



**Tenants' rally in Lisbon, Portugal 1921.**

Rent strikes and community organising were an important part of anarchist and syndicalist activity: as part of the project of building counterpower, mass anarchists built dense and overlapping networks of popular, associational life. These included theatre troupes, neighbourhood committees, workers' night-schools, and even popular universities in countries as diverse as Egypt, Peru, Cuba, and China. *Picture courtesy of João Freire.*



**The Barcelona trams under self-management in 1936.**

The trams were among the thousands of industries and farms placed under worker and peasant self-management during the Spanish Revolution (1936–1939), in which the anarchists and syndicalists played a central role. The explosion of creative energy unleashed by the Spanish worker's control of their own lives was evocatively captured in George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).

# **Ideas, Structure, and Armed Action: Unions, Politics, and the Revolution**

**B**oth insurrectionist and mass anarchism are faced with a series of difficult challenges. In this chapter, we explore syndicalism in more depth, addressing ourselves to several critical issues: how can a syndicalist union avoid evolving into orthodox unionism, which focuses solely on immediate issues, and typically develops large and moderate bureaucracies? If anarchism is about the emancipation of the popular classes as a whole, how can syndicalism address the needs of those sectors of the working class and peasantry that are outside wage labour? Finally, assuming a revolutionary general strike takes place, can syndicalism effectively deal with the threat of armed counterrevolution?

We argue that syndicalism stressed a combination of radically democratic unionism and political education, welded together by direct action, as the means to develop a style of unionism that was insurgent and revolutionary. We also contend that historically, syndicalism sought to organise beyond the workplace, promote the struggles of the unemployed, working-class communities, women, and youth, and link with the peasantry. And we suggest that while many syndicalists underestimated the dangers of armed counterrevolution, there was a substantial current that aimed at armed self-defence, the destruction of the state apparatus, and the formation of a “libertarian social power” or “libertarian polity.”<sup>1</sup> In general, syndicalism emphasised the need for both counterpower and revolutionary counterculture as well as alliances and struggles beyond the workplace. It should not be interpreted as a form of economistic or workerist unionism.

## **Union Activism, Anarchist Ideology, and Union Bureaucracy**

Many important questions about syndicalism were raised at an international anarchist conference held in 1907 in Amsterdam and attended by about a thousand people, with eighty delegates present. Those in attendance were drawn from most of the European and Latin American countries as well as Japan and the United States. The meeting, which took place in the context of the rise of the French CGT and a second wave of syndicalism, was one of a series of ongoing attempts to form an

anarchist international after the demise of the Black International. Central to the conference was the question of resurgent syndicalism.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Amsterdam Congress endorsed syndicalism, provided the space for participants from eight countries to hold meetings to set up a syndicalist network, and established the multilingual *Bulletin International du Mouvement Syndicaliste* ("Bulletin of the International Syndicalist Movement").<sup>3</sup> This weekly was distributed and reprinted worldwide, and appeared with a great deal of regularity until mid-1914; edited by Christian Cornillessen (1864–1942), the bulletin was funded by the Dutch, German, French, Swedish, and Bohemian (Czech) syndicalists, with occasional aid from the U.S. IWW. Cornillessen trained as a schoolteacher in the Netherlands, and was initially a Marxist but moved toward syndicalism. He linked up with the radicals in the Social Democratic Union, among them Domela Nieuwenhuis, who were moving to anarchism.<sup>4</sup> Cornillessen was an important figure in the National Labour Secretariat (NAS), founded in 1893—the Netherlands largest union centre, which adopted a syndicalist platform in 1901—until he moved to France, where he immersed himself in the CGT. He remained active in the postwar period and also produced a number of works on socialist economic theory.

Pierre Monatte (1881–1960), representing the French CGT, and Amédée Dunois, a Swiss, defended syndicalism at the congress, presenting it as taking anarchism out of the "ivory tower of philosophic speculation" into the "school of will, of energy, and of fertile thinking."<sup>5</sup> The son of a blacksmith and employed as a proof-reader, Monatte was the editor of *La Vie Ouvrière* ("Workers' Life") and later active in the PCF. Expelled in 1924 for opposing Comintern policies and authoritarianism, he returned to syndicalism, founding *La Révolution Proletarienne* ("Workers' Revolution"). He remained active for many years, dying in 1960.

Malatesta responded to Monatte's input with an address that is of great interest as it raises questions about the adequacy of syndicalism, or at least about the views of many syndicalists. Before going into these questions, it is worth noting that Malatesta was by no means the staunch opponent of syndicalism that he appears in the literature.<sup>6</sup> As of the 1890s, Malatesta supported syndicalism, arguing that unions were of "vital importance," the "most powerful force for social transformation," "must play a most useful, and perhaps necessary, role in the transition from present society," and could serve as "the first necessary nucleus for the continuation of social life and the reorganisation of production without the bosses and parasites."<sup>7</sup> Unions were powerful forces for change, helped awaken workers to the class struggle, raised proletarian aspirations, won real improvements, and provided lessons in solidarity.<sup>8</sup> It is against this backdrop that we can understand why Malatesta sought to "give the libertarian movement more organisational coherency through the creation of anarchist trade unions" when he stayed in Argentina in the 1890s.<sup>9</sup>

Malatesta's response to Monatte started, perhaps unsurprisingly, by stressing the anarchist roots of syndicalism, and advocating "the most active participation" in the unions for propaganda and mass organising. Syndicalism was, Malatesta stated, an "excellent means of action," the unions were "doubtless the best of all the means" for revolution, and the general strike was an "excellent means for starting" a revolution.<sup>10</sup> Yet Malatesta rejected the view (which he believed some syndicalists held)

that unions would automatically act in a revolutionary manner. According to this line of reasoning, unions that were free of political parties, were run democratically, and adopted direct action would simply plunge down the road to the revolutionary general strike. Every union action, then, was a step toward the revolution.

For Malatesta, however, union work was only *potentially* revolutionary. It would be a "great and fatal illusion to believe" that the union movement will "by its very nature, lead to ... revolution."<sup>11</sup> Under normal circumstances, unions tended to look after the immediate material interests of workers and foster a conservative spirit. This was, Malatesta claimed elsewhere, a "natural tendency," for unions' normal operations were "reformist" and about compromise.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, unions were prone to develop layers of paid officials, whose personal interests lay in social peace and steady incomes from the unions—in current parlance, union bureaucracies.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, unions were not a "sufficient means" for revolution, for their normal state was that of a "legalitarian and even conservative movement with no other accessible end but the amelioration of the conditions of work." The union "in itself" could not be a "revolutionary ... negation of ... present society."<sup>14</sup>

In addition, Malatesta was concerned about the prospect of syndicalism becoming a narrow workerism that was sectional and ignored the popular sectors outside of wage labour. Capitalism pitted people against each other, and the working class was deeply divided "between employed and unemployed, between men and women, between native and foreign workers in their midst, between workers who use a public service and those who work in that service, between those who have a trade and those who want to learn it" as well as between countries, industries, nationalities, occupations, and races. Unions easily devolved into championing the narrow interests of particular sections of workers, striving to turn their members into "the aristocrats of the factory" while waging war on the "non-organised workers ... [the] proletariat in rags." How would syndicalism deal with the "ever growing unemployed proletariat" and the peasantry? It was in this sense, from a broad view of class politics, that Malatesta argued the revolution was not the task of a "single class" but of all "enslaved humanity," which was enslaved "from the triple viewpoint, economic, political and moral."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, Malatesta's address raised questions about the revolutionary process. He rejected the view, which he believed was held by some syndicalists, that capitalism and the state could be peacefully toppled by a general strike, making "armed insurrection unnecessary." More specifically, he rejected the notion that a universal cessation of work would force the abdication of the ruling class, which "dying of hunger, will be obliged to surrender"; the rich and powerful controlled the stores, and would more likely starve the working class out than the reverse.<sup>16</sup>

### **Mass Anarchism, Radical Counterculture, and Syndicalism**

How effectively did syndicalism address these concerns? The record suggests that—like Malatesta, who stressed the need for propaganda to "awaken" the unions and the workers to a "shared ideal," and "taking over the direction of production"—syndicalists generally maintained that misery alone was not revolutionary.<sup>17</sup> To change the world a "new social philosophy," a "new faith" in the possibility of a new

social order and the ability of ordinary people to create a new society, were all needed.<sup>18</sup> Maximoff argued that syndicalists must respond to “all burning questions of the day,” but “relate them to the final goal and utilise every opportunity for agitation, propaganda and the organisation of the exploited classes.”<sup>19</sup> Likewise for Kubo, “We should seize every opportunity in economic and political struggles so that anarchist thought may prevail.”<sup>20</sup> Goldman, another syndicalist, maintained that a “*fundamental transvaluation of values*” and the removal of the principle of hierarchy were the very bases of revolutionary change in society.<sup>21</sup>

Rocker believed that union struggle itself played something of an educational role: it was “as a producer and creator of social wealth” that the worker becomes “aware of his strength.” Workers realised their real power in society, their role as a productive but exploited class, gained a glimmer of their potential to remake the world, and learned the importance of solidarity and direct action. He therefore highlighted the “general cultural significance of the labour struggle.” The union was a “practical school, a university of experience, from which they draw instruction and enlightenment in richest measure.” The workers learn from and are radicalised by their experiences in struggles, and develop a powerful solidarity among themselves—a “feeling of mutual helpfulness” under difficult conditions that matures into a “vital consciousness of a community of fate,” and then into a “new sense of right.” Yet this alone could *not* lead to a revolutionary movement. It was absolutely critical that there was ongoing “educational work” “directed toward the development of independent thought and action.” This involved, as Rocker saw it, “the effort to make clear to the workers the intrinsic connections among social problems,” and “by technical instruction and the development of their administrative capacities to prepare them for their role of re-shapers of economic life.”<sup>22</sup>

There is no real difference between such views and those of Malatesta. All share the position that changing hearts and minds is central to the revolutionary project as well as the creation of counterpower. The stress that syndicalists routinely placed on winning the battle of ideas directs attention to an important feature of the mass anarchist tradition more generally. This is the project of creating a revolutionary counterculture within the popular classes. According to Rocker, in the same way that the “educational work” of the anarcho-syndicalists was partly “directed toward the development of independent thought and action,” they were opposed to the “centralising tendencies ... so characteristic of political labour parties.”<sup>23</sup> For Malatesta,

We who do not seek power, only want the consciences of men; only those who wish to dominate prefer sheep, the better to lead them. We prefer intelligent workers, even if they are our opponents, to anarchists who are such only in order to follow us like sheep. We want freedom for everybody; we want the masses to make the revolution for the masses. The person who thinks with his own brain is to be preferred to the one who blindly approves everything.... Better an error consciously committed and in good faith, than a good action performed in a servile manner.<sup>24</sup>

It was characteristic of syndicalist unions that they put a great deal of effort into political education and the development of a radical popular counterculture. The first anarchist daily newspaper in the world seems to have been the *Chicago-*

*er Arbeiter-Zeitung* ("Chicago Worker News"): started as a Marxist paper in 1877, it came under anarchist IWPA control and was edited by the Haymarket martyr Spies—a unionist and former SLP member—from 1884 to 1886.<sup>25</sup> The paper was part of a powerful anarchist counterculture that was active in unionism, held innumerable plays, picnics, dances, and rallies, published many journals in multiple languages for a multiethnic working class, and even paraded armed detachments. This was a "distinctively working-class, revolutionary culture."<sup>26</sup> It was a "rich libertarian counter-culture deeply rooted in the working classes and totally at odds with the values of the prevailing system."<sup>27</sup>

Spanish syndicalist unions were equally immersed in a rich and dense network of anarchist community centres, schools, and libraries—the *ateneus libertarios* ("libertarian athenaeums") that existed in every district and village of anarchist strength—and a vast anarchist press.<sup>28</sup> The CNT alone published scores of newspapers by 1936, including the largest dailies in Spain.<sup>29</sup> The notion that, since syndicalist unions generally admit workers regardless of their politics, syndicalists must therefore believe that the unions' democratic structures will suffice to make workers into revolutionaries, and therefore, for example, even that the great majority of CNT members were not really anarchists, is not very convincing.<sup>30</sup> The Chambers of Labour in Italy—initially municipal bodies designed to promote conciliation and act as labour exchanges, they become self-managed workers' centres—provided a major conduit of anarchist and syndicalist influence.<sup>31</sup> In France, the Bourses du Travail were specifically used by activists like Pelloutier as centres of radical and libertarian counterculture.<sup>32</sup>

The U.S. IWW, to offer another example, published thousands of pamphlets and dozens of periodicals, and also operated countless local halls where workers could read books on a wide range of subjects.<sup>33</sup> It "staged hundreds of Sunday Educational meetings and open forums, held classes, toured speakers who addressed street-corner meetings and indoor mass meetings all over the country, opened union halls where workers could get their latest Wobbly literature, [and] held 'bull sessions' on such subjects as 'Improved Machinery and Unemployment,' 'Industrial versus Craft Unionism,' 'The General Strike,' etc."<sup>34</sup> As Salerno reminds us, it is a mistake to assess the IWW purely in terms of numbers and the strength of formal union structures; the union local, which grouped workers from a range of industries and operated union halls, was probably the most important structure, and the nexus of a radical proletarian counterculture that had an impact far beyond the confines of the formal union.<sup>35</sup>

For the broad anarchist tradition, revolution could not be imposed or delegated; it was, literally, the task of the popular classes and required that a substantial number of people accepted its necessity. Rejecting authoritarian models like Leninism, syndicalist unions sought to minimise the gulf between the conscious anarchist and syndicalist minority and the masses of the people by winning over as many people as possible to their views, and by promoting the practices of self-organisation and direct action. Even if propaganda by the deed was elitist in practice, its basic aim remained *propaganda*. The emphasis placed on popular education by syndicalist unions, then, should be seen as typical of anarchism more generally, and syndi-

calist efforts should be seen as part of the larger project of forming a revolutionary counterculture as a piece of the project of building counterpower.

### **Anarchist Schools and Syndicalist Education**

Anarchist schools, centres, media, and theatre played a central role in this drive, and should be seen as key institutions in the broad anarchist tradition. Their influence is less easily estimated than that of the other major anarchist institution, the syndicalist union, but it cannot be understated. On one level, anarchist schools were an attempt to promote more libertarian methods of education along with a democratic and participatory pedagogy. Both Bakunin and Kropotkin advocated an “integral education” that covered the humanities, the natural sciences, and manual and mental skills.<sup>36</sup> On another level, anarchist schools were an attempt to overcome the inequalities in education arising from an inequitable social and economic order, and provide popular education.

In both cases, however, anarchist schools offered a critical worldview that rejected the ideology promoted in the education supplied by the church and state—a worldview that stressed class identity, a rejection of the status quo, and the necessity for fundamental social change. The Spanish anarchist Francisco Ferrer i Guàrdia (1859–1909), who opened the Modern School in 1901, became closely identified with anarchist schooling. Harassed by the authorities on several occasions, he was falsely charged with inciting the 1909 general strike and popular revolt in Spain against conscription for the colonial war in Morocco, known as the *Semana Trágica* or “Tragic Week.” Despite massive international protests, Ferrer was executed. While his pedagogy may have had its limitations, it is undeniable that his death popularised libertarian educational methods and anarchist schools.<sup>37</sup>

Well before Ferrer, anarchist and syndicalist centres and schools consistently played a central role in the movement. An early example was La Escuela del Rayo y del Socialismo (“The School of the Ray of Socialism”) in Chalco, Mexico. This school was established in 1865 by Plotino Rhodokanaty (1824–?), a Greek immigrant influenced by Fourier and Proudhon, and a founder of La Social; Zalacosta was also actively involved.<sup>38</sup> Its most notable graduate was the anarchist peasant militant Julio Chávez López (1845–1869).<sup>39</sup> The twentieth-century Mexican militants of the COM operated “Rational Schools” in which members of the anarchist group Luz (“Light,” of which more later) ran courses in political ideology, and their efforts contrasted favourably with “the Mexican government’s miserable failure to provide public services in the field of education.”<sup>40</sup> In Egypt, an “anarchist nucleus” that included Galleani founded the Free Popular University in Alexandria; there was also an attempt to form a second university in Cairo.<sup>41</sup> The university drew in European as well as Egyptian and Syrian workers, and was intended to promote anarchism.

In Cuba, the anarchists quickly seized on the *lectura*—a tradition in which a worker read aloud to fellow workers during working hours that emerged in the 1860s—to promote their ideas. In the 1880s, the Workers’ Circle—the *de facto* federation of unions in Havana—operated an educational centre, with a library and schools for children and workers. These challenged for the first time “the racially

segregated and non-laicist [clerical] municipal and religious school system in Cuba," and had a "strong prolabor character."<sup>42</sup> In the twentieth century, Cuban anarchists continued to promote a revolutionary popular counterculture that reshaped every aspect of people's daily lives.<sup>43</sup> Its institutions included the anarchist press, rational schools, popular theatre, and cultural events; attended by the whole family, and featuring revolutionary songs as well as recitations of anarchist poetry by children, they provided an alternative to the official rituals of nationalism and religion.

In early twentieth-century Brazil, the anarchists alone "offered the transplanted, alienated and oppressed workers a sense of their own decency and dignity," with "free schools, people's universities, social drama groups," and "intense educational, sociological, broadly libertarian propaganda."<sup>44</sup> In the United States, a number of anarchist Modern Schools were established in the twentieth century, starting with the Ferrer Centre in New York City in 1911, which was formed by Berkman, De Cleyre, Goldman, and others, and anarchists were involved with other socialists in the Socialist Sunday School movement.<sup>45</sup>

During the Ukrainian Revolution, the anarchists aimed to establish rational schools, but their efforts were hampered by the ongoing war.<sup>46</sup> In Peru, Manuel González Prada (1844–1918, of whom more later) established the National Library in 1912. In China, anarchists formed several similar bodies, such as the Labour Movement Training Institute and the National Labour University, both established in 1927.<sup>47</sup> In France, Sebastian Faure (1858–1942) ran a libertarian school called La Ruche ("The Beehive"). Born to a middle-class Catholic family, and initially identifying as a political socialist, Faure became an anarchist in 1888. He was arrested many times, was closely associated with Michel, was active in antimilitarism, and starting in 1926, prepared the *Encyclopedie Anarchiste* ("Anarchist Encyclopaedia"). He also published *Le Libertaire* ("The Libertarian") beginning in 1889, which survives today as *Le Monde Libertaire* ("The Libertarian World").

While Nettelau suggested that projects of popular education through schools, theatres, and workers' centres "brought little added energy and little new force to anarchist ideas," it would seem that such initiatives were absolutely critical to the strength of anarchism and syndicalism as well as the project of counterpower.<sup>48</sup> The view that a revolutionary movement must aim to establish an ideological counter-hegemony as part of the class struggle is often attributed to Antonio Gramsci, a founder of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Such ideas, however, were common currency in the broad anarchist tradition many decades before Gramsci wrote, as anarchists and syndicalists struggled to create an "oppositional counter-public" that could change the world.<sup>49</sup>

## Democracy and Direct Action

In 1907, Malatesta had also suggested that unions must "advocate and practice direct action, decentralisation, autonomy and individual initiative" if they were not to degenerate.<sup>50</sup> This was precisely what syndicalists did, aiming at a militant—and radically democratic—union movement that embraced workers in different industries, in different occupations and grades within the same industry, and regardless of divisions of sex, race, and nationality. The ideal syndicalist union structure was a



dual federation: there were specific unions for each sector of the economy, and all were brought together into a federation; at the same time, the different unions were interlinked through horizontal federations at the local level that brought together workers from different industries in the same locality. This structure can be traced back to the FORE in Spain.<sup>51</sup>

In Rocker's view, the problem with centralist styles of organising was that they concentrated power in the hands of a few, were attended by "barren official routine," "crushe[d] individual conviction, kill[ed] all personal initiative by lifeless discipline and bureaucratic ossification, and permit[ed] no independent action." So, syndicalists favoured instead federalism, "free combination from below upward," and the "right of self-determination of every member." This developed among the workers an "irresistible spirit of solidarity" and "tenacious belligerence."<sup>52</sup> Likewise, Ford and Foster stressed the "fundamental principle" that the "unions be decentralised and ... the workers alone have the power to decide."<sup>53</sup>

To avoid the problem of union bureaucracy, syndicalists emphasised a union structure that ensured that initiative and decision making reside at the local level, with local sections united through delegate structures both within and between industries. Union affairs would be run in a highly decentralised manner: the basic unit of decision making would be a workers' assembly within a given workplace—or several assemblies, if the workplace was large—that would elect a committee of mandated delegates to coordinate activity, enter negotiations, and communicate with other workplaces. The different workplaces would be federated through these committees, and the growth of a full-time union leadership, or "bureaucracy," would be avoided as far as possible. Whenever possible, delegates were to perform their duties while continuing to work at their own jobs.

The "decentralised form of the unions," asserted Ford and Foster, helped remove the "very foundation of labour fakerism, viz., delegated power."<sup>54</sup> The IWW, for its part, developed the slogan "We are all leaders," and placed strict limits on the power and income of paid union officials; an extremist "decentraliser" faction in its ranks even wanted to abolish the national office bearers' committee, and replace union congresses with referenda and local initiatives, opposing any delegation of tasks.<sup>55</sup>

### **An Iron Law of Oligarchy?**

It is, though, inevitable that a large and successful syndicalist union would have at least some paid officials; these could include paid organisers, editors of the union press, and record keepers. Must this lead, like Robert Michels famously argued, to the operation of an unstoppable "iron law of oligarchy" in which a large organisation inevitably generates a specialised layer of leadership, which equally inevitably, uses the mass organisation for its own ends?<sup>56</sup> Michels praised anarchism as the first current to directly address questions of hierarchy and oligarchy, and believed the major anarchist figures, like Kropotkin and Malatesta, were "as a rule morally superior to the leaders of the organised parties working in the political field." He also suggested that syndicalism had, with a "genuinely scientific scepticism ... stripped

away the veils which conceal the power exercised by the democracy in the state ... in acute opposition with the needs of the working class.<sup>57</sup>

Nonetheless, Michels held that an iron law of oligarchy applied to "all organisations as such without exception," and that syndicalist unions had an "oligarchical character" and were themselves an "organised elite" that dominated the unorganised workers.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, Michels's thesis can be considered "above all, a polemical attack on syndicalism" and the possibilities of democracy in radical mass movements.<sup>59</sup> (It is not insignificant that Michels was a former member of the German SDP and the Italian PSI with a strong leaning toward syndicalism; he became disillusioned with the Left, adopted the elitist view that the masses could not rule society, and ended up an apologist for fascism.)<sup>60</sup>

The close linkage between the iron law of oligarchy thesis and fascist conclusions immediately raises concerns about his analysis. There are, however, more basic problems with his claims. In the first place, his thesis is excessively deterministic and teleological in character; it does not take adequate account of the possibility that if a mass democratic organisation might develop oligarchic tendencies, an oligarchic organisation may also, under some circumstances, develop into a more democratic one, in part due to changing external conditions—something that Michels ignored.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, by focusing on the role of leaders, Michels took inadequate account of the ways in which democratic and decentralised structures, plus a strongly democratic culture among the rank and file, act as checks on oligarchic tendencies. He ignored, as a result, cases in which unions and other organisations have been able to avoid the development and domination of entrenched oligarchies.<sup>62</sup> He also missed the role of the rank and file's politics in developing democratic unions.<sup>63</sup>

It makes more sense, then, to recognise that while a tendency toward oligarchy exists in mass organisations, there is also a tendency toward democracy. The syndicalists certainly believed that both were possibilities, and their proposals for a radically democratic style of unionism—and their emphasis on political education, to be discussed below—were seen as safeguards against the emergence of a centralised and conservative leadership. Moreover, syndicalists developed a number of mechanisms for limiting the ability of paid officials in the syndicalist unions to usurp power. If oligarchy and democracy were both tendencies in unionism, syndicalist unionism sought by every means to ensure that it was democracy that would prevail.

The Spanish CNT sought to minimise the number of paid officials and their power by stressing that union work should, whenever possible, be undertaken by unpaid volunteers, that the union structure must keep power in the hands of ordinary members, and that anyone holding office, paid or not, must be directly accountable and operate within strict mandates. Ford and Foster proposed a number of other means to avoid developing a layer of "labour fakers," or treacherous and self-interested union leaders. The union treasury should be kept as small as possible, and avoid accumulating large strike and benefit funds. Any paid positions must be kept as unattractive as possible through low salaries as well as the dangers invariably associated with such posts in revolutionary unions. Only the "best and most courageous" workers would therefore consider such posts; any emergent labour fakers would be given "short shrift."<sup>64</sup>

## Alliances and the Struggle outside the Workplace

The question of how a syndicalist union movement should relate to sections of the popular classes outside direct wage labour had also been raised by Malatesta, whose remedy was that “we must remain anarchists, in all the strength and breadth of that definition,” and promote the anarchist idea on the land, in the barracks, and in the schools as well as in the factories, and mobilise all “enslaved humanity.”<sup>65</sup>

Now, at the heart of syndicalism lies the premise that revolutionary unions are the *decisive* and *irreplaceable* organs of popular counterpower: only such bodies can provide the means for the expropriation of the means of production worked by waged labour. This is not a role that anarchist or syndicalist political groups, community bodies, movements of the unemployed, and youth and women’s groups can undertake. The only possible qualification to this claim is that the peasantry, which cannot be organised in the same manner and with the same immediate objectives as the working class, may require different structures for the development of counterpower and revolutionary expropriation. The situation is different for waged farmworkers, who can be organised in the same manner as urban industrial workers. Even so, syndicalists rarely ignored other popular constituencies.

How could a syndicalist union movement relate to other sectors of the popular classes? The answer in the case of unorganised workers is fairly simple: the unorganised are organised into the syndicalist union; this is the express aspiration of syndicalist unions. The situation of the peasantry is also relatively straightforward. The syndicalist union could establish a peasant department, as was done by the French CGT in 1902, or form alliances with peasant movements; the Zenkoku Jiren in Japan, for example, argued for a united revolutionary movement of workers and tenant farmers “on the common basis of class struggle,” and was involved in a number of efforts to organise the peasantry, who occupied a central place in Hatta’s thought.<sup>66</sup>

What of the unemployed, the working-class neighbourhood, and those in groups made up of working-class students, youth, housewives, and women? There are several options: to ignore these groups, assuming their interests are represented by the syndicalist unions; incorporate these groups into the syndicalist unions; or ally with and otherwise promote specific organisations for these groups. Some syndicalists adopted the first approach; most opted for the latter two.

The Portuguese CGT adopted the position of incorporating nonworker groups, and included in its ranks tenants’ associations and cooperatives as well as sections for artists and academics.<sup>67</sup> The Central Workers’ Organisation of Sweden (SAC, formed in 1910), established a Syndicalist Youth Federation (SUF); the SAC currently allows the unemployed, students, and pensioners to enroll. Other unions went the alliance route. The U.S. IWPA, and later the U.S. and Canadian IWWs, agitated among the unemployed, organising demonstrations demanding relief and a shorter working day, with no loss of pay.<sup>68</sup> The U.S. IWW, addressing the unemployed, put it this way:

Nobody can save you except yourself. The jobless have to get together, somehow, and make so much noise in the world as to attract attention. Only by making a public scandal in every city and town will you break the silence of the press and receive notice. Only fear of a general social

conflagration will make the employers of labour, private or governmental, get together and devise ways and means. As long as you are contented to rot to death in silence, you will be allowed to do so.

If you are still able to stand on your legs for hunger, get up big meetings and demonstrations, without getting in collision with "law and order." Not a drop of blood should be allowed to flow.... Adopt resolutions demanding work or relief. Present them in person to the authorities and the press. All this will take time and some money. Time you have plenty. Money you will get from the employed if you show you are in earnest.... Such measures may not bring you relief in 24 hours, but they are bound to bring some results sooner or later. They are apt to bring some artificial life into capitalism for a while by creating pressure in the proper place.

But then, when you do get a job, then is your chance to take steps that it shall not happen again. Organize industrially in such great numbers that you are able, with your organised might, to cut down the work-day to the required number of hours to provide employment for the jobless. That will possibly tide us over until we are able to take complete control and put an end to unemployment forever.<sup>69</sup>

The Spanish case is also worth examining. The Spanish anarchists and syndicalists developed an expansive understanding of the general strike: it was a means of struggle that could draw in nonworkers. In the 1880s, the Spanish movement was wracked with debates between those who tended to ignore "enslaved humanity" outside the unions and wage labour, and those who argued for a broader approach. The debate was partly played out in the language of "collectivism" (identified with the narrowly workerist approach) and "communism" (identified with those who favoured larger communal mobilisations) as well as through a clash between syndicalist and insurrectionist approaches. Eventually,

the conflicts of the eighties were resolved through the evolution of a new theory, a compromise between anarcho-communism and anarcho-collectivism, known later as anarcho-syndicalism. It attempted to combine union strength with community organisation ... placing increased stress on workers' centres, cooperatives, mutual aid associations, and women's sections....

The tactics that united workers and the jobless were mass demonstrations and boycotts, many of which were organised through mutual aid associations, cooperatives, and workers' circles.... The Pact's main activity was to unite all the oppressed, whether or not they were employed, around May Day demonstrations calling for the eight hour day.... The general strike as developed in Andalusia was a tactic that relied on community support of organised workers [in the context of mass unemployment].... The general strike, really a mass mobilisation of the community, could take advantage of the weight of numbers ... [and] enabled militant unions and equally militant community people to march together against an oppressive system.<sup>70</sup>

In the twentieth century, the CNT developed an even more comprehensive approach, both forming alliances with anarchist groups outside the workplace and initiating actions in working-class communities. The CNT fostered and developed a working relationship with a range of anarchist working-class social movements outside the unions. The Libertarian Youth Federation of Iberia (FIJL) held its first

national congress in 1932; originally intended to have a Portuguese section, it was really a Spanish formation.<sup>71</sup> There was also the Libertarian Youth of Catalonia, which used Catalan instead of Castilian as its lingua franca. A unified youth congress in 1937 claimed to represent over 80,000 members.<sup>72</sup> Another important group was the anarchist *Mujeres Libres* ("Free Women"), by far the largest left-wing women's group in the country, with over 20,000 members. Formed in 1936, it focused its activities on consciousness-raising and organising working-class and peasant women, and played an active role in the Spanish Revolution.<sup>73</sup> We will examine this group in more depth in chapter 10.

The CNT also played a leading role in community struggles, particularly around rent and housing. Having already developed a mass base in the workplace, the federation's militants began to pay increasing attention to the need to "combat exploitation in the field of consumption."<sup>74</sup> In 1931, its Construction Union initiated a dramatic rent strike across Barcelona, calling for a 40 percent decrease in rents, demanding better housing, and organising groups to forcibly prevent evictions.<sup>75</sup> By August 1931, perhaps 100,000 people were involved in Barcelona alone, and the movement spread into the surrounding towns. It also sought to mobilise the unemployed to demand work and secure waivers of rent. In the following year, the CNT in Gijón organised a community Union for the Defence of Public Interests; based on neighbourhood committees, and using direct action, it aimed to enforce a new law protecting renters introduced by the new republic.<sup>76</sup>

Rent strikes were a major feature of anarchist and syndicalist activity elsewhere as well. British anarchists organised a "No Rent" campaign in 1891, while the syndicalist Clyde Workers' Committee was involved in a major rent strike in Glasgow in 1915.<sup>77</sup> Anarchists organised rent strikes in Havana, Cuba, in 1899 and 1900.<sup>78</sup> In the Mexican city of Veracruz in 1922 anarchists and members of the CPM, which was still markedly influenced by anarchism, formed a Revolutionary Syndicate of Tenants that brought 30,000 people—more than two-thirds of the total population—out on a rent strike.<sup>79</sup> This inspired similar protests in other cities in the state of Veracruz like Orizaba, Córdoba, and Jalapa, full-scale rent strikes in Mexico City and Guadalajara, and efforts at tenant organising in Mérida, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, Mazatlán, Monterrey, Tampico, Aguascalientes, Torreón, and Ciudad Juárez.<sup>80</sup>

In Chile in 1921, the Libertarian Women's Union organised a Committee for Lower Rents and Clean Housing, and anarchists were active in rent strikes in 1922 and 1925; they were also involved in the Tenants' League that was formed in Panama City in 1925 and organised a rent strike later that year.<sup>81</sup> Anarchists and syndicalists organised rent strikes in Buenos Aires in 1907, drawing in perhaps 140,000 people, and again in 1912, with the latter movement spreading to Córdoba, Entre Ríos, and Santa Fé.<sup>82</sup> Another anarchist-led rent strike took place in 1920 in Peru, where the anarchists also worked with a section of the university student movement.<sup>83</sup> There was also an anarchist-led rent strike in Portugal in 1921.

The notion that syndicalism cannot organise outside the workplace or must necessarily ignore people outside of wage labour is thus flawed. Malatesta was correct in pointing to the danger of a narrow unionism, but the actual history of syndicalism demonstrates that it managed to avoid developing into a narrow worker-

ism. Consequently, we would contend, it is important not to assume that syndicalist movements should be understood simply as *union* movements. Typically embedded within dense networks of peasant and working-class associational life, and central to revolutionary popular countercultures, syndicalism should be seen as a component of a larger anarchist social movement. Care should be taken not to set up an artificial divide between syndicalist unions and the larger anarchist movements of which they formed an integral part.

## Defending the Revolution

As we have seen, Malatesta worried that syndicalists did not adequately address the question of defending a revolution against a counterrevolution. Engels had some interesting points as well:

In the Bakunist programme a general strike is the lever employed by which the social revolution is started. One fine morning, all the workers in all the industries of a country, or even of the whole world, stop work, thus forcing the propertied classes either humbly to submit within four weeks at the most, or to attack the workers, who would then have the right to defend themselves and use this opportunity to pull down the entire society.<sup>84</sup>

In his view, this was nonsensical. It was necessary to have a sufficiently “well-formed organisation of the working class” with “plentiful funds” to carry out such a strike without the working class succumbing to starvation, and the state was unlikely to allow such a development. Furthermore, Engels asserted, it was more likely that “political events and oppressive acts by the ruling classes” would precipitate a revolution well before such an organisation could be formed, thereby rendering the syndicalist union redundant.<sup>85</sup>

Engels’s argument helped lay the basis for a second Marxist argument against syndicalism, which was the claim that Marxists, and scholars influenced by Marxism, have subsequently maintained: syndicalism was a form of “‘left’ economism” without a revolutionary strategy and serious analysis of the state.<sup>86</sup> James Hinton, writing from a classical Marxist position, alleged that syndicalism failed to appreciate “the need for politics” and was characterised by a “neglect of the role of the state in maintaining the domination of capital.”<sup>87</sup> The Marxist sociologist Richard Hyman likewise suggested that syndicalists ignored the role of the state in society.<sup>88</sup>

In an otherwise excellent study of South African unions, Rob Lambert charged that the syndicalists had an “inability to adequately confront the issue of state power.” The syndicalists emphasised their “social distance” from the state, but “failed to come to terms with the manner in which state power, located in a variety of institutions, reproduced capitalist social relations.”<sup>89</sup> Such criticisms were and are routinely leveled by Leninists, who contended that the failure of syndicalist unions to make successful revolutions stemmed from their supposed tendency to ignore the state and, of course, the supposed need for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There are several slightly different sets of criticisms in these points: the charge that syndicalists lacked an analysis of the state and ignored politics, the charge that syndicalists aimed to “starve out” the ruling class without necessarily assuming control of production, the charge that syndicalists ignored the need for the armed de-

fence of the revolution, and the related charge that syndicalists took insufficient account of the need for a systematic and sustained destruction of the capitalist state.

The first of these can be dealt with fairly quickly. The notion that syndicalists simply lacked an analysis of the state and its role in relation to capitalism cannot stand up to scrutiny. As we have seen in chapter 4, syndicalists did not reject political issues; instead, they saw the union as the key to fighting *both* economic and political issues through a unified movement that would “represent a synthesis of the political and of the economic function.”<sup>90</sup> Moreover, it was precisely *because* of a clear and specific analysis of the state’s role in maintaining capitalism that syndicalists repudiated the use of state power (“political action”) in changing society, and stressed instead the centrality of working-class self-activity outside of and against the state machinery.

Indeed, “syndicalist non-politicism was not neutrality at all. It meant above all anti-electoralism and anti-parliamentarism,” for whereas the “political socialists believed the state merely to be in the wrong hands ... fully developed syndicalist ideology” was characterised by “anti-statism.”<sup>91</sup> The position of the IWW, for instance, “was indeed a highly political rejection of state-based means for achieving socialism, an implacable anti-parliamentary posture, an expression of unmitigated contempt for ... reformist parties, and also about the aims and ambitions of revolutionary political parties.”<sup>92</sup>

In addition, syndicalist movements developed sophisticated analyses of the evolving role and functions of the state, including in the promotion of capitalist ideology and nationalism, the rise of state welfare systems, and the impact of growing state regulation of the economy.<sup>93</sup> The notion that syndicalists simply ignored the state is, in the final analysis, a serious caricature created by classical Marxist writers. It is most unfortunate that many scholars have relied on these writings, rather than basic syndicalist texts, in their analysis of syndicalism.

The charges that syndicalists aimed to starve out the ruling class without necessarily assuming control of production, and also ignored the need for the armed defence of the revolution, are interlinked. Here it is critical not to homogenise syndicalism but to recognise the diversity of syndicalist positions. What almost all syndicalists shared was the view that the revolutionary general strike involved a revolutionary expropriation of the means of production through workplace occupations. Where syndicalists really differed amongst themselves, however, was on the question of revolutionary violence.

Malatesta himself always argued for armed self-defence. A revolutionary strike meant a clash with the forces of the state, and “then the matter cannot help resolving itself into shooting and bombs.” The notion of a peaceful revolution was a “pure utopia,” for the revolution must inevitably be resolved through “main force” with “victory ... to the strongest.” A revolutionary general strike must involve the workers occupying the workplaces and continuing production “for their own benefit,” but this must be backed up by force of arms.<sup>94</sup>

Yet there can be no doubt that a section of syndicalists believed in the possibility of a peaceful revolution through the general strike and ignored the possibility of violent conflict with the ruling class, and thus the question of armed self-defence. One example is the German syndicalist Siegfried Nacht (1878–1956, better known

by the pseudonym Arnold Roller), who argued in the pamphlet *The Social General Strike* that the general strike had replaced the "battle on the barricades."<sup>95</sup> On more than one occasion, U.S. IWW figures hit a similar note, like Haywood who spoke confidently of a "bloodless revolution": "Our dynamite is mental and our force is organisation at the point of production." He added, "When we strike now, we strike with our hands in our pockets."<sup>96</sup>

The IWW activist Ralph Chaplin (1887–1961) provides another example. Chaplin wrote the popular union anthem "Solidarity Forever," was editor of the IWW's *Industrial Worker* in the 1930s, and is generally regarded as the originator of the black cat image widely used in anarchist and syndicalist propaganda. In his pamphlet *The General Strike*, Chaplin stated that the use of weapons was futile, and that a "well co-ordinated lockout of the Captains of Finance by both workers and technicians" would "put an end to the profit system but leave the production and transportation of goods unimpaired." He noted that "this, coupled with the program of picketing the industries by the unemployed, is what the IWW has in mind in advocating the General Strike" and anything else was simply "adding confusion onto confusion."<sup>97</sup> While Chaplin was probably correct that an armed insurrection alone was unlikely to defeat a modern state, he did not consider the possibility that armed self-defence might be needed to supplement a revolutionary strike, in order to defend against a military reconquest of industry by the ruling class.

Another important syndicalist current that simply failed to address the question of armed self-defence was De Leonism, with its view that the state would be paralysed and dissolved during the "general lockout" by the electoral victory of the SLP (backed by the One Big Union). Part of the problem is that it is exceedingly unlikely that a shutting out of the capitalist class and the electoral victory of the party of the One Big Union would so perfectly coincide, particularly given that elections to the state are only held periodically.

A general lockout might precede an electoral victory, in which case the SLP would be unable to prevent state repression. Alternatively, the electoral victory might take place before the unions were ready to make the revolution, in which case the SLP would find itself at the head of a capitalist government without the unions in place to institute barriers to capitalism. De Leon would doubtless have dismissed this potentiality, as he envisaged a slow and steady growth of the One Big Union, which he believed would result in the rise of the SLP. "The political movement is absolutely the reflex of the economic organisation," he wrote.<sup>98</sup> Nonetheless, even he feared that if the workers' representatives in parliament failed to "adjourn themselves on the spot," they would "usurp" power to create "a commonwealth of well-fed slaves" ruled by "a parliamentary oligarchy with an army of officials at its back, possessing powers infinitely greater than those possessed by our present political rulers."<sup>99</sup>

Malatesta, then, was to some extent justified in speaking of syndicalists who ignored the real prospect of armed counterrevolution against revolutionary uprisings. But it would be wrong to apply this charge to all syndicalists; many, on the contrary, advocated at least some measure of armed self-defence in a revolution. Spies of the IWPA thought that the workers "should arm themselves," for "the better they are armed, the easier the struggle will be ended."<sup>100</sup> He was one of a significant



number of IWPA militants involved in organising the Lehr und Wehr Verein (“Instruction and Protection Society,” or LWV); this militia, first formed in 1875, was branded illegal as of 1881, but continued to operate underground and appeared at IWPA meetings. The Haymarket martyr Adolph Fischer went to the gallows wearing a belt buckle featuring the letters LWV.<sup>101</sup> The Lehr und Wehr Verein was one of a number of armed groups linked to the IWPA across the United States; at least two CLU affiliates also organised militias.<sup>102</sup>

The revolutionary novel *How We Shall Bring About the Revolution: Syndicalism and the Cooperative Commonwealth* provides an insight into the views of the French syndicalists on the issue of defending the revolution. Published in 1909, and available in an English edition—translated by the anarchists Fred Charles and Charlotte Charles, with prefaces by Kropotkin and the British syndicalist Tom Mann (1856–1941)—the book was written by Pouget and Emile Pataud, a syndicalist electrician, strike leader, and firebrand speaker.

The story starts with violent clashes between police and strikers that quickly builds up to a general strike of insurrectionary proportions, headed by the CGT. The state finds its forces increasingly unreliable as police officers, municipal guards, and soldiers begin to switch sides; strikers in the transport sector hamper the use of military reinforcements from elsewhere in France and the colonies. The strikers raid arms depots, and a popular militia is formed. By this stage, cooperative societies and unions have started to take control of distribution. A tense showdown between the militia and the remaining government troops in Paris is averted as the soldiers mutiny and stretch “out their hands to the people”: “instead of a scene of horrible carnage, there were embraces—shouts of joy.” The “human flood” of “strikers, interspersed with soldiers,” places state buildings under armed guard, conquers the remaining barracks, and dissolves parliament; the same development is repeated elsewhere.<sup>103</sup>

By the evening the unions—the “heart and soul” of the mass movement—and the general strike move toward “social reconstruction.”<sup>104</sup> Classical Marxists are sidelined; reactionaries and pogromists are dealt with in a rough fashion. The banks are seized, and the media and production is reorganised by the unions, working alongside neighbourhood and village groups. In the countryside, the peasants—who had joined the strike from the start through the CGT’s Peasant Unions, and who are increasingly armed—have already begun to expropriate the large farms and plantations, and abolish rent, mortgages, and taxes. The new society is decentralised and federalist, and promotes individual freedom; it has no standing army, and no barracks, prisons, or police stations; popular courts are established; production is coordinated and planned through democratic union congresses; and distribution is organised on primarily communist principles.

The CGT’s Confederal Committee refuses diplomatic relations with foreign states, but establishes them with the popular classes abroad, advocating “international solidarity between the peoples,” and the revolution starts to spread. A well-armed popular militia, structured around the unions and organised on a volunteer basis, is formed “in order not to be taken unawares in the case of any reactionary conspiracy.” The “people had always detested military servitude” and “wars between nations,” but this “had never meant for them the resignation and non-resistance

preached by Tolstoi [*sic*].” It is just as well that “Trade Union France” is “bristling” with arms and “syndicalist battalions,” because a counterrevolutionary force is organised by the remainder of the French ruling class, backed by an invasion from abroad. With an army, an air force, and “terrible” chemical weapons and explosives at which even the old ruling class had balked, the revolutionary forces wage a “struggle relentless and without pity,” “tearing to shreds, without hesitation, the rules of the game of war.” The counterrevolution is crushed in a “hurricane of death and fire.”<sup>105</sup>

Granted, the novel probably simplifies the problems facing a revolution and makes the assumption that “the revolutionary forces possessed an exclusive monopoly of scientific weaponry.”<sup>106</sup> The key point, however, is that it can scarcely be regarded as demonstrating a “neglect of the role of the state in maintaining the domination of capital” or a refusal to face the possibility of armed counterrevolution. Other syndicalists commonly held such views. The IWPA argued forthrightly that the ruling class would not “resign their privileges voluntarily” and that there “remains but one recourse—FORCE!”<sup>107</sup>

Ford and Foster likewise argued that syndicalism wages a “life and death struggle with an absolutely lawless and unscrupulous enemy,” and must “wrest ... by force” the means of production in a “revolution by the general strike,” and link up with the small farmers in the countryside. This would “probably” be “accompanied by violence,” and the armed forces of the state, dispersed to expel workers from the occupied workplaces, would have to be “overwhelmed and disarmed.” Ford and Foster also projected a split in the military: “As they are mostly workingmen and in sympathy with the general strike,” they could be “induced to join the ranks of their striking fellow workers.” The groundwork for this would be ongoing antimilitarist work encouraging the “working class soldiers not to shoot their brothers and sisters ... but, if need be, to shoot their own officers and to desert the army when the crucial moment arrives.”<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, for Maximoff, the initial period of the revolution would bring “the huge masses of the people into action” and paralyse the old order. This period must be used to establish a revolutionary economic order and “lay immediately the foundations for ... organised military defence” before the “terrified elements of the old regime rally ... and reassemble their forces.” Revolutionary armed forces, structured along the lines of a general militia, with an elected staff of officers, and “utilising military science and all methods of modern war technique,” must be established.<sup>109</sup>

For his part, Berkman maintained that there was no prospect of a mere armed uprising defeating the “armoured tanks, poison gas, and military planes” of the ruling class. It was necessary for workers to exercise their power “in the shop, in the mine and factory” through a revolutionary general strike. This would strike the decisive blow at the ruling class and disperse the armed forces. Yet it had to be supplemented with “armed force,” based on a popular and democratic militia of “armed workers and peasants,” to be deployed at the workbench” or on the battlefield, “according to need.”<sup>110</sup> Tom Brown believed that the “workers’ Syndicates would establish Workers’ Militias ... and whatever other means of workers’ defence were necessary.... The armed Syndicates would be a general force—a people in arms.”<sup>111</sup>

Rocker distinguished between ordinary general strikes, for economic and political demands, and the “social general strike” against the capitalist system. All general strikes cripple the ruling classes, and scatter and weaken the army, allowing it to be subverted by the workers, observed Rocker. The social general strike, however, supplements the paralysing effects of a general strike with a deliberate programme of “collectivising of the land and the taking over of the plants by the workers’ and peasants’ syndicates,” which must be combined with the “armed resistance of the people for the protection of life and liberty.” He also noted the following:

The ridiculous claim, which is so often attributed to the Anarcho-syndicalists, that it is only necessary to proclaim a general strike in order to achieve a Socialist society in a few days, is, of course, just a silly invention of evil-minded opponents bent on discrediting an idea which they cannot attack by any other means.<sup>112</sup>

The founding document of the IWA, the “Declaration of the Principles of Revolutionary Syndicalism,” explicitly stated that syndicalists recognised “violence as a means of defence against the violent methods of the ruling classes in the struggle for the possession of the factories and the fields by the revolutionary people.” The “defence of the revolution” must “be entrusted to the masses themselves and their economic organisations.” While “syndicalists are the enemies of all organised violence in the hands of any revolutionary government, they do fail to recognise that the decisive struggles between the capitalist present and the free communist future will not occur without conflict.”<sup>113</sup>

There is no doubt then that many syndicalists—with important exceptions like the De Leonists—envisaged the need for an armed defence of the revolution, stressed that it should be organised through a militia, democratic in character and popular by nature, rather than a traditional hierarchical military, and also saw the subversion of the state military machinery as part of the armed phase of the revolution. This approach poses an alternative to the proletarian dictatorship: rather than the struggle against counterrevolution being waged through a new state machinery, headed by a vanguard party, it would be organised through radically democratic unions and other working-class organisations.

### **The Question of Power and the Spanish Revolution**

Nevertheless, even where syndicalists argued for armed self-defence, they still did not always take adequate account of the likelihood of *sustained* armed resistance by the old ruling class, or recognise that their revolution could only be secured by a systematic destruction of the capitalist state. The probability that the old state machinery and ruling class would prove resilient even after the means of production were expropriated was not always faced. The weakness of the De Leonists in this respect has been noted above, but De Leon’s view that “the political movement is absolutely the reflex of the economic organisation” had parallels elsewhere.<sup>114</sup> In September 1936, mere months after the outbreak of revolution in Spain, for instance, the CNT–Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI) *Information Bulletin* could confidently predict the “liquidation of the bourgeois State, weakened by suffocation ... the result of economic expropriation.”<sup>115</sup> (The Spanish Revolution started as a

revolt against an attempted military coup by General Francisco Franco, but quickly escalated, as the CNT structures—sometimes in conjunction with workers from the large but moderate socialist General Workers Union, or UGT—placed hundreds of workplaces under self-management, farmworkers and peasants seized land, and a popular militia of over a hundred thousand was formed.)

The problem with the “suffocation” position, though, is that the resources of the modern state are not simply economic. As Bakunin and many others had long pointed out, the state was itself a significant body for the reproduction of a class system, and its power was partly based on its control of the means of *administration* and *coercion*. It follows that “economic expropriation” alone cannot ensure the “liquidation” of the state. Rather, this task requires the thorough dismantling of state departments, the dissolution of the armed forces and expropriation of state resources, and a comprehensive shift in power to the popular classes (at the very least along the lines suggested by Pouget and Pataud), which in turn requires a coordinated military defence.

The Friends of Durruti (again, AD), a radical group in the Spanish anarchist movement, charted an alternative position. Named after the famed anarchist militant and martyr Buenaventura Durruti (1896–1936), who we will discuss later, this group of CNT and FAI militants suggested the formation of a “Revolutionary Junta” or “National Defence Council” in a revolution to destroy the state apparatus and coordinate

- a) The management of the war
- b) The supervision of revolutionary order
- c) International affairs
- d) Revolutionary propaganda<sup>116</sup>

Like the term “soviet,” “Junta” has subsequently acquired connotations of authoritarianism and militarism at odds with its original meaning; the AD was simply advocating a democratic and mandated coordinating body based in the mass organisations of the popular classes. Other AD proposals included the seizure of all state arms and financial reserves, thoroughgoing economic transformation, the restructuring of the armed forces, armed self-defence, working-class solidarity and a pact with the UGT, and noncollaboration with foreign and local capitalist forces.

Such views may be counterposed to the actions of the CNT at the time: asserting that the fight against fascist forces required maximum antifascist unity, the CNT joined an antifascist Popular Front government in September 1936. The abysmal and tragic failure of this tactic is something we will examine in volume 2. The move was controversial from the start, and was rejected by significant sectors of the militias, the anarchist youth, the CNT, and the FAI.

The proposals of the AD, compiled in 1938 as *Towards a Fresh Revolution*, have led some to suggest that the group had rejected the broad anarchist tradition.<sup>117</sup> Trotskyist writer Felix Morrow, for example, contended that the AD was “a conscious break with the anti-statism of traditional anarchism” because it “explicitly declared the need for democratic organs of power, juntas or soviets, in the overthrow of capitalism.”<sup>118</sup> By contrast, Morrow alleged, class collaboration “lies concealed in the heart of anarchist philosophy” (anarchists, he claimed, believe rev-

olution requires that capitalists embrace anarchism, thereby leading anarchists to embrace an ostensibly friendly state), which also supposedly “calls upon the workers to turn their backs on the state and seek control of the factories as the real source of power,” assuming that the state will simply collapse as a result.<sup>119</sup>

Morrow’s view that anarchism advocates class collaboration and statism is difficult to take seriously. The broad anarchist tradition does not base itself on the belief that the revolution requires a change of heart on the part of the ruling class. His second claim—which evidently goes back to Engels’s polemic against Spanish anarchism—is more compelling, if only because it is given some support by the “suffocation thesis” presented in the CNT and FAI press.

Some anarchists also suggest that, while anarchism as such certainly has a genuinely revolutionary potential, syndicalism inevitably embraces the suffocation thesis. Syndicalism is “a-political, arguing all that is necessary to make the revolution is for the workers to seize the factories and the land,” and then “the state and all the other institutions of the ruling class will come toppling down.”<sup>120</sup> While there are significant differences between Morrow’s analysis and this view, they share the proposition that the CNT’s entry into the Popular Front was not simply a questionable strategic decision, but followed from the very nature of syndicalism.

There are, however, serious problems with this reasoning. As we have seen, many syndicalists argued for armed action against counterrevolution. A National Defence Council of the sort proposed by the AD was indeed very much in line with Bakunin’s proposal for “permanent barricades,” and “federating the fighting battalions” to create “district by district” a “common and coordinated defence against internal and external enemies.”<sup>121</sup> Such a structure had even been created in December 1933, when the National Revolutionary Council was formed to head a revolutionary uprising, including in its number Durruti. It was the logical outcome of the position that the popular militia must be linked to the organs of popular counterpower, clearly present in Pouget and Pataud’s account, where the CGT Confederal Committee, based on delegate structures and radical democracy, connects the unions and the militia. This amounts to no less than taking power in society and exercising it through an armed federation; it also involves forcing the ruling class to surrender to an anarchist society.

The Spanish anarchists actually held the view that the revolution must “annihilate the power of the state” through class struggle and “superior firing power”—since the days of FORE.<sup>122</sup> At its Zaragoza congress in May 1936, the CNT argued for “necessary steps” to defend against “the perils of foreign invasion ... or against counter-revolution at home.” The best defence of the revolution was the “people armed,” a militia of “confederal defence cadres” ready for “large-scale battles,” and armed with “modern military techniques,” planes, tanks, armoured vehicles, machine guns, and anti-aircraft cannon, with the militia “effectively organised nationwide.”<sup>123</sup>

The entry of the CNT into the Popular Front, then, was not the inevitable result of a concealed anarchist policy of class collaboration, nor was it the result of an intrinsic link between syndicalism and the suffocation thesis. It was a strategic mistake that led the Spanish anarchists to “throw overboard all their principles,” and start to “dismantle its autonomous and revolutionary power apparatus.”<sup>124</sup> It was

against this tactic and the retreats it implied that the AD—along with others, like the FIJL—revolted. In this sense, the AD by no means represented “a conscious break with the anti-statism of traditional anarchism” by calling for “democratic organs of power, juntas or soviets, in the overthrow of capitalism,” but rather a *reaffirmation* of the traditional perspectives of anarchism.<sup>125</sup> This can be seen, for instance, in the group’s proposals around the elected Junta or National Defence Council:

This body will be organised as follows: members of the revolutionary Junta will be elected by democratic vote in the union organisations. Account is to be taken of the number of comrades away at the front; these comrades must have the right to representation. The Junta will steer clear of economic affairs, which are the exclusive preserve of the unions ... the trade union assemblies will exercise control over the Junta’s activities.... The Municipality [i.e., the commune] shall take charge of those functions of society that fall outside the preserve of the unions.<sup>126</sup>

This is a standard syndicalist position, and it was also the CNT position, adopted at the Zaragoza congress, actively defended by Durruti at a major CNT plenum in August 1936, reaffirmed as late as September 1936, and actually applied in part of Spain that year through through structures called the Council of Aragon and the Council of Valencia.<sup>127</sup> It was among the principles thrown overboard with the entry into the Popular Front.

There are, however, two important points made by the AD that mark it as profoundly innovative in the context of Spanish anarchism and worthy of the closest consideration by the broad anarchist tradition more generally. First, the AD recognised that the state would prove resilient even in the face of a revolutionary general strike and a popular militia, and that a revolutionary uprising could easily turn into a *protracted* civil war. This, arguably, the CNT and its counterparts elsewhere failed to adequately grasp. Second, it argued that the tendency of traditional anarchism and syndicalism to gloss over such issues, or invoke a suffocation thesis, meant that it failed to give serious thought to the tactics required in such a situation:

What happened was what had to happen. The CNT was utterly devoid of revolutionary theory. We did not have a concrete programme. We had no idea where we were going. We had lyricism aplenty; but when all is said and done, we did not know what to do with our masses of workers or how to give substance to the popular effusion that erupted inside our organisations. By not knowing what to do, we handed the revolution on a platter to the bourgeoisie and the Marxists who support the farce of yesteryear. What is worse, we allowed the bourgeoisie a breathing space; to return, to re-form and to behave as would a conqueror. The CNT did not know how to live up to its role. It did not want to push ahead with the revolution with all its consequences.<sup>128</sup>

This opinion has been confirmed, inter alia, by the CNT’s official historian and veteran activist José Peirats Valls (1908–1989), who joined the CNT aged four-teen and was an active militant for sixty years. He would write later that

in their writings, many anarchists conceived of a miraculous solution to the problem. We fell easily into this trap in Spain. We believed that “once the dog is dead the rabies is over.” We proclaimed a full-blown revolution without worrying about the many complex problems that a revolution

brings with it... [T]o the Iberian anarchists of my generation the notion that there is an inevitable reaction to any revolution was unthinkable, or unimportant. Some Spanish comrades still lament that our revolution had to be accompanied by a civil war. But when has there been a revolution without a civil war? Is not a revolution a civil war by its very nature? And yet we were caught unprepared when our revolution inevitably provoked a civil war.<sup>129</sup>

It was precisely this lack of a clear plan, he maintained, that led the CNT and the FAI to join the Popular Front when faced with Franco: it was this great flaw that the AD recognised and tried to correct.

### **In Conclusion: Anarchism, Syndicalism, and Counterpower**

In a previous chapter, we disputed the view that the history of the broad anarchist tradition can be understood as divided into separate “anarcho-communist” and syndicalist currents, and some of the material that we have presented here confirms that analysis. For one, Malatesta should be seen as a supporter of syndicalism, if not an outright syndicalist, rather than representative of an antisindicalist “anarcho-communist” position. Earlier, we argued that the foundational text in Platformism, the *Platform*, accepted syndicalism; we reiterate here that the same is true of the AD’s *Towards a Fresh Revolution*, usually regarded as the second most significant Platformist document.

More important, we have pointed out that syndicalist movements should be understood as *part of* a larger anarchist social movement; typically embedded within dense networks of peasant and working-class associational life, and central to revolutionary popular countercultures, syndicalist unions should not be arbitrarily divided from the larger revolutionary movement of which they formed an integral part. We cannot agree with Bookchin when he described syndicalism as a narrowing of anarchism, and a “change in focus from the commune to the trade union, from all the oppressed to the industrial proletariat, from the streets to the factories, and, in emphasis at least, from insurrection to the general strike.”<sup>130</sup> Syndicalism focuses on class struggle, but does not narrow it unduly.

While syndicalism certainly stressed the view—which was widely held in the broad anarchist tradition—that revolutionary workplace struggle was the essential lever for revolutionary change, and regarded revolutionary unions as decisive and irreplaceable organs of counterpower, it cannot reasonably be portrayed as a form of economism or workerism. These are perhaps the least appropriate terms to use to describe a revolutionary labour tradition premised on the necessity of a “fundamental transvaluation of values” and self-organised, antistatist struggle.<sup>131</sup>

In rejecting the insurrectionist anarchist position that unions were always and everywhere nonrevolutionary, syndicalists did not take the antithetical position that unions were always and everywhere revolutionary. Unions could only be revolutionary and make a revolution in *particular* circumstances: when they were infused with revolutionary and libertarian ideas, when they were based on direct action and self-activity, when they were radically democratic and participatory, and when they aimed at and prepared for revolution. This chapter rejects the notion that syndical-

ists believe that unions spontaneously generate revolutionary consciousness. It also disputes the assertion that syndicalists ignore political issues as well as the state.

Syndicalism is profoundly political, and takes the state very seriously indeed. Taken to its logical conclusion (and of course, there might be some who shy away from this conclusion), *all* mass anarchism amounts to a project of *taking power* in society and creating a coordinated system of stateless governance; this is especially true of syndicalism. Syndicalists have given the new order many names: a “libertarian social power,” a “union governing power,” a “libertarian polity,” an “Industrial Social Order,” a “Workers’ Republic,” and an “industrial government, a shop government.”<sup>132</sup> It is based on structures of self-management, and is “carried out from the bottom up, by free association, with unions and localities federated by communes, regions, nations, and, finally, a great universal and international federation,” allowing a “federalist and noncoercive centralisation” that is ultimately expressed in a body that might be called a confederal committee (or for those who accept that this order must also involve armed self-defence, a Revolutionary Junta or Defence Council).<sup>133</sup>

This polity is not, however, a state—at least as the state is understood in the broad anarchist tradition—for control is exercised from the bottom up, and linked by delegates and mandates, rather than hierarchically imposed by officials, and class no longer exists. It would take over some functions currently run by the state—such as organising public services—but it would not itself be a state. It differs from the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat precisely in its radically democratic character and classlessness. In aiming to move from oppositional *counterpower* to a hegemonic libertarian *social power*, syndicalists also differ profoundly with autonomist Marxists like John Holloway who advocate changing the world without taking power.<sup>134</sup>

Auxiliary to this project is the fact that at least one sector of society—the ruling class—*will* be forcibly suppressed and coerced into the anarchist society. For some, like the De Leonists, this might be done peacefully through expropriation and the dissolution of the state; for most syndicalists, it will also involve the use of violence. Yet from the perspective of the broad anarchist tradition, the forceful overthrow of the ruling class is not in contradiction with the antiauthoritarian principle. It is force used to remove the existing coercion of the capitalist system and can be seen as an act of legitimate self-defence by the popular classes. To allow the ruling class to retain its privileges until it is willing to concede to anarchism, on the grounds that everyone must enter anarchism voluntarily, is to provide that class with a permanent veto on the emancipation of the great majority of humanity. Unlike utopian socialism, anarchism does not premise its strategy on the moral conversion of the ruling class it invokes legitimate coercive power derived from collective and democratic decision making.

Where differences do arise among syndicalists is on the question of whether force must supplement the general strike in the destruction of the state and the overthrow of the ruling class. The great majority of syndicalists believed that a revolution would need to be defended against a counterrevolution by the force of arms, with a popular militia—linked to the unions and supplied with the best weaponry—playing the main role. This coordinated military defence would complement the



creation of a planned and self-managed economy, and would therefore be part of the libertarian polity.

Given that the majority of syndicalists thought that armed force would be necessary, that syndicalism was embraced by the majority of mass anarchists, and that mass anarchism was the predominant form of anarchism, the need for an armed defence of the revolution can reasonably be regarded as representative of the view of the great majority in the broad anarchist tradition on this question. Pacifist ideas have had some influence on a section of mass anarchists, a notable example being Bart de Ligt (1883–1938), a Dutch anarchist. For the pacifists, violence in any form is both unnecessary for the revolution as well as counterrevolutionary in itself in that it must supposedly generate a new system of inequality and domination. But pacificism was always marginal.

The use of force, even force without violence, in the revolution has a class character. Engels claimed that anarchists were hypocritical for opposing “authority” when a “revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part.”<sup>135</sup> But this formulation, which conflates the use of force to defend exploitation and domination with the actions of popular resistance and self-emancipation, amounts to treating murder and self-defence as identical. Even a pacifist strategy implies some measure of coercion, however peaceful, to impose the will of the popular classes on the ruling classes. Many anarchist and syndicalist actions—propaganda, boycotts, protests, strikes, and union organising—are peaceful, yet they are nonetheless coercive.

Many mass anarchists clearly believed that violence was regrettably necessary for a revolution, but would probably have agreed with Malatesta that “violence is justifiable only when it is necessary to defend oneself and others against violence. It is where necessity ends that crime begins.”<sup>136</sup> This should not imply a reign of reprisals against the former rulers or the use of terror as a revolutionary weapon. As Bakunin put it, “Bloody revolutions are often necessary, thanks to human stupidity; yet they are always an evil, a monstrous evil and a great disaster, not only with regard to the victims, but also for the sake of the purity and perfection of the purpose in whose name they take place.”<sup>137</sup> For Malatesta, “To condone ferocious anti-human feelings and raise them to the level of principle,” advocating them “as a tactic for a movement ... is both evil and counter-revolutionary.”<sup>138</sup>

## Notes

1. A. Guillen, *Anarchist Economics: The Economics of the Spanish Libertarian Collectives, 1936–39* (Durban: Zabalaza Books, 1992), 17; T. Wetzell, *Looking Back after 70 Years: Workers Power and the Spanish Revolution*, available at <http://www.workersolidarity.org/Spanishrevolution.html#power> (accessed June 15, 2005).
2. We would specifically like to thank Bert Altena for his comments on this section.
3. Thorpe, “*The Workers Themselves*,” 31.
4. A. Lehning, “Cornilissen, Christian,” in *Biografisch Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland* (Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 1987), 35–39.
5. P. Monatte, “Syndicalism: An Advocacy,” in *The Anarchist Reader*, ed. G. Woodcock (1907; repr., Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 218–19.

6. Malatesta is commonly presented as hostile to syndicalism. Bookchin states that Malatesta was "uncomfortable with syndicalist doctrines" and developed a "fundamental criticism of syndicalism"; Joll writes that Malatesta saw syndicalism as a rival "new movement" and "not only attacked some of the basic conceptions of the syndicalists; he also attacked their tactical methods"; Kedward claims that Malatesta "put the case" against syndicalism as "inevitably conservative, working within the established economic system for legal ends"; Woodcock labels Malatesta's input at the Amsterdam meeting "Syndicalism: an anarchist critique" (see Malatesta, "Syndicalism"); and Graham adds that Malatesta had a "broader conception of anarchism ... not exclusively working class." See Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 137; Bookchin, "Deep Ecology, Anarchosyndicalism, and the Future of Anarchist Thought," 50; Joll, *The Anarchists*, 205; Kedward, *The Anarchists*, 65; Graham, *Anarchism*, 206, 328.

7. See Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 113, 115, 120–21, 126; Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 223; E. Malatesta, "Anarchism and Syndicalism," in *The Anarchist Revolution: Polemical Writings, 1924–1931: Errico Malatesta*, ed. V. Richards (April–May 1925; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1995), 23; E. Malatesta, "A Project of Anarchist Organisation," in *The Anarchist Revolution: Polemical Writings, 1924–1931: Errico Malatesta*, ed. V. Richards (October 1927; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1995), 94.

8. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 113.
9. Yoast, "The Development of Argentine Anarchism," 149.
10. Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 220–23, 225.
11. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 113
12. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 114–115, 117, 119, 123–24
13. Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 223; see also Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 129.
14. Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 221–22.
15. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 118–21; Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 225.
16. Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 223.
17. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 113–18, 125–26, 129–30; Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 221–23.
18. Bakunin, "The Programme of the Alliance," 249, 250–51.
19. Maximoff, *The Programme of Anarcho-syndicalism*, 58.
20. Kubo, "On Class Struggle and the Daily Struggle," 381.
21. Goldman, "The Failure of the Russian Revolution," 159.
22. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, chapters 4 and 5.
23. *Ibid.*, chapter 4.
24. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 115.
25. See Bekken, "The First Daily Anarchist Newspaper."
26. *Ibid.*, 5.
27. Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 131; see also Nelson, *Beyond the Martyrs*.
28. M. A. Ackelsberg, "Revolution and Community: Mobilization, De-politicisation, and Perceptions of Change in Civil War Spain," in *Women Living Change*, ed. S. C. Bourque and D. R. Divine (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985); R. Hadfield, "Politics and Protest in the Spanish Anarchist Movement: Libertarian Women in Early Twentieth-Century Barcelona," *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History*, no. 3 (2001).
29. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, chapter 6.
30. V. Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, rev. ed. (London: Freedom Press, 1983), 198–99, 206.
31. Levy, "Italian Anarchism," 48–49.
32. A. B. Spitzer, "Anarchy and Culture: Fernand Pelloutier and the Dilemma of Revolutionary Syndicalism," *International Review of Social History* 8 (1963).
33. Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World*, 146–51.

34. *Ibid.*, 149.
35. Salerno, *Red November, Black November*, 6ff.
36. Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 65.
37. On its limitations, see, for example, Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 129–32.
38. On Rhodokanaty, see anonymous, *Plotino Rhodakanaty: The Actions of a Greek Anarchist in Mexico* (East Brunswick, NJ: No God, No Master Anarchist Pamphlets, n.d.); Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class*.
39. Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class*, 32–42.
40. *Ibid.*, 113–15. In 1911, 84 percent of the population was illiterate; J. D. Cockcroft, *Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accumulation, and the State* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), 88.
41. A. Gorman, “Anarchists in Education: The Free Popular University in Egypt (1901),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 41, no. 3 (2005): 306–7, 311–12.
42. Casanovas, “Labour and Colonialism in Cuba in the Second Half of the Nineteenth-Century,” 303–5.
43. Shaffer, “Purifying the Environment for the Coming New Dawn.”
44. E. A. Gordon, “Anarchism in Brazil: Theory and Practice, 1890–1920” (PhD diss., Tulane University, 1978), 176; R. Ramos, E. Rodrigues, and A. Samis, *Against All Tyranny! Essays on Anarchism in Brazil* (London: Kate Sharpley Library, 2003), 4.
45. P. Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980); K. Teitelbaum and W. J. Reese, “American Socialist Pedagogy and Experimentation in the Progressive Era: The Socialist Sunday School,” *History of Education Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (1983).
46. Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 121; see also M. Malet, *Nestor Makhno in the Russian Civil War* (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1982).
47. Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 262–69, 290.
48. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 289.
49. On the idea of an “oppositional counter-public” see F. Shor, “Left Labor Agitators in the Pacific Rim in the Early Twentieth Century,” *International Labor and Working Class History*, no. 67 (2005): 150.
50. Malatesta, “Syndicalism,” 221–22; also Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 125.
51. See, for example, Molnár and Pekmez, “Rural Anarchism in Spain and the 1873 Cantonalist Revolution,” 171–72.
52. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, chapter 4.
53. Ford and Foster, *Syndicalism*, 38.
54. *Ibid.*, 39–40.
55. See Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World*, 144–46.
56. Michels, *Political Parties*.
57. *Ibid.*, 318, 325–26.
58. *Ibid.*, 318–19, 322–23.
59. P. J. Cook, “Robert Michels’s *Political Parties* in Perspective,” *Journal of Politics* 33, no. 3 (1971): 775–76, 781–83, 785–86, 789.
60. *Ibid.*, 776–79.
61. For example, a number of contemporary U.S. unions, long considered exemplars of a bureaucratic and moderate style of unionism, have recently been increasingly revitalised by a crisis in the old leadership, the rise of new layers of activists, and pressure from other unions to act in a more innovative manner. As new members were recruited, and new organising and resistance tactics were adopted, including political education, the process of revitalisation gained momentum. Significantly, some of the impetus for change came from the union bureaucracy, raising questions about the link that Michels postulated between oligarchy and conservatism. See K. Voss

and R. Sherman, "Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy: Union Revitalization in the American Labor Movement," *American Journal of Sociology* 106, no. 2 (2000).

62. A classic study that made this point was S. M. Lipset, *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1956), which argued that a decentralised and democratic structure, a commitment to local autonomy and democracy, and competition between different factions provided major obstacles to the emergence of oligarchy.

63. Union education, plus the existing cultural and political traditions of union members, play a fundamental role in the emergence of democratic unionism; S. M. Buhlungu, "Democracy and Modernisation in the Making of the South African Trade Union Movement: The Dilemma of Leadership, 1973–2000" (PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2000).

64. Ford and Foster, *Syndicalism*, 39–40.

65. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 124–25; 125; Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 221, 225.

66. Quoted in Graham, *Anarchism*, 376, editor's notes.

67. Bayerlein and Van der Linden, "Revolutionary Syndicalism in Portugal," 160–64.

68. See, for example, Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*; Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World*, chapter 19.

69. Industrial Workers of the World, *What Is the IWW?*

70. T. Kaplan, "Other Scenarios: Women and Spanish Anarchism," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977), 166.

71. José Peirats, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution* (1964; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1990), 264–65.

72. *Ibid.*, 268.

73. There is a fairly wide literature on this group; see, inter alia, Ackelsberg, "Revolution and Community"; M. A. Ackelsberg, "'Separate and Equal'? Mujeres Libres and Anarchist Strategy for Women's Emancipation," *Feminist Studies* 11, no. 1 (1985); M. A. Ackelsberg, "Models of Revolution: Rural Women and Anarchist Collectivisation in Spain," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 20, no. 3 (1993); M. A. Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, rev. ed. (Oakland: AK Press, 2005); P. Carpena, "Spain 1936: Free Women, a Feminist, Proletarian, and Anarchist Movement," in *Women of the Mediterranean*, ed. by M. Gadant (London: Zed Books, 1986); Kaplan, "Other Scenarios"; M. Nash, "Mujeres Libres: Anarchist Women in the Spanish Civil War," *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* 10–11, nos. 3 and 1 (1979).

74. Quoted in N. Rider, "The Practice of Direct Action: The Barcelona Rent Strike of 1931," in *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice*, ed. D. Goodway (London: Routledge, 1989), 88.

75. *Ibid.*, 87–101.

76. For a fascinating account, see P. B. Radcliff, *From Mobilization to Civil War: The Politics of Polarization in the Spanish City of Gijón, 1900–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

77. See Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*; Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse*; Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards Movement*.

78. Shaffer, "Purifying the Environment for the Coming New Dawn."

79. A. G. Wood, "Postrevolutionary Pioneer: Anarchist María Luisa Marín and the Veracruz Renters' Movement," *A Contracorriente* 2, no. 3 (2005).

80. *Ibid.*, 3–6, 13–35.

81. A. Wood and J. A. Baer, "Strength in Numbers: Urban Rent Strikes and Political Transformation in the Americas, 1904–1925," *Journal of Urban History* 32, no. 6 (2006): 869, 874–75.

82. J. A. Baer, "Tenant Mobilization and the 1907 Rent Strike in Buenos Aires," *Americas* 49, no. 3 (1993); Yoast, "The Development of Argentine Anarchism."

83. Hirsch, "The Anarcho-Syndicalist Roots of a Multi-Class Alliance."

84. Engels, "The Bakuninists at Work," 132–33.

85. *Ibid.*

86. Holton, "Syndicalist Theories of the State," 5.
87. Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards Movement*, 276, 280.
88. Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism*, 43.
89. Lambert, "Political Unionism in South Africa," 45.
90. Enrico Leone, as summarised in Michels, *Political Parties*, 317.
91. Thorpe, "The Workers Themselves," 18–19.
92. Burgmann, *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism*, 53.
93. Holton, "Syndicalist Theories of the State."
94. Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 224.
95. See Richards, "Notes for a Biography," 283–84.
96. Quoted in Dubofsky, "Big Bill" Haywood, 65.
97. R. Chaplin, *The General Strike* (1933; repr., Chicago: IWW, 1985), n.p.
98. De Leon, *The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World*, 21.
99. *Ibid.*, 23–24; Socialist Labour Party [De Leon], *The Socialist Labour Party*, 20.
100. Quoted in Bekken, "The First Daily Anarchist Newspaper," 13.
101. Roediger and Rosemont, *Haymarket Scrapbook*, 86.
102. Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 160–63.
103. E. Pataud and E. Pouget, *How We Shall Bring about the Revolution: Syndicalism and the Cooperative Commonwealth* (1909; repr., London: Pluto Press, 1990), 75–84, 90–102.
104. *Ibid.*, 83–84.
105. *Ibid.*, 154–55, 156, 158, 159–65.
106. Holton, "Syndicalist Theories of the State," 11.
107. International Working People's Association, "The Pittsburgh Proclamation," in *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume I: From Anarchy to Anarchism, 300 CE to 1939*, ed. R. Graham (1883; repr., Montréal: Black Rose, 2005), 192.
108. Ford and Foster, *Syndicalism*, 9–13, 29–30.
109. Maximoff, *The Programme of Anarcho-syndicalism*, 49–52.
110. Berkman, *The ABC of Anarchism*.
111. Brown, *The Social General Strike*, 10.
112. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, chapter 5.
113. Thorpe, "The Workers Themselves," 324, appendix D.
114. De Leon, *The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World*, 21.
115. Quoted in Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, 71.
116. Friends of Durruti, *Towards a Fresh Revolution*, 25.
117. *Ibid.*
118. F. Morrow, *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain* (1938; repr., New Park Publications Ltd., London 1963), chapter 17, available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/morrow-felix/1938/revolution-spain/ch17.htm> (accessed June 30, 2006).
119. *Ibid.*, chapter 5, available at [http://www.spunk.org/library/writers/rocker/sp001495/rocker\\_as5.html](http://www.spunk.org/library/writers/rocker/sp001495/rocker_as5.html) (accessed June 30, 2006).
120. Workers Solidarity Movement, *Position Paper*, section 5.2.
121. Bakunin, "The Programme of the International Brotherhood," 152–54; Bakunin, "Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis," 190.
122. Maura, "The Spanish Case," 66, 68, 72, 80–83.
123. National Confederation of Labour, *Resolution on Libertarian Communism as Adopted by the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo, Zaragoza*, 10–11.

124. Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, 83; A. Bar, "The CNT: The Glory and Tragedy of Spanish Anarchosyndicalism," in *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective*, ed. M. van der Linden and W. Thorpe (Otterup, Denmark: Scholar, 1990), 131.
125. Morrow, *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain*, chapter 17. The Marxist author of the major English-language study of the AD notes that "its ideology and watchwords were quintessentially in the CNT idiom: it cannot be said that they displayed a Marxist ideology at any time." Rather than seeking to revise anarchism, the group was "against the abandonment of revolutionary objectives and of anarchism's fundamental and quintessential ideological principles, which the CNT-FAI leaders had thrown over." See A. Guillamón, *The Friends of Durruti Group, 1937-1939* (Oakland: AK Press, 1996), 61, 95, 107.
126. Friends of Durruti, *Towards a Fresh Revolution*, 24-25.
127. A. Paz, *Durruti: The People Armed* (Montréal: Black Rose, 1987), 247. An important review of the debate over taking power or joining the Popular Front is provided by Wetzel, *Looking Back after 70 Years*. The earlier version of this piece, which has some substantial differences, is also worth consulting: T. Wetzel, *Workers' Power and the Spanish Revolution*, available at <http://www.uncanny.net/~wsa/spain.html> (accessed September 10, 2004).
128. Friends of Durruti, *Towards a Fresh Revolution*, 12.
129. Peirats, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*, 13-14.
130. Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 137; Bookchin, *To Remember Spain*, 20-21.
131. Goldman, "The Failure of the Russian Revolution," 159.
132. For these terms, see works like Guillen, *Anarchist Economics*, 17; Wetzel, *Workers' Power and the Spanish Revolution*; Wetzel, *Looking Back after 70 Years*; De Leon, "Industrial Unionism"; Connolly, *Socialism Made Easy*, 48; Haywood and Bohm, *Industrial Socialism*, 49.
133. Bakunin, "The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State," 270; Guérin, *Anarchism*, 55, 153.
134. Holloway rejects both the parliamentary road to power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and advocates a system with a "commune of communes or council of councils," but rejects the idea of destroying the state or making a revolution; see J. Holloway, *Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution for Today*, rev. ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 241. How exactly his "commune of communes" would abolish capitalism and state power remains rather vague.
135. Engels, "On Authority," 102-5.
136. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 55.
137. Quoted in Eltzbacher, *Anarchism*, 89.