

Review: I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels by Albert Meltzer

AK Press, Edinburgh, £13.95

Andrew Flood

1996

There is a long tradition of personal autobiographies written by ageing activists in the anarchist movement about their experiences and motivations. This is the recently published autobiography of Albert Meltzer, a British anarchist whose life has taken him from the fights against Mosley and support for Spain in the 1930's through fringe involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler, the Cairo mutiny after WWII, supporting the Spanish resistance, to the Angry Brigade trials and fighting the National Front in the 1970's. The book also touches on more recent involvement up to and including the Poll Tax riot in London.

Albert's book is a valuable addition to the archive of anarchist history, not because its an accurate portrayal of the movement in this period (it's extremely partisan and anecdotal) but because it reminds us of the reason and motivation we have for being anarchists in the first place. Also among the many brief mentions of events are many that would encourage you to try and find out more and a valuable reminder of the way anarchists have been written out of even recent history.

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