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Felipe Alaiz, Iberian Federalism and the Making of the Anarchist Intellectual

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Felipe Alaiz, Iberian Federalism and the Making of the Anarchist Intellectual

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Abstract

This article traces how the work by Felipe Alaiz, *Hacia una federación de autonomías libertarias* (1945), posits an alternative to notions of contemporaneous nationhood, race and identity by placing his work within the context of nineteenth-century “Iberianism”, its social and political context and nationalist discourses on the nation. Rather than a trans-historical notion of nationhood, Alaiz demystifies essentialist concepts of race, suggesting that “Spanishness” is an amalgam of different cultural and “racial” characteristics. He suggests that the social organisation of the peninsula is best effected on the basis of the autonomous municipality, thus arguing that the nation and indeed the state are superfluous, nefarious and divisive concepts best jettisoned in favour of Iberian federalism. As a secondary concern, the article examines the extent to which Alaiz breaks with or revises concepts of the “intellectual” as a canon in the history of twentieth-century Spain. Rather than arguing that Alaiz was an intellectual, an analysis of his thought invites us to re-cast notions of intellectuality to include those who made ideas and fought on the side of the vanquished of the Civil War. In this way, a contribution to recuperating the thought of Alaiz and the broader libertarian project of acculturation of the masses is made.

Keywords: Federalism, Anarchism, Intellectuals, Spain, Felipe Alaiz

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Felipe Alaiz, Federalismo Ibérico y la Formación del Intelectual Anarquista

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Resumen

Este artículo analiza como la obra de Felipe Alaiz, *Hacia una federación de autonomías libertarias* (1945), propone una visión alternativa a las nociones contemporáneas de nación, raza e identidad por medio de una concepción que sitúa su trabajo dentro del concepto decimonónico del “iberismo”, su contexto social y político y discursos nacionalistas sobre la nación. En vez de un discurso transhistórico de la nación, Alaiz desmitifica conceptos esencialistas como el de la raza, sugiriendo que la “españolidad” es una fusión de características culturales y raciales distintas. Sugiere Alaiz que la organización social de la península se puede efectuar de manera más justa en la base del municipio autónomo, argumentando así que tanto la nación como el estado son conceptos superfluos, nefastos y divisorios que deberían ser rechazados a favor del federalismo ibérico. En segundo lugar, este artículo examina hasta qué punto se puede decir que Alaiz rompe con o revisa el concepto del “intelectual” como canon en la España del siglo XX. En vez de argüir que Alaiz fuera un intelectual, sin embargo, un análisis de su pensamiento nos permite repensar la noción de la intelectualidad existente tanto ahora como en el pasado y la contribución a las ideas de los que idearon y lucharon a favor de los vencidos en la contienda civil en España durante los años 1936 a 1939. De esta manera, se hace una contribución al proceso de recuperación del pensamiento de Alaiz y del movimiento libertario más amplio y su proyecto de aculturación de las masas.

Palabras clave: federalismo, anarquismo, intelectuales, España, Felipe Alaiz

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The relationship between anarchism, the nation and the intellectual is an uncomfortable one. Anarchism in its various expressions has sought the replacement of the state by some version of a federal organisation of communities in a non-hierarchical order and, although it has valued self-determination for all peoples, has rarely supported or participated in “nationalist” movements (Vargas-Golarons, 1987; Pereira & Fernández, 2006, p. 127-128). The nation, like the state, is viewed by anarchists as an artificial construction and is often viewed as a nefarious one to be dismantled as a myth dividing human beings, thus obfuscating their “true” economic, social and political interests.

The relation between anarchism and the intellectual, or intellectualism, is similarly problematic. While the role of the “Idea”, as it was known in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century anarchism, in social transformation has been heralded by the movement, “idle” intellectualism is dismissed as a bourgeois privilege and proclivity. Ideas and those that produce them, whether “intellectuals” or “rank and file” members of the movement, must be put to the service of the workers or humanity as part of the emancipatory social and political project. The tensions and the productive encounters between nation, state, intellectual thought and anarchism are what this article explores. It does so by examining the federalist thought of the anarchist writer and activist Felipe Alaiz (1887-1959). In particular, his thought on the desirability of a federalist, autonomous Iberia, representing all peoples in this geographical space, forms the principal focus of this piece through an examination of his work *Hacia una federación de autonomías ibéricas* [Towards a Federation of Iberian Autonomous Communities], first published as a series of pamphlets from 1945 onwards (Alaiz, 1993).

The question of nation-building in Iberia has been the subject of detailed examinations in recent years (Mar-Molinero & Smith, 1996). Although “Iberianism” or *iberismo* has been the subject of fewer and less extensive analyses, José Álvarez Junco (2002, p. 524-531), for example, dedicates some pages in his *Mater Dolorosa* to movements that wished to federate Spain and its historic communities with Portugal, “refounding” lost cohesiveness and a supposed shared identity between

the various component parts (Martín Martín, 1975). *Iberismo* was embraced by a multiplicity of political positions, from conservative to liberal. The heyday of *iberismo* was no doubt the middle to late nineteenth century but the nostalgia for fusion continued into the twentieth century, and it is noteworthy that by the 1920s the only political formations that actively placed “Iberian” in their titles were anarchist ones, thus reflecting an on-going desire for peninsular fusion, this time on the basis of libertarian communal arrangements.

The broader context of this article is Álvarez Junco’s analysis of the role of the elites in the construction of the nation and the part to be played in this process by the general population, romantically deemed to form the *pueblo*.¹ Álvarez Junco’s theme is echoed in the later volume by Santos Juliá, *Historias de las dos Españas*, in that both works are, at least in part, examinations of the role of the elites and intellectuals in the construction of the nation (Juliá, 2004). However, a careful reading of both Álvarez Junco and Juliá will show how restrictive their view of the intellectual is, referring as they do to “established” and recognised intellectual figures who wielded a certain amount of cultural capital and who worked within certain established paradigms, thus allowing their contributions to be assessed at the time and subsequently as “intellectual” contributions to thought. In the work by these two authors, the intellectual appears as a figure already established as an intellectual and little emphasis is placed on the becoming or the making of the intellectual and his or her social and political formation. The result is that only certain figures are discussed, whose more or less well known work is visible and assumed to be of importance to the readerships of these volumes.²

The construction of the intellectual in the works by Álvarez Junco and Juliá, it is argued here, follows certain well trodden paths that tacitly accept notions that do not go beyond the canon, the generally accepted view of the intellectual or certain sets of ideas whose history is already established. But it is necessary, above all in a society characterised by fundamental divisions during the most part of the twentieth century, to revise our notion of the intellectual and to attempt to understand the conditions pertaining to his or her social emergence within contemporary Spanish history (Roberts, 2007). The notion of the intellectual is no longer understood in the terms referred to in the

1920s by Julien Benda (1969), for example, and such views have long since been displaced by much broader interpretations by Antonio Gramsci (1971), Noam Chomsky (1988a, 1988b, 1988c), Michel Foucault (1980) and Edward Said (1994), to name just a few authors, to extend to a wider range of individuals who may not at first sight be classed as “intellectuals”. Both the social genesis and the impact of these figures can be assessed from this more inclusive standpoint that seeks to recuperate forgotten or elided intellectual figures in history.

This set of concerns – nation, discourse, authority, the canon, *iberismo*, and the intellectual – come together in the figure of Felipe Alaiz de Pablo whose militancy in the anarchist movement does not fit comfortably with established notions of the intellectual. Alaiz, one of the defeated, exiled and forgotten, was a member of the CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, National Confederation of Labour) and FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica, Iberian Anarchist Federation) and, amongst his estimated fifteen volumes of collected works, was the author of *Hacia una federación de autonomías ibéricas* in 1945-1947. He was, in many ways, nevertheless, an archetypical figure of the 1930s: eclectic, politically committed, somewhat romantic and certainly not “objective”. The purpose of this article, however, is not to try to establish Alaiz as an intellectual, or to restore him to his “true” place within any pantheon of intellectuals in Spain. Admittedly, his work was not dedicated to analysing the great philosophical traditions of European thought. Alaiz does, nevertheless, present us with an opportunity to question what we understand by the term “intellectual”, why we are prepared to concede the term for some and not for others, and to glimpse how so many ideas and movements have been eclipsed because they were associated with the “wrong side”, not just the wrong side of the victors of the Spanish civil war, but also on the wrong side of the left, having been practically successfully written out of history. Tracing his thought also allows us to perceive other models of nationhood than those commonly represented as current in Spain in the 1930s. This article, therefore, is in some senses an attempt at recuperation of both Alaiz and the contribution of the libertarian movement to alternative visions in the first half of the twentieth century in Spain.

While anarchism has received discussion by a broad range of social

and political figures from Durkheim (Álvarez-Uría & Varela, 2004, p. 222-223) to Weber (Whimster, 1999) outside of Spain and by Adolfo Posada, Gumersindo de Azcárate, Adolfo Buylla and Bernaldo de Quirós inside the country (Uría González, 1995, p. 108, 109, 112-113), it is striking that even in Álvarez Junco's now classic reference volume, *La ideología política del anarquismo español*, Alaiz does not even merit a mention (Álvarez Junco, 1991). On the other hand, the working-class movement historian Manuel Buenacasa (1977, p. 62) has referred to Alaiz as "el mejor de nuestros escritores" [the best of our writers] (by "our" he meant of the CNT-FAI), and while there is no mention of the author's works, we know that he wrote numerous pieces in the newspapers *Solidaridad Obrera* and *El Sol*, and that his other writings included *Por una economía solidaria entre el campo y la ciudad* (1937) [For economic solidarity between city and country], *Para que la propaganda sea eficaz* [On behalf of effective propaganda] (1938) and more than one novel, including his *Quinet* (1924).

Felipe Alaiz came from a comfortable Aragonese agrarian family, was born in Belver de Cinca (Huesca province) on 23 May 1887 and died in exile in Paris on 8 April 1959. He was a writer for the Madrid periodical *El Sol* in 1917, director of various anarchist periodicals including *Los Galeotes* (1920-1), *Solidaridad Obrera* in the republican and civil war years, *Tierra y Libertad*, *Ética* (1935-6), *Superación* (1937) and the paper *CNT* of the Confederation in exile. In addition to writing political and journalistic pieces, he translated works by Camillo Berneri, Max Nettlau and Upton Sinclair and wrote some short novels including the already mentioned *Quinet*, *Un club de mujeres fatales* (as part of the popular anarchist "Novela Ideal" series), *Elisabeth* (1923) and a descriptive piece on the revolution in education, *La Universidad Popular* (1938) (Íñiguez, 2001). His immediate intellectual environment was made up by an eclectic mix of political and literary figures including the agronomist and economist Joaquín Costa, whose influence was evident in *Hacia una federación*, Ramón J. Sender and the group that established the republican weekly *Talión* in Huesca (1914-1915), which included Joaquín Maurín and Ángel Samblancat, and he later collaborated with Ramón Acín at the

Ideal de Zaragoza (1915-1920) (Dueñas Lorente, 2000). Other important influences include anarchist figures such as Federico Urales, Ricardo Mella and, we will argue, Peter Kropotkin, all of whose ideas on the municipal community, the rise of the state and the desirability of federalism were strongly incorporated into or represented in *Hacia una federación*.

Some of the issues covered in Alaiz's *Hacia una federación* on the subject of radical federalism, had, as we have noted, received an audience elsewhere, often within a somewhat nostalgic paradigm of past idyllic social relations, unaffected by modernity and capitalism, but also as an essentially modern programme for democratic state-building, as expressed by the federalist politician Francesc Pi i Margall, even though his political programme envisaged a state with a difference.³ The philosopher Gumersindo de Azcárate had discussed the concept of the municipality as a building block for a decentralised society in 1875, in the aftermath of the failed republic of 1873. Internationally, anarchism had made statements on the subject of the work of Proudhon, *The Federal Principle* (1863), which was translated by Pi i Margall into Castilian Spanish in 1868 and such concerns are present in Kropotkin's *The State: Its Historic Role* (1897). In Spain, the 1936 Congress of the CNT at Zaragoza alluded to the need to create the *comuna libre* [free commune], which would then federate with other communes to form what was variously termed a *Confederación Ibérica* [Iberian Confederation], a *Confederación de la Península* [Peninsular Confederation] or a *Confederación Ibérica de Comunas Autónomas Libertarias* [Iberian Confederation of Autonomous Libertarian Communes], replacing the state and its hierarchical apparatus (CNT, 1978, p. 230-233).

Alaiz originally wrote his *Hacia una federación* as a series of booklets, only to be published later as a full volume. The work is unashamedly fragmentary, eclectic and somewhat eccentric, politicised and in its final version exudes the bitter taste of defeat and exile. This bitterness, however, is often juxtaposed with more pleasant folkloric details, as we shall see. The book is composed of twenty chapters ranging over comments on the splits in the CNT over collaboration with political parties, the Spanish municipality since Roman times, the experiences of the anarchist collectives over the years 1936-1939,

“excursions” through arid Spain and Spain’s river system, with direct reference to the anarchist geographer Elisée Reclus (cf. Reclus, 1995, 1998) and passing reference to Joaquín Costa (the proximity to Costa’s hydrographical confederations is clear) (Costa, 1993), the Iberian peninsula’s coastline, the economy, local Spanish life, urbanism, comments on the Basque Country and Catalonia, and an essay in favour of an “Iberia vertebrada” [vertebrate Iberia], with obvious reference to Ortega y Gasset’s *España Invertebrada*. There is even something for us to smile at: Alaiz, in his desire to collectivise the whole of society, its structures and its wealth, remarks with respect to the Aragonese folk song and dance, the jota, that “La jota es formidable cuando no se falsifica y cuando no se exagera el acento. El mejor remedio para que la jota tenga temple, es cantarla a coro. Hay que colectivizar, o mejor, socializar la jota” [The *jota* is wonderful when it is not falsified and when its tones are not exaggerated. The best way of ensuring that the jota is measured is to sing it in a group. It is necessary to collectivise, or rather, to socialise the *jota*] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 340).

In a way similar to some other commentators of nineteenth-century liberalism and twentieth-century republicanism, Alaiz conceded great importance to the pueblo as a protagonist in the forging of the new Iberia (cf. Álvarez Junco, 2002, p. 134-144). This time, however, such a transformation would be based on libertarian principles. While Alaiz admitted there was such a thing as the “Spanish character” – “El carácter español, cocido al sol del Sahara y enfriado por la galerna atlántica, tiene y tuvo su clima moral, ajeno al uso y al abuso del poder” – [The Spanish character, burnt by the Saharan sun and cooled by the breezes of the Atlantic, has and had its own moral climate free from the use and abuse of power] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 101), it was accepted more as an acquired characteristic rather than something biologically given, for he also attacked the concepts of “race”, “nation” and myths of unity. On the subject of whether the Spanish nation really existed, he relied on the ideas of Rudolf Rocker (probably his *Nationalism and Culture*) in order to assert that “la nación no es más que una consecuencia del Estado, no una derivación de él, una causa que se convierte en hecho consumado como una granizada o un terremoto” [the nation is nothing more than the consequence of the State, not a derivation of it, a cause that becomes a consummate fact like a hail-

-storm or an earthquake] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 47; Rocker, 1929; Rocker, 1937). In this way, the “nation” was not projected backwards towards some mythical foundational past preceding the state as in many right-wing nationalist movements existing in Spain and Europe at the time, but was a construction of the state itself. The illegitimacy and artificiality of this top-down process was clear, in Alaiz’s view, in the purpose behind the coming together of the nation and the state in one fused entity: “La nación no es más que el Estado camuflado para dominar y legislar impunemente en determinada área geográfica, mientras una Guerra o cualquier otra causa convencional no altere las fronteras históricas, establecidas por otra guerra” [The nation is nothing more than the State camouflaged in order to dominate and legislate with impunity in a particular geographical space until a war or any other conventional cause alters its historic borders, which had been established by another war] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 48).

A comparable sort of treatment was given to the subject of “race”. This time dissenting from the thought of Rafael Altamira and from many anthropologists who were at the time projecting “Spanishness” back into the past in order to find its ethnological roots and to distinguish it from other racial, cultural and linguistic groups in the peninsula (Goode, 2009), Alaiz argued that “En España hay un mosaico de razas fundidas en oposición a las fantasías nacionalistas. No hay una raza española originaria, sino un conglomerado con variantes infinitas” [In Spain there is a mosaic of races fused together thus belying nationalist fantasies. There is no original Spanish race; instead, there is a conglomerate with infinite varieties] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 49). In fact, the entire notion of “Spain” was based on a myth:

Si es un mito la unidad religiosa en España, como lo es la unidad histórica, la política, la racial y la idiomática, nos encontramos con que las clásicas bases de la llamada nacionalidad española están pidiendo a gritos una revisión de fondo [If the spiritual unity of Spain is a myth, just as any historical, political, racial and linguistic unity is too, we can assert that the classical foundation of so-called Spanish nationality is also crying out for a profound rethinking] (p. 55).

The notion of Iberia held by Alaiz was evidently the negation of unitary racial, linguistic and national myths. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, “Iberia” in Alaiz’s work was a vague term and one which was often read as “Spain” in a too common elision of Portugal. While Portugal and the Portuguese are certainly mentioned, for example, with respect to national independence from Spain and with respect to the sea which is viewed as a positive decentralising agent,⁴ Spain, its people or its history often stand in for the whole of Iberia (Alaiz, 1993, p. 48-50; 221). In his preliminary discussion of the proposed Iberian Federation, Spain and Iberia merge to become one by means of the Federation, the Associate Pact and Autonomy, which “ejercidos por los ciudadanos no privilegiados, pueden ser la base de la futura España, la deseada Iberia” [exercised by citizens without privilege, can form the basis of the future Spain, of the much sought after Iberia] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 66). Examples of communal living, but not always geographical and geological features, are drawn almost entirely from Spanish realities. Such a degree of marginalisation of Portugal is, of course, inconsistent with the aims of a federated Iberia and with the realities of historic anarchist organisation in the peninsula. While the Portuguese anarchist and syndicalist organisations were virtually extinguished or exiled by the early 1940s, contacts between the Portuguese and Spanish delegates of the FAI and youth federation, the FIJL (Federación Ibérica de Juventudes Libertarias), and the anarcho-syndicalist CGT (Confederação Geral do Trabalho), had been fairly close in the preceding years. Alaiz was not immune from a certain degree of arrogance with respect to his idea of Iberia.

The historical grounding for Alaiz’s notion of the commune or free municipality drew on a variety of sources including Rafael Altamira (*Historia de la civilización española*), Federico Urales (*El Municipio Libre*, 1932) and Ricardo Mella (*Diferencia entre el comunismo (autoritario) y el colectivismo*) (Alaiz, 1993, p. 76, 103-104, 107). A rather idealised Roman and medieval arrangement of *municipios* (municipalities) and the *fueros* (historic regional or national legal statutes) is alluded to and, before the “invasion” of the state, which is vaguely presented as occurring around the time of the reign of Carlos V, an idyllic *convivencia* (co-existence) between peoples was the norm:

Agricultores y artesanos integraron contra el municipio recaudador el verdadero renacimiento local y comarcal de España. Las razas se cruzaron. Se fundieron más que se soldaron. El hortelano árabe, el hebreo experto en artes industriales y el cristiano viejo simpatizaban con el indiferente [...] El trabajo une a los que no piensan igual, y acaba por hermanarlos, mientras que el ocio separa y divide hasta a ociosos afines [Farmers and artisans were behind the true local rebirth of Spain against the impositions of the municipality. Races crossed. They fused rather than being soldered together. The Arab agriculturalist, the Jewish expert in the industrial arts and the old Christian made friends with those who were indifferent [...] Work united those who thought differently and humanised them while inactivity divides even those who are inactive] (p. 79-80).

As we will suggest later, all this historical account led inexorably to a single pivotal event: the Revolution of 1936 as the “return” of municipal autonomy and freedom once the yoke of the state was cast off; Alaiz writes of the “servidumbre del municipio oficial hasta julio de 1936” [the slavery of the official municipality until July 1936] (p. 86), and the First International is seen as embodying living solidarity and federalism (p. 99-100).

It is perhaps surprising that Alaiz does not mention the major anarchist thinker Kropotkin in his account. Urales and Mella, for example, were well versed in Kropotkin’s thought and the latter’s work, *The State: Its Historic Role* (original in French, 1897), was readily available in Spain up to the end of the civil war (Cleminson, 2010, p. 58-59). For it is the Russian author who best summarises the anarchist case for decentralised, autonomous municipalities, justifying like Alaiz his argument on an idealised medieval commune, based on mutual aid and equality until the rise of the modern state. In the account written by Kropotkin, the medieval commune is depicted as the pure form of free social organisation before the onslaught of the state and the rise of privileged groups:

The village commune, being based on the possession in common and very often in the cultivation in common of the land; and being sovereign both as judge and legislator of customary law,

sovereign both as judge and legislator of customary law, satisfied most of the needs of the social being [...] And society was then literally covered, as if by a network, of sworn brotherhoods; of guilds for mutual aid, of ‘conjurations’, in the village as well as outside it, in the federation. (Kropotkin, 1987, p. 18).

The origins of such freedom would be the individual, the commune and the federation:

The commune of the Middle Ages, the free city, owes its origin on the one hand to the village community, and on the other, to those thousands of brotherhoods and guilds which were coming to life in that period independently of the territorial union (p. 24).

Such a situation resulted in happier and wealthier times for the population: “In short”, writes Kropotkin,

there is a massive and varied documentation to show that mankind has not known, either before or since, a period of relative well-being assured to everybody as existed in the cities of the Middle Ages. The present poverty, insecurity, and physical exploitation of labour were then unknown (p. 28).

If the Middle Ages were a kind of golden age for Kropotkin, they were too for Alaiz, an age lost only to be recuperated at the height of the Spanish Revolution. But he did not simply advocate a “return” to more primitive origins, but an assemblage of elements inspired by medieval autonomy and modern social, industrial and agricultural progress. This did not impede the somewhat teleological trajectory of Alaiz’s writing, finding its plenitude in 1936. During the July revolution, after centuries of state intervention and repression, the *municipio* was once again free to self-organise, to self-govern (Alaiz, 1993, p. 113-114, 125). In a remarkable section entitled “El Municipio mandatario de su Asamblea abierta” [The self-governing Municipality in its open Assembly] Alaiz relates the experience of anarchist collectivisation from July 1936 onwards: “muchos pueblos de zona adversa a Franco constituyeron de hecho, sin atenerse a ninguna directiva

gubernamental, pequeños núcleos de administración local libre, cooperativas y colectividades” [many villages in the zone opposed to Franco constituted, in light of no governmental directives, small free local administrative units, cooperatives and collectives] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 125). What follows is a reporter’s account (no doubt Alaiz himself) of one such commune’s organisation and agenda for a public meeting, ranging from issues of the construction of a new road, questions relating to irrigation, the establishment of a communal olive oil press, the public library, medical reports and even tourism. A verbatim account of this village reorganisation is recorded in his account.

The example of these libertarian communes, created in accordance with the CNT’s programme of 1936 for Libertarian Communism, is taken by Alaiz to advance what he believes would be desirable for the whole of Iberia. Resources and wealth would be socialised (along with the jota) and culture – as an empowering dynamic artefact and process – was seen as a prime moving factor:

En una Federación de Autonomías Ibéricas, el primer valor federable y autónomo por esencia, principio y experiencia, es la cultura. Los hombres se diferencian unos de otros por lo que podríamos llamar moral inteligente o inteligencia moral. Hay una moral aislante, no por ser moral, sino por ser desapacible y sectaria [In a Federation of Iberian Autonomies, the first element that is to be federated and to be made autonomous is culture itself. Men are differentiated from one another by what we could call intelligent morality or moral intelligence. There exists an isolating morality, not moral in itself but aggressive and sectarian] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 256).⁵

And here we see Alaiz’s notion of the intellect and the intellectual:

Hay una inteligencia aislante, no por ser inteligencia, sino por creerse autosuficiente y privilegiada. La moral, lo mismo que la inteligencia, han de ser sociables y comunicativas, supliendo con generosidad las insuficiencias propias o ajenas y respondiendo a un objetivo de eficiencia. Más hace por cultura el que enseña a leer a un adulto que el que da doscientas conferencias propagando la necesidad de cultivar la mente [There is an isolating form of

la necesidad de cultivar la mente. [There is an isolating form of intelligence, not because it is intelligence but because it believes itself to be self-sufficient and privileged. Morality, the same as intelligence, must be sociable and communicative, complementing one's own deficiencies or those of others and responding to the objective of efficiency. He who teaches an adult to read will have achieved more for the sake of culture than he who gives two hundred speeches on the need to cultivate the mind] (p. 256-257).

Do we hear strains of Ortega or María Zambrano here?⁶

In another chapter (“Relación sociable de los pueblos ibéricos [sic]” [Sociable relations between Iberian peoples]), other non-material elements were deemed to be vital in the new set-up created out of the revolution: “amistad, oficio, parentesco, pacto, afinidad, costumbre, cultura, interés legítimo, tránsito, educación, tolerancia, reciprocidad, buena vecindad, propaganda edificante” [friendship, creative activity, kinship, pacts, affinity, custom, culture, legitimate personal interest, movement, education, tolerance, reciprocity, good neighbourliness, edifying propaganda] (Alaiz, 1993, p. 523). All these elements would make up a new Iberia, “una Iberia vertebrada” [a vertebrate Iberia] (p. 555).

Conclusion

The Second Republic, while declaring itself to be the republic of all the workers, reserved a special role for its intellectuals and professionals. The number of doctors, lawyers, literary figures and philosophers active in republican politics or in the Cortes has been the subject of many studies. But this would be the province of established intellectuals, not working-class upstarts or “traitor” *clerics* who were active in oppositional or radical movements. While Benda defined intellectuals as “all those who speak to the world in a transcendental manner”, what he really was referring to were traditional intellectuals, not auto-didactic, politically committed intellectuals; these were the very figures he believed had betrayed their countries and western civilization.

Instead of the intellectual maintaining a supposed objectivity, many

committed “public intellectuals”, as Edward Said would write (Said, 2002), “collective intellectuals” in Bourdieu’s terminology, or “organic intellectuals” in Gramscian terms, were quite literally on the front line and helped to create, as Bourdieu may have conceptualised it, the social conditions for the collective production of realist utopias (Said, 2002, p. 36). But for Said and Bourdieu, it is not sufficient to constitute oneself as a public or collective intellectual; the task of such a person must be further defined. Said argued that the task of the intellectual is “dialectically, oppositionally, to uncover and elucidate [the context referred to earlier,] to challenge and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalized quiet of unseen power wherever and whenever possible” (p. 31).

When summing up Lyotard’s position whereby the duty of the intellectual is make him- or herself heard, Bauman remarks that this becomes a “duty without authority” (Bauman, 1995, p. 241-242). Such a position sums up the anarchist intellectual who follows in the footsteps of Bakunin who recognised no “infallible authority” (Bakunin, 1973, p. 132). It is the task of the intellectuals, Foucault noted in turn, to recognize that they are in fact part of the system of power, that they are subjects of power. The only way out of this “trap” is to objectify power relations and the role of the intellectual within them: the role of the intellectual “is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of ‘knowledge’, ‘truth’, ‘consciousness’ and ‘discourse’” (Foucault, 1980, p. 208).

These different interpretations can be applied to Alaiz with varying success for his designation as an intellectual. But, as we have said before, the task of this article was not to bestow or to deny Alaiz the descriptor of “intellectual”. Rather, what has been attempted here has been to show how one man positioned himself with respect to the ideas of his time and to show how he produced a discourse that constituted an alternative to the established intellectual canon on the subject of race, nation and identity while at the same time continuing to support a political movement. The discussion presented here suggests that, at a time of intense nationalist debate and conflict over the supposed roots and identity of the “Spanish nation”, Alaiz drew up a counter-model to prevailing nationalism by re-founding Iberian realities on the basis of a

federated mosaic of peoples which ascribed no essential or trans-historical racial purity to any grouping in the peninsula, which was faithful to anarchist ideological tenets and which continues to inspire libertarian thought today (Edo, 2001; Sanz, 2001).

Studying Alaiz also invites us to engage historically with a figure who was forced into exile, like many others, and who has practically been forgotten. It allows us, to take Said's words once more, to arrest the "disfiguring, dismembering, and disremembering of significant historical experiences that do not have powerful enough lobbies in the present and therefore merit dismissal or belittlement" (Said, 2002, p. 37).

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Notes

¹The pueblo in Spanish has two principal meanings: a small town or village and the people as a whole.

² Of course, to be fair, the authors do not set out to evaluate the concept of the intellectual in their work.

³ See, for example, Pi y Margall (2002, p. vii) where Pi remarks that “Busco hace tiempo en la federacion el organismo interior y exterior de las naciones, y no abandono una empresa que considero todos los dias más grande y fecunda” [I have been trying to locate in the federation for some time the internal and external organism of nations and I have not abandoned this task, a task I consider to be more great and more promising by the day] (original Spanish orthography).

⁴ Here, once more, Alaiz’s thought is in contrast to nationalist Portuguese commentators, such as the historian Damião Peres (1946, p. 13) who posited the Atlantic as a defining and differentiating element in the Portuguese “race”.

⁵ On the role of culture and acculturation in the Spanish anarchist movement, see Navarro (2004).

⁶ Zambrano (1996), although she was critical of anarchism for its supposed negation of society (p. 128).

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