

Dyer D. Lum

[Voltairine de Cleyre had “a great love and unshakable friendship” with Dyer D. Lum. (1) Here we reprint her tribute to her teacher, confidant and comrade after his suicide in 1893.]

Comrades:

Across the sea I send the echo of a mourning knell. The brightest scholar, the profoundest thinker of the American Revolutionary movement is dead. On Thursday, April 6th, they found him sleeping the last sleep, in a hotel near the Bowery in New York. Utterly without pain he must have passed away, as he had always wished he might – into the painless rest.

Dyer D. Lum was born at Geneva, N.Y., fifty-three years ago. He was descended from an old Puritan family, hence an American as much as it is possible for any Anglo-Saxon to be an American. In early life he was brought up under strict Presbyterian discipline, but piety never seems to have taken any deep root in his sceptical nature. According to one of his own inimitably told stories, such religious sentiment as he had all departed one bright Sunday, when God failed to send a thunderbolt upon him for having played ball, torn his trousers, and uttered an oath on the Lord’s day. And yet in the nobler and better sense of the word Dyer D. Lum was a deeply religious man. He was full of that earnest self-sacrificing devotion to whatever ideal of the future seemed highest to him at any period of his life, and he never stopped at any command of “the inward *must*,” though it cost him friends, worldly success, or the danger of death itself.

He has frequently said and written that the labor movement of America really began with the Pittsburg riots in 1877; (2) previous to that time, however, he had taken part in the great struggle, now recognised as an economic one, known as the civil war. He fought on the northern side, and so bravely that he jumped from the rank of a volunteer private soldier to that of captain by sheer force of merit. At that time, there is no doubt, he believed himself to be fighting in the good cause. But since he became an economic thinker he has often expressed himself sarcastically as having “gone down there out of *patriotism* (?) to fight the battle of *cheap* labor against *dear*.” After the war he resumed his trade as bookbinder, and began his studies in the economic field. In 1876 he was associated with Wendell Phillips as candidate for lieutenant-governor for Massachusetts

on the Greenback ticket. (3) Out of the old nursery of Greenbackism came nearly all of our present radical thought, while few of its original exponents are any longer affiliated with the Greenback program: it was simply the beginning of the Socialistic movement. Mr. Lum was not one to remain long satisfied with the “illogic” of Greenbackism. He was too consistent in mind to accept a mixed authoritarianism and liberty. At first he went over to authoritarianism, and was for a time a State-socialist. Subsequently, however, he became an Anarchist, a contributor to Parsons’ *Alarm*, and a most cutting critic of State-socialism.

While living in Washington he was appointed on a committee to investigate the conditions of labor, and in the course of that investigation studied the cooperative system of the Mormons (a much abused people here in America). The result was a pamphlet in which he set forth the principles of their labor exchange, disabusing the reader of many false notions in regard to Mormon life. This pamphlet had a wide circulation. (4)

In 1886 he was conducting a bookbindery at Port Jervis, N.Y., when the question of who should keep alive the paper of the imprisoned Parsons arose. Although Lum was an individualist and Parsons Communist, no one else could be found able and willing to continue the work of the doomed editor. Lum did not hesitate. He sold out his business, went to Chicago, put about \$1500 into the work, no penny of which he ever received or expected to receive back, ran the gauntlet of police, detectives, and the crowd haters of Anarchy, then very numerous in Chicago, and held the banner aloft as long as he could. During this time he was a constant visitor at the prison, the loved and trusted comrade of those who were about to die, the jealous guardian of their highest honor. Like all who knew those men, he grew to love them all, and never in after years was he able to speak much of them without tears filling his eyes. And yet he counselled them to die. When Parsons asked him his advice as to signing the petition, which he and Lum both *knew* from sure sources of information would have saved his life, he said, “I cannot advise you.” But when Parsons pressed him, he said, “Die, Parsons.” And the other answered, “I am glad you said it. It is what I wished.” For this he was blamed by some, blamed as “wanting their death.” Yes, he did want their death, as he loved liberty, [pto]

Dyer D. Lum

[from front] and honor, and pride, and the future, and their true glory – more than his own life and more than theirs. For those who knew him best knew there was not one moment when he would not have taken his place by their side and walked proudly to the scaffold had the State decreed it. (5)

After the failure of the “Alarm” in Chicago he was enabled, partly through the courtesy of John Most and others, to re-commence its publication in reduced form in New York. But owing to an accumulation of difficulties he could not continue it long. It was a great sorrow to him, for his last promise to Parsons was to do everything to keep the paper alive. From that time on his life was a bitter struggle with poverty whose miseries he endured with shut lips, only his intimate friends knowing how great they were, and even they hardly daring to offer him any help for fear of offending his proud, uncomplaining spirit. This poverty chained his hands, tied his aspirations, compelled him to a forced inaction that wore him out more than the severest active strain. Although of a strong constitution he became a victim of insomnia and burnt up the oil of life without replenishing. – Yet no one would have guessed all this to have met and talked with him, always merry, always full of jokes, always ready to sympathise with the humblest thing that suffered or was glad. At one moment talking Philosophy with the scholars, at the next stroking the sore foot of a dog, or playing hide-and-seek with the children, it was hard to determine what lay deepest beneath those smiling gray eyes that never told aught of the hard personal struggle within.

Of his many pamphlets, articles and poems it may be said all evinced profound thought; but unfortunately were too often in a heavy style that rendered them difficult to the ordinary reader. In fact few students went deeper into psychological depths than he, and his habit of reading the masters, living in the company of books, made language which to most of us is stilted the ordinary channel of his thought. His early studies in Buddhism left a profound impress upon all his future concepts of life, and to the end his ideal of personal attainment was self-obliteration – Nirvana. He had not the slightest use for the Hedonistic doctrines of most of the individualistic school, and often sent the sharp shafts of his wit into the heart of an argument hingeing upon the “pleasure the motive of action” premise.

As to his revolutionary beliefs he always avowed them when there was any reason for so doing. When Berkman shot Frick (6) he was one of those who dared to defend the act. But he did not believe in continually talking about it: He did not believe in telling *other* people to “do” anything. He never said, “arm yourselves and prepare.” He had his own plans probably; but if he had he trusted to himself, and neither

depended upon nor asked aught from others. For the rest he believed in revolution as he believed in cyclones; when the time comes for the cloud to burst it bursts, and so will burst the pent up storm in the people when it can no longer be contained. So he believed, and trusted in the future.

And I who trust in his philosophy trust that in the fire-hued day the spirit of my beloved teacher and friend will burn in the hearts of the strugglers for freedom, till it consumes away all fear, all dependence, all the dross of our “American slavery,” and leaves them erect, proud, free, dauntless as he who has left to them the rich legacy of a life of thought and work in their behalf

Voltarine de Cleyre
Philadelphia
Freedom, June 1893

Notes

- 1, Paul Avrich, *An American anarchist: the life of Voltairine de Cleyre* p53. “Teacher, confidant and comrade” comes from Hippolyte Havel’s introduction to her *Selected Works* (1914). A longer tribute to Lum, also from de Cleyre’s *Selected Works* is at <http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/rv16pv>
- 2, In Pittsburgh, twenty workers were killed in a battle with the State militia during the “virtual general strike” of 1877, “the first great collision between capital and labour” in America. See Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket tragedy*, p26-7.
- 3, Wendell Phillips 1811-1884 was an abolitionist and social reformer. The Greenback movement was devoted to currency reform (the promotion of paper money).
- 4, Lum was the author of *Utah and its people. Facts and statistics bearing on the “Mormon Problem.”* (1882) and *Social problems of to-day, or, The Mormon question in its economic aspects : a study of co-operation and arbitration in Mormondom, from the standpoint of a wage-worker* (1886).
- 5, “It was Lum who smuggle in the dynamite cigar with which Lingg committed suicide in his cell.” Avrich, *An American anarchist* p63; Lum had also plotted with Robert Reitzel to free the Haymarket defendants the day before their execution, see Avrich *The Haymarket tragedy* p384-5.
- 6, Homestead, Pennsylvania, 23 July 1892.

Helping Hands

Shawn P. Wilbur is gathering online donations to purchase scarce anarchist material to republish and donate the original to the Kate Sharpley Library, starting with Dyer D. Lum’s *Utah and its People*. <http://libertarian-labyrinth.blogspot.com/2010/04/help-corvus-help-kate-sharpley-library.html>

The guerrilla Franco was never able to hunt down

The Anarcho-Syndicalist Guerrilla Curuxas

The CNT in Galicia (CNT Galiza) has spent years trying to rescue its history – a history of anarcho-syndicalism, of the CNT – from oblivion, Galicia having fallen into the clutches of fascist barbarism in July 1936. Despite that Galicia fought back, orchestrating many escapes by sea, organising resistance and guerrilla activity and was fortunate to be able to count on hundreds of male and female comrades who held out against fascism throughout the 40 years they were obliged to endure it. One outstanding example of this was comrade Ramón Rodríguez Varela aka Curuxas, who died of natural causes in Irago de Abaixo-Toques (La Coruña) on 14 May 1967.

The first startling fact about *Curuxas* was his ability to hold out against the fascists who were never able to finish him off. As Carlos Parrado entitles his book about him, *Curuxa, O guerrilleiro que no cazou Franco*, he was *Curuxas, The Guerrilla Franco Was Never Able to Hunt Down*. *Curuxas* had belonged to the CNT since 1932, in which year he joined the powerful, CNT-affiliated “Mining and Amalgamated Trades Union” in Lousame (La Coruña) and from then on and throughout his long life as a resister he continued to profess his anarcho-syndicalism and libertarian beliefs.

In the initial response to Franco’s coup attempt in 1936, he served with the legendary San Finx column of CNT miners which raced from Lousame and Noia to Compostela and La Coruña in an effort to face down the fascists.

When their attempt failed, he was forced to make his way back to Lousame and Noia, escaping through the hills to join the hundreds of “*fuxidos*” (runaways) as those who fled the clutches of repression in their early days are referred to in Galicia.

Later he would mount his first armed raid on 14 April 1937, pay day for the miners of San Finx. Still later he tried to cross into Asturias but failed and so had no option but to return to his family home in the village of San Xiao do Camino in the town land of Toques (La Coruña) in 1938, where his partner Marcelina gave birth to their sixth and last daughter, Celsa.

After that the Civil Guard made a number of attempts to capture him, arresting Marcelina so as to force him into turning himself in. Then came the frustration of the end of the second world war across Europe and *Curuxas* persisted in his resistance struggle, operating through the “Melide and Ulloa districts” and becoming a guerrilla, first with the Neira Group and later with the “Galicia-León Guerrilla Federation“, engaging in underground political activity that would

have been impossible without the support of the people.

He continued to mount a number of guerrilla operations such as the hold-up at the Guimarei Mule Fair (Friol-Lugo) in 1944, the expropriation carried out at the ‘Saints’ Fair’ in Monterroso, the “Herdeiro de Castro” raid of 1945, the incident surrounding the death of “the priest from Meire”, the deaths of Benedicto, the commander of the “III Guerrilla Army of Galicia Group” and the “priest from Cubrián”, incidents which brought a violent crackdown on the heads of the guerrillas in 1946. The upshot of the latter was – given also that the Spanish Communist Party let them down – lots of guerrilla fighters such as Domingo de Cancela and Trosky were forced into exile.

By 1947, when the CNT, *Curuxas*’s trade union dating back to his days in the San Finx mines, sent out word that the armed struggle against Franco should be abandoned, the “Melide and Ulloa district” guerrilla war had petered out and once more *Curuxas* found himself a “*fuxido*”, but, far from dying down, the repression was stepped up, the object being to wipe out this legendary guerrilla.

At that point *Curuxas* decided to send his 4 oldest children off to Argentina, overseeing a complicated arrangement whereby he would smuggle letters to his wife Marcelina via his children in Buenos Aires for reposting back to Galicia, as if *Curuxas* was living over there too, leading the Civil Guard to believe that he had relocated to Argentina to escape the crackdown.

Life was hard for the family, yet *Curuxas*, due to his adaptability or to the intelligence always available to him and due to his many contacts – being admired by some and respected by others – managed to survive the fascist repression for so many years; he was frequently guest of honour in many local homes and on a number of occasions was tended by doctors from Melide or Palas de Rei. *Curuxas* was always grateful for such small gestures of solidarity, making small gifts to the children of his helpers.

It was general knowledge following the remarks made when the Civil Guard arrested the CNT’s Benigno Andrade García aka *Foucellas* in 1952 or when the Civil Guard mowed down another legendary guerrilla friend of *Curuxas*’s, José Castro Veiga aka *O Piloto*, that they had no intention of taking him alive.

It was due to his commitment to his beliefs, his strong anarcho-syndicalist convictions, the calibre of the man, his intelligence and shrewdness, the support from his friends and solidarity from his neighbours that he made it to 14 May 1967, on which day he passed away in the home of Ramiro Mosquera aka *O Zarato* and Manuela Pardo, who, with other collaborators and friends of his, undertook to dress him, slipping his old pre-1936 Astra [Star] pistol into his pocket, a pinch of

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tobacco, a lighter, a neckerchief and a 100 peseta note in his pockets: later they brought the corpse by stages, with an overnight stop in Silverde, a hamlet which is part of Vilamor to Itago de Abaixo-Toques (La Coruña) where they laid it out at the side of the road. His neighbours and friends clustered around his coffin and laid him to rest in Vilamor, the serving parish priest undertaking to give him “a decent burial”.

27 June 2009 witnessed a moving rally in Vilamor and the unveiling of a stone recording the affection, respect and admiration felt for our comrade by his neighbours, relatives and friends, all of whom had stood by *Curuxas* and the cause of freedom throughout the fascist “long night of stone”.

Further details: Carlos Parrada, *Curuxas. O guerrilleiro que non cazou Franco* (A Nosa Terra books)

Source: *cnt* (Madrid) No 360, October 2009.

New KSL Book

Wisdom earned the hard way – The Tragic Procession: Alexander Berkman and Russian Prisoner Aid [Review]

It is not news to report that the Bolsheviks destroyed the anarchist movement in the Soviet Union. But how, and what were the consequences? These reprinted bulletins from the Joint Committee for the Defense of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia and the Relief Fund of the International Working Men’s Association for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned or Exiled in Russia show it as it happened. They ‘shed a little light on the struggles of our comrades and keep their names alive’ (p.x)

So, who were the anarchists? If you have already read up on Russian anarchist you’ll recognise some of the veterans like Aron Baron, Olga Taratuta and Lea Gutman, or foreigners like Francisco Ghezzi. But the bulletins also report on unknown anarchists and comrades who only came to anarchism in the 1920s: Poly Kurganskaya, F.G Mikhailov-Garin (a blacksmith), Kira Sturmer, Maria Polyakova. Alongside the anarchists the bulletins contain the stories and voices of Socialist Revolutionaries, Social Democrats, Zionists and peasants.

These bulletins are also part of wider anarchist history, showing solidarity in action: a pound from Leah Feldman; a pound and fourteen shillings collected by S. Mainwaring in South Wales; donations from Carl Nold in Detroit, L. Antolini (of Chicago), Chaim Weinberg of Philadelphia. It’s hard to tell which is more striking: what small resources they had, or what they managed to achieve with them.

Much of this is down to the tenacity of Alexander Berkman: ‘Obtaining verifiable information on prisoners and their whereabouts filled Berkman’s daily life.

Rumours, counter-rumours, hopes, fears, and confusions distinguished each day.’ (p.ix) It’s apt that the Alexander Berkman Social Club have both co-published this work and provided the excellent introductory essay.

It is very easy to talk about ‘ends and means’ but coming from Alexander Berkman we should recognise wisdom earned the hard way. Berkman was loyal to the idea of revolutionary social change but critical of the totalitarian path. He did not merely criticise the Bolsheviks but organised support for anarchists and socialists suppressed by the Communist Party. This book reminds us that history is about people, as well as historical forces. A stateless person (having displeased the ‘democratic’ rulers of the USA and the ‘proletarian’ rulers of the USSR) Berkman’s efforts for Russian anarchists got him expelled from France in May 1930. As Henry Alsberg said ‘he has spent his whole life lavishly in active rebellion’ (1).

The introduction ends with suggested further reading where more on Bolshevik repression and the anarchist (and socialist) response can be found. This list will grow if researchers examine the IWMA Bulletins (where Russian anarchist prisoner news was published from 1932 onwards) and the archives of the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam which ‘bulge with letters and dossiers of incarcerated anarchists, their names followed by such grim annotations as “beaten in Butyrki,” “repeated hunger strikes,” “killed in prison,” “shot by Kiev Cheka,” “beaten for resisting forced feeding,” and “fate unknown.”’ (2)

This is a fascinating work of remembrance and a valuable primary source for recovering the history of the anarchist movement in Russia, and of the broader Russian revolutionary movement.

Notes

1, in Alexander Berkman 60th Birthday Celebration pamphlet (1930).

2 Paul Avrich, *the Russian Anarchists*, p.235

Berkman, Alexander.

The Tragic Procession: Alexander Berkman and Russian Prisoner Aid.

Alexander Berkman Social Club and Kate Sharpley Library: 2010. 96 pages, perfect bound book, facsimile bulletins from the Joint Committee for the Defense of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia and the Relief Fund of the International Working Men’s Association for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned or Exiled in Russia 1923-1931

With introduction from the Alexander Berkman Social Club

9781873605905 \$12/£8

Spain, Reviews, Letters, Lives

Spain: The Struggle Goes On

The death of the Spanish struggle has, naturally, attracted the vultures flocking around the corpse. It is hardly necessary to warn readers of a Socialist forum for Socialists, against the lies that are inevitably levelled against the Revolution by the supporters of Franco: regrettably, it is necessary to warn them against similar lies emanating from the supporters of Negrin and the other opponents of working-class Socialism.

It is necessary to recall that at the outbreak of the Fascist rebellion, the Popular Front Government was weak and powerless. Only the working-class took the initiative in suppressing the rebellion.

And the workers did more than act against Fascism: they proceeded with the revolution. The anarchist method of revolution – socialisation from below and workers' direct control of industries and farms (many of the local collectives being living examples of anarchism in practice) – was mainly followed, owing to strong influence of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. on the masses.

Because of the war, the revolution needed arms. Because of the of arms it was obliged to maintain co-operation with the liberal bourgeoisie, who could obtain arms (to some extent) from abroad. Spain, not an industrial country, could not, like this country for example, produce enough arms for herself; the arms blockade prevented importation of arms. The working masses outside Spain, in large numbers, duped by the reformists and Popular Frontists, did not send those arms themselves. Their reformist leaders presumably thought the way to send arms was to utter mild protests to the capitalist governments (or, more likely, realised that that was the way to get votes: one remembers Morrison maintaining that Spain could be saved if he were sent to County Hall!).

The Spanish Revolution was therefore obliged to get arms where it could. Russia, for instance, sent arms. True, she insisted on full payment, the arms were often worthless, heavy political conditions were attached – but still, Russia sent arms. It was Russia's arms that helped crush the workers' revolution!

Under these conditions the C.N.T. did its best to carry on the struggle to win the war and the revolution. Its best men were killed at the front and in the rear: Durutti, Berneri, Ascaso, gave their own lives in the struggle.

It is clear, at this time (and from this distance!) that the C.N.T. made mistakes. It should never have joined the Cabinet; but should have kept aloof from the Cabinet as it kept aloof from the Cortes and from the Popular Front. The C.N.T.-U.G.T. unity and the U.H.P. was sufficient. In addition, it is clear that the C.N.T.-F.A.I. Should have threatened to sabotage the Anti-Fascist Front in order to blackmail the Negrinists,

instead of allowing the Negrinists to threaten to sabotage that Front to blackmail the C.N.T. and the whole revolution.

However, the mistakes were made. The revolution was crushed. The war was lost.

After Fascism had been successful in Catalonia, Negrin and the Communist leaders escaped to French territory and declared from there their firm resolve of fighting on till the last men were killed. The last men failed to see the point of this, and the formation of Junta of Casado was a recognition that all hopes of a military victory were impossible. Whether justified or not, those in the firing-line realised they were unable to succeed on the military field. The lesser evil was to surrender, and to liquidate the barricades; since victory being impossible, the consequent massacre by Franco would come anyway, and the further massacre entailed by further fighting saved.

But the surrender does not mean the end of the resistance to Franco and the struggle for revolution. It simply implies that the Civil War is over. The only way out of the Civil War had become Franco, or Negrin established by French-British intervention (which was not forthcoming, in any case); the Civil War has therefore been ended, but not the Revolution. The Spanish proletariat returns to the guerilla tactics of the days before 1936; but with memories of the "Glorious July" and experience of Popular-Frontism. Once more the old organisation must be rebuilt: and the old struggle, that continued during the Monarchy, the Dictatorship and the Republic, taken up again.

Albert Meltzer

From *Left Forum*, no 32, May 1939.

Sparks of Hope : Impressions of Early North American Anarchist Newspapers: words by Barry Pateman; music by Devin Hoff. [CD Review]

Barry Pateman is a great speaker, combining passion and knowledge with wit and wisdom (what more could you ask for?) These pieces are very thoughtful, reflecting not only that he knows an awful lot about the subject, but also the respect he has for it: An imaginative effort is needed to understand the past, to comprehend these lost worlds.

In talking about these anarchist newspapers, he can quote plenty of dramatic material. Would you have found a quote about 'the supreme daring of liberation' to sum up Luigi Galleani's *Cronaca Sovversiva* (*Subversive Chronicles*)? But he has, and it does.

Devin Hoff uses his double bass to make music that is haunting or driving, and sometimes both together. These pieces (to me, anyway) would make a good soundtrack to an anarchist film, being tense and dramatic. This tension means words and music complement each other. I look forward to hearing more

Spain, Reviews, Letters, Lives

from Devin Hoff. And much more from Barry Pateman, whether spoken or written. How can we encourage him to keep talking?

The CD is available from the KSL for \$7.00/£5.00

Updating Berkman, a letter

We've had a letter from one of our readers who enjoyed Alexander Berkman's *What is Anarchism?* ("the best all-round book on anarchism I have ever read") But, besides giving it a more lively cover, in black and red, he has this suggestion for updating it:

"A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since *What is Anarchism?* was written in 1926. It is a powerful book – to make it more powerful up to the present day what it needs is a final note and a last word at the end... of four or five pages long, or more, to update the changes in Capitalism since then. Where ... people from the different anarchist organizations (maybe 6 to 8 people) sit around a table and agree what to put in this epilogue." Any takers?

To the Editor, The Woman Rebel

Dear Comrade: In your article in the June issue of your paper, you give what I consider to be an idealistic account of the suffragette movement in England. It is true, that at times, in spite of ourselves we are inclined to become sympathetic towards "the cause," because of the petty persecutions, which some of its advocates suffer. But are we to be ruled by sentiment? If so, why not avow ourselves Christians, because in some district the poor tools of the "general" [Booth of the Salvation Army] were met with something stronger than hard words? That women are entitled to the vote (for what it is worth) I do not wish to dispute; but what I do deny, – and that emphatically, – is that they are inspired by "a new passion for liberty." I would rather say the suffragette is inspired by the *passion to govern*. Really one marvels at the interest our movement is taking in the Woman's struggle for the vote. For there is not the least doubt that some of the brainiest and most energetic members of the Socialist movement have been sent right off the track by means of a few catch phrases. Yet perhaps it is as well that we sort ourselves out occasionally, and realise how many, or how few of us are really prepared to stand by the clearcut principles of revolutionary Socialism; understand what Parliament stands for, and the corrupting it has upon even the most disinterested.

And let us not presume that those who are financing the militants are doing so from any philanthropic motives. It appears to me that the American Radical movement as well as the English, is deluding itself that *woman*, the sex, is the victim, and that the vote will prove a means to emancipation. This is obviously illogical. For how shall we benefit if, instead of

electing our master – as we do to-day – we elect his wife to govern us?

That is all, actually, the property vote movement stands for. It does not dream of abolishing this wage-slave society; it does not even demand Adult Suffrage. The mere mention of Free Love would horrify any self-respecting militant, whilst freedom, as you or I would define it, would meet with their very severe disapproval; our object should indeed be to instil into the heart of the toiler a cordial hatred for the "White livered monster" you refer to, "that fattens upon child labor – and prostitution." But, we must take great care to point out, at the same time, that the monster is a bi-sexual creature called capitalism.

Yours for a free society

Rose Witcop

The Woman Rebel v.1, n.5, July 1914.

Michael Gilbert

It is with great sorrow that we record the death of our comrade Gil (Michael Gilbert).

An anarchist for some half a century, he was a stalwart of the Worthing anarchist scene for numerous years and a good friend of many of us.

Despite the restrictions of his failing health, he continued to take part in a range of political activities and managed to get up to the Anarchist Bookfair in London in October.

Although well versed in anarchist theory and history, it was not the writers and theoreticians whom Gil most admired – it was the men of action.

Men like Emiliano Zapata, the Mexican revolutionary, Nestor Makhno, the Ukrainian anarchist guerrilla and Buenaventura Durruti, the inspiring anarchist fighter in the Spanish Revolution of 1936-1939.

The attitude of all these heroes can be summed up in the anarchist slogan "It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees!", which Gil heartily endorsed.

Gil certainly didn't live on his knees. As well as his political involvement, he was a relentless crusader against every aspect of petty repression, discrimination and exploitation that he encountered in his day-to-day life.

A thorn in the side of the uncaring authorities, he was also a guardian angel for many people who came to rely on his guidance and support.

It was this practical dedication to mutual aid, to human solidarity, that made Gil such a genuine and exemplary anarchist.

Even when he died, after a heart attack, it was while doing a favour for a friend – dying on his feet, helping other people.

He will be hugely missed.

www.worthinganarchists.blogspot.com

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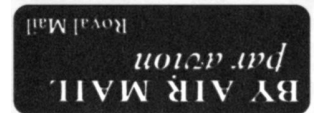
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