

Especifismo and Synthesis/Synthesism

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December 22, 2009

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Especifismo

Especifismo is a conception of anarchist organisation. The term is used and was first advocated by the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU), with which it refers to the anarchist current that historically defended the need for specific anarchist organisation. Thus, the specific organisation believes that the struggle must take place on two distinct levels: that of the anarchist organisation and that of the popular movements – which must form on the basis of need and not be restricted to a particular ideology as in the case of anarcho-syndicalism. This model of organisation has its foundations in classical anarchism, as has been advocated by Mikhail Bakunin, Errico Malatesta, the Dielo Truda Russian exiles, among others. Bakunin advocated such a model for the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, when in his role within the International Workers Association (IWA), Malatesta advocated similar positions in his formulation of the “anarchist party”, and, similarly, Dielo Truda in the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. Similar positions were advocated at different times and in different places by anarchist-communists who held an “organisationalist” line of anarchism, based on the organisation and willingness of workers to promote social change through mass movements. Since the nineteenth century, other concepts have been incorporated into what today is considered to be the “especifismo” that is advocated by a number of anarchist organisations in Latin America: the understanding of anarchism as an ideology and, therefore, a necessary connection with a political practice with the goal of social transformation; organisation as an indispensable element in the struggle; the design of the specific anarchist organisation as an organisation of an active minority; the centrality of class struggle and the priority for social work with the popular movements (social movements, trade unions, etc.); theoretical and ideological unity; unified strategy and tactics; a decision-making process marked by the attempt at consensus, and failing that, by the vote; and the emphasis on the commitment of militants. Outside Latin America, the organisations that advocate similar positions to that of Especifismo define themselves as anarchist-communists – of Platformist inspiration.

Synthesis/Synthesism

The discussion about the Anarchist Synthesis arises in the context of the discussion on the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists, written by the Dielo Truda group of Russian exiles in 1926. Two texts made as responses to the Platform, each proposing different models, are the basis for what became known as the organisation of synthesis, or simply “synthesism.” The first text, by Sébastien Faure, was written in 1928 and maintains that anarchism is characterised by three fundamental currents: anarcho-syndicalism, libertarian communism and anarcho-individualism. In his view, these currents were not contradictory but complementary, each having a role within anarchism: anarcho-syndicalism as the strength of the mass organisations and the best way for the practice of anarchism; libertarian communism as a proposed future society based on the distribution of the fruits of labour according to the needs of each one; anarcho-individualism as a negation of oppression and affirming the individual right to development of the individual, seeking to please them in every way. The second text, by Volin, was written in 1934 and maintains that it is necessary to synthesise the various anarchist currents in a “harmonious, ordered, finished” way. Modeled on the lines that were intended to

construct the Nabat Russian anarchist organisation, Volin, similarly to Faure, demands a model of organisation in which unionism is considered the method of social revolution, libertarian communism constitutes the organisation of the new society, and individualism becomes the goal of post-revolutionary society, aiming at the emancipation and happiness of the individual. For him, it would be a mistake to oppose the anarchist currents against each other, and more productive would be to merge them into a “synthetic anarchism”, essential in his view. Currently, the anarchist synthesis organisation of greatest expression is the Anarchist Federation (FA) of France.

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Retrieved on 14th October 2021 from www.anarkismo.net
Translation by Jonathan – ZACF.

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