

Union-Bashing Economics [1975]

This is a sort of do-it-yourself Fleet Street editorial: ‘The powerful unions must not be allowed to defy the Government ... the issue is simply who is to govern, the unions or the elected representatives of the people in Parliament...’ Some such words are left unwritten by journalists when they walked out in defence of their pay claims; they resume when they come back, talking of ‘unreasonable blackmail, extortionate demands ... inflation’.

None of this is the language either of socialism or of capitalism. It has nothing to do with achieving socialist collectivisation in which unions must play an important part. It has even less to do with capitalist economics which depend upon the free market and in which the worker is entitled to sell or withdraw his labour, take it from or to the highest bidder, or combine to increase its value by competition. It is the language of a Statism which takes over from socialism and capitalism and combines the worst features of both.

The State is seen as supreme: hence later in the saga will come the words ‘law and order’, ‘a stable society’ and other hints at the big stick of the State. Hints are given that this ‘industrial blackmail’ is designed to lead to State socialism but it is likely as not directed against State industries. The employer who talks in terms of free enterprise is oddly enough the first to denounce such free enterprise as a strike, and calls for the very State intervention that he spends his time deploring otherwise. He wants the State but only in its repressive role, against others. The saga that has grown up around State control in Britain and is the stuff of the politics of the media is a hybrid of languages of socialism and capitalism: it calls for equal sacrifices but recognises the essential point of capitalism that the main thing in life is individual achievement. The aim in life is money, but one should not pursue it! – It is a sort of ossification of the class structure. Those with money, should keep it; those without, should stay without, ‘until the crisis is over’. But the ‘crisis’ goes on year after year without abating and is no crisis but the norm. The occasional flight of fancy by journalists – ‘the party’s over’ ... ‘the kissing has to stop’ ... – obscures the fact that for one reason or another we have been told the crisis was on for nearly half a century ... post-war depression, unemployment (as if it were a natural disaster like

floods or pestilence), war preparations, war, post-war crisis and so on. What is behind the manufacture of the saga is a sort of ‘deep freeze capitalism’ in which all the competitiveness is to be taken out of the system, with those *in* staying in, except for bad luck, and no one else climbing on the wagon. It does not work, of course, but ‘freeze’ is the essential word in the saga.

It is odd that even today people believe in the saga and not only seriously discuss ‘inflation’ as if it were something like a monsoon but equally worry about ‘deflation’ (journalists have even invented ‘reflation’!). It is the language of myth called in to justify power – an economic myth to replace the patriotic myth, but in this case using the same ‘national necessity’ ploy as in war.

None of the economic ‘laws’ are natural. They are only observations of how people will behave when they have economic power. The persistently repeated story that if wages rise prices will rise is merely a method by which some people wish to alter the rules of ‘free competition’ once they find they aren’t winning.

[Albert Meltzer] *Black Flag*, v4, n3 (Aug. 1975) ■

Remembering Stuart, two years on



The Stuart Christie Memorial Archive has now opened. They have a lot of scanned material on their website, including this front page of *Ruta* from 1964: <https://stuartchristie.maydayrooms.org/items/show/411>

Copies of *A Life for Anarchy: A Stuart Christie Reader* arrived in the UK at the very end of June 2022. There are reviews in this issue: always keen to see more! We’d like to see copies in libraries: have you asked your local library to get one? ■

Inside: ‘A Life for Anarchy’ reviewed

A 'good example': A Life For Anarchy: A Stuart Christie Reader [Book review]

It seems to me that one of the recurring themes running through the history of anarchism is the avoidance of creating 'idols' (certainly in the anarcho-punk milieu from which my interest in anarchism grew), and yet, just as humanity in general seems intent on creating 'heroes' of one sort or another – some more deserving of the title than others (see the vacuous 'cult' of the modern day 'celebrity' – the deification of idiots), anarchism also is no exception, throwing up its own candidates for heroic veneration.

However, despite this laudable aversion to hero worship, there are good reasons to keep in memory the events of the past and the deeds of those involved; not least of all in order to learn from the mistakes and victories of others. It is arguable as to whether anyone really learns from any mistakes other than their own (speaking for myself now), but leaving that aside; it is possible for us to celebrate, to praise the achievements, and commemorate the memory, of those activists among us who have exemplified themselves by their actions in life, while avoiding the pitfalls of mindless hero worship: for in life these people became what all communities and organisations need: 'good examples' by which to inspire and help guide us through the trials we face each day. We learn from each other, as each generation learns from the last, and the struggle goes on. For, as the publications of the Kate Sharpley Library attest, this struggle for a better world is not the preserve of an 'elite' or some Trot vanguard, but of everyone capable of taking up the fight. And anarchism was, as Stuart said and the book points out, not about 'great thinkers and writers but was something made by the efforts and sacrifices of ordinary people.' [217]

These 'role models' exist throughout our communities and their histories, and largely unsung as they often are, they are the real 'prime movers' in the struggle for a better society; it is not those 'painted idols' promoted by the state and its supporters: the politicians and political parties; business leaders and entrepreneurs; the so-called 'Captains of Industry'; the celebrities, sportsmen and women, and assorted fake 'professionals' peddling dodgy theories in the universities (who claim a monopoly on knowledge), but those forgotten people whose actions have helped drive us forwards; who held the banners of freedom aloft when all about them seemed a desert of authoritarianism and human slavery, and those who fought on against tyranny and overwhelming odds. Those who, as Miguel Garcia pointed out so poignantly, having 'lost the war'

became the resistance and 'fought on' and in the process became 'criminals' to both the Falangist victors, and liberal democracies alike. Forgotten, marginalised, slandered or criminalised, these are examples worthy of emulation and admiration, while falling short of adulation and hero-worship for the simple reason that all of us are fallible. Unlike the fabled 'utopian society' dangled like a carrot on a stick before the working class donkey by the various 57 unwholesome varieties of authoritarian Marxism, and which can, by definition, never be attained – the personal examples of courage, fortitude and tenacity set before us in the pages of real working class revolutionary struggle are, having been done before, attainable by all possessing the spirit and courage to make the attempt.

In the articles included here, Christie mentions a number of such examples (particularly in 'Introduction to *MAN! An anthology of anarchist ideas, essays, poetry and commentaries.*'), such as the anarchists Pa Chin in China, J.W. Fleming in Australia, and M.P.T. Acharaya in India. These three I pluck from many due to their lonely vigil in their respective countries, keeping the flames of anarchist struggle alive, when it must have seemed to them that all was lost (maybe that's my pessimistic interpretation though). Ignored by conventional history, these are the real exemplars of our histories; those who lead by their example. Christie champions activists like these not only to rescue them from the obscurity conventional history would condemn them to, but to highlight those whose past deeds and actions help guide and inspire us in the continuing struggle for a better world.

People need no 'leaders' in the conventional sense of the word, what we need are those who 'lead' by personal example (especially when young and stuck in small towns like Scunthorpe). We need people who, when needed, do what is necessary; they take up the slack and show others the way forwards by their actions and clarity of thought; they show us how to work and to organise together. We need these 'good examples' today more than ever before. I would have to guess here, never having had the privilege of meeting him, but from the accounts of his friends, family and comrades, Stuart Christie was clearly one such 'good example'. He was, like so many of those activists whose life's work he championed, someone whose actions in life inspired others to work towards the creation of a saner, more equitable society. That we can do this without the creation of yet more 'untouchable idols', or 'unaccountable notables', is evidenced by the many deeds and struggles set forth in the publications of the Kate Sharpley Library and by Stuart himself. Flawed as we all may be – we raise ourselves through the struggle for a better world, rather than wallowing in pacific indifference. There is undoubtedly, a new world waiting to be built, and

from those members of that ‘strange, unknown, unappreciated tribe’ [65] who came before us, and in whose ranks Stuart Christie now stands, we can find the inspiration to fight on; for as another of those fighters once said; ‘we are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that.’

As you would expect, *A Life For Anarchy* contains a short biography, many articles, tributes and obituaries written by Christie himself, and tributes, memories and reflections written by his friends and comrades.

All-in-all a book well worth reading and a fitting tribute to the life and works of Stuart Christie; a true exponent of the ‘beautiful ideal of anarchism.’ [217]

Mark R.

A Life For Anarchy: A Stuart Christie Reader, edited by the Kate Sharpley Library. 9781939202376
<https://www.akpress.org/a-life-for-anarchy.html>
<https://www.akuk.com/a-life-for-anarchy-a-stuart-christie-reader.html> ■

A living book : ‘A Life For Anarchy: A Stuart Christie Reader’ [book review]

No need here to start by explaining who Stuart Christie was. I almost wrote ‘is’, for – as one appreciation in this book admits – ‘It seemed he would always be there’. In this world a few rare folk come across as permanently fixed points of reference, whose removal seems inconceivable, unreal.

This tribute to Stuart is not a linear biography but a great collective compilation, the work of numerous contributors and compilers. The novelist Anthony Powell once suggested that effective spies ‘don’t suddenly steal an indispensable secret that gives complete mastery of the situation, but accumulate a lot of relatively humdrum facts, which when collated provide the picture.’ As creator of *The investigative researcher’s handbook*, Stuart would have appreciated that point, and this tribute to him demonstrates it well.

A life for anarchy fills nearly 300 pages of varied recollections and original articles, by Stuart and about him. It is sprinkled with some great photos, with a bibliography, a glossary and an excellent introduction. It falls into three sections – a selection of Stuart’s own writings from his Glasgow days onwards, followed by some obituaries and short biographies of others written by him, and rounded off with appreciations of him by friends and comrades, including tributes delivered at his funeral.

And it’s not more of the same. It does not dip into *The Christie file* of 1980, nor into Stuart’s three volumes of memoirs from 2003-04. Those stand

separate and parallel. There’s a vast amount here that I’d never read before, or if I did, it must have been years ago. Much is fresh and often surprising. For instance, who knew about the remarkable and self-sacrificial life of Walter Morrison, ex-soldier, militant pacifist, anti-nuclear protester, community activist and ‘private extraordinaire in the Awkward Squad’? Stuart tells his story. Nor had I ever heard of Tom McAlpine’s pseudo-co-operative ‘Factory for Peace’, which Stuart criticised justly and mercilessly in 1964. Nor did I recall José Martín-Artajo, son of a Francoist minister, novelist, poet, CNT ‘Apache’ and eventually both an anarchist and a Spanish diplomat at the same time. Again, his life is here, thanks to Stuart. I could pick other nuggets almost at random.

We might worry that such a hefty patchwork would give an incoherent or unfocused picture, but it isn’t so. The articles by Stuart himself that make up the first section are selected with such care that the trajectory of his political life comes through sharp and clear. If I’d never heard of him, that part alone would give me the necessary framework. And if I’d never met him or had dealings with him, the tributes by him and for him in the two sections that follow would certainly introduce me to the man, not just as a political force but as a person.

In her moving tribute, Stuart’s daughter Branwen speaks of his strength and courage, his unwavering commitment to justice, his readiness to follow his heart, his grace and compassion, his moral compass, his humility. These were close, personal qualities, but they translated directly into virtues that formed his political outlook and drove his tireless activism. As Stuart himself says here, in the last piece in the book, his anarchism was not an imported ideology but essentially ‘an attitude to life’. Jessica Thorne points out that he developed a growing respect for ‘the sheer ordinariness of people’, while ‘MH’ remembers him, despite the ‘big name actions,’ as ‘at heart ... very much an everyday anarchist who would get involved in whatever needed doing including the unglamorous stuff as well.’ All of one piece, then – a life for anarchy and an everyday anarchist.

In the book’s introduction, the KSL collective notes that *The investigative researcher’s handbook* recommends networking with ‘sociometric stars’ – ‘key people who know everything and everybody’ – and that Stuart himself certainly came into that category. Was there anyone in the movement he hadn’t met or didn’t know about? The biographical tributes and obituaries by him, collected in the second section of the book, are written with flair, warmth and sympathy, and are often quite astonishing, opening up to us from his first hand acquaintance the unthinkable brave lives of these militants. His salutes to the artist Flavio Costantini are revealing and touching, as also is his final eulogy here, for his wife Brenda.

The book’s cover blurb insists that it ‘is not meant

to be a crash course in modern anarchist history.’ Maybe not, but throughout these pages there is much to learn, and much to be moved and motivated by. *A life for anarchy* is a proper reader – not a dry memorial, not a dusty headstone, but a living book to keep handy, to dip into repeatedly and to relish. In his review of *The Christie file* included here, Albert Meltzer complained that ‘Few political books manage ever to be readable.’ Well this one certainly does. It gives us both a closure and an opening, both remembering and renewal, and those who have put it together have done Stuart Christie proud.

Richard Warren

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<https://www.akpress.org/a-life-for-anarchy.html>
<https://www.akuk.com/a-life-for-anarchy-a-stuart-christie-reader.html> ■

Immense enthusiasm and optimism : ‘A Life For Anarchy: A Stuart Christie Reader’ [book review]

It’s almost two years since the Covid restrictions prevented me – and many, many others – from attending Stuart Christie’s funeral in person. This book provides a degree of solace. The Kate Sharpley Library Collective is to be commended for its industry and astuteness in carefully editing this collection of his writings spanning over a 56-year period. Anyone familiar with Stuart’s life and work will appreciate that this is no mean feat. After his acquittal in the Angry Brigade trial, in 1972, finding himself effectively blacklisted, Stuart threw himself into radical publishing, establishing the Cienfuegos Press, home to the ephemeral *Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review*. Along with his close comrade Albert Meltzer, Stuart brought new life to the rather jaded world of British anarchism and reasserted the proletarian values of anarcho-syndicalism. In later life, Stuart founded the Anarchist Film Archive as part of the Christie Books website.

The KSL editors have done a fine job collating these diverse texts. They also produced a brief and apposite introduction and a series of instructive footnotes that are used with economy and precision throughout. There is also a very handy glossary that will be helpful for younger readers and for those less familiar with the history of the European anarchist movement.

Divided into three sections, the first is just shy of 20 texts, ranging from speeches to press articles and book reviews. Each text is preceded by a brief introduction to orientate the reader and provide coherence to the section, allowing a sense of the

evolution of Stuart’s thinking. The first part of the book – which covers a range of themes, such as reflections on violence and the dynamics of state repression, taking in the trial of the ‘Stoke Newington 8’ and the ‘Persons Unknown’ witch-hunt of the late 1970s – is a welcome contribution to British anarchist culture and history. (Millennials will doubtless raise an eyebrow at Stuart’s writings in the early days of *Time Out*, when the publication was far removed from the hipster bible it became.)

Stuart believed in the importance of studying the enemy – one example is his book on Stefano delle Chiaie, the Italian neo-fascist at the heart of the ‘strategy of tension’ of the late 1960s. Similarly, in one article, he references the work of imperialist thug General Sir Frank Kitson, *Low intensity operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping*, a Machiavellian handbook designed to allow the defenders of a crisis-ridden state to steady the ship in the face of spiralling dissent whether at home or in the colonies. In the UK, this played out with rising state and police repression, the erosion of civil liberties, the one judge conveyor-belt Diplock Courts in British-occupied Ireland and bloated Special Branch resources. The volume also reflects developments within the international anarchist movement, along with key events in Stuart’s activist life, specifically the relaunching of the Black Cross and the unerring internationalism that led to his passionate concern with the plight of Spain. Indeed, the first section ends with Stuart’s preface to *We, the Anarchists!*, his major contribution to Spain’s revolutionary anarchist history. Showing a keenness to debunk myths – whether this made him popular or not – he charted the bureaucratisation of the Iberian Anarchist Federation and how it came ‘to apply the brakes to the spontaneous revolutionary activity of the rank and file and repress the new generation of revolutionary activists among the Libertarian Youth and the “Friends of Durruti” group.’

The second section consists of a series of obituaries of numerous militants from the British and, mainly, international anarchist movement. These portraits – which serve as important biographical resources – tell much about Stuart’s internationalist priorities: the Spaniards (10) outweigh the British (4) and the Italians (3). These biographies also offer testimony to Stuart’s profound generosity of spirit and his tremendous feeling of loyalty for comrades and loved ones. He was always generous with his time and, moreover, ready both to listen, as well as to offer advice.

Another of Stuart’s core attributes – unflinching humour – comes through in the pages of this collection, even in the most adverse circumstances, such as during his time in Carabanchel jail, Madrid. In his inimitable style, we read how he received a monthly money order from the exiled Spanish CNT in Toulouse: ‘The names of the remitters were, in

rotation, George, Paul, John and Ringo, the only English names known to the political prisoners' support fund, all of which led to the rumour that I had been bankrolled by the Beatles, something which gave me considerable kudos among my fellow prisoners.'

Finally, we see ample evidence of Stuart's love of language and erudition. I was always struck by the breadth of his culture, whether in his writing or in conversation. We worked together on the English-language edition of José Peirats' *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution* for Christie Books. Besides appreciating his qualities as a patient and attentive editor, I was impressed by his literary references, which ranged from obscure Scottish poetry to popular culture; this was always very natural, lightly worn, in no way jarring or artificial. He also displayed immense enthusiasm and optimism. Many of these admirable traits are attested to in the final section, which consists of tributes paid to Stuart by his comrades, friends and loved ones, although the frontiers between these categories were very fluid. This volume is a fitting tribute to someone I was lucky to know and will always remember with tremendous affection.

Chris Ealham 12-8-22

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<https://www.akpress.org/a-life-for-anarchy.html>
<https://www.akuk.com/a-life-for-anarchy-a-stuart-christie-reader.html> ■

The use and need for a union

An unfortunate indifference still reigns among a large number of working women.

Lulled by illusions, deceived by prejudice, sometimes by resignation itself, they imagine that their earthly sufferings will be compensated by a better life. This is how, consciously or not, they do a great deal of harm to their comrades, their sisters in the struggle. And, yet, as workers, we cannot see any other fate than the fate we will achieve by ourselves. In order to do this, we only have to join and contribute to our unions. Many among us might say that we should leave such things to the stronger sex. But, to those who think so, we ask: 'who will watch over us; who will take care of our interests?' It certainly won't be our bosses.

By her economic situation, the working woman finds herself in a state of inferiority compared with her boss. While the latter owns the instruments of her work, the machinery, the factories, etc., the working woman only owns the energy of her body or her brain, which means that, in order to survive, she finds herself forced to sell this energy to her boss.

The boss, among all the arms which reach out to get a job and afford some bread to eat, will always choose, in his own interest, the one who will sell her

physical or mental energy for the tiniest wages. But if the worker is, faced with her boss, in an inferior economic situation, and if the latter can impose on her her working conditions as he pleases, this situation will change once working women have understood that their strength resides in their union. Certainly, if they cannot fight against the bosses with the same weapons as them, capital, since they don't own any, they can achieve anything through numbers and organisation; since we are no doubt the more numerous.

We can therefore oppose the bosses' attacks with an even greater force: the united and indivisible multitude of the workers. We all feel the need to gain better living conditions; by a single aspiration, by a single idea, we will impose our will on the bosses; by the power of our organisations, we will tear from them wages which will allow us to live honestly, and gradually, as much as possible, we will reduce the length of the work day.

And, in this way, from the slaves we are, we will become masters of our own destinies.

May these few facts give working women some thought if they still had doubts on the need for a union, and make them join, to strengthen it, since the union makes us strong.

Léa Wullschleger

L'Exploitée, No.3, 7 Juillet 1907.

<https://forgottenanarchism.wordpress.com/2014/11/09/lea-wullschleger-the-use-and-need-for-a-union/>
Original at <https://www.e-periodica.ch/> ■

Joe Thomas [obituary]

Joe Thomas, who died at 78 in London in February, was an old friend of anarcho-syndicalism who worked together on many industrial fights, with Tom Brown of the old Syndicalist Workers Federation, as well as with Miguel Garcia for the CNT prisoners. Though Marxist (but not a Leninist – his distinction) he consistently supported the Flag even through the difficult Angry Brigade days when Marxists and pseudo-anarchists had gone with the wind up. (The support was often financial and we are told is reflected in his will).

Originally with the Young Communists, and a committed trade unionist well known among Fleet Street printworkers, he later went over to council communism. While his main interest politically was workers councils, and at the same time forming and re-forming small groups of those who were disillusioned with State Communism, or seeking an alternative to the liberalism masquerading as 'airy-fairy anarchism' (as he put it), he was (to the surprise of his many friends in the trade union movement) a good friend to revolutionary anarchism and to the practicalities of anarcho-syndicalism (to the dismay of his Marxist friends).

Once when he told a surprised trot he was coming

with me and Miguel Garcia to speak at our meetings in Wales, he was asked in surprise, 'Why should anarchists be interested in miners?' and he melodramatically whispered 'Dynamite!' To a 'Christian Anarchist' who doubted the existence of 'violent' anarchists and suspected police agents, he told him, 'They're among my dearest friends'.

A memorial meeting (paid for by Sogat, in appreciation of his work) was held in March. There was no funeral as such – as a strict atheist (with Britain's leading evangelist as a brother-in-law) he was taking no chances on an occasion where for once he couldn't answer back.

AM [Albert Meltzer]

Black Flag 198 (May 1990)

[See also: *Life and Times of Joe Thomas :The road to libertarian socialism* by Alan Woodward

http://www.thesparrowsnest.org.uk/collections/public_archive/13380.pdf] ■

Audrey Beecham [1915-89]

Audrey Beecham was a subscriber to *Black Flag* from 'Bulletin No, 1' to the last. The renewed issue came back with a notification that she had died in Oxford, where she had retired. She was in her seventies.

In the 'thirties Audrey went to the Spanish War as a driver in the Friends Ambulance Unit. The Quakers did not approve of her carrying a rifle, and she joined the Anarchist militia. In the 'sixties she was principal of a Nottingham women's college and the Black Cross could always rely on her to get residence and work permits for those of the Iberian Resistance wanted by the fascist police who came, at a minute's notice, to England.

She worked for many defence campaigns including the Angry Brigade and 'Persons Unknown'. Though an Anarchist she also supported some active Marxist-Leninist feminist separatist groups and was involved with Amnesty and other civil liberties organisations as well, explaining once she 'could not escape from her middle class liberal academic background'.

I was told by her shocked colleagues that when the 'Yorkshire Ripper' was loose, some male students holding a 'rag' twice invaded the women's dormitories at night pretending to be the rapist-murderer. On the second occasion they were confronted by the formidable principal in her dressing gown, firing a pistol in the air, and shouting "Next time I'm shooting straight", which discouraged a third replay.

She was a good friend to Miguel Garcia and myself. I took back from Barcelona this October many messages of greetings from Spanish friends both of the 'thirties and 'sixties, which will never now be delivered.

AM [Albert Meltzer]

Black Flag 204 (Spring 1994)

<https://files.libcom.org/files/black-flag-issue-204-spring-1994.pdf>

Further fragments on Audrey Beecham

'She was inevitably a rebellious and adventurous undergraduate, taking off in the long vacation of 1936 to run guns for the anarchists in the Spanish Civil War.' (Rachel Trickett, entry on Beecham in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/60731>) 'Audrey Beecham, who was also in Barcelona for her summer holidays, participated in the street fighting' *Somerville for Women: An Oxford College, 1879-1993* by Pauline Adams.

There's also a much later mention in *Freedom*: 'Audrey Beecham gave a splendid impromptu exposition of the practical demands being made by libertarians in the Women's Liberation Movement to get MORE PIE NOW for working-class women.' 'Anarchist Conference Reaches Decisions' (Report on 3rd Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance Conference, Sheffield, July 29-30 [1972])

<https://freedomnews.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Freedom-1972-08-19.pdf>

Her papers are in the University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections, 'restricted pending full cataloguing'. Might they throw more light on her time in Spain, and her connections to the anarchist movement? ■

Anarchist history roundup

Aug. 2022

The Sparrow's Nest Another set of scans now available from the busy Nottingham comrades:

<https://thesparrowsnest.org.uk/index.php/14-news-and-events/248-new-additions-to-the-digital-library-jul-aug-2022>

The Spirit of Revolt interview 'The Archive collects, manages and preserves multi-media records from Glasgow's and Clydeside's anarchist and libertarian-socialist past and present.' J and S from the Spirit of Revolt are interviewed by our Tyneside comrades:

<https://tynesideanarchistarchive.wordpress.com/2022/04/23/spirit-of-revolt-interview/>

Venice 1984 remembered The International Anarchist Conference in Venice in 1984 brought together anarchists from all over the world (including lots of well known names!) The Libertarian Studies Centre-Guiseppe Pinelli archive have put on line this wonderful resource featuring papers, interviews and recollections from the conference:

<https://centrostudilibertari.it/en/node/825>

Anarchist and Syndicalist Periodicals from Latin America A collection of anarchist, syndicalist, and labor periodicals from Latin American countries

(1873-1957). <https://archive.org/details/anarquismolantino>

What is History from Below? Kathy Ferguson's article looks at some classics of 'history from below' to see what tricks we can borrow and talks about 'scale' in writing history (from individual lives to historical forces). Nice quote from Marcus Rediker: 'we must learn to listen, to cultivate curiosity, to read with the gift of wonder.'

'Writing Anarchism with History from Below', *Anarchist Studies*, 30(1), 7-29. Currently free at: <https://journals.lwbooks.co.uk/anarchiststudies/vol-30-issue-1/abstract-9522/>

On the KSL site:

Imanol: two new pieces on anarchists in the

French Resistance In the Footsteps of the Libertarian 'del Rio' Battalion and Its Fight Against the Nazis [Ariege; Haute Garonne]

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/z614pg>

How Libertarian Memory in France Was Usurped and Manipulated: a Story of a Theft

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/z08nq1>

Liverpool: two pieces from *Liverpool Anarchist*

The Liverpool Anarchist Group

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/np5kjin>

Rudolf Rocker in Liverpool

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/5mkndv>

Art: Cienfuegos Press price list of Flavio Costantini prints (1975)

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/kwh8wh>

Two letters by Anna Shimaite

<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/x0k8f1> ■

Advice to My Anarchist Comrades (1901)

[Élisée Reclus (1830–1905): anarchist, geographer, teacher, banished-for-life Communard, prolific writer (including his 19-volume 'Universal Geography' — *La Nouvelle Géographie universelle, la terre et les hommes*)

Reclus wrote the following letter on the occasion of the opening of an anarchist congress. It was subsequently published in *Il Pensiero* (June 16, 1907), in *Réveil de Genève* (January 7, 1911), and in volume 3 of *Correspondance*, 238-40.]

To the Editors of *La Huelga General* in Barcelona
Brussels, December 4, 1901

Dear Comrades,

It is our usual habit to exaggerate both our strengths and our weaknesses. During revolutionary periods, it seems that the least of our actions has incalculably great consequences. On the other hand, during times of stagnation, even though we have dedicated ourselves completely to the cause, our lives seem barren and useless. We may even feel swept away by the winds of reaction.

What then should we do to maintain our intellectual vigor, our moral energy, and our faith in the good fight?

You come to me hoping to draw on my long experience of people and things. So as an old man I give you the following advice.

Do not quarrel or deal in personalities. Listen to opposing arguments after you have presented your own. Learn how to remain silent and reflect. Do not try to get the better in an argument at the expense of your own sincerity.

Study with discretion and perseverance. Great enthusiasm and dedication to the point of risking one's life are not the only ways of serving a cause. It is easier to sacrifice one's life than to make one's whole life an education for others. The conscious revolutionary is not only a person of feeling, but also one of reason, for whom every effort to promote justice and solidarity rests on precise knowledge and on a comprehensive understanding of history, sociology, and biology. Such a person can incorporate his personal ideas into the larger context of the human sciences, and can brave the struggle, sustained by the immense power he gains through his broad knowledge.

Avoid specialization. Side neither with nations nor with parties. Be neither Russians, Poles nor Slavs. Rather, be men who hunger for truth, free from any thoughts of particular interests, and from speculative ideas concerning the Chinese, Africans, or Europeans. The patriot always ends up hating the foreigner, and loses the sense of justice that once kindled his enthusiasm.

Away with all bosses, leaders, and those apostles of language who turn words into Sacred Scripture. Avoid idolatry and value the words even of your closest friend or the wisest professor only for the truth that you find in them. If, having listened, you have some doubts, turn inward toward your own mind and reexamine the matter before making a final judgment.

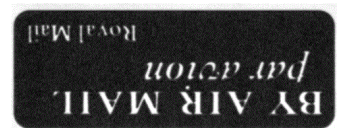
So you should reject every authority, but also commit yourself to a deep respect for all sincere convictions. Live your own life, but also allow others the complete freedom to live theirs.

If you throw yourself into the fray to sacrifice yourself defending the humiliated and downtrodden, that is a very good thing, my companions. Face death nobly. If you prefer to take on slow and patient work on behalf of a better future, that is an even better thing. Make it the goal of every instant of a generous life. But if you choose to remain poor among the poor, in complete solidarity with those who suffer, may your life shine forth as a beneficent light, a perfect example, a fruitful lesson for all!

Greetings, comrades.

Élisée Reclus

Reposted by Stuart Christie and quoted in our 'Remembering Stuart Christie, one year on'



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