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Alexander the Great, Viva Zapata!, and Rebellion in Patagonia all depict communities in which people have assumed control of their daily lives, illustrating what anarchism is for rather than simply what it is against. Each film also asks how does one defend such communities against an Alexander, an Aguirre, or a Zavala without compromising anarchist principles.

Contents

As internal tensions mount, a hostile monarchist army approaches. Alexander makes deals with the monarchists, betrays the village, and then, in turn, is betrayed by the monarchists.

He kills the captive Brits, the Italians, and numerous villagers. Much of the tragedy is seen through the eyes of the local schoolteacher, the village ideologue. The infighting reaches its climax when Greek women pull Alexander from his horse and pummel him to death. The action is shown from above so the viewer only sees the swirling black capes of the avenging widows. The women scatter when a monarchist cavalry unit arrives on the scene. The monarchists do not find a mutilated corpse but a marble statue of Alexander. The great man celebrated in the plaza is actually a great villain. That same man, however, is not alien to the village, but one of its creations.

The popular appeal of Alexander is lessened by the highly individualist style of director Theo Angelopoulos. The most intricate and confusing of these is the exposition regarding Alexander and his family. The infant Alexander is adopted by a village woman who does not age and is later married by the adult Alexander. Their child is thus simultaneously Alexander's daughter and step-sister'. A boy usually seen as the son of the adopting mother is sometimes depicted as being the young Alexander. These shifting identities coupled with direct evocations of Greek Orthodox iconology are designed to emphasize that we are not viewing a historical moment but a cultural syndrome.

The Greek public found the film's style tiresome and Alexander failed at the Greek box office. It won some awards at international festivals but critical support was tepid. Greek leftist critics, rather than seeing the village commune's link to the ideas of Kropotkin and Malatesta, generally thought the strikingly similar physical appearance of the film's Alexander with that of legendary guerrilla leader, Aris Velouhiotis, mocked the gallant guerrilla fighters of the anti-Nazi Resistance and the 1946 through 1949 Greek Civil War.

Activities Committee (HUAC) in order to be allowed to continue making films in Hollywood.

Puzzling then and now was the number of left critics who thought the bolshevik Aguirre was the genuine revolutionary and Zapata well-intentioned but naive. Such critics did not know that Zapata had anarchist advisors and organized his Liberation Army of the South in accordance with anarchist principles.

Alexander the Great

The Alexander of Alexander the Great is not the classic conqueror, but the Alexander of Greek folklore who is supposed to appear whenever the nation is threatened. As the film progresses, it becomes obvious the title is meant to be ironic.

The film's Alexander is a bandit-revolutionary who battles against a repressive monarchy in the final year of the nineteenth century. The film's action begins when Alexander escapes from prison, reunites with his warriors, and heads home to the mountains. Along the way he captures a group of English aristocrats on vacation and holds them for ransom. Still later, he encounters four Italian anarchists also heading for his home village.

When Alexander arrives at the place of his birth, he discovers there has been a non-violent revolution that has abolished private property. Two farmers, one male, one female, welcome the Italians on the condition that they swear allegiance to the new totally egalitarian society in which women have full rights, a condition happily met. Alexander and his men do not take the oath.

That night the Italians are feted with joyful music and a banquet. In the midst of the merriment, Alexander and his men arrive clad in black and carrying rifles. They declare that having fought bravely for the village for years, they intend to keep their property private. They sing and dance to a war melody, bringing the festivities to an end.

Hundreds of films take on anarchist themes in some manner, but only a handful deal with anarchist governance. Three of the most interesting of these are, Alexander the Great (Megalexandros, 1980, Greek), Viva Zapata! (1952, United States), and Rebellion in Patagonia (La Patagonia Rebelde, 1974, Argentina).

The films offer complex psychological portraits set in striking physical and political landscapes. Each has an interesting purely cinematic dimension. For the purpose of this summary, I will concentrate only on aspects of each film that depict anarchists in revolutionary situations.

Rebellion in Patagonia

Rebellion in Patagonia deals with a revolt in 1821 by Argentine anarcho-syndicalist workers in the rural area of Santa Cruz and their alliance with workers in Buenos Aires who also raised the black flag. The film opens with an anarchist hurling a fatal bomb at a Lieutenant Colonel Zavala, a prominent military officer. Flashbacks then take us back a few years to the striking workers in Patagonia.

Anarchist militants constantly quarrel about tactics, but are united regarding the principle that anarchists must adhere to whatever decisions the workers make. This view is juxtaposed to those of a group proclaiming itself Bolshevik. The Bolsheviks unilaterally undertake violent direct action and seem more bent on robbery for personal wealth than to finance social change.

The film's climax features wonderful images and principled debates by the armed workers who have been surrounded by a superior military force led by Col. Zavala. The colonel promises amnesty if the strikers surrender peacefully. After considerable deliberation, the strikers accept the offer as being made in good faith.

Two anarchist militants who have been the focus of the film's action believe the strikers will be massacred. To remain ideologi-

cally pure they should stand with the workers' decision and hope their fears are not justified.

One of the anarchists decides to do just that, but the other decides that such ideological purity is suicidal and escapes the entrapment. The amnesty offer is indeed fraudulent. The workers are murdered. The dissenting anarchist will deliver the retaliatory blow against Zavala years later. The film's incidents are based on a massacre of 1,500 workers in Patagonia as rendered in The Avengers of Tragic Patagonia, a novel written by Osvald Bayer. The script was a collaborative work of Bayer, director Hector Olivera, and Fernando Ahala.

Rebellion won the Silver Bear award at the prestigious Berlin film festival in 1974, but more importantly was a huge popular success in Argentina, a nation then on the brink of a revolutionary upsurge. When the Argentinean military began its campaign of "disappearing" militants, the film was suppressed.

The most challenging ideological aspect of Rebellion is what anarchists should do when decisions democratically determined are judged to be destructive. While theory holds that truly democratic governance usually produces the wisest course, if the decisions seems suicidal, should an anarchist feel bound to honor it? For anarcho-syndicalists, in particular, the problem is not academic. Lenin argued that unions were incapable of revolutionary decisions and required their views to be regulated by a vanguard of professional revolutionaries, what had the right to supersede democratic consensus. Anarchists have always denied the need for such a vanguard.

In this sense, is the action taken by the principled anarchist who escapes to fight again a repudiation of anarchist ideology? Rebellion in Patagonia poses the problem rather than resolving it, leaving viewers to consider similar problems that will inevitably arise in situations of this nature.

Viva Zapata!

Viva Zapata!, starring Marlon Brando as the Mexican revolutionary, is an attempt by director Elia Kazan and scriptwriter John Steinbeck to make a film about armed revolution that repudiates the tactics and organizational forms championed by Marxist-Leninists. Although the film, set during Mexico's 1910 revolution, has numerous fictionalized historical details, it remains psychologically true to Emiliano Zapata's character. The anarchist theme begins with the first scenes during which peasants (the original Zapatistas) make a communal defense of Zapata when he is arrested by the federal police. Throughout his military campaigns, Zapata is shown refusing privileges of any kind for himself or his closest associates, including his brother.

The film's pivotal scene is when Zapata denounces Fernando Aguirre, a Leninist professional revolutionary who has advised him. Zapata states that Aguirre is a man without a community, an ideologue more desirous of political power than justice. As an official in the revolutionary government, Zapata finds his own judgments being corrupted by having power. He resigns his role in government and command of his forces.

The script is politically explicit. Zapata states his followers have matured. "That's how things really change — slowly through the people (with a faraway look" [this direction in the original script)). When his wife insists people must be led, he replies, "But by each other. A strong man makes a weak people. Strong people don't need a strong man."

Even though Zapata! like Rebellion, has a popular format, the 1950s McCarthy Era was not a period receptive to a film honoring an incorruptible revolutionary. Zapata! was a box office flop. Critical assessments from the left were influenced by the fact that Kazan turned informer in 1952, handing over the names of eight members of the Communist Party to the U.S. House Un-American