Standard typologies of anarchism are based on categories such as individualism and communism that refer to philosophical issues or to different models of the future society. Such categorizations project an image of anarchism as more concerned with abstract questions than with practical matters. However, they are misleading. Through a cross-national analysis of three major European anarchist movements, Italian, Spanish, and French, around the 1890s, I show that the most fundamental issues that divided all these movements alike were tactical, not theoretical. They concerned participation in the labor movement, collective action, and organization. By revising standard categorizations along these lines, anarchism can be rescued from the stereotypical charge of irrationalism and shown to be a movement in rational search of the best means to achieve its ends.

Standard categorizations of anarchism, from its beginning up to the Second World War, are based on a heterogeneous mix of criteria. For example, Irving Horowitz outlines a typology that includes eight basic forms of anarchism: utilitarian, peasant, syndicalist, collectivist, conspiratorial, communist, individualist, and pacifist. George Woodcock places anarchist schools on a curve that runs from individualism to anarcho-syndicalism through mutualism, collectivism, and anarchist communism, with the aside addition of anarchist pacifism. In Woodcock's definition, individualism was based on self-assertion and "respect for each other's ruthlessness"; mutualism foresaw a society in which individuals and small groups possessed their means of production and were bound by contracts of exchange and mutual credit; collectivism advocated the common possession of the means of production while still assuring the full product of one's work to each individual; communism had a different view on distribution, which was to be done according to needs; and anarcho-syndicalism emphasized revolutionary unions both as organs of struggle and as the basis of the future society. For Peter Marshall, social anarchists, comprising mutualists, collectivists, communists, and syndicalists, are the mainstream in "the river of anarchy," with the individualists forming another important part of the flow and with other groups such as the spiritual and the philosophical anarchists as complements. Paul Avrich, dealing specifically with Italian anarchism, discerns four ideological categories: "anarchist-communist, anarcho-syndicalist, anarchist-individualist, and just plain anarchist, without the hyphen."1

Notwithstanding heterogeneity, a core set of categories such as individualism, communism, collectivism, and syndicalism recur. Although these were familiar concepts in anarchist debates up to the middle of the twentieth century, categorizations based on them are misleading in that they do not represent the real divides of the anarchist movement. Focusing on the late nineteenth century, I argue that the issues upon which anarchists most fundamentally diverged did not concern philosophical questions, or human nature, or the different models of the future society, but more concrete questions such as the anarchists' attitude toward the labor movement. Obviously, at least in the case of anarcho-syndicalism, this question was explicitly central. However, precisely the inclusion of anarcho-syndicalism in such typologies as the ones earlier mentioned is awkward, for either it suggests a mutual exclusion between that current and others with which it was not really in contrast or it encourages comparisons based on a narrow emphasis on anarcho-syndicalism as yet another model of the future society, one in which unions would become the key institutions of workers' self-management.
Classifying the currents of anarchism is not an idle hobby for systematically minded scholars. Rather, it is a crucial task, for different typologies project different images of anarchism, which in turn inform the way we look at that movement. Standard categorizations foster a picture of anarchism as preoccupied with doctrinal questions and distant utopias. Horowitz clearly spells out the implications: "it might appear strange that an ism that has generally never been in a position to muster any significant political support should be so preoccupied with principles and programs." His answer is that "historically, it is a characteristic feature of minority movements, unburdened as they are with problems of the exercise of political power, to be schismatic and factional in relation to their principles and precepts. The struggle for purity is as essential to political messianism as the sacrifice of principles is characteristic of actual rule."2

In brief, the projected image is that of anarchism as unchanging in its preoccupation with timeless, abstract questions, unconcerned with empirical issues and practical means of struggle, and ultimately irrational, much in step with E. J. Hobsbawm's time-honored and widely influential interpretation of anarchism as a millenarian movement. Such image may be unproblematic and befitting for such historians as Horowitz, who have "no doubt that anarchism was foredoomed to failure" and believe that it expressed "an absurd point of view."3 However, for those who seek to make sense of their subject, the attribution of absurd beliefs is an explanatory problem, not a solution. In the following I provide an alternative to that stereotypical image, arguing that distinctions based on labor orientation were crucial and deep-seated in the anarchist movement, although they were not always immediately apparent in current denominations, and that they are more enlightening than customary distinctions in order to understand the theory and practice of anarchism and to rescue it from the charge of irrationalism.

My argument is based on the analysis of three major anarchist movements in Europe around the 1890s: the Italian, the Spanish, and the French. I take a comparative and transnational approach that examines parallel developments in these countries and takes into account mutual influences between national movements. Such an approach both highlights the problem and points to the solution. The terms in which controversies in each national movement are usually accounted for seem relatively sound as long as one's analysis remains confined within each country's boundaries. However, these analyses reveal inconsistencies with each other and with standard categorizations of anarchism as soon as national boundaries are crossed.

These conceptual problems are best illustrated by the example of the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, whose activity of international scope readily lends itself to cross-national comparisons. During the 1890s the Italian anarchist movement was torn about the issue of organization. While Italian antiorganizationists are often likened to individualists, most of them were communists, like the organizationist Malatesta. In turn, Malatesta had a much greater affinity with the Spanish collectivists than with the communists of that country. And although he strongly supported participation in the labor movement, he is usually regarded as the main opponent of French syndicalism at the Amsterdam congress of 1907, in the name of alleged anarchist "purism." Precisely those categories that form the core of standard categorizations need to be questioned.

Furthermore, historical analyses of national scope run into problems in the way they account for change and continuity in each national movement. In Italy, the years 1 897-1 898 saw a
resurgence of organizationist anarchism after years in which the movement had been dormant, as a consequence of the 1894 Crispi government's repression in response to the Sicilian Fasci movement and the anarchist uprising in the Tuscan area of Lunigiana. As Nunzio Pernicone notes, such resurgence was aided by an amnesty in 1896: "With replenished ranks and a less oppressive political atmosphere, the movement rebounded dramatically by the spring of 1897. Once again, the anarchist resurgence was spurred by the leadership of Malatesta. . . ."4 Unless one takes a broader context into account, this biennium is bound to be simplistically viewed as yet another sudden rebirth of Italian anarchism spurred by the "reappearance" of the deus ex machina Malatesta with new tactics in mind. Such a picture would fit the cyclical pattern that Hobsbawm considers characteristic of millenarian movements.

In Spain, the anarchist movement was split between "collectivists" and "communists." Standard accounts of the controversy are based on some kind of Spanish exceptionalism. For example, George Richard Esenwein remarks that the transition from collectivism to communism in Europe did not generate anything like the controversy that preoccupied the Spanish anarchists for two decades. Spain is thus regarded as the one country where Bakuninist collectivism lingered for much longer than elsewhere and oddly remained majoritarian in the anarchist movement. As long as one remains confined to a national scope and to an analysis in terms of ideological insularity, the "weight of tradition" is likely to remain the only available explanation, thus reinforcing irrationalist interpretations.5

In France the rise of syndicalism followed a period in which anarchism was dominated by "propaganda by the deed." In order to accommodate such a dramatic change within the continuity of a single movement, historians such as Richard Sonn have offered implausible explanations such as that the transition was not precipitated by the anarchists themselves but rather by government repression and that French anarchists "shifted from a predominantly cultural to an economic orientation" as they realized "the need to bridge the gap between libertarian ideals and organizational necessity." So long as a movement is regarded as a monolith that evolved en bloc solely under the pressure of domestic factors, unlikely explanations are bound to crop up.6

Both typological and explanatory puzzles can be solved if we abandon a narrowly national framework of analysis to look at each national movement in a broader context that takes into account cross-national mutual influences between different movements. In following the evolution and controversies of the Italian, Spanish, and French anarchist movements throughout the 1890s, I use Malatesta's activity and intellectual evolution as a thread that provides chronological continuity and finks together parallel developments and debates in the various countries. In the process, it will become clear that those developments and debates did not hinge on abstract concepts but on concrete issues such as the anarchists' attitude toward the labor movement, the advocacy or rejection of large, formal organizations, and the priority given to collective versus individual action.

Anarchist Controversies in Italy and Spain

A brief survey of Malatesta's ideas is the best introduction to a parallel analysis of anarchist controversies in Italy and Spain, for he had a key role in both. For Horowitz, Malatesta is
unquestionably "the leading exponent of communist anarchism." Indeed it was Malatesta, together with Carlo Cafiero and on behalf of the Italian Federation, who proposed to give up collectivism for communism at the Berne Congress of the First International in 1876, thus starting off the controversy between collectivists and communists. However, Malatesta's later ideas underwent a profound evolution. The fact that he remained an advocate of anarchist-communism ever since, until his death in 1932, only shows how misleading it is to prioritize communism as the qualifying trait of his anarchism and of a current allegedly led by him.7

In contrast to Horowitz, Paul Avrich claims that Malatesta "preached an undogmatic brand of anarchism that encompassed a range of elements," making him the most admired figure by those "plain," unhyphenated anarchists who "refused to attach any prefix or suffix to their label, calling themselves 'anarchists without adjectives.' "8 Avrich refers to Malatesta's theoretical and tactical turn of 1889 upon his return to Europe from a four-year stay in South America that marked the watershed between his Internationalist period and his later anarchism. At that time Malatesta began advocating the federation of anarchists mainly on the basis of their method of struggle, which he identified with the "method of freedom." In such federations collectivists and communists were to coexist, leaving the solution of the controversy between the two systems to the free development of the postrevolutionary society.9

In advocating pluralism Malatesta was not proposing an impartial, eclectic brand of anarchism in which differences were glossed over. Instead, he was proposing a sharply defined form of anarchism that decidedly took sides. Malatesta's point was that affinities and divisions were not to proceed from different blueprints of the future society but rather from different methods of struggle and tactics in the present. It was in these terms that Malatesta's anarchism was clearly characterized. A key trait was the advocacy of anarchist participation in workingclass life and labor struggles. In his South American years Malatesta had given a fundamental contribution to the birth of the Argentinean labor movement, being directly involved, especially in the struggles of the Buenos Aires bakers. In that context he had come to appreciate the value of day-to-day labor struggles in raising workers' class consciousness. Upon his return to Europe in 1889 he settled in London, where he witnessed the Great Dock Strike, which is generally identified as the start of British "new unionism," based on the idea of general workers' unions enrolling all classes of skilled and unskilled workers. Malatesta explicitly acknowledged the dockers' strike as a "most fruitful lesson," after which he came to regard strikes as the most promising path to revolution, in contrast to other means that anarchists had practiced or entertained until then.10

Malatesta's 1889 call for broad anarchist federations points to another key trait of his anarchism, the advocacy of anarchist organization. In Italy the idea took shape with the creation of a Revolutionary Anarchist-Socialist Party, founded at the Capolago congress of January 1891, with Malatesta's fundamental contribution. The party's program included among its means participation "to all agitations and all workers' movements" and called workers to a general strike for the upcoming First of May, then in its second year of life.11 The party had a short life, and Malatesta's revolutionary project that begun with the Capolago congress was soon subjected to attacks. This was the beginning of a period of long, ardent, and sometimes harsh polemics in the Italian anarchist movement between two theoretical and practical currents, which came to be known as "organizationist" and "antiorganizationist."
Both sides had a working-class orientation and included advocates of anarchist communism. In fact, communism was more of a sine qua non for antiorganizationists than for their opponents. The issue from which the two currents took their names was whether anarchists should organize in any permanent, structured form. Antiorganizationists rejected all institutional forms such as parties, programs, and congresses. Participation in labor organizations was an equally controversial matter. The antiorganizationists' preoccupation was that anarchists would compromise and ultimately lose their anarchist identity in trade unions, becoming progressively involved in questions of palliative improvements that diverted them from their real goal. A third issue was the relative importance attributed to individual deeds versus collective movements. Malatesta urged anarchists to "go to the people," participating in collective movements such as the First of May. Because of this attitude, organizationists came to be disparagingly called primomaggisti (MayDayers) and were mocked for advocating "revolution at a fixed date." In general, antiorganizationists were critical not only of attempts at anarchist organizations but also of any tactical alliances with nonanarchist parties and of anarchists aiming to take a leading role in organized collective movements. Such tactics were regarded as fatal steps in the direction of parliamentarianism. In brief, Italian anarchists fiercely argued about tactics, not about the future society, on which there was little disagreement.

In November 1891 Malatesta went to Spain, where he embarked on a long speaking tour together with the Barcelona anarchist Pedro Esteve. The tour was just an episode in a long history of close affinity and long-standing mutual involvement characterizing Malatesta's relationship with Spanish anarchism. This relationship constitutes a useful link between the controversies that respectively agitated Italian and Spanish anarchism, providing the opportunity to assess their differences and commonalities.

The origins of Malatesta's relationship with the Spaniards dated back to the very birth of anarchism as a movement, for the Spanish and the Italian Federations, along with the Jura Federation, were the main founders of the federalist International at the St. Imier congress of September 1872. The eighteen-yearold Malatesta was one of the Italian delegates. In 1873, the year of the cannonatisi revolts in Spain, Bakunin and Malatesta projected a trip to that country, but the plan was stopped by Malatesta's arrest. Frederick Engels analyzed the anarchist participation in those revolts in his article "The Bakuninists at Work," describing anarchist tactics as focused on the general strike as the main lever by which social revolution was started, thus foreshadowing ideas usually associated with French anarcho-syndicalism. Then Malatesta succeeded in going to Spain in 1875. His contacts with Spanish anarchism remained constant in the following years, as witnessed by the regular echo they gave to each other in their press. Throughout the 1880s Malatesta remained deeply involved in the Spanish debates between anarchist collectivists and communists, which theoretically concerned distribution in the socialist society. For collectivists this was to be done according to work performed and for communists according to needs.

However, the controversy was not simply a theoretical disagreement about the future anarchist society. It also concerned anarchist tactics in the present society. In fact, the first Andalusian dissidence arose on the tactical ground, out of irritation toward the Federal Commission of the Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española (FTRE) and its gradualist tactics based on labor organization. The dissidents converged at a small secret congress in Seville in January
1883, forming a society named Los Desheredados (The Disinherited). The name of the dissident group did not include any qualification as communist, nor did the group seem to have an interest in anarchist communism, for in the congress that they held a year later they kept declaring themselves collectivists.15

Still at the end of 1885, in an article on the socialist situation in Spain written while he was already in Argentina, Malatesta summarized the respective positions of the FTRE and the Desheredados in purely tactical terms. "The programme of these two organizations," he wrote, "is the old anarchist-collectivist programme. ... A simple question of method differentiates these organizations between themselves." The FTRE, Malatesta explained, accepted strikes as a form of anticapitalist resistance, focused on propaganda, and aimed at organizing the forces of the proletariat. The Desheredados were an "eminently revolutionary organization" that was forced underground and disdainfully rejected legal means.16

In brief, as Esenwein argues, those who either criticized the "legalist" orientation within trade unions or deserted the FTRE altogether did not reject the collectivist creed at first; only later, with the penetration of anarchist communist ideas from abroad, did these dissident elements become the disciples of the new ideology.17 On the tactical ground, Esenwein attributes the following tenets to communists: they were "intractably opposed to trade unions, which were viewed as essentially reformist bodies" and "as being invariably accompanied by the three most iniquitous features of capitalism: bureaucracy, hierarchy, and corruption"; they preferred to "set up small, loosely federated groups composed of dedicated militants"; and they held a profound faith in the power of spontaneous revolutionary acts. "Quite understandably," Esenwein concludes, "they tended to shun strikes and other forms of economic warfare in favor of violent methods, extolling above all the virtues of propaganda by the deed."18

The similarity between the tactics advocated by Spanish anarchist communists and those advocated by Italian antiorganizationists is apparent. The two currents were equally opposed to labor involvement, organization, and collective action. As the ideological controversy unfolded in Spain, theoretical divergences remained explicitly linked to organizational ones. In fact, while the tactical rift was as sharp in Spain as in Italy, the divide on collectivism and communism, although nominally more relevant, was blurred. As the anarchist historian Max Nettlau remarked, "on reading the journals published in Madrid from 1885 on, La Bandera social (The Social Banner), La Bandera raja (The Red Banner), La Anarquía . . . one can hardly distinguish whether they were collectivist or communist; they display neither enthusiasm for one nor animosity against the other doctrine."19

From the second half of the 1880s, the anarchists of Catalonia, which was the stronghold of collectivism, strove to overcome doctrinal disputes. Beginning in 1886, the anarchists of the Barcelona printers' association did so by espousing a nondenominational form of anarchism for which they even coined the new term "acracia" in place of "anarchism."20 Considerable efforts were also made by the editing group of El Productor, the main organ of collectivism. A series of articles of 1889 argued that the various economic systems were a secondary aspect of anarchist theory, for the common conclusions already reached on the economic ground and accepted by all anarchist schools were a sufficient foundation for the anarchist society, thus making current disputes over details of the future society pointless. Communism and collectivism were to be
regarded as hypotheses, between which any choice was premature. Specific qualifications of one's anarchism should come empirically from the evidence of science, not from abstract hypotheses.21

All such ideas came together in "anarchism without adjectives," as advocated by Fernando Tárrida del Mármol, who used the phrase for the first time in an essay of October 1889.22 Another figure usually associated with "anarchism without adjectives" was the collectivist Ricardo Mella, who promoted tolerance among competing anarchist factions, believing that this would allow for the rational experimentation and testing necessary to demonstrate what system was best.23

The evolution of Spanish collectivism toward "anarchism without adjectives" closely paralleled Malatesta's own pluralist turn. The two processes were far from independent. Already in 1888, while Malatesta was still in Argentina, the Madrid anarchist newspaper La Bandera Roja reported him speaking at a cosmopolitan anarchist meeting in Buenos Aires and "arguing that communism as he intends it is exactly the same as our collectivism, the differences being, in his opinion, more formal than substantial." Malatesta's turn of 1889, with its explicit call for unity between collectivists and communists, was clearly prompted by his preoccupation with the Spanish controversy. In fact, it was in Spain that his appeal for unity had the greatest echo, both in communist and collectivist periodicals, which translated his pluralist manifesto.25 Even the resolutions of the Capolago congress of 1891, despite the national scope of the congress, were taken with an international horizon in mind. In particular, one of the newborn party's principles was the "common organization of production and consumption, through freely made agreements among associated workers and federations of workers' associations." This broad formula intentionally meant to encompass both communism and collectivism in a conciliatory spirit.26

The pluralist turn of the Spanish collectivists, similar to Malatesta's, was not a move toward neutrality and eclecticism. Rather, its significance consisted in shifting the debate from the ground of doctrine to that of tactics, from remote blueprints of the future society to the present means of struggle. At the same time that the doctrinal divide was declared irrelevant, the tactical one remained as sharp as before. This is evident from an open letter of August 1890 sent by El Productor to the Parisian La Révolte. The letter first criticized the French comrades for their "unproductive puritanism": they accepted absolute freedom and expected everything from individual initiative, stretching it to such a point that no coordination or agreement was any longer possible; in the end this was equivalent to impotence. The tactics adopted in Spain, the letter continued, was completely different. It was likewise based on theoretical intransigence, but the ideal was "Anarchy without adjectives," which could not be a priori associated with a specific economic or productive system. The Spanish movement was based on a federative organization, its field of action was among the proletarian masses, and the associations for resistance to capital were its main instrument. In brief, at the same time that it advocated "anarchy without adjectives," the letter well illustrates both the Catalan anarchists' rejection of antiorganizationist tactics and their affinity with Malatesta's organizationist ideas.27

That the real divide followed the same tactical lines in Spain as in Italy, and not doctrinal fines, is further confirmed by Malatesta's speaking tour of November 1891 in Spain, with which we opened our discussion of Spanish anarchism. The tour was undertaken with Pedro Esteve, from
the group of El Productor, and it was quite ambitious in its countrywide scope. Max Nettlau relates that the tour was "undoubtedly motivated by the objective of uniting anarchists toward some activity of a general character starting from 1 May 1892." The tour is evidence of a complete agreement and collaboration between Malatesta and the Spanish "collectivists." Moreover, the goal of organizing anarchist forces in view of collective action for the First of May clearly shows that organizationist tactics were the ground for that agreement.

The most vociferous opposition to the Esteve-Malatesta tour was leveled in Barcelona by El Porvenir Anarquista, an "anarchist-communist organ" with sections in Spanish, Italian, and French. The editor was the Italian Paolo Schicchi, the same who earlier that year had dubbed Malatesta and his associates primomaggisti. He attacked again Malatesta from a strongly antiorganizationist position, denouncing the alleged authoritarianism inherent in any appeal to organization. The episode had an appendix that provides additional evidence as to where the real divide lay. The Valladolid anarchist groups and the editor of El Combate of Bilbao stigmatized Schicchi's attacks, countering that they were anarchist-communists and yet they supported both El Productor and Malatesta. The speaking tour was eventually interrupted, as a result of the repression following the Jerez uprising of January 1892, and Malatesta returned to his London exile.

In sum, the anarchist whom Horowitz "unquestionably" regards as the leader of communist anarchism was in fact the closest ally of the Spanish "collectivists" and the main target of Spanish "communists." However, the seeming paradox disappears once we realize that the Spanish controversy primarily concerned tactics, just as the Italian controversy did.

The Resurgence of Labor-Oriented Anarchism in France and Italy

The open letter of August 1890 from El Productor to La Revoke shows that antiorganizationist tendencies were also discernible in France. Such tendencies would become more prominent in the following years, when a dramatic wave of attentats swept the country. The more sensational were the bombings of Ravachol, Vaillant, and Emile Henry between March 1892 and February 1894, and Sante Caserio's assassination of President Sadi Carnot in June of the same year. In response, the lois scélérates were passed after Vaillant's attempt. Anarchist leaders and intellectuals such as Jean Grave, Sébastien Faure, Paul Reclus, and Emile Pouget were brought before the courts along with a gang of illegalist anarchists in the so-called Trial of the Thirty of August 1894.

In the face of such repression, exile was one of the anarchists' options. One of the most frequent destinations was London, where French anarchists joined the exiles of earlier times and fellow anarchists from other countries such as Italy and Spain, where government repression was also raging in the same years. As a result, the London international milieu of anarchist exiles became the headquarters of continental anarchism in those years.

The international community of anarchist exiles in London is a good starting point for reconstructing the parallel evolutions of the Italian and French anarchist movements from 1894 on. By taking a cross-national approach, it can be shown that labor-oriented tactics in Italy and France had common origins in the years of "propaganda by the deed," that both arose in contrast
to alternative conceptions of anarchism, and that they progressed in step. In this way both the new phase of Italian anarchism associated with Malatesta's return in 1897 and the rise of syndicalism in France can be put in a broader context, revealing affinities that misleading categorizations tend to obscure and preventing historiographic misinterpretations of new anarchist tendencies as sudden rebirths or unlikely shifts made by supposedly monolithic movements.

Anarchist exiles in London kept close ties with their respective homelands, and in this way they could influence events there. A French police report of December 1893 about the Paris anarchists' correspondents gives an idea of the volume of such contacts. According to the report, more than one-fourth of those correspondents were from abroad. In turn, over one-third of the abroad correspondents were from London, which ranked first in absolute numbers, preceding the top-ranking French cities. The interest of the French police, through a network of spies in London, is an indicator of the influence that anarchists could exert from there. In 1895 there were no less than three agents in London, as many as in Paris, all six sometimes responding simultaneously to the same requests from the Paris prefecture. In other words, the two cities received equal consideration from the French police.

London fulfilled a unique role as a junction in the anarchist networks of different countries. The transnationalism of each country's movement, along with international exchange and integration among anarchist exiles in London, determined a characteristic pattern of cross-national mutual involvement, of which French and Italian anarchists constituted a notable example. The French police monitored the two groups with equal zeal, and reports often dealt indistinctly with both. For example, an 1894 list of thirty-four anarchists resident in London, compiled by the French police, lumped eight Italians with the remaining French. Similarly, more than half of an 1896 list including over 200 London anarchists of various nationalities comprised French- and Italian-sounding names, with Italians being nearly 40 percent of that subgroup. Finally, an 1897 report by the title "Anarchism in France" included biographies of the Italian Malatesta and Saverio Merlino among the "Profiles of some leaders of the anarchist party."

The exchange and cooperation between Italian and French anarchists in London was instrumental in setting in motion a process by which the currents of anarchism that believed in organization, collective struggle, and participation in the labor movement increasingly regained initiative in the respective countries after the setbacks of 1894. In France, 1894 was a turning point between a three-year period predominated by individual deeds, ended with the Trial of the Thirty, and an era in which anarchists acted as conscious minorities amid the masses. Thus for Jean Maitron, syndicalism "was precisely a reaction against that infantile disorder of anarchism that was terrorism." In Italy anarchism was at low ebb in 1894 after repression by the Crispi government had disbanded its ranks. That year, after return to London from an underground stay in Italy, Malatesta began subjecting anarchist tactics to a thorough reconsideration, lamenting the failure caused by the progressive detachment of the anarchist movement from popular life and the resulting neglect of sustained agitation among the masses.

The mutual influence between Malatesta and two key figures of syndicalism, Emile Pouget and Fernand Pelloutier, in a crucial phase of their intellectual evolution illustrates the cross-fertilization of ideas among anarchist exiles in London. In mid-1893 Pouget traveled from Paris
to London to confer with the French Charles Malato and Marius Sicard, according to a spy, about giving a revolutionary direction to the Bourses du Travail. On the occasion he also visited Malatesta. Pouget's finks with the Italians in London were indeed close, for the next year, upon moving to that city, he lived in the same Italian dwellings where Malatesta also lived. Both Pouget and Malatesta contributed to The Torch, an anarchist periodical edited in London. Significantly, the issue of August 1894 contained articles from both, but it was Malatesta's article that advocated the general strike as a revolutionary weapon.38

The next month, the new syndicalist orientation was signaled in France by a split that occurred at the Nantes union congress between the Marxists and a syndicalist majority that voted for general strike tactics.39 In 1895 Pouget returned to France. For Jean Maitron, one reason why Pouget's stay in London was a turning point in his syndicalist trajectory was the influence of trade unions, as witnessed by the London run of Pouget's periodical Le Père Peinard. According to Pierre Monatte, Pouget established strong relationships with British trade unionists that he kept up after his return to France.40 In 1895 Pouget and Pelloutier undertook an intense propaganda of the new syndicalist tactics among French anarchists. That year Pelloutier published a series of articles in Les Temps Nouveaux advocating anarchist engagement in syndicates. In the first article, "La situation actuelle du socialisme," he backed up his appeal for new tactics with a reference to the ideas of the Italian Merlino and to their implementation in Malatesta's organizationist activity. Pelloutier would restate his affinity with Malatesta four years later in a "Letter to the anarchists," which he opened by claiming that his ideas found a perfect illustration in Malatesta, who could "combine so well an indomitable revolutionary passion with the methodical organization of the proletariat."41

The labor-oriented currents of Italian and French anarchism not only arose in parallel but also publicly and jointly asserted their new ideas when they made a common front at the London Congress of the Second International in 1896, which was dominated by the issue of the anarchists' exclusion from participation. Far from being a reenactment of the old controversy that characterized the First International, the anarchists' joint battle in London was forward-looking, novel, and constructive. As Maitron remarks, the London congress, where the majority of the French delegation voted against the anarchists' exclusion, was the "continuation and completion" of the split that occurred at Nantes between Marxists and syndicalists.42 Participation in an "International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress" was itself a statement of the controversial tenets of organizationist anarchism: trade-union involvement, commitment to collective struggle, and acceptance of formal organization.

In March 1897 Malatesta returned to Italy, where he started the newspaper L'Agitazione. Without repudiating revolution and antiparliamentarianism, L'Agitazione began preaching novel tactics for Italy made of a long and patient work and focusing on the incremental creation of a revolutionary consciousness through labor struggles for immediate economic gains and legal resistance for the defense and extension of political liberties. However, this was no "reappearance" out of the blue. The events outlined earlier help bridge the gap between Malatesta's departure from Italy in 1894 and his return in 1897, showing that a straight, uninterrupted line connected the experiences of 1894 to the new tactics of 1897. Most importantly, this new phase was part of a broader trend that was also gaining momentum in France through syndicalism.
This connection between Italian and French labor-oriented anarchism clearly emerges from the columns of L'Agitazione. In October 1897 Malatesta approvingly commented upon the recent Toulouse congress of the Bourses du Travail, where anarchist tactics had prevailed, and warmly recommended that the same direct-action methods be accepted by that congress, such as strikes, boycotts, ca'canny, and sabotage, be also used in Italy, where they were new.43 This advocacy of new tactics did not remain unchallenged. For example, in December 1897 V Avvenire Sociale of Messina, the voice of antiorganizationists in opposition to L'Agitazione, polemically declared its support for "integral anarchism" for all means of struggle "when they do not enter the ground of legality." It also claimed to be "certain of the futility of the economic-legal struggle and labour organization." The contrast could not be more explicit.44

In the light of this affinity between French syndicalism and Italian labor-oriented anarchism, the account of the Amsterdam congress of 1907 as a "showdown" between syndicalism and Malatesta's "purism" appears misleading. In the opening of his speech, Malatesta made it clear that he would only address his disagreements with the syndicalists, being confident that an authence of comrades would not exchange that for a rejection of organization and labor activism. On these points, which other anarchists opposed, Malatesta was in complete agreement with the syndicalists. Such affinity was clearly perceived by the congress participants, who carried both the motions respectively seconded by Malatesta and the French syndicalist Monatte by a large majority.45

In sum, seen in the broader context of the anarchist movement at large, the commonalities between Malatesta's anarchism and French syndicalism far outweighed their differences. Those commonalities were the ground for a common effort that brought labor-oriented anarchism back to the forefront in both France and Italy in the 1890s. That Malatesta and Monatte could debate over more specific issues at an international anarchist congress in 1907 only points to the success of that common effort, for viewpoints that were contentious in the anarchist movement a decade before could now be taken for granted.

Conclusion

Simultaneously accounting for the developments and controversies of Italian, Spanish, and French anarchism in the 1890s in terms of standard categories such as individualism, collectivism, communism, and syndicalism would be problematic and misleading. The problems disappear if one draws a different line. On one side, there was a view of anarchism based on organization, participation in the labor movement, and advocacy of collective action; on the other side, there was a view hostile to large, formal organizations, wary of the "reformist" action of unions, and favoring autonomous initiatives by loosely connected groups and individuals. That line equally existed in Italy, Spain, and France. Italian organizationists, Spanish collectivists, and French syndicalists were all on the same side of the line.

The awareness of the cross-national scope of such divisions puts the development of national anarchist movements in a new perspective. Explanations in terms of implausible changes of course or unreasonable attachment to tradition can be replaced with the comprehension of the steady and consistent evolution of competing, cross-national anarchist currents. The case of Spain is instructive. If the core of the controversy in Spain was the same as elsewhere, it
becomes problematic to look at Spain as exceptional in its attachment to a Bakuninist tradition. As Murray Bookchin has pointed out, "Spanish anarchists were practicing Anarchosyndicalist tactics decades earlier [than French Anarchosyndicalism] and, in many cases, were quite conscious of their revolutionary import before the word 'Anarchosyndicalist' itself came into vogue." If we regard this rather than collectivism as the real majoritarian tradition in Spain, then that tradition did not just "finger" but remained vital for more than half a century, eventually turning Spanish anarchism into a powerful mass movement.46

Drawing a line between different attitudes toward labor is not a way of separating the wheat from the chaff, the mindful from the mindless, the class conscious from the déclassé. For the most part, socialism and working-class allegiance were shared and undisputed assumptions of anarchist debates. Moreover, the antiorganizationist arguments were not based on messianic expectations but on sound reasons. Their focus was on such themes as the displacement of goals, the oligarchic tendency of organizations, and the conformity to rules induced by bureaucracy, all themes that later gained scientific currency through the work of sociologists such as Max Weber, Robert Michels, and Robert Merton. Labor bureaucracies, so dreaded by antiorganizationists, have become a common reality of the twentieth century. In brief, drawing a line along the anarchists' attitude toward labor, collective action, and organization is not a way of separating the rational from the irrational, but rather it is a way of vindicating the sophistication of the entire debate by pointing out the real field on which it took place.

Above all, and in contrast to the misrepresentation of anarchism as unconcerned with practical means, acknowledging that debates over different ways of organizing and struggling were central in the anarchist movement implies acknowledging also that tactical questions took priority over controversies about different models of the future society or philosophical issues. This is a significant step toward replacing stereotypical views of anarchism as spontaneous, purist, Utopian, impossibilist, romantic, fideistic, primitive, millenarian, and irrational with the view of a movement in rational search of the best means to achieve its ends.

**Footnote**

Notes


7. Horowitz, 44.

8. Avrich, 53.


12. The term primomaggisti comes from "Primo Maggio," the Italian phrase for "First of May." For the use of this sarcastic label see Paolo Schicchi's article "Tattica rivoluzionaria," Pensiero e Dinamite (Geneva) 1, no. 2 (July 28, 1891), quoted in Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, by Leonardo Betoni (Florence: Crescita Politica, 1972-1976), vol. 2 238.


14. See for example, in 1884, Revista Social (Madrid) and La Federation Igualadina (Igualada).


16. "La situazione socialista nella Spagna," La Questione Sociale (Buenos Aires) 1, no. 10 (November 29, 1885).

17. Esenwein, 113.


20. Esenwein, 134.

21. Piqué i Padró, 134-7. The following arricies of 1889 from El Productor (Barcelona) are relevant: "Los principios económicos," no. 134 (March 8); "Recapitulación," parts 1-3, nos. 138-40 (April 5-19); "Sobre la producción," no. 142 (3 May 3).

22. Nettlau, Short History of Anarchism, 198.

23. Esenwein, 140.


25. "Manifiesto anarquista," La Revolución Social (Barcelona) 1, no. 2 (September 29, 1889); "Manifiesto anarquista," El Productor (Barcelona), no. 164 (October 2, 1889).


27. "Questions de Tactique," parts 1 and 2, La Révolte (Paris) 3, no. 51 (September 6-12, 1890); 4, no. 1 (September 13-19, 1890).


29. See various articles in El Porvenir Anarquista (Barcelona) 1, no. 1 (November 15, 1891).

30. "Objeciones," El Porvenir Anarquista (Barcelona) 1, no. 2 (December 20, 1891); "Misceláneas," El Combate (Bilbao) 1, no. 2 (November 28, 1891).


34. On the transnationalism of Italian anarchism see Davide Turcato, "Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885-1915," International Review of Social History 52, no. 3 (2007): 407^14; on the mutual involvement between French and British anarchists see Constance


37. [Errico Malatesta], "Andiamo fra il popolo," L'Art. 248 (Ancona) 1, no. 5 (February 4, 1894).


40. Ibid., 272-3.


42. Maitron, 291.

43. [Errico Malatesta], "L'anarchismo nel movimento operaio," L'Agitazione (Ancona) 1, no. 30 (October 7, 1897).

44. Quoted in "Dissensi veri o falsi," L'Agitazione (Ancona) 1, no. 42 (December 30, 1897).


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