

Anarchism in Post-Revolutionary Spain

The Final Straw Radio

Feb. 13, 2013

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Synopsis

For many Anarchists, the history of Anti-authoritarian and Anti-capitalist resistance in Spanish serves as a laboratory in which to discuss the successes and failures of that political trajectory in application. The communes, the vibrant difference and debates that existed, and the resistance to the rise of fascism, bourgeois social democracy and statist communism: these are elements that find echoes in struggles prior (such as the Russian Revolution) and since (the struggles in the sixties through to today).

This weeks speakers, Ana & Pablo, present a slightly different narrative. By covering a critical (if brief) history of the Anarchism existant from the beginning of the Social Revolution ongoing when Franco's military coup of 1936 was engaged, through the era of dictatorship, through the spectacular democratization of Spain in the 1970's and into today, the speakers propose that the strongest that Anarchist movements have been was during periods of critical heterodoxy and debate within, as well as mutual aid and support in the face of restistance.

This show, due to it's length, is split into two episodes. The first aired 2013-02-03. Following interviews, there's about 20 minutes of metal tracks from Usnea and others! The playlist can be found here: <http://www.ashevillefm.org/node/6159>

Part 2

This week's episode of the final straw picks up where last week's left off. The features speakers are Ana and Pablo, two anarchists living in Barcelona, and they'll be discussing the rise and struggle of anarcha-feminism in Spain since the social revolution of the 1930's through to current times. We'll also be discussing intersections of anarchist struggle and healthcare in the age of austerity and visions of autonomous and anarchist forms of health care. This show also features a scene report of Anarchists in Spain today by Pablo and Ana presents some closing thoughts on struggles to engage in.

Following the discussion, you'll be hearing some new metal tracks from Brighton's own Light Bearer. Light Bearer is a 4 album project themed around the fall of Lucifer. Light Bearer shares members with the band, Fall of Efrafa, an epic crust band themed around the novel Watership Down. The 2nd album in the series, Silver Tongue, has just been released by the band to a mediafire file.

We'll also hear a metal track posthumously released from the Austin Texas anti-civ anarchist sludge project, Ecocide. For archives of this and other episodes of the Final Straw, check out radio4all.net and search the show title.

The playlist can be found [here](#).

Transcript

BURSTS: Asheville free mediaashevillefm.org. This is the final straw and I'm your host first to goodness. The show can also be heard on KXF in Marshall, CA and on kwtf.net out of Santa Rosa. California the show is sponsored in part by the worker owners at Firestorm Books and Cafe at 48 Karma Street in downtown Asheville. North Carolina Firestorm features organic coffee and milks vegan sandwiches, homemade baked goods, radical literature and a community calendar that can be found online at www.firestormcafe.com.

For many anarchists the history of anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist resistance in Spain serves as a laboratory in which to discuss the successes and failures of that political trajectory. In application, the communes, the vibrant differences and debates that existed and the resistance to the rise of fascism. Bourgeois social democracy and statist communism. These are the elements that find echoes in struggles prior, such as the Russian and Mexican revolutions and since in the struggles of the 1960s through today.

This week's speakers, Anna and Pablo present a slightly different narrative. These two comrades from Spain from Barcelona, in particular, cover a critical brief history of anarchism of the anarchism. Existence from the beginning of the social revolution. Ongoing when Franco's military coup of 1936 was engaged. Through the era. Of dictatorship and on to the spectacular democratization of Spain in the 1970s, and in today.

The speakers propose that the strongest that anarchist movements have been during the periods of critical heterodoxy and debate within as well as mutual aid and support in the face of resistance.

This show, due to its length, is split into two episodes. Other topics discussed during this presentation. Include the rise and prominence or lack thereof of anarcho feminism in Spain, as well as debates around healthcare and engagement in reformist struggles along with folks neighbors.

So I hope you enjoy.

BURSTS: We're speaking with two comrades from Barcelona to discuss the history of anarchist struggles in Spain. Since the 1930s. Thank you so much for joining us.

PABLO: Thanks for having us.

ANNA: Thank you.

PABLO: Well recently anarchist the anarchist struggle and social movements in Barcelona have gotten international attention. With the Plaza occupation movement with the general strikes and of course there was also an important social revolution

centered in in Barcelona and. Addling year during the Spanish Civil War back in 1936, which which was also a major historical episode on a world scale. When we look back at the anarchist movement in uh in in the Spanish state, and particularly in Barcelona, what we find is that the movement seems to be a lot stronger when the broad anarchist space is fragmented between. Multiple different currents, all of which are strongly identified. And maybe often in conflict with one another, not in agreement. As long as there's different currents are communicating, whether that's criticizing one another supporting one another, creating a spirit of solidarity, and what we found is that that the anarchist space is strongest when it's fragmented and communicative. Rather than when it's unified under one single organization or when it's segmented into disparate groups that that don't communicate at all. So, for example, the Civil War broke out in July 1936. 6 and that immediately triggered a social revolution with the occupation of factories and the collectivization of land, and that, of course, had a lot of preparation that went into it. There were, there was. A lot of struggle in the in the previous years, a lot of capacities that were built and that was done by a wide variety of actors. Of course there was the. The Anarchist labor union. The CNT but that had insurrectionary elements also. There were very strong illegalised and individualist tendencies in in the Spanish state. There were there were naturalist anarchists that practiced vegetarianism and nudism, as well as target practice. There was the. Anarcho feminist group that formed in advance Mohaddis Libres or free women that that played a a very important role. There were all sorts of currents, not just the anarchosindicalist. Who were preparing both in terms of spreading visions of how to self organize society, how to take over the workshops and factories, how to collectivize the land and as well as practicing armed struggle, seizing weapons, learning. How to use? Them fighting back against the state and all of those. Factors played a very important role. But as the strength of the anarchist movement grew, the anarchist space unified and split entirely behind the CNT. By the time that the Civil War broke out in 1936. So when you had the sort of informal leadership of the CNT, make a very flawed decision to collaborate. With the Republican government and to collaborate with the communists against the fascists, which allowed the communists to essentially stamp out the anarchist movement and also sell out, sell out the struggle against the fascists. Then rather than. Just one single anarchist current suffering the consequences of that bad strategic decision. The entire anarchist movement suffered those consequences because at this point the anarchist movement was very unified and that was all especially unfortunate, because just in the prior years they had, they had many. Many examples, many lessons that that could have taught them that this was that this was a flat idea, and in fact other anarchists at the time were were criticizing this decision, but they're definitely a a minority because the movement as a whole was sort of unified within the structure of the. Well the CNT so for example in 1933 and in 1944 you had insurrections in different parts of Spain that were brutally crushed by the Republican government. So not by military dictatorship. But by the very government with which the anarchists would ally. Just two short years later and you also had the

experience that was well known in Spain of what the Bolsheviks did to the Russian Revolution, and they knew very well that the Bolsheviks in Russia had arrested and killed. Fellow anarchists and still the revolution in the very authoritarian and ultimately capitalistic direction so they had plenty of reason not to make that strategic decision. But one anarchist current made the decision and the rest sort of followed them to their graves. So of course the Civil War was lost the fascists won and the experiment of an anarchist revolution was prematurely snuffed out. But after the Civil War the anarchist struggle continued.

ANNA: The Maquis were anti-fascist guerrillas, mostly anarchists who operated after the Civil War in Catalonia. As well as other parts of the Spanish state. They didn't accept defeat in the Civil War, and so they headed to the hills to continue fighting against the Franco regime. They lived in France and in Catalunya. They carried out bank robberies and also robberies against businesses in order to finance the struggle helped and supported the prisoners. They smuggled weapons and propaganda across the border with France, and they distributed those throughout Catalonia. They carried out sabotage, they killed snitches, and on several occasions they tried to assassinate Franco. In 1949, Fascist Spain managed to normalize their international relations, so they were able to begin a much stronger repression against the Maquis, the Maquis, the anarchist. The rulers had the hope that once the fascists and the Nazis lost the Second World War. These problems with the other countries would help Spain get rid of the French regime. To the contrary, the other countries, such as the US, the United Kingdom, supported fascism and turned their back on the anti-fascist struggle. In the following years, there was a very heavy repression and the police got orders to shoot any suspicious person. 80% of the Maquis were liquid. Meanwhile, the Maquis had big problems with funding and with getting support from the CNT in exile in France. Once fascist Spain is accepted by Europe. The CNT orders the Maquis to abandon the anti-fascist struggle. Both fell, Marquez refused and so they lost. The support of the CNT. So they found themselves in a situation of struggle without without resources without funding. And with the police hot on their heels. Finally, in 1963, the last mocking Catalonia was killed.

The conclusion we can draw from this is that the CNP was living one on their image and on the basis of functioning bureaucracy than on the basis of its participation in struggle.

BURSTS: So the Confederacy on Nacina de Trabajadores was a Workers Union that took a syndicalist or I guess that's a weird word to use, but like an anarchosyndicalist sort of model, but was not inherently an anarchist organization. Is that correct?

PABLO: That's correct, the CNT definitely organized itself as a labor union with heavy anarchist influence. And on a definitely anarchist anarchist model. But it was a union for workers and workers didn't have to be. Anarchist in order to participate, it was not meant to be an ideological organization. Subsequently, in the 20s you had a A syndicalist reformist branch really grow within the CNT of a branch that wanted to turn it into a reformist organization and. And to impose itself as a leadership on

that organization. So at that point you had lots of anarchists in the rank and file of the CNT kick out that that would be leadership who subsequently left the CNT and formed a political party.

ANNA: Many anarchists did belong to the CNT. These number of anarchists belong to the C&T. Lots of the machines. The Anarchy gorillas also belong. To C&T for. Example Kiko saw that day. Who was the most famous of the of the anarchist gorillas? He always considered himself a member of the CNT. Even when the CNT stopped. Supporting the Maquis. And he kept trying to. Maintain that link, uh, with the CNT.

BURSTS: What types of relationships existed between the CNT and the feel the youth organization?

ANNA: The FIJAL, which is the libertarian youth organization, was the youth wing of the CNT. And many maquis belong to the libertarian youth and to the CNT simultaneously. The Maquis, for example, had a publication called Ruta and they signed their articles as libertarian youth.

BURSTS: What was the relationship between the Phi and. And the CNT, or the Maquis?

PABLO: The FIJAL started out as a rank and file attempt by anarchist within the CNT to defeat this, the tendency towards our reformism in in this. New sort of. Self appointed CNT leadership so that began. As a revolutionary current within the CNT to keep the CNT from being Co. Opted, however, once the fight succeeded in this attempt, they won lots of, uh, lots of influence within the organization and subsequently the fight became wedded in a strange sort of way to the CNT. So by the time the CNT went into exile, well, the Phi and the CNT. There were considered. Sort of wanting the same and at that point the file had already transformed into a into a conservative organization that cared more about the organizational well-being of the CNT rather than the struggle, even though they in their beginnings are quite different. So in the 70s you had the transition to democracy. the Fascist dictatorship decided it would also be in its own best interests to transition to democracy. There was a pressure from investors, a pressure from from the business class and also a desire within. Well within the European Union to have Spain democratize, so could we could join the European Union and that was very stage managed transition. So, for example, Franco, the fascist dictator, brought back a king so that Spain could be a constitutional monarchy, the communists. They were legalized and they form the Socialist Party. The fascists just became the Conservative Party and then they continued to try to suppress that history of revolution. And of course repression continued against the anarchists notwithstanding, it was it was a moment of very strong struggles, lots of people, hundreds of thousands of people came out into the streets. Again, many people thought it would be another chance for a revolution.

And the CNT came back from exile in France. They came back to Spain and Barcelona. Some of the early CNT protest gatherings drew crowds of hundreds of thousands. There were some of the largest gatherings in those days, and lots of people

flocked to the banner of the CNT because the CNT still had. It was still a symbol of resistance of uncompromising resistance. Against fascism, unlike the Communists and socialists. Were starting to collaborate with the. But unfortunately the CNT had completely lost touch with the reality. In in coupling. Year in the Spanish state. In the intervening decades. Whereas the Maquis had always tried to cultivate relationships and contacts and resistance at the at the grassroots at the base and the CNT had really lost contact so. In the 60s and 70s, new struggles appeared. The workers autonomy movement, Wildcat strikes, neighborhood organizations that had at at different times, very revolutionary. Many of those movements tended to use a Marxist language, either because they were influenced by similar movements in Italy or because, for example, Marxism could be studied in the universities under the fascist dictatorship, whereas anarchism was suppressed completely. But despite their Marxist language, these movements. Tended to have a very libertarian or anti-authoritarian character, but the CNT they missed this completely. they made contact with these movements. They saw that they're using a Marxist language and they just assumed that they were that they were communists and much. Too late rejected the idea. of working with them and then they continue to pick up on events that were hot topics in the 1920s and 1930s, but that people long since forgotten about, so they really they really missed the chance to inside in in any kind of powerful way in that social movement during the transition in the 70s. They also had taken on very conservative characteristics as an organization, so in the face of the inevitable police repression that was directed against anarchists. they took. A A defensive posture and a legalistic posture asking to be left alone claiming that they were innocent and not pushing for a heightened struggle but actually trying to preserve some kind of social peace so they really caught flat footed by repression and there's lots of criticisms. Against the CNT for how they participated or didn't participate in those movements during the transition. Subsequently the CNT broke apart. As lots of lots of the different unions that constituted the CNT wanted to adopt a more reformist structure so that they could participate in the new, democratically managed workplaces. Other parts of the CNT refused to do that to the CNT split in into multiple groups. Then they had a big court battle. Over who was still allowed to use the initial CNT. And I know just this big internal ugly fight that that made the CNT much less effective. It turned it away from struggles in the workplace and also turned a lot of people off to it.

ANNA: In the 80s we find 2 very important struggles. One of those is the cooker, which. Is a coordinating body of prisoners and struggle. Their conditions in Spanish prisons in the 80s, just like today were and continue to be very terrible in Spain. There were more prisoners under the under the democratic regime than there were under the fascist regime and spains the country with the most prisoners in all of Europe, or about 70,000 prisoners in Spain in the 80s. Due to the precarity in the prisons and the bad conditions, the prisoners got together and they organized a coordinating group. They had three basic points of their struggle which were getting rid of the feus. Which was a special regimin inside the prison. Like prison within prison. CSS is

short for teachers and governments, especially sentimental, and it's applied to political prisoners or conflicted prisoners. They were also fighting for the end of the dispersion of prisoners in which prisoners are sites to the farthest prisons are way possible by this story from their families. And we also fought for the release of prisoners with terminal illnesses. So that those prisoners. Could die in their homes and not. In the cell. There was a struggle with lots of prison riots and mutinies as well as hunger strikes. they didn't achieve any of their of their three main points of struggle. But they did manage to close down one prison in the north of Spain, where there. That was a. Particularly cruel prison with lots of torture used. It was a story that was very important within social movements and within the anarchist struggle. But we believe that it it didn't really reach society at large. And generally people in staying don't know what the fee is. Regime is what this isolation machine. Is and we don't know what happens inside the prisons. Another very important struggle in the 80s was the anti military struggle which was against the obligatory military service. This was a struggle that was ultimately victorious in that obligatory military service was abolished.

PABLO: So these struggles in the 80s ended up to a large extent as as isolated single issue struggles. So even though they achieved some successes, they didn't break out of this bubble that often grows up around single issue struggles. So the anti military struggle for example. Was able to get rid of the drug. But it it failed to continue any sort of broader struggle against militarism in general.

Then in the 90s there was an important an important case casual Cordova, in which four people were arrested after a bank robbery in Cordova that resulted in the. The death of a cop. And these were anarchist bank robbers, most of them from Italy. And this was actually the vector by which insurrectionary anarchism in its most recent incarnation, arrived in the Spanish state. So lots of anarchists in Barcelona and in Catalonia, and elsewhere in the Spanish. Right? Uh, when we picked up on this act and also the uncompromising statements of these 4 prisoners in defense of their expropriation and their owned action, they picked up on that as as an inspiration and that was actually one of the main influences that that that led to the appearance of this more recent form of instruction. Americanism, rather than, for example, texts by Bonanno or Cavaletti, which actually weren't translated until until significantly later and often contained a very different form of instruction. Anarchism then than that which was. Which was present in in Spain, but the Castro column in 1996 also led to a pretty heavy split in in the anarchist space.

ANNA: In response to custom core of the, the CNT makes a statement saying that the four prisoners of the case are murderers. And so in that moment the anarchist Black Cross breaks off relations with the CNT. At the same time libertarian youth that's going into this little Thaddeus put out a book called Sharpening Our Lives, which is largely influenced by Italian instructionally anarchism. In that book they made criticisms of anarcho syndicalism. They criticized wage labor. And so they ideologically break off from the CNT. 723 2000 in Barcelona. There is a wave of decentralized actions, sabotage and other actions in the street by a. Variety of different groups. And here

there are two very important requests. In 2003, the police arrest an anarchist group in Barcelona. They accused them of illegal association and forming a terrorist group. The members of the group are accused of carrying out sabotages and bombings of government buildings and other targets actions against banks and actions in solidarity with various prisoners. Eight seats, 100. And 20 years imprisonment can be accused. Or finally, they do about five or six. Years in prison. And that that group is largely influenced by the Italian sectionalism and the idea of if not us, who if not now when?

In 2009 there's another case of repression. The police detained a comrade to model. She's accused of sending a mail bomb to the director of penitentiary services in Catalonia, in solidarity with the prisoner on the CS, who is carrying out a hunger strike. At the moment, he's on hunger strike to demand his release after 30 years of imprisonment. So those, those are some of the most important cases.

BURSTS: Before we actually get to these currents. Excuse me, let's take a little break from the talk because it's pretty dense. Again, we're listening to. Conversation or presentation by Pablo and Anna. From Barcelona to comrades. Let's listen again to the actual song of by Paco Ibanez called Agala Par from his presentation at the Olympia I think in 1968 in Paris. It opens up with a little bit of talk that. I'm going to skip through. Feel free media. Ashill FM. Dot ORG.

PACO'S SONG: Conserva complemented arithmos. Last year, last year, last year, the Spanish Las Grande Las ...

PABLO: So this time period, in the 1990s and the next decade one can talk as a generalization about three different currents within the anarchist. This and these currents were largely isolated. they existed in parallel to one another, often without communicating, generally rejecting one another, but without entering into any serious or direct criticisms.

You had the squatters. And the squatters largely failed to. To make a criticism of housing under capitalism, they ended up largely as a sort of self isolating bubble, and it's interesting that in the last few years or for example say between 2005 and in 2010, the part of the squatters movement that attempted most to actually address the problem of housing under capitalism took up a. Almost discourse rather than rather than any revolutionary or anarchist discourse.

On the other hand, it's important to recognize that this current, along with all the others, did achieve some important things. The squatters movement, for example, did succeed in opening up lots of free self-organized spaces for social centers and other projects throughout Barcelona, and they also help the participants in that squatter movement regain lots of skills that have generally disappeared under capitalism and these are skills that are extremely useful to put the concept of self-organization to practice and so that squatters movement is still continuing and there's anarchist participation in it. But it's it doesn't exist so much as as a distinct current. Then you also. Have the current of the. CNT the anarchosyndicalist. And there were. After the 80s, a couple of a couple of strikes of some importance, but in general the CNT participated very little in any workplace struggles there. They were very ineffective in in workplace

struggles, and since that was their primary motive, they can also be considered to have been a failure or to have been ineffective during these years, but they also accomplished something important. For many years. They were one of the primary forces in preserving or recovering. A memory of past struggles in Barcelona so. Just because they had organizational continuity, they served. As linked to the past. And they also intentionally lots of activities. Whether these are historical tours or. The publication of Books or holding talks and other events to retain these memories of struggles in the past and those memories have have been very important. They've served as a way to preserve and to spread collective experiences and collective knowledge so so they played an important role, even though they largely failed in in their primary. Line of struggle. Then you also have the insurrectionary current which did not succeed in in generalizing attacks against the system. It didn't succeed in in breaking out of specialized. Groups, uh, however they did keep strong attacks against the state alive, so that the idea of forceful illegal sabotages wouldn't just be a thing of the past, but would be ever present and visible as a reality in in ongoing struggles. And that's very important, they that they made sure that these strong attacks. Did not fade into the past that they remained a present part of struggles, even if they did fail in in some of their other. There are other aims.

BURSTS: First can you say a few things about what the what the difference in first? Could you give a basic like just round out of what insurrectional and insurrectional ISM is and what differentiates the Italian schools of thought from the Spanish?

PABLO: Insurrectionary anarchism has had lots of different incarnations in the history of the anarchist struggle in Barcelona. Perhaps within that history the most. Basic element is the idea that you don't wait for conditions to be ripe, but you have to make conditions, but now is always the time to go on the attack and to increase the strength of the struggle to spread possibilities for rising up against the state. So for example, that was one group of anarchists in the 1920s, during a definite low in the social struggles that went on the attack that started carrying out armed actions that started seizing weapons, learning how to use them. And the experience that they generated definitely played a role in the successes in 1936, when thousands of armed workers were able to defeat. the military in the streets and then it can also be seen in in the 1990s when lots of the CNT were much more legalistic. Lots of them had taken on a a Social Democratic discourse, a discourse of rights and reformism And then in that context, the libertarian youth who can do this, either thadius, broke off. From the sea NT. Talked about abolishing work rather than just making work more humane, they talked about. Changing changing society down down to its very foundations rather than just changing the management structure. And they also. Talked about the need to go on the offensive now against the state. Insurrectionary anarchism in. In Spain, in the most recent incarnation was largely influenced by Italian selectionism. I would say that it came directly from there, so it did not have the influences of Greek insurrectionary anarchism or the forms of instructionally anarchism that we're developing on the West Coast of North America or in Shindle. Or in other places. However, because it came

from the court of the bank robbers from their action, and then from their statements, it actually ended up differing a lot from the sort of instructional anarchism described by Bonanno or Cavalletti and one of the main differences that that often surprised people when they. when they first let translated texts of those Italian writers who I mentioned weren't translated into several years after this? It surprised lots of people in Spain world large social emphasis that that the Italian instructional texts had the emphasis on intervening and being present in in social struggles, and also the lack of a total rejection of formal organization. So of course formal organization is critiqued. In Italian Italian instruction. They thought, but it's not necessarily rejected, whereas insurrectionary anarchism in Spain tended very heavily towards small affinity groups and only informal organizations.

BURSTS: So we're going to take a break from the rest of that conversation. Next up is Anna and she's going to be talking about about anarcho feminism in Spain, so, but we will bring that next week along with conversations about healthcare and involvement in reformist. Labels and I hope you've been enjoying the content again. The show can be found later on. Both parts eventually will be available through asheville-and.org slash. The final straw and afterwards podcast, both through radio 4all.net but just by searching the final straw and bursts. Well, in the meantime. We're going to for the rest of the show. Listen to a little bit of. As is my way, we're going to hear Usonia, which is a Portland based doom metal project and off of their self-titled album, which I believe just came out this year or late last year. We're going to hear chaos Comf and probably a little bit of alone with our failures. By woe off of their album a spell for the death of Man, Asheville Free Media. Asheville, m.org. Asheville free mediaa-shevillefm.org. This is the final straw and I'm your host Bursts O'Goodness. This show can also be heard on KXF and Marshall, California K WTF .net out of Santa Rosa, CA. Also, the show is sponsored by the worker owners at Firestorm Books and Cafe, 48 Commerce St. in downtown Asheville, NC. Firestorm features organic coffee and milks vegan sandwiches. Homemade baked goods, radical literature and a community calendar that can be found online at www.firestormcafecom. So this concludes the first part of an interview show with two anarchists living in Barcelona about the history of anarchist resistance and organizing since the revolution of 1936 there. Interspersed with Spanish music followed by metal, we heard usnea off of their self-titled album with Chaos Comph. After that it was woe with alone with her failures off of the album, that spell for the death of man available on Stronghold Records and right now we're listening to Witch Mountain from Portland. With veil of the forgotten. And I hope you all have a wonderful week and stay tuned next week. Live Sunday between 2:00 and 3:00 PM Eastern Standard Time and Cape W www.ashevillefm.org for the second-half of that interview and more music. Enjoy the music.

Part 2

BURSTS: Asheville free mediaashevillefm.org. This is the final straw and I'm your host bursts of goodness. The show can also be heard on KXF and Marshall, California and on kwtf.net out of Santa Rosa, CA. The show is sponsored. By the worker owners at Firestorm Books and Cafe at 48 Commerce St. in downtown Asheville, NC. Firestorm features organic coffee and milks vegan sandwiches, homemade baked goods, radical literature and a community calendar that can be found online at www.firestormcafe.com. This week's episode of the final Straw. Picks up for last week's. Left off It features speakers Anna and Pablo. 2 anarchists living in Barcelona and they'll be discussing the rise and struggle of anarcho feminism in Spain. Since the social revolution of the 1930s. Through to the current times. We'll also be discussing intersections of anarchist struggle and healthcare in the age of austerity and visions, of autonomous and anarchist forms of healthcare. This show also features a scene report of anarchists of anarchism. Excuse me in Spain today by Pablo and Anna presents some closing thoughts on struggles to engage in. Following the discussion, you'll be hearing some new metal tracks. Not new metal, but new metal tracks from Brighton's own band, light Bearer. Light bearer is a four album project themed around the fall of. Offer light bearer shares. Some of the members of the band fall off of excuse me fall of Efrafa and Epic Cross band themed around the novel Watership Down, the second album in the series. Silver Tongue has just been released by the band to a Mediafire file, so you should be able to find it online if you search blogs. We'll also hear a metal track posthumously released from the Austin, TX anti save Anarchist Sludge Project Eco side for archives of this and other episodes of the final straw check out Radio 4all.net and search the show title. So right now in the background we're listening to. Oxide de Noir off their album monochrome. This is automat, the first track of this dark ambient cinematic electronica industrial stuff. And let's start in with the interview.

ANNA: Anarchism puts some of its focus in the economic struggle between classes by way of the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the collectivization of the means of production. And in this way to put an end to the Society of classes. In this way, other systems of oppression, such as. Checking are reduced to secondary importance this this situation this characteristic of anarchism above all in the in the 30s. Will give rise to the appearance of Mujeres Libres, free women who will defend female anticipation as an essential condition of the social revolution.

Given that the revolution which is. Fought for by anarchists. Isn't conceived of as just the transformation of the relations of production and the economic system, but rather as a profound transformation that affects all aspects of life? Getting rid of all kinds of relations with power and the problem with patriarchy needs to be a top priority.

They're not being done. But it wasn't like that in the 30s and it's. Still not like that currently in Barcelona. Because in many parts of the. Anarchist space, the anti capital struggle takes priority. And the struggle against patriarchy is seen as a theme

of secondary importance and some comments have even made that affirmation openly. Currently, one sector of the anarchist movement in Barcelona even criticizes anarcho feminists for being separatist and for creating women only spaces.

I'm glad. But I think this is a hypocritical vision because the people who are making these criticisms aren't doing so because they want to participate in the struggle against patriarchy, but rather because they're just not interested and by calling for unity, they know and silence the struggle. Are given the situation and given that many anarcho feminists are tired of the struggle against patriarchy being minimized, they create their own anarcho feminist groups just for.

I'm going in these groups they work on different themes. they work on such topics as the self-organization of Healthcare on abortion, organizing demonstrations and propaganda.

There you can leave publish books or bulletins. Currently various fronts of struggle in Barcelona. Regarding as regards that feminism. 11 important front is the struggle against the Ultra Catholics who are organizing against abortion. At the door of. A hospital where abortions are provided. They do chance against people who have abortion. Also religious chants. A group of feminists and anarcho feminists do counter demonstrations. These these protests. Often end with police charges against the feminist groups because the Ultra Catholic protest is legal and permitted, whereas the counter demonstration is not. They also organize cafes in Barcelona. Which I'll meeting spaces just for women, lesbian and trans, as as a way to create a space that. Safe and based on affinity and above all the space of their own where women's are not where women are not put on a secondary plane. Another important theme within the feminist struggle is work around self-defense. There's a lot of attempts to popularize this theme. And they also organize workshops for women to learn self-defense. In order to encourage the use of violence by women. On the 8th of March also, they'll have protests exclusively by women in which men aren't allowed to participate. Because the way in which they create small groups to carry out different actions like hanging banners, doing spray painting, different things in the streets. Abortion in Spain has never been legal. There are only three exceptions. Currently, the right wing government has introduced the worst law in the history of democratic Spain. Regards abortion and this before, if the fetus had some kind of grave defect, it was allowed to abort and, and currently that's no longer. The case. But at the same time, the government, as part of the cutbacks has gotten rid of aid for economically precarious. Families, a member of whom has a severe disability. Which which is to say people who are completely dependent on care and family members. This forced as many women to go to other countries to get abortions, as was the case under. The Franco regime. This will also need committee clandestine abortions for core people who can't afford to pay who can't afford. A trip to. A major part of the austerity measures that have been taken by the Catalan government have been towards the privatization of healthcare. So one of the large social movements that has appeared in recent years has been a movement for public health care. And that is a movement that has, uh? Provoked made different responses from anarchists. Some

anarchists, along with, along with socialists and other activists, have participated in that struggle very unco. Going into the streets or. Helping Occupy hospitals or carrying out blockades. with the sole Demands that that public health care is restored. Other anarchists have made very strong criticisms of public healthcare as it exists of the welfare state of Western medicine and on that basis have rejected those political those social movements. Some anarchists in Barcelona have tried to engage critically with those movements, recognizing that that people need health care. That it's a very immediate problem and that on at least some levels, it makes sense for people to try to protect their. Public health care. And at the same time, making criticisms of this sort of defense. Of the welfare state. And this this defense of institutionalized medicine that naturally is more. Of a tightrope to walk. Which for some of us is evidence that that it's the most intelligent path because a struggle is never going to be the easier path. It's not going to be the easier path of just participating uncritically, just like another body in the streets, and it's not going to be the very easy path of making an intelligent. This isn't from the sidelines or without entering into struggle. So they're going to attempt to hold debates to occupy plazas and to hold discussions to carry out actions in solidarity with the healthcare workers and with the people who are taking to the streets in in defense of public healthcare. To talk about why capitalism now is, is privatizing healthcare and to talk about ways in which public state funded healthcare also served the interests of capitalism. How it was not a healthcare organized for human needs. But a healthcare? Organized for the needs of the market. So that's been really an interesting point to struggle. Maybe you want to talk more about some of those criticisms of healthcare. The public healthcare system is not individualized. It treats people like a sort of homogeneous flock and not like people with individual character. Everyone receives the same the same treatment. With no concern for their specificity. The healthcare system is also at the service of the state. They use medication, which are often very aggressive with very harmful side effects. And they use those medications so that the patient. So that their symptoms go away. And so that they can. Quickly go back to work. The healthcare system isn't respectful of natural processes, of sickness and health. It doesn't allow bodies to heal themselves, and it simply can't permit that a person just takes a week off in order to get better. And so that's why that's why they medicalize people. So they can. Remain active in at work and in society. As far as abortion is concerned, there is a demand for. Free abortion. As anarchists we don't feel comfortable demanding that the state provide us free abortions. But we also. Face the problem of lacking the skills to Carry out abortions. Given that all of the skills. And knowledge that those who came before us held. Have been erased by capitalism. This was one of. The consequences of the witch burnings and the Inquisition. Get rid of this knowledge and destroy the legacy of self knowledge that women had over their bodies. So other companies in Barcelona are trying to recover this legacy so that they don't have to depend on the state for their health.

BURSTS: So you've decided you've described people going to protests to. Enunciate how angry they are about the increased costs of healthcare and making sure

that abortion is available and so protesting to the government for these rights. But what kind of what kind of positive plans have sprung out of anarchist communities concerning healthcare and the self-organization of healthcare?

ANNA: Well, that was one of our criticisms of this whole movement that the mainstream. Of the movement. Was basically requesting the states to continue funding healthcare without understanding that the state only began to fund healthcare at such a massive scale in a very specific moment when there was the possibility when there were very strong. Movements that that had just participated to a great extent in defeating fascism across Europe, and that we're pushing to carry out social revolutions. The states had to sort of buy off their populations, provide, provide something to avoid those revolutions, social movements. Currently don't have anything near the strength that would require the state to be afraid of us and to. Attempt to buy us off. What they do have is a very strong problem of accumulation, which requires them to privatize healthcare to open up a new source for profit and invest. So you simply can't just convince the state to reverse the decision that it's already made to start to start funding healthcare again. So instead of asking the state to fund healthcare, a part of the social movements that that have risen up around this. Question and especially the anarchist participation has focused on the self-organization of. Care, uh, and that actually brought up an interesting dynamic that before the crisis in healthcare became obvious, there were already a number of anarchist or antiauthoritarian anti-authoritarian projects for the self-organization of healthcare. For example in the center of Barcelona there's a clinic with various therapists who have studied. Multiple different forms of therapy, among them who also work with low income people to make sure that that it's affordable and then another clinic which is in a squatted social center which focuses on order or exchange. Rather than paying for therapies. and that's really important, because sometimes when people criticize Western medicine or institutionalized healthcare, they focus on these alternative therapies as though that method in and of itself were enough. But those alternative therapies tend to be taken over by capitalism, and they just become new commodities. New things that are only available for rich people moreover. So there are some projects that combine. Therapies that are critical of this sort of Western tradition of treating the body like a machine with an anti-capitalist analysis that refuses to allow these. These these practices to be commoditized to be yuppified and turned into something that's only. Accessible for for. For rich people. Then there's also a cooperative complex throughout Columbia that's been making some steps both with medical professionals trained in Western medicine, along with therapists who practice other therapies, including very effective effective therapies like acupuncture and new nutritional doctors. Things of that nature. So so a lot of these projects exist, but the interesting thing is that there's frequently a disconnect between folks who are fighting against the state fighting against capitalism, and folks who are trying to create these capacities that we can heal one another. So in fact, a lot of anarchists didn't even know that some of these projects existed. And the ones who did know that they existed. Never found the time to. To make use of these

of these services. Even when these were, these were clinics run by their own friends, so that's very interesting. That shows that a lot of times we're using. A method of struggle that. That exploits us and that prevents us from caring for ourselves, even in a way that prevents us from supporting very necessary projects of self-organization and projects that put into practice new social relations. A lot of times these different clinics, one of the major problems they face, is. They just can't get enough participation. They can't get enough people to go there to spread the word to make use of the services that they're offering. and if they could get that increase in participation, then they could grow and become available to more people, even anarchists who have this critical engagement with the social movement for healthcare haven't been finding the time even after they got beaten up at a protest, or if they have some health problem. Which because. Of high stress. Levels or poor nutrition or in the city. A lot of people do. They just don't have the time. They don't find the time to make use of those services so that that really shows that that there's some. Some deeper blocks still to being able to wed these more combative parts of the struggle with the constructive parts of struggle, and that also people are often participating in social movements in a way that they're still not struggling for their own lives and for their own needs. Because they're not taking the time to take care of themselves in a. In a in a. Self organized way. So that's interesting. So on the one hand, you do have a lot of new projects that are that are spreading that are that are that are being created that can provide an answer for the self. Organization of healthcare. And then on the other hand, you still have the method of struggle. In which you see an unfortunate separation between the creative and the destructive tasks of the struggle and, and also at the sort of. Burnout activism where people are fighting for A cause and not for. Their own lives.

BURSTS: Can you talk a? Little bit about what the. Current scene in Spain looks like.

ANNA: So I had talked about three different currents in the anarchist space that did achieve some important things, but on the whole failed and they were also quite isolated one from another they didn't communicate. And then Anna mentioned an arch of feminism and this. Sometimes this this. Sort of feeling of communication this this sort of separation, which has been a a necessary separation without a doubt, but has also led further isolation within the anarchist space. It's interesting that in the last few years as social struggles. I've been getting stronger here. A lot of that isolation is overcome. And the anarchist space is not becoming more unified. It still has very distinct currents that don't necessarily get along. They often have conflict between each other, but they're communicating. They're participating in the same spaces, so you have a lot more heterogeneous spaces of struggle. So before the first of the most recent. 8th of General Strikes, which was the strike of 29th of September 2000. Then several different neighborhoods in Barcelona for neighborhood assemblies, and these were heterogeneous spaces of communication and organization, where anarchists together with socialists together with people from the Neighborhood Association would would get together, have debates, prepare for the strike, go out in the streets together

with. Flyers and posters to urge their neighbors to also participate in the strike. Uh, then you had the, UM, the Plaza occupation movement, which brought hundreds of thousands of people together from all walks of life. And there was definitely a very strong attempt to dominate that by Reformist group with a very Social Democratic discourse, which was in a way sort of trying to move away from. And this increasingly strong anti-capitalist movement of the past and only make reference to corrupt politicians as though we could solve all of our problems if we left the economic system intact but could just throw a couple bankers in jail and find honest politicians or something like. That so it was. Or the dominant discourses of that movement were quite absurd, but beneath that out of the eye of the media there were much more radical discourses that were developing. There were strangers who were meeting, having debates, and those heterogeneous spaces were increasingly important in in these new social struggles. Also, people who often didn't work together. Before, uh, like squatting anarchists, insurrectionary, anarchists, anarcho syndicalists started working together for the preparation of these general strikes or for the preparation of, for example, one very combative Mayday protest, and they didn't necessarily agree with one another. And after it. Was over often they were angry at each other had. Had criticisms of. One another, but they could cross paths they could. Share perspectives they could. Make those criticisms, which was also extremely important. So just like how there were very different anarchist currents in Barcelona before the Civil War in the 1920s, in the early 1930s, and this, this led to. A multiplicity of strategies that were put into effect. This. This allowed people to attack the state from 1000 angles at once. You have something, although clearly not as strong, something that that mirrors that in a certain way you have lots of different anarchist strategies in effect. Lots of different anarchist currents and you have. Stronger, stronger social movements that haven't been unified, but they also have not been Co opted or taken over by reformists. And that's a very important development.

BURSTS: Do you see the heterogeneity that you say it's so related to strength? Do you see that as being the product of larger social development? Or was it the specific choice of the folks that were involved in those movements to say I don't like you? I don't agree with you, but let's sharpen our teeth on each.

ANNA: Well before the economic crisis broke out and before the social movements really started getting bigger, you actually could already see a sort of change in strategy where lots of anarchists wanted to break out of the isolation which was to a certain extent self-imposed. So you already had. Some early attempts which served as good practice to work with people from uh, from really different political backgrounds or who were acting very different strategies, and. And you saw an increased desire for engagement. So for example, if the Plaza occupation movement had broken out in, not in the 2006, 2007. Probably the anarchists might never have participated because there was. Still, that same rejection of this Social Democratic discourse for real democracy, or for better politicians, but without a desire to engage with that, to debate that to participate and to try to create radical possibilities. And then at the same. Time,

the fact that anarchists have had some success over the decades. And popularizing our ideas. This made it that just regular activists who weren't anarchists thought it would be best instead. Of calling for a new politics. The party to call for assemblies in which everybody could participate in which you didn't have to throw a party line in which there could be a lot of diversity of opinions. And that's. In part because anarchists have been winning the historical debate against leftists against Socialists and Communists regarding how to organize ourselves just like. How the Soviet the Council in in the Russian Revolution was a largely anarchist contribution. It was, it was a largely spontaneous contribution that had anarchist characteristics and in which the anarchists could participate effectively, and which the communists had to suppress. The assembly was a suggestion with anarchist characteristics that. Was really favorable towards the opening up of radical forms of struggle, but put the different political parties and the different reformists at a disadvantage.

ANNA: To finish up, I wanted to make a small reflection. Many anarchists don't enter or participate in certain struggles because they say they're reformist, like the movements of the 15th of May. The Plaza occupation. Movements in my neighborhood, the town hall, once town hall wants to tear down the Old Town in order to build a commercial strip.

My neighbors aren't anarchists and they don't have a radical vision of things either. They don't even have a. Critique of private property. They just want their houses left. But I don't want. Them to be kicked out of their houses. It's possible that when I get evicted. From my house, many neighbors. Won't stand in solidarity with me. But I struggle against evictions so that people can live wherever they want and not where it's convenient for the government, for them to live, if I participate in their struggle, I can share with them the tools that I know for resisting an eviction. Capitalism with the enclosure of lands and the establishment of small private property has broken the concept of collectivity. And has broken networks of solidarity. Because of. This we've forgotten all of our tools of struggle. As anarchists we have to break through this isolation and recover the social fabric that's been lost, as well as practicing mutual aid which has also been lost thinking that it is a reformist struggle for me is to live in defeat. Their struggle, the struggle of these neighbors is reformist in part, but we have to. Participate and show that a reformist struggle is a dead end St. and it has to go further. In other words, attack the very concept of private property. The same goes. For retirees who are trying to recover a part of their retirement benefits that have been taken away by. The austerity measures. The student struggles the struggle for public health care. All of these struggles need to change course. Because all the. People who are going out into the streets to request to request these various reforms. Have not really. Because the problem is that the welfare state is a Society of privilege. A society in which one part of the population lives off of the exploitation. Of other parts of the. World and even within these very welfare states, some social classes live well on the backs of others. This is not sustainable and this is the message that we as anarchists have to be given. That's why we have to. Be in the form. Of struggles to radicalize

them and to deconstruct the democratic. For me this. Has been a strategic error within the anarchist movement, believing that all of societies are enemy. If you're not capable of communicating with other anarchists with our neighbors with the cashier in the supermarket with the immigrants, the undocumented immigrants selling CD's in the street. It's because capitalism has succeeded in holding us in isolation, breaking our capacity to communicate. And to relate with the. World, it's important to have a community of support, but we can't take refuge within it.

We have to spread our ideas beyond the walls of our squats and our social centers, identify our enemies and try to find sincere allies who also hate... [recording cuts off]

BURSTS: Thank you so much Pablo and Anna. For coming on and talking to us today.

PABLO: No problem, it's my pleasure.

ANNA: Thank you.

BURSTS: We've been speaking with two comrades from Barcelona, Anna and Pablo about the history of anarchism in Spain and where it stands today from their perspectives as well as the position of anarcho feminism and of debates around health-care and support of reformist struggles in Spain.

So I hope you enjoyed that. Asheville Free Media Asheville m.org. This is the final straw and I'm your host Bursts O'Goodness.

We're going to hear a track from. Hopefully we'll have enough time for both of these. I kind of doubt it, actually. UM? Well, let's start with the light bearer. So as I said, this is recently released track off of their album. It's downloadable off of their official website. Silver Tongue is the name of the. Album, it's the. Second of four albums, based on Milton's Paradise Lost. And the fall of lost. And in this chapter, aggressor and usurper, it's of the interaction between Lucifer and Eve and the condemnation of. Of Eve and Eves. Progeny through the generations. I hope you enjoy and afterwards we'll hear some of eco side off of their recently, posthumously or maybe not recently yet released album. When will it end.

[Music plays]

BURSTS: OK, that was aggressor and usurper by lightbearer off of silvertongue, the just online released. Second album in their four part series about Lucifer and his fall Next up, we'll hear most of when will it end by Echo side the recently. Up or in the last few years broken up, Austin, TX sludge metal band. This is the self-titled track off of when will it end? This is Asheville Free Media, Asheville m.org. You're listening to the final straw. Your host person goodness. The show can also be heard on KXF at Marshall. California and K WTF? Of Santa Rosa, CA. The show Spencer, sponsored by the worker owners at Firestorm Books and Cafe, 48 Carmel Street in downtown Asheville, NC. Firestorm features organic coffee and milks vegan sandwiches, homemade baked goods, radical literature and a community calendar that can be found online at www.firestormcafe.com. Archives of this. Show can be found on radio4all.net by searching the final straw. Also, older archives can be found on archive.org by searching bursts. BRSS final straw have a great week and Next up

will be probably an archive of signals filled the void, the epic metal and punk show produced by Sasha. Have a great week.

The Ted K Archive

The Final Straw Radio
Anarchism in Post-Revolutionary Spain
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Part #1 & #2

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