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two pounds

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## The 'Finest library on Anarchy' : Georges Pilotelle, Columbia University and anarchist print culture

Anarchist libraries sometimes arise from a personal collection of books and papers, and sometimes such collections end up within an institution. In June 1903 reports appeared of the purchase of the 'Finest library on Anarchy – Books, Pamphlets and Flaming Posters of the Most Violent Character Secured by Columbia.

'The Columbia library on Morningside Heights has just come into the possession of a complete anarchistic library of some 2,000 books, pamphlets and documents, and in a few weeks they will be ready for reference. It is stated by Dr. James P. Canfield, the head librarian, that it is the most complete collection of its kind in the world. It originally belonged to a French anarchist. On his death in London last year the collection passed into the hands of administrators, and they had the books put up at auction. Columbia bought them for \$100.' [1]

Other reports gave much fuller details of what was in this collection: 'Some time ago, says the *New York Post*, it came to the attention of Dr. Vladimir G. Sienkhovitch [Simkhovitch], the university bibliophile, that a French anarchist long resident at London, and of considerable literary ability, had died in the course of the winter, and that his library had passed to administrators who were plainly ignorant of the character of the calling of the man. Dr. Sienkhovitch, however, knew that the dead man had spent the greater part of his life in making an exhaustive collection of all the valuable anarchistic literature extant; he noticed that this collection, which consisted not only of books and pamphlets, but also of posters, periodicals, journals and broadsides, was turned over by the administrators to the Sothebys, the London book auctioneers, and soon found hidden away in their spring catalogue an item

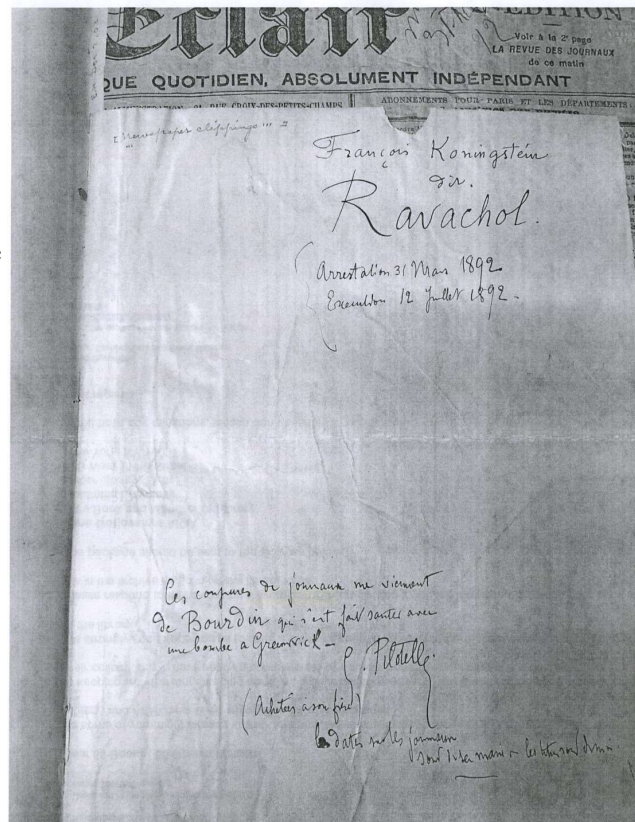
advertising the sale of the entire collection. [...]

'The entire collection, in twenty-four large boxes, arrived at New York in the spring. The work of examination, classification, appraisal, cataloguing and binding has been going on now for several weeks, but has not yet been completed. Neither the scientific nor the pecuniary value of the consignment can as yet be ascertained, but as an indication of the worth of the collection it may be stated that much of this material appears in no existing bibliography, being hitherto unknown [...]

'The list includes 232 sets of newspapers and periodicals, nine-tenths of which are absolutely complete; In addition there are nearly 300 anarchistic pamphlets and books, a collection of 270 huge sheet posters and broadsides, most of which have no duplicates; hundreds of photographs of prominent agitators of all countries; an enormous body of letters, documents, manifestoes and autograph manuscripts by most of the leading anarchists, from Bakounin [Bakunin], the Russian, down to the present time, and

a vast quantity of inflammatory songs and clippings from nonanarchistic publications.

'Access could be had to only a small part of the collection, most of it now being in the hands of the binders, but an idea of its scope, magnitude and importance can be gained from the following specimen items: A death warrant, forecasting to the inner circle the assassination of President Sadi-Carnot of France six hours before its occurrence; nine manuscript writings by the famous Louise Michel; a warrant issued from a London police court for the apprehension of a desperate foreign incendiary; the school [pto]



**Inside: What can we learn from old leaflets?**

books of Ravachol; announcements of attacks to be directed against nearly all of the crowned heads of Europe and photographs of Lucheni, who assassinated the empress of Austria. Another striking exhibit is a batch of scorched papers found on the person of a London anarchist who died while hurling a bomb into a crowded square. [2]

‘Among the periodicals in the collection are *La Pere Peinard*, published in Paris by E. Pouget from 1889 to 1896, only two copies being known; *Der Sozialist*, published in Berlin; *the Alarm*, which comes from Chicago; *La Questione Sociale*, an Italian paper printed in Paterson, N.J.; *El Porvenir Anarquista*, from Barcelona, Spain; *Gazeta Robotnicza*, a Polish publication from Chicago; *Volne Listy*, a New York anarchistic paper in the Czechish tongue: *Freedom*, the great organ of the London agitators; *the Beacon*, printed in San Francisco; *Le Temps Nouveau* [*Les Temps Nouveaux*], Prince Kropotkin [Kropotkin]’s paper, and *Caserio*, which appears in Buenos Ayres [Aires], the capital of the Argentine Republic. These periodicals are printed in English, German, French, all the Scandinavian languages, new Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Slavonic, Czechish, Spanish, Yiddish and many other dialects and languages. [3]

‘On the opening of Columbia’s one hundred and fiftieth year in the autumn the entire collection will be placed conspicuously on view in the university library. A member of the faculty who has specialized in this field made the following comment on the anarchica:

“‘The collection has equal interest for students of modern history, of sociology, of penology and of morbid psychology; and it is unquestionably the most complete of its kind, not only in the United States, but in the world.’” [4]

The Sotheby’s listing gives a little more information:

‘223 Anarchism. An Extraordinary Collection of Anarchist Documents (about 2,000) written in French, English, Russian, German, Italian, Polonese [Polish], Armenian, Tzechish [Czech], Flemish, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Greek, Danish, Hebrew [i.e. Yiddish], etc. comprising Autographs of the most celebrated Anarchists : Prince Bakounine, Prince Kropotkine, Elisé Reclus, Louise Michel, Ravachol, Vaillant, Henry, Caserio Santo, etc. Anarchist Brochures and Books in different languages ; Anarchist Posters and single sheets (some of very large size) ; Anarchist Newspapers of every part of the Globe; Anarchist Portraits, Photos; Anarchist Manuscripts, etc. etc. contained in 24 red Folio Cases of 44 in. width, with inscription “Evolution libertaire since 1871.” [5]

‘A detailed list will be sold with the collection. It would be impossible now to form another similar collection.’ [6]

The details confirmed this really was a collection

of anarchist publications (not broadly radical or even non-anarchist), despite touches of sensational reporting (the ‘London anarchist who died while hurling a bomb into a crowded square’ sounded like an exaggeration of Martial Bourdin’s death in Greenwich, in 1894). But who was this ‘dead French anarchist’? The obvious first step was to ask if Columbia University knew who the collection originally belonged to. No, but Robert H. Davis at Columbia University Libraries directed me to an article by Lyubov Ginzburg which tells us more about why it was collected:

‘Vladimir Grigorievich Simkhovitch (1874–1959), [was] an astute librarian, and later a Columbia professor of Economic History and Economics, social-democrat and long-time resident of New York’s Greenwich Settlement House. In 1901, shortly after the assassination of President McKinley by anarchist Leon Czolgosz (1873–1901), Simkhovitch dispatched a letter to Professor Butler, then acting president of Columbia University, providing his perspective of the incident and writing that “the failing to prevent anarchistic crimes and punish the real criminal is entirely due to the fact that neither the government nor even the academic political science has here the slightest idea about theories, tendencies, and aims of the different anarchistic groups.” Simkhovitch further suggested that it was the proper time to entrust competent specialists “to investigate ... and report about the origins and spread of anarchism in America [and] its interrelations with the revolutionary movements abroad.”’ [7]

Comparing the listing of what was in the ‘1903 collection’ with the Columbia University Library catalogue led to some possible matches including a bound volume ‘Newspaper clippings relating to the assassins Ravachol, A. Vaillant, E. Reclus,[!] Émile Henry, and Caserio Santo’.[8] Tanya Chebotarev, Curator, Bakhmeteff Archive, Rare Book & Manuscript Library was able to confirm that this was part of the ‘1903 collection’, that the original owner was Georges Pilotelle and provided a photo of his note bound in the volume. Interestingly, the ‘batch of scorched papers’ found on a body seem instead to be a set of press cuttings sold to Pilotelle by Bourdin’s brother Henri. But ‘scorched papers’ may be bound in the volume, too: it’s impossible to be sure without checking. Since Bourdin’s death was an inspiration for Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*, presumably the Conradians would be interested, besides anyone interested in Martial Bourdin himself.

### Who was Pilotelle?

Georges Pilotelle (or Pilotelli, Pilotell) was a communard who lived in exile in London. An artist and Blanquist, Pilotelle declared himself chief delegate of Fine Arts during the Commune and then worked for the Commune’s police – including shooting prisoners during the ‘bloody week’ when

the Commune was overrun.[9]

During his exile in London Pilotelle worked as an artist (including drawing Disraeli and members of the royal family)[10] and in the world of fashion. He also collected and published material relating to Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793), and planned to write a book about Marat's time in England. Pilotelle sold his Marat collection in December 1902 at Sotheby's: 'However, his collection was later in the possession of the collector Henri Bourdin.' [...] 'Subsequently *Le Gaulois*, *Notes and Queries* (5 Dec. 1903) and *Le Charivari* announced the sale of the collection to an American millionaire and even the death of Pilotelle.' [11]

Pilotelle did not die until 1918, but rumours of his death presumably come from this story of a 'dead French anarchist'. Did he use that story to dispose of his anarchist collection anonymously? Was he simply a collector of anarchist materials? There are letters from Pilotelle at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. He wrote to Max Nettlau about Bakunin, to Louise Michel and to Friedrich Engels asking for documents relating to the Jura Federation.[12] In 1894 he was in touch with Malatesta (who, among other things, asked if he could suggest where a comrade artist could find work) [13] There's one reference to him sending money for selling copies of *Freedom* (3 shillings in the November 1896 issue).

His 1897 letter to *La Revue Blanche* shows something of his (abrasive) character and attitude to the contemporary anarchist movement:

'I am sorry that I cannot send you the notes that you are kind enough to ask me for on the Commune, but for a month I have not had a minute to myself.

'And then I admit that I might have been too severe on our old friends. I am not talking about those who were slaughtered, although death is no excuse; but about these narrow-minded sectarians, with base desires, mediocre ambitious people, ready to be satisfied with the bone that is thrown to them to gnaw on; leaders, politicians and traitors.

'Now something else is taking shape. The libertarian evolution, in this 19th century of absolute authoritarianism, is asserting itself superbly both philosophically and artistically. I have only one hope, that the mistakes of the Commune will serve future demolitionists.' [14]

### What is in the library?

It would be interesting to know what was in Pilotelle's collection: does the list survive in the library's archives? Or can anything now in the rare books collection of Columbia University Library be identified as formerly belonging to Pilotelle? After 120 years things may have been lost, or disposed of as duplicates. Items from Pilotelle's collection may not have any sign of ownership. But there are things listed that seem worth looking at like the 'Volume of

Italian and Spanish anarchist periodical issues', 'a collection of socialistic and anarchistic ballads and songs in French and German' and 'Anarchistic pamphlets and posters in French, English, German, Italian, Dutch and Spanish, 1883-1896'. [15] What about the 29 bound volumes of pamphlets? Are any of those 'in no existing bibliography' still?

Wherever they came from, this material would throw some light on anarchist history and culture (printed or otherwise): there's a project for someone (but maybe not a 'morbid psychologist').

[Thanks go to Robert H. Davis and Tanya Chebotarev at Columbia for their essential help; also to Constance Bantman, Pietro Di Paola, Barry Pateman and Paul Sharkey.

Image: 'Newspaper clippings relating to the assassins Ravachol, A. Vaillant, E. Reclus, Émile Henry, and Caserio Santo' Dewey collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.]

### Notes

- 1, *Willmar Tribune* (Willmar, Minn.), June 27, 1903 <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn89081022/1903-06-27/ed-1/?sp=3>
- 2, Sadi Carnot was assassinated by Sante Caserio on 24 June 1894. Louise Michel (1830-1905) and Ravachol (1859-1892) were both French anarchists. Elizabeth Empress of Austria was assassinated by Luigi Luccheni on 10 September 1898.
- 3, Emile Pouget (1860-1931), Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921)
- 4, *Rock Island Argus* (Rock Is., Ill.), June 27, 1903 <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn92053934/1903-06-27/ed-1/?sp=10>
- 5, Michael Bakunin (1814-1876), Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), Elisé Reclus (1830-1905), Louise Michel (1830-1905), Ravachol (1859-1892), Auguste Vaillant (1861-1894), Émile Henry (1872-1894), Sante Caserio (1873-1894)
- 6, <https://archive.org/details/b31825576/>
- 7, Ginzburg, Lyubov 'Two Russian Foundational Collections at Columbia University Library: Witte & Warburg', *Slavic & East European Information Resources* Volume 23, Issue 1-2: The Slavic, East European & Eurasian Collections of Columbia University: Vignettes Towards an Anniversary History (2022) p.45-72] (Simkhovitch distinguished the Russian revolutionary movement from anarchists that used political violence who were 'criminals of a most objectionable type'. Simkhovitch, V.G. 'Russia's Struggle with Autocracy' *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.20, No.1 (Mar., 1905) p.118.)
- 8, <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14987596>
- 9, see Paul Lidsky's Biography of Pilotelle at <https://www.commune1871.org/la-commune-de-paris/histoire-de-la-commune/dossier-thematique/les-artistes-et-la-commune/611-pilotelle-georges-raoul-eugene-un-artiste-communard-contraste>



10,

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG42048>

11, Cock, Jaques de 'The collection of Marat's bibliographer at the British Library', *British Library Journal*, vol.19, No.1, (1993) p.44-57.

12, Nettelau:

<https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/ARCH01001> ;

Michel:

<https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/ARCH02550> ;

Marx-Engels:

<https://search.iisg.amsterdam/Record/ARCH00860>

13,

[https://www.schulsonautographs.com/images/upload/cat222\\_2.pdf](https://www.schulsonautographs.com/images/upload/cat222_2.pdf)

14, *La Revue Blanche* (January 1897)

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k15533q/f382.item>

15, <https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/17831655>,

<https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14985478> and

<https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/14408698> but also try 'Virtual Shelf Browse' from there.



## John Couzin – Seeker of Peace, Poet and Propagandist (1934-2025)

Anarchist, activist, writer and family guy, John Couzin, died at home in Glasgow, Scotland in his partner's arms, aged almost 91.

Active in Glasgow, and deeply interested in Social History, John was angry that the lack of preservation of Anarchist history played to the power

of the State and was easily exploited by other political parties, because it was also the denial of our existence.

John started to gather names and events, produced the online Strugglepedia wiki and researched Clydeside Anarchists in his book *Radical Glasgow* which led to the setting up of the Radical Glasgow History Project. Eventually he was the main driver behind the co founded Spirit of Revolt Archives of Dissent and uploaded almost all of it online.

John ran a blog (including radical map and local events list) under the pseudonym AnnArky for 20 years reaching around 2 million hits. The blog lent itself to a free street paper format thus the birth of – the *Anarchist Critic*. He founded Voline Press under which he self published his 5 poetry books.

John played chess daily to a very high level and tried to start a club last year but ill health slowed him down as it did over the years from time to time.

John was known in the family as Jack but by his comrades as John. He was born in 1934 before WW2 in the notorious Garnagad Glasgow slums, so bad the City Council demolished it and renamed the area. The family moved to Balornock.

John's father William was a coal miner and mother Lizzie mostly a factory worker, he had two older sisters Sadie and Margaret and a younger sister Betty. It was a deeply loving and supportive family. He was a tall quiet boy, talented pianist and very keen on chess from aged 11.

He was evacuated out of Glasgow with his sisters to a farm, treated there like a son and remembers the joy he witnessed from the old horse, kicking and frolicking as it was let out to the grazing field on its last day of toil.

He refused University which the Miners' Union would have paid for and instead took up an engineering study course followed by apprenticeship at the Fairfield's Shipyard.

He enjoyed his time, discovered Anarchist ideas and was vocal and active there, taking part in the Apprentices strike 1952. He was also exposed to asbestos later developing pleural plaques and saw his best friend die of mesothelioma. He witnessed the drowning of his young friend Archie, a riveter who fell from ship scaffolding, an event which deeply disturbed him his whole life. He saw first hand government contracts and the waste of public money swishing around the Defence Industry by being employed to build ships that got decommissioned after their launch.

He was refused a contract there and moved to Vickers where he soon realised the different pay structure of piecework was responsible for the backstabbing race to finish first for bonuses at the expense of health and safety.

John left engineering and got a job selling round the doors in slum areas. He sold furniture, TVs and insurance, returning weekly to pick up the payments.

He saw the worst things that haunted his mind, cold hungry unwashed children, families burning floorboards to heat and cook, babies sleeping on bundles of coats for a bed.

He eventually left it and moved into shop retail as by now he had met Ann and they had two children, Brian and Corinne to support. He succeeded at retail working his way up to manager, breaking records for profits because by default he gained bonuses he needed to keep the family. They moved to Pollokshaws and he grew roses, the kids settled at school and made friends. He bought a boat which the whole family enjoyed.

By the time he was in his 50's they had left home and he joined Amnesty International which John regarded as a useful way to raise awareness and denounce injustices at the hands of the powerful everywhere. He was the Urgent Action Coordinator for Scotland, reading daily bulletins of torture victims and trying to promote these in the Scottish Press to establish support campaigns. After three years he found it too painful to read another one and he moved on to SACRO, volunteering to drive prisoner's families for visits across Scotland.

He retired from sales aged 59 and increased his time in the gym as well as his long distance road cycling regular 90 miles, with overnight stay and returning home the next day. In his 70's he had established the AnnArky blog, he had completed the book *Radical Glasgow* selling it at book fairs, and he had started to produce the *Anarchist Critic* street paper which ran for 20 years from 2002-22. It was an anti-capitalist paper exposing the flaws and contradictions of Capitalists; multinational corporations, empires, clubs, States and Borders, IMF, European Central Bank, World Bank and Davos Economic Forum. The *Anarchist Critic* was anti-war, anti-authoritarian, anti-imperialist protest literature but not pacifist, as John believed self-defence is an immutable right. He was a very well known face in Glasgow giving out his paper.

His Depleted Uranium feature was published in *Freedom* (11 March 2006).

His family was now expanded by Stathis his new son-in-law and Stavros and Stefania two lovely grandchildren. In 2005 he met Stasia a fellow activist and soulmate, and they very happily fell in together as a deeply loving couple for 20 years. In 2011 he co-founded with others the Spirit of Revolt Archives of Dissent, both online and publicly accessible at the Mitchell Library.

John also tried to establish the return of May Day to Glasgow Green, the gathering place, execution site and historical location for voicing political agitation in Glasgow for hundreds of years. Over recent years the city council underinvested in the People's Palace museum running it into closure and the March organisers have diluted May Day's impact, rerouted it, dissociating it from the Glasgow Green site

thereby actively diminishing the importance of the event, deeply significant to Anarchists.

In January John's son Brian died very suddenly which shook the whole family and broke his heart.

John was an avid reader and poet throughout his life and produced 5 books of powerful poems now being translated into French.

We are all grieving for John now, he may have left us but his work for Anarchism in Scotland raises our profile, legitimises our existence and paves the way for future generations to build upon as he had wished. His big hearted love for everyone has left a deep impression upon us all and the memory of John Couzin's own spirit of revolt will forever remain a source of inspiration in our lives.

Stasia Rice, 17/03/25

John Couzin, 22/03/34 – 11/03/25

#### Links

Radical Glasgow: <http://radicalglasgow.me.uk/>

Spirit of Revolt Archives of Dissent

<https://spiritofrevolt.info/>

Strugglepedia <http://strugglepedia.co.uk/>



## Obituary: Umberto Tommasini (1896-1980)

Born into a working class socialist family in Trieste in 1896, Umberto Tommasini started work as a metal work apprentice at an early age. At the age of thirteen he took part in his first demonstration, a protest against the execution in Barcelona of the anarchist educator Francisco Ferrer. During the first world war, Tommasini was a POW in Mauthausen. Returning to Trieste in 1918, he joined the anarchist movement. He played an active part in the various struggles of the heated years that followed, especially in direct action against strike-breakers and the rising wave of fascist attacks. In 1925 he was involved in Gino Lucetti's abortive assassination attempt on Mussolini's life. In 1926 he was among the first anti-fascists consigned to internal exile on Italy's prison islands.

For six years he was a 'guest' on Ustica and Ponza. In 1932 he slipped across the border into exile

in France where he was active in the exiles' anti-fascist struggle. When the Spanish revolution broke out, he went to Barcelona to serve with the CNT-FAI's Ascaso Column on the Aragon front. In 1937 he was arrested by the Stalinists during an attempted sabotage of Francoist shipping, but managed to escape from a CP prison in Valencia. Tommasini refused to submit to the militarisation of the militias as the communists insisted and returned to France. He was arrested there in 1940 and interned in the Vernet d'Ariege concentration camp, whence he was extradited to Italy. From 1941 to 1943 he was one of the hundreds of anarchists in confinement on the island of Ventotene. After the war he returned to Trieste, where he joined with other anarchists who had been through the experience of exile and partisan activities, to found the Gruppo Germinal and its journal of the same name. Always to be found in the front line of anarchist activity, he was sentenced by the Allied military government in 1954 for anarchist propaganda.[1]

In the wake of the libertarian outbursts of 1968, Tommasini was active and available for talks with interested young people; his group's numbers swelled, its premises re-opened and its activities redoubled. Tommasini was always among the most active of its members. At the age of 74, in 1970, he repulsed a fascist attack on the group's premises, chasing several of the attackers into the streets and seeing off several others. In 1972 he took over from another anarchist militant of long-standing, Alfonso Failla, as editor in chief of 'Umanita Nova' which led to fresh charges being brought and new sentences imposed upon him. In his eighties, he took part in anti-militarist marches and the FAI Congress as well as his group's local activities. Some time ago he retired to Vivaro (Pordenone) to convalesce. He died there on 22nd August 1980;[2] his funeral was attended by a hundred of his comrades, most of them young people. Flags and tributes were carried.

From *Black Flag*, vol.6 no.6 (Jan. 1981)

### Notes,

1, He and 2 others were sent to prison after being charged with putting up abusive posters inciting police to disobey orders.

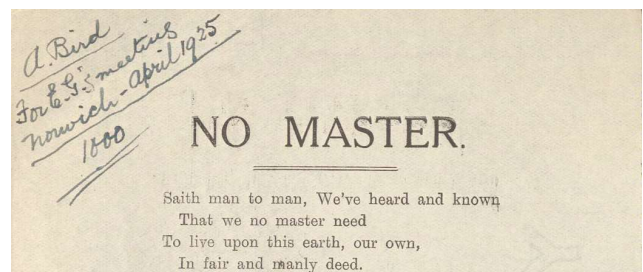
2, corrected from 15th in original text.

## Layabouts?

'He thinks the Welfare State has featherbedded the country – but who provides the feathers? The country is a "paradise for layabouts, crooks, gangsters and gamblers". True, but we call them the Ruling Class.'

Anon but Albert Meltzer

The Maudling Prize for IDIOT OF THE MONTH  
*Black Flag* : *Anarchist Monthly*, vol.2, no.6, June 1971



## Piecing Together Anarchist History

Thanks to friends and supporters of the Kate Sharpley Library we recently managed to acquire a fascinating collection of mainly British anarchist ephemera ranging from the 1890s to the 1920s. It consists of fliers advertising meetings, leaflets explaining anarchism and fliers in support of anarchists and others who are in the hands of the state. There is also a collection of cards that advertise public meetings or act as tickets bought to attend those meetings. There is more (songs, poetry, etc. etc.). You can see some of this ephemera here:

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/9320sp>

Dating most of the meetings was relatively simple. Most of them had the date and year of the meeting on them as if organizers knew that one day in the future someone would be looking at them. Working through calendars eventually identified the years that were missing. We were helped in all of this by information written on them by someone – possibly the printer or someone close to the printer. We find out, for instance, that an April 1925 meeting with Emma Goldman in Norwich had a thousand copies of William Morris's poem 'No Master' printed.[1] We can see an early draft flier from November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1910 in support of the imprisoned Japanese anarchists.[2] Alas, protest leaflets were issued but Kotoku and 11 comrades were executed in late January 1911. The flier was followed by a memorial to those anarchists and an appreciation of Kotoku penned by Leopold Fleischmann.[3]

Dates have been added to fliers and cards by this person which has helped us a lot. Still – there are some problems which centre on those general fliers which try to explain anarchist ideas and practice. They have all originated from the Freedom Press and are undated. Most are not mentioned in *Freedom* and we are looking at such things as pamphlets listed for sale, allusions in the text and typeface to get a rough date on them. More of that another time.!!!

Looking at these items leads to a consideration of various themes to do with the history of anarchism. Some may well be obvious, others less so.

Firstly, I think we should understand that fliers don't just appear. They are often the result of careful thinking and planning and, of course, effort. We already had a flier for the meeting held in memory of Louise Michel in London on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1905.[4]



The flier that came with this collection was noticeably different.[5] The details of the meeting in English and appeals to comrades to attend written in English and French were exactly the same as the one we had; but in this latest flier the German appeal was replaced by an appeal in Yiddish. The organizers knew their audiences and appealed to each one with their mother tongue. Perhaps there are other fliers for this meeting could there somewhere with appeals for attendance in Spanish or Italian or other languages. Sometimes calls for support for comrades overseas may be outdated the moment they are printed. Those creating the flier couldn't press delete and put in the changes needed!! When news got to you it may well be a case of working all night to amend the flier with new information, or simply you had to create a new flier.

Secondly, this collection has emphasized the importance of not perceiving anarchist history as just looking at anarchist newspapers. With regard to Britain we have to move away from seeing London or Glasgow as the be all and end all of anarchist development. Anarchism may well have had a presence in towns we not considered before. Little groups may have existed who didn't produce a paper but could have been active in the factories, offices or in agriculture. Because they aren't mentioned in *Freedom* does not mean they didn't exist. There are still histories waiting to be written.[6] To give one example we have over the last year or so obtained quite a lot of anarchist material from Leicester.[7] Other towns will have their fliers and cards advertising meetings as well.

Thirdly, anarchism was based on personal relationships. When Frank Kitz spoke in Loughborough[8] on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1889 what happened after the meeting was just as important as the meeting itself. People would have a drink in the pub or café after and chat. Friendships would be renewed and friendships created. Rivalries would be re-kindled or forgotten. It was these relationships that often became the center of anarchism. These conversations shaped anarchism in these communities and what that anarchism was is worthy of study.

Fourthly, anarchism had a richness within it that sometimes is overlooked. In a series of lectures held from January-April 1910 at the Secular Hall in Leicester[9] topics included: Bakunin's *God and the State*, Knowledge and Belief, the plays of Bernard Shaw, State Socialism and Anarchism, Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread*, Tolstoy's *Slavery of Our Times* and numerous other topics. Ideas connected and sometimes probably uncoupled but it was the process of learning that was important, a process of making sense of the world.

Fifthly, we have to recognize the critical importance of internationalism in anarchist thought and practice. We can see that in the Memorial

Meeting for Louise Michel and the campaign to free the Japanese anarchists as well as meetings held against the actions of the Russian Government at Caxton Hall, London in May 1910. One of the speakers was Russian anarchist W. Tcherkessoff alongside others who certainly didn't share his beliefs.

So this small collection of ephemera adds to, hope, how we look at anarchist history. It is a few pieces adding to a wider picture and, I believe, enriching that picture.

Barry Pateman

## Notes

- 1, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/pg4h9p>
- 2, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/0vt5xj>
- 3, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/z8wctv>
- 4, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/9p8fpr>
- 5, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/x960hr>
- 6, It has been heartening to see such work gradually appearing. Two fine examples are: Andrew Lee, *The Red Flag of Anarchy: A History of Socialism and Anarchism in Sheffield 1874-1900* Pirate Press, Sheffield, 2017 and Tyneside Anarchist Archive, *Anarchism In North East England, 1889-1892* Active Distribution, 2021
- 7, See <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/fqz7sq>
- 8, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/tht9ft>
- 9, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/zgmvmqv>

## Library update (April 2025)

### Scans

As well as the (ongoing) scans of anarchist ephemera, we have also scanned these Freedom Press pamphlets:

*The Chicago Martyrs: Parsons; Spies, Fischer, Engel, Lingg, Fielden, Schwab and Neebe. Speech of August Spies* (1897)

*Organised vengeance, called 'Justice' (Kropotkin) with The superstition of government (Henry Glasse)* (1902)

*The International Anarchist Congress, held at the Plancius Hall, Amsterdam, on August 26th-31st 1907*  
*The Basis of Trade Unionism* by Emile Pouget (1908)

*Concentration of Capital : A Marxian Fallacy* by W Tcherkessoff (1911)

*England Monopolised or England Free?* by William C. Owen (1920)

*Anarchism and Democracy* by John Wakeman (1920)  
*Objections to Anarchism* by George Barrett (1921)

You can get to them via

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/bzkjs6>.

### Articles

We've put up several articles by William MacQueen, with a focus on propaganda and picnics:

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/d255cn>

**Update from Imanol:** 'A range of fresh information about Manuel Huet and the Underground in France'

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

**British Miners' Strike 1984-5** by Dino Marcone

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

**Three pieces by Albert Meltzer:** 'Chaim Weizmann and Israel', 'Author's Apology : I couldn't paint golden angels' (explaining the title) and *Anarchism: arguments for and against* [2023 edition], plus obituaries of Albert by Sid Martell and Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin (all via

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/0rxwm0> )

**Workers' Freedom Groups** The Membership card with Basis and Programme, Workers' Freedom Groups [March 1913] suggests all sorts of connections to follow up <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/n02xb9>

**Emma Goldman** AK Press have published a new edition of Emma Goldman's *Anarchism and Other Essays*, with notes and introduction by Jessica Moran and Barry Pateman.

<https://www.akpress.org/anarchism-and-other-essays.html>

**G.P. Maximoff** is the subject of a chapter from Nikolai Gerasimov's new book on Russian anarchism, Translated by Macolm Archibald

<https://freedomnews.org.uk/2025/03/18/the-adventures-of-g-p-maximoff/>

**Cover price** has increased for the first time since 1991, for the obvious reason. Still happy to get donations from people who like what we do.

## The Police Computer Speaks



By Richard Warren.

From *Black Flag*, vol.5, no.5 ([June] 1978).

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**8 Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library**



## Antoinette Cazal

The Kate Sharpley Library is keen to recover the stories of 'unknown anarchists': there's a lot of them (and plenty of questions even when we do know their names and the rough outline of their lives).

Constance Bantman has just published a short piece on French anarchist Antoinette Cazal (1862-1902) who was acquitted in the 'Trial of the Thirty' (1894) and had 'complicated romantic entanglements with Léon Ortiz', who was convicted. 'I expect that many labour historians and biographers share the wish to know how the protagonists of our histories would feel about becoming academic subjects; indifference or annoyance would be my guess. And then of course, my focus would be on the questions I would ask her. The main one relates to the anarchist activism which is glaringly absent from her biography: did she think of herself as an anarchist, and if so, what did she mean by it?'

It's good to see someone who has done so much research reach out to the past thoughtfully. See <https://sslh.org.uk/2024/12/18/class-encounters-antoinette-cazal-anarchist/> [Photo <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/306716> ]

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