

# Kropotkin's Ideas and the International Anarchist Movement in the 1920s and 1930s

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Peter Alekseyevich Kropotkin was not the “founder” of the ideological doctrine of anarchist communism, but by rights is considered one of its originators. His authority as a thinker among his contemporaries in the anarchist movement (discounting the “individualists,” who clearly fell outside the mainstream) was virtually indisputable. As the historian of anarchism Max Nettlau noted in this connection, Kropotkin’s ideas in those years were “seldom criticized, seldom questioned”; “. . . the opinions of Kropotkin seemed to many to be truths not subject to doubt, while others considered it inappropriate to raise questions which might weaken the enormous influence which Kropotkin’s personality, talent, and dedication rendered to their cause.”<sup>1</sup>

Strange as it may seem, it was Kropotkin himself who delivered the first blow to his own authority, when he supported participation in the First World War on the side of the Entente and, together with a number of other well-known anarchists, signed the corresponding “Declaration of the Sixteen.” This departure from the traditional ideas of internationalism and anti-militarism – ideas which he had formerly propagandized zealously – caused disarray among many participants of the movement. Considering such a volte-face to be a betrayal, they tried to purge Kropotkin’s doctrine of Kropotkin himself. Typical in this connection are the declarations of Russian emigrant-anarchists in 1916. The Paris group announced that “from now on we can not consider the signers of the ‘Declaration’ our comrades in the struggle, for even if they acted unintentionally, the reality is that they are ENEMIES OF THE WORKERS’ CAUSE, and we must treat them inflexibly as such.” Representatives of the Geneva group, mentioning Kropotkin by name, proclaimed: “Those who call upon people to take part in the War can be neither anarchists nor anti-militarists. . . They have ripped out the soul of anarchism and cast it among the devotees of militarism to be torn to pieces. As for us, we shall remain at our old post.”<sup>2</sup>

Characteristically, the respect for Kropotkin in anarchist circles was so great that he was essentially forgiven for his “apostasy” (in contrast to another prominent libertarian who signed the Manifesto in support of the War – Jean Grave) and for his “democratic illusions” of 1917– 1918. For example, Alexander Berkman, after visiting the veteran of the movement in 1920, included in his diary notes about the meeting not word about Kropotkin’s former “sins,” then noted: “The stamp of the idealist lay so strikingly upon him that the spirituality of his personality was experienced in an almost physical sense.”<sup>3</sup>

But time passed, and the world of the 1920s and 1930s was already quite different from the pre-War world. The terrible experiences of the “last” (as contemporaries liked to think of it and as was confirmed by the victors) war not only demonstrated a shocking level of human barbarism and contempt for life, but clearly showed how the achievements of science and technology could be used for killing and destruction. In the most recent decades the so-called “rationalization” of production had been developed, resulting in the widespread introduction of the assembly line and Taylorist methods in the organization of labour (and control over it). Turning the worker into the appendage of a machine, a living automaton (recall Charlie Chaplin’s remarkable film *Modern Times* with its image of a small man lying on a huge gear!), this technical restructuring heralded a new role for science and technology. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century they had served as a synonym for liberation; now they began to be perceived as yet another, more refined, form of slavery and domination. And although no one, even in a nightmare, could imagine the monstrous factory of industrialized mass murder which was Auschwitz, the first anxious voices sounded. “If the rationalization of labour continues in its present form for another 50 years, any hope for socialism will disappear,” warned the German anarcho-syndicalist Rudolph Rocker.<sup>4</sup>

These tendencies called into question the very notion of “scientific anarchism” promoted by Kropotkin. As is well known, this sage tried to create a unified and non-contradictory conception of the universe from which would follow the ideological and political doctrine of anarchism. This conception was based on positivistic logic, although Kropotkin in some respects turned positivism upside down. He shared notions about common features of the development of nature and society typical of positivists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But while the latter usually envisaged the laws of nature acting on society, the anarchist thinker tried to apply to nature (including inanimate nature), the social principles of harmony and self-organization which he wished to see triumph in human society.<sup>5</sup> The problem was not even whether such a view of nature could be justified (many contemporary scholars are willing to acknowledge its correctness, at least in part). The problem was in the positivist approach itself, with its presumption of “positive knowledge,” “empirical givens,” and the tendencies contained in them, which were regarded almost as having the status of the phenomena of the natural sciences. It was merely necessary to clear the way and these tendencies would prevail in just the same manner as the laws of nature. But what if the “empirical givens” turned out to be more complicated and contradictory? What if they included not only the assumed tendencies, but also very different ones? Which tendencies would gain the upper hand? Is pure science able to explain and predict this? And is it possible to submit human life, human feelings, and human freedom to cold, scientific reason, operating with the precision and regularity of a machine? Is this not the death of ethics, rather than its affirmation?<sup>6</sup>

A similar critique of positivism and its associated “given facts” with their scientific regularity was developed within the framework of Marxist thought by the social philosophy of the Frankfurt School.<sup>7</sup> Within anarchism, this critique put an end to attempts to construct an integral anarchist philosophy and the framework of a “scientific anarchism.” The prominent anarchist Errico Malatesta in the 1920s, albeit not entirely fairly, criticized Kropotkin for “mechanism” and trying to reduce the liberation of mankind to natural determinism, warning that “science is a weapon which can serve either for good or evil; but science itself is completely oblivious to the concepts of good and evil.” Science “comes to a halt where fatalism ends and freedom begins.” That’s why it makes no sense to “introduce science where it doesn’t belong”; the anarchist ideal – human freedom, ethics, solidarity – has its source not in scientific determinism, but in the free will of people.<sup>8</sup>

However the main battles didn’t take place over Kropotkin’s philosophical views. They were centred around that part of his doctrine which dealt with anarchist revolution and the future society of anarchist communism. As Rudolf Rocker [secretary of the anarcho-syndicalist International Association of Workers (IWA)] noted, “the War and the period of revolution in Russia and Central Europe posed a whole series of new problems which had either not been foreseen or which had been regarded as hopefully avoidable.”<sup>9</sup>

Lively discussions occurred in anarchist publications, conferences were held, and thorny questions were actively discussed inside libertarian organizations, at congresses of the IWA, etc.

In the words of the researcher of the history of anarchism G. Manfredonia, a unique “anarchist revisionism” developed during this period.<sup>10</sup>

A lively discussion was precipitated in the first instance by the experience of the Russian Revolution (1917–1921) and the world-wide revolutionary wave of 1918–1923. Although the labouring masses of Russia displayed a great desire and propensity for self-organization and self-management, and while their demands were frequently close to the anarchist ones, the anarchists on the whole did not succeed in steering the course of events into following the course of their own “program.” In a number of other countries, supporters of libertarian ideas managed to leave their own stamp on events (in Spain, Italy, Argentina, Brazil and Peru they had a decisive effect), but they were nevertheless unable to attain victory. Why did authoritarian socialists triumph in Russia, installing a system of state capitalism? Why did the revolutionary offensive run out of steam across the entire globe? The anarchist movement had to find answers to these questions.

Kropotkin himself in his last years of life energetically warned his comrades, saying that the Bolsheviks had showed “how *not* to make a revolution.”<sup>11</sup> In remarks written

for the post-revolutionary publication of **The Conquest of Bread**, he noted in particular: “Now, when we see from experience how difficult it is to ‘create’ without prior careful planning, based on the study of social life, of *what* and *how* we want to create, it must be said that ‘creating, I destroy!’”<sup>12</sup> In other words, this was an acknowledgment that a spontaneous eruption of the masses was insufficient. The anarchist movement found itself unprepared for revolution. At the moment the social upheaval began, it was unable to spread itself widely enough to render an influence on the mood and actions of sufficiently broad layers of the population. Finally, the movement was lacking in constructive, creative potential. Such a conclusion, which was shared by a majority of anarchists in the 1920s, leads to one of two strategies: either libertarians must be better prepared for the coming revolutionary battles (but how?), or they must assume that when the next revolution breaks out, they will remain in a minority, co-existing with other ideological-political forces and tendencies.

One of the answers was that anarchists should prepare themselves, above all, in an organizational sense. In 1926 the “Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad,” led by Peter Arshinov and Nestor Makhno, came out with the draft program “Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists.” The authors of this document saw the cause of the unpreparedness of anarchists for revolution in their dispersal in individual groups and tendencies, and in the absence among them of clear principles and organizational methods. They proposed to create a unified anarchist organization on the basis of a common program – the General Union of Anarchists. Such an organization had to possess a single ideology and a single set of tactics and build itself according to the principle of collective responsibility. Consequently, the organs of the Union would already have not only technical and coordinating functions (as understood in an anarchist sense), but also decision-making (directive) functions. Such a unified force would be able, according the authors of the Platform, to play the role of an ideological avant-garde – carrying on a struggle in mass social movements (trade unions, soviets, etc.) in order to draw them away from the influence of other political tendencies and attain a position of ideological hegemony. The text of the program was composed with rather careful phrasing, but some passages indicated directly that the creators of the proposed “General Union” did not intend to limit themselves to just the “ideological orientation” of the masses. For example, here is what was said in the Platform about work in the trade unions and the labour movement: “. . . the task of anarchists within the ranks of the revolutionary labour movement can only be carried out if their efforts there are closely connected and co-ordinated with the activity of the anarchist organisation outside the syndicalist union. Put differently, we must enter the revolutionary labour movement as an organised force, answerable to the general anarchist organisation [the General Union – V. D.] for our work inside the syndicalist unions, and receiving guidance from that organisation.”<sup>13</sup> It’s hardly surprising that in anarchist circles

this draft was perceived as a plan for the creation of a centralized anarchist party which, in essence, would engage in a struggle for power.

The concept of scattered groups, acting independently of one another, was discarded by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; this was connected, among other things, with the renunciation by anarchism of the tactics of assassination and “propaganda of the deed,” as well as with the return to work in mass movements. Anarcho-communist groups in certain countries began to unite in federations. Kropotkin came out in favour of a revival of the mass revolutionary workers’ International. “We shall create this (broad, – V. D.) organization for the purpose of direct anti-capitalist struggle of the workers against the employers,” he wrote to Jean Grave in 1902. “And, obviously, in the heart of this new international alliance there will be formed a tighter alliance of people who know one another.” “By the International I understand something big which makes an impression on a broad spectrum of the public through its congresses, and which includes in its core, revolutionaries who are in an alliance with each other and who remain communists.”<sup>14</sup> However, he did not envisage this “internal” organization as an external organizational force, acting according to norms of centralism and centralized discipline. Malatesta, speaking at the 1907 International Anarchist Congress, argued that syndicalism and the classic labour movement were insufficient for revolution, and he defended the idea of a separate organization of anarchists, united in groups, federations of groups and, ultimately, an Anarchist International. But he emphasized: “Beyond any doubt, this association [of anarchists, – V. D.] must grant full autonomy to its individual members, and the federation must observe the same autonomy for its own groups.”<sup>15</sup>

Such a position, on the whole, prevailed within the anarchist movement. That’s why the “revisionist” ideas of the “platformists” encountered fierce objections from other anarchists. Among those expressing negative judgments were such notable figures of the movement as Vsevolod Voline, Maria Goldsmith, Errico Malatesta, Sebastien Faure, Jean Grave, Max Nettlau, Diego Abad de Santillán, Miguel Jiménez, and others. Perhaps the most acute and substantive critique was the response of the well-known Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri: “The scheme proposed by the Platform amounts to nothing but equivocations: this forces one to suspect that the inspirational leadership will turn out to be an actual dictatorship, and take the form of an anti-anarchist division between a minority of ruling elements and a majority consisting of the ruled masses. The masses will be completely justified in mistrusting those with pretensions of being rulers while insisting they are doing nothing of the sort, merely aspiring to be a ‘general staff.’”<sup>16</sup>

On the whole, the attempts of the “platformists” to convince the majority of the anarchist movement in their own correctness failed. In 1927 they were able to convene an international congress, but a “General Union of Anarchists” was not forthcoming. Sub-

sequently, individual “platformist” groups appeared in various countries, leading to still more disunity among libertarians.

The question of mutual relations between the mass movement and anarchist organizations was frequently raised and discussed at congresses of the IWA. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the anarcho-syndicalist International (1928) rejected the possibility of “non-union organizations” taking part in it, noting that only revolutionary labour unions can be the vehicle of social revolution and the achievement of libertarian communism. This ban included anarchist ideological groups, although the anarcho-syndicalists emphasized their desire to work with them. In Spain the so-called “trabazón” (“connection”) policy had been approved from the end of the 1920s: it envisaged the creation of a distinct kind of coordination between the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) and the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI).<sup>17</sup> In France the situation was more complicated, since the majority of anarchists preferred to work not in the syndicalist, but in the socialist or communist unions, as they were more in the nature of “mass” organizations. (This corresponded to the ideas of Malatesta, expressed by him as early as the Anarchist Congress of 1907: since the unions by themselves can not be a revolutionary force, it’s better for libertarians to work toward “trade union unity,” and not to create separate anarchist labour unions.) The French anarcho-syndicalists tried to convince “non-syndicalist” libertarians to join IWA organizations while maintaining their own groups. “Anarchism can help the anarcho-syndicalist movement, while not replacing it,” – was the point of view of Pierre Besnard, leading ideologue of the Confédération Générale du Travail-Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire (CGT-SR). He proposed that all anarcho-communist groups join together on a global scale on the basis of “unity of doctrine” to create an international organization and undertake the practice of “linking” at all levels. The anarchists should join anarcho-syndicalist unions and simultaneously carry on broad-based ideological and organizational work in their places of residence, preparing the ground for libertarian communes during the revolution.<sup>18</sup> However, the resolution of this problem was not successful in France: by no means did all the anarchists join the anarchist federation “linked” with the CGT-SR.

European anarcho-syndicalists assigned first-degree significance to organizing workers and preparing them “in an efficient manner” for revolution. “The social revolution must be prepared in detail, in order to be crowned with success,” emphasized, for example, the Swedish anarcho-syndicalist Albert Jensen. “It’s complete nonsense to expect to improvise everything. Such a position plays into the hands of political demagogues, who can use it to their advantage to take over the revolution, re-introduce political power and establish a dictatorship.”<sup>19</sup> Such indeed happened in Russia, where the Bolsheviks harvested the fruits of the revolution, since the masses, while understanding what they were fighting against, did not have a clear idea about what was to replace the old system. As a result, “The anarchists fought, while the Bolsheviks began

building their own system,” stressed the Spanish activist Valeriano Orobón Fernández. “It’s necessary to develop the constructive talents of the workers,” he argued, “Capitalism isn’t going to die by itself. Constructive action is more important than barricades. Destruction isn’t the least bit creative. The second day after the revolution is the most important – that’s when the building of the new system starts.”<sup>20</sup>

And how did the anarcho-syndicalists envisage preparing the labouring masses for revolution? First of all, it was necessary to strengthen the anarcho-syndicalists unions and extend their influence so that they brought together the majority of workers in their ranks. These organs were destined to constitute the already-prepared structure which at the moment of revolution could take the management of economic life – production and distribution – into its own hands. “The task of revolutionary syndicalism,” it was said, for example, in the declaration of principles of the IWA, “assumes a dual character: on the one hand, it carries on a daily revolutionary struggle for the improvement of the economic, mental, and moral condition of the workers within the existing social system; and on the other hand, its highest goal consists in the preparation of the masses for the independent management of production and distribution and for the taking into its hands of all spheres of social life.”<sup>21</sup> In directives developed by German anarcho-syndicalists in the early 1920s, at a time when, as it seemed, revolution in Germany was on the agenda, it was assumed that trade unions, organized according to the industrial principle, would be transformed into organs for management of production, and their geographical associations and federations – into organs for the administration of distribution and social life. In order to be able to fulfill this role, labour unions while still under capitalism needed to engage in the study of the economy, to gather statistical data about the requirements of industry and the potentials of production, and begin drafting plans for harmonizing these different aspects.<sup>22</sup> The Spanish CNT, which included hundreds of thousands of wage-workers in its ranks, repeatedly collected such statistics in the early 1920s and during the 1930s.

The anarcho-syndicalists proposed to study economic activity on all levels: from individual enterprises, corporations and municipalities to worldwide phenomena. At the local level this led to a focus on factory-plant Councils, which were to be organized by syndicalist unions. These unions not only had to defend the interests of the workers in conflicts with entrepreneurs and the state, but also to organize courses for workers so that they could study production, collect information about their own workplace, master bookkeeping functions and exchange information on a regular basis with other Councils. By such means, the anarcho-syndicalists assumed that the workers could not only seize their own factories, plants, institutions and service providers in the course of a social revolution, but also manage them without too much trouble, re-orienting production along the lines of meeting the needs of real people.<sup>23</sup>

The Spanish syndicalist Juan Peiró believed that there could be no talk about any sort of revolution until industrial federations of anarcho-syndicalist unions had been created. At the IWA congress in 1931 the French anarcho-syndicalists proposed a “Plan for the Re-organization of International Syndicalism.” It envisaged rebuilding the international organization from top to bottom with industrial unions which would have the same structure for all countries: Workers’ Councils would be joined together in networks which would extend, first to the national level, then to international industrial organs. These organs were to be both weapons in the struggle with capitalism (taking into account its globalization), and the embryos of the economic system of the future. Their tasks also included the gathering of economic and technical information, the implementation of workers’ control over enterprises and labour mobility, and preparing workers to manage production on all levels – including internationally.<sup>24</sup>

However, many anarchists rejected this orientation towards the “organizational” moment, and considered it a “mechanization” of anarchism. While agreeing that the revolution must be prepared, at the same time they emphasized ideological and psychological preparation. At the CNT congress in 1931, the Spanish anarchist José Alberola argued: “Advocates of industrial federations are in favour of them because they have lost faith in goals and believe only in the gears of the machine mechanism. But I say that the machine doesn’t create forces, but rather consumes them, which is why we shall create a mentality which resists everything tending to mechanize the personality . . . We need an ideal capable of sooner or later destroying this capitalist machine mechanism.”<sup>25</sup>

Another representative of the “radical” wing of the CNT, Juan García Oliver, declared that preparing the revolution is a two-stage process and that “everything that can be prepared has already been done.” What was important now was the will to carry out a takeover.<sup>26</sup>

“In the storm of revolution, all preparations will be thrown overboard,” declared, for example, representatives of the Argentine Regional Labour Federation (FORA) at the IWA congress in 1931. “The revolution will create its own forms of life.” (...) We should avoid thinking exclusively about production, and more about people; the main task is not the organizing of an economic system, but the dissemination of anarchist ideology.”<sup>27</sup> Only by “creating ethical values capable of cultivating in the proletariat a grasp of social problems which is independent of bourgeois civilization, is it possible to proceed to the creation of the indestructible foundations of an anti-capitalist and anti-Marxist revolution, which will destroy the regime of large industry and financial, industrial, and commercial trusts,” insisted Emilio López Arango, theoretician of the FORA.<sup>28</sup>



The basic approach of the Argentine worker-anarchists involved the elaboration and revolutionary interpretation by Kropotkin of the notion of the French philosopher Alfred Fouillé about the transforming role of “idées-forces,” namely, “thought leading to action.” Anarchist ideas, Kropotkin assumed, stimulate “a multitude of acts of revolt: first, individual revolt against capital and the state; then collective revolt: strikes and working class insurrections – both preparing, in people’s minds as in their actions, a revolt of the masses, a revolution.”<sup>29</sup> To this notion about the motive power of ideas (especially the ethical ideas of solidarity, mutual aid and freedom), the theoreticians of the FORA added the conception (drawn from Bakunin) of “revolutionary gymnastics.” They assumed that in the course of struggling for everyday economic and moral demands, the workers could re-acquire a sociality forgotten or suppressed by capitalism, along with habits of solidarity and mutual aid. These habits, along with ideological and cultural work, could help the exploited overcome the disconnectedness intrinsic to existing society and the values imposed by it, thereby allowing them to break away from the usual assumptions upon which society is based, and develop within themselves an understanding of the “idées-forces” of social revolution and anarchist communism. The important thing was that this struggle be waged on the basis of self-organization, direct action and self-management, without political parties and bureaucrats.

Therefore the “foristas” considered a separate ideological-political organization of anarchists unnecessary – even harmful – and rejected both the corresponding notions of Malatesta, and “platformism.” The very principle of division into an anarchist association and a mass labour organization in which organized libertarians were active, was regarded by the FORA as authoritarian and party-oriented. “This dualism,” emphasized Abad de Santillán during the Argentine period of his activity (before 1930), “condemns anarchism to impotence, because anti-authoritarian economic organizations will never agree to being run by organizations operating independently outside their framework and unavoidably reflecting certain party interests.”<sup>30</sup> The organizational model proposed by the FORA “is neither an anarchist ‘party,’ nor a syndicalist organization”; it is a labour movement which combines a trade union form with an ideological (anarcho-communist) content.<sup>31</sup>

But what if at the moment of rising up against capitalism, the population was not sufficiently under the sway of anarchist ideas, and anarchism had to co-exist with other socio-political forces and tendencies? What if the revolution as a result was not “purely” anarchist? It’s clear that the more the social upheaval was prepared (organizationally or ideologically) by anarchists, the more libertarian its character would be. Well, what if this preparation was behind schedule?

In the 1920s in anarchist circles, critical or ironic remarks were frequently directed at a notion about social revolution prevailing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, namely that it would take

the form of a decisive assault, a “Grand Soir.” Some anarchists and syndicalists actually pushed for a “transition period” on the way to “full” anarchy, although this was in contradiction with libertarian “orthodoxy.” Thus, the Russian anarcho-syndicalist Alexander Shapiro as early as 1923 was writing that “a future revolution will not lead to a complete implementation of the anarchist ideal” and immediate “full equality.” The inevitable decline in production during the period of upheaval, the necessity of applying violent measures against enemies, and other difficulties, he believed, would give rise to a special stage when syndicalist unions, still not encompassing the whole mass of the population, would have to take upon themselves responsibility for administering society; money would be temporarily retained, etc.<sup>32</sup>

The French anarcho-syndicalist Pierre Besnard distinguished between “free communism” and “libertarian communism.” Social revolution, seizure of the means of production and exchange, and liquidation of personal property still would not signify the creation of a free communist society, he argued. This only initiates a transition period “between the destruction of the old regime and the stabilization of the new regime,” a period of “comparatively long” duration. Besnard predicted that the workers would hesitate, run out of energy, and that progress forward would be delayed. It would be necessary to engage in foreign trade for gold and issue national “tokens of exchange” in units of labour time, since the population would be accustomed to money and have faith in it. Only gradually would it be possible for this imperfect “libertarian communism” to develop towards the communist principle “from each according to their abilities – to each according to their needs.”<sup>33</sup>

Ideas about the “transition period” on the road to the “full” realization of the libertarian ideal found an echo in the movements of other countries as well. In Spain, the moderate wing of the CNT, the so-called “trentists,” favoured a similar position. Their spokespersons also asserted that “introducing libertarian communism directly” was impossible, that “a stage of syndicalism was inevitable” as “our own kind of bridge,” when “the rule of the majority” prevailed, and unions exercised “executive power in the fields of production and distribution.”<sup>34</sup> Similar views were expressed by Abad de Santillán, who arrived in Spain in the 1930s and joined the Spanish movement. He also understood libertarian communism as a type of transition society on the path to full anarchy (communism), initially allowing a deviation from communist principles of distribution “according to needs” and the introduction of some kind of “means of exchange.” “We predict that the destruction of capitalism will be followed by a long and difficult process,” since “age-old habits. . . cannot be overcome in one step.”<sup>35</sup>

Some anarchists, rejecting the model of a “syndicalist transition period,” adopted the position that after the revolution a pluralist society would arise in which anarchists would be able, with the help of free experimentation, to prove to everyone the superiority of their own way of managing everyday life. Such ideas were expressed by Mala-

testa. He believed that “even a small minority, under especially favourable conditions, could develop an understanding of anarchy” while the state and capitalism were still in existence. “The conversion of the masses to anarchism and communism – or even to the most moderate form of socialism – is impossible as long as current conditions prevail.” Consequently, “revolution can not be carried out for the direct and immediate inauguration of anarchy, but only for the creation of conditions making possible rapid development in the direction of anarchy. . . .” Malatesta proposed creating anarchist communes, which would initially absorb a minority of the population while co-existing with other types of communes and co-operatives living according to market or collectivist principles. Then, he hoped, the anarcho-communists would succeed in convincing everyone of their correctness and draw to themselves a majority of the population.<sup>36</sup> A similar position was held by the outstanding historian of anarchism Max Nettlau.

Connected with ideas about the gradualness of the transition to anarchist communism was the perception of the unreality of the anarcho-communist principle of distribution according to need, as it was developed by Kropotkin. And while Pierre Besnard proposed that after the revolution all members of society be issued an equal sum in labour cheques and vouchers which they could exchange for objects of consumption at their own discretion,<sup>37</sup> on the other hand some German syndicalists endorsed a return to the collectivist principle “to each according to their own labour” at the initial stage of building a new society. According to this view, “communism is possible only if this preliminary condition holds, namely that everything is in abundance, for only then does free consumption acquire real importance.” Moreover, “we must deal with people as they are now and figure out how to transition them from the old society” with its law-and-order mindset and its commitment to the law of value.<sup>38</sup> Finally, there were adherents of anarchist “revisionism” in Germany, who generally considered distribution according to needs a “crazy notion”<sup>39</sup> and advocated that distribution be linked to a calculation of the “real productivity” of labour. In a free society, insisted the German syndicalist Fritz Dettmer, “people can not take from the supply of social goods as much as they choose, without working as much as is necessary for the production of the distributed goods.” He rejected the notion of equal pay for all and considered that the prices of commodities and norms for wages should be systematically coordinated by the trade unions. Dettmer envisaged the creation of community banks and systems of credit.<sup>40</sup> He even went so far as to consider it unnecessary to change the structure of production in a serious way. This was not simply a step backwards from anarcho-communism to the collectivist doctrines of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but actually a return to the obsolete ideas of Proudhon.

The argument according to which communist distribution geared to the needs of real people is possible only under conditions of abundance, was clearly borrowed from Marxist doctrine. It’s no accident that Dettmer referred to Marxist economic catego-

ries. However, the attempt to ascribe to Kropotkin naive prescriptions for the unlimited consumption of all goods and claim that these prescriptions constitute the main principle of anarcho-communism is completely without foundation.

Mind you, on the whole it's possible to agree with the assessment of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century anarchist theoretician Murray Bookchin: perceptions about shortages (deficit) of goods and hopes for abundance permeated socialist thought at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>41</sup> But it's still appropriate to take note of what Kropotkin himself wrote on this subject. Although he actually assumed that the transition to a new society would by itself allow production to increase significantly and satisfy people's basic needs, he emphasized: the notion that everyone will simply take what they need in unlimited quantities, "from the pile," is "balderdash" and a "stupid joke." The principle of anarcho-communist distribution was described by Kropotkin completely differently: ". . . no stint or limit to what the community possesses in abundance, but equal sharing and dividing of those commodities which are scarce or apt to run short."<sup>42</sup> In other words, everything depends on the correlation of needs and production possibilities. However, Kropotkin felt it was important to observe the principle of equal access of everyone to social wealth, independent of their individual "labour contribution," both because the latter is practically impossible to measure in practice, and also because it could be effected by a multitude of contingencies over which people have no control and therefore could not be regarded as their merit or demerit. The anarchist theoretician stressed the necessity of the careful study of needs and production possibilities and their coordination through organs of self-management of both producers and consumers (the original "planning from below"). For objects of consumption not available in abundance, he proposed to set an upper limit on individual consumption.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, from the point of view of orthodox anarcho-communism, the absence of abundance was still inadequate grounds for rejecting the equal right of all people to access to social goods. But for those in favour of revising the doctrine, there was still one very strong argument at their disposal: the incongruity of the ideas and "prescriptions" of Kropotkin to the industrial stage of development of society. First and foremost was the matter of overcoming the minute division of labour through a process of integration, and the concept of the self-managing commune as the basic unit of a free anarchist society.

It should be recalled that Kropotkin allowed for the existence in the future libertarian society of a variety of types of federations and associations: based on territory, production, or affinities of interests, etc. And yet he regarded as the basic building block "the urban commune, declaring its own independence."<sup>44</sup> The theoretician of anarcho-communism assumed that this self-governing territorial unit would concentrate on maximizing its self-sufficiency in goods and services, although he did not go so far as

to advocate the complete elimination of exchange and absolute economic autarky. Accordingly, this implied the widespread development within the commune of the most diverse branches of agricultural and industrial production, the breaking down of narrow divisions of labour – industrial and agrarian, mental and physical – and the achievement of their integration. Economic and political decentralization, according to Kropotkin, didn't mean egotism and exclusivity. Communes, he assumed, would have to join together in federations and work together in solving economic and social problems which affected the interests of several communes, a region, a country, or indeed, the whole world.

However, under the conditions of the “second industrial revolution” of the 1920s, this program seemed stale and obsolete to many. Nettleau was one of the first to develop a critique of the “idyllic harmony” of the Kropotkinist “industrial village, self-sufficient and on friendly relations with its neighbours.” “It's possible to grow grain and fruit in hothouses using artificial light and heat, even in the most barren northern regions. But only people cut off from the whole rest of the world would have recourse to this,” Nettleau maintained. “This mode of living . . . presupposes the existence of a very strange world, one divided up into many regions alienated from each other even more than the contemporary European states.”<sup>45</sup>

In the same vein Abad de Santillán, rejecting the views of the FORA, wrote: “Notions about a rural paradise or about free communes were advanced by poets of old. But things will work out completely differently in the future. . . . The ‘free commune’ is the logical result of group relations, but in economics such free communes don't exist because their prerequisite – independence – doesn't exist. . . . Economic communism is a relict of old juridical conceptions of communal property. . . . Today's economy is an extraordinarily ramified organism, and any sort of isolation causes damage. Only by eliminating specialized labour can we imagine the free commune as the economic ideal. But today that's impossible.”<sup>46</sup>

Industrial critics of Kropotkin proposed to turn to the “syndicalist utopia,” a term used by Kropotkin in referring to the views of revolutionary syndicalists in his preface to a 1911 book by the French syndicalists Émile Pataud and Émile Pouget. According to this notion, the basis of the future society should be the industrial association of producers – the syndicate (trade union) – organized in federations completely up to the world-wide level. In this scheme territorial associations played a subsidiary role (organizations for consumption, recreation, communal life, etc.). Correspondingly, the economy would be subject to large-scale centralization through mechanisms of planning and exchange; the extensive division of labour and the introduction of macro-technologies were perceived not as a means for the alienation of the human personality, but as essential conditions for progress. One of the means of exchange could be money.

This is in essence a Marxist-industrial “correction” to anarchist doctrine. Thus, the German syndicalist Gerhard Wartenberg was quite disturbed by anarcho-communism’s push for decentralization, its stress on the maximum possible self-sufficiency, and by the resolution of as many problems as possible at the local level. He advised that such an approach would lead to the “collapse of large enterprises,” which were in fact in a position to assure “rational production.” Wartenberg also called for the rejection of the “obsolete” (in his opinion) strict opposition of state and society. The functions of the former, he asserted, would not disappear after the revolution: “In the future society, certain functions of the state must, at least in the transition stage, be carried out by a public organization. . . .” This would be a system of Councils which “basically would correspond to what the old French syndicalists envisaged, based on the structure of the *bourses* (territorial federations of union locals – V. D.)”<sup>47</sup> More or less the same scheme was described by Besnard and Abad de Santillán.

Although advocates of a revision of “orthodox” views in anarchism in the 1920s–1930s created a stir, it’s impossible to say whether they achieved dominance in the movement. The arguments of the “renovators” were not as compelling as they believed them to be. As was justly noted by Kropotkin’s disciple Maria Korn (Goldsmid): “They are not showing us ideals and new ways. Instead they are showing us something which turns out to be older than those maligned pre-War ideals which they want to replace. The ‘new’ turns out to be, in essence, a resurrection of the distant past, something which was considered to have fallen irretrievably into oblivion 30 years ago.”<sup>48</sup>

A considerable number of well-known and popular anarchists came forward in defense of anarcho-communist doctrine.

Among them, for example, was Alexander Berkman, who wrote **What is Communist Anarchism?** (published in 1929). He took it upon himself to defend the arguments of Kropotkin concerning the impossibility of determining the labour contribution of individuals and challenged the assertion that the absence of material incentives would necessarily lead to slacking off and refusing to work. Moral respect and recognition of one’s social worth can serve as a much better stimuli, as well as solidarity between free people. This is not a matter of some grotesque “egalitarianism,” i.e. a de-personalized averaging, but, on the contrary, a matter of the maximum development of creative diversity, of the individual talents and proclivities of each person. The social revolution, thought Berkman, will take the form of a general strike which overthrows the state and capitalism. Such a revolution “is not an accident, not a sudden happening . . . ideas don’t change suddenly. They grow slowly, gradually, like a plant or flower. Hence the social revolution . . . develops to the point when considerable numbers of people have embraced the new ideas and are determined to put them into practice.”<sup>49</sup>

The social revolution, thought Berkman, “is not destruction but construction.” It “means the establishment of new human values and social relationships, a changed attitude of one person to another . . . it means a different spirit in individual and collective life.”<sup>50</sup> Such a change cannot take place by itself, it must be prepared: people will have to grasp, to imagine to themselves, and to plan for – life without government and without the principle of authority. All this is nurtured in working people only in the course of struggle for their rights and interests, for liberation. An important moment in this process is the development of solidarity, the bringing together in common struggle of workers, peasants and specialists (“intellectual proletarians”). Berkman emphasized the primary role of revolutionary and libertarian trade unions in the organization of workers, and in the preparation and carrying out of strikes. He envisaged the organization of such unions in the form of a system of workplace Councils federated at all levels. In the opinion of this American anarchist, the union was both an organ of struggle and also a place where workers learned solidarity, studied production and its operation, and understood their place in society and their tasks. The time was at hand to create such Councils in enterprises everywhere. In the course of a general strike it would then be incumbent on the workers’ organizations (Labour Councils and their Federations) to take economic and social life in their hands, establish control of production and consumption (co-operating with tenant and ward committees), etc.

But if the revolution is the result of evolution (the educational and cultural enlightenment of people and their ideological development, instilling in the masses notions about how one must act in practice to build a new life), then, once started, it no longer needs any transition period or a mixture of different systems. In anticipation of the moment when the new society will easily be able to produce enough to meet people’s needs, Berkman proposed to introduce equal distribution per capita of whatever was in short supply (with a greater share for the sick, seniors, children and women during and after pregnancy). In this case money, according to him, was subject to immediate elimination, and production adapted to needs. Needs would be made known by consumers to the labour organizations and thus needs would become the unique source of orders for goods – the regulator of production. All manufactured goods would be delivered free of charge to public warehouses for distribution to those in need of these goods.<sup>51</sup>

An important part of Berkman’s book is concerned with the restructuring of the system of production with a focus on decentralization and, to a significant degree, the self-sufficiency of territorial communes (in the spirit of Kropotkin). The defense of the revolution he saw as a matter of the people-in-arms united in their federations, but without a special army, secret police, etc.

Thus Berkman’s book was based on a combination of Kropotkin’s notions of anarcho-communism and anarcho-syndicalist programmes for organization and struggle. To a

certain extent, his treatise can be considered a response by those who wished to uphold the classical principles of anarchism to the assumptions and arguments of the “anarcho-revisionists.”

An interesting and comprehensive critique of the views of opponents of “orthodoxy” was put forward by the Indian anarchist M. Acharya, living in Europe at the time. He strongly opposed any intention to keep money (“stolen labour”) in the future society. The freedom of choice in consumption offered by money is imaginary, wrote Acharya, it is “freedom of injustice and selfishness,” in fact, slavery. Money as a regulator of distribution is bad because it is faceless and does not take into account the individual needs and characteristics of the concrete individual. The Indian anarchist defended the anarcho-communist approach in which “local communes fairly distribute essential goods proportionally to the total number of members” and “under public control.” The total number of people is the regulator of the upper limit of consumption, and everyone should get exactly what they need, not faceless money. “Exchange is the capitalist form of economic life.” Like the “classic” anarcho-communists, Acharya noted the inextricable link between the principle of exchange and the state. “The notion of exchange,” he emphasized, “leads to individualism and, ultimately, to the necessity of a judiciary and a dictator. . . .” He argued that a free society can not be built on selfishness. “Anyone who practices exchange is not a socialist but an oppressor, a perpetual bearer of political strife. . . .”

In socialist ideology, Acharya wrote, there should not and can not be any mention of exchange or theories of exchange. Labour, the products of labour, and society – are inseparable. The issue of exchange between individual communes is also a non-starter, because all communes are part of one large global commune, and all members of an individual commune are simultaneously members of the global entity. Everyone is, to a certain extent, under the same roof, like one family. In a free society people don’t work for exchange, but in order to get satisfaction for themselves and for their comrades. Responding to claims that such a society is impossible, Acharya referred to the experience of primitive peoples and recently created communities and communes.

The Indian theorist called a spade a spade – it was a matter of some libertarians borrowing Marxists concepts. “There is no such thing as a transition stage between non-socialist and socialist systems,” insisted Acharya, “even during the revolutionary period. Any peaceful transition would be a combination of two systems with diametrically opposed principles. . . . Such a transition can only be Marxist: revolution in the beginning, then a transition stage, and only then ideology and a goal.” This ends up with Bolshevism, he warned, calling for an urgent solution of the issues connected with socialism before the revolution.<sup>52</sup>



The well-known German anarcho-syndicalist Heinrich Drewes, alluding to the support of “many comrades,” condemned attempts to solve the problems involved in creating a new society “with the aid of *capitalistic modes of thought, its ideas and its principles*,” since he believed that such attempts were doomed to failure.<sup>53</sup> Theories about the use of money in a free society he labelled “fantastic.” Yes, socialism must be planned and prepared for, since it involves a profound change in people’s consciousness, but this is not purely organizational preparation. You still must have “forces of will power, forces of spirit, forces of resistance.” Revolutionaries must nurture the formation and development of these forces long before the revolution, trying to “articulate socialist ideas in contemporary terms” and demonstrating them to people. People need to be “made aware of the thought-images describing the future economic and social system” which will free them from slavery and misery, and they need to have “clarification of the concepts and ideas.” This will enable them to grasp the absurdity underlying the capitalist system, and to desire not to endure it any longer. The organizational expression of this “process of clarification” will give people the possibility of intervening in the course of events at the appropriate moment and winning.<sup>54</sup>

Most of the French libertarians were also opposed to the ideas about the transition period. Thus, in a resolution passed by a congress of the largest anarchist organization of France (l’Union anarchiste communiste révolutionnaire) it was emphasized that the congress “is opposed to the notions of a transition regime in the situation of revolution” and stands for libertarian revolution “without transition periods and ideological concessions.”<sup>55</sup>

Anarcho-Communists not only defended the ideas of Kropotkin, but also developed and enriched them in many respects. In particular, they elaborated the critique of industrialism, the principles of the free commune and the reorganization of production and consumption.

An important contribution in this development was made by Rudolf Rocker (despite his departure from the “orthodox” approach to distribution). During a discussion of the second industrial revolution (which is what they called “rationalization” in those days), he strongly condemned “the systematic adaptation of the body and mind to the rhythm of the machine and the movement of the conveyor,” the transformation of a person into “a machine of flesh and blood,” which will work flat-out for the owners, and be spurred on by them, until finally discarded in the scrapyard. Rocker expanded the traditional anarcho-communist critique of Marxist economism and productivism, i.e. the idea of progress as the continuous growth of production, division of labour, mechanization, centralization and economic concentration – a progress which inevitably and naturally leads to socialism. After all, socialism is not just a question of the stomach, but also a new culture, a new psychology. This is a fundamentally different society – centred on the person, not the economy – and leads to completely different

paths than an “exaggerated and one-sided industrialization of the economy in conjunction with the division of labour carried to an extreme.” It’s impossible to see “in the most monstrous outgrowths of the capitalist system” the prerequisites of socialism. This is the road to the abyss: “capitalism in its present-day form is transforming itself into a huge threat for the entire human race.” It should be understood that “the way to socialism is not through a permanent increase in the productivity of each and in production as a whole,” because “people don’t exist for the economy,” rather the economy exists for people. Work must cease to be mind-numbing and destructive of health and spirit; it’s necessary to make it meaningful and attractive. “No, not the intensification of the division of labour and rationalization at the cost of a person’s physical and mental degradation, but rather the integration of labour, decentralization of industry, the combining of industry and agriculture, and the full development of the individual . . . such is the basis and prerequisite for practical and constructive socialism,” sums up the theoretician of anarcho-syndicalism.<sup>56</sup>

In turn, H. Drewes urged the rejection of the industrialist notions dear to many syndicalists and the repudiation of “the whole capitalist mode of labour and management.” From it will remain only “bare human activity,” i.e. skills. But the very appearance of the economy will change, since in its centre will be the person; the course of economic development will be determined by the person’s demands and needs, and not by the pursuit of profits or markets. From the point of view of Drewes, this was a matter not only of the socialization of the means of production and land, with the granting of the latter for the free use of all who wish to cultivate it, but about much more profound changes. He insisted that “the industrialization of the economy give way to development of the agricultural sector, that technology be transformed from an end to a means,” and that the machine become a servant of mankind rather than its master. Drewes spoke about a “reorientation . . . from industry to agriculture,” which would “put an end to the unnaturalness and distress caused by the industrial expansion of the economy.” In accordance with their needs, people would be able to consciously direct economic activity and subject it to their will. There would also have to be a shift from “directorial” (one-person, capitalistic) methods of organizing the labour process to “collective” (socialist) methods; from orders and subordination to consensus and technical competence. A new division of labour would be based on the free agreement of the people involved.

All these changes, Drewes continued, will exert a significant impact on the very structure and organization of production. He claimed that “about three-quarters of capitalist industry, for example, the chemical, weapons, aviation, and transport industries, etc., along with their various branches, do not serve any ‘needs’ in a socialist sense, but arose solely from capitalist laws of power and profit. . . .” Accordingly, there is no point in creating syndicalist federations based on these industrial sectors, which would then have to be liquidated. Rather it’s necessary to deal with the important question of how

to absorb into other branches of industry those who are currently performing work slated to be abolished under socialism.<sup>57</sup>

It should be noted that notion of “responsibility” and “meaningful” production, the refusal to manufacture goods that serve only the purposes of advertising and prestige but are harmful to health, and the rejection of toxic technologies and industrial processes – these are ideas advanced by Kropotkin. In the 1920s these ideas were well-established in the thinking of many anarcho-syndicalists. The German anarcho-syndicalists wrote a lot about this, and the Spanish CNT even conducted strikes demanding better quality in manufactured products.<sup>58</sup>

Representatives of the Argentine FORA did not limit themselves to condemning the consequences of capitalist “rationalization,” but, developing Kropotkin’s ideas, engaged in open debate with the theory of linear progress and the whole philosophy of history based on it. They sharply criticized economic and historical determinism, and denied the progressiveness of capitalism and its economic organization. “Industrialization is not necessary,” stated the Argentine anarchist theoreticians of the labour movement. “People lived without it for thousands of years; happiness and well-being aren’t dependent on industrialization.”<sup>59</sup> The leading FORA theorist Emilio López Arango perceived the very structure of industrial-capitalist society (the factory system with its hierarchy, centralized production, specialized branches, rigid division of labour, etc.) as an “economic state,” alongside the “political state,” i.e. the government. One of the lessons of the Russian Revolution, he argued, lies in the fact that if the government is overthrown, but the “economic state” is preserved, then the latter, by the very logic of its existence, leads to the re-establishment of “political power.”<sup>60</sup> Polemicizing with European syndicalists, Argentine anarchists argued that “not only political fascism, but capitalist industrialism is a dangerous form of tyranny. . . . The apparatus of capitalism, whether it remains as it is, or falls into our hands, will never become the instrument for the liberation of people crushed by this gigantic mechanism. The economic crisis has resulted in a huge expansion in the use of machines and rationalization . . . this is a universal crisis, which can only be resolved by social revolution.”<sup>61</sup>

From this it followed that the new, free society should not flow naturally from the old, but there should be a decisive break with the old society and its logic. The proletariat was called upon to put an end to the further development of industrialism and capitalism: it “should be a wall, which prevents the expansion of industrial imperialism.” In any case, a system of anarchist communism could not be built “in the bosom” of the old system; otherwise, the fate of the Russian Revolution awaits it.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, the Argentine anarchist union insisted that the basis for the future libertarian society cannot be the syndicate. The trade union, the Argentine worker-anarchists

frequently noted, is the natural instrument of the struggle of workers for their own rights in capitalist society; it comes out of the needs that have emerged within the framework of existing society. Its function ends with the victory of the revolution.<sup>63</sup> An anarcho-communist society can only be built on the free commune, the free association of producers and free distribution.

Japanese anarcho-communists of the 1920s, basing themselves on the ideas of Kropotkin, took the critiques of the Marxist philosophy of history, industrialism and “pure” syndicalism to their logical conclusion. They expounded the concept of anarchist revolution as a radical break with the logic of capitalism and industrialism. The present society, they said, is based on an extreme division of labour and the hierarchy which results from this; this division of labour and its apex – mechanization – deprive workers of any responsibility and require the coordination and administration of centralized authority, which is incompatible with the principles of libertarian communism, as defined by Kropotkin. Therefore the structure of the future free society cannot match the existing structure, which is authoritarian and capitalist. It must overcome industrialism and the harmful division of labour, and base itself on a different concept, combining consumption and production, with an emphasis on consumption. Its basic unit should be the self-sustaining, autonomous commune which unites within itself both industry and agriculture.<sup>64</sup>

The Japanese anarchists recognized class struggle as an historical fact, but refused to see it as the basis for libertarian revolution which, they believed, arises not from the economic contradictions of capitalism and the material interests of classes, but from the human striving for liberation and the elimination of classes generally. “If we understand. . . that the class struggle and revolution are two different things, we will have to say that it would be a big mistake to declare. . . that the revolution will take place with the aid of the class struggle,” according to Hatta Shūzō, the leading theoretician of the Japanese anarchist movement. “Even if class struggle changes society, it will not mean that there was a real revolution.”<sup>65</sup>

It’s well known that Kropotkin, who had a positive attitude towards revolutionary syndicalism as a method of action, criticized the impulse to turn it into a special ideology and the consequent notions about the new society being based exclusively on the production principle. The FORA and the Japanese anarcho-communists also rejected syndicalism as an ideology and social model. They saw in this model a reproduction of the industrial-capitalist system. Continuation of the division of society into groups according to the type of labour performed, preservation of the factory system, and the centralized organization of society based around trade and industrial unions – would perpetuate the division of labour and hierarchical management. “Syndicalism is based on production,” wrote Hatta, “ It adopts the capitalist mode of production, and also preserves the system of huge factories, and above all – the division of labour and the

capitalist model of economic organization.”<sup>66</sup> The structure of syndicates grows out of the capitalist mode of production and creates an organization that serves as a mirror image of capitalist-industrial structures. Hatta predicted that if the capitalist owners were eliminated, and the mines transferred to the miners, the blast furnaces to the steelworkers, etc., then the contradictions between the different branches of production and the inequality between different groups of workers would remain. This meant that you would need some form of arbitration or organ to resolve conflicts between these sectors and groups. This would create a real risk of classes re-emerging, resulting in the appearance of a new state and a government in the form of a trade union bureaucracy. According to another anarchist theorist, Sakutarō Iwasa, this bureaucracy would seek to take the place of the capitalists, just like members of a gang trying to get rid of their leader so they can be robber chieftains themselves.

At the same time they were criticizing syndicalism, the Japanese anarcho-communists criticized plans for the organization of a new society in the form of a system of Workers’ Councils. Hatta regarded Councils which originated in production as a manifestation of the capitalist division of labour. In his opinion, these Councils would reproduce the foundations of power and would discriminate against those who were not direct participants in producing material goods or who worked in “secondary” sectors of the economy.

Of course by this time, in most countries of the world, the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements had already been destroyed by repression and could not begin to implement the planned ideal. However, there was one exception: in Spain after the overthrow of the monarchy, the number of anarcho-syndicalists rose steadily, and by 1936 the number of members of the CNT exceeded one million. Among the libertarians of the Iberian peninsula, the ideas of Kropotkin enjoyed enormous popularity. As the German anarcho-syndicalist Augustin Souchy recalled, on account of Kropotkin sometimes even illiterates learned to read: “This was the new gospel.”<sup>67</sup> It was on the basis of Kropotkin’s anarcho-communism that the famous book of Isaac Puente on libertarian communism was written, a book which was widely distributed in the anarchist milieu.<sup>68</sup> Puente’s work had a notable influence on the resolution concerning libertarian communism adopted at the congress of the Spanish CNT in Zaragoza in May 1936.

This “Conception of Libertarian Communism” set forth the problem of eliminating capitalism and state power and proclaiming libertarian communism – a stateless society based on self-management by communes and free associations of producers in which everyone will work according to their abilities and enjoy equal access to the means for satisfying their needs. According to this document, libertarian communism (principle: from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs within the framework of economic possibility) could be established without any transition

phases immediately after the triumphant social revolution. At the heart of the future free society must be two types of organization – territorial (free communes and their federations) and industrial (syndicates as associations of producers and economic organs of communes). The program advocated decentralized planning from below on the basis of statistically-determined needs and production capabilities. Money was to be cancelled and replaced by producer and consumer cards. “Once the violent phase of the revolution is finished, private property will be abolished along with the state, the principle of authority and, therefore, classes. . . . Wealth will be socialized, and organizations of free producers will take over the direct control of production and consumption. In each locality, a Free Commune will be established and a new social mechanism will come into effect. . . . Its form will be determined by the producers, organized in trade unions in each branch of industry, in each profession, and in each workplace.” It was proposed to assign the coordination of economic and social life, responsibilities of defense, etc., to the communes, syndicates and their federations. A large part of the program was devoted to the communist principle of distribution, transformations in gender relations and education, and the free development of art and science. The state and the permanent army were to be abolished and replaced by federations and communes and workers’ militias.<sup>69</sup>

It’s possible to consider this resolution of the CNT as the result of the discussion around the ideas of Kropotkin which had taken place around the world in the anarchist movement in the 1920s – 1930s. The Spanish workers were inspired by it when, after 19 July 1936, they took over the land and businesses in much of the country and launched a social transformation that has no equal in history and demonstrates the viability of Kropotkin’s views.<sup>70</sup>

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1 Max Nettlau. **Ocherki po istorii anarkhicheskikh idey i stat'i po raznym sotsial'nym voprosam**. [An Outline of the history of anarchist ideas and articles on various social questions.] (Tucson: 1991), p. 125.

2 Quoted in: **Anarkhisty. Dokumenty i materialy. 1883 – 1935. V dvukh tomakh.** [Anarchists. Documents and materials. 1883 – 1935. In two volumes.] Vol.1. 1883 – 1916. (Moscow: 1998), pp. 616, 618.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Berkman. **The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920 – 1922).** (London, Winchester (Mass.): 1989), p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in: J. Muñoz Congost. **La Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores a través de sus Conhresos. El debate anarcosindicalista (III) // Cenit.** 1988. Febrero. № 252, p. 7236.

<sup>5</sup> “The whole aspect of the universe changes with this new conception. The idea of force governing the world, of pre-established law and preconceived harmony, disappears to make room for the harmony that Fourier had caught a glimpse of: the one which results from the disorderly and incoherent movements of numberless hosts of matter, each of which goes its own way and all of which hold each other in equilibrium.” – wrote Kropotkin. See: P. A. Kropotkin. **Anarkhiya, yeye filosofiya, yeye ideal** [Anarchy, its philosophy, its ideal] // P.A. Kropotkin. **Anarkhiya, yeye filosofiya, yeye ideal. Sochineniya.** [Collected Works] (Moscow: 1999), p. 206.

<sup>6</sup> After the Second World War the Norwegian writer Jens Bjørneboe noted that the Nazi camps of mass annihilation were, to a certain degree, a consequence of the positivist-utilitarian approach to reality. If we assume that races do exist and their existence must be cleansed of harmful elements – then selection must, by this logic, be set above any ethical considerations and objections.

<sup>7</sup> See: V. Damier. **Filosofiya Frankfurtskoy shkoly** [The Philosophy of the Frankfurt School] // <http://aitrus.info/node/109>.

<sup>8</sup> E. Malatesta. **Anarchisme et Science** // E. Malatesta. **Écrits choisis. I.** (Annecy: 1978), pp. 43–52.

<sup>9</sup> R. Rocker. **Moderne Probleme des Anarchismus** // R. Rocker. **Aufsatzsammlung. Bd.1. 1919–1933.** (Frankfurt a.M. : 1980), p. 61.

<sup>10</sup> G. Manfredonia. **France, années 20: Le debat plate-forme ou synthèse** // **Itinéraire.** 1995. №13 (Voline), pp. 34–35.

<sup>11</sup> Berkman, **Bolshevist Myth**, p. 75.

<sup>12</sup> P. A. Kropotkin. **Khleb i volya. Sovremennaya nauka i anarkhiya.** [Bread and freedom. Modern science and anarchism.], (Moscow: 1990), p. 187.

<sup>13</sup> **Organizatsionnaya platforma Vseobshchego soyuza anarkhistov (Proyekt)** [The Organizational platform of the General union of anarchists (Draft)] // **Анархисты. Документы и материалы 1883 – 1935 гг.** [Anarchists. Documents and materials 1883 – 1935]. In 2 volumes. Vol. 2, (Moscow: 1999), p. 484.

<sup>14</sup> M. Nettlau. **Eine Arbeiterinternationale in Kropotkins Auffassung** // **Die Internationale.** 1932. №5 (Mai), p. 96.

<sup>15</sup> **The International Anarchist Congress: Amsterdam 1907**, ed. M. Antonioli, (Edmonton: 2009), p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> L. Fabbri. **Su un progetto di organizzazione anarchica** // <http://www.nestormakhno.info/italian/fabbri.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> Concerning the resolution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the IWA, more details can be found in: V. Damier. **Zabytyy Internatsional: Mezhdunarodnoye anarkho-sindikalistskoye dvizheniye mezhdu dvumya mirovymi voynami.** [The Forgotten International: the International anarcho-syndicalist movement between the two world wars.], Vol. 1, (Moscow: 2006), pp. 715–716. Concerning the “trabazón” see: *ibid.*, pp.403–404.

<sup>18</sup> P. Besnard. **L’anarcho-syndicalisme et l’anarchisme.** (Marseille: 1997).

<sup>19</sup> **IV. Weltkongress der Internationalen Arbeiter-Assoziation. Madrid, vom 16. bis 21. Juli 1931.** (Berlin: 1931), p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> **Resolutionen angenommen auf dem Internationalen Kongress der Revolutionären Syndikalisten zu Berlin, vom 25. Dezember 1922 bis 2. Januar 1923.** (Berlin: 1923), p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> For more details, see: V. Damier. **Zabytyy Internatsional**, Vol. 1, pp. 299–304.

<sup>23</sup> See: **Die Internationale.** 1925. Juni. № 5, pp. 67–68.

<sup>24</sup> **IV. Weltkongress . . .**, pp. 16–17, 80–81.

<sup>25</sup> **Congresos anarcosindicalistas en España 1870 – 1936.** (Toulouse ; Paris: 1977), p. 109.

<sup>26</sup> Cited by A. Paz. **Durruti. Leben und Tode des spanischen Anarchisten.** (Hamburg: 1994), pp. 243–246.

<sup>27</sup> **IV. Weltkongress . . .**, pp. 17–18.

<sup>28</sup> E. López Arango, D. Abad de Santillán. **El anarquismo en el movimiento obrero.** (Barcelona: 1925).

<sup>29</sup> P. A. Kropotkin. **Anarkhiya, yeye filosofiya, yeye ideal . . .**, p. 249.

<sup>30</sup> D. Abad de Santillán, **La Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores: su historia, sus ideas, su porvenir. IV // La Revista Internacional Anarquista.** 15.04.1926, pp. 133–134.

<sup>31</sup> E. López Arango, D. Abad de Santillán. **El anarquismo en el movimiento obrero.**, pp. 7–8.

<sup>32</sup> See: A. Schapiro. **Die Probleme des Tages nach Ausbruch der Revolution // Der Syndikalist.** 1923. № 50/51. Supplement.

- <sup>33</sup> P. Besnard. *Du capitalisme . . . au communisme libre // Le Combat syndicaliste*. 1.12.1931. № 49, p. 4. For more details, see: V. Damier. *Zabytyy Internatsional*, Vol. 2, pp. 163–164.
- <sup>34</sup> Quoted from: *Ökonomie und Revolution*. (Vienna: 1986), pp. 92–93.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 129–130.
- <sup>36</sup> Quoted by M. Nettleau. *Protiv utopiy "perekhodnogo perioda"* [Against utopias of the transition period] // M. Nettleau. *Ocherki po istorii anarkhicheskikh idey...*, pp. 304–318. Compare also E. Malatesta. *Queques considerations sur le régime de la propriété après la révolution // Idem. Articles politiques*. (Paris : 1979), pp. 379–390. (Since, as the "Russian experience" demonstrates, "for the organization of a communist society on a broad scale, it is necessary to radically transform the whole of economic life – means of production, exchange, consumption, and this can only be done one step at a time," the revolution leads initially to the emergence of a hybrid society composed of numerous communes "linked by both communist and commercial relations." Otherwise there would be an anarchist dictatorship.)
- <sup>37</sup> See: P. Besnard. *Le Mond nouveau: son plan, sa constitution, son fonctionnement*. (Limoges: n.d.), p. 68.
- <sup>38</sup> See, for example: R. Rocker. *Doktrin und Praxis // R. Rocker. Aufsatzsammlung*. Vol. 1, p. 94.
- <sup>39</sup> H. Rüdiger. *Konstruktive Zukunftsaufgaben des Syndikalismus // Die Internationale*. 1928. № 12; H. W. Gerhard. *"Prende au tas" // Ibid.* 1931. № 7.
- <sup>40</sup> F. Dettmer. *Produktionskontrolle // Die Internationale*. 1931. № 5. März, pp. 112–118; Idem, *Regelung der künftigen Wirtschaft // Ibid.* 1931. № 10. August, pp. 209–212.
- <sup>41</sup> For more details, see: M. Bookchin. *Towards a Liberatory Technology // M. Bookchin. Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Montréal; Buffalo: 1986), pp. 109–117.
- <sup>42</sup> P. A. Kropotkin. *Khleb i volya. Sovremennaya nauka i anarkhiya*. [Bread and freedom. Modern science and anarchism.], (Moscow: 1990), pp. 58, 80.
- <sup>43</sup> For more details about Kropotkin's economic views, see: V. Damier, D. Rublyov. *Ekonomicheskiye vzglyady Petra Kropotkina i vyzovy XXI veka* [The Economic views of Peter Kropotkin and the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century] // *Neprikosnovenny Zapas*. [Iron Ration.] 2009. № 5 (67), pp. 79–92; V. Damier. *Aktual'nost' anarkho-kommunizma P. A. Kropotkina v svete krizisa industrial'noy tsvilizatsii* [The Relevance of P. A. Kropotkin's anarcho-communism in light of the crisis of industrial civilization] // *Pryamukhinskiye chteniya 2008 goda*. [Pryamukhino papers 2008], (Tver: 2010), pp. 40–53.
- <sup>44</sup> P. Kropotkin. *Predisloviye* [Preface] // E. Pataud, E. Pouget. *Kak my sovershim revolyutsiyu*. [How we will make the revolution.] 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Moscow: 2011), p. 6.
- <sup>45</sup> M. Nettleau. *Ocherki*. . . , p. 124.
- <sup>46</sup> D. Abad de Santillán. *Der ökonomische Organismus der Revolution // Ökonomie und Revolution*. . . , pp. 138–139.
- <sup>47</sup> Later, according to Wartenberg, could ensue the stage of "full anarchy", which he envisaged as total spontaneity with the absence of any long-term structures generally. See: H. W. Gerhard. *"Prende au tas"*. . . , pp. 150–151; Idem. *Unsere Staatsauffassung // Die Internationale*. 1931. April. № 6, pp. 128–129.
- <sup>48</sup> M. Korn. *Sovremennoye polozheniye i nasha programma* [The Present situation and our program] // *Delo truda – Probuzhdeniye*. 1953. January – April. № 41, p. 17 (the article was written in the 1930s).
- <sup>49</sup> A. Berkman. *ABC des Anarchismus*. (Berlin: n.d.), pp. 34, 44.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 49–50.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 80–82.
- <sup>52</sup> M. Acharya. *Das Problem der Ausbeutung und ihrer Beseitigung // Die Internationale*. 1931. April. № 6, pp. 131–134.
- <sup>53</sup> H. Drewes. *Idee und Organisation im Lichte konstruktiver Planung des Sozialismus // Die Internationale*. 1931. Dezember. № 13, p. 296; 193. Oktober. № 12, p. 279.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibidem.* // *Die Internationale*. 1931. Dezember. № 13, pp. 298–299, 296.
- <sup>55</sup> *INO Presse-Korrespondenz*. 10.11.1931. № 32 (104).
- <sup>56</sup> R. Rocker. *Die Rationalisierung der Wirtschaft und die Arbeiterklasse*. Frankfurt a.M., 1980., pp. 13, 43–49, 80.
- <sup>57</sup> H. Drewes. *Op.cit.* // *Die Internationale*. 1931. Oktober. № 12, pp. 158–160.
- <sup>58</sup> Thus, during a strike at a bakery, the workers demanded not an increase in pay, but an improvement in the quality of the bread being baked. See: *Die Internationale*. 1925. Juni. № 5, pp. 158–1960.
- <sup>59</sup> IV. Kongress der Internationalen Arbeiter-Assoziation. . . , p. 17.
- <sup>60</sup> E. López Arango. *Doctrina y tactica // Certamen internacional de "La Protesta"*. Buenos Aires, 1927, p. 95.



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<sup>61</sup> IV. Congress... pp.14–15. Concerning the similarity between the anti-industrial views of the FORA and the critique of industrial-capitalist productive forces as “matrices” of capitalism in the radical ecological thought of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, see: V. Damier & D. Rublov, *op. cit.*

<sup>62</sup> E. López Arango & D. Abad de Santillán, *op.cit.*

<sup>63</sup> See: IISG, Amsterdam. IWMA Archive. File “1st. Congress of IWMA, Berlin, 1922”. No.3. Memorandum de la FORA pour le Congrès syndicaliste et industrialistes de Berlin.

<sup>64</sup> For more details, see: V. V. Damier. *Razvitiye anarkho-kommunizma P.A. Kropotkina v libertarnoy mysli 1920-kh – 1930-kh gg.* [The Development of the anarcho-communism of P. A. Kropotkin in the libertarian thought of the 1920s – 1930s.] // *Petr Alekseyevich Kropotkin i problemy modelirovaniya istoriko-kul'turnogo razvitiya tsivilizatsii. Materialy mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferentsii.* [Peter Alexseyevich Kropotkin and the problems of modelling the historical-cultural development of civilization. Materials of an international scientific conference.] (St. Petersburg, 2005), pp. 54–57.

<sup>65</sup> John Crump. *The anarchist movement in Japan.* London, 1996.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted from: *Hatta Shūzō: Krytyka syndykalizmu i systemy rad* [Critique of syndicalism and the council system] // “*Fraternite*” (Warsaw). № 3, p. 26.xxx

<sup>67</sup> A. Souchy. *Nacht über Spanien.* (Grafenau – Döffingen: 1987), p. 145.

<sup>68</sup> I.Puente. *Finalidad de la C.N.T.: el comunismo libertario.* (Barcelona: 1936).

<sup>69</sup> See: *Congreso extraordinario de 1936 en Zaragoza. Dictamen sobre “Concepto Confederal del Comunismo libertario”* // *Congresos anarcosindicalistas...* P.157–176.

<sup>70</sup> For more detail about the Spanish Revolution and its transformations, see: V. Damier. *Zabytyy Internatsional.* Vol. 2 (Moscow: 2007), pp. 313–414.