

Militant Minority: The Question of Anarchist Political Organisation

The broad anarchist tradition has consistently stressed the significance of ideas for the libertarian and socialist reconstruction of society as well as the need for a “*fundamental transvaluation of values*” and the removal of the “authority principle” from the hearts and minds of the popular classes.¹ Even the insurrectionist anarchists, for example, saw armed action as important primarily for its educative function. The same concern with the centrality of ideas is seen in the mass anarchist strand, the promotion of revolutionary countercultures, Bakunin’s emphasis on anarchism as a “new faith,” Malatesta’s stress on the “revolutionary imagination,” the intellectual work of figures like Reclus, Foster’s idea of a militant minority, and so on.

The issue that arises, however, is *how* best to spread the new faith, and it is here that we encounter a wide range of different tactical positions on a crucial question: Is it necessary for the militant minority of anarchists or syndicalists to form themselves into a specifically anarchist or syndicalist political organisation in order to promote their ideas and pursue their strategies? If so, how should such a group be organised?

There are a number of key positions. There is an “antiorganisationalist” one, which argues for an informal network of revolutionaries. There is the view of some syndicalists that a revolutionary union can undertake all the tasks of an anarchist or syndicalist political organisation, making such an organisation redundant. Finally, there is organisational dualism, which is the stance that there must be a specific and distinct anarchist organisation that would promote anarchist or syndicalist ideas. Yet even if organisational dualism is accepted, there is wide scope for disagreement over how much agreement, coherence, and discipline a group should adopt. We discuss these issues in this chapter, making the case that a coherent and specifically anarchist organisation, with a common analysis, strategy, and tactics along with a measure of collective responsibility, expressed in a programme, is the most effective of these approaches and arguably a necessary complement to a syndicalist strategy.

Insurrectionist Anarchists, Antiorganisationalism, and Stirner's Ghost

For insurrectionist anarchists, the role of the militant is to inspire the masses through exemplary actions, expose the inequities of the present, strike back at the ruling class, and disrupt the framework of class power through the "tactics of corrosion and continuous attack."² Besides opposing reforms and compromises of any sort, this type of anarchism is usually associated with a profound distrust of formal organisations. For Galleani, organisations with set political programmes, common strategies, and formal structures must be "modestly, but firmly" opposed. They involve a "graduated superstructure of bodies, a true hierarchy, no matter how disguised," and are united through a "single bond, discipline" that hampers initiative and "punishes infractions with sanctions that go from censure to excommunication, to expulsion." Galleani favoured a loose network of anarchists, with cells based on the affinity of different activists; "an organisation compatible with anarchist principles is not to be found," and an "anarchist party" must be a "government like any other government."³ More recent insurrectionist anarchists have called for a "specific informal anarchist organisation" with "an insurrectional project," based on "autonomous base nuclei."⁴

It is possible that this antiorganisationalist approach, with its stress on a loose network of insurrectionary activists, was developed as an alternative to the authoritarian insurrectionism of earlier socialists like Louis Auguste Blanqui, who advocated a coup d'état by a revolutionary conspiracy.⁵ The Galleanist approach raises questions. Organised—even if informally—and bound by a definite programme, the Galleanists were essentially an "anarchist party" that was willing to enforce some sort of discipline and exclusion. A network is an organisation, as is a local cell, and the insurrectionist anarchist current was clearly characterised by a narrow set of shared analytic and strategic positions. If a network of individual affinity groups could operate in a nonauthoritarian manner and share common political positions, as the Galleanists believed, then there is no real reason to suppose that formal organisation must eventuate in "a true hierarchy," an authoritarian organisation; if not, then "antiorganisationalism" is also not a solution.

The Galleanists arguably did not recognise the dangers of informal organisation and the merits of formal organisation. The great problem of informal organisation is the development of informal and invisible hierarchies. By contrast, formal rules and procedures outlining responsibilities, rights, and roles enable a certain amount of accountability and transparency, and provide a safeguard against the "tyranny of structurelessness."⁶ Thus,

The absence of any formal structure not only does not guarantee greater internal democracy, but can also permit the creation of informal groups of hidden leaders. These groups come together on the basis of affinity, they can co-opt new adherents and they can generate an uncontrolled and uncontrollable leadership, hard to identify but nonetheless effective.⁷

If there is no necessary link between the formal character of an organisation and the rise of authoritarianism and hierarchy, it is also the case that an informal structure does not avoid such problems.

Antiorganisationalist currents were not restricted to insurrectionists, but also emerged among mass anarchists, though. In his exile in late nineteenth-century Argentina, for instance, Malatesta struggled against antiorganisationalist currents.⁸ Isabel Meredith's semiautobiographical account of English anarchism in the late nineteenth century leaves no doubt that there were mass anarchists who stressed the right of every individual to do as they wished as well as the total autonomy of local groups, and opposed the development of any common analysis, strategy, and tactics.⁹ While the Chinese anarchists were predominantly in favour of organisation, there were those who "believed that anarchism should not be organised, or that anarchist organisation had no room for discipline, rules, and regulations."¹⁰ An "autonomist" faction within the IWPA accepted only the most loose-knit organisations, even distrusting the CLU.¹¹ The antiorganisationalist tendencies of many contemporary autonomist Marxists suggest that libertarian socialism—with its emphasis on individual freedom—is perhaps peculiarly vulnerable to the emergence of antiorganisationalist ideas in a way that political socialism is not.

Antiorganisationalist notions are also often associated with a very individualistic outlook, something that the rediscovery of the works of Stirner in the late nineteenth century reinforced. While Stirner's ideas were not integral to the broad anarchist tradition, they came to exercise a powerful attraction on antiorganisationalist anarchists. It was in these circles in particular that Stirner found a new audience; his ideas also attracted a number of mutualists, including Tucker.¹² Some anarchists were also attracted to Friedrich Nietzsche's doctrines of individualism and relativism. Besides being open to the tyranny of structurelessness, these approaches have another crucial limitation: they make consistent and coherent political work difficult, and hamper the promotion of the anarchist idea.

By the time of the 1907 Amsterdam Congress, antiorganisationalist currents were a serious problem. Not only did some self-described individualists disrupt the proceedings but a number of anarchists stayed away "because of their opposition to any organisation more elaborate than the loose local group."¹³ The congress declared that "the ideas of anarchy and organisation, far from being incompatible, as has sometimes been pretended, in fact complement and illuminate each other," but antiorganisational and individualistic currents continued to grow.¹⁴ Victor Serge (1890–1947) provided a vivid recollection of their impact in 1917 in Spain, at the time in the throes of preparations for a general strike:

Andrés, an editor of the Confederation [CNT] paper, a thin swarthy Argentine with sharp, squarish features, a pointed chin, and a querulous look, held a pointed cigarette between purple lips.... Heinrich Zilz [a "French deserter"], his necktie carefully knotted ... was smoking with a smile on his face.... Hardly moving his lips, Andrés said:

"The people over in Manresa have promised some grenades. Sabs, Tarrasa, and Granollers are ready. Our pals in Tarrasa already have a hundred and forty Brownings. The Committee is negotiating with a junta of infantrymen. But what cowards those republicans are!"

"So you're really itching to get yourselves chopped down, eh?" Zilz broke in, lighting another cigarette. "... you can count me out. My skin is worth more than a republic, even a workers' republic."

A heavy silence fell over us.... We went out ... Andrés said what we were all thinking. "The ego-anarchist poison. People like that, you see, don't risk their necks anymore except for money."¹⁵

The impact of the "ego-anarchist poison" on the class struggle led Serge—initially a supporter of the CNT—to abandon anarchism for Bolshevism, which seemed to offer a more realistic conception of revolution; he was not the only anarchist to make this shift for these reasons.

Kropotkin also found it increasingly necessary to defend anarchism against Stirnerite and Nietzschean ideas, which he believed provided a recipe for "the slavery and oppression of the masses."¹⁶ He argued that anarchists were "individualists," but only in the sense that they advocated the free development of all people in a democratic and egalitarian socialist order. In place of "misanthropic bourgeois individualism," he advocated "true individuality," which could only be realised "through practising the highest communist sociability."¹⁷ Rejecting relativism, he argued that: "No society is possible without certain forms of morality generally recognised," and "anarchist morality" was based on the principle of "solidarity."¹⁸ Other anarchists tried to deal with the destructive impact and troubling implications of Stirnerism by rereading Stirner as compatible with anarchist views of freedom as the product, not the antithesis, of society: Nettlau attempted unconvincingly to recast Stirner as "eminently socialist"; Rocker tried to appropriate Stirner for mass anarchism as a thinker who "impels powerfully to independent thinking"; and more recently Guérin used the same approach.¹⁹

Developments in the 1920s showed that antiorganisationalist and individualistic attitudes continued to maintain their hold. If anything, the influence of these views grew as the fate of the Russian Revolution convinced many anarchists that attempts at establishing formal organisations were a form of creeping Bolshevism that eventuated in Leninism and dictatorship. Camillo Berneri painted a depressing picture of the effects on the anarchist movement by the 1930s:

As for the unions, I believe that it is the only area in which we could build anything, although I cannot accept union officials and I can clearly see drawbacks and dangers in anarcho-syndicalism in practice. If I blame individualism, it is because, although less important numerically, it has succeeded in influencing virtually all of the movement.²⁰

Born in Italy, Berneri had initially been affiliated with the PSI, left in 1915, was drafted into the Italian army in 1917, became actively involved in the anarchist press, and worked as a schoolteacher. Driven into exile by Mussolini, he suffered arrests and expulsions from France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Holland. He was editor of the exiled USI paper *Guerra di classe* ("Class War"), and was murdered in Spain in 1937 by Communist Party of Spain (PCE) agents.

Syndicalism and Anarchism without Adjectives

Some (but by no means all) syndicalists argued for an alternative approach to spreading revolutionary ideas. Admitting the importance of and embracing formal organisation, they claimed that there was no need for a specific political organisation to wage the battle of ideas within such a union. The syndicalist movement was self-sufficient: based on a revolutionary platform, the union would inculcate

its membership with revolutionary ideals through systematic education. In other words, the syndicalist union would fulfill the tasks of both union and political group, and the case for a specific anarchist or syndicalist political organisation was therefore denied.

The basic problem with this approach is that it was not clear how syndicalism would be defended against rival political tendencies in the union. Workers, after all, join unions primarily with an eye on the “amelioration of the conditions of work.”²¹ They might join a syndicalist union simply because it was the only one available or the most effective union in a particular workplace. It is inevitable that a syndicalist union would continuously be infused with elements that did not share its official views. Building a mass syndicalist union must then inevitably pose the question of how best to defend the revolutionary project to which the union aspired.

Unless the union restricted its membership to convinced anarchists and syndicalists—in which case it would not be a union but a strictly anarchist or syndicalist political organisation masquerading as a union—it must open its doors and thereby continually place its syndicalist aims in jeopardy. The Mexican CGT, for example, grew from forty thousand to eighty thousand by 1928–1929, but this growth led to a substantial influx of members who did not share the union’s anarcho-syndicalist aims and the CGT soon split along political lines into rival federations.²²

As we have seen in the previous chapter, no syndicalists believed that the union struggle would spontaneously generate a revolutionary consciousness or counterculture. What they asserted instead was that the syndicalist union would be able to win new members over to its ideas. How should this programme of education be organised? It is here that the strand of syndicalism that denies the need for a specific political organisation falters. To operate a systematic programme of revolutionary education in a syndicalist union presupposes a group that is in agreement with those ideas, plays a central role in the union, and is willing to wage the battle of ideas against other ideologies. There is nothing otherwise to prevent the union being captured or split.

There is little doubt that even those syndicalists who denied the need for a separate political organisation in theory were compelled to organise one—even if only informally—in practice. This is shown by the experiences of the two major syndicalist formations that openly denied the need for a separate political organisation: the French CGT and the U.S. IWW. Public proclamations aside, the Wobblies embraced the theory that there must be a specific militant minority to “propagate revolutionary ideas, standardize their policies, instigate strike movements, and organise their attacks on the conservative forces in the unions,” including the labour fakers.²³ In the French CGT, syndicalists organised “the most revolutionary elements among the masses” into “definite groups, *noyaux*, within the broad trade unions,” and it was the *noyaux* network that provided the means for the initial anarchist takeover of the Bourses du Travail and the CGT.²⁴ The IWW operated Propaganda Leagues as auxiliaries to the union, and a network of convinced militants were key to driving the IWW’s educational programme.²⁵ The question of the need for a separate anarchist or syndicalist political group was also posed elsewhere, notably when the revolutionaries were operating as a minority within existing unions or a rank-and-file movement.

In practice, then, it is difficult to avoid recognising the need for specific political organisations to supplement mass organisations—that is, the need for organisational dualism: the position that mass organisations like unions must be complemented by a specifically anarchist or syndicalist political organisation if they are to be revolutionary. As the *Platform* argued, “if trade unionism does not find in anarchist theory a support in opportune times it will turn, whether we like it or not, to the ideology of a political statist party.”²⁶

Organisational dualism has a long history within the broad anarchist tradition, and is distinct from both antiorganisationalism and the type of syndicalism that denies the need for specific political organisation. Nonetheless, there has never been a consensus over the way a specific anarchist grouping, based around anarchist ideas and focused on their propagation, should operate.

A common view, held by a vocal section of mass anarchists, was that while a specific anarchist political organisation was necessary, it should be structured loosely, seeking to unite all anarchists and syndicalists as far as possible. Thus, the specifically anarchist organisation should be open to all anarchists and syndicalists, and could and should not aspire to a close agreement on questions of analysis, strategy, and tactics. This approach is based on two ideas: that it is somehow authoritarian for an anarchist organisation to prescribe particular views and actions; and that it is more important that anarchists and syndicalists, in general, were united organisationally than share a programme based on clear positions.

The drive for anarchist unity, regardless of the major divisions within the broad anarchist tradition, can be traced to the 1890s, where it was often informed primarily by a concern with fostering cooperation between the advocates of collectivist and communist systems of distribution in the future society—a contentious issue in Spain and elsewhere.²⁷ Many anarchists felt such disputes were futile and could be resolved after the revolution. Malatesta held this view, as did Fernando Tárri del Mármol (1861–1915), who advocated for unity on the basis of “anarchism without adjectives.”²⁸ Born in Cuba, but mainly active in the Spanish movement, he was trained as a scientist and active in syndicalism; there is some evidence that his ideas on syndicalism were a crucial influence on Mann. One of those influenced by the call for unity was the U.S. anarchist de Cleyre.²⁹ Born to a poor family and initially intent on a religious career, she was radicalised by the Haymarket affair, influenced by the writings of Tucker, worked as a private tutor, wrote a number of important works, and was associated with Berkman, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Michel, and others. She maintained that an anarchist society would see “many different experiments” in social organisation “tried in various localities in order to determine the most appropriate form.”³⁰

While the idea of anarchism without adjectives was at first an argument for unity despite differences over the *future* society, it was expanded by the early twentieth century into a call for unity in the *present*, regardless of differences in analysis, strategy, and tactics. This was not Tárri del Mármol’s conception, for he argued for a well-organised anarchist grouping, with a “plan of struggle” to shape the “labour unions and societies of resistance.”³¹ For Nettlau, however, “all the anarchists” and “all freedom-loving human beings” must “become a united force, which, while pre-

serving the autonomy of each of its members," would "practise mutual aid among all of them" as well as "advance liberty on a small scale and a large one."³²

The same contentions were reiterated by the French anarchist Faure and became tied to the idea that an anarchist organisation should not in any way constrain the activities of its members. For Goldman, this was an issue of principle: "I will only accept anarchist organisation on one condition: it is that it should be based on absolute respect for *all* individual initiatives and should not hamper their free play and development. The essential principle of anarchism is individual autonomy."³³ Many of the "pure anarchists" in Japan wanted a loose organisational structure—some were even wary of federations—despite maintaining in practice a precise analysis and strategy.³⁴ For Voline, there was "validity in all anarchist schools of thought," and anarchists "must consider all diverse tendencies and accept them." To maintain that anarchism was "only a theory of classes" was "to limit it to a single viewpoint," for anarchism was "more complex and pluralistic, like life itself," and it was not the "anarchist way" to promote one view over another. An anarchist organisation was necessary, but it must accommodate all "opinions" and "tendencies," and be fairly loosely organised. A "harmonious anarchist organisation ... does not have a formal character but its members are joined together by common ideas and ends," and it was a mistake to build a single anarchist organisation based on a unitary "ideological and tactical conception."³⁵

There are a number of problems with this approach. Even if, as Goldman held, the essential principle of anarchism was individual autonomy, it simply did not follow that an anarchist organisation must tolerate all initiatives and views. An organisation is generally formed to allow people to cooperate in pursuit of common purposes, and there is no reason why individual initiatives should be at odds with those purposes, or why contradictory opinions and tendencies should be grouped together within a single organisation.

Nor is there any reason why an organisation should not develop a common programme, complete with close agreements on analysis, strategy, and tactics, so long as this is done democratically. Since the anarchists accept the idea that organisation should be voluntary, those who hold common views are entitled to exclude from their organisations those who express alternative ones. To insist that an organisation cannot exclude someone is to violate the principle of voluntary cooperation. Equally, those who hold alternative perspectives and who are excluded from one organisation are perfectly entitled to form their own groups, and the fact that other groups exist is no barrier to this free association. There is, in short, nothing authoritarian about forming a tight-knit group with a unitary "ideological and tactical conception," and nothing particularly libertarian about the stance that anarchists "must consider all diverse tendencies and accept them."

The view that anarchists and syndicalists will be strengthened by the formation of an organisation that is open to all anarchist currents is also open to question. Such unity, as Voline recognised, is only possible if the organisation highlights what the different currents share in common and ignores the points of division. This can be done in two ways: either by allowing every tendency "free play and development" within the loose framework of a common adherence to anarchism or by trying to develop a synthesis of views that enables the formulation of a common platform ac-

ceptable to the “entire movement.” Goldman favoured the former approach; Voline proposed the latter “synthesist” approach, as did Faure: anarchism has “class elements as well as humanism and individualist principles,” “its class element is above all its means of fighting for liberation; its humanitarian character is its ethical aspect, the foundation of society; its individualism is the goal of mankind.”³⁶

Examples of groups and federations that have sought to unite all self-declared anarchists on the basis of a common identity abound. A recent one was the now-defunct Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation formed in the United States in 1972. The history of the broad anarchist tradition also provides many examples of a consciously “synthesist” approach, such as the Francophone Anarchist Federation (FAF) established in 1937 and the Italian Anarchist Federation formed in 1945, both of which are still active.

The problem, however, is that organisations formed in such ways often have difficulties in operating. While some issues can be deferred to a vague future, other points of division are not so easily sidestepped. An organisation that brought together insurrectionist anarchists, antisindicalist mass anarchists, and syndicalists of various types would immediately be characterised by disagreements over fundamental issues. If the organisation used a loose definition of anarchism, it could also conceivably include in its ranks various nonanarchist currents, like Taoists, Stirnerites, and Tolstoyans. Propaganda and analysis would have to be vague; if all views are to be represented, publications must either carry a wide range of contradictory perspectives or focus on articles of a sufficiently abstract nature that avoid giving offence to different factions. The practical challenges of the class struggle pose further problems: for instance, faced with a bitter general strike by reformist unions, different members of the organisation would respond in radically different ways; the usefulness of the organisation would be doubtful.

The notion that bringing together all anarchists in a single organisation would strengthen the anarchist movement is arguably mistaken. Existing divisions within the broad anarchist tradition would simply be reproduced within the organisation, and the unity that was created would be nominal; once various nonanarchist tendencies are also allowed admission, this problem must be immeasurably more serious. Such an organisation must either have a fairly weak impact, even if numerically strong, or suffer serious splits.

In China, anarchism was a potent force in the first half of the twentieth century, but was often localised, uncoordinated, and made up of a wide variety of incompatible views.³⁷ This organisational chaos helps explain why the far better organised but initially far smaller CCP was able to make rapid gains against anarchism after 1921.³⁸ In the PLM, Flores Magón advocated “an activating minority, a courageous minority of libertarians,” that would “move the masses ... despite the doubts of the incredulous, the prophecies of the pessimists, and the alarm of the sensible, coldly calculating, and cowardly.”³⁹ Yet the PLM began as a Liberal party—“liberal” in the Latin American sense of a progressive, democratic, and modernising party—and its official platform remained Liberal until around 1911. When it moved into action during the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) and adopted an openly anarchist programme, it was crippled by splits and secessions; many members were not in fact anarchists.⁴⁰ The same type of process took place in Japan, where the “pure an-

archists" and the syndicalists split, followed by a split in the Zenkoku Jiren unions and the formation of the Nihon Jikyo.

The project of "synthesis" does not provide a solution to these difficulties. Voline was conscious of the limitations of a "mechanical alliance of different tendencies, each holding only to its own point of view," and it is partly for this reason that he favoured a synthesist approach. He was well aware that there were serious "contradictions" among the various currents of anarchism and syndicalism (among which he included Stirnerism), but optimistically believed these arose from misunderstandings along with the "vague and imprecise character of some of our basic ideas." In his view, synthesis would allow for unity as well as rectify "confusion in our ideas about a series of fundamental issues."⁴¹

The creation of a unifying synthesis is rather more difficult than this optimistic prognosis would suggest. Voline admitted that the points of "confusion" included "a series of fundamental issues, such as the conception of the social revolution, of violence, of the period of transition, of organisation," the means of "getting a large part of the population to accept our ideas," and the way to deal with "repression."⁴² It is difficult to envisage an acceptable synthesis on these issues that would provide a basis for common work or "clarify" positions. The confusion about ideas that Voline mentioned would not be resolved but reproduced. It might seem self-evident that the unity of all anarchists must provide strength, but this is by no means the case:

Whatever the level of theoretical unity may be (and it is never complete), the absence of any strategic unity means that any decisions taken need be observed only by those who agree with them, leaving the others to do as they please. This means that the decisions are of little value, that Congresses can make no effective resolutions, that internal debate is unproductive (as everyone maintains their own positions) and that the organisation goes through the motions of its internal rites without presenting a common face outside the organisation.⁴³

An organisation aiming at synthesis through bringing together "heterogeneous theoretical and practical elements" can only result in a "mechanical assembly of individuals each having a different conception of all the questions of the anarchist movement, an assembly which would inevitably disintegrate on encountering reality."⁴⁴

Bakuninism, the Organisation of Tendency, and the "Platform"

An alternative anarchist and syndicalist approach is represented by the "organisation of tendency," in which specifically anarchist or syndicalist political groups are formed on the basis of shared political positions, with a measure of organisational discipline.⁴⁵ The organisation has a shared analysis of the situation as well as an agreement on strategic and tactical issues expressed in a clear programme, and its members agree to carry out that programme and are held accountable for doing so. This approach can be traced back to the Alliance. The Alliance was formed in 1868, replacing the earlier International Brotherhood, and applied to join the First International.⁴⁶ At Marx's insistence, the Alliance was publicly dissolved, and its adherents entered the First International as individual members and branches.

This had little effect on the political views of the new adherents.⁴⁷ It is certain that the Alliance continued underground as a secret body, operating as a specifically anarchist political organisation that aimed to reshape the First International into an anarchist and syndicalist body.

When the First International began to split in the early 1870s, the continued existence of the Alliance despite the 1868 ruling provided the Marxists with a good deal of political ammunition. To the spurious charge that Bakunin was an advocate of “universal, pan destruction,” “assassinations ... *en masse*,” was added the claim that the International was being subverted by a sinister secret grouping, based on “blind obedience” to the personal dictatorship of “Citizen B,” with designs on “barrack-room communism.”⁴⁸ In response, the anarchists maintained that the Alliance no longer operated—a position that has frequently been accepted by later writers. What had been a flat denial by an emergent movement, caught in an obviously embarrassing position, became something of a dogma in later years and was incorporated into the literature. The result, reinforced by a hostile scholarship on Bakunin, has been that the significance of the Alliance has often been consistently underrated. Thus, Carr and Joll insist that the Alliance was an “imaginary” group, and explain this by reference to Bakunin’s supposed mania for inventing nonexistent “secret societies.”⁴⁹

The evidence is rather different, though. When Bakunin’s agent Giuseppe Fanelli (1827–1877) arrived in Spain in 1868 to help initiate what would become FORE, the largest section of the First International, he brought with him both the programme of the First International and the statutes of the Alliance.⁵⁰ The Alliance in Spain “worked within the organisation of workers against any possible anti-revolutionary deviation” and played a critical role in shaping FORE. By 1870, there were “secret Bakuninist nuclei” of between twenty thousand and thirty thousand adherents in Spain, and an Alliance section was formed in Portugal in the following year.⁵¹ The Alliance was also active in Italy and Switzerland; doubtless there were sections elsewhere. Bakunin himself referred to the Alliance in the present tense in 1872 and 1873, and Kropotkin joined the organisation as late as 1877.⁵² As Malatesta, himself an Alliance member, would later comment:

Why try to conceal certain truths now that they are in the domain of history and can serve as a lesson for the present and the future?... We, who were known in the International as Bakuninists and who were members of the Alliance made loud outcries against the Marxists because they tried to make their own particular programme prevail in the International. Yet, setting aside the question of the legality of their methods, which it is fruitless to dwell upon now, we did just what they did; we sought to make use of the International for our own party aims.⁵³

Admitting to the existence of the Alliance, yet eager to deflect Marxist claims that the organisation was a sinister conspiracy, the anarcho-syndicalist Sam Dolgoff (1902–1990) insisted that the International Brotherhood and the Alliance were inoffensive and “quite informal fraternities of loosely organised individuals and groups.”⁵⁴ This is not accurate: both the International Brotherhood and the Alliance had clearly set out programmes, rules, and criteria for membership.⁵⁵ Born in Russia to a Jewish family, Dolgoff grew up in the United States, where he worked on the

docks and railroads, in lumber camps and factories, and painted houses. He became an anarchist, joined the IWW and a number of anarchist projects, devoted his life to the anarchist cause, edited the standard Bakunin anthology in English, and wrote important studies of Spain and Cuba as well as an interesting autobiography.⁵⁶

For Bakunin, the Alliance was a “powerful but always invisible revolutionary association” that will “prepare and direct the revolution,” “the invisible pilots guiding the Revolution ... the collective dictatorship of all our allies.”⁵⁷ Bakunin saw the Alliance as a vehicle for mobilising and politicising the popular classes, rather than as a substitution for popular action or the instrument of a Blanquist-style dictatorship. The “*secret and universal association of the International Brothers*” would be “the life and the energy of the Revolution,” composed of “men neither vain nor ambitious, but capable of serving as intermediaries between the revolutionary idea and the instincts of the people,” and aiming at a revolution that “excludes any idea of dictatorship and of a controlling and directive power.”⁵⁸

The “invisible pilots” and “collective dictatorship” would “awaken and foment all the dynamic passions of the people,” who would then organise from below upward, “spontaneously, without outside interference” or “official dictatorship.”⁵⁹ The “sole purpose” of the Alliance was, Bakunin wrote, to “promote the Revolution; to destroy all governments and to make government forever impossible,” to “give free rein to the ... masses ... voluntary federation and unconditional freedom,” and to “combat all ambition to dominate the revolutionary movement of the people” by “cliques or individuals.” Its power would not be based on official positions yet only the “*natural but never official influence* of all members of the Alliance.”⁶⁰ Bakunin argued that the Alliance was “a secret society, formed in the heart of the International, to give it a revolutionary organisation, and to transform it and all the popular masses outside it, into a force sufficiently organised to annihilate political, clerical, bourgeois reaction, to destroy all religious, political, judicious institutions of states.”⁶¹

The secrecy of the Alliance was, arguably, not an “authoritarian strategy” based on “manipulating others through secret societies.”⁶² The repressive conditions under which the early anarchists operated necessitated secrecy—a concern that revolutionaries of all types shared: for instance, it was a secret Communist League issued *The Communist Manifesto*.⁶³ Within these constraints, the anarchists sought to win the battle of ideas, not manipulate the popular classes through a conspiracy:

The difference lay in the fact that we, as anarchists, relied chiefly on propaganda, and, since we wanted to gain converts for the anarchist cause, emphasised decentralisation, the autonomy of groups, free initiative, both individual and collective, while the Marxists, being authoritarians as they are, wanted to impose their ideas by majority strength—which was more or less fictitious—by centralisation and by discipline. But all of us, Bakuninists and Marxists alike, tried to force events rather than relying upon the force of events.⁶⁴

The model of a specific anarchist political organisation of tendency developed by Bakunin and the Alliance as an alternative to Blanquist and classical Marxist conceptions—an anarchist organisation with a clear agenda, working within the movements of the popular classes, relating to their demands and striving to win the

battle of ideas, rather than imposing its will by fiat or manipulation—has been a recurrent feature of mass anarchism. For Kropotkin, it was the “party which has made the most revolutionary propaganda and which has shown the most spirit and daring” that “will be listened to on the day when it is necessary to act, to march in front in order to realise the revolution.”⁶⁵ He considered it essential “to plan for the penetration of the masses and their stimulation by libertarian militants, in much the same way as the Alliance acted within the International.”⁶⁶ Rejecting the notion that the unions were spontaneously revolutionary, Kropotkin maintained that “there is need of the other element Malatesta speaks of and which Bakunin always professed.”⁶⁷

Malatesta had contended that “Bakunin expected a great deal from the International; yet, at the same time, he created the Alliance, a secret organisation with a well-determined programme—atheist, socialist, anarchist, revolutionary.” This gave the “the anarchist impulse to one branch of the International just as the Marxists, on the other hand, gave the Social Democratic impulsion to the other branch.”⁶⁸ While Malatesta flirted with the synthesist position on occasion, he more typically called for a “continuity of effort, patience, coordination and adaptability to different surroundings and circumstances,” doubted the wisdom of “bringing together all anarchists into a single organisation,” and argued for “cooperating in a common aim” as well as a “moral duty to see through commitments undertaken and to do nothing that would contradict the accepted programme.”⁶⁹ He envisaged the ideal anarchist political organisation in fairly loose terms—congress resolutions were not, for instance, to be binding on those who disagreed with them—but was generally within the Bakuninist approach to organisational dualism.⁷⁰

In Spain, the FORE was followed by the FTRE and then the Pact of Union and Solidarity, within which militants “committed to the need for political cadres and fearful of the reformist inclinations of organisations based on unions created ... the Anarchist Organisation of the Spanish Region.”⁷¹ In 1918, and again in 1922, anarchists committed themselves to working within the CNT to “bring their full influence to bear” and prevent a Bolshevik takeover.⁷²

The National Federation of Anarchist Groups was followed in 1927 by the FAI, which was meant to operate in both Portugal and Spain, although it seems to have only been a serious factor in the latter. Explicitly modelled on the Alliance, the FAI was a clandestine organisation dedicated “to an intensification of anarchist involvement in the CNT,” with the FAI viewing it as its “duty to guide the CNT from positions of responsibility.”⁷³ For many veterans, the FAI “brought anarchist history full circle,” with the Alliance again “revived to guide and to hasten the revolutionary action of anarcho-sindicalism.”⁷⁴ It may have had nearly forty thousand members on the eve of July 19, 1936.⁷⁵ It was the FAI that played the key role in ousting the moderate *treintistas* from prominent positions in the CNT in 1931—a process during which the “leading trientistas were fired from their posts in publications and committees” and “expelled from the confederation.”⁷⁶

The FAI in Spain has been described as “a highly centralised party apparatus,” but the position was more complicated.⁷⁷ It was tightly structured: based on small local bodies called “affinity groups,” with a policy of carefully selecting members, it was organised into local, district, and regional federations, linked through mandated committees and based on regular mass assemblies; it also had a Peninsular

Committee that dealt with administrative questions, executed agreed policies, and issued public policy statements.⁷⁸ There is some evidence that significant sections of the organisation developed a cult of action in which politics was less important than doing something exciting and practical, regardless of its place in FAI strategy, yet the general impression is certainly that of political coherence and homogeneity.⁷⁹

Durruti (1896–1936) exemplified the ideal FAI militant. The son of a railway worker, he became a mechanic on the railways at the age of fourteen, fled to France during the dramatic 1917 general strike, moved toward anarchism, and joined the CNT on his return in 1919.⁸⁰ He was active in union work, and in 1922 helped form the clandestine Los Solidarios anarchist group. The early 1920s saw a wave of assassinations of CNT militants by employer-hired killers and the police, and groups like Los Solidarios organised armed reprisals. Based in the CNT, these armed groups were qualitatively different from those of insurrectionist anarchists, for their actions were part of a mass struggle, not a substitute for it. In the same spirit, Durruti also robbed banks across Europe and Latin America to raise funds.

In 1931, Durruti joined the FAI, affiliated with the hard-line *Nosotros* (“We”) tendency, and played a key role in the CNT’s plans for revolution in 1932 and 1933, serving on its National Revolutionary Committee. With the outbreak of the Spanish Revolution, he opposed the Popular Front approach and took a leading part in the popular militia, heading what became known as the Durruti Column, which fought on the Aragon front and then in defence of Madrid. Durruti was shot on November 20, 1936, and two days later in Barcelona half a million people attended his funeral, the largest such procession in the city’s history.

Woodcock’s view that Spain provides “the only time in the history of anarchism” that “Bakunin’s plan of a secret elite of devoted militants controlling [*sic*] a public mass organisation of partially converted workers came into being” is not accurate, for similar cases of the Bakuninist approach can be found elsewhere.⁸¹ We have already touched on instances like the *noyaux*, the SNLA, the ISEL, the IWPA in Chicago, and the SLP.

In Mexico, the clandestine anarchist group La Social, first formed in 1865, played an active role in both the CGO and the CGOM, and aimed at establishing unions “similar in nature” to the Spanish CNT.⁸² In 1912, this tradition was reinvigorated with the founding of Luz (renamed Lucha, or “Struggle,” in 1913), a clandestine group that strived for the “creation of an anarcho-syndicalist labour front.”⁸³ Its fiery manifesto declared that it would “enlighten an enslaved and ignorant people,” “overthrow the tormentors of mankind,” “devastate the social institutions generated by torturers and loafers,” “use truth as the ultimate weapon against inequity,” and march “toward the universal nation where all can live with mutual respect” and “absolute freedom.”⁸⁴

Besides promoting workers’ schools and libraries, to be sponsored by the unions, Luz ran popular education classes, founded the COM and played a critical role in expanding the union, and also functioned within it “as a Bakuninist-type control [*sic*] group.”⁸⁵ By 1914, it had become so difficult to distinguish the union’s confederal committee from the Lucha group that the term Lucha even fell into disuse.⁸⁶ In 1917, a new Grupo Luz (“Light Group”) was formed, and was critical in de-

fending and strengthening syndicalism in the difficult years of 1917 to 1921, when it helped form the Mexican CGT.⁸⁷

In China, Shifu's circle, the Society of Anarchist-Communist Comrades, pioneered union organising; "it was Sifu's [*sic*] group that first undertook such activity, propagated syndicalism in China, and, until the mid-twenties when they began to lose ground to the Communist Party, provided leadership in the labour movement."⁸⁸ By 1920 they had organised China's first May Day (in 1918), published the country's first magazine devoted to union work, *Laodong zazhi* ("Labour Magazine"), established nearly forty unions, and had played a similar role to groups like La Social and Luz. In Japan, the role of the Kokuren in the Zenkoku Jiren can be compared to that of the FAI in the CNT.⁸⁹ Formed in 1925, the Kokuren was an "inner core of battle-hardened militants" within the radical unions; it also operated in colonial Korea and Taiwan.⁹⁰

In South Africa, the syndicalist political group, the International Socialist League, championed civil rights, promoted syndicalist ideas, distributed syndicalist materials, and worked within the mainstream unions, where it increasingly promoted rank-and-file syndicalism. It also formed a number of syndicalist unions like the Clothing Workers' Industrial Union, the Horse Drivers' Union, the Industrial Workers of Africa, and the Indian Workers' Industrial Union. The key figures in every single one of these syndicalist unions, like Thibedi, were members of the International Socialist League. Given that the mainstream unions, on the whole, did not admit workers of colour, the formation of new syndicalist unions operated in tandem with the promotion of rank-and-file syndicalism.

Nevertheless, while the International Socialist League aimed at operating as a politically cohesive and tight-knit formation, it tended to lack a clear and consistent programme of action that could foster unity around clear activities and targets, avoided hard choices regarding the use of limited resources in money, people, and time, and generally tried to organise every worker, everywhere, and all the time.⁹¹ This meant that energies were often dissipated and breakthroughs were not always consolidated. Despite some influence in African and Coloured nationalist groups like the Transvaal Native Congress, there was no ongoing work in these bodies; likewise, the syndicalist unions were never linked together in a federation, nor coordinated with one another in other ways.

The Alliance and its successors in the Bakuninist tradition of organisational dualism proved to be successful in promoting and defending the ideas of the broad anarchist tradition in mass organisations, and were pivotal in fostering the successful implementation of the mass anarchist project. This track record arguably arises directly from its stress on shared perspectives and the carrying out of the programme that was adopted. In unifying anarchists around clear objectives, elaborating a shared set of strategic and tactical choices, orienting itself directly toward the popular classes as well as their struggles and organisations, adopting a possibilist outlook, taking decisions about priorities and avoiding the diversion of scarce resources, and uniting energies around a common programme and accepting the responsibility for carrying it out, a small Bakuninist organisation is invariably more effective than a large group that strives for a loose anarchism without adjectives.

From Bakunin to the "Platform"

In 1926, Makhno, Arshinov, and the other Paris-based editors of *Dielo Truda* issued the *Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, which argued for a specific anarchist political group with shared positions, a common programme, and a mandated executive.⁹² The advocates of a loose conception of anarchist political organisation predictably responded with a series of scathing attacks. Voline led the assault, insisting that the *Platform* was "one step away from Bolshevism" and constituted an anarchist "revisionism toward Bolshevism." He asserted that the "Executive Committee of the Universal Anarchist Union" that would "assume the ideological and organisational direction of every organisation," and favoured "coercion, violence, sanctions," the suppression of "freedom of press and freedom of speech," a "centralised and planned" economy, and a "central army, with a central command ... and 'political direction'" would dominate the "mass organisations."⁹³ These charges—that the *Platform* was Leninist or Blanquist—have been uncritically accepted by many anarchists and syndicalists as well as by scholars today.⁹⁴ "It is difficult to see what the difference is between this concept and the Bolshevik idea of a revolutionary vanguard."⁹⁵ The strategy of the *Platform* "essentially consisted of adopting bolshevik means in order to compete more effectively with bolshevism."⁹⁶

These claims, however, are rather a caricature of the *Platform*, which actually advocated "the total negation of a social system based on the principles of classes and the State, and its replacement by a free non-statist society of workers under self-management." The *Platform* called for a "General Union of Anarchists" that would aim at the "preparation of the workers and peasants for the social revolution" through "libertarian education," which required "the selection and grouping of revolutionary worker and peasant forces on a libertarian communist theoretical basis" in tandem with organising "workers and peasants on an economic base of production and consumption."⁹⁷

As mass organisations like unions and peasant movements did not spontaneously generate a revolutionary consciousness, it was the "fundamental task" of the "General Union of Anarchists" to win the battle of ideas so that anarchism would "become the leading concept of revolution." This implied work in the unions: because it united "workers on a basis of production, revolutionary syndicalism, like all groups based on professions, has no determining theory," and "always reflects the ideologies of diverse political groupings notably of those who work most intensely in its ranks." Consequently, the "tasks of anarchists in the ranks of the [union] movement consist of developing libertarian theory, and pointing it in a libertarian direction, in order to transform it into an active arm of the social revolution." The organisation "aspires neither to political power nor to dictatorship" but attempts to "help the masses to take the authentic road to the social revolution" through popular bodies built "by the masses and always under their control and influence," thereby realising "real self-management."⁹⁸

These tasks could not be fulfilled through an informal body, as suggested by antiorganisationalists, nor by a loose one structured along the lines of anarchism without adjectives, for the "masses demand a clear and precise response from the

anarchists." "From the moment when anarchists declare a conception of the revolution and the structure of society, they are obliged to give all these questions a clear response, to relate the solution of these problems to the general conception of libertarian communism, and to devote all their forces to the realisation of these." As a result, the anarchist political organisation must have close agreement on its programme and project, collective responsibility to the organisation by its members, a federal structure, and an executive with tasks "fixed by the congress."⁹⁹ Overall, then, the *Platform* should be seen as a *restatement* of the Bakuninist approach, rather than an innovative one, let alone a "revisionism toward Bolshevism."

Like the AD's *Towards a Fresh Revolution*, the *Platform* emerged against the backdrop of revolution—in this case, the Russian and Ukrainian revolutions in the late 1910s. Although both Bakunin and Kropotkin came from Russia, their contribution to the anarchist movement took place mainly in Western Europe. Russia had perhaps the weakest of the European anarchist and syndicalist movements. Anarchism played a role in the narodnik movement, but the SRs that emerged from narodism were mainly political socialists. Faltering in the late nineteenth century, the movement grew rapidly in the early twentieth century, particularly with the events of the 1905 Russian revolt.¹⁰⁰ Its ability to act effectively was hampered by the deep divisions between self-declared "Anarchist Communists," who were mainly insurrectionist anarchists, and mass anarchists, who were themselves deeply divided over issues of strategy and tactics. Besides these main currents, there was also a host of Stirnerites and other eccentrics, many of whom proclaimed themselves "individualist" anarchists.

By 1917, Voline recounts, anarchism and syndicalism were marginal and "nearly unknown" in Russia.¹⁰¹ The socialist movement in Russia was dominated by the Mensheviks, who had developed into a social democratic current; the Bolsheviks, who were committed to classical Marxism; and the SRs, divided into moderate and radical wings. Anarchism and syndicalism grew rapidly with the Russian Revolution of 1917, but were never able to assume a leading role, despite the return from exile of leading figures like Berkman, Cherkezov, Goldman, Kropotkin, and Voline. *Golos Truda* was published in Russia starting in August 1917 by the Union of Anarcho-syndicalist Propaganda, and its editors included Maximoff and Voline.¹⁰² The anarcho-syndicalists were highly critical of the Bolshevik regime, and despite ongoing repression, launched a Confederation of Russian Anarcho-syndicalists in November 1918.¹⁰³ Rather than try to capture the existing unions, controlled by political parties, and wary of the increasingly bureaucratic soviets, the anarcho-syndicalists adopted rank-and-file syndicalism, focusing on the factory committee movement that emerged in 1917.¹⁰⁴ The Anarchist Communists, meanwhile, continued their assassinations and "expropriations" (providing a ready pretext for the ongoing Bolshevik repression of the anarchists and syndicalists), while a significant section of the anarchists, disillusioned by the state of the movement, joined or otherwise actively supported the Bolsheviks; the latter were known as the "soviet-anarchists."

It was too little too late, and the movement was crushed and exiled by 1921. There was one important exception to this trend, and that was in the Russian territory of Ukraine; here, events took such a dramatically different path as to justify us speaking of a distinct Ukrainian Revolution. From 1917 onward, anarchists began

to play a key role both in the urban centres, particularly the provincial capital Hul'yaypole (often called "Gulyai-Pole"), and among the peasants. Besides union work in industry, they formed the Union of Peasants, began promoting the expropriation of land and factories, and tried to destroy the state apparatus in 1917. In January and February of that year, they helped defeat an attempt by the Ukrainian nationalists to take power.

When the Bolsheviks handed the Ukraine to the German forces in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, these activities were disrupted. Yet the anarchists were able to organise partisan detachments that were critical in expelling the invaders in 1918; these developed into a vast anarchist-led militia, the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of the Ukraine (RIAU). As the RIAU grew and expanded its control over territory, it created space for the blossoming of an anarchist revolution in a large part of the southern Ukraine. Based among poor peasants, but with a substantial degree of urban support, the Ukrainian Revolution involved large-scale land expropriation, the formation of agrarian collectives, and the establishment of industrial self-management, all coordinated through federations and congresses of soviets. Voline, fleeing the oppressive climate of Petrograd, joined the movement and helped to establish the Nabat anarchist federation along with Arshinov—a federation that played a critical role in Makhnovist education and propaganda.

The key figure in the movement was Makhno.¹⁰⁵ The son of poor peasants, he worked from a young age as a housepainter, cart driver, and then a labourer in a foundry, and joined an insurrectionist anarchist group in 1906. Involved in a number of terrorist actions, he was imprisoned in 1908, with a death sentence commuted to hard labour, and then freed in 1917 during the political amnesties that followed the collapse of czarism. In prison, Makhno broke with insurrectionism, and after his release he organised the Group of Anarchist-Communists, became the leading union activist in Gulyai-Pole, also formed the Union of Peasants, and then became the main figure in the RIAU; it is no accident that the Ukrainian revolutionary movement was widely known as the Makhnovists. In 1921, he fled into exile as the Bolshevik's Red Army crushed the Ukrainian Revolution, ending up in France, where he was involved in *Dielo Truda* and the Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad. He died in abject poverty in 1935.

Makhno's life cannot easily be disentangled from that of Arshinov, an anarchist metalworker. Arshinov came from the city of Ekaterinoslav in the Ukraine, and had been a prominent Bolshevik before his conversion to anarchism in 1906. Initially an insurrectionist anarchist, he was, like Makhno, involved in armed actions and sentenced to death. Arshinov escaped to Western Europe, but was extradited and retried, with his sentence changed to hard labour. In jail he met Makhno, and had a profound influence on the young activist. On his release in 1917, Arshinov initially went to Moscow, before returning to the revolutionary Ukraine. Like Makhno he had to flee abroad, and ended up in Paris. In 1931, Arshinov took a fateful decision to return to Russia, hoping to form an underground anarchist group. Nettlau sneered at the time that Arshinov "was never really an anarchist" and that his decision to enter the Soviet Union was merely a "homecoming."¹⁰⁶ Stalin obviously did not agree: Arshinov was executed in 1937 for anarchist activity.

Rethinking the "Platform" Debate

Makhno and Arshinov explicitly linked the *Platform* to the Bakuninist heritage. Bakunin's "aspirations concerning organisations, as well as his activity in the 1st IWMA [the First International] give us every right" to view him as an "active partisan" of the idea that anarchism "must gather its forces into one organisation, constantly agitating, as demanded by reality and the strategy of class struggle."¹⁰⁷ Likewise, they quoted Kropotkin with approval: "The formation of an anarchist organisation ... far from being prejudicial to the common revolutionary task ... is desirable and useful to the very greatest degree."¹⁰⁸ For the authors of the *Platform*, it was precisely the absence of a coordinated anarchist political group, with a common programme, that contributed to the Russian movement's crushing defeat by Bolshevism. Outside the Ukraine, Russian anarchism had been characterised by "inactivity and sterility," and "confusion in anarchist theory and organisational chaos in anarchist ranks"; indeed, most Russian anarchists had simply "*slept through*" the Ukrainian Revolution, a "mass movement of paramount importance."¹⁰⁹ It was during the Russian Revolution that "the libertarian movements showed the greatest degree of sectionalism and incoherence."¹¹⁰

This, of course, begs the question of why the *Platform* aroused so much controversy. On one level, it should be borne in mind that much of the debate over the *Platform* took place in the circles of the exiled Russian anarchists: such émigré milieus are notorious for their infighting, and it is not at all surprising to learn of an almost total breakdown of personal relations between Makhno and Voline, and between Arshinov and Berkman. Yet much of the debate was conducted in French and drew in anarchists well beyond the exiled Russian circles. Several other factors contributed to the vehemence with which many anarchists opposed the *Platform*—notably, the rise of antiorganisationalism and the fear of creeping Bolshevism, expressed in the view that a tight-knit anarchist organisation must eventuate in Bolshevism.

Many of the criticisms of the *Platform* came from precisely the section of anarchism that rejected tight organisation on principle. For example, Maria Isidine (1873–1933), an anarchist and scientist of Russian and French descent, criticised the *Platform* in a paper that rejected in principle the view that an organisation should have shared political positions, a common strategy, a clearly structured federation, make binding decisions, or direct its press to promote particular stances.¹¹¹ In her opinion, even the synthesist position went too far: every individual, local group, and current should be free to act as it saw fit, as this was efficient, fostered unity, and did not violate the rights of dissenting minorities. Given such a perspective, it was inevitable that Isidine would balk at the *Platform*'s proposals, which seemed to her a call for a "strong, centralised party" made of "new organisational formulas" that were "inspired" by Bolshevism.¹¹² (For Voline, too, the *Platform* was "only one step away from Bolshevism," and the "similarity between the Bolsheviks and the 'Platform anarchists' was frightening.")¹¹³

Such critics could not really explain why close agreement on analysis, strategy, and tactics was incompatible with anarchism. The view that a common programme violates the rights of those who cannot agree to that programme is surely weak. If

there is a deep division, the minority can go along with the views of the majority, or if it is judged feasible, two divergent tactics could be permitted, or the minority could withdraw; the minority is neither punished for disagreeing nor brutalised into agreeing, and can leave freely at any time it wishes. The suggestion that the majority must, as a matter of principle, allow a dissident minority to do precisely as it pleases regardless of the fact of common membership in one organisation is also not without its problems. Besides dissipating limited resources, it can be problematic in other ways: the consequences of a group of insurrectionists engaging in assassinations while part of a group focuses on careful union work under difficult circumstances can readily be imagined, with obvious impacts on the individual freedom of the majority.

In caricaturing the *Platform*, critics like Isidine and Voline did anarchism a great disservice. Most important, they simply avoided the tough question posed by the *Platform*: the astounding failure of Russian anarchism. Voline purged anarchist and syndicalist history of experiences like the Alliance, and misrepresented the Ukrainian Revolution. The role of the Nabat would certainly seem to bear out the views of the *Platform*, so Voline presented it as a successful example of the synthesist approach. While the Nabat had started from an overtly synthesist view, it had quickly evolved in the “whirlwind of revolution” into a federation that rallied “the most determined, the most dynamic militants with an eye to launching a healthy, well-structured movement with the prospect of a standardised programme.”¹¹⁴ The Nabat practiced majority decision making and promoted a unitary “policy line,” “a single, coherent platform”:

In short, it was a well-structured, well-disciplined movement with a leading echelon appointed and monitored by the rank and file. And let there be no illusions as to the role of that echelon [the secretariat]: it was not merely “technically” executive, as it is commonly regarded. It was also the movement’s ideological “pilot core,” looking after publishing operations, and propaganda activity, utilising the central funds and above all controlling and deploying the movement’s resources and militants.

Why? As its press explained,

Anarchism, which always leaned upon the mass movement of the workers, has to support the Makhno movement with all its power; it has to join this movement and close ranks with it. Hence we must also become a part of the leading organ of this movement, the army, and try to organise with the help of the latter the movement as a whole.¹¹⁵

Other Responses to the “Platform”

Still, not all criticisms of the *Platform* came from anarchists influenced by the ideas of antiorganisationalism and loose organisation, and these responses must be treated somewhat differently. It is necessary to distinguish between two types of responses by anarchists in the Bakuninist tradition of organisational dualism. Some were enthusiastic about the *Platform* and accepted its principles, with one French activist writing,

If the Russian anarchists—like ourselves in fact—had had a serious organisation, had been grouped together, it would have been more diffi-

cult to defeat them, and something would have been left from the effort expended and the influence which they had acquired, because it would have been necessary to talk, to discuss, to deal with them, instead of exterminating them as the Bolsheviks, the Red Fascists, did.¹¹⁶

In 1927, the *Dielo Truda* group issued a call for an International Anarchist Communist Federation: its preliminary meeting in February and conference in April drew in Chinese, French, Italians, and Poles, but the conference was disrupted by the arrest of all those present.¹¹⁷ The French Union Anarchiste initially incorporated some of the proposals of the *Platform*, but later repudiated them; the Revolutionary Anarcho-Communist Union also considered the *Platform* at its 1930 congress, but rejected it. The Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad itself fractured in 1927, and this also seems to have contributed to a split in the Federation of Anarcho-Communists in North America and Canada into advocates of tight organisation and antiorganisationalist *svobodnik* groupings.

In Italy, supporters of the *Platform* set up the short-lived Italian Anarchist Communist Union, while in Bulgaria, the FAKB incorporated the *Platform* into its constitution. The 1945 FAKB *Platform of the Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria* argued for an anarchist and communist future order. While rejecting the traditional political party as “sterile and ineffective,” and “unable to respond to the goals and the immediate tasks and to the interests of the workers,” it advocated syndicalist unions, cooperatives, and cultural and special organisations (like those for youth and women), and a specifically anarchist political group along the lines of the *Platform*:

It is above all necessary for the partisans of anarchist communism to be organised in an anarchist communist ideological organisation. The tasks of these organisations are: to develop, realise and spread anarchist communist ideas; to study the vital present-day questions affecting the daily lives of the working masses and the problems of the social reconstruction; the multifaceted struggle for the defence of our social ideal and the cause of working people; to participate in the creation of groups of workers on the level of production, profession, exchange and consumption, culture and education, and all other organisations that can be useful in the preparation for the social reconstruction; armed participation in every revolutionary insurrection; the preparation for and organisation of these events; the use of every means which can bring on the social revolution. Anarchist communist ideological organisations are absolutely indispensable in the full realisation of anarchist communism both before the revolution and after.¹¹⁸

In Spain, the *Platform* was not available in translation at the time of the FAI's founding and thus was not discussed, although it was on the agenda; similar ideas to those of the *Platform* were nonetheless widely held in the FAI, and AD's *Towards a Fresh Revolution* was also widely regarded as an integral part of the Platformist tradition. The *Platform* also had some influence elsewhere in this period. In Brazil, for instance, Russian and Ukrainian immigrants, who had organised a self-managed farm in Erebangó in Rio Grande do Sul state, were influenced by the example of the Ukrainian Revolution and received *Dielo Truda* starting in 1925.¹¹⁹ In the period after 1945, Platformism underwent something of a revival, notably in Italy and

France. The Libertarian Communist Federation was formed in France, and it split from the FAF in 1952. Its history was marred by controversy, not least as a result of attempts to capture the FAF and by a decision to run in the 1956 elections, thereby reviving suspicions of the *Platform*.¹²⁰ Despite a decline in the late 1950s, the Libertarian Communist Federation left an important legacy in the form of the *Manifesto of Libertarian Communism*, written by George Fontenis and sometimes regarded as a key Platformist text.¹²¹ The Anarchist Revolutionary Organisation, established in 1968 and splitting from the FAF in 1970, adopted elements of the *Platform*, leading to similar groups being formed in Denmark, Britain, and Italy (the latter evolving into the current FdCA).

The 1980s and 1990s saw a rapid spread of explicitly Platformist groups worldwide. These included the WSM in Ireland (formed in 1984), the Gaúcha Anarchist Federation in Brazil (FAG, formed in 1995), and the Workers Solidarity Federation in South Africa (formed in 1995). The controversial British Class War Federation also flirted with Platformism.¹²² These developments will be examined more fully in volume 2. For now, it is worth noting that the postwar revival of Platformism was a response to a further upsurge of the doctrines of antiorganisationalism and loose federation in this period, with Platformism operating as a pole of attraction for anarchists in the Bakuninist tradition. For many—in part due to the weakness of anarchism in many countries by this time—the *Platform* was seen as something wholly new in anarchism. As organisations have developed, however, there is a growing recognition of its place in a larger Bakuninist tradition.¹²³

The other response by anarchists in the Bakuninist tradition was substantially more critical of the *Platform*. Malatesta, who was under house arrest in Fascist Italy beginning in 1926, was sympathetic to the general project of the *Platform*, and also agreed with the view that a “large, serious and active organisation” was “necessary above all” to “influence the direction of the mass of the people.” His criticisms were careful—he avoided Voline’s wild accusations—but did make the suggestion that the “tendency” of the document was somewhat “authoritarian” and expressed some doubts about the wisdom of relying on majority rule principles.¹²⁴ Maximoff was rather more scathing, claiming that the *Platform* advocated the “Party structure of the Russian Bolsheviks,” placed the “interests of the Party above the interests of the masses,” and aimed at the forcible subjugation of the unions.¹²⁵

As these criticisms did not proceed from a basic suspicion of organisation, they are of great interest and must be accounted for in other ways. In part, it is clear that we are dealing here with a problem of miscommunication, as the exchange with Malatesta revealed. Responding to Malatesta’s initial input, Arshinov confessed his “perplexity” at the criticisms, for the “principles taken up by comrade Malatesta correspond to the principal positions of the *Platform*.”¹²⁶ Makhno replied that Malatesta must either have “misunderstood the project for the ‘Platform’” or rejected the principle of members having a responsibility to the organisation.¹²⁷ The latter, it turned out, was not the case: Malatesta responded with the statement that “anyone who associates and cooperates with others for a common purpose must feel the need to coordinate his actions with those of his fellow members and do nothing that harms the work of others,” and that “those who do not feel and do not practice that duty should be thrown out of the association.”¹²⁸

Other misunderstandings were also evident. For example, Malatesta read the *Platform* as advocating an “Executive Committee to give ideological and organisational direction to the association,” which he suggested might mean “a central body that would, in an authoritarian manner, dictate the theoretical and practical programme of the revolution.” Yet as the authors of the *Platform* remarked, “Let it be said, first of all, that in our view, the Union’s Executive Committee cannot be a body endowed with any powers of a coercive nature, as is the case with the centralist political parties.” In case of a split in the organisation, “the question will be resolved, not by the Executive Committee which, let us repeat, is to be merely an executive organ of the Union, but by the entire Union as a body: by a Union Conference or Congress.”¹²⁹ In a further reply, indeed, Malatesta conceded that “this is perhaps only a question of words ... reading what the comrades ... say ... I find myself more or less in agreement with their way of conceiving the anarchist organisation ... and I confirm my belief that behind the linguistic differences really lie identical positions.”¹³⁰

That misunderstandings could play so important a role—and it is clear that Maximoff also misinterpreted the *Platform* in many respects—points to a basic flaw of the document: many of its formulations are contradictory or lend themselves to misinterpretation. The *Platform*, for example, asserted that the “immutable principles and teachers” argued for a tight-knit group, a view held by “practically all active anarchist militants,” and ascribed weak organisation to a “false interpretation” of anarchist ideas, yet also spoke of the movement as having an “absence of organisational principles and practices” as well as suffering from the “disease of disorganisation” for “dozens of years.”¹³¹ Likewise, as Arshinov suggested, the “absence of a homogeneous general programme has always been a very noticeable failing in the anarchist movement ... its propaganda not ever having been coherent and consistent in relation to the ideas professed and the practical principles defended.”¹³²

Such formulations, applied in a careless and indiscriminate manner to the whole of the broad anarchist tradition, served to alienate the very Bakuninists to whom the *Platform* might be expected to have the greatest appeal, for it dismissed a wide swath of anarchist history and theory. The bulk of Maximoff’s angry retort to the *Platform*, for instance, arose from precisely this source. He expressed indignation that the *Platform* should be “credited with all kinds of achievements for which it was not responsible,” and castigated its failure to acknowledge the achievements and policies of the anarchist First International, its ignorance of the history of syndicalism and the rise of the IWA, and its failure to give due credit to the role played by Russian groups like the Nabat and the Confederation of Russian Anarcho-syndicalists in combating “the chaotic, formless, disorganised and indifferent attitude then rampant among the Anarchists.” The *Platform* was, Maximoff contended, characterised by an “ignorance of the history of our movement, or, more correctly, the notion that the history of our movement was ushered in by the ‘Platform’”; that it “contains nothing original” and is marked by a “chronic ignorance.”¹³³

The tragedy of the situation was exemplified by Maximoff’s rejection of the *Platform*’s proposals for anarchist organisation. Having alleged that the *Platform* was unduly influenced by Bolshevism, Maximoff went on to restate what he regarded as the principal anarchist positions on the relationship between the anarchist vanguard

and the mass organisations of the popular classes—involvement in daily struggles, homogeneous national groups, work in the unions to win them to anarchism, work outside the unions, revolutionary reconstruction by the popular classes, armed self-defence, and so on—adding that there is “nothing ‘anti-Anarchist’ in a party organisation as such.” “One must go into the masses oneself, work with them, struggle for their soul, and attempt to win it *ideologically* and give it guidance.”¹³⁴ Anarchists must “organise their own associations,” and consider “unification by ideological affinity” at all levels as “vitaly important” in the field of “mass propaganda and the struggle against the political parties.”¹³⁵

Maximoff’s views were not actually so different from those of the *Platform*. Like Bakunin, he openly argued that the anarchists must lead the masses, albeit in a libertarian way. The anarchists should not passively wait for the popular classes to call for assistance or provide only “ideological assistance.” They must instead take steps to win the battle of ideas, and success in this task inevitably makes anarchists into leaders, and compels them to provide “guidance in action and struggle.” If the popular classes were won to anarchism or syndicalism in large numbers, this would inevitably result in anarchists and syndicalists playing a key role in union structures, education, publishing, and so forth. It would be absurd, conversely, to take a principled opposition to such responsibilities; “logically it would be better not to mingle with the masses at all.” In either case, the effect would be a *de facto* reservation of the role of leadership for nonanarchists. The “question is not the rejection of leadership, but making sure that it is *free* and natural.”¹³⁶

In other words, there is a place for a *libertarian* form of leadership, one compatible with anarchism, in which positions of responsibility are undertaken in a democratic and mandated manner, the influence of anarchism and syndicalism reflects its ideological influence yet is not imposed from above through coercion or manipulation, and leadership facilitates the self-emancipation of the popular classes, rather than substitutes for it. To refuse positions of responsibility can merely result in adopting an irresponsible position, as an incident from Voline’s life shows. During the Russian revolt of 1905, Voline was apparently approached by a group of workers, who requested he take up the post of president of the Petrograd Soviet: citing his “scruples,” he turned it down.¹³⁷ The post then went to Trotsky.

This followed from Voline’s abstract views on the role of anarchists, including a repudiation of all “leadership.” Voline maintained that anarchists “do not believe that the anarchists should lead the masses; we believe that our role is to assist the masses only when they need such assistance,” and anarchists “can only offer ideological assistance, but not in the role of leaders.” “The slightest suggestion of direction, of superiority, of leadership of the masses and developments inevitably implies that the masses must accept direction, must submit to it; this, in turn, gives the leaders a sense of being privileged like dictators, of becoming separated from the masses.”¹³⁸

In Conclusion: Militant Minority and Mass Movement

This chapter has examined the tactical issues that surround the question of how anarchists and syndicalists should organise themselves in order to reach their goals. It has surveyed insurrectionist anarchist approaches, syndicalist posi-

tions that deny the need for a specific anarchist or syndicalist political group, mass anarchist positions that advocate either antiorganisationalist approaches or loose organisation, and finally, Bakuninist positions that argue for a well-organised specifically anarchist political formation based on shared positions. These differences stem partly from different conceptions of the structure of the organisation; they also involve differences over the role of that organisation, and in particular, whether—or how—it can “lead” the popular classes. There has never been a consensus over these issues—a factor that has no doubt played a role in the fortunes of anarchism and syndicalism.

Several further points are worth noting. It is a mistake to contend that syndicalism as a whole rejects the need for a specific political group. There is certainly a current in syndicalism that holds this position, but there are many syndicalists from Bakunin onward who admitted—whether tacitly or openly—the need for organisational dualism. Inasmuch as the Platformist tradition is an example of the Bakuninist tradition of organisational dualism, and advocates something similar to that practiced by groups like the Alliance, Luz, La Social, the Society of Anarchist-Communist Comrades, the FAI, and other Bakuninist groups, and inasmuch as the core Platformist documents (the *Platform* and *Towards a Fresh Revolution*) supported syndicalism, setting up a sharp contrast between Platformism and syndicalism is not useful.

The survey of positions undertaken in this chapter raises a number of fundamental issues about the nature of social change as well as the relationship between society and the individual. An ideology’s prospects rest in part on the strength of its basic ideas about the current society and its plans for the future. They also rest on the practical activity of its advocates, and the way in which they apply their ideas to economic and social realities. Ultimately, it is in the sphere of strategy and tactics that the fate of any movement is determined.

Any progressive movement for social change must inevitably confront the question of the relationship between the militant minority of conscious activists with a revolutionary programme and the broader popular classes. Should the revolutionaries substitute for the masses, as Blanqui suggested, or dominate them through a dictatorship, as Lenin believed? For the broad anarchist tradition, such positions are not acceptable, as they reproduce the very relations of domination and the oppression of the individual that the tradition rejects. It follows that the role of anarchists or syndicalists is to act as a catalyst for the self-emancipation of the masses, promoting both the new faith of which Bakunin spoke as well as popular self-organisation and participatory democracy.

There are various ways in which this can be done, and it is on this issue that the question of the need for a specific anarchist political organisation arises. There are a number of anarchist and syndicalist positions on this issue, as we have noted. The antiorganisationalist approach is flawed by its failure to consider the dangers of informal organisation and its dogmatic view that it is impossible to establish a formal organisation compatible with anarchist principles. The strand of syndicalism that denies the need for a specific anarchist or syndicalist political organisation fails to explain how a syndicalist union will be defended against the inevitable emergence of rival political currents within its ranks in the absence of such a body. The

approach that calls only for a loose organisation that seeks to unite all anarchists and syndicalists, regardless of profound differences in outlook, on the basis of what they share does not provide a solution either: an organisation characterised by a wide diversity of views must lack a clear programme of action and fails to effectively coordinate the efforts of its militants in the battle of ideas; it is likely to split when confronted with situations that require a unified response. This approach also fails to explain why the unity of all anarchists should be seen as an end in itself and why a common programme should be seen as incompatible with anarchist principles.

The Bakuninist position, advocating an organisation of tendency with a shared analysis, strategy, and tactics, coordinated action, and an organisational discipline, seems the most effective approach. By coordinating activity, promoting common positions on the tasks of the present and future, and rallying militants around a programme, it offers the basis for consistent and coherent work, the direction of limited resources toward key challenges, and the defence and extension of the influence of anarchism. This approach, going back to the Alliance and expressed in the *Platform*, is probably the only way that anarchism can challenge the hold of mainstream political parties as well as nationalist, statist, and other ideas, and ensure that the anarchists' "new faith" provides a guide for the struggles of the popular classes. We turn now to an exploration of the class character and historical features of the broad anarchist tradition.

Notes

1. Goldman, "The Failure of the Russian Revolution," 159.
2. Galleani, *The End of Anarchism?*, 11.
3. *Ibid.*, 44–45.
4. O. V., *Autonomous Base Nucleus*, n.d., available at http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/insurr2.html (accessed March 30, 2004).
5. A dedicated revolutionary, Blanqui spent forty of his seventy-six years in jail, being imprisoned by five successive French regimes. He believed that reforms were generally futile. Only a revolution could create a socialist order, but the masses were trapped in ignorance, which meant the key task was to form a hierarchical and disciplined secret society to seize state power. See A. B. Spitzer, *The Revolutionary Theories of Louis Auguste Blanqui* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), especially 95–105, 114, 128–44, 153, 157–79.
6. See J. Freeman, *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* (1970; repr., Hull, UK: Anarchist Workers' Association, n.d.).
7. Craparo, *Anarchist Communists*, 83.
8. See, for example, Yoast, "The Development of Argentine Anarchism," 155–56.
9. See, for example, I. Meredith, *A Girl among the Anarchists* (1903; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), chapter 2. The author's name is a pseudonym.
10. Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 233.
11. Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 150–52.
12. Tucker published an English translation of Stirner's *Ego and His Own* in 1907.
13. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 251.
14. Quoted in *ibid.*, 251.
15. V. Serge, *Birth of Our Power* (1931; repr., London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1977), 31.
16. Kinna, "Kropotkin's Theory of Mutual Aid in Historical Context," 268–69.

17. Kropotkin, "Letter to Nettlau," 296–97.
18. Kropotkin, "Anarchist Communism," 73; P. Kropotkin, "Anarchist Morality," in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets: A Collection of Writings by Peter Kropotkin*, ed. R. N. Baldwin (1890; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 97.
19. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 54–55; Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, chapter 1; Guérin, *Anarchism*, chapters 1 and 2.
20. Quoted in F. Mintz, "Class War: The Writings of Camillo Berneri," *Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review*, no. 4 (1978): 47.
21. Malatesta, "Syndicalism," 221–22.
22. Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class*, 156; Hart, "Revolutionary Syndicalism in Mexico," 200–1.
23. Ford and Foster, *Syndicalism*, 44.
24. Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World*, 417.
25. *Ibid.*, 134.
26. Makhno, *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, 6–7.
27. See Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 198.
28. *Ibid.*, 166, 195, 198–201, 207.
29. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 392–93.
30. *Ibid.*, 393.
31. Quoted in F. Castilla, *Anarchism without Adjectives: From Yesterday to Today*, January 23, 2007, available at http://www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=4717&print_page=true (accessed January 24, 2007).
32. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 294–95.
33. Quoted in Joll, *The Anarchists*, 204. Also quoted in Darch, "The Makhnovischna," 499.
34. Crump, *Hatta Shuzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan*, 155–57, 159–60, 174–77.
35. S. Fleshin Voline, M. Steimer, Sobol, J. Schwartz, Lia, Roman, and Ervantian, *Reply to the Platform (Synthesist)*, 1927. Available online at <http://www.nestormakhno.info/english/volrep.htm> (accessed December 1, 2006).
36. Voline, *Reply to the Platform*.
37. Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 11–13. There were, for example, ninety-two different groups formed between 1919 and 1925, but no national federation.
38. Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism*, 215–16.
39. Quoted in D. Hodges, *Intellectual Foundations of the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 83–84.
40. MacLachlan, *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution*, 32–38, 51, 113–14.
41. Voline, *Reply to the Platform*.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Craparo, *Anarchist Communists*, 83.
44. Makhno, *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, 1.
45. Craparo, *Anarchist Communists*, 83.
46. For a still-excellent history of the First International, albeit marred by overt hostility toward Bakunin, see Stekloff, *History of the First International*.
47. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 156.
48. K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association," in *Marx, Engels, Lenin: Anarchism and Anarcho-syndicalism*, ed. N. Y. Kolpinsky (1873; repr., Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), 113, 116, 118, 120.
49. Carr insists that the Alliance was a figment of Bakunin's imagination. For Joll, Bakunin showed a lifelong "passion ... for establishing largely imaginary secret societies." See Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 421–23; Joll, *The Anarchists*, 87.

50. Peirats, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*, 237.
51. Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 50, 52, 72; Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 168.
52. Bakunin, "Letter to *La Liberté*," 289; Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 281.
53. Quoted in Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 131.
54. S. Dolgoff, editorial comments to *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, ed. S. Dolgoff (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), 182. Compare also to Joll, *The Anarchists*, 87–88, 91.
55. See, inter alia, Bakunin, "The Programme of the International Brotherhood"; Bakunin, "The Programme of the Alliance."
56. S. Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*; Dolgoff, *Fragments*.
57. Quoted in S. Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 10; M. Bakunin, "Letter to Albert Richard," in *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, ed. S. Dolgoff (1870; repr., London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), 180.
58. Bakunin, "The Programme of the International Brotherhood," 154–55.
59. Bakunin, "Letter to Albert Richard," 180–81.
60. M. Bakunin, "On the Internal Conduct of the Alliance," in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, ed. S. Dolgoff (Montréal: Black Rose, 1980), 387.
61. Alliance Syndicaliste Revolutionnaire et Anarcho-syndicaliste, "Putting the Record Straight on Mikhail Bakunin," *Libertarian Communist Review*, no. 2 (1976) (translated from the French by Nick Heath). Available online at http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/hist_texts/lcr_bakunin.html. Accessed March 8, 2000.
62. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 277.
63. See McLellan, *Karl Marx*, 167–88. The Communist League operated through a number of "front" organisations and emerged from the older secret society, the League of the Just. See also A. Flood, "Bakunin's Idea of Revolution and Revolutionary Organisation," *Red and Black Revolution: A Magazine of Libertarian Communism*, no. 6 (2002).
64. Quoted in Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 131.
65. P. Kropotkin, "The Spirit of Revolt," in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets: A Collection of Writings by Peter Kropotkin*, ed. R. N. Baldwin (1880; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 43.
66. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 277.
67. Quoted in *ibid.*, 281.
68. Quoted in *ibid.*, 130.
69. Malatesta in Richards, *Errico Malatesta*, 181; Malatesta, "A Project of Anarchist Organisation," 97. On his flirtation with the synthesist position, see, for example, E. Malatesta, "Communism and Individualism," in *The Anarchist Revolution: Polemical Writings, 1924–1931: Errico Malatesta*, ed. V. Richards (April 1926; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1995).
70. Malatesta, "A Project of Anarchist Organisation," 98–99, 101–2.
71. Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 165.
72. Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, 200.
73. Joll, *The Anarchists*, 245; Peirats, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*, 238–39.
74. Amsden, *Collective Bargaining and Class Conflict in Spain*, 18.
75. Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 215.
76. Peirats, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*, 81.
77. Morrow, *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Spain*, chapter 5.
78. Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 213–14.
79. Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, 83–84. The same impression of sophistication is provided in Paz, *Durruti*, a book that offers some insight into the inner workings of the FAI.

For a somewhat different view, see S. Christie, *We, the Anarchists: A Study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation, 1927–1937* (Hastings, UK: Meltzer Press, 2000).

80. See Paz, *Durruti*.
81. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 358.
82. Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class*, 29, 47–48, 54, 58.
83. *Ibid.*, 109, 192–93.
84. Quoted in *ibid.*, 113.
85. *Ibid.*, 109, 192–93
86. *Ibid.*, 128.
87. *Ibid.*, 156.
88. Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, 128.
89. Crump, *Hatta Shuzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan*, 75.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Van der Walt, “Anarchism and Syndicalism in South Africa,” 354–57, 507, 511–12, 582–83.
92. Makhno, *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*.
93. Voline, *Reply to the Platform*.
94. “The unfortunate thing was that faced with two successful examples—the bolshevik party and the anarchist army—Arshinoff, Makhno and their group produced an organisational platform and politics incorporating the main features of both”: 1987 preface to Maximoff, *Constructive Anarchism*, 4.
95. Darch, “The Makhnovischna,” 500.
96. Crump, *Hatta Shuzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan*, 18–19.
97. Makhno, *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, 2, 3–4.
98. *Ibid.*, 4–6.
99. *Ibid.*, 5, 8–9.
100. See Avrigh, *The Russian Anarchists*; P. Avrigh, ed., *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).
101. Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*, 115.
102. Avrigh, *The Russian Anarchists*, 135–51.
103. *Ibid.*, 190–94.
104. *Ibid.*, 140–45, 190–91.
105. For anarchist accounts of Makhno and Arshinov, see, inter alia, P. Arshinov, ed., *History of the Makhnovist Movement, 1918–1921* (1923; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1987), especially chapter 3; Voline, preface to *History of the Makhnovist Movement, 1918–1921*, ed. P. Arshinov (1923; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1987); Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*. For more scholarly works, see the definitive Makhno biography, now in English, A. Skirda, *Nestor Makhno: Anarchy's Cossack: The Struggle for Free Soviets in the Ukraine, 1917–1921* (1982; repr., Edinburgh: AK Press, 2003). See also the excellent, if fairly hostile, Darch, “The Makhnovischna.” See also the more sympathetic Malet, *Nestor Makhno in the Russian Civil War*. There is also a useful chapter in Avrigh, *Anarchist Portraits*.
106. N. Walter, “Preface to the British Edition,” in *History of the Makhnovist Movement*, ed. P. Arshinov (London: Freedom Press, 1987), 5.
107. Makhno, *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, 1.
108. Kropotkin, quoted in *ibid.*, 1.
109. Arshinov, *History of the Makhnovist Movement*, 242–44.
110. Makhno, *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, 1.
111. M. Isidine, *Organisation and Party*, first published in *Plus Lion*, nos. 36–37 (1928), available at <http://www.nestormakhno.info/english/isidine.htm> (accessed March 30, 2004).
112. *Ibid.*

113. Voline, *Reply to the Platform*.
114. Skirda, *Nestor Makhno*, 243–45.
115. Darch, “The Makhnovischna,” 419.
116. Quoted in *ibid.*, 502–3.
117. N. Heath, “Historical Introduction,” in *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, ed. P. Archinov, N. Makhno, I. Mett, Valevsky, and Linsky (1989; repr., Dublin: Workers Solidarity Movement, 2001), ii–iii.
118. Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria, *Platform of the Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria*, 1945, available at http://www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=2526 (accessed March 3, 2006).
119. E. Rodrigues, *Against All Tyranny!* 17–19.
120. See A. Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organisation from Proudhon to May 1968* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2002).
121. G. Fontenis, *Manifesto of Libertarian Communism* (1953; repr., London: Anarchist Communist Federation, 1989).
122. See, for example, Class War Federation, *Unfinished Business: The Politics of Class War* (London: Class War Federation, 1992), chapter 7.
123. See, for example, the analysis provided by Saverio Craparo of the FdCA, which starts with Bakunin; Craparo, *Anarchist Communists*.
124. Malatesta, “A Project of Anarchist Organisation,” 93–94, 98–101.
125. See Maximoff, *Constructive Anarchism*, 17–21.
126. P. Arshinov, *The Old and New in Anarchism*, May 1928, available at <http://www.nestor-makhno.info/english/oldnew.htm> (accessed March 15, 2004).
127. N. Makhno, “Letter to Errico Malatesta from Nestor Makhno,” in *The Anarchist Revolution: Polemical Writings, 1924–1931: Errico Malatesta*, ed. V. Richards (1928; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1995), 103.
128. E. Malatesta, “Malatesta’s Response to Nestor Makhno,” in *The Anarchist Revolution: Polemical Writings, 1924–1931: Errico Malatesta*, ed. V. Richards (1929; repr., London: Freedom Press, 1995), 107–8.
129. Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad, *Supplement to the Organisational Platform (Questions and Answers)*, 1926, available at <http://www.nestormakhno.info/english/supporg.htm> (accessed March 15, 2004).
130. E. Malatesta, *On Collective Responsibility*, n.d., available at http://www.nestormakhno.info/english/mal_rep3.htm (accessed March 15, 2004).
131. Makhno, *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*, 1.
132. Arshinov, *The Old and New in Anarchism*.
133. Maximoff, *Constructive Anarchism*, 12–13, 14, 16–17; see also 18, 20. Maximoff went on to criticise the *Platform* for ignoring a range of issues. This was not entirely fair (after all, the *Platform* was a brief document) but again reveals the same line of reasoning. For example, Maximoff’s view that the *Platform* tended toward a reductionist class analysis was made on the grounds that the document was insufficiently aware of existing anarchist positions; see *ibid.*, 16.
134. *Ibid.*, 5–17; the quote is from 17.
135. Maximoff, *The Programme of Anarcho-syndicalism*, 57–58.
136. Maximoff, *Constructive Anarchism*, 19.
137. Recounted in Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*, 98–101.
138. Voline, *Reply to the Platform*.

