The Luso-Anarchist Reader

THE ORIGINS OF ANARCHISM IN PORTUGAL AND BRAZIL

Edited by
Plínio de Góes, Jr.

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STUDIES ON EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

The Luso-Anarchist Reader: The Origins of Anarchism in Portugal and Brazil

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DEDICATION

For the men and women who dedicated themselves to anarchist ideas in Portugal and Brazil, striving for a better world, and were imprisoned for their beliefs. Too many of them passed away in the political concentration camps of Tarrafal in Cape Verde and Clevelândia in northern Brazil.

For my two loves: my wife Lauren and my son Luca.

INTRODUCTION TO THE READER

The activities of anarchists affiliated with the global Occupy movement as well as those associated with alter-globalization protests against international trade summits have brought increased attention to the political philosophy and practice of anarchism in recent years. New anarchist theories are elucidated from the history of anarchism, from the ideas of classical anarchist theorists like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin, and Peter Kropotkin, as well as Errico Malatesta, Emma Goldman, and others. The history of European anarchism, Spanish anarchism in particular, is being examined with fresh eyes as are the histories of anarchism in the United States, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Given this context, it is particularly important to guarantee that anarchist history is as complete as possible, that gaps are filled in order to provide a stronger foundation upon which research and activism can be built. This book is intended to begin the very long process of filling one such gap. The lives, stories, and ideas comprising anarchism in Brazil and in Portugal have rarely been divulged to non-Portuguese speakers. The majority of histories of Iberian anarchism focus almost exclusively on Spain—and the majority of works on Latin American anarchism mention Brazil, the largest and most populous Latin American nation, only in passing.

The Luso-Anarchist Reader: The Origins of Anarchism in Portugal and Brazil, pages xi–xv.

This book is therefore intended to serve the following purposes: *pedagogy*, teaching the tradition of anarchism in these two nations to students or in affinity groups; filling in gaps as to the *history* of anarchism in the early twentieth century; and providing context for readers, researchers, and activists to understand current anarchist movements in these nations today, and, therefore, to be able to aid or seek inspiration from these movements via *activism*.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CONCEPT OF LUSO-ANARCHISM

The term "Luso" means "Portuguese-speaking." Immediately, the objection might be raised that there is no such thing as "Luso-Anarchism." In fact, Brazil and Portugal represent two very different cultures tied to two different continents. While the Portuguese view themselves as part of the history of the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula with Spain, Brazilians view themselves as the merger of European, indigenous American and African cultures. Furthermore, the relationship between Portugal and Brazil was hardly cooperative for much of their histories. Brazil is a former colony of Portugal's and, as such, studying their histories together may appear to imply that Brazil derived its culture from Portugal, depreciating the impact of African and indigenous American influences.

While these objections have some merit, the reasons for examining Portuguese anarchism and Brazilian anarchism together are just as powerful. In the first place, anarchists value solidarity as a fundamental force for change and the stories of Portuguese and Brazilian anarchists working together across national and racial boundaries illustrate this principle in action. When the Afro-Brazilian writer Lima Barreto rises to defend anarchist European immigrant workers against the charge that they are unworthy elements which should be deported from Brazil, we see solidarity breaking down barriers. In fact, the ties between Portuguese workers and workers who are from colonies and former colonies of Portugal presented themselves not only in Brazil, but also in the nation of Mozambique. In the city of Maputo (formerly known as Lourenço Marques), port workers published anarchist newspapers and organized, although the volume of materials generated was not nearly as significant as in Brazil.

As it is demonstrated by the readings included in this collection, Brazilian anarchism and Portuguese anarchism developed in interaction with each other. Portuguese newspapers published tracts written by Brazilian anarchists when the latter faced significant censorship. The same is true for Portuguese workers, who fled to Brazil or published appeals in Brazilian newspapers when conditions worsened for them in their country. The fact that most anarchist writers in these nations were self-taught and could only speak Portuguese strengthened these ties, bonds they could not form as easily with those who spoke other languages. Many of the most influential Portuguese anarchists lived and worked in Brazil for much of their lives. Perhaps the most read anarchist who authored a theoretical work in either country, a journalist named Neno Vasco, was born in Portugal but lived in both Brazil and Portugal. Similarly, anarchist author Pinto Quartin was born

in Brazil but lived much of his life in Portugal. Anarchists moved back and forth between these nations based on the level of oppression to which they were exposed in a given nation at a particular moment in time. It was not unusual for an anarchist from Portugal to be arrested in Brazil and deported to Portugal and then suffer additional harm in that country. Over the course of the years, close contact led to Portuguese anarchism and Brazilian anarchism developing certain common traits: a focus on the ideas elucidated by Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta with Mikhail Bakunin and others causing less of an impact, and a repudiation of racism as well as classism.

Eventually, both Portuguese and Brazilian anarchists found themselves confronting governments calling themselves *Estados Novos* (New States). The *Estado Novo* ideal was derived from the principles of Integralism, elaborated in Portugal by António Sardinha and in Brazil by Plínio Salgado. These dictatorships valued the traditional relationships present in the agricultural spheres controlled by rural elites—family, Catholicism, nationalism, property, tradition, etc. Brazilian and Portuguese anarchists worked together to survive these regimes.

Perhaps most importantly, both Portuguese and Brazilian anarchists have been largely ignored outside of the Portuguese-speaking nations. As such, propagandists and theorists from both nations have not received the proper level of attention from the international community. They are united in their fate, their shared invisibility.

For all these reasons, Luso-Anarchism is a useful construct to describe a set of ideas built on ground prepared by the solidarity of two distinct but interrelated peoples. Any attempt to divulge these traditions separately would simply result in constant references to the excluded tradition and wind up forming a Luso-Anarchism with a missing part.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This book begins with an essay by the editor outlining the history of Luso-Anarchism from its origins to the present day. The essay provides the reader with the necessary link between anarchism in the early twentieth century and its current manifestations.

The remainder of the book is divided into three chapters. Each chapter is comprised of translations of works by anarchists translated by Plínio de Góes, Jr. The first chapter attempts to introduce the reader to the historical conditions anarchist activists faced when anarchism first began to make itself known in Portugal and Brazil. The first chapter thus provides the reader with a glimpse into life in an oppressive, paternalistic society wherein wealthy elites hold unquestioned power.

The second chapter introduces the reader to the theoretical framework behind Luso-Anarchism. This chapter contains one of the most important theoretical works in Luso-Anarchism, Neno Vasco's *The Anarchist Conception of Syndicalism*. While most readings are fairly short, the longest translation in this reader is Maria Lacerda de Moura's *Love Each Other . . . and Don't Breed*. In part, this

is due to the fact that Maria Lacerda de Moura was the most influential female anarchist in the Portuguese-speaking world. An outspoken feminist, she criticized the anarchist movement itself for reproducing inequality between men and women within its ranks. A significant amount of androcentrism is indeed apparent in many of other readings in this collection with too few references to the struggles of women.

The third chapter focuses on the repression suffered by Luso-Anarchists towards the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Anarchism gained adherents at the turn of the twentieth century, becoming the primary revolutionary force within the working class in these two nations, but anarchists quickly became targets for authoritarian regimes. By the mid-1930s, many anarchists found themselves jailed or in hiding. The readings in this chapter are diaries or letters from prisoners suffering abuse under horrible conditions.

The title of this collection refers to the "origins" of Luso-Anarchism. While the impact of anarchism on the working class was certainly greater in the early twentieth century, anarchism survived repression and the loss of adherents to state communism, which gained followers with the success of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the Cuban Revolution of the 1950s and early 1960s. Anarchists continued to make their positions known despite their clandestine status for much of the twentieth century in dictatorships in Portugal and Brazil. The *Movimento Estudantil Libertário* (Libertarian Student Movement) or MEL in Brazil of the 1960s opposed the military dictatorship in power and libertarian publications were again produced in the 1970s in both Portugal and Brazil. We see the work of anarchists today in the *Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro* (the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro) or FARJ, and the *Centro de Cultural Libertária* (Center for Libertarian Culture) in Lisbon. The tradition presented in this reader is very much alive.

For the reader who is unfamiliar with the term "anarchism," it is a term which has taken on many meanings over the years, but no previous knowledge of anarchist thought is necessary to comprehend the texts in this reader. "Anarchism" can be defined here as the opposition to the existence of government, including government-enforced property rights. The term can, however, encompass support for the abolition of other forms of authority in addition to State power. As the term was used by Luso-Anarchists, anarchism is a form of socialism opposed to concentrated power in the following spheres:

- The State—The anarchists in this collection generally call for the complete elimination of all governing institutions, including parliaments, armies, state schools, police departments, and all other organs of government.
- The Family—Although some Luso-Anarchists lived fairly conventional lives, others argued for the abolition of the family and for free love, as well as the communal raising of children.
- The Church—The anarchists in this collection generally viewed the family as a creation of the Church and the Church as an institution fabricated to

instill subservience in the working class. As such, many Luso-Anarchists were also militant atheists.

- Property—Uniting Luso-Anarchists was the belief in the abolition of property. All the means of production and all land should be owned by the workers themselves in a structure comprised of communes united via a federation.

Early twentieth century Luso-Anarchism was strongly tied to the labor movement but it was divided into two tendencies. One current was an anarcho-syndicalist strand which espoused the idea that worker's unions themselves were the building blocks of a new society. As such, the union itself embodied the anarchist movement. The second tendency was an anarchist-communist group which claimed that anarchists should participate in unions but that the unions themselves reproduced hierarchical relationships and, thus, were insufficient to build a new world. This second group advocated participating in unions in order to distribute literature to workers and gain adherents to their cause.

Luso-Anarchists today have built upon their historical roots, importing new theoretical frameworks from the environmental movement such as social ecology and anarcho-primitivism to enrich their tradition. They express concern with regards to global warming and deforestation, as well as the traditional anarchist concerns with inequality and authoritarianism. These twenty-first century anarchists continue to act as part of a movement which does not see a contradiction between freedom and equality but, instead, views them as mutually reinforcing—one can only be truly free when others are also similarly free. If any person is a slave, we are all slaves alongside them.

Plínio de Góes Jr., Esq., Ph.D.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

RENOVAÇÃO

The Origins of Luso-Anarchism

Plínio de Góes, Jr.

The word *renovação* (renovation) was frequently used in anarchist periodicals in Brazil and Portugal. In fact, some anarchist periodicals chose this term as their name. The name reflected a belief that society had to be remade, rebuilt. In order to comprehend a project to rebuild a structure, one must understand not only the plans for change but the structure of the original building. As such, an overview of the obstacles faced by Luso-Anarchists is required to understand their views.

Herein, a brief history of the relationship between nations in the Portuguese-speaking or Lusophone world is presented. The overview necessarily falls short of being complete but it provides the reader with a working knowledge of the history of the relationships at issue. After this general historical summary, an outline of anarchist activism and worker's movements in these nations is presented. Luso-Anarchism obtained its current shape as a result of three periods: before 1900, when anarchism slowly gained adherents among workers; between 1900 and the 1930s, when anarchism became the primary force in the worker's movement; and after the 1930s, when anarchism exercised less influence but survived and continued to inspire activists. The last portion of this essay discusses the continuing legacy of Luso-Anarchism in activist circles.

The Luso-Anarchist Reader: The Origins of Anarchism in Portugal and Brazil, pages 1–40.

I. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF NATIONS AND PEOPLES IN THE PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING WORLD

In 1922, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, a Modern Art Week exposition was held to allow new, daring artists and writers to display their talents. Several of the artists and writers presented works inspired by Brazil's indigenous American and African influences. Oswald de Andrade, a poet who had been present at this festival, went on to write the essay *Manifesto Antropófago* (Cannibal Manifesto), wherein he described Brazilians as cannibals secure in their native roots but willing to digest new ideas from anywhere in the world, proudly proclaiming:

> We were never catechized. What we really made was Carnaval. The Indian dressed as a Senator of the Empire. Making believe he's Pitt. Or performing in Alencar's operas, full of worthy Portuguese sentiments.
>
> We already had communism. We already had surrealist language. The Golden Age.[1]

Andrade proclaims "[d]own with every catechism" and states that "[b]efore the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness."[2] The Manifesto expresses the idea that, prior to Portuguese colonization, native Brazilians lived in an egalitarian society free from European religious influences.

The Afro-Brazilian journalist Lima Barreto, in his essay "Words from an Anarchist 'Snob'" writes in 1913: "The civilization which dominates us, the form of social organization under which we live, is the same as that of Europe and as old as she is."[3] Barreto argues that, despite living among native peoples in Brazil with very different ideas, the Portuguese who colonized Brazil had preserved and spread their own culture based on a hierarchy reinforced by the Catholic Church. As such, anarchism was required in Brazil, as in Europe, precisely to cure diseases, the diseases of capitalism and hierarchy, which had been brought from abroad.

In his epic poem, *The Lusiads*, first published in 1572, the Portuguese writer Luís Vaz de Camões describes the voyages of Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama in the late fifteenth century, including encounters with societies in Africa and Asia. Although the work is marked by the presence of Roman gods, a rivalry with Muslims and the need to divulge the faith are also essential elements of Portugal's national poem—the god Bacchus even creates a fake altar with the Virgin Mary to lure the Portuguese explorers into a trap.[4] Frequently, Portuguese explorers would leave behind *padrões* (markers), crosses made out of wood or stone pillars with crosses and engravings, sometimes dedicated to a particular saint, at strategic locations to signal their presence.[5] A sense of a religious mission was crucial for the project of a Portuguese Empire.

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[1] Andrade, "Cannibalist Manifesto," 40.
[2] Ibid., 38, 42.
[3] Barreto, "Words from an Anarchist Snob," included in this reader.
[4] Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, 66–68.
[5] Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 2–3.