Anarchist Counter Culture in Spain

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People are often drawn to the study of labour history because they want to understand how to change the world. It is thought that the history of class struggle contains within itself not only a series of events and dates laid out in chronological order but also lessons. Through studying the history of class struggle we can establish with evidence what strategies and tactics work or do not work, why movements grow and why they collapse, what challenges social movements will have to overcome and so on. The necessity of studying history emerges from the fact that socialists cannot run scientific experiments in a laboratory and thereby establish the definitive formula for revolution. We can instead only look at contemporary and previous attempts to achieve socialism in order to try and learn from a vast assortment of victories and defeats. The study of history cannot create a recipe for revolution since no such recipe exists. It can at best establish generalisations which inform our action in the present.

When learning about the past it is easy to focus on major exciting events in which large groups of workers took direct action and in so doing simultaneously transformed the world and themselves. During my research I find myself drawn to narratives about strikes, riots, insurrections, massive civil disobedience campaigns, armed uprisings, and revolutions. Learning about these events is an important part of labour history but to focus exclusively on them leads to a distorted view of the past and how social change happens. Members of historical socialist movements did not spend the majority of their time participating in huge actions which rapidly transformed society and the future course of history. The bulk of their lives as revolutionaries were spent doing much more mundane activities. They produced, distributed and read radical literature, organised and attended picnics, performed in a theatre club, watched a public debate, discussed politics with friends, family and colleagues, attended an endless series of meetings for their affinity group or trade union, wrote and received a vast amount of letters and so on. These small mundane activities can appear to be of little importance when viewed in isolation. Yet when these small activities were repeated day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year by groups of people they took on greater significance.

These small activities produced and reproduced the social relations, capacities, psychological drives and consciousness which were the foundation of social movements. Without these seemingly insignificant acts repeated over and over again, the large exciting moments of rebellion and revolution never would have occurred in most instances or would have occurred on a much smaller scale. Even events which can appear to have come out of nowhere were significantly shaped by the struggles which preceded them. For example, the Paris Commune of 1871 arose unexpectedly in response to a chance event: army soldiers were sent to seize cannons from the national guard in the district of Montmartre and a crowd of protesters went to stop them. Although the founding of the Commune took only a few days, it was the culmination of years, and arguably decades, of class struggle from below. Within Paris this class struggle took various forms, such as massive public meetings, talks and debates attended by thousands of workers, the production and distribution of books, pamphlets and papers, the founding of co-operatives, the organisation of sections of the International Workingmen's Association, and a wave of strikes, demonstrations and riots (Merriman 2014, 39-45. For a brief summary of preceding struggles see ibid 11-2, 16-7, 25-36).

Anarchists in the 19th and early 20th century understood the significance of small acts being repeated over and over again. They viewed social change as a single process which could be divided into periods of evolution and periods of revolution. During periods of evolution change is slow, gradual and partial. Over time this evolutionary change builds up and culminates in a

revolutionary period during which change is rapid, large scale, and fundamentally alters society. Evolutionary change and revolutionary change were not viewed as separate distinct entities. They were instead seen as two aspects of a single process which fed off and flowed into one another (Reclus 2013, 138-40). This idea was usually expressed through water-based metaphors. To give one example, in 1875 Michael Bakunin wrote in a letter to Élisée Reclus that, "[w]e are falling back into a time of evolution – that is to say revolutions that are invisible, subterranean and often imperceptible . . . drops of water, though they may be invisible may go on to form an ocean" (Bakunin 2016, 251-2). Anarchists thought that evolutionary change included a wide spectrum of behaviour. It referred not only to direct action which modifies the dominant structures of class society, such as a strike which wins higher wages in a workplace. It also included transformations driven forward by culture, such as a worker's understanding of the world being altered through their exposure to a book, poem or song.

The latest research on the history of anarchism has drawn attention to the construction of counter-culture by anarchist movements around the world. This includes, but is not limited to, anarchist movements in Cuba (Shaffer 2019), Argentina (Suriano 2010), Japan (Konishi 2013), England (Di Paola 2017) and the United States (Goyens 2007; Zimmer 2015). For the purposes of this essay I shall focus on the manner in which anarchists in Spain engaged in evolutionary change through the formation of a radical working class counter-culture. It should be kept in mind that identical or similar practices were implemented by anarchists in other countries. Discussions of anarchism in Spain often focus on the National Confederation of Labour (CNT). The CNT is a trade union that was founded in 1910 and adopted an anarcho-syndicalist programme in 1919 at the La Comedia national congress in Madrid, which was attended by 450 delegates representing over 700,000 workers. Despite suffering multiple waves of state repression and being illegal for several years of its existence, the CNT was able to survive and maintain itself over time. By May 1936 the CNT was composed of 982 union sections with a total membership of 550,595 workers. The CNT proceeded to play a key role in the Spanish revolution and civil war of 1936-1939, during which workers created numerous experiments in economic self-management that demonstrated the feasibility of anarchist socialism working at scale (Peirats 2011, 7-10, 93. For details on self-management during the revolution see Leval 2012). The CNT is the largest anarcho-syndicalist trade union in history. To understand how anarchists in Spain were able to construct a mass movement it is necessary to go beyond the examination of strike waves, armed uprisings, the highs and lows of formal organisations, important national congresses, the various debates about strategy and tactics within the movement as a whole and so on. These factors were of course extremely important but they are not the full picture. Another key factor is the manner in which the creation and transmission of culture sustained, reproduced and expanded the anarchist movement in Spain.

The central importance of culture for the development of anarchism in Spain is especially apparent when examining print media. Between 1890 and 1915, 298 periodicals and journals were launched in Spain. Of these 107 were based in Catalonia and 191 were in other regions of Spain, such as Andalusia and Valencia. These papers collectively released 7328 issues, of which 4930 have survived. These papers largely appeared on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. Most periodicals were one sheet of paper which was folded to create four pages. These papers typically featured articles on anarchist theory, commentaries on current events, critiques of the bourgeois and state socialist press, letters and correspondence from members of the movement, and news of the class struggle both within Spain and the wider world. These short periodicals

co-existed with a smaller number of journals, which were eight, sixteen or thirty-two pages long. During this period over 700 anarchist books and pamphlets were also published. These covered topics as diverse as geography, history, biology, sociology, political theory, birth control, law, art and literature. Peter Kropotkin's Mutual Aid sold 20,000 copies in three years and The Conquest of Bread went through eleven editions and had sold 28,000 copies by 1909. Most groups could not afford to publish books due to the printing costs involved and instead focused on the publication of periodicals and pamphlets. Errico Malatesta's pamphlet Between Peasants was particularly popular and was published in fifteen different editions between 1889 and 1915. The distribution of pamphlets was itself assisted by periodicals. Extracts of a pamphlet would be printed on the third and fourth page of a paper. Over several weeks or months a reader would accumulate the entire pamphlet and then tear out each page, assemble them together, and bind them with string. Anarchists did not limit themselves to non-fiction and also published poems, plays, songs and short stories as sections of periodicals or self-contained pamphlets (Yeoman 2020, 9-11, 41-3).

The majority of anarchist print media was written and edited by workers for free in their spare time after a full day of work. There were a few papers which were run by full time paid staff, such as Solidaridad Obrera from 1916 onwards, but these were in the minority. The manner in which anarchist periodicals were typically produced after work can be seen in the fact that the masthead of El Corsario declared that its office hours were from 7pm to 9pm in the evening. Most famous theorists, such as Anselmo Lorenzo and Ricardo Mella, were not professional writers and worked full time at other occupations. During the early 1930s the anarchist militant José Peirats split his time between working as a manual labourer during the day and writing articles for several important anarchist periodicals in the evening. Peirats was not unique in this respect. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century one of the main sources of content for anarchist papers was the vast number of letters which workers sent to editors and publishing groups. These letters usually contained anarchist theory, stories, poetry, calls for solidarity, news of organising and meetings, and reports of oppressive or scandalous behaviour by capitalists and the police (Yeoman 2020, 43-4, 56, note 33, 248; Esenwein 1989, 127; Ealham 2015, 72-4).

The workers who sent in letters were known as correspondents and played a key role in the day-to-day functioning of anarchist print media. Through writing letters they transmitted information and reflections about a local area to the editors of the paper. The editors of the paper would, if they deemed it worthy, print the letter in the paper and then send copies of the paper to every correspondent they had across the country. These correspondents would then distribute the paper to local workers and collect money for both the publishing costs of the paper and solidarity funds that the paper had set up. These solidarity funds, which were collected at workplaces, meetings, plays, marriages and funerals, provided financial assistance to striking workers, anarchist prisoners, and widows of dead comrades. The anarchist press was therefore constituted by a social network in which, to quote the historian James Yeoman, local correspondents were "the 'nodes' through which the anarchist press was channelled into localities, and the thoughts, experiences and money from localities were channelled out to publishers" (Yeoman 2020, 47). The various publishing groups were, in turn, interconnected with one another and would support each other in various ways, such as larger and well established papers announcing the appearance of a new anarchist periodical. These kinds of positive relationships did not of course always occur and on other occasions anarchist periodicals engaged in polemical arguments with one another. During periods when there were no genuinely national formal anarchist organisations, the informal social networks that connected readers, correspondents, editors and publishers functioned as

the national organisational structure of the anarchist movement. These social networks also operated at an international level. Larger anarchist papers in Spain would receive correspondence and articles from anarchists around the world and would, in turn, send out copies of their paper to workers in other countries. This was especially the case with countries that had a significant Spanish immigrant population, such as Argentina and Cuba (Yeoman 2020, 43-50, 17-8).

The health of anarchist print culture was a proxy for the health of the movement. During periods of organisational growth the number of periodicals generally expanded, whilst during periods of state repression in which anarchist formal organisations and affinity groups were forced underground the number of periodicals dramatically shrunk. This is not to say that the highs of anarchist print culture always coincided with the expansion of anarchist formal organisations. Between 1898-1906 the number of anarchist periodicals significantly increased but during this same period the anarchist led trade union, the Federation of Resistance Societies of the Spanish Region (FSORE), was seriously weakened by an unsuccessful general strike in 1902. The FSORE continued to decline over the following years until it was dissolved in 1907 (Yeoman 2020, 9-15, 162-3). Nor is the number of periodicals in circulation always an indicator of the health of anarchist print culture. In 1916 the official organ of the CNT, Solidaridad Obrera, became the anarchist movements first successful daily paper. In response to this other anarchist papers decided to close down and encouraged their readers to support Solidaridad Obrera instead. Despite the number of periodicals in circulation decreasing, anarchist print culture was the strongest it had ever been. Solidaridad Obrera published as much content in a month as most anarchist periodicals published in a year. Between 1916 and 1919 Solidaridad Obrera issued around 800 daily editions. A typical anarchist paper between 1890-1915 had, in comparison, a print run of only 20 to 30 issues before it ceased publication due to financial difficulties and/or state repression. The strength of Solidaridad Obrera coincided with the strength of the CNT, which funded the publication of the paper and had almost 800,000 members in 1919. That year the CNT organised a massive general strike in Barcelona which successfully forced the Spanish ruling class to pass legislation granting the eight hour day. The direct action of workers at the point of production was assisted by the pens of Solidaridad Obrera's writers, who published articles throughout the strike informing readers of the latest news. In response to this strike wave the Spanish state repressed the CNT and banned Solidaridad Obrera (Yeoman 2020, 15, 51, 53, 248-9. For information on the strike see Smith 2007, 292-9).

The amount of time and energy anarchists in Spain devoted to the creation and distribution of print media is understandable given the importance that anarchist theory placed on education. The black American anarchist Lucy Parsons claimed that "Anarchists know that a long period of education" which develops "self-thinking individuals" is a necessary condition for "any great fundamental change in society" (Parsons 2003, 31). Similar remarks can be found in the Spanish anarchist press. In 1902 Mella wrote in La Protesta that "[w]e the anarchists" should "work for the coming revolution with words, with writings and with deeds . . . the press, the book, the private and public meeting are today, as ever, abundant terrain for all initiatives" (Quoted in Yeoman 2020, 40). Anarchist attempts to educate workers through print media faced a significant barrier: during this time period the majority of adults, especially poor people, could not read or write. In 1877 72 percent of the population in Spain were illiterate. This gradually decreased to between 63 and 67 percent in 1900 and 59 percent in 1910 (Bray and Haworth 2019, 7). Anarchists overcame this obstacle through the spoken word. Anarchist periodicals, journals, pamphlets and books were read aloud to groups of workers by the few people who were literate. This would

usually be followed by a group discussion about the contents of the paper, pamphlet or book. This practice of collective education occurred at public meetings, smaller private gatherings and even at work. The development of revolutionary consciousness on company time was achieved by groups of workers dividing up tasks such that one worker would recite anarchist literature whilst the others laboured and listened (Esenwein 1989, 129, 132; Yeoman 2020, 46).

This feature of the anarchist movement was commented on by people at the time. The reformist Ramiro de Maeztu claimed in 1901 that,

> These books, pamphlets and periodicals are not read in the manner of others . . . the reader of anarchist works—generally a worker—does not have a library, nor buys books for himself. [I have] witnessed the reading of [Kropotkin's] The Conquest of Bread in a workers' centre. In a room dimly lit by a candle, up to fourteen workers met every night of the winter. One of them reads laboriously, the others listen . . . (Quoted in Yeoman 2020, 46)

Juan Díaz del Moral made a similar observation during the period of excitement which followed the 1917 Russian revolution. He wrote,

> In their work breaks during the day (los cigarros) and at night after the evening meal, the most educated would read aloud pamphlets and newspapers, to which the others would listen attentively. What had been read was followed by corroborating perorations and endless praise. Not everything was understood: there were unknown words; some interpretations were childish, others were malicious, according to the character of the person who expressed them; but ultimately everyone agreed. It could not be any other way! It was the truth that they had felt all their lives, although they had never been able to express it. They read continually; their curiosity and their desire to learn were insatiable. Even on the road, mounted on horseback, with the reins or halters loose, campesinos could be seen reading; there were always some pamphlet in the saddlebag with their food. The number of copies of newspapers that were distributed is incalculable; each person wanted to have his own. It is true that 70-80 percent of them could not read; but this was not an insurmountable obstacle. The dedicated illiterate bought his own newspaper, gave it to a compañero to read to him, and then marked the articles that pleased him most. Later he would ask another comrade to read the article marked, and after a few readings he had committed it to memory and would recite it to those who did not know it (Quoted in Mintz 1994, 120, note 3).

The fact that anarchist articles were routinely spread through the spoken word had a profound effect on how they were written. An article ending with the declaration 'VIVA ANARCHY! VIVA THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION!' can appear over the top to a solitary reader. Such sentences make a lot more sense when one imagines a reader shouting these words at a group of workers and those workers shouting the same words back (Yeoman 2020, 46).

To a modern reader the manner in which workers historically absorbed anarchist ideas can appear similar to how contemporary workers educate themselves through listening to podcasts or youtube videos. There are, however, a number of important differences. A modern person

generally listens to content alone over the internet. Workers in the 19th and early 20th centuries listened to anarchist print media as a group in a face-to-face gathering. This medium of transmission by itself created a social network of anarchist workers in a specific location. This group of workers could then decide to not only absorb and discuss anarchist theory, but also put theory into practice and take direct action, such as by unionising their workplace or organising a strike. The collective nature of anarchist print media is apparent not only in how it was consumed but also in how it was produced. Periodicals published the thoughts and experiences of correspondents within Spain and the wider world. Through the medium of the printed word the thoughts and experiences from multiple individuals and groups were saved in the pages of the paper. They thereby gained a permanence which existed long after the memories of people were altered, decayed and forgotten due to the passage of time or lost forever with death. Workers who retained complete sets of papers, even after they had ceased publication, had access to the memory of the movement and the class struggles for emancipation which had previously occurred. The hunger for such information can be seen in the fact that editors of papers regularly received letters asking for previous issues so that an anarchist library could offer visitors a complete collection (Yeoman 2020, 53-4).

Anarchists also spread their ideas through lectures, public debates and speaking tours. Some speaking tours were big events in which the most famous anarchist orators and writers gave talks across all of Spain. This included talks given by well known anarchists from abroad, such as Malatesta and Pedro Esteve's November 1891 to January 1892 speaking tour which was promoted by the anarchist paper El Productor. Other speaking tours were much smaller affairs. In 1892 the Catalan metalworker Ignacio Martín visited the city of Gijón and single handedly spread anarchist ideas across factories, taverns and workers' centres. Through these speaking tours anarchist orators attempted to simultaneously influence the consciousness of other workers and encourage them to form or join anarchist groups, organise, and take direct action. This can be seen in Malatesta and Esteve's speaking tour. They travelled across the country giving talks which explained basic anarchist ideas and emphasised the need for organisation and armed insurrection to achieve emancipation. Following their visit new anarchist groups or workers' associations were formed. In addition to encouraging the formation of new anarchist groups, Malatesta and Esteve also visited prominent anarchist militants wherever they travelled in order to establish or strengthen social networks between anarchist groups throughout Spain. In so doing they aimed to create the organisational basis for future acts of revolt. The dual goal of consciousness raising and organising was typically facilitated through the distribution of posters, pamphlets, and periodicals at talks. This had the effect that speaking tours established a local archive of anarchist literature wherever they travelled. The new collection of print media could then be used by workers to educate themselves further and become more committed to anarchism once the speaking tour had left the area. Since periodicals included an address to send letters to, the distribution of print media also ensured that new local anarchists had a means to communicate with other anarchists and become part of the social networks that constituted the movement. This is not to say that speaking tours were always enormous successes. Their effectiveness was routinely hindered by state repression. For example, one speaking tour, which aimed to persuade proletarians and peasants in Andalusia to join the CNT, was abruptly ended when all the speakers were arrested at the first event (Yeoman 2020, 147-8, 219, 234-5, 246; Turcato 2012, 91-9).

The creation and transmission of anarchist culture was not confined to print media and speaking tours. Anarchists in Spain devoted a significant amount of time and energy to organising a

wide range of different social events. This included, but was not limited to, plays, poetry scenes, concerts, dinners, dances, picnics, discussion groups, and reading groups. These various forms of association generally occurred within public meeting places, such as cafes and bars, and were self-organised by working class groups known as circles, affinity groups or workers' centres. During the late 19th century one of the best known workers' centres in Barcelona was La Luz, which organised daily discussions at a cafe that attracted workers and middle class professionals from various political persuasions. Although the majority of people who attended the meetings were republicans, anarchists were able to effectively intervene in the discussions, spread their ideas to other workers, and persuade some of them to become anarchists. Such daily or weekly activities were interspersed with public celebrations of key dates in the revolutionary calendar, such as the anniversary of the Paris Commune and May Day. For example, on the fifteenth anniversary of the Paris Commune anarchist groups from Barcelona and the surrounding area organised a festival which featured choirs, an orchestra, poetry recitals and theatre performances (Esenwein 1989, 128-32; Smith 2012, 156-7, 260). The spread of anarchist culture through social events was facilitated by the creation of anarchist-run physical spaces. In the early 1930s anarchist members of the CNT established a co-operative store and bakery in Sant Adrià. The co-operative was built from scratch by a group of volunteer carpenters, bricklayers and plasterers using building materials which were paid for by crowd-funding within the local community. The co-operative not only sold various products and food at cost price but also featured a library, a bar with a billiard table, and a cafe. This enabled the co-operative to host a wide range of anarchist social events, including evening classes, lectures, plays and musical recitals (Ealham 2010, 52-3).

One of the main physical spaces where workers came into contact with anarchist ideas were cultural and social centres known as ateneos or athenaeums, which were interconnected with the anarchist trade union movement. An ateneo typically featured a cafe, library, reading rooms, meeting rooms for anarchist and neighbourhood groups, and an auditorium for formal debates, public talks and artistic performances. The walls of the building were decorated with signifiers of anarchism, such as portraits of famous revolutionaries and red and black banners. During periods of state repression when trade unions were forced underground, ateneos were generally able to remain open and thereby ensure the on-going existence of an anarchist presence within working class communities. The ateneos were funded and run by workers in their spare time, such as the La Torrassa Rationalist Athenaeum in Barcelona which was set up and paid for by a group of anarchist brick-makers in the early 1930s. The building's furniture was provided by anarchist carpenters. The workers who participated in ateneos organised a wide range of educational and leisure activities in their spare time. This included day schools for working-class children, evening classes for adult workers, theatre clubs which would perform radical plays, singing and musical groups, family picnics, and hiking clubs which allowed poor urban workers to experience the beauty of nature in the countryside and along the coast. The wide range of activities which ateneos organised led to workers who participated within them to change themselves in multiple directions, such as gaining the confidence to speak before a crowd, learning to read and write, and acquiring an in-depth understanding of why capitalism and the state should be abolished. In so doing they experienced first hand one of the main goals of anarchism: the many-sided development of human beings as an end in and of itself.

Through participating in ateneos workers not only developed themselves but also formed social bonds with one another and became members of the anarchist movement. A significant number of anarchist militants, especially women, first encountered anarchist ideas and entered

into anarchist social networks through their participation in the ateneos when they were children and teenagers. This process was facilitated by print media. Anarchist periodicals informed readers of the existence of ateneos. Ateneos, in turn, taught workers to read and write and contained libraries of anarchist books, pamphlets and periodicals. This can be seen in the experiences of Soledad Estorach, who arrived in Barcelona at the age of fifteen and soon learned about anarchism through the journal La Revista Blanca. She read articles by Soledad Gustavo and decided to travel to Gustavo's address, which was printed in the paper. Gustavo told Estorach to go to an ateneo. Upon arrival she met an old man who showed her the library. She recalled being "entranced by all those books" and feeling "that all the world's knowledge was now within my reach" (Quoted in Ackelsberg 2005, 86). In the years that followed Estorach became a key participate within the CNT and Mujeres Libres, which was an anarchist organisation that focused on women's emancipation. Young people not only received an anarchist education in ateneos but also gained experiences of anarchist organising. In 1932 youth groups which had emerged from ateneos in Granada, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia formed the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth (FIJL). The FIJL, which was an independent organisation linked with the CNT, came to be viewed as one of the main pillars of the anarchist movement. On several occasions ateneos were the avenue through which workers mobilised to participate in demonstrations and strikes. Money raised by the ateneo in the La Torrassa neighbourhood funded not only its activities but also the wider social movement, including the CNT's prisoner support committee which helped imprisoned anarchists and their families. Ateneos were, in other words, social spaces which facilitated working class self-education, recreation, and class struggle (Ackelsberg 2005, 84-8; Ealham 2010, 45-7; Ealham 2015, 50-5; Evans 2020, 23. For a Spanish anarchist advocating human development see Mella 2020, 6-9).

One of the main services which ateneos provided to workers, be they adults or children, were educational classes. This occurred as part of a wider emphasis on pedagogy and schools within the anarchist movement. Anarchists advocated the formation of secular schools which were independent of the church and the state, taught boys and girls together in the same classes, and emphasised the development of both physical and mental capacities. In the early years of the movement anarchist teachers worked at secular schools run by republicans. Over time anarchists began to establish their own schools. This most notably included the Modern School established by Fransisco Ferrer in Barcelona. The school was founded in September 1901 with a class of thirty pupils. The number of students gradually increased over the following years and by 1905 126 pupils attended the school. The school did not last long and was permanently closed by the Spanish state in 1906 following an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the King of Spain. Three years later in 1909 Ferrer was arrested and executed by the Spanish state after he was falsely charged with having orchestrated a week long working class insurrection against army reservists being called up to fight in Morocco. This had the effect that Ferrer was transformed from a relatively obscure figure into an internationally famous martyr who inspired anarchists around the world to create modern schools of their own. The majority of anarchist schools in Spain were not as well funded as Ferrer's Modern School. Outside of Catalonia they were typically rooms which lacked equipment and trained teachers. These rooms were often used for multiple purposes, such as the anarchist ran school in Cádiz which was located in the meeting room of the city's metalworkers society (Avrich 2006, 3-31; Bray and Haworth 2019, 1-43; Smith 2012, 158-60; Yeoman 2020, 151-6). Despite these limitations anarchist schools could still have a significant impact on workers who attended them. One worker claimed, "I'm Andalusian and I moved to l'Hospitalet

when I was nearly 10 years old. I learnt everything I know from the anarchists. I was 14 or 15 and I didn't know how to read or write. I learnt at the night school organised by the libertarians" (Quoted in Ealham 2010, 47).

The manner in which different aspects of anarchist counter-culture intermixed with and supported one another can be seen in the Centre for Social Studies, which was founded in 1898 in the large town of La Línea. Anarchist workers from a variety of occupations were affiliated with the centre. According to a 1901 report, this included 347 carpenters, 450 construction workers, 200 painters, 210 iron and metal workers, 80 quarrymen and stonemasons, 80 cork-makers, 120 boot-makers, 120 tobacco-workers and 423 from varied industries. This last category of worker mostly consisted of casual and farm labourers. Later reports from 1902 establish that between 4,000 and 8,000 workers were affiliated with the centre. In 1901 the centre launched a new school which was located on the premises. This occasion was heralded with a large public event that featured poetry recitals, the unveiling of portraits of the anarchist Fermín Salvochea and the novelist Émile Zola, and lectures on such topics as god, the state, capitalism and the history of anarchism in Spain. The school's main teacher was Ernesto Álvarez, who edited the anarchist paper La Protesta. Álvarez was able to become a teacher at the school due to the fact that his salary was paid for the various workers' societies who were affiliated with the centre. By the end of 1901 the new school was teaching 180 children reading and writing and had begun to expand into adult education. This included French night classes where the teaching methods and classroom rules were decided upon by the students themselves. Gabriela Alcalde, who was another teacher at the school, ran night classes for women which taught them embroidery and needlework. These were organised in order to provide women with skills that could enable them to gain economic independence and no longer have to work as domestic servants. The school, which in 1902 claimed to be educating 400 children and 22 adults, was shut down by the Spanish state following a series of protests and riots in the town (Yeoman 2020, 157-9, 183, note 309).

The various aspects of anarchist counter-culture were generally underpinned by the expectation that those most committed to anarchism would transform themselves and become what was called a 'conscious worker'. To be a conscious worker was, at the very least, to be an active participant within the trade union and collective struggles in the workplace and community. It was also believed to require various lifestyle changes in which a worker led by example and abandoned alcoholism, tobacco, gambling, visiting brothels, and watching bull fights in favour of reading, studying, and discussing anarchist ideas. It was for this reason that anarchist social centres typically prohibited the consumption of alcohol on the premises and served non-alcoholic drinks, such as unfermented grape juice (Mintz 2004, 85-7; Smith 2007, 160-1; Yeoman 2020, 131). Despite the best efforts of the most committed anarchists, the majority of other workers appear to have preferred having a fun night out. For example, the anarchist militant Manuel de los Reyes responded to a sociology lecture in Cádiz being badly attended by writing an angry article in the periodical El Proletario. During the article he labelled those who had not shown up as "cowards" and "traitors". He complained, "why do you not frequent the society where they are able and want to educate you, and not the taverns that are nothing more than centres of corruption? . . . why do you not school yourselves?" (Quoted in Yeoman 2020, 161). Some anarchist workers went further and embraced a cluster of alternative lifestyles known as naturalism, which included vegetarianism, nudism and only eating uncooked foods (Mintz 2004, 87-8). These anarchists made a surprise appearance in the CNT's 1936 Zaragoza congress resolutions on libertarian communism. The CNT's resolutions, which mostly covered such topics as the armed defence of the revolution

and the construction of a large-scale bottom-up planned economy, also featured the caveat that "naturist/nudist communes" would be free to autonomously self-manage themselves. It was stipulated that since no commune can be entirely self-sufficient, even if it is populated by nudists who only eat uncooked fruits and vegetables, naturalist communes would be able to form voluntary agreements with the federations of workplace and community councils that the majority of the anarchist movement would construct (Peirats 2011, 104-5).

One of the main ways in which anarchists attempted to implement their ideals in daily life was free love. Free love referred to voluntary sexual relationship between equals which occurred outside of marriage. These relationships were free in the sense that if one partner wanted they could voluntarily disassociate, end the relationship, and date new people. These relationships were overwhelmingly monogamous and articles advocating free love often clarified that they were not endorsing polyamory or promiscuity. Although there were some anarchists at the time who today would be regarded as queer, such as the lesbian Lucía Sánchez Saornil, anarchist discussions of free love focused on heterosexual relationships between a man and a woman. In practice a significant number of anarchists did not fully implement the ideas of free love and decided to instead form voluntary secular marriages which occurred independently of the Catholic church (Ackelsberg 2005, 47-52, 172; Mintz 2004, 91-9; Yeoman 2020, 138-41). In a country where Catholicism was a dominant social force, those anarchists who decided to have secular marriages known as 'free unions' faced hostility and prejudice from other members of their community. For example in Casas Viejas, Antonia wanted to enter into a secular marriage with Pepe. Her father, who was a member of the local anarchist led trade union, was against the idea and violently hit her after she refused to leave Pepe. Antonia recalled,

> since I didn't answer him, he started to beat me. There were some shoes hanging there, and he seized them and started to beat me black and blue. My sister grabbed my father by the legs, but he kept beating me. He hit me such a hard blow on the head that he could have killed me. I ran out and went up to the vegetable patch on the slope. I had to run around a tree, and when I turned around—my father was behind me, running. I reached the house of a neighbor. When my father got to the neighbor's small patio, he had to stop. He couldn't enter. (Quoted in Mintz 2004, 97)

Despite these traumatic events Antonia and Pepe married a few days later at a secular wedding attended by local anarchists. Antonia wore the clothes she had run away in since she was unable to safely return home. After the wedding Pepe would see Antonia's father in the street and greet him but he would never reply. Antonia similarly recalls that one day she greeted her father and he responded by shouting at her to leave and get out of his sight. Although Antonia's father came to accept the situation and regret his behaviour, these events provide an illustrative example of the obstacles practitioners of free love and secular marriages had to overcome in a deeply religious and patriarchal society (Mintz 2004, 98-9). This is not to say that anarchist men were perfect. The evidence which is available indicates that anarchist men were generally sexist towards women in the movement and expected their partners to do the majority of childcare and housework. In 1935 Lola Iturbe complained that anarchist men "however radical they may be in cafés, unions and even affinity groups, seem to drop their costumes as lovers of female liberation at the doors of their homes. Inside, they behave with their compañeras just like common 'husbands'" (Quoted in Ackelsberg 2005, 115).

Anarchist parents rejected the religious baptism ceremonies of the Catholic church in favour of simply registering the name of the child. These registrations often included a communal event where revolutionary songs were sung and local children would read anarchist texts aloud. It was common for anarchist parents to give their children distinctly anarchist names. Some children were named after abstract concepts, such as Anarchy, Germinal, and Fraternity. One couple went so far as to name one of their children Free Proletarian, who sadly died shortly after birth. Other anarchist parents named their children after famous rebellious figures, such as Spartacus and Kropotkin, or famous scientists, such as Archimedes, Galileo, and Darwin (Yeoman 2020, 139-41). The birth and secular registration of children was reported upon and celebrated in the anarchist press as examples of workers living in accordance with anarchist ideals. In April 1910 Tierra y Libertad reported that,

> A beautiful boy with the delightful name of Palmiro has been brought to the civil register of Medina Sidonia as the son of the compañeros Maria de los Santos Bollullo and José Olmo, the first offspring of their free union. Our sincere congratulations to these compañeros for the strength of their convictions in removing themselves from the bureaucratic procedures used by the black-clothed priests (Quoted in Mintz 2004, 95).

Given the above historical overview, an understanding of how social movements are able to grow and significantly alter society requires an examination of both huge moments of protest and rebellion and the smaller day-to-day activities which sustained and expanded social movements over time. Between the late 19th and early 20th century anarchists in Spain successfully organised the largest mass anarchist movement in history. This mass movement was centred on trade unionism within the CNT and the organisation of strikes. Anarchists in Spain did not limit themselves to a narrow conception of trade unionism and also engaged in a wide variety of other activities. One of the main activities they engaged in was the construction of a vibrant working class counter-culture centred on print media, education and art. The creation and transmission of this culture was facilitated by the establishment of anarchist social spaces, including co-operatives, schools and social centres known as ateneos. Through this counter-culture anarchists were able to spread their ideas, establish contact with the wider working class community, and sustain their commitment to anarchism over time, especially during periods of state repression. Their cultural activities, in short, promoted and supported class struggle from below and were interconnected with a revolutionary social movement. It was therefore distinct from much of what passes for counter-culture today, which often consists of the formation of an identity through the purchasing and consumption of commodities.

It is of course the case that anarchists alive today cannot simply copy what worked in the past onto the present and expect similar results. What was once extremely radical, such as having secular weddings and funerals, are now for large parts of the world a common thing to do. It is very difficult to create hundreds of ateneos in a context where buildings and land are extremely expensive and the rent is too damn high. Nor is it the case that every aspect of historical anarchist counter-culture was a good idea. No child should have to suffer the negative consequences of their anarchist parents naming them Anarchy or Free Proletarian. It is also important to not romanticise historical anarchists and ignore their failings. The brickmaker José Peirats played a key role in the history of the CNT and the construction of anarchist counter-culture. He was

also a sexist homophobe (Ealham 2015, 206-8). Despite these limitations the study of historical anarchist counter-culture in Spain can serve as a source of inspiration in the present. It should merely be kept in mind that, even if counter-culture is a necessary condition for the development and reproduction of mass revolutionary movements, it is not a sufficient condition. As historical anarchists in Spain were well aware, social change requires that workers organise and take direct action against the ruling classes. Counter-culture is important but it is no substitute for what Kropotkin once referred to as the formation of "workers' organisations" which engage in "the direct struggle of Labour against Capital and its protector,—the State" (Kropotkin 2014, 189).

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