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## 3

## Malatesta and the war interventionist debate 1914–17: from the ‘Red Week’ to the Russian revolutions

**Carl Levy**

This chapter will examine Errico Malatesta’s (1853–1932) position on intervention in the First World War. The background to the debate is the anti-militarist and anti-dynastic uprising which occurred in Italy in June 1914 (*La Settimana Rossa*) in which Malatesta was a key actor. But with the events of July and August 1914, the alliance of socialists, republicans, syndicalists and anarchists was rent asunder in Italy as elements of this coalition supported intervention on the side of the Entente and the disavowal of Italy’s treaty obligations under the Triple Alliance.

Malatesta’s dispute with Kropotkin provides a focus for the anti-interventionist campaigns he fought internationally, in London and in Italy.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will conclude by examining Malatesta’s discussions of the unintended outcomes of world war and the challenges and opportunities that the fracturing of the antebellum world posed for the international anarchist movement.

### **Globalised syndicalism, insurrection, imperialism and the shadow of world war**

Between 1905 and 1914 the combination of a revived (libertarian) syndicalist movement, anti-militarism and anti-imperialism raced around the globe (in the North and the South),

propelling anarchism to the forefront of the international left. A new era opened when a war-weakened Russia nearly succumbed to a direct action movement of soviets in 1905, and a call-up of Spanish soldiers to fight the Berbers in Morocco's Rif Mountains sparked Barcelona's 'Tragic Week' in 1909. Industrial unrest exploded in the USA, in the UK, in Sweden and in Latin America: the Mexican Revolution had a strong anarchist inflection.<sup>2</sup> New forms of Marxism, whether Rosa Luxemburg's or Lenin's, theorised the importance of the mass strike or direct action, and did not merely rely upon the ballot: the position that had caused the expulsion of the anti-parliamentary socialists and anarchists at the London Conference of the Second International in 1896, where Malatesta played a prominent role in the defeated opposition.<sup>3</sup>

This new era was announced as early as 1902, when Malatesta wrote an article from London entitled 'Lo Sciopero Armato' [The armed strike].<sup>4</sup> The incessant drum-beat of imperial adventure, rearmament, inflation and mass anti-militarist direct action reached a crescendo in Italy with *La Settimana Rossa* (Red Week) in Italy in June 1914, when Malatesta, a key player in the strategically located anarchist stronghold of Ancona, threatened the institutional integrity of Italy's Savoyard monarchy. For a few brief days a powerfully effective broad coalition of all the elements of the subversive Italian left challenged the established authorities. The background to this general strike-cum-insurrection was the Libyan War, which broke out in late 1911. As the Ottoman Empire faltered under pressure from the Libyans, the Balkan Wars were ignited, setting off a chain of events which led to the July crisis of 1914, world war and the realignment of left-wing politics.<sup>5</sup>

From his London exile, Malatesta quickly realised that the Libyan War would destabilise the Giolittian system and increase opportunities for the Italian extra-parliamentary left. When Malatesta arrived back in Italy 1913 he sought to cement an anti-dynastic alliance of radical republicans, rebel socialists within the PSI (led by the young journalist firebrand,

Benito Mussolini), syndicalists and anarchists. The powerful mobilising symbolism of anti-militarism married to general industrial unrest thrust anti-statism on to the left's agenda. The melding of different and sometimes confusing rebel movements into one broad subversive coalition was an Italian version of Malatesta's recent experience with the British 'syndicalist revolt'.<sup>6</sup>

After the Red Week protest collapsed with the failure of the mainstream socialist and trade unionist leadership to rally to the cause, Malatesta remained underground in Italy until the end of the month. On 20 June 1914, he proclaimed his satisfaction with the recent uprising: 'Who can say now that the revolution is impossible and that popular insurrection is the stuff of '48?''<sup>7</sup> However, Malatesta stressed that next time revolutionaries would have to have a pre-established plan to guide such popular movements.

From Vienna, Max Nettlau wrote on 22 June 1914 to Thomas Keell of London's *Freedom* expressing his admiration for his friend, but admitting concern that the old agitator might be gravely endangered. Typically Nettlau, the historian, was dismayed that Malatesta's personal papers had been seized, and on reviewing his life he wrote:

This is the same Malatesta 40 years ago, in 1874, when he went with a band to the Apulian mountains, to Castel del Monte, and later travelling to Switzerland to join Bakunin, was arrested at the rail junction of Pesaro and the revolt of 1874 has striking similarities with that of 1914 ...

In some parts of Italy it was a real revolution where the people for some days held their own – remember only what happened in Catalonia in Ferrer's days (1909) and Russia before and after October.<sup>8</sup>

Malatesta hid in the home of a 'good monarchist' in Ancona until he was smuggled clandestinely via San Marino to Milan for Como, crossing the border at Chiasso and onwards to Geneva, Paris and London. He was back in his Arthur Street flat in Soho by the very end of June.<sup>9</sup>

In an interview with Alfred Rosmer, Malatesta explained the truly revolutionary proportions of the rising in the Marches. Ancona had briefly been in the hands of the insurgents, the old order had been shaken and a completely new one had replaced the old way

of doing things. But the anarchists, he explained, did not propose the immediate expropriation of wealth; rather they attempted to run the city autonomously, relying on assistance from local peasants and merchants to feed the population.<sup>10</sup> The London-based anarchist *Voice of Labour* reported a brief interview with Malatesta, in which he angrily denounced the socialists and their affiliated trade union organisations for defusing the situation. But he promised to return to Italy ‘to keep alive the workers’ movement’.<sup>11</sup> In the July edition of *Freedom* Malatesta finally presented his own short account of the revolt. While maintaining his strong criticisms of the reformists, he was honest enough to admit the limitations of spontaneous protest. ‘If it had not been for the betrayal of the Confederation,’ he concluded, ‘we could not yet have made the revolution for the lack of necessary preparation and understanding and a much greater importance.’<sup>12</sup> He added this optimistic parting observation:

In every way these events have proved that the mass of the people hate the present order; that the workers are disposed to make use of all opportunities to overthrow the Government; and that when the fight is directed against the common enemy – that is to say the Government and the bourgeoisie – all are brothers, though the names Socialist, Anarchist, Syndicalist, or Republican may seem to divide them.

Within a month world war would unravel Malatesta’s short-lived *fronte unico*.

## **Malatesta and the war interventionist debate: the view from London**

For most of July Malatesta was ill. He wrote to Luigi Fabbri at the beginning of August that the life of Emilia Defendi had lain in the balance for several days.<sup>13</sup> But the July crisis and the gathering war clouds had not passed him by. Malatesta admitted to Rudolf Rocker that the *attentat* at Sarajevo might have serious consequences, but he still discounted the threat of a major war.<sup>14</sup> The successive months were probably some of Malatesta’s most trying and disheartening. Not only did the outbreak of war shatter his remaining illusions about the Second International, but the patriotic responses from within the anarchist camp destroyed some of his most enduring relationships. While it is true that the rank and file of the national

anarchist movements remained faithful to their anti-militarist and internationalist beliefs, many of the most celebrated international personalities declared in favour of war. The unity of the London exile community was shattered. Many German anarchists returned to fight for the Kaiser. The French anarchists rushed to support the *Union sacrée*.<sup>15</sup> From Vienna, Nettlau, in a grotesque correspondence with the Freedom group, supported the Habsburgs' duty to defend the Empire from the Slav threat.<sup>16</sup> Malatesta's discussion group was divided when Fernando Tarrida del Marmo, Riccardo Mella, Kropotkin and Varlaam Cherkesov came out openly and fervently for the Entente. From Paris Charles Malato and Christian Corneilsson endorsed their position. At least until late 1915 the *Garibaldino* instincts of most of the London Italian anarchist colony drew them towards the Entente. Silvio Corio gave Henry Hyndman's jingoist *Justice* a pro-war interview in March and also contributed articles to Mussolini's pro-interventionist *Popolo d'Italia*.<sup>17</sup> The sensitive Belgian anarchist art critic Jacques Mesnil at first endorsed the war, after fleeing from the destruction in his homeland. Writing to Fabbri in 1915, he simply thought that a German victory would destroy the liberal civilisation of England in which anarchists such as Malatesta had been granted asylum.<sup>18</sup>

Despite his weakened health and serious illness in his family, Malatesta immediately launched a bitter campaign against Kropotkin's unalloyed Francophilism. Malatesta struggled to preserve anarchist internationalism in a Britain already at war, but he simultaneously directed his thoughts to Italy which would not enter the war until May 1915.

Within a month, two leading newspapers of the Italian anarchist movement, *Volontà* (the newspaper Malatesta edited in Ancona in 1913–14) and *Il Libertario* (La Spezia), were showing signs of confusion; uncertain how to respond to a possible Austrian invasion of Italy. A 1915 anarchist conference was postponed as the left attempted to hold back the interventionist campaign, now being guided by some of the heroes of June 1914.<sup>19</sup> In an interview in *The Voice of Labour* in September 1914 Emidio Recchioni (a close associate of

Malatesta in London)<sup>20</sup> claimed that most of the Italian population was opposed to war, but had to admit that ‘even among some individual anarchists there is a sentimental idea that the allies are to some extent fighting for civilisation against militarism ...’

Malatesta began his campaign in the autumn of 1914. By October he was debating with Italian interventionists in Soho and lending support to the anti-war Jewish anarchists in the East End.<sup>21</sup> The destruction of the Freedom group and the bitter quarrel between Malatesta and Kropotkin were the most dramatic events of these first months of war.<sup>22</sup> The cause of the rupture of this anarchist fellowship can be traced to a consistent Francophilism on Kropotkin’s part. In 1882 Kropotkin made his position quite clear: ‘Bismarck knows,’ he wrote in a newspaper article,

that on the day on which the alliance of people of the Latin race take place, German supremacy will be at an end. He understands that the principle of the almighty State will also be done away with whose faithful expression and final vanguard at this moment is Germany – the monarchical as well as the republican, and the republican as well as social democrat. An almighty State, even if it wore republican colours can satisfy neither France, nor Italy, and even less Spain. Therefore, the alliance of the Latin peoples is the nightmare which presses on Germany against which Bismarck works.<sup>23</sup>

Seventeen years later Kropotkin repeated the same theme. In 1899 he wrote:

The triumph of Germany was the triumph of militarism in Europe, of militarism and political despotism, and at the same time the worship of the State, of authority and State socialism, which is in reality nothing but State capitalism triumphant in the ideas of a whole generation.<sup>24</sup>

By the early twentieth century Kropotkin, it has been noted, exhibited a habitual ‘mitigated French patriotism’.<sup>25</sup>

Malatesta had recognised these disturbing tendencies in his comrade’s behaviour for a long time, but kept quiet before the war for fear of dividing the movement and discrediting one of its foremost talents. ‘I confess,’ he wrote in a pained letter to *Freedom* in December 1914, ‘that we were in the wrong not giving importance to his Franco-Russian patriotism, and not foreseeing where his anti-German prejudices would land him.’<sup>26</sup> Just before his death, Malatesta wrote a long article on the tenth anniversary of Kropotkin’s passing. He recalled his friend’s conversion to war as a real pathological case and one of the saddest ‘and most

tragic events of my life (and I dare say one of his) in which after a decidedly painful discussion, we separated as adversaries, almost enemies'.<sup>27</sup>

Kropotkin openly declared his views in the October 1914 issue of *Freedom*. In November the anarchist-inspired Milanese *Università Popolare* reported that Malatesta had severely criticised Kropotkin's position. In December the Italian anarchists learned of Malatesta's position from a letter he sent to Mussolini's *Popolo d'Italia* refuting rumours that he had joined the interventionists, which also appeared in *Avanti!*, the main newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party.<sup>28</sup> Two bitter events precipitated the final break in the anarchist ranks.

At the end of October Rudolf Rocker and the entire German anarchist community were arrested. Rocker was placed in detention in the Olympia exhibition hall in west London, on the *Royal Edward* prison ship (later sunk during the landing at Gallipoli) in the Thames and finally in Alexandra Palace in north London for the duration of the war.<sup>29</sup> Rocker had worried about this possibility soon after war was declared. But Malatesta, somewhat out of character, relied on the good sense of the British authorities. 'You're alright Rudolf,' he reassured Rocker. 'Nobody will suspect you of spying for the Kaiser. They won't touch you.'<sup>30</sup> Proved wrong, Malatesta forever linked Rocker's incarceration with Kropotkin's interventionist betrayal; shortly after his arrest Rocker wrote a long refutation of Kropotkin's position in the Yiddish *Arbeter Fraynd*. The second event involved the chief personalities of pre-war London anarchism in another bitter and personal debate. In the autumn just before Rocker was interned, Cherkesov, Keell, Schapiro, Malatesta and other Freedom group members met in London to discuss the war. Kropotkin was too frail to make the trip from Brighton, so Cherkesov deputised for him. Rocker recalled that Cherkesov started the debate with a furious defence of the war.

Malatesta couldn't contain himself. He kept angrily interrupting Tcherkesov, who had been his intimate friend for many years. He said this war like any other war was being fought for the interests of the ruling class, not of the nations. It would be different if the workers of France and Britain had fought for their countries, and had won, to introduce a new social



order. But now it was different, and whichever side the workers fought on they were only cannon-fodder. Malatesta agreed that a victory for Germany would lead to a general reaction in Europe, but he argued that a victory for the Allies would bring a clericalist and royalist reaction which would overthrow the Republic. He said that he too wanted a German defeat, but for different reasons than Kropotkin and Tcherkesov. A German defeat would start a revolution in Germany which would spread to other countries. The rest of the comrades expressed similar views. At this meeting Tcherkesov stood alone.<sup>31</sup>

## **Two manifestos and a new realignment (beyond the Red Week of 1914 and a return to Malatesta's line of 1896)**

In November 1914 Malatesta published an impassioned article in *Freedom*, repeating the argument he had voiced privately ('Anarchists have forgotten their Principles'). He foresaw a long inconclusive war with 'an enormous loss of life and wealth, both sides being exhausted', followed 'by some kind of peace ... leaving all questions open, thus preparing for a new war more murderous than the present'. In March 1915 he signed the *International Anarchist Manifesto on the War (Freedom)*. His name appeared beside 33 others, many London exiles, as well as Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman and Bertoni – who would suffer imprisonment for their beliefs.

Europe in a blaze, twelve million men engaged in the most frightful butchery that history has ever recorded; millions of women and children in tears; the economic, intellectual and moral life of seven great peoples brutally suppressed, and the conflict becoming every day more pregnant with new military complications – such is, for seven months the painful, agonising, and hateful spectacle presented by the civilised world. [AQ ref]

After Italy entered the war on the side of the Allies in June 1915, Malatesta published a post-mortem of the ill-fated Italian anti-interventionist campaign. He turned his sharpest words against the former allies of the June days – the Republicans and left-wing interventionists (Mussolini's socialists, the syndicalists and anarchists).

They have done their utmost to resuscitate in the masses the old idea of patriotism, which was developed in the time when national independence seemed to be the means for attaining emancipation from poverty and bondage, and which had decayed in consequence of the experience that a national Government is as bad as a foreign one. They raised the cry 'War or Revolution', and when the King, perhaps to save himself from the revolution has declared war, they have put themselves in the mass at the service of the King. What, then, about the Republic? Many of them still say that they want a war in order to facilitate the revolution; but what nonsense! If Italy is victorious, certainly it will be to the exclusive advantage of the Monarchy; and, on the other hand, we cannot conceive that the Republicans would be capable of the infamy of pushing the people into war with the secret hope that they will be beaten and their country invaded and devastated. [AQ ref]

Malatesta settled down to a long brutal war. ‘It is astonishing and humiliating,’ he wrote in this article, ‘to see how easily the masses can be deceived by the coarsest lies.’ Malatesta had always believed that the possible advantages a war might produce for a revolutionary – a weakened state and a radicalised population – were offset by the inherent authoritarianism it produced in the masses. In an interview in the Catalan anarchist newspaper *Tierra e Libertad*, Malatesta emphasised the ‘inexhaustible obedience and servility of the most humiliated, of the flock-like spirit, of a popular soul which revealed a discouraging fatalism and with the resignation of peoples led to massacre. No protest! No spark of rebellion!’ [AQ ref]

In the spring of 1916 Malatesta finally burned his remaining bridges with the pro-war anarchists. Throughout 1915 Kropotkin maintained a correspondence with the pro-war French anarchists, and in early 1916 Jean Grave came over to Brighton to formulate their *Manifesto of the Sixteen* which unreservedly endorsed the unconditional defeat of the Central Powers. The signatories to the *Manifesto* were ‘slight in numbers if not names’: Malato, Cherkesov, Jean Winstch, Cornelisessen, Jean-Louis Pindy and Grave were the most illustrious; nine French citizens, two Russians.<sup>32</sup> It was circulated in the pro-war socialist, syndicalist and bourgeois press in France and Britain. The *Manifesto* merely confirmed the split which existed in the anarchist movement; nevertheless it raised ill-feeling to irreconcilably shrill tones. The deep loathing for German civilisation which it expressed had always lain close to the surface of the Francophile libertarian left even before the war. Cherkesov, for instance, had written to Jean Grave in the autumn of 1914 anticipating the harsh tenor of the *Manifesto*’s words: he told Grave that the war needed to be followed to its logical conclusion and that it was necessary that ‘the Germans were beaten, annihilated, humiliated ... let, this time, the Allies bring devastation and massacre to that nation of spies, butchers, and professional murderers’. [AQ ref]

In ‘Pro-Government Anarchists’, Malatesta denounced the *Manifesto*, which demanded ‘a fight to a finish and the crushing of Germany’. The signatories, Malatesta continued, ‘take their stand against the idea of “premature” peace’. He could understand how republicans, socialists and ‘labourists’ were capable of supporting a militarised state, but such behaviour ‘is incomprehensible in the case of “the Anarchists”’. Echoing the cry of the Clydeside Shop Stewards Movement, he exploded: ‘in the hope of crushing Prussianised England and France; they have submitted themselves to Tsarism; they have restored the prestige of the tottering throne of Italy’. The *Manifesto* was nothing less than ‘criminal’ since it added to those forces which desired a prolongation of the war. One year before the Russian revolutions and the US entry into the war unsettled the stalemate, Malatesta made a ringing if pious demand: ‘Peace ought to be imposed by bringing about the Revolution or least threatening to do so. To the point in time, the strength or skill was wanting.’ [AQ ref]

The dispute against the pro-war anarchists was carried into Italy. In June 1916 a long anonymous pamphlet (*La Guerra Europea e gli anarchici* [The European war and the anarchists]) appeared. Luigi Fabbri wrote the document, Malatesta may have contributed suggestions, and it was printed by Turinese anarchists in the suburbs of ‘Italy’s Clydeside’. The pamphlet not only denounced the pro-war anarchists, but it also – *sotto voce* – warned anarchists against too close ties with pacifists and anti-war statist socialists, although Malatesta’s contacts in London, Paris and Milan tended towards such an accommodation. The intransigence in this pamphlet approached Lenin’s earlier appeal ‘to turn the imperialist war into a civil war’.

Our behaviour has nothing in common with the pacifism of the philanthropic bourgeoisie and is clearly differentiated from the neutralism of the authoritarian socialists – we are not neutralists, but are hostile to either alliances of States and completely independent from the two solutions, in as much as we remain on the terrain of revolutionary libertarian action against the statist bourgeoisie, either if they prosecute the war or if they reach a peace.<sup>33</sup>

For the remainder of the war neither Malatesta’s nor Fabbri’s positions were so impossibly sectarian. Contacts with the French anarchist movement revealed attempts to ally with the

very bourgeois pacifist intellectuals denounced in the Turinese pamphlet. For example, the Groupe des *Temps Nouveaux* adopted a moderate position until 1916, appealing for a rapid peace based on no territorial annexations or financial reparations for either bloc. Similarly, Pierre Martin's Amis du *Libertaire* appealed to all anti-war forces and after the autumn 1915 Zimmerwald Congress, the Groupe des *Temps Nouveaux* created a 'Comité pur la Reprise des Relations Internationales', republishing Malatesta's 'Pro-Government Anarchists' as a pamphlet.

This ecumenical approach by the French was represented by Sebastian Faure's *Ce qu'il faut dire* (1916) and *L'Avenir Internationale*, both of which would be more accurately described as anti-war journals rather than as strictly anarchist.<sup>34</sup> Malatesta may have had doubts but he remained in frequent contact with these groups. He had assisted in the Freedom group's recently established International Anarchist Committee of Action which gradually established a communications network with the Swiss, German and Italian anarchist communities in Zurich, Faure's circle in Paris and the Italian Comitato di Azione Anarchica in Rome. From London and Switzerland the Italian exiles smuggled leaflets into Italy and formed an 'underground railway' to help deserters escape from the Italian army.<sup>35</sup> Although warned by the British authorities to stay out of anti-war activities, Malatesta and other Italian anarchists helped Italians to avoid being registered for service in the Italian army.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile the syndicalists were also seeking to re-establish international contacts. Armando Borghi had circulated the anti-war syndicalists in the summer of 1915 and throughout 1916 he rallied the *minorité* in the French metalworkers union and the Vie Ouvrière group to oppose the pro-Allied conventions of trade unionists scheduled to convene in Leeds in November 1916. By 1916, and stretching into 1917, complex negotiations were underway between the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and the libertarian left (since the PSI never formally endorsed Italian entry into the war), with the Italian anarchist exiles playing an

important role. From 1916 the Italian authorities believed that the ‘rigid’ faction within the PSI would soon create an insurrectional alliance with the anarchists and the USI (Unione Sindacale Italiana). The rising in Turin during late August 1917 and the well-known meeting of the ‘rigids’ in Florence (including a much overshadowed young Antonio Gramsci) that autumn reinforced the fears of the Italian government.<sup>37</sup> Malatesta also met Italian socialists in London from the centre and left of the party.<sup>38</sup> But as I have shown elsewhere, even in favourable territory such as Turin, the young Gramsci and his comrades in 1917–18 established obstacles to complete fusion.<sup>39</sup> For their part, the anarchist leadership never agreed to a formal amalgamation with the socialists, which would inevitably have meant the domination of the new organisation by the numerically superior partner. Writing to Mesnil in 1918, Fabbri explained to the Belgian anarchist, now a member of the French socialist party that, in Italy ‘we maintain a sympathetic and courteous and also cooperative attitude with the socialists in all those things that we have in common with their ideas and ours, but without attempting to join them or they joining us’.<sup>40</sup>

In this context, from 1916 to 1917 Malatesta’s spirit revived as the stalemate of war brought a new realignment of the anti-war radical and pacifist socialists, anarchists and syndicalists, re-energised through the rise of the shop stewards, factory council and soviet movements from Glasgow to Turin and from Berlin to St Petersburg. Malatesta knew many of the militants in the new movements from the pre-war syndicalist revolt; indeed some had been active in the Malatesta Committee, which had prevented his deportation to Italy in 1912.<sup>41</sup> Recchioni’s article published in September 1915 in *Freedom* was prescient. Recchioni predicted a new *fronte unico* along new lines of political demarcation which the war had begun to create – one which would eradicate the division between certain anti-war followers of the socialism of the Second International and the pariahs of the Second International, the anarchists and syndicalists.

On one side will be those who advocate the continuation of the 'sacred union' with the Liberal and Democratic parties and with the State. There will be a Radical party of reform in Germany and so in France and Italy especially, where the new party will join the Republicans, Reformist Socialists and some Syndicalists. On the other hand, there will be those who will continue to fight capitalism on the old basis of the *lutte de classe*, or 'class consciousness', but their Parliamentary and legal action has proved a failure now more than ever, they (together with the trade organisations, will in all countries turn to revolutionary Syndicalism, if we act quickly), if they are really bona fide, change towards, direct action their line in their struggle, that is, towards the Anarchist method, the very method they have for many years opposed.<sup>42</sup>

But the prehistory of the Third International must also note the mutual suspicion of socialists and libertarians towards an amalgamation of forces. Thus the Zimmerwald (1915) and Kienthal (1916) Congresses received a mixed response from the Italian anarchist leadership. The Italian anarchists organised a nationwide clandestine congress in Ravenna during August 1916 to discuss, among other things, the movement's attitude towards a new socialist international. One key anarchist, Pasquale Binazzi of *La Spezia*, predicted a new era of cordial relations between anarchists and socialists. He envisaged an international organisation open to all working-class internationalists which would replace the discredited, exclusively parliamentary Second International.

Binazzi's conception of the new international (a return to Recchioni circa 1915) circulated throughout the Italian left in 1916–17. In Turin a leading working-class 'rigid' socialist, Pietro Rabbezzani, argued on May Day 1916 that he looked forward to a New Union of the Labourers of the World, based on anti-parliamentary syndicalist principles as the successor to the discredited Second International. And in December 1917, Spartaco Lavagnini, a 'rigid' socialist railwayman from Florence, defended a similar conception of the International, linking it with Malatesta's anti-parliamentarian position at the London Congress of 1896, and as we shall see, Malatesta's intervention at the USI's *Guerra di Classe* the previous month, albeit the Florentine's line was disowned by more sectarian maximalist socialists such as Serrati, Bordiga and Gramsci.<sup>43</sup>

## **From London 1896 *redux* to the challenge of the soviets (1916–17): the balance of power and world revolution**

Before the Russian Revolution broke out Malatesta persisted in believing that Germany was the weak link among the warring states. On New Year's Day 1916, he visited Rocker at the Alexandra Palace internment camp, and expressed the opinion that the Germans would not be able to withstand the British naval blockade much longer. German defeat would mean the collapse of the *Kaiserreich* and social revolution would spread rapidly to other war-weary countries. Europe was bleeding to death; it was not a question of victors or vanquished. But he added, 'if America came into the war things would turn out differently. Then Germany's defeat would be overwhelming. She would be crushed.' France would experience a clerical-nationalist revival lasting five or ten years and European revolution would be postponed for a long time to come.<sup>44</sup> In April 1917 on another visit to Rocker, Malatesta had changed markedly. The Russian Revolution had broken out and it surprised and invigorated the old veteran. 'The Russian Revolution had given the old rebel new courage and hope,' Rocker recalled.

He was straining at the leash to go to Russia to serve the Revolution. The British Government had refused permission for him to leave the country. But he hoped to get out some other way. There was an International Socialist Congress being organised in Stockholm. He expected that he would be sent there as delegate, and then he would try to make his way to Russia from Sweden. [AQ ref]

Malatesta was now more optimistic about European revolution. But he realised that it depended on the delicate balance between American power and the ability of the Russians to weaken the Germans sufficiently to cause unrest in central Europe.<sup>45</sup> Malatesta was not ignorant of the logic of the balance of power. Rocker explained: 'It all depended, he said, on Russia. If the Russians could hold the Germans back long enough there would be a revolution in Germany and Austria. If that didn't happen then the arrival of the American armies in France would end the war before the next Spring.'<sup>46</sup>

Malatesta was wrong. Russia under the Bolsheviks left the war in early spring 1918 and Germany mounted a menacing drive on Paris that was broken by the British and the French: the Americans were only fully mobilised in the spring of 1918 and between then and the Armistice of November 1918 they helped break German resistance.<sup>47</sup> In any case, in June 1917 the USI selected Malatesta as their delegate for the never to be convened Stockholm peace conference. All the Allied powers refused to grant passports. Malatesta's movements were closely monitored by the British and his correspondence with Borghi was opened. The Italian authorities noted that Malatesta was on very good terms with the Russian socialist exile community in London, especially the Bolsheviks, with personal ties to Georgii Chicherin and Maxim Litvinov.<sup>48</sup> But even now this was an alliance of convenience: as noted already, Malatesta's thoughts about a new International, based on his principles of 1896, did not go down well with the socialist leadership in Italy. Malatesta's *La Mondiale*, he explained to the readers of *Guerra di Classe* in November 1917, would include all the socialists, anarchists and syndicalists who had remained faithful to internationalist principles, all those who had stuck to the principle of class struggle and had not become instruments of their bourgeois governments. *La Mondiale*, however, was not merely to be syndicalist-oriented as some of the left interpreted it, and Malatesta was quick to distance himself from any suggestion that he favoured another attempt to revive pre-war efforts at founding a syndicalist International, since the corporatism of trade unionism had been open to the seduction of collaboration with wartime governments. *La Mondiale* was neither parliamentarian nor syndicalist in conception. It would, Malatesta believed, inspire and coordinate the nationally based rebellions of war-weary workers without forcing a variety of movements to conform to a guiding political ideology.<sup>49</sup> But from the autumn of 1917 a new realignment of forces gathered pace, which used the energy of the anti-war mavericks (the anarchists, syndicalists, the maximalist libertarian-tinged socialists, and the first 'apolitical' vaguely libertarian



supporters of the soviets) and reinstated the Marxist dictum of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. From 1918, the challenge of Bolshevism caused Malatesta to revisit his youthful support of Bakunin in his battle with Marx during the First International, and thus the rebirth of a ‘Red Week’ alliance nationally or internationally between 1917 and 1921 was quickly overshadowed by the monopolist imperatives of the Bolshevik Third International.<sup>50</sup>

### **Conclusion: Malatesta, Kropotkin and the challenges of world war: the fate of antebellum anarchism**

This chapter has illustrated the apparent gulf between the positions of Kropotkin and Malatesta, but it is my contention that both men shared many unspoken assumptions. I will tease out the implications in this conclusion.

What did they share in common? Even after their rupture they shared similar sociological first premises. If, as we shall see, differing takes on realism and the international scene in 1914 divided Malatesta and Kropotkin, the realities of Bolshevik authoritarianism after 1917 alienated them both from the outcomes of the October Revolution, which had destroyed the non-sectarian ‘sovietist’ kernel of earlier revolutionary events in 1917 itself. Malatesta shared Lenin’s use of John Hobson’s interpretation of modern imperialism and like Lenin used the mobilising counter-dynamics of imperialism and militarism to craft insurrectionary alliances (for Malatesta during the Red Week and then with a projected newly reshuffled alliance during the First World War; for Lenin, within Russia, with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries and anarchists in the lead-up to the October Revolution and then in the Bolsheviks’ attempts to ‘asset-strip’ syndicalist, anarchist, shop stewards and council communist networks during the formative years of the Third International).<sup>51</sup> But whereas Lenin used Hobson’s work to update the Marxist Hegelian grand march of the stages of history – famously, imperialism was merely the last and highest stage and thus world war set the ground for world revolution – Malatesta *and* Kropotkin denied that there was a last stage.

Nor did they believe that there was an Engelsian ‘last instance’, in which Marxist determinism stepped in to put paid to anarchist heresy and return good revolutionaries to orthodoxy.<sup>52</sup> Thus in a speech on the Italian invasion of Libya, given to Italian workers at Soho’s Communist Club in 1912, Malatesta asked his audience if they believed that ‘England’ was rich due to her possession of India. No, he replied, Britain was rich due to the comparative advantage of being the first industrial nation, her near monopoly on modern technology for nearly fifty years, and also because of her huge deposits of coal. The Italians did not need Libya, they too (and here Malatesta the electrician was speaking) had the potential of the ‘white coal’ of fast-flowing mountain rivers.<sup>53</sup> Thus, for Malatesta and also Kropotkin, modern imperialism was the contingent product of militarist and financial interests. In a similar vein, Malatesta and Francesco Saverio Merlino<sup>54</sup> had argued elsewhere that the Risorgimento had failed due to congeries of crony capitalists, the military, landlords, bureaucrats and former revolutionaries using the Savoyard state ‘for the enrichment of the few to the detriment of the many’.<sup>55</sup>

There were other connections to British and European liberalism and republicanism in the thought of Kropotkin and Malatesta. Thus Kropotkin’s love affair with the volunteerism and self-help of Victorian and post-Victorian society (most famously embodied in the Life Boat Society), melded to his older and firm attachment to the French Revolution and its reassertion in the Paris Commune of 1871. Besides the previously mentioned linkages to British liberals, noted in the case of Malatesta, the Italian revolutionary also sought out alliances with radical liberals in Italy in the late 1890s when military dictatorship threatened, even though he refused to be a protest candidate in parliamentary elections.<sup>56</sup> But in 1914, while Kropotkin argued the logic of the lesser evil and found comfort in the traditions of British liberalism and French republicanism, Malatesta disagreed.

Ruth Kinna has argued that Kropotkin saw the imperialism of the German Empire as the greatest threat to a future libertarian world, because a victorious *Kaiserreich* would also undermine the bourgeois liberties of the present statist UK or France. She also contends that Kropotkin espied the incipient federalisation of the Russian Empire in the wake of 1905 while in turn the military weakness of the Tsarist Empire made it a lesser threat than potentially triumphant Central Powers.<sup>57</sup> Malatesta begged to differ: the Allies posed the threat of a French chauvinist/Anglo-Knouto alternative, and in any case the war would lead to the permanent militarisation of the world, and merely be the first of many world wars of vengeance. Kropotkin and other Allied war interventionist anarchists thought the invasions of Belgium and Serbia by the Central Powers demanded action and made choosing sides easy. But, Malatesta argued, was the treatment of the Persians, Indians, Tonkinese (Vietnamese), Congeese and Moroccans by the ‘liberal’ Allies any better?

One has to understand the concept of the lesser evil by marrying it to geopolitics.<sup>58</sup> This is first approached by examining how Malatesta and Kropotkin reacted to the failure of the European workers to stop the war in July/August 1914. For Kropotkin, the German masses had been brainwashed long before 1914 by the explicit social imperialism and authoritarianism of German Marxism, and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had been the most efficient agents of German imperialism because they had made German domination an unspoken shared common sense of the entire German nation. Thus during the war, suggestions of peace in 1916 were anathema to Kropotkin because the Germans would not agree to give up their territorial gains. In certain respects, Kropotkin’s line anticipated Woodrow Wilson’s pronouncements in 1917, by arguing essentially that there would be no peace without regime change in Berlin. Indeed, one could argue that Kropotkin expressed this even more intransigently, because he seemed to be arguing that the entire ‘Teutonic race’ had to undergo political and cultural re-education. However, for Kropotkin, the Latin races were

inherently libertarian, or at least had been saved from authoritarian temptations by their retention of the traditions of the French Revolution and the Paris Commune. Thus the victories of the Bakuninists in the Latin world in the 1870s had prevented the definitive victory of the Marxist authoritarian alternative in the First International.

For Malatesta, ‘Latin Unions’ were pernicious nonsense. Although he worked with the ‘Colonel of the Commune’, Amilcare Cipriani, in the 1880s and 1890s, he denounced his proposed Union of the Latin Peoples of 1888 (a device announced by Cipriani to prevent Prime Minister Crispi, scheming with Bismarck, from launching a nation-building war against France). It was no surprise to Malatesta that from his Parisian exile, the aged Cipriani endorsed Kropotkin’s position in 1914.<sup>59</sup> As we have seen, Malatesta also returned to his First Internationalist roots, the *Mondiale*, but in this case the unit would be universal, cosmopolitan and non-sectarian, not solely Bolshevik, and certainly not merely ‘Latin’ or ‘Latin-Slavic’.

For Malatesta, the choice of the lesser evil undermined anarchist solidarity. In this volume, Peter Ryley mounts a spirited defence of the logic of the lesser evil, while Davide Turcato, in contradistinction, argues that Malatesta’s position preserved the coherence of ends and means that morally and practically was the best policy. I suggest that Ryley *and* Turcato have missed the point. Malatesta’s position was always more pragmatic than this either/or dilemma suggests. In order to be the complete anarchist, Malatesta would have had to have taken a Tolstoyan position on the First World War. But Malatesta’s position was a libertarian version of the Leninist slogan of turning the world war into a civil war: thus the *Mondiale* was a union of all anti-parliamentary strands who followed the line of class struggle (it is unclear if the humanist Malatesta would be easy with that). There were not 21 Points but perhaps one or two points, and how these would be enforced was never tested. Nevertheless, Malatesta was a pragmatic revolutionary, who had endorsed anarchist socialism

during the unrest of the 1880s and 1890s to seek socialist allies and broader alliances in the run-up to the Red Week of 1914 and later during the *Biennio Rosso* (1919–20). In effect the anarchists were just one component in a larger non-anarchist revolutionary coalition.

Anarchism, he argued would only be fulfilled in the longer term: men and women had to be free to practise libertarian lives in the workplace, in their families and in their communities, and that would only occur through generations of education; but this could only occur after the revolution. Thus, in effect, the anarchists would be the loyal, critical opposition in post-revolutionary society, where their victorious partners' authoritarian impulses would be kept in check through newly libertarian societal structures and the vigilance of the anarchists.<sup>60</sup> In this regard, Kropotkin's argument that one had to choose the Allies to prevent the destruction of liberal and republican Europe, because this Europe, rather than an enlarged *Kaiserreich*, allowed for the possibility of future anarchist advances, is not so different from the consequences of Malatesta's decades' old practice and theorisation of choosing a lesser evil.

But one can pursue this argument one step further. Malatesta argued that it was legitimate for a people to defend their country from aggressive invasion. He tried to fight with the Serbian Bosnian insurgents against the Tur in Bosnia in 1876, and with the forces of the Egyptian nationalist Urabi Pasha against the British outside Alexandria in 1882, although he opposed Cipriani's expedition to Greece in 1897, because he felt the Italian volunteers were catspaws of the King of Greece.<sup>61</sup> Thus a revolutionary defence of one's homeland was justified, and naturally the Paris Commune (with all its faults) remained the model to which one returned. This gave Mussolini an easy target when in the autumn of 1914 Malatesta's position was still unclear, so that Mussolini could argue that Malatesta's previous actions would lead one to believe that he was on the side of intervention.<sup>62</sup> Indeed in 1917 in another context, it was reported by Italian agents that Malatesta had told a group of Italian workers in London that in light of the apparent ongoing disintegration of the Italian army following the

rout at Caporreto and the recent Bolshevik revolution, anarchist and other Italian revolutionaries should reform the Royal Army and start the revolution in Italy itself.<sup>63</sup> In the unlikely event that this might have happened, would Malatesta have then endorsed a defensive revolutionary war against the Austrians and Germans? Counterfactuals aside, it is certainly the case that during the Russian Civil War and the Allied intervention, even as he opposed Leninism, he still supported the Bolshevik-led side and was a notable participant in the 'Hands Off Russia' campaign in London in 1918 and 1919.<sup>64</sup> In the end Malatesta made his choice of the lesser evil, it was just that his priorities were different to Kropotkin's.

Malatesta was truly radical during the First World War when on occasion he transcended the false dichotomy over lesser evils, as he ruminated on the deeper message of industrialised mass killing. Malatesta was not a Tolstoyan or Gandhian, and he advocated violent revolution, albeit plumping for the least violence necessary.<sup>65</sup> That is why, he would argue, an anarchist revolution would have prevented the unspeakable violence of the war. But the First World War gave birth to the unspeakable violence of the Russian Civil War, where Malatesta took a partisan if hedged stand.<sup>66</sup> Later, however, in light of the decline of the anarchist movement in the 1920s and the consolidation of Leninist communism and Mussolini's fascism, Malatesta took a deeper look at the dialectics of violence in modern society.<sup>67</sup> He had hinted at the problems of mass society as early as the turn of the century when the new era of social imperialism was signalled by the Dreyfus Affair, the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China, the Spanish-American War and the Boer War.<sup>68</sup> And he witnessed in person the chauvinism and jingoism of the crowds in New York and London. But perhaps even more chilling was the apathy that the popular press and drink induced in London's impoverished working class, which 'brutalises itself in its "public houses", indifferent to everything else'.<sup>69</sup>

Ruminations on the role of mass society and the road to totalitarianism would have to await the next generation of Italian anarchists, particularly the interventions of Camillo Berneri on interwar anti-Semitism and the logic of Stalinism and Nazism.<sup>70</sup> Kropotkin's federalisation or the libertarian take on Mazzinian ethics that Malatesta endorsed were of little use, although the attempts by Rocker to flesh out an anarchist theory of nationalism as the genocidal killing was happening still retain their interest.<sup>71</sup> Inflamed new national passions and heightened class tensions focused on minorities and 'class enemies' in newly created hyper-nationalist states or former truncated, truculent revolutionised empires, and the endless and bloody wars of vengeance that Malatesta had foretold in 1915 and 1916 came to pass at mid-century.

## Notes

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- 1 The most comprehensive biography of Malatesta is G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872–1932* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2003). In English, see V. Richards (ed.), *Malatesta. Life and Ideas. The Anarchist Writings of Errico Malatesta* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015); D. Turcato, *Making Sense of Anarchism: Errico Malatesta's Experiments with Revolution, 1889–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); D. Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom. An Errico Malatesta Reader* (Oakland, CA, and Edinburgh: AK Press, 2014); C. Levy, *The Rooted Cosmopolitan: Errico Malatesta, the Life and Times of an Anarchist in Exile*, forthcoming. For Malatesta's London exile, see C. Levy, 'Malatesta in Exile', *Annali della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, 15 (1981), pp. 245–70; C. Levy, 'Malatesta in London: The Era of Dynamite', *The Italianist* (special supplement), 13 (1993), pp. 25–42; C. Levy, 'The Rooted Cosmopolitan: Errico Malatesta, Syndicalism, Transnationalism and the International Labour Movement',

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- in D. Berry and C. Bantman (eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour & Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010); [AQ pp] C. Levy, ‘Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs: Il “capo” dell’anarchismo mondiale a Londra’, in D. Turcato (ed.), *Errico Malatesta, ‘Lo Sciopero Armato’. Il lungo esilio londinese 1900–1913’. Opere complete, Vol. 5* (Milan: Zero in Condotta, 2015). For the Italian anarchist exile community in London, see P. di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy: London and the Italian Anarchist Diaspora, 1880–1917* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).
- 2 I review the pertinent literature in C. Levy, ‘Social Histories of Anarchism’, *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 4.2 (2010), pp. 1–44.
- 3 D. Turcato, ‘The 1896 London Congress: Epilogue or Prologue?’, in Berry and Bantman (eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour & Syndicalism*. [AQ pp?]
- 4 E. Malatesta, ‘The Armed Strike’, in Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom*, pp. 315–18.
- 5 L. Lotti, *La Settimana Rossa* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1965); Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 479–550; F. Giulietti, *Storia degli anarchici italiani in età giolittiana* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2012), pp. 297–320.
- 6 Giulietti, *Storia degli anarchici*, pp. 297–308; Levy, ‘Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs’, pp. xx–xxx.
- 7 E. Malatesta, ‘E ora?’, *Volontà*, 20 June 1914, p. 1.
- 8 International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (hereafter IISH), Freedom Group, Max Nettlau (Vienna) to Thomas Keell (London), 22 June 1914.
- 9 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 547–8.
- 10 A. Rosmer, ‘La semaine rouge en Italie. Conversation avec Malatesta’ *Vie Ouvrière*, 5 July 1914.
- 11 ‘Malatesta’, *Voice of Labour*, 3 July 1914.



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- 12 E. Malatesta, 'The General Strike and the Insurrection in Italy', *Freedom*, July 1914.
- 13 IISH, Luigi Fabbri Papers, Errico Malatesta (London) to Luigi Fabbri (Bologna), 3 August 1914. Emilia Defendi was the partner of Giovanni Defendi and possibly the mother of his son Errico ('Erricuccio') Defendi. The Defendis were for many years the hosts for Malatesta in London.
- 14 R. Rocker, *The London Years* (London: Robert Anscombe, 1956), p. 240.
- 15 C. Bantman, *The French Anarchists in London, 1880–1914. Exile and Transnationalism in the First Globalisation* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), pp. 183–7.
- 16 IISH, Freedom Group, and see also B. Altena, 'A Networking Historian: The Transnational, the National and the Patriotic in and around Max Nettlau's *Geschichte der Anarchie*', in C. Bantman and B. Altena (eds), *Reassessing the Transnational Turn. Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 72–5.
- 17 Di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy*, pp. 192–5.
- 18 IISH, Luigi Fabbri Papers, Jacques Mesnil (Paris) to Luigi Fabbri (Bologna), 14 June 1915.
- 19 For the most recent overview of the Italian anarchists and the interventionist debate, see F. Giulietti, *Gli anarchici italiani dalla Grande Guerra al fascismo* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2015), ch. 1. See also A. Luparini, *Anarchici di Mussolini: dalla sinistra al fascismo tra rivoluzione e revisionismo* (Montespertoli: MIR, 2001); M. Antonioli, *Sentinelle perdute. Gli anarchici, la morte, la Guerra* (Pisa: CBFS, 2009); A. Pakieser, *I Belong Only to Myself. The Life and Writings of Leda Rafanelli* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2014).
- 20 E. Diemoz, *A morte il tiranno. Anarchia e violenza da Crispi a Mussolini* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011).

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- 21 B.P. Gidley, 'Citizenship and Belonging: East End Jewish Radicals 1903–1918' (PhD dissertation, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2003), pp. 228–30.
- 22 For Malatesta's part in the interventionist debate, see Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 557–95, and in *Freedom*, S. Varengo, *Pagine anarhiche. Pëtr Kropotkin e il mensile 'Freedom' (1886–1914)* (Milan: Biblion, 2015), pp. 65–88.
- 23 G. Woodcock and I. Avakumović, *The Anarchist Prince. A Biographical Study of Peter Kropotkin* (London: T.V. Boardman, 1950), p. 186.
- 24 Woodcock and Avakumović, *The Anarchist Prince*, p. 289.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 297.
- 26 E. Malatesta, 'Anti-Militarism: Was it Properly Understood?', *Freedom*, December 1914.
- 27 E. Malatesta, 'Pietro Kropotkin. Ricordi e critiche di un vecchio amico', *Studi Sociali*, 15 April 1931, translated in R. Vernon, *Malatesta*, p. 244. [AQ]
- 28 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 567–8.
- 29 F. Rocker, *The East End Year. A Stepney Childhood* (London: Freedom Press, 1998), pp. 131–5. Rocker wrote an exposé of the conditions; see P. Di Paola (ed.), *Sindrome da filo spinato. Rapporto di un tedesco internato a Londra (1914–1918)* (Santa Maria Capua Vetere: Editizioni Spartaco, 2006).
- 30 Rocker, *The London Years*, p. 245.
- 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 247–8.
- 32 Woodcock and Avakumović, *The Anarchist Prince*, p. 385.
- 33 [L. Fabbri], 'Per un gruppo di anarchici', *La guerra europea e gli anarchici* (Turin: Tipografia editore, 1916), p. 15.
- 34 Good overviews can be found in D. Berry, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917–1945* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009), ch. 1; W. Thorpe, 'The European Syndicalists and War, 1914–1918', *Contemporary European History*, 10.1 (2001), pp.

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- 1–24; S. Rowbotham, *Friends of Alice Wheeldon. The Anti-War Activist Accused of Plotting to Kill Lloyd George* (London, Pluto Press, 2015), pp. 1–112.
- 35 A good overview of Malatesta's life during the First World War is found in Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 547–605.
- 36 Di Paola, *The Knights Errant of Anarchy*, pp. 196–201.
- 37 C. Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), pp. 102–4.
- 38 ACS [AQ] A56 Prima Guerra Mondiale, B 133, F 133; see reports for 1917 and 1918, and Carte Morgari B 14, F 27, SF 6, N 6.
- 39 Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*, pp. 102–4.
- 40 IISH, Luigi Fabbri Papers, Luigi Fabbri to Jacques Mesnil, 2 October 1918.
- 41 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 600–5.
- 42 E. Recchioni, 'Between Ourselves. Where We Have Failed and How We Might Succeed', *Freedom*, September 1915.
- 43 For these discussions, see Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*, pp. 102–4; Giulietti, *Gli anarchici italiani dalla Grande Guerra al fascismo*, ch. 1.
- 44 Rocker, *The London Years*, p. 312.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 327.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 328.
- 47 D. Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918* (London: Penguin, 2012); A. Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914–1918* (London: Penguin, 2015).
- 48 CPC 2950, [AQ] 13 December 1917, and via Silvio Corio, *Silvia Pankhurst 1912–1924 dal suffraggio alla rivoluzione sociale* (Pisa: ETS Università, 1980). For Sylvia Pankhurst and the maverick 'Sovietist' left, see also I. Bullock, 'Sylvia Pankhurst and the Russian Revolution: The Making of a "Left-Wing" Communist', in I. Bullock and

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R. Pankhurst (eds). *Sylvia Pankhurst. From Artist to Anti-Fascist* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992); M. Davis, *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Life in Radical Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); K. Connelly, *Sylvia Pankhurst. Suffragette, Socialist and Scourge of Empire* (London: Pluto Press, 2013). For Chicherin and Litvinov in London, see R.K. Debbs and W. Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); R. Challinor, *The Origins of British Bolshevism* (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

49 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 604–5.

50 For the arguments between Italian anarchists concerning the Bolsheviks and the dictatorship of the proletariat, see S. Fedele, *Una breve illusione. Gli anarchici e la Russia Sovietica 1917–1939* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1996); Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*.

51 For the attempted Bolshevik conversion of the maverick wartime networks, see A. Lindemann, *The 'Red Years': European Socialism versus Bolshevism 1919–1920* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974); I. Bullock, *Romancing the Revolution. The Myth of Soviet Democracy and the British Left* (Edmonton: AU Press, 2011).

52 For an early polemic, see L. Fabbri, *Dittatura e rivoluzione* (Ancona: Internazionale Giovanni Bitelli, 1921); L. Fabbri, *Anarchia e comunismo 'scientifico'* (Milan: Libreria editrice, 1922). And for an analysis, see S. Fedele, *Luigi Fabbri. Un libertario contro il bolschevismo e il fascismo* (Pisa: BFS, 2006).

53 Levy, 'Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs', p. xxvi.

54 F.S. Merlino, *L'Italie telle qu'elle est* (Paris: Albert Savine, Editeur, 1890).

55 Levy, 'Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs', p. xxvi.

56 Levy, 'Malatesta in London: The Era of Dynamite', pp. 38–42.

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- 57 R. Kinna, *Peter Kropotkin. Reviewing the Classical Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).
- 58 Peter Ryley and Davide Turcato deal with the concept of the ‘lesser evil’, as does Giampietro Berti in his biography; see Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 557–86, ‘Il problema del “male minore” nel dibattito internazionale’ [‘The problem of the “lesser evil” in the international debate’].
- 59 P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta* (Milan: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1974), pp. 230–1, 239. For Crisipi, see C. Duggan, *Francesco Duggan: From Nation to Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 60 This is the major theme in my work on Malatesta.
- 61 P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell’epoca degli attentati* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1981), pp. 93–6; M. Antonioli, *Senitnelle perdute. Gli anarchici, la morte, la Guerra* (Pisa: BFS, 2009), pp. 23–40.
- 62 B. Mussolini, “‘Il minor male’. L’opinione di Malatesta’, *Volontà*, 17 October 1914. For Mussolini, the anarchists and the interventionist debate, see Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 578–86; E. Gentile and S. Spencer (eds), *Mussolini socialista* (Bari: Laterza, 2015).
- 63 ACS, CPC 2950, 13 December 1917.
- 64 ACS, A56, Prima Guerra Mondiale, F. Inghilterra, 20 December 1918. In this document a police spy complains that Malatesta and the other Italian subversives have no manners and keep their caps on at a massive meeting in the Albert Hall, and anticipates Tony Blair in suggesting that the solution is ‘educare, educare, educare’.
- 65 See, for example, E. Malatesta, ‘Anarchy and Violence’, *Liberty*, 9 September 1894 and 10 October 1894.
- 66 Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp. 724–31.

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67 Ibid., pp. 751–88.

68 Levy, ‘Da Bresci a Wormwood Scrubs’, p. xxv.

69 E. Malatesta, ‘Società condannata’, *La rivoluzione sociale*, 29 December 1902.

70 On Berneri, see C. De Maria, *Camillo Berneri: tra anarchismo e liberalism* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2004); S. D’Errico, *Il socialismo libertario ed umanistica oggi fra politica ed antipolitica. Attualità della revisione berneriana del pensiero anarchico* (Milan: Mimesis Eterotopie, 2011).

71 R. Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture* (London: Freedom, 1937). See also C. Levy, ‘Anarchism and Cosmopolitanism’, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 16.3 (2011), pp. 265–78, and D. Turcato, ‘Nations without Borders: Anarchists and National Identity’, in Bantman and Altena (eds), *Reassessing the Transnational Turn*.