

**Salvador Gurucharri aka Salva, Comrade and Friend**

Paying homage to a person is not the done thing among anarchists. Not just because of the allergy to ritual but also because we prefer our dealings with whomsoever we come into contact with to be between equals. Despite that, every time some comrade, male or female, leaves us, we feel slightly orphaned and it is only natural that we should express this and want to share our grief at the loss and the memory of what that absent comrade or friend means to us. The memory is a pretty distant one, but it is almost always bound up with the fight to which anarchists committed themselves, from whatever their circumstances happened to be at the time.

Salvador Gurruchari is a case in point; to us, he was just *Salva*, ever since life's vagaries and the fight against the Francoist dictatorship brought us into contact at the beginning of the 60s of what is now "last" century. He was one of our own ...

As has been recalled lately, it was in 1956 that Salva joined the London branches of the CNT and FIJL. From then on, he was an activist, so it will come as no surprise that he was actively involved in the CNT reunification process that culminated in the congress held in September 1961 in Limoges (France) at which it was resolved that an agency to combat the Francoist dictatorship would be set up. That secret agency eventually came to be known as Defensa Interior (DI).

The reason we met up in London a few days later was that we both backed the resolutions passed at the congress, which the FIJL had embraced as its own, especially with regard to the DI, for which the youth organisation had been lobbying for some years.

What followed has been recounted from a range of viewpoints since. I will say only that the connection with Salva as well as with other young FIJL comrades, male and female, was crucial in my decision to agree to engage with the DI, my departure from Mexico and my incorporation into that "secret" agency in March 1962. I say 'crucial' not just because they all displayed the same enthusiasm, but also the same appetite for a fight. In Salva's case, there was also his preparedness to quit England to join the clandestine fight against the Franco regime from France. This was also the case with another young comrade, Floreal Ocaña (aka *Florico*), who was then based in Mexico. And so, over that spring we would meet up and began to share in the ups and downs of the clandestine anti-Franco struggle together with all the

other comrades from the FIJL, FAI and CNT who supported the operations of the DI. During that period of active struggle, Salva was involved as FIJL secretary on the MLE (Spanish Libertarian Movement) Defence Commission, an umbrella for the CNT, FAI and FIJL, and in August 1963 he was arrested during a massive swoop by the French authorities on libertarian circles in the wake of the [Francoist] executions of young libertarians Joaquin Delgado and Francisco Granada.

The DI was effectively wound up following the October 1963 CNT congress in Toulouse and the situation in France was becoming ever more difficult for young libertarians, so in 1965 Salva and Antonio Ros moved to Brussels to run the FIJL's Delegation Abroad from there. From then on that Delegation played an important part in the operations mounted by the FIJL against the Franco regime – under the "First of May Group" flag – up until the events in Paris in May 1968 which, in a way, led to the winding-up of the FIJL towards the end of that year.

Following Franco's death in 1975, Salva decided to return to Spain, his mind and heart set on lending a hand in the process of rebuilding the CNT and Libertarian Movement in general. He was unable to make any headway until 1976 and, as has been stated elsewhere, he aligned himself with the "official" sector, although he did not take part in the divisive Vth Congress. In the 1990s he was active in the "*deconfederada*" (de-confederated) CNT of Catalonia and ran *Solidaridad Obrera* up until 1999.

His commitment to militant activity left him scarcely any time to write; writing and reading were his passions. Be that as it may, he produced an interesting *Bibliography of Spanish Anarchism 1869-1975: Notes towards a Reasoned Bibliography*, published (in Spanish) by Ediciones Rosa de Foc in Barcelona in 2004. And, together with Tomás Ibañez, he co-wrote the book *Libertarian Insurgency. The Libertarian Youth in the Fight against Francoism* (in Spanish, Editorial Virus, 2011). In that book he and Tomás, relying upon precious documentary evidence, describe the Libertarian Youth's contribution to the fight against Francoism from the beginning of the 1960s up until the FIJL was disbanded in 1968. The book has been translated into French and published by Editions Acracia in 2012.

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## Defensa Interior comrades / Ethel Mannin on Spanish exiles

### Salvador Gurucharri aka Salva, Comrade and Friend

[from front] My most recent memory of Salva dates from December 2011 when Ariane and I met up with Tomás and him at the Anarchist Book Fair in Madrid, at which the four of us took part in the launch of his book *Insurgencia Libertaria* at that event, the organisers of which used it as the launch-pad for a discussion on the subject of “Reflections for the Present”.

We knew that Salva had moved to Gerona some time ago and it was there that his journey ended. I received the news first from Tomás and then confirmation from his son, Félix. For health reasons we ourselves were unable to attend his funeral (the years are beginning to exact a heavy toll). May these few lines serve to remind us all of a cherished comrade and friend.

Octavio Alberola

Source:

<http://revistapolemica.wordpress.com/2014/05/16/>

[Original titles of works mentioned:

*Bibliografía del anarquismo español 1869-1975.*

Barcelona : Librería la Rosa de Foc, 2004.

*Insurgencia libertaria : las juventudes libertarias en la lucha contra el franquismo.* Barcelona: Virus, 2010.

*Une résurgence anarchiste : les jeunesses libertaires dans la lutte contre le franquisme : la FIJL dans les années 1960.* La Bussière (Vienne) : Acratie, impr. 2012.]

### Antonio Martín Bellido, Madrid 1938-Paris August 17, 2014

I am sorry to announce the death this morning of my old friend and comrade Antonio Martin Bellido who died at 5.00 am, the same time 51 years ago as his two comrades, Joaquin Delgado and Francisco Granado, whose lives – and deaths were so closely entwined with his own. His funeral will take place in a few days.



Antonio Martín Bellido at l'Escorial de Madrid (July 1963)

**Antonio Martín Bellido**, Madrid 1938-Paris August 17, 2014: son of a Madrid UGT (General Workers' Union) militant exiled in France where he lived, in Strasbourg, from the age of two. Having served his apprenticeship as an electrical engineer, he moved to Paris at the age of 19 where he joined the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth (FIJL). In 1962 he visited London with other young Spanish and French anarchists to take part in the annual anti-nuclear Aldermaston march, during which many enduring friendships were forged. That same year he joined the recently re-constituted MLE's (Libertarian Movement in Exile) clandestine planning section known as 'Defensa Interior' (D.I.), whose remit was (a) to organise and coordinate actions intended to destabilise and discredit the Franco regime internally and internationally, and (b) to assassinate General Franco. Among the anti-Francoist actions in which he participated that year were the explosions targeting the dictator's slave-built mausoleum at the Basilica de la Santa Cruz in the Valley of the Fallen (12 August 1962) and in St Peter's Square in Vatican City (23 September 1962) at the opening of the Vatican Council.

(DI bombs were not intended to kill, only to draw international attention to the ongoing and growing repression and violent nature of the Franco regime. Small amounts of plastique were used in these devices, all of them timed to explode in the early hours of the morning. In fact, throughout the extensive, international, two-year DI bombing campaign against Francoist institutions, there was only one occasion – in the Dirección General de Seguridad, the HQ of Franco's secret police in Madrid's Puerta del Sol – when a few people were slightly injured as a result of a detonator mis-timing. During this period the DI organised two attempts on Franco at San Sebastian (18 June 1962), the Palacio de Ayete (19 August 1962))

Perhaps the most crucial actions for Antonio were those that occurred on 29 July 1963 at the Madrid HQs of the secret police (the Brigada Politico Social) and the Falangist Labour Front. It was the misfired bomb at police HQ that had the most serious consequences and the greatest lifelong impact on Antonio in terms of guilt. Unbeknown to him and his fellow DI comrade, Sergio Hernández, Octavio Alberola, the DI coordinator, had sent another comrade, Francisco Granado Gata, to Madrid in a specially modified car with weapons, explosives and a radio transmitter in preparation for a further attempt on Franco at the Palacio del Oriente during the annual presentation of new ambassadors to Franco's court. Unfortunately, there were no new ambassadors that July and the operation had to be cancelled, Francisco Granado withdrawn and the materiel passed over to another Madrid-based group led by a man called Jacinto Guerrero Lucas, the protégé of

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former CNT Defence Secretary (and guerrilla combat groups organiser in Catalonia between 1949 and 1952) Jose Pascual Palacios. Another FIJL/DI activist, Roberto Ariño, was sent to Madrid on 20 July to contact Granado, and advise him of the change of plan but missed his rendezvous with the latter. Eight days later an anxious Alberola sent trusted friend and comrade Joaquin Delgado to Madrid to contact Ariño and Granado and instruct them to return to France, after depositing the materiel in a Madrid safehouse for Guerrero's Madrid-based group to collect later. Ariño returned to France the same day, 28 July, but Delgado was unable to make contact with Francisco Granado until the following day, the day the fateful bombs planted by Antonio Martin and Sergio Hernández exploded prematurely in Security- and Falangist HQs. Sergio returned to France by train immediately after the explosion, but Antonio remained in Madrid for a week or so until the hue and cry had died down sufficiently for him to make his escape. On 31 July, as Delgado and Granado were preparing to leave Madrid, they were arrested by a Guardia Civil officer allegedly on the grounds they were 'acting suspiciously', a classic ploy used by police wishing to conceal the fact that they are acting on information received from informers or agents. Both men were arrested, tortured, charged with 'Banditry and Terrorism', tried by a summary (drumhead) court martial on 13 August 1963 and sentenced to death by garrote-vil. The two innocent men were executed in Carabanchel prison at dawn on 17 August 1963. The BPS were fully aware they had no involvement in the actions of 29 July, but they did know that the cache of weapons and explosives they discovered were to have been used in an attempt on Franco. The question was, who was – or were – the traitor or traitors responsible for the deaths of Delgado and Granado? It was a question that was to haunt Antonio Martín for the rest of his life, as did his deep sense of guilt over his role in the crime for which they were judicially murdered. When he discovered the fate of the two comrades on his return to Paris, Antonio wanted to make a public statement admitting his responsibility, but was persuaded against doing so; it would have made no difference to the decision to execute Delgado and Granado, especially Delgado, a freemason and an influential figure in both the FIJL and the DI. General Eduardo Blanco, head of the security service (DGS), wanted scapegoats and they fitted the bill perfectly. Both men had been under surveillance throughout their stay in Madrid, their mission – to kill Franco – had been betrayed by Pascual's protégé, Jacinto Guerrero Lucas, a police agent who remained active within the ranks of the exiled libertarian movement until the end of the 1960s.

In 1968 – as secretary of the Paris branch of the FIJL – he was arrested and confined to Saint Brieuc for membership of an 'association of evildoers' (malhechores), a reference to the First of May Group, the successor action group to the DI. Throughout the rest of his life he remained a tireless supporter of the anti-Francoist activities of the FIJL and the CNT-in-Exile. Laterally, he played a key part in ensuring that the Spanish Republican and anarchist contribution to the Liberation of Paris by Leclerc's 2nd Armoured division, "La Nueve" received the public recognition they deserved.

Finally, on 17 October 2009, after years of investigation, Antonio Martin succeeded in organising a videoed debate/confrontation in Madrid in the presence of Jacinto Guerrero Lucas and a number of the surviving comrades from his own Madrid group – his victims – who had been tortured and jailed in connection with various attacks mounted in 1962 and 1963 on sites of symbolic significance to Francoism.

Stuart Christie via <http://kslnotes.wordpress.com/>

### **No More Mimosa by Ethel Mannin: A re-consideration and appreciation**

In the early nineteen seventies I was interviewing exile Spanish anarchists who were living in London. Most had arrived there in the aftermath of the defeat of the Spanish Revolution in 1939 and I wanted to get their first hand impression of what had happened in Spain. Perhaps I fancied writing something afterwards although that desire doesn't seem to have stayed as long as the experience of the interviews has. Truth be told it was going very badly. I realize now I was asking too many leading questions in a futile attempt to get them to say what I wanted to hear. I also realize some forty years after that I did not know enough about the complexities of Spanish anarchism to ask anything like the right questions (and after all this time I am still not sure that I do). There was something else as well. Something I couldn't quite describe. A disconnect; probably on my part but perhaps on theirs as well. Whatever it was there was a lack of energy in the whole process that left me somewhat despondent and near to giving up. There seemed much better things I could do with my time.

Muttering about it with a couple of older anarchists who had been involved in Spanish support work led to sympathy and Ethel Mannin. Yes, they themselves had drifted away from some of the Spanish exiles over the years. Had I read *No More Mimosa* by Ethel Mannin? There was a story in there I might find useful and interesting. I picked a copy of the book up from a second hand shop in Dalston and read it.

A quick note on Mannin might be useful here. As there is with most people, I am quickly learning, there

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was, of course, an important New Zealand connection. In her memoir *Confessions and Impressions* (1930) she recounts that as a sixteen-year-old copywriter for an advertising agency she began a relationship with an artist she identifies only as "J.S." He introduced her to the work of the freethinker Robert Ingersoll as well as the writings of Tom Paine. Together they read books by William Morris, ('News From Nowhere' made a great impression) Peter Kropotkin, and Upton Sinclair among others. In 1917 J.S. returned to New Zealand to avoid joining the British Army. Later Mannin would send her children to A.S. Neill's Summerhill school and go on to join the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1935. During the conflict in Spain she became very interested in anarcho-syndicalism, supported the CNT-FAI (she contributed to the anarchist newspaper *Spain and the World*) and became friends with Emma Goldman. In 1941 she wrote *Red Rose* (1941) a novel based on Goldman's life and in 1944 a wonderful study of Utopian ideas *Bread and Roses* (1944). A wickedly funny book *Comrade O Comrade or Lowdown on the Left* (1944) followed and is still worth reading today for the fun it pokes at radical posturing. She would go on to write copious amounts of travel books, many novels, numerous volumes of autobiography and always maintained an interest in what we might call alternatives to capitalism.

*No More Mimosa* was also published in 1944. Dedicated to the Spanish anarchist Joaquin Delso De Miguel it consists of 31 short stories. The book is divided into three sections that reflect the political moods of the nineteen thirties and the years immediately following them. The first section is "Before The Deluge" while the final section is "The Deluge". The pivotal middle section, "Thunder In Spain" reflects Mannin's belief that the Spanish Civil War was critical for freedom and defeat in Spain lead to the Deluge – the frightening possibility of a descent into a fascist barbarism. The story that was recommended to me, and that led me to question what on earth I was doing with those interviews is called "Refugees" and is the third story in that middle section. It's only a few pages long and simply describes the everyday life of Spanish refugees in a "shabby, crumbling old house in one of the grimmer districts of North London" (116) where they live "in the damp cold of an English winter". It's a life of misery and isolation, a "completely alien life into which we have been plunged" (118). They are supported by Spanish Aid Committees but feel out of control of their lives having to justify each expense and felt stripped of all their autonomy. Their Aid liaison worker speaks cheerily of Lorca or Picasso in an attempt to find common ground with them but the disconnect between her and the exiles was achingly relevant to me and rather too near the mark. The

narrator is aware that they had lived through a time when "a dream trembled on the brink of realization like the morning star" Now they are in a cold, wet London in a shabby square surrounded by bare trees living in "the yawning emptiness of the days in which there is nothing whatsoever to do, nothing getting up for, nothing to hope for" (121).

In a few descriptive pages Mannin crystallized the universal experience of political exile and loneliness. It is a wonderful piece of writing. Each sentence has its own rhythm and cadence and by the end you feel a palpable sense of the pain that permeates this awful, awful experience. It's unremittingly bleak as only total and utter defeat can be and it put my own research into perspective. I realised that the disconnect I was feeling wasn't just between myself and the exiled Spanish anarchists but was actually was also inside the people I was interviewing. They had actually lived through the feelings and emotions Mannin describes. For all I know they had been the role models for her story. Some of them had become quite successful in financial terms but struggled to find inner contentment and acceptance. They were disconnected from themselves. I realized that the process of exile had been as corrosive as the joy of experiencing the rays of the "morning star" had been exhilarating. Spain wasn't a symbol to them. It was their life. Exile meant the end of nearly everything they had known. The loss of everything that had been ingrained in their lives and had made them who they were. Some of the people I was interviewing knew that and had difficulty reconciling who they had become with who they had been. A terrible protective dignity became their defense against a world that had cast them adrift. To describe all that – their complexities, contradictions, confusions – in a historical narrative that could encapsulate all that and not allow them to become ciphers was more than I was capable of. I knew that immediately. Now I think that perhaps a historian with the empathetic and epic narrative skills of E P Thompson may have pulled it off but I certainly couldn't have. It was a chastening experience.

Today the writings of Ethel Mannin, introduced to radical ideas and actions by an (as yet?) anonymous New Zealander, are little read. For me though, back in the seventies, her beautifully crafted short story taught me that the writing of history sometimes wasn't enough. Literature could do the job much better than I (and dare I say others?) ever could. On reflection that bothers me less and less as the years go on.

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## Book Reviews – Biographies

### **Ready for Revolution : The CNT Defence Committees in Barcelona, 1933-1938. [Book Review]**

When I received *Ready for Revolution* from AK Press, my heart sank. The voluminous literature on the Spanish Revolution did not, I felt, need expansion. I placed it on my 'to read' pile, then thought little more of it until a chance conversation returned it to my mind. Despite my initial misgivings, I was pleased to be reminded of it, as I soon found this little volume to be one of the best books about revolution – let alone the Spanish Revolution – I have encountered. It may not have the immediacy of the action of Tom Barry's *Guerrilla Days in Ireland*, nor the style of Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*: but what it does have, what makes it in my mind a very important book, are its revelations about the role and organization of the CNT's Defence Committees in Barcelona. Narratives by protagonists like Barry, like Orwell, and like Arshinov are, in their way, excellent. They are necessary. They pass on the energy and emotions of a time when desires could easily become reality and the bounds of normal, workaday life were burst for thousands of men and women. But these works, the narratives of revolution, show the swan gliding on the water, not the frenetic movement beneath the surface which propels the bird. Revelations about this unseen motor, the organization which facilitates revolution, are rare, and frequently appear only many years after the events. This delay can mean that the context in which they occurred has been lost, and technology or social change prevents them being of other than historical interest.

*Ready for Revolution* is not some worthy, dry, dusty academic tome destined to slumber unread on library shelves. When reading the book questions which remain important today are raised, questions which are still – or should still – be considered by anarchists and other revolutionaries in contemporary Britain. How does one prepare for revolution? Is it enough to rely on the spontaneity of the working class? Anti-fascist – or anti-state: which takes priority? These are large questions, and not ones to which there is any definitive answer. Yet the posing of questions like these, it seems to me, is a necessary first step for revolutionaries. The answers the CNT arrived at in the 1930s may help us now in our struggle for a better world.

Lest this be seen as a panegyric for the book, it does have some shortcomings which I will run through before dealing in greater detail with its positive aspects. Much of the book deals with some quite detailed accounts of events in Barcelona. Yet there is no map of the city, which would greatly assist readers to follow the action. The footnoting is sporadic: for example, lengthy quotes on pages 140, 142 and 142-3 do not receive citations and there are many places in the book where it is unclear on what authority Guillamón is

basing his statements. There are a number of typographical errors, which will hopefully be cleared up in future print-runs of the book. Most of these weaknesses can be corrected through the inclusion of source citations from the Spanish edition or from Guillamón's manuscript.

Yet against these weaknesses should be set the considerable strengths of the work. The Defence Committees have not, as far as I am aware, received any significant degree of attention. Guillamón's contribution to the historiography of the Spanish Revolution in this book, then, is to rescue them from an obscurity to which they have unjustly been condemned. As well as retrieving many of the names of members of the Committees, Guillamón also highlights their role – not merely within the important and well-known events in Barcelona but also in the months preceding Mola and Franco's rebellion. The CNT were very well aware of the need for preparation for revolution, noting that 'One cannot just conjure up, as though through spontaneous generation, the necessary means to fight a war against a state that boasts experience, vast resources [in terms of armaments], and superior offensive and defensive capabilities'.<sup>[1]</sup> To allow them a fighting chance in October 1934 the CNT established secret committees in each barrio composed of six members – apparently the ideal number for a covert group – each with well-defined responsibilities based around liaison with other committees or obtaining information about specific people, places or resources. These committees later became the centres around which the mobilization of large numbers of men took place when civil war broke out in the summer of 1936. Although it would have been interesting to find out whether the sudden influx of men overwhelmed Defence Committees as a smaller enlargement overwhelmed the Provisional IRA following Bloody Sunday in 1972, the emergence of a coherent improvised anarchist fighting force shortly after the launch of the Army coup is testament to the efficiency with which the CNT's committees had worked in the two preceding years.

Over the course of the civil war the Committees saw themselves enlarged, taking on additional roles – seeing their remit increase to include supplies, for example – but throughout the period they remained CNT organizations. The lack of clear demarcation between the war effort overseen on a local level by the Defence Committees and the role of higher committees was a recipe for internecine conflict, to some extent distracting from the fight against Franco as other fronts opened up against other factions supposedly on the same side.

A brief review cannot do justice to the complexities of the developing Spanish Revolution, in which the Defence Committees found themselves in friction with other elements of the CNT, the government of

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Catalonia, and socialist and Stalinist ‘comrades’ supposedly on the same side. Guillamón does a good job of guiding the reader through this very involved history and shedding light on how these factors affected the development of the Defence Committees and their associated bodies. The light shone on this hitherto shadowed aspect of the Spanish Revolution manages to explain the intricacies of the situation without being basic.

Although *Ready for Revolution* is not as strong a book as I would have liked, it serves as at least an initial foray into a fascinating and very important area: working class preparation for insurrection and civil war. I feel that the importance of the Defence Committees for Barcelona is no less than their importance for us today, as we look for our own ways to organize for revolution. The Defence Committees, appropriate in their time and context, may not be our way forwards. Nonetheless, this book has given me an insight into why comrades like Albert Meltzer and Stuart Christie dedicated so much of their time into perpetuating the memory of the Spanish anarchists and the world they fought to win. I doubt *Ready for Revolution* will be the final word on the subject: but it sets out the parameters for future research.

Edward McKenna

### Notes

[1] *Ready for Revolution*, p. 16

*Ready for Revolution : The CNT Defense Committees in Barcelona, 1933-1938* by Agustín Guillamón. AK Press and Kate Sharpley Library: 2014. ISBN 9781849351423 £12.95/\$14.95

### **The French Anarchists in London 1880-1914 (Constance Bantman); The Knights Errant of Anarchy[1] (Pietro Di Paola) [Book Review]**

It’s good to see an academic study where the text is readable and the anarchism recognisable. Here are two, which examine the history of the anarchist movement in London as lived by French and Italian exiles respectively. Bantman and Di Paola have done the spadework of historical research which adds to our knowledge of the movement in London and its connections. Bantman for instance quotes from a David Nicoll address to dock labourers [p42] [2] and mentions an informer’s report that ‘two young anarchist deserters, wood engravers by trade, died of starvation in London’ (but without naming them, unfortunately) [p57]. Di Paola frequently recounts attempts to organise workers in the catering trade, and covers well the activities of London’s Italian anarchists, and the mechanics of how they were spied on (and how the surveillance was sometimes blown).

Bantman sometimes veers off into generalisations: ‘the inherent impossibility of setting up anarchist organisations’ [p31] brought me up short. Di Paola deals better with the debate on anarchist organisation. It’s a shame that Bantman attributes the Siege of Sidney Street to Latvian Left Social Revolutionaries [p131] and Di Paola blames Social Democrats [p116]. Di Paola refers to Phil Ruff’s research in a footnote, but without mentioning that those involved were Latvian anarchists.[3]

The value of these two books is that they allow us to see what the anarchists were up to (as well as what their enemies said they were doing) and how their networks of agitation, socialising and survival functioned. Transnational networks are a hot topic for historians. Bantman divides an anarchist “elite” from the grassroots [p72], but I didn’t see how this elite was defined. Of course someone like Kropotkin has a much different experience of exile than those anonymous (and voiceless?) deserters. But I do worry that it’s easier to look at well-known figures who left a paper trail, and that perhaps some who are now invisible or shadowy were important in different ways.

The books themselves are well-produced, but expensive. That is what happens with short run printing, and most of those will be going to libraries (where, hopefully, they will be read). These books will be useful for historians – paid or unpaid – of both radical London and the Anarchist movement. I hope that paperback editions come out soon.

### Notes

1 ‘Knights errant’ comes from Pietro Gori’s ‘Addio Lugano Bella’.

2, ‘Most of you derive your opinion your opinion of Anarchism and Anarchists from the Capitalist press which is daily informing you that we are nothing but a set of murderers, dynamitards, criminal lunatics... we wish to prove to you that far from being the blood-thirsty monsters we are depicted we are but workers like yourselves, like yourselves the victims of the present system’ IISG, Max Nettlau Papers, ‘Socialist League’ file, folder 319, ‘Anarchist Address to the Dock Labourers’ (1894). See the Nettlau papers online: <http://search.socialhistory.org/Record/ARCH01001/ArchiveContentList> in particular page 107 of File 3294

<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH01001.3294?locatt=view:pdf> and page 34 of file 3330

<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH01001.3330?locatt=view:pdf>

3 See ‘Peter the Painter (Janis Zhaklis) and the Siege of Sidney Street’ in *KSL: Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley*

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<http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/rjdgpg>

*The French Anarchists in London 1880-1914 : Exile and Transnationalism in the First Globalisation /* Constance Bantman ISBN: 9781846318801 £70  
*The Knights Errant of Anarchy : London and the Italian Anarchist Diaspora (1880-1917) /* Pietro Di Paola ISBN: 9781846319693 £70. Both Liverpool University Press.

### Library Notes (August 2014)

Our intermittent library blog 'Notes from the KSL' has been busy lately, with pieces on Sacco and Vanzetti, Noah Ablett, Alf Barton and the pamphlet "Jones's Boy" by Spokeshave. Keep an eye on it for more thoughts on anarchism and history:

<http://kslnotes.wordpress.com/>

Also keep an eye on our website at [www.katesharpleylibrary.net](http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net) as new stuff is posted there regularly.

I had an interesting discussion with a friend recently about anarchist history. As ever, we talked about the problem of working out how to study the history of the anarchist movement. You'll not be surprised that neither of us thought just reading about Kropotkin was enough. But given that we can't know everything, how do you work out what is important and where do you find it? Relying on the printed word can only give a partial reconstruction of what was going on, or what people were thinking. Worse, it can lead to neat accounts of messy processes; something that academic writing always risks, with its need to produce or refute narratives. "Snippets and traces do not make for a PhD."

These questions won't go away. How do you rescue the nameless ones of anarchist history? Even if you can give them a name, how much can you understand of how they saw the world, or the movement and their role in it? And how to understand anarchist history without producing a version of history that simplifies and tidies up what the movement was? Drop us a line if you have any thoughts on this.

London's *Freedom* newspaper announced in March 2014 that they were moving online, complemented by a quarterly freesheet and a monthly email digest. If you want to get involved, *Freedom* can be found at [www.freedompress.org.uk](http://www.freedompress.org.uk)

The London Anarchist bookfair is Saturday 18th October, Queen Mary, University of London. <http://www.anarchistbookfair.org.uk/>

This Double issue was produced by the KSL collective in August 2014. Thanks go to everyone who helped, including the friends of the library.

### Some Latin American Anarchist Women Olga ACERA (Argentine Republic)

Born in Punta Alta in Buenos Aires province, she worked on the land as a cowherd from the age of eight. She received her primary education at a Rationalist Modern School modelled upon the one set up by the Spanish libertarian Francisco Ferrer y Guardia and based on the scientific, trial-and-error approach. In 1917 she took part in the railroad strikes during the celebrated days of struggle when the women of south Buenos Aires sat down on the tracks to bring services to a standstill.

A feminist, she was the partner of Generoso Cuadrado Hernández, a writer and anarchist activist born in Bahía Blanca, sharing his life for upwards of fifty years. They lived in Tapiales in greater Buenos Aires. Mother of Alba Cuadrado, a member of the Argentinean Libertarian Federation (FLA)

From *Libertarias en America del Sur*, by Cristina Guzzo, p. 15 [Buenos Aires : Libros de Anarres, 2014.]

### Miguelina Aurora ACOSTA CARDENAS (Peru, 1887-1938)

Born in Yurimaguas in the Loreto department in the Alto Amazonas 1887, according to her university papers. Her parents were Miguel Acosta Sánchez and Grímanesa Cárdenas Montalbán, landowners in the Peruvian Amazon territories blessed by the boom in the rubber industry. As the heiress of a wealthy family of the day she was sent to France, Switzerland and Germany for her education, which enabled her to sample the climate in Europe in the wake of the First World War.

On her return to Peru Miguelina ran up against two new realities: her family had quit the farm in the Amazon, rubber having been replaced by synthetics which ushered in the end of the era of rubber-tapping; and she began her studies in Peru and was initiated into the reality in the country.

At the Universidad Mayor de San Marcos she studied literature and later studied Jurisprudence, being admitted to the bar in 1920. In her thesis "Our marriage institution debases woman's legal and social status" she lifted the veil on her militant feminism and her preoccupation with male dominance over women. She lobbied for women to be granted the right to bring law suits, a right denied under the established legislation. Miguelina Acosta was to be Peru's first female lawyer open to defending working men and women.

From 1917 until 1919 she co-directed the anarchist-inclined weekly *La Critica* alongside her 'Indianist' friend Dora Mayer. Those were years of huge labour strikes in Peru, strikes mounted by mutualist and anarchist workers. The anarchist movement's heyday in Peru was between 1911 and 1924, during which time



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Miguelina Acosta popped up as a feminist and anarcho-syndicalist leader. In *La Critica* she signed her articles with the aliases *Maac* and *Emedosa*. In those articles she grappled with labour demands and the fight for female emancipation. She believed in education for women as instrumental in women's personal development. Another core theme in her struggles were rights for the native peoples (Indians) and she was especially fixated with the problems of Amazonian women, something she had been familiar with, having experienced life in that region. As a consequence, she set up a school for women in her native town of Yurimaguas and was a member of the Pro-Indian Association founded by Dora Mayer and Pedro Zulén. She also wrote for *El Obrero Textil* and in the famous review *Amauta* run by José Mariátegui, to whom she became close from 1923 to 1930. She stood out by taking part in labour rallies as a public speaker and gave speeches in the premises of the González Prada People's University.

During her time as a student at San Marcos she launched and chaired the Women's Commission on the Supply of Staple Goods in 1919 at a time when soaring prices were behind huge strikes. Espousing an anarcho-syndicalist approach, she led the 25 May 1919 "anti-hunger" march in Lima that was banned by the government, whereupon a rally was held with placards reading "We want bread!", "Down with the capitalist hoarders!" and "Long live the women's organisation!". Repression and clashes with the police followed. Later, Miguelina embarked on a hunger strike in the port of El Callao in protest at the scarcity of basic foodstuffs and this made her very popular right across Peru. Similarly, she took part in and led the anarcho-syndicalist women's struggles mounted throughout Peru in 1917 and 1918 to press for the eight hour working day and stood up to heavy-handed police repression which on occasion had tragic outcomes. Mariátegui refers to these women in his *7 Essays Interpreting Peruvian Reality*. On account of her ideas, Miguelina Acosta was shunned in certain circles and some doors were barred to her, but even so, she stuck to her educational work as a teacher in a range of workers' schools and at the González Prada People's University in Jauja. She was a member of the 'Evolución Feminista' association launched by the journalist and educator María Jesús Alvarado, a member of the Feminist Labour Society and of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In 1924 she took part in the Pan-American Women's Conference where she set out her plan for the establishment and training of a corps of peripatetic rural teachers to tackle illiteracy among the Indians.

In the review *La Protesta* (Lima, No 84, in January 1920) the anarchist Delfín Levano published the lyrics of a song entitled "El perseguido" (The Persecuted

One) dedicated to Miguelina Acosta and referring to her as "sister". In fact, Miguelina was by then looked upon as a libertarian leader and brilliant public speaker.

In her later years she lived in El Callao, dying on 26 October 1938 in that port city in Peru.

Op.cit., pp. 15-17

### **Esperanza AUZEAC (Moldavia/Uruguay, 1919-?)**

Moldavia-born anarchist militant who moved to Uruguay with her family. Originally her name was Nadezhda and her father, a French officer posted to Russia, was part of the diaspora that left the empire in the wake of the 1917 revolution. He said he had arrived at the River Plate as a fugitive from the Bolsheviks.

Esperanza was a unionist and helped set up the Meatworkers' Union which had previously not existed in Montevideo. She started working at the Frigorífico Anglo (Anglo Refrigeration) plant as a 17 year old but the belief is that she was actually only 14 or 15 years old when she started work. And she was sacked from the refrigeration plant for her political activity.

She was very friendly with the Montevideo anarchist Débora Céspedes and her partner "Beto" Gallegos and lived, as they did, in the El Cerro district. Esperanza was a member of the group around the El Cerro Ateneo Libre and belonged to the GEAL, *Grupo de Estudios y Acción Libertaria* (Libertarian Studies & Action Group) from the 1980s onwards.

Her own partner was Santiago Rodriguez (b. 1916) from the Canillitas Union and they had a son, Boris. Her close friend Débora Céspedes wrote a biography of Esperanza published in *Centro Oeste*, the review of the El Cerro district pensioners.

In 2001 the Dutch researcher Kees Rodenburg carried out the "Simón Radowitzky" interview with Esperanza after discovering a photograph of her with Simón Radowitzky in Luce Fabbri's archives; the snapshot had been taken at a picnic organised by the Ateneo Libre and was published in the review *Opción Libertaria* (Montevideo, June 1999, p. 14). In the interview Auzeac recalls Radowitzky's arrival in Montevideo in 1930 following his release from Ushuaia penitentiary; the interview can be found at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam.

Esperanza Auzeac died in Bolivia where she had spent her later years.

Op.cit. pp. 19-20

### **Nelia BURSUK (Argentina) b. 1921**

Born in Bernasconi in La Pampa in 1921, daughter of Jose Bursuk and Benita Kaplan and grand-daughter of the head of the clan, Wolf, all of them originally from Bobrovsky in Russia, arriving in Argentina at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as refugees from Nicholas II's pogroms.



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Their destination was the Narcisse Level settlement in Bernasconi; it had been launched in 1909 by the Jewish Colonization Company, a philanthropic society set up by Baron Hirsch. Along with a lot of other Ashkenazi Jewish settlers, they settled down to the hard slog of rural living, planting and harvesting cereal crops in an outlying area with less than top quality soil, but in settling there on that virgin soil they were able, collectively, to reproduce their culture, language and customs. The Bursuks were anarchist intellectuals and they opened an anarchist bookshop as part of the local business community. In addition, they brought to Narcisse Level all of the published output of Francisco Ferrer's Modern School so as to introduce libertarian educational methods to the settlement.

Nelia was just over a year old when her parents and a few other family members moved to Charata in what was then the Chaco National Territory. They were drawn there by the offer of cheap land for cotton-planting and they left La Pampa behind, fed up with the high rents the Colonization Company introduced after 1920.

They settled in Charata with five other families on a 100-hectare plot where they set up a cooperative, affirming their anarchist identity. In spite of the oppressive climate, presence of mosquitoes and absence of electricity, the family led a peaceful existence with Nelia learning to read Yiddish and Spanish and give recitals and take part in amateur dramatics. Quiet family evenings featured readings out loud from *La Protesta* and *Dos Freie Wort* (1936-1975), the Buenos Aires-based Yiddish anarchist daily on which Nelia's uncles Berishe and Mayer both worked.

The 1930s were the heyday of the collective, with a school, a hospital being built as well as the launching of a Jewish Society where up to one hundred families used to gather to watch plays. Nelia, her mother and her aunt Taibe were part of the "Bursuk Theatre Troupe" run by Berishe and Mayer. Nelia appeared in one play called "*Hambre*" (Hunger) featuring a mother unable to feed her little children and – so they say – reduced the audience to tears. Back then performances were also held in the surrounding countryside and villages to raise funds in support of anarchist causes. The programme changed every three months and there was a gradual shift to the use of Spanish. One report from the FORA noted in 1934 that a "soiree" in Charata had drawn an attendance of upwards of 400 people.

In 1930 the Bursuks set up the "Leon Jazanovich Library" in Charata, called after the director of the newspaper *Brot un Ere* (Bread and Honour) who had exposed the abuses of Hirsch's Colonization Company, dubbing its practices "feudal philanthropy". Jazanovich had become *persona non grata* with the Argentinean government and was deported in 1910.

With her ten siblings, her cousins and friends, Nelia launched a separate library for youngsters called *Brazo y Cerebro* (Brawn and Brain). It held fortnightly soirees attended by Jews and non-Jews alike, offerings recitals and discussions of literary works and anarchist readings.

In 1940 the Bursuk family left the Chaco and moved to Buenos Aires. Nelia joined the "Libertarian Youth" organisation as a member of the FACA (Argentinean Anarcho-Communist Federation) and as an anarchist activist she gave poetry readings, performed in theatre groups, sold anarchist literature and distributed propaganda at night school. Like her father and her uncle Mayer Bursuk, she also belonged to the Jewish Rationalist Association (ARJ) which was active in Argentina from 1916 up until 1978, was a member of the FORA (Argentinean Regional Workers' Federation) and had close ties to the "Jose Ingenieros" People's Library. There were several schools of thought within the ARJ, as witness the controversy between individualist anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists or Tolstoyan humanists and the rationalist influence of the Modern School. The ARJ embraced the doubly pariah status of the "anarchist Jew" and boosted the cultural identity and education of Russian immigrants arriving in Argentina as illiterates. Nelia Bursuk was heavily involved in this educational endeavour which was conducted through Yiddish and she also fought against the discrimination against women, whose voices were little heeded among traditionalist groups of the sort, which was why the younger generation tended to associate with more open-minded leftwing groups in which Spanish was the language used.

When the ARJ's director Gorodisky died in 1976, the two thousand books in the Jewish Rationalist Association library on the corner of Humahuaca and Pringle Streets were gifted to the Argentinean Anarchist Studies Department at Tel Aviv University.

Nelia Bursuk was 25 when she first met her husband Antonio Legaz at a FORA dance. Legaz was Argentinean, but had lived in Spain since the age of five and had fought for the revolutionary cause in the Civil War there. Nelia and Legaz had two daughters – Marina Luisa, an anarchist active in the FLA (Argentinean Libertarian Federation), who was born in Buenos Aires on 30 December 1947; and Estella Noemi, born on 7 April 1950. Nelia has two grandchildren, Estrella's children, Sebastian and Gabriela Irina.

Now in her 90s and blessed with good health, Nelia Bursuk is an iconic woman of Ashkenazi extraction who fought for cultural integration and feminism on the basis of anarchist values.

Op.cit. pp. 38-41. Translated by Paul Sharkey from *Libertarias en America del Sur*, by Cristina Guzzo, [Buenos Aires : Libros de Anarres, 2014.]

## Anarchists against WW1

### **Anarchists against World War One: Two little known events – Abertillery and Stockport**

There have now been a reasonable number of publications on British anarchist opposition to World War One – the trailblazing and well-documented book on opposition in North London by Ken Weller, the relevant chapter in John Quail's book on British anarchism, etc. However, much more investigation needs to be done. This article is a contribution to that ongoing work, with reference to State repression in two different parts of Britain.

In 1913 the resentment against the behaviour of trade union leaders in South Wales – the so-called anti-leader agitation – crystallised in the setting up of Workers Freedom Groups in that region. The anarchist paper *Freedom* reporting on the Anarchist Conference of March 1913, referred to the report given by delegates from Abertillery, Harlech and Swansea and took note that there were now eight of these groups in the Swansea valley alone. One of these groups was at Ammanford with the involvement of the miner Jim Colton (see his biography at libcom). These groups rapidly took on an anarchist communist nature and began to spread beyond Wales. As the Ammanford group proclaimed:

“The Constitution and programme of the Workers Freedom Groups have been shaped upon the model of future society at which they aim, namely Anarchist-Communism”.

Workers Freedom Groups were set up in at least Bristol, Oldham and Chopwell (the latter at the initiative of the miner Will Lawther, later to become a right wing union bureaucrat). The development of the Workers Freedom Groups seems to have been sponsored by George Davison, with the wealth he had received from his involvement in Kodak. Davison paid for the setting up of Communist Clubs connected to the Workers Freedom Groups in Ammanford and Chopwell and it seems likely that he paid for the Communist Club in Stockport, itself connected to the foundation of a Workers Freedom Group there. It appears that the Workers Freedom Groups may well have had their origins in the Central Labour College, a breakaway from Ruskin College that was also sponsored by Davison. At a national anarchist conference held in Newcastle on April 11th and 12th 1914, there was discussion on a basis for work using the Workers Freedom Groups (*Newcastle Journal*, 13th April 1914)

The Communist Club was opened at 18 Park Street, Hazel Grove in Stockport in February 1914 with participation from anarchists from Stockport itself, Cheadle, Reddish, Oldham and New Mills. *Freedom* was to describe the “dainty, bright” and “charming” rooms of the Club in a report of the Anarchist Conference held there a year later at Easter in 1915. The

Stockport group summed up their concept of anarchist communism in a statement published in *Freedom* which included the following:

“Comrades, to struggle is to live, together, not isolated; let not the most determined individualist fear the Communism we advance – the Free Society of Individuals – based upon the order of equality and liberty of expression, voluntary agreement and social service according to ability, desire and opportunity”.

The war started with millions volunteering to be slaughtered. The death of so many in the first two years of the War compelled the British State to consider introducing conscription, and over this even some supporters of the War expressed grave reservations. The Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party (formerly the Social Democratic Federation) had large sections who took a pro-war, patriotic stand and it was only around the *Labour Leader* paper of the ILPer Fenner Brockway that the anti-war elements of the ILP were able to rally. For their part, the anarchists, despite the pro-war stance of Kropotkin and others, consistently opposed the war and carried on propaganda and activity against it. As an indication of sympathy for anti-war views, sales of *Freedom* and *The Voice of Labour* rose significantly. Conscription was introduced in January 1916 and soon the State struck against the anarchist movement. *Freedom* and *The Voice of Labour* were raided and anarchists like Henry Sara, Guy Aldred, Bonar Thompson and others were imprisoned, Sara being particularly badly treated. Other anarchists like Rudolf Rocker and Charlie Lahr were interned as “enemy aliens”. One London anarchist, Alf Corum, was plucked from the orchestra pit of Finsbury Music Hall by the police (1)

An indication of how seriously the State took the anti-war agitation of the anarchists is seen from the treatment meted out to the anarchist Jack Smith in Glasgow in May 1916. Whilst two others, Maxton and McDougall, who were socialists, received sentences of 12 months for the same offence, Smith received a sentence of eighteen months, because of his association with a “well-known London anarchist” (Aldred is meant here) and because 8 copies of a paper were of “an extreme character” found on him contained a statement from the International Stop the War Committee which advocated the ending of the War through revolution, and the spreading of communism. (*Western Daily Press*, May 12th 1916 and *Derby Daily Telegraph*, May 11th 1916)

The Welsh coal miner Christopher John Smith, very active in Abertillery in the Workers Freedom Group there, had his house visited by a police inspector whilst he was at work on March 22nd 1916, and anarchist literature there was confiscated. As *Freedom* noted on his trial “our militant comrade at Abertillery, Chris

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Smith, has now been singled out for distinction for thinking aloud". In court he described himself as an Anarchist Communist. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment on 12th April 1916 for advocating a down-tools policy to the prejudice of the national interest, translated by *Freedom* as "the heinous crime of distributing leaflets among the miners". He was also charged with sending a letter to a newspaper calculated to prejudice recruiting. Judgement was reserved on the latter charge. Smith told the court he had been a soldier in the Boer War but had since changed his mind about militarism. On August 5th, 1916 the socialist paper *The Merthyr Pioneer* reported: "The case of Chris Smith, about four months ago sentenced at Abertillery to six months' imprisonment under the Defence of the Realm Act, will be well remembered by many *Pioneer* readers. A week last Monday his wife and other relatives and friends visited him at Usk Prison, where he is confined. They found him in good health and spirits, and also looking well and strong. He was by no means down-hearted, but rather his optimism was marked. Prison life has not modified his opinions, neither lessened his determination to continue service in the people's cause. The cell does not suppress a man's spirit nor his mentality it only strengthens the revolutionary."

In Stockport there was an active branch of the No-Conscription Fellowship and the number of prosecutions against conscientious objectors seems to have been high for the Stockport area. One objector from Stockport, Arthur Butler (who appears not to have been an anarchist) died in Preston prison as a result of the appalling treatment he received. The local anarchists were active in the NCF and the Club soon became the target of raids. The first raid took place on February 1st with the local Chief Constable taking out a warrant under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) to search the "premises occupied by the Workers Freedom Group or Anarchist Club" (evidence given by Inspector Billings in court). No one was present in the Club during the raid. The police seized the anarchist literature at the Club "many of which were of a revolutionary nature and were no doubt prejudiced to recruiting". The owners were summoned to show cause why the literature should not be destroyed. The *Manchester Evening News* (7th March 1916) reported that Robert Holt (probably an erroneous transcription of Herbert Holt) had appeared and said he was a member of the group and that he wished to state reasons why the literature should not be destroyed. The magistrates agreed that not all the documents should be condemned: "There were some" said the Chairman "that people might read with advantage. We have gone over a number of the pamphlets and think that "The Appeal To Socialists" "Down With Conscription" "International Anarchist Manifesto on the War" and "Apes and

Patriotism" should be condemned and the rest handed back".

On 13th June 1916 one of the Stockport anarchists, Walter Barlow (21), a hat leather cutter, of Stream Terrace, Turncroft Lane, was in front of the local magistrates on the charge of being an absentee under the Military Service Act. In court he said that "I am an anarchist and do not believe in government of men by men", adding that he did not appeal because he denied the right of any man to judge his conscience. The tribunals were used to smash opposition to the Military Service Act and therefore he refused to have anything to do with them. He was fined 40 shillings and handed over to the military authorities (*Manchester Evening News*, 13th June 1916).

In raids on the Club on 18th and 20th September five anarchists were captured and charged with absenting themselves from military service. These were William Jackson, a commercial traveller, of Langley Cottage, Hazel Grove; Herbert Hope of York Street, Didsbury, (another erroneous transcription for Herbert Holt); William Hopkins of Marshland Street, Stockport; Charles Warwick of Crofton Street, Rusholme and Arthur Helsby. Hopkins, a conscientious objector, was found in the cellar. Holt and Jackson said they were antimilitarists and did not believe in war and the Army. Holt went out of his way to say that the Club was not the premises of the NCF as had been alleged by the police. He said that he did not owe anything to England and therefore did not think he should fight for the country. Jackson said that he did not intend to be a soldier because war was barbarism. The Chief Constable said that Helby refused to give an account of himself and "was evidently a man of foreign extraction" (!) He was remanded for further enquiries. The others were fined forty shillings each and ordered to be handed over to the military authorities (Friday 22nd September 1916, *Manchester Evening News*).

In another raid on the Club Robert Williams was arrested. The previously arrested Jackson and Hopkins were sentenced to 2 years hard labour at a Birkenhead court martial.

In another raid elsewhere another Stockport anarchist, Robert Seaton of Charles Street was arrested for not having responded to a call up notice. He was an employee of the L& N.W. Railway Company.

In court he stated: "How can I absent myself from something to which I never belonged. It's illogical and the whole proceedings are a perfect farce from beginning to end". The usual sentence was meted out... 40s shillings fine and handing over to the military authorities. Another Stockport objector, James Worsencroft, told the court that: "I am opposed to all manner of warfare".



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Fenner Brockway was imprisoned for his anti-war activity and met some of the Stockport anarchists whilst imprisoned at Chester Castle. "There were three young anarchists from Stockport whom I knew as N.C.F. members". He went on to say that they were "splendid" and that: "two of them were only eighteen and the third could not have been older than twenty... They were all working class lads accustomed to roughing it and were blessed with a great sense of humour... Bob Seaton was a strong, good-looking boy with the open, ruddy type of face one usually associates with the country. Williams was quiet and thoughtful, a pale-face. Sam Brookes was a little chap with the features and fun of Punch. I went through a good deal of my imprisonment with these boys and found them of sterling character." Brockway, together with the anarchists and Percy Bartlett, later secretary to George Lansbury, decided to defy the silence rule in prison and went to the prison governor to tell him so. The governor replied that this could be interpreted as mutiny for which flogging was the punishment. Despite this they began to talk whilst stitching mail bags. They were confined to their cells and next morning reported to the governor, but this time not removed to cells. Ordered to walk ten feet apart during exercise they bunched together and even started playing games. They were then left like this for a week, by which time the revolt spread. Brockway, together with Brookes, was then moved to Lincoln Prison.

Another Stockport anarchist, Alfred Toft, was forced into the Cheshire Regiment as a private. He appeared in court charged with disobeying orders on May 30th 1917. In court he stated: "I decline to plead as I don't recognise myself as a soldier". He had already been court martialled three times. He believed that the military system was brought about through ignorance, war was brought about by the capitalist class for its own gain, to the disadvantage and degradation of the masses. The result of war was slavery. He was previously sentenced to two years, with 1 year and 22 days remitted. He now received 2 years hard labour, a sentence then reduced to six months with hard labour. (*Liverpool Echo*, 6th September 1917)

The Stockport anarchists remained intransigent during their imprisonment, refusing to accept alternative service, with the exception of Herbert Holt, who finally agreed to do work for the Home Office at Wakefield. In April 1919 all of the conscientious objectors in prison were released, Seaton and the others among them.

(1) Alf Corum (1890-1969). From a musical family. Joined the British Socialist Party in his early twenties, became an anarchist during the First World War, contributing to *Freedom*. Imprisoned as a conscientious objector he edited the secret prison paper *The*

*Winchester Whisperer*, written in ink with a blunt needle on toilet paper. Became a founder-member of Communist Party in 1920 and remained with it the rest of his life. He became a fairly well-known classical composer.

Nick Heath

Sources

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<http://libcom.org/history/anarchists-against-world-war-one-two-little-known-events-abertillery-stockport>

### **Futures by John Barker [Book review]**

*Futures* is set in the London of 1987, in one way a different world from now, one where mobile phones aren't everywhere and the Gulf War is going on between Iran and Iraq. But it's also the start of our world: deregulated markets, the powerful with more money than sense and everyone without trying to keep their heads above water.

One of whom is Carol, a small-time cocaine dealer who thinks one big deal could be enough to get her out of the business. One of her customers is Phil, a financial analyst who dreams, with his friend Jack, of setting up a futures market for cocaine. Her supply comes through Gordon Murry, gangster businessman. Their worlds collide as the stock market collapses and the great storm batters London.

The novel is narrated over the shoulder of each character, slotting the plot together piece by piece. The exception is Gordon Murray, who narrates his own parts which fits: he's big on rules, but only ones he's written himself. He is given a nice turn of phrase, though:

"I poured him a scotch and came on with the soda siphon. That's what Keith calls a rhetorical gesture. The Super shook his head like he was some Scottish peasant living on oats and a dram." (p166)

All the characters are believable, not one-dimensional types, which makes for a gripping story. Barker shows the interconnections between the worlds of illegal and legitimate business. He also shows how one resembles the other: diversification and self-justification all round. Radical crime fiction is inevitably interested in power. Barker's not taken in by self interest dressed up as science, but presses on to look at how capitalism works rather than the "flim-flam" that's trotted out to justify it. You even get a bonus article on the economics of cocaine!

*Futures* is a magnificent piece of work: gripping plot and sharp writing coming from a brain that's switched on and humane. Read it!

*Futures* by John Barker. Published by PM Press, 2014. ISBN 9781604869613 \$17.95 / £9.99



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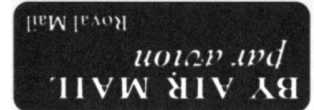
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