



**Edgar Rodrigues (1921-2009)**

With the death of historian and researcher Edgar Rodrigues on 14 May 2009, the Portuguese-language and worldwide anarchist movement has been robbed of a prolific author whose life was devoted to commemorating, recording and promoting anarchism and freedom, especially in Portugal and Brazil.

Edgar was born 1921 in Lavra, outside Oporto, in northern Portugal. His father, Manuel Correia, an anarcho-syndicalist, worked for the Port and Docks agency and was one of the many who defied the fascistisation of the labour unions after the establishment of the fascist *Estado Novo* (New State) in 1926. Edgar was raised in a home where the table-talk was of opposition and anti-Salazarist propaganda. As a boy he learned to copy anti-fascist pamphlets, messages etc., by hand.

He saw his own father arrested by the PVDE (later renamed the PIDE, the Portuguese secret police) and jailed in Oporto and he helped smuggle stuff to him in the jail in the Rua do Heroismo in Oporto. Edgar spent that period gathering the information that would be the basis for *Na Inquisição do Salazar (In Salazar's Inquisition)* published in Brazil in 1957. Some of that book consisted of the prison letters of Luis Portela, another anarcho-syndicalist opponent of Salazarism. Edgar's father was later freed "on licence" and sacked from his job. Edgar joined a Political Prisoners' Aid Committee and helped distribute antifascist newspapers. During the Second World War he had to do his military service. Within months he and other antifascist soldiers ("above suspicion") were handing out anti-dictatorship pamphlets, with help from Casimiro Ferreira from Braga (a veteran of the Spanish Revolution). But for the transfer abroad of many of the troops from No 1 Sappers' Barracks in Oporto it would have become a hotbed of the antifascist resistance. During his time in the service Edgar often had to accompany the local military defence counsel, Major Valdes, to trials of antifascists and saw and heard for himself the travesty of justice and the trumped-up charges and accounts of torture employed against the defendants. He left the army at the end of the war, joining amateur drama groups as cover for his oppositionist activities, as well as setting up a library and learning Esperanto. He bombarded foreign publications with letters protesting the terror in Portugal. He was one of those who harboured the fugitive oppositionist Luis Portela after Portela escaped from jail in

Peniche. In this Edgar had help from Antonio Cruz, Joaquim de Freitas and Rossadas (a republican) in procuring false ID for Portela. When Portela was eventually run to ground Edgar then fled to Brazil, arriving there in August 1951. One of the people he met there was the Spanish anarchist Manuel Perez Fernández (1887-1964) in Rio de Janeiro, sometimes referred to as "the anarchist consul" (who had been sentenced to death by Franco but saved by pressure from the Brazilian government) and through him Edgar gained an entrée to the Brazilian anarchist community. He met Professor José Oiticica (1882-1957), director of *Acção Directa* newspaper which Edgar then used as a platform for denouncing the Salazar regime, serialising "Salazar's Paradise" there over 5 years. He also wrote for other papers, conventional and anarchist, in Brazil and around the world. *Na Inquisição do Salazar* helped revive and inform vocal opposition to the Salazar regime. In 1957 PIDE agents sent to Brazil ahead of a planned visit by the Portuguese president Craveiro Lopes came looking for Edgar, determined to "neutralise" opponents ahead of the visit. In 1959 he published *A Fome en Portugal (Hunger in Portugal)*. In *El Sol* (Costa Rica) – run by a Cuban libertarian in exile, Nelson Mourelo – he denounced Salazar's torturers and the doctors abetting them. In 1957, following the death of José Oiticica, Edgar helped set up the Professor José Oiticica Study Centre (CEPJO) and was a director of it until 1969 when it was shut down by the Brazilian dictatorship. Up until the 1950s, the focus of Edgar's activities was internal opposition in Portugal, in the 1950s, 60s and 70s he divided his attention between Portugal and his adopted homeland of Brazil and after the 1974 revolution concentrated more on Brazil (before him a largely unknown movement), visiting his native land but integrating himself more and more into the Brazilian movement as researcher, activist, publisher and lecturer. He criss-crossed Brazil in search of primary sources (living and printed) on the movement there, anticipating by some 30-40 years a revival in academic interest in its history. Edgar's books were for many students and activists their first glimpse of a world excluded from the official record by authoritarian governments, authoritarian parties and a largely blinkered academia. On foot of the resources he was able to track down and sift through (93 year old, bare-footed Manuel Francisco [pto]

**Double Issue; Inside: more biographies!**

**Edgar Rodrigues obituary continued**

dos Passos was tracked down to a dirt-floored hut in Bangu and was able to hand Edgar a number of elderly, yellowing anarchist papers) and memoir material entrusted to him by former activists as he proved himself worthy of that trust, he did not hesitate to challenge the errors and deliberate misrepresentations of the academic historians and was particularly resentful of plagiarism of the books and articles he had himself so painstakingly researched. He never lost sight of the fact that “all history is biography” and so many of the people he wrote about were acquaintances and friends, so when, in the 1990s he published his 5-volume biographical dictionary of the Brazilian movement, *Os Companheiros (The Comrades)*, those listed are listed by forename, not family name. Immigrant and native-born sit side by side, the academic, author and physician alongside the docker and construction worker. Another bug-bear of his was the intrusion of the universities and their bank-rolls into an area of research that he had pioneered. From the owner’s family, the State University of Campinas was able to buy up the library and archives of Edgard Leuenroth who had refused Edgar access to those resources, Leuenroth having intended to exploit these resources in books of his own. (In 1921 Leuenroth the anarchist was approached by a delegate of the Comintern who invited him to launch a Communist Party of Brazil but Leuenroth declined).

Edgar Rodrigues’s scores of books and thousands of articles have been praised by historians of the stature of Renée Lamberet, Paul Avrich and John Foster Dulles.

Rodrigues characterised the changes within the Brazilian movement between 1900 and 2000 like this: [In 1900] “the anarchists were immigrants, some of them even having been expelled from their countries of origin and labelled ‘outside agitators’ and many of them were jailed and deported. The libertarian movement started from SCRATCH!” By the 1980s, “virtually all of the anarchists are Brazilians, none of them is illiterate, many are intellectuals and academics but at no risk of being deported. [...] It is up to them now – where possible – to capitalise upon the experiences of the past and plot fresh courses for the 21st century.”

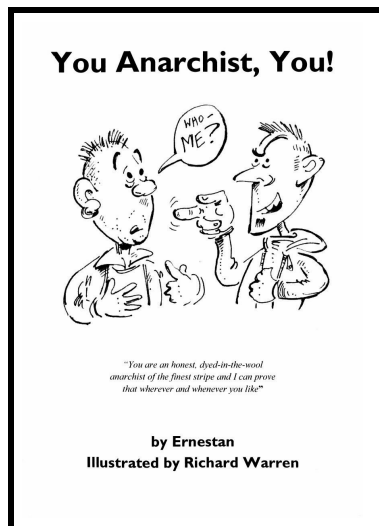
Without the life’s work of Edgar Rodrigues, they would be singularly ill-equipped to tackle that mission.

His books, too numerous to list, cover a range of topics: Portuguese social history, Brazilian social history, globalisation, hunger, violence and authority, women and anarchism and anarchism around the world.

Paul Sharkey

**New pamphlet “You Anarchist, You!” by Ernestan**

A Malatesta-style talk about anarchism and the state of the world between two workers, with satirical illustrations by Richard Warren. Translated by Paul Sharkey, illustrated by Richard Warren, introduction by Nick Heath



Frank the anarchist meets his friend Pete; they chat about the state of the world and how to change it. They also cover what anarchism is (as opposed to what people say it is). Frank tells Pete “You are an honest, dyed-in-the-wool anarchist of the finest stripe and I can prove that wherever and whenever you like.” Pete ends up not just feeling “a bit of an anarchist”, but knowing that he is one. Richard Warren’s satirical illustrations have a go at useless politicians on the take, employers who know nothing and control everything, bankers whose mistakes we have to pay for, and the “crazy anarchist” stereotype.

Ernestan (Ernest Tanrez, 1898-1954) was a Belgian anarchist, and began writing for the anarchist press in 1921. “You Anarchist, You!” is one of his post-war agitational works, written in a conversational style and aimed at convincing his readers that anarchism, far from being strange or frightening, actually matches what they already see and think about the world.

Translated by Paul Sharkey from “Tu es anarchiste” (Editions du ‘Libertaire’, Paris, no date [circa 1948]. The title literally reads “You are an Anarchist”, but we think “You Anarchist, You!” captures the mood better.)

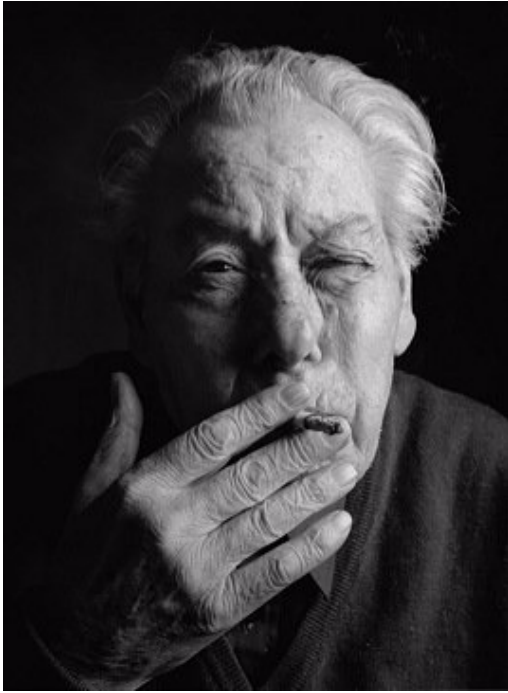
Richard Warren is an occasional anarchist illustrator best known and loved for his “Ann & Archie” series in the “Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review”. See some of the illustrations at [www.katesharpleylibrary.net](http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net)

Nick Heath is a member of the Anarchist Federation, and regularly produces biographies of anarchist militants for their magazine, “Organise”.

“You Anarchist, You!” by Ernestan, illustrated by Richard Warren.

ISBN: 9781873605790 Anarchist Library series 21 £3 (£2 to KSL subscribers and direct orders) / \$3 Review copies are available.

## Abel Paz



### Remembering Diego Camacho AKA Abel Paz

*Listen, listen – he said to me – We might tear down churches and aim to banish the Catholic church from people’s minds, but we don’t intend to turn the ateneos into replacement churches or anarchy into a religion (From Abel Paz, Viaje al pasado)*

Diego Camacho Escámez (aka Abel Paz) was born in Almería (Andalusia) in 1921 before moving at the age of six to Barcelona to live with an uncle of his who was active in the CNT.

In 1932 Diego joined the Escuela Natura (a libertarian educational establishment that followed Francisco Ferrer) in El Clot, a working class quarter in the Catalan capital. He joined the Libertarian Youth in 1935 in Almería where he stayed with his mother (a CNT member) up until February 1936 when he returned to Barcelona.

There he joined the FAI and the CNT and was active in the El Clot defence group and helped launch the ‘Quijotes de la Ideal’ group which opposed the CNT-FAI leadership’s moderate policies. After he was arrested in May 1937 (during the confrontation between the anarchists and the Stalinists) he tasted life in the farm collectives, wrote for *Tierra y Libertad* (the FAI mouthpiece) and took part in the armed struggle on the Catalonia front. In January 1939 he was one of the hundreds of thousands of Catalans and Spaniards who fled Barcelona and sought asylum in France. He found work there for a time and in 1942 embarked upon the underground struggle, crossing the Pyrenees. He was jailed by the Francoist police and spent five years shuttling from prison to prison, just for having tried to refloat the CNT. After a few

months at large he was arrested again, for having taken part in a Libertarian Youth meeting and spent five more years in Franco’s harsh prisons. On his release in 1952 he, like many another anarchist, resumed his underground activity and in 1953 was appointed by the underground organisation as its delegate to the IWA congress. He then stayed in France and carried out a short, unfortunate mission inside Spain on behalf of the Defence Commission.

With his partner Antonia Fontanillas (from a historic anarchist family; they lived together until 1958) he moved around a number of French cities and took part in numerous meetings and activities in several libertarian quarters ranging from the Libertarian Youth and CNT through to anti-Francoist youth groups. In the 1960s he embarked on the writing of his long (and thus far the most comprehensive) biography of Durruti and a series of historical books. He returned to Spain in 1979 on the back of the resurgence of the movement and threw himself into efforts to boost its quality as well as its numbers. Despite some disappointment, he stayed south of the Pyrenees and carried on with working on his own lengthy personal memoirs covering 4 volumes.

He was one of the few elderly militants to constantly engage and communicate with upcoming generations of libertarians to whom he passed on his bitter reflections on the past sweetened with an incorrigibly critical but also purposeful mind.

In 1995-1996 he took off on a lengthy tour of Italy, addressed around forty public meetings in response to the interest generated by Ken Loach’s *Land and Liberty* which he regarded as very sound and stimulating.

In his tiny apartment in the working class Gracia quarter of Barcelona, throughout the 1980s and 1990s he welcomed the hundreds of comrades dropping by just to meet and converse with him. Despite his recent physical decline he continued to follow developments in the movement and to supply facts and observations for use in a number of videos and books. In short, death overtook him while he was in the full flush of activity.

Claudio Venza  
*Umanità Nova*, 16 April 2009

Photograph of Abel Paz by Sofia Moro, taken from <http://estelnegre.baleareweb.net/>

## Kotoku on money

### Abolish Money!

When bacteria enter a person's bloodstream, so that person's health is gradually undermined.

It is the same with money as with bacteria. Since money has unlimited power in the world, the ways of the world are bound to be increasingly debased. Step by step, morality is bound to be ruined and human nature faced with corruption. In the end, society is driven to destruction.

There are people calling for the abolition of prostitution, waxing indignant over the depravity of the gentry, advocating the reform of popular customs urging that morality be improved ... and so on. Yet, it seems to me that at times like these, when money is needed even to get hold of a volume dealing with the subject of morality or to gain admission to a half-day course of lectures, all the endless chatter of their sermonising is utterly futile.

Nobody willingly becomes a prostitute. Nobody willingly sells their honour. There is nobody who does not want popular customs to be reformed or who does not want morality to be improved. Yet the reason why things work out differently is simply because of money.

Instead of people putting so much effort into overworking their tongues and wearing out their pens it would be better for them to give priority to demonstrating the omnipotent power of money. If one does not get rid of money, then one cannot destroy the omnipotent power which money exercises in other spheres. To put it another way, unless one abolishes the necessity for money in this world, it is quite impossible to improve the ways of the world or human nature.

Someone who has no money cannot live. This is the way the world is at present. Yet even in today's corrupt society, no-one could say that this is right and proper. Truly, a person lives by other things than money. Over and above money, there is strength and there is honour. There is right and there is duty. There is bread and there are clothes. Yet nowadays, when money has unlimited power, is there any room for truth in the world? Can what is right be done?

If one fine morning it were put to the test, if money were abolished and the need for it completely eradicated, what a noble place the world would be! How peaceful! How happy!

Bribery, corruption, people selling their principles – all these would completely disappear. Murder, robbery and adultery would be greatly reduced too. There would be no need to call for the abolition of prostitution, nor to advocate the reform of popular customs. All at once it would be just like the Buddhists' pure land and the Christians' heaven.

It is natural that there should be any number of rises and falls in history but, if money had not existed in the civilisations of ancient India, Egypt, Greece and Rome, I believe that it would have been possible for them to have lasted several thousand years more.

But in days like these when money has such power, if we utter the words 'Abolition of Money', people look at us as though we are mad. Is it madness, though? Are you prepared to say that the modern European socialists who are spreading everywhere throughout the world (sic) are all mad, then? – because the socialists have the abolition of money and the suppression of the private ownership of capital as their ideals.

They take this position because they want to see the individual – and society as a whole – live by other things than money. In other words, they want to replace money by strength and honour, by right and duty. Indeed, truth and righteousness lie in doing just this. So if you agree that truth and righteousness really should be put into practice, then why should you think of socialism as being difficult to realise in actual life? Socialism is far from being an impossibility. Rather it is just that it has not been put into effect up till now.

Why don't people who want to improve human nature and the ways of the world stop their petty squabbles and put their efforts into achieving socialism? If they did this, it would be the quickest way for them to achieve their objectives.

The nineteenth century was the age of liberalism but the twentieth century is about to become the age of socialism. All capable people need to wake up to this new trend in the world – and to this alone. (Article in the *Yorozu Choho* (*Morning News*), 9 February 1900.)

Kotoku Shusui

### New Kate Sharpley Library website.

The Kate Sharpley Library website – [www.katesharpleylibrary.net](http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net) – is now bigger and better.

The new design means you can now explore the website by author, translator or subject. Subjects include Anarchism, Lives (for biographies, autobiographies and obituaries), Reviews as well as events like the Paris Commune or Spanish Revolution and Civil War.

All back issues of the KSL bulletin are available in HTML and PDF format.

We are now able to take paypal payments for orders or donations.

We also have set up feeds, one for news items from the Kate Sharpley Library and another for the newest documents added to the website.



## Pouget and Malatesta

### Emile Pouget : a biography

Emile Pouget was one of the most outstanding militants of the French labour movement. Together with that of Pelloutier, his was a crucial influence at the end of the 19th and start of the 20th centuries.

Born in Salles-de-Source in the Aveyron department in 1860, he was raised in a progressively-minded family setting where phalanstery-style socialism was the keynote. In 1871, the trial mounted against the communards in Narbonne sent ripples through the region's villages. After starting his education at high school in Rodez, Emile was obliged to earn his living in 1875 and went to Paris, where he found work in a large store: he used to attend public meetings, the circle of Bakunin's disciples known as the "demi-quarteron" that used to meet in the Rue Saint-Martin, in the hope of the elder Rousseau, helped re-launch the first workers' associations and to set up a shop employees' union, his own. He was at all the demonstrations and in 1883, at a rally of the unemployed in the Esplanade des Invalides, some bakeries en route were looted and he was arrested in the Place Maubert, while trying to rescue Louise Michel. Sentenced in the assize court to eight years' imprisonment (he was freed under an amnesty after three months) he returned to active life as a bookseller's agent and resumed his revolutionary propaganda. In this regard, he engaged primarily in journalism for the first part of his life as an activist.

His journalistic talents had surfaced back in his high school days when he put together a news-sheet, *Le Lycéen républicain*, which earned him detentions and impositions. By 1889 he was joining Constant Martin in the publication of *Ca ira*, where he started to write in the vulgar tongue understood right across France and of which the workers were fond: he continued by writing a number of posters and then launched *Le Pere Peinard, réflexes d'un gniaff*. When Boulanger was elected, *Le Pere Peinard* appeared, written in the timeless style of popular language and illustrated by great artists, first of all in the format of little octavo booklets, and then as an eight page review and finally as a newspaper. Continually harassed, it altered its format in order to escape the police.

In 1894, Pouget was implicated in the Trial of the Thirty: he fled to London from where he dispatched copies of *Le Pere Peinard*, by then a tiny review printed in letter format, back to France. He did this up until 1895 for, following the election of Félix Faure to the presidency of the Republic in France, Pouget returned to the country, stood trial and was acquitted.

Right after he was acquitted, *Le Pere Peinard* turned into *La Sociale* before reverting to *Le Pere Peinard* from October 1896 to 1900. As much harassed as loved, *Le Pere Peinard* reached out even

into the remotest villages to inspire social activism. Anti-parliamentary, anti-militarist and anti-clerical, the paper attacked not individuals but institutions and injustices and above all, capitalism, as well as all flim-flam, including that practised upon the people by the workers' parties, particularly the Guesdists at that time: its verve and audacity take one's breath away today. Its propaganda was very widespread: Pouget sought to arouse the people for the purposes of revolutionary social action and in this regard supported all forms of social activism – individual, collective, conscious or otherwise: by his reckoning, powerful concerted forces might emerge from the diversity of the populace, rather than their being corralled within boundaries.

An anarchist by temperament, he had also seen in trade union activity a means of inciting the populace to revolution and he made this his chief preoccupation from 1894 onwards, doubtless following his many exchanges with Pelloutier.

The last years of the 19th century saw syndicalism on the rise: Pouget and Pelloutier thereafter dedicated their lives to marshalling the workers for the prospect of action. From as early as 1889, *Le Pere Peinard* was pushing the general strike and direct action: in 1894 it was calling upon anarchists to enter the trade unions: "If there is one group the anarchists should be delving into, it just has to be the trades council." And again: "The union's object is to wage war on the bosses and not concern itself with politics." In 1895, Pouget had used the term sabotage in *Le Pere Peinard* and he offered an explanation of its meaning in a report submitted to the Toulouse congress in 1897 'Boycott and Sabotage, a New Form of Struggle'. The report was adopted: he fleshed out his ideas in *La Sociale* and in *Le Journal du peuple*.

His dearest hope was for a daily newspaper for all revolutionary tendencies: he wrote for Sébastien Faure's *Journal du peuple* when the Dreyfus Affair was at its height; and the foundering of that paper as a daily impelled him launch a weekly. The trade union congress in Toulouse in 1900 determined that a syndicalist paper, *La Voix du peuple*, should be launched; Pouget was secretary of its editorial staff after 1 December 1900 in his capacity as joint secretary of the CGT. Its main campaigns were against the placement bureaux, for the eight hour day, for the May Day commemoration and anti-militarist propaganda.

During this age of revolutionary syndicalism in opposition to reformism, Pouget shouldered most of the actual work inside the CGT up until 1908, especially following Pelloutier's death and alongside Griffuelhes, in terms of his contributions, reports, countless articles, pamphlets and silent presence (he was no public speaker): he stood out on account of the

## Pouget and Malatesta

clarity and breadth of his vision: he was unrelenting in his insistence upon the character of trade union action and organisation and in *La Voix du peuple*, he wrote: "Improvement wrested from the privileged is in proportion to the workers' level of consciousness, the degree of their cohesion and their vigour." "Let's not delude ourselves. The social revolution is not going to be made without a formidable effort's being required." As he saw it, revolutionary syndicalism had to build upon the work of the First International "by striving for an ever more conscious determination". Its task was to bring popular forces together on the battlefield, to arouse their will and their consciousness, to remind them of the essential, far-off objective, without letting itself be taken over by short-term concerns. In his view the outcome of syndicalism and social emancipation had to be to set the individual free.

After contributing to numerous papers, he tried again to launch a daily newspaper, *La Révolution*, in partnership with Griffuelhes and Monatte but it was forced to cease publication after two months (in March 1909). That came in the wake of the Draveil-Villeneuve-Saint Georges incidents in 1908, followed by the Marseilles congress and then, on 2 February 1909, Griffuelhes resigned from the secretaryship of the CGT. Pouget, weary but doubtless also because of the reformist turn taken by the CGT, withdrew from activity and returned to earning his livelihood, until he died at the age of 71 in 1931.

Renee Lamberet

### Death of Malatesta

The Anarchist movement has united in mourning the death of one of its outstanding fighters and thinkers. For fifty years he was an active propagandist, and though he produced no great works on Anarchism his articles and pamphlets have been printed in almost every modern language. He combined action with theory and his years of imprisonment proved how much his influence was feared by all upholders of privilege and power.

Malatesta lived for a number of years in London and we met on many occasions at meetings, at Freedom office, or at his home. He impressed me as a frank and loveable man, always willing to help us. On one occasion he spent an entire day overhauling our printing machine. If he were asked to write an article he would at first refuse, saying we should get English comrades to write for an English paper; but in the end he usually agreed. He wrote in very good French and complained that translators sometimes distorted his meaning. At last we found a really good translator for one of his articles, and when we took the translation to him and read it, his eyes twinkled as he said it really was his article, not the translator's.

Malatesta had a keen, logical mind and went straight to the heart of a problem. He was never moved by loose thinking, and had no illusions as to the strength of the forces opposed to us. When the war came it was a great comfort to me to have his active support when others had stepped aside from the Anarchist movement.

Some Anarchists in France and Belgium who were supporting the war thought it could be turned to the advantage of the workers when peace was made. They cherished the illusion that a drastic form of disarmament could be forced on all the Powers, whose armed forces were to be strictly limited in accordance with the size of their populations. A comrade came to London to get Malatesta's support. He listened quietly while the scheme was explained. Then he asked how many soldiers would Italy be allowed. The figure was given. "Ah," said Malatesta, "just enough to keep the Anarchists in order."

Whenever Malatesta was announced as a speaker, the hall was crowded. He usually spoke in French. I remember one meeting at the old Athenaeum Hall in Tottenham Court Road. Sitting on the corner of a table he began in a quiet conversational tone, and in short, pithy sentences. As he proceeded with his speech he left the table and went to the front of the platform. Not a sound was heard at first as all listened eagerly to his words, but when he began to warm up to his subject and drove his points home with strong eloquent phrases, applause came quickly, and as he left the platform everyone cheered.

It was a sore trial to Malatesta to have to remain inactive in England after the war, whilst events in Italy were moving to an upheaval. He could not get a passport, but his Italian comrades at home finally smuggled him away. Whatever may have been the cause of the failure of the revolutionary movement in Italy, we may be sure it was not due to the lack of energy on the part of Malatesta, who never spared himself. But fail it did completely, and instead of the social revolution he hoped for he was fated to see the Fascist Dictatorship put its heel on the necks of the Italian people. Mussolini persecuted Malatesta, but he dared not kill our comrade, who was loved and honoured by the Italian workers.

T.H.K. [Thomas Henry Keell, 1866-1938]  
Freedom Bulletin No. 15, December 1932

## Anti-Fascism in Liverpool

### Action! Race War to Door Wars [Review]

I had thought that anyone with any sense would take Joey Owens' so-called autobiography ('Action! Race War to Door Wars') with a very large pinch of salt. However, some people who should know better have proved that this is not always the case. So, here's a review of sorts.

First, I will admit that I haven't a clue about Owens' early life. I also don't know a huge amount about his life as a bouncer (which is half the book). I'm not his mum, so that isn't surprising. I do however, know a fair amount about the mid-1980s in Liverpool, so this is the bit I'll concentrate on. I think it's fair enough to judge Owens' book on this period for two reasons: First, for any book, if one part is rubbish (or just plain dishonest), it doesn't say much for the rest of the book. Second, the mid-1980s – the confrontations between the BNP and anti-fascists – is why Owens says he is writing the book (apparently in response to the book 'No Retreat' by two Manchester anti-fascists). So, here's why I wouldn't spend any money on this (I've looked at the free download version).

Early on in the book Owens states that the situation in Liverpool "was a battle for dominance between two opposing ideologies each determined not to retreat. This decade-long war saw people arrested, hospitalised and imprisoned. It was ten years of conflict which saw the eventual triumph of the nationalist will..." After reading this, you would expect that, at the end of the ten years, Liverpool BNP would have smashed all its opponents into the ground. The "nationalist will" would have triumphed. So it may come as some surprise to find that Owens describes the exact opposite. An increasingly violent and arrogant BNP is met head-on in the mid-1980s, and collapses. Owens suddenly finds he has better things to do.

Most of this information is found in the chapter "The End of Politics". This is the period from early 1986 to 1988. At the beginning the BNP is apparently growing. At the end all the main BNP members left – and Owens also left, to begin life as a bouncer. What caused this collapse? Owens sort-of hints at what happened. Owens admits to a "war" with the anarchists. However, according to Owens, these anarchists are all a bunch of smellies, who run away "screaming" while forever being hit over the head with iron bars by victorious fascists. These anarchists are "concerned" every time they visit their centre. Yet they force all the BNP to resign. Funny that. Something doesn't quite add up.... About the only time Owens comes close to how it really was – back in the mid-1980s – is when he describes a fight outside the left wing bookshop News From Nowhere. As

Owens admits (seeing as he lost a tooth) it wasn't a walk over. What Owens doesn't explain is why the BNP (including Owens) stopped harassing or visiting News From Nowhere around this time, and why they stopped selling papers in Church Street (their 'spec' in Liverpool city centre).

According to Owens: "Never did reds drive us from our pitch on Church Street even when they had double our numbers. It was only when they outnumbered us five to one or more" .Sounds good – but Liverpool BNP wrote something very similar in the 'British Nationalist' magazine back in 1987. I know this because, in 1987, four BNP paper sellers in Church St, including the local organiser, were confronted by four anti-fascists – mostly anarchists. All the BNP papers and magazines were ripped up or confiscated. The article was in the free magazines. The BNP said they'd be back next week in force – but didn't turn up then, or in the long weeks and months that followed.

The BNP lost it in the streets – and not to vast mobs of 'reds', though you'd never guess this from Owens' account. The BNP could have tried to even the score by paying a visit, at any time, to the anarchist centre in town. Instead, rather than risk a head to head, they chose to repeatedly attack the home of someone Owens calls a "witch". Owens obviously knows a lot about these attacks, and says the "witch" should have been slashed "across the face". Yet nowhere does Owens admit he's talking about a teenage schoolgirl. I never knew her personally, but I do know she was young (15 or so, maybe less) living at home with much younger brothers. No-one should be surprised at this. The BNP were just acting like usual fascist scum – not the heroes Owens would like the reader to believe.

Owens ends this period with a claim that, after the BNP collapsed, "the owners" of News From Nowhere (ie 4 women) were beaten up in their shop, at night, by friends of his. "The owners" had apparently taken to sleeping there to stop fascist attacks. Owens writes how everyone was arrested, red-handed, but mysteriously no-one was charged. There are a few things that can be said about this – like how come no-one heard about this attack at the time? And how come no-one from News From Nowhere had any actual injuries? Fascist attacks on the bookshop – including arson – ended long before the BNP collapsed, as the BNP were forced onto the back foot. Shortly after the BNP collapse News From Nowhere moved from White-chapel (near Victoria St) to Bold St. What Owens is actually describing is anyone's guess. Fascist victory against "the reds", at this time, I don't think so.

I'll end with one final point. Owens says he wrote this book as a response to the book [pto]

## German, Austrian and Swiss Anarchism

### Anarchism in the German-speaking Countries

It has been said, and not unjustly, that before the proletariat will be able to triumph over the scourges of authority and exploitation, it will have first to overcome the ban of discipline and cast-iron centralism that is dominating the German working class under the form of "Socialism," viz., Social Democracy. Verily, this may not be far from the truth, because it is this more than anything else that is keeping the working people of the German-speaking countries back from rational and revolutionary activity upon the path of social reconstruction. Germany is at the helm of this reaction against the "real thing," a rigorous labor movement, wielding its economic power in the General Strike, Direct Action, Sabotage, and Anti-militarism, and thereby pushing ahead to the final goal of the modern emancipating movement, Communism – Anarchy.

In virtue of these facts the labor movement of Austria and Switzerland is hardly more than a tail of the Social Democracy of Germany, even more submissive, more bereft of all really Socialist activity and still more permeated by opportunism than the latter. And it stands to reason that a principle like Anarchism, with its entire negation of all rule and government of men by is hated most bitterly not only by the governments but also by the political exploiters of the labor movement in the mentioned countries. They combine with their respective governments when it is a problem of downing the revolutionary principles of Anarchism. Thus we find them rejecting every principle of free speech when they direct their venomous efforts against our cause. The history of the labor movement in Germany and Austria – to a lesser extent in Switzerland – is a combined onslaught of government and politician against real revolutionary Socialism, as it is only embodied in Anarchism. In this strife, aided by the dense ignorance and

#### **Action! Race War to Door Wars [Review cont.]**

'No Retreat' – which deals with the many physical force defeats inflicted on violent fascists by Anti-Fascist Action and its predecessors. Owens, in the introduction, says he can't believe the authors of 'No Retreat' hadn't heard of him or the trouble he gave the left in the 1980s. So, you would expect Owens' book to give an account of how Liverpool BNP whupped the collective ass of Liverpool AFA. Except he can't say this as the total opposite occurred. In fact, the words "Anti-Fascist Action" never appear in Owens' autobiography with regard to Liverpool. This is despite all the anarchist anti-fascism of the time – from the mid-1980s well into the mid-1990s – being under the AFA banner. Funny that.

An ex-AFA member.

under-development of the working class, State or parliamentary "Socialism" and shallow "social reform" take the place of a really class-conscious labor movement in Germany, Austria, and the German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

Nevertheless, the flame of idealism and real Socialist activities can not be wholly quenched. And thus there is also an Anarchistic movement in these countries which is even getting stronger as the flood of evolution and experience passes by. We shall attempt to give a short survey of the same.

### Germany

The Anarchist movement is the strongest in this country in comparison to the other two. It has, over twenty years ago, developed out of a rigid Marxian wing of the effete Social Democracy which excluded the former for its too revolutionary proclivities. This was at the time of the so-called *Jungen* (Young Folks). Out of this group there emanated the Anarchistic movement of contemporary Germany.

Theoretically, the movement is based on the principles of Communist-Anarchism as enunciated by Kropotkin. In its tactics, it is thoroughly revolutionary with a leaning toward the old insurrection method of Bakunin. But the latter is superseded by its revolutionary syndicalist activities, which concentrate mostly upon a very vigorous and energetic anti-militarist propaganda, exceedingly necessary in military-ridden Germany, but also very dangerous. Thus the movement has to bring many sacrifices for anti-militarism. Every year numbers of good comrades are disappearing behind the bars of jail and prison, to serve long sentences. Only recently, for instance, Rudolf Oestreich has been released after penal servitude of almost 4 years, for the reproduction of the Amsterdam resolution on anti-militarism in the organ *Der Freie Arbeiter* (The Free Worker).

The German Social Democracy has adopted the method of calling the General Strike, in its economic aspect, Anarchistic, while for the purposes of politics the General Strike is called a mass strike. The courts, therefore, have lately focussed their attention upon the General Strike as propagated by the Anarchists. Without an explicit anti-Anarchist law, our movement is yet under a harsh, exceptional law, by virtue of the free interpretation which courts give to the existing laws. For instance, the propaganda in favor of the General Strike is declared to be tantamount to an incitement to it and is punished by many months of imprisonment.

The stronghold of the Anarchist movement in Germany is organized in the *Anarchistische Föderation Deutschlands* which has during the last few years succeeded in gaining almost the whole of the



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movement. Another section is organized in the so-called *Socialistischer Bund*, the theoretical foundation of which is collectivism as perceived by Proudhon; in tactics this group aspires mainly toward the starting and creating of co-operative settlements and productive as well as consumptive co-operative associations, upon the basis of solidaric mutuality, but practical effort in this direction has not been made as yet.

Since the last five years the revolutionary syndicalist movement has developed considerably in Germany. It matured out of the most thoroughly organized Social Democratic unions, which this party had excluded for not wanting to adhere and merge themselves in the "pure and simple" trade union movement as led in Germany by renowned Social Democratic leaders, for instance, Legien, Sassenbach, Schlicke, Elm, etc. Being excluded, the revolutionary organization *Freie Vereinigung Deutscher Gewerkschaften* (Free Association of German Trade Unions), became a clear-cut revolutionary syndicalist organization, which rejects the ballot swindle and parliamentary game in general and propagates the general strike, direct action and anti-militarism with the avowed aim of free communism. The movement is, happily enough, growing quite briskly, though bitterly fought by the "pure and simple" unions as well as the Social Democratic movement.

In point of literature, the above organization publishes two papers: *Einigkeit* (Unity) and *Pionier* (Pioneer). Both appear weekly, the former being the official and the latter the propagandist organ of the association. Besides these, the *Socialistischer Bund* is publishing a fortnightly periodical entitled *Der Sozialist*. A very great fighter and leading agitation paper is the organ of the "Anarchist Federation," named *Der freie Arbeiter*. A small monthly leaflet paper appears in Hamburg, the *Kampf* (Struggle). I must not forget to mention a very laudable, solitary effort by the Anarchist poet Erich Mühsam, of Munich, who publishes there a literary monthly *Kain* (Cain) which is pervaded by a delightful spirit of Anarchism carried into literature, criticism, art and letters.

The foundation of the Anarchist as well as the syndicalist movement is ineradicably rooted in the soil of the social movement in Germany. As events go by and the decay of the Social Democracy into a purely middle class palliative movement will become clearer to the conscience of the German working class, our movement will be the legitimate heir of the revolutionary triumph of labor, its emancipation.

### Austria

The following account does not comprise the Bohemian section of Anarchism in Austria. The

movement of our Czech comrades is very strong and vigorous, characterized by a fully developed Anarchist philosophy, and possessing revolutionary labor activities and several organizations, mostly among the miners and weavers. In spite of their small number, the Czech comrades publish six journals of their own, all dealing with the various phases of our cause.

The German-speaking movement of Austria is by no means as thoroughly developed as the movement in Germany. The cause of this is the history and comparative youth of the movement. It began as a radical Marxian faction of Social Democracy about thirty years ago; under Anarchism it understood the tactics of terrorism. All the heroism of these precursors of the Socialist cause in Austria could not stem the overwhelmingly crushing power of government. The latter was assisted by and did itself foster the so-called "moderate" Social Democratic faction which aimed solely at the harmless conquest of universal suffrage. Anarchism as a philosophy and practical application in the labor movement was, even in a purely theoretical way, severely prohibited by the Austrian government, which condition of affairs, on the other hand, drove many a well-meaning idealist of the "radical" Social Democratic Marxian wing into terrorism, then labeled by the government and the "moderate" wing as Anarchism. The absolute crushing out of free speech, assembly, and press for the "radical" faction, followed up by years of penal servitude for the slightest attempt to publish a mere leaflet, then at the same time unmolested evolution of the "moderate" wing, led to an absolute extermination of the former, and an equally absolute arena for the latter.

Until universal suffrage was conquered in 1907, Anarchism had no foothold whatsoever amongst the German-speaking workers of Austria, the same being enwrapped by the most blissful expectations of the possibility of parliamentarianism as promised and pictured to them by their Social Democratic leaders. The latter are in Austria through and through more "revisionist" than Bernstein and his followers in Germany have ever been. But now the great disillusion is setting in; the Austrian workers perceive that they have been hoodwinked by their political grafters.

At the middle and end of 1907 the Anarchist propaganda began again in the German language; there was then not even a remnant left of a former revolutionary movement. A fortnightly paper was launched by a few comrades, entitled *Wohlstand für Alle* (Welfare for All), and, lo and behold, it succeeded where former attempts under more auspicious conditions failed; it remained alone until to-day, and has now reached its sixth year of existence.

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The struggle of our movement in Austria is very severe. The workers themselves have been converted into conservatives by the Social Democracy. Still the Anarchist cause, through having strenuously to fight for its direct existence, is here to-day, it is penetrating into the ranks of the workers; it is attracting their attention by showing them that there is a higher and truer aim than Social Democracy, and is gradually winning valuable adherents and fighters for our ideal.

Except *Wohlstand für Alle*, an annual almanac for the whole of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, is published in Austria. It is called *Jahrbuch der freien Generation-Documente der Weltanschauung des Anarchismus-Sozialismus* (Annual of the Free Generation; Documents of the Philosophy of Anarchism-Socialism). The Austrian movement is also the base of supply of Anarchist literature to the movement of the other German-speaking countries.

The German-speaking Anarchist movement is communistic in its economic ideals and propagates the ideas of Kropotkin, Reclus, etc. It possesses various groups for theoretical agitation as also for syndicalist activity. Both are going hand in hand; the latter being a means for the former. Developing in a country of the densest Catholicism and of an all-powerful clergy, our movement is tinged with many tendencies of Tolstoy in his ruthless annihilation of churchism as contrary to the real "genesis" of Christianity.

A young Polish movement is developing in Galicia, where our comrades have succeeded in interesting private publishers to issue books by Kropotkin and have also published various pamphlets by the latter, Bakunin and others.

### Switzerland

Here, too, as usually when comparing the German with other races, we must unfortunately draw a sharp line between the French and Italian movements of Anarchism-communism and revolutionary syndicalism in the so-called "Roman" parts of Switzerland, and the weakness of the movement in the German parts. In the former the Anarchist principles of the time of the old "Internationale" have survived. And just as at that time, almost forty years ago, the movement in the German part of Switzerland was mainly Social Democratic, adhering to the centralism of Marxism, so it has practically remained until to-day.

But here is another factor which must not be overlooked. The Swiss Social Democracy is very opportunistic, but – may be just therefore – not as intolerant as its sister parties in other countries. There are many professed Anarchists and syndicalists within the party and within its trade union movement, exercising there a very wholesome influence and giving much inspiration in the direction of Anarchism,

federalism and economic direct action on the part of the workers.

The great impediment to an independent self-sustaining Anarchist movement in Switzerland is the rigid laws of expulsion, which by the way, are vigorously applied by Social Democratic police officials, rampant in Switzerland. The writer of these lines has himself been imprisoned and afterwards expelled by a Social Democratic Chief of Police in Zürich (Vogelsänger) for having become unpleasant by his agitation to some of the leaders of the Swiss Social Democracy. The party there is split in two factions, but both are equally opportunistic to last degree, which accounts for their not caring if even Anarchists like Dr. Bauphacher, for instance, are members of the party; they are glad to have them remain.

Whenever German or Austrian Anarchists carried on an active propaganda in Switzerland, their efforts were crowned with great success. But soon the government, under the direct influence of Social Democracy, interfered by expelling the most active agitators. Somehow the German Swiss does not possess as yet himself the necessary oratorical and organizing ability for the cause of Anarchism; and the work of the few expelled fighters soon collapsed.

To-day the Swiss movement of German-speaking Anarchism has some literary circles; workers of our faith propagate our ideas in the Social Democratic trade unions – with great success for syndicalism, as the one-day General Strike action of July 12, 1912, proves.

Intellectually and literary, the Swiss movement derives its inspiration from Germany and Austria. But signs are multiplying that it will soon be on its own feet again.

The above survey does not claim to give a thorough monographic or psychological review of the Anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist movement in the named countries. It is intended only to give some glimpses and sketches of the work done for Anarchism amongst the German-speaking working class. That work is not in vain; it is progressing, and the time is not far when it will grow into the ripeness of its idealism and social-revolutionary realism.

By P. Ramus [Rudolf Grossman, Austrian anarchist and editor of *Wohlstand für Alle*]  
*Mother Earth*, December 1913.

## Spain 1931-32

### TRAGIC BALANCE SHEET

**From April to April**

***Dedicated with my aching soul to all victims of repression***

Every time that I found myself among comrades, we would talk indignantly and angrily of the authorities' violent crackdown on the Spanish proletariat and whenever one of those present would ask, aghast "How high can they go?", my usual answer was "You'll know soon enough, comrades; as for myself, I give you my word that, at the year's end, I'll be publishing a full list of the death toll for during the current year."

So here I am, keeping my pledge, albeit not unaware that the hateful '*Doña Anastasia*' (prior censorship) brazenly disguised as a law for the "defence" of the Republic, prevents me from calling a spade a spade, since (unfortunately for me) I was neither born nor educated among men of intelligence from whom I might have learnt how to express the thinking behind these notes without "falling" into the trap of the law, which, Cicero stated " ... *is a spider-web that catches flies, though not kites*".

Clumsy, yes, because mine is the pen of a working man born into an unfair capitalist society that never bothered (far from it, indeed) to make the means of education accessible to those of us who have the misfortune to belong to a class which they contemptuously think of as the "lower class"!

Clumsy, yes, because mine is the pen of one of the exploited, one damned by an arbitrary regime to spend his life as a pariah, one of the oppressed and abused, a starveling .. in short, a slave, to become an instrument, a human machine useful only for churning out pleasures and ongoing well-being for its own tyrants, posturing as supreme arbiters over an outraged, downtrodden, aching, bleeding humanity ...

Here it is, my proletarian pen, well tempered against men's injustice and obliged to grapple with the eloquent pain of a list of dead human beings.

Here you are, people of Spain: you, who gave your all for a revolution that would put an end to hunger, wretchedness and injustice: here you have it, let me say again, you long-suffering people, the balance sheet of one year.

Pause a while a read it:

| <b>A Breakdown of those Killed by Government Repression between 14 April 1931 and 14 April 1932</b> |               |                              |    |  |   |
|---|---------------|------------------------------|----|--|---|
| <b>LOCATION</b>   | <b>DEATHS</b> |                              |    |  |   |
| Barcelona   | 2             | Palacios Rubios              | 4  | Málaga   | 1 |
| Seville   | 2             | Seville                      | 1  | Seville  | 1 |
| Barcelona   | 1             | Chozas de Canales            | 1  | Córdoba  | 1 |
| Madrid  | 2             | Gilena                       | 5  | Padul  | 2 |
| Córdoba   | 4             | Melilla                      | 1  | Zaragoza   | 4 |
| Pasajes   | 7             | <b>ALL OF THE ABOVE 108</b>  |    | Huelva   | 1 |
| Bilbao  | 1             | <b>UNDER MAURA, 'Mr 108'</b> |    | Navalmoral de Mata   | 1 |
| Málaga  | 5             | Talavera                     | 1  | Badalona   | 1 |
| Granada   | 1             | Granja Torrehermosa          | 1  | Lora del Río   | 1 |
| Pamplona  | 1             | Burgos                       | 1  | Orense   | 1 |
| Blanes  | 2             | Parla                        | 1  | Antequera  | 1 |
| Cardona   | 1             | Bujalance                    | 1  | Las Palmas   | 1 |
| Logroño   | 1             | Almodóvar del Río            | 1  | Chipiona   | 2 |
| La Coruña   | 1             | Zaragoza                     | 1  | Pinos Puente   | 1 |
| Asturias  | 1             | Gijón                        | 5  | Osuna  | 1 |
| Carcabuey   | 1             | Tarrasa                      | 1  | <b>TOTAL KILLED BY SECURITY FORCES =166*</b>   |   |
| Seville   | 39            | Tineo                        | 1  | * Note that we have counted only those deaths arising from social disputes: many others have perished at the hands of the republican crackdown for a variety of other reasons. |   |
| Barcelona   | 16            | La Almarcha                  | 1  |  |   |
| Zaragoza  | 1             | Feria                        | 1  |  |   |
| Olivares  | 1             | Castilblanco                 | 1  |  |   |
| Malón   | 1             | Zalamea de Serena            | 1  |  |   |
| Corral d'Almaguer   | 5             | Épila                        | 2  |  |   |
|   |               | Jerasa                       | 4  |  |   |
|   |               | Calzada Calatrava            | 1  |  |   |
|   |               | Puertollano                  | 1  |  |   |
|   |               | Arnedo                       | 11 |  |   |
|   |               | La Coruña                    | 1  |  |   |

## Spain 1931-32

One hundred and sixty six lives cut down as a result of inhuman repression! One hundred and sixty six corpses, still warm (the second most recent being that of a girl of eleven years of age, whose mother was likewise very seriously wounded), the ingrained, loving and indignant recollection of which brings to mind the need to mount concerted action to facilitate a change of economic and social system, whereby justice may prevail and human brotherhood avert all this pain and anguish!

Pasajes! The María Luisa Park! Barcelona Police Headquarters! Arnedo! That damned ship '*Malos Aires*'! Proletarian Spain in mourning!

Behold the funereal symbol of an age-old Spain, whose litany of suffering will conjure up a new Spain as a sublime prologue to a better world, one wherein the sun of Justice and Liberty may bathe all human beings equally, flooding consciences and hearts with love and brotherhood until it becomes impossible for men to exploit, hate and tear at one another like wild animals. ... And not only that, but nor will we have to weep over the depressing balance sheet of a second 14 April, its anniversary marked by pretty contrived entertainment that the long-suffering Spanish people was unable to savour whilst mourning, grief and wretchedness ravaged the humble homes of those missing – one hundred and sixty six! – victims.

by Melchor Rodriguez  
*La Tierra*, 18 April 1932

### **RODRÍGUEZ GARCÍA, Melchor.**

Anarcho-syndicalist, 1894-1972.

An advocate of a pacifist and very humanistic anarchism, he was a man equal to the circumstances he encountered. He was director of prisons under García Oliver (1936) and stood out for his decent treatment of inmates and his exposé of the existence of Stalinist *Chekas* (see the Cazorla case). Very active during the years leading up to the civil war, he was outstanding in the Madrid construction strike of 1936. After the civil war he was one of the mainstays of the clandestine CNT (arrested in 1946-47 and tried the following year on charges of smuggling propaganda into Alcalá prison). At a time when disenchantment was taking its toll of anti-Francoists he kept the CNT torch aloft and opposed *Cincopuntista* activity in 1965. Used the alias of Manuel Amador.

This was the basic sketch with which Iniguez started on his *Encyclopedia of Spanish Anarchism*.

Anti-communist historian Cesar Vidal (in *Paracuellos-Katyn*, a study of the communist propensity to exterminate opponents physically) has lots of

praise for Melchor Rodriguez and this short biographical note on him (p. 324)

### “RODRIGUEZ, MELCHOR

He came in for tremendous censure from a range of Popular Front personages for having halted the killings in Paracuellos. Come the end of the civil war he was court martialled and many persons from the Nationalist camp testified on his behalf, including General Agustin Munoz Grande. Such gratitude ensured that after a year and a half behind bars he was freed and rebuilt his life as an insurance agent. During the postwar years he strove to secure the freedom of quite a few republican prisoners, relying on the support of Munoz Grandes and other bigwigs from the Franco regime. His funeral was attended not just by old comrades from the CNT but also by leading Francoists. His coffin was draped in the anarchist flag and the Our Father was prayed over it. The left never gave him the recognition he deserved, perhaps because he was an eloquent witness to what the policy of the Popular Front had been.”

Partly as a spin-off from the whole ‘Historical Memory’ campaign in Spain, Melchor Rodriguez has been shot to new prominence recently. His humane actions are contrasted with the murderous conduct of Santiago Carrillo complicit in the murder of fascist prisoners and suspects. The Paracuellos murders of prisoners is being invoked as a counter to Republican victimology and Melchor Rodriguez’s prominence is one side effect of this.

In *Germinal* No 6 (October 2008) Alfonso Domingo has an article “Melchor Rodriguez and Los Libertos” – a study of the man, his work and his FAI group. It runs to about 20 pages and among other things refers to Melchor Rodriguez having saved the lives of upwards of 10,200 people (during the civil war) as well as harbouring about 50 in his own home and smuggling others out to France.

PS

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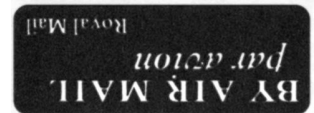
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