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# The anarchist movement in North Africa: 1877-1951

Lucien van der Walt & Michael Schmidt

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The history of the broad anarchist tradition in North Africa has yet to be written, and must therefore be pieced together from a wide variety of sources. Modern, developed Egypt was – and still is – largely confined by its desert wastes to a narrow fertile funnel embracing the capital of Cairo on the Nile River and the Nile delta port cities of Alexandria and Port Said. Originally part of the Ottoman Empire, it became an autonomous Ottoman province under the dynasty of Mohammed Ali from 1805, but the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 proved too much of a temptation for imperialist Britain, which occupied the country in 1882. In “Egypt and Tunis,” Max Nettlau argues, “Italian Anarchist émigrés and refugees were for many years the life and spirit of libertarian activity,” but he adds little other material in either his *Short History of Anarchism*, or, indeed, the section on North Africa in his ten-volume study of anarchist history<sup>1</sup>. Spain often used its territories in the Sahara and the Canary Islands as penal colonies for its dissidents: it was

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<sup>1</sup> A *Short History of Anarchism*, Max Nettlau, Freedom Press, London, UK, 1996, First Published 1934.

here, for example, that both Durruti and Ascaso were imprisoned in 1932. A range of other materials have been drawn together by Van der Walt, whose notes are incorporated here<sup>2</sup>.

An Italian anarchist journal, *Il Lavoratore* (The Labourer), began printing in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1877, and Alexandrian anarchists were represented at the 1877 Verviers Congress of the Saint-Imier International. Malatesta himself fled to Alexandria in September 1878, but was deported when Italian workers organised a demonstration outside the Italian consulate to applaud an assassination attempt against Italian King Umberto I by a republican. He represented an 'Egyptian Federation' at the 1881 International Social Revolutionary Congress of the anarchists, with a mandate from 'bodies from Constantinople and Alexandria.' Malatesta returned to Egypt in 1882, – the year the country was invaded by the British – where he appears to have been involved in the 'Pasha revolt' that broke out that year, and which was suppressed by British forces. In 1884, the paper *La Question Sociale* (The Social Question) appeared in Egypt. In 1877, the journal *L'Operaia* (The Worker), appeared in Tunis, followed in 1881 by the Italian anarchist journal *Imola* (Inflame), published by Andrea Costa, and another, *La Protesta Humana* (Human Protest) was subsequently published in the city before relocating to Italy in 1896.

The Egyptian newspaper *al-Hilal* (The Crescent) reported on 18 March 1894 that a Greek worker was arrested in Alexandria for distributing 'anarchist leaflets' calling on workers to celebrate the anniversary of the 1871 Paris Commune.

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<sup>2</sup> This piece and Lucien's notes are an edited extract from *Global Fire: 150 Fighting Years of International Anarchism & Syndicalism* (Counterpower Vol.2), Michael Schmidt & Lucien van der Walt, AK Press, USA, [in process, but possibly to be published in 2010]. For brief introductions to the history of anarchism in parts of North Africa, look at Stiobhard's work at: a) Algeria: <http://stiobhard.tripod.com/east/algeria.html> b) Tunisia: <http://stiobhard.tripod.com/east/tunisia.html> c) Egypt: <http://stiobhard.tripod.com/east/egypt/html>

in Paris. Cavan was in fact René Cavanhié who also sat on the FAF's national committee and he asked about activities on "the Spanish coast," indicated concern that the group in Oran had not been heard of in some time, but supposed the MLAN was still working together with "the Tunis group". Revealed in this letter is the intriguing suggestion, apparently raised by exiled "Spanish comrades" of the FAI, that the MLAN fuse with the FAI forces in North Africa. The CRIA archives retain no further letters between the MLAN and the CRIA, suggesting that this merger did, in fact, take place and that the MLAN thus became part of the FAI and so of the broader libertarian exile resistance movement. The FAI was re-established in Iberia after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974 (provoked by the liberation wars in Portugal's African colonies and precipitating Portuguese decolonisation) and the death of Franco in Spain in 1975 and continues to this day. In 1953, the year that Mohamed died and Fontenis gave the oration at his funeral, Fontenis' platformist faction within the FAF, the Thought Battle Organisation (OPB), took over the FAF, renamed it the Libertarian Communist Federation (FCL) and adopted a pro-Algerian liberation line. The synthesist remnant reconstituted the FAF. Morocco and Tunisia gained independence in 1956 and some anarchists of European origin may well have stayed. But the situation in Algeria quickly spiralled out of control into all-out warfare. What became of the anarchists in Oran, Algiers and the bled is unknown to us, but it is likely that many were either killed or fled to France, especially after France's loss of Algeria as a colony in 1962 following the Oran Massacre of that year. We will examine the anarchist responses to decolonisation in Africa and South-East Asia – especially the very different attitudes of the FCL and the FAF – in a future edition of Zabalaza.

In 1901, an anarchist paper entitled *La Tribune Libre* (The Free Tribune) was also being published in Alexandria. In Alexandria, an Italian-language anarchist weekly, *l'Operaio* (The Worker) began publishing in 1902 and ran until the following year. In 1904, the Arabic-language radical journal *al-Nur* (The Light) was established in Alexandria by Daud Muja'is, the Syrian-Lebanese editor of *al-Hurriyya* (Freedom) of Beirut (1909-1910?). According to Khuri-Makdisi<sup>3</sup>, *al-Nur* had a correspondent in Cairo, was published until 1908, increasingly took an anarchist line and had subscribers among the Syrian-Lebanese Diaspora as far afield as Haiti and Brazil – one of the best examples of the extent of North African anarchist influence.

The Italian-language *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Subversive Chronicles), published in Vermont, United States from 1903 onwards by Luigi Galleani, reached 'far beyond the confines of the United States' including North Africa and Egypt. Italian radicals played a key role in founding the labour movement in Egypt, forming a People's Free University in Alexandria in 1901, and activists associated with the University and *Le Tribune Libre* appear to have been amongst those involved in founding 'international' unions in early 20th Century Egypt. Most notable was the International League of Cigarette Workers and Millers of Cairo in 1908, 'open to workers of all nationalities, Egyptians as well as foreigners,' and apparently including 'production workers other than the skilled rollers.' Other examples of integrated labour solidarity existed. A meeting in 1901 in support of striking garment workers (including Egyptians) in a Cairo café included a speech by the president of the cigarette rollers' craft union, and a reading of the workers' demands in Arabic as well as Greek, Italian,

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<sup>3</sup> *Levantine Trajectories: The Formulation and Dissemination of Radical Ideas in and between Beirut, Cairo and Alexandria 1860-1914*, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, Harvard University, 2003.

Hebrew and German. This was followed by a march of 3,000 chanting workers through Cairo. What is interesting is that European cigarette workers living in Egypt were radicalised by the likes of the Egyptian syndicalists and returned to Europe to spread anarchist ideas there. Two notable examples of this are the anarcho-syndicalist Konstantinos “Kostas” Speras (1893-1943) and the anarchist-communist Stavros Kouchtsoglous (1878-1949). Both were radicalised in Egypt and returned to Greece to become the leading lights in the revolutionary trade union movement there. Speras was fluent in Arabic and Kouchtsoglous was involved in numerous worker demonstrations in Alexandria and Istanbul. They both helped establish anarcho-syndicalist trade unions in Greece including the syndicalist minority within the General Workers’ Confederation of Greece (GSEE) in 1918<sup>4</sup>.

Although these cases are not necessarily representative, they do indicate that anarchists were involved in founding racially integrated unions in colonial Egypt. The evidence for anarchist activity for subsequent years is less clear. Bearing in mind the possible mistranslation of ‘syndicalist,’ in academic studies, and the misapplication of the term ‘anarchist’ in official records, it is possible to find mentions of subsequent activity. Investigations into the assassination of the Egyptian Prime Minister, Butrus Ghali in February 1910, for example, revealed the existence of a number of secret societies, including one splinter group, founded in 1908, based on both Sufism – a mystical form of Islam – and ‘Syndicalism’. In 1919, Viscount Allenby of the British administration in Egypt noted in his records that ‘while the nationalist movement had lost some of its strength the syndicalist movement was growing,

<sup>4</sup> a) Konstantinos Speras: the Life and Activities of a Greek Anarcho-Syndicalist, Leonardis Kottis, Libertarian Historical Archive and Vivliopelagus Editions, Athens, Greece, 2001, translated into English in 2005 by James Sotros. b) Stavros Kouchtsoglous – a Greek Anarchist Communist, James Sotros, 2009.

under which each suffered. The Moroccan Section is not mentioned in the CRIA correspondence but presumably was based in the French-colonised Atlantic Ocean ports of Casablanca and Rabat and not in the Francoist-occupied Mediterranean ports of Ceuta and Melilla. In its first manifesto, Doukhan, secretary of the MLAN’s Algerian Section, announced that the principles of the MLAN’s Algerian Section were: “For economic and racial equality and the establishment of libertarian communism,” a “harmonious society based on solidarity, mutual aid, co-operation and federalism,” and opposed itself to “patrimonial feudal colonialism,” racism, war and imperialism. It appears to be a carbon-copy of the FAF’s positions. That was a tall order, for an undated CRIA document on the parlous circumstances in which the MLAN found itself noted that the Algerian Section consisted of only “three comrades in Algiers, and several comrades dispersed and isolated in the bled (the small-town countryside)”. Nevertheless, the Algerian Section embarked on a definition of its principles and tactics, a possible sign of the hands of Fontenis and Prudhommeaux in shaping the North African movement.

In 1950, Doukhan wrote to the CRIA Secretariat in Paris from the MLAN office at No.6 Rue du Rousillon, Algiers, saying that the Algerian Section had been legalised by the authorities on 31 March. As a result, the MLAN in Algeria was demanding its right to autonomy from the FAF and on its right to register in its own name as an affiliate of “the Anarchist Organisations” – presumably the CRIA<sup>14</sup>. In April 1951, a letter was written to the MLAN in Algiers from “R. Cavan” of the CRIA

<sup>14</sup> The original French text reads in part: “C’est a la occasion de la legalisation du M.L.A.N. (seccion Algerienne) par les pouvoir publics em date du 31 Mars 1950 sous le No. 4.189 et de sa constitution et autonomie par rapport au le F.A.F. a laquelle nous appartenions en tant que 13e Region du 2 September 1947 jusqu’au 31 Mars 1950 que nous avons la satisfaction de vous demander: - de nous assigner s’il y a lieu, la tache qui nous correspond afin de collaborer a meme titre que les Organisations Anarchistes adherentes.”

the IWA), Germany, Guatemala, India, Israel, Italy (Italian Anarchist Federation, GAAP Filosofo, GAR-FAI and Umanita Nova), Japan (Japanese Anarchist Federation), Korea (Korean Anarchist Movement), Mexico, the Netherlands (Vrijheid), North Africa (the North African Libertarian Movement of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia), Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain (Libertarian Movement in Exile and National Confederation of Labour), Sweden, Switzerland (Swiss Romande Anarchist Movement), Uruguay, the United States (Libertarian League, Free Voice of Labor, Resistance, and Cultura Proletaria), Venezuela, and Yugoslavia. The CRIA held its first congress in Paris in 1949 and at its congress in London in 1958, it joined with the Provisional Secretariat on International Relations (SPIRA) and was transformed into the Anarchist International Commission which survived until about 1960 but laid the groundwork for the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF) established in 1968.

It is the North African Libertarian Movement (MLAN) that intrigues us here. It appears from CRIA correspondence in the immediate post-war period<sup>13</sup> that the MLAN was a French-speaking organisation with close ties to the strong anarchist movement on the French mainland, and was divided into a Moroccan Section, an Algerian Section, and a Tunisian Section. It seems that the Algerian Section was, from 2 September 1947, recognised as the “13th Region” of the Paris-based Francophone Anarchist Federation (FAF). The Tunisian Section, appears to have started life as the Tunisian Libertarian Movement (MLT) and later also become a FAF affiliate after correspondence with Georges Fontenis. The MLT apparently initially shied away from affiliation to the Algerian Section because of the differences in the colonial administrations

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<sup>13</sup> CRIA-MLAN correspondence 1947-1951, very kindly provided to the ZACF by Frédéric Deshusses, archivist, CRIA International Centre for Research into Anarchism, 2008.

with secret support from Italian journalists. A curiosity in this period was the production in 1921 of a French-Egyptian silent film called *Aziz Bey, l'Anarchiste*, the existence of which is noted in the list of anarchist-themed films compiled in 2004 by the International Centre for Research into Anarchism (CIRA) in Switzerland<sup>5</sup>. The mere creation of a film about an Egyptian anarchist, fictional or not, suggests the presence and influence of anarchist ideas in Egyptian society at that stage. While the Egyptian socialist movement seems to have been eclipsed by nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s, it revived in the 1940s. The years 1942-5 saw the establishment of various socialist groups in Egypt, including one ‘under the syndicalist leader Mudarak.’

Algeria, under French rule from 1830, was also a site of anarchist activity. A range of anarchist journals were published in Algiers at the end of the 19th Century, including *L'Action Revolutionnaire* (Revolutionary Action)(1887), *Le Tocsin* (The Alarm)(1890), *Le Libertaire* (The Libertarian)(1892) and *La Marmite Sociale* (The Social Cauldron) (1893). According to Anderson, by 1894, Jean Grave’s influential anarchist-communist *La Révolte*(Revolt)had subscribers as far afield as Algeria and Egypt, while Emile Pouget’s anarcho-insurrectionist *Le Père Peinard* (The Toiling Father)

had subscribers in Algeria and Tunisia, the latter a former Ottoman province that became a French protectorate in 1881<sup>6</sup>. Fernand Pelloutier’s 1895 *Anarchism and the Workers Unions* ... mentions that anarchists had become increasingly active in “many trade unions”, including those in Algiers. The anarchist Victor Barroucand published a daily called *Les Nouvelles* (The New) in Algiers in the first decade of the 20th Century: its most famous correspondent was Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904), the

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<sup>5</sup> *Anarchists on Screen 1901-2003*, CIRA Bulletin 60, International Centre for Research into Anarchism, Lausanne, Spring 2004.

<sup>6</sup> *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination*, Benedict Anderson, Verso, London, UK, and New York, USA, 2005.

Swiss-Ukrainian dockworker/adventurer/writer whose father had been a friend of Bakunin. The syndicalist successor of the French General Confederation of Labour (CGT), the CGT - Revolutionary Syndicalist (CGT-SR) apparently operated a section in Algeria. Like the other French anarchist organisations, the CGT-SR opposed French colonialism. Thus, a joint statement by the Anarchist Union, the CGT-SR, and the Association of Anarchist Federations denounced the centenary of the French occupation of Algeria in 1930, arguing 'Civilisation? Progress? We say: murder!'

A prominent militant in the CGT-SR's Algerian section, as well as in the Anarchist Union was Saïl Mohamed (1894-1953), an Algerian anarchist active in the anarchist movement from the 1910s until his death in 1953<sup>7</sup>. Although resident in Paris and Aulnay-sous-bois for much of his life, Mohamed was a founder of organisations such as the Association for the Rights of the Indigenous Algerians and the Anarchist Group of the Indigenous Algerians with Sliman Kiouane in 1923, organised meetings on the colonial exploitation of North Africans in both French and Arabic, and was the secretary of the anarchist 'Algerian Defence Committee Against the Provocations of the Centenary' in 1929. Saïl Mohamed was also editor of the North African edition of the anarchist periodical *Terre Libre* (Free Earth), all copies of which have, sadly, been lost. Jailed on numerous occasions, Saïl Mohamed was also a contributor to anarchist journals such as *L'Eveil Social*, and *La Voix Libertaire* (The Libertarian Voice), often on the Algerian question, and fought as a volunteer in the international section of the Durruti Column ... in the Spanish Revolution. The interna-

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<sup>7</sup> Mohamed, Saïl (1894-1953), *Organise!* #58, Anarchist Federation, UK, online at: <http://libcom.org/history/mohamed-sail-1894-1953> A collection of Mohamed's writings from the 1920s-1950s is available in *Appels aux Travailleurs Algériens*, Saïl Mohammed, Groupe Fresnes-Antony, France, *Fédération Anarchiste*, 1994.

was arrested there in March 1941 and deported to Spain where he was sentenced to death (he was later released and lived in Paris the rest of his life, dying in 1975). What role, if any, these exiles played in the 1945 uprising in Algeria, is not known to us, but Santamaria stayed on in Algeria acting as the secretary of the CNT's North African branch until he travelled to Toulouse, France, in 1946 to represent North Africa at the MLE's Intercontinental Congress the following year. He stayed on in Toulouse, however, becoming the city's FAI secretary in 1948-1950, helping to reunite the revolutionary and reformist CNT factions in 1960/1, helping re-establish the CNT in Spain after Franco's death.

In May 1948, at a pan-European anarchist conference in Paris, the Anarchist International Relations Commission (CRIA) was established by, among others, Parisian anarchist bookstore owner, former Friends of Durruti supporter and editor of *Le Libertaire*, André Prudhommeaux (1902-1968), Ildefonso Gonzalez, Renée Lamberet of the International Workers Association, Clément Fournier, Jules Pulidori and René Cavanhié, with the aim of maintaining ties between the dispersed and rather battered, but still vibrant post-war anarchist movement<sup>12</sup>. CRIA established a sister organisation in Latin America, the Montevideo-based Continental Commission of Anarchist Relations (CCRA). The CRIA saw itself as continuing the work of the 1907 Amsterdam International and maintained a network of correspondence between organisations, journals and individual militants in Argentina, Australia (League for Freedom), Bolivia, Brazil, Britain (Anarchist Federation of Britain), Bulgaria (the exiled Bulgarian Libertarian Union in France), Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, France (Francophone Anarchist Federation, Revolutionary Anarchist Action Groups, and

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<sup>12</sup> CIRA Bulletin 64, International Centre for Research into Anarchism, Lausanne, September 2008.

The Italian conquest of Libya, and the Nazi victory over half of France had been followed by the suppression of the left in North Africa. By 1939, it seems clear that the anarchist tradition had largely withered away in Egypt, but remained extant in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, with its links to the CGT-SR and the work of activists like Saïl Mohamed, and the existence of communities of foreign anarchists such as the Spanish exiles in the city of Oran. Among these exiles was Roque Santamaria Cortiguera (?-1980), a CNT-FIJL (National Confederation of Labour-Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth) barber who had sat on the Council of Valencia during the Revolution, and who fled to Oran after the Francoist victory in 1939. He is described by Stuart Christie as “a militant of great merit, with particular strengths as a public speaker and polemicist and well versed in matters organisational”<sup>11</sup>. The ascension of Vichy France saw Santamaria (and no doubt many other Oran anarchists) incarcerated in the concentration camps of Cerchel and Morand, where Santamaria co-ordinated National Confederation of Labour (CNT) activism, being released in November 1942 after the Allied forces took Oran. Another key Spanish anarchist who spent time in North Africa was the legendary Cipriano Mera Sanz (1897-1975), a bricklayer illiterate until the age of 20 who had taken part in the anarchist uprising in 1933 alongside Durruti and Isaac Puente, and rose to become the leading anarchist military strategist during the Revolution. Mera also fled to Oran in 1939, and was likewise interned in Morand but escaped to Morocco. However, Mera

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2nd Armoured Division, John Beresford Welsh, Washington DC, USA, 2000, online at: <http://www.angelfire.com/wa2/FJ6/French2nd.html> c) 1943-1944: CNT Militants and the Liberation of Paris, anonymous, but including the reminiscences of 9th Tank Corps veterans Abenza Jesus and Manuel Lozano, online at: <http://www.libcom.org/history/articles/cnt-militants-lib-paris/index.php>

<sup>11</sup> *Granny Made Me an Anarchist: General Franco, the Angry Brigade and Me*, Stuart Christie, Scribner, UK, 2004. Also, discussions in 2008 between Michael Schmidt and Christie.

tional group of the Durruti Column included ‘400 Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Britishers, Moroccans and Americans’.

Another key Algerian anarchist was Albert Guigui-Theral (1903-?), who was born in Algeria, but raised in Paris, returning to Algeria in 1918 where he worked as a mechanic, but became involved in a series of metalworkers’ strikes and was jailed for distributing anarchist propaganda<sup>8</sup>. In 1922, after a failed attempt to establish a phalanstery in Algeria, Guigui-Theral moved back to Paris where he lost a series of jobs because of his anarchist activities, but became active in the CGT’s Metal Federation where he fought against the growing Stalinist influence. From 1928, he began contributing to *Le Libertaire*, and briefly travelled to the USA, returning to France in 1932 where he worked in the Paris region of the CGT assisting the Spanish syndicalists. He was arrested for his activities in June 1940, as France succumbed to Nazi rule, but was released and escaped to the “free” joining the Maquis resistance under Jean Moulin, working with the Clandestine CGT in trying to get aid from General Charles de Gaulle in London, and with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Philadelphia, USA. Returning to Paris among the city’s Spanish anarchist liberators in 1944, Guigui-Theral later worked for the ILO in Geneva.

Portuguese anarchists also played a role in disseminating libertarian ideas in North Africa. Some idea of the scope of activities may be gleaned from a report in early 1936, prepared by the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI)-affiliated Anarchist Federation of Portugal. The report noted that, ‘The Portuguese Federation entered a new phase in March 1935.’ It ‘established relations with nuclei of comrades in Spain, France, Brazil, Argentina, the United States, French Africa, Portuguese Africa, and Morocco,’ and was publishing ‘our journal, *Rebellion*, although not regularly, because we do not have sufficient funds.’

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<sup>8</sup> Albert Guigui-Theral (1903-??), anonymous, online at: <http://www.libcom.org/history/articles/1903-19/index.php>

This was ‘distributed inside Portugal, as well as in the Azores, Africa and Oceania.’ Although the Spanish state used territories in North Africa for penal purposes, North Africa was also a haven for anarchist militants and refugees. Julio Sánchez Ortiz draws attention to the role played by Tangiers in Morocco, which was an international protectorate in the early 20th Century ... After the defeat of the Spanish Revolution, and with the outbreak of the Second World War, Tangiers, which had formerly been an international city, came under the control of the dictator Franco, and there was a massive crackdown on the left and labour in that city. Many fled to Casablanca in Algeria... Exiled Italian anarchists, like Celso Persici, were involved in the anti-Nazi resistance in Morocco during the Second World War, as Vertice Persici notes.” According to José Peirats, Roque Santamaria C o r t i g u e r a represented exile organisations from North Africa at a 1947 intercontinental congress of the exile Spanish anarchist movement in Toulouse, France<sup>9</sup>.

A handful of Ethiopians fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Revolution, while Saïl Mohamed and other North Africans fought in the Durruti Column anarchist militia. Many Spanish anarchists fled from the defeat of the Revolution into exile in Algeria, where they established an exile community in the city of Oran. From 1939 onwards, however, Spanish Morocco and Western Sahara remained under the control of the new Spanish regime, while fascist Portugal controlled the Azores, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe in West Africa from 1927 until 1974. Ethiopia, Libya and Somaliland remained under Italian Fascist rule from 1935 until roughly 1942, while Nazi-linked Vichy France controlled Algeria and much of west and equatorial Africa until it progressively lost these territories as the Second World War wore

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<sup>9</sup> Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution, José Peirats, Freedom Press, London, 1990. First published 1951-1953. The source here is the Appendix to this work, printed by Black & Red, Detroit, Michigan, USA, 1993.

on. Saïl Mohamed became an identity document forger for the underground anti-fascist resistance in Vichy France during the Second World War. In the war, many Spanish republicans, including anarchists, served in the Long Range Desert Group and other special forces in North Africa. Republicans who had joined the French Foreign Legion in exchange from be released from the detention camps in southern France. Many of them were stationed in North Africa, Cameroon and Chad when the war broke out. The 9th Armoured Company – known as El Nueve – had been founded in Chad as part of the Regiments of March of Chad.

The 9th Armoured Company drove tanks and armoured half-tracks flying the Spanish Republican flag and with names redolent of the Spanish Revolution painted on their sides: “Durruti”, “Ascaso”, “Casa Viejas”, “Teruel”, “Madrid”, “Belchite”, “Guadalajara” and “Guernica”. It included libertarian fighters like Abenza Jesus, who had fought on the Madrid front, but had been trapped and unable to cross into France until 1941. Imprisoned in the Argeles concentration camp, then deported to Algeria, Jesus volunteered with the French Africa Corps, fought in Tunisia, then joined what became the Chad Marching Division that fought Rommel’s Afrika Korps before being sent to England to train for the Normandy invasion. Jesus and El Nueve hit the beaches at Normandy on the night of July 31/August 1, 1944, as one of two armoured divisions in the US 3rd Army that defeated three SS Panzer divisions and linked up with the Canadian forces at Falais – at the same time as some 30,000 Maquis took up arms in Brittany – before pushing on to Paris where the anarchists became the first “Allied troops” to liberate the city on 24 August 1944<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> For various accounts of the actions of El Nueve in the liberation of Paris, look at: a) The Spaniards who Liberated Paris, Denis Fernandez Recatala, Le Monde Diplomatique, August 2004, cached online at: <http://74.125.77.132/search?q=cache:VJallXrvQZkJ:mondediplo.com/2004/08/13spaniards+El+Nueve+liberation+Paris&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=za> b)