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Apropos of a Foreword. José Peirats's Second Death

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José Peirats (1908-1989), who was a brick-maker and worker-journalist before becoming one of the finest experts in Spanish anarchism, has often been cited in the columns of *A Contretemps*, and there are at least two reasons for that. One, because during the 1930s his role as a militant (he being on the editorial panel of *Solidaridad Obrera* at the time) placed him right at the heart of the “revolutionary gymnastics” that were to culminate in July 1936 in a revolutionary process of unparalleled dimensions.

That revolution which even now continues to feed — as well as question — the libertarian imagination. Peirats saw its dawning and later witnessed its inexorable petering out as it found itself trapped in the hellish logic of warfare. Two, because he made up his mind to become its painstaking historian and in the 1950s produced a critical work of immense analytical and documentary merits—*La CNT en la revolución española*¹— a crucial accomplishment for that time. The impeccable rectitude he demonstrated at times when at various points in its history the CNT trespassed against the fundamental principles by which it was governed, and the intellectual rigour with which he strove to fathom the reasons for such deviations made Peirats a most extraordinary individual and, without question, one of the most praiseworthy representatives of a generation of activists since deceased.

Given the interest we take in Peirats, news of the publication of his *Memoirs* was very welcome to us since we had been looking forward to publication for quite some time. In fact, written mostly in 1974 and 1975, this long, autobiographical text—some 1300 typewritten pages of it—foundered at the beginning of the 1980s on the demands of some booksellers, Planeta for one, who stated that they were eager to publish it but only an abridged version, focusing on the author's recollections of his boyhood, adolescence and pre-(civil)war experiences as is the usual practice in such published memoirs. Peirats, who could be very stubborn, doggedly refused any such abridgements, finding it much preferable that his *Memoirs* should not appear than that they appear in a truncated version. Which is why he turned to his representative in dealings with publishers, his friend the Uruguayan historian and sociologist Carlos M. Rama who rejected any such offer. As far as he was concerned it was all or nothing. So, for want of a publisher deserving of the name, nothing it was. Since which the only inkling we have had of those *Memoirs* is down to Peirats himself as he agreed at the end of the 1980s to a request from the Barcelona review *Anthropos* to select some extracts from his memoirs, a selection that appeared shortly after Peirats's death in the “*Antologías temáticas*” collection of that review.