

H-France Review Vol. 3 (May 2003), No. 51

David Berry, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945*. Contributions to the Study of World History, no. 97. Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 2002. xiv + 323 pp. Notes, bibliography, and index. \$64.95 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0-313-32026-8.

Review by Judith Wishnia, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Go to any *manif* in Paris and you will inevitably see a small group of young men and women waving the black flag of anarchism, the remnant of what was once a powerful influence on left-wing politics in France. For it was in France, as David Berry tells us, that anarchism first became a significant force, especially in the development of revolutionary syndicalism, a historical subject worthy of study. Berry pays homage to the magisterial work of Jean Maitron, as well as the studies of Daniel Colson, Roland Briard, Katherine Amdur, Steven Vincent, among others, but most of these books emphasize the period before and just after the First World War, or in the case of Briard, the post-World War II period.^[1] Missing is a thorough analysis of the theoretical and tactical struggles and changes within the anarchist movement between the two world wars. This is the era covered by this very intensive study, a period experiencing such major events as the Russian Revolution and the subsequent growth of the world-wide Communist Party, the rise of fascism, and the Spanish Civil War, when certain segments of the anarchist movement attempted to move away from the glorification of individual action toward more organization and practical action, with close ties to the labor movement.

Berry has done an amazing job of poring through the speeches, the newspapers, the reports of meetings of all the various strands of the anarchist movement—and as might be expected from individualists, there were many opinions and splinter groups—to develop a coherent story of changing anarchist ideology in the 1920s and 1930s. Beset by the internal problems of a lack of a unified ideology and organization and attacked by the communists and other left-wing organizations, numerous anarchists came to see that organization and internal democracy were not necessarily incompatible.

Berry begins with the glory days of anarchism when, despite the actions of a small group of terrorists who became associated in the public mind with the entire movement, anarchists became very influential in the labor movement, especially in the Bourses du Travail. At first they eschewed the reformism of the organized working class such as the movement for the eight-hour day; but by 1894 they joined the labor movement, helping to develop the concept of revolution through the spontaneous general strike and eventually influencing the Amiens Charter of 1906, which separated syndicalists from parliamentary political parties. During the Great War most anarchists, as opposed to pre-war anti-militarists like Jean Grave and Gustave Hervé, joined the minority of socialists and syndicalists in rejecting the Union Sacrée, seeing the war as a struggle between bourgeois governments which used the European working class as cannon fodder.

But then came the Bolshevik Revolution and anarchists debated whether or not to support what many considered to be the first working-class revolution, the first anti-capitalist revolution, even though it did not emerge from a massive general strike of workers. The big problem for anarchists was not the soviets, which many saw as local worker-led communism operating without central state authority, but the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat which was seen as just another repressive form of state power. Torn between concepts of individual freedom and the authority necessary to defeat the remnants of the bourgeoisie, French anarchists split between those who moved closer to communism, supporting the soviets as a possible combination of individual freedom and communism, and those who rejected Leninism. By 1920, after Lenin published *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, and then when the newly formed French Communist Party attacked the anarchists, the honeymoon period of communist and anarchist unity was over. Some leading anarchists such as André Lurulot, and the publication *L'Idée Libre*, continued to support the Bolsheviks because they were needed to lead the masses and because, essentially, they were the only game in town. Finally a shooting of two anarchists in 1924 after a battle with communists finished any formal cooperation between the two revolutionary groups.

In the meantime, however, most anarchists continued to be active in the labor movement, even after the schism, some hoping for labor unity by remaining in the more reformist *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT), others joining the communist-dominated *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire* (CGTU), and still others organizing a third, more revolutionary group, the *Confédération Générale du Travail Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire* (CGTSR), which eventually fell by the wayside. The years 1924-1934 were indeed sad ones for the entire labor movement and here one wishes that Berry had said more about strike losses and internecine conflicts between socialists and communists, the CGT and the CGTU, as well as about the anarchists who continued to suffer from ideological splits and isolation.

By 1934, anarchists were again faced with an ideological and tactical dilemma: how to respond to the rising threat of fascism. Most anarchists were happy with the reunification of socialists and communists within the CGT, even with increased communist influence, and welcomed the strikes of 1936 as the beginning of the massive rising of workers they had always espoused. They were less content with the Matignon accords on collective bargaining, which they saw as a sell-out, ending any hope for a government-toppling general strike. As for the Popular Front itself, anarchists cooperated with local unity groups but viewed the national Popular Front government elected in 1936 as just another form of the bourgeois state.

The Spanish Civil War continued the debates and the splits. All agreed that the Spanish working class organizations were to be supported but not all anarchists could support the Republican government which was, after all, a bourgeois reformist government. And while some urged France to sell arms to the Spanish republicans, they agreed with the non-intervention policy of Léon Blum, not wanting a French reformist state to interfere in the Spanish conflict. A number of anarchists went to fight in Spain (those who died are listed in the front of the book) but they did so as individuals, not as a unified group. And of course, the constant attacks of the Stalinists in France and Spain further minimized the anarchist influence.

With the German occupation of France, anarchists, like so many others, merely tried to exist, to live out the occupation and the war. Some joined the resistance—mostly Spanish refugees—and some became collaborationists. Berry excuses most of those who worked with the Germans, agreeing with the interpretation that there were many levels of collaboration and there were indeed some who used their positions to aid comrades. But, as Berry notes, there is no excuse for people like Pierre Besnard and others who actually joined the *milice*.

Berry concludes with an analysis of anarchist strength in the interwar period. Given the disparate nature of the movement and a lack of statistics, it is difficult to gauge their actual numbers. Certainly as

with other left-wing and working class organizations, there was a growth in numbers and influence in the aftermath of World War I and then again in the period 1936-39. Clearly there were more sympathizers than actual members of organizations and subscribed readers of periodicals. And despite their internal weaknesses and the relentless attacks from communists, there is no denying their influence within the syndicalist movement.

Berry's self-established task was to do an ideological study of interwar anarchism and at this he has been incredibly successful, and he does indeed indicate the problems faced by those who opposed capitalism and its political power in an era when capitalism and the state were becoming ever more powerful. But it would have been even more informative if there had been more analysis of other aspects of anarchist thought and action. Berry mentions very briefly that there were women's anarchist groups, and that suffrage was important to these women, while not important to anarchist men. One might mention here that this was the position common to many other left-wing militants among socialists, communists and syndicalists: first liberate the working class and the liberation of women will follow (after they prepare dinner). It is important to note that among the first women to organize a working class feminist movement were the revolutionary syndicalist teachers, Marie Mayoux and Marie Guillot.[2] As Berry notes, Guillot became disillusioned with the communist dominated CGTU and helped to found the *Groupes Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires* (p. 132). He also notes that many anarchists began to realize that a working-class revolution would still need to keep some aspects of a state apparatus, at least for a while. One wonders how that differs from the failed Leninist concept of the withering away of the state.

It is doubtful that anarchists will ever again be an important force in French politics. Yet a study such as this helps us understand the development of working class ideology and organization as well as the dilemma of trying to maintain a free and independent position in a world of hegemonic capitalist power.

NOTES

[1] Jean Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France*, 2 vols. (Paris: Maspero, 1975); Daniel Colson, *Anarcho-syndicalisme et communisme, St-Etienne 1920-25* (St-Etienne: Université de St-Etienne, 1986); Kathryn Amdur, *Syndicalist Legacy: Trade Unions and Politics in Two French Cities in the Era of World War I* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); K. Steven Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism: Benoit Malon and French Reformist Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and Roland Briard, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste, 1945-1975* (Paris: Galilee, 1976).

[2] *Groupe Féministe Universitaire*. See also feminist columns in *L'Ecole émancipée*, the newspaper of the *Syndicat des Instituteurs et Institutrices*.

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H-France Review Vol. 3 (May 2003), No. 52

Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002. xxvi + 670 pp. Figures, maps, graphs, bibliographical notes, and index. \$40.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0-300-08812-4.

Review by Raymond A. Mentzer, University of Iowa.

The tumultuous history of the Huguenots in early modern France had an expansive European and Atlantic context. The members of the French Reformed churches were part of an international Calvinist movement whose dimensions were wide and deep. Inspired initially by Huldrych Zwingli's reform of Zurich and, more obviously, the Frenchman John Calvin's subsequent success at Geneva, the so-called Reformed tradition spread north and east to Germany, Poland, and Hungary, west to France, the Netherlands, Scotland, and England, and ultimately across the Atlantic to New England. This religious dynamic with its empowering doctrine of predestination occupied a crucial role in the French, Dutch and English religious-civil wars. In New England, puritans exercised substantial influence in the formation of American culture.

Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Max Weber approvingly argued that Calvinism profoundly shaped modern western bourgeois society. While our understanding of the details of these developments and the appropriate interpretative models has changed a great deal since Weber's time, the fascination with Calvinism remains. Over the past several decades, scholarly scrutiny of the movement has tended to focus on the experience of particular kingdoms, regions, and cities.

As Philip Benedict aptly remarks in the opening pages of this study, the last major synthetic examination of the Reformed tradition, John T. McNeill's *History and Character of Calvinism*, appeared some fifty years ago. During the intervening half century, scholarly interests and inclinations have undergone a dramatic shift. To some extent, the transformation has been a move towards assessment of the religious beliefs and activities of ordinary men and women, and away from the concerns of political and social elites. At the same time, historians have become less invested in the particular confessional traditions associated with the Reformation; they are more ecumenical in their approach and often religiously detached from the subject. Both developments prompt Benedict's reconsideration of the nature and influence of Calvinism in early modern Europe.

The results are a significant book—some 550 pages of text and fifteen years in the making—whose value to scholars cannot be overemphasized. The present study assembles the best recent scholarship on Calvinism throughout Europe and integrates the findings into a coherent overarching account. While Benedict's survey embraces a Calvinist world that goes well beyond the kingdom of France and neighboring Geneva, it squarely addresses the francophone milieu. For their part, the Huguenots