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A Conference of the "National Anarchists"

The fascists who call themselves "anarchists"

Wayne Price

July 13, 2017

You ask who these people are, sending me an account of an international gathering of the "National Anarchist Movement" in Spain this year. The short answer is that they are fascists, and no more "anarchist" than the National Socialists were "socialist." However, they deny being fascist, and the article repeatedly says that they are not fascist, let alone Nazi. The article is written by one Keith Preston, who has claimed to be trying to pull together left and right libertarianism, anarchist-communism and national-anarchism.

The Nazis denounced capitalism and big business (especially their "left wing" which stupidly believed this rhetoric, until Hitler got into power and had "left Nazis" killed). So these pseudo-anarchists denounce the state, the international capitalist ruling class, imperialism, and the dangerous misuse of technology by capitalism. Preston summarizes, "much of what was said was highly relevant to the ideas of the libertarian-left and the libertarian-right alike, as well as those affiliated with

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<http://anarkismo.net/article/30386>

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anti-globalization, environmental, anti-imperialist, indigenous, anti-state, and anti-corporate movements generally.”

The NA propose replacing the centralized state and mass society by more-or-less autonomous communities. The communities will form themselves on whatever basis they want, but (surprise!) the NA suggest forming them on the basis of “ethnicity.” “The overwhelming, incontrovertible, widespread return of a series of racial issues is undeniable,... National-anarchist communities can be the positive answer to the problem. ...In this context, I would like to focus on ethnicity.” They reject internationalism or “universalism.” Hence the term “National Anarchists.

The underlying assumptions show through the anarchist rhetoric. One speaker “integrated not only the pro-national and pro-ethnic standpoints of the Right into his Weltanschauung,” but also methods of psychotherapy from the Left (not quite equivalent). This person (Peter Topfer) decided “that there is no good humanism.” Apparently, “humanism...merely becomes a weapon of Jewish ethnocentrism and supremacy.” He thinks that “while Islamism is a threat...Jewish ethnocentrism...exercises a much greater influence.” Another speaker “synthesized the ideas of Otto Strasser with those of Murray Bookchin.” Strasser was a Nazi.

Another speaker pointed out that liberal capitalist democratic states are the most common and most accepted right now. Therefore National Anarchists should not focus on defending the democratic rights of the people, but “the anarchist struggle in the twenty-first century is essentially a struggle against liberal parliamentary states.” At no point do these NAs advocate democracy, even of the most radical, direct, participatory, kind.

Sean Jobst gave a talk, “Zionism and Globalism: A Threat to All Communities.” “We can define Zionism as Jewish chauvinistic nationalism...a global threat.” Jobst did quote Bakunin as making an anti-semitic attack on Marx in 1871,

referring to “the parasitic Jewish nation.” This says something about Bakunin, as well as Jobst, but not much about either anarchism or the Jews. I won’t go through the full rationalization which is offered. Preston does not criticize either one of the anti-semitic presentations he reports.

From historical experience, we expect fascist “ideology” to be confused, contradictory, and irrational. No doubt many of these “National Anarchists” are sincere muddleheads. They may think that they are not fascists and have convinced themselves that they do not want to oppress people. But this nonsense can only serve to support capitalist statism in its actual practice—as did National Socialism.

I am pretty broad in accepting self-described anarchists as anarchists: primitivists, gradualists, individualists, pro-market (but anti-capitalist) anarchists, etc. I argue that they are mistaken in their ideas and strategy, but not that they aren’t “anarchists.” They mostly share the same goals as revolutionary class-struggle anarchist-socialists, which have been the historical mainstream of the movement. But I draw the line at “anarchist-capitalists” (right “libertarians” who oppose the state but support capitalism). They are not anarchists if they accept capitalism. Similarly people are not anarchists if they accept racism, anti-semitism, and nationalism, even if they pretend not to be fascists.