Rudolf Rocker
Anarchy and organisation
January 2003

Retrieved on 2020-06-05 from libcom.org
Translation from Spanish (Castellano) of Rudolf Rocker's "Anarchism and organisation", Fourth digital edition, January of 2003, retrieved from Antorcha.net

theanarchistlibrary.org

Anarchy and organisation

Rudolf Rocker

January 2003

Contents

sion in a federative cooperation of forces. As a result it opposes all imposition of cooperation from the top over the rest of the people, because it destroys natural relationships between them, which is the base for all real organization and it coverts each individual into a part of a machine that works for the interests of the privileged.

One can, like Malatesta, rest the whole weight on the organizations of anarchist groups and their federative union. Or one can, like Kropotkin, defend that anarchists should remain with their small groups and rest the whole weight of their activities in the syndicalist organizations. One can even take the point of view of James Guillaume, the great comrade of Bakunin, that one shouldn't even talk of anarchist organizations, since one should work exclusively in revolutionary unions to propagate the evolution and deepening of libertarian socialism. These are differences stances that should be discussed, but in all of them the need for organization is stated.

Now, before the storm comes, that need is all the more urgent. The social contradictions have become more palpable in all countries and huge masses of the proletariat are still dominated by the belief that the use of State violence by this same proletariat puts it under conditions to solve the social problem. Not even the frightening collapse of the East can cure the majority from that conceitedness. It's absurd to think that State Socialism lost its power over the masses. Quite the opposite, over it and all other kinds of slavery one has to place the IDEAL OF FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM. A struggle, a struggle without mercy of any force of tyranny and any worshiper of power and domination, no matter what mask they use. The luck of our next agreement is on the hands of history. As such all forces have to unite into a great alliance and open the doors to a free future.

Chapter 6

We don't want there to be any confusion. Our strong defense of organization doesn't mean that we claim that it's a medicine for all diseases. We know well that first and foremost is the spirit that invigorates and inspires a movement; when there's a lack of such a spirit, organization is of no use. You can't bring the dead back to life by organizing them. What we do think is that wherever the spirit and necessary forces exist, the organization of forces through a federalist foundation is the best method to reach great results. In organizing there's a field of activity for all. The close cooperation of the individuals for a common cause is a powerful path for the surge of moral force and solidarity in each member. It's absolutely false to state that one loses individuality and personal sentiments in an organization, thanks to the constant contact with equals the best qualities of the personality come to surface. If by Individualism one understands nothing more than the constant polishing of the "Me" and the ridiculous notion that in all close contact with others there is a danger for the person itself, then (s)he's forgetting that the greatest obstacle to the development of individuality is exactly that. The closer one is connected to his/her fellow Man and the more profoundly feels joys and pains, the deeper and richer is his/her personal feelings and the greater is the individuality. Personal feelings and developed as a direct result of social sentiments.

As such Anarchism is not opposed to organization, on the contrary, Anarchism is its strongest supporter, this assuming that it's a natural organization on every level that resulted from the common relationships of people and that finds its expres-

Foreword

This edition of Rudolf Rocker's book fundamentally seeks to:

1. End the myth, based on actual events, that Anarchism as a political theory opposes any form of organization;

2. Provide knowledge of the general history of a period in German Anarchism.

We chose this essay because the author's participation in the German anarchist movement allows him to treat it with a critical view. Furthermore his militancy in the international anarchist forum establishes credibility in his analysis of the organization subject.

As this work was written in the 1920's, it falls on us to try to modernize his main ideas, which are:

a. In the plan of the international theoretical-practical development, the classical anarchist authors, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin and Piotr Kropotkin, don't establish any anti-organization theory.

b. In the plan for the development of the German anarchist movement, the lack of anarchist political preparation from certain militant sector annulled the completed comprehension of the specifically anarchist objectives giving way to the words anarchism, anarchist and anarchy, being gradually distanced from their original meaning. Reaching the extreme of being interpreted in the same way as the bourgeoisie interprets them.

c. In the "discovery" by J. Mackay of the writings of Johan Gaspar Schmidt (better known as Max Stirner), the level of inconsistencies that these incentivized in a sector of both the German and international anarchist movement, culminated in the absolute denial of any organizational intentions.

Over the first point there's a lot to take, but that does not correspond to the objectives to which we proposed ourselves since the organizational alternatives provided by the classical and non-classical writers are numerous.

On the other hand, it's necessary to raise a critic of Rocker's analysis of the disorganization of the German anarchist movement. He exposes the reality of the views and actions of certain groups who continually refused to organize themselves in the bosom of the German Anarchist Federation, but fails to indicate, situate and explain when, where and why the aforementioned federation originated. That is, he doesn't explain which needs it was responding to, if it was effectively an organism or simply a… cadaver. Of the parties involved in the supposed conflict, federation and anti-federation groups, he puts to judgment the attitude of the anti-federation group. But does not tackle, and from here comes our critic, the theoretical and practical positions of the members of the federation.

Summarizing, according to Rocker, the responsibility for anarchism not progressing in the time falls on the hostile attitude of the supposed anti-organization. When in reality, and if we see this objectively, that responsibility should be put on the G.A.F., since it was the Federation who was directly interested in organizing the diverse anarchist groups. As such the responsibility fell solely to the Federation to seek a way to achieve this, and not to the anti-organizers.

On the second point, we think that this problem is much more pronounced now than it was then. Several causes have generated and, in our opinion, the most important ones are:

Anarquista is one of the most important and influential organizations in the Italian worker's movement. In Spain, where anarchists have always concentrated their propaganda and organizing activities in the revolutionary syndicalist movement, right after the war the Confederación del Trabajo was marvelously developed. After a whole string of struggles it was in a way dispossessed of their publicity by the reaction that once again occurred there, during the last couple of years, but despite these persecutions that it suffered and still suffers it has not disappeared. Thanks to their unbreakable organizing activity, our Spanish comrades managed to resist the violent attacks of the reaction and to reaffirm the stability of the movement. In Portugal and South America, where the movements are similar to the Spanish one, our comrades have greatly contributes in the fields of organization and they hold the best of hopes for the future.

In Germany Anarchism has gained some solid ground, from the revolution, due to the strong development of the anarcho-syndicalist movement which includes all elements of the anarchist worker's movement. In my opinion this is the most significant event in the evolution of Anarchism in Germany, despite it not being valued enough by the comrades who supposedly should form the base of the worker's movement and organization. The person who values the whole odyssey of said development will conclude that those comrades that are no longer new to the movement should be particularly interested in accelerating it as much as possible, since a big divisionism as we see today with most extremist organizations would mean a collapse of the anarchist movement from which it would not be able to piece itself back together.

eties that are called, by them, **authoritarian** only because they have a Chairman and pass resolutions. Enough of empty words, let's dedicate ourselves better on practical actions. Words separate, actions unite. It's about time that we organize our forces to obtain decisive influence over social events.

With that in mind, the Congress took several decisions, subsequently creating an International Bureau in order to ease the relationships between the different national organizations. The second congress of the Anarchist International, which was supposed to happen in the summer of 1914 in London and of which the delegates of 21 European and American countries had been notified, was interrupted by the World War. The war broke out just when it was most needed for the congress to occur and the five members of the Bureau were later on dispersed in several countries.

The first part of the gigantic catastrophe was now behind us and it would be impossible to predict what would come with the second part. We can only make vague assumptions. We have numerous problems awaiting solutions. The anarchist movement suffered the consequences of war and comrades everywhere should do everything they can to unite and reinvigorate our dispersed forces back into the action. It's now known that the anarchist movement need an organizing base in order to obtain effective results in the great struggles that are ahead of us and so that the State Socialists, of one current or another, to reap the fruits of the seeds of our activity and sacrifice. Russia gave us a great example in that sense, there the anarchist movement, despite its huge influence on the people and sacrifices of anarchists for the revolution, ended as a victim of its own internal scatter and disorganization. It helped the Bolsheviks climb to power and now our comrades feel the bitter result. The same will happen everywhere while we fail to unite with certain lines of conduct and unite our forces into organizations.

In France our comrades united in the Union Anarchiste and have been carrying out satisfactory activity. In Italy the Union

1. The lack of spreading, at a general level, of the anarchist alternatives and approaches through books, pamphlets, periodicals, magazines, comics, etc.

2. As a consequence, there's a shutting off of the groups from the outside which brings about stagnation both at a cultural and political level, in turn leading to a lack of imagination, investigation, creation, analysis and opinion. From that the most astonishing monster of ideology resulted, fanaticism. This is antagonic to the anarchist plans. **Fanaticism and Anarchism are diametrically opposed poles.**

3. The lack of appreciation among the adherents of anarchism of their own work and that of other anarchists, all the while any outside action or declaration, distant from anarchism by its own actions, is profoundly commented and discussed by these same anarchists. It seems as if one searches, maybe unconsciously, (her)himself in that which is outside of him(her). The few anarchist publications with a periodical character, mainly survive due to the constant effort of little, sometimes minuscule, groups of people and not actual support from the anarchist community in general. There's no doubt that the origin for such attitudes is the defeatist sentiment that's present. That who considers himself adherent to anarchism ideology and doesn't intent to do nothing in favor of the alternatives of the ideology, is bringing with this attitude future defeat.

4. The product of the aforementioned is constituted by a lack of consistency in any activity. It starts with an overall enthusiasm and determination without a match, but after a short amount of time these dissipate with surprising speed. The fatigue sets in and the little or big amount of work performed is wasted, not to mention that the

time spent during the process was wasted too, which is lamentable. This immaturity, this inconsistency, in what is carried out, has been for the last two decades a common denominator in anarchist circles.

On the third point, the resurgence of Stirnian positions, we think that this phenomenon has returned, with several causes to it. It's obvious that the work of Marx Stirner *The Ego and its Own* (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*), is almost a jolt for every young, adolescent almost, reader that searches diligently the ideological spectrum to justify their presence in the world. And for this work to find a group of followers there needs to be an adequate atmosphere, whose bases, in our opinion, are the following elements:

1. Urban centers of such proportion that they form a dam to inter-individual communication;

2. Overcrowding of such inhuman proportions that it minimizes, or destroys, the value of each individual, practically reducing them to nothing;

3. Urban architecture designed so irrationally, that they are a daily threat to individual integrity.

While such environmental characteristics exist, the field will be fertile enough for Stirnian crops to bloom. And if this problem is not resolved, if we don't resolve it, there will remain plenty of the negative characteristics which it leads to. While the atomization of the individual is the constant, while humongous buildings populate the cities, while avenues are designed for machines, while collective transportation is designed for cattle and not human beings, anti-social/anti-communitarian actions will certainly remain present, expressed with the bitter angst shown throughout Stirner's work. They will keep signaling through their own irrationality the irrationality of their environment, and that new Frankenstein's monster, that terrible

the creation of the Anarchist International. The French comrade Dunois started the defense of Anarchism and organization with a small connection, in which he noted the social character of the Anarchist ideals and declared Anarchism not as Individualist, but as Federalist in all subjects. In the discussion all comrades, with the exception of the Dutch Individualist Croiset, defended the need for organization. Errico Malatesta, the eternal champion of organization, did so particularly well.

Malatesta said that we shouldn't fall into the false conception, that the lack of organization is a guaranty of freedom; past events have shown us the contrary of this statement. An example: there are periodicals in France that don't depend on any organization, but that are closed to all whose ideas, style and attitude aren't what the editor wants. This results in a situation where a few individuals possess the power to limit the freedom of expression of others, unlike a periodical that is edited by an organization. Authority and authoritarianism are frequently spoken of. Let's make it clear, once and for all, what one means by it. There's no doubt that we rebel, and will always rebel, against the authority from the State, which only seeks to maintain society's economic slavery, but no anarchist, without exceptions, would refuse to respect the purely moral authority that results from experience, intelligence and talent. It's a serious error to accuse the adherents of organization, the Federalists, of authoritarianism and it's a big error to believe that the so called enemies of organization, Individualists, voluntarily doomed themselves to complete isolation. I'm of the opinion that the conflict between Individualists and adherents to organization, consists mostly of phrases which are void of any value in practical situations. In Italy, it's frequent for Individualists to not realize that they are against organization, them being better organized than the defenders of organization, which are always defending the necessity for organization, but never implement it. Also, frequently in groups where individual freedom is so advocated that there's more authoritarianism than in soci-

> International Revolutionary Congress of London, in 1896, tried to approve a resolution there would be a Stirnian protesting: **What a resolution? I don't want any resolutions! I didn't come here to make pacts! I want to be MYSELF!** But at the time, the communist current had the supremacy and responded: **You could have done that at home! Don't come here just to bother us.**

I quoted Cornelissen in such a detailed manner because he hit it out of the park with his considerations and what he talked about still exists to this day. Unfortunately, the spirit of the time hasn't yet completely disappeared from the anarchist movement in Germany and continues to drift between people that easily get drunk on hollow sentences and that have no ability to delve into the substance of the concepts. These people are attached to the exterior aspects of things, because they suffer from an incurable fetishism that makes them see the product of their imagination as reality. I only need to remember the pamphlet that the *Bolsa de Obreros Mozos* conveniently decided to publish at the time of the last syndicalist congress in Dusseldorf. The authoritarian hierarchies remained intact with the passing of time. Only one thing changed, the little paper was called *Der Vorgeschobene*, and that was new. In a society so concentrated on the sovereign individual, there were still herds; something nobody ever thought would be possible. Apart from that, they were just ghosts of the past returning in the dark of the evening, before the brightness of dawn.

Just when the anarchist movement was returning to the organization of the masses, as their antecessors did in the time of the International, the problem of organization came, naturally, back to surface and it was the main reason for the International Anarchist Congress of Amsterdam (1907) and for

Horla will curse his own creator and will be present in his creators happiest moment – prophetic Shelleynian warning – the flawed and abhorrent authoritarian way.

Let's hope that this work is useful, by as little as it may be, to try to overcome the identified flaws, and that with self-critics and objective arguments we can find the breadcrumb path that will enable us to leave this terrible maze in which we apparently find ourselves.

Chapter 1

It is not satisfactory that within anarchist circles it hasn't been possible to clear this question, due to its importance for the present anarchist movement and its future development. Here in Germany, is where the perspectives on the question are the most intricate. Naturally the special conditions on which modern anarchism has developed here is largely culpable for the situation of today. A fraction of the anarchists in Germany refuses, as a principle, any kind of organization with certain codes of conduct and argues that the existence of such organisms is in opposition to anarchist ideology. Others recognize the need for small groups, but refuse any union between them, as thin as it may be. In, for instance, the German Anarchist Federation's fusion of forces they see a restriction upon individual freedom and an authoritarian tutelage by a few. We argue that these points of view come from a complete confusion of the origin of the question, a complete lack of knowledge of what one means by Anarchism.

Even if in Anarchism's considerations of the diverse social formations and ideological currents it originates from the individual, it is still a social theory that has autonomously developed with communities as the center. Man is above all a social creation, on which the entire species works, slowly but without interruption, and that constantly takes new energies celebrating each second of its resurrection. Man is the heir of social coexistence, not the discoverer. The social instinct was received from animal ancestors when passing the gateway towards humanity. Without society Man is inconceivable, since life and struggle has always been within society. Social coexis-

and many of the recently founded organizations put forward the preliminary question of **what statutes and representatives bring with them the seeds for new domination**. Not satisfied with criticizing the abuses of the organizations and the using all methods possible to avoid the presidents of the Unions from having too much power, since they are simply the mandataries of the associates, the individualists quickly started to fight the organizations themselves, as they always saw new **tyrants** where there was a simple regulation of the simplest of Union procedures. In these cases, like others, words like **dictatorship of the majority over the minority** and **repression of individual freedom** were used. But, the individualist critic was unable to notice that a worker's organization not having regulations there is a greater ease for personal authority and the dictatorship of individual action, just like in the old associations. Individualism had a greater effect than the Unions, in the time of transition of which we are talking about, in groups and centers of study and agitation that sought to place themselves directly against social-democracy. Not too long ago several countries discussed problems like: Is it not against individual freedom to vote and establish resolutions in revolutionary groups? Is one authorized to nominate a chairman to take notes of those that ask to speak, a secretary or, especially, a treasurer, since they are all responsible towards the members and this would establish a new domination as that of the social-democrats? Besides, in regards to responsibility, the sovereign individual owes himself responsibility. Don't think that this is exaggerated. Every time the

masses, and it defended direct action and the general strike. A strong case for those tactics had already been made by Rudolf Lange and other comrades, which is why they published the *Anarchist*. But, at the time to place oneself in the mass revolutionary movement, the subject of organization came up once again and, in fact, Lange was one of the strongest supporters of large scale anarchist organization, and his staunch defense of this position frequently stirred up opposition among his German comrades. When the German Anarchist Federation's Manheim Conference (1907) established lines of conduct in that regard, it, as expected, caused several people to protest against it, in these complaints the autocratic absolute autonomy of the individual played a big role.

Events of the sort happened basically everywhere, that is to say, they were matters that should have the same effect everywhere. The famous Dutch anarchist, reported on it detailly in his interesting study, *The Evolution of Anarchism* (*Ueber die Evolution des Anarchismus*), where he states the following opinion:

> In several modern countries Anarchism has presented itself as a practical path for opposition to the centralization and discipline of social-democracy. But said opposition, as usually occurs in opposition movements, quickly went to the other extreme. The influence of the libertarian and artist elements greatly contributed to Individualism, lending it some support, as a theory and even causing disorganization all over the movement. Especially at the beginning of the 9th decade of the past century, when individual action was responsible for several bomb attempts. The Individualist critic in Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Bohemia, etc., firstly attacked the form of organization and later the organization itself. In the Unions the individualist spirit of disorganization appeared

tence is the precondition and most essential part of individual existence and it's also the starting shape of all organization.

Maybe the strength of traditional relationships that we observe in the majority of humanity is just a manifestation of this deep social instinct. As Man lacks the conditions to exactly interpret what is new, his fantasy is of the dissolution of all human relations and fearing to drown in the subsequent chaos, he compulsively sustains himself within the historical traditional molds. It is surely one of the errors of coexistence, but at the same time it shows us how social impulses are connected to the life of each individual. That who ignores or doesn't accept this irrefutable characteristic will never be able to understand with clarity the impulsive forces of human evolution.

The forms of human coexistence aren't always the same. They transform through-out History, but society remains and works tirelessly over the lives of individuals. Those who are used to always operating within abstract representations – towards which German people have a certain inclination – would eventually extract the individual from these relationships that tie him to society, the result of this would not be a human, but a caricature, a pale and fleshless relative that would only have a spectral life in the nebulous world of the abstract, and that has never existed in the real world. The result would the same of the merchant who tried to make his donkey lose the habit of eating and that when it died yelled with despair: "Such a shame! If he had lived just a couple more days, we would have managed to live without eating!"

The great theoreticians of modern anarchism, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, always highlighted the social base of anarchist theory, using it as the starting point for their considerations. They battled the State, not only due to it being the defender of monopoly and social contrasts, but also because it is the greatest obstacle for all natural organization that develops in the heart of the people, from below to the top, and that tends to defend the interests of the whole from the

multitude of aggression carried out against them. The State, the violent political apparatus of the privileged minority of society, whose mission is to force on the majority the burden of the employer's exploitation and spiritual tutelage, is the worst enemy of all natural relations of human beings and it will always ensure that such relations will only happen with the intervention of official representatives. It considers itself the owner of Humanity and cannot allow foreign forces to meddle in its profession.

That is why the history of the State is the history of mankind's slavery. Only with the existence of the State is the economic exploitation of the people possible and its only task can be synthesized to the defense of such exploitation. It's the mortal enemy of all natural liberty and solidarity – the two noblest results of social coexistence and that obviously consist of the same thing – by attempting, by all kinds of legal methods, to restrict or at least paralyze all direct initiative of its citizens and all natural fusion of humans with the goal of the defense of general interests. Proudhon had already figured it out and in *Confession d'un Révolutionnaire* made the following astute observation:

> From the Social point of view, Liberty and Solidarity are two identical concepts. As the liberty of each, is not a barrier to the liberty of others, as stated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1793. It is a support for it, the most free of people is the one that has the most relations with his fellow man.

Anarchism, the eternal opposite of scientifical, political and social Monopolies, battles the monopoly protector and ferocious enemy of direct and indirect human relations, the State, but was never the enemy of organization. Quite the opposite, one of the greatest accusations against the State apparatus is

clude everything that is possible and impossible, would remove the masses from the movement and convert it to a fossilized sect. This led many to have a firm attitude against Der Sozialist and to take other paths. The bitter injustice to people like Gustav Landauer that resulted from this is truly a shame, both from the Humanitarian point of view and of the interests of the movement. A quick look at his excellent *Manifest to Socialism* is enough to recognize that Landauer was one of the few in Germany that deeply understood the social side of Anarchism. But it would also be unfair to attribute everything, in those disputes, to clashes of personality and spiritual restrictions, even though they are unfortunate occurrences that accompanied the events.

Common sense led a lot of anarchist workers to desire a more powerful root for the union between Anarchism and the worker's movement. For many it was probably more due to instinct than knowledge. One could feel the internal necessity, but there wasn't any certainty over the right path to take. The period of the Neues Leben wasn't even an actual path, though to some it accelerated their internal understandings, despite its strong influence from events abroad. The young syndicalist movement in France developed with an astonishing speed and many active anarchists committed all their energies to it, participating in numerous struggles. The mass movement rose after years of hibernation during the time of the State of Exception. The grandiose idea of a General Strike started to get supporters among the masses in the Latin countries and under the direct influence of the worker's struggles that during the present century affected Spain, France, Italy, French Switzerland, Netherlands, Hungary and other countries the anarchist movement started a new evolutionary phase, that brought it closer to its founders.

In January 1904 the *Der Freie Arbeiter* (*The Free Worker*) started being published in Berlin, its editors put themselves entirely in the field of the revolutionary movement of the

That's why in 1897 some of the elements that were unhappy with *Der Sozialist* formed a new anarchist periodical, *Neues Leben* (*New Life*). But the new periodical didn't generate any particular honor for its promising title, despite their editors' good motives they lacked the capacity that is needed to publish a well edited and formatted periodical. Despite all of this it managed to outlive *Der Sozialist*, which, in 1899, after long and difficult financial struggles stopped being published.

Obviously this wasn't a good sign for the spiritual strength of the movement that a paper like the *Neues Leben* managed to muscle out an excellent and restrained paper such as *Der Sozialist*. But such events have to be judged from another point of view as well. There's no doubt that at the time, among German anarchists there were some elements that were more disillusioned socialist than they were anarchists. That element still hasn't disappeared from all of Germany.

It is easy to understand that *Der Sozialist* wasn't a periodical that they found appropriate for them, but there was another cause that took an important part in the disputes among anarchists that may have had a decisive importance. Some of the anarchist workers instinctively felt that the positions taken by *Der Sozialist* were getting farther and farther away from those of the working class, this was due to the fact that a considerable part of its writers got stuck in ideals and completely lost touch with the daily struggles faced in life. One could feel that the internal contact with the worker's movement in general was getting weaker day by day, and that there would an accident that would hurt the development of the movement.

These things are, generally, better understood and felt by the simple worker than by the intellectual, despite sometimes not having the same ease to express such feelings. The majority of German comrades wanted an anarchist worker's movement and they instinctively felt that overly unilateral accentuation of purely abstract theories over the unlimited sovereignty of the individual and other analogous things from which one can con-

that it is the biggest obstacle to effective organizing based on the equality of interests for all. The great supporters of the universal anarchist conception, clearly understood that the more opposed interested exist in the social structures, the less humans are connected to each other and the bigger is the level of personal freedom for the individual within the collectivity of society. That's why they saw in Anarchism a social state in which individual desires and the needs of humans surpass their social sentiments and are more or less identical to them. In mutualism they will provide an effective stimulus for all social evolution and the natural expression of general interests. For this reason they refused the coercive law as a way for relationships and developed the idea of the free accord as basis for all social forms of organization. The predominance of laws is always the predominance of the privileged over the majority that is excluded from the prerogatives and under its mask of evened out rights it's a symbol of brutal violence.

People are connected by common interests that create common tendencies, under which free accords serve them as codes of conduct. A convention between equals is the moral foundation for all true organization, all other forms of human grouping are violent and without prerogatives. That was how Proudhon understood the idea of the social organization of humanity; he expresses this in his great work *Idée générale de la Révolution du XIX siècle*, in the following:

> In place of laws, we will use agreements. No more laws voted by a consenting majority, each citizen, each town, each industrial union, make their own laws. In place of political powers, we will use economic forces. In place of the ancient classes of citizens, nobles, bourgeois and proletarians we will use the general titles and specialization of their function: Agriculture, Manufacture, Commerce, etc. In place of public force, there will be

> collective force. In place of permanent armies, we will use industrial associations. In place of police, we will use equality of interests. In place of political centralization, we will centralize economy. Do you see now how there can be order without employers, a profound intellectual unity? You, who cannot conceive unity without a whole apparatus of legislators, prosecutors and attorneys-general, you have never known what unity is. What you call unity and centralization is nothing but perpetual chaos, serving as a pedestal for a real situation that has no other goal than anarchy (naturally Proudhon is using the word anarchy in its popular and false interpretation as disorder) of the social forces, of which you made a base for a despotism which could exist without such anarchy.

A similar ideological notion was developed frequently in Bakunin's writings and publications. I only recall his conclusions in the first Congress of the League of Peace and Liberty in 1867 in Genebra. Of Kropotkin we will not speak in this piece, as his mains works are well known by all. We will just point out that the admirable book *Mutual Aid*, in which he studies the history of human organizations until the most remote times proclaiming solidarity, the most wonderful of results of social coexistence, as the biggest and most important factor of the evolution of social life.

Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin were not amoral, unlike some loud wishy-washy Nietzsche fans from Germany who call themselves anarchists and which are quite honest on how they consider themselves super-humans. They haven't constructed a lord and slave moral from which all kind of conclusions can be taken. On the contrary, they have preoccupied themselves with finding the origin of moral feelings in Man

Chapter 5

The editors of *Der Sozialist* considered publishing it abroad, but after a seven month stand-still they managed to publish it in Berlin again. But the style and content of the writing changed. The new *Sozialist* lost the tone from its first years of a brave youth; it now dealt exclusively with purely theoretical questions. It highly contributed to these questions; I remember for instance its admirable studies of Marxism and, especially, its critical analysis of Historical Materialism, which were widely studied.

The articles of Dr. Eugene Smith, Ladislauer, Gumplowicz, Benedict Fried-lander, Bruno Wille, Ommerborn, Brude, etc., despite all their kindness, could not answer the needs of the anarchist workers that weren't instructed enough to appreciate their intellectual idealizations. Logically this led to a deep confusion within the Berlin movement and it later extended into other localities. The editors of *Der Sozialist* realized that something needed to be done to attempt to smooth out the contradictions that kept getting more significant. So, in 1896, they founded the *Annen Konrad* (*The poor Conrad*). It was a sort of popular supplement to the *Sozialist*. This new periodical, also under the guidance of Albert Weidner, was also well designed, but its format was too small to occupy the existing void. Meanwhile the divergences caused by *Der Sozialist*'s nature deepened. Even though with a bit of good will, a compromise that would have been favorable and reasonable for the whole movement could have been reached that was not the case as in Germany these disputes dated back to a time with a much more hostile character, more hostile than anywhere else.

Wille rejected. One could talk about a few other things that also had influence over the development of the anarchist movement in Germany, but it's only necessary to take notice of the more important currents. We again repeat that all of those new ideas and goals around the young movement could have useful and advantageous, had there been enough time to spiritually strengthen oneself and to establish bases for their activity. But sadly that wasn't the case; all these new tendencies functioned as gunpowder on the young movement, gradually destroying it from the inside. The editorial team of *Der Sozialist*, which had in Gustav Landauer an admirable representative, committed itself to uniting and educating the movement from the inside, but this was no easy task as the atrocious persecutions and taunting from the police that the movement had to endure made it gradually harder. The plots from Ravachol, Vaillant, Henry, Pallás and others that occurred in France and Spain drove the German police mad and led it to chase down anarchists ferociously. The persecutions fell over the movement like hail and were directed especially against the editors of *Der Sozialist*, which they intended to destroy at all costs. In its short existence, from November 1891 to January 1895, seventeen editors were accused and, with the exception of those that managed to escape abroad, all of them were condemned. When this had no further results, they even broke the law, with the goal of destroying the periodical, until they finally succeeded.

and subsequently discovered it in social coexistence. Far from giving moral a religious and metaphysical significance, they saw that moral feelings are the natural expression of social existence that slowly crystallized into certain conducts and behaviors and that served as a pedestal for all forms of organization that come from the people. This was observed with clarity by Bakunin and even more profoundly by Kropotkin, who occupied himself until the end of his days with this question and provided us with the results of his investigations in a special piece, that so far has only had a few chapters published[1]. Certainly because they observed the social origin of the moral is why they were such vocal prophets of a social justice that finds its expression complemented with the eternal combat of the human being towards individual freedom and economic equality.

The majority of the countless bourgeois and state socialists that so far have occupied themselves with the critic of Anarchism, haven't noted the deep character of the basic anarchist doctrine – Wilhelm Liebknecht, Plekanoff and several others did this on purpose – because it's the only way to explain the artificial difference between Socialism and Anarchism, an absurd and unfounded difference, that they seek to show. For their classification they have mostly based their work on Stirner, without considering that his genius piece didn't have the slightest influence in the origin and evolution of the true anarchist movement and that at most Stirner can be considered, as the Italian anarchist Luis Fabbri astutely observed, one of the most distant precursors and ancestor of Anarchism. Stirner's piece *The Ego and Its Own* appeared in 1845 and passed by unnoticed. Ninety nine percent of anarchists hadn't ever heard of the German philosopher and his work, until around 1890 when the book was unearthed in Germany and since then translated into several languages. And still the influence of Stirner's ideas on

[1] *Ethics: Origin and Development*

the anarchist movement in Latin countries, where the theories of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin have had decisive influence for decades in working class circles, was miniscule and never increased. In certain French intellectual circles that at the time played around with anarchism, of which the majority have for some time now joined the other side of the barricades, Stirner's work had a great effect, but the majority of workers of the time had never any contact with it.

To none of theoreticians of Anarchism did it even occur that the day would come where they would be denominated as anarcho-socialists. All of them felt they were socialists, since they were deeply dedicated to the social character of their theory. For this same reason they did not call themselves more frequently revolutionaries or anti-authoritarian socialists, in opposition to state-socialists, only later did the name Anarchist become natural to them.

to study some of those who follow their own path, the ones that are always ready with empty phrases, brain-dead herd, and the idiotism of masses and experience has always shown me that the majority of those weird saints were always at the same height of the simple Man of the people and that for many of them the epithet at the margin of the masses was predictable. The same occurred with their authoritarian hierarchy. They sought to fall under any authority and then reduce it to ashes, but they were always the most intolerable and they had a stubbornness and sickening opposition that made it impossible to work with them during any amount of time.

But they weren't the only influences over the young movement, though they were the most effectively prejudicial to it. In 1892 Dr. Benedict Friedlaender's work *Libertarian Socialism in opposition to the State slavery of the Marxists* (*Der freiheitliche Sozialismus im Gegensatz zum Staatsknechtsthum der Marxisten*) was distributed, a book that is worthy of being read, it reminded anarchist of the vital work of Eugen Dühring, which was also unknown to most young people. This lead many anarchists to study Dühring's Works, exactly when the new tendency was beginning to edit in 1894 their own periodical *Der Moderne Volkergeist* (*The Modern Spirit*), which would enable a more intensive propagation of their ideas.

Furthermore there was the movement that favored the "freeland" advocated by Theodor Hertzka, which had such a powerful influence in the anarchist movement that it's impossible to assess it. His works *Freeland*, *A Trip to Freeland*, etc. were read in the German anarchist circles and frequently commented on in Der Sozialist.

In 1894, Dr. Bruno Wille published his work *Philosophie der Befreiung durch das reine Mittel* (*Philosophy of the emancipation by a pure way*), which also caused big differences of opinion, since it once again brought to the spotlight the question on the use of violence as a tactic for struggle, a tactic that

A year later there was a new edition of Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* in Reclam's Universal Library, a piece that had been completely forgotten (The second edition, 1852, wasn't very distributed and within anarchist circle it was practically unknown). The reappearance of that weird piece is an important event for the German anarchist movement. Only a small percentage had any idea of the time and circumstances of Stirner's piece. The great ideological struggles of before 1848 had long been forgotten and consequently many of the ones that avidly studied The Ego, had no idea about them or if they did know about them, it was a very lacking knowledge with no way to interpret the polemical attacks in the book. It's easy to assume so, since that period left us no traces of literature presenting the opposing values of those remote times. As a result Stirner's works became for many a new Manifest, a kind of ultimate truth that could not be beaten. Paradoxically, this classical work of rejections, without a match in literature, was converted by many anarchists into a new Bible, which itself was very commented and interpreted, and unfortunately there was no lack of writers. I think it's a tragedy that of all the great spirits, or maybe spirit in general, it's always the most obtuse and tasteless charlatans that are always ready to take the role of the apostles. Stirner, Nietzsche and beyond, didn't deserved better than what they got. In many anarchist groups there were Stirnian writers that were always ready to comment on the egoistic – that, one should mention, they didn't understand – and preventing any other reasonable writings. That meant that in each group there could only be one of those spirits, because when there was another spirit in the group rupture was unavoidable and it lead to the immediate formation of a new group. Those Germans fought especially against all organizing activity, looking down on the flock with a certain derogatory pride. They even forgot that Stirner himself puts a relative value on organization when he talks about the egotistic societies. I had the opportunity

Chapter 2

It's clear that the great defenders of Anarchism and the writers of the modern anarchist movement, the ones that never got tired of stating the social character of their ideas, could not be against organization. And in fact were never so. They fought against the centralized structure for organization of the State and Church, but all of them recognized the absolute need for an organized union of forces and found in federalism the most adequate structure for it. Proudhon's influence over the French worker's associations is widely known. This is not the place to occupy oneself with the detailed history of that highly interesting movement, which without a doubt represents one of the most admirable chapters of the grand struggle of Labor against the exploitation of the Capitalist regime. Here we're solely interested in respect to comradely organizations. Proudhon strongly criticized, in his periodical, the original idea for the association and attempted to influence it with his conclusions. With the endless work of his friends inside the associations, he managed to break State Socialist Luis Blanc's influence on the community and to conduct in them a great spiritual transformation. At all times wherever he was he would incite in his comrades the struggle against the government, and they stayed by his side in all of his struggles. With the help of the association the ideas of the great French thinker beneficially penetrated worker's circles, thus acquiring a practical form. His famous project, the *Banque du peuple*, was supposed to be the natural means for the coalition between associations all over the country and at the same time take ground away from Capital. It is not our intention to make a critic of value

and the significance of that project, born in the specific conditions of the time. We only intend to point out that Proudhon and his adherents were strong supporters of organization. The project of the *Banque du peuble* was a grand scale operation and Proudhon himself thought that the bank in its first year would have over two million participants.

We just need to observe the conclusions of Proudhon over the essence and object of forming organizations, that can be found frequently in all his works and periodicals he put out, to recognize how deeply and detailed the French thinker defined the attributes and substance of all social forms of organization: the principle of Federation and the political capacity of all the working classes.

The countless admirers that Proudhon captivated among the working class were all staunch defenders of organization. They were the most important element for the foundation of the International Workers Association and the first evolution phases of the great union of workers were completely under his spiritual influence.

But all these efforts that expressed themselves with the organizations of the Mutualists, how the adherents to Proudhon's ideas were called, can be considered as the precursors and the beginning of the anarchist movement which initiated in the International's period, especially since the influence of Bakunin and his friends is more recognized in the federations of Latin countries. Bakunin was always a staunch supporter of the idea of organization and the most important part of his activity in Europe consisted in his unstoppable desire to organize the revolutionary and libertarian elements and to prepare them for action. His activity in Italy, the foundation of his Alliance, his powerful propaganda in the ranks of the International had always as a goal that finality. He always defended that position in a series of admirable articles, that showed up in Geneva's *L'égalité*, and that deal specially with the organization of the International as a co-fusion of economical federations in oppo-

wanted to do just that, but at that time internal disagreements, that would for years affect the young movement, started. A flood of different currents engulfed the new anarchist movement, which led to an incredible confusion of spirits. Had the movement had the opportunity to publicly develop and spiritually strengthen itself for a few years without any setbacks, many thoughts that they would acquire would have helped to accelerate and spread their spiritual evolution. Unfortunately they weren't in that kind of a situation. The majority of its adherents at the time lacked the spiritual maturity that could have enabled them to prove and critically value all the new thoughts that were being introduced at its bosom.

Ninety nine percent of anarchists in Germany at the time didn't have any idea of the origin and aspirations of the anarchist movement. With foreign anarchist periodicals and pamphlets they got to know superficially a certain phase of the struggle, but the circumstances that determined the shape of this phase of the movement remained unknown to them. The comrades that got to know the period of conspiracy of the anarchist movement in Germany were all, without exceptions, Anarcho-Communists. Other tendencies hadn't even been heard of. In 1891, in Munich, the famous novel by John Henry Mackay *Die Anarchisten* appeared. This book caused a lot of talk in German anarchist circles, despite its weak theoretical base. In the group meetings and the night dissertations discussions on the question "Anarcho-Communism or Individualist Anarchism?" rambled on forever. The ones that reached the conclusion that so called Individualism represented the true ideological framework of Anarchism weren't few. Some of them, after Mackay, went so far as to seriously question the right of the adherents to the Communist tendency to title themselves as anarchists. It's remarkable how the most fanatical proselytes of freedom are exactly those who wish to limit it the most.

us, the youth, than the simple explanations of Kropotkin. Psychologically it's easy to understand this, in a country where free speech was forbidden, one interprets that the most radical actions should have the most success, even if those actions weren't thoroughly studied.

With the fall of the law against socialists in 1890 there was a significant change in the horizon of Anarchism in Germany, one of considerable proportions even when it was operating slowly. The opposition within the social-democracy, that was already quite noticeable during the time of the law, spoke out publicly, causing disgust to the old party leaders. The old tried all kind of tactics to conform themselves to the young and when they didn't succeed; they openly declared themselves in favor of a rupture, reaching the extreme of, during the 1891 convention in Erfurt, throwing out the orators from the opposition. The expelled then founded a new organization, the Association of Independent Socialists, with a periodical in Berlin, *Der Sozialist*.

These events helped the anarchists to come out publicly with their ideas, with Berlin as the city where the first anarchist conferences where held. Two years later they even tried to start their own anarchist periodical in Germany, but *Arbeiter Zeitung*, which titled itself the periodical of the German anarchists and was due to come out on November 1893, was immediately confiscated by the government. All editions of the first issue, with the exception of a few copies, fell into the hands of the police. Meanwhile *Der Sozialist* was evolving into the direction of Anarchism, finally under the editorial guidance of Gustav Landauer there was a rupture with the Independent Socialists and the majority declared themselves in favor of Anarchism. Since then, *Der Sozialist* has been purely anarchist.

As such one can say that in the first half of the new decade, it would have been possible to organize the several anarchist groups in Germany and subsequently establish the foundations for a healthy and vigorous movement. A part of the anarchists

sition to all political parties. In his work *On the Policy of the International Workingmen's Association*, which was published in the aforementioned periodical, in 1869 in the issues of August 8th and 28th, Bakunin warns the workers against Politics, under any shape, which fundamentally seeks a sole purpose: sustaining the domination of the bourgeoisie and at the same time the slavery of the proletariat. As such one should not attempt the participation in bourgeois politics, in the hope of managing to improve his situation, as all attempts would lead to cruel deceptions and would delay the emancipation of work from Capitalism to a distant future. The only way to emancipate the proletariat is the union of workers in fighting economical organizations, as the International. The solitary worker, even with extraordinary skills and energy, is nothing against the forces of Capital. Only within organizations the strengths of all are developed and concentrated towards common goals.

Bakunin was a staunch defender of organization and its necessity until his last breath. I don't hesitate to remember once again in his resignation letter to his Comrades of the Jura Federation, shortly after the 1873 Geneva Congress. A letter which can be considered a testament to his friends and collaborators:

> This is not the time for ideas, but for action, for deeds. Today, the essential is the organization of the proletariat forces. But this organization must be the task of the proletariat itself. If I was still young, I would live among the workers and share their life of toil, all the while participating with them in the grand work of proletarian organization.

At the end of this goodbye letter he summarizes again those two conclusions that, according to his opinion, are at conditions to by themselves guarantee the triumph of their work, in the following words:

> (1) Adhere firmly to the great and all-embracing principle of the people's liberty, in which equality and solidarity are not lies, (2) Organize ever more strongly the International and the practical solidarity of the workers of all trades in all countries, and always remember that even though you're weak on your own, or in local or national organizations, you will find a colossal strength and an irresistible power universal collective.

Bakunin, the great prophet of individual freedom, but that always conceived it within the marks of the interests of the community, fully recognized the need for a certain subordination of the individual towards, voluntarily conceived, resolutions and general lines of conduct, is at the foundation of the essence of organization. He didn't see in that a violation of personal freedom, unlike certain servile dogmatists drunk in a few banal phrases that never penetrated the real origin of anarchist ideology, despite always declaring themselves the true holders of the anarchist principles. As he declares, for example, in his great work *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*, written under the influence of the still fresh events of the Paris Commune:

> As hostile as I am to what is called discipline in France, I must however recognize, that certain non automatic discipline, but voluntary and reasoned is and always will be necessary where several Man voluntarily gather for a common struggle or desire a common action to establish a movement. This discipline is no more than a voluntary agreement reasoned upon towards a common purpose and the unification of all individual energies towards a common goal.

understood by the anarchists of the first period and that is why they dedicated themselves mainly to propaganda for the masses and they sought to connect them in economic unions and social studies centers. Later, when the growing reactions ended that activity and the anarchist movement was chased by the authorities, the tendency that we discussed previously was developed.

In Germany, under the domination of the anti-socialists law, the anarchist movement developed underground activity that limited itself to the clandestine distribution of periodicals and pamphlets published abroad. Anarchist elements such as *Freíheit de Most* and Warheitque also appeared in New York and Autonomy of London was introduced to Germany through the Belgium and Dutch borders. The distribution of such literature resulted in numerous victims and the comrades that fell into the hands of the authorities were almost always punished with prison. The movement was never very strong, as it always had to fight against countless problems and not only did it have to endure all kinds of persecutions carried out by the government, but it also had to endure hateful and intolerable behavior from the social-democratic leaders, who were masters in all kinds of vilifications. Wilhelm Liebknecht slandered August Reinsdorf, accusing him of being working with the police, when he had already been condemned to death.

There were groups in Berlin, Hamburg, Hannover, Magdeburg, Frankfurt, Mainz, Manheim and several other cities in the lower Rhein, Saxony and South of Germany. The majority of the members, especially after the law against socialists, were young enthusiasts, who conceived their Anarchism more with feelings than with reason. But that's not odd at all, since there wasn't much anarchist literature in German. Besides Bakunin's *God and the State* there were some pamphlets by Kropotkin, Most and Poucquart. This was all there was. We also can't forget that Most's words of substance had more influence over

Chapter 4

The anarchists of that period exaggerated the significance of conspiracy organizations and, as time went on, they also exaggerated the importance of individual acts. These last ones reaching big proportions as many of them even got to the point of considering the so called propaganda by the deed the essential of the movement. Individual terrorist acts of a passionate character are comprehensible and explainable in times of wild reaction and atrocious persecutions. These methods weren't just used by the anarchists. One can even say, with certainty, that in comparison with the reactionary adherents to individual terrorism, anarchists were just simple innocent creatures. Anyway, it is well established that these acts by themselves have nothing to do with anarchists. As human beings, just like everyone, certain conditions incited some anarchists to carry out certain acts, just like it could happen with people of very different ideological tendencies. Only due to the horrendous persecutions of which anarchists are a target of in several countries, can one explain why the importance of these acts was exaggerated in the anarchist circles of the period.

Individual actions can never serve as the foundations for a social movement and they are in no way capable of transforming the social system. They can only, in certain periods, frighten some supporters of the system, but they never actually influence the system itself. That was also said by the anarchists. Only certain individuals can be enticed by terrorist actions, and this fact alone is the best proof that a movement can't be built with individuals as the base. Social transformations are only possible by movements of the masses. This was

In this sense the anarchist of Bakunin's period conceived the organization and verified the practical expression of the concept. In this sense they worked in federations and sections of the International, enriching it with their ideas. They organized the workers in local propaganda sections and in groups in accordance to their trade. The local groups and societies were part of the regional Unions and these were part of the national organizations, which in turn were connected to each other in the great union of the International.

If you want to have an exact painting of the extraordinary organizing activity that anarchists carried out at the time you only have to see the information presented by the *Federación Nacional Española* in the Sixth International Congress in Geneva in 1873. This is especially important, because the International in Spain had been guided by anarchist principles since its beginning. Anarchism till today has been a decisive factor in the Spanish workers movement in general, and was capable of successfully refusing social-democratic attempts, mainly because the Spanish anarchists have remained above all else strict to their primitive principles and methods, despite the horrible persecutions that they suffered and still suffer today. They never got affected by the superman ailments and the stupid obsession with the "Me", whose unfortunate victims are always submerged in a mute admiration for themselves. And they never feared that organization would hurt their insignificant figure. Spanish anarchists were always deeply rooted in the workers movement, whose spiritual and organizational efficiency they always attempted to accelerate with all their strength and in whose struggles they were always in the frontlines.

In the report of the *Federación Nacional de España* we can read the following:

> The Federación Nacional de España, in the 20th of August 1872 had 65 local federations, with 224

> trade associations and 49 mixed trade sections. Besides that, it had 11 cities with individual adherents. In the 20th of August 1873 the Federación Nacional de España had 162 local federations, 454 trade sections and 77 mixed trade sections.
>
> By aggregating the aforementioned local federations and the federations that are forming (that is, the existing sections which are uniting into federations), one reaches this result: the Federación Nacional de España had up to the 20th of August 1872, 204, existing and under formation, local federations, 571 trade sections and 114 mixed trade sections, it also has 11 cities, where there is no organization, but there are individual adherents.
>
> The 20th of August of 1873 the Federación Nacional de España had 270 local federations, existing and under formation, 557 trade sections and 117 mixed trade sections.

I could also bring extracts from several reports from the *Federazione Italiana*, the *Jura Fédération*, etc., that refer to their organizing activities, but I would be overextending myself. All literature in periodicals and pamphlets of the time is filled with indications on the need for organization and in the anarchist ranks of the time there was nobody that represented a tendency in an opposite direction. All stated the social character of the conception of anarchism and they were all convinced that social liberation would only be possible through the education and organization of the masses, and that the organization is the first condition towards common actions.

necessity for the movement with the essential of anarchist propaganda. That's why Reinsdorf got lost in purely Blanquist ideals, without realizing he was being influenced by extremely authoritarian ideas. For instance, in September 1880 in correspondence on *Freíheit* he incentivizes the German workers to study thoroughly the *Catéchisme révolutionnaire*, which he mistakenly claims to be – like many others did – of the revolutionary Bakunin, when in fact they were written by Netschaiev and it was exactly this document that excited in him the denial of all personal feelings, of all personality in general. But that didn't just happen to Reinsdorf. The so called Executive Revolutionary Committee of New York about which John Most talked about a lot in the 80's (of the XIXth century), but that most likely existed more in their imagination than in reality, was most definitely not the result of anarchist ideas. In such periods of general reaction when the revolutionary movements can only exist clandestinely, those confusions are inevitable. It's an atmosphere of errors from which nobody can completely rid themselves of.

> and, as a result, the acceleration of initiatives and the confidence in the individual's own force as a benefit for the cause by means of actions and what's more important: the liberation from the huge weight that are the incompetent bosses to an action, that's the result of an anti-authoritarian organization of socialist revolutionary character.

In issue 39 of *Freíheit* (1880) Reinsdorf once again talks about anarchist organization, saying:

> What's the current state of anarchist organization? You don't hear much about large congresses, speeches and resolutions; without being guilty of disobedience against the discipline of the party (the word sounds very militarist) each group and even each member works in their own way towards the revolution, assured of the solidarity agreement of their comrades, regarding acts of propaganda. But a sudden lightning in Neva, a quick glow in Deniester, a peasant conspiracy in Romania, an armed assault on the tax collectors in the Sierra Nevada vales, a colossal demonstration in the world city near the Sena or a scuffle with the police in the republican coasts of Aar, are the vital signs that from time to time demonstrate that they always have the goal in their sights: the destruction of the current society.

As it's easy to observe, Reinsdorf conceives organization almost exclusively under the principles of conspiracy and terrorist actions. All anarchists of the time were around this same point of view. The natural essence of Anarchism was not known to them or known very superficially without any perfection and the majority of them confused a circumstantial

Chapter 3

The previously mentioned character of the movement transformed gradually after the Franco-Prussian War and especially after the horrendous fall of the Paris Commune. The triumph of Germany and the Bismarck policies originated a new historic achievement from which it couldn't rid itself. The emergence of a military-bureaucratic State in the center of Europe equipped with all the tools of power, inevitably had influence in the development of a general reaction of raised heads everywhere. Actually, that was the cause too. The center of the European worker's movement was thrown from France to Germany, there contributing to the development of the social-democratic movement, which in its development decisively influenced, with a few exceptions, the other countries. Thus on one hand the unfortunate period in which Europe was gradually falling victim to the militarization that was occurring in Germany was born, while on the other hand the worker's movement, under the growing influence of the German social-democracy, was sinking into a desperate posibilitism.

In the Latin countries where the libertarian wing of the International had the strongest influence in the beginning of the seventh decade (of the XIXth century) there was a savage reaction. In France, where the best and brightest elements of the worker's movement died in the horrendous fall of the Commune, or where exiled to Nouvelle-Calédonie, if they didn't manage to escape abroad and carry out the restless life of a refugee, all workers' organizations were repressed by the government and the revolutionary press was forbidden. This was

repeating itself in Spain two years later, after the bloody repression of the Cantonalista movement and the capitulation of the Cartagena Commune. All workers' movements were suppressed and spreading news of the revolutionary movement in public was impossible for years. In Italy the members of the International were provoked as if they were savage beasts, and public propaganda was made so difficult as to force them to resort to secret organizations, to which their comrades from abroad were more accustomed due to their old traditions with the secret societies of the Carbonari and the Mazzinians.

As a result of the atrocious persecutions that the anarchist movement endured, for several years, it disappeared from the public in Latin countries, as it was forced to create a refuge in secret societies. As the period of reaction lasted longer than what the majority believed it would, the movement slowly gained a new psychology that was fundamentally different from its previous one. Secret movements are certainly capable of developing, in their limited circle, a superior level of willingness to sacrifice and physical suffering in their individuals for the good of the revolution, but they lack the wide contact with the popular masses, the only thing they can achieve is improving their efficiency and to conserve them fresh and excited for long periods of time. That's why the members of that sort of movements lose, without realizing, the exact notion of the real events of life and their desire converts into the creator of their thoughts. They slowly lose the sense of constructive activity and their evolutionary thought takes a purely negative direction. Summarizing, they unconsciously lose the conception of popular movement. That evolutionary process occurs surprisingly fast, in few years it gives a very different character to the movement, when the exterior circumstances, blind persecutions by the government, favor the development of secret organizations.

It's understandable that, in time of general reaction, when government prevents all possibility of public life from a move-

while believing it has a certain importance, and naturally it can have a very limited influence. With this in mind Reinsdorf conceived the organization about which in July 1880 he stated in *Freíheit Most* the following thoughts:

> When we consider the terror against the German socialist workers by a small fraction of Reichstag employees and journalists, that culminated in the expulsion of the Hasselman and Most parties, the taunting of social-revolutionary workers and the despise for all revolutionary activity, we reach the conclusion that the cause for that lamentable event lies with the same German workers that with their centralized organization created that fetishist party, which places itself against all individual action and boycotts all that may make room for any doubt over its infallibility. The great lesson that one should take from those achievements of the German socialists is to in the future maintain their individual self-determination against all that is titled as leader. Each individual must have the right to adjust their revolutionary action; in accordance to their idea each independent group must have the right to employ, in their social ground, as a method for liberation poison, daggers, dynamite… without being declared as irresponsible or at the service of the police. Each group must also have the right to unite for certain common actions with one or more distinct groups without being accused of plotting against the party tactics and other artificial considerations and words that, so far, only have the object of the creation of privileges. Freedom of revolutionary action for each individual and each group, freedom for each group and individual of coalition

secuted by the government. There's nothing that contributes as much to awaken the violent instincts in humans as the thirst for revenge and the incessant abuse of their dignity. You have to live in a period like that to understand its fatal influence. The eternal persecutions of the police, the trickery that you're exposed to everyday, the economic conditions and the provocation from all parties, can break down the most peaceful of persons. When this happens to a person of great personal value, like August Reinsdorf, who was truly chased from city to city like a wild beast, it's understandable that the spirit eventually overflows with vengeful thoughts which will have a decisive influence over everything they do, including their propaganda. The more victims are sacrificed, the more rooted the thirst for vengeance gets.

One can understand that in such a state of stimulation there's little comprehension for the development of ideas and acts. The spiritual communication with the popular masses gradually disappears and in an even worse manner when the extreme aspects of revolutionaries occur. Despite that, he is convinced that it's the way to get closer to the people, when in reality the opposite happens. It's impossible to understand the special psychology of a person while we don't know the atmosphere of the sphere in which he acts. And that was the cause for its great acceptance. The way for a great organizing activity, with its basis on the people, completing itself with new ideas and then soaking itself with the practical life of the people, a mutual and effective exchange without which a true popular movement is incomprehensible. This way, it loses itself little by little and all kinds of hallucinations that aren't even close to reality start taking place. But it can't be in any other way since all activity, no matter how big it is, at the margin of the masses is a result of the State of Emergency. The grand blossoming thinking of organizing masses, as represented with the International, little by little is left behind. The organization becomes a small circle of conspirators, all the

ment the secret organization is the only possible method to conserve the movement, but, by recognizing this, we should not remain blind to the unavoidable defects of such organizations and glorify their importance. A secret organization can always be considered as just a method, which the danger of the moment justifies, but that can never successfully propel, or start, a social revolution. In the atmosphere of secret meetings the individual easily forgets this irrefutable fact. The magical influence that those organizations exert over young elements, romantically willing, is a powerful obstacle to a clear observation of propaganda and blinds many to the truth. All is seen through a dream, not as it really is but as one wants it to be.

The secret organizations of the old Russian revolutionaries had a huge contribution, but despite that they had to slowly bloody themselves and their ideas never managed to reach the masses. The movement has recently made itself invincible when with the development of the Russian industry, the great masses of the proletariat, and the peasants to some degree, adhered to socialist ideas.

Besides, a clandestine movement is intertwined with a series of serious defects that inevitably occur from its existence. Above all they are in a continuous struggle with the guardians of State order, that are always spying everywhere for plots and if needed create them themselves. That struggle forces the conspirator to always be seeking new security procedures, which generates, besides a huge waste of energies, a permanent morbid suspicion of all, the kind that converts itself into a second nature. Suspicion introduces itself everywhere and permanently destroys countless lives. I only need to remember the Poucquart affair, which not only was the tragedy of his life but for a long time divided the movement, thus paralyzing its force. It's also obvious that personal issues in such movements have a fatal effect, the more limited is the circle of its activities the more serious is its effect. Remember the bitter fights between Barbès and Barqui, in the secret societies during the govern-

ment of Louis-Philippe, which for a long time paralyzed the activities of their organizations.

All these events place on clandestine movements a certain character and have a powerful influence over the spiritual structure of their own members. They hurt the spiritual developments of the movements and their creative aptitudes, because they are always obliged to impose their destructive efficiency.

In such a period of reaction and secret connections the anarchist movement entered the last decade of the past century and naturally hasn't managed to rid itself of the influence of the new atmosphere. With the passing of the years the anarchist ranks got used to considering clandestine activity as normal. The new elements that joined the movement, during the conspiracy period, had a special inclination to consider the secret organization and its activity as a logical consequence of the anarchist movement and that it should be placed before any public activity. A concept in that sense was defended by the Italian Committee for Social Revolution in its lengthy letter to the 7th Congress of the International, November 1874 in Brussels. In the aforementioned manifest all public activity is renounced by the revolutionaries as dangerous. They say:

> The mass repressions carried out by the governments, obligated us to secret plotting as our sole activity. As that form of organization is vastly superior we congratulate ourselves, because the persecutions ended the public International. We will continue with the path of secrecy, we have elected it as the only way to reach our goal: Social Revolution.

This was the situation of the movement when several radical German social-democrats abroad got acquainted with it. The big ideological struggles in the center of the

International passed on to the German proletariat almost without a mark. One could only distinguish the influence of the grand Workers Alliance in Germany. The old contacts of the precursors of Anarchism in Germany had long been forgotten, while the German workers started to organize themselves autonomously. The writings of Karl Grün, Moses Hess, Wilhelm Marr, etc. were completely ignored by them, as were the valuable lessons of Proudhon, which by the fourth and fifth decades (of the XIXth century) had been published in Germany. The whole movement was thus under the influence of the social-democrats.

The horrendous persecutions to the anarchist movement in the Latin countries chased away a big quantity of refugees to the French Switzerland. There French, Italians and Spanish met. That circle got bigger when in Germany a law against socialists was implemented; many Germans had to seek refuge abroad due to the persecutions. The Jura Federation, which had a big influence in Switzerland in the past decade, carried out lively propaganda in which the refugees participated. In those circles, German workers such as Emilio Werner, Eisenhauer and August Reinsdorf got acquainted with Anarchism. It was exactly that evolutionary phase of the movement, that we've talked about, which they met and that had a special mark on their evolution. In the spirit of the time there was the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* which was founded in July 1876 in Berna, the first anarchist periodical in German. When the Reichstag adopted, two years later, the law against all socialists and the whole socialist movement was declared illegal, it naturally contributed a great deal to the new tendency heading towards extremism.

Besides, one needs to add a new factor of extreme importance. In Russia the terrible campaign of the Narodnaya Volya, against the representatives of the tsarist absolutism, ignited a never before seen passion in Europe. The actions of the Russian revolutionaries had a magical influence over the socialist movement in Europe, especially where the movement was per-