

Anarchism, Syndicalism and Violent Anti-imperialism in the Colonial and Post-colonial World, 1870-1940

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As an influential current of radical dissent in the period 1870s-1940s, the anarchist / syndicalist movement was international in conception, intent and structure; straddling the colonial, post-colonial, and imperial countries, it was also deeply anti-imperialist in theory and practice – playing a major role that has been effaced in later nationalist and Marxist narratives. The aims of this paper are, firstly, to recover the role of anarchist and (revolutionary and anarcho-) syndicalist movements in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles in the colonial and post-colonial world. This includes a discussion of different strategic approaches to these struggles, which shaped the form and intention of involvement. This paper, secondly, examines the role of revolutionary violence in anarchist and syndicalist involvement in these struggles. A typology of violent modes is developed – ranging from “insurrectionist” assassinations, to popular militias, to participation in broad armed fronts – and a basic distinction between the movement's “insurrectionist” wing (best known for its violent “propaganda by the deed” from the 1890s to the 1920s) and its predominant “mass” anarchist / syndicalist wing (which stressed large-scale, pragmatic and patient organising) is developed. Explanations for the use of revolutionary violence – which was by no means typical of the movement, but which took place on a scale far more significant than often recognised – are also outlined.

The aims of this paper are to examine, on the one hand, the role of anarchist and (revolutionary and anarcho-) syndicalist movements in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles. This paper also seeks, on the other hand, to examine the role of violence in anarchist and syndicalist² involvement in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles. In doing so, it will examine patterns in the anarchist and syndicalist movement, including the distinction between the “insurrectionist” wing of that movement – best known for its violent “propaganda by the deed” from the 1890s to the 1920s – and its larger “mass” anarchist wing, examine the role of violence in the struggles of each, and

¹ A version of this paper was presented earlier: Lucien van der Walt, 2014, “Anarchism, Syndicalism and Violent Anti-imperialism in the Colonial and Post-colonial World, 1870-1940”, Panel on “Transnational Dimensions of Violent Dissidence”, Fourth Global International Studies Conference, World International Studies Committee (WISC), Frankfurt, Germany, 6-9 August 2014.

² From this point onwards, “syndicalism” will be taken to include both anarcho-syndicalism and revolutionary syndicalism, unless otherwise stated.

suggest, in doing so, both a typology of anarchist and syndicalist anti-imperialist violence, and an explanation of its causes.

As influential movements of radical dissent in the period of the 1870s to the 1940s,³ the anarchists and syndicalists were active in the colonial and postcolonial world as well as in the imperialist centres. These movements were international in conception, intent and structure; transnational networks, based on the circulation of militants, on immigration, and on a radical press, played a key role in constituting the movement, in developing and standardising its ideas, in enabling cooperation, and in diffusing repertoires of action.⁴

The focus of this paper will be on the period of the 1870s to the 1940s, because this is better documented, and for reasons of space: it must be stressed that the 1950s onwards saw anarchists and syndicalists retain and gain an important influence in a range of countries, and undergo periodic revivals – not least in recent years. The focus of this paper, in examining anarchist and syndicalist participation in these struggles will also be on the colonial and postcolonial world, again primarily for reasons of space: it must also be stressed here that there was a powerful tradition of opposition to imperialism and national and racial oppression by anarchists and syndicalists in the imperialist centres.⁵ And, finally, I do not want to suggest that such a phenomenon exists as “Southern” or “third world” anarchism or syndicalism: its networks and structures straddled the colonial, postcolonial, and imperial countries, and it was “internationalist in principle and imagination,” and “global in its creation, organisation, reach and aspirations.”⁶

Anarchism, syndicalism as important global movements

The influence of anarchism and syndicalism in the period of the 1870s to the 1940s – not least, outside of the North Atlantic region – has been increasingly recognized in the literature, Benedict Anderson arguing that it constituted an immense “gravitational force,” “the dominant element in the self-consciously internationalist radical Left” from the 1870s, and “the main vehicle of global opposition to industrial capitalism, autocracy, latifundism, and imperialism” by the turn of the century.⁷ More modestly, Eric Hobsbawm conceded that “in 1905-1914,” the Marxist left was “in most countries ... on the fringe of the revolutionary movement,” and “the bulk of the revolutionary left was anarcho-syndicalist, or at least much closer to the ideas and the mood of anarcho-syndicalism.”⁸ The present author has, with Michael Schmidt, and on the basis of a global historical overview of the movement, disputed

³ I certainly do not want to suggest that the history of the anarchist and syndicalist movement is *confined* to this period.

⁴ See, *inter alia*, BANTMAN, C. (2006) Internationalism without an International? Cross-channel anarchist networks, 1880-1914. *Revue Belge de Philologie et D'Histoire*, 84, 961-981., 974-979; VAN DER WALT, L. & HIRSCH, S. J. (2010b) Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism: the colonial and post-colonial experience, 1870–1940. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill., li-iv.

⁵ For a partial overview of this tradition in the imperialist centres, see Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The revolutionary class politics of anarchism and syndicalism*, AK Press, 2009, 211-218.

⁶ VAN DER WALT, L. & HIRSCH, S. J. (2010b) Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism: the colonial and post-colonial experience, 1870–1940. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill., iv.

⁷ ANDERSON, B. (2006) *Under Three Flags: anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination*, Verso., 2, 54.

⁸ HOBBSAWM, E. (1993) *Revolutionaries*, London, Abacus., 72-3.

the claim that anarchism was “never more than a minority attraction,”⁹ showing that “mass anarchist and syndicalist movements emerged in a number of regions, notably parts of Europe, the Americas and East Asia,” and had “an enormous impact on the history of working class and peasant movements, and on the left more generally.”¹ This global spread was closely linked to international networks: if the anarchists and syndicalists rarely managed to establish lasting Internationals, they were closely connected by “informal internationalism.”¹⁰

The anarchist and syndicalist role in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles has generally been ignored, both in standard overviews of anarchism, as well as in accounts of the radical left role in such struggles. This reflects, in part, the North Atlantic focus of most overviews of anarchist and syndicalist history, which tend to elide the three quarters of humanity that comprised the colonial and postcolonial world, as well as ignore anarchist and syndicalist thought and praxis on these struggles.¹¹ Related to this is a general tendency in the literature to conflate radical left engagement with in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles with *Marxist* engagement, evident both from discussions of the relation between socialist and nationalist struggles,¹² and from examinations of left involvement in anti-imperialist movements.¹³

This perception is now, however, starting to change, with range of recent interventions that have engaged with East and South Asia, southern and North Africa, Eastern Europe and Ireland, and the Caribbean and Latin America.¹⁴ That said, there is a well-established – and growing – literature that demonstrates a long history of anarchist and syndicalist involvement in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles, dating from the anarchist/ syndicalist inception in the International Workingmen’s Association (the “First International”) of 1864-1877.

⁹ KEDWARD, R. (1971) *The Anarchists: the men who shocked an era*, London/ New York, Library of the Twentieth Century., 120.

¹⁰ BANTMAN, C. (2006) Internationalism without an International? Cross-channel anarchist networks, 1880-1914. *Revue Belge de Philologie et D'Histoire*, 84, 961-981., 974-979.

¹¹ George Woodcock’s classic study ignored Asia and Africa, and only looked at one case of a colonial society within Europe itself (the Ukraine); Latin America garnered only three pages: WOODCOCK, G. (1975) *Anarchism: a history of libertarian ideas and movements*, Penguin., 401-403. The work of James Joll reflects the same imbalance: JOLL, J. (1964) *The Anarchists*, London, Methuen and Co., 175, 184-188, 217, 221-223, 239. Studies by Daniel Guérin and Roderick Kedward fare no better, offering only a brief treatment of the Ukraine: GUÉRIN, D. (1970) *Anarchism: from theory to practice*, New York, Monthly Review Press., 98-101; KEDWARD, R. (1971) *The Anarchists: the men who shocked an era*, London/ New York, Library of the Twentieth Century., 81-83. Like Woodcock and Joll, neither Guérin nor Kedward considered how the Ukrainian anarchist movement – one of the most important of all anarchist movements – explicitly located itself within the national independence struggle that defined Ukrainian politics. Peter Marshall’s more recent study allocated only 2 out of 41 chapters (or 33 pages out of 706), to the colonial and postcolonial world, and issues of anti-imperialism barely featured: MARSHALL, P. (1994) *Demanding the Impossible: a history of anarchism*, London, Fontana Press., 473-475, 504-535. Tangential discussions on medieval religious radicals, ancient Greece and the New Right – by way of comparison – occupied 3 chapters and 26 pages: 66-73, 86-95, 559-565.

¹² Thus, left debates over anti-imperialism are typically reduced to the ostensibly contrasting position of Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Mao Zedong etc. For example, BLAUT, J. (1987) *The National Question: Decolonizing the theory of nationalism*, London, Zed.; NIMNI, E. (1985) Great Historical Failure: Marxist theories of nationalism. *Capital and Class*, 58-82.

¹³ E.g. SETH, S. (1995) *Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics: the case of India*, New Dehli, Thousand Oaks, London, Sage.; SHERLOCK, S. (1998) Berlin, Moscow and Bombay: the Marxism that India inherited. *South Asia: journal of South Asian studies*, 21, 63-76., 63-76; TUROK, B. (Ed.) (1990) *Revolutionary Thought in the Twentieth Century*, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, Institute for African Alternatives..

¹⁴ See e.g. ANDERSON, B. (2006) *Under Three Flags: anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination*, Verso.; VAN DER WALT, L. & HIRSCH, S. J. (Eds.) (2010a) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill.; RAMNATH, M. (2011) *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar movement charted global radicalism and attempted to overthrow the British Empire*, University of California Press.

Rethinking anarchist violence: militias, coalitions, cells, lone wolves

While such anarchist/ syndicalist involvement sometimes involved violence – and, as will be indicated later, largely accepted that violence had a role to play in revolutionary struggle – it would be mistaken to reduce anarchist/ syndicalist activities, including involvement in such struggles, to violent activity: violence in such struggles was by no means an anarchist or syndicalist preserve, nor was it introduced by the anarchists; and, as elsewhere, much anarchist and syndicalist activity was, in fact, relatively peaceful and pragmatic.

The violent stereotype of anarchism (and by extension, of anarcho- and revolutionary syndicalism) rests, first and foremost, on a notorious spate of assassinations and bombings undertaken from the late 1880s and into the 1910s by a wing of the anarchists. This wing, the insurrectionist anarchists, advocated “propaganda by the deed” as their core strategy i.e. armed propaganda for their cause, targeting elite political and economic personnel and associated institutions in order to weaken the system and awaken the popular classes.

The insurrectionist anarchists operated on a fairly global stage (albeit with activities heavily concentrated in Western Europe), and their targets were prominent: successful assassinations included heads of states of the United States, France, Spain and Austria; failed attempts included the Japanese emperor, the Turkish sultan,¹⁵ and the Iranian shah;¹⁶ major bombings included Wall Street in 1920. Their activities have recently been recalled in the press, and been dubbed the first wave of modern “terrorism,” the “anarchist wave,”¹⁷ evoked controversies about the extent to which the “anarchist” wave – and the anarchist actions – parallels a contemporary “religious” wave.

Without entering this debate, I would argue that the global diffusion of “propaganda by the deed” indicates that the networks of the movement provided a key mechanism for the international diffusion of a certain repertoire of action – as well as of the requisite technical skills for this sort of action.

I will add that that there are several confluences in the “wave” theory that greatly undermine its usefulness, and indicate that the violent stereotype of anarchism is misleading – albeit not for the reasons that may be supposed. The anarchist and syndicalist movement was rather *more* violent than a focus on an “anarchist” wave from the 1880s into the 1910s, would suggest; most anarchist and syndicalist violence was not undertaken by the insurrectionists, nor through the characteristic insurrectionist structures – lone actors and isolated cells – but through militias and similar structures linked to mass organizations; and its peak was the period from the late 1910s into the 1940s, and not the 1880s into the 1910s.

¹⁵ YILMAZ, I. (2014) Anti-Anarchism and Security Perceptions during the Hamidian Era. *Zapruder World: An international journal for the history of social conflict*, 1.

¹⁶ VIZETELLY, E. A. (1911) *The Anarchists: their faith and their record*, Edinburgh, Turnbull and Spears Printers., 261.

¹⁷ Notably, RAPOPORT, D. C. (2004) Modern Terror: The four waves. IN CRONIN, A. & LUDES, J. (Eds.) *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a grand strategy*. Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press. and SEDGWICK, M. (2007) Inspiration and the Origins of Global Waves of Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 97-112.

To clarify: in the first instance, conflating anarchism with the *insurrectionist* anarchists is misleading, since this was a minority strand amongst the anarchists, even for the period of the 1880s to the 1910s. The majority of anarchists were, to use the terms I have helped develop elsewhere,¹⁸ “mass” anarchists: while the insurrectionists, who held that all reforms were futile, and all mass organizations including trade unions pregnant with authoritarian dangers, hoped to use armed struggle to evoke a spontaneous mass revolution, the mass anarchists – among them, the syndicalists -- stressed patient mass mobilization and education, and fights for immediate improvements, hoping thereby to create the stable mass formations and entrenched revolutionary consciousness that would enable a revolutionary uprising. , engaged in immediate struggles around issues of rights and incomes, and was, on the whole, remarkably pragmatic and flexible – certainly as compared to the insurrectionists.

These ideas, which preceded those of the insurrectionists, dated back to the inception of anarchism in the International Workingmen’s Association (the “First International,” 1864-1877), and the first “wave” of syndicalism, which saw syndicalist unions emerge from the late 1860s into the 1880s in Cuba, Mexico, Spain and the United States.¹⁹ In this early period, this mode of activity seems to have been diffused through the informal networks of the movement, as well as through the more formal structures of the First International, and its short-lived successor, the Anti-Authoritarian (or “Black”) International formed in 1881.²⁰

Second, it is not altogether accurate to speak of the wave of assassinations and bombings undertaken from the 1880s into the 1910s as an “anarchist” wave – or conversely, to reduce anarchist violence to that period. The activities of the anarchists – including of the insurrectionist “propaganda by the deed” anarchists – were only one component of the political violence of the 1880s to the 1920s. Even if the list of participants is restricted to those who engaged in bombings and assassinations, and even if the notion of an identifiable first “terrorist wave” is accepted, then it must include nationalists, including Irish and Indian militants, labour activists like the 1910 *Los Angeles Times* bombers, and Russian groups like the populists. It is therefore misleading to speak of a distinctly “anarchist” wave, even if anarchists innovated several methods of attack.²¹

Conversely, most anarchist and syndicalist violence – if by violence we mean casualties and injuries –was *not* committed by the insurrectionist anarchists. Even if we accept the figures given by Jensen for the “anarchist wave” – 160 deaths and 500 injuries attributable to anarchists for 1880-1914 --²² it must be noted, on the one hand, that not all of the deadly violence by anarchists in this period undertaken by the advocates of “propaganda

¹⁸ Michael Schmidt and I develop the basic distinction, used here, between “insurrectionist” and “mass” anarchism in VAN DER WALT, L. & SCHMIDT, M. (2009) *Black Flame: the revolutionary class politics of anarchism and syndicalism*, San Francisco, Edinburgh, AK Press. chapter 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 155-159.

²⁰ The two largest affiliates of the Black International were, in fact, American and Mexican.

²¹ Contra. JENSEN, R. B. (2009) The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880–1930s. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21, 89-109.; RAPOPORT, D. C. (2004) Modern Terror: The four waves. IN CRONIN, A. & LUCES, J. (Eds.) *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a grand strategy*. Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press. and SEDGWICK, M. (2007) Inspiration and the Origins of Global Waves of Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 97-112.

²² JENSEN, R. B. (2009) The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880–1930s. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21, 89-109., 90.

by the deed,” and, on the other, that many of the largest incidences of anarchist or syndicalist violence took place after this period. At least some deaths counted among those for anarchists and syndicalists for 1880-1914 arose from strikes and large-scale uprisings, such as the 1892 and 1909 rebellions in Spain, the 1914 Ghadar rebellion in India, and the Red Week of that same year, in Italy.

But, anarchist and syndicalist militias and irregular forces, as well as militias and irregulars led by anarchists and syndicalists – as opposed to the signature insurrectionist models, of the lone actor or the clandestine cell – were already in evidence by the 1870s, and exploded into importance from the 1910s.

Early examples include the militias linked to the anarchist trade unions in Chicago in the United States in the 1870s,²³ and the anarchist-led or –influenced peasant risings in Mexico in 1867-1869, 1878, and 1879-1881;²⁴ the 1910s opened with an anarchist-led armed rising in Baja California in Mexico in 1911, syndicalist Red Battalions in Mexico City in 1915,²⁵ the Easter Rising in Ireland in 1916 by union and republican militias led by the syndicalist James Connolly, the emergence of Black Guards in Russia from 1917 and the emergence of the anarchist Revolutionary Insurgent Army in the Ukraine from 1918,²⁶ and the rise of Korean anarchism from 1919, including a prominent role in the armed struggle against Japan. These foreshadowed similar developments in Bulgaria, China,²⁷ Germany, Poland,²⁸ Spain²⁹ and elsewhere in the years that followed – and the considerable size and impact of these militias, all linked to mass anarchism. (The mass anarchists also used secretive armed squads at times – notably in Spain in the early 1920s³⁰ – for reprisals against official terror; the logic of these, to *defend* mass organizations, was completely different from that of insurrectionism).

To summarise: mass anarchist movements did not routinely engage in violence, and much of the violence that they undertook was confined to specific period in their history; most activities by mass anarchists, including syndicalists, did not involve deaths or injuries, but centred on struggles for immediate gains, on patiently building mass movements, and on popular education, and in all of these activities, there was a considerable degree of flexibility and pragmatism; that said, when mass anarchists *did* undertake violent action, they did so backed by substantial organisational resources, on a scale unmatched by the insurrectionists,

²³ AVRICH, P. (1984) *The Haymarket Tragedy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.,160-163

²⁴ HART, J. (1978) *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931*, Austin, Texas University Press.,32-42, 70-71, 81-82

²⁵ ALBRO, W. S. (1996) *To Die on your Feet: The life, times and writings of Praxedis G. Guerrero*, Fort Worth, Texas Christian University Press.

²⁶ See e.g. SHUBIN, A. (2010) The Makhnovist Movement and the National Question in the Ukraine, 1917-1921. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill.

²⁷ See e.g. HWANG, D. Ibid. Korean Anarchism before 1945: A regional and transnational approach.118-120

²⁸ For Germany and Poland, see e.g. in NELLES, D. (2010) Internationalism in the Border Triangle: Alfons Pilarski and Upper Silesian anarcho-syndicalism during the interwar years. IN BERRY, D. & BANTMAN, C. (Eds.) *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The individual, the national and the transnational*. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.83-85, 89-92.

²⁹ GUILLAMÓN, A. (2014) *Ready for Revolution: The CNT Defense Committees in Barcelona, 1933-1938* AK Press.

³⁰ CASANOVA, J. (2005) Terror and Violence: The dark face of Spanish anarchism. *International Labour and Working Class History*, 87-91.

and using instruments like union-backed militias that completely overshadowed, in their capacities, numbers and impact, the best the insurrectionists ever attained.

For example, the anarchist Revolutionary Insurgent Army in the Ukraine had, at its height in 1919, around 40,000 troops, including cavalry, machine gunners, artillery, armoured trains, and at least one aeroplane.³¹ On 25-26 September 1919, to continue the example, it crushed several regiments of White Army forces so decisively that only an “insignificant part ... managed to save themselves,” with the “route of their retreat was strewn with corpses for over two miles.”³²

“Insurrectionist: anarchism versus “mass” anarchism

In short, if the actions of the insurrectionist section of the anarchists attracted global attention, it would be completely mistaken to reduce anarchism and syndicalism as a whole – including the role of anarchism and syndicalism in violence – to this current. This was always a minority strand, a status partly explicable by the character of its politics: completely opposed to immersion in immediate conflicts, and having ruled out the possibilities of winning small gains, such as in wages, and the value of building mass organizations, such as unions, parties (or indeed, popular militias), the insurrectionists closed the road to working with the large layers of working class and peasant people who were aggrieved with the system – but who did not see in immediate revolution a practical solution. Further, given their perspectives, the insurrectionists could do little *but* engage in either propaganda “of the word,” prophesying the anarchist revolution and propounding the means to bring it about – a position that, for many people, seemed quite abstract – *or* engage, as many did, in violent “propaganda of the deed” – which, by its nature, did not and could not involve large numbers of people.

The decisive role was played, in all regions where anarchism operated, by the mass anarchists – including their syndicalist offshoot. The mass anarchist current, the predominant one, was also notably successful in building a widespread popular presence: whilst the insurrectionists attracted media and police attention, the mass anarchists attracted the working class and the peasantry by the millions. In many regions, it overshadowed classical Marxism as a radical creed; in others, it proved a powerful challenge to other oppositional ideas. Syndicalism, an expression of mass anarchism, was especially successful, and at one time or another dominated the labour movement in countries as diverse Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, France, Mexico, Peru, Portugal and Uruguay; it also formed a substantial minority current in places as varied as Bolivia, China, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Germany, Malaysia, South Africa, and syndicalism had some impact on unions in countries like Ireland, the Philippines and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) as well.³³

³¹ MALET, M. (1982) *Nestor Makhno in the Russian Civil War*, London, London School of Economics and Political Science/ Macmillan., 87, 91.

³² ARSHINOV, P. ([1923] 1987) *History of the Makhnovist Movement 1918-1921*, London, Freedom Press., 143-145.

³³ There is an extensive literature on this influence, including ALEXANDER, R. J. & PARKER, E. M. (2005) *History of Organised Labour in Bolivia*, Westford, Greenwood Press.; ANDERSON, B. (2006) *Under Three Flags: anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination*, Verso.; BAYERLEIN, B. & VAN DER LINDEN, M. (1990) *Revolutionary Syndicalism in Portugal*. IN VAN DER LINDEN, M. & THORPE, W. (Eds.) *Revolutionary Syndicalism: an international perspective*. Otterup/ Aldershot, Scolar / Gower Publishing Company.; CASANOVAS, J. (1994) *Labour and Colonialism in Cuba in*

Likewise, the decisive military forces of the anarchists and syndicalists were never those of the insurrectionists, but instead, those of the mass anarchists. Here, it must be stressed here that insurrectionist and mass anarchists were not, on the whole, divided over *whether* to use violence: while a section of the syndicalists hoped for a relatively bloodless revolution, most mass anarchists believed that violence was an inevitable part of radical social change.

The distinction between the two does not rest on the issue of violence, but on the *relationship* between violent action and popular mobilization. The insurrectionists reduced their activities to propaganda, and their propaganda, increasingly, to “propaganda by the deed” undertaken by tiny circles of extremists. Here violence was meant to *generate* mass movements, and was, in the meantime, a *substitute* for mass movements.

By contrast, the mass anarchists generally stressed patient mass work, with violent means were seen as *subordinate* to this task. Thus, if violence was to be used, it should serve and defend mass movements like syndicalists unions, for example, through providing self-defence, enabling retaliation, or securing, illicitly, much-needed funds. Violence was merely *one* element in a wide range of tactical and strategic resources, to be used with due care – and, in practice, it was used relatively infrequently. While the insurrectionists moved in the narrow tactical and strategic confines of propaganda of the word, and of the deed, the mass anarchists were able to employ a vastly richer array of approaches; they were far more flexible, and far less frequently violent.

If the characteristic armed group of the insurrectionists was the isolated conspiratorial cell, that of the mass anarchists was the democratic, popular militia, linked to unions and other mass formations – an organizational form enabling large-scale popular participation and also corresponding to the democratic forms of the mass formations that they assisted. The militias, in short, were not intended to generate mass movements, but to *defend* and *extend* the principles and capacities of *existing* mass movements.³⁴ Thus, to return to the example of

the Second Half of the Nineteenth-Century. State University of New York...; LAFORCADE, G. D. (2001) A Laboratory of Argentine Labour Movements: dockworkers, mariners, and the contours of class identity in the port of Buenos Aires, 1900-1950. Yale University.; DIRLIK, A. (1991) *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press.; GORDON, E. A. (1978) *Anarchism in Brazil: theory and practice, 1890-1920*. Tulane University.; GORMAN, A. (2010) 'Diverse In Race, Religion And Nationality . . . But United In Aspirations Of Civil Progress': The Anarchist Movement In Egypt 1860–1940 IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill.; HART, J. (1978) *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931*, Austin, Texas University Press.; HIRSCH, S. J. (1997) *The Anarcho-Syndicalist Roots of a Multi-Class Alliance: organised labour and the Peruvian Aprista Party, 1900-1933*. George Washington University.; O'CONNOR, E. (1988) *Syndicalism in Ireland 1917-1923*, Cork, Cork University Press.; OVIED, Y. (1997) The Uniqueness of Anarchism in Argentina. *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y el Caribe* 8, 63-76.; VAN DER WALT, L. (2010) Revolutionary Syndicalism, Communism and the National Question in South African socialism, 1886–1928. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill.; VAN DER WALT, L. (2011) Anarchism and Syndicalism in an African Port City: the revolutionary traditions of Cape Town's multiracial working class, 1904-1924. *Labor History*, 52, 137-171.; WILLIAMS, G. (1975) *A Proletarian Order: Antonio Gramsci, factory councils and the origins of Italian communism 1911-21*, London, Pluto Press.

³⁴ VAN DER WALT, L. & SCHMIDT, M. (2009) *Black Flame: the revolutionary class politics of anarchism and syndicalism*, San Francisco, Edinburgh, AK Press., chapter 6.

the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of the Ukraine, it emerged from a process of union organization and peasant mobilization in 1917, and its rise was in direct response to an assault on those forces by Ukrainian nationalists and then, a puppet government backed by the Central Powers.

Did insurrectionism help build or inspire mass movements, and, in doing so, succeed in other ways? The answer is that while “propaganda of the deed” was successful propaganda, inasmuch as it publicized the insurrectionists on a global scale, the effects of such propaganda were mixed, and rarely what was intended.

In some cases, as in China, the violent reputation that it bestowed on the anarchists attracted young radicals to anarchism: once familiar with anarchist doctrine, as well as the range of anarchist strategies and tactics, most repudiated – in practice, if not always in theory – “propaganda by the deed.”³⁵ In other cases, as in southern Africa, the great majority of anarchists and syndicalists always explicitly distanced themselves from “propaganda by the deed” by adopting labels such as “Philosophical Anarchist,” by emphasizing their commitment to methods such as syndicalism, and sometimes, by completely disavowing the term “anarchist” itself.³⁶

In a third set of cases, among which British India may be placed, militant nationalists made contact with European anarchist circles primarily to the techniques of armed struggle; these nationalists generally repudiated the anarchist doctrine and vision.³⁷ At least some of these nationalists applied the lessons learnt: both Ibrahim Nassif al-Wardan, who killed Egyptian Prime Minister Boutros Ghali in 1908,³⁸ and Hemchandra Das, who sought to kill the District Judge of Muzzafarpur, India, that same year,³⁹ had associated with anarchist circles in Europe. As Sedgewick has pointed out, the “terrorist” wave starting in the late nineteenth century cannot really be called the “anarchist” wave, since it certainly involved nationalists and others – including, but by no means restricted to, those in some way associated with anarchists.⁴⁰

What is clear is that “propaganda by the deed” was a complete failure on its own terms i.e. it completely failed to achieve its aim of evoking a class-based revolution from below, and it did little to spread the specifically insurrectionist rendering of anarchism. Despite the dedication of its followers, the notoriety of its actions, and the terror it evoked, “insurrectionist” anarchism was – judged in terms of its own agenda – failure. Its lasting legacy was a massive increase in international police cooperation, as the panic generated in

³⁵ See DIRLIK, A. (1991) *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press., 63-76.

³⁶ E.g. HARRISON, W. H. ([? 1947] n.d.) *Memoirs of a Socialist in South Africa 1903–47*, Cape Town, Stewart Printing., 119

³⁷ HEEHS, P. (1994) Foreign Influences on Bengali Terrorism 1902-1908. *Modern Asian Studies*, 28, 533-556., 544-555.

³⁸ BADRAWI, M. (2000) *Political Violence in Egypt 1910–1924: Secret societies, plots and assassinations*, Psychology Press., 28, 46. I am grateful to Anthony Gorman for directing my attention to this source.

³⁹ Heehs, 553.

⁴⁰ SEDGWICK, M. (2007) Inspiration and the Origins of Global Waves of Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 97-112., 107

elite circles led to a series of negotiations that laid the basis for InterPol,⁴¹ promoted waves of repression against the left, including the mass anarchists, and an entrenchment of an anarchist-as-bomber stereotype.

Anarchism, syndicalism, anti-imperialism

Anarchist and syndicalist participation in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggle included This included activity in colonial and postcolonial regions, including parts of Caribbean and Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, Europe, East and South Asia, and the Pacific region; it also entailed militant anti-imperialist and anti-war struggles in the “home” imperialist states. Besides the direct participation of anarchists and syndicalists, there were also a number of “syncretic” currents in such struggles that, while neither wholly (or even primarily) anarchist / syndicalist, were nonetheless substantially and demonstrably influenced by anarchist / syndicalist positions and activists; these too are part of the story of anarchist and syndicalist anti-imperialism. It should be noted I do not include in this category -- nor will I discuss -- movements or currents that had some *parallels* to anarchism and syndicalism, but that lacked any demonstrable links to that tradition.

Before the 1920s, however, Marxists had (at best) a marginal presence in most colonial and post-colonial regions; only with the Communist International (1919-1943) was an active anti-colonial policy made central to Marxism. This had its own limits and contradictions, one of which will be significant in this paper: such policy's co-existence with the Soviet (and Chinese) imperialism, including the forcible occupation of parts of Europe and Asia.

Anarchists and syndicalists, by contrast, actively participated in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles from the 1860s. This participation was shaped by their larger project i.e. the complete removal of social and economic inequality, and of exploitation, which required (they believed) a revolutionary class struggle for a universal, self-managed and stateless and socialist order, wherein individual freedom was expressed via a cooperative and egalitarian social order.

“Carried out from the bottom up, by free association,” argued Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), this would entail trade “unions and localities federated by communes, regions, nations, and, finally, a great universal and international federation.”⁴² Such “nations” would be classless, having been reconstituted through the revolutionary struggle of the popular classes, expunged of economic and political elites.

The question that arose was *whether*, or *how*, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles could contribute to the revolutionary project.

At the level of *principle*, anarchists and syndicalists opposed imperialism for its coercion, discrimination, and oppression, obviously antithetical to basic libertarian positions.

⁴¹ See e.g. YILMAZ, I. (2014) Anti-Anarchism and Security Perceptions during the Hamidian Era. *Zapruder World: An international journal for the history of social conflict*, 1.; JENSEN, R. B. (2009) The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880–1930s. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21, 89-109..

⁴² BAKUNIN, M. ([1871] 1971) The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State. IN DOLGOFF, S. (Ed.) *Bakunin on Anarchy: selected works by the activist-founder of world anarchism*. London, George Allen and Unwin., 270

Cultural, national and racial diversity was intrinsically valuable, with every people “has the right to be itself ... no one is entitled to impose its costume, its customs, its languages and its laws.”⁴³ Since the “right of freely uniting and separating is the first and most important of all political rights,”⁴⁴ this included the right to be *separate*, including rejecting assimilation, as well as, implicitly, state-managed “multi-culturalism.”

Distinct “nations” or “peoples” were a building block of a “great universal and international federation.” Such “nations” need not correspond to any existing *state* boundaries, which were imposed from above by ruling classes.

The key qualification was that the content of “customs” and “laws,” and of “freely separating,” could not take violate the universal norms of freedom and equality upon which these rights of association and nationality (and the anarchist project) rested in the first place.

From a *strategic* perspective, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles could be deemed valuable *to the extent* that they contributed to the larger anarchist / syndicalist emancipatory project.

The movement agreed that mere substitution of an imperialist by a national state, nor of foreign by local elites, was far from an anarchist / syndicalist revolution. The problem lay in nationalism: an ideology aiming to unite nations across class divisions, and to create new national states, it reproduced the evils of classes and states.

This was evident, the first generation of anarchists insisted, in the disappointing outcomes of earlier independence struggles, including those of east Europe (where Bakunin had begun his activism) and the *Risorgimento* in Italy. Rather than national liberation “as much in the economic as in the political interests of the masses,” these were captured by elites “ambitious intent to set up a powerful State” and “a privileged class.”⁴⁵

The debate, then, was, first, could anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles be *transformed* into anarchist or syndicalist social revolutions that would break from nationalist bounds to create nations free of *all* elites and states, even their own? And second: if such a radical outcome was not possible, could the nationalist project nonetheless be considered as, in itself, a *progressive* step to a *future* social revolution?

Three main anarchist / syndicalist position on the political tasks in relation to these struggles emerged.⁴⁶ The first position argued that *all* such struggles were bound to be captured by nationalists (in the precise sense spelled out above: a statist, multi-class ideology), would merely replace foreign with local oppressors, and would achieve nothing for the peasantry and broad working class, it counselled *abstention*.

⁴³ Cited in GUÉRIN, D. (1970) *Anarchism: from theory to practice*, New York, Monthly Review Press., 68

⁴⁴ Quoted in ELTZBACHER, P. ([1900] 1960) *Anarchism: exponents of the anarchist philosophy*, London, Freedom Press., 81.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 68; also BAKUNIN, M. ([1866] 1971) The National Catechism. IN DOLGOFF, S. (Ed.) *Bakunin on Anarchy: selected works by the activist-founder of world anarchism*. London, George Allen and Unwin., 99.

⁴⁶ See VAN DER WALT, L. & HIRSCH, S. J. (2010b) Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism: the colonial and post-colonial experience, 1870–1940. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill., lxii-lxvii; VAN DER WALT, L. (2002) “Pour Une Histoire de l’Anti-impérialisme Anarchiste: ‘dans cette lutte, seuls les ouvriers et les paysans iront jusqu’au bout’”. *Refractions*, 8, 27-37., 27–37; VAN DER WALT, L. & SCHMIDT, M. (2009) *Black Flame: the revolutionary class politics of anarchism and syndicalism*, San Francisco, Edinburgh, AK Press., 297–321.

The second position argued that these struggles were *always* a progressive step forward, and that, since nationalism was their main engine, despite being a statist and multi-class ideology, the task of anarchists and syndicalists was to *liquidate* their efforts into those of nationalism. The anarchist revolution could come later, built on the foundations the nationalists laid.

The third position, which was Bakunin's, argued rejected the conflation of anti-imperialism/ anti-colonialism/ national liberation with the specific ideology of nationalism that marks the two previous approaches – obviously these struggles have multiple currents, historically including everything from religious fundamentalisms to Marxism-Leninism.

Therefore, anarchists and syndicalists should participate to push them, as far as possible, in the direction of an internationalist, anti-statist, and class struggle-based, social revolution. This would probably mean some cooperation with nationalists (and others), but a struggle to ultimately supplanting them i.e. a *critical engagement*. Given anarchist aims and principles, there were presumably *some* currents in these struggles that could not be allies, such as extreme reactionaries.

Bakunin, East Europe and Ireland

The “critical engagement” approach marked most anarchist involvement in the independence struggles of eastern Europe. Anarchists were active in the 1875 uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and participated in the movements in Bulgaria and Macedonia against the Ottoman Empire (now Turkey).

Anarchism in the Ottoman Empire was heavily based amongst subject nationalities, many of Christian descent. In 1876, the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta was among the international volunteers who joined the independence struggle in Bosnia.⁴⁷ Armenian Alexandre Atabekian (1868-1933) published the Armenian-language anarchist journal *Hamaink* (“Commonwealth”) in 1894, linking the Armenian national struggle to social revolution. He also helped found the (multi-tendency) Revolutionary Armenian Federation (*Dashnaktsutiun*) in 1890 in Georgia -- a group that did not shy away from violence, and was, in part, inspired by Russian populism.⁴⁸ In 1896, members of the *Dashnaktsutiun* seized the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul, threatening to kill hostages, and then fleeing into exile after a standoff with security forces and multiple deaths. A subsequent short-lived alliance with the Committee of Union and Progress (“Young Turks”) failed, and anarchists were among the victims of the 1915 Armenian genocide.

As should be clear from the above, anarchist and syndicalist activism in this region often entailed participation in broad, multi-tendency, national liberation fronts: it is misleading to set up a neat contrast between, for example, Armenian and Bulgarian nationalists and

⁴⁷ LEVY, C. (2010) The Rooted Cosmopolitan: Errico Malatesta, syndicalism, transnationalism and the international labour movement. IN BERRY, D. & BANTMAN, C. (Eds.) *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The individual, the national and the transnational*. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.75.

⁴⁸ SEDGWICK, M. (2007) Inspiration and the Origins of Global Waves of Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 97-112., 107.

anarchists in respect of the use of violence.⁴⁹ Thus, the Bulgarian anarchist Hristo Bòtev (1848-1876) became in the 1870s a leading figure in the Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee, linked to the Internal Revolutionary Organisation, which sought to coordinate armed independence groups. He was killed in the (brutally suppressed) 1876 April Uprising against the Ottoman empire.

While Bulgaria became independent in 1879, Bulgarian anarchists remained active in related national liberation struggles. Mikhail Gerdzhikov, for example, was among the founders of the Macedonian Clandestine Revolutionary Committee in 1898, which published *Otmusterie* ("Revenge"). In July 1903, this organization, now in favour of alliances with ordinary Muslims against the Sultanate, and also of a Balkan federation, staged a revolt the anarchists saw as a step to the social revolution.⁵⁰ As with the *Dashnaktsutiun* and the Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee/ Internal Revolutionary Organisation, this was a case of anarchists operating *within* larger national liberation fronts – rather than operating their own militia. That said, there is some evidence that the anarchists managed to secure control over a significant part of the armed forces of 1903, with uprisings in Thrace and Macedonia involving some attempts at implementation of the anarchist programme.⁵¹ (The 1903 revolts were defeated after around two months).

In 1880s Ukraine, influential figures like Mikhailo Drahomanov and Ivan Franko were influenced by Bakunin's views on national liberation and formulated programmes that "drew considerably from Bakuninist tenets,"⁵² distancing themselves from the goal of an independent Ukrainian state.⁵³ Anarchism reemerged in the Ukraine in the early 1900s, especially after 1905 when an insurrectionist current became prominent, but it would reach its apogee in the late 1910s with the titanic anarchist "Makhnovist" revolution of 1917-1921 – one of the most successful mass anarchist movements of all time.

Most presentations of the *Makhnovischna* in overviews of anarchist and syndicalist history tend to elide the fact that the movement operated in a subject territory long divided between Poland and Russia, operated in a wave of post-1917 independence struggles in Central and Eastern Europe, and competed and cooperated with Ukrainian nationalists. Beginning in 1917 with union and peasant organizing, strikes and land occupations, and clashing with Ukrainian nationalists in early 1918, it saw the amount of land under peasant control increased sharply from 56 to 96 percent of the total, administered by the traditional village body, the *mir* or commune⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Contra. *Ibid.*, 107, "This wave did not consist only of Anarchists and Narodniks, as is often thought. It also contained Armenian, Macedonian, Bengali, Egyptian, and Filipino nationalists." Groups like *Dashnaktsutiun* were by no means purely nationalist.

⁵⁰ BOJANEV, V. (1991) Bulgaria: the history of the Bulgarian anarchist movement. *The Raven*, 4, 31-35.

⁵¹ For an anarchist version of the events, see BALKANSKI (1982) *Liberation Nationale et Revolution Sociale: a l'exemple de la revolution Macedonienne*, Paris, Volonte Anarchiste: Edition Du Groupe Fresnes Antony.

⁵² CIPKO, S. (1990) Mikhail Bakunin and the National Question. *The Raven*, 3, 3-14., 11-12

⁵³ See HIMKA, J. P. (1982) Young Radicals and Independent Statehood: the idea of a Ukrainian nation-state, 1890-1895. *Slavic Review*, 41, 219-235., 219-221, 223-224, 227-229.

⁵⁴ DARCH, C. M. (1994) *The Makhnovischna, 1917-1921: ideology, nationalism, and peasant insurgency in early twentieth century Ukraine*. University of Bradford., 149.

A growing Ukrainian anarchist militia played a key role in expelling the German forces that took the territory following the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and who had launched a decisive assault on the popular movement headed by the anarchists; it soon controlled a rapidly expanding territory in which an anarchist revolution, based on land expropriation, and the formation of agrarian collectives and the establishment of industrial self-management.⁵⁵ This was coordinated through federations and congresses of *soviets*, which also ensured that the militia, now the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of the Ukraine, remained under soldier, peasant and worker control. Opposing Austrian, German and Russian control, and defending its position with the use a large militia that controlled vast swathes of territory, the movement was both a revolutionary movement of the popular classes, and a movement fighting for Ukrainian independence, but with national liberation was viewed in revolutionary terms. It's Revolutionary Military Council stated in 1919: "When speaking of Ukrainian independence, we do not mean national independence in Petliura's sense but the social independence of workers and peasants."⁵⁶

The new Ukraine was to be free of invading White Armies, of the incipient Ukrainian national States like the *Rada* and the Directory, of the Petliurist nationalists and of the Moscow backed "Soviet Ukraine." The independent anarchist Ukraine was to be multinational and egalitarian, with the militia proudly multi-ethnic and the Makhnovist movement violently opposed to anti-Semitic pogroms, and classless and stateless. This movement can be seen as a successful example of fusing national liberation with anarchist revolution, of "critical engagement" succeeding.

It was largely defeated in 1921 by the Bolsheviks, and the exiled Nestor Makhno (1884-1934) would now characterize Ukraine as an occupied territory, governed by the "Ukrainian cat's paws" of Moscow, and advise a "toilers' line on the notion of self-determination."⁵⁷ The Ukrainian movement would retain an underground and partisan presence: there were substantial armed Makhnovist detachments until the mid-1920s; Makhnovist émigré centres in Paris and Bucharest which actively supported underground work; various illegal urban, workers' and sailors' groups existed throughout the 1920s and 1930s, in increasingly difficult conditions;⁵⁸ among the partisan groups active under the German occupation from 1942 were some who identified with anarchism and/ or Makhno.⁵⁹

Anarchism expanded in Poland from 1905; the country was partitioned between Austria, Russia and Germany from the late seventeenth century. Initially a fairly marginal current in the face of rising Polish nationalism, especially it's more conservative variants, and

⁵⁵ Notable studies include Ibid.; MALET, M. (1982) *Nestor Makhno in the Russian Civil War*, London, London School of Economics and Political Science/ Macmillan.; SKIRDA, A. ([1982] 2003) *Nestor Makhno: anarchy's Cossack: the struggle for free soviets in the Ukraine 1917 - 1921*, Edinburgh, San Francisco, AK Press.

⁵⁶ ARSHINOV, P. ([1923] 1987) *History of the Makhnovist Movement 1918-1921*, London, Freedom Press., 209; also see MAKHNO, N. ([December 1928] 1996) A Few Words on the National Question in the Ukraine. IN SKIRDA, A. (Ed.) *The Struggle against the State and Other Essays by Nestor Makhno*. Edinburgh, San Francisco, AK Press.

⁵⁷ MAKHNO, N. ([December 1928] 1996) A Few Words on the National Question in the Ukraine. IN SKIRDA, A. (Ed.) *The Struggle against the State and Other Essays by Nestor Makhno*. Edinburgh, San Francisco, AK Press.

⁵⁸ See, for example, DUBOVIC, A. & RUBLYOV, D. I. (2009) *After Makhno: the anarchist underground in the Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s: outlines of history and the story of a leaflet and of the fate of anarchist Vershavskiy*, London, Kate Sharpley Library.

⁵⁹ See P. Ruff, "Introduction," to RUFF, P. (1991) *Anarchy in the USSR: a new beginning*, London, ASP.

often persecuted in the 1920s by the nationalist government established in 1918 for being “anti-national,” its influence grew rapidly in the 1930s.⁶⁰ The movement grappled with the “national question,”⁶¹ generated by the country’s history of colonial subjugation, and brief independence of 1918 to 1939.

Mass anarchists and syndicalists became a leading force in the Union of Trade Unions (ZZZ, formed 1931 as a nationalist, state-aligned union federation), and, following the 1939 German and Russian partition, the Union of Polish Syndicalists, the “Freedom” Syndicalist Organisation, and the Syndicalist Battalion militia, played an active role in the Resistance activities, with ambiguous relations to the government-in-exile, and generally a stance of “critical engagement”; armed activity included participation by syndicalist militia in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising.

In the Czech lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, anarchism emerged from the 1880s, part of the larger anarchist current in the empire, and active in unions and in propaganda work. In the 1910s, the anarchist Bohuslav Vrbensky (1882-1944) developed a programme emphasising opposition to the imperial state and an independent, stateless, Bohemia: this was accepted in 1914, with the formation of the Federation of Czech Anarchist Communists.

With the 1918 formation of an independent Czechoslovak state, a section of anarchists and other socialists formed the Socialist Party. One result was that Vrbensky held several ministerial positions from 1919 to 1922, while several other anarchists, including Stanislav Kostka Neumann (1875-1947), held parliamentary seats⁶² – given the critical positions these men took, though, this was not quite “liquidationism.”

Another Czech anarchist section steadfastly opposed the republic, but its association with highly unpopular assassination attempts by insurrectionist anarchists (including against Karel Kramár, first Prime Minister) hastened the movement’s eclipse. Developments in Czechia were part of the larger post-war turmoil in Hapsburg lands: in Hungary, for example, anarchists took an anti-imperialist position including opposing Hungarian irredentism.

In Bulgaria, meanwhile, anarchism retained a real role in popular movements, including notable anti-fascist actions in 1923 and 1925, laying the basis for a significant part in the victorious partisan movement. Rapid anarchist growth from 1944 was checked by growing repression by Russian-backed authorities, particularly from 1946.⁶³

Ireland, under British rule, saw a significant syndicalist current emerge by the 1910s, which sought to unite workers across sectarian lines in One Big Union, the Irish Transport and

⁶⁰ A partial account of Polish anarchism is provided by CHWEDORUCK, R. (2010) *Polish Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism in the Twentieth Century*. IN BERRY, D. & BANTMAN, C. (Eds.) *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The individual, the national and the transnational*. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁶² CABADA, L. (2010) *Intellectuals and the Communist Idea: The search for a new way in Czech Lands from 1890 to 1938*, Lanham, Lexington Books.34-36, 43-44. Also WHEATON, B. (1986) *Radical socialism in Czechoslovakia: Bohumír Šmeral, the Czech road to socialism and the origins of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 1917-1921*, New York, Boulder/ Columbia University Press.

⁶³ See BOJANEV, V. (1991) Bulgaria: the history of the Bulgarian anarchist movement. *The Raven*, 4, 31-35.; also Jack Grancharoff, “The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement,” unpublished manuscript, Quamaa, Australia, 2006; also REVIEW, C. P. A. (1977) A Short History of Anarchism in Bulgaria. *Cienfeugos Press Anarchist Review*, 27-32.

General Workers' Union (ITGWU) seen as a key step in this direction. The syndicalist James Connolly (1868-1916) envisaged socialism as based on “democratic control” through “Industrial Unions” without the “political, territorial state of capitalist society,”⁶⁴ and argued against the nationalist thesis that “labour must wait”: “the whole age-long fight of the Irish people against their oppressors resolves itself, in the final analysis into a fight for the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production, in Ireland.”⁶⁵

Actively involved in the 1916 Easter Rising, where the ITWGU-linked Irish Citizens' Army cooperated with Irish Republicans, Connolly was executed after capture. Syndicalist-influenced unions grew rapidly during the War of Independence (1919-1921), and there were a number of land occupations and *soviets*, but were increasingly opposed by the Irish Republican Army and the nationalist Sinn Féin;⁶⁶ such actions were not tolerated by the subsequent Irish Free State. Ironically early issues of the paper *Sinn Féin* had serialized anarchist luminary Pytor Kropotkin's (1842-1921) classic *Fields, Factories and Workshops*.⁶⁷

North Africa and Southern Africa

Anarchism emerged in Egypt from the 1870s, and was represented at 1877 congress of the First International, and again at the 1881 International Social Revolutionary Congress, which formed the “Black International.” While movement founders were from the large Italian community, successful efforts were made to recruit Arab workers through including multi-lingual propaganda and (from the turn of the century) “international” syndicalist unions and a Free Popular University in Alexandria.⁶⁸

Opposition to Egyptian nationalist appeals to nativism, and very real rivalry, did not prevent important cases of cooperation, nor undermine shared opposition to imperialism. Anarchists like Errico Malatesta (1853-1932) participated in the 1882 Ahmad 'Urabi revolt, aiming to exploit possible opportunities for social revolution. From 1881 Egypt was effectively under British control, although nominally part of the Ottoman Empire. Labour (including radical foreign workers) was increasingly courted by the nationalists and played a role in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution. Anarchists were in the Egyptian Socialist Party of 1922, with its anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist position. After self-government in 1922, the government of Sa'd Zaghul persecuted anarchists and other radicals.

In French Algeria, anarchism had a presence from at least the 1890s, through the revolutionary syndicalist General Confederation of Labour (CGT). Anti-militarism was central to the CGT, which produced the seditious *Manuel du Soldat* (“Soldiers' Manual”) and in 1913

⁶⁴ CONNOLLY, J. ([1909] 1973) Socialism Made Easy. IN RANSOME, O. D. E. A. B. (Ed.) *James Connolly: selected political writings*. London, Jonathan Cape., 271, 274

⁶⁵ CONNOLLY, J. (1910) *Labour in Irish History*, Cork, Corpus of Electronic Texts., 183.

⁶⁶ O'CONNOR, E. (1988) *Syndicalism in Ireland 1917-1923*, Cork, Cork University Press.; KOSTICK, C. (1996) *Revolution in Ireland: popular militancy 1917 to 1923*, London, Pluto Press.

⁶⁷ (1971) James Connolly, Irish Syndicalist. *Anarchy Magazine.*, 12

⁶⁸ See GORMAN, A. (2005) Anarchists in Education: the Free Popular University in Egypt (1901). *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41.; GORMAN, A. (2010) 'Diverse In Race, Religion And Nationality . . . But United In Aspirations Of Civil Progress': The Anarchist Movement In Egypt 1860–1940 IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill.

held a strike of 80,000 for peace.⁶⁹ Captured in 1914 by reformists, then contested by Communists, the CGT split in 1920, leading to a 1926 CGT-Revolutionary Syndicalist (CGT-SR) in 1926. Active in Algeria, it opposed French colonialism and discrimination, and the 1930 colonial centenary celebrations.⁷⁰

A notable CGT-SR member, the Berber, Saïl Mohamed Ameriane ben Amerzaine (1894-1953), also a member of the Anarchist Union. With Sliman Kiounae, he organised from Paris the Indigenous Algerian Defence Committee in 1923 (three years before the more famous *Étoile Nord-Africaine* of Messali Hadj). Saïl Mohamed also formed the Anarchist Group of the Indigenous Algerians, and edited the North African edition of *Terre Libre* ("Free Land"), opposing both "Arab aristocracy and French plutocracy." Algerian anarchist Albert Guigui-Theral was active in the anti-Nazi *Maquis* and Clandestine CGT in the 1940s, while Saïl Mohamed lived in secret. The CGT-SR had links to French Morocco, while Saïl Mohamed was among the Algerians and Arabs who fought in the anarchist militias in the Spanish Revolution (1936-1939); a section of the CNT at this time worked with Moroccan groups with the intention of fomenting a North African insurrection.⁷¹

South Africa, from 1910 a self-governing Dominion, akin to Australia and Canada, had internal social relations were akin to Algeria's. Always opposed to segregation, the substantial anarchist and syndicalist movement of the 1900s and 1910s actively opposed the civil and political disabilities imposed on people of colour, whom it had recruited to general unions from 1905, and organised into several syndicalist unions from 1917.⁷² The latter included the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA); syndicalist political groups like the International Socialist League (ISL) (and the separate *Industrial Socialist League*) had many black, Coloured and Indian militants, among them union militant T.W. Thibedi (1888-1960), Johnny Gomas (1901-1979) and Bernard Sigamoney (188-1963).

The ISL and IWA worked, at times, with (and also, within) sections of the South African Native National Congress (now the African National Congress), from a position of "critical engagement." ISL and IWA militants also working with that had a significant impact on the expanded Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa (ICU) formed in 1920, a massive, but loose and unstable union formation influenced with a "syncretic" outlook, which would spread into neighbouring colonies like Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe; here it was active into the 1950s), and South West Africa (now Namibia). The ISL and the Industrial Socialist League helped found the Communist Party,

⁶⁹ MITCHELL, B. (1990) French Syndicalism: an experiment in practical anarchism. IN VAN DER LINDEN, M. & THORPE, W. (Eds.) *Revolutionary Syndicalism: an international perspective*. Otterup/ Aldershot, Scolar / Gower Publishing Company., 34-37; also see FEELEY, F. (1994) French School Teachers against Militarism, 1903-18. *The Historian*, 57, 315-328., pp, 315-328.

⁷⁰ See BOULOUQUE, S. (1994) Saïl Mohamed ou la Vie et la Révolte d'un Anarchiste Algérien. IN BOULOUQUE, S. (Ed.) *Saïl Mahomed: appels aux travailleurs Algériens*. Paris, Volonte Anarchiste: Edition Du Groupe Fresnes Antony.

⁷¹ On CNT-Moroccan links, see especially, PAZ, A. (2000) *La Cuestión de Marruecos y la República Española*. Madrid..

⁷² E.g. VAN DER WALT, L. (2010) Revolutionary Syndicalism, Communism and the National Question in South African socialism, 1886–1928. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill.; VAN DER WALT, L. (2011) Anarchism and Syndicalism in an African Port City: the revolutionary traditions of Cape Town's multiracial working class, 1904-1924. *Labor History*, 52, 137-171.

wherein syndicalists played a role in the 1920s; by the late 1920s, the syndicalist faction disintegrated, and the ICU (at least in South Africa) collapsed in the early 1930s.

The Caribbean and Latin America

There was a substantial independence movement in Cuba by the 1870s, which was (along with part of Morocco, plus Puerto Rico and the Philippines), one of the few remaining Spanish colonies. From the 1880s anarchists dominated many Cuban unions, playing a notable role organising across the colour line and opposing segregation.⁷³ Suspicious of the early nationalists, many of whom were hostile to anarchists and the left, leading anarchists and syndicalists like Enrique Roig de San Martín (1843-1889) tended to an “abstentionist” position in independence.⁷⁴

This was replaced by “critical support” at the 1892 congress of the Workers' Alliance unions, a position maintained by the subsequent Cuban Labour Federation. Cuban anarchists and their unions played a key role in the separatist forces in the third war of independence (1895-1898), working with the Cuban Revolutionary Party of José Martí (1853-1895).⁷⁵ Martí's vision of independence with social justice impressed the anarchists favourably: some like Ramón Rivero y Rivero moved to a basically “liquidationist” position; most, like Enrique Creci, pursued however a revolutionary outcome, Creci himself dying in 1896 from wounds received in battle. Anarchists made a “huge” contribution to the Cuban independence struggle, including a notable role on the revolutionary army.⁷⁶

United States intervention from 1898 saw a semi-independent Cuban republic established in 1902, while Puerto Rico became an American territory. Puerto Rican anarchists like Paca Escabí (1885-?) and Rafael Alfonso Torres criticised United States imperialism in the region (as well as the national government). In newly-created Panama—where the United States had direct rule of the Canal Zone—anarchists opposed racial discrimination, as well American control and imperial ambitions.⁷⁷ In Cuba, anarchists opposed both neo-colonial collaboration with the United States, and the local elite.⁷⁸ While the movements in Panama and Puerto Rico entered difficulties in the 1920s, not least from the United States' military actions, the Cuban movement, which clashed repeatedly with the new republic, was on the

⁷³ See CASANOVAS, J. (1994) *Labour and Colonialism in Cuba in the Second Half of the Nineteenth-Century*. State University of New York, 8, 300-302, 330-332, 336-341, 366-367

⁷⁴ FERNANDEZ, F. (2001) *Cuban Anarchism: the history of a movement*, chapter 1. Tucson, See Sharp Press.; also SHAFFER, K. (2010) *Tropical Libertarians: anarchist movements and networks in the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Mexico, 1890s–1920s*. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill., 276-268.

⁷⁵ See POYO, G. E. (1985) *The Anarchist Challenge to the Cuban Independence Movement, 1885-1890*. *Cuban Studies*, 15, 29-42., 39-41

⁷⁶ CASANOVAS, J. (1994) *Labour and Colonialism in Cuba in the Second Half of the Nineteenth-Century*. State University of New York. 424

⁷⁷ SHAFFER, K. (2010) *Tropical Libertarians: anarchist movements and networks in the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Mexico, 1890s–1920s*. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill., 292-308.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 279-281.

rise, manifested by its showing in the 1920s National Confederation of Cuban Workers – the first island-wide labour confederation.

Mexico merits inclusion because of the role of United States imperialism. Here anarchism emerged from the mid-1860s, playing a leading role in early unions, including the General Congress of Mexican Workers (one of the two largest “Black International” affiliates), with anarchist peasant risings by Julio Chávez López (1845-1869) from 1867, and Francisco Zalacosta (1844-1880) from 1878, were followed by the more “syncretic” movement of General Migeul Negrete from 1879 to 1881.⁷⁹

Anarchists and syndicalists were involved in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), which exploded against the backdrop of the Porfiriato period that saw a massive foreign capitalist influence. The anarchist Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) of Ricardo Flores Magón (1874-1922) was active in various strikes and risings before 1910, one of the only nationwide opposition formations. In 1911, it partially implemented the anarchist programme in Baja California,⁸⁰ also playing a role in the separatist 1915 “Plan of San Diego” in Texas; its zone of influence included indigenous peoples. From Morelos came the Liberation Army of the South, the 1910s Zapatistas, a “syncretic” agrarian movement: its 1911 *Plan de Ayala* was co-authored by the anarchist Zapatista general Otilio Montaña Sánchez (1887-1917), with Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919); its land reforms, with communal ownership, bottom-up governance was decidedly libertarian.

By contrast, the syndicalist House of the Workers of the World (COM) entered into a short-lived armed alliance with Alvaro Obregón’s and Venustiano Carranza’s bourgeois Constitutionalists, hoping to push the revolution leftwards. Syndicalist “Red Battalions” clashed tragically with Zapatistas in 1915, but then threw themselves into the massive syndicalist confrontations with the Constitutionalists that followed. The emphasis of the syndicalist unions like the COM and Mexican IWW on “‘bread and butter’ issues combined with the promise of future workers’ control struck a responsive chord among workers caught up in a nationalist revolution that sought to regain control from foreigners of the nation’s natural resources, productive systems and economic infrastructure”.⁸¹ The syndicalist movement opposed the “wage disparity between Mexicans and North Americans”, and “discriminatory practices by foreign managers”.⁸² The 1920s saw vigorously anti-imperialist syndicalism explode again, as well as some anarchist role in rural rebellions, like that of Primo Tapia.

Another “syncretic” movement was that of Augusto César Sandino (1895-1934) in Nicaragua –regularly occupied by American forces from 1909. Exposed to “radical anarchist

⁷⁹ HART, J. (1978) *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931*, Austin, Texas University Press., 32-42, 70-71, 81-82

⁸⁰ Ibid., 100-103; MACLACHLAN, C. M. (1991) *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution: the political trials of Ricardo Flores Magón in the United States*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, University of California Press. 32-47; also SHAFFER, K. (2010) Tropical Libertarians: anarchist movements and networks in the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Mexico, 1890s–1920s. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill., 303-315.

⁸¹ CAULFIELD, N. (1995) Wobblies and Mexican Workers in Petroleum, 1905-1924. *International Review of Social History*, 40, 51-75. , 52.

⁸² Ibid., 52, 54, 56, 64-65, 67-68, 70-72.

communism” through syndicalist unions in Mexico,⁸³ as well as influenced by mystical and nationalist ideas, Sandino organised the peasant-based Army for the Defence of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua from 1927 to 1933. The revolt saw a growing emphasis on peasant co-operatives in liberated areas, with more formed in a large autonomous territory established in the peace settlement, and destroyed after Sandino’s 1934 assassination.

South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific

Anarchist and Commune, Louise Michel (1830-1905), deported to New Caledonia, supported the tribal Kanakas’ struggle against colonialism—including advising the rebels of 1878 on cutting telegraph wires: “The Kanakas were fighting for the same liberty we sought in the Commune.”⁸⁴

Following the unsuccessful 1896 Filipino revolt against Spain, Isabelo de los Reyes (1864-1938) was among the rebels jailed in Barcelona: there he was influenced by anarchism.⁸⁵ Returning in 1901 to a country now ruled by the United States, he organized a syndicalist-influenced (and short-lived) Democratic Workers’ Union that soon claimed 150,000 members in eight regions. Arrested by the colonial authorities, he was replaced by Hermenegildo Cruz, also influenced by anarchism.

Chinese anarchists like Liu Sifu (“Shifu,” 1884-1915) assisted anti-colonial militants like Vietnam’s Phan Bội Châu (1867-1940),⁸⁶ fostered regional -imperialist initiatives, and advocated a radical version of independence. Most followed Li Pei-Kan (“Ba Jin,” 1904-2005) in criticising nationalism as unable to address the needs of the popular classes, despite playing a progressive role against imperialism and warlordism.⁸⁷ By 1917, anarchists and syndicalists had founded the first modern labour unions in China, organising at least forty unions in the Canton (Guangzhou) area by 1921,⁸⁸ including in foreign-owned companies, assuming a key role in the labour movement in Peking (now Beijing), Shanghai and Wuhan,⁸⁹ and influencing labour Changsha, in Hunan.⁹⁰

Some anarchists worked with the Nationalist Party (*Goumindang*) to access resources, such as a major role in the *Goumindang*-controlled Shanghai National Labour University; similarly, anarchists used the *Goumindang* banner to take *de facto* control of

⁸³ On these influences, see BENDANA, A. (1995) A Sandinista Commemoration of the Sandino Centennial: speech given on the 61 anniversary of the death of General Sandino, held in Managua’s Olaf Palme Convention Centre. Olaf Palme Convention Centre: Managua, Centre for International Studies.

⁸⁴ MICHEL, L. ([1886] 1981) *The Red Virgin: memoirs of Louise Michel*, University of Alabama Press., 112. Also see HART, K. (2001) Oral Culture and Anti-Colonialism in Louise Michel’s *Memoires* (1886) and *Légendes et chants de gestes* (1885). *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 30. , 107-108.

⁸⁵ ANDERSON, B. (2006) *Under Three Flags: anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination*, Verso., 228-229.

⁸⁶ See DIRLIK, A. (1991) *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press.; DIRLIK, A. (2005) Anarchism in East Asia. *Encyclopædia Britannica.*; TAI, H.-T. H. (1992) *Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass./ London, Harvard University Press.

⁸⁷ For a notable statement, KAN, L. P. ([1927] 2005) Anarchism and the Question of Practice. IN GRAHAM, R. (Ed.) *Anarchism: a documentary history of libertarian ideas, volume 1: from anarchy to anarchism, 300 CE to 1939*. Montréal, Black Rose.

⁸⁸ DIRLIK, A. (1991) *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press., 15, 27, 170

⁸⁹ See DIRLIK, A. (1989) *The Origins of Chinese Communism*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press.. 178-179; PERRY, E. J. (1993) *Shanghai on Strike: the politics of Chinese labour*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press. particularly chapters 4 and 5

⁹⁰ SHIRŌ, N. (January 1975) Anarchists and the May 4 Movement in China. *Libero International.*; DIRLIK, A. (1989) *The Origins of Chinese Communism*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press. 214-215

Quanzhou in Fujian province. However, others, like Li Shizeng (1881-1973), effectively “liquidated” their politics into the *Goumindang* programme. Anarchist-initiated militias around Quanzhou in the 1920s – the “Movement for Rural Self-Defence Communities” – was followed by guerrilla actions against the Japanese empire in the 1930s and 1940s, with militias in which anarchists playing a leading role including the Korean-Chinese Joint Guerrilla Unit, formed in 1939.⁹¹

Chinese anarchists – influenced by the pro-syndicalist Shifu current – were also involved in clandestine work in British Malaya (now Malaysia) from the late 1910s where they pioneered trade unionism;⁹² a section also undertook (unsuccessful) attacks on the British High Commissioner and Governor, Sir Lawrence Guillemard, and on the Protector of Chinese for Selangor, Daniel Richards, in 1925.

Korean anarchism was, from the start, closely tied to the independence movement, and grew rapidly from the 1919 rising onwards.⁹³ The Band of Heroes (*Üiyöltan*) united anarchists and nationalists, influenced by Yu Cha-myöng (1891-1985) and Shin Ch'aeho (1880-1936), who wrote the 1923 anarchist “Korean Revolution Manifesto.” Formations like the Korean Anarchist Federation (KAF), the Black Flag Alliance (*Heuk Ki Yun Maeng*), and the Korean Anarcho-Communist Federation (KACF) followed.

Much Korean anarchist activity took place in China, and in Manchuria, where anarchists had substantial influence in the Korean Independence Army (KIA) through the anarchist general Kim Jwa-Jin (1889-1930). With Kim’s support, KAF and KACF anarchists helped establish a large anarchist zone in Shinmin from 1929-1932. Another current in Korean anarchism, however, tended to liquidationism, with figures like Yu Rim (1894-1961) running a political party in the first post-independence elections. Cooperation with Chinese, as well as Japanese, anarchists was always an important part of Korean anarchism – and further cooperation was attempted through the formation of an Eastern Anarchist League in Nanjing in 1927, linking Chinese, Koreans, Taiwanese, Vietnamese and Indians. The 1930s, especially the period of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) saw Koreans participate through formations like League of Korean National Front, which had a military Korean Volunteers Unit, and the Operation Unit of Korean Youth at Warfronts.⁹⁴

Regarding India, the major influence vector of anarchist influence was the *Ghadar* (or “mutiny”) Party, formed in the United States in 1913, a “syncretic” transnational movement, influenced by anarchism as well as nationalism (and later, also by Marxism). Figures like the

⁹¹ Information provided to this author by Dongyoun Hwang.

⁹² See CYONG, C. F. (1991) Origins and Development of the Malayan Communist Movement, 1919-1930. *Modern Asian Studies*, 25, 625-648., and KIM, D. K. K. & MALHL, R. S. (1993) Malaysia: Chinese anarchists started trade unions. *The Sunday Star*. Kuala Lumpur.

⁹³ HWANG, D. (2007) Beyond Independence: the Korean anarchist press in China and Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. *Asian Studies Review*, 31, 3-23.; HWANG, D. (2010) Korean Anarchism before 1945: A regional and transnational approach. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill.; also RAK, H. K. (1986) *A History of Korean Anarchist Movement [sic.]*, Taegu, Anarchist Publishing Committee.

⁹⁴ Information provided to this author by Dongyoun Hwang.

anarchist Lala Har Dayal (1884-1939) played a key role.⁹⁵ Ghadar groups emerged in Afghanistan, China, Japan, and in Africa (notably in Kenya).⁹⁶

In 1915, the party launched an unsuccessful armed rebellion in India itself, centred on the Punjab. Revived in the 1920s, its ideology still eclectic but with its focus decisively shifted from armed actions to careful mass mobilisation, Ghadar influenced radicals like anti-colonial martyr Bhagat Singh (1907-1931), who also had some sympathies for anarchism. A more explicitly anarchist current was developed by Mandayam Parthasarathi Tirumal Acharya (1887–1951), who had worked with Har Dayal in the 1910s, and who finally moved to anarchism after playing a pioneering role in Indian Communism.

Patterns of violence: forms, organisations, connections

From the above account, it will be clear that anarchists and syndicalists played a significant role in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles, in the colonial and postcolonial world. It will also be clear that this role took a range of forms: at one level, (naturally, leaving aside the “abstentionist” position), involvement could take the form of “critical engagement” or of “liquidationism”; at another level, it is also possible to distinguish cases along another axis, that of whether violence was used or not; once these cases are distinguished, it becomes possible to examine the relative roles of insurrectionist versus mass anarchists, the forms through which violence was organized, and the reasons why violence was used, when it was used.

In terms of the use of violence, the discussion presents a number of cases in which violence was *not* used: these include the Egyptian,⁹⁷ Panamanian, Philippine, Puerto Rican and South African (and neighbouring countries, where the syncretic ICU played a role). Among the cases where violence *was* used by anarchists or syndicalists, the following may be numbered: Armenia, Bulgaria, China, Czechia, Cuba, India (if we include the syncretic Ghadar movement), Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Poland, and Ukraine.

Within these cases several main forms of violent organization can be identified. The first is the democratic militia form: akin to that seen in Spain from 1936-1939 (and anticipated in earlier risings in Spain in the 1930s), this form could include multiple currents, but it was led by anarchists or syndicalists, and its overall ideological orientation was anarchist or syndicalist. The most striking example is provided by the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of the Ukraine, which was led by committed anarchists like Makhno, included a “cultural” section that published anarchist materials and undertook various other measures to promote anarchist ideas, and that prided itself on being accountable to regional congresses of “free soviets.”

⁹⁵ Besides RAMNATH, M. (2011) *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar movement charted global radicalism and attempted to overthrow the British Empire*, University of California Press., the reader is referred to BROWN, E. C. (1975) *Har Dayal: Hindu revolutionary and rationalist*, Tucson, Arizona, University of Arizona Press.; and PURI, H. K. (1983) *Ghadar Movement: ideology, organisation and strategy*, Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University Press..

⁹⁶ See BUREAU, D. S. I. (1934) *The Ghadr Directory: containing the names of persons who have taken part in the Ghadr Movement in America, Europe, Africa and Afghanistan as well as India*, New Delhi, Government of India Press.

⁹⁷ I am leaving aside the 1882 Ahmad ‘Urabi revolt, which cannot reasonably be construed as a revolt in which anarchists played an important role, as instigators, militants or beneficiaries.

The Mexican PLM anticipated this form by some years, and while the PLM began as a Liberal party (in the Latin American sense), under Magón, it became decisively anarchist in orientation; certainly its aims in Baja California were social revolutionary. As with the “Makhnovist” army, it included various currents – at least some PLM branches and militants withdrew as a result of the overt anarchism that came to dominate party affairs⁹⁸ – and it located its project within that of global revolution.

While both the Makhnovist and Magónista forces were substantial, and secured control for a time over substantial territories, the anarchist (or syndicalist) militias of the Chinese, Koreans and Polish appear to have been somewhat more modest affairs – modest, that is, in terms of power, they had a complex interface with nationalist forces. The “Movement for Rural Self-Defence Communities” around Quanzhou, in which both Chinese and Korean anarchists were prominent, was partly dependent upon *Goumindang* patronage. When Korean and Chinese anarchists subsequently secured a leading role in the , under *Guomindang*-linked Agency for Training People’s Militias in Quanzhou and Yongchun Counties, that party – alarmed at the emergence of a rival anarchist chain of command – ordered the Agency dissolved.⁹⁹

In Poland, syndicalist militias appear to have eventually accepted the leadership of the Polish Home Army, linked to the exile government – a move that secured arms supplied by the Allies, and placed the syndicalists in a position of partial dependence on nationalist forces. A parallel might also be drawn with the Red Battalions associated with the COM in Mexico, which were initially largely armed by the Mexican government as a bulwark against the Zapatistas, then approaching Mexico City.

In none of these cases did such use of official resources *weaken* the militias: on the contrary, connections with states, such as the *Goumindang* government, then based in Nanjing, or the Constitutionalists in Mexico City, secured access to weaponry and resources; nor did use of such resources imply subservience to these states, as the anarchist capture of part of the *Goumindang* military, and the rebellion of the Red Battalions in 1916 clearly showed. In other words, the use of resources did not dictate a liquidationist position, since all of these militias retained a high degree of autonomy, including the potential to rebel against their patrons. Deftly used, such alliances enabled anarchists and syndicalists to secure resources that they might not otherwise have had, thus increasing their capacities, without compromising their basic political independence.

A second form of organization was provided, in the Czech, Korean, Malaysian, and Polish cases: the insurrectionist anarchists who struck at Kramár and others in Czechia; the Korean Park Yeol, arrested in 1923 with Japanese anarchist Fumiko Kaneko for a plot to assassinate Japanese Crown Hirohito;¹⁰⁰ the assassins who struck at top British officials in

⁹⁸ See MACLACHLAN, C. M. (1991) *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution: the political trials of Ricardo Flores Magón in the United States*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, University of California Press.

⁹⁹ HWANG, D. (2010) Korean Anarchism before 1945: A regional and transnational approach. IN HIRSCH, S. J. & VAN DER WALT, L. (Eds.) *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: the praxis of national liberation, internationalism and social revolution* Leiden, Boston, Brill., 120, also 120 note 88

¹⁰⁰ See DONG-SHIN, S. (2007) Korean Anarchists Pursuing Third Way. *Korea Times*.

Malaysia, who seem to have had no links to the local unions initiated by anarchists; and the Ukrainian insurrectionist movement that started in 1905, and was heavily repressed by the early 1910s. It was not the use of violence, including assassination that marked these individuals as insurrectionist –for example, the Band of Heroes (*Úiyǒltan*) formed in 1919 by Korean anarchists and nationalists was dedicated to assassinating Japanese colonial officials¹⁰¹ – but the *aim* of these actions. As elsewhere, these cells acted sporadically, and their best efforts can scarcely be compared to the impact of the coordinated, sustained, and planned actions of militias like those of the Ukrainians and Mexicans.

A third form of organization that can be noted here is the coalition of anarchists, nationalists and others in *common* military structures: this is to be distinguished from anarchist *alliances* with other tendencies in common military *operations*. Such joint groups can be identified in several cases, including the Armenian *Dashnaktsutiun*, the Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee/ Internal Revolutionary Organisation, the Cuban independence army, the Irish Citizens' Army, and, in Korea, the *Úiyǒltan*, the Korean Volunteers Unit, and the Operation Unit of Korean Youth at Warfronts.

Whatever the differences, politically, between anarchists (or syndicalists) and other political currents, they were in these cases willing to work one another on immediate military issues. At times, this required a certain silence – or at least glossing over – the differences, by setting common immediate political targets. In the case of the Armenians and Bulgarians, the immediate task was clearly set out as the defeat of Ottoman power: as seen in Thrace and Macedonia in 1903, the anarchists might then seek to use the space to implement their own distinct programme.

In the Korean case, the anarchists were divided between those who decided, explicitly, that anarchist revolution was to be deferred until after the defeat of Japan – this was the approach of the Korean Volunteers Unit, and the Operation Unit of Korean Youth at Warfronts – and those who hoped to *merge* the struggle against Japanese colonialism – including military struggle – with a social revolutionary project. Here, a striking example of the practicality of the latter approach may be seen in the anarchist participation in the KIA, and work with the KIA, in creating the anarchist zone in Shinmin – an undertaken that closely parallels, in its coverage of territory, and survival over time, the Ukrainian revolution of the Makhnovists, and the Spanish Revolution. (The PLM rising in Baja California has definite similarities to these three cases, but covered a smaller area for a rather shorter time).

In the Cuban case, the anarchists seem to have had some hopes that the nationalists would veer towards a more revolutionary position. In the Irish case, Connolly placed his revolutionary politics – and his ongoing scepticism of the nationalists – on the backburner in 1916, for there is little sign of a clear revolutionary or socialist position being articulated in the Easter Rising. Possibly, Connolly believed that of circumstances would *force* the nationalists into a more radical position, since he had long argued that the local capitalist class, bound by

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

“a thousand economic strings” to Britain could never genuinely embrace “Irish patriotism.”¹⁰² In both the Cuban and Irish cases, any illusions of anarchists and syndicalists in the nationalists were soon shattered, as postcolonial capitalist regimes quickly emerged.

The final form of violent organisation is that of the “syncretic” armed force. This is not a coalition between anarchists or syndicalists, and others, since by its nature, the syncretic formation *merges* the different ideologies; it is not based on tactical or strategic agreement around a common objective, since there are no *discrete* parties who can undertake such agreements. Rather, each syncretic formation is *sui generis*: anarchism and/ or syndicalism are part of the mix, but are not present as distinct, independent, or coherent currents, and their impact can vary dramatically.

Three of the syncretic movements discussed here – the 1910s Zapatistas, the 1920s Sandinistas and the Ghadar Party – used violence in their struggles, with varying degrees of success; the extent to which their aims and praxis corresponded to anarchism also varied. The Zapatistas came closest, with control over a large territory, Morelos, with a relatively liberal social order, and some direct and ongoing anarchist influences. Sandino’s movement was eclectic, and like Sandino, marked by contradictory ideas, but towards the end, certainly put in place some elements akin to those of Morelos; however, a very direct anarchist influence was missing. In Ghadar, the anarchist ideas of men like Dayal (the “establishment of communism,” “free fraternal cooperation, and the ultimate abolition of the coercive organisation of Government”)¹⁰³ co-existed with nationalist and other ideas, and the failure of the 1915 rising in India meant that there was no real test of what the Ghadar social and economic programme would have been, in practice.

A final point is worth making here: the issue of transnational linkages. These played an important part in most of these experiences. The PLM operated in the United States-Mexico borderlands, Magón himself ran much of the PLM operations from California, the PLM’s paper, *Regeneración*, in Los Angeles, and the 1910 PLM uprising was joined by a large number of American volunteers. Sandino was exposed to anarchism and syndicalism while working in Tampico, Mexico. The Bulgarian anarchists were active in Macedonia as well, while the Armenians carried out armed attacks in Istanbul. The Korean anarchist revolution took place, not in peninsular Korea, but in Manchuria, while much of the activities of the movement took place in China (like the League of Korean National Front) or in Japan (like the activities of Park), and in concert with Chinese and Japanese militants. Isabelo de los Reyes of the Philippines was exposed to anarchism in Spanish prisons, while Louise Michel aided Kanaka rebels while in exile in New Caledonia. Meanwhile, much of the preparation for the 1890s war of independence for Cuba took place in Tampa, Florida, in the United States.

The anarchist and syndicalist movement in South Africa was founded by British – especially Scottish – immigrants, developed a base amongst local black, Coloured and Indian people, and, through the ICU, spread northwards into neighbouring colonies. The Ghadar

¹⁰² CONNOLLY, J. (1910) *Labour in Irish History*, Cork, Corpus of Electronic Texts. p. 25

¹⁰³ Quoted in RAMNATH, M. (2011) *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar movement charted global radicalism and attempted to overthrow the British Empire*, University of California Press., 94-95.

Party was founded, not in India, but in San Francisco in the United States, and it built up a global network; the mobilization for the 1915 uprising involved efforts to smuggle militants back *into* India. James Connolly, the key Irish syndicalist, was born in Scotland, and first joined the IWW while working in the United States. Polish syndicalists formed militias in Upper Silesia, then part of Germany, in the 1920s¹⁰⁴ – over a decade before forming militias in Poland itself. The French CGT and then the CGT-SR were active in both Algeria and France, and Saïl Mohamed spent much of his activist life in Paris, not Algiers. And it was in Paris too, that the exiled Makhno ended up, working as a labourer – his only additional source of income a stipend provided from Spain, by the CNT.

Patterns of violence: explaining the use of violence

The final section of the paper will address the issue of why anarchists and syndicalists, and “syncretic” movements influenced by anarchism and syndicalism, engaged in violence. Since anarchism and syndicalism – as previously stated – were not always violent, the use of violence requires some explanation.

To state this issue another way: in *theory* and in *principle*, almost all anarchists and syndicalists believed in the necessity of a violent social revolution, as they were convinced that the beneficiaries of the existing system, and the institutions that defended it, would oppose with force any radical change. But doctrine alone cannot explain the pattern of violence, for even if there was a doctrinal predisposition to violence, it was often *not* translated into violent action.

Why then, was it used in some cases? One explanation, arising from social movement theorists, is that the choice of certain modes of struggle is determined by the political opportunity structure: from this follows the claim that repressive political structures breed violent action.¹⁰⁵ There is some value in this argument: the PLM was operating, as was the Sandino movement, in highly repressive conditions, exacerbated by imperialist involvement; the same was true of the Cuban movement of the 1890s, under Spanish rule, and of the Korean anarchists, under Japanese colonialism; the Armenian *Dashnaktsutun* and the Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee/ Internal Revolutionary Organization, likewise faced in the Ottoman empire an intolerant opponent; British India was repressive, but Nazi- and Soviet-occupied Poland was far worse. In such cases, measures such as the 1896 seizure of the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul, or the formation of the *Üiyöltan* in Korea, or the formation of militias by the successors of the ZZZ, can be at least partially understood in relation as a response to an implacable foe.

Yet this explanation is, if valuable, nonetheless incomplete since violence was used by anarchists and syndicalists, or at least a section thereof, in contexts that were relatively

¹⁰⁴ See NELLES, D. (2010) Internationalism in the Border Triangle: Alfons Pilarski and Upper Silesian anarcho-syndicalism during the interwar years. IN BERRY, D. & BANTMAN, C. (Eds.) *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The individual, the national and the transnational*. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 83-85, 89-92.

¹⁰⁵ See the discussion in DELLA PORTA, D. (2013) *Clandestine Political Violence* Cambridge University Press., chapter 2.

open, such as postcolonial Czechia, where even anarchists briefly sat in parliament, and Ireland, which had representation in the British House of Commons; conversely, violence was not used in other repressive contexts, notably Algeria, Egypt, Malaysia, the Philippines and postcolonial Cuba. And further, it should not be assumed that anarchists or syndicalists would turn to violence *because* of a lack of opportunities to participate in the state, since the anarchists and syndicalists generally *repudiated* the state as such, viewing it as a fortress of class and elite domination; their project aimed to create a completely different social order, not to participate more fully in the existing ones. The absence of opportunities for participation matters less, if a formation has no intention of participating.

This draws attention to the point that an important problem with arguments that stress political opportunity structure is that inadequate attention is paid to how actors *perceive* the context.¹⁰⁶ But perception follows in part from *politics*, both in the sense of basic orientation, and in the sense of interpretations of situations, and of the development of tactics and strategies.

In the Czech case, for example, violence in the 1920s was undertaken by insurrectionist anarchists, whose basic politics tended to elide differences between regime types, and make a virtue of violent action: all capitalist contexts are basically viewed in the same, negative light, thus requiring the same actions. By contrast, in Algeria, Egypt, Malaysia and postcolonial Cuba, where insurrectionist anarchism was largely absent, anarchists and syndicalists generally seem to have judged that violence was neither feasible nor necessary *at the current* stage of mass consciousness and organization. The focus, then, had to be on patient mass work. Similarly, in South Africa and the Philippines, the focus was on syndicalism and on propaganda; the possibility of revolution, let alone the question of its armed defense, seemed extremely remote. The 1925 assassination attempts in Malaysia bear these points out as well: these were the work of insurrectionists, who understood the tasks of the moment quite differently, than the Malaysian syndicalist majority.

Assessment of the situation, and of the opportunities presented by particular junctures, also helps explain the 1915 Ghadar rebellion, and the 1916 Easter Rising. In both cases, the decision to move to armed revolt was informed by the view that the outbreak in August 1914 of the World War provided an opportunity to rise when Britain was weak and distracted; promises of German aid were a further incentive. In both cases, the assessment proved tragically flawed, and the risings were failures.

But the point is that the “reading” of the situation has significant implications for if, and when, violence is used. Likewise, in the case of the Ukraine in the late 1910s, the rapid disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian, German, Russian (and Ottoman) empires, and the rapid spread of a revolutionary mood, undoubtedly convinced radicals like Makhno – newly amnestied, and returned to his people – that the moment was ripe for complete social change.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

This example indicates a further factor: influences by *other* currents, and the need to respond to rapidly changing situations, and the effects of both of these on the anarchists and syndicalists. Anarchists might make their own history, but they do not do so in circumstances of their own choosing – nor in complete isolation from the influences of other currents. In the Cuban case, it was not the anarchists who initiated the various armed rebellions against Spain, but the nationalists, and the anarchists and syndicalists were then faced with the question of how to deal with an armed rebellion that was imminent, on a schedule and with a command structure beyond their control. And in such a situation, if the anarchists influenced a figure like Martí, it is not unreasonable to suggest that they, in turn, were influenced by men like Martí, who were convinced that there was not alternative to violent revolt.

Likewise, in East Asia, conditions of conflict and even war did not start with the anarchists and syndicalists; they shaped the options for the anarchists and syndicalists, as well as their perceptions. Following ongoing Japanese interventions, Korea was finally annexed in 1910 and subjected to a harsh colonial regime, with a major rebellion breaking out in 1919. It was in the 1919 events that Korean anarchism was born, as was the KIA and the *Úiyöltan*; with open activity in peninsular Korea almost impossible, but with possibilities for covert armed action existing, and with armed KIA rebellion in the borderlands, the anarchists were immersed from an early stage in a highly militarised milieu, and this shaped their choices, as well as their thinking.

In China, as the anarchists lost their urban, syndicalist base, and in the context of a country wracked by growing and violent conflicts between the *Goumindang*, the warlords, and Japanese intervention, the situation was similar. With options for mass work through means like syndicalism increasingly closed down, and a growing reliance on groups like students and peasants taking place, violent means also made more practical sense: organised workers have structural power through the ability to quickly and peacefully disrupt production; for peasants, who would starve if they disrupted their farms, the stakes are much higher, and the temptation to turn to armed action also stronger.

Conclusion

Analyses of the use of violence by anarchist and syndicalist movements that reduce this to actions undertaken by advocates of “propaganda by the deed” exaggerate the importance of a fairly minor strand of anarchism, the insurrectionists. Such analyses do not deal with most violence by anarchists and syndicalists, nor with its causes, forms or patterns. This paper has sought to provide a partial corrective to this approach, with a focus on anarchism and syndicalism in the colonial and postcolonial world from the 1870s to the 1940s; it has also sought to indicate the role of transnational connections in these developments.

In so doing, this paper aims, implicitly, to provide some sense of perspective: the famed activities of the insurrectionists were, on the whole, trivial in the larger history of the broad anarchist tradition; a focus on such groups ignores key developments, including

instances where anarchists and syndicalists became the dominant military forces in significant regions, and played a key role in anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and national liberation struggles. Significantly, of the three great anarchist revolutions, two – Ukraine 1917-1921, and Shinmin 1929-1932 – arose from anti-imperial rebellions; further, revolts anticipating these revolutions took place in two earlier anti-imperialist uprisings – Mexico in 1910, and Macedonia/ Thrace in 1903; this interface of anarchism with anti-imperialism is a striking phenomenon, which has potentially significant implications for the understanding of both anarchist and anti-imperialism – but it is elided by a focus on the anarchists of “propaganda by the deed.”

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