

Anarchy over the water

A visit to Cienfuegos Press & conversation with Stuart Christie

Nhat Hong

November 1980

Cienfuegos Press is an anarchist publishing project that for the last eight years has made a startling variety of books, pamphlets and magazines available to the English language reader. Its first book was *Sabate*, the story of one part of the guerrilla war carried on by anarchists against the Franco regime in Spain until the late 1950's.

Man!, an edited collection of articles and poems from the U.S. journal of the same name that published from 1933 until 1940 followed later. The Press has since published many, many books and booklets including Berkman's *The Russian Tragedy*, Albert Meltzer's *The International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement*, Gregory Maximoff's *The Guillotine at Work*, Poole's *Land and Liberty: Anarchist Influences in the Mexican Revolution*, and Costantini's marvelous paintings reproduced in the *Art of Anarchy*, to mention only a few of Cienfuegos' books.

Cienfuegos has also managed to publish a good dozen or so pamphlets on various subjects. And its *Anarchist Review* has grown from a small catalog to a wide ranging, hefty magazine, full of articles and reviews of broad interest to anarchists and others.

All of this adds up to quite an impressive achievement for a small publisher. We at Soil of Liberty have long been grateful for Cienfuegos' efforts and have harbored a growing curiosity of who was the source of all this energy and how did they do it? This spring we had a chance to find out.

Stuart and Brenda Christie are the hub of Cienfuegos Press. It is from their house "Over the Water" on the island of Sanday that the publishing efforts are coordinated. Various comrades in different countries collaborate with translations, writing and editorial work. Stuart and Brenda arrange the technical aspects; typesetting, printing, binding, distribution and not least, finances from their Orkney island outpost.

Stuart is not so fondly referred to by the British press as "Britain's leading, self-confessed anarchist." He has received the attentions of the state and its police from several countries in the last two decades. In the early 60's, at age 18, Stuart participated with Spanish anarchists in an ill fated attempt on Franco's life. The Spanish court gave him a twenty year sentence after he was busted with a load of plastique explosives and detonators.

Released after three and a half years because of international pressure, he returned to Britain where he and other comrades began Black Cross, a group to aid libertarian prisoners in Spain and other countries.

Stuart remained an object of grave interest to both British and Spanish police. The years following his release were punctuated by subtle and obvious harassment by the police. Among other things he has been arrested for, my favorite is counterfeiting U. S. currency (actually an anti-Vietnam leaflet with a rough facsimile of a dollar bill saying "One Life" instead of one dollar). In 1971 Stuart was charged with a group of seven others (Angry Brigade-Stoke Newington 8) with attacks on the Miss World Beauty Contest, Spanish, British and U. S.

government buildings. After a four month trial Stuart was acquitted, but four others were not so fortunate.

After the acquittal police told Stuart they were going "to get you next time." The harassment continued and made regular employment (as a gas fitter for the British Gas Board) and normal life impossible for Stuart and Brenda. To escape the harassment they moved to Sanday, an island off the northern coast of Scotland with 500 people and no police. They moved Cienfuegos Press with them, a project begun in 1972 with the dual purpose of creating self employment (beyond the reach of politically motivated sackings) and advancing the anarchist critique of the world we live in. As a job, Cienfuegos is a hand to mouth source of income. As to making the anarchist critique louder and clearer Stuart, Brenda and Cienfuegos' collaborators have done an admirable job.

Too loud and too clear for some. This summer Cienfuegos published a manual for 'People's Militias' and members of Britain's parliament exploded with righteous anger over this "hotbed of Anarchy in the Orkneys."

Newspaper headlines splashed "Terror Books Uproar" across their pages. Members of Parliament demanded the investigation (ie. destruction) of the Militia book and Cienfuegos Press in June. So far Cienfuegos is still at it (see review section), but distributors have refused to carry their books and their main printer has refused to print anything of theirs again. Thanks to all the publicity, the Militia book sold out its first printing in large part to a new, non-anarchist audience including trade union groups.

Daniel Shaw and I had a warm, very hospitable visit for five days in April this year at "Over the Water" with Stuart, family and friends. We agreed to an arrangement under which Soil of Liberty and Cienfuegos will co-publish pamphlets together. The first one, *The First Mayday: The Speeches of Voltarine De Cleyre* will be available November 1st. The second, *The Italian Resistance to Fascism* will be available before the end of the year.

I had the opportunity to spend a few hours on a rainy afternoon talking with Stuart in the Cienfuegos office about various things. Part of that conversation follows.

Nhat: One thing we have in the States is something of a split between non-violent anarchists and anarchists who would employ various methods in their activities.

Stuart: Well, I think that's probably more or less the situation in this country at the moment. In the late 50's and early 60's the mainstream of the anarchist movement was within the anti-war movement, you see, and the Committee of 100. But from the late 60's onward there was this split with the pacifist movement and the activist section of the anarchist movement. But that has since disappeared with decrease in militancy generally. I mean when you have periods of peaks of militancy as you had in the late 60's, then it was more important to know where you stood, where you were, a revolutionary activist or a pacifist. While we're in this trough at the moment the differences have really disappeared and people do manage to plod along together. I don't think its really a matter of any great importance as long as you know where people stand and

what you can count on them to do. They have their priorities and other people... for example the pacifist has his priorities and I have my priorities.

Nhat: It does get a little disappointing when they (pacifists) seem to join your enemies and howl.

Stuart: Well, it can be disappointing, but personally speaking I find it mainly, through my prison experiences that I just accept people for what they are and don't expect things from people and don't get disappointed.

Nhat: Do you want to talk about your Spanish experience?

Stuart: Well, if you ask me some questions I'll talk about it. Its very much a thing in the past. It was interesting and useful for learning about other people and more importantly learning about myself.

Nhat: You were quite young at the time.

Stuart: I just turned 18 at the time.

Nhat: There was a certain feeling that Sam Dolgoff mentioned, that at the time a lot of people felt that you had been used. On reading your book, *The Christie File*, you totally discount that.

Stuart: No, No. This was created mainly by the campaign run by Freedom Press at the time. Being very liberal and bourgeois in their outlook, they immediately assumed that I had been an innocent victim. But in fact at the time of the trial I admitted my 'guilt', but mitigated prior to the trial that I had no knowledge of what I was carrying across the frontier. Once I was in Spain I had opened the container and discovered explosives and I was in a bit of a quandry as to what to do. I wasn't very happy with the police, so I just decided to carry on with the mission. But in fact that was just a story to tell. When you're confronted with the most notorious secret police force in the world your mind ticks overtime trying to think up a plausible story, something they will accept and which will give you an out at the same time. Freedom ran the story that I'd been used, that I'd been given a batch of leaflets, that I had been informed it was a parcel of leaflets, clandestine leaflets, to take across the frontier, that I was an unwilling, unknowing victim of some devious, conspiratorial group of anarchists in Paris.

Of course that wasn't the case. I was well aware of what was going on. In fact, I had volunteered to take part in any anti-Franco activities in Spain.

Nhat: This was one in a long series of attempts on Franco's life?

Stuart: Oh yeah. There were others in which other British people participated as well. It just so happened I was the unfortunate one to be caught. But it was useful in as much as my arrest and my sentence, my plea in prison focused attention, the attention of Britain and western Europe on the plight of political prisoners in Spain. So it was useful in that respect.

Nhat: Upon getting out, you used that attention, in a sense, to form the Anarchist Black Cross group?

Stuart; Yeah, well the only people, while I was in prison, who were receiving any assistance at all from outside Spain were from the Communist Party and Jehovah's Witnesses. The anarchists were left to rot. I suppose various small Trotskyist groups and socialist...

Nhat: Even the exile movement in France didn't ...

Stuart: The majority of them didn't have a powerful exile movement. Because the Trotskyists have so many varieties, they didn't really have much.

Nhat: But the Libertarian exile movement didn't have a strong support of libertarian prisoners in Spain?

Stuart: Oh yes. There was a very efficient infrastructure both within and outside Spain. We would regularly receive money from the movement inside Spain, prisoner aid campaign. But certainly within the English speaking movement, there was no conscious attempt to help the revolutionary prisoners within Spain. So we started the Black Cross.

Nhat: Which is still going?

Stuart: Which is still going, yeah. With different priorities at the moment, due to the situation in Spain having changed radically and the movement in Spain is perfectly capable of looking after its own prisoners at the moment.

Nhat: What are the new priorities?

Stuart: As I say, there are the Persons Unknown trial in this country and we tend to concentrate on prisoners in the States now an awful lot. People write to us asking for prisoners whom they can write and offer solidarity and financial support, whatever. And the majority of addresses and names we're passing on to them are in the States and Ireland.

Nhat: I've noticed over the years a group in Chicago and more recently in New York, groups that have called themselves Black Cross. Are they connected with you?

Stuart: They are connected in as much as they've been doing a similar type of thing as our Black Cross. But there's no formalization of structure in Black Cross. We prefer to keep it small affinity groups. Basically, Black Cross in London and Black Flag here acts as a clearing house for information, so people don't duplicate efforts regarding prisoners. But there is no formal structure.

Nhat: You had some interesting comments earlier on anarchists trying to build up paper organizations and driving for large memberships. You're thought on it was that it wasn't the most efficient way of spending your time.

Stuart: Yeah, well. People come into the anarchist movement from other radical and socialist movements and they tend to hang on to those organizational attitudes they had while in the previous organization. They tend to despair of the apparent lack of organization and discipline within the anarchist movement. They seem to believe problems will be resolved by building up a strong organization with a large membership on paper. Once they pass a magical number, reach a saturation point, the revolution will be achieved. It doesn't work that way.

Basically its just a form of frustration on their part. They divert all their energies into building an organization as opposed to propagandizing and politicizing people at their place of work.

Nhat: The CNT, however is a definite organization.

Stuart: The CNT is a trade union organization. The reason for the split up at the moment, and I think the CNT at the moment is unfortunately making one of its last gasps for life before it splits up completely. It sort of looks that way. The problem is, at least one of the problems is that people are confused as to what the CNT is. The CNT is essentially a trade union. Its not an anarchist organization or a political party. Its a trade union. As such there are people with a whole spectrum of political and social opinions within it. And there should be room for people with different opinions within it, in a trade union, particularly an anarcho-syndicalist one. Trotskyists trying to infiltrate it, the exiled FAI in Toulouse trying to take control and I think its probably a matter of time before the whole thing disintegrates completely.

Nhat: Because of the confusion over its function as a trade union?

Stuart: Thats one of the reasons, but there are also the power struggles in it. The specifically anarchist, some of whom, unfortunately are acting like fascists at the moment, physically attacking people with whom they disagree. That is symptomatic of the malaise that is spread throughout

the CNT at the moment. I can't actually give you chapter and verse of all the problems its facing at the moment. We're still very much in the dark and we get many different stories from Spain. Hopefully in the next couple weeks we'll get some reasonably informed information from people inside and outside Spain.

Nhat: One of the questions I had before coming here was why you were up in the Orkney islands?

Stuart: Well, it wasn't so much why the Orkneys. We were around at a friend's house one evening and a friend of theirs came by and during the course of the conversation it came up that he had a house for sale in Orkney.

This was his house and he had lived and worked here. It was something new, so I pricked up my ears and Brenda and I decided to come up and have a look at the place. We liked it and moved up. The other reason was that we were in severe financial difficulties in Huddersfield at the time and we worked it out so we could sell the house in Huddersfield, cover the costs of moving, pay for a deposit for this house and have a substantial amount left to cover some of the debts of Cienfuegos Press, or part of the debts. So that's basically why Cienfuegos is in Orkney and it can't afford to get out of it now.

Nhat: Cienfuegos was started 4-5 years ago ?

Stuart: It was started when I got out of prison in '72, winter of '72. The reason we started the press was basically because I couldn't get a job anywhere else. No one would employ me after the Angry Brigade case. The Gas Board, whom I had been working for earlier on the gas conversion program, wouldn't re-employ me. Actually I was working for a sub-contractor and the Gas Board told the sub-contractor that under no circumstances could I be re-employed. And while I had been in prison I had translated *Sabate* and while hawking it around to various publishers and publishing houses in London I discovered nobody wanted to touch anarchist literature. They thought it was uncommercial and there was no market for it. I thought otherwise and decided to publish it ourselves. I thought it was time we had an anarchist publishing house, an English language anarchist publishing house in this country. Basically that's how Cienfuegos started. The initial printing of *Sabate* was done on credit.

The second book we did was *Man!* and it was financed mainly by Marcus Graham, the original editor of *Man!*

From there we've just published one book after another. Each book paying for the following book. But its usually stumbling from one financial crisis to the next.

Nhat: How many titles have you come out with since you've started?

Stuart: About 35 or 36. Hopefully by the end of the year it will be up around 50. I don't quite know how we'll pay for them, but it should be around that many. The other idea for Cienfuegos was while we were on holiday in Italy. We were staying with a comrade Franco Keggio [Leggio] in Ragusa, Sicily who had been publishing, running an active publishing house. He worked six months in the fields and the other six months he spends publishing books, mainly through his own income from working as an agricultural laborer. I thought if Franco could do it, and he's been doing it for 20 years, there was no reason why we shouldn't do it.

Nhat: The only other people who publish anarchist stuff in England is Freedom?

Stuart: They don't publish on a large scale as far as books are concerned. They aren't concerned with publishing new anarchist material. They only try to keep in print the anarchist classics. They're not even particularly successful at that.

Nhat: I've always been pleased with Cienfuegos because they have always come out with things I haven't seen elsewhere in English.

Stuart: That's what we try to do. Freedom wouldn't publish anything that had not been established. I think the reason for that is the organizational set up at Freedom Press that is controlled by Vernon Richards. They are not prepared to, because of the property owning structure there. The person who is financially responsible there is Vernon Richards, the editor. He is the one that makes the decisions. They are just not prepared to risk the Press or the property they have in printing books that may or may not sell. Also they are not geared up to it. They don't use multi-colored covers, in case they can be called sensationalized or trying to sensationalize anarchism or personalize it. I think they even objected to a line drawing of Rudolf Rocker on one of the booklets they did.

They thought it pandered to the cult of the personality. But as I say, that's one aspect of Freedom Press.

Certainly they have done a good job keeping good anarchist classics in print. But they are living very much in the past. It's time we had some new material for English readers that is new and original, Nhat: And which is also helpful in getting a sense of the international situation.

Stuart: Exactly. People in the past have mainly concentrated on historical issues. But the reason for this is not because we are living in the past, but for people to have some sense of continuity in the struggles we are facing today, which are the same struggles that were faced 50 or a 100 years ago. I think it's good that people have a sense of continuity, one link in a chain.

Nhat: Without sacrificing imagination on how to deal with the situation today.

Stuart: What we're hoping to do now is to expand more into contemporary theory so that we can provide an alternative to the various marxist groups' publications, because we're sadly lacking in contemporary material, theoretical material. Good, readable theoretical material and criticisms of Marxism. Basically providing people with solutions which face people in modern society. So that's what we are hoping to do in the future.

Nhat: You seem fairly well set up to do that. How does it work editorially? It seems you have people all over who cooperate.

Stuart: This is the strength of Cienfuegos. Basically all I'm doing is acting as a clearinghouse here. For example, our Cienfuegos files give us access to lots of people who have skills and talents which would be lost to the movement. We can get translations done for stuff that comes over from France and Spain. I can send it off to a translator who isn't doing anything at that particular moment and he sends the translations back. We get it typed up and copy edited by someone else. Basically that's all my function is, to act as a clearinghouse for stuff that comes in and coordinating and organizing the printing and binding and so on. And most importantly, juggling with the money that isn't available. People are constantly amazed at the stuff we put out. They must think we're financed from Moscow. But in fact its all done with the magic word credit.

Nhat: You do have a subscribers service?

Stuart: Perhaps 400 subscribers now. Really we need to boost that to around a thousand. For example, a subscription this year is \$40.00 this year. The books that will be made available through the book service will be, certainly in the region of 70-80 dollars. And that's not including postage, which is a hefty part of the cost. So subscribers are getting books at a considerable discount.

Nhat: In the past you've been plagued by a lot of police harassment.

Stuart: Yeah, but there has been no harassment here. Had I remained in London or Yorkshire, then I'd almost certainly been framed on some charge or other. In fact the recent Persons Un-

known case, in Stuart Carr's statement, the police made quite obvious attempts to get Carr to name me as being one of the prime movers in the conspiracy.

Nhat: That was one thing I thought of while reading about the Persons Unknown case in the States, that you being in Orkney helped you from getting pulled into the conspiracy charge.

Stuart: Most definitely. Without a doubt. I was told by an inspector of the Special Branch immediately after the Angry Brigade case that it was only a matter of time before they finally did fit me up. They had made so many mistakes in the past, that next time they would make it impossible for me to get out.

Nhat: Why don't you explain the Angry Brigade case. Was it in the late 60's?

Stuart: The first action of the Angry Brigade was in 1969. Basically it was an extension of the International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement, the First of May groups, an anarchist international organization which carried out actions against embassies and government buildings throughout Europe and also the States. The Angry Brigade I suppose could be called the British section of the International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement. They carried out a number of bombing... propaganda campaigns, none them involved deaths or the possibility of injuries to any innocent or guilty victims. It was purely propaganda.

Nhat: Against property?

Stuart: Yeah, against property and against policies of the Conservative Party. Mainly against the attempts to control the trade union movement in the early 70's by Edward Heath. So the actual Angry Brigade lasted say two years – two and a half years, from early 1969 until the arrest in 1971 of the Stoke Newington 8. The trial itself was probably the longest trial in British history. We were held in Brixton prison for 18 months.

Nhat: Without bail?

Stuart: Without bail and it was the longest trial, for that time anyway, in British judicial history. The end result was that four were acquitted and four were sent down for ten years each. The jury asked for clemency. If the jury hadn't asked for clemency the probable sentences would have been in the region of 15 to 20 years. Jake Prescott, who had been tried earlier and convicted and who was alleged to have committed a minimal part in the conspiracy (in as much the only thing he was accused of having done was address a communique from the Angry Brigade) and he was given 15 years. So the main protagonists who were the ones in the Stoke Newington trial, they would have certainly received between 15–25 years.

Nhat: You were found innocent in this case?

Stuart: Yeah, I was found innocent.

Nhat: Did you have further trouble with the police after that point?

Stuart: No, it would have been very difficult for them to actually do anything, because during the trial we made

[it] so obvious that I'd been under surveillance almost 24 hours a day for periods up to 3 and 4 months. And they could produce no actual forensic evidence against me; written evidence or verbal evidence that would involve me in the Angry Brigade case. It was all pure supposition and basically it was a conspiracy.

Nhat: A police conspiracy?

Stuart: No, the charge was conspiracy and they didn't actually have to prove what they couldn't prove. That's why they made it a conspiracy charge. They couldn't prove there was any actual direct involvement in any of the charges alleged against me. So they fell back on the old conspiracy charge which is very similar to the Nazi law of *a priori* culpability. You just kind of see who

could have done it, therefore he probably did do it. So you should convict. And this was basically the essence of the evidence against me.

Nhat: Are the four out of prison?

Stuart: They've all been released. John Barker was released two years ago. He's now writing a book for Cienfuegos of prison stories called *Tales From the Time Tunnel*. Jim Greenfield is working as a carpenter in London. Chris Bott is on Social Security and the two women I think have more or less dropped out. The only one who is active in any sort of way, I mean the only one who is still politically active is John Barker. The others have just gone their own ways. But then again John Barker was always the prime, main charismatic character in that particular friendship group.

Nhat: Earlier you said anarchist activity or the anarchist movement was kind of in a trough, a kind of downturn in activity.

Stuart: Well, I think people are moving away from the concept of the national organization sort of thing and they are very much involved in local politics, which is I think what every anarchist and anarchist group should be primarily concerned with spreading the idea within their own communities, the places where they work. Not preaching or trying to win converts to anarchism, but basically to create agitprop situations where they gain the respect of the people they live and work with, slowly but surely making people aware that there are other answer to problems other than the authoritarian ones and that anarchism and libertarian ideas do provide a solution.

Nhat: Often the local, community issues can be quite large.

Stuart: Very much so. For example in Swansea the local anarchist paper sells 5,000 copies weekly for one or two pence. It got an amazing circulation. It was one thing anarchists were doing in Swansea. It wasn't a specifically anarchist paper. It just so happened anarchists were involved in it. I think we're doing some thing similar up here with the *Free Winged Eagle*. Its finding its own level as well. People are beginning to expect and find that they can use it as an alternative to the *Orcadian* (the conservative weekly 'serving' the Orkney islands).

Nhat: Plus you have a big battle up here over uranium mining.

Stuart: There was a confrontation last year. The opposition was so total that the government was forced to hold an inquiry. But nothing has been decided as yet. The whole project to mine uranium has been shelved for the moment. It hasn't been abandoned, it has been shelved. But no doubt as the requirement for uranium becomes greater the central government will over ride any opposition from the local community or local council, and at that time, that's when we'll have a major physical confrontation if the government decides to push it. I find it very difficult to see how the government can do it. Mainly because this is an island community and the inhabitants are sorely opposed to mining uranium. It would be different on the mainland. There is less of a sense of community. But here Orkney begins at the pier. Anybody coming in would require some degree of cooperation from local inhabitants. If they don't have that cooperation and have active antagonism, a lot of people have threatened direct action and these are normally conservative farmers and farm workers and small businessmen. Certain feelings have been voiced that should popular opinion be overruled and ignored, that they would then take direct action.

Nhat: It's impressive to go through some of the towns and see No Uranium stickers in every shop window.

Stuart: Yeah, well I think the government abandoned it and hoped that it will just die down and that in the meantime something will happen to change people' minds. Like, for example, the recent increases in diesel generated electricity increased by 17 and one half percent plus a 3% per

unit surcharge. No doubt sometime this will be used as an excuse to justify the introduction of uranium mining as a source of cheap power.

Nhat: What about the question of violence employed by the anarchist movement?

Stuart: The question of violence should be one of common sense. You certainly don't convince anyone by violence, ramming ideas down their throats and banging them over the head. But there are always situations when common sense dictates when violence is called for and when it shouldn't be. But I don't think it should be made into the level of dogma. If someone is threatening to kill you, imprison, torture you and you've no out, you've exhausted all... I mean once consensus politics goes down the drain, there is no longer any possibility of an exchange of ideas or reaching a compromise. There is no room for a discussion or opposition, then you've obviously got to start thinking of protecting your interests by other methods.

Nhat: With regard to events in Germany and the SLA in the States, I have trouble juggling my criticisms with some of the things they've done and not wanting to be real public about it, because they are at the wrong end of the state's stick. It's not the method of violence, it just seems that in the situation, for example in the SLA's case, it was a bad case of welfare thinking in a sense.

Stuart: They were definitely being elitist, as was the Red Army Fraction and most of the other Marxist-Leninist groups. But remember they are Marxist-Leninist groups. They have an authoritarian ideology and their whole attitude is patronizing in an attempt to create or cause situations which they think will lead to a revolutionary situation. They think revolutionary situations can be created artificially. They can't. But the important thing to remember with the SLA is that in fact none of them were anarchists. They became anarchists while in prison and they realized, all of them, certainly Joe Remeiro and Russ Little, where they made the mistakes. They said this after they read the *International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement* booklet. The Angry Brigade and the First of May Group are the best examples of, not proper revolutionary violence, but at least common sensical.

Obviously you don't want to use violence when it's counter productive. When you start blowing things up or shooting people or intimidating people, then you have the whole force weight of the press and media against you and anything you say will be misinterpreted. So it has to be very carefully thought out before hand. In the case of the First of May Group, they chose their targets very carefully, so that they couldn't be misinterpreted. I think this was very successful. They carried out the kidnapping of Ussia, who was a priest at the Vatican in 1966. The reaction to it was one of opposition to Franco. The same thing with the kidnapping of Elias, the first kidnapping on mainland Europe, in 1963. All six kidnappers walked from the court free men because they had the sympathy of the people of Italy. You must remember at the time the opposition to Franco was so great. You have to weigh the object of the exercise against public opinion. It is a very fine line. For example, in this current situation at the moment, it would be silly to go out and shoot Margaret Thatcher. It would be not so silly to go out and pie her. No, I think on the question of violence the situation has to be quite clear cut and you have to be satisfied yourself that there are no other options open.

Nhat: And a proper social situation where the opposition is already there and you are highlighting it?

Stuart: Yeah, but there are other situations where the social situation doesn't exist. Where it is maybe a last desperate statement when you feel there is nothing left for you to do. You're not prepared to compromise your ideals or beliefs, so you either commit acts of violence against

yourself, bombing yourself or someone else or a building. That develops out of frustration. But there is always the hope that that might have a cumulative effect and people say Stop, even for a fraction of a minute, Stop and question their perhaps uncritical attitude towards what is happening in the world around them.

Nhat: One of the greatest benefits Cienfuegos has had in my case is making available the history of the Spanish resistance after the end of the civil war.

Stuart: It's lost, you know. That's what I was saying about providing some continuity so that militants today can appreciate it. A lot of people think they are on their own, that what is happening here and now has never happened before. It may be a bit agit-propose, but its always useful for people to see how other people, how anarchists in previous generations suffered, gave up their lives and freedom for the idea. We're doing Facerias, that's been typeset. I don't know if we'll do the printing (or if it will be done in the States). Have you read *Sabate*?

Nhat: Yeah.

Stuart: Well, this is a much more detailed history of the urban guerrilla movement in Spain from 1939 to 1957 and also gives a very interesting background to the CNT in clandestinity and its relationship with the exterior. A lot of people might find this a bit boring. But the other interesting thing is the history of the anarchists in exile in the struggle against Nazism. For example, Crete was taken almost entirely by Spanish Republican exiles.

Montgomery's 8th Army, whole sections of them were Spanish Republicans and anarchists. Most of the networks... Leclerc. Have you ever seen the documentary newsreel taken of General Leclerc in Paris? It shows quite often on old newsreels from the war. If you look closely at the armored cars going into Paris you'll see Durruti, Ascasco, Guipuzcoa and Guernica painted on the armored cars. This is never mentioned. The resistance networks in the south of France were almost exclusively anarchist, socialist and communist. And yet in the official history of the French occupation, a 700 page work, there are about two lines given over to the role played by the Spanish exiles. And it says in the south of France there were some Spanish groups! For example, the group Reseau Pat O'Leary which was the major escape and sabotage group in the south of France, that was in fact a group run by a Spanish anarchist called Ponzan. Yet it is totally ignored.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Nhat Hong
Anarchy over the water
A visit to Cienfuegos Press & conversation with Stuart Christie
November 1980

Retrieved on 16th May 2021 from www.katesharpleylibrary.net
Published in *Soil of Liberty*, Vol. 6 no 3., November 1980. Republished as an appendix to *Islands of anarchy: Simian, Cienfuegos and Refract 1969–1987*, an annotated bibliography by John Patten (2003) Posted on the Kate Sharpley Library website as a tribute to Stuart Christie (1946–2020)

theanarchistlibrary.org