

Free Commune and Billy MacQueen

We are beginning to think about scanning some of the material we hold in the KSL archives. What we want to do though is put what we scan into some kind of context and not just leave it floating around aimlessly on the “world wide web”. Anyhow – here’s a paper that interests us, *The Free Commune* from Leeds. It appears to have been published during 1898 and it re-invented itself as *The Free Commune: A Quarterly Magazine* in January 1899. KSL holds No. 3 of *The Free Commune* and No. 1 of the *The Free Commune Magazine*. (If you can send us other copies that would be a treat!!!)

Both of these titles were put together by William “Billy” MacQueen (1875-1908) and Alf Barton (1868-1933). MacQueen was based in Leeds, Barton in Manchester. You can read more about MacQueen here and more about Barton here. [1]

Of the two it’s MacQueen we want to talk about a little more. He had interesting links between the UK and the USA anarchist movements and paid a grim price for his beliefs and actions and his life, I think, like so many others, presents us with some interesting reflections on ideas and action. Although both he and Barton were class struggle anarchist communists *The Free Commune* suggests that they both saw anarchism as a rich tapestry and were able to easily reconcile what some of us may now see as contradictions or antagonisms. We can see this in the last two paragraphs of Barton’s piece on Nietzsche, for example, where he and Nietzsche differ on the attractiveness of “socialism,” yet Barton is still able to appreciate the immense importance Nietzsche had in freeing the human mind and encouraging individual revolt. The donations column is also interesting in this respect. The two donors “Eagle” and “Serpent” are a misprint, being in reality the individualist paper *The Eagle and Serpent: A Journal of Egoistic Philosophy and Sociology* published in London between 1898-1900 – a paper that *The Free Commune* regularly sent exchange copies to.

On page four there is an advertisement for the paper *New Order* edited by John Colman Kenworthy. MacQueen had met Kenworthy in 1897 when he came to speak in Leeds. Partly as a result of this visit a bicycle and light mechanical co-operative was created “conducted upon Anarchist-Communist lines” and called “The Brotherhood Workshop” (6 Victoria Road, Holbeck, Leeds). Kenworthy was, in fact, a

prominent Tolstoyan Christian anarchist (he visited Tolstoy in Russia in 1895) and helped found the Croydon Brotherhood Church and, in 1896, the Purleigh Brotherhood Church. Both were based on the principles of voluntary co-operation and non-violence.

We can see, then, that there is a lot going on in this little four-page newspaper and a wide range of ideas and anarchist practice are represented, including a scornful comment on the horrified reaction of “reformers” to the assassination of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria by the Italian anarchist Luigi Lucheni. The editors would like to see a similar reaction whenever a working woman is killed by “the profit-mongering system.” The attitude of the editors to the killing of the Empress presages that of Emma Goldman in ‘*The Psychology of Political Violence*’ (1910) seeing assassinations as the natural outcome of a society “based upon robbery and murder”

MacQueen eventually left Leeds for Hull from where he emigrated to the US in 1902. Before then he had helped edit, in 1900, the *Anarchist Newsletter* and had begun in Leeds, and later in Hull, to produce pamphlets (and numerous leaflets) under the imprint of *The Free Commune Press*. We’ve managed to identify some of them:

Charlotte Wilson, *Anarchism*, Leeds, 1900

Peter Kropotkin, *The Development of Trade Unionism*, Leeds, 1900

Johann Most, *The Deistic Pestilence*, Hull, 1902 (KSL has this one)

Sebastian Faure, *Die Verbrechen Gottes*, Hull, 1904

The last pamphlet reminds us that MacQueen was a fluent German speaker and it was this talent, which would lead to his untimely death.

When he arrived in New York he spent time with Johann Most (they had corresponded before) managing to get himself arrested on May 4th 1902 under the terms of the recently legislated Criminal Anarchy Act, put into place after the assassination of President McKinley by Leon Czolgosz. MacQueen is alleged to have shouted “To hell with the laws of America; to hell with the government” at a farewell reception for Johann Most, who was about to serve a prison sentence for printing an article called “Murder against Murder” in his paper “*Freiheit*” just before McKinley’s assassination.

MacQueen had also begun to produce a newspaper

Billy MacQueen

“Liberty” which he edited from April-December 1902.

Meanwhile in Paterson, New Jersey silk dyers went out on strike on 23 April 1902. Sometime in May MacQueen and Rudolph Grossman (Pierre Ramus) went to Paterson to work with and support the German-speaking strikers. Both spoke with Luigi Galleani at the 18 June strike support meeting in Belmont Park. MacQueen had already written an article in *La Question Sociale* calling for a general strike and repeated the demand at the rally. Following the rally rioting broke out in Paterson’s textile district and the police responded by opening fire. Galleani (after being shot in the face) fled to Canada, returning to Barre Vermont under an assumed name in 1903. Grossman and MacQueen were arrested and charged with incitement to riot. Interestingly MacQueen’s wife, Nellie, spoke at a meeting with Emma Goldman on “The Situation in Paterson, NJ” in New York City on 18 November 1902.

Both MacQueen and Grossman jumped bail after being sentenced to five years, with MacQueen returning to England. For whatever reason he returned to stand serve his sentence on April 10 1904. (He appeared to be concerned for the person who had lost his bail money when the two fled.) Grossman never did. Sent to prison MacQueen was released in 1907 but had contracted tuberculosis while locked up. He died in England in 1908. In prison MacQueen had become somewhat of a cause celebre. H.G. Wells visited him and a very sympathetic portrait of MacQueen appeared in Wells’ *The Future in America* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1906). A pamphlet (?) *The Case of William MacQueen: Reasons Why He Should Be Liberated* written by Alfred Wesley Wilshire appeared in Trenton in 1905.

MacQueen is one of many anarchists who died young and never saw his full potential realized. If nothing else writing a little about him reflects a determination that at the very least he will not be forgotten. There’s something else, though. Often we raid the anarchist past to justify the anarchist present. We can create a historical precedent or discover lost traces and tendencies that were prescient and illuminating for our present practice- or whatever bee we have in our bonnet. We can’t easily do that with MacQueen. He could stand with the most militant of anarchists and urge a General Strike in a tense and confrontational atmosphere, be supportive of non-coercive, Christian Anarchism and see hope in small co-operative factories. Some of us may see him as a walking contradiction as we look for purity of theory and practice. The truth is, I sense, that for MacQueen the pursuit of anarchy was urgent and necessary. That pursuit, in his case, took the form of passionate and fiery speeches (in the most oppressive situations he chose attack, rather

than defense), impulsive, sustained actions and thoughtful and inclusive writing. Action wasn’t careful and rational. It was messy, sometimes self-defeating and sometimes wonderfully exciting. All he had to guide him at each step was a steadfastness of morality and purpose. Any road that might take him towards anarchy was worth walking on and he appears to have had little of the rigidity and theoretical certainty that was a feature of the writings and practice of other comrades of this period. His life (no marginal one in the pursuit of the ideal), does suggest that the term “class struggle” was a little more complex and complicated than it’s present day adversaries and adherents have defined it.

1, <http://libcom.org/history/articles/1875-1908-william-macqueen-and>
<http://radicalmanchester.wordpress.com/2010/01/05/alfred-barton-19th-century-anarchism-and-the-early-20th-century-labour-party/>
From: <http://kslnotes.wordpress.com/2012/04/10/free-commune-and-billy-macqueen/>

New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism [Book Review]

This is the fruit of (part of) an Anarchist Studies Network conference. Some new academic interest in anarchism has produced stuff that is incomprehensible. Fortunately, this is both readable and interesting. If “Alfons Pilarski and Upper Silesian Anarcho-syndicalism during the Interwar years” seems too narrow a topic, you probably shouldn’t be reading the Kate Sharpley Library bulletin anyway.

The editors trace the current state of play and in particular the fact that transnational networks and the lives of individuals are currently of interest. Each contribution is fairly short (which is good) but also provides leads to lots of further reading (also good, if a bit daunting to think about buying them all.)

Davide Turcato ends his piece on the 1896 London Congress “[B]y appreciating the weight of the controversy on organisation we can recognise that the issues that most concerned anarchists, and therefore divided them, were not their theoretical utopias for the future, but practical means of struggle in the present.” A good, grounded thought. For those who want to study not just what happened in anarchist history, but the how and why, this book contains some interesting threads to pull.

New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational edited by David Berry and Constance Bantman. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. ISBN 9781443823937 £40/\$60

Philip Josephs

Philip Josephs and anarchism in New Zealand

Philip Josephs – a Latvian-born Jewish tailor, recent arrival to New Zealand by way of Scotland, and self-proclaimed anarchist – took to the floor of the Wellington 1906 May Day demonstration amidst orchestral outbursts and a flurry of motions. “This meeting,” moved Josephs, “sends its fraternal greetings to our comrades engaged in the universal class war, and pledges itself to work for the abolition of the capitalistic system and the substitution in New Zealand of a co-operative commonwealth, founded on the collective ownership of the land and the means of production and distribution.”[1] The motion, as well as highlighting his involvement in the radical milieu of New Zealand’s capital, conveys the key concepts of his anarchism – internationalism, mass collective action, and free communism.

However, if readers were to form an understanding of anarchism based on the newspapers of the day, or from the accounts of New Zealand’s labour movement by certain historians, a very different conclusion would be drawn. On the occasions it is mentioned, anarchism is used hysterically by the press to denounce or decry; by labour leaders in order to show the fallacy of their opponents’ positions; and by labourist historians to symbolise wayward ideas or acts of extremism – painting a nightmarish picture of anarchist practice in the vein of Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday*. [2]

Yet as Vadim Damier illustrates in *Anarcho Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, anarchism was a global working class movement, one “that spread to countries as different as Spain and Russia, France and Japan, Argentina and Sweden, Italy and China, Portugal and Germany,” and “was able to attract hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of wage workers.” Anarchists “not only took an active part in the most important social upheavals and conflicts of the twentieth century, often leaving their own indelible imprint on these events, but also in many countries they formed the centre of a special, inimitable, working class culture with its own values, norms, customs, and symbols.”[3] Against this reality of anarchism as a socialist movement, a focus on its most controversial deviations reaffirms the stereotype of the anarchist terrorist, dressed in black and wielding a bomb – insane, dangerous, and against civilisation itself. “‘Gods Own Country’ is not safe from the vagaries of the person who believes in the bomb as opposed to argument,” bellowed one daily New Zealand paper in 1907.[4]

Although highly exaggerated, the article contained one truth. God’s Own Country – the ‘workingman’s paradise’ that was New Zealand in the early years of the twentieth century – had anarchists in its midst. To

describe this small number as a coherently organised movement would be another exaggeration, but nonetheless, those that subscribed to anarchism in New Zealand were a valid part of the labour movement, imparting uncredited ideas and influence. Likewise, anarchist agitation and the circulation of radical literature contributed significantly to the development of a working class counter-culture in New Zealand.

The most substantial work to date on anarchism in New Zealand during the turbulent teens is the indispensable 32-page pamphlet, ‘Troublemakers’ *Anarchism and Syndicalism: The Early Years of the Libertarian Movement in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, by Frank Prebble. Drawing on snippets of primary and secondary sources, his research was pioneering in that it was the first specific work on anarchism – highlighting a definite strand of libertarian praxis in New Zealand that has long been overlooked. Yet as Prebble notes in the introduction, “this pamphlet is not complete, much of the information is very fragmentary and a lot more work needs to be done.”[5]

By drawing on the work of Prebble, information garnished from living relatives of certain anarchists, and with a transnational lens, my forthcoming book (*Sewing Freedom: Philip Josephs, Transnationalism & Early New Zealand Anarchism*) will explore anarchism in New Zealand before 1921 through a biography of one of its key players. The transnational nature of anarchism in the period between its emergence in the workers’ movement of the late 1860s, and the interwar years, can be seen in the migration and activity of Philip Josephs (1876-1946). His sustained activism, whether from the soapbox or through the mailbox, and his involvement in the class struggle that swept through the country, makes Josephs one of New Zealand’s most important and pioneering anarchists.

As well as providing previously scarce biographical information on Josephs, I hope to convince the reader of three main claims. First, before the arrival of Josephs in New Zealand the ‘broad anarchist tradition’ – defined by Schmidt and van der Walt as a revolutionary form of libertarian socialism against social and economic hierarchy (specifically capitalism and the state), in favour of international class struggle and revolution from below in order to create a socialist, stateless social order[6] – had next to no organised presence. There were anarchists and various forms of antiauthoritarian ideas in New Zealand before Josephs, but it was his activity within the New Zealand Socialist Party and later through his formation of one of New Zealand’s first anarchist collectives, The Freedom Group, that ensured a level of

Philip Josephs

organised anarchism previously lacking in the wider labour movement.

The second point is one of legitimacy: anarchism was a valid part of the New Zealand labour movement and its working class counter-culture – directly through the activity of Philip Josephs and other anarchists, or indirectly due to anarchist literature and ideas. Although often missing from the indices of New Zealand labour histories, anarchism was “more influential than most have realised.”[7] The anarchist communism of Josephs reflects the rejection of violent individualism (propaganda by the deed) and the move back to collective action taken by the majority of anarchists in the late 1890s. His tireless distribution of anarchist literature, numerous public speeches, and his tailor shop-cum-radical bookshop helped to create a radical counter-culture in New Zealand; while his support of syndicalist class struggle and the general strike, and his activity alongside the local branches of the Industrial Workers of the World, typifies the relationship of anarchism with revolutionary syndicalism. Indeed, if one went so far as employing Schmidt and van der Walt’s definition of syndicalism being a variant and strategy of the broad anarchist tradition, the era of the first New Zealand Federation of Labor of 1908-1913 can be seen in a whole new light.[8]

Finally, New Zealand anarchists, and Josephs in particular, were rooted in the international anarchist movement. Josephs’ birth in Latvia, his radicalisation in Glasgow, Scotland, and his almost two decades in New Zealand before leaving for Australia highlights the transient nature of labour; while his distribution of international anarchist literature, and personal networking with overseas revolutionaries and groups such as Freedom Press (UK) and the Mother Earth Publishing Association (USA), illustrates the doctrinal diffusion and sharing of information so vital to informal, intercontinental anarchist networks. This sharing went both ways. Josephs’ activities, the bankruptcy of state-socialist legislation, and accounts of New Zealand strikes popped up on the pages of various anarchist journals abroad, lending weight to the notion that:

anarchism was not a Western European doctrine that diffused outwards, perfectly formed, to a passive ‘periphery.’ Rather, the movement emerged simultaneously and transnationally, created by interlinked activists on many continents – a pattern of interconnection, exchange and sharing, rooted in ‘informal internationalism.’[9]

Josephs played a key role in the establishment of a distinct anarchist identity and culture (in New Zealand and abroad), a culture that emerged and enveloped simultaneously around the globe. His New Zealand

activity personifies the transnational deepening of the day, and illustrates how interlinked (and often un-recognised) activists operating within small local scenes but with an eye towards international events and developments advanced the anarchist project worldwide. As a result, Josephs’ struggle for social change linked our South Pacific nation to the global movement, and furthered anarchism in New Zealand itself – the Freedom Group of 1913 being one of the first of many anarchist collectives to play a vibrant part in the history of the New Zealand left.

Jared Davidson

[*Sewing Freedom: Philip Josephs, Transnationalism & Early New Zealand Anarchism* will be published by AK Press in early 2013. The Kate Sharpley Library has been instrumental in providing rare archival finds for this research, including *Mother Earth* articles and its confiscated subscription list.]

Notes

1. *Evening Post*, 7 May 1906.
2. G.K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*, J.W. Arrowsmith Publishing: London, 1908.
3. Vadim Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, Black Cat Press: Canada, 2009, p.3.
4. *Marlborough Express*, 1907.
5. Frank Prebble, “Troublemakers” *Anarchism and Syndicalism: The Early Years of the Libertarian Movement in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Libertarian Press, 1995.
6. Michael Schmidt & Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*, AK Press, 2009, p. 71.
7. Eric Olssen, email to the author, 20 August 2010.
8. Schmidt & van der Walt, *Black Flame*.
9. Steven Hirsch & Lucien van der Walt, ‘Rethinking Anarchism, Syndicalism, the Colonial and Postcolonial experience’ in Hirsch & van der Walt (eds.), *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution*, Brill, 2011, p. iiv.

Reproduced courtesy of the *Labour History Project Newsletter* (issue 54).

Needed: New Anarchist Review

Can anyone send us a copy of issue 23 of the New Anarchist Review? And can any libraries give a home to these issues: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21?

Credit

Done in July 2012 by the Kate Sharpley Library collective. Feedback and support welcome!

Remembering Sue Richardson / Sarah Fenwick Owen

Three days after Christmas, on one of those clear winter days during which the dark clouds are pierced by a sunlight that turns the water to silver, a group of friends gathered at Bull Island in the heart of Dublin city to say goodbye to Sue Richardson. Sue died in October in 2011, aged seventy, sitting at her kitchen table, waiting for the kettle to boil. At her funeral a former housemate said, 'Sue had an uncanny knack of turning the conversation away from herself'. She had an extraordinary life, yet spoke very little about it. The story here cannot be anything but incomplete.

She was born Sarah Fenwick Owen in 1941. At 23 she became Sarah Poulakous on marrying Dimitris Poulakakos. Dimitris later became a radical actor and Greek rock-star. Though they didn't stay together, almost fifty years later she met him again to discover that both had in the intervening years followed similar political paths. In 1972, it was Sarah Poulakous who Scotland Yard said they were anxious to interview about the activities of the British anarchist group the Angry Brigade. In the previous year, one member of the brigade had received a 15 years prison sentence and four others were sentenced to ten years for involvement in a series of bombings. So it was that Sarah Poulakous came to Ireland and Susan Richardson was born, a new name, a new birthday, a new date of birth, a new passport.

She moved to Dublin's inner city, was involved in the burgeoning Irish feminist movement and joined the Dublin Anarchist Group. Her life changed once more, when on February the 22nd 1978, a man entered the Bank of Ireland on Drumcondra road and passed a note to the teller saying "I am armed, push out all the money to me. Hurry. No delay. Return note". He left with a bag of money and disappeared. Sue was found nearby, holding the bag, and was arrested. At her trial, at the Special Criminal Court she refused to identify the robber and so was sentenced to three years in jail on a charge of receiving money knowing it was stolen.

Conditions at Mountjoy Women's prison were harsh. It had changed little since Victorian times. There were only two toilets for the 16 women prisoners, both open to those around, including to male prisoners. For washing there were two small basins with only cold water. Once in their cells, the women had to use pails and slop out every morning – often in the same basins. Sue, ever the fighter, took a case to the Irish High Court arguing that the state had failed in its duty to protect the health of the prisoners. She said to the judge "I don't know what your stomach feels like in the morning, but it can be very unpleasant to go to wash your face and teeth to find the basin filled with human waste". Justice Barrington, upheld

her complaints and directed the authorities to improve facilities at the prison.

She was released in 1980 after serving 16 months, but was told by the prison authorities that she was not to communicate with newspapers, radio or television or to engage in public controversy. If she did, she would be considered in breach of prison discipline and returned to jail. Sue went to the High Court and contested the gagging order. Once more she was successful. The judge Mr Justice Barrington prohibited the Minister for Justice and the prison governor from attempting to restrict her freedom to express freely her convictions and opinions, through newspapers, radio and television. On release she remained active in Prisoners Rights Organisation and supported other prisoners, when she could, organising friends to visit prisoners when she could not.

The Dublin she returned to was beginning to see the corrosive effects of heroin addiction spreading through inner city communities. The threatened destruction of the inner city families led to the rise of a grassroots anti-drug campaign known as Concerned Parents Against Drugs. Mass meetings were held to expose dealers, mass pickets were placed on their houses. With Noreen O'Donohue, Sue wrote 'Pure Murder: a book about drug use', which detailed the effect of addiction on the area she lived in. It was groundbreaking as it contained interviews with addicts themselves, giving voice to a group who were often demonised. It was published by the Women's Community Press, which she helped to set up, in 1983.

I first met Sue, in the early 1990s at anarchist meetings in Dublin. She was a tall, frail woman.

I was told the damp and strain of prison had destroyed her lungs. Over the months, as her emphysema worsened she could no longer make it up the stairs to meeting rooms, could no longer leave the house, until eventually she was bed-bound and dependent on an oxygen machine. We didn't think she had long to live. Then we heard she had been flown on an Irish army plane for a heart lung operation in the UK. The operation gave her back her life, though the anti-rejection drugs she had to take, led to dialysis and a kidney transplant ten years later, and what she described as "only a bit of cancer" last year. Despite her new lungs, she continued to chain smoke, and gave short shrift to anyone who dared suggest she stop.

When I asked people at her wake where they first met Sue they said; I met her at a Residents Against Racism meeting, through the Women's Community Press, I worked with her in CAFE, the community arts organisation, she helped me on my mother's fruit farm in Meath, I met her when I came out of prison, I lived in her house. Solidarity and direct political action were Sue's core beliefs. At her funeral her close friend

Anarchist Lives

Trish MacCarthy told how, as Sue's lungs began to fail, a group of friends held a fundraiser and raised 200 pounds, enough to buy Sue a car. A few years later, when Trish was herself short of cash, she found 200 pounds in her bag after a visit to one of Sue's many parties. Trish said "that was the way she felt about money, it was only something to be handed on and passed around when needed".

The house she lived in was a reflection of her personality. Trish described it as 'as a communal space and numerous individuals who needed support and a place to stay were made welcome there over the years'. A former house-mate remembered the dinner parties and political arguments around the kitchen table. When I visited her house I always left with ideas, the name of a new book I needed to read, a film I should watch, a radical economist worth listening to. She loved her garden and her cat. She had a wicked sense of humour and was quick to laugh. Sue was one of those rare individuals that are always worth listening too but who share their wisdom in a gentle unassuming way. She could be strong without being forceful – though young male activists would often find themselves at the butt of her questions. She had contempt for those in authority, 'assume nothing' she said. In the last few years she cared for her terminally ill sister Jane, went wooferring in the Lebanon and travelled throughout the Basque country with her friend Rose Dugdale. It's hard to believe that she is dead, because she lived so well.

Sue is survived by her two nieces, and missed by friends, comrades and house-mates.

Aileen O'Carroll From <http://www.wsm.ie/>

Chaired anarchist meeting in [Eighteen-]Eighties [Obituary of Ambrose Barker]

It is with great sorrow that we record the death, on Saturday, February 14, of our grand old comrade, Ambrose Barker. He was 93, and died at his Walthamstow (London) home of bronchitis contracted during the fog last December.

To attempt anything like a full record of Ambrose Barker's work in the revolutionary movement would need a great volume. A tiny indication of his early activity is given by the following extract from a letter he wrote to "Direct Action" in June, 1948:-

"Our mutual friend G.C. (George Cores, who died on September 20, 1949, at the age of 82. – Eds.) has just sent me a letter enclosing the cutting from 'Freedom' to which he replied in May 'Direct Action.'

Defended John Most

" 'Freedom' is NOT the earliest Anarchist paper. In 1881 John Most was prosecuted at the Old Bailey for an article in his 'Freiheit' on the execution of

Alexander of Russia. A committee of which I was chairman was formed for the defence and it issued a weekly paper in defiance, 'The English Freiheit,' which contained in the first number a translation of the article for which Most suffered 16 months imprisonment, and was sold outside the Old Bailey while the trial was proceeding. It ran to seven or eight numbers and then succumbed for want of funds.

"It is generally thought that Kropotkin first came to England in 1885. But that is not so. He first came in 1882. he met a few comrades at the Patriotic Club. I had a conversation with him and induced him to give a lecture at Stratford. He came with Tchaikovsky and we had a crowded meeting..."

In 1881, too, Ambrose Barker helped found the Labour Emancipation League, a militant organisation which developed a widespread indoor and outdoor propaganda for revolutionary socialism in London. Still earlier, he had belonged to the International Club in Rose Street, Soho, where comrades such as the brothers Murray were able to pass on the message from Chartist days.

Comrade Barker was a friend of William Morris, and worked with him in the Socialist League, when that body seceded from the Social Democratic Federation in 1883.

His activity in the working class movement was never relaxed. A schoolmaster, he was an able indoor and outdoor speaker. In 1929, when "Freedom" (not connected with the present journal of that name) was restarted by the London Freedom Group, he became its editor.

On his 90th birthday, I and another comrade spent the evening with him and his companion, Ella Twynam, at Walthamstow. During the two hours that we were with him he brought to life the story of his part in the working-class struggles of more than 70 years. We asked him what he thought of the Labour Government. "£1,000-a-year men – all of them," he answered, "they're doing the Tories' work well."

During the latter years of his life, Comrade Barker's main activity was in the peace movement, but he always remained an Anarchist and revolutionary. His body was cremated at Golders Green on February 20, following a secular service conducted by his old friend, Mr. Percy Turner.

The S.W.F. [Syndicalist Workers Federation] salutes the memory of this brave fighter for freedom and social justice, and offers its deepest sympathy to our comrade, his companion of many years.

K.H. [Ken Hawkes]

Direct Action, v.8, no. 1, March 1953.

Adela García Murillo

The Granada CNT-AIT lost one of its longest standing female members with the death on 27 January 2012 of Adela García Murillo.

Born in Guéjar Sierra, Adela witnessed the outbreak of civil war when she was just 17. In those days the CNT was unknown in Guéjar Sierra as it was kept at bay political bosses who attacked it any time it raised its head: there were only vague rumours by locals travelling to the city of Granada from time to time who returned with reports of “a more radical organisation in Granada”.

During the civil war the Maroto Column arrived in Guéjar Sierra and the CNT thus had a real chance to make itself known in the village: locals joined it en masse, the new organisation being more radical than the UGT which the local bosses had petty much tolerated. That radicalism made it better suited to needs of a village where, as Adela recalled, folk were half-starved and barely clothed. She remembered the Columns and all its trucks arriving, bringing plenty of food and clothing at long last, plus something the village had not witnessed for centuries – a revolution, although no collectives were formed in Guéjar Sierra which was close to the battlefield. Adela herself knew some famous militants such as Francisco Maroto del Ojo “a tall fellow who always went around in his work overalls, rather boyish in good-natured way”. He led the Column that bore his name and turned up in Guéjar, just 16 kilometers from Granada, albeit that after a few weeks he was forced to withdraw and avoid a fight due to ammunition shortages. José Barcojo, a Granada CNT member from the Bakers’ Union, who served as a militiaman in the war, was to become Adela’s brother-in-law.

After the war, by which time Adela had joined the CNT herself, she was none too well known to the Francoist authorities on account of her youth and the fact that the organisation had been unknown there prior to the civil war and so she was below the police radar. This left her ideally placed to be able to help the guerrillas – the maquis – and the reorganisation of the CNT in Granada, together with Barcojo and other militants. Adela always told us that she never identified all of the various guerrillas who passed through her home and that Barcojo could give us more of the details, but that she had chosen to remain ignorant so as to be as tight-lipped as possible. Only later on did she discover that some of her visitors may well have included the famous Quero brothers, looking for a place to hide out, or, above all, for material assistance and intelligence. There was also a lot of talk about harbouring the Clares, ‘El Yatero’ and the Ollafrías, but, aside from the last named, Adela, when pressed, could never confirm or deny this. Unfortunately, in the course of the capture of

some of the groups, leaks emerged that gave Adela away and she was arrested and served 10 years in a female prison. The horrors she witnessed there were such that she always said she would carry them with her to her grave.

On her release from prison, Adela focused mainly on reorganising the CNT. The time of the guerrillas were drawing to an end, she had a record now and besides she regarded organising the union as a better option than a spreading guerrilla war as such. As she saw it, helping the guerrillas was a thankless task, exposing all the comrades to great risks and there was less and less of an opening for armed struggle. Her comrade Barcojo crossed the border into France several times together with railwayman Carlos Soriano (who came from Antequera, although he was very active in Granada) to take part in several CNT plenums. By then Adela had moved into the city of Granada.

Come the death of Franco and the Transition, she played an active part in resurrecting the CNT in Granada and experienced some great times such as Federica Montseny’s rally in the erstwhile Sánchez Herrera stadium in El Zaidin (Granada), only to see this followed by a split and an all-round weakening of the organisation. Although right to the end she insisted that, although small, the potential for struggle at a local level was still there, as are the chances of recovery.

Many students dropped by her home in the El Zaidin quarter to record her testimony to carry back to their schools and colleges. A number of Andalusian institutions paid tribute to her for her struggle against Francoism and her time in jail.

Her comrade Barcojo died in 1995.

Adela remained active in the CNT all throughout her life and every year, without fail, she turned out for the Granada CNT’s 1st of May demonstration in Plaza de las Pasiegas, she received visits from comrades and did what she could to answer the call of the organisation.

The CNT grieves for the loss of one its best female comrades, one of those women who never make it into the history books but who were always there, day after day, tackling the most demanding tasks and grappling with the toughest and most unrewarding struggle. Any gratitude we may feel towards Adela and female comrades like her will always fall a long way short of what they have given to the cause of emancipation and human freedom. Even so, we should feel grateful and publicise what they – and Adela – were and what they counted for and press on until we achieve a freedom that is a fitting tribute to them.

Farewell, Adela, the CNT mourns you but we shall pay tribute to your memory with every day that passes.

CNT-AIT Granada

Source: www.cnt-es/noticias

Anarchist Books

The Story of the Iron Column [Book Review]

This is an important and long-awaited account of perhaps the most militant anarchist column in the Civil War in its fight against fascism and, more importantly the encroaching reformism that increasingly sought to stifle the social revolution. Written by Abel Paz, the author of the definitive biography of Durruti, this volume brilliantly portrays the spirit of revolutionary anarchism and resistance that characterized the brief lifetime of the Column.

Formed in Valencia in August 1936, the Column immediately headed for the Teruel front, a crucial military position, in defence of the entire Levante region. Proclaiming Libertarian Communism on the way, we read of a chronic shortage of arms and ammunition, so common among many of the anarchist columns. Indeed with 12,000 members initially enlisted, only 3,000 were armed.

Famously, (or infamously!), its membership was bolstered by inmates from the San Miguel de los Reyes prison which was liberated by a small number of comrades. As Iron Column member Roque Santamaría comments: “The opening of the prison was prompted by principle and nothing more. It was an attempt to do away with something we regarded as a product of bourgeois rule: the inmates were victims of society and had to be given a chance, at which point most of them joined the Iron Column, fighting and conducting themselves in an extraordinarily brave and intrepid fashion.” (p35)

Vilified from all sides from its very inception as comprising “extremists” and “uncontrollables” the Column was soon subject to counter-revolutionary communist treachery. At the funeral of a comrade murdered by the Guardia Popular Antifascista (Popular Antifascist Group – GPA) in Valencia in late October, delegates from the Column come under unprovoked machine-gun fire from the offices of the PCE, sustaining very heavy casualties. Clearly, this can be seen as a prelude to the ‘May Days’ in Barcelona the following year. The response of the Column seems to be marked by an admirable restraint in not exacting immediate revenge. However in a manifesto published in its bulletin *Línea de Fuego* shortly afterwards we read rather ominously: “the day will come when we re-examine and remember these events and give the responsible parties what they deserve.” The writer concludes with a bold statement of intent: “The Iron Column, in spite of adversity and come hell or high water, holds fast to its revolutionary stance... we will continue to fight everywhere for the triumph of the revolution and of liberty” (p93) This unshakeable faith in the principles of revolutionary anarchism fills the pages of this book and certainly makes for an

inspirational and thought-provoking read for the present-day anarchist!

The issue of the forced militarisation of the anarchist columns into ‘regular’ Republican army units lies at the heart of this book, and we are presented with a wealth of material on this topic.

Vehemently protesting against the CNT’s entry into the Largo Caballero government and the gradual bureaucracy and ‘circumstantialism’ of the CNT/FAI ‘leadership’, the Iron Column were bitter opponents of the entire militarisation process. The move from a freely-formed and self-organising libertarian column to a conventional army unit was a fundamentally reactionary and counter-revolutionary strategy that struck at the heart of the Column’s ethos. We follow the absorbing accounts of the resistance to militarisation within the wider context of the steady decline of a genuine social revolution. Most readers will of course be aware of the fate of the Iron Column as it eventually became part of the 83rd Mixed Brigade, and indeed we are left with a sad and poignant sense of the inevitability of this process in the face of such great odds. The basic dilemma facing the Column in the early months of 1937 was either dissolution or an acceptance of militarisation. The reader is struck by both the self-contradictory position of the CNT/FAI leadership and the ideological resolve of the Column’s rank and file membership. The bitterness and sense of betrayal felt by many members is evident in an account of a meeting of militants held in Barcelona in March 1937. A militiaman, Blumenthal, clearly spoke for many of his comrades when he states: “An attempt is being made to divide us with the principle: ‘First win the war’. In Barcelona I saw some truly repulsive things, including stripes and stars... I am an anarchist and stand with other anarchists. I refuse to be a soldier and a servant of capitalism” (p162)

Perhaps the most moving and revealing section of the book is the ‘Testimony of an Uncontrollable’, published [in a different translation] as a pamphlet by the Kate Sharpley Library as ‘A day mournful and overcast’. Written by a young Column militant freed from jail after killing a tyrannical village *cacique* (boss), this piece is an often painful read, exposing the sense of personal betrayal felt by many.

Overall, the reader is left in total sympathy with the Column’s rank and file membership and, indeed, bemused by the often openly hostile attitude of the National Committee of the CNT itself.

This engrossing story is admirably rounded-off by a fine set of appendices in which we learn the fate of many of the militants and the subsequent military operations of the 83rd Brigade throughout the remainder of the war. Of particular interest is a piece by George Orwell on the elimination of the POUM,

Anarchist Books

written in August 1937, and an account of the life of José Pellicier, a leading light of the Iron Column, executed on 8th June 1942.

In summary, this is an essential text for anyone seeking to understand the spirit of rebellion, hope and idealism that informed the most dedicated and uncompromising anarchists of the Civil War. We are left with a greater understanding of not just the role of the Iron Column itself, which Paz describes as: “a grain of sand in the descent of the Republican zone” (p147), but the often complicated debates and issues that raged throughout the revolutionary period regarding anarchist organisation and how to truly achieve a libertarian communist society.

Highly recommended.

The Story of the Iron Column: Militant Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War

by Abel Paz. Published by AK Press and the Kate Sharpley Library. ISBN 9781849350648.

New pamphlet

News of the Spanish Revolution : Anti-authoritarian Perspectives on the Events edited by Charlatan Stew.

Members of the North American revolutionary syndicalist union Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) have always followed international struggles with great interest. In 1936, when the Spanish Revolution began, they were inspired by the part played by the anarchist-led Spanish labor union confederation, the CNT, and the endeavor to create a self-governing egalitarian society. From the IWW's critical understanding of the danger posed by the authoritarian left, including the Communist parties of the world and the government of the Soviet Union, they were on their guard against the behavior of these groups in Spain. In the IWW press people like Joseph Wagner wrote and translated articles about the Spanish situation, offering alternative perspectives not available in either the Communist or liberal press. This collection contains some of these articles, offering a sample of what English-speaking anti-authoritarians could read about the Spanish Revolution in the late 1930s. In addition, the pamphlet contains two articles published later about participants' experiences. One is by Russell Blackwell, who became an anarcho-syndicalist as a result of his experiences in Spain. The final article is about Federico Arcos, a Spanish anarchist veteran of the revolution. It provides a glimpse into what the anarchists of Spain experienced and what the participation of international fighters who went to Spain meant to them.

9781873605165 88 pages. Anarchist Sources Series #17. £5 (£4 to subscribers) / \$3.

Bakunin : A possible plan for an edition in ten volumes

I have now had a chance to do a lot of the work of estimating just how many pages we are dealing with, just how marginal and fragmentary some of the fragments and variants are, etc., and have been laying out tentative volumes. My working assumption at this stage, based on the little feedback I've received, is that there is indeed a desire for a fairly complete edition, but perhaps not such a deep scholarly desire that every fragment and variant needs to make it into a print edition. For the moment, I'm also banishing the thought that we'll run into insurmountable permissions issues regarding anything absolutely essential. And, not having been contradicted by anyone, I'm still assuming that the focus on presenting Bakunin's work, as opposed to, for example, documenting key conversations of which he was a part, is presently the one that fills the largest gap in the published materials. So, based on those assumptions, it looks like an edition of The Collected Works of Bakunin might logically break down into ten volumes, chronologically order, roughly like this:

Early writings and correspondence: 1837-1851

Writings: 1860-1867

Writings: 1868-1869

Writings: 1870-1871

“The Knouto-Germanic Empire & the Social Revolution:” 1870-1871

“Against Mazzini” & other writings: 1871

“Statism and Anarchy” & other writings: 1872-1876

Correspondence

Correspondence

Correspondence, bibliography, index, miscellany

I see no reason to tie our publishing schedule to the chronological order, since it makes at least as much sense to work from general, familiar, and/or currently topical to specific, unfamiliar, and of primarily historical interest. But the proposed division does respect some fairly natural divisions in Bakunin's career.

Getting to this stage of planning is a fairly significant relief, given the fragmentary nature of Bakunin's work. But perhaps what seems like a triumph of organization to me looks different to other potential users of the work, so, once again, I would welcome any and all feedback.

Shawn P. Wilbur

<http://bakuninlibrary.blogspot.co.uk/>

Errico Malatesta : Complete Works (in Italian)

No doubt about it: Errico Malatesta was the most important exponent of the Italian-speaking anarchist movement. A protagonist in the movement's history from the days of the International through to the advent of fascism, he has been, given his contribution to theoretical and political debate and as an organiser and agitator, an inevitable reference point for several generations of militants and for the various strands within anarchism. A person of acknowledged humanity, modesty and personal integrity, his lengthy experience of exile helped him work and carry out political and trade union activity in the many countries in which it fell to him to live, and placed him at the epicentre of a rich network of international connections. Malatesta left behind no systematic, theoretical exposition of how he saw anarchism, any more than he showed any willingness to write his memoirs. The evolution in his thinking and in the meaning of his life are therefore reconstructed primarily through the huge numbers of his articles meant for newspapers and propaganda pamphlets, addresses to meetings and rallies and from dense correspondence. Apart from the odd anthology of articles and periodical reprints of his best known and most widely read pamphlets, most of Malatesta's writings remain unfamiliar even to the present day.

Two libertarian publishing houses – La Fiaccola and Zero in Condotta – are now sponsoring the publication of Errico Malatesta's complete works. This, we think, is a project of considerable significance in itself, not least as an opportunity for cooperation between publishing imprints. A project that also entails a substantial commitment in terms of funding and effort, to which end we call upon all interested comrades to offer their concrete support.

Beginning in June 2010, Malatesta's works are to appear at the rate of two or three volumes per year. The plan provides for a total of ten volumes that will collate, in chronological order, those articles of Malatesta's published in Italian and foreign periodicals, all of his propaganda pamphlets, his outgoing correspondence and indices.

The oversight of the complete works has been entrusted to Davide Turcato. An expert in Malatesta's thought, from whom the idea of completing the project that Luigi Fabbri launched back in the 1930s emanated, and by whom the task of collating texts was begun. Each volume will be stand-alone and will contain an introductory essay dealing with the period under scrutiny, this task being entrusted to a different expert each time.

The Planned Complete Works

Volumes

1. "Chi è povero è schiavo": Il periodo internazionalista e l'esilio in Sud America, 1871–1888. "The poor

man is a slave": The Internationalist phase and exile in South America, 1871–1888

2. "Andiamo fra il popolo": *L'Associazione* e gli anni londinesi del 1889–1897. "Let us turn to the people": *L'Associazione* and the London Years, 1889–1897

3. "Un lavoro lungo e paziente...": Il socialismo anarchico dell'*Agitazione*, 1897–1898. "Long and patient endeavour ...": The anarchist socialism of *L'Agitazione*, 1897–1898

4. "Verso l'anarchia": Malatesta in America, 1899–1900. "Towards anarchy": Malatesta in America, 1899–1900

5. "Lo sciopero armato": Il lungo esilio londinese del 1900–1913. "The armed strike". Long exile in London, 1900–1913

6. "È possibile la rivoluzione?": *Volontà*, la Settimana Rossa e la guerra, 1914–1918. "Is revolution feasible?": *Volontà*, Red Week and the War, 1914–1918

7. "Fronte unico proletario": Il biennio rosso, *Umanità Nova* e il fascismo, 1919–1923. United proletarian front". The red biennium, *Umanità Nova* and fascism, 1919–1923

8. "Anarchismo realizzabile e realizzatore": *Pensiero e Volontà* e ultimi scritti, 1924–1932. "Anarchism, doable and doing.": *Pensiero e Volontà* and late writings, 1924–1932

9. "Che cosa vogliono gli anarchici": Opuscoli, programmi, manifesti e altre pubblicazioni miscelanee. "What the anarchists want": Pamphlets, manifestoes and miscellaneous other publications

10. "Tuo e per l'anarchia...": La corrispondenza di Malatesta. "Yours, and for anarchy ...": Malatesta's correspondence.

It is not anticipated that the volumes will appear in strict chronological order but that will depend on the state of progress of the undertaking. The volumes will be available in paperback. It is anticipated that discounts will be available for groups and associations placing orders for a certain number of copies. Groups and individuals are invited to refer to the addresses of the two publishing houses regarding placement of orders:

Associazione culturale "Zero in Condotta"
Casella Postale 17127 – MI 67,20128 Milano
Italy

www.zeroincondotta.org

or

Edizioni La Fiaccola
Associazione Culturale Sicilia Punto L
Vico L. Imposa 4 – 97100 Ragusa

Sezione La Fiaccola

Via Tommaso Fazello 133

96017 – Noto (SR)

www.sicilialibertaria.it

News from the Kate Sharpley Library

A visit to the Kate Sharpley Library (2012)

I've just come back from visiting the Kate Sharpley Library in California. Things have changed from the days when I could get there on the bus and we were buying our first filing cabinet. Lots of filing cabinets now, as well as boxes like the Left Bank Books archive. It's good to look at the non-fiction shelves, seeing 'old friends' and new acquisitions.

There's always plenty of filing and organising to do which occasionally throws up a gem: did you know Walthamstow's Ambrose Barker was in touch with Max Charnick (Chernyak) in Buenos Aires? It's good to put runs of newspapers into acid-free boxes. This is the 'preserve' part of us 'preserving and promoting anarchist history'. Of course, those boxes cost an arm and a leg, so you have to choose who gets preserved. A couple of 1970s French pamphlets gave up their Mylar protective pockets to some 1920s Italian publications. Thanks go to our friends: your donations help with ordering that essential preservation stuff (when we're not spending them on acquisitions).

I saw our catalogue in action. One thing we discussed was how we could use it to raise our profile (and fill gaps in the collection) without being overwhelmed by demands beyond our limited abilities.

We talked about ways to get hold of books and periodicals that we need, and how to get more supporters. We also talked about digitising documents and publications. First we need to raise the money for a new scanner, just to do the small jobs like the 'treasures' to illustrate our 'Notes from the KSL' blog. In the long term, when we digitise material we want it to be done well, and to show collections in context. That will need both work and money.



With Barry working on it most days, the library is probably the best organised and catalogued that it's ever been. With the help of our friends and comrades, the Kate Sharpley Library will be preserving and promoting more anarchist history than ever in the coming years. If you want to help with that, send us some money or drop us a line!

Mere Barking Wont Do

Petitions, protests, resolutions, hundreds of thousands of them – all in vain! The masters are triumphant: Joe Hill is shot, murdered, dead.

What now? What next? Not only what, but *who* is next? You and I, who are striving for a better world, we may be next tomorrow. You who have a vision of a society without masters, and are spreading your ideal, among the oppressed and exploited, tomorrow *you* may be led to the scaffold. Why not? You say you have committed no crime? You don't have to! If you are known as a man of deep devotion to the Cause of the Workers, never mind about a charge: any shrewd attorney will find one against you, just as they did for Joe Hill. That's what they have done 28 years ago to Parsons and his comrades, that's what they have tried to do to Haywood, Moyer and Pettibone, to Ettor and Giovanitti, to Ford and Suhr in California, Rangel and

Clines in Texas, that's what they are trying to do right now to Schmidt and Caplan in Los Angeles.

And what are you going to do? Again protest? O, yes, in this "free" democratic country you have freedom of speech: talk! Talk your head off – who cares? A lot you care when you hear a hungry dog barking? That's just the attitude of the masters towards us: Bark! a lot they care!

Fellow-workers and comrades! All of you to whom the existing conditions are repugnant, and all of you who find a Free Society worth fighting for, – let us profit by the death and torture of our martyrs in realizing once for all that

Mere barking won't do!

We must learn to bite, and bite effectively!

A. Barron. *The Alarm*, Chicago. Vol. 1, no. 3 December 1915 [Baron returned to Russia in 1917 and was active until he was shot in 1937.]

Bulls – and Bullshit

Against Bull-Fighting and Human Exploitation

Dear Sir

In reply to the circular published in this city's press, the Modern School is pleased to associate itself with the rally scheduled for Sunday next in opposition to bull-fighting.

However, allow me, on behalf of the body which I represent, to point out that such association is merely a gesture of support for opposition to that barbaric practice and is devoid of any patriotic or regionalist implications.

The point here is not to pit Catalonia against Castile, because in breathing new life into the differences that have artificially been created between regions and nations, to the cost of these societies and to the sole advantage of the ruling classes, the Commission would be departing from the purpose for which it was appointed: campaigning for the abolition of bull-fighting.

I should also like to advance a thought that seems to encapsulate this point: since the exception taken to bull-fighting has sprung from the noble sentiments of the founders of the campaign, might the Commission not see its way clear to raising an objection also the suffering that owners inflict upon their horses in the form of over-work and under-feeding?

And having thus spoken up in defence of animals, why should we not also busy ourselves setting up a league for the protection of man? Tormenting a bull is barbaric. The sight of men dressed in motley tackling a wild animal in order to earn a crust is savagery; but it is more barbaric and greater savagery to witness, acknowledge and support a regime whereby man is exploited by his fellow man, where human life is so undervalued that, from the industrialist less upset by the death of a workman than the death of a chicken, through to governments that dispatch men to war in their thousands, we are all of us unworthy of the description 'civilised' unless we speak out equally against bull-fighting and torture and exploitation in all guises.

Most affectionately yours,

F. Ferrer Guardia
Barcelona, 17 February 1905

This letter was sent to the president of the Commission for the Abolition of Bull-Fighting. It was reprinted in *¡Tierra!* (Havana, Cuba) on 13 October 1911 and in *Tierra y Libertad* (Madrid), No 280, November 2011.

Translated by Paul Sharkey

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A selection of jabs at the words our lords and masters beat us over the head with. Here are some of our favourites. Collect the set at:
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AUSTERITY

A notion of collective sacrifice is invoked by those who do not have to make sacrifices, with the promise that austerity will somehow purge the collective and its individuals of their excesses, toxins or sins, and that in the long run we will all be better off for the experience. This familiar bedtime story, aimed especially at parents hoping that it will turn out to be true for their children, now tells us to defer those 'appetites and pleasures' that were so encouraged in yesteryear's bank advertisements telling you not to put it off, but to take that holiday-of-a-lifetime now!

GIVE THEM AN INCH AND THEY'LL TAKE A MILE

A constant anxiety of the rich and the ruling class and their various enforcement agencies. A constant justification for stinginess, Toughlove and worse.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

You, a person of importance, tell a lie, smear an innocent person, or have your goon squad manhandle pensioners, and you are found out. As a person of importance it is not then inexcusable, iniquitous, or invidious. Rather, it is inappropriate as if socks had been given to a teenager as a Christmas present, or the quality of the wine complained of at a State Banquet. This useful phrase from the New Labour era is likely to run and run.

THE ROUGH AND THE SMOOTH

Just accept, you're told, at the very moment life is at its hardest. There are life rhythms, Swings and Roundabouts, they say. Hearing these smug words, like you're just one more idiot in the queue, is guaranteed to make it that much harder to endure.

TOUGH LOVE

It's all for your own good, being punished by those who really care about you and worry that you're not going to shape up.

"Being cruel to be kind is just ordinary cruelty with an excuse made for it."

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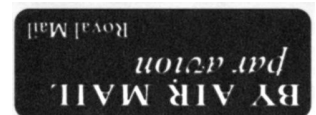
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