



Number 50-51

one pound or two dollars

July 2007

Sacco and Vanzetti eighty years on

Sacco and Vanzetti were two anarchist militants, framed in an unfair trial at a time of anti-radical repression and executed as enemies of the state. Their names still strike sparks of controversy, illuminating the limits of democratic state 'justice', what the powerful will do to their enemies, and the strength of human resistance.

Anarchists

Bartolomeo Vanzetti was born in 1888 in Villafralleto, Piedmont (South of Turin, near Italy's border with France). Nicola Sacco was born in 1891 in Torremaggiore, Puglia (across the 'ankle' of Italy from Naples). They both sailed for America in 1908 where their experiences as overworked and underpaid labourers, of 'poverty and squalor in the midst of plenty' [1] turned them into anarchists. Their anarchism was made in America, not imported.

Vanzetti defined the anarchist attitude: 'The anarchist go ahead and says: All what is help to me without hurt the others is good; all what is help the others without hurting me is good also, all the rest is evil. He look for liberty in the liberty of all, for his happiness in the happiness of all, for his welfare in the universal welfare. I am with him.' [2]

But Sacco and Vanzetti were not 'philosophical anarchists', whatever their defenders felt forced to say. They were militants, followers of Luigi Galleani, *Galleanisti*. Galleani was the leading figure among Italian anarchists in America and a captivating speaker. He originally studied law (like Pietro Gori and Francesco Saverio Merlino) but devoted his whole life to the anarchist movement. Galleani's attitude was simple: 'We do not argue about whether property is greedy or not, if masters are good or bad, if the state is paternal or despotic, if laws are just or unjust, if courts are fair or unfair, if the police are merciful or brutal. When we talk about property, state, masters, government, laws, courts and police, we say only that *we don't want any of them.*' [3]

The *Galleanisti* had no faith in trade unions or any formal organisations, which they thought would hold back and try to control the inevitable revolt. Revolt was what they praised and practised, revolt against church, state and capitalism from strikes up to and including explosions and assassinations.

War

The United States entered the First World War in 1917. Initially, Sacco and Vanzetti moved to Mexico with other *Galleanisti* to avoid registering for the draft (not because they were pacifists, but because they refused to fight for any government) and to be ready to sail to Italy when revolution broke out there. Within six months they had returned to find the war had led to an escalating repression against radicals of all kinds.

Nor did the end of the war change anything. 'During the preceding years the public had been whipped up by patriotic propaganda to a pitch of nativist excitement, and such emotion could not be instantly turned off. Instead, wartime hatred of Germans transformed itself into peacetime horror of radicals, especially alien radicals. If only the menace of un-Americanism could be eliminated, it was widely felt, the nation would be cleansed, its difficulties and tensions mitigated.' [4]

Thus began the 'Red Scare', one of many post-war repressions. After their seizure of power, the Bolsheviks in Russia would crush their anarchist and Socialist-Revolutionary rivals to consolidate a new state in the name of the working class. Italian fascists (many ex-servicemen and supported by the forces of the state) would crush the working class in the name of the nation after near revolution, and go on to take over the state. In the United States, vigilantes, ex-servicemen and police crushed the radical movement in the name of the nation. Official political life remained unchanged. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer gave the justification: 'The Red Movement is not a righteous or honest protest against alleged defects in our present political and economic organization of society ... Each and every adherent of this movement is a potential murderer or a potential thief, and deserves no consideration.' [5]

The Galleanisti responded to the repression with a series of bombings, including one of Palmer's own house. Sacco and Vanzetti may have been involved, but there's no evidence they were. However, they certainly knew what was going on: 'we were at war with the government.' [6]

The arrest of anarchist printers Roberto Elia and Andrea Salsedo, both *Galleanisti*, in New York began a fatal chain of events. First came the death of Salsedo on 3 May 1920. Sacco, Vanzetti and their comrades needed a car to dispose of incriminating evidence before they too found themselves at the tender mercies of Bureau of Investigation. At which point, 5 May, they ran into the theory of Michael E. Stewart, Bridgewater chief of police. Stewart's theory was that Italian radicals were behind the Bridgewater attempted hold-up (24 December 1919) and the South Braintree killings and robbery (15 April 1920). When arrested Sacco and Vanzetti lied to the police about what they'd been doing, who they knew and why they were armed. This led to the accusation of 'consciousness of guilt' which was the strongest evidence against them.

This was not what they'd expected. 'Sacco could barely contain his indignation. "If I was arrested because of the Idea [anarchism] I am glad to suffer," he said. "If I must I will die for it. But they have arrested me for a gunman job." [7] The Bureau of Investigation on the other hand, saw this as a stroke of luck.

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Biography Special Double Issue. Inside: Peter the Painter, Polish Anarchists

Remember Sacco and Vanzetti!

'It was the opinion of Department [of Justice] agents here that a conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti for murder would be one way of disposing of these two men.' [8]

Trial

Judge Webster Thayer, who tried Vanzetti alone for the Bridgewater crime, *asked* to try Sacco and Vanzetti for the South Braintree killings and robbery as part of his personal anti-Red crusade. There is no question that Thayer was biased: 'Did you see what I did with those anarchistic bastards the other day?' [9] but he was wise enough to leave no evidence. As William G. Thompson, later to join the Sacco-Vanzetti defence told the Lowell Committee: 'It wasn't what he said, it was his manner of saying it. It looked perfectly straight on the record; he was too clever to do otherwise. I sat there for a while and I told [defence lawyer] John McAnarney "Your goose is cooked. You will never in this world get these men acquitted. The judge is going to convict these two men and see that nothing gets into the record; he is going to keep his records straight and you have no chance."' [10]

In 1886, at the Chicago Haymarket trial, the prosecutor was able to say 'Anarchy is on trial!' and get a conviction, despite having no evidence proving the defendants had committed the crime they were charged with. Those convictions were later overturned. Though also held at a time of anti-radical frenzy, this was to be a much more sophisticated frame up.

Ripley, the foreman of the jury, had replied to the suggestion, before the trial, that Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent with 'Damn them, they ought to hang them anyway.' [11] There's a strong probability that ballistic evidence was tampered with. Prosecution witnesses were coached. It was arranged that William H. Proctor would testify one of the bullets was 'consistent with' having been fired from Sacco's Colt, meaning that had come from some Colt. The prosecution and judge would claim Proctor thought it came from Sacco's gun. [12] Every attempt to tell what had happened to Salsedo which would explain an unwillingness to 'help police with their enquiries' was blocked [13] Thayer quoted non-existent evidence in his ruling (he invented a cross-examination of Sacco) [14]

Their attempt to counter the 'consciousness of guilt' argument merely opened the door to prosecutor Frederick Katzmann's incitement of prejudice against foreign-born, radical opponents of the war. Prejudice was everywhere and was essential to the conviction. The start of Thayer's charge to the jury played up wartime unity, sacrifice and loyalty: 'The Commonwealth of Massachusetts called upon you to render a most important service. Although you knew such service would be arduous, painful and tiresome, yet you, like the true soldier, responded to that call in the spirit of supreme American loyalty. There is no better word in the English language than "loyalty." For he who is loyal to God, to country, to his state and to his fellow men, represents the highest and noblest type of true American citizenship, than which there is none grander in the entire world.' [15] Clearly the wartime power of patriotism had continued into the 'Red Scare'. 'At war, the individual becomes almost identical with his society. He achieves a superb self-assurance, an intuition of the rightness of his ideas and

emotions, so that in the suppression of opponents or heretics he is invincibly strong; he feels behind him all the power of the collective community.' [16]

Campaign

After the conviction in July 1921, there was a long series of appeals. Thayer, an expert in the art of protesting too much, was asked to rule on his own bias and if the discrediting of prosecution witnesses and appearance of new evidence would justify overturning the verdict or holding a new trial. Unsurprisingly, he found himself unbiased, nothing new was found to be relevant and nothing disturbed his 'consciousness of their guilt'. The supreme court of Massachusetts, apparently only able to act on solid proof of insanity or corruption, refused to intervene. Sacco and Vanzetti were sentenced to death in April 1927.

Vanzetti berated Thayer for his delays in responding to the appeals of the defence. If, as seems obvious, Thayer was intent on upholding the original verdict and confident of support from higher courts, why the delay? Was it to give an illusion of due process and considered decisions? The delays gave the Sacco-Vanzetti Defence Committee vital time to publicise the injustice of the case.

Alongside the legal arguments, a political campaign grew. Gradually expanding from their anarchist comrades, the Sacco-Vanzetti Defence Committee fought to overturn the conviction. Inevitably some campaigners found similarities which appealed, even if they misrepresented reality. Liberal humanitarians saw them as 'philosophical anarchists', some taking their opposition to capitalist wars as pacifism. Communists (with their own committee and own agenda) saw them as working class militants, so they became 'labor organizers'.

For all their shared political ideas, the two men responded differently to their situation. While always protesting his innocence, Sacco believed their enemies were intent on killing them and refused to waste time on appeals for mercy after the conviction. For him, it was better to get it over with. Vanzetti, on the other hand, was willing to keep fighting for as long as possible. "We expect nothing but injustice and abuse from our prosecutors but we will fight to the last." [17]

The political pressure and widespread unease about how they had been convicted led Governor Fuller to examine the case, and appoint the Lowell Committee of worthies to advise him. By this stage the issue was not really about Sacco and Vanzetti but defending the state from criticism. The Lowell Committee was unable to find anything wrong, except that Thayer had committed a 'grave breach of decorum' in talking about the trial while it was in progress. This is like saying 'You were wrong to stab him with a dirty knife'. Haywood Brown would comment 'It is not every prisoner who has a President of Harvard University throw on the switch for him. If this is a lynching, at least the fish peddler and his friend the factory hand may take uncton to their souls that they will die at the hands of men in dinner jackets or academic gowns.' [18]

Fuller himself found no reason to save their lives. It wouldn't take Machiavelli to think that somebody from the Bureau had pointed out that what they were suspected of being involved in was worse than what they were convicted

Remember Sacco and Vanzetti!

of. Fuller in 1930 said 'They belonged to a band of conspirators who attacked peaceful citizens with bombs and dynamite. They were for socialism and godlessness.' [19] Thus 'consciousness of guilt' really means his consciousness of their anarchism, and a conviction that if they were innocent of what they were charged with, they were probably guilty of something worse, and as enemies of the state they should be disposed of by any means necessary.

Both men died bravely, just after midnight on 23 August 1927. Sacco proclaimed 'Viva l'anarchia!' (Long live anarchy!), Vanzetti declared his innocence and that he forgave *some* people for what they were doing. Five days later the Boston police paid them the compliment of violently attacking their funeral procession.

History

Eighty years is a long time, yet this case refuses to fade into the past. Maybe if it had been a less sophisticated frame-up, like Haymarket or the Mooney-Billings affair, it would now be forgotten by all but anarchists and local historians. It has the provocative ingredients of death, conflict and politics. A more important feature is doubt. The passage of time alone means the South Braintree killings are probably beyond solving now, but the human mind finds it hard to stay open and would prefer certainty. Inevitably some are drawn to reweighings of disputed testimony and doubtful evidence as if that is where the answers lie.

But it is political significance which keeps the Sacco-Vanzetti case alive: too symbolic to forget and too polarising to agree on. It feeds the family feud of liberals and conservatives about how America should be governed (remember Galleani: 'we don't want any of them.') Like the 'Red Scare' generally it shows the puritan dilemma at the heart of American government: the desire for freedom, mixed with the desire to repress the 'ungodly'; coupled with the universal taste for violence to preserve privilege.

But violence is not restricted to the powerful. One of the funeral wreaths bore the legend 'Aspettando l'ora di vendetta' - 'awaiting the hour of vengeance'. [20] Presumably it was *Galleanisti* who bombed the houses of the executioner and Thayer. These isolated acts were not Sacco and Vanzetti's lasting revenge, though. Their long martyrdom made their names an accusation against the American state. Vanzetti's words to Phil Stong are justly famous:

'If it had not been for this thing, I might have live out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by an accident.

'Our words - our lives - our pains - nothing! The taking of our lives - lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler - all!

'That last moment belongs to us - that agony is our triumph.' [21]

You needn't agree with the tactics of the *Galleanisti*, nor even be an anarchist, to agree that they understood how to die for a cause. They not only proved 'laws are cobwebs for the rich and chains of steel for the poor' (Proudhon). They showed that though you cannot choose your battles, there is

part of the human spirit that can only be killed, but not broken.

Vanzetti's appraisal of Sacco holds true for both of them: 'Sacco's name will live in the hearts of the people and in their gratitude when Katzmann's and yours bones will be dispersed by time, when your name, his name, your laws, institutions, and your false god are but a *deem remembering of a cursed past in which man was wolf to the man.*' [22] The names of Sacco and Vanzetti will live as long as the lesson holds true: we only have the freedom we struggle for. We will remember them until freedom means 'liberty in the liberty of all', not a partial freedom allowed us by the powerful.

Footnotes

- 1 Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: the anarchist background*, p.26
- 2 Avrich, p.36
- 3 Luigi Galleani, *The end of anarchism?* p.48
- 4 Avrich, p.134
- 5 Avrich, p.173
- 6 (Sacco to William G Thompson) Francis Russell, *Tragedy in Dedham*, p.189
- 7 Avrich, p.204
- 8 Letherman affidavit, Russell, p. 341
- 9 Louis Joughin and Edmund M. Morgan, *The legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti*, p.148
- 10 Russell, p.133
- 11 Brian Jackson, *The black flag: a look back at the strange case of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti*, p.52
- 12 Joughin and Morgan, p.128
- 13 Upton Sinclair, *Boston, August 22nd*, p.236
- 14 Joughin and Morgan, p.260
- 15 Russell, p.207
- 16 Randolph Bourne, 'War is the health of the state' in George Woodcock (ed.) *Anarchist Reader*, p.99
- 17 B. Vanzetti, *Background of the Plymouth trial*, p.13
- 18 Quoted in 'Sacco and Vanzetti' by Howard Zinn, <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=12575>
- 19 Joughin and Morgan, p. 357
- 20 Avrich, p.212
- 21 Russell, p.387-8
- 22 Joughin and Morgan, p.468-9

Louise Michel In Algeria

Following the defeat of the Paris Commune, Louise Michel was banished to New Caledonia. There she mixed with some Algerians who had been sent there in the wake of the 1871 uprisings in Kabylia. They got on famously. She promised them that she would visit their homeland as soon as it was feasible. She was as good as her word.

This book retraces the links between exiled Communards and the exiles from Kabylia, then looks at the trip that Louise Michel and Ernest Girault made to Algeria some decades later, between October and December 1904. It was a working visit for it was punctuated by several dozen lectures denouncing religion, militarism, oppression and colonial exploitation ... and urging social revolution. To packed halls every time.

This was Louise Michel's last ever trip, for she died in Marseilles in 1905. 'Oddly' this period in Louise Michel's life has been all but entirely hidden. This book therefore corrects an 'oversight' and is well worth the trouble. That applies to French and Algerians alike.

Louise Michel en Algérie, by Clotilde Chauvin (Saint-Georges d'Oléron: Les éditions libertaires, 2007, 157 pp.) Price €15 (c.£10-£11) Taken from CIRA Marseilles bulletin

Comrade H. Zolotarov, The Freedom-Pioneer, And The Jewish Workers' Movement In America

Comrade Zolotarov came to America in 1882; he was then all of eighteen years old. But from what we find out from his life history before he came to America, we must conclude that in his youngest years he already reacted to life with much seriousness. In Yelizavetgrade¹ he frequented the high-school. But he left Yelizavetgrade for Odessa and joined the Am Olam [Jewish socialist emigration movement], in order to travel with them to America, where he hoped to begin a new life, a life of work, a life built on new social foundations, on the foundations of freedom and of Communism.

But before he traveled to America he remained exactly one year in Odessa, and there he took part in the revolution-ary movement.

Because of his youthful ideals he leaves his father and mother and begins his own independent life. He cannot remain longer in dark Russia, where human freedom is suffocated, where the true self is persecuted like a wild animal. He cannot make peace with the ugly life around him, and young as he is, he finds the courage in himself to cut himself off entirely from his past in order to begin a new life in America, where everything is strange, unfamiliar, and he can certainly assume that he will have to do hard and bitter work until he comes to something.

Thus it must be clear to us that already from his very first years Comrade H. Zolotarov exhibited signs of that which he was his whole life: a fighter, a rebel, a man with his own opinions, a passionate lover of freedom, and a man with a great heart, who not only sought freedom and good fortune for himself, but freedom for all his fellow human beings.

However it must be noted that in that time, exactly as in later years, a considerable number of young men came to America with great, lofty aspirations, with a passionate fervor to accomplish something great in life. Unfortunately not many retained their youthful ideals. Most of them were consumed by the cloudy stream of everyday life and "equal status." Not, however, Comrade Zolotarov. After he had stayed four years in America – working first with a party of the "Em-Oylem'tzes" [Am Olam] in a Communistic colony, and then traveling with his parents to Cincinnati where he enrolled in the Chickring (*sp?*) Institute, and then enrolling in a university Chemistry department and graduating – then, when he was already thoroughly "Americanized," having become, so to say, a complete American, the first thing Zolotarov did, arriving in New York in 1886, he threw himself with the whole fire of his soul into the anarchistic movement. He lectured, he agitated, he wrote, he protested against the shameful sentencing of the Chicago anarchists, and H. Zolotarov, the graduated chemist, the former assistant professor, associated with green (*meaning recently immigrated*) young men, joined their group "Pioneers of Liberty," and did everything that he could in order to dig up the stony soil of New York for grains of anarchism.

I can say with a pure conscience that insofar as anarchism, the doctrine of freedom and equality and brotherhood, was accepted amongst the Jewish workers, it is

absolutely certain that a great part was owed to the untiring and very effective organization of H. Zolotarov.

And this was much more than the reader of the present time can appreciate. Now, lecturing and speaking is a considerable profession. We have many such lecturers in America who make an entire living by propagandizing their ideas. Besides money, the lecturer, the speaker, has his adherents who only take care that where the lecturer comes he should have all his comforts, and in most cases he is received with great honor.

But it was entirely different in 1886. What honor, what money? The few poor people themselves who formed the group "Pioneers of Liberty" had to put together their meager few pennies in order to be able to rent a room where they could hold their meetings, or a "mass-assembly" that consisted, when a lot came, of a few tens of people.

And it is then that Zolotarov, instead of thinking about an end result, devoted himself with all his strength to the Pioneer-work. Keep in mind that Comrade Zolotarov was never a rich man, and don't forget also that his parents were very poor. His father, one of the most loving and warm-hearted men that I had the occasion to meet, was a tailor. He couldn't then give his youngster everything that he needed to live. The elder Zolotarov had to make a living then for an entire sizable family, and all with his own ten fingers. So it is certain that at that time Zolotarov had to earn for himself in order to live. And this he did also: He gave English lessons to poor, green workers. One can only imagine how much he could earn that way. He wrote for a short time in the "People's Advocate," a weekly newspaper with something of a radical tint, and, when necessary, helped his father in his work, as the elder Zolotarov once confided to me. Here, amidst these uncertainties, Zolotarov was one of the very first agitators for free thought, for a more beautiful and better social life amongst Jewish workers. The work was difficult, frighteningly difficult, but Comrade Zolotarov always hoped to be able to sow the seed of a free life; in this Zolotarov was never lacking.

And I often think, who knows if precisely this intense work already then undermined his health?

Yes, at this same time he was also a student, enrolled in medical school. And I ask now, where did the young, small, weak Zolotarov get the necessary strength? I remember that at this time a small group decided to publish a weekly newspaper, and whom did they hope to have as the leader, the lead writer, the chief agitator? Zolotarov. And he didn't disappoint us. He wrote for the newspaper much more than people expected; he agitated for it with all his strength, and, what is more, he contributed as much as was possible in money for the maintenance of the newspaper.

Such was Comrade Zolotarov, when I became acquainted with him in 1886.

I recall it was very cold outside, and the group "Pioneers of Liberty," a meeting of which I was attending for the first time, was gathered in a small room behind a saloon somewhere on Allen Street. We didn't have to pay any rent for the room, but each person had to order a glass of beer whether he wanted it or could drink or not.

I remember that it was already near the end of the meeting, about half past ten. Most of the business had already been accomplished. But everyone remained seated.

Zolotorov

As a newcomer, I asked my neighbor, for whom is everyone waiting? And the answer was: "Zolotarov must come soon." That there was a Zolotarov, who was a firebrand, this I knew, but I hadn't yet encountered him, and naturally, out of curiosity, I remained with everyone. And soon, indeed, a young man in a summer jacket, the collar turned up, ran into the room, badly frozen. And cold as he was, I got the impression that a strong warmth flowed out from him. He had been about five minutes in the room when he noticed me. "A newcomer," a "recruit," he shouted, "good. This is how we grow. What is your name?"

Half a year later, in the summer nights, we used to walk around the streets and continually quarrel. But I don't remember about what, except that often we used to differ strongly and angrily with each other. The first encounter with him I can't forget, because the shout "a recruit," "we grow then," was full of true enthusiasm.

And in that shout the true Zolotarov expressed himself, because more than anything Zolotarov was an enthusiast. He was a truly deep thinker, had a good clear mind; he never stopped learning, studying. But that which distinguishes Zolotarov from all comrades of his time is his great, inexhaustible enthusiasm.

And such a man he remained his whole life. In the hardest minutes of his life – and there were many such times, both in his personal life and in his life as a community leader, as we will soon see – he never became discouraged, always remained the same lively, inspired, and inspirational Zolotarov.

In 1889 I left America for England, where I was editor of *London Workers' Friend* [*Der Arbayer Fraynd*] for almost five years. Before this time the Jewish anarchists had published the *Free Workers' Voice*, [*Fraye Arbayer Shtime*] in which Comrade Zolotarov had very strongly participated. After a long martyrdom the magazine had to close down for a time, and the whole anarchistic movement lived through a supremely critical time. From American Jewish life rose up to heaven the star of social democracy.

I come back to America and find Zolotarov already as a doctor, in his own office, married, and I figure that Zolotarov has already "cooled off," has become an "established person," earns money and scoffs at the whole world.

I speak with him alone, he is the same Zolotarov from 1886, it flames and blazes from him, and he is participating in the publication of a monthly scientific magazine, that is, according to him, the sole thing that Jewish anarchism must do.

I don't agree with him. I insist on this, that our propaganda must lead on a broader scale, as cannot be done with a monthly magazine, and Zolotarov gets excited, fumes, yells with shrieking shouts, that what we must do is to elevate the workers, but never, never go down to them. And a debate starts just like in former times.

And the magazine is published, and Zolotarov writes, and Zolotarov holds speeches, and here I leaf through the old *Free Society*, [*Fraye Gezelshaft*] and I marvel when and where he managed the time for everything.

A few years later the magazine had to be given up out of lack of strength. It wasn't possible, as it turned out, to elevate the workers so quickly. The *Free Workers' Voice* [*Fraye Arbayer Shtime*] under my editorship, lives, and I

come to Zolotarov and point out to him that his place is in the *FWV* [*FAS*] Not only does he write, but he truly participates in the routine work. He comes to business meetings, participates in different committees, he is active.

And now we intend to publish a daily newspaper. Money is needed, someone must travel to agitate, and no one is as enthusiastic as Zolotarov. I tell him, someone must travel to Philadelphia to kindle the comrades, and Zolotarov locks up the office for two days, and we travel to Philadelphia, and he begs, and he scolds, and the audience showers him with money.

You understand yourself already, that with such a way of "attending" to business as Zolotarov practiced, he couldn't become rich. Barely, barely did he make a living even in the time when he was still healthy.

But the heart becomes weaker, and Zolotarov must refuse a great part of his practice. Yes, there comes a time when his wife, whom he has loved and respected his whole life, must go ahead and help him make a living. There comes a time when Zolotarov can hardly walk, and yet he must, in order to somehow to maintain a respectable style of life, give lectures in the evening schools, for ten dollars a lecture. Yes, he must receive from the *FWV* [*FAS*] five dollars for an article, on which he works a whole night. Hard, frightening times, that would bring to who knows what a man with a weaker character. But Zolotarov remains devoted in the very blackest times of life. He is full of belief in his ideals, and doesn't stop a moment in his life's work. If he can't speak any more because the heart is weak, he writes all the more. He writes dramas, he writes sociological and psychological treatises, and so he remains active, industrious, literally until the last minute of life.

It is not my task to evaluate his literary work, that will be done by others. I can only say that in everything that Zolotarov created, he invested his heart, his soul. He did not one thing mechanically, and that is, in my opinion, the greatest profit from his literary work, as from his entire, great, beautiful, lofty life.

Who, who but the comrades, with whom he worked, fought, and suffered, and the thousands and thousands whom he inspired to a better and more beautiful life, to nobler and more human thought and feeling, these will never, never forget Comrade H. Zolotarov.

S. Yankovski

Notes

1 Former name of Kirovograd, city in S. Central Ukraine, in SW former Soviet Union, population 237,000 (as of date of my dictionary)

Chaim Weinberg's 1930 Jewish Anarchist Memoirs Are Now Online

Wooden Shoe Books and the Dead Anarchists website are proud to announce the online release of Chaim Leib Weinberg's *Forty Years in the Struggle: The Memoirs of a Jewish Anarchist*, which are translated by Naomi Cohen and edited by Robert P. Helms. We present this book for the first time in English, and in the only form that is now available to a general readership.

<http://www.deadanarchists.org/weinberg.html>

Peter the Painter

Peter the Painter (Janis Zhaklis) and the Siege of Sidney Street

[In October 2003 the Latvian press carried a number of articles about the Latvian anarchist Janis Zhaklis. These were largely based on the work of Philip Ruff who, after twenty years of research into the Siege of Sidney Street has identified Zhaklis as the most famous Latvian in London: Peter the Painter. His hunt through the archives continues but before the full story is published we thought it worth posting this article to whet your appetites.

Pauls Bankovskis, who wrote this piece is a well-known journalist and novelist. His 2002 novel, *Mister Latvia*, was based on some of the characters involved with the events around Sidney Street. KSL]

Melnals Peteris (The Black Peter)

Almost a hundred years after an unsuccessful robbery of a jeweller's shop, an English historian continues to follow the footprints of the main suspect. Over this time the man called "Peter the Painter" became a legend. He is the most famous Latvian in London.

When I finished writing my novel "Mr. Latvia" and wanted to send it in to the "Karogs" magazine for competition, I decided that it wouldn't be clever to go to the editors myself, carrying the manuscript in my breast pocket. It would be obvious to everyone that "Mr. Latvia" was my creation. For conspiratorial reasons I gave the manuscript to a chauffeur A., who took it to the editors' office. The plot succeeded and no suspicions were aroused. Besides, a bit of cunning seemed to suit the book with the false identities and secret ways it described. It also suited a book about the legendary Peter the Painter (or Peter the Artist, because he was an artist as well as a house painter) and Latvian anarchists who had escaped to England from Czarist Russia and caused an unprecedented hullabaloo in the Kingdom in London in 1910. At that time I didn't know that Peter the Painter would come back – this time not as an eerie legend, but as a real man with a name, surname and life story.

After the book came out, I was often asked if anything like this had ever happened in reality. Unlike in London, in Latvia Peter the Painter had never become a tale on the scale of Kaupen, sung about in musicals. But in London to this day he is at least as well known as Jack the Ripper. "He was a Bin Laden of his time", as an East End historian Bill Fishman put it in a slightly exaggerated way in one of the documentaries about London's Scariest Mysteries. In any case, there are "Peter the Painter" pubs and decorating companies in London...

When writing "Mr. Latvia", I was interested by the activities of Latvians abroad – and not just any activities, but real events, which have caused a lot of noise and leaving permanent marks (results) which would remain imprinted in memory, become a legend. That is how I came to write a book about Peter the Painter, who, as I was told, "in reality probably was the artist Gederts Eliass". Andris Mellakauls, who during his life in London collected information on his famous countryman, lent me various books dedicated to Peter (they are listed in the bibliography at the end of "Mister"). Carefully examining the photos of Peter the Painter and Eliass and comparing their biographies, it is almost impossible to believe that this is one and the same

person, – but that did not seem important. I was interested in the story itself. The false identities and aliases. The man who appeared at a certain moment in history, and later disappeared without a trace, leaving behind him a lot of elaborately colourful conjectures and surmises.

The Gedert Eliass Version

On a sunny day in early autumn we are driving down to Kurzeme together with Philip Ruff. The end destination of our trip is Talsi, Kuldiga and Sabile – places, where some traces of Peter's life might still be found...

The Englishman, who looks like a bespectacled school teacher, has studied the history of Latvian anarchists and the revolutionary movement for years in his free time. Gradually this research turned into an obsession in a way. Listening to his stories, versions and hypotheses, watching the enthusiasm with which he is trying to find some more crumbs of information to add to his study, an involuntary recollection dawns upon my mind of a film called "Possession" – about a romantic obsession caused by a letter found by chance in a library... Soon enough, looking through the dusty files of a local museum and examining topographic maps, I also start getting visions of what I would so much like to find and discover...

Mr. Ruff first came to Latvia at the end of the eighties and surprised many by his altogether insanely naïve wish to see the KGB House. From the inside. It turned out later that precisely in those days, comparing the two biographies, Philip put forward the wrong hypothesis that Peter the Painter and Gederts Eliass might be one and the same person.

In 1988 a British newspaper "The Observer" published an article saying that the identity of the since 1911 most wanted person in Great Britain had been disclosed. Next to poster, in which the London police promises £500 to anyone who could provide information on the man involved in the murder of three policemen known as Peter the Painter, the portrait of the artist Gederts Eliass is printed with the caption: "Eliass: Peter the Painter."

Still, very soon Mr. Ruff was forced to admit that this had been a mistake, because he happened to find in Riga a portrait of Peter the Painter. The same as was printed on the "wanted" posters in London. It could be said with certainty that the man seen on the poster was not Eliass. A little later photos of him were found, where he was depicted in France and the US.

The Lessons Of 1905

1905 is the year in which the legend of Peter the Painter began. The approaching centenary of this event might be one of the reasons for an increased interest and attempts to study it without the generalisations and bias, inflicted on the readers by Soviet history books.

The events in London in the winter of 1910 were closely connected with the 1905 revolution in Latvia – people seeking to escape the repression and persecution in Czarist Russia found refuge in London. Historians who have studied their activities in London are unanimous about the fact that the awful experiences of 1905 – interrogations and tortures, executions without trial – could be at the basis of the

Peter the Painter

unheard of in those days cruelty and audacity of foreign anarchists.

On December 16th, 1910 an unsuccessful attempt was made to rob a jeweller's shop in London. The robbers had rented a neighbouring house and under the cover of darkness had planned to dig a tunnel through the party wall into the shop. They were disturbed by the police. The idea to surrender did not even enter the robbers' minds. Three policemen were shot dead, two seriously wounded. That was an unprecedented brutality, considering that the London police in those days were not armed.

It is possible that this incident would never have been disclosed, if in the heat of the battle one of the robbers had not been accidentally shot by one of his comrades. The body of Hartmanis, or "Puika", was found the next day in a flat in the East End. The documents found in this flat led the police to believe that the dead man had belonged to a fighting group of Latvian anarchists called "Liesma". The mysterious Peter the Painter, also known as Peter Pjatkov, was considered to be the leader of "Liesma" and together with Fricis Svavs (a cousin of the later notorious Chekist Jekabs Peterss) had lived in this flat.

The last act in this tragedy happened after a few days. The police were informed that two of these anarchists – Fricis Svavs and Jazeps Sokolovs – were hiding in a house in 100 Sydney Street. This time the police took careful precautions. The whole quarter was surrounded by 750 men – police and Irish Guards, armed with battlefield rifles. Even a cannon was delivered, for there was no other way to fight those anarchists! And still the police had not the slightest experience in fighting terrorists; also their weapons, compared to the automatic Mausers used by the two fighters, were insignificant.

The Siege of Sydney Street turned out to be a real attraction – Londoners, who had never seen anything like this before, were crowding the streets in the neighbourhood, trying to get hold of the best observation places on the roofs of surrounding houses. In those days they didn't have the dozens of educational (instructive) films, which have made it clear even to children nowadays that at the sound of the first shot one has to run for cover and not hang out the windows...

The siege lasted for 7 hours, and even the Home Secretary Winston Churchill came personally to take in the course of events. It is possible that one of the bullets by accident hit a gas pipe. Smoke started coming out of the building. The police and the crowd watched the house burn down, but nobody came out of the burning house...

And still the "mastermind" Peter the Painter got lost without a trace. Almost the same way as the present-day terrorist leaders do. Soon afterwards the London police arrested Jekabs Peterss, who was later acquitted due to lack of evidence against him. Anger seized the public opinion and the press: look, where their hospitality has led Londoners... It turned out that the city was swarming with armed to the teeth anarchists who had come from all across Eastern Europe and who didn't hold anything as holy.

A police historian, Donald Rumbelow, is absolutely convinced that it was Peterss who was the main shooter and the murderer of the three policemen. It seems that he cannot withstand the idea that only the later Chekist would be

capable of such an audacious crime. And, of course, the knowledge that Peters received his well-earned punishment, falling victim to Stalinist terror at the end of the 30s. Philip Ruff considers this Rumbelow's version as pure fiction.

Although a lot of money was promised in return for any information leading to the capture of Peter the Painter, the police soon abandoned all efforts to find him: even if he had been found in some other country, the British police wouldn't have the slightest pretext for demanding his extradition, because they did not have any direct evidence against him. And so his identity remained a mystery....

Man In The Photo

On the photos discovered by Philip Ruff in the Riga archives, one can see a man called Janis Zhaklis, or Zhakle (in the old script Schaakle), who was born on July 19 1883 on a farm listed in police files as "Kounen" (maybe "Kalnini"?) in the district of Talsi. Some zhandarmerie accounts mention Wolmar, or Valmiera, as his place of birth. Known under an assumed name of "Mernieks", he was a leader of the LSD (Latvian Social Democracy) in Tukums. In the summer of 1905 he took part in many of the so-called "church demonstrations" in Kurzeme, and was very much respected as a good speaker. Later he became the leader of the LSD Riga Fighting Organisation, planning and personally taking part in all the major operations carried out by the fighters, among them the attack by 52 men on the Riga Central Prison in October 1905. As well as in the famous attack on the building of the Secret Police Department in Riga in January 1906, during which Fricis Svavs was liberated. After that Zhaklis went to Finland, where together with Gederts Eliass, who later became a well-known artist, but in those days was just as well known as a fighter, and several other men, he organised and carried out the expropriation of the Helsinki Bank. The greatest part of the money went to Vladimir Uljanov, or Lenin.

Still, already in 1906, differences of opinion appeared between the Social Democrats and Janis Zhaklis. The wish of the LSD to abandon armed struggle (in favour of a parliamentary discourse) was unacceptable to Zhaklis, and together with 10 other former Social Democrats he founded a communist anarchist group "The Same – in Word and Deed!" ("Pats – vards un darbs!"). His "desertion" and conversion to the camp of "mensheviks and anarchists" could be the reason why in the Soviet times his activities were not particularly studied and noted. After two members of this group, Anna Caune and Karlis Krievin'sh were killed by the police in a siege in Stabu Street, Janis Zhaklis, Svavs, Hartmanis and others escaped abroad.

Of course, the expropriation of the Helsinki Bank and the subsequent expropriations in the U.S. and Great Britain can be considered as ordinary robberies – and still personal enrichment was not the fighters' goal. Almost all of them had left family behind in Latvia, many relatives were left without a breadwinner after the events of 1905. From 1908 till 1913 an anarchist journal "Briviba" was published in New York, and from 1911 till 1914 "Melnais Karogs" was published in Paris. Alongside with calls to ensure social justice and do away with governors and rulers, "Melnais Karogs" published articles on the right of nations to self-determination and independence.

Peter the Painter

“Waging an unceasing struggle against exploitation, its cornerstone – private property and its guarding bulwark – the State, we at the same time stand for the independence and free development of our people. There isn’t, and cannot be, any other way of solving the national question”, a certain “Sampo” wrote in “Melnais Karogs” in December 1913...

If not for the unsuccessful robbery in London, it is possible that the legend about Peter the Painter and his mates would never have been born. Even though there is little evidence to support this, it is quite probable that the expropriations which they had carried out before then were successful and did not cast any suspicion on them. Sokolov had worked in various jewellery shops – and every time he would leave a job for a new one, the previous shop would be robbed. He was even questioned by the police in this connection, but they couldn’t prove anything. (They didn’t notice anything suspicious).

No More News...

Although Philip Ruff disclosed the identity of the mysterious Peter the Painter, the later fate of the legendary figure is still surrounded by mystery. There are rumours that he successfully emigrated to Australia. Some gossip has it that he later worked for the Soviet secret services (intelligence) and was executed in the purges. There is another story about a certain prisoner in a Siberian camp, who at the beginning of the 50s claimed to be Peter the Painter and could retell the story of the events in London in the minutest details...

Philip Ruff is full of determination to get to know about the later period in the life of Peter the Painter / Janis Zhaklis. Neither his name, nor the names of any of his relatives or comrades are mentioned in the lists of participants in the 1905 revolution, which are kept in the museums of Talsi and Kuldiga. Our only findings consisted of the golden light of early autumn, the blue-black clouds on the horizon, the smell of apples in the car, some maple trees already reddened by the night frost, the smell of burning grass and the numerous potato diggers along the Kuldiga roadside.... Nothing else.

P.S. Philip Ruff continues to look for information about the youth of Janis Zhaklis (Mernieks, Peter Pjatkov) and would be grateful to receive any information about him, his family, as well as about Fricis Svards and other Latvian anarchists.

By Pauls Bankovskis “SestDiena” (Riga), 11 October 2003

CIRA Appeal for Solidarity

Lausanne’s CIRA (International Centre for Anarchist Research) which is now 50 years old is appealing for help. As well as a large anarchist library, with online catalogue, they also organize conferences on anarchism, both in Lausanne and elsewhere, like in Venice in 1984.

They must raise a minimum of 150,000 Swiss Francs (€100,000 or \$130,000) to buy their building. They are nearly there (see their website) but like the KSL depend on support from their comrades.

CIRA: Centre international de recherches sur l’anarchisme, Beaumont 24, CH-1012 Lausanne, Switzerland
<http://www.cira.ch> cira@plusloin.org

Haymarket: A Novel by Martin Duberman [Review]

Many anarchists will know the Haymarket story, if only because it gave us Mayday: the 1886 struggle for the eight hour day in Chicago and other American cities, the bomb thrown during a workers’ meeting, the farce of a trial against eight anarchists, the execution of four and the suicide of a fifth. This novel covers all this by recreating the lives of Albert and Lucy Parsons and their world. Duberman is historically accurate but has gone beyond merely dramatising the trial records. He has built on his research to breathe life into history.

The relationship of Albert and Lucy forms the centre of the novel. Even without the drama of the Haymarket affair, theirs is a remarkable story: An ex-Confederate soldier who first became a Republican, then labour agitator and anarchist, and an African-American woman who forever maintained she was of Spanish and Native American origin, a political militant in her own right who was prepared to call for class violence against the rich. So, there are plenty of political arguments in the book, along with debates on sex and, inevitably, race. The radical culture of the Chicago anarchist movement, from beer halls to workers’ militias, is also shown.

Through a mixture of straight narration and fictional documents like diaries and personal letters Duberman manages to transmit a huge amount of information while maintaining the pace of the book, and the reader’s interest. Not only does he bring Lucy and Albert to life, but others outside the Haymarket eight like their close comrades Lizzie Swank and William Holmes.

The long view (the book begins with Lucy and Albert meeting in Texas in 1871) shows not only their personal history but the social context in a period of American history best described as open class warfare. The rich call for workers to be massacred, the police are an occupying force, and the courts a device for permanently silencing labour agitators. As Albert says:

“The prosecution wants to convict us of murder on the basis of our opposition to the current social order - for our political views - yet hails the Captain Bonfields, who have committed actual deeds of murder, as ‘saviors of law and order.’”

If you’re interested in the history of the Haymarket Affair, this is a good introduction which will give you an accurate idea of what happened. As fiction, it not only records the names of the dead, it gives them back their voices. Which is a victory of a kind.

Haymarket: A Novel by Martin Duberman
Seven Stories Press, 2003. ISBN 1583226184

London Anarchist Bookfair

This year’s bookfair will be on Saturday 27 October 2007, at Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Road, London, E1. 10-7 (new venue)

Credit

This Bulletin (Double issue) produced July 2007 by the Kate Sharpley Library Collective. Please fill in the questionnaire at the back – tell us what you think.

Anarchism in Poland

New book: *Na Krawedzi Zycia: wspomnienia anarchisty 1943-44 (On the Edge of Life: Memories of An Anarchist 1943-44)* by Pawel Lew Marek

Pawel Lew Marek (originally Melajach Lew) was born on the 16th of August, 1902, in Radymno, near Przemysl (now in the south-eastern part of Poland). He started work when he was 14. In 1918 he started the Independent Organisation of Working Youth (Samodzielna Organizacja Młodsiezy Robotniczej), which united young Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish workers. He was an organiser of two strikes and a member of a workers' council.

In November 1923 he took part in fights in Przemysl (when Communists attacked a socialist meeting), where he moved closer to the ideas of syndicalism and anarchism. In 1924 he did his military service. In 1926 he was one of the founder members of the Anarchist Federation of Poland (AFP).

In 1930 he emigrated to Paris and co-operated with a group of Polish anarchists there. After his return to Poland he was a secretary of the AFP (1931-37) and editor of an illegal anarchist newspaper *Class Struggle (Walka Klas)*. He was a worker at Schenka & Co. in Warsaw, where he organised a stay-in strike. Then he was a manager with the Hartwig shipping company.

In 1939 Pawel Lew Marek took part in the defence of Warsaw. In 1941-42 he was imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto. After his escape he was the organiser of a revolutionary syndicalist group. He took part in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. He was organiser of the Syndicalist Uprising Platform (Syndykalistyczne Porozumienie Powsrancy) and editor of *Syndicalist (Syndykalista)* newspaper. After the defeat of the Uprising, he made his way to Krakow, where he was arrested.

After the liberation of Krakow he worked in the Regional Committee of Worker Unions (Okregowa Komisja Zwiqzkow Zawodowych). He was an exponent of co-operatives, initiator of the Union Housing Co-operative (Zwiqzkowa Spoldzielnia Pracy) and its chairman. IN 1946-49 he was also chairman of the Co-operative Publishing House "Word" (Spoldzielnia Wydawnicza "Słowo") in Lodz. In 1949 he joined the Polish United Workers Party (the governing Communist Party).

From 1951 he lived in Warsaw and worked on the union newspaper *Voice of Work (Glos Pracy)*. He died on the 7th of November 1971.

Contact lukasdab@poczta.onet.pl for more information. The book (in Polish) costs 10 Euros including postage to the UK.

Extract from the book. Appendix B: Biographies of Syndicalists and anarcho-syndicalists.

Mieczyslaw Bankowicz – born 1st October 1908. Lawyer, journalist. After WWII publicist of *Trybuna Mazowiecka (Mazowsze Tribune)* and *Szpilki (Pins satirical magazine)*, for 20 years columnist of *Gazeta Handlowa (Newspaper of Trade)* chief editor of *Prasa Polska (Polish Press)*, head secretary of Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich (Association of Polish Journalists), vice-chief editor of Agencja Robotnicza (Workers Agency). Died 14th August 1971.

Ignacy Gluchowski – alias 'Morus', born 1892, worker in Państwowy Monopol Tytoniowy (State Tobacco Monopoly) factory, syndicalist activist in Związek Związków Zawodowych (ZZZ: Union of Workers Unions) and Robotniczy Instytut Oświaty i Kultury (Workers Institute of Education and Culture). In October 1939 became vice-chairman of workers section in Związek Syndykalistów Polskich (ZSP: Union of Polish Syndicalists). Sergeant, chief of 104 ZSP Company, took part in the fighting in Stare Misato (Old Town) and Srodmiescie. Died 24th September 1944, during the fighting.

Wladyslaw Gluchowski – born 27th July 1911 in Lipniki near Siedlce, teacher and anarcho-syndicalist. 1931-1932 editor of *Zycie Uniwersyteckie (University Life)* in Poznan, activist of Związek Polskiej Młodzieży Demokratycznej (ZPMD: Union of Polish Democratic Youth), graduated from the History Faculty. After studies he worked as a teacher in Belorussian secondary school in Wilnus [Vilna]. 1934-1939 anarcho-syndicalist activist (they also called themselves revolutionary syndicalists) in ZZZ (Union of Workers Unions). At the same time member of Anarchistyczna Federacja Polski (AFP: Anarchist Federation of Poland). Published in *Front robotniczy (Workers' Front, newspaper of ZZZ)*. In 1935 became a section secretary of ZZZ in Krakow. Arrested 10th January 1937 after rally in Chrzanow, accused of calling for overthrow of the state. In October 1937 acquitted by the court after police and workers' testimony. 1937-1939 secretary of section of ZZZ in Czestochowa. Strike organizer. Initiator of many workers common-rooms in Upper Silesia and people's house in Czestochowa. With the lawyer Zygmunt Choldyk was an initiator of underground Polski Związek Wolności (PZW: Polish Association of Freedom). In 1940 joined Syndykalistyczna Organizacja 'Wolność' (Syndicalist Organization 'Freedom'). 12 June 1940 arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. 19 January 1941 died of infected wounds as prisoner no. 17710. He left a daughter, Helen.

Zofia Hajkowicz-Brodzikowska – alias 'Basia' born 1913. Daughter of professor of mathematics at Technical High School of Wawelberg and Rotwand. Graduated secondary school in Warsaw. She was influenced by Włodzimierz Bochenek, an activist of Związek Młodzieży Polskiej (Association of Polish Youth). After a year of studies at the State Institute of Theatrical Arts, moved to the High School of Journalism and graduated in 1938. From 1931 she was a member of Union of Polish Democratic Youth (ZPMD), and after the split in its left wing joined the break-away Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży Syndykalistycznej (SMS: Syndicalist Youth Association). At the same time she was an activist of Anarchist Federation of Poland. 1938-39 she was a chairman of Youth Section in Workers Institute of Education and Culture and editor of its publications e.g. *Through syndicalism to Poland*. With her husband, Witold Brodzikowski, she took part in an anarcho-syndicalist propaganda group in ZZZ. In October 1939 she was an organizer of temporary mobilization centre for revolutionary syndicalists in Warsaw. In November 1939 she joined Union

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of Polish Syndicalists. From 1940 leader of Syndicalist Organization "Freedom". She was responsible for internal communication and contacts with other organizations e.g. Komitet Pomocy Żydom (Committee for Aid to Jews [AKA Council to Aid Jews or Żegota]). Also responsible for printing fake documents, weapon transportation, underground printing. She was arrested 23rd December 1943 while carrying arms on Koszykowa St. Warsaw. Probably betrayed by Major 'Ketling' from Polska Armia Ludowa (Polish Popular Army) who was accused after the war of collaborating with the Gestapo. She was tortured in Pawiak (infamous Nazi prison) committed suicide by hanging in January 1944.

Franka Hoffman-Zgodzinska – Anarchist Federation of Poland activist. She lives in Canada. She was one of publishers printing a Yiddish anarchist paper in Warsaw Jewish ghetto, the *Voice of Freedom*.

Stefan Kozakiewicz – alias 'Marcinek' ('Little Martin') born in 1914. Professor, arts historian. Before WWII worked in the National Museum in Warsaw. During occupation took part in so-called 'Pruszkow action' – saving cultural relics. Member of the radio monitoring section of syndicalist bulletin *Iskra* (*Spark*). In *Iskra* he edited a bulletin section instructing how to protect art relics during battles. After WWII vice-director of National Museum in Warsaw and lecturer in Warsaw University. Died in 1974.

Stefania Karolina Marek – nee Brojde, alias 'Kruk' ('Crow'). Born 1906. Office worker, anarchist. In secondary school she joined Anarchist Federation in Czestochowa. She was arrested for being an anarchist. She was one of the first members of Warsaw Housing Cooperative. Spoke three languages: English, German, French. Wife of Pawel Lew Marek (author of *On the edge of life – memories of anarchist 1943-44*). During WWII hidden by (among others) Stanislaw Rosloniec. During Warsaw Uprising, fought in the Old town with I Mechanized Division of Narodowe Sily Zbrojne (National Armed Forces) alias 'Stefania', she worked in English and German radio monitoring sections of *Voice of the Old Town* uprising newspaper. With soldiers of NSZ she managed to get to another fighting district, Srodmiescie, where she joined the Syndicalist Brigade. She worked in radio monitoring section of syndicalist bulletin *Iskra*. After capitulation of the Uprising she was a so-called 'Warsaw Robinson' – she survived by being buried alive with 40 other people in bunker until 18 January 1945. After WWII worked in Interstate Trade Centre. Never joined the Communist Party. Died in 1985.

Tomasz Alfons Pilarski – alias 'Janson', 'Rylski', 'Kompardt' and others. Born 6th July 1902 in workers family. Before WWII one of the leading activists of anarchist movement in Poland. 1917-1921 draughtsman in agronomic office in city hall of Raciborz. In 1918 joined Upper Silesia Communist Party and in 1919 anarcho-syndicalist workers union Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschlands. Until 1933 he was an activist of the FAUD. Resistance organizer against Hitler. In 1929 initiated paramilitary anarchist organization Schwarze Scharen

(Black Ranks) 1928-1932 editor of *Freedom* published in Wroclaw (Breslau) and Raciborz. Accused by Third Reich regime of high treason, fled to Berlin where he was hidden. With help of Polish diplomat he managed to flee to Poland where he got political refugee status. 1933-35 scholar in Institute for Ethnographic Research in Warsaw. He was active in Union of Workers Unions (ZZZ) as an anarcho-syndicalist. 1934-36 secretary of Union in Zaglebie Dabrowskie. He represented Polish anarcho-syndicalists during IWA congress in Paris in 1938. From 1939 in Central Section of ZZZ. Published in *Front Robotniczy* (*Workers' Front*) as 'Jan Rylski'. From May 1939 he worked in a German-language anti-Nazi programme in Katowice radio station. From July 1939 member of ZZZ board. After September defeat went to Mozejki near Wilnus [Vilna]. He joined Związek Walki Zbrojnej (ZWZ: Association of Armed Struggle, precursor of Polish National Army [Home Army/ AK]). Worked in an office preparing fake documents for underground. In 1942 he came back to Warsaw as a Swedish citizen. Took part in so called 'N-action' (disinformation in press and leaflets for Eastern Front German soldiers). He joined Syndicalist Organization 'Freedom', published in *Walka Ludu* (*Peoples Struggle*). Took part in Warsaw Uprising in the ranks of Polish Popular Army. 8th August 1944 wounded. Joined Syndicalist Brigade. After defeat of Uprising, together with his wife and daughter, evacuated to Ojcow near Krakow. From January 1945 worked as secretary of propaganda section of District Committee of Workers Unions in Krakow. In June 1945 went to Silesia where he organized reconstruction of industry. After the war he maintained contact with German anarcho-syndicalists. In 1947 he joined Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Party of Workers) then Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Party of Workers – communist regime party). 1948-50 worked in office in Ministry of Western Lands. In 1950 expelled from the Party for 'anarchist aberration'. In 1953 imprisoned for months without sentence. He worked in Warsaw in Dom Słowa Polskiego (Polish Word House) and Panstwowa Centrala Handlu Książkami 'Dom Książki' (State Central of Books Trade 'Book House'). He refused to receive decorations and honorable awards. Died 3rd February 1977 and was buried in Powazki Cemetery in Warsaw.

Wieslaw Protschke – alias 'Wieslaw' born 1913 in Lwow (Lwiv), his father was an architect. Graduated law faculty in University of Jan Kazimierz in Lwow. During his studies cooperated with *Sygnaly* (*Signals*) periodical. 1935-39 activist of Union of Polish Democratic Youth (ZPMD) and Workers Institute of Education and Culture. Great propagator of cooperative ideas of Edward Abramowski (famous Polish 'anti-state socialist'). Member of Union of Workers Unions (ZZZ). Protschke was member of editorial staff of *Front Robotniczy* (*Workers' Front*), *Głos Pracownika Umysłowego* (*Intellectual Workers' Voice* – ZZZ paper 1934-37), *Przebudowa* (*Reconstruction* – ZPMD paper). His article 'Bakunin – the freedom fighter' in *Workers' Front* was the cause of his conflict with Stanislaw Cat-Mackiewicz (famous conservative, editor of *Slowo* paper) who appealed for police intervention against 'Bolsheviks in ZZZ'. In

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November 1939 together with Boleslaw Stein founded underground anti-soviet organization Rewolucyjny Związek Niepodległości i Wolności (Revolutionary Union of Independence and Freedom) which was created by syndicalists, socialists and peasant organization members. The organization was destroyed in January 1940. From 1940 Protschke was chairman Syndicalist Organization 'Freedom' Central Committee. During WWII he was working in publishing cooperative 'Czytelnik' ('Reader') in Krakow. Protschke together with Tomasz Pilarski represented SO 'Freedom' in Centralny Komitet Ludowy (Popular Central Committee). After unification of military division of SO 'Freedom' with Polish National Army ([Home Army or] AK) he became a political officer of AK. In September 1944 during Warsaw Uprising arrested and sent to Auschwitz concentration camp, then to Mauthausen where he was murdered in January 1945.

Pawel Jan Rogalski – alias 'Pawel'. Born 18th August 1908 in Warsaw. Before WWII worked in *Ostatnie Wiadomości* (*Last News*) paper. In 1924 one of editors of socialist paper *Nowy Zew* (*New Call*). From 1926 student of political and social sciences faculty in Free Polish University. Also from that year involved in self-education anarchist group of Benjamin Wolman. From 1927 member of Anarchist Federation of Poland, comrade of Jerzy Borejsza. Worked in underground printing house *Walka* (*Struggle*). In 1929 arrested in Warsaw for participating in a celebration of Peter Kropotkin. In 1930 emigrated to France where he worked as workman and studied in the Sorbonne. In 1932 returned to Poland. During WWII he was hidden himself and help others to hide. In October 1939 together with Roman Jablonowski (before the war member of Communist Party of Poland, then close to syndicalists, activist and last leader of 'Zegota' (Council for Aid to Jews) initiated socialist resistance group. In August 1942 escaped from Warsaw ghetto. During Warsaw Uprising arrested together with his family by the SS Division Galizien. He escaped again. To the end of occupation he was hidden in Nadarzyn. In January 1947 invited by Rose Pesotta (union activist and member of anarchist group publishing *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* Yiddish language paper, who visited Poland in 1946) Rogalski went to the USA. There he gave a series of lectures about Warsaw ghetto and Warsaw Uprising. After his return to Poland was interrogated by Urząd Bezpieczeństwa (Public Security – secret police). In 1946 with other anarchists and Roman Jablonowski opened Spółdzielczy Instytut Wydawniczy 'Słowo' (Cooperative Publishers Institute 'Word') where among others, books by Peter Kropotkin were printed. Cooperative was stigmatised by Central Committee of Polish Workers Party (Communists) and was forced to close in 1949. From 1949 until retirement Rogalski worked in 'Książka i Wiedza' ('Book and Knowledge') publishing house. Died in 16 March 1993 in Warsaw. He asked to engrave: 'Militant of Anarchist Federation of Poland' on his tombstone.

Bronisława Rosloniec – (Bronisława Frydman) born 1912. Activist of Anarchist Federation of Poland (AFP). Before WWII worked as a clerk. During the occupation, evicted to

ghetto from where she fled and was hidden in her husband's flat. After WWII lived in Lodz (central Poland). Died in Uppsala, Sweden, 8th November 1991.

Stefan Julian Rosloniec – alias 'Julek' born 1911, before WWII activist of AFP which was the cause of frequent arrests. During occupation helped to hide people. He rescued a few dozen people who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto. Awarded the title 'Righteous Among the Nations'. After the war, an intellectual worker. Activist in Esperanto movement, member of Polish Esperanto Association board. Died 10th May 1988 in Uppsala, Sweden.

Boleslaw Stein – born 29th April 1907 in Biecz. Doctor and syndicalist. In November 1926 co-founder of Organizacja Młodzieży Radykalnej (Organization of Radical Youth) in Krakow. From November 1929 chairperson of ZPMD in Krakow. Expelled from University for political reasons. Continued his studies in Wilnus [Vilna] (nowadays Lithuania). Worked in Liga Samopomocy Gospodarczej (League of Economic Mutual Aid). Since 1936 chairman of District Council of ZZZ in Wilnus. In April 1938 stood up court accused of libelling Stanislaw Mackiewicz, editor of conservative paper *Slowo*. He was also penalized for publishing a leaflet and taking part in a strike. After his studies, worked in a military sanatorium in Rabka (southern Poland). Since 2nd April 1939 member of Central Department of ZZZ. In 1939 mobilized in Vilna, but managed to get to Lviv (nowadays Ukraine) where he was co-initiator of anti-soviet conspiracy Rewolucyjny Związek Niepodległości i Wolności (Revolutionary Union of Independence and Freedom) which included syndicalists, socialists and peasant movement activists. Organization was crushed in January 1940. At the same time Boleslaw Stein organized the evacuation of children from the TB hospital in Rabka. During WWII member of ZWZ-AK. From 1940 lived in Krakow. As director of St. John of God Hospital, he provided help to soldiers of AK (National Army [or Home Army]), AL (Popular Army), Jews, English pilots and others. After Warsaw Uprising he helped Warsaw fugitives. In 1945 he joined PPS (Polish Socialist Party) – after unification he stayed in PZPR (Polish Unified Workers Party – communist regime party). Died 21st October 1969 in Krakow.

Stefan Szwedowski – alias 'Wojciech', 'Szwed' born 26th December 1891 in Janowice. In 1905 (during revolution) participated in school movement. Interrogated by tsar's secret police (Ochraha). First time arrested in 1913, spent 2 years in prison. In the same year joined 'Warsaw Battalion' of Polish Legions. At the end of WWII in executive group of 'Zet' (Association of the Polish Youth). In 1919 ended his studies in the law faculty of Warsaw University. In 1922 one of organizers of Związek Obrony Kresow Zachodnich (Western Frontier Defence Association) and Związek Rad Ludowych (People's Councils Union). From 1931 involved in ZZZ. 1935-39 member of Central Department of ZZZ. In October 1939 one of the underground initiators of Związek Syndykalistów Polski (ZSP: Union of Polish Syndicalists). Since 1943 head secretary of ZSP. Co-initiator and ZSP delegate in Council for Aid to Jews. From February 1944

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vice-chairman of Centralizacja Stronnictw Demokratycznych, Socjalistycznych i Syndykalistycznych (Centralization of Democratic, Socialists and Syndicalist Groups/Parties). During Warsaw Uprising fought in the Old Town as soldier of 104 company of ZSP. In Srodmiescie he was co-initiator of Syndykalistyczne Porozumienie Powstańcze (Syndicalist Uprising Agreement – syndicalist and anarcho-syndicalist coalition). After WWII together with anarchists and co-operative activists worked in Publishing Cooperative ‘Slowo’ and other cooperatives. Died in 1973 in Warsaw.

Halina Świerczyńska – alias ‘Halina’. Born in 1923. During Warsaw Uprising, soldier of Syndicalist Brigade, messenger. Now active in providing social help.

Bernard Konrad Świerczyński – alias ‘Aniela’, ‘Kondek’. Born 20th August 1922. Since a young boy, he was inspired by his father’s involvement in anarchist movement. During occupation provided help to hidden Jews, organized hideouts and escapes from the Warsaw ghetto. Many times sneaked into the Warsaw ghetto carrying food, medicines and letters for people inside. During Warsaw Uprising soldier of Syndicalist Brigade. Never a member of any party. After WWII awarded the title ‘Righteous Among the Nations’. Journalist of cooperative movement press. Member of Polish Journalists Association. Died 31st October 2002 in Warsaw.

Konrad Świerczyński – alias ‘Wicek’. Born 19th February 1888 in Warsaw. Participant of Winter Palace assault in 1917 in Petersburg. During interwar period leading light of anarchist movement, bookseller, poet. Many times imprisoned for anarchist activity. During Warsaw Uprising soldier of Syndicalist Brigade. ADC [aide de camp] of General Skokowski in PAL (Polish Popular Army). After WWII lived in Tarnow (south Poland), power plant worker. Died 29th February 1956 in Tarnow.

Tadeusz Tyszka – alias ‘Lord’, ‘Tadeusz’, son of fighter of 1905 Revolution. Before WWII, member of ZZZ. Captain in Main Military Department in SO ‘Freedom’. Worker in underground printshop on Francuska St. in Warsaw. Shot dead by police 5th February 1944 during siege of the printshop.

Aniela Franciszka Wolberg – born 14th October 1907 in Czesochowa. Student of Jagiellonian University, and Montpellier University in France. Chemistry MSc, assistant in Free University. Since 1926 AFP activist, co-editor of *Class Struggle* paper. In France cooperated with *Combat Syndicaliste*. Deported from France for anarchist activity. In 1932 became Secretary of AFP. In 1934 arrested, released for lack of evidence. In 1936 she joined in the Spanish Revolution. Died in 1937 in Warsaw from postoperative complications. (Obituary in *KSL Bulletin* 39)

Edward Wolonciej – alias ‘Czemier’. Born 30th September 1919. During WWII student of secret classes, syndicalist soldier. In 1941 joined AK (National Army [or Home Army]). Took part in Warsaw Uprising. 1-15 September

1944 member of ‘Gustaw-Harnas’ battalion. After Old Town capitulation, captain commander of Syndicalist Brigade in Srodmiescie. After surrender of Uprising imprisoned in Pruszkow camp, from where he fled to Krakow. In 1947 student in law faculty in Jagiellonian University. OM TUR [Organizacja Młodzieżowa Towarzystwa Uniwersytetu Robotniczego – Youth Organisation of Workers University Association] and PPS (Polish Socialist Party) activist. In 1950 graduated diplomatic department of Academy of Political Science. Since 1953 solicitor. Also studied at State Theatrical High School in Director’s Faculty. He wrote diaries, stories and plays which weren’t published during communist regime for their ‘incorrect content’. He was victimized for anti-communist struggle. Died 3rd February 1999 in Warsaw.

Kazimierz Zielinski – born 1913 (or 1915). Graduated from Warsaw University. Member of ZPMD. In 1935 he joined revolutionary syndicalists circle in ZZZ. He studied in France, where he cooperated with French syndicalists. Husband of French communist activist. Came back to Poland just before the war and joined the army. After September defeat together with Zofia Hajkiewicz and Zygmunt Dymka organized mobilisation center for revolutionary syndicalists. In 1939 arrested by accident during a Nazi street roundup. Went missing without a trace.

Jerzy Zlotowski – alias ‘Poreba’. Born in 1911. Architect engineer, took part in the defence of Poland during the Nazi invasion. From November 1939 member of Central Committee of ZSP. Superintendent and then commanding officer in sabotage Combat Units of the Headquarters of the ZSP. During Warsaw Uprising officer in 104 company of ZSP (Old Town) and Syndicalist Brigade (Srodmiescie). 30 September 1944 fell in combat on the corner of Krucza St. and Wspolna St.

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Anarchist Library series (ISSN 1479-9073) #18