

NEO-ANARCHISM: MARX AND BAKUNIN

BY ABRAHAM GULLÉN



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Guillen, William Morrow and Co. 1973

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Biography

Guillen was born in Guadalajara on March 13, 1913. During the Spanish Civil War he fought against the Francisco Franco's forces, operating within the National Confederation of Labour (CNT), the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), and the General Union of Workers (UGT). At the end of the war, he was arrested by Franco's forces, condemned to death, and ultimately was sentenced to ten years in prison. He escaped from prison in 1945, fled Spain, and spent three years in France.

In 1948, he emigrated to Argentina. During the Perón era, he worked as an editor for *Economía y Finanzas* ("Economy and Finance"), and his contributions were published under the pseudonym, Jaime de las Heras. Under another pseudonym, that of Fernando Molina, he contributed to the Buenos Aires newspaper *El Laborista*. His 1957 publication *The Agony of Imperialism*, resulted in the loss of his job and his barring from employment as a journalist in Argentina. In 1960, he was employed briefly as an economic consultant to the Argentine government. In 1961, he was imprisoned for a few months on the charge that he was a member of the Uturuncos, guerrillas active in northwest Argentina during 1960 and 1961. Following his imprisonment he sought political asylum in Montevideo in 1962 and soon made contact with revolutionary elements in that country. The first edition of *Strategy of the Urban Guerrilla* was published in 1966. It served as a counter to the rural insurrectionist methods espoused by Che Guevara, although Guillen did agree with Guevara on several key issues and even authored the introduction to the Uruguayan edition of Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare*.

Guillen continued to publish frequently during this time period. He took a position as a journalist for the Montevideo newspaper *Acción*, often using the pseudonym of Arapey. Throughout the late 1960s

and early 1970s, he was a constant subject of investigations both by Latin America police and by the CIA. In addition to Argentina and Uruguay, he also lived and worked in Peru and eventually returned to Madrid, Spain, where he taught theories of economic self-management and communal political action. He died on August 1, 1993.

Works

- El imperio del dolar: América Latina: Revolución o alienación, Buenos Aires 1962
- Teoría de la violencia; guerra y lucha de clases, Buenos Aires 1965
- Estrategia de la guerrilla urbana (Ediciones Liberación, 1969)
- Desafío al Pentagono; la guerrilla latinoamericana, Montevideo 1969
- Philosophy of the urban guerrilla. The revolutionary writings of Abraham Guillén, New York 1973
- El Capitalismo Soviético: Última etapa del Imperialismo (Queimada Ediciones, 1979)
- El error militar de las izquierdas, Barcelona 1980
- Economía libertaria (Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, 1988)



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The viability of Marxism is greater than that of Leninism because the latter is too closely tied to the formalized politics of Soviet bureaucrats, who are actually worse Marxists than the authentic Christians who follow Jesus' teachings rather than the Church. The Stalinist and neo-Stalinist dictatorships of unlimited duration, which continue to exist in various self-proclaimed socialist countries, are not the consequence of Marxism.

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At the Congress of Lausanne (1867) the members of the First International reached a compromise resolution on the question of the state agreeable to both anarchists and authoritarian socialists: "Collective property," the resolution states, "belongs to the entire society, but in the form of concessions to worker's associations. The state will consist of nothing more than a federation of these associations." At the Congresses of the Hague (1872), Brussels (1874) and Berne (1876), it was resolved that the management of public services, the railroads, post office, etc., should come under state control or something similar in order that the general interest might be represented and not only collective, trade-union or local interests. The Brussels Congress resolved that public services should be administered by a federal organization or regional groups, by federations of communes functioning under the supervision of regional work councils; in the case of great national enterprises, it recommended supervision by the worker's state, i.e., "a state based on the association of free worker's communes." And at the Berne Congress, the Italian anarchist Enrico Malatesta acknowledged that public services should be administered by a single centralized organization, although not by a state in the traditional sense.

The Russian Revolution teaches the importance of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as it was conceived by Marx and Engels. Lenin gave it greater prominence by identifying it with the essence of the socialist revolution. In his “Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” presented at the First Congress of the Communist International, March 4, 1919, he says:

Proletarian dictatorship is not only an absolutely legitimate means of overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but also absolutely necessary to defend the entire mass of workers against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie

However, Lenin’s affirmation is exaggerated with respect to the bounty of a proletarian dictatorship. Whatever may be said for such a dictatorship, it led to the domination of a bureaucracy over the working masses in the U.S.S.R., to the intervention of Soviet troops in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), to border clashes with China (1969) and to support for Indian intervention in East Pakistan (1971).

The “Asiatic despotism” perpetuated by Stalinism raises serious questions concerning the role of the state in the revolution. With its absolute powers the state acts as a fetter or brake on social change, impeding the self-management of socialism. “Stalinist terror,” with or without Stalin, demands a reassessment of the anarchist theses concerning the oppressions engendered by an absolute state, even should this be a worker’s state. In this respect anarcho-Marxism gains force: a synthesis of the thought and action of Marx and Bakunin. Such a synthesis is indispensable in the twentieth century in order to revitalize Marxism and demystify neo-Stalinism. And it is hardly less necessary to overcome the utopian and unrealistic elements in traditional anarchism: its social moralism, apolitical

idealism and economic simplicity, none of which is capable of liberating the workers from monopoly capitalism in the West and state capitalism in the East.

With the automation of production, nuclear energy, the mechanization and industrialization of agriculture, the emergence of great national enterprises and the growth of a student proletariat generated by the technological revolution, all the conditions are present for unifying and applying the thought of Marx and Bakunin. Given an advanced technology and high labor productivity, the material conditions exist for the development of a self-managed socialism. Such a socialism, with another name, is anarcho-Marxism - a new kind of anarchism, not to mention Marxism, that is scientific and realistic in its design for the total disalienation of man.

The anarchist theses on “free municipalities” or “free communes” represent a return to the Middle Ages and are unsuited to the integration of production and social capital required by the present technological era. To assimilate the computer, the automatic regulator and thousands of engineers, on a larger scale than formerly. Economic regions have become more viable units than the ancient Roman or medieval townships or the modern province created by liberal capitalism when the steam engine was the basis of production. Super sonic transportation, artificial satellites and intercontinental missiles have since reduced our planet to the proportions of a small country. Consequently, to remain on the frontiers of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance or the dawn of modern capitalism in the presence of this scientific-technical revolution constitutes a major contradiction between economic-technological progress and now obsolete political structures.

The Medieval communes, the old municipalities have to be redistricted, enlarged and replaced by the agrovilles of the future,



having all the advantages, comforts, productivity and educational resources of the great cities. These advantages were lacking in the old municipality, no matter how free. Thus Kropotkin's claims concerning the "free communes" have lost their force, like Lenin's exaggerated theses concerning a "dictatorship of the proletariat." Since without private or state capitalism there is no necessity to oppress or exploit anyone, the classic state must be transformed from a government over men into an administration of things. Self-government on the basis of socialized production and co-administration at the top constitutes the scientific socialism of our era.

* * *

Bureaucratic socialism must be overcome. Hence there is need for a "Second Russian Revolution." The Soviet Union is now on the road towards a second socialist revolution which will be made by working-class, peasant and university youth together with those intellectuals, scientists and professionals who have come to realize that "Red Tsarism" is a survival of the old aristocratic tsarism defeated in 1917. Men of science like Andrei Sakharov, men of letters like Solzhenitsyn and men of arms like General Grigoriyenko constitute the spearhead of a Second Russian Revolution designed to replace the present authoritarian bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R. with the socialism of self-management.

Under these circumstances the struggle against the bureaucratic state, which abuses its power over the lives of its citizens, has to have an anarchist content. For the first time in history society has undertaken a struggle against the state - not an isolated class or front of oppressed classes but virtually the whole people against the government's system of organized oppression. Because of the automation of production and the emergence of technobureaucratic



state in the West, the fight against neocapitalism also leads to neoanarchist forms of struggle. Attacks are launched everywhere without any fixed front in order to mobilize the population to act in its own liberation and to move toward a socialism of self-management.

In the struggle against the state, Marxism-Leninism is less effective than anarcho-Marxism. Without defining carefully the powers of self-managed workers against the bureaucratic apparatus, Leninism is bound to vacillate or fail in its struggle against state capitalism, which is defended with greater tenacity and cruelty than demoliberal capitalism in the West.

Except for unique historical occasions, this struggle should not take the form of mass uprisings, but rather of guerrilla, erosive actions that undermine the state's authority. Socio-economic antagonisms leading to a military confrontation or collision between two bureaucratic socialist powers may well create the objective and subjective conditions for the anti-bureaucratic revolution. In the case of the Soviet Union, a defeat in any grave conflict involving foreign powers would tend to unleash all the social, economic and political antagonisms that are currently unable to manifest themselves openly. For that reason the U.S.S.R. could not afford to negotiate with Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Albania and China -- negotiations that might facilitate at any moment a Second Russian Revolution. With any major setback in Central Europe or along the Siberian frontier with China, the antilabor and neocolonial totalitarian bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R. could be challenged internally. And in that event the most likely outcome would not be a return to capitalism and the bourgeois state of 1917., but a revival of the socialism of self-management tantamount to a scientific neoanarchism.

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On these matters the social and political philosophy of Bakunin completes and compliments that of Marx. For our part, we are obliged to explain the present epoch without making a fetish of the past. Neither Marx nor Bakunin can explain contemporary developments in response to nineteenth century problems, even though their works and deeds embody a coherent revolutionary theory applicable to the twentieth century. What survives is anarcho-Marxism, which unites Marx and Bakunin, the philosopher/economist with the professional revolutionary.

Marx was not in principle, but only in strategy, opposed to anarchism. Here are some of his words worthy of an anarchist, words which were written in the middle 40's: "*All socialists understand by anarchist this: the goal of the proletarian movement, the abolition of classes and the transformation of state powers and governmental functions into simple administrative acts.*" Nor was Bakunin opposed to each and every function of the state. In his writings on the International Workingman's Association he accepts the concept of the state under another form, that of the "*social collective,*" "*regenerated state,*" "*new revolutionary state,*" "*socialist state*" and "*national commune,*" always with the understanding that it represents a delegated power consistent with self-management and direct democracy.

* * *

Anarcho-Marxism is the revolutionary science of our epoch: Marxist in its economic conception of capitalism, the contradictions of capitalism and the means of overcoming them; anarchist in its conception of direct democracy, and self-managed enterprises and federations of freely associated workers. Marxist and anarchist forms of socialism are reconciled in the socialism of self-management, when the organs of production and administration are

based on direct democracy and not on the bureaucratic state disguised as an illusory dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Marx says that communism constitutes the negation of private property and, to that extent, human alienation. He believed that with the disappearance of bourgeois property, man would reappropriate his alienated human powers. However, public property managed by the state through a bureaucracy as the dominant elite does not put an end to alienation; it perpetuates it in another form. In order for man to recover his integrity as a non alienated subject, he must manage his own products through organs of direct socialist democracy and on administration of things rather than men.



Abraham Guillén (13 March 1913 – 1 August 1993), was a Spanish author, economist and educator. He was a veteran of Spanish Civil War, influenced by anarchism. One of the most prolific revolutionary writers in Latin America during the 1960s and intellectual mentor of Uruguay's revolutionary Movement of National Liberation (Tupamaros). He is most widely known as the author of *Strategy of the Urban Guerrilla*, which played an important role in the activities of urban guerrillas in Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil.



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