¡PORQUE FUERON SOMOS, PORQUE SOMOS SERÁN!
¡BECAUSE YOU WERE, WE WILL BE!

CNT/FAI MILITANT. BAKUNIN BARRACKS
AUGUST 1936
“And yet Barcelona in those years, rather than what was done on the battlefields, was a brief revelation of something latent but dazzling in humanity: the hope to fly like angels. We, or our children, will see it again. In Barcelona and Catalonia, this epiphany was released by anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists.”

Issue 10 of D.i.Y.Culture, is a homage to the class warriors of the Anarchist Revolution that started in Spain in July 1936. This was an insurrection that involved millions of anarchists and as Orwell witnessed, ‘put the working class firmly in the saddle’. An event that challenged the authority of the state, that fought fascism tooth and claw, that erased the power of the cops, that banished landlordism and overpowered organised crime-gangs, that literally burned the centuries of oppression of the Catholic church and was the largest experiment in radical, direct democracy in the history of the world - a social upheaval that had the potential to be a turning point in the history of human-kind.

But this was too much of a threat to the ruling classes of the world, to the dog-eat-dog economics of capitalism and to the so-called communism of the USSR – the crushing and betrayal of this people’s revolution in Spain, was ruthless. Funded and supplied, by (among other states) the USA, the UK and the Vatican and supported militarily by Italy and Germany. A shocking, wasted opportunity to deal with Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and fascism – an appeasement that led directly to the Second World War, to the deaths and deprivation of millions and to the future direction of militarised global politics.

We are of course, scratching the surface with this publication, but there has been a concerted attempt over decades, to bury and discredit the history of the Anarchist Revolution, because it was a dangerous event from the point of view of the powerful (both left and right) and the hope is, that some of these stories will inspire people to find out more – every anarchist has a duty to study what happened in the summer of 1936 and the best way to pay tribute to the uprising, is to build an outward-looking, working class movement from the grass-roots up.

In addition to 10 blazing pages from the Gata Negra collective in Valencia, we have contributions from Stuart Christie (the man that went to kill Franco), Ruth Kinna on the optimism of Emma Goldman, Vipera of the Moscow Anarchists with her take on LGBT oppression in Russia, and news from the anarcho-punks of URC on the continued military clampdown in Cebu City (Philippines). There’s a letter from an anarchist in Rojava, the Whitechapel Anarchist on Revolutionary Working Class Anarchism v Life-Style Politics, Lisa McKenzie on sweatshops, bosses and unions. Beautiful illustration/artwork from Clifford Harper, The Slow Burning Fuse, Carlos Madriz, Pablo Picasso and The Anarchist Union for Draughtsmen and Painters (CNT).

¡Porque Fueron Somos, Porque Somos Serán!
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“Barcelona was something startling and overwhelming. It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle.” Waiters and shopwalkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and even ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared. Nobody said ‘Senor’ or ‘Don’ or even ‘Usted’; everyone called everyone else ‘Comrade’ and ‘Thou,’ and said ‘Salud!’ instead of ‘Buenas Dias.’ Tipping had been forbidden by law since the time of Primo de Rivera; almost my first experience was receiving a lecture from a hotel manager for trying to tip a lift-boy. There were no private motor cars, they had all been commandeered, and all the trams and taxis and much of the other transport were painted red and black. Down the Ramblas, the wide central artery of the town where crowds of people streamed constantly to and fro, the loud-speakers were bellowing revolutionary songs all day and far into the night. Yet so far as one could judge the people were contented and hopeful. Above all, there was a belief in the revolution and the future, a feeling of having suddenly emerged into an era of equality and freedom. Human beings were trying to behave as human beings and not as cogs in the capitalist machine. In the barbers’ shops were Anarchist notices (the barbers were mostly Anarchists) solemnly explaining that barbers were no longer slaves. If I had understood the situation a bit better I should probably have joined the Anarchists."

George Orwell, Homage To Catalonia.

In July 1936, the popular movement that contained the military and right-wing uprising in Spain triggered one of the most profound social revolutions of the twentieth century. The period that began on 19 July 1936 and ended in August 1937 with the destruction of the revolutionary Aragon collectives by communist-led republican military forces was one of profound and extended freedom and democracy in the management of social life, work and the economy. The history of the Spain of 1936-7 demonstrates the fate of a revolution that attempted to create a genuinely autonomous society, but did not make a complete break with those bodies that are inherently given to control and manipulation - the state, the political parties and the unions. In other words, the Spanish anarchist movement of the time failed to clarify its radicalism and to pursue the logic of its principles. Why did this happen? How did the republican parties re-establish the authority both of the Catalan regional government and of the central government in Madrid? What brought about the ultimate ascendancy of the Communist Party under the premiership of Juan Negrin?

A key factor in understanding this is the slogan, ‘First the war, then the revolution.’ This phrase was cynical when it was used by not only by the republicans, socialists and communists, who never wanted a popular revolution anyway, but also by those anarchists who were so far removed from the people that they no longer identified with them. More dangerously, though, the slogan was ingenious when it was mouthed by many other, entirely committed anarchists, because it obscured the reality that a war is a very political phenomenon, and that how it is fought is determined by political alignments.

It is ingenious to believe that the only possible anti-fascist front is one made among leaders at governmental level. Such a point of view sees efficiency in obedience, and fails to take account of the importance of the will to fight, which derives from what is being fought for. In fact, there were only three major victories by the republican side in the war: the original defeat of Franco’s revolt, the defence of Madrid and the battle of Guadalajara. The first two were won by the spontaneous action of the people, by the committees and militias and through
revolutionary enthusiasm, while even in the third, which came after revolutionary hopes began to die, political subversion of enemy troops played a decisive role.

The political decision to organise a hierarchical, traditional army placed political limitations on the way the war was fought. A war of movement was excluded. It would have required highly independent units. But in the war of positions that took place instead, the technical advantages of the Francoists were maximised and the main advantage of the anti-fascists - the fact that most of the population were anti-Franco - was lost. Political factors also entered into play very directly in another way: the fronts held predominantly by anarchist troops, such as in Aragon, were starved of arms and ammunition, and the central front, where Stalinists ruled, was heavily supplied, even though it was less vulnerable and the fighting had moved elsewhere. This prevented the possibility of action in the north, which might have united the isolated republican region in the north-west (with its mining and industrial base) with the main area. But this would also have united revolutionary Asturias with revolutionary Aragon and Catalonia.

There was much else also to be gained for the republican state in avoiding a dynamic approach. The prospect of a victory over fascism while the state was shaky and the revolutionary movement organised, active and armed could only strike fear into the hearts of the politicians. Thus not only were anarchist troops deliberately used in such a way as to decimate them, but there was an immense concentration of weaponry retained for repressive purposes in the rear while the fronts went without. This is a genuine irony given all the allegations by the Stalinists that weaponry was being hoarded in the rearguard by the revolutionaries. Competitive political interests at great cost dominated military planning. At the end of the war, lives continued to be wasted because hostilities were pointlessly prolonged for the sake of illusory diplomatic ends. The point here is not that victory would have been possible if these obstructions had been removed. The limitations of the revolution, already mentioned, would themselves have placed curbs on the military possibilities. The point is that the slogan ‘First the war, then the revolution’ was no innocent plea made from practical necessity. Instead, it was the most vital ideological weapon that the republican state and its restorers, including the ‘leadership’ of the CNT/FAI, possessed. Probably the most important element in the argument it represented was that of foreign policy.

Britain and France, it held, would not supply arms or assist Spain diplomatically if there was any talk of revolution. However, the ‘non-intervention’ of the West soon showed itself to be a means of doing nothing to aid Spain, while allowing Germany and Italy relatively undisrupted intervention. Moreover, wisdom on this score was soon beside the point, for it was Stalin who the Spanish were reassuring by placating the international bourgeoisie, once Russian aid began to flow in September 1936. Stalin was out to suppress any true, autonomous revolution, and wanted to use Spain to achieve a western anti-fascist commitment. A counter-revolutionary policy served both these desires, and it was imposed both through the lever of aid and by Communist Party and secret police terrorism. Though the revolutionaries at least should have understood that the West was more anti-Russian than anti-fascist, the ‘foreign policy’ argument against revolution continued to be used even after Stalin started laying the basis for the Nazi-Soviet Pact and let aid to Spain drop.

For the sake of this deluded hope (which became an excuse for counter-revolution), real opportunities were lost, and the revolutionary gains for which the people fought so hard and sacrificed so much were reviled, eroded and subject to repression. The Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri wrote the following to Federica Montseny shortly before his murder during the Stalinist police terror of the May Days of 1937: ‘The war in Spain, thus stripped of all new faith, of all ideas of social change, of all revolutionary greatness, of all universal meaning, is no more than a common war of national independence, which must be carried out to avoid the extermination which the world plutocracy has in mind. There remains the terrible question of life or death, but it is no longer a war to assure a new regime and a new humanity...’ He added: ‘The dilemma: war or revolution no longer has any meeting. The only dilemma is this one: either victory over Franco thanks to the revolutionary war, or defeat’.

September 1936: https://struggle.ws/spain/scRevSpain/c3_sept36.html
October 1936: https://struggle.ws/spain/scRevSpain/c4_oct36.html

Anarchists do not stand aside from popular struggle, nor do they attempt to dominate it.

They seek to contribute practically whatever they can, and to assist within it the highest possible levels of both individual and of group solidarity.

Stuart Christie
April 1st 1939 Spain: Franco declares the Spanish Civil War at an end. The democracy-loving USA rushes to recognise his fascist dictatorship. Ford, Studebaker, and General Motors sold a total of 12,000 trucks to the fascists. The American-owned Vacuum Oil Company in Tangier refused to sell to Republican ships and at the outbreak of the war, the Texas Oil Company (Texaco) rerouted oil tankers headed for the republic to the Nationalist controlled port of Tenerife, and supplied gasoline on credit to Franco.

The end of the war & the defeat of the Spanish Revolution, did not end the killings, however. Franco systematically slaughtered some 200,000 of his opponents ... in a carnage of genocidal proportions that was meant to physically uproot the living source of the revolution...

Over a sustained and politically focused 40 year reign of terror, torture and brutalisation, a whole generation of anarchists, communists, trade-union activists and socially progressive people and their ideas, were wiped from history; they were murdered, buried in anonymous mass graves, forced into exile and their babies stolen and given to Francoist/Catholic/Fascist households.

How was this ongoing horror allowed to happen in a post WW2 world, where millions had died in the fight against the same degenerate ethos of fascism? The USA’s financial and practical support for the dictatorship of Franco had ensured a fascist victory and Spain became a convenient airbase for a rabidly anti-communist America - cynical Presidents, Democrat and Republican, queued to warmly shake the hand, that had shaken the hand of Hitler.

State Interests over Anti-Fascism - The Shameful Behaviour of the UK Labour Party

“We failed wholly in our objective which was to persuade the National Executive and the Labour movement as a whole to challenge the government dramatically on its attitudes and policies, so-called non-intervention and neutrality in the Spanish War.”

J. C. Pole, secretary of the Labour Spain Committee.

9 October 1945, the Labour government defended its imprisonment of 226 Spanish civil war, republicans, anarchists, communists and anti-Nazi resistance fighters, describing them as “serving members of an enemy paramilitary organisation”. The men had initially been interned in France, but escaped and joined the French resistance. They were then captured by the Germans and upon ‘liberation’ they were rounded up and sent to a concentration camp in Chorley, Lancashire, England. One internee, Agustin Soler, killed himself and others like Eustagio Bustos were driven mad by the persecution.

The defeat of Nazi Germany and the election of a majority Labour government in 1945 seemed for many, to herald the downfall of Franco’s regime and a final death-blow to fascism. Therefore, the Labour government’s unwillingness to force political change in Spain and Franco’s unexpected survival caused immense disappointment and a sense of bitter betrayal on the part of British anti-fascists. This outcome has usually been explained as a combination of Ernest Bevin’s cold war pragmatism and the (well-practiced) management of dissent within the Labour Party. British establishment/state opposition to Franco was far smaller and less cohesive than has been assumed, and was severely disrupted by the advent of the cold war when Spain became a strategic air-base for United States bombers. It was also conditioned by social and cultural changes in postwar Britain, such as the rise of mass tourism to the annexed regions of Spain (deliberately imposed on areas of anarchist and republican militancy by Franco).

Shamefully, the Labour government and the same mealy-mouthed Labour Politicians who had given Franco their tacit, ‘non-interventionist’ support in 1936, deported dozens of anti-fascists who had fled Spain back to the dictatorship for torture and probable death. Had Franco and his allies, Hitler and Mussolini, been crushed in 1936 in Spain, millions of lives would have been saved across the world – but the Labour Party was (and still is), inextricably tied to the desires of an establishment and a state that supported fascism over the interests of working class communities.

The Labour Spain Committee: Labour Party Policy & The Spanish Civil War - an academic paper: https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/S0018246X00002272
Oliver Law, Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Romanillos, West of Madrid - members of the 3,000 strong Lincoln Battalion, pose for a photograph. For the most part, the ALB were direct-action communists and street-fighting anti-fascists. One third of its membership was Jewish, but it also included nearly a hundred African-Americans - Oliver Law (pictured front left) was killed on the 10th July 1937, leading an attack on a fascist emplacement at Mosquito Crest.

ALB Archive Biography: http://www.alba-valb.org/volunteers/oliver-law

“From the time I arrived in Spain I felt like a human being, like a man. People didn’t look at me with hatred in their eyes because I was black, and I wasn’t refused this or refused that because I was black. I was treated like all the rest of the people were treated, and when you have been in the world for quite a long time and have been treated worse than people treat their dogs, it is quite a nice feeling to go someplace and feel like a human being.”

Crawford Morgan, Anti-Fascist.

15th September 1954, Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade were brought before the Subversive Activities Control Board to respond to attempts to classify them as a subversive organisation. Crawford Morgan, who had fought and had been wounded in battle on the Aragon Front in August 1937, testified: “Being a Negro, and all of the stuff that I have had to take in this country, I had a pretty good idea of what fascism was and I didn’t want no part of it. I got a chance to fight it there with bullets and I went there and fought it with bullets. If I get a chance to fight it with bullets again, I will fight it with bullets again...I felt that if we didn’t lick Franco and stop fascism there, it would spread over lots of the world. And it is bad enough for white people to live under fascism, those of the white people that like freedom and democracy. But Negroes couldn’t live under it. They would be wiped out.”

In 1942 Morgan enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in an all-black unit.

Excerpts of congressional testimony of Crawford Morgan: https://libcom.org/history/excerpts-congressional-testimony-crawford-morgan
“...the foreign journalists covering the war were so obsessed with the military struggle and the Republican leadership in Madrid that they hardly noticed the revolution going on outside their hotels. And yet Barcelona in those years, rather than what was done on the battlefields, was a brief revelation of something latent but dazzling in humanity: the hope to fly like angels.

It was one of those moments only Europe seems to do. The granite mountains of government and wealth, the ravines of class and the dark forests of the law, suddenly turn out to be cardboard stage scenery. Ordinary people kick them down and fall into one another's arms. Everything is to be held and done in common; nobody is to be unwillingly obeyed; in the sunlight of what Robert Burns called 'social love', human beings return to their true nature of unselfish sharing. It's a transfiguration first seen in the French Revolution; most recently (in flashes) during the 1968 'events' of Berlin and the Paris May. We, or our children, will see it again.

In Barcelona and Catalonia, this epiphany was released (they wouldn't have liked the word 'led') by anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists. Orwell arrived there in December 1936 to 'fight fascism' and walked about the streets in a daze, trying to adjust to a place where waiters and shop assistants spoke to him as an equal and where he was denounced for trying to give a lift-boy a tip. He wrote, with touching Englishness: 'All this was queer and moving. There was much in it that I did not understand, in some way I did not even like it, but I recognised it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for.'
“The artist must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative. The history of the capitalist era is characterised by the degradation of my people: despoiled of their lands, their culture destroyed, they are in every country, save one, denied equal protection under the law, and deprived of their rightful place in the respect of their fellows. May your inspiring message reach every man, woman, and child who stands for freedom and justice. For the liberation of Spain from the oppression of fascist reactionaries is not a private matter of the Spaniards, but the common cause of all advanced and progressive humanity.”

Paul Leroy Robeson. Born April 9, 1898.
The great American bass baritone and actor who was known both for his cultural accomplishments and for his political activism, spoke passionately of his support for the Republican cause in Spain and of his opposition to fascism. He organised fund-raising concerts to aid the republic and help Spanish children who had been orphaned and displaced by the war and was made an honorary member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades.

Paul Robeson, Spain and the Anti-fascist Crusade by William Loren Katz - January 28, 2006:
http://williamlkatz.com/paul-robeson-anti-fascist-crusade/

Anarchism and the Black Revolution
by Lorenzo Komboa Ervin
‘I accept the anti-authoritarian critique of Anarchism, but not its rejection of the class struggle...I believe in workers control of society and industry, so I am an Anarcho-Syndicalist. Anarchist Syndicalism is revolutionary labor unionism, where direct action tactics are used to fight Capitalism and take over industry I believe that the factory committees, workers’ councils and other labor organizations should be the workplaces, and should take control from the Capitalists after a direct action campaign of sabotage, strikes, sit-downs, factory occupations and other actions.

I do not believe in government, and so I am an Anarchist. I believe that government is one of the worst forms of modem oppression, is the source of war and economic oppression, and must be overthrown. Anarchism means that we will have more democracy, social equality, and economic prosperity. I oppose all forms of oppression found in modem society: patriarchy, white supremacy, Capitalism, State Communism, religious dictates, gay discrimination, etc.’

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin is a former member of the Black Panther Party and wrote the seminal text “Anarchism and the Black Revolution” while incarcerated as a political prisoner.

This is an excerpt from the sections ‘Why I Became an Anarchist’ and ‘What I Believe’:
https://blackrosefed.org/komboa-why-i-am-an-anarchist/

Versión Español – “Por qué soy anarquista”
Black Rose Anarchist Federation/ Federación Anarquista Rosa Negra:
https://blackrosefed.org/
“When the bourgeoisie sees that power is slipping out of its hands, it brings up fascism to hold onto its privileges”, warned the great anarchist Buenaventura Durruti, who lost his life in the Spanish uprising of 1936.

Nine decades later, we know that this dictatorship does not always term itself fascist and its uniform can as well be a white coat as a black shirt.

But its weapon of choice will always be fear - the fear that paralyses, that infantilises, that deceives, divides and disarms.

“I believe, as I always have, in freedom. The freedom which rests on the sense of responsibility,” declared Durruti.

When authority steals this sense of responsibility, claiming that it knows best what is good for us, then it has also robbed us of our freedom.

To regain our freedom is also to regain our sense of responsibility, of right and wrong, which we source from a place deep within.

When we look back to the peasants and workers of Catalonia, Aragon or Andalusia, as they bore arms and spades to take back what was theirs, we feel that we fought alongside them then and that one day we will share their glorious insurrection.

We feel this bond because anarchy is a timeless expression of the collective human soul, its will to live and to be itself.

“We are not in the least afraid of ruins”, said Durruti and neither are we.

Like us, he knew that nothing real and authentic can thrive while the structures of artifice, control and exploitation - psychological as well as physical - remain intact.

Only when these prison walls have crashed and crumbled will the space be cleared for the seeds of a better future to germinate in the rubble.

From them will sprout the green shoots of the organic, co-operative, human vitality and well-being which we call anarchy.

“We are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that,” promised Durruti. “We carry a new world here, in our hearts”.

Artwork by Carlos Madriz.
Representation Of Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalist José Buenaventura Durruti. Monotype Screenprint And Spray Paint.
Anarchy doesn’t mean chaos and disorder, nor is it a white, Western, male-dominated ideology. It is a spirit and ethic that has a history spanning several centuries and six continents and at its heart is a politics of solidarity. The indigenous anarchist collective Indigenous Action and others have argued that modern movements need “accomplices not allies”—people dedicated to sharing risks and taking direct action together, motivated by a vision of collective liberation rather than guilt, duty, or prestige. The Justice for George Floyd protests have demonstrated the effectiveness of multiracial, decentralized, grassroots efforts. Informed by a horizontal, participatory ethos that rejects police violence as well as every other form of state coercion, anarchists insist that everyone has a role to play in the process of getting free.

Anarchists cannot claim credit for the fierce resistance we have seen in this uprising. It is bigger than any single demographic or ideology. Yet anarchists are contributing experience with resistance tactics, infrastructures of support freely available to all in need, and visions of a world in which the institutions that killed George Floyd and so many others would not exist. Anarchist ideas and approaches can be seen in action throughout these protests, employed by many who aren’t familiar with anarchism at all.

*Illustration from the Slow Burning Fuse*
Since Minneapolis police brutally murdered George Floyd on May 25, 2020, demonstrations have exploded across the US and the world. Millions of people have taken to the streets to demand justice for George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and an end to police violence and terror, underscoring the need to eradicate systemic racism by radically transforming our society. Within 24 hours of the explosion of protest, the President of the United States claimed that anarchists and anti-fascists were responsible for the unrest that has occurred in cities across the country.

This move to blame anarchists and “antifa” is intended to discredit these popular uprisings while demonizing and isolating the participants. Yet the ways that the prevailing order has failed almost all of us are clearer than ever. Outrage and protest have spread far beyond any particular ideology or group. As tens of thousands fill the streets of scores of cities, it is obvious that anarchists are not responsible for organizing these demonstrations. The demonstrations and the unrest accompanying them represent an organic response to a widely felt need. At the same time, this organic groundswell of momentum, based in reproducible tactics that anyone can employ, embodies anarchist models for social change. Many of the practices and principles that have been fundamental to this movement have long been mainstays of anarchist organizing.

Here, we explore the anarchist roots of eight principles that have been essential to the success of the Black Lives Matter and Justice for George Floyd demonstrations, seeking to center Black initiatives that reflect anti-authoritarian values. For background on Black anarchism specifically, we recommend Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin’s *Anarchism and the Black Revolution* or the more recent *Anarkata Statement.*

From the anarchist minister Federica Montseny nicknamed as ‘the woman who speaks’, to the companions of the magazine ‘La voz de la mujer’ (The voice of the Woman), who on the 19th century from Argentina told us: no God, no master, no husband, passing through Rita la Cantaora, who got killed by a fascist bomb attack in the antifascist Madrid claiming ‘They shall not pass!’; to contemporary referents like Ana Peñas who nowadays tell us: ‘We are all well’, many people started raising their voices, joined today by Gata Negra. We do it against oblivion and apathy to search on the internet for the history of those who, because their uncomfortable speeches, were intended to be erased.

¡Grrrr!
Although many of the cantaores have not defined themselves plainly as anarchists, they have done so by referring to their cante (folk singing), since in the world of flamenco the discourse is manifested through the practice. As the singer Manolo Caracol explains, cante is not made-shoes are made- rather cante becomes. However, there is a common identifying feature that links flamenco to the anarchist universe: the rebellion against the oppressor, summed up in the defiant sentence by Tomatito: “Nobody tells me what to do”.

It is this rebellion and the spirit of fighting against injustice that gives flamenco singing its strength. As the brothers Carlos and Pedro Caba Landa wrote (harshly persecuted during the Franco regime for their book ‘Andalusia: their communist ideas and their cante jondo’) there is in Andalusian sorrow a feeling of universal solidarity for the pain of all those who suffer.

Some authors point out that flamenco cannot be apolitical because it is born from the working class and its lyrics, although they will also speak of love and death, criticize those in power. We could say that although flamenco is often non-partisan, it is unfair to label it apolitical, and what is more, its position of rejecting any oppressing system brings it closer to the most libertarian anarchism.

They take it from me and catch it from me / to the one who steals for their children. / And the one who steals many thousands / cannot be found not even by the goblins / nor either by the civilians.

*Lyrics of El Bizco Amate, who lived under a bridge and who was continually arrested for being homeless. During the postwar period, many cantaores were humiliated for their poverty, regardless of whether they had committed crimes or not, they were considered guilty for their mere existence and condition.

Tomatito, front-line flamenco singer, stated in one of his interviews: “Flamenco is keen on Anarchy, never on dictatorships”. Flamenco (emerged between the sixteenth and seventeenth century) was born as a song of protest against the oppression, poverty and persecution suffered by the Moors who inhabited the south of the Iberian Peninsula. This tradition of song in the face of injustice lasted through the centuries, first against the French invasion, with verses against Napoleon, such as “With the bombs you drop, I make myself corkscrews”, then against the repressions carried out by the absolutist monarchy, to the later years of the Spanish Republic, the postwar period and Francoism.

Today, that libertarian current of flamenco remains expressed through singers such as Agujetas or El Cabrero who sing songs against capitalism and injustices against the working class, or through the music featuring García Lorca’s poems in the álbum Omega by Enrique Morente with many collaborators, Leonard Cohen among them.

*Cover El Cabrero “Tierras duras” (Hard lands)
The avant-garde painter Helios Gómez was one of the main advocates of the gypsy community during the times of Civil War. He was one of the few voices that tried to raise awareness to the gypsies contribution to the fight against the fascist front.

In October 1936, on an interview with Crónica magazine, he said: ‘the gypsy community is an active part of the Spanish people that are epically risking their life and future in the civil war.’ Helios also explained how in Barcelona, the gypsies of Sants -the neighborhood with the greatest proletarian population- they were the first ones to mobilize. With hunting shotguns, old pistols and knives, they blocked the way to the forces of the Pedralbes Barracks.’

‘I have seen the gypsies fight like heroes in the front of Aragon, in Bujaraloz and in Pina. Gypsies came with the Bayo column to Mallorca and landed in Puerto Cristo, and there -within the troop of the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia- there were gypsies who fought like lions on a parapet called “of the Death”. And right now, in a column of Cavalry that is just being formed, the first ones to join in were gypsies’.

Helios himself -also known as the painter in the red tie- was a gypsy, as well as a trade unionist and guerrilla fighter from the Republic.

But this is a story that few know, because during the years of the dictatorship and even to this day, many attempts have been made to erase its presence from the history of Spain and to associate flamenco and all things gypsy, with adjectives such as vague, crook, carefree or even unreliable. The fate of almost all of these rebels was similar. Some, like Carmen Amaya or Miguel Molina, managed to escape to Mexico, Argentina or Chile. Others were not so lucky and perished during the war or were shot afterwards, while others had to be humiliated and to escape poverty, silenced their republican past and sung for young rich gentlemen, the military personnel and famous personalities related to the regime.

Henrique Mariño in his article “The flamenco singers who died defending the Republic and fighting against Franco” tells us an interesting trick. In official reports, cause of death ‘heart failure’ was often used as an euphemism for a bullet, contributing to the concealment of violence perpetrated against them. For example, El Chato de Ventas was jailed in Cáceres when he returned from a tour and was sentenced to death. But the doctor who wrote his death certificate claimed that he died from a heart attack in his cell, despite the fact that Pedro Martin’s granddaughter declares that he was shot. Another example is that of Rita la Cantaora who perished during a bombing in Madrid, while the city was resisting the fascist attacks. Some sources indicate that she was evacuated to Zorita del Maestrazgo, where she suffered from heart failure.

We can assume that the regime found more convenient for these figures, who stood up to fascism, to go down in history as deceased due to health problems rather than as having been shot for rebellion, thus reproducing the idea of their supposed apoliticism.

These verses were sung by the Sevillian singer Manuel Vallejo in support of the military who rose up in arms against the monarchy in 1930. Like him, there were many singers who, in one way or another, sympathized with the new progressive movement that was growing in Spain. Some fighting at the front, such as El Chato de las Ventas or Ramón Perelló, others digging trenches, as was the case with Juanito Valderrama, or even singing to boost the of the troops.

I fear not justice / nor blunderbusses nor daggers. / Neither men of one and a half yards/ Nor of two complete ones.

For more info Gata Negra recommends: “Helios Gómez: la invisibilidad de la revolución gitana” by María Sierra.
They sentenced me to twenty years of boredom
For trying to change the system from within
I’m coming now, I’m coming to reward them
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.

Comentarios:
flamenco1609

The first ‘cante jondo’ (traditional style of flamenco singing) festival was organized by Federico García Lorca in Granada. At the time the intellectuals of the 98th generation were against flamenco but nevertheless, the ones of the 28th supported it.

Later, during Franco’s dictatorship, flamenco was used to draw tourism and give an image of a united and folkloric Spain. In fact the first ‘tablaos’ were an idea of the minister Fraga in 1973. But that image was far from the reality of the country and of flamenco itself. In that very moment Flamenco won and lost at the same time...

Fraga was a Franco’s minister and the person who worked in creating the idea of the new Spain. He is one of the key pieces to understand the current problems of our country. Fraga promoted tourism, cultural domestication and the urbanization of our coasts, while repressing with a strong hand the student movements, even if it meant deadly results.

On democratic times he remained on power, and is actually the founder of the Partido Popular, the political party that has been in power for the most ammount of years in democratic times- in close connection to the church, big companies and the forces of the State.

Not all the murdered were artists. “There was a special intention to suppress not so much flamenco itself as the flamenco context. The civil guard harassed the gypsies for any aspect of their daily life and culture, from gastronomy to clothing, even singing. But it should be remembered that the law of vagrants and thugs which implied their explicit harassment, was passed during the Republic”, says Rafael Buhigas Jiménez.

It implies a division between the gypsy performances and the gypsies themselves. The goods and the bads, the ones singing in cafés and the ones doing it in their caves. “There is a bifurcation in the world of representation. On one hand, a flamenco aristocracy is created, with plenty of payos (gypsy word for those who aren’t gypsies) whose stage is the theater. An exportable product that benefits the tourism industry. In fact the first ‘tablaos’ were an idea of the minister Fraga in 1973. But that image was far from the reality of the country and of flamenco itself. In that very moment Flamenco won and lost at the same time...”

“...In the end, flamenco is extracted, exoticized and capitalized. The popular tradition continues to exist, however it does not matter. Some people recognized the repression and exile that the flamencos suffered, but they are usually payos or gypsies within an accepted and normalized world. However, ordinary romanes were repressed not only by the lyrics of their cantes, but for various other reasons, even before Francoism.”

*Enrique Morente & Leonard Cohen speaking about the album Omega / Drawing of Federico García Lorca made during his stay at NYC
Like the Mexican word ‘gringo’, **guiri** is a word that Spanish people use to describe foreigners, specifically those fair skinned people from Great Britain and Germany, typically imagined as a socks-and-sandals wearer, and very likely a tourist, but that can be extended to any foreigner.

This pejorative term started to be used after the touristic boom in Spain in the 60s. In that moment people from democratic countries of Europe decided to ignore the fact that we were living in a dictatorship and came to enjoy a nice and cheap holiday on our country.

Nowadays, on cities such as Barcelona or Valencia the rental prices rise continuously due to the demand for tourist flats. Meanwhile, the social net of neighborhoods is being destroyed because they cannot cope with house prices, in a maneuver we can call touristic gentrification.

Due to this, from the different neighborhood platforms, we want to ask people who want to come and visit our country to do so with an awareness of what they are consuming, how they interact with the environment and above all, in which way they are contributing to the place that they are visiting.

If you are thinking of visiting Spain on your next vacation, think about how you are going to do it, don’t be a **guiri**, don’t take part of a system that reduces workers options to the service sector, having precarious salaries and living in houses with excessive rents.

**WHAT IS A GUIRI AND WHY YOU SHOULDN’T BE ONE**

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* Take care of your neighbours

dvanderh
The government takes advantage of the Covid-19 crisis and evicts the ingo. During the confinement situation and on the biggest crisis in decades, this ‘progressive’ government has nothing better to do than evict our social center, a public building that had been empty for more than 5 years. Were you so afraid that the ‘Ungovernable’ would resume the activity, that you have taken advantage of the confinement to sneak out while we are confined at home? Do you consider this eviction so essential that you prioritize it in the midst of an international pandemic?

Thank you Sindicat D’Habitatge Raval and Xarxa de Suport Mutu Raval, without you many people would be hopeless.

ATTENTION. The old school of La Massana (on the Raval) is back in the hands of the neighborhood to provide an action place to the Raval Housing Union and Raval Support Network.

We recover this space for the neighbors to make it available to what the institutions are not able to do.

When a symbol of the people becomes one of struggle and resistance. The fight was to go from the abandonment and degradation to dignity and recovery. We’ve come a long way. It has not been and will not be easy. But we are a collective, thanks to those who were there before, those who are now and who will be. We will continue to open, cleaning, getting our hands dirty with lime and sand, with sweat and ground, with effort and collective strength.
This comic made by Ana Penyas narrates the Spanish Transition from a different perspective, away from the official history. She speaks of fractures, oblivion and dissent, and of the precarious situation of a country that went through 40 years of darkness. It shows us the poetics of the street: the neighborhood and citizen struggles, the collateral conflicts and the consequences.

Illustrations Ana Penyas / Script Alberto Haller / Layout Irene Bofill / Barlin Recondite Collection
Federica Montseny was the first female minister of Spain, the first to make her way among men to raise her voice among crowds and to defend the rights of women over their bodies, the need to take care of the bodies of the working class people and the need for universal healthcare.

“I want to be loved by those who have not been born yet” were her words. She was relegated to decades of exile and oblivion during Franco’s dictatorship and she died in France in 1994. But here we are many years later to abide by her words, to love her.

She not only made speeches in big cities, but she also traveled through a multitude of Spanish towns and rural areas, where she climbed the tribunes and explained that exploitation had to be stopped and that when this was achieved and the now oppressed had power, they should never exercise it to exploit others. Of these trips it is said that for each town that she went, it was as if a powder fuse was lit.

It is also remarkable how she gave priority to social issues, trying to change care systems such as the orphanages, which she considered sordid places in which children could not have a decent life, or for example considering prostitution not as a moral but a social problem.

Federica Montseny, defended a new model of independent and free woman that tormented the Franco’s regime. A few years ago investigation files were published where she was demonized, and also lawsuits were opened for Freemasonry or collaboration with French radicals.

In Noam Chomsky’s words her only flaw was defending advanced ideals fifty years to the needs of her time.

“ Tradition and custom are things that die slowly. But one can remain attached to their principles while trying to drag the mass society forward, towards a better tomorrow.”
When I arrived in Paris, I had the intention of helping gather the various groups and tendencies in which the shrunken anarchist movement was fragmented. This led me to start coordinating initiatives among the younger sectors. I tried to find a common denominator that didn’t belong exclusively to any of the organizations to promote a confluence. We also wanted to multiply the perceived presence of the anarchist movement by the simple fact of the repetitive appearance of that common denominator in public expressions (leaflets, graffiti, etc.) of the different anarchist groups.

I proposed that idea -the A with a circle- in one of the groups, insisting that it should be a symbol that would be quick and easy to draw, and also that could evoke anarchism in a direct way. The proposal was accepted, we started brainstorming and late at night we agreed that an “A” in a circle could be a good logo. It was in this way that, in April 1964, it came out on full page at the number 48 of our newsletter “Jeunes Libertaires”, the first “A” in a circle. An editorial explained the meaning of the proposal and all anarchist groups were invited to appropriate this symbol.

But beware, we had only created an image and formulated a proposal, we had not created a symbol. The A in a circle would only become a symbol of anarchism through the action of thousands and thousands of hands that painted it on the streets of the world, in a massive collective creation of which no one has ownership.

New! Double podcast episode with Catherine Howley and Nick Lloyd giving a brief introduction to the Spanish civil war and revolution of 1936-9, when workers from Spain and across the world took on the military might of Nationalist Spain, fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Currently available for early listening for our patreon supporters.

Learn more, listen and subscribe:
https://workingclasshistory.com/2020/06/17/e39-the-spanish-civil-war-an-introduction/
On the 5th August 1936, railway worker and anarchist Buenaventura Durruti was interviewed by Pierre van Paasen of the Toronto Star. In this interview he gives his views on Fascism, government and social revolution.

“For us”, said Durruti, “it is a matter of crushing Fascism once and for all. Yes; and in spite of the Government”.

“No government in the world fights Fascism to the death. When the bourgeoisie sees power slipping from its grasp, it has recourse to Fascism to maintain itself. The Liberal Government of Spain could have rendered the Fascist elements powerless long ago. Instead it compromised and dallied. Even now at this moment, there are men in this Government who want to go easy on the rebels.”

And here Durruti laughed. “You can never tell, you know, the present Government might yet need these rebellious forces to crush the workers’ movement . . .”

“We know what we want. To us it means nothing that there is a Soviet Union somewhere in the world, for the sake of whose peace and tranquillity the workers of Germany and China were sacrificed to Fascist barbarians by Stalin. We want revolution here in Spain, right now, not maybe after the next European war. We are giving Hitler and Mussolini far more worry with our revolution than the whole Red Army of Russia. We are setting an example to the German and Italian working class on how to deal with Fascism.”

“I do not expect any help for a libertarian revolution from any Government in the world. . . . We expect no help, not even from our own Government, in the last analysis.”

“But”, interjected van Paasen, “You will be sitting on a pile of ruins.”

Durruti answered: “We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall. We will know how to accommodate ourselves for a time. For, you must not forget, we can also build. It is we the workers who built these palaces and cities here in Spain and in America and everywhere. We, the workers, can build others to take their place. And better ones! We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here, in our hearts. That world is growing this minute.”
To the outside observer, much of what erroneously passes for the UK anarchist movement might look like middle-class ‘identity’ or ‘life-style’ activists. None of which bears any relation, or pays any respect to revolutionary working class anarchist politics. It is the realm of a handful of cranks and cultists and appeals to an exclusive minority of ‘leftists’ who are far removed from the world of struggle against state, capitalism and authority. These individuals are usually born into privileged circumstances, ‘well educated’, far removed from the bitter realities of class conflict and blanketed from the cold machinations of the state. This ‘life-style’ posturing, makes it almost impossible to have any idea of overthrowing that state – in fact, they are beneficiaries, in the long and the short term. These people would do well to study the history of our movement and to see that when it explodes across society, anarchism is the ultimate politics of freedom, rights and choice - but those freedoms and choices must be applied on a mass scale or they are as good as meaningless.

Make a direct comparison to the Spanish anarchist movement of the 1920s and 30s – a classic example of a long-lived, ultra-revolutionary mass-movement that survived generations of extreme repression from church and state. This movement consisted overwhelmingly of workers, landless labourers and impoverished peasants. From this dynamic movement, a real proletarian counter-culture evolved.

Defying and challenging the Catholic church in an ultra-Catholic country, a church that was inseparable from the state and funded Franco, the anarchists were renown for so-called ‘free-love’ – this had nothing to do with modern day polyamory, but that partners, lovers and those with babies, refused the medieval sanction of the Church for marriage, funerals, baptisms and refused the order of the state to impose a warped version of morality.

The anarchists were totally atheistic – a revolutionary mentality that broke with centuries of oppression, punishment and brain-washing by the Catholic Church. The men of God and Brides of Christ, were nearly always a fascist supporting interest group.

Spanish anarchism has sometimes been described, even dismissed as ‘puritanical’ by historians, as many abstained from alcohol, smoking or eating meat – this was more likely to have been through personal choice and that these commodities were expensive. As much as possible, funds and any surplus cash was diverted into the movement by committed anarchists – people also risked their lives and liberty by robbing banks to fund the cause of liberation.

A vital part of the anarchist lifestyle, was self and mutual education – once again, breaking with tradition, people made great sacrifices to set up their own schools, publish their own literature, periodicals and newspapers, create mobile film-units to take to the collectives. This anarchist education programme, targeted literally millions of people – by 1936, there were more than 1.5 million members of the Anarchist union, the CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo). The Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) were anarchist militants active within affinity groups inside the CNT to keep a strong anarchist ethos alive within the union. It is often abbreviated as CNT-FAI because of the close relationship between the two organizations.

These FAI Affinity Groups, were the backbone of the anarchist movement – embedded in the neighbourhoods, in agriculture and in workplaces, this gave strength to anti-eviction actions, rent-strikes and guerilla warfare against the bosses-gunmen, scabs, politicians and cops during heightened periods of strikes and insurrection. The affinity groups enabled communities to survive extreme state repression but also to establish and sink deep roots into the working class. In 1933, there were over 30,000 anarchist prisoners that required a vast network of support – mostly from the impoverished sections of society via the CNT/FAI. Those prisoners became some of the fiercest fighters in the Anarchist Columns when they were broken out of jail in the run-up to the revolution.

These few words are barely scratching the surface of a momentous event and movement that every anarchist should study – avowedly class based. Here are a couple of book recommendations that vividly describe the spirit of that age and how we might bring that spirit to our movement today.

The Anarchists Of Casas Viejas by Jerome R Mintz – for a rural perspective and Anarchism And The City – Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898 -1937 by Chris Ealham

We need revolutionary, working class anarchism – not vapid life-style politics.
¡A LAS BARRICADAS!

October 1935. Spanish anarcho-syndicalist theoretician, trade-union activist, anti-fascist and poet, Valeriano Orobón Fernández writes the lyrics to A Las Barricadas - one of the most popular songs of the Spanish anarchists during the Civil War. A las Barricadas is sung to the tune of La Warszawianka, a revolutionary socialist anthem from Poland.

The Confederation referred to in the final stanza was the CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo - “National Confederation of Labour”), at the time the largest labour union and main Anarchist organisation in Spain, and a major force opposing Franco’s fascist coup against the Republic.

“The revolution Orobón looked forward to was not one that could be carried out by any one trade union organisation or political party... no, the revolution he had in mind was more expansive... a social revolution that would sweep away bourgeois institutions and their system of exploitation of the working class. And he threw himself into this task with all of the tremendous potential that he could muster.”

He had contracted tuberculosis in prison and died just weeks before the Spanish Revolution erupted on the 19 July 1936.

A booklet about Valeriano available from the Kate Sharpley Library for £3.00: https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/msbdkt

Black storms shake the sky  
Dark clouds blind us  
Although death and pain await us  
Against the enemy we must go  
The most precious good is freedom  
And we have to defend it with courage and faith  
Raise the revolutionary flag  
Which carries the people to emancipation  
Working people march onwards to the battle  
We have to smash the reactionaries  
To the Barricades!  
To the Barricades!  
For the triumph of the Confederation.
November 13th 1936, Spain: Journalist and anti-fascist combatant Carlo Rosselli launches the slogan “Today in Spain, Tomorrow in Italy” - in a broadcast on Barcelona radio he states:

“Thousands of Italians in exile have joined the revolutionary army. For three months now an Italian column has fought on the Aragona front. We hear of 11 dead & 20 wounded. A second Italian column is now defending Madrid. These are Italians who, having lost their freedom at home, begin to reconquer it in Spain, with weapons in their hands.”

Italian Anarchist Volunteers In The Spanish Civil War: [https://machorka.espivblogs.net/2015/01/03/remembering-spain-italian-anarchist-volunteers-in-the-spanish-civil-war-2](https://machorka.espivblogs.net/2015/01/03/remembering-spain-italian-anarchist-volunteers-in-the-spanish-civil-war-2)

Photo: The Anarchist Battalion of Death or Battalion Malatesta was formed by a few hundred Italian anarchist exiles in France and made its debut in Spain parading through the Paseo de Gracia and the Plaza Catalunya in Barcelona wearing their smart uniforms and brandishing the slogan ‘Without God Nor Master’. Definitely some of the most stylish anti-fascists who went to the front, they wore black turtleneck jerseys, olive-green uniforms with ammunition belts and a black beret with a skull and a dagger badge and the battalion consisted of both men and women.
"I had the opportunity to fight alongside my comrades, when women didn’t fight. They usually stayed at home. I lost my hand but it didn’t matter. I was prepared to lose my life."

Rosario Sánchez Mora, Front Line Malicana, born April 21st 1919.

Rosario Sánchez was one of the first women to enlist in the revolutionary militias that fought Franco’s troops in the civil war. She enlisted on the day the fascist-controlled and backed Spanish army, mutinied against the people and the republic in July 1936.

She was 17 and one of the few women fighters on the frontline in defence of Madrid, and the only one among the élite dynamiters section. While bomb-making in the trenches with volatile and sub-standard explosives, an explosion took her hand off.

Rosario was imprisoned following the defeat of the Republic and condemned to death (later commuted to a life sentence) “for joining an armed rebellion” – a common sentence for those who had resisted Franco. She was sent to the brutal Ventas jail near Madrid, where anarchist and communist female combatants were tortured, murdered and had their children taken from them to be raised by fascist parents.

Following her release, she set up a stall in Madrid selling cigarettes, which sustained her throughout the dictatorship until her retirement. With the advent of democracy she became a fount of oral history, whilst losing none of her political convictions.

More about the Malicianas here: https://libcom.org/files/FemaleCombatantsintheSpanishCivilWar.pdf

Rosario pictured with her daughter Helena.

“What anarchists have to do is understand the natural process of rebellion and not separate themselves from the working class under the pretext of serving it better.”

Buenaventura Durruti.

¡Durruti Is Dead Yet Living!

19th November 1936, Madrid. Railway-worker, bank-robber/expropriator, militant anarchist and talismanic figure of the Spanish Revolution, José Buenaventura Durruti Dumange is shot in the chest - he dies at dawn on the 20th. Carl Einstein, who had enlisted in the Column, delivered a thrilling tribute to the libertarian leader to the huge crowd which showed up to attend the funeral: “Where the Column advances, one collectivises. The land is given to the community, the agricultural proletarians, slaves of caciques (local political bosses) which they were, metamorphose themselves as free people. One passes from agrarian feudalism to free Communism.”

Durruti Is Dead Yet Living by Emma Goldman: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-durruti-is-dead-yet-living

Photo: The Durruti Column enters Madrid, November 1936.
“We say to all workers, to all revolutionaries, to all anarchists: At the front or in the rearguard, wherever you may be, fight against the enemies of your liberty and demolish fascism. But also make sure that your exertions do not bring about the installation of a dictatorial regime that would represent the continuation, with all of its vices and defects, of the whole state of affairs that we are trying to obliterate. Now with weapons and later with the tools of labour, learn to live without tyrants and to develop for yourselves the only road to freedom. These are the feelings of the Iron Column, and they have been explained clearly and simply. Comrades: Death to fascism! Long live the social revolution! Long live anarchy!”

Statement of the Iron Column, November 1936.

The Column was formed in Valencia and its members were among the most notorious anarchists in the Spanish Civil War. Many of its 12,000 combatants were hardened ex-prisoners who were keen to join the fight following mass jail-breaks - anarchist/anti-fascist politics had spread like wild-fire through the prisons and they approached class-warfare with vigour and nothing to lose. They were intransigent in the face of the fascist revolt, but also in defence of the revolution’s gains.

As Iron Column member Roque Santamaría comments: “The opening of the prison was prompted by principle and nothing more. It was an attempt to do away with something we regarded as a product of bourgeois rule: the inmates were victims of society and had to be given a chance, at which point most of them joined the Iron Column, fighting and conducting themselves in an extraordinarily brave and intrepid fashion.”


Emma Goldman described the efforts of Spanish workers and peasants to build and defend an anarchist society ‘with almost bare hands and every hindrance in their way’ as ‘an inspiration one cannot easily forget.’ It is a rare and intensely moving experience to witness, through her eyes, their constructive achievements and their travail, caught between the Fascist hammer and the Communist anvil, ignored or vilified by Western ‘progressives’.

Vision on fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution.

LOOK ON MY WORKS, YE MIGHTY, AND DESPAIR!' - THE ORGANISATION & OPTIMISM OF EMMA GOLDMAN

By Ruth Kinna, anarchist and writer

Franco’s Valley of the Fallen commissioned in 1940 and built by forced labour was purportedly intended as an act of reconciliation and atonement. The Sacré Cœur in Paris, erected in the Commune’s heartlands after its brutal crushing in 1871, fulfils the same purpose: to remind the vanquished to be contrite and play nice on victors’ terms.

If monuments turn events into official, dead histories, reminiscences challenge those histories and keep the events alive. Emma Goldman made three trips to Spain during the revolution of 1936-39. Her remarkable commentary repeatedly returns to three topics: the decision of anarchists in 1936 to take government positions, the necessity of organisation and optimism.

She was critical of Spanish comrades who joined the government, but reserved her anger for remote commentators who, apparently oblivious to conditions on the ground, reduced their predicament to a straightforward choice. Locating the cause of revolutionary failure in Franco’s overwhelming military strength, she judged the revolution an outstanding success. Though too many revolutionaries remained wedded to patriarchal norms, she felt they proved beyond doubt that anarchism was far more than a beautiful idea. They showed, too, that spontaneous resistance depended on years of propaganda and persistent building-activity.

As to optimism, while Goldman confessed to moments of utter despair, she held to the credo of Mon Nou, Emilia Roca’s colony in northern Catalonia: ‘Children are the new world. And all dreamers are children’.

Roca and the children fled Franco’s advancing forces in 1939, along with half a million other refugees. The horrors of their experiences can trick us into thinking that the Spanish revolution belongs to the past. Goldman’s commentary releases it from his trap: the glint of 15M (the direct democracy/antiausterity movement in Spain - El Movimiento 15-M) is in her eye. Not even the grandeur or colossal scale of the Valley of the Fallen can imprison it. Look at Franco’s temple and remember Shelley’s ‘Ozymandias’:

I met a traveller from an antique land Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand, Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, Tell that its sculptor well those passions read Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things, The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed: And on the pedestal these words appear: ’My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!’ Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Vision on fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish revolution:

https://libcom.org/library/vision-fire-emma-goldman-spanish-revolution

The Government of No One - The Theory & Practice of Anarchism by Ruth Kinna. Available at all good/radical bookshops: https://housmans.com/product/gov-of-no-one/

‘...Anarchism as a philosophical and political movement is as relevant as ever. Contrary to popular perception, different strands of anarchism — from individualism to collectivism — do follow certain structures and a shared sense of purpose, a belief in freedom and working towards collective good without the interference of the state. In this masterful, sympathetic account, political theorist Ruth Kinna traces the tumultuous history of anarchism, starting with thinkers and activists such as Peter Kropotkin and Emma Goldman and through key events like the Paris Commune and the Haymarket affair. Skilfully introducing us to the nuanced theories of anarchist groups from Russia to Japan to the United States, The Government of No One reveals what makes a supposedly chaotic movement particularly adaptable and effective over centuries — and what we can learn from it.’
A German officer with an interest in art, visited Picasso in his Paris studio during the Second World War. There he saw Guernica and, shocked at the modernist ‘chaos’ of the painting, asked Picasso: ‘Did you do this’? Picasso calmly replied: ‘No, you did’.

26th April 1937. During a continuous three hour bombardment, Guernica, the most ancient town of the Basques and the centre of their cultural tradition, was, at the behest of Franco, completely destroyed by a fleet of German and Italian aircraft. Stuka dive-bombers plunged low from above the centre of the town to machine-gun those of the civilian population who were attempting to take refuge in the fields. The air raid lasted for four hours, decimating the population and was deliberately planned for a Monday, which was a busy market day, in order to kill as many civilians as possible.

Hitler lent the Condor Legion, a unit of the German Luftwaffe, to Franco’s nationalist forces to help them repress the republican cause and to quell the threat of communism and the anarchist revolution that had put the working class firmly in the saddle in many regions. The loan of these warplanes also allowed the Nazis to practise their blitzkrieg tactics, later used in the second world war. Franco enjoyed the full support of the anti-communist British establishment, whilst the governments of Germany, Italy and to a lesser extent Portugal, contributed money, munitions, manpower and support to Nationalist forces. The Vatican, not only funded Franco’s fascism, but described the conflict in Spain as a ‘Crusade against the enemies of God and the Church’.

And of course, the USA got involved and went on to support the ruthless dictatorship of Franco as an ally against the Soviet Union and to use Spain as a convenient airbase. Automakers Ford, Studebaker, and General Motors sold a total of 12,000 trucks to the Nationalists. The American-owned Vacuum Oil Company in Tangier refused to sell to Republican ships and at the outbreak of the war, the Texas Oil Company (Texaco) rerouted oil tankers headed for the republic, to the Nationalist controlled port of Tenerife, supplying gasoline on credit to Franco.

War, what is is good for? It’s good for profit and keeping power in the hands of a few.

Revealed: secret battle ‘anarchist’ Picasso lost to become French.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/may/02/france.arts
Political graffiti on trains is nothing new. The Anarchist Union for Draughtsmen and Painters of the CNT Barcelona, paint anti-fascist texts on the trains, July 1936.
“Direct action meant that the goal of any and all of these activities was to provide ways for people to get in touch with their own powers and capacities, to take back the power of naming themselves and their lives. It was to be distinguished from more conventional political activity even in a democratic system. Instead of attempting to make change by forming interest groups to pressure politicians, anarchists insisted that we learn to think and act for ourselves by joining together in organisations in which our experience, our perception, and our activity can guide and make the change. Knowledge does not precede experience, it flows from it: “We begin by deciding to work, and through working, we learn... We will learn how to live in libertarian communism by living in it.” People learn how to be free only by exercising freedom: “We are not going to find ourselves... with people ready-made for the future... Without the continued exercise of their faculties, there will be no free people... The external revolution and the internal revolution presuppose one another, and they must be simultaneous in order to be successful.”

Martha A. Ackelsberg, Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women

14 April 1931, radical workers attacked the women’s prison on Calle Amalia, Barcelona, freeing the prisoners therein, who then consequently joined armed militias and anarchist groupings. Anarchist Maria Rius, was one of the women involved in the assault - she had previously been jailed for planning jailbreaks. She later took part in the revolution of 1936, joining the Hilario Zamora Column, and fled to France following the defeat of the Republic by the combined forces of Franco, Hitler, and Mussollini (funded by the USA and the Vatican).

Free women of Spain - Martha A. Ackelsberg PDF: https://libcom.org/library/free-women-spain-anarchism-struggle-emancipation-women-martha-ackelsberg

More information in this short biography of Maria Rius here: https://libcom.org/history/rius-maria-1909-c1970

Pictured: Barcelona 1936. New members of Mujeres Libres undergoing weapons training.
A Girl at an Anarchist School in Madrid, April 1937.

A beautiful portrait by modernist photographer Kati Horna - the hopes of a potential new world, are seen in the eyes of this child.

Horna's reports, published in Libre-Studio, Mujeres Libres, Tierra y Libertad and especially in the anarchist magazine, Umbral, focused on intimate portraits of daily life and of the population on the home front.

A short biography of Kati Horna here: https://time.com/3811407/kati-horna-spanish-civil-war/

The origin and ideals of the Modern School - Francisco Ferrer: https://libcom.org/library/origin-ideals-modern-school

“No workers should be exploited in factories, or be slaves in the home or to the family: We are for a society without masters or lords - but communist and libertarian, free men and women!”

Teresa Claramunt, Anarcho Syndicalist.

4th June 1862, textile worker militant, feminist and one of the founders of the Spanish anarchist movement, Teresa Claramunt was born. A lifelong radical, she was jailed several times and played a leading role in the 1911 Aragon general strike. She was arrested after the bombing at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona in 1893 during the ongoing war between the anarchists and the bosses/police/criminal gangs - she was brutally beaten while in custody. She felt the effects of that beating for the rest of her life. When she died in 1931, 50,000 workers came to her funeral and a street remains named after her to this day in Barcelona.

This is a short biography: https://libcom.org/history/claramunt-teresa-1862-1931
“There are only two roads, victory for the working class, freedom, or victory for the fascists which means tyranny. Both combatants know what’s in store for the loser.”

Buenaventura Durruti

April 26th 1937, the masthead of El Frente (The Front), the newsletter of the Durruti Column - 20,000 copies were printed on a weekly basis. The Column was the CNT-FAI's anarchist militia organised by Durruti at the start of Spanish Civil War. As an anarchist military-formation, discipline was based on solidarity and comradely education, not hierarchy or privilege.

In a largely illiterate country, huge quantities of literature on social revolution were disseminated and read many times over. There were tens of thousands of books, pamphlets and tracts, vast and daring cultural and popular educational experiments (the Ferrer schools) that reached into almost every village and hamlet throughout Spain. Newspapers and periodicals were of enormous importance to the Spanish anarchist movement. By the end of 1918 more than fifty towns in Andalusia had libertarian newspapers of their own.

By 1934 the CNT attained a membership of 1,500,000 and the anarchist press blanketed Spain. In Barcelona the CNT published a daily, Solidaridad Obrera, with a circulation of 30,000. Tierra y Libertad of Barcelona (a magazine) reached a circulation of 20,000; Vida Obrera of Gijon, El Productor of Seville, and Acción y Cultura of Saragossa had large circulations. The magazines La Revista Blanca, Tiempos Nuevos, and Estudios reached circulations of 5000, 15,000, and 75,000 respectively.

This image now available on a tshirt from non-profit comrades at Bundschuhconspiracy - wear with pride: https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/588354404/el-frente-durruti-column-cnt-fai
“Instead of attempting to make change by forming interest groups to pressure politicians, anarchists insist that we learn to think and act for ourselves by joining together in organisations in which our experience, our perception, and our activity can guide and make the change. Knowledge does not precede experience, it flows from it. We will learn how to live in libertarian communism by living in it.

People learn how to be free only by exercising freedom. We are not going to find ourselves with people ready-made for the future. The external revolution and the internal revolution presuppose one another, and they must be simultaneous in order to be successful.”

Libertad Ródenas Domínguez, Valencian anarcho-syndicalist, CNT and Mujeres Libres organiser. In 1936 she enlisted in the Durruti Column and fought at the front. She took part in the capture of Pina Del Ebro, fought in the trenches and took part in a night raid. She then was occupied with the evacuation of 600 children from Aragon to Barcelona.


“And so Puig Antich has been done to death. Remember that the cops did their best to do away with him at the time of arrest... and thousands of libertarians have lost their lives for the same reasons ever since this revolutionary class war became widespread in 1936.”

Salvador Puig Antich - murdered by the Spanish State on the morning of 2 March 1974.

The Catalan anarchist and bank-robber, Salvador Puig Antiche was the last person to be executed by garrotte in Spain under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. To use this particularly medieval method of execution, was a symbolic gesture of warning by a fascist state, signed-off personally by an ailing Franco. Any chance of clemency had evaporated, when ETA assassinated Franco’s intended successor, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, with a car bomb that launched his car over a 5 storey building in Madrid in December 1973. An ailing Franco determined to show he was still in control personally sanctioned Puig Antich’s execution.

Anarchists Should Never Forget - Salvador Puig Antich: https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/mkkxdb
“When the masses become better informed about science, they will feel less need for help from supernatural Higher Powers. The need for religion will end when man becomes sensible enough to govern himself.”

Francisco Ferrer Guardia

Francisco Ferrer – born 10th January 1859. Radical freethinker, anarchist, and educationist behind a network of secular, libertarian schools in and around Barcelona. He was convinced that the only way to regenerate society was through a new system of education - an education Ferrer preferred to call rationalist, which we would call libertarian, free from all dogmas and systems whether they be religious, political, nationalistic, republican or what you will. His execution, following a revolt in Barcelona, propelled Ferrer into martyrdom and grew an international movement of radicals and liberals, who established schools in his model and promoted his schooling approach.

In La Escuela Moderna, published after his judicial murder, he wrote: “Education” means in practice domination or domestication. I do not imagine that these systems have not been put together with the deliberate aim of securing the desired results. That would be the work of a genius. But things have happened just as if the actual scheme of education corresponded to some vast and deliberate conception; it could not have been done better. To attain it teachers have inspired themselves solely with the principles of discipline and authority, which always appeal to social organisers; such men have only one clear idea and one will – the children must learn to obey, to believe, and to think according to the prevailing social dogmas. If this were the aim, education could not be other than we find it today. There is no question of promoting the spontaneous development of the child’s faculties, – or encouraging it to seek freely the satisfaction of the physical, intellectual and moral needs. There is question only of imposing ready-made ideas on it, of preventing it from ever thinking otherwise than is required for the maintenance of existing social institutions – of it, in a word, an individual’ rigorously adapted to the social mechanism.”

...The teachers are merely conscious or unconscious organs of their (the ruling classes) will, and have been trained on their principles. From their tenderest years, and more drastically than anybody, they have endured the discipline of authority. Very few have escaped this despotic domination; they are generally powerless against it, because they are oppressed by the scholastic organisation to such an extent that they have nothing to do but obey ...

The Brief Summer Of Anarchy.
A man from the 1930’s in a macho society.

“At the beginning of 1936 Durruti lived right next to my house, in a small apartment in the industrial Sans quarter just outside Barcelona. The bosses and businessmen had put him on a black list. He couldn’t find a job anywhere. His partner Émilienne worked as an usherette in a cinema to keep the family in food and clothes.

One afternoon we went to visit him and found him in the kitchen. He was wearing an apron, washing the dishes and making dinner for his little girl Colette and his wife. The friend who I’d gone there with, tried to joke: “but hey, Durruti, those are women’s jobs.” Durruti smiled and replied: “I’ll tell you something important: when my wife goes to work I clean the house, make the beds and prepare the food. Plus bathing and looking after my daughter. If you think an anarchist has to be in a bar or sipping coffee while his wife works, that means you haven’t understood anything.”

Taken from: The Brief Summer of Anarchy (The Life and Death of Durruti) by Hans Magnus Enzensberger: https://libcom.org/files/The Brief Summer of Anarchy.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0S1eDn9K_gakyZwceg54QeA1Mn_Gyohl2mtVrsjhe1cy1mRk0Ayvi3cA8

Pictured: Durruti with his partner Émilienne and his daughter Colette in Barcelona.

“The love of liberty and the sense of human dignity are the basic elements of the Anarchist creed.”

Frederica Montseny, Spanish anarcha-feminist, novelist and radical Minister of Health during the Spanish Revolution, born 12th September 1905. She aimed to transform public health to meet the needs of the poor and the working class. To that end, she supported decentralised, locally responsive and preventative health care programs - particularly in the field of reproductive rights.

She was, in her own words, the “daughter of a family of old anarchists”. Her father was the anti-authoritarian writer and propagandist Juan Montseny Carret, and her mother, Teresa Mañé Miravet, was also an anarchist activist. Montseny joined the anarchist trade union CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) and wrote for anarchist journals such as Solidaridad Obrera, Tierra y Libertad and Nueva Senda. In 1927, she joined the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI) in order to ‘guide aimless discontent into anarchism’, which she considered to be a path with principles.

While the anarchist clash with the Communists and Republican government during the ‘May Days’ 1937 in Barcelona is relatively well-known, this does not apply to the fighting in Madrid in 1939. The anarchists of the FIJL (Libertarian Youth) and FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) lost the battle in Catalonia, and the revolution was put aside in favour of winning the war against Franco’s Nationalists. The CNT Ministers exited the Republic government and the POUM Trotskyists were exterminated.

Cipriano Mera was a CNT Construction worker leader in Madrid and a leading FAI member. In 1936 he led an anarchist column before becoming commander of the 14th Division. He reluctantly agreed to the militarisation of the militias as the only way to create an army strong enough to defeat fascism. The Division fought in the battles of Guadalajara and Brunete (against both the Italian and Spanish fascists) in 1937 and the following year he became commander one of the four army corps defending Madrid.

But in 1938, a huge Nationalist offensive split the Republic in two, and rapidly overran the anarchist heartlands in Catalonia right up to the French border. Thousands fled into exile. The French and British had already dealt the Republican cause a huge blow at Munich by supporting Hitler’s annexation of the Sudetenland, and this was now followed by recognition of Franco’s regime in February 1939.

Only Madrid and 30% of Spanish territory remained in Republican hands, and it was clear that the Civil War had been lost. Yet the Republican government under Negrín, largely controlled by Communists loyal to Stalin, called for a ‘fight to the death.’ But the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) clearly had other plans for themselves, as loyal party members were suddenly put in charge of all the evacuation ports along the coast.

This spurred the non-Communists to act. On 5 March 1939 the commander of the Republican forces ousted the Negrín government and formed a National Defence Council (NDC) comprised of non-Communist Republicans, including the CNT. In the hope of being able to negotiate an end to the fighting and save lives, the NDC quickly began to arrest the diehard Stalinists, but Negrín and his associates escaped.

Yet there were still three army corps located around Madrid under Communist control, and on 7 March 1939 they seized the city, executing some Republican commanders.

The fate of Madrid now lay solely in the hands of Cipriano Mera’s IV Corps whose anarchist and Republican troops remained loyal to the NDC. They counter-attacked. After three days of fighting they had surrounded the Communist forces in the city centre. In hard street fighting the next day Mera and his anarchist and republican troops defeated the Communists, executing their commander and his commissar. Up to 2000 soldiers died in this civil war within the Civil War.

Despite the hope of negotiation with Franco (in order to prevent more reprisals and spare Madrid) he demanded only unconditional surrender and went on the offensive with overwhelming force.

There was no longer any Republican will to sacrifice lives uselessly and refugees rushed for the coast. But the Republican navy had fled. British ships evacuated only a few hundred of the many thousands desperate to escape.

Cipriano Mera made it to Algeria, but was extradited by Vichy France in 1942. Although initially condemned to death his sentence was commuted to 30 years. Upon release he went to France where the remnants of the CNT and FIJL still operated in exile and he remained in contact with the new generations of anarchist militants as well as the old. He died in Paris in 1975, just one month before Franco.

Cipriano Mera was one of the few anarchist commanders (like Makhno) to fight both fascists and communists, and win battles against both. While his last battle was only a minor victory over the Communists, it probably spared the destruction of Madrid and thousands more dead in needless fighting. It may also have saved his own life by being a factor in having his sentence commuted. The thrilling story of his life is told in a 2 hour documentary now available online.
‘flares on the street stalls, red as fire against the night-dark sky...The crowds were more dense too which was an added excitement... the yellow glare of lights from the shop fronts, the warm smell of the people pressed close together, the bunches of wallflowers stacked on barrows, the pungent smell of oranges and the great glowing blaze of their colour, the bunches of grapes, white and black suspended like Japanese lanterns from the awnings, the white nakedness of the scrubbed celery heads gleaming wantonly in the flicker and shadow, the rhythmic rows of shining apples And the black shawled gipsy-looking women who sold these things and their rough men-folk and brass earrings in their ears...infinitely romantic...’

Ethel Edith Mannin, was a working class, self-educated woman born in 1900. She became a novelist, journalist, anti-imperialist, 'Tolstoyan anarchist', anti-fascist activist, anti-Stalinist, and radical feminist.

When Ethel was at school, she wrote an essay that advocated anti-patriotic and anti-monarchist ideas. For writing the essay, her headmistress scolded her in front of the whole school and made her kneel in the school hall all afternoon. Mannin often mentioned this incident in her autobiographies as shaping her later politics. She grew up in a political household and her father was a member of the Socialist League: ‘His socialism went a great deal deeper than any politics or party policy; it was the authentic socialism of the Early Christians, the true communism of ‘all things in common’ utterly-and tragically-remote from Stalinism...’

During the conflict in Spain she became very interested in anarcho-syndicalism, supported the CNT-FAI (she contributed to the anarchist newspaper Spain and the World) and became friends with Emma Goldman. Ethel and Emma organised meetings in London to create public support, fund-raising and awareness, for Spain’s anarcho-syndicalist factions and the anarchist revolution.
“Anarchism is a beautiful path, but very rough. But you have to follow it and once you’re on it you cannot leave it, it envelops you, it intoxicates you. Anarchism is love, freedom, equality, humanity in all conditions. Neither borders, nor colour, nor race, nor flags! ... In anarchism there is only humanity, human feelings, hope for all, the maximum you can get ...”

Isabel Mesa Delgado, born 30th December 1913 - the daughter, granddaughter & great-granddaughter of working class anarchists. She was a militant anarcho-syndicalist, a member of the CNT from the age of 14, elected as secretary of the Valencian Mujeres Libres and, following the defeat of the revolution, organised a clandestine resistance group to provided aid to prisoners and their families under the dictatorship. With the death of Franco Isabel helped organise many new anarchist projects and support channels.

At her funeral, and in accordance with her wishes, her body was wrapped in the red and black flag and the old CNT anthem ‘A Las Barricadas’ was sung.

A short biography here:
https://libcom.org/history/mesa-isabel-1913-2002

6 April 1902, Jewish modernist photographer and revolutionary anarchist, Margaret Michaelis was born in what is now Poland. Moving to Germany, she fled to Spain to avoid Nazi persecution, where she got involved in the Spanish civil war, taking photographs for the Republican side.

Pictured: Doctor and Child, Barcelona Hospital, July 1936. She had been injured during the bloody combat for the city, between the Anarchist/CNT militias and sections of the military who were supportive of deeply nationalist/fascist ideology. After the defeat of the nationalist coup in Barcelona, the CNT was the real power in the city, with over 30,000 armed anarchists, both men and women, defending the streets and barricades - for a brief but beautiful moment, the working classes were truly in the saddle and attempting to build a new world.

Margaret’s work became more and more closely associated with the burgeoning revolution and she accompanied Emma Goldman on a tour of Aragon.

A short biography here:
https://libcom.org/history/michaelis-margaret-born-margaret-gross
The Impetuous Resurgence of Anarchism in the Beginning of the 21st Century...

Anarchism is Movement by Tomás Ibáñez. “Beneath the incredulous gaze of those who had locked it in the dungeons of history and to the surprise of many, anarchism has been experiencing an impressive increase in momentum since the beginning of the 21st century that has manifested itself in various regions of the globe.”

An accessible and inspirational way to get your head round ‘Neo-Anarchism’, ‘Post-Anarchism’ and a look at why there’s a global resurgence/renewal of our movement - Anarchism is Movement by Tomás Ibáñez.

Direct Action, Mutual-Aid, Solidarity - more than ever before, these words have resonance.

Here in PDF from the Anarchist Library: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/tomas-ibanez-anarchism-is-movement

Or available in hard copy (Covid-19 allowing) from Freedom Books: https://freedompress.org.uk/product/anarchism-is-movement/

Freedom Interview: Tomás Ibáñez on power and modern anarchy: https://freedomnews.org.uk/interview-tomas-ibanez-on-power-and-modern-anarchy/

“Governments have ever been known to hold a high hand over the education of the people. They know, better than anyone else, that their power is based almost entirely on the school. Hence, they monopolise it more and more...When the masses become better informed about science, they will feel less need for help form supernatural Higher Powers. The need for religion will end when man becomes sensible enough to govern himself.”

Juan Puig Elías was a Spanish anarchist, anti-fascist and educationalist born July 30th 1898

He developed the philosophy of the Modern School of Francisc Ferrer i Guardia, at the Natura School in Barcelona - where science and libertarian reason were taught as opposed to the backward oppression of religious/state teaching. Constant contact with the natural world was also high on the curriculum.

In 1936 on the wave of the revolution, he organised a campaign against illiteracy in Spain and within five months, opened a hundred new free schools for more than 60,000 children. All the schools, progressive teaching practices and all anarchist literature, were subsequently destroyed by Franco.

Exiled to France in 1939, Puig Elías fought in the Resistance against the Nazis as part part of the Freedom Battalion - the Battalion was made up largely of anti-Francoist fighters, many of whom returned to Spain in 1945, to fight a clandestine war against the dictatorship.

The Modern School Movement by Emma Goldman: https://libcom.org/library/fransisco-ferrer-modern-school-emma-goldman
Anarchist ideas were widespread by 1936. The circulation of anarchist publications at that time gives us some idea of this: there were two anarchist dailies, one in Barcelona, one in Madrid, both organs of the CNT with an average circulation of between 30 and 50 thousand. There were about 10 periodicals, in addition to various anarchist reviews with circulations of up to 70,000. In all the anarchist papers, pamphlets and books, as well as in their trade union and group meetings, the problem of the social revolution was continuously and systematically discussed. Thus, the radical nature of the Spanish working class, politicised through struggle and confrontation, as well as the influence of anarchist ideas meant that in a revolutionary situation anarchists were able to obtain mass popular support.

Although it was in the countryside where the most far-reaching anarchist socialisation took place, the revolution took place in the cities and the towns too. At that time in Spain almost 2 million out of a total population of 24 million worked in industry, 70% of which was concentrated in one area - Catalonia. There, within hours of the fascist assault, workers had seized control of 3000 enterprises. This included all public transportation services, shipping, electric and power companies, gas and water works, engineering and automobile assembly plants, mines, cement works, textile mills and paper factories, electrical and chemical concerns, glass bottle factories and perfumeries, food processing plants and breweries.
“Those were the most intense years of my life. I experienced brotherhood, unselfishness, the spirit of sacrifice and solidarity.”

Frederico Arcos.

LIVING UTOPIA

19th July 1936, in response to a military-fascist mutiny of right-wing generals against the Spanish Republic, in Barcelona - the capital of the region of Catalonia and the largest industrial centre of the country - a general strike flared up and grew into a worker revolt. The core elements of this uprising were armed members and supporters of the CNT.

If you want to understand the potential of Anarchism and the threat it poses to the capitalist order, then watch this film - for a brief, beautiful moment in 1936, the working class were in the saddle and the bosses, the gangsters, the landlords, the cops, the fascists and the government, could go fuck themselves.

Living Utopia documentary by Juan Gamero: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxRXtWvWVuY&fbclid=IwAR3kfZA7qVqU-nSo1_HbvFHtsnQ09s7L2p1MmyvguCJpC6qmIGQ5iXiE58


“...what sometimes passes for anarchism, is little more than an introspective personalism...an encounter group variously renamed a 'collective' or an 'affinity group'; a state of mind that arrogantly derides structure, organization, and public involvement; and a playground for juvenile antics.”

Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism - An Unbridgeable Chasm?

Murray Bookchin

Will anarchism evolve once more into a revolutionary social movement or become a chic boutique lifestyle subculture? Will its primary goals be the complete transformation of a hierarchical, class, and irrational society into a libertarian communist one? Or will it become an ideology focused on personal well-being, spiritual redemption, and self-realisation within the existing society?

Murray Bookchin forcefully examines the trends that threaten to undermine the revolutionary tradition of anarchism and co-opt its fragments into a harmless personalistic, yuppie ideology of social accommodation that presents no threat to the existing powers that be.

“With the plastic explosive strapped to me, my body was improbably misshapen. The only way to disguise myself was with the baggy woollen jumper my granny had knitted to protect me from the biting Clydeside winds. At the risk of understatement, I looked out of place on the Mediterranean coast in August.

I walked through the outskirts of Perpignan until I came to a junction with a road sign pointing to Spain. After what seemed like hours, a car pulled over. It was driven by a middle-aged English commercial traveller from Dagenham. He was going to Barcelona.

It soon became apparent that his charity was driven to a large extent by enlightened self-interest. Every few kilometres the old banger would chug to a standstill and I would have to get out in the full blast of the August Mediterranean sun and push the bloody car up the foothills until we got it bump-started. Between pushing a car uphill and granny’s jumper, the sweat began rolling off me. Waterproof tape was yet to have been invented, and the cellophane-wrapped packets of plastique began slipping from my body. I had to keep nudging them up with my forearms...”

**Stuart Christie, Granny Made Me An Anarchist.**

11th August 1964, 18-year-old Scottish anarchist Stuart Christie was arrested in Madrid while carrying explosives to blow up Spain’s fascist dictator General Franco. When arrested he was wearing a kilt, which confused the Spanish press in to describing him as “a Scottish transvestite.”

Here is a personal and more detailed account of those events:  

Granny Made Me An Anarchist. Available for download at the bargain price of £1.50:  
I no longer have the strength to light the wick  
But I keep my conscience intact  
Others are there and rightly revel  
In the substance that fuels my hope  
A better world towards the best of all worlds

Maria Lozano Molina, anarchist, anti-fascist street-fighter and poet, 
born in Zaragoza on 3 March 1914.

Maria became involved with the anarchist movement at the age of fifteen, via the Los Solidarios (Solidarity) group - this was a anarchist armed-struggle group founded in 1922 in Barcelona, as a reply to the ‘dirty war’ strategy used by the employers, gangsters, the police and government against trade unions and political activists.

In 1936, she was one of the thousands of women who picked up a rifle and took to the streets against the fascists and eventually she enlisted with the Durutti Column. Following the war against Francoism, she was exiled to France becoming active in the French resistance movement during WW2. Actively engaged in the post-war anti-Franco underground, Maria ran a safe-house for libertarian activists. She maintained her activism and anarchist beliefs until her death in 2000.

The Life & Times of Maria Lozano Molina:  
https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/q83crw

Further information on Los Solidarios:  
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Solidarios

Every year on October 28, thousands of Cuban children throw flowers into the sea. “A flower for Camilo,” they say.

Camilo Cienfuegos brought the libertarian tenets of anarchism to the Cuban revolution. He was born in Havana on February 6 1932 into an immigrant working-class family of Spanish anarchists, he will, forever, be inseparably linked to the idealistic period of the Revolution of 1959. Wounded and arrested in anti-Batista demonstrations in the mid-1950s, Camilo sought exile in New York and later, Mexico where he joined Castro’s ’26 July Movement’, landing in Cuba in December 1956. By 1957 he had been appointed ‘Comandante’, and on December 30 1958 his column, along with that of Che Guevara, successfully captured the provincial capital of Santa Clara. Next day the USA’s proxy dictator, Fulgencio Batista, fled Cuba. In January 1959, during the triumphal entry of the ‘barbudos’ into Havana, the 27-year-old Cienfuegos, the ‘Third Man’ of the Revolution, was acclaimed by millions of Cubans. Ten months later, on October 28th he was dead, his Cessna 310 having mysteriously disappeared after leaving Camaguey for Havana.

In this account of Cienfuegos’s life Carlos Franqui, a close personal friend of Camilo, details the dramatic events and circumstances leading up to his death, events that were to change Cuba’s destiny - and the hopes and aspirations of the Cuban people.

Available for download at ChristieBooks:  
“...it is the Anarchist insistence that revolutionary movements can develop effectively only if they speak to the specific realities of people’s lives - leading logically to the conclusion that a truly revolutionary movement must accommodate itself to diversity.”

Amparo Poch y Gascón. Spanish anarchist, doctor, and activist in the years leading up to and during the Spanish Civil War, she was one of the founding members of the Mujeres Libres.

She was responsible for organising women’s groups in Barcelona and worked to promote awareness about sexuality and health, sexual freedom and the sexual double standard - writing extensively on the topic of motherhood, promoting an anarchist approach to child rearing.

Poch has publications in many different mediums, including poetry, essays, novels, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers. While they all serve a political purpose, she wrote beautifully and personally about the experience of being a Spanish woman in the heart of the Civil War. Her novel, Amor, tells the story of a painter and through it, discusses her interest in anarchism and nonconformity.

Amparo is most well known for her magazine Los Mujeres Libres, a publication aimed at consciousness raising for working and peasant class women in Spain, in order to end the “triple enslavement of women, to ignorance, to capital, and to men.”


“Back then wearing trousers was a very odd thing. I remember I wore my hair short like a boy. And as I never wore earrings, because I didn’t like them, when we went around to the villages people would look at me and say: “A woman in trousers!” And someone else would say, “No, it’s a boy!” But then they’d notice my breasts and say, “No, it is a girl!” Well, we used to joke a lot about that. But the fact is that my parents kicked me out of the house for wearing trousers.”

Teresina Torrellas, Anarchist.

De Toda La Vida (All Our Lives). 1986 Directed by Lisa Berger and Carol Mazer

In July 1936 an attempted coup d’etat by nationalist military forces threw Spain into bitter civil war. In the midst of this civil war the most ambitious social experiment the world has ever seen took place. The Spanish Revolution saw workers seize control of their lives under the red and black banner of liberty. Despite the liberatory nature of the revolution, sexism was still rife within Spanish culture, even the most revolutionary sections of it. To counter this the Anarcha-Feminist group the Mujeres Libres (Free Women) was formed. This film, made in 1986, is a series of interviews with surviving members of the group. An important oral history of an inspiring group of anarchist women.

De Toda La Vida (All Our Lives): http://www.christiebooks.com/rave/mp4/Sp%20%20All%20our%20lives%201986%20Lisa%20Berger%20Carol%20Mazer.mp4

Pictured: An anarchist militia-woman outside the Bakunin Barracks Barcelona, summer 1936.
The last public statue of Spain’s former dictator General Francisco Franco was finally knocked off its pedestal in December 2008. Workers unceremoniously ripped the monument to him from a square in the northern port city of Santander (where 25,000 of Mussolini’s mercenary-scab troops were involved in the battle for the city in 1937). The huge bronze sculpture of the fascist prick sitting on a prancing horse, had proudly overseen traffic jams around the city’s Plaza del Ayuntamiento for 44 years.

Workers arrived with blow torches, pneumatic drills and a crane to begin the task of carrying him off to a municipal warehouse/scrap-heap of history. The small crowd of onlookers included a handful of Franco supporters, who arrived with a bunch of wilted flowers and a few sad, nazi salutes in memory of the murderous scumbag. One fascist-twat tried to pin the flag of the Falange, on to the sculpture – both he and the flag fell off, much to the amusement of the workforce. Since it’s erection, this ‘civic tribute’ had been consistently spattered with the red paint and tar of affronted anarchists and disgusted family survivors.

As part of the same move to eradicate Francoist symbols, the Canary Island city of Santa Cruz de Tenerife changed the name of one of its main streets from Rambla General Franco to Rambla de Santa Cruz. All across Spain, other streets named after Francoist generals have also been dispatched to somewhere with no postcode and the anarchist movement is on the rise again – so fuck their pathetic ‘legacy’.

The Santander statue, was the last public sculpture of Franco left in mainland Spain - the very last public sculpture of Franco anywhere in the world, was removed from Spain’s north African mercenary-scab enclave at Melilla, where he gained military prominence as a young Spanish Legion officer. On top of that, his rancid body has been exhumed from La Valle de los Caidos (the ‘Valley of the Fallen’) – now there’s a Catholic shithole that needs blowing up...and placed in a municipal cemetery.

It won’t be long before those fetid bones of Franco will need to be removed from that municipal cemetery, burned, given to dogs, tossed in the sea or ground to dust and ‘disappeared’ - there are more than 2,000 mass burial sites across Spain, the whereabouts of loved ones still unknown, many buried under the motorways and tourist hotels by the Fascist state.
'No Quiero Salir'

(Franco)
I don't want to go out
I don't want to go out
People forget about me
In the way that they forgot about all those who I shot

(Left Politician)
Finally, you will have to find
A new place to sleep

(Franco)
Please stop digging
Please stop disturbing my tomb
I really don't have time to clean
Please stop digging

Oh no
Aznar (Right-Wing PM)
allowed me to sleep

Right Politician
I will not bother you
If we take out Franco
We put the transition to democracy in danger

(Franco)
I have a solution
We will accuse the leftists of being masons
In that way they will be put up against the wall (once more).

(Right Politician)
But Generallisimo,
things don't work that way anymore

(Franco)
Well if it's not like that any more,
I don't want to go out

(Left Politician)
Thanks to the exhumation
I will govern the country
I have found a seam of gold

(Right Politician)
Oh god
You will divide the country

(Franco)
It's my right to decide
And I'm not going out
Not in these clothes
I look like a faggot

No no no no
I'm not going out

An old man, a transvestite, without a house
And oppressed by society... the left will at last listen to me

Hmmmmnnn... I would give myself one.
Humans began fashioning images of their idols several millennia ago; these became Gods, and then the Gods became Men. Augustus was not the first to be cast (literally, in bronze) as a God. This was borrowed from the Egyptians.

But along with this ultimate depiction of hierarchical power fashioned in stone and bronze came iconoclasm. The smashing of idols has been a theme of all societies, from Egypt, through Arabia, into Byzantium, and thence across the whole of Christian Europe. And found in Asia and even remote Rapa Nui.

Supreme moments of English iconoclasm occurred during the Reformation and the 17th century Civil Wars. Look over many English cathedrals or parish churches and you find a notable absence of statuary in the empty niches. This is because, during the tumultuous period of popular rebellion the Parliamentarian army smashed the saints to bits. Of course we are not alone - in Revolutionary France in the 1790s a similar amount of smashing went on, this time of Kings.

The Enlightenment brought with it a whole new crop of liberal, bourgeois reformers who battled it out with the feudal aristocracy for control of many new “nations.” Statues of reactionary military heroes like Wellington or Nelson loomed large, but as capitalist ‘primitive accumulation’ reaped the benefits of slavery and Empire, so this enormous wealth yearned for a more benign legacy. And so began philanthropy, the mark of a gentleman keen to obscure the exploitation on which his fortune was based. As the British Empire expanded and reached its apogee, statues of military heroes and rich philanthropists became essential landmarks in British cities, that celebrated both the successful oppression of foreign native peoples, and - for those with eyes keen enough to see it - the successful oppression of the British working class. It is therefore fitting that some of these old statues are now toppling.

In Spain the reckoning with the past has seen the destruction of monuments to Franco. What artistic merit did they have? None. What possible reason to keep them? As part of Spain’s history? A monument to a monster responsible to the deaths of thousands? That is the kind of history that needs us to remember above all the struggle and the victims. Not the oppressors.

In this country we should have an inventory of all statues and set up local tribunals to decide on the fate of each. Imagine that every town and city had one, where local people and experts could come and argue the merits of each case - should the statue be toppled, or have an addition, or an explanatory plaque? Imagine how this would open up history to everyone, to make it live and breath in the present. And with that debate we can open up revolutionary and class perspectives. The very act of discussing the fate of these icons would be a displacement of the existing power structures, a reversal of perspective. Ideas can break bricks.
“BASF lacks the infrastructure for further political education. It does not have an office, library, or community space. It lacks computers, original and translated publications, and people capacity to take on popular education projects. Despite resource drawbacks though, BASF has generated collective feelings among its members, negotiated higher wages, and engaged in practices of mutual aid within its sectors. After natural disasters in the region, BASF members work together to rebuild fellow members’ homes without any external aid. During health emergencies or family events, members pull together their resources to support one another. Some of us who have grown up in authoritarian society and discover anarchism later in life have the least grounds to assume that our vision of freedom is the most comprehensive. After all, we lived completely oblivious to something simple and innate for decades, in some cases.”

Bangladesh Anarcho Syndicalist Federation

In the so-called ‘third world’, in the new industrial heartlands, the ideas of anarchism and radical democracy, are once more gaining traction or re-emerging following brutal suppression - from Indonesia, to the Philippines, to Malaysia, to Bangladesh, anarchists are embedded in working-class communities, in factories and on the land. As with Spain in 1936, many believe these countries to be the front-line of anarchist politics in the world today. Comrades across the planet should get in touch via social media and show solidarity, send materials and practical support wherever possible.

Love & Rage - Interview With BASF:
https://loveandragemedia.org/2019/01/05/an-interview-with-the-bangladesh-anarcho-syndicalist-federation/
“It’s not just political theories we are concerned with...it’s life, it’s our relations to all that is, it’s the revolution of everyday life that counts...if people can’t see anarchism in their daily lives, how people live and treat each other, we will never see how we can seize the moment. If people are having to declare Kropotkin’s or Bakunin’s anarchism at a time of upheaval or crisis, then that means nothing. But if we can see people seizing control over their own lives on a day to day basis, without authority, we’ll see that anarchism is probably here more than we could ever imagine.”

Ashanti Alston Omowali is an anarchist, speaker, and writer, and former member of the Black Panther Party. Alston sometimes refers to himself as “the Anarchist Panther”, a term he coined in his anarchist Panther Zine series. He was also member of the Black Liberation Army, and spent more than a decade in prison after police captured him and he was convicted of armed robbery. Alston disputes the moral issues of property and terms his activity in the BLA as “bank expropriation”.

Short interview with Ashanti Alston: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpH AJ1nOJOU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpH AJ1nOJOU)

Transcript of a talk given by Ashanti Alston at the Law and Disorder conference, held in Portland, Oregon: [https://libcom.org/library/panthers-black-liberation-army-struggle-free-all-political-prisoners-prisoners-war](https://libcom.org/library/panthers-black-liberation-army-struggle-free-all-political-prisoners-prisoners-war)
**America was built under/stand, by stolen labour on stolen land**

*NDN Collective calls for closure of Mount Rushmore and for the Black Hills to be returned to the Lakota.*

"Mount Rushmore is on stolen Lakota land and its very existence is a symbol of white supremacy" says Nick Tilsen, NDN Collective President. "In opposing the ongoing desecration of our sacred land and asking for return of Lakota lands where Mount Rushmore is situated, we’re not saying anything that our parents, grandparents and great grandparents haven’t already said – The Lakota have opposed Mount Rushmore since the very beginning."

On the heels of growing national protests in defense of Black lives, monuments of white supremacy are coming down. Local, state and national governments are being called upon to take down symbols of thinly veiled white supremacy, including monuments and statues wherein white historical figures who have caused grave harm to Black and Indigenous lives are exalted, from confederate statues, to statues of Christopher Columbus and brutal conquistadors like Oñate.

“When it comes to U.S. Presidents, what many Americans don’t realize is that the vast majority of them had policies devoted either to the complete annihilation or subjugation of Indigenous people,” says Sarah Sunshine Manning from NDN. “Even seemingly ‘good’ presidents like Abraham Lincoln aren’t known for the harm they’ve caused Indigenous people; Though Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, he also ordered the largest mass execution in American history with the hanging of 38 Dakota men in 1862– these were Indigenous people who were fighting for their lives."

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**Defend. Develop. Decolonize.**

NDN Collective is a national organization dedicated to building the collective power of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations to exercise our inherent right to self-determination.

We are unapologetically, unabashedly, NDN. United like never before, we rise together—arm in arm—to equip all Indigenous Peoples with the tools needed to become architects of our future. Through a holistic approach to infrastructure, funding, advocacy, consulting, and philanthropy we are fostering a world of justice and equity for all people and the planet.

*From NDN Collective in Rapid City South Dakota: https://ndncollective.org/*

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The Six Grandfathers (Tȟupkášila Šákte), was the most sacred site of First Nations tribes - shown here before desecration.

George Washington ‘owned’ 317 slaves/human beings and had dentures made of slave teeth.

Thomas Jefferson ‘owned’ 600 slaves/human beings and raped child slaves.

Theodore Roosevelt said: “I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every 10 are. And I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth.” and went on: “...the most vicious cowboy has more moral principle than the average Indian.”

Abraham Lincoln ordered the largest mass-hanging in US history – 38 Dakota tribe members.

The only good President, Is a dead President – Trust No Politician!
A revolution is taking place in Rojava as we speak. It might not be perfect, nor the utopia we dream of as we read Bonano while sipping coffee on our couches, nor the spontaneous insurrection against all authority that the invisible committee talks about, nor the epic revolution that we imagine when we speak of the 1936 Spanish Revolution. But it is happening here and now, and it is the closest to a revolution that we can experience nowadays. It is up to us that it goes down in history as such.

What is happening in Syria is a popular movement; organized and armed. A movement fighting to exist and administer a territory against forces which wish to occupy it. They are defending a massive revolutionary process through collective action in which people organize from the bottom up under the principles of democracy, pluralism and women’s liberation.

A movement in the midst of a bloody war raging on in Rojava. A war fought on various fronts, in which the enemy is not only ISIS or the Turkish state. The war takes place in cities and rural areas, seeking to build an economic system which will stop capitalism from destroying society and the land that sustains it. But the war is also fought inside families and communities, aiming to put an end to the patriarchal system that oppresses women and the system that denies the youth’s potential, striving to build a communal and self-organized society. But the battle also takes place in the institutions, seeking to build a democratic system in which people can govern their own lives and their land, establishing and consolidating communal councils in order to manage and solve people’s problems from a collective standpoint. The war is also an ideological war that goes on in the minds of those involved. Struggling against the individualist, capitalist, liberal and patriarchal mind-set. Above all, it is a struggle that goes on inside people’s minds. The form it takes is collective and popular education and co-existence, so as to learn to distinguish between what we need to live and that which the system tries to impose on us as necessities to survive.

In Rojava we can learn how power perpetuates itself by keeping us isolated, pitting us against each other, so it can later present itself as our saviour that – through the use of the states’ monopoly and centralisation systems- manages to have influence society, making it seem as though they are solving our problems. We can learn that statistics, which we are presented with, telling us we have moved past the crisis are nothing else but numbers and graphics which aim to convey their own history, the history of power. This is how they make us believe that it is only thanks to them that the nation is safe and that they have managed to avoid same disaster they have caused. We can also learn that they have not only managed to perpetuate their system of exploitation and pillage but also they have managed to consolidate and strengthen it. It might not be necessary to travel to Rojava to learn these aspects of political life, but it is here that you can see them as clear as day and that we should not expect states, parliaments, nor even local institutions that are now claiming to bring about change, to come in our aid. The solution must come from the people themselves, as only the people can save the people. This isn’t to say that any effort invested in penetrating their institutions is in vain. Institutions themselves are tools that must be used appropriately, but not only state institutions. The PAH (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca, a platform fighting against evictions and for housing rights in the Spanish state) for example, has been able to provide solutions for people facing eviction more so than the Housing Ministry. The appropriate way to understand and use the institutions is analysing when they are useful to free oppressed people from their oppressors and when they are not. This is something we can also learn from Rojava. Reaching state institutions can be useful when behind the institutions it is the people themselves that occupy them through a popular revolutionary organization willing to force upon said institutions to do what is right and to put a...
solution to the problems they have caused. If not, they are only a demobilising tool, betraying the hopes that the people placed on empty speeches, sowing mistrust and discord.

**State, Colonialism and Revolution**

What is happening in Rojava is the result of more than 4 decades of experience and revolutionary organization. The social model being built is possible because of the tens of thousands of people, women and men, armed and trained to defend themselves. It is this experience that has enabled the people to face the forces of oppression that fight to invade their homes. The expulsion of the Islamic State from their land has laid bare what lies behind them; the Turkish state has opted to continue its bloody war in Afrin with its own soldiers this time around. The Turkish state, like all other states, needs war in order to survive. War is its reason to exist, its means to prevail. When military conflict is not effective or profitable, the state uses all means possible to subdue its enemies (democratic society): economic war, media manipulation or environmental aggressions. But when all these fail, its last resort will always be the use of brutal force, military violence. This is a valuable lesson to be learned from the Rojava experience.

Western states are not so different from states in the middle eastern region, with the difference that those of us classified as its citizens possess numerous commodities and privileges. These privileges serve as a buffer to suppress resistance, to prevent a revolutionary movement from gaining foothold and question its hegemony. It is important to keep in mind that these commodities and privileges, come mainly from the exploitation and pillage of what we have arrogantly named the third world. The Spanish state knows colonial exploitation very well. The brutal incursions and conquests of Latin America, which began 5 centuries ago looting and massacring the indigenous population, brought vast wealth to the kingdom. In this way, monopolies were created that allowed a certain degree of hegemony against the capitalist industrialism, that was being born in England. This system of colonial imperialism, of which the Spanish and Portuguese states are two of its precursors, was later extended through Africa, Asia, and the Middle East by other European states. And this is precisely what is being fought against in Rojava, with the experience of more than 4 decades of revolutionary movement for the liberation of Kurdistan, and with the heritage of centuries of anticolonial movements throughout the world.

**An Internationalist Struggle**

From the beginning of the 2012 revolution, Rojava has risen as an internationalist revolution. Hundreds of people -mainly western, truth be told- have answered the calling to defend the revolution, and many of them have been martyred while fighting against those who aspired to end it. In Rojava, we can learn about the great sacrifice undergone by those who have given their lives to defend the revolution, not only the Rojava Revolution, but all revolutionary movements that keep up the fight for a more humane and fair world. The revolution which took place in the Spanish state in 1936 is, to this day, one of the milestones for internationalist revolutionaries. Tens of thousands of socialist militants, from over 50 countries, left their homes to face fascism that had taken up arms. They knew that if fascism was not stopped in the Spanish state it would come knocking at their doors. More than a third of those international brigades were martyred in combat, and we must salute and honour their memory and their struggle along with the local militants that, while belonging to different revolutionary organizations, joined a popular front to confront fascist barbarism, dressed as national-Catholicism.

In Rojava, the reaction presented itself as an Islamic caliphate, channelling the hate and frustration accumulated after years of imperialist intervention. The brutal invasion of Iraq in 2003, led by the USA, with the Spanish state as an accomplice, has been one of the main causes of terror and resentment, which has prepared the terrain for the emergence of the barbaric Islamic State and its temporary consolidation. But, unlike 1936, in Rojava the revolutionary movement has been able to defeat the enemy. The end of the war in 1939 was the spark that ignited the second world war when Hitler managed to grasp complete control of the German state and extended his reign of terror in Europe. Today, Erdogan follows his footsteps and the brutal geostategic tensions accumulated in Syria in the last 7 years of war can easily lead to a war of similar or even bigger proportions.

**If not you, who? If not now, when?**

Fascism advances if it is not fought against, and the invasion of Afrin has been the terrible reminder that the peace attained in Rojava, after the defeat of ISIS, does not mean anything as long as Erdogan remains in control of the Turkish state. The fascist uprising lived in the Spanish state in 1936 was met with a popular and revolutionary uprising to put an end to it. Faced with such an extreme situation, dozens of socialist organizations – coordinated by the efforts of the international workers’ congresses- called upon all its members and freedom loving people. A calling that resonated throughout the world, a calling to put an end to fascism in the Spanish state. However, fascism is also capable of having an international approach when it needs to, in the same way that Germany and Italy came to Franco’s help, thousands of jihadists have heeded the call of the caliph Al Bagdadi.

Now Islamic/clerical fascism in Rojava has taken on a new flag. Erdogan has renewed the pact with the militias born out of Al Qaeda to occupy Afrin. Today they threaten Manbij, and they will not stop if not confronted. The Socialist International Organizations are nothing but ashes these days, but ashes from which we must be reborn to face the fascist threat. Anticolonial struggles and anti-imperialist struggles, as well, must heed the call and respond with might against this brutal aggression to the Syrian land carried out by Turkey, an army which, must be noticed, is a key component of the bloodthirsty military alliance known as NATO. Rojava is ready to receive all forms of support from internationalists around the world. This revolution can be the rear-guard that we need, a rear-guard for all revolutionary movements around the world as Palestine once was. To stand up against global capitalism, we need to develop a global revolutionary movement that can face the enemy wherever it may attack. We must do everything in our hands to defend this revolution, let’s not reduce solidarity to mere words. If not us, then who? If not here, then where? If not now, then when?
As unemployment is soaring close to the levels of the 90’s in St Petersburg, the brunt of the government’s reactionary and diversionary laws, is born by women, the LGBT community, and migrants. The amendments to the constitution - which include “firmly defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman”, amongst other remarks of nationalistic and bigoted character, have been overwhelmingly accepted. After I wrote a short post for a Russian anarchist page about the repressions and police cruelty towards Julia Tsvetkova, a feminist who made body positive and feminist art, I was rather disturbed to see some of my comrades throw out typical misogynist talking points to try and detract from Julia’s predicament. I was disappointed and hurt to see points brought up about women supposedly “lying about rape en masse to ruin men’s lives”, about “men struggling too” as a clear attempt to derail the conversation. It saddened me to realise that for many activists this issue was just a debate, just a distraction. Once they walked out the chat, it would all be behind them. I on the other hand, as well as many other women and girls - cis and trans alike - have no such option. They are beaten by their husbands, their rapes are laughed at, their abortion rights are ever under threat. Women cannot leave the topic, for it weighs heavily over their very existences, especially because so many were trapped with their abusers during the lockdown and were refused abortions as “non emergency procedures”.

Especially hurt was I to see yet another feminist channel use a platform that it built through bringing to light the case of 3 sisters, who killed their abusive father in self defence and were getting harsh prison sentences for it, to speak out in support of JK Rowling - a multi-millionaire who is currently punching-down, and using her vast media platform to scaremonger about a tiny minority of trans people, as opposed to focusing on where the power lays within society. I am so very angry on the behalf of the many Russian trans people who spent time and energy organising events in support of the sisters, and now feel dejected and hurt by this thoughtless, cruel action. It is telling that some supposed feminists attack a vulnerable minority instead of confronting the real enemy which rejoices to see us fight. It is unacceptable that feminist trans people have to assume that they will be faced with hostility if they reveal their identity when they go into activist spaces.

It is revolting that in Russia, when people and groups are under attack by the state, that some feminists appear to be some of the most reactionary, short-sighted individuals to ever stick around women under the pretense of defending them - proclaim that trans women never “stand up for women”, without realising that trans women have been doing exactly that alongside them, but often had to deem it unsafe to reveal their identity for fear of aggression.

I watch the cops grab my peers at demonstrations and shove them into trucks, I watch judges come to court in FSB cars and give my anarchist comrades massive sentences for fabricated charges, and cannot help but feel paranoid that the FSB comes for me. I hear the door slam the floor even now, and it matters not that the pigs don’t even know or care who I am. They have made us afraid, and the fear is a powerful tool. I know of the possibility of my comrades rejecting me for supporting trans people, or snapping one day at me for being “too politically correct and intersectionist”...and I am not afraid. I am a rock unto myself. I know in my heart that there many people - even out here in Russia - who are anarchists like me, but would never equate speaking out for minorities to being “a liberal intersectionist”.

And if there aren’t, I shall spread information and thus gain them. The world now hates science, it despises feelings and empathy, but it doesn’t have to always be this way. A better world is possible, an equal world without capitalism and oppression is possible, and maybe I can shine a small beam on that world in this god-damned country.
A message from the streets of Cebu City, during lockdown. The roads are still closed with police barriers/blockades – in fact, there are so many police bastards on the streets it is hard to move without being seen by them – the state is using the pandemic to increase it’s control over the lives of people.

It feels like we are sacrificing days of our lives as this shit goes on – we are so bored here and giving less of a fuck about this administration/government every day. Our collective is still involved in the community kitchens, but many markets and shops are closed so we rely on food donations from individuals and people with some land. A second wave of Covid-19 and more of their bullshit stupid lies and corruption, will surely push people over the edge – some are even talking about getting weapons. Fuck the mayors staff and the para-military police that protect the fuck. This country needs food not the Bio weapons that our government is spending millions on.

URC Dino

Dear comrades, first of all we are our solidarity. Today’s economic crisis has imposed financial hardship on low- and middle-income communities. Despite this, the creativity and resourcefulness of mutual aid groups that prioritize community over wealth maximization have provided pathways to economic stability. With further research and advocacy, these pathways can become more widespread and build the economic resilience of our communities.

URC Bogs

As days past from ECQ or Enhance Community Quarantine we are now in lockdown, things are getting harder as armed personal from Manila descended here in a mass the SAP Special Action Force known for their inhumane acts of violence in the battlefield, now they roam the streets like they own them - penetrating the community such as ours, locking us inside the community and immobilizing us. I became one of their targets and was confronted by them - thankfully that happened in broad daylight and people have witnessed it, the cop-soldier asked ‘what are you doing, why is your name and your friends names on our list’? I simply said we provide food and other amenities such as hygiene kits and masks to prevent people for being jailed for not wearing one, ‘that’s good of you to do, are you still doing it right now’? I said yes, I also ask him can we continue doing on what we are doing, he said ‘yes as our role here is only safety and security we will let you do what you and your friends have been doing. But let me be clear, No pictures - we don’t want this to get to the president and his cronies, now that you are isolated on your community and you have access to the markets selling food and vegetables that’s all you have.’

Maybe even the cops are turning?

Amidst the crisis that we are facing here and difficulties that have, we are still able to give masks and food to the poor people in our community – we show solidarity in the name of Anarchism! We can’t ask for vegetables in our local markets anymore for very little supply has been arriving but we’re doing our best to tip the scale - we haven’t got any support from our local counterparts, our mission is clear we will continue giving aid to our community as long as we can and if things get harder we Filipinos going to find the ways as we are doing here in Cebu City Philippines for mutual aid. We would love to here from you and share our existence in this insane tyranny and beyond difficulties that we are facing here.

URC 28

Love, Freedom and Hope to all. Mabuhi Ang Mga Anarkista (A) - Long Live Anarchism (A)
THE RETURN OF SWEATSHOP BRITAIN - CHEAP FASHION IN OTHER PEOPLE’S MISERY

By Dr Lisa Mckenzie, working class academic

“We had huge, powerful unions then, that had deep radical and cultural roots into our communities - gradually, they have been dismantled/disempowered/bought off by the state. Right now, the TUC should be getting off it’s well-worn knees and advocating the occupation, expropriation and collectivisation of all the workplaces that are being shut down and where workers are being sacked in their thousands - the shareholders and bosses are still raking it in.”

Profiteering, criminal ‘businessmen’ and a compliant, state-owned TUC, have meant the 2000s have brought misery for vast swathes of Britain’s working class. Now should be the time to stop the exploitation and end the country’s ongoing wealth inequality. I don’t buy into the right-wing argument that black and brown people and migrants are currently most at risk from Covid-19 because of their own actions or their ‘cultural norms’. What Covid-19 has done is lift the masks that have been hiding exploitation and inequality in our system – and nothing has been as stark in opening this can of worms than the city of Leicester’s return to lockdown.

I know Leicester quite well; I used to work there in the 1990s. My mum, who was a representative for the National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel, visited Leicester weekly, as the union’s head office was located there due to the large number of factories in the area and throughout the East Midlands. Both the industry and the union have ceased to exist – the draw of huge profits in overseas sweatshops in China and Bangladesh, was too much to resist for the greedy bastards that owned them. With them, went the inter-generational, hard-won rights of workers – not a word from the Labour Party or the TUC (probably too busy selling out the miners (again).

Leicester is a great city; it’s not only the most diverse city in the country, but it’s one of the friendliest. When I heard that it was to be locked down again, I felt real empathy with the community. But worse was to come, with the initial media consensus suggesting the Covid-19 spike might be due to that diversity and friendliness – those ‘cultural norms’ – squarely laying the blame on the people of Leicester themselves. What we have learned recently gives some context to this story, which really isn’t just about Leicester but about the working class in Britain, especially those in the post-industrial areas and migrant workers. An undercover journalist working for the Times recently shared their experience of working during the lockdown period in a Leicester sweatshop, where workers are earning £3.50 an hour and their safety has been shown as totally secondary to profit.

The lockdown has increased the public’s interest in shopping online, and so Boohoo, the benefactor of the Leicester sweatshops, has been coining it in – or at least it was, until the revelations of the past few days explained how they do ‘fast fashion’ by exploiting British workers. The value of the online fashion retailer has now plunged by more than £1.5bn. I remember my mum talking to me in the 1970s and 1980s about sweatshops that existed in Leicester, along with Nottingham, Birmingham and Derbyshire and in London’s East End. Her union ran a massive campaign to get them unionised or in some cases closed down, and by the mid-1990s they had all but disappeared. At the same time the textile manufacturing industry was also being asset stripped from our shores.

So there has been a degree of shock in learning that the sweatshops have returned in the East Midlands, and that your summer dress has not been made by exploited faceless people in some far-off foreign land, but by the same in the middle of England. In all honesty, I am not surprised; it was always a matter of time. After the devastation left by de-industrialisation and the feeding of steroids to a finance economy in the
form of deregulation – plus the elevation of the roles of banker, commodity trader and financial broker to God-like status – a clear gap has appeared in the UK.

If it was in physical form, it would look like a series of Grand Canyons separating the Midlands, the North and the coastal areas away from London and South East. The devastation has been that stark. Consequently, during the early 2000s, local councils in the devastated areas courted any industry that would come, and the distribution centres arrived. The new ‘satinic mills’ were created by tax breaks, European funding and infrastructure projects that saw A-roads used mainly by lorries carved into the country’s heartlands.

The spiv businessman was also on the rise again, opening up terrible places to work, using high security to keep out unwanted scrutiny from the media, the public, and what is left of the tepid trade unions. Mike Ashley of Sports Direct and Mahmud Kamani of Boohoo are such spiv industrialists, making billions and being celebrated and rewarded for their exploitation with government grants and bailouts.

But now, finally, the curtain is rising on these spivs, backroom sweatshops and terrified workers. Enough is enough. The 2000s have been truly awful – a full bonanza of excess, the greed of the spiv bosses, the dodgy bureaucrats in Westminster and town halls, and, of course, the weak British unions. Most of these seem more interested in getting involved in party politics and working with the government than getting back into the shop floors, training and educating workers to fight for themselves like my mum did in the past.

Is it any surprise that union membership within the private sector has never been lower, while the spiv industrialist reigns supreme? The ONS showed how income inequality was rising back in February 2020; imagine where we will be by 2021. There are a number of complicated threads to pull together from this one story of rising Covid-19 cases in Leicester. But among them is the fact that working-class migrants and people of colour are not responsible for the economic position they are in, which puts them at risk; that our society is deeply divided on economic class lines; and that fast fashion is exploitative, and we do not need a pair of fucking jeans made in someone else’s misery.

Our industrial or de-industrial history is important to our past, present and future. Places like the East Midlands need industries that allow people to be skilled, educated and paid well – where working-class people join together in grass-roots, syndicalist, direct action unions. Making clothes for other people can, and should, be a joy in the right conditions, not a nightmare created by parasite bosses, bent politicians and lap-dog unions.
[CW: Mentions of Sexual Assault, Rape]

I think it's necessary to offer a wee history of the SWP for new activists who don't know about this organisation.

I'll start with trying to name all their 'front orgs':

- Stop the War Coalition (StWC)
- Stand Up To Racism (SUTR)
- Unite Against Fascism (UAF) formerly Anti-Nazi League (ANL)
- Rock Against Racism (RAR)
- Right To Work Campaign (RTW)
- The Socialist Worker (newspaper)
- Socialist Review (magazine)
- Women's Voice (publication)
- Black Lives Matter*

*The SWP has frequently used the name ‘Black Lives Matter’ to organise and advertise their events whether it be the name of their event on Facebook or plastered on their generic looking placards. They are in no way affiliated with the BLM movement.

Previously known as the International Socialism Group (IS), the group aligned with Trotskyism and adopted a “Socialism from below” tactic in building a workers movement. It was heavily involved in the anti-vietnam war movement particularly in student area where it gained a lot of its first wave of members. At this time (late 60s) there was also the question of their position on Ireland. This is a quote from an article in the Socialist Worker:

“The breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists.”

The call from the people of Ireland being “Troops Out!” was rejected by the Party. This stance was deeply unpopular and saw many new activists and organisers become sceptical or leave the party entirely.

This tactic of inserting the Party into the latest movement became a frequent tactic and is still prevalent today. During the miners strike for example the then “IS” membership grew by around 50% through the distribution of its newspapers to striking workers.

The IS changed its name in 1977 to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) this was due to the Party now seeking to stand in elections. This re-branding was also meant to reassure its members and potential members that the Party was moving forward despite being in decline. It was also meant to be the start of a new era where the Party would now attempt to initiate new movements rather than insert itself into existing ones. This would see a tactical change which brought about the formation of many “front” organisations.

In 1977 they launched the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) in reaction to the growing presence of National Front (NF). Around the same time, Rock Against Racism (RAR) was formed, mostly as a result of Eric Claptons public support of Enoch Powell. Women’s Voice was also founded around the same time which was the SWP’s feminist wing and magazines such as Flame, aimed at “ethnic minorities”.

The rise in the far-right saw an increase in membership as more activists were on the street.
but by 1980, National Front became fragmented and less popular so naturally this saw an end to the need for militant anti-fascism around the country. This also meant less members for the SWP which started to decline in the early 80s and it turned back to its propagandist approach to gaining members. Street stalls and newspapers.

Women’s Voice was shut down in 1982 much to the dismay of many existing members who felt that this was to ignore women’s oppression. Some also criticised WV for simply inserting feminist theory into the party without actively trying to gain more women members.

In the early 90s, the ANL was able to relaunch in opposition to the BNP. After the murder of Stephen Lawrence, who was killed by racists near the BNP headquarters, the SWP were accused of using his name to gain support and members, Stephens mother eventually got so frustrated that she demanded they stop using his name.

In 1997, despite being deeply unpopular with the left, the SWP asked people to vote for Tony Blair’s Labour Party. The party thought that once New Labour was voted in, the public would become disillusionsed with their policies and this would allow members to turn to more radical factions, thus an increase in members to the SWP. This tactic would arguably prove successful with the Blair/Bush invasion of Iraq.

In the early 00s the Party attempted to form socialist alliances throughout the UK. The Socialist Alliance (SA) in England and Welsh SA. Whilst its members in Scotland joined the growing Scottish Socialist Party (SSP). The SWP quickly ran these alliances into the ground, being accused of financial impropriety by socialist feminist barrister Liz Davies. In Scotland, the SSP continued to grow but not for long.

After 9/11 the party approached the Communist Party of Britain and the Muslim Association of Great Britain to form the Stop the War Coalition. However it was SWP members who occupied all the most senior positions within the organisation. The Muslim Association was also a very conservative group, whose only shared interest was anti-western sentiment. They endorsed George Galloways uncritical support for Hezbollah whilst Lindsey German, a founding member of the StWC commented that:

“I’m in favour of defending gay rights, but I am not prepared to have it as a shibboleth, [created by] people who ... won’t defend George Galloway”

This type of reactionary behaviour would prove to be a pattern in defending the white male figureheads of the SWP and its political allies. According to some sceptics, the SWP were not against the war but in favour of Saddam Hussein.

John Rees, another officer of Stop the War, commented:

“Socialists should unconditionally stand with the oppressed against the oppressor, even if the people who run the oppressed country are undemocratic and persecute minorities, like Saddam Hussein.”

Whilst this dialogue between centrist journalists and the SWP seems to be more like a point-scoring game between pro-Blair and anti-war, it is clear that the attitude of the left at the time was against the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. It is more likely that the public had a much more nuanced opinion on their anti-war sentiment than people like George Galloway. It is also a stretch to say that the SWP were not anti-war, it is more realistic to say that their priorities were not in politically nuanced / strategic debate but in gaining membership from the grassroots movement, mostly devoid of party political interest.

In any case, it was unsurprising when another coalition emerged and this time with Galloways Respect Party, called ‘Respect - The Unity Coalition’ which lasted between 2004-07. Though the SWP and Galloway have much in common in how they like to insert themselves at the front and centre of grassroots movements, the inevitable split came due to massive egos on both sides.

The pattern of supporting male-egos would not stop here, when in 2006 the SWP put their energy behind Tommy Sheridan’s Solidarity Party after his split from the SSP. Tommy Sheridan, having been accused of adultery, caused a split in the SSP when he refused to admit his mistakes and instead brought the then successful party into oblivion. The Scottish parliamentary left has never recovered from this and to this day, only a handful of leftists sit in parliament across the Greens, SNP and Labour.

In 2004, the SWP allowed jazz musician Gilad Atzmon to play at their events and promoted the artist as a “fearless tirade against Zionism”. Gilad was a right-wing anti-semite and holocaust denier, who once stated:

“I’m not going to say whether it is right or not to burn down a synagogue, I can see that it is a rational act”

Gilad was platformed by the SWP for 2 years before the party cut ties with him. Proving again, a pattern of rejecting nuanced opinion in favour of reactionary views that fit their agenda along with hollow slogans. The only goal being of co-opting movements in order to gain members.

In 2011 Chris Bambery resigned from the party arguing, that it was ridden with factionalism, that
he had learned about the founding of RTW from Party Notes and that the party has no credible strategy to fight the government’s cuts. Bambery’s resignation was followed by 38 members in Scotland.

This flow of membership in and out of the party continues today, not just from senior committee members but from activists on the ground who tend to be young people brought out onto the street by the latest grassroots movement. The danger the SWP cause to the Left mostly lies here. In their co-optation of events and aggressive recruitment tactics, they often deter enthusiastic activists altogether or take their energy and use it to recruit more new members. As Chris Bambery notes that there is “no real strategy” within the Party against the cuts. Similarly there was no real strategy to the anti-war campaign or indeed the anti-racism campaign before that. The priority lies in recruitment.

**[CW: Sexual Assault, Rape]**

In 2013 allegations were brought to the party that the then national secretary Martin Smith (aka Comrade Delta) had sexually assaulted and raped a 19yr old female member. This came after years of allegations and issues with Smith, which were continually ignored or dismissed. Much of the early criticism around the case was aimed at the fact that the police were never involved, in a leaked transcript, one member commented that the party “had no faith in the bourgeois court system to deliver justice”.

Journalist Laurie Penny noted that the allegations were investigated and dismissed by friends of the accused, adding that the alleged victim and her friends were harassed by other party members. The party’s Central Committee, stated that the issue was an internal matter, insisting that “we strongly condemn” the release of the conference transcript and that “this case is closed”. The Guardian reported that the woman was asked a number of offensive questions about her sexual past and drinking habits. That instead of actually dealing with the rape allegation, the SWP preferred to talk about its internal organisation, thereby protecting its leadership. Less than a year later further allegations of rape were made internally against another party member. A special conference was held in which the central committee insisted the report about the complaint against Delta (Martin Smith) “that no rape had occurred” be accepted.

One of the members who left as a result of this was replaced by Julie Cherry on the central committee. Incidentally Julie’s father was a member of the disputes committee who found the allegation of misconduct against Delta “not proven”.

By 2014 the SWP lost around 700 members as a result of the allegations and handling of the case. This was the most public scandal around these issues but it has been noted that around the same time there were more people coming forward with allegations of sexual assault within the party that may not have been specifically the same abuser. These are thought to have also been “swept under the carpet”. Thus the Party has rightfully been branded as “rape apologists”.

The SWP continue to insert themselves into the latest movements in hope of gaining more members to their supposed political party but it is hard to see this as anything other than a predatory for-profit business that operates by preying on young and enthusiastic leftists who are unaware of their history. They swamp every demonstration with thousands of placards, with heavily scripted and boring chants and still operates a chronically hierarchical structure, where power is concentrated in the hands of the ‘central committee’.

They continue to be a thorn in the side of every grassroots movement from housing struggles, to welfare, to community action and as seen by their latest co-optation of Black Lives Matter today. They need to be sidelined.
The internet is a place where the lynch-mob mentality of “call-out culture” encourages people to view one another as one-dimensional beings – only defined by mistakes and imperfections. In the name of ‘social justice’ and ‘ outing abusers’, a new statism emerges, utilizing fear and guilt to coerce allyship conformity. And similar to being charged by the State, once condemned on the internet, an individual may never escape that reputation. Instead, any or all personal growth and development remains trivial to the static nature of their past mistakes. Despite personal improvement, a convicted individual is sentenced to forever remain captive by the essence of their online portrayal.

In my experience as a ‘marginalized voice’ I’ve seen identity politics used by activists as a tool of social control aimed at anyone who fits the identity criteria of ‘oppressor’. The traditional power-struggle for equality has turned into an olympic sport for social leverage, inverting the same social hierarchy that should have been destroyed in the first place. Many identity politicians I’ve come across are more interested in exploiting “white guilt” for personal (and even capital) gain than physically confronting any organizational model of white supremacy. I’ve witnessed victimhood used to conceal blatant lies and bullying, motivated by personal revenge. All too often I have seen how identity politics creates a culture where personal experiences are trivialized to the point of passive silence. But this is all old news. Any experienced, self-identifying anarchist has seen or probably experienced some form of being ‘called-out’ or ‘cancelled’. So why do I bring it up? Because I still see this shit happening and I still see so many people lacking the courage to openly confront it.

I don’t expect this text to bring identity politics to a grinding halt. I am merely expressing my hostility for it and its authoritarian, anti-individualist nature. I still see self-proclaimed anarchists fussin’ over ‘white’ dreads (as well as seeing people cut their dreads under social pressure). I still see people justify voting like they did for Obama (this time it’s for Bernie). And I still see ‘allies’ mumbling frustration under their breath, too scared to confront the authoritarianism they see right in front of ‘em.

Imagine what anarchy would look like if people refused to obey the condescending demands of identity politicians. Would people feel more free to explore their lives beyond the narrow limitations of prescribed identity? Would they fearlessly reclaim their power to formulate their own opinions? Is there a joy to be experienced in the hysterical mockery of academic elitism? Would this text be less valid if it wasn’t written by a queer person of color? What if I was a ‘white’, ‘cis’ ‘male’? Why would it matter?

In the grand scheme of things, it doesn’t. Because after all, this isn’t just about identity. This is about anti-authoritarian anarchy. If there is one thing I have seen the most in the past few years, it’s how identity politics moves like a plague, consuming every social space — ironically including anarchist circles. For me, anarchy is about destroying socially assigned identity and all the limitations it imposes upon the imagination. Anarchy is an individualist experience that finds itself held captive by the prison of assigned identity. Rather than destroying that prison along with the society that constructs it, anarchism today has become a cemetery of dead potential, internalized victimhood, and an ideological competition for who is ‘most oppressed’.

Rather than taking aim at identity itself and the apparatus maintaining this paradigm, energy is spent tearing one another down, ignoring the complexity of individual uniqueness, and playing the State’s role of defining each other based on membership to identity categories. Embracing a particular identity only reaffirms that identity’s existence as a ‘universal ‘truth’ – and therefore, by the colonial intentions of assigned identity, the servitude and enslavement of some to others as a universal truth as well.

Anarchists are the radical of the radical – the black cats, the terrors of many, of all the bigots, exploiters, charlatans, fakers and oppressors. Consequently, we are also the most slandered, misrepresented, misunderstood and persecuted of all.”

Bartolomeo Vanzetti

Call for International Week of Solidarity With Anarchist Prisoners 2020 // 23 – 30 August

https://solidarity.international/

A new decade has started on this planet. With the rise of right-wing movements and the slow decline of social democracy, we are looking into coming years of intense struggle with the state and capitalism. There are already many anarchists sitting in prisons for taking on this fight—forgotten or ignored by liberals and human rights NGOs for “violent” actions.

Quite often anarchists do get solidarity from parts of the society from which they are come. After all who can support one better than their own fellow humans trapped in the same misery of exploitation. However, we believe that responsibility for those facing repression in different parts of the world should not be only on the shoulders of local communities, but of international anarchist movements. Through our collective actions we can not only more widely diffuse the resources that are available, but also keep the fires burning in the chests of those imprisoned through autonomous revolutionary love and direct actions!

This is a call for you to act in solidarity with imprisoned anarchists all around the world. From the 23rd of August 2020—the day of execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, you can do everything, limited only by your imagination. Put some of that vast imagination into action to make people feel your energy and show our collective strength in revolutionary struggle!

325
ABC Brighton
ABC Warsaw
ABC Dresden
ABC Belarus
NYC Anarchist Black Cross
Cempaka Collective
Anarchist Union of Afghanistan and Iran
anarchistnews.org
**Father Jack’s rant on Separation and Isolation**

*First puking and mewling*
Then very pissed off with your schooling
Then fucks, then fights
Then judging chap’s rights
Then sitting in slippers
Then drooling

**Greetings and Salutations!**

Pissed off with our inability to separate ideas, beliefs and strategies from our own ever decreasing circle of opinions and our increasing ability to isolate and fragment. Comrades can be no-platformed and given no right to reply to accusations made against them.

Same strategy used when civilians are bombed and it is called collateral damage, it is a way of shifting blame. ‘O thou hast offended me’ - another tactic for control.

What a crock of shit.

Oceans, lakes, rivers, streams different names for bodies that contain water.
Same with tribes, clans, ethnic groups different names but all contain comrades.
The inability to separate the method from the objective is fucking infantile.
Many different methods exist to achieve the same objective i.e: Smashing the fucking bejesus out off the rancid rotten state.

Failure to separate leads to isolation, helped along by the internet which is the death of social revolution.
Breeding ground for gossip and curtain-twitchers and sets of boring snitches.

We lose the ability to form meaningful affinity groups and instead we become branches disconnected from the tree. Live and work together as brothers and sisters or die as fools.
As for Boris the mega piece of shit trying to sell you a turd pie, he could not lie straight in a bed so he can fuck right off.
We may lose many battles but so long as we don’t surrender we will never lose the war...

Get off your knees and say we wont get fooled again.....Salud Y Anarquia

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**Yo My People Dem, Ezio is Back Again!**

Pinch, punch first day of the month and my first day back to school since the lockdown/clampdown started in March. Last night I convinced my mum and dad, with my super-powers of persuasion, to let me sleep in their bed because I was being made to go back to school!! I was hoping school wasn’t going to start until at least October, but both my mum and dad have to go to work!

I got woken up early this morning, but got to watch a bit of my home boy the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air before school. The playground was different, there wasn’t many children and everyone had to stand away from each, but this didn’t bother me.

I was in a small group with two other boys from year 4 and 5 and a few girls. We didn’t really do normal school work and in the afternoon we played out on the school fields. I got to play football with the older boys and enjoyed teaching my teacher how to parkour roll.

Lunchtime was better as everyone was spaced out and I had a nice space to myself to eat my lunch – I hope it doesn’t go back to being crowded when everyone comes back in September.

Overall I sort of enjoyed my day and I am looking forward to making an exploding volcano tomorrow. Plus I got to play extra GTA V when I got home, which I suppose makes going back to school not too bad!

*Peace out! Ezio, anarchist, aged (nearly) 8.*
The Anarchist Film Group (AFG) is a developing platform for anarchist, radical and related film-works - both historic and contemporary, documentary, TV, feature-film, short clips and domestic/amateur footage. The group is growing rapidly and feels like a fairly healthy environment - please invite others who might be interested in the subject and those who are interested in developing an outward-looking anarchist movement.

The Anarchist Film Group ★ on Facebook:  
https://www.facebook.com/groups/anarchistfilmgroup/

There is also an Instagram account – this is in order to file the films/recommendations/clips/etc that are posted on the Facebook Group, to make it easier to find postings and to avoid repetition.

To keep AFG moving forward, and to broaden the reach of the group, we’d also like to begin to arrange group screenings, talks and maybe days that are dedicated to particular subjects – a weekend of radical animation for instance. If any members wish to get involved in organising these events or have suggestions/ideas for future projects, then please get in touch.

Here’s the link to the Instagram account, please follow and share and once again, help to create a vibrant, outward-looking movement:  
https://instagram.com/anarchist.films
"Anarchists know that a long period of education must precede any great fundamental change in society, hence they do not believe in vote begging, nor political campaigns, but rather in the development of self-thinking individuals.

We look away from government for relief, because we know that force invades the personal liberty of man, seizes upon the natural elements and intervenes between man and natural laws; from this exercise of force through governments flows nearly all the misery, poverty, crime and confusion existing in society.

We believe the coming change can only come through a revolution, because the possessing class will not allow a peaceful change to take place; still we are willing to work for peace at any price, except at the price of liberty."

Lucy Parsons, The Principles of Anarchism.

Described by the Chicago Police Department in 1920 as “more dangerous than a thousand rioters” - Lucy Parsons should be number one on the reading list of those that are interested or new to anarchism. She is an inspiration.

Full text here: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/lucy-e-parsons-the-principles-of-anarchism

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Trust No Politician

BOOKSHOPS/SOCIAL CENTRES/RESOURCES

1in2 Club (Bradford):
https://www.facebook.com/1in12/

56a Infoshop (London): http://56a.org.uk/

Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh:
http://autonomous.org.uk/

Bristol Anarchist Solidarity Easton (BASE):
https://network23.org/kebele2/

Cowley Club (Brighton): https://cowley.club/

DIY Space for London: https://diyspaceforlondon.org/


Housmans (London): http://www.housmans.com/

London Action Resource Centre: http://larc.space/

May Day Rooms (London): https://maydayrooms.org/

News From Nowhere (Liverpool):
http://www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk/

Next to Nowhere (Liverpool):
http://www.liverpoolsocialcentre.org/

Oxford Action Resource Centre:

Partisan (Manchester):
https://www.facebook.com/partisancollective/

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Star and Shadow (Newcastle):
https://www.starandshadow.org.uk/

Sumac Centre (Nottingham):
https://sumac.org.uk/

Sylvia’s Corner (London):
https://focuse15.org/sylvias-corner/

The Common House (London):
https://www.commonhouse.org.uk/

The Field (London): http://thefieldnx.com/

Wharf Chambers (Leeds):
http://www.wharfchambers.org/

Anarchist Film Group ★ (AFG):
https://www.facebook.com/groups/291682418494775/

D.I.Y. CULTURE

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/becomeungovernable101/

Blog: https://dyculture.home.blog/

E-mail: seradicalmedia@protonmail.com

The Slow Burning Fuse - a populist reservoir of anarchist fun, philosophy and imagery

https://www.facebook.com/TheSlowBurningFuse/