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## Revolutionary anarchism in Spain : 1868-1939

Mark Hoffman

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Mark Hoffman

History 493A

Margaret George

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Revolutionary Anarchism in Spain: 1868-1939

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Revolutionary Anarchism in Spain: 1868-1939

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by

Mark Hoffman

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ABSTRACT (100-200 words):

The paper that I have written deals with the role of Spanish Anarchists in the Popular Front during the Spanish Civil War. The ideological roots of Spanish Anarchism are examined and an effort is made to show how the Bakuninist world-view gained currency among a significant portion of the Spanish peasantry and working-class. The historical conditions peculiar to Spain that provided the Anarchists with their base of support are discussed at length. In addition, the conflicts between the Anarchists and the Spanish Communist Party are dealt with in detail. Throughout the paper, the events taking place in Spain are put into their international context. The paper concludes with a brief summary of the impact of Anarchist thought on world history.

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## Revolutionary Anarchism in Spain: 1868-1939

The political history of Spain in the period of the Civil War involves a bewildering proliferation of ideologies. Every fine-tuned shade of opinion had its representatives; coalition was no easy matter. On the Right, divisions existed between the old monarchists, a monarchist faction known as the Carlists, the Radical Party of Alejandro Lerroux Garcia, the Catholic CEDA (Confederacion Espanola de Derechas Autonomas) and the fascist Falange. The Left suffered from factionalism to an even greater degree. The Socialist UGT (Union General de Trabajadores) contained both reformist and revolutionary elements. The Communists vied with the semi-Trotskyite POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista) for the allegiance of the more radical workers. The impoverished peasantry often gravitated toward the Anarchist CNT (Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo) which was itself split between moderate and purist factions. The tactics and strategies espoused by individuals were sometimes difficult to compartmentalize, especially among the Anarchists. While the outbreak of the civil war did establish a line of demarcation between Nationalists and Republicans, the continued struggle among the parties that made up the Republic created a civil war within a civil war. The Right, on the other hand, managed to crystallize their offensive around General Francisco Franco and the Falange. The results were tragic.

When making an analysis of the relations between the various forces on the Left in the Spanish Civil War, the most unusual aspect of the situation that confronts the historian would have to be the strength of the Anarchists. In no other modern social revolution has Anarchism played such an important role. Even in Russia, a country

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where Anarchists had enough of a following to hold a few seats in the Petrograd Soviet of 1917, peasants and workers on the whole rejected Anarchism in favor of other revolutionary trends. Elsewhere, Anarchism failed to make even as much impact as it had in Russia, the Haymarket Riot notwithstanding. Spain, then, stands as the great exception in this regard. Whereas Anarchists in other countries have usually left little more than an intriguing footnote to history, the Anarchists of Spain led a mass movement that shook their society to its foundations.

Why did Anarchism attract a mass following in Spain? Certainly, the widespread poverty, unemployment and political corruption contributed to peasant and worker unrest in general; these conditions, though, did not necessarily give rise to libertarian views. The idea that Spain could exist without a state was based on the assumption that workers and peasants could carry out any administrative functions necessary in an Anarchist society through voluntary participation in revolutionary committees. If there was anything holding the Spanish people back from bringing the new society into existence, the Anarchists preached, it was los malos, those forces that were so unlike the good, simple, instinctively communal people of the pueblo. In the Anarchist ideology, no effort was made to distinguish between different types of states; every state apparatus was considered to be another example of tyranny. The simplicity of the reasoning of the early Spanish Anarchists appealed especially to the uneducated peasants. These people feared greatly the caciques (political bosses) and Civil Guardsmen who came from outside the pueblo to oppress the poor. The lack of complex political theory in libertarian propaganda has been alluded to by Dr. Isaac Puente, an Anarchist writer active during the Civil War:

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There is no need to invent anything, or to create a new organism. The nuclei of the organization around which the future economic life will be organized already exist in the present society: the trade union and the free municipality... the latter of ancient origin in which, spontaneously, the inhabitants of villages and hamlets gather, offers a way to the solution of all the problems of co-existence in the countryside. (quoted in Fraser, pg.543)

The ideas of men such as Puente, unique as they were, did not find their first expression in Spain. They were introduced from the outside.

The first stirrings of a Spanish Anarchist movement date back as early as 1868, the year that Giuseppe Fanelli, an Italian member of the First International and a follower of Bakunin, came to Spain to assist in the creation of a revolutionary nuclei. By 1870, Bakuninist ideas were attracting attention in Madrid and Barcelona. Spanish members of the First International began to publish *La Solidaridad*, a periodical that propagated libertarian ideas. While in its infancy, the Spanish Anarchist movement exhibited millenarian qualities that remained characteristic of the trend throughout its history. The Anarchists gained strength largely by giving the impoverished braceros, (landless agricultural workers), a new faith in themselves. Much credence was given to the idea that the illiterate poor could rise above their circumstances through dilligent study and self-improvement. Dedicated militants founded their own schools to educate the children of the rural pueblos. At these schools, children learned to read, to write and to question the values of previous generations. Adults also attended night schools where they gained literacy and a rudimentary knowledge of

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of disciplines such as geography and history. Since no system of public education existed in Spain at the time, the Anarchists filled a shameful void.

Ignorance was not the only evil that the Anarchists attacked. They demanded that their followers give up the vices that had become so widespread in Spanish society. Alcohol, tobacco and prostitution were condemned. According to the Anarchists, the obrero consciente ("conscious worker") had to set an example for all of Spain. If enough people were to live by the principles of Anarchism, the argument went, truth and reason would eventually win out over injustice. The Anarchists attempted to conduct their lives as though they were already living in the new society. They denounced the Catholic church, a hated symbol of reaction, and refused to take part in church weddings or baptism ceremonies. To an obrero consciente, the Catholic church was as much of a blight on society as the taverns and the brothels.

The early Spanish Anarchist movement, lacking a clearly defined political program or theory of organization, could, at times, ignite spontaneous riots. One such occurrence, an attempt on the part of 4,000 workers to occupy Jerez in January of 1891, collapsed soon after the arrival of the police.(Brenan, pg.162) Another similar event, known as "la Semana Tragica"(the Tragic Week), took place in Barcelona in 1909. This episode resulted in the deaths of 104 civilians and eight policemen.(Kern, pg.18) Predictably, these spontaneous uprisings brought about frequent waves of repression. The Mano Negro affair, for example, appears to be a case in which the Spanish government invented a fictitious secret society as a pretext for arresting large numbers of Anarchists and union organizers. Bernaldo de Quiros, the sociologist who investigated the case of the Mano Negro for the government, doubted

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the existence of any such organization; nonetheless, police continued to accuse individual Anarchists of belonging to the Mano Negro throughout the 1880's. (Bookchin, pg.108) The intensification of security measures on the part of the government has been cited as the cause for the decline of the labor movement in Andalusia and Catalonia in the 1890's. (ibid., pg.108)

Much of the Anarchists' problem lay in the fact that their forms of organization left a great deal of initiative to local committees. "Propaganda of the deed" could be invoked as a justification for any number of isolated terrorist actions. Indeed, the extremist wing of the movement promoted a cult of violence. Terrorist bombs went off regularly in the 1890's. An explosion that took place in 1896 led to the arrest of 400 radicals, five of whom were sentenced to death. (Kern, pg.16) The police took advantage of the situation by infiltrating unions and radical groups with agent provocateurs. There is, then, some degree of difficulty in determining exactly who is responsible for each separate terrorist action. In any case, continued police repression (including disruption of simple trade union activity) brought about an escalation in the intensity of the attacks. While the obreros conscientes originally planned to limit their terrorist actions to the destruction of unoccupied buildings, they later bombed police stations in a desperate drive for revenge. Their actions, however, still failed to be integrated into a strategy for the seizure of power.

The founding of the CNT in 1911 did not lead to any consensus among Anarchists on the question of terrorism. What did arise soon after the birth of the CNT was a clearer picture of the Anarchist road to power. Though some purists within the organization clung to their Utopian dogma, most members agreed that libertarian principles ought

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to be combined with syndicalism. This did not mean that the Anarchists had given up their revolutionary aspirations; it did mean that Anarchism was making inroads in urban areas where workers were becoming disillusioned with Socialist reformism.(Thomas, pg.42) The CNT, unlike the Socialist UGT, did not see strikes as a means to purely economic ends; rather, strikes were to be wielded as a political weapon against the bourgeoisie. The main differences within the CNT at the time of its inception concerned the question of pace- militants wanted to confront the bourgeoisie immediately; moderates suggested that the organization give itself time beforehand to build up local chapters.

For the next several years, the size of the CNT remained somewhere between 45,000 and 50,000 members, most of whom lived in Barcelona, Corunna, Saragossa and Gijon.(Kern, pgs.25-26) At this time, all union activity was illegal. Out of tactical necessity, the CNT did cooperate with the UGT in actions such as the nation-wide general strike that took place on March 27, 1917.(ibid., pg.28) Tensions between leaders of the CNT and those of the UGT were not eased by these temporary alliances. In his book, The Spanish Cockpit, Franz Borkenau described the schism:

The CNT, in contrast with the UGT, rejected all sorts of social insurance, it did not even keep strike funds but relied, in strikes, upon the solidarity of those sections of the movement which were not implicated, or upon the sympathy of the public at large. In consequence, strikes had to be short, and to be short they must be violent. And they were. Barcelona never knew the peaceful type of strike action that is normal in Europe. It always experienced strikes plus bomb-throwing, or plus riots at the factory

doors, or things like those that happened during a tramway strike in Barcelona, when the strikers set the cars on fire and made them run down the streets in flames; and won the strike with it! Again, the CNT rejected all sorts of agreements with the employers. Strikes ought to lead, in their conception of trade unionism, to the de facto application of better wages and shorter hours by the employers, but without any obligation, on the side of the workers, to keep to a settlement for a given time. The state of war between employers and wage earners must be continual. (pgs. 34-35)

Obreros conscientes referred to the final aim of Anarcho-syndicalism as "comunismo libertario." Under this libertarian communist system, a federation of autonomous collectives throughout the country would take the place of the state. Exchange of goods between the various collectives would not be based on equivalence but would be carried out according to the objective of distributing the necessities of life to each pueblo on the basis of what would be required (in that particular pueblo) to maintain a satisfactory standard of living. Parasites and deviants would be censured by public opinion. The state, the church and the capitalist economy would be abolished and replaced by a society in which every individual worked "according to his ability" and was compensated "according to his need."

The syndicalist aspect of Anarcho-syndicalism posits that the trade unions can take over the functions of the economy that, under capitalism, are controlled by the bourgeoisie. Thus, the trade unions are to be used as schools of liberation for the workers. After the revolution, they would replace the capitalist state. The workers, then, would exercise their power through the unions. As Murray Bookchin has noted, "the

guiding and most important principle is that the management of production occurs at the base of society, not at its summit, and decisions flow from below to above."(pg.133)

Within the Anarcho-syndicalist CNT, disputes broke out as to whether the organization ought to place more emphasis on syndicalism or Anarchist propaganda. Those who stressed economic gains constituted, by 1925, a majority. To ensure that the CNT did not degenerate into a reformist union in the manner of the UGT, revolutionary Anarchists created the FAI (Federacion Anarquista Iberica), a group that represented a more purely Anarchist position than that which had been adopted by the CNT. The FAI, formed in 1927 during the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, sought to provide the CNT with ideological guidance. Some of the most gifted Anarchist organizers soon became members of the FAI. At a time when Spain was ruled by a government that refused to make any concession to the labor movement, syndicalism of the type that had been developed by the CNT lost much of its appeal. FAI leaders such as Manuel Buenacasa believed that the Anarchist movement, suffering from the imprisonment of most of its urban intellectual leadership, needed to return to the "pure" Anarchism of the CNT's most important social base- the braceros of the rural pueblos. (Kern, pg.81)

The changes in Anarchist strategy advocated by the FAI, had they been implemented, could have done little to prevent the decline of the CNT in the last years of the Primo dictatorship. In 1930, the CNT exerted almost no influence over the strikes that broke out in Malaga, Seville, Saragossa, Granada, Cordoba and Barcelona.(ibid., pg.87) The general crisis that gripped Spain at this time lacked stable revolutionary leadership; nonetheless, the crisis did eventually lead to the end

of the dictatorship. A coup by liberal military officers at Jaca brought down General Primo de Rivera. The Second Republic was born; municipal elections would be held on April 12, 1931.

Divisions between the CNT and the FAI became more acute during the first years of the Second Republic. The moderates of the CNT, including Angel Pestana (the General Secretary) and Juan Peiro (the editor of Solidaridad Obrera) advocated limited cooperation with the government. The presence of three Socialists in the cabinet of the new government headed by Manuel Azana led many members of the CNT to believe that the need to safeguard the constitutional rights of labor precluded any further attempts at a seizure of power. The FAI, on the other hand, continued their policy of militant labor activity. When a strike by the telephone workers of the Compania Telefonica de Espana was declared illegal by the Socialist Labor Minister, Largo Caballero, FAI militants reiterated their assertion that the Socialist politicians of the Republic were enemies of the labor movement. Though Caballero justified his action on the grounds that the young Republic was not in a position to interfere with the business affairs of International Telephone and Telegraph (the owners of the company in question), the FAI could not be placated. FAI support of the telephone strike helped the organization to gain influence among rank-and-file CNT members. The arguments of CNT moderates did nothing to calm labor unrest; on the contrary, militant strikes occurred with increasing frequency among fabric, textile and metallurgical workers. (ibid., pg.96) In the rural areas, peasant riots erupted in the absence of any serious attempts on the part of the Azana government to implement a land reform program. On January 18, 1932, an insurrection began in Catalonia. Red and black

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flags flew over the mining towns of Figols, Manresa, Berga and Sallent for a period of five days before the rising was crushed by government troops. (Bookchin, pg.244) Other similar attempts at a seizure of power took place later in Barcelona and parts of Andalusia. The most violent confrontation between Anarchists and police, though, broke out in a small village known as Casas Viejas in January of 1933.

The Casas Viejas affair did more damage to the stability of the Azana government than other similar events. The braceros of Casas Viejas, led by a septuagenarian known as Seisdedos, had announced the establishment of comunismo libertario in their village. The Asaltos, a special police force known for its loyalty to the Republic, responded by setting fire to Seisdedos' home. The blaze claimed the lives of Seisdedos, his son-in-law, his two sons, his cousin, his daughter, his daughter-in-law and his two grandchildren. (Preston, pg.81) An additional sixteen people were shot dead. (Brenan, pg.247) Captain Rojas, the commander of the Asaltos, is said to have been under orders to "shoot for the belly." (Bookchin, pg.247) A wave of public outrage followed the massacre. The Socialist ministers came under attack from the Left due to their complicity in the affair. The Right also took advantage of the situation by claiming that the violence was the result of the failure of the government to establish order. In doing so, the Right was appealing to those sections of Spanish society that expressed frustration over the inability of Azana to put a stop to the Anarchist uprisings.

The elections held in November of 1933 proved to be disastrous for the Left. By failing to create a coalition, Socialists and Left Republicans lost ground to the united parties of the Right. Constitutional modifications that were passed under Azana contributed to the

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conservative victory. As Gerald Brennan has observed, "the new election law had been devised to favor the formation of two main groups in the Cortes, in imitation of the English party system: voting was for lists of candidates and parties which combined to form a united front obtained a great advantage over those that did not."(pg.265) The refusal of the Anarchists to participate in the elections further ensured that the Socialists would lose their foothold in the government. Whereas a sizable portion of the CNT had voted for the Socialists in 1931, the disgust of the Anarchists with the first Republican government meant that Anarchist participation in the electoral process had, at least for the time being, come to a halt. The CNT would not enter into the electoral arena again until 1936.

While the conservative government that coalesced under the Radical leader Alejandro Lerroux moved to undo the liberal reforms of the Azana government, the CNT, now under the domination of the ultra-Leftist FAI, struggled to maintain its offensive against the bourgeoisie. Another general strike was called in Saragossa on December 8, 1933. The inevitable street battles between Anarchists and the Civil Guard resulted in five fatalities and forty-five arrests.(Kern, pg.124) Moderate members of the CNT, weary of what they saw as reckless FAI adventurism, formed their own "syndicates of opposition." At the same time, the Socialists were becoming more radical. In their desire to have allies in their struggle against Lerroux, Socialist party leaders agreed to coordinate UGT and CNT strike activity. As alliances shifted, revolt continued. Regionalist Catalan uprisings gave the government serious cause for concern. When a CNT-UGT insurrection hit Asturias in October, Lerroux, uncertain of the loyalty of Spanish army regiments, sent Moroccan troops from North Africa to suppress the rising.(Bookchin, pg.271)

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The events in Asturias fostered a crisis mentality among members of the Spanish middle class. In this atmosphere, the CEDA and the Falange grew in strength. Repressive actions on the part of the government increased. Caballero and other Leftists were jailed. Solidaridad Obrero and other radical publications were forced to cease publishing their material. The reactionary counter-offensive fortified itself further when the various parties of the Right united to form a Nationalist Front. In response, Socialists, Communists, members of the POUM and Left Republicans united to form the Popular Front. The CNT made no formal statement of support for the Popular Front; nonetheless, Anarchists understood that their most immediate objective-- the release of political prisoners who had been jailed in the aftermath of Asturias-- required that the Right be defeated in the election of 1936. Conflict within the CNT, therefore, abated; even the FAI now heeded the plea for Anarchist electoral involvement that had been made earlier by CNT moderates.

The elections of 1936 turned out to be a major political advance for the parties of the Left. The Popular Front received 4,176,156 votes in comparison to 3,783,601 votes for the Nationalist Front, 681,047 votes for the Center and 130,000 votes for Basque Nationalists. (Thomas, pg.94) Unity among the parties of the Left, however, appeared to be rather fragile. The cooperation between the CNT and the UGT that had been seen in Asturias soon gave way to bitter feuding between the two unions. Splits within the Socialist party between a Left wing represented by a recently radicalized Caballero (who had come to be known as "the Spanish Lenin") and a Right wing represented by Indalecio Prieto only exacerbated factionalism within the Popular Front. In contrast, the Nationalist Front broadened its network of alliances by winning over

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adherents from the Center. By July, leaders of the Nationalist Front decided that the balance of forces was in their favor. The time was ripe, then, for a Right-wing overthrow of the Second Spanish Republic.

When Nationalist generals throughout Spain declared a state of war against the Republic, Azana, once again the head of the government, came under pressure to distribute arms to the UGT and the CNT. Though he feared the possible consequences of arming his political opponents on the Left, he eventually acquiesced. In reality, though, the controversy was moot. At this time, real political power could no longer be exercised by the Republic. In some areas, the Falange had seized control; in other areas, workers and peasants had taken matters into their own hands. By the end of July, over 490,000 hectares of land had been taken over by squatters. (Bookchin, pg.286) Prisons across Spain had been thrown open; thousands of political prisoners were released. Church burnings took place in Madrid and Barcelona. The Nationalists responded to these events by carrying out a series of terrorist actions against Leftists and members of the government. A wave of uncontrollable violence swept the country. Sporadic street battles occurred between Falangists and Socialists; the Civil Guard and the peasants; the CNT and the UGT— even between the two main factions of the Socialist party.

In Barcelona, representatives of the UGT, the CNT, the Communist party and the POUM managed to come together to form an Anti-Fascist Militia Committee. The Committee prepared to advance on Nationalist territory in Aragon. Buenaventura Durruti, an Anarchist, acted as its political commander-in-chief. The Militia obtained supplies by whatever means necessary. Trucks at a General Motors plant near Barcelona, for example, were requisitioned by working-class militiamen with no thought of restitution. (Kern, pg.159) The lack of supplies was not the

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only problem that the Militia faced. The lack of coordination between the Republican government in Madrid and the Militia based in Barcelona served to complicate the situation. Within the Anti-Fascist coalition itself, the rivalry and lack of communication between members of different parties restricted the ability of the coalition as a whole to maintain those positions which were captured from the Nationalists.

To meet the demands of a wartime situation, the government at Madrid attempted to take some degree of control over the economy. Withdrawals from bank accounts were limited to 2,000 pesetas.(Jellinek, pg.384) Industries vital to the war effort came under government control. A total of 117 car workshops, 48 coal plants, 49 textile warehouses, 19 textile factories, 31 medical and 54 chemical stores, 3 paper factories, 4 truck factories, 33 radio factories and 8 sugar factories were nationalized.(ibid., pg.385) The CNT and the more revolutionary elements in the UGT took appropriate measures of their own. They issued vouchers in place of money so as to be able to procure the necessary goods. Public kitchens were set up by the CNT to feed the Militia. In areas where there was a strong CNT influence, workers took control of industries that had not already been nationalized by the government. Expropriation of land in the rural areas proceeded at a furious pace. By 1938, 5,423,212 hectares of land had been confiscated.(Payne, pg.240) In the midst of a massive peasant uprising, the government could do little to halt the sudden seizure of land. The expropriations were simply legalized by a series of ex post facto decrees.

If the Republic was to avoid complete political fragmentation, the government at Madrid would have to include representatives from the CNT. To facilitate a more coordinated war effort, Largo Caballero, now Premier and Minister of War, invited some Anarchists to join his Cabinet. After

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fierce debates among libertarians over questions of doctrinal purity, four representatives of the CNT accepted Ministries within the reorganized government. The role of the CNT in the new Cabinet was as follows:

Juan Garcia Oliver	Minister of Justice
Juan Lopez	Minister of Commerce
Federica Montseny	Minister of Health and Public Assistance
Juan Peiro	Minister of Industry

Manuel Mascarell, a member of the national committee of the CNT, explained the change in policy in terms of practical necessity. "The conduct of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists," he asserted, "should be inspired by and should be in harmony with our anarchist ideology, but when circumstances, when particular events demand a modification of tactics, anarchists should not confine themselves to the limited framework of what, theoretically, in normal times, was held to be their line of action, because to cling obstinately to principles, to follow a rigid line without departing one iota from what is laid down in anarchist textbooks and declarations is the most comfortable attitude one can adopt in order to justify doing nothing or risking nothing." (quoted in Bolloren, The Spanish Revolution, pg.195)

In exchange for the Cabinet seats granted to the CNT, Caballero expected the organization to limit, at least to some extent, the authority of the local revolutionary committees that had sprung up throughout Republican Spain at the outset of the Civil War. The line of Caballero's party, a party dominated by the strategic thinking of the Spanish Communists of the Third International, held that the mass expropriation of land and factories that had been carried out by the

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revolutionary committees prevented Western democracies from giving aid to a "Red" Republic. To win international support for the Republican cause, the Socialists and Communists argued, the Civil War should be portrayed as a clear-cut struggle between "democracy" and "fascism." Social revolution, therefore, would have to be played down in favor of a united campaign against the Nationalists. In Homage to Catalonia, George Orwell has examined the political effects of the increasingly popular line of the Third International in Spain:

The general swing to the Right dates from about October-November 1936 when the U.S.S.R. began to supply arms to the Government and power began to pass from the Anarchists to the Communists. Except Russia and Mexico no country had had the decency to come to the rescue of the Government, and Mexico, for obvious reasons, could not supply arms in large quantities. Consequently the Russians were in a position to dictate terms. There is very little doubt that these terms were, in substance, 'Prevent revolution or you get no weapons,' and that the first move against the revolutionary elements, the expulsion of the POUM from the Catalan Generalite, was done under orders from the U.S.S.R.(pg.53)

Orwell also deals specifically with the effect of the line of the Third International on Spanish Anarchism:

The Anarchists, the only revolutionary party that was big enough to matter, were obliged to give way on point after point. The process of collectivization was checked, the local committees were got rid of, the workers' patrols were abolished and the pre-war police forces, largely reinforced and very heavily armed, were restored, and various key industries which

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were under the control of the trade unions were taken over by the Government...finally, most important of all, the workers' militias, based on the trade unions, were gradually broken up and redistributed among the new Popular Army, a 'non-political' army on semi-bourgeois lines, with a differential pay rate, a privileged officer-caste, etc., etc., (pg.55)

Was social revolution as much of a threat to the war effort as the Socialists and Communists claimed? In the rural areas, the situation was too complex to provide any simple answers. Certainly, the extreme poverty that existed in the agricultural areas called for some kind of change. If no immediate measures were taken, the peasants might not have had much incentive to support the war effort. Unfortunately, there was no consensus as to what type of changes should have been made. The Anarchists frequently encountered opposition from peasants who resisted their attempts at imposing comunismo libertario by force; as a consequence, much of the land that had been expropriated was not collectivised. In some areas, expropriated land was divided among individual farmers. The amount of land that was collectivised, though, was extensive. By the winter of 1936-1937, over 1000 agricultural collectives had been established in Republican Spain. (Hugh Thomas- quoted in Carr, The Republic and the Civil War in Spain, pg.242) These collectives, far removed from the bitter sectarianism seen in the cities, were often a joint venture between the CNT and the UGT. (ibid., pgs.242-243) In many collectives, money was abolished altogether; in others, it was replaced by work certificates. Distribution was based on need. Men with wives and children received bigger allotments of the available goods than single men. Where money was used, the average wage amounted to 42 pesetas a week. (ibid., pg.251) This was significantly less than the average

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of 60-72 pesetas a week earned by soldiers and factory workers.(ibid., pg.251) Still, few poor peasants complained. Before collectivization, their diet consisted of little more than bread and potatoes. After collectivization, they began to receive rations of rice, sausages, meat, olive oil and wine.(Fraser, pg.361) While collectivization obviously brought about an increase in food consumption for the poorest peasants, the effects of comunismo libertario on production varied from one area to another. Wheat production in 1937, for example, declined by about 20% in Catalonia but increased by the same percentage in Aragon.(ibid., pg.370) These figures, however, are of limited value since statistics for agricultural production in Spain had been known to fluctuate wildly from year to year. What is certain is that the separate collective villages lacked an effective system of coordination. Food often did not reach the people who needed it; shortages in the cities became common. Raymond Carr summed up the situation when he wrote that "what went wrong with the Republican agricultural sector, and caused near starvation in the cities, was less any drastic decline in production than a breakdown in the marketing mechanism."(The Spanish Tragedy, pg.101)

Collectivization of industry mirrored the collectivization of agriculture in many respects. While the collectivist movement suffered no shortage of enthusiasm on the part of the working class, good intentions alone failed to prevent complications. As with the collectivist movement in agriculture, the sheer intensity of the revolution in industry proved to be more than the CNT or the UGT was prepared to deal with. In Barcelona, an Anarchist stronghold, collectivization extended to everything from milk pasteurizing plants to the entertainment industry. (Boltonen, The Spanish Revolution, pgs.62-63) A similar pattern could

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be seen in other areas including Madrid and Valencia. Since the Anarchist ideology opposed socialization implemented from above, factories usually came under control of the revolutionary Workers' Committees. Those who served on the Committees often lacked the experience necessary to keep the factories running smoothly. Andreu Capdevila, a CNT textile worker interviewed by Ronald Fraser, has commented on the ambiguities of the revolution in industry:

The workers' committee and later the works council was never able to impose an efficient order of production; the original members, whose first president was a laborer- a great orator in the CNT style- weren't technically qualified to run a factory, let alone convert it to arms manufacture. Too much was left to luck, too much depended on the individual will of a few people rather than on the combined effort of the whole workforce. The majority of technicians weren't sympathetic to collectivization. I remember a Generalitat engineer saying that the reason was that none of the technicians had been shot. In a sense he was right. All in all, I don't think production ever reached 50% of its potential...(pg.226)

In addition to the dearth of efficient collectivist management, collectivised industry faced a shortage of working capital. The Spanish government, holding as much as 2,258,569,908 pesetas worth of gold in reserve, refused credit to CNT-controlled industry.(Peirats, vol.I, pg. 248) Collectivized firms, then, had to rely on liquid assets seized during the revolution.(Broue and Temime, pg.163)

Disputes over strategy once again threatened to disrupt the fragile unity of the CNT at a time when the question of social revolution was being taken up by the Anarchists' strongest opponents. Garcia Oliver



and other CNT moderates advocated increased cooperation with the Socialists and Communists in the name of "legality;" Durruti and other militants wanted to leave political and economic power strictly in the hands of the revolutionary workers and peasants. Durruti himself attacked the collaborationist argument vigorously: "When the workers expropriate the bourgeoisie, when one attacks foreign property, when the militia is controlled by the unions, when, in fact, one is in the process of making a revolution from the bottom up, how is it possible to give this a legal basis?"(quoted in Paz, pg.246) Despite such admonitions from Durruti and the purists, the moderate line won out in the end. By the early months of 1937, the general swing to the Right started to undermine the accomplishments of the rank-and-file Anarchists of Spain. The Communists and their supporters were rapidly gaining ground. On January 12, a series of fifty-eight decrees drafted by the Catalan Councillor of Finance, Josep Tarradellas, imposed heavy taxes on collectivized industry.(Richards, pg.121) In March, the Anarchist security patrols were disbanded. Tensions between the various parties mounted. On May 3, street fighting erupted in Barcelona between the CNT and their enemies in the Communist party. The battle originated in a dispute between the CNT and their allies in the POUM over the CNT occupation of the Barcelona Telephone Building. Undoubtedly, Anarchist control of the telephone system meant that the CNT could easily hinder the communications capabilities of anti-CNT forces; consequently, the struggle over control of the telephone system was seen by both sides as a decisive political battle. It was, in fact, a turning point of sorts. In the aftermath of the affair, the Communists threatened to resign from the government if Largo Caballero (who had strayed from the line of the Third International by refusing to take drastic measures against the CNT and the POUM) did not step down as

Premier and Minister of War. With the support of the Left Republicans and Prieto Socialists, the Communists advanced their political agenda. Caballero resigned and was replaced by Juan Negrin, the former Minister of Finance. The new cabinet, purged of Left Socialists and Anarcho-Syndicalists, moved to crush the POUM. As many as 300 people associated with the organization were arrested; some party leaders were shot. (Bolloten, The Spanish Revolution, pg.456) The revolutionary committees were declared illegal and press censorship was imposed. The Spanish Anarchist movement appeared to be reaching a moribund phase.

Under the Negrin government, Anarchist collective enterprises could no longer operate freely. Anarchist collectives invariably refused to pay any taxes to the central government; they had become, therefore, a weak link in the eyes of those who wanted to see a more tightly organized Republican war effort. A narrow, selfish attitude prevalent among some members of individual collectives contributed to the hostilities. The workers of the CNT-operated Cros chemical factory, for example, received food supplies in far greater quantities than other workers in the surrounding area. (Fraser, pg.450) The government attempted to remedy the situation by starting a "de-collectivization" movement. Negrin went so far in breaking up the agricultural collectives, though, that the protests of peasants who supported collectivization led the government to make some concessions. Even Jose Silva, the Communist general secretary of the Institute of Agrarian Reform, had to admit that "those persons who were discontented with the collectives— and who had good reasons for being so, if the methods employed in forming them are taken into account— took them by assault, carrying away and dividing up the harvest and farm implements without respecting those collectives that had been formed without violence or pressure, that were prosperous, and were a model of organization, like the one in Candasmó." (quoted in Bolloten,

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The Spanish Revolution, pg.462) Despite such concessions, the Anarchist dream of comunismo libertario no longer seemed viable. As the Nationalists began to make massive territorial gains, the collapse of the Republic itself seemed imminent.

The German and Italian military aid, the lack of support from the Western democracies, the incessant Nationalist bombing raids, the food shortages in the cities, the growing disenchantment with Communist hegemony- all of these factors took a toll on the ability of the Republic to defend itself. On January 26, 1939, Barcelona, a stronghold of anti-fascism throughout the Civil War, fell to Franco's invading troops. By mid-February, over 490,000 refugees had fled to France and other countries.(Thomas, pg.575) While some territory in the South (including Madrid) remained under Republican control, the anti-fascist cause suffered severe demoralization. Access to raw materials had been cut off; further Soviet arms shipments were impeded by the Nationalist blockade of sea-ports; food shortages were leading to near starvation in Madrid. In the chaos of the last days of the Republic, the Negrin government was deposed by a coup led by the commander of the army in Madrid, Colonel Segismundo Casado. Though Casado originally intended to reorganize the remaining resistance, the hopelessness of the situation soon became apparent. The government had to admit defeat. The soldiers abandoned the front; the remaining political leadership prepared to evacuate. Franco had consolidated his victory.

In a matter of months, all the Great Powers (with the exception of the Soviet Union) recognized the Franco regime.(ibid., pg.604) The Western democracies, whom the Republicans had counted on to eventually start supporting the anti-fascist cause, did not even see fit to accept refugees from Nationalist Spain at the end of the Civil War. Thousands of

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these refugees found themselves trapped in concentration camps in southern France. Still, these people fared better than those anti-fascists who remained in Spain. The political prisoners of Franco's regime numbered as many as 200,000 in July of 1939. (ibid., pg.608) Thousands of these prisoners were given death sentences; many more were given lengthy prison sentences. The iron boot of Franco's dictatorship ensured that the entire Spanish Left, from Azana to the CNT-FAI, would cease to exist.

Who, in the final analysis, can be said to be responsible for the defeat of Republican Spain? Some Spanish Anarchists in exile argued that Franco could have been defeated if the CNT had carried out a complete proletarian revolution at the outset of the Civil War. (ibid., pg.611) Popular Communist leaders such as Dolores Ibarruri placed the blame for the collapse of the Republic on the "Anarcho-Trotskyites." (Ibarruri, pgs.281-286) Still others (of various political affiliations) claimed that German and Italian military aid tipped the balance of forces in favor of Franco. (Brenan, pgs.323-330) While the emphasis of certain factors over others changes from one testimony to the next, almost every analysis of the Spanish Civil War takes into account, to one extent or another, the disunity of the Republic. Left-wing sectarianism in Spain, fostered to a great extent by the policy of the Comintern, seems to have contributed to a defeat of the anti-fascist forces that resembled, in some ways, the defeat of the German Left in the 1930's. True, the international situation at the time of the Spanish Civil War differed greatly from the international situation at the time of Hitler's rise to power; still, the domestic situation in Spain did exhibit strong similarities to the German scene. Perhaps a more independent, uniquely Spanish stand on the part of the Spanish

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Communists could have avoided some of the problems that did arise. Perhaps the bitter conflicts that arose between the Communists and the other parties could have been avoided.

The most serious split on the Spanish Left at the time of the Civil War (one that could have been resolved if the Communists had adopted a more flexible policy) surfaced between the Anarchists and the Communists. There were, after all, intrinsic differences between the two movements that served to polarize them. For the Anarchists, the final objective was, at the outset of the revolutionary process in Spain, everything. To adjust to the political realities of the Second Republic, then, libertarian leaders had to make compromises that alienated them from their social base. In the end, the CNT became something that its founders had never wanted it to be— a political party. Though the Anarchists advocated the destruction of the state, they eventually entered the government; though they envisioned a society based entirely on voluntary cooperation, they resorted to forceful coercion at times during the phase of rapid collectivization. In short, the paradox of Spanish Anarchism was that to achieve political power, the Anarchists had to betray their own utopian aspirations. The Marxist parties, on the other hand, faced no such dilemma. The dialectics of Marxism (even if they were not handled perfectly by the Third International) allow for an infinitely greater degree of maneuverability than any theory bound by static precedents could ever have. The Communists saw no violation of sacred principles involved in making an alliance with the Republican bourgeoisie or of subordinating the social revolution to the fight against Franco. They did not hesitate in changing their set of alliances from day to day according to their immediate needs as a political party. Indeed, the major irony of the Communist role in the Spanish Civil War

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is that the Party allied itself with the factions within the Republic that stood for moderation and opposition to proletarian revolution. The Anarchists, being unwilling to accept the idea that proletarian revolution must be accomplished in stages, could only find such an alliance with the bourgeoisie repugnant to their ideology.

The conflict over the question of social revolution was not the only cause for hostility between Marxists and libertarians. The CNT and their supporters also suspected that the Communists of Spain planned to construct, at some point, a dictatorship modeled after the one that existed in the Soviet Union under Stalin. They saw, in the campaign against the POUM and the curtailment of the Revolutionary Committees, an embryonic dictatorship of the Communist party that threatened the very survival of the Spanish Anarchist movement; nonetheless, a movement based on firm adherence to principles could not hope to win out over a movement that was prepared to use any means necessary to achieve its aims. While the libertarians collapsed, the Marxists endured. Marxism, furthermore, continues to endure. The same cannot be said of Anarchism. Not since the days of the Spanish Civil War has the world seen a mass Anarchist movement capable of making a major impact on the political landscape of any nation. Marxism, though, continues to flourish across the globe. The phenomenon of Anarchism in Spain, therefore, can most likely be said to be a result of conditions peculiar to Spain at a certain stage of historical development. It is quite probable that Eric Hobsbawm will be confirmed in his characterization of Anarchism as a movement that "...is likely to go down in the books with the Anabaptists and the rest of the prophets who, though not unarmed, did not know what to do with their arms, and were defeated forever." (Hobsbawm, pg.92)

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