

# Internationalism and the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement: ideas, practices and debates, 1910-1939

Joshua Joseph Newmark

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of History

School of Languages, Cultures & Societies

September 2024

I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Joshua Joseph Newmark to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (grant number AH/R012733/1) through the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities. Research trips were also funded with grants from the School of History (University of Leeds) and the Royal Historical Society.

It has been an immense privilege to work with my supervisors, Professor Peter Anderson and Professor Richard Cleminson. I am profoundly grateful for the erudition and insight they have brought to our conversations and for the understanding, encouragement and patience they have shown me during these four years.

I am greatly indebted to James Yeoman, Kevan Aguilar, Nathaniel Andrews and Danny Evans for their advice, encouragement and kindness at different stages of this project. Thanks also to Juan Cruz and Anna Pastor from the Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo for their interest in my research, and to Jason Garner and Almudena Rubio for their archival suggestions. I am grateful to Professor Gutmaro Gómez Bravo and Professor María Sierra for hosting me with their groups in Madrid and Seville respectively. I would also like to thank Jim Jump and the International Brigade Memorial Trust for hosting me for a placement midway through the PhD, from which I learnt a great deal.

Upon arriving in Leeds, Stephen Rainbird was the first to welcome me during the socially distanced days of Autumn 2020 and has been an invaluable supportive colleague and more importantly, along with Emma, an excellent friend. All my gratitude also to Sophie Turbutt, my fantastic Spanish anarchist history comrade at Leeds. I am very glad that Henry Brown and Adrian Pole reached out to me when we all started our theses, as their camaraderie throughout these years has been a huge help. Many thanks also to Daniel Raya Crespi, Marta Duran, Adrián Pericet, Rosie Cousins and Lucy Slater for sharing the PhD experience and its various highs and lows with me.

I am also very grateful to my friends and family outside academia. Special thanks to Fran for helping me with my initial move to Leeds, and to Sonia for always being there for me on trips back to London. My parents' moral and logistical support has been indispensable, and I am so grateful for their belief in me, as well as that of my sisters and my grandmother, Judith. I would also like to remember Rob Burbea ל"ו, writer, teacher, direct action activist, but first and foremost my dear Uncle Rob, who passed away a few months before I began the project but whose encouragement was with me throughout.

Finally, thank you to my partner, Sara. Throughout much of this process we had to live in different countries, and Covid-19 travel restrictions kept us separated for up to seven months at a time during the first year and a half; yet her love, support and understanding, even while completing her own PhD in difficult circumstances, have been indefatigable. This thesis simply would not have been completed without her. To the many adventures to come – in Spain, the UK and wherever life takes us.

### **Abstract**

This thesis explores the ideas, practices and debates arising from Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism in the years 1910-1939. Despite considerable knowledge of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement, which grew during this era to become the largest anarchist-oriented national organisation in world history, this aspect of its ideology and praxis has often been invoked or assumed rather than closely examined over an extended time period. This thesis provides that missing analysis. It adopts an emergent view of internationalism, arguing that while it was an indispensable value and practice through which anarcho-syndicalists expressed and reaffirmed their distinct political identities, it was also an evolving and contested one that could be at the sharp end of profound disagreements.

During the period of study, anarcho-syndicalists responded to revolutions in Mexico and Russia, the First World War, significant transformations in the global working-class movement, the rise of international fascism, and a Spanish Civil War that had enormous repercussions outside Spain. Throughout this, they consistently sought to maintain relations of international solidarity with allies outside the national borders, and this thesis explores a range of vibrant ideas and practices through which anarcho-syndicalist men and women, both well-known activists and broader grassroots, expressed this intent. However, the movement also lacked consensus regarding the form and content of these relations of solidarity, and the thesis analyses various vigorous debates over questions such as the strictures of doctrinal orthodoxy, decentring internationalism, and class or ideological identities. The thesis therefore establishes internationalism as a popular, passionate but also complex and sometimes thorny cause at the centre of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism.

## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	iii
<b>Abstract</b> .....	iv
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	v
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	vii
<b>Notes</b> .....	viii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<i>Internationalism and the history of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism</i> .....	2
<i>Internationalism as project, process, and problem</i> .....	12
<i>Sources, subjects and structure</i> .....	23
<b>Chapter One. ‘The programme of the International [...] is today being realised in Baja California’: Spanish anarchism and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1916</b> .....	30
<i>Magonismo in the ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere’</i> .....	34
<i>A call to action</i> .....	42
<i>Debating the Indigenous question</i> .....	50
<i>The First World War: a new lens</i> .....	62
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	75
<b>Chapter Two. ‘The true internationalists’: The question of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism, 1917-1931</b> .....	78
<i>Berlin, via Moscow</i> .....	81
<i>The International: unity or minority?</i> .....	95
<i>Anti-bolshevist internationalism</i> .....	108
<i>Internationalism and the Esperanto project</i> .....	115
<i>(Inter)national industrial federations</i> .....	123

<i>Conclusion</i> .....	133
<b>Chapter Three. ‘Storm over Spain’: The CNT at the heart of international anarcho-syndicalism, 1931-1936</b> .....	135
<i>1931: contested narratives</i> .....	139
<i>Roles and responsibilities in an imbalanced International</i> .....	148
<i>Dilemmas of libertarian anti-fascism</i> .....	156
<i>Enduring difficulties: the IWA Secretariat in and out of Spain</i> .....	165
<i>The question of collaboration with other tendencies</i> .....	171
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	179
<b>Chapter Four. ‘The shock force of the global proletariat: Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism during the Civil War, 1936-1939</b> .....	181
<i>The international proletariat: an elusive ally</i> .....	184
<i>Crisis in the IWA</i> .....	193
<i>An ‘EMINENTLY NATIONAL’ struggle?</i> .....	202
<i>Other ‘Amigos’: the USSR and Cárdenas’s Mexico</i> .....	210
<i>Humanitarian internationalism: Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista</i> .....	221
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	230
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	232
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	241
<i>Primary Sources</i> .....	241
<i>Secondary Sources</i> .....	246

## Abbreviations

CGT	Confédération Générale du Travail/Confedação Geral do Trabalho/General Confederation of Labour
CGTSR	Confédération Générale du Travail - Syndicaliste Revolutionnaire/General Confederation of Labour – Revolutionary Syndicalist
CGTU	Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire/United General Confederation of Labour
CNT	Confederación Nacional del Trabajo/National Confederation of Labour
CRT	Confederación Regional del Trabajo/Regional Confederation of Labour
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya/Republican Left of Catalonia
FAI	Federación Anarquista Ibérica/Federação Anarquista Ibérica/Iberian Anarchist Federation
FAUD	Freie-Arbeiter Union Deutschlands/Free Workers' Union of Germany
FORA	Federación Obrera Regional Argentina/Argentine Regional Workers' Federation
FRE	Federación Regional Española/Spanish Regional Federation
FTRE	Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española/Workers' Federation of the Spanish Region
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IRA	International Red Aid
IWA	International Workingmen's Association
OPE	Oficina de Propaganda Exterior/Office of Foreign Propaganda
NAS	Nationaal Arbeids Secretariaat/National Workers' Secretariat
PCE	Partido Comunista de España/Spanish Communist Party
PLM	Partido Liberal Mexicano/Mexican Liberal Party
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español/Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
RILU	Red International of Labour Unions
SAC	Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation/Swedish Workers' Central Organisation
SIA	Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista/International Antifascist Solidarity
UA	Union Anarchiste/Anarchist Union

UAP	União Anarquista Portuguesa/Portuguese Anarchist Union
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores/General Workers' Union
USA	Unión Sindical de Argentina/Argentine Syndical Union
USI	Unione Sindacale Italiana/Italian Syndical Union
ZZZ	Związek Związków Zawodowych/Union of Trade Unions

### **Notes**

Spanish regions and cities are named in their Castilian form, with the exception of A Coruña and the Basque Country, in Galician and English respectively. All translations of foreign-language sources were carried out by the author.



## Introduction

This thesis explores the ideas, practices and debates arising from Spanish anarcho-syndicalists' sense of 'inescapable duty' towards 'the workers of the world'.<sup>1</sup> Anarcho-syndicalist internationalism was an emergent phenomenon, shaped by a past into which the 'memory of the First International had not faded' and by the aspiration to a future world order of equality and solidarity; it was a core and ever-present value of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, it was one whose role has often merely been assumed rather than demonstrated, and invoked rather than dissected. This thesis aims to provide that missing analysis, situating internationalism within the political culture and praxis of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism between the years of 1910 and 1939. It also seeks to identify the fault lines across which activists debated different approaches to internationalism, and to understand how and why particular actors articulated it in different ways at different times. Such an approach will offer a significant original contribution to our knowledge of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement, furnishing an in-depth analysis of the mediated and contested ways that it conceptualised and put international solidarity and comradeship to the test. This unique insight into internationalism in the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist context also makes an important addition to a growing interdisciplinary literature on the articulation and contestation of transnational solidarities.

In order to achieve this aim, this study situates Spanish anarcho-syndicalism within 'a broader history of the left and the workers' movement', but does so through the prism of anarcho-syndicalists' own evolving understandings of their place in the world.<sup>3</sup> This follows historian James Yeoman's important work on turn-of-the-century Spanish anarchist print culture, which discards 'linear' or 'all-encompassing' assumptions of what anarchism meant and remains alert to the movement's 'constant experimentation'.<sup>4</sup> It is also inspired by Kathy Ferguson's recent call for histories of anarchism which emphasise the agency of the subjects,

---

<sup>1</sup> From the preliminary motion on international relations taken from: CNT, *Memoria del Congreso celebrado en el Teatro de la Comedia de Madrid, los días 10 al 18 de diciembre de 1919* (Cosmos, 1932), p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> José Peirats Valls, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution*, volume I, ed. by Chris Ealham, trans. by Paul Sharkey and Chris Ealham, second edition (PM Press, 2011), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Danny Evans and James Michael Yeoman, 'New approaches to Spanish anarchism', *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 29.3 (2016), pp. 199-204 (p. 201), doi: 10.1386/ijis.29.3.199\_2.

<sup>4</sup> James Michael Yeoman, *Print Culture and the Formation of the Anarchist Movement in Spain, 1890-1915* (Routledge, 2020), pp. 5-6.

‘cultivating receptivity to what people do on the ground to liberate themselves’.<sup>5</sup> These ideas dovetail with a productive trend in the scholarship on radical internationalisms away from *a priori* assumptions and towards a recognition of the complex and diverse ways in which they have been articulated.<sup>6</sup>

The period of study, 1910-1939, begins with the founding of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour, CNT) and ends with its defeat, along with other anti-fascist organisations, at the end of a devastating civil war. Over the course of the intervening years, the CNT’s activists built the organisation into a colossus of working-class power with hundreds of thousands of members, saw it almost crippled by repression, and then successfully reconstructed it into unquestionably the biggest anarchist-oriented organisation in the world and a key protagonist in the Spanish Civil War.<sup>7</sup> A shifting national situation, as Spain passed through the end of the Restoration era, the military dictatorships of Primo de Rivera and Berenguer, a period of mass democracy under the Second Republic, and almost three years of bloody conflict, permits greater understanding of the ways that different local contexts shape the conditions and objectives of internationalism. Globally, this period encompassed revolutions in Mexico and Russia (not to mention Spain itself), world war, economic crisis, and the rise of authoritarian regimes. Grappling with such a convoluted period of national and international history has posed a considerable analytical challenge in the writing of this thesis. Nonetheless, this longer periodisation has enabled the study to identify continuities and ruptures, make important comparisons across time, and question commonplaces.

### ***Internationalism and the history of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism***

At the outset of the twentieth century, when French syndicalist ideas descended across the Pyrenees, they encountered a ‘rich tradition of indigenous anarchism’ which was already

---

<sup>5</sup> Kathy E. Ferguson, ‘Writing Anarchism with History from Below’, *Anarchist Studies* 30.1 (2022), pp. 7-29 (p. 12), doi:10.3898/AS.30.1.01.

<sup>6</sup> See for example David Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (Zed Books, 2013); Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (eds.), *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies* (Routledge, 2015); Kasper Braskén, *The International Workers’ Relief, Communism, and Transnational Solidarity: Willi Münzenberg in Weimar Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Danny Evans, ‘The Anarchist Movement, 1871-1939’, in *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish History*, ed. by Andrew Dowling (Routledge, 2023), pp. 331-41.

‘firmly entrenched within the labour movement’.<sup>8</sup> The libertarian or ‘Bakuninist’ wing of the International Workingmen’s Association (First International) had arrived in Spain in 1868, finding fertile ground and in turn giving shape to the country’s working-class movement.<sup>9</sup> Throughout this process of expansion and consolidation, the idea of belonging to an *international* community was intrinsic to Spanish anarchism: indeed, during the 1870s and 1880s, Spanish anarchists referred to themselves simply as ‘Internationalists’, regarding the First International to be ‘synonymous’ with anarchism.<sup>10</sup> The names of their early organisations, the Federación Regional Española (Spanish Regional Federation, FRE) and later the Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española (Workers’ Federation of the Spanish Region, FTRE), reflected an effort to identify as geographical subdivisions of an international movement rather than entities circumscribed by nation-state borders.<sup>11</sup> The Paris Commune of 1871 and Chicago’s Haymarket Affair (1886-1887) were fundamental events whose repercussions in Spain both demonstrated and reconfirmed Spanish anarchists’ identification with a wider international movement.<sup>12</sup> Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta and Grave were among the many non-Spanish names that formed a constant fixture of the Spanish anarchist press.<sup>13</sup> According to one historian, across the turn of the twentieth century, anarchists in Spain evinced a ‘remarkable’ interest in forming part of international networks and in efforts to build international institutions alongside kindred movements elsewhere.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Wayne Thorpe, *“The Workers Themselves”: Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913-1923* (Kluwer Academic, 1989), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> George R. Esenwein, *Anarchist ideology and the working-class movement in Spain, 1868-1898* (University of California Press, 1989), pp. 5-6, 14-17; Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy and Social Tragedy: Spain, a Laboratory of Social Conflict, 1892-1921* (Sussex Academic Press, 2020), pp. 21-23.

<sup>10</sup> Esenwein, *Anarchist ideology*, pp. 5, 35; Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936* (Harper Colophon, 1978), p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Angel Smith, ‘Los anarquistas y anarcosindicalistas ante la cuestión nacional’, in *Izquierdas y Nacionalismos en la España Contemporánea*, ed. by Javier Moreno Luzón (Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 2011), pp. 141-56 (p. 144); José Álvarez Junco, *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868-1910)* (Siglo XXI, 1991), p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> Álvarez Junco, *ideología política*, pp. 248-53, 421, 549-50; Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, pp. 31-34, 155-60; Clara E. Lida, ‘Hacia la clandestinidad anarquista: de la Comuna de París a Alcoy, 1871-1874’, *Historia Social* 46 (2003), pp. 49-64; Susana Sueiro Seoane, ‘Prensa y redes anarquistas transnacionales. El olvidado papel de J.C. Campos y sus crónicas sobre los mártires de Chicago en el anarquismo de lengua hispana’, *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea* 36 (2014), pp. 259-95, doi:10.5209/rev\_CHCO.2014.v36.46690.

<sup>13</sup> This referring to the Russians Mikhail Bakunin and Piotr Kropotkin, the Italian Errico Malatesta and the Frenchman Jean Grave: Francisco Madrid Santos, ‘La prensa anarquista y anarcosindicalista en España desde la I Internacional hasta el final de la Guerra Civil. Volumen I, tomo I, análisis de su evolución, 1869-1930’ (PhD thesis, Universidad Central de Barcelona, 1989), p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> Teresa Abelló i Güell, *Les relacions internacionals de l’anarquisme català (1881-1914)* (Edicions 62, 1987), p. 226.

Although the creation of a ‘national’ labour confederation implied greater acceptance of the nation framework by 1910, an impulse to look beyond state borders was also apparent from the outset of the CNT’s history, with its founding congress passing motions supporting French railway workers, protesting repression in Argentina, and in favour of studying Esperanto.<sup>15</sup> The new Confederation intended to unite, ‘when it is possible and opportune’, with ‘the other national worker organisations of all countries’, forming a ‘global Association’ with a view to ‘the total emancipation of all the exploited in general’.<sup>16</sup> Internationalism was therefore foundational in Spanish anarchism, and a consistent value and practice within the movement, even as it sank deep roots within Spain.

This thesis focuses on the anarcho-syndicalist current within Spanish anarchism, as embodied in the CNT. ‘Anarcho-syndicalism’ refers to a form of trade unionism that combines the autonomous, direct-action organisation and tactics associated with revolutionary syndicalism with an explicitly anarchist programme and end goal.<sup>17</sup> The term itself did not gain widespread currency until the 1920s, not being employed in Spain until late in that decade, but scholars have argued that it emerged ‘*avant la lettre*’ in various countries, including Spain.<sup>18</sup> In fact, it is difficult to distinguish clearly between a ‘revolutionary syndicalist’ and ‘anarcho-syndicalist’ period in Spain, because from the outset so many Spanish anarchists regarded syndicalism as but a new form of anarchism; for the historian Julián Vadillo Muñoz, revolutionary syndicalism in the Spanish context was always shaped by ‘its own history, tradition and autochthony’, and was not apolitical but ‘always [...] impregnated with anarchism’.<sup>19</sup> For Anselmo Lorenzo, a veteran of the FRE who would also be present at the foundation of the CNT, French revolutionary syndicalists had ‘returned to us, amplified, corrected and perfectly systematised, ideas with which the Spanish

---

<sup>15</sup> CNT, *Congreso de Constitución de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (Ediciones CNT, 1959), pp. 38, 40; Smith, ‘Los anarquistas’, p. 147.

<sup>16</sup> ‘A las entidades obreras’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 13 January 1911.

<sup>17</sup> Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Pluto Press, 1989); Zoe Baker, *Means and Ends: The Revolutionary Practice of Anarchism in Europe and the United States* (AK Press, 2023), pp. 266-77.

<sup>18</sup> Baker, *Means and Ends*, pp. 266-76, 420n95; Arturo Zoffmann Rodríguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists and the Russian Revolution, 1917-24’ (PhD thesis, European University Institute, 2019), p. 16; David Berry, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945* (Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> Julián Vadillo Muñoz, *Historia de la CNT: Utopía, Pragmatismo y Revolución* (Catarata, 2019), p. 93. See also Álvarez Junco, *ideología política*, pp. 547-73; Esenwein, *Anarchist ideology*, pp. 208-11; Angel Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction: Catalan Labour and the Crisis of the Spanish State, 1898-1923* (Berghahn, 2006), pp. 129, 237; Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp. 215-16, 237-38; Baker, *Means and Ends*, p. 265.

anarchists inspired the French’.<sup>20</sup> A clear sense of continuity was also expressed by Juan Peiró, the prolific CNT activist and organiser, who identified the FRE and the nineteenth-century anarchist ‘*internacionalistas*’ as a historical heritage that ‘in Spain, Revolutionary Syndicalism tries to incarnate’.<sup>21</sup> While this thesis begins in a period when there was no explicit ‘Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement’, it focuses on these anarchist-oriented currents within the CNT and the press, activists and organisations in its orbit who would, eventually, be referred to as ‘anarcho-syndicalist’; throughout, ‘revolutionary syndicalist’ and ‘anarchist’ are employed where greater specificity is necessary, ‘*cenetista*’ is used as the Spanish designation for a member of the CNT, and ‘libertarian’ as a broad signifier encompassing anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism.<sup>22</sup>

Transnational approaches to anarchist history are now well established.<sup>23</sup> The anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists of Spain had important reciprocal transnational linkages to Spanish anarchist diaspora communities elsewhere, engaging in what Martha Ackelsberg terms ‘cross-fertilization’ with movements in Cuba, Argentina and Panama, as well as South Wales and Northern Australia.<sup>24</sup> Recent trends in transnational radical history have, however, somewhat deemphasised mobility and migration: while these foci have offered invaluable insights, it has been noted that they risk occluding the transnational radicalism of ‘groups and

---

<sup>20</sup> Cited in Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> Juan Peiró, *Ideas sobre sindicalismo y anarquismo* (¡Despertad!, 1930), p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that other tendencies did not exist within the CNT at different times, but they are not the focus of the thesis.

<sup>23</sup> For two highly useful and analytical overviews of this subfield: Constance Bantman and Bert Altena, ‘Introduction: Problematizing Scales of Analysis in Network-Based Social Movements’, in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*, ed. by Bantman and Altena, pp. 3-22; Constance Bantman, ‘Anarchist Transnationalism’, in *The Cambridge History of Socialism* volume I, ed. by Marcel van der Linden (Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 599-620.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Cross-fertilization’ is from Martha A. Ackelsberg, ‘It takes more than a village!: Transnational travels of Spanish anarchism in Cuba and Argentina’, *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 29.3 (2016), pp. 205-23 (p. 209), doi:10.1386/ijis.29.3.205\_1. See also: James Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants in Spain and Argentina* (University of Illinois Press, 2015); James M. Yeoman, ‘Salud y Anarquía desde Dowlais: the translocal experience of Spanish anarchists in South Wales, 1900-15’, *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 29. 3 (2016), pp. 273-89, doi:10.1386/ijis.29.3.273\_1; Robert Mason, *The Spanish Anarchists of Northern Australia: Revolution in the Sugar Cane Fields* (University of Wales Press, 2018); Óscar Freán Hernández, ‘Ideas y vidas a través del Atlántico. El anarquismo americano en la prensa libertaria gallega’, *Historia y Política* 42 (2019), pp. 117-43 (pp. 126-127), doi:10.18042/hp.42.05; James M. Yeoman, ‘The Panama Papers: Anarchist Press Networks between Spain and the Canal Zone in the Early Twentieth Century’ in *Transatlantic Radicalism: Socialist and Anarchist Exchanges in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. by Frank Jacob and Mario Keßler (Liverpool University Press, 2021), pp. 83-108; Alex Doyle, ‘Transnationalism, Class and National Identity in the Cuban Labour Movement (1898-1902)’, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2023), pp. 335-56, doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2282832.

actors whose primary experience was not that of exile, but of working-class solidarity, black internationalism, or anti-colonialism'.<sup>25</sup> In his research on Chilean anarchism, Raymond Craib deploys the concept of 'sedentariness' to avoid a return to 'methodological nationalism' while nonetheless expressing certain activists' 'temporal depth' within a discrete geographic area.<sup>26</sup> Constance Bantman's biography of French anarchist Jean Grave similarly describes him as a 'sedentary transnationalist', reflecting his own 'duality' as a spatially rooted but well-connected, cosmopolitan activist.<sup>27</sup> Although this thesis is strongly influenced by – and contributes to – this transnational literature, it focuses not on 'relations and formations, circulations and connections' in their general sense, but in the more specific, 'more normative, moral' realm of 'internationalism', which differs from 'transnationalism' in its *value-laden* nature and its association with the direct intention 'to reshape the world on more equitable terms'.<sup>28</sup> Transnational ties represented a vital force underpinning and embodying internationalism's ethos of 'collective action and solidarity across national and state borders'.<sup>29</sup> However, internationalism represented a particular kind of transnationalism, and could also unfold through distinctly tenuous or even entirely imaginary connections.

What can this Spanish case study offer the broader literature on anarchist transnationalism? To redeploy Craib's idiom, few anarchists had more to show for their 'temporal depth' than the Spanish: as Yeoman puts it, this was 'a movement which claimed the support of around 5 per cent of the national population in 1917 (dwarfing most comparable movements), and twenty years later carried out the only anarchist revolution in world history'.<sup>30</sup> Whereas the transnational perspective has often emphasised networks consisting of links between individual nodes (such as Grave, or Errico Malatesta) which

---

<sup>25</sup> Kasper Braskén, David Featherstone, and Nigel Copsey, 'Introduction: Towards a Global History of Anti-Fascism', in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism*, ed. by Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone (Routledge, 2020), pp. 1-20 (p. 8). See also Lewis Mates, 'Syndicalism and the 'Transnational Turn'', *Capital & Class*, 40 (2016), 344-354 (p. 353), doi:10.1177/0309816816661148; Bantman, 'Anarchist Transnationalism', p. 603.

<sup>26</sup> Raymond Craib, 'Sedentary Anarchists', in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*, ed. by Bantman and Altena, pp. 139-56 (pp. 140-41).

<sup>27</sup> Constance Bantman, *Jean Grave and the Networks of French Anarchism, 1854-1939* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), p. 49.

<sup>28</sup> Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 2; Fred Halliday, 'Three concepts of internationalism', *International Affairs* 64.2 (1988), pp. 187-98 (p. 188), doi:10.2307/2621845; Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Josep Maria Antentas, 'Global internationalism: an introduction', *Labor History* 63.4 (2022), pp. 225-40 (p. 425), doi:10.1080/0023656X.2022.2139819.

<sup>30</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 19.

stretch across the globe, the sheer ‘scale’ of Spanish anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism as a local endeavour can seem to compel a focus on a more intermediate, geographically-circumscribed level of analysis.<sup>31</sup> In other words, the development of an expansive, dynamic and diverse anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain makes it an optimal site for following Kathy Ferguson’s recent call for histories of anarchism at the ‘meso level’ between the individual (micro) and global (macro): here, we find ‘groups of people, places, thoughts and things, emergent communities created by and creating interactions and mediations’, shaped by ‘both specific individuals and larger social forces in supporting roles’, and forming ‘the crucial space for bringing a political movement to life’.<sup>32</sup> Despite this healthy meso-level growth, the Spanish movement identified itself with and sought to intervene in the macro-level, through its internationalism; it offers fruitful historical terrain for studying the articulation and debating of internationalism within a well-developed, locally-rooted mass anarcho-syndicalist movement.

Before elaborating further on how such a study will be approached, it is necessary to highlight the scholarship that already exists, and the challenges that remain. In fact, despite the CNT’s acknowledged ancestry in the ‘*internacionalistas*’ of the nineteenth century, there are no overarching studies of the Confederation’s own internationalism, and much of the literature on shorter periods requires urgent conceptual and methodological enrichment. The Russian Revolution’s impact on the Spanish anarchists and syndicalists has, for instance, been the subject of decades of historiography, but these studies have frequently limited their discussion of the movement’s international affiliation to a short timescale, not placing *cenetistas*’ affinity with Bolshevism into a longer trajectory of the movement’s international politics.<sup>33</sup> While Jason Garner’s *Goals and Means* does offer a longer periodisation, situating

---

<sup>31</sup> Evans and Yeoman, ‘New approaches’, pp. 199-201. See for instance Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (Verso, 2005); Davide Turcato, ‘Italian anarchism as a transnational movement, 1885-1915’, *International Review of Social History* 52.3 (2007), pp. 407-44, doi:10.1017/S0020859007003057; Bantman, *Jean Grave*.

<sup>32</sup> Ferguson, ‘Writing Anarchism’, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> The topic has interested both Spanish and non-Spanish researchers, such as: Gerald Henry Meaker, ‘Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalism and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1922’ (PhD thesis, University of Southern California, 1967); Gerald H. Meaker, *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914-23* (Stanford University Press, 1975); Antonio Bar, *La C.N.T. en los años rojos (Del sindicalismo revolucionario al anarcosindicalismo 1910-1926)* (Akal, 1981), pp. 436-51 and *passim*; Juan Avilés Farré, *La fe que vino de Rusia: la revolución bolchevique y los españoles (1917-1931)* (Biblioteca Nueva, 1999); Jason Garner, ‘Separated by an “Ideological Chasm”: The Spanish National Labour Confederation and Bolshevik Internationalism, 1917-

Russia and anarcho-syndicalist internationalism within a detailed, even intricate analysis of the events and debates that led to the foundation of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (Iberian Anarchist Federation, FAI) in 1927 and its development up to 1931, he still leaves out the crucial 1930s era when the CNT dominated the international anarcho-syndicalist movement and delved into the anti-fascist struggle.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, his consideration of internationalism tends to be subordinate to his main purpose of elucidating the movement's evolving synthesis of anarchism and syndicalism, as is evident in absences such as the Mexican Revolution. The first chapter of this thesis, by contrast, furnishes an original analysis of the Mexican Revolution's reception among Spanish libertarians, highlighting its significance as a case study for the movement's passionately held but deeply contested notions of international solidarity. Construing internationalism as straightforwardly subordinate to ideology also lends itself to what Arturo Zoffmann Rodríguez, in the most detailed and incisive analysis of Spanish anarchism and the Russian Revolution to date, terms the 'empirical school': a common framework in which the CNT's adhesion to Bolshevik internationalism is identified as a result of an information vacuum, until 'accurate' insight could be attained, the 'error' corrected, and the movement returned to a straight and narrow path of true anarcho-syndicalist internationalism.<sup>35</sup> The prevalence of this kind of assumption points to the need for new approaches which acknowledge the levels of diversity, fluidity and evolution in the movement's internationalism.

Another limitation has been many scholars' conflation of internationalism with anti-nationalism; in his detailed history of Spanish anarchist ideology to 1910, for example, José Álvarez Junco equates it with 'the overcoming of nationalism'.<sup>36</sup> This definition is taken as implicit in the movement's own rhetoric, in slogans such as 'the poor have no *patria*'.<sup>37</sup> Álvarez Junco accordingly treats nationalist 'infidelities' in anarchist discourse, such as the presentation of anarchism as 'one more of the features of the national stereotype, alongside

---

1922', *Contemporary European History* 15. 3 (2006), pp. 293–326, doi:10.1017/S0960777306003341; Reiner Tostorff, 'Mission Impossible: Ángel Pestaña's Encounter as CNT Delegate with the Bolshevik Revolution in 1920', in *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational*, ed. by David Berry and Constance Bantman (Cambridge Scholars, 2010), pp. 94–108.

<sup>34</sup> Jason Garner, *Goals and Means: Anarchism, Syndicalism, and Internationalism in the Origins of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (AK Press, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Zoffmann Rodríguez, 'Spanish Anarchists', pp. 10–11.

<sup>36</sup> Álvarez Junco, *ideología política*, p. 247.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.



bullfighting’, as a ‘doctrinal incongruency’ and as a contribution to laying the foundations of reactionary ethnonationalist ideology.<sup>38</sup> While Álvarez Junco’s study ends where this thesis begins, the same binary perspective is apparent in recent analyses of anarchism during the Civil War, such as in Morris Brodie’s argument that the Spanish undertook a ‘retreat into nationalism’ against the ‘internationalism’ of their internationalist foreign comrades, and Martin Baxmeyer’s assertion that the presence of nationalist discourses in anarchist propaganda during the war marked an immense ‘deviation from the universal and egalitarian utopia’ the movement had previously espoused.<sup>39</sup> However, historians of other anarchist movements have departed from what Bantman and Pietro Di Paola call a ‘blunt equation of internationalism with a presumed unilateral rejection of identification with the nation’, or what political theorist Kinna regards as a conflation of the nation with the nation-state.<sup>40</sup> Kirwin Shaffer, for instance, has differentiated between ‘nationalist sentiments to benefit the state’ and anarchist efforts ‘to harmonize an international movement with local, regional or national realities’.<sup>41</sup> Nino Kühnis highlights that Swiss anarchists, while fierce critics of reactionary uses of patriotism, nevertheless also used ‘nationalistic or patriotic recuperations’ to solidify their identity and forge ‘a profound sense of tradition and perseverance’ within a particular *fin de siècle* context when anarchism was habitually treated as a foreign import.<sup>42</sup> Analysis of anarchist perspectives within anti-colonial liberation struggles has shed particular light on this more complex relationship with national identities.<sup>43</sup> For instance, Ruth Kinna points to the Indian anarchist Ananda Coomaraswamy’s concept of ‘national idealism’, which

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 254-55;

<sup>39</sup> Morris Brodie, *Transatlantic Anarchism during the Spanish Civil War and Revolution, 1936-1939: Fury Over Spain* (Routledge, 2020), pp. 97-127; Martin Baxmeyer, “‘Mother Spain, We Love You!’: Nationalism and Racism in Anarchist Literature During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)”, in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*, ed. by Bantman and Altena, pp. 193-209 (p. 201)

<sup>40</sup> Constance Bantman and Pietro Di Paola, ‘Banal and everyday (inter)nationalism: French and Italian anarchist exiles in London, 1870s-1914’, *Nations and Nationalism* 29.1 (2023), pp. 176-90 (p. 178), doi:10.1111/nana.12897; Ruth Kinna, ‘What is Anarchist Internationalism?’, *Nations and Nationalism* 27.4 (2021), pp. 976-91 (pp. 979-80), doi:10.1111/nana.12676.

<sup>41</sup> Kirwin Shaffer, ‘Cuba para todos: Anarchist Internationalism and the Cultural Politics of Cuban Independence, 1898-1925’, *Cuban Studies* 31 (2000), pp. 45-75 (p. 47). See also Kirwin R. Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean: Countercultural Politics and Transnational Networks in the Age of US Expansion* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 30.

<sup>42</sup> Nino Kühnis, ‘More than an Anonym: a Close(r) Look at the Dichotomy between the National and Anarchism’, in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*, ed. by Bantman and Altena, pp. 159-73 (pp. 163-67).

<sup>43</sup> Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt, eds. *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution* (Brill, 2010).

meant identifying as ‘a nationalist in response to imperialism and an internationalist in respect of Indian nationalism’.<sup>44</sup>

As this thesis will show, essentialist national stereotypes could be embraced as an identity and an explanatory model even by avowed internationalists. In an important account of the CNT from within, José Peirats, the veteran *cenetista* activist and movement historian whose commitment to anarchist principles is hardly in doubt, would write that in ‘psychology, temperament and reactions, the anarcho-syndicalist is the most Spanish of Spaniards’, words that closely recall the British writer Gerald Brenan’s description of anarchism as ‘the most “Hispanic” thing South of the Pyrenees’.<sup>45</sup> Although this concurrence appears striking, such exceptionalist ideas were not only embraced by British Hispanists and Spanish anarchists: effectively, a form of ‘Spanish exceptionalism’ had currency within transnational European and American anarchist networks from at least the end of the nineteenth century, when stories about the spread of the Idea among the tumultuous peasants of Andalucía and the revolutionary martyrs of Barcelona and about the ‘inquisitorial’ state persecution imposed on them underpinned the depiction of Spain as a ‘mythical redoubt of anarchy’.<sup>46</sup> The German anarcho-syndicalist organiser and theorist Rudolf Rocker, for instance, was so ‘enamoured’ with this image of Spain that in 1907 he named his son after the legendary Andalusian anarchist Fermín Salvochea.<sup>47</sup> Rather than simply treating them as an aberration against internationalism and against libertarian principles, then, this thesis asks how and why ideas about Spanish exceptionalism were utilised *within* articulations of and debates about anarcho-syndicalism internationalism during the period of study.

As Kinna and José Gutiérrez have recently identified, there was no ‘unified anarchist theory or dogma on the national question’ and individuals ‘habitually advanced theory from practice, addressing particular national questions at specific moments to think creatively in the moment’.<sup>48</sup> An acknowledgement of this fluid and dynamic engagement with the nation

---

<sup>44</sup> Kinna, ‘What is Anarchist Internationalism?’, p. 982.

<sup>45</sup> José Peirats, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution* (Freedom Press, 1998), p. 80; Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 197.

<sup>46</sup> Abelló i Güell, *relacions internacionals*, p. 122.

<sup>47</sup> Diego Abad de Santillán, *Memorias 1897-1936* (Editorial Planeta, 1977), pp. 78, 83.

<sup>48</sup> José A. Gutiérrez and Ruth Kinna, ‘Introduction. Anarchism and the National Question – Historical, Theoretical and Contemporary Perspectives’, *Nations and Nationalism* 29.1 (2023), pp. 121-30 (p. 125), doi:10.1111/nana.12891.

is also missing from the work of some historians of a Catalan nationalist persuasion, who have argued that a ‘vague’ or ‘completely nebulous internationalism’ led to an inability or even outright refusal among most Spanish anarchists to engage with the question of Spain’s peripheral nationalisms.<sup>49</sup> These works are rather undermined by the authors’ political grievances, which are comprehensible when it is acknowledged, as Angel Smith does, that the ‘hostility of the CNT was undoubtedly the Achilles heel of Catalanism’.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, they treat anarchist internationalism as an anti-national totality, when in fact both Catalan and Spanish national frameworks could be adopted or rejected according to their contingent implications for activist objectives. In the 1880s, for instance, there had been a ‘progressive’ overlap between republicanism, Catalanism and anarchism, but by the time of the emergence of the CNT in the 1910s, a stark divergence had emerged between the political goals of anarcho-syndicalists who sought to build a working-class movement capable of effectively confronting the capitalist state apparatus, and those of a Catalan nationalist movement now dominated by the right-wing Lliga Regionalista and its industrialist patrons.<sup>51</sup> Given this elitist hue, anarcho-syndicalists argued that ‘the same way [the workers] are tyrannised today *in Castilian*, they would be tyrannised tomorrow *in Catalan*’; the cause of Catalan autonomy and ‘the personality of Cataluña, the rebelliousness of the Catalan people’ became ‘sarcastic blasphemies’ coming from ‘the mouth of politicians’, and were instead best expressed within a broader anarcho-syndicalist framework.<sup>52</sup>

The potential confusion derived from negative definitions and rigid ideas about internationalism is also apparent in the aforementioned Baxmeyer charging the movement with an almighty ‘deviation’ from the values it ‘had proclaimed before the war’ while simultaneously affirming that this ‘certainly didn’t come out of nowhere’.<sup>53</sup> As evidence Baxmeyer cites, via the historian Dieter Nelles, a single quotation attributed to an unnamed CNT representative in one German anarcho-syndicalist’s recollection of the 1935 IWA

---

<sup>49</sup> Jordi Sabater, *Anarquisme i Catalanisme: la CNT i el fet nacional català durant la Guerra Civil* (Edicions 62, 1986), p. 96; Annalisa Corti, “‘La Revista Blanca’ i el problema català”, *Recerques: Història, Economia, Cultura* 2 (1972), pp. 191-208 (p. 191).

<sup>50</sup> Angel Smith, ‘Cataluña y la Gran Guerra: de la reforma democrática al conflicto social’, *Hispania Nova* 15 (2017), pp. 472-99 (p. 493), doi:10.20318/hn.2017.3498.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, pp. 169-70. For an even longer timescale of this evolving relationship, see José A. Gutiérrez and Jordi Martí Font, ‘October 2017 in Catalonia: the anarchists and the *procés*’, *Nations and Nationalism* 29.1 (2023), doi:10.1111/nana.12896.

<sup>52</sup> ‘La Autonomía y el Proletariado’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 14 June 1916, emphasis in original.

<sup>53</sup> Baxmeyer, ‘Mother Spain’, p. 205.

congress: ‘We in Spain make the revolution. You, in your countries, copy it. *That* is our internationalism’.<sup>54</sup> Brodie references the same statement, also via Nelles, as evidence of ‘a history of national chauvinism’ within the CNT, while Nelles himself presents it as evidence of the Confederation’s lackadaisical if not openly hostile approach to internationalism.<sup>55</sup> This means that the historiography of Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism in the 1930s has placed considerable stock on a sole quotation; striking in tone, but nonetheless a single statement coming from a figure from outside the movement, and often interpreted through a rather narrow conflation of internationalism with ‘anti-nationalism’. In relation to the Civil War era, recent work on the movement’s internationalism has been similarly shaped by *a priori* assumptions, linked to specific debates about the adaptations of wartime but disconnected from broader questions about internationalism and its problems.<sup>56</sup> There is, then, an urgent need for fresh analysis based on new and more varied evidence and on greater engagement with the interdisciplinary scholarship on internationalism.

### ***Internationalism as project, process, and problem***

As stated above, internationalism differs from transnationalism in its *value-laden* nature; in a recent essay, the political theorist Ruth Kinna posits the values underpinning anarchist internationalism in particular as ‘solidarity’ (or ‘cosmopolitanism’) and ‘secession’ (or voluntary association).<sup>57</sup> In the more distinctly workerist vision of anarcho-syndicalism, this meant proletarian solidarity that would ‘reach beyond the artificial boundaries of the states’, structured through federalist forms of organisation that preserved autonomy and eschewed ‘uniformity’.<sup>58</sup> Anarcho-syndicalists regarded these values as manifest in a First International that they viewed in almost reverential terms, and in ensuing attempts to develop ‘formal’ or ‘institutional’ internationalism, mainly the International Workingmen’s Association (IWA), or ‘Berlin International’, established in 1922.<sup>59</sup> They also maintained an abundance of what

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, emphasis in original.

<sup>55</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic Anarchism*, p. 99; Dieter Nelles, ‘La Legión Extranjera de La Revolución’, in Dieter Nelles, Harald Piotrowski, Ulrich Linse and Carlos García, *Antifascistas Alemanes En Barcelona (1933-1939)*, second edition (Virus Editorial, 2019), pp. 125-276 (pp. 133-35).

<sup>56</sup> For example Agustín Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT. Los comités superiores cenetistas contra la oposición revolucionaria interna e internacional (1936-1939)* (Editorial Descontrol, 2022).

<sup>57</sup> Kinna, ‘What is Anarchist Internationalism?’.

<sup>58</sup> Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, pp. 69, 104-05.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 82.

Bantman terms ‘informal internationalism’, meaning more diffuse transnational ‘collaborations’ in everyday praxis and in periodic commemorations and events.<sup>60</sup> Transnational libertarian press networks sustained a sense of equivalence of struggle across borders: in Hobsbawm’s romantic terms, it was through his newspaper that the ‘village cobbler in a small Andalusian town’ became ‘conscious of having brothers fighting the same fight in Madrid and New York, in Barcelona and Leghorn, in Buenos Aires’.<sup>61</sup> Symbolic anniversaries such as the Paris Commune and Chicago’s Haymarket Affair, both formative, parabolic events underpinning a distinct anarchist consciousness, also gave the moment an international collective memory and identity.<sup>62</sup> These distinct formulations, affiliations and leitmotifs established the individuality of anarcho-syndicalists’ own project as one aimed at *working-class emancipation on libertarian terms* – a tradition of anti-authoritarian socialism to whose historiographical recovery this study seeks to contribute and not detract.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, the historian Glenda Sluga has suggested that internationalisms are best understood as ‘imagined’ and ‘invented’ phenomena, ‘constructed [...] out of leaps of imagination’ much like nationalisms; when we move from the certitudes of rhetoric to the question of practical realisations, we encounter the ‘blurrier borders’ of the edifice and their contested nature.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, behind the imaginal rhetoric about ‘the workers of the world’ and ‘the exploited of the globe’, idealistic proclamations of ‘Long Live International

---

<sup>60</sup> Constance Bantman, ‘Internationalism without an International? Cross-Channel Anarchist Networks, 1880-1914’, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 84.4 (2006), pp. 961-81 (p. 963), doi:10.3406/rbph.2006.5056 ; Patrizia Dogliani, ‘The Fate of Socialist Internationalism’, in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. by Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 38-60 (p. 55).

<sup>61</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, second edition (Manchester University Press, 1971), pp. 84-85.

<sup>62</sup> Ruth Kinna, *The Government of No One: The Theory and Practice of Anarchism* (Pelican, 2020), pp. 24-25; Bantman, ‘Internationalism’, pp. 972-74; Carl Levy, ‘Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism in Europe, 1860-1939’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50 (2004), pp. 330-42 (p. 334), doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8497.2004.00337.x; Anna Ribera and Alejandro de la Torre, ‘Memoria libertaria: usos del calendario militante del anarquismo hispanoamericano’, *Historias* 75 (2010), pp. 105-24.

<sup>63</sup> This contrasts with Antonio Bar’s notion that although their internationalism was of ‘enormous importance’ to revolutionary syndicalists, it was an element shared by other contemporaneous working-class movements and did not reflect syndicalism’s ‘differential features’: Bar, *C.N.T.*, p. 95n166. Rather, their distinct approach to internationalism reflected anarcho-syndicalists’ particularities. On the post-Cold War efforts to recover the history of this libertarian socialist tradition, see Benedict Anderson, ‘Preface’, in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World 1870-1940*, ed. by Hirsch and van der Walt, pp. xiii-xxix.

<sup>64</sup> Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 9, 17, 38. Similarly, introducing their edited collection of essays on a broad swathe of ‘internationalist’ projects, Sluga and Patricia Clavin argue the necessity of ‘constructivist’ approaches attentive to ‘conflicting and contested narratives of the international’: Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, ‘Introduction: Rethinking the History of Internationalism’, in *Internationalisms*, ed. by Sluga and Clavin, pp. 3-14 (pp. 11-12).

Solidarity!', or even genuine transnational relationships and formal affiliation to organisations such as the IWA, we can identify many significant ambiguities.<sup>65</sup> For instance, as sociologist Josep Maria Antentas points out, radical movements often present solidarity as an *a priori* 'political reality', intrinsic to the working-class condition; as an example he offers the slogan of the CNT's syndicalist cousin, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), 'an injury to one is an injury to all' – a statement presented as fact but which was not inherently true and was instead 'a political horizon around which to advance'.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the philosopher Kurt Bayertz notes the tendency to assume that the 'factual' solidarity of 'common ground' would 'spontaneously' produce a 'normative' solidarity of 'mutual obligations'.<sup>67</sup> This kind of teleology was apparent in Bakunin's assertion that the 'economic solidarity' of workers in proximate relation would expand to encompass 'the workers of the world' in a 'deep passion sentiment [...] of emotional solidarity', and in Rudolf Rocker's description of solidarity as a 'feeling of mutual helpfulness' that 'grows into the vital consciousness of a community of fate'.<sup>68</sup> As José Álvarez Junco argues, the notion of the intrinsic solidarity of all workers was also inbuilt in the CNT, whose regional precursor and *de facto* national newspaper were named 'Solidaridad Obrera' ('Worker Solidarity').<sup>69</sup> In reality, however, solidarity is not inevitable, nor even, in historian Charlotte Alston's words, 'linear' or 'predictable'; it results, as Antentas puts it, from 'conscious decisions and a political understanding of its necessity'.<sup>70</sup>

For geographer David Featherstone, solidarities are always 'contested, ongoing and under construction'.<sup>71</sup> While the rejection of any intrinsic or 'given' impulse to solidarity may appear 'miserly', it is necessary for two reasons: firstly, to acknowledge the countervailing

---

<sup>65</sup> The first quotations are from the 'Libero' Esperanto group's address to the CNT's founding congress: CNT, *Congreso de Constitución*, p. 16. The 'viva' is from a notice announcing the foundation of a Regional Federation of the CNT for Galicia: 'LA ACCIÓN SOCIAL', *Acción Libertaria*, 16 June 1911.

<sup>66</sup> Antentas, 'Global internationalism', p. 428.

<sup>67</sup> Kurt Bayertz, 'Four Uses of "Solidarity"', in *Solidarity*, ed. by Kurt Bayertz (Kluwer Academic, 1999), pp. 3-28 (p. 3).

<sup>68</sup> Mikhail Bakunin, 'The Program of the Alliance', in *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, ed. by Sam Dolgoff (Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 243-58 (pp. 250-53); Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, p. 118.

<sup>69</sup> Álvarez Junco, *ideología política*, pp. 557-58.

<sup>70</sup> Charlotte Alston, 'Transnational solidarities and the politics of the left, 1890-1990 - introduction', *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 21.4 (2014), pp. 447-50 (p. 449), doi:10.1080/13507486.2014.933188; Antentas, 'Global internationalism', p. 427.

<sup>71</sup> Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 38.

power relations through which solidarity has historically been articulated, and secondly to restore the agency involved in forging it.<sup>72</sup> In other words, as Kasper Braskén has urged in the communist context, it is important to recognise the panoply of factors, both external and internal, which shaped and circumscribed anarcho-syndicalists' solidarities, and the creative and often imperfect ways they navigated them.<sup>73</sup> This positions internationalism, as Kinna goes on to say in the forecited essay, as 'a project and a process', a pursuit of 'non-domination' filled with tensions and evolving through engagement with real-world 'practices of resistance' as its 'motors of solidarity'.<sup>74</sup> It suggests regarding abstract ideal-types as aspirations towards which actors tried to work, rather than as actually-existing models from which they departed. It implies asking how anarcho-syndicalists confronted the question of 'difference' which has 'haunted' Black internationalism; negotiated a balance between 'solidarism' (values convergence) and 'pluralism' (diversity), as has troubled postcolonial cosmopolitans; and grappled with the 'complex puzzle that is the world' like intersectional feminist internationalists have had to do.<sup>75</sup>

A key aim of this thesis is therefore to ask how Spanish anarcho-syndicalists construed and constructed internationalist solidarity, both as something they projected towards others, and as something they expected towards themselves. In line with the above frameworks, it treats this as an emergent process which evolved in response to their own changing circumstances and self-conceptions and encountered many dilemmas and problems. Their internationalism was mediated by a plethora of factors. Ideology was one which has already been hinted at: despite a universalising rhetoric of 'the working class', anarcho-syndicalists represented a distinct political tendency *within* the labour movement, opposed to 'political', reformist and authoritarian currents.<sup>76</sup> This coloured their understanding of solidarity and with whom to practise it. Moreover, this did not occur in a stable manner: if, as Álvarez Junco has affirmed, anarchism itself always rested on a duality, where tensions between working-class anti-capitalism and rationalist, Enlightenment radicalism could generate 'fluidity and

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, pp. 18-22;

<sup>73</sup> Braskén, *International Workers' Relief*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>74</sup> Kinna, 'What is Anarchist Internationalism?', pp. 989, 980.

<sup>75</sup> Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, p. 217; Rahul Rao, 'Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism: Between Home and the World' (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2007); Lola Olufemi, *Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power* (Pluto Press, 2020), pp. 135-37.

<sup>76</sup> Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, pp. 82-89.

versatility’ but also reduce the movement to bouts of ‘doctrinal chaos’, the hyphenation of ‘anarcho-syndicalism’ clarified the movement’s proletarian orientation, but left latent antagonisms intact, not least between anarchist and syndicalist elements.<sup>77</sup> Various studies have discussed the CNT’s internal doctrinal struggles; one objective of this thesis is to shed light on how these fault lines were refracted in debates about the movement’s internationalism.<sup>78</sup>

Another factor mediating international solidarity, and for Nicolas Delalande the ‘most difficult to negotiate’, was the division of the world into distinct nationalities, implying ‘the multiplicity of judicial and political systems, different standards of living, and different worker cultures’.<sup>79</sup> For Ángel Herrerin, prominent historian of Spanish anarchism, writing the movement’s history requires a ‘complex alchemy’, acknowledging ‘the necessary portion of internationalism and transnational relations, but without forgetting [...] its vital national ambit’.<sup>80</sup> With regard to Italian anarchism, Davide Turcato discusses the ‘deep truth’ that, given the difficulty in truly overcoming national borders in all their multifaceted complexity, anarchist internationalism became ‘a sort of division of labor, in which each nationality’s movement contributed to a universal cause by fighting against its own government, in a sort of reverse nationalism’.<sup>81</sup> For Antentas, the resilience of ‘different spatial scales’ – local, national, international – is such that even a ‘strong’ internationalism (as opposed to a weaker ‘inter-nationalism’ characterised by ‘reciprocal emulation’) should not be considered synonymous with ‘de-territorialized and “post-national” abstract cosmopolitanism’.<sup>82</sup> In fact, scholars have emphasised that internationalisms are constructed within discrete settings which tend to leave their mark: as the geographer Doreen Massey asserted, ‘places are [...]

---

<sup>77</sup> Álvarez Junco, *ideología política*, pp. 583-85.

<sup>78</sup> See for instance Eulàlia Vega, *El trentisme a Catalunya. Divergències ideològiques en la CNT (1930-1933)* (Cural, 1980); Bar, *C.N.T.*; Anna Monjo, *Militants: Democràcia i participació a la CNT als anys trenta* (Editorial Laertes, 2003), pp. 114-16; Garner, *Goals and Means*.

<sup>79</sup> Nicolas Delalande, *Struggle and Mutual Aid: The Age of Worker Solidarity*, trans. by Anthony Roberts (Other Press, 2023), p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> Ángel Herrerin López, ‘La Idea en la maleta libertaria y su difícil encaje nacional’, *Alcores* 25 (2021), pp. 15-35. A similar argument in the context of early twentieth century social democracy is offered in Kevin Callahan, “‘Performing Inter-Nationalism” in Stuttgart in 1907: French and German socialist nationalism and the political culture of an international socialist congress’, *International Review of Social History* 45.1 (2000), pp. 51-87, doi:10.1017/S0020859000000031

<sup>81</sup> Davide Turcato, ‘Nations without Borders: Anarchists and National Identity’, in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*, ed. by Bantman and Altena, pp. 25-42 (p. 38).

<sup>82</sup> Antentas, ‘Global internationalism’, p. 426.



the moments through which the global is constituted, invented, coordinated, produced'.<sup>83</sup> A corollary of this, as Patricia Clavin has suggested, is that the international emerges as an alternative lens for considering the national or local – 'histories of transnational encounters [...] tell us as much about the national contexts which condition and inscribe them as they do about the world they seek to reshape'.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, Antentas emphasises not a constantly linear determinism from local upon international, but an entanglement wherein internationalist activism can also transform understandings of the 'domestic' struggle.<sup>85</sup> Scholarship on anarchism has further suggested that scales of experience are intertwined and should be analysed as such; as Bantman and David Berry have argued, internationalism cannot be 'easily dispensed with' and treated as intrinsically separate from 'local' organisation and activism, while Ferguson prefers to think of micro, meso and macro 'levels as open-ended assemblages that are fluid, dynamic, and entangled'.<sup>86</sup> Internationalism can therefore be considered a pertinent lens through which to consider the CNT in general – its internal dynamics, its evolution, its activists' worldview and praxis – as these both shaped and were shaped by that internationalism.

As well as shaping the approach to writing history, an acknowledgement of the national 'division of labour' asks questions of international solidarity which can be missing when an autonomous 'international' level is presupposed. For instance, Delalande has highlighted the 'profound asymmetries' among national movements within the First International, which pulled away from solidaric reciprocity and towards one-way dependencies and 'free rider' situations.<sup>87</sup> During the period under study here, for instance, international anarcho-syndicalism became starkly asymmetrical, with a significant 'imbalance of scale' emerging between the CNT and its sister organisations after 1931 and problematising relations between

---

<sup>83</sup> Doreen Massey, 'Geographies of Responsibility', *Geografiska annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 86.1 (2004), pp. 5-18 (p. 11), doi:10.1111/j.0435-3684.2004.00150.x. See also Cecelia Lynch, 'The Promise and Problems of Internationalism', *Global Governance* 5.1 (1999), pp. 83-101.

<sup>84</sup> Patricia Clavin, 'Introduction: Conceptualising Internationalism Between the World Wars', in *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars*, ed. by Daniel Laqua (I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 1-14 (p. 3).

<sup>85</sup> Antentas, 'Global internationalism', pp. 426-27.

<sup>86</sup> Constance Bantman and David Berry, 'Introduction', in *New Perspective on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism*, ed. by Berry and Bantman, pp. 1-13 (pp. 3-4); Ferguson, 'Writing Anarchism', p. 18.

<sup>87</sup> Delalande, *Struggle and Mutual Aid*, p. 44, 119, 160. See also Bayertz, 'Four Uses of "Solidarity"', p. 19; Braskén, *International Workers' Relief*, pp. 45-46.

them.<sup>88</sup> Wayne Thorpe, commenting on the impact of the disparity between the French Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labour, CGT) and its fellow revolutionary syndicalist movements in 1913, notes that ‘arguments on international policy were conditioned above all by national perspectives’.<sup>89</sup> Susan Milner’s important study of how the CGT navigated the ‘dilemmas of internationalism’ similarly emphasises the way that ‘national strategies and priorities’ came to bear on internationalism, although she acknowledges – anticipating Antentas – that ‘international debates and strategies’ could also have an influence at the domestic level.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Milner’s observation that working-class internationalism, while ‘uncontested’ as an orienting value, in itself ‘did not commit labour unions to anything’ and was formulated in starkly different ways by different movements (and tendencies within them) is a useful one which further informs the emergent framework taken here.<sup>91</sup> This thesis takes a similar approach, viewing internationalism through the lens of a particular movement with its own (internally contested) perspective and interests.

Asymmetries and nationalist encroachments highlight another pertinent factor mediating international solidarity, which Brent Hayes Edwards describes as the *unevenness* of access to ‘the level of the international’.<sup>92</sup> At the very heart of anarcho-syndicalism, indeed one of the CNT’s founding principles, was the First International slogan: ‘the emancipation of the workers will be the labour of the workers themselves’.<sup>93</sup> For Anselmo Lorenzo, the new CNT’s objective was to struggle for those who had been rendered mere ‘accessories of the machine’ by a capitalist system that favoured ‘the privileged of the world’, to restore their individual dignity, and to place them at the forefront of ‘*la gran obra humana*’ (‘the great work of humankind’).<sup>94</sup> Anarcho-syndicalism was thus about empowering workers to dissolve a ‘bourgeois’ political and economic system that systematically dispossessed and marginalised them; its internationalism reflected this concern with working-class

---

<sup>88</sup> Phrase from Evans and Yeoman, ‘New approaches’, p. 201.

<sup>89</sup> As the only revolutionary syndicalist movement that was also its country’s largest labour organisation, the CGT was also the only one able to affiliate to the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, and was sceptical of the 1913 proposal for an independent revolutionary syndicalist international congress for this reason: Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 54; Susan Milner, *The Dilemmas of Internationalism: French Syndicalism and the International Labour Movement, 1900-1914* (Berg, 1990), pp. 165-67.

<sup>90</sup> Milner, *Dilemmas of Internationalism*, p. 12.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>92</sup> Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, p. 7. See also Featherstone, *Solidarity*, pp. 6, 59-60.

<sup>93</sup> CNT, *Congreso de Constitución*, p. 28.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

protagonism, seeking ‘to unite the workers of all countries in an international alliance which should open the path for the social and economic liberation of the working class’.<sup>95</sup> Yet this concern with proletarian empowerment did not guarantee freedom from other exclusionist beliefs about who was to participate in the new public realm. Racial and gender ideologies were present even among founding anarchist figures, as in Bakunin’s crude antisemitism, or in the avowed patriarchy that Sharif Gemie highlights in Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.<sup>96</sup> Such prejudices had the potential to circumscribe notions of solidarity and therefore of internationalism. Spanish anarcho-syndicalism originated in a libertarian milieu within which, as Álvaro Girón Serra has recently shown, many had adopted nineteenth-century racial science as an extension of their faith in rational, scientific knowledge against the cultural hegemony of the Church.<sup>97</sup> Although it did not preclude Mariano ‘Marianet’ Vázquez’s ascent to general secretary of the CNT, a recent account of the anti-Gypsy smears he faced demonstrates the presence of even cruder ethnic prejudices, as does Baxmeyer’s aforementioned study, which highlights the racializing discourses some Spanish anarchists directed at Moroccans during the Civil War.<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, as this thesis will show, as well as reproducing prevailing hierarchies, *cenetistas* found ways to navigate and challenge them.

This was also a movement whose discourse was often infused with homophobic, misogynist masculinism, which Richard Cleminson suggests was even more prevalent in *machista* Spain than elsewhere.<sup>99</sup> As with racialisation, gender ideology’s impact on the movement was uneven and contested; Gemie notes the apparent ‘paradox’ that ‘within this tough, masculine culture, there nonetheless developed a proto-feminist strand’.<sup>100</sup> However,

---

<sup>95</sup> Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, p. 68.

<sup>96</sup> Levy, ‘Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism’, p. 335; Sharif Gemie, ‘Anarchism and Feminism: A Historical Survey’, *Women’s History Review* 5.3 (1996), pp. 417–44, (pp. 422–23), doi:10.1080/09612029600200123.

<sup>97</sup> Álvaro Girón Serra, ‘Discursos sobre la raza en el anarquismo barcelonés: evolucionismo, internacionalismo y nación (1869-1918)’, in *Clase antes que nación: trabajadores, movimiento obrero y cuestión nacional en la cataluña metropolitana, 1840-2017*, ed. by José Luis Oyón and Juanjo Romero (El Viejo Topo, 2017), pp. 117–42.

<sup>98</sup> María Sierra and Juan Pro, ‘Gypsy Anarchism: Navigating Ethnic and Political Identities’, *European History Quarterly* 52.4 (2022), pp. 593–612 (p. 602), doi:10.1177/02656914221097011; Baxmeyer, ‘Mother Spain’, pp. 196–97.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 40; Richard Cleminson, ‘Anarchism and Feminism’, *Women’s History Review* 7.1 (1998), pp. 135–38 (p. 136) doi:10.1080/09612029800200162.

<sup>100</sup> Gemie, ‘Anarchism and Feminism’, p. 418.

although anarcho-syndicalists called for unionising women workers, this proceeded slowly during the period of study; moreover, even female-majority unions were frequently led and represented by men, and the CNT's focus on 'proletarian' workplace struggle often elided the specific forms of exploitation to which working-class women were subject.<sup>101</sup> The 'canonical example' of Spanish anarchist-feminism (although it rejected the 'feminist' label) was *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women), a women's organisation founded in the spring of 1936 by a group of female activists understandably impatient with the slow pace of an episodic and often merely rhetorical gender equality.<sup>102</sup> Its very existence testified both to gendered patterns of solidarity in the movement, and to efforts to remake them in a more inclusive manner. *Mujeres Libres* followed a trail blazed by the organiser and propagandist Teresa Claramunt, who was recognised in her own time as an 'outstanding figure of Iberian and international anarchism', gaining renown outside Spain as the only woman incarcerated during the Montjuïc Process – an uncommon example of a leading female protagonist in the movement's internationalism.<sup>103</sup>

Claramunt's apparent rarity is partly because gendered assumptions about what constitutes political activity have also shaped conceptions of internationalism: as the feminist geographers 'J.K. Gibson-Graham' note, formulations with a 'masculinist' focus on powerful, global-scale initiatives often overshadow the transnational potential of 'local' practices – the 'discussions around kitchen tables and village wells that formed much of the political practice of a women's "movement" of global proportions'.<sup>104</sup> Temma Kaplan's classic account of 'female consciousness' in Barcelona hints at this by emphasising the expansive 'radical political implications' of street protests whose 'more social than political'

---

<sup>101</sup> Martha Ackelberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, second edition (AK Press, 2005), pp. 72-79; Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, pp. 39-40, 90, 121, 207-209, 244; Laura Vicente, *La revolución de las palabras: la revista Mujeres Libres* (Comares, 2020), p. 14; Nathaniel Andrews, 'Anarchism in Everyday Life: Libertarian Prefigurative Politics in Spain and Argentina, 1890-1930' (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2021), pp. 61-68.

<sup>102</sup> Gloria Espigado Tocino, 'Las mujeres en el anarquismo español (1869-1939)', *Ayer* 45 (2002), pp. 39-72 (p. 44); Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*; Vicente, *La revolución de las palabras*.

<sup>103</sup> See for instance Manuel Buenacasa, *El movimiento obrero español 1886-1926. Historia y crítica* (Ediciones Júcar, 1977), pp. 176-78. See also Amalia María Pradas Baena, *Teresa Claramunt, la virgen roja barcelonesa: Biografía y escritos* (Virus Editorial, 2006), pp. 57-58, 320.

<sup>104</sup> J.K. Gibson-Graham, 'Beyond global vs. local: economic politics outside the binary frame', in *Geographies of Power: Placing Scale*, ed. by Andrew Herod and Melissa W. Wright (Blackwell 2002), pp. 25-60 (pp. 35, 50).

and thus implicitly parochial character has often been affirmed.<sup>105</sup> However, within what the anarcho-syndicalist movement itself considered to be ‘internationalism’, the integration of women was halting and qualified. In 1900, a commission to select Spanish delegates for the Paris anarchist congress declared that while female representation ‘would please us in the extreme’, the influential rationalist educator and anarchist writer Soledad Gustavo (Teresa Mañé) was unsuitable due to her lack of foreign language skills, and two male representatives were chosen instead, demonstrating that a rhetorical commitment to gender equality was often subordinated to other perceived imperatives.<sup>106</sup> In 1913, the ‘Union and Solidarity Women’s Society’ from Alaior joined other Menorcan groups and unions in nominating prolific anarchist organiser José Rodríguez Romero as delegate to the international revolutionary syndicalist congress in London; although he proposed a unanimously-accepted declaration of sympathy towards ‘any revolutionary movement that tends towards women acquiring the same civil and economic rights as men’, the example continued the problematic practice of attaching male leadership to groups of female workers.<sup>107</sup> The following decade, an influential Spanish anarcho-syndicalist newspaper dedicated a two-part special issue ‘to women’ which recentred female protagonists in narratives of human emancipation and positioned the particular issues of working-class women as matters of anarcho-syndicalist concern, in texts by Spanish and international authors including Federica Montseny (Gustavo’s daughter), Sofia Kropotkin, the Brazilian anarchist-feminist Maria Lacerda de Moura, Milly Witkop Rocker, Felipe Alaiz, and Sébastien Faure.<sup>108</sup> However, a special issue, by its nature, breaks with the ordinary, and the newspaper was, like the overwhelming majority of libertarian periodicals, edited by male activists.<sup>109</sup> This thesis demonstrates that

---

<sup>105</sup> Temma Kaplan, ‘Female consciousness and collective action: the case of Barcelona, 1910-1918’, *Signs* 7.3 (1982), pp. 545-66 (p. 566), doi:10.1086/493899; Lucía Prieto Borrego, ‘Las mujeres en el anarquismo andaluz: cultura y movilización en la primera mitad del siglo XX’, *Arenal* 19.1 (2012), pp. 47-74 (p. 63), doi:10.30827/arenal.v19i1.1408. See also Ackelbserg, *Free Women of Spain*, pp. 207-11; Martha Ackelsberg and Myrna Margulies Breitbart, ‘The role of social anarchism and geography in constructing a radical agenda: A response to David Harvey’, *Dialogues in Human Geography* 7.3 (2017), pp. 263-73, doi:10.1177/2043820617732916.

<sup>106</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 143.

<sup>107</sup> ‘El Congreso de Londres’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 30 October 1913; Biography of Romero Rodríguez in Miguel Íñiguez, *Esbozo de una enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2001), p. 523.

<sup>108</sup> See *Acción Social Obrera*, 2 August and 6 September 1924.

<sup>109</sup> Although this can be attributed at least partly to a Press Law that demanded editors be ‘in full possession of civil and political rights’: Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 143. *Acción Social Obrera* is thought to have been edited by Francisco Isgleas Piarnau and Fortunato Barthe: Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, pp. 14, 79, 309.

women were by no means absent from anarcho-syndicalist internationalism, and activists such as Lola Iturbe were able to articulate their own approaches through a distinctly gendered prism; however, these were exceptions within a male-dominated realm where predominant notions of solidarity showed scant attention to women's specific oppression.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, scholars such as Featherstone and Kasper Braskén have foregrounded affectivity as a key dimension of internationalism.<sup>111</sup> In fact, libertarians placed great emphasis on affect: as already referenced, Bakunin regarded 'passionate [...] emotional solidarity' as crucial to worker internationalism; one CNT newspaper claimed in 1937 that 'the anarchist is not born, he is made [...] Half through feelings and half through education'.<sup>112</sup> Higinio Noja Ruiz, an important Spanish anarchist writer, framed 'the Idea' as built on a foundation of '*sentimiento*', meaning a 'feeling', 'emotion' or 'sentiment': the '*sentimiento* of protest [that] gives birth to solidarity', becoming 'class consciousness, friendship, proselytising, the burning desire to establish universal fraternity upon the Earth, the noblest aspiration to establish the reign of justice, the elevated *sentimiento* of freedom'.<sup>113</sup> Contemporary research reconfirms the important role of emotions in social movement mobilisation, which often cannot easily be explained through a 'rational choice' prism.<sup>114</sup> However, it also emphasises a more complex role than is apparent in the teleological thrust of movement discourse. An array of personal and interpersonal motivations can lie behind the ascent of apparently selfless emotions.<sup>115</sup> Sociologist James Jasper argues that emotions can blur the distinction between activist means and ends; for example, the feeling of connection derived from collective mobilisation can itself become a source of as much satisfaction as the movement's formal objectives.<sup>116</sup> These analyses thus call attention to the subjective and affective side of internationalism and its impact on making *and unmaking* solidarities.

---

<sup>110</sup> Sonya Torres Planells and Antonia Fontanillas Borrás, *Lola Iturbe Arizcuren. Vida e ideal de una luchadora anarquista* (Virus Editorial, 2006).

<sup>111</sup> Featherstone, *Solidarity*, pp. 36-37, 65 and *passim*; Braskén, *International Workers' Relief*, pp. 150-51 and *passim*.

<sup>112</sup> Bakunin, 'Program of the Alliance', p. 252; '¿ANARQUISTA...?', *CNT de Toledo*, 21 July 1937.

<sup>113</sup> Higinio Noja Ruiz, *El sendero luminoso y sangriento (El instinto de conservación a través de la Historia)* (Luis Morote, 1932), pp. 15-16.

<sup>114</sup> Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper and Francesca Polletta (eds.), *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (University of Chicago Press, 2001)

<sup>115</sup> Todd Rogers, Noah J. Goldstein and Craig R. Fox, 'Social Mobilization', *Annual Review of Psychology* 69 (2018), pp. 357-81, doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-122414-033718.

<sup>116</sup> James M. Jasper, 'Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research', *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011), pp. 285-303 (p. 296), doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150015.

### *Sources, subjects and structure*

While this thesis is about internationalist ‘ideas’ and ‘debates’ as well as ‘practices’, it is not an intellectual history; instead, it approaches these questions through the lens that Kathy Ferguson terms ‘political thinking in the streets’, meaning the sometimes diffuse or implicit contributions that actors ‘intimately engaged in overlapping sets of struggles and in the creation of the political space within which struggles could take place’ make to political thought.<sup>117</sup> Such a framework is well-suited to a CNT which was, in Chris Ealham’s words, ‘an organ of combat and action rather than a revolutionary think-tank’.<sup>118</sup> It also remains close to libertarians’ own perceptions of an internationalism which, in Bakunin’s words, ‘did not spring ready-made out of the minds of a few erudite theoreticians’ but was rather the culmination of a process of solidarity-making – even if that process was mediated in more ways than they often acknowledged.<sup>119</sup> Despite not being renowned for producing great thinkers and philosophers, the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement was a vital source of experimental and empirical data on anarcho-syndicalist internationalism and had much to ‘say’ about the topic; like Ferguson, this thesis utilises theoretical tools to draw out the wider conceptual significance of the archive and help it to ‘speak’.<sup>120</sup>

The CNT’s relations with the anarcho-syndicalist ‘Berlin International’, or IWA, were considered a key part of its internationalism, and as such constitute an important part of this thesis, analysed with reference to ‘official’ documentation such as the published records of plenums and congresses, internal reports and correspondence. Although until recently it was argued that historiography had to pluralise away from ‘formal’ institutional internationalism and towards more informal iterations, Antentas’s warning that ‘attempts to create stable international organizational frameworks’ must be analysed as well as ‘episodic practices and concrete campaigns’ suggests that the scholarly terrain has shifted in the opposite direction.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, as Julián Vadillo Muñoz notes, the IWA has long been regarded as the ‘unknown international’, limited to a ‘residual space’ within labour history and in sore

---

<sup>117</sup> Kathy E. Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), pp. 2-3.

<sup>118</sup> Chris Ealham, ‘An Impossible Unity: Revolution, Reform and Counter-Revolution and the Spanish Left, 1917-23’, in *The Agony of Spanish Liberalism: from Revolution to Dictatorship 1913-1923*, ed. by Francisco J. Romero Salvadó and Angel Smith (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 92-120 (p. 100).

<sup>119</sup> Bakunin, ‘Program of the Alliance’, p. 252.

<sup>120</sup> Ferguson, *Emma Goldman*, pp. 7, 12.

<sup>121</sup> Berry and Bantman, ‘Introduction’, p. 31 Antentas, ‘Global internationalism’, p. 430.

need of new insight of the kind offered by this thesis.<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, ‘informal’ approaches to internationalism outside the institutional framework were also vital, and the thesis draws extensively on the movement’s print culture, which ‘offers access to the anarchist experience as conceived by anarchists, in a way that no other material can provide’.<sup>123</sup> A significant quantity of popular periodicals, pamphlets and books have been consulted to build an image of the kinds of discourses and ideas that circulated at the ‘meso level’. In fact, the tenor of sources explored shifts as the thesis progresses, because whereas little ‘bureaucratic’ documentation exists for the CNT’s earliest years, the sprawling behemoth of the Civil War era bequeathed thousands of folders of it, posing an entirely different methodological challenge about how to navigate source material.

The effort to account for ‘informal’ internationalism is also about writing a more plural and inclusive history, as a purely institutional framework is often linked to the assumption that ‘rank-and-file members tend to be less interested in international questions than the leadership’.<sup>124</sup> Eric Hobsbawm decried this as a ‘senseless’ commonplace which flattened the ‘multidimensionality’ of social identities and failed to give socialist movements due credit for fomenting, in however an imperfect and mediated way, a more cosmopolitan sensibility among the rank-and-file, who accepted ‘in principle [...] as right and legitimate’ the values they propagated.<sup>125</sup> Other scholars have emphasised still further the cosmopolitan agency of ‘ordinary’ workers, as in labour historian James Barrett’s suggestion that ‘blue-collar cosmopolitans’ were a common fixture of American working-class communities, evincing forms of ‘quotidian’ worldliness, of which the internationalism of radical

---

<sup>122</sup> Julián Vadillo Muñoz, ‘El sindicalismo revolucionario a través de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores (1922-1945)’, in *Internacionalismo Obrero: Experiencias del Sindicalismo Internacional (1888-1986)*, ed. by Manuela Aroca Mohedano (Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero, 2019), pp. 54-74 (p. 54). A summary and commentary on the (relatively unchanged) paucity of historiography on the IWA in Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 300-01. Proving that paltriness, the main text on the International’s trajectory after its foundation remains a book chapter: Wayne Thorpe, ‘Syndicalist internationalism before World War II’, in *Revolutionary syndicalism: an international perspective*, ed. by Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe (Scolar, 1990), pp. 237-260.

<sup>123</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 9; Javier Navarro Navarro, *A la revolución por la cultura: prácticas culturales y sociabilidad libertarias en el País Valenciano (1931-1939)* (Publicacions Universitat de València, 2004), p. 147.

<sup>124</sup> Milner, *Dilemmas of Internationalism*, p. 12.

<sup>125</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, ‘Opening Address: Working-Class Internationalism’, in *Internationalism in the Labour Movement 1830-1940*, ed. by Frits van Holthoon and Marcel van der Linden (Brill, 1988), pp. 3-16 (pp. 13-15).



proletarian movements was but the ‘ultimate form’.<sup>126</sup> Internationalism ‘from below’ is key in Featherstone’s work, and in the playful phrase ‘local people’s global politics’ that Joseph Fronczak applies to the Hands Off Ethiopia movement in the mid-1930s – an ‘unled, unorganized, and unstructured’ internationalist mobilisation that escaped the top-down, centralised directives of the Comintern.<sup>127</sup> On the other hand, although the presumption of grassroots parochialism is untenable, Bantman identifies ‘a clear gap, as far as internationalism is concerned, between the militant elite and the grassroots level’ within the French anarchist milieu in London, with the ‘intense networking’ of leading activists easily differentiated from the rank-and-file’s ‘limited, yet resolute and ritualised internationalism’.<sup>128</sup>

These questions must be considered with reference to a more specific literature on stratification within the CNT, where Anna Monjo has identified a ‘basic contradiction’ between the Confederation’s claims to embody anarcho-syndicalist direct democracy, and the reality of a tripartite hierarchy consisting of a largely pragmatic mass of ‘affiliates’, an upper tier of local ‘grassroots activists’ with some degree of commitment to libertarian ideas, and a core of key activists who were truly invested in ideological and strategic discussions.<sup>129</sup> Qualifying this view, Garner contends that ‘the wide readership of the confederal press, the attendance of open-air conferences, and the support for strike movements shows that a large percentage did take an interest in the outcomes of debates’, producing forms of accountability and active participation which meant that a minority of elite activists ‘could not, even if they so wished, control the CNT’.<sup>130</sup> Jordi Getman-Eraso argues that the lack of a negative rank-and-file response to the ‘revolutionary rhetoric’ of the CNT’s leading cadres suggests that the ‘conceptual distance’ between strata was not so great; that for many workers, such rhetoric appeared ‘representative of its experience and perceived place in society’ and helped to define a ‘separate worker space [...] beyond the reach of government authorities and

---

<sup>126</sup> James R. Barrett, *History from the Bottom Up and the Inside Out: Ethnicity, Race, and Identity in Working-Class History* (Duke University Press, 2017), pp. 80-99.

<sup>127</sup> Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 11 and *passim*; Joseph Fronczak, ‘Local People’s Global Politics: A Transnational History of the Hands Off Ethiopia Movement of 1935’, *Diplomatic History* 39.2 (2015), pp. 245-74 (p. 246), doi:10.1093/dh/dht127.

<sup>128</sup> Bantman, ‘Internationalism’, pp. 962, 970.

<sup>129</sup> Monjo, *Militants*, pp. 477-80.

<sup>130</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 9.

outside the influence of bourgeois culture'.<sup>131</sup> This analysis draws heavily on the work of Chris Ealham, who has emphasised that CNT activists were popularly respected as 'the ones with ideas' and were embedded in working-class communities, where they were instrumental in forging an 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere'.<sup>132</sup> In reality, Monjo substantially caveats her own argument, acknowledging the porousness of her own typology and acknowledging that anarcho-syndicalism overflowed the CNT's boundaries, constituting a far broader 'social fabric' into which anarchist affinity groups, cultural initiatives, atheneums, and the press were woven.<sup>133</sup> For Javier Navarro Navarro, the whole spectrum of 'activists, affiliates and sympathisers' shared in the 'libertarian identity', forged from a tapestry of 'activities, relationships, affects and values woven around the associative spaces' of the movement and its 'networks of sociability'.<sup>134</sup> The movement's print culture reflects these broader characteristics: although characterised by a *de facto* elite stratum of periodicals and of contributors within them, Francisco Madrid and others have highlighted that 'spontaneous collaborations' were a characteristic feature of an uneven but nonetheless inclusive movement press, in which 'all were potential contributors'.<sup>135</sup> It is therefore an invaluable source for gleaning sometimes sparse and sparing data 'from below'.

In fact, the guiding role of a 'conscious minority' and its willing acceptance by the 'passive majority' was a recognised feature of revolutionary syndicalist movements and not a contradiction particular to the CNT.<sup>136</sup> A motion at the CNT's second congress in 1919 gives some indication as to the acceptance of this kind of delegatory structure in the movement's international relations, speaking of nominating three individuals who would

be in constant relation with all the working-class organisations of the world, giving accounts of their

---

<sup>131</sup> Jordi W. Getman-Eraso, 'Pragmatism unveiled: the meanings of revolutionary rhetoric in Spanish anarcho-syndicalism', in *Nation and Conflict in Modern Spain: Essays in Honor of Stanley G. Payne*, ed. by Brian D. Bunk (Parallel Press, 2008), pp. 31-50 (p. 34). On the extent to which ideals were shared beyond the ideological elite, see also Danny Evans and Elizabeth Stainforth, 'Learning to Live: Anarcho-Syndicalism and Utopia in Spain, 1931-37', *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 36.1 (2023), pp. 3-20, doi:10.1386/ijis\_00078\_1.

<sup>132</sup> Chris Ealham, *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (AK Press, 2010), pp. 34-53.

<sup>133</sup> Monjo, *Militants*, pp. 481, 484.

<sup>134</sup> Navarro Navarro, *A La Revolución*, p. 18.

<sup>135</sup> Francisco Madrid, *Solidaridad Obrera y el periodismo de raíz ácrata* (Ediciones Solidaridad Obrera, 2007), p. 16; Álvarez Junco, *ideología política*, p. 79; Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 155; Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 48.

<sup>136</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 17-18.

activities to the National Committee and publishing in the Confederal newspaper everything of interest, with the objective of strengthening the ties of union with all the workers and orienting the Spanish proletariat about the true situation of the social struggle in the whole world.<sup>137</sup>

The role envisaged in the motion is redolent of an ‘imagineer’, a concept which geographers Paul Routledge and Andrew Cumbers introduce in relation to contemporary global justice networks, and which Yeoman applies to Vicente García, the prolific Spanish anarcho-journalist who was based for a time in the southern Wales mining community of Dowlais.<sup>138</sup> ‘Imagineers’ are key activists who mediate between the local/national and the international, working ‘to “ground” the concept or imaginary of the network [...] within grassroots communities’.<sup>139</sup> The concept can readily be applied to individuals such as the rationalist teacher Eusebio Carbó, who was one of those eventually nominated by the 1919 congress to carry out international relations, and his pupil and later ‘one of his most loyal companions and one of his most constant interlocutors’, Valeriano Orobón Fernández.<sup>140</sup> Both stood out for their distinct experiences and qualities. For example, Carbó had spent time in exile in France and Italy prior to the First World War and had made the acquaintance of Errico Malatesta and other leading figures from the Italian anarchist movement.<sup>141</sup> Exile made of Carbó a practised international activist, drawing on his prior outstanding aptitudes – his level of education and knowledge, his multilingualism, ‘his gift for debating and polemic’.<sup>142</sup> The younger Orobón was able to carry comparable qualities into exile in 1924, and similarly developed close ties with international figures, working in the IWA Secretariat in Berlin and as a translator for Max Nettlau, then one of the most well-connected individuals in the global anarchist movement.<sup>143</sup> Although both were atypical in their connectedness and their attributes, rather than becoming a distant elite, both worked in the mould of the ‘imagineer’,

---

<sup>137</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 342.

<sup>138</sup> See Paul Routledge and Andrew Cumbers, *Global Justice Networks: Geographies of transnational solidarity* (Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 65-70 and *passim*; Yeoman, ‘Salud y Anarquía’, p. 279.

<sup>139</sup> Routledge and Cumbers, *Global Justice Networks*, p. 21.

<sup>140</sup> Margarita Carbó, *Eusebi Carbó i Carbó. Vida i militància. Un anarquista al servei de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, trans. by Clara Martín. (Cossetània Edicions, 2014), pp. 10, 19; José Luis Gutiérrez Molina, *Valeriano Orobón Fernández: Anarcosindicalismo y Revolución en Europa* (Libre Pensamiento, 2002). See also José Peirats, *Figuras del movimiento libertario español* (Picazo, 1977), pp. 63-66.

<sup>141</sup> A further spell in exile in the 1920s would see him build further ties; for example, the leading figure in the international anarcho-syndicalist movement, the Russian Alexander Schapiro, became ‘one of his greatest friends’: Carbó, *Eusebi Carbó*, pp. 16-17, 29; Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, p. 124.

<sup>142</sup> Carbó, *Eusebi Carbó*, p. 29.

<sup>143</sup> Gutiérrez Molina, *Valeriano*, pp. 28-48.

placing their language skills at the service of the wider movement – José Luis Gutiérrez Molina claims that Orobón’s ‘intensive translation work’ almost single-handedly kept anarcho-syndicalists in Spain informed about the activities of the IWA and its fellow sections during the 1920s, and cannot ‘be separated from his militant activity’.<sup>144</sup> Both were also prolific propagandists and organisers who were remembered for their effort and adroitness at the tribune and in the movement press, garnering a substantial popular reputation which hints not only that they intended to be ‘grassrooting vectors’ for anarcho-syndicalist internationalism but that they had some success.<sup>145</sup>

Although the ‘imagineer’ is an ideal-type, it usefully acknowledges the kind of qualitative difference noted by Bantman, while also resisting a strict binary between an ideological leadership and pragmatic rank-and-file; in its in-between character, it is also evocative of the ‘meso level’ of analysis. It suggests a notion of ‘grassroots internationalism’ akin to the way Anne-Marie Angelo uses the term with reference to the British Black Panther Movement: to describe the efforts of community-embedded activists ‘to tie local people’s quotidian struggles to Black internationalist politics’ through printed materials and oratory that rendered ‘their everyday struggles visible in a diasporic framework’.<sup>146</sup> Although much of the thesis thus has as its subjects figures like Orobón and Carbó, or the ‘fire-brand’ Lucía Sánchez Saornil who coordinated anarcho-syndicalist women’s groups and whose ‘powerful presence as an orator’ was redolent of the Communard Louise Michel, or Diego Abad de Santillán (Sinesio Baudilio García Fernández), the tireless organisational and theoretical ‘nexus’ between European and Latin American anarchist movements, it treats them as closely connected to organisational efforts on the ground, and as proponents of a popularly-oriented

---

<sup>144</sup> Gutiérrez Molina, *Valeriano*, pp. 74, 83. Meanwhile, Carbó served time in prison for acting as an interpreter at the 1915 anarchist peace congress in El Ferrol: Carbó, *Eusebi Carbó*, p. 18.

<sup>145</sup> See for instance Buenacasa, *movimiento obrero español*, pp. 216-21; Peirats, *Figuras*, pp. 40-41, 62-63; Salvador Cano Carrillo, *Valeriano Orobón Fernández: Towards the Barricades*, trans. by Paul Sharkey (Kate Sharpley Library, 2011), pp. 1-2; Carbó, *Eusebi Carbó*, p. 20. The term is from Routledge and Cumbers, *Global Justice Networks*, p. 131.

<sup>146</sup> Anne-Marie Angelo, “‘Black oppressed people all over the world are one’: the British Black Panthers’ grassroots internationalism, 1969-73”, *Journal of Civil and Human Rights* 4.1 (2018), pp. 64–97 (pp. 68-71, 83), doi:10.5406/jcivihumarigh.4.1.0064.

internationalism, committed to fomenting the kind of grassroots ‘emotional solidarity’ that Bakunin had envisaged decades earlier.<sup>147</sup>

For the sake of clarity, given a relatively lengthy periodisation of 1910-1939, the four chapters of the thesis are organised on a chronological basis, to avoid a constant back-and-forth across very distinct contexts. The first chapter explores Spanish libertarian responses to the Mexican Revolution during the early years of the CNT and into the First World War, while the second explores the debates about international affiliation and movement-building in the wake of that war and throughout the 1920s. The third and fourth chapters then address a qualitatively different period, as the CNT’s reconstruction at the onset of the Spanish Second Republic made it by 1931 by far the biggest anarchist-oriented organisation in the world and the only one to constitute a genuinely major sociopolitical actor in its own national context. While the third chapter considers this in a peacetime context, the final chapter explores the Civil War period, when the Spanish movement oversaw ‘the only anarchist revolution in world history’ but was also strongly constrained by the impositions of the conflict.<sup>148</sup> From a methodological perspective, this chronological approach has also permitted a diachronic understanding of the movement’s internationalism, and engagement with distinct historiographies from specific moments within that over-arching period, such as that pertaining to the libertarian movement during the war, while not allowing that period to dominate it in a teleological manner. Nonetheless, diachronic does not mean a narrative account, and the thesis maintains a consistent conceptual focus throughout, interweaving the chronological and the thematic; the Conclusion further brings together the key overarching insights which run through the chapters.

---

<sup>147</sup> Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, pp. 121-22; María Fernanda de la Rosa, ‘La figura de Diego Abad de Santillán como nexo entre el anarquismo argentino, europeo y latinoamericano, 1920-1930’, *Iberoamericana* (2001-) 12.48 (2012), pp. 21-40, doi:10.18441/ibam.12.2012.48.21-40.

<sup>148</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 19.

## Chapter One

### **‘The programme of the International [...] is today being realised in Baja California’ Spanish anarchism and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1916**

The foundation of the CNT in Barcelona coincided with the outbreak of a multifaceted social and political uprising on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup> Recent scholarship on the Mexican Revolution has emphasised its *global* dimensions and impact.<sup>2</sup> As Devra Anne Weber notes, its place among the major events of the early twentieth century was for many years ‘eclipsed’ in hindsight by the Russian Revolution, a Eurocentric distortion which obscures the immense impression that the Mexican Revolution had on observers at the time.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, while the Russian ‘aurora’ is an inevitable fixture of general histories of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, Mexico has received little acknowledgement even though, as Francisco Madrid notes in one perceptive exception to this oversight, it ‘awakened unprecedented excitement among the Spanish anarchists’ and was for a time ‘the most important campaign’ to feature in *Tierra y Libertad*, one of the foremost anarchist newspapers in Spain and later the official organ of the FAI.<sup>4</sup> Although a small number of more specific studies have begun to address this transatlantic relationship, this chapter draws on a more diverse set of sources and theoretical literature to afford the Mexican Revolution the significance it merits within the history of Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism and draw from it a set of insights about how that internationalism was articulated and contested.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Some of the research in this chapter has been published open access as Joshua Newmark, “‘Put rifles in their hands!’: constructing Spanish anarchist solidarity with the early Mexican Revolution”, *WroCAH Journal* 6 (2022), 64-74.

<sup>2</sup> Christina Heatherton, *Arise! Global Radicalism in the Era of the Mexican Revolution* (University of California Press, 2022) ; Kevan Antonio Aguilar, ‘Revolutionary Encounters: Mexican Communities and Spanish Exiles, 1906-1959’ (PhD thesis, University of California San Diego, 2021) ; Sonia Hernández, *For a Just and Better World: Engendering Anarchism in the Mexican Borderlands, 1900-1938* (University of Illinois Press, 2021) ; Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean*, pp. 125-154 ; David M. Struthers, *The World in a City: Multiethnic Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (University of Illinois Press, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Devra Anne Weber, “‘Different Plans’: Indigenous Pasts, the Partido Liberal Mexicano, and Questions about Reframing Binational Social Movements of the Twentieth Century”, *Social Justice* 42.3-4 (2015), 10-28 (p. 12).

<sup>4</sup> Madrid Santos, ‘prensa anarquista y anarcosindicalista’, pp. 43-44, 188-89. Even the detailed classic account of the CNT during this period omits any mention of Mexico: Bar, *C.N.T.*

<sup>5</sup> For example, for a largely descriptive overview of the coverage of the Mexican Revolution in some of the key Spanish anarchist newspapers from 1911 to 1917: Joaquín Beltrán Dengra, ‘La opinión sobre la

The Mexican Revolution offers an important case study in ‘informal internationalism’ – transnational collaborations outside the efforts to build formal ‘international agencies’.<sup>6</sup> It provides original insight into the construction and role of internationalism within what Chris Ealham calls the ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere, meaning the oppositional space where everyday proletarian experience and anarcho-syndicalist ideology converged into a set of ‘values, ideas, rituals, organisations and practices’.<sup>7</sup> However, the Revolution did not inspire universal libertarian acclaim. David Struthers argues that many anarchists of European origin were constrained in their analysis of Mexico by ‘the racist and conceptual limits of their revolutionary imagination’.<sup>8</sup> In her biography of Jean Grave, Bantman cites his scepticism towards Mexico as illustrative of the way that ideological purism ‘bounded’ the globality of his activism.<sup>9</sup> As Mexican historian Marco Antonio Samaniego López indicates, Grave was influenced by reports first circulated by Italian American anarchists who in May 1911 visited Baja California, supposedly ground zero of the libertarian communist revolution, and concluded that it was a ‘*rivoluzione da tavolino*’ – an editing table revolution, invented to hoodwink foreign anarchists.<sup>10</sup> Their critical reports confirmed preexisting prejudices and preconceptions regarding non-European peoples.<sup>11</sup>

Anarcho-syndicalist engagement with the Mexican Revolution was therefore also about how racial and colonial ideologies were navigated, subverted or absorbed in the articulation of internationalism. Recent studies have shown that turn-of-the-century anarchists’ anti-clerical rationalism and scientism could be a vector for Eurocentric, racializing ideas about

---

Revolución mexicana (1911-1917) en la prensa anarquista española’, *Espiral* 14. 41 (2008), 169-205. Eduard Masjuan has written an interesting analysis of the newspaper *Reivindicación* (discussed in detail below), but without placing it in a broader discussion of anarchist internationalism: Eduard Masjuan, ‘*Reivindicación*, la defensa de la Revolución mexicana magonista por el anarquismo español, 1914-1918’, *Signos Históricos* 12. 43 (2020), 186-219. Kevan Aguilar’s recent PhD thesis sheds some further light on the topic, albeit largely focusing on Spanish émigrés in Mexico and the USA: Aguilar, ‘Revolutionary Encounters’, pp. 21-45; see also the very recent Kevan Antonio Aguilar, ‘The “Indios” of Spain and the Mexican Revolution: Racial Ideologies and the Labor of Internationalist Solidarity’, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 104.3 (2024), pp. 433-63, doi:10.1215/00182168-11189922.

<sup>6</sup> Bantman, ‘Internationalism’, pp. 961-62.

<sup>7</sup> See Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, pp. 34-53.

<sup>8</sup> Struthers, *World in a City*, p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> Bantman, *Jean Grave*, pp. 163-64.

<sup>10</sup> Marco Antonio Samaniego López, ‘El poblado fronterizo de Tijuana. Emiliano Zapata y la *rivoluzione da tavolino*’, *Historia Mexicana* 66. 3 (2017), pp. 1123-75, doi:10.24201/HM.V66I3.3378. See also Shaffer, *Anarchists of the Caribbean*, pp. 142-46.

<sup>11</sup> Samaniego López, ‘El poblado fronterizo’, pp. 1157-8.

cultural backwardness.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, anarchist anti-colonialism also contained a romanticising streak, which regarded ‘pristine’ Indigenous societies as the embodiment of anarchism’s aspiration to communal self-government.<sup>13</sup> Although this arguably simply substituted one set of prejudices for another, some historians of Latin American anarchism note that anarchist movements with considerable Indigenous involvement have deployed similar discourses, such as idealisation of pre-Columbian societies, as a strategy of resistance and group pride.<sup>14</sup> By the early twentieth century, meanwhile, shifting trends in cultural anthropology also facilitated a ‘scientific’ basis for a radical readjustment in understandings of ‘primitive’ peoples, which gained a distinctly anarchist hue in Piotr Kropotkin’s writing about pre-modern ‘solidarity’ and ‘mutual aid’.<sup>15</sup> All of these phenomena were evident in Spanish libertarian responses to Mexico.

On the other hand, quite apart from explicit discussion of supposed racial and ethnic characteristics, postcolonial scholarship draws our attention to exclusions lurking even behind notionally ‘universalist’ discourses, and the consequently deeply uneven, mediated access to international solidarity.<sup>16</sup> For George Ciccariello-Maher, the mainstream anarchist movement has been guilty of such silencing: ‘fidelity to anarchism as identity rather than as a series of practices which undermine and attack the state’ can ‘lead us to miss the antistate forest for the anarchist trees’, especially leading to the marginalisation of patterns of

---

<sup>12</sup> Although biological determinism tended to be eschewed as a reactionary fiction, nineteenth century anarchists often saw racial or ethnic equality as a future goal to be reached by bringing ‘rational’ socialisation and education to ‘backwards’ races: Girón Serra, ‘Discursos sobre la raza’. A similar, but somewhat more positive interpretation in Richard Cleminson and Diogo Duarte, ‘Anarchism, Colonialism and the Question of “Race” in Portugal (c.1890-1930)’, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29. 1 (2023), pp. 115-35, doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2178169.

<sup>13</sup> For example, in relation to Indian ‘civilisation’ prior to Portuguese and British colonialism: Cleminson and Duarte, ‘Anarchism, Colonialism’, p. 125. Or in relation to Ireland’s Celtic past: José Antonio Gutiérrez and Federico Ferretti, ‘The nation against the state: the Irish Question and Britain-based anarchists in the Age of Empire’, *Nations and Nationalism* 26.3 (2020), pp. 611-27 (p. 619), doi:10.1111/nana.12584. In Peru, this entailed a romantic vision of precolombine Andean communities: Gerard Leibner, ‘La Protesta y la andinización del anarquismo en el Perú, 1912-1915’, *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 5. 1 (1994), pp. 83-102 (pp. 65-7, 90), doi:10.61490/eial.v5i1.1228.

<sup>14</sup> Steven J. Hirsch, ‘Anarchism and “the Indian problem” in Peru, 1898-1927’, *Anarchist Studies* 28.2 (2020), pp. 54-75 (p. 56), doi:10.3898/AS.28.2.03; Carlos Pazmiño, ‘Anarquismo Comunista y dilema indio. Pasado, presente y futuro revolucionario’, *A Las Barricadas* (2016) <www.alasbarricadas.org/noticias/36932> [accessed 3 July 2023]

<sup>15</sup> Girón Serra, ‘Discursos sobre la raza’, pp. 132-36. Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* (Jonathan-David Jackson, 2018), pp. 49-87.

<sup>16</sup> Vivienne Jabri, ‘Solidarity and spheres of culture: the cosmopolitan and the postcolonial’, *Review of International Studies* 33.4 (2007), pp. 715-28, doi:10.1017/S0260210507007747; Rao, ‘Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism’; Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, p. 7.



resistance in non-European societies.<sup>17</sup> Ciccariello-Maher and other scholars interested in ‘decolonising anarchism’ have thus argued for attentiveness to praxes that embody the ‘spirit not the word’ of anarchism.<sup>18</sup> This chapter demonstrates that some Spanish libertarians evinced this in a crude, imperfect but nonetheless meaningful way, offering a striking precocious example of decentred, global internationalism.

The chapter begins by analysing Spanish libertarians’ alignment with one tendency within the Mexican Revolution: their radical counterparts in the Partido Liberal Mexicano (Mexican Liberal Party, PLM). The first section explores the discursive, symbolic and ideological commonalities through which a strong sense of affinity was cultivated within, and which in turn reinforced the ethos and autonomy of, the ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere’. It emphasises the way that the active construction of solidarity takes place on terms shaped by actors’ subjective situation and context, and the generative role that such solidarities can then play in reaffirming those actors’ own political identities. A second section analyses the activity which emanated from that solidarity, such as considerable fundraising, as well as rallies and demonstrations; it is shown that these physical acts of internationalism were further construed as an extension of ‘local’ activism. The chapter then considers how Mexico’s non-Europeanness factored into this ongoing internationalist relationship, as the PLM’s role diminished and focus turned to the agrarian and frequently Indigenous movements who retained the mantle of social revolution. The exploration of the ways in which the Spanish libertarian press romanticised, patronised, vilified, and admired Indigenous Mexicans highlights the lack of a given response to racial ‘difference’, although one voluntarist approach exemplified in *Tierra y Libertad* prefigured the kind of framework for a ‘decolonised’ anarchist outlook for which some activist-scholars advocate today. A final

---

<sup>17</sup> George Ciccariello-Maher, ‘An Anarchism That Is Not Anarchism: Notes toward a Critique of Anarchist Imperialism’, in *How Not To Be Governed: Readings and Interpretations from a Critical Anarchist Left*, ed. by Jimmy Casas Klausen and James Martel (Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), pp. 19-46 (p. 40). See also Arlif Dirlik, ‘Anarchism and the question of place: thoughts from the Chinese experience’, in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World*, ed. by van der Walt and Hirsch, pp. 131-46 (pp. 131-2); Laura Galián Hernández and Constantino Paonessa, ‘Caught between internationalism, transnationalism and immigration: a brief history of anarchism in Egypt until 1945’, *Anarchist Studies* 26.1 (2018), pp. 29-54 (pp. 41, 48).

<sup>18</sup> Ciccariello-Maher, ‘Anarchism That Is Not anarchism’, pp. 29, 40. This is analogue to Maia Ramnath’s call to distinguish between ‘big A’ and ‘small a’ anarchisms: Maia Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism: An antiauthoritarian history of India’s liberation struggle* (AK Press, 2011), pp. 6-8. See also Laura Galián, *Colonialism, Transnationalism, and Anarchism in the South of the Mediterranean* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

section turns to the First World War era, offering Mexico as a novel lens for reading the deep divisions which the conflict triggered among libertarians and further exemplifying, through a period of contestation, that internationalism was closely tied to one's sense of political identity. The case study of the Mexican Revolution will thereby demonstrate the centrality, vitality and controversy of internationalism while situating it within this early period in the history of the CNT.

### *Magonismo in the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere'*

The Mexican Revolution was not a singular event, but an overlapping amalgam of revolts against corruption, centralisation, capitalist accumulation and ties to foreign capital, which had generated a heterogeneous base of discontent.<sup>19</sup> Disaffected elements of the elite and the middle class coalesced in late 1910 around the presidential campaign of the millionaire Francisco Madero; rather than the hoped-for reestablishment of liberal democracy, his toppling of the dictator Porfirio Díaz opened a decade-long struggle for power at the helm of the state.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the country's dispossessed masses had more expansive aspirations, as landless workers mobilised to redistribute the land: as one historian has written, its 'popular and agrarian character' made Mexico 'a social revolution'.<sup>21</sup> Across the stratifications of Restoration Spain, actors interpreted this multifaceted process differently. Still chafing from the loss of their last American colonies in 1898, monarchist elites were supportive of Díaz's *Porfiriato* regime: as well as affording privileges to wealthy Spanish expatriates, they believed that Díaz constrained US expansionism in the region and furthered their neocolonial pursuit of pan-Hispanic strategic and cultural ties.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Spanish conservatives were perturbed by the spectre of social upheaval that Mexico portended.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, some of the country's bolder reformists were supportive of Madero's anti-re-

---

<sup>19</sup> Heatherton, *Arise!*, pp. 14-16; Michael J. Gonzales, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940* (University of New Mexico Press, 2002), pp. 5-59.

<sup>20</sup> Stuart Easterling, *The Mexican Revolution: a short history, 1910-1920* (Haymarket Books, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Gonzales, *Mexican Revolution*, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Rosario Sevilla Soler, 'España y los revolucionarios mexicanos en la prensa andaluza: Una visión condicionada', in *Insurgencia y Republicanismo*, ed. by Jesús Raúl Navarro García (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006), pp. 299-339 (pp. 300-02); Joaquín Beltrán, 'La opinión de la prensa española dinástica, republicana y socialista sobre la Revolución Mexicana, 1911-1920', *Revista de Humanidades: Tecnológico de Monterrey* 16 (2004), pp. 149-74 (pp. 151-52, 155-57).

<sup>23</sup> Beltrán, 'La opinión de la prensa española', pp. 153-55.

election campaign.<sup>24</sup> The Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party; PSOE) and its newspaper, *El Socialista*, saw in the 'constitutionalist' Venustiano Carranza's promise of a secular, democratic state and agrarian reform from above a reflection of their own commitment to a liberal, reforming republic in Spain.<sup>25</sup>

For Spain's libertarians, however, it was the Partido Liberal Mexicano, which united the most radical currents on the far left of the opposition to Díaz, that shaped their views of the Revolution. Founded at the outset of the twentieth century, the PLM had been swept into a clandestine existence long before Madero began testing the waters for a challenge to the dictatorship.<sup>26</sup> The Party's best-known, most militant leaders were gathered in the 'Organising Junta' led by brothers Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón and, at the outset of the Revolution, confined to exile in Los Angeles, from where they published the *Regeneración* newspaper.<sup>27</sup> Despite the catch-all 'Liberal' moniker, the Flores Magóns had moved towards anarchism in the years prior to the Revolution.<sup>28</sup> Although the Mexican historian Marco Antonio Samaniego López criticises the term '*magonismo*' for contradicting the Flores Magón's anti-personalist ethos, both contemporary and scholarly accounts have used the label to account for this distinct tendency within the Mexican Revolution.<sup>29</sup>

Working-class Spanish émigrés first brought anarchist ideas to Mexico, and formed a point of contact between the PLM and Spanish anarchism prior to the Revolution: for example Jaime Vidal, an acquaintance of Francisco Ferrer who emigrated westwards in the early 1900s, became a friend of the Flores Magóns after moving to California in 1907.<sup>30</sup> However, back in the old country, most would encounter *magonismo* through transnational

---

<sup>24</sup> Sevilla Soler, 'España y los revolucionarios mexicanos', p. 308.

<sup>25</sup> Beltrán, 'La opinión de la prensa española', p. 162.

<sup>26</sup> Gonzales, *Mexican Revolution*, p. 72.

<sup>27</sup> See the useful overview in Mitchell Cowen Verter, 'Biographical Sketch', in *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader*, ed. by Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter (AK Press, 2005), pp. 21-105.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 'Biographical Sketch', p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> Marco Antonio Samaniego López, "'...El Magonismo No Existe": Ricardo Flores Magón', *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México* 49 (2015), pp. 33-53, doi:0.1016/j.ehmcm.2014.12.001. Others contend that the idiosyncrasies of Flores Magón's anarchism merited this individualised nomenclature (more on this below): Shawn England, 'Magonismo, the Revolution and the Anarchist Appropriation of an Imagined Mexican Indigenous Identity', in *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History*, ed. by Geoffroy de Laforcade and Kirwin Shaffer (University of Florida Press, 2015), pp. 243-60.

<sup>30</sup> Christopher J. Castañeda, 'Moving West: Jaime Vidal, Anarchy, and the Mexican Revolution, 1904-1918', in *Writing Revolution: Hispanic Anarchism in the United States*, ed. by Christopher J. Castañeda and Montse Feu (University of Illinois Press, 2019), pp. 107-19; Aguilar, 'Revolutionary Encounters', pp. 24-32.

anarchist print networks.<sup>31</sup> In his memoirs, Manuel Sirvent Romero, later an important militant in both the CNT and the FAI, recalled distributing copies of *Regeneración* alongside other titles such as *¡Tierra!* (Cuba) and *El Único* (Panama) as a young paperboy, part of his earliest induction into the movement in Sabadell.<sup>32</sup> There, *Regeneración* was eagerly received: one Sabadell group requested ever larger numbers of copies because demand always outstripped supply.<sup>33</sup> Articles from *Regeneración* were also reproduced in Spanish libertarian newspapers, and throughout 1911 frequently made the front page of the CNT's *Solidaridad Obrera* and the anarchist weekly, *Tierra y Libertad*. It was this radical press which urged those with no physical ties to Mexico to see the 'incalculable transcendence' of the events across the Atlantic.<sup>34</sup>

Modern technology offered a constant supply of news from Mexico: 'At every moment the telegraph conveys us details of the struggle'.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, *Regeneración* shaped the distinct interpretation of the events, centring and even exaggerating the role of the PLM and its uprising in Baja California in Spanish libertarians' early understandings of the Revolution.<sup>36</sup> Its efforts to emphasise the Revolution's *social* character were particularly important in establishing commonalities with *cenetistas*. A spring 1911 manifesto 'to the workers of the whole world' declared that rather than 'fighting to topple the Dictator Porfirio Díaz to put another tyrant in his place', the Revolution had 'the deliberate and resolute purpose of expropriating the land and the implements of labour to deliver them to the people

---

<sup>31</sup> On the links between those physical contacts (particularly with Vidal) and the forging of a transatlantic print network see Javier Gámez Chávez, 'Recepción y debate del magonismo en el movimiento anarquista español, 1907-1911', *Pacarina del Sur: Revista de Pensamiento Crítico Latinoamericano* [online] 5.19 (2014), <[www.pacarinadelsur.com/nuestra-america/huellas-y-voces/945-recepcion-y-debate-del-magonismo-en-el-movimiento-anarquista-espanol-1907-1911#\\_edn21](http://www.pacarinadelsur.com/nuestra-america/huellas-y-voces/945-recepcion-y-debate-del-magonismo-en-el-movimiento-anarquista-espanol-1907-1911#_edn21)> [accessed 27 July 2021].

<sup>32</sup> Manuel Sirvent Romero, *Un Militante del Anarquismo Español [Memorias, 1889-1948]* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2011), pp. 39-40.

<sup>33</sup> 'La Revolución de Méjico', *El Trabajo*, 13 July 1912.

<sup>34</sup> 'La Revolución en Méjico', *El Trabajo*, 21 September 1912.

<sup>35</sup> 'La Revolución en Méjico', *El Trabajo*, 28 September 1912.

<sup>36</sup> The Junta frequently portrayed itself as a representative body for the social revolution; it also claimed that the party controlled 'a vast territorial expanse in Baja California' and that a new social order was being established there 'without masters and tyrants': 'A tomar posesión de la tierra', *Tierra y Libertad*, 14 June 1911. This kind of claim has been questioned in accounts such as Marco Antonio Samaniego López, 'La revolución mexicana en Baja California: maderismo, magonismo, filibusterismo y la pequeña revuelta local', *Historia Mexicana* 56.4 (2007), pp. 1201-62. In reality, while the PLM had played a formative role in shaping opposition to the *Porfiriato* prior to 1910, and although many of its activists went on to be active in other factions, the Party itself played an overall secondary one in the actual Revolution: Cowen Verter, 'Biographical sketch', pp. 75-89.

[...] without distinction of sex'.<sup>37</sup> The PLM stood for 'modern ideas' (a common euphemism for anarchist ideals) and 'DIRECT ACTION' tactics, and proclaimed the 'fallacy of political panaceas to redeem the proletariat from economic slavery'.<sup>38</sup> By urging profound social transformation beyond a mere change of political leadership, the Organising Junta espoused the same conclusions that Spanish anarcho-syndicalists had reached concerning the 'political comedy and social tragedy' of Restoration-era Spain.<sup>39</sup> The *Liberales*' appeal to sex equality in land distribution and calls for female revolutionary participation also chimed with the Spanish movement's growing, albeit still limited, embrace of gender emancipation since the turn of the century.<sup>40</sup>

The use of this distinctly libertarian language was vital given the sometimes insular and oppositional dynamics of the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere'. Jordi Getman-Eraso has identified the CNT's 'revolutionary rhetoric' as a kind of 'identifying idiom' and 'organisational *carnet*' which amounted to 'a prerequisite to being accepted as a true *cenetista*'.<sup>41</sup> 'Revolutionary rhetoric' was thus a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion, regulating access to solidarity based on a particular set of ideologically-defined ideas and symbols.<sup>42</sup> As news of the revolution began to filter into Spain, the Spanish libertarian press noted, with palpable excitement, the similarity of idiom: 'The *liberales* of Mexico call each other comrade and constantly address their proclamations to the proletariat, speaking to them [...] in language akin to that used by the anarchist publications of all the world'.<sup>43</sup> One obvious example of this shared terminology was the PLM's use of the slogan '*¡Tierra y*

---

<sup>37</sup> 'MANIFIESTO A los Trabajadores de Todo el Mundo', *Regeneración*, 8 April 1911. Reproduced in the Spanish libertarian press: 'MANIFIESTO', *Tierra y Libertad*, 3 May 1911; 'LA REVOLUCION EN MÉJICO', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 5 May 1911. See also Margarita Carbó Darnaculleta, '¡Viva la Tierra y Libertad! La utopía magonista', *Boletín Americanista* 47 (1997), pp. 91-100 (p. 95).

<sup>38</sup> 'MANIFIESTO A los Trabajadores de Todo el Mundo'.

<sup>39</sup> Referring to deep social inequality and a corrupt, unrepresentative political system, this phrase is taken from Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*.

<sup>40</sup> A rather more direct appeal to women, although suffused with masculinist ideology, appeared in a note from the PLM militant Rosa Mendez, who urged men to show 'that you are really men; and we, the women, let us teach the cowardly men their position and discharge the whip of our disapproval upon their eunuch bodies. Let us women show that we too are brave fighters and let us urge the men to remain firm in their positions': 'La revolución en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 12 July 1911. More broadly, however, the PLM was early to integrate gender equality – and cultural and socioeconomic steps to achieve it in substance – into its programme: Hernández, *Just and Better World*, pp. 37-48. On the growth of anarchist-feminism in Spanish anarchist and syndicalist circles over the turn of the century, see Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp.135-46.

<sup>41</sup> Getman-Eraso, 'Pragmatism unveiled', p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> On the construction of *partial* solidarities, rather than given universalities, see Featherstone, *Solidarity*, pp. 16-24.

<sup>43</sup> 'Una revolución libertaria', *Tierra y Libertad*, 15 March 1911.

*Libertad!* ('Land and Freedom!'), which was 'doubly agreeable' to the editors of its Barcelona namesake.<sup>44</sup> The use of a common revolutionary language, expressing shared grievances and aspirations, helped to shape bonds of trust across the geographical divide, positioning the Mexicans as comrades deserving of solidarity.<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile, the Organising Junta's use of the symbol of the 'Red Flag of the proletariat' situated the Mexican social revolution within the history of international working-class revolt.<sup>46</sup> The Junta argued that the Mexican revolutionaries had raised the red flag 'not to make a puerile show of it in inoffensive street demonstrations [...] but to plant it firmly on the battlefields as a brave challenge to the old society'.<sup>47</sup> This distinctly militant appeal to common symbolism undoubtedly had potency for a CNT which claimed that its stance of open and immediate confrontation – as opposed to the gradualism of the socialists – represented continuity with the true essence of the workers' struggle.<sup>48</sup> The evocative appeal of the red flag among Spanish libertarians was apparent in one pseudonymised poetic tribute sent to *Tierra y Libertad*, which described it as a 'crown' which was 'floating fiery red' above Tijuana and urged the revolutionaries not to let it be 'torn, stained or disfigured'.<sup>49</sup> Efforts to situate Mexico within that history were bolstered considerably by the endorsement of Anselmo Lorenzo, Spain's deeply respected veteran of the First International, on the front page of *Tierra y Libertad*:

That which for more than half a century has been maintained among the workers of the world through the diffusion of ideas, is currently upheld in Mexico by arms.

---

<sup>44</sup> 'La revolución en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 11 December 1912.

<sup>45</sup> Studies in social movement mobilisation have noted the overlapping and reinforcing nature of *shared* emotional sentiments on the one hand and *reciprocal* affective ties on the other: Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, 'Why Emotions Matter', in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. by Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 1-24 (p. 20).

<sup>46</sup> 'MANIFIESTO A los Trabajadores de Todo el Mundo'.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> For instance, note the criticism by many Spanish libertarians of the perceived degeneration of May Day in the hands of reformists and parliamentary socialists. The commemoration of the Chicago martyrs and the struggle for an eight-hour day had been 'turned into a *fiesta*, the protest into a caricature-like civic procession': Mauro Bajatierra, *Contra el Capitalismo y Contra el Estado* (Biblioteca Plus Ultra, n.d.), p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> 'Á TIJUANA', *Tierra y Libertad*, 28 July 1911.

The programme of the [First] International, developed in [Piotr Kropotkin's] *The Conquest of Bread*, is today being realised in Baja California, by those warrior workers who wield the rifle and the hoe, to the cry of Land and Freedom!<sup>50</sup>

As a living symbol of that International and therefore of the movement's collective memory and continuity, Lorenzo's authorship – or 'imagineership' – strengthened the effort to historicise the Mexican Revolution.<sup>51</sup> That Revolution in turn reaffirmed the real-world relevance of the radical working-class past and its ideology, collapsing the teleology and timeframe for when 'the revolution' was due to take place and bringing it into the realm of imminent realisation.

Militants such as Lorenzo construed the Mexican Revolution as a didactic example that confirmed the libertarian thesis that 'political revolution' at the helm of the state, as advocated by Spain's republicans and socialists, was insufficient, and 'social revolution', overthrowing the whole edifice, a necessity. Years earlier, the Paris Commune and the Haymarket martyrdom had fleshed out the anarchist critique of republican regimes, unveiling the emptiness behind the French and American republics' lofty, liberatory claims.<sup>52</sup> In Spain, where republicanism was still a (relatively) untried formula, the Mexican Revolution continued this tradition of international affairs proving the inevitable bankruptcy of republican experiments. At a pro-Mexican Revolution meeting organised in A Coruña in June 1911 by the recently-constituted Galician regional federation of the CNT, the Mexican revolutionaries' example was repeatedly cited as proof of the need to transcend bourgeois reformism.<sup>53</sup> A *Tierra y Libertad* front page urged working-class supporters of the republican and socialist parties to 'keep in mind' that in Mexico 'we are speaking of a working-class insurrection against the tyranny of a republic'; the 'situation could not be clearer nor our

---

<sup>50</sup> 'La revolución en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 28 June 1911.

<sup>51</sup> For instance, Lorenzo was a firm proponent of the notion that revolutionary syndicalism represented a direct continuity with the values of the First International: see Anselmo Lorenzo, *Sindicalismo* (Biblioteca Vértice, n.d.), pp. 1, 20-21. Teresa Abelló i Güell notes that Lorenzo was invited by the organisers of the international revolutionary syndicalism congress in London in 1913 to address it specifically as 'an almost unique remnant of the old International': Abelló i Güell, *relacions internacionals*, pp. 139-40. Yeoman describes Lorenzo as 'the human embodiment of the link between the movement's past and present': Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 228.

<sup>52</sup> Kinna, *Government of No One*, pp. 24-5.

<sup>53</sup> Report from *Tierra Gallega* reproduced in Carlos Illades, *México y España durante la Revolución Mexicana* (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1985), pp. 160-65. The Federación had been founded in March 1911: Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 219.

decision more categorical. In Mexico appears the solution to the social problem'.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, *La Picota* newspaper of Sabadell denounced 'the Spanish republican press [which] with its silence [...] makes a mockery of their false and hypocritical revolutionism'; Mexico's *Porfiriato* republic – 'worse than the most reactionary monarchy' – disproved any teleology which claimed the need to 'pass through' a liberal republic on the road to emancipation.<sup>55</sup>

As well as this ideological refinement, solidarity with the Mexican Revolution reinforced and was sharpened by the adversarial edge of the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere', illustrating its dynamics as a 'separate worker space'.<sup>56</sup> For example, the conservative press characterised the Revolution as one of senseless violence perpetrated by 'bandits', frequently depicted through a deeply racializing prism.<sup>57</sup> In response, the libertarian press did not deny the violence, but reinterpreted it: *El Sindicalista* newspaper from the city of Villanueva y Geltrú, for example, argued that violent 'acts of justice' were 'not crimes as the official press wants to make them seem, but rather a feature of the beautiful Social Revolution that is very close to triumphing'.<sup>58</sup> This was closely tied to a critique of the perceived hypocrisy of hegemonic notions of morality: 'How much innocent blood has the three-headed hydra called Capital, Government and Religion spilt during so many centuries of slavery! These are crimes indeed!'.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the libertarian press in Spain regularly reproduced *Regeneración*'s sanguinary chronicles of class warfare, filled with graphic anecdotes about *haciendas* conquered 'by blood and fire' and the execution of 'bourgeois' landowners for the exploitation they had inflicted upon the workers.<sup>60</sup> This would suggest a certain receptivity to class violence itself among at least some of the militant readership of newspapers like *Solidaridad Obrera*, over whom the bloody repression of Barcelona's Tragic Week and the gratuitous execution of Ferrer less than two years previously undoubtedly still hung. While Aguilar argues that the Spanish libertarians resisted 'mainstream' depictions of the

---

<sup>54</sup> 'La revolución en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 5 July 1911.

<sup>55</sup> 'La Revolución de Méjico y la prensa republicana española', *La Picota*, 17 June 1911.

<sup>56</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*; Getman-Eraso, 'Pragmatism unveiled', pp. 34-35.

<sup>57</sup> Aguilar, 'Revolutionary Encounters', pp. 32-33; Sevilla Soler, 'España y los revolucionarios mexicanos', p. 312.

<sup>58</sup> 'La Revolución en Méjico'. *El Sindicalista*, 21 September 1912.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> 'Información', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 July 1911.



Revolution because they ‘empathized’ with fellow workers and *campesinos* across the Atlantic, a more ‘selfish’ interest in affective gratification can also be considered.<sup>61</sup>

The intense contempt for bourgeois authority was also apparent in a less provocative but nonetheless consequential manner: the reading against the grain of ‘bourgeois’ news about the Revolution. The libertarian press frequently culled what information it could from mainstream sources; according to *Tierra y Libertad*, much of this curation was carried out by José Negre, the inaugural secretary of the CNT.<sup>62</sup> This was carried out with considerable suspicion, accusing the bourgeois dailies of maintaining an ‘obstinate silence’ or a ‘vacuum’ in the face of ‘the existence of the libertarian revolution’, but convinced that the latter’s ‘vitality’ would shine through ‘with the force of facts, which it is not possible to silence’.<sup>63</sup> In one example, *Tierra y Libertad* highlighted telegraphic reports of ‘new combats’ in Mexico, which – it claimed – proved that the ‘celebrated armistice between Madero and Díaz’ was a mere charade, and the ‘expropriatory’ social revolution raged on.<sup>64</sup> The repeated accusation that the mainstream, ‘bribed’ newspapers were ‘silencing’ events in Mexico reflected the movement’s ‘counter-hegemonic’ praxis, to use Ealham’s Gramsci-inflected terminology.<sup>65</sup> While this clearly tied into the ethos of working-class autonomy at the movement’s heart, it is worth acknowledging the latent tensions created by such a conspiratorial outlook, by building only a partial image of reality which had to be weighed against the mediated if not deeply hostile nature of ‘bourgeois’ coverage. Spanish anarcho-syndicalist solidarity with *magonismo* was therefore a solidarity refracted through a flattering, aggrandising lens.

Featherstone points to the ‘transformative’ and ‘inventive’ nature of solidarity and its role in ‘politicization’ and the formation of new political identities and subjectivities.<sup>66</sup> The above examples have all highlighted ways in which solidarity with the Mexican Revolution facilitated the articulation and refinement of a libertarian, militantly proletarian, and revolutionary political culture. Indeed, the Revolution inspired enthusiasm at a time when

---

<sup>61</sup> Aguilar, ‘Revolutionary Encounters’, p. 33.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Sobre Méjico’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 9 April 1913.

<sup>63</sup> ‘De la revolución mejicana’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 24 May 1911; ‘La revolución de Méjico’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 13 September 1911.

<sup>64</sup> ‘De la revolución mejicana’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 24 May 1911.

<sup>65</sup> ‘LA REVOLUCION EN MEJICO’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 24 March 1911; ‘La revolución en Méjico’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 15 February 1911; Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, p. 48.

<sup>66</sup> Featherstone, *Solidarity*, pp. 5-8.

new libertarian organisations were coming into existence. At the very local level, formations like the ‘Acracia’ anarchist group in the town of Gallarta, northern Spain came into existence with greetings for ‘those valiant comrades from Mexico who fight with energy and valour to the cry of Land and Freedom to conquer the common good of all’.<sup>67</sup> Internationalist solidarity also produced new links *between* groups, as when two Barcelona anarchist groups placed a note in *Tierra y Libertad* appealing to ‘the groups, collectives and individuals who sympathise with the Mexico campaign’ to pass through the newspaper’s editorial office in order to collaborate on expanding the solidarity efforts.<sup>68</sup> At regional level, members of the new Solidaridad Obrera Federation in Galicia similarly used the opportunity of its founding meeting to send greetings to ‘the brave Mexicans’.<sup>69</sup> At national scale, the CNT’s first congress in September 1911 sent further greetings to the Mexican revolutionaries, highlighting how Mexico offered a point of international reference for the ideology of the fledgling confederation.<sup>70</sup> While the Mexican Revolution was not the sole generative factor in birth, growth and expansion at these various levels of organisation, it clearly offered a vital reference point in these formative moments.

### *A call to action*

Featherstone notes that radical internationalist causes can become a ‘tactical way of fighting back’.<sup>71</sup> In 1911, the repression meted out during Barcelona’s Tragic Week remained very fresh in radical minds.<sup>72</sup> The Mexican Revolution’s liberating vision of resistance and insurrection irrupted into the ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere’ when many in the movement were looking to revive and reconsolidate the libertarian project in the wake of that crushing repression, including by creating the nationwide labour organisation which would become the CNT.<sup>73</sup> One Cádiz-based donor to a subscription for the Mexican revolutionaries alluded suggestively to a link between the events by using the pseudonym ‘One who was

---

<sup>67</sup> ‘Maremagnum’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 5 July 1911.

<sup>68</sup> ‘A los grupos, colectividades e individuos que simpatizan con la campana de Méjico’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 10 May 1911.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Crónicas internacionales’, *Acción Libertaria*, 16 June 1911.

<sup>70</sup> ‘PRIMER CONGRESO OBRERO’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 15 September 1911.

<sup>71</sup> For example, the British left’s support for Nicaraguan Sandinistas, the ANC in South Africa, or the PLO, during the 1980s when the Thatcher government’s power appeared most unassailable: Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 35.

<sup>72</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp. 204-08.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 208, 212

working in Barcelona during the Tragic Week'.<sup>74</sup> Shortly after publishing the Organising Junta's manifesto, *Tierra y Libertad* declared that

the social revolution which has been spoken of so many times in the proletarian world, has finally had a true incarnation in Mexico. The example is suggestive, contagious, and it would not be difficult to follow in other countries, bringing to the countryside the spirit of rebellion that in the cities is choked between the prison walls of factories and workshops.<sup>75</sup>

This pointed to the vivid ('suggestive') and affective ('contagious') impact even of simply contrasting one image of a stifling, carceral industrial city and another of sprawling Mexican countryside in open rebellion. If, as sociologist James Jasper puts it, the 'excruciating contrast between the way things are now and the way things might be' is a prime motivator of protest and social action, an international example like Mexico could sharpen that sense of possibility.<sup>76</sup>

Driven by this, anarcho-syndicalists in Spain sought to intervene and further the Revolution, acting on their professed beliefs: 'Enough theories! The moment has arrived [...] let us give our support to the Revolution'.<sup>77</sup> For a small minority of Spanish anarchists, this meant travelling across the Atlantic to join in the Revolution, although travel restrictions and economic limitations placed this option out of reach for many.<sup>78</sup> For most, it meant responding to Organising Junta's spring 1911 appeal for 'SOLIDARITY' and for the 'agitation' of 'conscious workers' and their organisations – 'in the street, in the theatre, on the tram, in meeting halls, in the heart of homes, everywhere there may be ears ready to listen, consciences capable of becoming outraged'.<sup>79</sup> More specifically, the Junta called for 'global protest' against foreign intervention in Mexico, a widespread propaganda effort on behalf of the PLM cause, and 'MONEY, MONEY AND MORE MONEY for the foment of the Social

---

<sup>74</sup> 'Suscripción para ayudar a los libertarios mejicanos', *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 June 1911.

<sup>75</sup> 'De la revolución mejicana', *Tierra y Libertad*, 24 May 1911.

<sup>76</sup> Jasper, 'Emotions and Social Movements', p. 291.

<sup>77</sup> 'La Revolución en México', *El Trabajo*, 19 October 1912.

<sup>78</sup> Aguilar, 'Revolutionary Encounters', p. 41; Aguilar, 'The "Indios" of Spain', pp. 446-47. The American anarchist Sam Dolgoff recalled an old comrade, Frank González, who was born in Santander, Spain, but after being targeted for repression 'fled to Mexico to participate in the Mexican Revolution': Sam Dolgoff, *Fragments: A Memoir* (Refract, 1986), pp. 76-7.

<sup>79</sup> 'MANIFIESTO A los Trabajadores de Todo el Mundo'.

Revolution [sic] in Mexico'.<sup>80</sup> Within weeks, *Tierra y Libertad* recorded how workers in Spain had 'translated into deeds' their 'indescribable' enthusiasm: anarchist groups had reproduced the spring manifesto and distributed 'several thousand' copies around the country, while the CNT had approved offering 'moral, material and propaganda aid' to the Mexican revolutionaries.<sup>81</sup> This activism for Mexico coincided with a period of 'intense popular unrest in Spain' which lasted throughout the summer of 1911, and which the fledgling CNT was keen to foment and shape in a revolutionary direction.<sup>82</sup>

Immediately after publishing the Organising Junta's appeal, *Tierra y Libertad* opened a solidarity fund, an example soon followed by other newspapers.<sup>83</sup> Joaquín Beltrán Dengra tallies the total collected as 2,482.50 *pesetas* by the following May and 3695.42 by the summer of 1913, pointing out that an average daily working-class wage was around four pesetas.<sup>84</sup> Reading through the subscription lists, most individuals appear to have given between ten and fifty cents, meaning that there were several thousand donations in two years, both from individuals and via small local collections in anarchist groups and trade unions.<sup>85</sup> Appeals portrayed donation as an important intervention in the revolutionary struggle. For example, in September 1911, Ricardo Flores Magón wrote that thousands of Mexican 'peons' fought under the 'Red Flag', armed only 'with STONES [...] against thousands of henchmen of the Dictatorship', and exhorted foreign supporters to '[p]ut rifles in their hands!'.<sup>86</sup> This graphic imagery encouraged a sense of vicarious participation in the Revolution – and in its violent aspect. At least one donor, from Castro del Río, clearly identified with this, using the suggestive pseudonym 'A shepherd who would not mind exchanging the crook for the rifle wielded by the Mexican revolutionaries to brandish over the Porfirios and Maderos'.<sup>87</sup>

The other side of this affirmative role for donation was that failure to donate could be construed as a personal moral failing and a dereliction of duty, as Flores Magón expressed no less vividly: 'Are you waiting for the last Mexican libertarian to disappear, in order to spill floods of tears upon a corpse whose bloody wounds will be a solemn condemnation of

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> 'De la revolución mejicana', *Tierra y Libertad*, 24 May 1911.

<sup>82</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp. 223-24.

<sup>83</sup> See the note after 'MANIFIESTO', *Tierra y Libertad*, 3 May 1911

<sup>84</sup> Beltrán Dengra, 'La opinion sobre...', pp. 175, 175n6, 201.

<sup>85</sup> The subscription lists tended to appear on the back page of newspapers alongside administrative notes.

<sup>86</sup> 'Solidaridad compañeros, solidaridad', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 8 September 1911.

<sup>87</sup> 'Suscripción para ayudar a los libertarios mejicanos', *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 June 1911.

your lack of solidarity?’<sup>88</sup> One Sabadellense activist made a similarly harsh declaration: ‘A man is worth his sacrifices’ and so ‘whoever does not make sacrifices for a just cause is worth nothing’.<sup>89</sup> Linked to this was the role that donations could play as a litmus test to distinguish the authentically revolutionary from the supposed faux radicalism of republicans and socialists: for instance, one contributor to *Solidaridad Obrera* criticised republicans and socialists for funding ‘chalets and automobiles for your deputies’ instead of sending money to the PLM; if they wanted workers to pay attention ‘when you speak to them of sacred revolutions in some electoral meeting, show them that you speak the truth’ by aiding the Mexican revolutionaries.<sup>90</sup>

Beyond individual affirmation, donation underpinned a sense of belonging to a shared movement, demonstrating actively, as another Sabadellense individual wrote in *Soli*, ‘that they do not fight alone’ and ‘that all of us, the exploited of the world, are brothers’.<sup>91</sup> In his work on radical Los Angeles, Struthers argues that donations to revolutionary causes constituted a kind of investment by workers ‘to support the collective action they envisioned’ but also to transcend the boundaries of a simply ‘imagined’ community.<sup>92</sup> Donor pseudonyms such as ‘*un cosmopolita*’ and ‘*dos sin patria*’ suggested the kind of abstract ideals that those behind them – quite likely ordinary workers and sympathisers – sought to concretise.<sup>93</sup> In *Tierra y Libertad* and *Solidaridad Obrera*, the subscription lists for donations to Mexico were published alongside funds for local strikes and the ever-present issue of prisoner solidarity, lending credence to the idea that the Mexican revolutionaries were perceived as fellow members of the ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere’. The fact that the Organising Junta responded directly to donations lent itself to this sense of community: in mid-July 1911, for example, *Solidaridad Obrera* published a letter from Ricardo acknowledging receipt of funds and offering, ‘in the name of our comrades at arms [...] a strong fraternal embrace [...] because you know how to practice solidarity’.<sup>94</sup> For Kirwin Shaffer, in his analysis of Cuban anarchism, donations were a way for ordinary workers to

---

<sup>88</sup> ‘Solidaridad compañeros, solidaridad’.

<sup>89</sup> ‘La Revolución en Méjico’, *El Trabajo*, 28 December 1912.

<sup>90</sup> ‘¡OBREROS, ESCUCHAD!’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 14 July 1911.

<sup>91</sup> ‘UNA PROPOSICIÓN’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 July 1911.

<sup>92</sup> Struthers, *World in a City*, p. 54.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Suscripción para ayudar a los revolucionarios mejicanos’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 14 June 1911.

<sup>94</sup> ‘UNA CARTA’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 14 July 1911.

‘speak’ and articulate their beliefs.<sup>95</sup> Spanish anarchists’ efforts to ‘speak’ through donation had thus elicited a deeply affective dialogue. Further acknowledgements in *Regeneración* weaved the *Tierra y Libertad* and *Solidaridad Obrera* donations into a broader internationalist tapestry with other solidarity efforts such as the legendary anarchist activist Emma Goldman’s endeavours to propagandise the Mexican Revolution among Jewish workers in Brooklyn.<sup>96</sup>

In considering donation as a form of ‘speech’ for the voiceless, the gendered nature of access to a ‘voice’ within the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement becomes relevant; the print culture surrounding the Mexican Revolution was markedly devoid of women’s interventions, reflecting the broader relative marginalisation of women within the CNT.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the somewhat blunt instrument of first names (which not all named donors included) and gendered pseudonyms mentioned on the subscription lists suggests a considerable gender disparity, although women – such as ‘*Una compañera*’ (fifty cents) and ‘*Una entusiasta*’ (twenty-five cents) from Cádiz, ‘*Una desheredada*’ from Barcelona (fifty cents), and ‘*Una obrera revolucionaria*’ from Castro del Río (fifteen cents) – were certainly among the donors present.<sup>98</sup> Feminine pseudonyms on the subscription lists were therefore one way for women to make their mark on an ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere’ where their voices were often marginalised, albeit not one in which their presence was overly striking. On the other hand, at the aforementioned solidarity meeting in A Coruña, the presence of ‘several women’ was pointedly mentioned on the record.<sup>99</sup> As Yeoman notes, the anarchist press often eagerly highlighted women’s attendance at meetings, to emphasise the movement’s expansion ‘beyond its traditional base in male labour organisations’.<sup>100</sup> In A Coruña, each collection plate was attended to by a ‘*niña*’, and one of the (all male) speakers called for ‘two women to do a collection around the locale, in favour of the Mexican rebels’.<sup>101</sup> Within the context of an entirely male platform, this gendered division of labour

---

<sup>95</sup> Kirwin Shaffer, ‘Havana Hub: Cuban anarchism, radical media and the trans-Caribbean anarchist network, 1902-1915’, *Caribbean Studies* 37. 2 (2009), pp. 45-81 (p. 53).

<sup>96</sup> ‘Movimiento de solidaridad’, *Regeneración*, 16 September 1911.

<sup>97</sup> Sophie Turbutt, ‘Sexual Revolution and the Spanish Anarchist Press: Bodies, Birth Control, and Free Love in the 1930s Advice Columns of *La Revista Blanca*’, *Contemporary European History* 33. 1 (2024), pp. 338-56 (p. 340), doi:10.1017/S0960777322000315

<sup>98</sup> ‘Suscripción para ayudar a los libertarios mejicanos’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 June 1911.

<sup>99</sup> Report reproduced in Illades, *México y España*, p. 160.

<sup>100</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 144.

<sup>101</sup> Report reproduced in Illades, *México y España*, pp. 160-1.

appeared indicative of women's unequal status within the movement, and what Lucía Prieto Borrego calls the 'instrumental' or 'accessory character' of female integration into the CNT.<sup>102</sup> However, economic factors may have been relevant: as working-class women's income was frequently regarded as 'complementary', their labour tended to be systematically underpaid, potentially leaving less room for contributions.<sup>103</sup> For women not in a position to donate, collecting could have been a way for them to articulate their own solidarity with Mexican revolutionaries, and the recorded presence of women and girls implies that internationalist solidarity work might be considered alongside the movement's cultural and educational efforts as more gender-diverse spaces than the frequently 'masculine' realm of the trade unions.<sup>104</sup> Nonetheless, limited and pseudonymised sources make it difficult to draw very concrete conclusions in this regard.

As well as funds, the Organising Junta had also called for protest against foreign intervention, as the US authorities jailed its members and mobilised thousands of troops in response to revolutionary activities in northern Mexico.<sup>105</sup> The Spanish libertarian press reproduced the condemnation of 'Yankee imperialism' which was a fixture of the PLM's propaganda, as in Ricardo's essay warning that President Taft had mobilised troops and warships: 'the vampires of finance, the boa constrictors of Wall Street turn on the taps and want to swallow Mexico'.<sup>106</sup> Whereas Spanish elites saw Porfirio Díaz as an ally in constraining US hegemony in Latin America, Flores Magón declared that the dictator 'cleans Taft's fetid shoes with his rancid tongue and hands himself over, body and soul, to the avarice and extreme voracity of the American plutocracy'.<sup>107</sup> This was the same 'plutocracy' which had intervened in Cuba and the Philippines and 'robbed Colombia of part of its territory to found a ridiculous Republic, that of Panama' in various imperialist adventures across the

---

<sup>102</sup> Prieto Borrego, 'mujeres en el anarquismo andaluz', p. 66.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 39.

<sup>104</sup> Vicente, *revolución de las palabras*, p. 14; Andrews, 'Anarchism in Everyday Life', pp. 66-68; Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, pp. 84-85. Eulàlia Vega also notes that women's domestic and childcare responsibilities prevented many from attending union meetings after work like many male workers, so that the women who were present at meetings tended to be younger: Eulàlia Vega, *Pioneras y Revolucionarias: mujeres libertarias durante la República, la Guerra Civil, y el Franquismo* (Icaria, 2010), pp. 21-22. This might explain the presence of the 'niñas'; their attendance could also indicate that this kind of meeting was more family oriented and hence the presence of both 'niñas' and 'mujeres'.

<sup>105</sup> Cowen Verter, 'Biographical Sketch', p. 84; Gonzales, *Mexican Revolution*, p. 76.

<sup>106</sup> 'Atila a las puertas de Roma', *Tierra y Libertad*, 19 April 1911.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

Americas: references which situated Mexico within a longer narrative of ‘Yankee imperialism’ and the libertarian geographical imaginary.<sup>108</sup> One way that the Spanish libertarian press manifested a desire to challenge the US was by reproducing a protest coupon from *Regeneración* designed to be mailed *en masse* to Taft in Washington DC, which demanded the release of the Organising Junta members from prison, and accused the US government of violating neutrality laws.<sup>109</sup> However, information on the takeup of this campaign could not be found. Andalusian anarchist Juan Gallego Crespo called for a ‘supreme effort’ against US intervention and to pressure the European governments that had given ‘*carta blanca*’ to the ‘*yanquis*’, but there is little evidence that activists in Spain moved substantially beyond condemning US intervention in their own propaganda.<sup>110</sup>

On the other hand, closer to home, some activists mobilised to contest the Spanish government’s amenable treatment of the dictator Díaz. In June 1911, *Solidaridad Obrera* reported that ‘the despot, the bloodthirsty, the tyrant Porfirio Díaz’ was *en route* to exile in Spain.<sup>111</sup> The ‘disgrace’ of Spain becoming a ‘promised land’ for ‘deposed rulers’ was intimately related to *cenetistas*’ own struggles against the Spanish oligarchy: if politicians such as Antonio Maura, who had ‘sustained themselves with the blood’ of the workers, still sat in the country’s parliament, ‘how can it be strange to us that tyrants choose this land to come and relax after their vandalic deeds?’<sup>112</sup> For libertarians, ‘festivities, receptions and royal hunts’ that the government was bound to organise in Díaz’s honour proved the state’s underlying anti-worker essence, ‘however democratic it calls itself’.<sup>113</sup> The Spanish libertarian press thereby condemned Díaz for his oppressive rule in Mexico, while at the same time identifying the welcome give him by Spain’s elites as demonstrative and constitutive of the gulf in moral and class identity between those elites and the country’s workers, and of the latter’s affinity with the revolutionaries who had deposed him. *Solidaridad Obrera* advised Díaz to ‘keep in mind [...] that we Spanish workers know your history, that we are not blinded by the crosses that hang on your breasts, because we know that they represent

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. For example, the Cuban War of Independence had been a particularly important cause among Spanish libertarians: see Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp. 98-101. More recently, émigré workers had informed comrades back in Spain of US capital’s exploitative role in Panama: Yeoman, ‘Panama Papers’, p. 86.

<sup>109</sup> ‘A PROTESTAR TODOS’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 11 August 1911.

<sup>110</sup> ‘Miremos hacia Méjico’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 17 December 1913.

<sup>111</sup> ‘LA REVOLUCIÓN DE MÉJICO’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 16 June 1911.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. See also Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 164; Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, pp. 85-98.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.



much proletarian blood'.<sup>114</sup> It warned that 'we will not forget' how back across the Atlantic 'our comrades fight to topple the regime of privilege, which for so many years our future visitor has represented', and warned of 'the most formidable protest' to greet him.<sup>115</sup>

Rumours swirled that Díaz would arrive in Galicia, in north-western Spain: in A Coruña, worker newspaper *La Voz del Obrero* distributed a manifesto on behalf of Galicia's Solidaridad Obrera Federation describing the notorious San Juan de Ulúa castle as the 'Mexican Montjuïc' and urging the people of the city to receive Díaz as 'as your enemy [...] as one receives a tyrant, as a monster'.<sup>116</sup> This was an evocative call for Spanish workers to embody their solidarity with their Mexican counterparts. According to the conservative *ABC* newspaper, the Federación's manifesto provoked sufficient alarm to warrant significant 'precautions' both on board Díaz's ship and in the harbour, something corroborated by other non-worker press.<sup>117</sup> The Mexican historian Carlos Illades records that the Mexican consul in A Coruña successfully appealed to local authorities to have anti-Díaz demonstrations there suppressed.<sup>118</sup> However, the front page of *Tierra y Libertad* claimed that 'the attitude of frank repudiation of our comrades from [the nearby city of] Vigo' had led Díaz to decide 'not to disembark, having continued his journey to France'.<sup>119</sup> A delegate for the Vigo workers at the aforementioned solidarity meeting in A Coruña that same month also referred to Vigo's 'honour of being the first Spanish port where the tyrant from Mexico was anathemised'.<sup>120</sup> Vigo was thus claimed as a successful example of workers policing the boundaries of physical space in line with the internationalist values of the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere'. In fact, Díaz was eventually able to disembark in Santander, further east along Spain's northern coastline, to a warm welcome.<sup>121</sup> Nonetheless, the events in Galicia testify to a willingness of radical workers to mobilise physically in solidarity with their Mexican counterparts.

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Reproduced in 'La llegada de un tirano', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 23 June 1911.

<sup>117</sup> 'PORFIRIO DÍAZ EN ESPAÑA', *ABC*, 18 June 1911; 'VIAJE DE PORFIRIO DIAZ', *El Siglo Futuro*, 18 June 1911; 'DON PORFIRIO', *El Liberal*, 19 June 1911.

<sup>118</sup> Carlos Illades, *Presencia española en la Revolución Mexicana (1910-1915)* (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras UNAM, 1991), p. 171.

<sup>119</sup> 'La revolución en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 21 June 1911.

<sup>120</sup> Report reproduced in Illades, *México y España*, p. 161.

<sup>121</sup> Aguilar, 'Revolutionary Encounters', p. 21.

### *Debating the Indigenous question*

Although the PLM identified with the European anarchist tradition, it was also shaped by Mexico's specifically postcolonial dynamics; its anarchism was essentially 'syncretic', intertwined with local, Indigenous patterns of resistance and emphasising land restitution and communal autonomy.<sup>122</sup> Historians Stephen Hirsch and Geoffroy de Laforcade identify the PLM as arguably the foremost and most archetypical case of 'cross-fertilisation' between anarchism and Indigeneity in Latin America.<sup>123</sup> In *Regeneración*, Flores Magón combined these local influences with Kropotkinian anthropology.<sup>124</sup> He presented Mexico's Indigenous and *mestizo* masses as the ideal social base for an anarcho-communist society because they 'instinctively' hated government and the bourgeoisie and maintained historical traditions of 'mutual aid'.<sup>125</sup> Within Latin America, the PLM offered a generative example of this 'cross-fertilisation', for example inspiring collaboration between anarchists of European origin and Andean communities in Peru.<sup>126</sup>

During early coverage of the Revolution in the Spanish libertarian press, reference to these particularities was limited.<sup>127</sup> Nonetheless, some Spanish anarchists were shocked that the long yearned-for social revolution had taken place in Mexico, even despite their enthusiasm for it. In praising the 'warrior workers' of Baja California, for example, Anselmo Lorenzo acknowledged his surprise that 'the emancipatory programme that was launched into the world by the [International Workingmen's Association] Congress of Geneva in September 1866' was not being proclaimed in Europe, 'where worker intellectuality is so notable', nor in the USA, Argentina or some other of the 'most important' (Europeanised? Industrialised?) countries of the Americas, but rather in Mexico, 'where ignorance seemed

---

<sup>122</sup> Struthers, *World in a City*, pp. 152-3. See also Benjamín Maldonado Alvarado, *Magonismo y vida comunal mesoamericana: A 90 años de la muerte de Ricardo Flores Magón* (CSEIIIO, 2012), pp. 19-32; England, 'Magonismo'; Weber, 'Different plans', pp. 16-17; Devra Anne Weber, 'Keeping Community, Challenging Boundaries: Indigenous Migrants, Internationalist Workers, and Mexican Revolutionaries, 1900-1920', in *Mexico and Mexicans in the History and Culture of the United States*, ed. by John Tutino (University of Texas Press, 2012), pp. 208-235.

<sup>123</sup> Geoffroy de Laforcade and Steven Hirsch, 'Introduction: Indigeneity and Latin American Anarchism', *Anarchist Studies* 28. 2 (2020), pp. 7-18 (pp. 13-4), doi:10.3898/AS.28.2.01.

<sup>124</sup> England, 'Magonismo', p. 244.

<sup>125</sup> 'El Pueblo Mexicano es Apto Para el Comunismo', *Regeneración*, 2 September 1911.

<sup>126</sup> Hirsch, 'Anarchism and "the Indian problem"', p. 63.

<sup>127</sup> The influential *cenetista* Miguel Permañer did depict the uprising as a continuity of the long Mexican independence struggle, in an article about the Mexican people's 'revolutionary temperament': 'El genio revolucionario de un pueblo', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 14 July 1911. There were also some diffuse references to the '*indios*' ('Indians') involved in the struggle: 'Información', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 July 1911.

so thick, black and deeply-rooted'.<sup>128</sup> For Lorenzo, this was testament to the 'utility and value of emancipatory propaganda'.<sup>129</sup> Lorenzo's framing, emphasising the ability of the 'emancipatory propaganda' of the First International to penetrate Mexico's otherwise 'ignorant' social life, obscured the role of *local* agency and non-European content present in what Shawn England describes as *magonismo*'s 'unique synthesis'.<sup>130</sup> The spectacle of revolutionary Mexico clearly contradicted Lorenzo's own peripheralizing assumptions, and in reaching for an explanation he leant towards Eurocentricity.

The failure of the PLM's northern campaign and its project to establish 'libertarian communism' in Baja California, however, forced greater attention to the non-European nature of the Mexican Revolution. From late 1911, the Organising Junta and *Regeneración* shifted to a broad focus on the various Indigenous and agrarian insurgencies raging on across Mexico; for example, they supported Emiliano Zapata, who had himself been influenced by *magonismo*, and his rebel campaign at the helm of the 'Ejército Liberador del Sur' (Liberation Army of the South).<sup>131</sup> These *campesino* rebels did not fit with many European stereotypes of revolutionaries: even within Mexico, for example, urban workers from the country's other major anarchist organisation, the Casa del Obrero Mundial (House of the Global Worker), based in Mexico City and founded by Spanish émigrés, struggled to overlook their social and cultural differences with the *campesinos*.<sup>132</sup> This shift thus posed the spectre of difference to European anarchists.

In May 1912, *Tierra y Libertad* signalled its open-mindedness by reprinting, on its front page, an article by Kropotkin criticising the limited imagination of Jean Grave and others who had distanced themselves from Mexico.<sup>133</sup> Kropotkin urged his fellow anarchists to understand agrarian rebellion and warfare as an entirely legitimate and historically important branch of revolutionary activism; to diversify away from visions of 'combat on the barricades or [...] triumphant Garibalidan expeditions'.<sup>134</sup> That summer, the same newspaper shared

---

<sup>128</sup> 'La revolución en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 28 June 1911.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> England, 'Magonismo', p. 244.

<sup>131</sup> Beltrán Dengra, 'La opinión sobre...', p. 183; John M. Hart, *Anarchism & the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931* (University of Texas Press, 1978), p. 131; England, 'Magonismo', pp. 255-56; Cowen Verter, 'Biographical Sketch', pp. 85-86.

<sup>132</sup> Hart, *Anarchism*, p. 131.

<sup>133</sup> 'La Revolución de Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 8 May 1912.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

Enrique Flores Magón's description of the 'mutual aid' which he claimed was the norm in Mexico's rural villages.<sup>135</sup> Towards the end of the year, the newspaper's front page made one of its clearest references to Mexico's postcolonial dynamics, describing the agrarian rebels as formerly colonised people who had 'paid a just tribute to the *civilisers*' who had 'for four centuries [...] watered their plants [...] with the blood of a human race *inferior* to their own'.<sup>136</sup> Nonetheless, even if the Revolution had idiosyncratic features which need not be 'imitated', it was nonetheless a 'social revolution', which 'authorises us' to appeal for the support of 'the pariahs and exploited of the world'.<sup>137</sup> Although the anarchists sought revolution everywhere, 'today it is only being carried out in Mexico, and this being so, undoubtedly we must assist in the triumph of those who struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed class'.<sup>138</sup> The newspaper also contested the depiction of the revolutionaries as 'bands of outlaws', maintaining instead that 'our Mexican brothers' were simply workers ('these warriors of today are the producers of yesterday'), thereby further resisting the othering, racialised discourse of the elite press.<sup>139</sup>

It is necessary to recall that Barcelona's libertarian activists built the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere' by overlaying pre-existing practices and cultures of everyday subaltern resistance with a 'language of class'.<sup>140</sup> This brought greater quotidian relevance to anarcho-syndicalist ideas and more transcendent meaning to popular cultures of contention. Often, *Tierra y Libertad* analysed international events through a similar prism: the spectacle of land expropriation and social revolution in Mexico, along with other apparently 'isolated events' – Italian builders refusing to construct a prison, Brazilian naval mutinies, English miners' strikes – could be weaved into a general narrative of 'two classes [that] find themselves face to face'.<sup>141</sup> With regard to Mexico, the newspaper asserted that while Zapata had not himself been libertarian at the outset of the conflict, 'his activity [...] was identical to that carried out by the libertarian army'.<sup>142</sup> This differed from Lorenzo's earlier approach, by asserting *local* agency as the basis for *de facto* anarchist struggle, with anarchism

<sup>135</sup> 'La cuestión social en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 13 March 1912.

<sup>136</sup> 'Los comunistas de Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 23 October 1912. Emphasis in original.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>140</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, pp. 34-39.

<sup>141</sup> See 'La huelga de mineros en Inglaterra', *Tierra y Libertad*, 13 March 1912.

<sup>142</sup> 'La revolución en Méjico', *Tierra y Libertad*, 11 December 1912.

understood not as a ‘perfected condition’ but as what Maia Ramnath calls ‘a recurrent tendency or orientation’.<sup>143</sup> This was significant, as far as internationalism is concerned, for its *decentring* implications, recognising non-European sources of revolutionary agency.<sup>144</sup> This was also apparent in the newspaper’s contentions that the ‘*indios*’ (‘Indians’) had the same ‘enemy’ as European workers (‘the bourgeoisie and the government’).<sup>145</sup> The *indios*’ land struggle, ‘throwing the electoral ballot into the wastepaper basket’, advanced ‘in accordance with’ libertarian ideas.<sup>146</sup> By tending towards the anarchist ideal of ‘the apocalypse of the bourgeoisie’, the Mexican Revolution thus represented a ‘call to the global proletariat to “rise up, modern slave, be free!”’<sup>147</sup> It should ‘greatly interest the universal proletariat, since in those fields the beautiful prologue to human redemption is being written’, and libertarians in Spain had to ‘embrace’ the Mexican revolutionaries and ‘show them our affinity [*identificación*] by sending them the broadest solidarity’.<sup>148</sup> A commonality of enemies and ends thereby established the relevance of the *indios*’ struggle for anarchists and revolutionary workers in Barcelona and beyond.

This recasting of the Indigenous struggle into an intrinsically anarchist one was sometimes a process of essentialisation. The *El Porvenir del Obrero* newspaper of Mahón, Menorca, republished a two-part article originally penned for the Parisian *Les Temps Nouveaux* by Aristide Pratelle, who had been writing about the PLM and anti-colonial causes for some years; its first instalment was titled ‘THE INSTINCT OF THE RACE’.<sup>149</sup> Pratelle asserted that the ‘*indios*’ were ‘deeply communist in many of their social customs, implacable enemies of authority and of the bourgeoisie’.<sup>150</sup> Citing the anarchist anthropology of Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus, he invoked ‘ethnic psychology’ to argue that Indigenous Mexicans had a ‘spirit of hereditary mutual aid incomparably stronger than that which any European intellectual could offer’.<sup>151</sup> Whereas the ‘civilised’ European radical might learn

---

<sup>143</sup> Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism*, p. 7.

<sup>144</sup> On the decentred gaze, see Natalie Zemon Davis, ‘Decentering history: local stories and cultural crossings in a global world’, *History and Theory* 50.2 (2011), pp. 188–202, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2011.00576.x.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Los comunistas de Méjico’.

<sup>146</sup> ‘La revolución en Méjico’ (11 December)

<sup>147</sup> ‘Los comunistas de Méjico’.

<sup>148</sup> ‘La revolución en Méjico’ (11 December)

<sup>149</sup> ‘EL INSTINTO DE LA RAZA’ and ‘CAUSAS Y ORÍGENES de la Revolución Mejicana’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 13, 20 July 1912. See Bantman, *Jean Grave*, pp. 160–63.

<sup>150</sup> ‘EL INSTINTO DE LA RAZA’.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

about the path to emancipation by reading those intellectuals, ‘one could say’ that the *indio*’s ‘anarcho-communist instinct’ came to them ‘with their mother’s milk’.<sup>152</sup> Pratelle thus flirted with a kind of biological determinism. However, he also emphasised that the *indios*’ communist customs established Mexico as ‘the prologue of the international social revolution foretold’ which ‘offers to the “civilised” universe a [...] beautiful example’: ‘the Mexican insurrectionist is today worthy and capable of completing the revolutionary education of the international proletariat’.<sup>153</sup> As the second instalment put it, more directly, events in Mexico were ‘a heroic and heartening example offered by the primitive races to civilised humanity’.<sup>154</sup>

Essentialist tropes were thus not intended to ‘other’ Indigenous people and establish an unbridgeable divide, but to affirm the ‘convergence’ of different struggles, emphasising their relevance as a model to Europeans, subverting or inverting Eurocentric developmental hierarchies to place a formerly colonised people at the vanguard of global revolution.<sup>155</sup> The use of categories recognisable to European workers – the *indios* being enemies of ‘authority’ and ‘the bourgeoisie’ – laid the ground for familiarity and affinity, drawing on the PLM’s own discursive arsenal and its linking of an idealised vision of Indigeneity with specifically anarchist concepts.<sup>156</sup> Historian Kirwin Shaffer has similarly highlighted ‘the relationship between ethnicity and anarchist internationalism’ with regard to Mexico, as the British-American anarchist W.C. Owen used “‘Indianness” as a synonym for rebelliousness’, treating the ‘Indian’ as metonymic for ‘nationalities seeking to be free and self-governing’.<sup>157</sup> According to Kenyon Zimmer, Owen manifested ‘an unambiguous commitment to anti-colonialism’ in his activism, as an ‘ardent supporter’ of independence struggles as well as

---

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> ‘CAUSAS Y ORÍGENES’

<sup>155</sup> On ‘convergence’ see Heatherton, *Arise!*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>156</sup> A similar example from the influential Spanish activist Antonio Loredó acclaimed the ‘communism’ of the Aztecs, lamented the corrosive ‘defects’ brought by the Europeans, and declared that the Indigenous struggle could be ‘synthesised in one phrase’ as ‘the conquest of bread’: ‘EL PROBLEMA MEJICANO’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 29 April 1914.

<sup>157</sup> Kirk Shaffer, ‘Tropical Libertarians: Anarchist Movements and Networks in the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Mexico, 1890s-1920s’, in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World*, ed. by Hirsch and Van der Walt, pp. 273-320 (pp. 307-08).

*magonismo*.<sup>158</sup> Essentialism, by functioning to establish commonalities, could thus form part of the work to establish an ‘alternative logic of connection’ to prevailing frameworks shaped by colonialism.<sup>159</sup> It prefigured the discursive and symbolic practices that Judy Tzu-Chun Wu terms ‘radical orientalism’, by which North-American activists ‘romanticized and identified with revolutionary Asian nations’ during the Cold War period.<sup>160</sup> While retaining the orientalist logic of a cultural ‘dichotomy’ between East and West, the phenomenon was nonetheless ‘radical’ because of how it ‘inverted and subverted previous hierarchies’, casting idealised Asian societies as objects of admiration and models of ‘new political possibilities’.<sup>161</sup> Tzu-Chun Wu argues that radical orientalism differed from ‘internationalism’, which implies ‘genuine dialogue and collective identification among people across various borders’, but suggests that the ‘tension’ between these concepts ‘was a productive and generative one’ – a navigation between essentialist difference and universalist sameness which aided in what Salar Mohandesi calls the ‘messy’ work of ‘translating Vietnam’.<sup>162</sup> Although seemingly departing from universalist ideals, essentialised discourses have thus formed part of the solidarity-making work between activists in Global North and South.

This idealisation did not involve entirely ‘accurate’ portrayals of Indigenous communities, but did bring Indigenous people and their struggles for emancipation into the political imaginary of Spanish workers. At least one, imprisoned in Tarragona and donating to *Tierra y Libertad*’s solidarity fund, identified themselves pseudonymously as ‘a Zapatista Indian’, showing that Indigenous revolutionaries had even become part of European radicals’ vicarious fantasies.<sup>163</sup> The Spanish anarchist Fermín Sagristá, whose incarceration for his protests against the execution of Ferrer had itself attracted the condemnation of international figures including Jean Grave, demonstrated an interest in Indigenous people as the subjects

---

<sup>158</sup> Kenyon Zimmer, ‘At war with empire: the anti-colonial roots of American anarchist debates during the First World War’, in *Anarchism, 1914-18. Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War*, ed. by Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna (Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 175-98 (p. 179).

<sup>159</sup> Phrase from Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 250.

<sup>160</sup> Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism During the Vietnam Era* (Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 4.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11; Salar Mohandesi, *Red Internationalism: Anti-Imperialism and Human Rights in the Global Sixties and Seventies* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 139-40.

<sup>163</sup> Aguilar, ‘Revolutionary Encounters’, p. 35.

of revolutionary art.<sup>164</sup> Receiving artwork which Sagristá had donated to the struggle, Flores Magón praised his representation of ‘a beautiful *indio*’, which would ensure that ‘the intelligent men and women of the Earth will not see in the Mexican the thief nor the murderer that the bourgeois press wants to make him appear’.<sup>165</sup> *Regeneración* later reprinted another work by Sagristá which fused the European anarchist tradition, the PLM, and Indigenous themes, depicting European luminaries such as Kropotkin, Bakunin, Malatesta and Lorenzo alongside members of the Organising Junta.<sup>166</sup> All were arranged above a centrepiece in which three women on horseback – of different races, with one wearing a Mexican *sombrero de charro* and another (in the centre) an Indigenous feathered headdress – carried a flaming torch across the globe, from ‘Europe’ to ‘America’.<sup>167</sup> The image was a striking visual articulation of the decentring thrust of solidarity with Indigenous Mexicans. ‘Juan Greaghe’ (Argentina-based Irish anarchist John Creaghe) further exemplified the potentially redeeming nature of essentialism in an article describing Zapata as ‘an *indígena* [indigenous person], an *indio* if you like, but I myself prefer the first term for this Mexican race, so intelligent and so civilised, so different to the idea generally held of “an *indio*.”’<sup>168</sup> The revolutionary leader, ‘like all the *indígenas*’, had ‘a genuine instinct in favour of communism’.<sup>169</sup> The invocation of a communist ‘instinct’ allowed Creaghe to challenge negative stereotypes of the ‘*indio*’ and demand what he regarded as the more dignified label of Indigeneity.

Not all Spanish libertarians, however, shared in this receptivity – however mediated – to non-Europeans as legitimate revolutionary subjects. Eduard Masjuan inaccurately dates the first negative portrayals of the Mexican Revolution in the Spanish libertarian press to late 1914.<sup>170</sup> In fact, as early as February 1913, *El Porvenir del Obrero* publicly affirmed that ‘the redemption of the Mexican people, which fights for one master or another, appears very

<sup>164</sup> Masjuan, ‘*Reivindicación*’, p. 193; Aguilar, ‘The “Indios” of Spain’, pp. 442-43. See Abelló i Güell, *relacions internacionals*, pp. 187-88.

<sup>165</sup> ‘Una carta de Fermín Sagristá’, *Regeneración*, 8 June 1912; Masjuan, ‘*Reivindicación*’, p. 193.

<sup>166</sup> Centrefold, *Regeneración*, 1 January 1913.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> ‘SOBRE MÉJICO’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 27 May 1914. On Creaghe: Máirtín Ó Catháin, ‘Dr. John O’Dwyer Creaghe (1841-1920). Irish-Argentine Anarchist’, *Society for Irish Latin American Studies* <<https://www.irlandeses.org/cathain.htm>> [accessed 22 March 2021].

<sup>169</sup> ‘SOBRE MÉJICO’ (27 May).

<sup>170</sup> Masjuan, ‘*Reivindicación*’, p. 195.



distant', breaking with the consensus that it was a social revolution.<sup>171</sup> Days later, a front-page editorial clarified the newspaper's dissenting stance: author 'Juan Cualquiera' (likely the editor, Joan Mir i Mir) ridiculed the very idea that one might 'believe that the Mexican people, with insufficient knowledge and morally backward, should be placed by surprise at the forefront of the nations of greater culture'.<sup>172</sup> Weighing the struggle in Mexico against the recent reforms passed by David Lloyd George's Liberal government in Britain, the author lectured 'revolutionary romantics' that only 'a little good judgement' was necessary 'to understand that in England a revolution of much greater transcendence than the armed revolts of Baja California is being carried out'.<sup>173</sup> In reality, 'the Mexican communist revolution', although 'we sympathise with and desire it the greatest success [...] could only have a local influence', whereas Britain's reforms 'represent a revolution, in principles and in practice, of benefit for all the countries of the world' and were the 'first positive triumphs' of the 'proletarian revolution which for years has been developing in the civilised countries'.<sup>174</sup> This was a paradigmatic example of Eurocentrism; given that Lloyd George's reforms were hardly anarchist in nature, the judgement was based solely on a set of stereotypes about 'backwards', parochial Mexico and 'civilised', global Britain.<sup>175</sup>

It is important to acknowledge that *El Porvenir del Obrero* was firmly rooted in anarchist networks, and fomented anarcho-syndicalist internationalism; its Eurocentricity cannot be easily disavowed and must be considered part of the history of what Ciccariello-Maher labels 'anarchist imperialism'.<sup>176</sup> The same year as the above editorial, for example, *El Porvenir del Obrero* – like *Tierra y Libertad* and *Solidaridad Obrera* – enthusiastically supported Spanish participation in the revolutionary syndicalist congress held in London in 1913, reprinting Guy Bowman's invitation to help forge 'a new revolutionary, proletarian International' and describing the congress's effort towards 'reciprocal knowledge' as steps towards the kind of 'fraternal human unity' for which 'Juan Cualquiera' himself had recently

---

<sup>171</sup> 'Notas internacionales', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 27 February 1913, emphasis added.

<sup>172</sup> 'Dos revoluciones', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 6 March 1913. The historian Pere Alzina identifies Mir i Mir as the man behind the 'Juan Cualquiera' moniker: Pere Alzina, 'Repensant l'obra de Joan Mir i Mir (Illa de Menorca, 1871-1930)', *Educació i Història* 32 (2018), pp. 115-43, doi:10.2436/20.3009.01.211

<sup>173</sup> 'Dos revoluciones'.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid

<sup>175</sup> Unsurprisingly, the positive view of Lloyd George's reforms was controversial even among those who were also sceptical about Mexico; see for example the criticism by Vicente García: 'Sobre una crónica', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 3 April 1913.

<sup>176</sup> Ciccariello-Maher, 'Anarchism That Is Not Anarchism'.

called.<sup>177</sup> The newspaper was embedded in transnational anarchist networks; indeed, it was via those networks, principally its connections to *Les Temps Nouveaux*, that it printed the accusations that *Regeneración* had oversold the situation in Mexico.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, articles in the newspaper drew awareness to the ‘horrors’ that colonialism inflicted on the Indigenous people of countries like Peru and the Congo, for which it proclaimed that ‘only in Anarchy’ would such cruelties disappear.<sup>179</sup>

However, the new *El Porvenir del Obrero* editorial line demonstrated an intense scepticism that this ‘Anarchy’ could emerge first in a non-European context: in Mexico ‘no movement has been produced which is clearly and consciously anarchist, as could be conceived in our European environment’.<sup>180</sup> This notion of *conscious* anarchism emerged as a key factor of exclusion, wherein true anarchism could only be understood as a codified body of doctrine which had to be learnt through studious understanding of its core texts: another Jean Humblot text taken from *Les Temps Nouveaux* argued that Emiliano Zapata’s *campesino* rebels ‘would be bewildered’ to hear that they were ‘anarchists, a term that most of them do not know’.<sup>181</sup> The influential Spanish anarchist Vicente García also invoked this idea, writing in the same newspaper that ‘it is an error to call them anarchist’ because ‘if you told the *indios*, who do not know how to read or write, that they are anarchists, they would be bewildered’.<sup>182</sup> García later built on this argument in *Solidaridad Obrera*: ‘the Mexican *campesino*, although communist by intuition, does not know the principles, and his illiteracy is a wall that impedes him from the necessary study [...] For such people the press is useless’.<sup>183</sup> García thus saw solidarity as emanating through a common body of theory and a

---

<sup>177</sup> ‘La Antigua Internacional’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 13 February 1913 and ‘El Congreso de Londres’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 30 October 1913. See also ‘¡Al Congreso Sindicalista de Londres!’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 26 February 1913; ‘El Congreso Sindicalista Internacional de Londres’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 3 July 1913. Although the CNT was unable to send an official delegation, there were various Spanish representatives such as José Negre for the Catalan CRT, José Suárez Duque on behalf of several A Coruña-based trade unions, and José Rodríguez Romero for various Menorcan societies and unions: see the above report in *El Porvenir del Obrero*; Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 66-86; Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp. 229-30.

<sup>178</sup> See for instance ‘EL MAGONISMO’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 27 March 1913. See also Bantman, *Jean Grave*, pp. 163-64.

<sup>179</sup> See ‘Los horrores del Perú’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 7 September 1912; ‘Horrores del capitalismo’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 23 November 1912.

<sup>180</sup> ‘EL MAGONISMO’.

<sup>181</sup> ‘EL ZAPATISMO’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 3 April 1913.

<sup>182</sup> ‘Sobre una crónica’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 3 April 1913.

<sup>183</sup> ‘Sobre Méjico’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 May 1914.

shared transnational press; there was none of the *implicit* anarchism discerned by *Tierra y Libertad*.

Critics also claimed disaffection with the violent character of the Revolution and the palpable glee with which much of the libertarian press presented this. Another *El Porvenir del Obrero* article maintained that even before the accusations against Flores Magón, they ‘had read things in the newspapers that sympathise with *magonismo* that in no way excited us’, such as examples of looting and violence in which the rebels appeared more ‘bandits’ than revolutionaries.<sup>184</sup> Just a few weeks prior to the ‘Juan Cualquiera’ editorial, *El Trabajo* in Sabadell had reported, with considerable relish, that in Mexico ‘one sees that those who have betrayed the people [...] are fearful of what is coming to them’, and informed them not to ‘tremble, wretches, because it is too late to escape [...] Justice and Truth must be built upon your remains’.<sup>185</sup> In sharp contrast, ‘Juan Cualquiera’ contended that anarchists ‘are not revolutionaries for pleasure, nor rebels for sport’, and that violence could be ‘a painful necessity’ but not ‘an ideal’.<sup>186</sup> According to historian Pere Alzina, Mir i Mir was long a proponent of moral and intellectual preparation of the workers rather than violence; revolution was ‘peaceful’, a ‘slow process of personal transformation’, and he ‘never defended violence as a tool for change’.<sup>187</sup> Yeoman names *El Porvenir del Obrero* as an emblematic example of anarchism’s turn away from failed strategies of violence and terrorism (‘propaganda by the deed’) and towards a broad idealisation of ‘education’, rooted in secular, rational, Enlightenment principles, in the late 1890s.<sup>188</sup> Thus this also represented a principled, ethical disagreement over revolutionary strategy.

Yet ‘Juan Cualquiera’ identified revolutionary violence in Mexico with the perceived backwardness of the country’s social life and morality: ‘debased by despotism, by ignorance and superstition’ and lacking ‘respect for the rights of man’, it was perhaps understandable that ‘the people can only respond with insurrection and relentless warfare’.<sup>189</sup> Eurocentric ideas therefore always lingered close to the surface. These activists considered it self-evident that the Mexican ‘*indios*’ were far behind European anarchists: ‘before arriving at the

---

<sup>184</sup> ‘¿Anarquistas o qué?’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 24 April 1913.

<sup>185</sup> ‘La Revolución en Méjico’, *El Trabajo*, 4 January 1913.

<sup>186</sup> ‘Dos revoluciones’.

<sup>187</sup> Alzina, ‘Joan Mir i Mir’, pp. 127, 130.

<sup>188</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 131.

<sup>189</sup> ‘Dos revoluciones’.

anarchist communism of which *Regeneración* speaks, the Mexican *indios* should follow the evolution of the European peoples, having their political and then social education'.<sup>190</sup> This was simply a rational truth: 'if only we were wrong and that the sunrise of the social revolution might emerge when rationally we might least expect it!'<sup>191</sup> This rhetoric illustrated the potential easy slippage from idealising certain (Enlightenment) models of 'rational' socialisation and education into exclusionary ideas about other cultures which then 'bounded' internationalism.<sup>192</sup>

*El Porvenir del Obrero* thus sought to differentiate between 'anarchism' and whatever was happening in Mexico: not necessarily, an editorial argued, 'to induce Spanish comrades to stop helping the Mexican revolutionaries' but rather to stop them 'exciting themselves excessively', which risked them 'suffering a painful disappointment'.<sup>193</sup> This suggested a preoccupation that Mexico's inevitable shortcomings would provoke disillusionment with the anarchist ideal. The newspaper also repeatedly invoked the concept of 'sympathy': first in the 'Juan Cualquiera' editorial, and then in an article by García which agreed that the '*indios*' fighting 'to conquer their land' merited 'sympathy'.<sup>194</sup> In a subsequent article García again maintained that the Mexicans merited 'our sympathy' in their 'revolt against the government and the thieves, from whom they want to wrest their lands [...] although they may not be anarchists, although they may be illiterate, although if they obtain the lands they may sell them the following day'.<sup>195</sup> This 'sympathy' placed the Mexican Revolution on the same level as other events of a broadly progressive nature – such as 'the fall of the Portuguese and Chinese monarchies' – rather than a true anarchist revolution.<sup>196</sup> Later, the newspaper editors once more insisted that recognising Mexico as a political, not social revolution was 'not an obstacle to *seeing with sympathy* the triumphs of the Liberal Party' against 'despotism'.<sup>197</sup> Although 'sympathy' might appear a supportive trait, in the context its implication was negative, implying that full internationalist solidarity should be reserved for the conscious exponents of anarchist doctrine.

---

<sup>190</sup> 'EL ZAPATISMO'.

<sup>191</sup> '¿Anarquistas o qué?'.

<sup>192</sup> Ciccariello-Maher, 'Anarchism That Is Not Anarchism', pp. 20-21; Bantman, *Jean Grave*, p. 164.

<sup>193</sup> '¿Anarquistas o qué?', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 24 April 1913.

<sup>194</sup> 'Sobre una crónica'.

<sup>195</sup> 'La Revolución Mejicana', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 12 June 1913.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid; reaffirmed in 'La Revolución Mejicana', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 26 June 1913.

<sup>197</sup> 'LA REVOLUCIÓN MEJICANA', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 10 July 1913, emphasis added.

The iconoclasts of *Tierra y Libertad* would not, however, allow these critics the final word. The insurrectionary thrust of the Mexican rebels spoke for itself: ‘it does not worry us much whether the *indios* know how to define anarchism, if [...] they fight with weapons in their hands against authority and against capital, conquering the land for those who work it’.<sup>198</sup> The newspaper continued to evoke an implicit libertarianism in Mexico: ‘If the Mexican revolutionaries do not fight for any determined political party; if they fight against authority, capital and politics, what do they fight for?’<sup>199</sup> This voluntarist argument, explicitly levelled against Vicente García and the insistence that anarchism had to be a conscious engagement with written doctrine, was a striking prefiguration of Ciccariello-Maher’s call for a ‘nonanarchist anarchism’ of ‘the spirit not the word’.<sup>200</sup> It highlighted revolutionary actions as an important catalyst for internationalism which could inspire heterodox solidarities even in the absence of formal doctrinal ties.

Some weeks later, the *Tierra y Libertad* front page featured an article by Jaime Vidal, the US-based Spanish émigré and friend of the Flores Magóns, further emphasising this voluntarist argument. Vidal identified the ‘*campesino indio*’, that ‘great mass of slaves, disheartened [...] since the Spanish domination’, as ‘the soul of the Mexican Revolution’, and insisted that ‘[w]e do not care that these fighters may not know how to read nor write’ or whether they were familiar with Jean Grave or Kropotkin.<sup>201</sup> Rather, it was

enough for us to know that these Mexican slaves feel yearnings for freedom, and that to achieve their emancipatory goals they begin by destroying all that hinders them, be that laws, religion, government, private property, etc.<sup>202</sup>

As in the case of other foreign defenders of the Revolution, Vidal projected some of his own values onto the agrarian rebels: could the Zapatista soldiers, who wore images of the Virgin of Guadalupe sewn onto their hats, be said to be fighting against ‘religion’?<sup>203</sup> Nonetheless, as Christopher Castañeda has argued, Vidal’s insight was in recognising that the ‘ultimate

---

<sup>198</sup> ‘Sobre Méjico’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 9 April 1913.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ciccariello-Maher, ‘Anarchism That Is Not Anarchism’, p. 29.

<sup>201</sup> ‘El alma de la revolución Mejicana’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 21 May 1913.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Gonzales, *Mexican Revolution*, p. 141.

goal’ of the Revolution, ‘uplifting the campesinos’, had greater relevance than ‘whether it qualified as a specific kind of anarchist movement with a canonical definition’.<sup>204</sup> For Vidal, anarchist critics of Mexico were little different from ‘the parliamentary socialists and other *farsantes* [frauds] who constantly preach that “the revolution’s time has not come,”’ and merited far less respect than the Mexican *campesinos* who were actively carving out a pathway to anarchy, however heterodox it might appear.<sup>205</sup> In his view, the actions of the latter spoke louder than the words of the former.

Whereas *El Porvenir del Obrero* spoke vaguely of ‘sympathy’ with Mexico, a kind of diluted solidarity mediated by ideological distance, a voluntarist perspective demanded active support. Gallego Crespo, the Andalusian critic of ‘Yankee’ imperialism, urged readers not to ‘stop to argue whether Mexico’s revolution is or is not anarchist, is or is not political’, and see simply ‘that there are proletarians there fighting for their emancipation, for whose cause we must do everything possible’.<sup>206</sup> Crespo also addressed the criticism of revolutionary violence, denying that he favoured bloodshed: ‘I lament fratricidal struggles, in fact, I detest them. But confronted by the labyrinth of vested interests, how do we emerge from it? By calling on the exploiting class to allow its victims to live more comfortably?’<sup>207</sup> What Crespo implied was similar to what Vidal had argued out loud: that critics of the Mexican revolutionaries’ praxis were placing themselves closer to a milquetoast reformism than revolutionary insurgency. Both sides in this debate evidently saw how they defined and related to the Mexican revolutionaries as closely related to their own ideas of what it meant to be an anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist, placing internationalism squarely within the contested terrain of ideological debates and identities.

### ***The First World War: a new lens***

The Mexican Revolution offers a novel lens for considering the debate over the First World War which provoked extreme polarisation across global libertarian networks.<sup>208</sup> Although

---

<sup>204</sup> Castañeda, ‘Moving West’, p. 115.

<sup>205</sup> ‘El alma de la revolución Mejicana’.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Miremos hacia Méjico’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 17 December 1913.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 87-90. Although lacking a chapter on Spain, an excellent overview and dissection of these wartime anarchist debates offered in Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna (eds.) *Anarchism, 1914-18: Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War* (Manchester University Press, 2017). The

the revolutionary syndicalist movement was generally anti-war, the world's two biggest such organisations demonstrated that this was by no means a universal stance.<sup>209</sup> Apart from a dissenting minority, the French CGT met the call for national defence against invasion with a 'wave of patriotism'.<sup>210</sup> A third of the membership of the Unione Sindacale Italiana (Italian Syndical Union, USI) split into a pro-interventionist faction committed to defending European republicanism from German militarism.<sup>211</sup> The Dutch Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat (National Workers Secretariat, NAS), had to disown its own 'father', the influential anarchist Christiaan Cornelissen, for his pro-Entente proclamations.<sup>212</sup>

Anarchists were themselves polarised by the intense dispute between Kropotkin and Malatesta: the international movement's 'most respected intellectual' against 'one of its most committed and fearless activists'.<sup>213</sup> Kropotkin was intransigently pro-Entente, believing it necessary to defend France and its revolutionary traditions from an aggressive, authoritarian German foe.<sup>214</sup> Malatesta was equally steadfast in arguing that only anarchists who 'have forgotten their principles' could possibly take sides in a war between imperialist states.<sup>215</sup> Despite Malatesta's accusation, recent scholarship has emphasised that Kropotkin and the pro-Entente minority did not simply abandon their values; theirs was simply 'a particular conception of internationalism and anti-militarism that Malatesta did not share'.<sup>216</sup> As Kenyon Zimmer points out, this frequently involved a 'woefully misplaced' belief that the Allies were essentially 'progressive' and would consistently support national self-determination; one noted by anarchist critics at the time, such as Alexander Berkman and

---

connection to the First World War is only briefly mentioned in Aguilar, 'The "Indios" of Spain, p. 444, and acknowledged but not analysed in depth in Masjuan, 'Reivindicación'.

<sup>209</sup> Ralph Darlington, 'Revolutionary syndicalist opposition to the First World War: a comparative reassessment', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 84.4 (2006), pp. 983-1003, (pp. 991-94), doi:10.3406/rbph.2006.5057; Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 90.

<sup>210</sup> Darlington, 'Revolutionary syndicalist opposition', pp. 991-93; Milner, *Dilemmas of Internationalism*, pp. 209-11.

<sup>211</sup> Ralph Darlington, *Radical Unionism: The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Haymarket Books, 2013), pp. 138-40.

<sup>212</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 90.

<sup>213</sup> Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna, 'Introduction', in *Anarchism 1914-18*, ed. by Adams and Kinna, pp. 1-26 (p. 18).

<sup>214</sup> Peter Ryley, 'The Manifesto of the Sixteen: Kropotkin's rejection of anti-war anarchism and his critique of the politics of peace', in *Anarchism 1914-18*, ed. by Adams and Kinna, pp. 49-68.

<sup>215</sup> Reproduced in Errico Malatesta *Life and Ideas: The Anarchist Writings of Errico Malatesta*, ed. and trans. by Vernon Richards (PM Press, 2015), pp. 227-31

<sup>216</sup> Adams and Kinna, 'Introduction', p. 7. See also Ruth Kinna, *Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), Ryley, 'The Manifesto of the Sixteen'.

Emma Goldman, as Jewish anarchist émigrés from the Russian Empire, who highlighted France's alliance with the Tsar, and the New York-based Spaniard Pedro Esteve, who questioned what was so 'progressive' about British, French and Belgian colonialism in Africa.<sup>217</sup> On the other hand, these neutralists were arguably too dismissive of the qualitative difference between democratic citizenship, whatsoever its limits, and foreign occupation.<sup>218</sup> Diego Abad de Santillán, influential in the Spanish and Argentina anarchist movements, would later write that the Second World War, when the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini was clearly the favourable option, would encourage him to rethink his earlier bafflement regarding those anarchists who had opted, in 1914, for what they saw as the lesser evil.<sup>219</sup> The debate was thus complex and multifaceted.

James Yeoman has demonstrated that the Spanish movement had 'divisions similar to those in the rest of Europe'.<sup>220</sup> *El Porvenir del Obrero*, Gijón's *Acción Libertaria* and Zaragoza's *Cultura y Acción* – 'the three most prominent non-Catalan publications' – all supported the pro-Entente minority, as did influential individuals such as Ricardo Mella, Federico Urales and Soledad Gustavo.<sup>221</sup> The *El Porvenir del Obrero* editors described the war as a struggle between 'democracy' and 'imperialism' which heralded 'Napoleon's prophecy that [...] at the end of the nineteenth century Europe would have to be Republican or Cossack'.<sup>222</sup> Both *El Porvenir del Obrero* and *Acción Libertaria* published Kropotkin's (in)famous 'letter to Steffen' in which he argued that it was incumbent upon 'all who love the ideal of human progress', and 'especialy' upon the European proletarian movement, to resist the 'Teutonic invasion of western Europe'.<sup>223</sup> Mir i Mir's endorsement of such views was in clear continuity with his earlier positive regard for republicans as progressive bedfellows.<sup>224</sup> The anarcho-syndicalist heartland of Cataluña, however, was a bastion of anti-

---

<sup>217</sup> Zimmer, 'At War with Empire', pp. 182-83.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, p. 193.

<sup>219</sup> Santillán, *Memorias*, p. 76.

<sup>220</sup> James Michael Yeoman, 'The Spanish anarchist movement at the outbreak of the First World War: a crisis of ideological neutrality', in *Shaping neutrality throughout the First World War*, ed. by José Leonardo Ruiz Sánchez, Inmaculada Cordero Olivero and Carolina García Sanz (Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2015), pp. 81-101 (p. 89); see also Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp. 239-47. Cf. Darlington, 'Revolutionary syndicalist opposition', pp. 985-86.

<sup>221</sup> Yeoman, 'Spanish anarchist movement', pp. 90-94.

<sup>222</sup> 'A nuestros amigos', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 11 March 1915.

<sup>223</sup> See the note explaining that the Gijonese newspaper had already published it in January: 'La carta de Kropotkine', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 11 March 1915.

<sup>224</sup> Alzina, 'Joan Mir i Mir', pp. 133-34.



militarist neutralism, as propagated by both *Solidaridad Obrera* and *Tierra y Libertad*.<sup>225</sup> David Devesa Pájaro points out that regarding the question of military mobilisation, Catalan workers' 'closest precedent, as much geographically as temporally' was the Tragic Week of 1909; this had been a very concrete reinforcement of the linkage between militarism and the oppression and class violence of the bourgeois state.<sup>226</sup> In late 1914 *Tierra y Libertad* reprinted Malatesta's essay on 'anarchists who forget their principles' and in March 1915 the 'International Anarchist Manifesto', with a note explaining that it would also be distributed as a flyer.<sup>227</sup> The same newspaper shared Carbó's fiery denunciations of those who forgot that anarchists were 'cosmopolitans' and 'have no *patria*', questioning which supposed 'freedoms' and 'rights' a German victory would trample, and citing British crimes against Australia's Aboriginal people and the Indigenous population of India to disprove suggestions that the Allies represented self-determination.<sup>228</sup>

In late April 1915, inspired by a call from influential French anarchist Sébastien Faure, the syndicalist athenaeum in El Ferrol, Galicia, organised a peace congress, which was attended by both sides of the debate, although pro-Entente attendees were left disillusioned and redoubled in their view that the anti-militarists were not realists.<sup>229</sup> Indeed the congress, which was difficult to organise in wartime and heavily disrupted by a governmental clampdown, had no impact on the war: El Ferrol and subsequent meetings it inspired in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro were, in the end, 'imperfect' fora in which revolutionary syndicalists and anarchists could 'register their resistance' to the war.<sup>230</sup> For Wayne Thorpe, El Ferrol's enduring significance lay, rather, firstly in fomenting notions of intra-Iberian libertarian organisation; secondly in furthering the idea of an independent revolutionary- or anarcho-syndicalist international movement; and thirdly in providing a platform for delegates from across Spain to agree to work towards reanimating the stricken CNT, following a

---

<sup>225</sup> Yeoman, 'The Spanish anarchists', p. 89.

<sup>226</sup> David Devesa Pájaro, 'El discurs pacifista dins de l'anarcosindicalisme: el cas de Badalona i Mataró durant la Primera Guerra Mundial', *Cercles* 11 (2008), pp. 154-67 (pp. 162-63).

<sup>227</sup> 'Anarquistas que olvidan sus principios', *Tierra y Libertad*, 30 December 1914; 'Manifiesto Anarquista Internacional', *Tierra y Libertad*, 31 March 1915. The manifesto appeared on the front page along with a notice that it was also going to be distributed as a flyer.

<sup>228</sup> 'Lágrimas y sangre', *Tierra y Libertad*, 27 January 1915.

<sup>229</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 70-71; Yeoman, 'The Spanish anarchists', p. 97.

<sup>230</sup> Wayne Thorpe, 'El Ferrol, Rio de Janeiro, Zimmerwald, and beyond: syndicalist internationalism, 1914-1918', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 84.4 (2006), pp. 1005-23 (p. 1014), doi:10.3406/rbph.2006.5058.

proposal from one of the Catalan Confederación Regional del Trabajo (Regional Labour Confederation, CRT) delegates, Ángel Pestaña.<sup>231</sup> This latter point reconfirms the potential generative role of internationalist activism in local movement-building, while, more broadly, El Ferrol symbolised Spanish anarcho-syndicalists' desire to intervene in international affairs, in solidarity with victims of a war in which they were not involved, even if the effort proved to be in vain.

Weeks after El Ferrol, in June 1915, it was from within the stridently anti-militarist milieu of Catalan anarcho-syndicalism that a set of Sabadell-based activists, with the aid of *Tierra y Libertad* editor Tomás Herreros, launched *Reivindicación*, which Masjuan identifies as the first 'exclusively' and explicitly *magonista* newspaper in Europe.<sup>232</sup> The creation of such a newspaper, whose masthead forthrightly proclaimed its determination to 'defend the expropriatory Mexican Revolution', was further palpable proof of the impact that *magonismo* had in Spain, but the fact that it had now been almost four years since Flores Magón's contributions were common currency in the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere' is itself suggestive, implying that the horrors of war and intra-libertarian controversy were fertile ground for nostalgia for the hopeful fervour inspired by Mexico and by the interlocation of Flores Magón.<sup>233</sup> The first issue had a circulation of 2,500 and was distributed at eight different points throughout Barcelona, while the editors also claimed that they regularly received far more prospective contributions than there was space to include.<sup>234</sup> There is thus evidence that the newspaper reached a considerable proportion of the Catalan libertarian movement, and beyond: one individual from Sevilla announced that he joined

---

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, pp. 1012-15. See also Yeoman, 'Spanish anarchist movement', pp. 97-101; Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 72-75.

<sup>232</sup> Masjuan, '*Reivindicación*', pp. 189, 196. In general, enduring support for the Mexican Revolution mapped onto anti-militarist positions, and vice versa, as explored here. Some key exceptions were Kropotkin and W.C. Owen, both outspoken pro-Entente anarchists who had sympathised with the Mexican Revolution; conversely Vicente García, an influential and outspoken sceptic of *magonismo*, was now an equally forthright anti-militarist and one of the signatories of Malatesta's manifesto. On Owen see Zimmer, 'At War with Empire', pp. 185-86; on García see Yeoman, *Print Culture*, pp. 240-44.

<sup>233</sup> Contributions from Ricardo Flores Magón included 'La Revolución Mexicana', *Reivindicación*, 8 June 1915; 'LA REACCIÓN', *Reivindicación*, 17 June 1915; 'Habilidad de los políticos', *Reivindicación*, 24 June 1915. The *Reivindicación* project has also been linked to an ill-fated attempt by a group of aspiring revolutionaries attempted to travel to Mexico in early 1916; according to a family member of one of the militants, Joaquín Estruch, the expedition only made it as far as France: see Masjuan, '*Reivindicación*', pp. 209-14; Aguilar, 'The "Indios" of Spain', pp. 446-47.

<sup>234</sup> 'Notas y avisos', *Reivindicación*, 8 June 1915; 'Explicaciones necesarias', *Reivindicación*, 17 June 1915; Masjuan, '*Reivindicación*', p. 208.

‘wholeheartedly to the campaign in favour of the beautiful Mexican movement that *REIVINDICACIÓN* will carry out’, because even despite his ‘scarce knowledge’, it was impossible to deny ‘that this is the revolutionary spark that, today in Mexico, tomorrow somewhere else, sets alight [...] all corners of the planet we live on’.<sup>235</sup> Although only a small number of copies survive, at least nineteen (likely more) were published across almost a year of activity, when libertarian periodicals frequently lasted only ‘a handful of issues’.<sup>236</sup> Contributors also included figures such as Carbó (following his release from being jailed in the wake of El Ferrol) and Manuel Buenacasa, both of whom would go on to play key roles in the CNT over subsequent decades.<sup>237</sup>

*Reivindicación* manifested the deeply voluntarist spirit that had characterised *Tierra y Libertad*’s continued support for the Mexican Revolution. Its masthead quoted the PLM martyr, Praxedis Guerrero (‘There are many who are impatient for the hour of freedom, but how many work to bring it closer?’) and Anselmo Lorenzo (‘You say that Humanity is defectively organized? There you are to put it right’), both emphasising action over passivity. Moreover, its inaugural editorial declared plainly that ‘we are fed up with theories [...] to implement anarchy it is not necessary that we all be professors and academics’; rather than awaiting the right conditions, ‘we must try everything and take advantage of all circumstances to bring about our ideal’.<sup>238</sup> The empiricist rejection of abstract doctrinairism led inexorably into a decentred internationalism: to ‘set the society of the future upon solid foundations’, a genuine and concrete example was needed – ‘Mexico’.<sup>239</sup> A ‘P. Palomero’ wrote admiringly from New York of having spent time in revolutionary Mexico and observed ‘innumerable parties who invade the villages and *haciendas*, without flying any flag, and in a language crude and therefore more comprehensible to the people, saying that equality has come’; these were, he wrote, ‘*hijos del pueblo*’ (sons of the people), the title of a classic song of the Spanish working-class movement, once more implying a historical and sociological

---

<sup>235</sup> ‘Opresion y Rebeldías’, *Reivindicación*, 17 June 1915.

<sup>236</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 51.

<sup>237</sup> Carbó’s biographer Margarita Carbó claims that he even helped to re-found the newspaper in its second era: Carbó, *Eusebi Carbó i Carbó*, p. 19. See also Masjuan, ‘*Reivindicación*’, p. 199. Carbó was a regular contributor with articles such as ‘CONTRA LA GUERRA’, *Reivindicación*, 27 August 1915; Buenacasa penned a criticism of the expulsion of Spanish journalist Luis Bonafoux from France: ‘UN CASO RARO’, *Reivindicación*, 16 July 1915.

<sup>238</sup> ‘Presentación’, *Reivindicación*, 8 June 1915.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

parallel between the anarchists of Spain and the informal agrarian insurgents of Mexico.<sup>240</sup> This was in continuity with *Tierra y Libertad*'s earlier identification of the implicit anarchism of the Mexican revolutionaries. It was also in *Reivindicación* that a young Higinio Noja Ruiz, anarchist autodidact and later to become a prestigious and prolific Spanish anarchist theorist and activist, argued emphatically that instead of 'ridiculing the movement' in Mexico for its supposed doctrinal errors, it was anarchists' duty to help point the revolutionaries towards 'their true enemies, the parasitical class' and to show 'the comrades that struggle there that they are not alone'; this would be 'more in harmony with our ideals' and give 'a brilliant demonstration of international solidarity'.<sup>241</sup>

Noja Ruiz's argument about anarchists' duty to support and, if necessary, guide the Mexican Revolution was an almost paradigmatic example of the view which Kinna and Adams attribute to Malatesta: of 'revolutionary change' as 'perpetually imminent, its fortunes resting on the ability of anarchists to [...] shape impulsive acts of resistance' in accordance with anarchist ends.<sup>242</sup> Turcato has further emphasised Malatesta as a precursor of 'methodological individualism', in respect of one of his 'most marked traits, his voluntarism'.<sup>243</sup> Unsurprisingly, *Reivindicación* thus strongly aligned with Malatesta within the international anarchist controversy, declaring – as he had done – that the minoritarians had lost their moral core: a 'true anarchist' would not send 'their brothers to the slaughterhouse to satisfy the ambitions of the capitalists' but instead 'takes advantage of all revolts to channel them toward ideality'.<sup>244</sup> *Reivindicación* reprinted the Italian's condemnation of his country's intervention in the war: Italian capitalists, Malatesta declared, would send Italian workers to liberate 'poor Belgium' while hypocritically maintaining their

---

<sup>240</sup> 'Miremos hacia Méjico' *Reivindicación*, 16 July 1915. See Álvaro G. Marhuenda, 'CANTORES del IDEAL: Sobre el origen del himno Hijos del Pueblo', *Alacant Obrera*, 23 April 2019 <<https://alacantobrero.com/2019/04/23/cantores-de-la-revolucion-la-historia-del-himno-hijos-del-pueblo/>> [accessed 7 July 2023].

<sup>241</sup> 'SOBRE LA REVOLUCIÓN MEJICANA', *Reivindicación*, 22 October 1915. See the biography (which does not mention his contributions to *Reivindicación*) by Javier Navarro Navarro, 'Biography, culture and militancy in Spanish anarchism: Higinio Noja Ruiz (1894-1972)', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 28.1 (2022), pp. 59-74, doi:10.1080/14701847.2022.2052691.

<sup>242</sup> Adams and Kinna, 'Introduction', p. 8.

<sup>243</sup> Davide Turcato, 'Saving the Future: the Roots of Malatesta's Anti-Militarism', in *Anarchism, 1914-18*, ed. by Adams and Kinna, pp. 29-48 (p. 44).

<sup>244</sup> 'Presentación'.

own colonial designs in North Africa and the Mediterranean.<sup>245</sup> This question of Belgium was a vitriolic one: ‘Poor Belgium’ was also the sarcastic title of a Carbó polemic in the newspaper, claiming that the Brussels police had helped the German occupiers to detain local anarchists, whereas for *El Porvenir del Obrero* the Germans’ toppling of the Francisco Ferrer statue in the same city was a pertinent reminder of which side anarchists ought to be on.<sup>246</sup> *Reivindicación* also promoted efforts such as a raffle to support foreign refugees, whose plight in Spain it publicised, for instance protesting the possible deportation of two Italians and a Russian detained by the Spanish government whose only crime, it insisted, was evading ‘the sanguinary appetites’ of their governments; it was necessary to show them ‘that international solidarity is a fact’.<sup>247</sup>

What was novel and significant about *Reivindicación*’s anti-militarism, however, was the way it presented it as co-constitutive and mutually reinforcing with its internationalist solidarity with the Mexican Revolution. The astonishing human cost of the war threw the perceived hypocrisy of their opponents’ anti-violence stance into sharp relief: while it was true that revolutions had their casualties, ‘just as no birth is without pain’, the newspaper sustained that the difference between even ‘the most terrible of revolutions’ and ‘the least formidable of wars’ was unanswerable.<sup>248</sup> Moreover, however, if a strident anti-militarism was ‘anarchists’ way of saving the future’, as Turcato puts it of Malatesta, the *Reivindicación* editors believed that the voluntarist example of the Mexican Revolution, of which they were ‘enthusiastic admirers’, had to orient that future vision.<sup>249</sup> Sometime before Lenin and Trotsky offered their revolutionary alternative to the war, Mexico thus fired the imaginations of those who dreamt of working-class insurrection, beyond the victory of one alliance or the other:

Ah! If the European proletariat, instead of wielding the rifle to kill their brothers and defend the

---

<sup>245</sup> Originally printed in *L’Era Nuova* (Paterson, New Jersey), see ‘¡TAMBIÉN ITALIA!’, *Reivindicación*, 22 October 1915.

<sup>246</sup> ‘¡Pobre Bélgica!’, *Reivindicación*, 16 July 1915; ‘España en Bruselas’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 11 March 1915

<sup>247</sup> ‘ACLARACION’, *Reivindicación*, 27 August 1915; ‘EN PLENA INQUISICIÓN’, *Reivindicación*, 5 November 1915. No further information on the case appears, but there was an interesting parallel between wartime Spain and Mexico as neutral countries which played host to many refugees from Russia and other belligerent nations: Arturo Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘Neutrality and Internationalism: The Russian Exiles in Spain, 1914-1920’, *Contemporary European History* 31.3 (2022), pp. 339-52, doi:10.1017/S0960777321000461

<sup>248</sup> ‘La guerra y la revolución’, *Reivindicación*, 8 June 1915.

<sup>249</sup> ‘Presentación’, Turcato, ‘Saving the Future’, p. 43.

interests of the bourgeoisie [...] if instead of destroying each other in this fratricidal struggle, had imitated the Mexican revolutionaries.<sup>250</sup>

Mexico and the global breadth of these activists' internationalism allowed them to deepen and broaden their ultra-left anti-war critique; in turn, the catastrophe of the war on European soil reaffirmed their global, decentring outlook and the inversion of colonial hierarchies. Just months after *Tierra y Libertad* had published the 'International Anarchist Manifesto' in which Malatesta, Goldman, Berkman *et al* had questioned which side of an inter-imperialist war could truly claim to represent 'civilisation', *Reivindicación* declared that while the sun set on 'old Europe', that 'cradle of *civilisation*', leaving it in the 'gloomy night of the past' and those 'old and routine hatreds of race and nation', Mexico to the west was witnessing 'the dawn of the new day' and the 'rising Sun [sic]' which would herald 'Peace, Love, Freedom and Equality'.<sup>251</sup> Some articles revelled in the irony that it was 'the *indios*, the *semi-civilised*, the *savages*, [who were] giving lessons in anarchism to the *educated*, the *wise*, the *supermen* of old European, whose sons are seized by exterminatory madness'.<sup>252</sup> Thus for *Reivindicación*, the cataclysm of war in turn further supported the radical decentring implications of the Mexican Revolution.

In similar regard, the newspaper reported on the struggle by 'our Indian brothers', the Yaqui 'comrades' – whose ongoing fight for land recovery was supported by the PLM – and also included texts which evinced further essentialist ideas about the *indios*' profound relationship with 'Mother Nature'.<sup>253</sup> In a message sent from A Coruña, an individual named Enrique Chas claimed to have long supported the 'brave comrades who, waving the red banner of *¡Tierra y Libertad!* sacrifice their wellbeing and their lives in the fields and villages of the country of the Aztecs'; having worked as a waiter on board a transatlantic ship, he wrote, he had now witnessed for himself 'the character of the *indios*' during stays in Veracruz

<sup>250</sup> 'No hay fuerza capaz de detener la marcha de los rebeldes mejicanos', *Reivindicación*, 27 August 1915.

<sup>251</sup> 'Manifiesto Anarquista Internacional'; 'SOL PONIENTE Y SOL NACIENTE', *Reivindicación*, 16 July 1915.

<sup>252</sup> '¿...?', *Reivindicación*, 24 June 1915.

<sup>253</sup> 'Notas revolucionarias mejicanas', *Reivindicación*, 22 October 1915; 'Notas Revolucionarias Mejicanas', *Reivindicación*, 17 June 1915. The ongoing connection between the PLM and the Yaquis in Javier Gámez Chávez: 'Yaquis y Magonistas: una alianza indígena y popular en la Revolución Mexicana', *Pacarina del Sur: Revista de Pensamiento Crítico Latinoamericano* 2010 <<https://www.pacarinadelsur.com/home/olejaes/88-yaquis-y-magonistas-una-alianzaindigena-y-popular-en-la-revolucion-mexicana>> [accessed 10 May 2024]; England, 'Magonismo', p. 255.

and Tampico.<sup>254</sup> Masjuan suggests that the editors of *Reivindicación* ‘ironically’ adopted the pseudonym ‘Aspiring *indio*’ to mock those who discredited the Mexican Revolution because of its Indigenous protagonists, but there is little reason to suppose any sarcasm; the name bears resemblance to the earlier use of ‘Zapatista Indian’ as a pseudonym and fits within the broader pattern of *Reivindicación* continuing with the earlier celebration of Indigenous individuals as revolutionary subjects.<sup>255</sup>

On the other side of the debate, following Kropotkin’s Francophilia and his call to oppose the ‘savage hordes’ of the ‘bellicose German nation’, *El Porvenir del Obrero* embraced parallel essentialisms which buttressed, rather than challenged, Enlightenment narratives.<sup>256</sup> Like others among the pro-Entente minority, Mir i Mir justified his support for the Allies as a choice which aimed at ‘the toppling of militarist empires and the consequent liberation and democratic constitution of the diverse peoples who are today under their domination’.<sup>257</sup> However, as in the case of Kropotkin, the clear embrace of a hierarchical vision of different peoples cut against this ostensibly anti-imperialist intent. *El Porvenir del Obrero* accompanied the Russian’s ‘letter to Steffen’ with an editorial note arguing that those who blindly opposed both sides in the war had no regard for ‘the progressive or regressive actions of people and governments of different nationalities’.<sup>258</sup> This even more pronounced sense of cultural hierarchy was a fertile context for ever harsher indictments of the revolutionary capacity of Indigenous Mexicans. The pro-Entente *Acción Libertaria*, for example, greeted the founding of *Reivindicación* with a message insisting that the Mexican Revolution’s limits were an ‘inevitable consequence of that people’s backwardness’.<sup>259</sup>

A further article made this implied developmental teleology more explicit, suggesting that the *indios* strove to return to a ‘primitive communism’ of the past, with little to do with ‘an ideal such as anarchy’ which lay in the future; it was laughable to suppose ‘that men of such a narrow mentality could carry out a revolution as we must conceive it’, and

---

<sup>254</sup> Article from *Reivindicación*, 9 February 1916, reproduced as ‘Insisto en lo mismo’, *Regeneración*, 25 March 1916.

<sup>255</sup> The pseudonym appeared in “‘Acción Libertaria’ y la revolución de Méjico”, *Reivindicación*, 16 July 1915; Masjuan, ‘*Reivindicación*’, p. 200.

<sup>256</sup> ‘La carta de Kropotkine’. For example, Urales took to the newspaper to profess his belief that the French had ‘better culture, better civilisation, better moral progress, better liberty, better justice’: cited in Yeoman, ‘Spanish anarchist movement’, p. 91.

<sup>257</sup> Cited in Alzina, ‘Repensant’, p. 134.

<sup>258</sup> ‘La carta de Kropotkine’.

<sup>259</sup> ‘Para un nuevo colega’, *Acción Libertaria*, 18 June 1915.

*Reivindicación* was ‘confusing barbarism with anarchy’.<sup>260</sup> In the same newspaper, Enrique Nido, (pseudonym of Amadeo Lluán, a Catalan anarchist exiled in Argentina), decried the Mexican *indios* as ‘among the most ignorant and most brutish peoples of the earth’.<sup>261</sup> The polarised context of the war thus sharpened even further the ascriptive exclusions which had previously assigned the Mexican revolutionaries ‘sympathy’ on the border of anarchist internationalism, and now placed them well outside it. Similarly, in a sprawling front-page editorial, *El Porvenir del Obrero* now fully endorsed the accusations that the PLM were simply ‘swindlers’ who through ‘illusion’ had stolen ‘important quantities’ of money raised ‘through sacrifice by enthusiastic and selfless workers [...] believing themselves to be contributing to the first great anarchist revolution’.<sup>262</sup> In reality, ‘that people, neither morally, nor intellectually, has the ability to think of social revolutions, nor even to sustained a political regime of relative freedom’; the ‘thieves and murderers’ of Mexico could not have any ‘relations with anarchism, socialism, or any other of the higher ideas studied by the workers of more advanced countries’.<sup>263</sup> Despite aligning with him over the war, the newspaper also critiqued what it deemed Kropotkin’s previous ‘excessive confidence in the revolutionary capacities of backwards peoples’, demonstrating its weddedness to earlier, nineteenth-century models of ‘cultural evolution’.<sup>264</sup>

Just as *Reivindicación* saw anti-militarism and *magonismo* as mutually reinforcing, these critics perceived a relationship between the two questions: for *El Porvenir del Obrero*, however, naivete was the common denominator in its opponents ‘assuming a disposition for [...] anarchist communist among the Mexican *indios*’ and their having ‘become the unconscious instruments of German militarism in Europe’.<sup>265</sup> Moreover, this represented a moral failing: those anarchists it accused of ‘Turco-German sympathies’ were ‘precisely the same ones who excommunicate us at the same time as they certify the anarchist orthodoxy

---

<sup>260</sup> A propósito de la revuelta mejicana’, *Acción Libertaria*, 30 June 1915.

<sup>261</sup> ‘Causas de la revolución mejicana’, *Acción Libertaria*, 1 July 1915. Biography in Iñiguez, *Esbozo*, p. 335.

<sup>262</sup> ‘LAS MINAS DE CALIFORNIA’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 26 August 1915.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> ‘Las opiniones ajenas’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 2 September 1915.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.* This was apart from the more specific accusations of accepting German bribes to write neutralist propaganda, which were sufficiently compelling to lead to the resignation of *Soli*’s editorial team; as Devesa Pájaro points out, this alleged incident came amid a far wider pattern of opportunistic bribery of the press on the part of both belligerent parties: Devesa Pájaro, ‘El discurs pacifista’, p. 161n14. See also Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 243; Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, p. 139.



of the plunderers of Cuajimalpa and Chalmita'.<sup>266</sup> Whereas *Reivindicación* and the anti-militarists identified a self-evident contradiction between their opponents' critique of revolutionary violence and simultaneous support for the war effort, these pro-Entente newspapers perceived a lack of discernment and an inability to distinguish civilisation from barbarism, which they regarded as a fundamental anarchist principle. In turn, *Reivindicación* critiqued what it saw as these activists' Teutophobia and their discourse of 'German barbarism' in relation to 'the country that gave birth to Wagner, Goethe, [and] Nietzsche'.<sup>267</sup> Like other anti-war publications, it highlighted the perceived hypocrisy of such activists supporting an alliance which included Tsarist Russia.<sup>268</sup> The problem, it therefore suggested, lay in attempts to draw general conclusions about people from their governments, instead of remaining loyal to a cosmopolitan anti-statism.

While the clash between Malatesta and Kropotkin, or between robust anti-militarism and a pro-Entente stance, has frequently been posed in terms of intransigent idealism versus pragmatism, commentary on the Mexican question demonstrates that the pro-Entente newspapers, at least in Spain, felt that it was their anti-militarist opponents who had lost their values. Nido, for example, professed his distance from what he described as the 'catastrophist temperament' of those who 'believe that anarchy has to emerge from the smoke of the cannons and from the smell of blood'.<sup>269</sup> Similarly, an article in *El Porvenir del Obrero* declared that '[a]lthough we might all call ourselves anarchists, it is evident that we do not think the same as those who believe that anarchy is synonymous with disorganisation, carelessness, shamelessness, immorality and impunity for the greatest crimes'.<sup>270</sup> Rather, it insisted, anarchism was about aspiring 'to a more perfect society, founded on a superior morality'.<sup>271</sup> Responding to these efforts to define anarchy, *Reivindicación* once more deferred to voluntarism, asking 'When have those behind *Acción Libertaria* burnt churches, set fire to barracks, prisons and property registers? Undoubtedly, the Mexicans have a very

---

<sup>266</sup> 'El anarquismo mejicano', *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 9 September 1915.

<sup>267</sup> 'Carta abierta', *Reivindicación*, 3 September 1915; 'ANTE LA MATANZA', *Reivindicación*, 24 September 1915.

<sup>268</sup> For example 'INSISTIENDO', *Reivindicación*, 14 August 1915 and 'En interés del ideal', *Reivindicación*, 5 October 1915.

<sup>269</sup> 'Causas de la revolución mejicana'..

<sup>270</sup> 'El anarquismo mejicano'.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

narrow mentality and those of *Acción Libertaria* a very broad one'.<sup>272</sup> In a message to *Reivindicación*, a member of the Dowlais, Wales-based Spanish anarchist group 'Ni Dogmas, Ni Sistemas' ('Neither Dogmas, Nor Systems') described those who had spread doubts about the Mexican Revolution as 'bogus intellectuals' who simply feared the spectre of 'popular justice' and could not believe that others were willing to act concretely on their rebellious rhetoric.<sup>273</sup> These remarks were strongly redolent of how Vidal and Crespo had earlier contrasted the example of action offered by the Mexican revolutionaries with what they regarded as the passivity of their critics.

Nonetheless, for some activists, these questions about what it was that actually defined and unified *an* anarchist movement, refracted through debates about internationalism, brought the very question of the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere' into contestation. *El Porvenir del Obrero* acknowledged that 'the word revolution has a fascinating attraction for us' and had triggered that early 'sympathy' for 'the revolutionary movement that expelled Porfirio Díaz'.<sup>274</sup> However, the ability to assimilate new information and readjust was crucial: for *El Porvenir del Obrero*, the kind of cynical and suspicious posture which accused 'the bourgeois press' of 'hiding the character of the events in Mexico', was a weakness and a sign of naivety about the reality of the 'modern press'.<sup>275</sup> Nido, for his part, claimed that the 'less impressionistic' within the movement had felt 'doubt' from the first outbreak of news from Mexico, when others had demonstrated 'naive hope in the impending triumph of anarchy'.<sup>276</sup> Although Nido and others associated with *Acción Libertaria* would remain anarchists, Mir i Mir seemed to be realising that he had more in common with middle-class republicans than with the insular, oppositional workerism of many anarcho-syndicalists; after the war, *El Porvenir del Obrero* ceased publishing and he migrated towards republican, *catalaniste* and *menorquiniste* politics.<sup>277</sup> Although this was undoubtedly a multifaceted decision, the Mexican Revolution and the war evidently factored into it, demonstrating that internationalism could involve an unmaking as well as a making of solidarities, and that international questions could be at the heart of one's anarcho-syndicalism.

---

<sup>272</sup> "'Acción Libertaria" y la Revolución de Méjico', *Reivindicación*, 27 August 1915.

<sup>273</sup> 'Opresiones y Rebeldías', *Reivindicación*, 17 June 1915.

<sup>274</sup> 'LAS MINAS DE CALIFORNIA'.

<sup>275</sup> 'Las opiniones ajenas'.

<sup>276</sup> 'Causas de la revolución mejicana'.

<sup>277</sup> Alzina, 'Repensant', pp. 122-23.

### Conclusion

The central presence of the Mexican Revolution in the movement press, including the founding of a specific newspaper in *Reivindicación*, and the traces of memory left afterwards testify to the importance that the event held for many Spanish anarcho-syndicalists.<sup>278</sup> The evidence explored here has shown that it was a popular cause within the libertarian movement which generated a significant affective response and inspired practical efforts such as raising solidarity funds, distributing propaganda, and demonstrating against Porfirio Díaz and the Spanish government's amicable treatment of him. This underlines the significance of internationalism within the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere' and the ways that the construction of international solidarity was also a process of defining and delimiting one's own ideological and class identity. Consequently, international questions could be at the sharp end of profound debates about what it meant to be an anarcho-syndicalist. In terms of observations for the rest of the thesis, this chapter's contributions can thus be summarised as demonstrating activists' attentive and strongly affective relationship with international questions and highlighting the way that arguments about internationalism extrapolated from and were extrapolated onto other debates, including abstract questions about ideology and identity and those of purportedly national or local scope. There was not a single *a priori* anarcho-syndicalist internationalism; rather, internationalism was a process involving a great degree of agency and contention, through which activists and adherents worked to express their own vision of what anarcho-syndicalism meant, whether rebellion, insurgency and regeneration or the triumph of progressive civilisation over barbarism

The identification here of a particular strand of open-minded voluntarist anarcho-syndicalism finds an echo in Arturo Zoffmann Rodríguez's recent research on the 1917-1924 period, which argues that for many Spanish anarchists, the Russian Revolution would represent a 'tangible feat whose importance transcended theoretical differences'.<sup>279</sup> In fact, Zoffmann Rodríguez briefly acknowledges that the Mexican Revolution prefigured this by strengthening 'the idea that formal ideological tags were unimportant; what mattered was

---

<sup>278</sup> For example, in 1923, Spanish exiles in Lens took the name 'Flores Magón' for a new anarchist group: 'NUESTRO GRUPO', *Acción Social Obrera*, 15 September 1923. In 1926, a major Spanish anarcho-syndicalist newspaper published Ricardo's writings on the mechanisation of production on its front page: see 'El obrero y la máquina', *Acción Social Obrera*, 9 January 1926. Also see below pp. 215-21.

<sup>279</sup> Zoffmann Rodríguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', p. 175.

one's revolutionary mettle'.<sup>280</sup> This chapter has reinforced and expanded upon that observation, demonstrating the ways that it was articulated and contested. But it has also gone further, identifying the significance of such a voluntarist approach to anarcho-syndicalism in light of recent efforts to articulate a contemporary 'decolonised' anarchism: in *Tierra y Libertad*, an adaptive, action-oriented approach to anarchism facilitated an openness to non-European, Indigenous, agrarian insurgency as a source of revolutionary agency which might inspire Europeans; *Reivindicación* later continued this work, facilitated by the world-inverting context of the First World War. This was an important early example of decentred internationalism.

From the perspective of today's political praxis, however, the solidarities explored in this chapter were not entirely unproblematic. Essentialist ideas worked to resituate Indigenous Mexicans as valid revolutionary subjects whose efforts could and should be of interest to European radicals, but involved a considerable degree of distortion and generalisation: this revives the question, previously explored in a different Latin American anarchist context, of whether 'stereotypes' can be 'positive'.<sup>281</sup> Moreover, while Ciccariello-Maher's appeal to find 'non-anarchist anarchisms' is intended to decolonise, pluralise and therefore transcend the limits of existing anarchism, identifying the non-anarchist *as* anarchist poses a risk of asserting crude equivalences between non-equivalent situations; as the historian of Black radicalism Robin D.G. Kelley argues of Black-Palestinian transnational solidarities, this 'can lead to historical distortion and muddled political intentions'.<sup>282</sup> Although the activists behind *El Porvenir del Obrero* were deeply prejudiced in their approach to Mexico, their anti-violence critique also raised the overlapping question of whether smoothing out ambiguities and differences into a singular narrative of resistance risks degenerating into a vague moral relativism; a troubling possibility against which more contemporary anarchist voices have warned, in light of subsequent, nominally anti-imperialist liberation struggles which produced their own forms of oppression.<sup>283</sup>

---

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>281</sup> José C. Moya, 'The positive side of stereotypes: Jewish anarchists in early-twentieth-century Buenos Aires', *Jewish History* 18.1 (2004), pp. 19-48, doi:10.1023/B:JEHI.0000005735.80946.27. See also Cleminson and Duarte, 'Anarchism, Colonialism, p. 125.

<sup>282</sup> Robin D.G. Kelley, 'From the river to the sea to every mountain top: solidarity as worldmaking', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 48.4 (2019), pp. 69-91 (p. 71), doi:10.1525/jps.2019.48/4.69.

<sup>283</sup> See Anarchist Federation, *Against Nationalism* (Anarchist Communist Editions, 2009).

Nonetheless, the openness demonstrated first in *Tierra y Libertad* and later in *Reivindicación*, untethering ‘anarchism’ from Eurocentric presumptions and positing Indigenous and agrarian insurgency as a pathway to liberation and social equity, had considerable potential. Had there been scope for building on the imaginative openings detailed in the anarcho-syndicalist press, these could have produced the kind of fruitful dialogue between anarchism and Indigeneity urged by Native Hawaiian Kanaka Maoli scholar Kahala Johnson and Kathy Ferguson, who highlight ‘points of contact in which meaningful and contentious conversations could emerge through the development of resonant relationships’.<sup>284</sup> In June 1915, a representative of the ‘Ni Dogmas, Ni Sistemas’ group in Dowlais suggested that there were a ‘majority of young enthusiasts’ who ‘feel the desire to know the drama developing in Mexico and sympathise with those revolutionaries’, and urged that what was needed was more ‘direct correspondence with those *campesinos*’, to arrive at a new level of solidarity.<sup>285</sup> The difficulties of wartime transatlantic travel were a key reason why more direct encounters, beyond the diffuse references such as the forecited transatlantic waiter Enrique Chas, were not forthcoming.<sup>286</sup> Nonetheless, the desire to open a more ‘direct’ dialogue highlighted how the Mexican aurora had pointed towards ‘new ways of relating and being in the world’.<sup>287</sup>

---

<sup>284</sup> Kahala Johnson and Kathy E. Ferguson, ‘Anarchism and Indigeneity’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. by Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 697-714 (p. 708).

<sup>285</sup> ‘Opresiones y Rebeldías’.

<sup>286</sup> Aguilar, ‘The “Indios” of Spain’, p. 447.

<sup>287</sup> Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 254.

## Chapter Two

### ‘The true internationalists’

#### The question of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism, 1917-1931

This chapter analyses the contested terrains of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism during a period of considerable flux, experimentation and evolution. The First World War was a historical earthquake, triggering convulsions near and far. Despite Spain’s neutrality, the war’s drastic economic impact brought hundreds of thousands of workers into the labour movement; an expansion of which the CNT was the primary beneficiary.<sup>1</sup> At Europe’s other periphery, the toppling of Russia’s liberal Provisional Government and the creation of the first revolutionary proletarian regime was another seismic event, which many anarcho-syndicalists took, at least temporarily, as indicative of the impending outcome of the social and political unrest engulfing Spain and other European countries.<sup>2</sup> Propelled by these significant national and international forces, Spain’s anarcho-syndicalists sought to become internationalists in a more practical sense, finding themselves immersed in what international relations scholar Alejandro Colás describes as ‘the messy business of making political judgements, pondering on strategy, alliances and prudential calculations, and entering into protracted and often fraught deliberation and negotiation with international partners’.<sup>3</sup> By grappling with this ‘messiness’, we can better understand the competing and overlapping affective, ideological and practical elements that constituted and divided anarcho-syndicalist internationalism.

Notwithstanding the complex and multifaceted nature of international relations, the idea of a ‘true’ or ‘genuine’ internationalism was a leitmotif among revolutionary syndicalists, who ‘considered themselves the rightful heirs of the First International’.<sup>4</sup> When prompted by the congresses of 1913 (London) and 1915 (El Ferrol), Spanish anarcho-syndicalists had demonstrated a keen aspiration to establish ‘a vast revolutionary federation of trade unions’

---

<sup>1</sup> The CNT in December 1919 claimed a membership of 700,000 whereas the UGT had grown to 200,000: Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 225. The war and Spain’s repositioning into a key exporter to the belligerent countries brought rapid growth, but also inflation and a drastic widening of socioeconomic inequalities: see Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, pp. 120-23; Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, pp. 225-26.

<sup>2</sup> Avilés Farré, *La fe que vino*, pp. 99-100; Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, pp. 151-53; Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Alejandro Colás, ‘Taking sides: cosmopolitanism, internationalism and “complex solidarity” in the work of Fred Halliday’, *International Affairs* 87.5 (2011), pp. 1051-65 (p. 1062), doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2011.01020.x

<sup>4</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 48 and *passim*.

which would be ‘a new international organisations without bosses or functionaries’.<sup>5</sup> Towards the end of the war, however, ‘syndicalists no longer found themselves alone in the effort to establish a new and radical International’.<sup>6</sup> The appeals from first Moscow and then Berlin involved a process of confronting more directly the question of what internationalism meant, how to practise it and what it ought to look like. In fact, these questions would remain largely unresolved even after the choice of Internationals seemed settled: although affiliates celebrated the new anarcho-syndicalist International Workingmen’s Association (IWA, the ‘Berlin International’) for ‘reviving the old ideals of the First International’ for which it was named, it is shown here that there was no definitive consensus on that historical legacy.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, activists remained divided over questions such as whether their internationalism should be defined by a ‘neutral’ class identity or a sectarian ideological one, by centralised organisational initiatives or spontaneous solidarity, and by local agency or overarching structures. Accordingly, the chapter is not limited to that already much-explored history of the CNT’s pivot from one institutional affiliation to another; it also considers a set of often deeply contested issues through which Spanish anarcho-syndicalists expressed and negotiated their internationalism, thereby shedding light on a neglected dimension of some well-trodden debates which thundered throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s.

The first section offers an overview of that much-frequented topic of the 1917-1922 period of first affiliation with and then divorce from Moscow, emphasising the multifaceted nature of the CNT’s internationalism in this era and the many competing factors which shaped and complicated its trajectory. An array of historians have also discussed the transnational element of the 1920s tug-of-war between so-called ‘pure syndicalists’ favouring an apolitical class identity for the CNT, and ‘radicals’ who wanted it to openly identify with anarchism: while the former had allies such as the Italians Malatesta and Luigi

---

<sup>5</sup> Words from one of the Spanish attendees to the 1913 London congress, José Suárez Duque, in his later reflections on the event: ‘Deber que se impone’, *El Porvenir del Obrero*, 4 December 1913. See also Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 83; Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 65-73.

<sup>6</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> The quotation is from Rudolf Rocker’s introductory speech for the IWA’s second congress: see Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam [hereafter IISG] Diego Abad de Santillán Papers 366, ‘INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO DE LA ASOCIACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LOS TRABAJADORES’. According to Santillán, the French delegates at the founding congress had proposed the name ‘International Association of Revolutionary Syndicalist Workers’, but Santillán proposed the International Workingmen’s Association as ‘a kind of revivification of the first International’: Santillán, *Memorias*, p. 87.

Fabbri, the latter were supported vociferously by the editorial group of the Buenos Aires-based *La Protesta* newspaper.<sup>8</sup> However, despite this extensive acknowledgement, the internationalist dimensions of the debate remain remarkably understudied: what did these two competing conceptions of the Confederation imply for the International? This is the topic of the second section. The first two sections thus highlight some of the key contradictions and areas of contestation, many of which remained even after the CNT had ostensibly ‘settled’ its international position; they thereby further challenge notions of a fixed or ‘given’ anarcho-syndicalist internationalism. Nonetheless, one area of much-needed consensus between the CNT’s rival tendencies was a profound hostility to the communists, explored in the following section. In a Spanish context, Chris Ealham has lamented the sectarian marginalisation of Spain’s heterodox communists and the negative impact it had on the CNT’s ability to engage with questions of revolutionary power.<sup>9</sup> However, the work of American historians Kathy Ferguson and Kenyon Zimmer on Russian anarchist exile anti-Bolshevism, underlining the internationalist significance of interwar libertarians’ opposition to Soviet authoritarianism as a marker of moral identity, influences the alternative used here in section three.<sup>10</sup> The movement’s growing interest in fomenting and utilising Esperanto also took on greater relevance during this period, and occupies the subsequent section. As a significant but ultimately failed effort to negate the national ‘division of labour’ among the radical working class, Esperantism highlights both the extent and the limitations of internationalist aspirations. The final section explores the debate over (inter)national industrial federations, an organisational question which further exemplifies the competing understandings of how the CNT was to fit into an international anarcho-syndicalist project as they bore on a perceived moment of opportunity at the outside of the 1930s. Together

---

<sup>8</sup> Antonio Elorza, ‘El anarcosindicalismo español bajo la dictadura (1923-30). La génesis de la Federación Anarquista Ibérica (I)’, *Revista de Trabajo* 39-40 (1972), pp. 123-477 (pp. 152-220); Bar, *C.N.T.*, pp. 682-95; Juan Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organisation: The History of the F.A.I.*, trans. by Abe Bluestein (Black Rose Books, 1986), pp. 79-86; Rocío Navarro Comas, ‘El Frente Único, las Alianzas Obreras y el Frente Popular: La evolución teórica de los anarquistas ante la colaboración obrera’, *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* [Online], 41.1 (2011), doi:10.4000/mcv.3855; Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants*, pp. 93-117; Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 173-78.

<sup>9</sup> Ealham, ‘An Impossible Unity’, pp. 100-08

<sup>10</sup> Kathy E. Ferguson, ‘The Russian Revolution and Anarchist Imaginaries’, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116.4 (2017), pp. 745-61, doi:10.1215/00382876-4234983; Kenyon Zimmer, ‘Premature Anti-Communists?: American Anarchism, the Russian Revolution, and Left-Wing Libertarian Anti-Communism, 1917-1939’, *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 6.2 (2009), pp. 45-71, doi: 10.1215/15476715-2008-058.



these different elements illustrate a constantly evolving and disputed question of ‘true’ anarcho-syndicalist internationalism during this era.

### *Berlin, via Moscow*

In 1919, the CNT affiliated provisionally to the Third International (Comintern); in 1922, it instead opted to join the new IWA, the ‘Berlin International’ founded by various libertarian working-class movements.<sup>11</sup> As mentioned in the Introduction, a considerable historiography already pertains to this sequence of events; nonetheless, without seeking to re-tread too far an already well-trodden terrain, it is important to survey some of this period’s ‘messiness’ and highlight the competing pressures which shaped the trajectory of Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism. Zoffmann Rodríguez’s recent work on the topic breaks with what he terms ‘empirical’ approaches to the CNT and the Third International, wherein affiliation was a ‘mere misunderstanding’ which would be rectified as the movement returned to a straight-and-narrow path of true anarcho-syndicalist internationalism, and points to the need to view this period through a non-linear lens, as one of genuine openness.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, threads of continuity clearly ran through this process, demonstrating the robustness of libertarian traditions and ideas within much of the movement.

In 1919, anarcho-syndicalists with different approaches to the internationalist question could nonetheless be united in perceiving the necessity of affiliation to ‘Moscow’. The Catalan trade union organisers led by Salvador Seguí wanted the CNT to be ‘an essential factor in the social life of Spain and an undeniable guarantee for the international proletariat’.<sup>13</sup> In May 1917, Seguí and his ally Ángel Pestaña had appealed for a renewal of the internationalism abandoned by the social democratic movement, emphasising the revolutionary syndicalists’ moral authority derived from their consistent anti-militarist ‘affirmation of internationalism’.<sup>14</sup> However, these activists were soon busily focused on perfecting the syndical apparatus in Cataluña – in the process shifting towards prioritising effective organisation and working-class unity over doctrinal purity – and gaining hegemony

---

<sup>11</sup> Although this separation would not be *de jure* until a Confederal congress could codify it, which had to wait until 1931.

<sup>12</sup> Zoffmann Rodríguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> ‘LA CONFEDERACIÓN REGIONAL A TODO EL PROLETARIADO MILITANTE DE CATALUÑA’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 23 October 1918. See also Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 163.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Manifiesto al pueblo español’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 25 May 1917.

over the regional labour movement.<sup>15</sup> Early in 1919, the ‘*Canadiense*’ strike demonstrated Barcelona CNT workers’ astonishing unity and dedication, ending in resounding victory and a governmental pledge to introduce Europe’s first legally mandated eight-hour workday.<sup>16</sup> For Seguí, this momentum imposed a ‘responsibility’ not to remain ‘enclosed’ in Cataluña, to reject the parochial regionalism of the bourgeois *catalanistes*, and to ‘put ourselves in communication with all the Spanish workers and [...] all of those outside Spain’.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, declaring a nationwide ‘*excursión de propaganda*’, the CNT grew, gaining significant footholds in traditionally socialist regions such as Asturias and the Basque Country in this era.<sup>18</sup> This lofty, expansive ambition to represent *the* national working class was epitomised by the decision to hold the Confederation’s second congress, in December 1919, in the Spanish capital rather than the traditional heartland of Barcelona; any absence would be considered ‘desertion’.<sup>19</sup> Delegations in Madrid represented ‘close to one million Spanish workers’, a number whose ‘mere enunciation’ spoke ‘eloquently’ to the gathering’s ‘transcendence’.<sup>20</sup>

As such, when the congress came to debate the question of the Third International, those outward-looking aspirations implied, for Seguí, a need to avoid ‘being separated from the comrades, the workers of the rest of the world’.<sup>21</sup> In the context, this meant affiliating to Moscow – even despite his own doubts that the Bolshevik model should be applied in Spain.<sup>22</sup> For as Hilario Arlandis – an advocate of aligning with Moscow, and future communist – pointed out during the debate, it was ‘very difficult to find a concrete formula to unite the entire proletariat of the world and give satisfaction, in the smallest details, to all tendencies’.<sup>23</sup> The unarguable fact of the Russian revolutionary achievement appeared to

---

<sup>15</sup> See Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, pp. 238-41, 245-50.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp. 292-96; Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, pp. 156-58; Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, pp. 158-61.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Los sindicalistas catalanes en la Casa del Pueblo’, *España Nueva*, 5 October 1919.

<sup>18</sup> ‘LA CONFEDERACIÓN REGIONAL A TODO EL PROLETARIADO MILITANTE DE CATALUÑA’; Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, p. 152.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Segundo Congreso de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo’, *España Nueva*, 30 November – 1 December 1919; ‘¡Acudid todos al Congreso sindicalista!’, *España Nueva*, 8 December 1919. See also Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 180n.

<sup>20</sup> ‘II Congreso de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo’, *España Nueva*, 14 December 1919. The actual figure was 765,101: Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 235.

<sup>21</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 371.

<sup>22</sup> Seguí was a firm defender of the thesis that any transition to communism had to occur through trade unions, when the workers were sufficiently ‘prepared’: see Avilés Farré, *La fe que vino*, pp. 102-03; Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 163.

<sup>23</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 351.

offer the closest thing to such a unifying beacon; even the Asturian Eleuterio Quintanilla, one of the most critical voices during the 1919 debate, described it as the ‘most transcendental fact of our times’ which deserved ‘our adhesion and our unconditional encouragement’, at the same time as he affirmed the need for a specifically libertarian International.<sup>24</sup> As for Seguí; he hoped that affiliation to the Third International would be a step towards, rather than viewing it as the fulfilment of, the goal of ‘constituting the true, the only, the genuine International of the workers’.<sup>25</sup>

Others at the congress were far more enthusiastic and unconditional in their adhesion to Moscow. Russia remained, at this juncture, the ‘great myth’ stirring the imaginations of thousands of aspiring Spanish revolutionaries, whether in tumultuous Barcelona or the volatile Andalucian countryside; many felt a profound affinity with the Bolsheviks’ resolute opposition to continuing the war and equally resolute commitment to overthrowing the bourgeois order and expropriating private property.<sup>26</sup> Although libertarians might not ‘absolutely subscribe’ to the Bolsheviks’ principles, many felt that these affinities transcended philosophical differences sufficiently to regard revolutionary Russia as a possible ‘nexus between all partisans of the abolition of the wage [...] the anarchists, socialists and syndicalists who did not betray the ideas of the [First] International’.<sup>27</sup> Predictably, the exponents of this view included previous contributors to the voluntarist, anti-militarist and insurrectionist *Reivindicación*, such as Carbó and Manuel Buenacasa. For Buenacasa, the decisive stance represented by the Zimmerwald conference and the Revolution implied sufficient ‘moral authority’ to form the basis upon which the ‘true internationalists’ could establish ‘the true Worker International, based exclusively upon the class struggle’.<sup>28</sup> At the 1919 congress, Carbó was one of the most emphatic proponents of the Third International, portraying it as a necessary corollary of the revolutionary identity which distinguished the anarchists from the parliamentary socialists even if in principle the libertarians rejected dictatorship.<sup>29</sup> His attack on the monarchist *ABC* newspaper and its

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pp. 356-63.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp. 370-1.

<sup>26</sup> Avilés Farré, *La fe que vino*, pp. 40, 103-04; Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, pp. 171-72, 222-23; Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 86

<sup>27</sup> ‘HACIA LA PAZ’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 23 October 1918.

<sup>28</sup> ‘LA REUNION DE LA INTERNACIONAL’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 16, 17 and 19 November 1918.

<sup>29</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, pp. 363-67.

‘chorus of virgins’ who decried the ‘victims’ of the revolution, ‘as if in the idyllic peace in which we live there were not thousands [of victims] every day’, bore a strong resemblance to the earlier mockery of those who criticised revolutionary violence in Mexico.<sup>30</sup>

Many historians have treated the eventual resolution pertaining to Moscow as nonsensical: for Avilés Farré ‘the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists decided to go to Lenin’s meeting in the name of Bakunin’, Garner refers to a ‘contradiction’ which evidenced ‘continuing confusion over Bolshevism’, and Romero Salvadó describes it, with a degree of ridicule, as ‘baffling’.<sup>31</sup> However, for Peirats, the nuances of the resolution proved that the ‘surrender’ to Bolshevik internationalism ‘was far from unconditional’.<sup>32</sup> It was prefaced with a declaration that the CNT ‘declares itself firm defender of the principles that inform the First International, sustained by Bakunin’, and proclaimed that the Confederation affiliated

provisionally, to the Third International, for the revolutionary character that presides over it, while in Spain an International Congress is organised and held, which will lay down the foundations by which the true International of the workers must be governed.<sup>33</sup>

The congress followed this resolution immediately with another which affirmed that the CNT’s ultimate objective was libertarian communism, defined by *both* the socialisation of the land and the means of production *and* the disappearance of ‘the absorbent power of the State’.<sup>34</sup> For Zoffmann Rodriguez, this dual endorsement of the Comintern and Bakuninism was perfectly comprehensible: both were then ‘seen as affirmations of revolutionism’ and reaffirmed ‘the distinct identity of the CNT’ in opposition to the moderation of its socialist rival.<sup>35</sup> As had occurred in prior years with the Mexican Revolution, convergence with the Bolshevik Revolution was an extension of anarcho-syndicalists’ steadfast commitment to revolutionary insurrection: as such, affiliation hung explicitly on the Third International’s ‘revolutionary character’. The *provisional* affiliation also suited the more pragmatic stance

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 366.

<sup>31</sup> Avilés Farré, *El fe que vino*, p. 116; Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 90; Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, p. 152.

<sup>32</sup> Peirats, *Anarchists*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>33</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 373.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, p. 178.

of Seguí, which sought to avoid isolation but was not overawed by Bolshevism itself; indeed, Gerald Meaker described the resolution as a ‘compromise’ between the moderates and radicals.<sup>36</sup>

The commitment to Bakuninism and *libertarian* communism, moreover, also demonstrated the considerable rootedness of an *anarchist* tradition within the Confederation, even while the adhesion to the Third International reflected the temporary ‘attenuation of the divide between radical Marxists and anarchists’ brought about by the war and the revolution.<sup>37</sup> Two further internationalist initiatives emanating from the congress further evidenced the resilience of *cenetistas*’ libertarian identity and networks. One was the hosting of Manuel Joaquim de Sousa of the newly formed Portuguese Confederação Geral do Trabalho (General Confederation of Labour, CGT), who informed delegates that the Portuguese organisation had ‘the same ideological character’ as the CNT, being ‘inspired by direct action and eminently anti-parliamentary’.<sup>38</sup> The congress opined that the Spanish and Portuguese workers ‘will march together in complete accord’, and CNT National Committee member Evelio Boal was tasked with working towards ‘fusing in one sole Confederation the two great worker organisations of anarchist tendency existing in the Iberian Peninsula’.<sup>39</sup> This was not to prove fruitful: Boal was assassinated in 1921 by right-wing paramilitaries tipped off by the police, and Manuel Pérez, one of the activists who most worked to connect the Spanish and Portuguese movements, later referred vaguely to ‘multiple complications’ precluding fusion of the countries’ trade unions.<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, Pérez held strongly to the view that there were profound affinities between the Spanish and Portuguese movements, which would eventually be made concrete when the FAI was founding in 1927.<sup>41</sup> Although libertarian *iberismo* was to prove deeply nuanced in practice, as an aspiration it frequently testified to a distinct Iberian (or Ibero-American) anarchist identity and a strong identification

---

<sup>36</sup> Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, pp. 247-48.

<sup>37</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, p. v.

<sup>38</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 374. See Pier Francesco Zarcone, *El anarquismo en la historia de Portugal* (La Neurosis o Las Barricadas, 2019), p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 375; Buenacasa, *movimiento obrero español*, p. 71.

<sup>40</sup> Buenacasa, *movimiento obrero español*, p. 71; Manuel Pérez, *30 años de lucha. Mi actuación como militante de la C.N.T. y anarquista español*, ed. by Fermín Escribano (Asociación Isaac Puente, 2012), p. 73. On Boal: Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, pp. 93-94; Romer Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, p. 218.

<sup>41</sup> Pérez, *30 años de lucha*, pp. 50-51, 73-74.

with anarchism as an orienting philosophy for the labour movement.<sup>42</sup> The discussion of a fusion in 1919 indicated that this identity had not been entirely diluted by Moscow's allure.

Another suggestive initiative was the congress's dispatching of Carbó to Italy to contact the CNT's sister organisation there – the USI.<sup>43</sup> Once more, this signalled a determination to maintain prior ties with kindred organisations. From his brief sojourn, Carbó informed *cenetistas* about the social unrest of the *biennio rosso*, with the Italian workers 'rejecting any mediation' and seeking 'higher ends' than mere economic improvement.<sup>44</sup> These reports contributed to a general 'prevailing mood of optimism' which encompassed the Russian Revolution and the broader 'social effervescence' of a continent aflame.<sup>45</sup> However, Carbó's emphasis on direct action by the workers emphasised the vitality of a distinctly anarcho-syndicalist view of revolution, distinct from Bolshevism's party-oriented vision. Carbó was also tasked with raising awareness of the repression being inflicted on the CNT back in Spain, and he reported on Italian dockworkers' decision to boycott Spanish goods in protest, describing it as 'international solidarity in action' which showed that workers comprehended their 'common interests' and 'feel like brothers'.<sup>46</sup> Although Garner portrays a CNT 'limited to sending increasingly desperate' appeals to their international allies, Nathaniel Andrews offers an alternative perspective on this era, highlighting the forging of 'extensive transnational solidarity networks' as a more positive side of the repression that was beginning to stifle the CNT.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the engagement with Bolshevik

---

<sup>42</sup> For example, Quintanilla saw discussion of CNT-CGT fusion as portending closer ties between the Latin workers, as an international force in favour of libertarian ideology: 'UNA CONFEDERACION SINDICAL IBÉRICA', *El Noroeste*, 29 January 1926. Nonetheless, despite a strong sense of libertarian *iberismo* and a long history of contacts between Spanish and Portuguese worker movements, attempts to organise at a peninsular levels often had limited success: see Gil Gonçalves, 'Península Rubro-Negra – F.A.I. e o iberismo libertário no Entre Guerras (1927-1936)', *História. Revista da FLUP* 10.1 (2020), pp. 29-52, doi:10.21747/0871164X/hist10\_1a3; Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 216-22; Peirats, *Anarchists*, p. 238.

<sup>43</sup> Buenacasa, *movimiento obrero español*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>44</sup> 'Malatesta y el proletariado italiano', *España Nueva*, 29 March 1920; 'La agitación en Italia', *España Nueva*, 3 May 1920.

<sup>45</sup> Zoffmann Rodríguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', p. 219.

<sup>46</sup> 'La solidaridad internacional en acción', *España Nueva*, 14 June 1920. Original report on the dockworkers' action in 'El proletariado internacional apoyará a los obreros españoles', *España Nueva*, 27 May 1920.

<sup>47</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 115; Nathaniel Andrews, 'Repression, solidarity and a legacy of violence: Spanish anarcho-syndicalism and the years of "pistoleroismo", 1919-23', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 32.3 (2019), pp. 173-93 (pp. 179-80), doi:10.1386/ijis\_00004\_1.

internationalism was arguably part of these efforts to find foreign succour.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, other connections were more distinctly libertarian. Argentine anarchists associated with Santillán undertook an ‘extensive solidarity campaign’ for Spanish prisoners, and Andrews also cites a Boston anarchist group who distributed a poster calling for a boycott of Spanish goods in protest at the anti-worker violence.<sup>49</sup> The poster in question was signed by José Marinero, pseudonym of Spanish anarchist émigré Francisco López García; in 1920, the CNT press itself republished Marinero’s manifesto regarding the capital trial of two Boston-based Italian American anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, and launched a solidarity fund.<sup>50</sup> As is shown below, both of these transatlantic linkages would prove important to the CNT’s distinctly libertarian internationalism later in the decade.

Carbó’s stay in Italy also permitted him to interview the anarchist elder statesman Malatesta, who criticised a Soviet dictatorship which was ‘killing the revolution in its social sense’ and which anarchists needed to combat as they would any other state.<sup>51</sup> This was similar to the view that ‘pure’ anarchists were beginning to adopt in Spain; however, the fervour of many of the radical anarcho-syndicalists remained impervious even to the protestations of leading international anarchist luminaries, as evidenced by Buenacasa’s critical response to Kropotkin’s warnings about Bolshevik authoritarianism.<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, Carbó attentiveness to Malatesta and the publication of his critical views further highlights the plurality of CNT internationalism in this era, with libertarian connections maintained alongside the ties to Bolshevik internationalism.

The subsequent unravelling of those ties has been related many times. The moral and voluntarist foundations of the affinity with Bolshevism were soon destabilised. In Spain, waves of repression wore down the sense of imminent revolution: even as the 1919 congress

---

<sup>48</sup> For instance, see the notice published by the CNT National Committee acknowledging the RILU’s declaration of a boycott of Spanish goods alongside other efforts by revolutionary syndicalists, anarchists and socialists: ‘LA SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA INTERNACIONAL’, *Redención*, 9 April 1921. Garner considers the decision to send a delegation to the second Comintern congress part of a broader moment when *cenetistas* ‘looked abroad for hope’: Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 92.

<sup>49</sup> Andrews, ‘Repression, solidarity’, p. 180.

<sup>50</sup> Manifesto in IISG Max Nettlau Papers 3349, ‘¡Boicot a los productos Españoles, Boicot!’, n.d. See for instance ‘Manifiesto a los trabajadores del mundo’, *España Nueva*, 30 August 1920; ‘A todos los trabajadores españoles’, *España Nueva*, 31 August 1920; ‘Solidaridad para nuestros camaradas de Norteamérica’, *España Nueva*, 1 September 1920. The subscription opened with a 500-peseta donation from the CNT and 100 pesetas from the *España Nueva* editor Rodrigo Soriano. See also Freán Hernández, ‘Ideas y vidas’, p. 138.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Una interviú con Malatesta’, *España Nueva*, 25 May 1920; Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 92.

<sup>52</sup> Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, pp. 308-12.

met, a massive employers' lockout had begun which by early 1920 would stall Catalan anarcho-syndicalism's forward march.<sup>53</sup> Major governmental clampdowns in November that year and following the assassination of Prime Minister Eduardo Dato in March 1921 saw scores of *cenetistas* jailed, unions shuttered and the press proscribed.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, police and paramilitary violence drove a 'continual slaughter' of activists, so that by 1921 the Confederation's trajectory was, in Meaker's words, 'inexorably downward'.<sup>55</sup> This stifling atmosphere neutralised Russia's magnetism as a harbinger of social transformation. At the same time, the implications of forming part of the Third International were becoming clearer. Historians have often suggested that Ángel Pestaña's experiences as CNT delegate to the second Comintern congress in the summer of 1920 'served to demonstrate the ideological gulf between Bolshevism and the revolutionary syndicalism of the CNT'.<sup>56</sup> Although Zoffmann Rodriguez argues that Pestaña's later writings exaggerated his negative impressions of Russia, which in the summer of 1920 could still appear as 'the fighting outpost of the imminent European revolution', discussions in Moscow undoubtedly revealed multiple differences of opinion between the Bolsheviks and delegates from revolutionary syndicalist organisations on questions such as entryism in the reformist organisations, and the necessity of political activity ending in a party-dominated dictatorship.<sup>57</sup>

Upon arrival, Pestaña was immediately plunged into discussions regarding a new Red International of Labour Unions (RILU).<sup>58</sup> For syndicalists, the proposed organisation posed the question of its 'organic link' with the Comintern and, analogously, that of trade unions such as the CNT with the new communist parties emerging everywhere; for, as Pestaña insisted in Moscow, the Confederation already had a 'glorious' and 'legendary' history of 'struggles against the political parties'.<sup>59</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez argues that growing syndicalist qualms about an 'organic link' must 'be read in a national key', because many of

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 316.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp. 332, 341.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 344.

<sup>56</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 95. See also Tosstorff, 'Mission Impossible'; Avilés Farré, *La fe que vino*, pp. 158-68.

<sup>57</sup> Ángel Pestaña, *Memoria que al comité de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo presenta, de su gestion en el II Congreso de la Tercera Internacional, el delegado Ángel Pestaña*, volume III (Biblioteca Nueva Senda, [1922]), pp. 29-38; see also Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 132-49. Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', pp. 226-32.

<sup>58</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', p. 209.

<sup>59</sup> Pestaña, *Memoria*, pp. 69-70; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, p. 191.



the same organisations had enthusiastically embraced the Third International ‘in the knowledge that this was a “political” organisation’.<sup>60</sup> In other words, their affinity with Bolshevik internationalism was despite their knowledge of the Bolsheviks’ Marxism; their reticence now was more to do with the implications at home, where the newly founded Partido Comunista de España (Communist Party of Spain, PCE), for example, was made up of former socialists – the CNT’s *bête noire* – and had immediately provoked *cenetistas* by attacking the Confederation’s libertarian traditions and asserting the need for Party control.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, as then *cenetista* Joaquín Maurín noted, militants also perceived their ‘relegation’ from the Comintern to the Profintern as akin to being ‘treated as a second-class organisation’.<sup>62</sup> When *cenetistas* had spoken previously of a ‘true’ workers International, they had envisaged one in which the CNT played a protagonist role befitting its status as Spain’s only viable vehicle for working-class revolution.

Maurín and Andreu Nin, two relative newcomers who led the CNT’s so-called ‘communist-syndicalist’ tendency, struggled to keep the Confederation aligned with Moscow in light of these concerns. Having risen to the Confederal leadership amid the clampdown on the old guard, this tendency dominated the CNT’s delegation to the RILU founding congress in July 1921, where they ‘epitomised’ a middle ground which sought to dilute the ‘organic link’ and maintain trade union autonomy while also seeking coexistence within what Nin hoped would be a ‘lively International’ uniting different revolutionary proletarian currents.<sup>63</sup> Although the CNT had not been represented at the revolutionary syndicalist conference organised by the Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Free Workers’ Union of Germany, FAUD) in Berlin in December 1920, the line pursued by the Spanish ‘communist-syndicalists’ in Moscow appeared well within the spectrum of opinion represented there.<sup>64</sup> However, the Bolsheviks showed little evidence of being willing to accept such a middle ground, especially in the long term.<sup>65</sup> Whereas the early Third International had appeared, in

---

<sup>60</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish anarchists’, pp. 264.

<sup>61</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 96; see also Meaker, *Revolution Left*, pp. 249-64

<sup>62</sup> Cited in Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, p. 258.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, pp. 237-68.

<sup>64</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 149-60.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, pp. 181-88.

Zoffmann Rodriguez's words, as a 'kaleidoscope' of 'diversity and vivacity', a process of 'Bolshevisation' of both the Comintern and Profintern was soon steadily underway.<sup>66</sup>

In any case, Nin and Maurín were fighting against a shifting tide. A CNT national plenum in August 1921, before the delegation had even returned from Moscow, reaffirmed the CNT's aspiration to 'libertarian communism' and 'absolute independence and autonomy from all parties, including the so-called communists'; the Confederation was 'sufficient in itself to prepare, direct and carry out the social revolution *at national and international level*'.<sup>67</sup> The implication was clear: no ties to communists at home, nor Bolshevik internationalism abroad. Information about the Soviet regime's repression of the Russian libertarians was now becoming widely known: in January 1921, for instance, Paris's influential *Le Libertaire* newspaper published an appeal from Russian syndicalists urging their foreign comrades to prevent further Western intervention in the Russian Civil War while also attacking the Bolshevik dictatorship's persecution of other revolutionary tendencies.<sup>68</sup> Newly released radicals such as the Basque Galo Díez appealed for ideological 'territorial demarcation' and an end to the 'asphyxia of obfuscation' which had brought authoritarian ideas into the anarcho-syndicalist milieu.<sup>69</sup> This 'demarcation' would not only be an abstract question of doctrinal purification: a letter from Argentine anarchist groups in Alcoy's *Redención* newspaper around this time demanded that 'every true revolutionary' denounce the repression of the Russian anarchists, demonstrating that anti-bolshevism was increasingly a matter of active solidarities with comrades against an oppressive state apparatus.<sup>70</sup>

The communist-syndicalists contested the efforts to marginalise their perspective, appealing to the Confederation's apolitical foundations; they could also point to their close involvement with efforts on behalf of imprisoned Russian anarchist prisoners in Moscow, where they had helped to lobby successfully for the release into exile of Volin (Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eikhenbaum) and other important activists – Arlandis was even manhandled

---

<sup>66</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', p. 212; Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 13-14.

<sup>67</sup> 'C.N. del Trabajo de España', *Redención*, 27 August 1921, emphasis added.

<sup>68</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 169. The CNT had previously discussed the question of acting against Western intervention, but given Spanish neutrality the National Committee argued that workers from more involved countries ought to take the lead: CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 343; 'Dos palabras sobre la revolución rusa', *España Nueva*, 1 December 1919.

<sup>69</sup> 'Deslindando campos', *Redención*, 22 October 1921.

<sup>70</sup> 'Sobre el estrangulamiento de la propaganda anarquista en Rusia', *Redención*, 16 December 1921.

by an incensed Trotsky for his insistence on this issue.<sup>71</sup> Ealham concurs that their marginalisation was a case of anarchist overreach which broke with the Confederation's 'traditions of freedom of tendency and tolerance'.<sup>72</sup> However, their opponents, the champions of a divorce from Moscow, had transnational wind in their sails. The CNT's old libertarian allies had proved an important dialectical force against the attraction of Bolshevism: one emblematic example was the USI's Armando Borghi successfully urging Pestaña to strike his signature from the RILU founding theses in the summer of 1921.<sup>73</sup> Now, efforts spearheaded by a FAUD which had been suspicious of Bolshevism since 1919 were by early 1922 coalescing into the demand from various revolutionary syndicalist organisations for an independent and autonomous International.<sup>74</sup> The International Syndicalist Bureau created by the aforementioned conference in Berlin spoke of needing to rediscover the pre-war and pre-Russia path, 'to continue the work begun at the London Congress in 1913' and create 'a world organisation of the left of the workers' movement'.<sup>75</sup> As Zoffmann Rodriguez notes, in Berlin *cenetistas* now found a genuine alternative to Moscow as an expression of their revolutionary internationalism.<sup>76</sup>

A touch of projection may have underpinned Buenacasa's description of the debate on the Third International at the CNT's June 1922 national conference in Zaragoza as 'rapt with the greatest passion' and 'disgust': Meaker, in fact, likens Buenacasa's attitude to that of a 'disillusioned suitor' in his emphatic support at the conference for total revocation of the ties to a Russian Revolution of which he had so recently been such a fervent supporter; Ealham notes how he was among a group of radicals who now 'lashed out at the former object of their fascination'.<sup>77</sup> 'Divorce' is an apt term for a realignment which also implied the reversal of a profound emotional investment; Ferguson identifies it as a 'devastating' period of 'loss'

---

<sup>71</sup> 'La Confederación Nacional del Trabajo y la Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Cataluña', *Redención*, 18 November 1921; Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', pp. 255-57; Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 196-200.

<sup>72</sup> For Ealham, this left the CNT bereft of an adequate theory of revolutionary power, which would be exposed upon the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War: Ealham, 'An impossible unity', pp. 102-7.

<sup>73</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', p. 219; Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 145.

<sup>74</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 116-278.

<sup>75</sup> IISG IWMA Archives [hereafter IWMA] 1, 'Aux Organisations Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires'.

<sup>76</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', pp. 276-78.

<sup>77</sup> Buenacasa, *movimiento obrero español*, p. 87; Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 442; Ealham, 'An Impossible Unity', p. 106; Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', p. 283.

for many anarchists.<sup>78</sup> When Arlandis, the only member of the 1921 delegation to attend Zaragoza, attempted to insist that ‘an objective perspective on the international movement obliges us to be in relation with the whole revolutionary proletariat’, he was subjected to ‘all the wrath’ of these incensed and anguished revolutionaries.<sup>79</sup>

Even such a proponent of proletarian unification as Seguí now affirmed that the adhesion to Moscow, which had been made out of ‘a high spirit of proletarian solidarity’, had been erroneous: ‘An abyss separates us from Russia, as much in ideology as in tactics’.<sup>80</sup> The conference also protested very explicitly the repression of the Russian anarchists and called for a campaign ‘of international character’ in their defence.<sup>81</sup> Serialised translations of Goldman’s experiences and Berkman’s analysis of the Kronstadt mutiny would soon be published by the movement press, the latter forming a key myth, alongside the Makhnovshchina, within what Zimmer calls the libertarian ‘collective analysis of the Russian Revolution’, which was remembered as a popular social uprising that had been arrogated by Bolshevik tyrants.<sup>82</sup> The kind of international campaign urged by the Zaragoza conference soon began to crystallise: in August 1922, Pestaña signed a manifesto alongside such luminaries as Sébastien Faure, Max Nettlau, Rudolf Rocker, Alexander Schapiro, Volin and W.C. Owen, denouncing the Bolshevik regime’s abandonment of ‘the ideal and the goals of the October Revolution’ and calling for global worker solidarity with the ‘anarchist martyrs’ who, in ‘the Cheka’s basements’ and ‘the prisons of Bolshevik Russia’, were victims of the ‘most barbaric persecution’.<sup>83</sup>

The Zaragoza conference thus opted (pending a statutory referendum) to split from the ‘markedly political and partisan’ Comintern and RILU and adhere – as the 1919 congress resolutions, it was argued, had permitted – to ‘whichever efforts are made to organise a Red

---

<sup>78</sup> Ferguson, ‘Russian Revolution and Anarchist Imaginaries’, p. 746; Zoffmann Rodriguez notes the utility of romantic analogy: Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> IISG CNT (España) Archives [hereafter CNT] 68A.1, ‘Conferencia Nacional, Zaragoza’; Meaker, *Revolutionary Left*, p. 441.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Conferencia Nacional, Zaragoza’.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> From Goldman: ‘Los bolchevikis y la Revolución Rusa’, *Redención*, 23 November – 28 December 1922; from Berkman: ‘La rebelión de Kronstadt’, *Redención*, 17 May – 8 August 1923; on Makhno, see for instance ‘NESTRO MAKHNO’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 24 November 1923. Zimmer, ‘Premature Anti-Communists?’, pp. 53–4.

<sup>83</sup> ‘PERSECUTIONS DE REVOLUTIONNAIRES EN RUSSIE’, *Bulletin International des Syndicalistes Revolutionnaires et Industrialistes*, August 1922.

Trade Union International, autonomous of all political parties’, which in concrete referred to the meeting taking place immediately afterwards in Berlin.<sup>84</sup> A report on Spain published in the Berlin-based *Bulletin International des Syndicalistes Revolutionnaires et Industrielles* that month declared that there was ‘a background of anarchism within the Spanish people’ which meant that Marxism and authoritarianism would never garner a real foothold in the country; ‘Spain was the cornerstone of the Bakuninist International’, and the Spanish workers had a great ‘spiritual and practical adhesion to the libertarian interpretation of life and revolution’.<sup>85</sup> Possibly authored by Rudolf Rocker, these lines offered a complete break with late 1919, when Bakuninism and Bolshevism could be considered simultaneous expressions of the CNT’s revolutionism: now, its Bakuninism was totally antithetical to Bolshevik internationalism and made it the beating heart of a distinct, anarcho-syndicalist one.

In December 1922, the new IWA was formally founded. Although the CNT delegation were detained before they could attend the founding congress, the Confederation was recognised as a founding member organisation, alongside others including the FAUD, USI, Portuguese CGT, and the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (Argentine Regional Workers’ Federation, FORA).<sup>86</sup> The organisation’s statutes – a declaration of revolutionary syndicalist principles and tactics authored by Rocker – committed it to ‘class war’, conducted through ‘the union of manual and intellectual workers in economic fighting organizations’ and aimed at ‘free communism’.<sup>87</sup> This meant the abolition of ‘the state in every form, even in the form of the so-called “Dictatorship of the Proletariat”’.<sup>88</sup> The statutes invoked direct action, anti-militarism, and revolutionary working-class self-emancipation.<sup>89</sup> As Garner notes, these statutes were framed as a revival of the pre-war traditions of revolutionary syndicalism, making the IWA more than *just* a backlash against Moscow, as some histories of the CNT have implied; nonetheless, their markedly anti-political tone, rather than simply apolitical neutrality, also showed that they had been shaped by the syndicalists’ experiences

---

<sup>84</sup> ‘Conferencia Nacional, Zaragoza’.

<sup>85</sup> See the ‘Espagne’ section of ‘L’ATTITUDE INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS DANS LES PAYS DE LANGUE LATINE’, *Bulletin International des Syndicalistes Revolutionnaires et Industrialistes*, 16 June 1922. On the bulletin: Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 215.

<sup>86</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, p. 244.

<sup>87</sup> Statutes reproduced in Thorpe’s *The Workers Themselves*: Ibid, p. 322.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 324.

with Bolshevism.<sup>90</sup> This was thus part of the evolution to an expressly *anarcho-syndicalism*.<sup>91</sup>

Although in hindsight the pivot from Moscow to Berlin appears – and would be presented as – an entirely logical, even predeterminate move, one incident from around the time of affiliation to Berlin problematises such a view. Within weeks of the IWA's founding congress, the weekly supplement of *La Protesta* (Buenos Aires) accused the moderate, syndicalist CNT National Committee under Juan Peiró of having 'wavered' on the cusp of affiliation, and of considering rejoining the RILU if the 'Berlin International' had consisted only of the FORA and the Portuguese CGT.<sup>92</sup> This *cenetista* 'hesitation', in Garner's words, reflected a 'subordination of qualitative or ideological concerns to quantitative ones'; a fear of tying the CNT into a minoritarian and sectarian International.<sup>93</sup> That same National Committee, *La Protesta* alleged, had also published a manifesto shortly after affiliation to the IWA, describing it as a 'conditional' affiliation and declared that 'our credo and our ideology are not subject [...] to international fluctuations, and nor do they need fortifying by any International'.<sup>94</sup> Although *cenetistas* denied later rumours that Seguí had been planning to travel to Moscow at the time of his assassination in March 1923, Zoffmann Rodriguez notes a letter in the Soviet archives from that era, in which RILU general secretary Lozowsky invited Seguí on an informational trip to Russia, suggesting that an about-turn was at least considered a possibility.<sup>95</sup> While the revolutionary affinity which brought radicals like Buenacasa into the Bolshevik fold had long dissolved, the syndicalists' concern with aligning with 'the global proletariat', even if this meant some compromises, was still a factor in their decisions.<sup>96</sup> In response to this 'wavering' and 'vacillation', the *La Protesta* editor Santillán recalled the Córdoba congress of 1873.<sup>97</sup> Then, as now, Marxists attempted to vie for control

---

<sup>90</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>91</sup> Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 269-70.

<sup>92</sup> Rejoining the RILU would be pending certain stipulations on autonomy: 'LAS VACILACIONES DEL SINDICALISMO ESPAÑOL', *La Protesta (Suplemento Semanal)*, 5 March 1923. Garner regards the *La Protesta* report as credible: Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 135, 309n86.

<sup>93</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 114, 138; Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', p. 366.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in 'LAS VACILACIONES DEL SINDICALISMO ESPAÑOL'.

<sup>95</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 136; Zoffmann Rodriguez, 'The Spanish Anarchists', pp. 336-37.

<sup>96</sup> For an international comparison, see the FORA's response to the 'Resolution on Revolutionary Unity' proposed by Pierre Besnard and the French Comité de Defense Syndicaliste at the December congress: Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves*, pp. 251-52.

<sup>97</sup> 'Vacilaciones e inconsecuencias de la C.N.T. de España', *La Protesta*, 11 May 1923.

of the working-class movement against a backdrop of violent state repression; yet ‘the Spanish labour movement did not lose its ideological compass, it was more intransigent than ever’, and opted for Bakunin’s St. Imier International.<sup>98</sup> Santillán’s supporters in Spain would soon concur; rather than closing the debate on the CNT’s ‘true’ international allegiance, the meaning of ‘Berlin’ was to be hotly contested as part of the broader divisions within the Confederation over the following years.

### *The International: unity or minority?*

In December 1921, as the CNT’s involvement with Bolshevik internationalism hung in the balance, Joaquín Maurín penned various essays in favour of remaining affiliated to Moscow. The Third International and the RILU, he argued, aimed to bring the international revolutionary proletariat together for ‘combat’.<sup>99</sup> In response to this necessary coalescence of revolutionary workers, ‘two tendencies’ were discernible within the CNT: one oriented by a ‘class concept’ and driven by the ‘socioeconomic interests of all the workers’, and another defined by a ‘sectarian concept’, appealing to ‘identity of political or philosophical opinions’.<sup>100</sup> Whereas the ‘class concept’ entailed ‘mass struggle’ and was ‘internationalist’, focused on building a strong global proletariat which could counter the increasing interdependence of their capitalist enemies, the ‘sectarian’ one could only inspire far less robust ‘individual action’, and was rooted narrowly and intransigently in ‘national particularities’.<sup>101</sup> This ‘puerile’ defence of ‘different modalities’ contradicted the spirit of the First International, now embodied – Maurín argued – in the RILU’s desire to unite workers around their revolutionary class interests.<sup>102</sup>

Although Maurín’s representation of the RILU as a proxy for class unity was undone by the organisation’s political baggage, his typology of ‘class’ and ‘sectarian’ concepts offered an incisive observation of the key fault line coming to define Spanish anarcho-syndicalist

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Maurín distinguished this from pre-war reformist agglomerations such as the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres: ‘LAS DOS TENDENCIAS’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 3 December 1921.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid; ‘La C.N.T. delante de la Internacional Sindical Roja’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 5 December 1921.

<sup>101</sup> ‘LAS DOS TENDENCIAS’.

<sup>102</sup> ‘La C.N.T. delante de la Internacional Sindical Roja’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 17 December 1921.

internationalism.<sup>103</sup> Rather than resolving this dichotomy, the IWA became a subject of contestation *across* it, between the warring factions who competed for control of a CNT that the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera had largely reduced to clandestine activity by the spring of 1924.<sup>104</sup> For instance, the proponents of a ‘neutral’ CNT open to all workers spoke in the idiom of Maurín’s ‘class concept’. Their salient historical point of reference was Saint Martin’s Hall in London in 1864 and the ‘first great effort of the European working class to group all tendencies and currents of the young labour movement from all countries’ into an ‘instrument in which the interest of organised labour against the capitalist world would find its expression’.<sup>105</sup> Downplaying ideological specificity and emphasising proletarian interests, they contended that the First International was not ‘the result of some genius minds; it was not borne from the ideas of some elect, rather it emerged from the bosom of the working masses and was formed in accordance with their desires and needs’.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, their identification of the new IWA pure class interest could be summarised in a pointed and rather turgid ‘viva’ given on the sixtieth anniversary of that first gathering in Saint Martin’s Hall: ‘Long live the new International of the organisations of economic struggle of the working people!’<sup>107</sup>

For this tendency, the IWA’s impact depended ‘on the organisational importance that it acquires’.<sup>108</sup> In the same spirit as Seguí’s grandiose designs from the previous decade, they saw the International’s objective as no less than ‘the global worker movement’, which it needed to ‘wrest from the hands of the reformists and the aspiring commissars’.<sup>109</sup> Given these goals, Carbó, as CNT delegate to the second IWA congress in 1925, was strongly supportive of Alexander Schapiro’s initiatives to centralise solidarity efforts and enact regular and reliable collection of International dues, to transcend the ‘impulsive solidarity’

---

<sup>103</sup> For instance, despite the Spanish ‘communist-syndicalist’ efforts, the 1921 RILU congress ended with ‘belligerent’ anti-anarchist interventions which did not bode well for the survival of their middle-ground positions. Zoffmann Rodríguez’s analysis of Soviet archives has also proven that Maurín ‘returned from Moscow as a committed Leninist’ who consciously disguised his views behind a syndicalist façade, a tactic ‘rubberstamped by Moscow’: Zoffmann Rodríguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, pp. 267-68, 319-21.

<sup>104</sup> On the gradual impact of the dictatorship on the CNT, see Elorza, ‘El anarcosindicalismo español’, pp. 125-34.

<sup>105</sup> ‘La Internacional’, *Solidaridad Proletaria*, 18 October 1924.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> ‘El Congreso de la A.I.T.’, *Solidaridad Proletaria*, 28 March 1925.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*



of ‘sentiment’ with ‘preventative solidarity, systematized solidarity’.<sup>110</sup> Such a preoccupation with careful organisation and expansion orchestrated from the centre undoubtedly helped to allay more moderate *cenetistas*’ earlier fears that ‘Berlin’ would remain inward-looking and sectarian. For Schapiro, a compromise with ‘discipline’ was crucial if anarcho-syndicalists were to compete with rivals such as the communists, who were able to channel Soviet funds through front organisations; it would help the IWA’s affiliate organisations grow from ‘small ideological groups’ into mass movements.<sup>111</sup> A key example was Germany, where the IWA had appealed for solidarity with workers affected by hyperinflation, the French occupation of the Ruhr and other crises; although some aid was provided, it had been vastly surpassed by that offered by the international communist movement, and the FAUD remained deep in the shadows of its Marxist rivals.<sup>112</sup>

Against the defenders of an open, purely class-oriented CNT, ‘intransigents’ such as Buenacasa demanded an explicitly *anarchist* organisation.<sup>113</sup> An early 1925 open letter signed by José Alberola, Jaime Rosquilla Magriña and dozens of others outlined the views of this tendency regarding the Confederation’s internationalism.<sup>114</sup> Spain could not ‘be on the margins’ of the international debate over the role of anarchists in the labour movement, given ‘the great influence that the Spanish section of the First International had in the adoption by the Latin branches and particularly by Spanish-speaking countries, of the federalist methods and anarchist ideality that characterised the FRE’.<sup>115</sup> As ‘the heirs of such a great work’, they argued that alongside likeminded allies in the FORA and grouped around *A Comuna* newspaper in Portugal, anarchists had to ‘instil in the Spanish section and by repercussion in the bosom of the International itself’ the distinct ‘doctrine and modalities of organisation’ of Spain’s specifically anarchist labour movement.<sup>116</sup> The historian Antonio

---

<sup>110</sup> ‘INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO’.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Appeals and references to aid in, for example: ‘Al proletariado de la Europa occidental’, *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 22 January 1924; ‘La ayuda a los niños y la AIT’, *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 9 May 1924. Solidarity for German workers had been a transformative campaign for the communists’ International Workers’ Relief: Braskén, *International Workers’ Relief*, pp. 77-97.

<sup>113</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 170.

<sup>114</sup> ‘A los camaradas anarquistas’, *Solidaridad Proletaria*, 28 March 1925. Other signatories included Miguel Chueca, a key figure in the Aragonese libertarian movement, Dionisio Eroles, who spent the entire Primo de Rivera dictatorship incarcerated for his role in action groups, and Antonio Sesé, who somewhat ironically later became UGT general secretary: Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, pp. 145, 198, 570-1.

<sup>115</sup> ‘A los camaradas anarquistas’.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

Elorza situates this open letter within a thread running from the *La Protesta* campaign against the CNT's 'deviations' in the early 1920s, via the founding of the combative *El Productor* newspaper by Alberola, Buenacasa and others in Barcelona in 1925 and through to the creation of the FAI in Valencia in 1927.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, the FAI's founding conference would bring together Spanish and Portuguese supporters of the 'anarchist labour movement' and affirmed the FRE's legacy; in seeking to be a platform for anarchist intervention in the CNT and CGT, it embodied the open letter authors' goal of bringing the 'spiritual radiation' of the anarchist groups into the trade unions.<sup>118</sup> However, although its ties in the Portuguese and Argentine movements is well known, the content of this tendency's internationalism has not been analysed in depth. Evidently, it carried the hallmarks of Maurín's 'sectarian concept' – a doctrinal focus and an invocation of national modalities, in which the work of Santillán was key.

Although then affiliated with the FORA, Santillán was a lodestar of the 'anarchist labour movement' tendency in Spain: for Alberola, *La Protesta* – which was widely read in Spain during the dictatorship – filled the gap left by the proscribed *Tierra y Libertad*, and *El Productor* regarded his writing as 'the most interesting' of the century.<sup>119</sup> It is therefore reasonable to consider him a proxy for their views within the IWA in this era, against the neutralist CNT National Committee. In various writings, Santillán offered an alternative historical and philosophical vision for the new IWA. Whereas the syndicalists harked back to 1864, Santillán and his *La Protesta* co-editor, fellow Spanish expatriate Emilio López Arango, appealed to 1872, when the 'intransigence of the Latin sections' had destroyed 'that first attempt at the universal brotherhood of labour' but thereby enabled 'the salvation of ideas more important than the organisation itself'.<sup>120</sup> In Santillán's writings, the new IWA's

---

<sup>117</sup> Elorza, 'El anarcosindicalismo español', pp. 152-204.

<sup>118</sup> 'A los camaradas anarquistas'. The record of the founding conference in Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, Madrid [hereafter FAL], ARC-03016, 'FUNDACION DE LA FEDERACION ANARQUISTA IBERICA'. Although the new Federation superficially resembled the separate 'specific organisation' advocated by the opponents of the 'anarchist labour movement', it strove for the latter via a direct '*trabazón*' (link) with the trade unions: see Elorza, 'El anarcosindicalismo español', p. 182; Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 214-15, 222, 260.

<sup>119</sup> 'CARTA DE ESPAÑA', *La Protesta*, 9 May 1925; 'EL ANARQUISMO EN EL MOVIMIENTO OBRERO', *El Productor*, 1 January 1926. On *La Protesta*'s popularity in this era: Elorza, 'El anarcosindicalismo español', p. 143.

<sup>120</sup> Emilio López Arango and Diego Abad de Santillán, *El anarquismo en el movimiento obrero*, second edition (¡Libertad!, 2014), p. 40.

distinctly anti-political statutes, authored by Rocker in collaboration with other proven anarchists such as Schapiro, showed that the organisation was not inspired by the ‘opportunist’ classism of the 1860s, but rather represented continuity with the ‘antiauthoritarian and federalist spirit’ of the Bakuninist St. Imier International, which had represented the inevitable rupture of the ‘little illusion’ of working-class unity.<sup>121</sup> In reality, no common interest existed between authoritarians and anti-authoritarians, and the IWA ought to stand proud as ‘a single entity against the principle of authority and the postulate of private property’.<sup>122</sup> Santillán’s allies in the CNT concurred, emphasising that the division of the international working class was an inevitability and a *fait accompli*. As Magriña put it to Peiró, if universal worker unity was so important, why had the Confederation pursued the ‘folly’ of ‘splitting from the RILU, proving that trade union unity is a farse?’<sup>123</sup> The war had already separated the revolutionary wheat from the reformist chaff, and the subsequent trajectory of the Russian Revolution crystallised a further division of libertarian from authoritarian.<sup>124</sup> Like Santillán, Magriña thus emphasised the distinctly *anti*-political and anti-state principles of the IWA, representing ‘the true International Workingmen’s Association’.<sup>125</sup>

The existence of multiple Internationals was thus fundamental to the ‘sectarian’ argument, and their use of it to pursue an explicitly anarchist CNT demonstrated the entanglement between international affiliation and national agendas and identities. Their neutralist opponents attempted to square the empirical evidence for a divided working class with their own ‘class unity’ rhetoric by affirming that whereas the Marxist Internationals subordinated the workers to nation-based political parties organised along inter-national lines, the IWA’s revolutionary syndicalist trade unions represented pure, borderless proletarian interests.<sup>126</sup> It was thus a *true* labour movement, and one which needed close ‘co-penetration’ with the anarchist movement.<sup>127</sup> This language highlighted the influence of the

---

<sup>121</sup> ‘La Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores: su historia, sus ideas, su porvenir [II]’, *La Revista Internacional Anarquista*, 15 February 1925; ‘EL MOVIMIENTO OBRERO PURO’, *La Protesta (Suplemento Semanal)*, 15 February 1926.

<sup>122</sup> ‘La labor inmediata del Anarquismo’, *La Revista Internacional Anarquista*, 15 December 1924.

<sup>123</sup> ‘INCOHERENCIAS’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 21 March 1925.

<sup>124</sup> ‘LAS IDEAS Y EL SINDICALISMO II’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 25 August 1928.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> ‘La Internacional’.

<sup>127</sup> ‘El Congreso de la A.I.T.’

Italians Malatesta and Fabbri within this tendency: the notion of the trade union as an organ of pure economic combat which could not in itself be ‘anarchist’, but within which the anarchists should operate in order to preserve that purity, foment radicalism and solidarity, and avoid partisan takeovers.<sup>128</sup> But applying this logic to the IWA – an organisation in which neither Malatesta nor Fabbri seem to have been closely involved – was not unproblematic.<sup>129</sup> Although the IWA’s statutes spoke a language of pure ‘economic fighting organisations’, the ‘connection’ with the anarchist movement ‘was evident for all to see’.<sup>130</sup> Thus would E. Labrador, another signatory of the open letter, urge the Berlin International to identify itself ‘openly at the side of anarchism, as the communists and socialists already describe it’.<sup>131</sup> The attitude towards Moscow was, as Magriña identified, clear evidence of the IWA’s not-quite-neutral nature. For instance, when the Association’s first congress in December 1923 discussed the Comintern’s ‘united front’ tactic, Rocker claimed the mantle of the ‘true proponent of unitary worker thought’ for revolutionary syndicalism, which ‘always aspired to reunite the workers upon the base of the economic organisation’.<sup>132</sup> However, he contended, this could not mean ‘arbitrary and purely mechanical heaping together of elements that repel each other, but rather an organic association of the workers on the basis of common interests and convictions’.<sup>133</sup> Thus the IWA represented a *qualified* form of proletarian ‘unity’, one which questioned whether communists shared in workers’ ‘common interests and convictions’. As Magriña would further point out, Rocker’s FAUD had prohibited Communist Party members, while the CNT remained open to them; this, he felt, was clearly in disharmony with its IWA affiliation.<sup>134</sup>

More broadly, the obvious minoritarian status of the IWA rather clashed with the

---

<sup>128</sup> Peiró, for instance, cited both Italians in Peiró, *Ideas*, p. 50. See also Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, pp. 107-24; Baker, *Means and Ends*, pp. 323-29.

<sup>129</sup> Fabbri mentioned his and Malatesta’s relative ambivalence regarding the IWA and the dominant tendencies within it in ‘Las cosas largas se convierten en serpientes’, *Acción*, September 1925.

<sup>130</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 126.

<sup>131</sup> ‘EL CONTROL OBRERO’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 2 July 1927. See similar arguments from Magriña: ‘CHACHARA SEMANAL’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 31 January 1925; ‘LAS IDEAS Y EL SINDICALISMO’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 4 August 1928. The FAI’s founding conference also argued that ‘class unity is not possible’: ‘FUNDACION DE LA FEDERACION ANARQUISTA IBERICA’.

<sup>132</sup> Reported in ‘LOS PROGRESOS MORALES DE LA ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE LOS TRABAJADORES’, *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 30 December 1923.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> ‘Respuestas a unas preguntas’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 31 August 1929. See also ‘HOY, MÁS QUE AYER’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 17 May 1930.

pretension to represent the international working class: although the CNT was (at least prior to the dictatorship) a mass movement with pretensions to absorbing the socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (General Union of Workers, UGT), some of its foreign allies' talk of constituting the *syndicat unique* rather than another *syndicat d'opinion* within their countries was, in Berry's words, 'rather ironic'.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, the rhetoric of borderless proletarian interests was somewhat contradicted by the International's *actual* structure as an alliance of national movements, reflecting that of earlier Internationals which had tended to reproduce the nation-state framework even while claiming to break it down.<sup>136</sup> And the 'intransigent' tendency readily embraced this division into 'national' movements; as Maurín had identified, their 'sectarian' internationalism emphasised national ways of doing, which they sought to imprint upon the International at large: the authors of the aforementioned open letter called for a CNT which would promote the 'doctrine and modalities of organisation' of the Spanish (anarchist) labour movement.<sup>137</sup> In the mid-1920s, Santillán and López Arango offered Argentina as a more contemporary example of the 'anarchist labour movement'; the strength of Argentine anarchism imposed a 'fundamental duty' to 'make known to the international anarchist movement the causes that have allowed the development of our ideas'.<sup>138</sup> Nonetheless, Argentinian anarchism had found its 'fundamental orientations' in the 'fountains' of Spanish anarchism, and Santillán also defended 'the traditions of the Spanish labour movement' – the 'anarchist trade union' – from the 'metaphysics' of a 'pure', class-oriented trade union.<sup>139</sup> An *anarchist* CNT was in keeping with the 'fifty year history of the Spanish labour movement'; 'attention to that history' was needed to rectify the 'temporary deviation'.<sup>140</sup> An openly anarchist working-class movement, Santillán contended, reflected 'the Spanish people's own modalities of independence and rebellion'; the CNT was thus 'a plainly national organisation that has its basic foundations in the soul of the Spanish region'.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>135</sup> Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, p. 135. In reality, absorption was just one of various positions regarding how the CNT should relate to the UGT debated in 1919, but the various positions on the question still acknowledged the Confederation's numerical importance: Bar, *C.N.T.*, pp. 511-25.

<sup>136</sup> See Milner, *Dilemmas of Internationalism*, p. 30.

<sup>137</sup> 'A los camaradas anarquistas'.

<sup>138</sup> López Arango and Santillán, *El anarquismo*, p. 8.

<sup>139</sup> 'De aquí y de allí', *El Productor*, 12 March 1926.

<sup>140</sup> 'Vacilaciones e inconsecuencias de la C.N.T. de España'.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

Did this tendency offer a stable alternative model of internationalism to the syndicalists' chimeric universalism? Whereas Carbó supported Schapiro's plans for 'systematising' solidarity at the IWA second congress in March 1925, Santillán opposed this 'centralising endeavour'.<sup>142</sup> Instead, the International had to be based on the spontaneous solidarity of a principled rank-and-file, for which the FORA was Santillán's 'example'; despite Schapiro's concerns about 'sentimental' solidarity, *foristas* were not a 'class of dreamers, of romantics who live outside reality', as proven by their consistent fundraising for prisoners in Argentina, Italy and Spain, for propaganda drives across the Americas, and in support of *La Protesta*.<sup>143</sup> Santillán thus invoked an internationalism of wilful, spontaneous solidarity and affinity, without need of a central plan, reflecting what Juan Gómez Casas calls his anti-programme tendencies.<sup>144</sup> In response, amid open, rancorous hostility between the FORA and CNT delegations at the IWA congress, Carbó sarcastically remarked that the International might find itself 'in the fix of desiring that the anarchist spirit might diminish slightly in the heart of the FORA'.<sup>145</sup> What good was 'anarchist spirit' if it left the International trailing its rivals? This mockery prompted Santillán to point out that, notwithstanding Carbó's advocacy for greater and more regular payments, the CNT had not actually paid its already-existing dues to the IWA, which he in turn blamed on the Confederal leaders' lack of such 'anarchist spirit'.<sup>146</sup> What good were regularity and rules in the absence of genuine solidarity?

To this, Carbó responded by invoking the impact of the crushing repression in Spain.<sup>147</sup> In doing so, he highlighted a latent contradiction in Santillán's simultaneous defence of national situations *and* ideological purity; of *both* pluralism (as an anti-programme defence of local autonomy) *and* solidarism (as doctrinal orthodoxy), to use the terminology of

---

<sup>142</sup> 'INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO'; see also 'La Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores: su historia, sus ideas, su porvenir [IV]', *La Revista Internacional Anarquista*, 15 April 1925.

<sup>143</sup> 'INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO'. See also 'CRONICA SURAMERICANA', *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 14 November 1925, and Schapiro's response 'La organización como factor revolucionario', *Acción*, December 1925.

<sup>144</sup> Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organisation*, p. 157. Similar discussions were then taking place about how the anarchist groups ought to structure their international relations, and Santillán's position was akin to that of Mauro Bajatierra's defence of informal ties 'of affinity of sentiments, friendship, likes' instead of any kind of 'generic' model from the centre: 'NO HAY LUGAR', *Redención*, 10 May 1923.

<sup>145</sup> 'INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO'. On these hostile exchanges see Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants*, p. 102-3; Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 177-8.

<sup>146</sup> 'INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO'.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

international relations theory.<sup>148</sup> Santillán wanted the IWA to represent, ‘on top of all second-order divergences, a singular body against the principle of authority and the postulate of private property’, which would offer a ‘respectable’ bulwark against the forces of authoritarianism; although he claimed that this did not require ‘uniformity of action and thought’, he offered little to explain how these two principles might be reconciled.<sup>149</sup> Similarly, he and López Arango defended the ‘specific characteristics of our [Argentine] movement [...] that separate us from the comrades of other countries’, while branding as ‘silliness’ any effort to claim the FORA’s praxis as the ‘true’ or ‘infallible’ anarchism, *and* simultaneously trumpeting Argentina as an ‘example’ which was ‘worth of imitation’ in forging the international movement’s ‘common aspirations’ and preserving ‘the anarchist ideology against all deviations’.<sup>150</sup> In practice, these contradictions were brought to the surface by Santillán’s attacks on the CNT, as Carbó could argue that his appeal to ideological purity ‘denies all importance to the situation of the country’: although ‘principles are the same at all latitudes[, r]ealities vary from *pueblo* to *pueblo*’.<sup>151</sup> From Carbó’s perspective, the desire to restore the CNT to some pure, anarchist past was completely at odds with the ‘period of praetorian terror through which Spain is passing’; the ‘idealists’, whether in Spain or outside, were rooted to an outdated vision, rendered meaningless by the dictatorship.<sup>152</sup> Meanwhile, activists from Portugal’s União Anarquista Portuguesa (UAP) complained of Santillán’s ‘harmful’ ignorance about their country, a ‘sad’ demonstration of the hollowness of internationalist rhetoric, while Luigi Fabbri charged him with an ‘inexact knowledge of the Italian labour and anarchist movement’.<sup>153</sup> Activists in at least three countries thus perceived this outspoken opponent of ‘centralising endeavours’ as himself guilty of forcing a generic model where it did not fit. Even Santillán and López Arango’s claim on Argentine ‘modalities’ was contestable, as the CNT’s syndicalists hit back by reprinting an essay by Anatól Gorelik and Gaston Leval, two European anarchists then residing in Argentina,

---

<sup>148</sup> These international relations concepts are repurposed in the sense of universalism and autonomy in Rao, ‘Postcolonial cosmopolitanism’, pp. 52-53 and *passim*.

<sup>149</sup> ‘La labor inmediata del Anarquismo’.

<sup>150</sup> López Arango and Santillán, *El anarquismo*, pp. 9-10, 23.

<sup>151</sup> ‘El eclipse de la cordialidad’, *La Revista Internacional Anarquista*, 15 April 1925.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. See also ‘PASADO Y PRESENTE DE ESPAÑA’, *La Revista Internacional Anarquista*, 15 December 1924; ‘VARIACIONES SOBRE LO MISMO’, *La Revista Internacional Anarquista*, 15 February 1925.

<sup>153</sup> ‘La UAP contesta a unas alusiones’, *El Productor*, 12 February 1926; ‘Las cosas largas se convierten en serpientes’.

accusing *La Protesta* of tearing the country's anarchist movement apart, and more broadly by supporting IWA membership for the FORA's pure revolutionary syndicalist rival, the Unión Sindical Argentina (Argentine Syndicalist Union, USA).<sup>154</sup>

There was also irony in Santillán assuming the mantle of spontaneous solidarity, given his sharp-tongued reputation. For Santillán, merciless scrutiny of perceived ideological 'errors' and 'deviations' on the part of the CNT leadership was a necessary praxis to defend ideological orthodoxy.<sup>155</sup> Although his allies in *El Productor* denied being 'fanatic', 'sectarian' or 'splitters' ('*escisionistas*'), they enthusiastically embraced the notion of 'purifying work', seeing provocation and 'polemic' as standard fare for 'noble and impassioned spirits'.<sup>156</sup> In short, Maurín's 'sectarian' label was not for nothing; but in targeting individuals like Carbó, Orobón and Peiró, whose commitment to anarchism was beyond doubt, Santillán posed questions about how far a 'sectarian concept' and spontaneous fraternity were compatible in practice.<sup>157</sup> For Carbó, *La Protesta* had created a dynamic where 'the atmosphere is poisoned and indispensable networks are destroyed', breaking 'tacit pacts' and 'sacred bonds'.<sup>158</sup> Orobón disdained the 'vindictive animosity and irresponsible maliciousness of so-called anarchist publications' at a time when 'all our energies are insufficient to defend us from the furious jaws of reaction' and when the movement needed, 'more than irate and inopportune diatribes, fraternal support'.<sup>159</sup> For the two *cenetistas*, Santillán had spurned fundamental elements of comradely relations, a *sine qua non* for internationalism. The outraged emotivity of Orobón's response in particular highlights how solidarity, as a moral and affective investment, could create an underbelly of vulnerability: in Bayertz's words, solidarity implies a moral expectation, whose 'absence is not only regretted but also morally disapproved of' and considered 'shabby and reprehensible'.<sup>160</sup> The

---

<sup>154</sup> 'La vida del movimiento anarquista en la Argentina', *Solidaridad Proletaria*, 29 November 1924; 'SOBRE EL MOVIMIENTO OBRERO ANARQUISTA EN LA ARGENTINA', *Solidaridad Proletaria*, 18 October 1924. About the CNT and the USA/FORA affair, see Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 174-76.

<sup>155</sup> For example 'En torno a la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo', *La Protesta (Suplemento Semanal)*, 8 June 1925.

<sup>156</sup> 'Lo que debe ser "El Productor"', *El Productor*, 7 November 1925; 'Crece la ola de las calumnias', *El Productor*, 22 January 1926.

<sup>157</sup> Santillán later regretted that his 'exaggeratedly puritan' stance led him to see 'phantoms where there were none': Santillán, *Memorias*, p. 92; see also Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organisation*, p. 75.

<sup>158</sup> 'El eclipse de la cordialidad'.

<sup>159</sup> 'CONTUMACES EN LA CALUMNIA', *Tiempos Nuevos*, 10 September 1925.

<sup>160</sup> Bayertz, 'Four uses of "solidarity"', p. 18.



CNT's national situation – summed up by Orobón's double exile – demanded solidarity, not ideological inquisition.<sup>161</sup>

There were therefore considerable ambiguities in the 'sectarian' model of internationalism, regarding its efficacy, its respect for diversity and its divisiveness while trumpeting spontaneous solidarity. And yet, aspects of it were proving influential. Although Santillán arguably offered the most pronounced quasi-nationalist anarchist discourse, similar arguments appeared within Spain. 'J.S'. – possibly Jaime Sagalà, one of the signatories of the above open letter – cited the *La Protesta* editor explicitly in an article attacking the '*sui generis* philosophy' of the 'pure' syndicalists, who lacked 'a little Spanish history': 'We will not betray the traditional characteristics of the Spanish labour movement'.<sup>162</sup> Although Buenacasa did not directly reference Santillán's writing in his 1928 history of the Spanish labour movement, we know that he read *La Protesta* with 'great attention' and was 'in agreement with everything'; moreover, his criticism of the 'regrettable errors and [...] ominous deviations' of the pure syndicalists and his argument that the Spanish labour movement had always been closely tied to anarchism bore close resemblance to Santillán's thesis.<sup>163</sup> A 1930 statement from the Sevilla construction workers' union, endorsing the 'beautiful' *La Protesta*, similarly cited 'History and tradition' in defence of an explicitly anarchist CNT; this, under the FAI's guidance, would forge the 'libertarian intuitism [sic] of the Spanish worker' into a 'mass movement which, like a lighthouse [...] will illuminate the European workers' movement'.<sup>164</sup> The identification of the 'anarchist labour movement' as an institutionalisation of Spanish workers' supposed libertarian character appears akin to other efforts to appropriate (often similarly essentialist) national or ethnic identities through an anarchist lens, going back even to Bakunin and Kropotkin's idealisation of the 'Latin' revolutionary impulses behind the Paris Commune.<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>161</sup> Orobón wrote from Berlin, having been exiled first from Spain and then from France: Gutiérrez Molina, *Valeriano*, pp. 24-25

<sup>162</sup> 'PERSISTENCIA EN LOS ERRORES', *Acción Social Obrera*, 17 October 1925.

<sup>163</sup> Buenacasa instead cited various major figures from the Spanish movement itself, such as Federico Urales and Ricardo Mella, and the English Labour Party politician G.H.B. Ward, to sustain the anarchist essence of the Spanish working class movement: Buenacasa, *movimiento obrero español*, pp. 19, 29-30. For his thoughts on *La Protesta*, see his letter to the editors: 'El anarquismo y el sindicalismo en España', *La Protesta*, 17 February 1925.

<sup>164</sup> 'Sindicalismo y movimiento obrero anarquista', *El Productor*, 21 June 1930.

<sup>165</sup> Kinna, *Kropotkin*, pp. 111-13. The example of *Regeneración* in the previous chapter is another obvious example. See also: Kühnis, 'More Than an Antonym'; Shaffer, 'Cuba para todos'.

It is notable that the tendency which most jealously guarded the CNT's 'anarchist' identity was also clearly the prime mover of such quasi-nationalist ideas. In Nino Kühnis's observations about the 'patriotic recuperations' of Swiss anarchists, he argues that their enduring commitment to anarchism cannot be explained from a 'rational choice' perspective, as it came at significant material cost to movement members, and must be considered in terms of an *identity*.<sup>166</sup> This might offer some explanation as to why nationalistic ideas entered into the lexicon especially of those with a distinctly idealist and sectarian approach to their anarcho-syndicalism, in contrast with ostensibly more 'pragmatic' tendencies who were focused on building a robust and effective trade union which could procure immediate material improvements for the workers. Nonetheless, the influence of these narratives was such that it seemed to force even the exponents of a purely class-oriented CNT to acknowledge and respond to them. For the syndicalist Juan López, the anarchist intransigents had it the wrong way around: if Spain had offered a 'shining example' to the international proletariat, it was in 'the great activity that the libertarians carried out in the labour organisations', *not* in establishing their own, separate ones, which was their 'modus operandi of today, of wanting to fracture' the labour movement.<sup>167</sup> Juan Peiró may have been influenced by the intransigents' use of such narratives when he urged workers around the world to recall the 'Mecca of syndicalism', Cataluña, where the 'Spanish proletariat inscribed in the glorious CNT' had forced the adoption of the eight-hour workday.<sup>168</sup>

Exile in France, and firsthand exposure to the perceived decadence of the French anarchist movement, also seemed to reaffirm Spain's idiosyncrasies.<sup>169</sup> Typically polemical, the *El Productor* intransigents identified the separation between a 'specific' anarchist organisation and neutral trade unions as 'the French style' and at odds with 'our temperament'; Spanish anarchists were 'not intellectualists *a la francesa* and cannot have the repellent spirit of vain superiority [...] that distinguishes the comrades from across the Pyrenees'.<sup>170</sup> Nonetheless, even the France-based supporters of apolitical, class-unity trade unions were, by 1927, reminiscing about Spain and the close historical relationship between

---

<sup>166</sup> Kühnis, 'More Than an Antonym', pp. 159-60.

<sup>167</sup> 'En torno a la tendencia del "movimiento obrero anarquista,"' *Acción Social Obrera*, 18 August 1928.

<sup>168</sup> 'EL UNICO CAMINO POSITIVO', *Acción Social Obrera*, 25 June 1927.

<sup>169</sup> Garner, *Goals and Means*, pp. 201-03. There were some important exceptions, such as the deeply respected Sébastien Faure.

<sup>170</sup> 'Actividades anarquistas', *El Productor*, 7 November 1925.

a revolutionary labour movement and the anarchist movement. An ‘organising commission’ – which included Carbó – declared that Spanish workers in France needed to reorganise the Spanish CNT, to ‘give impulse to the international revolutionary syndicalist movement’.<sup>171</sup> The commission’s secretary, Bruno Carreras, argued that by preserving ‘the psychology of the workers of our country’, this revived CNT would be a source of ‘support and strength’ for the fledgling Confédération Générale du Travail–Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire (General Confederation of Labour–Revolutionary Syndicalist, CGTSR).<sup>172</sup>

Notions of Spanish libertarian particularity also gained currency during this period in opposition to communists’ efforts to garner influence in the country. It was, for example, in response to a provocation by Maurín in 1928 that Peiró was willing to defend the Spanish labour movement’s ‘spiritually anarchist and revolutionary’ character and Cataluña’s ‘psychology and autochthonous sentiment’, at a time when his discourse *within* the CNT often focused on ensuring its ideological neutrality.<sup>173</sup> Similarly, in an essay rejecting the applicability of Marxist materialist teleology to Spain, Carbó invoked the ‘history of the last fifty years’, which demonstrated that ‘nowhere is the working class better disposed than in Spain for the exercise of libertarian communism’.<sup>174</sup> Spain and Russia had different ‘psychological or temperamental’ factors and ‘ethnic and anthropological affinities’, which made it pointless to generalise a model from one country to the other.<sup>175</sup> As Magriña had hoped, it was the spectre of Moscow which exposed the ‘blurrier borders’ of class-unity internationalism, pushing purported neutralists to reaffirm their libertarian proclivities, sometimes using the kind of quasi-nationalist discourse which their ‘intransigent’ opponents had deployed as a positive argument for the ‘anarchist labour movement’.

---

<sup>171</sup> See the manifesto of the ‘organising commission’: ‘Los trabajadores españoles refugiados en Francia, por la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo’, *Tiempos Nuevos*, 31 March 1927. On the commission and on the Spanish anarchist exile in France during this period, see Jason Garner, ‘El primer exilio. Los libertarios españoles en Francia antes de la Segunda República’, *Spagna Contemporanea* 31 (2007), pp. 93–111.

<sup>172</sup> ‘PUNTUALIZANDO’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 9 July 1927. Hence the ‘organising commission’ called for distinct, CNT cadres within the CGTSR, rather than simply joining the French organisation directly. On the founding of the new organisation: Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, pp. 133–34.

<sup>173</sup> ‘En Maurín fent de Maurín’, *L’Opinió*, 5 May 1928. Maurín had recycled an old Leninist trope about anarchism, arguing that it had only grown significant in Spain due to the weak offerings of Pablo Iglesias’s socialism: ‘La vida del treball’, *L’Opinió*, 14 April 1928.

<sup>174</sup> ‘Incongruencias y Capciosidades’, *Acción*, March 1926.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Anti-bolshevist internationalism*

Pere Foix offered his friend Peiró a comradely reprimand for penning the forecited response to Maurín; not because he disagreed with his analysis, but because it was not worth giving the ‘emissaries of Moscow’ a chance to justify their Kremlin stipends by gifting them the aura of relevance.<sup>176</sup> Foix recalled that while *en route* to Russia in 1921, future IWA founding secretary Augustin Souchy had told him that the Bolsheviks, having becoming ‘persecutors’ of the Russian anarchists, did not merit engaging in dialogue, and although ‘Maurín has not yet practised murder’, he was a ‘master of slander’ and therefore on the path of evolution into a genuine Bolshevik.<sup>177</sup> It is true that Foix’s assessment of Maurín would not be borne out by his subsequent anti-Stalinism.<sup>178</sup> Nonetheless, the different shades of hostility from both Foix and Peiró – hardly paragons of anarchist sectarianism – underlines that *cenetista* anti-bolshevism cannot be attributed solely to ideological dogmatism.<sup>179</sup> Foix’s framing demonstrates that, while Zoffmann Rodriguez emphasises that CNT hostility to the PCE in 1921 must be ‘read in national key’, libertarians had subsequently come to read communists in *international* key, as ‘representatives of the Kremlin in Spain’, or through the lens of the Bolshevik precedent, as ‘the enemies of tomorrow’.<sup>180</sup> Even those who dismissed the threat of communists with ‘zero influence’ in Spain, such as the leading FAI activist Juanel, felt it important to expose the reality of the ‘Russian state upon whose orders they are’, and counter their obfuscation of the ‘true lamentable situation of the Russian workers’ under it.<sup>181</sup>

*Cenetistas’* anti-bolshevism was an extension of their internationalism and of their sense that positionality vis-à-vis international questions was fundamental to one’s moral and political identity. As outlined above, authoritarianism and repression was pivotal in the libertarian divorce from Moscow. In August 1922, influential activist and future *Soli* editor

---

<sup>176</sup> ‘En torno de una polémica’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 4 August 1928.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. Arlandis had invited Foix to accompany the 1921 CNT delegation when it stopped in Paris: see Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, pp. 247-48.

<sup>178</sup> Ealham, ‘An impossible unity’, p. 103; Victor Alba and Stephen Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism versus Soviet Communism: A History of the P.O.U.M. in the Spanish Civil War* (Transaction Publishers, 2009).

<sup>179</sup> For instance, both would sign a 1930 manifesto in favour of collaboration with republicans against the dictatorship: Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, p. 232.

<sup>180</sup> ‘Los Comunistas catequizan a los anfibios del Sindicalismo’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 19 July 1924; ‘Una labor perniciosa’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 17 November 1923; Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish anarchists’, pp. 264.

<sup>181</sup> ‘Los Agentes de la Discordia’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 16 August 1930.

Sebastián Clara wrote that the time had passed when it was ‘an unpardonable indiscretion’ to criticise the Bolshevik regime; the crimes of the chekas, ‘committed sarcastically in the name of the Revolution’, left ‘our conscience [...] submerged in the stinking filth of the blood of the victims’, and protest was obligatory ‘as anarchists, as true revolutionaries’.<sup>182</sup> In order to speak of revolution and of anarchism, Clara implied, one needed a clear conscience, which meant not abandoning the persecuted Russian anarchists, or the Russian people, those who ‘made the Revolution’ and were now subjugated to a new oppressive regime.<sup>183</sup>

Solidarity with those victims of the Soviet ‘proletaricide dictatorship’ [sic] was a common concern of the different tendencies within the movement.<sup>184</sup> As the historian Santos Juliá once observed of Spanish domestic history, one area where anarchists and syndicalists were in ‘perfect harmony’ was in their propensity for outrage ‘from the conviction that some comrade of theirs is imprisoned because of a government of socialist traitors’.<sup>185</sup> Anti-Bolshevism replicated this at the international scale. The rancour at the IWA’s second congress, for example, was punctuated by an early unanimity when Carbó proposed sending telegrams to ‘the comrades [Aron] Baron and [Efrem Borisovich] Rubintschik, persecuted by the government of the soviets’.<sup>186</sup> A few months later, the polemical activists behind *El Productor*, so critical of Carbó and the National Committee he represented, commissioned a special contribution from Mark Mratchny, a leading member of the Berlin-based Joint Committee for the Defence of Revolutionaries Imprisoned in Russia, which also referenced Baron’s case.<sup>187</sup> In 1926, this Joint Committee became the IWA ‘Relief Fund for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned in Russia’ – a name which spoke to the pan-libertarian nature of the cause.<sup>188</sup> Although the repressive situation and extensive local prisoner aid commitments may have limited the popularity of that fund in Spain during the 1920s, it is notable that in early 1930, almost immediately with the onset of the so-called *dictablanda* and growing political freedom, *Acción Social Obrera* published a front page appeal for

---

<sup>182</sup> ‘El verdugo rojo’, *Redención*, 31 August 1922.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> Nomenclature launched from a Barcelona prison cell by the anarcho-syndicalist Ramón Magre: ‘EN EL PAIS DEL ZARISMO ROJO’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 20 September 1924

<sup>185</sup> Santos Juliá Díaz, *Madrid, 1931-1934. De la fiesta popular a la lucha de clases* (Siglo XXI, 1984), p. 225.

<sup>186</sup> The congress made ‘an energetic condemnation’ of Soviet repression and appealed ‘to all its adherent organisations to not desist in their propaganda in favour of the liberation of the revolutionary prisoners who fill the Bolshevik prisons’: ‘INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO’.

<sup>187</sup> ‘VOZ DE ALERTA’, *El Productor*, 8 January 1926.

<sup>188</sup> Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 224.

donations to it, explaining that alongside a fifty peseta donation from the newspaper itself, it had allocated 300 pesetas from the national pro-prisoner fund which ‘we believe [...] will only give satisfaction to the Spanish comrades who donated to it’.<sup>189</sup>

Juan Avilés and Ángel Herrerín have used ‘propaganda by repression’ or ‘propaganda by martyrdom’ as terms to describe how Spanish anarchists had, since the nineteenth century, presented the Spanish government’s indiscriminate approach to counter-insurgency as confirmation of their own arguments about the state’s inherent oppressiveness.<sup>190</sup> Romero Salvadó offers ‘propaganda by injustice’ as a more accurate alternative, because the real incisiveness of such propaganda lay in exposing the hollowness of the Restoration regime’s constitutional rhetoric.<sup>191</sup> Undoubtedly, there was a similarly propagandist interest in, as the IWA put it in a March 1924 appeal, ‘unmasking’ the Soviet regime and countering its ‘claims to be a “worker” and “socialist” government’.<sup>192</sup> Activists sought to circulate ‘the facts about Russia’, including a list of the names of 147 imprisoned and exiled anarchists, syndicalists and other leftists.<sup>193</sup> An earlier message from the IWA, which appeared on the front page of the Alcoy-based *Redención* anarchist newspaper, situated the repression of radicals in the USSR within the same lineage as the abuses of ‘clerical Spain’, ‘Italian fascism’, the crushing of the Paris Commune, and the process of the ‘American multimillionaires’ against Sacco and Vanzetti, describing the prisoners in Russia’s Kholmogory concentration camp as ‘the Russian Saccos’.<sup>194</sup> These references located the issue of Soviet repression within a broader tradition of international ‘propaganda by repression’, sustaining the libertarian thesis about the oppressive nature of the state as an institution.

Indeed, the ultimately futile but nonetheless vigorous agitation for Sacco and Vanzetti highlights the broader liveliness of international prisoner solidarity and ‘propaganda by repression’. Despite Spain’s absence from Lisa McGirr’s ‘global history’ of the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign, the case was covered prominently in the years following the CNT National Committee’s promotion of Marinero’s manifesto in 1920: in May 1923, for

---

<sup>189</sup> ‘Información de la A.I.T.’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 4 and 11 January 1930.

<sup>190</sup> Juan Avilés and Ángel Herrerín, ‘Propaganda por el hecho y propaganda por la represión: anarquismo y violencia en España a fines del siglo XIX’, *Ayer* 80.4 (2010), pp. 165-92.

<sup>191</sup> Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, p. 25.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Ayudad a los revolucionarios presos en Rusia’, *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 12 March 1924.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> ‘En Rusia se caza a nuestros militantes’, *Redención*, 17 May 1923.

instance, *Redención* published a portrait of the two condemned anarchists on its front page.<sup>195</sup> In 1926, *El Productor* received a flurry of adhesions to its 'justice campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti' from anarchist groups and CNT unions, including endorsement from *Acción* in Paris, showing commonality across the divide over the anarchism-syndicalism question.<sup>196</sup> As their execution drew nearer, its impact upon Spanish libertarians was evident in the tributes that filled the worker press.<sup>197</sup> A group of workers in Figueras offered a template for a telegram to the US embassy which was followed by various trade unions and anarchist groups; the founding conference of the FAI also sent a message of solidarity.<sup>198</sup>

Yet the evident affectivity of the cause coexisted with or even co-constituted its political dimensions. The anarchist-feminist and rationalist teacher Antonia Maymón, identifying Sacco and Vanzetti in the same lineage of martyrs for human progress as Galileo, claimed that the case had touched all who had 'humanitarian feelings', linking the emotions invoked by their plight to a broader political standpoint.<sup>199</sup> Noting that the case had by then captured the attention of the labour movement in general and the liberal intelligentsia, an article on the front page of *Acción Social Obrera* pointed out that 'we, the anarchists, the men of noble heart, altruist and human sentiments' had spoken out 'long before'.<sup>200</sup> This international campaign was, in other words, generative of an anarchist identity which emphasised an elevated sense of morality and humanity. Sacco and Vanzetti were 'two workers, two men, two symbols' whose persecution exposed the hypocrisies of 'bourgeois justice' and the hollowness of a 'society that brags about humanism, that boasts of liberty by erecting statues' which it 'tramples on' freedom and 'cannibalises the feeling of humanity'.<sup>201</sup> Comparisons

<sup>195</sup> '¡Exijamos justicia!' *Redención*, 10 May 1923; Lisa McGirr, 'The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti: A Global History', *The Journal of American History* 93.4 (2007), pp. 1085-1115, doi:10.2307/25094597.

<sup>196</sup> See 'Campaña de justicia en pro de Sacco y Vanzetti', *El Productor*, 12 February 1926 and in the three subsequent issues of the newspaper; 'Revista de Revista', *Acción*, March 1926.

<sup>197</sup> As one of the few libertarian newspapers still standing in the summer of 1927, *Acción Social Obrera* was filled with such tributes. One contributor acknowledged that there was little more to say, but that they had felt stirred to write something by a sense of 'sacred, human, noble and just duty'; that the 'Sacco and Vanzetti case erases all borders, it transcends the differences of race and class. It is a case of justice, of the justice common to all men': 'En pro de dos vidas', *Acción Social Obrera*, 25 June 1927.

<sup>198</sup> See '¡Salvemos a Sacco y Vanzetti!' *Acción Social Obrera*, 4 June 1927; 'EN PRO DE SACCO Y VANZETTI', *Acción Social Obrera*, 25 June 1927; and 'Por la libertad de Sacco y Vanzetti', *Acción Social Obrera*, 11 June - 29 July 1927; 'FUNDACION DE LA FEDERACION ANARQUISTA IBERICA'.

<sup>199</sup> 'AYER Y HOY', *Acción Social Obrera*, 5 June 1927.

<sup>200</sup> 'PRO SACCO Y VANZETTI', *Acción Social Obrera*, 18 June 1927; McGirr, 'Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti'.

<sup>201</sup> 'SACCO Y VANZETTI', *Acción Social Obrera*, 10 July 1926; 'Alrededor de una injusticia', *Acción Social Obrera*, 18 June 1927.

with the Haymarket Affair – that foundational event in the international anarchist critique of ‘Yankee’ plutocracy – were common, and one individual also linked the case to the ‘savage’ practice of lynching and the ravages of American imperialism in Latin American and the Philippines; an implicit affinity with victims of racial and colonial brutality as fellow casualties of the ‘materialistic and despotic’ US state.<sup>202</sup> The evidence from the Sacco and Vanzetti campaign thus further emphasises the palpable impact of international solidarity causes, and reinforces that these could be simultaneously passionate and political.

When it came to the Soviet regime, though, anarcho-syndicalists also found themselves face-to-face with Spanish communists whom they deemed complicit in, and potential emulators of, the Bolshevik dictatorship. This international contextualisation of ‘local’ sectarian conflicts can be considered a form of what Featherstone terms ‘maps of grievance’: the imaginative strategies by which political actors ‘make sense of and [bring] into contestation spatially stretched relations of power’.<sup>203</sup> If the international communist movement was a ‘red octopus’ with its ‘head in Moscow’ (from whence came the ‘roubles [...] fuelling the activity of the catechists of Marxism)’, as influential anarchist writer Fortunato Barthe described it, then attacking that movement’s Spanish ‘tentacle’ was a way to combat the Soviet dictatorship from afar.<sup>204</sup> Early after its founding, the IWA had contended that both the Comintern and RILU had been ‘built upon the bodies of the Russian revolutionaries’ and that activists should ‘demand that your communist parties and trade unions [...] open the doors of the Russian prisons!’, thereby explicitly positing communists internationally as extensions of the Soviet state.<sup>205</sup> In January 1924, the fatal shooting of two unarmed anarchists by a French communist at a Paris meeting exposed the ‘imperialism’ emanating from Moscow: it was ‘bolchevist terror across borders’, carried out by what Carbó described as a ‘cheka’.<sup>206</sup> One contributor to *Soli* noted that this time it had not been the

---

<sup>202</sup> ‘En torno a la campaña pro Sacco y Vanzetti’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 20 August 1927. On Haymarket see for example ‘SACCO Y VANZETTI’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 10 July 1926; ‘POR DOS VIDAS’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 2 July 1927; ‘En pro de Sacco y Vanzetti’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 9 July 1927.

<sup>203</sup> David Featherstone, ‘Black Internationalism, Subaltern Cosmopolitan, and the Spatial Politics of Antifascism’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103.6 (2013), pp. 1406–20 (p. 1408), doi:10.1080/00045608.2013.779551.

<sup>204</sup> ‘Comunistas y comunoides’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 18 October 1924. Biography in Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, p. 79.

<sup>205</sup> ‘En Rusia se caza a nuestros militantes’, *Redención*, 17 May 1923.

<sup>206</sup> ‘LA VIOLENCIA COMUNISTA’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 15 January 1924; ‘ZARPAZOS’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 16 January 1924; ‘Vallas de sangre’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 24 January 1924; Carbó quoted in



police but the ‘red soldiers of the communist army’ who had attempted to silence libertarians with ‘disciplinarian’ violence; thus could communists be regarded merely as agents of yet another oppressive state, akin to the police who had persecuted activists for decades.<sup>207</sup>

Within such a worldview, Soviet funding was treated as moral contamination: by accepting it, Nin, Maurín and Arlandis had willingly ‘put themselves at the service of Russian gold, of the traitors of the Russian revolution’.<sup>208</sup> When a PCE activist on a visit to Berlin mocked the IWA headquarters as a ‘room with a plaque on the door’, the Spanish-language IWA newspaper proudly contended that in fact the IWA did not have a room, or even a plaque of its own; in authentic ‘proletarian poverty’, it survived on the ‘hospitality’ of the FAUD, in contrast with the ‘grand and magnificent palaces in which the Amsterdam and Moscow Internationals have their general quarters’ which had no ‘relationship with the emancipation of the workers’.<sup>209</sup> This was something that those ‘bought by Moscow’ with the roubles taken from the Russian workers, those who had ‘sold their revolutionary convictions for a plate of lentils and want to trade away the Spanish proletariat to the Russian government’, would never understand.<sup>210</sup> Thus could the IWA’s quite marginal existence be reframed as indicative of its revolutionary, proletarian authenticity.

The moral suspicion attached to communists because of their ties to the Soviet regime precluded unity with them, even in the face of grave threats to the workers in general – such as fascism. With its close ties to the USI, the CNT was attentive to the repression of the Italian labour movement by Mussolini’s regime, seeing it as the vanguard of the broad, authoritarian onslaught of which *pistolerismo* in Spain was also a part.<sup>211</sup> One *cenetista* urged their comrades to repay the solidarity shown by the Italian dockworkers and others earlier

---

‘Internacionalismo de la calumnia’, *La Protesta (Suplemento Semanal)*, 31 March 1924. A year later, the incident was recalled as an ‘eloquent’ demonstration of the ‘cancer’ which had infected French syndicalism: ‘DESDE FRANCIA’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 10 January 1925. For context on the shooting, see Berry, *A French Anarchist Movement*, p. 88.

<sup>207</sup> ‘ZARPAZOS’.

<sup>208</sup> ‘Los bolchevikis y la Revolución Rusa’, *Redención*, 23 November 1922. Maurín requested Soviet funds for his endeavours to promote the ‘communist-sindicalist’ line in Spain, and Moscow funded the creation of what became the tendency’s main newspaper, *Lucha Obrera*: Zoffmann Rodríguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, pp. 292, 295-96, 338-39.

<sup>209</sup> ‘ESPAÑA’, *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 27 September 1924.

<sup>210</sup> ‘ESPAÑA’, *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 27 September 1924.

<sup>211</sup> See for instance ‘PLUMAZOS’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 6 January 1923; ‘UN NUEVO CRIMEN’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 1923; ‘Las persecuciones en Italia’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 5 September 1923; ‘Panorama exterior’, *Redención*, 26 September 1923; ‘LA VIDA OBRERA INTERNACIONAL’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 9 January 1924.

amid the previous wave of repression.<sup>212</sup> In fact, in 1923, anarcho-syndicalists already considered anti-fascism such an imperative that it was regarded as one area in which a degree of ‘temporary’ cooperation with Moscow might be necessary, and was willing to reach out to the RILU.<sup>213</sup> However, notions of equivalence between the authoritarian regimes in Moscow and Rome soon spread within the International.<sup>214</sup> In 1924, for example, one contributor to *Acción Social Obrera* dismissed communist ‘crocodile tears’ in response to the assassination of Matteotti in Italy: what could one death compare to the ‘millions of Matteottis’ persecuted by the Soviet regime?<sup>215</sup> The development of diplomatic relations between Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union was simply a formalisation of the spiritual ties between two regime which shared ‘one aspiration [...] to finish with Freedom’.<sup>216</sup>

Communist ties to the Soviet regime made them inherently untrustworthy when it came to aiding imprisoned comrades. For example, one individual from Sevilla urged donations to the Committee of Anarcho-Syndicalist Defence, whose work for the Russian prisoners reflected the ‘great topicality’ of prisoner relief among anarchists.<sup>217</sup> By contrast, the Comintern-affiliated International Red Aid (IRA) was a ‘travesty’ of solidarity: those who lionised the Soviet dictatorship over the ‘cries of anguish’ of the incarcerated anarchists, clearly ‘do not give a damn about prisoners’.<sup>218</sup> In order to be reliable anti-fascists, communists had to demonstrate moral consistency. This was the crux of what Rocker had expounded in December 1923: accepting only those who definitively condemned *all* anti-worker oppression as true exponents of class interests allowed proponents of ‘class unity’ to opt for a circumscribed version of it in practice, without a sense of hypocrisy.

How this logic might manifest in practice was exemplified in 1929, when Orobón was nominated by a CNT national plenum to attend the International Anti-Fascist Congress in

---

<sup>212</sup> ‘Hay que auxiliar al proletariado italiano’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 10 February 1923.

<sup>213</sup> See ‘Una carta de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores a las Internacionales de Amsterdam y Moscou’, *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 19 April 1923.

<sup>214</sup> See David Bernardini, ‘A different antifascism. An analysis of the rise of Nazism as seen by anarchists during the Weimar period’, *History of European Ideas* 48.4 (2022), pp. 454-71, doi:10.1080/01916599.2021.1963629

<sup>215</sup> ‘Lágrimas Moscovitas’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 20 September 1924.

<sup>216</sup> ‘BOLCHEVIQUES Y FASCISTAS’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 18 October 1924.

<sup>217</sup> ‘Por nuestros presos en Rusia’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 29 January 1927. In May 1923, the IWA’s press had announced the creation of this committee to offer ‘moral and material support’ to persecuted revolutionaries: ‘FOR PROPAGANDA IN RUSSIA’, *News Service of the IWMA*, 8 May 1923.

<sup>218</sup> ‘Por nuestros presos en Rusia’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 29 January 1927.

Berlin; although he immediately identified the event as a communist front, Orobón obliged, using the occasion to affirm the CNT's status as the main representative of Spain's workers, as against the '*roublified*' Spanish Communists.<sup>219</sup> Along with the IWA's Souchy and delegates from libertarian youth organisations, Orobón wrote that he had presented an alternative motion condemning 'dictatorial absolutism' and demanding freedom 'in all countries including Russia', where 'socialist workers' were persecuted in the 'name of "communism"' just as they were in Italy 'in the name of fascism'.<sup>220</sup> According to Orobón's retelling, this attempt to foment 'an international anti-fascist and anti-reactionary united front above the narrow perspectives of party' did not get far, and he and the other libertarian representatives withdrew from the congress with a final written submission accusing the congress organisers of betraying the 'international proletariat' and 'above all [...] the fighters of the October Revolution'.<sup>221</sup> The protest seemed to have little impact: a spokesperson for the Second International, dismissing the congress as a communist front, could only refer vaguely to 'a Spanish anarchist, [who] was so naïve as to protest in this circle against the persecution of Trotsky'.<sup>222</sup> Nonetheless, this episode would be an interesting prelude to the distinct approach to anti-fascism sustained by many *cenetistas* in the following years.

### *Internationalism and the Esperanto project*

Each of the broad tendencies within the CNT utilised the imagery of cosmopolitan universalism: the proponents of apolitical proletarian unity argued that 'the worker socialism of the [First] International knew no borders between nation and nation', seeing borders as relics of 'the capitalist period'; their 'intransigent' opponents described anarchism's ultimate goal as the 'social unity of the species, broken by the dualisms of castes, classes and hateful privileges'.<sup>223</sup> Nonetheless, participation in a nationally circumscribed organisation such as the CNT, the growing identification with the idea of a distinctly Spanish anarcho-syndicalist

---

<sup>219</sup> 'Informe de la delegación de la C.N.T. en el Congreso Internacional Antifascista', *Acción Social Obrera*, 6 April 1929.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> 'NEW COMMUNIST BODY. Anti-Fascist Bureau Thus Labeled by Socialist International', *New York Times*, 21 April 1929. Orobón mentioned in his report having requested amnesty for all former revolutionaries including Trotsky, Radek and other Bolsheviks 'although these do not deserve our support': 'Informe de la delegación de la C.N.T.'.

<sup>223</sup> 'La Internacional'; 'A los camaradas anarquistas'. Antentas, 'Global internationalism', p. 426.

tradition, and the ‘othering’ of ostensibly decadent French anarchists or Russian Bolsheviks were all rather suggestive of an ‘inter-nationalism’, in which the national framework was determinative in both material and imaginal terms.<sup>224</sup> This apparent contradiction might speak simply to what Hobsbawm called ‘the multidimensionality of human beings in society’: someone could feel national loyalties in one context, which did not in any way compromise their sense of cosmopolitanism.<sup>225</sup> Santillán, for example, later insisted that he never ‘knew an incompatibility between Spanish patriotism and the condition of [...] citizens of the world’.<sup>226</sup>

Whether activists sought to eliminate or simply navigate national borders, certain undeniable barriers preserved what Turcato calls the national ‘division of labour’ within internationalism.<sup>227</sup> Language was a primary and potentially thorny one; *cenetistas*’ argument that the decision to suppress minority languages in favour of Castilian was a ‘universalist’ one hardly helps the case against Catalan historians’ accusations of ‘*involuntari espanyolisme*’.<sup>228</sup> One purported solution to this problem was Esperanto: an artificial language first formulated in the 1880s by Lazar’ Liudovik Zamenhof, a Jewish subject of the Russian Empire whose life – and interest in fomenting universalism – was shaped by the Jewish Question in an era of antisemitic pogroms.<sup>229</sup> Zamenhof claimed rather optimistically that the fundamentals of Esperanto grammar, consisting of sixteen rules, could be mastered in one hour of study.<sup>230</sup> This ease of use and the dedicated efforts of its early adherents meant that during the ‘first globalisation’, in which talk of an ‘international language’ was well established, a variety of communities and tendencies would embrace Esperanto as a vehicle

---

<sup>224</sup> See Callahan, ‘Performing inter-nationalism’.

<sup>225</sup> Hobsbawm, ‘Opening Address’, p. 14.

<sup>226</sup> Santillán, *Memorias*, p. 173.

<sup>227</sup> Turcato, ‘Nations without Borders’, p. 38.

<sup>228</sup> Bantman, ‘Anarchist Transnationalism’, p. 612. For instance, the *Acción Social Obrera* editors declined one individual’s request to write in Catalan, on the grounds that this would contradict the ‘universalist tendency of this newspaper’ whose cause was ‘human, without distinction of race or border’: ‘Modos políticos y comentarios’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 24 July 1926. The individual in question, Jaime Arago, countered that his proposal was not intended to be anti-universalist, but would help to undermine the *catalaniste* bourgeoisie’s hostile claims that the CNT was ‘foreign’: ‘LA CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DEL TRABAJO’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 7 August 1926. See Sabater, *Anarquisme i Catalanisme*, p. 30.

<sup>229</sup> Brigid O’Keeffe, *Esperanto and Languages of Internationalism in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), pp. 15–46; Esther Schor, *Bridge of Words: Esperanto and the Dream of a Universal Language* (Metropolitan Books, 2016), pp. 59–108.

<sup>230</sup> O’Keeffe, *Esperanto*, p. 8.

for ‘grassroots internationalism’.<sup>231</sup> The CNT was among the radical movements to do so, with the ‘Libero’ Esperanto group addressing the worker congress which founded the Confederation in 1910, and its second congress in 1919 approving Esperanto as a vehicle for the organisation’s international relations.<sup>232</sup> The following year Pestaña – recalling that decision and aghast at the inefficiency of fourfold translation – proposed unsuccessfully to the presidium at the second congress of the Third International that Esperanto be adopted for future gatherings.<sup>233</sup> Although Esperanto had been present in the ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere’ since the first decade of the century, this period of international experimentation and mobilisation thus brought more serious discussions about putting it to revolutionary use.<sup>234</sup>

What appeal did Esperanto hold for anarcho-syndicalists in particular? It implied a general appeal to humanism and cosmopolitanism: Antonio Marco Botella, a Spanish esperantist since the 1930s, described it as ‘more than a language, an ideal of peace and mutual understanding among men’.<sup>235</sup> However, anarcho-syndicalists also identified Esperanto with what Sluga calls the ‘objective facts’ of ‘internationality’, alongside innovations such as radio, aviation, sub-marine cables, electricity networks and the mail services which contributed to the ‘denationalisation of the Earth’.<sup>236</sup> For the members of the ‘Libero’ group, Esperanto represented ‘civilisation’ and ‘modern progress’; as Navarro Navarro notes, Esperanto’s purported ‘purity’ dovetailed with ‘libertarian hyperrationalism’ and notions of scientific perfectibility.<sup>237</sup> Moreover, the simplicity of this ‘marvellous scientific apparatus’ facilitated its employment as a means of subaltern resistance against the ‘divide and rule’ tactics of bourgeois, clerical and governmental elites.<sup>238</sup> In 1921, French

---

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, p. 1; Schor, *Bridge of Words*, p. 6.

<sup>232</sup> CNT, *Congreso de Constitución*, pp. 16-17; CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, pp. 203-10.

<sup>233</sup> Pestaña, *Memoria*, pp. 55-68. On this ‘dead end’, see O’Keeffe, *Esperanto*, pp. 100-01.

<sup>234</sup> In fact, a resolution at the international anarchist congress in Barcelona in 1885 had advocated for a ‘universal language’, and the historian Roberto Garvía identifies an article in the city’s *El Productor* newspaper in the summer of 1904 as the first explicit call for Esperanto to serve this purpose: Roberto Garvía, *Lengua y Utopía. El movimiento esperantista en España, 1890-1936* (Editorial Universidad de Granada, 2021), pp. 89-80.

<sup>235</sup> Antonio Marco Botella, *Crónicas del movimiento obrero esperantista* (Asociación Izquierda y Esperanto, 2009), p. 2.

<sup>236</sup> See for instance ‘La interdependencia económica universal’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 13 October 1928; Sluga, *Internationalism*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>237</sup> CNT, *Congreso de Constitución*, p. 16.

<sup>238</sup> ‘Cultura S.A.T.-ana’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 26 January 1924.

communist Eugène Lanti founded the Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda (World Anational Association, SAT) in 1921 with precisely this use of Esperanto in mind; in late 1923 the Barcelona branch of the organisation translated Lanti's polemic against the avowed 'neutralism' of some bourgeois Esperantists and in favour of placing the language at the service of the class struggle into Spanish, publishing it in the anarcho-syndicalist newspaper *Acción Social Obrera*.<sup>239</sup> From a more specifically libertarian perspective, Javier Alcalde Villacampa notes that Esperanto was construed as a vehicle to bring workers into direct interpersonal contact, akin to internationalist direct action.<sup>240</sup> In this regard, one contributor to *Solidaridad Obrera* explained that they had learnt Esperanto because the 'working masses, in their international relations, must depend on intermediaries' who 'can say what suits them'.<sup>241</sup> As an example, they mentioned that the language had allowed them to learn 'the truth' about life in Soviet Russia.<sup>242</sup>

However, although some proponents presented Esperanto as akin to a 'symbol of the anarchist ideal', not all libertarians were convinced.<sup>243</sup> Some were sceptical of its practical application: even Quintanilla – Esperantist and self-professed 'internationalist worker' – argued against allowing 'sentimentalism, passion, [and] enthusiasm' to distract from the difficulties of actually realising its potential.<sup>244</sup> Moreover, as Brigid O'Keeffe notes for the Russian revolutionary context, Esperantism 'framed key debates about internationalism'.<sup>245</sup> This was also true of anarchists: German anarchist Gustav Landauer, for example, was intensely sceptical of an 'artificial cosmopolitanism' which 'lacked a passionate attachment to real life'; this has a contemporary echo in the late James Scott's indictment of an

---

<sup>239</sup> '¡Abajo el Neutralismo!', *Acción Social Obrera*, 17 November - 29 December 1923. See also Schor, *Bridge of Words*, pp. 143-46; O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, pp. 105-06.

<sup>240</sup> Javier Alcalde Villacampa, *Esperanto i Anarquisme: els orígens (1887-1907)* (Malcriàs d'Agràcia, 2022), pp. 21, 50. See the broader notion of 'direct action' emphasised by Baker, *Means and Ends*, pp. 132-34.

<sup>241</sup> 'POR QUE APRENDÍ EL ESPERANTO', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 23 September 1930. Hence Sho Konishi's reading of Japanese Esperantism as a manifestation of 'populist' or 'popular internationalism': Sho Konishi, 'Trilingual World Order: Language without Culture in Post-Russo-Japanese War Japan', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72.1 (2013), pp. 91-114, doi:10.1017/S0021911812001751.

<sup>242</sup> 'POR QUE APRENDÍ EL ESPERANTO'. Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, Soviet citizens were able to conduct uncontrolled private correspondence in Esperanto: O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, p. 126. A Spanish socialist also recorded receiving news of political persecution in the USSR directly from an Esperantist correspondent: Garvía, *Lengua y Utopía*, p. 245.

<sup>243</sup> Navarro Navarro, *A la Revolución*, p. 87.

<sup>244</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 204.

<sup>245</sup> O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, p. 2.

‘exceptionally thin language’ of merely ‘utopian curiosity’.<sup>246</sup> Similarly philosophical and anthropological criticisms of Esperanto appeared in Spain, as when Barthe in 1922 lamented ‘a language without a soul, a mechanical language’.<sup>247</sup> From a Barcelona prison cell in 1924, José Gardeñes likewise criticised Esperantists for seeking to homogenise human culture with a ‘sad and anti-euphonic’ language.<sup>248</sup> The expatriate Catalan Enrique Nido denounced the notion of an international language as ‘the biggest chimera of the century’: the ‘natural instruments of communication’ could not be manipulated like ‘a dead, passive and artificial’ object.<sup>249</sup> A monolithic language, Nido further contended, contradicted the defence of minority cultures, as propagated by Bakunin.<sup>250</sup> These opponents feared that Esperanto heralded a ‘transcendental’ universalism which would smother linguistic and thus sociocultural diversity.<sup>251</sup>

Two responders to Gardeñes contended, however, that Esperanto was an ‘international’ rather than ‘universal’ language; an ‘intermediary’ rather than a replacement.<sup>252</sup> It prefigured a future social order of solidarity and fraternity, not homogeneity or the erasure of national groups. In fact, this was a point of debate among Esperantists: SAT’s anationalism, for example, was evident in its division by time zones rather than diplomatic borders.<sup>253</sup> On the other hand, in the CNT’s endorsement, Esperanto’s role was quite clearly circumscribed, at least at first, to facilitating inter-national relations, and Quintanilla commented that a ‘real and positive’ objective might be that a ‘considerable nucleus’ or ‘at least those who constitute the select minority of the organisation’ learn the language – hardly a proposal that threatened linguistic extinction.<sup>254</sup>

Esperanto also posed questions about linguistic hierarchies. For proponents, Esperanto was effectively decentred: a ‘language without nation [...] without the pride of speaking

---

<sup>246</sup> Carl Levy, ‘Anarchism and Cosmopolitanism’, in *Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. by Levy and Adams, pp. 125-48 (p. 137); James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 256-7.

<sup>247</sup> ‘ALREDEDOR DEL ESPERANTO’, *Redención*, 19 June 1922.

<sup>248</sup> ‘La Lengua Universal’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 12 January 1924.

<sup>249</sup> ‘La unidad contra la Naturaleza’, *La Revista Internacional Anarquista*, 15 February 1925.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> See Jabri, ‘Solidarity and spheres of culture’.

<sup>252</sup> ‘La lengua internacional Esperanto’, *Acción Social Obrera* 26 January 1924; ‘UN POCO DE TODO’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 19 January 1924.

<sup>253</sup> Garvía, *Lengua y Utopía*, p. 159.

<sup>254</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, pp. 203, 207.

one's own language, nor the humiliation of speaking a foreign language'.<sup>255</sup> On the other hand, Barthe contended that it favoured Europeans and was not accessible for Indigenous peoples with other language families (Leo Tolstoy, though an Esperantist, made a similar observation).<sup>256</sup> However, this moral qualm sat uneasily with his suggestion of French as an alternative vehicle for international communication (no critics, it seems, suggested that Western activists might learn non-Western languages).<sup>257</sup> Thus although Barthe challenged Esperantists' decentred self-representations, he did not offer an alternative solution to the problem of linguistic equality. In any case, while 'Esperanto's European-ness can scarcely be denied', Esperanto's popularity among Chinese anarchists offers one counterexample to Barthe's concerns, while Sho Konishi discerns Japan's 'Esperanto craze' as embodying a popular, internationalist effort to *resist* the consolidation of a Western-style nation state, precisely through its decentred premises.<sup>258</sup>

Esperanto practitioners also questioned critics' depiction of a lifeless, soulless language, attesting instead to its 'human spirit' and experiencing it as a 'living language'.<sup>259</sup> As historians note, Esperanto was not designed as a fixed and finished entity external to human agency; Zamenhof intended that practitioners would create new words from the system of affixes, participating in a *process* of 'collective invention'.<sup>260</sup> Furthermore, although it was a recent creation, individuals invested Esperanto with deep affective meaning: Esperantists felt 'empowered' by the language, the opportunities it offered and the way it allowed them 'to fashion themselves as modern cosmopolitans'.<sup>261</sup> When *Acción Social Obrera* announced the publication of an Esperanto course, for instance, it billed it as a 'practical' option for 'those who feel Universalism beating in their chest', a striking allusion to bodily warmth to

---

<sup>255</sup> 'IV.º CONGRESO DE LA SENNACIECA ASOCIO TUTMONDA', *Acción Social Obrera*, 18 October 1924.

<sup>256</sup> 'Sobre Esperanto', *Redención*, 14 September 1922; O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, p. 54.

<sup>257</sup> 'ALREDEDOR DEL ESPERANTO'. Similarly, Gardeñes suggested French, English, Portuguese, Russian or Spanish as better alternatives: 'La Lengua Universal'. One responder mocked the idea that Spanish with its irregular verbs or English for which 'two years of study are needed to babble incorrectly' might fulfil the functions of an international language: 'UN POCO DE TODO'.

<sup>258</sup> O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, p. 8. See Gotelind Müller-Saini and Gregor Benton, 'Esperanto and Chinese anarchism 1907-1920: the translation from diaspora to homeland', *Language Problems and Language Planning* 30.1 (2006), pp. 45-73, doi:10.1075/lplp.30.1.05mul; Konishi, 'Translingual World Order', p. 100. On Esperanto's 'Eurocentricity', see also Schor, *Bridge of Words*, pp. 31-34.

<sup>259</sup> 'Pro-Esperanto', *Redención*, 3 August 1922; 'La lengua internacional Esperanto'.

<sup>260</sup> Schor, *Bridge of Words*, p. 16; O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, p. 8.

<sup>261</sup> O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, p. 188.



counterpose to the suggestions of a cold, mechanical language.<sup>262</sup> The Barcelona delegate to the SAT's fourth congress in Brussels wrote of the thrilling experience of being among a 'handful of workers, coming from 16 countries [...] speaking in Esperanto, understanding each other perfectly'.<sup>263</sup> Like the example of the Mexico solidarity meeting in the previous chapter, moreover, Esperanto classrooms also appear to have been spaces in which women and girls were expressly included: in the libertarian atheneum in El Clot neighbourhood in Barcelona, which the organiser and later militiawoman Concha (Conxa) Pérez remembered as an important site for her socialisation in the libertarian movement, Esperanto classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening were attended by thirty-five young students of both sexes.<sup>264</sup>

Esperanto also facilitated and generated transnational ties. Many of the El Clot students reportedly corresponded 'with comrades from very far away countries, up to the Far East, from Asia, from Japan, from China', which allowed them to 'know other civilisations, other cultures and other races' and thereby reaffirm 'our ideal of universality and humanism'.<sup>265</sup> Texts such as reports on the Chinese anarchist movement, a Yiddish tale about bourgeois inhumanity against striking workers and a fable attacking the hollowness of British civilisational ideology in colonial India were also brought into the print culture of the 'anarchist-inspired working-class public sphere' in Esperanto, as was an appeal for support for Sacco and Vanzetti.<sup>266</sup> An anonymous Esperantist also wrote that the language had allowed them to support foreign comrades who had come to Spain.<sup>267</sup> It is unclear exactly what this referred to – possibly an encounter with some of the many Russians and other exiles who had flocked to Spain during the First World War – but SAT urged the use of Esperanto to support refugees and exiles.<sup>268</sup> These examples indicate Esperanto's qualitative

---

<sup>262</sup> See notice on the front page, *Acción Social Obrera*, 12 January 1924.

<sup>263</sup> 'IVº CONGRESO DE LA SENNACIECA ASOCIO TUTMONDA'.

<sup>264</sup> 'El Ateneo Libertario del Clot', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 13 November 1931; Vega, *Pioneras y Revolucionarias*, pp. 96-98; Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>265</sup> 'El Ateneo Libertario del Clot'.

<sup>266</sup> See 'Esquema sobre el desenvolvimiento anarquista en China', *Acción Social Obrera*, 29 December 1923 – 1 January 1924; 'El movimiento anarquista en China', *Acción Social Obrera*, 6 August 1927; 'EL LOCK-OUT', *Acción Social Obrera*, 20 September 1924; 'El indio y el inglés', *Acción Social Obrera*, 27 September 1924; 'PARA SACCO Y VANZETTI', *Acción Social Obrera*, 27 February 1925.

<sup>267</sup> 'POR QUE APRENDÍ EL ESPERANTO'.

<sup>268</sup> 'El Esperanto al servicio del Proletariado', *Acción Social Obrera*, 25 October 1924. On the refugees see Zoffmann Rodríguez, 'Neutrality and Internationalism'.

importance for the movement's internationalism, and that of individual anarcho-syndicalists.

Sources are lacking for a complementary quantitative analysis, but sociologist Roberto Garvía affirms that Esperanto was more prominent in Cataluña than in other Spanish regions precisely because its labour movement 'of anarchist orientation' promptly 'made Esperanto a substantial part of its class identity'.<sup>269</sup> In September 1909, the middle-class journal *La Cataluña* noted the 'sympathy and fervour with which the working class has entered into the study and propagation of Esperanto'; whereas abroad it was largely an intellectual movement, 'here in Cataluña, [Esperanto] belongs to the humble, the laborious workers'.<sup>270</sup> In his research on anarchist cultural practices, Navarro Navarro observes the 'habitual' and 'very active' presence of Esperantism within libertarian milieus in 1930s Valencia; anecdotal recollections from grassroots *cenetistas* affirmed that most CNT workers attended at least some lessons, and that there was considerable enthusiasm for it.<sup>271</sup> To this we can add the implicit evidence of *Acción Social Obrera*'s Esperanto course, which occupied the bottom third of the weekly's back page continually from 19 January 1924 through to completion on 29 August 1925; given the dictatorship's censorship of almost all other libertarian press, this was a considerable use of scarce newspaper space, implying that the editors regarded it as relevant and popular among its readership.<sup>272</sup> This is all suggestive that Esperanto was embraced as a form of rank-and-file internationalism.

On the other hand, albeit no less anecdotally, the same newspaper published a Barcelona SAT member's complaint that Spanish workers had shown the 'least interest' of any nationality in learning Esperanto, despite having 'statistically' the highest proportion of anarchist workers.<sup>273</sup> This ought to have made Spain an Esperantist 'vanguard'; greater uptake was necessary 'if you do not want to present yourself to the proletarian world, like a ridiculous and unconscientious people'.<sup>274</sup> This concern demonstrated how expressions of national identity (and hurt national pride) could irrupt even within such a supposedly horizontal and cosmopolitan realm as Esperanto, where a country was just a 'patch of earth

---

<sup>269</sup> Garvía, *Lengua y Utopía*, p. 179.

<sup>270</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>271</sup> Navarro Navarro, *A la Revolución*, pp. 89-91.

<sup>272</sup> See 'Curso de Esperanto', *Acción Social Obrera*, 19 January 1924 – 29 August 1925. One week when the course was not published due to a surplus of time-sensitive items, the editors included an apologetic note to the 'esperantist comrades': 'A los camaradas esperantistas', *Acción Social Obrera*, 2 May 1925.

<sup>273</sup> 'Al proletariado en general y a los militantes en particular', *Acción Social Obrera*, 27 March 1926.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

called Spain'.<sup>275</sup> More broadly, although this individual blamed their own comrades' lack of radicalism, it was a global reality that the more grandiose aspirations of Esperanto's proponents – to make 'workers of the world, unite' into a concrete reality – clearly ended in failure.<sup>276</sup> While the suggestive evidence that many *cenetistas* used Esperanto to satiate their internationalist inclinations testifies to an appetite for transcending or at least softening the national 'division of labour', the history of Esperantism also necessarily reveals the *persistence* of that division. Some of the debates which Esperanto provoked – among those who thought at universal scale and those who sought to preserve local identities and initiatives – had an indirect but very clear analogue in the controversy over industrial federations that took place during this same period.

### *(Inter)national industrial federations*

Historians have often treated the CNT's 1931 debate about creating national industrial federations as an intramural one, above all related to internal differences over national organisation and tactics.<sup>277</sup> Some note that the question of industrial federation was an IWA-wide one.<sup>278</sup> However, previous analyses have not typically recognised the significance of this debate as illustrative of the contested approaches to anarcho-syndicalist internationalism. In 1871, Bakunin wrote that 'complete solidarity with [one's] workmates' would expand into the 'wider solidarity [which] has become necessary because all the employers in all the industries have established a united front', and eventually expand 'much further, beyond all frontiers', to include 'the workers of the world'.<sup>279</sup> The debate about industrial federations,

---

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Mundane divisions affected the Esperantist movement. Ideological divergences saw both libertarian anti-Bolshevik and pro-Soviet splinters from SAT: Garvía, *Lengua y Utopía*, pp. 160-61. Meanwhile, 'Ido', or 'reformed Esperanto', emerged in 1907 as a competitor language whose proponents described it as having 'maximum internationality': see the notice for Ido courses in *Acción Social Obrera*, 12 January 1929. In fact, the Ido vs Esperanto question was mentioned during the CNT's 1919 debate, with the Madrid anarchist Mauro Bajatierra dismissing Ido as a 'distortion' of Esperanto: CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, pp. 208-10. See also O'Keeffe, *Esperanto*, pp. 44, 200n125.

<sup>277</sup> See for instance Julián Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain, 1931-1939*, trans. by Andrew Dowling and Graham Pollok (Routledge, 2004), pp. 11-12; Abel Paz, *Durruti in the Spanish Revolution*, trans. by Chuck Morse (AK Press, 2006) pp. 132, 247-53.

<sup>278</sup> Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organization*, pp. 160-61; Ángel Herrerín López, *Camino a la Anarquía. La CNT en tiempos de la Segunda República (1931-1936)* (Siglo XXI de España, 2019), pp. 77-79. These international dimensions are also explored in Vadim Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th century* (Black Cat Press, 2009), pp. 98-113.

<sup>279</sup> Bakunin, 'Program of the Alliance', pp. 250-51.

sixty years later, was about *how* exactly to realise this ‘scaling up’ of solidarity. As well as representing a further dimension of the contention between ‘class’ and ‘sect’ approaches, it was an arena for grappling with the ‘scalar complexity’ of the movement’s transnational aspirations and how they were to be realised.<sup>280</sup> It pointed to tensions both inherent to internationalism and specific to this juncture, when the IWA debated how to seize the initiative at a time of international economic crisis.

The industrial federations debate did indeed continue a longstanding, evolving discussion about how to structure the anarcho-syndicalist federation. According to Rocker, anarcho-syndicalism adheres to two organisational forms: territorial ‘labour cartels’, which unite individual trade or craft unions in a given locality and are in turn grouped into regional federations, in turn constituting the national one, and so on; and national ‘industrial alliances’ which coordinate trade unions within the same trade and industry at national level.<sup>281</sup> Both structures are intended to integrate greater numbers of workers, breaking down sectional and skill barriers.<sup>282</sup> In the 1870s, the FRE had adopted this dual structure in principle, but in practice only the territorial one was realised.<sup>283</sup> Activists debated these organisational questions continually during the CNT’s early years: although the organisation’s founding congress selected the cartel form, its first congress the following year called for complementary national trade federations.<sup>284</sup> Angel Smith highlights that strike defeats, industry-wide disputes and the unity of bosses, especially in the form of lockouts, all urged coordination at higher scales; syndicalist ideology also promoted an overcoming of boundaries between workers, although decentralisation, autonomy and a rejection of bureaucracy remained important libertarian watchwords against creating such superstructures.<sup>285</sup> In any case, the Confederation did not actively create trade federations, leaving them up to the trade unions’ own initiative, and nor did it clarify their place within its structure, which allowed tensions to emerge between the two organisational forms.<sup>286</sup>

---

<sup>280</sup> Bantman and Altena, ‘Introduction’, pp. 12-14.

<sup>281</sup> Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>282</sup> Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (AK Press, 2009), pp. 281-82.

<sup>283</sup> Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, pp. 20-21

<sup>284</sup> Bar, *C.N.T.*, pp. 699-702.

<sup>285</sup> Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, pp. 215-16.

<sup>286</sup> Bar, *C.N.T.*, pp. 720-23.

The CNT's 1919 congress endorsed the *sindicato único* (single union, SU) model adopted the year before by the Catalan Regional Confederation.<sup>287</sup> The SU united all workers within smaller localities, or all the workers from a given industry in larger ones, with individual craft unions becoming 'sections' of the SU, which would then form the CNT's Local and Provisional (*Comarcal*) Federations, and so on.<sup>288</sup> In a locality such as Barcelona, it was essentially a 'local industrial union', combining aspects of both industrial unionism and the 'labour cartel' structure and thereby uniting two forms of revolutionary syndicalist organisation – according to Antonio Bar, a 'synthesis' that *cenetistas* had sought from the outset.<sup>289</sup> Buenacasa described the SU as transcending the limits of the craft unions, forming a 'united front against united capitalism' while still preserving the autonomy of the local solidaric community via the CNT's staggered federal structure.<sup>290</sup> The Catalan syndicalists grouped around Seguí were enthusiastic about this new structure, seeing it as the basis for the CNT's successful expansion in Cataluña, while radicals like Buenacasa, who as a carpenter had taken part in forming Barcelona's woodworking SU, saw it as a prefigurative ('futurist') structure that preserved the grassroots solidarities fundamental to a post-revolutionary society.<sup>291</sup>

Nonetheless, Seguí and other syndicalists were also interested in introducing a further organisational form: national federations of workers in the same industry.<sup>292</sup> At the CNT's 1919 congress, Quintanilla became the main advocate for national industrial federations: the labour movement was still lagging behind capitalist development, 'as the shadow [follows] the body', and needed to modernise.<sup>293</sup> Quintanilla had long regarded syndicalism as a distinctly *modern* adaptation to economic changes, distinct from the anarcho-collectivism of the FRE, and clearly viewed industrial federations in this vein of tactical and organisational innovation.<sup>294</sup> Some of his strongest support at the congress came from the glassworkers, including the secretary of their own national federation, Peiró, who argued that national glass

---

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, pp. 544-45, 725-31.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid, pp. 734-35.

<sup>289</sup> Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 238; Bar, *C.N.T.*, p. 702; van der Walt and Schmidt, *Black Flame*, pp. 281-82.

<sup>290</sup> Manuel Buenacasa, *¿Qué es el Sindicato Único?*, second edition (Aurora, n.d.), p. 4.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid; Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, pp. 238-40; Romero Salvadó, *Political Comedy*, pp. 155-56.

<sup>292</sup> Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 238.

<sup>293</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 262; Bar, *C.N.T.*, pp. 545, 731

<sup>294</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 231.

production capacity outstripped demand, dooming most strikes of a purely localised remit; as Angel Smith points out, glassworkers were also threatened by mechanisation and by employers' desire to discipline their workforce.<sup>295</sup> For Quintanilla, it was easily foreseen that economic globalisation would exacerbate these problems, as capitalists undercut their striking workers with foreign ones: contemporary 'economic problems', he insisted, 'are scarcely limited to within the borders of a nation', and necessitated trade-union coordination at ever greater scales; unions themselves needed to be able to scale upwards, and become more trans-national, to mirror the transnationality of production and consumption.<sup>296</sup>

Critics contended that industrial federations implied a 'corporative' and 'materialist' mindset and an unwieldy, bureaucratic structure; the return of those 'eternal secretaries [...] eternal directors of the old workers' societies' whose disappearance Buenacasa celebrated.<sup>297</sup> Organising workers directly at the national level jumped the 'scaling up' gun and threatened to denature the proximal, interpersonal solidarities which were vital to producing the revolutionary élan that radicals like Buenacasa cherished and which he held could not be conjured 'from outside'.<sup>298</sup> For his part, Quintanilla objected that the industrial federation was a *complementary* structure, alongside the 'fundamental base' of local unions.<sup>299</sup> Moreover, the Asturian interpreted the reticence of his Catalan comrades as kind of nationalist attachment, insisting that the *sindicato único* was not a 'Catalan creation', 'not yours', and was in fact 'already old' in other parts of Europe.<sup>300</sup> He further suggested that Barcelona workers' successes were merely 'circumstantial', attributable to the anomalous wartime situation: how else could the Spanish trade unions have leapfrogged their far more developed French, German and English counterparts to secure the eight hour day?<sup>301</sup> For Quintanilla, the CNT's success in Cataluña was no argument against fine-tuning the organisation in line with supposed advances elsewhere, such as in the French CGT.<sup>302</sup> There,

---

<sup>295</sup> The same argument was made by a hatmakers' delegate: CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, pp. 275, 279-80, 284, 287-88; see also Peirats, *Figuras*, p. 233; Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 242; Bar, *C.N.T.* pp. 724-25.

<sup>296</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, p. 290.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 274, 277-79; Buenacasa, *Sindicato Único*, p. 3.

<sup>298</sup> CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, pp. 274, 301.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid*, p. 301.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 291-92.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 300-01.

<sup>302</sup> Quintanilla is not quoted on the record as mentioning France, but another delegate replied to him with reference to the CGT statutes: *ibid*, pp. 301-02.

an analogous conflict was taking place, with autonomists such as Pierre Monatte defending the ‘more idealistic’ *départemental* structure from a ‘rationalisation’ which favoured a ‘sectional and centralist’ industrial one.<sup>303</sup> The debate, which Quintanilla lost resoundingly, was thus about how to ‘scale up’ trade union activity, but also about how far the CNT ought to adapt and learn from what happened in other countries, or merely trust in its own spontaneous ‘local’ activity.<sup>304</sup>

This international dimension was even clearer upon the revival of the idea later in the 1920s: when the CNT debated national industrial federations again at its third congress in June 1931, Peiró claimed that the glassworkers had maintained their national federation for years in defiance of the 1919 congress’s decisions, having ‘believed ourselves authorised’ after the idea was endorsed by the IWA’s third congress in Liège in 1928.<sup>305</sup> This was a far cry from the syndicalists’ 1923 argument that the CNT’s ‘credo’ did not ‘need fortifying by any International’, evidencing the fluidity (and instrumentality) of affirmations of national sovereignty in relation to doctrinal and tactical discussions. Now, moreover, the debate over industrial federations was taking place within an IWA that had not existed in 1919.<sup>306</sup> In fact, the impetus now came from Pierre Besnard, secretary of the newly founded CGTSR; in 1927, *Acción Social Obrera* printed his argument that ‘to the united strength of the capitalists [...] it is necessary to be able to oppose the united strength of the workers’, and Peiró contributed the foreword to the 1931 Spanish edition of his book, *Labour Unions and the Social Revolution*.<sup>307</sup> Besnard claimed that his thesis, to which Peiró put his name, and which would

---

<sup>303</sup> Quintanilla was also supported by the Portuguese representative de Sousa, who mentioned that the CGT had national industrial federations but not SUs: *ibid.*, p. 375. See Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, pp. 115-16.

<sup>304</sup> The vote was tallied at 651,431 to 14,008: Smith, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction*, p. 314. In this era, Peiró cited the limitations of worker control in Russia and during Italy’s factory occupations to argue for well-organised industrial unions: Robert Christl, ‘Anarchism in one country: Diego Abad de Santillán and the invention of participatory national economic planning in interwar anarchism’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 84.2 (2023), pp. 313-36 (p. 318), doi:10.1353/jhi.2020.0014.

<sup>305</sup> CNT, *Memoria del Congreso Extraordinario celebrado en Madrid los días 11 al 16 de Junio de 1931* (Cosmos, 1932), p. 141.

<sup>306</sup> See Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, pp. 98-113; Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organization*, pp. 159-63.

<sup>307</sup> ‘SER O NO SER’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 21 July 1928. Emphasis in original. This formed part of a four-part series of articles, 22 October 1927, 21-28 July and 4 August 1928 (the gap was due to a nine month period when *ASO* finally succumbed to a suspension by the regime’s censors). See preface to Pierre Besnard, *Los Sindicatos Obreros y la Revolución Social*, trans. by Felipe Alaiz (Ediciones de la C.N.T. de España, 1931), pp. 7-16. On Besnard’s influence in Spain, see Wayne Thorpe, ‘Anarchosyndicalism in inter-war France: the vision of Pierre Besnard’, *European History Quarterly* 26.4 (1996), pp. 559-90 (p. 560), doi:10.1177/026569149602600403; Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organization*, pp. 160-61.

essentially be adopted as official CNT policy in 1931, was inspired by Bakunin and Kropotkin, and loyal to revolutionary, federalist, anti-capitalist and anti-statist principles.<sup>308</sup> However, he proclaimed that capitalist development increasingly tended towards ‘concentration’ and so-called ‘rationalisation’, demanding of revolutionary syndicalism ‘its own *rationalisation*’, and the achievement of ‘*homogenous organisation and singular action*’.<sup>309</sup> This demanded ‘breaking absolutely with the past, doing away with ethnic prejudices’ and different national ‘modalities of organisation and social activity’.<sup>310</sup> One pillar of Besnard’s standardised structure was essentially the staggered territorial structure already utilised by the CNT, from local industrial unions through Local, Regional, National and International federations.<sup>311</sup> However, as Quintanilla had earlier done, Besnard urged the creation of a *complementary* network of national and international industrial federations which would have a *technical* and *informative* role, allowing the labour movement to develop the necessary economic and industrial knowledge to facilitate a future working-class takeover of the economy without disrupting production.<sup>312</sup>

Besnard thus envisaged a quite literal form of class unity based on ‘homogenous organisation that goes from the union to the International itself’.<sup>313</sup> With a sufficiently rational structure and technical knowledge to confront the capitalist class, the labour movement would first secure a shortened workday to confront mass unemployment (which Besnard regarded as an intentional tactic employed by the bourgeoisie to discipline labour), then achieve a single, dignified international salary (to overcome the division and stratification of the proletariat), and finally secure trade union control of the economy.<sup>314</sup> A rational, ‘homogenous and congruent’ social order, Besnard argued, ‘gives the individual maximal freedom and wellbeing and harmonises social life’, by removing the impurities of the unequal capitalist-state system.<sup>315</sup> It is easy to see why Besnard’s plan appealed to more class-oriented, organisation-occupied activists such as Peiró and Juan López, whose concern

---

<sup>308</sup> Besnard, *Sindicatos Obreros*, pp. 90-117, 129-41. The CNT proposal, strongly redolent of Besnard’s, outlined in CNT, *Teatro de la Comedia*, 112-32.

<sup>309</sup> Besnard, *Sindicatos Obreros*, pp. 22, 153, 201.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid*, p. 202.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, p. 154.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 181-91.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid*, p. 201.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 204-18.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid* p. 331.



had long been bringing as many workers as possible together in a respectable, effective and well-organised trade union apparatus.<sup>316</sup> The late Salvador Seguí had spoken rather abstractly of needing to be a ‘guarantee’ for the international proletariat; now, this homogenous programme pointed the way for the CNT to avoid being ‘left behind’ in the international labour movement.<sup>317</sup> The absence of any Spanish delegates from a 1927 international conference of IWA-affiliated construction trade unions was an ‘inexcusable’ act of ‘negligence’ which ‘caused a poor impression’, and the CNT ought to be active in articulating this new apparatus.<sup>318</sup> For López, well-organised international industrial federations would ‘bring together proletarian hearts’ and shift the IWA towards greater ‘efficacy’; arguments which clearly evoke Schapiro’s concerns, seconded by the moderate CNT National Committee in 1925.<sup>319</sup>

Despite this continuity, the idea’s revival in the late 1920s also reflected the specificities of that juncture. Although anarcho-syndicalism appeared to be languishing by this era, it was possible for activists to imagine imminent opportunity, as the postwar forward march of social democracy appeared to stall. The first British Labour government would ‘finish once and for all with the legend of “good socialist governments”’, and militants such as Sebastián Clara saw the ‘betrayal’ of Britain’s 1926 General Strike as a ‘lesson’ to reject reformism.<sup>320</sup> In late 1927, Peiró was ‘optimistic’ that global capitalist reaction, including new restrictions on some trade union activities in Britain, would be sufficiently harsh even to break the legalist ‘psychology and idiosyncrasy of the English proletariat’.<sup>321</sup> A year later, López urged anarcho-syndicalists to adopt the ‘acceleration demanded by the most pressing problems’, so as to capitalise on the masses’ imminent loss of faith in state socialism.<sup>322</sup> In 1930, the FAUD’s Helmut Rüdiger informed Spanish readers that the collapse of the German social democratic government offered an ‘eloquent example’ of the ‘historic mission of anarcho-

---

<sup>316</sup> From Peiró, see for instance ‘La organización de tipo industrialista’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 3 October 1930; from López, ‘EL TERCER PUNTO EN LA CONFERENCIA NACIONAL’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 27 September 1930.

<sup>317</sup> ‘La hora de la revisión’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 3 November 1928.

<sup>318</sup> ‘La Construcción Internacional’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 9 April 1927.

<sup>319</sup> ‘EL TERCER PUNTO EN LA CONFERENCIA NACIONAL’.

<sup>320</sup> ‘LOS LABORISTAS HAN LLEGADO YA AL PODER’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 24 January 1924; ‘LOS POLITICOS EN LA ORGANIZACION OBRERA’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 22 May 1926; ‘LA HUELGA GENERAL INGLESA’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 5 June 1926.

<sup>321</sup> ‘¿POR QUÉ SOY TAN OPTIMISTA?’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 3 September 1927.

<sup>322</sup> ‘La unidad moral debe responder a la unidad orgánica’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 21 July 1928.

syndicalism [...] the demasking of political democracy and of the “social” republic to prove to the worker masses that political parties are not and cannot be instruments of proletarian liberation’.<sup>323</sup> The onset of the Depression and a massive exacerbation of the employment crisis made it even more conceivable that the IWA might soon ‘be seen as the only hope of the proletariat due to the moral and numerical bankruptcy of the other international organisations’.<sup>324</sup> Orobón believed that the organisation’s ‘clear ideology and concrete tactical orientation’, as opposed to the reformists’ ‘social homeopathy’, could transform the ‘millions of zeros’ currently in the Amsterdam and Moscow Internationals into ‘positive units’ who ‘fight effectively and directly for a freer present and an emancipatory future’.<sup>325</sup> The *zeitgeist* of crisis could be construed as a potentially propitious moment when class conflict would crystallise and the anarcho-syndicalists’ commitment to pure proletarian struggle could catapult them from decline to the forefront of history. Besnard’s proposals for rationalisation and homogenisation expressed this hope that the movement might soon find itself bringing millions of workers together into a ‘phalanx of the internationally organised working class’.<sup>326</sup>

Notwithstanding these bold aspirations, however, there remained a considerable body of ‘intransigent’ opposition to industrial federations and to the idea of revolutionary syndicalist ‘rationalisation’. Many anarchists were perturbed by the idea that the worker movement ought to take cues regarding its own structure from what Magriña labelled the bourgeois ‘united front of vampires’; for future CNT National Secretary Manuel Rivas, it was ‘plagiarising from our enemies’.<sup>327</sup> Buenacasa revived his 1919 argument that proximity was the motor of solidarity: Barcelona woodworkers’ struggles were ‘won not by the solidarity of the Spanish woodworkers, but by the energetic intervention of all the Barcelona workers’.<sup>328</sup> However, he also identified rationalisation as part of the broader denaturing of the CNT’s anarchist identity, abandoning ‘the heroic and sentimental anarchism of the

---

<sup>323</sup> ‘La caída del gobierno social-demócrata’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 1 May 1930.

<sup>324</sup> ‘IV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores en España’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 9 August 1930. See also ‘Manifiesto de la A.I.T.’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 1 May 1930.

<sup>325</sup> ‘La A.I.T. ante las realidades políticas y económicas del presente’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 4 April 1929; ‘¡TRABAJO PARA TODOS!’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 1 May 1930. See also the essay by Souchy: ‘Luchas obreras internacionales’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 26 April 1930.

<sup>326</sup> ‘Manifiesto para el 1.º de Mayo’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 1 May 1929.

<sup>327</sup> ‘LAS IDEAS Y EL SINDICALISMO III’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 1 September 1928; ‘Federaciones nacionales de industrias’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 18 July 1931.

<sup>328</sup> ‘¿FEDERACIONES DE INDUSTRIA?’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 11 October 1930.

Chicago martyrs' in favour of 'the crudest materialism'.<sup>329</sup> This demonstrated how the controversy, while rekindling many aspects of the 1919 debate, was also now filtered through the more recent lens of the struggle for ideological control of the Confederation. In this vein, *El Productor*, newly relaunched after a four year hiatus, renewed its affinity with the anti-programme Argentines, publishing an essay by *forista* Bernardo Díaz which criticised those with 'more confidence in the effectiveness of the mechanical action of the trade union organisation than in the conscious and solidaric action of the proud and rebellious proletariat'.<sup>330</sup> Díaz defended the FORA's structure, in which craft unions organised directly into Local Federations, eschewing even the localised industrialism of the CNT; he contrasted the generous settlement that FORA had won from General Motors with the failure of labour movements in more industrialised countries, where a proletariat 'distracted' by 'Marxist authoritarianism' had an 'excess' of bureaucratic organisation but a 'lack of rebelliousness'.<sup>331</sup>

*El Productor* also seconded the 1930 campaign of the Asociación Continental Americana de Trabajadores (American Continental Workers' Association, ACAT), a new IWA affiliate which the FORA was instrumental in founding the previous year, in favour of the six-hour workday.<sup>332</sup> The six-hour day was official IWA policy since 1925 and had been demanded by various of its sections; the Secretariat claimed in 1930 to have contacted the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU, the 'Amsterdam International') without success regarding a joint campaign.<sup>333</sup> Indeed, the moderate-dominated CNT would adopt a demand for the six-hour workday at the 1931 congress.<sup>334</sup> However, while Peiró, Besnard and others saw it as a demand which would best be achieved by improving the trade union apparatus,

---

<sup>329</sup> 'Las ideas y las tácticas del movimiento obrero', *El Productor*, 5 July 1930.

<sup>330</sup> 'Conflictos obreros de trascendencia', *El Productor*, 28 June 1930.

<sup>331</sup> 'Conflictos obreros de trascendencia'. The General Motors strike is mentioned in Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants*, p. 124.

<sup>332</sup> See the ACAT manifesto 'Sobre la Desocupación Mundial', *Acción Social Obrera*, 17 – 24 May 1930; 'Noticiario', *El Productor*, 21 June 1930. On the ACAT: Santillán, *Memorias*, p. 127.

<sup>333</sup> 'Notas actuales', *Acción*, February 1926; 'SOBRE LAS SEIS HORAS' *Acción Social Obrera*, 2 July 1927; 'Información de la A.I.T.', *Acción Social Obrera*, 9 August 1930.

<sup>334</sup> On the campaign in Spain, which activists explicitly linked to the IWA one, see José Luis Gutiérrez Molina, 'El Ramo de la Construcción de Sevilla y la jornada de 6 horas (1870-1936)', in *La Jornada de Seis Horas 1936. Movimiento Obrero y Reducción de la Jornada de Trabajo en el Ramo de la Construcción de Sevilla*, ed. by A.M. Bernal, M.R. Alarcón and J.L. Gutiérrez (Centro Andaluz del Libro, 2001), pp. 33-89.

radicals regarded it as a bold slogan which the movement could put forward to capitalise on the crisis without organisational reforms.

Opponents of (inter)national industrial federations therefore contested them in ideological terms, as overly bureaucratic and tending to fragmentation of the workers rather than the building of solidaric ties. However, a further timbre of opposition could be discerned by the time the CNT debated the proposal at the June 1931 national congress in Madrid. There, a certain Juan García Oliver asserted that the ‘comrades from Berlin’ were ‘completely ignorant of Spain’ and failed to understand that the CNT was not just any ‘worker organisation’ but was ‘purely Spanish’ and an ‘authentic product of our country’.<sup>335</sup> For García Oliver, industrial federations ‘come from Germany and seem to have come out of a barrel of beer’.<sup>336</sup> García Oliver was taking a position on a debate which still divided the IWA.<sup>337</sup> However, his dismissive tone about ‘Berlin’ and the caricature about a beer barrel gave his argument a xenophobic hue.<sup>338</sup> Although the congress, dominated by the Confederation’s more ‘syndicalist’ tendency, voted in favour of national industrial federations, ‘intransigents’ continued to oppose them, and their ascent within the organisation would see implementation largely stalled until the Civil War.<sup>339</sup> While not quite reaching García Oliver’s level of irreverence, this opposition was often framed in similar terms. For Alberola, local *sindicatos únicos* exemplified ‘conscious proletarian rebelliousness and the solidaric spirit of the workers’.<sup>340</sup> Moreover, they preserved the ‘individualism’ which made Spain ‘an exception’ to the ‘automatism produced by

---

<sup>335</sup> CNT, *Congreso Extraordinario*, pp. 137-8, 147. Also see the critical article by the FAI activist and future CNT national secretary, Manuel Rivas: ‘Federaciones nacionales de industrias’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 18 July 1931.

<sup>336</sup> CNT, *Congreso Extraordinario*, p. 147.

<sup>337</sup> At the IWA’s congress, held in Madrid straight after the CNT one, Santillán also invoked arguments about national particularisms in the debate, framing the debate as one between movements from industrialised European countries and the agrarian economies of Latin America. The congress overcame a fiery dispute by invoking autonomy, defining industrial federations as a ‘fundamental general orientation’ which national sections could enact as they saw fit: FAL ARC-03016, ‘IV Congreso Mundial, celebrado en Madrid, España, en los días 16-20 de junio de 1931’.

<sup>338</sup> One which Abel Paz omitted from his quotations of García Oliver in the debate: Paz, *Durruti*, pp. 227-28. However, Peirats’s account made clear that García Oliver’s essentialism was significant – because he himself replicated it, speculating that the proposal’s eventual failure was because it did not suit the ‘psychology’ or ‘temperament’ of ‘the Spaniard’, who ‘is allergic to complexities’: Peirats, *Anarchists*, p. 80.

<sup>339</sup> As quickly as October 1931, the Catalan CRT had essentially imitated the IWA by voting to make the measure optional and discretionary: Paz, *Durruti*, p. 253..

<sup>340</sup> ‘POR QUE PROTESTAMOS LAS FEDERACIONES DE INDUSTRIA’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 November 1931.

industrialism'; Alberola's defence of free spontaneity – of having 'all routes unobstructed and the wings of the imagination free to fly [...] around the uplifting space of the purest Idealism' – was twinned with a disdain for the 'exoticism' which wanted to bring an excess of control and centralisation into the CNT.<sup>341</sup> *Tierra y Libertad*'s endorsement of such an argument, contrasting Spain's 'combative and intensely idealist spirit' with the 'absence [...] of liberating ideality' evident in 'the democracies and social-democracies of the whole world', made this the FAI's official position.<sup>342</sup> These radicals depicted industrial federations almost as an invasive species which threatened to contaminate a pure and pristine autochthonous anarchist culture. The language clearly evoked the quasi-nationalist idiom which 'intransigents' had wielded since the beginning of the decade, but its rise to prominence within one of the major tendencies within the CNT is best understood by considering the national and international context in 1931 – a task taken up by the next chapter.

### *Conclusion*

Despite this chapter's titular quotation from Buenacasa (1918), there were no 'true internationalists'; rather, there were constant efforts to negotiate internationalism, to practise solidarity, and to relate to a real or imagined international movement. This chapter has demonstrated this through a kaleidoscopic examination of some of the key ideas, practices and debates across the anarcho-syndicalist spectrum during a tumultuous period in Spain and the world. It has highlighted the 'messiness' of internationalism in myriad ways: in the magnetism which a Marxist revolution held for supposedly orthodox libertarians; in the dynamic competition between 'sectarian' and 'class' concepts of internationalism; and in the question of whether a universal language was a liberatory or deeply centralistic vision. The following chapters recount an arguably more controversial period in the history of Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism, when the CNT's foreign allies bemoaned its supposed lack of commitment to the international movement. Yet the findings of this chapter and indeed the previous one offer an important basis for a re-evaluation, emphasising that anarcho-syndicalist internationalism had long been contested and controversial, with

---

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> 'Federaciones de industria', *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 November 1931.

sometimes starkly opposed views about solidarity and how and with whom to practise it. Notwithstanding the complex terrain that anarcho-syndicalists had to navigate, internationalism remained a popular aspect of their political culture, as exemplified by examples such as the campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti or the efforts to learn Esperanto, both of which constituted means by which rank-and-file movement members could express their sense of belonging to something which transcended the national borders.

The chapter opened with a period in which social and political upheaval in Spain appeared as part of a pan-European or even global tumult; in looking first to Moscow and then to Berlin, Spanish libertarians sought allies and orienting frames. The decision to align with anarcho-syndicalist ‘Berlin’ demonstrated the robustness of the movement’s libertarian ties and political culture, but activists were still divided over whether internationalism should be defined by ‘class’ or by ideological ‘sect’. Drawing on the myths bequeathed by the nineteenth century, proponents of an openly anarchist identity for the CNT often posited the Confederation as the expression of a distinctly Spanish anarchist tradition reflecting popular libertarian temperaments. At the period’s close, renewed debates about industrial federations demonstrated further the diversity and controversy regarding the movement’s transnationality; some of the opposition to the industrialist proposals demonstrated the extent to which these notions of an ‘authentic’ Spanish libertarian tradition were entrenched in some of the ostensibly most radical and ideologue corners of the movement. Rather than a rejection of internationalism per se, these perspectives tended to construe Spain as having a particular generative role within international anarchism; by 1931 and the close of this chapter, this would be approaching a reality, as the CNT was the only truly mass-scale libertarian movement left standing after years of repression, division and accommodation elsewhere.

### Chapter Three

#### 'Storm over Spain'

#### The CNT at the heart of international anarcho-syndicalism, 1931-1936

The declaration of the Spanish Second Republic in the spring of 1931 appeared to herald an era of reforms and civil liberties.<sup>1</sup> Seizing on this opening, the relegalised Confederation rapidly regrouped, growing to a scale which restored its status as a mass movement: the third congress of the CNT, held in Madrid that June, claimed an attendance of 440 delegates representing more than 600,000 affiliated workers; in absolute terms, a remarkable rebound after a long period of illegality and exile.<sup>2</sup> The IWA's fourth congress, held in the same city on the tails of the Confederal one, reaffirmed the significance of the CNT's resurrection in international terms. The Argentine FORA, for which Santillán and López Arango had so recently claimed the mantle of a global vanguard, was in a severely weakened position following the 1930 coup d'état.<sup>3</sup> One secretarial address to the congress noted this supersession explicitly: 'The movement suffered a downturn with the dissolution of the Argentine FORA, but is now reborn with the resurgence of the Spanish CNT'.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the USI languished under the Mussolini regime, while both the FAUD and the CGTSR had membership figures in the low thousands.<sup>5</sup> In Portugal, the CGT claimed a respectable 15-20,000 affiliates, but these were forced to operate clandestinely.<sup>6</sup> The relatively robust Swedish Workers' Central Organisation (SAC) boasted 30,000 workers, but this was only one-twentieth the affiliation of that country's reformist federation and of the CNT.<sup>7</sup> As Ángel

---

<sup>1</sup> Julián Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*, trans. by Martin Douch (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 19-24.

<sup>2</sup> Herrerín, *Camino*, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Damier, *Anarcho-syndicalism*, p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> 'IV Congreso Mundial'.

<sup>5</sup> Damier, *Anarcho-syndicalism*, p. 87. The FAUD had claimed 10,000 members in 1930, but a document seized by police in 1932 gave a figure of 4,307: Bernardini, 'Señales', pp. 47-48. The CGTSR had 5000-6000 members upon its founding in 1926 but anecdotal references from the time say it had either stagnated or fallen amid the economic crisis: Thorpe, 'Anarchosyndicalism', p. 574; Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, pp. 133-34.

<sup>6</sup> Damier, *Anarcho-syndicalism*, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Herrerín López, 'La Idea', p. 24.

Herrerín points out, this left the CNT accounting for more than 85% of the IWA's total membership.<sup>8</sup>

For the anarcho-syndicalists of the 1930s, how to 'acknowledge the specific development of anarchism in Spain, without suggesting that it was the only place where this process could occur' was thus not merely a 'double bind' to bamboozle future historians, as Evans and Yeoman have put it, but a pressing political question.<sup>9</sup> This type of quandary was not unique to anarcho-syndicalist internationalism. Colás has argued, for instance, that the various socialist Internationals were 'heavily conditioned by the particular configuration of political forces at the time', structured according to the balance of power: for instance, the Second International's federalism reflected its domination by German and French social democrats committed to their own 'domestic legitimacy'; the Third International was heavily centralised due to its focus on 'the survival of Soviet Russia as the only existing socialist state'.<sup>10</sup> According to Colás, these 'real historical and political constraints' are 'often overlooked by a purely idealist conception of cosmopolitanism'.<sup>11</sup> Yet regarding the IWA the prism of idealism is difficult to escape. As the previous chapter established, founding members had opted to defend fundamental anarcho-syndicalist principles over numerical concerns. Although many of its activists spoke in terms of capturing mass working-class support, waves of repression and a losing battle against the other Internationals meant that within less than a decade, as Wayne Thorpe notes, the IWA's 'ideology and structure' reflected only 'hopes and intentions'; 'The map of its aspirations [...] never matched the geography of its possibilities'.<sup>12</sup> By the 1930s, that geography of possibility was almost entirely restricted to Spain – but the IWA remained wedded to the 'map of its aspirations'.

Whereas Colás finds that the Second and Third Internationals were structured to reflect their internal balances of power, Nicolas Delalande's recent research on the First

---

<sup>8</sup> Herrerín, *Camino*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>9</sup> Evans and Yeoman, 'New approaches', pp. 199-200

<sup>10</sup> Alejandro Colás, 'Putting Cosmopolitanism into Practice: The Case of Socialist Internationalism', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23.3 (1994), pp. 513-34 (pp. 521-23), doi:10.1177/03058298940230030. On the competition between the Second Internationals main sections, see Callahan, 'Performing Inter-Nationalism'; on Soviet domination of the Comintern and its sections see McDermott and Agnew, *The Comintern*; Norman LaPorte, Kevin Morgan and Matthew Worley (eds.) *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization, 1917-53* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Colás, 'Putting Cosmopolitanism into Practice', p. 523.

<sup>12</sup> Thorpe, 'Syndicalist internationalism', p. 248.



International emphasises the ‘gigantic imbalance, numerical and financial’ between the British trade unions and other sections, giving the former considerable cultural and monetary power which sometimes strained federalist and reciprocal principles.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Delalande argues that unquestionable Soviet hegemony in the Third International, for all its faults, had the effect of sparing it some of the ‘quarrels’ and ‘fragilities’ that plagued the earlier Internationals.<sup>14</sup> Delalande’s work thus poses the question, if not explicitly stated, of an International whose structure did *not* always match the ‘configuration of political forces’ therein. By applying this framework to the case of the CNT and the IWA, this chapter contributes significantly to our understanding of the relations between the Spanish and international anarcho-syndicalist movements during this era. It also adds to our knowledge of the ‘abundance and complexity of anti-fascist ideas, movements and practices’ by exploring the transnational debate about how libertarians ought to respond to the fascist threat – and the ways that the CNT’s peculiar position shaped a distinct approach in 1933.<sup>15</sup>

Despite considerable attention – as the next chapter will highlight – to the relations between the CNT and the IWA during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), there is a paucity of historiographical analysis of the organisations’ relations during the preceding five years, prioritising instead the Confederation’s internal factional strife and its tumultuous relationship with the new Republic.<sup>16</sup> However, José Muñoz Congost, an active *cenetista* during the 1930s who later served as IWA secretary, argued that ‘extremely optimistic, triumphalist’ reports from Spain gave rise to ‘exaggerated illusions and confusion’ within the International during these years; a ‘legend’ of the CNT which created latent tensions that would burst upon the outbreak of the Civil War.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, in his research on German anti-fascists in 1930s Barcelona, Dieter Nelles correctly contends that despite the CNT being ‘the only element of hope for international anarcho-syndicalism’, its relationship with the

---

<sup>13</sup> Delalande, *Struggle and Mutual Aid*, pp. 41, 101-2, 108, 119. Marcello Musto also reflects on the ‘uneven’ nature of the First International: Marcello Musto, ‘History and political legacy of the International Working Men’s Association’, *Labor History* 63.4 (2022), pp. 479-91, doi:10.1080/0023656X.2021.2000593.

<sup>14</sup> Delalande, *Struggle and Mutual Aid*, p. 295.

<sup>15</sup> Braskén, Featherstone, and Copsey, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Although the IWA sometimes appears in these studies, the relationship is not analysed in any kind of depth. See for instance: Herrerín, *Camino*; Casanova, *Anarchism*; Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, pp. 54-169; Eulàlia Vega, *El trentisme a Catalunya*.

<sup>17</sup> José Muñoz Congost, ‘La Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores a través de sus congresos: el debate anarcosindicalista [I]’, *Cenit* 250 (1987), pp. 7164-94 (p. 7165); Brief biography in Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, p. 427.

IWA ‘was full of tensions’ throughout the period.<sup>18</sup> However, Nelles asserts that this was because ‘international affairs [...] did not take on any importance’ in the CNT’s political culture, a characteristic which he depicts as a cultural difference specific to Spain.<sup>19</sup>

If the image of an insular, parochial movement uninterested in the international situation hardly tallies with the evidence explored over the thesis so far, this chapter shows that it was equally untrue for 1931-1936. Through a wider-ranging exploration than carried out by either Muñoz Congost or Nelles, utilising IWA and CNT documentation as well as press and print materials from different archives, it places the tensions in context and demonstrates that at stake was not whether Spanish anarcho-syndicalists *were* internationalists, but *how* to realise that internationalism, *how* to negotiate competing local and international factors, and *how* to navigate the unresolved question of imbalance within the IWA. The chapter begins by outlining the diversity of views regarding the CNT’s role within the international movement: although so-called ‘*faístas*’ evinced a kind of CNT ‘legend’, this perspective was not shared by their ‘*treintista*’ rivals, nor by many figures within an IWA dominated by a minoritarian outlook. The following section then assesses the tensions which developed as both the CNT and IWA asked questions about the role that each could play for the other, against a backdrop of increasing CNT radicalisation: the incongruity between the imagined community and the actual ‘configuration of political forces’ exposed the IWA’s ‘blurrier borders’. A third section then explores how *cenetistas* responded to the rising threat of fascism in Europe; this issue once more highlights their attentiveness to international events, but also their sense that Spain differed due to its strong anarcho-syndicalist movement. The following sections then explore the two broad impacts of the failed December 1933 anarchist uprising. The first was a generalised crisis in the CNT below the weight of repression, which would grow worse after the socialist-led insurrection in October 1934; this further complicated the Confederation’s relations with an IWA Secretariat increasingly dependent on it. The failed insurrection also provoked growing attention to the question of collaboration with non-libertarian organisations to resist fascism, and the final section considers how understandings of the international situation (and Spain’s place within it) continued to shape that debate. Taken together, these sections offer a multifaceted analysis of the CNT’s internationalism

---

<sup>18</sup> Nelles, ‘La Legión Extranjera de la Revolución’, p. 130.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp. 130, 134.

during a period marked by its idiosyncrasy within the international anarcho-syndicalist movement.

### *1931: contested narratives*

Rather than resolving the tensions between the ‘various anarchisms’ within the CNT, the onset of the Second Republic saw ‘*treintista*’ proponents of ‘consolidation and gradual expansion of revolutionary syndicalism’, who accounted for most leading Confederal cadres in the spring and summer of 1931, face off against the ‘*faístas*’ who sought ‘confrontation with the repressive apparatus of the republican regime’.<sup>20</sup> Divisions persisted until spring 1936 and the cusp of Civil War. As well as disagreeing on the path to follow in Spain, these tendencies diverged on what the CNT’s resurgence implied for the International. Amid CNT reconstruction and the disintegration of the dictatorship, Ángel Pestaña, a leading light among the *treintistas*, was ‘optimistic’ about Spain in a meeting with the IWA bureau in August 1930.<sup>21</sup> However, this optimism was always qualified and contingent, and far from any kind of ‘legend’; as the *treintistas*’ manifesto made clear, these activists were not fond of ‘myth’.<sup>22</sup> Rather, the ‘exceptional moment’ required ‘responsibility’ above all else.<sup>23</sup> These activists, who also included Peiró, López and Clara, were at the forefront in urging the adoption of Besnard’s rationalisation; their internationalism continued to emphasise powerful, efficient trade-union structures which could organise ‘the workers’ across borders.<sup>24</sup> This focus on the *class* dimension of the International could be observed in a meeting to close both the CNT and IWA congresses, where Pestaña contrasted the humble dimensions of the IWA’s meeting with the ‘pomp’ of a recent gathering of the IFTU in Madrid, where the ‘delegates were received officially by the government’ because they were

---

<sup>20</sup> The former named for the manifesto signed by thirty such activists in August 1931; the latter denominated so for their supposed connection with the FAI: Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 53-63.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Reunión del Bureau de la A.I.T.’, *Acción Social Obrera*, 2 August 1930.

<sup>22</sup> ‘We are revolutionaries, yes; but not cultivators of the myth of the revolution’: see Juan López and others, ‘Manifiesto de los Treinta’, August 1931 <[https://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifiesto\\_de\\_los\\_Treinta](https://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifiesto_de_los_Treinta)> [accessed 14 December 2022].

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Peiró wrote the preface to the Spanish version of Besnard’s book advocating the new structure, arguing suggestively that ‘sidereal’ visions based on simplistic invocations of ‘free accord and mutual aid’ would not resolve social, political and economic problems, which ‘are resolved more easily [...] at ground level’, and praising Besnard’s ‘objective, up-to-date, forward-thinking’ work: in Besnard, *Sindicatos Obreros*, pp. 9-11.

‘protectors of the bourgeoisie’; once again, the Association’s relative poverty was reconstrued as a sign of moral strength.<sup>25</sup>

With the emphasis on agglomeration and organisation, *treintistas* sought a close integration of the CNT into the IWA’s structures. When *Solidaridad Obrera* returned under *treintista* editorship in August 1930 after a half-decade absence, its debut issue described it as a mouthpiece of the IWA as much as of the CNT and Catalan CRT.<sup>26</sup> The following summer, *Soli* covered the Madrid IWA congress extensively, also printing essays by Souchy, Rocker, the CGTSR’s Lucien Huart and the SAC’s Albert Jensen, among others, in support of the various motions.<sup>27</sup> *Soli* also promoted the ‘Great International Meeting’ in Barcelona’s Communications Palace on 7 June 1931, which was addressed by several of these IWA congress attendees, including Rocker, Huart, Jensen, Albert de Jong and Nicolas Lazarévich, who had stopped in the city *en route* to Madrid.<sup>28</sup> The speeches, translated, were aired on Radio Barcelona, although *Soli* protested that the transmission had been interrupted by electoral broadcasts.<sup>29</sup> This effort to bring the IWA into the public soundscape formed part of what Casanova describes as revolutionary syndicalists’ efforts to ‘re-enter the public sphere’ by utilising the Republic to expand the CNT as a legal mass trade union movement.<sup>30</sup> That month, the *Mañana* journal associated with the *treintista* tendency also dedicated

---

<sup>25</sup> ‘DESPUES DE LOS CONGRESOS’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 24 June 1931. Spain was then an ‘island of hope’ for the international socialist movement just as much as for libertarians, and it was in his new capacity as Minister of Labour that the UGT’s Largo Caballero hosted the IFTU in Madrid barely two weeks after the declaration of the new Republic: Manuela Aroca Mohedano, ‘Internacionalistas entre la revolución y el fascismo: la Unión General de Trabajadores en el mundo (1919-1936)’, *Hispania* 78. 259 (2018), pp. 323-52 (p. 344), doi:10.3989/hispania.2018.008; Enrique Berzal de la Rosa, ‘More Internationalism, More Strength: The Unión General de Trabajadores in the International Labor Organization, 1919-1936’. *Ventunesimo Secolo* 15.38 (2016), pp. 34–57 (p. 50), doi:10.3280/XXI2016-038003.

<sup>26</sup> The editorial in the first edition of *Soli* following a half-decade prohibition described the newspaper as the ‘organ’ of the Catalan CRT and the ‘mouthpiece’ of the CNT and of the IWA. The newspaper’s masthead now also featured a prominent graphic of the initials AIT (the Spanish initialism for the IWA): ‘EN MARCHA OTRA VEZ’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 31 August 1930.

<sup>27</sup> Essays pertaining to the congress were published under the headline ‘IV CONGRESO MUNDIAL DE LA «ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES»’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 29 May 1931 and various issues in June 1931. The congress itself was covered in ‘Han empezado, en el teatro Barbieri, las tareas del IV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 17 June 1931 and subsequently under the title ‘EL IV CONGRESO DE LA A.I.T.’.

<sup>28</sup> Gutiérrez Molina, *Valeriano*, pp. 52-3 ; see ‘Grandioso Mitin Internacional’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 6 June 1931.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Grandioso Mitin Internacional’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 9 June 1931.

<sup>30</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism*, p. 4.

several pages to Souchy's history of the IWA, which defined it as a continuation of the nineteenth-century International, 'an international union of all the workers'.<sup>31</sup>

Whereas *treintistas* were cautious about Spain and enthusiastic about the IWA, the *faístas* were rather the opposite, combining a certain scepticism towards the International with zealous Spanish exceptionalism. For José Alberola, the vogue for industrial federations demonstrated that IWA organisations had lost their moral compass; however, the Spanish 'masses [...] stood out for their self-sacrifice in social struggles' and their 'promising libertarian idealism'.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps the foremost exceptionalist was García Oliver, who twinned his criticism of the 'beer barrel' industrial federation proposal and the ignorance of 'Berlin' towards the 'purely Spanish' CNT with a mystical vision of the Confederation as one of the 'four spiritual influences' in the world, alongside Soviet Russia, fascist Italy, and 'magnificent India'.<sup>33</sup> This language was in continuity with radicals' wielding of nationalistic myths in the 1920s as a form of dissent against the perceived revisionism and dilution of the CNT's anarchism; the Confederation's revival and explosive expansion as an openly libertarian organisation now appeared to reaffirm these quasi-nationalist stereotypes about anarchist Spain. Now it could be proclaimed that whereas 'Russia has been the first country of the world in which a so-called socialist regime has triumphed', it was the 'destiny' of the CNT, led by the anarchists, that 'Spain will be the first to have the joy of enjoying the libertarian communist regime, the anarchist society'.<sup>34</sup> This vision of national teleology established Spain as a generative site for libertarian internationalism: as the FAI leader Juanel put it, invoking the FRE once more, the Confederation's 'historic mission' was of 'transcendental importance for the other vanguard organisations'.<sup>35</sup> On the front page of *Tierra y Libertad*, Alberola declared that the CNT, with the anarchists at its helm, should 'inject the nourishing sap that flows from our healthy Ideal into the producers grouped in the ranks of IWA'.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> 'ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES', *Mañana*, June 1931.

<sup>32</sup> 'Los anarquistas y la C.N.T.', *Tierra y Libertad*, 28 March 1931.

<sup>33</sup> CNT, *Congreso Extraordinario*, p. 148.

<sup>34</sup> 'EL DESTINO DE LA C.N.T.', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 11 August 1931.

<sup>35</sup> Quotations from the FAI leader, Juanel, reflecting on the CNT congress: 'Después del Congreso', *Tierra y Libertad*, 18 July 1931.

<sup>36</sup> 'Las ideas anarquistas en el momento social', *Tierra y Libertad*, 18 July 1931.

Although *faístas* were perturbed by the industrialist ideas emanating from the IWA Secretariat, García Oliver's dismissive attitude towards the 'comrades from Berlin' did not tell the whole story of their relationship with the organisation. *Tierra y Libertad* published communications from the International Antimilitarist Office, showing that the IWA's antimilitarism was beyond reproach; the newspaper promoted the resolute opposition of Dutch anarcho-syndicalists Albert de Jong and Arthur Müller-Lehning to Besnard and Huart's argument for revolutionary military preparedness.<sup>37</sup> As in the 1920s, moreover, the 'intransigents' utilised the *fait accompli* of the Confederation's membership of a specifically libertarian International to assert its ideological exclusivity. This now had urgent relevance, as the 'agents of the murderers of the Russian proletariat', those 'on Moscow's payroll', sought to capitalise on the flux of regime change and capture the Confederal grassroots through front organisations called 'Committees for the Reconstruction of the CNT' which affirmed that the movement's 1919 adhesion to the Third International remained binding.<sup>38</sup> At the 1931 CNT congress, Galo Díez thus confronted the issue of communist entryism in Confederal unions with the argument that 'at the international level we belong to the IWA, because it is the continuation of the principles of the First International'; therefore, the organisation should disavow as 'incompatible with our national and international postulates those who seek to enter, rather than as workers, as partisans of a political tendency of purely dictatorial character and as defenders of an International opposed in principles to the IWA'.<sup>39</sup>

Between the *treintistas* and *faístas*, and true to Casanova's description of him as a 'prestigious defender of an alternative middle way', stood Orobón, then a member of the IWA Secretariat.<sup>40</sup> Like the *faístas*, Orobón believed that *Soli* should be a paragon of anarcho-syndicalist principles, for instance combatting supposed mistruths about the situation in Spain being propagated in the Soviet press.<sup>41</sup> This concern reflected his belief –

---

<sup>37</sup> 'Los comicios de la CNT, de la AIT y de la FAI' and 'A los trabajadores de todos los países', *Tierra y Libertad*, 1 August 1931; 'REVOLUCION O VIOLENCIA', *Tierra y Libertad*, 29 August 1931.

<sup>38</sup> 'Obediencia a la consigna de Moscou', *Acción Social Obrera*, 14 June 1930; 'El Sindicato y los Políticos', *Acción Social Obrera*, 30 August 1930; 'A SUELDO Y CONSEJO DE MOSCU', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 2 April 1931. See also 'LOS «RECONSTRUCCIONISTAS»', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 7 April 1931. On the plot see Peirats, *CNT*, p. 53, 370n76; Garner, *Goals and Means*, p. 237.

<sup>39</sup> For this debate, see CNT, *Congreso Extraordinario*, pp. 220-26.

<sup>40</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism*, p. 54.

<sup>41</sup> At a meeting of the Catalan CRT that spring, the examples he cited from *Pravda* 'brought about the unanimous protest of the assembled': CRT de Catalunya, *Memorias de los Comicios de la Regional Catalana*

also akin to that of the *faístas* – that Spain could be to the libertarian movement what Russia had been for the communists, offering for ‘our international movement [...] a formidable propaganda weapon [...] against the Bolshevik miscarriage’.<sup>42</sup> In this sense, Orobón appeared to agree that Spain had a special role to play in international anarchist history. Amid the optimism of 1931, he authored a pamphlet, *Sturm über Spanien (Storm over Spain)*, for the FAUD’s *Der Syndikalist* publishing house, which seemed, on the surface, to concur that Spain would be a generative example.<sup>43</sup> The preface declared that ‘the eyes of the global proletariat converge on Spain’, as a sole example of a working class ‘on the attack’ amid economic crisis and authoritarianism; Spain’s ‘proletarian-revolutionary movement’ was of ‘*incomparable* power and energy’, and its ‘organisational forms and methods of struggle’ – ‘the result of a long and heroic tradition that *differs profoundly* from the parliamentary collaborationism practised for decades by the German labour movement’ – now ‘*deserve to be studied* by the global proletariat’.<sup>44</sup> This phrasing recalled Santillán and López Arango’s arguments, not long ago, that the FORA (now the CNT) represented a model movement, rooted in national traditions but which other sections would do well to observe and imitate. Orobón’s essay also evoked some of the *faístas*’ exceptionalism: the ‘critical spirit’ and ‘very combative tradition’ of Spain’s workers was partly attributable to the ‘Spanish temperament’, shaping the ‘decidedly libertarian character’ of the country’s labour movement.<sup>45</sup> Like the *faístas*, he also felt a sense of Spanish historical protagonism: ‘History has placed the Spanish syndicalist movement before a situation that requires of it a gigantic step. The eyes of all international syndicalism look with justified hope upon the CNT’.<sup>46</sup>

---

*Celebrados los Días 31 de Mayo y 1 de Junio, y 2, 3 y 4 de Agosto* (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, 1931), p. 22. Orobón also wrote about the Soviet press’s efforts to ‘deform minds and poison consciences’ with misinformation about Spain in ‘COMO INFORMA LA PRENSA RUSA SOBRE ESPAÑA’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 2 June 1931.

<sup>42</sup> ‘CONSIDERACIONES SOBRE LA REVOLUCIÓN ESPAÑOLA Y LA MISIÓN DE LA CONFEDERACIÓN NACIONAL DEL TRABAJO [III]’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 31 May 1931. More specifically, this essay in *Soli* responded to Leon Trotsky’s argument for Spanish Communists to seize the initiative of the ‘Spanish Revolution’, in which the Russian had dismissed the ‘sorry bewilderment’ of the anarcho-syndicalists: Leon Trotsky, *The Spanish Revolution in Danger* (Pioneer Publishers, 1931).

<sup>43</sup> Bernardini, ‘Señales’, p. 87. The pamphlet is reproduced in Spanish as Valeriano Orobón Fernández, ‘Tormenta sobre España’, in Valeriano, ed. by Gutiérrez Molina, pp. 161-80.

<sup>44</sup> Orobón Fernández, ‘Tormenta sobre España’, pp. 161-2. Emphasis added.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 164.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 180.

However, Orobón firmly deferred these expectations to a later time when the movement was prepared: ‘Could Spanish syndicalism soon build a social experiment of its own and achieve success with this? The future will tell.’<sup>47</sup> In fact, it was exactly the CNT’s apparent exceptionality which threatened its undoing, via the trap of teleological complacency: ‘experience has taught us, precisely in Spain and during painful periods, that the magnitude of the organisation is not enough’.<sup>48</sup> In Orobón’s analysis, the CNT *could* be the kind of global libertarian vanguard hailed by the insurrectionist *faístas*, but only by following a path of improvement which included the structural reforms hailed by the *treintistas*.<sup>49</sup> He contrasted the CNT’s numerical strength with, for example, the SAC’s ‘method, order, practicality, and statistics’, which made it ‘undoubtedly, in terms of organisation, the best section of the IWA’.<sup>50</sup> Orobón’s synthesis emphasised both the CNT’s unique possibilities, and what it could still learn from the rest of the IWA.

The nuances in Orobón’s vision of the CNT were representative within the IWA. It is true that some declarations at the IWA’s 1931 congress in Madrid appeared to support Muñoz Congost’s vision of a CNT ‘legend’ in the International. Carbó, as a Confederal delegate, trumpeted the ‘moral force’ made evident by the movement’s redemption after years of illegality.<sup>51</sup> In his secretarial address to the congress, Rudolf Rocker used tropes of Spanish exceptionalism, referring to Spain as the ‘heart of the revolution’ where the ‘spirit of Bakunin’ was most firmly entrenched, and celebrating ‘the heroism of the Spanish proletariat which, despite the repressions suffered, has always resurged with more vigour and enthusiasm’.<sup>52</sup> He also warned the CNT: ‘The international proletariat [...] trusts in you; do not dash their expectations’.<sup>53</sup> In his own secretarial address to the congress, Orobón offered a starker, even existential warning: ‘You are the key to the future of the anguished and

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> ‘CONSIDERACIONES SOBRE LA REVOLUCION ESPAÑOLA Y LA MISION DE LA CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DEL TRABAJO [I]’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 29 May 1931.

<sup>49</sup> An undated CNT National Committee memorandum espoused a similar analysis: Although those familiar with Spanish social and political life would be ‘shocked’ to see that the ‘completely discredited’ Republicans and Socialists had taken control of the April 1931 ‘revolution’ despite the CNT’s greater ‘prestige and authority’, the ‘psychological moment’ had now passed, and preparation and planning was necessary to ensure that the Confederation’s militants were ready for the next one: IISG CNT 93B.1.2A, ‘ORGANIZACIÓN DE DEFENSA CONFEDERAL’.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Reportajes internacionales’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 25 August 1931.

<sup>51</sup> ‘IV Congreso Mundial’.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.



bloodily restrained proletariat. If you do not become the champions of the new era, we will fall back under the exactitudes of tyranny'.<sup>54</sup> Rocker and Orobón's keenness to emphasise the 'expectations' of the international movement, however, could have been related to their concerns after witnessing sectarian recriminations emerging at the CNT congress a few days prior.<sup>55</sup> In general, apart from these kinds of rhetorical flourishes, the evidence of the congress resists Muñoz Congost's characterisation: even those delegates representing deeply troubled movements (such as the FAUD and the South American organisations) were keen to probe the Spanish representatives about various rumours of Confederal leaders' collaboration with republican politicians.<sup>56</sup> The *cenetistas* present were frequently on the defensive; indeed, it was in an effort to put the various criticisms to rest that Carbó declared that nothing could place in doubt the CNT's revolutionary credentials, 'of which it has given so much proof'.<sup>57</sup> The CNT's 'legendary' status thus appeared more as a reactive claim by which *cenetistas* deflected criticism and scrutiny, rather than a position accepted within the International.

It should be recalled that the IWA was largely a minoritarian tendency; outside Spain and Portugal, most of its sections were very much minorities within their local contexts, 'forced' by constant setbacks 'into the role, above all, of propagandist and critic'.<sup>58</sup> All had consciously spurned the much larger Second and Third Internationals, indicating a certain disposition towards scepticism of claims to grandeur and a high regard for the integrity of fundamental principles. For instance, Schapiro in 1930 insisted that it was better for anarchists to join the 'weak, but revolutionary' French CGTSR than the 'strong... but reformist' CGT.<sup>59</sup> That CGTSR was derided by its critics as the 'CGT-*Sans Rien*' because of the gulf in its affiliation compared with the CGT and the communist CGTU (Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire) – a derision which its leader Besnard bore, in Thorpe's analysis, precisely because of his ideological rigidity.<sup>60</sup> As such, Besnard was hardly swept away by the CNT's resurgence: he wrote in the *treintista* newspaper *Cultura Libertaria* that

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Santillán observed that both Orobón and Rocker appeared to share his temptation to intervene amid the quarrelling: Santillán, *Memorias*, p. 152.

<sup>56</sup> 'IV Congreso Mundial'.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Thorpe, 'Syndicalist internationalism', p. 252.

<sup>59</sup> 'DOS CONGRESOS – TRES DERROTAS', *Acción Social Obrera*, 11 January 1930.

<sup>60</sup> Thorpe, 'Anarchosyndicalism', p. 580.

‘the IWA [...] has a responsibility *to all the sections*’ and that the utility of the Spanish situation, as far as the International could be concerned, depended on how far any Spanish revolution adhered precisely to ‘the syndicalism of the IWA’.<sup>61</sup> This emphasis on a universal doctrinal model left little room for getting carried away by claims of a peculiarly Spanish ‘heroism’ or libertarian national cultural patterns.

The Russian group in the IWA was particularly emblematic of this principled minoritarianism, consisting of revolutionaries who had disavowed a successful revolution in their country, demonstrating their resilience to triumphalist rhetoric. In this regard, their representative at the IWA congress, Nicolas Lazarévitch, began a later report of his visit to Spain by declaring his desire not to appear like the ‘pilgrims returning from Russia after two- or three-week visits and calmly saying the stupidest things about the “new world” that they have discovered’.<sup>62</sup> Instead, it was his intention, *even* ‘if certain facts *cause the loss of some illusions*’, to uphold ‘worker truth’ and thereby ‘allow the Spanish proletariat to move forward despite its errors’.<sup>63</sup> For example, he urged revolutionary syndicalists from other countries,

who know better the harm caused to the labour movement by the parliamentary illusion, to tell the CNT upon which they all have their eyes fixed: we admire the mass character of your movement; we approve of your struggle against the socialist leaders betraying the proletarian cause; we share your distrust of the Communist politicians, executors of the Russian government’s foreign policy [...] but we cannot be in solidarity with the welcoming attitude observed by your daily press towards elements which may claim to be extreme left, but never intend to leave the confines of the bourgeois order.<sup>64</sup>

Lazarévitch could not have been clearer that in his view, the CNT’s numerical advantage would *not* protect it from scrutiny for perceived ideological deviations. Unsurprisingly, he was among those who asked probing questions of the CNT delegates at the 1931 congress.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> ‘PROBLEMAS DEL MOMENTO’, *Cultura Libertaria*, 25 December 1931. Emphasis in original.

<sup>62</sup> ‘LA SITUATION POLITIQUE DE L’ESPAGNE’, *La Révolution Prolétarienne*, 5 October 1931

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. Lazarévitch likely referred to the short-lived and informal pact some Catalan *cenetistas* maintained with the populist Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) party, which promised trade union freedoms and an amnesty for social and political prisoners. See Ealham, *Anarchism*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>65</sup> ‘IV Congreso Mundial’.

On the other hand, in his own congressional greeting, *cenetista* Avelino González Mallada stated that he ‘would like [the CNT] to be the most modest of all the organisations affiliated to the IWA because this would demonstrate [the IWA’s] vitality’.<sup>66</sup> This was a polite reference to an issue which must have been obvious to all: the massive numerical disparity between the CNT and most of its fellow sections. In fact, whatever aggrandising ‘legend’ may have exaggerated the CNT’s powers was surely far outweighed by the IWA’s own discursive fictions, such as constant references to the ‘international proletariat’ or to ‘the working class’ of a given country, when most of its sections represented small, even miniscule minority unions and groups.<sup>67</sup> *Cenetistas* themselves often dabbled in flagrant hyperbole when referring to their international allies, playing their part in this fiction.<sup>68</sup> Yet although discursive abstractions and hyperbolic flattery could obfuscate that imbalance, it left questions open at the International’s ‘blurrier borders’, in the exact sense in which Sluga uses the phrase: ‘who it represented, who it would govern, on what authority, and with what powers.’<sup>69</sup> This became evident in a more heated moment of that 1931 congress, when various delegations clashed with Santillán over the question of the industrial federations.<sup>70</sup> Exasperated, Carbó declared that it was unacceptable for ‘inexistent organisations’ to overrule the will of the those with ‘the representation of more than a million workers’.<sup>71</sup> Manuel Pérez, representing the CRT for northern Spain, claimed that at the 1926 IWA plenum in Paris, he and other CNT delegates had not voted because they ‘believed honourably that an organisation with no real strength should not impose its opinion on those who were genuinely represented’.<sup>72</sup> Notably, this had been one of Pestaña’s criticisms of the second Comintern congress over a decade earlier – that a single vote for each individual delegate left the CNT underrepresented in its voting power.<sup>73</sup> The concern was that an unweighted voting system gave minorities a disproportionate and unrepresentative level of power; a federalist arrangement first designed to bring together analogue movements

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See for example, Souchy’s speech at the congress; *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> For example, the CNT and the Portuguese CGT were mutually guilty of giving distorted impression of each other: Gonçalves, ‘Península Rubro-Negra’, pp. 45-46.

<sup>69</sup> Sluga, *Internationalism*, p. 38.

<sup>70</sup> See above, p. 132n337.

<sup>71</sup> ‘IV Congreso Mundial’.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Zoffmann Rodriguez, ‘The Spanish Anarchists’, p. 216.

representing each country's working class was now one which treated vastly different organisations as equivalents. Although the voting system remained intact for the time being, Carbó and Pérez's concerns signalled some of the underlying dilemmas posed by a deeply imbalanced organisation, and this would not be the last time CNT representatives attempted to promote a proportional approach within the International.

### *Roles and responsibilities in an imbalanced International*

Nelles argues that 'the Spanish movement' was oriented towards 'the immediate realisation of the social revolution' and had a 'less formal, more direct' understanding of how to organise and how to practise solidarity compared with other anarcho-syndicalist movements.<sup>74</sup> This supposed cultural difference, Nelles argues, included a disinterest in international affairs, that would explain the increasingly troubled relations between the IWA and the CNT during the years of the Second Republic. However, this argument can be criticised. The evidence from the movement's print culture suggests that even when 'local' events absorbed a great deal of attention, the imagery and iconography of the international movement shaped understandings of the struggle: the disruption of local Communist Party meetings formed part of the fight against 'Stalin's demagogues', and the Casas Viejas massacre sat within the same lineage of revolutionary martyrdom as the Chicago anarchists in 1887 or Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927.<sup>75</sup> The engagement with the issue of fascism, explored in the next section, further demonstrates awareness of the international situation. Furthermore, Nelles's generalisation ignores the stark internal political divisions *within* 'the Spanish movement'. After the onset of the Second Republic, a confluence of bitter labour disputes, state repression, and weak democratic consolidation slowing the pace of reform all set the CNT on a path of radicalisation; the *faístas* who took the helm had attitudes very different to those of the *treintistas* they replaced.<sup>76</sup>

At the CNT's 1931 congress, various delegates had insisted on the need to pay IWA dues, which had fallen into irregularity during the years of dictatorship and exile.<sup>77</sup> The IWA had

<sup>74</sup> Nelles, 'La Legión Extranjera de la Revolución', p. 134.

<sup>75</sup> 'The Spanish workers against Stalin's demagogues', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 10 December 1932; '¡Chicago—Casas Viejas!', *CNT*, 11 November 1933.

<sup>76</sup> For this process of radicalization see Ealham, *Anarchism*, pp. 90-129; Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 30-35.

<sup>77</sup> CNT, *Congreso Extraordinario*, pp. 218, 226.

in early 1924 stated that sections would be *requested* to collect funds for solidarity and propaganda via stamps, whose value ‘should be decided by every national organisation itself’.<sup>78</sup> The following year, as the IWA moved to assume a degree of discipline and organisation, its second congress approved a system whereby each individual member of an affiliated organisation would pay annual dues equivalent to 10 US cent, collected via local unions and certified by a stamp on the union card; the national section would forward this money monthly to the IWA Secretariat.<sup>79</sup> In practise, however, the years of underground organisation and exile had prevented the CNT from fulfilling this duty and in 1931, amid the *treintista* clamour to consolidate and organise, many concurred with Pestaña’s argument that the ‘path of normality’ opened by the Republic should lead to regularity in the CNT’s internal finances and proportionality in its contribution to the IWA.<sup>80</sup>

By late 1932, however, Pestaña had been forced out of the CNT; his perspective replaced by the one evinced in the Confederation’s official report to the IWA, which declared that the experiences of constant struggle and repression made it ‘easier to launch a whole region into a general strike, than make it pay its confederal dues with normality’.<sup>81</sup> González Mallada, the report’s author, depicted the Spanish workers, with the FAI at the vanguard, ‘on the march [...] towards Libertarian Communism’.<sup>82</sup> The notoriously repressive Spanish state knew that it ‘had to defeat us or perish’: ‘the workers of Europe know the formidable repression unleashed against the Spanish workers belonging to the CNT’.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the hostility from both the Republic and from ‘all the Marxists’ testified to Confederation’s genuine power and potential.<sup>84</sup> Affiliation to ‘Berlin’ reflected the revolutionary identity of this heroic and battle-hardened CNT, which could have no truck with the traitorous Amsterdam International or the ‘new masters of Russia’.<sup>85</sup> Despite this *moral* and *political* alignment, however, this version of the CNT’s *modus vivendi* left little room for fulfilling the prosaic and practical

---

<sup>78</sup> ‘FULL SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKINGMEN’S ASSOCIATION’, *News Service of the IWMA*, February 1924.

<sup>79</sup> ‘INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO’.

<sup>80</sup> According to Pestaña, only thirty or forty thousand members (less than 10% of the posited membership) regularly paid their dues: CNT, *Congreso Extraordinario*, p. 227.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Informe enviado a la AIT [II]’, CNT, 6 January 1933; Herrerín López, *Camino*, pp. 166-67.

<sup>82</sup> Informe enviado a la AIT [II]. As detailed within the report, Mallada along with Galo Díez had been one of the *cenetistas* sent to affiliate to the IWA ten years prior.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Informe enviado a la AIT [I]’, CNT, 5 January 1933.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

responsibilities of IWA membership. González Mallada cited the ‘constant subversive strikes’ and constant repression – ‘our unique way of being’ – as explanations for ‘the delays in dues, the difficulty in assembling statistics, [and] the absence of any methodised work’.<sup>86</sup> He thus urged ‘IWA comrades who do not fully know our ethnic peculiarities’ to not envisage ‘a well-articulated Confederation, whose union cadres punctually fulfil their statutory duties and obligations’.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the CNT would maintain consistently low rates of compliance in paying dues, which themselves remained relatively low compared with the dues of other IWA sections, for the duration of this period.<sup>88</sup>

This was not, however, especially out of the ordinary within the context of the IWA. From the outset, sections had claimed an exemption from contributions, undoubtedly benefitting from the International’s federalist, libertarian ethos: during the 1925 discussion on creating a regular system, representatives for the Portuguese and Mexican CGTs both suggested that the crises their sections were experiencing made payment of these sums impossible; instead, they agreed ‘in principle’, pledging ‘to do everything possible to cooperate in the maintenance of the IWA’.<sup>89</sup> Carbó had similarly defended the CNT’s non-payment of dues as a consequence of the dictatorship.<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, Santillán had argued that the Latin-American sections’ prisoner solidarity costs, stemming from their constant confrontation with authoritarian states, made it impossible for them to pay their dues.<sup>91</sup> In reality, then, the IWA Secretariat had tended to rely on the strong finances and stability of the SAC as its ‘treasury’.<sup>92</sup>

It was therefore an IWA Secretariat accustomed to surviving on the support of particular sections, rather than on the regularised contributions of them all, that approached the CNT National Committee in January 1933 to explain that rising unemployment in Sweden had undermined the SAC’s finances, and to request that the Confederation ‘contribute to strengthening the organisations adherent to the IWA’.<sup>93</sup> With this, the IWA Secretariat began

---

<sup>86</sup> ‘Informe enviado a la AIT [II]’.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 41-2.

<sup>89</sup> ‘INFORME OFICIAL DEL SEGUNDO CONGRESO’.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> He later conceded that this argument had been something of an evasion: Santillán, *Memorias*, p. 96.

<sup>92</sup> Thorpe, ‘Syndicalist internationalism’, p. 249.

<sup>93</sup> IISG IWMA 19, ‘Rapport sur l’activité de la CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DU TRAVAIL d’Espagne’ [Annex 1].

to conceptualise the CNT similarly to how many continental organisations within the First International had seen the British unions: ‘as sources of money to be called upon’, frequently based on unrealistic expectations.<sup>94</sup> There was an ‘urgent need to reinforce our propaganda within the countries where our ideas are little known, or where our organisations are still weak, but which promise good outcomes for our movement’.<sup>95</sup> This conferred a redistributive responsibility on the CNT. However, while some members of the National Committee were sympathetic (although also clear that the Confederation lacked the funds to take on such a responsibility), one delegate derided it as ‘childish’ to reallocate scarce resources to ‘where nothing exists’.<sup>96</sup> Rather than the CNT shouldering the burden of expanding the International, ‘Spain needs the support of the whole IWA’ in its status as the organisation’s only revolutionary hope.<sup>97</sup> The same issue – the dramatic disparity between the CNT and other IWA sections – provoked entirely different responses, from the redistributive to the protectionist. This may have implied, as Nelles suggests, differing views on the immediacy of social revolution and on the objectives of organisation; but the question also cannot be separated from the dilemma posed by imbalance, in terms of individual (national) responsibilities to the collective (International).

The International’s plenum that April in Amsterdam saw further consideration of this question, against the backdrop of the Nazi takeover in Germany which forced the dissolution of the FAUD and the flight of the IWA Secretariat, its archive confiscated.<sup>98</sup> With a sense of growing crisis, delegates spoke of needing a ‘good financial base’ and for ‘strong’ sections, particularly the CNT, to ‘help the weaker organisations’.<sup>99</sup> However, the CNT itself was in poor shape, in the wake of the failed January 1933 anarchist uprising. The proponents of ‘revolutionary gymnastics’ had attempted to launch an insurrection, believing that violent acts could transform a railway workers’ strike into a broader proletarian rebellion; among various failings, however, a lack of active support for the uprising within the rank-and-file

---

<sup>94</sup> Nicolas Delalande, ‘Transnational solidarity in the making: labour strikes, money flows, and the First International, 1864-1872’, in *‘Arise Ye Wretched of the Earth’: The First International in Global Perspective*, ed. by Fabrice Bensimon, Quentin Deluermoz and Jeanne Moisand (Brill, 2018), pp. 66-88 (p. 77).

<sup>95</sup> ‘Rapport sur l’activité de la CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DU TRAVAIL d’Espagne’ [Annex 1].

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. The IWA delegate contended that an expansion of the International would ‘create the atmosphere and thereby facilitate and strengthen [the revolution] being prepared in Spain’.

<sup>98</sup> Thorpe, ‘Syndicalist internationalism’, pp. 550-51; Vadillo Muñoz, ‘El sindicalismo revolucionario’, p. 70.

<sup>99</sup> FAL ARC-03016, ‘PLENUM INTERNATIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933’.

was pivotal.<sup>100</sup> The diffuse episodes of upheaval triggered considerable repression, of which the massacre of twenty *campesinos* in the village of Casas Viejas, Cádiz was just the most infamous episode.<sup>101</sup> As such, parrying his IWA comrades' scrutiny of the Confederation's finances, Carbó cited the 'frequency of persecution': 'Hundreds of comrades are in prison. Trials cost a lot of money'.<sup>102</sup> Nonetheless, he also acknowledged that it was 'humiliating that the CNT, which is forty times stronger than the SAC, contributes forty times less', and unfair that some sections had become the 'bankers of the movement', pledging that the Confederation would try to improve the situation by implementing a stamp for individual union cards.<sup>103</sup> At the same time, however, the CNT delegation questioned the plenum about the material support the various IWA sections would be able to provide in the event of a revolutionary situation arising in Spain; with no immediate answer forthcoming, Carbó voiced his doubts about whether the other affiliates truly understood the 'special difficulties' faced by the CNT.<sup>104</sup> Once more, as well as different understandings of the imminence of revolution, these were also essentially contradictory views on how to manage the imbalance and how the exceptional CNT could be generative for the Association as a whole: as a financial base for other sections, or as the vanguard for the movement's revolutionary goals.

The April plenum also saw discussion of the report prepared by IWA secretary Alexander Schapiro during a stay in Spain across late 1932 and early 1933. Historians from as diverse perspectives as Ángel Herrerín and Agustín Guillamón have cited Schapiro's report, which criticised the internecine conflict between *treintistas* and *faístas* and the failed January uprising as evidence of the poor state of internal cohesion and organisation within the Confederation at this juncture.<sup>105</sup> However, beyond its insight into the CNT's internal situation, the Schapiro report in itself also emphasises the paradoxical dynamic unfolding in

---

<sup>100</sup> Herrerín, *Camino*, pp. 197-205.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, pp. 205-07.

<sup>102</sup> 'PLENUM INTERNATIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933'.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. The decision by the IWA's 1925 second congress to adopt an individual union card stamp for the international contribution thus appeared to have been long forgotten.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Agustín Guillamón, *Los Comités de Defensa de la CNT en Barcelona (1933-1938). De los Cuadros de Defensa a los Comités Revolucionarios de Barriada, las Patrullas de Control y las Milicias Populares*, fifth edition (Alejandría Proletaria, 2018), p. 11 ; Herrerín López, *Camino*, pp. 213-4, 234-4; Julián Casanova cites it as one key case of IWA 'observers and delegates', throughout the Second Republic era, hedging their declarations of respect for the CNT's (and the Spanish people's) spirit and activity with criticisms of the Confederation's 'organisational defects': Casanova, *Anarchism*, p. 42.



the International. Schapiro's original mission in Spain was to help establish an 'Iberian Secretariat' of the IWA, which would act as a point of contact between the IWA and the CNT – a clear indicator of the central importance that the latter now represented for the former.<sup>106</sup> It was only after visa troubles held him back until December, by which time the National Committee was too occupied with revolutionary preparation to collaborate on the new Secretariat, that Schapiro switched to preparing his report.<sup>107</sup> Thus the same document which would eventually chronicle the CNT's dysfunction also signified, in its origins, the International's increasing dependence on that same CNT.<sup>108</sup>

In the report, Schapiro dabbled with Spanish exceptionalism, suggesting that libertarian ideas were 'rooted in the hearts of the Spanish people to such a profound degree that we can speak of *racial anarchism*'.<sup>109</sup> However, like Orobón, he rejected teleological determinism. The failure of the January 1933 uprising demonstrated that this seemingly innate anarchism could not by itself compensate for organisational 'disarray' and the 'practical difficulties of a social revolution'.<sup>110</sup> As Besnard, Lazarévitch and others had done in 1931, Schapiro thus largely measured the CNT against IWA doctrine rather than the reverse, once more suggesting that a CNT 'legend' is too simple a framework to explain the inter-organisation relationship in this era. His analysis recalled the debates about anarchism and syndicalism from the previous decade: criticising the FAI's external 'interference' in the CNT and the 'exaggerated sentimentalism and total absence of reasoned judgement' of the purist anarchist Federica Montseny, while also disapproving of the *treintistas*' excessively apolitical

---

<sup>106</sup> A 1935 IWA report suggests that the Iberian Secretariat was created at the 1931 international congress, with Pestaña nominated as its secretary, and that the July 1932 meeting determined that Carbó and Schapiro would 'reorganise' it: FAL ARC-03016, 'L'ACTIVITÉ DE L'ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS 1933-1935'. However, no mention is made of such a decision in the CNT's own transcript of the 1931 IWA congress. Souchy explained that the decision to create an Iberian Secretariat was made by the five secretaries (Souchy, Schapiro, Carbó, Müller-Lehning, and Rocker) in June 1932: 'PLENUM INTERNATIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933'. In his report, Schapiro stated that in July it was decided that he would go and help Carbó set it up: IISG IWMA 19, 'Rapport sur l'activité de la CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DU TRAVAIL d'Espagne'.

<sup>107</sup> 'Rapport sur l'activité de la CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DU TRAVAIL'.

<sup>108</sup> Despite the name, the emphasis was very much on Spain and the CNT. However, Schapiro at the April 1933 plenum acknowledged that Portugal had an anarchist tradition akin to that of Spain, and that the Portuguese CGT would be similarly powerful if it were not for the dictatorship: 'PLENUM INTERNACIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933'. Nonetheless, although sources are limited, surviving correspondence shows that Portuguese exiles in Spain such as Germinal de Sousa were in contact with Carbó as secretary of the Secretariat, giving it a certain 'Iberian' function: see Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica, Salamanca [hereafter CDMH], PS-Barcelona 848/15.

<sup>109</sup> 'Rapport sur l'activité de la CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DU TRAVAIL'. Emphasis added.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

stance.<sup>111</sup> Attempting to articulate a complementarity between the exceptional CNT and the rest of the IWA, Schapiro reached for a metaphor: ‘Spain is, today, undoubtedly, the hearth of the revolution. But it is poorly maintained. The fire is irregular and burns poorly. The useful heat emitted is far from proportional to the quantity of coal employed’.<sup>112</sup>

Nelles cites the CNT's response to Schapiro as evidence of his broader thesis on the Spanish movement's supposedly dismissive stance on internationalism, claiming that the IWA secretary's ‘attempt [...] to influence the development of the CNT found little sympathy among the Spanish comrades’.<sup>113</sup> At the aforementioned 1933 IWA plenum, for example, Carbó insisted that the Russian could only have obtained a partial understanding of the Spanish situation during his limited sojourn in the country, and argued that the report apportioned too much blame to the FAI and not enough to the *treintistas*.<sup>114</sup> The FAI, Carbó argued, made Spain a ‘revolutionary country par excellence’.<sup>115</sup> In other words, whereas Schapiro felt his criticism of the FAI was needed to *protect* Spain's exceptional revolutionary potential, Carbó invoked that same exceptionality *against* the former's intervention. Surviving correspondence indicates further criticism of Schapiro from the CNT following this plenum: the IWA Secretariat complained about ‘aggressive and unpleasant statements’ made by the CNT's general secretary Manuel Rivas during a meeting of the National Committee to discuss the report.<sup>116</sup> A letter co-signed by Rivas and other union leaders attacked Schapiro's perceived ‘partisanship’ towards the FAI, and suggested that Schapiro ‘wanted to address *our* problems at the cost of disfiguring them’.<sup>117</sup>

However, it is worth acknowledging the strikingly interventionist nature of Schapiro's ‘fire’ metaphor, with the prescriptive hand of the IWA correcting the Spanish movement's trajectory. The insinuation of executive overreach bears resemblance to Santillán's own quarrels with Schapiro's ‘centralising endeavours’ the previous decade, and therefore hints at the unresolved tensions between solidarism and pluralism operating within the

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Nelles, ‘La Legión Extranjera de la Revolución’, p. 130.

<sup>114</sup> ‘PLENUM INTERNACIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933’. The CNT delegate, Amadeo Gonga, also defended the National Committee.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 848/15, IWA secretary to National Committee, 12 October 1933. Rivas had been singled out in the Schapiro report for mixing his functions as CNT leader and anarchist activist.

<sup>117</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 848/15, Manuel Rivas *et al* to IWA Secretariat, 19 October 1933. Emphasis added.

International. Moreover, by April, the CNT's own internal turmoil was a polarising force. As Casanova highlights, in the immediate aftermath of the 'fiasco' of January 1933, many leading voices within the Confederation – including the National Committee and the *CNT* editor González Mallada – coincided with much of Schapiro's analysis, but a political culture unforgiving of open criticism of revolutionaries soon brought 'mutual reproaches, corrections and accusations' to the fore, leading to recantations.<sup>118</sup> In point of fact, despite his objections in Amsterdam, Carbó had actually collaborated closely with the Russian during his time in Spain, co-authoring a first critical IWA memorandum on the January uprising which shaped, and indeed was reproduced within, Schapiro's final report.<sup>119</sup> Not unreasonably, the IWA Secretariat pointed out that the National Committee had unanimously accepted that Schapiro-Carbó memorandum at the time, and that its condemnation of Schapiro's report some months later 'implies a 180 degree turn compared with earlier attitudes'.<sup>120</sup> As well as highlighting different interpretations of the International's role and remit, the spurning of Schapiro's observations must thus be understood as occurring within this cutthroat context, rather than reflecting any *a priori* hostility to him as a foreign activist.

Indeed, activists were keen to *use* Schapiro as an authoritative voice when it served their factional agenda in the struggle between *faístas* and *treintistas*: in February, for example, both *CNT* and *Solidaridad Obrera* published his criticism of Ángel Pestaña's ever clearer disavowal of anarchism.<sup>121</sup> Shortly after the April plenum, *CNT* published a special May Day double-length issue which again featured writing by Schapiro as well as other figures from the IWA and the wider international movement including Rocker, the Dutch IWA secretary Arthur Müller-Lehning, Max Nettlau, Sébastien Faure, Kropotkin, and the German anarchist Erich Mühsam.<sup>122</sup> The 'little sympathy' that Nelles discerns for Schapiro's intervention cannot, therefore, be so easily attributed to a lack of internationalism. Among many other examples from the movement's print culture in this period, Carbó's two-part essay in *Tierra*

---

<sup>118</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>119</sup> 'Rapport sur l'activité de la CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DU TRAVAIL'.

<sup>120</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 848/15, IWA secretary to National Committee, 12 October 1933. Indeed, even before the uprising Rivas had held an 'ambiguous' position, saying that he opposed the uprising as CNT representative 'but as an activist and anarchist his heart was with those who participated': Casanova, *Anarchism*, p. 69.

<sup>121</sup> 'Una carta del compañero A. Schapiro a la Redacción de «Cultura Libertaria»', *CNT*, 25 February 1933; 'Una razonada opinión del compañero Schapiro', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 24 February 1933.

<sup>122</sup> See *CNT*, número extraordinario [1 May] 1933.

y *Libertad*'s supplementary journal can be highlighted: affirming that the IWA was the 'heir and successor' to the Bakuninist wing of the First International which had laid 'deep roots' in Spain, Carbó described it as the 'natural' international affiliate for the CNT, inextricable from the Confederation's own moral purpose, 'the supreme task that its own nature has assigned it: the realisation of anarchist communism'.<sup>123</sup> This was 'imagineer' work, situating the IWA within the CNT's own traditions and leitmotifs.

The Schapiro report thus provides further evidence that Muñoz Congost's idea of a CNT 'legend' taking root in the IWA is oversimplified: although the Spanish section's exceptionality was acknowledged, there was considerable concern about whether it was deviating from anarcho-syndicalist doctrine and therefore imperilling its revolutionary potential. The contradiction that the report embodied – of a floundering international movement, clearly dependent on a Spanish section which was itself deeply troubled – would only intensify as the April plenum upheld Schapiro's recommendation to move the Secretariat, uprooted from Berlin, to Spain.<sup>124</sup> The *faístas* who had spurned Schapiro's critique nonetheless saw the IWA as a potential source of material support for an impending revolutionary uprising, in an outlook which spoke more to their own hopeful notions about the function of revolutionary internationalism than to any realistic assessment of the International.<sup>125</sup> The IWA Secretariat would in turn continue to see the CNT as a potential source of stabilising funds, even as the Confederation hurtled towards an uprising, in defiance of that same Secretariat's urgings, which would herald a period of almost constant crisis for the CNT.

### *Dilemmas of libertarian anti-fascism*

Given the controversy that still surrounds the CNT's decision to opt for anti-fascist unity and collaboration in the wake of the July 1936 coup, the relative lack of analysis of the

---

<sup>123</sup> 'la a.i.t. en españa', *Suplemento de Tierra y Libertad*, 15 October and 16 November 1933

<sup>124</sup> First to Madrid, and later to Barcelona: 'PLENUM INTERNACIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933'.

<sup>125</sup> This is evident from the forecited letter from the IWA Secretariat querying the National Committee's about-turn on the Schapiro report; it also states that the other sections had not yet given any indication of 'the solidarity that, eventually, they would be able to offer', implying that the National Committee had made further inquiries about the issue. Rejection of Schapiro's criticism was thus simultaneous to a desire for international solidarity from the International: CDMH PS-Barcelona 848/15, IWA secretary to National Committee, 12 October 1933.

movement's earlier attempts to grapple with the fascist threat is surprising. Agustín Guillamón, for example, has been a stringent historiographical critic of the Confederation's wartime policy, yet does not analyse its pre-war attempts to grapple with the fascist threat in Spain in any kind of depth.<sup>126</sup> Danny Evans offers an exception to this paucity, in his recasting of the CNT's 'ultra-left' response to the fascist threat in 1933 as a rational one, against the grain of hindsight which tends to affirm the pragmatic suspension of revolutionary principles as 'a necessary precondition for successful anti-fascism'.<sup>127</sup> However, there is scope to expand on Evans's analysis by asking how the CNT's real and perceived exceptionality within the international anarcho-syndicalist movement were mobilised and contested in debates about how to respond to fascism, within Spain and the IWA.

As Hugo García has highlighted, and more recent research has confirmed, anti-fascism was an eminently transnational phenomenon, closely linked to cross-border networks and movements; yet it was also one in which different iterations were shaped by particular national identities and traditions.<sup>128</sup> Anti-fascists had to choose between the 'strict ideological terms of international class solidarity' or the reclamation of national identity with an 'alternative national imaginary'.<sup>129</sup> In this latter vein, on the symbolic date of 1 May 1933, for example, the anarchist purist Federica Montseny wrote that although Spaniards were 'conscious' of what was happening 'in old Europe', it was the fact that they carried 'the globetrotting gypsy, the sanguine Hebrew, the adventurous Bedouin within us' which gave them a 'healthily and ferociously individualist' nature, to which fascism represented an aberration.<sup>130</sup> While Montseny's cultural nationalism was one idiosyncratic response, however, what concerns us here is the interplay between the CNT's association with the IWA

---

<sup>126</sup> For example, despite the book's supposed periodisation, the dilemmas of 1933 are not analysed in any kind of depth in Guillamón, *Comités de Defensa*. More on Guillamón and anti-fascist collaboration in the next chapter.

<sup>127</sup> Danny Evans, "'Ultra-left' anarchists and anti-fascism in the Second Republic", *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 29.3 (2016), pp. 241-56 (p. 253), doi:10.1386/ijis.29.3.241\_1

<sup>128</sup> Hugo García, 'Transnational history: a new paradigm for anti-fascist studies?' *Contemporary European History* 24.4 (2016), pp. 563-72 (pp. 566-7), doi:10.1017/S0960777316000382. See also Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David J. Featherstone (eds.), *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism* (Routledge, 2021).

<sup>129</sup> Nigel Copsey, 'Radical diasporic anti-fascism in the 1920s', in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective*, ed. by Braskén, Copsey and Featherstone, pp. 23-42 (pp. 25, 28).

<sup>130</sup> 'FASCISMOS', *La Revista Blanca*, 1 May 1933.

on the one hand, and its unique character as a mass anarcho-syndicalist movement on the other, which shaped debates about how to respond to the threat of fascism in Spain.

Evans highlights that regarding the rise of fascism, the CNT was ‘more attuned to developments in Europe than is sometimes suggested’.<sup>131</sup> Significant, prominent coverage of the ascent of Hitler in Germany in the *cenetista* press, for instance, again puts the lie to Nelles’s portrayal of a movement with little interest in global affairs.<sup>132</sup> To Evans’s account could be added that the IWA was frequently involved in disseminating understandings of, and organising opposition to, the authoritarian regimes afflicting its constituent sections. For example, *CNT* published an appeal from the IWA Secretariat on behalf of the German Jewish anarchist Erich Mühsam on its front page, calling for Spanish workers to send messages of protest against his detention to the German embassy in Madrid.<sup>133</sup> The Secretariat later reported that ‘innumerable’ CNT unions had done so and that a resolution against Mühsam’s persecution was also passed by a meeting of twenty thousand *cenetistas* in Madrid.<sup>134</sup> Another IWA-inspired campaign, oriented towards the plight of Portuguese workers, accrued more than two thousand *pesetas* from CNT unions.<sup>135</sup> These examples – initiatives which allowed *cenetistas* of all levels to collaborate actively with the International – highlight the active investment of anarcho-syndicalist workers in anti-fascism with a clear internationalist orientation.

Evans also notes that *cenetistas* drew lessons from Germany about the failed ‘complacency’ of ‘Marxist fatalism’.<sup>136</sup> As he points out, at a hundred-thousand-strong rally in Barcelona, Orobón – whose experiences abroad left him ‘more aware than most of the specific dangers that fascism posed’ – railed against the failure of Germany’s socialist political parties to prevent Hitler’s rise.<sup>137</sup> Other IWA figures were also pivotal in

---

<sup>131</sup> Evans, ‘Ultra-left’, p. 242.

<sup>132</sup> For example, *CNT* ran a front page column on the Nazi takeover: see ‘Hacia el tercer Reich’, *CNT*, 3 March 1933 and subsequent issues.

<sup>133</sup> ‘¡¡La vida de Erich Mühsam, en peligro!!’, *CNT*, 25 November 1933. See also the subsequent notice of his death in the IWA’s Spanish-language press: ‘ERICH MUEHSAM’, *Boletín de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores*, August 1934.

<sup>134</sup> ‘L’ACTIVITÉ DE L’ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS 1933-1935’.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Evans, ‘Ultra-left’, pp. 248-9.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249. Reported in ‘La CNT, en la entraña del pueblo’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 7 November 1933.

disseminating this message.<sup>138</sup> On *CNT*'s front page, Schapiro argued that the Nazi takeover proved the moral bankruptcy of both the Second and Third Internationals, and thus of authoritarian politics in general.<sup>139</sup> This critique of the German Marxists' failure arguably carried its greatest weight when put forward by FAUD activists forced into exile: in *La Revista Blanca*, for example, Rüdiger pointed to the 'historical irony' that the Nazis had destroyed the Gustav Landauer memorial while denouncing him as a 'Marxist', when the Nazis themselves were 'continuing and perfecting the traitorous work of the German social democrats'.<sup>140</sup> In words reprinted in both *CNT* and *Solidaridad Obrera*, his colleague Rudolf Rocker urged a sacrosanct treatment of libertarian principles in the face of the fascist threat:

[w]hile the IWA remains loyal to this anti-authoritarian conception of socialism, its existence is more than justified, it is of first necessity, whether the number of its followers is large or small compared to that of other movements and tendencies. The number does not matter more than the spirit of the organisation.<sup>141</sup>

This was a particularly striking example of the minoritarian ethos of many IWA militants and their belief in the indivisibility of anti-authoritarian principles. From within the IWA and the FAUD, there was therefore emphasis on awareness of the fascist threat, while justifying the need to maintain libertarian principles.

Nonetheless, although this awareness and concern was present across the IWA, it did not signify perfect harmony, nor that each section behaved in like manner; while Evans suggests that the lucid analysis of events in Germany (and in Spain) were reasonable grounds for an 'ultra-left' approach to anti-fascism, it is important to note the marked differences *within* the broad notion of an anti-political, libertarian response to the fascist threat.<sup>142</sup> The *faïsta*-led *CNT* would respond to the perceived threat with a doomed, unilateral revolutionary

---

<sup>138</sup> See the front page 'Un llamamiento de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores contra el fascismo mundial', *CNT*, 2 June 1933.

<sup>139</sup> Printed twice: 'El fracaso de las Internacionales marxistas', *CNT*, 6 April 1933 and 7 April 1933; The IWA's Spanish-language press service also attacked the role of the KPD in the Nazi takeover: 'El fascismo en Alemania', *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 15 October 1933.

<sup>140</sup> 'GUSTAV LANDAUER', *La Revista Blanca*, 15 August 1933.

<sup>141</sup> 'El socialismo y los principios de la AIT', *CNT*, número extraordinario [1 May] 1933; 'POSICION MENTAL FRENTE AL FASCISMO', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 2 November 1933.

<sup>142</sup> At home, the UGT's collaboration with the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and the blame attributed to the PSOE for various episodes of bloody repression under the Republic generated reasonable doubts about the Socialists' reliability as anti-fascist allies: Evans, 'Ultra-left', pp. 243-4.

insurrection in December 1933.<sup>143</sup> However, at the Confederation's plenum just weeks prior, the IWA Secretariat cautioned strongly *against* what it saw as a precipitous rising, declining to finance the preparations and dissenting from the insurrectionists' reading of the Spanish 'politico-social situation'.<sup>144</sup> Instead, the IWA urged fulfilment of the recommendations of the Schapiro report (improving the movement's structures and organisation), regularising the Confederation's contributions to the International, and channelling *cenetistas'* clear interest in anti-fascist solidarity into a boycott of German products.<sup>145</sup>

In fact, divergences between the CNT and other IWA sections over the anti-fascist question began earlier and were clearly linked to the Spanish movement's exceptional position. When the IWA's April 1933 plenum debated whether to participate alongside Marxist organisations in an upcoming global anti-fascist congress in Copenhagen, for example, it is striking that within a spectrum of responses the *cenetistas* were the most outspoken and intransigent opponents of working with those whom Carbó labelled 'the murderers of Casas Viejas'.<sup>146</sup> This was itself a notable departure from the example mentioned in the last chapter, when in 1929 the clandestine CNT dispatched Orobón to a communist-organised anti-fascist congress despite his own misgivings. Carbó now argued for total non-contamination: 'you do not attend fascist congresses to make propaganda, and so, if you attend a communist congress, it suggests a certain solidarity'.<sup>147</sup> By contrast, one of the FAUD's delegates contended that the syndicalist movement needed to recognise its weaknesses and that it was useful if other tendencies opposed fascism; this, they argued, need not detract from the movement's anti-Bolshevik stance.<sup>148</sup> For Souchy, the FAUD activist now representing the Polish anarchists, it was necessary to acknowledge that 'Germany is not Spain'; in countries lacking a mass anarcho-syndicalist movement, activists had often been forced to work within actions spearheaded by non-libertarian trade unions, and anti-

---

<sup>143</sup> For a detailed narrative account of the uprising: Roberto Villa García, 'La CNT contra la República: La insurrección revolucionaria de diciembre de 1933', *Historia y Política* 25 (2011), pp. 177-205.

<sup>144</sup> In fact, although the CNT requested funds, at the same plenum the IWA delegate insisted on the need for the CNT to financially support the Secretariat if it were to function 'even relatively' correctly, further emphasising the disparity in expectations between the two organisations: IISG CNT 93B.1.2D, 'Extracto del pleno nacional de regionales. Madrid, 30 de octubre 1933'.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> 'PLENUM INTERNATIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933'. Others, such as Schapiro, were also totally opposed to participation, but less outspokenly.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*



fascism was no different.<sup>149</sup> In this instance, the contrast between the CNT, still a major revolutionary movement, and the FAUD, reduced to a clandestine existence, clearly shaped the distance between the organisations' delegates on the question of anti-fascism and collaboration.

The expelled *treintistas* also diverged from the IWA position, albeit in an entirely different manner but one which further hints at their experience in the idiosyncratic CNT. In December of 1933, the so-called Opposition Unions would sign the 'Alianza Obrera' (Worker Alliance) with the dissident communists and minor Catalan socialist parties.<sup>150</sup> Juan López justified the pact explicitly on the grounds that the CNT was *not* so exceptional: 'the facts tell us today, with an irrefutable eloquence that, in isolation, neither in Spain nor in any other country of the world is there an organisation capable of impeding the enthronement of fascism'.<sup>151</sup> Class-based, anti-fascist alliances with other working-class organisations appeared an extension of their old arguments for proletarian unity beyond ideology – or 'workerism, without exclusions of hue'.<sup>152</sup> After all, 'between a capitalist dictatorship (fascism) and a proletarian one, stretches an abyss'.<sup>153</sup> Although this position rejected teleological notions of Spain's libertarian destiny, the evident emphasis on building and maintaining a mass working-class movement above all else was a clear point of distinction from IWA minoritarians and thus showed the influence of their experiences in Spain.

The radical currents at the helm of the CNT, however, remained as teleological as ever: in the summer of 1933, while the Opposition Unions entered into dialogue with other tendencies, the *faístas* were 'conscious of the enormous responsibility' that the 'revolutionary anti-capitalist and anti-statist' CNT had; whereas Russia and Italy offered models for the

---

<sup>149</sup> In the end, the plenum resolved that the Association would publish a manifesto in French, English, German and Danish and send one activist to distribute it at the congress: 'PLENUM INTERNATIONAL. AMSTERDAM 22, 23 et 24 Avril 1933'. According to David Bernardini, as early as 1930 FAUD activists had recognised that they would need to look beyond their own organisation to fight fascism and sought to cooperate with the most radical currents among the Marxists to organise direct action: Bernardini, 'Señales', pp. 57-61. Souchy's relative pragmatism also reflected that of fellow FAUD and Polish Związek Zawodowców (Union of Trade Unions, ZZZ) activist Thomas Pilarski, who had shifted from dogmatism in the 1920s to a consistent anti-fascist pragmatism in the 1930s: see Rafał Chwedoruk, 'Polish anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism in the twentieth century', in *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism*, ed. by Berry and Bantman, pp. 141-162 (p. 148).

<sup>150</sup> 'Se constituye la Alianza Obrera, frente de hierro de los trabajadores contra la Reacción', *Sindicalismo*, 15 December 1933.

<sup>151</sup> 'Necesidad de la unidad obrera contra el fascismo', *Sindicalismo*, 4 August 1933.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

communists and the fascists respectively, Spain would offer ‘the necessary and fecund example of a revolution realised for freedom’.<sup>154</sup> This sense of international duty could not be unmeshed from their anti-fascist praxis: at a mass meeting in Barcelona, Francisco Ascaso – one of the *faísta* ‘men of action’ along with García Oliver and Buenaventura Durruti – declared that even as ‘capitalism fall back on its final redoubt, fascism’, Spain remained ‘a hope for the global proletariat’ and ‘the last redoubt of freedom’; whereas once Spain had ‘carried the cross to the whole world, from today it must carry anarchy, saving the world [...] That is our mission’.<sup>155</sup> The *faístas*’ analysis of events in Germany was forged in the radicalising furnace of Barcelona’s ‘anarchist-inspired workers’ public sphere’: for voluntarists such as Juanel and Francisco Pellicer, the Reichstag fire exemplified self-sacrificing idealism, with Marinus van der Lubbe a popular ‘man of action’ who defied communist passivity to confront the repressive apparatus of the German state.<sup>156</sup>

This differed markedly from Rüdiger’s analysis, favoured in *Solidaridad Obrera*: that van der Lubbe had probably simply been a pawn of the regime whose silence was likely the result of mental incapacitation by poisoning.<sup>157</sup> Rüdiger (and *Soli*) did not downplay the Nazi regime’s horrors, which was ‘no internal German affair’: fascism posed a ‘terrible threat’ to the ‘global proletariat’; ‘The bourgeoisie of the whole world is fascinated by the example of Germany, which will be imitated all over Europe if the working class does not know how to initiate an urgent and implacable resistance’.<sup>158</sup> However, whereas the *faístas* demanded insurrection in the martyred mould of van der Lubbe, Rüdiger argued for the Spanish workers to engage in an economic boycott of Nazi Germany, deploying a classic revolutionary syndicalist direct-action tactic to the anti-fascist exigencies of the moment.<sup>159</sup> The CNT’s October plenum unanimously accepted the boycott proposal – further evidencing the movement’s interest in anti-fascist internationalism – and a joint CNT-IWA manifesto that month urged workers to avoid German goods, refuse to unload ships flying the Swastika flag, and spurn cinemas showing German films, declaring that this act of ‘aid and solidarity

<sup>154</sup> ‘Al proletariado español toca iniciar la edificación del nuevo mundo’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 6 June 1933.

<sup>155</sup> ‘Rumbo hacia la Revolución’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 24 November 1933.

<sup>156</sup> ‘El proceso de Leipzig’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 6 October 1933; ‘El incendio de Reichstag’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 13 October 1933.

<sup>157</sup> ‘EL INCENDIO DEL REICHSTAG’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 1 November 1933.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

for the working class and against barbarism' would also strike a blow 'against latent Spanish fascism', and 'mark a decisive step towards the internationalisation of the fight against reaction and war'.<sup>160</sup> As in Rüdiger's formulation, the boycott was thus construed as a transnational intervention that would disrupt fascism's own transnationality, and thereby have important repercussions at home. In preparation, *Soli* reported on examples of workers in other countries engaging in various forms of direct action against Nazi Germany and its trade.<sup>161</sup>

Importantly, although the boycott was thus posited as an alternative to unilateral revolution, its proponents were nonetheless emphatic about the outsize importance of the CNT: as 'one of the greatest hopes of the current world' and 'the most solid bulwark of freedom' in Europe, 'revolutionary Spain' had a 'moral obligation to teach the workers of other nations what a true boycott means, so that they learn and imitate the example given to them by the biggest and most celebrated of the IWA sections'.<sup>162</sup> This construed its exceptionality as bestowing a didactic, responsible role upon the CNT, to offer 'a magnificent propaganda in favour of the ideas and means of action of global anarcho-syndicalism'.<sup>163</sup> In turn, this would favour the Spanish workers, being 'one of the most effective means to attract the eyes of the revolutionary world to the great struggles and ideas of our beloved CNT'.<sup>164</sup> This argument highlighted the dynamic relationship between the quasi-nationalist invocation of 'revolutionary Spain', and a commitment to anarcho-syndicalist internationalism: the former being generative for the latter, which would in turn aid the Spanish workers in their struggle.

The *Solidaridad Obrera* editorial made these arguments in opposition to the reported fears of the Barcelona textile union that the IWA 'would fall into very obvious ridicule' if its call were only implemented in Spain – a risk, given the International's otherwise perilous state.<sup>165</sup> This once more highlighted distinct approaches to the International's imbalance: the

---

<sup>160</sup> 'Extracto del pleno nacional de regionales. Madrid, 30 de octubre 1933'; manifesto reproduced in 'L'ACTIVITÉ DE L'ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS 1933-1935'.

<sup>161</sup> 'El proletariado mundial secunda el boicot contra los productos y las enseñanzas fascistas', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 24 October 1933; 'El boicot a los productos alemanes', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 26 October 1933.

<sup>162</sup> 'El boicot a los productos alemanes'.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. According to Damier, the Swedish and Dutch sections had also made plans to organise the boycott, whereas the CGTSR feared that it might reinforce Nazi propaganda: Damier, *Anarcho-syndicalism*, p. 92.

lack of a solid international network could imply *risk* and demand caution and conservatism, *or* give the CNT a responsibility to be a generative force – to ‘break the isolation in which we live, creating for the CNT a current of sympathy for the CNT among the workers of the world, which would be an inestimable support for the social revolution in this country’.<sup>166</sup> Indeed, whereas the textile union responded along protectionist lines, proponents of the boycott aspired for it to transform internationalism from ‘a generous aspiration of the most revolutionary and conscious strata of the proletariat’ into a genuine interdependence; shifting the IWA from a beloved ‘symbol of our internationalist ideology’ and a ‘common banner’ into the heart of everyday praxis.<sup>167</sup>

In the event, the attempted insurrection took place before the boycott could be properly organised, and the effort disappeared amid the ensuing repression.<sup>168</sup> *Soli*’s defence of the boycott dovetailed with its call for building up working-class power through ‘proselytising propaganda and solid organisation of the workers’ alongside any ‘insurrectional preparation’; a tacit acknowledgement that the Confederation was not yet ready for revolution, and a view distinctly similar to that evinced by the IWA in this period.<sup>169</sup> This highlights that some diversity remained within the CNT – and other perspectives also drew insight from international precedents; for Lola Iturbe (‘Kyralina’), for instance, the women who participated actively in Russian Nihilism were an inspiration; the ‘global panorama’ of fascist takeover was not a signal for immediate revolution but for women to take on a more ‘practical’ role in the anarcho-sindicalist movement, as a way to ‘push back the brutal bogeyman of fascism and accelerate the reality of our conceptions’.<sup>170</sup> While the anonymous author of the Germany boycott appeal did ‘not want for Spain the fate of the *pueblos* shackled by fascism [...] the terrible *Via Crucis* through which the German, Italian, Polish etc workers are passing’, they sought inspiration in a ‘recent, but forgotten historical episode’ from Germany: the 1920 Kapp Putsch, when ‘Hitler’s predecessor’ had been defeated by the spontaneous force of ‘worker protest’.<sup>171</sup> Nonetheless, they acknowledged, ‘maybe we do

---

<sup>166</sup> ‘EL BOICOT COMO EXPONENTE DE SOLIDARIDAD INTERNACIONAL’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 October 1933.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> ‘L’ACTIVITÉ DE L’ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS 1933-1935’.

<sup>169</sup> ‘La lucha contra la reacción’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 2 November 1933.

<sup>170</sup> ‘Frente al fascismo’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 22 September 1933.

<sup>171</sup> ‘La lucha contra la reacción’.

not have time left for so much and we may find ourselves needing to act immediately'.<sup>172</sup> Shortly afterwards, the right-wing electoral victory was taken as the signal that the moment was indeed upon the movement.

***Enduring difficulties: the IWA Secretariat in and out of Spain***

The CNT was devastated by the repression following the failed uprising; the onset of the so-called *bienio negro* of right-wing rule in late 1933 heralded a period of almost constant crisis for the organisation, which was left 'broken, dispersed and without a press or publicity machinery. Only shreds remained of what promised to be a devastating force two years before'.<sup>173</sup> At the Confederal plenum in February of 1934, the representative for the IWA Secretariat was quick to point out that the CNT had ignored the prescriptions of Schapiro's report and again opted for precipitous insurrection without the optimal 'psychological atmosphere', bringing about 'a catastrophic situation'.<sup>174</sup> Yet that same Secretariat was now based in Spain, having taken the decision to move there because of the CNT's massively outsized importance within the IWA. This created a paradoxical situation where a dysfunctional IWA was almost completely dependent on a crisis-ridden CNT.

As a result, the IWA Secretariat's sojourn in Spain was undoubtedly a troubled one; it was their experiences during this era which led non-Spanish activists such as Müller-Lehning and Rüdiger to the assessment that *cenetistas* were hostile towards any perceived 'intervention in Spanish affairs'.<sup>175</sup> When in 1935 the Secretariat fulfilled a threat it had first made the previous year to abandon Spain for France, it blamed a CNT which 'had no interest in the IWA' and 'never asked the Secretariat to collaborate in shared work'.<sup>176</sup> Although Nelles suggests that these activists, from more northerly anarcho-sindicalist movements, likely maintained a sense of chauvinist superiority vis-à-vis the Spanish which may have influenced their critical view of the CNT, he nonetheless accepts their broader premise, that the Spanish movement was culturally *different*, including manifesting a general disregard for

---

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism*, p. 78.

<sup>174</sup> IISG CNT 93B.1.2E, 'Actas del pleno de regionales. Barcelona, 10-12 febrero 1934'.

<sup>175</sup> Nelles, 'La Legión Extranjera de la Revolución', pp. 131-33.

<sup>176</sup> 'L'ACTIVITÉ DE L'ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS 1933-1935'. For the threat, see IISG Federación Anarquista Ibérica Archives [hereafter FAI] CP-36B.2, 'Actas impresas del Pleno Nacional de Regionales de la CNT, celebrado el 23 de junio y días sucesivos en Madrid'.

internationalism and for international affairs.<sup>177</sup> Yet as with the Schapiro example, reality was more nuanced than a simple parochialism on the part of the Spanish. For one thing, just as it had shaped the response to Schapiro, the atmosphere of sectarian confrontation within the CNT likely shaped these activists' experiences. For example, at the Confederation's October 1933 plenum, the *faísta* National Committee had treated the tabling of a compromise offer from the Valencian Opposition Unions (*treintista*-aligned former CNT trade unions) by the IWA's Iberian Secretariat as 'coercion of the plenum' and an irregular intervention from the International.<sup>178</sup> However, as mentioned above, the same plenum had unanimously endorsed the IWA's anti-Nazi boycott plan.<sup>179</sup> Thus, the incident cannot so easily be attributed to a lack of 'interest' in the IWA as much as to the Confederation's internal strife and a lack of consensus about the precise reach and remit of the IWA vis-à-vis its sections.<sup>180</sup>

The chaos brought on by repression after December was also a key factor in these misunderstandings. In one informative incident in May 1934, the National Committee declined an urgent request from the IWA Secretariat for funds to relieve the 'economic vicissitudes' of then secretary Müller-Lehning, citing an 'economic situation' in which 'national obligations' had to take precedence and claiming that it had 'not received, to this day, any communication from the IWA Secretariat giving signs of its existence'.<sup>181</sup> This angered the IWA Secretariat, whose representative at the next CNT plenum the following month, criticised the 'anomalous situation' that had arisen.<sup>182</sup> In fact, the incident clearly reflected the flux after the December rising: the National Committee had only been in place a few weeks, and its main International liaisons – Carbó and Orobón – had been struck down by imprisonment and illness *and* imprisonment respectively, explaining the lack of contact between the two organisations.<sup>183</sup> Although the language of 'national' over international obligations appears to imply a protectionist, nationalistic mindset, it must be viewed within

---

<sup>177</sup> Nelles, 'La Legión Extranjera de la Revolución', p. 134.

<sup>178</sup> 'Extracto del pleno nacional de regionales. Madrid, 30 de octubre 1933'.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Moreover, the 'outside intervention' rejected by the *faístas* had been actively sought by their syndicalist opponents, problematising the idea that there was a general Spanish rejection of 'intervention'.

<sup>181</sup> IISG CNT 50A.9A, National Committee to Regional Confederations, 20 May 1934.

<sup>182</sup> 'Actas impresas del Pleno Nacional de Regionales de la CNT, celebrado el 23 de junio y días sucesivos en Madrid'.

<sup>183</sup> Meanwhile, the Secretariat had its own personnel problems, with Rocker in the USA in exile from the Nazi regime and Müller-Lehning suffering 'a long ailment': see IISG CNT 50A.9A, National Committee to Regional Committees, 30 July 1934.

the context of scarce resources and political persecution, in which the moral obligation to practise prisoner solidarity took precedence over supporting the Secretariat.

As with the Schapiro report, the print culture of the movement offers a clear contrast with this apparent insularity: in May 1934, the same month as the aforementioned incident, the *faísta* Juanel and the repatriated Santillán and Manuel Villar published the first of many editions of *Tiempos Nuevos*, a monthly theoretical journal to accompany *Tierra y Libertad*, in which writers from the international movement – including Müller-Lehning – were in the majority.<sup>184</sup> Thus the apparent friction with that same international movement is best attributed not to disregard but to the generally tense and unstable context. This, however, was only about to worsen, as the socialist-led uprising in October 1934 provoked another wave of crippling repression for the CNT, despite its only patchy involvement in the insurrection.<sup>185</sup> Throughout much of 1935 the organisation would be in a state of ‘paralysis’, with poorly functioning institutions and a large and growing financial deficit.<sup>186</sup>

Even in this stricken state, however, the CNT remained utterly indispensable to the IWA’s mission: when the Confederation communicated that its internal crisis had not given it time to prepare a delegation for the IWA’s fifth congress in 1935, for example, the Secretariat opted to postpone, reasoning that ‘the absence of a duly mandated CNT delegation to the Congress would distort the Congress’s entire work and render its deliberations virtually inoperative’.<sup>187</sup> It was at this congress, when it was finally held in Paris in August 1935, that the CNT representative was later said to have declared that ‘We make the revolution in Spain, you follow it; that is our internationalism’.<sup>188</sup> For Nelles, this quotation, the source for which was a letter written some time after the congress by a German anarcho-syndicalist, was emblematic of the Spanish movement’s dismissive approach to internationalism.<sup>189</sup> However, although the lack of a transcript precludes direct analysis of the quotation, other source material permits a more nuanced interpretation which challenges Nelles’s presentation

---

<sup>184</sup> See his article ‘La concepción socialista del Estado y el socialismo sin Estado’, *Tiempos Nuevos*, 5 May 1934.

<sup>185</sup> On the CNT and the October rising, see Ángel Herrerín, ‘La CNT en el movimiento de octubre de 1934: entre el boicot y la participación’, *Hispania* 76.252 (2016), pp. 217-44, doi:10.3989/hispania.2016.008

<sup>186</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism*, p. 89.

<sup>187</sup> IISG Rudolf Rocker Papers 524, IWA Secretariat, circular 15, 14 June 1935. The congress had already been postponed from the previous year in part due to the CNT’s critical situation: see IISG CNT 50A.9A, National Committee to Regional Committees, 30 July 1934.

<sup>188</sup> Nelles, ‘La Legión Extranjera de la Revolución’, pp. 134-5.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

of it as a paradigmatic and determinative statement of the Confederal viewpoint.<sup>190</sup> The CNT's national plenum in March 1935, for example, discussed the upcoming international congress as an opportunity to 'initiate a resurgence of our beloved International Association', capitalising on the failures of the Second and Third Internationals in the face of the rise of fascism.<sup>191</sup> At rank-and-file level, ahead of the congress there was demand for a closer relationship with the International: for example, at a July 1935 meeting of the CNT's Local Federation in Zaragoza, attendees 'made clear the unanimous desire that from here onwards the IWA be something more than the three letters', demanding to be 'updated on its activities and initiatives', to 'know the worldwide proletarian movement' and to 'tighten the solidarity and fraternity' with it.<sup>192</sup> Following the IWA congress, *Solidaridad Obrera* printed details, including Besnard's opening speech and new proposals for a youth International and for new global solidarity campaigns.<sup>193</sup>

We can therefore speculate that the delegate's declaration referred to the ongoing question of the CNT's finances, which continued to be a vexed question in which the IWA made 'special appeal' to the Confederation to rectify its 'insignificant' financial contributions.<sup>194</sup> The quotation bears resemblance, for instance, to the arguments made by the CNT National Committee at the Confederation's congress in Zaragoza in May 1936. As they had in the 1931 congress, CRTs approached the congress with a desire to fix 'the fulfilment of pecuniary obligations' to the International.<sup>195</sup> However, in the event, the National Committee argued that the CNT's special conditions of existence – its 'essentially revolutionary, fighting character' – were an excuse for lack of payment: it was 'impossible and absurd that [the IWA] should want to oblige an organisation such as ours, which everyday lives revolutionary moments and suffers cruel repressions, to pay whatever, for lack

---

<sup>190</sup> No transcript of the congress could be identified. In the months after, the IWA Secretariat responded to requests from the CNT National Committee with the explanation that its personnel crisis had precluded them from being printed and it is possible this was never fulfilled: see IISG CNT 50A.8C, IWA Secretariat 17, 28 December 1935.

<sup>191</sup> IISG CNT 50A.9B, 'Pleno Nacional de Regionales, Zaragoza, 19 de marzo 1935'.

<sup>192</sup> IISG CNT 68A.2, Zaragoza Local Federation to Aragón, Rioja and Navarra Regional Committee, 22 July 1935.

<sup>193</sup> See 'El V Congreso Internacional de la A.I.T.', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 18 and 24 September 1935.

<sup>194</sup> See the memorandum that December: IISG CNT 50A.8C, IWA Secretariat circular 17, 28 December 1935.

<sup>195</sup> See document prepared by the CRT for Aragón, Rioja and Navarre: IISG CNT 50A.3, 'HACIA EL CONGRESO DE LA CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DEL TRABAJO'.



of means, it owes the International'.<sup>196</sup> This framing cast the CNT's character as a movement embroiled in revolutionary struggle as in itself a sufficient contribution to the anarcho-syndicalist International.

The Zaragoza congress also passed a motion of displeasure regarding the IWA's failure to send a representative, after various delegations criticised its non-attendance.<sup>197</sup> The Alicante woodworkers' union queried the still unanswered inquiry about how the IWA would support a CNT revolutionary mobilisation, showing that the issue of reciprocity remained alive.<sup>198</sup> These questions about the IWA's own perceived obligations to the CNT can be contrasted with its assertive criticism of the Confederation in this era (see below), problematising the idea that it was the Spanish who were flouting some fixed and functional standard of internationalism. Notably, though, some delegates openly contested these attitudes: the representative from Moncada, for example, argued that criticism of the IWA was unjustified 'because we do not fulfil the duties that bind us to it'.<sup>199</sup> The same speaker was also scathing about Carbó's work in the Iberian Secretariat, and argued that it would be best to do away with 'bureaucrats' and instead staff the Secretariat with '10 or 12 comrades, but these should be workers, labourers who go to the factory. Then it will fulfil its mission and all nations will know with certainty the global situation'.<sup>200</sup> This striking call for a return to grassroots proletarian solidarity showed once more that beneath and beyond the problematic relationship between the National Committee and the IWA Secretariat, many activists felt invested in the ideal of internationalism, and demonstrated this within the movement's mechanisms of accountability when they had the chance.

From around this time, another important proof of this continual desire to form part of an international project were the efforts by the newly founded *Mujeres Libres* to foment internationalism outside the male-dominated realm of the IWA.<sup>201</sup> Ackelsberg and Yeoman

---

<sup>196</sup> CNT, *El Congreso Confederal de Zaragoza. 1936* (Zero, 1978), pp. 85-86.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, pp. 86-92

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, p. 86.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. 99.

<sup>200</sup> For example, the delegate accused Carbó of having lost contact with Latin American organisations through negligence: Ibid, p. 100.

<sup>201</sup> A similar but seemingly short-lived women's organisation – the 'Syndicalist Women's Union' – had been created within the FAUD in 1920, cofounded by Milly Witkop Rucker: Baker, *Means and Ends*, pp. 287-88. However, the 1931 IWA congress's unanimous approbation of Lucien Huart's proposal that the International's sections carry out propaganda specifically oriented towards women did not seem to have brought about any desire for direct female representation within the Association: 'IV Congreso Mundial'.

have shown that the *Mujeres Libres* journal built on longstanding transnational exchanges of content and contributors, such as those between Argentine publications *La Voz de la Mujer* and *Nuestra Tribuna* and *La Revista Blanca* and *Estudios* in Spain.<sup>202</sup> As Laura Vicente highlights, in the shorter-term the genealogy leading to *Mujeres Libres* included meetings of the Barcelona-based anarchist Agrupación Cultural Femenina (Women's Cultural Association) which were attended by international figures like Max Nettlau, and where the issues of fascism and war were discussed in international key, often through a deeply gendered lens which posited women as mothers who would teach their children to reject militarism.<sup>203</sup> In the months prior to the creation of the new organisation, *Tierra y Libertad*'s 'women's page' (edited by Lola Iturbe) offered a feminist critique of fascism, colonialism and war, describing fascism as 'the greatest enemy of female independence' in its reactionary social tenets and colonialism (in the form of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia) as an extension of the Mussolini regime's natalism and militarist expansionism.<sup>204</sup> This mirrored the efforts of anti-fascist women elsewhere to articulate a double critique of fascism on both humanist and feminist terms.<sup>205</sup> Iturbe had previously written about international issues including Dutch colonialism and Soviet diplomacy, and the 'women's page' highlighted iconic revolutionaries such as Sophia Perovskaya, Rosa Luxembourg and, above all, Louise Michel as models of female revolutionary protagonism to follow in Spain, and noted international examples of women's struggles for emancipation, such as the pursuit of educational equality during the Turkish Revolution – features which situated the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist women's struggle as part of a transnational one.<sup>206</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> Ackelsberg, 'It takes more than a village!', p. 216; Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 142. See also Raúl Gracia Meseguer and Alaia Prieto Cano, 'Discursos transfronterizos en torno a la emancipación femenina: Teresa Claramunt y Juana Rouco Buena, dos feministas libertarias que lucharon por la igualdad', *Historia Social* 106 (2023), pp. 101–22. See also the two special issues of *Acción Social Obrera*, mentioned above p. 21.

<sup>203</sup> See for instance report 'En el Gran Price', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 23 June 1936; Vicente, *Revolución de las palabras*, p. 18.

<sup>204</sup> 'LA PAGINA DE LA MUJER', *Tierra y Libertad*, 15 May 1936. See also 'La civilización burguesa en Etiopía', *Tierra y Libertad*, 10 December 1935.

<sup>205</sup> Sana Tannoury-Karam, 'No Place for Neutrality: The Case for Democracy and the League Against Nazism and Fascism in Syria and Lebanon', in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective*, ed. by Braskén, Copsey, and Featherstone, pp. 133–51 (pp. 139–41).

<sup>206</sup> 'LA MUJER EN LA LUCHA SOCIAL', *Tierra y Libertad*, 10 December 1935; 'Una conferencia de Claude Farrère', *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 January 1936. For Iturbe's old writings, under her 'Kyalina' alias: 'La rebelión del "Zeven Provincien"', *Suplemento de Tierra y Libertad*, March 1933; 'la rusia revolucionaria y la rusia diplomática', *Suplemento de Tierra y Libertad*, November 1933

This demonstrated an internationalist sensibility not circumscribed by the male-dominated IWA, among the proponents of a distinct women's movement within the CNT. Accordingly, the first issue of *Mujeres Libres* included a letter from Emma Goldman, who was not affiliated to any IWA section, and who wrote that she was 'delighted to learn that some Spanish comrades are following, at last, the route taken some time ago by *compañeras* from other countries'.<sup>207</sup> Goldman identified a quite different form of exceptionality which had 'painfully surprised' her during her visit Spain in 1929: the 'backwardness' in the situation of Spanish women, given their 'submission to the Church and, in private life, to men'.<sup>208</sup> *Mujeres Libres* sought examples of militancy elsewhere as models for correcting this and bringing women to the forefront of social struggle, such as women's prominent role in the summer 1936 strike wave in France.<sup>209</sup> In looking to map out a distinct set of international references, in fact, the journal prefigured by some months the new internationalist ties pursued by the CNT during the Civil War. This was especially salient in an anonymised article which denounced the 'sweet indifference and inexplicable meekness' of the various working-class Internationals in the face of the 'fascist pillaging' of Abyssinia, and appealed to 'international fraternity and justice'.<sup>210</sup> To fully lay the grounds for an exploration of that post-July 1936 internationalism in the next chapter, however, it is necessary to end this one with an exploration of how the question of alliances had evolved more generally within the CNT since December 1933.

### *The question of collaboration with other tendencies*

The failure of the anti-fascist uprising of December 1933 sparked growing interest in the question of collaboration beyond the libertarian movement. Different positions appeared across the international movement. Answering an IWA inquiry in September 1934, for example, the relatively robust SAC warned against the 'suicide' of revolutionary syndicalism through 'compromises', whereas the FAUD responded that anti-fascism would differ from country to country; in Germany, the existential threat posed by Nazism demanded an

---

<sup>207</sup> 'Una carta de Emma Goldman', *Mujeres Libres*, May 1936.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> 'LA MUJER EN EL MOVIMIENTO HUELGUISTICO FRANCES', *Mujeres Libres*, July 1936.

<sup>210</sup> 'El crimen consumado', *Mujeres Libres*, May 1936.

unconditional united front ‘for the defence of the rights of man’.<sup>211</sup> In France, the CGTSR tended to reject cooperation with historical rivals, staying aloof from the unity projects championed by activists from the Union Anarchiste (Anarchist Union, UA), libertarians who remained active in the original CGT, having rejected Besnard and Huart’s revolutionary syndicalist splinter to avoid further splitting a divided labour movement.<sup>212</sup> In contrast with France and the division between the UA and CGTSR, in Spain such positions coexisted (albeit uneasily) *within* the CNT. In Asturias, González Mallada and other *cenetistas* imprisoned after the December rising published a late January 1934 endorsement of a working-class alliance; that March, the Asturian CRT signed a pact with the regional UGT.<sup>213</sup> This built on local traditions: Quintanilla, the veteran figure of Asturian anarcho-syndicalism, had supported such a proposal for years.<sup>214</sup> Nonetheless, the national movement heatedly debated the ideas emanating from Asturias at the CNT’s February and June plenums, with the hard-line and numerically superior Andalucian and Catalan CRTs contesting them.<sup>215</sup>

Although such ideas remained, for now at least, largely marginalised within the Confederation, the IWA Secretariat’s delegate to the June 1934 CNT plenum shared a letter expressing acute, even existential alarm about alliances which could ‘endanger the very existence of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist organisation’.<sup>216</sup> This was precisely an issue because

[i]nternational fascism has destroyed our revolutionary movements in the majority of countries. International socialism, in all these countries, has failed shamefully and criminally against the march of fascist reaction. The hope that the Social Revolution can defeat fascist reaction remains in one sole country. That country is Spain.

---

<sup>211</sup> IWA Secretariat circular 8, 22 November 1934, in ‘L’ACTIVITÉ DE L’ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS 1933-1935’.

<sup>212</sup> David Berry, “‘Fascism or Revolution!’ Anarchism and Antifascism in France, 1933-1939”, *Contemporary European History* 8.1 (1999), pp. 51-71 (pp. 53, 57), doi:10.1017/S0960777399000132; Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>213</sup> Ángel Herrérín, ‘La CNT en el movimiento’, p. 236.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid; Ramón Álvarez, *Eleuterio Quintanilla (Vida y Obra del Maestro)* (Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1973), p. 336.

<sup>215</sup> The smaller Galician and Balearic CRTs showed sympathy for the Asturian proposals: Tom Corkett, ‘Unity as Rivalry: The Spanish Anarcho-syndicalists and Socialists on the Eve of the Civil War’, *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 13.3 (2012), pp. 267-87 (pp. 268, 274), doi:10.1080/21567689.2012.701187

<sup>216</sup> ‘Actas impresas del Pleno Nacional de Regionales de la CNT, celebrado el 23 de junio y días sucesivos en Madrid’. The letter was later circulated to all IWA sections: IISG Rudolf Rocker Papers 524, IWA Secretariat, circular 5, 20 September, 1934.

Loss of Spain – loss of the last hope.<sup>217</sup>

The Secretariat called for more clarity of language when *cenetistas* discussed questions of ‘unity’, arguing that only localised alliances with UGT rank-and-file organisations, along the lines of ‘everyday direct action, based on anti-political, anti-electoral, anti-parliamentary and anti-fascist struggle’, would be acceptable.<sup>218</sup> Using exceptionalist language, it argued that Spain was an optimal site for this kind of grassroots unity along revolutionary syndicalist lines because ‘the working class and peasantry of Spain are profoundly imbued with libertarian and revolutionary sentiment’.<sup>219</sup> However, as in 1931 and 1933, exceptionality in itself was insufficient: rather, it was by demonstrating a clear alignment with the IWA’s doctrine that the Confederation would not only strengthen ‘the ties among all members of the CNT, but also the ties that bind the CNT with its brothers from other countries’ and ‘the International as a whole’.<sup>220</sup> The message – which, perhaps tellingly, coincided with Schapiro’s reintegration into the Secretariat – recalled the dynamic represented in his report a year earlier: recognition that the Spanish movement was the only hope of international anarcho-syndicalism, yet an impulse to ‘correct’ it and push it towards certain doctrinal standards.<sup>221</sup>

In fact, despite the IWA Secretariat’s alarm, the ideas behind the Asturian pact were not distant from the IWA’s own, *revolutionary* vision of acceptable unity – as would be made clear during the October 1934 rising.<sup>222</sup> Orobón’s two-part essay in *La Tierra* newspaper in late January 1934, a foundational text in the growing openness to notions of unity, did not disavow the anti-electoral, revolutionary path of December (‘infinitely superior to the election of a hundred worker deputies’) and spoke of ‘unifying the revolutionary proletariat’ so as to narrow the situation down ‘to the single and antithetical terms of fascism of social

---

<sup>217</sup> ‘Actas impresas del Pleno Nacional de Regionales de la CNT, celebrado el 23 de junio y días sucesivos en Madrid’.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Schapiro’s return to the depleted Secretariat reported in IISG CNT, Comité Nacional to CRTs, 30 July 1934.

<sup>222</sup> Despite relevant parties identifying the pact publicly with opposition to ‘fascism and war’, in private it aimed explicitly at ‘the triumph of social revolution in Spain’: Matthew Kerry, *Unite, Proletarian Brothers! Radicalism and Revolution in the Spanish Second Republic* (University of London Press, 2020), p. 114. See also Herrerín, ‘La CNT en el movimiento’, pp. 239-41; Evans, ‘Ultra-left’, pp. 251-2; Corkett, ‘Unity as Rivalry’.

revolution'.<sup>223</sup> For Orobón, it was still the Nazi precedent and the dilemma of 'choosing between meekly allowing themselves to be annihilated, like in Germany, or saving themselves by fighting along with the other proletarian sectors' which would force the socialists to abandon their own political reformism and meet the libertarians 'on the revolutionary terrain that the CNT will always occupy'.<sup>224</sup> Just as *Solidaridad Obrera* had earlier appealed to the direct worker action against the Kapp Putsch of 1920 as a more glorious episode in German history, Orobón drew on the revolutionary worker councils of the Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919 and the collaboration between left-wing socialists, communists, and anarchists to bolster his call for 'revolutionary worker democracy'.<sup>225</sup>

As Orobón's text demonstrates, arguments about collaboration with other tendencies were shaped by the international panorama and Spain's role within it. In the wake of the October 1934 rising, Federico Urales observed a 'global' class struggle between the 'dictatorships of the rich' and the 'masses who rebel', underpinning his striking transformation from an anarchist purist into an advocate of the 'union of all socialist tendencies'.<sup>226</sup> Santillán had also shifted considerably away from the pronounced sectarianism of the 1920s, influenced by the failure to prevent the authoritarian takeover in Argentina, which he attributed to working-class disunity and the FORA's dogmatism.<sup>227</sup> Nonetheless, as with Orobón, the kinds of alliance these individuals proposed tended to envisage the workers coalescing around common anti-capitalist interests, *outside* electoral politics; in other words, they had a clear anarcho-syndicalist hue.<sup>228</sup> Although shaped by a global perspective, perceived Spanish idiosyncrasies therefore still influenced the thinking of many of those who now advocated forms of unity and doubtless underpinned their acutely libertarian understanding of anti-fascist collaboration. The Asturians had defended their

---

<sup>223</sup> 'Consideraciones sobre la unidad I', *La Tierra*, 29 January 1934.

<sup>224</sup> 'Consideraciones sobre la unidad I'.

<sup>225</sup> This rested upon a practical basis of socialisation and federalisation of the economy, proletarian direct democracy, and no collaboration with the bourgeoisie: 'Consideraciones sobre la unidad II', *La Tierra*, 31 January 1934.

<sup>226</sup> 'Ante una fatalidad histórica', *La Revista Blanca*, 22 March 1935.

<sup>227</sup> See his contrasting of the FORA's sectarian intransigence in the face of that authoritarian threat with the earlier example of worker unity during the Kapp putsch in Germany: 'MIRADAS RETROSPECTIVAS', *Tiempos Nuevos*, 14 March 1935. See also Navarro Comas, 'El Frente Único, las Alianzas Obreras y el Frente Popular'.

<sup>228</sup> For Urales, see 'Algo más sobre la fatalidad histórica', *La Revista Blanca*, 10 May 1935. For Santillán, 'La revolución libertaria y sus condiciones', *Tiempos Nuevos*, 5 December 1934; 'Minorías y Mayorías en la Revolución Social', *Tiempos Nuevos*, 1 January 1936.

vision of unity with a call for the confrontation of fascism in Spain to be different to ‘in Austria and other countries’.<sup>229</sup> Santillán emphasised the promise of the Spanish anarchist movement as an answer to the threat of fascism and war: ‘the vision of what Spain could be elevates and encourages us’.<sup>230</sup> The Catalan CRT, once it had agreed to propose a revolutionary alliance with the UGT, maintained that revolutionary syndicalist principles were ‘made flesh in the Spanish proletariat’.<sup>231</sup> It should be noted that the events of October 1934 seemed to offer support for this idea of unity on revolutionary terms, demonstrating, as Evans puts it, ‘the relative limit to the embourgeoisement of the UGT’, demonstrated by its rank-and-file’s willing insurrectionism, compared with the emphatically constitutionalist German socialists.<sup>232</sup>

Indeed, there had to be a realistic reckoning with the balance of forces within the Spanish working class: another lesson of October 1934 was that the anarcho-syndicalists were too important to exclude (‘Either the revolution is made in Spain with the CNT, or there will be no revolution; and if there is no revolution there will be fascism’), but not sufficiently hegemonic to guarantee a unilateral victory; Santillán thus argued for mutual tolerance among different socialist tendencies around common goals.<sup>233</sup> For Urales, the country’s specific conditions necessitated CNT involvement in any anti-fascist union, because the exclusion of ‘a sector as important as libertarian communism is in Spain’ meant that any such coalition which did not include it would necessarily have to include those who were ‘neither proletarian, nor socialist’.<sup>234</sup> *Tiempos Nuevos* published the Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri’s contention that it was precisely the ‘preponderance’ of anarchists in Spain which, as well as auguring revolutionary opportunity, also gave them ‘greater responsibilities’, just as the Marxists’ dominance in Germany signified a clear socialist and communist culpability for the fascist takeover.<sup>235</sup> These arguments presented some form of unity as a responsibility incumbent on as powerful a movement as the CNT. They contrasted with the arguments of

---

<sup>229</sup> ‘Actas impresas del Pleno Nacional de Regionales de la CNT, celebrado el 23 de junio y días sucesivos en Madrid’.

<sup>230</sup> ‘ESPAÑA Y EL MUNDO’, *Tiempos Nuevos*, 1 June 1935.

<sup>231</sup> ‘La C.N.T. no ha hecho concesiones, ni las hará, en el plano de lucha cotidiano’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 15 February 1936. For the process leading to this apparent shift in the Catalans’ attitude, see Corkett, ‘Unity as Rivalry’, pp. 378-84.

<sup>232</sup> Evans, ‘Ultra-left’, p. 245.

<sup>233</sup> ‘Los anarquistas españoles y la insurrección de octubre’, *Tiempos Nuevos*, 10 January 1935.

<sup>234</sup> ‘Algo más sobre la fatalidad histórica’, *La Revista Blanca*, 10 May 1935.

<sup>235</sup> ‘Consideraciones sobre España II’, *Tiempos Nuevos*, 5 September 1934.

still-intransigent militants who felt that the Spanish movement's uniqueness bestowed a responsibility to defend orthodoxy: as Manuel Pérez, writing from Sevilla, put it, 'the CNT is [...] not only a hope for the Spanish proletariat, but for the workers of the whole world, who trust in her to start the social transformation, and follow her heroic struggles step by step'.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, the IWA Secretariat continued to denounce demonstrations of 'opportunistic psychology' and the 'theory of the lesser evil' within the CNT, precisely because anarcho-syndicalists everywhere were 'follow[ing] very closely' because of 'the preponderant role of the Spanish section' within the international movement.<sup>237</sup>

The movement's anti-Bolshevik internationalism was also an ever-present factor which continued to circumscribe notions of anti-fascist unity. Communists' ties to the Soviet dictatorship still meant that they were too morally compromised to be reliable anti-fascists: 'Before such barbaric crimes carried out in the USSR, what can Stalinist communists object to capitalist tyrannies? Nothing! Blush with embarrassment and fall silent'.<sup>238</sup> International solidarity with the victims of the Soviet regime also remained an important element. For example, having responded energetically to the IWA's appeal for protests against the imprisonment and murder of Erich Mühsam by the Nazi regime, *cenetistas* showed a keen interest in the detention of his widow Zenzl Mühsam in Moscow in the spring of 1936, with *Solidaridad Obrera* giving front page coverage to the International's notice and its declaration that 'if we protest against the horrors of Hitlerism in Germany, let us not forget to protest against the crimes of bolshevism in Russia'.<sup>239</sup> For *Mujeres Libres*, the case of Zenzl Mühsam was a firm rebuke to any suggestion that the Soviet regime had emancipated women and offered an answer to the reactionary patriarchy of Nazism.<sup>240</sup> The journal thereby linked anti-fascism and anti-Bolshevism through its own anarchist-feminist prism, marking a difference with other feminist anti-fascisms and an internationalist iteration of Lucía Sánchez Saornil's rejection of depoliticised 'feminine unity'.<sup>241</sup> Both newspapers, moreover, placed the Mühsam case alongside those of communists incarcerated by authoritarian

<sup>236</sup> 'A LAS URNAS, ¡NO!' *Solidaridad Obrera*, 30 January 1935.

<sup>237</sup> IISG CNT 50A.8C, IWA Secretariat to CNT National Plenum, 26 March 1935.

<sup>238</sup> 'RUSIA', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 30 January 1935.

<sup>239</sup> 'Zenzl Muhsam, ha sido detenida en la URSS', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 18 June 1936.

<sup>240</sup> See the foreword in *Mujeres Libres*, July 1936.

<sup>241</sup> On this opposition to straightforward gender unity: Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, p. 191. Compare the anti-Soviet perspective with Tannoury-Karam, 'No place for neutrality', pp. 139-40.



regimes and invited the imprisoned communists' advocates to, 'if they were sincere', also join with the appeal for Mühsam, a marked continuity with Orobón's efforts to call for a morally consistent anti-authoritarianism in 1929.<sup>242</sup> The notion that anti-fascist unity might provide a context to assist Mühsam in particular, and libertarian victims of the USSR in general, would continue into the Civil War.<sup>243</sup>

Although the creation of the Popular Front ahead of the February 1936 general elections formed part of the broad trend towards forms of anti-fascist unity, an open endorsement of voting was beyond the pale for most *cenetistas*.<sup>244</sup> Nonetheless, the election evoked a 'level of ambiguity' within a beleaguered CNT, as some (especially from the Aragonese CRT) questioned the meaning of an explicit abstention campaign when no revolutionary threat could be offered, while others were interested in the promises of prisoner amnesty.<sup>245</sup> Undoubtedly seeking to head off these ambiguities, *Solidaridad Obrera*'s front page editorial shortly after the Popular Front victory declared Spain the global 'centre of anarcho-syndicalism':

In all countries, our libertarian movements have been sinking, one by one, beneath the bestial pressure of authoritarianism. The possibility of a transformation of society, in the direction of freedom, has taken refuge in Spain. Only Spain today fires the hopes of the anarchists of the world.<sup>246</sup>

While the influence of Marxism had grown internationally because it had what *Soli* described

---

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. While *Mujeres Libres* used the Romanian communist Ana Pauker, *Soli* equated Mühsam with the KPD leader Ernst Thälmann and the Brazilian Luís Carlos Prestes: see the cartoon on the front page of *Solidaridad Obrera*, 25 June 1936. Libertarians had long evinced support for communist victims of authoritarianism. The CNT was represented among the speakers at a rally for Prestes attended by various Popular Front organisations in Oviedo in May 1936: Matthew Kerry, 'The Last Echo of 1917? The Asturian October Between Revolution and Antifascism', in *Rethinking Revolutions from 1905 to 1934: Democracy, Social Justice and National Liberation around the World*, ed. by Stefan Berger and Klaus Weinbauer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), pp. 255-75 (p. 271). Orobón's own invocation of Trotsky at the 1929 congress was an earlier example; another was the even earlier IWA appeal against the detention of Hungarian Communist Mátyás Rákosi despite him being 'one of the worst persecutors of anarchists in Soviet Russia' and 'an adversary of the libertarian labour movement': 'A LOS TRABAJADORES DE TODOS LOS PAISES', *Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT*, 25 November 1925.

<sup>243</sup> See below pp. 214-15.

<sup>244</sup> Hence Getman-Eraso does not present any evidence for his claim that CNT leaders 'openly encouraged' a Popular Front vote: Jordi Getman-Eraso, '“Cease Fire, Comrades!” Anarcho-syndicalist Revolutionary Prophecy, Anti-Fascism and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9.1 (2008), pp. 93-114 (p. 95), doi:10.1080/14690760701856416

<sup>245</sup> Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>246</sup> 'España, centro del anarcosindicalismo', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 February 1936. The Catalan CRT, which *Soli* officially represented, had maintained an intransigent call for abstention: Casanova, *Anarchism*, p. 91.

as its ‘Mecca’ in the Soviet Union, and fascism’s global expansion had emanated from the ‘focal point’ of Mussolini’s Italy, ‘the libertarian revolution in Spain would have the enormous value of carrying our ideas onto the path of social experimentation, and demonstrating to the world that there are other ways’.<sup>247</sup> This would have particular ‘repercussions’ in the countries with linguistic and ‘historical, cultural and racial’ ties to the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>248</sup> The timing of such an editorial suggests that it was intended, like previous articulations of Spain’s libertarian destiny and role in the world, to put paid to revisionist ideas.

Despite these nuances, the IWA Secretariat was deeply perturbed by what it described as a ‘psychosis’ which, it claimed, was driving some *cenetistas* to reconsider their abstentionism; this was, once more, of supreme importance because of the CNT’s importance not just in Spain but also for ‘the fortunes of the revolutionary movement of other countries’.<sup>249</sup> Carbó, although now no longer a member of the Secretariat, clearly supported this alarmist view, using his newly created newspaper, *Más Lejos*, to critique ‘collaborationism’, reprint the IWA’s critical letter from June 1934 about the need to limit any form of unity, and to share the hostile opinions of international figures – including Schapiro and Besnard – to any notion of tactical engagement with the electoral system.<sup>250</sup> The Secretariat’s message to the CNT’s Zaragoza congress in May 1936 was scathing about what it presented as a *de facto* support for the Popular Front in February: an ‘incomprehensible and, for many, inexcusable’ action attributable to ‘the confusion created by the propaganda of unity of action’.<sup>251</sup> It was clear that the International’s centre of gravity remained in Spain: ‘a victorious CNT [...] is the victory of the IWA. A CNT that does not know what it wants [...] is [...] the defeat of the IWA’.<sup>252</sup> As in 1931, 1933 and at other

---

<sup>247</sup> ‘España, centro del anarcosindicalismo’.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> See the letter presented with ‘urgency’ to a conference of Catalan unions; the unions responded that they supported a renewed abstention campaign, citing the example of Austria and Germany: see CRT de Cataluña, *Memorias de la Conferencia Regional extraordinaria celebrado los días 25, 26 y 27 de Enero 1936* (Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Cataluña, 1936), pp. 84-90, 100-1

<sup>250</sup> ‘Lo que opina Pierra Besnard’, *Más Lejos*, 7 May 1936; ‘No lo entendemos’, *Más Lejos*, 9 April 1934; Las cuestiones que ahora se discuten en la Organización’, *Más Lejos*, 23 April 1936; ‘Opina A. Schapiro’, *Más Lejos*, 2 July 1936

<sup>251</sup> IISG CNT 50A.8C, ‘AU CONGRES EXTRAORDINAIRE DE LA C.N.T.’. The message also revived Schapiro’s old criticisms about the CNT’s lack of cohesion and organisation.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

moments, the IWA simultaneously affirmed the CNT's exceptionality *and* sought to scrutinise it and correct its perceived doctrinal transgressions.

### *Conclusion*

That May 1936 message from the IWA Secretariat to the Zaragoza congress also recalled the moment five years previously when 'a burst of hope ignited the proletariat of all countries' and it had seemed possible that the 'debacle of the Russian Revolution would finally have, in Spain, its counterpart and its compensation'; whereas 'international Marxism turned towards Moscow [...] the revolutionary syndicalists, the anarcho-syndicalists, the anarchists of the world had their sights turned towards Barcelona'.<sup>253</sup> With this statement, intended to set up its various criticisms of the CNT, the Secretariat unintentionally revealed a key problem within the anarcho-syndicalist International during the 1930s: that an organisation created to supplant the Third International's centralisation had instead become even more deeply imbalanced than its communist rival. However, whereas the Comintern's affiliates often embraced Soviet leadership and 'Bolshevisation', the IWA's sections frequently sought to scrutinise and 'correct' their biggest colleague.<sup>254</sup> This reflected the 'minoritarian' experiences of many of its activists and shows that Muñoz Congost's argument for an uncritical 'legend' of the CNT which would rupture in July 1936 is an oversimplification. Rather, the earlier Second Republic period offered plenty of clues as to the conflict which would emerge in wartime.

Instead, this chapter has concurred with Dieter Nelles's vision of continual tensions between the CNT and the IWA throughout this period. However, unlike Nelles, this chapter has shown that this troubled relationship cannot be attributed to a lack of internationalism within the Spanish movement. Instead, the negotiation of complex political differences and an imbalance between the CNT and other IWA organisations could bring the 'blurrier borders' of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism into contestation. Using both CNT and IWA documentation and examples from print culture to counter the narrative of Spanish parochialism, this chapter has thus once more highlighted the ever-contested nature of

---

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *International Communism and the Spanish Civil War: Solidarity and Suspicion* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 17-18.

internationalism, which involved a messy reality of distinct and competing claims. Within the CNT, rival tendencies had disparate approaches to the question of how to relate to the International, and both the *faístas* and the *treintistas* would have their own disagreements with the IWA Secretariat during this period; nonetheless, both were shaped by and operated within an eminently internationalist political culture.

The chapter has also explored the development of the libertarian approaches to anti-fascism during this period, shaped by international connections but also by understandings of Spain's idiosyncrasies. As Kenyon Zimmer notes, efforts by interwar anarchists to delineate an 'ethically uncompromising', anti-authoritarian version of anti-fascism prefigured the 'moral and ideological integrity' of the libertarian left amid the 'Faustian bargains' of the Cold War.<sup>255</sup> At the time, for many anarchists, the 'rejection of [...] "the suicidal theory of the lesser evil" was in itself suicidal'.<sup>256</sup> In Spain, however, libertarian anti-fascism took on a particular hue due to the exceptional character of the country's anarchist movement – the mass anarcho-syndicalism of the CNT – and activists hoped the country could respond to the threat of fascism with a generative example of *revolutionary* working-class mobilisation. Others felt that the movement's power meant that it could afford to pact with that 'lesser evil', confident that the Spanish working class could not be diverted away from its libertarian essence. These ideas would shape the movement's response to the right-wing rebellion in July 1936, which gave rise to the Spanish Civil War – the subject of the following chapter

---

<sup>255</sup> Zimmer, 'Premature Anti-Communists?' p. 71.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Four

### ‘The shock force of the global proletariat’

#### Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism during the Civil War, 1936-1939

In July 1936, armed resistance to a right-wing military coup triggered a revolutionary process in many areas of Spain, including the ‘revolutionary festival’ which took place in the CNT’s Barcelona stronghold.<sup>1</sup> However, with the rebel generals proceeding to advance on the zones where the coup had been repelled, giving rise to the Spanish Civil War, both the CNT and the FAI opted to collaborate with the Republic and other anti-fascist organisations in the struggle against the so-called ‘Nationalists’ and their international allies – a decision most dramatically emblematised by the entry of anarchist ministers into the national and regional governments in the autumn of 1936.<sup>2</sup> This was thus a revolutionary period, depicted as the culmination of decades of agitation; but also one in which the exigencies of anti-fascism demanded a considerably heterodox course of action from Spanish anarcho-syndicalists. In a 1937 manifesto, the FAI Peninsular Committee appealed to the international libertarian movement for understanding, arguing that it was easy ‘to criticise and judge movements and men without living the events they have lived and without knowing the social and psychological mechanisms that determine the course of occurrences’.<sup>3</sup> By examining both public-facing and internal documentation, this chapter aims to understand how the interactions between those wartime ‘social and psychological mechanisms’ and the movement’s anarcho-syndicalist roots shaped an evolving internationalist praxis.

This chapter applies an analysis of internationalism missing from accounts by historians such as Juan Pablo Calero Delso and Julián Vadillo Muñoz, who argue that the CNT remained loyal to its radical traditions even while pragmatically cooperating with the Republic.<sup>4</sup> With the benefit of a longer periodisation and more diverse source materials, the chapter highlights that many of the supposed ruptures identified by historians critical of anti-fascist collaboration in fact reflected existing ambiguities and debates within libertarian

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is from Ealham, *Anarchism*, p. 173. See also Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 101-15.

<sup>2</sup> Juan Pablo Calero Delso, *El gobierno de la anarquía* (Editorial Síntesis, 2011); Danny Evans, *Revolution and the State: Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (AK Press, 2020), pp. 33-57.

<sup>3</sup> Biblioteca Pública Arús [hereafter BPA], IV-C1028, ‘El anarquismo en España: informe del Comité Peninsular de la Federación Anarquista Ibérica al movimiento libertario internacional’.

<sup>4</sup> Calero Delso, *El gobierno de la anarquía*; Vadillo Muñoz, *Historia de la CNT*, pp. 231-61.

internationalism, and as such cannot be so straightforwardly dismissed as symptoms of an abandonment of the movement's principles or a turn to 'nationalism'.<sup>5</sup> Recent work by Guillamón, for example, has framed an analysis of the CNT's wartime relations with the IWA around his contention that anti-fascism equated to 'the defence of capitalist democracy', disavowing the 'revolutionary alternative' and 'renouncing its own principles'.<sup>6</sup> For Miquel Amorós, the CNT was from the autumn of 1936 intent on 'reassuring as much as possible the signatory powers of the Non-Intervention Pact'.<sup>7</sup> These authors posit that apart from certain dissident tendencies who remained loyal to their values, the movement opted for the kind of anti-revolutionary, interclass Popular Frontism championed by the Comintern.<sup>8</sup> Other studies, however, depart from such strict, binary perspectives and acknowledge the 'contradictory' approach of anarcho-sindicalists and other tendencies in promoting a united front while simultaneously defending their own positions.<sup>9</sup> In reality, the war compelled hybridisation in both the rebel and Republican zones, giving rise to frequently idiosyncratic political amalgams within which factions jostled for influence.<sup>10</sup> While Guillamón's view of ideological improvisation and hybridisation is characteristically negative, Henry Brown's recent analysis of anarchist combatants during the war has highlighted their 'preservation of a separate libertarian sensibility, capable of rising to the surface when threatened' within the

---

<sup>5</sup> See for instance Brodie, *Transatlantic*, pp. 97-127; Daniel Evans, 'The conscience of the Spanish Revolution: anarchist opposition to state collaboration in 1937' (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2016), p. 49 and *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT*, pp. 48-9, 501.

<sup>7</sup> Miquel Amorós, *Los Amigos de Durruti en la Revolución española* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios de Anselmo Lorenzo, 2022), p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Popular Frontism sought 'political unity among democratic forces, linking worker and bourgeois across barriers of social class': see Helen Graham and Paul Preston, 'The Popular Front and the Struggle Against Fascism', in *The Popular Front in Europe*, ed. by Helen Graham and Paul Preston (Macmillan, 1987), pp. 1-19 (p. 4).

<sup>9</sup> Corkett, 'Unity as Rivalry', pp. 286-7.

<sup>10</sup> Santos Juliá, *Hoy no es ayer. Ensayos sobre la España del siglo XX*, sixth edition (RBA, 2011), pp. 92-4; Chris Ealham and Michael Richards, 'History, memory and the Spanish civil war: recent perspectives', in *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, ed. by Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1-20 (pp. 1-2). On the Republican side in particular: Hugo García, "'World Capital of Anti-Fascism'?: The making – and breaking – of a global left in Spain, 1936-1939", in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective*, ed. by Braskén, Copsey and Featherstone, pp. 234-53; Carl-Henrik Bjerström, 'A respectable revolution: Republican cultural mobilisation during the Spanish Civil War', *Cultural and Social History* 18.1 (2021), pp. 97-121, doi:10.1080/14780038.2021.1886388; Pamela Radcliff, 'The Culture of Empowerment in Gijón, 1936-1937' in *The Splintering of Spain*, ed. by Ealham and Richards, pp. 133-55.

broader liminality of the period.<sup>11</sup> This chapter builds on this alternative perspective to emphasise the enduring libertarian agency even within a more adaptive or pragmatic internationalism shaped by the transformational wartime context.<sup>12</sup>

More generally, this chapter contributes to a growing literature on the *other* anti-fascist internationalisms of the Spanish Civil War, diversifying our understanding beyond the communists and the International Brigades.<sup>13</sup> Unlike some other studies, it does not focus on militants' interactions with foreign volunteer anarchists, whose arrival in Spain the CNT explicitly discouraged.<sup>14</sup> Rather, its focus is on the movement's sustained and multifaceted appeal for international solidarity with the revolution and the anti-fascist war effort, which exemplified once again the 'messy business' of building internationalist ties and the complex or even unresolvable contradictions it can involve.<sup>15</sup> This chapter aims to take this 'unruly' process seriously as part of the work of internationalism rather than dismissing it as stemming from a 'retreat into nationalistic discourse'.<sup>16</sup> The chapter begins by exploring the terms on which the CNT's new foreign propaganda apparatus hoped to mobilise the global working class, showing that they were clearly oriented by anarcho-syndicalism, although shaped by the war situation. A second section focuses more specifically on the IWA, where criticism of anti-fascist collaboration collided with the imbalances explored in the previous chapter. This

---

<sup>11</sup> See Agustín Guillamón, *Barricadas en Barcelona: la CNT de la victoria de julio de 1936 a la necesaria derrota de mayo de 1937*, third edition (Editorial Descontrol, 2016), p. 66; Henry Brown, "'¡Vivan las tribus!': persecution, resistance and anarchist agency in the Popular Army during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9)", *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2023), 357-79 (p. 359), doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2282836

<sup>12</sup> Brown's article forms part of a special journal issue stemming from the 'Anarchism in the Iberian Peninsula' symposium at the University of Leeds in June 2022, where this notion of ideological liminality and hybridity was a primary discussion point.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Andy Durgan, *Voluntarios por la Revolución: La milicia internacional del POUM en la Guerra Civil Española* (Editorial Laertes, 2022); Brodie, *Transatlantic*; Emily Mason, *Democracy, Deeds and Dilemmas: Support for the Spanish Republic within British Civil Society, 1936-1939* (Sussex Academic Press, 2017); Maria Framke, 'Political humanitarianism in the 1930s: Indian aid for Republican Spain', *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 23.1-2 (2016), pp. 63-81, doi:10.1080/13507486.2015.1117421. To these can be added studies highlighting the ways that the Comintern's efforts in Spain intersected with other internationalisms: for instance, Cathy Bergin, 'African American internationalism and anti-fascism', in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective*, ed. by Braskén, Copsey and Featherstone, pp. 254-72.

<sup>14</sup> See 'To all comrades abroad', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 21 April 1937. Kenyon Zimmer, 'The Other Volunteers: American Anarchists and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 10.2 (2016), pp. 19-52, doi:10.14321/jstudradi.10.2.0019; Morris Brodie, 'Volunteers for Anarchy: The International Group of the Durruti Column in the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 56.1 (2021), pp. 28-54, doi:10.1177/0022009420949926.

<sup>15</sup> Colás, 'Taking sides', p. 1062.

<sup>16</sup> Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 41; Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 108.

further complicates the notion of a simple pragmatism vs principle binary and emphasises the intra-IWA conflict as reflective of far broader, longstanding tensions in anarcho-syndicalist internationalism. The third section examines how anarcho-syndicalists engaged with a framework of national liberation during the war, and the fourth their responses to the Spanish Republic's only two nation-state allies (the Soviet Union and Mexico), in both cases challenging the notion that they straightforwardly adopted the Popular Front line and highlighting the ways in which they expressed a particular libertarian outlook through them. A fifth and final section explores the creation of the international humanitarian organisation SIA as a further example of libertarian internationalist traditions adapted to the wartime circumstances. Through these different elements, the chapter offers a novel approach to Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism during the war, informed by the methodological framework developed over the previous chapters.

### *The international proletariat: an elusive ally*

As their own hubristic pronouncements made clear, Spain's anarcho-syndicalists were well aware of the limitations of their fellow libertarian movements in other countries.<sup>17</sup> As such, they quickly sought a broader base of international working-class support. The creation of the CNT-FAI Oficina de Propaganda Exterior (Office of Foreign Propaganda, OPE) within days of the coup was a statement of intent in this regard, which situated the anarcho-syndicalists 'well ahead' of the Republican authorities in the field of overseas propaganda.<sup>18</sup> The OPE aimed to 'inform the whole world about the situation in Spain' and 'create a current of revolutionary solidarity towards Spain overseas, to capture sympathies for the ideology of the CNT-FAI and to make the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements of other countries understand the CNT-FAI's tactics'.<sup>19</sup> Its propaganda would thus emphasise the

---

<sup>17</sup> See the contrast between Spain, 'the country destined to carry out the first experiment in anarchist life', and the 'small groups of propagandists without much influence' elsewhere, in 'Gira informativa por la provincia de Tarragona', *Tierra y Libertad*, 28 July 1936.

<sup>18</sup> IISG CNT 103E.1, 'INFORME DEL COMITÉ PENINSULAR SOBRE LA PROPAGANDA EXTERIOR DE LA CNT-FAI'; Hugo García, *The Truth About Spain! Mobilizing British Public Opinion, 1936-1939* (Sussex Academic Press, 2010), pp. 71-2. See also María-Cruz Santos Santos, 'Las oficinas de la CNT en el exterior durante la Guerra Civil', *Conversación Sobre Historia*, 18 August 2022 <<https://conversacionsobrehistoria.info/2022/08/18/las-oficinas-de-la-cnt-en-el-exterior-durante-la-guerra-civil/>> [accessed 17 October 2022].

<sup>19</sup> IISG CNT 103E.1, 'Proposición'. See also 'Hay que divulgar el movimiento español', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 29 July 1936.



‘constructive work of the unions’ in remaking the Spanish economy, and communicate ‘the true social and revolutionary character of Spanish anti-fascism’, while also ‘rejecting, in an opportune manner and always keeping in mind the need for anti-fascist unity, the Marxist tendency towards sabotage inside the country and abroad’.<sup>20</sup> This latter task should be carried out by promoting ‘the constructive idea of the revolutionary workers alliance’.<sup>21</sup> This notion of the OPE’s mission reflected, at an international level, the hopes already pinned on a revolutionary proletarian alliance in Spain: that within a necessary working-class unity, the CNT’s anarcho-syndicalist, revolutionary ideals would inevitably come to the fore and ‘political’ tendencies fade away.<sup>22</sup>

The creation of the OPE spoke to a perceived need for more diverse allies. This would soon intensify: across late August and early September 1936, Augustin Souchy travelled to Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Stockholm as a CNT emissary, reporting to the National Committee that the reformist and socialist organisations there all massively outweighed libertarians and that the Confederation needed to tap into other sources of foreign support.<sup>23</sup> It is worth highlighting immediately, however, that the search for a broader set of foreign allies did not simply replicate the Popular Front’s focus on securing the support of the liberal middle class and the ‘bourgeois democracies’. Although a plurality of discourses can be identified in the libertarian press, those addressed to a broader anti-fascist constituency tended to refer to ‘the democratic *and* proletarian world’, thus preserving the notion of a proletarian sphere separate from the bourgeois democratic realm.<sup>24</sup> Undoubtedly, many within the CNT were concerned about the Non-Intervention Pact, the farcical neutrality agreement which deprived the Republic of armaments while being ‘systematically flouted’

---

<sup>20</sup> ‘Proposición’.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Corkett, ‘Interactions between the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and the Unión General de Trabajadores in Spain and Catalonia, 1931-1936’ (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011), pp. 231-3.

<sup>23</sup> IWA co-founder and former secretary Souchy was in Barcelona upon the outbreak of the war, scheduled to address an anti-militarist rally on what turned out to be the night of the coup: Augustin Souchy, *Beware! Anarchist! A Life for Freedom*, trans. by Theo Waldinger (Charles H. Kerr, 1992), pp. 89-91. He soon played a key role in founding the OPE: IISG CNT 103E.1, ‘INFORME DEL COMITÉ PENINSULAR SOBRE LA PROPAGANDA EXTERIOR DE LA CNT-FAI’. Correspondence between Souchy and the National Committee from his early trips as a CNT representative in IISG CNT 50A.8C, 29 August – 9 September 1936.

<sup>24</sup> ‘LLAMADA AL MUNDO’, *CNT*, 15 November 1936, emphasis added; ‘EN POLITICA EXTERIOR’, *Boletín de Orientación Interna del Movimiento Confederal*, 8 June 1937; ‘A MESSAGE TO THE PROLETARIAN AND ANTI-FASCIST WORLD’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 23 April 1938.

by the German, Italian and Portuguese dictatorships.<sup>25</sup> This preoccupation was evidenced by the constant, detailed coverage of the diplomatic manoeuvrings of its various signatories in the main Confederal newspapers throughout the war.<sup>26</sup> The fear that this might have a politically distorting impact was voiced in February 1938, when the ‘secretariat of external relations’ (which appears to have consisted simply of the CNT and FAI general secretaries, Mariano ‘Marianet’ Vázquez and Pedro Herrera) urged the movement’s press to be more critical in its coverage of the diplomatic landscape and avoid giving too much credit to any ‘tepid anti-fascist manifestation’ by ‘capitalist, so-called democratic’ forces.<sup>27</sup>

However, the palpable *material impact* of diplomacy goes a long way to explaining this interest: ‘By means of non-intervention, thousands of men and women in Spain have been slaughtered’.<sup>28</sup> Although the libertarian press at times denounced the ‘precedent against all international law’ which barred ‘a legal and democratic nation’ from obtaining arms, the placement of these declarations alongside propaganda firmly in the revolutionary proletarian genre undermines any notion that the movement had simply internalised the legalism of the Popular Front.<sup>29</sup> The OPE’s English-language bulletin, for example, forcefully criticised Largo Caballero’s attempt to ‘charm the fair Albion and giddy France’ with ‘reformist’ assertions about the situation in Spain, and urged ‘the world proletariat’ not to ‘be deceived’: ‘It is for the revolution we are struggling’.<sup>30</sup> Bitter references to the denial of ‘a rudiment of international “bourgeois” legality’, for example, instead spoke to anger at the deprivation of even the bare minimum offered by bourgeois democratic ideology.<sup>31</sup> At a mass meeting in Barcelona in January 1937, García Oliver provoked a ‘great ovation’ when he condemned the ‘international democratic hypocrisy of France and England’; a response that suggested a

---

<sup>25</sup> Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 172-4, 213-22.

<sup>26</sup> To take one example at random, a July 1937 issue of *Soli* included an article about Mussolini’s manoeuvrings vis-à-vis the League of Nations on the front page, as well as various news articles regarding Japan’s expansion in China, new initiatives within the Non-Intervention Committee in London, and international banks’ relations with the Francoists: see *Solidaridad Obrera*, 27 July 1937.

<sup>27</sup> IISG CNT 67A.2C, ‘SECRETARIADO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES’.

<sup>28</sup> ‘CAPITALIST EXPECTATIONS’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 6 March 1937.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Neutrality’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 8 September 1936.

<sup>30</sup> ‘CAPITALIST EXPECTATIONS’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 6 March 1937; ‘SOME STATEMENTS OF LARGO CABALLERO’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 15 March 1937. And similarly, with respect to similar efforts from Communists: ‘DECLARATIONS OF SANTIAGO CARRILLO’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 19 May 1937.

<sup>31</sup> ‘THE DEBT OF INTERNATIONAL WORKMEN TO SPAIN’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 20 August 1938.

widespread sense of injustice.<sup>32</sup> While this affective response to hypocrisy was clearly shaped by the immediate war context, it also sat within the long tradition of the libertarian movement seeking to expose the hollowness of the bourgeois liberals' democratic pretensions, from the Paris Commune to Sacco and Vanzetti.

More commonly, however, the OPE straightforwardly identified the arms blockade as an act of class warfare imposed because the global powers 'do not want an Anarchist Spain' which would be 'the beginning of world revolution'.<sup>33</sup> Some pronouncements openly identified Britain in particular as a potential imperialist aggressor.<sup>34</sup> Rather than the 'miserable resources of "diplomacy"' employed by 'the so-called democratic governments', the CNT thus called for 'very definite intervention' by the 'world proletariat' to give to the 'Spanish worker [...] the solidarity that he needs'.<sup>35</sup> In *CNT*, the Mujeres Libres co-founder Lucía Sánchez Saornil poured scorn on 'democratic' and 'pseudo-proletarian' states; instead, she directly addressed the 'workers of all countries', calling on them to understand 'that the Spanish proletariat is the shock force of the universal proletariat: that your fate is tied up with ours and that our sacrifice makes yours worthwhile'.<sup>36</sup> She called for 'international solidarity in a classically proletarian sense', meaning the traditional praxis of revolutionary syndicalism: 'direct action' through boycotts and sabotage of all trade with the Francoist zone.<sup>37</sup>

The OPE's English-language bulletin upheld this classically revolutionary syndicalist belief in working-class self-emancipation – that there was but 'ONE WAY: DIRECT ACTION!' and 'ONE FORCE: THE WORKERS!' – throughout the war, insisting that the 'tremendous powers' of the workers could break the blockade forged by 'the corrupted tools

---

<sup>32</sup> Juan García Oliver, *El fascismo internacional y la guerra antifascista española* (Oficinas de Propaganda CNT-FAI, 1937), p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> 'CAPITALIST EXPECTATIONS'.

<sup>34</sup> 'ANT-FASCIST SOLIDARITY WITH SPAIN NEEDED MORE THAN EVER', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 12 March 1938; 'IRONIES OF THE SPANISH TRAGEDY', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 20 August 1938. The view of England as 'essentially imperialist' went all the way to the Confederal leadership, as evidenced in its internal communications: see 'POLITICA EXTERIOR DE LA GRAN BRETAÑA', *Boletín de Orientación sobre el Exterior [CNT-FAI]*, 26 February 1938. The fear of British imperialism had underpinned the exclusion of foreign-owned property from revolutionary expropriation in the summer of 1936: see Peirats, *Anarchists*, pp. 119-21; Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 139, 207n35.

<sup>35</sup> 'THE UNITED WORKERS OF THE WORLD', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 5 January 1937; 'AN APPEAL TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 16 February 1937.

<sup>36</sup> 'ATALAYA', *CNT*, 15 November 1936.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

of Diplomacy'; that if the workers 'become conscious of their duty to help by any means their Spanish brothers [...] the war will soon be finished'.<sup>38</sup> It called for international solidarity strikes to force the hands of the non-interventionist powers, for global boycotts against Germany, Italy and Japan, and for grassroots fundraising for Spanish anti-fascism.<sup>39</sup> The argument that the global working class was anti-fascist Spain's only true international hope was also expressed in the National Committee's own internal 'orientation bulletin', highlighting that even those sectors which most consistently defended collaboration with the government nonetheless retained a revolutionary syndicalist sensibility.<sup>40</sup> The English-language bulletin's reports on local revolutionary initiatives, emphasising profound, worker-driven social transformation with the trade unions as protagonists, were also clearly at odds with Popular Frontism.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, when Juan Negrín's government set out to dismantle worker control in the wake of the 'May Days', the bulletin attacked what it identified as an effort 'to wipe out the gains of the Revolution and make the Spanish republic appear respectable to other democratic governments'.<sup>42</sup> Defiantly (although perhaps fancifully), even in late 1938 it declared that 'THE REVOLUTION LIVES AND WILL TRIUMPH', referring to a 'proletarian Revolution' which was 'fruit of titanic efforts and preparatory struggles which honour Spanish anarchism'.<sup>43</sup>

As the OPE's mission statement urged, however, the bulletin complemented these affirmations of a particular *revolutionary* vision of events in Spain with a defence of the anti-

---

<sup>38</sup> 'The World Proletariat and the War of the Spanish Workers against Fascism', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 23 January 1937; 'APPEAL OF THE LIBERTARIAN YOUTH OF CATALONIA TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 25 February 1937; 'ARMS! ARMS! SEND US ARMS!,' *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 16 April 1938; 'ANOTHER COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE SPANISH TRAGEDY', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 16 July 1938.

<sup>39</sup> 'July 19th', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 16 July 1938; 'THE FIRST OF MAY AND THE HELP OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT FOR ANTI-FASCIST SPAIN', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 30 April 1938.

<sup>40</sup> See 'AYUDA INTERNACIONAL DEL PROLETARIADO', *Boletín de Orientación Interna del Movimiento Confederal*, 27 August 1937 and further articles on 22 September and 14 October 1937.

<sup>41</sup> 'Blanes', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 23 January 1937; 'THE CONSTRUCTIVE WORK OF THE C.N.T.-F.A.I.', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 29 January 1937; 'THE HOUR OF THE SYNDICATES', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 25 February 1937; 'CONSTRUCTIVE CAPACITY OF ANARCHISM', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 24 March 1937; 'Constructive work of anarchism: Revolutionary realizations in Torelló', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 21 April 1937.

<sup>42</sup> 'THE C.N.T. PERSEVERES IN ITS TASK OF CONSOLIDATING THE REVOLUTION', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 12 February 1938. See Calero Delso, *gobierno de la anarquía*, p. 323; Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 134-5.

<sup>43</sup> 'THE REVOLUTION LIVES AND WILL TRIUMPH', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 22 October 1938.

fascist alliance, and depicted the CNT as a key and consistent supporter of unity. For example, early on, the OPE appealed in print and radio to the ‘workers of England’ to look to Spain, where ‘the lesson of Italy and Germany’ had been learnt and ‘all the proletarian and political left sectors of the country’ had formed ‘an embrace of unbreakable solidarity’ to defeat fascism.<sup>44</sup> It offered repeated invocations of past and present alliances between the CNT and UGT, arguing that these represented the ‘authentic voice of the Spanish workers’.<sup>45</sup> After the May Days, the bulletin reproduced ‘documentary proof’ that the CNT’s concern had been to preserve, not undermine, anti-fascist unity.<sup>46</sup> Given that libertarian allies abroad appeared far more concerned with whether the revolutionary militia had been disarmed and whether the May Days had constituted a counter-revolution, this emphasis on the movement’s efforts to maintain unity spoke to the prioritisation of securing support *beyond* the libertarian movement, through a unified international working class.<sup>47</sup>

Nonetheless, the aspiration to this kind of unity was to go unfulfilled. If even in Spain, where the CNT’s potency made it impossible to marginalise, the anarcho-syndicalists’ integration into the broader anti-fascist coalition was decidedly shaky, elsewhere there was no particular pressure for hostile forces to put their sectarianism aside. Thus Besnard, who was now general secretary of the IWA, found his CNT-instigated attempts to seek a collaboration with the IFTU repeatedly rebuffed in what he characterised as a display of ‘obvious ill will’ towards the libertarian movement.<sup>48</sup> For Emma Goldman, working as the CNT’s representative in Britain, only the radical left Independent Labour Party (ILP) showed an ‘understanding and appreciation of the importance of the CNT in the Spanish Revolution’.

<sup>49</sup> As such, although the OPE in Barcelona might address its bulletins to the ‘workers of

---

<sup>44</sup> ‘A message addressed by Radio to the workers of England’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 8 September 1936.

<sup>45</sup> ‘REVOLUTIONARY UNITY IN ACTION’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 25 February 1937; ‘THE EXAMPLE OF THE ASTURIAS’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 6 March 1937; ‘TOWARDS EFFECTIVE UNITY’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 15 March 1937.

<sup>46</sup> See especially ‘THE CNT-FAI WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF MAY 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>!’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 12 May 1937; also ‘ANTI-PROLETARIAN CAMPAIGN APPROACHES ITS CLIMAX’ and ‘A PLOT IS UNCOVERED’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 19 May 1937.

<sup>47</sup> See for example FAL ARC-01494, W. Farrer to Martin Gudell, undated, Martin Gudell to W. Farrer, 3 June 1937.

<sup>48</sup> IISG IWMA 21, ‘Rapport moral par P. Besnard, membre du secrétariat’. In fact, the IFTU and Second International were themselves divided by this question: García, ‘World Capital’, p. 239.

<sup>49</sup> IISG Emma Goldman Papers [hereafter EGP] 49, Goldman to National Committee, 24 February 1937. See Brodie, *Transatlantic*, pp. 166-9

England', Goldman cautioned about how difficult it was 'to reach the mass in England', due to the 'conservatism' of the Labour Party and mainstream trade unions, the hostility of the Communist Party, and the 'conspiracy of silence on the part of the British press'.<sup>50</sup> Although in public Goldman condemned the IFTU and the other Internationals for their 'breach of proletarian solidaric duty', in private she lamented the 'childish naivety' [sic] of the *cenetistas* in seeking alliances with the socialists while 'the old hatred and antagonism against Anarchists in general and the CNT in particular goes merrily on'.<sup>51</sup> In fact, however, internal CNT discussions noted the 'insufficiency' of the support shown to the Spanish Revolution 'despite the enormous positive current towards Spain', and the limited scope of openly anarchist organisations in many countries; as a possible solution, they mooted the potential for nominally 'neutral' bodies along the lines of Soviet front organisations like International Red Aid (IRA).<sup>52</sup> These discussions highlight that *cenetistas* were perhaps not as 'naïve' as Goldman suggested, and would contribute to novel initiatives, discussed below.

As well as exogenous hostility towards the anarchist movement, it is worth noting the factors endogenous to the movement which, although difficult to quantify in terms of just how much they undermined efforts to capture support, were identified by different actors at the time. In various letters to Souchy in 1937, for example, Goldman, wrote of her 'despair' at the 'exasperating' and 'paralysing' delays in correspondence and in the delivery of propaganda materials, which would 'try the patience of a Saint, and I have never pretended to be one'.<sup>53</sup> It was incomprehensible that even 'in Spain where the CNT-FAI are supposed to be a power', the movement's international propaganda apparatus was less efficient than that of other tendencies.<sup>54</sup> While Goldman may have been overestimating the CNT's limited material resources and internal organisational coherence (as the last chapter showed, this would not be the first time a foreign anarchist had done so), this failing may also have

---

<sup>50</sup> IISG EGP 49, Goldman to National Committee, 24 February 1937.

<sup>51</sup> 'AN INTERVIEW WITH EMMA GOLDMAN FOR THE C.N.T.', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 8 October 1938; IISG EGP 153, Goldman to Souchy, 17 March 1937.

<sup>52</sup> See the document in the CNT archives, likely dating from late 1936 or early 1937: IISG CNT 103E.1, 'Proyecto para constituir en diferentes países la Sociedad de Amigos de la España Nueva'.

<sup>53</sup> IISG EGP 153, Goldman to Souchy, 4 January 1937, 23 February 1937, 12 July 1937.

<sup>54</sup> IISG EGP 153, Goldman to Souchy, 17 March 1937.

indicated an overly idealistic view among *cenetistas* of what was needed in order to capture attention abroad and mobilise an internationalist response.<sup>55</sup>

For the CNT, meanwhile, the sectarianism of libertarian allies was a common complaint and a disruptive force in attaining its international objectives. Already in October 1936, the CNT's Fecundo Roca wrote to the National Committee from Paris to share the 'lamentable' news that Besnard had declined to address a meeting for anti-fascist Spain because the CGTSR had prevented him from sharing a platform with old enemy, CGT secretary Léon Jouhaux.<sup>56</sup> As well as a missed opportunity to support their Spanish comrades, Roca implied that this was demonstrative of a narrowness of vision which ignored what was 'demanded of anti-fascism' and which declined 'to widen the radius of action of its own movement, which is [...] very insignificant'.<sup>57</sup> In other words, the narrow enclosure of sectarianism clashed with the CNT's vision of the anti-fascist struggle as demanding a certain stature and a certain degree of openness and compromise.<sup>58</sup> When a young Albert Meltzer (then at the outset of decades of anarchist activism) wrote from Britain to complain about Goldman's 'domination' of pro-CNT activities in the UK, the OPE secretary Martin Gudell's response was evocative of the exasperation in Spain: 'we are not interested and do not want to intervene in matters of this type', characteristic of 'small anarchist groups unable to develop major activities' because of internal squabbles; he urged them not to 'waste time on little arguments that go nowhere' and claimed that a fascist victory would partly be the fault of 'all those anarchists who have not known how to fulfil their duty correctly'.<sup>59</sup>

The annoyance manifested by Gudell – a Lithuanian-American immigrant who in 1932 had moved to Barcelona and joined the CNT – reflected a wider affective response which began to appear within a few months of the outbreak of war, amid the perception that international support for the Spanish Revolution was falling far shorter of what was needed.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Scholarship on contemporary efforts to garner international support for insurgencies and activist causes has emphasised the complex process of adaptation required: see Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>56</sup> IISG CNT 50A.8C, Roca to National Committee, 26 October 1937.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> On the sectarian streak in the CGTSR and Fédération Anarchiste Française, see Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, pp. 215-29.

<sup>59</sup> FAL ARC-01494, Albert Meltzer to Martin Gudell, n.d., and Gudell to Meltzer, 26 October 1937. For an alternative view of Meltzer's quarrel with Goldman: Brodie, *Transatlantic*, pp. 145-7.

<sup>60</sup> Emilià Páez Cervi, 'GUDELL, Martin (1906-1993)', in *Biografías del 36*, ed. by Paolo Casciola and Agustín Guillamón (Editorial Descontrol, 2016), pp. 120-125.

As early as January 1937, the English-language bulletin spoke out against ‘platitudes’ and lamented that ‘[t]he world proletariat has not yet realised the significance of our struggle nor the tasks to be complied with in this supreme moment’.<sup>61</sup> By that March, Sánchez Saornil’s early exhortations had given way to exasperation at the ‘suicidal attitude of the international proletariat’.<sup>62</sup> As the war progressed, the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist press increasingly voiced a sense that the ‘sacrifices’ of the Spanish workers were not being reciprocated; a ‘free rider’ view of the conflict, in which the global working-class’s interests were inherently at stake but they made no effort to share in the risk.<sup>63</sup> The experience of appealing rather abstractly to the ‘global proletariat’ on the grounds of class interest had thus highlighted the reality that solidarity is, in Charlotte Alston’s words, ‘neither linear nor predictable’; or, as Featherstone puts it, solidarity is ‘without guarantees’, and not a ‘given’ relation.<sup>64</sup> As the following sections show, however, while the failure of the ‘international proletariat’ would be a source of bitter frustration, it would not mean the end of anarcho-syndicalists’ efforts to build international solidarity with their struggle.

Although class-based universalism may have proven hollow, the CNT still had its own foreign libertarian allies. Indeed, it expected them to be the pinnacle and vanguard of its search for international solidarity: when the IWA’s first wartime plenum, in Paris in November 1936, pledged its ‘total solidarity with the Spanish CNT in struggle’, the National Committee urged workers to ‘follow the route of solidarity’ paved by the International.<sup>65</sup> In fact, the plenum agreed that the IWA would take over the running of the OPE, reflecting this notion of foreign allies’ role.<sup>66</sup> However, these bold declarations disguised growing tensions

---

<sup>61</sup> ‘The World Proletariat and the War of the Spanish Workers against Fascism’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 23 January 1937.

<sup>62</sup> ‘AYUDA DEL PROLETARIADO EXTRANJERO’, *CNT*, 6 March 1937.

<sup>63</sup> ‘LET THE WORLD BE ASHAMED OF OUR SACRIFICE’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 7 May 1938; ‘TO ALL REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE WORLD’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 14 May 1938; ‘THE DEBT OF INTERNATIONAL WORKMEN TO SPAIN’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 20 August 1938; ‘THE WAR AGAINST FASCISM MUST BE WAGED AND WON BY THE WORKERS’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 19 November 1938. Bayertz applies the ‘free rider’ problem, traditionally association with the economics of public goods, to working-class movements in reference to situations where workers might benefit from a strike in which they did not participate and thus did not assume the risk: see Bayertz, ‘Four uses’, pp. 18-19.

<sup>64</sup> Charlotte Alston, ‘Transnational solidarities’, p. 449; Featherstone, *Solidarity*, pp. 245-6.

<sup>65</sup> IISG CNT 61A.10, ‘RESOLUCIÓN’, n.d.; IISG CNT 61A.10, ‘LA ASOCIACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES (A.I.T.) EN SU CONGRESO EXTRAORDINARIO, TOMA RESOLUCIONES IMPORTANTES DE SOLIDARIDAD HACIA EL MOVIMIENTO ANTIFASCISTA ESPAÑOL’.

<sup>66</sup> IISG 61A.10, IWA Secretariat circular 3, 20 November 1936.



within the International. The now general secretary Pierre Besnard felt that the Spaniards' 'errors' and 'deviations' were 'too serious not to interest the entire international movement', and his plenary address warned that the 'revolution was in retreat': the ostensible alliance with Stalinists and the apparent failure to defend revolutionary initiatives – the militia, the committees, and full worker control – were already troubling, and the recent entry of four anarchist ministers into the government constituted a 'capital infringement' of libertarian doctrine.<sup>67</sup> Although the final resolutions were 'conciliatory', prospective motions had urged the CNT to return to the revolutionary positions of July, calling for 'total demilitarisation of the Army' and for the reconstitution of revolutionary committees in place of renascent state bodies.<sup>68</sup> Rather than the most secure and emphatic ally, the IWA was becoming a restive forum for foreign libertarian criticism of the CNT's actions. Consequently, the OPE would remain under Gudell's secretaryship, a decision which the National Committee later conceded was due to 'prejudiced conceptions' within the IWA.<sup>69</sup> At the same time as the CNT was, through the OPE, projecting a message of revolutionary working-class unity which seemed consonant with its revolutionary syndicalist basis, its relations with many of its ideological allies were under existential strain; a situation which necessitates closer examination for what it says about the 'messy business' of internationalism.

### *Crisis in the IWA*

Historians who have addressed the wartime conflict within the IWA have largely omitted an engagement with internationalism in conceptual depth.<sup>70</sup> Instead, the positions from various IWA plenums (November 1936, June 1937) and congresses (December 1937, October-November 1938) have become an illustrative device for their contentions regarding the CNT's anti-fascist collaboration: what Guillamón and Evans depict as the principled opposition of figures such as Besnard, Schapiro and Camillo Berneri to the rudderless

---

<sup>67</sup> 'Redressement nécessaire', *L'Espagne Antifasciste*, 24 October 1936; FAL ARC-03016, 'PROTOCOLE du BUREAU ADMINISTRATIF DE L'A.I.T. à PARIS, les 15, 16 & 17 novembre 36'.

<sup>68</sup> 'Rapport moral par P. Besnard'; IISG CNT 61A.10, 'PROYECTO DE UNA MOCION'.

<sup>69</sup> IISG CNT 61C.1, 'Informe y resoluciones de la delegación de la CNT al congreso extraordinario de la AIT', December 1937. A considerable back-and-forth between the IWA Secretariat, Rüdiger, and the National Committee over control of the OPE can be traced in IISG CNT 63C.1, IISG CNT 103E.1 and in IISG CNT 61A.10; see also ; Robert J. Alexander, *The Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War*, volume II (Janus, 1999), pp. 1138-39.

<sup>70</sup> A partial exception to this, albeit brief, in Thorpe, 'Syndicalist internationalism', pp. 252-57.

pragmatism of the Confederal ‘upper committees’, was for Casanova and Robert Alexander an example of meaningless puritanism in the face of realism.<sup>71</sup> Undoubtedly, the clash between pragmatism and principles was a key and continual axis of contention. Besnard, for example, called on the Spanish movement to renounce collaboration with the state and ‘return to the straight and narrow path’, depicting himself as a ‘loyal guardian of the IWA’s doctrines’ who sought to correct ‘the deviations that the CNT imposed on our principles’.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, CNT representatives contested a ‘stale puritanism’ that evaluated the movement’s actions from ‘a purely philosophical point of view’.<sup>73</sup> The increasingly acrimonious division saw these positions give rise to mutual insults: of ‘concessionists’ on one side and self-imposed ‘apostles of the ideology’ on the other.<sup>74</sup> In this polarised atmosphere, Goldman found herself ‘between the frying pan and the fire’, disapproving of the purist scrutiny of the CNT, yet disdaining Marianet’s ‘preposterous’ and ‘scandalous’ attacks on anarchist critics.<sup>75</sup>

A focus purely on this binary, however, marginalises the other factors involved and the way this wartime debate overlaid longstanding fault lines in the construction of libertarian internationalism. For example, the CNT and its supporters often framed the dispute around *understanding*, as when the OPE sought to ensure that ‘the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements of other countries *understand* the CNT-FAI’s tactics’.<sup>76</sup> Understanding could be construed in a very literal and practical sense, as when Helmut Rüdiger, who continually attempted to carve out a middle way in the dispute, suggested that the ‘exaggerated optimism’ of communications from revolutionary Barcelona in July 1936 had obscured the complexities

---

<sup>71</sup> Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT*; Evans, ‘conscience’, pp. 233-43; Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp. 151-2; Alexander, *The Anarchists*, pp. 1134-62.

<sup>72</sup> FAL ARC-03016, ‘PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L’A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937’; ‘Rapport moral par P. Besnard’.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Informe y resoluciones de la delegación de la CNT al congreso extraordinario de la AIT’; ‘PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L’A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937’.

<sup>74</sup> The former appeared in the newspaper of the Fédération Anarchiste Française, closely aligned with the CGTSR: see the clipping in IISG CNT 61A.10, ‘ET MAINTENANT?’; the latter in IISG CNT 61D.4, National Committee circular 12, 26 June 1937.

<sup>75</sup> IISG EGP 153, Goldman to Souchy, 27 July 1937.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Proposición’, emphasis added. One example of this in practice was when the English-language bulletin reproduced Federica Montseny’s important speech explaining how circumstances had demanded certain adaptations and compromises of the Spanish anarchists: ‘Militant anarchism and the Spanish reality’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 8-12 January 1937.

which were necessary to make sense of the CNT's actions.<sup>77</sup> However, it could also be linked to the more emotive notions of empathy and solidarity at the heart of internationalism, as when Federica Montseny expressed her 'bitterness' at the 'Anarchists who have not understood us and [...] who have criticised us deeply'.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, Guillamón's criticism of the angry tone taken by CNT delegates during IWA debates on Spain seems to ignore the way that movements with a deeply moralistic attachment to solidarity often see a perceived failure to practise it as 'shabby and reprehensible'.<sup>79</sup> 'Understanding' could also be closely related to the more overtly libertarian concepts of federalism and autonomy: upon the eventual decision, at the late 1938 congress, to reform the IWA statutes to permit 'the broadest tactical autonomy', the Confederal delegation praised the willingness to 'understand us and take on our experiences'.<sup>80</sup> Thus, there were multiple other axes of contention related to the different building blocks of internationalism.

In many ways, the acrimony between the CNT and some of its IWA allies was redolent of the tensions between ideological alignment and more flexible approaches to solidarity which had run through libertarian internationalism for decades: when *cenetistas* requested unconditional solidarity, they located this demand within 'the principles of anarcho-syndicalism and its emancipatory ends'.<sup>81</sup> The intensifying context of the war, however, forced activists to pursue the debate between solidarity and doctrinal alignment further, turning it into a causality dilemma. At the IWA's June 1937 plenum, for example, the CNT's representatives argued that the *lack* of solidarity – 'the inertia of the global proletariat' – itself justified the Confederation's doctrinal heterodoxy, as it had left the anarcho-syndicalists in a position of relative weakness.<sup>82</sup> This shifted the onus of moral responsibility: as the FAI peninsular committee put it that year in a message to the 'international libertarian movement', rather than 'the failure of Spanish anarchism', it was necessary to speak of 'another more

---

<sup>77</sup> Helmut Rüdiger, *El anarcosindicalismo en la Revolución Española* (Barcelona: Comité Nacional de la CNT de España, 1938), p. 8; see also Zimmer, 'The Other Volunteers', p. 22.

<sup>78</sup> 'Militant anarchism and the Spanish reality' (8 January)

<sup>79</sup> Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT*, pp. 228, 245, 261; Bayertz, 'Four uses', p. 18.

<sup>80</sup> IISG CNT 79A.11, 'INFORME SINTETICO DE LA DELEGACION DE LA CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DEL TRABAJO AL CONGRESO DE LA ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE LOS TRABAJADORES CELEBRADO EN PARIS DESDE EL DIA 28 DE OCTUBRE HASTA EL 6 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1938'.

<sup>81</sup> From the CNT's report to the December 1937 congress: 'Informe y resoluciones de la delegación de la CNT al congreso extraordinario de la AIT'.

<sup>82</sup> 'PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L'A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937'

lamentable failure: that of international worker solidarity', in which the IWA did not lack blame the negative pronouncements emanating from certain corners of it.<sup>83</sup> For critics such as Schapiro, however, the inverse logic was true: 'it is necessary to do first, before finding imitators': if the CNT wanted allies, it was incumbent on it to provide a sufficiently inspiring revolutionary example.<sup>84</sup> Besnard similarly argued that to 'closely practise international solidarity', it was necessary to have 'certainties on both sides'.<sup>85</sup> These circular arguments reflected longstanding contentions about the relative spontaneity or artificiality of solidarity, and with whom to practise it.

To bring the very nature and origins of solidarity into contention was to pose questions about the ties within the International and its very *raison d'être*, which was precisely what Marianet did in a June 1937 memorandum in which he toyed with the idea of leaving the IWA, questioning whether the CNT ought to continue 'tolerating and collaborating with these "comrades" [...] who do nothing but censure and lambast us'.<sup>86</sup> His use of the inverted commas emphasised that the latter activity had, in his view, placed the movement's fundamental comradely ties in doubt. At various points throughout the war, different actors made claims on what constituted a 'natural' or 'logical' internationalist praxis, in the process only drawing attention to the *lack* of any such organic logic. For example, in his complaints about the CNT's close relations with UA activists in France who remained members of the main CGT, Besnard asserted that the CGTSR was 'the natural Representative of the CNT in France, as the IWA is in the world'.<sup>87</sup> However, as Berry points out, the UA's position on anti-fascist unity meant that it was arguably far closer to the CNT than the CGTSR was.<sup>88</sup> In this instance, the boundaries of the IWA thus did not actually correspond to a situation of likeness or identification, posing the question of what Besnard actually meant by representativity.<sup>89</sup> Another example occurred at the December 1937 IWA congress, when CNT representatives disdained the 'incorrect attitude' and lack of 'respect' of their CGTSR

---

<sup>83</sup> 'El anarquismo en España: informe del Comité Peninsular de la Federación Anarquista Ibérica al movimiento libertario internacional'.

<sup>84</sup> 'PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L'A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937'.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> IISG CNT 61D.4, National Committee circular 12, 26 June 1937.

<sup>87</sup> In particular, Louis Lecoin: IISG CNT 61A.1B, Besnard to Prieto, 12 October 1936.

<sup>88</sup> Berry, 'Fascism or Revolution!' p. 63.

<sup>89</sup> This recalled the 1920s period when Santillán and other FORA representatives had decried Ángel Pestaña's dalliance with the more syndicalist-leaning USA: see above, p. 104.

counterparts in opposing Emma Goldman being allowed to address the delegations because she was not a member of a section.<sup>90</sup> This quarrel was obviously motivated by Goldman's sympathy for the CNT, but the conflicting perspectives regarding how an 'old militant of international anarchism' ought to be treated further highlighted how the International's boundaries could appear arbitrarily drawn.<sup>91</sup>

While the National Committee questioned the boundaries of the IWA, Besnard probed whether the International should continue collaborating with the CNT, such was its apparent deviation from doctrine. Besnard's summer 1937 interest in an internal 'opposition' that might 'reorient' the CNT or replace it as a Spanish section more loyal to 'the doctrines, principles and decisions of the IWA' triggered fury from the National Committee.<sup>92</sup> However, Besnard's speculation only reflected the growing contestation of the International's 'blurrier borders'. As Evans notes, CNT representatives adopted the contradictory posture of denying that such an internal opposition existed while also protesting the Secretariat's 'intolerable' dalliance with it.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, in his attack on Besnard's purported 'Committee for Victims of the Spanish Counter-Revolution' in the same period, Marianet argued that the 'most elemental ethical logic' demanded CNT control over any such funds, while simultaneously asserting that 'we do not know of the existence of these victims'.<sup>94</sup> In both cases, the National Committee's contradictory arguments reflected a desire for local control, which itself spoke to the difficulty of transcending competing narratives and claims at national and international level. But in this instance, Marianet's 'callous' attitude towards foreign victims of Republican repression placed such 'national' claims in tension with loyalty to persecuted comrades.<sup>95</sup> Ever the mediator, although Rüdiger was 'stunned' by Marianet's attitude towards foreign victims of the post-May Days repression, he agreed that Besnard ought to have had 'due contact with the CNT'; the issue

---

<sup>90</sup> 'Informe y resoluciones de la delegación de la CNT al congreso extraordinario'.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> See 'Rapport moral par P. Besnard'.

<sup>93</sup> Evans, 'conscience', pp. 235-6.

<sup>94</sup> IISG CNT 61A.1B, Vázquez to IWA secretariat, 19 October 1937; Evans, 'conscience', pp. 171-2.

<sup>95</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 109.

was ‘one more detail among those which characterise the toxic atmosphere in our international movement’.<sup>96</sup>

Amid the litigating of questions of representativity and authority within the International, it was almost inevitable that the question of imbalance would return: the CNT’s wartime membership explosion saw it grow to ninety percent of the Association’s total affiliation, widening the existing disparity within the International.<sup>97</sup> Thorpe, in fact, posits the imbalance as an explanatory framework for the debate over doctrine and pragmatism, arguing that dogmatism stemmed from smaller organisations with no recent experience of the responsibilities and complexities of mass movement organising whereas the SAC, as the International’s second largest organisation, was a consistent ally of the CNT.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, the CNT National Committee held up the SAC’s example, publishing a pamphlet in 1938 on the history of the Swedish anarcho-syndicalism and its support for anti-fascist Spain to ‘show the Spanish proletariat that it is not alone in its struggle against fascism’, and ‘that there are places where the proletariat [...] is not reformist [...] does a lot for our war’.<sup>99</sup> This chimes with the analysis of the previous chapter, on the friction between the CNT’s majoritarian pretensions and the minoritarian nature of most of the IWA; however, examples such as Max Nettlau demonstrate that activists with no affiliation to any mass movement in particular nonetheless felt that the exceptional circumstances demanded unconditional support for the CNT.<sup>100</sup>

Nonetheless, while the imbalance may not in itself explain the emergence of different attitudes towards orthodoxy and pragmatism, the former problem certainly became folded into the latter, as the political implications of the disparity were brought into contention. By the spring of 1937, for example, the CNT National Committee was responding to criticism from other IWA sections by declaring that the Confederation would not ‘submit to the decisions’ of ‘non-existent movements’, language which recalls the exclusionist rhetoric of

---

<sup>96</sup> IISG CNT 63C.1, Rüdiger to National Committee, 25 October 1937. Evans estimates that more than one in ten of the participants in the May Day uprising, and of the victims of the repression afterwards, were foreign revolutionaries: Evans, *Revolution and the State*, p. 116n72.

<sup>97</sup> Thorpe, ‘Syndicalist internationalism’, p. 251.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 257.

<sup>99</sup> IISG CNT 66C.5, Marianet to Gudell, 19 May 1938; Rodolfo Berner, S.A.C. *El movimiento anarcosindicalista en Suecia. Su obra a favor de la España antifascista* (Editorial Tierra y Libertad, 1938).

<sup>100</sup> On Nettlau’s ‘uncritical’ support, see Alexander, *The Anarchists*, p. 1149.

Pérez and Carbó in 1931.<sup>101</sup> Accordingly, at that June's IWA plenum, the CNT's representatives mounted a failed effort to alter IWA rules to prevent sections-in-exile from voting on the Confederation's conduct.<sup>102</sup> Guillamón describes the latter as an effort at 'authoritarian control of the IWA' – an attempt to suppress its critics; in general, in his view, 'the terrible international weakness of the anarcho-syndicalist movement outside Spain' was an 'essential cause of the self-importance, arrogance and cockiness' of the CNT towards the rest of the IWA.<sup>103</sup> A haughty attitude was indeed plainly apparent in Marianet's July 1937 polemic against 'those who only reaped failures', which urged foreign libertarians to have 'a little confidence in us, since we have been the soul of international anarchism'.<sup>104</sup> However, although the National Committee undoubtedly sought to stymie criticism and could be dismissive in how they referred to non-Spanish libertarian movements, Guillamón's perspective risks overlooking the fundamental challenge that such a drastic imbalance posed to the International's democratic structure. For the National Committee, the fact that other sections could censure one which accounted for nine tenths of the Association's affiliation constituted an 'unfair, anti-federal and absurd' distribution of voting power.<sup>105</sup>

Imbalance was also a question of reciprocity, as the war collided with unresolved prior tensions about the distribution of responsibilities within the International. At the June 1937 IWA plenum, faced with increasing insistence from many foreign allies that the CNT change course, the Confederation's representatives invoked reciprocity, or the lack thereof: *cenetista* Nemesio Galve, for example, described a proposed pledge to disavow all future collaboration with the Republican state as 'an impossible thing' which begged the question: 'what can the IWA offer us in exchange for that promise?'<sup>106</sup> In the same vein, the National Committee spurned the promises of the CGTSR 'with its three thousand affiliates' to second such a unilateral withdrawal from collaboration via an international solidarity strike; such an empty promise in exchange for such a highly risky manoeuvre made a mockery of 'the most

---

<sup>101</sup> IISG CNT 51B.4, 'Actas del pleno nacional extraordinario del Movimiento Libertario'.

<sup>102</sup> 'PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L'A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937'.

<sup>103</sup> Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT*, pp. 175, 311; see also Evans, 'conscience', p. 242.

<sup>104</sup> 'Al anarquismo español no lo pueden desautorizar quienes solo cosecharon fracasos', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 6 July 1937.

<sup>105</sup> 'Informe de la delegación de la CNT al congreso extraordinario'.

<sup>106</sup> 'PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L'A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937'.

elemental rule of reciprocity'.<sup>107</sup> Morris Brodie's critical assessment that the CNT demanded the 'near-impossible' of the 'tiny' international anarchist movement by condemning its ineffectualness thus rather misses this role of *reciprocity* in giving rise to *cenetistas*' scorn towards their critics.<sup>108</sup> For example, while the FAI Peninsular Committee denied that the IWA could be blamed a priori for being unable to transcend its diminutiveness and conjure up international working-class support, it was the fact that it 'could and should have suspended all criticism and judgement [until after] first judging itself' – in other words, until first evaluating its own contribution – which was cause for censure.<sup>109</sup>

Rüdiger, ever seeking a way to bridge the International's divisions, was intrigued by this issue of reciprocity, or as he described it, the 'difficult and complex' question of 'the unity of the IWA'.<sup>110</sup> At the CNT's national plenum in May 1937, he called for 'mutual comprehension' and a recognition of 'spiritual interdependence' of the International's different sections.<sup>111</sup> While the CNT's 'heroic' struggle was a 'magnificent impulse' to the movement, the Spanish activists in turn needed to recognise what the smaller sections had contributed; for instance, the anarcho-syndicalist theory articulated by individuals such as Rocker and other figures in the much smaller FAUD.<sup>112</sup> Rüdiger further developed this idea of 'interdependence' in his major apologia for the CNT pamphletised by the National Committee in 1938: although his depiction of a Spanish movement rooted completely in libertarian popular culture with *no* knowledge of anarchist philosophy was a clear caricature, it spoke to a perceived need to offer a narrative of complementarity.<sup>113</sup> Rüdiger's efforts highlight that the imbalance and how to navigate it remained a question five years after Schapiro had sought to articulate a complementarity between the Spanish movement and its far smaller IWA partners; these were therefore genuine and longstanding questions about the

---

<sup>107</sup> IISG CNT 61D.4, CNT National Committee circular 12, 26 June 1937. The plenum had also occurred at a time when the National Committee continued to receive reports about the CGTSR's sectarianism disrupting efforts to raise awareness of the CNT cause in France: IISG CNT 61A.10, 'Informe: de la tournée de propaganda celebrada en Francia por el Comité Nacional de la CNT', 16 May 1937.

<sup>108</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 109.

<sup>109</sup> 'El anarquismo en España: informe del Comité Peninsular de la Federación Anarquista Ibérica al movimiento libertario internacional'.

<sup>110</sup> IISG CNT 63C.1, Rüdiger to Vázquez, 17 November 1937.

<sup>111</sup> IISG CNT 63C.1, 'Informe del Secretariado de la AIT en Barcelona ante el Pleno Nacional de Regionales de CNT, FAI y JJLL en Valencia el 25 de mayo de 1937'.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> See Rüdiger, *El anarcosindicalismo*, pp. 7-9.



nature of the bond within the International, beyond the ephemeral question of anti-fascist collaboration.

Although the preceding has outlined various structural problems within the International and at its 'blurrier borders', the figure of Rüdiger as a 'strong, though critical, supporter' of the Spanish movement who attempted to mediate the intra-International conflict also poses a question about personalities as a contingent factor shaping internationalism.<sup>114</sup> In particular, Rüdiger appears as a stark contrast with Pierre Besnard, whose self-proclaimed 'guardianship' of anarcho-syndicalist doctrine during the war reflected, in Wayne Thorpe's analysis, his longstanding 'schismatic and sectarian propensities'.<sup>115</sup> The general secretary's December 1937 report, ending in his resignation, appeared to dwell on various perceived personal slights, such as the disrespect he felt Largo Caballero had shown him, the lack of attention given to his own proposals to win the conflict, and the CNT's recruitment of Souchy, whom he described as an 'ex-secretary of the IWA who had always frustrated as far as possible the work of his successors'.<sup>116</sup> A less abrasive alternative at the helm of the IWA in 1936-1937 might have drastically changed the hue of the plenums and congresses during that period, where Besnard's critical secretarial reports set the tone. Without delving too far into counterfactuals, the Hispanophile Rudolf Rocker, a leading light of the International, would undoubtedly have approached the task differently: as he put it in 1937, 'we should be the last to throw salt in [*cenetistas*'] wounds, especially if we ourselves are not able to share in those sacrifices'.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> The description is from Alexander, *The Anarchists* p. 1161.

<sup>115</sup> Thorpe, 'Anarchosyndicalism', pp. 579-81. For instance, Besnard had previously been accused of doctrinaire rigidity regarding the splitting of the CGT in 1921: Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, pp. 119-20.

<sup>116</sup> 'Rapport moral par P. Besnard'. Marianet had previously implored Besnard to cease trumpeting his supposed solutions: IISG CNT 61A.1B, Vázquez to IWA secretariat, 23 July 1937. These included a 'chimeric' proposal to set the Moroccan anti-colonial rebel leader Abd el-Krim, then in French-imposed exile in Réunion several thousand miles away, loose in the Francoists' North African rearguard: Abel Paz, *La cuestión de Marruecos y la República Española* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2000), p. 89. Another involved an arms dealer whom García Oliver had swiftly identified, to Besnard's chagrin, as a 'swindler': Alexander, *The Anarchists*, pp. 1140-41.

<sup>117</sup> The IWA co-founder had been in exile in the USA since the Nazi takeover. See letter to Rüdiger reproduced in a memorandum from the central Spain (Madrid) CRT: CDMH PS-Madrid 663/9, CRT Centro circular 24, 17 November 1937. Rocker elsewhere cautioned against attempts to 'judge from afar' and urged understanding and unity in an international libertarian movement 'threatened on all sides by the gravest dangers': Rudolf Rocker, *Extranjeros en España*, trans. by Helmut Rüdiger (Ediciones Imán, 1938), p. 101.

*An 'EMINENTLY NATIONAL' struggle?*

Anarcho-syndicalists frequently depicted the war as a struggle for national independence. The front page of the first 'new era' edition of *Tierra y Libertad*, for example, invoked the Spanish War of Independence and the 'universal surprise' inspired by the defeat of the 'colossus' Napoleon through 'the untiring action of the brave guerrillas, who today are representative figures of the race'.<sup>118</sup> The use of this imagery so promptly questions Xosé Núñez Seixas's suggestion that the anarchists were 'reluctant' to use the national independence frame and did so in imitation of the Communists and Republicans, suggesting a more spontaneous and autochthonous adoption of it.<sup>119</sup> Recent analyses by Evans and Brodie also maintain that the 'national independence' framework was symptomatic of the CNT's collaborationism with those anti-revolutionary tendencies, arguing that the closer activists were to the Republican state, the more they traded 'internationalism' for 'nationalism'.<sup>120</sup> However, these accounts have tended to suggest a mutually exclusive relationship between discourses of the nation and internationalism, which does not correspond to the more dynamic one established in this thesis and in other recent literature on anarchist internationalism and nationalism.<sup>121</sup>

Moreover, the frame of national independence extended far beyond more 'collaborationist' sectors of the movement. The recalcitrant 'Amigos de Durruti' group's *Towards a New Revolution* included an entire section on 'THE INDEPENDENCE OF SPAIN', in which the group lamented the grip of 'exotic capital' and the 'tentacles of international finance' on 'our country' and its 'vernacular riches'.<sup>122</sup> This clearly conflated anti-capitalist opposition to imperialism with a sense of affront at the violation of national sovereignty. While the pamphlet declared that the enmeshing of 'indigenous capital' and 'international capital' made independence 'a case of class interests' rather than 'a patriotic problem', it also boasted that 'multiple invasions have never been able to break the sacred

---

<sup>118</sup> 'La voz heroica de las Juventudes Libertarias de Cataluña', *Tierra y Libertad*, 28 July 1936. In fact, the anti-Napoleonic guerrillas had previously been considered an important example of popular resistance which might inspire an eventual defence of the revolution: Federico Urales, *Municipios Libres (Ante las puertas de la Anarquía)* (Ediciones de La Revista Blanca, 1932), p. 28

<sup>119</sup> Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el invasor! Nacionalismos y movilización bélica durante la guerra civil española (1936-1939)* (Marcial Pons Historia, 2006), pp. 62-3

<sup>120</sup> See Evans, 'conscience', pp. 50, 107; Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 108.

<sup>121</sup> For instance Gutiérrez and Kinna, 'Introduction'; Bantman and Di Paola, 'Banal and Everyday (Inter)Nationalism'; Turcato, 'Nations without Borders'; Kühnis, 'More than an Antonym'.

<sup>122</sup> Manuscript in FAL ARC-03016, 'Hacia una nueva revolución'.

spirit of independence' of the Spanish people.<sup>123</sup> Thus although emphasising class interests, the pamphlet maintained some ambiguity regarding the residual role and meaning of nation. The work of Antonio Morales Gúzman in the Juventudes Libertarias (Libertarian Youth, JJLL) newspaper *Faro* was similarly ambiguous. Evans cites Morales Gúzman as a strident internationalist against the nationalist tide, having written that the conflict was 'not Spanish, and still less nationalist', but instead 'the war of all peoples who struggle to free themselves from the yoke of tyranny'.<sup>124</sup> Only a week before, however, the same writer had lauded guerrillas as exemplars of Spanish 'racial temperament', locating the militia columns against the 'Italo-Germanic invasion' in the same traditions as the 'warriors of Independence [who] left home and hearth and gave their life for free Spain, dying with a smile on the lips and joy on their face'.<sup>125</sup> These examples show that militants did not maintain as strict a binary as some historians have done between the framework of national independence from foreign invasion, and that of broader struggles for class liberation or the struggle against tyranny. Rather than a symptom of political transformation, this national discourse must be understood within the affective context of the war and within the history of anarchist solidarity with national liberation.

For Evans, a 'particularly egregious example' of the movement's nationalistic trend was the 26 May 1937 front page editorial in *Solidaridad Obrera*.<sup>126</sup> Under the striking headline 'OUR REVOLUTION MUST BE SPANISH', the author – almost certainly Jacinto Toranzo – railed against 'foreign intrusion, whatever its colour or hue' and accused 'foreign interests' of seeking to 'asphyxiate the Iberian Revolution'.<sup>127</sup> Against the 'foreignization' ('*extranjerización*') of Spanish politics, the CNT and FAI represented a 'plainly Spanish, plainly Iberian revolutionary movement' rooted in 'the guts and the heart of the race' and committed to defending '*Spain, for the Spanish*'.<sup>128</sup> As both Evans and Brodie note, the article provoked a scathing response from Schapiro: while recognising that the author intended to critique the growing influence of the Communist Party, he questioned why

---

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Cited in Evans, 'conscience', p. 181.

<sup>125</sup> 'Los guerrilleros de la Libertad', *Faro*, 12 November 1937.

<sup>126</sup> Evans, 'conscience', p. 180.

<sup>127</sup> 'NUESTRA REVOLUCIÓN HA DE SER ESPAÑOLA', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 26 May 1937. In fact, the headline was recycled from an earlier front page polemic against foreign intervention in the same newspaper: see *Solidaridad Obrera*, 24 January 1937.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. Italics in original.

instead of ‘playing fair and saying straightforwardly that it was a matter of getting rid of the Communists and Moscovite schemes’, it had adopted the ‘anti-revolutionary’ strategy of ‘racism’.<sup>129</sup>

The findings of the previous chapters, however, permit us to question the extent to which the editorial represented a rupture with earlier praxis. As Santillán’s protégé, perhaps it should hardly be surprising that Toryho identified anarchism as a Spanish national trait to defend radical positions.<sup>130</sup> Schapiro, for his part, compared the editorial’s ‘chauvinism’ to García Oliver’s 1931 comments about the ‘barrel of beer’.<sup>131</sup> However, he could have cited a more contemporaneous example in his own reference to Spain’s ‘racial anarchism’ in his 1933 report. In fact, this was not even the first time that the front page of a major Spanish libertarian newspaper had utilised national essentialism to reject the idea of Soviet Communism taking root in Spain: in August 1934, for example, *Tierra y Libertad* had led with an essay by the Argentinian anarchist Juan Lazarte which contrasted the authoritarian, ‘Asian’ culture of Russia with the ‘African’ heritage which had left the ‘peninsular peoples with a soul aloof from the fumbling of capitalist materialism’.<sup>132</sup> Thus this racialisation of Spanish anarchism is not so easily identifiable as merely part of the project of anti-fascist collaboration and had long been utilised as an anti-Bolshevik argument. The texts of dissident, anti-collaboration sectors of the movement further emphasise this: for example, the clandestine radical newspaper *Anarquía* accused foreign imperialists of trying to divert the ‘Iberian Revolution’ from its ‘authentically Spanish [...] idiosyncrasy and racial temperament’.<sup>133</sup>

Undoubtedly, the war provoked an intensification of pre-existing patterns and phenomena and shaped them around new necessities: thus if before the war Toryho had written of Spanish anarchism having its ‘roots in the guts of the people’, the exigencies of the post-July 1936 situation, including the growth in Communist influence, necessitated a more forthright

---

<sup>129</sup> See ‘National-Anarchisme?’ *Le Combat Syndicaliste*, 11 June 1937; Evans, ‘conscience’, pp. 180-1; Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 107.

<sup>130</sup> José Miguel Fernández Barreira, review of *Años de Hierro. Conflicto bélico y anticomunismo vistos por un periodista libertario en el exilio*, by Jacinto Toryho, *Libre Pensamiento* 116 (2024), 111-15 (p. 113).

<sup>131</sup> ‘National-Anarchisme?’

<sup>132</sup> ‘ESPAÑA Y RUSIA’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 16 August 1934.

<sup>133</sup> ‘¿Un pacto secreto franco-ruso-británico?’ *Anarquía*, 22 July 1937. The common conflation of ‘Iberian’ with ‘Spanish’ prefigured the later ‘elision’ of Portugal in Felipe Alaiz’s postwar imaginings of *iberismo*: Richard Clemenson, ‘Felipe Alaiz, Iberian federalism and the making of the anarchist intellectual’, *Social and Education History* 1.2 (2012), pp. 153-71 (p. 162), doi:10.4471/hse.2012.10.

assertion of this ‘social biology’.<sup>134</sup> However, although Brodie writes of a ‘retreat into nationalistic discourse’, these endeavours rather resembled a forward march onto the terrain of national narratives, while always maintaining libertarian agency and denying having even ‘the tiniest speck of *españolismo*’ or ‘nationalist sentiment’.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, Toryho claimed that his objective was to articulate a ‘libertarian, class-based national consciousness’ for ‘the workers [...] my comrades’.<sup>136</sup> This demanded a decidedly anarcho-syndicalist vision of Spanish national mythology: for example, the recasting of Viriathus as a ‘man of action, something more than a patriot [...] a proletarian risen in arms against the Celtic aristocracy [...] and against the Roman consuls’, and an exponent of ‘what today we call *class consciousness*’.<sup>137</sup> The guerrillas who fought Napoleon during the War of Independence in 1808 were exemplars of ‘popular initiative [...] the action of the people in its most spontaneous and effective expression’.<sup>138</sup> This centred anarcho-syndicalist notions of popular spontaneity and class struggle within the narratives of resistance to foreign invasion that were being utilised across the anti-fascist spectrum.<sup>139</sup> Addressing himself to Catalan audiences, Toryho undertook a similar, parallel effort to locate the anarcho-syndicalist movement and its traditions of rebellion and federalism within Cataluña-specific narratives of the war.<sup>140</sup>

The sense of international abandonment was another contextual factor which lent itself to an intensified national sensibility, manifested in a defiant sense of pride in the Spanish workers who were ‘perfectly aware of the isolation in which we have been left [...] But, nevertheless [...] persist in their invincible decision to fight until the bitter end’.<sup>141</sup> Toryho, for example, was scathing about the ‘shameful indecision’ and ‘incredible cowardice’ of the global working class.<sup>142</sup> Federica Montseny’s March 1937 appeal to the ‘indomitable spirit of the race’ followed immediately after her observations about anti-fascist Spain’s

---

<sup>134</sup> ‘REAFIRMACION DEL ANARQUISMO’, *La Revista Blanca*, 13 March 1936; Jacinto Toryho, *La Independencia de España (Tres etapas de nuestra Historia)* (Barcelona: Ediciones Tierra y Libertad, 1938), pp. 288-89.

<sup>135</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 108; ‘NUESTRA REVOLUCIÓN HA DE SER ESPAÑOLA’.

<sup>136</sup> ‘NUESTRA REVOLUCIÓN HA DE SER ESPAÑOLA’; Toryho, *Independencia*, pp. 288-91.

<sup>137</sup> Toryho, *Independencia*, pp. 14-5. Italics in original.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>139</sup> See Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el Invasor!*, pp. 29-40.

<sup>140</sup> See the speech published on the front page of *Tierra y Libertad*, 29 July 1936; BPA I-C 49/31, ‘El 11 de setembre del 1714 i la Guerra antifeixista d’avui’, n.d.

<sup>141</sup> ‘THE SPANISH PROLETARIAT AFFIRMS ITS WILL FOR VICTORY’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 21 May 1938.

<sup>142</sup> Toryho, *Independencia*, pp. 245-46.

solitude.<sup>143</sup> An exchange between Emma Goldman and the old ‘man of action’ turned army commander Gregorio Jover in late 1938 evidences the role that contingent circumstances could play in shaping these sentiments. While Goldman argued that the French and English workers had not responded suitably to the appeal for solidarity with anti-fascist Spain because they were ‘very different from the Spaniards’ and ‘not well informed’, Jover insisted that there were no inherent differences or knowledge gaps.<sup>144</sup> Rather, the difference lay in Spanish workers having ‘the courage to face squarely the problem presented to them’, in the knowledge ‘that all we have is the fruit of our efforts’, whereas others wanted to secure freedom ‘without struggles’.<sup>145</sup> Here, Jover’s sense of the *exceptional* courage of the Spanish workers emerged contingently from the perceived (and emotive) contrast between the sacrifices taking place in Spain and the apparent complacency elsewhere.

Instead of an abandonment of internationalism, these ‘nationalist’ appeals frequently emphasised the urgent need to place anti-fascism at the centre of internationalism or risk the loss of everything for which the working class had struggled for decades.<sup>146</sup> The movement’s discourse depicted the Spanish as standing alone *within* internationalism, at the forefront of a *global* working-class struggle against fascism. For example, despite her sense of being ‘absolutely alone’, Montseny was resolute, in comparing the Spanish Revolution to the Paris Commune some six decades prior, that ‘We do not fight only for ourselves [...] the very future of the world is in contention’.<sup>147</sup> Internal propaganda was emphatic that even if the Spanish workers’ ‘salvation’ lay ‘only and exclusively in ourselves’, it nonetheless had to be underpinned by the conviction that ‘upon the triumph or failure of the Spanish Revolution depends the fate and future of the universal proletariat’.<sup>148</sup> As an outside observer, Goldman perceived that the ‘consciousness that by fighting Fascism they are not merely fighting for

---

<sup>143</sup> Federica Montseny, *La Commune de Paris y la Revolución Española* (CNT Comité Nacional, [1937]), pp. 29-30.

<sup>144</sup> ‘EMMA GOLDMAN CONVERSES WITH COMRADE GREGORIO JOVER’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 29 October 1938.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> See ‘THE FIRST OF MAY AND THE HELP OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT FOR ANTI-FASCIST SPAIN’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 30 April 1938.

<sup>147</sup> Montseny, *La Commune*, p. 36.

<sup>148</sup> See CDMH PS-Madrid 663/9, CRT Madrid circular 17, 17 September 1937; ‘España baluarte de las libertades del mundo’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 January 1939.

Spain alone but for the whole world' was an important impetus among the Spanish.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, she told a mass rally in Barcelona in September 1936 that the Spanish struggle was 'of universal scope and magnitude', and a meeting of the JJLL that October that they were 'torch bearers' for their comrades in other countries.<sup>150</sup> Rather than simply 'nationalism', this reflected a more dynamic relationship between sentiments of national pride and internationalism, comparable to earlier efforts to identify local struggles as simultaneously deriving from, and being generative of, international ones.<sup>151</sup>

Although this discussion has hitherto focused on representations of Spain, it would be incomplete without also broaching the question of xenophobic and racist discourses towards the country's 'invaders': the representations of 'Teutonic bandits', 'macaroni wolves', and Moors 'who dreamt of raping our wives', which historians have identified in libertarian literature and propaganda during the war.<sup>152</sup> These exclusionist images were used to mock the 'nationalist' pretensions of a military rebellion dependent on foreign support.<sup>153</sup> There is also the obvious temptation to point to the potential for deadly conflict and its affective realities – fear of violence, hatred of the enemy – to act as a solvent for cosmopolitan ideals. However, the appearance of these tropes within the 'anarchist-inspired workers' public sphere' did not mean their internalisation or a total occlusion of internationalism. The CNT National Committee, for example, determined that the government should invest in better radio transmitters as a priority, to 'talk to the German and Italian people [...] in a continual and persistent way'.<sup>154</sup> This represented an enduring commitment to the idea of solidarity between different national peoples even within a martial context.

Hostile representations of the rebels' Moroccan troops have been particularly controversial, because tropes about the savage 'Moor' evoked the most reactionary versions of Spanish nationalism and have been construed as complicity in Spanish colonialism.<sup>155</sup> Yet

---

<sup>149</sup> Goldman to the *Toronto Star*, 27 December 1937, cited in David Porter, *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, second edition (AK Press, 2006) pp. 58-9.

<sup>150</sup> IISG EGP 297, 'First address to the Spanish comrades at a mass-meeting attended by ten thousand people', September 1936, and 'Address at the Mass-Meeting of the Youth of the FAI', 18 October 1936.

<sup>151</sup> For instance see Shaffer, 'Cuba para todos'.

<sup>152</sup> Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el Invasor!*, p. 65.

<sup>153</sup> See the offensive caricatures deployed in a cartoon in the Valencian CRT's newspaper: 'PERO, ¿ESTO QUÉ ES?', *Fragua Social*, 26 March 1937.

<sup>154</sup> 'EN POLITICA EXTERIOR', *Boletín de Orientación Interna del Movimiento Confederal*, 8 June 1937.

<sup>155</sup> Baxmeyer, 'Mother Spain', pp. 195-96; Evans, *Revolution*, p. 50.

here, too, the picture is complicated and diverse.<sup>156</sup> As Abel Paz has shown, early moves to support a pro-independence uprising in the Francoists' Moroccan rearguard dissipated with the CNT's integration into the Republic's 'diplomatic game', while also undermined by a lack of genuine ties to Riffian communities.<sup>157</sup> Evans links this failed anti-colonialism to the enduring 'nationalist and racist baggage' in the movement, evidenced by hostile stereotypes in the CNT press about the 'deficient mentality of the majority of the Muslim people' or Sephardic Jewish 'freeloaders who, calling themselves Spanish, work against Spain'.<sup>158</sup> On the other hand, even the clearly limited efforts to support Moroccan independence in 1936 (and, according to Ali Al Tuma, anarchists supported a further unrealised plot in 1938) represented an unprecedented advance in the CNT's anti-colonial praxis.<sup>159</sup>

Highlighting the *plurality* of discourses is not intended to 'excuse' the racist and xenophobic ones highlighted by Evans and others, but rather to decouple them from a singular understanding of how ideas of anti-fascist imperatives impacted the movement. Thus, Federico Ferretti and Jacobo García-Álvarez identify a decolonising, anti-Eurocentric thrust in many wartime anarcho-syndicalist pronouncements on Morocco.<sup>160</sup> In one radio broadcast republished in *CNT*, the geographer Gonzalo de Reparaz cited the history of protest and rebellion against the wars in Morocco as proof that the 'the Muslim world' and Spanish working class had a shared adversary in Spain's colonial elite.<sup>161</sup> The same newspaper also published works by the Jewish Moroccan Léon Azerrat Cohen, who glorified the pre-*Reconquista* past and argued that imperialism was the common 'enemy' of both the workers and the Islamic world.<sup>162</sup> That October, the CNT also supported the creation of the

---

<sup>156</sup> See the duality of discourses identified in Josefa Alcolea Escribano, '¿Moro invasor o hermano revolucionario? Las imágenes de los marroquíes durante la guerra civil en el diario cenetista de Valencia *Fragua Social*', *Cahiers de Civilisation Espagnole Contemporaine* [online] 1 (2012), doi:10.4000/cccec.4047.

<sup>157</sup> Paz, *La cuestión de Marruecos*; Evans, *Revolution and the State*, p. 50. See also Ali Al Tuma, *Guns, Culture and Moors: Racial Perceptions, Cultural Impact and the Moroccan Participation in the Spanish Civil War* (Routledge, 2018), pp. 192-98.

<sup>158</sup> Danny Evans, 'Carrying the war into Africa? Anarchism, Morocco and the Spanish Civil War [Part 2]', *Freedom News*, 30 November 2020 <<https://freedomnews.org.uk/2020/11/30/carrying-the-war-into-africa-anarchism-morocco-and-the-spanish-civil-war-2/>> [Accessed 21 April 2021]; 'La "independencia" marroquí', *Fragua Social*, 15 November 1936.

<sup>159</sup> Tuma, *Guns, Culture and Moors*, pp. 195-6.

<sup>160</sup> Federico Ferretti and Jacobo García-Álvarez, 'Anarchist Geopolitics of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939): Gonzalo de Reparaz and the "Iberian Tragedy"', *Geopolitics* 24.4 (2019), pp. 944-68, doi:10.1080/14650045.2017.1398143

<sup>161</sup> Transcribed in 'A TODO EL ISLAM', *CNT*, 12 September 1936.

<sup>162</sup> 'MARRUECOS, CONTRA EL FASCISMO', *CNT*, 15 September 1936; Ferretti and García-Álvarez, 'Anarchist Geopolitics', p. 959.



Asociación Antifascista Hispano Marroquí (Hispano-Moroccan Anti-fascist Association) by Palestinian communist Nayati Sidqi.<sup>163</sup> Its propaganda, reproduced in the anarcho-syndicalist press, called on Moroccan troops to desert and urged Spaniards to identify with them: one flyer, for example, depicted a Moroccan peasant farmer and insisted that ‘Like the *campesino* of Spain, the labouring, dignified *moro* does not wield the rifle; he works the land’.<sup>164</sup> This allusion to a common, worker identity implicitly rejected ‘othering’ portrayals of the Moroccans.<sup>165</sup>

In late Autumn 1936, the OPE’s radio transmitter hosted a Moroccan anti-fascist volunteer, Ahmed Ben Thami, who appealed to his fellow countrymen to remember ‘the crimes committed by the Italians in Abyssinia’ and recognise that Franco sought ‘to establish in Spain a dictatorship after the Italian pattern’, thus linking the plight of anti-fascist Spain to that of Ethiopia as well.<sup>166</sup> As this evidence highlights, although some activists turned towards racist tropes, anti-fascism could also be the setting for a significant *decentring* of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism *away* from its traditional foci and towards new affinities. While this was itself riddled with imperfections – as Evans points out, early CNT efforts to ally with Moroccan nationalists involved various ‘glib’ assumptions about Riffian society and anti-colonial praxis, and Baxmeyer highlights that the use of Arabic ignored the Berber origins of many of the *Regulares* – it was nonetheless a generative process which could encourage new commonalities and solidarities.<sup>167</sup> It was within the context of anti-fascism, for example, that anarcho-syndicalists in Spain gave greater prominence to the issue of Japanese imperialism and popular resistance in China, identifying the Spanish and Chinese struggles as ‘one sole positive resistance’.<sup>168</sup> Thus it is useful to consider the ways that the

---

<sup>163</sup> Alcolea Escribano, ‘¿Moro invasor o hermano revolucionario?’ On the association: Abdelatif Ben Salem, ‘Nayati Sidqi, un internacional palestino en el Madrid de la guerra’, *Madrid Islámico*, 29 August 2020 <<https://madridislamico.org/nayati-sidqi/>> [accessed 29 March 2023]. For examples of propaganda, see *Fragua Social*, 6 March 1937 and 30 March 1937.

<sup>164</sup> ‘Propaganda de la Agrupación Antifascista Marroquí’, *Fragua Social*, 5 March 1937.

<sup>165</sup> Although as Evans suggests, seemingly the only *explicit* protest against the ‘othering’ of Moroccans in Republican propaganda was *Mujeres Libres*’s criticism of a recruitment poster which appealed to men using the threat that the ‘Moorish “*razzias*”’ posed to their wives: Evans, ‘Carrying the war into Africa?’.

<sup>166</sup> ‘Radio speech of an antifascist Moroccan in Barcelona’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 14 November 1936.

<sup>167</sup> Evans, ‘Carrying the war into Africa?’; Baxmeyer, ‘Mother Spain’, p. 202.

<sup>168</sup> ‘1937-1939’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 January 1939. See also ‘Guerra Shanghai-Valencia’, *Umbrales*, 9 October 1937; ‘¿Será China la tumba del imperialismo japonés?’ *Umbrales*, 30 October 1937; ‘CHINA lucha por su libertad’, *Mujeres Libres*, January 1938.

war compelled a widening of the movement's internationalism beyond its traditional alliances, and the ways that libertarian agency was maintained in and exercised through these new ties.

### *Other 'Amigos': the USSR and Cárdenas's Mexico*

Despite their traditional anti-Bolshevism, Spanish anarcho-syndicalists responded favourably to Soviet aid for the Republic.<sup>169</sup> The movement's press lauded the Soviet 'solidarity', the CNT and FAI were officially part of public demonstrations in Barcelona to commemorate the nineteenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution in November 1936, and that same month the Confederation dispatched three representatives to join a Spanish delegation to the USSR.<sup>170</sup> For Schapiro, writing in 1937, this 'flirtation' represented 'unconscionable hypocrisy', and critical historiography has maintained this negative view; for instance, Chris Ealham cites the example of García Oliver referring to Stalin as 'our dear comrade' as evidence of the ideological degeneration which accompanied the movement's integration into the state.<sup>171</sup> However, by focusing on extreme examples and giving the impression of a strict binary between supporting or opposing the Soviet Union, these critics overlook the way *cenetistas* exercised a distinct libertarian agency in their relations with the USSR while employing 'the necessary tact' to avoid endangering the Republic's main source of aid.<sup>172</sup>

At the time and afterwards, *cenetistas* cited the 'special circumstances' of a war where palpable aid and support for the Republic was at a premium, to explain their alliance with the USSR on pragmatic terms.<sup>173</sup> The CNT's representatives informed their IWA allies that the

<sup>169</sup> The USSR began sending aid in the autumn of 1936 in response to fascist powers' breaches of the Non-Intervention Pact; shipments of heavy machinery likely averted an early Francoist capture of Madrid: Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 220-2.

<sup>170</sup> See 'UNA CONMEMORACION HISTORICA', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 8 November 1936; 'Cataluña, la Cataluña que siente la guerra y la Revolución, se manifiesta en un acto memorable', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 10 November 1936. On the delegation, see below.

<sup>171</sup> Alexander Schapiro, 'The USSR and the CNT: an unconscionable stance', trans. by Paul Sharkey, *Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library* 14 (1998) <<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/pk0q0r>> [accessed 2 October 2022]; Chris Ealham, 'De la unidad antifascista a la desunión libertaria: Los comités superiores del movimiento libertario contra los quijotes anarquistas en el marco del Frente Popular (1936-1937)', *Mélanges de la Casa del Velázquez* [online] 41.1 (2011), doi:10.4000/mcv.3874, paragraph 16.

<sup>172</sup> The phrase was used by the National Committee to refer to the need to assert differences with the Soviets without revealing an open hostility: see 'RUSIA', *Boletín de Orientación sobre el Exterior [CNT-FAI]*, 2 March 1938.

<sup>173</sup> Martin Gudell, *Lo que oí en la U.R.S.S.* (Ediciones Estudios Sociales, 1946), p. 17.

Confederation ‘had no right [to reject Soviet support], because given the gravity of the situation it was our only chance of salvation’.<sup>174</sup> Elsewhere, the movement press urged ‘simpletons’ who fixated on the political ‘contradictions’ of such an alliance to observe the contrast between the ‘verifiable action’ of Soviet support and the ‘idle talk’ and ‘suicidal’ attitude of other prospective allies.<sup>175</sup> From a pragmatic perspective, the softening attitude towards the Soviets was closely tied to the material fact of support, rather than to the ideological project of anti-fascist collaboration. Comintern agent André Marty acknowledged as much when he observed that the ‘most important element’ in generating reconciliation between the Spain’s anarchists and the USSR was ‘effective aid [...] The presence of boats with foodstuffs in Barcelona and Valencia’.<sup>176</sup> From a more affective perspective, José Peirats wrote of the ‘emotional chord’ struck among the Catalan people by the arrival of aid, breaking through ‘the justified reservations which the proletariat of Barcelona had always had concerning the Soviet dictatorship’ and arousing a ‘deeply-rooted’ solidaric sentiment.<sup>177</sup>

At the same time, as contemporary observers noted, the CNT press often ‘spoke only of the *Russian people*’, depicting Soviet support as an effort compelled from below in grassroots proletarian solidarity, rather than a top-down policy of the regime.<sup>178</sup> For example, a CNT-FAI banner greeting the arrival of the Russian ship *Ziryanin* carrying foodstuffs into Barcelona in October 1936 declared that ‘THE REVOLUTIONARY IBERIAN PROLETARIAT SALUTES THE RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT’.<sup>179</sup> Although, as Schapiro noted, this discourse contradicted anarchists’ longstanding view that the USSR was a totalitarian dictatorship (and evidence suggests that the ‘spontaneous’ workplace collections for Spain were organised by the regime), evidence from behind the curtain of the wartime

---

<sup>174</sup> This was the explanation given by Fecundo Roca at the June 1937 IWA plenum: ‘PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L’A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937’.

<sup>175</sup> ‘El aniversario de la Revolución rusa’, *Artes Gráficas*, 25 November 1936.

<sup>176</sup> Cited in Miguel Amorós, *Durruti en el laberinto*, second edition (Virus Editorial, 2014) p. 148.

<sup>177</sup> José Peirats Valls, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution* volume II, ed. by Chris Ealham, trans. by Paul Sharkey and Chris Ealham (ChristieBooks, 2005), pp. 105-06.

<sup>178</sup> This observation was made by the Polish delegation at the June 1937 IWA plenum: ‘PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L’A.I.T.’. Emphasis added.

<sup>179</sup> See IISG CNT Photo Collection 248.

public transcript suggests that the distinction was made sincerely.<sup>180</sup> In February 1937, for example, the Catalan delegate to a FAI plenum was concerned that

the aid that has been given to us by the Russian people cannot be permitted to become a weapon to carry out proselytising work. We must clarify that we accept with pleasure the aid that comes to us in an unselfish way on behalf of the proletariat, but we cast aside the aid that has an ulterior motive.<sup>181</sup>

The belief in Russian workers' genuine proletarian solidarity thus coexisted with a lucid awareness that humanitarian aid could be a propaganda tool. Decades after any need for political niceties had expired, and even as he stressed the ulterior motives of the Soviet state in Spain, the CNT organiser turned Popular Army commander Ricardo Sanz lauded the Russian people as the 'one *pueblo* which [...] felt in its own flesh the anguish of the Spanish people'.<sup>182</sup> These examples belie simple binary explanations of dishonesty or naivety, or indeed pragmatic 'tact'.<sup>183</sup>

Although a precise causal explanation for *why* this sincere belief developed and endured is elusive, its *subversive* properties can be discerned. It offered the most radical possible vision within the boundaries of anti-fascist unity, allowing militants to emphasise the 'popular accomplishments' of working-class internationalism rather than statecraft while denying any 'sectarian' intentions.<sup>184</sup> In fact, Amorós notes approvingly how Durruti authored a letter for the Confederation's November 1936 delegation to the USSR, addressed 'exclusively to the workers, ignoring their leaders' and speaking of the need for class

---

<sup>180</sup> He regarded it as 'dishonest': Schapiro, 'The USSR and the CNT'; Denis Smyth, "'We are with you': solidarity and self-interest in Soviet policy towards Republican Spain, 1936-1939', in *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936-1939*, ed. by Paul Preston and Ann L. Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 87-105 (pp. 88-9).

<sup>181</sup> IISG CNT 49A.11, 'Memoria del pleno del Comité Peninsular de la FAI en Barcelona'.

<sup>182</sup> Ricardo Sanz, *Los que fuimos a Madrid*, second edition (Editorial Descontrol, 2017), p. 96.

<sup>183</sup> Deceit appears to be Miquel Amorós's interpretation when he refers to CNT leaders' 'self-interested confusion between Soviet Government and Russian people': Amorós, *Durruti en el laberinto*, p. 44.

<sup>184</sup> See 'HOMENAJE A LA U.R.S.S.', *Tiempos Nuevos*, September/October 1937. Similarly vis-à-vis the International Brigades, references tended to acclaim the volunteers as examples of internationalism and proletarian consciousness, without mention of their communist provenance: 'INTERNACIONALES', *Mujeres Libres*, September 1938; 'THE C.N.T. COMMITTEE, DEEPLY MOVED, TAKES LEAVE OF THE VOLUNTARY FIGHTERS FOR LIBERTY', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 29 October 1938; 'Las Brigades Internacionales y la fase actual de las luchas sociales en la palestra mundial', *Tierra y Libertad*, 12 November 1938.

solidarity.<sup>185</sup> However, there are few clear grounds for differentiating between Durruti's approach and that of the CNT's 'upper committees', as Amorós seems to do. In authoring the letter Durruti was, like leading *cenetistas*, deploying radical content while operating within the context of the official alliance between the Republic and the USSR, and both *Solidaridad Obrera* and *Tierra y Libertad* republished the letter on their front pages.<sup>186</sup> Moreover, the delegates who delivered his letter maintained that during their time in the USSR 'we never addressed ourselves to the men of the State, but to the Russian People, the workers', showing that they considered this an important distinction to make.<sup>187</sup>

One of those delegates was the OPE secretary Gudell, and his little-studied memoir of the trip offers further insight into the rapprochement with the USSR and the ways that *cenetistas* preserved and expressed a libertarian agency within it. Gudell argued that *cenetistas*' long interest in the Russian Revolution and its aftermath had left them 'better informed about the life of the USSR than those of other organisations', and revealed that the decision to send a delegation was debated and contested by a significant internal minority.<sup>188</sup> Nonetheless, the perceived importance of Soviet support amid a dire international and military context overcame this opposition, while *cenetistas* also maintained a residual respect for the Russian people's revolutionary past.<sup>189</sup> Thus, as with the rapprochement more broadly, the justification lay in something more than pragmatism, also actively seeking a connection to that radical, popular heritage. By keeping his fluency in Russian concealed, Gudell was also able to observe the dishonesty, manipulation and fabrications of the Soviet hosts, which he identified as an affront to the principle of 'the common interests of the working class, of international solidarity'.<sup>190</sup> Consequently, the delegates did not fall for the

---

<sup>185</sup> The letter depicted the Spanish and Russian revolutions as episodes of the same class universal struggle, recalled the international solidarity manifested after 1917 and urged the Soviet workers to respond in kind, declaring that 'we do not trust in any so-called democratic or anti-fascist politicians; we trust in our class brothers, the workers': Amorós, *Durruti en el laberinto*, p. 109.

<sup>186</sup> See *Solidaridad Obrera*, 30 October 1936 and *Tierra y Libertad*, 5 November 1936.

<sup>187</sup> IISG FAI PE-36.1B, 'Informe de la delegación de la CNT que fue a URSS en el mes de noviembre de 1936, al Comité Regional de Cataluña'. The delegates were the OPE secretary Gudell, the Durruti Column militiaman and future 'Amigo de Durruti' Francisco Carreño, and metal union activist José Berruezo.

<sup>188</sup> Gudell, *Lo que oí*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, pp. 11-17, 22-23. Despite the majority vote, the decision remained controversial and the FAI peninsular committee specifically requested that Gudell 'publicly and internationally refute' the suggestion that the delegation represented the FAI or 'the anarchists of Spain': IISG Martin Gudell Papers [hereafter MGP] 24, 'A LA COMISIÓN ENCARGADA DE LA PROPAGANDA EN EL EXTRANERJO'.

<sup>190</sup> Gudell, *Lo que oí*, pp. 30-31, 33-34, 95-96, 162-65, 215-16, 217-18.

deceptions, and later cautioned against sending any future delegates who did not speak Russian.<sup>191</sup> They were keen to visit sites associated with Russia's revolutionary history, and defended the honour of the libertarian movement, for example quarrelling with their guide about Bakunin and Kropotkin; with this, they at least symbolically reclaimed the place of the anarchist movement within the history of the Russian Revolution.<sup>192</sup> Gudell also claimed to have taken an opportunity to evade the delegation's handlers and visit a mutual acquaintance, a disaffected Russian worker, for a period of genuine, unmediated connection.<sup>193</sup> These all represented gestures of agency which, although essentially inconsequential in the power struggle within anti-fascist Spain, qualify the depiction of a movement in obsequious submission to the Soviet regime and show a desire for internationalism on the movement's own terms.

The ultimately futile efforts to leverage anti-fascist unity on behalf of libertarian prisoners in the USSR further reinforces this interpretation. In November 1936, for example, the libertarian press shared an open letter from the German and Spanish militia of the 'Erich Mühsam' machine-gun group, which identified the 'exciting' solidarity between Spain and Russia as an 'opportune moment' to request the release of the still unaccounted-for Zenzl Mühsam.<sup>194</sup> Although in appealing 'to the Russian workers' for the release of a regime prisoner, the letter inadvertently revealed the contradictions of efforts to reimagine the alliance between the Republic and the USSR, the insistence 'that your next ships to Spain do not come' without Mühsam aboard attested to a desire to retain libertarian values despite the material pull of Soviet aid.<sup>195</sup> In fact, the CNT repeatedly pressed the issue of libertarian prisoners, lobbying the Soviet consul general in Barcelona with a list of 154 prisoners, also

---

<sup>191</sup> 'Informe de la delegación de la CNT que fue a URSS en el mes de noviembre de 1936, al Comité Regional de Cataluña'

<sup>192</sup> Gudell, *Lo que oí*, pp. 101-10.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, pp. 221-38.

<sup>194</sup> 'Carta abierta a los trabajadores rusos', *Tierra y Libertad*, 14 November 1936, also published in *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 18 November 1936; *Solidaridad Obrera*, 14 November 1936; *Línea de Fuego*, 19 November 1936. On the unit's origins: Nelles, 'La Legión Extranjera de la Revolución', p. 203.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid*.

presented to the leader of the Soviet trade unions by the November 1936 delegation.<sup>196</sup> Gudell also unsuccessfully attempted to make contact with Mühsam during and after the trip.<sup>197</sup>

While Amorós treats the question of advocating for libertarian prisoners in the USSR as a superficial and quickly forgotten gesture, Gudell's little-studied memoir and apparently unexamined archival papers offer another view.<sup>198</sup> The latter show that during the war, Gudell had commenced an unpublished pamphlet titled *Let us open the prisons: undertakings of the CNT-FAI to free the anarchist comrades persecuted in the USSR*, in which he explained that the Confederation had avoided publicising the prisoner issue, even despite the ire of anarchist critics, in order to protect negotiations, believing that the communists might be genuinely cooperative.<sup>199</sup> The anti-fascist war was thus posited as the moment when the moral consistency which anarcho-syndicalists had urged on their communist rivals since at least Orobón and Souchy's attendance to the Anti-Fascist Congress in 1929 might finally become a reality. Such a belief was vividly demonstrated by a banner held aloft during a demonstration on the nineteenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution: behind one reading 'CNT-FAI. A GREETING TO THE USSR BROTHERS', it read 'the anarchist groups request the freedom of the political and social prisoners of the whole world'.<sup>200</sup> This may have been naïve – shockingly so in the eyes of Schapiro – and by the following spring the CNT was growing more explicitly critical of a regime for which, in Goldman's eyes, it was already 'paying dearly' for its 'concessions'.<sup>201</sup> Nonetheless, it suggests a genuine belief that libertarian agency could be preserved within an anti-fascist context.

Spanish anarcho-syndicalists' response to the aid of the Republic's other key nation-state ally, Mexico, reveals further evidence of this desire for libertarian self-expression and autonomy within an anti-fascist context. Although Mexican support was less consequential than that from the USSR, the prompt, steadfast and consistent support of President Lázaro

---

<sup>196</sup> See IISG MGP 24, 'LA AYUDA DE LOS ANTIFASCISTAS DE TODO EL MUNDO AL PUEBLO ESPAÑOL', 'La entrega de la lista', Vázquez to Soviet consul general, 22 October 1936.

<sup>197</sup> Gudell, *Lo que oí*, pp. 244-6; IISG MGP 24, Gudell to Elena Stasova, 1 June 1937 and Stasova to Gudell, 29 June 1937.

<sup>198</sup> Amorós, *Durruti en el laberinto*, p. 144.

<sup>199</sup> IISG MGP 24, 'Abramos las cárceles', n.d. In the same folder, see the title page mock-up, draft chapters explaining the various appeals by CNT diplomats, and the extensive documentation about libertarian prisoners and exiles in the USSR. See also Gudell, *Lo que oí*, pp. 255-57.

<sup>200</sup> IISG CNT Photo Collection, negatives 631-664.

<sup>201</sup> IISG EGP 49, Goldman to National Committee, 12 April 1937.

Cárdenas's radical administration contrasted with Moscow's more hesitant policy.<sup>202</sup> Anti-fascists throughout the Republican zone acclaimed this robust solidarity.<sup>203</sup> However, the libertarians were especially emphatic allies of Mexico, with homages and tributes throughout the movement's press.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the CNT National Committee established relations with the Mexican embassy, while anarcho-syndicalists also established the 'Amigos de México' (Friends of Mexico) association.<sup>205</sup> In Madrid, for instance, the local branch of the 'Amigos' originated in a committee of 'old activists of the libertarian movement' selected by an assembly of the JJLL; it claimed that 98% of its members were libertarians, and was funded by the JJLL and local anarchist atheneums.<sup>206</sup> The organisation oversaw various initiatives to raise awareness of the ties between the two countries and celebrate Mexico's political and humanitarian solidarity with Republican Spain, such as the great 'homage' event in Valencia's Principal Theatre in April 1937, addressed by well-known local movement figures such as Higinio Noja Ruiz and Armando Artal as well as Mexican poet Juan P. de Muro and Mexico's consul to Valencia, Juan Arriaga.<sup>207</sup> The Amigos' 'Semana de México' – 'Spain Week' – festival in October 1938, supported by various CNT unions and collectives, was one of the last major public events in anti-fascist Barcelona before its fall to Franco.<sup>208</sup>

Although Helmut Rüdiger would lament that, as with the USSR, *cenetistas* had transcended 'political tact' in their appraisals of the Mexican government, this appeal to orthodoxy once more overlooked the ways in which revolutionary, libertarian values were

---

<sup>202</sup> Mario Ojeda Revah, *Mexico and the Spanish Civil War: Political Repercussions for the Republican Cause* (Sussex Academic Press, 2015); Carlos Ímaz Gispert, 'España en el corazón: la ayuda y el refugio mexicano', in *La Guerra Civil Española, 80 años después*, ed. by Albert Reig Tapia and Josep Sánchez Cervelló (Tecnos, 2019), pp. 251-68; T.G. Powell, *Mexico and the Spanish Civil War* (University of New Mexico Press, 1981).

<sup>203</sup> Aguilar, 'Revolutionary Encounters', p. 112.

<sup>204</sup> 'SOLIDARIDAD DE NUESTROS HERMANOS DE MEJICO', *Línea de Fuego*, 6 December 1936; 'THE UNITED WORKERS OF THE WORLD', *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 5 January 1937; 'El símbolo de México', *Hombres Libres*, 19 March 1937; 'HOMENAJE A MEXICO', *Mujeres Libres*, May 1937; 'ARAGON ABRAZA A MEJICO', *Nuevo Aragón*, 1 May 1937.

<sup>205</sup> IISG CNT 62C.3, National Committee to Mexican consul, 20 January 1937. See '«Los amigos de México»', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 24 January 1937. The CNT National Committee funded the organisation: IISG CNT 62C.1, Vázquez to Amigos de México (Valencia), 31 March 1937 and Vázquez to Amigos de México (Barcelona), 10 March 1938.

<sup>206</sup> CDMH PS-Madrid 663/20, 'MEMORIA QUE PRESENTA A LA FEDERACION LOCAL DE SINDICATOS UNICOS DE MADRID LA ASOCIACION DE LOS AMIGOS DE MEJICO'.

<sup>207</sup> 'México ha recibido el homenaje del pueblo español', *Fragua Social*, 6 April 1937; IISG CNT 62C.1, Asociación Amigos de México (Valencia) to National Committee, 3 April 1937.

<sup>208</sup> See the pamphlet IISG CNT 62C.1, 'SEMANA de MEXICO'.



mobilised *through* solidarity with Mexico.<sup>209</sup> One obvious way was in the *tactical* use of Mexico to mitigate the political influence that the USSR could derive from its intervention in Spain, with the Amigos de México being a clear imitation of the communist-led Friends of the USSR.<sup>210</sup> Indeed, the private transcript demonstrates that the association was intended ‘to obstruct and impede as far as possible the proselytizing work’ of its pro-Moscow precursor.<sup>211</sup> However, the organisation was not unidimensional: even within its internal documentation, activists mentioned a broader mission for the ‘Amigos’, facilitating the ‘spiritual’ and ‘cultural’ approximation of the two countries.<sup>212</sup> The veteran Noja Ruiz did not even mention the USSR when informing the CNT National Committee that activists in Valencia had constituted a branch, writing instead of ‘reciprocating’ Mexico’s support and educating those in Spain about ‘the values [...] represented by that restless and dynamic people’.<sup>213</sup> Mexican solidarity had an affective impact which stood the test of time: Ricardo Sanz wrote decades later of Spanish anti-fascists’ enduring gratitude to Mexico for going against the grain of ‘global hostility’ and having ‘in the difficult moments of our life [...] stretched out its arms and supported us’.<sup>214</sup> Thus, the organisation was also a manifestation of genuine, spontaneous and deeply-felt solidarity which emerged from the wartime context. This is further evidenced by the endorsement of even a radical, collaboration-sceptic newspaper such as *Faro*, which advertised an Amigos de México-sponsored exhibition of the Mexican painter Angel Soto’s work.<sup>215</sup>

Just as anarcho-syndicalists emphasised the USSR’s revolutionary heritage to reaffirm their own revolutionary reading of the Civil War, militants cited the Mexican Revolution as a historical point of reference which demonstrated the need for social transformation to

---

<sup>209</sup> IISG CNT 63C.1, ‘Materiales para la discusión sobre la situación española en el pleno de la AIT el día 11 de junio 1937’.

<sup>210</sup> Navarro Navarro, *A la revolución*, p. 297.

<sup>211</sup> See ‘MEMORIA QUE PRESENTA A LA FEDERACION LOCAL DE SINDICATOS UNICOS DE MADRID LA ASOCIACION DE LOS AMIGOS DE MEJICO’. The same explanation was offered at a meeting of the Catalan CRT in response to some confusion about why the dissident ‘Amigos de Durruti’ were being persecuted while the ‘Amigos de México’ were treated preferentially. Regional secretary Dionisio Eroles helpfully clarified that ‘the [F]riends of whoever can do whatever they want as long as they do not mess with us’: cited in Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT*, pp. 183-4

<sup>212</sup> ‘MEMORIA QUE PRESENTA A LA FEDERACION LOCAL DE SINDICATOS UNICOS DE MADRID LA ASOCIACION DE LOS AMIGOS DE MEJICO’.

<sup>213</sup> IISG CNT 62C.1, Amigos de México to Comité Nacional, 19 March 1937.

<sup>214</sup> Sanz, *Los que fuimos a Madrid*, p. 98.

<sup>215</sup> ‘En “Los Amigos de Méjico”’, *Faro*, 17 December 1937.

accompany the defeat of political tyranny.<sup>216</sup> For one individual named Jaime Espinar, the fact that Spain was collaborating not with ‘Anglo-French capitalism’ but with revolutionary Mexico and ‘the Russian proletariat’ was indicative of the revolutionary nature of its struggle and that the end goal was the emancipation of the workers and peasants.<sup>217</sup> Some had personal memories of the PLM’s heyday: the Amigos de México cofounder, Emilio Mistral, wrote a wartime biography of Ricardo Flores Magón, recalling how he had ‘anxiously sought out’ copies of *Regeneración* back during the early 1910s.<sup>218</sup> It can be recalled that fellow ‘Amigos’ founder Noja Ruiz had written for *Reivindicación* more than two decades previously about the responsibility of European revolutionaries to offer a ‘brilliant demonstration of international solidarity’ instead of ‘ridiculing’ the Mexican Revolution for its possible doctrinal limitations, because it was vital to show ‘the comrades that struggle there that they are not alone’.<sup>219</sup> This was a striking continuity both in the specific bond with Mexico, and with the general acclamation of radical, voluntarist solidarities outside the strictures of ideological dogma.

It was within this latter tradition of open, voluntarist solidarity that Spanish anarchists would voice their admiration for Cárdenas, notable for his championing of land reform and secular education and his visits to rural and Indigenous communities, as a ‘case, uncommon in recent times, of a government expressing the aspirations of the people, and of a people tied to the government and disposed to support and defend it’.<sup>220</sup> Viewed through this admittedly rose-tinted lens, Cárdenas’s administration appearing to offer an example of the kind of close alignment between government and popular revolutionary movements that the anarcho-syndicalists had envisaged when they suspended their doctrinal orthodoxy and committed to collaboration with the Republic. In a similar vein, the Sevillian *faísta* Manuel Pérez, (whom Guillamón identifies as an opponent of collaboration), speaking at an event attended by the Mexican ambassador, praised the Cárdenas’s government for standing up to the neo-imperial

---

<sup>216</sup> See for example ‘«LOS AMIGOS DE MEXICO»’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 January 1937.

<sup>217</sup> ‘México en la revolución española’, *Fragua Social*, 6 April 1937.

<sup>218</sup> Emilio Mistral, *Vida revolucionaria de Ricardo Flores Magón* (Guerri, [193-]), pp. 7-8.

<sup>219</sup> See above p. 68.

<sup>220</sup> Asociación Amigos de México, *México y los niños españoles* (Ediciones Amigos de México, 1937), p. 14; Aguilar, ‘Revolutionary Encounters’, p. 115. On Cárdenas’s government: Gonzales, *Mexican Revolution*, 221-259.

interests of the British state and upholding the idea that ‘Mexico belongs to the Mexicans!’<sup>221</sup> This declaration, strikingly redolent of Toryho’s quasi-nativist phraseology, marked an odd alignment between anarchism and populist petroleum nationalism, exemplifying the openness – indeed ‘blurrier borders’ – of anti-fascist internationalism and the easy translation of anti-fascist ‘political grammar’.<sup>222</sup>

Pérez’s contrasting of Mexico’s ‘vehement’ solidarity and the ‘suicidal passivity’ of the European democracies also highlights the decentring nature of this solidarity relationship, adding to the ways in which the anti-fascist context provided for a diversification of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism.<sup>223</sup> The contrast between Mexico’s robust support and the European democracies’ apparent cowardice inspired geographical reimagination: as Vázquez wrote to a Mexican trade union leader in 1938, it was to be lamented ‘that Mexico’s geographic location is not that of France, because if it were so, we are sure that many months ago our conflict would have ended with the victory of the people’.<sup>224</sup> For Claró Sendón, ‘other nations, about which so much hot air has been produced’, should bear in mind the great example of ‘virtue’ offered by the ‘spirited and indomitable race that bathed in the Mayan, Aztec and Tlaxcaltec civilisations’.<sup>225</sup> In this way, the Spanish Civil War followed the First World War two decades prior in offering a context wherein the Mexican example could throw the failings of ‘European civilisation’ into sharp relief, subverting Eurocentric hierarchies. In a radio broadcast for the ‘Mexico Week’, *Mujeres Libres* voiced this explicitly: Mexico’s support ‘increased in value amid the isolation in which a so-called civilised world leaves us’.<sup>226</sup>

Moreover, this solidarity inspired some anarchist writers to reflect explicitly on the (post)colonial question. For Noja Ruiz, the postcolonial dynamics of the relationship between ‘Spain and Mexico, victimiser and victim yesterday, brothers today’ were part of what made it a compelling one: in ‘those who have felt embarrassed upon reading’ about the ‘miseries’

---

<sup>221</sup> IISG CNT 81A.1, ‘EL DIRECTOR DE «RUTA», COMPAÑERO MANUEL PEREZ’; Guillamón, *CNT* vs *AIT*, p. 138.

<sup>222</sup> García, ‘World Capital’, pp. 240–42.

<sup>223</sup> ‘EL DIRECTOR DE «RUTA», COMPAÑERO MANUEL PEREZ’.

<sup>224</sup> IISG CNT 62C.3, Vázquez to Lombardo Toledano, 13 July 1938.

<sup>225</sup> ‘México, pueblo hermano’, *Fragua Social*, 31 January 1937.

<sup>226</sup> ‘ENVIO A MÉJICO’, *Mujeres Libres*, September 1938.

of colonial domination, Mexico's 'solidaristic gesture' evoked 'a most profound emotion'.<sup>227</sup> In fact, that 'Spain should have been for Mexico a source of eternal disgust' actually gave Mexican aid a greater political significance than that from the USSR.<sup>228</sup> As an explanation for the Mexicans' apparent overcoming of historical enmity, Noja Ruiz mused that perhaps they 'have understood that the Spanish rebels are the direct successors of those *conquistadores*'.<sup>229</sup> While acknowledging a sense of postcolonial guilt as a Spaniard, Noja Ruiz thus simultaneously identified the victimisation of Indigenous peoples at the hands of Spanish colonialism as a source of commonality with the Spanish workers of the present, oppressed by the current crop of the very same traditional elite; this historicised their relationship, rather than simply appealing to a cruder class universalism.<sup>230</sup> Kevan Aguilar notes that both Spanish radicals and Mexican diplomats referred to the idea of a shared historical enemy – Spain's traditional elites – throughout the war.<sup>231</sup>

The anarchist physician and writer Félix Martí Ibáñez also looked to historicise the ties between Spain and Mexico without regurgitating the racial and Catholic solidarity or neo-colonialism frequently espoused by Spanish and Latin American elites: although many Spaniards and Mexicans were linked 'by blood', they were united 'with greater firmness by the Ideal'.<sup>232</sup> This was, he argued, evident in the specific histories of both countries: thus the affinity towards 'our brown sister of the West' went beyond simply 'gratitude for the generous aid' or 'a friendly and emotive impulse', and instead reflected 'a subconscious perception of the close historical affinities and the similarity of destiny that links the revolutionary Spain of today with the rebellious Mexico of always'.<sup>233</sup> Martí Ibáñez described this as the true and genuine '*Hispanidad*', thereby looking to resignify this concept,

---

<sup>227</sup> See Noja Ruiz's prologue in Victor Gabirondo, *España y México* (Ediciones Amigos de México, 1937), p. 2.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-2. Thus a link between this postcolonial aspect and the effort to use Mexico to subvert Soviet influence.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>230</sup> On the Eurocentricity of class-centralism see Ciccariello-Maher, 'Anarchism That Is Not Anarchism', pp. 22-23.

<sup>231</sup> Aguilar, 'Revolutionary Encounters', pp. 119-125. Other examples in the Spanish libertarian press distinguished between the colonial crimes of 'Black Spain, represented by the rebel Junta in Burgos' and the 'exploits of the *conquistadores*' and 'civilising work' which they claimed as patrimony of revolutionary Spain: see for example 'La ayuda de Méjico a la Revolución española', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 8 January 1937. These once more identified a parallel in colonial and fascist crimes, but demonstrated that Eurocentric hierarchies persisted among some anarcho-syndicalists.

<sup>232</sup> Félix Martí Ibáñez, *Mensaje a México* (Ediciones Amigos de México, [1937]), p. 5.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

which referred to a shared transnational community of Hispanic language and culture and was usually associated with reactionary, neo-colonial politics, as a non-racial, ‘spiritual’ bond derived from a shared past and present of workers’ resistance and struggle.<sup>234</sup> These examples are further evidence that the search for anti-fascist alliances could have a decentring impact rather than reaffirming Eurocentric nationalism.

***Humanitarianism internationalism: Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista***

Another initiative which was to have a generative impact in libertarian internationalism was Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (International Anti-fascist Solidarity, SIA), a humanitarian organisation founded by the CNT in the spring of 1937 and which by the end of the war would have branches in five continents and hundreds of thousands of members in Spain.<sup>235</sup> Besnard regarded SIA as an affront to the IWA: a parallel structure which was ‘a demonstration of the CNT’s indiscipline and distrust of the IWA’.<sup>236</sup> Guillamón endorses this view, depicting the new organisation as an authoritarian manoeuvre to sidestep the IWA’s dissent, and defining SIA as ‘anti-fascist, not libertarian’.<sup>237</sup> However, this overlooks the various ways in which SIA constituted libertarian praxis and exemplified the possibility for anti-fascism to be *generative* of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism.

Although other historians have treated SIA as at least partly a response to tensions within the IWA, the evidence demonstrates that the decision to found such an organisation was driven by other concerns.<sup>238</sup> Rather, the organisation was founded as ‘Solidarity for Victims of Fascism’ during the CNT’s national plenum in April 1937, amid a discussion over how to confront growing Soviet influence in Spain.<sup>239</sup> International Red Aid (IRA) was one vector

---

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, p. 5. On neo-colonial uses of *hispanidad*, see Kirsten Weld, ‘The Spanish Civil War and the Construction of a Reactionary Historical Consciousness in Augusto Pinochet’s Chile’, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 98.1 (2018), pp. 77-115, doi:10.1215/00182168-4294468

<sup>235</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 111; Valentin Cionini, ‘Solidarité Internationale Antifasciste, ou l’humanitaire au service des idées anarchistes’, *Diacronie* [online] 7.3 (2011) doi:10.4000/diacronie.3311, paragraph 24.

<sup>236</sup> See final section. ‘Informe y resoluciones de la delegación de la CNT al congreso extraordinario’. See also ‘PLENUM EXTRAORDINAIRE DE L’A.I.T. Tenu à Paris de 11 au 13 juin 1937’ and IISG CNT 61A.1B, Besnard to National Committee, 15 and 17 June 1937, and Vázquez to Besnard, 3 July 1937.

<sup>237</sup> Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT*, pp. 275, 352, 504.

<sup>238</sup> For example, Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 111.

<sup>239</sup> IISG CNT 52B.1, ‘Acta del pleno nacional de regionales, 15 de abril 1937’. Afterwards, the activists tasked with creating the new organisation decided that its name should recognise ‘that the most positive aid can come from abroad’: IISG CNT 64C.4F, ‘PEQUEÑA HISTORIA DE LA CONSTITUCIÓN DE S.I.A. Y SU DESARROLLO ACTUAL Y SU DESARROLLO FUTURO’.

of this influence, and the plenum was ‘deeply convinced that the considerable fundraising it carries out, serves exclusively for its dismal propaganda’ and that it ultimately lacked ‘any of the solidaristic intentions which it publicly claims’.<sup>240</sup> Despite this disdain for IRA’s politics, as noted above, internal discussions had noted the efficacy of its ‘neutral’ model in raising support for Moscow, in contrast with the Spanish Revolution’s isolation, and posited a similar kind of organisation under libertarian control, whose branches in different countries might ‘constitute a kind of antechamber for the enlargement of the anarcho-syndicalist movement’.<sup>241</sup> SIA’s founding *raison d’être* were thus anti-Stalinism, the need for more effective aid, and a desire to grow the international anarcho-syndicalist movement.

Libertarians had long sought to unmask the communists’ humanitarian initiatives as political tricks, and attacked the perceived insincerity of IRA.<sup>242</sup> In December 1931, the *cenetista* Santiago Bilbao wrote to *Solidaridad Obrera* from his jail cell, urging the ‘aspiring commissars’ who had been holding collections for him to instead dedicate their fundraising efforts to victims of the Soviet state.<sup>243</sup> Early on in the war, some militants maintained this critical stance: *Mujeres Libres*, for example, questioned IRA activists’ allegedly depoliticised rhetoric and condemned the ‘old trick’ of street collections (‘forced charity’) when there were still riches to expropriate from churches and bourgeois residences.<sup>244</sup> However, in other quarters the early vogue for anti-fascist unity had blunted this scepticism, with *Soli* carrying notices about IRA initiatives for the wounded and needy.<sup>245</sup> Guillamón’s portrayal of SIA as a politically denatured ‘anti-fascist’ body is thus an odd characterisation for an organisation whose creation clearly marked a shift *back* towards a critical (or sectarian) posture vis-à-vis IRA, compared with the first weeks of the war.

---

<sup>240</sup> ‘Acta del pleno nacional de regionales’. Laura Branciforte argues that SRI operated as both a ‘genuine instrument’ of humanitarianism in Spain, and ‘an instrument of the Communist recruitment policy’: Laura Branciforte, *El Socorro Rojo Internacional (1923-1939): Relatos de la Solidaridad Antifascista* (Biblioteca Nueva, 2011), p. 249.

<sup>241</sup> ‘Proyecto para constituir en diferentes países la Sociedad de Amigos de la España Nueva...’

<sup>242</sup> See above p. 114.

<sup>243</sup> Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT*, p. 275; ‘Saliendo al paso de los manejos comunistas’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 6 December 1931.

<sup>244</sup> ‘¡Consciencia, camaradas!’, *Mujeres Libres*, September 1936. *Soli* also criticised the reliance on street collections rather than heavier levies on the bourgeoisie, although not linking the practice to IRA: see ‘Las grandes cosas que se han hecho y las que faltan por hacer’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 28 August 1936

<sup>245</sup> See ‘SOCORRO ROJO INTERNACIONAL’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 29 July 1936.

Furthermore, despite its theoretical independence from the libertarian movement, in defining its humanitarian activities in Spain – which included colonies for orphaned children and crèches for those whose mothers had joined the wartime workforce, refugee facilities, public canteens providing meals for the needy, and Rescue Brigades to save victims of bombardments – SIA laid claim to the eminently anarcho-syndicalist traditions of mutual aid, worker solidarity and belief in the ‘aspiration to fraternity immanent in all men’ which constituted the ‘morality upon which the future society will be based’.<sup>246</sup> Announcing the founding of the new organisation in an internal memo, Marianet asserted that SIA would help ‘demonstrate the excellences of mutual aid, being the vehicle that carries it out’.<sup>247</sup> In internal communications, SIA’s Catalan Regional Council wrote that the proletariat’s experiences of exploitation and struggle had forged a ‘sentiment of solidarity’ far more ‘developed’ than that of the bourgeoisie, which was ‘why among the ranks of the workers the flame of SIA burns with greater ardour’.<sup>248</sup> Propaganda construed support for humanitarian work as a demonstration that the revolutionary impulse remained alive.<sup>249</sup> Although SIA’s determination to play a ‘palliative’ role for imprisoned revolutionaries rather than ‘study the causes’ of their imprisonment fell short of some of the more confrontational activism in favour of prisoners highlighted by Danny Evans, the organisation’s activists nonetheless presented this work as a continuity with the libertarian tradition of prisoner solidarity.<sup>250</sup> Indeed, even the JJLL’s *Faro*, which offered a radical critique of collaboration, reproduced SIA’s manifestos and advertised its initiatives, showing that these had an audience even among more revolutionary elements.<sup>251</sup>

Moreover, although SIA’s ‘neutrality’ had originally been in imitation of IRA, anarcho-

---

<sup>246</sup> See IISG CNT 002D.2, ‘Normas para la constitución y funcionamiento de Agrupaciones Locales’; Cioni, ‘Solidarité’, pp. 7-10. This was also how Federica Montseny approached her ministerial work in the fields of healthcare and ‘social assistance’, a term which SIA would adopt: Calero Delso, *gobierno de la anarquía*, pp. 278-80.

<sup>247</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 149/4, National Committee circular 4, 26 May 1937.

<sup>248</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 149/21, SIA Catalan Regional Council to Torroella de Montgrí Local Group, 3 March 1938

<sup>249</sup> For example, the streetcar union’s fifty thousand peseta donation to SIA disproved the ‘quiet voice’ which claimed that the unions had become ‘new bourgeois’ since the onset of worker control: IISG CNT 65C, SIA National Council circular 5 (annex), 1 November 1937.

<sup>250</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 848/19, ‘Por los Presos Antifascistas’, 6 October 1937. On the oppositional role of prisoner solidarity, see Evans, ‘conscience’, pp. 171-2.

<sup>251</sup> ‘Homenaje de la S.I.A. a Durruti’, *Faro*, 19 November 1937; ‘Alegría y vida para los niños’, *Faro*, 17 December 1937; ‘SOLIDARIDAD INTERNACIONAL ANTIFASCISTA’, *Faro*, 24 December 1937.

syndicalists identified it with the movement's anti-political faith in popular spontaneity: for the Catalan Regional Council, SIA was 'the young and vigorous daughter of the Iberian popular revolution; it emerged from the guts of the people to go to the people itself' and 'perform a function of solidarity forgotten by the state and the political or religious relief organisations'.<sup>252</sup> It was, 'through propaganda and deeds [...] creating in man a new concept of solidarity, more simple and more natural, without the vices and defects of Christian charity or of the "Solidarity" of political elements'.<sup>253</sup> Sara Berenguer, who was part of SIA's National Council, saw the organisation's dedication to 'the purest terrain of human solidarity, stripped of all political and religious interference' as 'an example that the anarchists might give to the world'.<sup>254</sup> This appropriation of neutrality as a moral virtue made it more than just a 'window dressing', as Brodie has termed it.<sup>255</sup> Thus although SIA was 'anti-fascist' and deeply connected to the contingent needs of the war, it is too simplistic to deny its connections to libertarian politics, which ignores the way anarcho-syndicalists expressed their distinct political agency through its work.

Guillamón's dismissive view also overlooks the importance of women's participation in SIA. This mirrored the prominent female involvement in other humanitarian efforts, including IRA.<sup>256</sup> SIA urged 'heroic *muchachas* [girls]' to 'be at the forefront of the struggle'.<sup>257</sup> There was considerable cross-fertilisation between SIA and Mujeres Libres, both at national leadership level, where Mujeres co-founder Sánchez Saornil became secretary of the SIA General Council in May 1938, and at local level, such as in Villanueva y Geltrú where the organisations shared a headquarters and several committee members, or Igualada, where María Claramunt was secretary of the eighty-member SIA local group and soon also became regional secretary of Mujeres Libres.<sup>258</sup> Mujeres Libres activists

---

<sup>252</sup>; CDMH PS-Barcelona 149/21, SIA Catalan Regional Council to Borjas Blancas Local Group, 9 February 1938.

<sup>253</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 149/21, SIA Catalan Regional Council to Villanueva y Geltrú Local Group, 14 December 1937.

<sup>254</sup> Sara Berenguer, *Entre el sol y la tormenta: Revolución, guerra y exilio de una Mujer Libre*, second edition (L'Eixam, 2004), pp. 147-8.

<sup>255</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 111.

<sup>256</sup> Branciforte, *Socorro Rojo Internacional*, pp. 54-61, 214-18.

<sup>257</sup> CDMH PS-Lérida 63/1, 'Boletín Especial para la prensa de la Región Catalana', 30 October 1937.

<sup>258</sup> Laura Vicente, *revolución de las palabras*, pp. 30-31; CDMH PS-Barcelona 149/21, Consuelo Pujantes to SIA Catalan Regional Council, 11 December 1937; details of Igualada SIA in CDMH PS-Barcelona 149/19; Íñiguez, *Esbozo*, p. 147.



collaborated with SIA to provide aid and carry out evacuations.<sup>259</sup> Through humanitarian activities, SIA built on *Mujeres Libres*'s integration of 'traditional women's support work' into 'a larger political context', affirming that caregiving roles and the relief of both civilian and combatant suffering were active contributions that 'anti-fascist women' could make towards 'victory'.<sup>260</sup> In texts such as an exploration of progressive education reforms in revolutionary Mexico, or a declaration that 'the children of the Congo are also children [...] Children of Spain: your playmates will be the children of everywhere', the *Mujeres Libres* journal had also explored internationalist approaches to its broader politicisation of supposedly 'domestic' topics such as childcare.<sup>261</sup>

SIA's efforts to mobilise women were not without recourse to gendered discourses, including stereotypes about women's supposed 'gifts of solicitude, patience, [and] tenderness' which, it was claimed, made them more apt for caregiving roles.<sup>262</sup> In its international appeals, SIA also frequently used imagery that portrayed women and children as victims in need of salvation, or spoke to women's 'maternal sentiment', as Federica Montseny did in one such message.<sup>263</sup> Referencing this, Brodie laments what he depicts as an opportunistic toleration of 'the pernicious effects of patriarchal relations' for the sake of garnering donations.<sup>264</sup> However, this criticism overlooks the role that mobilisations grounded in women's claimed 'differences' have played, historically, in women's entry into the public sphere, including in the elaboration of distinct feminist approaches to international politics.<sup>265</sup> Moreover, these discourses in SIA emerged amid ongoing debates within *Mujeres*

---

<sup>259</sup> Vega, *Pioneras y Revolucionarias*, p. 214.

<sup>260</sup> Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, pp. 174-6; 'LAS MUJERES TRABAJAN', *Mujeres Libres*, February 1937. Examples of women undertaking such work in SIA uniform in IISG CNT Photo Collection 237.

<sup>261</sup> 'LA REFORMA ESCOLAR EN MEJICO', *Mujeres Libres*, July 1936; 'NIÑOS, NIÑOS, NIÑOS', *Mujeres Libres*, September 1936. Sara Berenguer also recalled that copies of an exercise book by *Mujeres Libres* cofounder Amparo Poch were distributed in Indigenous schools in Mexico: Berenguer, *Entre el sol*, p. 203. Poch was also instrumental in the humanitarian evacuation of 500 Spanish children to Mexico: Vicente, *revolución de las palabras*, p. 95.

<sup>262</sup> CDMH PS-Extremadura 10/1, SIA National Council circular 41, 5 May 1938.

<sup>263</sup> IISG FAI CP-42B.3, 'SOLIDARIDAD INTERNACIONAL ANTIFASCISTA A LAS MUJERES DE AMERICA', 20 December 1937. See for example image of mother and children in CDMH PS-Cartel 00830.

<sup>264</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic*, pp. 139-40.

<sup>265</sup> Pnina Werbner, 'Political Motherhood and the Feminisation of Citizenship: Women's Activisms and the Transformation of the Public Sphere', in *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, ed. by Nira Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner (Zed Books, 1999), pp. 221-45; Jan Stöckmann, 'Women, wars, and world affairs: Recovering feminist International Relations, 1915-39', *Review of International Studies* 44.2 (2017), 215-35, doi:10.1017/S026021051700050X

Libres about ‘what feminine characteristics are and what women [distinctly] have to offer to society’.<sup>266</sup>

In its own wartime appeals to the ‘proletarian women of the world’, *Mujeres Libres* did not shy away from referring to their ‘feminine sensibility’ even alongside invocations of their class interests, showing that these were not assumed as mutually exclusive.<sup>267</sup> Similarly, the organisation praised the ‘maternal sentiments’ of Argentine women in preparing winter clothing for children.<sup>268</sup> These appeals had earlier roots: Iturbe’s ‘women’s page’ in *Tierra y Libertad*, for instance, had featured anti-war messages with similar invocations of mothering roles as co-constitutive with radical activism; one María Vergés from Vilarrodona, for instance, wrote in explicitly as a mother, depicting anti-conscription protest as an extension of maternal caregiving, with reference to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia.<sup>269</sup> Iturbe herself had long combined an appeal for women to resist their marginalisation and their confinement in the ‘domestic environment’ through education and activism, with notions such as that within the context of an amnesty campaign, women were best placed to speak out about the incarceration of ‘the son or brother, or lover’ – an idea which appeared to emphasise women’s significance as caregiving relatives as much as comrades.<sup>270</sup> Moreover, as well as reconstructing caring activities as a distinct form of anti-fascist praxis in themselves, wartime writings in *Mujeres Libres* implied that proximity to the anti-fascist struggle could itself be politicising: for instance, in Iturbe’s vision of a young sex worker radicalised by experiencing the struggle for Barcelona in July 1936.<sup>271</sup> Thus even an ‘opportunistic’ effort to attract women to anti-fascist activism could be construed as part of SIA’s aim to form an ‘ante-chamber’ for anarcho-syndicalist activism.

Outside Spain, SIA was able to fulfil its goal of expanding beyond the anarchist movement proper, but the picture remained more nuanced than Guillamón’s ‘anti-fascist, not

---

<sup>266</sup> Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, pp. 150, 157-8. See for instance Goldman’s essay ‘SITUACION SOCIAL DE LA MUJER’, *Mujeres Libres*, November 1936; ‘LAS MUJERES EN LOS PRIMEROS DIAS DE LUCHA’, *Mujeres Libres*, [July] 1937.

<sup>267</sup> ‘A todas las mujeres proletarias del Mundo’, *Mujeres Libres*, January 1938.

<sup>268</sup> IISG CNT 60A.4c, ‘Mujeres! Madres de Cruz del Eje’, 17 February 1937.

<sup>269</sup> ‘A las mujeres españolas’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 15 May 1936. Far earlier, during the First World War, one female contributor to the same newspaper urged women working the armament industries of the belligerent countries to remember that ‘women are called to care and soften suffering’ and to realise ‘that all men are sons’: ‘LAS MUJERES’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 6 September 1916.

<sup>270</sup> ‘Frente al fascismo’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 22 September 1933.

<sup>271</sup> ‘MUJERES HEROICAS’, *Mujeres Libres*, February 1937.

libertarian' label. The General Council urged national sections to adapt their propaganda to the 'mentality' and 'idiosyncrasy' of anti-fascism in their own country.<sup>272</sup> In Britain, where Goldman had complained that 'Britishers are afraid' of revolutionary appeals but were 'sentimental and the need[s] of children appeal to them', SIA thus tactfully adopted a more humanitarian hue, attracting even the donations of pacifist Quakers.<sup>273</sup> However, its British sponsors included the anarchist Herbert Read and anti-communist leftists such as George Orwell and Rebecca West, and its CNT provenance was sufficiently apparent for communist fellow travellers Nancy Cunard and W.H. Auden to revoke their endorsement.<sup>274</sup> As for SIA's French section, although Besnard made much of the presence of non-anarchists on the national committee, it was led by UA activists and, as Berry points out, built on the anarchist Louis Lecoin's earlier praxis of open-ended humanitarian campaigns, which he had used to secure the 1927 release from French prison of Durruti, Jover and Francisco Ascaso, as well as in favour of Sacco and Vanzetti.<sup>275</sup> Its members also included anarchist luminaries such as Sébastien Faure, left-wing socialists, revolutionary syndicalists, anti-Stalinist Marxists, and radical intellectuals, an assemblage which, Laura Vicente argues, distinguished it from more mainstream Popular Front formations.<sup>276</sup> The US section was led by the anarchist Frank González – who had fled repression in Spain to take part in the Mexican Revolution – and consisted largely of working-class Spanish anarchist émigrés.<sup>277</sup> This contrasted with the 'mainstream' US movement for anti-fascist Spain, in which Eric Smith suggests that ethnic prejudice deprived Spanish Americans of leadership roles despite their outsized contributions.<sup>278</sup> SIA USA also organised its own campaigns to import from CNT collectives and boycott Italian and German products, and sent flour to Spain.<sup>279</sup> Moreover, its retention of only around 3.5% of the more than \$80,000 it raised for expenses, sending the rest to Spain, was a much higher aid-to-expenses ratio than communist-linked aid organisations,

---

<sup>272</sup> IISG CNT 50B.5, SIA General Council circular 5, 1 November 1937.

<sup>273</sup> IISG EGP 153, Goldman to Souchy, 23 January 1937; Brodie, *Transatlantic*, pp. 115-16.

<sup>274</sup> Full list in David Goodway, *Anarchist seeds beneath the snow: left-libertarian thought and British writers from William Morris to Colin Ward*, second edition (PM Press, 2012), p. 129.

<sup>275</sup> Guillamón, CNT vs AIT, p. 287; Berry, 'Fascism or Revolution!', p. 66; Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, p. 149.

<sup>276</sup> Vicente, *revolución de las palabras*, p. 30. Full list in Berry, *French Anarchist Movement*, p. 209n45.

<sup>277</sup> Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 112; Dolgoff, *Fragments*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>278</sup> Eric R. Smith, *American Relief Aid and the Spanish Civil War* (University of Missouri Press, 2013), pp. 65-69.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

exemplifying the organisation's libertarian anti-bureaucratic ethos in practise.<sup>280</sup> In Mexico, organised workers and peasants wrote to the Spanish ambassador to inform him of their desire to form a SIA chapter so as to 'support our class siblings that struggle for their freedom', while the Michoacán branch sold anarchist literature, including copies of *Tierra y Libertad*, to fund local anti-fascist activism.<sup>281</sup> This admittedly very limited survey shows that anarchists in other countries found in SIA a politically acceptable vehicle for their own particular anti-fascist and humanitarian activism, problematising a simple binary between 'libertarian' and 'anti-fascist'.

Although the creation of a 'neutral' humanitarian organisation was not necessarily in keeping with anarchist orthodoxy, the continual mobilisation of grassroots solidarity networks validated libertarian positions. Towards the close of the war, the veteran *cenetista* José Negre – the Confederation's first general secretary – wrote that while the 'democracy' of the European states had failed, the myriad examples of grassroots solidarity with anti-fascist Spain showed that 'mutual aid, one of the postulates of anarchist ideas' had endured.<sup>282</sup> By constructing this expanded international network, Spanish anarcho-syndicalists were able to restore the affective sense of solidarity which had been challenged by the perception of abandonment and isolation. The creation of new SIA branches abroad was announced as a 'profoundly' meaningful sign that 'the firm solidarity of our brothers from other countries, instead of decreasing due to tiredness and forgetfulness, grows incessantly, which demonstrates that the international conscience sees the problem with greater clarity every day'.<sup>283</sup> An internal bulletin launched in early 1938 reported prominently on aid efforts in other countries, such as the SIA-organised and SAC-supported 'flour for Spain' campaign adopted with 'the greatest enthusiasm' in Sweden, or the 'SIA Festival' in New York which claimed thousands of attendees and a total of \$4133 collected.<sup>284</sup> News of the founding of SIA Australia affirmed the existence of 'restless spirits and idealistic fighters'

---

<sup>280</sup> On the other hand, Eric Smith highlights that other US anarchist-led aid efforts had an inefficient expenses-to-aid ratio, although he suggests that this may have been due to anarchists wilfully contributing to other tendencies' fundraising efforts: *ibid*, pp. 27-28; Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 114.

<sup>281</sup> Aguilar, 'Revolutionary Encounters', pp. 72-73.

<sup>282</sup> 'Democracia y Solidaridad', *Tierra y Libertad*, 7 January 1939.

<sup>283</sup> 'ACTIVIDADES DE SIA EN EL ORDEN INTERNACIONAL', *Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista*, 27 June 1938.

<sup>284</sup> 'CAMPAÑA PARA ENVIAR HARINA A ESPAÑA', *Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista*, 12 May 1938; 'DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS', *Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista*, 12 March 1938.

in ‘every corner of the planet’.<sup>285</sup> Projects such as the ‘Spain and the World’ children’s colony, sponsored by the eponymous British anti-fascist newspaper, were physical embodiments of international solidarity within the built landscape.<sup>286</sup> Decades after the war, Sara Berenguer recalled the ‘great help, both economically and in propaganda and solidarity’ given by the French SIA groups, the ‘passion’ with which Emma Goldman spoke in favour of SIA during a meeting in Paris, and the ‘great support’ which European and American SIA activists gave to the anti-fascist combatants in Spain.<sup>287</sup>

Meanwhile, while SIA worked against the grain of international isolation and sought to raise awareness of the plight of anti-fascist Spain, it also urged the preservation of an outward-looking, decentring sentiment of solidarity within the country. The internal press informed readers of repression and the struggle against authoritarianism in Argentina, Cuba, Bulgaria, Austria, Portugal and Cabo Verde in an effort to build a sense of commonality and solidarity.<sup>288</sup> According to a letter of thanks from Barcelona’s Amigos de México branch, SIA took part in the aforementioned ‘Mexico Week’ events, and its bulletin kept readers informed of the humanitarian evacuation of Spanish children to the allied Republic.<sup>289</sup> Even late in 1938, amid a dire military situation, the SIA General Council argued that ‘the best propaganda for our work, must always be the example of solidarity to those who need it’ and urged sections to raise awareness of the suffering of the Chinese and the Jewish people at the hands of fascism, and to try to build links with the diasporas of both communities.<sup>290</sup> In fact, the Anglo-Jewish writer Louis Golding sat on the SIA English section’s committee, following an appeal from Goldman which made specific reference to their shared Jewish heritage.<sup>291</sup> As a SIA representative, Goldman also made contact with working-class Jewish

---

<sup>285</sup> ‘NUEVAS SECCIONES’, *Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista*, 9 April 1938.

<sup>286</sup> Reported in ‘NOTICIAS DEL CONSEJO GENERAL DE SIA’, *Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista*, 12 March 1938.

<sup>287</sup> Berenguer, *Entre el sol*, p. 191.

<sup>288</sup> ‘BAJO EL SIGNO DEL FASCISMO’, *Boletín Orgánico del Consejo General de SIA*, 24 March 1938; ‘COMO ACTUAN LOS GOBIERNOS FASCISTIZANTES’, *Boletín Orgánico del Consejo General de SIA*, 31 March 1938.

<sup>289</sup> CDMH PS-Barcelona 149/21, Barcelona Local Junta of Amigos de México to SIA Catalan Regional Council, 20 October 1938; ‘NOTICIAS DE MÉXICO’, *Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista*, 12 May 1938.

<sup>290</sup> ‘DEBERES PRIMORDIALES DE S.I.A. EN LA ACTUALIDAD’, *Boletín Orgánico del Consejo General de SIA*, 8 December 1938.

<sup>291</sup> Goodway, *Anarchist seeds*, p. 129; Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 101.

communities in Liverpool, offering to address them in Yiddish, and drew attention to the ‘immense’ contributions to SIA USA by predominantly Jewish trade unions such as the International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union.<sup>292</sup> Meanwhile, Gudell had corresponded with a Chinese supporter of the CNT in 1937 and urged the creation of a Chinese branch of SIA, writing that since ‘fascism is international [...] we also must make the aid and solidarity of anti-fascists international’.<sup>293</sup> The announcement of that Chinese section in June 1938 was thus welcomed as uniting the two peoples at ‘the vanguard of the global war against fascism’.<sup>294</sup> As with the decentred internationalism of the 1910s, the potential for compelling new relationships appeared within grasp. As the Republican front collapsed, however, the prospects of building these aspirations into tangible initiatives diminished; SIA became focused on the growing refugee crisis and would continue to support Spanish exiles for decades after the war.<sup>295</sup> Nonetheless, that such aspirations were still voiced at the tail end of 1938 testified to a profound commitment to internationalist ideals.

### *Conclusion*

On a general level, all the tendencies involved in the fight against Franco had the same problem: despite honourable exceptions which would live long in memory, international support – whether from anti-fascist governments, ideological allies, or social strata (e.g., the intellectuals or the working class) – was insufficient to close the gap with the robust aid given to the rebels by the fascist powers.<sup>296</sup> Nonetheless, this was not for want of trying, and this chapter has explored the complex tapestry of Spanish anarcho-syndicalists’ wartime internationalism. It has contested the argument put forward by critical historiography that the wartime decision to collaborate with the Republican state and anti-fascist allies involved a concomitant abandonment of the movement’s traditional anarcho-syndicalist internationalism. Rather, *cenetistas* attempted to draw on those traditions while responding

---

<sup>292</sup> See IISG EGP 80, Goldman to Flak, 23 March 1938 and other correspondence; ‘AN INTERVIEW WITH EMMA GOLDMAN FOR THE C.N.T.’, *CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information*, 8 October 1938.

<sup>293</sup> FAL ARC-0149, correspondence between Gudell and DP Lee, 8 August 1937 and undated.

<sup>294</sup> ‘NUEVAS SECCIONES’, *Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista*, 27 June 1938.

<sup>295</sup> Including into the twenty-first century, among old *cenetista* exiles in Toulouse: Ángel Herrero López, *La CNT durante el franquismo: clandestinidad y exilio (1939-1975)* (Siglo XXI de España, 2004), p. 387. See also Pérez, *30 Años de lucha*, p. 562; Brodie, *Transatlantic*, p. 111; Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants*, pp. 177-78, 183.

<sup>296</sup> Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 229, 234-35.

to an intensely difficult context which often demanded pragmatism. The chapter has thereby softened the edges of some of the apparent contradictions between principles and actions, demonstrating the ways that militants preserved forms of libertarian agency: for instance, by preserving their scepticism of governmental intentions even while pursuing broad working-class support, by seeking moral consistency from their anti-fascist allies on behalf of the Russian anarchist prisoners, and by establishing an independent humanitarian organisation under libertarian control. Instead of a simple ‘retreat’ from anarcho-syndicalist ideology, the chapter has thus emphasised the ‘messy’ reality of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism. It therefore adds to other recent efforts to recreate the nuances of libertarian internationalism in different, complex contexts, such as the First World War or anti-colonial struggles.<sup>297</sup>

Writing about solidarities between Black Americans and Palestinians, the eminent historian of Black radicalism and internationalism, Robin D.G. Kelley, maintains that solidarity ‘must be understood as a contingent political project rather than some kind of natural, essential transhistorical alliance’.<sup>298</sup> The first two sections of this chapter have demonstrated the aptness of such a statement, as neither the CNT’s appeals to shared working-class interests, nor its anarcho-syndicalism, guaranteed it the support of either the ‘global proletariat’ or the international anarcho-syndicalist movement. The contingent circumstances of the war instead saw the emergence of rather unforeseen solidarities, perhaps most dramatically exemplified by *cenetistas*’ fraternal embrace of the radical Cárdenas government in Mexico. As Glenda Sluga has said of internationalism more generally, its twentieth century history ‘is not a history of utopianism, but rather of the fine gradations of idealism that took on the urgency of political realism at specific moments of despair and illumination’.<sup>299</sup> The contribution of this chapter has been to recover the internationalist praxis of the Civil War from a narrative of failure measured against often abstract notions of what internationalism should have been, and instead emphasise how activists were able to express their affects and ideals even while assailed by sharp realities and necessities.

---

<sup>297</sup> Adams and Kinna, eds., *Anarchism, 1914-18*; Hirsch and van der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World*; Kinna, ‘What is anarchist internationalism?’.

<sup>298</sup> Kelley, ‘From the River to the Sea to Every Mountain Top’, p. 71.

<sup>299</sup> Sluga, *Internationalism*, p. 146.

## Conclusion

This thesis has considerably broadened and deepened our knowledge of the nature, operation and challenges inherent to Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism, and thereby of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement in general during a key period in its history. Contrary to reductive invocations of ‘internationalism’ which equate the practice simply with anti-nationalism *tout court* or with a given transnational community such as the IWA, a key insight of this thesis has been precisely the diversity of different permutations of internationalism that existed, their contested characteristics, and their fluid and evolving nature. Setting out to explore how Spanish anarcho-syndicalists constructed international solidarity both as a relation with others and as something they expected for themselves, this study has shown that different approaches to internationalism reflected and reaffirmed actors’ changing and competing conceptions of themselves and their own roles and identities, as these evolved ‘in the streets’ of activism.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion will recount some of the key findings from the chapters of the thesis, highlighting taxonomic differences in the diverse approaches to anarcho-syndicalist internationalism that have been outlined before discussing some of the more general contributions that this study has offered.

Beginning right at the outset of the CNT’s existence, the first chapter demonstrated the enthusiasm that a vision of insurgent class warfare from across the Atlantic inspired among many Spanish libertarians, who promptly went about propagandising, fundraising and rallying for the Mexican Revolution. For a militant like Anselmo Lorenzo, although Mexico was an unexpected point of departure, ‘the emancipated and emancipators in Mexico’ embodied the social revolution from below that he had long urged in the context of Restoration Spain, becoming ‘the first workers in the world to wield the rifle and the hoe, to practice equity, to take from the pile, according to their necessities’.<sup>2</sup> As this *practical* imagery suggested, transatlantic solidarities flowed above all from the impression of decisive *action* and Mexican revolutionaries’ perceived willingness to rise up and confront the bourgeois state apparatus. As such, libertarians in Spain drew broad equivalences, sometimes using essentialist depictions, between the rebellion in Mexico and the ethos of anarcho-

---

<sup>1</sup> Ferguson, *Emma Goldman*.

<sup>2</sup> Lorenzo, *Sindicalismo*, p. 25.



syndicalism in Spain, continuing a tradition of overlaying the ideological framework onto more diffuse practices of resistance. They were able to present ‘Barcelona yesterday, and Mexico today’ as two closely related ‘pages of glory’ in revolutionary history, as the Argentine anarchist Emilio Santolaria put it in a message sent from Buenos Aires.<sup>3</sup> The *voluntarism* of this approach to internationalism became particularly apparent when contrasted with the *doctrinaire* stance of others who argued that Anarchy must derive from a conscious embrace of anarchist writings. This also gave the voluntarists a more *decentred* outlook which prefigured contemporary ideas of decolonised anarchism, whereas their more dogmatic interlocutors were *Eurocentric* by virtue of their weddedness to specific textual frameworks. Meanwhile, although the activists associated with *Tierra y Libertad* sought to incorporate examples of spontaneous rebellion wherever possible and willingly embraced violence, for Joan Mir i Mir, veteran editor of *El Porvenir del Obrero*, anarchy was about the progressive eradication of superstition and inequity through the peaceful ascent of rational, Enlightenment ideals. For Mir i Mir, this was reflected in his own internationalism precisely through *scepticism* of the Mexican movement, and later through support for the Entente, seeing this as a consistent rejection of puerile, obvious choices in order to preserve higher ideological ends. For those associated with Sabadell’s *Reivindicación*, however, there was nothing anarchist about an internationalism that disavowed revolutionaries and sided with one imperial alliance in a devastating inter-imperial war.

*Reivindicación*’s open-ended voluntarism found continuity in the enthusiasm that the Bolshevik Revolution inspired in Spain, as in *Solidaridad Obrera*’s early affirmation that ‘[t]he Russians show us the path to follow [...] let us learn from their conduct’.<sup>4</sup> However, a chilling authoritarian backlash in Spain lowered the revolutionary temperature sufficiently for stark ideological divergences to become apparent, while Soviet repression of the Russian libertarians also provoked growing outrage and a sense of solidarity with the persecuted comrades. Although *cenetistas* thus concurred in their unwillingness to become *bolchevistas*, considerable differences would continue to divide their approaches to internationalism during the 1920s, along lines akin to the ‘class’ and ‘sect’ typology that Maurín identified at the outset of the decade. For those in the mould of Salvador Seguí, committed to a *unifying*,

---

<sup>3</sup> ‘hermoso despertar’, *Tierra y Libertad*, 22 November 1911.

<sup>4</sup> ‘La revolución rusa en marcha’, *Solidaridad Obrera*, 11 November 1917.

*organisationally-sound* CNT which could accurately claim to speak for the Spanish labour movement, the IWA's goal had to be to embody *universal proletarian solidarity*. For these activists, such concerns were embodied in projects for improving and formalising the international organisational structure, as embodied by the project for national and international industrial federations, which they vigorously embraced. By contrast, those in Spain who adhered to Santillán's and *El Productor*'s vision of the CNT as preserver of the Spanish *anarchist trade union* tradition instead emphasised the International's distinctly *ideological* programme and personnel. Rather than a chimeric working-class unity, they sought an explicitly *anarchist* internationalism, and believed that the CNT should and would play a generative role within it. For these activists, industrial federations were alien to Spain's traditions and represented distance and bureaucracy when the CNT's radical identity had been built upon a foundation of vibrant, locally rooted *sindicatos únicos*. Contested dichotomies between local and transnational structures as the basis for internationalism, or between genuine 'living popular' communities and abstract collectives, were also apparent in debates about Esperanto.<sup>5</sup> In general, however, Esperanto was popularly embraced as an accessible internationalist practice which pursued a laudable goal from below.

The 1930s heralded a new era, as the CNT's resurgence in the relatively free context of the Spanish Second Republic made Spain the only country in which anarcho-syndicalists had a claim to representing the dominant tendency in the organised working class and possibilities of overseeing social revolution. One key dividing line became the one between the *treintistas* who remained wedded to goals of organisational and ideological consolidation, and the *faístas* who argued that the resilience of Spain's autochthonous libertarian movement portended its imminent spearheading of social revolution. Like the 'sectarian' internationalists of the previous decade, *faístas* such as Juan García Oliver were *exceptionalists* who argued that the movement's strength in Spain meant it had an important role to play in fomenting an international anarchist revival. Soon, however, the threat of fascism began to dominate conversations about the global panorama, taking on much greater urgency in the wake of Hitler's ascent to power in Germany; to many anarcho-syndicalists,

---

<sup>5</sup> The phrase comes from Bakunin's criticism of constitutionalism, which eschewed 'living popular' groups in favour of the abstract language of 'citizens' and 'nations': Kinna, 'What is anarchist internationalism?', p. 979.

the failure of Germany's mighty social democratic and communist movements also highlighted the need for libertarians to carve their own anti-fascist path. However, there were different ideas regarding what this meant. The IWA Secretariat and some elements in the CNT wanted to redouble organisational efforts and carry out an international boycott of Nazi Germany, hoping that the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists could inspire other workers to adopt such direct-action tactics. Others, however, saw the threat of fascism as the signal to mobilise for revolution, influenced by their vision of Spain's special role – a view which contributed to the disastrous December 1933 uprising.

The failure of that uprising pushed many activists to reevaluate questions of collaborating with other tendencies in order to resist fascism and bring revolution to Spain, although many also remained reticent until at least the outbreak of the Civil War in July 1936. During the conflict, *responsibility* and *common interests* were watchwords of many *cenetistas* in their international outlook, against others – such as Schapiro and Besnard – who claimed to represent *doctrinal integrity* and who criticised their Spanish comrades' willingness to compromise and reach across ideological divides. Within the CNT and FAI, a desire to preserve and express libertarian agency while bearing responsibility within the boundaries of anti-fascist unity manifested in initiatives such as the OPE's efforts to appeal for global working-class support, the decentring alliance with Cárdenas's Mexico, and the creation of a new humanitarian network in SIA. While the thesis ends in 1939, this story of transformation continued afterwards as anarcho-syndicalists adapted to their new circumstances. In postwar exile, some *cenetistas* shifted dramatically from *anti-fascist unity* to championing *strict doctrinal purity* within the IWA – an irony which has not gone unnoticed, but which further testified to evolving conceptions of international praxis in light of changing individual experiences and motivations.<sup>6</sup> In the 1960s, New Left and anti-colonial internationalism reflected young Spanish libertarians' positionality within the emergent worker opposition to the Franco dictatorship and within the wider Cold War.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Thorpe, 'Syndicalist internationalism', pp. 257-58; Herrerín López, *La CNT durante el franquismo*, p. 306; Danny Evans, 'Uprooted Cosmopolitans? The Post-War Exile of Spanish Anarchists in Venezuela, 1945-1965'. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 25.2 (2019), pp. 321-42 (pp. 325-26), doi:10.1080/14701847.2019.1632037.

<sup>7</sup> Jessica Thorne, 'Anarchist Prisoner Networks in Franco's Spain and the Forging of the New Left in Europe', *European History Quarterly* 54.1 (2024), pp. 110-29, doi:10.1177/02656914231214933; Evans, 'Uprooted cosmopolitans'. pp. 331-32.

Rather than a singular thread of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism, then, there existed a panoply of different ideas and practices, evolving and often contested. This variety and changeability accords with Kinna's view of anarchist internationalism as a 'project and process' which had to grapple with the real-world challenges of solidarity and resistance, even as it was oriented by the overall goal of 'non-domination'; it has also reflected Featherstone's argument that solidarity is never 'inherent', is constantly mediated by different power relations and positionalities, and is always a product of agency.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, this analysis coincides with Yeoman's view of the anarchist movement's development in Spain as 'an on-going, dynamic process' for which 'a fastidious reading on anarchist theory' supplies little insight into the trajectories that were taken or into 'what the movement meant to its grassroots support' at different junctures.<sup>9</sup> It has also allowed us to depart, with Kinna, from a totalising dismissal of internationalism as a 'failed doctrine involving an inconsistent commitment to proletarian solidarity'.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, it has resisted an essentialist or heroic depiction of anarcho-syndicalism which simply assumes that activists espoused an ideal-type cosmopolitanism.<sup>11</sup> Internationalism has instead been shown to have been emergent and constituted by myriad creative and controversial approaches shaped by contingency and agency.

Contestation has also been key to the conceptualisation developed in this study, reinforcing global labour studies theorist Katherine Nastovski's observation that worker internationalism is 'a hotly contested idea with many layers and a lack of clearly definable limits'.<sup>12</sup> Although they fell under a shared umbrella of ideological leitmotifs and aspirations, articulations of anarcho-syndicalist internationalism were differentially positioned along various intersecting spectrums, of which some of the key ones identified in the thesis have been Eurocentricity or decentredness, class, ideological and/or national identity, masculine or feminine solidarities, fixed doctrine or spontaneity and voluntarism, and universal structures or local initiatives. The meaning and duties implied by membership of international

---

<sup>8</sup> Kinna, 'What is anarchist internationalism?'; Featherstone, *Solidarity*.

<sup>9</sup> Yeoman, *Print Culture*, p. 276.

<sup>10</sup> Kinna, 'What is anarchist internationalism?', p. 977.

<sup>11</sup> Such as Murray Bookchin, 'Nationalism and the "National Question"', *Democracy & Nature* [online] 2.5 (1994) <[https://www.democracynature.org/vol2/bookchin\\_nationalism.htm](https://www.democracynature.org/vol2/bookchin_nationalism.htm)> [accessed 7 January 2021].

<sup>12</sup> Katherine Nastovski, 'Transnational Labour Solidarity and the Question of Agency: A Social Dialectical Approach to the Field', *Labor History* 63.4 (2022), pp. 441-58 (p. 442), doi:10.1080/0023656X.2022.2045262

communities and organisations was also a common source of disagreement and even rancour, and this thesis has particularly highlighted the way that stark imbalances between different national sections could strain the imaginal premises of a community such as the IWA. Rather than signifying an unredeemable ‘doctrinal chaos’ specific to anarchism, though, contestation is common to all internationalisms and ‘forms of universality’.<sup>13</sup> Focusing on disagreements and problems therefore does not by any means imply a dismissal anarcho-syndicalism; on the contrary, this study has identified a movement that continually endeavoured to grapple with contentious issues, remaining loyal to internationalist ideals throughout. The final chapter really emphasised this point: during the Civil War, even despite a sometimes desperate sense of international isolation, *cenetistas* spoke continually in terms of the international proletariat and a global struggle against fascism.

Stories also have relevance even when they do not flow into satisfyingly teleological or uncontested conclusions. Spanish libertarians’ ties with *magonismo* in the 1910s are worthy of consideration as an important precursor of debates today about decolonising radical movements and respecting non-European iterations of resistance beyond the letter of doctrine and orthodoxy. The grassroots Esperantism of the 1920s and 1930s testifies to a popular interest in internationalism even if the Esperanto ‘project’ itself fell short of its bold and expansive aims. Indeed, although rank-and-file internationalism remains relatively elusive in the historical record, this thesis has highlighted suggestive examples of engagement, such as the solidarity funds for Mexico, mass lobbying of foreign embassies on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti and Erich Mühsam, and the efforts to engage with Mexican, Russian and broader humanitarian aid with anti-fascist Spain during the Civil War. A closer examination of the CNT’s relations with the Soviet Union during the war has also questioned the suggestion that Spanish anarcho-syndicalists abandoned their principles during the war, highlighting nuanced continuities rather than a period of rupture between the robust anti-Bolshevism of earlier times and the libertarian ‘moral and ideological integrity’ of the Cold War.<sup>14</sup> These were all important examples of libertarian agency that sought to uphold solidaric principles in the face of countervailing power relations.

---

<sup>13</sup> Álvarez Junco, *ideología política*, p. 584; Featherstone, *Solidarity*, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Zimmer, ‘Premature Anti-Communists?’, p. 71.

Recovering these stories is also about pluralising and decentring history. The example of SIA in the last chapter exemplifies this very clearly. Recent work by an influential historian of the Spanish anarchist movement, for example, effectively disavows SIA out of hand, apparently influenced by Besnard's claim to be a 'guardian' of anarcho-syndicalist doctrine.<sup>15</sup> Yet SIA has here been recovered as an important arena of praxis and experience and an effort to realise anarcho-syndicalist ideals within the idiosyncratic and challenging context of the Spanish Civil War into which many activists entered enthusiastically; moreover, it was a significant domain for women's activism, providing an important platform for individuals such as Sara Berenguer and Lucía Sánchez Saornil and harmonising with *Mujeres Libres*' endeavours to recast caregiving actions as revolutionary anti-fascist praxis – an aspect which goes entirely unmentioned in the aforementioned account. These experiences are often lost in a unidimensional perspective, fomenting the 'blind spot' that Bantman identifies in the writing of transnational anarchist history, by reproducing the 'masculinist outlook of contemporary witnesses'.<sup>16</sup>

Future research may take this latter aspect further. The thesis has made efforts to encompass women's 'specific forms of political involvement' in internationalism.<sup>17</sup> As well as the wartime humanitarian work in which figures like Saornil and Berenguer were involved, it has drawn from sometimes scarce source material to bring women more carefully into the story of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, for instance donating and collecting money for Mexican revolutionaries and studying Esperanto; it has also highlighted the distinctly feminist approach to anti-fascist and anti-militarist internationalism of *Mujeres Libres* such as Lola Iturbe. Subsequent work could look to incorporate more of women's experiences by decentring and diversifying still further our understanding of what constituted internationalism.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, as Bantman has suggested, there is also still scope for further research into the transnational aspect of anarchist lifestyle experiments; Sophie Turbutt, for instance, emphasises the need for understand Spanish anarchist sexual reformers as operating within transnational scientific and eugenicist networks.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, the methodological

---

<sup>15</sup> Guillamón, *CNT vs AIT* pp. 275, 352, 504.

<sup>16</sup> Bantman, 'Anarchist Transnationalism', pp. 617-18.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 618.

<sup>18</sup> See for instance Gibson-Graham, 'Beyond global vs. local'.

<sup>19</sup> Bantman, 'Anarchist Transnationalism', pp. 618-19; Turbutt, 'Sexual Revolution', p. 356.

‘meso level’ approach, focusing largely on efforts to articulate internationalism at the movement level, has had a somewhat contradictory impact: while the ‘meso’ lens has brought a variety of perspectives into focus within one study, it has also situated it largely in the midst of a male-dominated, workerist CNT milieu in which such lifestyle questions were often marginalised. Ironically given their individualised focus, biographies can often best recover the ‘plurality of the past’ by centring on those whose voices are marginalised at other scales of analysis.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, Ferguson emphasises the importance of bringing (individual/micro, meso, macro) levels into dialogue, inserting individuals into ‘supporting roles’ at the meso level while locating individuals ‘within their personal and political networks’.<sup>21</sup> In other words, pluralising biographies need studies such as this one which illuminate the nuanced context and debates in which individuals intervene and their trajectories unfold.

As well as inviting more critical and empirical scholarly approaches, demonstrating that internationalism was plural, emergent and contested has a potential practical or activist implication, by pointing to the danger of any complacent assumption that emancipatory outcomes flow axiomatically from emancipatory rhetoric. As Nastovski has argued, ‘workers’ agency cannot be assumed to operate in a particular political direction’.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that the late international relations scholar Fred Halliday was correct to query the meaningfulness of internationalism in the guise of the ‘abstract, disembodied ideal’ or the ‘utopian proclamation from nowhere’.<sup>23</sup> However, this was not, he insisted, to dismiss ‘an ideal that recurs across history’; on the contrary, Halliday sought a ‘realistic analysis and formulation’ of internationalism, beginning with a ‘critical, informed reading of [its] past record’ that would eschew ‘romantic, uncritical and uninformed’ affirmations but also, equally, the ‘modish, complacent, post-1991 rejection of the revolutionary past’.<sup>24</sup> Halliday’s

---

<sup>20</sup> Isabel Burdiel, ‘La construcción de la «Gran Mujer de Letras Española»: los desafíos de Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851-1921)’, in *La historia biográfica en Europa: nuevas perspectivas*, ed. by Isabel Burdiel and Roy Foster (Institución Fernando el Católico, 2015), pp. 343–71 (p. 365). See for instance Ana Campos, ‘It started on the railroads: the journey of an anarcho-syndicalist in the Spanish Civil War’, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2023), pp. 319–33, doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2282831.

<sup>21</sup> Ferguson, ‘Writing Anarchism’, pp. 9, 20.

<sup>22</sup> Nastovski, ‘Transnational Labour Solidarity and the Question of Agency’, pp. 444–51.

<sup>23</sup> Fred Halliday, ‘Revolutionary internationalism and its perils’, in *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World: Social Identities, Globalization, and Modernity*, ed. by John Foran, David Lane, and Andreja Zivkovic (Routledge, 2008), pp. 65–80 (p. 78).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pp. 66, 78. See also Halliday, ‘Three concepts of internationalism’, pp. 195–97.

student, Alejandro Colás, described his realist vision of emancipatory internationalism as one of ‘complex solidarity’; an approach to progressive international relations which urged activists to acknowledge ‘concrete social forces’ and undertake the ‘messy’ work of surveying, calculating, and negotiating with them.<sup>25</sup>

In its critical but receptive approach, this thesis has offered the kind of historical analysis for which Halliday appealed: its recovery of Spanish anarcho-syndicalist internationalism as a problematic, controversial but also popular and exhilarating phenomenon within a vibrant radical movement evokes his own vision of internationalism as a tricky but worthy endeavour. Although Spanish anarcho-syndicalists were certainly prone to the utopian and the abstract and did not always offer a model of ‘complex solidarity’, this analytical exploration of the trials, tribulations and occasional triumphs of their internationalism has offered important empirical insights about the kinds of problems and solutions that are likely to emerge in any effort to grapple with the problem of solidarity in all its complexity. Rather than a model to imitate precisely, the examples examined here amounted to what Delalande has recently said of the First International: an ‘apprenticeship in international worker solidarity’ which did not, and necessarily *could not* offer a definitive framework, but one that highlighted vital tensions and triumphs which could inform subsequent emancipatory projects.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Colás, ‘Taking sides’. See also Danny Postel, ‘Who is responsible? An interview with Fred Halliday’, *openDemocracy*, 29 April 2010 <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/who-is-responsible-interview-with-fred-halliday/>> [accessed 5 September 2022].

<sup>26</sup> Delalande, *Struggle and Mutual Aid*, p. 143.



## Bibliography

### *Primary Sources*

#### Archives

Biblioteca Pública Arús, Barcelona (BPA)

Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica, Salamanca (CDMH)

Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, Madrid (FAL)

Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam (IISG)

#### Press, Bulletins and Periodicals

*ABC* (Madrid)

*Acción* (Paris)

*Acción Libertaria* (Gijón)

*Acción Social Obrera* (San Feliu de Guixols)

*Anarquía* (Barcelona)

*Artes Gráficas* (Barcelona)

*Boletín de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores* (Madrid)

*Boletín de Orientación Interna del Movimiento Confederal* (Barcelona)

*Boletín de Orientación Interna de Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista* (Barcelona)

*Boletín de Orientación sobre el Exterior [CNT-FAI]* (Barcelona)

*Boletín Orgánico del Consejo General de SIA* (Barcelona)

*Bulletin International des Syndicalistes Revolutionnaires et Industrialistes* (Berlin)

*CNT* (Madrid)

*CNT de Toledo* (Toledo)

*CNT-FAI Bulletin of Information* (Barcelona)

*Cultura Libertaria* (Barcelona)

*El Liberal* (Madrid)

*El Noroeste* (Gijón)

*El Porvenir del Obrero* (Mahón)

*El Productor* (Barcelona)

*El Siglo Futuro* (Madrid)

*El Trabajo* (Sabadell)

*España Nueva* (Madrid)  
*Faro* (Barcelona)  
*Fragua Social* (Valencia)  
*Hombres Libres* (Guadix)  
*La Picota* (Sabadell)  
*La Protesta* (Buenos Aires)  
*La Protesta (Suplemento Semanal)* (Buenos Aires)  
*La Revista Blanca* (Barcelona)  
*La Revista Internacional Anarquista* (Paris)  
*La Révolution Prolétarienne* (Paris)  
*Le Combat Syndicaliste* (Paris)  
*L'Espagne Antifasciste* (Paris)  
*Línea de Fuego* (Puebla de Valverde)  
*L'Opinió* (Barcelona)  
*Mañana* (Barcelona)  
*Más Lejos* (Barcelona)  
*Mujeres Libres* (Madrid/Barcelona)  
*New York Times* (New York)  
*News Service of the IWMA* (Berlin)  
*Nuevo Aragón* (Caspe)  
*Redención* (Alcoy)  
*Regeneración* (Los Angeles)  
*Reivindicación* (Sabadell)  
*Servicio de la Prensa de la AIT* (Berlin/Madrid)  
*Sindicalismo* (Barcelona)  
*Solidaridad Obrera* (Barcelona)  
*Solidaridad Proletaria* (Barcelona)  
*Suplemento de Tierra y Libertad* (Barcelona)  
*Tiempos Nuevos* (Paris)  
*Tiempos Nuevos* (Barcelona)  
*Tierra y Libertad* (Barcelona)  
*Umbral* (Valencia)

Printed sources and memoirs

Abad de Santillán, Diego, *Memorias, 1897-1936* (Editorial Planeta, 1977)

Asociación Amigos de México, *México y los niños españoles* (Ediciones Amigos de México, 1937)

Bajatierra, Mauro, *Contra el Capitalismo y Contra el Estado* (Biblioteca Plus Ultra, n.d.)

Bakunin, Mikhail, 'The Program of the Alliance', in *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, ed. by Sam Dolgoff (Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 243-58

Berenguer, Sara, *Entre el sol y la tormenta: Revolución, Guerra y exilio de una Mujer Libre*, second edition (L'Eixam, 2004)

Berner, Rodolfo, S.A.C. *El movimiento anarcosindicalista en Suecia. Su obra a favor de la España antifascista* (Editorial Tierra y Libertad, 1938)

Besnard, Pierre, *Los Sindicatos Obreros y la Revolución Social*, trans. by Felipe Alaiz (Ediciones de la C.N.T. de España, 1931)

Buenacasa, Manuel, *El movimiento obrero español 1886-1926. Historia y crítica* (Ediciones Júcar, 1977)

———, *¿Qué es el Sindicato Único?*, second edition (Aurora, n.d.)

CNT, *Congreso Confederal de Zaragoza. 1936* (Zero, 1978)

———, *Congreso de Constitución de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (Ediciones CNT, 1959)

———, *Memoria del Congreso celebrado en el Teatro de la Comedia de Madrid, los días 10 al 18 de diciembre de 1919* (Cosmos, 1932)

— *Memoria del Congreso Extraordinario celebrado en Madrid los días 11 al 16 de junio de 1931* (Cosmos, 1932)

CRT de Cataluña, *Memorias de los Comicios de la Regional Catalana Celebrados los Días 31 de Mayo y 1 de Junio, y 2, 3 y 4 de Agosto* (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, 1931)

— *Memorias de la Confederencia Regional extraordinaria celebrada los días 25, 26 y 27 de enero 1936* (Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Cataluña, 1936)

Gabirondo, Victor, *España y México* (Ediciones Amigos de México, 1937)

García Oliver, Juan, *El fascismo internacional y la guerra antifascista española* (Oficinas de Propaganda CNT-FAI, 1937)

Gudell, Martin, *Lo que oí en la U.R.S.S.* (Ediciones Estudios Sociales, 1946)

Kropotkin, Peter, *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* (Jonathan-David Jackson, 2018)

López Arango, Emilio and Diego Abad de Santillán, *El anarquismo en el movimiento obrero*, second edition (¡Libertad!, 2014)

López, Juan and others, ‘Manifiesto de los Treinta’, August 1931  
<[https://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifiesto\\_de\\_los\\_Treinta](https://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifiesto_de_los_Treinta)> [accessed 14 December 2022]

Lorenzo, Anselmo, *Sindicalismo* (Biblioteca Vértice, n.d.)

Malatesta, Errico, *Life and Ideas: The Anarchist Writings of Errico Malatesta*, ed. and trans. by Vernon Richards (PM Press, 2015)

Martí íbañez, Félix, *Mensaje a México* (Ediciones Amigos de México, [1937])

Mistral, Emilio, *Vida revolucionaria de Ricardo Flores Magón* (Guerri, [193-])

Montseny, Federica, *La Commune de Paris y la Revolución Española* (CNT Comité Nacional, [1937])

Noja Ruiz, Higinio, *El sendero luminoso y sangriento (El instinto de conservación a través de la Historia)* (Luis Morote, 1932)

Orobón Fernández, Valeriano, 'Tormenta sobre España', in José Luis Gutiérrez Molina, *Valeriano Orobón Fernández: Anarcosindicalismo y Revolución en Europa* (Libre Pensamiento, 2002), pp. 161-80

Peiró, Juan, *Ideas sobre sindicalismo y anarquismo* (¡Despertad!, 1930)

Pérez, Manuel, *30 años de lucha. Mi actuación como militante de la C.N.T. y anarquista español*, ed. by Fermín Escribano (Asociación Isaac Puente, 2012)

Pestaña, Ángel, *Memoria que al comité de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo presenta de su gestion en el II Congreso de la Tercera Internacional, el delegado Ángel Pestaña*, volume III (Biblioteca Nueva Senda, [1922])

Rocker, Rudolf, *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Pluto Press, 1989)

——— *Extranjeros en España*, trans. by Helmut Rüdiger (Ediciones Imán, 1938)

Rüdiger, Helmut, *El anarcosindicalismo en la Revolución Español* (Comité Nacional de la CNT de España, 1938)

Sanz, Ricardo, *Los que fuimos a Madrid*, second edition (Editorial Descontrol, 2017)

Schapiro, Alexander, 'The USSR and the CNT: an unconscionable stance', trans. by Paul Sharkey, *Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library* 14 (1998)  
<<https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/pk0q0r>> [accessed 2 October 2022]

Sirvent Romero, Manuel, *Un Militante del Anarquismo Español [Memorias, 1889-1948]* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2011)

Souchy, Augustin, *Beware! Anarchist! A Life for Freedom*, trans. by Theo Waldinger (Charles H. Kerr, 1992)

Toryho, Jacinto, *La Independencia de España (Tres etapas de nuestra Historia)* (Ediciones Tierra y Libertad, 1938)

Trotsky, Leon, *The Spanish Revolution in Danger* (Pioneer Publishers, 1931)

Urales, Federico, *Municipios Libres (Ante las puertas de la Anarquía)* (Ediciones de La Revista Blanca, 1932)

### *Secondary Sources*

Abelló i Güell, Teresa, *Les relacions internacionals de l'anarquisme català (1881-1914)* (Edicions 62, 1987)

Ackelsberg, Martha A. *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, second edition (AK Press, 2005)

——— 'It takes more than a village!: Transnational travels of Spanish anarchism in Cuba and Argentina', *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 29.3 (2016), pp. 205-23, doi:10.1386/ijis.29.3.205\_1

———, and Myrna Margulies Breitbart, 'The role of social anarchism and geography in constructing a radical agenda: A response to David Harvey', *Dialogues in Human Geography* 7.3 (2017), pp. 263-73, doi:10.1177/2043820617732916

Adams, Matthew S. and Ruth Kinna, eds., *Anarchism 1914-18: Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War* (Manchester University Press, 2017)

- Adams, Matthew S. and Ruth Kinna, 'Introduction', in *Anarchism 1914-18: Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War*, ed. by Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna (Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 1-26
- Aguilar, Kevan Antonio, 'Revolutionary Encounters: Mexican Communities and Spanish Exiles, 1906-1959' (PhD thesis, University of California San Diego, 2021)
- 'The "Indios" of Spain and the Mexican Revolution: Racial Ideologies and the Labor of Internationalist Solidarity', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 104.3 (2024), pp. 433-63, doi:10.1215/00182168-11189922
- Al Tuma, Ali, *Guns, Culture and Moors: Racial Perceptions, Cultural Impact and the Moroccan Participation in the Spanish Civil War* (Routledge, 2018)
- Alba, Victor and Stephen Schwartz, *Spanish Marxism versus Soviet Communism: A History of the P.O.U.M. in the Spanish Civil War* (Transaction Publishers, 2009)
- Alcalde Villacampa, Javier, *Esperanto i Anarquisme: els orígens (1887-1907)* (Malcriàs d'Agràcia, 2022)
- Alcolea Escribano, Josefa, '¿Moro invasor o hermano revolucionario? Las imágenes de los marroquíes durante la Guerra civil en el diario cenetista de Valencia *Fragua Social*', *Cahiers de Civilisation Espagnole Contemporaine* [online] 1 (2012), doi:10.4000/cccec.4047
- Alexander, Robert J. *The Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War*, volume II (Janus, 1999)
- Alston, Charlotte, 'Transnational solidarities and the politics of the left, 1890-1990 – introduction', *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 21.4 (2014), pp. 447-50, doi:10.1080/13507486.2014.933188
- Álvarez, Ramón, *Eleuterio Quintanilla (Vida y Obra del Maestro)* (Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1973)

Álvarez Junco, José, *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868-1910)* (Siglo XXI, 1991)

Alzina, Pere, ‘Repensant l’obra de Joan Mir i Mir (Illa de Menorca, 1871-1930)’, *Educació i Història* 32 (2018), pp. 115-43, doi:10.2436/20.3009.01.211

Amorós, Miguel, *Durruti en el laberinto*, second edition (Virus Editorial, 2014)

Amorós, Miquel, *Los Amigos de Durruti en la Revolución Española* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios de Anselmo Lorenzo, 2022)

Anarchist Federation, *Against Nationalism* (Anarchist Communist Editions, 2009)

Anderson, Benedict, ‘Preface’, in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution*, ed. by Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt (Brill, 2010), pp. xiii-xxix

——— *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (Verso, 2005)

Andrews, Nathaniel, ‘Anarchism in Everyday Life: Libertarian Prefigurative Politics in Spain and Argentina, 1890-1930’ (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2021)

——— ‘Repression, solidarity and a legacy of violence: Spanish anarcho-syndicalism and the years of “pistolerismo”, 1919-23’, *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 32.3 (2019), pp. 173-93, doi:10.1386/ijis\_00004\_1

Angelo, Anne-Marie, “‘Black oppressed people all over the world are one’: the British Black Panthers’ grassroots internationalism, 1969-73’, *Journal of Civil and Human Rights* 4.1 (2018), pp. 64-97, doi:10.5406/jcivihumarigh.4.1.0064

Antentas, Josep Maria, ‘Global internationalism: an introduction’, *Labor History* 63.4 (2022), pp. 225-40, doi:10.1080/0023656X.2022.2139819



Aroca Mohedano, Manuela, 'Internacionalistas entre la revolución y el fascismo: la Unión General de Trabajadores en el mundo (1919-1936)', *Hispania* 78.259 (2018), pp. 323-52, doi:10.3989/hispania.2018.008

Avilés, Juan and Ángel Herrerín, 'Propaganda por el hecho y propaganda por la repression: anarquismo y violencia en España a fines del siglo XIX', *Ayer* 80.4 (2010), pp. 165-92

Avilés Farré, Juan, *La fe que vino de Rusia: la revolución bolchevique y los españoles (1917-1931)*

Avrich, Paul, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton University Press, 1988)

Baer, James, *Anarchist Immigrants in Spain and Argentina* (University of Illinois Press, 2015)

Baker, Zoe, *Means and Ends: The Revolutionary Practice of Anarchism in Europe and the United States* (AK Press, 2023)

Bantman, Constance, 'Anarchist Transnationalism', in *The Cambridge History of Socialism*, volume I, ed. by Marcel van der Linden (Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 599-620

——— 'Internationalism without an International? Cross-Channel Anarchist Networks, 1880-1914', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 84.4 (2006), pp. 961-81, doi:10.3406/rbph.2006.5056

——— *Jean Grave and the Networks of French Anarchism, 1854-1939* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021)

———, and Bert Altena, 'Introduction: Problematizing Scales of Analysis in Network-Based Social Movements', in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, ed. by Constance Bantman and Bert Altena, (Routledge, 2015) pp. 3-22

- , and Bert Altena, eds., *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies* (Routledge, 2015)
- , and David Berry, 'Introduction', in *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational*, ed. by David Berry and Constance Bantman (Cambridge Scholars, 2010), pp. 1-13
- , and Pietro Di Paola, 'Banal and everyday (inter)nationalism: French and Italian anarchist exiles in London, 1870s-1914', *Nations and Nationalism* 29.1 (2023), pp. 176-90, doi:10.1111/nana.12897
- Bar, Antonio, *La C.N.T. en los años rojos (Del sindicalismo revolucionario al anarcosindicalismo 1910-1926)* (Akal, 1981)
- Barrett, James R., *History from the Bottom Up and the Inside Out: Ethnicity, Race, and Identity in Working-Class History* (Duke University Press, 2017)
- Baxmeyer, Martin, "'Mother Spain, We Love you!': Nationalism and Racism in Anarchist Literature During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)", in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, ed. by Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (Routledge, 2015), pp. 193-209
- Bayertz, Kurt, 'Four Uses of "Solidarity"', in *Solidarity*, ed. by Kurt Bayertz (Kluwer Academic, 1999), pp. 3-28
- Beltrán Dengra, Joaquín, 'La opinion de la prensa española dinástica, republicana y socialista sobre la Revolución Mexicana, 1911-1920', *Revista de Humanidades: Tecnológico de Monterrey* 16 (2004), pp. 147-74
- 'La opinion sobre la Revolución Mexicana (1911-1917) en la prensa anarquista española', *Espiral* 14.41 (2008), pp. 169-205

- Ben Salem, Abdelatif, 'Nayati Sidqi, un internacional Palestino en el Madrid de la guerra', *Marid Islámica*, 29 August 2020 <<https://madridislamico.org/nayati-sidqi/>> [accessed 29 March 2023]
- Bergin, Cathy, 'African American internationalism and anti-fascism', in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism*, ed. by Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone (Routledge, 2020), pp.254-72
- Bernardini, David, 'A different antifascism. An analysis of the rise of Nazism as seen by anarchists during the Weimar period', *History of European Ideas* 48.4 (2022), pp. 454-71, doi:10.1080/01916599.2021.1963629
- Berry, David, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945* (Greenwood Press, 2002)
- "‘Fascism or Revolution!’ Anarchism and Antifascism in France, 1933-1939', *Contemporary European History* 8.1 (1999), pp. 51-71, doi:10.1017/S0960777399000132
- Berzal de la Rosa, Enrique, 'More Internationalism, More Strength: The Unión General de Trabajadores in the International Labor Organization, 1919-1936', *Ventunesimo Secolo* 15.38 (2016), pp. 34-57, doi:10.3280/XXI2016-038003
- Bjerström, Carl-Henrik, 'A respectable revolution: Republican cultural mobilisation during the Spanish Civil War', *Cultural and Social History* 18.1 (2021), pp. 97-121, doi:10.1080/14780038.2021.1886388
- Bob, Clifford, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Bookchin, Murray, 'Nationalism and the "National Question"', *Democracy & Nature* [online] 2.5 (1994)

<[https://www.democracynature.org/vol2/bookchin\\_nationalism.htm](https://www.democracynature.org/vol2/bookchin_nationalism.htm)> [accessed 7 January 2021]

——— *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936* (Harper Colophon, 1978)

Botella, Antonio Marco, *Crónicas del movimiento obrero esperantista* (Asociación Izquierda y Esperanto, 2009)

Branciforte, Laura, *El Socorro Rojo Internacional (1923-1939): Relatos de la Solidaridad Antifascista* (Biblioteca Nueva, 2011)

Braskén, Kasper, *The International Workers' Relief, Communism, and Transnational Solidarity: Willi Münzenberg in Weimar Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

———, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone, eds., *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism* (Routledge, 2021)

———, David Featherstone and Nigel Copsey, 'Introduction: Towards a Global History of Anti-Fascism', in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism*, ed. by Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone (Routledge, 2020), pp. 1-20

Brenan, Gerald, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 1960)

Brodie, Morris, *Transatlantic Anarchism during the Spanish Civil War and Revolution, 1936-1939: Fury Over Spain* (Routledge, 2020)

——— 'Volunteers for Anarchy: The International Group of the Durruti Column in the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 56.1 (2021), pp. 28-54, doi:10.1177/0022009420949926

- Brown, Henry, ““¡Vivan las tribus!”: persecution, resistance and anarchist agency in the Popular Army during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9)”, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2023), pp. 357-79, doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2282836
- Burdiel, Isabel, ‘La construcción de la «Gran Mujer de Letras Española»: los desafíos de Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851-1921)’, in *La historia biográfica en Europa: nuevas perspectivas*, ed. by Isabel Burdiel and Roy Foster (Institución Fernando el Católico, 2015), pp. 343-71
- Calero Delso, Juan Pablo, *El gobierno de la anarquía* (Editorial Síntesis, 2011)
- Callahan, Kevin, ““Performing Inter-Nationalism” in Stuttgart in 1907: French and German socialist nationalism and the political culture of an international socialist congress’, *International Review of Social History* 45.1 (2000), pp. 51-87, doi:10.1017/S0020859000000031
- Campos, Ana, ‘It started on the railroads: the journey of an anarcho-syndicalist in the Spanish Civil War’, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2023), pp. 319-33, doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2282831
- Cano Carrillo, Salvador, *Valeriano Orobón Fernández: Towards the Barricades*, trans. by Paul Sharkey (Kate Sharpley Library, 2011)
- Carbó, Margarita, *Eusebi Carbó i Carbó. Vida i militància. Un anarquista al servei de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, trans. by Cara Martin (Cossetània Edicions, 2014)
- Carbó Darnaculleta, Margarita, ‘¡Viva la Tierra y Libertad! La utopía magonista’, *Boletín Americanista* 47 (1997), pp. 91-100
- Casanova, Julián, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain, 1931-1939*, trans. by Andrew Dowling and Graham Pollok (Routledge, 2004)
- *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*, trans. by Martin Douch (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

- Castañeda, Christopher J., 'Moving West: Jaime Vidal, Anarchy, and the Mexican Revolution, 1904-1918', in *Writing Revolution: Hispanic Anarchism in the United States*, ed. by Christopher J. Castañeda and Montse Feu (University of Illinois Press, 2019), pp. 107-19
- Christl, Robert, 'Anarchism in one country: Diego Abad de Santillán and the invention of participatory national economic planning in interwar anarchism', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 84.2 (2023), pp. 313-36, doi:10.1353/jhi.2020.0014
- Chwedoruk, Rafał, 'Polish anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism in the twentieth century', in *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational*, ed. by David Berry and Constance Bantman (Cambridge Scholars, 2010), pp. 141-62
- Ciccariello-Maher, George, 'An Anarchism That Is Not Anarchism: Notes toward a Critique of Anarchist Imperialism', in *How Not To Be Governed: Readings and Interpretations from a Critical Anarchist Left*, ed. by Jimmy Casas Klausen and James Martel (Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), pp. 19-46
- Cionini, Valentin, 'Solidarité Internationale Antifasciste, ou l'humanitaire au service des idées anarchistes', *Diacronie* [online] 7.3 (2011), doi:10.4000/diacronie.3311
- Clavin, Patricia, 'Introduction: Conceptualising Internationalism Between the World Wars', in *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars*, ed. by Daniel Laqua (I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 1-14
- Cleminson, Richard, 'Anarchism and Feminism', *Women's History Review* 7.1 (1998), pp. 135-38, doi:10.1080/09612029800200162
- 'Felipe Alaiz, Iberian federalism and the making of the anarchist intellectual', *Social and Education History* 1.2 (2012), pp. 153-71, doi:10.4471/hse.2012.10

- , and Diogo Duarte, 'Anarchism, Colonialism and the Question of "Race" in Portugal (c.1890-1930)', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29.1 (2023), pp. 115-35, doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2178169
- Colás, Alejandro, 'Putting Cosmopolitanism into Practice: The Case of Socialist Internationalism', *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 23.3 (1994), pp. 513-34, doi:10.1177/03058298940230030
- 'Taking sides: cosmopolitanism, internationalism and "complex solidarity" in the work of Fred Halliday', *International Affairs* 87.5 (2011), pp. 1051-65, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346-2011.01020.x
- Copsey, Nigel, 'Diasporic Anti-Fascism in the 1920s', in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism*, ed. by Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone (Routledge, 2020), pp. 23-42
- Corkett, Thomas, 'Interactions between the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and the Unión General de Trabajadores in Spain and Catalonia, 1931-1936' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011)
- Corkett, Tom, 'Unity as Rivalry: The Spanish Anarcho-syndicalists and Socialists on the Eve of the Civil War'. *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 13.3 (2012), pp. 267-87, doi:10.1080/21567689.2012.701187
- Corti, Annalisa, "'La Revista Blanca" i el problema català', *Recerques: Història, Economia, Cultura* 2 (1972), pp. 191-208
- Cowen Verter, Mitchell, 'Biographical Sketch', in *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader*, ed. by Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter (AK Press, 2005), pp. 21-105

Craib, Raymond, 'Sedentary Anarchists', in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, ed. by Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (Routledge, 2015), pp. 139-56.

Damier, Vadim, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th century* (Black Cat Press, 2009)

Darlington, Ralph, *Radical Unionism: The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Haymarket Books, 2013)

—— 'Revolutionary syndicalist opposition to the First World War: a comparative reassessment', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 84.4 (2006), pp. 983-1003, doi:10.3406/rbph.2006.5057

de la Rosa, María Fernanda, 'La figura de Diego Abad de Santillán como nexo entre el anarquismo Argentino, europeo y latinoamericano, 1920-1930', *Iberoamericana* (2001-) 12.48 (2012), pp. 21-40, doi:10.18441/ibam.12.2012.48.21-40

de Laforcade, Geoffroy and Steven Hirsch, 'Introduction: Indigeneity and Latin American Anarchism', *Anarchist Studies* 28.2 (2020), pp. 7-18, doi:10.3898/AS.28.2.01

Delalande, Nicolas, *Struggle and Mutual Aid: The Age of Worker Solidarity*, trans. by Anthony Roberts (Other Press, 2023)

—— 'Transnational solidarity in the making: labour strikes, money flows, and the First International, 1864-1872', in *'Arise Ye Wretched of the Earth': The First International in Global Perspective*, ed. by Fabrice Bensimon, Quentin Deluermoz and Jeanne Moisand (Brill, 2018), pp. 66-88

Devesa Pájaro, David, 'El discurs pacifista dins de l'anarcosindicalisme: el cas de Badalona i Mataró durante la Primera Guerra Mundial', *Cercles* 11 (2008), pp. 154-67



- Dirlik, Arlif, 'Anarchism and the question of place: thoughts from the Chinese experience', in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution*, ed. by Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt (Brill, 2010), pp. 131-46
- Dogliani, Patrizia, 'The Fate of Socialist Internationalism', in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. by Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 36-60
- Dolgoft, Sam, *Fragments: A Memoir* (Refract, 1986)
- Doyle, Alex, 'Transnationalism, Class and National Identity in the Cuban Labour Movement (1898-1902)', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2023), pp. 335-56, doi:10.1080/14701847.2023.2282832
- Durgan, Andy, *Voluntarios por la Revolución: La milicia internacional del POUM en la Guerra Civil Española* (Editorial Laertes, 2022)
- Ealham, Chris, 'An Impossible Unity: Revolution, Reform and Counter-Revolution and the Spanish Left, 1917-23', in *The Agony of Spanish Liberalism: from Revolution to Dictatorship 1913-1923*, ed. by Francisco J. Romero Salvadó and Angel Smith (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 92-120
- *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (AK Press, 2010)
- 'De la unidad antifascista a la desunión libertaria: Los comités superiores del movimiento libertario contra los quijotes anarquistas en el marco del Frente Popular (1936-1937)', *Mélanges de la Casa del Velázquez* [online] 41.1 (2011), doi:10.4000/mcv.3874
- , and Michael Richards, 'History, memory and the Spanish civil war: recent perspectives', in *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil*

*War, 1936-1939*, ed. by Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1-20

Easterling, Stuart, *The Mexican Revolution: a short history, 1910-1920* (Haymarket Books, 2012)

Edwards, Brent Hayes, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Harvard University Press, 2003)

Elorza, Antonio, 'El anarcosindicalismo español bajo la dictadura (1923-30). La génesis de la Federación Anarquista Ibérica (I)', *Revista de Trabajo* 39-40 (1972), pp. 123-477

England, Shawn, 'Magonismo, the Revolution and the Anarchist Appropriation of an Imagined Mexican Indigenous Identity', in *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History*, ed. by Geoffroy de Laforcade and Kirwin Shaffer (University of Florida Press, 2015), pp. 243-60

Esenwein, George R. *Anarchist ideology and the working-class movement in Spain, 1868-1898* (University of California Press, 1989)

Espigado Tocino, Gloria, 'Las mujeres en el anarquismo español, 1869-1939', *Ayer* 45 (2002), pp. 39-72

Evans, Daniel, 'The conscience of the Spanish Revolution: anarchist opposition to state collaboration in 1937' (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2016)

Evans, Danny, 'Carrying the war into Africa? Anarchism, Morocco and the Spanish Civil War [Part 2]', *Freedom News*, 30 November 2020 <<https://freedomnews.org.uk/2020/11/30/carrying-the-war-into-africa-anarchism-morocco-and-the-spanish-civil-war-2/>> [accessed 21 April 2021]

——— *Revolution and the State: Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (AK Press, 2020)

- ‘The Anarchist Movement, 1871-1939’, in *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish History*, ed. By Andrew Dowling (Routledge, 2023), pp. 331-41
- ‘“Ultra-left” anarchists and anti-fascism in the Second Republic’, *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 29.3 (2016), pp. 241-56, doi:10.1386/ijis.29.3.241\_1
- ‘Uprooted Cosmopolitans? The Post-War Exile of Spanish Anarchists in Venezuela, 1945-1965’, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 25.2 (2019), pp. 321-42, doi:10.1080/14701847.2019.1632037
- , and Elizabeth Stainforth, ‘Learning to Live: Anarcho-Syndicalism and Utopia in Spain, 1931-37’, *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 36.1 (2023), pp. 3-20, doi:10.1386/ijis\_00078\_1
- , and James Michael Yeoman, ‘New approaches to Spanish anarchism’, *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 29.3 (2016), pp. 199-204, doi:10.1386/ijis.29.3.199\_2
- Featherstone, David, ‘Black Internationalism, Subaltern Cosmopolitanism, and the Spatial Politics of Antifascism’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103.6 (2013), pp. 1406-20, doi:10.1080/00045608.2013.779551
- *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (Zed Books, 2013)
- Ferguson, Kathy E., *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013)
- ‘The Russian Revolution and Anarchist Imaginaries’, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116.4 (2017), pp. 745-61, doi:10.1215/00382876-4234983
- ‘Writing Anarchism with History from Below’, *Anarchist Studies* 30.1 (2022), pp. 7-29, doi:10.3898/AS.30.1.01

- Fernández Barreira, José Miguel, review of *Años de Hierro. Conflicto bélico y anticomunismo vistos por un periodista libertario en el exilio*, by Jacinto Toryho, *Libre Pensamiento* 116 (2024), pp. 111-15.
- Ferretti, Federico and Jacobo García Álvarez, ‘Anarchist Geopolitics of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939): Gonzalo de Reparaz and the “Iberian Tragedy”’, *Geopolitics* 24.4 (2019), pp. 944-68, doi:10.1080/14650045.2017.1398143
- Framke, Maria, ‘Political humanitarianism in the 1930s: Indian aid for Republican Spain’, *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire* 23.1-2 (2016), pp. 63-81, doi:10.1080/13507486.2015.1117421
- Freán Hernández, Óscar, ‘Ideas y vidas a través del Atlántico. El anarquismo americano en la prensa libertaria gallega’, *Historia y Política* 42 (2019), pp. 117-43, doi:10.18042/hp.42.05
- Fronczak, Joseph, ‘Local People’s Global Politics: A Transnational History of the Hands Off Ethiopia Movement of 1935’, *Diplomatic History* 39.2 (2015), pp. 245-74, doi:10.1093/dh/dht127
- Galián, Laura, *Colonialism, Transnationalism, and Anarchism in the South of the Mediterranean* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)
- Galián Hernández, Laura, and Constantino Paonessa, ‘Caught between internationalism, transnationalism and immigration: a brief history of anarchism in Egypt until 1945’, *Anarchist Studies* 26.1 (2018), pp. 29-54
- Gámez Chávez, Javier, ‘Recepción y debate del magonismo en el movimiento anarquista español, 1907-1911’, *Pacarina del Sur: Revista de Pensamiento Crítico Latinoamericano* [online] 5.19 (2014) <[www.pacarinadelsur.com/nuestra-america/huellas-y-voces/945-recepcion-y-debate-del-magonismo-en-el-movimiento-anarquista-espanol-1907-1911#\\_edn21](http://www.pacarinadelsur.com/nuestra-america/huellas-y-voces/945-recepcion-y-debate-del-magonismo-en-el-movimiento-anarquista-espanol-1907-1911#_edn21)> [accessed 27 July 2021]

—— ‘Yaquis y Magonistas: una alianza indígena y popular en la Revolución Mexicana’, *Pacarina del Sur: Revista de Pensamiento Crítico Latinoamericano* [online] 3 (2010) <<https://www.pacarinadelsur.com/home/olejaes/88-yaquis-y-magonistas-una-alianzaindigena-y-popular-en-la-revolucion-mexicana>> [accessed 10 May 2024]

García, Hugo, *The Truth About Spain! Mobilizing British Public Opinion, 1936-1939* (Sussex Academic Press, 2010)

—— ‘Transnational history: a new paradigm for anti-fascist studies?’, *Contemporary European History* 24.4 (2016), pp. 563-72, doi:10.1017/S0960777316000382

—— “‘World Capital of Anti-Fascism’? The making – and breaking – of a global left in Spain, 1936-1939’, in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism*, ed. by Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone (Routledge, 2020), pp. 234-53

Garner, Jason, ‘El primer exilio. Los libertarios españoles en Francia antes de la Segunda República’, *Spagna Contemporanea* 31 (2007), pp. 93-111

—— *Goals and Means: Anarchism, Syndicalism and Internationalism in the Origins of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (AK Press, 2016)

—— ‘Separated by an “Ideological Chasm”: The Spanish National Labour Confederation and Bolshevik Internationalism, 1917-1922’, *Contemporary European History* 15.3 (2006), pp. 293-326, doi:10.1017/S0960777306003341

Garvía, Roberto, *Lengua y Utopía. El movimiento esperantista en España, 1890-1936* (Editorial Universidad de Granada, 2021)

Gemie, Sharif, ‘Anarchism and Feminism: A Historical Survey’, *Women’s History Review* 5.3 (1996), pp. 417-44, doi:10.1080/09612029600200123

Getman-Eraso, Jordi, ‘“Cease Fire, Comrades!’ Anarcho-syndicalist Revolutionary Prophecy, Anti-Fascism and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War’, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9.1 (2008), pp. 93-114, doi:10.1080/14690760701856416

Getman-Eraso, Jordi W., ‘Pragmatism unveiled: the meanings of revolutionary rhetoric in Spanish anarchosyndicalism’, in *Nation and Conflict in Modern Spain: Essays in Honor of Stanley G. Payne*, ed. by Brian D. Bunk (Parallel Press, 2008), pp. 31-50

Gibson-Graham, J.K., ‘Beyond global vs. local: economic politics outside the binary frame’, in *Geographies of Power: Placing Scale*, ed. by Andrew Herod and Melissa W. Wright (Blackwell, 2002), pp. 25-60

Girón Serra, Álvaro, ‘Discursos sobre la raza en el anarquismo barcelonés: evolucionismo, internacionalismo y nación (1869-1918)’, in *Clase antes que nación: trabajadores, movimiento obrero y cuestión nacional en la cataluña metropolitana, 1840-2017*, ed. by José Luis Oyón and Juanjo Romero (El Viejo Topo, 2017), pp. 117-42

Gómez Casas, Juan, *Anarchist Organisation: The History of the F.A.I.*, trans. by Abe Bluestein (Black Rose Books, 1986)

Gonçalves, Gil, ‘Península Rubro-Negra – F.A.I. e o iberismo libertário no Entre Guerras (1927-1936)’, *História. Revista da FLUP* 10.1 (2020), pp. 29-52, doi:10.21747/0871164X/hist10\_1a3

Gonzales, Michael J., *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1940* (University of New Mexico Press, 2002)

Goodway, David, *Anarchist seeds beneath the snow: left-libertarian thought and British writers from William Morris to Colin Ward*, second edition (PM Press, 2012)

- Goodwin, Jeff, James M. Jasper and Francesa Polletta, eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (University of Chicago Press, 2001)
- Goodwin, Jeff, James M. Jasper, and Francesa Polletta, 'Why Emotions Matter', in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. by Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesa Polletta (University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 1-24
- Gracia Meseguer, Raúl, and Alaia Prieto Cano, 'Discursos transforterizos en torno a la emancipación femenina: Teresa Claramunt y Juana Rouco Buela, dos feministas libertarias que lucharon por la igualdad', *Historia Social* 106 (2023), pp. 101-22
- Graham, Helen and Paul Preston, 'The Popular Front and the Struggle Against Fascism', in *The Popular Front in Europe*, ed. by Helen Graham and Paul Preston (Macmillan, 1987), pp. 1-19
- Guillamón, Agustín, *Barricadas en Barcelona: la CNT de la Victoria de julio de 1936 a la necesaria derrota de mayo de 1937*, third edition (Editorial Descontrol, 2016)
- *CNT vs AIT. Los comités superiores cenetistas contra la oposición revolucionaria interna e internacional (1936-1939)* (Editorial Descontrol, 2022)
- *Los Comités de Defensa de la CNT en Barcelona (1933-1938). De los Cuadros de Defensa a los Comités Revolucionarios de Barriada, las Patrullas de Control y las Milicias Populares*, fifth edition (Alejandria Proletaria, 2018)
- Gutiérrez, José A and Jordi Martí Font, 'October 2017 in Catalonia: the anarchists and the *procés*', *Nations and Nationalism* 29.1 (2023), doi:10.1111/nana.12896
- Gutiérrez, José A., and Ruth Kinna, 'Introduction. Anarchism and the National Question – Historical, Theoretical and Contemporary Perspectives', *Nations and Nationalism* 29.1 (2023), pp. 121-30, doi:10.1111/nana.12891

Gutiérrez, José Antonio, and Federico Ferretti, 'The nation against the state: the Irish Question and Britain-based anarchists in the Age of Empire', *Nations and Nationalism* 26.3 (2020), pp. 611-27, doi:10.1111/nana.12584

Gutiérrez Molina, José Luis, 'El Ramo de la Construcción de Sevilla y la jornada de 6 horas (1870-1936), in *La Jornada de Seis Horas 1936. Movimiento Obrero y Reducción de la Jornada de Trabajo en el Ramo de la Construcción de Sevilla*, ed. by A.M. Bernal, M.R. Alarcón and J.L. Gutiérrez (Centro Andaluz del Libro, 2001), pp. 33-89

——— *Valeriano Orobón Fernández: Anarcosindicalismo y Revolución en Europa* (Libre Pensamiento, 2002)

Halliday, Fred, 'Revolutionary internationalism and its perils', in *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World: Social Identities, Globalization, and Modernity*, ed. by John Foran, David Lane, and Andreja Zivkovic (Routledge, 2008), pp. 65-80

——— 'Three concepts of internationalism', *International Affairs* 64.2 (1988), pp. 187-98, doi:10.2307/2621845

Hart, John M., *Anarchism & the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931* (University of Texas Press, 1978)

Heatherton, Christina, *Arise! Global Radicalism in the Era of the Mexican Revolution* (University of California Press, 2022)

Hernández, Sonia, *For a Just and Better World: Engendering Anarchism in the Mexican Borderlands, 1900-1938* (University of Illinois Press, 2021)

Herrerín, Ángel, 'La CNT en el movimiento de octubre de 1934: entre el boicot y la participación', *Hispania* 76.252 (2016), pp. 217-44, doi:10.3989/hispania.2016.008

Herrerín López, Ángel, *Camino a la Anarquía. La CNT en tiempos de la Segunda República (1931-1936)* (Siglo XXI de España, 2019)



- *La CNT durante el franquismo: clandestinidad y exilio (1939-1975)* (Siglo XXI de España, 2004)
- ‘La Idea en la maleta libertariaa y su difícil encaje nacional’, *Alcores* 25 (2021), pp. 15-35
- Hirsch, Steven, and Lucien van der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution* (Brill, 2010).
- Hirsch, Steven J., ‘Anarchism and “the Indian problem” in Peru, 1898-1927’, *Anarchist Studies* 28.2 (2020), pp. 54-75, doi:10.3898/AS.28.2.03
- Hobsbawm, Eric J., ‘Opening Address: Working-Class Internationalism’, in *Internationalism in the Labour Movement 1830-1940*, ed. by Frits van Holthoon and Marcel van der Linden (Brill, 1998), pp. 3-16
- *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, second edition (Manchester University Press, 1971)
- Illades, Carlos, *México y España durante la Revolución Mexicana* (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1985)
- *Presencia Española en la Revolución Mexicana (1910-1915)* (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras UNAM, 1991)
- Ímaz Gispert, Carlos, ‘España en el corazón: la ayuda y el refugio mexicano’, in *La Guerra Civil Española, 80 años después*, ed. by Albert Reig Tapia and Josep Sánchez Carvelló (Tecnos, 2019), pp. 251-68
- Íñiguez, Miguel, *Esbozo de una enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2001)

- Jabri, Vivienne, 'Solidarity and spheres of culture: the cosmopolitan and the postcolonial', *Review of International Studies* 33.4 (2007), pp. 715-28, doi:10.107IS0260210507007747
- Jasper, James M. 'Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research', *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011), pp. 285-303, doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150015
- Johnson, Kahala, and Kathy E. Ferguson, 'Anarchism and Indigeneity', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. by Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 697-714
- Juliá, Santos, *Hoy no es ayer. Ensayos sobre la España del siglo XX*, sixth edition (RBA, 2011)
- Juliá Díaz, Santos, *Madrid, 1931-1934. De la fiesta popular a la lucha de clases* (Siglo XXI, 1984)
- Kaplan, Temma, 'Female consciousness and collective action: the case of Barcelona, 1910-1918', *Signs* 7.3 (1982), pp. 545-66, doi:10.1086/493899
- Kelley, Robin D.G., 'From the river to the sea to every mountain top: solidarity as worldmaking', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 48.4 (2019), pp. 69-91, doi:10.1525/jps.2019.48.4.69
- Kerry, Matthew, *Unite, Proletarian Brothers! Radicalism and Revolution in the Spanish Second Republic* (University of London Press, 2020)
- 'The Last Echo of 1917? The Asturian October Between Revolution and Antifascism', in *Rethinking Revolutions from 1905 to 1934: Democracy, Social Justice and National Liberation around the World*, ed. by Stefan Berger and Klaus Weinbauer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), pp. 255-75

Kinna, Ruth, *Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016)

——— *The Government of No One: The Theory and Practice of Anarchism* (Pelican, 2020)

——— ‘What is Anarchist Internationalism?’, *Nations and Nationalism* 27.4 (2021), pp. 976-91, doi:10.1111/nana.12676

Kirschenbaum, Lisa A., *International Communism and the Spanish Civil War: Solidarity and Suspicion* (Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Konishi, Sho, ‘Trilingual World Order: Language without Culture in Post-Russo-Japanese War Japan’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72.1 (2013), pp. 91-114, doi:10.1017/S0021911812001751

Kühnis, Nino, ‘More than an Antonym: a Close(r) Look at the Dichotomy between the National and Anarchism’, in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, ed. by Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (Routledge, 2015), pp. 159-73

LaPorte, Norman, Kevin Morgan and Matthew Worley, eds., *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization, 1917-53* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Leibner, Gerard, ‘La Protesta y la andinización del anarquismo en el Perú, 1912-1915’, *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 5.1 (1994), pp. 83-102, doi:10.61490/eial.v5i1.1228

Levy, Carl, ‘Anarchism and Cosmopolitanism’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, ed. by Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 125-48

——— ‘Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism in Europe, 1860-1939’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50 (2004), pp. 330-42, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8497.2004.00337.x

- Lida, Clara E., 'Hacia la clandestinidad anarquista: de la Comuna de París a Alcoy, 1871-1874', *Historia Social* 46 (2003), pp. 49-64
- Lynch, Celia, 'The Promise and Problems of Internationalism', *Global Governance* 5.1 (1999), pp. 83-101
- Madrid, Francisco, *Solidaridad Obrera y el periodismo de raíz ácrata* (Ediciones Solidaridad Obrera, 2007)
- Madrid Santos, Francisco, 'La prensa anarquista y anarcosindicalista en España desde la I Internacional hasta el final de la Guerra Civil. Volumen I, tomo I, análisis de su evolución, 1869-1930' (PhD thesis, Universidad Central de Barcelona, 1989)
- Maldonado Alvarado, Benjamin, *Magonismo y vida communal mesoamericana: A 90 años de la Muerte de Ricardo Flores Magón* (CSEIO, 2012)
- Marhuenda, Álvaro G. 'CANTORES del IDEAL: Sobre el origen del himno Hijos del Pueblo', *Alacant Obrera*, 23 April 2019  
<<https://alacantobrera.com/2019/04/23/cantores-de-la-revolucion-la-historia-del-himno-hijos-del-pueblo/>> [accessed 7 July 2023]
- Masjuan, Eduard, 'Reivindicación, la defensa de la Revolución mexicana magonista por el anarquismo español, 1914-1918', *Signos Históricos* 12.43 (2020), pp. 186-219
- Mason, Emily, *Democracy, Deeds and Dilemmas: Support for the Spanish Republic within British Civil Society, 1936-1939* (Sussex Academic Press, 2017)
- Mason, Robert, *The Spanish Anarchists of Northern Australia: Revolution in the Sugar Cane Fields* (University of Wales Press, 2018)
- Massey, Doreen, 'Geographies of Responsibility', *Geografiska annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 86.1 (2004), pp. 5-18, doi:10.1111/j.0435-3684.2004.00150.x

- Mates, Lewis, 'Syndicalism and the 'Transnational Turn'', *Capital & Class* 40 (2016), pp. 344-54, doi:10.1177/0309816816661148
- McDermott, Kevin and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (Macmillan Press, 1996)
- McGirr, Lisa, 'The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti: A Global History', *The Journal of American History* 93.4 (2007), pp. 1085-1115, doi:10.2307/25094597
- Meaker, Gerald H., *The Revolutionary Left in Spain, 1914-23* (Stanford University Press, 1975)
- Meaker, Gerald Henry, 'Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalism and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1922' (PhD thesis, University of Southern California, 1967)
- Milner, Susan, *The Dilemmas of Internationalism: French Syndicalism and the International Labour Movement, 1900-1914* (Berg, 1990)
- Mohandesi, Salar, *Red Internationalism: Anti-Imperialism and Human Rights in the Global Sixties and Seventies* (Cambridge University Press, 2023)
- Monjo, Anna, *Militants: Democràcia i participació a la CNT als anys trenta* (Editorial Laertes, 2003)
- Moya, José C., 'The positive side of stereotypes: Jewish anarchists in early-twentieth-century Buenos Aires', *Jewish History* 18.1 (2004), pp. 19-48, doi:10.1023/B:JEHI.00000005735.80946.27
- Müller-Saini, Gotelind, and Gregor Benton, 'Esperanto and Chinese anarchism 1907-1920: the translation from diaspora to homeland', *Language Problems and Language Planning* 30.1 (2006), pp. 45-73, doi:10.1075/lplp.30.1.05mul
- Muñoz Congost, José, 'La Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores a través de sus congresos: el debate anarcosindicalista [I]', *Cenit* 250 (1987), pp. 7164-94

- Musto, Marcello, 'History and political legacy of the International Working Men's Association', *Labor History* 63.4 (2022), pp. 479-91, doi:10.1080/0023656X.2021.2000593
- Nastovski, Katherine, 'Transnational Labour Solidarity and the Question of Agency: A Social Dialectical Approach to the Field', *Labor History* 63.4 (2022), pp. 441-58, doi:10.1080/0023656X.2022.2045262
- Navarro Comas, Rocío, 'El Frente Único, las Alianzas Obreras y el Frente Popular: La evolución teórica de los anarquistas ante la colaboración obrera', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* [online] 41.1 (2011), doi:10.4000/mcv.3855
- Navarro Navarro, Javier, *A la revolución por la cultura: practices culturales y sociabilidad libertarias en el País Valenciano (1931-1939)* (Publicacions Universitat de València, 2004)
- 'Biography, culture and militancy in Spanish anarchism: Higinio Noja Ruiz (1894-1972)', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 28.1 (2022), pp. 59-74, doi:10.1080/14701847.2022.205691
- Nelles, Dieter, 'La Legión Extranjera de La Revolución', in Dieter Nelles, Harald Piotrowski, Ulrich Linse and Carlos García, *Antifascistas Alemanes En Barcelona (1933-1939)*, second edition (Virus Editorial, 2019), pp. 125-276
- Núñez Seixas, Xosé M. *¡Fuera el invasor! Nacionalismos y movilización bélica durante la Guerra civil española (1936-1939)* (Marcial Pons Historia, 2006)
- Ó Catháin, Máirtín, 'Dr. John O'Dwyer Creaghe (1841-1920. Irish-Argentine Anarchist', *Society for Irish Latin American Studies* <<https://www.irlandeses.org/cathain.htm>> [accessed 22 March 2021]
- O'Keeffe, Brigid, *Esperanto and Languages of Internationalism in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021)

Ojeda Revah, Mario, *Mexico and the Spanish Civil War: Political Repercussions for the Republican Cause* (Sussex Academic Press, 2015)

Olufemi, Lola, *Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power* (Pluto Press, 2020)

Páez Cervi, Emilià, 'GUDELL, Martin (1906-1993)', in *Biografías del 36*, ed. by Paolo Casciola and Agustín Guillamón (Editorial Descontrol, 2016), pp. 12-25

Paz, Abel, *Durruti in the Spanish Revolution*, trans. by Chuck Morse (AK Press, 2006)

——— *La cuestión de Marruecos y la República Española* (Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2000)

Pazmiño, Carlos, 'Anarquismo Comunista y dilema indio. Pasado, presente y futuro revolucionario', *A Las Barricadas* (2016)  
<[www.alasbarricadas.org/noticias/36932](http://www.alasbarricadas.org/noticias/36932)> [accessed 3 July 2023]

Peirats, José, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution* (Freedom Press, 1998)

——— *Figuras del movimiento libertario español* (Picazo, 1977)

Peirats Valls, José, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution*, volume I, ed. by Chris Ealham, trans. by Paul Sharkey and Chris Ealham, second edition (PM Press, 2011)

——— *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution*, volume II, ed. by Chris Ealham, trans. by Paul Sharkey and Chris Ealham (ChristieBooks, 2005)

Porter, David, ed., *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, second edition (AK Press, 2006)

Postel, Danny, 'Who is responsible? An interview with Fred Halliday', *openDemocracy*, 29 April 2010 <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/who-is-responsible-interview-with-fred-halliday/>> [accessed 5 September 2022]

Powell, T.G. *Mexico and the Spanish Civil War* (University of New Mexico Press, 1981)

Pradas Baena, Amalia María, *Teresa Claramunt, la virgen roja barcelonesa: Biografía y escritos* (Virus Editorial, 2006)

Prieto Borrego, Lucía, 'Las mujeres en el anarquismo andaluz: cultura y movilización en la primera mitad del siglo XX', *Arenal* 19.1 (2012), pp. 47-74, doi:10.30827/arenal.v19i1.1408

Radcliff, Pamela, 'The Culture of Empowerment in Gijón, 1936-1937', in *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, ed. by Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 133-55

Ramnath, Maia, *Decolonizing Anarchism: An antiauthoritarian history of India's liberation struggle* (AK Press, 2010)

Rao, Rahul, 'Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism: Between Home and the World' (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2007)

Ribera, Anna and Alejandro de la Torre, 'Memoria libertaria: usos del calendario militante del anarquismo hispanoamericano', *Historias* 75 (2010), pp. 105-24.

Rogers, Todd, Noah J. Goldstein and Craig R. Fox, 'Social Mobilization', *Annual Review of Psychology* 69 (2018), pp. 357-81, doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-122414-033718

Romero Salvadó, Francisco J., *Political Comedy and Social Tragedy: Spain, a Laboratory of Social Conflict, 1892-1921* (Sussex Academic Press, 2020)

Routledge, Paul and Andrew Cumbers, *Global Justice Networks: Geographies of transnational solidarity* (Manchester University Press, 2009)



- Ryley, Peter, 'The Manifesto of the Sixteen: Kropotkin's rejection of anti-war anarchism and his critique of the politics of peace', in *Anarchism 1914-18: Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War*, ed. by Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna (Manchester University Press, pp. 49-68
- Sabater, Jordi, *Anarquisme i Catalanisme: la CNT i elf et nacional català durant la Guerra Civil* (Edicions 62, 1986)
- Samaniego López, Marco Antonio, "'... El Magonismo No Existe": Ricardo Flores Magón', *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México* 49 (2015), pp. 33-53, doi:0.1016/j.ehmcm.2014.12.001.
- 'El poblado fronterizo de Tijuana. Emiliano Zapata y la *rivoluzione da tavolo*', *Historia Mexicana* 66.3 (2017), pp. 1123-75, doi:10.24201/HM.V6613.3378
- 'La revolución Mexicana en Baja California: maderismo, magonismo, filibusterismo y la pequeña revuelta local', *Historia Mexicana* 56.4 (2007)
- Santos Santos, María-Cruz, 'Las oficinas de la CNT en el exterior durante la Guerra Civil', *Conversación Sobre Historia*, 18 August 2022 <<https://conversacionsobrehistoria.info/2022/08/18/las-oficinas-de-la-cnt-en-el-exterior-durante-la-guerra-civil/>> [accessed 17 October 2022]
- Saunier, Pierre-Yves, *Transnational History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
- Schor, Esther, *Bridge of Words: Esperanto and the Dream of a Universal Language* (Metropolitan Books, 2016)
- Scott, James C., *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1998)
- Sevilla Soler, Rosario, 'España y los revolucionarios mexicanos en la prensa andaluza: Una vision condicionada', in *Insurgencia y Republicanismo*, ed. by Jesús Raúl

Navarro García (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006), pp. 299-339

Shaffer, Kirk, 'Tropical Libertarians: Anarchist Movements and Networks in the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Mexico, 1890s-1920s', in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World 1870-1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution*, ed. by Steven Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt (Brill, 2010), pp. 273-320

Shaffer, Kirwin, *Anarchists of the Caribbean: Countercultural Politics and Transnational Networks in the Age of US Expansion* (Cambridge University Press, 2020)

—— 'Cuba para todos: Anarchist Internationalism and the Cultural Politics of Cuban Independence, 1898-1925', *Cuban Studies* 31 (2000), pp. 45-75

—— 'Havana Hub: Cuban anarchism, radical media and the trans-Caribbean anarchist network, 1902-1915', *Caribbean Studies* 37.2 (2009), pp. 45-81

Sierra, María and Juan Pro, 'Gypsy Anarchism: Navigating Ethnic and Political Identities', *European History Quarterly* 52.4 (2022), pp. 593-612, doi:10.1177/02656914221097011

Sluga, Glenda, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013)

——, and Patricia Clavin, 'Introduction: Rethinking the History of Internationalism', in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. by Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 3-14

Smith, Angel, *Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction: Catalan Labour and the Crisis of the Spanish State, 1898-1923* (Berghahn, 2006)

—— ‘Cataluña y la Gran Guerra: de la reforma democrática al conflict social’, *Hispania Nova* 15 (2017), pp. 472-99, doi:10.20318/hn.2017.3498

—— ‘Los anarquistas y anarcosindicalistas ante la cuestión nacional’, in *Izquierdas y Nacionalismos en la España Contemporánea*, ed. By Javier Moreno Luzón (Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 2011), pp. 141-56

Smith, Eric R., *American Relief Aid and the Spanish Civil War* (University of Missouri Press, 2013)

Smyth, Denis, “‘We are with you’: solidarity and self-interest in Soviet policy towards Republican Spain, 1937-1939”, in *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936-1939*, ed. by Paul Preston and Ann L. Mackenzie (Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 87-105

Stöckmann, Jan, ‘Women, wars, and world affairs: Recovering feminist International Relations, 1915-39’, *Review of International Studies* 44.2 (2017), pp. 215-35, doi:10.1017/S026021051700050X

Struthers, David M., *The World in a City: Multiethnic Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (University of Illinois Press, 2019)

Sueiro Seoane, Susana, ‘Prensa y redes anarquistas transnacionales. El olvidado papel de J.C. Campos y sus crónicas sobre los mártires de Chicago en el anarquismo de lengua hispana’, *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea* 36 (2014), pp. 259-95, doi:10.5209/rev\_CHCO.2014.v36.46690

Tannoury-Karam, Sana, ‘No Place for Neutrality: The Case for Democracy and the League Against Nazism and Fascism in Syria and Lebanon’, in *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism*, ed. by Kasper Braskén, Nigel Copsey and David Featherstone (Routledge, 2020), pp. 133-51

Thorne, Jessica, 'Anarchist Prisoner Networks in Franco's Spain and the Forging of the New Left in Europe', *European History Quarterly* 54.1 (2024), pp. 110-29, doi:10.1177/02656914231214933

Thorpe, Wayne, 'Anarchosyndicalism in inter-war France: the vision of Pierre Besnard', *European History Quarterly* 26.4 (1996), pp. 559-90, doi:10.1177/026569149602600403

—— 'El Ferrol, Rio de Janeiro, Zimmerwald, and beyond: syndicalist internationalism, 1914-1918', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 84.4 (2006), pp. 1005-23, doi:10.3406/rbph.2006.5058

—— 'Syndicalist internationalism before World War II', in *Revolutionary syndicalism: an international perspective*, ed. by Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe (Scolar, 1990), pp. 237-60

—— *"The Workers Themselves": Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913-1923* (Kluwer Academic, 1989)

Torres Planells, Sonya, and Antonia Fontanillas Borrás, *Lola Iturbe Arizcuren: Vida e ideal de una luchadora anarquista* (Virus Editorial, 2006)

Tostorff, Reiner, 'Mission Impossible: Ángel Pestaña's Encounter as CNT Delegate with the Bolshevik Revolution in 1920', in *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational*, ed. by David Berry and Constance Bantman (Cambridge Scholars, 2010), pp. 94-108

Turbutt, Sophie, 'Sexual Revolution and the Spanish Anarchist Press: Bodies, Birth Control, and Free Love in the 1930s Advice Columns of *La Revista Blanca*', *Contemporary European History* 33.1 (2024), pp. 338-56, doi:10.1017/S0960777322000315

- Turcato, Davide, 'Italian anarchism as a transnational movement, 1885-1915', *International Review of Social History* 52.3 (2007), pp. 407-44, doi:10.1017/S0020859007003057
- 'Nations without Borders: Anarchists and National Identity', in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, ed. by Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (Routledge, 2015), pp. 25-42
- 'Saving the Future: the Roots of Malatesta's Anti-Militarism', in *Anarchism, 1914-18: Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War*, ed. by Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna (Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 29-48
- Tzu-Chun Wu, Judy, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism During the Vietnam Era* (Cornell University Press, 2013)
- Vadillo Muñoz, Julián, 'El sindicalismo revolucionario a través de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores (1922-1945)', in *Internacionalismo Obrero: Experiencias del Sindicalismo Internacional (1888-1986)*, ed. by Manuela Aroca Mohedano (Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero, 2019)
- *Historia de la CNT: Utopía, Pragmatismo y Revolución* (Catarata, 2019)
- van der Walt, Lucien, and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (AK Press, 2009)
- Vega, Eulàlia, *El trentisme a Catalunya. Divergències ideològiques en la CNT (1930-1933)* (Cural, 1980)
- *Pioneras y Revolucionarias: mujeres libertarias durante la República, la Guerra Civil, y el Franquismo* (Icaria, 2010)
- Vicente, Laura, *La revolución de las palabras: la revista Mujeres Libres* (Comares, 2020)

Villa García, Roberto, 'La CNT contra la República: La insurrección revolucionaria de diciembre de 1933', *Historia y Política* 25 (2011), pp. 177-205

Weber, Devra Ann, "'Different Plans': Indigenous Pasts, the Partido Liberal Mexicano, and Questions about Reframing Binational Social Movements of the Twentieth Century', *Social Justice* 42.3-4 (2015), pp. 10-28

—— 'Keeping Community, Challenging Boundaries: Indigenous Migrants, Internationalist Workers, and Mexican Revolutionaries, 1900-1920', in *Mexico and Mexicans in the History and Culture of the United States*, ed. by John Tutino (University of Texas Press, 2012)

Weld, Kirsan, 'The Spanish Civil War and the Construction of a Reactionary Historical Consciousness in Augusto Pinochet's Chile', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 98.1 (2018), doi: 10.1215/00182168-4294468

Werbner, Pnina, 'Political Motherhood and the Feminisation of Citizenship: Women's Activisms and the Transformation of the Public Sphere', in *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, ed. by Nira Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner (Zed Books, 1999), pp. 221-45

Yeoman, James Michael, *Print Culture and the Formation of the Anarchist Movement in Spain, 1890-1915* (Routledge, 2020)

—— 'Salud y Anarquía desde Dowlais: the translocal experience of Spanish anarchists in South Wales, 1900-15', *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 29.3 (2016), pp. 273-89, doi:10.1386/ijis.29.3.273\_1

—— 'The Panama Papers: Anarchist Press Networks between Spain and the Canal Zone in the Early Twentieth Century', in *Transatlantic Radicalism: Socialist and Anarchist Exchanges in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. by Frank Jacob and Mario Keßler (Liverpool University Press, 2021), pp. 83-108

—— ‘The Spanish anarchist movement at the outbreak of the First World War: a crisis of ideological neutrality’, in *Shaping Neutrality Throughout the First World War*, ed. by José Leonardo Ruiz Sánchez, Inmaculada Cordero Olivero and Carolina García Sanz (Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2015), pp. 81-101

Zarcone, Pier Francesco, *El anarquismo en la historia de Portugal* (La Neurosis o Las Barricadas, 2019)

Zemon Davis, Natalie, ‘Decentering history: local stories and cultural crossings in a global world’, *History and Theory* 50.2 (2011), pp. 188-202, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2011.00576.x

Zimmer, Kenyon, ‘At war with empire: the anti-colonial roots of American anarchist debates during the First World War’, in *Anarchism, 1914-18. Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War*, ed. by Matthew S. Adams and Ruth Kinna (Manchester University Press, 2017)

—— ‘Premature Anti-Communists?: American Anarchism, the Russian Revolution, and Left-Wing Libertarian Anti-Communism, 1917-1939’, *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 6.2 (2009), pp. 45-71, doi:10.1215/15476715-2008-058

—— ‘The Other Volunteers: American Anarchists and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939’, *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 10.2 (2016), pp. 19-52, doi:10.14321/jstudradi.10.2.0019

Zoffmann Rodriguez, Arturo, ‘Neutrality and Internationalism: The Russian Exiles in Spain, 1914-1920’, *Contemporary European History* 31.3 (2022), pp. 339-52, doi:10.1017/S0960777321000461

—— ‘The Spanish Anarchists and the Russian Revolution, 1917-24’ (PhD thesis, European University Institute, 2019)