



On our second last day in Barcelona [1939], in the face of the imminent threat, we officers from the Mujeres Libres committees and a few comrades from the districts held a get-together. In such grave times we needed to take the requisite decisions regarding organisation of the evacuation from Barcelona, and that when transport was in such short supply.

At the time I was very ill. I had just returned from a tour of the entire Catalonia region. I'd contracted scabies from the barns where I had occasionally had to spend the night and I was also afflicted with boils along with a high fever. Physically, I was in a very sorry condition and could scarcely walk. After the meeting, the comrades determined that, on account of my health, I should leave along with another ailing comrade in a car that had room for two more passengers. The car belonged to the SIA (International Antifascist Solidarity) secretary Mateo Baruta and it carried his wife Cristina Kong and Mary Barroso, secretary to the then national secretary of the Mujeres Libres and SIA member, Lucía Sánchez Saornil. After which we arranged to meet at 5.00 am. in a certain location. We had just enough time to collect a few things from home and say goodbye to relatives, without letting them know that this departure was going to be final.

As arranged, my comrade and I arrived at the agreed spot at 5.00 am., but six o'clock, seven o'clock and then nine o'clock came and went and no car showed up. We were starting to feel panicky and, being sick, did not know where to turn. We realised that our side had lost. It was 25 January 1939 and the Francoists entered the city on the 26th. We had no idea that danger was so close.

We were downhearted and then it occurred to me to go back to the local, which wasn't far away. When we got there, the place was deserted, as one might expect and our hopes were dashed. What could we do now? Nothing. not a thing. However, just as we were in the depths of despair, the phone rang. At least there was somebody close by. In fact we heard a voice saying:

"Pepita Carpena?"

"Speaking", I answered, startled to hear my name spoken.

"Soledad Estorch here." I heaved a sigh. It was the comrade who had organised our trip. "Our apologies..."

She explained that comrade Baruta had thought he had heard fascist troops entering the city overnight. He had succumbed to panic and set off ahead of schedule. Other comrades had taken our seats and were by now in Gerona. Discovering our absence, Soledad had taken the risky decision to gamble everything. After a moment she told me: "Pepita, don't move, we're on our way to pick you up."

I've never forgotten that act of sisterly solidarity that placed her own life in danger. Few, very few people would have taken on such a delicate mission.

Being sick and unable to see things clearly and with a level head, it was all like a dream to me. Fever had me in a stupor and events just passed me by. I never found out the name of the driver who picked us up along with Soledad Estorch, but I owe him my life.

It now defies my understanding why we had gone back to our local, to the very place where we stood some chance of rescue.

Our destination was Gerona. Our comrades had a house not far from there that belonged to the SIA and which had been used as a home for city kids who were taken out to France to spare them from the dangers of air raids.

I spotted lots of comrades, most of them officials from the various committees, unions, bureaux, etc., doing what they could to welcome new arrivals.

I was lucky to come through this period and to be spared having to endure the wretchedness of having to cross the mountains in the awful cold snap of 1939.

In the village of Rabós, where we ended up, there were comrades from the local, regional and national Mujeres Libres committees, including the sisters Felisa and Apolonia de Castro, María Cerdán, Conchita Guillén ... On seeing the condition I was in, Conchita did not hesitate and showed exemplary determination in trying to treat my infection. I let myself be guided and was almost in a stupor and to this day I can remember it like a dream, I was so afflicted with sickness and fever. After a while (I can't remember how long it was), the comrades managed to find us a vehicle to ferry us over the border. In the end, we made it to Perpignan. Conchita Guillén, finding me so ill, did all in her power to find me a doctor. Doctor Santamaría, examining me, told me that I had a scabies infection. He looked after me from then on.

<from front> In the wake of the hopeful experiences we had been through, finding ourselves reduced to this is a wound that has never healed in spite of the passage of the years.

As Spanish republicans, we ‘reds’ were humiliated and mistreated. I say republicans because that’s what they called us in France once we crossed the border. France, the homeland of the rights of man and freedom. We were tremendously let down and if we are able all these years later to analyse that people more dispassionately, the reason is that it was the treatment meted out by the government rather than the populace as a whole that we found unthinkable. Men herded like animals across the beaches in the dead of winter, with only the sky for a covering; the weakest lost their lives there. Women and children at least had some shelter, albeit in atrocious conditions.

The years that have passed since then, our struggle on French soil during the Second World War, with all its wretchedness, would deserve separate treatment. [...]

Pepita Carpena May 1986

‘Solidaridad Fraternal’ from *Mujeres Libres: Luchadoras libertarias* (FAL, Madrid 1999) pp. 79-82.

Pepita Carpena (1919-2005)

CIRA Marseilles is saddened to announce the death in Marseille on 5 June of Pepita Carpena.

Pepita Carpena (Josefa Carpena Amat) was born in Barcelona in 1919. A working class anarchist, she took part in the Spanish Revolution at a very early age, in the ranks of the CNT, the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth (FIJL) and the Mujeres Libres movement. Franco’s victory forced her into exile. In Marseilles, she participated in CNT activities and then was involved with the CIRA. She was the CIRA’s coordinator from 1988 to 1999.

PEPITA CARPENA – OUTLINE BIOGRAPHY

Between April 1992 and June 1993 Pepita Carpena drafted her memoirs in Spanish. The title she gave them was *Toda una vida: mémoires*. Photocopies of the text were distributed in 1998. It was later published as *De toda la vida* (a 72 page pamphlet) by Éditions du Monde libertaire and Alternative Libertaire (Brussels) in 2000 as part of the Graine d’anar series.

Pepita contributed to two anthologies. In *Mujeres libres: luchadoras libertarias* (Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, 1999, 91pp.) she had two contributions included – ‘Vivencias’ (pp. 73-78) and ‘Solidaridad fraterna’ (pp. 79-82). The book was translated into French as *Mujeres libres: des femmes libertaires en lutte* (Los-las Solidarios-solidarias, 2000, 329pp). In the minutes of the Barcelona symposium *Anarquisme: exposició internacional* (Fundació d’Estudis

llibertaris i anarco-sindicalistes, 1994, 592pp) she spoke in the debate on Feminism & post-Feminism (pp. 340-377)

He testimony can also be found in two of the *Bulletins* from the CIRA in Marseilles – *1886:1936 et quelques autres anniversaires* (No 26-27, 1986, 120 pp.) and *Les anarchistes espagnols dans la tourmente (1939-1945)* (No 29-30, 1989, 199pp.)

Pepita Carpena also features in two films about the Spanish Revolution – Richard Prost’s *Un autre futur* (1988-1997) and *De toda la vida* by Lisa Berger and Carol Mazer (1986). Her photograph also features in Erick Zonka’s *Le petit voleur* (1999).

She was a contributor to the Spanish and French anarchist press: *Cenit*, *CNT*, *Le Combat syndicaliste*, *Ideas-Orto* and *Solidaridad Obrera*.

New Books:

Mujeres Libres

Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women

Martha A. Ackelsberg

AK Press, 2005 1-902593-96-0 \$20/ £12

This is the second edition of an important book, both a study of the Mujeres Libres group (Spanish anarcho-syndicalist women) and a discussion of the lessons activists can draw from their experiences. We have a review copy, please write if you want to give it a go. Reviewers could (but don’t have to) use it to initiate a discussion on women’s liberation, the ins and outs of anarchist organisation, or the Spanish revolution and the libertarian movement.

Chomsky on Anarchism

Noam Chomsky, selected and edited by Barry Pateman.

For anyone who’s been touched by Chomsky’s trenchant analysis of our current situation, as well as anyone looking for an intelligent and coherent discussion of anarchism itself, *Chomsky on Anarchism* will be one of this season’s most exciting and surprising reads. Published by AK Press ISBN: 1-904859-20-8 £10 / \$16.95. 241 pages. We have a review copy of this title available, please write if you’re interested.

Zapata of Mexico

by Peter E. Newell on ‘the purest embodiment of the Mexican revolution.’ We have already found a comrade to review this title, but we can recommend getting it from Freedom if you don’t want to wait! Published by Freedom Press, £9.50
Freedom Bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX



PÉREZ NAVARRO, Joaquín

Born in Calpes de Arenoso (Castellón) 4 August 1907. From a humble farming background, he moved away with his widowed mother to Barcelona in 1918, finding work as a hod-carrier before becoming a waiter (his final trade) and joining the anarchist movement sometime around 1922-1923, giving it his all. In July 1936 he was involved in the fighting in Barcelona and then immediately set off for Aragon: he worked on the collectives in Gelsa and Pina de Ebro, turning down an officer's commission in the army and was active in the Friends of Durruti group with which he fought against the Stalinists in Barcelona in May 1937. Later, he seems to have served with what had once been the Iron Column and in late 1938 he was arrested and tortured by the Stalinists who sentenced him to death and jailed him in Montjuich. Escaping with the Francoists at the gates of Barcelona, he made it to France: in January 1939 he was in the camps in Argelès and Barcarés and within a year was part of the labour companies working on the building of the sea wall in Brest, escaping from there to Great Britain after the German occupation. From then on he lived in England, was active in an anarchist group in London and in 1969-1974 headed up the CNT Liaison Commission in Great Britain. Still alive in 1999. Author of *Relato poético* (London 1995), *S.I.M. (Servicio de Investigación Militar)* (Barcelona 1998, co-written with Francisco Piqueras), and *Yo luché por la revolución social del pueblo español y por todos los pueblos del mundo* (Barcelona 1999) From Iñíguez *Esbozo de una Enciclopedia Historica del Anarquismo Espanol* (FAL, Madrid 2001) p. 477.

New acquisition: We would like to thank Joaquín Pérez Navarro for donating his books and papers to the Kate Sharpley Library.

New pamphlets

UNKNOWN HEROES: Biographies of Anarchist Resistance Fighters by Miguel García

Meet “Burnt Face,” “Bread Swallower” and “The Catalan” – just a few of the Anarchist militants of the resistance to Franco. Having survived the struggle against fascism in occupied France, they took the fight back to Franco's murderous system. They also paid the ultimate price, in ambushes by the ferocious Guardia Civil, facing the firing squad, or in the cells of the secret police.

Miguel García (1908-1981) was not a historian of the Anarchist resistance to Franco, but a participant. He was part of the Tallión (‘Revenge’) urban guerrilla group which fought in Barcelona until their capture in 1949. Nine members of the group were condemned to death. Of the four reprieved, one was Miguel García. After serving twenty years (to the day) he left Spain in 1969, determined to return to the struggle. He acted as the International Secretary to the newly reformed Anarchist Black Cross and wrote pamphlets like *Spanish Political Prisoners* and *Looking back after Twenty Years of Jail*, followed by an autobiography, *Franco's Prisoner*.

These biographies first appeared in *Black Flag*, the bulletin of the ABC. Here he tells the stories of some of the anarchist militants who – from the end of the Spanish Civil War to the 1960s – never surrendered to dictatorship. They form a tribute to fallen comrades from one who very nearly joined them. They are also testimony to a struggle still scarcely known.

“This pamphlet will become an essential reference for historians. It also makes for a fascinating read.”

Paul Preston, author of *¡Comrades! Portraits from the Spanish Civil War*

ISBN 1-873605-83-8 A5 pamphlet, 20 pages.
£3 (£2 post free for direct orders)

Umberto Marzocchi's Remembering Spain : Italian Anarchist Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War

Translated by Paul Sharkey. Expanded second edition. Alongside other Italian anarchist exiles, Marzocchi fought on the Aragon front from October 1936 until 1937. It also covers the counter-revolution of May 1937 in Barcelona and the Communists' murder of Camillo Berneri.

This new edition has been expanded with a timeline of Marzocchi's life from the Italian anarchist newspaper *Umanità Nova*.

ISBN 1-873605-98-6, Anarchist Library #11
£3 (£2 subs.)/ \$3 inc S&H (North American orders)

Andre Boesiger

22nd July [1913]-13th April 2005

Another grand old man of international anarchism has died. Will we see their like again?

Born in Switzerland in the Jura, he left school at 13. He arrived in Geneva at 16 in 1929. He became active in his union and in its anarchosyndicalist wing Ligue d'Action du Batiment (League of Housing Action) which practised direct action and sabotage on the building sites AND against recalcitrant landlords and helped unemployed workers when they faced eviction. The LAB fought against Saturday work and extra overtime hours... As a worker he practised the tactics of "Bad pay, bad work".

He also joined the Geneva Anarchist Group. 50 people met every week, among them Italian workers who had fled fascism. On 9th November 1932 a thousands strong antifascist demonstration, which Andre was on, was fired on by the Swiss Army with 13 dead and many wounded. Andre's best friend was among those shot dead. He was at his side when he was shot through the head.

During the Spanish Revolution, Andre made sure that truck after truck was sent from Switzerland to the anarchist militias in Spain. Among the clothes, tools and provisions were hidden arms. He also loaded many trucks for the French Resistance during World War Two. Twice he was imprisoned for a year's stretch in prison for refusing military service. He used this time to read the Petit Larousse from cover to cover (French language equivalent of the Encyclopaedia Britannica). He commented: "Is two years of prison a long time? Well, I would have needed 2 more years to finish everything I had to read!"

During the Algerian War he smuggled many people (war resisters, Algerian dissidents etc.) and arms over the border to and from France. He found work and lodging for these refugees and even discussed workers control with Ben Bella and Raptis (Pablo), then without money or lodging. He did the same for deserters and anti-Francoist activists. He was also active in setting up cooperatives in Switzerland. He had a lifetime companion in the anarchist Ruth (Coucou) Boesiger, who died in 1990, and together they represented an active anarchist couple, not a frequent occurrence in their generation and still rare today.

In 1957 he was one of the founders of the CIRA, the library and archive of international anarchist material in Switzerland, helping with its construction, its various moves, and its rent. He wrote his memoirs *Souvenirs d'un Rebelle* in 1990. He also appeared in a film *Ecoutez Andre Boesiger*, filmed by Bernard Baissat and the historian Alexandre Skirda, and in a film about Swiss volunteers in Spain.

The Swiss working class and the international anarchist movement has lost one of its most warm and generous personalities.

Charlie Mowbray – AF. (From LibCom.org)

John Crump (1944-2005)

John Crump died at the beginning of March at the early age of 60. Best known to Anarchist Federation members and *Organise!* readers as the author of our pamphlet *The Anarchist Movement in Japan*, he had been active in the socialist and libertarian movement since the early 1960s. He started his political life in the Socialist Party of Great Britain and for some time was one of the editors of their magazine the *Socialist Standard*. In the early 1970s a significant number of younger members began to develop a libertarian communist critique of the SPGB. John was involved in this current and eventually left the SPGB after a number of others had been expelled. He helped form the libertarian group *Social Revolution* and wrote a number of articles for its publications, *Libertarian Communism* and *Social Revolution*. He eventually went to live in Japan, but continued to contribute articles from there. In the late 1970s he wrote a pamphlet, *A Contribution to the Critique of Marx*, which was published jointly by *Social Revolution* and *Solidarity*. This pamphlet can be found on our northern website, www.afnorth.org.

John was unhappy with the eventual merger of *Social Revolution* and *Solidarity* and took no further part in those groups. His next important contributions were two books. In 1986 he helped write a critique of the Russian economy *State Capitalism: The Wages System under New Management*. He co-edited with Maximilien Rubel a book *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1987). In this he argued that there exists a "thin red line of non-market socialism", which includes all those tendencies arguing for a stateless, money-less, classless society. When the *Subversion* group was formed in the late 80s, he again helped. This time he wrote a pamphlet on the Japanese economy and delivered a seminar at a day school in Manchester.

Those of us who knew John valued him for the basic sense of his views and the straightforward way he expressed them. He made many in Britain aware of the contribution of Japanese anarchists, whilst at the same time doing much to argue against sectarianism and narrow mindedness. His lasting contribution was to help others see the links that unite those of us in "the thin red line". He will be missed.

Taken from *Organise!*, magazine of the Anarchist Federation #64, postal address: BCM ANARFED, London WC1N 3XX, web: www.afed.org.uk (The Anarchist Movement in Japan £1.50 from them)

Anton Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, edited and introduced by Robert F. Barsky (AK Press, 2003). xxxiv + 219pp. £9.00. ISBN 1-902593-56-1
For Workers' Power: The Selected Writings of Maurice Brinton, edited and introduced by David Goodway (AK Press, 2004). 380pp. £12.00. ISBN 1-904859-07-0

Here are two books from AK Press, one not only valuable in itself but also a potential starting-point for further projects, the other representing something of a missed opportunity.

The latter first. Anton Pannekoek (1873-1960) was a well-known figure in the Dutch and German social-democratic parties in the early 20th century, and was among the left-wing minority which opposed the first world war and welcomed the Russian revolution. He joined in the creation of a new workers' international, but he and his comrades soon parted company with the Bolsheviks over Lenin's insistence that the newly-founded communist parties should work within parliament and the trade unions. For Pannekoek and others who shared his views, the war had shown that parliamentary parties and trade unions, formed to gain reforms during the era of ascendant capitalism, had become integrated into capitalism and now acted to prolong the subjection of the working class. Events in Russia and Germany at the end of the war had instead revealed workers councils as the new form of organisation which the mass of workers, no longer relying on leaders, would use to fight against the bosses, overthrow capitalism, and administer the post-revolutionary society.

At first Pannekoek and his comrades were known as 'left' communists, since their outlook appeared to be a 'more extreme' version of Bolshevik orthodoxy. Later, however, Pannekoek came to analyse the Russian revolution as a bourgeois revolution leading to the establishment of state capitalism, and what had initially appeared to be tactical disagreements were now understood as fundamental differences between the methods of the capitalist revolution in Russia and the communist revolution in Western Europe. Hence the 'left' communists became better known as 'council communists', through their emphasis on the council form.

Pannekoek wrote *Workers' Councils* during and just after the second world war and his English translation was first published as a single volume in Melbourne in 1950. The first two of the book's five sections were reproduced by Root & Branch in the USA in 1970, while in 1984 the whole 1950 volume was brought out in four successive pamphlets by Echanges et Mouvement. However the current AK Press edition is the first time the whole work has been republished as a single volume in over 50 years.

While it is very welcome to have this useful introduction to the ideas of council communism readily accessible once again, I have several niggles over the way in which it has been produced.

First, nearly all of the numerous *errata* from the 1950 edition have been left uncorrected; yet at the same time, "some minor corrections have been made to improve readability", without any indication of what these "corrections" are or where they occur.

Second, there is little contextual information which might tell you something about Pannekoek, the movement he belonged to, or how he arrived at his views. Instead we have misleading statements such as (on the back cover) "Pannekoek... lived and worked in workers' councils from China to Germany", which makes a workers' council sound like a kibbutz, and I doubt very much if Pannekoek ever set foot in China.

Third, while there is a lengthy bibliography containing some useful references for anyone seeking such background information, these are buried indiscriminately among numerous other less relevant works with titles such as "Works Councils: Consultation, Representation and Cooperation in Industrial Relations".

Fourth, I realise AK have to shift copies, but is it really necessary to put "Introduction by Noam Chomsky" on the front cover, when the book contains no such thing, but rather an interview between the editor and Chomsky, which in content is at best tangential to Pannekoek's text?

By comparison *For Workers' Power* is an altogether more impressive production. Maurice Brinton (pseudonym of Christopher Pallis, 1923-2005) was the "principal writer, translator and thinker" of Solidarity, the British libertarian socialist group best known in the 1960s and 1970s for its propagation of the ideas of Cornelius Castoriadis, and for its industrial coverage which emphasised the need for independent working class struggle.

In his informative introduction David Goodway traces the continuities and changes in Brinton's ideas over nearly three decades following his break with Trotskyism at the end of the 1950s, and looks in particular at Brinton's relationship to anarchism, concluding that his politics were anarchist in all but name.

Approximately two-thirds of the book is taken up with Brinton's relatively well-known texts on *Paris: May 1968*, *The Irrational in Politics*, and *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control*. The rest of the book consists of 40 items – leaflets, articles, book reviews, introductions to pamphlets – spanning the years 1960-1985, and representing nearly half of Brinton's post-Trotskyist output. The criteria for selection are not stated, the order of arrangement is

slightly haphazard – neither wholly thematic nor strictly chronological – and Goodway admits that while Brinton may have been the “primary author” of all of the texts included here, in the case of items published collectively by the Solidarity group “many of these would not be entirely his work”.

Nonetheless this is a rich and fascinating body of work, spanning a wide variety of topics, such as the history of working class revolt (including the Paris Commune, Russian Revolution, Hungary 1956, France 1968, Portugal 1974 and Poland 1980), eye-witness accounts of struggles, anarchism, and sexual politics. Constant themes – which would be recognisable to Pannekoek – are a striving to update and redefine critical theory; a critique of all existing organisations claiming to represent the working class; and the effort to identify and encourage the seeds of new forms of working class struggle and organisation which “anticipate the socialist future of society rather than mirror its capitalist past”.

The standard of production of *For Workers' Power* shows what could have been done with *Workers' Councils*, but unfortunately wasn't. This book is well worth reading in its own right; what would also be interesting would be an account and assessment of the influence of Solidarity's ideas, activities and members not only during its heyday in the 60s and 70s but also, following the break-up of the national group, in the ‘ultra-left’ and anarchist groups of the 1980s. Perhaps *For Workers' Power* will be the inspiration for further work along these lines.

Mark Shipway

Libcom.org statement on London bombings

As libertarian communists, we at libcom.org deplore the horrific attacks on innocent people this morning in London. We express our deepest sympathy to anyone affected by the blasts. We condemn the use of violence against ordinary people and the perpetrators of the bombings whether they be Islamists or anyone else.

Terrorist actions are completely at odds with any struggle for a freer, fairer society and never help oppressed people in any part of the globe. Instead violence against civilians is a tool of states and proto-states every bit as brutal as the ones they profess to oppose.

The British Government, by sending British soldiers to kill and die in Iraq and Afghanistan has made all of us a target for terrorists in their pursuit of increase profit and power at the expense of ordinary working people.

We stand for a world in which human solidarity and co-operation replace the quest for profit as society's driving force, and stand in solidarity with all people fighting exploitation and oppression in all its form, from opponents to the occupation of Iraq here to those in Iraq who are opposing both the occupying forces and the ultra-reactionary Islamists the Occupation helps strengthen.

Our thoughts today are with the victims of this atrocity, and their loved ones.

Libcom.org Group, Thursday July 07 2005
www.libcom.org/londonbombings

Library News

This edition of KSL: Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library produced by the KSL Collective, August 2005.

Thanks go to Paul Sharkey for translations, as well as Mark Shipway for the joint book review. Other books are available for review: see page 2. We have comrades working on reviews of *Nestor Makhno – Anarchy's Cossack* and *Zapata of Mexico* which you will be seeing in the next couple of issues, as well as volume two of José Peirats' *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution* which is also now available from us.

Thanks to the Anarchist Federation for letting us reprint two obituaries, of Andre Boesiger and John Crump. We don't print obits to depress you, but to celebrate full lives, which certain applies here. KSL readers will, I'm sure, all join in sending our sympathy to their families and comrades.

We have had the first anarchist autobiography come in as a response to our appeal, circulated at the London Anarchist Bookfair, for comrades to write their stories for us. Thanks – and we look forward to seeing others.

Our next pamphlet, due in October will be:

Santos – The Barcelona Of Brazil : Anarchism and Class Struggle in a Port City (Edgar Rodrigues)
1-873605-93-5

Edgar Rodrigues, the chief historian of Anarchism in Brazil, recounts some of the events that made Santos notorious as an anarchist stronghold: demonstrations, raids and cavalry charges, but also self-education, workers' newspapers and revolutionary theatre.

Solidarity

The Barricade Collective in Budapest are appealing for help. Gondolkodó Antikvárium [Gondolkodó Autonóm Antikvárium, Logodi utca 51, Budapest 1012, Hungary or gondolkodo@citromail.hu] is a bookshop of the anarcho-communist movement, but it distributes working-class movement publications in general. It faces closure and the imprisonment of one of the collective members (and eviction of his family) unless they can pay off a rent debt of around 2,400 euros.