Born of Struggle, Living in Hope

The Anarcho-Punk Lives of the Centro Iberico, 1971–1983

Nick Soulsby

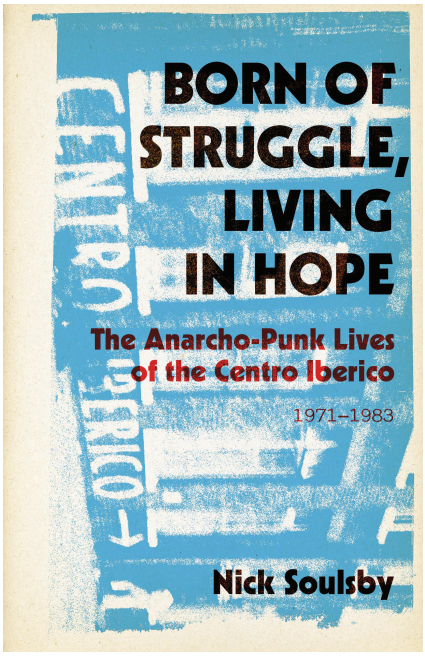
The story of the Centro Iberico, a legendary music venue of the UK's postpunk era, has been fragmentary and disjointed, its tangled twelve-year history never properly documented before now.

Its tale spans the Spanish Civil War as we follow an anarchist hero who spilt blood for his beliefs, fought the Nazis, fought Franco's fascists as part of the resistance, endured a death sentence commuted to twenty years' imprisonment, before devoting his twilight years to evangelizing his cause from exile in London. His survival and the inauguration of the Centro Iberico were thanks to London's anarchist underground, which maintained a foothold and kept the torches burning despite harassment and disinterest, before finding new life amid punk's co-optaion of "anarchy" as a youth culture phenomenon. Punks and political anarchists rallied together to support the victims of an egregious and shambolic antiterror trial. The Centro Iberico's peripatetic journey ended as it came into contact with the squatters occupying an abandoned school, morphing from its activist roots to become a creative hub which gave refuge to the residents of the anarchy center before the first murmurs of the '80s construction boom finally ended its existence.

The Centro Iberico was the only consistently established anarchist center that survived throughout the decade, forming a key connection between the international political prisoner support offered by the Anarchist Black Cross, the anarchist groups abroad that fueled the *Black Flag* newspaper, while sustaining its own activities in support of the cause.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nick Soulsby is the author of *Everything Keeps Dissolving: Conversations with Coil* (2022), *Lydia Lunch: The War Is Never Over* (2019), *Swans: Sacrifice and Transcendence* (2018), *Thurston Moore: We Sing a New Language* (2017), *Cobain on Cobain: Interviews & Encounters* (2016), *I Found My Friends: The Oral History of Nirvana* (2015), and *Dark Slivers: Seeing Nirvana in the Shards of Incesticide* (2012).



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