

Rejecting the arguments of those who described the strikes as a struggle for the right to form trade unions, he wrote, "It is this general lack of rights typical of Russian life, this hopelessness and impossibility of fighting for particular *rights*, and this incorrigibility of the tsarist monarchy and its entire regime, that stood out so distinctly against the background of the Lena events as to fire the masses with *revolutionary* ardour." It was indeed the incorrigibility of the tsarist regime, resisting reform and revolution alike, which accounted in large measure for the Russian workers, interested in the first place in the economic struggle to improve working conditions, deciding to follow the slogans of the revolutionary Bolsheviks, which combined the demand for the eight hour day with the overthrow of the autocracy.

The arid and frequently repeated estimate of Lenin's contribution to revolutionary theory and practice as being that of a technologist of revolution and the disinterment of the stinking corpse of the Stalinist model of the party in order to pronounce the Leninist concept of organisation irrelevant today can come only from those who have never understood the dialectics of revolutionary thinking or who need to justify their own abandonment of a revolutionary position.

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**ANARCHISM: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE,**  
by Daniel Guerin. Introduction by Noam Chomsky.  
Monthly Review Press, US \$6.00, 166 pp.

DANIEL GUERIN'S BOOK is much inferior to anarchist sympathiser George Woodcock's *Anarchism*. Besides including only half the material Woodcock does, omitting an index and being written in a sloppy and ambiguous style, it is as extremely tendentious as Guerin's previous books about the French Revolution have been.

It is true that Guerin promises to let the anarchists speak for themselves by quoting copiously, but his main aim is to claim for the anarchist movement the creation of the notion of workers' self-management and to deny that the terrorism of the late nineteenth century was really central to anarchism. So, where there are pages in Woodcock on the propaganda by the deed favoured by many anarchists in 1880-1914, there is practically no detailed investigation in Guerin of Costa, Brousse, Pouget, Ravachol, Henry, Cafiero and Malatesta. The object in claiming authorship of the workers' self-management system is implied in the concluding sentences of the preface:

"Throughout this little book the reader will see two conceptions of socialism contrasted and sometimes related to one another, one authoritarian, the other libertarian. By the end of the analysis it is hoped that the reader will be led to ask himself which is the conception of the future."

Everything is subordinated to this over-all wish to show 1) the commitment of anarchism to concepts of participatory democracy, and 2) to show the affinities between radical marxism and anarchist currents. Noam Chomsky emphasises this last point in his lengthy introduction. Since this means both twisting the historical facts and misunderstanding the theory of anarchism, Guerin cannot start with a chronological historical account and instead says lamely

"In place of a historical and chronological sequence an unusual method has been adopted in this book: the reader will be presented in turn with the

main constructive themes of anarchism and not with personalities". (Compare Woodcock's approach).

It is true that there is a vogue for anarchism at present as Horowitz and Krimmerman and Perry's excellent anthologies show, and no doubt *Monthly Review* has political objects in publishing this book. It is also true that all socialists must work together to overthrow capitalism. But to work out a suitable basis for joint action with anarchists, we must start with a real understanding both of anarchism and of the historical relations between marxism and anarchism and not attempt to gloss over the differences. Guerin is quite happy to include a lengthy account of Bolshevik persecution of anarchists and perfidy vis-a-vis Makhno, which is quite true (although Makhno was not the white knight that he suggests he was), but there is no account of the evolution of marxism as an anti-anarchism.

Marx worked out his ideas in the *German Ideology*, coming to terms "with his erstwhile German philosophical conscience", by a critique of Stirner, Grun, Hess and other anarchists. He reached his first exposition of his beliefs in a critique of Proudhon's *Philosophie de la Misere* and he later evolved his views on organisation needed by revolutionaries in a lengthy dispute with Bakunin in the First International. It is clear that philosophical anarchism and philosophical marxism do not meet. Let anyone read Stirner's *Der Einzige*, the object of Marx's ridicule and derision, and then let him decide whether anarchism is merely the libertarian form of socialism and that the dispute between marxism and anarchism was ever merely one of means. The fundamental dispute appears more to be that for Marx man is primarily a social being and for the anarchist he is the supreme egoist described by Stirner, for whom there are no beliefs which are not shackles. It is not by chance that Stirner is a source for Nietzsche and Sorel for Mussolini.

This tendentiousness about generalities is matched by a carelessness and bias in treating particulars. If it can be easily shown that far from being democratic, anarchism can be shown to be anti-democratic individualism, it can be more easily shown that the *Discourse on Inequality* is not at the root of anarchist thought, that the factory councils of Turin led by Gramsci were at best partly inspired by anarcho-syndicalism (which some anarchists have argued is not anarchism at all), and that Makhno not only "moved the hearts" of the Ukraine but also "removed many of the heads".

The Postscript is perhaps the most irritating section of the book. Here in May 1968 Guerin addresses a plea to the students of Paris which suggests that you "are libertarian socialists without knowing it", which savours of a helter-skelter "getting with it" which insults both the anarchists and the students. Anarchism has a long and rich tradition which goes back at least to Godwin, who was rediscovered by Kropotkin over a century after he wrote. It also has a record of resolute struggle for a new society. It is by starting with the facts of this history that we can work out a common basis of endeavour. What Guerin does is present us with an account of anarchism as it *ought to be*. In such a form it may be attractive to the unthinking and unread, though it never existed. *Monthly Review* must bear the responsibility for publishing a book which ignores the cardinal point of marxism that marxism begins with the facts, understood as historical — products of course — but not with what men think of themselves.

What Marighela's article (a fact of today) also, published in this review, tells us is that it may be anarchist terrorism which is still of relevance.

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