

Italian anarchism, transnationalism and emigration to Brazil: Contributions to theoretical debate

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Abstract: The transnational networks built by anarchists' activists in the end of the 19th and beginning the 20th centuries, are already much known by the historiography. For Italian anarchism, due to the political persecution suffered in the 19th, transnational networks became the rule of the movement. Italian's anarchist immigration to South American cone was part of this transatlantic history. The encounter of many activists in São Paulo, Brazil, allowed the creation of several affinity groups working together, an important improve to the propaganda. In 1904, one of these efforts resulted in their aim media, "La Battaglia", maybe the most important, certainly a very popular periodical in Brazil until 1913.

Key words: anarchism, immigration, transnationalism

In the passage from the 19th to the 20th centuries, a period of profound transformations in Brazilian society, with intensive urbanization and industrialization, the dominant political and economical created and spread the thesis that anarchism would be an "exotic plant" – coming from Europe, it would not have a favorable climate to develop here. This biological comparison between a philosophical and political movement guided by the uncompromising search for political autonomy and freedom and equality between human beings, as anarchism can be generically defined, to a plant foreign to our biomes, is nonetheless indicative of the fear of proliferation of new ideas brought in the luggage of immigrants with the national proletariat, considered by this same elite as "peaceful and orderly". The motto "Order and Progress" stamped on the flag stigmatizes the general idea of the recently declared Republic, with a strong nationalist appeal, indicating the use of a firm hand in relation to the poorest population, if this "order" was questioned. After all, the untrue phrase attributed to Washington Luís when he was governor of the State of São Paulo – "The social question is a police case!" – carried, in fact, the true understanding of workers about how social struggles were treated by the usual Brazilian bosses, whether

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conservative or liberal.

Italian emigration to Brazil between the 19th and the 20th

This exotic plant was not foreseen by the intellectual mentors of the population whitening policies – Sílvio Romero, Nina Rodrigues and João Batista de Lacerda, at the front, and each in their own way – as a solution to what they believed to be the country's relative social backwardness in relation to the “civilized” world. This desirable whitening of the Indian, black and mestizo population should occur through the continuous interethnic contact promoted by the arrival of immigrants from the end of the 19th century. The idea of a probable cultural assimilation of and by the immigrant involved “an adaptation of the foreigner to the Latin and Catholic formation of the country, certainly maintaining the preferential option for whites, now, from the Iberian Peninsula and Italy” (SEYFERTH, 2002, p. 129). Seyferth discusses the racist principles that underpinned the colonization policy in Brazil and pays special attention to the controversial agricultural centers of foreigners in the South of the country, which are at odds with the assimilationist objectives desired for immigrants. Thought since the Empire as a strategy of settlement and agricultural colonization of cultural frontier areas, the migratory policy increased during the Republic, directed, for example, to the mountains and plateaus of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, areas of contact between the pioneer fronts and the indigenous populations of guaranis and caingangues, pejoratively called “bugres”¹, should preferably generate arms for agriculture to replace the old slave labor, then freed and abandoned, in most cases, to their own luck.

In another geographical context, the interior of the State of São Paulo, in the last decade of the 19th century, a massive influx of immigrants, mostly from northeastern Italy. The difficult adaptation of the settlers on the coffee plantations, a job then still strongly influenced by the slave models, led many of these Italian immigrants to abandon the countryside and seek opportunities in the cities². It was

¹ “The mention of indigenous incursions stopped by the colonizing presence shows the place reserved for the natives, designated by a derogatory term (bugres) – the disappearance. With the intensification of settlements, the remnants would be mercilessly “hunted” by bugreiros, categorized as savages, the antithesis of the 'European' civilization brought by colonization”. Commentary on Father Joaquim Gomes d'Oliveira e Paiva's report, dated 1846, about the colonization in São Leopoldo (RS), (SEYFERTH, 2002, p. 122)

² The issue of the difficulty of the Italian immigrant to adapt to the activity of harvesting on coffee farms has already been comprehensively addressed by historiography. This relationship of hope and frustration between the settlers is present in two of the most significant works on Italian emigrants to Brazil: (TRENTO, 1989; ALVIM, 1998). From the perspective of the role of anarchist groups in

thus that Adolfo Rossi, in charge of migratory affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, in response to a series of complaints that had been linked in the Italian press, went on an official trip to Brazil in 1902 to verify the working conditions of the settlers on the coffee farms. The report resulting from the visit was not at all supportive:

It is a truly fortunate combination if a peasant family ends up on a good *farm*, it more often happens, especially now, after the crisis, that the settlers come in demand by ruined *farmers* or bullies and bullies, who segregate them, making them work like slaves from 5 am to 7 pm, even during the rain, which constrain them to buy foodstuffs in their *sales* at very high prices, which burden them with fines under the most futile pretexts, and which, after four or five years of fatigue, defraud them of their earnings, for most of the time the *farm* is auctioned, after a process by the creditors.³

The complaint from a senior attaché made the Italian government issue the Prinetti Decree, prohibiting subsidized emigration to Brazil of family groups. With this act, the entry of Italian settlers headed to farms in the interior of the State of São Paulo, despite continuing to exist and even with the agency of consular officers, began to suffer a continuous annual fall, to what Angelo Trento called the “emigration flow”, between 1903 and 1920, with all the implications that the maintenance of the decree caused (TRENTO: 1989, p. 57-68). In contrast, we began to witness a relative increase in the spontaneous emigration of Italians to commercial and industrial work in the cities, locally driven by an internal urban displacement of those who had previously emigrated.

If in fact a significant part of the entire Italian immigrant contingent that entered Brazil went to the countryside (ALVIM, 1998), the generalizing thesis that the movement of the great international migration took place preferentially towards the

denouncing the precarious working conditions on São Paulo farms, the anarchist newspaper *La Battaglia*, from São Paulo, for example, maintained for several years in a row a column called “Dalle Caienne Brasiliane”, in allusion to Ilha do Diabo in the French colony (ROMANI, 2015, p. 141-159).

³ Author's translation. “È una vera combinazione fortunata se una famiglia di contadini va a finire in una buona *fazenda*: più spesso accade, specialmente ora dopo la crisi, che i coloni vengano assunti da *fazendeiros* rovinati o pomeschi e prepotenti, che li segregano facendoli lavorare come schiavi dalle 5 antimeridiane alle 7 pomeridiane, anche durante le piogge, che li costringono a comperare i generi alimentari nelle loro *vendas* a prezzi carissimi, che li sovraccaricano di multe sotto i più futili pretesti e che, dopo quattro o cinque anni di fatiche, li defraudano delle merci poiché il più delle volte la *fazenda* viene venduta all'asta, dietro domanda dei credori”. (ROSSI, 1902).

countryside and that only in a second moment walked to cities came to be questioned by research that pointed to different destinations for emigrants, since leaving European ports. For example, in the case of contingents of Portuguese emigrants, who arrived since the 19th century, and in the case of Syrian-Lebanese, from the 1910s onwards, many destinations were the large cities, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Santos, among others. The Spanish and Galician emigrant colony also had a similar urban destiny, Santos, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, as different works show. On the other hand, there are studies indicating a little-known flow of Spaniards to São Paulo farms⁴. Finally, we want to emphasize the necessary prudence in the analyses, avoiding the construction of models that are fragile in the face of evidence. With this, we understand that it is not possible to generalize in relation to the great international migratory movement directed to Brazil between the 19th and 20th centuries. Starting with the destination of those who arrived here, due to the long period over which this flow extended, with different offers and possibilities of work, as well as the different nationalities involved, in addition to the regional particularities existing in each country promoting emigration.

When dealing with the emigration of peninsular people, even circumscribing it to the period between the 1890s and 1920s, it is important to point out that regional differences in Italy were quite decisive in the emigration flow. The translation of the works of Emilio Franzina (2006) helped to undo generalizations and interpretive mistakes⁵. Workers from the north of that country, Lombards and Emilians from the Po valley and the large mass of emigrants from the Veneto (35% of the total number of expatriates between 1878 and 1902, according to Franzina), most of them went, since the beginning of the emigration, to the mountains of the south of the country and to the coffee fields of the interior of São Paulo. The same cannot be said of emigrants

⁴ The relevant bibliography is extensive, here we indicate only some of the works that address the problem posed to emigrants from the Iberian Peninsula: (SOUSA et. al., 2006; SILVA, 2007; 2009; CÂNOVAS, 2009). The scarcity of studies on Arab emigration to Brazil is also evident: the arrival of the first Syrian-Lebanese, called Turks by the passport issued by the Ottoman Empire, dates back, at least, to the 1890s.

⁵ The first researcher to draw attention to the diversity of Italian emigration to Brazil and the impossibility of talking about Italian migrants in the 19th century in São Paulo, since they recognized themselves as Neapolitans, Calabrians, Venetians, or even more by their provinces of origin, Trevisans, Trentinos, etc., was Michael Hall (1974). Most of the Italian emigration to Brazil departed from the port of Genoa in northern Italy. The largest contingent of emigrants, Venetians and neighbors, who went to the South and to the coffee farms in São Paulo, had polenta as their basic food and the *quadrilho* as a traditional dance, very well represented in the homonymous film by Fábio Barreto (1995). However, common sense, through the stereotyped image in the media, such as the famous soap opera *Terra Nostra*, still represents this immigrant as a Neapolitan, pizza eater and tarantella dancer.

from central Italy, coming in smaller numbers, mainly from Tuscany and Lazio, whose geographical distribution in the State of São Paulo indicates a concentration in medium to large cities since the end of the century. XIX, many working as artisans or merchants. Neither is this rural destination valid for emigrants from southern Italy, mainly Neapolitans and Calabrians, whose most intense arrival, even surpassing those from the north, took place at the beginning of the 10th century. These, for the most part, headed for the big cities: São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. In any case, over the years, the fact is that even foreigners coming from more rural Italy and who were initially destined to work on coffee farms in the interior of São Paulo and the south of Minas Gerais, in a significant generational effort, managed to make smallholders from the 1920s onwards. Since then, most Italian immigrants were largely concentrated in the cities, culturally and socially inserting themselves into the dynamics of Brazilian society, as indicated, for some time now, by general studies on immigration that are less known to historians (KLEIN, 1989).

Italian anarchists, immigrants circulating in Brazil

Among the different national groups of immigrants living in Brazil, even if we cannot identify exactly the beginning of anarchist propaganda, it would be correct to say that the most decisive contribution to the spread of anarchism was that of the Italian community, and especially that immense portion of Italians living in Brazil. in the state of Sao Paulo. Since 1891, anarchism was already a concrete reality in Brazil when there was the implementation of the experimental community of Colônia Cecília in the interior of Paraná, known for putting into practice a form of social organization based on the idea of free association of individuals, self-management of production and collective decision-making. Giovanni Rossi, director of the journal *Lo Sperimentale*, born in Pisa and creator of the colony, was a veterinary doctor and agronomist who believed in a free society without employers or employees, where men and women would work and have fun in harmony, that is, the idealized prototype in the 19th century for a future anarchist society⁶. From this experience, which lasted three years, some notorious anarchists emerged, such as Arturo Campagnoli, who would have founded a colony in Guararema-SP (RODRIGUES, 1994, p. 75-76) and

⁶ The community project of the Pisan doctor had already been conceived a decade earlier (ROSSI, 1878). Rossi successively revised his project in later editions of 1884 and 1891 (FELICI, 1994, p. 346). About the Cecilia Colony (MUELLER, 1999).

Francesco Gattai, grandfather of the writer Zélia Gattai. Some of Cecília's members later moved to São Paulo, giving impetus to São Paulo anarchism. The painter and journalist Gigi Damiani, one of the leaders of the great São Paulo general strike of 1917, even though he did not participate in Cecília's experience, drank indirectly from this source when he lived in Curitiba with some members of the colony, with whom he edited the first libertarian newspaper in Paraná, *Il Diritto*, between 1897 and 1899 (DAMIANI, 1948).

There is no way to say categorically, but there may have been some relationship between the dispersion of Cecilians at the end of the experiment during the 1890s, with the profusion of periodicals in Italian, avowedly anarchists or libertarian socialists, mainly in the city of São Paulo, despite that most of the names involved in the publications had no contact with the Palmeira experiment. Most of them were shy editorial experiences, generally short-run and short-lived, but which occupied a politically critical place, with a libertarian socialist background, in the nascent independent press in São Paulo, until then almost non-existent. The more important among them was *L'Avvenire*, an anarchic weekly periodical directed by Felice Vezzani, a unionist converted to anarchism and defender of an action that would later be classified as organizationist (we will discuss this issue later) for its action in favor of the formation of unions. *L'Avvenire* was published almost continuously between November 1894 and August 1895, until the arrest of its director (ANTONIOLI et al.: 2004, p. 673-675). May First came to be remembered as a date of workers' struggle with more ostensible demonstrations that culminated in the explosions that took place in the streets of São Paulo on the night of that day in 1893, heavily criticized by the official periodical of the Italian colony, *Fanfulla*. Anarchism began to appear more frequently in the police pages of the national press and Italian militants began to be arrested en masse (FELICI, 1994, p. 373)⁷. Vezzani, for example, after being arrested and sent to Rio de Janeiro, managed to edit the periodical clandestinely for a few months in São Paulo until he had to flee to Buenos Aires, where he resumed the publication of *L'Avvenire* in 1897.

Surviving as a combative working-class press in the São Paulo of the 1890s was an arduous task and, according to Isabelle Felici, it was the main objective of its editors,

⁷ “Felice Vezzani wrote from his prison in Rio on November 14, 1894, a letter that *L'Avvenire* reproduced from the Rio newspaper, *O Estrangeiro*, the ten people detained are as follows: Andrea Alemos, Augusto Bargioni, Galileo Botti, Eugenio Gastaldetti, Arturo Campagnoli, Alfredo Capricci, Antonio Maffucci, Francesco Patelli, Sera Fino Suppo, and Felice Vezzani”, (author translation).

at least until 1896. All these early periodicals of an anarchic socialist character, *Gli Schiavi Bianchi*, *L'Asino Umano*, *L'Avvenire* and *L'Operaio*, and their directors, suffered harshly from police repression (FELICI, 1994a, p. 326-327). Only after 1898, already at a time of significant increase in the contingent of anarchist workers in São Paulo, with the publication of *Il Risveglio*, by Alfredo Mari and the participation of Gigi Damiani after the 22nd. number, is that this class journalism will conquer a socially accepted place and achieve relative perpetuity. *La Birichina*, directed by Galileo Botti, was longer-lived and from 1895 to 1898 published 30 issues. This is perhaps explained by the author's more individualistic character, giving him a more satirical and humorous profile, with a less aggressive and combative writing than, for example, *Avvenire*.

With the arrival of the new century, São Paulo's Italian-language libertarian press proliferated significantly, following the city's population growth and, mainly, relying on the huge number of Italians who had settled in the city. At its height, at the beginning of the 20th century, more than 40% of the total population were Italians of the municipality of 260,000 inhabitants, according to data from 1904 (FRESCURA, 1904, p. 24, apud SEIXAS, 1992, p. 11). At the beginning of this new stage, the first half of the 1900s, anarchist ideas in São Paulo were already well known by the Italian community and were also spread among the nationals, the result of a continuous campaign through the press. Among the most active in the new century, the Roman Gigi Damiani, from 1900 onwards, was joined by strong reinforcements from the Tuscany region, such as Tobia Boni and his periodical *La Palestra Sociale*, Alessandro Cerchiai, a prestigious columnist residing in São Paulo, who corresponded with the libertarian press in Buenos Aires and Milan, and Angelo Bandoni, a very active polyform anarchist who directed *Germinal* and founded a homonymous libertarian school in the capital of São Paulo and another in the interior of the state (BENEVIDES, 2016).

A brief overview of the historiography of Italian anarchism

Anarchism and immigration are words that go together when we talk about the Italian libertarian experience. First of all, it should be understood that for the diffusion of socialist ideas of a revolutionary nature soon after the unification of the Kingdom of Italy, at a time of great circulation of the republicanism of Mazzini and Garibaldi, including among the workers, the passage of Mikhail Bakunin was fundamental by

Florence and Naples in 1864, where he came in contact initially with Carlo Cafiero and later with Errico Malatesta, who would become the main Italian activists in the International Association of Workers, the AIT (MASINI, 1982). Then, since the beginning of the 1870s, dozens and even hundreds of workers' organizations, many of them sections adhering to the AIT, better known only as the International, were created in Italy as a result of the profusion of internationalist ideas propagating the social revolution as the means of establishing a regime of equality and freedom, without exploitation between men (MARINI, 2017). It was an initial period of revolutionary syndicalism, right after the Paris Commune of 1871, when the struggle between workers and employers in Europe took place in a visceral way with violent responses mainly from the State apparatus and its police onslaught against the internationalists who at that time were still fighting only for the organization of workers.

In Italy, the persecution of the most politically active workers took place from very hard until the beginning of the 20th century, a fact that shows the intrinsic relations between the employer class and the State in the elaboration of a repressive policy of social control (LEVY, 1989). The continuous concern with the strengthening of the workers' movement and the emergence of an organized and revolutionary working class, on the one hand, added, on the other, to the emergence of an anarchist reaction against political and police persecution in the period that is conventionally called the "epoch of the attacks" (MASINI, 1983; ANTONIOLI and MASINI, 1999), it also led to the organization of a new type of political police that acted in a preventive way, infiltrating the working class and setting up an international and transatlantic system of communication and surveillance between different countries (JENSEN, 2009; GALEANO and ALBORNOZ, 2017).

Here we must make room for a historiographical discussion about anarchism in Italy. The first historiographical works on the history of Italian anarchism in the 20th century were all done by Marxist historians. Enzo Santarelli (1973) is considered the first "historian of Italian anarchism" when he published *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, in 1959. From its first publication to the second version, already well modified and republished in 1973, the author showed an evident distance from Stalinist orthodoxy, a sign of the new times of post-68 Europe, as explained by Carl Levy (1989) in the chapter in which he discusses the conceptual transformation of Italian anarchism between 1870 and 1926 and its different historiographical approaches. In

Italy, historiography on the subject of anarchism took a long time to be produced and the collective work *História das ideias e movimentos anarquistas*, originally published in 1962 by Canadian historian George Woodcock (2002), was, at the time, still one of the few written references that dealt with Italian anarchism internationally. Despite showing his more individualistic preferences, Woodcock followed the political interpretation of other authors of the time who wrote about anarchism, for example, that of Eric Hobsbawm (1970), who in a 1959 text considered it an archaic form of social movement.

In short, for the historiography of work with a Marxist bias until the 1970s, anarchism was treated as a movement dating from the 19th century and persistent in some more peripheral regions of capitalism in the 20th century, resulting from the character they called “spontaneist” of social action moved by agitators originating mostly from the small and middle bourgeoisie, almost excluding from the movement urban and rural workers engaged in a class struggle. For these social scientists, anarchists have historically failed in their revolutionary intent by not perceive the ongoing transformations in the organizational character of the industrial world of modernity. The last breath of this movement would have been the Catalan “short summer of anarchy” in 1936. Woodcock, despite not being part of this historiography, follows the same Marxist interpretive model, for whom anarchism, by abandoning an alleged Bakuninist, violent and destructive profile of the established society, and approaching its communist, kropoktinian component, would have lost the old space of action with the masses without being able to compete with forms considered to be superior, or more evolved, of political and party organization, theoretically tributary to Marx and that would lead to Leninism.

Gino Cerrito (1977), in an article published in *Rassegna Storica Toscana*, in 1968, was the first historian to write about the history of Italian anarchism starting from a historiographical problem. Nine years later he would expand his study and publish a brief history of anarchism in Italy. In 1974, Pier Carlo Masini, the most notorious historian of anarchism in Italy, would originally write his famous *from Bakunin to Malatesta*, the first volume of a history of Italian anarchists, in which the chronological frameworks and the theoretical and practical premises would be launched. for the understanding of the historical development of anarchism in Italy, relating it to the revolutionary phenomena taking place in the second half of the 19th century in the rest of Europe. Returning to Cerrito, his great merit was to have problematized for the first

time the case of Italian anarchism as a double historiographical problem. Initially because until then its history had been told by those who became its historical enemies within what was conventionally called the political field of the left. The phrase “se gli anarchici non se ne curano la storia la faranno i loro nemici”⁸ uttered by the socialist Gaetano Salvemini, professor of Camilo Berneri at the University of Florence, is notorious (SENTA, 2015: p. 10). And it is also clear that since the Russian revolution, Bolshevism and orthodox Marxism have become the greatest enemies of anarchism, at least that radically anti-authoritarian anarchism. Santarelli, for example, was the Italian Marxist historian who, following Hobsbawm's practice, directly related anarchism to pre-political revolts and buried Italian anarchism as an expressive political movement already under the government of Francesco Crispi (1894-98). During those late nineteenth years, the Italian prime minister had faced the sheaves of workers in Sicily in 1893, the uprisings of marble workers in Lunigiana in 1894 and the bread riots in Milan in 1898, all driven by the direct action of anarchist activists, undertaking a true hunt for them and arresting hundreds of militants and sympathizers, accused of association for delinquency, confining, on islands and headlands off the coast of Italian coast in the so-called domicilio coatto, the finest flower of Italian anarchism.

The socialist strand of Italian anarchism, the title of Santarelli's study, strengthened at the end of the 19th century with the international projection of Errico Malatesta, would have been an anachronistic movement, a shadow of the Socialist Party, whose survival over time would have occurred thanks to the structure economy of backward southern Italy. For this historiographical current, when posing the problem of the occupation of factories in the northern working-class centers, in Turin, Milan and in the Emilia region during the so-called rosso biennium (1919-20), Italian anarchist communism would have been inexpressive in the face of the most well prepared of the revolutionary socialists in charge of the trade union centrals and the emergence of the Ordine Nuovo group, embryo of the future Italian Communist Party. Subsequently, the studies carried out by the historian Maurizio Antonioli (1997) on Italian unionism in the first two decades of the 20th century show the enormous participation of anarchists in the most combative aspects of revolutionary unionism, precisely those that led and organized the occupation of the metallurgical factories in Emilia. -Romagna and Lombardy, embryo of anarcho-syndicalism of the early 1920s.

⁸ Translation. If anarchists aren't careful, their history will be made by their enemy.

So, where would the erroneous reading that directly associated anarchism with the lack of organization and the “spontaneism” of “primitive” workers reside. For Cerrito, this may have been deliberately caused by the Marxist reading of this historical period, but it may also have been the result of a theoretical misunderstanding of the way in which anarchism was organized by the Marxist strands of historiography.

In the last decade, several studies in the field of “Global History”, including the essay by Davide Turcato (2007), face this problem by indicating that any historical study on the form of political organization of anarchism would need to take into account that this movement lacked a formal organization such as that existing in the socialist and communist parties. Hence, ignoring, or rather, belittling, the less organic character of the modes of organization of anarchist groups, ignoring the importance of fluidity and flexibility as an organizational model. The lack of understanding that the alleged formal historical discontinuity of anarchic organizations was, many times, a strategy of action in the face of continuous onslaughts of repression, it led to misinterpretations about the intermittence of anarchist groups and the low social penetration of the movement. To circumvent this documental problem, Turcato proposes the prominence of the use of press sources and the different types of propaganda used by anarchic groups to trace a transnational history of the movement beyond possible formal discontinuities.

The other historiographical problem that arises because of this mobility of Italian anarchism comes precisely from its transnational character. Firstly, due to the massive emigration of Italian workers, almost a diaspora to other countries in Europe, the Americas, Oceania, Africa and the Mediterranean Middle East. An emigration movement continued for more than four decades, between 1875 and 1915, which took approximately fourteen million Italians abroad, more than a third of its total population on the eve of World War I (ROSOLI, 1978). A country of emigrants, of working emigrants and many of them anarchists fleeing political persecution in their own country. This would explain the anarchic orientation of several of the labor movements that emerged in different countries in America that received the strong impact of Italian emigration. The United States, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, for example, were some of those countries where, unlike Italy itself, due to its dispersion, and most European countries, anarchism was the main organizing movement of the revolutionary working class between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

Turcato goes further in this problematization of the particularly transnational character of Italian anarchism, a characteristic that, otherwise, had already been presented by Cerrito and even better developed by his disciple Adriana Dadá (1985), tributary, at the time, to the platformist current of anarchism⁹, in his history of anarchism Italian comunista. What Turcato innovates is in the fact that he shows that the transnational character of Italian anarchism surpasses that of Italian immigration to the four corners of the world. In other words, the diaspora of anarchists was understood as a form of resistance of the movement to the successive political persecutions it suffered in the 19th century in Italian territory and later in neighboring countries, in Switzerland, France and Belgium. A resistance to extermination organized through a network of activists very well-articulated around the world, committed to the reception and dissemination of anarchic ideas, activists who made anarchist propaganda their very life. On the other hand, the anarchist press played a central role in the meeting, the diffusion of the movement, and its subsequent rearticulation in Italy through a set of experiences, not only of Italian workers, but also of other immigrant workers in the countries to which they moved. gave the diaspora, giving a political and cultural vitality to the Italian anarchist movement not common in the movements of other European countries, much more ethnocentric, a fact that allowed it to survive despite the uninterrupted and cruel persecutions it suffered until the end of fascism, in 1945.

Therefore, according to Turcato, the strength of Italian anarchism resides

⁹ The so-called platformist current of anarchism proposed a rereading/revision of anarchism based on the writing of the Platform of Libertarian Communism by Pedro Archinov, of the Dielo Truda group of Russian exiles in France, in 1926. Platformism reappeared in the context of the second post-war period and its main promoter was the Frenchman Georges Fontenis (1953), identifying the role of an active minority, already existing in Bakunin, with that of a revolutionary avant-garde. In South America, from the contact of Uruguayan anarchists with this French current in the 1950s, it was adapted to regional dirigisme characteristics, calling it *especifismo*. In the historical context that we are working on in this article, the end of the 1920s, Malatesta and Fabbri responded negatively to the Platform's invitation to organize a General Union of anarchists that intended, among other propositions, to exclude individualists and centralize the decision on certain actions, arguing that in Italy the UAI, *Unione Anarchica Italiana*, had already been constituted, with a pluralist and non-directorist conception of anarchism. The epistolary exchange between Makhno and Malatesta is translated into Portuguese and can be accessed on several pages. We indicate this: <http://www.nestormakhno.info/portuguese/mala_reply_pt.htm>. A few years later, Malatesta published in *L'Adunata dei Refratari*, of New York, a harsh critique of anarchist revisionists, derived from a split among the platformists, which was soon translated into Portuguese (MALATESTA, 1932) warning of the risks of bureaucratization of the international anarchist movement. The most in-depth historiographical discussion on the problem of organization on the platform was elaborated in Italy by Gino Cerrito, for whom "Tatteggiamento filobolscevico di Archinov e il suo rientro in U.R.S.S. dihedero alla "Piattaforma" il colpo di grazia" (CERRITO, 1973, p. 307). Translation. "Archinov's philo-Bolshevik behavior and his re-entry into the USSR gave the "Platform" the coup de grace", which in fact did not happen.

precisely in the immigration of anarchist workers and in the production of an Italian language press in different countries of the world as an instrument of political propaganda. Far from representing its burial, according to the understanding of Marxist historians, this organizational discontinuity would be its greatest strength. A semi-strategy, almost because it was not perceived as such by the agents involved, which allowed anarchism to reorganize itself historically at different times, including after the end of the fascist dictatorship. A political force whose best-known mentor was Errico Malatesta, whose origins date back to the repression of the Bologna Congress, at the end of 1872, when the strategy defined by Andrea Costa was adopted, to keep the vehicles for the dissemination of the ideas of the International in Italy, as well as its regional sections that were beginning to be assembled (MARINI, 2017, p. 103-131).

The hallmark of Italian anarchism, largely due to the exhaustive propaganda carried out by Malatesta, was to make a type of policy aimed at the most population through different forms of direct action. From the use of the general strike instrument within the labor movement, through the effective dissemination of a combative press, to the organization of an alternative education, Italian anarchism, inside or outside the country, maintained a level of organization sufficient for the actions to be taken. were quite effective without the constitution of leading hierarchies, characteristic of the future Bolsheviks, but already present in the revolutionary syndicalist centralization denounced by Malatesta himself at the Amsterdam Congress of 1907 (MALATESTA, 1907). This dominant form of action of Italian anarchism, developed mainly in the thought and action of men like Malatesta (TURCATO, 2011-2015) and Luigi Fabbri (FABBRI, 1996), capable of contemplating and synthesizing the differences between individualists and unionists in favor of a common union, was what allowed the formation of the *Unione Anarchica Italiana* in the 1920s, a form that became known in the history of anarchism by the name of anarchocommunism.

The communist model of anarchism originally inspired by Kropotkin's thought emerged in Italy in the last decade of the 19th century during a debate between individualist tendencies, called anti-associationists, and associationist tendencies that, under the influence of Malatesta, became dominant at the beginning of the century. XX, as we have already stated. However, during the previous century there was still a strong reaction on the part of individualist anarchists to the forms of organization of the trade union movement in Italy, as they understood the phenomenon of organization as something that would inevitably lead to Marxist forms of socialism

based on centralization and hierarchy and led by a party. We must remember that after the intense repression of internationalists unleashed by the Italian police, there was a first split between the most prominent activists of Italian anarchism, with the passage of Andrea Costa to the Partito Operaio, the future Socialist Party (PERNICONE, 1993, p. 166- 178). During the whole of the 1880s and the beginning of the following decade, it was the parliamentary current of socialism that managed to escape political repression and establish a foothold within the majority of the Italian working class. Thus, the reasons for the enormous distrust of Italian anarchists in relation to trade unions in this century can be understood.

Transnationalism, circulation of ideas and Italian anarchism in Brazil

We are now able to better understand the dynamics of Italian anarchism in Brazil and its importance in the class organization of workers in the country. The origin and historical evolution of this anarchism was also reflected in the texts written by Italian immigrants in periodicals published in Brazil and the problem of organization crossed much of the debate in this press (FELICI, 1994, p. 326-338). Except for *L'Avvenire de Felice Vezzani*, most of the first libertarian periodicals still in the 19th century, *Caradura*, *La Birichina*, expressed through editors such as Giovanni Gavilli their rejection of forms of organization, especially in relation to the anarchist presence within trade union organizations. The point of passage for a non-demonization of the idea of organization among Italian anarchists living in Brazil occurs with the writings of Malatesta that circulated in the early years of the last century, in which a greater organization of workers was postulated, without, however, defining the union. as a priority space for the revolutionary struggle. The exclusivity of the union as a social space for anarchism will be adopted by anarchists such as Giulio Sorelli, who were increasingly approaching the model of Italian revolutionary unionism linked to the Italian Socialist Party (TOLEDO, 2004), but also the distance from the anarchism they were experiencing. French revolutionary syndicalism after the Amiens Charter in 1906.

Even Luigi Fabbri, a notorious defender of the Resistance Leagues and the programmatic proximity of anarchists to workers' organizations (FABBRI, 1906), the man intellectually closest to Malatesta, came to have serious restrictions on the directive strategies of revolutionary unionists who distanced themselves from of the idea for a future libertarian society:

And anyone can see how much diversity there is between trade

unionism proper, of which we share, together with our friends in France and beyond, and the latest model trade unionism that some so-called Italian revolutionary socialists have been propagating for some time now, almost as if were them: - a revolutionary syndicalism in words, legal in deeds, which copies word for word the phrases of French syndicalism, pretending to ignore its anti-parliamentary character.

[...] And the syndicalist idea, of libertarian, libertarian and revolutionary origin in its essence, so they will spend it, as they have spent so many ideas, methods and manifestations of a completely legal nature, method and origin.¹⁰

If the criticism was still restricted to Italian revolutionary syndicalists, from 1906 onwards it also extended to the French, causing a split in the anarchist Congress of Amsterdam in 1907. Émile Pouget, one of the pillars of the French CGT, asked by Luigi Fabbri if he was still an anarchist, replied that he was, but increasingly syndicalist. As Rene Berthier (2017, p. 255-305) warns, at this moment in history, revolutionary syndicalism began to distance itself from anarchism, or from what we could already consider as the future anarcho-syndicalism and, particularly in Italy, approached socialism of the CGdL (although in 1912 the Italian revolutionary unionists had built their own autonomous union, the USI). With the victory of Bolshevism in Russia, in almost every place in the world where revolutionary syndicalism can develop (Italy-USI, France-CGT-SR, USA-IWW, Argentina-FORA, etc.) anarcho-syndicalist conception with the foundation of the AIT in Berlin in 1922 (ROCKER, 2007, BERTHIER, 2017, p. 298-305).¹¹

Despite the existence of several purely individualist anarchists in Brazil at the end of the 19th century, such as Pio Spadea, most of the Italian activists who arrived here were followers or sympathizers of the political tendency of Malatestan anarchism

¹⁰ Luigi Fabbri, *Il sindacalismo*, Il Pensiero, Rome, June 1, 1905, “E ognun vede quanta diversità ci sia tra il sindacalismo propriamente detto di cui siamo partigiani noi, insieme coi nostri amici di Francia e altrove, e il sindacalismo ultimo modello che alcuni cosiddetti socialisti rivoluzionari italiani vanno da un pò di tempo propagando, quase come cosa loro - un sindacalismo rivoluzionario a parole, legalitario nei fatti, che copia parola per parola le frasi del sindacalismo francese fingendo di ignorarne la caratteristica estremamente antiparlamentare; [...] E l'idea sindacalista, di origine libertaria e rivoluzionaria nella sua essenza, a questo modo la guasteranno, come hanno guastato tante idee, metodi e manifestazioni d'indole e di origine tutt'altro che legalitaria”. (apud ANTONIOLI, 2006, p. 83).

¹¹ The acronyms cited refer to CgdL, Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, USI, Unione Sindacale Italiana, CGT-SR, Confédération Générale du Travail – Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire, IWW, Industrial Workers of the World, FORA, Federación Obrera Regional Argentina.

and gravitated between social propaganda through the press and schools or action within the unions, not being both exclusive. Among these prominent names of the anarchist movement in São Paulo were Oreste Ristori, Gigi Damiani, Alessandro Cerchiai and Angelo Bandoni, who edited the newspaper *La Battaglia* between 1904 and 1913, the São Paulo workers' newspaper that reached the largest circulation in that period. *La Battaglia*, originating from the action group called "La Propaganda", reached an average weekly circulation of 5,000 copies with peaks in some numbers of up to 8,000 copies. For one country of illiterates having an average of 20 thousand readers per week among workers can be considered a great achievement, even more so since the population of São Paulo, at the turn of the century, did not exceed 200 thousand inhabitants. One of its editors, Gigi Damiani, after his expulsion in Brazil in 1919, will become Malatesta's right-hand man in Italy in the editorial office of *Umanità Nova*, the official periodical until the present of the Italian Anarchist Federation, adhering to the IFA.¹²

The penetration of this anarchist journal, which maintained an independent orientation despite reproducing Malatesta's thinking in many cases, shows the strength of anarchism as a social movement in the first decades of the 20th century in São Paulo, where it even exerted a strong influence in the countryside. Large numbers of immigrants came to work on the coffee farms where they were brought through consulates or specialized agencies, which were true recruitment mafias. They promised them paradise and gave them "Hell on the farms", the title of one of the first editorials by *La Battaglia*, in June 1904. The agreements signed were difficult to comply with or respected, practically subjecting the settlers to a regime of debt slavery. And when they tried to flee, they were persecuted and, if arrested, they were tortured or murdered by the ranchers' henchmen, with the complicity of the local authorities. Oreste Ristori undertook investigative work and denounced the conditions of slave labor on the farms through the newspaper *La Battaglia*, during the years 1906 and 1907. His investigation through trips to visit farms in the interior of the State of São Paulo generated the printed *Contra A Imigração ao Brasil*, which was published in Italian and

¹² A IFA, International of Anarchist Federations, <http://i-f-a.org/index.php/pt-BR/> brings together a significant set of national, regional and collective federations within an understanding of anarchism that is conventionally called anarchist synthesis, since its first historical reference would refer to the publication of Volin's article in *Revue Anarchiste*, 1924, (available at https://cras31.info/IMG/pdf/voline_1924_synthese-anarchiste.pdf) and whose ideas were later developed by Sébastien Faure in *La Synthèse Anarchiste*, published in 1927, and by Volin himself in 1934, both as responses to the Platform of which we have already written in the previous note.

Portuguese and caused a significant reduction in the arrival of Italians to Brazil, a fact that was a of the causes for the enactment of the future law on the deportation of foreigners in the following year (AUTOR, 2015, p. 151-159).

Many other periodicals circulated on the streets of São Paulo in these early 20th century years: *O Amigo do Povo*, *Germinal*, *A Lanterna*, *A Batalha*, to name just a few. All these periodicals promoted a type of anarchism in which education and culture were fundamental instruments for the emancipation and liberation of individuals from all oppression ways. The campaign for the construction of anarchist schools was a recurring theme in these periodicals. The modern school based on Francisco Ferrer's pedagogical methods would play an important role in libertarian propaganda among the workers' children, especially after 1909, the year of the Catalan pedagogue's execution. In almost all social circles linked to labor unions and unions in São Paulo and in the largest cities in the interior of São Paulo, there was a school for the children of associates. Administered by the workers themselves, they were usually maintained by support lists, an anarchist practice of self-management of their institutions, which ranged from the management of schools to, eventually, that of occupied factories.

In addition to the press and school, propaganda parties, with musical concerts and the staging of popular dramas, occupied a lot of space among Italian immigrant anarchists, including in the interior cities of São Paulo. In working-class social circles, or in rented halls, balls were organized on Saturdays, the proceeds of which were donated to the continuation of anarchist propaganda, to maintain a financial reserve at the time of strikes, or to help in the defense of a comrade detained by the police. Anarchist theater was also another component of these festivities, when dramatic plays such as the Italian Pietro Gori's *Primeiro de Maio* were staged, in which class conflict and the capitalist exploitation of human labor were portrayed.

We can consider that the first two decades of the 20th century were a very effervescent period for anarchist propaganda and for the organization of the labor movement, which brought a consequent improvement in the quality of life of workers. However, while this occurred, the employer and state mechanisms of repression were also increasing in Brazil. The fight against workers' associations, which had already given very violent signals during the 1906 railway strikes, leading to the formulation of the Law on the Deportation of Foreigners, the so-called Adolfo Gordo Law of 1907, began to develop even more intensely in the 1910s. The persecution of workers' newspapers, with police attacks burning stocks and destroying graphic equipment,

showed that both the State and Brazilian capitalism would not easily give in to the workers' demands and struggle. Specifically in relation to foreigners, the state government in São Paulo, through the Secretary of Public Security Washington Luiz, future President of the Republic, undertook fierce persecution of anarchists. From 1907 the expulsion of foreigners became common practice, however, due to gaps in its wording, the commonly the so-called Adolfo Gordo Law did not prove to be very effective, as it prevented the expulsion of foreigners who had arrived in the country for more than three years or who had already established a Brazilian family. And these were already the majority, which demonstrates again that the exotic anarchist plant had already taken solid roots in a tropical climate.

Among the persecutions undertaken by the São Paulo police is the curious anticlerical struggle of Oreste Ristori, who in 1909 aggressively fought the Catholic Church that covered up the murder of the girl Idalina committed by Father Faustino Consoni at the Cristovão Colombo Orphanage. The denunciation followed by a weekly campaign asking for the priest's condemnation was taken for two years to the pages of *La Battaglia* and pointed to another field of struggle of anarchists: the criticism against abuses and the doctrinal practice of the Church with the workers. Journalist Edgard Leuenroth, editor of *A Lanterna*, a historic name in Brazilian anarchism who would become its greatest archivist, was also involved in the same campaign that had a clear objective; demoralize the Catholic Church seen at the time as a great rival in the struggle for the intellectual liberation of workers. Ristori's anticlericalism was the reason for strong police persecution and before fleeing to Argentina in 1917, the Tuscan agitator took refuge in Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1910s. In the then federal capital, Ristori found a highly organized anarchism because of years of contact between Rio de Janeiro workers and anarchist immigrants, mainly Portuguese who arrived in Guanabara Bay, among which the passage of Neno Vasco stands out for its significant influence (SAMIS, 2009).

Activists for the anarchist cause soon felt the need for their propaganda to reach Portuguese-speaking workers. However, Brazil would only have avowedly anarchist newspapers written and printed in Portuguese at the end of the 19th century (*O Libertário* in São Paulo and *O Despertar* in Rio de Janeiro, both in 1898). Still, in the city of São Paulo, anarchist newspapers written in Portuguese often continued to have sections in Italian or Spanish, and Italian-language anarchist newspapers continued to circulate until the 1920s. Anarchist journalism in Portuguese in Brazil was consolidated

and expanded its reach from 1902 when the newspaper *O Amigo do Povo* was published in São Paulo. In addition to this periodical, the Portuguese anarchist and trade unionist Neno Vasco (1878-1920) wrote the magazine *Aurora* (1905) and the periodical *A Terra Livre* (1905-1910).

In this geographical division of anarchist transnationalism in Brazil, there were not many militants of Italian origin in Rio de Janeiro, but their contribution was not less intense for that. Among them we can highlight the couple Luís and Matilde Magrassi. A graphic designer, Magrassi settled in Rio from São Paulo around 1904. In the federal capital, due to the local peculiarities of the anarchist movement closest to trade unionism, a form inherited from the mostly Iberian immigration, it can develop intense union activity, being an important figure in the launch or maintenance of several libertarian periodicals and one of the main organizers of the I Workers' Congress. Brazilian in 1906. Matilde Magrassi was a constant contributor to the libertarian press, writing and publishing several texts. The shoemaker Pedro Matera, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro in the 19th century as a boy, established in the first decade of the 20th century a school for workers and their children in the then factory district of Vila Isabel. Matera and Escola Livre 1º de Maio will be closely linked to the history of social struggles in the neighborhood, especially the class conflicts with the employers of the Confiança fabric factory, a powerful textile industry that dominated the region and brought together thousands of workers (SILVA, 2015).

At the end of the 1910s, influenced by the general strike of 1917 in São Paulo (LOPREATO, 2000) and by the anarchist insurrection in Rio de Janeiro in 1918 (ADDOR, 2002), another strong wave of repression against foreigners who remained in Brazilian territory emerged. Triggered. But this time, the new Law of 1919 had a much more arbitrary practice. Any foreigner that the federal government deemed a danger to national security could be deported. Gigi Damiani was one of those who, upon returning to Italy, wrote *No país onde não se deve emigrar*. There were other times, socialist revolutions spread around the world and the Brazilian State spared no efforts to fight foreign anarchists in these lands.

Final comment

Talk about the relations between anarchism and Italian immigration that developed after the beginning of World War I until the emergence of the Vargas dictatorship and the great repression unleashed from 1936, a period that bury

transnationalist activism in our history with the expulsion of many foreign activists, including many Italians (AUTOR, 2014, p. 89-110), is the subject of another article. What we can conclude here is that the transnational characteristic of Italian anarchism was also present in Brazil, mainly during the arrival phase of the Italian activists of the international anarchist movement in Brazil, that is, until the first decade of the 20th century. From the second decade of this century, the rooting of Italian immigrants in Brazilian lands and the birth of a second generation of children of these emigrants will make the national themes supplant the previous endogenous in fact existing in the midst of the Italian community and soon we will be able to verify the emergence of a more characteristically Brazilian practice of anarchism, but significantly influenced by the transnational tradition of Italian anarchism, whose main printed representative was the São Paulo newspaper *A Plebe*.

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