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Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885–1915

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Summary: Analyses of anarchism emphasizing cyclical patterns of advances and retreats inadequately explain how anarchism sustained itself over time. They foster a picture of powerlessness before repression and cyclical reappearances as if by spontaneous germination, thus lending themselves to interpretations, such as Hobsbawm's millenarianism, that identify discontinuity, spontaneism, and lack of organization as features of anarchism, and ultimately supporting charges of ineffectiveness and irrationalism. A narrow framework of analysis of national scope is responsible for such explanatory inadequacy. This article illustrates the transnational dimension of Italian anarchism, by analysing its presence in the United States and worldwide, with special emphasis on the anarchist press. A transnational analysis reveals new forms of integration, continuity, and organization, based on the mobility of militants, resources, and ideas across the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. In times of repression, seeming entrances and exits of anarchism on the Italian stage often corresponded to shifts of initiative across the Italian border. Transnationalism was a built-in characteristic that supported insurrectionary tactics by enhancing the opaqueness of their preparation. Together, insurrectionism, organizational opaqueness, and transnationalism help providing an alternative to the advance-and-retreat pattern of explanation.

INTRODUCTION

In *The Many-Headed Hydra*, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker tell the lost history of proletarian resistance to rising capitalism around the Atlantic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They claim that this history has remained hidden, and argue that:

> [...] the historic invisibility of many of the book's subjects owes much to the repression originally visited upon them [...]. It also owes much to the violence of abstraction in the writing of history, the severity of history that has long been the captive of the nation-state, which remains in most studies the largely unquestioned framework of analysis.[1]

1. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA, 2000), p. 7.

A similar claim could be made about the history of anarchism. Analogous to the revolutionary Atlantic, what remains hardly visible about anarchism is partly due to repression. This is indeed true in the immediate sense of "the violence of the stake, the chopping block, the gallows" etc., referred to by Linebaugh and Rediker. In addition, repression affected anarchism by making it opaque, in the same sense in which E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* called Luddites "the opaque society". Much of Thompson's discussion of the Luddites' clouded sources equally applies to the anarchist movement of a century later. On the one hand, those who had direct knowledge of the movement – the anarchists themselves – were necessarily secretive about it. Anarchist sources tend to be reliable, but typically reticent. On the other hand, police and journalistic sources are more readily available, but they are unreliable and distorted. As for police spies and informers, they often tended to give authorities what these expected to hear. Linebaugh's and Rediker's second claim, about "the violence of abstraction in the writing of history", straightforwardly applies to anarchism, too. The use of analytic frameworks of national scope prevented historians from grasping relevant aspects of anarchism. Questioning such frameworks in the case of Italian anarchism is the purpose of this article.[2]

For some scholars, the history of Italian anarchism appears to follow a cyclical pattern of advances and retreats, with outbreaks of revolt followed by periods of quiescence and then resurgences. Thus Nunzio Pernicone identifies the periods of resurgence with the years 1884–1885, 1889–1891, 1892–1894, and 1897–1898, commenting: "as if the movement was locked in a vicious cycle of advance and retreat, every anarchist revival triggered or coincided with a new wave of government repression [...] that eradicated all that had been accomplished". Similar patterns are found in other countries of strong anarchist presence, such as Spain. For example, E.J. Hobsbawm thus summarizes sixty years of history of Andalusian anarchism within a paragraph:

> The movement collapsed in the later 1870s [...] revived again in the later 1880s, to collapse again [...]. In 1892 there was another outburst [...]. In the early 1900s another revival occurred [...]. After another period of quiescence the greatest of the hitherto recorded mass movements was set off, it is said, by news of the Russian Revolution [...]. The Republic (1931–1936) saw the last of the great revivals [...].

Thus goes the pattern of anarchist movements that seem to disappear in the wave of arrests, exiles, shut-down of periodicals, and disbandment of groups after each struggle's onset, only to resurface years later in a new cycle of agitations. The historiographical problem of this model is that this

2. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, rev. edn (Harmondsworth, repr. 1974), pp. 529–542.

alternation of appearances and disappearances fosters interpretations identifying discontinuity, spontaneism, and lack of organization as inherent to anarchism.[3]

Such characteristics have provided ground for positing an unbridgeable gap between anarchist ends and means, which has in turn backed up charges of ineffectiveness, and ultimately of irrationalism, as E.J. Hobsbawm's interpretation of anarchism as millenarian illustrates. For Hobsbawm, a millenarian movement is characterized, firstly, by revolutionism, i.e. "a profound and total rejection of the present, evil world, and a passionate longing for another and better one"; secondly, by "a fairly standardized 'ideology' of the chiliastic type"; and, thirdly, by "a fundamental vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about". Abstract revolutionism and unconcern for practical means, and hence for empirical issues in general, entail that anarchism be not only irrational, but also unchanging. As Jerome Mintz notes, in Hobsbawm's book "attitudes and beliefs of 1903–1905, 1918–1920, 1933, and 1936 are lumped together or considered interchangeable". In turn, this alleged immutability is Hobsbawm's ground for extending his historical condemnation from Andalusian anarchism to anarchism in general, and from the past to the future as well, concluding that:

> [...] classical anarchism is thus a form of peasant movement almost incapable of effective adaptation to modern conditions, though it is their outcome [...]. And thus the history of anarchism, almost alone among modern social movements, is one of unrelieved failure; and unless some unforeseen historical changes occur, it is likely to go down in the books with the Anabaptists and the rest of the prophets who, though not unarmed, did not know what to do with their arms, and were defeated for ever.[4]

Unfortunately, the millenarian interpretation, which has become standard for many writers, hides more than it reveals. It essentially insists that anarchism results from spontaneous combustion, as it were, which is not helpful in political or historical analysis. Accounts of anarchism as archaic, incapable of adaptation, and ultimately doomed are unhelpful for understanding what made the movement last. Emphasis on anarchism's immutability and detachment from empirical reality conceals the historian's own detachment from the evolving empirical reality of anarchism. However, other historians have started to change this picture, trying instead to understand in more positive terms how anarchism functioned and sustained itself over time. For example, Hobsbawm's millenarianism

3. Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864–1892* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), p. 7; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester, 1959), pp. 78–79.

4. *Ibid*. pp. 57–58, 92; Jerome R. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Chicago, IL [etc.], 1982), p. 271.

was questioned by Temma Kaplan, who sought to show that Andalusian anarchism was "a rational, not a millenarian response to a specific social configuration", and that "by distinguishing among forms of oppression, it demonstrates that even exploited people have political options from among which they choose".[5]

Many historians of Italian anarchism have likewise resisted the millenarian approach. Furthermore, Italian anarchist emigration has been well-known and illustrated in several works. However, such works have usually studied Italian anarchism in specific countries – as Leonardo Bettini's essays on Brazil, Egypt, and the United States – or have limited themselves to occasionally following the anarchist "knights errant" abroad for the sake of chronological continuity – as Pier Carlo Masini's two-volume history of Italian anarchism, which remains the most comprehensive book on the subject.[6] In either case, a national perspective persisted, focusing on either Italy or receiving countries. As a result, the picture of Italian anarchism as powerless before repression, but nevertheless reappearing as if by spontaneous germination, has not been adequately challenged, even by historians who did not subscribe to it. Thus, Carl Levy aptly remarks that anarchist exile "created hidden organizational and financial mobilization networks, which explains to a great extent why the movement could suddenly snap back to life in Italy after years of torpidity". Still, he acknowledges that "the history of Italian anarchism in exile has yet to be written". His statement, made in 1989, still holds today.[7]

In fact, the seeming appearances and disappearances of the Italian anarchist movement – and its associated traits of discontinuity and lack of organization – are the fault of the historian, not of the movement, which had more continuities and organizational resources than analyses of national scope can reveal. The movement did not vanish: it just moved from one sphere to another and historians missed it when it moved from the piazza they were looking at. In fact, Italian anarchism was a transnational movement stretching around the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Like Linebaugh's and Rediker's rebellious proletariat, Italian anarchism was a many-headed hydra, not a phoenix that died and was reborn anew. Accordingly, by extending the analysis of Italian anarchism to the transnational level, more complex patterns of how anarchists organized and provided continuity to their movement are revealed. The movement's seeming entrances and exits on the Italian stage in fact correspond to shifts of initiative from the Italian territory to the

5. Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia 1868–1903* (Princeton, NJ, 1977), pp. 10–11.
6. Leonardo Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, 2 vols (Florence, 1976); Pier Carlo Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta* (Milan, 1969); *idem*, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati* (Milan, 1981).
7. Carl Levy, "Italian Anarchism, 1870–1926", in David Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice* (London [etc.], 1989), pp. 25–78, 43–44.

movement's transnational segment, especially when the hydra was beheaded in Italy. Thus, the analysis of transnational scope reveals forms of continuity and organization unavailable to analyses of national scope, and by broadening our perspective on the anarchist movement it compels us to look for more sophisticated interpretations of the movement's dynamics.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

One problem of studying the history of anarchism is that continuity can seldom be traced through formal institutions. Anarchist organizations shaped up more often as networks of militants than as formal organizations. In a formal organization, such as political parties, an impersonal structure exists, with roles in which actors are mutually substitutable. Actors may change while the structure persists. Continuity can be most naturally followed through an organization's unchanging structure. Conversely, a network has no such impersonal structure, though actors may persist over time. I will tackle this problem in two ways: by focusing on the anarchist press, the most universal and visible institution of anarchist movements; and by anchoring the study of the Italian movement to the life and activity of a prominent figure such as Errico Malatesta. I will look at Italian anarchism in the United States and worldwide, combining qualitative methods – concerning individuals, groups and newspapers, such as *La Questione Sociale* of Paterson – and quantitative methods concerning the anarchist press.

Periodicals played a central role in the anarchist movement, far beyond their specific function. Before returning to Italy from his London exile in 1913 to direct the newspaper *Volontà* in Ancona, Malatesta wrote to a comrade: "I attribute the greatest importance to the success of the newspaper, not only for the propaganda it will be able to carry out, but also because it will be useful as a means, and a cover, for work of a more practical nature." An 1898 article about organization in *L'Agitazione* of Ancona, another of Malatesta's periodicals, referred to periodicals as fulfilling the function of correspondence committees.[8] Indeed, one often encounters the idea of anarchist periodicals as *organs*, even – or especially – when no formal organization existed. Thus, around 1897–1898 *L'Agitazione* and *L'Avvenire Sociale* of Messina were respectively considered the organs of the two currents of Italian anarchism, the organizationist and the anti-organizationist. Likewise, in 1902–1903 Italian anarchists across the United States extensively debated about the

8. Errico Malatesta to Luigi Bertoni, London, 12 June 1913, Errico Malatesta, *Epistolario: Lettere edite e inedite, 1873–1932*, Rosaria Bertolucci (ed.) (Avenza, 1984), p. 92; "Questioni di tattica", *L'Agitazione* (Ancona), 3 February 1898.

best location for their organ, after a proposal to move *La Questione Sociale* from Paterson to Barre had been made. Eventually a new periodical, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, was created in Barre instead, taking over the role of Italian anarchist organ in the United States. For a periodical to be an organ meant that contributions tended to converge on it, while smaller periodicals would often cease publication voluntarily, to let their resources converge on major ones, as *Il Pensiero Anarchico* of Rome did in 1913, when *Volontà* was founded.[9]

On the role of the press in disseminating ideas, Kropotkin remarked in 1899 that socialistic literature had never been rich in books, while its main force lay in pamphlets and newspapers. If one wants to understand how workers accept socialist ideals – he argued – "there remains nothing but to take collections of papers and read them all through [...]. Quite a new world of social relations and methods of thought and action is revealed by this reading, which gives an insight into what cannot be found anywhere else".[10] With respect to Italian anarchism, suffice to mention that its most fundamental and long-standing debate, about organization, includes no original contribution in book form, nor does the copious output of Errico Malatesta and Luigi Galleani, the respective leading figures of the organizationist and anti-organizationist currents.

The anarchist press was a vehicle of ideas not only nationally, but also internationally, as the historian Max Nettlau vividly relates:

> For a long time the anarchist ideas were constantly discussed in many papers everywhere, and some of these, like the *Temps Nouveaux*, *Le Libertaire* and *L' Anarchie* (Paris), *Le Reveil–Risveglio* (Geneva), *Il Pensiero* (Rome), *Freedom* (London), *Der Sozialist* (by Gustav Landauer) and *Freie Arbeiter* (Berlin), *De Vrije Socialist* (by Domela Nieuwenhuis, Holland), *Revista Blanca* and *Tierra y Libertad* (Spain), *Free Society*, *Mother Earth*, *El Despertar*, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, *Questione Sociale* (United States), *La Protesta* (Argentine Republic), and many others were published regularly for many years and became centers of discussion. There was besides a constant exchange of ideas from country to country by translations of questions of more than local interest. In this way every good pamphlet became very soon known internationally, and this sphere of intellectual exchange ranged from Portugal to China and New Zealand, and from Canada to Chile and Peru. This made every formal organization, however loose and informal it was, really unnecessary [...].[11]

This exchange was favoured by the transnational scope of each linguistic segment of the movement: by living in different countries and knowing different languages, militants were able to provide translations and

9. "Agli anarchici degli Stati Uniti", *La Questione Sociale* (Paterson) [hereafter *LQS*], 13 December 1902; *Volontà* (Ancona), 13 July 1913.
10. P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (New York, 1968), p. 275.
11. *Errico Malatesta: The Biography of an Anarchist. A Condensed Sketch of Malatesta from the Book Written by Max Nettlau* (New York, 1924), pp. 58–59.

correspondences from everywhere to newspapers in their own language. In a study of Italian anarchism in London, Pietro Di Paola mentions that special sections of newspapers were even dedicated to exchanging coded messages. Furthermore, the exile condition helped Italian anarchists to enrich their ideas with first-hand acquaintance with trade unions and capitalist developments in other countries, as Carl Levy argued about Malatesta's London exile.[12]

In sum, the various functions taken up by the anarchist press make it a good mirror of the movement. Certainly, different periodicals could have different functions and readerships. Malatesta's *L'Agitazione* and *L'Associazione* are a case in point. The former was printed in Italy and addressed a wider audience than just anarchists or militants. In contrast, Malatesta himself remarked that a periodical published abroad like the latter was ill-suited for mass propaganda, being more useful for the exchange of ideas and information among militants.[13] Such a periodical could be produced by a relatively small group, and still be influential without having a broad and committed local readership. Thus, press distribution cannot be mechanically translated into a numerical estimate of the militants' distribution. Still, a correlation between press distribution and movement's strength existed, as Enzo Santarelli's study of anarchism in Italy confirms by correlating the distribution of newspapers in 1890–1898 with an estimate of the size of each region's movement in 1897–1898. Indeed, the foremost regional movements, in the Marches, Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, and Sicily, were those with more than one newspaper.[14] Moreover, both kinds of periodicals – those with a relatively large local readership, and those addressing remote readers – are relevant for the purpose of studying anarchist transnationalism: the former by pointing to areas of numerically strong presence, and the latter by speaking to the movement's transnational disposition.

In addition to using the press, I give unity and continuity to my analysis by using the life and activity of a key figure, such as Errico Malatesta, as a common thread. In contrast to the absence of formal institutions, a strong persistence of individuals is observed in the Italian anarchist network, providing a handle to study continuity. If we look at the anarchist network in formal terms as a set of nodes (i.e. its militants and groups), and of links between such nodes (i.e. contacts, correspondence, resource exchanges, etc.), the best research subject would be the most densely and continuously connected node, whose web of links would come nearest to an image of the

12. Pietro Di Paola, "Italian Anarchists in London, 1870–1914", (Ph.D., Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2004), p. 157; Carl Levy, "Malatesta in Exile", *Annali della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, 15 (1981), pp. 245–280.

13. "Ai nostri corrispondenti", *L'Associazione* (Nice), 16 October 1889.

14. Enzo Santarelli, "L'Anarchisme en Italie", *Le Mouvement Social* (Paris), no. 83 (1973), pp. 135–166, 139.

Figure 1. London, 14 May 1912. Errico Malatesta in front of the Bow Street Magistrates' Court and Police Station, waiting to be tried in the "Old Bailey", the Central Criminal Court, on a criminal libel charge. Malatesta was awarded a three-month prison sentence and recommended for expulsion as an undesirable alien, after he had lived in London for most of the last quarter of a century, during which the Metropolitan Police kept a tight watch on him. However, the expulsion order was quashed as a result of an energetic protest campaign culminating in mass demonstrations in Trafalgar Square and supported by radical newspapers such as the *Daily Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian*.
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entire network. In social networks parlance, this would amount to using an egocentric network method, which studies a social network starting from a specific, arbitrary node, and following this node's links. Though my evidence will be anecdotal, without using any formal model, Malatesta is undoubtedly the historical figure that most closely approximates such a theoretical ideal.

Malatesta's prominence in Italian anarchism need not be belaboured. In brief, Malatesta was at the center of most major upheavals in Italy between 1870 and 1930, though living mostly abroad: the internationalist insurrectionary attempts of 1874 and 1877, the 1 May agitations of 1891, the Sicily and Lunigiana revolts of 1893–1894, the bread riots of 1898, the 1914 Red Week, and the 1919–1920 red biennium. Obviously, Malatesta was not a *deus ex machina* that made things happen, but instead he was integral part of a movement. His periodicals' influence is illustrated by the fact that an English language list of thirty-one all-time anarchist journals of historical significance includes six edited by Malatesta.[15] Most importantly, Malatesta well represents the movement's transnational segment, as even a cursory glance at his life shows: he was in Egypt in 1878 and 1882; in 1885–1889 he lived in Argentina and Uruguay; in 1899 he escaped from Italy to Tunisia; in 1899–1900 he was in the United States; and for most of the three decades from the 1890s to the 1910s he lived in London. By covering the entire area of Italian anarchist transnationalism, Malatesta's life truly epitomizes our topic.

Malatesta's influence on Italian anarchism directly illustrates the importance of the transnational segment, of which he was part, for the movement in the homeland. Most importantly, his relevance in both the movement in the homeland and the transnational segment makes him a key link in the relation between those two halves of the anarchist network: by illustrating the contacts of comrades abroad with Malatesta, one indirectly illustrates their contacts with the movement in Italy. In sum, in using Malatesta as a thread, I remain interested in the anarchist network as a whole. Thus, Malatesta's representativeness of that network does not reside in his being an average militant, from which generalizations are drawn, but, on the contrary, in his exceptionality, or even uniqueness. His contacts' scope and continuity and his prominence in the movement make his set of links more representative of the entire network than anyone else's.

Finally, an explanation about the concept of transnationalism is necessary. The concept has been widely used in anthropological and historical studies about migration and diasporas, taking on various, complex connotations, depending on one's focus on sending versus

15. Paul Nursey-Bray (ed.), *Anarchist Thinkers and Thought: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT, 1992).

receiving countries, and on one's interpretation of the underlying concept of "nation", which has often been associated with nationalism, nation-building, and the nation-state. For example, Benedict Anderson defines nation as "an imagined political community", thus linking it to the existence of nationalist projects aiming at creating sovereign states. Analogously, transnationalism has been defined as some kind of border-crossing nationalism. Thus, in *Nations Unbound*, Basch, Schiller, and Szanton Blanc argue that migration, along with the steady rootedness of migrant populations in nation-states, challenges the traditional conflation of geographic space and social identity, and posit the concepts of "deterritorialized nation-states" as transnational projects. In the same vein, Schiller and Fouron define "long-distance nationalism" as an ideology aiming at constituting transnational nation-states, such that emigrants permanently settled abroad continue to be part of their homeland's body politic. These authors discriminate between long-distance nationalism and diaspora, as the former applies only when a diasporic population begins to organize to obtain its own state. Others, like the scholar of Italian diaspora Donna Gabaccia and her associates, have comparatively studied the relationship between migrants and receiving countries, but in doing so they have still focused on nation-building, by studying how labour migration contributed to multi-ethnic states.[16]

Some concept of nationhood must certainly be posited for Italian anarchists, too, if nothing else, because of their mutual identification as Italians. This consisted in their sharing common origins, language, and culture. Like long-distance nationalists, they shared a political project concerning the nation-state of their country of origin. However, their relationship to nationalism, nation-building, and nation-states was the exact reverse of long-distance nationalists. Their ideology was not nationalist, but anti-nationalist, and their project was not to uphold or build the nation-state, but to abolish it. The commitment of Italian anarchists – wherever they were – to political struggle in their territorial homeland expressed a sort of division of labour, as it were, in a inherently cosmopolitan global movement opposed to all borders.

Both long-distance nationalism and anarchism challenge the territoriality of the nation-state with their border crossing, but in opposite ways. Long-distance nationalism calls for transnational nation states and

16. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), pp. 14–16; Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, PA, 1994); Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Eugene Fouron, *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home* (Durham, NC? [etc.], 2001), pp. 17–24; Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli (eds), *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana, IL, 2001).

transborder citizenry, such that the identity in scope between a people and its nation state can be reconstituted. In contrast, I argue that the transnationalism and border crossing of Italian anarchism was vital to its struggle precisely because it contrasted with the territoriality and limited sovereignty of the Italian nation state. In other words, the mismatch in scope between people and state is problematic for long-distance nationalism, but it was advantageous for anarchism.

Anarchists were not committed to struggle exclusively in their homeland. Many were also engaged in social struggles in their receiving country. For example, Michael Miller Topp has illustrated the political culture of Italian-American syndicalists in his book *Those Without a Country*. Relatedly, militants like Malatesta did not simply export ideas to other countries. Rather, their views were modified by their experiences abroad and by interacting with local movements and social contexts. However, the present article focuses on Italian anarchists from the perspective of their country of origin. Therefore, their role in receiving countries is outside of my scope. In sum, the term "transnational" does not refer here to the anarchists' dual commitment to struggles in both Italy and their receiving countries, but rather to the circumstance that the scope of the Italian anarchist movement extended beyond the national territory.[17]

THE TRANSNATIONALISM OF ITALIAN ANARCHISM IN NORTH AMERICA

Italian immigration and anarchist presence in North America

By and large, the spread of Italian anarchism in the United States followed the general trend of Italian immigration, both chronologically and geographically. Initially North America was not a topmost destination of mass migration after Italy's unification in 1870, but it became progressively so. As a result of a combined shift in migration trend from Europe to the Americas and from South to North America, in addition to a steady overall increase, massive migration to North America began in the 1890s and grew rapidly up to World War I.[18]

Italian immigrants were not evenly distributed over the United States territory. Statistics for 1891–1900 show their disproportionate concentration in the North Atlantic Division, where 72.7 per cent of them settled. In turn, one-half of these were in New York, while the others were distributed in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Other areas of immigration were, in descending order, the North Central

17. Michael Miller Topp, *Those without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists* (Minneapolis, MN, 2001).
18. Samuel L. Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870–1914* (Ithaca, NY [etc.], 1999), pp. 27, 54.

Division, especially Illinois and Ohio, the Western Division, with California at the top, the South Central Division, especially Louisiana, and the South Atlantic Division.[19]

However, anarchist presence was not simply a direct function of the volume of immigration. Immigrants from any given Italian area would not distribute randomly, tending instead to cluster according to place of origin, because of chain migration based on kinship and occupation. The latter favoured migration between corresponding areas of similar industrial activities. Accordingly, labour radicalism typical of specific Italian areas could be transplanted to areas where overall immigration was lower than elsewhere. Thus, the anarchists of Barre, Vermont, were stone and marble cutters from Carrara, a Lunigiana town where a major and markedly anarchist upheaval occurred in 1894. Likewise, socialist and anarchist presence was strong in Tampa, Florida, due to predominant immigration from Sicily, the other main theater of the 1893–1894 upheavals, which were centered there on the Fasci workers' organization, led by socialists. Another example is Paterson, New Jersey, whose textile industry attracted workers from Biella, a town in Piedmont with a textile tradition harking back to medieval times.[20]

The geographical distribution of Italian anarchist periodicals and single issues in the United States until 1915 is a useful indicator of the correlation between anarchist presence and immigrant distribution. To a large extent, the former mirrored the latter. The highest-ranking divisions – North Atlantic, North Central, and Western – are the same and in the same order of relevance in the two cases, even in terms of states: Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in the North Atlantic Division; Ohio and Illinois in the North Central Division; and California in the Western Division. Clearly, a strong correlation existed between migration and anarchist transnationalism.[21]

However, notable exceptions show that this convergence is not the whole story. For example, Louisiana had no anarchist presence, despite a significant Italian migratory influx. Conversely, in Vermont and Florida anarchist presence was stronger than one could predict from the volume of immigration. The anarchist press in these two states was concentrated in Barre and Tampa, respectively, thus confirming the relevance of chain migration from Italian areas of strong anarchist presence. In sum, anarchists were not isolated exiles, being instead integral part of large

19. Eliot A.M. Lord, John J.D. Trenor, and Samuel J. Barrows, *The Italian in America* (New York, 1906), pp. 4–6.

20. Donna Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick, NJ [etc.], 1988), pp. 123–127; Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), p. 168; Roberto Gremmo, *Gli anarchici che uccisero Umberto I: Gaetano Bresci, il "Biondino" e i tessitori biellesi di Paterson* (Biella, 2000), pp. 32–44.

21. Data from Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, II, pp. 169–196.

and steady immigrant communities. Still, migration was a necessary but not sufficient pre-requisite of anarchist transnationalism. Additional mechanisms were at work for anarchist transnationalism that the sheer volume of migration cannot explain.

Members of the International, which in Italy was markedly anarchist, began emigrating to the United States in the early 1880s to escape a wave of repression spurred by the Benevento uprising of 1877 and Giovanni Passanante's attempt on the king's life in 1878. The first attested group, the Circolo Comunista Anarchico Carlo Cafiero, was created in New York in 1885. From January to June 1888 it edited the first Italian anarchist periodical in the United States, *L'Anarchico*. It was not until June 1892 that another periodical, *Il Grido degli Oppressi*, appeared in New York, moving to Chicago in 1893 in the hope to obtain broader support. By this time Italian anarchist groups had sprung up not only in New York and Chicago, but also in Paterson, West Hoboken, Brooklyn, Orange Valley, and Boston, while other groups were being formed in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. *Il Grido degli Oppressi* ended in October 1894, being replaced the following year by *La Questione Sociale* of Paterson, which functioned as the organ of the Italian anarchists of North America for the next several years.[22]

The transatlantic mobility of Italian anarchists

Since its inception Italian anarchism in North America displayed high levels of integration with the homeland movement. For example, *L'Anarchico* motivated its publication with the government repression that made it impossible to express one's ideas in the homeland, and announced that one of its editors would set off to Italy to establish contacts, collect subscriptions, and secure correspondents. This brief announcement foreshadowed the key traits of Italian anarchist transnationalism in the following decades: its role in times of repression in the homeland, the mobility of militants, the organizational integration of groups, the mutual support and exchange of resources, and the circulation of ideas through the press.[23]

A remarkable phenomenon of anarchist transatlantic mobility was the sustained practice of propaganda tours in North America by prominent figures of Italian anarchism. By "propaganda" anarchists broadly referred to any activity by spoken and written word aiming at educating the masses and spreading anarchist ideas. The first to undertake such a tour was

22. Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, pp. 147–157; Leonardo Bettini, "Appunti per una storia dell'anarchismo italiano negli Stati Uniti d'America", in *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, II, pp. 289–291.

23. "Ai Compagni d'Italia", *L'Anarchico* (New York), 1 February 1888.

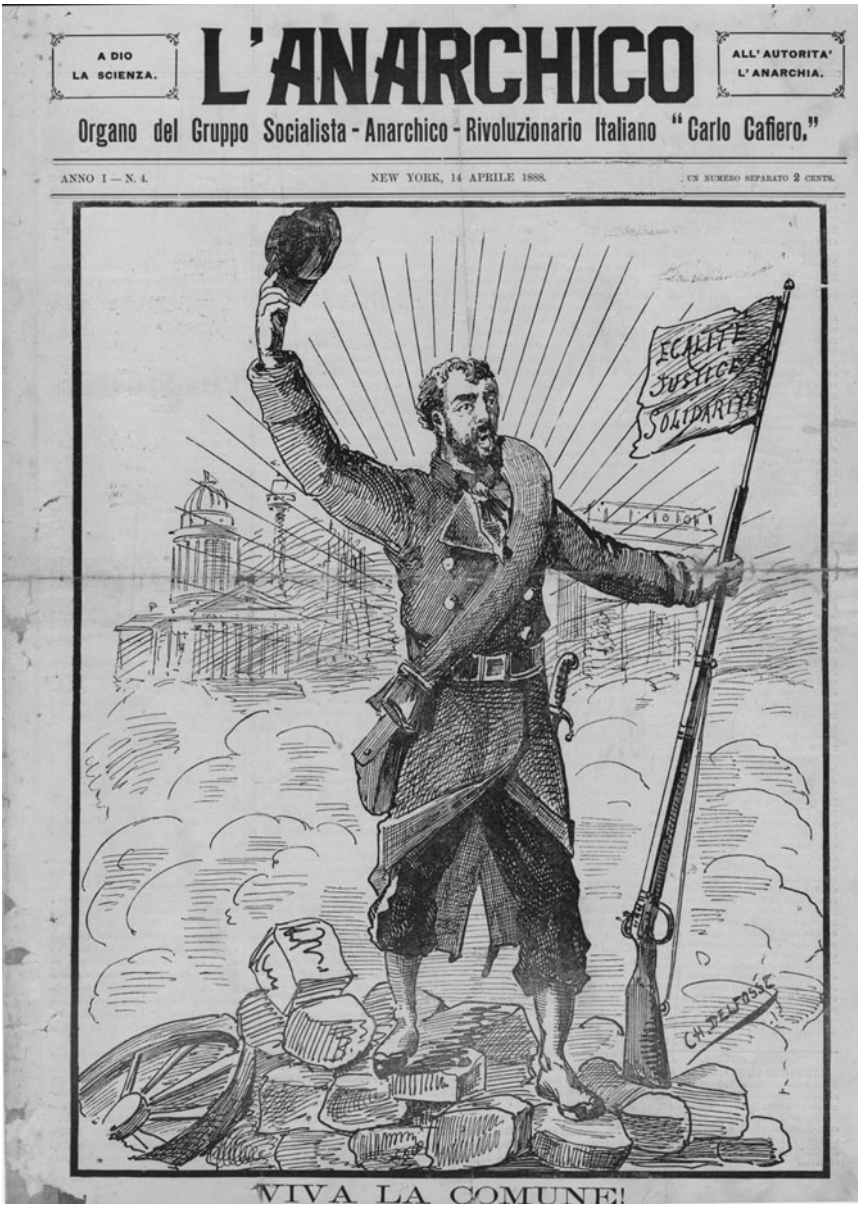

Figure 2. A front page of *L'Anarchico*, the first Italian anarchist organ in North America, edited in New York in 1888. The issue celebrates the Paris Commune of 1871. The denomination "socialist-anarchist-revolutionary", adopted by its editing group, usually denoted formations advocating anarchist organization. The two mottos in the masthead, "A Dio la scienza" and "All'autorità l'anarchia", invoke the weapons of science and anarchy against, respectively, God and the authority, that is religious and political oppression.
IISH Collection

Francesco Saverio Merlino, who arrived in the United States by late April 1892. Merlino spent his first months in New York, where he soon started the abovementioned *Il Grido degli Oppressi*. He published a "Programme of the Italian Workers' Association", advocating a federative basis for the Italian-American anarchist movement, as an organizational tool to effectively counter existing institutions for Italian immigrants. Merlino was also active in the English-speaking movement. According to Emma Goldman, he started the New York anarchist periodical *Solidarity*, which first appeared on 18 June 1892. Between September and November Merlino undertook a wide propaganda tour which included Chicago, St Louis, Paterson, West Hoboken, Orange Valley, Cleveland, Boston, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, fostering the formation of several new Italian anarchist groups.[24]

Two years later Pietro Gori, a popular figure of Italian anarchism, crossed the ocean for a year-long stay. On 27 July 1895 Gori attended his first meeting in Paterson, where *La Questione Sociale* had started publication the week before. Gori spent three months in Paterson, contributing to the periodical and lecturing there and in New York. Then he began a tour that occupied his next nine months. Gori crossed the entire continent from coast to coast and back, covering 11,000 miles and holding over 250 meetings. He returned to England on 18 July 1896. Gori held meetings in Italian, English, and French, getting logistic help from anarchist groups of many nationalities. However, his tour was often a pioneering work of proselytism in places where no anarchist group existed and no prior arrangement could be made, such as mining centers in Illinois, Colorado, and Pennsylvania. A lawyer and a poet, Gori was both a fine speaker and an entertainer who used songs and even theater as vehicles of propaganda, as the Industrial Workers of the World would do years later.

The importance of such tours was retrospectively acknowledged in 1911 by Luigi Galleani, who lived in North America from 1901 to 1919, becoming himself the most influential Italian anarchist in that continent: "We owe to [Gori] and Saverio Merlino today's fervour of revolutionary activity here." Gori's tour made anarchism known among newly-arriving Italian immigrants, especially in areas untouched by anarchist propaganda. His meeting reports frequently recorded the formation of new anarchist groups and workers' clubs. As Gori himself emphasized in a farewell article, his work was of propaganda, but also of organization. He promoted the formation of the Anarchist Socialist Federation of the Italian Workers of North America, which included groups from coast to

24. Giampietro Berti, *Francesco Saverio Merlino. Dall'anarchismo socialista al socialismo liberale, 1856–1930* (Milan, 1993), pp. 192–201; Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, 1-vol. edn (Garden City, NY, 1931), pp. 101, 178; on Merlino's editorship of *Solidarity*, see e.g. *Solidarity* (New York), 24 September 1892.

coast. Finally, the tour gave stability to *La Questione Sociale* in its first year of life. Gori sought subscribers and made the periodical known in many places, especially mining camps, that could have hardly been reached otherwise.[25]

Gori's successful tour was followed few years later by Errico Malatesta's. Malatesta arrived in Paterson on 12 August 1899, invited by his Spanish friend Pedro Esteve.[26] A key issue that prompted Malatesta to undertake his trip was the editorship of *La Questione Sociale*. Few months earlier Giuseppe Ciancabilla had come from Europe and become the periodical's editor, giving it an anti-organizationist direction. The debate between organizationists like Malatesta, who favoured the creation of anarchist federations, and anti-organizationists, who rejected formal membership, congresses, and party programmes as authoritarian, had been raging for years, and would continue for a long time. Factional divides followed people across the ocean, and it seems reasonable to think that Malatesta was concerned with the direction that groups in the United States might have taken under Ciancabilla's influence. Comrades in North America played a key role in shaping the Italian anarchist movement in Europe, and in turn *La Questione Sociale*, their only journal, played a key role among them. Therefore, Ciancabilla's anti-organizationist approach was likely a serious concern for Malatesta as well as for Pedro Esteve, who also favoured organization and was a direct witness and interested party in the management of *La Questione Sociale*. After Malatesta's arrival, the editorship issue was settled relatively quickly. The editing group Diritto all'Esistenza [Right to Exist] called a meeting in which its majority declared for organizationist tactics. Ciancabilla resigned the editorship, and with a small group of "dissidents" announced that he would found a new periodical, *L'Aurora*. On 9 September the new series of *La Questione Sociale* started under Malatesta's editorship.

During Malatesta's eight-month stay in North America, *La Questione Sociale* and anti-organizationism were not his only concerns. After lecturing extensively to Italian audiences in Paterson, New York, and around New Jersey, and undertaking propaganda activity among Spanish-speaking workers, on 23 September 1889 Malatesta set off from New York on a four-month propaganda tour. The itinerary largely coincides with localities that had contributed to *L'Agitazione* in 1897–1898, such as Boston, Pittsburgh, Barre, Vermont, and Spring Valley, Illinois, in addition to major nearby cities such as Philadelphia, Providence, and

25. On Gori's lectures in Paterson and New York see: "Conferenza", *LQS*, 30 July 1895; "Cose locali", *LQS*, 30 September 1895. Reports about Gori's tour can be found in *LQS*, 15 October 1895–15 July 1896. See also: "L'addio di Pietro Gori: Ai compagni del Nord-America", *LQS*, 30 July 1896; G. Pimpino [Luigi Galleani], "Pietro Gori", *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Barre), 21 January 1911; A. Guabello, "Un po' di storia", *L'Era Nuova* (Paterson) [hereafter *LEN*], 17 July 1915.
26. "Errico Malatesta", *LQS*, 19 August 1899.

Chicago. San Francisco was too distant to be included. The tour made a priority those places where established Italian anarchist groups existed, as Malatesta – unlike Gori – focused more on organization than on proselytism. Malatesta's effort to organize the Italian anarchists of North America provided them with an organ, *La Questione Sociale*, with a well-defined tactical perspective. Furthermore, it provided them with a programme, published in the first issues of the periodical's new series, and finally it promoted the development of an anarchist federation. One can clearly see the continuity with the work of Gori, and even more of Merlino, who founded *Il Grido degli Oppressi*, published the "Programme of the Italian Workers' Association", and promoted the association's development on a federative basis.

In sum, such propaganda tours bear a significant continuity in time, as virtually all foremost Italian anarchist leaders came to the United States at one time or another. Moreover, these were not pioneering trips to a virgin land, for they were taken at times in which Italian anarchism was progressively more established. Finally, in most cases the visiting leaders were not forced by circumstances, but rather they undertook their trips intentionally, for propaganda and organization purposes. In brief, those trips point to a sustained, organic relationship between the leaders of the Italian anarchist movement and one important segment of that movement.

A case study of transatlantic cooperation: La Questione Sociale

The editorship of *La Questione Sociale* further illustrates the relations between Italian anarchism in North America and Italian agitators from overseas. The periodical makes an interesting case study to analyse patterns of cooperation, integration, and division of labour, as it were, across the Atlantic Ocean. Contrary to what some historians claim, the periodical's founder was not Gori.[27] Rather, it was collectively founded by the group Diritto all'Esistenza, retaining thereafter its character of collective undertaking by rank-and-file militants. As Pedro Esteve noted, this character made the periodical a notable exception in the panorama of the anarchist press, where determined individuals were often the driving force of periodicals. However, a steady influx of Italian anarchists from Europe, driven by government persecution or invited over for propaganda tours, provided qualified editorship over time.

For example, just when the first issue was being prepared, Antonio Agresti, a chief contributor of the English anarchist periodical *The Torch*, arrived from London and took up editing *La Questione Sociale.* Shortly thereafter Pietro Gori arrived, as did Edoardo Milano, who had been expelled with Gori from Switzerland earlier that year. All three

27. Cf. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p. 77.

contributed to *La Questione Sociale*, probably with different responsibilities at different times, considering, for example, Gori's long absence for his tour. On this note, a recollection article of 1915 explains that two figures were ordinarily associated with the newspaper, an *editor* and a *lecturer*, thus further illustrating that a periodical's tasks also included spoken propaganda and organization.[28] By July 1896 Agresti, Gori, and Milano were all back in Europe and the periodical remained without an editor. The Paterson group turned to Esteve, the periodical's typesetter, long active in the movement. During 1897 he was replaced by Francesco Cini, Malatesta's closest comrade in London since 1894. The next to arrive in Paterson was Giuseppe Ciancabilla, who had contributed to *La Questione Sociale* from Europe since April 1898, and had left for the United States at the end of October 1898 after expulsion from Switzerland and a short stay in London. Ciancabilla was immediately entrusted with the editorship of the periodical. Shortly thereafter another well-known figure of Italian transnational anarchism, Pietro Raveggi, arrived from Tunis, where he had been active in the local Italian anarchist movement for the last few years. He remained for some time in Paterson, then undertook a propaganda tour while still contributing to the paper. However, after Malatesta's arrival in August 1899 and Ciancabilla's split with *La Questione Sociale*, Raveggi sided with the latter, whose anti-organizationist periodicals he contributed to. Later on, Luigi Galleani's turn came. After his escape from *domicilio coatto* [forced residence] in Italy and a year-long stay in Egypt, Galleani also settled in London, but after a short time he decided to set sail for the United States. Soon after his arrival in October 1901, Galleani took up the editorship of *La Questione Sociale*, but he had to flee to Canada after the incidents ensuing the Paterson silk strike of June 1902, and the paper remained again without an editor. Few years later the editorship was taken up by Ludovico Caminita, who had been active with the socialists in Palermo before moving to the United States.

After mailing privileges were removed in early 1908, the paper was forced to cease publication, but it reappeared few months later as *L'Era Nuova*. By that time, however, another Italian anarchist newspaper, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, had appeared in Barre in June 1903, and had become the most representative periodical of Italian anarchism in North America, under the capable and steady editorship of Galleani, who had managed in the meantime to re-enter the United States from Canada. As Pedro Esteve noted, during its life *La Questione Sociale* "went through sad periods, during which the scissors were used more than the pen", meaning that the periodical had no editor and had to borrow heavily from other periodicals.

28. N. Cuneo, "Vent'anni", *LEN*, 17 July 1915.

Nevertheless, the steady influx of militants from Europe did provide an editorship of high quality and considerable continuity.[29]

The integration between Italian anarchism in North America and in the homeland

The transnational dimension of Italian anarchism has fallen through the cracks of histories of national scope. Just as it has been neglected by historians restricted to an Italian national perspective, so it has been largely lost on American historians who have leveled their own charges of detachment from empirical reality against Italian anarchist leaders from the perspective of their own country. Thus, George Carey remarked that *La Questione Sociale* "was continually caught between the interests of its local group constituents in improving the conditions of their lives through local union related activities, and leadership imported from abroad – however distinguished – which sought blindly to apply to American conditions formulae forged in the European context". Such an exclusive focus on North America is misleading, and Carey himself concedes that "study of the American context in the absence of the Italian is insufficient".[30]

In fact, the relationship between Italian anarchists in North America and in their homeland was a two-way cooperative relationship. If militants from Europe contributed to propaganda and periodicals in North America, the converse is equally true. In times of repression in Italy, it fell upon the anarchist press abroad to carry on propaganda in Italian. When *La Questione Sociale* appeared in July 1895, the reaction of the Crispi government was raging in Italy. Exceptional laws passed in July 1894 limited the freedom of press and introduced a systematic use of *domicilio coatto* against anarchists. At that time, no anarchist periodical existed in Italy, and only two other anarchist periodicals in Italian were published worldwide: *La Questione Sociale* of Buenos Aires, and *L'Avvenire* of São Paulo, which was shortly forced to cease publication by the Brazilian government's repression.[31] Therefore the appearance of

29. Pedro Esteve, "Ventesimo Anniversario", and A. Guabello, "Un po' di storia", *LEN*, 17 July 1915. On Agresti, see: Hermia Oliver, *The International Anarchist Movement in Late London* (London [etc.], 1983): pp. 122–124. On Cini's editorship, cf. "Agitazione astensionista", *LQS*, 15 April 1897. On Ciancabilla, Raveggi, and Caminita see respective entries in: Maurizio Antonioli *et al.* (eds), *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani*, 2 vols (Pisa, 2003–2004). On Galleani, see: Ugo Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani: quarant'anni di lotte rivoluzionarie: 1891–1931* (Cesena, 1956), pp. 105–114.

30. George Carey, "La Questione Sociale: An Anarchist Newspaper in Paterson, NJ (1895–1908)", in Lydio Tomasi (ed.), *Italian Americans: New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity* (Staten Island, NY, 1985), pp. 289–297, 296–297.

31. Bettini, Bibliografia dell'anarchismo.

La Questione Sociale in Paterson, in relatively unhampered conditions, fulfilled a fundamental role in the Italian anarchist movement worldwide.

We have circulation figures for the periodical throughout the year 1899, another critical time, with all anarchist periodicals shut down in Italy by the massive repression following the bread riots of 1898, culminating in the Fatti di Maggio [May events] in Milan, where demonstrators were shot by heavy artillery, with at least 264 casualties and nearly 1,700 arrests.[32] In February 1899, during Ciancabilla's editorship, the print run of *La Questione Sociale*, by then weekly, was increased from 3,000 to 3,500 copies. It was increased again to 4,000 in September, under Malatesta's editorship. However, as of 9 December the paper stopped publishing print-run figures, showing simultaneously a decrease in printing expenses, which indicates that its print run was probably close again to 3,500. It may not be coincidental that, meanwhile, two anarchist periodicals, *L'Avvenire Sociale* of Messina and *Pro Coatti* of Genoa, had reappeared in Italy.[33] The paper had a strong base in Paterson. Carey mentions a circulation of about 1,000 copies in town, though his reference year is unclear. Considering that the Italian population of Paterson rose from an insignificant number in 1879 to 18,000 in 1911, a circulation of 1,000 around the turn of the century could have meant that the paper was read approximately in every other Italian household.[34]

Still, the Paterson readership, and probably the United States readership as well, represented a minority. Suffice to note that around October 1899 the expenses for mailing the paper abroad, amounting to $10, were nearly five times those for domestic mailing, and approximately equalled printing expenses. In addition to news-stands in Paterson, New York, and a couple of nearby towns, the paper was regularly sold in London and Marseilles, and for some time in Nice. Most importantly, a November issue mentioned that the paper was mailed "to a great deal of people in Italy, France, Switzerland, etc.", a service for which a simple confirmation of interest rather than payment was requested. In fact, the weekly administrative reports show that sales and subscription were mostly from the United States, constituting a minor part of the paper's proceeds. They were usually exceeded by a permanent collection from militants, which also were mostly from the United States. In brief, North American militants, besides being readers, regularly subsidized a large distribution of the paper in Italy and other countries.[35]

32. Louise A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan, 1881–1901* (New York [etc.], 1992), pp. 261–267.

33. "Avviso importante", *LQS*, 11 February 1899; "Amministrazione", *LQS*, 16 September and 9 December 1899.

34. Carey, "La Questione Sociale", pp. 291–292.

35. "Amministrazione", *LQS*, 14 October 1899; "Ai compagni ed amici d'Europa", *LQS*, 18 November 1899.

The reciprocity of the relationship between Italian anarchists across the ocean is illustrated by the support from North America to the anarchist press in Italy and elsewhere, through subscriptions and donations. Table 1 illustrates the relative weight of donations from the United States to the four major periodicals edited by Malatesta between 1889 and 1915, as reported in the administrative summaries regularly published by each periodical. All periodicals were weekly or fortnightly. Only direct donations to the periodicals are considered, as opposed to collections on such accounts as propaganda tours or political prisoners. In each case the country of publication and the United States were the two highest contributing countries, although their relative order varied. The United States ranked highest with *La Rivoluzione Sociale*, published in London in 1902–1903, with contributions at 41.5 per cent, as against 17 per cent from the United Kingdom. Since Italy was the country of highest circulation, contributions from the country of publication were predictably higher for periodicals published in Italy, such as *L'Agitazione* and *Volontà*, respectively published in 1889–1890 and 1913–1915. The former's contributions from Italy and United States were respectively 68.7 per cent and 17.1 per cent, and the latter's were 42.4 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively.

The case of *Volontà* is particularly significant, and its almost equal contributions from Italy and United States deserve further illustration. The contributions from the United States, though significant throughout the periodical's life span, really soared after a financial crisis forced *Volontà* to suspend publication with the issue of 17 October 1914, few months after Malatesta's return to England following the June events of the Red Week, during which popular agitations spread like fire over Romagna and Marches, taking on an insurrectionary character. The editors attributed the crisis to a drop in readership with the outbreak of World War I, and few weeks before ceasing publication they issued an appeal for financial help to their comrades in North America, where the war's effects were not felt, yet.[36] A massive response came from the United States and elsewhere, allowing the periodical to resume publication on 14 November, continuing until July 1915, when publication ceased shortly after Italy's declaration of war. While donations to *Volontà* from Italy and the United States before the suspension were respectively 59.5 per cent and 14.9 per cent, thus being comparable to those of *L'Agitazione* in 1897–1898, after World War I broke out contributions from the United States became absolutely predominant, soaring to 67.4 per cent, as against 23.6 per cent from Italy, and showing again that country's fundamental role in bridging periods of acute difficulty for the movement.[37]

36. "Ai nostri compagni residenti in America", *Volontà* (Ancona), 5 September 1914.
37. Data collected from source periodical by the author.

Table 1. *Donations to major periodicals edited by Malatesta, 1889–1915*

Periodical	Years	No. of issues[a]	Country of publication	Donations [b]		
				Total	From country of public. (%)	From USA (%)
L'Associazione	1889–1890	7	France [c]	ITL 136.50	42.5	18.3
L'Agitazione	1897–1898	52	Italy	ITL 5,569.45	68.7	17.1
La Rivoluzione Sociale	1902–1903	9	England	£24 4s 3d	17.0	41.5
Volontà	1913–1915	93	Italy	ITL 21,541.35	42.4	40.0

Source: Data collected from source periodicals by the author.
[a] This is the number of examined issues, which may be lower than the number of published issues, due to gaps in consulted collections.
[b] Percentages are over the total of donations that could be attributed to a country, which may be lower than the total shown.
[c] The periodical moved from France to England at some point. For the sake of simplicity, France has been considered the country of publication, due to the short life of the periodical after the move.

The transatlantic integration of Italian anarchism was not limited to financial contributions, but it also found organizational expression. Debates and projects affecting the movement in Italy could be decisively influenced by initiatives in North America. The opaqueness of anarchist organizational activities makes it difficult to provide systematic evidence. However, all institutional or public manifestations of Italian anarchism show a steady participation of the North American segment. For example, when the Italian anarchists issued a manifesto for electoral abstention in November 1890, its signatories included the New York anarchists Napoleone Carabba and Vito Solieri – the latter being Malatesta's old comrade, expelled with him from Switzerland in 1879 and fellow exile in London in 1881. In January 1891 the anarchists of the United States were represented at the Capolago congress, where the Italian Federation of the Revolutionary Anarchist Socialist Party was founded. Solieri was also in the editorial staff of *La Questione Sociale*, the prospective organ of the newly created party. Another pro-abstention manifesto published by *L'Agitazione* in March 1897 was subscribed by forty-three militants from two New York groups.[38]

Fragmentary evidence about transatlantic organizational integration also comes from the contacts between Italian anarchists in North America and Malatesta, both before and after his trip of 1899–1900. As mentioned, subscriptions and donations from North America to *L'Agitazione* in 1897–1898 were significant. After Malatesta's arrest in January 1898, *La Questione Sociale* even recommended its subscribers to redirect their dues to *L'Agitazione*.[39] Contacts were soon resumed after Malatesta's move from jail to *domicilio coatto* in 1898. According to the Governor of New Jersey, the Paterson anarchists contacted comrades in London to have the Tunis anarchists arrange for Malatesta's escape from Lampedusa Island in April 1899.[40] Right after the escape, *La Questione Sociale* was able to publish news directly received from Malatesta in Tunis. Contacts continued on a regular basis after Malatesta's return to London in May, until his departure for America in August 1899.[41]

After Malatesta returned to Europe in 1900, frequent correspondence

38. "I socialisti-anarchici al Popolo Italiano: Non votate!", in Enzo Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia* (Milan, 1959), pp. 179–182; "Congresso Socialista Rivoluzionario Italiano", *La Rivendicazione* (Forlì), 10 January 1891; *1 Maggio* (Naples), 29 March 1891; "Adesioni al manifesto astensionista", *L'Agitatore Socialista-Anarchico* (Ancona), single issue in replacement of no. 7 of *L'Agitazione*, 25 April 1897.

39. "Avviso", *LQS*, 28 February 1898.

40. "Cenno biografico", Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome [hereafter, ACS], Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Casellario Politico Centrale [hereafter, CPC], box 2950.

41. "Piccola Posta", *LQS*, 11 February 1899; "Errico Malatesta", *LQS*, 27 May 1899. On Malatesta's arrival in London, see: Italian ambassador to Minister of Interior, London, 26 May 1899, ACS, CPC, box 2949.

with Galleani was reported in 1901–1902, including the aftermath of the 1902 Paterson strike in which Galleani was involved.[42] Traveling to the United States continued to be an option, though it never materialized again after the trip of 1899–1900. For example, in 1896 *La Questione Sociale* asked Malatesta, in a short editorial mail, "When can we expect you to come over?" A warm invitation to move to Paterson was also addressed by *L'Era Nuova* in 1912, after Malatesta was convicted of libel and threatened with expulsion from Great Britain.[43] Frequent references to projected trips to America can also be found in police sources, such as one by the Swiss police in 1893, and one by the New York Italian consul in 1903, reporting about a collection of funds started in New York to defray Malatesta's travelling expenses.[44] A telling episode is a week-long visit to Malatesta in London in December 1906 by the Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri, funded by Italian comrades in North America, who assigned Fabbri the task of inducing Malatesta to return to Italy.[45] The resolution to have someone from Italy speak personally to Malatesta was taken in an effort to sidestep the mail service and prevent the police from intercepting Malatesta's correspondence.[46] Again in 1911, after Malatesta had been seriously afflicted by pneumonia, Luigi Galleani remarked tongue-in-cheek in *Cronaca Sovversiva* that "the London climate does not seem to be the best for comrade Malatesta to live in", and encouraged the comrades of Italy to induce him to cross back the Alps, pledging the unanimous support of the United States anarchists to the project.[47] Shortly thereafter, an anarchist conference in Rome promptly resolved to collect funds for Malatesta's propaganda tour across Italy, though Malatesta eventually decided otherwise.[48]

Such scattered episodes document that Italian anarchists in North America were both interested and influential in the Italian movement in Europe, as well as organizationally closer than the physical distance might lead one to believe. Their sustained contribution of militants, resources, and ideas must ordinarily be reckoned with in assessing the strength of Italian anarchism, so as to avoid the pitfall of exchanging mobilization campaigns in Italy for cyclical and short-lived episodes of spontaneous combustion.

42. Italian consul to Minister of Interior, New York, 28 January 1902, and Police Superintendent Prina to Minister of Interior, London, 27 July 1902, ACS, CPC, box 2949.
43. "Piccola Posta", *LQS*, 30 October 1896; "La condanna di Malatesta", *LEN*, 1 June 1912.
44. Letter no. 37 from Department of Justice and Police, Geneva, 17 May 1893, Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, Bern, Justiz, Bundesanwaltschaft, Polizeidienst, E 21, Ds. 7113; Italian consul to Minister of Interior, New York, 26 August 1903, ACS, CPC, box 2949.
45. "Una buona notizia", *LEN*, 7 October 1911.
46. Police copy of a letter from Firmino Gallo to Luigi Fabbri, Paterson, 9 January 1912, ACS, CPC, box 2256, folder 52603 (Gallo Firmino Felice fu Antonio).
47. "Errico Malatesta", *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Barre), 1 July 1911.
48. "Malatesta in Italia", *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Barre), 25 November 1911.

THE TRANSNATIONALISM OF ITALIAN ANARCHISM WORLDWIDE

"Nostra patria è il mondo intero" [Our homeland is the whole world]: thus begins a popular Italian anarchist song attributed to Pietro Gori. That line expresses hope for a future in which the whole world would be a homeland without borders; it also expresses the internationalist disposition of anarchists to solidarity towards workers and oppressed of all countries; but it also expresses a factual truth. Italian anarchism was a transnational movement. In this section I extend my analysis from the case study of the United States to the rest of the world, showing that the same sort of organizational integration and resource exchange also existed for other countries. In fact, for European countries – especially those neighbouring Italy – cooperation across the border was an ordinary mode of operation.

Transnational organizational integration

The organizational integration in South American countries like Argentina was akin to that of the United States. Moreover, Italian anarchist immigrants had a preponderant influence on the Argentinian workers' movements. Both Malatesta and Gori spent there extended periods of time. Malatesta reached Buenos Aires in 1885 with a group of Italian comrades, part of which would be in the editorial staff of *L'Associazione* in Nice and London in 1889. Malatesta played a leading role in the wave of Argentinian workers' struggles of the late 1880s, especially those of the Buenos Aires bakers. Gori was in Argentina from 1898 to 1902, carrying out academic work in criminology, undertaking long propaganda tours in Argentina and neighbouring countries, and contributing to the foundation of the Federación Obrera Argentina in 1901.[49] European and Mediterranean countries were also of special relevance, particularly Italy's neighbours such as Switzerland and France, where not only the Italian anarchist groups of the capital cities played an important role, but also those of cities and towns next to the Italian border, such as Lugano and Nice, respectively. Suffice to say that a list of fifty-three anarchists of the Nice area, reported to the French Minister of the Interior in 1893, included only four Frenchmen, all the rest being Italians.[50]

The role and mode of operation of Italian anarchist transnationalism in neighbouring countries are best illustrated through the example of a brief but significant segment in the movement's life. As previously mentioned, a pro-abstention manifesto was issued in November 1890 on the occasion of

49. Hugo Mancuso and Armando Minguzzi, *Entre el fuego y la rosa. Pensamiento social italiano en Argentina: Utopías anarquistas y programas socialistas, 1870–1920* (Buenos Aires, 1999).
50. Prefect of the Maritime Alps to the Minister of Interior, Nice, 27 December 1893, Archives Nationales, Paris, F/7 "Police Générale", box 12507.

general elections in Italy, individually signed "on behalf of anarchist groups and federations" by seventy-five militants, with no indication of places.[51] By all appearance, it was a manifesto from the Italian anarchist movement to the Italian people. Yet, it originated in Paris. As Luigi Galleani recalled, the decision to issue the manifesto was taken "together with Errico Malatesta, Saverio Merlino, Paolo Schicchi, Augusto Norsa, Peppino Consorti, Galileo Palla and a number of other comrades exiled in France, Switzerland, and England", including Amilcare Cipriani.[52] These militants had all converged on the French capital around 1 May 1890, then scattering in different directions shortly thereafter: Malatesta and others returned to London; Norsa was expelled in May; Merlino, convicted for events related to 1 May, left France in July, as Schicchi also did; and Galleani himself was expelled after a four-month imprisonment, only to be arrested again in Switzerland in October.[53] Moreover, as Luigi Fabbri stated, not only "the best-known comrades of the time", but also the other lesser-known or unknown comrades were all militants living abroad.[54] Biographical information about the whereabouts in 1890 or in the next few years of twenty-five signatories – in addition to the ones already mentioned – illustrates their geographical spread: seven are found in London; four each in France, Switzerland, Tunisia, and Egypt; and two in the United States.

From the circumstance that Italian anarchism was represented by exiles, one might be tempted to infer that the movement in the homeland must have been at low ebb. Yet, at the same time that the manifesto was issued, initiatives were under way for the organization of the Capolago congress, the importance of which Nunzio Pernicone thus emphasizes: "Within the cyclical pattern of advance and retreat that characterized Italian anarchism throughout its history, Capolago represented the highest point the movement had reached since the heyday of the International."[55] How congress arrangements were made is also telling. The first initiative for organizing the congress was taken by the Lugano anarchists, which were soon backed up by another organizing committee in Ravenna, in the Romagna region. The congress site, Capolago, was a little town in Switzerland, just across the Italian border. The congress, held on 4–6 January 1891, was attended by 74 delegates from 11 Italian regions, in addition to 14 representatives of the transnational segment, thus distributed: 8 from Switzerland, 2 from France, and 1 each from England, Malta, Egypt, United States, Argentina, and Brazil. Overall, 208 groups

51. See n. 38.
52. Minin [Luigi Galleani], "È morto Cipriani", *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Lynn), 20 April 1918.
53. See respective entries in Antonioli, *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani*.
54. Luigi Fabbri, *La vida de Malatesta* (Barcelona, 1936), p. 128.
55. Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, p. 257.

from 140 localities endorsed the congress.[56] In brief, these circumstances show how tightly the segments of the anarchist movement in Italy and abroad were ordinarily intertwined, how dynamic their mutual relationships was, to what extent the latter was an integral part of the movement, and how crucial its logistic and organizational contribution was to the success of a major country-wide mobilization on the Italian territory.

Worldwide transnationalism and the anarchist press

The transnational support to the anarchist press is quantitatively illustrated in Table 2 by the worldwide contributions to the same sample of four periodicals previously used for the United States: *L'Associazione*, *L'Agitazione*, *La Rivoluzione Sociale*, and *Volontà*. The peak of transnational contributions was reached by *Volontà*, with 83 per cent contributions from outside Italy. *L'Associazione* and *La Rivoluzione Sociale*, both published abroad, follow on a par, with contributions from outside the country of publication of 57.5 per cent and 57.6 per cent, respectively. Ironically, the least impressive total, 31.3 per cent concerning *L'Agitazione*, is probably also the most significant, for three reasons.

First, the figure concerns a relatively long period, covering fifty-two weekly issues, thus providing more valuable data than shorter-lived periodicals, in terms of both higher statistical reliability and higher significance as a financially viable periodical. Second, the periodical was published in Italy. Hence one can expect contributions from the country of publication to be highest. Finally, unlike *Volontà*, whose figures were partly due to an exceptional wartime situation, *L'Agitazione* reflected a relatively ordinary situation. It is true that solidarity to the periodical was partly spurred by governmental repression in 1898, including Malatesta's arrest. However, this can hardly be considered exceptional. In fact, Malatesta rarely resided in Italy longer than a year without being arrested or escaping arrest by going underground or fleeing the country.

In brief, *L'Agitazione* exhibits a steady contribution from abroad of nearly one third of overall donations in standard conditions, thus providing a baseline from which one can generalize and claim that contributions from abroad were crucial for the viability of any Italian anarchist periodical. For similar reasons, *L'Agitazione* better illustrates the worldwide spread and balance of contributions in ordinary times. For example, it illustrates the importance of contributions from South America, which equalled those from Europe, and from Africa. Contributions from these three areas together amounted to 14.3 per cent, coming close to the volume of contributions from the United States. In contrast,

56. "Congresso Socialista Rivoluzionario Italiano", *La Rivendicazione* (Forlì), 10 January 1891.

Table 2. *Donations from outside the country of publication to periodicals edited by Malatesta, 1889–1915*

Country (by continent)	Donations to periodicals (%)			
	L'Associazione (France)	*L'Agitazione* (Italy)	*La Rivoluzione Sociale* (UK)	*Volontà* (Italy)
Europe				
Austria	–	0.2	2.4	–
Belgium	–	0.1	–	–
Bulgaria	–	–	0.8	–
France	n.a	0.8	6.5	2.2
Germany	–	–	–	0.1
Italy	15.0	n.a	4.0	n.a
Luxembourg	–	–	3.8	0.3
Rumania	–	0.2	–	–
Spain	7.3	–	–	–
Switzerland	11.0	2.4	7.2	1.4
United Kingdom	5.9	2.6	n.a	4.9
Africa				
Egypt	–	0.7	–	1.3
South Africa	–	0.8	0.3	0.1
Tunisia	–	0.4	–	–
North & Central America				
United States	18.3	17.1	41.5	40.0
Panama	–	–	–	0.1
South America				
Argentina	–	4.9	–	2.8
Brazil	–	0.4	8.2	1.8
Uruguay	–	0.8	8.3	1.7
Oceania				
Australia	–	–	–	0.1
Unidentified locations	–	–	–	0.8
TOTAL	57.5	31.3	83.0	57.6

Note: See Table 1 for remarks on periodicals and data.

those three areas are not given justice in the case of *Volontà*, being comparatively dwarfed by the United States.

Predictably, the highest contributing countries substantially overlap with the countries of highest Italian immigration in that period. This intersection defines the map of Italian anarchist transnationalism: France, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom in Europe; Egypt and Tunisia in Africa; Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay in South America; and the United States in North America. However, no hard and fast correlation between a country's Italian immigrant population and its contribution to the anarchist press in Italy can be established. This is readily apparent by

comparing North and South America, with the former having a much higher volume of contributions, in contrast to the latter's higher Italian immigrant population. A comparison between the rate of overall contributions from abroad and the rate of Italian population abroad is also instructive. As of 1 January 1901, the population on the Italian territory amounted to 32,447,474, while Italians abroad were 3,344,548 around that year. Therefore the latter comprised 9.3 per cent of the Italian worldwide population, which strikingly contrasts with the 31.3 per cent rate of contributions to *L'Agitazione* from abroad.

While better economic conditions of workers abroad may partly explain this gap, further causes and motivations, besides workers' migration, were at work with anarchist transnationalism, of which government repression was foremost. As a consequence, Italian anarchists were exiles in a higher proportion than Italian workers were migrants. Suffice to mention that, according to an extensive biographical dictionary of Italian anarchists, approximately 60 per cent of them emigrated at least once for longer than six months. Clearly, anarchist exiles were attracted to areas of Italian migration, both because they were workers themselves, and because those areas provided a more fertile ground for their political activity. However, the relevance of transnationalism for their movement went much beyond the transnationalism of the Italian population at large.[57]

One can reasonably assume that the map of contributing countries reflects a periodical's readership. However, the Italian anarchist press was also transnational in another way: periodicals were also locally published in those same areas of Italian migration. Besides their local readership, they also had a wide circulation, thus fulfilling a fundamental propaganda role, especially in times of repression in Italy, as we noted for *La Questione Sociale* of Paterson. Table 3 provides a statistical survey of Italian anarchist periodicals and single issues published worldwide between 1889 and 1913. Nearly 40 per cent of all periodicals were published outside of Italy, in those same countries of Italian immigration and anarchist concentration. South America – represented by Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay – is particularly prominent, with a share of 14 per cent of all periodicals, remarkably higher than the 9.5 per cent share of North America. The discrepancy between the rates of periodicals and single issues published abroad is worth noting: less than 25 per cent of single issues were published abroad, in contrast to the already mentioned percentage of nearly 40 per cent for periodicals; or, to put things in a different but equivalent perspective, 59 per cent of anarchist publications in Italy were single issues, as against only 41 per cent abroad.

57. Ministero di Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio. Direzione Generale della Statistica, *Annuario Statistico Italiano, 1905–1907. Fascicolo Primo* (Rome, 1907), pp. 53, 164–165; Antonioli, *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani*, p. vi.

Table 3. *Italian anarchist periodicals and single issues published worldwide, 1889–1913*

Country (by continent)	Periodicals		Single issues		Country (by continent)	Periodicals		Single issues	
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%
Europe					Africa				
Austria	8	4.0	2	0.9	Egypt	7	3.5	2	0.9
France	3	1.5	3	1.3	Tunisia	1	0.5	–	–
Italy	123	61.5	175	76.4	North America				
Spain	1	0.5	–	–	USA	19	9.5	10	4.4
Switzerland	6	3.0	4	1.7	South America				
UK	4	2.0	7	3.1	Argentina	10	5.0	14	6.1
					Brazil	16	8.0	12	5.2
					Uruguay	2	1.0	–	–
					Total	200	100.0	229	100.0

Source: Data from Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*.

How to explain this discrepancy? Why were Italian anarchists more prone to publish single issues in Italy than abroad? The rate of single issues may in fact be regarded as an indicator of the difficulties that the press encountered in an area. Sometimes publications were intentionally given the form of single issues, when the need to comment on specific questions arose. However, more often than not publishing a single issue was a necessity, or simply the unforeseen outcome of an aborted editorial project. In many cases it was a fall-back solution when resources were not sufficient for a serial publication. In other cases, what we call single issues were simply planned periodicals that ceased publication after the first issue, for lack of funds or police harassment. Relatedly, single issues could be stratagems to circumvent police prohibition: the title of a serial publication was changed at every issue so as to be formally unrelated to the previous issues hit by police prohibition. In sum, rather then representing a discrepancy, the figures about periodicals and single issues complement each other in showing that publishing anarchist press was easier abroad than in Italy: periodicals had a less troubled life abroad, and therefore they had a longer life span. Conversely, less single issues, or less aborted periodicals, were published abroad.

The circulation of anarchist ideas was not limited to the press. Anarchist literature, especially pamphlets, was another crucial component, though constructing a systematic analysis is more problematic in this case. However, we can catch a brief glimpse, using Malatesta's pamphlets as a representative sample, given that they were steadily popular throughout the entire period under consideration, in all areas of anarchist presence, and among anarchists of all tendencies. The most popular was undoubtedly *Fra*

Contadini [*Between Peasants*], which was reprinted so often and for so long as to constitute a statistically significant sample, even limiting ourselves to editions in Italian. Between 1884 and 1913, twenty-five editions were published, including both new editions and simple reprints, but excluding serializations in periodicals. The editions printed in Italy represent a minority, amounting to twelve. The United States follow with eight editions; then the rest of Europe with three, and South America with two.[58] Places of publication tended to be repetitive: three Italian editions appeared in Turin, and three more in Messina; two editions came out of London; and six of the eight North American editions were published in Paterson.

Such places of publication correspond to those of major anarchist periodicals, such as *L'Avvenire Sociale* in Messina, and *La Questione Sociale*, then renamed *L'Era Nuova*, in Paterson. More generally, pamphlets almost invariably came out of the printing presses of periodicals, further confirming both the broader propaganda tasks associated with newspapers, and the importance of places like Paterson, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Tunis, London, Paris, etc. for a wider range of anarchist activities than just publishing periodicals. Printing presses lasted longer than periodicals, and thus the production of pamphlets, which were more durable and exchangeable propaganda vehicles than some local and ephemeral periodicals, is an even stronger indicator of the continuity of transnational propaganda provided by those centers.

It is also important to analyse the way in which the transnationalism of individuals and ideas intersected. To what extent was the worldwide spread of the press determined by the mobility of militants? What sort of continuity existed in the management of the transnational anarchist press? We can get a sense of the mobility of the editors of periodicals by answering the following question: How many of the militants who were editors-in-chief of any Italian anarchist publication, periodical or single issue, in the time window from 1889 to 1913 had major responsibilities in other anarchist periodicals at any time, inside or outside that time window? Bettini's bibliography of the Italian anarchist press provides a sample of 92 relevant militants, which can be partitioned into three classes, depending on whether: (i) they had no responsibility in other periodicals; (ii) they had further responsibilities, but only in the same country; (iii) they had further responsibilities in other countries. The 92 editors account for 124 periodicals, or 29 per cent of the 429 publications issued in the relevant time window. It turns out that 47 per cent of the editors had responsibilities in more than one periodicals, and 20 per cent had responsibilities in more than one country, thus speaking to a significant continuity of editorship even at the transnational level.[59]

58. Data collected by the author from various bibliographies, catalogues, and original pamphlet editions.

59. Data from Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*.

Nor was the transnational mobility of editors simply due to outbound migration from Italy. If we define a *transition* as the event of an editor moving between periodicals in different countries and languages, possibly with an intervening lapse of time, then eighteen relevant editors effected thirty-seven transitions overall. Of these, only fourteen, or 38 per cent, were from Italy to a foreign country; eight, or 22 per cent, were from a foreign country back to Italy; and fifteen, or 40 per cent, were from a foreign country to another foreign country. Malatesta himself effected all three kinds of transition. He edited *La Questione Sociale* in Argentina in 1885, *L'Associazione* in 1889 in France, *L'Agitazione* in Italy in 1897–1898, then he moved again from Italy to a foreign country, where he edited further periodicals.

ANARCHISM, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

The claim that Italian anarchist publications underwent less governmental harassment outside of Italy raises a fundamental question: why was anarchist propaganda easier abroad than at home? The answer may contribute to explain why Italian anarchism was so markedly transnational.

The Catalan historian Joan Casanovas has argued that Spanish anarchists enjoyed greater freedom of organization and expression in the United States than in Spain, partly because of the difficulty of the United States administration in censoring the press and infiltrating groups that used foreign languages.[60] The argument could clearly be extended to other countries. On this note, in 1905 an Italian police agent in London reported a telling episode. At the time a strong, anarchist-oriented, Jewish labour movement existed in London. The Yiddish anarchist paper *Der Arbayter Fraynd* [*Workers' Friend*] had recently reached sales of 6,000 copies. The circumstance worried the London chief of police, who sent 300 policemen to attend Yiddish classes, so as to monitor speeches and street conversations among Russian and Polish Yiddish-speaking refugees.[61] Clearly, such a language barrier probably contributed to hamper police surveillance of Italian anarchists as well.

Furthermore, it is often assumed that countries of liberal traditions, such as Great Britain and Switzerland, functioned as "safe havens" for anarchists. Data about the number of expulsions from Switzerland

60. Joan Casanovas i Codina, "Pere Esteve (1865–1925): un anarquista català a cavall de dos mons i de dues generacions", *L'Avenc* (Barcelona), no. 162 (1992), pp. 18–22, 20.

61. "Relazione del movimento dei sovversivi in Londra nei mesi marzo ed aprile", 21 May 1905, ACS, Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione affari generali e riservati, Archivio generale, Categorie annuali, 1905, Partito anarchico, box 22, folder 377 (Inghilterra).

Figure 3. The anarchists Pietro Gori, Ettore Croce, Giovanni Borghetti, and Edoardo Milano in the prison of Lugano, Switzerland, in January 1895. They were among twenty Italians, many of which anarchists, expelled from that country on 29 January 1895, under the charge of plotting to abduct the king of Italy. Gori and his group reached London, from where they spread in different directions shortly thereafter. On that occasion, Gori composed a song known as "Addio, Lugano Bella" [Farewell, Beautiful Lugano], which has since become one of the most popular among Italian anarchists. The song is about the "knights errant" being "dragged to the North", and thus it well symbolizes the transnational character of Italian anarchism.
IISH Collection, photograph by G. Brunel

between 1879 and 1902 cast doubts on this assumption, though. Overall, 241 individuals were expelled in that period, 141 of which were Italians. The peak was in 1898, the year of the already mentioned "Fatti di Maggio", when repression in Italy determined a wave of exiles, which in turn spurred the Swiss government's reaction: 87 expulsions occurred, of which 76 concerned Italians. Most people expelled in those 23 years were anarchists: Malatesta was expelled in 1879; the only expulsion of 1881 was that of Kropotkin; other notable cases were Galleani in 1890, Schicchi in 1891, Gori in 1895, and Ciancabilla in 1898.[62] In brief, Switzerland was by no means the "safe haven" that it was purported to be for Italian anarchists.

Nor was the Swiss republican government unconcerned with anarchist activities targeting the Italian monarchy: Malatesta's expulsion of 1879 was determined by a manifesto against the king of Italy after Passanante's attempt; and in 1900 arrests were made in Switzerland, in connection with the publication of Malatesta's pamphlet "Against the Monarchy". Still, anarchists in Switzerland were comparatively safer from the clutches of the Italian government. While Malatesta was not only expelled from Switzerland, but also imprisoned for violating the order of expulsion in 1891, on the same occasion the Swiss government rejected the Italian government's

62. J. Langhard, *Die anarchistische Bewegung in der Schweiz: Von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart und die internationalen Führer* (Berlin, 1903; repr., Glashütten im Taunus, 1975), pp. 472–479.

request of extradition. Similarly, in London the Metropolitan Police kept a tight watch on Italian anarchists, but it was often reluctant to act upon information provided by the Italian embassy, when the information was about crimes or plans concerning Italy.

Italian anarchists were aware of the importance of transnationalism for their struggles and consciously relied on it, seeking to mobilize the transnational section of their movement in support of revolutionary agitations in Italy. For example, the anarchist-socialist group *La Solidarietà* was formed in London in 1893, the year of the Sicilian Fasci movement, with a threefold goal: propagating anarchist-socialist principles among Italian workers in London; establishing transnational links to the end of constituting a federation of Italian anarchists residing abroad; and helping revolutionary propaganda in Italy and elsewhere. The group soon issued a circular "To the Italian Workers Abroad", in which, after emphasizing that increasing numbers of anarchists were forced to reside abroad by political persecution or unemployment, it reiterated the necessity to unite and form groups everywhere that would actively correspond between themselves and with Italy.[63] In the United States Malatesta emphasized again the crucial importance of transnationalism in the very first issue of his editorship of *La Questione Sociale*, addressing an appeal to the Italian anarchists in North America and pleading for transnational solidarity, which he called an "anarchist duty".[64] Two weeks later, in a further appeal on the eve of his propaganda tour, he clearly expressed the essence of anarchist transnationalism as follows:

> As bad as conditions may be here in the United States, they are still exceptionally favourable to us, compared to continental Europe: there are more resources than elsewhere, and there is opportunity for an activity that can be expanded slowly, perhaps, but without too much danger of being suddenly interrupted by the government. We must take advantage of the present circumstances to build up a strength that, now and later on, in one way or another, can come to the aid of our cause where the opportunity arises, especially in Italy, which is the country we come from, whose language we speak, and where consequently we can exert our influence more effectively.[65]

The reference to a slow but continuous expansion is crucial, coming in the aftermath of the 1898 repression in Italy, which abruptly ended Malatesta's effort to undertake precisely that kind of expansion in the homeland.

The Capolago congress is an instance of how Italian anarchists relied even more directly on transnationalism as an ordinary component of

63. "Communications et Correspondance. Groupe La Solidarité", *La Révolte* (Paris), 8–14 April 1893; "Movimento Sociale. Inghilterra", *L'Ordine* (Turin), 29 April 1893; "Revista del Exterior", *El Productor* (Barcelona), 4 May 1893; "Á los anarquistas italianos del extranjero", *El Productor* (Barcelona), 1 June 1893; "Questioni di tattica", *Sempre Avanti!...* (Livorno), 4 June 1893.
64. "Il dovere anarchico", *LQS*, 9 September 1899.
65. "Federazione Socialista-Anarchica", *LQS*, 23 September 1899.

organization and struggle on the Italian soil. On the same note, it is worth recalling that the man who sparked the Rome May Day riots in 1891, and was initially considered an unknown troublemaker coming out of the blue, was in fact a foremost figure of transnational anarchism, Galileo Palla, one of Malatesta's comrades in Argentina and in the editorial staff of *L'Associazione*, who lived at the time in Paris. Transnationalism could also help carrying out openly illegal propaganda in Italy even in times of harsh repression. In 1894, hundreds of copies of a manifesto "Al Popolo d'Italia" [To the People of Italy], signed by the group *La Solidarietà*, were mailed from London to Italy for country-wide distribution in the aftermath of the Sicily and Lunigiana uprisings, with the repression of the Crispi government raging all over Italy. The manifesto addressed the Italian people in very explicitly insurrectionary terms, urging them to attack police stations, set fire to courtrooms and city halls, burn documents concerning ownership claims, etc. The authorities identified over fifty recipients of placard bundles, and a flurry of prosecutions ensued all over Italy. However, the defendants, many of which were well-known anarchists, invariably ended up being acquitted, as long as they could claim, as they all unfailingly did, that they had not solicited the sending of the placards. The episode clearly illustrates a sort of division of labour between militants in Italy and abroad, which enabled the former to be less exposed to government persecution.[66]

In sum, borders did not necessarily always work against anarchism. Certainly the Italian borders circumscribed the territory inside of which the Italian government ruled, but at the same time they circumscribed the territory outside of which that government could not rule. Italian anarchism, whose homeland was "the whole world", lived on either side of the border, while the Italian government had a limited reach beyond it. An initiative such as the International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 in Rome was an attempt – largely unsuccessful – by the Italian government to cope with the transnational character of anarchism. Foreign countries like Switzerland and Great Britain were probably not more liberal towards Italian anarchists than Italy, from their own domestic perspective. However, Italian anarchists were indeed safer there than in Italy, in the narrower sense of being out of the reach of the Italian government.[67]

CONCLUSIONS

Italian anarchism was characterized by high levels of transnational mobility across the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, in terms of

66. ACS, Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia, Direzione Generale degli Affari Penali, delle Grazie e del Casellario, Divisione Affari Penali, box 105, folder 991, "Stampa straniera sediziosa".
67. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp. 120–124.

militants, resources, and ideas. The mobility and transnationalism of anarchist militants had its own dynamics and was not a simple function of the mobility and transnationalism of the Italian population at large. The volume of transnational contributions to the anarchist press indicates that Italian anarchists were transnational in a significantly higher degree than Italians in general. The mobility of anarchist editors also indicates that the pattern of anarchist mobility was distinct from that of migration in general, involving a significant component of mobility between foreign countries. However, anarchist transnationalism was indeed rooted in the areas of Italian immigration, as illustrated by the distribution of the areas of highest anarchist editorial activity and contribution to the press. The steady presence of Italian anarchists in such areas was relied upon by their comrades in the homeland and elsewhere in the world.

The transnational segment of Italian anarchism had a key role in providing financial resources for propaganda in Italy, most notably by supporting the anarchist press. It also had a key role in publishing its own periodicals and pamphlets. The transnationalism of ideas is most clearly illustrated by the fact that nearly 40 per cent of Italian anarchist periodicals were published outside Italy. Such periodicals were transnational in various ways. Not only they were published abroad, but they were also meant for distribution outside of their country of publication. Their content was itself considerably transnational, thanks to regular correspondencies from comrades in other countries. Furthermore, the offices and editorial staffs of anarchist periodical were centers of broader propaganda and organization activities – such as holding lectures, printing literature, and functioning as correspondence committees – that pertained to a larger circle of people than those involved in the newspapers themselves.

In addition to geographical spread and mobility of militants, resources, and ideas, a high level of organizational integration characterized the Italian anarchist movement. Transatlantic integration is well exemplified by the United States, which were intentionally visited by most Italian anarchist leaders, with the purpose of developing, extending, and organizing the anarchist movement and press in that country. The sustained editorship of *La Questione Sociale* by a steady stream of foremost anarchists over a long period of time constitutes a singular pattern of cooperation and illustrates well the transnationalism of anarchist militants. Conversely, militants from overseas locations, both across the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, regularly participated in the collective life of the Italian anarchist movement, as institutional events like the Capolago congress of 1891 illustrate. In other words, the anarchist groups of cities like New York, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Tunis, and Alexandria – as well as of European cities like London, Paris, and Geneva – with their own periodicals and their steady

participation to the life of the homeland anarchist movement were by all means an integral part of it. In addition to this pattern of cooperation, transnational anarchism in Europe had an even closer role. A sort of division of labour existed, whereby a significant amount of organization and propaganda workload – organizing and hosting meetings and congresses, printing placards, etc. – could be taken up by groups outside of Italy, especially when such activities were likely to incur in government repression. Conversely, exiles like Malatesta, Merlino, Cipriani, and Palla were always ready to clandestinely re-enter Italy, when circumstances required it.

Transnationalism was thus a key feature of the anarchist movement, which significantly contributed to its sustainability. In times of repression, Italian anarchism abroad provided continuity to the movement that had been beheaded in the homeland, and its press abroad took up the task of carrying on propaganda in the Italian language. However, transnationalism was not just an emergency mode of operation in exceptional times. Rather, it was a built-in characteristic of the movement, closely related to the nature of anarchist tactics. Italian anarchists were fully aware of the role of transnationalism and intentionally relied on it, as the arrangements made for the Capolago congress in 1891, the attempt at constituting a federation of Italian anarchists residing abroad in 1893, and Malatesta's appeals to the "anarchist duty" of transnational solidarity in 1899 clearly witnessed.

Anarchist insurrectionary tactics required a gradual work of preparation and organization. The more this work could be carried out quietly and covertly, the more effective it could be. Therefore, in the division of labour between anarchists in Italy and abroad, the latter were more suited to carry out that work of preparation. Conversely, the execution of direct-action tactics was as effective as it could be sudden and widespread. In other words, the extent to which insurrectionary episodes such as the First of May 1891 in Rome, and the Lunigiana uprising of January 1894 appeared to be spontaneous popular revolts could be taken as a measure of success for their preparation. This brings us back to the notion of opaqueness from which we started: the appearance of discontinuity, spontaneism, and lack of organization may have partly been the intentional and required counterpart of the reality of effective collective action. In brief, direct action tactics, opaqueness of organization, and transnationalism together help providing an alternative pattern of explanation to the advance-and-retreat or appearance-and-disappearance patterns.

Like the rebellious proletarians of Linebaugh's and Rediker's book, Italian anarchism was a transnational movement. Unlike those rebels, however, Italian anarchists were not a "motley crew". They were conscious carriers of a revolutionary project, and members of an integrated and articulate movement that pursued that project. In a very literal sense,

Italian anarchism is best analysed as a single movement stretching across the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. In that way historians can appreciate how transnationalism provided organizational continuity to the movement, and constituted the ground for its sustainability in time. A transnational perspective on Italian anarchism also provides the appropriate context in which the individual lives of militants should be placed. Malatesta's life is paradigmatic in this respect. From a national perspective his exiles through Europe, North Africa, and the Americas may appear as the wanderings of a knight errant in and out of his country, an alternation of engagements with and disengagements from anarchism in Italy. From a transnational perspective the same moves represent a coherent itinerary within Italian anarchism, either in Italy or outside of Italy, with no interruption and no disengagement.