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Transnational Migrants and Anarchism in Latin America, Late 19th-Early 20th Century

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coherence derived from mobilities and networks, by diverse, colourful, reactive and transnational anarchist movements. The transnational “space” in which this history unfolded was not limited to the borders of countries or continents; anarchist thought in Latin America never assumed the constraints. Most often reduced to clandestinity, but interwoven with popular workers’ movements and active in cultural and educational fields, the militants of this movement accompanied, for half a century, not only powerful waves of transatlantic migrations, but their articulation with forms and languages of resistance stemming from the emergence, in the nineteenth century, of peoples alongside the nations that would later claim them.

was, as in the case of Kropotkin's claim to the peasant "mir" in Russia,⁷⁹ an idealized vision of the pre-modern past and an organicist utopia for the socialist future; a myth that was supposed to restore pride in the cultural heritage of a divided nation, and mobilize rural majorities against the oppression of the modern state. What is interesting is not the empirical underpinnings of such a vision or its resonance for later generations; rather, its translation of two decades of anarchist thought and action into an actual movement of workers, peasants, and intellectuals of all ethnicities to resolve deep socio-economic cleavages in a manner that was revolutionary for the time.

The creation of modern identities in Latin America depended in part on the anarchist contribution to an anti-authoritarian culture. Rooted in social struggles, spread by anarchists openly opposed to the atavistic and racialized representations of identity promoted by their nationalist detractors, this conception was disseminated through powerful migration and communication networks. The nineteenth-century Latin American republican state, which emerged from colonial carvings and civil wars, was a source of legitimacy for the dominant Creole elites. It was not in itself an expression of founding unitary cultures, its advent being prior to the incorporation of popular sectors into the political community that is generally defined as "nation."⁸⁰ The resistance to this state model of territorial division and exclusion of popular participation, of repression of dissent and centralization of power, was carried out, without exclusivity but with a practical

⁷⁹ José Álvarez Junco, *La ideología política del anarquismo español*, Madrid, Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1976, p. 596–597.

⁸⁰ Cf. Alberto Filippi, *Institutiones e ideologías de la Independencia latinoamericana*, Buenos Aires, Alianza Editorial, 1988.

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“mestizo Indian”, participated in the creation of Indian defense militias in Puno before joining the “Gonzalez Prada Popular University”, advocating education and the establishment of Indian rationalist schools as well as promoting pride in the Inca past. Urivulo later became a leader of the Federación indígena obrera regional peruana (FIORP), where he advocated workers’ self-emancipation and the rejection of government-backed paternalism.⁷⁴ In 1912, Levano Sr. called in *La Protesta* for a “Peruvianization” of the libertarian strategy, and for the continental unity of “Indoamérica.”⁷⁵ When he published in 1904 his denunciation of Eurocentrism and racism entitled “Nuestros Indios”, Manuel González Prada intended to demonstrate that the Indian peoples themselves should be the architects of the profound socio-economic transformation that Peru needed after its defeat by Chile in the War of the Pacific.⁷⁶ Instead of the absurd “fanaticism” of Creole patriotism⁷⁷ and the “degenerate sentimentalism” of the self-proclaimed “protectors of the indigenous race,”⁷⁸ González Prada envisioned a radical federalist reorganization of the agrarian economy by the Indian communes on the model of collectivism and mutual aid (the village “ayllu”), in close cooperation with resistance societies and anarchist circles in the cities, which would reproduce the idealized harmony of the pre-colonial civilization of Tawantinsuyo. This

⁷⁴ Steven J. Hirsch, ‘Peruvian Anarcho-Syndicalism’, in Steven J. Hirsch et Lucien van der Walt, *Anarchism and Syndicalism... op. cit.*, p. 262–264 ; Jean Piel, *Crise agraire et conscience créole au Pérou*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1982, p. 44–45.

⁷⁵ Steven J. Hirsch, ‘Peruvian Anarcho-Syndicalism’, *loc. cit.*, p. 66–67.

⁷⁶ Manuel González Prada, « Nuestros Indios » in *Horas de lucha*, Lima, Tipografía Lux, 1924, p. 311–338.

⁷⁷ Manuel González Prada, *Nuevas páginas libres*, p. 71, cité par Hugo García Salvattecci, *Visión de un apóstol. Pensamiento de Manuel González Prada*, Lima, Emisa Editores, 1990, p. 340.

⁷⁸ Manuel González Prada, *Free Pages and Other Essays: Anarchist Musings*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 187.

called aristocratic republic.⁷⁰ Manuel Caracciolo Lévano and his son Delfín Lévano, bakery workers, and the dockworker Ramiro Quesada — all Peruvians — founded in 1907 the newspaper *El Oprimido*, which was succeeded four years later by *La Protesta*, in whose columns the famous indigenous writer Manuel González Prada published numerous articles. Small libertarian circles existed in several localities, including Callao, where an important sailors' strike was led in 1917 by an Afro-Peruvian anarchist from the *Luz y Amor* group.⁷¹ Finally, the pedagogical teachings of the Spanish educator Francisco Ferrer Guardia figured, as elsewhere on the continent,⁷² in the Peruvian libertarian platforms. A “Centro racional Ferrer” appeared in Lima in 1910, and in 1913, a manifesto entitled “Contra la ignorancia” called for the study of Peruvian popular culture and the education of urban and rural workers, especially indigenous peasants.⁷³

The originality of Peruvian anarchism lies precisely in its efforts to develop organic links between workers and Indian populations, a strategy that made the “national question” — understood as a reflection on identity — a priority in its propaganda. Steven Hirsch has shown that rural migrants extended the influence of anarchism to the rural areas of Cusco and Puno, through the liberal-inspired “Comité pro-derecho Indígena Tahuantinsuyo,” founded in 1919 by Pedro Zulén, the son of a Creole father and a Chinese mother. The anarchist activist Ezequiel Urivulo, a Quechua-speaking

⁷⁰ Piedad Pareja Pflucker, *Anarquismo y sindicalismo en el Perú (1904–1929)*, Lima, Ediciones Rikchay, 1978, p. 53–54.

⁷¹ Pedro Parra V., *Bautismo de fuego del proletariado peruano*, Lima, Linotio Los rotarios, 1969, p. 84–87.

⁷² Cf. Dora Barrancos, *Anarquismo, educación y costumbres en la Argentina de principios de siglo*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Contrapunto, 1990, p. 27–36 ; Kirwin Shaffer, *Anarchism and Countercultural Politics in Early 20th Century Cuba*, op. cit., p. 165–194.

⁷³ Ricardo Melgar Bao, *Sindicalismo y milenarismo en la región andina del Perú (1920–1931)*, Mexico, Instituto Nacional de Antropología, p. 33–35.

Abstract

This article assesses the role of transatlantic European migrants in the spread of anarchist ideas and practices in Latin America, and it discusses the degree to which local, regional and transnational solidarities generated by their successors throughout the hemisphere emulated, or differed from, the libertarian socialist heritage in Europe. Anarchism's antecedents in earlier utopian movements, its appropriation of regionalist rebellions and nineteenth-century social traditions, and its immersion in transnational networks and flows of workers and activists between metropolises and regions are considered. In the process of appealing to «native» audiences, anarchists adapted many of their concepts to local conditions, generating new forms of identity and representation that included variations on the symbolic repertoires of the nation, the heritage of slavery, and discourses of indigenism.

Introduction

The former American colonies of Spain and Portugal provided a fertile ground between 1870 and the interwar period for the spread and adaptation of anarchist ideas. Max Nettlau even saw them as their most important theaters in the modern world.¹ These anarchist movements in Latin America were originally based on the mobility of European exiles and immigrants, especially from Italy, Spain and France. Italians played an important role in the diffusion of anarchism in the Rio de la Plata and Brazil, but also in Cuba during the war of independence against Spain from the rear bases of the struggle in Tampa and Key West (Florida), and in Mexico, where the Mexican Liberal Party of the Flores Magón brothers tried to

¹ Max Nettlau, « Antes del congreso continental Americano de mayo de 1929 », *La Protesta*, 5 mars 1929.

establish transnational networks between the United States and Mexico.² The Spaniards played a fundamental role in Cuba, Puerto Rico and Panama, as well as in Argentina, where their influence surpassed that of the Italians after 1900.³ The role of these migrants explains why post-war historians and activists in Latin America reduced anarchism to a prelude to the birth of truly rooted socialist and nationalist organizations: it was an imported doctrine that, even at its peak, proved incapable of grasping the social and cultural realities of the “new continent.”⁴ This classical approach has been contrasted with more recent studies that tend to emphasize the local roots and diversity of anarchist movements across the region.⁵ These “center-periphery” schemes are not the same as those of the “new continent. These “center-periphery” schemes now appear too reductive: the “European” anarchist militants, who were in the majority during the formative period of the movement in the Americas, came from heterogeneous regions and traditions, some of them making their first steps in Latin America before “exporting” their militant experience

² Max Nettlau, *A Contribution to an Anarchist Bibliography of Latin America*, Buenos Aires, Editorial la Protesta, 1926, p. 12–13 ; David Struthers, *The World in a City: Transnational and Inter-Racial Organizing in Los Angeles, 1900–1930*, thèse de doctorat d’histoire, Carnegie Mellon University, 2010, p. 203 ; voir aussi Davide Turcato, ‘Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885–1915’ www.sapruderworld.org.

³ Voir José C. Moya, « El anarquismo argentino y el liderazgo español », in Marcela García Sebastiani, *Patriotas entre naciones: Elites emigrantes españolas en Argentina*, Madrid, Editorial Complutense, 2010, p. 371.

⁴ Voir David Viñas, *Anarquistas en América latina*, Buenos Aires, Paradiso Ediciones, 2004 ; José Aricó, *La hipótesis de Justo: Escritos sobre el socialismo en América Latina*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Sudamericana, 1999.

⁵ Voir par exemple Joël Delhom, *¡Viva la Social! Anarchistes et anarcho-sindicalistes en Amérique Latine (1860–1930)*, Paris, América Libertaria, 2013 ; Geoffroy de Laforcade et Kirwin Shaffer, *In Defiance of Boundaries. Anarchism in Latin American History*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2015.

Janeiro by Afro-Brazilian sailors unhappy with their working conditions and competition from Portuguese immigrants. Supported by the libertarians, the rebellion was crushed and its instigators deported to the Amazon. Convinced that only social revolution could liberate workers of all origins from the oppression of the republican state, Pereira then devoted himself to the organization of the *Confederação General de Trabalhadores* (CGT).⁶⁸ He was one of the leaders, along with José Pereira, of the CGT. He was one of the leaders, along with José Oiticica, Manuel Campos, Carlos Dias and others, of a workers’ insurrection in Rio in 1918, before moving on to the communist movement, of which he was a notorious leader.⁶⁹

Peruvian Anarchism and Integration of Indian Populations

The case of Peru illustrates well the impasse of the designation of the anarchism as an allogeous phenomenon unsuited to the local realities. In the absence of important migratory flows comparable to those of Argentina, Brazil or Cuba, the movement was constituted in Lima and in the hinterland of Aréquipa at the initiative of mainly native militants. Foreigners participated mainly through Latin American solidarity, such as that promoted by the Argentine FORA, or in attempts at cooperation between Peruvian and Chilean workers’ federations. The first anarchist groups were created by artisans, textile workers, sailors and port workers, often with the support of intellectuals disappointed by the liberal “civilism” under the so-

⁶⁸ Martín César Feijó, *Formação política de Astrogildo Pereira (1890–1920)*, São Paulo, Editora Novos Rumos, 1985, p. 49–52.

⁶⁹ Cf. Carlos A. Addor, *A insurreção anarquista do Rio de Janeiro*, Rio de Janeiro, Dois Pontos, 1986.

language, showed little enthusiasm for acquiring citizenship.⁶⁴ In this context, it is difficult to see how the state could have a significant impact on the development of the country. In this context, it is difficult to speak of a native “nation” to which Europeans were alien, as many historians in Latin America still do; the popular classes, colourful and divided, were sorely lacking in the rights and participatory mechanisms necessary for “national” identification. Jacy Alves de Seixas has shown that the discourse and practice of direct action promoted by anarchists in Brazilian society during the first decades of the twentieth century contributed to the “assimilation, integration and unification (in diversity) of a multicolored working class.”⁶⁵ This work of constituting a popular subject consisted of cultivating bonds of solidarity between regions and with the outside world, formulating an alternative discourse to modernity as an antidote to powerlessness, and opposing a language of class to divisions of race and ethnicity.⁶⁶

In Brazil, the champion of black resistance Lima Barreto provided anarchists with a repertoire of resistance immersed in the past of anti-slavery struggles.⁶⁷ One of his disciples, the essayist and journalist Astrojildo Pereira, was radicalized by the election of the conservative president Hermes da Fonseca, who was supported by the rural aristocracy and the state. One of his disciples, the essayist and journalist Astrojildo Pereira, radicalized by the election of the conservative president Hermes da Fonseca, supported by the rural aristocracy and the army, moved towards anarchism during a mutiny in 1910 in Rio de

⁶⁴ José Murilo de Carvalho, *Os Bestializados: O Rio de Janeiro e a república que não foi*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1989, p. 81–82.

⁶⁵ Alves de Seixas, *Mémoire et oubli...*, op. cit., p. 159.

⁶⁶ Cf. Sheldon Leslie Maram, *Anarquistas, imigrantes e o movimento operário brasileiro, 1890–1920*, São Paulo, Paz e Terra, 1979.

⁶⁷ Cf. Jane Mary Cunha Bezerra, *Lima Barreto: Anarquismo, antipatriotismo e forma literária*, mémoire de maîtrise en Lettres, Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2010.

to their continent of origin.⁶ It seems necessary, therefore, to consider the multiple types of connections that gave rise to the rise of Latin American anarchism in the nineteenth century. A mapping of this rise would include several intersecting transnational networks, based not only on European immigration but also on the flows of workers and activists between the metropolises of several regions: the East and West coasts of the United States, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, the northern Mexican border, the Pacific coast of South America, the Andean region and the Rio de la Plata.

This article attempts to show how these networks — along which people, funds, newspapers, communiqués and ideas passed — facilitated the appropriation and local adaptation of libertarian discourses and practices.⁷ By taking up a historiography that is now important but very scattered according to national histories, it aims to show how the diffusion of anarchism in Latin America was relayed — without being exclusive — by European activists. The aim is to show how the diffusion of anarchism in Latin America was relayed — without exclusivity — by European or North American activists, always with the concern of translating for a “native” public a tradition born in Europe or applying its concepts to a local reality, in the form of new “identity representations.”⁸ The different Latin American nationalisms traditionally associate the anarchist with the foreigner: they assimilate him to a virus

⁶ José C. Moya, « El anarquismo argentino y el liderazgo español », in Marcela García Sebastiani, *Patriotas entre naciones: Elites emigrantes españolas en Argentina*, Madrid, Editorial Complutense, 2010, p. 371.

⁷ Cf. Lucien van der Walt et Steven Hirsch, *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Post-Colonial World, 1870–1940. The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution*, Leiden, Brill, 2010.

⁸ Kirwin R. Shaffer, ‘Latin Lines and Dots: Transnational Anarchism, Regional Networks, and Italian Libertarians in Latin America’ (www.zapruderworld.org) ; Joël Delhom, « L’anarchisme latino-américain, la littérature et les arts, ou comment rendre populaire la culture savante et savante la culture populaire », *Amerika*, n° 6, 2012.

and construct him as an antithesis of the nation. To resume the analysis of the relationship between migration and the rise of Latin American anarchism therefore also implies deconstructing this traditional discourse. The question that concerns us is not whether the “allogeneous” sources of this thought make it “foreign” or not, but rather to show how the local, regional, and transnational solidarities fostered by early anarchist activists in Latin America — triggers for transformative practices and meanings, new forms of association, and a counterculture associated with agrarian revolts and the birth of trade union movements — were inspired by, and demarcated from, the libertarian socialist legacy in Europe. This is true in other parts of the world as well, as the many “carriers” of libertarian thought — migrants, refugees or exiles — have never claimed a national allegiance or an inflexible dogma, let alone a “center” of operations. Several factors must be taken into account in the history of anarchism as a distinctly Latin American phenomenon: the prior existence of socializing traditions and regionalist rebellions; the absence among liberals of a vision of “nation” that included popular participation; the authoritarian construction of the centralized state without recourse to universal suffrage or worker protection; and the role — important but not exclusive — of transatlantic European immigration in the spread of ideologies of political dissidence and social transformation.

The Precedent of “Utopian” Missions in America

If there are “antecedents” to libertarian socialism in its Latin American variant, and if one wants to identify tendencies to “imitation” in its diffusion, one must look for them in the numerous examples of “social utopias” that were attempted in Latin America in the nineteenth century. In 1828, Robert Owen

pressure on the labour market in the big cities and provoking communal violence. Stereotypes abounded on both sides, but the “dangerousness” of the figure of the anarchist militant, foreigner and parasite, always quick to agitate the docile and incredulous plebeian, was assimilated in the police discourse to that of the barbaric African pack at the gates of the city.⁶¹ Moreover, the numerous laws against immigration, which were passed in the 1960s and 1970s, had a strong impact on the situation. Moreover, the numerous expulsion laws passed between 1903 and 1927 were applied indiscriminately against labor activists of all origins.⁶²

While anarchism in Brazil was launched by European exiles, the movement soon sought to counteract communal violence by linking up with “native” workers and intellectuals, mobilizing a pluralist discourse of integration that the liberal “civilist” tradition had left fallow. “Comrades,” wrote Benjamin Mota in 1898, “we must reflect on the difference between the countries of old Europe and Brazil; we must understand the spirit that animates the Latin-Portuguese race, which was transplanted to the tropics and mixed with all sorts of elements: Dutch, Germans, Italians, and especially blacks and indigenous peoples, so that we must develop a propaganda more in harmony with the feelings of the entire Brazilian people.”⁶³ The liberals and positivist doctrines of the First Republic had made popular culture invisible, and the state elites, without serious socialist or reformist competition, prevented civic participation by the majority. Even the Portuguese immigrants, despite their familiarity with the

⁶¹ Francisco Foot Hardman, *Nem Pátria, nem patrão! (Vida operária e cultura anarquista no Brasil)*, São Paulo, Editorial Brasileira, 1983, p. 60.

⁶² Edgar Rodrigues, *Os anarquistas...*, *op. cit.*, p. 85–86.

⁶³ Benjamin Mota, *Rebeldías* (1898), cité par Jacy Alves de Seixas, *Mémoire et oubli : anarchisme et syndicalisme révolutionnaire au Brésil, mythe et histoire*, Paris, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 1992, p. 63.

and Puerto Rican railroad workers were “very receptive to libertarian ideas.”⁵⁹ The information circulated in a diffuse and random way, according to displacements and persecutions, through the dissemination of pamphlets and newspapers that structured the vision of the world of the anarchists and their public.⁶⁰ Migration is thus important for understanding the dissemination of anarchist ideology throughout the Americas, as indeed throughout the world; but to follow its movement rather than to determine its “birth” or to catalogue signs of mimicry.

European Anarchists and “Native” Anarchists in Brazil

The very existence of intellectuals and artists of African descent among Latin American libertarian thinkers is often forgotten or obscured, as racism and stigmatization have played their part in the history of anarchism in Latin America. In Brazil, the ethnic and racial tensions created by the shock of late emancipation and mass immigration wreaked havoc on the ranks of labor activists. By the end of the nineteenth century, Rio de Janeiro was two-thirds “creole” workers of Afro-Brazilian descent, with Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian immigrants from the north making up the bulk of the white minority. In São Paulo, on the other hand, emancipated blacks were numerous in the service sector but a minority in industry, where southern Italians and Portuguese predominated. In the first twenty-five years of the First Republic, as many as three million immigrants poured into Brazil, putting considerable

⁵⁹ David Doillon et Pierre-Henri Zaidman, « Guayaquil, foyer de l’anarcho-sindicalisme équatorien » in Joel Delhom et al., *Viva la Social!...*, op. cit., p. 82–83.

⁶⁰ Cf. Mirta Zaida Lobato, *La Prensa obrera. Buenos Aires y Montevideo, 1890–1958*, Buenos Aires, EDHASA, 2009.

requested permission to create a collectivist commune in the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas (present-day Texas), where an Icarian colony inspired by Étienne Cabet appeared after the territory was annexed by the United States. A Fourierist phalanstery was established in Aguascalientes in 1850.⁹ Also in Mexico, the Greek anti-authoritarian immigrant Plotino Rhodakanaty spread the ideas of Fourier and Proudhon among artisans, peasants and indigenous communities, before opening in 1855 a “school of reason and socialism” in Chalco, considered by many to be one of the founding experiences of the Mexican agrarian rebellion embodied in 1869 by his pupil Julio Chávez López and later by Emiliano Zapata.¹⁰ Also in 1855, shortly after the crushing of the Bogotá Commune (the “Craftsmen’s Revolution”, inspired by the Proudhonian orientations of a radical liberal faction),¹¹ the French-speaking anarchist geographer Élisée Reclus participated in the constitution of a utopian rural commune in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia on land confiscated from the large landowners. Built by European, Asian and indigenous artisans and peasants all working on an equal footing, the experiment frightened the liberal elites and was quickly dismantled.¹² Other Fourierists and other intellectuals were also involved. Other Fourierists and Proudhonians active in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina are listed in a recent study by Pierre-Luc Abramson, who points out the importance of social “utopias”, carried by European em-

⁹ Cf. Carlos Rama, *Utopismo socialista (1830–1893)*, Caracas, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1977.

¹⁰ Cf. Max Nettlau, *Actividad anarquista en México. Rhodakanaty y Zacacosta. Ricardo Flores Magón, Regeneración y las insurrecciones por « tierra y libertad »*. *Apuntes sobre la propaganda anarquista y sindical tardía*, Mexico, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2009.

¹¹ Alfredo Gómez Muller, *Anarquismo y sindicalismo en América Latina: Colombia, Brasil, Argentina, México*, Medellín, La Carreta Editores, 2009, p. 61–63.

¹² Gustavo Vargas Martínez, *Colombia, 1854: Melo, los artesanos y el socialismo*, Bogotá, La Oveja Negra, 1972, p. 29.

igrants disappointed with the fate of the revolution in Europe, in the formation of the new Latin American post-colonial societies.¹³ In Brazil, Italian immigrants, who arrived in large numbers under the impetus of the nascent coffee economy, contributed to this tradition by founding “utopian” rural communities such as the Guararema plantation and the “Colônia Cecilia” in the state of Paraná. The former, the work of an artisan jeweler named Arturo Campagnoli, was established with the help of Italian, Spanish, Russian, French and Brazilian settlers in the last months of the monarchy; the latter, in the state of Paraná, decreed universal equality and free love under the impetus of Italian anarchist Giovanni Rossi.¹⁴ Both experiences reflect the experimental dimension of the social and economic development of the country. Both experiences reflect the experimental dimension and the utopian spirit of projects conceived by some new immigrants who wanted, like the Franco-Argentine anarchist Joaquín Alejo Falconnet (alias Pierre Quiroule), to launch the “volunteers of anarchy” to the assault of a new post-capitalist egalitarian society based on the cooperation of the world of work.¹⁵ Let us remember, however, that the so-called utopian imagination was not only the domain of Europeans. In Brazil, however, a region of high immigration from Portugal, Spain, Germany and especially Italy, the libertarian tradition also draws from the colonial and monarchist past a memory rich in struggles and resistances, as testified by the writings of

¹³ Cf. Pierre-Luc Abramson, *Monde nouveaux et nouveau monde : les « utopies sociales » en Amérique latine au XIXe siècle*, Dijon, Presses du Réel, 2014.

¹⁴ Edgar Rodrigues, *Os anarquistas. Trabalhadores italianos no Brasil*, São Paulo, Global Editora, 1984, p. 20–52 ; Egar Leuenroth, *Anarquismo: roteiro da libertação social*, Rio de Janeiro, Editorial Mundo Livre, 1964, p. 91 et 141–142.

¹⁵ Cf. Pierre Quiroule, *La ciudad anarquista Americana*, reproduit dans Luis Gómez Tovar, Ramón Gutierrez et Silvia A. Vásquez, *Utopías libertarias latinoamericanas*, vol. 1: *La ciudad anarquista Americana de Pierre Quiroule*, Madrid, Ediciones Tuero, 1991.

in 1901, where the AIT was founded.⁵⁴ FORA also sent a delegation of activists to faraway Peru in 1912, only months before a Peruvian workers’ federation emerged. It is no exaggeration to say that Argentina played as decisive a role as a “nerve center” for the spread of anarchism in the “region” as Havana did in the Caribbean and Central America.⁵⁵ The FORA, federalist and anti-authoritarian, spearhead of anarcho-communism from 1905 onwards, was a “real melting pot mixing various nationalities,”⁵⁶ internationalist by vocation, drawing its strength from local protest, the flow of migrations and the relations cultivated between militants through the libertarian press and militant tours.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, it would be futile to look for a geographical “origin” to these processes, or to believe that the anarchist networks were “administered” in a coherent and premeditated way. On the contrary, the meetings between militants, even when they followed predictable paths such as river or transatlantic navigation, were more often than not the result of circumstances. The case of the Cuban Miguel Albuquerque y Vives is a reminder of this: he went in search of support for his country’s independence and ended up founding the “Society of the Sons of Labor” in Ecuador in 1896, thus contributing to the birth of a powerful movement of artisans.⁵⁸ He was not alone in his efforts. He was not alone in echoing the events in the Caribbean, since in the port of Guayaquil, home of the country’s first workers’ organizations, Jamaican

⁵⁴ Joel Delhom, « Le mouvement ouvrier anarchiste au Pérou (1890–1930) : essai de synthèse et d’analyse historiographique » dans Joel Delhom *et al.*, *Viva la social!...*, *op. cit.*, p. 221 et 236.

⁵⁵ Cf. Kirwin Shaffer, ‘Tropical Libertarians’, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁶ José Aricó, *La hipótesis de Justo...*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁵⁷ Cf. Iacov Oved, *El anarquismo y el movimiento obrero en Argentina*, Mexico, Siglo XXI Editores, 1978 ; Gonzalo Zaragoza, *Anarquismo argentino (1876–1902)*, Madrid, Ediciones de la Torre, 1996.

⁵⁸ Carlos Rama et Ángel Capelletti, *El anarquismo en América latina*, Caracas, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1990, p. CXLV.

In the case of Chile, a country on the Pacific coast, historians generally attribute the first local libertarian movements to “creole” anarchists. The connection with exiled European emigrants was, however, made through Buenos Aires, the main port of entry for anarchist ideas on the continent since the creation in the 1870s of a section of the International Workers’ Association (IWA). The Italian printer Washington Marzoratti, for example, founded an “Anarcho-Communist Circle” with Ettore Mattei and others in Buenos Aires in 1884, before moving on to Montevideo, then Valparaíso and finally Santiago, from where he maintained militant links with anarchists in the Rio de la Plata.⁵¹ The typographer Juan Andres, who was a member of the AIT, was a member of the AIT. The typographer Juan Andrés González, who had rubbed shoulders with the Spaniards, Italians, French and Argentines of the AIT section in Buenos Aires, is credited with founding the anarchist craftsmen’s movement in Asunción, Paraguay in the 1880s.⁵² In the early 1900s, the federations of anarchists were formed in Buenos Aires. This enabled the Italian anarchist criminologist Pietro Gori to give courses in Asunción in 1901, and later made the Spanish revolutionary Rafael Barrett a famous activist in the entire region bordering Paraguay and Argentina, and an advocate for the cause of the Paraguayan farm workers in northern Argentina.⁵³ The FORA also sent a delegation to Asunción

⁵¹ Cf. Víctor Muñoz, « El Oprimido. Los extranjeros y la prehistoria del anarquismo chileno (1889–1897) », webmail.portaloaca.com/extranjeros-y-la-prehistoria-del-anarquismo-chileno-1889-1897.html

⁵² David Doillon et Pierre-Henri Zaidmann, « L’anarchisme au Paraguay : des origines du mouvement ouvrier à la commune d’Encarnación », in Joel Delhom [dir.], *Viva la social!...*, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁵³ Cf. Rafael Barrett, *El terror argentino*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Proyección, 1971 ; et Francisco Corral, *El pensamiento cautivo de Rafael Barrett. Crisis de fin de siglo, juventud del 98 y anarquismo*, Madrid, Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1994.

Afro-Brazilian anarchist authors such as Gabio Luz or Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto.¹⁶ There are, for example, numerous references to the “Quilombos”, autonomous societies founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by fugitive slaves, or to the idealism of the rebellious community of -Canudos led by the rural bandit Antônio Conselheiro in the late nineteenth century.

Anarchists in Latin America and the Local Political Terrain

Deep-seated trends in Latin American nineteenth century history helped facilitate the appropriation of anarchist theses and their local reception. In Argentina, for example, the federalist political tradition — an important current of the post-independence era — proved essential to the subsequent expansion of anarchism: opposing the centralizing state, it was embodied both in the folkloric image of the pioneering, self-sufficient “gaucho” and in the epic of the “montoneras,” popular rebellions against the centralizing state that were often commemorated through their leaders, such as José Gervasio de Artigas, an emblematic figure in a representation of regional history shared by nationalists and anti-authoritarians across the continent.¹⁷ These uprisings are sometimes cited as evidence of the presence of an “indigenous” or “creole” anti-state current based on the horizontality of power and the decentralization of the countryside, advocating freedom against an oligarchy complicit with foreign capital in its project of state modernization by force, from the capital

¹⁶ Cf. Edgar Rodrigues, *Os libertários. Idéias e experiências anárquicas*, Petropolis, Editora Vozes, 1987, p. 85–101.

¹⁷ Cf. María Moreno Sainz, *Anarchisme argentin, 1890–1930 : contribution à une mythanalyse*, Lille, Atelier national de reproduction des thèses, 2004.

Buenos Aires.¹⁸ The European immigration to the country was later accompanied by the emergence of the “Creole” movement, which was to be the first to be established in the country. Later, massive European immigration, itself promoted by late nineteenth-century liberal positivism to remedy the “racial failure” of “Latin” societies, would have brought the libertarian socialist tradition from across the Atlantic into the young American republics.¹⁹ These European anarchists understood the importance of the libertarian socialist tradition in the development of their country. These European anarchists quickly realized that in order to expand beyond circles of linguistic or national affinity, they needed to connect with earlier regional and federalist traditions.

The “classical” anarchist thinkers foresaw this necessity in their writings on tradition, culture, and the emergence of nationalism. For Elisée Reclus, for example, a critical awareness of history is a prerequisite for overcoming the social conflicts specific to any culture, and for formulating its “collective future.”²⁰ In Latin America, where independence was followed by a long resistance to the centralization of modern states, anarchists found in regionalism and federalism potentially mobilizing references, and sometimes presented themselves as their heirs.²¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the intellectual father of federalism as the autonomy of local powers from central authority, attracted an audience beyond libertarian circles. For him, social revolution depended on

¹⁸ Julio Mafud et Enrique Fernández, *El Anarquismo argentino*, Buenos Aires, Biblioteca José Ingenieros, (manuscrit inédit, non daté), p. 34.

¹⁹ Cf. Nancy Leys Stephan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995 ; Nicola Foote et Michael Goebel, *Immigration and National Identities in Latin America*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2014.

²⁰ Elisée Reclus, *L’Homme et la Terre*, Paris, Librairie Universelle, 1905–1908, volume 6, p. 527.

²¹ Cf. Juan Lazarte, *Federalismo y descentralización en la cultura argentina*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Cátedra Lisandro de la Torre, 1957.

Rico and Panama),⁴⁵ and “class ties among people of different races, political sensibilities, and backgrounds.”⁴⁶ When tobacco worker and anarchist leader Enrique Roíg San Martín ironically described his country as being composed of three parties — “the Spaniards, the Cubans and the blacks”⁴⁷ — he was pointing to the cracks in the edifice of national unity produced by particular historical conditions. This was not an “alien” opinion carried like a virus by newcomers, whatever the anarchist reticence towards political nationalism; the most important leaders of the local anarchist movement, including Roíg himself, had been born on the island.⁴⁸ They supported the revolution and the blacks, but they were not the only ones. They supported the Cuban revolution and independence while criticizing the racially and socially exclusionary regime that followed, first during the U.S. occupation (1898–1902) and then when immigration (European, Caribbean, Chinese) boomed in the following decades.⁴⁹ Shaffer notes that Cuban anarchists clung to the symbol represented by José Martí, an internationalist and theorist of national sovereignty who died in battle in 1895, believing that it was important to free this symbol from its instrumentalization by the state, rather than leaving it open to manipulation by the elites.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Cf. Kirwin Shaffer, ‘Contesting Internationalists: Transnational Anarchism, Anti-Imperialism and U.S. Expansion in the Caribbean, 1890s–1920s’, *E.I.A.L. Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, volume 22, n° 2, juillet-décembre 2011 et *Black Flag Boricuas...*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ Joan Casanovas, *Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850–1898*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998, p. 202.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 182.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 147.

⁴⁹ Cf. Amparo Sánchez Cobos, *Sembrando ideales: Anarquistas españoles en Cuba, 1902–1925*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2008.

⁵⁰ Cf. Kirwin Shaffer, ‘Tropical Libertarians: anarchist movements and networks in the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Mexico, 1890s–1920s’, in Hirsch et van der Walt, *Anarchism and Syndicalism...*, *op. cit.*

its kind in the world. A “Musical Center” established in Lima under the direction of the anarchist Delfín Lévano offered a repertoire of rebellious songs with the active support of the militant organizations, in order to propagate a “new social ethic” and to work to “the beautiful task of making recede the popular prejudices.”⁴³ Libertarian cultural production, whether in music, theater, poetry, or literature, was a place for denouncing social injustice (its protest dimension), raising awareness (its didactic function), political mobilization (the use of propaganda), and exalting virtue and beauty (its utopian repertoire).⁴⁴

Havana and Buenos Aires, Two Poles of Diffusion

Moments of catharsis such as the outbreak of the Cuban War of Independence in 1895 challenged the anarchists, not because of their supposed “foreign” origin, nor because of their conceptual inability to think of “nation” in terms that could be read by the people, but because the legacies of slavery, war, and worker exclusion had made the formulation of the “social question” external to that of the “national” tradition. In the course of the struggles, in which they participated in large numbers both on the island and in the ranks of the diaspora (especially among tobacco workers), Cuban anarchists promoted new forms of worker organization, transnational networks of solidarity (nurturing strong movements in Puerto

culturelles et linguistiques aux XIXe et XXe siècles (Angers, 27–28 novembre 1992), Angers, ALMOREAL-Bibliothèque Municipale d’Angers, 1993.

⁴³ Cf. Steven Hirsch, ‘Peruvian Anarcho-Syndicalism’, in Hirsch et van der Walt, *Anarchism and Syndicalism...*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Cf. Jean Andreu, Maurice Fraysse et Eva Golluscio de Montoya, *Anarkos. Literaturas libertarias de América del Sur, 1900*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Corregidor, 1999.

the diversity and maintenance of sovereign, decentralized entities, characterized by cultural pluralism, local governance and an awareness of shared identities, open to dialogue with the outside world.²² The reaction of elites to the revolutionary idealism generated in Latin America by the European uprisings of 1848 is indicative of their fears. As Guy Thompson has shown, “conservatives in Mexico and Brazil realized that democratization, federalism and decentralization would encourage Indian caste wars and slave revolts, which would undermine the edifice of postcolonial societies. The exiled Argentine liberals...doubted that Spanish America was ready for democracy... Despite their quest for popular support, even progressive and radical liberals in Mexico, Peru and Brazil still excluded Indians or African slaves from their definition of the people.”²³ By arousing elite concern in Latin America, these ideas contributed to the “civilization versus barbarism” discourse made famous by Domingo Fausto Sarmiento’s indictment of Argentine President Rosas,²⁴ long before the federalist principle was invoked by anarchist organizers of the labour movement in the early part of the following century.

Anarchism, Belonging and Nation

Libertarian thought in Europe had long established, without waiting for the massive immigration to the Americas or the xenophobic tightening of nationalist positions in the young re-

²² Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, « Du principe fédératif et de la nécessité de reconstituer le parti de la révolution » (1863), cité dans Pierre Ansard, *Marx et l’anarchisme. Essai sur les sociologies de Saint-Simon, Proudhon et Marx*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1969, p. 266–267.

²³ Guy Thompson, *The Revolutions of 1848 and the Americas*, London, Institute of Latin American Studies, 2002, p. 7–8.

²⁴ Cf. Domingo Fausto Sarmiento, *Facundo o civilización y barbarie en las pampas argentinas* (1845) (traduction française, coll. *Mémoires*, éd. L’Herne, 1990).

publics at the beginning of the 20th century, the importance of questions of culture and national belonging for emancipatory action. For the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, the social question and the national question went hand in hand;²⁵ national movements should be supported wherever they arose, provided they defended “the political and economic interest of the masses” rather than “founding a powerful state.”²⁶ For him, any socio-economic organization had to be based on the decentralized federation of communes and self-managed work units, so that people could freely define their mode of belonging.²⁷ National identities were only one of the most important elements of the social and economic development of the country. National identities were only one form of association among others that could emerge from the social revolution. The Russian ideologist Piotr Kropotkin, a fervent anti-colonialist, suggested to his comrades “not to treat questions of nationality lightly.”²⁸ For the Neapolitan Errico Malatesta, a leading figure in the spread of anarchism in Latin America and who participated in revolts in Egypt, Syria, and Romania,²⁹ patriotism inspired by popular affiliations and cultures could oppose foreign domination, provided that class oppression was rejected

²⁵ Mikhail Bakounine, ‘Appeal to the Slavs’ (1848) in Sam Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy* Londres, 1973, cité par Eric Cahn et Vladimir Claude Fisera, *Socialism and Nationalism in Contemporary Europe (1848–1945)*, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1978, volume 1, p. 34.

²⁶ Mikhail Bakounine, ‘Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism’ (1867), *ibidem*, p. 38.

²⁷ André Nataf, *Des Anarchistes en France, 1880–1910*, Paris, Hachette, 1986, p. 275–288.

²⁸ Piotr Kropotkine, « Césarisme », *Les Temps Nouveaux*, n° 32–39, 3–9 décembre 1898 & 21–27 janvier 1899.

²⁹ Arian Miéville, « Entre anarchie et syndicalisme », in Arian Miéville et Maurizio Anonlioli, *Anarchisme et syndicalisme. Le Congrès Anarchiste International d’Amsterdam (1907)*, Paris, Éditions du Monde Libertaire, 1997, p. 61.

invention of a new cultural imaginary, through the dissemination of libertarian precepts and their translation into a renewed language at the local level. In Argentina, for example, the anarchists appropriated traditional songs and modified their lyrics, celebrating the popular sensibility of the “payadores”, or poets of the countryside, producing a literature impregnated with libertarian themes and nostalgia for the federalist struggles of the “gauchos”, or legendary guardians of the “pampas”, symbols of rebellion. They made creolized musical genres such as the *milonga*, *tango*, *guajira* and *habanera* their own.

As historian Juan Suriano has shown, while the anarchists appropriated many popular forms of cultural expression, they also fought against them when they believed they were in opposition to their revolutionary vocation of moral elevation and workers’ emancipation: the debauchery of the carnival, grotesque theater, manifestations of drunkenness and sexual exploitation, and even popular sports. Instead, they emphasized a “high culture” made up of modernist art expressed in a didactic manner.⁴¹ The revolutionary theater was the most prominent example. Revolutionary theater was one of the most favored genres. In Buenos Aires, the philodramatic academy Ermette Zacconi and the company Los Caballeros del ideal performed regularly before large audiences in the early twentieth century. Montevideo gave birth to the most prominent libertarian playwright of the region, Florencio Sánchez. In Peru, Manuel González Prada expressed the conviction of many libertarian intellectuals that theater should evoke social demands, and serve as a platform not only for pedagogy but also for popular mobilization.⁴² A “Musical Center” established in Lima, Peru, was the first of

⁴¹ Cf. Juan Suriano, *Anarquistas. Cultural y política libertaria en Buenos Aires, 1890–1930*, Buenos Aires, Manantial, 2001 et *Auge y caída del anarquismo. Argentina, 1880–1930*, Buenos Aires, Capital Intelectual, 2005.

⁴² Cf. Joel Delhom, « Manuel González Prada et la culture européenne » in *Colloque Europe-Amérique latine : réceptions et réélaborations sociales*,

prise us, as no social movement is, by definition, isolated from the society in which it is formed. The question is therefore to know by what means anarchism has taken root.

First, the creation of “resistance societies” by trade, federated by a local grouping (by city or province) respecting their diversity and autonomy; and second, their networking on a regional scale (which could take the name of a nation without recognizing its territorial boundaries), a process theorized by the Catalan anarchist Antonio Pellicer Parraire in the Argentine anarchist press at the turn of the century. These organizations — never legally constituted, and whose adherence to theoretical anarchism was not always self-evident — were described as “receptacles of the innate anti-capitalist consciousness of the exploited workers,” “embryos of collective institutions,” and “the basis of the future anarchist society.”⁴⁰ They were not “unions” in the strict sense, but assemblies where the concrete demands of strikers were translated into broader alliances, for example between artisans, workers, urban and rural workers, small businessmen, tenants, women, the unemployed, intellectuals, etc., and aligned — in accordance with the thinking of Malatesta, who took part in their creation — with the strategic orientation, often contested, of the regional federation where the libertarian “meaning” of their action was deliberated. These societies, informally linked on a daily basis with affinity groups, circles of intellectuals and artists, and other autonomous associations — including those of immigrant communities — aimed to integrate the uprooted and the “dispossessed” plebeians into a collective subject — the “workers” — whom they saw as the potential insurgents of a coming revolution, in a civic sense (understood as participation in social debate). In addition to networks based on diversity, horizontality of power and direct democracy, these movements deliberately relied on pedagogy and the

⁴⁰ Antonio Pellicer Parraire (“Pellico”), « Organización obrera », *La Protesta Humana*, 17 novembre 1900–6 janvier 1901.

and the homelands of others were left free.³⁰ In the anarchist conception of nationality, it was not only the nationality of one’s own country that was at stake, but also the nationality of the other. In the anarchist conception of social revolution, the valorization of traditions, languages and forms of belonging of oppressed peoples — of what Raymond Williams called “residual cultural formations”³¹ — is a weapon against the national “destiny” promoted by the recent modern state, a counterpoint to the arbitrariness of its assimilative functions, authority and borders, to the illegitimacy of its hierarchies, exclusions and bureaucratic methods.³² Before being a subject labeled Italian, Spanish or other, and without denying the culture or belonging, the typical anarchist militant in Latin America of the late nineteenth century was a nomad: “mobile, always ready to swim with the current of workers’ struggles, going from one corner of the country or even the continent to another; capable of perceiving with great intuition the signs of latent conflicts ready to explode, and who never allowed himself, in his desire to fight and his unbounded loyalty to the cause of the most deprived, to be limited by national borders.”³³ These characteristics — mobility, scope of propaganda and organization, indifference to territorial boundaries — were also the basis for the founding of the Argentine Regional Workers Federation (FORA) in 1901. The first anarchist federation in the hemisphere and the second strongest in the world, it developed local, provincial and

³⁰ Errico Malatesta, « La Guerra e gli anarchici » et « Somos y seremos internacionalistas », cités par Luigi Fabbri, *Vida y pensamiento de Malatesta* (Barcelonne, Editorial Tierra y Libertad, 1938), p. 257–258.

³¹ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 122.

³² Samuel Clark, *Living Without Domination. The Possibility of an Anarchist Utopia*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007, p. 94–96 ; Jesse S. Cohn, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Politics*, Selinsgrove, Susquehanna University Press, 2006, p. 75.

³³ José Aricó, « Para un análisis del socialismo y del anarquismo latinoamericanos », *loc. cit.*, p. 38.

transnational networks of solidarity, information and mutual cooperation between regions far apart, including Brazil and the Andes.³⁴ This did not prevent its members from becoming more and more active. This did not prevent its thinkers, far from it, from interpreting local particularities and from being interested in the “identities”, even national ones, of the peoples they addressed. Martín Fierro, one of the main literary journals of the early twentieth century in Argentina, directed by Alberto Ghirardo — leader of FORA and a leading anarchist intellectual — was thus dedicated to “national thought” in Latin America.³⁵

The Creation of New Anarchist Cultures

Malatesta, founder in Argentina of the first anarchist newspaper, *La Question Sociale* (1885), was the one who first defended the concept of “societies of resistance” adopted by most of the emerging anarchist movements in Latin America. Not only had his insurrectionary experiences in Europe convinced him of the need for a popular base for action, but the workers’ strikes of the time in Argentina made him understand that the labor demands, disdained by Kropotkin’s followers who criticized their “reformism,” turned out to be the bearer of new forms of resistance to capitalism, through the horizontal organization of counterpowers or struggles for women’s emancipation.³⁶ Throughout Latin America, the

³⁴ Voir Geoffroy de Laforcade, ‘Federative Futures: Waterways, Resistance Societies, and the Subversion of Nationalism in the Early 20th Century Anarchism of the Río de la Plata Region’, *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, volume 22, n° 2, 2011.

³⁵ Cf. Héctor Adolfo Cordero, *Alberto Ghirardo, precursor de nuevos tiempos*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Claridad, 1962.

³⁶ José Moya, ‘Italians in Buenos Aires’ Anarchist Movement: Gender Ideology and Women’s Participation, 1890–1910’, in Donna R. Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002.

anarchists’ demands were not limited to the workers’ movement, but also to the workers’ movement. Throughout Latin America, anarchists, whose priority was to create societies of resistance and cosmopolitan organizations, were confronted with debates about national cultures, their specificities, their meaning for the movement, and their relationship to the state.

The inventory of this intellectual heritage reveals a great variety of opinions and interpretations about identities and the influence they could have on the circumstances of libertarian struggles. Carlos Rama and Ángel Capelletti affirm that “from the point of view of organization and praxis”, the ideologically heterodox and predominantly worker actors of Latin American anarchism “invented forms of it that were unknown in Europe until then.”³⁷ The learning and exercise of freedom, through direct action and the constitution of “federating networks” linking workers’ movements, women’s collectives, ethnic societies, artists’ and intellectuals’ circles, would have generated specific forms of social contestation, class identification and identity representation. Regardless of their doctrinal “purity” or their capacity to last, these were rooted in the experience of anarchist militancy and the repression that was directed against it. This was also the case in Europe, Asia and elsewhere.³⁸ Not only does the nature of support for anarchism, its internal contradictions, its responses to local challenges and transformations in society differ from region to region, but so does its cooperation with other movements.³⁹ This should not surprise us, as it is not the case in the United States. This should not sur-

³⁷ Carlos M. Rama et Ángel J. Capelletti, *El anarquismo en América latina*, Caracas, Biblioteca Ayacucho, p. X-XI.

³⁸ Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination*, Londres, Verso, 2005.

³⁹ Voir Geoffroy de Laforcade, ‘The Ghosts of Insurgencies Past: Waterfront Labor, Working-Class Memory, and the Contentious Emergence of the National-Popular State in Argentina’, in Barry Maxwell et Raymond Craib, *No Gods, No Masters, No Peripheries: Global Anarchisms*, Oakland, PM Press, 2015.