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# The black flag among others

(trans) nationalism and internationalism in the  
construction of anarchism in Brazil (1890-1930)

Kauan Willian dos Santos

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litical and ideological influences, had an influence on its insertion and development. In the Brazilian case, clashes between ethnocentric, internationalist and national cohesion positions gravitated among anarchists over time and were key elements, more than in theory, but in the very construction of revolutionary syndicalism, in a complex way. Positions that certainly influenced class cultures for their reformulations in later periods that, without this experience and debate, could not have been supported in the country when, in the coming decades, nationalism, the national imagination and statism would be fortified.

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## Abstract

This article, a partial result of a doctoral thesis under development by the Department of Social History at the University of São Paulo, seeks to reflect on the connection between anarchism and internationalism and the practical transnationalism, through immigration, militant networks and circulation of ideas and experiences, including the vision of the nation, nationalism, patriotism and race of its agents, as well as their overlap with their concepts and class practices. After a justification based on a theoretical debate on the topic, we suggest the division into three moments within the Brazilian republican periodical, where we observe changes, both in its practices, forms of insertion and relationship, debates and vision about its movement and the elements analyzed.

## Introduction

It is true that anarchism, both from its political theory and in the execution itself, sought to build and propose a new political, social and economic organization. Agents who called themselves libertarian socialists were against the advance of the capitalist system of production, national borders, statist centralism and what they understood as a religious and cultural alienation that would benefit a small part of the population (CORRÊA; SILVA; SILVA, 2014). In this endeavor, for Benedict Anderson, “following the collapse of the First International and the death of Marx in 1883, anarchism in its typically diversified forms was the dominant element in the self-conscious radical left” and, until the First World War, “the main vehicle of global opposition to industrial capitalism, autocracy, landlordism and imperialism (ANDERSON, 2014, p. 19-20).”

The participants of the black ranks were governed by an internationalist goal, that is, they believed that their resistance

and the gains to be conquered would not be restricted to a national unit or an ethnic group, having to remove the holders of the means of production and the rulers to form a global revolution. In fact, much more than a theory, anarchists tried to exercise their internationalism in practice. The anarchist Errico Malatesta, for example, after intense activity in Italy, passed through Switzerland, Belgium and London. In addition, as if his activities in several places in Europe were not enough, he traveled through the north of the African continent and also in America, where he visited and spread his thoughts “for four years in Buenos Aires (ANDERSON, 2014, p. 2).” As well as him, many anarchists forced by reasons of flight and exile as well as emigrating for reasons of necessity or even aiming to spread their ideas across the globe, crossed different countries and continents, bringing and bringing diverse thoughts and experiences and building anarchism beyond the North Atlantic or the European experience, speaking about universal fraternity. The internationalist character of anarchism is evident from its structuring, which can be located in the performance of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy (ADS). In this political body, representatives such as Mikhail Bakunin, Charles Perron and James Guillaume created contacts with organizations of an international character such as the International Association of Workers (AIT). From 1868 onwards such militants they resumed the federalism of the Proudhonian mutualists and, based on previous experiences in popular demonstrations in different parts of Europe, extreme their revolutionary character in a way never before evaluated, featuring the entry of the so-called collectivists into the association –later recognizing themselves as anarchists. ADS had representatives in England, Russia, Italy, France, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium and other regions (SAMIS, 2011, p. 33-60). In addition, in line with the more systematic and programmatic work of the allianceists, the passage of anarchist characters in these

the country and, therefore, the insistence on the part of their adversaries to extirpate them.

The attempt to maintain syndicalist networks and more organized anarchist groups in an attempt not to break up in the national territory, in practice, continued –although with severe damage and delays due to repression and transformations of syndicalism and the clash with communists, reformists and cooperatives –while trying to undermine state patriotism. It was necessary to exclude or dilute the national ideology of the speeches and to emphasize internationalism, international fraternity and the link between repression and the world interests of the bourgeoisie, as well as repression and the need for unionism and direct action from a certain unity in the country.

## Final Considerations

When a certain historiography –marked by a view of political justification as the historian Claudio Batalha (1998) points out –marks that the reflection on a view of Brazil for the introduction and insertion of socialism in the country took place only with the consolidation of communist policy, evidence More precise details about the working-class press in the republican period show that other groups, such as anarchists, had already reflected on the national character of Brazil.

We also see, correctly, as Benedict Anderson (2014) induces, that “nationalism, that element with the greatest valence of all, combined with all the others [romanticism, democracy, idealism, Marxism, anarchism and fascism] in different ways and at different times” (ANDERSON, 2014, p. 19), making the construction of anarchism, depending on the migrant flow, the region in which it settled and how it saw other ethnic groups and national groups, facts combined with its debates and po-

“the strike of Rossbach Brazil workers”. in Recife and the creation of the Center for Social Studies of Belém, in Pará, signed by activists Raymundo Cordeiro, Antonio Pereira da Silva, Pedro Lyra, Mauro Serra and others, stating that

”considering that the workers’ organization based on modern Revolutionary Syndicalism is the most appropriate vehicle for the transition from the Capitalist-State Regime to the advent of the Libertarian Communist Society of the future, we deem it our inalienable duty to honor, encourage, and develop the revolutionary syndicalist organization among the oppressed and efforts, strengthening it with our membership of existing unions, as well as assisting in the founding of others, where they are needed, or circumstances dictate.”<sup>35</sup>

In this way, in addition to trying to show, to their readers in the state and in the country, that anarchism and its main strategy were still active in the country, they also tried to link them, giving the idea of organization at the national level again, since emphasizing federalism and anti-statism, disputing and creating mass organizations. Evidence of this connection was the creation of the mainstream newspaper *O Ceará* in 1928 by the journalist Rachel de Queiroz, who invited the activist and anarchist theorist Maria Lacerda de Moura, who lived in the interior of São Paulo at the time, to write for the newspaper (PEREIRA, 2001). It is also interesting to point out that, after 1928, as before the events of 1924, the main anarchist political debates were personified around two Brazilians, Domingos Passos and José Oiticica and, between 1924 and 1925, in libertarian focuses on places far from one another. another, as in Rio Grande do Sul and Ceará. These are evidences that anarchist political culture was completely in line with the country’s political culture, and that the appeal to internationalism was not part of an elongation of immigration and ethnic networks, but of the elongation of the needs of anarchist political culture in

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<sup>35</sup> “Libertarian Action in Pará.” *A Plebe* (São Paulo), April 9, 1927, p. 2-3.

places and the reception and diffusion of libertarian ideas in that period in newspapers, books, pamphlets and pamphlets made the black flag expand to overwhelming proportions.

In 1885, Argentina witnessed the militant periodical *Questione Sociale*, which had international links (COLOMBO, 2004, p.79). In the 1890s, the first newspapers containing libertarian ideas in Brazil, *Gli Schiavi Bianchi*, *La Bestia Umana* and *L’Asino Umano*, *O Despertar*, *Il Diritto* and others marked their presence (LEAL, 2006, p. 149-204). In Italy, in the 1880s, relevant agents such as Errico Malatesta and Pietro Gori promoted strong protesting movements, spreading anarchism among artisans and small subaltern traders and also in the form of associations with social support (ROMANI, 2002, p. 20). -30). Furthermore, anarchist ideas arrived in southern and southern African regions since the end of the 19th century (VAN DER WALT, 2010). And from that period until the first decades of the 20th century, anarchism was decisive, starting from remarkable insurrections and demanding unionism in the United States of America. In a matter of decades, workers’ organizations with a libertarian orientation were also formed in the Pacific and on the Asian continent (HWANG, 2010, p. 95-130).

The cause of this diffusion, in addition to the commitment of anarchist militants and their internationalist expectations, had a latent context. From the end of the 18th century to the 20th, the contemporary era was marked by advances in economic transformations that provided the development of transport and communications in an unprecedented way (ANDERSON, 2008). The result was a constant flow of pamphlets, pamphlets, books and periodicals created from the intensification of contacts between people and countries, added to colonial conquests and mass migrations. The creation of railroads, steam trains, printing machines and other inventions of the industrial revolutions along with migratory processes and the imperialism, in this way, provided subsidies for anarchists

to disseminate their ideas and practices (HIRSCH; VAN DER WALT; 2010).

However, another phenomenon was taking place and intensifying in which the libertarian militants had already noticed and, therefore, they were precisely contrary in their programs; the national state itself. The various types of nationalisms and national ideas modeled on the construction of national states and later on patriotism, in which these characters fought so much, were driven by the decline of old forms of social organization, such as the influence of religion and absolutism, which left a vacuum for new feelings and customs that could fill that gap. Through the new social arrangements under the body of the capitalist production system, its technologies and the proliferation of culturally rooted and shaped discourses and symbols, there was the creation and intensification of links between different groups within a territorial unit, forming possible ideologies of belonging. of groups to the detriment of others, also establishing other types of political groupings.

The growth of national sentiment created the need for the construction and expansion of increasingly homogeneous states at the expense of ethnic minorities. According to Eric Hobsbawm, this “nation formation constituted the essential content of the 19th century evolution” (HOBBSAWM, 2013, p. 37) for the agents involved with the political project of liberalism and for the rising bourgeois class. Similarly, in some places, popular movements demanded the unification of their countries to protect themselves from dynastic and imperialist domination, rival empires and aristocracy, making popular republicanism a revolutionary target.<sup>1</sup> The end of the era of successful national liberation movements in the Americas

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<sup>1</sup> For Edilene Toledo “in countries like Italy, which wanted to gain their independence, therefore, the idea of nation took on a revolutionary connotation, tended to be linked to liberal and democratic ideologies and often acquired a supranational character: in the history of revolutions nineteenth century” (TOLEDO, 2008, p. 3).

ditions of reactivation and reorganization of anarchism and to see the situation of revolutionary syndicalism in the state -was to support and continue the project of Rio Grande do Sul Workers Federation “which has been supporting the work of associative propaganda of the proletariat in accordance with the principles of revolutionary syndicalism”, citing that it is still a continuation of the “International Association of Workers, based in Berlin.” For this reason, the Committee of Pro-Social Prisoners, an organization created by the activists in Rio de Janeiro still in 1924 to report and defend political prisoners, was reactivated and “it was decided to transfer the headquarters [...] to the city of Pelotas.”<sup>33</sup>

Another interesting action in this regard was the news of the Continental Workers’ Congress, an effort by the General Confederation of Labor of Mexico to bring unionist groups together on the American continent, in addition to trying to form a united front against repression and in favor of labor rights. In the coming years, an American body that was suggested at the congress was not implemented as desired, but the resolution of support from the unions in the country and in Argentina made possible a new approach after these bodies went through this moment of repression. A Plebe reported that it was in Pelotas, by the Workers’ Federation of Rio Grande do Sul, that it was decided to support the event, which was soon joined by groups from Rio de Janeiro (Pelotas and downtown), Minas Gerais (Bagé, Caxambú) and São Paulo (Santos, Rio Preto).<sup>34</sup>

The organizational tradition in some cities in northeastern Brazil meant that A Plebe, as soon as he returned in 1927, after the state of siege, intensively reported on strikes, demonstrations, acts and important organizations in the region, such as

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<sup>33</sup> “Workers Federation of the State of Rio Grande do Sul: a conference of representatives was held in Pelotas.” A Plebe (São Paulo), March 26, 1927, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> A Plebe (São Paulo), March 26, 1927, p. 2.



which, in fact, responded to the process of centralization of the Russian Revolution, redefining the syndicalist and internationalist strategy typical of anarchists, aiming to stop reformism and statist communism (GARNER, 2014, p. 141-173).

The organs and the journal *A Plebe* seem to have influenced many organizations and libertarian periodicals, as well as workers' associations, demonstrations and strikes in the period. Before an intensification of repression over the next two years, the newspaper shows in the state of São Paulo numerous actions by the working class that were still betting on direct action, such as a shoemakers' strike in 1922 that paralyzed "for days at the *Bebé* and *Iberia* factories"<sup>30</sup> and, in *Petrópolis*, the anarchist militants guaranteed their presence in a great victorious strike at *Fábrica São Pedro de Alcantara* from their positions in the Union of Workers in Fabric Factories. During this period, libertarians were also supported by their union strategies in the *Graphic Workers Union*, the *Civil Construction Workers' League*, the *Café Employees Union*, the *Tailors Union*, as well as the *Footwear Artificers Union*, the *Crafts Union* Various and other associations.<sup>31</sup>

The return to its transnational networks could affect the effort to continue its circuits in the country, even more so with anarchist militancy and its main social vector –revolutionary syndicalism –being seriously affected. Nevertheless, a departure from the group around *A Plebe*, after trying to take stock of the unions with a libertarian tendency active in the city, such as the *União dos Canteiros* and the *União dos Trabalhadores grafos de São Paulo*, in addition to trying to visualize and organize anarchist groups still active in São Paulo's neighborhoods and in the interior through the *Bases of Agreement of the Anarchist Groups Relations Committee*<sup>32</sup>—that is, to assess the con-

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<sup>30</sup> "The Shoemakers' Strikes." *A Plebe* (São Paulo), Saturday, October 7, 1922, p.4.

<sup>31</sup> See *Idem*, p.1-4.

<sup>32</sup> See *A Plebe* (São Paulo), March 26, 1927, p.2.

largely coincided with the beginning of the era of nationalism in Europe (ANDERSON, 2008, p.107)."

The emergence of a national ideology, used since the creation of national states, but also disseminated and latent for the liberation of ethnic minorities or for the unification of dominated countries, was so constant and inevitable that it is no wonder that many anarchist militants, before formulating and joining the libertarian and internationalist ranks had participated in anti-imperialist struggles or national unification. In the 1840s, Mikhail Bakunin participated in the struggle for the independence of the Slavs in which he promoted a union between the Russian and Polish people against imperialism and aristocracy. For Felipe Corrêa, "Bakunin considered national liberation the first step in the struggle for a democratically based revolution, which should lead to a federative republic of Slavic countries (CORRÊA, 2010, p. 15)." The young Malatesta, before his participation in the Paris Commune, adhered to the ideals of Giuseppe Mazzini and his vision of popular republicanism that attracted many revolutionary adherents before Italian unification (AVELINO, 2003).

Over the years, struggles for national liberation or for ethnic minorities continued to be a constant in the construction of anarchism. Libertarian militants, mainly outside Western Europe and in the affected regions, whether the colonies seized since the end of the 19th century or during the effects of the great wars, largely participated in an anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist position, building tactics and strategies that rooted in the construction of anarchism. Authors Lucien van der Walt and Steven Hirsh note that the most sophisticated and hegemonic anarchist position "was to participate in national liberation struggles seeking to shape them, win the battle of ideas and ward off nationalism, promoting a policy of national liberation by through the class struggle, and giving national liberation struggles a revolutionary meaning." However, there was

”a kind of anarchist and syndicalist approach [which] was to support nationalist currents uncritically, considering their struggles as a step in the right direction. For some, this meant supporting the formation of small states, which they preferred to large ones, a perspective rejected by most anarchists (HIRSH; VAN DER WALT, 2010, p. lxiii-lxiv).”

Thus, according to the authors, in fact, some anarchists participated in national liberation struggles only with the aim of destroying the dominant powers at the time, not criticizing, within these and their actions, any growth or formation of nationalism or exclusionary policies. Many militants and activists considered a type of colonial liberation and the formation of its cultural and political contours to be a necessary stage, and then the need for its deconstruction. This seems to be the case of the Philippines and Cuba, studied by Benedict Anderson, in the which nationalism absorbed socialist, and anarchist demands and influences, but standing out with potential for emergence, with little tension from members of the latter, not only because of their convictions since there were anti-nationalist fronts in these countries, but also because of the type of alliance built or due to the difficulties presented in the process (ANDERSON, 2014).

Therefore, ethnic imaginaries could be added to the revolutionary character of political currents such as socialism and anarchism to face their interests and vice versa. This character made the connections between anarchism and nationalism intrinsic ever since and, far from being paradoxical, the national imagination, over time, was part of the very construction of the practical transnationalism of these phenomena.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to mark the differences between “internationalism” and “transnationalism” used in many researches indiscriminately. Internationalism refers to the movements, here within the socialist debates, that considered the importance of the participation of different groups together, national and ethnic, for the construction of an egalitarian society. But, as we are defending in the following thesis, this intention did not rule

omy of each one in the development of their specific programs and establishing a general program for the struggle against the domination of capitalism. [...] Deeming indispensable the constitution of a solid international institution of libertarian groups from all over the world, we already declare our solidarity and our support to the International Anarchist Secretariat of Sweden, organized by the International Anarchist Congress held in Berlin in September 1921, as well as the International Anarchist Federation in formation in Uruguay.”<sup>28</sup>

Signed by activists and editors Edgard Leuenroth, João Penteadó, João Peres, Rodolpho Felipe, Ricardo Cippola and others, this issue of the periodical followed the call “anarchists in the present moment: defining attitudes.” In addition to the official and more programmatic break with the Russian Revolution, anarchists took the opportunity to show strategic and tactical paths in this context, both from the repression and the world political instability after the First World War. At that time, they still disputed the term communist saying that “as communists we attack the institution of property”, but they showed that they were also anarchists because a “free political organization, constituted from the individual to the group, from the group to the federation and the confederation with contempt for barriers and borders.” For this, the methods of action that these agents instituted were still propaganda, but preferably “the work of the organization in the economic field, with the workers, and in the political field.”<sup>29</sup> This is how anarchists still reinforce their position on the strategy of syndicalism. revolutionary, reinforcing the internationalism and federalism of this current. Libertarians claimed to be being influenced by the International Anarchist Congress held in Berlin in 1921 and the International Anarchist Federation of Uruguay,

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<sup>28</sup> “Anarchists in the Present Moment.” A Plebe (São Paulo), March 18, 1922, p.4.

<sup>29</sup> Idem, p. 1.

ary syndicalism and anarchism and a political project that, in the view of libertarians, would potentiate the advance of these evils, the Anarchist tendency in this period was to abandon ideas and discourses of a labor movement or national anarchist movement, as this could easily be confused with such practices and discourses. It is evident that their networks and the news of the labor movement from different cities and states was still a propaganda tactic in the main libertarian periodicals in the country such as *O Syndicalista* de Porto Alegre, *Renovação* and *A Voz do Povodo* Rio de Janeiro, *A Hora Social* de Recife, *A Plebe* and *Alba Rossa* in São Paulo and others. But, in addition, it was necessary to show and strongly emphasize that these networks would go beyond national borders and, therefore, they began to bet again and incisively on columns or entire pages about the international labor movement.

The news of organizations, victories and repression from countries like Italy, France, United States, Portugal, Spain, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and even Palestine were accompanied by anarchist symbols, through texts or images, which the militants wanted to search as the projects of the rationalist schools of Francisco Ferrer, of the Paris Commune, of theorists such as Errico Malatesta who composed the periodicals in that period. The appeal was that the labor movement in several of its locations should act seeking the typical universal fraternity and internationalism, also respecting the conditions of the local political and trade unionist culture, from a revolutionary prism, as we can see in the newspaper *A Plebe* in 1922:

”To achieve this objective, we believe that the International trade union, regardless of politics, must bring together all the federative bases, thus constituting the exponent of the organized force of the world proletariat in its struggle against wages and employers. With the same criterion, we look at the organization of the political International, within which we believe that the revolutionary political-social parties of all countries must be united federatively, respecting the auton-

In Brazil, even if not included in a national liberation struggle, anarchists were affected or instrumentalized nationalisms, either in the construction of their movement, or in their ideas and practices. This article, the partial result of a doctoral thesis in Social History at the University of São Paulo<sup>3</sup>, seeks to bring, from the analysis of the bibliography and periodicals of the labor movement and anarchism, three different moments in the Brazilian republican period, which addresses this theme, thus contributing to the historiography that studies the connections between socialisms and nationalisms.

## **Between ethnocentric, internationalist and syncretistic imaginaries with Brazil (1890-1913)**

More complex and diffuse than often claimed, libertarian ideas in Brazil appeared here even before the political systematization of anarchism in the First International. The writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, substantial for most mutualists, influential in the Paris Commune and reference to the construction of anarchism would already appear in the country in the 1870s in the writings of abolitionists. Historian Maria Helena Machado (1994) informs us that one of the activists of this cause

”using the pseudonym of Proudhomme and perhaps inspired by Proudhon’s famous slogan, What is property? Property is theft – Sponsorship coined his own couplet: “Slav-

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out the influence of ethnic or national ideas on the circulation of revolutionary ideas and experiences. In some cases, in the transnational process, that is, in the transit of national ideas, through immigration or the circulation of transcripts, nationalism sometimes impregnated the discourses as anarchism.

<sup>3</sup> Thesis entitled *Pontes de Liberdade: internacionalismo e imaginários nacionais na construção do anarquismo no Brasil (1890-1937)* under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Robert Sean Purdy.

ery is theft. Every slave owner is a thief (MACHADO, 1994, p. 163).”

Although the author reminds us that abolitionism was disputed by different political currents, the study shows how libertarian proposals were already used, adapted and transformed by movements from the country. Such thoughts also arrived before mass immigration, being brought in by intellectuals without a clear project and sometimes spreading without a connection with other anarchists in the rest of the globe.

Even so, it is, in fact, with the phenomenon of mass immigration that the coming of libertarian practices and conceptions, as well as anarchism, was potentiated. The first most notable case in Brazilian lands was the creation of the Colônia Cecília in the state of Paraná in 1890.<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Rossi’s project sought to put into practice and experiment the community and self-managed lifestyle advocated in the world to come preached by the anarchists. Despite this, the proposal was completely marginal to the interests of anarchism, in most international discussions. For some of the most influential anarchists, such as Errico Malatesta, it was impossible to isolate themselves from reality and, in addition to a proposal for self-management, it was necessary to create ways to combat the dominant classes and forms of domination. Discussing emigration and other forms of supposed escape like this, the militant stated:

”The duty of revolutionaries is to make every effort to make the wretched understand that misery exists there as it does here, and that the remedy, if they want to, can be found by staying where they are and rebelling against the government

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<sup>4</sup> Isabelle Felici states that the Colônia Cecília is the “best known aspect of Italian anarchism in Brazil and its first manifestation. However, there are many false impressions about this experience, since the image of Cecília, which appears in the works on anarchism and in the works of fiction that have been devoted to her, owes more to legend than to reality” (FELICI, 1998), p. 9).

sented a great challenge for anarchism, which tried to keep some groups active in the country and abroad, in addition to having to preach libertarian federalism in the face of this scenario, deflating patriotism (OLIVEIRA, 2009), pp. 153-196).

In this way, the newspaper *A Plebe*, in 1921, the newspaper founded by the militant Edgard Leuenroth in 1917 and the most influential in the organization of the General Strike in São Paulo, stated that the reformists use “a rogue maneuver that consists in making the bourgeois feeling of nationality emerge in the soul of the working class.”<sup>26</sup> In addition, libertarian militants showed evidence of that this project served perfectly for the growth of cooperativism in the period and in ways that supposedly would co-opt the organization of workers for the fortification of the national state. On a polemic about the institution of the Brazilian Cooperative Union Federation, the periodical *A Hora Social* de Recife in 1920 concluded a column asking “why has this government, which intends to crush revolutionary, transformative unionism, just organized the Federation [...]?”, and tried to show that:

”Since it can be seen that the government, organizing such cooperatives by through the Admentation superintendence founding the Brazilian Cooperative Syndicalist Federation, when he himself closed down the workers’ unions and committed the greatest brutalities against revolutionary unionists, it was already clear that this government had a Machiavellian plan devised. Let the workers open their eyes and not be deceived. When we meet in trade unions, unions or associations, we have only one idea: that of revolt against current society.”<sup>27</sup>

Seeing, in this way, that there was an effervescence of nationalism and aggressive patriotism among the population, the fortification of the State from the repression of revolution-

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<sup>26</sup> “Yellow Socialism.” *A Plebe* (São Paulo), June 11, 1921, p. 1. YEAR XI, Nº 21, July/2020 ISSN: 2177-9961

<sup>27</sup> “Trade unionism and cooperativism: the maneuvers of the government of the republic.” *A Hora Social* (Recife), August 7, 1920, p. 1.

archists wrote: “Long live anarchy! Equally rejoicing and saluting the new era that will enlighten humanity.”<sup>25</sup>

This articulation was essential both for the projects of the Anarchist Alliance or the Anarchist Communist Party in the period -which aimed at the agglutination of anarchist forces in Brazil -and for the Brazilian Workers Confederation -aiming at the union of Brazilian unions of various ideological tendencies. These organisms were important to foment and later to spread demanding events such as the general strike in São Paulo and the Anarchist Insurrection in Rio de Janeiro in 1918, or in Salvador and Porto Alegre in 1919.

### **Transnational and translocal resistance and the reinforcement of federalism in the face of the effervescence of nationalism (1922-1930)**

During the third decade of the 20th century, anarchism began to have a great reflux, although it had a lot of influence among the working class and in trade unionism until 1937 with the New State. However, in 1922, libertarians officially broke with the paths of the Russian Revolution and had to deal with competitors, many of them already inserted in the labor movement because they were former socialists, unionists and anarchists. In addition, in this period, anarchists were still confronted with large mass movements, many of them nationalist or regionalist, which would be risky of being disputed, such as tenentismo and the São Paulo insurrection of 1924, still counting on a repression that aimed mainly at the libertarian content. with the mandate of Artur Bernardes. The rise of reformist unionism and corporatism at the end of the decade also repre-

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<sup>25</sup> “South American Anarchist Congress.” Na Barricada (Rio de Janeiro), Thursday, October 28, 1915, p. 2.

and against the bosses to take back what they themselves produced.”<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the problem of class struggle, essential in the view of many anarchists, the experience of Rossi and his group did not present an effective integration. For Isabelle Felici, the colony, although it aimed to expand, was restricted most of the time to immigrants established within the experience, most of them Italians (FELICI, 1998). It seemed, therefore, that it was isolated from the Brazilian reality, providing the first clues, therefore, that the perspective that united local reality with international goals was not clear to all adherents of anarchism or libertarian ideals and, as well as other points, should be exercised.

This is a first trend observed in groups in the country that, despite an internationalist stance, and being anchored in ethnic networks, had difficulty integrating with the Brazilian population. Within this context appears the first periodical that presented references to the notions coming from anarchism, the Gli Schiavi Bianchi, started in May 1892, coming from the Brás neighborhood in São Paulo, the first city where we can find a greater concentration of anarchist and libertarian militants, after the experimental projects through colonies (LEAL, 2006, p. 172-173) and where he exemplified well the type of “ethnic anarchism”.<sup>6</sup> With four pages and small headers, the name “Os Escravos Brancos” made a clear reference

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<sup>5</sup> Malatesta, Errico. La Rivendicazione, march 1891, quoted in FELICI, 1998, p. 10

<sup>6</sup> For Luigi Biondi (2008), “the aspects of Italian immigration so far pointed out lead us to the use of concepts such as “ethnic socialism”, already used by Vezzosi for the American case and by [him] for the Brazilian case (from São Paulo)). So we can speak, also considering Benedict Anderson’s latest analysis, of “ethnic anarchism.” The same arguments also make it possible to question the constitution of an ethnic class identity, in an attempt to establish, perhaps, an identity coincidence between national origin and being a worker, a kind of ethnic labor myth that in São Paulo” (BIONDI, 2008), p. 65).

to the situation of immigrant workers on farms and cities that, for the newspaper, were dominated “completely by bourgeois tyranny” and, therefore, needed to free themselves from the “slavery of capital.”<sup>7</sup> The newspaper struggled to maintain itself, it was launched irregularly because, despite being sold for \$100, it accepted voluntary donations and was donated to those who could not pay (LEAL, 2006, p. 179-180). Its declared director and main editor were Galileo Botti, born in Livorno who lived in Buenos Aires until 1890. Due to a strong financial crisis in Argentina and the growth of repression in that country, the character established himself in São Paulo. Botti abandoned his profession as a shoemaker to make liqueurs, a practice that was even prohibited at the time. Apparently, the character had already had contact with anarchism in these countries, as he communicated with the newspapers *Il Perseguido e Lavoriamo* and *Lavoriamo* in Buenos Aires and *Il Farillain Mantova* (COLOMBO, 2004, p.80-81).

Galileo Botti was arrested on charges of not having a license to publish his newspaper and for allegedly slandering the authorities at times. There was an attempt to deport him to Europe, signaling that his periodical was beginning to attract the attention of the authorities and to have some support in the city (LEAL, 2006, p. 177-179). It is quite interesting that his journal had contact networks with other cities, such as in the interior of São Paulo, Paraná, Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. In addition to the countries he visited, Botti also addressed letters and reported on events in France and Spain. Nevertheless, the main theme of the newspaper, in addition to being declared anti-capitalist, was to examine the relationship between the Monarchy and the Republic in Brazil. One of the criticisms regarding the ineffectiveness of republican projects in the country was slavery, which, for the newspaper, was perpetuated, with only the ethnicity of the enslaved being different.

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<sup>7</sup> “Un’ era nuova.” *Gli Schiavi Bianchi* (São Paulo), June 20, 1892, p. 1.

union strength beyond national borders. However, they had differences in their intentions. While the first tried to guarantee the union with ideological groups (socialists, anarchists) and unions (officio or regional) from various parts of the globe, aiming at the union of forces of proletarian origin to especially intend the decisions of the national States in the course of the First World War. The other was specifically proposed by anarchist militants within the confederation, trying to reach other nuclei or libertarian propaganda groups on the South American continent, aiming at a type of program for the performance of their political family within the working-class spaces in which they operated.

Organizations between the countries, such as the proposed South American Workers’ Confederation or even the union sessions of correspondence between South American countries, proposed in the analyzed congresses, did not take place. Nevertheless, for historian Tiago Oliveira (2009), “if the long-awaited South American Workers Confederation did not take place, on the other hand a series of solidarity activities took place, at least on the part of Brazil and Argentina.” (OLIVEIRA, 2009, p. 223). In this way, the ties of continuity, exchange and solidarity proposals that accompanied news about the groups’ activities were brought to the local militancy in the countries in question. Far from being just empty resolutions and agreements, we realized in the coming years that the positions of the congresses, and the use of their decisions and speeches, were taken into account in several libertarian and syndicalist periodicals. Union anarchists, both in Argentina and Brazil, felt strengthened by such events, publishing in several of their communication vehicles the victory not only of this strategy but of their own ideology, justifying it between the labor movement and other ideological and political currents. Policies. Faced with these, the an-

manufacturing space such as the Resistance Association of Coachmen, Coachmen and Attached Classes and the Union of Barbers and Hairdressers Employers, who also guaranteed their own interests in the progressive material struggle. The adhesions managed to be extended internationally among various organizations of an economic or political nature, such as the Union of Worker Classes Weavers and the Union of Syndicalist Youth of Portugal, the Ateneo Sindicalista Ronda and the Grupo de Educacion Anarquista of Spain, the Confederação de Sindicato Obrero de la Republica Mexicana, the Unione Sindicalista Italiana and the Socialist Party of Argentina, who also made calls to attend or strengthen the event (SANTOS, 2016, p. 75-76).

Much more than the internal decisions and debates that it is not possible to follow in the resolutions of the congress, apart from the choice for the continuous use of unionism with a revolutionary intention and the increase of anti-militarism in Organs union bodies of the participating countries, the most interesting are the letters that COB exchanged with FORA and with libertarian groups in Argentina, among them the Agrupacion Anarquista, the Agrupacion Libertaria Orientacion, the Comité Pro-Presos yDeportados, the periodicals La Protesta and La Rebellion, the Liga de Educacion Racionalista, and others.<sup>24</sup> It seems that, from then on, there was a concrete bond between the organisms, which began to observe and accompany each other with more intimacy. It is in this vein that militants from the aforementioned entities then proposed the South American Anarchist Congress, reported in libertarian periodicals such as in La Protesta Humana and Na Barricada (CASTRO, 2007, p. 255).

The two congresses that took place in Rio de Janeiro clearly faced the advance of world conflicts, proposing to guarantee

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<sup>24</sup> See "Correspondence". International Peace Congress. Astrojildo Pereira File: CEDEM, p. 3.

This attitude created the first steps towards the expansion of libertarian ideas and anarchism in the city, although with some other initial paradoxes. As can be seen in the journal, there was a discourse of freedom that cited the "great human family, like the great animal and plant family."<sup>8</sup>, often also citing "white slaves, as well as blacks."<sup>9</sup> Even so, when not sticking to the specific problems of the Brazilian reality, little outside the circles of immigrants, and making a tabula rasa of the country's traditions of struggle, such as the abolitionist one, dealing mostly with the relations of exploitation of workers in their ethnic circle, made their support very large among precarious Italians, a large part of the working class in the city, but excluding, consequently, many Brazilians. In the analysis of the social scientist Clayton Godoy (2013), for this reason, in this period,

"the anarchism was much more dependent on the presence and performance of mediators from other countries and their respective interpersonal networks than on initial absorption, for Brazilian social segments, of ideas disseminated through non-relational mechanisms (GODOY, 2013, p. 85)."

For the author, anarchist ideas and practices, still trapped in small militant circles, were not received by the entire population, a fact that was also due to their issues and languages anchored in ethnic networks. It should be noted that many of the attitudes of Botti and other characters from that period were the result of the immigrant condition in the city where they lived. Angelo Trento informs us that of the 4,100,000 foreigners who entered Brazil between 1886 and 1934, 56% came to the state of São Paulo, and 44.7% of these were Italians. Unlike in Rio de Janeiro, for example, where immigration was individual, the form of establishment of foreigners in São Paulo was for en-

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<sup>8</sup> "Un' era nuova." Gli Schiavi Bianchi (São Paulo), June 20, 1892. p. 1. Our translation.

<sup>9</sup> Gli Schiavi Bianchi (São Paulo), June 20, 1892. p. 2.

tire families. The presence of Italian immigrants was so strong in some neighborhoods and farms that it became the dominant language in several spaces. To Angelo Trento,

”The choice of language in which to publish was certainly not determined by chauvinistic attitudes [...] The transition from one to another language or the decision to publish in Portuguese could not have been easy, since even in 1906 the official spokesperson for the Union of Unions of São Paulo was, with articles almost exclusively in Italian (TRENTO, 1988, p. 243).”

Evidently, along with the language came and developed many customs, traditions, cultures, dilemmas and problems typical of the Italian community. One of the most influential anarchist periodicals in the city of São Paulo, the *La Battaglia*, at times, presented strong ethnic ideas when verifying that

”the national proletariat is still information and no one can ever count on it. It’s a herd of voters at a good price. There is a lack of historical preparation, perhaps also the economic environment within which an indigenous proletariat can be formed. We have good fellow Brazilians, workers or professionals, but please, let’s not look for socialism, syndicalism and anarchism in the indigenous workers’ societies, organized for political purposes, of vulgar politics.”<sup>10</sup>

For historian Luigi Biondi, the group had absorbed, in addition to its explicit political culture, the tradition of Mazzinian republicanism (BIONDI, 1998), with its ideals of popular nationalism coming from the period of Italian unification.<sup>11</sup>for

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<sup>10</sup> *La Battaglia* cited in BIONDI, 1998, p. 198.

<sup>11</sup> Edilene Toledo states: “In the 1820s, unified republican projects aimed at independence had started in the environments of Italian political emigration. However, it was not until the 1830s that the ideal of an Italian unification to be achieved through an authentic popular struggle, and not through conspiracies and agreements with princes, spread among democratically inclined patriots, becoming a concrete doctrine and program of action largely due to the work of Giuseppe Mazzini who, arrested in 1830 for participating in the Carboneria and for his democratic ideas, went into exile in France” (TOLEDO, 2008, p. 3).

was needed to discuss the means of combating the tremendous European war.” They also highlighted that “an agreement between the revolutionary forces of the international proletariat would be of undeniable effectiveness to promote the end of the disgraceful carnage”, thus justifying their attacks. Furthermore, they still used their militant networks around the world to show that

”The *Ateneu Sindicalista Del Ferrol*, Spain, made a call to the advanced proletariat from all over the world to meet in a congress in that city, at the end of April of that year. [...] It happened, however, that the belligerent governments, fearful of the consequences of the hurtful international anti-war assembly, put pressure on the Spanish government and the latter banned the meeting of the *Ferrol Congress*.”<sup>22</sup>

In the call made by the COB for the International Peace Congress, we realized that the event was also perceived as a result of the prohibition of another congress that would take place in Spain, a fact that attests to the link of transnational continuity contained between the anarchist militants present, but also of internationalism. worker who was strengthened through them. In the same way, it is possible to notice the concern to build actions to prevent the weakening of the labor movement in the face of events. The networks of this anarchist and anticlerical group ensured news and adhesions from other libertarian groups such as the Center for Social Studies in Rio de Janeiro, the *Centro Feminino Jovens Idealistas* in São Paulo, the *Grupo Anarquista Renovação de Santos*, the periodicals *La Protesta* and *La Rebelion* from Argentina, the *União Anarquista Comunista* from Portugal, the *Grupo Educacion Anarquista* from Spain and others with whom they had closer relations.<sup>23</sup> Alagoas, as well as workers outside the specifically

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<sup>22</sup> “For Peace.” *Na Barricada* (Rio de Janeiro), September 2, 1915, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> See “Subscriptions” and “Correspondence.” *International Peace Congress*. Astrojildo Pereira File: CEDEM.



as the current state of affairs, -some giving their lives on the battlefields, in holocaust to the god of capital, the others, as a result of the industrial and commercial crisis, dying of hunger and misery, without either of us having a gesture of rebellion to rise up against the causes of such a monstrous crime against humanity.”<sup>21</sup>

Anarchists, trade unionists and socialists in the country were referring to the International Peace Congress in Spain and the Anarchist Congress in London, scheduled for 1914, which were unable to take place, either because of the new difficulties of traffic of militants and periodicals from one country to another. or by the intensification of repression in these countries. Even so, militants of the labor movement, as if in a connection network, continued the aborted debates, especially in the case of pacifism and anti-militarism, building events and bodies outside the countries most directly affected by the conflicts.

It is in this context that, in September 1915, the Brazilian Workers Confederation, through the periodical *A Voz do Trabalhador* and *Na Barricada*, reported the International Peace Congress, scheduled for October 14, 15 and 16 at Praça Tiradentes, no. 71, in Rio de Janeiro. This last mentioned newspaper was created in the same year with a perspective similar to that of the periodical *Guerra Social* in São Paulo, but the tradition of its editors, involved with unionist projects, as was the case of Astrojildo Pereira, also a member of the most his anti-militarist experience in the periodical *A Guerra Social*, resulted in quick actions with an already structured union base, even though Confederation was going through a moment of reanimation. In order to carry out the first event, the activists and editors of the organizations claimed that an “international meeting of socialists, unionists and anarchists

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<sup>21</sup> Organizing Committee. International Peace Congress. Astrojildo Pereira File: CEDEM –Unesp.

example, they had a marked and even majority presence of immigrants who, in turn, saw themselves isolated, with a good part of the population, from institutional politics and, in this sense, this tendency facilitated the processes of political and union organization at first, although it presented and potentiated barriers with other groups, such as workers born in the country.

However, if ethnic ties and the dissemination of outside ideas were, in fact, undeniable trends, this character did not cancel the reception of these ideologies by previously existing movements or by clashes between social positions constituted in previous years. The author Marcelo Badaró Mattos (2009) states, in the specific case of Rio de Janeiro, that it was not rare for individuals, previously linked to the abolitionist or also republican movements, who joined in the construction of relevant labor organizations, including those with socialist and revolutionary.

This case was certainly related to the construction of newspapers and anarchist groups such as *O Amigo do Povo* (1902) in São Paulo, *O Despertar* (1898) in Rio de Janeiro, *A Nova Era* (1906-1907) in Minas Gerais and *A Luta* (1906-1911) from Rio Grande do Sul that brought together immigrants and Brazilians in their compositions and made efforts to enter the popular support movements.

This seems to have been the case of the periodical *O Protesto*, with the participation of Sarmiento Marques and the direction of Joaquim Mota Assunção. The latter militant was born in Portugal but came to Brazil with his father and three brothers at the age of eight. First, Mota Assunção and part of his family settled in agricultural colony in the west of São Paulo, subsidized by the State. The character moved to the country’s capital in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, where he worked as a tram conductor and later as a typographer and typesetter. The newspaper of his direction had 12 issues with a circulation of 1,000 to 1,500

copies and already showed a greater insertion in workers' associations, which, under the column "Movimento Operário Social", pointed out the claims and specificities of the so-called "bond workers". and also the attempt to create a Federation of Workers that was established at Rua Tobias Barreto, nº 37.<sup>12</sup> Mota Assunção took advantage of this organizational experience and presented many anti-capitalist and clearly anarchist or libertarian quotes and columns, starting with its header citing "property is a theft" by Pierre Joseph Proudhon and "expropriation is a necessity" by Piotr Kropotkin.<sup>13</sup> With that, it was already in the news and attempts were made to organize the categories of painters, barbers, weavers, bakers and hatters and typographers, known for being demanding in the city, spreading ideas such as republicanism, socialism and anarchism (MATTOS, 2008, p. 13-14).

But the way in which the group and the character act also reveals the specificities of the composition of the working class in the city and its relationship with immigration. Unlike São Paulo, with the majority of Italians, Rio de Janeiro was the main destination for Portuguese people who, in the 1890s, attracted 106,461 of these immigrants in a population of 522,651 people. During this period, the Portuguese represented 20.37% of the population in the region and 68.60% of the immigrants (OLIVEIRA, 2009). Despite the city being known for its Portuguese appearance due to the presence of the Portuguese court decades ago, the choice still had other constraints. The fact was that there was a continuous contingent of precarious individuals in search of better living conditions, especially in rural areas of Portugal, which had increased sharply since the mid-19th century. In addition, like São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and other regions, Rio

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<sup>12</sup> See "Social Workers Movement." O Protesto (Rio de Janeiro), December 3, 1889. p.3 and O Protesto, December 3, 1899, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> O Protesto (Rio de Janeiro), November 3, 1899, p. 1.

immigrants became more common over the years. The context of the First World War that hampered the flow of immigrants to the country, as well as barring their attempt to return to their homeland, was added to the great migration from rural areas to the industrial center, conditions that resulted in the emergence of a set of ideas that took into account "building a life in São Paulo without thinking about going back (BIONDI, 2011, p. 160-161)". A fact that, for other authors, such as Sheldon Maram, meant, even with the continued instability in the lives of residents of working-class neighborhoods, to stick more incisively to the class struggle in their region (MARAM, 1979, p. 56-57).

On this last point, despite being critical and far from more structured labor organizations, the opening of the group to Brazilian and Portuguese militants made the organizational and syndicalist groups of the anarchist political family have contact with the discussion of Guerra Sociale around of the First World War, which came from the Balkan conflicts. This factor, together with contact with other transnational networks, made other groups stick to propaganda against national conflicts in a more programmatic way. On this last point, anarchist groups from various parts of the world also denounced the repression that was being intensified against the labor movement and anarchism itself, which was turned into propaganda trying to inflame demands, strikes and strikes or even the construction of bodies and associations. under the local level:

"To socialists, trade unionists, anarchists and workers' organizations around the world. The pressure exerted by the governments of the belligerent nations on the Spanish government, forcing it to prohibit the meeting, in Ferrol, of the International Peace Congress, scheduled for 30 April this year, is proof that the governments of the bourgeoisie fear that the proletarians of the whole world, let us come to combine efforts and, together, let us put a stop to the horrible slaughter [...]. Belligerent and neutral, we suffer the same consequences

than half of the proletarian class, to have an organ that neutralizes nationalist propaganda. and other trends, made in Italian, to an Italian audience. On the other hand, the indifference of the indigenous element is disappearing on social issues and “Guerra Sociale” already has a large number of Brazilian subscribers, who demand a more developed collaboration in Portuguese. [...] We invite, therefore, the comrades who know how to write Portuguese [...], to collaborate with perseverance for our current Portuguese session, which if it does not come out wider today, it is because we lack collaborators.”<sup>20</sup>

We do not know whether this attitude increased the number of copies of the journal, but it is possible to note that this initiative added more collaborators and activists from different origins such as Portuguese, Spanish and Brazilians, among them João Crispim, Rafael Esteve, Neno Vasco and Florentino de Carvalho. This fact ended up increasing the number of columns of the newspaper, previously containing four pages, but which doubled its size and established weekly regularity. Therefore, it is still an essential attitude for the direction that the editors, at the time, wanted to give the newspaper.

It is necessary to emphasize that the reformulation of the group and the journal, as well as its greater sensitivity to the different ethnic groups in the country, were not part of an insight or an epiphany out of context as we are claiming. In addition to possibly absorbing all the discussions of the workers’ movement in the last decade in the country and in some parts of the world, in addition to knowing the resolutions of the Second Workers’ Congress and of the anarchist nuclei in distant regions of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the situation of workers and subaltern groups was not the same as it was years ago. Although, as noted, a good part of the population in the industrial centers of the city of São Paulo had their roots in the European continent, their experience with Brazilians or other

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<sup>20</sup> Guerra Sociale (São Paulo), January 27, 1917, p.1.

de Janeiro has become a target destination for representing one of the emerging industrial centers offering activities and jobs. Its special feature was also the presence of an extensive commercial area that attracted a large number of unskilled workers who sought after activities as assistants to merchants, stevedores, barbers, tram conductors, bakers and others. For Carla Mary Oliveira (2009) being

”mostly single men, the Portuguese who arrived in Rio de Janeiro ended up settling there, in the center of the city and its surroundings, in Gamboa, Saúde, Castelo, and went to work, almost always, in functions that they did not need prior qualification (OLIVEIRA, 2009, p. 153).”

Mota Assunção had already lived in Brazil for some time, the first factor that allows us to think that his sharing with anarchism may have occurred with his experience among these precarious workers, which foreigners, but also Brazilians, made up. Evidently, forms of association between individuals from the same country or region were common, even in places where they did not receive family immigration, preserving cultural aspects of their origins, as well as books, experiences and currents of thought. This, in fact, makes it more likely that the militant has known and disseminated libertarian ideas among immigrant militants, mostly Portuguese (SAMIS, 2009), but we cannot exclude their integration with others, such as Spaniards and Italians –that existed in large numbers in the city<sup>14</sup>-and even Brazilians.

Regarding this last group, we can see, as the composition of the following strikes attests, that such ideas were already being developed by categories of unskilled workers with a large population contingency, which Portuguese and Brazilians shared intimately, among the latter many ex-slaves (MATTOS, 2008,

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<sup>14</sup> Although there are not many studies of Italian immigrants in Rio de Janeiro, it is known that this group was also important for the configuration of the working class (BERTONHA, 2014).

pp. 37-82). The construction of the São Paulo Workers' Federation (FOSP), with many anarchists agglutinating a majority of leagues and unions with ethnic backbones, and the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ), with its more intimate presence with Brazilians and Portuguese, sought projects and, for the first time in 1906, they founded, with other organizations, the Brazilian Workers' Confederation –an attempt by revolutionary syndicalism to have a national dimension, which shows the beginning of a debate of the Brazilian national imagination for the syndicalist struggle, which anarchists and other groups defended in the period:

”With this, the first step is taken towards the awakening of the proletariat of Brazil and the foundations are laid for a future organization, made by common accord and with a determined purpose. It is necessary for Brazilian workers to open their eyes and realize the mystifications of which they are being victims. You must understand that your enemy is not outside Brazil, that your enemy is not the foreigner, but the capitalist, the bourgeois, the military, the priest and all the mainstays of the iniquitous organization of present society, and that these enemies we have them here in Brazil, as they are everywhere, and it is up to the workers as the main victims to prepare to fight them here, while our comrades, the workers of our nations, do the same in their respective countries.<sup>15</sup>”

For many libertarian militants, therefore, the institution of the COB could be a good means of instituting, if not their ideology, at least some practices of their political culture, thus justifying, in the working class, revolutionary proposals of “common agreement and with an end determined.” This same medium also showed that national and ethnic rivalries blinded and hindered the unity and gains of these workers, an exercise that tried both to revoke the ideals of superiority

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<sup>15</sup> “Brazilian Workers Confederation.” *A Voz do Trabalhador* (Rio de Janeiro), July 1, 1908, p. 1.

inequities.” It is worth mentioning that this tactic was also used by many groups that were previously abolitionists or black resistance and that later became union associations. The historian Marcelo Badaró Mattos, in this sense, followed the trajectory of the militant João de Mattos and the *Sociedade Protetora dos Empregadores em Padaria* and found that many agents who fought for the end of slavery later developed an ideology of “struggle for freedom continued by the workers’ struggle” built by “disappointment with the Republican State; awareness of the opposition of class interests between employers and employees and the need for organized collective action (MATTOS, 2008, p. 221)”.

We do not have evidence that shows the contact of the periodical *Guerra Sociale* with any black or indigenous personage, or even a group or association that had a tradition of abolitionist struggle such as the one mentioned, nor even the inclination or search for these on the part of the writers. Nevertheless, recognizing that there were historical and social differences that had to be overcome, taking into account the special needs of each ethnic group, and that it was still necessary to unify the producing or oppressed class among its different demands, since such thoughts of segregation would be instrumentalized by the class dominant in order to segregate the exploited and hinder the struggle for equality, the group in question tried to create tactics to reformulate the newspaper’s own dissemination and writing, in line with anarchism in other parts of the country, which had Brazilian groups. So, despite assuming that their readers were mostly immigrants or their children, this was a good opportunity to include columns in other languages, especially that of the country:

”The need for a Portuguese edition of “*Guerra Sociale*” is becoming more and more felt every day. Giving up, however, the Italian edition is impossible and for economic reasons, since most of our subscribers are Italians and also because it is essential, in a state where Italian immigration constitutes more

the form of racism, still affected the country. In this sense, it is interesting to notice that these characters understood that racist thoughts and practices were shared by a large part of the population, highlighting the middle and upper classes, but that they came from different spheres of domination, such as cultural and ideological as well as economic. In this case, these anarchists were trying to change the discourse that claimed that all classes were supposedly equally enslaved -a rhetoric that embodied the working class, but that diluted or ignored its existing racial and ethnic conflicts. The tactic also bet on the complete destruction of the groups that owned the means of production and the political class-the result was the same-but it recognized the weakness of the former enslaved and indigenous people, showing which social class was supposedly responsible for such a situation. Both the situation of the immigrant or national workers and the national conflicts, underlined by the newspaper, were attributed to the bourgeoisie and the representatives of the State who, for them,

”they live on lies, on the crime of exploitation and violence, barbarously enslaving the working classes, unfairly stealing the product of our work, detaining [sic?] the land and other instruments of production, which constitute the patrimony of humanity. [...] Working modern slaves, we are the most useful, we constitute true humanity by number and value. The time has come to start a new redemptive crusade. Therefore, the new champions, the new propagandists of abolition -of the capitalist regime, of the State and of all social inequities arise [...].”<sup>19</sup>

The anarchists of the periodical *Guerra Sociale* tried to show the connections between the end of slavery and the formation of the working class, which they called “modern slaves”, yet recognizing that there were differences within the class itself and therefore, in addition to economic exploitation, the activities that anarchists proclaimed would end all “social

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<sup>19</sup> Idem, p. 3-4.

of foreigners to workers born in the country or the reaction of the latter against such racist discourses and practices, also promoting means of segregation. The Brazilian unity thus appeared as a way of organizing these workers as long as they understood that the real enemies, for the editors, were all over the world, as were their companions as well. Thus, it was possible to unite associations such as the *Società Internazionale do Brás*, the *Società Operaia da Lapa*, the *Unione Operaia Civiltà e Progresso* and others with an Italian ethnic tendency -although not closed to them -that made up, among others, the FOSP (BIONDI, 2012). ) and the *Sociedade Cooperativa dos Empregados em Padarias do Brasil*, the *Resistance of Workers in Trapiches and Café* and the *União dos Operários do dockers* who “were basically formed by black associates” (MATTOS, 2008, p. 135), from FORJ, all of which also made up the COB.

### **Antimilitarism, national unity and practical internationalism (1913-1922)**

A second phase can be observed with the outbreak of the Balkan wars, which anarchists of Italian origin observed, and after the First World War, passing through the Russian Revolution and its hardening. During this period, anarchists tried to overcome their previously ethnocentric positions, although their difficulty in articulating, in cities and regions with an immigrant majority, with the black and indigenous struggle still existed in practice. Nevertheless, its diffusion in the country in areas with a non-white majority, such as Bahia and Pernambuco, and the articulation of both union and specifically anarchist organizations that attempted a Brazilian national unity was deepened. Transnational bodies were also heavily supported, not only in Europe, but in South America. The Russian Revolution also intensified, as propaganda and practice, an internationalism that was mobilized and trans-

lated into local demands, strikes and strikes, strengthening syndicalism, anarchism and later Bolshevism and communism.

Interesting in this case is to follow, in 1915, the formulation of the periodical *La Guerra Sociale*, later passed only to *Guerra Sociale*. Containing four pages and obtaining, accepting voluntary donations or annual subscriptions of 5\$000 or biannual subscriptions of 3\$000, the periodical had the direction of Angelo Bandoni, being printed in an undisclosed place, had larger headlines and more incisive and smaller texts and assumed positions that the group in question had taken since the beginning of their trajectories, such as the preparation for the anti-capitalist revolution, equally opposed to exploitation in factories and state powers. For these characters to ignite such positions, the Great War was the scenario that would explain the nationalist and militarist evocations that came from the “interests of capital: rivalry, the appetite of different financial groups, colonial expansionism, statism, nationalism, all its institutions and all its morals, based on violence [...]”, all of which were not a “curse of an evil god, now cynical and fierce, but of a social order.”<sup>16</sup>

Interpreting that the clashes of a nationalist nature came from projects linked to the groups that owned the means of industrial production that influenced political directions, those involved with the foundation of the newspaper, mostly from the Italian regions, began to stress the ethnocentric position that some militants, years before, had presented. About another campaign, the newspaper showed:

“[...] we live under a part of the land we call Brazil, which has a president, ministers, deputies, employees and soldiers. Well, another country called Argentina is its neighbor, which in turn also has a president, ministers, deputies, employees and soldiers, it is neighbor to another country called Chile, neigh-

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<sup>16</sup> “Per la nostra guerra e per la nostra pace.” *Guerra Sociale*, September 20, 1916, p. 1. Our translation.

bor to this one called Peru, etc., etc., which are component parts of America and the world –in all these countries live men formed just like us, with a nose, a mouth, eyes and ears, men who don’t know us and don’t want to harm us, and to whom, in turn, , we wish no harm.”<sup>17</sup>

Much more than just propagating a supposed value of equality at the discursive level, as it was done, the strong resumption of internationalism reformulated with the First World War resulted again in the search for historical elements that could prove the reasons for these inequalities between different groups, provided that within of a “social order”:

”The aspirations that animated the combatants for the extinction of the slavery of men of color were great and generous, but in reality the cursed slavery of the proletarian masses has not yet been abolished. In fact, colored men continue to be regarded as slaves, as beasts. Today, it is said among bourgeois people ‘whoever escaped in white is black and black is not people’. The hatred of the race endures in all its intensity, turning to men of color the deepest contempt. And not only do former slavers, priests and civil servants declare that men of color have no spirit or intelligence, but even pseudo scientists maintain that the black race and the mestizo are species or varieties incapable of evolving. This list also includes the indigenous, inhabitants of the sertões, who are victims of the ferocity of national or foreign slavers, types without guts, who with the help of henchmen and legal forces massacre these poor people.[...]”<sup>18</sup>

Contrary to neglecting the abolitionist struggles as some Italian anarchist groups did in the last century in the city, the characters around the *Guerra Sociale*, evoked them as “great and generous”, but tried to show that the enslaved position, in

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<sup>17</sup> “A’smãis”. *Guerra Sociale* (São Paulo), May 1st 1916, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> “May 13: to modern slaves.” *Guerra Sociale* (São Paulo), May 20, 1916, p. 3.