted into an attitude that we're superior to anyone who isn't white and BRITISH.

But every country feels that they are best and everyone else second-rate. This is simply another form of racism, whipped up to hysterical levels when it suits our rulers economic interests to go to war.

Then we are sent off to murder people of our own class while the bosses – in each country – laugh all the way to the bank.

Good for business

Racism protects the bosses by acting as a safety valve at times of 'economic crisis'. It's always the colour of peoples' skin that gets the blame for unemployment, for example, or crime on the street. Blame the blacks, not the bosses, we're told. But this lie is easily exposed – just consider Northern Ireland, one of the UK's worst areas of unemployment. Not exactly overrun with Asian immigrants, is it?

Historically, racism was a justification for the slave trade and later colonialism. The pretence was that black people were fit for nothing better, or in some way benefited from these things.

The real enemy

We must combat racism at all times. We know that NO-ONE is racially superior or more important. The real enemy are the bosses and their police.

The working class has no country. Our interests lie with our class, and the struggle between the rulers and the ruled will only be solved in solidarity, with the downtrodden of the world breaking through the boundaries of nationalism and racism.

Remember, regardless of the petty differences of skin colour and nationality, we are in the same boat. Let's organise as a class for the chance to run our own lives.

LIVERPOOL DAM

Direct Action No.26 (July 1985)

<https://libcom.org/article/direct-action-26-july-1985>

Valerie Powels (1950-2011)

One thing leads to another. We have just posted a tribute to Eduardo Pons Prades by Manel Aisa Pampols. It was translated by Valery Powels [Valerie Powels] who, it turns out was a Birmingham anarchist who wound up in Barcelona. Nick Lloyd described her as 'local activist, anarchist and historian who fought doggedly to save the 307 bomb shelter, today an essential visit in understanding Mussolini's murderous bombing of city to help Franco's war' (this on the occasion of a square in Poble-sec being named after her in 2023).

Let us hear from the woman herself:

'I love Poble sec, the district I live in in Barcelona. I love the narrow little streets and the park of Montjuïc behind.

I love its working class history, the sense of community.

Which survives.'

Her website is still live at

<http://refugi307.blogspot.com/> We should remember our history – and our historians!

Remembering Kate Austin, Missouri anarchist & feminist

'An early freethought and free love advocate, Austin was among those influenced by the legacy of the Hay-market anarchists and became a lifelong anarchist communist. [...] In 1901 in the pages of *Free Society*, Austin joined Emma Goldman in defending Leon Czolgosz's attack on President McKinley. Austin was a contributor to *Free Society*, *Firebrand*, *Lucifer*, *the Lightbearer*, and *Discontent*. She died of consumption in Kingman, Kansas, on 28 October 1902 while traveling to Denver.'

[1] From the farm she shared with husband Sam in Missouri, Austin was an integral part of the anarchist movement and its press and took part in debates about anarchism, tactics, feminism and reproductive rights. She also wrote in the broader radical press and be-

longed to the American Press Writers Association, a radical group 'who monitored newspapers for bias and wrote editorials in protest to mainstream papers across the country.' [2]

The hard work of farm life certainly gave Austin a jaundiced view of men who wanted to 'protect' women: 'I've always noticed that the men who talk that way never feel hurt when the angel chops the wood, milks the cow, and builds the fire on a cold morning. He is not afraid of that sort of independence, but only of the kind that might question his authority.' [3]

Free Society printed several tributes after her death. James F. Morton, Jr. wrote 'Herself a revolutionist to the core, and an intense combatant in behalf of her own resolutely uncompromising position, she never departed from the standpoint of fraternal affection for every comrade.' [4]

In a report to the Amsterdam Congress in 1907, Emma Goldman and Max Baginski declared 'Kate Austin, now dead, was one of the most fearless rebels America ever produced. Though her entire life was spent on a distant western farm, lacking opportunities and the association of kindred spirits, Kate Austin succeeded in developing into a clear and concise thinker, fearless in her attacks upon the present system.' [5]

Austin certainly developed her own powers through self-education, having only had a little official schooling. Here's a couple of fragments from her daughter's account of her life to both show and question how isolated she was:

'As a little girl it was one of my almost daily tasks to ride slow-footed Dewey, the burro, two and one-half miles distant to the post office at Caplinger Mills. I carried a bag full of letters to mail and brought back a bag full for her to read and answer. [...] And through all her days Kate Austin's life was the hard life of the farm woman. There were her husband and the five children. And there was her busy life in the farm community among families interdependent upon one another for their pleasures no less than for help in times of sickness and trouble.' [6] It seems to me that Austin was connected, in all sorts of ways to all sorts of people. After her death Giuseppe Ciancabilla paid tribute to her in *Protesta Humana*, recording that she'd sent a photo of herself to 'one of our comrades', signed it 'One of those who was born again Nov. 11, 1887.' [7]

A new phase of remembering Kate Austin happened in the thirties. In her 1931 memoir *Living my Life* Emma Goldman recalled visiting the Austin farm and lamented the death of 'the most daring, courageous voice among the women of America!' [8] Austin's friend Carl Nold wrote a tribute to her in *Man!* [9] Nold was also instrumental in gathering material for the Labadie Collection, and it's likely that included the material by and about Austin that they hold.

Her intense activity in the anarchist and radical press (and making it into the archive) has made Austin 'rememberable': Back in 1996 Howard S. Miller

made a valuable study of this 'midwestern farmwife and mother of five, who wrote revolutionary propaganda at her kitchen table in the evenings after chores.' [10] In 1999 Jessica Moran wrote her thesis on *The Story of Kate Austin: Anarchist Revolutionary Writer* (unpublished). She is also one of Sheila Rowbotham's 'Dreamers of a new day'. [11] A compilation of her writings has been published in French translation. [12] Now a wave of digitisation of primary sources (some undertaken by anarchist 'shade-tree historians' [13] like Historical Seditions) means her writings are now more available than ever.

The Kate Sharpley Library has a page devoted to her at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/d7wn1c>. There's more to read out there and probably a lot more to learn.

Notes

- 1, 'Austin, Kate' in Directory of Individuals p.509; *Emma Goldman : a Documentary History of the American Years, Volume 2: Making Speech Free* edited by Candace Falk, Barry Pateman, Jessica Moran (2005).
- 2, Bio of Edward W. Chamberlain, p.514 *Making Speech Free*.
- 3, 'Woman' manuscript in the Labadie Collection, printed in *Man! : an anthology of anarchist ideas, essays, poetry and commentaries* (1974) as 'Is woman doomed by nature to be the mental inferior of man?' First published in *Man!* vol. 2 No. 6-7 June-July 1934 with note about copying it from the Labadie Collection by 'C.N.' (Carl Nold) (see also <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/kate-austin-woman>)
- 4, *Free Society*, November 30, 1902 https://historicalseditions.noblogs.org/files/2023/04/Free-Society_9-48_30-November-1902.pdf. Other tributes in this issue came from William Holmes, Voltairine de Cleyre and 'Joy' (Freedom Colony, Kansas).
- 5, 'The situation in America', [Anon. but Goldman and Baginski] *Mother Earth* November 1907. p.387.
- 6, Jennie B. Austin, 'Kate Austin, April [193-?]' in the Labadie Collection <https://apps.lib.umich.edu/labadie-collection>
- 7, G. Ciancabilla, 'Kate Austin' *La Protesta Humana* (November 1902) <https://archive.org/details/la-protesta-humana-vol.-1-no-7-12-1902-03/>
- 8, Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* vol 2 p.331. She runs her two visits of 1897 and 1899 into one.
- 9, Carl Nold, 'Kate Austin' *Man!* vol. 2 No. 6-7 June-July 1934. Text (from the *Man!* Anthology) at <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/w9gk7h>
- 10, Howard S. Miller, 'Kate Austin: A Feminist-Anarchist on the Farmer's Last Frontier'. *Nature, Society and Thought*. 9 (2): (April 1996) 189–209. <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/149963>
- 11, Sheila Rowbotham, *Dreamers of a new day : women who invented the twentieth century* (2011)
- 12, *Kate Austin, paysanne anarchiste et féministe* edited and introduced by Aurélien Roulland (2019).
- 13, see Robert P. Helms, 'Ross Winn in the Anarchist

A Woman's View of It

Some time ago comrade Addis[1] asked The Firebrand women to express their opinions about free love and variety ; since then there has been a distressing silence on the part of my sex, until Mrs. B's open letter to E. F. Ruedebusch in the issue of March 28th. Mrs. B. seems to be 'all at Sea' in her conception of free love, and thinks the man does not exist who would support the 'children of one or more women,' with pleasure and satisfaction, and that her husband 'thinks he had a right to practice free love whenever he had money.' As far as this is concerned Mrs. B's husband is not a free lover, if love is his only when he has the money. He probably gets the article commonly peddled about under the name of love, sold all the way by the hour or night, or in some cases for life, in which latter case, 'Priests the selling do.' [2]

But we all know that no golden key will unlock the casket of love, and that oft-times free love is the priceless possession of the poorest man or women on earth. Many insist on saying that 'free love is not practicable under present conditions.' Now I am not afraid to say that free love is all there is of love, that it was born of life and has always been with us, and is all that sweetens our onward march. If love is put in a cage, or fettered in any way, it is no longer love, but a ghastly nameless thing, that blasts the living and curses the unborn. There are not many men who expect the women to nourish their children alone. I have lived 32 years in this 'vale of tears' among the poor of the farming class, and the men who do not strain every nerve to provide for their children are the exception. Paternal love is as much a fact as maternal love. I have known many instances where the fathers of 'natural children' tried to and did provide for them. Fathers desert their bastard children for the same reason that illegitimate mothers desert and often murder them: Because Respectable People consider them a disgrace. 'Respectability' drove Pearl Bryan to her doom and murdered Jackson and Walling on the Gallows.[3] Had Pearl Bryan's mother taught her how to prevent conception and all the sacredness of the maternal mystery, she would, in all probability, be a living happy woman today. And if the parents of Jackson and Walling had taught them the same truths, their strangled bodies would not be lying 'neath six feet of earth. When children are taught from their youth not to create life unless they desire to provide for that life, and also taught how they can gratify their natural desire with safety, there will be fewer instances of Mrs. B's sad case. To say the least (tho' her husband is probably a victim of bad training) he must be a cow-

ard to desert his children, or else physically in the same condition as the men who spend the last cent for drink, that should go to succor a dying child. Mrs. B. is a noble woman to stand alone in the world for her children.

KATE AUSTIN

Caplinger Mills, Mo.

Firebrand 25 April 1897

Notes

1, Henry Addis (1864-1934), Portland anarchist, co-founder of *The Firebrand*

2, from *Unseen Spirits* by Nathaniel Parker Willis

3, Pearl Bryan was 22, unmarried and pregnant when murdered in 1896 by her lover Scott Jackson and his friend Alonzo M. Walling. Jackson and Walling were executed on the 20th March 1897.

This letter was one of the pieces complained of in the *Firebrand* obscenity trial (1897), but not one that the editors were convicted for publishing. See: *Anarchism on the Willamette: the Firebrand Newspaper and the Origins of a Culturally American Anarchist Movement, 1895-1898* by Alecia Jay Giombolini (2018)

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/4471/

The Workers and the Strike.

I wish to discuss some of the points brought up in Comrade Winn's reflections on the general strike.[1] In the first place, I do not think the 'workers themselves understand that they are the victims of an unjust and undesirable social order,' as Comrade Winn declares. The workingmen who do understand that slavery exists are the exceptions – it is not true of the mass. But even if it were the case, there would be no occasion to blame them for inactivity, for then they would not be inactive.

As soon as a goodly number of workingmen realize that the wage system is slavery, and that property in land is the basis of slavery, something will break loose. It will not be necessary to awaken all the workers to such a realization, nor even a majority of them. The next change in our economic system will come as all other changes have come, that is thru the action of an intelligent minority. It seems to me that all that can be done is to teach the masses of the people that they are slaves. When a sufficient number get that in their heads, they will throw off the yoke without asking advice or direction.

The ideal of the average workingman at present is living wages and a good boss. He has so much respect for property rights, that he will see his family famine-stricken and not repudiate that respect. What is more, in a strike they will let starvation walk in and break the strike and destroy the solidarity of their union, send them back like whipped dogs to their masters, and a lower scale of wages. They will allow all this

rather than take bread. In short, a workingman will sacrifice his liberty before he will do that awful thing which will label him a thief. And until he does take bread, the general strike will be impossible. Labor has ever paid the expenses of strikes. When one section of workers win an advance in wages, it means their employers have robbed Peter to pay Paul. Even the reduction of the hours of labor have been brought about more thru improved methods of production owing to mechanical inventions, than thru the demands of labor unions.

The one grand thing about labor unions and strikes is that by these methods the infant Labor is learning to walk, to feel his power.

The main question is not 'how to lead men to emancipation,' but to teach them to desire emancipation; and when they learn that the cause of their sufferings is slavery, they will take liberty. Before the general strike can come the workers who participate must possess the qualities outlined by Comrade Winn, namely, 'determination, a total disregard of the laws of the State, the lies of the Church,' and not hesitate at destruction if they cannot hold possession. When we consider the above necessary qualifications for the general strike, it is easy to see we are a long way off from that most desirable object.

If the cause of human misery and inequality is slavery, and if the cause of slavery is government, as Tolstoy has set forth so vividly in his writings, the only remedy is to abolish government. There exists a well defined movement against all government, world-wide in its scope. Every land furnishes tributaries that are slowly forming into a strong human current that will in time sweep away the props of the State. While it is possible that those reformers who wish only to reform the State, not abolish it, might unite on some plan of action, which if carried would amount to nothing, for the State reproduces every evil that is scotched, if not in the same form, then in another. The movement against all government cannot possibly unite with the reformers of government.

No one need be discouraged over the war of contrary ideas, Agitation forces men to think; and human thought will in time kill government. But it is well to recognize all that the people must unlearn before they can question the all-powerful State. They, in common with their masters, consider property rights more sacred than life. As long as they do, they disarm themselves and arm their foes.

Kate Austin

Free Society March 16 1902 (vol. 9, no.11)

Note

1, Ross Winn's 'Radical Reflections : The General Strike' appeared in *Free Society* 23 February 1902.

Library Notes Dec. 2024

Déjacque Luc Nemeth tells us Joseph Déjacque did not die in 1864, despite what former exile Gustave

Lefrançais said: 'I confirmed in 2011 that the exact date is Nov. 18th 1865.'

Faure *The Anarchists and the Dreyfus Affair* (1898)

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/1c5cjk>

Kevrik A short bio by Nick Heath now out at

<https://libcom.org/article/kevrik-vera-yevgenyevna-or-yevlampievna-one-report-1893-1926>

Lahr Bloomsbury's Anarchist [a tribute to Charlie Lahr] by Albert Meltzer

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/ngf3z6>

Libraries The International Anarchist Archives: A report on conditions and a proposal for action [Conference Paper, 2011] Andrew Hoyt

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/zcrmr8>

Mullen 'Dan often humorously remarked that no matter how hard the times were he would never be "broke" – that he always kept a silver plate in his head!' <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/xksq9x>

Pentecost Bob Helms has produced a compilation of Hugh O. Pentecost's 'gospel of social revolution':

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/jq2dwb>

Spindrift A new issue is out with thoughts on work (Elisha Moon Williams), rural American regions (Sonja Lavelle) and more

<https://organisemagazine.org.uk/category/spindrift/>

Thanks to everyone who helped...

A workman is sitting on a tram...

A workman is sitting on a tram in the 1930s reading a copy of *Solidaridad Obrera* when a priest takes a seat opposite him. Spotting the newspaper, the priest booms: "Anarchist, eh? Don't you realise that very little separates the anarchist from the bandit?" The workman quietly folds up his newspaper, takes out a tape measure and measures the distance between himself and the priest. "Fifty centimeters", he replies.

This appears in a short tribute to Bernabe Garcia Polanco in *CNT* (No 307, December 2004), Madrid.

Apparently he died in May 2004. It was one of the jokes he used to tell.

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