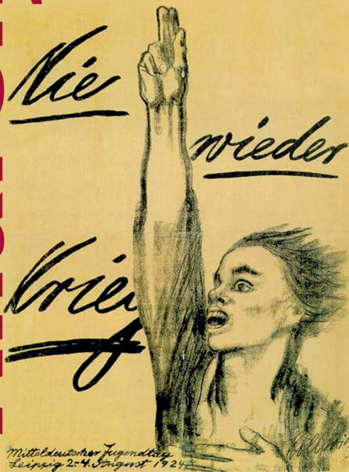
Anarchism 1914–18

Internationalism, anti-militarism and war

Edited by
RUTH KINNA and
MATTHEW S. ADAMS



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To Frank, George and Ethel and Arthur, Nell and Tiggy

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Introduction

Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna

In 1903, as European tensions began to mount, Jean Jaurès, the leader of the French Socialist Party, declared his faith in the possibility of securing a peace that was 'profound, durable, organised and definitive'. The two 'great systems of alliances' which, for now, merely held each other in check, would produce strong and lasting friendships; democracy was extending across the continent and it would not be long before 'all human groups from Finland to Ireland, from Poland to Alsace' would discover their 'moral affinities' and find 'reciprocal security' through disarmament.[1] Others were less sanguine about the prospects for peace in Europe. Just four years later, Bertha von Sutter, the first female recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, acknowledged that European state relations were predicated on the precarious 'condition which exists between two wars', and that the stronger commitment to pacifism, which she understood as 'peace on a sound basis', was lacking.[2] That Jaurès lost his life to the bullet of a disgruntled nationalist on 31 July 1914, just three days before France was once again at war with Germany, suggests that von Sutter had a point. Yet both sides to this debate held one view in common, namely, that the key to European security turned on the condition of Franco-German relations and that the prospects for peace lay in resolving their rivalry. Given the lasting legacy of the Paris Commune, it is not surprising that this belief also pervaded European socialist circles or, as Moira Donald argues, that the main driver for the establishment of the Second International in 1889 was the desire to find a way of containing and defusing Franco-German hostility.[3]

Historians have explained the failure of this initiative to prevent the outbreak of war in 1914 in different ways, among which

organisational paralysis, the inability to overcome deep-seated personal animosities, sectarianism and the apparently irresistible force of national patriotic appeals are frequently emphasised. Political miscalculation also played an important part: it is a commonplace to present the image of a socialist movement caught unawares by the outbreak of war in 1914. There is, however, general consensus about the disastrousness of the result. Whether it is suggested that in 'July 1914 the workers' movement did not consider the possibility of war' or that 'the war ambushed Europe's socialists', its impact was, regardless, profound, demonstrating the hollowness of much of the movement's internationalist rhetoric and, in its failure to mount effective anti-war agitation, checking the swelling labour unrest that had characterised the pre-war years.[4] For Rosa Luxemburg, who had held fast to the idea that the war represented nothing but the 'horrors of imperialist bestiality in Europe', the 'capitulation of … social democracy' represented a 'world tragedy'.[5]

If the outbreak of war in 1914 was a climacteric for socialists, posing difficult questions regarding allegiance, the same is true for the anarchist movement. However, while there is a considerable literature examining the shortcomings of the mainstream European socialist movement, very little work has been done on the anarchist response to the war. This is despite the fact that, as Benedict Anderson noted, anarchism was the 'dominant element in the self-consciously internationalist radical Left' in the latter decades of the nineteenth century,[6] and all of the belligerents hosted anarchist groups and dissidents of varying levels of organisational acumen and practical strength. This volume takes a first step towards filling this gap. It looks closely at the bitter dispute over intervention between two of European anarchism's most important figures, both marooned in British exile, Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta, which split the global anarchist movement in 1914. In turn, it examines the politics of internationalism and anti-militarism in order to explain this division and consider how it contributed to the reshaping of post-war anarchist politics. Kropotkin's controversial decision to throw his weight behind the Entente against the Central Powers fittingly takes centre stage in the contributions by Davide Turcato, Peter Ryley and Carl Levy. Its reverberations are examined in the US context by Kenyon Zimmer, in the Dutch movement by Bert Altena, and in the French by Constance Bantman and David Berry. The politics of anarchist internationalism and anti-militarism are discussed in Lukas Keller's account of German anarchism and in Ole Birk Laursen's analysis of the murky plots that prompted anar-

chist internationalists to support the Indian anti-colonial nationalist campaigns that hoped to capitalise on Britain's distracted gaze. One of the central findings of the volume is that, far from describing two static positions, the division between pro-war and anti-war anarchists emerged from a complex of ideas, importantly shaped by local political and cultural contexts, about the kind of peace that capitalist states maintained, the causes and likely effects of war and the processes of revolutionary change.

The scale of the challenge that confronted anarchist activists on the outbreak of war, and its dramatic effect on anarchist movements, is prominent in both Zimmer's and Keller's contributions. Popular patriotism, emergency legislation and the loss of comrades to the trenches proved to be a toxic mix that all but destroyed pre-war networks and organisations. If the practical demands of total war and the radically altered ideological atmosphere it created seriously undercut the ability of anarchists to organise effective opposition, the renewal of radical dissidence in Russia posed further challenges. The Bolshevik coup, discussed by Levy, Allan Antliff and Bantman and Berry, further depleted anarchist energies, at first exacerbating internal divisions as Kropotkin called for the continuation of the war against Germany after 1917, and eventually leading anarchists to place themselves on the wrong side of the historic socialist victory.

Yet despite the repressions, splits and fractured friendships, the experience of war and anti-war activism also invigorated anarchist politics. Indeed, a leitmotif running through this entire book is the idea that Kropotkin's decision to support the Entente, as divisive as it was, encouraged reflection on anarchism's central principles which captured the minds of thinkers and activists on a global scale. The chapters by Kathy Ferguson, Matthew Adams and Antliff show how the combination of war and revolution brought well-honed anarchist conceptions of violence, state power and mutual aid into sharp relief, stimulating new approaches to resistance, transformation and social relationships that were shaped by anti-militarism. Crucially, this was an anti-militarism now cognisant of the shape of modern warfare, changes that the modernist pioneer Wyndham Lewis hinted at in the final issue of *Blast*, published in 1915, as he looked at the opening acts of the war in an attempt to imagine the future of warfare:

> War has definitely and for good gone under the ground, up in the air, and is quickly submerging itself down to the bed of the ocean. In

> peace time, now, the frontiers will be a line of trenches and tunnels with miles of wire and steel mazes, and entanglements crackling with electricity, which no man will be able to pass. Everything will be done down below in future, or up above.[7]

Against this backdrop, the acrimonious clash about intervention and the experience of being caught on the wrong side of the revolution encouraged anarchists both to reaffirm their deeply held rejection of vanguard socialism and to develop strategies that drew on a plethora of anti-war activities. We consider the impact of the war on anarchism at the end of this introduction, but first turn to the debate that split the movement and the politics that underpinned Kropotkin's apparent betrayal of anarchist principle.

Cultural nationalism, patriotism and the war

The anarchists' inability to hold fast to their internationalist principles is sometimes considered to have been the result of an ideological hostility to organisation.[8] More familiar in anarchist critique is the suggestion that Kropotkin and the signatories of the *Manifesto of the Sixteen* – the collective statement issued by a number of Europe's leading anarchists in 1916 that insisted on the necessity of victory over the Central Powers – were impelled by a deep-seated 'Francophilism', to borrow a phrase from Levy's contribution. Perhaps a more historically apposite phrase might be that beloved of Luxemburg and Lenin to denounce those socialists who acquiesced to the demands of their national governments – 'social chauvinist' – a term that certainly describes the feelings of many of Kropotkin's ex-comrades, and gives a flavour of the rancour his arguments produced. If the popular image of Malatesta's role in this great struggle for the heart of European anarchism is that of the voice of principle – insisting on the necessity of holding fast to class solidarity, remaining aloof from national attachments and warning that victory for either side augured further, more devastating war – Kropotkin assumes the obverse role, of the apostate who, in Leon Trotsky's words, 'made use of the war to disavow everything he had been teaching for almost half a century'.[9] Contra Malatesta, the predominant image of Kropotkin is one of an activist in his twilight years, out of touch with geopolitical realities and suffering from failing intellectual powers. His decision to support the war effort, and then use his prominence within the movement to encourage general participation, is read as an indication of a thinly

veiled patriotism, 'chilling' apostasy, or obstreperous arrogance.[10] All of which is captured in George Woodcock's rather Pooterish picture of Kropotkin being wheeled around Brighton in a bath-chair, haranguing the editor of *Freedom*, Thomas Keell, for his anti-war views from a living-room decorated with the flags of the Entente. Ryley, in his chapter here, defends Kropotkin's interventionism, contextualising it through a critical analysis of the British peace movement; for Woodcock, despite a lifelong sympathy for Kropotkin and his work, it was evidence of a 'defection from the libertarian tradition'.[11]

In wider socialist circles, interventionist debates were importantly framed by arguments about the movement's own revolutionary heritage. Lying behind the *Union sacrée* was an appeal to 'egalitarian sentiment and republican tradition' that not only shaped mainstream political culture in France, but was highly significant given that most socialist groups traced their origins back to theoretical positions created in the aftermath of the French Revolution.[12] As one historian has noted, for socialists in France seeking to rally the recalcitrant, there was a 'common thread' between the war of 1914 and the Revolutionary Wars at the turn of the nineteenth century: a defence of liberty.[13] Rather than seeing the First World War through Lenin's eyes as a product of imperialism, many socialists understood the war as one of liberation, in which a despotic monarch to the east imperilled the home of the European revolutionary tradition. The seductiveness of readings like this is demonstrated by their appeal even to British socialist groups such as the Fabians and the Social Democratic Federation. In spite of a strain of liberal voluntarism running through British socialism, they were able to countenance ideas of military service with apparently far more ease than anti-militarists in the Third Republic, whose commitment to republican values was undermined by a poisonous mix of brutal military discipline, martial injustice and the deployment of troops against striking workers.[14]

For anarchists, it might be expected that such conventional models would hold little appeal, and would consequentially be of minimal relevance in 1914. Yet the cultural prejudices that commonly underpinned ideas of the *Union sacrée* or *Burgfriedenspolitik* were widely shared by anarchists on both sides of the interventionist debate. Anarchists including Kropotkin readily adopted the kind of idioms that were regularly exploited in war propaganda to, for example, laud Belgian troops equipped with 'the doggedness of the English type' or depict the Serb soldier as a 'hero, a born fighter,

and a fatalist'.[15] But as Zimmer demonstrates in his chapter, the interventionist position extended along a spectrum, and these languages of patriotism were not indicative of a shared politics: Domela Nieuwenhuis broke with Kropotkin but used the same anti-German tropes, as Altena notes here; and Ferguson's account of Emma Goldman's calls to resist conscription indicate that these were couched similarly as patriotic appeals to defend American traditions. Anti-militarism was also frequently legitimised in terms of the defence of republican values: 'I am no patriot,' Ernest Crosby wrote in his anti-militarist classic *Swords and Plowshares*: 'I love my country too well to be a patriot.'[16]

Within the interventionist camp, Kropotkin's reading of the French Revolution holds some clues to the emergence of fault lines that would crucially shape his decision to back the Entente. His identification with France was profound and his interest in the French Revolution lifelong. When he at last produced a comprehensive study of the Revolution, a book running to nearly 600 pages published just five years before the outbreak of war, it had a discernible whiff of republican musket powder. But as much as other socialists looked to the *levée en masse* and the 'citizen-soldier' as the embodiment of national virtue that was appropriate with France imperilled once more, Kropotkin's position was more ambiguous.[17]

On the one hand, he followed French anarchist conventions: the *enragés* who opposed the Jacobins' centralising, universalist, nationalist politics which ultimately undermined the Revolution were the anarchists' intellectual ancestors.[18] This critique developed a line of thought that extended back to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Pondering whether the experience of 1789 had discredited the idea of revolution, Proudhon argued that the 'revolutionaries [had] failed in their mission after the fall of the Bastille'. Neglecting 'economic ideas' and forced on to the defensive by invasion, 'the nation was again delivered into the hands of warriors and lawyers', replacing the rule of 'nobility, clergy and monarchy' with that of 'Anglomaniac constitutionaries, classic republicans [and] militaristic democrats'.[19] Aligning himself with this tradition, Kropotkin identified authoritarianism with a tradition that extended from Robespierre to Marxist social democracy and, eventually linking German centralism with Russian vanguardism, was thus immediately critical of the Bolshevik takeover.[20]

On the other hand, Kropotkin also defended the French Revolution as a liberating moment. However problematically, he saw France's military effort in 1792 as a spontaneous uprising of

peasants along the ‘frontier departments’, who recognised in the approaching royalist armies the return of the rule of the ‘nobles and clergy’.[21] Kropotkin also downplayed the role of the *levée*, preferring to see democratisation – ‘new leaders, openly republican, ris[ing] from the ranks’ – as the key reason for France’s military success. For all that he emphasised the localised initiative behind the *levée*, he linked it to the broader centralisation of the Revolution, suggesting that the ‘Committee of Public Welfare took advantage of the first military successes to demand and obtain … almost dictatorial powers’.[22] The extension of the Revolution beyond France’s borders clearly posed some difficult questions. To Kropotkin’s mind, however, this was undoubtedly – even when led by the ‘ex-*sans-culotte*, now … general of the *sans-culottes*’ Napoleon – about preserving hard-won liberties and relative freedoms. Indeed, he concluded that Napoleon’s *coup d’état*, while reining in the revolutionary momentum and reconstituting aristocratic rule, could not check the ‘impulsion’ that had been given to ideas that reconfigured European politics: ‘the absolute monarch – master of his subjects – and the lord-master of the soil and the peasants … have both disappeared’. Seeing divine right and feudalism vanquished, Kropotkin wondered in closing: ‘which of the nations will take upon herself the terrible but glorious task of the next great revolution?’[23]

As Levy and Turcato point out in this volume, Kropotkin and Malatesta both drew on the heritage of revolution to distinguish struggles for liberation from statist and capitalist wars of domination. Their disagreement did not turn on the principle of entering into resistance struggles, but on the extent to which the threat that ‘autocratic’ Germany posed to ‘revolutionary’ France could be understood in these terms. Kropotkin’s history of the French Revolution highlighted a less than enthusiastic embrace of republicanism but also opened up a theoretical space between the emergence of revolutionary ideals and the processes of revolutionary transformation. His history suggested that it was possible to destroy the revolution without destroying its principles. In 1914, Kropotkin concluded that it was imperative to defend those principles, even though they had been badly distorted by their institutionalisation. This argument pointed to a particular conception of internationalism and anti-militarism that Malatesta did not share.

Internationalism and anti-militarism

Critics sometimes argue that Kropotkin's interventionism rested on a grand view of the unfolding of human history, an idea that critics describe as the product of a materialism which pointed towards the natural evolution of anarchy and ultimately left an ambiguous role for revolution.[24] For a number of reasons, Malatesta dissented from this view. Indeed, one of Malatesta's key indictments of Kropotkin's philosophical system was what he saw as its fatalism. In Malatesta's words, Kropotkin's position suggested that 'logically all we can do is to contemplate what is happening in the world with indifference, pleasure or pain … without hope and without the possibility of changing anything'.[25]

The implication is not that Malatesta lacked a sense of history – after all, few thinkers with a foot in the nineteenth century could escape the attractions of historical argument[26] – but that historical examples held less appeal for him than for Kropotkin because he was not interested in outlining a theory of history. As he pointedly commented, 'Society moves forward or backward depending on which forces and wills prevail, mocking any of those "historical laws" that may explain past events more or less adequately (more often inadequately than not).'[27] Paradoxically though, when Malatesta did reach for historical examples to buttress his polemical writing, they were often of the sweeping kind impugned by critics of historical determinism. In these instances, Malatesta saw in the 'lessons of history' the continual necessity of preparing for a coming conflict between 'the oppressed' and the 'privileged classes', insisting that governments never willingly abandon their power nor the bourgeoisie their privileges.[28] France in 1789 proved this, he noted elsewhere, insisting that the 'history of past revolutions provides quite splendid proof' that all revolutions are 'determined' by a series of local rebellions that 'prepared minds for the fray'.[29] The prospect of revolutionary change was therefore perpetually imminent, its fortunes resting on the ability of anarchists to promote their ideas in order to shape impulsive acts of resistance in ways that would avoid perpetuating the follies of revolutions past. It was from this perspective that Malatesta viewed the war, a crisis that validated anarchist arguments concerning the connivance of capitalists and imperialists, but also opened up fresh possibilities and pointed to the pressing urgency of radical change.

In 1914 anarchists wrestled with potential histories. The dichotomy of war and revolution infused their debates and, as Berry and

Bantman argue in the French context, the positions that anarchists took on the question of intervention strongly coloured their responses to the Bolshevik revolution. And principled commitments to internationalism and against militarism assumed a central place in these arguments: the threat posed by militarism to internationalism painted a picture of the future that appeared to undercut the prospects for revolution. By the same token, the possibility of waging an internationalist struggle – arguably a more realistic prospect post-1917 than in the early days of 1914 – against the war offered the hope of fundamental social transformation.

Although some of the crowds that massed in 1914 opposed the war, and although many of the 'enthusiasts' were neither seduced by jingoistic appeals nor deluded in their reasoning to accept it,[30] the mobilisations of 1914 appeared to render the case for revolution purely academic. Yet as the Christmases passed and domestic conditions worsened across central and eastern Europe, the war afforded new opportunities for those revolutionary socialists who had either resisted participation in government, or were freshly radicalised in the face of looming economic catastrophe. The Zimmerwald Conference held in Switzerland at the start of September 1915 gave early expression to these feelings. Seeking to heal the wounds caused by the fragmentation of the socialist movement – as its manifesto declared, to 'retie the torn threads of international relations' – and railing against a Europe resembling 'a gigantic human slaughterhouse', it called on revolutionaries to take up the anti-war struggle 'with full force'.[31] One delegate who was particularly keen on the idea that the destabilisations of war presented a real chance for meaningful change was Lenin, already exiled in Switzerland at the time of the conference, but with eyes fixed firmly on the increasingly volatile political situation in his homeland. Having always been sceptical about the Second International's preventive anti-war measures, he counselled revolutionaries to play the long game in 1914 and ditch proposals to launch a mass action at the war's commencement. His policy had been to prepare 'to transform the imperialist war into a civil war for socialism'.[32] That meant disassociating from the pursuit of the war and standing against popular patriotic fervour. As Keller argues in his chapter, this was a costly, if not implausible strategy for anarchists operating in situations where they were already painted as social outcasts. Yet as Lenin made clear in a draft resolution for the conference, in which he dismissed the war as a 'defence of the great-power privileges and advantages', the conflict had decisively created 'a revolutionary situation, and

has generated revolutionary sentiments and discontent'. The task of 'Social-Democrats [is] to maintain and develop' this dissatisfaction, 'clear[ing] the revolutionary awareness of the masses and purg[ing] their minds of the falsehood of bourgeois and socialist chauvinism'.[33]

Lenin's policy resonated with a whole range of revolutionary socialists, including anarchists, who drew back to the shared principles of the First International and associated internationalism with anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, class solidarity and the transcendence of national boundaries.[34] This conception had infused the pre-war transnational activism of international labour organisations, notably the Industrial Workers of the World and Dora Montefiore's anti-racist and pro-feminist socialism,[35] and it shaped Malatesta's proposal for a new International (*La Mondiale*) to rebuild the revolutionary socialist movement.[36] Nevertheless, it was not unproblematic.

The tensions between the socialist idea of internationalism and the pressures active on pre-war European politics have been well documented by historians. Reviewing socialist history in 1949 and hinting at the contradictory forces acting on socialists, Harold Laski argued that 'the parallel principle to socialism has not been internationalism, but self-determination'.[37] Socialists active in the borderlands of failing European empires, notably Russia and Austria-Hungary, felt the problems of reconciling internationalism with anti-imperialist national struggles particularly acutely. As Liliana Riga shows, the Polish Bolsheviks Feliks Dzierżyńksi and Karl Radek were not only forced to confront the pressures that ethnic identities placed on socialist internationalism, but also met them in conflicting ways. While Radek supported a peasant land movement to attack Polish and Austrian landowners, Dzierżyńksi's proletarian national-internationalist struggle was directed against Russification and Tsarist oppression.[38] Important conceptual challenges to socialist internationalism were also made in the pre-war period. In America, Jewish and black workers questioned lazy assumptions about the connection between racism and capitalism and argued that 'race would not simply vanish with socialism'.[39] These issues played out in socialist anti-militarism, too.

Socialist anti-militarism was intimately associated with internationalism and was typically invoked to decry a range of phenomena: increases in military spending, aggressive and expansionist foreign policies, domestic repression and the propagation of nationalist and jingoist sentiments that encouraged preparedness for war

and paved the way for the deployment of troops against civilians. In Europe, anti-militarist activism correlated strongly with compulsory military service, boosted by the economic impact of the globalisation of the world economy, in that movements flourished in states where conscripts endured appalling maltreatment and were aware of the economic opportunities they were being forced to forego as a result of their systematic abuse.[40] Yet while socialist theories of militarism were sharply at odds with mainstream progressive historical accounts, such as that advanced by the Italian liberal and historian Guglielmo Ferrero, which plotted the civilising evolution of European peace-building,[41] as much separated socialist analysts as united them against liberals. There was a considerable theoretical gap between the orthodox Marxist view advanced by Karl Kautsky, which rooted militarism in class power, and the ideas advanced by Karl Liebknecht, which associated militarism with a broader understanding of domination.[42] Thus while anti-militarism became a central tenet of socialist internationalism, gathering momentum as the European arms race gathered pace, the nature of militarism remained theoretically hazy. As Kropotkin also argued in his 1914 pamphlet, *Wars and Capitalism*,[43] it was possible to talk of a military-industrial complex and understand war as a result of capitalism. But since there was no agreement between revolutionary socialists about the nature of the state and the relationship of the state to capitalism, it was impossible to predict how anti-militarist commitments would be expressed in terms of policy in any particular situation.

In strategic terms too, socialists diverged considerably in their approaches towards militarism. As Altena describes in his chapter, for instance, socialists in the Second International clashed over Domela Nieuwenhuis's proposal for a general strike. Anti-militarists were also divided in their ethical responses to war. Some linked anti-militarism to pacifism while others, like Liebknecht, called for the creation of a citizen army. Entrenched racism could also play into these issues. The fear of the 'yellow peril' that fuelled the White Australia policy that Dora Montefiore struggled against was seen by some socialists to be important enough to drop their objections to conscription in defence of the British colonial power.[44] Even Liebknecht, still regarded as one of 'the most important and consistent representatives of Marxist anti-militarism',[45] endorsed a class-based internationalist anti-militarist strategy that bore traces of racism. Contrasting the army of 'the American negro or East Prussian menial slave'[46] with the 'class conscious' proletarian

militia, he argued that the former was intellectually and economically inferior to the latter and consequently more easily seduced by militarist trappings. Fearful of the disciplining effects of militarism, Liebknecht argued that the proletariat was, in contrast, 'supremely indifferent to the international task of the army and the whole capitalist policy of expansion',[47] and therefore better equipped to fight the class war.

While Kropotkin's analysis of war and capitalism appears to add weight to the accusation that he betrayed his principles in 1914, the messiness of internationalist anti-militarism suggests a different reading. Socialists struggling against imperial powers in Europe were not more likely to support the war than those in apparently stable states such as France or Germany. Anti-war sentiments prevailed in the Hungarian anarchist movement, for example.[48] Nevertheless, socialist reflections on internationalism complicated the principle of class solidarity to which anti-war revolutionary socialists typically appealed and showed how 'internationalism' and 'anti-militarism' could be disassembled and reconstructed in multiple ways. While the Italian anarchist Luigi Bertoni made common cause with Indian nationalists on the basis of a perceived shared commitment to terrorist methods and anti-imperialism, as Laursen shows in his chapter, French artists recalibrated their aesthetic violence that had once been directed against the French militarist state, transforming 'the politics of class war into a cultural narrative concerning war between nations'.[49] For Mark Antliff, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's decision to enlist did not 'signal his rejection of anarchism', even though it led him to detach his earlier advocacy of revolutionary anti-militarism from his enduring commitment to anti-capitalist struggle.[50] In this light, Kropotkin's interventionist stance appears less a betrayal of principle than a divergence from a dominant but contested socialist norm. Kropotkin shared Liebknecht's view that 'Prusso-German militarism had all the bad and dangerous qualities of any kind of Capitalist militarism', and had dubbed what Liebknecht called this 'exemplary model of militarism' Caesarism.[51] In 1914, Kropotkin relinquished his hopes that revolutionary militias would meet German aggression, but this did not mean that he had also abandoned his commitment to anarchism or to anti-capitalist internationalism.

Debates about observable processes of internationalisation – so-called new internationalism – help to further contextualise Kropotkin's internationalist ideas. Examining the relationship between nationalism and internationalism, Martin Geyer and

Johannes Paulmann argue that pre-war thinking was importantly shaped by the analysis of these processes.[52] Alert to the growth of a plethora of international organisations, pre-war intellectuals anticipated the globalisation debates initiated in the 1980s to prescribe policies for the unimpeded development of internationalism that pulled in contrary directions. Some associated internationalism with laissez-faire economics and the free flow of capital, usually also linking it with peace-building. Yet unlike old internationalism, new internationalism had nothing to do with ethics or ideology. It simply described the serendipitous action of free market forces. For Harold Bolce, new internationalism, 'engineered by the very money power against which all the idealistic isms rail, stands, despite the incidental evils it inflicts, for a world peace, equilibrium, and progress'.[53] Equally sceptical about old Kantian ideas, other internationalist critics of the free market ideal injected democracy into the mix. For the peace activist G.H. Perris, the 'newer Internationalism' was 'neither a culture without a political and economic base, nor an economic policy lacking support in culture and political ethics'. Above all, he wrote, new internationalism was democratic. 'Its chief aim … is to bring the democratic sentiment of every progressive country into contact with that of every other.'[54]

Kropotkin's anarchist conception of decentralised federation was clearly at odds with these internationalising visions, but the dynamic processes they highlighted usefully facilitate the reassessment of his conception of revolutionary change, his Germanophobia and his questioning of class solidarity. Like Malatesta, Kropotkin believed that 'society moves forward or backward depending on which forces and wills prevail'. But he did not think of these forces solely in terms of the struggle between class and capitalism or, as Levy and Turcato in this volume argue of Malatesta, consider that the cultural and political differences between the belligerents were effectively negated by capitalism. Kropotkin linked the internationalising effects of war to the collapse of empire in central and eastern Europe and the reaffirmation of the anarchist revolutionary ideal – which Jacobinism had perverted – in the internationalist actions of the national groups who struggled for their liberation. Kropotkin's internationalism fused Dzierżyńksi's anti-Russification politics with Radek's revolutionary land movement, anticipating the collapse of empire. To Kropotkin's mind, the advance of Germany, the dominant power in Europe, threatened to smother these initiatives and thus move internationalism backwards. German advance meant the advance of militarism and it opened the door to Jacobinism

in Russia. His implicit, problematic understanding of the role of Jacobinism in derailing the revolutionary momentum in 1793 thus fed into his understanding of Bolshevism and his insistence that Russian revolution required the continuance of the war.[55] For a thinker who had commented before the Russian Revolution that 'Jacobinists and Anarchists have existed at all times among reformers and revolutionists', it is apparent that this historical lesson was at the forefront of his mind as he negotiated events between 1914 and 1917.[56]

As Peter Ryley notes in his chapter, Kropotkin's stance raised considerable difficulties. Believing that the prospects for a revolutionary war had disappeared with the voting of war credits and the European mobilisations, Kropotkin overlooked the systematic oppression that German activists faced in the years leading up to the war, as outlined by Keller. He underestimated the extraordinary pressures that states exerted on individuals to drive enlistment and the violence meted out to those who refused to comply. In addition, not appreciating that the 'enthusiasm' for war would fail to silence anti-war sentiment,[57] he alienated himself from the broad non-sectarian anti-war movements and non-conscription fellowships that sprang up in Britain and around the world.[58] Kropotkin also failed to consider the extent to which war was likely to accelerate the sociological changes that would undercut decentralised federation, 'bolstering the state, boosting militarism and compromising his ideals', to borrow Ryley's formulation. The necessity of waging total war encouraged unparalleled governmental intervention in economic affairs, even if, as in Britain, this tended to amplify economic and political processes that were already underway.[59] Nevertheless, ideas concerning the value of radical intervention that had previously loitered on the margins of political discourse moved to the centre, and the war also created a space for governmental participation that suited non-anarchist forms of socialism.[60] A revealing example of these developments is the case of Arthur Henderson, Labour Party leader after the resignation of Ramsay MacDonald, who served in the wartime cabinets of both Henry Asquith and David Lloyd George. While an obvious representative of the liberal wing of the Labour Party in the pre-war years, Henderson's comments towards the war's end that the experience had 'profoundly modified the economic system' pointed, he believed, to a positive outcome for the future of socialism:

> Methods of State control which would once have been regarded as intolerable infringements … have been accepted without effective protest even from those bred in the individualist tradition of the last century … The extent and importance of these changes in methods of production, the control of industry, the management and distribution of labour, and the limitations imposed upon … financiers and the enterprises of individual capitalists, practically involve a revolution … In four crowded and eventful years we have gathered the fruit of a century of economic evolution.[61]

While Lenin hijacked the revolution in Russia, putting paid to Kropotkin's hopes for international federation, war also smothered the principles of voluntary association and mutual aid that Kropotkin had hoped to stimulate within states, preparing the way for the wholesale absorption of grassroots initiatives into state-controlled national welfare projects.[62] The warfare state was born.[63]

Anarchism and war

Andrew Cornell has recently argued that pre-war American anarchism was invigorated by a cultural engagement with gender, sexual politics and art and that these innovative currents were lost to the movement until the period of anarchism's second wave, as a result of the violent repression of radicalism in the post-war years.[64] The chapters by Ferguson, Antliff and Adams in this volume point to similar shifts in anarchist thinking. Neither the anarchists' failure to galvanise mass resistance to the war nor the Bolsheviks' seizure of the revolutionary initiative foreclosed on the possibility of collective action; mass anarchist movements survived the European war. Nevertheless, the tension between nationalism and internationalism, the emergence of non-class cleavages associated with anti-colonial resistance, the increasing regulatory power of states that the war accelerated, and the polarisation of international politics engendered by Bolshevik success provided a catalyst for a significant reframing of anarchist politics. If its effects were not fully felt until 1968 when the student movement dubbed Soviet communism obsolete, the creative new left politics of civil disobedience, passive resistance, anti-racism, feminism, civil rights and personal liberation emerged and was crystallised during the First World War, when anarchism was apparently obsolete. While Ferguson and Antliff show how the anti-war movement drew attention to the gendered character of state oppression and provided a platform for artists to aestheticise violence in ways that emphasised anarchism's

creative energy, Adams examines how the memory of the war was felt in new drives towards social activism and change.

These changes in anarchist politics resonated across radical movements. C.K. Ogden and Margaret Florence's critique of the militarist state, for example, dovetailed with Emma Goldman's struggle for free motherhood, discussed by Ferguson here. 'Male humanity,' they argued, 'has wobbled between two convictions', one that women 'exist for the entire benefit of contemporary mankind' and the other 'that she exists for the entire benefit of the next generation'. Both supported the command to 'Be fruitful and multiply', for men needed women to populate the battalions that 'warrior-statesman' required to conquer the earth.[65] The argument altered the terms of the case often advanced by suffragettes, particularly as the British National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) moved from a stance of pro-neutrality to a position that saw the war as an opportunity to 'show ourselves to be worthy of citizenship'.[66] For the women who accepted this shift, participating in the war was a test of responsibility that deserved the franchise in return. For their anti-militarist sisters, the refusal to participate in the war was the special task that fell to women, because they had the power to combat militarism and male domination.

Yet the net effects of the war and the Bolshevik revolution were felt in particular ways within anarchist movements. On the one hand, anarchist disillusionment in Russia reinforced the commitment against vanguardism and generated ongoing debates about pacifism, non-violence, state repression and the nature and possibility of revolution. On the other, Kropotkin's disgrace arguably bolstered the convergence between anarchists and non-anarchists on the central issues of class solidarity and anti-militarism. When, in the 1940s, Rudolf Rocker described the struggle against Hitler's 'New Order' as the 'first duty of our time', Freedom Press lamented the reversal of his earlier anti-war position and endorsed Marcus Graham's critique, which aligned liberal imperialists with fascists and called on the workers to rebuild the First International to oppose both.[67] This hardening of position perhaps also diverted anarchists from the possibility of conceptualising 'the liberation of nation from state, along with the liberation of people from occupation and exploitation', as Maia Ramnath describes the nineteenth-century anarchist position.[68]

At the same time, the re-evaluation of mutual aid as an ethic of association, detached from the revolutionary activism that Kropotkin associated with it, can also be traced to the war. As

Adams argues in this volume, Herbert Read's anxieties about his own participation in the conflict led him to develop an idea that emphasised 'fidelity' – a principle capable of supporting horizontalism but not necessarily intimately tied to it. Indeed, Read offers an indicative example of how the contested memory of the war continued to shape anarchism. While by no means an uncontroversial figure in the anarchist tradition, Read is distinctive in that, while an older generation of anarchist thinkers and activists struggled to come to terms with the war, he was engaged in fighting it. By turns harrowing and liberating, this experience informed an abhorrence of violence in Read that mutated into a pacifism that carried with it a preference for gradualist revolutionary tactics. The power of this memory in continuing to influence anarchist politics is reinforced by the example of Read's friend Woodcock, who, despite being born in 1912, attributed his anarchist conversion to reading the war memoirists who were Read's contemporaries – Robert Graves, Richard Aldington and Erich Maria Remarque – writers who did much to shape how the conflict was remembered.[69] Woodcock, along with Read and Alex Comfort, would all see themselves as having learned the lessons of the failures of 1914 in vociferously opposing war in 1939, and would also strip Kropotkinian politics to what they thought was its central contribution: demonstrating the utility, immanence and constructive potential of mutual aid. In this way, shorn of the nineteenth-century revolutionary baggage that they saw as redundant in a world that had witnessed the corruption of the Russian Revolution, anarchists might evade more-or-less entirely the problem of political violence. This position, aside from its questionably unrealistic appreciation of how revolutionary change is actually likely to unfold, is not without its problems. Alfred Bonnano, for one, has objected that the English 'neo-Kropotkinites' had taken to 'digging under the snow' to find seeds even in 'the structure of capital', and Read was often criticised for a dilettantish commitment to real struggle. Nevertheless, their position highlights the enduring importance of the intellectual, political and cultural forces unleashed by the war, forces that continued to shape anarchist politics even for those too young to remember it.[70]

Conclusion

The First World War was a prodigious sower of myths. But as Samuel Hynes points out, to think of these myths simply in terms of their truth or untruth misses their real significance:

> This sense of radical discontinuity of present from past is an essential element in what eventually took form as the Myth of the War. I use that phrase … to mean not a falsification of reality, but an imaginative version of it, the story of the war that has evolved, and has come to be accepted as true.[71]

Such a perspective highlights the importance of the war as an 'imaginative force' with enduring power in European history and culture, and helps explain why recent decades have witnessed an avalanche of books seeking to nuance, unpick and contest these powerful narratives.[72] Whether it is revising the thesis that total war finally ended Victorian trust in laissez-faire, nuancing the view that it marked a watershed in the political and social freedom of women, or contesting the idea that the war was fundamental in 'ushering in modernism', exploring and challenging these myths has been central to furthering our understanding of the legacies of a war now beyond living memory.[73]

Anarchism has its myths too, and as a political tradition pulled in competing directions by the unprecedented challenges created by the war and the revolution that burst to life in its penultimate year, it is unsurprising that these dogged narratives should cluster around the period between 1914 and 1918. Here, against the backdrop of the beginning of what has been seen as a three-decade long European civil war, we see the radical promise of anarchist politics, once the scourge of crowned heads and statesmen, apparently extinguished in a farce of mutual recrimination and self-immolation. It was a movement-wide crisis epitomised in a clash between two of its most prominent figures, one described, not accidentally, as its most respected intellectual and the other as one of its most committed and fearless activists. Just at the moment when European rivalries seemed to confirm the anarchist analysis of the state's inherent weakness and violence, Kropotkin and Malatesta, two former comrades, found themselves trading barbs and defending positions that the other dismissed as illogical. Contained within this split is rich soil for myth making. On one side, we have an act of apostasy from anarchism's *grand homme*, showing the emptiness of anarchist ideas or a latent nationalism that for an onlooker like Trotsky betrayed anarchism's Enlightenment roots as a toothless twin of liberalism. On the other, we have the old fighter Malatesta, marginalised by domestic restrictions on his activity, who, in continuing to call for revolution, revealed the unreality of anarchist tactics in this desperate and unusual situation. To cap this, with the Bolshevik triumph demonstrating the power of a different model of

socialist activism, we have the eclipse of anarchism as a worldwide movement, a politics unprepared for and unable to face the radically different realities of the twentieth century.

As this book demonstrates, however, the reality is both far more complex and more interesting. While the division between the camps represented by Kropotkin and Malatesta was very real, to judge this as a simple renunciation of previously held principles on Kropotkin's part is inadequate. While a popular interpretation among both Kropotkin's contemporary opponents and later historians of the movement alike, it stems from a reading of his position that diminishes the historical vision at the centre of his politics. Where Malatesta placed his hope in maintaining a revolutionary momentum that would unmask the collusion of bourgeois and bureaucrat and reach a crescendo in an anarchist revolution, Kropotkin's position rested on a different set of assumptions: an insistence that imperial collapse and the prospect of Europe's reordering meant that anarchism's decentralising, federal project was best served by protecting Europe's revolutionary heritage from militarist reaction, and that mass mobilisation had undercut the Commune model of revolutionary struggle that he had advocated up to that point. To Kropotkin's mind, far from a repudiation of the anarchist principles he had spent a lifetime expounding, this was a more realistic means of achieving them. Neither, however, is the image of Malatesta as the ardent but naive revolutionary fitting. His engagement with the interventionist position was not one of passion over intellect, but the product of a concerted effort to meet the challenge of war with a reassertion of anarchist principles that he too had spent a lifetime refining. In practical terms this narrative of division has not only tended to simplify tangled intellectual positions and differing readings of ostensibly shared concepts, but it also introduces a language of betrayal and blame that further clouds an adequate appreciation of the issues. There was far more to anarchism in 1914 than this.

If, as Hynes suggests, a myth is a story whose logic is self-reinforcing, 'assimilating along the way what [is] compatible with its judgements, and rejecting what [is] not' and then becoming a dominant frame for subsequent generations, the Kropotkin/Malatesta rift is an anarchist myth.[74] The real damage done by this narrative, as it has been refined in the hands of historians over the last one hundred years, can be measured by its reduction of important conceptual and theoretical debates that were at the heart of anarchism to a simple clash of personalities. As these chapters

testify, what really informed anarchism's crisis was a rich intellectual contestation of core principles in the socialist political identity, a process that points to anarchism's distinctive theoretical makeup, and is the seal of a living political tradition. While they were interrogating the politics of anti-militarism, pondering the heritage of republicanism, and rethinking the politics of internationalism, anarchists were engaged in a simultaneous effort to theorise the role of anti-colonial struggles in processes of broader revolutionary change, to understand how war preparedness shaped gender and sexual politics, and to imagine new ways of creating a free society in the face of unprecedented governmental intervention and monopoly. If the focus on Kropotkin's and Malatesta's sparring is unduly dichotomous in overlooking the range of positions anarchists assumed on the war, it also obscures the tactical and theoretical plurality that is a hallmark of anarchist political theory. While the war may have underlined anarchism's failure to find a simple solution to the ruinous violence created by the state and capitalism, anarchists' reactions to this moment of crisis also highlighted the depth, variety and complexity of the critique they had pressed, and the ludicrousness of the familiar representation that cast them as dangerous, chaotic and threatening.

In a sense, then, anarchism's apparent failure also underlined its strengths. Bolshevism did much to undercut anarchism's appeal, persuading some less libertarian socialists that history was on Marxism's side, and inspiring satellite communist parties around the world to starve domestic libertarian movements of oxygen. It should be remembered, however, that anarchists were among the first critics of a regime that in many ways simply added a fresh patina of industrial modernity to an absolutism with deep roots in Russian society and history.

Anarchists remained important voices of dissent in the early years of the Soviet experiment and their example was rediscovered in the 1960s, as the grip of Marxism on the left began to loosen. Anarchism had never gone away, but now, as students from Paris to Berkeley stockpiled cobblestones and reached for their paintbrushes, it chimed with an urgent and confrontational politics. The importance of anarchism ran deeper than simply inspiring a penchant for disorder and sloganeering, however, and also offered more positive aspects than a dissection of the paradoxes and barbarities of Soviet Marxism. Under the stress of war decades earlier, anarchists had developed critiques of the state and capitalism and explored issues of racial and sexual domination that anticipated

the necessary interconnectedness of personal and social liberation. They had also devised innovative methods of resistance that opened up new sites for activism and fresh possibilities for left convergence. Ideas explored decades earlier were shown to have a reactive afterlife. Taken up by a diverse range of art activists, those participating in non-violent civil resistance, community action projects and insurrectionary movements, these ideas importantly shaped the diverse conceptions of prefigurative politics that still endure in contemporary radical politics. For one onlooker, Paul Goodman, a radical public intellectual deeply inspired by these previous traditions of dissent, it was not Sartre or Mao that lay behind this new spirit of protest, but something both older and in a sense newer:

> The wave of student protest … overrides national boundaries, racial differences, the ideological distinctions of fascism, corporate liberalism and communism … Officials of the capitalist countries say that the agitators are Communists, and Communists say they are bourgeois revisionists. In my opinion, there is a totally different political philosophy underlying – it is Anarchism.[75]

Goodman's enthusiasm for the student movement would fade, but in tying these radical values to a deeper historical vein of anarchist ideas, he pointed to processes of conceptual continuity and change that showed the beating heart of a politics that remained alive despite the travails of war and revolution.[76]

Notes

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Part I

The interventionist debate

1

Saving the future: the roots of Malatesta's anti-militarism

Davide Turcato

Anti-militarism, the refusal to support or join a government's military effort, is today an unquestioned mainstay of anarchism. Is it an essential or a disposable feature, though? The First World War was the historical juncture where the question was most dramatically posed. Anarchists split on the issue of intervention, with the two great figures Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta taking opposite sides. Despite their irreconcilable differences, both claimed to be following the First International's tradition. For the historian, dramatic disagreements between figures of such a calibre – Malatesta's disagreement with Francesco Saverio Merlino about anarchism and democracy is another example – offer rare opportunities to deepen our understanding of anarchism, by probing the respective assumptions underlying the opponents' contrasting interpretations of a set of beliefs hitherto unproblematically shared. In this chapter I will discuss the reasons for Malatesta's anti-militarism and their roots in his theoretical principles. As I will show, his anti-militarist arguments against Kropotkin bear striking similarities to the anti-parliamentarian arguments he made in opposition to Merlino in 1897. The comparison reveals a common ground of core beliefs that foreshadowed ideas of twentieth-century sociology, such as 'displacement of goals' and 'methodological individualism'. Bringing forth those foundational beliefs not only demonstrates how deep-seated Malatesta's anti-militarism was, but also sheds new light on his anarchism.

The controversy over intervention

The controversy broke out in 1914, about three months after war was declared, when Kropotkin published his 'Letter to Steffen' in the October issue of the London anarchist paper *Freedom*. Malatesta and others responded in a 'Symposium on the War' in the next issue. However, the disagreement had been brewing for over a year, at least since the long, private discussion of the spring 1913 in which Kropotkin acquainted the Swiss anarchist Luigi Bertoni with his views; that discussion was followed by his interview in the Italian socialist newspaper *Avanti!* where he declared himself an opponent of desertion and anti-war strikes. The interview prompted Malatesta to solicit privately a clarification from his friend.[1]

The controversy revolved around conflicting interpretations of the shared ideas of internationalism and anti-militarism. For Kropotkin, the war presented a clear instance of German aggression. He maintained that European civilisation was menaced by the iron fist of German militarism and that, if French influence disappeared from Europe, 'Europe would be thrown back in its development for half a century'. Accordingly, he considered that 'the duty of everyone who cherishes the ideals of human progress altogether, and especially those that were inscribed by the European proletarians on the banner of the International Working Men's Association, is to do everything in one's power, according to one's capacities, to crush down the invasion of the Germans into Western Europe'.[2]

For some anarchists, it did not matter for workers whether they were exploited and oppressed by a government of fellow countrymen or by one of foreigners. Kropotkin rejected that idea: 'You do not know how it feels to be under the foreign yoke, or you would not even talk about that,' he countered. He also believed that governments could govern more or less arbitrarily, appreciated the political liberties that some workers enjoyed, and advocated the struggle for the extension of political rights.[3]

For him, questions of borders were substantial. Under the standing menace of Prussian militarism, France had been hampered in its development. Smaller, oppressed nationalities, such as Belgium or Serbia, were placed in vassal conditions towards their powerful neighbours. That being the case, the anti-militarists' past preaching that 'the present frontiers of the States must remain what they are now, and no war must be fought to alter them' was for him 'an unpardonable blunder'.[4] How was anti-militarist propaganda to be conducted, then? For Kropotkin, the reply was evident:

> It must be supplemented by a promise of direct action. An anti-militarist ought never to join the anti-militarist agitation without taking in his inner self a solemn vow that in case a war breaks out, notwithstanding all efforts to prevent it, he will give the full support of his action to the country that will be invaded by a neighbour, whosoever the neighbour may be. Because, if the anti-militarists remain mere onlookers on the war, they support by their inaction the invaders; they help them to make slaves of the conquered populations; they aid them to become still stronger, and thus to be a still stronger obstacle to the Social Revolution in the future.[5]

For Kropotkin, this viewpoint was consistent with the ideals of the First International: 'since the International's very idea was to internationally help workers defend themselves from their exploiters' oppression, our duty is to help workers and peasants of the invaded countries *repel the conquerors*, who, above all, move in as labour exploiters'.[6]

The line of Kropotkin's argument was apparent before the outbreak of the war, and during the controversy he further maintained that he had always held the opinions he expressed at that point. In support of his claim, he recalled an 1877 article, occasioned by the insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the Turks, in which he expressed his ideas about national independence.[7] In the article, anonymously published by the *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne* as the contribution of a 'Slav socialist', Kropotkin framed the East European war as a 'question of nationality' and argued that the social struggle in the area 'will not be able to start until the day the bourgeois and the peasants will face each other, without having their eyes turned to a third common enemy, the foreign conqueror'. 'Social revolution,' he maintained, 'will only be possible when the different nationalities of the peninsula will be free from any foreign yoke.'[8]

Indeed, Kropotkin's views on anti-militarism had already raised concerns among anarchists almost a decade before the war's outbreak. In 1905 he expressed them at a meeting in Paris with the editing group of *Les Temps nouveaux*, criticising the prevalent idea of desertion in case of war.[9] Commenting upon the meeting, the Parisian daily *Le Temps* thankfully quoted Kropotkin as claiming that, at his advanced age, he wished he had 'enough strength to take up a gun to defend France, if it was attacked'.[10] His response to *Le Temps*, in which he clarified his ideas, did not dispel his comrades' misgivings. In *Le Revéil*, Jean Wintsch expressed concern at the nationalist ring of Kropotkin's claim that 'whenever a military state

invades another one too weak to defend itself, the anti-militarists of all nations will have to rush to its defence; and they should especially do this for France, should it be invaded by a coalition of bourgeois who, in the French people, hate above all their leading role in the social revolution'.[11]

In 1905, when the scenario of a German invasion was still a conjecture, Kropotkin could still link together the prospects of defensive war and revolution. Thus, in restating his wish that he could take up arms in defence of France, he explained that he would do so '*not as a soldier of the bourgeoisie, of course, but as a soldier of the Revolution*, in the revolutionaries' voluntary brigades, similar to Garibaldi's and the free-shooters of 1871'.[12] Unpalatable as Kropotkin's ideas may have been to fellow anarchists, they were still compatible with anarchist principles. In 1914, however, defensive war and revolution could no longer be advocated at the same time: the war was already under way, and no revolutionary option was in sight. Therefore, a dramatic choice had to be made: either to support a government-led military response or to stand by and wait for the resumption of the revolutionary struggle. Kropotkin chose the first option: in his own mind, he was being faithful to his advocacy of defensive wars; in his critics' view, he was betraying his advocacy of revolution. Malatesta took the second option.

Malatesta's anti-militarist arguments

The most concise summary of Malatesta's anti-militarism is contained in a paragraph of his initial response to Kropotkin's letter of October 1914, where he argues that the anarchists' duty in all circumstances is to do everything possible to weaken the state and the capitalist class and to take the interests of socialism as the only guide to conduct; 'if they are materially powerless to act efficaciously for their own cause, at least to refuse any voluntary help to the cause of the enemy, and stand aside to save at least their principles – which means to save the future'.[13] The passage is significant because, while it effectively expresses Malatesta's viewpoint, it also lays bare his attitude's seeming weakness. As Malatesta himself summarised, his opponents' charge was that, 'being blind and deaf to all reasons that drive the world in a direction that does not exactly match any ideal programme', anti-interventionists 'sacrifice reality for the sake of "formulas" and, being unable to directly or indirectly bring about anarchy, they prefer to remain inert'.[14]

Malatesta's opposition to the war did not proceed from any

abstract principle. He was no pacifist. He readily admitted that wars of liberation were necessary wars, 'holy wars'.[15] Nor did he dismiss questions of nationality. The aspiration of small nations to defend their language and culture was legitimate. However, anarchists, in their cosmopolitanism, endorsed struggles for national independence only as questions of freedom: 'we would like any human group to be able to live in the conditions it prefers and be free to join or split from the other groups at will; therefore we consider the question of nationality obsolete on the ground of ideas'. Still, he continued, 'we understand that, in the countries where the government and chief oppressors are of foreign nationality, the question of freedom and economic emancipation appears under the guise of a nationalist struggle, and therefore we side with national insurrections as with any insurrection against oppressors'. This, he stressed, still meant siding with the people against the government.[16] Thus, for example, Malatesta had supported the Cuban war of liberation against Spain, where many anarchists fought on the ground, and sided with the Boers against the British: 'The regime they will probably choose,' he stated, 'will certainly not receive our favour; their religious, political, social ideas and ours are poles apart. Still, they have asserted the right of every human being and group to have its own will and stand up for it; this is what matters most.'[17] At the time of the International, Malatesta even joined, or attempted to join, nationalist insurrections. In a 1916 letter to Marie Goldsmith, Kropotkin recalled that, in 1877, a group of 'bakuninists' rushed to the Balkan peninsula to support the insurrection of Herzegovina against the Turkish yoke, and 'later, in 1881, one of them rushed again to Alexandria to support the insurrection of Arabi Pasha for the independence of Egypt'.[18] In the heat of the controversy on intervention, it is probably not accidental that both references were to initiatives of Malatesta.

However, in Malatesta's view, the First World War could not be described as a war for human emancipation. He had no greater confidence, he wrote, in the English diplomats who oppressed India and crushed the Boer republics, in the French bourgeoisie that massacred the Moroccans, or in the Tsar, than he had in the 'mad dog' of Berlin or the 'old hangman' of Vienna. If the victory of Germany certainly meant the triumph of militarism in Europe, as Kropotkin argued, the triumph of the Allies would mean the development of the militarist spirit in England and a clerical or even monarchist reaction in France, not the end of militarism and the triumph of civilisation and international justice. The only hope

for true progress on the path of emancipation was revolution; and since he thought that revolution was more likely to break out in a vanquished Germany, for this reason, and for this reason alone, Malatesta expressed a wish for Germany's defeat.[19]

Refusing to take sides was not equivalent to believing that all governments were equally bad; interventionists, Malatesta wrote, did not need to trouble themselves with arguments that it was better to be jailed than hanged, or to be jailed for a year than for ten. The differences between liberal and autocratic regimes were obvious. However, those differences lay not so much in the form of government as in society's material and moral conditions, in the state of public opinion, and in the degree of resistance that each government encountered from its subjects. Forms of government, which were ultimately the consequence of past struggles, were relevant, too, in that they opposed present struggles with different degrees of strength. So, it was the historian's task, he argued, 'to objectively study the facts and their causes' and tell us, for example, 'that in a certain age there was more freedom in France than in Germany, that in a certain country there was less coercion under the republic than under the monarchy'. However, the task of those who fought for complete freedom, and knew that all governments, by the logic of their own existence, must oppose freedom, was to strive to overthrow governments, not to improve them, for, even from a reformist point of view, that was the best way to wrest concessions and profit from them without paralysing the struggle and compromising the future. 'In practice,' Malatesta argued, 'for us the worst government is always the one under which we are, the one against which we fight more directly.' When the 'Cossacks of Italy' kill demonstrators, the Italian anarchists advocate revolt against them and their government, without pausing to consider that in Russia many more demonstrators would have been killed. Only on the condition of always looking forward can one be revolutionary and progressive. Otherwise one would always have to be content with one's lot, for one could always find an age or a country where people were worse off. Thus, anarchists did acknowledge the relativity of human affairs and were always ready to contribute to any cause that, in their view, represented progress and brought them closer to their ideal of justice, freedom and solidarity. However, Malatesta rhetorically asked, what outcome could possibly be expected from the war that was so important as to induce revolutionaries to tag along with the worst reactionaries, free thinkers to consort with priests, socialists and syndicalists to forget about class antagonism,

anti-militarists to demand conscription, and anarchists to cooperate with the state?[20]

Still, Malatesta had stated that he wanted the defeat of Germany: why would he not contribute to that defeat, then? This was the criticism that Benito Mussolini, at the time a socialist who had joined the interventionist camp, levelled against him.[21] Malatesta's answer was that 'it may not always be useful to contribute to bringing about what one wishes, because things are often beneficial only on condition that they cost nothing or, at most, their material and moral cost is less than their worth'. Nothing is ever completely equivalent to something else. Every event may help or hinder one's aims. Therefore, 'in every circumstance, one has a choice to make, a wish to express, without necessarily wanting to deviate from one's straight path and start supporting whatever one deems to be indirectly beneficial'. For example, preferring one government over another did not imply that one should actively campaign for it, because that would mean digressing from one's own aims. Making a revolution, he concluded, requires revolutionaries: if they set aside their own ideas and the interests they represent, if they side with their ruling classes and help them to win, they not only forgo any revolutionary opportunities that might arise during or after the war, but they also reveal that they consider their earlier programme utopian and bar their own way to any effective future action.[22]

Malatesta, too, had held such views for a long time. When, in 1897, a group of anarchists went to Greece to support the liberation war against the Turks, he acknowledged that the Greeks had every right to get rid of Turkish domination and he opposed the argument that anarchists had no place in a struggle that did not have anarchist and socialist aims. At the same time, he argued against the anarchist expedition, because the contingent was too small to be able to fight on behalf of anarchist ideas and was thus bound to submit to the command of the king of Greece.[23] What held for the Greco-Turkish war was all the more true for a conflict between the great European powers.

Kropotkin and Malatesta agreed on many points: they both believed in the antagonism between the governments of France and Britain and their peoples; they agreed that, nevertheless, governments were not all equally bad; they both considered national struggles to be legitimate steps in the direction of human emancipation; and both wanted the defeat of Germany. However, when it came to cooperation with one's own government, the contrast was total and the differences irreconcilable. The difference was ultimately in the

respective patterns of argument, which rested on totally separate and non-intersecting grounds.

Kropotkin's starting point was a broad picture of nations as players on the continental chessboard. He traced back the causes of the present war to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, and anticipated the chessboard's alternate configurations in case of the victory of either belligerent. He acknowledged that capital and the state were the root causes of the war, which were eventually to be attacked. But, in the name of realism, he urged that each individual's present duty was to choose between the foreseeable outcomes of that world-historical scenario, which were independent of any individual will. He was an internationalist, but there was no point in supporting international solidarity once the German workers had rallied behind their emperor; he was an anti-militarist, but there was no point in making anti-war propaganda once a foreign army had invaded one's country. Not only were an individual's options restricted to the collectively possible outcomes, but not choosing was not an option, for it practically amounted to supporting the aggressor.

In contrast with Kropotkin's historically minded outlook, by claiming that the worst government is one's own government Malatesta was setting for each anarchist a task that was universally valid in every age and at every latitude. That did not mean that anarchists, unconcerned with reality, were to unchangingly and endlessly strive for impossible aims, as the millenarian caricature of anarchism would have it. Rather, they were to strive for whatever objectives their present circumstances and present strength allowed them to undertake on their own terms, while remaining on their own path. This is what Malatesta had urged in 1897 concerning the Greco-Turkish war, and this is what he was currently urging about the European war, no matter how limited the room for action was at present. Anarchists could wish that the world – that large part of the world they had no control of – would go in a certain direction, but that should not deflect them from their goals so as to embrace, even temporarily, someone else's goals, let alone those of the class enemy. Why? Because there was no such thing as embracing someone else's goals temporarily. 'Even on the supposition,' Malatesta wrote in response to the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*, '… that Germany alone was responsible for the present war, it is proved that, as long as governmental methods are adhered to, Germany can only be resisted by suppressing all liberty and reviving the power of all forces of reaction.' Excepting revolution, there

was no other way of resisting the menace of a disciplined army than with a stronger and more disciplined army; 'so that the sternest anti-militarists, if they are not Anarchists, and if they are afraid of the destruction of the State, are inevitably led to become ardent militarists'. For an anarchist who has not renounced the right to call himself an anarchist, 'even foreign domination suffered by force and leading to revolt, is preferable to domestic oppression meekly, almost gratefully, accepted, in the belief that by this means we are preserved from a greater evil'. Nor could it be claimed that it was a question of an exceptional time, after which each would return to the struggle for his own ideal. 'If it is necessary to-day,' Malatesta continued, 'to work in harmony with the Government and the capitalist to defend ourselves against "the German menace," it will be necessary afterwards, as well as during the war.' No matter how great the defeat of the German army, a spirit of revenge was bound to brew in Germany, which would call for patriots in other countries to permanently hold themselves in readiness. This meant that Prussian militarism would become a permanent and regular institution in all countries. What about the self-styled anarchists who supported the war then? Would they keep calling themselves anti-militarists and preach disarmament only to become recruiting sergeants for the government at the first threat of war? It might be argued that all this would come to an end when the German people had rid themselves of their tyrants and destroyed their country's militarism. If that was the case, the Germans who rightly feared English, French or Russian domination would be entitled to think likewise and wait for the other countries to destroy their own militarism first. If everyone was to wait for the others to begin, revolution would be postponed forever.[24]

In brief, choosing the lesser evil meant setting off on a regressive path, from which there was no way back.

Anti-militarism and anti-parliamentarism

The type of reasoning that Malatesta used to back his stance on the war and his rejection of the lesser evil argument can also be traced, in very similar forms, in the arguments he raised against parliamentarism. By taking heed of this commonality we can appreciate how fundamental his anti-militarist arguments were for his anarchism. To a considerable extent, his anti-militarism and his anti-parliamentarism either stand or fall together. That commonality is most clearly illustrated in his well-known 1897 debate on

anarchism and democracy with Francesco Saverio Merlino, another prominent anarchist who had joined the anarchists' opponents – in this case, the parliamentarist camp – and appealed to his former comrades to follow him, claiming, at least for a time, that his action remained true to anarchist principles.

Merlino's argument was that political liberties, such as freedom of association, were not devoid of value, and since such liberties were defended mainly outside parliament but also in parliament, electoral means were of some use in the struggle for freedom, whereas a flat rejection of parliamentarism accustomed the people to indifference towards political liberties. Anarchists were thus to fight for freedom on all grounds, including the electoral one, though they did not need to stand as candidates.[25]

In his response, Malatesta acknowledged the importance of political freedoms, but he added that 'freedoms are only secured once the people have shown themselves determined to have them; and, once obtained, they endure and have value only until such time as governments feel that the people would suffer their being abolished'. Likewise, he unproblematically acknowledged that parliamentarism was better than despotism, but only if it represented a concession granted by the despot out of fear of worse: 'Given a choice between a parliamentarism, embraced and boasted, and a despotism forcibly thrust upon minds that cry out for redemption, despotism is a thousand times better.' Malatesta was aware, he wrote, that Merlino placed small store by elections, and sought to fight the real battle by direct action, but, for all that, 'the two methods of struggle do not go together and whoever embraces them both inevitably winds up sacrificing any other consideration to the electoral prospect'. By saying that anarchists need not put up candidates of their own, he continued, Merlino showed that he was aware of that danger. His position was untenable, though: if good could be done through parliament, why let others go to parliament instead of the anarchists themselves, who reckoned to know better than the others? 'Let Merlino be assured on this point,' Malatesta concluded: 'if we tell people today to go out and vote, tomorrow we will be telling them to vote for us. In which we would be logically consistent.'[26]

The debate had been occasioned by the general election in Italy. In its aftermath Malatesta rejoiced over the socialists' success. Merlino seized the opportunity to point out a contradiction between Malatesta's abstentionist propaganda and his appreciation of the election's outcome as an important sign of rebellion against

masters, priests and authorities: 'If your rejoicing over the socialists' victory is not in contrast with your anarchist principles, neither my declaring that I wished it can be in contrast. Your congratulations would not have happened unless someone had worked for the socialists' victory in the elections.' Malatesta replied that anarchists rejoiced when democratic socialists got one over on the bourgeois, just as they would celebrate if republicans got one over on the monarchists, or the liberal monarchists on the clericals. 'Good and evil are quite relative,' Malatesta argued, 'and a reactionary party may well represent a step forwards in comparison with an even more reactionary one.' He was always delighted to see 'a clerical turn into a liberal, a monarchist into a republican, a fence-sitter into something; but it does not follow from that that we – whose thinking is streets ahead of theirs – must become monarchists, liberals, or republicans'.[27]

Malatesta further elaborated on this point a few months later. Merlino had remarked that anarchists and reactionaries were both striving to discredit parliamentarism and, in this way, were contributing to the likelihood of an authoritarian turn. In his view, the point was rather to rectify the flaws of parliamentarism without giving up its advantages; thus he pleaded for its defence against the dangers of an authoritarian resurgence.[28] Malatesta retorted that, paraphrasing Merlino, one could argue that the monarchy was to be defended, because it was better than government by priests. 'That sort of reasoning could carry us a long way,' he continued, 'since there is no reactionary, harmful, nonsensical institution that does not have someone opposing it for the purpose of replacing it with a worse one.' All revolutionaries would need to turn into conservatives so as to avert the perils of going back. This was an old story: when the International arose, Malatesta recalled, 'the "liberals" and republicans screamed that it was serving the interests of the Empire, of Bismarck, or of other monarchies'. Instead, he rejoined, the best way of warding off a reversion to the past was, and had always been, to make the future prospects of conservatives and reactionaries ever more unpromising:

> There would be no constitutional monarchies had the king not been afraid of the republic; there would be no republic in France, had the Paris Commune not worried the supporters of the restoration; and if a republic ever comes about in Italy it will be once the growing threat from socialism and anarchism prompts the bourgeoisie to try that last stratagem for deluding and holding back the people.[29]

Merlino's theoretical framework is well illustrated by an essay in which he sought to reconcile collectivism and communism, democratic socialism and anarchism. Collectivism and communism, he argued, were often presented as two systems corresponding to opposite principles – 'to each according to his labour' and 'to each according to his needs', respectively. In this pure form, however, they were both utopian systems. As soon as it was confronted with practical reality, the rigid and exclusive application of either principle encountered insurmountable difficulties and objections. Any practicable system had to strike a middle path in which the two principles were to be reconciled as complements, as respective expressions of two types of social relations that were to coexist: necessary and fundamental social relations and voluntary and variable relations among individuals. Likewise, Merlino made a distinction between individual interests and indivisible collective interests – which exceeded those of any individual and were to be collectively managed – and sought the political form that could best express the collective will and avoid the danger of oppression. This could neither be centralised government nor direct administration. Rather, a socialist political organisation was to acknowledge intangible individual rights and organise collective interest by means of delegates under the people's control, so that they could not turn into an authoritarian oligarchy of the government type. Democracy consisted essentially in the absence of any such oligarchy and in this it did not substantially differ from anarchy. Merlino claimed to have thus reconciled the two sections of contemporary socialism, the democratic and the anarchist: 'Socialism and anarchy, solidarity and freedom are two elements of the future society and two dissolving agents of the present society.'[30]

Malatesta's curt response was equally characteristic. Merlino, he argued, was putting the question in the wrong terms. In order to compare the democratic and the anarchist solutions, one had to go back to the substantial difference that divided the two schools. That difference was: authority or freedom; coercion or consensus; 'obligatoriness' or voluntariness. The fundamental issue at stake was the supreme regulating principle of interpersonal relations. Without agreement on that question, there could be no agreement on specific forms of organisation. In practical terms, should a revolution happen, was political power to be seized or abolished? One could support one or the other method, or even seek a middle path, but that fundamental disagreement could not be neglected.[31]

For Merlino, as for Kropotkin, the anarchists' starting point in

choosing their course of action was to be society as it presently was. Only a limited number of 'possible worlds' – to use a term from contemporary philosophy – were within the reach of the present world. Anarchists were to choose one of those worlds as the goal of their immediate action. Thus, for Kropotkin, international solidarity and anti-militarism were out of the question during a war: the choice was between the victory of one or other belligerent. Likewise, for Merlino, full communism or full collectivism were not available options, at least for a long time: the range of reachable economic and political systems was much more restricted, and it was within that range that a choice was to be made. In the even shorter run, there was a choice to be made between a more reactionary and a more progressive parliament, between narrower and broader political freedoms, not between government and anarchy. Each progress in one direction would then open up new possibilities in that same direction.

In contrast, for Malatesta, it was one's ideal – that is, society as it ought to be – that should constitute one's starting point in choosing a course of action. Aiming for a non-authoritarian society implied using non-authoritarian means. Conversely, authoritarian means led in an authoritarian direction. The choice being one of method, it lay with each individual to autonomously face it. Such a choice – between authority or freedom, coercion or consensus, 'obligatoriness' or voluntariness – concerned both the society one aimed for and the method one used in the present struggle. That choice marked the line that equally separated anarchists like Malatesta from democratic socialists on the issue of parliamentarism and from interventionists on the issue of war.

Malatesta elaborated this methodological stance through a number of arguments in support of anti-parliamentarism. It is striking how closely each of them was mirrored by a parallel argument opposed to Kropotkin in support of anti-militarism almost two decades later. On both occasions, in response to the charge that he neglected the differences between one regime and another, he readily acknowledged that governments were not all equally bad and that political freedoms were to be appreciated. However, he pointed out that the differences did not depend so much on the form of government *per se*, as on the different degree of resistance that each government encountered in the people. From this perspective, 'despotism forcibly thrust upon minds that cry out for redemption' was better than 'parliamentarism, embraced and boasted', just as 'foreign domination suffered by force and leading to revolt'

was preferable to 'domestic oppression meekly, almost gratefully, accepted'. Characteristically, Malatesta construed society not in terms of the various institutions that historically arise, but in terms of the social actors' contrasting dispositions that give rise to those institutions.

For Malatesta, appreciating the differences between regimes included expressing preferences about the outcome of the struggles for supremacy between one party and another, one belligerent and another. This raised the same criticism from Merlino, about elections, and Mussolini, about the war: if Malatesta had preferences about the outcome of these struggles, why did he not contribute to making those preferences come true? The responses were along the same lines. Good and evil were quite relative: a reactionary party might well represent a step forwards in comparison with an even more reactionary one. Nothing was ever completely equivalent to something else. Every event might help or hinder one's aims. Therefore, in every circumstance there was a wish to express. However, it might not always be useful to act upon those wishes. That sort of reasoning could carry one a long way, for there was no reactionary institution that did not have someone longing for a more reactionary one. Were anarchists to support the monarchy for fear of clericalists? Were they to support French militarism for fear of German militarism? They were not. Since governments always granted concessions solely out of fear – and in this they were indeed all alike – the best way of warding off a reversion to more reactionary regimes was to make the prospects of present ones ever more unpromising. Even from a reformist point of view, striving to overthrow governments, not to improve them, was the best way to wrest concessions without paralysing the struggle and compromising the future. In practice, in a parliamentary regime as during a war, 'the worst government is always the one under which we are, the one against which we fight more directly'.[32]

Malatesta remarked to Merlino that his lesser evil argument was based on the fallacy of contrasting 'on the one hand, the electoral struggle and, on the other, inaction, indifference, and supine acquiescence to governments' and masters' impositions; clearly, the advantage is on the side of electoral struggle'. By the same token, he added, one could have argued that it was good to attend Mass, since believing in the effectiveness of prayers was better than the idiotic lack of any wish or hope.[33] Analogously to Merlino, Kropotkin contrasted support for the Entente with inaction, concluding that the latter amounted to support for Germany. However, as Malatesta

remarked to Mussolini, things were often beneficial only on condition that their material and moral cost was less than their worth. In fact, there was a high cost always attached to actively supporting the lesser evil: it meant setting off on a path that was no longer the anarchist one. After embarking on such a path, Malatesta claimed, the logic of one's position would be stronger than any good intention. If anything good could be done in parliament, so as to justify voting, in the long run there would be no reason to restrain anarchists from standing themselves in elections. Likewise, if it was necessary to work in harmony with one's government during the war, it would remain necessary afterwards. Anarchists would remain anti-militarist only on paper, while they would turn into recruiting sergeants for the government at any threat of war.

In brief, for Malatesta, lesser evil arguments failed to recognise that the contrast was not simply between support for the lesser evil and inaction. The contrast was, at the same time, between relinquishing and preserving that disposition to uncompromising revolt against any oppression and exploitation, that, in his view, was the real essence of any human progress. Relinquishing that disposition, not just temporarily, but indefinitely, was the real cost of deflecting from one's own straight path. In contrast, preserving that disposition, even at the cost of temporary inaction, was the anarchists' way of saving the future.

The foundations of anarchism

The comparison between Malatesta's anti-parliamentarist and anti-militarist arguments shows that they rested on a shared set of methodological assumptions about the dynamics of social action. That theoretical framework, which was the very foundation of his anarchism, can be most clearly spelled out in terms of a set of concepts that did not belong to Malatesta's vocabulary but have found wide application in twentieth-century sociology. That cluster of interrelated concepts, in turn, is best summarised and explained by describing Malatesta as a methodological individualist.

The term 'methodological individualism' is used to denote the approach to the social sciences that describes society as the 'effect of composition' of the intentional action of all its members, that is, as the end result of the complex interactions among individuals.[34] The concept is customarily contrasted with that of 'methodological holism', which conversely explains the behaviour of individuals in terms of the influence and constraints that social wholes place on

each of them. Now, Malatesta was no sociologist. His interest was not in explaining society, but in changing it. However, the distinction between methodological individualism and methodological holism can still be useful in characterising opposite approaches to prescribing, rather than describing, individual action. As one of its proponents stated, methodological individualism is based on the assumption that 'no social tendency exists which could not be altered if the individuals concerned both wanted to alter it and possessed the appropriate information'.[35] If one reads this principle normatively, it becomes a description of one of Malatesta's most marked traits, his voluntarism. 'Today, tomorrow, and always,' he wrote, 'we must act, think, and behave as if the revolution was possible any time. It is the only way to make it actually possible.'[36] And when, in 1914, even socialists were hesitant to demand that Italy should altogether abandon its colonial undertaking in Africa, arguing that this would be impossible, he rejoined: 'Why is it impossible, when the voyage from Libya back to Italy takes only a few hours?'[37]

A characteristic aspect of Malatesta's voluntarism was his dualist view of the descriptive and prescriptive domains. As he stated in a 1913 article, he acknowledged determinism to be an adequate approach to the study of the physico-chemical world, but he questioned its extension to human action, for its consequent application to that domain paralysed the will and presented any effort as futile. Rather than trying to solve the dilemma, Malatesta suspended his judgement and stopped at the acknowledgement that 'the absolute Free Will of the spiritualists is contradicted by facts and is repugnant to the intellect', while 'the negation of Will and Liberty by the mechanists is repugnant to our feelings'. The last word that could be said about the essence of the will, at least for the present, was 'we do not know'. In the meantime, the efficacy of the will was to be taken as a necessary presupposition of a conscious and creative life.[38] We can observe this dualism in Malatesta's claim that it was the historian's task 'to objectively study the facts and their causes' and tell us which countries were more or less free and which forms of government more or less coercive, whereas, for those who fought for complete freedom, the worst government was always the one under which one was.

The one principle that was valid in both the descriptive and prescriptive domains, and thus threw a bridge between them, was the principle of coherence between ends and means. This was definitely a prescriptive principle – indeed, the anarchists' most fundamental

and universal principle of action. However, in a way, it was also a descriptive principle, in the sense that, for Malatesta, ends and means always ended up being coherent. If one did not make his means coherent with his ends, then his ends would eventually adjust to his means. This is the essence of his references to the 'logic of one's position', which was stronger than any good intentions. If one reverts to parliamentary means, even as a bona fide anarchist, one will eventually embrace parliamentarism. If one reverts to military means, one will end up remaining trapped in militarism.

By those arguments, Malatesta was pointing to the phenomenon of the heterogony of ends, first expounded in 1897 by the German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, which decades later become common currency in sociology.[39] One aspect of Wundt's theory is what has come to be known as the 'unintended consequences of intentional action'. Actions undertaken with certain expected consequences in mind end up having secondary effects that need in turn to be addressed in order for the primary actions to be carried through. Such processes give rise to the related phenomenon of the 'displacement of goals', whereby means tend to become ends in themselves. The increasing involvement of socialists in parliamentarism and of interventionist anarchists in militarism, as discussed by Malatesta, both fit the pattern. In contrast, the coherence of the anarchists' means with their ends, even at the cost of temporary inaction, saved the future by avoiding the displacement of goals. As Malatesta used to say, 'in sociology as in topography, one does not go wherever one wishes, but wherever the path one is on may lead'.[40] When one could not make progress, standing still on the right path was a lesser evil than setting off on the wrong one.

Conclusion

In sum, from his methodological individualistic perspective, Malatesta construed social action as the result of the initiatives, thoughts and actions of all individuals who made up society. Anarchists were but one component in society. As in physics, the overall direction of society resulted from the composition of the diverging forces acting upon it. In the light of this perspective one can better understand Malatesta's argument that governments could be more or less coercive without governors being necessarily more or less enlightened. By the logic of their own existence, all governments opposed freedom and sought to extend their powers as much as possible. What made a government more 'liberal' was

the resistance it encountered in other social components. Another ramification of this methodological outlook was the indeterminacy of social action: each component, each group, could only choose the direction of its action, not the overall outcome, which depended on the choices of other actors and was not known in advance. For this reason, action based on its expected consequences was bound to incur the heterogony of ends. Furthermore, anarchists could legitimately express wishes about the direction in which other components would exert their force; as for themselves, they would exert theirs in the direction of anarchy. Finally, aiming for the 'impossible' – that is, for something that anarchists could not achieve alone – was still the best way to achieve the possible, that is, to steer society as much as possible in the direction they wanted. This is why Malatesta claimed that, even from a reformist point of view, striving to overthrow governments, not to improve them, was the best way to wrest concessions without compromising the future.

Setting forth the foundations of Malatesta's anarchism helps us understand that he could not have taken any other position on anti-militarism without altogether compromising his anarchism. One can best appreciate the foresight of his stance in retrospect, for his seemingly defeatist attitude truly saved the future. It is hard to imagine what kind of appeal anarchism could exert today if it had been utterly compromised in the great butchery of the First World War. If anarchism still attracts younger generations it is in no small measure due to a tradition that preserved its aims intact by keeping its means coherent with them.

Lastly, recasting Malatesta's anarchism in terms of such concepts as methodological individualism, voluntarism, social indeterminacy and heterogony of ends allows us to place anarchism in a broader perspective, where opposition to the state is not an axiom, but rather the consequence of an axiological argument that starts from the values of the French Revolution. In fact, Malatesta defined anarchy as a society that 'has for its basis and necessary point of departure *equality of conditions*. Its aim is *solidarity*, and its method *liberty*.'[41] If we construe social dynamics in terms of Malatesta's methodological framework, we can more easily understand why there is no room for governments in the rational pursuit of that ideal.

Notes

1 [L. Bertoni], 'Le procès des seize', *Le Reveil anarchiste* (Geneva), 26.754 (6 October 1928); G. De Falco, 'Un giovine settantenne!', *Avanti!* (Milan), 16 July 1913. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.
2 P. Kropotkin, 'Letter to Steffen', *Freedom* (London), 28.306 (October 1914).
3 'Contestación de Kropotkin a la "Carta abierta" de Pedro Esteve', *Cultura obrera* (New York), 2.90 (12 December 1914).
4 P. Kropotkin, 'Anti-militarism. Was it Properly Understood?', *Freedom* (London), 28.307 (November 1914).
5 Ibid.
6 'Contestación de Kropotkin'.
7 Ibid.
8 Untitled, parts 1 and 2, *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne* (Sonvillier), 6.24–5 (17–24 June 1877).
9 P. Kropotkin, 'Antimilitarisme et révolution', *Les Temps nouveaux* (Paris), 11.26 (28 October 1905).
10 P. Mille, 'Esquisses d'après nature: Pierre Kropotkine', *Le Temps* (Paris), 19 October 1905.
11 P. Kropotkin, 'Correspondance', *Le Temps* (Paris), 31 October 1905; J. W[intsch], 'L'attitude des anarchistes en cas de guerre', *Le Réveil socialiste-anarchiste* (Geneva), 6.151 (2 December 1905).
12 Kropotkin, 'Correspondance', emphasis original.
13 E. Malatesta, 'Anarchists Have Forgotten their Principles', *Freedom* (London), 28.307 (November 1914).
14 E. Malatesta, 'Mentre la strage dura', *Volontà* (Ancona), 3.14 (3 April 1915).
15 Malatesta, 'Anarchists Have Forgotten their Principles'.
16 Malatesta, 'Mentre la strage dura'.
17 E. Malatesta, 'La guerra anglo–boera', *L'Internazionale* (London), 1.1 (12 January 1901).
18 P. Kropotkin to M. Goldsmith, Brighton, 23 February 1916, in M. Confino, 'Anarchisme et internationalisme: Autour du Manifeste des Seize', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 22.2–3 (1981), p. 240.
19 Malatesta, 'Anarchists Have Forgotten their Principles'.
20 Malatesta, 'Mentre la strage dura'.
21 Malatesta had been acquainted with Mussolini's criticism only indirectly, through a summary sent by a friend in a letter. The criticism has appeared in Mussolini's *Popolo d'Italia*.
22 'Errico Malatesta a Mussolini', *Il Libertario* (La Spezia), 12.582 (17 December 1914).
23 'Pro Candia' and 'Gli anarchici e la questione d'Oriente', in *'Un lavoro lungo e paziente': Il socialismo anarchico dell'Agitazione, 1897–1898*,

in E. Malatesta, *Opere complete*, ed. D. Turcato (Milan and Ragusa: Zero in Condotta/La Fiaccola, 2011), pp. 6–7, 43–5.

24 E. Malatesta, 'Pro-Government Anarchists', *Freedom* (London), 30.324 (April 1916).

25 'Al partito socialista: Lettera di Saverio Merlino', *Il Messaggero* (Rome), 29 January 1897.

26 E. Malatesta, 'The Socialists and the Elections: A Letter from E. Malatesta', in *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, ed. Davide Turcato (Oakland, CA and Edinburgh: AK Press, 2014), pp. 210–11.

27 E. Malatesta, 'A Few Words to Bring the Controversy to an End', in Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom*, pp. 221–2.

28 F.S. Merlino, 'Il pericolo', *Italia del popolo*, 3–4 November 1897, reprinted in E. Malatesta and F.S. Merlino, *Anarchismo e democrazia* (Ragusa: La Fiaccola, 1974), pp. 100–4.

29 'Una difesa del parlamentarismo', in *'Un lavoro lungo e paziente'*, pp. 288–9. Translated by P. Sharkey.

30 S. Merlino, 'Collectivisme, communisme, social-démocratie et anarchisme: Essai de conciliation', *La Revue socialiste*, 25.150 (1897).

31 [E. Malatesta], 'Collettivismo, comunismo, democrazia socialista e anarchismo', *L'Agitazione* (Ancona), 1.21 (6 August 1897).

32 Malatesta, 'Mentre la strage dura'.

33 [E. Malatesta], 'Anarchia e parlamentarismo (Risposta a Saverio Merlino)', *L'Agitazione* (Ancona), 1.1 (14 March 1897).

34 The term 'effect of composition' was coined by the French sociologist Raymond Boudon.

35 J.W.N. Watkins, 'Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences', in M. Martin and L.C. McIntyre (eds), *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), p. 443.

36 'Il macello balcanico', *Volontà* (Ancona), 1.6 (13 July 1913).

37 'Via dall'Africa!' *Volontà* (Ancona), 2.8 (21 February 1914).

38 E. Malatesta, 'Liberty and Fatalism, Determinism and Will', in Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom*, pp. 363–7.

39 W. Wundt, *Outlines of Psychology* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1897), pp. 326–7; see R.K. Merton, 'The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action', *American Sociological Review*, 1.6 (1936), pp. 894–904.

40 E. Malatesta, 'Our Plans: Union between Communists and Collectivists', in Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom*, p. 99.

41 E. Malatesta, 'Anarchy', in Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom*, p. 143.

2

The Manifesto of the Sixteen: Kropotkin's rejection of anti-war anarchism and his critique of the politics of peace

Peter Ryley

> I consider that the duty of everyone who cherishes the idea of human progress altogether, and especially those that were inscribed by the European proletarians on the banner of the International Workingmen's Association, is to do everything in one's power, according to one's capacities, to crush down the invasion of the Germans into Western Europe.[1]

With these words, published in *Freedom*, Peter Kropotkin launched a provocative challenge to the anti-war consensus of the anarchist movement. Instead of the denunciation of the war that would have been expected, Kropotkin's open letter to the Swedish intellectual Gustav Steffen demanded support for the Entente powers to defend France and to destroy German militarism for good. It was not just his sentiment that astonished his comrades; it was his belligerent language. Germany had to be crushed. Emma Goldman's response was typical:

> Rumours had been filtering through from England that Peter had declared himself in favour of the war. We ridiculed the idea, certain that it was a newspaper fabrication to charge our Grand Old Man with pro-war sentiments. Kropotkin, the anarchist, humanitarian, and gentlest of beings – it was preposterous to believe that he could favour the European holocaust. But presently we were informed that Kropotkin had taken sides with the Allies … He was justifying all measures to crush the 'Prussian menace,' as those in the opposite camp were urging the destruction of the Allies. It was a staggering blow to our movement, and especially to those of us who knew and loved Peter.[2]

Kropotkin had split the movement, but his was a minority position. French anarchists, of whom Jean Grave was the most prominent,

supported him. The American individualist anarchist, Benjamin Tucker, who was then living in France, similarly backed the war. But individualism was in decline, anarcho-communism and syndicalism had become dominant, and both had adopted anti-militarism as a central doctrine. The formal position of both camps was anti-state and anti-war.[3] It was to prove to be a bitter quarrel. Even today, although there is renewed interest in Kropotkin and his ideas, his stance on the war is either glossed over or dismissed as, at best, a mistake driven by prejudice.

If ever there was time for a reappraisal, it is now. The issues that Kropotkin raised have not gone away. Replace the name Peter Kropotkin with George Orwell and we could be reading his arguments against pacifism in the 1930s. Exchange it for Christopher Hitchens and we are back in 2003. Today we could be talking about the West's non-intervention in Syria. The schism among anarchists in 1914 is not an historical curiosity; it is a live debate.

In her book, *Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition*, Ruth Kinna defends Kropotkin against the charge of apostasy, arguing that his position is entirely consistent with his anarchism.[4] She shows how the defeat of German militarism was as one with his assertion of the need to fight autocracy, his view of the development of the revolutionary class, and the need to produce what Kinna describes as a necessary prefiguration for the coming social revolution. Yet in supporting the Entente cause Kropotkin was not solely drawing on his anarchism. He had expected a war with Germany for more than a decade and had warned against the possibility of German aggression. The war did not come as a surprise. And that expectation led him to be fiercely critical of another movement, one that also had roots that extended into working-class organisations, and one that was a prominent part of the radical milieu; the British peace movement. Just as his position was coherent with his anarchist beliefs, it was also a product of his rejection of the main assumptions of the peace politics of his day. And it is to these that we must turn first.

The development of peace politics in Britain

The politicisation of peace started in the nineteenth century. Challenges to the just war tradition,[5] which defined when and by what means war was permissible, and the modern 'realist' perspective drawn from Clausewitz's maxim about war being the continuation of politics by other means already existed. Now they

were harnessed to a campaign for peace in the new arena of mass pressure politics.

These new movements drew their ideas from a number of sources. Absolute pacifism, renouncing war completely, was part of a Christian tradition that looked back to the teachings of the early Church. Its main contemporary advocates were the Quakers. Yet secular ideas were also growing. The Enlightenment brought with it an emerging optimism, based on a view that humans were capable of abolishing war through rational means. Speculative schemes for global peace abounded. The most durable of these was Immanuel Kant's 1795 plan for a federation of democratic states, *Perpetual Peace*, but there were many others.[6]

Political action began with the first organised peace movements, which came into existence at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1815 three Christian Peace Societies were formed in the United States. In Britain, independently from the Americans, the Quakers initiated the British peace movement by founding the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace in June 1816, which would become better known later as the Peace Society.[7] Peace politics widened its appeal and evolved around two distinct positions: pacifism, unconditional opposition to war, and pacific-ism,[8] action to prevent war where possible. Both engaged with the emerging social sciences to develop theories that would explain how wars arose and what was needed to stop them. These explanations fell into four main groups: free trade and non-intervention; anti-statism and anti-imperialism; international law and arbitration; and radical social change, notably socialism and feminism.

Free trade and non-intervention

The association between trade and peace was established liberal opinion by the mid-eighteenth century. As early as 1748 Montesquieu wrote that 'Peace is the natural effect of trade', binding nations together in reciprocal self-interest,[9] an assumption shared by Adam Smith. The peace movement gained early organisational expertise through the involvement of the driving figures behind the Anti-Corn Law League, Richard Cobden and John Bright. Although neither were pacifists, both were liberal internationalists. Known as Manchester Liberalism, the movement for free trade opposed war and imperialism as being the antithesis of peaceful commerce. This was linked to a firm belief in non-intervention in foreign affairs.[10] Manchester Liberals were economic internationalists only.

The policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other

nations can be found in Kant[11] and it has proven a persistent feature of much thinking about peace and war. Cobden and Bright's insistence on it came from their assumption that war was solely the expression of the interests of a ruling elite, in this case the aristocracy, and was always waged against the wishes of the people. Whereas trade was inherently cooperative and peaceful, statecraft, resting on the hated concept of the balance of power, was fundamentally militaristic. Intervention would promote war at the expense of peaceful trade, the only long-term remedy for conflict.

Anti-statism and anti-imperialism

The logical corollary to the suspicion of state power was the idea of a limited state. Laissez-faire could be extended to international relations for the benefit of all. At the same time questions were being raised about whether trade was wholly pacific in nature, given the corrupting influence of imperialism. David Hume foreshadowed this with what he saw as an impediment to trade, jealousy. He wrote in 1742, 'Nothing is more usual, among states which have made some advances in commerce, than to look on the progress of their neighbours with a suspicious eye, to consider all trading states as their rivals, and to suppose that it is impossible for any of them to flourish, but at their expence [*sic*].'[12] Because of this, states could act irrationally to prevent trade, and thereby peace, blossoming. Jeremy Bentham gave this argument a stronger material base in his *Plan for a Universal and Perpetual Peace*, published in 1789, just before the outbreak of the French Revolution.[13] In it, Bentham identified conflict over colonies as the main cause of war. While this was only a limited critique of the efficacy of trade, by the end of the nineteenth century a much more strident anti-imperialism would inform liberals and socialists alike.

National liberation, non-intervention and arbitration

The early peace societies were middle-class affairs, often opposed to popular jingoism. However, the peace movement did have connections with working-class radicals through moral force Chartism, and by the 1870s it was making inroads into the working classes, especially among skilled workers. The main working-class organiser was the trade unionist William Cremer. Cremer had been one of the founders of the First International and campaigned in 1870 against British involvement in the Franco-Prussian War with considerable working-class support. On the back of that campaign and with financial aid from the Peace Society, he founded the Workmen's

Peace Association (WPA) to argue for non-intervention and, later, for international arbitration of disputes through its successor organisation, the International Arbitration League. According to Paul Laity, the historian of the British peace movement, Cremer was hardly a good role model for his ideas. Argumentative, divisive and with a fearsome temper, he was described by the positivist E.S. Beesly as 'one of the dirtiest scoundrels that the working class has turned up lately'.[14] Rumours of financial impropriety hung round him and he was inclined to indulge in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. Nevertheless, he was later elected as a Liberal MP, knighted and, in 1903, became the third recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. To his annoyance, his non-interventionist peace politics was about to be challenged by another working-class sentiment, that of solidarity. It was active solidarity with oppressed peoples that produced a different concept of just war – wars of liberation.

One of the contradictions between non-intervention and anti-imperialism is that, though non-intervention may restrict the imperialism of your own country, it can allow the imperialism of others to continue unhindered. This conflict arose early in working-class movements when Mazzini appealed to the insurrectionary, republican tradition and attracted widespread support for the Italian *Risorgimento*. Liberty mattered more than peace. Similarly, in the second phase of the Franco-Prussian War, once France had deposed Napoleon III and declared itself a republic, there was considerable working-class pressure for intervention in support of the French, much to the consternation of the WPA. But it was the agitation over the Bulgarian atrocities that showed the problems inherent in a strictly non-interventionist stance.

In 1876 Turkey repressed a nationalist rising in Bulgaria with great brutality. Accounts of the massacre at Batak reached Britain at a time when Benjamin Disraeli, the Conservative Prime Minister, was pursuing a 'realist' foreign policy of aligning Britain with the Ottoman Empire against Russia. The peace societies set about organising mass protests against Disraeli, but were rather too successful, since indignation at Turkish brutality led to a call, supported by Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal opposition, for military intervention to protect the Bulgarians. Alarmed by the prospect of a war, even one in support of victims of crimes against humanity, the peace organisations turned around to campaign against any intervention. In effect, they were simultaneously deploring the crime while being equally hostile to action to remedy it. They were rescued from their contradictions by the Russian attack on Turkey.

By pressing a policy of neutrality, they ensured that Britain would not aid the Ottomans. Bulgaria gained autonomy in 1878 as a result of the war. The important point for the peace societies was that Britain had played no part. Anti-war sentiment trumped all.[15]

It was an obvious failing and so pacific-ist thinking turned towards alternative forms of non-military intervention. The main approach was to strengthen diplomacy and international law through systems of international arbitration. Lewis Appleton founded the International Arbitration and Peace Association in 1880, while Cremer started campaigning for an Anglo-American arbitration treaty, finally changing the name of his association to the International Arbitration League in 1888.

Late Victorian radicalism and peace: feminism and socialism

The broad parameters of liberal thinking about war and peace had now been set. Pacifists abhorred all war while pacific-ists adopted a doctrine of free trade, non-intervention (derided at the time as 'peace at any price')[16] and/or arbitration, all allied to a critique of the militarist state. Opposing them were radicals who supported wars of national liberation in solidarity with oppressed people and what we would now call humanitarian intervention.[17] By the end of the century the dominant liberal narrative was becoming more diverse as other political movements refined their ideas on war and peace. Two stand out.

First, agitation for the enfranchisement of women provided an organisational focus for feminist anti-war activity. One of the main causes of war was seen as female political exclusion. The assumption was that women were inherently pacific; as lifegivers they were instinctively averse to the slaughter of their children.[18] The outbreak of the First World War split the women's movement and while some supported the war effort, others were drawn into an active and ambitious peace campaign.[19]

Secondly, socialists emphasised the relationship between war and class struggle. For some, by arming the proletariat, war could create the opportunity for revolution. Others, though, saw war as the ultimate in working-class exploitation, sacrificing workers' lives and smothering international class solidarity with false national consciousness. This latter view became the source of war resistance and the unconditional detestation of militarism and patriotism.

Socialists saw war as deriving from the conflicts inherent in capitalism and they were given a powerful tool of analysis in J.A. Hobson's theory of imperialism. The pursuit of trade and profits,

rather than bringing peaceful cooperation, was the driving force behind imperial expansion, leading to international conflict over the control of markets. Capitalism meant war and only the working class could prevent it. Just how they would do it was an open question. The Second International failed to formulate a clear anti-war strategy, and though some hope was vested in vague notions of working-class abstentionism or a general strike against war, socialist movements were not well prepared for the events of 1914.

Anarchism and peace

The anarchist movement absorbed all these ideas and incorporated them into at least three strands. The first, absolute pacifism, was both religious and secular. Its most celebrated proponent was the Christian anarchist Leo Tolstoy.[20] Tolstoy's moral revulsion at what Wilfred Owen was later to call 'the pity of war' found wide acceptance, but there was a naivety to his view of the inherent peacefulness of people when their minds were not distorted by the indoctrination of the state. His solution, a doctrine of repentance, self-sufficiency and non-resistance, might have appealed to a monk, but not to a revolutionary.[21] But anarchists also began to advocate pacifism as a form of active resistance by developing the tactic of non-violence. Pacifist anarchists were certain that the integral link between means and ends meant that just as evil could not beget good, violence could not create peace. Pacifism and activism for social justice were now combined.

The second strand focused on the inherent violence of the state and the need to resist it. The idea here was that the concentration of force in the hands of the state reaches its highest level through the militarisation of society, which, in turn, requires constant warfare to reinforce it. In the words of the American radical Randolph Bourne, 'War is the health of the state.' He continued, 'The State is intimately connected with war, for it is the organization of the collective community when it acts in a political manner, and to act in a political manner towards a rival group has meant, throughout all history – war.'[22] Above all, war was a tool of indoctrination, of securing loyalty, a commonly held sentiment that was echoed by Kropotkin himself in discussing the crushing of free cities by nation states. As he wrote, 'State is synonymous with war.'[23] Seen from this perspective, war and the state are one and the same.

Finally, war was seen as an extension of class struggle. It was the product of capitalism and imperialism, and the militaristic state was

an instrument of capitalist rule. Absolutely critical to this strand was the belief that war was no more than a tool for the exploitation of the working class of all nations and, therefore, could never be in their interests. This was not a moral objection to violence – after all the working class would have to use revolutionary violence to emancipate itself – but an outright opposition to war waged by the capitalist class in its own interests.

So where did Peter Kropotkin fit into the debate?

Goldman's 'gentlest of beings' was anything but a pacifist. He was a revolutionary and drew from both the second and third strands of anarchist anti-war thought. He saw the state as an inseparable alliance between an exploitative capitalist class and government power. They were partners in crime.[24] War was the product of capitalist imperialism, the competition for markets, and was maintained by the values of popular patriotism.[25] Even as late as 1914, in his pamphlet *War and Capitalism*, he adhered to this line, and his economic determinism was even more prominent.[26] Furthermore, he offered a sophisticated description of the military/industrial complex, allied to state power and driven by the needs of finance. He rejected liberal ideas and was scathing about 'pacifist dreams', while the pamphlet was a direct attack on the fashionable ideas of what was known as Angellism.[27]

Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion* was first published in 1909 and gained an enthusiastic following.[28] The argument of the book amounted to an updated version of the views of the free traders and a repudiation of the economic theory of imperialism. Angell thought that economic prosperity was no longer linked to the expansion of political power and national boundaries. This meant that, taken together with the destructive nature of modern military technology, war was no longer rational. Once people realised this to be true, they would abolish war. Kropotkin ridiculed this view. War was very much in the interest of the elite and the military/industrial complex. Its very survival depended on it. Besides, even if Angell was right, Kropotkin argued, statesmen still saw it as being in their interests and would act accordingly.[29] Seen through the eyes of those who hold state power, war seemed both rational and profitable.

Kropotkin's views on war were unexceptional within the anarchist movement and so when war broke out, his failure to join in with the anti-war agitation of the majority of his comrades shocked them. They had assumed that their shared critique of war and capitalism meant that there was only one response possible – to

oppose the war. However, Kropotkin was clear that once a war had broken out, everything changes. A position had to be taken. Unlike his opponents, the war had not taken him by surprise; he had long predicted it and he always knew it would have to be fought. And so he stood on principle against his colleagues. There was an interesting precedent as well, set a few years earlier during the Boer War.

The South African War of 1899–1902 was fought against the Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to bring them under British rule. While popular patriotism was aroused on one side, liberal opinion was outraged both by what appeared to be a piece of naked imperial expansion and by the methods used by the British. Confronting the guerrilla tactics of the Boers, the British had resorted to a scorched earth policy which involved rounding up civilians, mainly women and children, into concentration camps to deprive the fighters of support. The camps were a scandal. Inadequate food and shelter led to the deaths of more than twenty thousand inmates. Faced with such an atrocity, who could fail to be anti-war or, as they were known at the time, pro-Boer?

The answer came in a short book by the libertarian feminist, Josephine Butler. Butler is best known for her campaigns against the exploitation of prostitutes. I have written elsewhere[30] about her neglected libertarianism and her place on the fringes of the individualist and anarchist movements. Her book *Native Races and the War* placed the interests of black Africans at the centre of the war and by doing so opened out a different perspective.[31]

Butler's case was straightforward; a victory for the Boers would mark the enslavement of native Africans. The Boers' misuse of 'apprenticeships' was a device to overcome the British ban on slavery. Her book is filled with witnesses' accounts of the institutionalised racism of the Boers (including one by the anarchist geographer Elisée Reclus).[32] And so she saw the Boer War as the moral equivalent of the North's struggle against the slave-owning Confederacy in the American Civil War and her own campaign against the enslavement of women by prostitution. Britain had to be supported.

Butler was not arguing about war in general; instead it was the specific consequence of this particular war that concerned her. She was certain that the choice was between liberty and slavery, a fact only obvious if you abandoned a narcissistic concern with your own country and saw the war through the eyes of the native African population. It was something that few were willing to do. By supporting the war she found herself in the same camp as the jingoists, to the

horror of many of her colleagues, but perhaps she also touched a raw nerve. Some pro-Boers opposed the war because they were horrified that it was being waged against white Protestants.[33] It was her vehement anti-racism, rather than nationalism, that led Butler to support the British war effort. And with our knowledge of the barbarities of apartheid, we can see now that it was a strong argument. Yet she paid a high price for her stand in terms of hostility and isolation from old friends and colleagues. To the closed minds of the pro-Boers, her arguments for war were an attack on virtue.

For Peter Kropotkin it was German militarism, rather than Boer racism, that took centre stage and that led him to take an equivalent stance against the consensus of his peers fourteen years later.

Round one – the letter to Steffen

The outbreak of the First World War saw a proliferation of peace groups emerging from mainstream British political and campaigning organisations. They were a beleaguered minority in an overwhelmingly patriotic country, but still formed a substantial dissident movement. Anti-war anarchists were not isolated; they were a part of a broader peace movement. Their shock was palpable when Kropotkin published his letter to Steffen, rejecting all their presumptions; 'war cannot be combatted by pacifist dreams and all sorts of nonsense about war being so murderous now that it will be impossible in the future. Nor can it be combatted by that sort of antimilitarist propaganda which has been carried on till now.'[34] Kropotkin still saw social revolution as the only way of preventing war. But now that there actually was one, his was the language of priorities: 'But for the moment we must not lose sight of the main work of the day. The territories of both France and Belgium MUST be freed of the invaders. The German invasion must be repulsed – no matter how difficult this may be. All efforts must be directed that way.'[35]

Having opposed the state and war all his active life, it seemed startling for Kropotkin to support a coalition of states fighting a war. To other anarchists it looked like apostasy. So why did he reject the anti-war line of his colleagues? First, Kropotkin's anti-German sentiment cannot be discounted. Today Kropotkin would be accused of Germanophobia, and there would be some substance to the charge. His opponents were quick to pick up on it. But it has to be qualified. His antipathy was towards the German state and its use of Prussian militarism as its organising principle. He had long

warned of the aggressive nature of German foreign policy. And if Germany was the epitome of a militaristic state, opposing it was an act of anti-militarism, not just an expression of cultural prejudice. Once militarism is on the march, the only way to stop it is through armed resistance.

But what kind of resistance? Anarchists had been calling for working-class action or a popular insurrection against war. Kropotkin stated the obvious, that it was not going to happen, and, even if it did, it would be one-sided and rapidly crushed. If popular resistance was impossible, then to stand aside would only aid the aggressor. So, once war had broken out, there was only one position for an anti-militarist, to support the right of self-defence against aggression.[36]

These were the four pillars of Kropokin's position: anti-militarism, limits to popular resistance in wartime, the right of self-defence, and the belief that non-participation and non-intervention did not bring peace, but only aided an aggressor. It kicked up a storm. But his arguments were coherent and it was up to his detractors to answer them. The debate was fierce.

Errico Malatesta, the Italian exile whose friendship with Kropotkin was to be ruined by their disagreements, was the main protagonist. Unlike Kropotkin, Malatesta was unprepared for the war. He was instinctively anti-war and responded accordingly. He, and other revolutionary anarchists, were anything but representative of the mainstream peace movement, but as the dispute developed it became clear that they had absorbed many of the tropes and impulses of liberal pacific-ism. Their habits of thought were the same. What they had accepted and adapted to fit their preconceptions, Kropotkin had rejected. This became apparent as the dispute progressed. There could be no meeting of minds.

As Malatesta went on the attack, his obvious first target was what he referred to as Kropotkin's 'Franco-Russian patriotism',[37] his anti-German sentiments. It is a weak argument. An accusation of bad faith is not an answer to the substance of an argument, merely an attack on the motives of the person making it. The consequences of a possible German victory remained. So the only coherent counter-argument was that Kropotkin was wrong and that it did not matter who won, and that, in turn, leads to moral equivalence. The anti-war anarchist writer Guy Aldred took this line in his own journal, *The Spur*: 'If there is any difference between Germany and the other states, then it is only a difference of degree, but surely not a difference in the real spirit, which is the same in

all states.'[38] Malatesta agreed, and wrote in *Freedom* that 'Russo-English domination' would be as much a victory for militarism as German domination.[39] Kropotkin could not have disagreed more. He remained opposed to capitalism, supported a social revolution, but was aware that there was a qualitative difference between capitalism developed in an autocracy and one that evolved in liberal democracies. He rejected the language of equivalence.

Malatesta did not leave it there, and was aware that there was far more substance behind Kropotkin's position. Malatesta, too, was not a pacifist, acknowledging the right of self-defence, but remaining unable to reconcile himself to the capitalist state. He felt that supporting the war would be allying with the bourgeoisie and abandoning the class struggle. It would be a betrayal of principle. There was no option but to abstain; 'to leave them [the belligerent ruling classes] to their own devices', and for socialists and anarchists to 'stand aside to save at least their principles – which means to save the future'.[40] Kropotkin's response to such ideological purity was scathing. 'But to remain a bystander while a wicked and strong man gives blows to a weak one, is an unpardonable wickedness. *This is precisely what maintains all oppression*.'[41]

This is the kind of dilemma that every revolutionary faces in a crisis. Malatesta clung to his ideology: 'the only hope is revolution'.[42] He accused Kropotkin of putting 'the national question before the social question', and, instead of exhorting French and German workers to make a revolution, was horrified that 'Kropotkin could invite the workers to make common cause with Governments and masters'.[43] But what if such a revolution was not possible? Then Malatesta was committing the nirvana fallacy: he was calling for perfection rather than dealing with reality.

By 1915 the respective positions had entrenched. Kropotkin left *Freedom*, as much because of his own stubborn intolerance, and in March 1915 *Freedom* published the *International Anarchist Manifesto on the War*. The signatories included many of the leading lights of the anarchist movement – Malatesta, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, among others. The manifesto rested its arguments on moral equivalence. Both sides were capitalist, both militarist, and, it concluded, 'none of the belligerents is entitled to invoke the name of civilization or to declare itself in a state of legitimate defence'.[44] The only war was class war and the sole response of anarchists to the war was to call for the abolition of the state.

This outlook remained unshaken by the sinking of the passenger

liner *Lusitania* by a German submarine. The grief in anarchist circles was personal. One of the dead was Lothrop Withington, American friend and collaborator with the British individualist anarchist, Henry Seymour. Withington had taken an anti-war position and published occasional articles and some of his dreadful poetry in *Freedom*. *Freedom* editorialised about the sinking being a 'tragic consequence of war, for which not only Germany, but all governments are responsible', and went on to blame the British blockade.[45] This is a neat illustration as to how moral equivalence can lead to obfuscation about agency. Extended to its worst, which it was not here, it can go as far as blaming the victims.

Early in 1916, *Freedom* published a short piece by Otto Leroy called *The Bondage of False Ideas*, which showed how the open debate of 1914 was being closed down.

> The position of the man who wants to defeat the Germans and destroy militarism, whilst he ignores the militarism of England; who objects to war in general but then thinks that he is justified in making an exception in the case of this war, is too absurd to require any laboured refutation.[46]

Orthodoxy had descended. But at that moment Kropotkin was about to issue another challenge.

Round two – *The Manifesto of the Sixteen*

1916 was a crisis year in the war. Any hope of a quick victory had evaporated, casualties were appalling and Britain finally introduced conscription. A nationalist rising in Ireland questioned loyalty to the Empire. Opponents of the war turned from protest to practical action, with women being the first and most ambitious. The Women's International League met in The Hague in 1915 and, not content with passing resolutions, set out to end the war through their own private diplomacy. Travelling across a continent at war and meeting the foreign ministers of all the belligerent powers, they nearly succeeded in their aim of convening a conference of neutrals to mediate between the combatants.[47] This was followed later in the same year by a smaller socialist peace conference in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, and another convened in Stockholm in 1917, given impetus by the February revolution in Russia.[48]

Having spoken up in favour of the war against Germany, Kropotkin now moved against a peace deal. On 28 February 1916 he issued *The Manifesto of the Sixteen*; oddly carrying only fifteen

signatures and largely written by himself, it argued that peace moves were neither possible nor desirable. The current agitation for peace was being encouraged by Germany to weaken the Allies' resolve. If it was successful, Germany would try to consolidate its gains and use the respite to strengthen and prepare for the next war. Any hope of action by the German working-class movements or any perceptions of peaceful intent on behalf of German statesmen were illusions. German militarism had to be defeated and destroyed for good. The *Manifesto* concluded that 'To speak of peace while the party who, for forty-five years, have made Europe a vast, entrenched camp, is able to dictate its conditions, would be the most disastrous error that we could commit.'[49]

This time there was to be no open discussion in *Freedom*. The divisions were too deep, despite the genuine personal pain. To argue for war was bad enough, but against peace? Malatesta was dismissive. A military victory by either side would only embed militarism.[50] And if the revolution failed to occur, then efforts must be redoubled until such time as it did. He was taking the position that Lenin took at Zimmerwald; that only a social revolution could end the war. Kropotkin thought that it had to be ended by an Allied victory. Malatesta had gone up the blind alley of revolutionary abstention, a leftist version of Cobden and Bright's non-intervention; there was no chance of reconciliation between the old comrades.

Conclusion

Anarchist attitudes to peace were not formed in a vacuum. They too drew their views from the diverse peace movement. Unlike Kropotkin, they mainly approved of the movement's sentiments, if not always of its supporting analysis. Some anarchists clung to absolute pacifism, but most took their hostility to war from their critique of capitalism and the state. Although the peace movement's natural enemy was popular jingoism, it also had to deal with critical friends, a radical dissenting tradition that saw that war could be a just and necessary instrument of self-defence and popular liberation. When Peter Kropotkin made his stand in support of the Entente powers, it was from this tradition, a precedent wholly in keeping with his anarchism. The bitterness of the dispute showed that it touched raw ideological nerves.

His opponents' objection to the war rested on two presumptions. The first was humanitarian and the second ideological. It was not just disgust at the carnage of the trenches that appalled; it was the

brutalisation of society that accompanied it. Emma Goldman was particularly eloquent.

> But even more fearful is the effect of that holocaust upon the living. It has dehumanised and brutalised mankind, has injected the poison of hatred into our hearts, has roused man's worst instincts, made life cheap, and human safety and liberty of the smallest consideration. Intolerance and reaction are rampant ...[51]

This moral indignation cannot help but move. When contemplating the horrendous loss of life and the desolation of the bereaved, all humanitarian instincts cry out for peace. It made Kropotkin's belligerence appear, at best, amoral.

Yet, if the slaughter was so reprehensible, how was it to be stopped? Ideology determined the anti-war camp's response. Unable to countenance any collaboration with capitalist states, they argued for social revolution alone. It was not convincing. Kropotkin shared their ideology, yet his conclusions were the opposite. Why was this so? This is the crux of the dispute. The majority were unwavering. But while they adhered to their ideology consistently, Kropotkin held it as contingent. That is why he insisted that anarchists should take a different line after a war breaks out to the one they took in peacetime.

Kropotkin's position was not without problems. The opposition were quick to point out that he could end up strengthening his enemies, bolstering the state, boosting militarism and compromising his ideals. After all, he was now offering his support to the hated Russian autocracy. What is more, anti-war factions point to the fact that warfare can produce unexpected outcomes that undermine its purpose. The harm of war can outweigh its benefits. That calculation is central to the dispute. Kropotkin did not disagree; he did not support war in general. But in the case of this particular war, he judged that the benefits to humanity in the defeat of German militarism far exceeded the harm of a German victory. The real risk lay in leaving Germany unopposed. The idea of the moral equivalence of the combatants, which Kropotkin firmly rejected, led Malatesta inevitably to the opposite conclusion. Kropotkin's most pertinent points went unanswered. He had made some of the inherent contradictions of peace politics explicit, in the same way as they had been exposed by the response to the Bulgarian atrocities.

Kropotkin highlighted four main difficulties for anti-war anarchists. The first is that to stand aside from the conflict and adopt a stance of 'a plague on both your houses' meant that they had to treat

each side as moral equivalents, whether or not they were.[52] They had to insist that the outcome of the war was irrelevant to the international class struggle.[53] Moral equivalence easily slips into obfuscation about agency, wishful thinking, and even contorted apologia, anything to prevent reality undermining ideological consistency.[54]

The second is that non-intervention is not a neutral act. If a country has the power to act and choses to do nothing, then it is aiding the aggressor by removing an obstacle to that aggression. Abstention thereby supports the strong against the weak, abandoning them to their fate.[55] This is compounded when crimes against humanity are involved. Failing to stop genocide is not peace.

Thirdly, denying the legitimacy of self-defence by anything other than popular insurrection is to invite catastrophe. There are plentiful examples of desperate risings crushed by mechanised, disciplined armies with horrendous humanitarian consequences.[56]

Finally, adopting an impossible strategy to either stop the war or to end aggression is merely a declaration; it achieves nothing. If there is no reasonable chance of success, then such a policy is a badge of virtue and nothing more. It is self-indulgence rather than practical politics.

Anti-war activists could not see the war as anything other than imperialist slaughter. But to Kropotkin, this was a war with profound consequences and one that had to be won. In 1917, in his farewell letter to England, he wrote of a clash of civilisations, 'One of them – the Western one – striving to achieve Progress through a steady growth of its inner forces, economic and intellectual, and the other returning to the obsolete ideals of outward expansion and enrichment through conquest.'[57] His French ally, Jean Grave, was just as adamant about the need for complete victory. 'This fever of militarism must be the fall of militarism everywhere. But in order to arrive at this, Prussian militarism must first be destroyed. It must be disarmed, the German hordes must be driven back … humbled to the dust.'[58]

What is striking about both statements was their prescience. In the context of the First World War, whose history is far from settled, they appear extreme. But they are a precise description of Allied war aims in the Second World War. Kropotkin and Grave were a war too early for general acceptance. Their fears about the longer-term dangers of German militarism look more acute today with our knowledge of how the crisis of the interwar years brought the Nazis to power. It was not until the total defeat of fascism in 1945 that this spectre was finally laid to rest.

Whether Kropotkin was right or not about Wilhelmine Germany remains contentious. However, his contingency is important. It points away from dogma towards the need to make judgements on specific events at specific times. Judgement is inescapable. It should not be avoided through rigid adherence to predetermined ideas.

Kropotkin and his opponents shared the same hopes for a world remade, but they quarrelled bitterly about how to react to an unprecedented total war. The majority stood with the peace movement, but Kropotkin spoke from the principles of another radical tradition, solidarity with oppressed peoples and the victims of aggression; a desire to protect the weak and bring down tyrannies; to support self-determination and democratic aspirations; and, above all, to try and build a positive peace based on just social relations and the end of coercion by the state. This tradition is based on principled internationalism, active interventionism and the pragmatic building of broad alliances.

And today, as we make judgements about the crises and conflicts of our time, they are fine principles to stand by.

Notes

1 Peter Kropotkin, 'A Letter to Steffen', *Freedom*, October 1914, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/kropotkin/steffenletter.html (accessed 25 July 2015).
2 Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York: Dover 1970), p. 564.
3 For a good discussion of this and an explanation of the distinction between anti-militarism and pacifism, see Carissa Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition: Herbert Read, Alex Comfort and Colin Ward* (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 4–6, 11–16.
4 Ruth Kinna, *Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).
5 There are several variations based on both just cause and in the methods of waging war. The most commonly cited are that a just war is a last resort; is waged by a legitimate authority; has a just cause (to redress a wrong); is fought with right intention; has a reasonable chance of success; uses force that is proportional to the wrong being redressed; and protects civilians and non-combatants. For a stimulating discussion, see Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984).
6 Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm (accessed 10 February 2015).
7 A.C.F. Beales, *The History of Peace: A Short Account of the Organised Movements for International Peace* (London: G. Bell, 1931), pp. 45–6.

8 This ugly term was coined by A.J.P. Taylor in *The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy 1792–1939* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957). For easier reading, I have followed the hyphenation as used by Martin Ceadel, *Thinking about Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
9 Charles de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws, Book XX, 2, Of the Spirit of Commerce*, www.constitution.org/cm/sol_20.htm#002 (accessed 10 February 2015).
10 Beales, *The History of Peace*, p. 57.
11 Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, Section 1, Article 5.
12 David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, Part II Essay VI, Of the Jealousy of Trade*, www.econlib.org/library/LFBooks/Hume/hmMPL29.html (accessed 10 February 2015).
13 Michael Howard described it deliciously as 'smug, parochial and simplistic, making sweeping generalisations on the basis of minimal knowledge'. Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 32–3.
14 Paul Laity, *The British Peace Movement: 1870–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 44.
15 Reminiscent of the contortions of the British Stop the War Coalition, which initially supported the Libyan Revolution in 2011 only to campaign vociferously against the NATO air campaign that prevented the revolution being crushed.
16 This was a ubiquitous cliché at the time. For a contemporary example, see William Pollard's defence of the Peace Society against the charge in an article in *Fraser's Magazine*, October 1880. William Pollard, 'The Peace-at-any-Price Party (By a Member of the Peace Society)', *Fraser's Magazine*, 610 (October 1880), pp. 490–500, http://search.proquest.com/docview/2617613 (accessed 24 September 2015).
17 Martin Ceadel referred to this position as 'crusading', but I am uncomfortable with this, given its historical association and current misuse by jihadists to describe Western military actions.
18 Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement* (London: Blackwell, 1981). She referred to this particular strand of feminism as a 'notion of female superiority that was accepted not only by women but by many of their male supporters' (p. 84).
19 See Anne Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War* (London: Pandora, 1985).
20 Leo Tolstoy, *Writings on Civil Disobedience and Nonviolence* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1987).
21 Leo Tolstoy, *What Then Must We Do*, trans. Aylmer Maude (Bideford: Green Books, 1991).
22 Randolph Bourne, *The State* (The Perfect Library, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 11 July 2015), p. 10.
23 Peter Kropotkin, *The State: Its Historic Role* (London: Freedom Press,

1946), section 7, digitised version retrieved from Anarchy Archives, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/kropotkin/state/state_toc.html (accessed 28 September 2015).

24 Peter Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism*, in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets: A Collection of Writings by Peter Kropotkin*, ed. Roger N. Baldwin (New York: Dover Books, 1970).

25 Peter Kropotkin, *War!* (London: International Publishing Company, 1886).

26 Peter Kropotkin, *War and Capitalism* (London: Freedom Press, 1914).

27 Although he never mentions Angell by name, the arguments are clearly directed against Angell's assumptions.

28 Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/38535 (accessed 24 February 2015).

29 Kropotkin, *War and Capitalism*, p. 19.

30 Peter Ryley, *Making Another World Possible: Anarchism, Anti-capitalism and Ecology in late 19th and Early 20th Century Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 55–60.

31 Josephine E. Butler, *Native Races and the War* (London: Gay & Bird, 1900).

32 Butler, *Native Races and the War*, pp. 64–6.

33 James Hinton, *Protests and Visions: Peace Politics in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), pp. 16–17.

34 Kropotkin, 'A Letter to Steffen'.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 *Freedom*, XXVIII.308 (December 1914).

38 *The Spur*, 1.9 (March 1915).

39 *Freedom*, XXVIII.307 (November 1914).

40 Ibid.

41 *Freedom*, December 1914 (emphasis in the original).

42 *Freedom*, November 1914.

43 *Freedom*, December 1914.

44 *Freedom*, XXIX.311 (March 1915). This would have come as news to the Belgians.

45 *Freedom*, XXIX.312 (April 1915).

46 *Freedom*, XXX.322 (February 1916).

47 The full story is told in Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women*.

48 For a discussion of the socialist peace movement, see F.L. Carsten, *War against War: British and German Radical Movements in the First World War* (London: Batsford, 1982).

49 I have used Shawn P Wilbur's translation throughout, taken from his website: http://libertarian-labyrinth.blogspot.gr/2011/05/manifesto-of-sixteen-1916.html (accessed 27 July 2015).

50 *Freedom*, XXX.324 (April 1916).

51 Emma Goldman, *A Woman without a Country* (Sanday: Cienfuegos Press, 1970), p. 4.

52 This can go as far as blaming one's own side regardless of the facts. This is a feature of some of the modern peace movement, but was just as apparent in the First World War. For example, Clifford Allen foreshadowed his future support for appeasement and apologetics for Hitler with his pamphlet, *Is Germany Right and Britain Wrong? A Reprint of a Speech* (London: Independent Labour Party, 1914).

53 This question arose in the Cold War when the argument that there was nothing to choose between the capitalist West and the Stalinist East was commonplace on the left and in the peace movement. Dwight Macdonald answered it unequivocally with his declaration, 'I choose the West'. He wrote, 'I choose the West because I see the present conflict not as another struggle between basically similar imperialisms as was World War I but as a fight between radically different cultures. In the West, since the Renaissance and the Reformation, we have created a civilization which puts a high value on the individual, which has to some extent replaced dogmatic authority with scientific knowledge, which since the 18th century has progressed from slavery and serfdom to some degree of political liberty, and which has produced a culture which, while not as advanced as that of the ancient Greeks, still has some appealing features. I think Soviet Communism breaks sharply with this evolution, that it is a throwback not to the relatively human Middle Ages but to the great slave societies of Egypt and the Orient.' Dwight Macdonald, *The Root is Man* (New York: Autonomedia, repr. 1995 [1946]), http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dwight-macdonald-the-root-is-man (accessed 3 March 2014).

54 *Freedom* has a good example of an attempt to delegitimise the defence of Belgium in an article by G. Marin, which uses unattributed anecdotal evidence to portray Belgian refugees as anti-war, claiming that they said that annexation by Germany was preferable to war. *Freedom*, April 1915.

55 As was argued by George Orwell in his 1942 essay, 'Pacifism and the War', when he wrote, 'Pacifism is objectively pro-Fascist. This is elementary common sense. If you hamper the war effort of one side you automatically help that of the other.' www.orwell.ru/library/articles/pacifism/english/e_patw (accessed 2 March 2015).

56 I cannot help thinking of the Warsaw Rising in 1944 with its desperate courage, appalling death toll, and the razing of the city to the ground by the Nazis, even if, by then, the eventual defeat of the Nazis was certain.

57 *The Times*, 8 June 1917, p. 6.

58 *Freedom*, November 1914.

3

Malatesta and the war interventionist debate 1914–17: from the 'Red Week' to the Russian revolutions

Carl Levy

This chapter will examine Errico Malatesta's position on intervention in the First World War. The background to the debate is the anti-militarist and anti-dynastic uprising which occurred in Italy in June 1914 (*La Settimana Rossa*) in which Malatesta was a key actor. But with the events of July and August 1914, the alliance of socialists, republicans, syndicalists and anarchists was rent asunder in Italy as elements of this coalition supported intervention on the side of the Entente and the disavowal of Italy's treaty obligations under the Triple Alliance.

Malatesta's dispute with Kropotkin provides a focus for the anti-interventionist campaigns he fought internationally, in London and in Italy.[1] This chapter will conclude by examining Malatesta's discussions of the unintended outcomes of world war and the challenges and opportunities that the fracturing of the antebellum world posed for the international anarchist movement.

Globalised syndicalism, insurrection, imperialism and the shadow of world war

Between 1905 and 1914 the combination of a revived (libertarian) syndicalist movement, anti-militarism and anti-imperialism raced around the globe (in the North and the South), propelling anarchism to the forefront of the international left. A new era opened when a war-weakened Russia nearly succumbed to a direct action movement of soviets in 1905, and a call-up of Spanish soldiers to fight the Berbers in Morocco's Rif Mountains sparked Barcelona's 'Tragic Week' in 1909. Industrial unrest exploded in the USA, in the UK, in Sweden and in Latin America: the Mexican Revolution

had a strong anarchist inflection.[2] New forms of Marxism, whether Rosa Luxemburg's or Lenin's, theorised the importance of the mass strike or direct action, and did not merely rely upon the ballot: the position that had caused the expulsion of the anti-parliamentary socialists and anarchists at the London Conference of the Second International in 1896, where Malatesta played a prominent role in the defeated opposition.[3]

This new era was announced as early as 1902, when Malatesta wrote an article from London entitled 'Lo Sciopero armato' [The armed strike].[4] The incessant drum-beat of imperial adventure, rearmament, inflation and mass anti-militarist direct action reached a crescendo in Italy with *La Settimana Rossa* (Red Week) in Italy in June 1914, when Malatesta, a key player in the strategically located anarchist stronghold of Ancona, threatened the institutional integrity of Italy's Savoyard monarchy. For a few brief days a powerfully effective broad coalition of all the elements of the subversive Italian left challenged the established authorities. The background to this general strike-cum-insurrection was the Libyan War, which broke out in late 1911. As the Ottoman Empire faltered under pressure from the Libyans, the Balkan Wars were ignited, setting off a chain of events which led to the July crisis of 1914, world war and the realignment of left-wing politics.[5]

From his London exile, Malatesta quickly realised that the Libyan War would destabilise the Giolittian system and increase opportunities for the Italian extra-parliamentary left. When Malatesta arrived back in Italy 1913 he sought to cement an anti-dynastic alliance of radical republicans, rebel socialists within the Italian Socialist Party (led by the young journalist firebrand, Benito Mussolini), syndicalists and anarchists. The powerful mobilising symbolism of anti-militarism married to general industrial unrest thrust anti-statism on to the left's agenda. The melding of different and sometimes confusing rebel movements into one broad subversive coalition was an Italian version of Malatesta's recent experience with the British 'syndicalist revolt'.[6]

After the Red Week protest collapsed with the failure of the mainstream socialist and trade unionist leadership to rally to the cause, Malatesta remained underground in Italy until the end of the month. On 20 June 1914, he proclaimed his satisfaction with the recent uprising: 'Who can say now that the revolution is impossible and that popular insurrection is the stuff of '48?'[7] However, Malatesta stressed that next time revolutionaries would have to have a pre-established plan to guide such popular movements.

From Vienna, Max Nettlau wrote on 22 June 1914 to Thomas Keell of London's *Freedom* expressing his admiration for his friend, but admitting concern that the old agitator might be gravely endangered. Typically, Nettlau, the historian, was dismayed that Malatesta's personal papers had been seized, and on reviewing his life he wrote:

> This is the same Malatesta 40 years ago, in 1874, when he went with a band to the Apulian mountains, to Castel del Monte, and later travelling to Switzerland to join Bakunin, was arrested at the rail junction of Pesaro and the revolt of 1874 has striking similarities with that of 1914 …
>
> In some parts of Italy it was a real revolution where the people for some days held their own – remember only what happened in Catalonia in Ferrer's days (1909) and Russia before and after October.[8]

Malatesta hid in the home of a 'good monarchist' in Ancona until he was smuggled clandestinely via San Marino to Milan for Como, crossing the border at Chiasso and onwards to Geneva, Paris and London. He was back in his Arthur Street flat in Soho by the very end of June.[9]

In an interview with Alfred Rosmer, Malatesta explained the truly revolutionary proportions of the rising in the Marches. Ancona had briefly been in the hands of the insurgents, the old order had been shaken and a completely new one had replaced the old way of doing things. But the anarchists, he explained, did not propose the immediate expropriation of wealth; rather they attempted to run the city autonomously, relying on assistance from local peasants and merchants to feed the population.[10] The London-based anarchist *Voice of Labour* reported a brief interview with Malatesta, in which he angrily denounced the socialists and their affiliated trade union organisations for defusing the situation. But he promised to return to Italy 'to keep alive the workers' movement'.[11] In the July edition of *Freedom* Malatesta finally presented his own short account of the revolt. While maintaining his strong criticisms of the reformists, he was honest enough to admit the limitations of spontaneous protest. 'If it had not been for the betrayal of the Confederation,' he concluded, 'we could not yet have made the revolution for the lack of necessary preparation and understanding and a much greater importance.'[12] He added this optimistic parting observation:

> In every way these events have proved that the mass of the people hate the present order; that the workers are disposed to make use of all opportunities to overthrow the Government; and that when

> the fight is directed against the common enemy – that is to say the Government and the bourgeoisie – all are brothers, though the names Socialist, Anarchist, Syndicalist, or Republican may seem to divide them.

Within a month world war would unravel Malatesta's short-lived *fronte unico*.

Malatesta and the war interventionist debate: the view from London

For most of July Malatesta was ill. He wrote to Luigi Fabbri at the beginning of August that the life of his friend Emilia Defendi had lain in the balance for several days.[13] But the July crisis and the gathering war clouds had not passed him by. Malatesta admitted to Rudolf Rocker that the *attentat* at Sarajevo might have serious consequences, but he still discounted the threat of a major war.[14] The successive months were probably some of Malatesta's most trying and disheartening. Not only did the outbreak of war shatter his remaining illusions about the Second International, but the patriotic responses from within the anarchist camp destroyed some of his most enduring relationships. While it is true that the rank and file of the national anarchist movements remained faithful to their anti-militarist and internationalist beliefs, many of the most celebrated international personalities declared in favour of war. The unity of the London exile community was shattered. Many German anarchists returned to fight for the Kaiser. The French anarchists rushed to support the *Union sacrée*.[15] From Vienna, Nettlau, in a grotesque correspondence with the Freedom group, supported the Habsburgs' duty to defend the Empire from the Slav threat.[16] Malatesta's discussion group was divided when Fernando Tarrida del Mármo, Riccardo Mella, Kropotkin and Varlaam Cherkesov came out openly and fervently for the Entente. From Paris Charles Malato and Christian Corneilsson endorsed their position. At least until late 1915 the *Garibaldino* instincts of most of the London Italian anarchist colony drew them towards the Entente. Silvio Corio gave Henry Hyndman's jingoist *Justice* a pro-war interview in March and also contributed articles to Mussolini's pro-interventionist *Popolo d'Italia*.[17] The sensitive Belgian anarchist art critic Jacques Mesnil at first endorsed the war, after fleeing from the destruction in his homeland. Writing to Fabbri in 1915, he simply thought that a German victory would destroy the liberal civilisation of

England in which anarchists such as Malatesta had been granted asylum.[18]

Despite his weakened health and serious illness in his family, Malatesta immediately launched a bitter campaign against Kropotkin's unalloyed Francophilism. Malatesta struggled to preserve anarchist internationalism in a Britain already at war, but he simultaneously directed his thoughts to Italy which would not enter the war until May 1915.

Within a month, two leading newspapers of the Italian anarchist movement, *Volontà* (the newspaper Malatesta edited in Ancona in 1913–14) and *Il Libertario* (La Spezia), were showing signs of confusion; uncertain how to respond to a possible Austrian invasion of Italy. A 1915 anarchist conference was postponed as the left attempted to hold back the interventionist campaign, now being guided by some of the heroes of June 1914.[19] In an interview in *The Voice of Labour* in September 1914, Emidio Recchioni (a close associate of Malatesta in London)[20] claimed that most of the Italian population was opposed to war, but had to admit that 'even among some individual anarchists there is a sentimental idea that the allies are to some extent fighting for civilisation against militarism …'

Malatesta began his campaign in the autumn of 1914. By October he was debating with Italian interventionists in Soho and lending support to the anti-war Jewish anarchists in the East End.[21] The destruction of the Freedom group and the bitter quarrel between Malatesta and Kropotkin were the most dramatic events of these first months of war.[22] The cause of the rupture of this anarchist fellowship can be traced to a consistent Francophilism on Kropotkin's part. In 1882 Kropotkin made his position quite clear: 'Bismarck knows,' he wrote in a newspaper article,

> that on the day on which the alliance of people of the Latin race take place, German supremacy will be at an end. He understands that the principle of the almighty State will also be done away with whose faithful expression and final vanguard at this moment is Germany – the monarchical as well as the republican, and the republican as well as social democrat. An almighty State, even if it wore republican colours can satisfy neither France, nor Italy, and even less Spain. Therefore, the alliance of the Latin peoples is the nightmare which presses on Germany against which Bismarck works.[23]

Seventeen years later Kropotkin repeated the same theme. In 1899 he wrote:

> The triumph of Germany was the triumph of militarism in Europe, of militarism and political despotism, and at the same time the worship of the State, of authority and State socialism, which is in reality nothing but State capitalism triumphant in the ideas of a whole generation.[24]

By the early twentieth century Kropotkin, it has been noted, exhibited a habitual 'mitigated French patriotism'.[25]

Malatesta had recognised these disturbing tendencies in his comrade's behaviour for a long time, but kept quiet before the war for fear of dividing the movement and discrediting one of its foremost talents. 'I confess,' he wrote in a pained letter to *Freedom* in December 1914, 'that we were in the wrong not giving importance to his Franco-Russian patriotism, and not foreseeing where his anti-German prejudices would land him.'[26] Just before his death, Malatesta wrote a long article on the tenth anniversary of Kropotkin's passing. He recalled his friend's conversion to war as a real pathological case and one of the saddest 'and most tragic events of my life (and I dare say one of his) in which after a decidedly painful discussion, we separated as adversaries, almost enemies'.[27]

Kropotkin openly declared his views in the October 1914 issue of *Freedom*. In November the anarchist-inspired Milanese *Università popolare* reported that Malatesta had severely criticised Kropotkin's position. In December the Italian anarchists learned of Malatesta's position from a letter he sent to Mussolini's *Popolo d'Italia* refuting rumours that he had joined the interventionists, which also appeared in *Avanti!*, the main newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI).[28] Two bitter events precipitated the final break in the anarchist ranks.

At the end of October Rudolf Rocker and the entire German anarchist community were arrested. Rocker was placed in detention in the Olympia exhibition hall in west London, then on the *Royal Edward* prison ship (later sunk during the landing at Gallipoli) in the Thames and finally in Alexandra Palace in north London for the duration of the war.[29] Rocker had worried about this possibility soon after war was declared. But Malatesta, somewhat out of character, relied on the good sense of the British authorities. 'You're alright Rudolf,' he reassured Rocker. 'Nobody will suspect you of spying for the Kaiser. They won't touch you.'[30] Proved wrong, Malatesta forever linked Rocker's incarceration with Kropotkin's interventionist betrayal; shortly after his arrest Rocker wrote a long refutation of Kropotkin's position in the Yiddish *Arbeter Fraynd*.

The second event involved the chief personalities of pre-war London anarchism in another bitter and personal debate. In the autumn just before Rocker was interned, Cherkesov, Keell, Alexander Schapiro, Malatesta and other Freedom group members met in London to discuss the war. Kropotkin was too frail to make the trip from Brighton, so Cherkesov deputised for him. Rocker recalled that Cherkesov started the debate with a furious defence of the war.

> Malatesta couldn't contain himself. He kept angrily interrupting Tcherkesov, who had been his intimate friend for many years. He said this war like any other war was being fought for the interests of the ruling class, not of the nations. It would be different if the workers of France and Britain had fought for their countries, and had won, to introduce a new social order. But now it was different, and whichever side the workers fought on they were only cannon-fodder. Malatesta agreed that a victory for Germany would lead to a general reaction in Europe, but he argued that a victory for the Allies would bring a clericalist and royalist reaction which would overthrow the Republic. He said that he too wanted a German defeat, but for different reasons than Kropotkin and Tcherkesov. A German defeat would start a revolution in Germany which would spread to other countries. The rest of the comrades expressed similar views. At this meeting Tcherkesov stood alone.[31]

Two manifestos and a new realignment (beyond the Red Week of 1914 and a return to Malatesta's line of 1896)

In November 1914 Malatesta published an impassioned article in *Freedom*, repeating the argument he had voiced privately ('Anarchists have forgotten their principles'). He foresaw a long inconclusive war with 'an enormous loss of life and wealth, both sides being exhausted', followed 'by some kind of peace … leaving all questions open, thus preparing for a new war more murderous than the present'. In March 1915 he signed the *International Anarchist Manifesto on the War*, published in *Freedom*. His name appeared beside 33 others, many London exiles, as well as Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman and Bertoni – who would suffer imprisonment for their beliefs.

> Europe in a blaze, twelve million men engaged in the most frightful butchery that history has ever recorded; millions of women and children in tears; the economic, intellectual and moral life of seven great peoples brutally suppressed, and the conflict becoming every day more pregnant with new military complications – such is, for seven

> months the painful, agonising, and hateful spectacle presented by the civilised world.[32]

After Italy entered the war on the side of the Allies in June 1915, Malatesta published a post-mortem of the ill-fated Italian anti-interventionist campaign. He turned his sharpest words against the former allies of the June days – the Republicans and left-wing interventionists (Mussolini's socialists, the syndicalists and anarchists).

> They have done their utmost to resuscitate in the masses the old idea of patriotism, which was developed in the time when national independence seemed to be the means for attaining emancipation from poverty and bondage, and which had decayed in consequence of the experience that a national Government is as bad as a foreign one. They raised the cry 'War or Revolution', and when the King, perhaps to save himself from the revolution has declared war, they have put themselves in the mass at the service of the King. What, then, about the Republic? Many of them still say that they want a war in order to facilitate the revolution; but what nonsense! If Italy is victorious, certainly it will be to the exclusive advantage of the Monarchy; and, on the other hand, we cannot conceive that the Republicans would be capable of the infamy of pushing the people into war with the secret hope that they will be beaten and their country invaded and devastated.[33]

Malatesta settled down to a long brutal war. 'It is astonishing and humiliating,' he wrote in this article, 'to see how easily the masses can be deceived by the coarsest lies.' Malatesta had always believed that the possible advantages a war might produce for a revolutionary – a weakened state and a radicalised population – were offset by the inherent authoritarianism it produced in the masses. In an interview in the Catalan anarchist newspaper *Tierra e Libertad*, Malatesta emphasised the 'inexhaustible obedience and servility of the most humiliated, of the flock-like spirit, of a popular soul which revealed a discouraging fatalism and with the resignation of peoples led to massacre. No protest! No spark of rebellion!'[34]

In the spring of 1916 Malatesta finally burned his remaining bridges with the pro-war anarchists. Throughout 1915 Kropotkin maintained a correspondence with the pro-war French anarchists, and in early 1916 Jean Grave came over to Brighton to formulate their *Manifesto of the Sixteen* which unreservedly endorsed the unconditional defeat of the Central Powers. The signatories to the *Manifesto* were 'slight in numbers if not names': Malato, Cherkesov, Jean Winstch, Cornelisessen, Jean-Louis Pindy and Grave were the most illustrious; nine French citizens, two Russians.[35] It was

circulated in the pro-war socialist, syndicalist and bourgeois press in France and Britain. The *Manifesto* merely confirmed the split which existed in the anarchist movement; nevertheless it raised ill-feeling to irreconcilably shrill tones. The deep loathing for German civilisation which it expressed had always lain close to the surface of the Francophile libertarian left even before the war. Cherkesov, for instance, had written to Jean Grave in the autumn of 1914 anticipating the harsh tenor of the *Manifesto*'s words: he told Grave that the war needed to be followed to its logical conclusion and that it was necessary that 'the Germans were beaten, annihilated, humiliated … let, this time, the Allies bring devastation and massacre to that nation of spies, butchers, and professional murderers'.[36]

In 'Pro-Government Anarchists', Malatesta denounced the *Manifesto*, which demanded 'a fight to a finish and the crushing of Germany'. The signatories, Malatesta continued, 'take their stand against the idea of "premature" peace'. He could understand how republicans, socialists and 'labourists' were capable of supporting a militarised state, but such behaviour 'is incomprehensible in the case of "the Anarchists"'. Echoing the cry of the Clydeside Shop Stewards Movement, he exploded: 'in the hope of crushing Prussianised England and France; they have submitted themselves to Tsarism; they have restored the prestige of the tottering throne of Italy'. The *Manifesto* was nothing less than 'criminal' since it added to those forces which desired a prolongation of the war. One year before the Russian revolutions and the US entry into the war unsettled the stalemate, Malatesta made a ringing if pious demand: 'Peace ought to be imposed by bringing about the Revolution or least threatening to do so. To the point in time, the strength or skill was wanting.'[37]

The dispute against the pro-war anarchists was carried into Italy. In June 1916 a long anonymous pamphlet (*La Guerra europea e gli anarchici* [The European war and the anarchists]) appeared. Luigi Fabbri wrote the document, Malatesta may have contributed suggestions, and it was printed by Turinese anarchists in the suburbs of 'Italy's Clydeside'. The pamphlet not only denounced the pro-war anarchists, but it also – *sotto voce* – warned anarchists against too close ties with pacifists and anti-war statist socialists, although Malatesta's contacts in London, Paris and Milan tended towards such an accommodation. The intransigence in this pamphlet approached Lenin's earlier appeal 'to turn the imperialist war into a civil war'.

> Our behaviour has nothing in common with the pacifism of the philanthropic bourgeoisie and is clearly differentiated from the neutralism of the authoritarian socialists – we are not neutralists, but are hostile to either alliances of States and completely independent from the two solutions, in as much as we remain on the terrain of revolutionary libertarian action against the statist bourgeoisie, either if they prosecute the war or if they reach a peace.[38]

For the remainder of the war neither Malatesta's nor Fabbri's positions were so impossibly sectarian. Contacts with the French anarchist movement revealed attempts to ally with the very bourgeois pacifist intellectuals denounced in the Turinese pamphlet. For example, the Groupe des *Temps nouveaux* adopted a moderate position until 1916, appealing for a rapid peace based on no territorial annexations or financial reparations for either bloc. Similarly, Pierre Martin's Amis du *Libertaire* appealed to all anti-war forces and after the autumn 1915 Zimmerwald Congress, the Groupe des *Temps nouveaux* created a 'Comité pur la Reprise des Relations Internationales', republishing Malatesta's 'Pro-Government Anarchists' as a pamphlet.

This ecumenical approach by the French was represented by Sebastian Faure's *Ce qu'il faut dire* (1916) and *L'Avenir internationale*, both of which would be more accurately described as anti-war journals rather than as strictly anarchist.[39] Malatesta may have had doubts but he remained in frequent contact with these groups. He had assisted in the Freedom group's recently established International Anarchist Committee of Action which gradually established a communications network with the Swiss, German and Italian anarchist communities in Zurich, Faure's circle in Paris and the Italian Comitato di Azione Anarchica in Rome. From London and Switzerland the Italian exiles smuggled leaflets into Italy and formed an 'underground railway' to help deserters escape from the Italian army.[40] Although warned by the British authorities to stay out of anti-war activities, Malatesta and other Italian anarchists helped Italians to avoid being registered for service in the Italian army.[41]

Meanwhile the syndicalists were also seeking to re-establish international contacts. Armando Borghi had circulated the anti-war syndicalists in the summer of 1915 and throughout 1916 he rallied the *minorité* in the French metalworkers union and the Vie ouvière group to oppose the pro-Allied conventions of trade unionists scheduled to convene in Leeds in November 1916. By 1916, and stretching into 1917, complex negotiations were underway between

the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and the libertarian left (since the PSI never formally endorsed Italian entry into the war), with the Italian anarchist exiles playing an important role. From 1916 the Italian authorities believed that the 'rigid' faction within the PSI would soon create an insurrectional alliance with the anarchists and the USI (Unione Sindacale Italiana). The rising in Turin during late August 1917 and the well-known meeting of the 'rigids' in Florence (including a much overshadowed young Antonio Gramsci) that autumn reinforced the fears of the Italian government.[42] Malatesta also met Italian socialists in London from the centre and left of the party.[43] But as I have shown elsewhere, even in favourable territory such as Turin, the young Gramsci and his comrades in 1917–18 established obstacles to complete fusion.[44] For their part, the anarchist leadership never agreed to a formal amalgamation with the socialists, which would inevitably have meant the domination of the new organisation by the numerically superior partner. Writing to Mesnil in 1918, Fabbri explained to the Belgian anarchist, now a member of the French Socialist Party that, in Italy 'we maintain a sympathetic and courteous and also cooperative attitude with the socialists in all those things that we have in common with their ideas and ours, but without attempting to join them or they joining us'.[45]

In this context, from 1916 to 1917 Malatesta's spirit revived as the stalemate of war brought a new realignment of the anti-war radical and pacifist socialists, anarchists and syndicalists, re-energised through the rise of the shop stewards, factory council and soviet movements from Glasgow to Turin and from Berlin to St Petersburg. Malatesta knew many of the militants in the new movements from the pre-war syndicalist revolt; indeed some had been active in the Malatesta Committee, which had prevented his deportation to Italy in 1912.[46] Recchioni's article published in September 1915 in *Freedom* was prescient. Recchioni predicted a new *fronte unico* along new lines of political demarcation which the war had begun to create – one which would eradicate the division between certain anti-war followers of the socialism of the Second International and the pariahs of the Second International, the anarchists and syndicalists.

> On one side will be those who advocate the continuation of the 'sacred union' with the Liberal and Democratic parties and with the State. There will be a Radical party of reform in Germany and so in France and Italy especially, where the new party will join the Republicans, Reformist Socialists and some Syndicalists. On the

> other hand, there will be those who will continue to fight capitalism on the old basis of the *lutte de classe*, or 'class consciousness', but their Parliamentary and legal action has proved a failure now more than ever, they (together with the trade organisations, will in all countries turn to revolutionary Syndicalism, if we act quickly), if they are really bona fide, change towards, direct action their line in their struggle, that is, towards the Anarchist method, the very method they have for many years opposed.[47]

But the prehistory of the Third International must also note the mutual suspicion of socialists and libertarians towards an amalgamation of forces. Thus the Zimmerwald (1915) and Kienthal (1916) Congresses received a mixed response from the Italian anarchist leadership. The Italian anarchists organised a nationwide clandestine congress in Ravenna during August 1916 to discuss, among other things, the movement's attitude towards a new socialist international. One key anarchist, Pasquale Binazzi of *La Spezia*, predicted a new era of cordial relations between anarchists and socialists. He envisaged an international organisation open to all working-class internationalists which would replace the discredited, exclusively parliamentary Second International.

Binazzi's conception of the new international (a return to Recchioni circa 1915) circulated throughout the Italian left in 1916–17. In Turin a leading working-class 'rigid' socialist, Pietro Rabbezzani, argued on May Day 1916 that he looked forward to a New Union of the Labourers of the World, based on anti-parliamentary syndicalist principles as the successor to the discredited Second International. And in December 1917, Spartaco Lavagnini, a 'rigid' socialist railwayman from Florence, defended a similar conception of the International, linking it with Malatesta's anti-parliamentarian position at the London Congress of 1896, and as we shall see, Malatesta's intervention in the USI's *Guerra di classe* the previous month, albeit the Florentine's line was disowned by more sectarian maximalist socialists such as Giacinto Menotti Serrati, Amadeo Bordiga and Gramsci.[48]

From London 1896 *redux* to the challenge of the soviets (1916–17): the balance of power and world revolution

Before the Russian Revolution broke out Malatesta persisted in believing that Germany was the weak link among the warring states. On New Year's Day 1916, he visited Rocker at the Alexandra Palace internment camp, and expressed the opinion

that the Germans would not be able to withstand the British naval blockade much longer. German defeat would mean the collapse of the *Kaiserreich* and social revolution would spread rapidly to other war-weary countries. Europe was bleeding to death; it was not a question of victors or vanquished. But he added, 'if America came into the war things would turn out differently. Then Germany's defeat would be overwhelming. She would be crushed.' France would experience a clerical-nationalist revival lasting five or ten years and European revolution would be postponed for a long time to come.[49] In April 1917 on another visit to Rocker, Malatesta had changed markedly. The Russian Revolution had broken out and it surprised and invigorated the old veteran. 'The Russian Revolution had given the old rebel new courage and hope,' Rocker recalled.

> He was straining at the leash to go to Russia to serve the Revolution. The British Government had refused permission for him to leave the country. But he hoped to get out some other way. There was an International Socialist Congress being organised in Stockholm. He expected that he would be sent there as delegate, and then he would try to make his way to Russia from Sweden.[50]

Malatesta was now more optimistic about European revolution. But he realised that it depended on the delicate balance between American power and the ability of the Russians to weaken the Germans sufficiently to cause unrest in central Europe.[51] Malatesta was not ignorant of the logic of the balance of power. Rocker explained: 'It all depended, he said, on Russia. If the Russians could hold the Germans back long enough there would be a revolution in Germany and Austria. If that didn't happen then the arrival of the American armies in France would end the war before the next Spring.'[52]

Malatesta was wrong. Russia under the Bolsheviks left the war in early spring 1918 and Germany mounted a menacing drive on Paris that was broken by the British and the French: the Americans were only fully mobilised in the spring of 1918 and between then and the Armistice of November 1918 they helped break German resistance.[53] In any case, in June 1917 the USI selected Malatesta as its delegate for the never to be convened Stockholm peace conference. All the Allied powers refused to grant passports. Malatesta's movements were closely monitored by the British and his correspondence with Borghi was opened. The Italian authorities noted that Malatesta was on very good terms with the Russian socialist exile community in London, especially the Bolsheviks, with personal

ties to Georgii Chicherin and Maxim Litvinov.[54] But even now this was an alliance of convenience: as noted already, Malatesta's thoughts about a new International, based on his principles of 1896, did not go down well with the socialist leadership in Italy. Malatesta's Mondiale, he explained to the readers of *Guerra di classe* in November 1917, would include all the socialists, anarchists and syndicalists who had remained faithful to internationalist principles, all those who had stuck to the principle of class struggle and had not become instruments of their bourgeois governments. La Mondiale, however, was not merely to be syndicalist-oriented as some of the left interpreted it, and Malatesta was quick to distance himself from any suggestion that he favoured another attempt to revive pre-war efforts at founding a syndicalist International, since the corporatism of trade unionism had been open to the seduction of collaboration with wartime governments. La Mondiale was neither parliamentarian nor syndicalist in conception. It would, Malatesta believed, inspire and coordinate the nationally based rebellions of war-weary workers without forcing a variety of movements to conform to a guiding political ideology.[55] But from the autumn of 1917 a new realignment of forces gathered pace, which used the energy of the anti-war mavericks (the anarchists, syndicalists, the maximalist libertarian-tinged socialists, and the first 'apolitical' vaguely libertarian supporters of the soviets) and reinstated the Marxist dictum of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. From 1918, the challenge of Bolshevism caused Malatesta to revisit his youthful support of Bakunin in his battle with Marx during the First International, and thus the rebirth of a 'Red Week' alliance nationally or internationally between 1917 and 1921 was quickly overshadowed by the monopolist imperatives of the Bolshevik Third International.[56]

Conclusion: Malatesta, Kropotkin and the challenges of world war: the fate of antebellum anarchism

This chapter has illustrated the apparent gulf between the positions of Kropotkin and Malatesta, but it is my contention that both men shared many unspoken assumptions. I will tease out the implications in this conclusion.

What did they share in common? Even after their rupture they shared similar sociological first premises. If, as we shall see, differing takes on realism and the international scene in 1914 divided Malatesta and Kropotkin, the realities of Bolshevik authoritari-

anism after 1917 alienated them both from the outcomes of the October Revolution, which had destroyed the non-sectarian 'soviet-ist' kernel of earlier revolutionary events in 1917 itself. Malatesta shared Lenin's use of John Hobson's interpretation of modern imperialism and, like Lenin, used the mobilising counter-dynamics of imperialism and militarism to craft insurrectionary alliances (for Malatesta, during the Red Week and then with a projected newly reshuffled alliance during the First World War; for Lenin, within Russia, with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries and anarchists in the lead-up to the October Revolution and then in the Bolsheviks' attempts to 'asset-strip' syndicalist, anarchist, shop stewards and council communist networks during the formative years of the Third International).[57] But whereas Lenin used Hobson's work to update the Marxist Hegelian grand march of the stages of history – famously, imperialism was merely the last and highest stage and thus world war set the ground for world revolution – both Malatesta *and* Kropotkin denied that there was a last stage.

Nor did they believe that there was an Engelsian 'last instance', in which Marxist determinism stepped in to put paid to anarchist heresy and return good revolutionaries to orthodoxy.[58] Thus in a speech on the Italian invasion of Libya, given to Italian workers at Soho's Communist Club in 1912, Malatesta asked his audience if they believed that 'England' was rich due to her possession of India. No, he replied, Britain was rich due to the comparative advantage of being the first industrial nation, her near monopoly on modern technology for nearly fifty years, and also because of her huge deposits of coal. The Italians did not need Libya, they too (and here Malatesta the electrician was speaking) had the potential of the 'white coal' of fast-flowing mountain rivers.[59] Thus, for Malatesta and also Kropotkin, modern imperialism was the contingent product of militarist and financial interests. In a similar vein, Malatesta and Francesco Saverio Merlino[60] had argued elsewhere that the *Risorgimento* had failed due to congeries of crony capitalists, the military, landlords, bureaucrats and former revolutionaries using the Savoyard state 'for the enrichment of the few to the detriment of the many'.[61]

There were other connections to British and European liberalism and republicanism in the thought of Kropotkin and Malatesta. Thus Kropotkin's love affair with the volunteerism and self-help of Victorian and post-Victorian society (most famously embodied in the Life Boat Society) melded to his older and firm attachment to the French Revolution and its reassertion in the Paris Commune of

1871. Besides the previously mentioned linkages to British liberals, noted in the case of Malatesta, the Italian revolutionary also sought out alliances with radical liberals in Italy in the late 1890s when military dictatorship threatened, even though he refused to be a protest candidate in parliamentary elections.[62] But in 1914, while Kropotkin argued the logic of the lesser evil and found comfort in the traditions of British liberalism and French republicanism, Malatesta disagreed.

Ruth Kinna has argued that Kropotkin saw the imperialism of the German Empire as the greatest threat to a future libertarian world, because a victorious *Kaiserreich* would also undermine the bourgeois liberties of the present statist UK or France. She also contends that Kropotkin espied the incipient federalisation of the Russian Empire in the wake of 1905 while in turn the military weakness of the Tsarist Empire made it a lesser threat than the potentially triumphant Central Powers.[63] Malatesta begged to differ: the Allies posed the threat of a French chauvinist/Anglo-Knouto alternative, and in any case the war would lead to the permanent militarisation of the world, and merely be the first of many world wars of vengeance. Kropotkin and other Allied war interventionist anarchists thought the invasions of Belgium and Serbia by the Central Powers demanded action and made choosing sides easy. But, Malatesta argued, was the treatment of the Persians, Indians, Tonkinese (Vietnamese), Congelese and Moroccans by the 'liberal' Allies any better?

One has to understand the concept of the lesser evil by marrying it to geopolitics.[64] This is first approached by examining how Malatesta and Kropotkin reacted to the failure of the European workers to stop the war in July/August 1914. For Kropotkin, the German masses had been brainwashed long before 1914 by the explicit social imperialism and authoritarianism of German Marxism, and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had been the most efficient agents of German imperialism because they had made German domination an unspoken shared common sense of the entire German nation. Thus during the war, suggestions of peace in 1916 were anathema to Kropotkin because the Germans would not agree to give up their territorial gains. In certain respects, Kropotkin's line anticipated Woodrow Wilson's pronouncements in 1917, by arguing essentially that there would be no peace without regime change in Berlin. Indeed, one could argue that Kropotkin expressed this even more intransigently, because he seemed to be arguing that the entire 'Teutonic race' had to undergo political and cultural re-

education. However, for Kropotkin, the Latin races were inherently libertarian, or at least had been saved from authoritarian temptations by their retention of the traditions of the French Revolution and the Paris Commune. Thus the victories of the Bakuninists in the Latin world in the 1870s had prevented the definitive victory of the Marxist authoritarian alternative in the First International.

For Malatesta, 'Latin Unions' were pernicious nonsense. Although he worked with the 'Colonel of the Commune', Amilcare Cipriani, in the 1880s and 1890s, he denounced his proposed Union of the Latin Peoples of 1888 (a device announced by Cipriani to prevent Prime Minister Crispi, scheming with Bismarck, from launching a nation-building war against France). It was no surprise to Malatesta that from his Parisian exile, the aged Cipriani endorsed Kropotkin's position in 1914.[65] As we have seen, Malatesta also returned to his First Internationalist roots, the Mondiale, but in this case the unit would be universal, cosmopolitan and non-sectarian, not solely Bolshevik, and certainly not merely 'Latin' or 'Latin-Slavic'.

For Malatesta, the choice of the lesser evil undermined anarchist solidarity. In this volume, Peter Ryley mounts a spirited defence of the logic of the lesser evil, while Davide Turcato, in contradistinction, argues that Malatesta's position preserved the coherence of ends and means that morally and practically was the best policy. I suggest that Ryley *and* Turcato have both missed the point. Malatesta's position was always more pragmatic then this either/or dilemma suggests. In order to be the complete anarchist, Malatesta would have had to have taken a Tolstoyan position on the First World War. But Malatesta's position was a libertarian version of the Leninist slogan of turning the world war into a civil war: thus the Mondiale was a union of all anti-parliamentary strands who followed the line of class struggle (it is unclear if the humanist Malatesta would be easy with that). There were not 21 Points but perhaps one or two points, and how these would be enforced was never tested. Nevertheless, Malatesta was a pragmatic revolutionary, who had endorsed anarchist socialism during the unrest of the 1880s and 1890s to seek socialist allies and broader alliances in the run-up to the Red Week of 1914 and later during the *Biennio Rosso* (1919–20). In effect the anarchists were just one component in a larger non-anarchist revolutionary coalition. Anarchism, he argued, would only be fulfilled in the longer term: men and women had to be free to practise libertarian lives in the workplace, in their families and in their communities, and that would only occur through generations of education; but this could only occur after the revolution.

Thus, in effect, the anarchists would be the loyal, critical opposition in post-revolutionary society, where their victorious partners' authoritarian impulses would be kept in check through newly libertarian societal structures and the vigilance of the anarchists.[66] In this regard, Kropotkin's argument that one had to choose the Allies to prevent the destruction of liberal and republican Europe, because this Europe, rather than an enlarged *Kaiserreich*, allowed for the possibility of future anarchist advances, is not so different from the consequences of Malatesta's decades' old practice and theorisation of choosing a lesser evil.

But one can pursue this argument one step further. Malatesta argued that it was legitimate for a people to defend their country from aggressive invasion. He tried to fight with the Serbian Bosnian insurgents against the Turks in Bosnia in 1876, and with the forces of the Egyptian nationalist Arabi Pasha against the British outside Alexandria in 1882, although he opposed Cipriani's expedition to Greece in 1897, because he felt the Italian volunteers were catspaws of the king of Greece.[67] Thus a revolutionary defence of one's homeland was justified, and naturally the Paris Commune (with all its faults) remained the model to which one returned. This gave Mussolini an easy target when in the autumn of 1914 Malatesta's position was still unclear, so that Mussolini could argue that Malatesta's previous actions would lead one to believe that he was on the side of intervention.[68] Indeed in 1917 in another context, it was reported by Italian agents that Malatesta had told a group of Italian workers in London that in light of the apparent ongoing disintegration of the Italian army following the rout at Caporetto and the recent Bolshevik revolution, anarchist and other Italian revolutionaries should reform the Royal Army and start the revolution in Italy itself.[69] In the unlikely event that this might have happened, would Malatesta have then endorsed a defensive revolutionary war against the Austrians and Germans? Counterfactuals aside, it is certainly the case that during the Russian Civil War and the Allied intervention, even as he opposed Leninism, he still supported the Bolshevik-led side and was a notable participant in the 'Hands Off Russia' campaign in London in 1918 and 1919.[70] In the end Malatesta made his choice of the lesser evil, it was just that his priorities were different to Kropotkin's.

Malatesta was truly radical during the First World War when on occasion he transcended the false dichotomy over lesser evils, as he ruminated on the deeper message of industrialised mass killing. Malatesta was a not a Tolstoyan or a Gandhian, and he advocated

violent revolution, albeit plumping for the least violence necessary.[71] That is why, he would argue, an anarchist revolution would have prevented the unspeakable violence of the war. But the First World War give birth to the unspeakable violence of the Russian Civil War, where Malatesta took a partisan if hedged stand.[72] Later, however, in light of the decline of the anarchist movement in the 1920s and the consolidation of Leninist communism and Mussolini's fascism, Malatesta took a deeper look at the dialectics of violence in modern society.[73] He had hinted at the problems of mass society as early as the turn of the century when the new era of social imperialism was signalled by the Dreyfus Affair, the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China, the Spanish-American War and the Boer War.[74] And he witnessed in person the chauvinism and jingoism of the crowds in New York and London. But perhaps even more chilling was the apathy that the popular press and drink induced in London's impoverished working class, which 'brutalises itself in its "public houses", indifferent to everything else'.[75]

Ruminations on the role of mass society and the road to totalitarianism would have to await the next generation of Italian anarchists, particularly the interventions of Camillo Berneri on interwar anti-Semitism and the logic of Stalinism and Nazism.[76] Kropotkin's federalisation or the libertarian take on Mazzinian ethics that Malatesta endorsed were of little use, although the attempts by Rocker to flesh out an anarchist theory of nationalism as the genocidal killing was happening still retain their interest.[77] Inflamed new national passions and heightened class tensions focused on minorities and 'class enemies' in newly created hyper-nationalist states or former truncated, truculent revolutionised empires, and the endless and bloody wars of vengeance that Malatesta had foretold in 1915 and 1916 came to pass at mid-century.

Notes

1 The most comprehensive biography of Malatesta is G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internationazionale 1872–1932* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2003). In English, see V. Richards (ed.), *Malatesta. Life and Ideas. The Anarchist Writings of Errico Malatesta* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015); D. Turcato, *Making Sense of Anarchism: Errico Malatesta's Experiments with Revolution, 1889–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); D. Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom. An Errico Malatesta Reader* (Oakland, CA, and Edinburgh: AK Press, 2014); C. Levy, *The Rooted Cosmopolitan: Errico Malatesta, the Life and Times of an Anarchist in Exile*,

forthcoming. For Malatesta's London exile, see C. Levy, 'Malatesta in Exile', *Annali della Fodazione Luigi Einaudi*, 15 (1981), pp. 245–70; C. Levy, 'Malatesta in London: The Era of Dynamite', *The Italianist* (special supplement), 13 (1993), pp. 25–42; C. Levy, 'The Rooted Cosmopolitan: Errico Malatesta, Syndicalism, Transnationalism and the International Labour Movement', in D. Berry and C. Bantman (eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour & Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010), pp. 61–79; C. Levy, 'Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs: Il "capo" dell'anarchismo mondiale a Londra', in D. Turcato (ed.), *Errico Malatesta, 'Lo Sciopero armato'. Il lungo esilio londinese 1900–1913'. Opere complete, Vol. 5* (Milan: Zero in Condotta, 2015), pp. xv–xxx. For the Italian anarchist exile community in London, see P. di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy: London and the Italian Anarchist Diaspora, 1880–1917* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).

2 I review the pertinent literature in C. Levy, 'Social Histories of Anarchism', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 4.2 (2010), pp. 1–44.

3 D. Turcato, 'The 1896 London Congress: Epilogue or Prologue?', in Berry and Bantman (eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour & Syndicalism*, pp. 25–43.

4 E. Malatesta, 'The Armed Strike', in Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom*, pp. 315–18.

5 L. Lotti, *La Settimana Rossa* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1965); Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 479–550; F. Giulietti, *Storia degli anarchici italiani in età giolittiana* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2012), pp. 297–320.

6 Giulietti, *Storia degli anarchici*, pp. 297–308; Levy, 'Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs', pp. xx–xxx.

7 E. Malatesta, 'E ora?, *Volontà*', 20 June 1914, p. 1.

8 International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (hereafter IISH), Freedom Group, Max Nettlau (Vienna) to Thomas Keell (London), 22 June 1914.

9 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 547–8.

10 A. Rosmer, 'La semaine rouge en Italie. Conversation avec Malatesta', *Vie ouvrière*, 5 July 1914.

11 'Malatesta', *Voice of Labour*, 3 July 1914.

12 E. Malatesta, 'The General Strike and the Insurrection in Italy', *Freedom*, July 1914.

13 IISH, Luigi Fabbri Papers, Errico Malatesta (London) to Luigi Fabbri (Bologna), 3 August 1914. Emilia Defendi was the partner of Giovanni Defendi and possibly the mother of his son Errico ('Erricuccio') Defendi. The Defendis were for many years Malatesta's hosts in London.

14 R. Rocker, *The London Years* (London: Robert Anscombe, 1956), p. 240.

15 C. Bantman, *The French Anarchists in London, 1880–1914. Exile*

and Transnationalism in the First Globalisation (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 183–7.

16 IISH, Freedom Group, and see also B. Altena, 'A Networking Historian: The Transnational, the National and the Patriotic in and around Max Nettlau's *Geschichte der Anarchie*', in C. Bantman and B. Altena (eds), *Reassessing the Transnational Turn. Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 72–5.

17 Di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy*, pp. 192–5.

18 IISH, Luigi Fabbri Papers, Jacques Mesnil (Paris) to Luigi Fabbri (Bologna), 14 June 1915.

19 For the most recent overview of the Italian anarchists and the interventionist debate, see F. Giulietti, *Gli anarchici italiani dalla Grande Guerra al fascismo* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2015), ch. 1. See also A. Luparini, *Anarchici di Mussolini: dalla sinistra al fascism tra rivoluzione e* revisionism (Montespertoli: MIR, 2001); M. Antonioli, *Sentinelle perdute. Gli anarchici, la morte, la Guerra* (Pisa: CBFS, 2009); A. Pakieser, *I Belong Only to Myself. The Life and Writings of Leda Rafanelli* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2014).

20 E. Diemoz, *A morte il tiranno. Anarchia e violenza da Crispi a Mussolini* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011).

21 B.P. Gidley, 'Citizenship and Belonging: East End Jewish Radicals 1903–1918' (PhD dissertation, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2003), pp. 228–30.

22 For Malatesta's part in the interventionist debate, see Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 557–95, and in *Freedom*, S. Varengo, *Pagine anarchiche. Pëtr Kropotkin e il mensile 'Freedom' (1886–1914)* (Milan: Biblion, 2015), pp. 65–88.

23 G. Woodcock and I. Avakumović, *The Anarchist Prince. A Biographical Study of Peter Kropotkin* (London: T.V. Boardman, 1950), p. 186.

24 Ibid., p. 289.

25 Ibid., p. 297.

26 E. Malatesta, 'Anti-Militarism: Was it Properly Understood?', *Freedom*, December 1914.

27 E. Malatesta, 'Pietro Kropotkin. Ricordi e critiche di un vecchio amico', *Studi sociali*, 15 April 1931, translated in Richards (ed.), *Malatesta. Life and Ideas*, pp. 241–51 (p. 244).

28 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 567–8.

29 F. Rocker, *The East End Years. A Stepney Childhood* (London: Freedom Press, 1998), pp. 131–5. Rocker wrote an exposé of the conditions; see P. di Paola (ed.), *Sindrome da filo spinato. Rapporto di un tedesco internato a Londra (1914–1918)* (Santa Maria Capua Vetere: Editizioni Spartaco, 2006).

30 Rocker, *The London Years*, p. 245.

31 Ibid., pp. 247–8.

32 *Freedom*, March 1915.

33 E. Malatesta, 'Italy Also', *Freedom*, June 1915
34 *Tierra e Libertad*, Barcelona, 10 May 1915.
35 Woodcock and Avakumović, *The Anarchist Prince*, p. 385.
36 Letter from Varlaam Cherkesov to Jean Grave, 15 November 1914, IISH, Freedom Group Archives.
37 E. Malatesta, 'Pro-Government Anarchists', *Freedom*, 29 April 1916.
38 [L. Fabbri], 'Per un gruppo di anarchici', *La guerra europea e gli anarchici* (Turin: Tipografia editore, 1916), p. 15.
39 Good overviews can be found in D. Berry, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917–1945* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009), ch. 1; W. Thorpe, 'The European Syndicalists and War, 1914–1918', *Contemporary European History*, 10.1 (2001), pp. 1–24; S. Rowbotham, *Friends of Alice Wheeldon. The Anti-War Activist Accused of Plotting to Kill Lloyd George* (London, Pluto Press, 2015), pp. 1–112.
40 A good overview of Malatesta's life during the First World War is found in Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 547–605.
41 Di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy*, pp. 196–201.
42 C. Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), pp. 102–4.
43 Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), A56 Prima Guerra Mondiale, B 133, F 133; see reports for 1917 and 1918, and Carte Morgari B 14, F 27, SF 6, N 6.
44 Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*, pp. 102–4.
45 IISH, Luigi Fabbri Papers, Luigi Fabbri to Jacques Mesnil, 2 October 1918.
46 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 600–5.
47 E. Recchioni, 'Between Ourselves. Where We Have Failed and How We Might Succeed', *Freedom*, September 1915.
48 For these discussions, see Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*, pp. 102–4; Giulietti, *Gli anarchici italiani dalla Grande Guerra al fascismo*, ch. 1.
49 Rocker, *The London Years*, p. 312.
50 Ibid., p. 327.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., p. 328.
53 D. Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918* (London: Penguin, 2012); A. Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914–1918* (London: Penguin, 2015).
54 Casellario Politico Centrale, CPC 2950, 13 December 1917, and via Silivio Corio, *Silvia Pankhurst 1912–1924 dal suffraggio alla rivoluzione sociale* (Pisa: ETS Università, 1980). For Sylvia Pankhurst and the maverick 'Sovietist' left, see also I. Bullock, 'Sylvia Pankhurst and the Russian Revolution: The Making of a "Left-Wing" Communist', in I. Bullock and R. Pankhurst (eds), *Sylvia Pankhurst. From Artist to Anti-Fascist* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992); M. Davis, *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Life in Radical Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); K. Connelly, *Sylvia*

Pankhurst. Suffragette, Socialist and Scourge of Empire (London: Pluto Press, 2013). For Chicherin and Litvinov in London, see R.K. Debbs and W. Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); R. Challinor, *The Origins of British Bolshevism* (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

55 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 604–5.

56 For the arguments between Italian anarchists concerning the Bolsheviks and the dictatorship of the proletariat, see S. Fedele, *Una breve illusione. Gli anarchici e la Russia Sovietica 1917–1939* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1996); Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*.

57 For the attempted Bolshevik conversion of the maverick wartime networks, see A. Lindemann, *The 'Red Years': European Socialism versus Bolshevism 1919–1920* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974); I. Bullock, *Romancing the Revolution. The Myth of Soviet Democracy and the British Left* (Edmonton: AU Press, 2011).

58 For an early polemic, see L. Fabbri, *Dittatura e rivoluzione* (Ancona: Internazionale Giovanni Bitelli, 1921); L. Fabbri, *Anarchia e communismo 'scientifico'* (Milan: Libreria editrice, 1922). And for an analysis, see S. Fedele, *Luigi Fabbri. Un libertario contro il bolschevismo e il fascismo* (Pisa: BFS, 2006).

59 Levy, 'Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs', p. xxvi.

60 F.S. Merlino, *L'Italie telle qu'elle est* (Paris: Albert Savine, Editeur, 1890).

61 Levy, 'Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs', p. xxvi.

62 Levy, 'Malatesta in London: The Era of Dynamite', pp. 38–42.

63 R. Kinna, *Peter Kropotkin. Reviewing the Classical Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

64 Peter Ryley and Davide Turcato deal with the concept of the 'lesser evil', as does Giampietro Berti in his biography; see Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 557–86, 'Il problema del "male minore" nel dibattito internationazionale' ['The problem of the "lesser evil" in the international debate'].

65 P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta* (Milan: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1974), pp. 230–1, 239. For Crisipi, see C. Duggan, *Francesco Duggan: From Nation to Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

66 This is the major theme in my work on Malatesta.

67 P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1981), pp. 93–6; Antonioli, *Sentinelle perdute*, pp. 23–40.

68 B. Mussolini, '"Il minore male". L'opinione di Malatesta', *Volontà*, 17 October 1914. For Mussolini, the anarchists and the interventionist debate, see Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 578–86; E. Gentile and S. Spencer (eds), *Mussolini socialista* (Bari: Laterza, 2015).

69 ACS, CPC 2950, 13 December 1917.

70 ACS, A56, Prima Guerra Mondiale, F. Ingilterra, 20 December 1918. In this document a police spy complains that Malatesta and the other Italian subversives have no manners and keep their caps on at a massive meeting in the Albert Hall, and anticipates Tony Blair in suggesting that the solution is 'educate, educate, educate'.
71 See, for example, E. Malatesta, 'Anarchy and Violence', *Liberty*, 9 September 1894 and 10 October 1894.
72 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 724–31.
73 Ibid., pp. 751–88.
74 Levy, 'Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs', p. xxv.
75 E. Malatesta, 'Società condannata', *La rivoluzione sociale*, 29 December 1902.
76 On Berneri, see C. De Maria, *Camillo Berneri: tra anarchismo e liberalismo* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2004); S. D'Errico, *Il socialismo libertario ed umanistica oggi fra politica ed antipolitica. Attualità della revision berneriana del pensiero anarchico* (Milan: Mimesis Eterotopie, 2011).
77 R. Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture* (London: Freedom, 1937). See also C. Levy, 'Anarchism and Cosmopolitanism', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 16.3 (2011), pp. 265–78, and D. Turcato, 'Nations without Borders: Anarchists and National Identity', in Bantman and Altena (eds), *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*.

Part II

Debates and divisions

4

Beyond the 'people's community': the anarchist movement from the *fin de siècle* to the First World War in Germany

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This chapter focuses on the anarchist movement as a political phenomenon at the margins of imperial German society. Drawing on government and police records as well as contemporary press coverage, it concludes that anarchism's ideology, goals and means placed it 'beyond' the sphere of politics. This development reached its peak during the First World War, when anarchists found themselves outside of the 'people's community' – the project that encouraged social solidarity in support of the war. Four-and-a-half years of conflict proved to be a marginal period for the movement and brought it to the verge of complete dissolution.

'Anti-socialist laws' and the early movement

The first attempts to popularise anarchist ideas in Germany coincided with the enactment of the rigorous and extraordinary legislation known as the 'anti-socialist laws'.[1] After two failed assassination attempts on Kaiser Wilhelm I by political extremists, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck initiated the legislation in 1878. For twelve years it prohibited socialist and social democratic political organisations, including their affiliated bodies and presses, with the exception of parliamentary activity. Politically, the 'anti-socialist laws' hit the already large Social Democratic Party (SDP) much harder than the few tiny local groups of anarchists, which had been created following the model of the first such organisations in German-speaking Switzerland and which operated in semi-legality.[2] Ironically, the extraordinary legislation introduced by Bismarck created divisions within the SDP, and radicals disenchanted by the party's weak reaction to its implementation spurred the growth of

anarchism. Crucial in this regard was the journal *Freiheit* [Freedom], founded by Johann 'John' Most one year after the introduction of the anti-socialist laws. Most belonged to a longer tradition of anarchist converts who had all started their activist careers in the Social Democratic Party and ultimately left it – either through expulsion or by choice – because of its de facto abandonment of revolutionary activity in favour of parliamentary action.[3] First edited in London and later in New York, *Freiheit* served as the main link between the 'old' anarchist groups and the new ones that emerged from the splits in the SDP. Together with *Autonomie*, another London-based German publication established in 1886, it became the most important source of anarchist propaganda in Germany until 1890. Like the older publications produced in Switzerland, *Freiheit* and *Autonomie* were banned in Germany and were smuggled in from abroad.[4] Not least because of the impossibility of organising a legal network of procurement and distribution, the readership of these journals remained modest – no more than 1,000 to 2,000 for each. And the number of anarchists who effectively organised themselves in (illegal) local groups was considerably smaller than that, probably 100 to 200 in the *Kaiserreich* altogether.[5]

Only after the end of Bismarck's chancellorship and the repeal of the anti-socialist laws in 1890 did anarchists establish more durable structures for their movement. In the following decade, anarchists organised in local, regional and national confederations. However, the internal friction and competition remained. Again, it was the influx of radical social democrats – the so-called *Jungen* (the 'Young Ones') – that bolstered this nascent movement.[6] One of the most important figures during this time was the philosopher and agitator Gustav Landauer. As the lead editor of the journal *Sozialist*, established in 1891, Landauer created a platform that appealed both to a radical social democratic and an anarchist readership. Landauer himself represented a self-consciously intellectual variant of anarchism, in contrast to the proletarian orientation of *Freiheit* and *Autonomie* and the bulk of the movement.[7] Since the organisational structures remained relatively weak and unstable, journals were essential for the dissemination of information and the formation of anarchist political cultures. The readership of *Das Neue Leben* [The new life], created in 1887 and later renamed *Der Freie Arbeiter* [The free worker], soon surpassed those of other propaganda organs. After its suppression during the war years it remained in circulation until the national socialist takeover in 1933.[8] In the *fin de siècle* a number of smaller newspapers including the *Revolutionär*,

the *Anarchist* and *Der Arme Conrad* [The poor Conrad] appeared, most short-lived or published with interruptions, both because of conflicts with the authorities and because of financial instability. Although mainly representing working-class interests, these different newspapers attested to the existence of contrasting understandings of anarchist goals and means.[9] However, internal conflicts, the limits of free speech, the unreliability of many activists, a constant lack of financial resources and infiltration by police spies ensured that anarchist newspapers never attracted a mass readership. Correspondingly, the organised movement remained on the margins of society. The Catholic daily *Germania* estimated in 1905 that about 3,000 people adhered to anarchist ideas, yet only 1,500 were proponents of an anarchist political programme.[10] This was the same number of activists that were under police surveillance, and according to their data 170 of them lived in the capital.[11]

'Propaganda by deed' and the punishment discourse

In a booklet entitled *Die Ideenwelt des Anarchismus* [The ideas of anarchism], published in 1904, W. Borgius accused the German government of deliberately confusing 'anarchism' with 'terrorism'.[12] And indeed, from the 1870s to the First World War, both the authorities and opinion makers in the press deliberately linked individual violence in the name of anarchism to the political movement based on this ideology. Evidently the number of killings in other European countries in the late nineteenth century helped to maintain the confusion. In Germany itself, it was only before and during the John Most 'era' in the 1880s that 'propaganda by deed' found supporters – and even at this point, it was a subject of constant debate within anarchist circles.[13] In the post-Bismarckian era, a much more cautious movement explicitly distanced itself from political assassinations. Yet prior to that, and despite heavy political and police repression, a small number of attacks had occurred in Germany. In 1883, the typesetter August Reinsdorf planned the most spectacular attack. Together with two assistants, Reinsdorf schemed to kill the Kaiser, his son and grandson during the inauguration of a national monument in the German state of Hesse. Because the fuse failed, Reinsdorf's dynamite did not explode. Public opinion was outraged all the same, and just two years later another attack occurred, causing further exasperation. This time Ludwig Rumpff, a police commissioner (and notorious persecutor of anarchists), was stabbed in the garden of his house

in Frankfurt-am-Main. After dubious court proceedings the main defendants in both cases were executed. Yet a broader discussion about punishment for political violence was just about to start.

This discussion became progressively disconnected from actual reality in Germany, where violence in fact petered out. But since anarchism was a transnational movement, so too were the reactions to its 'deeds'. In 1894, a year marked by attacks in France, Spain, Italy and Belgium, the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* spoke out against any 'sentimentality' and 'timid irresolution' towards anarchist perpetrators. Their 'means and doctrine', the newspaper stated, consisted in 'treacherous murder' that found its victims both 'defenceless' and 'at random'.[14] The killing of Empress Elisabeth of Austria by the Italian anarchist Luigi Lucheni in 1898, and the shooting of the Italian King Umberto I in 1900 by Gaetano Bresci, brought the discourse to a climax. Newspapers, including social democratic ones, portrayed the attacks generally as 'beyond' the political sphere. For them, they were not part of (violent) class warfare, but criminal actions committed by mentally unstable individuals. They saw the best means of preventing further attacks in the brutal punishment of the perpetrators. The Essen-based *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, for instance, wrote: 'If for a start such monsters [anarchist murderers] were to be beaten-up every day for a few weeks until their skin came apart, cynicism would soon disappear. Furthermore if a detailed daily report appeared in all papers of how pitifully and unheroically the "hero" ended up behaving, that would serve as the best deterrent for all similar creatures.'[15] One newspaper recommended the deportation of every 'confessor of anarchism' to an 'anarchist island'. Another recommended resolving the problem once and for all by firing squads.[16]

The killing of Empress Elisabeth also offered a useful pretext for the introduction of modern and integrated policing methods. At a conference in September 1898, Germany's semi-sovereign member states agreed to share their intelligence and to organise a unified structure for anarchist surveillance. The political police of Prussia with its headquarters in Berlin, created in the aftermath of the failed revolutions of 1848/49, was to be the coordinating agency for this network.[17] It resulted in the compilation of a so-called *Anarchisten-Album*, a collected volume that contained detailed information on the backgrounds and occupations of all identified anarchists, with photographs whenever possible.[18] The German government also played a leading role in the international conference on the 'Social Defence against Anarchists', which took place in Rome the same

year, and which marked the birth of Interpol.[19] At the conference, the German delegation spearheaded a push for harsher punishments, including the death penalty for attacks on heads of state. Russia, Austria and the Ottoman Empire supported such plans and on a broader level the conference participants agreed on developing police cooperation on a pan-European basis.[20] The understanding of anarchism as something 'beyond' politics was reflected in the discussion about the subject. The final document of the Rome conference stated: 'que l'anarchism n'a rien de commun avec la politique et qu'il ne saurait, en aucun cas, être considéré comme une doctrine politique'.[21]

The new century: containing the anarchist 'threat'

The new century started with further attempts to counter the 'threat' of anarchist violence through special legislation. Although Germany had not suffered a single attack since the 1880s, the topic was still deemed important enough to hold two conferences at the Prussian Ministry of State in September and November 1900.[22] This focus on a basically non-existent problem reflected both the insecurity of political leaders and their refusal to acknowledge the political and economic demands of anarchism. The conferences also mirrored the further 'depoliticising' of anarchist violence. One of the participant ministers pointed out that anarchists positioned themselves outside the legal system, and were therefore not to be treated according to its general principles. Another participant advocated the use of corporal punishment, pointing to Britain's use of such punishments against persons found guilty of insulting the Queen as a model. Yet such harsh visions were not universally supported. Some objected that a too harsh prosecution of anarchism would make Germany a target for anarchist violence, while others concentrated on the allegedly problematic nature of the press representation of 'propaganda by deed'. One participant, for instance, proclaimed the necessity of prohibiting any news coverage about anarchist perpetrators, 'as the reporting combined with a gratified vanity could provide the incentive to commit the crime'. Such an interpretation again sought to explain the attacks in terms of the pathological nature of the perpetrator, rather than the specific political intentions of the actor. Consequently, the participant demanded the suppression of the anarchist press as a whole.

Despite anarchism's marginal position within German society, it continued to frustrate and vex the authorities. In 1905, the Imperial

Chancellery asked the Ministry of the Interior about the current state of the movement. It wanted a detailed explanation of the monitoring methods, and information about the general developments of the movement. The distribution of anarchist literature was of particular interest. The question was still the same: whether it was possible to legally suppress it.[23] It was not. Later that year, in August, a meeting at the Prussian Ministry of State again discussed the issue of special legislation for perpetrators of political violence from the radical left. A strong signal seemed urgent because of the upcoming imperial manoeuvres in Silesia. According to the Prussian Prime Minister, the issue was delicate, given that 'the members of the socialist party in Breslau [were] inclined towards violent acts'.[24] During the August conference, participants voiced a general feeling of dissatisfaction about the inadequate implementation of existing penal provisions. The security situation hardly warranted tighter measures, given that anarchist and revolutionary ideas lacked broad popular support. Even in the light of the 1905 Russian Revolution, the situation in Germany was recognised as stable. As one participant pointed out: 'There is still such a stock of monarchical feeling in the German people that the situation prevailing in Russia can't be compared with that at home here.'[25]

Strictly speaking, no special legislation was needed to fight the anarchist movement. The administrative law provided a convenient tool for this purpose. As compared to criminal law, it offered much greater latitude for application on an everyday level and was perfectly suited to the continuous policing of the movement. It was routine, for example, to apprehend anarchists at gatherings or in public places – sometimes without any reason.[26] The closure of meetings was repeatedly justified by vague references to the need to protect public 'calm, security and order' – which was also the famous slogan of the Prussian police. Even official gatherings were disrupted in this way. In November 1902, to cite just one example, police in the industrial town of Elberfeld (now part of Wuppertal) banned a gathering of the syndicalist Freier Gewerkschaftsverein.[27] The gathering was intended to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Haymarket riots in Chicago and the subsequent execution of a number of comrades by the US authorities. Yet for the police, the attendance of a 'politically suspect' individual and the potential risk that speeches might disrupt public order were reason enough to suppress the meeting altogether.[28] For anarchists, this constant abuse of administrative law confirmed the impression of an unjust and morally corrupt political system, which did not abide by

its own principles. In 1901 the editor of the Berlin *Freiheit* (the newspaper shared the name with John Most's earlier publication) wrote: 'Although we anarchists are not subject to special laws, the generally applicable laws are used against us so that we are often prevented from exercising our legal rights, and when we demand our constitutional rights we receive only further fines.'[29] In a similar vein, a lawyer named Dr Bieber, who had defended many anarchists before the courts, called the cases against them a 'special category of criminal trial'.[30] Such was the feeling of outrage that *Neues Leben* went so far as to call freedom of speech a 'fairy tale'.[31]

The anti-war and general strike propaganda

As important as the topos of 'propaganda by deed' was for the discourse about anarchism at the turn of the century, another aspect gradually came to the fore. At a time when the arms race was gathering speed and a European war appeared to be increasingly likely, anti-militarist agitation provoked the concern of the authorities. This applied especially with respect to the concept of the general strike. This anarchist idea, and the related concept of the 'mass strike', also found substantial support within the social democratic movement.[32] In May 1905, in a letter to the Chancellor, the Minister of the Interior, Bethmann Hollweg, reported that it could not be denied 'that the anarchistic agitation has become more boisterous and active'. He noted that 'agitation through propaganda for a general strike has become animated,'[33] and explained the vigorous steps taken to prevent the success of such propaganda: 'As soon as the publication of such a press publication comes to our knowledge, at all costs we try to obtain it before the production of the issue, control its content and, if feasible, confiscate it in order to hinder its dissemination.'[34]

Anarchist anti-militarism occupied a particular place within the political culture of Germany. In no other European country, with the exception of Tsarist Russia, were the state and its military so tightly linked as in the Prussian-dominated *Kaiserreich*.[35] The political and economic elites and the officer corps tended to mirror each other, while workers and peasants rarely rose above the status of rank-and-file soldiers. Anti-militaristic propaganda – illegally distributed near army barracks and in industrial neighbourhoods – focused on the brutal drilling system and exposed shocking stories of aristocratic officers who tormented recruits from the lower classes.[36] But anti-militarism in Germany was also part of

a transnational movement, which reflected, at a theoretical level, on the interrelations between capitalist rule and the institution of the military. The International Antimilitaristic Bureau, founded in Amsterdam by Domela Nieuwenhuis, was particularly influential.[37] The critique that Nieuwenhuis and others advanced was that it was impossible to keep the problem of the 'capitalist' army and the quest for a new political order apart. From this perspective, the notion of the 'Fatherland', 'defended' by the military, was only an ideological ruse for protecting capitalist interests to the detriment of the working classes. By the same token, the organisation of a general strike before the onset of war would be a starting point for the political revolution, as well an instrument to prevent war. Such ideas were much more radical and far-reaching than those advanced by liberal pacifists, whose visions were limited to the installation of supra-national arbitration courts and disarmament treaties.[38]

The Balkan Wars of 1912–13 were a pivotal moment for the anti-militarist movement. In a letter to the Chief Public Prosecutor of the royal court, the president of the Berlin police commented in November 1912 that 'the anarchist agitation in the press and assemblies against the war and propaganda in favour of general strikes appears to make governmental action urgently necessary'.[39] A special cause of anxiety was an illegal leaflet issued by the Anarchistische Föderation für Rheinland und Westfahlen entitled *Krieg dem Kriege* [War against war]. Distributed in the industrial cities of Cologne, Elberfeld and Krefeld, the leaflet described in dramatic language the reality of war, with its 'mountains of bodies', 'squirted brains', 'blood-soaked earth', and its atrocities of hunger, rape and disease. The leaflet forcefully denounced the coalition of 'throne and altar', the education system and the 'well-led press' which, working in tandem, operated ideologically, predisposing citizens to support the existing order from their childhood. The leaflet ended with an appeal to respond to any declaration of war with a general strike.[40] Thanks to its sophisticated system of surveillance, the political police was informed about the leaflet when it was still in production.[41] For tactical reasons, police agents waited for the distribution of the pamphlet before taking action. Disguised as bricklayers and labourers, officers positioned themselves in the working-class neighbourhoods of Cologne and arrested seven activists, four of whom were sentenced to three months in prison after a trial held *in camera*.[42]

Despite the heavy repression, anti-militarism remained a crucial aspect of anarchist rhetoric in Germany. In April 1913, a participant

at a popular meeting organised by the Anarchistische Vereinigung Berlins once more denounced 'the complete damnability of this public enemy institution [the army] that inhibits all cultural progress and erodes every piece of humanity'.[43] However, compared to the immense popularity of military associations and prevailing chauvinist feelings, the isolated manifestations of anti-militarism by anarchists and like-minded people were like drops in the ocean.

Silencing of opposition to the war

Although fewer people shared an enthusiasm for the war than was for a long time assumed by historians, public demonstrations in its favour were evident across Germany.[44] The educated urban youth were particularly vocal in championing the belligerent course. The outbursts of aggressive nationalism in cities such as Munich, Hamburg, Wiesbaden and Dortmund were so fierce as to cause the authorities some concern.[45] Opposition rarely extended beyond the radical left and the equally isolated liberal pacifist circles.[46] The only organisation theoretically capable of instigating a mass movement was the Social Democratic Party. Yet since its leadership refused to make an unambiguous commitment against the war, anti-war opposition lacked coordination, as well as press and political support. On 18 July 1914, the *Freie Arbeiter* commented with frustration on the lack of attacks on the political leadership. Special reproach was reserved for the tactical manoeuvring of the social democratic elite and its failure to stand by the party's principles. Yet the *Freie Arbeiter* also acknowledged the 'harsh wind' blowing in 'Prussia-Germany', which impeded effective opposition to war. At the same moment, criminal proceedings had been initiated against Rosa Luxemburg and those social democratic associations that had supported her resolution for a mass strike in 1913.[47] Under such conditions and lacking the organisational base to appeal to the masses, anarchist and other anti-war groups were unable to stimulate, let alone organise, effective protests – although 2,000 people attended the final public meeting called for that purpose, in Hamburg on 31 July. With commendable foresight, some of the participants fled the country the next day, among them the anarchist leader Paul Schreyer.[48]

The coming of war confirmed these activists' worst apprehensions. Particularly troubling was the fact that even from within the anarchist movement, some changed their minds and joined the nationalist chorus. Most shocking were the actions of Erich

Mühsam – the well-known literary figure and bohemian and one of the movement's most illustrious propagandists. At the beginning of August 1914, the poet-activist gave notice of the suspension of his journal *Kain* for the duration of the war. The choice of words in the editorial ('foreign hordes' assaulting 'our wives and children') and the conditional support of defensive warfare led some readers to interpret this text as an affirmation of the war and a betrayal of anarchist principles.[49] Newspapers like the *Berliner Volkszeitung* exploited this, claiming that the 'posh anarchist [*Edelanarchist*] who formerly made the Berlin cafés unsafe' now supported the war.[50]

Kain was not the only anarchist publication that ceased to appear in this period. The majority of anarchist newspapers were dissolved during wartime, mostly by military order. Fritz Kater, the editor of the syndicalist *Einigkeit* [Unitedness], reflected on the seriousness of the situation for the movement when he wrote on 1 August 1914: 'Germany is in a state of war […] All public acts and expressions are now under military censorship. Newspapers are being strictly monitored and if given the slightest pretext, the editors and even the entire business could be imprisoned.'[51] In August, *Einigkeit* and *Der Pionier*, another syndicalist publication, ceased production.[52] The same fate befell the journal *Kampf! Organ für Anarchismus und Syndikalismus*, issued by the Anarchist Federation in Hamburg, and the *Freie Arbeiter*, the most influential anarchist newspaper. The latter was prohibited by Berlin military command on 5 August 1914.[53] The publisher of the newspaper, the Föderation der kommunistischen Anarchisten Deutschlands, tried to circumvent the prohibition by sending a *Mitteilungsblatt* (newsletter) to its readers. It stated:

> Comrades and friends! You all know the dictum of the poet: 'The mighty is mightiest, when alone'. In the context of our complicated situation, this means that although it is childishly simple to be carried and led by the shifting ferry of politically manufactured opinion, it is infinitely more difficult, particularly now at this moment of martial rage, to show ironclad tenacity, endurance and patience, to tread our own path, as persons not subject to authority, aside from and hostile to any nannying of the people … Now then! Let us show ourselves worthy of this responsible task.[54]

Against the power of military command, this task was hard to fulfil. All important press organs were suppressed and heavy security measures prevented other forms of propagation. One excep-

tion to the general trend was Gustav Landauer's *Sozialist*, which continued to appear temporarily. The price for this was a complete absence of coverage of war-related topics. However, its turn also came in March 1915. The reason for its closure was mundane: the typesetter was called up and Landauer was unable to find a replacement after his foreign substitute was arrested and subsequently deported.[55]

Anarchism under military rule

The harsh political repression, which began immediately after the outbreak of war, was based on a new legal situation. On 31 July 1914 the 'state of imminent war' was proclaimed. According to the 1851 Prussian statute on the state of war and siege, executive power was passed to the military commanders of the different German army corps districts and fortresses.[56] The law entitled these commanders to suspend a variety of civil rights and to introduce press censorship. As such, the surveillance and control of anarchists was now under military authority.[57] Given the political dispositions of the mostly ultra-conservative commanders, it was hardly surprising that they made political use of their security-related prerogatives. Yet a restrictive security regime had already announced itself during the July crisis, even before the state of war was proclaimed. Police and a vigilant population looked out for 'suspicious' foreigners and activists. For instance, in the Bavarian spa town of Bad Reichenhall, an Austrian anarchist named Franz Schneider was arrested for alleged high treason. Since there was no evidence to support a judicial prosecution, the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior simply expelled him.[58] With the onset of the war, the situation worsened. In October, the *Föderation der kommunistischen Anarchisten Deutschlands Mitteilungsblatt* informed its readership about the incarceration of comrades in Düsseldorf, Crefeld, Cologne, Mulhouse and Berlin. Apparently, none of them was charged with a specific crime.[59] And in a letter dated 10 August to the president of the Berlin police, colleagues in Düsseldorf informed him that a group of anarchist leaders had been arrested and put into prison on the day of mobilisation, in line with a secret decree of the governor (*Oberpräsident*).[60] The London-based newspaper *Freedom* reported similar events from all over Germany:

> Comrade Geissler was arrested. The police tried to get out of him the whereabouts of us deserters […] Other comrades had their houses

> searched [...] Comrade Eberhardt and others were arrested, according to a letter received yesterday. In Rhineland, at the outbreak of war, all known comrades were arrested. In Mühlhausen, comrade Altenbach and others were arrested, and are still in Tübingen in jail.[61]

The situation was no different in the capital. Those like the syndicalist Berthold Cahn who continued to make 'rabble-rousing speeches' and play a 'harmful role' (*staatsgefährliche Rolle*) in clandestine gatherings, met with fierce repression.[62] Anarchists and anti-war militants were also excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community),[63] the intellectual project that described an idea of Germany that was supposed to transcend all social, regional and religious boundaries. The concept of 'people's community' was a forceful trope in the war propaganda, helping to further alienate peace activists from society and exclude them from political platforms. Activists of various backgrounds agreed on the fact that the political situation in Germany was worse than in any of the other belligerent countries. Mühsam looked upon the relatively critical press in England, France and even Russia with some envy. The German government would have made 'appropriate use' of the machine guns taken from the Russian front, had German workers dared to organise peace protests as their counterparts in Britain had managed to do.[64]

Without a doubt, government authorities played a key role in translating the normative 'people's community' into a political reality. In Elberfeld, for instance, police officials became exasperated by anarchists who 'in today's grave times do not cease to further their ideas'. They recommended 'the arrest of all anarchists' to 'effectively oppose this activity'.[65] Apart from 'preventive detention' (*Schutzhaft*), military conscription also affected the activists. By December 1915, 118 anarchists had been drafted in Berlin alone.[66] Civilian authorities showed a particular interest in finding out where anarchists were deployed and their precise functions. As early as August 1914, local police departments were ordered to compile detailed lists of the military assignments of the anarchists under their control.[67] While it is unclear what impact this information had, the case of the international lawyer and liberal pacifist Hans Wehberg was perhaps indicative. In his post-war memoirs, Wehberg accused the Münster commanders of deliberately denouncing him as an 'infamous traitor to the Fatherland'. For Wehberg it was obvious that their goal was to raise the suspicions of the officers in the companies that he served in and encourage dis-

crimination against him. He wrote that 'the General Command of Münster slandered me at the outset in all companies I was assigned to as a dishonourable traitor to my country, that nothing was left out in the attempt to turn the lower [officers] against me and that this made it infinitely difficult to gain their trust'.[68] It is likely that anarchists, who were much more radical in their demands than liberal pacifists, were equally subject to such forms of 'special treatment'.

In addition to their 'immoral' mindset, anarchists and other anti-war groups were suspected of supporting enemy infiltration. Security agencies were particularly apprehensive about the influence of activists from Russia, where revolutionary forces were becoming increasingly powerful. In December 1915, the general staff of the field army demanded data including the addresses of Russian revolutionaries and anarchists, particularly those living in Germany.[69] Special attention was also given to border control. In August 1915, for instance, Berlin police issued a warning about Vsevolod Kyjovsky, a Moravian-born leader of the Czech community in Zurich. According to police information, Kyjovksy was expected to enter German territory. He had been registered for his 'busy activities geared at the representatives of enemy countries' for some time and was thought to be a man 'capable of anarchist machinations'. Instructions were given to arrest him immediately after his entry into the country.[70] None of these precautions or local preventive actions allayed the authorities' fears of foreign subversion and the threats were taken seriously even at the highest levels of command. In a November 1917 decree, Quartermaster General Erich Ludendorff wrote: 'Relationships are being formed through letters and by agents with particularly fanatical representatives of radical socialism, pacifism and similar individuals within the country or in neutral countries abroad to promote their efforts in every possible way.'[71] These fears betrayed a certain paranoia, since they completely misjudged the intentions and overestimated the capability of most of these groups. Yet it is noteworthy that Ludendorff did not even mention anarchism in this context. Was this a sign that the movement had become irrelevant by this point?

End of a movement?

The rupture of the war affected everything, from the organisational structure of the movement to its press institutions, and from its constituent base to its leadership. Transnational ties, which had been

lively until the war, also stopped during the conflict as a result of the security measures. Given the delicate nature of its organisation and its small membership, the situation for the German anarchist scene was critical even at the onset of the war. As early as October 1914, the police president of Hanover gave a report to headquarters in Berlin about the local Anarchistische Föderation, stating that since the breakout of hostilities, 'the community has quieted almost completely, regular gatherings are not taking place'.[72] By January 1916, another report noted the complete dissolution of the Föderation.[73] At this point similar observations were made throughout the Empire. In Frankfurt Oder, anarchist activities were no longer observable.[74] The same was true for the police precinct of Potsdam.[75] The authorities of Brandenburg observed that of the militants in the formerly politically active region of Niederbarnim, 'many have been conscripted or sent to Turkey by the *Reichsmarineamt* or *Feldzeugsmeisterei* etc. as munitions workers and the like'.[76] By the end of 1915, the fundamental and largely irreversible impact of war and military rule on the anarchist movement was manifest. Even the political police, renowned for its tendency to entertain worst-case scenarios, now described the movement as harmless. A report from December 1915 said: 'Since the outbreak of war, the anarchist movement in Berlin and the Brandenburg region has step-by-step diminished due to the strict measures, and is today without any serious significance.'[77] It ascribed the successful repression to the prevention of propaganda, the prohibition of assemblies and the imprisonment of the movement's leading activists. The question was raised as to whether all these measures were necessary, given that 'the majority of members were drafted one after another to military duty'.[78] Finally, in September 1917, the *Anarchisten-Album*, started in 1899, was discontinued.[79] It was as if a story had come to its end.

An article in the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* from 1917 which angrily refuted enemy press claims about alleged revolutionary agitation by German anarchists would thus seem to be accurate. It stated that it 'is well known that in Germany there exists no anarchism'.[80] External assessments about the movement corresponded with the internal perception of the activists. The syndicalist leader Berholt Cahn, released from prison in winter 1916, was shocked when he realised the lack of leadership and intellectual stimulus in the Berlin scene.[81] Partly this was because the journals, which were so central to the anarchist scene in Germany, had been suspended, but it was also because the public meetings that the military allowed

were so heavily controlled that they were politically toothless. Only a couple of syndicalist groups that adhered to anarchism enjoyed any degree of liberty. Early on in the war, some radical socialists used their positions in industry to agitate against the war.[82] Yet these actions were limited and beyond the factories they had little political impact. It was rather Gustav Landauer's escapism that characterised the movement.[83] After closing down the *Sozialist*, the philosopher left Berlin and completely withdrew from public life, devoting his time to historical study. An obituary that appeared after his murder in May 1919 rightly noted that: 'The more powerful Ludendorff became, the more Landauer immersed himself in the days of the French Revolution.'[84] The philosopher became active again only with the revolutionary movement at the very end of the war. Before his brutal murder by counter-revolutionaries, he spent the final months of his life supporting the Bavarian Council Republic. Erich Mühsam's role during the war was exceptional. After a period of irresolution, he tried to build up a network of anti-war activists. The project was not limited to anarchists, but included liberal pacifists such Helmut von Gerlach and social democratic dissenters such as Karl Liebknecht and Hugo Haase. However, nothing significant resulted from these attempts.

Did the German anarchist movement come to an end during the First World War? It is indisputable that during the conflict an irreversible change occurred. The pre-war organisational structures had mainly disappeared, both the political groups and the press organs. After the suppression of the second Bavarian Council Republic, influential leaders such as Landauer were either dead or, like Mühsam, in prison. A huge number of comrades had died the 'hero's death' on the battlefield. Yet there was another story. The brief but remarkable success of syndicalism in post-war Germany was its most visible indicator. Joining with activists in Germany, anarchists such as Rudolf Rocker and Augustin Souchy, who had been living abroad until that point, took key positions in syndicalist organisations. In the industrial regions in particular, they enjoyed substantial support.[85] Institutions such as the Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschlands (FAUD, Free Workers' Union of Germany) or the Föderation Kommunistischer Anarchisten Deutschlands (the successor organisation to the Anarchistischen Föderation Deutschlands), both created in 1919, were receptive to anarchist ideas. Yet after the inflation crisis in 1923, which marked the decline of the syndicalist movement, they had barely any influence on Weimar politics. After the end of the authoritarian *Kaiserreich* and the trying experience

of the war years, anarchism was destined again to take its strange place 'beyond' the sphere of politics.

Notes

1 The only in-depth study of the anarchist movement in the German Reich is Ulrich Linse, *Organisierter Anarchismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich von 1871* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1969). See also Andrew R. Carlson, *Anarchism in Germany. The Early Movement* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1972).
2 Carlson, *Anarchism*, pp. 77ff.
3 Hans Manfred Brock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918–1923* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1969), p. 7; Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 42–7.
4 For more details to the smuggling of the *Freiheit*, see Jürgen Jensen, *Presse und Politische Polizei. Hamburgs Zeitungen unter dem Sozialistengesetz, 1878–1890* (Hanover: Dietz, 1966), pp. 154–7.
5 Linse, *Organisierter*, p. 140.
6 Brock, *Syndikalismus*, pp. 13–16; Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 48–54.
7 Brock, *Syndikalismus*, pp. 14, 20–3.
8 Ibid., pp. 16–17.
9 Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 163–5; Brock, *Syndikalismus*, p. 16.
10 *Germania*, 31 March 1905.
11 Bundesarchiv–Lichterfelde (BArch), Berlin, R 43 755d.
12 Walther Borgius, *Die Ideenwelt des Anarchismus* (Leipzig: Felix Dietrich, 1904), p. 6.
13 Carlson, *Anarchism*, pp. 249ff.
14 *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 July 1894.
15 The article 'Der Anarchismus und die öffentliche Meinung', *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 7 August 1900, compiled different newspaper statements on the subject.
16 *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 7 August 1900.
17 Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 25–8; for background information on the Prussian political police, see Albrecht Funk, *Polizei und Rechtsstaat. Die Entwicklung des staatlichen Gewaltmonopols in Preußen 1848–1914* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1986).
18 Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStaA), Berlin, I. HA Rep. 77 Tit. 2512 Nr. 9 Bd. 2.
19 Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 25–7. For background information on the conference, see Richard Bach Jensen, 'The International Campaign against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880–1930', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21.1 (2009), pp. 89–109; Richard Bach Jensen, 'The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 16.2 (1981), pp. 323–47; Martin A. Miller, *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism. State Society and the Dynamics*

of Political Violence (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 150–204.

20 Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 25–6.
21 BArch R 43 755d.
22 For conference records and the following quotations, see BArch R 43 755d.
23 Letter from the Minister of the Interior to the Reich Chancellery, 18 May 1905. BArch R 43/755d.
24 GStA I. HA Rep. 90 A Nr. 3789.
25 Ibid.
26 Linse, *Organisierter*, p. 30.
27 Though close to each other in many aspects, the anarchist and syndicalist movements did not effectively consolidate before the war. The authorities, for whom the term 'anarchism' was invective anyway, had been lumping the two groups together since the nineteenth century.
28 Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Nr. 8648.
29 *Freiheit*, 6 July 1901.
30 Linse, *Organisierter*, p. 35.
31 *Neues Leben*, 10 May 1902.
32 Brock, *Syndikalismus*, pp. 26–8, 44–6.
33 BArch R 43 755d.
34 Ibid.
35 For a discussion on the subject, see Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction. Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), especially part II, 'Military Culture', pp. 91–196.
36 See the small collection of anti-militarist pamphlets in German issued by Ulrich Bröckling, *'Nieder mit der Disziplin! Hoch die Rebellion!'. Anarchistische Soldaten-Agitation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Berlin: Harald Kater, 1988).
37 Brock, *Syndikalismus*, p. 34.
38 For a collection of sources of voices opposed to war in a trans-European perspective, see Gerhard Senft (ed.), *Friedenskrieger des Hinterlandes. Der Erste Weltkrieg und der zeitgenössische Antimilitarismus* (Vienna: Löcker, 2014).
39 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Nr. 15628.
40 Leaflet, 'Krieg dem Kriege'. LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Nr. 15628.
41 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Nr. 15628.
42 See also the comments on the event in the anarchist press: *Der Freie Arbeiter*, 26 April 1913 and *Der Pionier*, 11 July 1913.
43 *Der Freie Arbeiter*, 26 April 1913.
44 For new work on 'war euphoria', see Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Steffen Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat. Die 'Ideen von 1914' und die Neuordnung*

Deutschlands im Ersten Weltkrieg (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).

45 For more details about the public reactions to the declaration of war and mobilisation, see Verhey, *Spirit of 1914*, pp. 58–71.

46 Fundamental for the liberal pacifist movement is Wilfried Eisenbeiß, *Die bürgerliche Friedensbewegung in Deutschland während des Ersten Weltkrieges. Organisation, Selbstverständnis und politische Praxis 1913/14–1919* (Frankfurt am Main and Bern: Peter Lang, 1918).

47 *Der Freie Arbeiter*, 18 July 1914.

48 *Freedom*, April 1915 (exact date unknown).

49 The diary entries of Erich Mühsam demonstrate conclusively that at no point did he support the war. Although he was impressed by the strong sense of unity on the home front, the overall political failures and the bloodshed depressed him deeply. For more details, see Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 313–17 and the many diary entries on the subject of the *Kain* editorial in Erich Mühsam, *Tagebücher, 1912–1914* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2012), pp. 175, 372–3; *Tagebücher, 1915* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2013), pp. 13, 112.

50 *Berliner Volkszeitung*, 11 August 1914.

51 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep 030 Nr. 15711.

52 For the specific situation of syndicalists during the war, see Wayne Thorpe, 'Keeping the Faith: The German Syndicalists in the First World War', *Central European History*, 33.2 (2000), pp. 195–216; see also the collection of sources in Helge Döhring, *Syndikalismus in Deutschland 1914–1918. 'Im Herzen der Bestie'* (Lich and Hessen: Verlag Edition AV, 2013).

53 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15647.

54 GStA I.HA Rep. 77 Tit. 2512 Nr. 10 Bd. 3.

55 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15647.

56 A study of the legal state of exception during the First World War is provided by Christian Schudnagies, *Der Kriegs – oder Belagerungszustand im Deutschen Reich während des Ersten Weltkrieges. Eine Studie zur Entwicklung und Handhabung des deutschen Ausnahmezustandrechts bis 1918* (Frankfurt am Main and Berlin: Peter Lang, 1994).

57 Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 28–9.

58 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15619, p. 249.

59 GStA I.HA Rep. 77 Tit. 2512 Nr. 10 Bd. 3.

60 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep 030 Nr. 15711.

61 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15647.

62 Ibid.

63 For more details on the concept of the 'people's community', see Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft*; Verhey, *Spirit of 1914*.

64 Mühsam, *Tagebücher 1915*, p. 79.

65 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15647.

66 Ibid.

67 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep 030 Nr. 15711.
68 See the memories of Hans Wehberg, *Als Pazifist im Weltkrieg* (Leipzig: Der Neue Geist Verlag, 1919), p. 78.
69 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15632.
70 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Nr. 15786.
71 Ingo Materna and Hans-Joachim Schreckenbach, *Dokumente aus geheimen Archiven. Band 4: 1914–1918. Berichte des Berliner Polizeipräsidenten zur Stimmung des Lage der Bevölkerung in Berlin 1914–1918* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1987), p. 228.
72 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Nr. 15694.
73 Ibid.
74 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 30 Nr. 15661.
75 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 30 Nr. 15661.
76 Ibid.
77 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15647.
78 Ibid.
79 GStaA I. HA Rep. 77 Tit. 2512 Nr. 9 Bd. 2.
80 *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1917 (exact date unknown). BArch R 8034 II 4964 Reichslandbund Anarchismus, S. 143.
81 LAB A Pr. Br. Rep. 030 Tit. 95 Nr. 15647.
82 For more details, see Thorpe, 'Keeping the Faith'; Döhring, *Syndikalismus in Deutschland.*
83 For Gustav Landauer's escapism during the war years, see Linse, *Organisierter*, pp. 326–9.
84 Stefan Großmann, obituary of Gustav Landauer, *Vossische Zeitung*, 6 May 1919.
85 Brock, *Syndikalismus*, p. 19; Rudolf Rocker, *Aus den Memoiren eines deutschen Anarchisten* (Frankfurt am Main: Edition Suhrkamp, 1974).

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'No man and no penny': Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, anti-militarism and the opportunities of the First World War[1]

Bert Altena

> What perfidiousness of that German Kaiser, who himself has guaranteed Belgium's neutrality and now violates it without any reason. And how extraordinarily shameless is that Chancellor. It is almost unbelievable, for he dares to say: I know it is against international law, but I do not care a fig; I am going to invade Belgium anyway. And what will be the end of it all? Since wishful thinking works, I think and hope that Germany will receive a castigation that it will remember for a long time to come. It might well happen that recklessness, as so often, precedes a downfall.[2]

On 5 August 1914, the Dutch anarchist and anti-militarist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis wrote in great distress to his daughter. She lived in Brussels with an officer of the Belgian army, who was now defending Liège against the German invaders. Domela Nieuwenhuis may have been surprised by the German invasion of Belgium, but not by the start of a new European war itself. From 1870 onwards he had been an active anti-militarist, and all that time he had been predicting the coming of a new war on the continent. Now that the years of armed peace were over and war had broken out, what could a Dutch anti-militarist do? In this chapter I will place Domela Nieuwenhuis's ideas and activities during the war in the context of his anti-militarism which started in the early 1870s. I will give special attention to his efforts to revive anti-militarist resistance in the Netherlands and internationally, situating these efforts in the context of the divisions in the international anarchist movement.

From war to war: a radical liberal tries to prevent wars

Domela Nieuwenhuis came from a family that belonged, as he would say, to the 'intellectual aristocracy' of the Netherlands.[3] After the start of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, he became an active campaigner in the peace movement.[4] At that time he was a young Lutheran minister and a radical liberal, already committed to two principles that he would keep throughout his life: that values and conduct should correspond even if that meant standing alone; and that hope and words were not enough, only action could change society, with his plans in that direction being practical. Considering himself an heir to the Enlightenment, he also believed that a peaceful Europe would be a huge step forward for human civilisation. This idea of progress shaped his understanding of the Franco-Prussian War: 'It was natural and fortunate that the immoral, rapacious, and half-barbarian military hordes of the Franks did not gain the victory, but that the triumph was due to Germany [...] all honourable men ought to rejoice at the victories of the Germans, for they are victories of which mankind in general will reap the fruits.'[5]

In order to achieve a peaceful and civilised Europe, the young clergyman proposed to rein in the spirit of militarism by reducing armies to a size just large enough to keep internal order. To dissuade people from thinking in terms of nations and encourage ideas of humanity, he proposed a council of the United States of Europe, with one member for every million Europeans, to arbitrate between nation states. This council would also have a small army in order to enforce its decisions. Lastly, the movement towards a peaceful Europe should be supported by the lower strata of the people, albeit under proper guidance.[6] 'Justice will be above courage and only knowledge will be power. The more morality guides our actions the sooner justice and equity will form the basis of society.' This search for justice and equity took Domela Nieuwenhuis on a political journey from radical liberalism to socialism, feminism and in the end to anarchism, but his political views remained deeply rooted in the bourgeois enlightened culture of the nineteenth century.[7]

In 1873 Domela Nieuwenhuis read Emile de Laveleye's *On the causes of war, and the means of reducing their number*, which proposed practical measures to prevent wars. Many of these proposals came down to extending transnational relations, for example, by creating customs unions, a common currency and common weights, introducing equal civil rights for foreign nationals, disseminating

knowledge about other countries, encouraging foreign language acquisition and international investments. De Laveleye also advocated strengthening the power of parliaments. Domela supplemented these proposals with some of his own: international arbitration and, based on moral and social Darwinian arguments, the liberation of colonies.[8]

Anti-militarism as true internationalism

As a result of the *Kulturkampf* and the introduction of the anti-socialist laws, Domela Nieuwenhuis's opinion of Germany became gradually more hostile: in the German Reich Prussia's backwardness apparently set the tone.[9] In 1879 he left the Lutheran Church and started to agitate for the rights of workers. He became a fully fledged social democrat, and began to view society from the standpoint of the working class. Reviewing his anti-militarism, this change led him to argue for action by workers themselves and to advocate soldiers' and workers' strikes against war.

At the international socialist congresses of Brussels (1891) and Zurich (1893) Domela Nieuwenhuis clashed with his German comrades over measures to prevent the outbreak of war. At the first congress he proposed that socialists should counter war not only with a general refusal to perform military service, but also by supporting a general strike. Anti-militarism was the hallmark of internationalism, he explained. To the German socialists, who remained extremely careful not to provoke the German government even after the lapse of the anti-socialist laws in 1890, such ideas were anathema. Moreover, contrary to Domela Nieuwenhuis, who expected war between England (or France) and Germany, they imagined Germany defending Western civilisation against Russian backwardness. To Domela the attitude of the German socialists was crucial, for a general strike and mass refusal to perform military service depended on reciprocal support. He dismissed the German socialists as narrow-minded nationalists and concluded that the outlook for a truly international socialism in Germany was extraordinarily bleak. From 1891 onwards he worked to achieve a fundamental change in the attitude of both the German social democrats and dissident libertarian socialists, who also were afraid to provoke renewed repression by the state.[10]

In 1896, at the London congress, he left the Second International. He now called himself a libertarian socialist and, later, an anarchist.[11] From this period, he opposed any attempt to form anarchist

organisations, believing formal organisation for the sake of anarchism to be contrary to its goal. He would approve of organisations only for specific and limited purposes, such as anti-militarism.

In the international anarchist world, Domela Nieuwenhuis became an authority on the question of anti-militarism, and he was charged with drafting a report on this subject for the international anarchist congress in Paris (1900). Because the congress was banned by the French authorities, this report was never discussed. Alongside his proposals from 1891, it was a forceful restatement of the ideas he had formulated in the 1870s, but these now served to undermine the power of states and of nationalism. To eliminate wars, Domela Nieuwenhuis proposed 19 measures, ranging from the need to teach soldiers to think for themselves and for parents to stop giving their children militarist toys, to the improvement of general knowledge and well-being for all. He also acknowledged the importance of propaganda in creating a militarist sentiment among the population through education, the glorifying of generals, etc. He added to this analysis that kings and governments were but instruments in the hands of bankers and capitalists. This explained why, contrary to the solemn declarations at international peace conferences, military budgets were increasing. Modern wars were commercial wars pursued in order to find outlets for the goods that piled up in domestic markets.[12] After he read Herman Gorter's pamphlet on modern imperialism in 1915 Domela Nieuwenhuis would arrive at a fuller understanding of the subject.[13]

He also proposed forming a new red International to propagate the idea of a general strike and a refusal to perform military service. 'If governments declare war, then that is a revolutionary act and then we have the right, even the obligation, to answer that by revolution.'[14] Although he did not reject the use of violence, he acknowledged the usefulness of Tolstoyan passive resistance and individual conscientious objection. Such individual actions, he maintained, required great moral courage but could have important consequences. All these proposals and considerations notwithstanding, in the end he doubted whether the twentieth century would see lasting peace among nations.

Between 26 and 28 June 1904, a new Anti-Militarist International (IAMV) was founded in Amsterdam. Domela Nieuwenhuis became its international secretary. Delegates from a number of countries, including England, France, Spain and the Netherlands, adopted almost the same resolution that Domela had proposed in Brussels in 1891. Consequently, the IAMV sought the help of trade unions,

and passive resistance and conscientious objection were rejected as suitable means of action. Since the revolution would be violent the congress did not want to promote Christian pacifism, and the IAMV would not encourage individual acts of refusal to enlist. In addition to mobilising workers, Domela Nieuwenhuis proposed recruiting women to the anti-militarist campaign. As mothers and partners they had an important role to play in preventing war.[15]

It soon turned out that the new International was an almost exclusively Dutch affair. Because its strategies required reciprocal action, this did not augur well for the IAMV. Most European anarchists were unwilling to endorse a specialised international anti-militarist organisation, probably because they could not see the need for such an International, just as they did not aspire to any other international organisation.[16] This became abundantly clear in 1907 when, only after much hesitation, the international anarchist congress in Amsterdam eventually agreed to organise a combined session with the IAMV. A year later Domela Nieuwenhuis complained to Pierre Ramus that in the meantime nobody had contacted him. In 1912 he came to the conclusion that few anarchists were also principled anti-militarists. Even in the Netherlands, where it served as an alternative organisation for anarchists, the IAMV was on the wane. And although it was not the only anti-militarist movement in the country (there were also the Tolstoyans and a union of Christian socialists with anti-militarist leanings, which attracted the support of quite a few clergymen), their anti-militarist campaigns only came to life after the war's outbreak.[17]

Meanwhile Domela Nieuwenhuis was alert to the preparations being made for war in many European countries. In 1913, he saw the Balkan Wars as a sign that a more general war was imminent, in which barbarous acts were to be expected.[18] Indeed, war would already have broken out, he commented in May 1914, had the political leaders kept their nerve. His realism added to his pessimism. In the midst of growing tensions after the murder of Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Domela Nieuwenhuis lost faith in the possibility of a general strike. The French were too divided or too weak to call a general strike, and German social democrats had consistently opposed educating German workers about its possibilities. When the war did break out at the end of July, Domela saw no means to prevent it. Worse still, on 31 July the Dutch government mobilised, and although there was no enthusiasm for the move, nor was there any protest, let alone a general strike. Like their German and French comrades the Dutch social democrats decided

to support the government and proclaimed a temporary end to the class war. All anti-militarists could do was organise huge protests; the moment for changing popular ideas and attitudes had passed. 'When the sword does the talking, reason has no chance.'[19]

War: finding the right course

The last days of July and the first few days of August were very stressful for Domela Nieuwenhuis. He longed to have his family with him at his home in Hilversum. Not only was his daughter Johanna living in Brussels, but his youngest son Cesar was staying with Domela's friend Alexander Cohen in Paris. Luckily Cesar returned on one of the last trains to leave the city. Because of his exposed position as leader of the anti-militarist movement, Domela Nieuwenhuis expected to be jailed. He even played with the idea that he might die in jail as a martyr to the cause. On 1 August he wrote his wife a farewell letter: 'To die for anti-militarism, to be a victim for world peace in this hypocritical world, is the greatest honour, and I am allowed to enjoy that.'[20] He hoped to follow the example of the Chicago martyrs or Francisco Ferrer.[21] It soon turned out, however, that the Dutch government was less repressive than Domela Nieuwenhuis had anticipated.

During the first few days of the war the Netherlands was gripped by panic. After the unexpected German invasion of Belgium, war seemed imminent. People rushed to the banks to withdraw their savings, prices went up, families suddenly lost their breadwinners to military service, and many businesses closed. It was said that during the first few weeks of August, in Amsterdam alone, some 40,000 people lost their jobs and their income.

Domela Nieuwenhuis was quite confused by these extraordinary events. What would be the result of this internal disruption, he wondered, and would the country succeed in staying out of the war? In his letters to his daughter Johanna the anti-militarist praised the Belgian army. 'Everybody admires the "chefkens" who put up such a brave fight. Would you believe that this has a very positive effect on our army?'[22] Even in his journal he praised the Belgians. Without reserve he made his anti-German feelings known, and described the decision of the old Austrian Emperor to send millions of soldiers to their deaths on account of his nephew's murder as a preposterously autocratic act. Because the German Kaiser had done nothing to hold Franz Joseph back, he was his partner in crime and ultimately responsible for the war. 'For Europe a German victory would start

an era of the most shameless arrogance and infinite tyranny, which no liberty loving person would wish.' At the same time, however, he did not close his eyes to the consequences of an Entente victory. This would strengthen despotic Russia, and he certainly did not wish that to happen. 'We have always maintained that Russia and Prussia (those names differ only in one character) are the big danger to progress in the world and that if Western Europe should lose the war then this would be very harmful to the democratic spirit.' Domela Nieuwenhuis preferred not to live under a German government, but that did not mean that he would side unquestioningly with the Entente. However, defining the war in terms of freedom and democracy, he failed to see the imperialist ambitions of all the warring countries.[23]

On top of his confusion with geopolitical events was his disillusionment with the behaviour of socialists and anarchists. Although he had not expected otherwise from the social democrats, their siding with their respective governments was nevertheless a severe blow. 'Every feeling of honour and dignity disappears if people at this moment, when faithfulness to one's principles is required, trample on it.' Alongside the perfidy of the social democrats was the anarchists' betrayal.[24] The siding of the French syndicalists with their government was painful. That Gustav Landauer had written that he was no longer an anarchist, a position taken also by Bruno Wille, stung. And that Erich Mühsam had closed down his anarchist monthly *Kain*, stating that he hoped the foreign dogs would not harm German soil, was telling. 'Every intellectual, including those who had acted as anarchists, seems to have completely changed his opinion.'[25] The internationalism of the social democratic and anarchist movements proved to have been a very thin veneer. Add to this the fact that the spirit of revolution had been almost completely absent among Europe's workers, and the whole reaction of the left proved to be a dismal failure. Domela Nieuwenhuis held fast to his anti-militarist principles, and felt completely isolated.

It took time to come to grips with the situation, but his public role left him no room for any indecision. However trying the times were, in public Domela Nieuwenhuis could not neglect his obligations to the anarchist cause and had to look for a brighter side to the situation. On 5 August he wrote in his journal that the war could well be a thunderstorm that would clear the air after twenty-five years of armed peace. It might still produce a more democratic and free spirit among peoples, and then justice would prevail. But this general analysis was more a general statement of belief than an

outline of a precise direction for action. Two people gave Domela that direction again, and inspired him to take practical action. The first was his close assistant Gerhard Rijnders, the leading figure in Social Anarchist Action (SAA), a conglomerate of Amsterdam-based anarchists. The second was David Wijnkoop, leader of the radical social-democratic Marxists.[26]

In the first half of August the SAA organised a meeting about the war of 1870 and the Paris Commune. Thus, from the start of the war the Commune became the leading point of reference for Dutch anarchists in relation to what could and should happen after the war's end.[27] Rijnders expected a *Blitzkrieg*, as in 1870. At no time, however, does he seem to have doubted that the only answer to the war should be 'no man and no penny for the army'. If a foreign country were to invade the Netherlands, workers should refuse to fight against their brothers. Every form of militarism should be fought against. From there it was but a small step to the idea that the Netherlands should demobilise as an example to workers in other countries, even if this left the country open to German occupation.[28] On 25 August a resolution along these lines was accepted at a crowded meeting.[29]

Wijnkoop had also immediately started to organise meetings to protest against the war and its consequences for Dutch workers. From the start the anarchist anti-militarists had joined in, and together they tried to mobilise various groups of people, including soldiers, housewives and the unemployed. At Wijnkoop's initiative these meetings always ended with a street demonstration and demands on local or national government. On one occasion a demonstration through Amsterdam encountered the strong arm of the law, and Domela Nieuwenhuis was defended by a group of women. During August he commuted constantly between his home in Hilversum and Amsterdam, and wherever protest meetings were allowed he would take part in agitation. His participation often led to larger halls having to be hired, because he was one of a few speakers to deliver a clear anti-war message, and, moreover, one of even fewer who had any charisma. He was 67 years old, but age did not matter and he was hardly ever at home.[30]

After the August resolution he found a new confidence concerning the role of anarchists and anti-militarists during the war. Cooperation with the Marxists should cease because appealing to governments was incompatible with anarchism. After occasional cooperation with the Marxists, this collaboration ended in October 1916. In September 1914, Domela Nieuwenhuis also started to

revise his early, emotional condemnation of the Germans. Not all Germans and not everything related to the German Reich were bad, he now thought. In fact, the war had been forced upon the Saxons and Bavarians by the Prussians. These had formed the Reich and, while being of Lithuanian origin, after 1871 they had not been Germanised but had succeeded in Prussifying the rest of the Reich. The best thing for the Germans to do would be to sever their ties to Prussia, and, being half-Slavs, the Prussians should become fully fledged Slavs. That was not intended to be derogatory, for Domela Nieuwenhuis was well aware that such luminaries as Dostoevsky, Gorky and Kropotkin were Slavs too. Europe, however, also had to be grateful for the German-born poets, authors, philosophers and composers. The old idea of a United States of Europe received a new airing: 'If we were to combine the thoroughness of the Germans, the practical mind of the English and the polished manners of the French, what a splendid ensemble we would have.'[31]

Regarding the position of the Netherlands, Domela Nieuwenhuis concluded that it was not up to his country whether or not it would be drawn into the war, but to the warring countries. In contrast with his early enthusiasm about the Belgian army, he now thought the Dutch army too weak. In hindsight, he asked whether their heroic resistance, which had resulted in many casualties, had helped the Belgians. Would one not be better off acknowledging that the living conditions in the countries of Western Europe were not sufficiently different to justify this response?[32]

At the end of 1914 Domela published *Het Vredesboekje* [The peace pamphlet], recycling his report for the anarchist conference of 1900. At the same time, and much more to the point, he reinforced his anarchist anti-militarist critique, and showed his readers how the production of weapons was related to major international capital. Behind the rulers of states and alongside the parliamentarians stood big bankers, meaning that to fight militarism, one had to fight the state. Like Bakunin, Domela Nieuwenhuis was convinced that the state would have to be crushed before a new society could be formed.[33]

Domela and the international anarchist schism

The betrayal by French and German anarchists had shocked Domela Nieuwenhuis, but the position of his old friend Kropotkin was a much harder blow. Domela Nieuwenhuis felt very close to Kropotkin and his ideas. He admired Kropotkin's critique of the state and

once described him to Landauer as 'our friend and much honoured master'.[34] Both men had feared that the Balkan Wars could lead to a pan-European war, but when war broke out they took opposite positions.[35] Kropotkin's opinion did not come as a complete surprise to Domela Nieuwenhuis. During his last visit to France the Russian had tried to persuade his French comrades to accept three years' military service, and that had not gone unnoticed by the Dutchman. Now Kropotkin turned out to be a Russian nationalist patriot. 'The amount of influence a war can have on people's minds is amazing, with as a result a man like Kropotkin even having positive expectations regarding the Russian Tsar Nicholas II, a narrow-minded, bigoted man who thinks himself to be deputy of God on the Russian throne.' Domela Nieuwenhuis was unable to detect any difference between the imperialism of Germany, France, Britain or Russia to justify choosing one side over the other.[36]

He felt increasingly isolated in his anarchist anti-militarism, but it was not only his comrades' renunciation of their principles that shocked him, for he experienced the outbreak of war as the gravest crisis in the process towards a completely civilised humanity.[37] Looking back two years later, he acknowledged that, with all its disappointments, the war had turned him into an old man.[38] At times he thought death preferable to disillusionment.[39] He was overjoyed, then, when in November 1914 *Freedom* published Malatesta's critique of Kropotkin. He immediately published a translation of this 'spirited article'. 'This is the anarchist position for this time, a position we have defended in our journal too. We reach out to everyone saying: that is the spirit that should inspire us anarchists; this is the guideline we should take our cue from.'[40]

Finding allies among anarchists abroad, Domela Nieuwenhuis intensified his propaganda in Europe. We do not know exactly what his transnational networks looked like at that time or who belonged to them. He received *Freedom* and *Mother Earth* and Luigi Bertoni's *Le Réveil/Il Risveglio*. However, as periodicals in the warring countries, especially in Germany, were discontinued, information about the anarchist movement dried up.[41] The war also considerably hindered the exchange of letters. Domela Nieuwenhuis had the same experience as Malatesta: letters were held up for fourteen days and arrived already opened; the police certainly withheld some of the mail. Moreover, he destroyed various letters, probably for reasons of safety.[42] While it is safe to assume that his correspondence with foreign anarchists was broader and more intense than the letters in his archive indicate, it remains unclear how he

came to sign Malatesta's manifesto of March 1915.[43] A manifesto to all anti-militarists, anarchists and freethinkers in November 1914 published in *La Libre Pensée internationale* (Lausanne) might have made his point of view known more widely.[44] In it he cited the August resolution of the Amsterdam anarchists and called for renewed anti-militarist action along the lines of that resolution. Following this publication he came into contact with Bertoni. Domela published several articles in *Le Réveil*. He also came to know the group around Nicholas Rogdaef and the journal *Nabat'*, which had found refuge in Geneva. Rogdaef was good at networking, and he was in contact with Russian anarchists in New York and London, and with Czech, Ukrainian and Bulgarian comrades. He also corresponded with Italian anarchists, such as Luigi Fabbri, who consequently sent a letter to Domela Nieuwenhuis informing him of the situation in Italy and of the need to keep the old anarchist principles intact. *Nabat*' and Rogdaef were very eager for contributions from Domela, and they even dedicated issue 2–3 of the journal to the Dutch anti-militarist.[45]

Domela Nieuwenhuis's contributions to *Nabat*' included articles that had already appeared elsewhere, but also new ones. In exchange, he published articles from *Nabat'* in *De Vrije Socialist*. The most curious among his contributions to *Nabat'* is an article that had been published in *De Vrije Socialist* shortly before, in which he proposed a crusade against the war by women. The idea was that the 12 million women who a few months earlier had protested at British embassies in various countries against the war should now go to the battlefields, position themselves between the warring soldiers and exhort them to stop fighting. Logistics appeared to be a minor problem for this proposal, which Domela Nieuwenhuis deemed excellent and practicable. He sent the article to journals published by the British suffragettes, but they refused to print it. Feminists in the Netherlands also ignored the idea.[46]

With the Second International a dead letter, Domela Nieuwenhuis believed there was an opportunity to found a new International, or at least an anarchist international newsletter. The *Nabat'* group was immediately enthusiastic about both ideas, but Bertoni thought the new International premature.[47] Though in favour of an international newsletter, Fabbri also had reservations and the idea had to be dropped once Italy joined the Entente in 1915. Although Rogdaef tried to get help from comrades in London for the international bulletin, this too failed to get off the ground.[48]

Domela Nieuwenhuis's critique of Kropotkin and others became

sharper after the publication of the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*, in early 1916, which supported Kropotkin. Following Malatesta, Domela Nieuwenhuis now called the signatories governmental anarchists, and argued that Kropotkin was acting against everything he had written about the state. In his eyes the parties to the manifesto had ceased to be true anarchists. In October 1916, in an exchange of letters, his differences with the prince proved to be insuperable. Whereas Kropotkin framed his argument according to what he saw as the exigencies of reality, for Domela Nieuwenhuis the long-term goal of preserving anarchism intact was much more important. Kropotkin argued that it mattered whether a country was occupied by a foreign power. The economy would be ruined and the inhabitants enslaved. The situation in divided Poland, or that of the Boers, was proof of this. In the past, he and Domela Nieuwenhuis had been on the same side in both cases, the Russian subtly remarked. Kropotkin maintained that he was being faithful to the ideas of the First International and of Bakunin, who had greatly valued the autonomy of nations. As an anarchist, one should not remain passive in the face of conquest. As far as Domela Nieuwenhuis was concerned, however, workers should never cooperate with their masters to win a war that was not theirs. Of course, when conquered, the workers would also have to bear the yoke of the conqueror, but their situation would be no worse than it already was. He missed any proletarian sentiment in Kropotkin's reasoning and believed nationalism had made him blind to the true situation. The best Domela Nieuwenhuis and the international anarchist anti-militarists could do was criticise these deviations from the right course and agitate against the war, publishing manifestos and building new networks.[49]

Revolution and violence

In the still neutral Netherlands the scope for action was slightly wider than in the warring countries, and Domela Nieuwenhuis was surprised that he could speak at gatherings directed at soldiers. Repression was applied only in regions designated to be in a state of war. One of his first concerns was to think about how anti-militarists could seize the initiative. He was annoyed by the fact that at the end of July 1914 the government had set the agenda. The Netherlands had mobilised the army before he and the syndicalists could even consider launching a general strike. With the population complacent, other than organising meetings to protest against the

war and its consequences he and his followers were unable to challenge the state's agenda.[50]

In May 1915 a group of 22 leading figures asked the Dutch government to introduce general compulsory training in the use of arms.[51] That request immediately alarmed anti-militarists. For Domela Nieuwenhuis and the IAMV it was the next step towards complete militarism,[52] but when it came to opposing the idea it was the Tolstoyans and Christian socialists who took the lead. On 30 September 1915 the clergyman L. Bähler published a manifesto in which the signatories declared that their consciences obliged them to resist conscription. Initially the manifesto was signed by 178 people, including quite a few clergymen. Because of this it gained currency as a plea for conscientious objection. The next editions – appearing on 12 October 1915 and 22 October 1915 – were signed by 326 and 529 people, respectively. The government decided to charge some of the better-known signatories with incitement, a move that inspired Domela Nieuwenhuis to sign the manifesto, even though he did not agree with all of its demands. Nevertheless, a new anti-militarist movement was under way, one that Domela Nieuwenhuis and his followers had not spearheaded.[53]

Soon, forgetting the rift of 1904, the IAMV and the Tolstoyans began to work together. In 1916 an international version of the manifesto was published, now with 1,070 signatories. As government repression grew, Domela Nieuwenhuis stepped up his intervention on behalf of the objectors and the signatories who were being prosecuted.[54] The more he agitated on behalf of the manifesto, the closer he seemed to move towards the ideas of Tolstoy, and while the Tolstoyans challenged Christianity more squarely than the atheist Domela Nieuwenhuis did when he referred to the Bible, the *De Vrije Socialist* shows a clear increase in the frequency of his references to Tolstoy. Over the years the anti-war movement grew, comprising about 400 objectors by 1919.[55]

From the second half of 1916 onwards, however, Domela Nieuwenhuis's health started to deteriorate and he had to withdraw gradually from the public scene. In private, he had to acknowledge that his age (by then he was almost 70) and his physical decline were presenting serious problems. His writing arm increasingly refused to do its job. To a cousin he confided that he was not afraid to die, but that he very much wanted to see how the war would end: 'However difficult it might be, one has to believe that this war will produce something good, because without that belief one loses all faith in the progress of the human race. It is better to lose everything

apart from that.' In 1918 he needed help to write his letters, and he sometimes used a typewriter. Editing *De Vrije Socialist* was a task increasingly left to Gerhard Rijnders and Sam Colthof, but Domela Nieuwenhuis still wrote most of the leading articles and, almost every week, a commentary on the political situation at home and in Europe. By 1918 he could hardly walk, his back contorted at an angle of 90 degrees, and he often had to be pushed in a wheelchair. No longer a charismatic leader, he became a charismatic symbol. The anti-militarist movement was thriving and would continue to do so for some years to come, but new people now took the lead.[56]

Domela Nieuwenhuis had started to think about what should happen after the war as early as 1915. There should, at least, be no militarist peace, he wrote, because that would sow the seeds of the next war. Like Jean Grave, he was opposed to any annexations. He advocated guaranteeing the independence of every nation and, in line with his ideas from the 1870s, that all states should disarm and accept compulsory arbitration to resolve interstate conflicts. Furthermore, he hoped that the workers would learn from Paris in 1871, and respond to the war with a new Commune. He had high hopes, if only the workers would show at least half the courage they demonstrated when fighting in the war and refuse any truce in the class war.[57]

Domela Nieuwenhuis's anti-militarism was always put to the service of a revolution for a better world; it was not an end in itself. In April 1915 he wrote to the editors of *Nabat'*:

> I assume things will soon happen that, in a short time, will be of much more import than the things that have happened in the bygone era. I fancy that the revolution is already under way. We will find that our preparation has been good enough for the revolution to be successful, if not entirely then at least partially, and that it will mean a great stride forward.

Maybe it was no more than a pep talk, but this faith gave purpose to his attempts to establish a new international understanding among anarchists.[58]

In 1916, when food was in short supply in the Netherlands and rumours began circulating of hunger revolts in Germany, Domela Nieuwenhuis saw revolution coming.[59] The prevailing state of affairs could quickly change, he reckoned.[60] Anarchists and anti-militarists should ready themselves. But for what exactly? And what strategy should they adopt? Did their principles not make an anarchist bid for leadership impossible? Domela Nieuwenhuis

certainly thought so: ‘We can give advice and point to causes; we do not have the workers on a string and cannot pull them to where we want them to be. Neither do we want this, because then they would act not on their own initiative but on our command.’[61] Anarchists did not want to become the new leaders. Like Malatesta, Domela Nieuwenhuis was convinced that the means ought to be in harmony with the ends.[62]

Where should the revolution break out? Where would it certainly not happen? By early 1916 he had come to the conclusion that only a revolution in Germany could save European civilisation. Germany had been almost impervious to anarchist ideas, but if German workers were to rise then their comrades in other countries would follow their example.[63] However, if the revolution were to start in France, the consequences would be disastrous: the Germans would repeat what they had done in 1871, crushing the revolutionaries and revolution in general.[64] A revolution in Germany could fail of course, but it could also strengthen democracy not only in Germany, but also in Paris, London and Rome. ‘Oh, I hope that the German workers will have learned a lot during this great war, but above all that a nation is not great because of the might of its armies, not because of brutish violence, but because of justice and reason and above all because of liberty.’[65] This was quite a change from Domela Nieuwenhuis’s initial hope that the Germans would be thoroughly routed.

Although discontent grew, Germany was still nowhere near a revolution. Instead, revolution broke out in Russia. Domela Nieuwenhuis’s reaction was lukewarm, because this revolution seemed to represent only a change of political leadership.[66] It was not a social and economic revolution and therefore would achieve very little for the workers. However, the February Revolution taught that, contrary to the expectations of many anarchists, a revolution would take longer than just a couple of days. Domela Nieuwenhuis longed to hear the views of Kropotkin, who had returned to Russia. By September, following his own compass, he called the erstwhile ‘maximalists’ Lenin and Trotsky ‘anarchists’, probably because he saw a resemblance between their struggle with the moderate socialists and his own fight with the social democrats. After the October Revolution, however, he quickly changed his mind. As soon as Lenin started to form a government and subsequently suspended the constituent assembly, Domela Nieuwenhuis regarded the revolution as lost. When news arrived that political adversaries (Whites, socialist revolutionaries, anarchists) were

being killed simply because of their opposition, he condemned the Bolsheviks' new fatherland of the workers.[67] Perhaps it reminded him of the French Revolution, of which it was said that it had eaten its own children. This brought Domela Nieuwenhuis to repudiate the use of violence as a means of seizing power.[68] The consequences of a one-sided general strike and a general refusal to go to war, together with the insights of Tolstoy and the lessons of the Russian Revolution, seem to have made him more or less a pacifist.[69]

Conclusion

Domela Nieuwenhuis lived long enough to witness the truce of November 1918, but on 17 November 1919, before the outcome of the German Revolution and before the Peace Conference had ended, he died. He had not been a man to change his convictions easily, as he himself noted in his memoirs. There is much continuity in his thought, but, learning from history and contemporary events, he sharpened his ideas throughout his life. The First World War was the last and most painful episode in this process. It was a time when opportunities to act, whether nationally or internationally, were exceptionally reduced. In warring countries, radical anti-militarist movements were severely repressed. To encourage the population to resist the war, these movements needed means of communication, but they were quickly denied them: publications were forbidden, correspondence was monitored or censored and activists were jailed. In wartime, anti-militarists need internationally coordinated action more than ever, but the example of Domela Nieuwenhuis shows how extremely difficult it was to achieve this. Judged by his own anarchist and anti-militarist principles, it is difficult to imagine what he could have done other than to keep his principles intact and defend them whenever necessary. He must often have lived by the adage of Ibsen's Brand, which was dear to him: 'The strongest man in the world is he who stands alone.'

Notes

1 I would like to thank Chris Gordon and the editors of this volume for improving my English, and the editors also for their kind and very stimulating comments.

2 Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis to Johanna Domela Nieuwenhuis, Hilversum, 5 August 1914, in Bert Altena and Rudolf de Jong (eds), *'En al beschouwen alle broeders mij als den verloren broeder' De*

familiecorrespondentie van en over Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1846–1932 (Amsterdam: IISG, 1997), p. 622. All translations from the Dutch are mine unless otherwise stated.

3 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Van christen tot anarchist. Gedenkschriften* (Amsterdam: Scheltema en Holkema, 1910), p. 11.

4 W.H. van der Linden, *The International Peace Movement, 1815–1874* (Amsterdam: Tilleul Publications, 1987), pp. 953–68.

5 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *De Vredebond* (Amsterdam: Funke, 1871), pp. 12–13, 18–19, as translated by van der Linden, *International Peace Movement*, p. 983.

6 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 'Een vraagstuk van internationaal belang', *Onze Tijd, studiën en berichten over persoonen, zaken en gebeurtenissen van den dag*, 2 (1870), pp. 324–36.

7 Nieuwenhuis, *Vredebond*, p. 13, as cited in Bert Altena, '"Gruss aus Holland, dem Lande der Freiheit und Revolution": F. Domela Nieuwenhuis und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie 1889–1919', in Walter Mühlhausen et al. (eds), *Grenzgänger. Persönlichkeiten des deutsch-niederländischen Verhältnisses. Horst Lademacher zum 65. Geburtstag* (Münster: Waxmann, 1998), pp. 69–103 (p. 73).

8 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 'De wereld op haar malst (een bladzijde uit de geschiedenis der vredezaak)', *Onze Tijd*, 1 (1874), pp. 172–90, 193–211, as cited in Greet Heijmans and Annelies Koster, *De IAMV van 1904 tot 1921. Geschiedenis van de internationale anti-militaristische vereeniging* (Zwolle: SVAG, 1984), p. 12.

9 Altena, '"Gruss"', pp. 74, 77.

10 Markus Bürgi, *Die Anfänge der Zweiten Internationale. Positionen und Auseinandersetzungen 1889–1893* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1996), pp. 163–72, 547–89; Homme Wedman (ed.), *Strijd, lief en leed in de Oude Socialistische beweging en de Vakorganisatie. Persoonlijke herinneringen door Christiaan Cornelissen* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 146–8; Altena, '"Gruss"', pp. 82–3. For the proceedings of the Brussels congress I have used the reports in the *Berliner Volkstribüne*, which are very extensive and much more reliable than the official minutes, which were published much later.

11 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Varlaam Tcherkessof [?], Amsterdam, 26 June 1896, in International Institute for Social History (hereafter IISH), Freedom Archive, 440.

12 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Oorlog aan den oorlog. Rapport over het militarisme en de houding van anarchisten en revolutionair socialisten in geval van oorlog tusschen de naties onderling, opgemaakt voor het verboden kongres te Parijs in het jaar 1900* (Amsterdam, 1901).

13 H. Gorter, *Het imperialisme, de wereldoorlog en de sociaal-democratie* (Amsterdam: SDP, 1915); *De Vrije Socialist* (hereafter *VS*), 20 January 1915.

14 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Oorlog aan den oorlog. Rapport over het*

militarisme en de houding van anarchisten en revolutionair socialisten in geval van oorlog tusschen de naties onderling, opgemaakt voor het verboden kongres te Parijs in het jaar 1900 (Amsterdam, 1901), p. 23.

15 Heijmans and Koster, *De IAMV*, pp. 21–50; J. Giesen, *Nieuwe Geschiedenis. Het antimilitarisme van de daad in Nederland* (Rotterdam: De Tijdstroom, [1923]), pp. 4–5; W.H. van der Linden, *The International Peace Movement During the First World War. In and Around the Dutch Anti-War Council 1914–1919, its International Mediatory Work for a Speedy Peace, and its International Central Organisation for a Durable Peace* (Almere: Tilleul Publications, 2006), p. 57. A possibly incomplete list of delegates at the 1904 congress can be found in Rossijskij Centr Chranenija i Izučenija Dokumentov Novejšej Istorii, Fond 208 (international correspondence F. Domela Nieuwenhuis) (hereafter RCChIDNI, Fond 208), 214.

16 See Constance Bantman, 'Internationalism without an International? Cross-Channel Anarchist Networks, 1880–1914', in Magaly Rodríguez García (ed.), *Labour Internationalism. Different Times, Different Faces*, special issue of *Revue belge de philology et de l'histoire / Belgisch tijdschrift voor filologie en geschiedenis*, 84.4 (2006), pp. 961–81.

17 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to P. Ramus, Hilversum, 16 June 1908 and 19 February 1912, IISH, Ramus Archive, 127. Heijmans and Koster, *De IAMV*, pp. 44, 51–2, 94–5; Giesen, *Nieuwe Geschiedenis*, p. 6; Ron Blom and Teunis Stelling, *Niet voor God en niet voor het Vaderland. Linkse soldaten, matrozen en hun organisaties tijdens de mobilisatie van '14-'18* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2004), p. 282. F. Domela Nieuwenhuis in *VS*, 6 June 1914.

18 *VS*, 19 July and 31 December 1913; *VS*, 3 January, 2 and 16 May, 13 June 1914.

19 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Militarisme en Anarchisme* (= *Vliegende blaadjes* 26) (Hilversum, 1908 [?]), p. 3; F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 'Algemeene werkstaking in geval van oorlog', *VS*, 15 July 1914; 'Wat staat den arbeiders te doen?', *VS*, 1 August 1914.

20 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Johanna Domela Nieuwenhuis, Hilversum, 30 July 1914, and F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to E. Domela Nieuwenhuis-Godthelp, Hilversum, 1 August 1914, in Altena and de Jong, *'En al beschouwen alle broeders'*, pp. 618–19. F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Johanna Domela Nieuwenhuis, Hilversum, 3 August 1914, ibid., p. 620. F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Johanna Domela Nieuwenhuis, Hilversum, 5 August 1914, ibid., p. 624. F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Jan Domela Nieuwenhuis Nyegaard, Hilversum, 28 August 1914, ibid., p. 628. *VS*, 28 August 1914.

21 *VS*, 30 December 1914.

22 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Johanna Domela Nieuwenhuis, Hilversum, 5, 7 August 1914 in Altena and de Jong, *'En al beschouwen alle broeders'*, pp. 622–6.

23 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Johanna Domela Nieuwenhuis, 11 and 15 August 1914, in Altena and de Jong, *'En al beschouwen alle broeders'*, pp. 622–6. *VS*, 1, 8 and 15 August 1914.
24 *VS*, 8 August and 14 October 1914.
25 *VS*, 28 August 1914 (CGT), 11 November 1914 (Landauer, Wille, Mühsam). Mühsam soon regretted his concluding statement in *Kain*: Chris Hirte and Conrad Piens (eds), *Erich Mühsam, Tagebücher, Vol. 3 (1912–1914)* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2012), from 24 August 1914 onwards. *VS*, 14 October 1914 and 8 January 1916.
26 On the SAA, see Heijmans and Koster, *De IAMV*, p. 79.
27 *VS*, 1, 5, 8 and 28 August 1914.
28 *VS*, 12 August 1914.
29 *VS*, 19 and 22 August 1914. Text in Giesen, *Nieuwe Geschiedenis*, pp. 15–16, and in IISH, Wijnkoop Archive 100 (microfilm of RCChIDNI, Fond 581). On demobilisation, see Blom and Stelling, *Niet voor God*, p. 419.
30 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Jan Domela Nieuwenhuis Nyegaard, Hilversum, 28 August 1914, in Altena and de Jong, *'En al beschouwen alle broeders'*, p. 628.
31 *VS*, 22 August and 16 September 1914.
32 *De Telegraaf*, 30 July 1915; F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 'U rabočich net otečestva', *Nabat' Organ Anarchistov-Kommunistov* (Geneva), April 1916, p. 2.
33 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *Het Vredesboekje* (Amsterdam: De Roode Bibliotheek, 1914). It had a print run of 10,000 copies according to *De Vrije Socialist*, though in a private letter from Domela Nieuwenhuis to the publisher he talks about 5,000 copies. There is no way to ascertain which number is correct (F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Gerhard Rijnders, Hilversum, 19 February 1916, IISH, F. Domela Nieuwenhuis Archive, 292). It was sold out within a couple of months: *VS*, 9 October 1915. See also van der Linden, *Dutch Anti-War Council*, p. 966. On anarchist anti-militarism, see *VS*, 28 October and 28 November 1914; Jan Domela Nieuwenhuis Nyegaard to Co and Betsy Domela Nieuwenhuis, Amsterdam, [1 March?] 1915, in Altena and de Jong, *'En al beschouwen alle broeders'*, p. 632; *De Telegraaf*, 25 May 1915.
34 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Landauer, Hilversum, 28 April 1912, IISH, Landauer Archive, 13.
35 Kropotkin to Domela Nieuwenhuis, Brighton, 31 January 1913, RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 260.
36 *VS*, 3 October 1914; *Freedom*, October and November 1914.
37 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Jan Domela Nieuwenhuis Nyegaard, Hilversum, 28 August 1914, in Altena and de Jong, *'En al beschouwen alle broeders'*, p. 628.
38 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to J. Rutgers, Hilversum, 21 July 1916, IISH, F. Domela Nieuwenhuis Archive, 291.

39 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Anton Bakels, Hilversum, 11 July 1918, in IISH, F. Domela Nieuwenhuis Archive, 275.

40 *VS*, 14 and 18 November 1914; *Freedom*, November 1914. For the role of Malatesta's protest in Italy, see Pietro di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy: London and the Italian Anarchist Diaspora, 1880–1917* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 192.

41 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to P. Ramus, Hilversum, 10 March 1916, IISH, Ramus Archive, 127; F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to Anton Bakels, Hilversum, 25 March 1918, IISH, F. Domela Nieuwenhuis Archive, 275.

42 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to P. Ramus, Hilversum, 10 February 1915, IISH, Ramus Archive, 127.

43 Malatesta's manifesto in *Freedom*, March 1915; *VS*, 3 March 1915.

44 *La Libre Pensée internationale* (Lausanne), 7 November 1914, and *Golos Truda* (New York), 27 November 1914 (Rogdaef was a collaborator); resolution also in *Le Réveil/Il Risveglio*, 28 November 1914. The manifesto reached Erich Mühsam by word of mouth: Mühsam, *Tagebücher*, ed. Hirte and Piens, 14 November 1914.

45 Malatesta, extract from his letter to Molinari in *Le Réveil/Il Risveglio* (Geneva), 31 October 1914. Articles by Nieuwenhuis in *Le Réveil/Il Risveglio*, 6 November and 4 December 1915, 26 February, 8 April and 8 July to 4 November 1916. On Rogdaef's network, see *Nabat'*, 2–3 (May–June) 1915; N. Rogdaef to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Geneva, 22 June 1915, RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 276. Luigi Fabbri to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Fabriano [6 May 1915], RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 275.

46 The manifesto of the Nabat' group was published in *VS*, 31 July 1915. The manifesto itself is in RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 277.

47 Bertoni, *Le Réveil/Il Risveglio*, 25 September 1915.

48 'Le Tocsin' group to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Geneva, 22 July 1915, RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 277. N. Rogdaef to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Geneva, 22 June 1915, RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 276. L. Fabbri to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Fabriano, 6 May 1915, RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 275.

49 P. Kropotkin to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Brighton, 3 October 1916, RCChIDNI, Fond 208, 279; *VS*, 11, 14 and 18 October 1916. See also *VS*, 12 April 1917, for Domela Nieuwenhuis's comment on Kropotkin's letter to a meeting in London in favour of the Russian Revolution. On the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*, see Homme Wedman, 'Fout in een verkeerde oorlog. Het "Manifeste des seize" van 1916', *Tweede Jaarboek Anarchisme* (= *de AS* 112, autumn 1995), pp. 15–20; Hans Ramaer, 'Het manifest van de zestien. Anarchistisch partijkiezen in 1914–1918', *de AS*, 186–7 (summer 2014), pp. 14–18.

50 *VS*, 1, 5, 8 and 22 August 1914; F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 'Lettre de Hollande', *Le Réveil/Il Risveglio*, 6 November 1915.

51 Van der Linden, *Dutch Anti-War Council*, p. 61.

52 *De Telegraaf*, 25 May 1915.
53 Heijmans and Koster, *De IAMV*, pp. 96–106; Giesen, *Nieuwe Geschiedenis*, pp. 22–31. Domela Nieuwenhuis and the manifesto: *De Telegraaf*, 5 February 1916, and *Leeuwarder Courant*, 10 April 1916.
54 Giesen, *Nieuwe Geschiedenis*, pp. 38–56. *VS*, 13 May 1915; *Leeuwarder Courant*, 10 April 1916.
55 Giesen, *Nieuwe Geschiedenis*, pp. 90–136.
56 Jan Domela Nieuwenhuis Nyegaard to Edzard Domela Nieuwenhuis Nyegaard, The Hague, 28 March 1916, in Altena and de Jong, *'En al beschouwen alle broeders'*, p. 635. F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to N.J.C. Schermerhorn, Hilversum, 14 July 1917, in IISH, Domela Nieuwenhuis Archive, 293. N.J.C. Schermerhorn to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Nieuwe Niedorp, 17 July 1917, in IISH, Domela Nieuwenhuis Archive, 211. Thriving: see figures by Johnny Harinck in *VS*, 12 January 1918.
57 *VS*, 26 May and 20 March 1915.
58 F. Domela Nieuwenhuis to editors of *Nabat*', Hilversum, 5 April 1915, *Nabat*', 2–3 (May–June) 1915, p. 4.
59 *VS*, 25 March 1916.
60 *VS*, 12 January 1916.
61 *VS*, 29 July 1916.
62 Davide Turcato, *Making Sense of Anarchism: Errico Malatesta's Experiments with Revolution, 1889–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 64.
63 *VS*, 4 November 1916.
64 *VS*, 8 and 12 January 1916.
65 *De Telegraaf*, 3 February 1918.
66 *VS*, 17 February, 21 March, 4 and 7 April 1917.
67 *VS*, 7, 13 and 21 September, 5 and 19 October 1918.
68 *VS*, 7 September 1918.
69 *VS*, 4 April 1917.

6

'The bomb plot of Zurich': Indian nationalism, Italian anarchism and the First World War[1]

Ole Birk Laursen

In June 1919, the Indian nationalists Virendranath 'Chatto' Chattopadhyaya and Abdul Hafiz of the Berlin-based Indian Independence Committee (IIC) were on trial in Switzerland alongside a group of Swiss-based Italian anarchists led by Luigi Bertoni and Arcangelo Cavadini for their involvement in the so-called 'bomb plot of Zurich'. The Attorney General of Switzerland accused Chatto and Hafiz of collaborating with Bertoni and Cavadini, and with the German Foreign Office, to smuggle German-manufactured bombs, weapons and poison into Switzerland and Italy in the summer of 1915. In conspiring with the Germans and Italians in Switzerland, Chatto, Hafiz and the Italian anarchists were accused of violating the Explosives Law as well as Swiss neutrality.[2] While the trial focused less on the Indians and more on the Italian anarchists, it appeared that Chatto and Hafiz had other, more sinister plans in mind.[3] Basil Thomson, head of the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard, wrote briefly about the plot in his memoir *The Scene Changes* (1939). According to him, Chatto and Hafiz also conspired with the German Foreign Office and the Italian anarchists to assassinate a number of European kings, presidents and prime ministers in the summer of 1915.[4] This was substantiated by reports from the British Department of Criminal Intelligence (DCI) and the Attorney General's indictment.[5]

The bomb conspiracy was one of many plans in the so-called Indo-German conspiracy – a series of plots in which Indian nationalists collaborated with the German Foreign Office to overthrow the British Raj during the First World War – and a prime example of the cross-national networks and strategic alliances forged during this era. Drawing primarily on hitherto unexamined documents

from the Swiss Federal Supreme Court and the Office of the Attorney General, this chapter examines the manner in which Chatto and Hafiz conspired with the German Foreign Office and a band of Swiss-based Italian anarchists to carry out the plot. Given that the intelligence from the DCI could not be used in the trial, the empirical focus on documents from the Supreme Court and Attorney General enables a closer inspection of the actual case as the Swiss police uncovered it. While the grand scale of the bomb plot merits investigation in its own right, this chapter is interested in the solidarities and strategic alliances formed between these three distinct groups. With that empirical focus in mind, the object here is twofold: to situate the 'bomb plot of Zurich', first, within the history of the Indian revolutionary movement abroad and, secondly, in relation to Italian anti-militarist anarchism during the First World War. In doing so, it highlights the ways in which the Indian nationalists made strange bedfellows in their struggle for independence. Moreover, it illuminates previously neglected overlaps between Italian anarchism and the Indian nationalist independence movement.

I argue that, in the context of the First World War, Indian anti-colonial nationalism was not necessarily incompatible with German imperialism and Italian anarchism. While the Indian nationalists had previously allied themselves with the anti-colonial and nationalist movements in Ireland, Egypt and Turkey, for instance, the strategic alliance with the German Foreign Office was born out of Germany's imperial rivalry with Britain. I contend that the First World War offered a unique opportunity for Indian nationalists to overthrow the British Raj with German assistance, regardless of Germany's equally imperialist ambitions. At the same time, I suggest that the collaboration with the Italian anarchists arose from the politics of assassination initiated when Madan Lal Dhingra murdered Sir William Hutt Curzon Wyllie in London on 1 July 1909. While Bertoni and the Italian anarchists were probably unaware of the Indians' alliance with the German Foreign Office, the defeat of the British Empire and assassinations of European kings and heads of state would strike a significant blow to the state and capitalist structures that helped explain the war in the first place. Moreover, the promise of weapons and ammunition for future revolutionary activities drew the Italian anarchists into alliance with the Indians. As an advocate of 'propaganda of the deed', Bertoni's support of the Indian nationalists' 'terrorist' anarchism reveals the limitations of prevailing forms of anarchist anti-militarist internationalism in

relation to anti-colonial struggles. That is to say, if the war offered the Indian nationalists a unique opportunity to stage armed revolution against the British Raj, the anti-militarist stance adopted by the bulk of the anarchist movement militated against such internationalist solidarities with the Indians. Indeed, the overall thrust of my argument is that, rather than viewing the bomb plot as an unusual coalition of conflicting ideologies of Indian anti-colonial nationalism and German imperialism, on the one hand, and Indian anti-colonial nationalism and Italian anti-militarist anarchism, on the other, the conspiracy is evidence of strategic alliances between such groups and confirmation of the old dictum that the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

While the coalition between the Indians and the Germans has been explored sporadically in scholarship on the Ghadar Party and the Indian revolutionary movement, this spectacular episode involving the Swiss-based Italian anarchists has escaped most historical accounts of the Indo-German conspiracy.[6] This lacuna is perhaps even more surprising given the fact that the ensuing 1919 trial was widely reported in newspapers across the world.[7] To date, the scant material available on Bertoni and the Italian anarchists has offered little insight into their involvement in the case.[8] Furio Biagini suggests that Bertoni's arrest was merely a 'provocation by the police' and an attempt to infiltrate the revolutionary movement, while Gianpiero Bottinelli frames the case within the unrest occurring in the wake of the general strikes across Switzerland in November 1917.[9] This line of historical inquiry may give rise to the idea that Italian anarchism during the First World War operated separately from other revolutionary groups throughout Europe. Bringing such groups together, this analysis sheds more light on the political life of Bertoni as well as Italian anti-militarist anarchism during the First World War.

In terms of the historiography of the Indian revolutionary movement abroad, James Campbell Ker briefly notes that the 'Germans employed their Indian adherents in a variety of ways', including 'attempts to commit assassinations in England and allied countries, especially Italy'.[10] Richard Popplewell's study of intelligence and imperial defence offers more details of the 'large-scale assassination conspiracy' and the DCI's efforts to stem Indian nationalist agitation in Europe. By his account, the plot was foiled less because of the collaborative efforts of the British, Swiss and Italian intelligence services, but simply because 'it was not kept sufficiently secret'.[11] In his biography of Chatto, Nirode Barooah similarly concludes

that 'it was a hopeless, amateurish adventure of untried men which produced no results'.[12] However, the primary focus on intelligence and the failure of the plot diverts attention away from the formation of strategic alliances between these disparate groups with seemingly different political motivations. While the Indian nationalists may have concealed the hand of the Germans in the plot, the Italian anarchists must have anticipated greater rewards than risks by entering this enterprise. By contrast, it is this aspect that allows Maia Ramnath to note that the plot was another occasion to 'witness the networks of radical ideologues crossing and recrossing' Europe and North America during this era.[13] Following Ramnath's transnational turn, Harald Fischer-Tiné's erudite analysis of the Indian nationalists in Switzerland provides new insights into the other side of Swiss 'governmental internationalism', which allowed such radical collaborations to develop.[14] Rather than emphasising the coalition between the Indian nationalists and the anarchists, the bomb plot, Fischer-Tiné argues, 'generated anxieties about what was perceived as a new threat: Bolshevism'.[15] Extending Ramnath's view and re-angling Fischer-Tiné's argument, the tracing of these alliances has significant implications for the history of the Indian revolutionary movement abroad, but also allows for an assessment of the limitations of such overlaps within the geopolitical context of the First World War.

Indian nationalism, terrorism and the German question

The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the introduction of a range of repressive measures in 1907–08 had two significant effects on the nationalist movement in India.[16] First, it radicalised the movement and forced it underground, which led to the formation of secret revolutionary societies modelled after Mazzinian republicanism as well as anarchist and nihilist principles of organisation. In the following years, India was swept by a series of assassinations of British officials, resulting in the incarceration of Indian nationalists. Secondly, fearing imprisonment or deportation, many Indian nationalists went abroad to countries with less restrictive legal regimes. Paradoxically, for many Britain was the first port of call, because here entrenched liberal traditions informed relatively forgiving immigration laws. Until the introduction of the Aliens Act of 1905, which tightened controls, it remained a European hub for anarchists, Marxists and nationalist revolutionaries in exile.[17]

Hafiz arrived in Britain in 1905, and after obtaining an MSc in

mining from the University of Birmingham he moved to Germany, where he was awarded a PhD from the University of Leipzig in 1910. He does not appear to have been involved in any revolutionary activities while in Britain, but later assumed a prominent role in the IIC.[18] Chatto, on the other hand, had close ties with other Indian nationalists in Britain. Born into an educated family in Hyderabad and brother of the famous poet Sarojini Naidu, Chatto arrived in Britain in 1902 to study law and compete in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination. After twice failing the examination, he instead joined the Inner Temple in 1903.[19] Still, his eagerness to join the ICS prevented him from obtaining one of Shyamaji Krishnavarma's scholarships, which stipulated that the holder 'shall not accept any post, office, emoluments, or service under the British Government after his return to India'.[20]

Shyamaji Krishnavarma was the founder of the Indian revolutionary movement in Britain whose anti-colonialist praxis involved a tripartite strategy of propaganda in the newsletter *The Indian Sociologist*, political organisation through the Indian Home Rule Society and recruitment of political missionaries to stay at India House, a hostel for Indian students in Highgate. Throughout its five-year existence, numerous Indian nationalists passed through India House, including Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, V.V.S. Aiyar, Madan Lal Dhingra, S.R. Rana, Bhikaiji 'Madame' Cama, M.B. Godrej, M.P.T. Acharya, Lala Har Dayal and Chatto. When Krishnavarma left for Paris in June 1907, Savarkar assumed control of the hostel. Under his leadership, the India House organisation became increasingly radicalised, culminating with Madan Lal Dhingra's assassination of the political *aide-de-camp* Curzon Wyllie on the front steps of the Imperial Institute in London in 1909. The immediate arrest and execution of Dhingra in August 1909 effectively terminated the Indian revolutionary movement in Britain, and by early 1910 the organisation around India House had disbanded and the building was sold off.[21] However, the murder of Curzon Wyllie initiated a revolutionary politics that legitimised political assassinations in the Indian struggle for independence in Europe.

After the closure of India House, the Indian revolutionary movement in Europe shifted to Paris, where Cama, Godrej and Rana had established the Paris Indian Society in 1905.[22] The Indians in Paris forged close connections with exiled socialists, anarchists and maximalists and learned the art of bomb-making from Nicolas Safranski, the leader of the Russian maximalists in Paris.[23] Among the new arrivals in Paris, Chatto and Har Dayal stood out. Suffering

from health problems, however, Har Dayal briefly went to Algiers and then Martinique before moving to Hawaii in early 1911.[24] With Har Dayal's absence, Chatto became the de facto leader of the Indian nationalists in Paris and joined the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (French Section of the Workers' International) in September 1910.[25] According to the DCI, under his leadership the Indian revolutionary movement in Paris organised 'for a revolution in India in one year or 10 years' along two significant paths that bear directly on the Zurich conspiracy.[26] First, they would carry out propaganda among the Sikh communities in the Pacific Northwest in North America and, secondly, they would actively seek to collaborate with Germany against Britain as soon as the anticipated war in Europe broke out.[27]

Before exploring these paths further, it is worth noting that, across the French border, with its long tradition of hospitality towards anarchists and political exiles, Switzerland was home to Chempakaraman Pillai. A protégé of 'the anarchist baronet' Walter Strickland, Pillai studied engineering in Zurich and, in June 1912, formed the International Pro-India Committee with Strickland, Krishnavarma, Edward Briess and the German novelist Karl Bleibtreu. The activities of the committee were modest, limited mostly to the preparation of anti-British leaflets and letters, but the presence of Indian nationalists in Switzerland was significant for the alliances with the Germans and the Italian anarchists in exile a few years later.[28] Indeed, the British Foreign Office noted that 'Switzerland is so much in Germany's pocket that there is nothing to be done'.[29]

While the Indian revolutionary movement in Europe waned in the early 1910s, it flourished in the United States after the arrival of Har Dayal in early 1911. After a brief sojourn in Hawaii and academic posts at the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University in 1912–13, Har Dayal soon carried out propaganda within the West Coast's Sikh communities and became involved with the San Francisco branch of the Industrial Workers of the World. In late May 1913, Har Dayal formed the Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast, a coalition of mostly Hindu and Sikh intellectuals, farmers, peasants and lumber mill workers.[30] Its propaganda organ the *Hindustan Ghadar* [Mutiny] carried on its masthead 'Enemy of the British Rule in India', and the association subsequently became known as the Ghadar Party. Much like the India House organisation, the Paris Indian Society and the International Pro-India Committee, the Ghadar Party advocated the

violent overthrow of the British Empire: 'Our name and our work are identical', Har Dayal said in the first issue of the *Ghadar*.[31] In the second issue, he elaborated on the prospect of war between Britain and Germany: '[t]he Germans have great sympathy with our movements for liberty, because they and ourselves have a common enemy (the English). In the future, India can draw assistance also.'[32] Following a lengthy investigation by special agent William C. Hopkinson and the US Bureau of Immigration, however, Har Dayal was arrested on 25 March 1914 'on charges of being a member of excluded classes, an anarchist or advocating the overthrow of the United States government by force'.[33] He was released on bail two days later and fled to Switzerland, where he met Pillai, and together they planned an Indo-Egyptian revolutionary congress to be held in Zurich in August 1914.[34]

The Indian Independence Committee and the Indo-German conspiracies

With war looming in Europe, the Indian nationalists and the German Foreign Office both saw an advantage in forging closer connections. Indeed, the German general Friedrich von Bernhardi, a former student of the German nationalist historian Heinrich Gotthard von Treitschke, had already asserted in 1911 that '[t]here is another danger which concerns England more closely and directly threatens her vitality. This is due to the nationalist movement in India and Egypt.'[35] The Indian nationalists, too, had identified Germany as a potential ally some years earlier. In January 1910, Madame Cama wrote in *Bande Mataram* that 'the cultivation of friendly relations with the powerful German nation will be of great advantage to the cause of Indian independence'.[36] In a reference to Chatto's short-lived newsletter *Talvar*, which he edited from Berlin, she also noted that '[t]he programme of active resistance with political assassination as a prelude is advocated with splendid earnestness'.[37] Chatto noted in *Talvar* that '[i]t is a misreading of German history to see in her expansion any other motive than the ousting of England from her position of naval supremacy'.[38] However, these intimations of solidarity were quite tenuous before the war.

In the months before Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, it became clear that, as potential subversives, the Indian nationalists would find it difficult to maintain their revolutionary activities in countries allied with Britain. With that in mind, Krishnavarma left Paris for Geneva in the spring of 1914 and

Chatto enrolled as a student of philosophy, Sanskrit and Arabic at the University of Halle in April 1914.[39] Hafiz, who was in the United States when the war broke out, also relocated to Germany shortly afterwards.[40] With the influx of Indians into Germany, the prospect of active assistance from the Germans became a reality. In September 1914, Pillai contacted the German consul Alfred Geissler in Zurich and offered him an outline of the Indian revolutionary movement abroad. He then travelled to Berlin, where more tangible plans were in the making. In the same month, Chatto approached the German Foreign Office with concrete requests for assistance, including training in the manufacture and application of explosives and assistance in procuring arms and ammunition. After a meeting between Chatto and Baron Max von Oppenheim, head of the newly formed Intelligence Bureau for the East, the Indian Independence Committee was formally set up in late September 1914. It was attached to the German General Staff and was directed by Baron Otto Günther von Wesendonk of the Foreign Office and Under Secretary of State Alfred Zimmermann. Its founding members were Chatto, Hafiz, Pillai and Moreshwar Govindrao Prabhakar. Later alumni included Har Dayal, M.P.T. Acharya, Tarakhnath Das, Mohamed Barkatullah and Harish Chandra.[41]

The IIC at first engaged in propaganda activities, spreading pamphlets and literature throughout Germany as well as seeking to recruit Indian prisoners of war in German camps and Indian troops fighting in European theatres of war.[42] From the end of December 1914, with the German Foreign Office's assistance, the Indian nationalists engaged in a series of plots against the British. The IIC sent a delegation to the United States with instructions from the German Foreign Secretary for Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, the German ambassador to the United States, to pay the Indian nationalists in the Pacific Northwest the dollar equivalent of 50,000 Marks, and a request for assistance with the importation of arms to India.[43] The money was used to purchase rifles to be sent to India on the schooner *Annie Larsen* in March 1915, but because of a mix-up in the shipping arrangements the plot never came to fruition. The Germans made another attempt to import arms into India from the Philippines, and this also failed, thwarted by the US Customs Agency.[44] Nevertheless, these episodes demonstrated the willingness of the Germans to smuggle arms to Indian nationalists across territorial borders and in violation of US neutrality. The distances between Europe, North America and South Asia complicated the execution of these secret plots. The logistics were less of

a problem in Europe, where geographical proximity offered easier communication. Here, collaboration between the Indian nationalists and Germany opened the door to cooperation with anarchists in Switzerland, Italy and France.

Italian anarchism, anti-militarism and the First World War

While the coalition between the Germans and Indians seemed obvious by the summer of 1914, there had been little contact between the Indian nationalists and the Italian anarchists until then. Krishnavarma had supported Errico Malatesta in his case against deportation in 1912, but otherwise there appears to have been little direct contact between Malatesta and the Indian nationalists in London.[45] Yet, well aware that Malatesta was known as an anarchist of good standing, Chatto and Hafiz donated 100 francs to Bertoni's paper *Il Risveglio/Le Révéil* and claimed that they knew Malatesta from London when they approached Bertoni in May 1915. With the assistance of Briess, the encounter had been facilitated through Chatto's, Har Dayal's and Hafiz's connections with the anarchist milieu in Switzerland. The German Foreign Office emphasised that 'One must be careful to ensure that the Italian anarchists do not sense the involvement of the Germans, because they would withdraw from the enterprise.'[46] The donation may have distracted Bertoni from ascertaining whether the Indians' connection with Malatesta was genuine, because it was not until September 1915 that he asked Malatesta for verification.[47] In the same letter, Bertoni suggested that Malatesta should launch a campaign against the war with the financial backing of 'a wealthy Indian man', who may have been Krishnavarma, who lived in Geneva at this time.[48] Before launching this campaign, Malatesta requested guarantees that the money did not come from Germany, confirming the German Foreign Office's warning. However, the DCI intercepted the correspondence between them and consequently directed Malatesta not to get involved.

Alongside Malatesta, the Italian-born Bertoni was among the most outspoken critics of war. From the early twentieth century a significant anti-militarist movement had developed in Italy in response to the invasion of Libya in September 1911 and the possibility of war in Europe, culminating with the Red Week of June 1914.[49] Bertoni had moved to Geneva in September 1890 and established the bilingual monthly journal *Il Risveglio/Le Révéil* in July 1900. As early as 1908, Bertoni was publishing essays

condemning wars as capitalist ventures and in the years leading up to the First World War the journal became an important organ for Italian anarchist anti-militarism.[50] For instance, in the August 1913 issue, Bertoni argued that only 'the anarchic spirit' could successfully combat militarism.[51] In March 1915, Malatesta and Bertoni joined some of the period's most prominent anarchists, including Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Pedro Vallina, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis and Hippolyte Havel, as well as Italian anarchists, including Carlo Frigerio, Emidio Recchioni, Noel Paravich, Antonio Calzitta, Antonio Savioli, Cleto Trombetti and Giovanni Vignati, as signatories to the *International Anarchist Manifesto on the War*, published in the London-based anarchist journal *Freedom*.[52] The manifesto made it clear that

> armed conflict, restricted or widespread, colonial or European, is the natural consequence and inevitable and fatal outcome of a society that is founded on the exploitation of the workers, rests on the savage struggle of the classes, and compels labour to submit to the domination of a minority of parasites who hold both political and economic power.[53]

The signatories declared themselves 'resolutely against all wars between peoples' and emphasised that 'in neutral countries, like Italy, where the governments seek to throw fresh peoples into the fiery furnaces of war, our comrades have been, are, and ever will be most energetically opposed to war'.[54]

While Bertoni aligned himself with the intention of the manifesto, he combined it with a defence of political assassinations. He had been arrested several times for publishing inflammatory articles in the journal, including an essay commemorating Gaetano Bresci, who had assassinated King Umberto I in July 1900.[55] In the journal's pages, Bertoni and Georges Herzig often attributed the elaboration of 'propaganda of the deed' to Peter Kropotkin, prompting Kropotkin to distinguish between 'legitimate terrorist acts, performed in a "spirit of revolt" and illegitimate acts of "propaganda of the deed"'.[56] However, because of his militancy, Bertoni may have seen the Indian nationalists' advocacy of political assassination as legitimate terrorist acts, performed in a 'spirit of revolt' in the struggle for Indian independence. In other words, while Bertoni aligned himself with the internationalism of the manifesto and campaigned against the war as a capitalist venture that exploited workers, he was also susceptible to the appeals of the Indian nationalists and their demands for freedom. His awareness

of the strategic importance of the war for the Indian nationalists challenged the socialist internationalism of the manifesto, which focused on the class struggles of European workers and less on solidarity with independence struggles across the colonial world. Bertoni's collaboration with the Indian nationalists suggests a commitment to a politics of anti-colonialism rooted in his idiosyncratic belief in the value of political assassinations.

In the years prior to the First World War, Italy had been part of the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, but it remained neutral for almost nine months before joining the Entente on 24 May 1915.[57] When Italy entered the war, the anarchist struggle to keep the country out of the conflict seemed lost. Consequently, the tactics of Bertoni and the Italian anarchists shifted, concentrating on efforts to end the war as quickly as possible.[58] It was this crucial change that facilitated the strategic alliance with the Indian nationalists.

The bomb plot of Zurich

In May 1915, Chatto travelled to Switzerland where he had already established contacts with the Italian anarchists through Har Dayal and Pillai. DCI reports show that Chatto concocted a plan to destroy property and assassinate a number of prominent people across Europe, including the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Grey; the British War Minister, Lord Kitchener; the British legation in Sofia, Gerald Fitzmaurice; the Foreign Editor of *The Times*, Valentine Chirol; the French President, Raymond Poincaré; the French Prime Minister, Rene Viviani; the King of Italy, Victor Immanuel III; and the Italian Prime Minister, Antonio Salandra. Moreover, reports from the DCI show that Hafiz had arrived in Zurich on 22 July 1915, where he arranged for ten time-bombs to be handed over to the German Consulate. Working with the Egyptian nationalist Ali Eloui, Arcangelo Cavadini was to smuggle the bombs over the border into Italy, from where a band of Italian anarchists would carry out the assassination of Salandra.[59] It is unclear who would carry out the other assassinations across Europe. However, the DCI, which had kept Chatto under close surveillance for years, intercepted his correspondence with a Swiss woman named Meta Brunner, which detailed the plan. Although the plot was formulated in enemy and neutral countries, agents from the DCI intervened to foil the plot and prevent the assassinations from being carried out. These details were all confirmed in October 1915 when Harish

Chandra, who had been turned into a double agent for the British Criminal Investigation Department, confessed.[60] By then, Chatto was outside British and Swiss jurisdiction, and Hafiz had relocated to Germany.

While Barooah suggests that the plot was largely an individual venture orchestrated by Chatto and Hafiz without the German Foreign Office's approval, Popplewell notes that 'it was not clear whether the plot was devised by the Germans or by the Indians themselves'.[61] Indeed, German diplomats in Switzerland were concerned about violating Swiss neutrality. They were also well aware of British intelligence operating in Switzerland and were concerned that the plan would be discovered. Consequently, in September 1915, the German Foreign Office asked Chatto to abort the assassination plan.[62] Nevertheless, given the now formal collaboration with the German Foreign Office, it seems unlikely that Chatto and Hafiz could have conjured up this plot without some assistance from the Germans. In fact, the Swiss court documents show that the weapons, ammunition and poison smuggled into Switzerland were German army material, and that the bombs had been tested at a military compound outside Berlin before Hafiz carried them across the border.[63] The court documents also implicate Alexander Jores and Anton-Franz Vengh of the German Foreign Office in the case.[64]

Once the bombs, weapons and poison had been smuggled into Switzerland, however, the conspiracy was largely in the hands of the Italian anarchists. The materials had been distributed among several anarchists, including Marino Brigo, Aldo Torriani and Albert Weil. Although the assassination conspiracy had been aborted by then, these materials were later supplemented with more guns and ammunition from Hafiz and other munitions factories in Switzerland and, in late 1916 or early 1917, Cavadini and Weil attempted to procure French hand grenades through Gustave-Robert Noverraz, an anarchist with contacts in the French radical scene. He put them in touch with Louis Crétin, a French pyrotechnist, whom Bertoni paid 2,500 francs for his work. At the same time, Torriani brought poison into Italy with the intention of poisoning Italian cavalry horses. Ultimately, however, Cavadini, Brigo and Weil agreed not to use the explosives, weapons and poison supplied by Chatto and Hafiz immediately, but to store them in Switzerland for future revolutionary activities in Italy. Cavadini then travelled across Switzerland, teaching other anarchists how to use the mines and hand grenades, and the guns were distributed among the anarchists, including Bertoni.[65] By then, Chatto had

moved the IIC's activities to Stockholm and was no longer involved in the conspiracy. While the assassination plans were aborted, some of the explosives were used in November 1917, when a bomb was placed outside the police headquarters in Zurich.[66]

Because the DCI operated undercover and could not interfere in Swiss jurisdiction, the Swiss police were not alerted to the conspiracy in 1915 and the Zurich police only caught on to the plot when they arrested Cavadini on 20 April 1918 following his involvement in the November 1917 strikes across Switzerland.[67] This arrest led the police to search the house of Marino Brigo and his sister, Maria, who also stored some explosives. Court documents show that Brigo and his sister hid the explosives in the Limmat and Letten canals in Zurich on 22 April, and the police recovered them two days later.[68] Throughout the months of April and May 1918, Bertoni, Crétin, Brigo, Noverraz, Torriani and Weil were arrested for their involvement in the plot. Six days after giving a partial confession, Cavadini committed suicide; Crétin also committed suicide, which made it difficult for the prosecution to prove the extent of Bertoni's involvement.[69] At the trial, the chief prosecution witness, Edward Briess, who was vice-president of Pillai's International Pro-India Committee and had fostered close connections with Indian nationalists in Switzerland, confessed that he was a spy working for the British Consulate in Zurich and laid bare the plot's full details.[70]

Despite their grand plans and the violation of Swiss neutrality, however, the collective confessions of Cavadini and the other anarchists, as well as Briess's testimony, led to lenient sentences and the immediate release of Bertoni and the other anarchists in June 1919.[71] Upon Bertoni's acquittal, the judge remarked that

> In the present case it is objectionable that this extremely anti-social act that Bertoni has committed by inciting Crétin to produce explosives for criminal purposes, has to remain unpunished only because Crétin, against the will of the inciter, has not fulfilled the order he had accepted. The current law, which the court has to apply despite its imperfections, does not allow for any other solution. It would be a different matter if the Explosives Law interpreted incitement to produce explosives, irrespective of the success of such incitement, as an independent crime, but this is not the case. This legal loophole stands Bertoni in good stead, as unsatisfactory as this may appear.[72]

After his release, Bertoni returned to Geneva where a crowd of 15,000 people welcomed him.[73] Chatto, who had moved the IIC's activities to Stockholm in July 1917, was sentenced in absentia to

a fine of 1,000 francs and two-and-a-half years' imprisonment for his involvement. He was also forbidden to enter Switzerland in perpetuity. Yet, as Barooah notes, due to Swedish extradition and deportation laws, individuals could not be extradited for political crimes or crimes that 'overwhelmingly had the character of political offence'.[74] Well aware of this, Chatto confessed that he had been arrested in Switzerland and since deported as well as having had two conversations with Bertoni. However, he denied having been in Switzerland at the time of the offence and claimed that the British had conspired against him.[75] Although Bertoni and most of the other Italian anarchists were acquitted, it is nevertheless significant to consider their involvement in the 'bomb plot of Zurich' in relation to the broader history of the Indian revolutionary movement abroad. Indeed, it shows that the Indian struggle for freedom was not rejected by the Italian anarchists in Switzerland as a result of their internationalist commitments.

Conclusion

The 'bomb plot of Zurich' is a prime example of the way in which a marriage of convenience opens up a space for the review of anarchist anti-militarism. To unfold the complexity of this unusual coalition, this chapter has situated the event within two particular strands of revolutionary movements that converged during the First World War. It has demonstrated that the Indian nationalists readily adopted anarchist terrorist methods and associated with anarchists across Europe and North America. At the same time, the Indian nationalists fostered close connections with Germany simply because it was a rival power to British imperial dominance. In other words, during the First World War, Indian anti-colonial resistance was primarily a project of national liberation and less a struggle against the concept of European imperialism *in toto*.

As a result of the geopolitical situation of the war in the summer of 1915, the neutrality of Switzerland provided excellent conditions for the Indians to conspire with the German Foreign Office and the Italian anarchists based in Switzerland. The Indian nationalists were no strangers to the tenets of anarchist terrorism, and Bertoni in particular had long advocated and celebrated the assassination of kings and heads of state. This, combined with a politics of anti-militarism that challenged the conscription of Italian workers into the army, meant that many Italian anarchists left Italy for Switzerland. When Italy joined the war the Italian anti-militarist

anarchists shifted tactics from resisting the war to ending it as soon as possible: the conspiratorial, terrorist methods that first drew the Indians to the anarchists gave the Italians an opportunity to plot insurrectionary violence in the name of anti-militarist struggle. At the same time, the war meant that weapons became more readily available to the Italian anarchists for future activities.

The significance of these conclusions lies in two directions: first, it demonstrates that the Indian national liberation struggle was more multifarious than is often assumed and easily formed strategic alliances with groups whose ambitions may have been ideologically problematic. That is to say, the conspiracy to assassinate a number of European kings, prime ministers and presidents may have been averted by the DCI, but the very formation of the coalition suggests that Indian nationalism must be considered in closer conjunction with European anarchism than previously admitted. The critical focus on the role of the intelligence services and the failure of the plot diverts attention from the forces of revolutionary nationalism and anarchism in the First World War.

Secondly, when historians of Italian anarchism and anti-militarism dismiss Bertoni's involvement in the plot as absurd and consider the case a matter of state repression of radical ideas, they risk masking the broader reach and influence of the contemporary anarchist movement in Switzerland and Italy.[76] The collaboration between the Swiss-based anarchists and the Indian nationalists clearly suggests that Bertoni and his friends were not impervious to collaboration with groups whose ideological tenets may have been in tension with the ideology of anarchism. In fact, the First World War produced a particular geopolitical space for the Italian anarchists in Switzerland to work more closely with the Indian revolutionaries. As such, the alliance suggests an alternative politics of liberation that was both anti-colonial and anti-militarist in ways that expose the lack of openness of mainstream anti-war anarchist internationalism to anti-imperial struggles.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Ruth Kinna, Matthew S. Adams, David Johnson, Pavan Malreddy, Enrique Galvan-Alvarez and Sarah Arens for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

2 Schweizerische Bundesanwaltschaft (hereafter SB), 'Anklageschrift', Luigi Bertoni Papers, ARCH00045, International Institute of Social History, pp. 8–9.

3 SB, 'Anklageschrift'; Schweizerische Bundesarchiv (hereafter BAR), 50/000/255, 'Bericht des schweizerischen Bundesrates an die Bundesversammlung über seine Geschäftsführung im Jahre 1919', pp. 331–4.

4 Basil Thomson, *The Scene Changes* (London: Collins, 1939), p. 251. Thomson also implicates Lala Har Dayal in the conspiracy, but the Swiss court documents show no evidence of his involvement.

5 SB, 'Anklageschrift', p. 4; Richard Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 1904–1924* (London: Cass, 1995), p. 225.

6 Nirode K. Barooah, *India and Official Germany, 1886–1914* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997); Arun Coomer Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905–1922: In the Background of International Development* (Patna: Bharati Bhawan, 1971); Giles Brown, 'The Hindu Conspiracy, 1914–1917', *Pacific Historical Review*, 17.3 (1948), pp. 299–310; Upendra Narayan Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War, 1914–1918: Recent Political and Economic History of India* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1997); Thomas G. Fraser, 'Germany and Indian Revolution, 1914–1918', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12 (1977), pp. 255–72; Karl Hoover, 'The Hindu Conspiracy in California, 1913–1918', *German Studies Review*, 8.2 (1985), pp. 245–61; Peter Hopkirk, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople: The Plot to Bring Down the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); F.C. Isemonger and J. Slattery, *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy, 1913–1915* (Lahore: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Printing, 1919); James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India, 1907–1917* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973 [1907]); Matthew Plowman, 'Irish Republicans and the Indo-German Conspiracy of World War I', *New Hibernia Review*, 7.3 (2003), pp. 81–105; Harish Puri, *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organisation and Strategy* (Amritsar: Guru Nanek Dev University Press, 1983); Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011); Tilak Raj Sareen, *Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad (1905–1921)* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1979); Seema Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance and Indian Anticolonialism in North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Benjamin Zachariah, 'Indian Political Activities in Germany, 1914–1915', in Joanna Miyang Cho, Eric Kurlander and Douglas T. McGetchin (eds), *Transcultural Encounters between Germany and India: Kindred Spirits in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 141–54.

7 'German Murder Plot', *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 4 June 1919, p. 1; 'Murder Plot', *Lancashire Evening Post*, 4 June 1919, p. 3; 'Anarchists on Trial', *Argus*, Melbourne, 5 June 1919, p. 7; 'German Black Hand',

Daily Express, 6 June 1919, p. 1; 'Les menées révolutionnaires de l'Allemagne', *Le Temps*, 11 June 1919, n.p; 'Anarchists in German Pay', *The Times*, 17 June 1919, p. 11; 'Used Switzerland as Base for Bombs', *New York Times*, 18 June 1919, n.p.

8 Gianpiero Bottinelli, 'Bertoni, Luigi', in Maurizio Antonioli et al., *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani* (Pisa: BFS, 2003), pp. 159–64; Giovanni Casagrande, *Schedature d'inizio secolo: il caso de Luigi Bertoni* (Bellinzona: Archivio Storico Ticinese, 1991); Giavanni Casagrande, 'Fiches du début du siècle; le cas de Luigi Bertoni', in Hans Ulrich Jost (ed.), *Cent ans de police politique en Suisse, 1889–1989* (Lausanne: Éditions d'en bas, 1992), pp. 63–80.

9 Furio Biagini, *'Il Risveglio' (1900–1922): storia di un giornale anarchico dall'attentato di Bresci all'avvento del fascismo* (Manduria: P. Lacaita, 1991), p. 50; Gianpiero Bottinelli, *Luigi Bertoni: la coerenza di un anarchico* (Lugano: Edizioni la Baronata, 1997), p. 105.

10 Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, p. 247.

11 Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, pp. 223–7. Popplewell also implicates the Egyptian nationalist Ali Eloui in the conspiracy, but the Swiss court documents show no evidence of his involvement.

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13 Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia*, p. 101.

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15 Fischer-Tiné, 'The Other Side of Internationalism', p. 237.

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25 Barooah, *Chatto*, p. 27.

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28 Fischer-Tiné, 'The Other Side of Internationalism', pp. 226–37; Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, p. 264.

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30 Brown, *Har Dayal*, pp. 138, 142.

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32 'Ideology of the Ghadr Party', in Sareen (ed.), *Select Documents on the Ghadr Party*, p. 84.

33 Brown, *Har Dayal*, p. 155; Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny*, pp. 90–3.

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46 'Abschrift eines Berichts des Hernn Jacoby über Dr Bries', German Foreign Office Political Archives, R21100-1. Author's translation.
47 Bottinelli, *Luigi Bertoni*, p. 107; Biagini, *'Il Risveglio'*, pp. 50–1.
48 di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy*, p. 197; Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Sanskrit, Sociology and Anti-Imperialism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014), p. 121.
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50 Biagini, *'Il Risveglio'*, pp. 55–86.
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54 Ibid.

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59 Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, p. 225.

60 Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 250.

61 Barooah, *Chatto*, p. 135; Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, p. 225.

62 Barooah, *Chatto*, p. 135.

63 This was probably in Spandau outside Berlin where the Indian nationalists had received training in handling explosives. See Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad, 1905–1922*, pp. 93–4.

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66 BAR, E21#1000/131+14363-68, 'Bomben- und Waffenfunde im Lettenkanal Zürich'.

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69 Ibid, pp. 331–4.

70 Ibid., p. 333.

71 Biagini, '*Il Risveglio*', pp. 50–1; Bottinelli, *Luigi Bertoni*, pp. 105–6.

72 BAR, 'Bericht des Schweizerischen Bundesrates', p. 334. Author's translation.

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74 Barooah, *Chatto*, p. 135.

75 Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, 'En dolk, en revolver, en flaska kloroform, som politisk kampmedel', *Folkets Dagblad Politiken*, 14 October 1921.

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7

The French anarchist movement and the First World War

Constance Bantman and David Berry

As one of the anarchist anti-militarist and anti-patriotic heartlands of the Western world, the French anarchist movement found itself in the eye of the storm at the outbreak of the First World War, famously rallying to the war effort – albeit neither unanimously nor unwaveringly – within just ten days of the declaration of war. This chapter examines the events and debates leading up to the interventionist 1916 *Manifesto of the Sixteen* (nine of whose original fifteen signatories were French)[1] and the Russian revolutions of 1917. It focuses on the movement's shift from a dominant yet complex anti-militarist stance to a more equivocal one, with significant voices being heard in support of interventionism. What were the arguments deployed by the supporters of the *Union sacrée*, and how much did they owe to the influence of Peter Kropotkin? Crucially, could the revolutionary project of the anarchists coexist with participation in the war effort, or did the war in fact expose the growing integration of the working classes into the nation, defusing their revolutionary potential? The chapter goes on to examine the ways in which the anarchists' varied attitudes to the national war effort largely determined their differing responses to the two Russian revolutions of 1917. It concludes that the failure of the movement to prevent the mobilisation of 1914 was in some respects a watershed for the French anarchist movement, provoking some profound soul-searching generally about the state of the movement and, specifically in relation to war, producing a much less ambitious attitude with regard to different possible anti-militarist positions and tactics.

Anarchist and syndicalist anti-militarism before 1914

The progress of pacifism and working-class anti-militarism in the run-up to the First World War went hand in hand with France's war preparations, which accelerated greatly after 1902.[2] The years 1880–1914 saw a patriotic, nationalist and military escalation, under the combined effects of colonial conquests and rivalries, the European arms race, and a succession of major diplomatic crises until July 1914. Anti-militarism and anti-patriotism were key anarchist themes from the movement's formal emergence in the late 1870s and remained so in the 1880s, when anarchism entered its 'heroic period'. The anarchists were also the most vocal and virulent anti-militarists of the pre-war period. After a slight lull in the 1890s, these themes were revived, encompassing various ideological causes and activities, and anti-militarism emerged as a cohesive movement and ideology in the decade leading up to the war. Anarchist anti-militarism was at the intersection of labour protest and proletarian internationalism. 'Workers' antimilitarism' – denouncing the use of armies in labour conflicts – was a central theme, to which pacifist anti-militarism in the tradition of the IWMA was gradually added.[3] Marc Angenot stresses the revolutionary dimension of the concept, which was closely associated with the far left: 'the point was to undermine capitalist society by weakening and demoralising its main defensive institution, the army'.[4]

There were many prominent anti-militarists among the French anarchists. The anarchist communist journalists and theorists Jean Grave and Charles Malato had written influential books criticising the army as a socially conservative institution; the novel *Biribi*, a scathing critique of military discipline, had been written in 1890 by Georges Darien, who was an anarchist at the time. In response to the nationalist Ligue des patriotes, a Ligue des antipatriotes had been founded in the 1880s. The first anarchist anti-militarist organisation was then founded in 1899 under the aegis of Gaston Dubois-Desaulle.[5] This was followed in December 1902 by a Ligue antimilitariste set up by prominent militants, including Emile Janvion, Libertad and Paraf-Javal, with a view to creating agitation for the suppression of armies. It gained momentum after 1904, at a time of acute international tensions, becoming the French branch of the International Anti-militarist Association (AIA). While the organisation was initially meant to recruit from trade unions and workers' associations, without any partisan sectarianism, anti-militarist anarchists and syndicalists were its main contingents.

The International Association's general council was based in Amsterdam and Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis was its general secretary. Georges Yvetot and the vociferous anti-militarist Miguel Almereyda were the secretaries for France.[6] The organisation progressed very rapidly in France. At the time of its first national conference, in St-Etienne in 1905, there were an estimated 93 sections, grouping 5,500 members.[7] However, it soon ran into financial difficulties and was plagued by questions about its purpose and identity. The St-Etienne gathering agreed to open up to all those supporting the association's insurrectional methods, which enshrined the primacy of revolutionary groups.[8] Above all, the AIA's effectiveness was drastically limited by repression, which eventually decapitated it. Nonetheless, in October 1906 there appeared a short-lived (3 issues) *Bulletin de l'AIA* overseen by Yvetot and Gustave Hervé, with the participation of Malato and other comrades from *Les Temps nouveaux* among others. Along with general anti-militarist themes (criticising the *patrie*, restating the primacy of class war over international divisions, inciting anti-patriotic and anti-militarist agitation), the publication was distinguished by its fierce call for insurrection against war.

This anti-war propaganda was then reinvested into *La Guerre sociale*, launched in 1906 with a similar staff and led by Hervé, adopting an even more polemic and violent tone, along with instructions to practise sabotage. The paper promoted insurrectional anti-militarism, with resounding influence until 1912. Anarchist militants contributed to it, for instance Almereyda, Victor Méric and Jules Grandjouan. The French trade union confederation, the CGT, was another active centre of anti-militarist activism, which converged with that of anarchists outside the organisation. Leading syndicalists such as Alphonse Merrheim, Hubert Lagardelle and Victor Griffuelhes were also linked with Hervé. These various strands created a broad anti-militarist current, which tried to conceive and promote a coherent strategy, and, perhaps more effectively, orchestrated several highly publicised stunts articulating a vocal anti-militarist stance.

In addition to the anarchist leanings of *La Guerre sociale*, two libertarian strands stand out: the Fédération Communiste Anarchiste (FCA) and the CGT. In 1911, the congress of the FCA agreed that in the event of a war, its Parisian groups would prevent troops from leaving Paris by bombing the railway lines. The following year, the staunch anti-militarist Louis Lecoin became the Fédération's secretary; it was not long before he found himself

sentenced for inciting soldiers to assassinate officers.[9] In parallel, Henry Combes ran *Le Mouvement anarchiste* (1912–13), focusing on similar themes: sabotaging mobilisation, soldier strikes, desertion, destroying weapons, setting powder kegs on fire, destroying railway lines and engines. In the same vein, in 1913, the anarchists circulated a 'red booklet' (*brochure rouge*) enumerating 'useful acts' in the event of a war, such as sabotage and assassination, and concluding with instructions on how to make explosives.[10]

Anti-militarism was also a central focus within the CGT. In 1901, the confederation's congress in Lyon discussed for the first time the strategy of absence without leave against military service. Georges Yvetot initiated one of the key anti-militarist campaigns of the CGT's advanced wing, with the launch of the 1902 *Manuel du soldat* [Soldier's handbook]. It defined patriotism as a ploy for the dominant classes to justify repression and manipulate the people. In 1902, it was agreed to print the *Manuel* and circulate it among the army and civilian population. The book was a huge success, with an estimated 20,000 copies printed and distributed to soldiers by 1904, and 16 editions by 1908.[11] 1905 saw the scandal of the *Affiche aux conscrits* (a poster for conscripts advocating insurrection, the general strike and shooting officers instead of fellow soldiers). From 1906 to 1909, under the influence of the confederation's anarchists, 'total anti-militarism' prevailed, followed by 'a gradual return to cautiousness and realism'.[12] The massive diffusion of anti-militarist propaganda climaxed with the adoption of a formal resolution in Amiens in 1906, and the 1908 Marseilles congress resolution which advocated – contentiously – a revolutionary general strike should war be declared, although it stated that 'workers' rather than the confederation should then initiate it.[13] The revolutionary stance was also supported through the notorious *sou du soldat* initiative, a pecuniary aid originally intended to support soldiers and maintain links with them, but which, in practice, was interpreted as incitement to desert. Five francs were given to those called to serve through the Bourses du Travail, financed by subscriptions from all CGT affiliates after 1900. After a popular period in 1910–11, at a time of general anti-militarism, the initiative was banned in 1914. The all-out anti-militarism of the most advanced members met with opposition from within the organisation.

In the run-up to the war, the project of an anti-war general strike was mentioned increasingly often, diverting the syndicalist, labour-oriented ideas of general strike and sabotage towards anti-patriotic propaganda. After the 1908 Marseilles congress of the CGT nar-

rowly voted for a general strike in the event of war, the resolution was reiterated annually, with growing majorities as well as a stronger emphasis on the predominantly pedagogical dimension of this resolution. The idea of a general strike in the event of war was already widespread in anarchist circles, drawing on the recommendations of the Brussels congress of the First International. As early as 1901, Domela Nieuwenhuis had advocated a military strike in the event of war, and a general strike, as well as conscientious objection and a strike on the part of transport workers to prevent mobilisation. The idea was also developed by the AIA (whose 1905 congress voted for strikes by reservists and generalised conscientious objection) and among the anarchists who, during the 1907 Amsterdam congress, had wished for insurrection as a response to the declaration of war. This brand of anti-militarism was very much rooted in a specifically French context, drawing on the denunciation of army participation in the repression of labour conflicts (especially after Clemenceau's appointment as Minister of the Interior in 1906) and peasant anti-militarism (which was above all a rejection of compulsory military service).[14] The repression faced by anti-militarists also attracted the sympathies of liberal public opinion.

After 1912, the Berry-Millerand military law and the Balkan Wars converged to make anti-militarism the main propaganda theme of the CGT. The Berry-Millerand law extended military conscription to three years, with especially hard conditions for delinquents and those found guilty of anti-militarist propaganda. Nonetheless, there was no consensus within the revolutionary labour movement regarding desertion. The solution to avoid internal dissension was to opt for general statements, for instance emphasising the urgency of fighting militarism.[15] Crucially, a number of factors precluded the effective international action upon which this propaganda was predicated: in addition to widespread scepticism regarding the chances of success for a mass protest against mobilisation, the confederation's poor relations with the main foreign trade union federations (in particular their German counterpart, where the idea of a general strike against the war appeared thoroughly ill-judged) jeopardised any hope for possible cooperation.[16]

The war: 'internationalist anarchists' vs. 'defencists'

When the war broke out, far from the international strike which public authorities had come to dread, the French working class

and most of its leaders rallied to the war effort *en masse*, thereby giving up on the internationalist positions of Jean Jaurès which they had formally adopted. At the very end of July, after restating its commitment to the international general strike, the CGT's committee officially gave up on the insurrectionary general strike and adopted the tactics of Jaurès, for whom such a strike could only take place within an international organisation. On 2 August, when the Germans crossed the Luxembourg border, the main French labour leaders, left helpless by Jaurès's assassination on 31 July, followed the mobilisation order issued the previous day. On 3 August, after Germany declared war on France, the CGT's secretary Léon Jouhaux joined the Comité de secours national (National Emergency Committee). In a powerful symbol of the CGT's majority U-turn and its rationale, the hitherto anti-militarist periodical *La Bataille syndicaliste* printed the following exhortation on 8 August: 'Leave without bitterness, leave without regret, fellow workers, called to the borders to defend the French land … It really is for the revolution that you will be fighting.'[17]

The war, as in many other countries, inaugurated a period of relative social consensus and a downswing in labour and revolutionary militancy. The anarchists found themselves unable to implement their sabotage plans, and ultimately powerless; most of those who were called up joined their battalions, although, as movements, anarchism and syndicalism remained dissident voices throughout the war. The team behind the syndicalist journal *Vie ouvrière*, around Pierre Monatte, Alfred Rosmer and Merrheim, became the rallying point of this anti-war minority, although this resistant core was more diverse than usually acknowledged in the historiography.[18] Some anarchists chose silence or went into exile, including prominent anti-militarist militants such as Henry Combes and Édouard Boudot. Many individualist anarchists retained their anti-war stance. Sébastien Faure took the lead, publishing manifestos for unity as early as the end of 1914. *Le Libertaire* continued to appear sporadically and clandestinely, through the efforts of a handful of comrades.[19] In contrast, Grave's historical anarchist publication, *Les Temps nouveaux*, associated with Kropotkin and defencism, entered a phase of ideological rift and eventually ceased publication. By 1918, Malato, aged sixty, an erstwhile fervent internationalist and anti-militarist-turned-defencist, could be found in London with his nephew, desperately trying to be conscripted on the basis that 'one can and must fight German militarism other than with public meeting clichés'[20] –

thereby showing his ideological consistency in supporting the war, according to Maurice Laisant.[21]

The war created a profound division between two antagonist sides separated by an ideological as well as a generational gap. These groups crystallised around Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta. Kropotkin's striking and very early support for the war effort generated much hostility. As early as September, in a private letter, Kropotkin urged his friend and protégé Grave – who, at that point, still advocated disarmament – to support France's war effort in unambiguous terms:

> In what illusionary world do you live, that you can talk of peace? … Quick, quick, design and cast 50 cm-cannons … Arm up! Make a superhuman effort – and this is the only way France will reconquer the right and the strength to inspire Europe's peoples with her civilisation and ideas of freedom, of communism, of fraternity.[22]

In October, the British anarchist periodical *Freedom* published the 'Letter to Steffen' in which Kropotkin explained his reasons for supporting the fight against Germany, in particular his perception of the latter as an obstacle to the progress of anarchism, and belief that pacifism was pointless in the present situation. Heated debates followed between the supporters of the war effort and its detractors. The latter formalised their positions in March 1915, with the *International Anarchist Manifesto on the War*, written in London and signed by about forty militants, including Malatesta and several prominent anarchists such as Tom Keell, Saul Yanovsky, Alexander Schapiro and Combes. Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and Harry Kelly were among the US signatories, as was Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis in the Netherlands. The *Manifesto* reasserted pre-war anti-militarist anarchist positions, dismissing the distinction between offensive and defensive wars, and emphasising the inherently imperialistic nature of war. It concluded with a call to insurrection, depicting the current state of confusion as an opportunity to weaken and 'disaggregate various states'.

The March 1916 publication of the *Manifeste des Seize* in *La Bataille syndicaliste* enshrined the split. Fifteen historical militants stated their reasons for supporting the war: 'It is because we want the reconciliation of peoples, including the German people, that we think that they must resist an aggressor who represents the destruction of all our hopes of liberation.'[23] Tensions climaxed in April 1916, with the reply of the Internationalists in *Freedom*.

Explanations

There were a number of theoretical justifications for those who reneged on anti-militarism – or at least appeared to do so – after the war broke out, bringing consistency to their seemingly contradictory positions. From 1905 onwards, Kropotkin had been forthright in declaring his attachment to France, which he saw as the land of the revolution.[24] This was paired with a profound hostility to German social democracy, the revolution's supreme enemy in his eyes. He had made his position clear in 1905, and his call for national defence had caused an outcry among the anarchists.[25] It was above all this 'modern form of Jacobinism'[26] – the notion that France, as the historical birthplace of revolution, should receive special protection – which accounted for his stance: 'Revolutionary and libertarian France was invoked, the Paris Commune recalled: the very model which had inspired anarchist internationalism for more than forty years was now a recruiting sergeant for the World War.'[27] A similar position was adopted, retrospectively, by syndicalists who joined the *Union sacrée*, arguing that 'there was a 1793 patriot in every one of us'.[28] For those opposing Kropotkin's positions, in contrast, French revolutionary *élan* was on the wane: 'I said France had lived on its revolutionary reputation for many years, and had exhausted the claim to be considered so now.'[29] The risk of seeing France and Europe subjected to German imperialism was another weighty argument for Kropotkin; it has also been suggested that Kropotkin's position betrayed a degree of hostility to German imperialism that had lurked in anarchism since the days of Bakunin.[30] In a recent reassessment, Ruth Kinna has emphasised the strategic dimension of Kropotkin's views on Prussian militarism, arguing that his positions 'reflected his assessment of the development of statism in Europe rather than a concealed nationalist sentiment', and a reassertion of transnational over statist principles, with the hope that the war would support the development of anti-statist federation.[31]

It is also important to restate the distinction made by several militants between the motherland and the state, even in the light of anarchism's anti-patriotic and internationalist creeds, and perhaps especially so in a diasporic movement.[32] Several comrades – notably Bakunin, Kropotkin and Reclus – distinguished between the motherland and the state, and did not disapprove of the former, calling for its defence against the enemy. Davide Turcato has also stressed the fact that anarchists were not hostile to the concept of the nation,

as long as it was non-political and inclusive and that distinctions were drawn between national identity and the state, as well as the political and national unit.[33]

Looking away from prominent anarchists to the 'rank and file', the picture that emerges is one of complexity. The apparent consensus during the summer of 1914 lastingly overshadowed the very diverse individual trajectories at the time; recent historiography has started to erode this myth by stressing the range of individual choices and the importance of a large variety of factors: one's region of origin, place of residence, gender and institutional affiliation to labour organisations.[34] One particularly influential factor was the degree of national integration of the labour movement and working classes. In the case of France, the war highlighted an ongoing process of integration, and reconciled the CGT's practice with its official discourse, thereby putting an end to the utopia of the proletarians' absolute separation within the nation. For Susan Milner, the French workers organisations' turnaround reveals that their opposition to the Republic had in fact not been as deep as it seemed. The events of 1914 testified to the ambiguous relationship of the labour movement's revolutionary wing with the bourgeois republic: despite profound disappointment with the repression and inequalities that characterised the Republic, not even the staunchest advocates of direct action entirely gave up hope for it.[35] Michel Cordillot comes to similar conclusions after analysing anti-militarism in the region of Yonne, a bastion of pre-1914 anti-war agitation, and the itineraries of its main activists, including the period after 1918.[36] While a sizeable dissident pacifist group remained during the war, Cordillot sees the predominance of unity in Yonne as manifesting a process of passive and paradoxical integration:

> But by stepping in so vociferously in order to give, in the name of the popular classes, an opinion which no one asked them to give, [the Yonne activists] had in some way managed to integrate themselves into the Nation, asserting themselves as integral partners in the debates affecting the national community.[37]

This analysis may be extended to the years 1880–1914 as a whole, and other sections of the anarchist movement, with the assumption that the anarchists' anti-establishment – anti-patriotic, revolutionary, anti-parliamentarian – stance not only concealed parallel processes of collective and individual integration, but actually made these possible. Several historians have emphasised rank-and-file

anarchists' ambiguous positions regarding the nation and the Republic, and the added layers of complexity brought on by the attachment to France's revolutionary patriotism, especially for those anarchists engaged in theoretical and historical analysis. As well as highlighting these conflicted responses to republican ideals, the war thus revealed an advanced process of national integration, effectively ending the proletarian utopia of absolute separation within the nation, until the Bolshevik revolution rekindled this ideal.[38]

The Russian revolutions and the war

In order to understand the impact of the Russian revolutions on those French anarchists who remained true to their internationalism and revolutionary anti-militarism, we have to appreciate the depth of their feelings of shock, disillusion and betrayal when the majority of the labour and socialist movements rallied to the *Union sacrée*. In the words of Louis Lecoin of the Fédération Anarchiste, for instance:

> It was as if, in August 1914, a shadow had fallen on the faith I had in human beings. The leaders of the CGT who had been my teachers now caused me only revulsion. And the antipatriot Hervé […] was even more repugnant to me. These ex-pacifists now showed themselves to be the most ferocious in their pursuit of the destruction of lives. How I hated them! I could not forgive them for having undermined my hitherto unspoiled confidence in others.[39]

The contrast with the relief and hopefulness provided by events in Russia therefore seemed all the greater, and this helps explain the warm welcome which the Russian revolutions and even the Bolsheviks were given by the majority of French anarchists. Indeed it appears to have been a group of anarchists in the Santé prison in Paris who in the summer of 1917 were responsible for the first manifesto produced in France in support of the Bolsheviks.[40] Claude Content of the Anarchist Union would insist in a 1918 leaflet entitled 'To the French People':

> It is above all the Russian Revolution which deserves our gratitude. For it was the Russian Revolution which threw off the yoke of autocracy and, in the face of a world gone berserk with murder, and to the great dismay of the generals and of the privileged, sent out its appeal for peace, for reason, for universal fraternity and for the struggle against capitalism.[41]

Early calls from the French anarchists for a second revolution in Russia, a social revolution supported by insurrections across the continent, were motivated quite explicitly by a concern that the Kerensky government would continue the war. Three Socialist Party members of parliament sent to Moscow by the French government to encourage the Kerensky government to pursue the war against Germany were condemned by the CRRI (Committee for the Resumption of International Relations) as 'official ambassadors of the French imperialist bourgeoisie'.[42] Instead, in language reminiscent of pre-1914 anti-militarism, French workers were exhorted in the anarchists' leaflets and newspapers not to lay down their arms, but to use them instead to make the revolution: 'The Russian, Bulgarian, Austrian and German workers are calling on you to join in the great class struggle which they have begun.'[43] Only revolutionary defeatism and a Europe-wide working-class insurrection, most anarchists believed, could end the war.[44] The prominent French anarchist Mauricius (pseudonym of Maurice Vandamme) admiringly quoted Lenin: 'A true socialist cannot not wish for the defeat of their own government.'[45]

1917 was thus followed by an extremely complex period of three or four years during which the impact of the outbreak of war, followed by the revolutions in Russia, effected significant changes in the labour and socialist movements in France. As the revolutionary socialist and war-resister Boris Souvarine put it at the start of 1920: 'The classifications of yesteryear no longer correspond to those of today. New currents have taken form, unforeseen affinities have brought together tendencies which were ignorant of each other or which were in conflict, new antagonisms have broken up hitherto compact forces.'[46] The failure of the anarchist and syndicalist movements to prevent mobilisation in 1914, combined with the perceived betrayal by the signatories of the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*, led many to question the established verities of what had by then already come to be referred to by some as 'traditional' anarchism, and to look elsewhere. At a minimum, this implied a critique of pre-war anarchism – with its unwillingness to embrace effective organisation in the name of absolute freedom – as 'idyllic'.[47] Maximally, it would lead to a certain *rapprochement* with the revolutionary minorities within the Socialist Party and the CGT. This would produce a short-lived Parti communiste and a Fédération communiste des soviets (Communist Federation of Soviets) in 1919–20, both of which – unusually, when compared with similar ideological developments elsewhere – were initiated by anarchists

and revolutionary syndicalists rather than by Marxists, and yet were animated by a very positive, libertarian reading of developments in Russia and even (initially at least) of the Bolsheviks.[48] Even within what might be called mainstream anarchist-communism there was a notable shift in favour of much greater organisational and ideological cohesiveness, the double experience of the war and of the Russian revolutions accelerating a change of attitudes in the movement already discernible before the war.

Jean Grave and the *Temps nouveaux* group

But what of those who, for various reasons and with greater or lesser enthusiasm, had supported the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*? Before the war, Jean Grave and the newspapers of which he had been the moving force – *Le Révolté* (1885–87), *La Révolte* (1887–94) and *Les Temps nouveaux* (1895–1914) – had been central to the anarchist movement. Indeed, in the words of Mireille Delfau, he was 'the incarnation, between 1880 and 1914, of "libertarian communist" ideology, such as it emerged progressively from the confrontation between Marx and Bakunin after the Commune' and he had an 'acute sense of anarchist orthodoxy'.[49]

However, the war and Grave's refusal to be 'neutral', as he put it, marked a crucial turning point, and from then on he became increasingly isolated. First there was the split with the 'internationalists' in the *Temps nouveaux* group in January 1918, when André Girard, André Mignon, Charles Benoît and others broke with him to found *L'Avenir international* [The international future], a monthly launched in reaction against the war and preoccupied with events in Russia. Grave retained the support of Marc Pierrot, Jacques Guérin and Paul Reclus, and this group produced a series of *Bulletins* from 1916 to 1919. Disagreements then arose over the future of the group's publication, resulting in another split between Grave and a majority of the others. The *Publications* put out by Grave lasted until 1936, but they were produced by a group of only four activists.

All of those associated with the pre-war *Temps nouveaux* who had not actively opposed the war effort were thus thoroughly marginalised between the wars: 'The war isolated us not just from comrades in other countries, but it also divided the anarchists in this country profoundly enough for them to consider each other enemies and to avoid any further contact.'[50] This group of anarchists were practically the only ones in France to have associated themselves

with the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*, and clearly this had an effect on militants' attitudes towards the Russian Revolution. Their closeness to Kropotkin also meant that theirs was the anarchist periodical in France which gave most prominence to Kropotkin's analysis of the Revolution. While most anarchists had applauded Russia's withdrawal from the war effort, the first thing Kropotkin did on his arrival in Russia was to campaign for the Kerensky government to carry on fighting. There was therefore no welcome for Bolshevism in the pages of *Les Temps nouveaux*. Indeed, one of the earliest reactions to the Russian Revolution to be found in the *Bulletins* demonstrates a quite astonishing anti-Bolshevik feeling and reads more like government propaganda of the time than an anarchist newspaper. Thus while the Revolution in general was approved of, Bolshevism was 'a dark reaction'; Bolshevik soldiers were selling their rifles to the Germans; they had dug up Tolstoy's grave to steal his jewellery; 'expropriation' was merely an excuse for rioting and pillaging: 'Reactionaries, tsarists, German agents and Red Guards are colluding in ruining the country in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat dear to those bourgeois Lenin and Trotsky.'[51] In January 1919, the rumour was even repeated that the Bolsheviks had murdered Kropotkin.[52]

The group also had little patience with those French comrades who were enthusiastically pro-soviet: 'They have ears only for those who speak to them of the establishment of a soviet republic analogous to that of the Bolsheviks and they are overcome when they hear a comrade speak ill of Bolshevism.'[53] In May 1919, when some comrades were announcing their membership of the Moscow International and advocating cooperation with socialists and syndicalists in a communist party or in a national federation of factory committees and workers' councils, the *Temps nouveaux* group were criticising the Russian soviets as counter-revolutionary and were declaring their support for the Russian anarchists and Left Socialist revolutionaries against the Bolsheviks. Nor does their attitude towards socialists and syndicalists and towards the question of organisation seem to have changed at all.[54] In stark contrast to the ambitious revolutionism of other anarchist communists, Grave saw the movement's future in much more modest terms. For him, the only realistic perspective for those who remained true to their anarchist principles was work in single-issue campaigns such as the Tenants' League, the Human Rights League, the Anti-Alcoholism League, and in such organisations as consumer co-operatives.[55]

When the new series of *Les Temps nouveaux* started in July

1919, the editorial group made clear their collective position on the Russian Revolution and their disagreement with most of the rest of the movement:

> We have no admiration for Bolshevism, though we detest no less strongly the parties of reaction who wish its demise. We can see why many revolutionaries, from afar, have idealised this government as a symbol; we understand that workers use the word itself mischievously to frighten the bourgeois. But for us, Bolshevism is nothing more than another form of State socialism, very authoritarian, extremely centralised and surviving thanks to violence.[56]

The *Temps nouveaux* group did not share the libertarian, spontaneist interpretation of the Russian Revolution common to the 'sovietists' and most other anarchist communists. On the contrary, they saw the Revolution as little more than a *coup*, the work of a Bolshevik minority simply imposing its will on the Russian people. The group was, in fact, almost unanimously and without qualification anti-Bolshevik, and the attacks became even more bitter and hostile with the launching of Grave's *Publications* in 1920. By 1922, Grave could claim that the activities of the GPU/Cheka put the Bolshevik regime on a par with tsarism, and he had become very pessimistic about any possible improvement in the situation: 'What is the point of making a revolution?'[57] The most violent attacks, however, were made by a J. Erboville, for whom the Russian Revolution was concrete proof of the failure of Marxism, and who could even descend to the grossest racism, referring to the 'Tartars' and the 'Hebrews who have murdered freedom of thought, killed production and sown famine in Russia.'[58]

Kropotkin and Rocker

Not all of the interventions published by this group were on this level, however, and not all of them were so one-sided.[59] Having said that, the best examples of intelligent analysis of the Russian situation published in Grave's newspapers were produced not by French militants, but by Peter Kropotkin and Rudolf Rocker. Rocker was to distinguish clearly between the soviet system and the Bolshevik dictatorship, arguing (as the sovietists were doing at about the same time) that the former belonged to the libertarian tradition, whereas the latter was a bourgeois conception belonging to the Jacobin and Babouvist traditions.[60]

In 1921, in a special number of *Les Temps nouveaux* dedicated

to Kropotkin. Maria Corn summed up the Russian's attitude thus:

> In the events in Russia, Kropotkin always saw more than just a struggle between political parties, more than the Bolshevik dictatorship: he saw revolution on the march, a new way of life being born. He put the interests of the revolution above all else, and above all sought to defend it against its enemies: reaction and the allies' intervention.[61]

Indeed, Kropotkin's analysis was far less negative than that of most of the French comrades around the review. Certainly he disagreed with Bolshevik methods. 'The idea of the soviets […] is a great idea', he wrote, but totally meaningless when topped with a system which in reality meant the dictatorship of one party.[62] He was above all concerned to emphasise the sheer impracticality of trying to undertake such an enormous task, on the scale of a country like Russia, using an over-centralised system. The Bolshevik approach, for Kropotkin, paralysed 'the constructive work of the people'.[63] On the other hand, he recognised that the Allied intervention and the civil war had made things much more difficult, and had made the Bolsheviks' methods even more authoritarian – hence his insistence that workers in the west should defend the Revolution against its capitalist and monarchist enemies. He remained optimistic for the future: 'One must recognise that the revolution has already introduced into our daily work new conceptions of the rights of labour, its true position in society and the duties of every citizen, and these conceptions will survive.'[64]

Conclusion

By the time of Kropotkin's death in 1921, much of the earlier enthusiasm for all things soviet among the anarchist 'internationalists' had waned, both as a result of the improved flows of information from Russia, and because of the creation of the French Communist Party at the end of 1920: Moscow's tactical decision to welcome into the nascent Communist Party prominent socialist politicians who were perceived by the anarchists to be careerist lackeys of imperialism did not endear the Comintern to them. The process of 'Bolshevisation' of affiliates of the new International from 1924 onwards would make the split definitive. But in other ways, the effects on the anarchist movement of its failure of 1914 and of the controversy provoked by the *Manifesto of the Sixteen* would be more persistent, and this was perhaps seen most clearly

in the syndicalist movement. As the anarchist leadership of the Revolutionary Syndicalist Committee put it in 1921: 'The war has revolutionised all the theories we believed to be inviolable.'[65] By the late 1920s, because of a series of disastrous splits caused first by the question of the stance to adopt with regard to the national war effort, and then by linked debates over the question of international affiliation, there were three national union confederations in France: the CGT, a Communist Party-dominated 'Unitary CGT' (CGTU) and an anarcho-syndicalist 'Revolutionary Syndicalist CGT' (CGTSR). On top of this, there were a number of trade unions which chose to remain or to become autonomous. Anarchist syndicalists – and the vast majority of anarchists were unionised – could be found scattered in all of them.

What of the anarchists' anti-militarism after the bitterly disappointing experience of 1914? This had long-lasting effects on the anarchist movement. It is true that the policy of insurrectionary general strike was maintained: 'For the expropriatory general strike, which alone will realise world peace!' declared the publicity for a public meeting in 1935 amid growing fears of another world war.[66] Yet there seem no longer to have been any illusions about the possibility of the success of such a strategy if war had already been declared, and a 1938 resolution of the Paris Federation of the Anarchist Union insisted that such a strike had to be 'preventive'.[67] This is the first way in which the anarchists' stance on war changed as a result of 1914. Secondly, there would be a move away from the previous insistence on collective resistance, and a growing acceptance of individual solutions instead – including, by the late 1930s, conscientious objection, rejected up until then for a number of reasons. Finally, although anti-fascist and anti-colonial wars would give rise to some difficult debates, there was a clear reassertion by the movement that it could never again be a question of whether a war between states was just or unjust: anarchists were fundamentally opposed to inter-state war. There would never be another *Manifesto of the Sixteen*.

Notes

1 The French signatories were Jean Grave (1854–1939), Jacques Guérin (1884–1920), Charles-Ange Laisant (1841–1920), François Le Levé (1882–1945), Charles Malato (1857–1938), Marc Pierrot (1871–1950), Paul Reclus (1858–1941) and P. Richard. Other signatories with close links to the French anarchist movement included Christian Cornelissen

(1864–1942), who was Dutch but lived in France from 1898 until his death; Georgian exile Warlaam Tcherkesoff (1846–1925), an editor of *Les Temps nouveaux* like Cornelissen; the Belgians Henri Fuss (1882–1964) and Jules Moineau (1858–1934); and Antoine Orfila who lived in Algeria. See Marianne Enckell, Guillaume Davranche, Rolf Dupuy et al., *Les Anarchistes. Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement libertaire francophone* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier/Les Editions ouvrières, 2014), p. 295.

2 Marc Angenot, *L'antimilitarisme: idéologie et utopie* (Quebec: Presses Universitaires de Laval, 2003), p. 7.

3 Guillaume Davranche, *Trop jeunes pour mourir. Ouvriers et révolutionnaires face à la guerre (1909–1914)* (Paris: L'Insomniaque & Libertalia, 2014).

4 Marc Angenot, 'L'antimilitarisme contre la "religion patriotique"', *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 76 (2004), pp. 41–58. All extracts from French originals cited here have been translated by the authors.

5 Jean Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France, 1880–1914* (Paris: Société Universitaire d'éditions et de librairie, 1955).

6 *Les Temps nouveaux*, 9 July 1904.

7 Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste.*

8 *Le Libertaire*, 23 July 1905.

9 J.-J. Becker and A. Kriegel, *1914. La Guerre et le mouvement ouvrier français* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1964), pp. 17–18.

10 Ibid., p. 19.

11 Barbara Mitchell, *The Practical Revolutionaries: A New Interpretation of the French Anarchosyndicalists* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987).

12 Jacques Julliard, 'La C.G.T. devant la guerre (1900–1914)', *Le Mouvement social*, 49 (1964), pp. 47–62.

13 Davranche, *Trop jeunes*, pp. 24–5.

14 Michel Cordillot, 'L'antimilitarisme dans l'Yonne, mythe ou réalité? "L'Affiche rouge" de février 1906', in Michel Cordillot (ed.), *« Plutôt l'insurrection que la guerre ! » L'antimilitarisme dans l'Yonne avant 1914* (Auxerre: Adiamos-89/SSHNY, 2005), pp. 121–51.

15 Davranche, *Trop jeunes*, pp. 404–8.

16 Susan Milner, *Dilemmas of Internationalism: French Syndicalism and the International Labour Movement 1900–1914* (New York: Berg, 1991).

17 *La Bataille syndicaliste*, 8 August 1914.

18 Davranche, *Trop jeunes*, pp. 515–17.

19 Maurice Laisant, 'Demeurer antimilitaristes … Les anarchistes et l'Internationale durant la Première Guerre mondiale', *Le Monde libertaire*, 1732 (February–March 2014 [1964]).

20 Grave Collection, Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale (IFHS), letter from Malato to Grave, 7 March 1918.

21 Ibid.
22 Grave Collection, IFHS, letter from Kropotkin to Grave, 2 September 1914.
23 *The Manifesto of the Sixteen*, 1916. English version available at http://libertarian-labyrinth.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/manifesto-of-sixteen-1916.html (last accessed 24 July 2015).
24 Jean Caroline Cahm, 'Kropotkin and the Anarchist Movement', in Eric Cahm and Vladimir Claude Fisera (eds), *Socialism and Nationalism in Contemporary Europe (1848–1945)*, 3 vols (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978–80), vol. 1, pp. 59–65.
25 Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste*, pp. 354–5.
26 Becker and Kriegel, *1914*, p. 123.
27 Carl Levy, 'Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism in Europe, 1860–1939', *Australian Journal of History and Politics*, 50.3 (2004), pp. 331–4, 340.
28 Angenot, 'L'antimilitarisme contre la religion', p. 55.
29 Nettlau Collection, International Institute for Social History (IISH), Amsterdam, Correspondence, letter from Thomas Keell to Max Nettlau, 6 June 1919.
30 Cahm, 'Kropotkin', pp. 64–5.
31 Ruth Kinna, 'Kropotkin's Theory of the State: A Transnational Approach', in C. Bantman and B. Altena (eds), *Reassessing the Transnational Turn. Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 43–61 (p. 58).
32 Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste*, p. 346.
33 Davide Turcato, 'Nations without Borders: Anarchists and National Identity', in Bantman and Altena (eds), *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*, pp. 43–61.
34 Wayne Thorpe, 'The European Syndicalists and the War, 1914–1918', *Contemporary European History*, 10.1 (2001), pp. 1–24.
35 Milner, *Dilemmas of Internationalism*.
36 Cordillot, 'L'antimilitarisme dans l'Yonne'.
37 Ibid., p. 35.
38 Becker and Kriegel, *1914*, pp. 171–2; see also Jacques Julliard, 'La C.G.T. devant la guerre (1900–1914)', *Le Mouvement social*, 49 (October–December 1964), pp. 47–62.
39 Louis Lecoin, *Le Cours d'une vie* (Paris: Louis Lecoin, 1965), p. 70.
40 Ibid., p. 92.
41 From the leaflet 'Au Peuple Français' [To the French people], summarised in a police report of 15 December 1918 (Préfecture de Police de Paris, BA1545). Reprinted as an article in *Le Libertaire*, 2 February 1919. See also *Le Journal du peuple*, 1 March 1919. According to the police report, 15,000 copies of the leaflet were printed.
42 Jacques Fauvet, *Histoire du Parti communiste français 1920–1976* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), pp. 21–2. CRRI leaflet, 'Les bons Apôtres',

Préfecture de Police de Paris, BA1545. The CRRI was created in February 1916 by the coming together of anarchists and revolutionary syndicalists from the Comité d'Action Internationale contre la Guerre (International Action Committee against the War) and Socialist Party militants involved with the Zimmerwald Conference.

43 From the leaflet 'Au peuple français'. A similar message was contained in a leaflet produced by the Comité de défense syndicaliste (CDS, Committee for the Defence of Syndicalism), 'Aux travailleurs de France'. Police report of 24 November 1918, Préfecture de Police de Paris, BA1545.

44 See also the leaflet 'Au peuple de Paris. La paix! Sans annexions, sans conquêtes et sans indemnités' [To the people of Paris. Peace! No annexations, no conquests, no indemnities'], published by the CDS. 10,000 copies were printed, paid for by the Building-workers' and Garment Industry Workers' Unions. Préfecture de Police de Paris, BA1494.

45 *Ce qu'il faut dire*, 21 April 1917.

46 'Brûlons les vieilles étiquettes!', *L'Avenir international*, 25 (January 1920).

47 Alex, 'La Dictature du prolétariat', *Le Soviet*, 29 August 1920.

48 For more detail, see David Berry, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement 1918–1945* (Edinburgh and Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).

49 Introduction to Jean Grave, *Quarante ans de propagande anarchiste* (Paris: Flammarion, 1973), p. 25.

50 Grave in *Publications de 'La Révolte' et 'Temps Nouveaux'*, May 1922. See René Michaud's account of how 'Dr P' (Pierrot) was obliged to leave a public meeting being addressed by Lecoin, before the latter would agree to continue. *J'avais vingt ans* (Paris: Syros, 1983), p. 137.

51 *Les Temps nouveaux*, September 1918.

52 Leaflet 'Le Sort de Pierre Kropotkine', inserted in *Les Temps nouveaux*, January 1919.

53 *Les Temps nouveaux*, 1 May 1919.

54 The Union Anarchiste was not to be spared criticism either: see F. Fichard, 'Un Congrès, dit Anarchiste', *Publications de 'La Révolte' et 'Temps Nouveaux'*, 11 (1922).

55 See various articles by Grave: for instance, 'Ce que l'on peut faire', *Publications du 'Groupe de Propagande par l'Ecrit'*, 2 (1920), and 'Pour préparer la société future', *Publications de 'La Révolte' et 'Temps Nouveaux'*, 9 (1921).

56 *Les Temps nouveaux. Revue internationale des Idées Communistes*, 15 July 1919.

57 *Publications de 'La Révolte' et 'Temps Nouveaux'*, 12 (April 1922).

58 See 'Les Moscovites', *Publications de 'La Révolte' et 'Temps Nouveaux'*, 16 (October 1922).

59 Only one article attempted a justification of the Bolshevik dictatorship: F. David in *Les Temps nouveaux*, 15 August 1920.

60 See 'Le Système des Soviets ou la dictature?', *Les Temps nouveaux*, 15 August and 15 September 1920, republished in Nikolai Bukharin, Luigi Fabbri and Rudolf Rocker, *The Poverty of Statism* (Orkney: Cienfuegos Press, 1981), pp. 63–74.
61 Maria Corn, 'Kropotkine et la Russie', *Les Temps nouveaux*, March 1921: 'Numéro spécial consacré à Pierre Kropotkine, l'ami, l'homme, l'anarchiste, le savant, son oeuvre, souvenirs personnels et hommages posthumes'. Maria Corn (or more often Korn) was one of the pseudonyms of Marie Goldsmith, a Russian militant who had lived in Paris since the 1890s.
62 'Une Lettre de Pierre Kropotkine', *Les Temps nouveaux*, 15 August 1920.
63 'Une Lettre de Pierre Kropotkine', *Les Temps nouveaux*, 15 October 1919.
64 'Une Lettre de Pierre Kropotkine', *Les Temps nouveaux*, 15 August 1920.
65 Augustin Quinton, Pierre Fargues and Pierre Besnard, 'Résolutions présentées par la Commission Exécutive du Comité Central des CSR au Congrès de la Minorité Révolutionnaire', in J. Maitron and C. Chambelland (eds), *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme: Les archives de Pierre Monatte* (Paris: Maspero, 1968), p. 283.
66 *Le Libertaire*, 20 December 1935.
67 *Le Libertaire*, 13 March 1938.

8

At war with empire: the anti-colonial roots of American anarchist debates during the First World War

Kenyon Zimmer

After members of the Young Bosnia movement assassinated the Hapsburg heir Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, the *New York Times* sought out anarchist Alexander Berkman's thoughts on the killing. Berkman speculated that credit for the act was due to '[t]he anarchists, the revolutionists, and the strong republican faction' in the Balkans, a quote that inspired the newspaper's sensationalist headline, 'Calls It Anarchist Plot'.[1] The Italian anarchist newspaper *L'Era nuova* of Paterson, NJ, declared, 'The anarchists … are not afraid to express their complete solidarity' with the perpetrators, but also noted that the assassination 'did not have an anarchist character. It was of a nationalist character.' Berkman later clarified that the man who had shot Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip, was in fact a 'Serbian patriot who had never heard of Anarchism'.[2] Yet this was not quite true, either; the nationalist Princip had read works by the anarchist thinkers Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin, and one of Princip's co-conspirators, Nedeljko Čabrinović, was a self-avowed anarchist who had thrown a grenade at the archduke's car earlier on the day of the assassination.[3] This ambiguous relationship between anti-statist anarchists and national liberation movements became central to American and international anarchist disagreements over the proper course of action during the First World War, a conflict that the Sarajevo assassination inadvertently set into motion. All sides of the war debate – those resolutely opposed to any tolerance of militarism, and those who supported victory for either the Allies or the Central Powers – drew on shared pre-war anti-colonial experiences and discourses.

Most writings on anarchism and the war attribute the attitude of Kropotkin and others who supported the Allied cause to a peculiar

'Francophilia' and anti-German sentiment, totally inconsistent with lifetimes of anarchist activism. Yet the 'pro-war anarchists' had not so much 'forgotten their principles', as Errico Malatesta famously charged, as developed an anti-imperialist argument for why defeating the German (or, in some cases, the Russian or British) Empire was imperative. Their 'neutralist' opponents responded with anti-imperialist critiques of the great powers on both sides of the war, and objected to the increasingly statist character of the national liberation and internationalism promoted by their rivals. Both sides agreed, however, that this fight was about, and against, empires.

Anarchism had a long, generally supportive relationship with national independence movements throughout the world. In the United States, some anarchists forged close ties to Cuban *independistas*, Irish republicans, Indian revolutionaries and Jewish territorialists, becoming part of a transnational community of anti-colonial activists. Although they believed that nationalism was an empty promise that did not solve 'the social question', many actively supported anti-imperialist and national liberation struggles, often in the hope of pushing those struggles in a more radical direction – seeking, as Benedict Anderson noted, 'the grail of an anti-nationalist mode of anti-imperialism'.[4] There was no consensus, however, on which struggles deserved support or what forms that support should take. As Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt note, anarchists developed three general stances towards nationalist movements: total rejection, 'a project of critical engagement and radicalisation' and uncritical support.[5] When the First World War came, adherents of the latter view proved most likely to offer similarly uncritical support to one side of the conflict or the other.

No international anarchist figure was so closely associated with these positions, or so influential among American anarchist circles before the war, as Peter Kropotkin. For decades, Kropotkin had argued that national independence movements everywhere merited anarchist support. Writing in 1885 for the British magazine *The Nineteenth Century*, he conceded that 'national problems are not identical with the "people's problems" … [T]he acquisition of political independence still leaves unachieved the economical independence of the labouring and wealth-producing classes.' But he went on to argue that 'both these problems are so closely connected with one another that we are bound to recognise that no serious economical progress can be won, nor is any progressive development possible, until the awakened aspirations for autonomy have been satisfied'.[6] In other words, social revolution would remain

impossible until national aspirations were met, making national independence a necessary but not sufficient condition for anarchism among colonised populations. Elsewhere, however, Kropotkin suggested that anarchists might inject revolutionary ideals directly into national liberation movements. In an 1897 letter to the Russian Jewish anarchist Marie Goldsmith, he mused,

> It seems to me that the 'purely nationalist character' of national movements is a fiction. There is an economic basis everywhere, or some basis for freedom and respect for the individual … [I]n each nationalist movement we should raise the people's issues alongside nationalist ones. But in order to do that, we need to have a foothold in national movements.

Kropotkin therefore wavered between indiscriminate support and radicalising engagement, but in either case saw an active role for anarchists in nationalist struggles (although he did make exceptions, such as the 1897 Cretan uprising against Ottoman rule, which Kropotkin felt had 'been molded from above, by the [Greek] State').[7] This commitment was not merely tactical. Kropotkin, like most anarchists, was a proponent of a radical cosmopolitanism that held cultural and racial diversity to be a positive good.[8] He extolled the 'patriotism' of national minorities seeking independence from colonial rule, and believed 'it quite possible that man will become more internationalist, the more he loves the local individualities that comprise the international family, the more he seeks to develop local, individual traits'.[9]

In the 1890s, the imperial ventures of Italy, Spain and the United States forced anarchists in America to grapple with these considerations directly. Native-born and immigrant radicals were resolutely opposed to the colonialism of their countries of origin, as well as colonialism in general. Thus the Italians who produced Paterson's paper *La Questione sociale* declared in 1896, 'we, ourselves, give absolute solidarity to the oppressed of Italy, to those of Abyssinia [which Italy had invaded the previous year], of Armenia, as with the glorious insurgents of Cuba and the strong and courageous exiles of far-away Siberia', because 'we, without distinction of color, race, language [or] custom, share affection and adoration for all the oppressed of humanity'.[10] The Cuban War of Independence, organised by émigré radicals in the United States and occurring less than a hundred miles off the coast of Florida, provided anarchists with an opportunity to combat imperialism with more than proclamations. Italian, Spanish and Cuban immigrant anarchists joined the

independence movement in large numbers, and many went to Cuba to take up arms.[11] *La Questione sociale* recognised that the uprising was not 'an anarchist revolt', but like Kropotkin, it viewed national independence as a vital first step towards a possible anarchist revolution, and hoped that the anarchists who gave 'life, blood, and energy to the fight … will not be without influence in the economic and political reconstruction of the island'.[12] Yet there were critics of this stance. Many Spanish anarchists, although sympathetic to the independence movement, urged anarchist 'neutrality' in what they viewed as a struggle to replace a Spanish ruling regime with a Cuban one. In the United States, the Catalan anarchist Pedro Esteve was the most vocal supporter of this position. Strangely, Kropotkin himself also urged neutrality.[13] American intervention and the beginning of the Spanish-American War, moreover, forced most anarchist partisans of Cuban independence to withdraw their support, lest they become lackeys of US imperialism. American anarchists unanimously decried the US annexation of Cuba, the Philippines, Hawaii and other territories in the Caribbean and Pacific. Emma Goldman was a particularly vocal critic, and even collaborated with Filipinos 'engaged in underground activities to secure freedom for the Philippine Islands'.[14]

Further afield, Goldman also supported the 'the brave and marvelously courageous' Afrikaner colonists of the Transvaal Republic and Orange Free State in their fight against the British in the Second Boer War (1889–1902), a position that mistook a conflict between competing colonialisms for an anti-colonial struggle.[15] Kropotkin, by contrast, saw both the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) as inter-imperialist conflicts that only harmed the working class and warranted no anarchist support for either side.[16] Less ambiguous were the Irish and Indian independence struggles, which enjoyed widespread anarchist sympathy. American and European anarchists collaborated with members of both movements, on everything from producing publications to constructing explosives.[17] Nevertheless, as Alexander Berkman noted, the struggle in Ireland was

> of a Nationalist character. It demands 'national independence,' which is by no means synonymous with the liberty of the people, individually or collectively. National independence for Ireland, as for any other people, merely means substituting your 'own' masters for those imposed on you … [T]he Irish people must learn sooner or later … that National independence is no cure for agrarian and industrial slavery, but that the salvation of the Irish people is to be found only

> in making common cause with the disinherited of all other countries, in a social revolution.[18]

Berkman was echoing Kropotkin's logic: national liberation was not inherently radical, but it might need to be satisfied before oppressed nationalities could 'learn' the necessity of more radical forms of emancipation.

Indian revolutionaries in the United States, meanwhile, attempted to fuse anarchism and syndicalism to their own struggle for national liberation. Hindu intellectual and anti-imperialist Har Dayal arrived in Berkeley in 1911, and was soon deeply involved in Bay Area anarchist circles. He took the initiative in establishing the multi-ethnic International Radical Club, the anarchist Fraternity of the Red Flag and the Bakunin Institute, an anarchist 'training centre' that issued its own English-language publication, *Land and Liberty*. He also became the leading figure within the Pacific Coast Hindi Association, which subsequently became the Ghadar Party, named for its Urdu-language publication, *Ghadar* [Mutiny], edited by Har Dayal in San Francisco. *Ghadar*, which soon had an international circulation of 25,000, drew on 'a broad range of ideas of nationalist, revolutionary, and anarchist movements to formulate its opposition to British rule'.[19] However, Har Dayal was arrested in March 1914 for violating the Anarchist Exclusion Act, and jumped bail to escape to Europe. *Land and Liberty* was left in the hands of its editor, the Indian-born English anarchist William C. Owen.

A veteran California radical, Owen was an ardent supporter of both Indian independence and Mexico's anarchist Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), and edited the English-language page of the PLM's paper, *Regeneración*.[20] In *Land and Liberty*, he proclaimed an unambiguous commitment to anti-colonialism: 'Wherever men or women battle for freedom they will find in us a champion, whether that battle is in Mexico or the United States, in Europe or the Orient.' He justified this stance through an analogy between individuals and nations, arguing that 'the impending struggle in Mexico, Ireland, Egypt, India, everywhere … is based on the Anarchist doctrine that the individual is entitled to self-ownership. Because Anarchists cling to this as their fundamental tenet, they sympathize with and do their best to assist national movements of revolt throughout the world.'[21] This peculiar elision of individual and national rights would also shape Owen's position on the First World War.

In the pre-war years a very different debate over nationalism

preoccupied many Jewish anarchists. New York's weekly *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* was the main organ of the transnational Yiddish-speaking anarchist movement, and the bloody Kishinev Pogrom of 1903 sparked a contentious argument in its pages. The resurgence of European anti-Semitism convinced a small number of anarchists that the very survival of Europe's Jews necessitated the formation of an autonomous Jewish territory. The leading spokesman for this position was the veteran anarchist Hillel Solotaroff, who presented his arguments in a series of articles for the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* and other Yiddish publications. Solotaroff believed 'not in religious nationalism, nor in cultural-political nationalism', but rather in the right of Jews to organise themselves as a nation to defend themselves. Instead of advocating the creation of a Jewish nation state in Palestine, therefore, he envisioned a federation of 'free communes' – some Jewish, some Arab and some mixed – organised according to the principle of free association.[22] Solotaroff and his fellow 'anarcho-nationalists' made common cause with the Socialist Revolutionary Party emissary Chaim Zhitlowsky, who arrived in the United States in 1904 and promoted the creation of a socialist Jewish territory rooted in secular Yiddish culture.[23] *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* editor Saul Yanovsky and a majority of Jewish anarchists, however, considered these ideas 'heretical' and saw in them a thinly veiled programme for the creation of a Jewish state, which as anarchists they could not support.

In 1907, Peter Kropotkin weighed in on the issue in two articles for his Russian-language paper *Listki 'Khleb i Volia'* in London, in response to a letter from an anarchist supporter of Zionism. Nationalist movements of 'oppressed peoples', he once again argued, were justified and progressive, but he believed Zionism to be an impractical movement that, even if successful, would result in a theocratic state; Jews should instead focus on the struggle for autonomy wherever they currently resided.[24] In 1909, at Saul Yanovsky's invitation, Kropotkin reiterated these arguments in the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*.[25] He again returned to the theme of Jewish nationalism in 1913, in the foreword to the Yiddish edition of his book *Mutual Aid*, published in New York. (Its translator, the long-time anarchist J.A. Maryson, was himself a proponent of Jewish territorialism.) Affirming once more that cultural and linguistic variety were an integral part of humanity, Kropotkin applauded the translation of his work, and declared that the preservation of languages – and therefore the nationalities that spoke them – was 'the most certain way to enrich our common heritage with all their

national traits, which have a special worth for philosophical insight, poetry, and art'. However, he worried that '[a]t the present time ideas of centralisation and centralised states are so much in style' that many people felt 'the small nationalities don't have grounds to exist' and would be inevitably absorbed by 'the larger nations, and will quickly forget their mother-tongues'.[26] The protection of 'small nationalities' from militaristic states would later be one of Kropotkin's core arguments for supporting the Allies.

As war spread throughout Europe in the second half of 1914, most anarchists in the United States reaffirmed their anti-militarist principles. The short-lived *Internationale Arbeiter-Chronik*, all that remained of America's once substantial German anarchist movement, firmly condemned German militarism and declared 'war on wars'.[27] In September, a coalition of San Francisco anarchists published 2,000 copies of *The Social Revolution*, a 'large and well-illustrated four-page paper' that printed anti-war articles in English, Italian, French and German under the motto, 'If we must fight, let us fight for the Social Revolution.'[28] A month later, however, Kropotkin's 'Letter to Steffen' appeared in London's *Freedom*, declaring his strident support for the Allied war effort and spreading confusion across the Atlantic. Emma Goldman later called his stance 'a staggering blow to our movement'.[29]

Kropotkin was enamoured with the French revolutionary tradition and believed a German victory would irreparably damage European progress towards social revolution – progress that, he believed, had advanced furthest in imperilled France. But he also based his position on a defence of national independence.[30] If German subjugation of the nationalities of central and western Europe could only be prevented by Germany's military defeat, he argued, then anarchists were obliged to support the Allied forces. Imagining the consequences of a German victory, he foresaw 'All French colonies – Morocco, Algiers, Tonkin – taken by Germany … Poland – compelled definitively to abandon all dreams of national independence.' After Germany was defeated, 'then there would be time to fight Russian Imperialism in the same way as all freedom-loving Europe is ready at this moment to combat that vile warlike spirit which has taken possession of Germany'. Kropotkin therefore appealed to 'everyone who cherishes the ideals of human progress, to do everything in one's power, according to one's capacities, to crush down the invasion of the Germans into Western Europe … The German invasion *must* be repulsed – no matter how difficult this may be.'[31]

The *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* was the first American paper to republish this letter, under the title 'Comrade Kropotkin's Clear Standpoint on the War'. An astonished Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman first read this Yiddish version of the document, before reprinting the original English text in *Mother Earth*, accompanied by an extended critique from Berkman that accused Kropotkin of having 'fallen a victim to the war psychology now dominating Europe'. Invoking France's alliance with the Russian Empire, Berkman declared, 'Prussian militarism is no greater menace to life and liberty than Tzarist [*sic*] autocracy. Neither can be destroyed by the other. Both must and will be destroyed only by the social revolutionary power of the united international proletariat.'[32] Goldman, voicing what would become a common rejoinder to the 'defencist' position, inverted the accusation that neutrality translated into support for Germany by claiming that Kropotkin's 'emotions for France lead him to sustain the schemes of Czarism'.[33]

Mother Earth and other American anarchist newspapers also widely reprinted Errico Malatesta's rebuttals of Kropotkin's views, originally published in *Freedom*. 'Kropotkin,' Malatesta observed, 'renounces anti-militarism because he thinks that the national questions must be solved before the social question.' However, the revered Italian anarchist argued, national independence could not be solved by supporting imperial France, Britain and Russia.

> I have no greater confidence in the bloody Tsar, nor in the English diplomatists who oppress India, who betrayed Persia, who crushed the Boer Republics, nor in the French bourgeoisie, who massacred the natives of Morocco; nor in those of Belgium, who have allowed the Congo atrocities and have largely profited by them.

Instead, 'the small nationalities' will

> have a real and final solution only when, the States being destroyed, every human group, nay, every individual, will have the right to associate with, and separate from, every other group … I admit, therefore, that there are wars that are necessary, holy wars: and these are wars of liberation, such as are generally 'civil wars'. – *i.e.*, revolutions.[34]

The Spanish- and Italian-language anarchist press raised similar points. In his paper *Cultura obrera*, Pedro Esteve published an 'Open Letter' to Kropotkin that presented several objections. If anarchists were ethically bound to aid resistance to invasions, he asked, 'how do you know who the invaders really are? Invaders, in this case, are the ones who cross their borders and enter another

country', which described participants on both sides of the war. Moreover, Esteve argued, 'the present war cannot even be called a "war of invasion" in the usual sense of the word', because in reality it was a struggle between two powerful imperial alliances vying for dominance. What of 'the African peasants' living under British, French and Belgian rule? Finally, if France had to be defended because it was more progressive than Germany, 'Russia is considered much less liberal than Germany and therefore we would have to side with the latter'.[35]

From London, Kropotkin responded in the pages of both *Cultura obrera* and *L'Era nuova*. He insisted, 'I hate the Russian yoke on Poland, on Finland and on the Caucuses', but 'I cannot remain an indifferent spectator while the Germans – the German Empire – attempts to suffocate the hearths of revolution represented by France and the Latin countries.' 'My view,' he continued,

> is that the duty of every sincere internationalist has been to prevent with *all* possible force the conquest of Morocco on the part of France, of Tripoli on the part of the Russians and the English, and to, *and much more*, to prevent the conquest of Belgium – that valiant country that has known how to defend its independence so well – and of France. To say that it makes no difference to the peasant or the worker to be under the whip of a French or German government, a Belgian or Prussian one, or a Turkish or Bulgarian one, is an absurdity that I have not ever permitted to be said to workers.[36]

Esteve replied in turn 'that Kropotkin, obsessed with his love for the revolutionary tradition of France, forgot the principles of anarchism'. He again emphasised that the war involved aggressive empires on both sides. 'I will not argue if France is more or less liberal, more or less centralised, more or less civil than Germany … But who can believe that any principle of freedom, decentralisation or anti-militarism is involved in this war? What interest can Russia … or Japan have in the defense of French "liberty"?' Peasants were oppressed and killed 'not only in Belgium, but also in eastern Prussia, in Galicia and in Poland, wherever the boots of a soldier trample on a human creature'. Invoking the example of Cuba, Esteve insisted that 'national independence is a purely bourgeois problem', for with its attainment 'the bourgeoisie will open to itself all administrative and governmental routes; while the workers are exploited just the same'.[37]

L'Era nuova's editor, the multilingual Slovenian Franz Widmar, also replied to Kropotkin. Widmar critiqued 'the principle of

nationality, the so-called national independence of one state from another, in the mistaken presumption that the separation of borders, as they are today, is the result of the will of individual peoples', rather than of 'the result of secular disputes, more or less bloody, that the bands of pirates, called dynasties, have always had between themselves to impose their domination and exploitation upon the people'. The transgression of these artificial and arbitrary borders did not represent the violation of nationalities' independence, because the creation of those borders in the first place had already placed them under government domination. Kropotkin's own pre-war writings, Widmar observed, argued that wars were fought between 'the various capitalist groups' to acquire 'new territory and new populations', not for the 'higher principle of right, of race, [or] of nationality'.[38] The Paterson anarchist Pietro Baldisserotto charged that those who supported the Allies in the name of combating foreign aggression 'have forgotten the A.B.C. of class struggle, have confused wars of conquest, wars of defense, patriotism, [and] defense of national independence and institutions, with tenacious struggle against the state and its props'.[39] As it was summed up by another writer for *L'Era nuova*, 'We equally hate Russian tyranny and Teutonic arrogance, Austrian oppression and English treachery, [and] the Republican ferocity of French capitalism as much as that of any constitutional or absolute monarchy.'[40]

Many of these objections were incorporated into the *International Anarchist Manifesto on the War*, issued in London in February 1915. This document declared that 'The role of the Anarchists in the present tragedy, whatever may be the place or the situation in which they find themselves, is to continue to proclaim that there is but one war of liberation: that which in all countries is waged by the oppressed against the oppressors, by the exploited against the exploiters', with the goal of 'weakening and dissolving the various States' where possible.[41] The *Manifesto* was published in every major American anarchist publication, and also distributed as a four-page leaflet. Eight of its 36 signatories, moreover, were living in the United States: American-born editors Leonard D. Abbott and Harry Kelly; Jewish anarchists Alexander Berkman, Joseph J. Cohen, Emma Goldman and Saul Yanovsky; Czech-born anarchist Hippolyte Havel; and William Shatoff, a leading figure within the anarcho-syndicalist Union of Russian Workers of the United States and Canada.

Yet they did not represent a united front. Harry Kelly's inclusion is especially strange, for he in fact agreed with Kropotkin on the war

and believed that any nation had a 'duty to repel the invader'.[42] He appears to have signed the anti-war manifesto despite his personal views, and later recalled that his position was so unpopular that 'if the anarchist movement had been an organized one I probably would have been expelled'.[43] Yanovsky, too, would come to agree with Kropotkin before the war was over. Writing to Guy Aldred's London anarchist paper *The Spur* in October 1915, Goldman lamented that in the United States, '[b]ut for a few, the Anarchists are quarreling as to whether Kropotkin is right or wrong in his position'.[44]

New York's Czech anarchist paper *Volnè listy*, which in 1910 had a respectable circulation of 4,500 copies, provided a platform for Kropotkin and his supporters. The Czech anarchist movement was committed to a programme of (anti-statist) national independence, and many of its American constituents supported the Allies against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The staunch anti-militarist Hippolyte Havel complained that the paper's pro-war articles amounted to nothing more than the 'same plea for small nationalities, a new pernicious theory smuggled lately into the anarchist movement' – although, as noted above, there was nothing new about Kropotkin's stance on national independence.[45] The sculptor Adolf Wolff, a prominent member of New York's anarchist Francisco Ferrer Center, was outraged by the invasion of his native Belgium and also strongly supported the Allies and America's entrance into the war, going so far as to declare that Emma Goldman should be 'hanged from the nearest lamppost' for her anti-war activism.[46]

Kropotkin's most vocal supporter in the United States was William C. Owen, who used his dual platform as editor of both *Land and Liberty* and the English page of *Regeneración* to urge anarchist support for the defence of France and Belgium. As an anarchist, he wrote, 'Intellectually and spiritually I am the foe of the invader, and whatever might be his nationality I would do my utmost to expel him … for I see in him the universal foe, who strips men of their rights, makes them bow beneath the yoke, reduces them to helplessness.' Owen continued to equate the invasion of countries with the oppression of individuals, obfuscating the divisions within, and artificial borders of, nation states. 'We attack capitalism, monopoly, militarism and other evils,' he explained, 'precisely because they invade the individual and rob him of that to which he is entitled.' A certain amount of martial masculinity also laced Owen's comments; 'resistance to invasion' was 'man's most commanding duty', he insisted, and 'between invader and invaded, no honest man is

justified in standing neutral. In all ages and everywhere the invaded have felt themselves called on to resist, and cowards if they failed to do so.'[47] Like Kropotkin, Owen also accused anti-war anarchists of complicity with the Kaiser, charging that 'Germany has no more stalwart upholders than many of our would-be Anarchist leaders!'[48] He conveniently neglected to mention the collusion between the Ghadar movement, of which he had been a strong supporter, and the German government (discussed below).

Unlike Kropotkin, Owen did not try to justify his stance in the name of internationalism; rather, he declared,

> To me it appears absurd to talk of internationalism at this juncture, because military invasion renders the practice of internationalism at once impossible … Great as are the worker's wrongs, it is not true that, as a class, he has neither home nor country. It is not true that he has nothing to lose but his chains. It is not true that it makes no difference to him whether he lives under Prussian military rule, as an inhabitant of an annexed and conquered country, or as a citizen of a land that has known how to defend itself.[49]

He even defended America's escalating 'preparedness' movement, despite his own prediction that if the United States joined the war, 'the ordinary citizen, will find yourself owned, body and soul and breeches, by what is necessarily the most heartless of all despotisms'. The blame for such an outcome, however, lay fully with Germany, which was 'forcing the curse of militarism on all the world … If militarism is to [be] the universal game we cannot keep out of it.' But Owen found little support for his views. Critics, including many former friends, charged that he hated Germany by virtue of his British origin, and even accused him of being 'an English spy'.[50] *Land and Liberty* folded in July 1915, and although Owen continued to air his views in *Regeneración*, Ricardo Flores Magón and other PLM leaders were silent on the matter. In February 1916, Owen was indicted for sending 'seditious' materials about the Mexican Revolution through the mails, and went into hiding. He nominally continued as editor of the English section of *Regeneración* until November, when he fled to England.[51] Ironically, once in London, Owen joined the *Freedom* group, which strenuously objected to Kropotkin's stand on the war. *Regeneración* meanwhile ceased printing pro-war articles, and when the United States did finally enter the conflict, Ricardo Flores Magón charged that 'no matter what side is victorious, the people shall continue to suffer the same wrongs'.[52]

In Italy, a handful of anarchists also began to campaign for Italy to join the war against the Central Powers. Anarcho-syndicalist Maria Rygier advocated intervention in the name of international solidarity with the 'Latin peoples' of France and Belgium, and like Kropotkin, she claimed that neutrality was a betrayal of internationalism, all the while maintaining that she opposed 'reactionary patriotism and imperialism'.[53] The other leading interventionist, individualist anarchist Massimo Rocca (who wrote under the name Libero Tancredi), formulated a very different justification. While living in the United States from 1908 to 1911, Rocca became convinced that other nations' disdain for Italy and Italian immigrants was a barrier to internationalism that could only be overcome through the regeneration of Italy and its working class through the glory of war and expansion – that is, by its becoming a respected imperial power. He therefore supported Italy's 1911 invasion of Libya, and after the war joined Benito Mussolini's fascist movement.[54] Yet interventionism never gained a significant anarchist following in either Italy or the United States, and it was harshly condemned in the Italian American anarchist press. Domenico Trombetta, part of an anarchist youth group in New York and an occasional contributor to Luigi Galleani's paper *Cronaca sovversiva*, was one of the few Italian Americans who broke with anarchism to support intervention. Trombetta took a position at syndicalist Edmondo Rossoni's brief-lived interventionist paper, *L'Italia nostra*, and like both Rocca and Rossoni, he became a fascist after the war, editing New York's notoriously anti-Semitic newspaper, *Il Grido della Stirpe*.[55] Wartime interventionism, Stefano Luconi notes, functioned as 'a sort of halfway house on the road to fascism for radicals who had become disenchanted with working-class empathy across ethnic lines' – a stark confirmation of anarchist warnings of the dangers inherent in militarism and nationalism.[56]

By contrast, Galleani's *Cronaca sovversiva*, harking back to many Italian anarchists' pasts as disillusioned republicans, held up Italy itself as an example of the bankruptcy of 'the principle of nationality'. National unification and liberation from Austria-Hungary and other would-be rulers had hardly set the peninsula on a progressive course, he argued.[57] Instead, Italy had assumed the role of a colonial power with its invasion of Libya, demonstrating, as *L'Era nuova* pointed out, that 'Nation-states, born yesterday, do not hesitate, in fact, to deny the principle of nationality that presided over their formation, in order to follow a policy of conquest.

Respect of all nationalities cannot therefore triumph, except thanks to the dissolution of all states.'[58] Britain and France's widespread use of colonial troops further muddied the arguments of Kropotkin and his supporters, and Italian American anarchists celebrated the 1915 mutiny of Indian soldiers against their British commanders in Singapore.[59]

The Singapore mutiny, however, was instigated by the Ghadar movement, which was working hand-in-hand with imperial Germany. This was a mutually convenient alliance; the Indians hoped that a German victory would loosen Britain's hold on their homeland, and the German government was happy to contribute to unrest within its enemy's colonies. Har Dayal and other Ghadar leaders travelled to Germany and formed the Berlin India Committee to coordinate these efforts.[60] In October 1915, Har Dayal wrote to Alexander Berkman, asking, 'Can you send some earnest and sincere comrades, men and women, to help our Indian revolutionary party at this juncture? … They should be real fighters, I. W. W.'s or anarchists.' He also requested the names and addresses of prominent European anarchists, and noted that the war had created 'a great opportunity for our party'. Although Berkman did not recruit volunteers on behalf of the Indian-German alliance, the discovery of Har Dayal's letters by the US authorities in 1918 inspired the misleading *New York Times* headline, 'Berkman in Ring of German Spies.'[61] That same year, eight Ghadar members were convicted in the sensationalised 'Hindu Conspiracy' trials in San Francisco, having been found guilty of working with a German agent who had unsuccessfully tried to ship munitions from the United States to Indian revolutionaries in 1915.[62] Thousands of Indians from the United States and elsewhere, however, did answer the Ghadar movement's call to return to India and work towards a pan-Indian revolt, resulting in a string of unsuccessful uprisings during the war.[63]

The Yiddish-speaking movement was the most conflicted segment of American anarchism on the war question. Until 1917, Jewish anarchists, as well as Jewish Americans in general, did not support the Allies, as to do so would mean supporting 'Russian despotism', in Saul Yanovsky's words.[64] As editor of the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, Yanovsky endorsed a strictly neutral position, but he kept the newspaper open to a range of differing opinions, and continued to publish translations of Kropotkin's writings on the war. Some of Yanvosky's comrades, on the other hand, declared their hopes for a German victory over Russia, arguing that '[n]o matter how terrible

German militarism may be, the Jews of Russia would profit politically, economically and above all spiritually' from the defeat of the Tsar, which might relieve the oppression of Jews and other minorities in the Russian Empire. The most vocal proponent of this view was Michael A. Cohn, a veteran member of New York's Yiddish anarchist movement.[65]

The Russian Jewish refugee Maksim Raevsky, who edited the Union of Russian Workers' paper *Golos Truda*, was a longtime disciple of Kropotkin and offered a sympathetic, but critical, analysis of Kropotkin's arguments in the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*. His two-part essay, 'The National Question and Anarchism', appeared in the spring of 1915. Raevsky summarised Kropotkin's writings on the topic from 1907 and 1909, which he considered the only thoughtful anarchist contributions on the subject. Unlike those critics who accused Kropotkin of abandoning anarchism, Raevsky correctly noted that Kropotkin's position on the war was firmly based in the 'revolutionary standpoint' on 'the national question' outlined in his earlier articles. However, like Malatesta, Raevsky disagreed with Kropotkin's apparent insistence that national liberation must precede social revolution. He pointed to the examples of the Jewish, Polish and Georgian workers' movements in Russia, which considered national liberation and class struggle inseparable. Raevsky therefore distinguished between 'reactionary nationalism' – 'statist patriotism, chauvinism, and militarism' – and 'progressive' nationalism. Anarchists should support the latter but not the former, he concluded, as 'the goal of internationalists is not national struggle, however just it may be, but international social revolution'.[66] He therefore could not join Kropotkin in supporting the Allies, and the Union of Russian Workers, which had 7,000 members by the end of the war, denounced the conflict and claimed that America's 'preparedness' movement was a campaign led by 'greedy American employer-capitalists'.[67]

The final effort by Kropotkin and his fellow 'defencists' to sway their comrades came with the *Manifesto of the Sixteen*, issued in February 1916. Printed in the French paper *La Bataille*, this document again invoked the principle of nationality, arguing that the only possible path to peace was for Germany to 'recognise the principle … that it is the population of each territory which must express its consent with regard to annexation', but that Germany would never do this, and '[t]hat is why we, anarchists, antimilitarists, enemies of war, passionate partisans of peace and the fraternity of peoples, are ranged on the side of the resistance, and

why we have not felt obliged to separate our fate from that of the rest of the population'. The signatories argued that

> we do not forget that we are internationalists, that we want the union of peoples and the disappearance of borders. But it is because we want the reconciliation of peoples, including the German people, that we think that they must resist an aggressor who represents the destruction of all our hopes of liberation.[68]

In the United States, no English-language translation of the document appeared, and the only major anarchist publication to reprint it in any language was the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*. Even there, the *Manifesto of the Sixteen* appeared only as an extended quotation within an article by Marie Goldsmith, the paper's longtime Paris correspondent (under the name Maria Korn), who agreed with Kropotkin's stance but had refused to sign the manifesto due to strong disagreements with its wording.[69] Several American anarchist newspapers, however, published Malatesta's strident rebuke of the manifesto, originally published in *Freedom* under the title 'Pro-Government Anarchists', giving the Italian the de facto first and last word on the topic.[70]

But in 1917, Kropotkin and his allies unexpectedly gained a major convert: the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* editor Saul Yanovsky. When Russia's February Revolution overthrew the Tsar, it also toppled Jewish opposition to the Allied war effort. Not only was the war no longer advancing Tsarist rule and Russian imperialism, but now the newly democratic Russia and any expansions of freedom and independence it held for Jews and other minorities were imperilled by continued German aggression. With this momentous change in circumstances, Yanovsky, like most American Jews, came to support the Allies. Even though Yanovsky deeply distrusted the Bolshevik Revolution that followed, he continued to maintain that an Allied victory was vastly preferable to the German conquest of Europe.[71] Yanovsky therefore supported America's entry into the war – as well as President Wilson's Fourteen Points, which would guarantee the right to national self-determination – and urged young radicals to join the war effort against Germany. The backlash against Yanovsky was immediate, and he found few defenders among his comrades. Although those Jewish anarchists like Michael A. Cohn who had dreamed of a defeat of Tsarism no longer supported Germany, few could justify a complete reversal of their position, and most instead joined the majority of neutralists. New Yiddish anarchist publications that appeared during the war con-

demned Yanovsky and other pro-war Jewish radicals, and in 1919, after twenty years as editor of the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, Yanovsky was forced to step down.[72]

After the United States officially joined the war in April 1917, American anarchists became absorbed in struggles against conscription, censorship, deportation and Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War. The debate over the most consistent anti-colonial course of action had already been settled overwhelmingly in favour of those who advocated neutrality and abstention, and space for further discussion was curtailed by the wartime suppression of most American anarchist periodicals, including *Cronaca sovversiva*, *Cultura obrera*, *L'Era nuova*, *Mother Earth*, *Regeneración* and *Volnè listy*. For most, interventionist endorsements of one imperialist power over another in the name of anti-imperialism seemed preposterous. Instead, the champions of such arguments were viewed as accessories to the European slaughter. One writer for *L'Era nuova* declared that 'All of you, so-called radicals, who advance illogical and meaningless ruminations (Teutonic danger, Latin race, French liberty) in support of your warmongering theses, you are responsible for a great and dark crime. You must be accountable to the people.'[73] Another anarchist in San Francisco suggested that 'Kropotkin should have died before this war. Then he would have been held in grateful remembrance by future working classes.'[74]

In hindsight, it is clear that Kropotkin and other 'defencists' fundamentally misjudged the character of the war and its likely results. Kropotkin never grappled with the problem of French, Belgian and British imperialism, and William C. Owen showed an astounding level of naivety when he wrote, 'I believe that the spokesmen for France, Italy and Great Britain, at least, are absolutely honest in their repeated declarations that they intend to abolish militarism.'[75] These anarchists' faith in the 'progressive' nature of the Allied governments was woefully misplaced; France and Britain were not merely fighting a defensive war, and they certainly did not renounce militarism or imperialism – as the settlement at Versailles painfully demonstrated. Already in early 1917, Luigi Galleani observed that the war had 'subjugated – in the name of human rights and the principle of nationality … the greatest number of lands and peoples as possible, in Africa, in Asia, in the East, in the Mediterranean'.[76]

This miscalculation was made possible by what Brian Morris calls 'Kropotkin's tendency to equate peoples with the state and to think in "nationalist" terms'. The conflict, Kropotkin had insisted early on, was not a war between states, 'but a war of peoples'.[77]

Alexander Berkman identified this facet of Kropotkin's thought as early as November 1914, when he wrote, 'Kropotkin argues as if the German people are at war with the French, the Russian or English people, when as a matter of fact it is only the ruling and capitalist cliques of those countries that are responsible for the war and alone stand to gain by its result.'[78] Writing to a friend during the war, Kropotkin proclaimed that '[t]rue internationalism will never be attained except by the independence of each nationality, little or large, compact or disunited'.[79] But he seemed to equate independence with the defence of independent nation states, and, in turn, conflated those nation states with the nationalities they purported to represent. As *L'Era nuova* observed, the interventionists held the mistaken belief that 'the International presupposes the nation; therefore it is necessary to ensure for each country this historical form, to put it in a position to prepare for its development toward the brotherhood of man'.[80] By 1914 Kropotkin had ceased to distinguish between states and nationalities, and had abandoned his earlier distinction between independence struggles 'molded from above, by the State', and popular movements of the oppressed.

Some pro-war anarchists, like the earlier supporters of Cuban independence, also deluded themselves with the notion that nationalist struggles might transform, by virtue of their own momentum, into social revolution. Early in the war, Owen believed that there were 'silver linings' to the slaughter: 'The small nationalities assert their right to individual life … The ball has been set rolling, and in rapidly-multiplying swarms the rebellious individual will assert himself, vowing death to the artificially-restrictive forces that strangle his life.'[81] Even after the war was over, Harry Kelly believed that it had advanced the cause of anarchism. Anarchists, he submitted, strive 'for the decentralisation of power because we believe this principle tends to a higher and better individuality and we welcome the dissolution of the Russian, German and Austrian Empires because they were inimical to human freedom and progress'. As anti-statists, anarchists 'seek the self-determination of individuals and a free association of peoples, but that does not preclude us from sympathising with or aiding the Free Republics of what was formerly Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria; the separatist movement of Ireland and Home Rule for India'. These movements, he conceded, were 'neither Anarchism nor Free Communism', but he claimed that they were 'tendencies, however, which show the influence of anarchist thought and propaganda and as such should be encouraged'.[82] However, nowhere

did wartime nationalism or post-war independence translate into anti-statism.

The neutralists were not without their own misconceptions. First and foremost, as Kropotkin and Owen pointed out, they were far too quick to dismiss the difference between living as a citizen of a democratic republic and as a subject of a foreign imperial power. Nor did they need to make such a claim, as they had already rejected the logic of actively supporting the lesser of two evils – a logic that, they recognised, would always and inevitably lead to non-anarchist ends. The anti-militarists also consistently overestimated their own capacity to combat militarism, let alone to go about 'weakening and dissolving the various States' involved. Although such an opportunity did arise in war-torn Russia, in the United States, for all of their efforts and sacrifices made in protesting militarism, anarchists never came close to impacting the American war effort.

Instead, in many ways, the war marked the beginning of the end for anarchism as a mass movement in the United States. It ushered in an unprecedented period of American nationalism, xenophobia, political repression and immigration restriction. Having incurred the wrath of anxious government authorities, anarchists paid an incredibly steep price for not compromising their principles. However, this very repression, as well as the rise of communism, forced the beleaguered and diminished anarchist movement to regroup after 1918, and the rifts created by the war were quickly forgotten. The fact that all the factions had based their wartime positions on the same shared commitment to anti-colonialism helped make such reconciliation possible.[83]

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Part III

The art of war: anti-militarism and revolution

9

The anarchist anti-conscription movement in the USA

Kathy E. Ferguson

This chapter explores the conceptual logic and political strategies of the anarchist anti-conscription movement in the USA before and during the First World War. Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Leonard Abbott, Rose Abbott, Stella (Cominsky) Ballantine and Eleanor (Fitzie) Fitzgerald, to name only a few, were actively involved in the Anti-Militarist League and later in the No-Conscription League and the League for the Amnesty of Political Prisoners. They forged an impressive alliance with other radicals, including socialist Jessie Ashley, syndicalist Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and radical educators Ellen Kennan, Helen Boardman and Martha Gruening, to contest the state's power to force men to go to war. The No-Conscription League issued 100,000 copies of its manifesto, held mass meetings that drew many thousands of people, provided free legal advice to men facing conscription and dedicated numerous pages in Goldman's journal *Mother Earth* and Berkman's journal *The Blast* to address the build-up towards war. The League's well-publicised efforts had the ironic effect of giving the American government the long-sought opportunity to imprison and deport Goldman, Berkman and other radicals. At the same time, the League's activities also forced a radical critique of capitalist wars into the national conversation about the wisdom of entering the war and the standing of dissent during wartime.

Mother Earth and *The Blast* were central to the League's work. *Mother Earth* had been established in 1906 as a political and literary journal with a broad readership in international anarchist communities and among like-minded reformers and revolutionaries. The editorial group, including Goldman, Berkman, Fitzgerald, Max Baginski, Harry Kelly, Leonard Abbott, Hippolyte Havel,

Ben Reitman and others, produced the monthly publication like clockwork for twelve years, until it was closed down by the authorities in 1918. In addition to dramatic illustrations, articles, poetry, short stories and plays, each issue included notices of fund-raisers and upcoming events, anarchist publications for sale, accounts of Goldman's annual nationwide lecture series, and caustic updates on the latest state interference with anarchist work.[1] *The Blast,* established by Berkman and Fitzgerald in 1916, was a militant weekly publication that, like *Mother Earth*, intertwined the birth control movement with the struggle against war and capitalism. *The Blast* group was also a centre of radical activity, organising a Current Events Club and coordinating with other anarchist groups in the San Francisco area, including the Freedom Group, the local branch of the Union of Russian Workers and the Gruppo Anarchico Volontà, admirers of the Italian anarchist Luigi Galleani.[2] Richard Drinnon writes that 'The pages of the *Blast* seem to smell of black powder, or, better, seem to have blown out of the eye of a social hurricane. A sense of absolute emergency pervades almost every column.'[3] According to Paul Avrich and Karen Avrich, *The Blast* 'was soon considered one of the most influential anarchist publications in America, second only to *Mother Earth*'.[4] The journals created feedback loops to keep their readerships informed of 'every arrest, confiscation, mailing delay, and free-speech fight'.[5] These journals did not simply report on anarchist activities happening elsewhere, but were themselves an expression of anarchism.

Working outside the No-Conscription League and its immediate networks, other anarchists – individuals and journals that were part of Goldman and Berkman's extensive networks – also made their opposition to the war public. Louise Olivereau distributed material encouraging young men to refuse registration in Seattle, was convicted of violating the Espionage Act and subsequently served twenty-eight months in prison. Dr Marie Equi in Portland, Oregon, similarly spoke out against 'preparedness' and in favour of birth control and labour reform; she was convicted under the Sedition Act and subsequently served ten months in prison. The Italian-language anarchist journals *L'Era nuova* and *Cronaca sovversiva* condemned conscription, as did William Owen's *Land and Liberty*, and several anarchists associated with these publications were arrested for distributing anti-war literature.[6] The militant Yiddish-language anarchist journal *Der Shturem*, later called *Frayhayt*, put out by Jacob Abrams, Mollie Steimer, Hilda Kovner and others, strongly condemned the war.[7] Numerous anarchist refuseniks

made their way to Mexico to avoid conscription and join resistance groups there. However, the No-Conscription League stood out as the visible centre of anarchist organising against the draft and the coming war. Its publications were in English, its members included individuals already well known nationally, and its organising activities were impressive.

Three major themes stand out in the political thinking and the practical activities of the No-Conscription League. First, the League was not pacifist but was consistently internationalist, calling for global insurrection against capitalism, states and empires, while recognising that the national culture of the USA contained some values worth preserving. Secondly, the League was part of a network of organisations, individuals and projects that extended across American society and the globe as well as through time. The short-lived No-Conscription League was not an isolated episode but rather a significant node in networks of anarchist organising. Thirdly, the anarchists of the No-Conscription League combined anarchist and feminist perspectives to advance a creative set of arguments regarding sexuality, labour and war. The League's writings integrated the role of the state, capitalism and patriarchy to weave together women's need for access to birth control with workers' need to control the means of production and soldiers' need to select the causes for which to fight. This creative thinking connected productive bodies, reproductive bodies and fighting bodies to analyse not just war but the larger process of the militarisation of society. The League is not only a neglected site of past radicalism; the writings and actions of the No-Conscription League offer perspectives on militarisation and activism that can press usefully upon us today.

Overview of events

To see these themes at work, a brief overview of the key events in the emergence and evolution of the No-Conscription League is required.

January 1916 – Berkman and Fitzgerald launched *The Blast*.

April 1916 – Goldman published an entire issue of *Mother Earth* on birth control. While some comrades objected that birth control was only 'a very small phase in a much larger social setting', Goldman insisted that it was central to anarchism because it 'represents the immediate question of life and death to masses of people'.[8]

22 July 1916 – Goldman was in San Francisco to speak on

the USA's role in the war, which was still, at that time, referred to as the European war. There was an explosion at the city's Preparedness Parade, a massive, jingoistic event staged to demonstrate the nation's readiness to go to war. Ten people were killed and forty wounded. Goldman went ahead with her scheduled talk on 'Preparedness: The Road to Universal Slaughter' and said 'there were more detectives than people' in the hall.[9]

The Preparedness Day bombing initiated a particularly intense period of state persecution and anarchist organising that explicitly connected labour agitation and war. Five labour organisers were arrested and tried under highly irregular circumstances.[10] Three were acquitted or excused, while Thomas Mooney and Warren Billings were convicted and sentenced to death. Berkman worked tirelessly on behalf of Mooney and Billings' defence, raising money and support from a wide coalition of labour groups and progressive individuals. In the end both were spared execution through Berkman's successful international campaign. Mooney and Billings were finally freed in 1939.[11]

6 April 1917 – the USA entered the First World War.

18 April 1917 – Congress passed the Selective Service Act (Draft Act) requiring all males aged 21–30 (including non-citizens) to register for military conscription and making no provision for conscientious objectors outside of a few traditional religious groups. The alliance between capital and the military became clear, as 'labor strikes and slowdowns now could be judged as seditious interference in the manufacture of war materials'.[12]

9 May 1917 – Goldman, Berkman, Fitzgerald and others established the No-Conscription League in New York. In the June 1917 issue of *Mother Earth*, Goldman outlined the League's platform:

> We oppose conscription because we are internationalists, antimilitarists, and opposed to all wars waged by capitalistic governments.
>
> We will fight for what we choose to fight for: we will never fight simply because we are ordered to fight.
>
> We believe that the militarization of America is an evil that far outweighs, in its antisocial and antilibertarian effects, any good that may come from America's participation in the war.
>
> We will resist conscription by every means in our power, and we will sustain those who, for similar reasons, refused to be conscripted.[13]

The No-Conscription League carefully avoided advising individuals not to register; their official position was that they left the decision

to each individual's conscience. Aside from being a practical (and unsuccessful) effort to escape arrest, Goldman based her advice on her subject-position as a woman as well as an anarchist: as a woman, she could not advise men on a matter to which she was not subjected; as an anarchist, she 'could not presume to decide the fate of others'.[14]

18 May 1917 – President Wilson signed the Conscription Law. The No-Conscription League held a protest at the Harlem River Casino, and 8,000 people attended. Berkman, Goldman, the IWW leader Carlo Tresca, the radical lawyer Harry Weinberger and the socialist Louis Fraina all spoke; 'they called for a general strike against the war and denounced forced military service'.[15] No one was arrested at the event, but in subsequent days, numerous anarchists, socialists and Wobblies (members of the IWW – Industrial Workers of the World) were arrested, leading the *New York Times* to editorialise with satisfaction that 'the Selective Draft Act gives a long and sorely needed means of disciplining a certain insolent foreign element in this nation'.[16] At the same time, hundreds of draft-age men and their distraught mothers called, visited or wrote for advice to the No-Conscription League.

31 May 1917 – anarchists Louis Kramer, Morris Becker and others were arrested in front of Madison Square Garden for distributing fliers announcing the No-Conscription League's meeting on 4 June. Calling himself a 'citizen of the world', Kramer refused to register for the draft.[17] They were the first people convicted under the new draft law of 'conspiracy to dissuade men from registering' and faced fines of up to $10,000 and prison terms of up to two years.[18]

4 June 1917 – the League's second major event, a 'Mothers' Protest' at Hunt's Point Palace in the Bronx, took place. There were 2,000 people inside the building, more than 30,000 outside.[19] Leonard Abbott's speech characterised conscription as 'the thin entering wedge of military despotism'.[20] Goldman mourned 'the tragedy that turned America, the erstwhile torch-bearer of freedom, into a grave-digger of her former ideals'.[21] Goldman and her colleagues strained their resources to the limit to publish 20,000 copies of the June issue of *Mother Earth*, which contained the anti-draft manifesto; while this was several times their usual print run, it was nonetheless quite inadequate to meet demand until the newspapers helpfully 'reprinted whole passages from our anti-conscription manifesto, some even reproducing the entire text and thus bringing it to the attention of millions of readers'.[22]

14 June 1917 – the League's third and final public event was a

rally at the Forward Hall, a facility belonging to the Jewish Socialist Party on East Broadway. The police used the event to arrest young men without draft registration cards, leading the League to abandon this otherwise successful organising strategy.

15 June 1917 – President Wilson signed the Espionage Act, criminalising dissent against the draft and the war. As the historian Kenyon Zimmer rightly notes, 'In a span of less than three months, anarchists' refusal to support the Allied war effort was transformed from an abstract matter of principle into a dangerous liability.'[23] The Espionage Act and the subsequent amendments known as the Sedition Act gave the Postmaster General the power to suppress materials 'advocating or urging treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to any law of the United States', and criminalised opposition to conscription, with punishment of up to $10,000 and imprisonment for up to twenty years.[24] State laws went further, criminalising anti-war language and in some cases singling out advocacy of strikes as forbidden speech.[25] Private and semi-governmental vigilante groups, including the American Protective League (sponsored by the Department of Justice), the National Security League, the American Defense Society and the more colourfully named Sedition Slammers and Terrible Threateners, policed civil society, courted informers and in general harassed actual or imagined opponents of war and/or conscription.[26]

There was a ferocious national assault on the anarchist movement, with Goldman and Berkman arrested that same day. The police took 'subscription lists, cheque-books, and copies of our publications … correspondence files, manuscripts intended for publication in book form, as well as [Goldman's] typewritten lectures on American literature and other valuable material that we had spent years in accumulating'.[27] Legal publications by well-known authors were seized. It was open season on anarchists: 'Throughout the country anarchist clubhouses were raided, men and women beaten, equipment smashed, libraries and files seized and destroyed.'[28] In addition to *The Blast* and *Mother Earth,* other anarchist journals suppressed or withheld from shipment via the mail included *Revolt* (New York), *The Alarm* (Chicago), *L'Era nuova* (Patterson, New Jersey), *Volnè listy* (New York) and *Regeneración* (Los Angeles).[29] For anarchist groups, which were organised around their publications, suppression of their journals was suppression of their movement. Avrich and Avrich sum up this dismal litany: 'Radical dissent was viewed as an insult to the American way of life.'[30]

27 June 1917 – Goldman and Berkman went to trial on

Goldman's birthday. The state accused them of announcing at their mass meetings that 'we believe in violence and we will use violence' and of advising young men not to register.[31] Numerous witnesses testified that neither speaker had urged violence or non-registration. Goldman and Berkman were nonetheless convicted and incarcerated immediately after their trial, Goldman in the state prison in Jefferson City, Missouri, Berkman in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia.

January 1918 – Harry Weinberger appealed against the convictions of Goldman, Berkman, Kramer and Becker to the US Supreme Court, but the appeal failed. The Supreme Court affirmed the convictions and found the Draft Act constitutional.

3 February 1918 – the night before they were taken to prison, Goldman and Berkman met with Fitzgerald, the anarchist Lucy Robins and others in Stella Ballantine's Greenwich Village apartment to form the League for the Amnesty of Political Prisoners.[32] The *Mother Earth Bulletin* published the founding statement of the Amnesty League on 1 February 1918, calling for recognition of political prisoners (in distinction from 'common felons') and 'the release of all political offenders through a general amnesty as soon as peace is declared'.[33] By the time of the armistice on 11 November 1918, there were about 1,800 war resisters serving long sentences in US prisons.[34] The Amnesty League worked effectively with other amnesty groups from socialist, pacifist, labour and civil liberties communities to gain recognition for war resistors as prisoners of conscience and to secure their release.

Goldman and Berkman's imprisonment effectively shut down the No-Conscription League, but the struggle continued. Mass as well as individual anti-war protests emerged and were suppressed; socialist, populist and anarchist periodicals were suppressed; subsequent meetings to protest against the suppression of publications were also suppressed. Assaults on immigrants and black people intensified. IWW actions were particularly singled out for legal, police and vigilante attacks. Federal authorities rounded up over 6,000 critics of the war, while often harsher state laws swept up many more.[35] The new laws were used to drive out progressive teachers, ministers, professors, union organisers and farmers. The state did not hesitate to connect opposition to war with opposition to capital and to suppress both. The mainstream newspapers enthusiastically joined the call for war. *The New York Times*, ignoring substantial evidence to the contrary, claimed that 'the whole nation has cheerfully volunteered to serve in the war' and wrote the resisters out of the nation:

'The conspirators, pacifists of the malignant type who are associated with anarchistic societies, are not of the nation. They have no right to be accounted citizens of the Republic.'[36] Bodies that failed to produce, reproduce and fight for capitalism, patriarchy and the state were not considered proper American bodies and must be expelled from the nation.

21 December 1919 – Goldman, Berkman and 247 other radicals were deported from the USA to revolutionary Russia under the 1918 Alien Act. In writer Jack Reed's succinct words, the nation descended into 'judicial tyranny, bureaucratic suppression and industrial barbarism'.[37] An observer at their departure more colourfully remarked, 'With prohibition coming in and Emma Goldman going out, t'will be a dull country.'[38]

Insurrection rather than war

The anarchists' opposition to conscription was based not on pacifism but on the individual's right to choose what to fight for. They questioned conscription from the theoretical position of internationalism: the global class struggle, not conflicts between governments, deserved their loyalty and sacrifice. They did not argue against all war, only against the wrong kind of war. However, the No-Conscription League's rejection of national wars did not lead to a wholesale rejection of any and all national presence: they appealed to Americans to protect the liberties their society promised them, and warned that the militarisation of American society posed a greater danger to cherished freedoms than the dangers that the war was intended to mitigate. In her address to the jury at her trial, Goldman insisted that she was an enemy of the state but a loyal supporter of traditional American liberties as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the writings of Thomas Jefferson, John Brown, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson: 'But may there not be different kind of patriotism as there are different kinds of liberty?'[39] Goldman also wrote with respect about the 'love of one's birthplace' towards which one feels loyalty and a sense of belonging.[40] The problems arose, she claimed, when states manipulated those feelings into 'conceit, arrogance, and egotism' in order to proclaim their 'spot' as superior and themselves as 'better, nobler, grander' and thus entitled to impose their 'superiority' on others.[41] In the courts and in public opinion, 'internationalist' was synonymous with traitor; the anarchists questioned the dichotomy between national and global loyalties in order to claim a place in America for its radical critics.

Like the anarchists in Britain, those in the USA split over the war. *Mother Earth* featured their debate: several of the relevant documents were published first in *Freedom* in London, then reprinted in *Mother Earth*. Peter Kropotkin's unexpected letter supporting the Allies in 'the main work of the day', that is, turning back the German invasion of France and Belgium, was published in *Mother Earth* in November 1914.[42] In the same issue, Berkman 'unconditionally condemn[ed] *all* capitalist wars' and affirmed 'the social revolutionary power of the united international proletariat' as the only effective counter to 'the great European catastrophe'.[43] The main anti-war statement, the *International Anarchist Manifesto on the War*, published in the London journal *Freedom* in March 1915 and reprinted in *Mother Earth* in May 1915, was signed by Berkman, Goldman, Hippolyte Havel, Leonard Abbott, Harry Kelly, Bill Shatoff, Saul Yanovsky and Joseph Cohen.[44] Beginning with the words, 'Europe in a blaze …' the statement asserted that war was

> permanently fostered by the present social system. Armed conflict, restricted or widespread, colonial or European, is the … inevitable and fatal outcome of a society that is founded on the exploitation of the workers, rests on the savage struggle of the classes, and compels Labor to submit to the domination of a minority of parasites who hold both political and economic power.[45]

The signatories rejected 'all wars between peoples' and endorsed wars of liberation 'waged by the oppressed against the oppressors, by the exploited against the exploiters'.[46] Goldman reprinted the *International Manifesto*, as well as Errico Malatesta's critique of the Italian government's entry into the war, in part to keep up the pressure against Kropotkin's pro-war position.[47] Her essay 'The Promoters of the War Mania', published one month before the USA entered the war, called on 'every liberty-loving person to voice a fiery protest against the participation of this country in the European mass murder'. She went on to call for a general refusal: 'If the opponent of war, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, would immediately join their voices into a thunderous No!, then the horror that now menaces America might yet be averted.'[48] Goldman recognised the work of 'earnest pacifists' such as the Women's Peace Party, but only the workers' mass refusal to kill other workers could avert the carnage.[49] A few anarchists changed positions when the USA entered the war, including the editor Saul Yanovsky, the sculptor Adolf Wolff, and Kropotkin's close friend Harry Kelly. The

Manifesto of the Sixteen was Kropotkin's and others' defence of the Allied position in the war, and was signed by Tom Bell, John Turner and William C. Owen.[50] Yet the most common position among US anarchists was anti-war.

Both *The Blast* and *Mother Earth* consistently articulated the perspective that guided the supporters of the *International Manifesto*. In the July 1917 issue of *Mother Earth*, Goldman stated, 'we have remained faithful to the spirit of Internationalism and to the solidarity of all the people of the world'.[51] The account of their anti-war work in Avrich and Avrich's otherwise excellent collective biography *Sasha and Emma* is inaccurate in calling most anarchists pacifists. Avrich and Avrich state that 'The majority of anarchists were pacifists – the ideology called for a peaceful society, even though some of its most visible adherents accepted, and committed, acts of terrorism.'[52] However, as Paul Avrich's immense scholarship makes very clear, 'pacifism' and 'terrorism' are not the only two options anarchists considered: most anarchists combined their opposition to states' wars with militant support of the workers in class and anti-colonial rebellions. Candace Falk rightly notes that 'Anti-Militarism was not pacifism. The league was organized not only to fight against war and militarism, especially the threat of war with Mexico, but also to foment domestic insurrection, armed if necessary, to counter the violence of private company armies and detective agencies used against labor.'[53] Berkman offered a plain-spoken statement in the June 1917 issue of *The Blast*:

> Do not confound us with pacifists. We believe in fighting. Aye, we have been fighting all our lives – fighting injustice, oppression and tyranny. Almost single handed at that. We are not pacifists. But we want to know what we are fighting for, and we refuse to fight for the enemies and the exploiters of humanity.[54]

They rejected the blind patriotism that leads to state war, while welcoming the mobilisation of the global working class that would lead to international revolution.

At the same time, internationalism did not entail a complete rejection of all aspects of national identity. While the state was never worth fighting for, elements of national culture deserved respect. The No-Conscription League manifesto appealed to Americans to protect their traditional liberties, particularly freedom of speech, press and assembly, while warning that the militarisation of American society was a greater danger than that which the war was intended to fight. Observing American society in 1918,

the novelist Lincoln Steffens was repulsed by the fevered pitch of pro-war sentiment: ‘It is sick, the public mind is … the streets feel excited, nervous, and the sight of them reminds one of the circus.’[55] The No-Conscription League warned Americans not only about the obvious violence of battle but also the more insidious destruction of their rich political culture.

Coalitions and networks

Contrary to contemporary images of anarchists as isolated extremists, the anarchists in the No-Conscription League and the subsequent Amnesty League were part of a global radical network. They forged impressive coalitions with socialists, syndicalists and other progressives. Far from being solitary misfits, the anarchists excelled at bringing in other radicals and liberals with whom they shared elements of a common agenda. Similarly, global networks connected individuals, ideas and projects, even as particular organisations came and went. As historian Davide Turcato has aptly shown in his account of anarchist insurrections, anarchist history is often misframed as ‘a simple and odd business … a succession of unconnected and hopeless initiatives’.[56] Ernest Freeberg, for example, in his history of the socialist leader Eugene Debs’ wartime imprisonment, discounts the No-Conscription League as a ‘shivering and forlorn’ little crowd who ‘warmed their spirits’ by conjuring up an ‘impressive sounding new organization’ that had ‘no constituency and no budget’.[57] Yet the No-Conscription League was part of a chain of linked organisations, individuals and publications that were responding to changing political challenges while surviving the relentless arrest, imprisonment and exile of their participants.

While it is often the insider disputes within the left that historians notice, there are ample opportunities to notice successful coalitions and diverse networks as well. For example, the subscribers to anarchist publications included a significant range of leftists. *The Blast* subscribers included ‘labor organizations, Workmen’s Circle branches, anarchist groups, and Wobblies’.[58] *Mother Earth* subscribers ranged even wider, including some suffragists, socialists, social workers, syndicalists, single-taxers, artists and liberals as well as a strong core of anarchists.[59] Berkman marshalled an impressive range of supporters for the Mooney–Billings Defense Committee, sponsored by the International Workers’ Defense League of San Francisco, and consisting of ‘socialists, anarchists, syndicalists,

labor groups, and unions who agitated for the release of "class-war prisoners"'.[60]

While anarchists are frequently lambasted for being impractical visionaries, many of them knew how to put a coalition together around specific issues with broad appeal. When one organisation fell apart or was overtaken by events, the resilient network of activists reassessed the situation and re-knit itself into a new arrangement. In such a manner, the Anti-Militarist League of Greater New York emerged early in 1914, led by Goldman, Berkman, Fitzgerald, Becky Edelsohn and Leonard Abbott, 'along with many anarchist and socialist members of the Conference of the Unemployed'.[61] The Anti-Militarist League was concerned largely with the threat of war with Mexico, which was intimately connected to the suppression of the miners' strike at Ludlow and Standard Oil's economic interests in Mexican oil. The organisers also had one eye on the coming war in Europe. They 'organized some of the first antimilitarist rallies in New York, as well as open-air meetings and a wide distribution of related literature'.[62] Their events included a fund-raising ball and bazaar on 24 October 1914 for the Rangel–Cline defense fund and for Italian anti-militarists protesting against the war, and a one-act anti-militarist play by Adolf Wolff performed at the Lenox Casino in Harlem.[63] Branches of the Anti-Militarist League were organised in Denver, Colorado, and Paterson, New Jersey. In May 1914, the Anti-Militarist League organised a May Day celebration, bringing anarchists and socialists together in 'a mass revolutionary demonstration' linking the anti-labour violence at Ludlow, Colorado, to the threat of war with Mexico.[64]

Similarly, the Amnesty League emerged out of the organising efforts of the No-Conscription League and worked with the American Union against Militarism, the Women's Peace Party and the Bureau of Legal Advice; the groups had partially shared agendas and notable overlapping participants, including Jessie Ashley, Crystal Eastman, Martha Gruening, Hilda Kovner, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Roger Baldwin. While the No-Conscription League existed as an organisation for only a few months, it is not quite correct to say, as does historian Frances Early in her otherwise fascinating analysis of war resisters, that the League 'folded'.[65] It did not 'fold' so much as morph into the League for the Amnesty for Political Prisoners. Early credits the Amnesty League for providing 'the driving force behind the amnesty movement in 1918 and 1919'.[66] Fitzie Fitzgerald, described by Early as an 'idealist, warmhearted, and a proficient administrator,' provided effective

leadership, enhanced by her inheritance of 'Emma Goldman's nationwide network of radical comrades'.[67] Pryns Hopkins, a radical educator from the Modern School movement, was selected chair: he toured the USA, raised funds for the League, and established branches in Rochester, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Ann Arbor, St Louis, San Francisco and Los Angeles.[68] Lucy Robins reached out to the unions: first, the more radical Jewish unions on the Lower East Side of New York City, and later all 36,000 American Federation of Labor (AFL) locals in the country as well as to Sam Gompers, the AFL leader himself.[69] Goldman was not wrong when she anticipated that 'the League for the Amnesty of Political Prisoners promises to become one of the most important organizations in America'.[70] Early notes that a 'full-blown amnesty campaign' emerged nationally in large part because 'Fitzgerald's Amnesty League worked to build a left-liberal and radical coalition in support of general amnesty for political prisoners, stressing the working class victims of wartime espionage and sedition laws'.[71] Freeberg notes that amnesty became a topic of conversation across the country:

> Americans were forced by the events of the war to examine their ideas about free speech. A traveling salesman observed that, everywhere he went, people were debating the fate of political prisoners. Church groups and reading groups, mutual aid societies and community forums held meetings to discuss amnesty, and in surprising numbers of cases felt strongly enough about the issue to petition their president.[72]

While the Justice Department coyly informed each petitioner for amnesty that there were no political prisoners in the United States, the campaign nonetheless grew, creating 'a clamor of protest that [the president] could not ignore'.[73] The last imprisoned war resister was pardoned in 1923.[74] Far from being the pariahs of the left or ineffective pretenders, anarchists were successful participants in lively networks and productive coalitions that shifted over time in response to changing circumstances.

Production, reproduction and war

It is customary to see war between nations and the stifling of labour as two different sequences of events. Even more so, we think of birth control as a substantially separate issue, unrelated both to workers' liberation and to peace. While we may recognise that

the issues are connected, they are typically separated for purposes of organisation as well as analysis. For instance, in his otherwise insightful commentary on *Mother Earth*, Peter Glassgold comments that, with regard to Goldman's second prison term in 1916, 'it was the issue of birth control, not revolutionary anarchism, that finally landed her in prison'.[75] Yet when Goldman was tried and convicted for lecturing on practical methods to prevent conception, she insisted that birth control was a class issue. She refused to accept 'a system which degrades woman to a mere incubator and which fattens on her innocent victims'.[76] Goldman located the struggle for free motherhood at the intersection of gender, class and war:

> The question of birth control is largely a workingman's question, above all a working woman's question. She it is who risks her health, her youth, her very life in giving out of herself the units of the race. She it is who ought to have the means and the knowledge to say how many children she shall give, and to what purpose she shall give them and under what conditions she shall bring forth life.[77]

My argument, *contra* Glassgold, is that for Goldman, Berkman and many others, birth control was an essential part of revolutionary anarchism, a constitutive link in chains of power relations. International war, class war and war on women were interactive faces of the same historical struggles. Each of them participated in a kind of biopower, in the sense that Michel Foucault discussed half a century later: the power to manage populations and to 'make live and let die'.[78] Each face of power coordinates with the others to manage bodies engaged in birth, death and work. A grim poem in *Mother Earth* by Fred A. Pease entitled 'To Birth Control' speaks to an unborn child about these crude population management strategies: 'What is this tyrant you call the Law/ That denies you the right not to be born/ Yet destroys your body after it's come/ on a bloody battlefield, mangled and torn?'[79] The capitalists' need to control the labouring bodies of workers resonates with the military's need to control the fighting bodies of soldiers, and the state's and churches' need to control the reproductive bodies of women. Restrictions on access to birth control serve the state's interest in managing the biopools of future soldiers and future workers as well as the future mothers of still more soldiers and workers. A free society, in contrast, would be one in which workers control their own labour, soldiers control their own fighting, and women control their own wombs.

The Comstock laws did for reproductive freedom what the

Selective Service, Espionage and Sedition laws did for freedom of speech. Like dissent, the use of contraception was judged a dangerous or treasonable act. When Goldman's tour manager Ben Reitman went on trial in 1916 for distributing birth control literature, in violation of the laws governing obscenity, the prosecutor frankly urged the judge to be mindful of the link between patriarchy and capitalism: 'If you will let him break the law on birth control, our property and our wives and daughters will not be safe.'[80] When birth control advocate Mary Ware Dennett was indicted for obscenity by the Justice Department, prosecuting attorney James E. Wilkinson blamed her booklet of 'filth' regarding contraception for undermining women's patriotic obligation to produce soldiers: 'What will happen to America if our national standards fall so low? Where will our soldiers come from in our hour of need? God help America if we haven't men to defend her in that hour.'[81] Suppressing contraception, protecting private property and promoting war are all, in Goldman's words, 'streams from the same source'.[82]

Both *Mother Earth* and *The Blast* consistently interwove these three issues, so that readers would find it difficult to separate them. For example, the November 1914 issue of *Mother Earth*, containing Kropotkin's and Berkman's statements on the war, also contained an essay demanding freedom of information regarding birth control:

> Neither government nor capital can exist without a plentiful supply of 'hands,' of workers to be exploited in factory or army. Now, if the workers should take it into their own hands consciously to reduce the size of their families, to check their birth rate, it would mean that they [the capitalists] would before long lose control of the labor market. The supply of 'hands' would then depend on the workers themselves, instead of on the employers, as is now the case. That would be giving labor a dangerous weapon that would threaten to a great extent the profits of capital.[83]

The Blast was equally insistent that workers' access to contraception was central to the liberation of labour and the end of war. In the 2 February 1916 issue, an article by Reb Raney argued that women's control over their reproduction was a potentially revolutionary act: calling for 'sex preparedness', Raney declared: 'Never mind your military preparedness or your anti-military preparedness. Here is something moving in your midst, which is going to rust every hole in your cannon belchers and muffle your powder in an eternity of sleep.'[84] Raney viewed 'sex preparedness' as the working classes'

rebellious response on the home front to the state's call for docile fighting bodies on the front line and obedient labouring bodies in the factories and shops.

Furthermore, the ability to control their reproduction would improve working-class women's health and economic conditions, leaving them more time and energy to live and to fight. It would allow women to enjoy sex without fear of unwanted pregnancy, giving women more joy in life and making life more precious. It would weaken the authority of the churches and family patriarchs, who used criteria of respectability and marriageability to control women's sexuality. It would accord women more power and more freedom.

Mediating the triangulated relationship of war, work and birth was the ubiquitous issue of freedom of speech. Organising political events around each point on the triangle – war, labour, reproduction – circles back to the demand for full freedom of speech and expression, for the simple reason that everything the anarchists sought required speaking for. The anarchists did not arrive at their ferocious defence of freedom of speech in quite the same manner as, say, classicists who drew upon Aristotle's praise of self-creation through shared speech and action, or liberals who relied upon John Stuart Mill's defence of freedom of expression as a basic human right necessary to the cultivation of individuality. While they appropriated the language of rights, and applauded brave and independent public speech, freedom of speech was always both an end in itself and a necessary means to organising on every issue. As Berkman wrote in *The Blast*, the arrest of Emma Goldman for disseminating birth control information, the state's suppression of radical publications (including *The Blast* and *Mother Earth*), the imprisonment of the Mexican revolutionaries the Magón brothers – all were part of 'the fight for uncensored freedom of expression'.[85]

Every speech on birth control, every anti-war gathering and every anti-capitalist action had a free speech component, which allowed anarchists to broaden their appeal to include those who might demur from the anarchist arguments but nonetheless defend their right to make them. In particular, achieving recognition for political prisoners was a necessary step towards decriminalising dissent. On 9 February 1919, Goldman wrote from prison to her niece Stella Ballantine in New York City:

> Political amnesty whether it fails or succeeds is really the first step ever made in this country to establish the distinction between

> common crime and political offenses. The whole social struggle depends upon that distinction, otherwise it will have to knock in vain at the door of the people. They will never listen with respect to the social rebel unless they cease seeing in him a criminal, a villain, a wild beast. So the campaign for political amnesty gose [*sic*] farther than the mere liberation of political prisoners.[86]

Conclusion

A few years after the war ended, anarchists who had survived the persecutions, imprisonments and deportations were anticipating the next global conflict. Berkman said to Rudolf and Milly Rocker, in a letter on 24 October 1935:

> There is bound to be another holocaust, for all the governments are prepared for it, the militarists itch for it, and the Mussolinis and Hitlers really NEED it badly to keep up their regimes. There is no end to this insanity. I must admit, it is a mighty poor showing after half a century of anti-militarist work and general education of the masses.[87]

Goldman saw the same pattern, with a slightly more generous assessment of anarchism's anti-militarist contribution. In her short biography of Goldman, Vivian Gornick is quite wrong to complain that Goldman paid little attention to the rise of fascism in Europe because she was distracted by the revolution and civil war in Spain.[88] On the contrary, Goldman's first-hand experience of fascism in Spain and Bolshevism in the USSR prepared her to see the dynamic they shared with Italy and Germany. In a letter to the labour activist Rose Pesotta, Goldman wrote:

> [Bolshevism, fascism and Nazism] made the masses drunk with the desire for the strong armed man, the bully who can save them from having to think or do anything for themselves … It is like a terrific storm. It's got to spend itself, and it will. But that it may go for all times it is necessary for us Anarchists to hold our banner high, and to let our voices be heard in the present political wilderness. It's all we can do. And it is by no means little.[89]

Perhaps anarchist efforts to stop previous wars contain lessons that might engage us today. They insist on combining a radical analysis of capitalism, patriarchy and the state with flexibility in maintaining working networks and focused coalitions. They remind us that war is not a discrete event but an assemblage of biopolitical practices that militarise production and reproduction. They alert us to the ways in which the home front and the front line

are connected. They encourage us to imagine unions as agents of radical transformation, not just workers' advocates on bread-and-butter issues. And they imagine that women's ability to control their own reproduction is not just a private decision between the woman and her physician but an essential aspect of revolution.

Notes

1 For more in-depth analysis of the art and politics of Goldman's journal, see Kathy E. Ferguson, 'Assemblages of Anarchists: Political Aesthetics in *Mother Earth*', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 4.2 (2013), pp. 171–94.
2 Paul Avrich and Karen Avrich, *Sasha and Emma: The Anarchist Odyssey of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 234.
3 Richard Drinnon, '*The Blast*: An Introduction and Appraisal', *Labor History*, 11.1 (1970), p. 86.
4 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 444 n. 10.
5 Peter Glassgold, 'Introduction', in *Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth*, ed. Peter Glassgold (Washington, DC: Counterpoint Press, 2001), p. xxix.
6 Kenyon Zimmer, '"The Whole World is our Country": Immigration and Anarchism in the United States, 1885–1940' (PhD dissertation, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, 2010), pp. 293–5.
7 See Richard Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (New York: Viking, 1987).
8 Emma Goldman, 'An Urgent Appeal to my Friends', in *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Vol 3: Light and Shadows, 1910–1916*, ed. Candace Falk and Barry Pateman (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 571.
9 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 255.
10 Paul Avrich suggests that the Preparedness Day bomb was probably the work of Galliani's men in San Francisco, Gruppo Anarchico Volontà. See Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, pp. 256–7, 265; and Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*: *The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 137–8.
11 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 345.
12 Ibid., p. 269.
13 Emma Goldman, 'The No-Conscription League', in Glassgold (ed.), *Anarchy!*, pp. 398–9.
14 Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York: Dover, 1970), p. 598.
15 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 270.

16 *New York Times*, 10 June 1917, quoted in Horace C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917–1918* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 24.
17 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 280.
18 'Anarchists Convicted of Obstructing Draft', *The New York Times*, 13 June 1917, pp. 1, 11.
19 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 271.
20 Peterson and Fite, *Opponents of War*, p. 25.
21 Goldman, *Living My Life*, p. 603.
22 Ibid.
23 Zimmer, 'The Whole World is our Country', p. 293.
24 Peterson and Fite, *Opponents of War*, p. 16.
25 Ibid., p. 18.
26 Ibid., pp. 18–20.
27 Goldman, *Living My Life*, p. 612.
28 Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, p. 94.
29 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 258.
30 Ibid., p. 269.
31 Goldman, *Living My Life*, p. 618.
32 The founding group included Berkman, Goldman, Fitzgerald, Ballantine, Weinberger, Leonard Abbott, Lucy Robins, Max Pine (United Hebrew Trades), Morris Finestone (United Hebrew Trades), Carlo Tresca (IWW), Pryns Hopkins (Modern School movement) and Louis Fraina (socialist); the Board included Jessie Ashley (socialist) and Roger Baldwin (civil libertarian). The young anarchist Hilda Kovnor was the stenographer. See Frances Early, *A World without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), p. 136.
33 Emma Goldman, 'The League for the Amnesty of Political Prisoners: Its Purpose and Program', *Mother Earth Bulletin*, 1.5 (1 February 1918), n.p.
34 Early, *A World without War*, p. 138.
35 Ernest Freeberg, *Democracy's Prisoner: Eugene V. Debs, the Great War, and the Right to Dissent* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 219.
36 Quoted in ibid., p. 54.
37 Quoted in ibid., p. 63.
38 Quoted in Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 223.
39 Emma Goldman, 'Address to the Jury', in *Trials and Speeches of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman in the United States District Court in the City of New York* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, July 1917), in *The Emma Goldman Papers: A Microfilm Edition*, ed. Candace Falk with Ronald J. Zboray et al. (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1990), reel 48.

40 Emma Goldman, 'Patriotism', in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p. 127.
41 Ibid., pp. 128–9.
42 Peter Kropotkin, 'Kropotkin on the Present War', in Glassgold (ed.), *Anarchy!*, p. 379.
43 Alexander Berkman, 'In Reply to Kropotkin', in Glassgold (ed.), *Anarchy!*, p. 381.
44 Of the signees whom I can identify, the following were 'from' the USA in that they did a substantial amount of their anarchist work there: Havel, Abbott and Kelly were part of the *Mother Earth* group; Yanovsky edited *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*; Shatoff helped publish *Golos Truda*; Cohen was active in the anarchist community at Stelton, New Jersey. Kelly and Yanovsky later reversed their positions and sided with Kropotkin.
45 Candace Falk, 'Into the Spotlight: An Introductory Essay', in Falk and Pateman (eds), *Emma Goldman*, p. 149.
46 Ibid.
47 Errico Malatesta, 'Italy Also!', in Glassgold (ed.), *Anarchy!*, pp. 388–91.
48 Emma Goldman, 'The Promoters of the War Mania', in Glassgold (ed.), *Anarchy!*, p. 392.
49 Ibid., p. 396.
50 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 447 n. 7. Anarchists' national allegiances could work in other directions, too. While Kropotkin was pro-French, anarchists Michael Cohn and Max Nettlau declined to sign the *International Manifesto* because they were pro-German.
51 Goldman, quoted in Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 275.
52 Ibid., p. 268.
53 Falk, 'Into the Spotlight', p. 146.
54 Alexander Berkman, 'War Dictionary', *The Blast*, 2.5 (1 June 1917), in Gene Fellner (ed.), *Life of an Anarchist: The Alexander Berkman Reader* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1992), p. 148.
55 Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, p. 83.
56 Davide Turcato, 'Collective Action, Opacity, and the "Problem of Irrationality": Anarchism and the First of May, 1890–1892', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 5.1 (2011), p. 1.
57 Freeberg, *Democracy's Prisoner*, p. 164.
58 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 254.
59 Kathy Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), pp. 268–72.
60 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 258.
61 Falk, 'Into the Spotlight', p. 146.
62 Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 235.
63 Falk and Pateman (eds), *Emma Goldman*, p. 509 n. 7, and p. 736. J.M. Rangel and Charles Cline were members of an IWW contingent

arrested in Texas while travelling to Mexico 'to participate in the revolution in that country' (Goldman, *Living My Life*, p. 519). In the confrontation with the authorities, three of the IWW men and a deputy sheriff were killed. Rangel and Cline were arrested and convicted of murder. The combined protests of anarchists, socialists and Wobblies won a reduction in their sentence. See James R. Green, *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895–1943* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 329.

64 Falk and Pateman (eds), *Emma Goldman*, p. 655.

65 Early, *A World without War*, p. 26.

66 Ibid., p. 135.

67 Ibid., pp. 136, 137.

68 Ibid., p. 136.

69 Freeberg, *Democracy's Prisoner*, pp. 169–10.

70 Goldman, 'The League for the Amnesty of Political Prisoners', n.p.

71 Early, *A World without War*, pp. 135, 137.

72 Freeberg, *Democracy's Prisoner*, p. 192.

73 Ibid., pp. 183, 298.

74 Ibid., p. 316.

75 Glassgold, 'Introduction', p. xxiii.

76 Emma Goldman, 'The Social Aspects of Birth Control', in Glassgold (ed.), *Anarchy!*, p. 140.

77 Emma Goldman, trials transcript, *The Masses*, 8.8 (June 1916), p. 27, in Falk et al. (eds), *The Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 48.

78 Michel Foucault, *'Society Must Be Defended': Lectures at the College de France, 1975–76* (New York: Picador, 1997), p. 241.

79 Fred A. Pease, 'To Birth Control', *Mother Earth*, 11.12 (February 1917), p. 1.

80 Quoted in Ferguson, *Emma Goldman*, p. 259.

81 John M. Craig, '"The Sex Side of Life": The Obscenity Case of Mary Ware Dennett', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, 15.3 (1995), p. 151. Craig states that the prosecuting attorney 'branched off into a rather incongruous "patriotic" argument' (p. 151). But my argument is that this patriotic turn was not a branching off, but a main theme – birth control and war preparedness were very much connected in the predominant framing of the time and place.

82 Goldman, *Living My Life,* p. 534.

83 Breckenridge (aka Emma Goldman), 'The Persecution of Margaret Sanger', *Mother Earth*, 9.9 (November 1914), pp. 296–7.

84 Reb Raney, 'The Meaning of Margaret Sanger's Stand', *The Blast*, 1.5 (12 February 1916), pp. 2–3.

85 Alexander Berkman, 'The Bloodhounds', *The Blast*, 1.11 (15 April 1916), in Fellner (ed.), *Life of an Anarchist*, p. 128.

86 Goldman to Stella Ballantine, 9 February 1919, in Falk et al. (eds), *The Emma Goldman Papers*, reel 11.

87 Berkman, quoted in Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 377.
88 Vivian Gornick, *Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 136–7.
89 Goldman to Rose Pesotta, 26 May 1935, quoted in Avrich and Avrich, *Sasha and Emma*, p. 376.

10

Aestheticising revolution

Allan Antliff

> War is a State activity which does not characterize a transitory and circumscribed period of its action but has been the very essence of its structure for as long as we know during the whole course of exploitation.
>
> Alfredo Bonanno[1]

In August 1914, America's best-known English-language anarchist journal, *Mother Earth*, responded to the outbreak of the First World War with a cover illustration by the modernist artist Man Ray. 'Capitalism' and 'Government' were depicted as two heads of the same beast ripping 'humanity' apart, a rendering that neatly encapsulated *Mother Earth*'s position regarding the conflict.[2] War, the journal declared, was 'permanently fostered by the present social system', which could not exist without it.[3] Wartime violence merely revealed what was there all along, institutionalised and written into the law. Capitalism was founded on exploitation and it could only be maintained through state-sanctioned violence or the threat of violence.[4]

This critique was not only directed at the war in Europe. A few months into the First World War, it was also countering a conservative-orchestrated 'preparedness' campaign focused on militarising the United States.[5] Mobilising businessmen, Republican and Democratic Party politicians, patriotic societies and the mass media, the preparedness campaign advocated an arms build-up and large-scale expansion of military ranks through conscription. The plot of the heavily promoted 'preparedness' film, 'Battle Cry for Peace' (1915), encapsulates the argument. The world is at war and pacifists are being used as pawns by a belligerent power to ensure

that the United States does not build up its armed forces. With the country defenceless, the enemy attacks. Washington quickly falls, leaving American women and children helpless at the hands of marauding troops.[6] As a promotional advertisement for the film put it, at a time when global war was demonstrating that universal brotherhood and morality were illusions, 'only the strong are safe. As we love peace, our homes, our country, so must we be strong to defend them.'[7]

The anarchist movement was quick to challenge such rhetoric. In early 1916 another modernist, Ben Benn, contributed an irony-inflected cover to New York's *Revolt* journal. Benn depicted an armed skeleton standing to attention, suggesting that anyone preparing for war had better prepare for death as well. On the inside page a poetic tribute to the war, 'Potpourri', described masses of soldiers spewing blood in 'crimson rainbows' accompanied by the 'hosannas of nations'.[8] The issue also featured an article deconstructing the demonisation of anarchist violence. Verifying that radical social change was anarchism's goal, the author observed that the anarchist, being human, could be as violent as the policeman, the detective, the soldier and other agents of the state.[9] The difference being that anarchists endorsed violence as a means of overthrowing capitalism and dismantling hierarchical social organisations, measures that would go a considerable way towards minimising violence in society. Those who endorsed the state's maintenance of capitalism in the name of peace and good government, on the other hand, condemned humanity to perpetual violence in the form of social conflict, exploitation, inequality and war.[10]

In May 1915, the militarisation campaign caught up with anarchism's most talented illustrator, Robert Minor. Minor worked as an editorial cartoonist for the mass circulation *New York Evening World* and his work was syndicated across the country. Initially, the editors were willing to sanction cautionary cartoons against American involvement in the war, but in 1915 the newspaper began promoting 'preparedness'. Anti-war politics could no longer be tolerated: Minor was fired.[11] He promptly took a position with the American Socialist Party's *New York Call* newspaper, which announced on the front page of its 1 June 1915 edition: 'The *World* wanted pictures that didn't get wrong with the system. Minor couldn't cramp himself down with that kind of work any longer. For Minor is a revolutionist, full of the fighting spirit. So Minor is making pictures for the *Call* now. He will picture things AS THEY ARE.'[12]

On 5 July, Minor marked his first month at the *New York Call* with a public speech on the commercial press. Newspaper editors, he related, were self-censoring mediocrities in the service of capitalism, which 'accounts for the stupid papers we have'.[13] The European press had stoked the flames of nationalism, instilling a pro-war spirit among the workers. Now United States newspapers were beating the war drums, and the need for a counter-discourse was urgent.[14] The illustration accompanying his critique, in which the word 'revolution' emerges 'through the smoke of battle', carried a radical message that the capitalist press could never accommodate. Minor was infusing present-day war with a desire for revolution, a revolution to be implemented, in his words, through general strikes on the home front and mutiny in the trenches.[15]

In late September, Minor embarked for France to report on the war at first hand. He arrived in October, and remained until December 1915, sending articles and illustrations back to the *Call*.[16] Minor intensified the experience of war through art, bringing his anarchist analysis into focus while at the same time heightening the affective dimensions of his critique. In short, his purpose was to draw readers into his worldview, to awaken their humanity and radicalise it. For example, 'Finding "Hers" on the Battlefield of the Marne' depicted a bedraggled woman standing alone among hastily planted crosses. Minor described 'mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts' searching for the remains of their loved ones, including the woman he portrayed 'weeping her soul out' over a grave.[17] A second drawing countered stories of battlefield heroism with the horror of a British soldier who had told Minor that he could not bear to watch as he impaled another human being. Minor depicted the soldier hiding his face while a victim squirms on the end of his bayonet.[18] He also volunteered for stretcher duty with a field ambulance. Illustrating the event, Minor recalled loading a heavily bandaged bundle which 'shrieked in pain' because its 'lower half' was missing.[19]

After returning to the United States, Minor worked for the *Call* until May 1916. Travelling west, he joined the anarchist *Blast* journal in San Francisco that autumn. *The Blast*'s 15 December issue featured a cover by Minor depicting 'revolution' as a burly armed worker striding away from the front with a small naked boy, 'peace', running along beside him. This accompanied an editorial on Germany's recently proposed peace terms in which Minor recounted discussions with radicalised soldiers during his time in France and speculated concerning the reaction along the western

front if German overtures were refused.[20] 'If Peace is not made,' he wrote, 'let us hope the undeceived common soldier will about face with his bayonet and his anger upon the parasites for whom he has been fighting.' If such a revolution did occur, then it was up to America's radicals to ensure that the United States army was not deployed to 'enforce peace' in capitalist terms.[21] His illustration vividly encapsulated this position, which became all the more threatening when revolution did break out in Russia the following year.

In April 1917, the United States government declared war on Germany and unleashed a propaganda campaign, along with blanket surveillance, summary arrests, round-ups and mob-incited attacks on anarchist social centres and gatherings. 'Criminal Anarchy' laws and the Federal Espionage Act gave law enforcement the right to sentence activists, speakers, editors, magazine distributors, printers and subscribers with fines of up to $10,000 and prison sentences of up to twenty years for propagating 'treason, insurrection or the obstruction of recruitment or enlistment'.[22] The general population was terrorised into compliance. During 1917 and 1918, so-called 'slacker' raids were conducted in major urban centres to round up anyone who looked eligible for conscription and forcibly enlist them.[23] In a letter to Elsie Clews Parsons (feminist, anthropologist and anti-war activist), the anarchist literary critic Randolph Bourne described 'slacker' raids in New York:

> You have missed the excitement of the draft raids – caged wagons marked 'military police' dashing through the streets, filled with 'suspects', cordons of soldiers and sailors around the stations, all the paraphernalia of a full-fledged military regime already. About the same time the Civil Liberties Bureau and the Bureau of Legal Advice were raided. They had been doing absolutely legitimate work in protecting men unjustly drafted, and in keeping track of the offences against freedom. But they must go. Furthermore, they all fear indictment.[24]

Demonisation of anti-war resisters fuelled vigilante actions.[25] '100% Americanism' was the slogan of the day, which the government popularised through speeches, films, newspapers, posters, songs, rallies, parades and war bond drives.[26] The most hated figure in the pro-war lexicon was the anti-government, anti-war, anti-nationalist, pro-revolutionary anarchist. Being branded an anarchist was synonymous with being an agent of the enemy, unfit for American citizenship.[27]

Wartime persecution transformed artistic protest against the

war into a criminal act. And these were the circumstances in which Rockwell Kent, illustrator for the anarchist *Modern School* journal, forged an alternative paradigm for revolution. In spring 1918, Kent issued a privately circulated, limited edition pen-and-ink portfolio, *The Seven Ages of Man*, attacking militarism. Moving from infancy to adulthood, a boy discovers the wonders of nature and falling in love before expiring on barbed wire. The title was taken from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*: 'And one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.' The naive conscript, however, only lives out four.[28] Kent's reworking of *As You Like It* was probably informed by the Russian playwright Michael Artizibashlev's *War: A Play in Four Acts*, which ends with its main protagonist returning home from war horribly mutilated. The play was translated from the Russian in 1916 by Thomas Seltzer, an associate of the New York-based socialist magazine, *The Masses*. Seltzer's introduction to the English-language Knopf Press edition of the play (which had first appeared in Chicago's *Drama* journal) includes an autobiographical statement in which Artizibashlev declares his allegiance to the politics of the nineteenth-century German philosopher Max Stirner, author of the foundational anarchist-individualist statement, *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* (1845).[29] Seltzer also described the playwright as a committed radical, promoting 'anarchic-individualism' through his art. Kent would have found affinity with Artizibashlev's politics and certainly his anti-war message 'in four acts' would have resonated as well.[30]

Eventually, mobilisation on the continental United States became so unbearable to Kent that in August 1918 he left New York for an Alaskan island, where he remained until March 1919. His most frequent correspondent was fellow anarchist Carl Zigrosser, who wrote to Kent detailing the treatment of a conscientious objector, Roderick Seidenberg, at the hands of the United States military.[31] Seidenberg was being kept in solitary confinement, strapped upright to a door with his arms outstretched at the level of his shoulders, and fed bread and water. Kent wrote a passionate letter to Seidenberg declaring:

> It is only by the slender thread of the endurance of such a man as you that any of us can now believe that the spirit of man shall become stronger than the beast of what he has been. Your sufferings have finally embittered my hatred of such a civilization as is America and of such a government and army as, in the name of Liberty, become Tyrants.[32]

In Alaska, Kent created a drawing, *Superman*, to encapsulate his belief that anarchist defiance could counter the violence of state-mobilised masses. A naked male figure enveloped in light appears suspended above a mountainous landscape, stretching his arms towards the stars. *Superman* was inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Zigrosser proposed that it serve as the frontispiece for a card honouring Siedenberg's stand. Its 'exultation of struggle and longing for freedom,' Zigrosser wrote, 'would make it particularly appropriate'.[33] While conceiving his drawing, Kent also painted a now lost version of the work. In a letter to his wife in December 1918, he described his original conception: 'On the dark mountainous land beneath the *Superman*, men are living as they do today, with slaughter and burning of homes.'[34]

The *Superman* pitted anarchism against the destructive forces of warring capitalism, but Kent could only sustain these politics by retreating to the far reaches of Alaska, to experiment, in his words, in living with 'no government'.[35] Anarchism's programme of revolutionary upheaval involving tens of thousands of soldiers and workers gave way to a more pessimistic programme in which individuals who refused to participate in the violence of the state were the only viable foundation for realising a free society. This emphasis on individual agency also figures in the work of Man Ray, whose anti-war illustration opened this chapter. In August 1914, Man Ray began painting a large-scale work entitled *War (AD MCMXIV)*.[36] The painting foregrounds a small innocent who lies lifeless on a battlefield dominated by faceless armies locked in mutual destruction, a narrative that is easily read as a political statement. But there is more at play here. The hard-edged aesthetic of this painting was influenced in part by the anarchist art critic John Weichsel, who contrasted art in the service of state power, religious prejudice and other social forces with individualist experimentation grounded in the creative interplay of colour and form, an impulse in modernism that Man Ray's work exemplified.[37]

War, then, occupies a political space similar to Kent's *Superman*: both inscribe the concept of revolution with individual agency, in this instance an agency that realises freedom on the aesthetic plane as the complement to an artistic protest against violence that the anarchist seems powerless to prevent. That said, Man Ray's position was also informed by the theorising of Dora Marsden, a proponent of Stirner's anarchism and founder of the British *Egoist* journal.[38] In an editorial published on 15 August 1914, Marsden critiqued the self-alienation of the pro-war masses who had

subordinated themselves to the abstract concept of the state and the anti-war pacifists who subordinated themselves to an equally abstract concept, absolute non-violence.[39] There was no stopping the First World War: on the contrary, it would probably intensify deeply ingrained habits of obedience handed down from generation to generation. But perhaps, she speculated, people might 'emerge at the far side of this crisis capable of waging a conflict' in keeping with their true self-interest.[40] In sum, anarchism's challenge was to deconstruct the political consensus undergirding the war, namely, the validity of the state as such.

This challenge, combined with a willingness to foment armed revolution against social and economic oppression, determined that after the United States entered the war in April 1917, anarchism had to be snuffed out at all costs, a position that the US government pursued with a vengeance. And the US government was not alone. Simultaneously, Lenin's Russian Communist Party (the Bolsheviks) was building its state dictatorship in the midst of a civil war and, from an anarchist perspective, killing the revolution in the process.[41] We can track the American anarchists' response to this course of events through its underground newspapers, *Freedom: A Journal of Constructive Anarchism* and *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*. Beset by state repression on two fronts, they continued to imbue anarchist politics with 'artistic' qualities such as emotionally charged self-expression, creativity, individual agency and freedom in the course of critiquing the violence of state capitalism and Bolshevik dictatorship.

Take, for example, *Freedom*'s definition of anarchism. It defines it as an 'art' enacted by individuals working together collectively to creatively transform society without recourse to authoritarian violence ('force'):

> Constructive Anarchism. – Practicing the art of self-government and thereby building a society wherein individual rights and social solidarity will be the keynote of the social organization; that each man is as good as he can be, and laws, codes, or rules of conduct have no justification except as they appear ethical or beneficial to the individual effected [*sic*] by them. Constitutions and statutory laws constrain humanity and are destructive of human liberty: they are matters of expediency to be abridged or abrogated by the individuals living under them whenever and wherever they see fit. No one's liberty is to be abridged without his consent, or as a matter of self-defence, for to do otherwise is to substitute force instead of reason, thereby impeding the growth and development of mankind.[42]

In this formulation, freedom is not fixed in place by an abstract set of enforced rights and privileges. Rather, it is dynamically interrelated with humanity's collective capacity to create and recreate the social order, empowering individuation and difference while disempowering authoritarianism.

We can explore this paradigm further through anarchist justifications for a series of bombings on 2 June 1919 that targeted the US Attorney General and other officials engaged in repressing the anarchist movement legally and extra-legally (through spy networks, government-sanctioned mob attacks, arbitrary arrests, beatings and killings).[43] In July, *Freedom* published a trenchant critique of the liberal *New Republic* magazine, which had called for the arrest of the anarchist bombers while condemning their action as 'terrorism' against the United States' democratic institutions and, by extension, the American people.[44] The bombers, *Freedom* countered, were 'social rebels' who had taken action against 'social conditions and social grievances' not of their making.[45] These 'sensitive', 'emotional people' were responding to a political and economic system that left 20 per cent of the children of New York 'without proper nourishment' while 'lynchings, deportations and other forms of callous and calculated brutality [were] committed upon the working class'.[46] The *New Republic*, on the other hand, was blind to the violence of the system it defended, a system which treated human life as 'the cheapest commodity in the market'.[47] Fetishising the capitalist state and its laws and institutions as inviolate, it sanctioned 'impersonal' 'social murder' on a mass scale:[48]

> We deplore violence as much or more than … the *New Republic*, we deplore it so much that we look with contempt on the man or men who would cover up the sores of our body politic … At the very time when these bombs were discovered, killing two persons, a mining disaster occurred in Pennsylvania which killed *sixty* people. This failed to call forth a single editorial in the New York papers, not even in the *New Republic*. Why? – Oh, it is part of the wage system, and the wage system is … 'a permanent hypothesis'.[49]

Freedom's editors then turned to the revolution in Russia, drawing on the reports of Minor, who had managed to make his way there to report on events at first hand. Minor was in Petrograd and Moscow from April to December, gathering documentation on the Bolsheviks' repression of the anarchist movement and the imposition of central government control over Russia's revolutionary workers councils' ('soviets') decentralised federated networks.

Immediately after departing from Russia, he revealed the full extent of this calamity in a series of articles for his former employer, the *New York World*. On 4 February, the newspaper published an interview Minor had conducted with Lenin concerning his programme ('Lenine [*sic*] is Eager for Peace, He tells *World* Man: Asks "When will Revolt reach the U.S.?"'). After citing Lenin at length, Minor added 'I did not agree with Lenine's idea of what he was building':

> There is no more industrial unionism in Lenine's highly centralized institutions than in the United States Post Office. What he calls industrial unionism is nothing by nationalized industry in the highest degree of centralization. This recent change has roused the bitter antagonism of the anarchist-syndicalists: the strongest opponents Lenin [sic] now has. Industrial unionism is a mere phrase in the Bolshevik dogma.[50]

On 6 February, Minor presented a more throughgoing condemnation, 'Lenine Overthrew Soviets by a Masked Dictatorship; Bourgeoisie Gain Power,' detailing how 'The Soviets, which were once the spontaneous expression of rebellion against the old order, representing the will of one class to rule', had been subdued.[51] 'The Bolsheviki found the Soviets growing out of the earth, the creation of thousands of untheoretical minds, trying to manage affairs without Government,' he related. 'The original supporters of the Soviets may aptly be called Anarchists and Communists. The great task was to catch this great Anarchical force and tame it and lead it.'[52] The Bolsheviks accomplished this through 'the wiles of politicians', pretending to support soviet power while they built a rival state apparatus. The soviets were sidelined and 'Lenine's Bolshevik State' was now appointing 'men of the bourgeois class' to run Russian industry as 'Peoples' Commissaries', thus making a mockery of any notion that the working class still held power.[53] On 7 February, Minor discussed the key to enforcing state decrees – a military. Utilising conscription, the Bolsheviks had formed a centralised army led by Lenin's Minister of War (Leon Trotsky) to counter the power of the revolution's spontaneously formed 'Red Guard' regiments of workers and soldiers who were 'free willed' and followed no leaders other than those they appointed. Many Red Guard regiments had connections with Moscow's forty-plus anarchist clubs and some were led by anarchist commanders, facts that made it all the more imperative to bring them to heel. Trotsky achieved this by disarming the regiments, outlawing anarchist commanders and other means.[54]

Two additional articles, 'Lenine Created Socialist State after Overcoming Syndicalism' and 'Russia as Robert Minor Sees It', reprinted from the *London Daily Herald* in the 3 July and 8 July 1919 editions of *The Butte Daily Bulletin* newspaper (published by the anarchist-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World union), expanded on these developments. The Bolsheviks' 'rigid law and order … would be the envy of several shaky European governments if they could see it,' Minor wrote.[55] 'A little more than a year ago,' he concluded,

> the 'Soviet Republic' was a loose federation of workmen, soldiers and peasants. It was governed by no man and was repugnant to State, socialists and bourgeois alike. Today the soviets are merged in a semi-social democratic State with which any capitalistic government can easily make treaties. The Bolsheviks can't afford to say that the old type of soviet no longer exists in Russia, but I, not being a Bolshevik, can.[56]

Responding to Minor's critiques that July, the editors of *Freedom* lamented the imposition of centralised state dictatorship, which had resulted in the 'loss of personal liberty and consequent curtailment of the creative instinct among the masses'.[57] The only consolation was that perhaps the 'Anarchic wave that Minor describes' might 'modify the tyranny of Lenine's Social Democratic State'. The crux of the Russian Revolution, as Minor argued, was 'the principle of Sovietism with its shop committees and decentralised form of social organisation'. So long as the soviet idea persisted in Russia, the working class might still advance '*freedom … a process whereby men learn the art of living together harmoniously on the basis of social equality*'.[58]

This tenuous hope was a far cry from the revolutionary certainties that had galvanised American anarchists during 1918, when Bolshevik intentions were still unclear. 'The Triumph of Revolutionary Principles in Russia', published in the February 1918 issue of the short-lived *Social War Bulletin* (February–August 1918), captures the gist of their misapprehension. Generalising at a time when the Bolsheviks were busy building state dictatorship in the territories that they controlled, the author praised 'the Revolution' as 'a challenge to the very idea of government and a prophecy of a Free Society'.[59] Whereas the US government had gone to war 'to make the world safe for democracy', Russia's 'revolutionary leaders of today – Lenin, Trotsky, Gorky, Kollontay, Spiridinova and the rest' – were waging revolution in the name of 'FREEDOM'

and condemning the war of 'capitalistic governments' on that basis.[60]

Soon, following Minor's lead, anarchists were decoupling the workers' freedom-infused 'creative instinct' and decentralised self-governance through soviet power from Bolshevism's pseudo-revolutionary pretences. In April 1919, an underground group, working with the anarchist Union of Russian Workers Groups in Canada and the United States, launched a free monthly broadsheet, *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*.[61] The first issue was a clarion call for 'workers, farmers, soldiers and sailors' to join the marching 'SOCIAL REVOLUTION of the WORLD'S WORKERS' and form an 'Anarchist Federation of Commune Soviets' to overthrow capitalism in the United States.[62] Evoking the example of Russia's soviets over the next three issues, by August the *Bulletin*, whose masthead proclaimed 'Capitalism is based on: EXPLOITATION, VIOLENCE AND MURDER' while 'Anarchism is based on: FREEDOM, EQUALITY AND HAPPINESS', was compelled to address Bolshevism's revolutionary credentials. The editors observed that capitalism's consolidation of power in the hands of a privileged elite and state power depended on 'the government, the press and the Church' indoctrinating workers into believing they were incapable of managing society themselves.[63] This process disarmed the working class, inducing them into a slave-like posture of voluntary submission to authority. The editors acknowledged that Bolsheviks, like anarchists, sought 'to abolish the capitalist who is the functioning Centralized body of our misery'. That said, Bolshevism, like capitalism, was based on 'the same Centralizing functioning organ – the State, that is the government' – and its attendant psychological disempowerment:

> If we have freed ourselves from economic slavery only to find ourselves under governmental slavery, then we have again Centralization, and of a worse kind than before, for now as in Russia, the Centralized government is keeping the workers enslaved, and is fooling them by the cry 'that it is for your own benefit'.[64]

Bolshevik authoritarianism stripped workers of their 'freedom', which was the prerequisite of 'happiness': these qualities, arising from the revolutionary life experience of the workers themselves, could only flourish in a decentralised social, political and economic system of 'Federated Commune Soviets'.[65] *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*'s September issue expanded on this interplay between subjective consciousness, revolutionary social change and artistic creativity

by reprinting the nineteenth-century German composer Richard Wagner's epic statement, 'The Creating Force', originally published as 'The Revolution' in a Dresden newspaper during an abortive uprising against the king of Saxony in 1848–49. Wagner personified 'creativity' as a revolutionary historical force upending 'the authority of the great; the law of property' in the name of 'enjoyment' and 'free will'. Self-fulfilling freedom was revolutionary creativity's companion-in-arms, transforming individuals and society as a whole:

> Let everything be destroyed which oppresses you and makes you suffer and, from the ruins of the old, let there arise a new undreamt of happiness. Let no hatred, envy, jealousy, animosity remain among you. You must recognise as brothers and sisters all who live; and free to will, free to act, free to enjoy, you shall know the worth of existence … For I am the Revolution, I am the new creating force.[66]

While state-building gutted the revolution in Russia, anti-anarchist repression intensified in America. On 7 November 1919, government forces conducted coordinated raids in cities across the United States, targeting the local headquarters of the Union of Russian Workers. Offices were destroyed and those caught in the dragnet were arrested and beaten up before being thrown in jail (where they faced prison sentences and/or deportation).[67] The *Bulletin* responded by calling on workers go 'UNDERGROUND', 'ARM YOURSELVES, LEARN HOW TO SHOOT' and form federations of small groups not only to defend themselves, but to go on the offensive and liberate America.[68] They capped their piece with a theoretical polemic, 'The Worker and the Government', by Stirner. Once again, revolution was couched qualitatively and subjectively. The state's sole interest in the worker, Stirner argued, was to exploit him as a 'proletarian', an identity that stripped him of his individuality and freedom to attend to his unique needs and desires. Workers who awakened to this system of economic and psychological indoctrination were government's most 'deadly enemy'.[69] Apparently the US government knew this only too well.

Grounding revolution in the worker's creative agency would give rise to a revealing exchange between Emma Goldman and Leninist Max Eastman, editor of *The Liberator* magazine. *The Liberator* had been founded in April 1918 as the successor to *The Masses*, with a reserve fund of $30,000, a large salaried staff, a substantial subscription base, paying advertisers and distribution on newsstands.[70] This was the platform from which Eastman, in March 1919, launched a stinging attack on anarchist critiques of Bolshevik

rule in Russia.[71] 'Bob Minor and the Bolsheviki' was directed in the first instance at Minor, whose reports had shocked many among the American left.[72] Eastman began on a sanctimonious note, giving 'profound thanks that Lenin the socialist, not Minor the anarchist, is in the position of leadership of the world-wide proletariat' before citing at length the leader's 'wise, and calm, and practical' responses to Minor's questions in the 6 February *New York World* interview.[73] He then reiterated a few of Minor's criticisms before abruptly announcing that 'Anarchism is a natural philosophy for artists. It is literary, not scientific – an emotional evangel, not a practical movement of men.' Animated by 'the spirit of the eighteenth-century libertarians, who never saw industrial capitalism',

> the anarchists still think that human freedom can be achieved through a mere negation of restraint. They have no appreciation of the terrific problem of organization involved in revolutionizing the world. What the working class has to accomplish is to reconstruct a tremendous and complex machine of social industry, so that besides producing an increased quantity of economic goods, it will distribute those goods to the people who produced them. They have to abolish economic slavery involved in the present system and until that is accomplished any conflicting ideal of freedom is of superficial impertinence. That is what the anarchists, like the liberals, find it impossible to see. So it is not a new thing for an honest and artistic apostle of anarchist rebellion to denounce 'the march of the iron battalions of the proletariat' as 'nationalized' and 'centralized,' and all the other bad names for good organization.[74]

Eastman closed by condemning Minor for breaking leftist ranks in defence of the Russian Revolution by publishing his views in the capitalist press and suggested that he was a politically confused enthusiast of Woodrow Wilson's peace plans (an extraordinarily duplicitous accusation, given Eastman's own recent endorsement of Wilson's platform).[75]

This was followed by an anonymously authored article, 'Anarchist Sabotage', by 'X' (Eastman informed his readers that 'We are able to add this further word, in explanation of the Lenin interviews, from an American observer of Russian's affairs').[76] 'X' claimed that Minor's much-vaunted anarchists were a hapless gang of 'hoodlums and thieves', 'swelled by converts from the aristocracy', whom the increasingly exasperated Bolsheviks had finally 'driven out and defeated' by force. This counter-revolutionary flotsam from a failed 'campaign of sabotage against the reorganization of Russia under the Bolshevik regime' was reactionary to the core, and Minor's

criticisms were simply ‘a rehash of the propaganda which appeared day by day in the anarchist papers of Petrograd’.[77] An accompanying illustration – ‘Before we help Russia we must kill the Bolsheviks!’ – depicting a corpulent priest pointing at the ‘Anarchist Sabotage’ headline was Eastman’s final slap in the face to Minor, the ‘artistic apostle’ of an outmoded politics which Bolshevism had swept aside.

In May 1919, Emma Goldman replied to these attacks from a cell in the Missouri Penitentiary in Jefferson City, where she had been imprisoned since July 1917 on charges of ‘conspiracy to induce people not to register’ for the draft (Alexander Berkman was imprisoned for twenty-one months in federal prison in Atlanta on the same charges).[78] Eastman refused to acknowledge or publish her letter.[79] Consequently, *Freedom: A Journal of Constructive Anarchism* decided to reprint her response along with statements by Goldman and fellow anarchist Berkman on the eve of their deportation from the United States on 21 December 1919. Goldman began by contesting the claim that Minor was breaking the American left’s solidarity by virtue of publishing his views in *The New York World*. Pointing out that the ‘same forces of reaction’ attacking the Bolsheviks were also ‘arrayed against the Anarchists’ (capitalist governments were no more in favour of anarchism, as Goldman’s own predicament evidenced), she accused ‘X’ of engaging in the same fractious splitting that Minor was accused of, with far more solidarity-destroying invective (Minor, after all, had respectfully quoted Lenin at length before critiquing him). Going to the heart of Eastman’s argument, she continued:

> ‘Anarchism is a natural philosophy for artists.’ Why so exclusive, dear Max? Surely you do not wish the worker to remain a drudge forever, to continue the automaton that he is. Surely you want him to become the creator rather than the creature of his conditions. If so, anarchism is as natural a philosophy for the worker as it is for the artist. In fact, more so, since the worker may get along without the artist, but the artist without the worker – never. Unless the worker grasps that society must be organized on the basis of the freest possible scope for expression, the future holds very little change for either the artist or the worker.[80]

For Goldman, revolutionary creativity necessarily unfolded along a continuum that included art, artists and the working class. The ‘freest scope of expression’ was its point of origin: in this sense, workers who broke with capitalism to enact revolution were artists in their own right. We find much the same point articulated by Alexander Berkman. Speaking to supporters at an evening event

held on 27 October 1919 in the Hotel Bevroot, New York, after his and Goldman's release from prison pending deportation, he related an encounter that morning with a woman who felt 'art is something outside and above … social and economic questions'.[81] 'I think,' Berkman continued:

> on the contrary, that art is one of the deepest expressions of humanity; there can be no expression unless there is liberty of expression … I cannot see how [artists] can stand aloof from the aspirations for liberty, for better conditions on the part of labour, or the struggle for free speech, free expression … The basis of all liberty is summed up in the various struggles that are going on today in this country, in Russia, in every other land.[82]

Conclusion

Violence is an inescapable facet of anarchism's quest to reconstitute society so as to end social oppression, a situation that, on the face of it, seems paradoxical. However, as one of the movement's most thoughtful contemporary theorists observes:

> Anarchists want a stateless, *voluntary* non-violent society. Given this, it should first be emphasized that the type of violence anarchists are *primarily* concerned with abolishing is violent enforcement or institutional violence … As for non-institutional, sporadic and diffuse instances of violence, it is misleading to say that anarchists want a society from which they are simply absent. Again, they seek a society from which they are absent voluntarily.[83]

During the First World War, anarchists in the United States emphasised the positive, constructive aspects of revolutionary violence by aestheticising it as an outgrowth of individual creativity, in contrast with capitalism's state enforced socio-economic order, which literally repressed the creative agency of those it exploited. Tragically, this revolutionary model would be realised, briefly, in the form of the soviets and then betrayed by Marxists intent on mobilising state power to impose a new social order, an order that, as Minor and others pointed out, shared all the authoritarian features of capitalism, even as its leaders declared otherwise.

Notes

1 Alfredo Bonanno, 'Towards Anarchist Antimilitarism', *Insurrection*, 1 (1982), p. 15.

2 Man Ray, 'Capitalism, Humanity, Government' (illustration), *Mother Earth*, 9.6 (August 1914), cover.
3 'International Anarchist Manifesto on the War', *Mother Earth*, 10.3 (May 1915), reprinted in *Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth*, ed. Peter Glassgold (New York: Counterpoint, 2001), p. 386.
4 Ruth Kinna, 'Preface', in Deric Shannon, Anthony J. Nocella II and John Asimakopoulos (eds), *The Accumulation of Freedom: Writings on Anarchist Economics* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2012), pp. 6–7.
5 For a contemporary anarchist analysis, see Emma Goldman, 'Preparedness, the Road to Universal Slaughter', *Mother Earth*, 10.10 (December 1915), pp. 331–8. An invaluable source documenting the multifaceted organisations behind the preparedness movement and their seamless integration into the government war effort after 1917 is Albert Bushnell Hart (ed.), *America at War: A Handbook of Patriotic Education References edited by Albert Bushnell Hart for the Committee on Patriotism through Education of the National Security League* (New York: National Security League, 1918).
6 'Battle Cry for Peace' (1915), http://civilwar.gratzpa.org/2012/04/the-battle-cry-of-peace/accessed (last accessed 21 July 2014).
7 'His Only Enemy—Preparedness!' (promotional advertisement), 1915, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Battle_Cry_of_Peace#mediaviewer/File:The_Battle_Cry_of_Peace.jpg/accessed (last accessed 21 July 2014)
8 Ben Benn, 'Prepare!' (illustration), *The Revolt*, 1.4 (29 January 1916), cover; Benjamin De Casseres, 'Potpourri', *The Revolt*, 1.4 (29 January 1916), p. 2.
9 Warren Van Valkenburgh, 'The Justification of Violence', *The Revolt*, 1.4 (29 January 1916), p. 3.
10 Ibid.
11 Richard Fitzgerald, *Art and Politics: Cartoonists for 'The Masses' and 'The Liberator'* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 82.
12 'Bob Minor', *The New York Call*, 1 June 1915, p. 1.
13 'Jingo Press Fools Labour, Says Minor', *The New York Call*, 6 July 1915, p. 2.
14 Ibid.
15 Robert Minor, 'Through the Smoke of Battle' (illustration), *The New York Call*, 6 July 1915, p. 6.
16 In an unsigned article announcing his arrival, *The Call* reported Minor's intention to 'rip the brass buttons off war' and penetrate 'through the surface to the living truth' by depicting the battle in Europe 'from the standpoint of the common man'. His illustrations would not be 'coloured by the sheen of gold lace or the glare of glory', nor would they be tragic, sad or horrific. Rather, Minor would depict war's realities: 'War I'm going to rip the brass buttons off it!', *The New York Call*, 23 October 1915, p. 1.

17 Robert Minor, 'Finding "Hers" on the Battlefield' (illustration), *The New York Call*, 24 November 1915, p. 1.
18 Robert Minor, 'When You Stick a Man' (illustration), *The New York Call*, 13 January 1916, p. 1.
19 Robert Minor, 'A Night on an Ambulance!' (illustration), *The New York Call*, 14 January 1916, p. 1.
20 Robert Minor, 'Peace and—REVOLUTION!' (illustration), *The Blast*, 1.23 (15 December 1916), cover.
21 Robert Minor, 'The Great Hope', *The Blast*, 1.23 (15 December 1916), p. 2.
22 Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 196.
23 Ibid., pp. 197–8.
24 Randolph Bourne to Elsie Clews Parsons, 12 September 1918, Elsie Clews Parsons Papers, Philadelphia Philosophical Society, Box One, Folder 3.
25 For example, Elsie Clews Parsons' papers include dated newspaper clippings (without page numbers) documenting the persecution of 'slackers': '50 Dollar Reward Offered for Arrest of Slackers', *New York Tribune*, 27 September 1917; 'All Who Oppose the War are Traitors', *New York Tribune*, 15 September 1917; 'Anarchists Lure Slackers into Trap', *New York Times*, 12 June 1917; 'Police Arrest 50 Slackers', *New York Times*, 10 June 1917; 'Pacifists Whipped', *New York Times*, 30 October 1917: Elsie Clews Parsons Papers, Philadelphia Philosophical Society, Box Seven, Folder 3; Folder 4.
26 The extraordinary breath of the pro-war propaganda is documented in Hart (ed.), *America at War*; James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words That Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917–1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1939); and J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1–16.
27 For a sampling of anti-anarchist tirades, see 'Draft Resister Gets 3-Year Term And $10,000 Fine', *New York Tribune*, 14 June 1917, p. 3; 'Jail for Anarchist Slacker', *The Sun*, 26 September 1917, p. 4; 'Goldman, Berkman, Pacifist, Spy, Anarchist Slacker, What Am I?', *The Sun*, 13 June 1917, p. 14; 'Seven Anarchists Arrested, Charged with Espionage', *New York Tribune*, 25 August 1918, p. 10; 'Bolsheviki Here Are Anything But American In Spirit', *The Sun*, 6 January 1918, p. 5; 'Are You An Anarchist of Your Own Future', *The Logan Republican*, 12 December 1918, p. 1.
28 Rockwell Kent, 'Seven Ages of Man' (New York: Privately Published Portfolio, 1918), Library Collection, Whitney Museum of Art, New York.
29 In 1908, the American anarchist Benjamin Tucker published an

English-language edition, titled *The Ego and His Own*. By this time Stirner's book was well-known among European anarchists and had been translated into French, Russian and other languages.

30 Michael Artizibashlef [*sic*], *War: A Play in Four Acts*, trans. Thomas Seltzer (New York: Knopf, 1916), pp. x, xiii.
31 Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, pp. 150, 161.
32 Rockwell Kent to Roderick Seidenberg, 17 February 1919, cited in ibid., p. 161.
33 Carl Zigrosser to Rockwell Kent, 13 February 1919, cited in ibid.
34 Rockwell Kent to Kathleen Kent, 8 December 1918, cited in ibid., p. 166.
35 Rockwell Kent, cited in ibid., p. 160.
36 Allan Antliff, 'Ezra Pound, Man Ray, and Vorticism in America, 1914–1917', in Mark Antliff and Scott Klein (eds), *Vorticism: New Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 145.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., pp. 142–3.
39 Dora Marsden, 'Quid Pro Quo', *The Egoist*, 1.16 (15 August 1914), p. 305. An article by Ezra Pound which Man Ray consulted while painting *War* follows Marsden's statement, leading me to conclude that Man Ray read Marsden's comments. On Pound's article and Marsden's central importance for Man Ray's politics and aesthetic, see Antliff, 'Ezra Pound, Man Ray, and Vorticism in America', pp. 142–4.
40 Marsden, 'Quid Pro Quo', p. 306.
41 Lenin renamed his Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in March 1918, and this was its title throughout the civil war (1917–21). The term 'Bolshevik' (majority) originated from a split at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1904 between a faction lead by Lenin and a rival group. Lenin's followers formed the majority and he appended 'Bolshevik' to the title of his faction to diminish his opponents' validity.
42 'Constructive Anarchism', *Freedom: A Journal of Constructive Anarchism*, 1.9–10 (October–November 1919), p. 16 (italics in original).
43 Paul Avrich's meticulously researched discussion of a series of campaigns conducted by anarchists during 1918–19 remains unsurpassed. On the 2 April 1919 bombings, see Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 149–77.
44 'Notes', *Freedom: A Journal of Constructive Anarchism*, 1.7 (July 1919), p. 9.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., pp. 9–10.
47 Ibid., p. 10.
48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.
50 Robert Minor, 'Lenine is Eager for Peace, He tells *World* Man: Asks "When will Revolt reach the U.S.?"', *The New York World*, 4 February 1919, p. 2.
51 Robert Minor, 'Lenine Overthrew Soviets by a Masked Dictatorship; Bourgeoisie Gain Power', *The New York World*, 6 February 1919, p. 1.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Robert Minor, 'Duped Russian Peasants Submit to Conscription under Red Dictatorship', *The New York World*, 7 February 1919, p. 1.
55 Robert Minor, 'Lenine Created Socialist State After Overcoming Syndicalism', *The Butte Daily Bulletin*, 3 July 1919, p. 5
56 Robert Minor, 'Russia As Robert Minor Sees It', *The Butte Daily Bulletin*, 8 July 1919, p. 5.
57 'Notes', *Freedom: A Journal of Constructive Anarchism*, p. 11.
58 Ibid. (italics in original).
59 L.D.A. [Leonard D. Abbott], 'The Triumph of Revolutionary Principles in Russia', *The Social War Bulletin*, 1.1 (February 1918), p. 1.
60 Ibid. Leon Trotsky was then People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the second most powerful figure in Lenin's government. Alexandra Kollontai served as People's Commissar for Social Welfare. Left Social Revolutionary Party member Maria Alexandrovna Spiridonova briefly held an executive position related to peasant affairs before being arrested and imprisoned by the Bolsheviks in July 1918. Former Bolshevik Maxim Gorky did not participate in Lenin's government.
61 Marcus Graham, 'Autobiographical Note', in *MAN! An Anthology of Anarchist Ideas, Essays, Poetry, and Commentaries*, ed. Marcus Graham (London: Cienfuegos Press, 1974), p. xii.
62 'To Workers, Farmers, Soldiers and Sailors!', *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, 1.1 (April 1919), p. 1.
63 'Anarchism and Bolshevism', *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, 1.5 (August 1919), p. 1.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Richard Wagner, 'The Creating Force', *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, 1.6 (September 1919), p. 2.
67 'Capitalism Begins its White Terror!', *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, 1.9 (December 1919), p. 1.
68 Ibid., p. 2.
69 Max Stirner, 'The Worker and the Government', *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, 1.9 (December 1919), p. 2.
70 Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, p. 207.
71 Max Eastman, 'Bob Minor and the Bolsheviki', *The Liberator*, 1.13 (March 1919), pp. 5–6.

72 On the reaction to Minor's reports, see Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, pp. 203–4.
73 Eastman, 'Bob Minor and the Bolsheviki', p. 5.
74 Ibid., p. 6.
75 Ibid. On Eastman's Wilsonian enthusiasm, see Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, pp. 205–6.
76 X, 'Anarchist Sabotage', *The Liberator*, 1.13 (March 1919), p. 6.
77 Ibid.
78 Richard and Anna Maria Drinnon (eds), *Nowhere at Home: Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman* (New York: Shocken Books, 1975), p. xxviii.
79 Emma Goldman, 'An Unpublished Letter', *Freedom: A Journal of Constructive Anarchism*, 1.9–10 (October–November 1919), p. 4 (editorial note).
80 Ibid., p. 5.
81 'A Dinner in Honour of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman', *Freedom: A Journal of Constructive Anarchism*, 1.9–10 (October–November, 1919), p. 25.
82 Ibid.
83 Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), pp. 98–9.

11

Mutualism in the trenches: anarchism, militarism and the lessons of the First World War

Matthew S. Adams

In June 1930, Richard Aldington wrote to Herbert Read asking whether he agreed with 'this talk that the "War book" is dead'. Aldington answered his own question, judging that, based on subscriptions for his short story 'At All Costs' (1930), there was plenty of life left in the form, and adding: 'I mention this in case the anti War [*sic*] book stunt has discouraged you from continuing the novel you mentioned to me.'[1] Although Read never completed a novel based on his experiences during the First World War, he would perpetually return to his memories of the conflict, and, in a variety of media, attempt to comprehend the ultimately ambiguous meaning of these experiences to his life. Looking back in 1962, Read admitted that he was no closer to fixing the war in his personal history:

> I still do not know whether the thing I stepped on in August, 1914, was a snake's head or a ladder. Materially it could be thought of as a ladder, for it gave me four years of material security (under the constant threat of death and the daily presence of suffering). Such an 'ordeal by fire' no doubt gave me also a self-confidence that would have taken longer to acquire in civil life. But at the end it left me with a pathetic longing for security.[2]

Read's equivocation was not an uncommon reaction among First World War veterans, and as recent historical examinations have stressed, the multifarious nature of these reactions sits uneasily with the perceived image of the war in popular memory.[3]

Just as one particular narrative of the war has been dominant in British popular culture, the scholarship on Read has tended to echo the general thrust of this depiction and reduce the experience

to a familiar triad of 'blood, mud and futility'.[4] In one sense, this interpretation sits comfortably with Read's own narrativisation of the conflict, notably his attempt to trace a direct line between his life as a soldier in a war whose premises he abhorred, and his post-war conversion to an internationalist, and anti-militarist, anarchism.[5] Yet, as his 1962 conclusion suggested, the reality was more complex. Rather than lessons forged in the heat of battle, the war imparted a number of experiences and sensations that were processed, comprehended and reimagined in calmer moments. This was an ongoing process, one that occupied Read for the rest of his life, and, as with the literary narrative that continues to exert such power, one that was refracted through the lens of subsequent events. As one historian has noted:

> Recent psychological and neurological studies … ha[ve] time and again emphasized the social nature of individual remembering and forgetting … Our ability to store, recall, and reconfigure verbal and nonverbal experiences … cannot be separated from patterns of perception … learned from our immediate and wider social environments. The very language and narrative patterns … we use to express memories, even autobiographical memories, are inseparable from the social standards of plausibility and authenticity.[6]

This frame casts fresh light on Read's writing about the First World War, and a new way to understand his attempts to make sense of his experiences in the context of his politics. As his political thinking matured against the backdrop of the Spanish Revolution and the post-war decades that seemed to herald 'the long-expected death of the capitalist system', Read began to reassess his involvement in the war.[7] What emerged was an anarchistic reading of his military life that offered a novel model of socialist militarism, one that looked to small-group 'fidelity' as an abiding lesson of the war, rather than the power of collectivism.[8]

A world of broken mirrors: remembering, rethinking and post-war disillusionment

In another letter sent to Read in 1930, Aldington reflected on the difficulties of writing about the war:

> But that is the whole trouble with these terrific experiences. They leave one speechless. Imagine trying to convey the feeling of that to a chap like [Sydney] Waterlow! It is a highpoint of intensity of experience and emotion which is clear for us, but hidden in the mist for them.[9]

Despite having already produced two collections of poetry, *Images of War: A Book of Poems* (1919) and *War and Love* (1919), and later finding fame with *Death of a Hero* (1929), Aldington's comment implied a threefold difficulty in writing accurately about their wartime experiences. One problem was being rendered 'speechless', and the sheer failure of words to describe the incomprehensible. A related issue, and a pressing concern for both Aldington and Read as they attempted to explore the war in verse and prose, was finding a suitable technique. After reading Read's short work *In Retreat* (1925), Aldington was impressed enough to think about writing First World War prose of his own, but confessed that Read's continued commitment to Imagist detachment set a high benchmark:

> I have read your account again and felt like doing a bally weep in consequence […] Suppose I did a similar thing and called it The Advance or In Advance, would you mind? I should try to tell it as coolly and truthfully as you did […] My […] difficulty is to refrain from giving way to angry emotionalism. I feel convinced we wasted men's lives up to the last hour. Some bloody ass sent out a corporal and three men to reconnoitre on the night of the 10/11, after we have received orders not to cross the Mons Maubeuge Road, and the poor devil was killed – he had been over three years in the line! Sickening waste.[10]

Some years later, Aldington rebuffed Read's criticism of his 'Meditation on a German Grave' and 'At All Costs', stories collected in *Roads to Glory* (1930), that he had failed to maintain emotional distance. 'Your objections […] are perfectly just,' he wrote, 'if you insist on restraint as an absolute rule'; but Aldington objected that 'I think we tend to express rather too little feeling than too much.'[11]

Apart from the issues of emotion and tone, the third factor identified by Aldington dealt with the problem of audience. For those who fought, a feeling of distance from those who remained at home was a common theme in war literature. This was perhaps most discernible in the reflex of misogyny that saw some male writers react with hostility to the apparent gains of women, who apparently prospered while the soldiers suffered.[12] Christopher Nevinson's painting *War Profiteers* (1917) is an expression of this mood, depicting two louche and 'over-dressed young women, perhaps prostitutes', in a sickly blue light, one gazing over her shoulder, the other grinning at the viewer.[13] Aldington pinpointed Sydney Waterlow as an exemplar of this inability to understand. Waterlow,

a member of the Bloomsbury group, sometime literary scholar and career diplomat, acquired a reputation for aloofness. 'By God! What a bore that man is!', noted Virginia Woolf in a characteristically tart missive to Lytton Strachey; 'no one I've ever met seems [...] more palpably second rate'.[14] T.S. Eliot was also unimpressed. Despite being given some much-needed review work by Waterlow while he was a student, Eliot deemed him, fresh from the Paris Peace Conference, 'very pompous'.[15] Aldington's mention of Waterlow, who was based throughout the war in the Foreign Office, reinforces the idea that those who did not experience the fighting could never comprehend its effect. Much later, Read expressed a similar sense of alienation when discussing the genesis of his Imagist aesthetic: 'I think the trauma of war experience had more to do with it than anything else. Sassoon was finished by the war; Owen would have been. Eliot and Pound did not experience the war (I mean the blood and shit of it).'[16] And four years subsequently, writing to Colin Wilson, Read voiced the same feeling that the war had been a uniquely disturbing experience, unintelligible to those who had not fought: 'I grew up in a very different world, and the impact of the First World War (at the age of twenty) was shattering in a way and to a degree that no one can imagine now that everyone is born into a world of broken mirrors.'[17]

One solution to the problem of trying to communicate the experience of the war to an uncomprehending audience was to give up. If, in the land of 'business as usual', people remained 'incapable of understanding' then 'why bother ... to tell them?'[18] Even as the war raged, a new poetic voice developed that spoke to those that understood. Siegfried Sassoon's mordant verse, mocking patriotic homilies and rejecting the romantic valour of figures like Rupert Brooke, epitomised this trend.[19] As a self-consciously avant-garde neophyte, Read was drawn to this new tendency, and his exploration of the war in verse in *Naked Warriors* (1919) cleaved to the spirit of disaffection, albeit with a detachment Aldington found disconcerting.[20] More revealing, however, is the fact that Read's other 1919 collection, *Eclogues*, assiduously avoided direct engagement with the subject of war. Perhaps unsurprisingly, for the recently demobbed, literary reflection on their ordeal was not a pressing concern, and Read's correspondence in this period demonstrates a resolute desire to realise a successful literary life, rather than come to terms with his recent experiences. 'Congratulations on all your activities,' wrote an impressed Aldington, 'we missed a good few years by our absurd capers in Picardy, Artois, Flanders &c., but I

believe we learned […] the importance of a pertinacious production of energy long after all energy has gone!'[21]

While never completely quiet, the deafening 'silence of the veteran' in the immediate post-war period brings into stark relief the explosion of literary reflections on the war years that began in the late 1920s.[22] For Read, the earlier absence of 'war books' was the product of a lack of audience: 'Young writers who took part in the last war came back with one desire: to tell the truth about war, to expose its horrors, its inhumanity, its indignity […] [But] […] there was not a public for war poetry or war stories. Between 1918 and 1928 it was almost impossible to publish anything realistic about the war.'[23] Throughout this period there was a trickle of realistic memoirs, Read added, but it was the publication of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) that broke the levee.[24] Contributing an essay to a *Festschrift* on Aldington in 1965, Read noted that Remarque's success had paved the way for Aldington to 'sail […] to fame and freedom on this new wave of "war books"'.[25] In fact, Read played a decisive role in the publication of Remarque's book, assisting with the English translation of the work, and corresponding with Remarque to find suitable translations for the book's idiomatic German. Post-publication, Remarque wrote to Read stating that he was 'happy that the book is so successful in England', and adding that he attributed this 'not least to your activities'. They had clearly already met in person at this stage, as Remarque promised a rematch of the German card game 'skat', played frequently by the soldiers in his novel. Evidently with beginner's luck on his side, Read had been victorious in their first encounter.[26]

Read's papers also include an autobiographical sketch sent by Remarque to his British publisher, in which he revealingly discussed his post-war itinerancy, and the ennui that affected his generation:

> I wanted quiet and calm and became a teacher in a […] remote village […] But after a few months the loneliness became crushing and […] in quick succession I worked as an organist in a madhouse, music teacher, manager of a small factory, car salesman, technical draughtsman, theatre critic […] I won a good sum at roulette that allowed me to travel […] Last year I wrote down, without ever having considered it earlier, the war experiences of me and my comrades. The book was born from reflecting that so many of my comrades, although after all we are still young, nevertheless lead an often joyless, bitter, resigned life without knowing why […] I […] found that we are all still suffering from the effects of the war today. The numberless agreements

> [with this opinion] when the book came out have shown me that this assumption was correct. In my book I wanted to describe three things: the war, the fate of a generation and loyal comradeship. And this has been the same in all countries. It is my wish that the book may contribute to showing the horror of war in order to promote peace.[27]

As Remarque's letter shows, the post-war context was crucial in fathoming the war's meaning and significance. The fragility of the German state in these years, and the economic woes that ensured a precarious existence for young veterans like Remarque, all contributed to his feeling of alienation. Moreover, it encouraged writers who had not previously thought about examining their war experiences to reach for their pens, lest the 'horror of war' be repeated.

Both Read and Aldington were subject to the same impelling forces, and rethought their experiences in the light of the tumultuous post-war decades. Yet prosaic concerns remained. While liking Remarque's book, Aldington was keen to highlight the originality of his own work: 'I suppose they'll say I imitated Remarque […] but I didn't read him until my own book was in type.'[28] Nevertheless, the commercial success of *All Quiet on the Western Front* inevitably inspired imitators, and, as with *All Quiet*, the boundary between fact and fiction in many of these works was unclear. Remarque's book, for instance, while often taken for a memoir, was a work of fiction, and the extent to which it drew on the author's actual experience generated acrimonious debate.[29] For other authors, the financial precariousness of literary life in the interwar years shaped their work. Robert Graves, who devoted considerable space at the end of *Good-Bye to All That* (1929) to detailing the privations of living by the pen, admitted to composing his memoir with an eye to what was most popular with the reading public.[30] This literary efflorescence caused Read, who was also experiencing financial uncertainty, to return to the subject of war, publishing an edition of short stories *Ambush* (1930), and the long poem *The End of the War* (1932).

The cultural 'triumph' of the 'soldier's story' as the prism through which the war is understood has sparked debate over the authenticity of these narratives as a means of remembering, but, more fruitfully, it has also highlighted the extent to which these acts of remembrance were informed by their post-war contexts.[31] Viewing Read's intellectual development, and especially his flourishing political philosophy, in similar terms is helpful, illuminating the rather obscure origins of his turn to anarchism. Part of the

confusion lies in the fact that Read himself offered an ambiguous account of his political awakening. In the definitive version of his autobiography *The Contrary Experience* (1963), he confessed to a period as a 'true-blue Tory' in his early youth, but suggested that voracious reading of Benjamin Disraeli's novels and familiarisation with 'his two nations of the rich and the poor' fanned a developing social conscience.[32] Immersion in the poverty of pre-war Leeds 'penetrated the armour' of his 'inherited prejudices', and Read found intellectual sustenance for this burgeoning conscience in those Victorian anatomists of capitalist atomisation, 'Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris'.[33] Pursuing these threads led Read to Marx, and, more influentially, to Kropotkin and Edward Carpenter.[34]

Given Read's later emphasis on artistic creativity as the 'index' of individual liberty, the account he gives of his early exposure to the aestheticised socialism of Ruskin and Morris is persuasive.[35] Yet, while admitting that his 'political opinions have varied considerably', Read also argued that he remained committed to the 'broad basic principles of socialism', and noted that his anarchism developed during the war years.[36] While consistency was never his strong point, Read's explanation of his politicisation sits uneasily with his rush to the colours; all the more so considering that the outbreak of war found him already in a military camp, driven 'to some extent' by his 'patriotic past'.[37] Read explained the paradox of his continuing pacifist internationalism and his active war service by hinting at the popular 'myth'[38] of war enthusiasm, arguing that the distractions of adventure outweighed his, at that time, diffuse political principles. At the end of his life, Read would boldly date his 'conversion' to anarchism to '1911 or 1912', repeating that Carpenter led him to the anarchist triumvirate of 'Kropotkin, Bakunin and Proudhon'.[39] His autobiography paints a slightly different picture, however, with Read observing that his political views had yet to crystallise in wartime, and that he toyed with both a Sorelian syndicalism and guild socialism.[40]

Guild socialism, standing, in the words of a contemporary, 'midway between State Socialism and Syndicalism', forms a conceivable temporary resting point for a nascent anarchist.[41] Yet in Read's first sustained political comment, he was openly, if rather vaguely, hostile to anarchism. His two articles for *The Guildsman* offer a broadly minarchist conception of guild socialism, in which the 'Group Idea' reconstitutes the relationship between the individual and the state on supposedly novel lines. This, he insisted, does not mean the destruction of the state, which is a 'mere negative

reality of anarchist philosophy', but a refashioning in which the 'will of the State to power' and the 'will of the individual to resist this power […] coalesce'. A Saint-Simonian administration of things appears to have been Read's answer, although he leaves the exact role of the state unclear, concluding that his solution is certainly not 'an anarchic ideal', as 'it postulates an organised society; and anarchy and organisation are mutually exclusive'.[42]

Comparing Read's autobiographical statements concerning his political conversion and his political writings during wartime demonstrates the necessity of treating his mature reflection on the growth of his political thought with caution. Tellingly, Read frequently intertwined the narratives of his intellectual development and war experiences in his writing, to the point of including in his autobiography a series of letters dwelling on his rigorously improving course of wartime reading. The fact that these processes occurred concurrently explains this fusion, but it also served an important rhetorical function in this autobiographical writing. Self-consciously intellectual, and fixated on the literary life as revealed in his correspondence with Aldington, Read presented his war experiences and growing intellectual sophistication as fundamentally climacteric periods of his life. The weaving together of these narratives reveals a lot about his sense of self, but their form also highlights the importance of contextual analysis in understanding the presentation of these memories. As one commentator has observed:

> Autobiographical memories are constructed […] This does not mean that they are either accurate or inaccurate, but they are not encoded, stored, and retrieved as wholes but rather are created at retrieval using components like […] narrative, imagery, emotion.[43]

That there is a tendency for 'the inevitable infiltrations of the fictionalizing process' in life-writing similarly demonstrates the value of thinking about Read's acts of remembrance contextually.[44] Rather than his war experiences bequeathing a defined political position, both his understanding of these experiences and his perception of their significance to his life were manifest in an ongoing process of rethinking and reimagining. This conversation with the past bore the imprint of the present, and just as the true nature of the war seemed to dawn on writers like Remarque and Graves in the turbulent 1930s, the war's relationship to Read's personal and political philosophy began to make sense in this period too. As ongoing strife in Europe demonstrated the failures of Versailles, and

alternative political models were in vogue, the war's lessons became clearer and more urgent.

Militarism and mutualism

For British socialists, militarism has been a source of both attraction and repulsion. On the one hand, there was an enduring attachment to a 'voluntarist conception of military service rooted in liberal ideas of limited government' that exercised an important influence in the pre-war decades.[45] Given liberalism's enduring magnetism for British socialists, seen most obviously in the varied membership of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the hegemony of this resistance to militarism had well-defined roots, and stood in contrast to the model of service as citizenship in the French Jacobinist-socialist tradition.[46] Just as conflicting views on militarism characterised the broader history of socialism, however, not every socialist in Britain opposed the idea of learning something from military organisation. As Kropotkin had wearily observed during the height of Britain's imperial adventuring, jingoism and popular patriotism were seductive forces. While Kropotkin lamented the vitiating effects of this on popular radicalism, other socialists saw maintenance of the Empire as essential to the future health of Britain. 'When England is at war,' wrote Robert Blatchford, reacting bellicosely to the Second Boer War, 'I'm English. I have no politics and no party. I am English.'[47]

As tensions heightened in Europe in the lead-up to the First World War, these voices became more shrill. Blatchford led the charge. Debating the issue of impending war with Upton Sinclair, he conceded that while 'capitalists and militarists' caused war, to hope that the international fraternity of the working class would prevent it was unrealistic. There was, he concluded, only one way to prevent the coming war: 'stopping the growth of German naval power'.[48] In a series of articles in the *Daily Mail*, Blatchford further prophesied impending attack by Germany, insisting that defensive preparations must begin in earnest.[49] 'Arm or surrender; fight for the Empire or lose it', he insisted.[50]

While Blatchford's position can be seen as a reaction to the exigencies of European politics in the pre-war years, militarism had deeper roots in British socialism. In the spirit of British exceptionalism, Henry Hyndman, founder of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), had similarly argued that, in spite of its faults, Britain was a country of unique liberties worth protecting.[51] Examining this position in 1907, in his pamphlet *Social-Democracy and the Armed*

Nation, Harry Quelch observed that although social democrats were fundamentally opposed to militarism, in the present international climate this was unrealistic. Instead, he proposed a 'National Citizen force' to replace the standing army, empowering people to actively protect their own individual freedoms.[52] Acting on this belief, the SDF's single MP, Will Thorne, proposed a 'citizen army bill to the Commons' in 1908.[53]

Heightened sensitivity to the 'German menace' pushed many socialists to rethink the importance of the military in light of the perceived vulnerability of unique British values. Beyond the practicalities of waging war, however, militarist models attracted several thinkers because they offered a practical mode of organisation that could also achieve meaningful social change. In increasingly complex societies, if there were two values essential to those dreaming of reordering the present and then administering the future, they were discipline and organisation. Given also that a language of efficiency had captivated utopian thinkers from Plato to Fourier, military analogies were often seductive, even for political theorists with an otherwise anti-statist edge. S.G. Hobson, for instance, looked admiringly at the construction of the Panama Canal, an operation managed by the US military after French attempts to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans foundered, and incorporated a language of 'regimentation' into his guild socialism.[54] The politically nomadic H.G. Wells, who had devised a war game for children with the humorist Jerome K. Jerome,[55] similarly frequently adopted a militarised language of efficiency and organisation in his social speculations. Indeed, like Blatchford and Quelch, while abhorring war and proposing that in a socialist world it would cease to be a problem, Wells stated that a 'Socialist State' would nevertheless possess awesome organisational power if conflict threatened:

> Here will be a State organized for collective action as never a State has been organized before, a State in which every man and woman will be a willing and conscious citizen saturated with the spirit of service, in which scientific service will be at a maximum of vigour and efficiency. What individualist or autocratic militarism will stand a chance against it? […] Universal military service, given the need for it, is innate in the Socialist idea.[56]

A corollary of this fixation on organisation and efficiency was a pervasive image of industrial productivity transformed through an appeal to militaristic methods. As most utopian thinkers had theorised during times of productive scarcity, abundance was often

a pressing concern, as their hopes for a pacific society rested on the absence of conflicts over resources. Efficiency is a common theme in Edward Bellamy's influential *Looking Backward*, for instance, with his 'industrial army' offering the narrator an awe-inspiring lesson in the 'prodigiously multiplied efficiency which perfect organization can give to labor'.[57] With wages equalised, Bellamy's utopia also adopts a militarised system of ranks and insignia as a spur to individual initiative. Workers wear a 'metallic badge' made of different material depending on rank, and 'rank in the [industrial] army constitutes the only mode of social distinction'.[58]

Resistance to the inflexibility of utopian thinking was a characteristically liberal preoccupation in the mid-twentieth century. As many of the leading anatomists of the utopian mentality had fled experiments in social engineering in the countries of their birth, this antipathy had clear historical and biographical roots. Yet while Karl Popper, Isaiah Berlin and Leszek Kolakowski inveighed against the barbarities committed in the name of renewal in the twentieth century, anarchism as a political tradition had developed a similar critique significantly earlier.[59] Given that anarchists have often been intemperate painters of utopian fancies, this is perhaps surprising, but at the heart of the utopian project of a figure such as Kropotkin was a commitment to malleability that addressed the issues identified by these liberal critics.[60] One discernible trend in this anti-utopian utopianism was the ridiculing of the militarist language and motifs regularly adopted by utopian schemers. Reviewing Bellamy's book in four articles in *La Révolte*, for example, Kropotkin noted its popularity in the Anglophone world, 'd'un livre qui est immensément lu en ce moment aux Etats-Unis, en Angleterre, en Australie', and added that it had even led 'le grand précurseur de Darwin', A.R. Wallace, to 'déclaré dans la presse que ce livre lui avait démontré la possibilitié du Socialisme'. Kropotkin concluded that its success was explained by the 'pâr ce côté *construtif* [*sic*] du livre', which appeased 'la masse des travailleurs' tired of merely critical works, and praised the short shrift Bellamy gave to the wage system.[61] Nevertheless, Kropotkin was concerned that Bellamy's book contained 'beaucoup de préjugés autoritaires', and complained of his 'l'armée industrielle': 'On se croirait dans une armée de Bismarck.'[62]

For Kropotkin, seizing on this military language became a way of criticising the authoritarianism of a number of competing political traditions. In an article on Herbert Spencer, he noted that while Spencer's panacea was a weakly theorised contractualism, this still

stood in noble contrast to the 'military utopias of German socialism' currently ascendant.[63] While aimed at Marxism, Kropotkin challenged communal experiments in similar terms, denouncing their tendency to banish 'mankind … [to] … communistic monasteries or barracks'.[64] More broadly, when discussing the constructive power of free initiative, he offered a counter image:

> The theorists – for whom the soldier's uniform and the barrack mess-table are civilization's last word – would like no doubt to start a regime of National Kitchens and 'Spartan Broth'. They would point out the advantages gained … the economy in fuel and food, if such huge kitchens were established.[65]

The language of military efficiency that Kropotkin recognised in various strains of socialism was, for him, antipathetic to meaningful social freedom.

As it was a growing familiarity with Kropotkin's political theory that encouraged Read's turn to anarchism, it could be expected that Read would similarly repudiate this martial language and turn away from military models. While in his immediate post-war political writing this is the case, as Read, rather disingenuously, described both 'hating' the war and being 'unmoved by the general enthusiasm for the Allied cause', later in life he united his wartime experiences and his political philosophy.[66] The result was an idiosyncratic account of trench warfare seen through the lens of his anarchism, a politicised reading of the trench experience that jettisoned its associations with militaristic elitism. Where Benito Mussolini gloried in the 'trenchocracy … the aristocracy of the trenches' who could see what 'the blinkered and the idiot do not see', Read saw the promise of real democracy.[67]

Rethinking this period of his life, Read began by offering a narrative made familiar in accounts of the broadening of the franchise in 1918, that living and fighting with 'miners and agricultural workers from the North of England' instilled in him a 'belief in the common man'.[68] He added that their shared experiences confirmed the inappropriateness of abstractions like 'bravery or courage', and that 'fatalism' was a better word, with a spirit of 'solidarity' emerging among the soldiers that had 'nothing to do with the conventional "esprit de corps"'.[69] Qualifying this assertion, Read drew on Joseph Conrad to suggest that 'fidelity' was a better description of the fellowship that formed under fire, and tied this concept to his anarchism:

> Fidelity is the word I need to describe the simple idea … revealed to me in the First World War – the fidelity of one man to another, in circumstances of common danger, the fidelity of all men in group to one another and to the group as a whole. I read, either during the war or shortly afterwards, Kropotkin's great book *Mutual Aid*, and there […] found this simple idea enshrined in a philosophy of society.[70]

Extending this idea, Read noted the paradox that he came to understand the power of fidelity while engaged 'in the beastly business of killing other men', and observed that, for this reason, it was clearly not a 'moral idea', for it was obvious that the 'enemy' possessed the same spirit. Rather than inherently moral, he argued that fidelity was a 'social virtue', and was thereby 'inculcated, not by precept, but by example and habit'. The bonds of reciprocity and mutual support that made life in combat endurable could similarly underpin a society organised horizontally, but in neither situation would they exist without conscious nurturing.[71]

Read's stress on the cultivation of fidelity as a prerequisite for a new social order may seem to echo the emphasis on discipline in many militarist models of socialism, but there is an important distinction in the degree to which he presented variety as a social good in itself. First, it is important to note that he pointedly rejected the notion that his lesson in fidelity was a case of 'esprit de corps', and rather saw fidelity as a 'social bond' not restricted to military groups.[72] Read's case is therefore instructive, for while offering paeans to the joys of brotherhood in the trenches was a theme in even the bitterest war literature, no other thinker incorporated this idea into a libertarian worldview. On the question of difference, Read argued that the failure to recognise the value of diversity was at the root of 'the mistakes of every political thinker from Aristotle to Rousseau', and drew a distinction between the assumed 'uniformity' of individuals for these theorists, and anarchists' recognition of 'the uniqueness of the person'.[73] For Read then, mutual aid exists to 'the extent that the person seeks sympathy […] among his fellows', and amounts to a 'functional' rather than social contract: 'the authority of the contract only extends to the fulfilling of a specific function'.[74] In a similar vein, the importance that Read attached to education was a clear attempt to secure both diversity and a degree of social solidarity, while eschewing conventionally hierarchical relationships. Education, then, offered a more positive space for the cultivation of fidelity than the 'common danger' in which Read had apparently learned its importance.[75]

Although presented as a result of immediate experience, it is clear that this anarchistic reading of his time in the trenches was a product of distance from the event. Read read his developed political position back into his youthful self, to offer a unique formulation of his wartime experiences filtered through his mature politics. Given that his contemporary political writing explored a libertarian version of guild socialism that actively rejected the feasibility of anarchism, it is clear that it is necessary to treat Read's comments on his political conversion with caution. The war's failure to solve Europe's geopolitical tensions became obvious in the late 1920s, as fresh economic uncertainty demonstrated that despite the carnage, it was not 'the war that will end war'.[76] Read's politics developed against this backdrop, and as literary memoirists began to see the war in what they believed to be a definitive perspective and reached for clean paper, his inchoate political views began to crystallise. As the war began to assume relative fixity in European history, Read's politics also began to become a more defined feature of his intellectual project. The originality of Read's approach resides in the fact that while other poets and prose writers exposed the horrors of fighting, they tended to ally this with political quiescence. The chief British keepers of this wartime memory, of whom Graves and Sassoon are the most prominent, though Aldington is also an important representative, pondered the chasm between combatants and civilians, and raged impotently at the representatives of the Victorian values who led them to the trenches, but generally avoided direct political engagement. While other writers reacted with sullen anger, Read was unique in uniting his wartime experiences with a libertarian vision. While an *anarchisant* writer such as George Orwell would use his participation in the Home Guard to theorise a more democratic and classless volunteer force, no other thinker used combat experience to consider a hopeful vision of future social organisation that stressed the productive capacities of mutual aid.[77]

Conclusion

> That is just the way with Memory; nothing that she brings to us is complete […] God be thanked that […] the ever-lengthening chain of memory has only pleasant links, and that the bitterness and sorrow of to-day are smiled at on the morrow […] For everything looms pleasant through the softening haze of time.[78]

For a commentator like Paul Fussell, Jerome's anodyne musing on memory would be seen as the product of a time ultimately destroyed by the First World War. Yet later Jerome may have wished to revise his position. Motivated by an abhorrence of 'German militarism', and hatred for the 'offizieren' he saw during his time in Germany 'swaggering three and four abreast along the pavements [...] insolent, conceited, over-bearing', Jerome was keen to do his part when war broke out.[79] Too old for service in the British army, he found France 'less encumbered [...] by hide-bound regulations' and enlisted as an ambulance driver, being particularly impressed by the specially designed uniform.[80] But the western front stripped the war of any lingering romance:

> I came back cured of any sneaking regard I may have ever had for war. The illustrations in the newspapers, depicting all the fun of the trenches, had lost for me their interest. Compared with modern soldiering, a street scavenger's job is an exhilarating occupation, a ratcatcher's work more in keeping with the instincts of a gentleman.[81]

Whether these experiences put Jerome off scrabbling about on the floor with Wells and his toy soldiers is unclear. Nevertheless, Jerome's case further adds to the picture of a post-war disillusionment that nurtured silence. Cured of his anti-German feeling, Jerome campaigned for a just peace at Versailles, and like Read, the agreement reached in the Hall of Mirrors encouraged a turning away from politics, and a turning away from the past. For young men like Read and Aldington, the pressing concern was to make good the lost years and carve out the literary careers that they had dreamed of in their dugouts, not to exorcise haunting memories.

Yet Jerome's comments on memory are not without value. As the writers and intellectuals who fought the war returned to their past with a fresh gaze, it was true that these memories were inevitably incomplete, even if they did not loom pleasant. As Modris Eksteins has noted in his discussion of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque's book 'is more a comment on the postwar mind, on the postwar view of war, than an attempt to reconstruct the reality of the trench experience'.[82] Remarque's autobiographical comment corroborates this reading, and it is a position shared by the British writers who looked back to the war in the late 1920s. Read continued to look back throughout his life, but his memories of the conflict were shaped by his growing political conscience – a reawakening of the passion for social change dampened in the wake of Versailles. While there has been a tendency to posit a direct line

between Read's experience of the First World War and his subsequent commitment to anarchism, it is important to note the role of the present in moulding his view of the past. Perpetually returning to the war in his writing in an attempt to finally understand experiences that defied comprehension, Read continually reimagined these experiences afresh, drawing clear biographical and political lessons that were, in fact, shaped by distance. Writing to Read from Paris, a young Henry Miller correctly guessed the defining importance of this Sisyphean task in typically candid terms: 'What I wonder about you is – did you really die through the war experience? Or did you come out merely mutilated?'[83]

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