GUSTAVO RODRIGUEZ

ILLEGAL ANARCHISM: THE FALSE DICHOTOMY

EDICIONES -CARA A CARA CON EL ENEMIGO- MEXICO

Illegal Anarchism:
The false dichotomy

The title of our talk might seem, to the newcomer reading, a tautology. Interestingly, many of us who assume ourselves to be part of Anarchism, also consider that it is a reiteration to speak of "illegal anarchism", however this particular label makes sense if, and only if, there is the existence of two antagonistic positions around the realization of direct action- that is, at the moment when we bring all of our theory to practice. This antagonism, as unfortunate as undeniable inside our movement, will be the cause of these peculiar "distinctions." So to get into the issue of this theme, we need to address the false dichotomy: "legalistic anarchism " v. " illegal anarchism."

And so we can plant this as a "false dichotomy", precisely because the so-called "legalistic anarchism" is an unusual contradiction. From the moment we appeal to *legality* we are denying Anarchism. Anarchism is illegal or it isn´t Anarchism. That is its essence and meaning- its nature. For this reason, sometimes it seems so obvious that we forget to meticulously emphasize the anti-authoritarian character of Anarchism and therefore, that it is consequently anti-systemic; Anti-systemic and full of rage! We are against all authority; that's our motto. For the same reason, Anarchists, from the moment we begin to assume ourselves as such, right in that initial moment, we are locating ourselves outside of the law.

When we affirm ourselves as Anarchists, we are against the system of domination. We fight against and object to the whole social order and all the laws that aid it. All laws have been and will be made to give juridical support to oppression and domination. If we are against the state we have to be strongly against the laws which entitle and justify its existence. Therefore, as Anarchists we are *illegal* because we *are* Anarchists, that is to say, by nature. Then for the much confusion that exists- a product of the liberal intoxication stalking again in these times- we must be very clear. And hence it should also be very clear that each time that

this euphemism is used, when the term ¨illegalist anarchists" pops up, it is making reference to ¨insurrectionalist Anarchism¨, to its tactics, methods and logic, and doing so in a derogatory manner with bad intentions- pointing the finger from the pulpit, from the supposedly "legalistic anarchist" stance. Or you could say from the denial of Anarchism. Here is a very timely moment for the maxim attributed to Camillo Berneri and Bob Black popularised in 1980s, in other words but without doubt words that certainly evoked the essence of the original sentence: "they are *those* anarchists, enemies of Anarchy".

Before delving into the history of the so-called "illegal Anarchism" we should start by doing something about that incongruous position, both conceptually and practically speaking, that calls for "legalistic Anarchism" and that simultaneously belittles, outlaws and impedes the subsequent actions of the supporters and the participants of Anarchy. To be able to understand why and how such an ambiguous term came about in our ranks and to be able to explain the peculiar interest that exists and persists in using such a label, we have to, once again, ask the inevitable question: what is Anarchism? As Bonanno has pointed out: it is always necessary to return to this question, even when we are among Anarchists. Often, just to be among Anarchists makes this question inevitable.

Alfredo Bonanno explains that the reiteration of this question owes itself to the fact that Anarchism isn`t a definition that, once reached, can be guarded jealously in a safe and conserved as a heritage from which we take our arguments each time that we need them. And he's right. Paradoxically, there are those who claim themselves as "Anarchists" yet argue the opposite, that is, they conceive anarchism to be an ideology to be kept it in a safe- like the safe that Bonanno mentioned- to "protect" it as if it were a creed.

These dogmatists of Anarchism understand the ideal like an undisputable Bible that gives them a rich array of arguments for every circumstance that comes their way and thus, avoiding reality by repeating its sacred prayers to infinity. The unprecedented part is that this distorted view of Anarchism, an idealized one to be exact, is shared by both sides of the currents despite their irreconcilable differences.

That is, both for the current "essentialism", akin to liberalism, to the "historicism" direct descendant of Marxism, Anarchism is treated as an ideology. This, in a certain form, explains to us why each time that Anarchism moves away from the reality of concrete struggles- whether as a result of the withdrawal periods or times of reflux of the real movement of the oppressed- these old ghosts reappear and it degenerates into an ideology. At other times, we have insisted on this and we will not tire of repeating it: Anarchism obtains its own specific theory/practice at any time breaking sharply with his roots, here is where it develops as such, revealing its parricidal character.

Unfortunately, except in rare and honourable exceptions, the vast majority of libertarian historiography has been written by outsiders of Anarchism and for this reason, a product sweetened and wisely "accommodated" by renowned academic figures has been developed, usually attached to these primitive currents that, logically, have continued their march in a

parallel manner. Therefore, we find a wide and voluminous list of libertarian historiography, appropriately tailored from the good consciences of liberal humanism or from the historical perspective of a clearly Marxist label. In the particular case of libertarian historiography available in Spanish, we are presented with a repertoire of really quite nauseating ¨libertarian¨ stories, made to fit the moralistic conceptions of characters of the likes of Carlos Dias- known pundit at the service of the Vatican, Victor Garcia and up until Fidel Miró, who manhandled and conditioned oth*er* previous stories invented by Abad de Santillan and company at their liking. No less ´well off´ are the texts of Buenacasa and Gomez House, determined to show things at their own convenience. Without speaking of the ´official´ historiography where rats the size of Angel Herrerin Lopez abound- paid scribe of the government in its duty to the Spanish State- or Juan Aviles. Of course, from this side of the puddle the same thing has happened, as well we have little gems the size of Roger Bartra and Arnaldo Cordova, only to mention a few. And well, another repugnant character comes to mind, to whom the Cuban state commissioned the ¨noble¨ task of erasing Anarchism from the history of the island, Abraham Grobart (Fabio Grobart). For this reason, we have to dedicate ourselves to dig... to swim and dive in the midst of all of this libertarian historiography and take the information and confront it with other sources, even though what we find comes from the enemy, from the bourgeois press of the time. Incredibly, nine times out of ten we find a lot more information in these antagonistic sources- the press particularly, above all names and dates forgotten or conveniently silenced and ignored. The same goes for the ¨official¨ history, with the texts of Herrerin and co, there we can sometimes find dates extracted from police archives. In these texts, with their academic rigor and regularly sought after label of ¨Social History¨, we can also find valuable information. These analysts have been responsible for recovering some names and presenting certain facts, with the clear intention of disqualifying us and presenting us as bandits and terrorists. But in the absence of objective studies, we have to draw our conclusions from there.

Well, let`s get into the subject of the talk, definitely we have to say that when mention is made of so-called ¨illegal Anarchism¨, really as a rule what is being referred to is insurrectionary Anarchism, to a set of Anarchist strategies implemented principally in France, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland and the United States during the last two decades of the 19th Century and the first three decades of the last. This particular period in our history, that in reality covers a little more, seeing that declarations of insurrection have been collected from the Congress of Madrid of 1874 and the so-called ¨retaliations¨ - without doubt suggests that this period served as defining moment for the birth of this false dichotomy of which we spoke of before of ¨legalistic Anarchism¨ vs ¨illegal Anarchism¨.

This gained momentum following the furious controversy which came about in France at the end of the 19th century with the Duval case. The expropriation of a hotel on Montceauc street in Paris on the 5th of October 1886 by the anarchists Duval and Turquais, members of the group ¨*La panthére des Batignoles*¨ brought with it an irreconcilable debate shortly after Clement Duval was detained, not without defending himself however and wounding the inspector in charge of his capture. This controversy soon arrived to the pages of the newspaper *La Revolte*, led by Kropotkin, becoming the obligatory theme within the

Anarchist movement. Shortly value judgements would emerge. Thus, the ´legalists´ appeared on the scene, advocating an evolutionary and educational Anarchism that would bring about their aspirations for justice and freedom through written and oral propaganda and the organisation of the masses, accusing those who acted ´outside of the law´ as ´criminals, aliens to the ideas´. However, Duval make his position clear in a letter he would send to the judge- permit me to read a fragment of this letter- *¨In my summary of prison in Mazas, I have seen written: ¨Attempted murder¨, I believe on the contrary that I have acted in self-defence. It is true that you and I do not consider this in the same way, taking into account that I am an anarchist, or better said, in favour of Anarchy, since one can not be an anarchist in today`s society, assuming this I do not recognise the law, knowing from experience that the law is a prostitute who is managed to the convenience of the advantage or detriment of this or the other, this or that class. If I have wounded the agent Rossignol it is because he has thrown the name of the law at me. In the name of freedom I have injured him. I am thus logical with my principles: there isn`t therefore such an attempted murder. Now is also time that the agents change the paper, before they persecute thieves that have seized the stolen¨.* End quote. With this letter, there are no two ways about it: Duval make his point clear that he was an anarchist and as such, was acting outside of the law consistently. With his words he emphasized what we commented on earlier ¨As anarchists we are illegal because we are anarchists, that is to say, we are illegal by nature¨. Clement Duval would appear before the judge on the 11th of January 1887, claiming as his defence that property, set in its laws and granted as a bourgeois right, was robbery and that those who accumulated fortunes appropriating the wealth produced collectively where the real thieves, not those in need of some sustenance, taking to their advantage, by right of existence, that which had been robbed before. The allegations of Duval again reaffirmed Anarchist principles against those who would try to discredit him with their bourgeois moralizing.
On being condemned to death, it was obviously for being an anarchist. For this, there were no lack of courageous voices that defended the name of Anarchy, like Louise Michel, who to the cry of ¨Viva Anarchy!¨ demanded the unity of all conscious revolutionaries in the fight against his conviction. Finally, under strong pressure, they changed the death penalty, instead sentencing him to life imprisonment in Guyana.

From there, he was able to escape and move to the United States, where he would settle in the city of New York, thanks to the support and solidarity of the Italian-American anarchists, with who he would work in the edition of ¨L´Adunata del Refrattari´. This ´refractory´ publication, as its title highlights, was one of the most hardened anarchist medias of its time in the North American territory and would serve as grounds for the expansion of the rebellious consciousness and formation of an Anarchist movement of clearly insurrectionalist tendencies throughout the far and wide of the North American geography. In the same insurrectionary Anarchist vein, an infinity of publications were published in the late 19th century throughout various parts of Europe, mainly in Italy, France and Spain. Those which would stand out were the printed publications in Barcelona, Valencia and Zaragoza, often published by Italian anarchist refugees in Spain. Titles such as ¨The Echo of the Rebel¨, ¨The social question¨, ¨Thought and dynamite¨ written by the group of Paolo Schichi ¨La Revenge¨ edited by Paul Bernard, ¨The revenge of Ravachol¨ among others, would

illustrate the activity of so called ´illegal Anarchism´ towards the end of the 19th century.

Another of the anarchist groups that would stand out, for the implementation of the practice of expropriation, at the end of the decade of the 80s of the end of the 19th century, in the city of Paris, would be the nucleus known as ¨*Los Intransigentes*¨. Founded by two Italian anarchists residing in France: Pini and Parmeggiani. Vittorio Pini, vindicated revolutionary expropriation, contributing to the debate surrounding this practice shortly after his ¨accidental¨ arrest as a consequence of an extradition request filed by the Italian government. When the French authorities searched his home they found an arsenal and a large sum of 500 francs, which by 1889 standards was a very high sum. The finding would lead to Pini along with some of his compañer@s' from his group to the tribunal.
The conviction of Vittorio Pini to 20 years hard labour resuscitated the controversy, bringing the debate to be aired once more in ¨La Révolte¨. In its pages the opinion of its editors in respect to the controversy were recorded- let me read a few notes- ¨*Pini never acted as a professional thief. He is a man of few needs, that lived simply, poorly even, and with rigour. Pini robbed for the propaganda, nobody can deny it. In the trial, Pini claimed himself as solely responsible for the acts and defended the anarchist principle of the right to steal or better, to expropriate*¨. End quote.

The cases of Duval and Pini put the theme of revolutionary expropriation on the table, placing it in the context of direct action and insurgent tactics, so it would return to the debate in the International Conference in Paris in 1889, without reaching agreements in a manner of conclusion in respect to it. However, clear guidelines existed in relation to direct action that- if not addressing expropriation in an explicit way- left no doubt as to the use of a wide array of tactics ranging from reprisals to propaganda by the deed, justified from the perspective of permanent insurrection.

The London Anarchist Congress of 1881 gives a good account of it. By the way I want to add as an anecdotal note that it is widely documented the participation of a Mexican Anarchist in the London Congress of 1881. According to the records, it is noted that it was ´*necessary to learn chemistry for the elaboration of explosives*´. It was also left documented the infiltration of police agents in this congress and their persistent interest in discrediting it as a meeting of dangerous international ´terrorists´.

The controversy between those who, naming themselves anarchists, justified expropriation and propaganda by the deed and joined in on a range of valid direct actions- that same that they identified with means consistent with the end- and those who, equally claiming themselves anarchists, condemned them as ´immoral´ and ´violent´, bringing about the label ´illegal anarchist´ that we are looking at today, the deepening rifts between direct action, or in the manner of how we conceive it depending on the lens we look at it through.

This controversy, unfortunately, has been with us throughout history and has been accepted or at least assimilated as an "ambiguity", originated in the primal formulation of Anarchism and therefore we drag it behind us forever and ever. However, this purported "ambiguity" is

false, and lies once again in the uncritical use in the rigged and opportune arrangement of terms and in the strengthening of these relationships of those who we spoke about at the beginning, those fictional familiarities with which Anarchism can not but reaffirm the most decisive and violent ruptures.

It reflects the contradictions drawn from another false "ambiguity" that seeks to perpetuate itself in Anarchism, justifying its origin in the progenitor currents of thought that we mentioned earlier, and that leads to the thesis of "the two Anarchisms." This, as we have tackled countless times and have been absolutely pivotal, stressing that for us, Anarchism is a living body of theory and practice that grew out of an open configuration of thought and action, embodied in a rebellious movement, which takes its specificity in the instant that determines that divorce, irreconcilable with liberal idealism, transcending the limitations of Marxist economic view through a original and non-transferable reflection around the system of domination and the formation of social classes

During the first three decades of last century, insurrectionary anarchism´s tactics and methods re-strengthened. In the years before the Russian Revolution we saw an extended and generalized practice, gaining new strength in expropriation and propaganda by deed. At that time, the group of "Workers of the Night", also known as "Banda Abbeville" would attain notoriety in France for the armed conflict that arose in that city between members of the group and the police, after an action failed, killing the officer Jacob Alexandre Pruvost, better known as Marius Jacob. This would be the linchpin of this small expropriating nucleus which also involved his mother and wife.

He was arrested in possession of explosives after a series of minor expropriations that could have led authorities to him, being sentenced to 6 months in jail. Shortly afterwards he would be arrested again but faking dementia he avoided a sentence of five years in prison and was sent to a mental hospital where he escaped, seeking refuge in the town of Sète. There, he began to organize his group with like-minded people who, though not claiming to be anarchists, they shared their principles in deeds with a minimum agreement- again, let me read these notes, "*only use the weapons to protect our life and our freedom from the police, only steal from those considered social parasites; entrepreneurs, bankers, judges, soldiers, nobles and clergy, but never to those who do noble and useful professions; teachers, doctors, artists, artisans, workers and so on. And set aside a percentage of the money recuperated for propaganda of the anarchist cause.* "

Accused of over one hundred and fifty expropriations and of the murder of the officer Pruvost, Jacob would be brought to trial in March of 1905 in the city of Amiens, facing a possible death sentence by guillotine. During the process, he made it clear in court the ideals that inspired him- here I have it- "*I prefer to keep my freedom, my independence, my dignity as a man, before making myself the architect of the fortunes of a master. In the crudest terms, without euphemisms, I preferred to steal rather than being stolen.* "

He was able to escape the guillotine but he was sentenced at 26 years of age to hard labour for life in Cayenne. After 17 attempts to escape from Devil's Island and just over 20 years of sentence served, he returned to France. In 1936, attracted by the irradiation of the Spanish Revolution, Jacob travels to Barcelona in order to fight alongside the libertarian movement, presenting a weapons collection strategy for the anarchist militias. However, since Ascaso and Durruti weren`t there at the time, he met face to face with the "legalistic Anarchism" in control. Disappointed with the Spanish reality in a lapidary he would note: "Where are the anarchists? In the mass graves. Betrayed in the rear, they sacrificed themselves in the front". Of course, neither Gómez Casa nor Victor García would record this.

Another French nucleus known as the ¨*Banda Bonnot*¨ should also be mentioned among the many insurrectionary anarchist groups that would achieve notoriety in Europe in the early twentieth century as it would initiate its activities due to Jules Bonnot´s initiative and a group of insurrectionary anarchists based around the ¨illegalistic¨ journal *L'Anarchie*. In those early years of the twentieth century, theories about revolutionary expropriation and propaganda by the deed were theorised over in heaps of insurrectionary anarchist publications that gave particular validity to these methods within the broad range of insurrectionary tactics.

Well, on this side of the pond much of the historiography is equally wealthy, yet warped and watered down in the best of cases because when we start to trace this type of information we find that obviously many things have been silenced and sentenced to oblivion. But hey, we`ve got to weave together the story with what there is at hand.

When we start to track down from here, we find the ancestors of insurrectionary Anarchism in Julio Lopez Chavez, who maintained intense expropriatory and confrontational activity between 1867 and 1868, being shot on July 68, by order of the Liberal government of Benito Juárez. López Chávez or Chavez López as some historians invert their last names and no one knows for sure which name was correct, there are even documents of the time, principally newspapers, where he is called Julian Lopez Chavez, instead of Julio -but , well ... let's stay with Julio López Chávez. He was a disciple of the modern school, the *Escuela del Rayo y el Socialismo*, which was founded in Chalco, Mexico State, by Plotino Rhodakanaty, inspired by the ideas of Fourier and Proudhon, but Lopez Chavez would quickly leave the mutualist ideas and become a Bakuninist.

Reaffirming his thinking he would say- let me read this little quote- *"I'm an anarchist because I am an enemy of all governments, and a communist, because my brothers want to work common land*" (end quote). Rhodakanaty distanced itself from its disciple because of disagreements over insurrectionary Anarchism, since, from his idyllic and evolutionary vision, did not recognize armed action as being consistent with the libertarian ideal. Julio Lopez would become a nightmare for landowners, relentlessly flogging the whole wealthy class of Chalco and Texcoco areas, extending his actions to Morelos to the south, east to San Martín Texmelucan and west to Tlalpan. He expropriated *haciendas* in the area but in the broader sense of the term, whereby not only did he loot the houses of money, valuables, weapons and horses but he also divided the expropriated land among farmers in the region. He also

conducted numerous raids in the area, earning a reputation as a "communist bandit" as he was called by the newspapers of the time. His group eventually grew to more than fifty members, spreading awareness among farmers and indigenous people of the area. After his death by gunfire, the expropriatory and insurrectionary activity continued until 1870, not only in the original area of operations but also spreading to Yucatan, the southern state of several of his actions, where various compañer@s were deported. Fifteen of them would be shot in the city of Merida, February 24, 1869.

He would also extend insurrectionary Anarchism to other states, with the insurrectionary activity of three of Lopez-Chávez´s compañer@s having been recorded in the state of Chiapas, who were involved in the indigenous rebellions of 1869 and the armed assault on the farms of the region. Ignacio Fernandez Galindo, his wife Luisa Quevedo, and Benigno Trejo, former colleagues of Julio Chavez from the school in Chalco, participated actively in the work of organizing the struggle and the dissemination of anarchist ideas and propaganda by the deed, amongst the indigenous Tzotzil people. Fernández Galindo, would be responsible for providing training in the use of weapons and militant tactics for the revolt. State authorities would face the uprising violently, demanding that the "lawbreakers... unconditionally surrender and hand over the weapons and leaders from outside who have deceived and manipulated them."

At that time, a poster was produced aimed at Indigenous rebels, which appeared on all the walls of the streets of the city of San Cristobal de las Casas, which perfectly illustrates the events. Again I have to read here in my notes. Let´s see, *"The president knows what you are doing and for this he is* ***very angry*** *and even though here we have quite a lot of troops and weapons, he says he will send enough people and is sure that you will finish, because those people who come do not know you, and so they don`t love you like we love you [...] apologise to the government and hand over all the weapons that you have so we can believe it's true what you say. "*

During the "Mexican Revolution" the action of insurrectionary Anarchism was also noted, starring radical members of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano*. The figures of Ricardo Flores Magon and Praxedis Guerrero were most outstanding in that revolutionary period, however, many insurrectionary internationalists anarchists did not match that particular appreciation that gives the rank of "revolution" to the struggles of the time. Specifically, that would be the position of the Italian insurrectionary anarchists who, motivated by the passionate chronicles published in the newspaper Regeneration and the fervent speeches of their colleagues in Los Angeles in 1917, would move to northern Mexico with the intention to join the libertarian insurrection. Included among those Italian insurrectionary anarchists were Sacco and Vanzetti, who travelled to Monterrey where a group of Italian anarchists who had fled the U.S. military recruitment had gathered following the outbreak of the First World War, interested in joining the "anarchist revolution¨.

They were soon to be disappointed, identifying the Mexican "Revolution" as nothing more than a power struggle between opposing sides. This particular group of Italian anarchists made history with their expropriations and propaganda of the deed actions far and wide

across the United States. It was the core group based around the insurrectionary anarchist newspaper ¨*Cronaca Sovversiva"* in which Sacco and Vanzetti also collaborated. This publication, written in Italian, would become the ultimate weapon for the spread of insurrectionary Anarchism among the Italian anarchists living in America.

The insurgent group would expand quickly, being called "*The Galleanists*" by the bourgeois press of the time, referring to the editor, Luigi Galleani. In this group, which soon became a real network with presence in major U.S. cities, would stand out due to the notoriety of the well-known Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Mario Buda aka Mike Boda, Nestor Dondoglio alias Jean Crones, Gabriella Segata Antolini , Luigi Bachetti, among others I can´t remember. Here I have some names of other compañer@s in this group listed here: Frank Abarno, Pietro Angelo, Carmine Carbone, Andrea Ciofalo, Ferrucio Coacci, Emilio Coda, Alfredo Conti, Roberto Elia, Luigi Falsini, Frank mandese, Ricardo Orciani, Nicola Recchi, Giuseppe Sberna, Andrea Salsedo, Raffaele Schiavina and Carlo Valdinoci.

The influential actions of these anarchists would take them to become the most persecuted revolutionary group by federal authorities in the United States. However, again the "accommodation" of history and not just the "official" history but the historiography of libertarians as well, would condemn them to be perfect strangers, taking care to silence all their actions and "disappear" their texts, reflections and other theoretical contributions. With the exception of Sacco and Vanzetti; "legalistic Anarchism" would take care of providing a false story that turned them into the "martyrs" of anarchism. As had been done before with the anarchists of Chicago: "The Martyrs of Chicago." Once again, the familiar tricks to hide the story. In the case of Sacco and Vanzetti the situation was the same. The argument that was inscribed as a logical defence strategy in order for them to be declared "innocent", has become the "official story" of the facts. With the exception of libertarian historian Paul Alvrich who would further address the anarchist activity at that time and Bonanno´s work on the subject, the rest of the published literature about Sacco and Vanzetti´s case denies their involvement in the expropriation for which they ended up being convicted. Really expropriations were carried out constantly by the group in which Sacco and Vanzetti were active participants and funds raised through these expropriations were used to continue printing anarchist propaganda and to fund attacks, retaliation calls and to assist fellow prisoners and unemployed, or in some cases their families. The attacks were always targeted against the state, capital, and clergy, with bankers, industrialists, politicians, judges, prosecutors, police and priests being the subjects of their attacks.

This group has countless anecdotes, we could be here all day recounting them, but there are several actions that deserve at least a brief mention such as the attack executed on November 24, 1917 against the Police Headquarters of the City of Milwaukee where an extremely powerful delay bomb containing several kilos of black powder exploded. The device had been built by Mario Buda who was the group's explosives expert. Also making use of his skills, Luiggi Galleani helped to prepare an explosives manual successfully circulated among the insurrectionary anarchists and apparently translated into English by Emma Goldman. Well, it was learnt that the plan was ingenious because due to the great anarchist activity at

the time, police stations were heavily guarded and there were strict controls when accessing these venues, so for the group to be able to get the bomb into the barracks they first placed the bomb in the foundations of a church in the city and later passed the information to a person they suspected was a police informant. An explosives squad quickly mobilized and removed the bomb from the church to the police station, thinking that the trigger mechanism had failed.

Minutes after checking that the device was in the facility it detonated, killing nine policemen and one civilian. Well, with this attack they managed to kill two birds with one stone because it not only met their goal, but also enabled them to uncover the informer. Nestor Dondoglio, in the city of Chicago in 1916, made another attack that deserves mention. Dondoglio was an Italian chef who called himself Jean Crones. On hearing that a great banquet was being planned in honour of the archbishop of that city, Archbishop Mundelein, with the attendance of a large group of the Catholic hierarchy, he presented himself saying he wanted to volunteer donating his skills and serving his exquisite dishes to diners, and in doing so poisoned some two hundred guests by adding arsenic to the soup. None of the victims died because in his haste to eliminate them, Dondoglio used too much poison which caused vomiting in victims immediately that only succeeded in expelling the poison. Only one priest would die two days after poisoning, Father O'Hara, pastor of St. Matthew's Church in Brooklyn New York, who had been chaplain at the prison gallows on Raymond St. Dondoglio, immediately after the attack, moved to the East Coast where he was hidden by a fellow group member until his death in 1932.

There are plenty examples of insurrectionary anarchist actions around that time, with many expropriations and actions of propaganda by deed. The death sentences of Sacco and Vanzetti, served as a trigger for increased action. As well in Havana, Montevideo and Buenos Aires, countless bombs exploded in protest at the state crime. In Argentina and Uruguay, insurrectionary anarchists also left their mark practicing expropriation and propaganda by deed. Di Giovanni and his band-mates stand out for their notoriety. Also the nucleus of Roscigno, Uriondo, Malvicini Paredes and Vazquez. Both in Argentina and Uruguay compañer@s have continued actions of expropriations and propaganda of the deed to this day. In the recent past, the expropriators of *el negro fiorito*, Amanecer Fiorito and Nuestro Urubú, who died at the hands of a police during a failed expropriation. Chile also has a long history of insurrectionary anarchists, of expropriations and actions of propaganda of the deed, which has also reached our days with painful losses like that of Maury[2] and the compañero who recently had his bomb blow up in is hands- Luciano? Yeah, exactly Luciano[3].

Here in Mexico, expropriation has been and is a recurring practice, although generally responsibility is not claimed. Well, with the exception of Anonymous Anarchist Action from Tijuana who have claimed expropriations in their communiqués. Nor can we forget, as a tribute and claim of responsibility, the compañero Mariano Sánchez Anon, of Aragonese origin, first exiled in France, when he had to flee from Mas de las Matas, his hometown, following the anarchist uprising of December 1933 and after taking refuge over here in

Mexico, after the triumph of fascism under Franco. He would arrive to this country aboard the Ipanema, with his partner Armonia de Vivir Pensando, entering the port of Veracruz. Immediately they were relocated to a farm in Santa Sabina, Chihuahua, where he would be sent to work as a labourer due to his peasant origins and agricultural experience. But Sanchez Anon, wouldn`t give up the anarchist ideal and went on to continue with his revolutionary activity in Mexico.

Quickly, he began to organize labourers in his workplace against the exploitation that they were submitted to and shot the manager of the farm, killing him. Wanted by the police, he moved to Mexico City alongside his compañero Diego Francisco Salas. Over here, they founded a task force consisting of five Spanish compañer@s who refused to renounce their anarchist ideas and revolutionary action, as the Mexican government had demanded as a condition for granting them asylum. They participated in various expropriations until the failed operation of the Modelo Brewery.

Mariano Sanchez Añón would be cowardly vilified by the Anarchist Federation of the Centre and alleged "Libertarian Youth" in San Luis Potosi, who published a statement condemning the expropriation of the Modelo Brewery, and accused the Spanish exiles who participated in that action of being "gangsters". Here I have the statement but, if you like you can read it online, this statement is hosted in the Virtual Library site *Biblioteca Virtual Antorcha*- the expropriation of the Modelo Brewery, and Mariano Sanchez Añón himself and his compañeros also received the condemnation of some of the Spanish libertarian refugees here, the so-called *bomberos* "fire-fighters"- logically it extinguished the fire whenever necessary- the notorious "holy men" of stagnant exile, among them another had a "cincopuntista" like Fidel Miró.

Interestingly, when the compañer@s asked us to present this issue, in preparing this talk, we found a valuable archive that is unordered but has a lot of information that would be worth bringing to light so as to see the conflicting attitudes of these "two Anarchisms". I speak of the file of the Technical Committee to Aid Spaniards in Mexico (CTAE). This "committee" has the distinction of having been created by Juan Negrin, head of the republican government, as a continuation of the Evacuation of Spanish Refugees Service, founded in France, with funding from the Government of the Republic.

Chaired by José Puche, the group remained in contact with several ministries and with Lazaro Cardenas, to coordinate the arrival of refugees, the arrival of the steamers *Sinaia* and *Ipanema*. Then continuing with their particular job, say ... "liaison" with the Mexican government, was also responsible for providing individual grants, accommodation and food, loans to start businesses. The Committee was founded with capital from the Government of the Republic, the Agricultural Industrial Finance, with this funding, the company would open Vulcano, Editorial Seneca, the Instituto Luis Vives, the Spanish-Mexican Academy, the Spanish College and other schools in other states. You can find some of this on the Internet from the published memoirs of the Spanish Exile, but the file exists and has a wealth of information. Most surprising is the participation of several anarchists in this committee, held responsible for "reporting" frequent anarchist activity in these parts. There you will find

several reports of Ricardo Mestre, Fidel Miro and Adolfo Hernandez, precisely about Mariano and other compañer@s, who were branded as "violent," "morons of the war," "robbers" and "bandits."

Anyway... Well finally today, revolutionary expropriations remain an essential vehicle of funding anarchist activities, both to carry out actions as well as for editing anarchist propaganda, books, publications, etc.. In regions such as Greece and Italy, where insurrectionary anarchism is very active, many compañer@s have gone to prison for failed expropriations. Alfredo Bonanno, Pipo Staicy, Christos Stratigopoulos and Yiannis Dimitrakis, the last two are still in prison, also victims of the silence and condemnation of "legalistic anarchism." Compañeros Claudio Lavazza, Giovanni Barcia and Gilbert Ghislain, insurrectionary Italian anarchist prisoners in the Spanish State who also remain behind bars for expropriations. Giorgio Rodríguez and Juan José Garfia are also in prison for expropriation, the latter has been in jail since 1987. And heaps of other compañer@s that I don`t remember their names right now. Not to mention in Chile and Argentina.

So when we address the so-called "illegal anarchism", we do so acknowledging the gigantic size of this incongruity, but also acknowledging that this euphemism is referring to insurrectionary anarchism, then we must reaffirm the validity and objectivity of propaganda by the deed and of expropriations, recognising these tactics and practices as consistent with our principles, appropriate for times of withdrawal and retreat from the real movement of the oppressed and for the periods of reflux, re-articulation and accumulation of forces. But precisely for that reason, our action should not be limited to action for the action itself without ideals or principles that reaffirm them but instead as a direct consequence of those principles and those ideals put into practice. For this reason, we disagree with compañer@s who, like Miguel Amorós, despite being strongly critical of the false "legalistic" anarchism and the farce of the fictional organization supported solely by oral and written propaganda, they fall into the commonplace assertion that anarchism in general and as a whole suffered a metamorphosis which abandoned the tactics of insurrection and transformed into an ideology alien to the real struggles.

While it is true that in the so-called "anarchism in transition" period, following the defeat of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, an ideology in broad sectors of anarchism was produced, an ideological degeneration of abandoning all contact with reality and taking refuge in the abstract ideas of primitive currents. It is also true that all "libertarian" liberalism immediately after the French Revolution relentlessly pushed for the abandonment of insurgent practices and the ideological degenerations that are now so submerged, laying the foundations of this humanistic and philanthropic liberalism still being preached from the sacred temples of "official" anarchism. In the same bag, you can not put those who consistently and according to the circumstances imposed by a context of a set-back of the struggles, continue in arms against domination, with the corresponding tactics and methods for that period of crisis of the movement and of the dispersion or regression of struggles. Amorós himself in his many criticisms of the insurrectionalist Anarchism has recognized that under conditions of withdrawal and retreat of a struggle, minimum organization is the only possible option, and he has also highlighted the inability of the offensive against the system of domination in a

situation of full retreat of the struggle. Then we ask how they can not recognize that it is precisely in such periods of crisis and decline which, limited by the circumstances, have implemented rebellious forms of struggle in order not to give the enemy the slightest of chances?

Not accepting the reformism, the evolutionary processes nor the contemplative attitudes of ¨legalist Anarchism¨, we front ourselves with the dilemma of standing armed crossed waiting for the ¨objective and subjective¨ conditions to be ripe, or articulate or impulse other rebellious actions that keep us alive, at war and without giving any respite to the enemy, not one single second of peace to the system of domination.

We believe that recognising the tactics and methods that correspond to each period of struggle is essential to developing a unitary critique. We are convinced that whilst we are not spreading the rebellious conscience, we will fail to achieve the reconstruction of the real movement of the oppressed and while this doesn`t materialize we can not extend the struggle and reach a generalised insurrection. Those with the essential ingredients needed to smash this old world that we inhabit to pieces and materialize the total destruction of the current system of domination. But we will not stay waiting for the maturation of the revolutionary process, we won`t wait for the revolution nor are we very worried whether it ever happens or not, because known revolutions- from the French revolution to nowadays- have degenerated, all of them, into reformist, authoritarian and dictatorial processes that have only helped to strengthen the state. Our fight is and always will be for Total liberation, for Anarchy. We won`t accept anything less. Thank you.

Talk by Gustavo Rodríguez, in the Squatted Social Centre ¨*La Casa Naranja*¨, Tlalnepantla, Mexico State.

Sunday 3rd July 2011.

---

[1] Term in Spanish *compañera, compañero* or *compañer@s* meaning something somewhere between *friend*, *colleague*, *affine* and *comrade*. It does not translate directly into English.
[2] Mauricio Morales, who died in May 2009 after a bomb he was transporting on his bicycle blew up prematurely in Santiago de Chile. The bomb was meant for a training college for prison guards.
[3] Luciano ¨Tortuga¨ Pitronelli who had a bomb blow up prematurely in his hands when placing it at an ATM in Santiago de Chile. At this moment he remains in the hands of the enemy.