

Jason Garner. *Goals and Means: Anarchism, Syndicalism, and Internationalism in the Origins of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica.* Oakland: AK Press, 2016. 384 pp. \$19.00, paper, ISBN 978-1-84935-225-3.

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Published on H-Socialisms (July, 2017)

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At her speech at the last interwar congress of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA) in 1938, Emma Goldman pointed out how "anarchists ... were a sore in the eye of an entire school of Marxists and liberals." [1] Goldman's remark still applies for the postwar era as the Spanish anarchist movement has been vilified by both Marxist and liberal historians. For example, Eric Hobsbawm condemned its millenarist mysticism, while Paul Preston associated it with lunatic extremism. [2] Such bias stems from the reactions against the "propaganda by the deed" years but also from the fact that anti-authoritarian and anti-hierarchical stances oddly fitted with the Marxist grid or the sacrosanct nation-state notion, two paradigms of the Cold War era echoed by its historians.

This is not to say that articulate studies do not exist. The 1970s actually witnessed the publication of many works by Spanish scholars (exiled or at home), like José Peirats (*La CNT en la revolucion española* [1971]), Antonio Elorza (*El anarquismo español bajo la Dictadura* [1974]), or Xavier Cuadrat (*Socialismo y anarquismo en Cataluña (1899-1911): Los orígenes de la CNT* [1976]), who focused on the national sphere of the movement, its governance, the transition to anarcho-syndicalism, or the representation of anarchism as a political ideology. [3] The transnational sphere also drew

attention to a lesser extent. On the Spanish side, Josep Termes (*Anarquismo y sindicalismo en España: La Primera Internacional 1864-1881* [1972]) sought to contextualize the national movement with the creation of the First International. On the English-language side, Robert Kern (*Anarchist Principles and Spanish Reality* [1976]) worked on the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo's (CNT) and Federación Anarquista Ibérica's (FAI) relations with the international movement, while Wayne Thorpe (*Revolutionary Syndicalist Internationalism 1913-1923: The Origins of the International Working Men's Association* [1979]) depicted how revolutionary syndicalism constituted an international phenomenon, an early announcement of the transnational turn in labor studies at the turn of 1990. Yet little is known about the Spanish movement's frequent clandestine interludes.

Jason Garner's *Goals and Means: Anarchism, Syndicalism, and Internationalism in the Origins of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica* constitutes a valuable addition to both the nation-centric and transnational historiographies on Iberian anarchism. It reflects excellent insights developed through his earlier work on Catalan cooperativism (which won him the Jacint Dunyo Prize) and on the CNT's relations with the Communist Internationals (*Creating Unity or Division: The Origins of the FAI* [2003], *Cooperativisme Revolucionari la Unió de*

Juventuts Cooperatistes de Catalunya [2005], *Separated by an 'Ideological Chasm': The Spanish National Labour Confederation and Bolshevik Internationalism, 1917–1922* [2006], *La búsqueda de la unidad anarquista: La Federación Anarquista Ibérica antes de la II República* [2008], and *La Alianza Cooperativa Internacional y la Organización de Naciones Unidas* [2008]). Most important, *Goals and Means* relies on an impressive amount of archival material in several Latin languages. His research and writing processes must not have been easy, considering the archival gaps resulting from constant repression, a decentralized militant culture, and a historiography tinted by ideologies. Garner nonetheless achieves his goal while making several historiographical contributions, specifically through the notions he revisits and the light he sheds on the overlooked General Miguel Primo de Rivera dictatorship and democratic transition eras (1923–31).

His monograph depicts the efforts by Spanish anarchists to establish a balancing act between the ideological “goal” and the syndicalist “means,” notably through the creation of monitoring apparatuses to prevent a slip into reformism, both in the national and transnational spheres. A secondary aim consists of exposing the origins of the FAI while revisiting its uneasy relation with the CNT union. The Malatestan and pro-FAI tone of his analysis (i.e., radical anarchism and distrust of syndicalism) constitutes both the strength and the weakness of his approach.

The book starts with a review of the early history of Spanish anarchism: the socialist utopians of the 1830s; Giuseppe Fanelli’s creation of a Bakunist (anti-authoritarian) section of the First International in 1871, called the Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española; the Saint-Imier congress and the two short-lived libertarian Internationals; and the creation of the Organización Anarquista de la Región Española and a first anarchist watchdog called the Pacto de Unión y Solidaridad. Events lead us to the 1909 Semana Trágica

unrest that was triggered by layoffs and conscription for the military intervention in Morocco, and finally, the establishment of a trade union as a means for developing the militant base: the CNT, which relied on local branches and was thus deprived of a national committee.

Moving to the transnational sphere, the French Confédération générale du travail (CGT) inspired the 1906 Amiens Charter, a blueprint for revolutionary syndicalism that the author depicts as a source of apolitical syndicalism, thus echoing Errico Malatesta’s opposition toward Pierre Monatte at Amsterdam’s (1907) and London’s (1909) anarchist conferences, where another hot topic was the creation of a formal International, a project enthusiastically backed by the young CNT in need of “vivifying oxygen” to prevent national asphyxia (p. 66). The First World War interrupted the quest for an International until the athenaeum of El Ferrol in Galicia held its international peace conference in late April 1915. Here the author could have pointed out how the event coincided with the Socialist Women’s International Peace Conference in Amsterdam, and preceded Zimmerwald by four months. Instead, focus is kept on El Ferrol and its call for the establishment of an International and a national committee of the CNT in spite of staunch repression.

There follows the Red Triennium era of 1917–19 and the impact of Bolshevism on the revolutionary movement that manifested itself in Spain in the apparition of the anarcho-Bolshevik tendency led by Joaquim Maurin and Andreu Nin (later to follow Leon Trotsky). Maurin and especially Nin took charge of the transnational relations with Moscow as the rest of the movement was busy striking for the eight-hour day (gained through the 1919 La Canadiense general strike) or fighting employers’ paramilitary units (Pistolero episode). In the early 1920s, the debate centered on adhesion to the Moscow-based Internationals: the Comintern and the Red International Labour Union (RILU) or Profintern (referred to in error by Gar-

ner as the Revolutionary Trade Union International, a term borrowed from Thorpe's translation of proceedings in German (*Revolutionary Syndicalist Internationalism*). However, after the authoritarian nature of the Comintern and Profintern became obvious, a decision was taken at the 1923 Berlin conference to establish the IWMA. Here Garner makes it clear that the IWMA project predated the Comintern's and responded to a desire for an international organization freed from the interference of political parties; in other terms, the creation of the IWMA did not solely amount to a reaction to the Comintern and Profintern challenge, as often claimed by Cold War era historians.

The part addressing the second half of the 1920s constitutes Garner's most important contribution to the historiography. The author depicts the creation of the Movimiento Obrero Anarquista (MOA) led by Eusebio Carbó and Miguel Jiménez, good friends of Malatesta and other Italian radicals, and shows how their radicalism and intransigence clashed with the moderate fringe of the movement led by Angel Pestaña, Salvador Seguí, and Juan Peiró. Amid all the tensions, a compromise was found that led to the creation of "anarcho-syndicalism."

It is worth pointing out that all of this happened under the "soft" authoritarian regime of Primo de Rivera, which was actually far from "soft" for the anarchists who were brutally repressed and banned, while the socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) oversaw labor relations and enjoyed an increase of affiliation within its rank and file. This situation soon led to important debates within the CNT regarding the relevance of direct action and insurrectionary tactics, the moderates even contemplating joining the joint labor committee alongside the UGT. But the intransigent MOA would have none of this.

Moving to the transnational sphere, the author addresses the Parisian debates of the exiled diaspora that revolved around the General Union of Anarchists "Platform" program calling for a more

homogeneous and tightly knit International. The Platform was the brainchild of the Russian delegation headed by Ukrainian Nestor Makhno in the wake of their experience in defending the revolution against both Whites and Reds. The Platform was opposed by Spanish radicals, who mistook it for a brand of "libertarian Bolshevism," with the notable exception of Buenaventura Durruti who admired Makhno and nurtured a friendship with him. Surprisingly, Garner makes no mention of this bond between the two, nor the latter's promise to assist the former in the event of a civil war in Spain. This penultimate chapter ends after French representative Sébastien Faure submitted an alternative program called La Synthèse. It was better received by MOA/FAI for its pluralist character and rejection of individualist anarchism, which allegedly had limited support in Spain.

In the final chapter, the long-awaited FAI steps in to replace MOA. This new anarchist watchdog aimed at reinvigorating the movement's decline resulting from repression, the Bolshevik and socialist challenges, and the growing desire for moderation within the CNT. Here Garner corrects the historiography by demonstrating how during the late 1920s the FAI with its "all inclusive ideological framework" exerted more influence over the CNT than in the following decade, and how it even showed leniency by abstaining from trade union affairs, something that the late MOA could have never done (p. 208). The FAI's collaboration with the CNT was realized through the *trabazon*, or liaison committees tackling common problems, whose origins Garner questionably attributes to the Comintern, whereas this classical tool of negotiation was used by the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA) before 1920. Abroad, the FAI conducted its own foreign policy, notably by opposing the Platform program with a proposal for an "international trabazon," a proposal that ran up against what the author refers to as the North Europeans' inclination for syndicalism and endless theoretical debating.

After the collapse of the dictatorship and the return of democracy, the CNT/FAI faced the greatest irony. The democratic revolution of 1931—just like in 1873—posed a much greater challenge to its unity, Garner even referring to a civil war raging within the CNT/FAI and leading to the ousting of the moderate Trentistas and Urales-Montseny clan.[4] There followed a succession of wildcat strikes, occupations, insurrections, and the inevitable repression, until the reintegration of the moderates in the wake of the Popular Front victory of 1936 led to the unthinkable: involvement in the republican government and army.

The final chapter ends with a smooth and unbiased reminder of what was at stake: the establishment of an equilibrium between the means and the anarchist goal. Unfortunately, this is slightly spoiled when the main conclusion fizzles out and Garner gives a shot at a classic viewpoint: the Spanish Civil War was lost due to the abandonment of pure revolutionary goals by the CNT/FAI. This is quite a topic for a closing line, and it deserves a few clarifications. The CNT/FAI's decision to collaborate with the Popular Front and its people's army stemmed from the unwillingness to leave power to the socialists (especially from the center and right wings) and the communists (in full ascension). This collaborationist stance worsened the divisions within the IWMA, best exemplified by Goldman who, while being accused by notable militant Alexander Schapiro and other French representatives of voicing FAI's policies, staunchly condemned the Spanish anarchists' endorsement of the Republic's centralization and militarization of the war effort.[5] Ultimately, the IWMA collapsed in 1938 and Goldman went into bitter retirement in Toronto, while the CNT/FAI supported a coup against Juan Negrin's government, thus opening the way to General Francisco Franco's final triumph.

Considering the complexity of the book, its is advisable to start with the well-summarized conclusion or Garner's excellent summary in Spanish

found on the Internet, the latter reflecting a maturation process.[6] Also, the book lacks indexes of acronyms, protagonists, and works cited/consulted, which would have made searching for references in the generous endnotes easier. In short, the stage could have been better set for such an in-depth analysis of governance and debates that is often achieved at the expense of clarity, flow, and contextualization, a problem related to the predominant use of archival material that should have been further summarized and contextualized. Other technical issues are the sometimes sharp transitions from the national to the international spheres, and overlapping discussions in the transitions from one chapter to the next, whereas closing summaries would have been preferable.

The ideological outlook of the book is definitely Malatestan and Faista (pro-FAI) in the sense that it stresses how unions should remain focused on the pure anarchist goal and refrain from reformism. A problem stemming from this ideological framework is the author's drastic discarding of odd elements without further explanations, thus giving the occasional dogmatic tone to his prose. One of many examples is when he refers condescendingly to the "moderate ideals propagated by the irresponsible middle-class intellectuals of the Urales family" (p. 244). The author also discards the Platform program he associates with the individualist brand of anarchism more present in Northern Europe, notably, by writing that "as opposed to the situation in France, in Spain the influence of individualist anarchism wasn't a source of disruption" (p. 209). Yet he contradicts himself on one occasion when arguing that the Platform program "was based around a mistaken premise" that rejected individualist anarchism in favor of communist anarchism (p. 207). This endorsement of the Malatestan/Faistas explains, moreover, his repeated criticism of the French militants' individualist and syndicalist inclinations, and overlooking of the Centrale Générale du Travail Syndicaliste et Révolutionnaire's (CGTSR) contributions to the 1926 Charter of Lyon and its renewed engagement

in fighting political parties and reformism. In other words, Garner's depiction of a "pathetic" French movement does not necessarily correspond with his rendering of a Platformist project considered too "rigid" (pp. 211, 209).

Regarding contextualization, the author could have addressed the roots of the disputes within the mainstream left, notably, by mentioning the expulsion of apolitical elements from the Second International in 1895; by showing how France's CGT remained a member of the Second International in order to keep a foot in the door; by describing the creation in 1901 of the Secrétariat Syndical international; by examining the pressures from the American Federation of Labor for the creation of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) in 1913; and by pointing to the definitive parting of the CGT with the anarchist movement. Then came the First World War and its "great treason," in other words, the trade unions in belligerent countries supporting national defense in exchange for reforms. Regarding the postwar period, Garner could have mentioned that the new IFTU enjoyed a near monopoly in international trade unionism while committing itself to radical international solidarity under the leadership of Edo Fimmen.

In the end, *Goals and Means* remains somewhere between the extremely well-researched doctoral thesis and the doctrinaire pamphlet. It provides considerable insight (especially for those who do not read Latin-based languages) into a unique decentralized revolutionary movement that knows no equivalents, with the notable exceptions of Ukraine and perhaps of Kurdistan. The author is currently based in Bariloche in Argentina, where I suspect he is researching the Southern Cone's anarchist movement in the early twentieth century, since little is known on the transnational aspect of the topic. If so, I look forward to his next monograph, especially if it is published by AK Press, which did such a good job with the graphic

artwork and cover texture and which makes consulting *Goals and Means* a real pleasure.

Notes

[1]. Draft of Emma Goldman speech to the conference, "Address to the Delegates at the Extraordinary Congress in Paris of the IWMA' von Emma Goldman," file 537, Rudolf Rocker Papers, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. See also Briefe von Emma Goldman, folder 107, Rudolf Rocker Papers. Quoted in Robert W. Kern, "Anarchist Principles and Spanish Reality: Emma Goldman as a Participant in the Civil War 1936-39," *Journal of Contemporary History* 11, nos. 2/3 (July 1976): 247.

[2]. Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959); and Paul Preston, "Spanish Civil War: Right versus Left in the 1930s," *Modern History Review* 3, no. 1 (September 1991): 2.

[3]. For a summary on anarchism in Spanish historiography, see Julian Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain: 1931-1939* (London: Routledge, 2005), 215-218.

[4]. Michel Ralle, "La 'Federacion Regional Espanola de l'AIT': Une longue hérédite," *Cahiers d'histoire de l'Institut de recherches marxistes* 37, no. 4 (1989): 88.

[5]. Kern, "Anarchist Principles and Spanish Reality," 247.

[6]. See Jason Garner, "La búsqueda de la unidad anarquista: La Federación Anarquista Ibérica antes de la II República," http://www.acracia.org/historico/Acracia/La_busqueda_de_la_unidad_anarquista.html (accessed May 18, 2017).

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Citation: Nicolas Lepine. Review of Garner, Jason. *Goals and Means: Anarchism, Syndicalism, and Internationalism in the Origins of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica*. H-Socialisms, H-Net Reviews. July, 2017.

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