

**Anarchist theories and practices in Milan: a history of the  
Milanese anarchist movement, 1870-1926**

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## Abstract

Despite the vast research on Italian anarchism conducted over the last 40 years, little is known about the history of Milanese anarchists. Knowledge of the extent and nature of the Milanese anarchist movement is overshadowed by stereotypes while a few existing studies have a limited focus. The overall picture that emerges from the literature depicts Milanese anarchists as ‘aristocratic’ and ‘schizophrenic’, as ‘mob agitators’. This study seriously examines the history of the Milanese anarchist movement from its origins in the late 1860s up to 1926, the year when the fascist regime promulgated its special laws on the press and effectively silenced Milanese anarchists.

This research is based on both primary and secondary sources. Anarchist publications are primary sources of insight into Milanese anarchists’ theories and ideological and political debates. Analysis of police reports and individual files has been integrated with this reading to describe initiatives and campaigns in which Milanese anarchists participated. Literature on Italian anarchism and on the history of post-*Risorgimento* Italy has been used to place the subject of this research within a clearer historical framework. An analytical approach has favoured the examination of raw data allowing a study of the Milanese anarchist movement’s social composition. A narrative model, on the other hand, proved to be apt for the description of political campaigns, main events and short biographies. Combining these two approaches, this study aims at to present a comprehensive picture of the Milanese anarchist movement.

In doing so, this work proposes interpretations of the directions taken by Milanese anarchists. The overall conclusion that emerges is that the Milanese anarchist movement transcended class divisions, rather than being dominated by ‘aristocratic’ intellectuals; its nature was experimental rather than ‘schizophrenic’; most of the Milanese anarchists were rebellious, rather than revolutionary. Several factors, such as the geographical aspects of the city of Milan, the development of an industrialized modern mass society, migration, competition with other parties and state repression, provide context for this conclusion. Conclusions of this study are specific to the Milanese anarchist movement, but they may apply to different local groups in different regions as the framework for further investigations into the eclecticism of the Italian left before the rise of fascism.

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## List of abbreviations

AA.GG. e RR.	Affari Generali e Riservati (General and Secret Affairs, Rome)
ACS	Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Rome)
ASM	Archivio dello Stato di Milano (Milan)
b.	busta (envelope)
cat.	categoria (category)
CdL	Camera del Lavoro (Chamber of Labour)
CGdL	Confederazione Generale del Lavoro (General Confederation of Labour)
COL	Confederazione Operaia Lombarda (Worker Confederation of Lombardy)
COM	Circolo Operaio Milanese (Milanese Worker Club)
CPC	Casellario Politico Centrale (personal files archive, Rome)
CPVP	Comitato Pro Vittime Politiche (Committee in support of Political Victims)
DBAI	Dizionario Biografico degli Anarchici Italiani (Biographical Dictionary of Italian Anarchists)
Dir. Gen.	Direzione Generale (General Office, Rome)
Div.	Divisione (Department, Rome)
fasc.	fascicolo (file)
FIOM	Federazione Italiana degli Operai Metallurgici (Italian Metalworkers' Union)
FLM	Fascio Libertario Milanese (Milanese Libertarian Group)
GC	General Council of IWA
IAMA	International Anti-militarist Association
IWA	International Working Men Association
LES	Libreria Editrice Sociale publishing house
Min. Int.	Ministero dell'Interno (Ministry of the Interior)
MOIDB	Movimento Operaio Italiano Dizionario Biografico (Biographical Dictionary of Italian Worker Movement)
POI	Partito Operaio Italiano (Italian Labour Party)
P.S.	Pubblica Sicurezza (Public Safety)
PSAR	Partito Socialista Anarchico Rivoluzionario (Socialist Anarchist Revolutionary Party)
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party)
PSRR	Partito Socialista Rivoluzionario di Romagna (Socialist Revolutionary Party of Romagna)
SMFFM	Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer di Milano (Modern School 'Francisco Ferrer' of Milan)
UAI	Unione Anarchica Italiana (Italian Anarchist Union)
UCAI	Unione Comunista Anarchica Italiana (Italian Communist Anarchist Union)
USI	Unione Sindacalista Italiana (Italian Syndicalist Union)

## Acknowledgements

This study began in 2007 when I met with Professor Rob Stuart at the History Department, the University of Western Australia (UWA). I approached Rob with an idea for a PhD project. I had just completed my Master of Human Rights Education and I was interested in working on an ‘Italian history from below.’ Since the very first meeting, Rob has been a supportive supervisor as well as a critical reader. Despite some ideological differences between us, his wisdom and experience have been an invaluable source of knowledge. I owe him special gratitude. As Rob’s main area of expertise is not Italian history, my second supervisor was Associate Professor Giuseppe Finaldi, who also provided critical feedback. My thanks go to Giuseppe also for the opportunity to teach European history to undergraduate students at UWA over the past four years.

To research Milanese anarchists, I spent five months in Italy, the longest period since I had left the country in 2003. When compared to Australia, Italy lacked something important. Talking with my family, friends, and young people, I realized that what they did not have was hope for the future. Students’ demonstrations against government reforms of the education system highlighted this widespread sense of hopelessness. Nonetheless, this impression was counterbalanced by the warm welcome I received from anarchists who helped me with my research. All of them were excited that someone was researching their history. For me, their excitement was a sort of investiture: I felt the honour and responsibility to write their history. By the time I left Milan to return to Fremantle, I had made new friends.

I received much support and care from the people of the *Centro Studi Libertario Archivio ‘Giuseppe Pinelli’* and *Eléuthera* publishing house: Rossella Di Leo, Amedeo Bertolo, Cesare Vurchio, Andrea Staid, Gaia and Paola who work in the basement of an old building in a north-eastern suburb of Milan. They spend every day working in three small rooms, two metres underground, spreading anarchist culture through Milan and Italy. This setting does not look very different from what anarchists experienced in the 1880s! People of the *Archivio* kindly allowed me to intrude on their workspace in order to consult books and journals. Moreover, the space is often visited by other comrades. In the same building, but two floors above the basement, is Paolo Finzi’s office. He is the editor of the anarchist monthly journal *A-rivista*. The journal has just turned 40 and most of the credit goes to Paolo and his intense activity since the very first issue of *A-rivista* in 1971. Paolo has been a friend and I am thankful to him and his partner Aurora Failla for the friendship and support they gave me during those five grey Milanese

months. Franco Schirone of the *Archivio Proletario Internazionale* of Milan, is ‘a living archive.’ A special thank-you goes to Franco for his precious contribution to my research. He gave me books, pamphlets, unpublished interviews, journals, and everything that helped me in finding a direction. In fact, between a cup of coffee and a cigarette, Franco also helped me to channel my ideas into a doable project. Franco has continued to help me after I returned to Australia, sending me the latest published anarchist material. I should not forget Professor Maurizio Antonioli and the opportunities we had to discuss Milanese anarchism. Similarly, pleasant meetings with John Foot, Luciano Lanza and Massimo Varengo gave me support and helped me to better understand the city of Milan and Milanese anarchism today. Overall, I admit that by the time I left Italy, that feeling of general pessimism had been overtaken by the warm feeling of friendship. At the *Archivio dello Stato* of Milan and at the *Archivio Centrale* of Rome I had the privilege of meeting helpful, kind and respectful workers.

Of course, I also have obligations to people in Australia. Here, for me there is no difference between friends and family. First, my thanks go to Dr Riccardo Baldissoni, Dr Janaka Biyanwila and Dr Karen Soldatic: we shared views on history, anarchism, philosophy, human rights, workers’ rights, disability, citizenship, nationalism, fascism and anti-fascism. Most of all, they supported me when I went through one of the worst periods of my life. I came to Australia in 2003 to learn English. I am still working on this! My writing in English can be problematic, and I hope readers will tolerate it. In this regard, I want to thank Dr Sandra Ottley for her friendship and patient help, reading all my writings; Lucy Fiske for proof-reading the early chapters, and Dr Jasmina Brankovich for the final editing of the thesis. Ultimately, responsibilities for eventual errors and omissions are mine.

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## **Note on translation**

All the source material used in this thesis, but which was originally published in Italian only, has been translated by the candidate. Associate Professor Giuseppe Finaldi, a native speaker of Italian, has checked the veracity of translation.

Where possible, the citation format in footnotes and bibliography for Italian sources has followed conventions in Italian publishing. These may be different than the conventions for sources published in English.

## Introduction

When I borrowed from my university library the volumes of Arthur Lehning's writings on Michael Bakunin, the librarian asked me what the texts were about. As the title seemed quite obvious to me, *Archives Bakounine*, I was a bit surprised but gave him a clue: 'Well, you know, Bakunin...' His silent look revealed a legitimate lack of knowledge: who was Bakunin? So, I introduced Bakunin to the librarian: 'He was an anarchist.' If I had been surprised by his initial question, I was astonished by his witty reply. He gave me a hint of a smile and said: 'Well, don't go around blowing up things, then!' Today Bakunin and the anarchists still evoke the use of bombs and this stereotype remains deeply rooted in public opinion. The reasons go back to more than a century ago, to the 1890s, when the anarchist 'propaganda of the deed' became famous both in Europe and in the USA. Yet anarchists are not only famous for their use of explosive devices. According to a popular view, anarchy is also synonymous with chaos. When I told some friends of mine that I was going to the UK for an anarchist studies conference, all the jokes were along the line of 'can anarchists actually organise a conference?'

Milanese anarchism has its stereotypes too. The massacres at the Diana theatre in 1921 and the Banca Popolare dell'Agricoltura in 1969 represent two watershed moments in modern Italian history. In the public domain, Milanese anarchists are associated with episodes of bomb explosion, whether as victims or as perpetrators. Conversely, critical scholarship has repetitively portrayed Milan as the centre of Italian individualist anarchism. According to most accounts, the best champions of the individualist current of Italian anarchism are found in Milan. For some historians, the theories of some individualist anarchists were more damaging than the government's anti-anarchist laws.<sup>1</sup> Milanese anarchists, their critics affirm, with their 'schizophrenic behaviour'<sup>2</sup> used an 'aristocratic' language and were 'mob agitators'.<sup>3</sup> At a superficial level, Milanese anarchists were either innocent victim of state repression, petit-bourgeois intellectuals or, at worst, dynamite enthusiasts, or a combination of the three. Who were these Milanese anarchists? Where did they come from? What were their main arguments? What were their main activities? Answers to these and other questions

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<sup>1</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, Florence, Cp, 1976, p.131.

<sup>2</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2003, p.444.

<sup>3</sup> M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, Pisa, BFS, 1999, p.70.

illuminate the contribution of the Milanese anarchist movement to the development of Italian anarchism.

What is the significance of Milanese anarchism? Why are studies of Milanese anarchists needed? Despite its considerable progress over the last three decades, the historiography of Italian anarchism remains incomplete. Histories of local anarchist movements constitute such historiographical gaps. As a result, what is not told, known and understood tends to reify misconceptions and stereotypes. Studies of regional realities of Italian anarchism contribute to a better understanding of the reasons that anarchism is still at the margins of the political arena. They help in understanding why and how an ideological paradigm such as anarchism has been relegated to the oblivion of history. The significance of Milanese anarchism has fallen into the gaps of critical scholarship. The contribution of Milanese anarchists has been dismissed too easily as a degeneration of anarchism. Yet the Milanese anarchists' legacy is broader than a few published journals and an odd bomb explosion. This study explores the history of the Milanese anarchist movement in a comprehensive way. It investigates new areas of research as well as the validity of some of the rhetoric, encompassing theories of anarchism and anarchist praxis.

The general context is provided by the history of Italian anarchism from its origins until the inception of the fascist regime. During the late 1860s, the Italian labour movement was in its founding stages. Throughout the following two decades, anarchism developed independently yet was interconnected with the socialist and workers' movement. How did Milanese anarchists understand social and economic questions? What differentiated Milanese anarchists from their socialist cousins? Why was the individualist current predominant in Milan? How did Milanese anarchists understand the rise of fascism? Until now, these questions have not been explicitly asked. The existing few studies of Milanese anarchism focus on the individualist milieu of early twentieth century, its cultural production and its main figures.<sup>4</sup> The massive research by

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<sup>4</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, Rome, Ed. Avanti!, 1978, pp.275-90; F. Schirone, 'La Casa Editrice Sociale', *Rivista Storica dell'Anarchismo*, vol.1, no.2, 1994, pp.95-112. For Giuseppe Monanni see G. Sacchetti, 'Un editore anarchico e Mussolini. Giuseppe Monanni (Arezzo 1887 – Milano 1952)', *Annali aretini*, Arezzo, vol.10, 2002, pp.317-27, and V. Beretta, 'Giuseppe Monanni, un editore anarchico del Novecento', *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.27, no.2, 2008, pp.71-108. On Leda Rafanelli see F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli, tra letteratura e anarchia*, Reggio Emilia, Biblioteca Panizzi – Archivio Famiglia Berneri – Aurelio Chessa, 2007. See also, M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*, Pisa, BFS, 2002, and D. Romeo, 'Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana: l'influenza di Francisco Ferrer y Guardia e della sua scuola moderna razionalista', *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.15, no.3, 1995, pp.69-103; M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a Milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.20, no.1, 2000, pp.61-107.

Mantovani sheds light on the Diana's episode but is limited in its focus.<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising, then, that Milanese anarchism has been dismissed if not neglected *tout court*. Yet the Milanese anarchist movement has a substantial story to tell. Its history is an emblematic case of anarchist experiments, both in theory and in practice.

Milanese anarchism deserves a more attentive analysis. In order to tell the history of the Milanese anarchist movement, both the analytical and the narrative approaches have been taken. The ideological debates between Bakunin, Mazzini and their respective followers found space in the pages of some Milanese internationalist journals. The complexities of their arguments are best elucidated by analysis. Similarly, the dialectic between individualist and communist anarchists, as well as organisational versus anti-organisational views, necessitates a deeper scrutiny in order to reveal how the Milanese anarchist movement was oriented at the beginning of the twentieth century. Conversely, story-telling best illuminates how Milanese anarchists responded to salient events. Narrative is also used for telling short biographies of some anarchists. For this purpose, the recently published Italian anarchists' biographical dictionary has been an invaluable source.<sup>6</sup> These short stories had to make sense in terms of those local, national and international events. They had to be embodied in a solid analysis.

Chapter One introduces the subject of this study. Who are the anarchists? What is anarchism? Finding a generic definition of anarchism revealed itself to be a difficult task. There is no single 'one-size-fits-all' definition of anarchism. The ideological framework has been constructed around anarchism's differences with liberalism and socialism. With these conflicted terms, anarchism shares some political convictions. Yet a definition of anarchist identity needs its contexts and, for this purpose, it is best illuminated through its historical development. Chapter One introduces a definition of anarchism that can only be fully explained in the context of the events described in the following two chapters. The chapter also illustrates the rich field of the historiography of anarchism. In doing this, patterns, contents and historiographical gaps are highlighted, providing the opportunity to place this research within a specific historiographical tradition. Finally, the chapter explains the methodology used in this work and particularly the archival sources and the ways in which they are interpreted in this thesis.

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<sup>5</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, Milan, Rusconi, 1979 and reprinted as *Anarchici alla sbarra, la strage del Diana tra primo dopoguerra e fascismo*, Milan, Il Saggiatore, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> M. Antonioli, G. Berti, S. Fedele & P. Iuso (eds), *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani*, 2 vols., Pisa, BFS, 2003-2004.

The significance of Milanese anarchism is analysed in Chapter Two. Which characteristics of the city facilitated the spread of anarchist ideas? Which means of communication did anarchists use? This chapter focuses on the origins of the Milanese anarchist movement. It is a derivative chapter that attempts to draw together, for the first time, sources used by Max Nettlau, Nello Rosselli and Giuseppe Del Bo.<sup>7</sup> At the end of the *Risorgimento* (the Resurgence, the process of Italian unification) in the 1860s, eminent figures of the Italian political arena, such as Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi, began to lose importance. How did Milanese internationalists understand the national question? Which ideas influenced them most? Towards the end of the 1860s, socialist theories were spreading throughout Europe. Bakunin and Marx competed for the dominance within the first International Working Men Association (IWA). How deeply did this clash affect the Milanese branch of the IWA and the development of anarchism in the city? At the beginning, Milanese internationalists were not aware of the conflict between Marx and Bakunin. Both Marx and Bakunin had their emissaries in the city and both of them tried to manipulate the direction of the Milanese IWA branch. The dialectic between Bakunin and Marx's supporters contributed towards the definition of the anarchist identity. Yet further divisions emerged in the 1870s. The socialist arena presented two factions: on the one hand, there were those socialists who began to soften the revolutionary aspect of their theories and, on the other hand, those who remained loyal to the internationalist revolutionary dogma and refused to accept delegation and parliamentary politics. Moreover, with the rise of economic theories about factory workers' conditions, a separate party emerged in Milan at the beginning of the 1880s – the first Italian *Partito Operaio* (Labour Party). How did Milanese anarchism emerge from these dialectics? Which features characterised the anarchist movement? Which ones remained constant across the decades?

The interrogation of an anarchist identity in Milan is completed in Chapter Three. Only with the formation of the Italian Socialist Party in 1892 did the differences between anarchists – or libertarian socialists as they were also known – and legalitarian socialists become clear. Until then, Milanese anarchists leapt from one theory to another. Milanese anarchists participated in socialist meetings and initiatives and so did the socialists with anarchist initiatives. Mobility of people also resulted in a cross-pollination of ideas. Stimulated by the competition with the socialists, in the 1880s

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<sup>7</sup> M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, Rome, Savelli, 1975; N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, Turin, Einaudi, 1967; G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1964.

Milanese anarchists tried to translate their organised efforts into actions. This chapter explicates the causes behind the merging of an anti-organisational and later an individualist current. This section terminates with the killing of the Italian king by the anarchist Gaetano Bresci in 1900. The fact that this episode occurred 20 kilometres away from Milan is not in itself relevant. Of importance here are the effects of this action: Bresci's deed ended the 'heroic' phase of Italian anarchism.

Chapter Four illustrates how historiography has portrayed the ideological debates within the Milanese individualist anarchist milieu. Here the use of the plural is deliberate. In fact, this chapter is based on qualitative research that has scrutinised the social composition of the Milanese anarchist movement. What comprised the Milanese anarchist movement at the turn of the century? This research has identified different milieus and their cultural points of reference. Within these milieus, the most influential figures have constituted the subject of those few existing studies of Milanese anarchism. Yet a story of the Milanese anarchist movement cannot be told without the stories of many lesser known participants. This chapter also tells the stories of those militants who have fallen into the oblivion of history. They were the backbones of the Milanese anarchist movement. Moreover, from the analysis of the anarchist movement three main areas of intervention have emerged. This chapter investigates the participation of Milanese anarchists in libertarian pedagogical projects, revolutionary unionism and anti-militarist campaigns. First, most Milanese anarchists were involved with the project of the Modern School inspired by the teaching methods of Francisco Ferrer y Guardia. Second, many anarchists looked at revolutionary unionism as a means for economic and social redemption. The third large campaign was anti-militarism. Given the major role played by this campaign, the anti-militarist initiatives of Milanese anarchists require their own chapter.

Chapter Five narrates how Milanese anarchists responded to salient events such as the massacres of workers by the army, the Italian colonial war in Libya and dramatic acts of rebellion within the military. It also examines the effects that the anti-militarist campaign had on Milanese anarchists during the Red Week of June 1914. Finally, the anti-war protests that occurred at the outbreak of the First World War were the logical outcome of the anti-militarist campaign. How was the war seen by Milanese anarchists? How did they react? The defection of a few individualist anarchists helped to further filter the movement and, in a way, better define the anarchist identity. Most Milanese anarchists remained loyal to their anti-militarist stances.

Chapter Six focuses on the post-war period and the establishment of the fascist regime. This work finds its logical end with the fascist laws on the press enacted in 1926. These laws would silence all dissenting voices in the country. Yet this chapter does not examine the origins of fascism, but focuses on the development of Carlo Molaschi's anarchism. Although Molaschi's anarchism is not representative of all Milanese anarchists, the evolution of his thought helps to better understand the complex geography of the social, cultural and ideological paradigms that marked the history of Italian anarchism after the Great War. To better comprehend this intricate geography, Milanese anarchism needs to be framed within the Italian historical background of the period between 1919 and 1922. How did Milanese anarchists respond to the outbreak of social unrest during the Red Biennium (1919-1920)? How did they understand those events? I will argue that they misunderstood them: like many other revolutionaries, Milanese anarchists believed that the revolution was imminent and inevitable. What they understood well, however, was the seriousness of an event such as the rise of fascism. Through the lens of *Umanità Nova* – the first Italian anarchist newspaper, founded in Milan in 1920 – this chapter illuminates the shift of focus of Milanese anarchists: they moved from the dream of a revolution to a civil war and finally to a war of resistance. Within this frame, the bomb attack at the Diana theatre represents a turning point for Milanese and Italian anarchists. With that explosion, the state repression of Milanese and Italian anarchists reached its final stage. Thus, without the opposition of anarchists and other revolutionaries, fascist squads were finally free to occupy all the major centres. Yet Milanese anarchism survived fascism. What happened to the Milanese anarchist movement after fascism constitutes an area for future research.

Overall, Milanese anarchists engaged with themes that are still valid in the twenty-first century. Yet, despite being very important issues, themes such as feminism and anti-clericalism were not turned into political campaigns. For this reason, these themes have occasionally been mentioned in this study. Milanese anarchists fought for the ideas of freedom, solidarity and social equality through anti-militarist and anti-war campaigns, planned for a different kind of education system and supported struggles for workers' rights. Bombs and other violent acts were rare. Milanese anarchists gave birth to several vital ideas and practices. Some of these ideas were successful, but others were failures. The complete emancipation of humankind, the ultimate dream of anarchists, has not yet been realised. Yet the history of Milanese anarchists, their experiments with social change and their continuous oscillation between means and ends is emblematic:

the current relevance of those issues Milanese anarchists fought for shows how little we have moved on since their day.

## Chapter One

### Defining Anarchism, Historiography and Research Methodology

*'Anarchists live their lives like nomadic people. They do not follow a specific path, but their own path, according to their nature, to their way of thinking, and also to their temper'*  
L. Rafanelli, *L'Eroe della Folla. Romanzo*, Milan, Casa Editrice Sociale, 1920

*'To describe the essential theory of anarchism is rather like trying to grapple with Proteus'*  
G. Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Ohio, The World Publishing Company, 1962, p.15

In May 1908, the Milanese anarchist weekly journal *La Protesta Umana* (The Humanity's Plaint) put forward the idea of occupying the Milanese cathedral. The journal's editorial committee invited every socialist, libertarian and anti-clerical thinker to denounce the climate of repression established by the authorities under the Giolitti government. In the previous 20 months the journal had had to face 40 trials, with heavy sentences inflicted on its 14 *gerenti* (administrators). Some of its directors ended up in jail while others felt it necessary to flee the country. *La Protesta Umana*, which was founded in 1906, was forced to cease publication in 1909 because of its debts. The idea of occupying the Dome never eventuated.<sup>1</sup>

The proposal to occupy the cathedral, the symbol of the Lombard capital, can be seen as an allegorical act representing the anarchist rejection of authority, whether religious or secular. Symbolically, the appeal to socialists and anti-clerical thinkers demonstrated an anti-sectarian approach by Milanese anarchists, despite their reputation for being anti-organisational individualist anarchists.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century *La Protesta Umana* and *Il Grido della Folla* (The Cry of the Crowd) were the most widely read anarchist journals within the Milanese anarchist milieu.<sup>3</sup> They both expressed a particular stream within the Italian anarchist movement – individualist

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<sup>1</sup> This episode is described in G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale, 1872-1932*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2003, p.442, which reports the figures from Gli anarchici e i rivoluzionari milanesi, 'In difesa della libertà', *Il Libertario*, La Spezia, 18 June 1908.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of *Il Grido della Folla* (1902-1905) see M. Antonioli, 'L'individualismo anarchico', in M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, Pisa, BFS, 1999, p.70 and G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale, 1872-1932*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2003, pp.441-51. See also Chapter Four of this thesis. On Italian anarchist journals published in Italy, see L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I, I, Periodici e numeri unici anarchici in lingua italiana pubblicati in Italia (1872-1971)*, Florence, Cp editrice, 1972, *ad nomen*.

anarchism – whose centre, according to historians of Italian anarchism, was indeed Milan. More significantly, the names of both journals indicated a specific attitude towards the development of Italian society. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the coming of the age of modernity was also reflected by the cultural fervour that ran across Europe. The process of modernisation was affecting every country and was producing a highly technological, dynamic and continuously changing society, a society in which humans were no longer people but a ‘crowd’, and where the dominant sounds were the noises of industries and their sirens. Nothing was left but dissenting cries and protesting voices, yearning for the freedom to express themselves. The *Scream* by the Norwegian painter Edward Munch symbolises this age. Within this framework, it is possible to understand the meaning a symbolic act, such as the occupation of the Milanese cathedral, would have.

The commitment to protest, to dissent, to sing out of tune, is just one of the many attitudes that can identify an anarchist. Finding a generic definition of anarchism which can be applied across time, lives and places is not easy. Despite some essential characteristics which can be used to frame an anarchist archetype, such as the principle of individual freedom and the rejection of authority, variations among anarchists in regards to society’s organisation, purpose of life, property, law and the dichotomy between means and ends have inevitably affected the history of anarchism both as an ideology and as a political movement. In order to define the subject of this study, this chapter will examine some of the significant features of anarchism.

In the preface of *For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice*, David Goodway drew attention to the following observation:

Anarchist historiography is a frustrating field, traditionally tending to be hagiographic or, still worse, antiquarian in approach. When it has come to their own past – or, indeed, the past in general – anarchists have not subjected it to radical analysis or acted as the innovators they have been in other disciplines. So, historical work has been untouched by the vital currents in recent Anglo-American anarchist thought.<sup>4</sup>

In Goodway’s opinion, the previous 30 years of social history, which was pioneered by Marxist historians, had focused on popular movements, ‘yet anarchism has been largely overlooked by the new social historians’.<sup>5</sup> If the ideal of anarchy, understood as a

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<sup>4</sup> D. Goodway, ‘Introduction’, in D. Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice*, London and New York, Routledge, 1989, p.6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

society without government, ‘has existed since time immemorial’,<sup>6</sup> and anarchism, as a system of thoughts, is a doctrine pervasive throughout modern European history, the historical study of anarchism is definitely a recent area of research.

This study examines the Milanese anarchist movement from its origins (early 1870s) to the implementation of fascist laws on the press (1926). It aims to fill a gap within the historiography of anarchism. The few existing studies on Milanese anarchism tend to focus on very short periods of time. This research will give a comprehensive and accurate picture of the anarchist movement including ideas advanced and initiatives carried out by famous intellectuals as well as unknown activists. With the use of primary and secondary sources, such as anarchist publications, police files and literature on the topic, this study explores the ideas, the events and the people that shaped the development of anarchism in Milan. This chapter presents a brief overview of the historiography of anarchism and, following the historical development of this field of study, the most significant works on anarchism are reviewed. Beginning from a general outline, information is channelled into the historiography of Italian and Milanese anarchism in order to establish a place for this research.

## 1.1 Defining anarchism

The Russian anarchist Kropotkin defined Proudhon as the father of anarchism;<sup>7</sup> nonetheless Proudhon’s anarchism, Kropotkin argued, was not ‘pure’.<sup>8</sup> However, does pure anarchism exist? Which criteria help to define a pure anarchist? Just like concepts such as ‘democracy’ and ‘liberty’, the term anarchism is open to a number of different interpretations. Many scholars have tried to define anarchism by studying both the theories of thinkers and the actions of activists.<sup>9</sup> Many historians have tried to fix a date

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<sup>6</sup> R. Graham, ‘Introduction’, in R. Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, vol.1, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 2005, p.xi.

<sup>7</sup> See M. Lair, ‘Proudhon, père de l’Anarchie’, *Annales des Sciences Politiques*, vol.24, 1909, pp.588 ff., cited in D.W. Douglas, ‘P. J. Proudhon: A Prophet of 1848: Part I: Life and Works’, *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol.34, no.5, 1929, p.800; moreover, with his *What is Property?* Proudhon was the first person who claimed the title of anarchist.

<sup>8</sup> D.W. Douglas, ‘P. J. Proudhon: A Prophet of 1848’, p.781.

<sup>9</sup> The first serious attempt to study anarchism is represented by the works of Max Nettlau, *Bibliographie de l’Anarchie*, Brussels, 1897, Ettore Zoccoli, *L’anarchia. Gli agitatori, le idee, i fatti*, Milan-Turin-Rome, F.lli Bocca, 1907 (reprinted as E. Zoccoli, *L’anarchia. Gli agitatori, le idee, i fatti. Saggio di una revisione sistematica e critica e di una valutazione etica*, Milan, 1944), followed one year later by P. Eltzbacher, *Anarchism*, New York, 1908. Fifty years later D. Novak published his article ‘The Place of Anarchism in the History of Political Thought’, *The Review of Politics*, vol.20, no.3, July 1958, pp.307-29, where the author acknowledges the importance of anarchism as a libertarian philosophy through its

for the beginning of anarchism.<sup>10</sup> They have found anarchist themes in the philosophies of ancient Greece, in the pages of medieval religious texts and in the religious uprisings and the social rebellions of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe.

What, then, is anarchism? Anarchism can be understood in political, social, economic and ethical terms. Anarchism can be studied not only as a political or social theory, but also from a psychological perspective.<sup>11</sup> Indeed it is possible to see the manifestation of a sort of Oedipus complex – in the rebellion of a child against his father’s authority – as the force that underpins the anarchist rejection of patriarchal rules and impositions from external authorities. Not surprisingly Max Nettlau, one of the first historians who devoted themselves to the study of anarchism, traced the idea of revolt against authority back to Lucifer, seen as the ‘rebel ... who, in Christian mythology, never yields and keeps on fighting in each individual soul against the good God’.<sup>12</sup>

From a strictly etymological point of view, a history of anarchism can be traced back to the first imposition of rule and the consequent denial of it. A history of anarchism may begin, imaginatively, with the replacement of a natural order by the introduction of a social contract aimed at regulating a peaceful coexistence through the limitation of individual freedoms. Thus, the concept of anarchism implies two specific human tendencies: the act of dissenting<sup>13</sup> and the desire for freedom. However, this specific interpretation does not explain why anarchism, both as a doctrine and as a political movement, came to life only at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The

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influence in Western countries ‘has declined to infinitesimal proportions’. A few years later the Canadian historian George Woodcock published his pioneering book *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Ohio, The World Publishing Company, 1962. Some other works shed light on the philosophy of anarchism. See in particular, J. Joll, *The Anarchists*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964, published in Italian as J. Joll, *Gli anarchici*, Milan, Il Saggiatore, 1970; D. Guerin, *L’anarchisme: De la doctrine à l’action*, Editions Gallimard, 1965; D.E. Apter & J. Joll (eds), *Anarchism Today*, London, The Macmillan Press, 1971; A. Carter, *The Political Theory of Anarchism*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971; C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1973; M. Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisée Reclus and Nineteenth-Century European Anarchism*, London, Croom Helm, 1979; A. Ritter, *Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980; D. Miller, *Anarchism*, London and Melbourne, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1984; Goodway, *For Anarchism*; G. Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists*, Kingston, Quarry Press, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Apart from the already mentioned G. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, see also M. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, London, Freedom Press, 1996, which is the English translation of the original Spanish text of 1932-1934 compiled by Ida Pilat Isca. This text summarizes the author’s previous nine-volume history of anarchism. Perhaps the most comprehensive and readable contemporary book on the history of anarchism is the work by Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, London, HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

<sup>11</sup> H. Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, London, 1938, cited in D. Novak, ‘The Place of Anarchism’, p.309.

<sup>12</sup> Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, p.3.

<sup>13</sup> I deliberately use the verb ‘to dissent’ instead of the noun ‘dissent’. The choice is due to the belief that dissenting is more a process that does not contemplate an end, rather than a thing. In this way I try to avoid the reification of a cognitive and physiological process which is at the very basis of any human development.

causes can be found in the European historical process of secularisation, in the system of economic and political centralisation, and finally in the Industrial and the French Revolutions.<sup>14</sup> It was only after the spread of the Enlightenment and the rise of a modern labour movement that the tendency to rebel found its place and its ability to express itself within the political arena.

This introductory chapter will place this study within a clearer theoretical framework. A clear definition of anarchism requires the analysis of several concepts such as the utopian dream, the Marxist critique of utopianism and anarchism, the development of socialism both as an ideology and as a political movement, the rise of the labour movement, the philosophy of individualism, the idea of revolution, the relationship between means and ends, and the rejection of God and spiritual anarchism. Several studies on these topics demonstrate that even within anarchism there are multiple shades of grey that essentially hide different approaches to the meaning of life. As Wakeman wisely pointed out, ‘there are as many variations of Anarchism as there are Anarchists’.<sup>15</sup> The complexity of defining and interpreting anarchism reveals the anti-dogmatic nature of anarchism. This contradictory and, at the same time, ‘benevolent’ aspect of anarchism does not mean that any individual choice is worthy as long as the person that makes it labels it somehow as being anarchist. The key principles of individual freedom and rejection of authority prevent anyone, especially an anarchist, from imposing a pre-set definition, values or criteria to define anarchism and what an anarchist should be. The author of this study is aware that the lack of a clear definition and interpretation, which is common to other political phenomena, challenges dominant western theories based on alleged objectivity, and highlights the complexity of being an anti-conformist even within the anarchist movement.

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to stress the uniqueness of anarchism, and to define anarchism through its relationship with other ideological paradigms. Only through the recognition and acknowledgment of difference is it possible to define specific identities. To establish a generic definition of anarchism, it is necessary to highlight its similarities and differences with other political theories, such as conservatism, liberalism and socialism.<sup>16</sup> This study focuses on the anarchist critique

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<sup>14</sup> G. Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists*, pp.13-39.

<sup>15</sup> J. Wakeman, *Anarchism and Democracy*, London, 1920, p.10, cited in D. Novak, ‘The Place of Anarchism’, p.310.

<sup>16</sup> A commonly accepted definition of anarchism is ‘libertarian socialism’; see for example D. Goodway, ‘Introduction’, in Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism*, p.1 and note 1, where the author invites the reader to

of key concepts – particularly power and authority – which throughout history have represented one of the greatest contrasts between anarchism and conservatism. In addition, with the advance of liberalism and socialism, further distinctions characterise the anarchist interpretation of the idea of freedom, its urgency and potential realization.

Anarchism challenges the conservative idea that authority is essential in order to live in a society. Conservatism is based on the commitment to order and to prevent chaos, and it assumes that human beings are not able to live without authority, hierarchical structures and relationships of power. As an historical result of this ‘dogma’ and its propaganda, for many, anarchy is synonymous with chaos. The French philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon tried to challenge this notion by affirming that ‘anarchy is order’,<sup>17</sup> while the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta suggested that the equation anarchy/chaos derives from the false belief that a government has always been considered necessary.<sup>18</sup> Therefore the absence of government – or anarchy – has been seen as disorder *par excellence*. Malatesta argues that it is important to convince people of the following belief:

Government is both harmful and useless and ... with anarchy (in the sense of the absence of government) comes natural order, unity of human needs and the interests of all, complete freedom within complete solidarity.<sup>19</sup>

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observe that ‘any association of anarchism with liberalism is furiously rejected by those anarchists who react according to their gut feelings rather than their minds’. See also D.E. Apter, ‘The Old Anarchism and the New – Some Comments’, in Apter & Joll (eds), *Anarchism today*, pp.1-2; N. Chomsky, ‘Introduction’, in D. Guérin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1970, pp.x-xi. In his ‘Noam Chomsky’s Anarchism’, in G. Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists*, pp.224-28, the Canadian historian disagrees with Chomsky’s portrayal of the anarchist approach to social change. Woodcock asserts that Chomsky’s analysis fails because: ‘[He] portrays anarchism as in practice a way of struggle on the economic level; more precisely, on an obsolescent nineteenth-century industrial level ... Yet the way he argues the anarchist case does in fact enclose it within the very limits of narrow anarcho-syndacalism from which Malatesta sought to keep anarchist aims free more than sixty years ago.’ Moreover, Woodcock finally argues that when Chomsky ‘quotes Guérin as saying that “the constructive idea of anarchism” can “contribute by enriching Marxism”, he appears to be reflecting his own outlook which, by regarding Marxism as *primary*, selects from anarchism those elements that may serve to diminish the contradictions in Marxist doctrines; thus, both Chomsky and Guérin in fact impoverish the anarchism they portray by abandoning its essential extremities’, p.228.

<sup>17</sup> This is one of his most famous maxims together with ‘property is theft’ and ‘god is evil’. In his *What is Property?*, Proudhon states that ‘Property and royalty have been decaying since the world began. Just as man seeks justice in equality, society seeks order in anarchy. Anarchy, that is, the absence of a ruler or a sovereign. This is the form of government we are moving closer to every day.’, in S. Edwards (ed.), *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, London, Macmillan, 1969, p.88.

<sup>18</sup> E. Malatesta, *L’Anarchia*, London, 1891, pp.3-4, reprinted in English as *Anarchy*, London, Freedom Press, 1975; see also G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale, 1872-1932*, pp.180-83.

<sup>19</sup> E. Malatesta, *L’Anarchia*, p.4.

The essence of anarchism needs to be sought not only from a semantic perspective, in the act of dissent from authority, but also in the equally fundamental concept of individuality and of freedom to participate in the management of the *res publica*. The principle of individual freedom is pivotal to the history of anarchism. Especially for communist-anarchists, freedom and equality are key concepts: it is not possible to have one without the other, and both find full realisation only when they are achieved together. Moreover, the freedom and/or right to participate imply the equally important concept of responsibility, and thus the anarchist refusal to delegate. This issue played an important role in the debate between anarchists and legalitarian socialists at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

Theoretically, anarchism shares with both liberalism and socialism the values and principles that were articulated in 1789. Liberty, equality and fraternity represent common ground for these three major political theories. However, it is the critique of the role of the state that makes anarchism unique. Anarchism challenges the state – understood as all those political, legislative, judicial, military and financial institutions which prevent people from participating in the management of their own life and security. Since governments own the monopoly of power and are able to impose their will ‘for reasons of state’,<sup>21</sup> the governments’ principle of authority tends to be seen by anarchists as nothing more than the brutal domination of a minority of people over the majority, who are kept in serfdom and have to work for the interests of the few.<sup>22</sup>

An established government may leave some space for individual freedom as long as the privileges of the dominant classes are not threatened. It is a ‘conditional’

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<sup>20</sup> See chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>21</sup> With his ‘Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism’, which was presented as a ‘Reasoned Proposal to the Central Committee of the League for Peace and Freedom’ in Geneva in September 1867, Bakunin also analysed Rousseau’s theory of the state. In one of his most famous passages the Russian revolutionary said that ‘(T)here is no horror, no cruelty, sacrilege, or perjury, no imposture, no infamous transaction, no cynical robbery, no bold plunder or shabby betrayal that has not been or is not daily being perpetrated by the representatives of the state, under no other pretext than those elastic words, so convenient and yet so terrible: “for reasons of state”’; see M. Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, edited by Sam Dolgoff, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1972, p.134.

<sup>22</sup> See for instance M. Bakunin, ‘The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State’, in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*. pp.269-70, where Bakunin, comparing the church and the state, asserts: ‘As the clergy has always been divisive, and nowadays tends to separate men even further into a very powerful and wealthy minority and a subjected and rather wretched majority, so likewise the bourgeoisie, with its various social and political organisations in industry, agriculture, banking, and commerce, as well as in all administrative, financial, judiciary, education, police, and military functions of the state tend increasingly to weld all of these into a really dominant oligarchy on the one hand, and on the other hand into an enormous mass of more or less hopeless creatures, defrauded creatures who live in a perpetual illusion, steadily and inevitably pushed down into the proletariat by the irresistible force of the present economic development, and reduced to serving as blind tools of this all-powerful oligarchy.’

freedom that, in the eighteenth century, allowed liberalism to develop as a form of individualism, giving way to the affirmation of economic liberalism, as theorized by Adam Smith. At the same time liberalism as a political doctrine was progressively associated with the idea of the nation, so that both the individual and the nation-state had to be free to pursue their own independence. On the contrary for Bakunin, hence for the anarchists, this kind of liberty, ‘which is dispensed, measured out, and regulated by the State ... is a perennial lie and represents nothing but the privilege of a few, based upon the servitude of the remainder’.<sup>23</sup> For the Russian anarchist, the state limits the rights of individuals in the name of the rights of all. Conversely, anarchists are ‘for freedom for all and for free agreement, which will be there for all when no one has the means to force others, and all are involved in the good running of society’.<sup>24</sup>

The main difference between anarchism and socialism is centred on the dichotomy means-end. First, unlike the socialists, anarchists refuse to accept any historical transitory stage before a utopian society. This impatient aspect of anarchists allowed them to criticize the formation of elite classes ruling on behalf of workers, such as the Russian government after the 1917 Revolution. Second, anarchists predicted the dangerous consequences of having a minority ruling against individual freedom for the sake of social equality. Third, while socialism and unionism in the second half of the nineteenth century developed as nation-based movements, anarchism always maintained an international perspective. For the anarchists, the emancipation of oppressed classes is strictly linked to the elimination of national borders and particular interests. The institution of the ‘nation-state’ is the crucial issue that divides anarchists from Marxist socialists. While Marxist socialists are willing to seize power and advocate a

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<sup>23</sup> Bakunin’s interpretation of liberty and his difference with liberalism are explained by this famous excerpt: ‘I am a fanatic lover of liberty. I consider it the only environment in which human intelligence, dignity, and happiness can thrive and develop. I do not mean that formal liberty which is dispensed, measured out, and regulated by the State; for this is a perennial lie and represents nothing but the privilege of a few, based upon the servitude of the remainder. Nor do I mean that individualist, egoist, base, and fraudulent liberty extolled by the school of Jean Jacques Rousseau and every other school of bourgeois liberalism, which considers the rights of all, represented by the State, as a limit for the rights of each; it always, necessarily, ends up by reducing the rights of individuals to zero’, in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p.261.

<sup>24</sup> E. Malatesta, ‘Neither democrats, nor dictators: anarchists’, *Pensiero e Volontá*, Rome, May 1926, translated by A. Bonanno; see also M. Bakunin, ‘God and the State’, in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p.237: ‘[T]o be free... means to be acknowledged and treated as such by all his fellowmen. The liberty of every individual is only the reflection of his own humanity, or his human right through the conscience of all free men, his brothers and his equals ... I am truly free only when all human beings, men and women, are equally free. The freedom of other men [sic], far from negating or limiting my freedom, is, on the contrary, its necessary premise and confirmation. It is the slavery of other men that sets up a barrier to my freedom, or what amounts to the same thing, it is their bestiality which is the negation of my humanity.’

‘proletarian dictatorship’ as a way to overthrow the capitalist bourgeois society, anarchists, and in particular Bakunin during his confrontation with Marx, support the destruction of the state, particularly as the cause of humankind’s troubles ‘does not lie in any particular form of government but in the fundamental principles and the very existence of government, whatever form it may take’.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the existence of experimental anarchist communities, which demonstrate the possibility and the will to live according to those unconditional ideals,<sup>26</sup> the absolute ideas of equality and freedom constitute the fragility of anarchism as a political theory.<sup>27</sup> In other words, anarchists’ key principles of absolute freedom and rejection of authority, which give to anarchism its anti-dogmatic nature, represent both the richness and weakness of this ideology.

Anarchism is unique in its own interpretation of concepts such as authority, power, freedom and social justice. As Malatesta pointed out, ‘anarchy will be completely triumphant when all will be anarchist’.<sup>28</sup> With these words the Italian revolutionary highlighted the importance of the relationship between means and end, and thus whether or not it is possible to achieve a peaceful anarchist society through violent means. This subject has affected anarchism as a political movement throughout its history. Undoubtedly the choice of a few anarchists to use violent means, despite different contexts and possible justification, has prevented other people from embracing anarchist ideals. Significantly, Malatesta and many other Italian anarchists stressed the importance of the process of raising political consciousness through coherent means. In

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<sup>25</sup> M. Bakunin, ‘The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State’, in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p.263: ‘The communists believe it necessary to organise the workers’ forces in order to seize the political power of the State. The revolutionary socialists organise for the purpose of destroying – or, to put it more politely – liquidating the State. The communists advocate the principle and the practices of authority; the revolutionary socialists put all their faith in liberty ... The revolutionary socialists, furthermore, believe that mankind [sic] has for too long submitted to being governed; that the cause of its troubles does not lie in any particular form of government but in the fundamental principles and the very existence of government, whatever form it may take.’

<sup>26</sup> In the preface of his *Anarchy in Action*, Colin Ward argues that ‘an anarchist society, a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism. Of the many possible interpretations of anarchism the one presented here suggests that, far from being a speculative vision of a future society, it is a description of a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society’, p.23.

<sup>27</sup> As Woodcock points out in *Anarchism*, p.15, ‘[T]o describe the essential theory of anarchism is rather like trying to grapple with Proteus, for the very nature of the libertarian attitude – its rejection of dogma, its deliberate avoidance of rigidly systematic theory, and, above all, its stress on extreme freedom of choice and on the primacy of the individual judgement – creates immediately the possibility of a variety of viewpoints inconceivable in a closely dogmatic system.’

<sup>28</sup> E. Malatesta, ‘L’alleanza rivoluzionaria’, *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 13 March 1920.

particular, Malatesta's life stands out as a role model of an anarchist living consistently according to his ideals, to the extent that his life can be seen as one of the best examples of anarchist 'propaganda of the deed'.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Milanese anarchists explained their ideas of anarchy, how they released their inner voice and what they did to reach utopia. Through the analysis of anarchist publications and official documents, this research will explore the way in which anarchists balanced themselves between the grassroots movement and the institutional political party. It will investigate what kind of campaigns they endorsed, which philosophical themes they spread and campaigned for, and how they related to other sectors of society such as trade unions, political institutions, educational and juridical systems and the mass media. This study will give a comprehensive reconstruction of Milanese anarchism, including ideas and theories spread by famous anarchists, as well as actions and initiatives – violent and non-violent – carried out by unknown activists.

## 1.2 The historiography of anarchism

Almost 20 years after Goodway's observation that anarchism has been neglected by social historians, the historiography of anarchism has developed independently by maintaining a dialogue with the discipline of social history. As Thompson pointed out at the beginning of his *Voice of the Past: Oral History*: '[A]ll history depends ultimately upon its social purpose.'<sup>29</sup> Anarchist historiography does not represent an exception to this rule: in the last thirty years anarchist historiography has been animated by historians who define themselves as libertarian, if not anarchist *tout court*. In a sense, anarchist historians have taken on board Gaetano Salvemini's recommendation that 'if the anarchists are not careful, their enemies will write their history'.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, for some years, labour and social history has focused more on political leaders and the origins of left-wing parties, thereby diminishing anarchism or treating it as a millenarian cult,<sup>31</sup> when it was not simply forgotten.

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<sup>29</sup> P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, p.1.

<sup>30</sup> From the Italian original 'Se gli anarchici non se ne curano, la storia la faranno i loro nemici', in V. Mantovani, *Mazurka Blu. La strage del Diana*, p.1; this sentence is reported also by C. Levy at the beginning of his 'Italian Anarchism, 1870-1926', in Goodway (ed.), *For anarchism*, p.25.

<sup>31</sup> See for example E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1959, published in Italian as E.J. Hobsbawm, *I ribelli, Forme primitive di rivolta sociale*, Turin, Einaudi, 1966; although Hobsbawm has

Despite the lack of in-depth studies of anarchism, the origin of this field of research can be found in the studies of anarchist ideals and ‘classical’ anarchist thinkers, such as William Godwin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, Max Stirner, Errico Malatesta, Peter Kropotkin, and Elisée Reclus which started to appear at the end of the nineteenth century. Significantly, one of the first analyses of anarchist thinkers was made by the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, founder of the Italian School of Positivist Criminology, who used his anthropological expertise to declare that ‘the anarchist movement is composed, for the most part (with a few exceptions, such as Reclus and Kropotkin), of criminals and madmen, and sometimes of both together’.<sup>32</sup> The use of a ‘scientific’ approach to explain anarchism and anarchists was not only the logical result of a positivist society but was also due to the fact that, by the end of the nineteenth century, anarchists were more famous for their bombings and assassinations than for their theories. This was largely due to the spread and affirmation of ‘the propaganda of the deed’.<sup>33</sup>

In 1897 Max Nettlau published a lengthy study on anarchist literature.<sup>34</sup> This work can be considered the first serious attempt to recount the historical development of anarchist thought. It is comprised of a massive body of literature and this material is now housed in the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Nettlau inaugurated the historiography of anarchism. He published works not only on the history of anarchist activities but also about the personalities, memoirs and correspondence of some of the most important anarchist activists in Europe and the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>35</sup>

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always been hostile to anarchism, he considers anarchism as a serious social and political force, though ‘the history of anarchism, almost alone among modern social movements, is one of unrelieved failure; and unless some unforeseen historical changes occur, it is likely to go down in the books with the Anabaptists and the rest of the prophets who, though not unarmed, did not know what to do with their arms, and were defeated for ever’, p.92.

<sup>32</sup> C. Lombroso, ‘Anarchy and its Heroes’, in A. Bérard, *Les mystiques de l’anarchie*, Lyon, A.-H. Storck, 1897; retrieved on 6 February 2008 from <http://www.marxists.org/subject/anarchism/lombroso.htm>. See also C. Lombroso, *Les Anarchistes*, Paris, 1896. A similar approach was taken by Felix Dubois, *Le Péril Anarchiste*, Paris, 1894; A. Hamon, *Psychologie de l’Anarchiste-Socialiste*, Paris, 1895. In the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century several definitions of anarchism were given; see for example, A.R. Parsons and others, *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis*, Chicago, 1887; A. Hamon, *Les hommes et les théories de l’anarchie*, Paris, 1895.

<sup>33</sup> The expression ‘propaganda of the deed’ was used by the Italian anarchists Carlo Caffero and Errico Malatesta in 1876 when in the *Bulletin of the Jura Federation* they declared that ‘the Italian federation believes that the insurrectional fact, destined to affirm socialist principles by deeds, is the most efficacious means of propaganda’, in Marshall, *Demanding the impossible*, p.346.

<sup>34</sup> M. Nettlau, *Bibliographie de l’Anarchie*, Brussels, 1897.

<sup>35</sup> Max Nettlau’s intellectual legacy is enormous. A selected bibliography of his works would include: M. Nettlau, *M. Bakunin, Eine Biographie*, 3 vols., Lithograph, 1896-1900; *Bakunin und die Internationale in*

The second important contribution to the development of the historiography of anarchism was made by the German judge, Paul Eltzbacher, who published *Anarchism* in 1908.<sup>36</sup> Eltzbacher tried to define anarchism scientifically through the categorisation of anarchists' thought. He analysed anarchist thinkers such as Godwin, Proudhon, Stirner, Bakunin, Benjamin Tucker and Leo Tolstoy, and reached the conclusion that the only common ground of all anarchists was their rejection of the state.<sup>37</sup> Eltzbacher's work has influenced many other studies on this subject, to the extent that his views and interpretations, including his omissions,<sup>38</sup> have become, in a sense, the conventional approach to the topic.<sup>39</sup> A different approach was taken by E.V. Zenker and E.A. Vizetelly, who traced anarchist ideas back to ancient times.<sup>40</sup> Their views were later appropriated by other historians of anarchism, such as Woodcock, Joll and, more recently, Marshall.<sup>41</sup>

In 1907 the Italian Ettore Zoccoli published *L'Anarchia: Gli agitatori, le idee, i fatti*.<sup>42</sup> This was the first Italian study of anarchism and it was written by a major scholar of Nietzsche. Moreover, Zoccoli considered Nietzsche's *Übermensch*<sup>43</sup> to be similar to Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own*, of which Zoccoli provided the first Italian translation.<sup>44</sup> At the beginning of the new century treaties on anarchism, written by anarchist thinkers such as Emma Goldman, Errico Malatesta and Peter Kropotkin, boomed both in Europe and the United States.<sup>45</sup>

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*Spanien 1868-1873*, Leipzig, 1913; *Errico Malatesta: Das Leben eines Anarchisten*, Berlin, 1922; *Der Vorfrühling der Anarchie*, Berlin, 1925; *Der Anarchismus von Proudhon zu Kropotkin*, Berlin, 1927; *Elisée Reclus: Anarchisten und Gelehrter*, Berlin, 1927; *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia dal 1846 al 1872*, Geneva, 1928; *Anarchisten und Sozialrevolutionäre*, Berlin, 1931; *Contribución a la Bibliografía Anarquista en América Latina hasta*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones La Protesta, n.d.; *Die erste Blütezeit der Anarchie*, Vaduz, 1981; *Anarchisten und Syndikalisten, I*, Vaduz, 1984.

<sup>36</sup> P. Eltzbacher, *Anarchism: Exponents of the Anarchist Philosophy*, New York, 1908, reprinted in New York by the Libertarian Book Club in 1960.

<sup>37</sup> Eltzbacher, *Anarchism*, pp.276, 292.

<sup>38</sup> As Marie Fleming points out, Eltzbacher did not consider Elisée Reclus among anarchist thinkers; see Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, pp.19-21.

<sup>39</sup> See for example, Woodcock, *Anarchism*; Joll, *The Anarchists* and R.B. Fowler, 'The Anarchist Tradition of Political Thought', *The Western Political Quarterly*, vol.25, no.4, Dec. 1972, pp.738-52.

<sup>40</sup> E.V. Zenker, *Anarchism*, London, 1898; E.A. Vizetelly, *The Anarchists: Their Faith and their Record*, London, 1911.

<sup>41</sup> Marshall, *Demanding the impossible*.

<sup>42</sup> E. Zoccoli, *L'anarchia. Gli agitatori, le idee, i fatti*.

<sup>43</sup> There is no general agreement on the exact English translation of *Übermensch*: the initial 'superman' has been replaced first by 'superhuman' and nowadays by 'overman'.

<sup>44</sup> M. Stirner, *L'Unico e la sua Proprietà*, translated by E. Zoccoli, Turin, F.lli Bocca, 1902. A few years ago Zoccoli's work was reprinted by Samizdat: E. Zoccoli, *I gruppi anarchici degli Stati Uniti e l'opera di Max Stirner*, Pescara, Samizdat, 1999.

<sup>45</sup> E. Goldman, *Anarchism and other Essays*, New York, 1911; by Malatesta see in particular E. Malatesta, *L'Anarchia*, London, 1891 and *Al caffè. Conversazioni sull'anarchismo*, Bologna, 1922; by

In the period between the two world wars the decline of anarchism as a political movement in favour of other ideologies such as socialism and fascism was mirrored by the lack of seminal works on the subject. Journal articles did continue to be published, but they mainly focused on specific themes and personalities related to anarchism, rather than providing systematic studies of its history and philosophy.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, published in 1930, had contributions from a number of scholars, including Oscar Jaszi, who was responsible for the section on 'anarchism.' He defined anarchism as 'a mass ideology coloured by many emotional and religious elements'.<sup>47</sup> In Jaszi's opinion, even if 'anarchism covers so many distinct conceptions and tendencies that it is difficult to reduce them all to a common denominator', anarchism could be described as:

An attempt to establish justice (that is, equality and reciprocity) in all human relations by the complete elimination of the state (or by a genuine minimization of its activity) and its replacement by an entirely free and spontaneous co-operation among individuals, groups, regions, and nations.<sup>48</sup>

A lack of systematic studies on the subject persisted throughout the 1940s and the 1950s,<sup>49</sup> but came to an end in the 1960s when the Canadian historian George

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Kropotkin, see P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, London, 1902; *Modern Science and Anarchism*, London, Freedom Press, 1923; *Ethics: Origin and Development*, New York, 1924.

<sup>46</sup> See for example, M. Jourdain, 'Mikhail Bakunin', *Open Court*, vol.34, October 1920, pp.591-99; 'The Sociological Ideas of Prince Peter Kropotkin', *Open Court*, vol.34, July 1920, pp.385-93; L.H. Williams, 'Prince Kropotkin's Philosophy in the Light of To-day', *Hibbert Journal*, vol.19, April 1921, pp.441-48; H.T. McClelland, 'Anarchy and Aspiration', *Open Court*, vol.36, December 1922, pp.753-60; S. Reznick, 'The Political and Social Theory of Michael Bakunin', *American Political Science Review*, vol.21, 1927, pp.270-96; L. Maury, 'Sur Proudhon', *Revue Politique et Littéraire*, vol.66, 1928, pp.278-80; G. Guy-Grand, 'Les Aspects de la Justice Selon Proudhon', *Revue Philosophique*, vol.109, 1930, pp.286-315; 'Proudhon est-il Philosophe?', *Revue Politique et Littéraire*, vol.68, 1930, pp.268-73; C.W. Roberts, 'Wadsworth, the Philanthropist, and Godwin's Political Justice', *Studies in Philology*, vol.31, 1934, pp.84-91; T. Baty, 'Can Anarchy Be a State?', *American Journal of International Law*, vol.28, 1934, pp.444-55; E.H. Carr, 'Bakunin's Escape from Siberia', *Slavonic Review*, vol.15, 1937, pp.377-88; M. Paleologue, 'Deux Précurseurs du Bolchevisme: Herzen et Bakunin', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol.44, 1938, pp.60-63; V.S. Yarros, 'Philosophical Anarchism (1880-1910)', *Journal of Social Philosophy*, vol.6, 1941, pp.254-62; O. Handlin, 'A Russian Anarchist Visits Boston', *New England Quarterly*, vol.15, 1942; D. Dillard, 'Keynes and Proudhon', *Journal of Economic History*, vol.2, 1942, pp.63-76; C.A. Madison, 'Anarchism in the United States', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.6, 1945, pp.46-66; 'Benjamin R. Tucker: Individualist and Anarchist', *New England Quarterly*, vol.16, 1943, pp.444-67; J.S. Shapiro, 'P.-J. Proudhon, Harbinger of Fascism', *American Historical Review*, vol.50, 1945, pp.714-37.

<sup>47</sup> O. Jaszi, 'Anarchism', in E.R.A. Seligman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Volume II, New York, Macmillan, 1930, pp.46-53.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.

<sup>49</sup> During the 1940s and the 1950s significant intellectual activity was manifested by anarchist thinkers, especially American and British anarchists, like Herbert Read, Alex Comfort, Paul Goodman, Marie Louise Berneri and Colin Ward. See for example H. Read, *To Hell with Culture: Democratic Values are New Values*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1941; *The Politics of the Unpolitical*, Routledge, 1943; *Education through Art*, Faber & Faber, 1943; *The Education of Free Man*, Freedom Press, 1944; *Anarchy*

Woodcock published his seminal work *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*,<sup>50</sup> to be followed by Joll's *The Anarchists*.<sup>51</sup> Woodcock wrote several books on anarchism including biographies of not only anarchists such as Proudhon and Kropotkin, but also writers and thinkers who were not overtly anarchist, such as Godwin, Oscar Wilde, and George Orwell. Woodcock had become familiar with the works of Orwell during the Second World War after a theoretical dispute over pacifism appeared in the pages of *Partisan Review*.<sup>52</sup> In this, his most famous work, Woodcock with an elegiac note reached the conclusion that anarchism, as a movement, had failed; however, he also argued that 'in this insistence that freedom and moral self-realisation are interdependent, and one cannot live without the other, lies the ultimate lesson of true anarchism'.<sup>53</sup> Joll came to a similar conclusion when he wrote about the lessons of anarchism as the following:

The protests which the anarchist movement has made express a recurrent psychological need, and one which has by no means disappeared with the apparent failure of anarchism as a serious political and social force.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1960s another important book on anarchism was published. This time it was the work of a French author, Daniel Guérin,<sup>55</sup> and although he was well known in France, English translations of his works were rare.<sup>56</sup> As a libertarian Marxist, with experience of revolutionary syndicalism, Guérin stressed the importance of the

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*and Order*, Faber and Faber, 1954; A. Comfort, *Peace and Disobedience*, Peace News, 1946; *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom*, Freedom Press, 1948; *Sexual Behaviour in Society*, Duckworth, 1950; *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State: A Criminological Approach to the Problems of Power*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950; *Delinquency*, Freedom Press, 1951; *Social Responsibility in Science and Art*, Peace News, 1952; P. Goodman, *Growing up Absurd*, (1960), Sphere, 1970; M.L. Berneri, *Journey through Utopia*, (1950), Freedom Press, 1982; *Neither East Nor West: Selected Writings 1939-1948*, Freedom Press, 1988; C. Ward, 'The State and Society', *Anarchy*, no.14, 1962, pp.115-19; 'The Future of Anarchism', *Anarchy*, no.28 1963, pp.175-76; 'Anarchism as a Theory of Organisation', *Anarchy*, no.62, 1966, pp.97-109.

<sup>50</sup> Woodcock, *Anarchism*.

<sup>51</sup> Joll, *The Anarchists*.

<sup>52</sup> See J. Rodden, 'The Politics of Literary Reputation: George Woodcock and the Anarchists' Orwell', *Queen's Quarterly*, vol.95, no.2, 1988, pp.330-49.

<sup>53</sup> Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p.476.

<sup>54</sup> Joll, *The Anarchists*, p.ix. Moreover, Joll edited with David E. Apter, *Anarchism Today*, which is a collection of essays including D.E. Apter, 'The Old Anarchism and the New – Some Comments', pp.1-13.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Guérin's most famous work is D. Guérin, *Ni Dieu ni Maître: anthologie de l'anarchisme*, 4 vols., Paris, Maspero, 1972.

<sup>56</sup> D. Guérin, *L'anarchisme: De la doctrine à l'action*, Paris, Editions Gallimard, 1965. Five years later this was translated into English by Mark Klopffer and published as D. Guérin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1970, with an introduction by Noam Chomsky. See also an essay by George Woodcock on Chomsky's introduction, G. Woodcock, 'Noam Chomsky's Anarchism', in Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists*, pp.224-28.

economic emancipation of workers. This reinforced the old debate among anarchists from the early twentieth century on the nature of revolution and whether an anarchist revolution was primarily an economic one or rather a lifestyle rebellion concerning all aspects of society for the liberation of humankind.

Attempts to compare and draw a synthesis between Marxism and anarchism were criticized by Alan Carter in *Outline of an Anarchist Theory of History*, where the author points out the questions central to the dilemma:

Current talk of a synthesis between anarchist and Marxist theory reveals a profound failure to understand precisely what it is that is problematic about Marxist political theory. Or, perhaps, such a synthesis is supposed to involve the acceptance of Marx's economic theory? But the fact that Bakunin was foolish enough to accept it is no reason why anarchist theory as a whole needs do so.<sup>57</sup>

In Europe the political, cultural and social uprising of 1968 saw a revival of anarchist themes. The famous black flag, for the first time with a circled A,<sup>58</sup> flew over universities in Paris, Milan, Brussels and other European cities. This new generation of anarchist thinkers was composed mainly of British and American authors.<sup>59</sup> Among the studies published during the 1970s the work of Colin Ward had the greatest impact.<sup>60</sup> Ward's writings belong not only to the field of anarchist historiography but also to the new contributions to anarchist thought. Indeed, his famous *Anarchy in Action* represents the continuation of Proudhon and Kropotkin's thoughts on organisation, federalism and mutual aid. Ward pointed out that an anarchist society has always existed, as well as alternatives to hegemonic power structures, and that 'mutual aid – voluntary co-

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<sup>57</sup> A. Carter, 'Outline of an anarchist theory of history', in D. Goodway (ed.), *For anarchism*, p.197, note 24.

<sup>58</sup> On the origins of the circled A, see VV.AA., *A-Cerchiata. Storia veridica ed esiti imprevisti di un simbolo*, Milan, Elèuthera, 2008.

<sup>59</sup> See in particular the works of Murray Bookchin. For instance, M. Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, Berkeley, Ramparts Press, 1971; *Toward an Ecological Society*, (1980), Montreal and Buffalo, Black Rose, 1986; *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Palo Alto, Cheshire Books, 1982; *The Modern Crisis*, Montreal, Black Rose, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1987; *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship*, San Francisco, Sierra Club, 1987. Other anthologies on anarchism were published during the 1960s and 70s. See in particular I.L. Horowitz (ed.), *The Anarchists*, New York, Dell, 1964; L.I. Krimerman and P. Lewis (eds), *Patterns of Anarchy: A Collection of Writings on the Anarchist Tradition*, New York, Anchor, 1966; M.S. Shatz (ed.), *The Essential Works of Anarchism*, New York, Bantam, 1971; P. Berman (ed.), *Quotations from the Anarchists*, New York, Praeger, 1972; G. Woodcock, *The Anarchist Reader*, Fontana, 1977; H.J. Ehrlich *et al* (eds), *Reinventing Anarchy*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.

<sup>60</sup> Other books were published in this period, see for example Apter & Joll (eds), *Anarchism Today*; A. Carter, *The Political Theory of Anarchism*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971; Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*.

operation – is just as strong a tendency in human life as aggression and the urge to dominate'.<sup>61</sup>

The growth of an independent anarchist historiography was evident throughout the 1980s and 1990s when several works on the subject were published. Perhaps, for some of these books, the choice of title reveals a lack of originality. David Miller's *Anarchism* and Alan Ritter's book of the same title, *Anarchism*, present very similar philosophical approaches to the subject displaying the same varieties of anarchism and concluding with an overview of anarchism's achievements. Worthy of mention, although it focuses on a specific theme, is Crowder's work on *The Idea of Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Anarchism*.<sup>62</sup> More significantly, at the end of the 1980s, influenced by post-modern works, a new term emerged within the field of political theories: post-anarchism. In particular, Todd May, Saul Newman and Lewis Call gave new interpretations of anarchism as a political system and a school of philosophical thought.<sup>63</sup>

In the last twenty to thirty years, within the historiography of anarchism, not many works can be said to have provided new analysis or offering new interpretations and understandings. Arguably, the sizeable work by Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*,<sup>64</sup> could be considered as the last synthetic contribution to the field of anarchist historiography, along with the most recent work on the topic, Robert Graham's *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, which presents a collection of anarchist themes in an original way.<sup>65</sup> However, Graham's assortment of works on the subject by many thinkers and activists sometimes struggles to give a general picture of what anarchism is and why it is relevant to the history of political theories.

Apart from comprehensive works on anarchism, any reflection on anarchist historiography must mention several important journal articles typically focusing on specific themes and personalities. The most analysed themes are those concerning the

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<sup>61</sup> Ward, *Anarchy in Action*, p.12.

<sup>62</sup> G. Crowder, *The Idea of Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Anarchism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987.

<sup>63</sup> See in particular, T. May, *The Political Philosophy of Post-structuralist Anarchism*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994; S. Newman, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2001; L. Call, *Post-modern Anarchism*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2002.

<sup>64</sup> Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*.

<sup>65</sup> R. Graham (ed.), *Anarchism. A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, Montreal, Black Rose, 2005-2007.

nature of anarchism's political thought and the place it occupies within a general theoretical framework. Works by Alan Ritter, R.B. Fowler and Thomas Weiss and many others address this issue.<sup>66</sup> The controversy over violence among anarchists has aroused particular interest among scholars. Violence, terrorism, conflict, nihilism, rebellions and revolutions are themes that have been addressed and studied in order to understand the issue at stake. In a sense, above all else, the dichotomy between means and ends has overshadowed other aspects of anarchist thought.<sup>67</sup>

The relationship between anarchism and Marxism has been explored from several perspectives. The roots of anarchism are closely linked with Marxism, socialism and the labour movement and many scholars have tried to understand their similarities and differences. The seminal work by G.D.H. Cole on the history of socialist thought dedicates an entire volume to Marxism and anarchism.<sup>68</sup> Other studies on the subject have specifically analysed the relationship between Marx and anarchists and in

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<sup>66</sup> A. Vagts, 'Intelligentsia versus reason of state', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.84, no.1, 1969, pp.80-105; A. Ritter, 'Anarchism and liberal theory in the nineteenth century', *Bucknell Review*, vol.19, no.2, 1971, pp.37-66; P.E.B. Coy, 'Social Anarchism: An Atavistic Ideology of the Peasant', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, vol.14, no.2, 1972, pp.133-49; R.B. Fowler, 'The anarchist tradition of political thought', *Western Political Quarterly*, vol.25, no.4, 1972, pp.738-52; H. Schurer, 'Anarchism – Past and Present', *Survey*, vol.18, no.3, 1972, pp.205-08; M. Schiller, 'Anarchism and Autonomy', *Bucknell Review*, vol.21, no.2-3, 1973, pp.47-59; I. Avakumovic, 'Books on Anarchism and Anarchists', *Russian Review*, vol.33, no.1, 1974, pp.86-88; B. Torode, 'The Poverty of Utopianism', *Studies*, vol.63, no.252, 1974, pp.339-41; T.G. Weiss, 'The Tradition of Philosophical Anarchism and Future Directions in World Policy', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.12, no.1, 1975, pp.1-17; see also G. Woodcock, 'Anarchist phases and personalities', *Queen's Quarterly*, vol.87, no.1, 1980, pp.82-96; G.C. Fidler, 'Anarchism and Education: Education Integrale and the Imperative Towards Fraternite', *History of Education*, vol.18, no.1, 1989, pp.23-46; S. Gemie, 'Counter-Community: An Aspect of Anarchist Political Culture', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.29, no.2, 1994, pp.349-67; K. Kumar, 'Aspects of the Western Utopian Tradition', *History of Human Sciences*, vol.16, no.1, 2003, pp.63-77; C. Levy, 'Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism in Europe, 1860-1939', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol.50, no.3, 2004, pp.330-42.

<sup>67</sup> See for example, A. Harrigan, 'Conflict and Nihilism', *Quarterly Review*, vol.303, no.643, 1965, pp.26-32; C.J. Friedrich, 'The Anarchist Controversy over Violence', *Zeitschrift fur Politik*, vol.19, no.3, 1972, pp.167-77; B. Overy, 'Approaches to Nonviolent Revolution', *Gandhi Marg*, vol.17, no.2, 1973, pp.141-49; A. Rezler, 'An Essay on Political Myths: Anarchist Myths of Revolt', *Diogenes*, vol.94, 1976, pp.34-52; Z. Ivansky, 'Individual Terror: Concept and Typology', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.12, no.1, 1977, pp.43-63; M. Fleming, 'Propaganda by the Deed: Terrorism and Anarchist Theory in Late Nineteenth-century Europe', *Terrorism*, vol.4, no.1-4, 1980, pp.1-23; R.B. Jensen, 'The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.16, 1981, pp.323-47; R.B. Jensen, 'Daggers, Rifles and Dynamite: Anarchist Terrorism in Nineteenth Century Europe', *Terrorism and Political violence*, vol.16, no.1, 2004, pp.116-53; E. Gabriel, 'Performing Persecution: Witnessing and Martyrdom in the Anarchist Tradition', *Radical History Review*, vol.98, 2007, pp.34-62.

<sup>68</sup> G.D.H. Cole, *Socialist Thought, II, Marxism and Anarchism, 1850-1890*, London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1964; for Marxism and anarchism see also K.A. Wittfogel, 'Marxism, Anarchism and the New Left', *Modern Age*, vol.14, no.2, 1970, pp.114-28; I. Scott, 'Nineteenth-century Anarchism and Marxism', *Social Science*, vol.47, no.4, 1972, pp.212-18.

particular his debates with Bakunin.<sup>69</sup> A different approach was taken by those who focused their research on anarchism and labour movements with a special regard to revolutionary syndicalism.<sup>70</sup>

### 1.3 On the historiography of Italian anarchism

The origins of Italian anarchism coincide with those of Italian socialism and the Italian labour movement. If the historiography of Italian anarchism has been able, since the 1960s,<sup>71</sup> to develop as an independent field of study this is primarily due to the earlier works published by two historians: Gino Cerrito and Pier Carlo Masini.<sup>72</sup> To their sense of critical analysis goes the credit of originating an autonomous area of research, though strictly linked to the historiography of Italian labour movement.<sup>73</sup> After the Second World War the hegemonic role of the Communist Party in telling the story of the Italian social movement appears clear from reading the works of Marxist historians such as Richard Hostetter, Leo Valiani, Aldo Romano, Gastone Manacorda, and Gaetano Arfé.<sup>74</sup> These historians were recipients of the intellectual legacy of former Communist

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<sup>69</sup> See in particular P. Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists*, Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980; J.H. Barker, *Individualism and Community: The State in Marx and Early Anarchism*, Westport, Greenwood, 1986. See also H. Mayer, 'Marx on Bakunin: A Neglected Text', in *Etudes de marxologie*, vol.2, 1959, pp.91-117. For the Paris Commune and its different interpretations, see E. Shulkind (ed.), *The Paris Commune of 1871: The view from the left*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1972, particularly pp.213-45 for anarchist contributions.

<sup>70</sup> A.B. Spitzer, 'Anarchy and Culture: Fernand Pelloutier and the Dilemma of Revolutionary Syndicalism', *International Review of Social History*, vol.8, no.3, 1963, pp.379-88; D. Geary, 'Socialism, Revolution and the European Labour Movement, 1848-1918', *Historical Journal*, vol.15, no.4, 1972, pp.794-803; R. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, with an introduction by Noam Chomsky, London, Pluto Press, 1989.

<sup>71</sup> Although the first publication is VV. AA., *Un trentennio di attività anarchica. 1914-1945*, Cesena, Edizioni 'L'Antistato', 1953, the first serious attempt to historically reconstruct Italian anarchism was made by Gino Cerrito who published 'Gli anarchici oggi in Italia', *L'Astrolabio*, Rome, 1st and 15th July 1965 (then *Volontà*, vol.10, Genoa, 1965) and 'Il movimento anarchico dalle origini al 1914. Problemi e orientamenti storiografici', *Rassegna Storica Toscana*, January-June 1969, pp.109-38.

<sup>72</sup> See M. Antonioli, G. Berti, S. Fedele & P. Iuso (eds.), *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani*, 2 vols., Pisa, BFS, 2003-2004, *ad nomen*.

<sup>73</sup> Masini, for instance, corresponded for twenty years with Gianni Bosio, director of the journal *Movimento Operaio*. Moreover, Masini wrote articles for other journals such as *Rivista Storica del Socialismo* and *Movimento Operaio e Socialista*; he was also one of the founders and members of the editorial scientific committee of *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo* until he died in 1998. See F. Bertolucci, 'Masini, Pier Carlo', in M. Antonioli, G. Berti, S. Fedele & P. Iuso (eds.), *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani*, pp.121-25, and F. Bertolucci & G. Mangini (eds.), *Pier Carlo Masini. Impegno civile e ricerca storica tra anarchismo, socialismo e democrazia*, Pisa, BFS – Quaderni della Rivista Storica dell'Anarchismo, 2008.

<sup>74</sup> R. Hostetter, *Le origini del socialismo italiano*, Milan, 1963; L. Valiani, *Storia del movimento socialista*, Florence, 1951; A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia*, 3 vols., Milan-Rome, 1954; G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi (1853-1892)*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1963. His interpretation of Bakunin's works is clearly influenced by Marx's controversy

Party leaders Palmiro Togliatti<sup>75</sup> and Antonio Gramsci and reinforced, through their studies, the image of Italian anarchism as a millenarian folkloristic cult whose flourishing, at the end of the nineteenth century, was largely due to the economic and social underdevelopment of Italy, especially in the southern regions where the anarchist movement was initially stronger.<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, the interconnections between the history of anarchism and the history of the socialist movement in Italy are clearer thanks to the work of Renato Zangheri. He was able to give a less partisan reconstruction of Italian socialism, from its ideological origins with the consequences of the French Revolution to the end of the nineteenth century, thus revaluing the anarchist contribution to the development of Italian socialism.<sup>77</sup> Letterio Briguglio studied the first Italian Labour Party founded in Milan in 1882. In particular he drew attention to the party's anarchist origins, its theoretical and ideological framework and he also researched the different activities of the regional groups.<sup>78</sup>

The events of 1914, also known as the *Settimana Rossa* (Red Week), represent the apex of Italian anarchism as a new revolutionary creative driving forces for the masses.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, 'the *Settimana Rossa* was definitely the end of the labour and socialist movements' revolutionary potentialities, on which anarchism and

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with the Russian anarchist and 'needs to be taken with certain cautions and reservations', in G. Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano (1892-1926)*, Turin, Einaudi, 1965, p.375. By Manacorda see also G. Manacorda, 'Il socialismo anarchico in Italia', *Studi Storici*, vol.1, no.1, 1959-1960, pp.197-200.

<sup>75</sup> See P.Togliatti, 'La formazione del gruppo dirigente del partito comunista italiano', *Annali dell'Istituto Feltrinelli*, 1960, then reprinted by Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1962.

<sup>76</sup> The best account of Gramsci's analysis of anarchism and his relationship with the anarchists is the work by Carl Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*, Oxford-New York, Berg, 1999. See also G.M. Bravo, 'Il socialismo anarchico in Italia', *Pensiero Politico*, vol.9, no.1, 1976, pp.102-05. However, in order to have an idea of how Marxist historians have dismissed anarchists and their theories, readers can be helped by the following writing by E.J. Hobsbawm: 'It will be clear that in my view anarchism has no significant contribution to socialist theory to make, though it is a useful critical element. If socialists want theories about the present and the future, they will still have to look elsewhere, to Marx and his followers, and probably also to the earlier utopian socialists, such as Fourier. To be more precise: if anarchists want to make a significant contribution they will have to do much more serious thinking than most of them have recently done.' The English historian then admits that '[t]he contribution of anarchism to revolutionary strategy and tactics cannot be so easily dismissed. It is true that anarchists are as unlikely to make successful revolutions in the future as they have been in the past. To adapt a phrase used by Bakunin of the peasantry: they may be invaluable on the first day of a revolution, but they are almost certain to be an obstacle on the second day', in E.J. Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973, p.89.

<sup>77</sup> R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, 2 vols., Turin, Einaudi, 1993-1997.

<sup>78</sup> L. Briguglio, *Il partito operaio e gli anarchici*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1967. By the same author see also L. Briguglio, 'Gli anarchici', in A. Nicosia (ed.), *Il mito della Rivoluzione e la sinistra italiana tra '800 e '900*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1991.

<sup>79</sup> On this topic see for instance L. Lotti, *La Settimana Rossa*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1965 and M. Severini, 'La Settimana Rossa: un bilancio storiografico', *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento*, vol.85, no.2, 1998, pp.238-51.

socialism had based their political and historical possibilities'.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the so-called *Biennio Rosso* (Red Biennium 1919-1920)<sup>81</sup> heralded the swan-song, the last sighs of an agonizing subject: the labour movement succumbed to repression initially by the Italian liberal regime and later to the rise of fascism. Notwithstanding the post-war increase in members of socialist organisations and the myth of the Bolshevik revolution, Italian anarchists failed to channel their revolutionary efforts into a general uprising.<sup>82</sup> Paradoxically, whilst the *Biennio Rosso* appeared to many Italian revolutionaries as one of the closest points to the overthrow of the liberal regime and the monarchy, the failure of that experience led to 20 years of fascist dictatorship and the consequent repression of the anarchist cultural and political heritage. In fact, after the Second World War, Italian anarchists were not able to affirm themselves as a significant force within the Italian political arena. Hence a consequent lack of historiographical legitimacy is mirrored, for instance, by the lack of any comprehensive works on the general history of Italian anarchism. Even the most complete and detailed anthologies are limited in time, or focus on specific themes or personalities to the extent that in order to have an overview of Italian anarchism it is necessary to read a number of texts on the subject.

In 1969 Masini published *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta*,<sup>83</sup> in which he reconstructed the history of Italian anarchism from its origins with the revolutionary activities of Bakunin during the period of the first IWA to the foundation of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) in 1892<sup>84</sup> which witnessed a definitive break between anarchists and socialists. The years in which Italian anarchists were famous for their acts of violence and terrorism are the topic of Masini's second major work on the history of Italian anarchism between 1892 and 1905.<sup>85</sup> In conjunction with these two texts one must read Gino Cerrito's *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia*, which analyses the revolutionary

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<sup>80</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.547.

<sup>81</sup> For an account of episodes during the *Biennio Rosso*, see G. Maione, *Il biennio rosso. Autonomia e spontaneità operaia nel 1919-1920*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1975 and 'Il biennio rosso: lo sciopero delle lancette (marzo-aprile 1920)', *Storia Contemporanea*, vol.3, no.2, 1972, pp.239-304. See also, P. Spriano, *L'occupazione delle fabbriche (settembre 1920)*, Turin, Einaudi, 1964. This work has been translated into English and introduced by Gwyn A. Williams: see P. Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories, Italy 1920*, Pluto Press, 1975. In English see also C.L. Bertrand, 'The biennio rosso: anarchists and revolutionary syndacalists in Italy, 1919-1920', *Historical Reflections*, vol.9, no.3, 1982, pp.383-402.

<sup>82</sup> For Italian anarchists and Russian revolution, see P.C. Masini, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la rivoluzione russa', *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, vol.5, no.15-16, 1962, pp.135-69.

<sup>83</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1969.

<sup>84</sup> For the history of the Italian Socialist Party, see Z. Ciuffoletti, *Storia del Psi, I, Le origini e l'età giolittiana*, Bari, 1992 and M. Ridolfi, 'Associazionismo e organizzazione della politica nell'Italia di fine secolo: la costruzione del Psi', *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea*, vol.20, no.3, 1991, pp.368-99.

<sup>85</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1981.

activities of Italian anarchists up to the eve of the First World War,<sup>86</sup> and Enzo Santarelli's *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*.<sup>87</sup>

Other works have examined the history of Italian anarchism, although they focus on specific periods. Much attention has been drawn to its origins, its rise and consequent fall with the fascist dictatorship. Little has been written on Italian anarchism after the war, its rebirth and the growth of the anarchist movement. Studies by Nunzio Pernicone and Carl Levy<sup>88</sup> offer a general picture of Italian anarchism to the English-speaking scholarly world, while works by Masini and Antonioli, Di Lembo, Rossi and Schirone,<sup>89</sup> when read in this order, provide a chronological study of the development of Italian anarchism.

In Italy, during the 1970s, anarchism developed as an independent field of study thanks to a conference, promoted by the *Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, held in Turin in 1971 on 'anarchists and anarchy'.<sup>90</sup> Due to its scientific purpose and to the involvement of cultural institutions, the conference took on an international historical significance. In fact, in the years immediately after the conference there was an increase in publications on anarchism,<sup>91</sup> followed by two other conferences: one on the relationship between

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<sup>86</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, Florence, 1977.

<sup>87</sup> E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, Milan, 1959 and 1973 (revised edition). See also by the same author, 'L'azione di E. Malatesta e i moti del 1898 ad Ancona', *Movimento Operaio*, vol.5, 1954, pp.248-74.

<sup>88</sup> N. Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892*, Princeton, Princeton U. Pr., 1993; C. Levy, 'Italian Anarchism, 1870-1926', in D. Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice*, pp.25-78.

<sup>89</sup> P.C. Masini & M. Antonioli, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*; L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana, l'anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla Guerra di Spagna (1919-1939)*, Pisa, BFS, 2001; I. Rossi, *La ripresa del movimento anarchico italiano e la propaganda orale dal 1943 al 1950*, Pistoia, Edizioni Erre Elle, 1981; F. Schirone, *La gioventù anarchica negli anni delle contestazioni, 1965-1969*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2006. For anarchists in 1968, see also Volontà, *La dimensione libertaria del Sessantotto*, Milan, 1988; R. Zani (ed.), *Alla prova del Sessantotto. L'anarchismo internazionale al Congresso di Carrara*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2008; and N. Balestrini, P. Moroni, *L'orda d'oro 1968-1977. La grande ondata rivoluzionaria e creativa, politica ed esistenziale*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1997 for an account of the Italian 'long 1968'.

<sup>90</sup> VV.AA., *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo. Atti del convegno promosso dalla Fondazione Luigi Einaudi (Torino, 5,6 e 7 dicembre 1969)*, Turin, Einaudi, 1971. The conference saw the intervention and contribution of some of the most authoritative Italian and international scholars on the subject, such as Valiani, Masini, Garosci, Cerrito, Nejtrotti, Briguglio, Bravo, Lehning, Joll, Hobsbawm, Guérin and Maitron. In particular, see the contribution by G. Cerrito on a general history of anarchism and its comprehensive bibliography: G. Cerrito, 'Il movimento anarchico internazionale nella sua struttura attuale. Lineamenti storici e bibliografia essenziale', in *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo. Atti del convegno promosso dalla Fondazione Luigi Einaudi (Torino, 5,6 e 7 dicembre 1969)*, Turin, Einaudi, 1971, pp.127-207.

<sup>91</sup> See for instance, G.M. Bravo, *Gli anarchici*, Turin, UTET, 1971; A. De Jaco, *Gli anarchici. Cronaca inedita dell'Unità d'Italia*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1971; V. Emiliani, *Gli anarchici*, Milan, Bompiani, 1973; M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico italiano nel 1914', *Storia e Politica*, vol.12, no.2, 1973, pp.235-54; D. Tarizzo, *L'anarchia. Storia dei movimenti libertari nel mondo*, Milan, Mondadori, 1976.

socialism and anarchism,<sup>92</sup> and one for the centennial of Bakunin's death.<sup>93</sup> From a strictly historiographical point of view special mention must be made of the work of Luciano Bettini who researched a century of anarchist publications in Italy and abroad creating an indispensable tool for all historians.<sup>94</sup>

Some scholars have focused on a long-standing issue in Italian anarchism: its continuous oscillation between being a grass roots movement and a political party. On this subject the work by Adriana Dadà represents a valuable source, since her work examines the entire history of Italian anarchism and presents a well-selected collection of documents written by local, regional and national anarchist groups.<sup>95</sup> Other works address the organisation of an Italian anarchist party, in particular, the studies by Cerrito, Antonio Cardella and Ludovico Fenech, as well as Giorgio Sacchetti.<sup>96</sup> On the history of the Italian anarchist federation (*Federazione Anarchica Italiana*, FAI) the historian and anarchist activist Ugo Fedeli edited *Convegni e congressi (1944-1962)*, which presents a chronological account of FAI's general meetings and conferences.<sup>97</sup> For an account of the history of the *Unione Anarchica Italiana* (Italian Anarchist Union, UAI), forerunner of FAI, the anarchist Milanese publisher *Zero in Condotta* has published a collection of essays written by various authors, *L'Unione Anarchica Italiana. Tra rivoluzione europea e reazione fascista (1919-1926)*.<sup>98</sup>

A topic that has been well studied is revolutionary syndicalism at the beginning of the twentieth century,<sup>99</sup> in particular the activities of the *Unione Sindacale Italiana*

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<sup>92</sup> AA.VV., *Anarchismo e socialismo in Italia 1872-1892. Atti del Convegno di studi 'Marxisti e Riministi' (Rimini, 19-21 ottobre 1972)*, Rome, 1973.

<sup>93</sup> AA.VV., *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi bakuniniani, (Venezia, 24-26 settembre 1976)*, Milan, 1977.

<sup>94</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I, 1*, and *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I, 2, Periodici e numeri unici anarchici in lingua italiana pubblicati all'estero (1872-1971)*, Florence, Cp editrice, 1976. For the anarchist textual legacy at the end of the nineteenth century, see also N. Dell'Erba, *Giornali e gruppi anarchici in Italia (1892-1900)*, Milan, 1983.

<sup>95</sup> A. Dadà, *L'anarchismo in Italia: fra movimento e partito*, Milan, Teti, 1984.

<sup>96</sup> G. Cerrito, *Il ruolo dell'organizzazione anarchica*, s.l. [Pistoia], 1973; A. Cardella, L. Fenech, *Anni senza tregua: per una storia della Federazione anarchica italiana dal 1970 al 1980*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2005; G. Sacchetti, 'Comunisti contro individualisti. Il dibattito sull'organizzazione nel 1907', *Bollettino del Museo del Risorgimento*, vol.35, 1990, pp.23-32.

<sup>97</sup> U. Fedeli (ed.), *Federazione Anarchica Italiana, Convegni e congressi (1944-1962)*, Genoa, Edizioni della Libreria della F.A.I., 1963.

<sup>98</sup> VV.AA., *L'Unione Anarchica Italiana, Tra rivoluzione europea e reazione fascista (1919-1926)*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2006.

<sup>99</sup> Major works on this topic are those by B. Uva, 'Vita e morte del sindacalismo rivoluzionario italiano', *Storia e Politica*, vol.2, no.3, 1963, pp.403-27; U. Sereni, 'Da Langhirano a Modena. La costituzione dell'Unione sindacale italiana', *Movimento Operaio e Socialista*, vol.3-4, 1975; U. Fedeli, 'Breve storia dell'U.S.I.', *Volontà*, vol.9-11, Genoa 1957, (reprinted: *Unione Sindacale Italiana. 1912-1970*, Livorno 1978); G. Quilici, 'Lotte politiche e agitazione economico-sociali dal 1919 al 1921 (dai rapporti di prefettura)', *Rivista Italiana di Studi Napoleonici*, vol.15, no.1, 1978, pp.95-126; A. Toninello,

(Italian syndicalist union, USI). In the last thirty years Maurizio Antonioli has published several fine studies on this subject demonstrating the capability to analyse not only Italian and local trade unionism in all their aspects, but also the relationship between them and other European and non-European forms of syndicalism, giving the reader an understanding of local, national and international contexts.<sup>100</sup> The emancipation of workers through trade unions' activities and the presence of anarchists within the USI's national and local branches constitute topics that inevitably refer to the economic analysis of the country and to the dichotomy between anarchism and Marxism. Specific studies have been published on the influence of Marxism in Italy with some reference to anarchism,<sup>101</sup> and special attention, mainly by the historian Franco Della Peruta, has been drawn to the activities, in Italy, of the first IWA which was influenced by Bakuninian ideas.<sup>102</sup> To Masini goes the credit for researching and collecting, into a

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*Sindacalismo rivoluzionario, anarco-sindacalismo, anarchismo*, Catania, La Rivolta, 1978; A. Andreasi, *L'anarco-sindacalismo in Francia, Italia e Spagna*, Milan, La Pietra, 1981; G. Careri, *Il sindacalismo autogestionario, l'U.S.I. dalle origini ad oggi*, Rome, Unione Sindacale Italiana, 1991; A. Lehning, *L'anarcosindacalismo*, Pisa, BFS, 1994; C. Levy, 'Currents of Italian syndicalism before 1926', *International Review of Social History*, vol.45, no.2, 2000, pp.209-50; A. Giovannetti, *Il sindacalismo rivoluzionario in Italia*, Milan, coediz. Zero in Condotta, Collegamenti/Wobbly – USI, 2004, notes and text are edited by M. Genzone and F. Schirone.

<sup>100</sup> By Antonioli on syndicalism and revolutionary syndicalism, see in particular M. Antonioli, *Anarchismo e/o sindacalismo. Introduzione a Dibattito sul sindacalismo. Atti del congresso internazionale anarchico di Amsterdam (1907)*, Florence, Cp editrice, 1978; 'Errico Malatesta, l'organizzazione operaia e il sindacalismo (1889-1914)', *Ricerche Storiche*, Naples, January-April 1983; 'Tra 'festa del lavoro' e 'sciopero' operaio: gli anarchici italiani e il Primo Maggio tra la fine dell'Ottocento e gli inizi del Novecento', *Ricerche storiche*, vol.14, no.2-3, 1984, pp.353-73; *Vieni o Maggio. Aspetti del Primo Maggio in Italia tra Otto e Novecento*, Milan, 1988; *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia. Sindacalismo rivoluzionario e anarchismo tra la fine dell'ottocento e il fascismo*, Manduria - Bari - Rome, Lacaita, 1990; *Armando Borghi e l'Unione sindacale italiana*, Manduria - Bari - Rome, Lacaita, 1990; *Il sindacalismo italiano. Dalle origini al fascismo. Studi e ricerche*, Pisa, BFS, 1997; M. Antonioli & L. Ganapini (eds.), *I Sindacati occidentali dall'800 ad oggi in una prospettiva storica comparata*, Pisa, BFS, 1995.

<sup>101</sup> See in particular works by G. Bosio, 'La fama di Marx in Italia dal 1871 al 1883', *Movimento operaio*, vol.3, no.15-16, 1951, pp.517-25 and 'La diffusione degli scritti di Marx ed Engels in Italia dal 1871 al 1891', *Società*, vol.7, 1951, pp.268-84; see also G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani 1848-1895*, Milan, 1964; E. Santarelli, *La revisione del marxismo in Italia*, Milan, 1964; E. Ragionieri, *Il marxismo e l'Internazionale*, Rome, 1968; S. F. Romano, 'La rivolta antiautoritaria', numero speciale di *Volontà*, September-October 1972; E. Ragionieri, 'Marx e la Comune', *Studi storici*, vol.4, 1971, pp.661-92; G. Rose, 'Da Londra a Saint-Imier via Rimini: marxismo e anarchismo a confronto', *Volontà*, vol.25, 1972, pp.371-92; E.J. Hobsbawm, 'La diffusione del marxismo (1890-1905)', *Studi Storici*, vol.15, no.2, 1974, pp.241-70; R. Monteleone, *Marxismo, internazionalismo e questione nazionale*, Turin, Loescher, 1982.

<sup>102</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'La consistenza numerica dell'Internazionale in Italia', *Movimento operaio*, vol.2, no.3-4, 1949-1950, pp.104-08; 'L'Internazionale a Roma dal 1872 al 1877', *Movimento operaio*, vol.4, no.1, 1952, pp.5-52; L. Valiani, 'Dalla prima alla seconda Internazionale', *Movimento operaio*, vol.4, 1954; P.C. Masini, 'La Prima Internazionale in Italia. Problemi di una revisione storiografica', in *Il movimento operaio e socialista. Bilancio storiografico e problemi storici (Atti del convegno promosso da 'Mondo Operaio' per il 70° del Partito socialista italiano, Firenze 18-20 gennaio 1963)*, Milan, Edizioni del Gallo, 1965; M. Nettelau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*; A. Arru, *Classe e partito nella Prima Internazionale. Il dibattito sull'organizzazione fra Marx, Bakunin e Blanqui*, Bari, De Donato, 1972; G.

single text, all the available documents written by local sections of the First IWA in Italy.<sup>103</sup>

The end of the IWA in Italy was followed by revolutionary attempts made by anarchists on the model of Italian *Risorgimento*.<sup>104</sup> Their failure, their trials and the consequent repression under liberal governments are the subjects of studies by Franco Della Peruta, Claudio Pavone, Masini, Alessandro Coletti, Romano Canosa and Amedeo Santuosso.<sup>105</sup> Luciano Violante focused his research on the repression of political dissent in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century,<sup>106</sup> looking in particular at the development of a juridical system aimed at erasing the political nature of anarchists' acts of rebellion to the extent of including common criminals and anarchists together under the same umbrella, more commonly labeled as *malfattori* (evil doers).<sup>107</sup> Significantly, the last years of the nineteenth century have been the subject of several studies which specifically considered the violent activities of anarchists around Europe. In 1898 an anti-anarchist conference was held in Rome. The only effective result coming from that conference was the birth of Interpol.<sup>108</sup> The conference was called by the Italian government as an answer to the wave of assassinations that hit Europe in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The death of the Italian King Umberto I in July

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M. Bravo, *La Prima Internazionale. Storia documentaria*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1978; G. Haupt, *L'Internazionale socialista dalla Comune a Lenin*, Turin, Einaudi, 1978; G. M. Bravo, *Marx e la Prima Internazionale*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1979; 'Associazioni partitiche e modelli organizzativi nell'età della Seconda Internazionale', in F. Bracco (ed.), *Democrazia e associazionismo nel XIX secolo*, Florence, Centro Editoriale Toscano, 1990, pp.211-24; E. Civolani, *L'anarchismo dopo la comune. I casi italiano e spagnolo*, Milan, 1981.

<sup>103</sup> P.C. Masini (ed.), *La Federazione italiana dell'Associazione Internazionale di Lavoratori. Atti ufficiali 1871-1880*, Milan, Ed. Avanti!, 1964.

<sup>104</sup> See an interesting study by G. Vaccarino on the anarchist influence on the origins of Italian unity: G. Vaccarino, 'Contributo agli studi sul giacobinismo 'anarchico' e le origini dell'unità italiana', *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento*, vol.41, no.2-3, 1954, pp.595-602.

<sup>105</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'La Banda del Matese e il fallimento della teoria anarchica della moderna jacquerie in Italia', *Movimento Operaio*, vol.3, 1954, pp.337-84. On the events of 1877 in the Matese region, see also S. Di Corato, 'Magistratura, anarchici e governo. La vicenda del Matese', *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea*, vol.13, no.3, July 1984, pp.321-72; C. Pavone, 'Le bande insurrezionali della primavera del 1870', *Movimento operaio*, vol.7, 1956, pp.42-107; P.C. Masini, *Gli Internazionalisti. La Banda del Matese*, Milan – Rome, 1958; A. Coletti, *Anarchici e questori*, Padua, Marsilio Editori, 1971; R. Canosa, A. Santuosso, *Magistrati, anarchici e socialisti alla fine dell'Ottocento in Italia*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1981.

<sup>106</sup> L. Violante, 'La repressione del dissenso politico nell'Italia liberale: stati d'assedio e giustizia militare', *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea*, vol.5, no.4, 1976, pp.481-524.

<sup>107</sup> For a general picture of Italian political and social system at the end of the nineteenth century see in particular, U. Levra, *Il colpo di stato della borghesia. La crisi politica di fine secolo in Italia 1896-1900*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1975. See also A. Boldetti, 'La repressione in Italia: il caso del 1894', *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea*, vol.6, no.4, 1977, pp.481-515.

<sup>108</sup> See in particular, F. Tamburini, 'La conferenza internazionale di Roma per la difesa sociale contro gli anarchici (24 novembre-21 dicembre 1898)', *Clio*, vol.33, no.2, 1997, pp.227-65; R.B. Jensen, 'Criminal anthropology and anarchist terrorism in Spain and Italy', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, vol.16, no.2, 2001, pp.31-44; 'The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.16, no.2, 1981, pp.323-47.

1900 at the hands of the anarchist Gaetano Bresci marked the end of a period for the Italian anarchist movement.<sup>109</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, economic and social conditions in Italy favored an increase in workers' struggles which saw the significant contribution of anarchists, especially in conjunction with the development of revolutionary trade unions' activities. The first general strike in Italy occurred in 1904. The Italian anarchist movement benefited from the international and national political contexts to develop its own structure, organisation and means of propaganda. Hence a theoretical framework led the anarchist movement, on the eve of the First World War, to dedicate pages of its journals to ideological debates on the nature of anarchist thought. Themes such as antimilitarism,<sup>110</sup> anticlericalism,<sup>111</sup> education<sup>112</sup> and the release of political prisoners were debated, campaigned for outside the factories, and money was raised. They represented much of the Italian anarchist movement's cultural heritage in the years before the war.<sup>113</sup>

Despite popular protests and the *disfattismo* (defeatism, resignation to defeat) of socialists and anarchists who opposed the war, the intervention of Italy in the war anticipated a much more famous *coup d'état*, which the anarchist Luigi Fabbri defined

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<sup>109</sup> L.V. Ferraris, 'L'assassinio di Umberto I e gli anarchici di Paterson', *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, vol.55, 1968, pp.47-64; L.L. Blaisdell, 'The assassination of Humbert I', *Prologue*, vol.27, no.3, 1995, pp.240-47; R. Gremmo, *Gli anarchici che uccisero Umberto I. Gaetano Bresci, il 'Biondino' e i tessitori biellesi di Paterson*, Biella, ELF, 2000; A. Petacco, *L'anarchico che venne dall'America. Storia di Gaetano Bresci e del complotto per uccidere Umberto I*, Milan, Mondadori, 2000 (1st edition 1974); G. Galzerano, *Gaetano Bresci. Vita, attentato, processo, carcere e morte dell'anarchico che giustiziò Umberto I*, Casalvelino Scalo, Galzerano Editore, 1988. However, Bresci was not the only famous Italian anarchist; other people made their names known to European police stations: Caserio, Passanante, Acciarito, Angiolillo, Luccheni. For all this, see P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*.

<sup>110</sup> On anarchists and antimilitarism, see particularly works by Cerrito and Oliva: G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, Pistoia, RL, 1968 [reprinted: Pescara, Samizdat, 1996]; P. Dogliani, *La 'scuola delle reclute'. L'internazionale giovanile socialista dalla fine dell'Ottocento alla prima guerra mondiale*, Turin, 1983; G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L'antimilitarismo dal 1861 all'età giolittiana*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1986; 'I messaggi dell'innodia politica antimilitarista di inizio secolo', *Movimento Operaio e Socialista*, vol.6, no.2, 1983.

<sup>111</sup> M. Sylvers, 'L'anticlericalismo nel socialismo italiano (dalle origini al 1914)', *Movimento Operaio e Socialista*, vol.16, no.2-3, 1970, pp.175-89.

<sup>112</sup> Following the example of the Spanish Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, Italian anarchists developed their own theories on libertarian education. See M.G. Rosada, *Le Università popolari in Italia 1900-1918*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1975 and F. Codello, *Educazione e anarchismo. L'idea educativa nel movimento anarchico italiano (1900-1926)*, Ferrara, Corso, 1995.

<sup>113</sup> See for instance P.C. Masini, 'Gli anarchici tra 'interventismo' e 'difattismo rivoluzionario', *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, January-March 1959; U. Fedeli, 'Momenti e uomini del socialismo anarchico in Italia. 1896-1924', *Volontà*, vol.13, 1960, pp.608-19; For Italian anarchists during the war see C. Costantini, 'Gli anarchici durante la prima guerra mondiale', *Il Movimento Operaio e Socialista*, April-June 1961, pp.99-122.

as a 'preventative counter-revolution'.<sup>114</sup> Anarchist studies on Mussolini and fascism include Camillo Berneri's *Mussolini grande attore*, and Masini's *Mussolini: La maschera del dittatore*.<sup>115</sup> The relationship between anarchism and the birth of fascism in Italy has been addressed by Whitaker,<sup>116</sup> while in the last two decades more attention has been drawn to the anarchist component of the Italian antifascist movement during the Resistance.<sup>117</sup>

In the period after the Second World War, Italian historians of anarchism have also researched the life, ideas and works of anarchists. Bakunin<sup>118</sup> and Malatesta<sup>119</sup> have been the most studied individuals. Nevertheless, in the last 20 years Italian historians have moved from a general framework to analysing more specific features. They have discovered a large number of anarchist activists who had memorable experiences which were worthy of being recounted. Their lives represent micro stories through which historians have tried to give a broader picture of Italian anarchism, since through those personal stories it is possible to read the positive and negative aspects of the Italian anarchist movement. This research is centred on the belief that biographies can be used as sources and is in debt with the work edited by Maurizio Antonioli, Giampietro Berti,

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<sup>114</sup> L. Fabbri, *La controrivoluzione preventiva*, Bologna 1922, reprinted Pistoia, 1975.

<sup>115</sup> C. Berneri, *Mussolini grande attore*, Pistoia, Edizioni dell'Archivio Famiglia Berneri-Comune di Pistoia Assessorato agli Istituti Culturali, 1983, which is a reviewed edition of C. Berneri, *Mussolini psicologia di un dittatore*, Milan, Azione commune, 1966; P.C. Masini, *Mussolini. La maschera del dittatore*, Pisa, BFS, 1999.

<sup>116</sup> See for example S.B. Whitaker, *'Individual-State-Nation': Anarchist-Individualism and the Origins of Italian Fascism: Leandro Arpinati, Torquato Nanni, Maria Rygier, and Massimo Rocca*, Emory U., 1994 and *The Anarchist-Individualist Origins of Italian Fascism*, New York, Peter Lang, 2002.

<sup>117</sup> See P. Bianconi, *La resistenza libertaria*, Piombino, TracceEdizioni, 1984; AA.VV., *L'antifascismo rivoluzionario*, Pisa, BFS, 1993; AA.VV., *La resistenza sconosciuta*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 1995; P. Cannistraro, 'Mussolini, Sacco-Vanzetti, and the anarchists: the transatlantic context', *Journal of Modern History*, vol.68, no.1, 1996, pp.31-62; F. Giulietti, *Il Movimento Anarchico Italiano nella Lotta Contro il Fascismo, 1927-1945*, Manduria, Lacaita, 2002.

<sup>118</sup> On Bakunin, see for example, P.C. Masini, 'Echi della morte di Bakunin in Italia', *Movimento operaio*, 5, 1953, pp.808-14; G. Cerrito, 'L'ideologia di Bakunin e gli internazionalisti italiani fino a Saint-Imier', in *Anarchismo e socialismo in Italia 1872-1892*; M. Antonioli, 'Bakunin tra sindacalismo rivoluzionario e anarchismo', in *Bakunin cent'anni dopo*, pp.64-113; M. Bakunin, *Azione diretta e coscienza operaia*, edited by M. Antonioli, Milan, La Salamandra, 1977.

<sup>119</sup> On and by Malatesta there is a large body of material. See in particular the following: T. Tagliaferri, *Errico Malatesta, Armando Borghi e i compagni davanti ai giurati di Milano (Resoconto stenografico del processo svoltosi il 27, 28 e 29 luglio 1921)*, con una prefazione di M. Mariani e 12 illustrazioni del pittore Crespi, Milan s.d [but 1921], reprinted as E. Malatesta, *Autodifesa davanti alle assise di Milano e altri scritti*, Roma, Datanews, 2002; E. Malatesta, *Scritti scelti*, edited by G. Cerrito, Rome, 1970; L. Gestri, 'Dieci lettere inedite di Cipriani, Malatesta e Merlino', *Movimento operaio e socialista*, vol.17, no.4, 1971, pp.309-30; M. Antonioli, 'Errico Malatesta, l'organizzazione operaia e il sindacalismo (1889-1914)', *Ricerche Storiche*, Naples, January-April 1983; G. Landi, 'Malatesta e Merlino dalla Prima Internazionale alla opposizione al fascismo', *Bollettino del Museo del Risorgimento*, vol.28, 1983; P. Finzi, *La nota persona. Errico Malatesta in Italia, (dicembre 1919/ luglio 1920)*, Ragusa, Edizioni La Fiaccola, 1990, (2nd edition 2008); C. Levy, 'Charisma and social movements: Errico Malatesta and Italian anarchism', *Modern Italy*, vol.3, no.2, 1998, pp.205-17; G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*.

Santi Fedele and Pasquale Iuso: the biographical dictionary of Italian anarchists is an indispensable starting point for all those who intend to research the lives of anarchists.<sup>120</sup>

The expression ‘anarchist leaders’ may seem to be an oxymoron; however personalities such as Carlo Cafiero,<sup>121</sup> Errico Malatesta, Armando Borghi,<sup>122</sup> Pietro Gori,<sup>123</sup> Andrea Costa,<sup>124</sup> Francesco Saverio Merlino,<sup>125</sup> Camillo Berneri,<sup>126</sup> Luigi Molinari,<sup>127</sup> Luigi Fabbri<sup>128</sup> and Luigi Galleani<sup>129</sup> were very influential in the political and personal growth of many Italian anarchists. This type of hagiography is noticeable for instance in the names that many anarchist groups have chosen, although often the martyrdom of anarchists, such as Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Franco Serantini, or Giuseppe Pinelli,<sup>130</sup> contributed to the formation of anarchist icons.

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<sup>120</sup> Antonioli *et al* (eds), *Dizionario biografico degli anarchici italiani*.

<sup>121</sup> P.C. Masini, *Carlo Cafiero*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1974.

<sup>122</sup> By Armando Borghi see A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, Naples, Edizioni della Rivista Anarchismo, 1954. On Borghi see M. Antonioli, *Armando Borghi e l'Unione sindacale italiana*.

<sup>123</sup> P.Gori, *Opere complete*, Milan, 1947-1948; G. Dinucci, ‘Pietro Gori e il sindacalismo anarchico in Italia all’inizio del secolo’, *Movimento Operaio e Socialista*, vol.13, no.3-4, 1967, pp.289-99; M. Antonioli, *Pietro Gori, il cavaliere errante dell'anarchia*, Pisa, BFS, 1996 (1st edition 1995).

<sup>124</sup> On Andrea Costa see chapter 2. See G. Bosio-F. Della Peruta, ‘La ‘svolta’ di Andrea Costa con documenti sul soggiorno in Francia’, *Movimento operaio*, vol.4, no.2, 1952, pp.287-313; P.C. Masini, ‘Lettere inedite di anarchici e socialisti a Andrea Costa (1880)’, *Movimento operaio e socialista*, vol.13, no.1, 1967, pp.53-73; G. Cerrito, *Andrea Costa nel socialismo italiano*, Rome, 1982.

<sup>125</sup> E.R. Papa, *Per una biografia intellettuale di F.S. Merlino. Giustizia e sociologia criminale. Dal ‘socialismo anarchico’ al ‘riformismo rivoluzionario’ (1878-1930)*, Milan, 1982.

<sup>126</sup> A. Molinari, ‘Un centro di raccolta di materiale per lo studio del movimento anarchico: l’archivio Famiglia Berneri’, *Nuova Rivista Storica*, vol.69, no.1-2, 1976, pp.125-30; M. Olivari, ‘L’azione politica di Camillo Berneri nella guerra civile spagnola’, *Critica Storica*, vol.19, no.2, 1982, pp.214-42; C. Berneri, *Anarchia e società aperta, scritti editi e inediti*, edited by Pietro Adamo, Milan, MB Publishing, 2001.

<sup>127</sup> P.C. Masini, ‘Il giovane Molinari’, *Volontà*, 29, 1976, pp.469-76; Federazione Nazionale Insegnanti Scuole Medie, *Luigi Molinari. Una vita per gli ideali libertari e per l’educazione popolare, (Atti del convegno interregionale di Crema, 11-12 ottobre 1980)*, Cremona, n.d.

<sup>128</sup> By Fabbri see L. Fabbri, *La controrivoluzione preventiva*, Bologna, 1922 (reprinted: Pistoia 1975); L. Fabbri, *L’organizzazione operaia e l’anarchia. A proposito di sindacalismo*, Rome, 1906, (reprinted: Firenze 1975, with an introduction by M. Antonioli). On Luigi Fabbri see the biography written by his daughter, Luce: Luce Fabbri, *Storia di un uomo libero*, introduzione di Pier Carlo Masini, Pisa, BFS, 1996; R. Giulianelli (ed.), *Luigi Fabbri. Studi e documenti sull’anarchismo tra Otto e Novecento, (Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Fabriano, 11-12 novembre 2005, nel settantesimo della morte di L. Fabbri)*, Pisa, BFS, 2005.

<sup>129</sup> P.C. Masini, ‘La giovinezza di L. Galleani’, *Movimento Operaio*, vol.6, no.3, 1954, pp.445-58; U.Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani. Quarant’anni di lotte rivoluzionarie (1891-1931)*, Cesena Edizioni L’Antistato, 1956; N. Pernicone, ‘Luigi Galleani and the Italian anarchist terrorism in the United States’, *Studi Emigrazione*, vol.30, no.111, 1993, pp.469-89.

<sup>130</sup> Much has been written on Sacco and Vanzetti. See in particular, P. Avrich, *Sacco e Vanzetti: the anarchist background*, Princeton University Press, 1991; on Franco Serantini see C. Stajano, *Il sovversivo, vita e morte dell’anarchico Serantini*, Pisa, BFS, 2002 (1st edition Turin, Einaudi, 1975); on Giuseppe Pinelli and the bombing of a bank in *Piazza Fontana* in Milan on 12 December 1969, see in particular L. Lanza, *Bombe e segreti*, Milan, Elèuthera, 1997; M. Dianese - G. Bettin, *La strage, Piazza Fontana*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1999; P. Barbieri - P. Cucchiarelli, *La strage con i capelli bianchi*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 2003; C. Cederna, *Pinelli. Una finestra sulla strage*, Milan, Il Saggiatore, 2004.

Giuseppe ‘Pino’ Pinelli was a well-known anarchist activist in Milan during the 1960s and his death, due to the police investigation of the bomb of *Piazza Fontana*, is linked to a turning point in the history of Italy.<sup>131</sup>

#### 1.4 On the historiography of Milanese anarchism

There are no comprehensive studies on the history of Milanese anarchism. In order to explain this void it might be helpful to quote Paolo Finzi’s preface to Vincenzo Mantovani’s work on the slaughter that occurred at the Diana Theatre in Milan on 23 March 1921 when 21 people died and more than 100 were wounded by a bomb set by three anarchists.<sup>132</sup> Mantovani, who was not an anarchist, decided to research this tragic event after a bomb exploded at the *Banca dell’Agricoltura* in Piazza Fontana on 12 December 1969. Reporting that event, the majority of the mass media immediately recalled the Diana attack. Moreover, in 1969, not surprisingly, police started to investigate the Milanese anarchist milieu. As Finzi pointed out, the slaughter at the Diana theatre was the ‘historical confirmation’ of the equation between anarchy and bombs. This was Finzi’s initial reaction after meeting Mantovani for the first time: ‘could not our kind interlocutor work on something else? Why did he choose exactly that page of the history of Italian anarchism, which could be turned against us?’<sup>133</sup> Unwittingly, these words reveal a sectarian approach to the concept of anarchist identity, so that all those who were not anarchists and wanted to investigate anarchism and anarchists were likely to be seen with suspicion. Finzi’s words also seem to be the

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<sup>131</sup> Pinelli belonged to the Milanese anarchist group ‘Sacco and Vanzetti’. He was one of the founders of the *Circolo Ponte della Ghisolfa* and *Croce Nera Anarchica* (Anarchist Black Cross), on the example of the Anarchist Black Cross founded by the Englishman Stuart Christie, who took the name from an organisation in support of Russian anarchists at the beginning of the twentieth century. For this see A. Bortolo, ‘Foto di gruppo con Pinelli’, in A. Bertolo, C. Cederna & P.C. Masini, C. Stajano, *Pinelli, la diciassettesima vittima*, Pisa, BFS, 2006, pp.11-14.

<sup>132</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*.

<sup>133</sup> From the original Italian: ‘Non avrebbe potuto il nostro cordiale interlocutore occuparsi d’altro? Tra le tante pagine sconosciute, e tutte più belle, della storia degli anarchici italiani, perché scegliere proprio quella che, nel pieno della campagna di controinformazione sulla strage di stato, poteva ritorcersi contro di noi?’, in P. Finzi, ‘Premessa. La (mia) lezione del Diana’, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.10. The famous expression ‘strage di stato’ (slaughter of state) is mainly used to refer to *Piazza Fontana*’s bomb explosion. It was used for the first time on 17 December 1969, a few days after the massacre and the death of Pinelli, when Milanese anarchists belonging to the anarchist collective *Circolo della Ghisolfa* held a press conference where they declared that they believed that terrorist attack was a ‘strage di stato’, which means it involved the conspiracy and participation of state officers. They also declared that Pinelli had been murdered and that Pietro Valpreda (at that time the main suspect of police investigation) was innocent. After almost forty years the final verdict has not been rendered, although the extreme right-wing, linked to foreign and Italian secret services and deviant elements of the state, remains the main suspect.

symptom of a defensive state, a form of self protection against anyone outside the anarchist movement and who is unaware of anarchist thought and the dynamics within the movement, but who is also subjected to the influence of the mass media. Thus, given all the biases against anarchists, Finzi's reaction was reasonable, in the sense that it demonstrated how anarchists feared being manipulated and discredited by the use of selective information. However, the lack of in-depth studies of Milanese anarchism is also the result of this kind of defensive and self-protecting mentality. Unfortunately, this void has also prevented the acquisition of historical knowledge about the Milanese anarchists who contributed to the development of Italian anarchism, its theoretical and ideological debates, its textual legacy and its cultural heritage in general. This research will fill a historiographical gap illuminating these aspects of Milanese anarchism.

But why Milan? Why is Milan significant? From researching Milanese anarchists what can we understand about the historical Milan? Throughout its modern history Milan has been a protagonist of all the major social, economic and political transformations that occurred in Italy.<sup>134</sup> From time to time Milan has changed although it kept intact the illusion of being a 'capital city': from the nineteenth century title of 'moral capital city',<sup>135</sup> to 'capital city of antifascism',<sup>136</sup> from the beginning of the twentieth century, 'industrial capital city', to the contemporary 'financial capital city', 'capital city of the economic miracle', 'capital city of television', 'capital city of fashion', and finally and most recently 'capital city of bribery and corruption'.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, Milan has been the birthplace of many ideologies, political movements and organisations, such as the Italian Labour Party, socialism, fascism, antifascism, the workers and students' protests of 1968-1977, terrorism, social centres, the *Lega Nord* (Northern League Party) and Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* (Go Italy Party). Milan has been studied from many different perspectives: general histories,<sup>138</sup> political histories,<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> For a general history of contemporary Italy see P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988*, London, Penguin, 1989; *L'Italia del tempo presente. Famiglia, società civile, stato, 1980-1996*, Turin, Einaudi, 1998.

<sup>135</sup> See R. Pavoni & C. Mozzarelli (eds), *Milano 1848-1898: Ascesa e trasformazione della capitale morale*, Venice, Marsilio, 2000 and M. Legnani, 'Il mito della 'capitale morale' tra politica e letteratura', *Italia contemporanea*, vol.154, 1984, pp.123-27; V. Spinazzola, 'La 'capitale morale'. Cultura Milanese e mitologia urbana', *Belfagor*, vol.36, 1981, pp.317-27.

<sup>136</sup> See G. Ferro, *Milano Capitale dell'antifascismo*, Milan, Mursia, 1985.

<sup>137</sup> The massive scandal of corrupt politicians in Italy began in Milan in 1992, when a local politician, Mario Chiesa, was arrested. Given the huge amount of money and bribes involved, the city of Milan started to be called *Tangentopoli*, 'city of bribes'.

<sup>138</sup> See for instance, D. Bigazzi & M. Meriggi (eds), *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni. La Lombardia*, Turin, Einaudi, 2001; G. Cavallazzi & G. Falchi, *La storia di Milano*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1989; C. Cerati, *Milano (1960-1970)*, Milan, Barbieri, 1997; S. Pizzetti (ed.), *Dallo stato di Milano alla Lombardia*

economic histories,<sup>140</sup> history of urban population, migrants and their integration,<sup>141</sup> transformation of urban areas, of neighborhoods and peripheries,<sup>142</sup> its cinema, arts and cultures in general.<sup>143</sup> Writing a review of general Milanese historiography is beyond the scope of this chapter.

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*Contemporanea*, I, Milan, Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1980; U. Dragone (ed.), *Milano tra passato e futuro*, Milan, Italia Nostra, 1975; G. Petrillo & A. Scalpelli (ed.), *Milano anni Cinquanta*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1986; C. Riccardi (ed.), *Milano 1881*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1991; J. Foot, *Milano dopo il miracolo. Biografia di una città*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2003.

<sup>139</sup> G. Barbaceto & E. Veltri, *Milano degli scandali*, Bari, Laterza, 1991; G. Bocca, *Metropolis. Milano nella tempesta italiana*, Milan, Mondadori, 1993; D. Della Porta, 'Milan: Immoral Capital', in *Italian Politics*, 1992, London, Pinter, 1993, pp.98-115; P. Valera, *Milano sconosciuta*, Milan, Greco & Greco, 1996; J. Foot, 'The Tale of San Vittore: Prisons, Politics, Crime and Fascism in Milan, 1943-1946', *Modern Italy*, vol.3, no.1, 1998, pp.25-48; F. Foti, *Milano: metropolis frammentata*, Milan, IRER, Franco Angeli, 1993; L. Ganapini, *Una città, la guerra: lotte di ideologie e forze politiche a Milano, 1939-1951*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1986.

<sup>140</sup> F. Amatori & M.T. Sillano, 'L'attività commerciale', in *Storia di Milano*, vol.XVIII, *Il Novecento*, Rome, Treccani, pp.182-236; A. Bonomi, *Il capitalismo molecolare. La società al lavoro nel Nord Italia*, Turin, Einaudi, 1997; E. Dalmaso, *Milano capitale economica d'Italia*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1972; J. Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan, 1885-1922*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993; G. Petrillo, *La capitale del miracolo. Sviluppo, lavoro, potere a Milano 1953-1962*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1992; G. Sapelli, 'Dal "miracolo economico" alla "neindustria": grandi famiglie e nuova borghesia', in *Storia di Milano*, vol.XVIII, , pp.147-81.

<sup>141</sup> S. Allievi (ed.), *Milano plurale. L'immigrazione tra passato presente futuro*, Milan, Tiemme, 1993; G. Baglioni, *Una ricerca sull'integrazione degli immigrati nella città di Milano*, Milan, Liberty, 1962; G. Barile, A. Dal Lago, A. Marchetti & P. Galeazzo (eds), *Tra due rive. La nuova immigrazione a Milano*, Milan, IRER-Franco Angeli, 1994; A. Dal Lago, *Non-persone. L'esclusione dei migranti in una società globale*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1999; J. Foot, 'Migration and the "Miracle" at Milan. The Neighbourhoods of Baggio, Barona, Bovisa and Comasina in the 1950s and 1960s', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol.10, no.2, 1997, pp.184-212; J. Foot, 'Immigration and the City: Milan and Mass Migration, 1950-1998', *Modern Italy*, vol.4, no.2, 1999, pp.159-72; L. Vitone, *Milano, Wide City. Mappa delle presenze straniere a Milano*, Milan, Comune di Milano, Progetto Giovani, 1998.

<sup>142</sup> G. Angeleri & C. Columba, *Milano Centrale: storia di una stazione*, Rome, Edizioni Abete, 1985; S. Boeri, A. Lanzani & E. Marini, *Il territorio che cambia. Ambienti, paesaggi e immagini della regione Milanese*, Milan, Abitare Segesta, 1993; M. Boffi, S. Cofini, A. Giasanti & E. Mingione, *Città e conflitto sociale. Inchiesta al Garibaldi-Isola e in altri quartieri periferici di Milano*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1972; A. Bonasia, *Vivere a Milano*, Milan, CSAPP, 1978; A. Predetti (ed.), *Case popolari: urbanistica e legislazione*, Milano, 1900-1970, Milan, Edilizia Popolare, 1974; F. Della Peruta, R. Leydi & A. Stella (eds), *Milano e il suo territorio*, Milan, Silvana Editoriale, Provincia di Milano, 1985; F.B. Dragone (ed.), *Via Spiga, il Quadrilatero e la moda*, in *Milano: venticinque secoli di storia attraverso i suoi protagonisti*, Milano, CELIP, 1998; J. Foot, 'The Family and the "Economic Miracle": Social Transformation, Work, Leisure and Development at Bovisa and Comasina (Milan), 1950-1970', *Contemporary European History*, vol.4, no.3, 1995, pp.315-38; R. Guiducci (ed.), *Periferie: le voci dei cittadini*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1993; A. Iosa, *I quartieri di Milano*, Milan, Centro Culturale C. Perini, 1971; G.M. Longoni, *La Fiera nella Storia di Milano*, Milan, Federico Motta Editore, 1987; G. Martinotti, *Metropoli. La nuova morfologia sociale della città*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1993; P. Gabellini, C. Morandi & P. Vidulli (eds), *Urbanistica a Milano. 1945-1980*, Rome, Edizioni delle autonomie, 1980; A. Pansera, *Storia e cronaca della Triennale*, Milan, Longanesi & C., 1978; U. Dragone (ed.), *Milano tra passato e futuro*, Milan, Sezione milanese di Italia Nostra, 1975; G. Tonon & G. Consonni, 'Aspetti della questione urbana a Milano dal fascismo alla ricostruzione', *Classe*, vol.12, 1976, pp.43-101; V. Vercelloni, *La storia del paesaggio urbano a Milano*, Milan, L'archivoltò, 1989.

<sup>143</sup> F. Colombo (ed.), *Libri, giornali e riviste a Milano. Storia delle innovazioni nell'editoria Milanese dall'Ottocento ad oggi*, Milan, Abitare Segesta, 1998; R. De Berti, 'Milano nel cinema. L'immagine della città sullo schermo', in R. De Berti (ed.), *Un secolo di cinema a Milano*, Milan, Il Castoro, 1996, pp.431-46; A. Ferrari & G. Giusto (eds), *Milano città della radiotelevisione, 1945-1958*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2000; J. Foot, 'Television and the City: The Impact of Television in Milan, 1954-1960', *Contemporary European History*, vol.9, no.3, 1999, pp.379-94.

Undoubtedly, Milan's geographical position – close to the heart of Europe – contributed to the development of a dynamic city, influenced by ideas and cultural trends from other parts of the continent. Moreover, Milan benefitted from greater social and economic success in comparison to other Italian centres. This was due to its administrative role and its industrial development all of which made Milan attractive to migrants. Milan's strategic position allowed a certain degree of international relationships to develop between Milanese anarchists and those based outside Italy. Prominent figures within the European libertarian movement, such as Bakunin and Ferrer y Guardia, influenced the Milanese anarchist movement, its origins and its development. At the same time, the large numbers of people migrating to Milan or simply passing through the city meant, for the Milanese anarchist movement, that there was an inability to develop solid roots within the labour movement and the population. It was also difficult to establish permanent anarchist groups or local branches of national anarchist federations. Nonetheless, European influences and high levels of migration brought new ideas and protagonists. Ideas developed in a unique way, according to different historical contexts. Within this framework, as for other social, cultural and political phenomena, the history of the Milanese anarchist movement confirms Milan as a workshop for ideas and practices.

What is the historical sense of Milan within Italy? What can we learn from the Milanese anarchist movement that can be integrated with, and contribute to, an understanding of the history of Italian anarchism? The history of the Milanese anarchist movement is a history of ideas and the various attempts to realize them. Milan represented a fertile ground for the development of different streams and currents of anarchism. Such a variety of positions, this cultural richness – based on the dichotomy means-ends – affected debates within anarchist publications, as well as the effectiveness of militants' actions. Yet, despite this wide-ranging feature of Milanese anarchism being able to explain failures and deficiencies, it also shows the eclecticism of the Italian left, within which different patterns of thought coexisted. Within such a broad spectrum, it is possible to understand the unique contribution of Milanese anarchists to Italian anarchism. They represent a multitude of particular dimensions that can be used to understand the general picture of Milanese anarchism.

The aim of this section is to examine not only the literature on Milanese anarchism, but also the historiographical gaps that this study is designed to fill. This thesis explores more than 50 years of Milanese anarchism, from its origins in the 1870s

up to the establishment of the fascist regime and its repressive laws intended to silence dissenting voices introduced in 1925 and 1926. In regards to the origins of the Milanese anarchist movement, nothing has been published. The only attempt to recount the history of early Milanese anarchism is in an undergraduate thesis by Giuseppe Beranti written in 1985-86.<sup>144</sup> Beranti's research looks at Milanese 'organisations and anarchist groups' in the period between 1889 and 1894. Hence, there is a lack of writings which study and systematically reconstruct the origins of Milanese anarchism, including its first publications, organisations, members, ideas and activities. Such research needs to consider publications on the general history of Milan, texts on labour movements, classes and politics in Milan,<sup>145</sup> the physiognomy of the city and the distribution of its population. The collection and reading of data retrieved from the *Archivio di Stato di Milano* (ASM) necessitate the contextualisation of these sources through the use of anarchist literature and historiography. Moreover, such research requires integration with later studies, particularly those by Louise A. Tilly, Della Peruta, Antonioli, Myriam Bergamaschi and Luigi Ganapini in order to present a picture of the Milanese anarchist movement within the broader context of the development of the labour and socialist movements. Finally, attention needs to be given to the events of May 1898<sup>146</sup> when popular strikes were bloodily repressed by general Bava Beccaris and, in doing so, revealing whether the participation of Milanese anarchists was influential or not, and if there were signs of organisation, spontaneity and political consciousness.

If the 'end of the century's crisis' is marked by those terrible days of May 1898, and Italian anarchism is shattered by the repression of 1894 and by the consequences of the King's assassination in 1900, the beginning of the new century saw a slow increase

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<sup>144</sup> G. Beranti, *Organizzazione e gruppi anarchici a Milano negli anni 1889-1894*, University of Milan, Milan, A.A. 1985-86, copy available at the *Centro Studi Libertari Archivio 'G. Pinelli'*.

<sup>145</sup> There is a huge amount of literature on this subject. See for instance, M. Antonioli, 'Milano: 1° maggio 1890', *Critica sociale*, vol.5, 1987; M. Antonioli, M. Bergamaschi & L. Ganapini (eds), *Milano operaia dall'800 a oggi*, 2 vols., Milan-Bari, Cariplo Laterza, 1993; L.A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan 1881-1901*, New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992; F. Della Peruta, *Milano, lavoro e fabbrica (1815-1914)*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1987; A. Nascimbene, *Il movimento operaio in Italia. La questione sociale a Milano dal 1890 al 1900*, Milan, Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1972; G. Bigatti, *La città operosa. Milano nell'Ottocento*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2000; M. Cerasi, *La residenza operaia a Milano*, Rome, Officina, 1974; G. Consonni, 'Dalla città alla metropolis. La classe invisibile', in M. Antonioli, M. Bergamaschi, L. Ganapini (eds), *Milano operaia dall'800 a oggi*, pp.19-36; F. Della Peruta, 'La fisionomia della classe operaia', in M. Antonioli, M. Bergamaschi & L. Ganapini (eds), *Milano operaia dall'800 a oggi*, pp.3-18; P. Melograni, *La famiglia italiana dall'Ottocento a oggi*, Bari, Laterza, 1988.

<sup>146</sup> P. Valera, *Le terribili giornate del Maggio '98*, Milan, Casa Editrice La Folla, 1898; F. Fonzi, *Crispi e lo 'Stato di Milano'*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1965; L. Villari, 'I fatti di Milano del 1898. La testimonianza di Eugenio Torelli Viollier', *Studi storici*, 8, 1967, pp.534-49; A. Canavero, *Milano e la crisi di fine secolo (1896-1900)*, Milan, Unicopli, 1998.

in the number of anarchists. Although the publication of anarchist journals and classical texts remained the main activity carried out by Milanese activists,<sup>147</sup> the participation in the formation of revolutionary trade unions corresponded with the worsening living conditions of factory workers and peasants.<sup>148</sup> There are only a few studies on the Milanese anarchist movement in these important years. Maurizio Antonioli focused his research on the first years of the new century,<sup>149</sup> while Donatella Romeo's thesis embraced a broader period, the so-called era of Giolitti.<sup>150</sup> Romeo started her analysis from the last events of the nineteenth century, presenting a comprehensive picture of Milanese anarchism, its ideological debates between individualists and organisational anarchists, its activities and political campaigns, showing not only its failures and the reasons for them, but also its achievements and legacy.

Ten years after Romeo's research Mattia Granata published *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*,<sup>151</sup> in which the author offers a specific image of Milanese anarchism through the pages of personal letters and correspondence between some of the most influential individualist anarchists of the Milanese anarchist milieu. Starting from an historical contextualization of Milanese anarchism between 1913 and 1919, Granata invites the readers to overcome the old debate on individualist anarchism, wisely suggesting that it would be more appropriate to talk about 'individualisms' rather than one single type of individualism.<sup>152</sup> This approach would allow the coexistence of several different types of individualist anarchists, who disagreed on practical matters while maintaining solidarity among themselves on the

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<sup>147</sup> For a general account of publishing activities in Milan at the beginning of the new century see F. Della Peruta (ed.), *I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e storia, Tomo II (1905-1926)*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1961.

<sup>148</sup> See for instance, M. Punzo, *Socialisti e radicali a Milano. Cinque anni di Amministrazione democratica (1899-1904)*, Florence, Sansoni, 1979; M. Antonioli, *Riformisti e rivoluzionari. La Camera del lavoro di Milano dalle origini alla grande guerra*, (with J. Torre Santos), Milan, Franco Angeli, 2006; M. Antonioli, 'I cortei del Primo maggio a Milano in età giolittiana', in M. Antonioli, M. Bergamaschi & L. Ganapini (eds), *Milano operaia dall'800 a oggi*, pp.231-45; D. Bigazzi, *Il Portello. Operai, tecnici e imprenditori all'Alfa Romeo 1906-1926*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1988; I. Granata, *Sindacato e crisi della democrazia: la Camera del Lavoro di Milano dallo splendore del biennio rosso allo scioglimento, 1919-1925*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1986.

<sup>149</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, pp.275-90.

<sup>150</sup> D. Romeo, *Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana*, Milan, A.A. 1991-92 copy available at the *Centro Studi Libertario Archivio 'G. Pinelli'*. By the same author see also, D. Romeo, 'Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana: l'influenza di Francisco Ferrer y Guardia e della sua scuola moderna razionalista', *Storia in Lombardia*, pp.69-103.

<sup>151</sup> M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19.

basis of common principles and ideals. Finally, Franco Schirone has researched the story of the Milanese anarchist publisher *Casa Editrice Sociale*, its founders and publications from 1909 through the fascist repression until the death of its main contributor, Giuseppe Monanni.<sup>153</sup>

Incorporating the works mentioned above with the reading of anarchist journals of that period, this study will investigate the ideological debates, theories and doctrines of Milanese anarchists. Some themes were dominant and, in some respects, anarchists have been a vanguard, especially in regards to anti-militarism and libertarian education as a starting point for a social and political revolution. Italy's participation in the First World War and the consequent debate between *interventisti* (interventionists) and anti-interventionists dominated the ideological debate until the birth of fascism changed the political landscape and anarchists had to face a new enemy.

In Italy, as in the rest of Europe, one of the consequences of the First World War was the growth of mass parties, in particular the Socialist Party. Violence between socialists and fascists erupted dramatically to the extent that Vincenzo Mantovani titled the second part of his book, *Il Biennio Rosso ... e nero* (The Red .... and Black Biennium).<sup>154</sup> The author reconstructed those years through the use of oral and written sources, eye witnesses, official documents and newspapers, presenting a comprehensive view of Milanese anarchism, Italian politics and civil society at the beginning of the 1920s. He shed light on an event that marked the history of Italian anarchism and Italy in general: one year after the massacre at the Diana, Benito Mussolini who benefited from the social and political instability, took power.

The period of fascist dictatorship in Italy coincides with a significant historiographical gap in regards to anarchist Milanese antifascism. Giovanni Ferro's *Milano capitale dell'antifascismo* dedicates less than four pages to the anarchist presence and its tradition in Milan implying that fascism benefitted from the anarchist

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<sup>153</sup> F. Schirone, 'La Casa Editrice Sociale', pp.95-112. For Giuseppe Monanni see also G. Sacchetti, 'Un editore anarchico e Mussolini. Giuseppe Monanni (Arezzo 1887 – Milano 1952)', pp.317-27. These two articles have been reprinted in M. Antonioli (ed.), *Editori e tipografi anarchici di lingua italiana tra Otto e Novecento*, Pisa, BFS, 2007. On Monanni see also V. Beretta, 'Giuseppe Monanni, un editore anarchico del Novecento', *Storia in Lombardia*, pp.71-108. On Leda Rafanelli see in particular F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli, tra letteratura e anarchia*; R. Gremmo, 'L'amante musulmana di Benito Mussolini', *Storia Ribelle*, no.11, 2002, pp.997-1004; L. Rafanelli, *Una donna e Mussolini*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1975, (1st edition 1946). On Leda Rafanelli and her relationship with the young socialist Benito Mussolini there has been a debate in the pages of the Milanese anarchist journal *A-Rivista anarchica* between February and October 2001, to which the publication of Granata's book put an end.

<sup>154</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.43.

critique of the state and its institutions.<sup>155</sup> Franco Schirone has conducted interesting research on the ‘exile’, in France, of *Umanità Nova*, the anarchist newspaper that was originally founded in Milan in 1920, then moved to Rome, and was finally forced into exile during the fascist dictatorship.<sup>156</sup> Research by Mauro De Agostini has reconstructed the participation of Milanese anarchists in the Resistance through the brigade ‘Bruzzi-Malatesta’.<sup>157</sup> He gives an accurate and detailed account of the last days of war in Milan and the crucial moments of liberation from the Nazi-fascist occupation. His study, which is well supported by statistics, is an indispensable text for understanding that period from a previously untold point of view. In fact, the history of the Italian resistance has been dominated by historians who came from the Communist Party tradition<sup>158</sup> and who did not do justice to the anarchist contribution to the partisan movement. Giovanni Pesce’s personal reconstruction of Milan’s Liberation is a seminal book, from the point of view of one of the communist leaders of the Resistance in northern Italy; however, he also disregards the anarchist contribution.<sup>159</sup> Nevertheless, his work remains among the best studies on the partisan war and the liberation of Milan.<sup>160</sup>

This study offers a specific image of Milanese anarchism. The research presented in this thesis confirms Milan as a creative centre, a social and political workshop, a nest of new ideologies, parties, and movements that is able to offer

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<sup>155</sup> G. Ferro, *Milano Capitale dell’antifascismo*, p.54.

<sup>156</sup> F. Schirone, ‘Umanità Nova in esilio: Parigi, 1932-1933’, in F. Schirone (ed.), *Cronache anarchiche. Il giornale Umanità Nova nell’Italia del Novecento (1920-1945)*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2010, pp.225-246.

<sup>157</sup> M. De Agostini, *Il movimento anarchico milanese nella Resistenza e nell’immediato dopoguerra*, tesi di laurea, A.A. 1979-80, copy available at the *Centro Studi Libertario Archivio ‘G. Pinelli’*, Milan. See also G. Petrillo, ‘Territorio, società e ideologie in Lombardia durante la Resistenza’, *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.2-3, 1998, pp.125-71. Further information on the Resistance in Milan are available on *Il Comunista Libertario*, Milan, no.3, 18 May 1945 e no.4, 27 May 1945; *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 10 Giugno 1945; VV.AA., *Un trentennio di attività anarchica*, Cesena, Edizioni ‘L’Antistato’, 1953, pp.117-18; M. De Agostini, ‘Gli anarchici milanesi nella Resistenza’, *L’Internazionale*, no.11-12, November-December 1981; Piero Bruzzi, ‘I giorni che precedettero e seguirono la tragedia italiana dell’8 settembre 1943 – Diario’, in *Umanità Nova*, 15, 22, 29 September and 6, 13, 20, 27 October 1963; *Bollettino Archivio Pinelli*, no.5, pp.25-30 and pp.33-39; L. Cavalli e C. Strada, *Nel nome di Matteotti*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1982, pp.100-04; *Il Libertario di Milano*, 25 April 1946, now in *Umanità Nova*, 26 April 1964.

<sup>158</sup> There are many texts on the Italian Resistance. Battaglia’s work is still considered one of the best accounts, although influenced by the Communist Party hegemonic role. See R. Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza italiana*, Turin, Einaudi, 1964. Through the 1980s and the 1990s there was a boom of publications on the Resistance. One of the best studies is C. Pavone, *Una guerra civile, saggio storico sulla moralità della Resistenza*, 2 vols. Turin, Boringhieri, 1991. On the political meaning of Resistance in Italian contemporary society see F. Focardi, *La guerra della memoria. La Resistenza nel dibattito politico italiano dal 1945 a oggi*, Bari, Laterza, 2005.

<sup>159</sup> G. Pesce, *Quando cessarono gli spari. 23/4-6/5 1945: la liberazione di Milano*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1977.

<sup>160</sup> By Pesce see also, G. Pesce, *Senza tregua*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1967.

alternative paths to mainstream themes, culture and networks of communication. Milanese anarchist publications, biographies and secondary sources have been used to reconstruct three generations of anarchists, their social and political background, their controversies, themes, debates and activities. This study examines how Milanese anarchists expressed their needs, which themes they spread and campaigned for, the ways they articulated their theories, and how they put into practice their countercultural alternative lifestyles. This study also seeks to understand how Milanese anarchists imagined revolution but it also tackles their history in order to engage with themes relevant to the social struggles of today.

### **1.5 Research methodology**

This research is a history of ideas placed in a particular social context. It is a history investigating specific ideas and ideologies through the analysis of primary texts and strengthened by the reading of secondary sources. This research uses a traditional documentary method rather than oral history.

The analysis of the Milanese anarchist movement is based on three different stages: first, doctrines and anarchist theories will be examined through the reading of anarchist journals, pamphlets, newspapers and resolutions of conferences. This means looking at the ideological issues debated between Milanese and Italian anarchists in general. Second, the research focuses on anarchist propaganda. 'Propaganda' is intended in a neutral way as spreading ideas and knowledge of theories of anarchism and critical information on local, national and international politics and working-class related topics, which was aimed at raising a revolutionary consciousness among their readers. Anarchist propaganda can be approached from two different perspectives: on the one hand, there is propaganda related to current affairs, evident through flyers, leaflets and public speeches outside factories; on the other hand there is a more systematic way of spreading anarchist ideas, with an abstract and philosophical approach, through conferences, magazines, periodicals, conducted by a limited number of intellectuals. Despite police repression and government censorship, publishing was the activity in which Milanese anarchists were most intensely involved. The historical reconstruction of the Milanese anarchist milieu recounts the most significant and original political campaigns and actions, confirming the vanguard nature that anarchism has consistently demonstrated throughout its history.

Most of these primary sources are available for consultation at two anarchist archives: *Centro Studi Libertario 'G. Pinelli'* and *Archivio Proletario Internazionale*, both in Milan.<sup>161</sup> In addition, *Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli* offers a broad range of activists' material. Due to the lack of official data, the historical reconstruction of Milanese anarchism needs to be drawn from a range of primary sources including the textual legacy of anarchists themselves, police and other official records which are available at the *Fondo Questura* (police archive) and *Gabinetto di Prefettura* (prefect's archive) of Milan State Archive respectively. The State Central Archive in Rome has been consulted for information from the files of individuals and the correspondence between Milanese prefects and ministers in Rome. The description of *pericolosi sovversivi* (dangerous subversives) and *malfattori* made by policemen and the zealous reports written by police chiefs is useful in framing the picture of anarchists' activities in Milan. The language used by officers in official reports and memoranda reveals an obvious bias against anarchists. Both the police and the anarchists were active participants in the development of the Milanese political arena, and as such each account carries the ideology of the actors' position and role. Therefore, anarchist texts and official and/or police data provide different historical facts and interpretations of them.<sup>162</sup> Hence, these primary sources need to be read in conjunction with one another to build an academically rigorous picture of anarchism in Milan which exposes the political and ideological foundations of each position.

Other primary sources such as mainstream newspapers and journal articles have been used in order to illustrate the image that mass media and public opinion had of anarchists and their beliefs. Primary sources have been placed in context through the use of biographies and secondary literature on Italian politics and society, thus supplementing the existing body of anarchist historiography.

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<sup>161</sup> Some Milanese anarchist publications have been retrieved also at the Biblioteca Braidense in Milan. I am particularly grateful to Franco Schirone, Andrea Staid and Maurizio Antonioli for helping me to research Milanese anarchist journals.

<sup>162</sup> See G. Sacchetti, *Sovversivi agli atti. Gli anarchici nelle carte del Ministero dell'Interno. Schedatura e controllo poliziesco nell'Italia del Novecento*, Ragusa, La Fiaccola, 2002, and C. Bermani, G.N. Berti, P. Brunello, M. Franzinelli, A. Giannuli, L. Pezzica & C. Venza, *Voci di compagni schede di questura, considerazioni sull'uso delle fonti orali e delle fonti di polizia per la storia dell'anarchismo*, Milan, Quaderni del Centro Studi Libertari Archivio Pinelli - Elèuthera, 2002.

## Chapter Two

### Origins and Early Development of the Milanese Anarchist Movement (1864-1882)

‘I am a fanatic lover of liberty’  
M. Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p.261

‘As the means so the end’  
M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, Ahmedabad, July 1924<sup>1</sup>

In Italy, as in the rest of Europe, the history of anarchism is inextricably bound with the socialist and labour movements, to the extent that a scholar inevitably must examine the latter subjects in order to study the former. The essential role played by the Russian anarchist Michael Bakunin in the origins of anarchism in Italy, whether he acted as a catalyst or as an initiator, has reached consensus among historians of Italian anarchism.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, anyone who wishes to study in great depth the broader context of Italian socialism cannot avoid looking at the prominent figure of Bakunin. Yet the relationship between Bakunin and the Italian socialist movement has been dismissed for many years by socialist historians, and only recently has the comprehensive work by Renato Zangheri clarified Bakunin’s contribution to the development of the socialist movement in Italy.<sup>3</sup> The origins of the Milanese anarchist movement need to be traced back to Bakunin’s ideas and his activities in Italy, and thus to the increasing influence of the first International Working Men’s Association’s (IWA) propaganda among workers. This chapter explores how Bakunin’s ideals were perceived, interpreted and reproduced on the pages of early Milanese internationalists’ publications, and how – and if – they were translated into actions.

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<sup>1</sup> R.N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973, p.362.

<sup>2</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.22; C. Levy, ‘Italian anarchism, 1870-1926’, in D. Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice*, p.26; P. Marshall, *Demanding the impossible. A History of Anarchism*, p.446; M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l’Internazionale in Italia*, Rome, 1970, p.2; A. Lehning, ‘Bakunin e la formazione dell’Internazionale in Italia’, in VV.AA., *Anarchismo e socialismo in Italia, 1872-1989. Atti del Convegno di studi ‘Marxisti’ e ‘riministi’ (Rimini 19-21 Ottobre 1972)*, p.157; G. Cerrito, ‘L’ideologia di Bakunin e gli internazionalisti italiani fino a Saint-Imier,’ in *Anarchismo e socialismo in Italia, 1872-1989. Atti del Convegno di studi ‘Marxisti’ e ‘riministi’ (Rimini 19-21 Ottobre 1972)*, pp.28-33.

<sup>3</sup> See R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, Turin, Einaudi, 1993.

The unity of Italy meant the end of the *Risorgimento*. Once the new Italian state had been made, the *Risorgimento*'s ideal of patriotism did not find a fertile ground among workers, and in particular among peasants, who were more concerned with social and economic reforms. In other words, the *questione nazionale* (national question) lost importance, giving way to the *questione sociale* (social question). Similarly, influential characters began to lose importance within the emerging labour movement: figures such as Garibaldi and Mazzini lost their appeal among the new generation of Italian rebels. New socialist ideas filled this gap. Since the early 1860s, the patriotism of a minority of the population began to be challenged by the spreading of an opposite ideal: Marx and Bakunin's internationalism was a key concept of socialist theories. Despite Mazzini's initial support for the IWA, soon the old Italian revolutionary found himself debating with a much younger and feisty Marx. The debate between Mazzini and Marx was around ideological and political issues (common property, republicanism, communism, God). Yet the disputes between their two parties were not about the means, rather about the ends. If the political question – particularly, the concepts of authority, State, violence and communism – represented the battleground among sections of the International (its authoritarian versus anti-authoritarian streams), there was a common ground which united every Internationalist, and this was the triumph of principles such as equality, freedom and justice in a secular and atheist society. Conversely, Mazzini's political ideology pursued a different end.

The debate between Mazzini and Bakunin was reported by the Milanese newspaper, *Gazzettino Rosa*. This chapter examines the role played by the *Gazzettino Rosa* and by its main contributor, the young internationalist Vincenzo Pezza – ‘the leading man of the International in Milan’<sup>4</sup> – in the development of the Milanese section of the IWA. Symbolically, the clash between Marx and Bakunin for the control of the IWA was mirrored by a clash of personalities within the Milanese branch. With the arrest of Marx and Engels' emissary in Milan, Bakunin's representatives took control of the Milanese branch. Yet they continued to have contacts with the London IWA's General Council controlled by Marx and Engels. In the meantime, an insurrectional tendency began to concern authorities who promptly set measures in order to repress the International in Italy as in other European countries.

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<sup>4</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.84.

The Milanese anarchist movement developed through a fraught relationship with other ideologically based movements, such as socialism and workerism. Once again, the division line was set by the means-end dichotomy. While repressing the internationalists, Italian authorities gave to moderate socialists reasons for tackling social, economic and political issues from different angles, including parliamentary politics and unionism. In fact, evolutionist socialists rejected Bakunin's violent destructive urge, and instead pushed for gradual reforms aiming at improving workers' living conditions. A similar approach characterised workerism: this was an ideology that placed itself between an organised political party and policy agendas of the unions. It advocated factory workers' economic issues and soon became an antagonist of anarchists who refused to get involved in initiatives that divided along the lines of job categories. With hindsight, the 'anti-class' approach of anarchists eventually prevented them from establishing stable and strong relationships with the workers' movement. Conversely, this task was taken over by the people of *La Plebe*, the journal of the evolutionist socialists, who ultimately paved the way to the formation of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) in 1892. Only at the beginning of the twentieth century were the anarchists able to effectively establish their presence within the labour movement. It occurred when specific historical conditions and the increasing influence of communist organisational tendencies within the national anarchist movement led to a greater participation of anarchists within the revolutionary union *Unione Sindacale Italiana* (the Italian Syndicalist Union, USI).

Through the reading of journals such as *La Plebe* and *Tito Vezio*, this chapter examines early ideological and political issues that marked the later development of Milanese anarchism. The development of a legalitarian socialist position significantly influenced the Milanese anarchist movement. On the one hand, the dialectics with their socialist counterparts helped the anarchists in defining their political identity. Issues such as insurrection, organisation, party and parliamentary system were debated in papers and at conferences. On the other hand, unlike the socialists, the anarchists' refusal to approach workers' emancipation as a primarily economic issue, and their lack of legal structures throughout the metropolitan territory, allowed socialist organisations to take control of the labour movement. Nonetheless, the reading of Milanese anarchist journals such as *Il Martello* and *Tito Vezio* reveals that in the 1870s and early 1880s an organisational tendency was predominant within the Milanese anarchist movement. Both journals declared themselves to be for a 'communist anarchism' that emphasised

social issues and the collective emancipation of workers. This organisational tendency was not however able to establish itself either in the city or within the labour movement for a number of reasons.

Another important factor that shaped Milanese anarchism since its beginning was government repression. Given the number of arrests, seized journals, fines and years of jail imposed on their editors, it can be argued that an anarchist journal could not survive for more than a few weeks. In the space of a few years, the internationalist and then anarchist 'sect' – as it was termed by the authorities – became a matter of concern for the forces of law and order which established a systematic network of information, filing and repression. The ruthless repression by the Italian government against the anarchists, who were considered and treated as *malfattori*, common criminals, not only affected the development of local anarchist movements, forcing them to act as clandestine and illegal groups, but it also facilitated the spreading of a different kind of propaganda. The 'propaganda of the deed' was intended no longer as a spontaneous insurrectional act by the masses, but as individual radical direct action, based on an idea of life seen both as a permanent status of rebellion and as an open clash with institutions. The effects of the 'propaganda of the deed' dramatically influenced protagonists and activities for many years and the history of Milanese anarchism is also a history of failures and missed opportunities. Yet both failures and occasional successful initiatives rested upon the individual's attempts to coherently change society according to one's principles. The dichotomy means-ends was a feature of social justice movements in the following years, and the Milanese anarchist movement was not an exception.

In order to examine the origins of the Milanese anarchist movement it is helpful, however, to set it in its geographical frame, and in doing so present Milan as a political space. What were the characteristics of the city that contributed to the spread of socialist ideas among the working class? Did Milan produce a specific anarchist movement? Did the city, as a political space, change over time through the influence of rapidly changing media technologies? Which lines of communication existed among anarchist groups? This chapter begins by highlighting some significant features of the city that allowed the development of specific anarchist ideas and practices.

## 2.1 Milan

During the Napoleonic occupation, Milan was the Kingdom of Italy's capital city. Visitors, migrants, workers, state officers, diplomats, landowners, artisans, people of every social class and origins were drawn to Milan, contributing to the development of the city and making of it one of the most dynamic and richest places in Italy. The cultural heritage of late eighteenth century Enlightenment had found in Milan fertile ground: Cesare Beccaria, Pietro Verri and Carlo Cattaneo are just some of the names that introduced civil and political liberalism to the city. The five-day uprising of the Milanese in March 1848 showed the cultural and political gap that was increasingly separating the city from the Austrian regime.

In the *Piazza del Duomo*, the cathedral square and the heart of Milan, stands the statue of Victor Emanuel II, the first king of Italy who ruled from 1861 to 1878. Significantly the statue, a key symbol of the state, faces the cathedral with a drawn sword challenging the church instead of protecting it. On the right-hand side of the square there is the *Galleria*, the gallery that links *Piazza del Duomo* with the nearby *Piazza della Scala*, where the city hall and the opera house, political and cultural centres of power, are sited. At the end of the 1860s this nucleus was surrounded by an internal canal, the *Naviglio Interno*, which once was a moat for city walls. In the sixteenth century, during the Spanish occupation, another circle of walls with several *Porte* (customs gates) was built around the city. Three other canals join the *Naviglio Interno*: the *Naviglio Grande* to the west, the *Naviglio di Pavia* to the south, and finally the *Naviglio Piccolo* to the northeast. These three canals were used for moving goods until the 1840s when the railways replaced them.

According to the 1861 census, the population of Milan within the Spanish walls was 196,109 inhabitants, with 47,000 outside the walls in an area named *Corpi Santi*, a suburban population incorporated into Milan in 1781.<sup>5</sup> By 1871, the population of the internal *circondario* (administrative district) had increased by 3,000 people and the *Corpi Santi* continued to offer housing solutions for newcomers and migrants from the countryside. The majority of Milanese industrial plants were located in the *Corpi Santi*. Ambrogio Binda's paper mill was in the southern suburbs, outside the *Porta Ticinese* and was, at that time, one of the largest factories in Milan. Together with Giulio

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.storiadimilano.it/cron/dal1861al1870.htm>, accessed on 10 March 2009.

Richard's ceramic plant they were the only two water-powered mills. In the north of the city, between *Porta Garibaldi* and *Porta Venezia*, was the area for large shops and the railway station, which linked Milan to Monza, Venice, Como and the rest of Europe through the Simplon and the Saint Gothard passes. Close to the railway station, in the area where once a Swiss monastery was located, there was the *Elvetica*, an engineering plant founded by a French engineer in 1846. Forty years later Ernesto Breda took over the firm and expanded it. Another important plant in the same area was G.B. Pirelli's, manufacturer of rubber products, which employed 250 workers in 1881.<sup>6</sup> In the northern suburbs there were also the *Fratelli Branca*, producing liquors, medicinal and alcoholic digestives, the state tobacco monopoly and Carlo Erba's pharmaceutical plant. In the southern suburbs, outside *Porta Genova*, *Porta Ticinese* and *Porta Vigentina* there were other engineering factories, the telephone firm and a sewing machine company.<sup>7</sup> Seamstresses, tailors and clothes shops were located in the city, where today one can see tourists shopping in *Via Montenapoleone* and *Via della Spiga*. Cotton spinning and silk weaving, the chief industrial development of Lombardy, survived the downturn of the seventeenth century and benefited from the tariffs of 1878 and 1887, which caused an increased demand for machines and a consequent mini-boom in mechanical weaving. Although Lyon came to dominate silk production in continental Europe, Milan continued to enjoy a certain degree of prosperity.

In particular, the printing industry developed constantly throughout the 1860s and the 1870s, becoming one of the most influential industries of Milan with many firms located in the city.<sup>8</sup> The main publishing houses were the *Fratelli Treves* and the *Edoardo Sonzogno*. Emilio Treves moved from Trieste to Milan and in 1861 founded his publishing house.<sup>9</sup> Sonzogno took over his family-owned typographical plant and founded the newspaper *Il Secolo*, which soon represented the positions of Milanese and Lombard radical democrats and supporters of Garibaldi.<sup>10</sup> The variety of newspapers

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<sup>6</sup> M.A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan, 1881-1901*, p.38.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.39.

<sup>8</sup> A. Gigli Marchetti, 'Le nuove dimensioni dell'impresa editoriale,' in G. Turi (ed.), *Storia dell'editoria nell'Italia contemporanea*, Florence, Giunti, 1997, p.118, cited in G. Rosa, 'La cultura letteraria della modernità', in D. Bigazzi, M. Meriggi (eds), *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni dall'Unità a oggi. La Lombardia*, p.208.

<sup>9</sup> G. Rosa, 'La cultura letteraria della modernità', in D. Bigazzi, M. Meriggi (eds), *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni dall'Unità a oggi. La Lombardia*. In 1872 Giuseppe Treves joined his brother Emilio in his business.

<sup>10</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904),' in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, vol.III, parte I, tomo I, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1956, *ad nomen*.

that a Milanese citizen could read in the 1860s and 1870s reflected the broad spectrum of ideas and positions that were dominating the Italian political arena. While *La Perseveranza* and *La Lombardia* were the organs of the traditional conservative class, *Il Corriere della Sera*, founded in 1876 and published by the little house *Tipografia Editrice Verri* was the expression of the emergent capitalist class.<sup>11</sup> By 1875 there were 70 printing works in the province of Milan, 60 of them within the city.<sup>12</sup>

According to Giovanna Rosa, Sonzogno and Treves's activities marked an historical turning point. The variety of reading material published – newspapers, pamphlets, inserts, journals, and magazines – generated larger and more diverse readership.<sup>13</sup> Within this framework of fervent publishing activities, a new literary trend emerged in Milan, the so-called Milanese *Scapigliatura* (ruffled hair). The term *Scapigliatura* spread with a romance by Cletto Arrighi published in 1862, *La scapigliatura e il 6 febbraio*. Soon, this word came to indicate a group of bohemian authors who shared a similar nonconformist eccentric and rebel style that mixed romantic schemes with modern French poetry modelled on Baudelaire's. They grew up with the *Risorgimento* and French Revolution's romantic ideals: independence, unity, liberty, equality and brotherhood. Later these ideals became crucial pillars of left-wing political parties, although often with varying degrees of importance.

At the end of the 1860s the city of Milan was experiencing a period of cultural, political and economic change. The relative backwardness of the Italian economy and the lack of a solid, unified and class-conscious proletariat did not prevent the fertile ground of Milan from being influenced by ideas arriving from other European countries, as well as developing its own political and cultural alternatives. Democratic newspapers began to present critiques of so-called 'bourgeois respectability', critiques of the political elites and their forms of corruption, as much as of the economic system and its social effects. Rumours of corruption of MPs involved with the authorisation of tobacco manufacturing had started to appear in democratic and republican newspapers. In 1867 the Menabrea Government had begun the process of economic reform following the 1866 war with Austria. The Italian Parliament introduced a tax on flour and sold the state monopoly of tobacco to private companies. In 1868 both bills caused riots and agitations in several regions, especially in the north where peasants, small landowners

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> G. Rosa, 'La cultura letteraria della modernità', in D. Bigazzi, M. Meriggi (eds), *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni dall'Unità a oggi. La Lombardia*, p.212.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.207.

and artisans were more affected by the tax. This measure imposed additional economic hardship on many people already struggling to make a living.

At the end of the 1860s Milan represented a key city for emerging workers' organisations. Industrialisation led to an increase in the activities of benefit societies, which would become modern trade union organisations. By the end of the 1860s another newspaper was enjoyed a large circulation in Milan, the *Gazzettino Rosa* that regularly published articles about the IWA, thus introducing Bakunin's programs to Milan's political environment.

## **2.2.From the *Risorgimento* to the IWA: Vincenzo Pezza and the *Gazzettino Rosa* (1867-1871)**

The *Gazzettino Rosa*, published in Milan by the *Società editrice lombarda*, was founded in 1867 as a humorous newspaper for the bourgeoisie, mainly focusing on satire and entertainment.<sup>14</sup> However, it subsequently became a political newspaper under the direction of Achille Bizzoni in collaboration with young journalists such as Vincenzo Pezza and Felice Cavallotti. They had been Garibaldi supporters and admirers of Mazzini and were influenced by the *Scapigliatura*'s cultural movement as well as by anticlerical, republican and socialist ideas. In Giarelli's words:

The head of the newspaper was the romantic-republican school in a red shirt. Its members were pioneers who had shortened the motto 'God and People' and kept only the second half as it pleased them. Of the first half, they did not care at all.<sup>15</sup>

Achille Bizzoni was born in 1841 in Pavia to an upper class family. He volunteered in 1859 and participated in the 1860 expedition to Umbria as part of the *Risorgimento* campaigns.<sup>16</sup> He joined Garibaldi in Trentino, Monterotondo and Mentana, before embracing the IWA's program and the ideals of the Paris Commune in

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<sup>14</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)', in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.32-36. The initial subtitle was: 'Giornale politico-letterario del buon genere Milanese e Monitore della Società delle corse dei cavalli in Lombardia.' See also ASM, *Fondo Questura*, bb. 118 and 119, *Stampe*, fasc. *Gazzettino Rosa 1870-1874*.

<sup>15</sup> F. Giarelli, *Felice Cavallotti nella vita e nelle opere*, Milan, 1898, quoted in N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, pp.249-50.

<sup>16</sup> G. Arcangeli, 'Bizzoni, Achille', in F. Andreucci & T. Detti (eds), *Il Movimento Operaio Italiano. Dizionario Biografico (1853-1943)*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1976-1979, pp.324-29. Hereafter cited as MOIDB.

1871.<sup>17</sup> During his journalistic career Bizzoni wrote against corruption, militarism and colonialism, moving his political position from being against parliamentary politics to supporting Felice Cavallotti and his electoral campaign.<sup>18</sup>

Felice Cavallotti was born in Milan in 1842 and, like Bizzoni, joined the national cause in 1859, but soon he started to manifest hostility to Cavour's policies and an ambiguous attitude towards both Mazzini and Garibaldi. After 1862 Cavallotti began his relationship with the *Scapigliati*'s milieu. In the same year, the episode of Aspromonte, where Garibaldi was defeated by the Italian army, brought Cavallotti to a radical and extreme position of opposition to the Savoy monarchy. Cavallotti, who had started to work for the *Gazzettino Rosa*, criticized Mazzini and Garibaldi, and moved to an internationalist and revolutionary position supporting first the IWA and later the Paris Commune.<sup>19</sup>

The *Gazzettino Rosa* became popular with its political campaign against the corruption of some MPs involved with the selling of the tobacco monopoly which caused riots in Milan in the summer 1869. The accusations launched by the *Gazzettino Rosa* were used by the MP Lobbia who claimed to have proof of corruption (5 June 1869).<sup>20</sup> The *Galleria*, which had been officially open in September 1867, immediately became a place for political protests and rallies. On 13 June 1869 Milanese youth protested in *Piazza Duomo* with slogans against the monarchy.<sup>21</sup> Three days later Lobbia was stabbed. More protests followed this incident, fanned by the reading of the *Gazzettino Rosa*'s accusations. There were riots, demonstrations and police repression. Four subeditors of the *Gazzettino Rosa*, Bizzoni, Billia, Ghinosi and Tivaroni, were arrested and brought to the Alessandria fortress. Cavallotti escaped arrest and continued to publish the newspaper from hiding until he was also captured. Other newspapers' journalists and editors were arrested, including Enrico Bignami, director of *La Plebe* of Lodi.

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<sup>17</sup> Cavallotti knew Bakunin: '*Bakounine parlait de lui comme un de ces 'quarts d'amis'*', in A. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, Leiden, 1961-1971, vol I, part I, XLII, note 2.

<sup>18</sup> R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.198. For the *Gazzettino Rosa*, see also V. Castronovo, *La stampa italiana dall'Unità al fascismo*, Bari, Laterza, 1970, pp.56-58; A. Galante Garrone, *I radicali in Italia (1849-1925)*, Milan, Garzanti, 1973, pp.99-101.

<sup>19</sup> MOIDB, *Cavallotti, Felice*.

<sup>20</sup> F. Catalano, 'Vita politica e questioni sociali (1859-1900),' in *Storia di Milano, XV, Nell'Unità Italiana (1859-1900)*, pp.128-29.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

This fervent environment produced two different political currents among the Milanese rebel youth: on the one hand, people such as Cavallotti, Billia, Ghinosi and Mussi moved towards a more legalitarian position in terms of political struggle, hence the acceptance of the parliament system; on the other hand, Vincenzo Pezza and Felice Cameroni opposed this kind of approach and gave birth to a socialist, libertarian and internationalist stream that gained momentum when Pezza met Michael Bakunin.

The name of the Russian revolutionary started to spread through Europe after the Prague and Dresden uprisings of 1848-49 which saw Bakunin emerging as a fighter and as an inspiring leader.<sup>22</sup> After 10 years spent between the Russian Peter-and-Paul fortress and exile in Siberia, Bakunin escaped to London in 1861. Here he met Italian revolutionaries and soon expressed his desire to move to Italy.<sup>23</sup> When Bakunin entered Italy on 11 January 1864<sup>24</sup> Italian police were aware of his possible arrival in Milan.<sup>25</sup> Bakunin settled in Florence and soon began to establish contacts with Italian democrats. After a short trip back to Sweden and London where Bakunin met Karl Marx 16 years after their first meeting in Berlin, Bakunin returned to Florence with the task of recruiting Italians and workers' organisations to join the newly formed IWA. However, once in Florence he also conducted a recruitment campaign for his International Revolutionary Brotherhood.<sup>26</sup> The Florentine democratic environment left Bakunin disappointed and soon he decided to move to Naples where he found 'more energy and genuine political and social life than in Florence. At last, I have found some men...'<sup>27</sup>

Vincenzo Pezza was of the same generation as Bizzoni and Cavallotti. He was born in Milan in 1841 to an upper class family. He enrolled in Garibaldi's army and, soaking up republican-Mazzinian ideas, in 1866 he followed the General. From 1867 he

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<sup>22</sup> E.H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, New York, Vintage Books, 1961, pp.198-204.

<sup>23</sup> T.R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988, p.15.

<sup>24</sup> Bakunin crossed into Italy with three letters of introduction provided by Aurelio Saffi. One of them was for 'Dael' who was perhaps the Milanese editor G. Daelli, see M. Nettleau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, Rome, 1970, p.10. Before Bakunin's arrival, Giuseppe Mazzini had written two letters to his Genoese friends Federico Campanella and to Giuseppe Dolfi asking them to welcome his Russian friend and 'to do whatever he asks,' E. Conti, 'Lettere inedite di Giuseppe Mazzini a Giuseppe Dolfi', *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, vol.36, ns. 5-6 (July-December 1949), p.175, reported by T.R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, pp.17-18.

<sup>25</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 102, Prefect to police chief, Milan, 2 October 1863, in T.R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, p.243, note 22.

<sup>26</sup> E.H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, pp.323-26; S. Furlani, 'Bakunine e la sua associazione segreta dei fratelli scandinavi del 1864,' *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol.89, nos. 3-4 (September – December 1977), pp.610-51; N. Pernicone, *Italian anarchism, 1864-1892*, p.17.

<sup>27</sup> Bakunin to Angelo De Gubernatis, 8 August 1865, in E. Conti, 'Alcuni documenti relative al soggiorno fiorentino di Michele Bakunin (1864-1865),' *Movimento Operaio*, vol.2, nos. 5-6 (February – March 1950), p.128, quoted in N. Pernicone, *Italian anarchism, 1864-1892*, p.17.

joined his friend Felice Cavallotti and became a contributor of the *Gazzettino Rosa*. Pezza wrote using the pseudonym of 'Burbero' (the rustic one) and contributed to the internationalist orientation of the newspaper. During this period Pezza further developed his main political ideas, based on a policy of abstention in electoral campaigns, aversion to the parliamentary system, and an atheistic view of politics and society which led him to reject the religious nature of Mazzini's ideology.<sup>28</sup>

Bakunin's activities in Naples reached out both to new militants and to disenchanted followers of Mazzini's republican movement. He ignited in them the idea of a social revolution. The nationalist program of the *Risorgimento* was not completed without Venice and Rome, but Mazzini's economic and religious views started to lose support in favour of more radical change. Bakunin began to criticize Mazzini in 1865 writing from the pages of *Il Popolo d'Italia* with the pseudonym 'a Frenchman'.<sup>29</sup> In a series of articles Bakunin enunciated the main themes of his anarchist program and finally, in 1867 Bakunin defined himself as an anarchist.<sup>30</sup> The debate between Mazzini and Bakunin escalated in autumn 1866, following the Italo-Austrian war with which the new Italian state gained the Veneto from Austria. Mazzini refused to face the *questione sociale* and created the *Alleanza Universale Repubblicana* in order to draw workers away from the IWA. Bakunin's reply, a pamphlet titled *La situazione italiana* (The Italian situation), constituted a crucial document for the development of the Italian socialist movement: on the one hand Mazzini was criticized for his conservative program of alliance between bourgeoisie and working class; on the other hand Bakunin attacked Garibaldi for his betrayal of the Italian masses. Since Bakunin's reply was a collaborative enterprise between him and his Neapolitan followers - Fanelli, Gambuzzi, Friscia and Tucci - this pamphlet represents one of the first significant steps in the origins of Italian anarchism.<sup>31</sup>

The break with Mazzini became definitive and public through a series of articles published in 1871. In particular, the dispute between Mazzini and the Internationalists dealt with the Paris Commune. In Milan, Pezza and the editorial board of the *Gazzettino* sided with the Parisian insurrectionists. It was during this period that Pezza was

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<sup>28</sup> M. Nejrotti, 'Pezza, Vincenzo', in M. Antonioli, G. Berti, S. Fedele, P. Iuso (eds), *Dizionario Biografico degli Anarchici Italiani*, Pisa, BFS, 2003-2004, vol.1, p.339. Hereafter cited as DBAI.

<sup>29</sup> N. Pernicone, *Italian anarchism, 1864-1892*, p.18; A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, I*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2nd edition, 1966, pp.341-53.

<sup>30</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.27.

<sup>31</sup> N. Pernicone, *Italian anarchism, 1864-1892*, p.25.

introduced to Bakunin's internationalism.<sup>32</sup> As Della Peruta pointed out, 'the *Gazzettino Rosa* [took] on the role of Bakunin's spokesman in Italy'.<sup>33</sup>

The ideological division between Mazzini and the Paris Commune's supporters proved to be crucial for recruiting young Italians in the International's ranks, drawing them away from the influence of Mazzini. Many enthusiastic young Italians went to Paris to support the first European socialist experiment of the modern era. Cavallotti sent reports of his observations from Paris to the *Gazzettino Rosa* in Milan. The journal mirrored a new generation and its ideals.

On 21 March 1871, the *Gazzettino Rosa* greeted 'with deep joy the courageous and very noble initiative of the generous city of Paris' that was seen as a 'model and example for the other nations of Europe, which are oppressed by the privileges of classes that support monarchies'.<sup>34</sup> The journal proclaimed its solidarity with the Communards, and criticized the 'conservative journals that ... believe they can point us out to public mockery, defining us as republican insurrectionists'.<sup>35</sup> On 1 April 1871, the *Gazzettino Rosa* took a more intimidating tone when addressing the 'privileged ones':

You are already shivering. Under the cloth of arrogance, your coward soul is shivering. Also here in Italy, where people power might live, one day it will be terrible for you. You can hear the symptoms of the popular rebellion like a lava flow simmering under the apparent calm... Behind the journals that you seize, behind the people that you arrest there is an almighty multitude with strong arms, ordered behind the flag of Liberty. That multitude is the people, the X factor. Hail dawn of liberty! I can see you rising above the horizon with the colour of fire.<sup>36</sup>

The *Gazzettino Rosa* did not approve of everything coming from the Paris Commune, yet, according to the Milanese newspaper, the Commune enjoyed 'the solidarity of all the republicans of the world'.<sup>37</sup> The political development of the Paris Commune was debated in the pages of the *Gazzettino Rosa*. Pezza disagreed with Garibaldi's proposal of a dictatorship,<sup>38</sup> and affirmed that a republic was superior to

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<sup>32</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>33</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904),' in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, p.34.

<sup>34</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 21 March 1871.

<sup>35</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 31 March 1871.

<sup>36</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 1 April 1871.

<sup>37</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 7 April 1871. See also N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, p.250.

<sup>38</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 11 April 1871.

laws and suffrages.<sup>39</sup> Pezza vigorously supported the Commune's ideals of republicanism and liberty.<sup>40</sup> At that time Pezza was not yet using terms such as socialism or workers' power, but rather autonomy and federalism.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, it was in this period that Bakunin's socialist ideas began to appear more frequently on the *Gazzettino Rosa*.<sup>42</sup> On 30 July 1871 the *Gazzettino Rosa* published the IWA's statute and, a few days later, with the newspaper was distributed *I miserabili della Comune di F.S.* (by 'perduto comunardo', a generic pseudonym used by the *scapigliati* of the *Gazzettino Rosa*). This insert was a two-episode novel about the Paris Commune experience.<sup>43</sup> In the meantime, however, accusations against the Paris Commune were spreading throughout Europe.<sup>44</sup> To support the Commune, on 9 September 1871 the *Gazzettino Rosa* stressed that the Commune '[was] not against the principles of honest, progressive and liberal politics' and that the IWA did not want to declare war against God since the International united believers with atheist workers.<sup>45</sup>

Giuseppe Mazzini was very critical of the Paris Commune. The old Italian revolutionary continued to defend the religious nature of his republican ideals synthesised by the motto 'God and people'. From the *Gazzettino Rosa*'s pages, Pezza acknowledged Mazzini's teaching and his contribution to the formation of young Italian radicals:

From him [Mazzini] we all learnt, when we were still young, to mumble the noun 'republic', and his words went straight to our hearts like a revelation, lighting up our chests, planting in our souls the seed of that spirit of emancipation that now torments our existence.<sup>46</sup>

Despite these words of gratitude, the campaign against Mazzini and his religious ideals had just begun. On 14 May 1871 Mazzini and his motto 'God and people' were criticised by the *Gazzettino Rosa*:

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<sup>39</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 1 May 1871. See also G. Haupt, 'La Comune di Parigi come simbolo e come esempio,' in *L'Internazionale socialista dalla Comune a Lenin*, pp.39-69.

<sup>40</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 23 May 1871.

<sup>41</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 30 June 1871.

<sup>42</sup> For example, in the *Gazzettino Rosa*, 25 July 1871, there was Bakunin's *L'Empire knouto-germanique et la revolution sociale*, published in Geneva and sold by the Milanese newspaper.

<sup>43</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 1 and 2 August 1871.

<sup>44</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 24 August 1871.

<sup>45</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 9 September 1871.

<sup>46</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 9 June 1871.

We, young materialists, do not care what will become of our souls when we are dead ... God should not be a nightmare; if it is an obstacle, it shall be eliminated.<sup>47</sup>

The *Gazzettino Rosa* also criticized all republicans who were said to be like ‘priests’,<sup>48</sup> since they believed in teaching and education as the means to change the world.<sup>49</sup> Finally, the definitive break up with Mazzini was announced: ‘It is not us who leave him; it is him who condemns us.’<sup>50</sup>

In summer 1871, in the pages of the *Gazzettino Rosa* it was possible to read about both the break with Mazzini and to see an apparent shift of emphasis towards Bakunin’s program: ‘[w]e detest every kind of tyranny, even Mazzini’s one’.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, even if ‘we are sorry for having lost a great man’s admiration; ... we have a deep belief that we are on the right track for the modern revolution’.<sup>52</sup> Following the publication of Mazzini’s article ‘*Gemiti, fremiti e ricapitolazione*’ (‘Moans, tremors, recapitulation’, 10 August 1871), the *Gazzettino Rosa* published Bakunin’s ‘*Risposta di un internazionalista a Giuseppe Mazzini*’ (An internationalist’s answer to Mazzini).<sup>53</sup> Alongside Bakunin’s attack on Mazzini, the *Gazzettino Rosa* also published an article by Pezza in which he criticized, from a social perspective, Mazzini’s ideology, supporting, on the contrary, materialism and rationality.<sup>54</sup> Mazzini’s supporters replied to Bakunin with a series of articles.<sup>55</sup> To Mazzini’s defenders, Pezza responded from the pages of the *Gazzettino Rosa* of 28 August 1871, with an article titled *Mazzini e la giovane democrazia* (Mazzini and the young democracy).<sup>56</sup> In September, Pezza shifted the emphasis towards the *questione sociale* and class struggle.<sup>57</sup> Although different positions coexisted within the *Gazzettino Rosa*’s editorial board, Pezza’s embrace of socialism was now definitive. From his first views on the Commune’s experience, where progress and federalism were compatible with democratic traditions, Pezza had

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<sup>47</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 14 May 1871.

<sup>48</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 7 April 1871.

<sup>49</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 24 May 1871.

<sup>50</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 30 June 1871.

<sup>51</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 12 August 1871.

<sup>52</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 28 August 1871.

<sup>53</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 16 August 1871. See also A. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine, I*, part I, pp.283-92.

<sup>54</sup> See *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 14 August and 14 June 1871.

<sup>55</sup> See ‘Un maestro dalla Russia’, *L’Unità Italiana*, Rome, 25, 28, 31 August 1871, in A. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine, I*, XLV, note 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 28 August 1871. See also A. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine, I*, XLV, note 3.

<sup>57</sup> See *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 9 and 12 September 1871.

moved towards socialism, and particularly towards Bakuninite collectivism. Pezza played a key role in shaping early Milanese socialism.<sup>58</sup>

Following his arrival in Italy in 1864, Bakunin wrote several articles published in left-wing Italian journals and engaged in activities with the aim of recruiting Italians for both the newly born IWA and his Alliance. These activities brought Bakunin to Milan in spring 1870, but only briefly.<sup>59</sup> In the Lombard capital Bakunin met Felice Cavallotti, subeditor of the *Gazzettino Rosa*, and other Milanese democrats and radicals. Bakunin's main contact in Milan was Vincenzo Pezza. The two internationalists had started corresponding in October 1871 and met for the first time in Locarno, Switzerland, on 15 October 1871.<sup>60</sup> Bakunin noted that there was complete agreement with Pezza.<sup>61</sup> After reading Mazzini's articles on *L'Internazionale*,<sup>62</sup> in particular 'Ai rappresentanti gli artigiani nel Congresso di Roma' ('to the delegates of the artisans for the Rome Congress, 15 October 1871'), Bakunin decided to reply to Mazzini. Rosselli suggests that Bakunin took this decision after meeting, on 15 October 1871, Pezza who probably invited Bakunin to respond.<sup>63</sup> By this time, however, the dispute with Mazzini was almost over, and Bakunin had achieved his purpose of drawing Italian youth away from Mazzini and closer to the IWA. After criticizing the Paris Commune and the IWA, and opposing the spread of socialism in Italy, Mazzini had lost his wide appeal both to revolutionaries and to workers. Evidence of this increasing political rejection was given at the beginning of November 1871, when the Rome Congress of the Italian Workers' Benefit Societies, previously a Mazzini stronghold, resulted in a fiasco. The following year Mazzini passed away.

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<sup>58</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.84; F. Giarelli, *Vent'anni di giornalismo 1868-1888*, Codogno, Tip.Ed. A.G. Cairo, 1896, pp.76, 198-207; *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 12, 14 and 25 January 1873.

<sup>59</sup> M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p.180.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 'Bakounine le mentionne pour la première fois dans son carnet le 8 octobre 1871 sous le pseudonyme de Burbero. Voir sur Pezza l'article nécrologique dans le *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne du 1er février 1873*,' in A. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, I, XLII, note 3.

<sup>61</sup> J. Guillaume, *L'Internationale. Documents et souvenirs (1864-1878)*, II, part III, Paris, 1907, p.229.

<sup>62</sup> *La Roma del Popolo*, Rome, 14, 21, 28 September 1871, in N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, p.306.

<sup>63</sup> Bakunin's paper, titled *Circolare ai miei amici d'Italia in occasione del Congresso operaio convocato a Roma per il 1 Novembre dal partito mazziniano*, was not written on time and only a summary of the first part was distributed to the congress's participants. The definitive publication of this article was given only in 1885 by *Il Piccone* of Naples and *Il Paria* of Ancona. Later on it was published as a pamphlet titled *Il Socialismo e Mazzini*. Although the entire manuscript was not published, it had a discrete circulation through Bakunin's collaborators in Naples and in Milan through Vincenzo Pezza. See N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, p.306.

### 2.3 Marx or Bakunin? The Milanese branch of the IWA and *Il Martello* (1870-1872)

In September 1867, Bakunin had moved to Switzerland. From here, he continued to correspond with his Italian friends, who supported him even after his withdrawal from the League for Peace and Liberty Congress, and the constitution of the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy. This new association declared its adherence to the IWA's statutes. However, the IWA's General Council (GC) refused the application. Thus, Bakunin decided to put an end to the Alliance's life, and the local sections of the alliance agreed to adhere to the IWA. From this moment Bakunin worked to recruit more local organisations to the IWA. In January 1869, the first Italian section of IWA was born in Naples.

Bakunin wrote many letters, pamphlets and articles published in Italian democrat journals and newspapers. He published an article titled *La situazione 2*, probably with the collaboration of Tucci.<sup>64</sup> In this article, Bakunin analysed the situation of the Italian working class and encouraged workers to rebel.<sup>65</sup> Soon, however, his attention was drawn to his growing personal and ideological dispute with Marx. Their first clash occurred in Basel, Switzerland, in September 1869, during the Fourth Congress of the IWA. The issue dealt with the abolition of inheritance rights. The debate escalated in the following months creating two currents within the IWA: one group was linked to Marx, Engels and the General Council based in London, while the other, which was known as the antiauthoritarian current, was led by Bakunin. The ideological debate was centred primarily on the concept of the state, which represented for Bakunin the ultimate cause of oppression and injustice. Consequently, the role played by the working class in the revolution, its goals and means of emancipation, constituted a significant part of their disagreement.<sup>66</sup>

In September 1871, a private conference of the IWA was held in London, called by Marx and Engels, who could rely on strong majority support. Its resolutions became public only in November; one particular resolution dealt with political activism and it rejected abstention as a political tool:

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<sup>64</sup> For the authorship of this pamphlet see Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, pp.60-62 and P.C. Masini (ed.), *Michele Bakunin: Ritratto dell'Italia Borghese (1866-1871)*, Bergamo, 1961, p.12.

<sup>65</sup> *La Plebe*, Lodi, 3 April 1869, in MOIDB, p.131.

<sup>66</sup> For an insight of the relationship between Marx and the anarchists, see P.Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists*, particularly pp.249-340 on Marx, Bakunin and the International.

[T]he constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the Social Revolution and its ultimate end – the abolition of classes.<sup>67</sup>

The publication of this resolution caused negative reactions. The Swiss federation of IWA had previously accepted the GC's advice to change its name to Federation Jurassienne in order to be acknowledged by the GC. The new Federation Jurassienne organised a congress in Sonvillier, in the Jura, Switzerland, on 12 November 1871. Here, participants rejected the London Conference's resolutions and denounced the authoritarian attitude of the GC. The outcomes of the Sonvillier congress were published as a circular letter, and this document became a cornerstone in the history of the IWA:

With the release of the Sonvillier Circular, the Marx-Bakunin controversy finally emerged into the public domain and the Italian socialists became aware for the first time of the crisis within the First International.<sup>68</sup>

The dispute between Marx and Bakunin regarding working-class formation, the development of capitalism and significance of the state, did not impair the spread of the IWA in Italy. Yet their clash within the IWA had repercussions for local sections, including the Milanese branch.<sup>69</sup> In fact, while Bakunin could rely on Pezza as his representative in Milan, Engels also had his emissary, the German Theodor Cuno. Pezza and Cuno were active members of the Mazzinian *Società operaia di mutuo soccorso morale e di istruzione* (Workers' Moral and Educational Benefit Society).<sup>70</sup> In Zangheri's words:

Milanese socialism, or at least an organised socialist group, even if it was a small one, was born thanks to the initiative and through the collaboration between Cuno and Bakunin's supporters.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> The resolution was published in *La Plebe*, 23 November 1871. See also J. Guillaume, *L'Internationale. Documents et souvenirs (1864-1878)*, II, pp.202-207. M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p.230.

<sup>68</sup> T.R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, p.140. For the Federation Jurassienne, see in particular M. Enckell, *La Federation Jurassienne*, Losanna, 1971, published in Italian as M. Enckell, *La Federazione del Giura*, Lugano, Edizioni La Baronata, 1981, with an introduction by P.C. Masini.

<sup>69</sup> On the Turin and Naples IWA branches see T.R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, p.143.

<sup>70</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.105-07. The *Società operaia's* program was published in the *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 4 September 1871.

<sup>71</sup> R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.309.

Theodor Cuno, who was in contact with Engels, received suggestions and recommendations from his mentor in order to influence the Milanese section and to take Marx's side.<sup>72</sup> Cuno wrote a letter to Engels on 1 November 1871 asking if he was aware of any internationalists or of an IWA's branch in Milan.<sup>73</sup> Engels wrote to Cuno on 13 November 1871 admitting that he didn't know any Internationalists residing in Milan, and invited Cuno to make propaganda for the IWA:

Milan, as the capital city of the Mazzinian movement and as an industrial city, is very important for us, because with Milan we shall get in our hands the industrial districts of silk in Lombardy.<sup>74</sup>

Nettlau wrote that these letters constitute the 'clearest proof of the way in which Engels played the role of the IWA's secretary as a way to fight Bakunin and the antiauthoritarian tendencies within the International'.<sup>75</sup>

Pezza introduced Cuno to the Milanese *Società operaia* and the German engineer joined the organisation. On 30 November 1871, Cuno wrote a letter to Engels announcing that he had found the *Società operaia*. However, according to Cuno, this organisation was made up of intransigent Mazzinians who did not know anything about the IWA.<sup>76</sup> At the *Società operaia* Cuno also met Vincenzo Testini, a student of agronomy who, together with Pezza, had prepared a program supporting the IWA.<sup>77</sup> According to Cuno, during his meeting with Pezza and Testini, they discussed the idea of joining the IWA.<sup>78</sup> For this purpose, Cuno wrote to Engels asking for membership cards for Pezza, Testini and other 50-60 members. Engels sent his reply on 16 December but Cuno never received it, presumably because it was intercepted by the police.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, Engels wrote again on 24 January 1872, once the Milanese section of IWA had already been formed and it had adhered to the Sonvillier circular, advising Cuno about Bakunin's plots against the IWA's GC.<sup>80</sup> This lack, or delay of communication, prevented Cuno from knowing about the Marx-Bakunin controversy

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<sup>72</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.59-60 and 138-42; M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, pp.234-37.

<sup>73</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.55-56.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>75</sup> M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p.235, note 1.

<sup>76</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.105.

<sup>77</sup> On Vincenzo Testini see R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.309, note 84; M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p.253; A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, II*, p.175, note 29.

<sup>78</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.106.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.120.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.139.

before he joined the newly formed Milanese section of the IWA at the end of December 1871. In fact, as he did not receive Engels' letter dated 16 December, Cuno wrote again to Engels on 27 December, renewing the request for cards.<sup>81</sup> Cuno felt disappointed that he had not received the cards yet because, in his view, this undermined the trust his comrades had in him. Moreover, without the General Council's support, Cuno could not gain the majority within the *Società operaia* in order to transform it into an IWA section. Nonetheless, Cuno was able to push for a vote of no confidence against the president and the committee of the *Società operaia*. Following this episode, Cuno started to carry a gun because he felt threatened.<sup>82</sup>

While Engels was pulling Cuno to his side, on 10 December Bakunin wrote two letters to Pezza, possibly seeking support for the Sonvillier circular.<sup>83</sup> The Milanese internationalists were not aware that they were in the middle of an ideological battle. However, a decision had not yet been made. When the *Gazzettino Rosa*, on 12 December, published Engels's protest against Mazzini and, on 20 December, Carlo Cafiero's interpretation of the London Conference's Resolution IX, Bakunin began to worry. His concerns were strengthened by the lack of response by Pezza from the pages of the *Gazzettino Rosa*. On 23 December 1871, Bakunin wrote to his Milanese friends expressing his concerns: 'Brothers, what is happening to you? Your silence, together with the obstinate silence of the *Gazzettino Rosa* surprises me, afflicts me, it worries me.'<sup>84</sup> Bakunin decided to send to Milan a French communard, Victor Cyrille, with a letter for his friends.<sup>85</sup> With the letter, Bakunin explained his reasons why it was important that the proletariat did not take part in bourgeois politics. According to Bakunin, a shift towards party politics would have weakened the IWA and favoured the 'threatening coalition of the reactionaries of all Europe'.<sup>86</sup> Bakunin's efforts to gain the majority and support of Milanese internationalists were not in vain.

Three days before the arrival of Cyrille (27 December), the first Milanese section of the IWA was formed. On Christmas Eve 1871, during a meeting for the election of the *Società operaia*'s president,<sup>87</sup> there were around 30 internationalists, but not enough to constitute the majority. Cuno proposed to leave the meeting and the

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp.120-21.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p.120.

<sup>83</sup> Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, p.141.

<sup>84</sup> J. Guillaume, *L'Internationale. Documents et souvenirs (1864-1878)*, II, part IV, p.251.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.252.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.252; a draft of this letter is published in A. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, I, pp.157-59.

<sup>87</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.120-21.

*Società operaia*, and to found an IWA section, upon which 32 members moved to a nearby *osteria* and elected a temporary committee: Cuno, Pezza, Testini and Turboli.<sup>88</sup> One week later, on New Year's Eve, they discussed the statute of the new association. Cuno's proposal to call the section 'Milanese section of the International' was refused on the basis that it would not have been wise to use the name International after the Paris Commune.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the membership agreed to name the group *Circolo operaio di emancipazione del proletariato* (Workers' Club for the Proletariat's Emancipation), also known as the *Circolo*.<sup>90</sup> Cuno wrote to Engels only on 11 January 1872, announcing the constitution of the *Circolo*.<sup>91</sup> On the same day, 11 January, the *Circolo* sent a letter to the IWA's GC, signed by Pezza, Cuno, Gandolfi, Ercole Pozzi, Achille Bonnetti and Giuseppe Bellasio. The letter reports 24 December 1871 as the foundation date and 7 January as its official adherence to the IWA. They also sent money for 100 membership cards.<sup>92</sup> After only 20 days the *Circolo* had reached 100 members.<sup>93</sup>

At the meeting on the 27 December 1871, after having received an appeal from Bakunin,<sup>94</sup> the Milanese Internationalists also decided to adhere to the Sonvillier circular.<sup>95</sup> The *Gazzettino Rosa* was among the several internationalist journals that published the Sonvillier document. It did not occur without some initial hesitation, since publishing the controversial document implied its adherence to Bakunin's position within the IWA, and against Marx and the GC. At that time, the *Gazzettino Rosa* was partly under the influence of the General Council, whose intermediary in Italy was Carlo Cafiero, and through whom Engels was trying to promote an anti-Bakuninite position. When later Cafiero converted to Bakunin's ideas (21 December 1871),<sup>96</sup> the *Gazzettino Rosa* also declared its adherence to the Sonvillier document, publishing a

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<sup>88</sup> See *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 13 January 1872.

<sup>89</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.121. See also R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.309, nota 87, in which he quotes Milan police chief to prefect, 21 December 1871.

<sup>90</sup> The *Circolo Operaio* of Milan became official only on 7 January 1872. See the letter of the *Circolo operaio* of Milan to Engels, 11 January 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.125-26. For the program of the Milanese section, see *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 13 January 1872. The statutes were published as a 16-pages pamphlet, titled *Statuto del Circolo Operaio di Milano: Regione Lombardia*, Milan, Tipografia di Alessandro Lombardi, 1872.

<sup>91</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.122.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, pp.125-26.

<sup>93</sup> N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, p.359.

<sup>94</sup> T.R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, p.141

<sup>95</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 29 December 1871.

<sup>96</sup> On 21 December 1871 Cafiero published in the *Gazzettino Rosa* an article titled *L'Internazionale*, and signed as 'An internationalist', with which he expresses ideas very similar to those of Bakunin regarding workers' participation to politics. This article marked the beginning of Cafiero's conversion to Bakunin's anarchism.

letter by *'un gruppo d'internazionali'* ('a group of internationalists'), supporters of Bakunin's thought and methods.<sup>97</sup> The 'group of internationalists' proclaimed its adherence to the principles promoted by the Federation Jurassienne and its support of an IWA general congress to counter the GC's authoritarian tendencies.<sup>98</sup> By the time Cuno received Engels' letter of 24 January, the Milanese section had already adhered to the Sonvillier circular, leaving Cuno powerless to shift the Milanese internationalists' position towards the GC. However, according to Ravindranathan, Cuno convinced his fellow internationalists not to endorse the policy of abstention, but rather to stress the significance and importance of a 'workers' democratic socialist party'.<sup>99</sup>

The programme of the *Circolo* was published first by the *Fascio Operaio* of Ravenna on 13 January 1872, and later in the first issue of *Il Martello* (The Hammer). *Il Martello* was a weekly journal founded by Pezza, Cuno and others in February 1872. The extreme views endorsed by Pezza were no longer compatible with the broad generic socialist line of the *Gazzettino Rosa*. According to Zangheri, Pezza had to move away from the *Gazzettino Rosa* in order not to be absorbed by the political current that was growing in the big industrial cities. This faction was made up of the socialist-democratic parties that were against the policy of abstention supported by Pezza and Bakunin. In Zangheri's words: 'If [Pezza] wished to define his own identity and to avoid being towed by the major democratic current, it was necessary to endorse a line of complete opposition'.<sup>100</sup> Yet, to prove that there were still similarities between the two journals, in the fourth and final issue of *Il Martello*, published on 4 March 1872, the Milanese internationalists of *Il Martello* referred to the *Gazzettino Rosa* as 'our older brother'.<sup>101</sup>

The Milanese internationalists were able to publish only four issues of their journal, three of which were seized by the police. Among the socialist journals, *Il Martello* had the shortest duration.<sup>102</sup> In the first issue, published on 4 February 1872,

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<sup>97</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 29 December 1871. The article was published on the *Gazzettino Rosa* on 29 December 1871, two days after the formation of the *Circolo*, when members probably discussed about the Sonvillier letter. The full text of the Sonvillier letter was also published in the *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 29 December 1871.

<sup>98</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 29 December 1871.

<sup>99</sup> Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, pp.142-43, note 144. In Ravindranathan's opinion, 'Cuno must have insisted on this concession in return for his signature on the document.'

<sup>100</sup> R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.352.

<sup>101</sup> On the news that the Court of Cassation had rejected the appeal for the release of Achille Bizzoni, former editor of the *Gazzettino Rosa*, see *Il Martello*, Milan, 4 March 1872.

<sup>102</sup> R. Hostetter, *Le origini del socialismo italiano*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1963, p.403. The subtitle was *Organo del circolo operaio di Milano. Giornale democratico socialista degli operai* (Spokesman of the

the leading article publicised the internationalist program of the *Circolo*.<sup>103</sup> The Milanese internationalists claimed ‘the producers’ social emancipation from the tyranny of economic and political privilege, which is at the basis of our modern society’.<sup>104</sup> They wanted to face ‘the economic question, which is the result of an organisation founded on injustice’. Moreover, ‘socialism is not brutal’ and it does not make war against individuals, because individuals are the ‘inevitable products of the social position that history and society have given them’. The Milanese Internationalists affirmed that they did not want to destroy homelands and nationalities, ‘because, if homelands and nationalities nowadays are an historical fact, a social and human reality, there is not any socialism or internationalism that can destroy it, nor is there any moral or material force that can take away from Italians, Germans or French their languages in order to give them a single one for everyone, invented by some amateur of communism’.<sup>105</sup> The article confirmed their position in favour of the International:

The International does not make war against natural homelands: it only makes war against the political and artificial states, the modern states that are organisations and guarantors of the privileges and supremacy of a few social classes.<sup>106</sup>

The program also defended the Paris Commune. According to Milanese Internationalists, the Commune was not against the dissolution of national unity, as it was declared by some of its critics, but rather it supported ‘the resurrection, the confirmation, the vivification and full realisation of this unity through full and complete popular freedom’.

The authors of the program defined themselves as ‘proletarians, the people who work and who want their emancipation’ through the social organisation of labour. They confirmed their solidarity and brotherhood with all the workers of the world. The authors also stressed the idea of freedom and equality as inseparable goals: ‘freedom within equality and brotherhood within freedom’. They accepted religious beliefs but rejected religious dogma. Since the beginning, violence as a means to achieve their goals represented a controversial issue: despite the prominence given to association and education, Milanese internationalists did not reject violence *a priori*, and they agreed on

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Milanese workers’ club, Workers’ democratic-socialist journal). The title was written within a picture of a hammer beating the ‘anvil of privilege’.

<sup>103</sup> ‘Ai nemici ed agli amici’, *Il Martello*, Milan, 4 February 1872.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

its use as the last resource if ‘the righteous’ was forced to it. Furthermore, the authors acknowledged that the workers’ economic dependence on the capitalists was a source of material and moral slavery. Thus, their object was not merely the abolition of private property, but rather the transformation of the actual system and the opportunity for workers to fully enjoy, through their associations, the products of their work. Moreover, political freedom was seen as the consequence of economic emancipation. As Zangheri points out, ‘the solution of the social question and gaining political liberty were in a cause-effect relationship’, and this approach ‘[would] have pleased Bakunin’.<sup>107</sup> According to Milanese internationalists ‘[t]he social question cannot be separated from the political one and the solution of the former is the *conditio sine qua non* for the solution of the latter’.<sup>108</sup> In the journal there was space for a final attack on Mazzini’s ideology that, according to the article, had failed to give an answer to people’s real needs. Milanese Internationalists could see on the horizon the dawn of ‘the real republic, the real revolution, the social revolution’, which will triumph through the working classes’ organisations. The first issue also contained an appeal from the *Circolo* to ‘working citizens’ to join the International.<sup>109</sup> Finally, the journal published the statute of the *Circolo*, and a letter from Garibaldi welcoming the constitution of the Milanese club.

By the end of January 1872, Milan had its own section of the IWA. Other sections were founded throughout Italy in that period, and in February 1872 the Neapolitan section invited typographers to meet and form a cooperative based on the principles of the International.<sup>110</sup> The second issue of *Il Martello*, published on 17 February 1872, reported the news that the first issue had been seized and that the editor had been ‘thrown to jail’. The editor was Carlo Elli who was consequently replaced by Vincenzo Pezza.<sup>111</sup> The second issue presented more articles and news related to workers and their organisations.<sup>112</sup> The issue of internationalists’ organisations began to

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<sup>107</sup> R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.310.

<sup>108</sup> *Il Martello*, Milan, 4 February 1872.

<sup>109</sup> The document was signed by Pezza, Cuno, Gandolfi, Bellasio, Bonetti, Pozzi, Faccioli and was dated 1 January 1872.

<sup>110</sup> N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, p.359 and *Il Martello*, Milan, 17 February 1872.

<sup>111</sup> F. Della Peruta, ‘I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)’, in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, p.44; L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell’anarchismo, I, ad nomen*.

<sup>112</sup> The second issue introduced new columns: *Il movimento operaio all'estero* (Workers’ movement abroad); *Il movimento operaio in Italia* (Workers’ movement in Italy), with news related to the *Società dei lavoratori ferraresi*, (Ferrara Workers’ Benefit Society) to the Neapolitan federation, to the Milanese

appear, in the forms of comments on local and regional congresses. News from the *Circolo* reported that, during its last meeting, the opportunity to participate in the coming democratic congress had been discussed. However, the dominant opinion acknowledged the benefits of organising a regional congress as an intermediate step towards a national meeting. Although the Milanese Internationalists appreciated the idea of a national congress, they decided not to participate in its preliminary meetings, as suggested by the Turin section. Within the *Circolo*, different opinions contributed to stimulate political debate. The ambiguity in regards to political organisations confirmed that the Milanese branch of the IWA was still in an embryonic stage.

Who joined the Milanese *Circolo*? What was the social composition of the *Circolo*? A letter from Vitale Regis<sup>113</sup> to Engels gave the following details:

The *Circolo operaio* is made up of 90 members, mainly students and workers, and of the latter almost everyone is employed at the *Elvetica* plant. Among the students there are some who are very good, [as they are] taught by Cuno, and others, like Testini, who are affected by Bakunin's theories. Among Bakunin's friends there are Pezza and Gandolfi, who is a shopkeeper. Gandolfi told me that the fight against Bakunin was too violent and that he had been accused too easily.<sup>114</sup>

At the same time Marx, Engels and Lafargue, commenting on the Milanese situation, noticed that the local IWA branch was made up of workers led by Cuno, together with students, journalists, shopkeepers, and petite bourgeoisie under the influence of Bakunin's Alliance. In their opinion, Cuno was excluded from the secret plots of the alliance because he was German. Soon after, in February 1872, Cuno was arrested by the Italian police, and 'thanks to this providential help, the alliance had the opportunity to take over the Milanese section of the IWA'.<sup>115</sup>

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*Circolo* and to the *Fascio Operaio* of Florence, which was reported to have 200 members soon after its foundation; *Associazione internazionale dei lavoratori* (IWA) which reported the London GC's minutes, and finally *Massime socialiste sulla eguaglianza e sulla libertà* (Socialist aphorisms on equality and liberty) by Cormenin, Vermorel and Proudhon.

<sup>113</sup> Real name Etienne Pecharde. At the beginning of 1872 he went to Milan and Turin to visit Cuno and Carlo Terzaghi. See A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, II*, p.296, note 140.

<sup>114</sup> Letter by Regis to Engels dated 1 March 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.160-64.

<sup>115</sup> Lafargue, Engels, Marx, 'L'Alleanza della democrazia socialista e l'Associazione internazionale degli operai (1873)', in G.M. Bravo, *La Prima Internazionale, II*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1978, p.979. See also A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, II*, p.296, and R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.313, note 93.

Later, Cuno declared that he had become aware of a secret Bakuninite group acting within the *Circolo*.<sup>116</sup> The equilibrium within the Milanese section between Bakunin and Marx's supporters was broken by the arrest of Cuno on 28 February 1872.<sup>117</sup> Officially, Cuno was expelled from Italy in April because 'he lacked means to support himself'.<sup>118</sup> However, this version given by the police might be interpreted as an excuse to justify his expulsion because he was an internationalist and an activist in promoting the International. This interpretation is supported by a letter written by Cuno and published on 8 January by the *Gazzettino Rosa* in which Cuno, who signed the letter as 'an engineer at the *Elvetica*', complained that he was tailed by two policemen, and asked the Milan police chief whether it was he who had ordered it.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, it might be possible that the protagonist of an 'unfair' dismissal from the *Elvetica*, 'without any legal reason', as signed by 'a former employee' in a letter published on *Il Martello*, was indeed Theodor Cuno.<sup>120</sup> Engels wrote to Cuno promising to begin a campaign in the European socialist press for his release. According to Engels, Cuno's arrest was 'the first act of the international police conspiracy between Prussia, Austria and Italy' and 'those filthy dogs must realize that it is not that easy anymore, and that the arm of the IWA is longer than the Italian King's one'.<sup>121</sup> In the internationalist press there were appeals and articles protesting against Cuno's arrest and expulsion.<sup>122</sup>

In mid-February, Vitale Regis, an Italian internationalist of the London's GC, returned to Italy. He was sent by Engels to study the Italian situation and to counterbalance Bakunin's influence. Regis also visited the Milanese section. Engels was concerned about Bakunin's influence and had written to Cuno on 24 January 1872

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<sup>116</sup> Letter of Cuno to Engels, 25 April 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.193-94.

<sup>117</sup> Letter of Cuno to Engels, 8 March 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.182. See also R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.311, note 90; A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, II*, p.296, note 138; M. Nettelau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p.308.

<sup>118</sup> Letter of Cuno to Engels, 8 March 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.182, in which Cuno reported the decree of expulsion released by the Milan Prefect.

<sup>119</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 8 January 1872. Letter of Cuno to Engels, 1 February 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.149. See also A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, II*, p.297.

<sup>120</sup> See first issue of *Il Martello*, Milan, 4 February 1872. The column 'Borsa del lavoro' (Labour Exchange) advertised job positions. There were two notes: one of them was signed by a former employee at the *Elvetica* plant who was dismissed 'without any legal reason.'

<sup>121</sup> Letter of Engels to Cuno, 22 April 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.188.

<sup>122</sup> See the appeals published on the *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 13 March and 7 May 1872.

that ‘almost everywhere the direction of Italian sections is under control of Bakunin’.<sup>123</sup> On 22 April Engel wrote: ‘It will take a long period of patient work in order to take people away from Mazzini’s nonsense.’<sup>124</sup>

On 25 February 1871 *Il Martello* announced that the usual meeting of the *Circolo operaio* of Milan was due on the coming Sunday ‘at the same place’: ‘[a]fter the Carnival distractions, surely members will participate in huge numbers. We have much to do and the contribution of everyone is necessary.’<sup>125</sup> After Cuno was arrested, Pezza and other Bakunin supporters could have completely taken over the control of the Milanese section of the IWA. However, despite condemning the authoritarian tendencies of the GC, Milanese internationalists maintained their relationship with the GC, primarily through Mauro Gandolfi. Second, police repression against members of the International had already begun: several internationalists were arrested, among whom were some students of agronomy whose role was considered crucial for propaganda in the countryside.<sup>126</sup> According to Bakunin, rural workers had the greatest revolutionary potential.<sup>127</sup> Yet this class did not receive enough support and representation by the Milanese internationalists, and this void influenced the later development of the Milanese anarchist movement.

At the end of March 1872 Vincenzo Pezza was arrested together with other subeditors. In May they were found guilty of breaching press regulations. Pezza was sentenced to six months imprisonment and a *Lire* 1,600 fine. However, by the end of July he was already out of jail and went to Switzerland to meet with Bakunin.<sup>128</sup> Pezza

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<sup>123</sup> Letter of Engels to Cuno, 24 January 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.141.

<sup>124</sup> Letter of Engels to Cuno, 22 April 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.189.

<sup>125</sup> I have not been able to find out if there was an official venue of the *Circolo*. The workers’ benefit society founded at the end of 1859 had his headquarter in *Piazza Santa Marta*, then *Piazza Mentana*, see <http://www.storiadimilano.it/cron/dal1851al1860.htm>. An article in *La Perseveranza*, Milan, 9 August 1872 mention *Via San Giovanni sul Muro* as the meeting place of Milanese Internationalists.

<sup>126</sup> See letter of the committee of the Circolo (Torboli, M. Gandolfi, V. Pezza, Arnaldo Rossi) to Engels, 28 April 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.196-197, and R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.313, note 93. The students were Testini, Danieli and La Bella, accused of plotting to burn the university’s chemistry laboratory: see G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.190.

<sup>127</sup> P.C. Masini, ‘La Prima Internazionale in Italia. Problemi di una revisione storiografica’, in *Il movimento operaio e socialista. Bilancio storiografico e problemi storici (Atti del convegno promosso da ‘Mondo Operaio’ per il 70° del Partito socialista italiano, Firenze 18-20 gennaio 1963)*, p.99.

<sup>128</sup> Rosselli suggests that Pezza escaped: see N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, p.341, note 2.

participated in a few meetings of Italian internationalists,<sup>129</sup> but he died very soon from consumption (8 January 1873).<sup>130</sup>

It is worthwhile to quote from a portrait of Pezza written by Enrico Bignami who described Pezza as a ‘young, handsome, sweet, generous and honest’ man.<sup>131</sup>

His faith was our faith, and he was one of its most ardent supporters. Persecuted, imprisoned because of his free words, powerful like the truth, carved on the republican-socialist journal that he had founded.

In his article Bignami expressed a sense of frustration and pain for the fact that Pezza had dedicated his life to the emancipation of the people and cursed at fate for not being able to see its realisation:

None of us will reach the great goal that tires our souls and eats our heart! Many of us will fall exhausted along the way; some, the most unlucky, will desert; others will be the victims of tomorrow.

*Il Martello* was not the only internationalist journal published in Milan. Giuseppe Cozzi, born in 1841, founded a journal titled ‘*La Lega Rossa*’.<sup>132</sup> In its program, this ‘political, literary, dramatic and musical’ weekly journal defined itself as ‘the leaflet of workers who belong to the Republican Party and are affiliated to the purpose of the International with conviction and feeling’. Little is known about

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<sup>129</sup> Pezza participated to 18 August 1872 introductory Congress of the Jurassienne Federation, held at La Chaux de Fonds by the Federation Jurassienne, for the IWA Hague Congress. He also attended the antiauthoritarian Saint-Imier Congress in mid September 1872. J. Guillaume, *L’Internationale. Documents et souvenirs (1864-1878)*, pp.317-18, in which Guillaume noticed that Pezza ‘looked sick’ and then ‘very tired’. On 26 August 1872, Pezza had a haemorrhage.

<sup>130</sup> See, ‘Appello della Federazione operaia napoletana alle associazioni consorelle, ai fratelli operai, nonché a tutta la democrazia italiana’, foglio volante (cm 23x37), s.n.t., in P.C. Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana della Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori, Atti Ufficiali (1871-1880)*, pp.242-45.

<sup>131</sup> *La Plebe*, Lodi, 22 January 1873, in R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, pp.378-79.

<sup>132</sup> There is some controversy around the date of birth of this internationalist journal. Rosselli first, and later Romano wrote that the weekly journal was founded on 28 January 1872. See N. Rosselli, *Mazzini e Bakunin. Dodici anni di movimento operaio in Italia (1860-1872)*, p.331, note 1 and A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, II*, p.242, note 9. Ravindranathan disagrees with Rosselli and Romano, since he has found the issue number 11 which is dated 18 February 1872. This would the journals take foundation date back to December 1871: see T.R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, p.288. However, according to F. Della Peruta, *La Lega Rossa* was the continuation of *La Farfalla*, and the new journal kept publishing with the same numeration of *La Farfalla*. See F. Della Peruta, ‘I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904),’ in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.42-43. Also, Ravindranathan writes that the issue he had found is the only one that has survived. This is contradicted by the second issue, (n. 12, 25 February 1872), available at the ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, *stampa L-MA*.

Giuseppe Cozzi. The Milanese police had only sporadic information about him.<sup>133</sup> Their documents reveal that he was affiliated to the ‘radical party’, while from the *Gazzettino Rosa* of 31 May 1872, we know that ‘the twenty-nine years old Giuseppe Cozzi, son of Pier Ambrogio, born and resident in Milan’ was at that time in prison for press crime.<sup>134</sup> From the few issues that survived, it is possible to get a glimpse of Cozzi’s ideology. In the ninth issue (4 February 1872), there was an article by Cozzi against conscription<sup>135</sup> and in the following one (11 February 1872) Cozzi expressed his view on the necessity of educating the youth in the use of weapons.<sup>136</sup> More significantly, in the 18 February 1872 issue, Cozzi criticized Mazzini with an article titled ‘*Il Mazzinanesimo e l’Internazionale*’ (Mazzinianism and the International). He also published a letter by Garibaldi in which the General accepted the honorary presidency of *La Lega Rossa*.

However, Cozzi’s troubles with the authority began with the twelfth issue (25 February 1872). First, he wrote an article, titled *Schiavi Bianchi* (white slaves), in which he expressed the need to emancipate this ‘huge multitude of white slaves’ not through violence but rather with education and with the right to work. On the second page there was an article that attracted a police charge: in his ‘Solite parole’ (Usual words), Cozzi criticized the Italian police that had the power to jail poor citizens. ‘The law is not equal for everyone’, Cozzi wrote, but rather ‘he who spends more is more right’. To prove his point, Cozzi mentioned the editor of *Il Martello*, who was at that time in custody: “‘Why?’” Cozzi asked, “‘what is the reason?’” Moreover, ‘in 1859 we were all supporters of the Savoy monarchy, thinking that their government was the best. We were deceived!’ According to Cozzi, ‘[i]t is time to change things’. Cozzi did not have time to change things; because of this article Cozzi was charged with press crime and the journal was seized.<sup>137</sup> After being on the run for almost six months, on 20 August Cozzi gave himself up to the police, when an amnesty was granted.<sup>138</sup>

Ravindranathan asserts that there is no proof that Cozzi had relationships with the *Circolo Operaio*. However, *La Lega Rossa* published appeals to attend the meetings

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<sup>133</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, *stampa L-MA*, Prefect to police chief, Milan, 12 March 1872: Cozzi is described as a man of ‘regular height, brown hair, brown moustaches and he dresses with elegance and with a top hat’.

<sup>134</sup> *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 31 May 1872.

<sup>135</sup> ‘La coscrizione’, *La Lega Rossa*, Milan, 4 February 1872.

<sup>136</sup> ‘Della necessità che la gioventù s’istruisca alle armi’, *La Lega Rossa*, Milan, 11 February 1872.

<sup>137</sup> Warrant for arrest against Cozzi, dated 25 February 1872, in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, *stampa L-MA*, police chief to prefect, Milan, 27 February 1872.

<sup>138</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, *stampa L-MA*, Royal prosecutor reporting to Milan police chief, 4 August 1872: although Cozzi had benefited of the amnesty (Royal decree 7 June 1872), further research had to be done.

of the *Circolo*. This kind of notification suggests that Cozzi and the members of the *Circolo* were aware of each other and networked in terms of information, communication and cross-referencing.<sup>139</sup>

## **2.4 Between Marx and Bakunin: the evolutionist socialism of *La Plebe* (1871-1877)**

According to Manacorda, it is possible to understand what happened in Italy in 1872 only if the analysis is framed within the broader context of the struggle within the IWA.<sup>140</sup> As Civolani points out, '[i]n a few months – from March 1871 to March 1872 – the IWA [in Italy] had become a well established organisation'.<sup>141</sup> The London conference's IX Resolution had caused the reaction of the Federation Jurassienne which released the Sonvillier letter in November 1871. Most of the Italian section had responded positively to the Swiss document. Significantly, on 5 August 1872 Engels wrote: 'In Italy we have only one section, Turin, of which we are sure; maybe also Ferrara. Milan, since Cuno has left, is completely in Bakunin's hand.'<sup>142</sup>

The government decided that the radical ideas published in internationalist journals were a threat to the state, and it decided to target journals and newspapers to prevent further dissemination of those ideas. In Italy, repression against the International started in February 1870 when the police raided the Neapolitan section and arrested some of its members who were allegedly involved in a leather workers' strike. In August 1871 the government released its first legislative intervention against the International. This organisation was considered to be a 'permanent offence to the Nation's laws and fundamental institutions and a remarkable danger to the public order', and thus, the Italian government ordered the dissolution of the Neapolitan

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<sup>139</sup> See *La Lega Rossa*, Milan, 11 February and 25 February 1872.

<sup>140</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi (1853-1892)*, pp.105-06.

<sup>141</sup> E. Civolani, *L'anarchismo dopo la comune. I casi italiano e spagnolo*, p.65. Historians have debated whether the First International in Italy can be considered as the first modern political party. Ragonieri and Civolani argue against such an interpretation: see Ragonieri, *Il movimento socialista in Italia (1850-1922)*, Milan, Teti, 1976, pp.29-30, and Civolani, *L'anarchismo dopo la comune. I casi italiano e spagnolo*, pp.11-12, nota 1. Manacorda, Candeloro, Masini and Cerrito believe the Italian Federation of IWA was the first political party: see G. Manacorda, *Il socialismo nella storia d'Italia. Storia documentaria dal Risorgimento alla Repubblica*, Bari, Laterza, 1970 (1st edition 1966), vol.I, p.130; P.C. Masini, 'La Prima Internazionale in Italia. Problemi di una revisione storiografica,' *Il Movimento operaio e socialista*, p.86; G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna, VI, Lo sviluppo del capitalismo e del movimento operaio 1871-1896*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1994, p.54.

<sup>142</sup> Marx-Engels, *Opere complete*, vol.XLIV, Rome, 1974, p.525, in R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, vol.I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.353.

section and the arrest of some members, included Carlo Cafiero.<sup>143</sup> In Milan, repression targeted members of the *Circolo* and its organ, *Il Martello*. A warrant for the arrest of Carlo Elli, editor of the journal, was released the day after the publication of the first issue.<sup>144</sup> Vincenzo Pezza, the journal's founder, replaced Elli but he also was arrested and jailed in May. Theodor Cuno, after his arrest, was expelled from Italy, while Giuseppe Cozzi was also sentenced to jail. Enrico Bignami, editor of *La Plebe*, was arrested in November 1872 and released only in February of the following year. *La Plebe* had to interrupt its publications and it was resumed only in 1875 in Milan.

As a matter of fact, the key people of the International in Milan were the targets of the government action.<sup>145</sup> However, the internationalists were not the only source of concern for the Milan Prefect. From 1871 there had been an increase in strikes and agitations, mainly by railroad workers in July and by tailors in August.<sup>146</sup> There were also rumours of a plot by porters outside *Porta Romana*, by peasants in San Pietro alla Vigna, strikes of tailors at the *Bocconi* plant, with some people arrested. There were more strikes at the *Strusa* plant, *Cimbardi* (silk factory) and *Grondona*.<sup>147</sup> In the following year another strike wave burst into the Milanese summer.<sup>148</sup> According to Tilly, 'a citywide strike began on August 5 in the foundry of the Suffert company, with mechanics from the associated machine works and other nearby engineering plants soon joining their fellows'.<sup>149</sup> Construction workers joined the strike and marched through the city streets. The rally in *Piazza del Duomo* was repressed by the police and two workers were wounded.<sup>150</sup> Protests continued in the following days, when workers from other factories, such as *Binda* and *Elvetica* joined the strike. *La Plebe* wrote that the police behaved provocatively and arrested around 40 people.<sup>151</sup> However, according to *La Plebe*, the lack of violence and the moderate behaviour displayed by the strikers earned the solidarity of the Milanese population.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.73.

<sup>144</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, *stampa L-MA*, Milan, 6 February 1872.

<sup>145</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 9/1, *Società Internazionale*.

<sup>146</sup> See *Gazzettino Rosa*, Milan, 24 July and 27 August 1871.

<sup>147</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 41, *Disordini e scioperi 1871-1872. Milano e dintorni*.

<sup>148</sup> For strikes in Milan in summer 1872 see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 105, *Spirito Pubblico*, fasc. 13, 1872.

<sup>149</sup> M.A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan, 1881-1901*, p.128, who reports the work by Volker Hunecke, *Classe operaia e rivoluzione industriale a Milano, 1859-1892*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1982, originally published in Germany, 1978.

<sup>150</sup> R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, p.319.

<sup>151</sup> *La Plebe*, Lodi, 7 August 1872, in Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, p.320

<sup>152</sup> *La Plebe*, Lodi, 14 August 1872, in Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, p.321.

In Tilly's opinion, 'economic factors seem dominant here'; however the historian also argues that those economic factors were connected to political changes 'that reduced the cost of action or augmented the benefits to be gained from it'.<sup>153</sup> Many internationalists hoped those strikes were the beginning of the social revolution. *La Plebe* shared a similar view until it corrected itself.<sup>154</sup> However, the possibility that these strikes could turn into something more political was a source of concern for Milanese authorities. The Milan police chief warned that the internationalist movement was the most serious danger and it could 'hallucinate the masses'.<sup>155</sup> At the end of summer 1872, 153 people were arrested, and 65 percent of them were young people aged between 15 and 30 years, coming mostly from the external districts or from the countryside.<sup>156</sup> The Milanese newspapers managed to confuse the police. While *Il Secolo* denied any interference by the International, to the extent of arguing that 'saying that the actual strike was promoted by the International is bullshit',<sup>157</sup> the conservative *La Perseveranza* ignited suspicions:

The rumour according to which some members of the Milanese section of the International were in touch with the mechanic workers who started the strike is spreading. (...). We know that the owner of the premises where the Milanese internationalists meet, in San Giovanni sul Muro, has closed the shop, announcing to the members of the Internationalist section that he is no longer willing to allow their meeting there.<sup>158</sup>

By the beginning of the 1870s there had been an increase in strikes<sup>159</sup> and the number of workers' organisations.<sup>160</sup> According to Tilly, a 'close link between organisation and strikes thus is evident in this period'.<sup>161</sup> It is highly probable that some internationalists participated in the strikes, especially among the *Elvetica's* workers, due

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<sup>153</sup> Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan*, p.129. See also, V. Hunecke, *Classe operaia e rivoluzione industriale a Milano, 1859-1892*, p.374 and E. Civolani, 'Scioperi e agitazioni operaie dell'estate 1872 nei comparti manifatturieri di Milano e di Torino', *Movimento operaio e socialista*, vol.22, 1977, pp.427-55.

<sup>154</sup> *La Plebe*, Lodi, 7 August 1872, in Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, p.320.

<sup>155</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 41, Milan police chief to Prefect, 27 September 1872, in *Ibid.*, p.325. Italian original, 'Allucinare le masse'.

<sup>156</sup> Civolani, 'Scioperi e agitazioni operaie dell'estate 1872 nei comparti manifatturieri di Milano e di Torino,' p.435.

<sup>157</sup> *Il Secolo*, n.d., in Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, p.326.

<sup>158</sup> *La Perseveranza*, n.d., in *Ibid.*, p.326.

<sup>159</sup> See E. Civolani, *L'anarchismo dopo la comune. I casi italiano e spagnolo*, p.42.

<sup>160</sup> In 1873 in Lombardy there were 41,511 workers' organisations. See R. Zangheri, 'Nascita e primi sviluppi', in R. Zangheri, G. Galasso & V. Castronovo, *Storia del movimento cooperativo in Italia*, Turin, Einaudi, 1987, pp.9 and 12, cited in Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, p.327.

<sup>161</sup> Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan*, p.128.

to Cuno's activities in the factory before his arrest. Yet it is hard to endorse the concerns of the police and of the conservative newspapers. The Milanese section of the International had suffered from the recent police repression with the arrest of its most influential members. As Zangheri points out, '[i]n Milan it was then difficult to start again the activities of the *Circolo*, although there was still the *Gazzettino Rosa* and *La Plebe*'.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, the Milanese internationalists of *Il Martello* had expressed some doubts in regards to the efficacy of striking. On 25 February 1872, Pezza wrote that without a radical reform of the relationship between labour and capital, a strike could achieve only 'ephemeral and temporary advance'. He also denied any association between the International and the strikes: '[s]omeone believes that the International causes strikes, and many workers confuse in their minds the idea of the International with the strikes'.<sup>163</sup> The author asserted that in most of the cases strikes were caused by the demands of the capitalists and by their strict and rigid regulations. If workers wished to improve their conditions, they had to 'ban selfishness'. Material and moral advance was possible only through collective actions, associations and solidarity among the oppressed, because the struggle was broader and was a struggle of ideas and principles. This article was anticipating an issue that later would become crucial within both the anarchist and workers' movements:

On an economic level, a strike, even if it is broadly organised, can only achieve temporary advance, since a general improvement of salary without a radical reform of the relationship between labour and capital, has, as a consequence, the inevitable raise of prices for consumers, who are, most of all, proletarians.

Yet industrial relations in Milan, as for the rest of Italy, did not offer chances for radical reforms. The peculiar situation of the Milanese industrial system was among the causes. In the 1870s the Milanese working class was not homogeneous, lacked structure, and did not have clear points of reference. This situation persisted across decades. In fact, unlike Turin or Carrara or Ancona, Milan never had a pole of attraction such as a car industry, mining companies or a harbour. Moreover, despite having the first Chamber of Labour in the country, this organisation remained one of the weakest workers' organisations in Italy until the outbreak of the First World War. Furthermore, Milan was a city with a high rate of mobility and migration, which affected the

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<sup>162</sup> Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, p.313.

<sup>163</sup> *Il Martello*, Milan, 25 February 1872.

internationalists' ability to establish their organisations and to develop strong ties with the labour movement.

During the Milanese workers' protests, on 4 August 1872 the Italian sections of the IWA met in Rimini in their first national congress. This event marks the foundation of the Italian anarchist movement, 'organised on a national basis'.<sup>164</sup> From that event, Cafiero and Costa began to play a key role.<sup>165</sup> During the congress, five important decisions were made: first, it was decided to constitute the Italian Federation of the IWA; second, its statute was approved and two committees were formed (the correspondence committee and the statistics committee); third, the Italian Federation formally ratified its break with authoritarian communism on an ideological level, and with the General Council on an organisational one; moreover, it was decided not to attend the IWA Hague Congress in September 1872, and finally, the second national congress was called for March 1873 in Mirandola, Bologna.<sup>166</sup>

The Milanese section did not send any representatives to the Rimini congress. A letter was sent to the Congress recommending the abolition, or at least the restriction, of the power of the London GC. On 8 August 1872, Carlo Cafiero and Andrea Costa, respectively the president and secretary of the newly born Italian Federation, replied to the Milanese internationalists on behalf of the Congress: 'What you told us to do, if the dictatorial ideas of the GC had prevailed in the next International congress, we did.' Moreover, 'We wanted to break once and for all with ... everything that smells of authoritarianism and we believe that our resolution is the most accurate expression of your feelings'.<sup>167</sup>

Although the Milanese section was supporting Bakunin in his struggle, it did not cease corresponding with the GC. *Il Martello* had regularly published minutes of the London GC.<sup>168</sup> While Pezza was in jail and Cuno expelled from Italy, Mauro Gandolfi kept writing to Engels, secretary of the IWA for Italy. On 16 May 1872, on behalf of the Milanese section, Gandolfi wrote a letter to Engels asking for funds for the GC in order

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<sup>164</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.66; M. Nettelau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p.365; P.C. Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana della Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori, Atti Ufficiali (1871-1880)*, pp.36-41.

<sup>165</sup> Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, I, p.353.

<sup>166</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani*,. *Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.65-66.

<sup>167</sup> Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana della Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori*, pp.43-44. The letter was published also in *La Favilla* of Mantova on 16 August 1872, see Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, p.357.

<sup>168</sup> See all four issues of *Il Martello*.

to cover the costs of Pezza and Elli's fine.<sup>169</sup> The day after, Gandolfi wrote a personal letter to Engels in which he defines Pezza as 'the most strenuous leader of the International in our town'.<sup>170</sup> Enclosed with the letter, there was a 'Circular letter to the Italian sections of the IWA', dated 14 May 1872, in which the *Circolo's* committee invited its 'brother-workers' to 'redouble the activities for an organisation' and to 'close the ranks. And when we will be well organised, we will stand up for our rights'.<sup>171</sup>

A few days before, on 7 May, Engels had written to Cuno that:

In Italy, the damned difficulty is only to get in touch directly with the factory workers. These damned Bakuninite doctrine makers, lawyers, doctors, and so on, intervene everywhere and they behave as if they were born as workers' representatives.<sup>172</sup>

As secretary of the IWA for Italy, Engels's correspondence with Italians was published in Italian internationalist newspapers, mainly *La Plebe* which had not subscribed to the Sonvillier letter.<sup>173</sup> Carlo Terzaghi replied to Engels with an article published in *La Favilla* denying Engels' claim that out of the 21 Italian sections only the Neapolitan one had paid its membership fee. Terzaghi affirmed that the *Circolo operaio* of Milan, the sections of Girgenti, Ravenna, Turin and Rome had all paid their fees. Engels replied in the pages of *La Plebe* asserting that Milan, Girgenti and Turin sections had not signed the Rimini resolutions.<sup>174</sup> This controversy about membership of the IWA demonstrates how fragile the GC's control of the International in Italy was. As Manacorda points out, '[w]ith the sole exception of *La Plebe* of Lodi directed by Enrico Bignami, the whole Italian internationalist press supported the Sonvillier circular letter'.<sup>175</sup>

Enrico Bignami was born in Lodi, near Milan, in 1844. Bignami became a Mazzini supporter and a volunteer for Garibaldi's army, and in 1868 he founded in his native town a newspaper titled *La Plebe*. This democratic-republican journal, which

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<sup>169</sup> Letter of the *Circolo's* committee (Mauro Gandolfi, Antonio Torboli, Arnaldo Rossi, Franco Cafulli) to Engels dated 16 May 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, pp.209-10.

<sup>170</sup> Letter of Mauro Gandolfi to Engels, Milan, 17 May 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.211.

<sup>171</sup> Circular letter of Milan *Circolo's* committee to the Italian sections of IWA, Milan, 14 May 1872, in G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.212.

<sup>172</sup> G. Del Bo, *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani (1848-1895)*, p.203.

<sup>173</sup> See *La Plebe*, Lodi, 5 and 8 October and 14 December 1872, in Bravo, *La Prima Internazionale, II*, pp.842-50.

<sup>174</sup> Carlo Terzaghi signed the article as 'Ateo'. See *Ibid.*, pp.846-47.

<sup>175</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi (1853-1892)*, p.109; J. Guillaume, *L'Internationale. Documents et souvenirs (1864-1878)*, p.247 ff.

lasted 15 years, ‘reflected Bignami’s ideological evolutions and constituted the reference point for Italian evolutionist socialism’.<sup>176</sup> In the first issue’s lead article, the author declared himself to be a socialist, but his lack of knowledge of socialist theories made his socialism a sort of democratic humanitarianism. After the events that marked the Paris Commune in March 1871, the distance between *La Plebe* and Mazzini became more noticeable and Bignami began a correspondence with the IWA in London. In September 1871 *La Plebe* published the IWA’s statute and Engels began his collaboration with the newspaper, which lasted until 1879. Between 1871 and 1872 Bignami joined a provisional committee. This small group was constituted in order to organise a national congress of all factions of the Italian Left. Basically, the congress aimed at uniting rationalists, Mazzinians, Garibaldinians, and Internationalists. Not surprisingly, the congress never occurred, but *La Plebe* continued to publish articles that exposed different opinions, as well as several appeals for unity.

With its attempts at reconciliation, *La Plebe* was undertaking an ‘eclectic’ direction. The journal emphasised the relationship between political and social issues and the necessity to find a solution for both. However, while the political issue was a matter of means which involved strategies and organisation, the solution of the social issue represented a common goal. The journal also reflected the position taken by Bignami in regards to the controversy between Marx and Bakunin within the IWA. *La Plebe* did not subscribe to the Sonvillier letter and instead it published the IX Resolution of the London Congress. Although his position seemed quite clear, Bignami did not want to definitely break with the ‘anti-authoritarian’ Italian sections of the IWA. His position was a sort of middle way between Marx and Bakunin. Bignami, and thus *La Plebe*, rejected the revolutionary methods of Bakunin proclaiming themselves to be ‘evolutionists’. Evolutionism meant to be open to different paths for achieving a socialist society. In Bignami’s opinion, federalism, collectivism and anarchy could coexist with a less catastrophic and more gradualist idea of social emancipation.<sup>177</sup> This long ideological process of separation between ‘evolutionist’ socialism and anarchism became a watershed in the history of the Italian socialist movement. Bignami’s evolutionist socialism could not coexist with the resolution taken at the International Anti-authoritarian Congress held in Saint-Imier on 15-16 September 1872. In particular,

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<sup>176</sup> MOIDB, *Bignami*, p.301.

<sup>177</sup> See Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.98.

Bignami could not accept the final resolution that rejected the idea of political power while advocating its destruction.

The evolutionist socialism of Bignami reached its complete definition in the period 1875-1877. Bignami had been arrested in November 1872 and then released in February 1873. *La Plebe* ceased publishing upon Bignami's arrest and resumed in November 1875 in Milan.<sup>178</sup> In the meantime, the distance between *La Plebe* and the anarchists increased in August 1874 when the Italian authorities prevented an insurrection led by internationalists and republicans arresting their leaders.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, the ideological evolution of Bignami was marked by the presence in Milan of the French socialist Benôit Malon who began to collaborate with *La Plebe*.<sup>180</sup> Malon's experimental and humanitarian socialism influenced Bignami and marked the late development of his political thought. Like Bignami, Malon too had been a supporter of the Paris Commune and had remained inspired by anarchist ideas.<sup>181</sup> Another important influence for Bignami's ideology and activism was Osvaldo Gnocchi-Viani.<sup>182</sup> In 1875-1876 Gnocchi-Viani wrote a column in the pages of *La Plebe* titled, *Corrispondenze* from Rome. In 1876, Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani constituted in Milan the *Circolo di studi economico-sociali per la propaganda e per l'approfondimento* (Social-economic club for in-depth studies and propaganda).<sup>183</sup> Through the analysis of the social and economic situation, Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani aimed at informing, with a series of conferences and seminars, Milanese citizens and workers about the 'natural laws that regulate the constitution and progress of society, their being and economic development'.<sup>184</sup> On 1 July 1876, *La Plebe* published a manifesto for the constitution of an 'Upper Italy IWA Federation'.<sup>185</sup> The manifesto was addressed to '[a]gli operai, alle operaie, alla gioventù d'Italia' (To Italian male and female workers, and to the youth) and it recalled the IWA's 1864 statute, thus repudiating the recent statute reviewed in

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<sup>178</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)', in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.59-66.

<sup>179</sup> See the article 'Ai lettori', *La Plebe*, Milan, 19 May 1876, which criticizes the insurrectional methods.

<sup>180</sup> N. Pernicone, *Italian anarchism, 1864-1892*, p.116.

<sup>181</sup> G. Woodcock, *Anarchism, A history of libertarian ideas and movements*, pp.288-89.

<sup>182</sup> See MOIDB, *ad nomen*; G. Berti, 'Gnocchi-Viani e l'idea anarchica,' *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.17, no.1, 1997, pp.207-14; F. Della Peruta, 'Osvaldo Gnocchi-Viani e l'Internazionale a Roma dal 1872 al 1877,' *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.17, no.1, 1997, pp.137-58.

<sup>183</sup> The *Circolo's* statute was published on *La Plebe*, Milan, 6 August 1876.

<sup>184</sup> *La Plebe*, Milan, 6 August 1876.

<sup>185</sup> The news of the Federation's constitution is in *La Plebe*, Milan, 24 June 1876. The manifesto was published on 6 July 1876. Now in P.C. Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana della Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori, Atti Ufficiali (1871-1880)*, pp.249-62.

Geneva in 1873.<sup>186</sup> Ambiguously, the manifesto ended with a generic declaration of faith in collectivism, federalism and anarchy.

On 15-16 October 1876, during the First Congress of the *Federazione dell'Alta Italia* of IWA (Upper Italy IWA Federation), Bignami was elected as a delegate to participate in the second Congress of the Italian Federation of the IWA, which would be held in Florence in October 1876.<sup>187</sup> However, Bignami was not able to participate in it because of the arrests made by the Italian police before the meeting. Despite the police raids, eventually a clandestine congress was held in Tosi, near Florence. During the meeting, the rejection of both political elections and republic was ratified. It was also affirmed that the social revolution was the only method to pursue the goal.<sup>188</sup> This episode contributed to increasing in the following months the distance between the Bakuninite faction of the Italian Federation and the evolutionist position of the *Federazione Alta Italia*. Such a gap received attention in the pages of *La Plebe*. *La Plebe* was becoming a point of reference for all those who opposed the insurrectional methods. Moreover, according to Masini, Engels's collaboration with *La Plebe* gave a sort of moral patronage.<sup>189</sup>

In February 1877, during the Second Congress of the *Federazione Alta Italia* held in Milan, the two factions of the Italian Federation finally split. On behalf of the evolutionist socialists, Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani reaffirmed that elections and the parliamentary system could not be excluded *a priori* from the means to achieve socialism. On the other side, Florido Matteucci supported the intransigent anarchist position within the *Federazione Alta Italia*, but he led a minority. The congress reaffirmed not only the plurality and experimental nature of different means, but also the autonomy of the *Federazione Alta Italia* on the basis of the original statute of the IWA. Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani emphasised the importance of workers' associations as a necessary starting point for improving economic and social conditions. Only 15

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<sup>186</sup> In September 1873, the internationalist delegates of England, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Holland, met in Geneva for the VI General Congress of the IWA. This congress marked the success of the antiauthoritarian current. The General Council based in New York (the Marxist branch of IWA) was overturned and the delegates adopted the Sain-Imier Congress's program. Also, A. Costa set the basis for the constitution of an 'Italian Committee for the Social Revolution,' which operated as a clandestine organisation. For this, see Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.82-83.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., pp.99-100.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p.103.

associations participated in this congress. Nonetheless, the meeting was crucial since it broke the unity of the IWA's Italian Federation.

Eventually, Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani contributed to the formation of the first *Partito Operaio Italiano* (Italian Labour Party, POI), which emphasised workerism as a program of economic reforms specifically for factory workers' struggles. In particular, attention was drawn to firm demands for the right to strike and to form worker's unions.<sup>190</sup> By 'workerism', Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani were suggesting that workers' organisations become tools of the class struggle on the economic level. Conversely, on a political level, the POI's perspectives remained limited by such specific and particular goals. Hence the gap between anarchists and workerists appeared more evident. In fact, while the anarchist movement was not able to emphasise the political aspect of the class struggle because it could see only the broader picture of a social revolution, workerism and its supporters failed to see the link between general political struggle and class interests.

The POI was founded in Milan in 1882, primarily by Giuseppe Croce and Costantino Lazzari with the intellectual support of Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani. During its fifth congress (1890), the POI moved closer to the democratic socialism of the Second International. In doing so, the POI paved the way for the formation, the following year, of the *Partito dei Lavoratori Italiani* (Italian workers' party). Eventually, the party merged with Costa's *Partito Socialista Rivoluzionario di Romagna* (Revolutionary socialist party of Romagna, PSRR) to form the first *Partito Socialista Italiano* (PSI, Genoa 1892).

## **2.5 From repression and divisions, the Milanese anarchists and Tito Vezio (1877-1882)**

In April 1877, the failed insurrection in the Matese region caused a harsh reaction by the Italian government.<sup>191</sup> On 8 May, *La Plebe* published the decree of suppression of the Italian sections of IWA, issued by the Perugia and Milan Prefects, respectively on 19

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<sup>190</sup> For an insight of the *Partito Operaio Italiano*, see L. Briguglio, *Il partito operaio italiano e gli anarchici*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1969, and M.G. Meriggi, *Il Partito Operaio Italiano. Attività rivendicativa formazione e cultura dei militanti in Lombardia (1880-1890)*, Milan, Angeli, 1985.

<sup>191</sup> See F. Della Peruta, 'La banda del Matese e la teoria anarchica della moderna 'Jacquerie' in Italia', *Movimento Operaio*, vol.5, 1954, pp.337-84.

and 20 April.<sup>192</sup> In the second half of August 1878, the trial of the '*Banda del Matese*' (The Matese's Gang) was held in Benevento.<sup>193</sup> The revolutionaries were charged with the murder of two *carabinieri*<sup>194</sup> and with attempted insurrection. Surprisingly, on 25 August, the judges acquitted the accused internationalists. In 1878 many other trials saw Italian anarchists at the bar and this gave them much publicity. The court cases provided the anarchists with a forum for exposing their ideas. The amnesty announced by the new King of Italy Umberto I on 19 January 1878 allowed many internationalists to be released and to continue their activities. The Italian Federation's headquarter moved from Naples to Florence and the journal *L'Avvenire*, published in Modena by Arturo Cerretti, became the organ of the Federation.<sup>195</sup>

However, another kind of propaganda began to appear in Italy. On 17 November 1878 in Naples, the 29-year-old Giovanni Passanante, who was neither an anarchist nor an internationalist, tried to stab the king. The monarch was saved by the prompt reaction of Prime Minister Cairoli. The day after in Florence, during a march organised by monarchists to celebrate the king's escape from death, a bomb was thrown into the crowd killing four people. A similar event happened in Pisa on 20 November without causing fatalities. The alleged attacker, Pirro Orsolini, was saved by the police from the crowd's ferocity.<sup>196</sup> This series of violent acts was ascribed to the Italian sections of the IWA and many members were arrested and jailed. The equation of anarchists and bombs started to spread. In December 1878, Pope Leo XIII released the encyclical *Quod apostolic muneris* in which the head of the Catholic Church condemned 'the sect of those who, with diverse and barbarous names, call themselves socialists, communists and nihilists'.<sup>197</sup> These events facilitated the repression of the IWA's Italian Federation. On 20 January 1879 a circular letter of the Minister of Interior revealed the government's intention to destroy the International and invited all the prefects throughout Italy to denounce and place under surveillance all its members.<sup>198</sup> The decision of the Florence Court of Cassation to consider the Italian sections of IWA to be '*associazioni di malfattori*' (associations of evildoers, common criminals) was a further

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<sup>192</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.127.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, pp.142-47.

<sup>194</sup> Originally part of the armed royal forces, the *carabinieri* are police who now have civil as well as military duties.

<sup>195</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.148.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., pp.152-53.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., pp.157-58.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p.159.

effective measure to put an end to the growth of the IWA.<sup>199</sup> Describing them as common criminals, the government intended to deprive the Italian internationalists of their political status. These actions against internationalists had two main effects: on a practical level, the new laws meant the end of the Italian Federation of the IWA and thus the Italian government could easily achieve its goal of destroying the association. On the other hand, however, the anarchist movement saw the rise of a radical individualist tendency, a centrifugal force that considered absolute and radical rebellion as the only way to facilitate a revolutionary process. This current of the anarchist movement developed during the 1880s when ‘permanent revolt’ replaced a lack of organisation on a national scale. These topics are further analysed in the following two chapters.

The state crackdown on anarchist, socialist and internationalist organisations caused the collapse of the *Circolo di studi economico-sociali* and of the *Federazione Alta Italia*. In Milan a socialist *circolo* was formed but was not successful. An Italian association of socialist groups based in Milan was theorised but never achieved. Yet, under the ash, something was still burning. On 20 May 1877 an article was published in *La Plebe* addressed to ‘the socialists of Italy’:

It has been a while since *La Plebe* has received requests to act as a spokesman for all those who wish to see the Italian socialists joining the great experimental social movement. (...) Our first task must be to analyse where socialism has had an effective propaganda – where it has gained the most influential moral position – where it develops with the most progressive pace. (...) Once we have analysed this, we have to investigate the whys and from the whys a broad, organic and vital entity has to come out in order to give a shape to the Socialist Party of Italy, a shape that it does not yet have.<sup>200</sup>

The attitude of *La Plebe* and its subeditors anticipated a deeper division within the Italian Federation of the IWA. Given police repression, after two years of political stasis in 1879 Andrea Costa, former secretary of the Italian Federation of IWA, began his famous ‘svolta’ (turn) towards ‘legalitarian’ socialism. With his letter ‘*Ai miei amici di Romagna*’ (To my friends of Romagna) published on *La Plebe*,<sup>201</sup> Costa began

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid. *La Plebe* published reports of trials against the ‘*malfattori*’ in September 1879, see Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.163-5.

<sup>200</sup> *La Plebe*, Milan, 20 May 1877.

<sup>201</sup> *La Plebe*, Milan, 3 August 1879.

steering the Italian socialist movement towards a legal and peaceful position.<sup>202</sup> Costa looked for the support of the Milanese socialist group. A passionate ideological debate began in the pages of *La Plebe*,<sup>203</sup> with Costa's former comrades attacking him for what was considered as a betrayal of the internationalist cause. In February 1880 Costa moved to Milan. On 4 April 1880 *La Plebe* published a manifesto addressed 'to the Italian socialists and to the people' calling for a congress to be held in Milan on 10-12 May. The congress was supposed to align all those Italian socialist forces that accepted the plurality of political struggles. As only a few organisations supported the initiative, foreseeing a fiasco, the organisers spread alarmist rumours about the revolutionary purposes of the congress' participants. Inevitably, these rumours caused the Milanese police to ban the congress.<sup>204</sup>

On 15 May 1880 the first issue of the *Rivista internazionale del socialismo* (International magazine of socialism), edited by *La Plebe* and with the contribution of Costa and Bignami, was published. The magazine aimed at uniting the Italian socialist forces, essentially constituting a party to stand in the coming elections.<sup>205</sup> The magazine lasted until 31 December 1880, just after the Chiasso Congress.<sup>206</sup> In the Swiss border city, the Third Congress of the Upper Italy Federation of the IWA marked a further rupture between Italian anarchists and socialists. From Milan, Carlo Monticelli and Paolo Valera joined the anarchist side, supporting Carlo Cafiero who played a key role for the anarchists. On the other hand, Gnocchi-Viani and Bignami, delegates of the *La Plebe* group, represented the evolutionist position. The two factions disagreed on collectivism, workers' participation in parliament and participation in municipal and administrative elections. The congress repudiated socialist and workers candidacies for election and condemned workers' organisations that pursued gradual reforms within the system. It was a success for the anarchists, but only a temporary one. The socialist faction that emerged from the congress was stronger and continued to grow in the following months. The Upper Italy Federation of the IWA changed its name to *Federazione socialista dell'Alta Italia* (Upper Italy Socialist Federation) to highlight the difference with the anarchist Italian Federation. Following these events, Andrea Costa,

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<sup>202</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.171.

<sup>203</sup> See in particular the articles of Francesco Saverio Merlino (17 August 1879) and Carlo Monticelli (30 August 1879).

<sup>204</sup> Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana della Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori*, pp.208-11.

<sup>205</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)', in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.80-82.

<sup>206</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.180-81.

who had started to publish *Avanti!* (Forward!) in April 1881, launched the *Partito Socialista Rivoluzionario di Romagna* (PSRR) in August 1881. On 26 February 1882, during the PSRR Congress held in Romagna, delegates decided to participate in the forthcoming elections. The debate among socialists and anarchists on parliamentary elections as a means to propagate their ideas had the effect of increasing socialist and workers candidacies. Cafiero and Cipriani were ‘protest candidates’. Likewise, Gnocchi-Viani was a candidate in Arezzo, Bignami in Pisa and Costa in Ravenna. The latter was the only socialist elected and he became the first Italian socialist MP.

The split from the socialists, and in particular with Costa, former revolutionary and secretary of the Italian Federation of IWA, worsened the mental condition of Carlo Cafiero.<sup>207</sup> In spring 1882, Cafiero moved to Milan, from where he surprisingly announced his adherence to the evolutionist current.<sup>208</sup> In his opinion, ‘it is better to make only one step forward all together than to remain isolated and walk hundreds of miles in abstract’.<sup>209</sup> On 6 April 1882, while he was in the Gallery with Gnocchi-Viani, Cafiero was arrested.<sup>210</sup> Despite his support for the legalitarian position and the ‘protest candidacy’ of other socialists, Cafiero resisted calls to stand as a candidate.<sup>211</sup> On 15 October 1882 Cafiero published a letter in the Milanese weekly journal *Tito Vezio* addressed to Carlo Monticelli. Cafiero expressed the reasons why he had decided to support the candidacy of his friend Emilio Covelli.<sup>212</sup> In Milan the antilegalitarian socialists gathered around the newly born journal *Tito Vezio*.<sup>213</sup>

Since the beginning, publishing represented the principal means of communication for the anarchists. Their publications were produced with the technologies of the time. Mass media technologies influenced the way anarchists related with the working class. Not only the format – pamphlets or journals – but also other techniques of communication – words, expressions, images, fonts, styles, titles – were all influenced by theories and ideas of the time coming from the rest of Europe. One

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<sup>207</sup> See P.C. Masini, *Cafiero*.

<sup>208</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.190.

<sup>209</sup> *La Favilla*, Mantova, 9-10 April 1882, quoted in P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.190.

<sup>210</sup> G. Bosio, ‘L’arresto di Carlo Cafiero dopo l’insurrezione del Matese’, *Avanti!*, Milan, 13, 16, 20, 30 July, 4 August 1949, in P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.190.

<sup>211</sup> *La Plebe, supplemento straordinario* (special issue), Milan, 27 October 1882, in P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.191.

<sup>212</sup> *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 15 October 1882.

<sup>213</sup> The complete title was *Tito Vezio. Giornale degli schiavi bianchi* (or *Tito Vezio: Journal of the white slaves*).

example is represented by the common use of inserting in the front page next to the title quotations by European thinkers. These quotes symbolized with a few words the ideological stances of the editorial board. Typographers, journalists and other contributors were in contact with European and non-European writers. They were part of the Milanese intelligentsia. Yet an analysis of the Milanese anarchist movement through the reading of police files and biographies reveals that since its origins the anarchist movement was in significant part made up of workers, such as metal and building workers. It also included artisans and shopkeepers - shoemakers and bakers - as well as part of the Milanese intelligentsia - typographers, publishers, journalists, *Scapigliati* and *déclasses*. In other words, the anarchist movement was a cross-class movement. However, the influential role played by intellectuals since the early stages of Milanese anarchism suggests a pattern that developed in the following years. Government repression made internationalists of all sorts outlaws. Thus, the lack of an official headquarter for anarchists affected the activities of the groups and increased the difficulty of establishing political networks with other groups and other individuals throughout the city. Personal contacts proved to be insufficient and, apart from reciprocal cross-referencing on the pages of their journals, groups failed to forge political ties among themselves. The lack of permanent headquarters to coordinate anarchists and a reticent-to-organisations Milanese labour movement made publishing the most effective anarchist initiative. Throughout its history, despite police repression, the Milanese anarchist movement produced a high number of publications. Within this framework, the anarchist intelligentsia emerged and was able to sustain its position as the most influential social group within the Milanese anarchist milieu.

The journal *Tito Vezio* represented the first communist-anarchist publication in Milan. The title recalled of a young Roman knight who, anticipating Spartacus, tried to claim liberty for the oppressed multitude of slaves.<sup>214</sup> In the first issue Luigi Castellazzo articulated the journal's program:

Who are we? It is easy to say: we are socialists. What do we want? We want the triumph of Justice;<sup>215</sup> the emancipation of all the dispossessed classes; the Abolition of all privileges; the social Order based on liberty, equality and brotherhood of People as well as of individuals; the real moral law replacing

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<sup>214</sup> 'Chi siamo e che cosa vogliamo', *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 15 October 1882. Below the title was the latin motto '*Frangar, non flectar*', meaning 'I will break (fracture) myself, but I will not bend (flex)'.

<sup>215</sup> Capital letter in the original.

the pile of old laws which have always protected and sanctioned every kind of tyranny ....

And further: ‘We want Science, with its proven truths and rational methods’ to replace ‘God of traditional revelations and of ridiculous cults’; ‘philosophical Anarchy’ to replace traditional authority; ‘the great workers’ family’ to replace a ‘limited, growling Homeland, locked within four walls and a moat’; ‘the full solidarity of all working men to produce - everyone according to his own strengths and for everyone according to his own needs – in one word, communism.’

The journal’s editor was Cesare Cova who had participated as a delegate of the Milanese *Figli del Lavoro* benefit society at the Congress of the Upper Italy Federation in February 1877.<sup>216</sup> Three years later, in August 1880, Cova tried unsuccessfully to convince Carlo Monticelli to reconstitute the Upper Italy Federation. Since the beginning, the journal opposed the socialist ‘evolutionist’ current and the idea of participating in elections. Yet an exception was made only for ‘protest candidates’ as a way to help imprisoned comrades. During the October 1882 elections, articles and letters appeared in the pages of *Tito Vezio*. Errico Malatesta sent letters to the journal accusing Costa of having betrayed the revolution and facilitating the end of the International in Italy.<sup>217</sup> Other articles were published on this topic: on 22 October 1882, a letter sent by Emilio Covelli invited every socialist to go to the ballot box to cast a vote against the present social and political order; one week later, an anti-electoral program signed by the ‘*Comitato operaio socialista rivoluzionario*’ (Socialist-revolutionary workers’ committee) sided with the anti-election position. The anti-evolutionist attitude of the journal’s editorial committee escalated in February-March 1883, following the publication of an article by A.C. (Andrea Costa) titled *Un sogno* (A dream).<sup>218</sup> Francesco Saverio Merlino replied to his former fellow with the article *La Repubblica sociale* (The social republic):

What does Social Republic mean? Social Republic means one hundred grams of republic and one gram of socialism ... The “prince” – this grand bourgeois, as they call him – would not exist anymore; but how many little princes ... would come out with their civic parties?

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<sup>216</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*. From October 1882 Cova was the main editor of *Tito Vezio* from October 1882 until 1883 when he was joined by Monticelli.

<sup>217</sup> *Tito Vezio*, Milan 12 and 30 November and 14 December 1882.

<sup>218</sup> A.C., ‘Un sogno,’ *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 5 February 1883.

Two days later, an article commemorating the Paris Commune and a manifesto addressed to ‘*Agli operai, alle operaie, al popolo delle città e delle campagne*’ (To workers, men and women of the city and of the countryside) confirmed the communist-anarchist tendency of the journal’s editorial board.<sup>219</sup> In protest against police repression and the continuous seizing of the journal, on 14 December 1883 *Tito Vezio* published a satirical dialogue between an imaginary editor and the public prosecutor. With this publication the Milanese journal defended its fellow journal, *Il Ribelle*, also published in Milan.<sup>220</sup> Much space was given to Tito Zanardelli, a former internationalist who was later revealed to be an agent provocateur.<sup>221</sup> There was news related to the workers’ and socialist movements in Italy as well as in the rest of Europe.<sup>222</sup> Finally, the journal published the minutes of the trial against Cova and Monticelli who were eventually sentenced and, for this reason, the publication of *Tito Vezio* ended. Before being sentenced, Monticelli organised a meeting in Milan on 18 February 1883.<sup>223</sup> Monticelli’s agenda included the disapproval of Costa’s parliamentary position. Costa, who had arrived in Milan the day before, decided to participate in the meeting, while Filippo Turati acted as chairman. Costa was criticized by the anarchists, in particular by Monticelli and Paolo Valera. However, Costa, who outlined the history of the Italian Socialist Party within a broader European framework and mentioned the collaboration with the Radical Party led by Bovio and Cavallotti, was able to gain support from the audience: the majority of the Milanese socialists approved of parliamentary activity. Monticelli’s agenda was rejected and, according to Pernicone, ‘The *Tito Vezio* meeting, resulted both in greater prestige for Costa among the Lombards and in sharp criticism of

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<sup>219</sup> *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 14 March 1883.

<sup>220</sup> ‘Dialogo,’ *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 14 January 1883. *Il Ribelle* was a weekly journal published in Milan at the end of 1882. It was the journal of the *Società democratica della Gioventù*, a republican-socialist organisation for Milanese youth, formed two years before. In its program, published in the first issue, the authors declared war on ‘every privilege, on everything that is not a real reform, a radical reform.’ But they also declared themselves not to be idealists or ‘anti-parliamentary.’ They believed that republicans and socialists had to participate in elections; however, in the event of being elected, no oath of allegiance to the state had to be taken. In this regards, the journal attacked Costa who did swear, although he had previously declared he would not do so. *Il Ribelle* applauded the MP Giovanni Falleroni who protested during the oath. The journal lasted only five issues because of police repression and financial problems. On 25 February and 5 March 1883 two special issues were released: *Il Ribelle in Parlamento* and *Il Ribelle alle Assise*.

<sup>221</sup> *Tito Vezio*, 12 November 1882.

<sup>222</sup> See the column, *Strappate e titillature*.

<sup>223</sup> The meeting was held in *Via del Pesce* and its report was published on *La Plebe*, Milan, March 1883, in Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani. Da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.185-86, note 32, who erroneously dated the publication January 1883. See also reports on *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 5 March 1883.

Monticelli for engaging in ... personal attacks'.<sup>224</sup> The confrontation between Milanese anarchists and their socialist counterparts had just begun.

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<sup>224</sup> N. Pernicone, *Italian anarchism, 1864-1892*, p.203.

## Chapter Three

### Milanese Anarchism from Organisation to Individualism (1881-1900)

*'We believe that the revolution is an act of will – the will of individuals and of the masses.'*  
E. Malatesta, 'Questione di onestà. Noi ed i socialisti', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 22 April 1920.

*'The parliament makes the laws; people make the revolution.'*  
Tito Vezio [editors], 'Il Parlamento e il Popolo', *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 29 October 1882.

The formation of the Labour Party (POI, 1882) and the development of legalitarian socialism affected the Milanese anarchist movement. Cooperation between anarchists and their interlocutors generated a cross pollination of ideas, a high mobility of people and the development of an organisational tendency within the anarchist movement. In Antonioli's words: 'Depending on the circumstances, borders between tendencies, although well defined, sometimes seemed to vanish while at other times those borders became more pronounced.'<sup>1</sup> According to Antonioli, three congresses – between July and September 1881 – paved the way for a 10-year period that deeply conditioned the history of Italian anarchism.<sup>2</sup> The anarchists met in London, the socialists led by Costa gathered in Rimini, while the workerists met in Milan. During the following decade differences between anarchists, workerists and legalitarian socialists became more noticeable, divisions were ratified and the Italian Socialist Party was founded (1892). The dialectic between anarchists and their ideological interlocutors, on the one hand, emphasised similarities and diversities, while on the other hand, it pointed out the merging of a few variations of anarchism.

Debates on the role of the working class, the ethics of means, the concept of revolution, and ultimately the formation of a modern socialist party contributed to define both socialist and anarchist identities. Both socialists and anarchists agreed on the ultimate goal of achieving a socialist society but diverged on how best to achieve that goal. The main dividing criterion was the concept of revolution. Unlike the anarchists, workerists and legalitarian socialists did not consider revolution as the only means to achieve a socialist society. The contrast rested upon the use of legal and illegal methods. In the 1870s, failed revolutions and state repression caused different responses

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<sup>1</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento operaio da Bakunin alla fondazione del partito socialista', in VV.AA., *La crisi di fine secolo (1880-1900)*, Milan, Teti editore, 1980, p.113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.112-13.

among Italian internationalists. While the anarchists, particularly after the 1881 London Congress, emphasised the ideas of revolution and direct action, workerists and socialists developed a more eclectic approach that did not exclude a gradual process of social and economic reforms within the system in operation, aiming at achieving improvements of workers' condition. The 1881 Rimini and Milan congresses of socialists and workerists respectively contributed towards both movements' attempts to differentiate themselves from the anarchists. Yet, despite points of divergence, the interaction and in some cases cooperation between anarchists, workerists and socialists had the effect of stimulating local anarchist activism. This chapter examines Milanese anarchists' structures and means of communication in the 1880s. It analyses how the concepts of revolution, party and organisation were perceived, interpreted and translated into action by Milanese anarchists.

On a practical level, Milanese anarchists responded to the London Congress's call for action establishing district-based anarchist clubs along the perimeter of the Spanish walls, in correspondence with the customs gates of the city. They participated in the formation of the Upper Italy Federation of the IWA with an anarchist orientation. An organisational tendency prevailed in the 1880s on both national and local levels. The attempts to organise Italian anarchists resulted in the 1891 Capolago congress. In Milan, however, organisational stances aimed at giving to militants a solid base for action proved to be ineffective, primarily because district-based associations were the outcome of some individuals' spontaneous activity. Among these associations, there was neither a hierarchical pyramid structure nor a solid and systematic network of mutual aid. Moreover, despite the existence of an anarchist association within the *Elvetica* plant, Milanese anarchists were not able to establish solid relationships with the growing working class. Figures reveal that the number of anarchists in the city was low, mainly young men in their 20s who were all under high surveillance by the state. The low number, the young age and the gender of militants were signals of a pattern that the anarchist movement in Milan was just starting to display. Social composition, class and regional origins of individuals need to be analysed in order to understand how significant was the role that non-Milanese militants, anarchist women and adult males played in the city in the following decades.

A core anarchist belief was revolution. Yet there is no evidence that Milanese anarchists were engaged in revolutionary plotting. Nonetheless, despite a lack of evidence against them, many anarchists were arrested in 1889. The Italian state aimed to

remove the most active members of the anarchist 'sect' from the city and from the factories. The police activity achieved its goal and the embryonic Milanese organisational anarchist movement crumbled. As a result, Milanese anarchists seemed to withdraw from the territory leaving space for the advance of the legalitarian socialists led by Filippo Turati. Yet anarchists did not completely disappear. They moved to the factories and they joined the 1890-1891 strikes of metal workers, contributing to the development of May Day celebrations.

The presence in Milan of the Sicilian-born lawyer Pietro Gori helped the local anarchist movement to restart its activities. Gori published the anarchist journal *L'Amico del Popolo* (1891-92) and the magazine *Lotta Sociale* (1894). Debates on organisation and participation in politics were dominant in these journals. Moreover, a new anarchist club was founded. The interaction with the newly born Italian Socialist Party contributed to highlight the anarchist movement's uniqueness. A lack of organisation, mutual aid and deep roots within the city became evident when the Crispi government launched another attack against the anarchists. What was already a fragile movement was hit by the Italian government's use of prison islands and *domicilio coatto*. However, while prison islands mainly held anarchists, at the end of the century the entire Italian socialist movement had to deal with what Umberto Levra has described as 'the bourgeoisie's *coup d'état*'.<sup>3</sup> The use of measures such as the *domicilio coatto* and the generalized repression of socialist movements from Sicily to Lunigiana, as well as the need for colonial wars in Africa, demonstrated the crisis of the Italian liberal system and the extent to which Italian capitalist class and landowners feared the advance of socialist ideas.

All these factors contributed to an increase in individual acts of revolt. Italian anarchists became well known for a series of violent acts against political leaders throughout Europe. However, in this period individualism did not represent a conscious philosophical tendency within the anarchist ideology. It was only at the beginning of the new century that the reading of Stirner and Nietzsche gave individualist anarchists the philosophical basis of their ideological stance. In the 1890s, individualist anarchism appeared more as the spontaneous reactions of individuals to state repression and to the lack of organisation to coordinate a collective response to this repression. The *fatti di maggio*, the bloody episode of May 1898, confirmed that the Milanese working class

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<sup>3</sup> See the crucial work by U. Levra, *Il colpo di stato della borghesia, la crisi politica di fine secolo in Italia 1896-1900*.

and Milanese anarchists did not act in a collectively organised way. On the contrary, despite its brutality and ferocity, the ease with which Milanese citizens' protests were repressed revealed the impotence of the Milanese labour movement. The killing of the king by an anarchist, as a reaction to the *fatti di maggio*, terminated a difficult phase of the Milanese anarchist movement. Little survived the storm which hit the anarchists.

### 3.1 Revolutionaries or reformists?

Italian anarchists approached the London Congress of July 1881 with the belief that the social revolution was imminent.<sup>4</sup> Many factors contributed to form this belief. The radical clashes between the internationalist revolutionaries and the Italian state played a crucial role in shaping the anarchists' analysis of society. It can be argued that the repression against the anarchists effectively closed all avenues of lawful participation in public politics and forced them to embrace illegal means as the only way to achieve their goals. At the Congress, anarchists stressed their ideological continuity with the previous anarchist branch of the IWA and, in particular, with the basic principle that workers' emancipation had to be carried out by workers themselves. This assumption automatically ruled out potential manipulations of the working class by the political elite. Anarchists confirmed their rejection of legalitarian positions and participation in parliamentary politics, calling instead for direct action by a vanguard of revolutionaries, including the use of violence. There was a tension here: while the anarchists rejected the idea of a political elite, their actions relied upon a small radical vanguard that could be regarded as elite activists within a purportedly egalitarian movement. Anarchists, or socialist revolutionaries as they were also known in order to stress the difference with their legalitarian cousins, decided to join workers' organisations and to incite workers to insurrection. The anarchist strategy was based on a Jacobin idea of revolution which focused mainly on the immediate insurrectional outcome.

In the pages of *Tito Vezio*, Luigi Castellazzo explained the position of Milanese anarchists regarding the concept of revolution, indicating evolution and revolution as

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<sup>4</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, pp.93-97; M. Nettleau, *A short history of anarchism*, p.149; D. Guerin, *L'anarchismo dalla dottrina all'azione*, Rome, Samonà e Savelli, 1965, pp.77-79; J. Joll, *Gli anarchici*, pp.164-66; G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla settimana rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1915)*, pp.9-13; Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.205-06; E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, pp.58-61; A. Dadà, *L'anarchismo in Italia: fra movimento e partito*, p.43; P. C. Masini, *Gli Internazionalisti. La Banda del Matese*, pp.90 and 113.

the two ‘manifestations of human development and civil progress’.<sup>5</sup> While the former represents the ongoing, regular advance of humankind, the latter is the ‘necessary and inevitable’<sup>6</sup> outcome when the human stream finds obstacles in its path. According to Castellazzo, revolution is temporary and violent. The use of expressions such as ‘[t]hey are ambitious ... bourgeois bastards full of bitterness’ clearly indicates a climate of opposition that did not exclude the potential use of violence.<sup>7</sup> Milanese anarchists agreed with Malatesta’s assertion that revolution is ‘a human act that depends on individuals’,<sup>8</sup> and that it requires the work of militants. However, apart from generic expressions such as ‘going to the people’, it appears that anarchists did not have a long term articulated strategy, and stressing the importance of direct actions and violent insurrections they moved towards a sectarian position which eventually isolated them from the workers’ movement. It was a contradiction in terms: on the one hand, anarchists emphasised the primacy of the political struggle over the economic one,<sup>9</sup> thus disagreeing with their workerist interlocutors, while on the other hand they lacked a long-term political project that could replace the abstract struggle between revolutionaries and the state. Looking at the London Congress with hindsight allowed the historian Pernicone to conclude that the London Congress ‘ended with a burial, not a resurrection’.<sup>10</sup>

While the London resolutions stressed the key role of revolution and a call for action, the Rimini Congress of July 1881 further increased the gap between anarchists and legalitarian socialists. In Rimini, socialists from Romagna led by Andrea Costa formed the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Romagna. The PSRR was a regional party which worked as a federation of socialist groups. Given Romagna’s economic background, the PRSS’s propaganda mainly addressed peasants, revealing a potential incompatibility with the Lombard POI’s propaganda directed towards factory workers. Despite the potential incompatibility, there was sufficient ground to facilitate the growing idea of forming a nation-wide socialist party which could unite both the urban and rural working class as a significant political force. An organised party which could effectively engage in parliamentary politics became a central issue of discussion among both anarchists and socialists. It was debated in journals and in conferences.

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Chi siamo e che cosa vogliamo’, *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 15 October 1882.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> ‘Azzuffiamoci pure’, *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 22 October 1882.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Ultima ora’, *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 12 November 1882.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Polemica’, *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 12 November 1882.

<sup>10</sup> N. Pernicone, *Italian anarchism 1864-1892*, p.195.

Historians agree that Costa's decision in 1879 to endorse legal means was a turning point in the history of socialism in Italy.<sup>11</sup> His decision was undeniably conditioned by the harsh repression by European governments against anarchists.<sup>12</sup> At the same time the formation of an effective German social democratic party showed the possibility of an alternative path to socialism. For the anarchists, a political party like the German SPD meant the acceptance of a long-term process made up of negotiations, compromises and gradual reforms within the bourgeois system. In Malatesta's words:

[Costa] wanted to enlarge the party's sphere of action by fighting *also* on legal grounds, and instead, consciously or not, he renounced all revolutionary means and restricted himself to legal means only.<sup>13</sup>

Costa was still defining himself as a revolutionary because, he argued, history demonstrated that a privileged class does not peacefully renounce privileges and material goods, and thus revolution was inevitable to change the actual social order.<sup>14</sup> According to Costa, a social revolution needed to be prepared through the introduction of revolutionary socialist ideas into the working class, and, in order to do this, an organised party was necessary. This issue was the crucial point which divided Costa from his former comrades. While Costa did not deny the inevitability of revolution nor the ultimate end of achieving communism in economic relationships and anarchy in the political sphere, he tried to conciliate reforms with revolution moving towards an eclectic socialism. Despite sharing a common goal, Milanese anarchists asserted their difference with Costa in terms of means: 'We disagree with Costa on some issues of method; but we have in common with him the splendid socialist ideal and faith in the future.'<sup>15</sup> According to Costa, in order to achieve socialism all means were acceptable: from the individual act of rebellion to the organised activities of the party for the

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<sup>11</sup> See in particular L. Forlani, 'Andrea Costa e gli anarchici: un decennio di polemiche (1882-1892)' and P. Albonetti, 'Note e documenti relativi ad Andrea Costa e l'Internazionale tra il 1879 e il 1889', in *Ravenna 1882. Il socialismo in Parlamento*, Ravenna, Angelo Longo, 1985, respectively pp.139-58 and pp.215-53; P.C. Masini, 'Lettere inedite di anarchici e socialisti a Andrea Costa', *Movimento operaio e socialista*, vol.13, 1967, pp.59-61; A. Costa, *Bagliori di socialismo. Ricordi storici*, Bologna 1910. On A. Costa see Aldo Berselli (ed.), *Andrea Costa nella storia del socialismo*, Bologna 1982; G. Cerrito, *Andrea Costa nel socialismo italiano*, Rome, 1982; N. Galassi, *Vita di Andrea Costa*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1989; L. Lipparini, *Andrea Costa rivoluzionario*, Milan, Longanesi & Co., 1977.

<sup>12</sup> See G. Bosio, F. Della Peruta, 'La 'svolta' di Andrea Costa con documenti sul soggiorno in Francia', *Movimento operaio*, vol.4, 1952, pp.287-313.

<sup>13</sup> Letter by Malatesta to Cipriani, December 1880, in F. Della Peruta, *Democrazia e socialismo nel Risorgimento*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1964, p.430.

<sup>14</sup> Costa's program was published later in the *Avanti!*, Cesena, supplemento al n. 16, 4-6 September 1881, in R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa*, pp.524-25.

<sup>15</sup> 'Ultima Ora', *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 5 November 1882.

propaganda of socialist ideas. Clubs, groups, benefit and mutual aid societies, strikes, direct actions and reforms allowed individuals and groups to choose what kind of activity to endorse. Costa attempted to unite the broad range of Italian socialists, a hope that ultimately proved an illusion.

Anarchists were allowed to participate in socialists' conferences and meetings, despite previous episodes of physical fights between them. Anarchists joined local socialist groups and moved freely between groups resulting in both a high mobility of people and a dynamic exchange of ideas between anarchists and socialists. Often anarchists contributed to the formation of socialist groups and their programmes. During the 1882 election campaign, Milanese anarchists confirmed their rejection of the parliamentary system, believing a parliament would never radically change society. Among the core aims of the Milanese anarchists was the abolition of private property, the 'source of all privileges and misery'.<sup>16</sup> As 'revolutionary socialists', Milanese anarchists declared their decision to act in an 'extra-legal' field. A clear dividing line was marked between anarchists and those who supported political parties, between parliament and people, laws and revolution, 'us' and 'them'.<sup>17</sup>

The third salient event that contributed to defining anarchism was the congress of Lombard workers' societies in September 1881. During the congress, the *Confederazione Operaia Lombarda* (Lombard Worker Confederation, COL) was founded and, together with the intellectual contribution of Bignami and Gnocchi-Viani, led to the constitution of the Milan-based POI (1882).<sup>18</sup> In Milan the labour movement had been under the influence of the *Circolo Operaio Milanese* (Milanese Worker Club, COM), a professions-based resistance federation of arts and craft societies, and that of the *Associazione Generale di Mutuo Soccorso fra gli operai di Milano* (Milanese Workers Mutual Aid General Association).<sup>19</sup> In September 1881 the COM was among the founders of the COL. In 1882 the COM constituted the *Sezione elettorale del POI*

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<sup>16</sup> 'La nostra condotta', *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 22 October 1882.

<sup>17</sup> Tito Vezio, 'Il Parlamento e il Popolo', *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 29 October 1882.

<sup>18</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.169-224. Within the workers' movement the border lines between mutual aid societies and resistance societies were blurred. The former had more of an assistance role for workers in case of health problems, unfair dismissals and unemployment. The latter acted as resistance organisations in the sense of claiming and negotiating workers' basic rights, such as the right to form workers' associations, to meet and to strike. See also F. Della Peruta, 'Carte della Confederazione Operaia Lombarda esistenti nell'Archivio di Stato di Milano', *Movimento Operaio*, vol.2, 1950, pp.354-55.

<sup>19</sup> The former was under the political direction of radical-democrats, while the latter was controlled by moderate bourgeois since its foundation, and tended to act as a paternalistic philanthropic benefit society.

(POI electoral section). However, after its failure in the 1882 political elections, the POI and its ideology, workerism, seemed to disappear from the political stage.<sup>20</sup>

What exactly was workerism? *Operaismo* (workerism, in the sense of worker exclusivism) is described by Manacorda as the ‘doctrine that aims to reclaim the direction of the working class from organisers with bourgeois intellectual origins, and aims instead to reclaim the leadership of the working class by workers.’<sup>21</sup> The POI was a class-based party, whose membership was extended only to factory workers. Workerists stressed the economic aspect of their ‘mission’. According to Briguglio this mission was ‘basically economic and intellectual: preparing for and bringing about workers’ emancipation through the organisation of the oppressed. It [was] flexible with its means, but intransigent with its ends’.<sup>22</sup>

Democrats, socialists, workerists and anarchists were struggling for the dominance of the working class. In the first half of the 1880s, the political geography of workers’ and socialist organisations was very dynamic. It was an energetic period with high mobility of individuals between various socialist, anarchist and workers’ organisations. For the POI the years from 1881 to 1883 were a period of evolution and organisation. This process of organising workers was significant because it emphasized the idea of a class-based party for working-class resistance. After the 1882 election, workerism intended as an ideological tendency survived within the labour movement and in 1885 an Upper Italy Regional Federation of the POI was formed.<sup>23</sup> The second half of the 1880s saw the POI shift from an organisational phase to a more active role in workers’ economic activities, especially in the Milanese countryside. A series of strikes between 1885 and 1889 was helped by the spreading of socialist ideas among Lombard peasants by POI activists.<sup>24</sup>

Cooperation between anarchists and workerists rested upon the existence of a common ‘economic and moral principle’, by which workers’ emancipation could be

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<sup>20</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, p.199.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.172.

<sup>22</sup> L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio e gli anarchici*, XIV.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11; G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.200 and 217.

<sup>24</sup> L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio e gli anarchici*, pp.74-84; L. Valiani, ‘Le prime grandi agitazioni operaie a Milano e a Torino’, *Movimento operaio*, vol.13, October-November 1950, p.364; F. Della Peruta, ‘Il movimento contadino nell’Alto Milanese (1885-1889)’, *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.3, 1984, pp.51-67. See also ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 106, *Spirito pubblico 1883-1889*, on semestral reports by the police chief to the prefect, particularly regarding years 1884 and 1885.

carried out only by workers themselves.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Gnocchi-Viani proposed a task-oriented cooperation between Milanese workerists and anarchists, a solid organisation which could support the entire working-class movement. Gnocchi-Viani was particularly interested in engaging with Romagna anarchists and in drawing them away from Costa's influence.<sup>26</sup> Costa's exclusion was dictated by the workerist principle of excluding bourgeois elements from the direction of the working-class. The POI's exclusiveness meant its members became closer to the anarchists rather than the legalitarian socialists. The period between 1883 and 1888 was marked by cooperation between workerists and anarchists in spreading their ideas in the factories and in the countryside among peasants. Surprisingly, the POI's propaganda was more effective in the countryside than in the factories. This unexpected outcome can be explained by what workerists and peasants had in common: the workerists' anti-political perspective and their message of workers' self-emancipation easily penetrated among peasants who were more concerned with the economic issues (organisations, resistance, economic emancipation, and class struggle) than with the political ones.<sup>27</sup>

A healthy cooperation resulted in the definition of roles, programmes and strategies. This dialectic was crucial in the formation of an organisational tendency among anarchists. Interaction with socialists, workerists and their organisations stimulated anarchists to act more effectively. Since the beginning of the 1880s, anarchist clubs started to spread revealing a high level of local activism. However, this was not backed up by a coherent long-term strategy. It was not until 1891, in Capolago, that Italian anarchists gave a meaningful shape to their multitude of local activities, forming the *Partito Socialista Anarchico Rivoluzionario* (Revolutionary Anarchist Socialist Party, PSAR).

Cooperation with workerists, however, did not last long. Anarchists became disillusioned with the POI's decision to participate in the 1882 elections. In Milan relationships between workerists and anarchists worsened when, in January 1885, Milanese anarchists belonging to the *Gruppo Comunista Anarchico di Milano* (Milan Communist-Anarchist Group) founded the *Federazione Alta Italia* (Upper Italy Federation) of the IWA aimed at spreading revolutionary communist-anarchist ideas

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<sup>25</sup> 'La nostra condotta', *Tito Vezio*, Milan, 22 October 1882.

<sup>26</sup> L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio e gli anarchici*, p.36.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.83-84.

among workers.<sup>28</sup> The anarchist-oriented Upper Italy Federation of the IWA became a rival of the POI. The Milanese anarchists, led by Ambrogio Galli, continued to have relationship with the workerists and the POI until 1888 when the POI denied the anarchists the use of the *Circolo Socialista Milanese* (Milanese socialist club).<sup>29</sup> Both anarchists and workerists suffered the state repression of May 1889 when police arrested the main leaders of both currents.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.2 1880s Milanese anarchists' organisations

During the 1880s, associations and organisations spread throughout the territory. Milanese authorities were forced to acknowledge the advance of the socialist movement:

There is no doubt that socialism is advancing both as a theory and as a manifestation of popular instincts: it is no longer only a few fanatic and isolated individuals ... Today it is a movement that advances by its own strength, and it is a force that the bourgeoisie and the State can feel.<sup>31</sup>

The theoretical debate on the importance of organisations had started at the beginning of the 1880s with the purpose of finding an effective response to the state's attack against the socialist and labour movements. At that time, the Italian anarchist movement started to be deeply influenced by the activity and thought of Errico Malatesta, who published the *Programma e Organizzazione* (Program and Organisation) of the IWA in 1884.<sup>32</sup> In March 1885, Italian anarchists met in Forlì at the national congress of the Italian Federation of the IWA.<sup>33</sup> Milanese anarchists sent their delegates to the congress where some new figures such as Luigi Galleani and Pietro Gori emerged within the Italian

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<sup>28</sup> O.d.G 21 September 1884, Gruppo Comunista Anarchico di Milano, published in *Proximus Tuus*, 17 January 1885, Turin, cited in E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, p.70; L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio e gli anarchici*, p.45; P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.219.

<sup>29</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.271-72, 275 and 401.

<sup>30</sup> See letter by F. Turati to A. Costa, dated 23 May 1889, in G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.400-01.

<sup>31</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 106, *Spirito pubblico 1883-1889*, f. 3, 1885, *Spirito pubblico I e II semestre*, police chief to prefect, I semestre 1885, Rapporto sullo spirito pubblico, n. 952, Milan, 8 July 1885.

<sup>32</sup> See G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, pp.120-26; and P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.215-18.

<sup>33</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, p.224.

anarchist movement.<sup>34</sup> The congress showed two sides of Italian anarchism. While anarchists were very active on a local level, conversely they lacked a long-term coherent nation-wide strategy that could contend with the dominance of the working class by the socialists. In 1889 from Nice, Malatesta started the publication of the journal *L'Associazione* (The Association).<sup>35</sup> The Malatesta's programme refused spontaneity and individualism and instead called Italian anarchists to organise and to participate in workers' activities, especially strikes. Malatesta's programme ascribed to organisations an important role for social and political change, to the extent that an anarchist party based on free federations was launched in Capolago in 1891.

Stimulated by the ideological debate with the socialists and the workerists the anarchists began to develop their organisations during the 1880s. According to the police, at the end of the 1880s Milanese anarchists numbered 300, mainly young men between 17 and 22 years of age, and led by more mature and educated individuals.<sup>36</sup> Police documents reveal that in 1889 there were six anarchist clubs located along the Spanish walls, more or less in correspondence with the *Porte*, the customs gates.<sup>37</sup> In the southeastern suburbs, between *Porta Vittoria* and *Porta Vigentina*, was the *Sole dell'Avvenire* (The Future's Sun) which had around eighty members and was led by Dionigi Malagoli, Italo Bianchi and Luigi Pavesi.<sup>38</sup> The group *Dinamite* (Dynamite) consisted of 40 members and was led by Federico Costa and Ettore Quarantelli. It extended from *Via Monforte* to *Via Principe Umberto*. The group *Avanguardia* (Vanguard) had 60 members and covered a bigger area in the northern region, from *Porta Sempione* to *Porta Nuova*.<sup>39</sup> In the western suburbs, from *Porta Magenta* to *Porta Lodovica*, the group *Sempre Avanti* (Ever Forward) was active with 50 members led by Cesare Cuneo and Giuseppe Mamoli.<sup>40</sup> An anarchist club, the *Spogliati* (The Undressed Ones), was located within the *Elvetica* plant and counted around 30 members. Police

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<sup>34</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.220-22.

<sup>35</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, p.97.

<sup>36</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, *Partiti anarchici 1887-1898*.

<sup>37</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to inspector VII section, Milan, 24 February 1889, n. 448, *Riunione di anarchici nelle osterie*.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> This group was based in *Porta Garibaldi* and it included groups spread along *Porta Tenaglia* (led by Pietro Bertola), *Porta Sempione* (Emilio Forzieri), *Porta Volta* (Carlo Crivelli), *Porta Garibaldi* (Paolo Grimaldi) and *Porta Nuova* (Attilio Panizza). The meeting place was the *Trattoria Berretta* in *Via Solferino* 40. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84. However, the newspaper *Il Secolo* indicated that the anarchist meeting place in *Via Legnano* 20, see 'Le perquisizioni agli anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17-18 March 1889.

<sup>40</sup> According to the police documents the anarchists' meeting place was the *Osteria della Brianza*, in *Piazza Vetra* 7, while the newspaper *Il Secolo* indicated *Strada Alzaia Pavese 10* as the anarchists' headquarter; see 'Le perquisizioni agli anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17-18 March 1889.

documents tentatively identify *I Ribelli* (The Rebels) as the '*gruppo centrale direttivo*' (central directing group) of the Milanese anarchist movement and name Ambrogio Galli, Giuseppe Paladini and Paolo Grimaldi as leaders. According to the police, the group had been formed recently (February 1889), 'but it is not confirmed if it has been definitely constituted'.<sup>41</sup>

Anarchist records do not contain evidence of a central coordinating body and the existence of such body is not likely, given the ideological stance of Milanese anarchists at this time. Milanese anarchist literature from the same period indicates a loose federation of autonomous groups working together or independently in a fluid and non-hierarchical manner. It is possible, therefore, that the identification of a hierarchical organisation with a central command is better explained by either the state's inability to comprehend the loose 'non-structure' of the anarchists or that the state could more easily justify its repression of the movement by presenting it as an organised '*associazione di malfattori*' (association of malefactors).<sup>42</sup> The location of these groups could be read as a territorial division of the city, so that each group was active in a specific area. However, a pre-ordered subdivision would imply the existence of a strategic federation of clubs and therefore a well-structured organisation, a structure which leading anarchists of the time refused.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of these groups did not have a fixed meeting place, so that anarchists used to meet in *osterie*, *trattorie* and coffee bars. Renting a room was probably too expensive and moving from one *osteria* to another helped anarchists to avoid the constant surveillance of the police. Within the groups *Sole dell'Avvenire* and *Avanguardia* there was an elementary structure with a secretary, a vice secretary and a treasurer. Members were supposed to pay a fee, often a minimal and symbolic one that allowed the groups to buy books, print pamphlets and posters, send delegates to congresses and conferences, or help comrades in jail. The social composition of the Milanese anarchist movement saw a significant presence of factory workers, typographers, students and artisans.<sup>44</sup> The young members were mostly recent migrants to Milan who had found employment in factories, while the older 'well educated' members were mainly typographers. The most influential figures tended to be of

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<sup>41</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to inspector VII section, Milan, 24 February 1889, n. 448, *Riunione di anarchici nelle osterie*.

<sup>42</sup> Briguglio supports the police version. See L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio e gli anarchici*, p.94.

<sup>43</sup> 'Il processo agli anarchici', *L'Italia*, Milan, 24-25 November 1889.

<sup>44</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, Milan, n.d.

bourgeois origins but had broken with the class of their birth. While most Milanese anarchists focused on their local environment, Ambrogio Galli and Arturo Cerretti were active both locally and nationally.<sup>45</sup>

Ambrogio Galli's story is significant because it epitomises a period marked by a deep dialectical process which saw many activists moving between anarchist and socialist groups generating a continuous flow of ideas and relationships.<sup>46</sup> Ambrogio Galli's experience represents this fervent period of organisational and cooperationist stances among moderate socialists and intransigent anarchists to the extent that it would be hard to define him simply as either an anarchist or a socialist.<sup>47</sup> His personal path moved along the curves of socialist thought and it crossed the blurred lines between different tendencies. In 1880 Galli attended the Chiasso Congress, and according to Aldo Romano, Galli was one of the 'socialism's young recruits'.<sup>48</sup> In the following years, Galli participated in the constitution of the POI, which would suggest he endorsed workerist principles. According to Antonioli, however, in 1884, when Galli signed the manifesto commemorating the Paris Commune, he was already an anarchist.<sup>49</sup> One year later Galli was among the promoters of the anarchist Upper Italy Federation of IWA, and later he was member of the anarchist group *I Ribelli*. He was put on trial in 1889 and in 1894. Two years later in 1896 Galli participated in the Florence Congress of the Italian Socialist Party. By then, he had definitely moved towards a reformist position.

From this overview, it would appear that in 1889 Milanese anarchists constituted a well-organised movement. However, given the lack of anarchist sources related to this period, this reconstruction has been made mainly through police documents. Often police officers tended to exaggerate the real force of Milanese anarchists. For example, the smallest groups were the result of the activism of a few anarchists, so that often new

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<sup>45</sup> On Arturo Cerretti see DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>46</sup> A. Galli 'was considered by the police as a violent anarchist and a good speaker', in R. Casero, 'Ambrogio Galli', in MOIDB, p.424.

<sup>47</sup> On Ambrogio Galli see MOIDB, *ad nomen*; DBAI, *ad nomen*; O. Gnocchi-Viani, *Il Partito Operaio Italiano, 1882-1885*, Milan, 1885, *ad indicem*; G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi, ad indicem*; L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio italiano e gli anarchici, ad indicem*; P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892), ad indicem*; M.G. Meriggi, *Il Partito Operaio Italiano. Attività rivendicativa formazione e cultura dei militanti in Lombardia (1880-1890), ad indicem*; R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, I, Dalla rivoluzione francese a Andrea Costa, ad indicem*.

<sup>48</sup> A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia, III*, p.353, cited in M. Antonioli, 'Galli Ambrogio', in DBAI, I, p.659.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

groups were born and disappeared within a brief period.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, anarchist clubs worked as catalyst points for activists in the city, and had the positive effect of generating a grassroots environment that could maintain anarchist ideas despite state repression. However, the lack of a coherent long-term project on a national as well as on a local level during the 1880s prevented the anarchist movement from withstanding the series of arrests in the period 1889-1894.

### 3.3 Arrests, trials and strikes (1889-1890)

At the end of the 1880s Milan was a different city compared with the early 1870s. New technologies had changed the industrial structure of the city. New mechanised textile and metallurgic factories needed new labour and migrants from the countryside satisfied this need.<sup>51</sup> An agricultural crisis and immigration from the countryside contributed to a continuous proletarianisation of more people.<sup>52</sup> Within this context working class consciousness developed along with the worker movement. At the end of the 1880s a series of struggles in the *Alto Milanese* (Northern Milanese countryside) coincided with the building workers' strikes in the city.<sup>53</sup> Worker discontent was a concern for the authorities: 'unfortunately, more news confirmed that agitations are worsening and spreading'.<sup>54</sup> Yet it was a vicious circle: an increase in state repression resulted in the increased actions of workers.<sup>55</sup>

Migrants' discontent constituted a fertile ground for potential uprisings and anarchist theories were perceived by the authorities as a danger.<sup>56</sup> Thus it was necessary

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<sup>50</sup> Although the groups *I Ribelli* and *Gli Amici dell'Ordine* were probably never constituted, they appeared on police documents as 'central committees.'

<sup>51</sup> On migration from the countryside see 'Gli effetti della continua immigrazione a Milano', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 28 November 1889.

<sup>52</sup> On Milanese industrialisation see in particular V. Hunecke, *Classe operaia e rivoluzione industriale a Milano 1859-1892*, pp.105-238, and L.A. Tilly, *Politics and class in Milan 1881-1901*, pp.52-78.

<sup>53</sup> F. Della Peruta, 'Il movimento contadino nell'Alto Milanese (1885-1889)', *Storia in Lombardia*, vol.3, 1984, pp.51-67.

<sup>54</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 46, *Provvedimenti di ordine pubblico*, Milan, 23 February 1889.

<sup>55</sup> On the authorities' response and the arrests of workers, see 'Agitazione operaia. Gli arresti di ieri notte', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 25 February 1889; 'Gli arresti in massa', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 24-25 February 1889; and M. Bonaccini, R. Casero, *La Camera del Lavoro di Milano dalle origini al 1904*, Milan, SugarCo, 1975, pp.17-18.

<sup>56</sup> At the trial, two conferences were used as evidence: the *Comizio operaio all'Arena di Milano* (Worker meeting at the Milan Arena), 8 November 1888, and the *Comizio della Pace al Teatro Dal Verme* (Peace meeting at the Dal Verme Theatre), 13 January 1889. For this meeting see 'Il Comizio operaio all'Arena', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 19 November 1888; 'Il meeting rivoluzionario-socialista di ieri', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 14 January 1889; M. Bonaccini, R. Casero, *La Camera del Lavoro di Milano dalle origini al 1904*, Milan, 1975, pp.15-17.

to silence those voices that incited rebellion. The authorities' response targeted active members of the anarchist movement, potential sympathisers and individuals who were observed associating with known anarchists.<sup>57</sup> Authorities worried that anarchists could incite popular revolts. Hence suppression of anarchists became a primary issue. The chance to put anarchists on trial was given to the authorities by the commemorations of the Paris Commune on the 18 March 1889. Socialists, workerists and anarchists had worked together to organise the event.<sup>58</sup> Authorities banned the celebration and the publication of a manifesto written by the organisers. Moreover, on 17 March houses and clubs of anarchists were searched by the police. The material seized in these raids led to the arrest of many anarchists.<sup>59</sup> A meeting to commemorate the Paris Commune was held anyway at the POI headquarters and was attended by 150 people, including Turati, members of the POI and of *Fascio dei lavoratori*. Panizza and Bianchi participated on behalf of the anarchists.<sup>60</sup> *Il Secolo*, a radical newspaper, criticised the activities of the authorities, suggesting that the search was due to political pressure from the government, particularly the Minister of Interior Francesco Crispi.<sup>61</sup>

At the beginning of May another alleged excuse was used by the police to search and arrest 17 anarchists.<sup>62</sup> Anarchists were suspected of organizing disorder during the *corso dei fiori*, the parade of coaches covered by flowers, which was part of a series of celebrations held in May.<sup>63</sup> For this event, anarchists had written a radical manifesto in passionate language urging a revolution. Authorities seized the manifesto and interpreted it as the spark that could ignite uprisings. As a result, the authors of that

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<sup>57</sup> The police chief and the prefect asked for information on anyone who expressed dissent towards authority and the institutions or supported the anarchist group. See for instance ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, fasc. *Anarchici I. Pratiche individuali*, information on Malinverni Vittorio, blacksmith, residing in *Via Panfilo Castaldi 29*, '[t]his anarchist suspect went to the De Crescenzo's osteria even when anarchists belonging to the sect located in Via Castaldi 29 met there. This is because he lives in the same building', Milan, 28 April 1892. See also 'L'arresto di diciassette anarchici', *L'Italia*, Milan, 19-20 May 1889, in which it is said that the 'political arrests [are] linked to the strikes of peasants.'

<sup>58</sup> See 'Cronaca', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17-18 March 1889. The manifesto is reported in 'Per la commemorazione della comune. I socialisti e la questura', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 16 March 1889.

<sup>59</sup> See *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17-18 March 1889.

<sup>60</sup> Reports of the meeting in 'Commemorandosi la Comune', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 19 March 1889. It is reported that the anarchists Panizza and Bianchi did not deal with the behaviour of the authorities. Their talks dealt with the rejection of the electoral campaign and commemorations of the Paris Commune as an attempt to practice anarchist ideas.

<sup>61</sup> *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17-18 March 1889.

<sup>62</sup> Names of the people arrested in *L'Italia*, Milan, 19-20 May 1889: the people arrested were 'Attilio Panizza e Italo Bianchi: Donadio Luigi, Cavaliere Pasquale, Righetti Paolo, Bertola Pietro, Vigo Giuseppe, Quarantelli Ettore, Montefiori Rodolfo, Rizzi Achille, De Petri Ermete Ernesto, Pozzi Francesco, Crivelli Paolo, Mazzini Angelo, Fraschini Giuseppe, Costantino Lodovico, Locatelli Giuseppe.'

<sup>63</sup> *Il Secolo*, Milan, 21-22 November 1889.

manifesto were arrested.<sup>64</sup> According to *Il Secolo*, however, it was the authorities who were plotting to fabricate evidence to use against the anarchists.<sup>65</sup> On this occasion, more conservative newspapers such as *L'Italia*<sup>66</sup> and *La Lombardia* presented a more sympathetic approach to anarchists than they had previously held.<sup>67</sup> Authorities had decided to use Italy's laws and courts to ban anarchist groups and to convict and imprison anarchists. In preparation for this, police conducted several raids on known anarchist locations where they seized material such as pamphlets and documents but did not find bombs or weapons.<sup>68</sup>

The allegations against the anarchists were based on pamphlets, manifestos and other publications which expressed anarchist theories of that time. The idea of social revolution was dominant and calls for workers 'to take up arms' and 'to arm themselves with sticks' against the hated bourgeoisie were explicitly made in propaganda material. However, Milanese anarchists were far from organising a violent revolution. First, they were too few in number; second, Milanese anarchist propaganda was not particularly effective because of the presence of the POI within the labour movement. Nevertheless, the police tried to present the anarchist movement as an *associazione di malfattori*, an association of malefactors, which was prosecuted under article 426 (later 248) of the penal code.<sup>69</sup> On 31 May the public prosecutor sought the conviction of seventeen anarchists for 'association of malefactors; instigation to commit crimes against press regulation; conspiracy to cause a civil war and damage against the upper class'.<sup>70</sup>

In the period between the arrests in spring and the trials in autumn, there is no evidence of anarchist activities or the presence of anarchists in political and social initiatives. The Milanese anarchist movement was thrown into disorder. The most active members were in jail pending trial and those few activists who survived the repression were under constant surveillance, while others lived as fugitives. More than half of the

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<sup>64</sup> Manifesto is in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84. The police were aware of the manifesto's existence, see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, fasc. 1, *Anarchici, Riunioni nelle osterie*, detective Pirovani to police chief, Milan, 20 May 1889.

<sup>65</sup> 'Arresto di diciassette anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 20-21 May 1889. See also 'Cronaca', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 5-6 May 1889.

<sup>66</sup> See 'Il processo agli anarchici', *L'Italia*, Milan, 21-22 November 1889.

<sup>67</sup> *L'Italia* and *La Lombardia* were softer, and they reported authorities' justification, see *L'Italia*, Milan, 17-18 March 1889; 'Le perquisizioni agli anarchici', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 17, 18 and 19 March 1889.

<sup>68</sup> 'Le perquisizioni agli anarchici', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 5 May 1889.

<sup>69</sup> 'Il Processo agli anarchici', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 14 September 1889. Out of 84 anarchists initially arrested, only 33 were charged: 24 of these were kept in custody, three on bail and six fugitives. See also R. Canosa, A. Santosuosso, *Magistrati, anarchici e socialisti alla fine dell'Ottocento in Italia*, pp.5-51 and 126-46.

<sup>70</sup> 'Corriere giudiziario. Il processo agli anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 31 May – 1 June 1889.

most active members were arrested and forcibly removed from the workers' struggles. Anarchists remained silent until the trial which began on 20 November 1889. The trial gave the anarchists the possibility to publicly articulate their principles.<sup>71</sup>

Police allegations were based on two conferences held in Milan: the workers' conference (November 1888) and the peace conference (13 January 1889). In the first conference, called by several workers organisations to discuss labour legislation, 'anarchists tried to put the rejection of legal agitation and the endorsement of violent means on the agenda'.<sup>72</sup> In the second conference, anarchists 'distributed two manifestos with which they called for workers to hate owners and incited social revolution'.<sup>73</sup> Allegations of being a clandestine organisation with national and international links were supported by the relationship of Milanese anarchists with the anarchist Gnocchetti, who was in jail for the riots in Rome in February 1889, and by a letter of Manrico Marracini from Lugano to Attilio Panizza.<sup>74</sup> The defendant's lawyer, Podreider, tried to demonstrate that the letter was a hoax made up by agent provocateurs.<sup>75</sup> According to the authorities, the Milanese anarchist movement was organised as a political party with a statute, precise objectives, and was part of a broader conspiracy against institutions. The prosecution put emphasis on the organised clandestine and subversive nature of these anarchist groups which shared the same programme. It is possible to say that this programme was Malatesta's '*Programma e organizzazione della Associazione Internazionale dei lavoratori*'.<sup>76</sup> According to the police, anarchists would soon put the program into practice.<sup>77</sup> On 7 December 1889, all 24 defendants were acquitted on the charge of *associazione di malfattori*.<sup>78</sup> Eighteen

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<sup>71</sup> See *L'Italia*, Milan, 21-22 November 1889. See also other Milanese newspapers from 21 November to 7 December 1889 and 'Fasti anarchici', *L'Associazione*, London, 7 December 1889.

<sup>72</sup> *La Lombardia*, Milan, 21 November 1889.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> The document found was a letter sent to Panizza by Manrico Marracini from Lugano, in 'Il processo agli anarchici', *L'Italia*, Milan, 4-5 December 1889. An alibi for Panizza was given in the testimony of Giuseppe Bianchi, shopkeeper in Lugano, see *La Lombardia*, Milan, 23 November 1889, for the interrogation of Panizza Attilio. See also *L'Italia*, 23-24 November and 1-2 December 1889, for the interrogation of Giuseppe Bianchi, witness for the defense.

<sup>75</sup> 'Gli anarchici alle Assise', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 4 December 1889.

<sup>76</sup> 'Programma e organizzazione della Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori', *La Questione Sociale*, Florence, 1884.

<sup>77</sup> See 'Gli anarchici alle Assise di Milano', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 30 November 1889, for the interrogation of former Milan police chief Santagostino.

<sup>78</sup> The anarchists charged were: Panizza, Fiocchini, Quarantelli, Maderna, Baracchi, Comolli, Goigis, Pacciarini, Grignani, Bianchi, De Petri, Mazzini, Righetti, Lodovico, Albasini, Manzoni, Norsa and Galli, see 'Il processo agli anarchici. Niente malfattori', *L'Italia*, Milan, 7-8 December 1889.

were acquitted for distributing prohibited material and six were judged guilty.<sup>79</sup> Panizza was found guilty of holding prohibited conferences. The sentences given were harsher than the prosecutor had requested.<sup>80</sup>

The organisational tendency that was emerging in the second half of the 1880s halted suddenly in 1889 when a series of arrests and trials stopped the activities of many Milanese anarchists. The crime of constituting an association of 'evil doers' or 'malefactors' was used by the authorities to present the anarchist movement as a well structured clandestine organisation with national and international ramifications. Despite anarchists' talk of revolution and the violent language they used, anarchists were imprisoned not on the basis of what they had done but on the basis of what they thought, their ideas. The most active members of the Milanese anarchist movement faced either arrest and imprisonment or life as fugitives. Milanese anarchist clubs in the city were shut down. Constantly under surveillance and unable to have their own space, Milanese anarchists were forced to move to the margins of the city, both geographically and politically. Those anarchists who survived the wave of state repression either found refuge in *osterie* and *trattorie*, thus isolating themselves and increasing the gap with other sectors of labour and socialist movements, or they tried to organise workers' struggles, particularly in the metal and building workers' strikes of 1890-91. Activities such as the May Day celebrations contributed to pave the way for the development of revolutionary syndicalism at the beginning of the new century. In the meantime, the withdrawal of many anarchists from the city and from the factories left room for the advance of the legalitarian socialists led by Filippo Turati. The dialectic with the socialists favored an attempt by Italian anarchists to constitute an anarchist revolutionary party in January 1891. In Milan, anarchists benefited from the presence in the city of Pietro Gori, who reanimated the anarchist movement through the publication of *L'Amico del Popolo* and a series of conferences. It seemed that anarchists could reorganise themselves after the arrests of 1889.

In 1889, while in Nice, Malatesta started to publish the anarchist journal *L'Associazione*, whose title reflected his belief that anarchists needed to join together and to coordinate their actions.<sup>81</sup> Significantly, in this period Malatesta shifted the focus of his analysis towards workers' conditions and the necessity of establishing a solid

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<sup>79</sup> For the same crime, Bertola, Crivelli, Locatelli, Frascini, Invernizzi and Gioseffi were found guilty, in *L'Italia*, Milan, 7-8 December 1889.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, p.97.

relationship between anarchist principles and organisational strategies.<sup>82</sup> Malatesta invited anarchists to move towards workers, to live with them, to share their living conditions and to reconsider their participation in the workers' movement.<sup>83</sup> Standing by the principle that workers' emancipation had to be carried out by workers themselves, Malatesta reaffirmed anarchists' rejection of parliamentary politics and of any form of representation.<sup>84</sup> These appeals were not invitations to a generic activism but to a precise and conscious participation in the promotion of initiatives, and to pushing them towards revolutionary outcomes. Malatesta believed in achieving social revolution through other means, including for example strikes, rather than participation in parliamentary politics.<sup>85</sup> The analytical shift rested upon anarchists' attitudes towards worker initiatives. The latter were not to be considered from an external point of view or led by a revolutionary vanguard but rather, according to Malatesta, anarchists should be active members and promoters of worker initiatives.<sup>86</sup> Rather than theorizing abstract formulas and waiting for the revolution, anarchists had to look at workers' living conditions, their everyday lives, their problems and needs. Within this framework, a weapon such as a strike ceased to be a mere economic practice and became a conscious and moral act of rebellion by the oppressed against the oppressor, and it was more meaningful when it was part of a broader revolutionary path.<sup>87</sup>

In Milan a serious economic crisis was spreading from the countryside towards the city, hitting several sectors of Italian industry. Through a domino effect, the crisis had become generalised. Mass job losses particularly affected the mechanical sector and the main plants in the city, *Elvetica* and *Grondona*.<sup>88</sup> Workers protested against job

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<sup>82</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.150; M. Antonioli, 'Errico Malatesta, l'organizzazione operaia e il sindacalismo (1889-1914)', *Ricerche Storiche*, vol.1, January-April 1983, p.154; P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.236-37; G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla settimana rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1915)*, pp. 47-48; A. Dadà, *L'anarchismo in Italia: fra movimento e partito*, p.47; M. Nettleau, *A short history of anarchism*, pp.172-75; C. Levy, 'Charisma and social movements: Errico Malatesta and Italian anarchism', *Modern Italy*, vol.2, no.3, 1998, pp.205-17.

<sup>83</sup> 'In alto i cuori', *L'Associazione*, Nice, 16 October 1889.

<sup>84</sup> 'Programma', *L'Associazione*, Nice, 6 September 1889.

<sup>85</sup> 'La propaganda a fatti', *L'Associazione*, Nice, 16 October 1889.

<sup>86</sup> See the long article 'Tra operai', *L'Associazione*, London, 7 and 21 December 1889 and 23 January 1890; M. Antonioli, 'Errico Malatesta, l'organizzazione operaia e il sindacalismo (1889-1914)', *Ricerche Storiche*, vol.1, January-April 1983, p.158.

<sup>87</sup> On the strike as moral act of rebellion see F.S. Merlino, *Necessità e basi d'una intesa*, Bruxelles, 1892; the book was edited by N. Dell'Erba and reprinted in 1979, Turin.

<sup>88</sup> In 1889 many people lost their employment. See 'La crisi negli stabilimenti meccanici. Licenziamento di operai', *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 10-11 February 1890. Plants such as *Elvetica* and *Grondona*, specialized in building locomotives, were affected by a decrease in demand by the state.

cuts by increasing the number of strikes.<sup>89</sup> Low-skilled migrant workers, who had become unemployed, represented a potentially fertile ground for radical theories. While anarchists remained on the margins of the workers' movement in the countryside, their propaganda was proving to be effective among factory workers in the city.<sup>90</sup> Milanese anarchists participated in workers' initiatives, meetings, conferences, committees, strikes and some of them were active promoters of such initiatives.<sup>91</sup> Anarchists invited unemployed workers to refuse charity, believing that 'charity demoralises workers',<sup>92</sup> and fed workers' discontent by inciting them to more intransigent positions.<sup>93</sup>

The period from 1887 to 1892 is characterised by continuous attempts by the Milanese anarchists to organise themselves and to lead workers' struggles towards a revolutionary course. Their attempts were systematically halted by state repression through censorship, arrests and constant surveillance. After the trials of November-December 1889, which eliminated the most active members of the Milanese anarchist movement, anarchists in Milan tried to reorganise their ranks. The movement had been thrown into disorder.<sup>94</sup> Clubs had been shut down<sup>95</sup> and the most influential members were in jail, fugitives<sup>96</sup> or in exile in Paris, London and Switzerland. After serving his prison sentence, Attilio Panizza moved to Lugano and participated in the Capolago Congress in 1891.<sup>97</sup> Dionigi Malagoli was living as a fugitive.<sup>98</sup> He first moved to Modena, his childhood town, then to Paris. From the French capital he sent propaganda

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<sup>89</sup> See V. Hunecke, *Classe operaia e rivoluzione industriale a Milano 1859-1892*, pp.368-400.

<sup>90</sup> L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio e gli anarchici*, p.81.

<sup>91</sup> The anarchist Luigi Invernizzi was a member of the *Comitato degli operai disoccupati* (Unemployed Workers Committee), see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47, *Agitazioni e scioperi*. On Luigi Invernizzi see also a description made by the police in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, *Elenco Anarchici*, Sez. VIII di P.S., n.d., cited also in L. Briguglio, *Il Partito operaio e gli anarchici*, p.96. On the Unemployed Workers Committee, founded on 10 February 1890 see *Il Secolo*, Milan, 10-11 February 1890. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47: The committee was formed by Ernesto Cappellini (president), G. Battista Botta (secretary), Annibale Ceruti, Enrico Puppo, Quirico Mandorlo, Giuseppe Carlinzoni, Algisio Sormani, Angelo Borlenghi and Luigi Invernizzi.

<sup>92</sup> 'Un'altra agitata adunanza di operai disoccupati', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 27 February 1890. See also 'La tumultuosa adunanza dei disoccupati', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 26-27 February 1890.

<sup>93</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47, 26 February 1890.

<sup>94</sup> 'Il processo agli anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 21-22 November 1889, the authorities believed that the importance of anarchists within the Milanese political arena was minimal, and that the POI was dominating the arena, until their separation in July 1888.

<sup>95</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, *Anarchici II*, Riunioni nelle osterie, police chief to detectives.

<sup>96</sup> 'Gli anarchici latitanti', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 11-12 December 1889.

<sup>97</sup> On Attilio Panizza see DBAI, *ad nomen*; MOIDB, *ad nomen*; G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, p.309; U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani, quarant'anni di lotte rivoluzionarie 1891-1931*, pp.20-22.

<sup>98</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector VII section to police chief, Milan, 6 June 1889. On Dionigi Malagoli see DBAI, *ad nomen*.

material to his comrades in Milan.<sup>99</sup> Milanese authorities registered a revival of anarchist propaganda in February 1890 and immediately moved to repress any resurgence of anarchists in the city.<sup>100</sup> In March 1890, 23 anarchists were arrested.<sup>101</sup> *La Lombardia* reported that Ermete Ernesto De Petri,<sup>102</sup> an anarchist and a key organiser of unemployed workers, was arrested after a meeting of workers. His fellow workers attempted to prevent his arrest, protesting against the police.<sup>103</sup> They were unsuccessful, but the episode demonstrated that Milanese anarchists were heeding Malatesta's call to align with workers and build support for their movement.

The radical newspapers *Il Secolo* distinguished between the state repression of anarchists and the rest of the workers' movement, claiming that 'none of them [the anarchists] had participated in the workers' militancy of those days'.<sup>104</sup> However, the relationship between anarchists and workers, and the anarchists' participation in the workers' movement, particularly at unemployed workers' meetings, could no longer be denied. On 5 March 1890 the Milan police chief expressed his concerns regarding the election of two anarchists to the new unemployed workers committee,<sup>105</sup> and the following day the Milan prefect invited police officers to act 'energetically' against those who provoked riots and crimes.<sup>106</sup> After informing the public prosecutor,<sup>107</sup> the police chief immediately proceeded to arrest 23 anarchists. Furthermore, on 20 March the prefect invited the police chief to 'get detailed information on unemployed workers' agitations, anarchists' plots and on the possibility of disorder'.<sup>108</sup> The Prefect stressed the fact that 'not every anarchist has been arrested and anarchist leaflets are greedily

<sup>99</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector III section to police chief, Milan, 3 October 1889.

<sup>100</sup> 'Agitazione anarchica', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 26 February 1890. See also *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 26-27 February 1890.

<sup>101</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47, police chief to prefect, Milan, 7 March 1890. List of people arrested on 6 March 1890: Cerri, Attilio (typographer); Mussini, Angelo (joiner); Frascini, Giuseppe (blacksmith); Perazzini, Giuseppe (typographer); Restelli, Giovanni (stationer); Testa, Giuseppe (stocker); Pogliani, Enrico (chiseller); Pacciarini, Benigno (chiseller); Maderna, Giuseppe (mechanic); Baracchi, Giovanni (bookbinder); Abbiati, Giovanni (blacksmith); Goisis, Angelo (joiner); Bruciati, Ermanno (typographer); Invernizzi, Luigi (basket-maker); Caspani, Antonio (gold-smith); Bedoni, Ettore (engraver); Cagnola, Pietro (typographer); Bianchi, Italo (accountant); Ghioni, Edoardo (upholsterer); Sturmo, Angelo (dye-worker); Brenzani, Giovanni (runner); Faccá, Angelo (blacksmith); Anzi, Felice (lithographer); De Petri, Ermete Ernesto (blacksmith), in 'L'arresto di 23 anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 7-8 March 1890.

<sup>102</sup> De Petri was involved in the 1889 trial and was found not guilty. Since then he had been one of the most active anarchists who had taken part and promoted meetings of unemployed workers. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47, police chief to Milan prefect, Milan, 5 March 1890.

<sup>103</sup> 'L'arresto di 23 anarchici', *La Lombardia*, Milan, 6 March 1890. See also, ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47, police chief to prefect, Milan, 7 March 1890. See also, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 8-9 March 1890.

<sup>104</sup> *Il Secolo*, Milan, 7-8 March 1890.

<sup>105</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47, police chief to Captain of Carabinieri, Milan, 5 March 1890.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, prefect to police chief, Milan, 6 March 1890.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, police chief to prefect, Milan, 6 March 1890.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, *Agitazione Operaia, Ordine pubblico*, Milan, 20 March 1890.

read'.<sup>109</sup> Authorities feared the consequences of anarchist propaganda: 'It is easy to gather 10,000 people in Milan, and if an insurrection of unemployed workers occurred in the city, peasants may join them.'<sup>110</sup>

### 3.4 The Capolago Congress and Pietro Gori in Milan (1891-1894)

Anarchists resumed their activities in Milan at the beginning of 1891 following the Capolago Congress (January 1891) and the arrival of Pietro Gori in the Lombard capital (January-February 1891). The Capolago Congress was 'the most important meeting of Italian anarchists since the First International'.<sup>111</sup> Around 80 delegates met in the Swiss city, between 4 and 6 January 1891, including Attilio Panizza and Italo Bianchi from Milan. The congress proved to be a success for the current led by Malatesta and F.S. Merlino. In fact, the assembly approved the constitution of a 'Socialist-Anarchist-Revolutionary-Federation Party', which was intended to overcome anarchists' isolationist tendencies, and to respond to the emergence of an individualist current.<sup>112</sup> The congress' resolutions were published as a manifesto.<sup>113</sup> The manifesto was a general call to form organisations and it was addressed to workers, socialists and revolutionaries who rejected parliamentary politics. In fact, according to Berti 'the idea of a party is completely absent' from Malatesta's thought.<sup>114</sup> The object of the meeting was to put together an organisation which could realise the anarchists' revolutionary

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.240; on Capolago Congress also see Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.240-44, 251-53; G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla settimana rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1915)*, pp.40-42; A. Dadà, *L'anarchismo in Italia: fra movimento e partito*, p.47; G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.308-14; E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, pp.78-86; U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani, quarant'anni di lotte rivoluzionarie 1891-1931*, pp.45-46; M. Nettleau, *A short history of anarchism*, p.176; E. Zoccoli, *L'anarchia. Gli agitatori, le idee, i fatti*, pp.399-401; G. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p.349; N. Dell'Erba, *Giornali e gruppi anarchici in Italia 1892-1900*, pp.13 and ff.; G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, pp.165-70; G. Martinola, 'Il congresso anarchico di Capolago', *Bollettino storico della Svizzera italiana*, vol.81, no.4, pp.182-89; M. Binaghi, *Addio Lugano bella. Gli esuli politici nella Svizzera italiana di fine Ottocento (1866-1895)*, prefazione di Nicola Tranfaglia, Locarno 2002, pp.463-89; 'Manifesto ai socialisti e al popolo d'Italia e programma del Partito Socialista Rivoluzionario Anarchico Italiano', Castrocaro-Forlì, 2 marzo 1891, cited in E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, p.80.

<sup>112</sup> This was the extreme wing of the anarchist movement and was represented at the meeting by Paolo Schicchi, see Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.234-36. This current of anarchism is analysed in-depth in the following chapter of this thesis.

<sup>113</sup> 'Manifesto ai socialisti e al popolo d'Italia e programma del Partito Socialista Rivoluzionario Anarchico Italiano, Castrocaro-Forlì, 2 March 1891, in E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, pp.182-89.

<sup>114</sup> Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp.168-69.

efforts. Yet Malatesta's idea of an anarchist organization did not present a hierarchical structure nor a leader, but it allowed the absolute freedom of individuals and groups that agreed on the basic principles of the manifesto. Moreover, the anarchist organization that was born out of the Capolago Congress maintained an internationalist perspective. Within this framework, the forthcoming May Day celebrations could play an important role and presented the opportunity to unite all workers. At the congress, Italian anarchists officially endorsed May Day celebrations.<sup>115</sup>

In the aftermath of the arrests in March 1890, Milanese anarchists reverted to an isolationist tendency. There are no records of any Milanese anarchist initiatives in the following nine months except for the May Day celebrations. For this occasion Milanese anarchists organised a conference in the anarchist club *Stella nascente*,<sup>116</sup> and requested propaganda material from comrades in Paris.<sup>117</sup> The club was located in *Corso Garibaldi* and 50 people attended the meeting to hear Pietro Cagnola speak. In 1890 there were two other anarchist clubs; one was located in *Corso Porta Romana* (a group called *Sole dell'Avvenire*), and the other one in *Via Santa Sofia*. Milanese anarchists tried to continue some sort of theoretical activity, but their resources were scarce and did not allow them to produce any effective propaganda or recruit new sympathisers.<sup>118</sup> Their activities were systematically restricted by the police. Their participation in

<sup>115</sup> On May Day in Italy and Milan in particular, see M. Antonioli, 'Tra 'festa del lavoro' e 'sciopero' operaio: gli anarchici italiani e il Primo Maggio tra la fine dell'Ottocento e gli inizi del Novecento', *Ricerche storiche*, vol.14, no.2-3, 1984, pp.353-73; M. Antonioli, 'Milano: 1° maggio 1890', *Critica sociale*, n. 5, 1987; M. Antonioli, 'Il 1° Maggio in Italia', in M. Antonioli, G. Ginex, A. Panaccione (eds), *Per i cent'anni della festa del lavoro*, Milan, Comune di Milano - Fondazione G. Brodolini, 1988, pp.30-35; M. Antonioli, 'Il Primo maggio in Italia tra otto e novecento: elementi, forme e aspetti della tradizione', in A. Panaccione (ed.), *Il 1° maggio tra passato e futuro*, Manduria - Bari - Rome, Lacaita, 1992, pp.33-85; M. Antonioli, *Vieni o Maggio. Aspetti del Primo Maggio in Italia tra Otto e Novecento*, Milan, 1988. See also S. Garroni, 'At the Origins of May Day: Ambiguous Loyalty, Contradictory Adhesion', in A. Panaccione (ed.), *May Day Celebration*, Venice, 1988; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour: Further Studies in the History of Labour*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984; M. Massara, C. Schirinzi, M. Sioli, *Storia del Primo Maggio*, Milan, 1978; A. Panaccione, *Sappi che oggi e la tua festa...Per la storia del 1 Maggio*, Venice, 1986; A. Panaccione (ed.), *La memoria del Primo maggio*, Venice, Marsilio, 1988 (with G. Ginex); H. Perrier-M. Cordillot, 'The origins of May Day: the American connection', in G.C. Donno (ed.), *Storie e Immagini del 1 Maggio. Problemi della storiografia italiana e internazionale*, presentazione di Giorgio Benvenuto, Manduria-Bari-Rome, 1990.

<sup>116</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, police chief to prefect, 1 Maggio 1890.

<sup>117</sup> Material was sent to Girolamo Mandelli and Antonio Caspani, with a message for Dionigi Malagoli and Augusto Norsa, in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, *Dimostrazioni per il 1 Maggio 1890-1898*, fasc. *Corrispondenza colla prefettura 1 Maggio 1890*, police chief to prefect, Milan, 31 May 1890. At the postal office 37 boxes were seized by the police and they contained several manifestos and pamphlets sent to thirty-nine consignees, in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, n. 33, prefect to police chief, Milan, 7 May 1890. There were four different types of manifestos: one of them was in French 'Aux etudiants du Monde entire'. The other three manifestos were in Italian: 'Gli anarchici al popolo in occasione del 1 Maggio', 'A militari', 'Agli Studenti d'Italia', in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, n. 606-2, police chief to solicitor, Milan, 28 April 1890.

<sup>118</sup> 'Testimonianze', *Il Libertario*, Milan, 30 July 1947.

worker initiatives was monitored and with periodic arrests authorities tried to cut the relationships between workers and anarchists.

Undeterred, anarchists found new ways to interact with workers. In June 1890 the *Cooperativa Sociale Operaia dei Figli del Progresso* (Worker Social Cooperative for Children of Progress) was founded in *Porta Genova*.<sup>119</sup> It was located in *Via Vigevano 22* and later moved to *Via Novara 21/B*, in the north-western area of the city. Authorities reported that the aim of the cooperative was mutual aid and cooperation among workers, and that socialist-anarchist propaganda was produced and distributed to increase the number of members.<sup>120</sup> However, authorities also reported that this group did not have sufficient strength to act against public order.<sup>121</sup> Anarchists were now focusing on workers' living conditions, their everyday problems and basic needs. The existence of this group demonstrated that anarchists continued to be active in reaching out to workers, albeit in a limited way.

Police records document that there was no evidence of anarchist presence within the building workers' protests in August and September 1890, but they were involved in the metal workers' actions of the same period.<sup>122</sup> It appears that anarchists were mainly active in heavy industrial sector workers' initiatives. This emphasis might be explained by the fact that the most advanced sector of Milanese industry required a high number of low skilled workers, often migrants from the countryside, who were easy targets for subversive and radical theories. Nevertheless, anarchist activities within this specific pocket of the workers' movement can also be seen as evidence against historical interpretations which depicted Italian anarchists as mainly middle class bourgeoisie, *déclassés* and artisans. The Milan anarchist movement's social composition revealed a strong presence of factory workers and proved that their activities were aimed at one of Italy's most advanced industrial sectors. Milanese anarchists had not been able to establish themselves as role models for the working class. Their idea of moral revolt implied a holistic approach to the struggle between oppressed and oppressor. It required intransigence and refusal to deal with authorities, rather than negotiations for a partial wage increase. Anarchist principles required the refusal of any elite that could control the workers' movement. Only workers could emancipate themselves. In other words,

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<sup>119</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 107, *Cooperative*, fasc. 11, *Società, Cooperativa Sociale operaia dei Figli del Progresso*. It was constituted on 1 June 1890 and had 100 members.

<sup>120</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 107, fasc. 11.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>122</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 47, *Agitazioni e scioperi 1890*.

anarchists shifted the analysis of economic crisis to a broader political framework. Yet Milanese anarchists needed the presence of Pietro Gori in Milan to effectively disseminate their ideas.

Gori moved to Milan after the Capolago Congress in 1891,<sup>123</sup> and according to police files, ‘took control of the [anarchist] party’.<sup>124</sup> When he came to Milan, the Sicilian lawyer found the Milanese anarchist movement deeply affected by the state repression of recent years. It is important to highlight the regional origins of Gori, since the presence within the Milanese anarchist movement of influential characters coming from other parts of Italy became a recurring theme throughout the movement’s history. On the one hand, this feature of Milanese anarchism was the result of specific economic and social factors that made of Milan a city with a high turn-over of people. On the other hand, the crucial role played by non-Milanese anarchists within the local anarchist movement demonstrated the need of external inputs – whether they were ideas or protagonists – in order to gain ideological and political acknowledgment within the city’s political space and within the national anarchist movement. A group of old and new activists gathered around Gori and, with his assistance, their efforts became more effective. His influence and his oratorical skills were a source of continuous inspiration for his comrades. Gori played a crucial role in the development of Milanese anarchism.

Together with Soldo and Mammoli, Gori was a member of the organising committee of the *Comizio Internazionale dei Lavoratori* (Workers’ International Assembly), held on 12 April 1891 at the *Teatro della Canobbiana* in Milan.<sup>125</sup> Milanese anarchists invited national and international delegates from worker, socialist and anarchist groups.<sup>126</sup> Around 150 organisations attended the meeting.<sup>127</sup> The anarchist Luigi Galleani came from Turin and together with Gori gained general approval from

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<sup>123</sup> Literature on Pietro Gori is substantial. See in particular DBAI, *ad nomen*; MOIDB, *ad nomen*; M. Antonioli, *Pietro Gori, il cavaliere errante dell’anarchia*; G. Dinucci, ‘Pietro Gori e il sindacalismo anarchico in Italia all’inizio del secolo’, *Movimento Operaio e Socialista*, vol.13, no.3-4, 1967, pp.289-99; S. Forese, *La vita e l’opera di Pietro Gori nei ricordi di S. Forese*, Milan, 1949; C. Molaschi, *Pietro Gori*, Milan, 1959; *Rosignano a Pietro Gori. Raccolta di saggi e testimonianze a cura del Comitato cittadino costituitosi per le onoranze a Pietro Gori*, Cecina, 1960; S. Catanuto, F. Schirone, *Il canto anarchico in Italia nell’Ottocento e nel Novecento*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2001.

<sup>124</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, n. 147, inspector III section to police chief, Milan, 17 May 1892.

<sup>125</sup> See ‘Un comizio internazionale per i diritti dei lavoratori’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 6-7 March 1891 and 13-14 April 1891, which reported in detail the contents of the meeting. See also U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani, quarant’anni di lotte rivoluzionarie 1891-1931*, pp.20-26.

<sup>126</sup> The organising committee, Augusto Norsa and Giuseppe Locatelli, with three different letters, invited Luigi Galleani from Turin, see L. Galleani, *Figure e figure*, Newark, N.J., Biblioteca de L’Adunata dei Refrattari, 1930, p.96 and U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani, quarant’anni di lotte rivoluzionarie 1891-1931*, p.20.

<sup>127</sup> U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani, quarant’anni di lotte rivoluzionarie 1891-1931*, p.23, note 10.

the audience.<sup>128</sup> Galleani was already well known as an active anarchist and a good orator. According to Galleani, at that time Milanese anarchists were a ‘very active and restless army of young enthusiasts’.<sup>129</sup> This meeting was significant because it was international, with delegates from France, England, Spain, Germany, Russia and Greece.<sup>130</sup> Most importantly, however, the assembly was open to all the different branches of socialism, thus allowing every participant to express his/her own view in front of a diverse audience. For the anarchists, this meeting represented an opportunity to readjust and clarify their revolutionary strategy, with a particular focus on the upcoming May Day events.<sup>131</sup> From the stage Milanese anarchists distributed a leaflet in which they invited every worker to participate in May Day celebrations. In this leaflet, labour was defined as the ‘first means of robbery used by the dominant class’ and as the ‘natural outcome of a system based on privileges and exploitation’.<sup>132</sup> Milanese anarchists declared ‘the need to stir up the working masses of the world’ and to oppose the international collaboration of finance and politics, to form ‘a cosmopolitan alliance of workers, the exploited and the oppressed, in order to emancipate humankind from every chain of serfdom, both economic and political.’<sup>133</sup> *Il Secolo*, the newspaper of the Milanese democrats, reported that at the assembly anarchists refused to vote for that item on the agenda which affirmed ‘the necessity of a simultaneous and progressive process of social and political reforms’.<sup>134</sup> Although speeches advocating revolution were loudly applauded, *Il Secolo* praised the disciplined multitude of workers who ‘want to earn labour rights with a calm and long term action, without violence, but through study and work’.<sup>135</sup> This ran counter to the anarchist position which was expressed by Gori:

The popular burst of enthusiasm on May Day will convince even the most skeptical ones, so that after the destructive storm the sun of equality, justice and liberty will shine over the human family.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Later, Galleani and Gori were ordered to appear before a judge: the former was charged with ‘eccitamento all’odio di classe’ (instigation to class hate), while the latter with ‘offese al capo della religione’ (offence to a religious chief), in U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani, quarant’anni di lotte rivoluzionarie 1891-1931*, p.26.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Significato del comizio’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 13-14 April 1891.

<sup>131</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, ‘Manifesto 1 Maggio 1891’, for the list of Milanese worker organisations supporting May Day celebrations.

<sup>132</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, *Agitazione sulla manifestazione del Primo Maggio 1891*.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> ‘Significato del comizio’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 13-14 April 1891.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

The expression ‘destructive storm’ epitomised the anarchist belief in the revolutionary course as a means to let the sun shine on the future.

The success of the International Workers’ Assembly provided a strong foundation upon which Milanese anarchists could reinvigorate the movement. Gori’s arrival inspired activists to meet and form new clubs throughout the city. Twelve days after the assembly, *Il Secolo* published a letter written by Gori and signed by a group of socialist-anarchist clubs.<sup>137</sup> New names appeared next to a few old ones: *Sempre Avanti*, *Circolo di studi sociali*, *Humanitas*, *Operaio*, N. 3 and *I Maggio*. In this letter, Gori replied to an article published in *Il Secolo* which indicated the presence of many undercover policemen within the socialist-anarchist movement.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, anarchists resumed initiatives such as meeting in *trattorie* and *osterie*,<sup>139</sup> in public spaces like parks, and in the Milanese hinterlands and countryside where they could carry on their activities in relative safety from police raids.<sup>140</sup> Anarchist ideas and activities began to spread beyond factory workers in the city to the peasant movement in the countryside, demonstrating the anarchists’ will to relate directly with the peasants’ struggles. On the one hand, this was due to the competition with the socialist and workerist organisations; on the other hand, Milanese anarchists realized that the peasant movement in the countryside constituted a crucial battleground of class struggle and economic emancipation.

For this purpose, Gori went to several conferences, debates and assemblies, and as a lawyer, he represented many anarchists at their trials.<sup>141</sup> Perhaps one of his most important activities during his time in Milan was publishing the anarchist weekly journal *L’Amico del Popolo* (The People’s Friend).<sup>142</sup> Other anarchists were involved in this project, such as Arcangelo Faccà (editor), Giuseppe Locatelli (subeditor), Luigi Invernizzi, as well as Antonio Ernesto Caspani and Sante Caserio, who managed the distribution of papers published by the *Biblioteca dell’Amico del Popolo* (The Library

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<sup>137</sup> ‘Una dichiarazione’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 24-25 April 1891.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, *Anarchici II. Riunioni nelle osterie*, Milan, 11 June 1892.

<sup>140</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, n. 197, *Conferenze di anarchici a Como e Brescia*, police chief to prefect, Milan, 25 April 1891.

<sup>141</sup> See P. Gori, *Opere XI, Conferenze politiche*, and *Opere IX, Pagine di vagabondaggio*, edited by P. Binazzi, La Spezia 1911-1912, republished Milan, 1947-1948; ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58; and U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani*, pp.56-64.

<sup>142</sup> On *L’Amico del Popolo* see L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell’anarchismo, I*, pp.87-89; F. Della Peruta, ‘I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)’, in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.158-59; and ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, *Anarchici I*.

of the People's Friend). The figures of Caspani and Caserio are further analysed later in this chapter. The editorial board was made up of 'very enthusiastic' young people.<sup>143</sup> The anarchists managed to produce only six issues, all of which were seized by the police, before being closed down by the authorities.<sup>144</sup> The aim of the journal was to provide a forum for discussion and debate among socialists.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, several debates were conducted between *L'Amico del Popolo* and other journals, such as *L'Emancipazione* (Rome), *Il Grido della Folla* (Pistoia), *Il Proletario* (Marsala) and *Il Secolo* (Milan). Most of the pages of *L'Amico del Popolo* were filled with polemics and news related to working class problems.<sup>146</sup> On more than one occasion anarchists also addressed gendered issues such as prostitution<sup>147</sup> and living in a sexist and patriarchal society: 'you are slaves in social life and in the private sphere. If you are also workers, you have two tyrants: your man and your boss.'<sup>148</sup> The lack of influential anarchist women within the movement is mainly explained by the general position of women in Italian society at the end of the century, and especially by their lower literacy rates. Only in the first decade of the twentieth century were there in Milan more women active as militants and playing influential roles within the movement.<sup>149</sup>

Gori wrote in the Milanese journal using the pseudonym '*Rigo*'. He published poems and dialogues titled *Veglie anarchiche* (Anarchist awaking). However, one of the main problems of the editorial board was created by the polemics with individualist anarchists: according to *L'Amico del Popolo*, supporters of individual acts of revolt had a very limited concept of social revolution.<sup>150</sup> The Milanese anarchist journal was heading towards open support of organisational stances among anarchists, and this was evidenced by the publishing of Kropotkin's texts.<sup>151</sup> Gori and his comrades aimed at making the journal a point of reference for all Milanese anarchists. Financial problems<sup>152</sup> and police repression, however, led to the demise of the journal. In a

<sup>143</sup> 'Al regio fisco', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 5 December 1891.

<sup>144</sup> The last issue is dated 23 January 1892, a. II, n. 6.

<sup>145</sup> 'Accademia', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 5 December 1891.

<sup>146</sup> See for example, 'La voce dei sarti', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 5 December 1891; 'Per la città', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 12 December 1891; 'La Questione Sociale', *L'Amico del Popolo*, 9 January 1892; 'Al Popolo', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 23 January 1892.

<sup>147</sup> 'Prostituzione', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 9 January 1892.

<sup>148</sup> 'Alle donne', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 5 December 1891.

<sup>149</sup> See in particular chapter 4 on the activities of Nella Giacomelli, Leda Rafanelli and Aida Latini.

<sup>150</sup> 'Accademia', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 1 January 1892.

<sup>151</sup> P.Kropotkin, 'Il nostro ordine ed il vostro disordine', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 5 December 1891; 'La Necessità della R...e', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 12 and 19 December 1891.

<sup>152</sup> The editorial board launched a permanent subscription in order to overcome financial problems. See 'Ai compagni, agli amici, agli operai, ai rivenditori', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 12 December 1891.

manifesto titled *Al Popolo* (To the People) and signed by the *Socialisti anarchici di Milano*, Milanese anarchists announced the decision that they were withdrawing from the public arena in order to conduct ‘an illegal and underground life, to come out in fits and starts, unexpected and merciless, in the form of pamphlets, single issues and manifestos.’<sup>153</sup> Indeed, Milanese anarchists occasionally published single issues, such as *L’Amico del Popolo* (29 May 1892), *Veritas!* (16 June 1893) and *Abbasso gli anarchici* (25 March 1894).<sup>154</sup>

Despite regular and ongoing police repression aimed at leaders of the anarchist movement as well as readers of *L’Amico del Popolo*,<sup>155</sup> the number of anarchists in Milan increased. Compared to the end of the 1880s, when Milanese anarchists were no more than 300, the Milanese anarchist movement had grown in numbers and developed as a network of organised groups. According to the newspaper *L’Italia del Popolo*, Milanese anarchists numbered around 1000, including women, and were organised in 30 groups around the city.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, the newspaper claimed that there even more anarchists not aligned to any particular group.<sup>157</sup>

Despite their generic support of revolutionary stances, in May 1892 Milanese anarchists, according to Gori, were not ready for a revolution, ‘both because it is not convenient and because of disorganisation’.<sup>158</sup> Despite the presence of Gori and the subsequent burst of enthusiasm, the Milanese left wing arena was soon to be dominated by the newly born Italian Socialist Party, led in the city by Filippo Turati.

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<sup>153</sup> ‘Al Popolo’, *L’Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 23 January 1892.

<sup>154</sup> See L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell’anarchismo, I*, p.88, who reports Sandro Foresi’s recollections (S. Foresi, *La vita e l’opera di Pietro Gori nei ricordi di Sandro Foresi*, Milan, Ed. Moderna, 1949, p.9.) According to Foresi twenty-one single issues (or special edition) were published. However, these publications have never been found, except an issue published on 18 February 1894, titled *L’Amico del Popolo*, and present in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84. In addition, there is information regarding another two issues, titled *Abbasso gli anarchici* and *Il 20 Settembre*, but they are unavailable. For all this see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, *Nota informativa su Carrara Enrico Vincenzo*, Milan, 30 September 1898.

<sup>155</sup> *L’amico del Popolo*, 23 January 1892.

<sup>156</sup> ‘I 25 anarchici’, *L’Italia del Popolo*, Milan, 3-4 May 1892.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.5 Opposition and exclusion: anarchists, socialists and the state repression (1892-1894)

The definitive division between anarchists and socialists occurred in Genoa, in August 1892, with the constitution of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI).<sup>159</sup> The formation of a modern socialist reformist party was the logical outcome of a 15-year period of debates, struggles and ultimately irreconcilable differences of opinion.<sup>160</sup> Prior to the formation of the PSI the *Congresso Operaio* (Worker Congress) was held in Milan on 2-3 August 1891.<sup>161</sup> Within this congress, socialists were demonstrably the dominant current of Italian socialism. However, an important item was voted and approved: that formal separation from the anarchists would be postponed to a forthcoming congress.<sup>162</sup> At the Milan Congress anarchists were represented by Pietro Gori.<sup>163</sup> He was able to convince

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<sup>159</sup> On the Genoa Congress see L. Cortesi, *La costituzione del partito socialista italiano*, Milan, 1961; *Genoa 1892. Nascita del Partito Socialista Italiano*, Milan, 1952; G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.336-54; U. Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani, quarant'anni di lotte rivoluzionarie 1891-1931*, pp.48-55; Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.9-11; Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.268-73; V. Evangelisti, 'Nascita, espansione e crisi di un partito insolito', in V. Evangelisti, E. Zucchini, *Storia del partito socialista rivoluzionario 1881-1893*, Bologna, 1981; L. Briguglio, *Turati 1892. Origini e caratteri del Psi*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1992; G. Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano (1892-1926)*; Z. Ciuffoletti, 'La fondazione del Partito socialista italiano e l'opera di Filippo Turati', in S. Caretti, Z. Ciuffoletti, M. Degl'Innocenti (eds), *Lezioni di Storia del partito socialista italiano (1892-1976)*, Florence 1977, pp.1-57; Z. Ciuffoletti, *Storia del Psi, I, Le origini e l'età giolittiana*, Bari, 1992; G.M. Bravo, 'Associazioni partitiche e modelli organizzativi nell'età della Seconda Internazionale', in F. Bracco (ed.), *Democrazia e associazionismo nel XIX secolo*, pp.211-24; F. Pedone (ed.), *Il Partito socialista italiano nei suoi congressi, I, 1892-1902. Con un'appendice sui congressi operai dal 1853 al 1891*, Milan 1959; M. Ridolfi, 'Alle fonti del Psi: l'associazionismo "sovversivo" nell'Italia di fine secolo e le inchieste di Crispi', in D. Mengozzi (ed.), *Gli uomini rossi di Romagna. Gli anni della fondazione del Psi (1892)*, Manduria-Bari-Rome, Laicata, 1994, pp.295-309; L. Cortesi, *Il socialismo italiano tra riforme e rivoluzione. Dibattiti congressuali del Psi 1892-1921*, Bari 1969; R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano, II, Dalle prime lotte nella Valle Padana ai fasci siciliani*, Turin, 1997.

<sup>160</sup> In 1889 the Second International was formed with a Marxist-socialist orientation. See G. Haupt, *La Seconda Internazionale*, Florence, La Nuova Italia, 1953; J.Joll, *The Second International 1889-1914*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984 (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1955); G.D.H. Cole, *A history of socialist thought, III, I, The Second International, 1889-1914*, London, Macmillan, 1967; G. Haupt, *L'Internazionale socialista dalla Comune a Lenin*, and E. Ragionieri, 'Alle origini del marxismo della Seconda Internazionale', in *Il marxismo e l'Internazionale*, Rome 1968, pp.47-162.

<sup>161</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.315-32; Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, pp.255-56; Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani*, pp.47-48; A. Nascimbene, *Il movimento operaio in Italia. La questione sociale a Milano dal 1890 al 1900*, Milan, 1972; V. Hunecke, *Classe operaia e rivoluzione industriale a Milano 1859-1892*, pp.400 and ff; Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, p.201; see also reports of the congress in *L'Italia del Popolo*, Milan, 2-3, 3-4 and 4-5 August 1891; 'Cronaca', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 3-4 and 4-5 August 1891; *Critica Sociale*, Milan, 20 August 1891.

<sup>162</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.256.

<sup>163</sup> See *Il Secolo*, Milan, 3-4 August 1891: Gori was the delegate of the *Federazione di resistenza dei cappellai di Intra* (Hat makers' resistance federation of Intra). Anarchists' presence at the conference was

the assembly to include an item in the final resolution to reaffirm ‘the free and anti-authoritarian organisation of the proletariat in order to achieve, through its own coordinated and cooperative forces, workers’ complete emancipation’.<sup>164</sup> Despite the efforts of Filippo Turati, leader of the Milanese socialists and editor of *Critica Sociale*, aimed at ‘purging’ Italian socialism of anarchist and workerist elements, within such an heterogeneous assembly he was not able to formalise the separation from the anarchists.<sup>165</sup> Turati acknowledged the similarities of principles between anarchists and socialists,<sup>166</sup> but he also highlighted their differences, as in the following:

the anarchists’ rejection of the slow and patient activity of workers’ organisation ... the antipathy towards discipline, the hate for everything that is gradual, the blind faith in spontaneity and effectiveness of rebellion, in the “revolutionary miracle”, and the distrust towards all those socialists who gain authority over the workers ...<sup>167</sup>

The anarchists’ faith in the ‘revolutionary miracle’ constituted the main division line between anarchists and socialists. Once again, the dichotomy means-end showed that the fracture between anarchists and socialists was becoming irremediable. The relationships between anarchists and socialists were difficult and the most controversial point of divergence was the participation in parliamentary politics.<sup>168</sup> As a consequence, the split between anarchists and legalitarian socialists contributed to an increase in anarchists’ activities to establish an organisation. In 1892 the anarchist Neapolitan lawyer, Francesco Saverio Merlino, published his *Necessità e basi di un’intesa* (Necessity and bases for an agreement).<sup>169</sup> On the one hand, Merlino attacked the individualist tendency within the anarchist movement, while on the other hand, he reasserted the importance of a revolutionary course, not as the activity of a party or a vanguard, but rather as the outcome of a massive intervention determined by the people,

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scarce: only thirteen delegates out of 120 voted for Gori’s agenda, see ‘Cronaca’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 4-5 August 1891.

<sup>164</sup> *Il Secolo*, 4-5 August 1891.

<sup>165</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito socialista (1853-1892)*, pp.330-31.

<sup>166</sup> F. Turati, ‘Gli Anarchici’, *Critica Sociale*, Milan, 10 May 1891. See also Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.270. See other articles on *Critica Sociale* relating to anarchists and socialists: O. Gnocchi-Viani, ‘Una opinione sugli anarchici. Chi sono, donde vengono e dove vanno’, *Critica Sociale*, Milan, 31 May 1891; F. Turati, ‘Anarchici e socialisti. Postilla a una nostra polemica’, *Critica Sociale*, Milan, 20 June 1891; ‘Asterischi’, *Critica Sociale*, Milan, 10 July 1891.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> ‘Cronaca’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 4-5 August 1891.

<sup>169</sup> F.S. Merlino, *Necessità e basi di un’intesa*, Turin, 1979, edited by Nunzio Dell’Erba.

without whom, ‘coups are made, but revolutions are not’.<sup>170</sup> Finally, Merlino stressed the necessity of organising workers, and educating them to understand that ‘the interest of every worker is to support other workers’ claims’.<sup>171</sup>

In Milan, anarchist calls for revolution faded away, drowned out by the sound of the socialist siren. The anarchist presence among workers became less pervasive. The division between the two currents of Italian socialism filtered through the Milanese anarchist movement. Those workers who did not join the new Socialist Party demonstrated their loyalty to the revolutionary idea.<sup>172</sup> However, the recovery from the economic crisis that had hit the Italian industrial sector in the years 1890-91 hampered Milanese anarchists’ efforts to recruit people for a potential revolution. In the aftermath of strikes and agitations in summer 1891, more workers were employed again<sup>173</sup> and they became more sensitive to socialist discourse on partial improvements of wages and conditions than to anarchist revolutionary appeals. One of the most disputed issues in the relationship between factory workers and their bosses, between labour and capital, was the *‘lavoro a cottimo’*, that is the system of paying workers according to the number of pieces produced. In August 1891 workers of the *Elvetica* plant started a strike that soon spread throughout the entire metallurgic sector of Milanese industry.<sup>174</sup> The *lavoro a cottimo* was the point of disagreement. The Milanese anarchist Italo Bianchi was a member of the workers’ committee set up to solve the dispute.<sup>175</sup> Strikers and unemployed workers gathered almost daily at the Arena for meetings and assemblies where both socialist and anarchist leaders addressed the audience.<sup>176</sup> Bianchi’s activity in the metallurgic workers’ struggle was pivotal in achieving the first general strike in this sector.<sup>177</sup>

Bianchi and Gori were two exceptions within the Milanese anarchist milieu. They were able to integrate calls for moral revolt with organisation and negotiations for

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p.24.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., pp.25-26.

<sup>172</sup> D. Marucco, ‘Processi anarchici a Torino tra il 1892 e il 1894, in *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo*, p.220.

<sup>173</sup> Mechanical factories could employ workers again only after an increase of state production orders.

<sup>174</sup> See ‘Cronaca. Lo sciopero all’Elvetica’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 28-29 August 1891.

<sup>175</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*. Together with Bianchi there were also Turati and Gnocchi-Viani. See ‘Cronaca’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 27-28 and 29-30 August 1891.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Cronaca. Il comizio degli scioperanti all’Arena’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 31 August-1 September 1891.

<sup>177</sup> M. Bonaccini, R. Casero, *La Camera del Lavoro di Milano dalle origini al 1904*, pp.60-65; A. Schiavi, *Origini, vicende e conquiste delle organizzazioni operaie aderenti alla Camera del Lavoro*, Milan, 1909, p.3; A. Nascimbene, *Il movimento operaio in Italia. La questione sociale a Milano dal 1890 al 1900*, Milan, 1972, pp.142-50. See also reports in Milanese newspapers between 25 August and 12 September 1891. On this series of agitations see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 49, *Disordini e scioperi 1891*.

partial improvements. They were able to develop a radical critique of bourgeois society without turning away the working class. However, the majority of Milanese anarchists limited their initiatives to pure and sterile accusations and personal polemics that often had counterproductive outcomes. In this regard, for example, the episode of the assembly of unemployed people at the *Teatro della Canobbiana*, on 28 May 1891 is emblematic, where the anarchist Giuseppe Mammoli with his speech caused police intervention and eventually his own arrest.<sup>178</sup> Anarchists attended rallies and demonstrations, such as those of unemployed workers in 1891. The anarchist movement, however, was slowly pushed towards the margins of the political arena. In the aftermath of the Genoa Congress, socialist ostracism of anarchists coupled with state repression contributed to the marginalisation of anarchist groups and deepened the divide between anarchists and the workers' movement.<sup>179</sup> Socialists represented an important point of reference for anarchist identity. Having lost their main interlocutor, anarchists retreated to an isolationist position, finding refuge in their clubs. It is significant to note that in this period the increase in anarchist clubs corresponded with the decrease in anarchist initiatives towards the working class. In order to survive the systematic interventions of police against them, anarchist clubs instead initiated 'recreational' and 'educational' programmes.<sup>180</sup> They were private clubs accessed only by members. Conferences were private and attendance required an invitation.<sup>181</sup>

It is significant to notice that even the names of these clubs suggested a more sober attitude: '*Figli del Progresso*' (Progress' Children),<sup>182</sup> '*Il Risveglio*' (The Awakening),<sup>183</sup> '*Ades tel disi*' (Milanese dialect for 'Now I tell you'),<sup>184</sup> '*Semper*

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<sup>178</sup> See 'Il tempestoso comizio dei disoccupati alla Canobbiana', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 29-30 May 1891 and ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 48, *Disordini e scioperi 1891*, inspector Ballanti to prefect, Milan, 3 June 1891. On Mammoli's trial see 'Corriere giudiziario. Processo Mammoli', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 3-4 June 1891.

<sup>179</sup> Two assemblies highlighted the contrasts between anarchists and socialists. See 'I candidati della lotta di classe alla Canobbiana', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 19-20 June 1892 and 'La conferenza Casati ed il dissenso fra anarchici e socialisti', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 31 August-1 September 1892.

<sup>180</sup> On the programme of the Club '*Figli del Progresso*', see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 107, *Cooperative*, fasc. 11, n. 3635, Milan, n.d., but 1891. On anarchist clubs' 'recreational objects' in order to avoid police intervention, see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector III section to police chief, Milan, 17 May 1892, which also includes a list of coffee bars and restaurants used by anarchists.

<sup>181</sup> Police records on anarchist conferences are numerous. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84. One of the conferences held at the club *Il Risveglio* had '*La Bomba*' (The Bomb) as a topic, and Francesco Cafassi as speaker. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to inspector VIII section, Milan, 28 February 1894.

<sup>182</sup> Police surveillance of this club was constant: a police patrol was always present in front of the club. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 107, fasc. 11, Milan, 10 June 1892.

<sup>183</sup> This club was located in *Via Paolo Lomazzo* 26 and it had around thirty members. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84.

*Innanz*' (Milanese for 'Ever forward'),<sup>185</sup> *Degli Amici*' (Some Friends), *Stella d'Italia*' (Italy's Star), *Armonia*' (Harmony).<sup>186</sup> All these names indicated not only a more tolerant and 'harmonious' attempt to connect with the working class, but also a positive, optimistic vision of the future. Yet only one club was explicitly addressed to workers, the *'Circolo operaio istruttivo*' (Workers' educational club), and in reality it was a desolate room with a table and four chairs.<sup>187</sup> Pietro Gori was a member of the *'Centro di Studi Sociali Agitate e Agitatevi*' (Centre for Social Studies 'Agitate and agitate yourselves').<sup>188</sup> Milanese anarchists often improvised public meetings outside the factories in the Milanese periphery and in the countryside just outside the city, such as San Donato, San Giuliano and Rogoredo.<sup>189</sup>

Gori was the most charismatic figure of the Milanese anarchist movement. His presence and his oratory were influential and his activities focused on organising the workers movement for revolution,<sup>190</sup> and defending anarchists in courtrooms. He disseminated anarchist ideas through conferences and publications. *L'Amico del Popolo* did not last long. The experience of publishing a 'scientific journal of socialist anarchism' was even shorter. On 1 January 1894 Gori and Enrico Pessina published *'Lotta Sociale*' which was meant to be a meeting place for theoretical debates, and open

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<sup>184</sup> The club was constituted on 2 April 1894 after that authorities ordered the closing of *Il Risveglio*, in March 1894. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84.

<sup>185</sup> This club was founded at the beginning of 1892 and, like *Il Risveglio*, had a 'recreational' programme aimed at 'entertainment and dance.' The club was located in *Via Bramante* 42 and had replaced another group, *Degli Amici*, in the same premises, see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, Milan, n.d.; and ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 110, *Società. Ritrovi, circoli, divertimenti*, Milan, 11 February 1894, order to shut down the club.

<sup>186</sup> The club *Stella d'Italia* was located in *Viale Cimitero Monumentale* and was closed by authorities at the end of 1892. The group was formed again with the name of *Armonia*, see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84.

<sup>187</sup> This club was founded on 29 September 1893 and was located in *Via Leonardo da Vinci* 57. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector Pirovano to police chief, Milan, 6 November 1893, and ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to prefect, Milan, 18 November 1893.

<sup>188</sup> The club was constituted on 13 February 1893 'in order to spread anarchist ideas'. Initially it was located in *Via Unione* 10 and after 20 March 1893 in *Via San Pietro all'Orto* 16. According to the police the club had around fifty members and its influence was minor; see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to inspector III section, Milan, 21 March 1893.

<sup>189</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to inspector IV section, Milan 13 December 1892, and inspector Pirovano to police chief, Milan 2 April and 2 May 1893. Anarchists held assembly also in *Via Bernardino Corio* and beyond the railway bridge, in *Via Giuseppe Ripamonti*. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector VIII section to police chief Ballabio, Milan, 11 June 1894.

<sup>190</sup> Gori intervened in the agitation of Pirelli's workers in August 1891. See 'Allo stabilimento Pirelli', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 2-3 August 1891; ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, Agitazione tra gli operai meccanici dello stabilimento Pirelli, inspector Ballanti to police chief, Milan, 30 July 1891; M. Bonaccini, R. Casero, *La Camera del Lavoro di Milano dalle origini al 1904*, pp.59-60.

to all currents of socialism.<sup>191</sup> *Lotta Sociale* satisfied its editors' desire to have an authoritative means for debating with legalitarian socialists.<sup>192</sup> Without doubt, Turati's journal *Critica Sociale* stimulated Gori and his comrades.<sup>193</sup> Gori tried to shift anarchist critique towards a more scientific and 'positivist' level.<sup>194</sup> *Lotta Sociale* was supposed to be a place for constructive critical thinking and theorising, and not for destructive and negative personal polemics.<sup>195</sup> *Lotta Sociale* represented one of the many attempts by Gori to carve a space for the anarchists within the Milanese political forum. The authorities prevented him from doing so once again. Two days before publication, the Milanese prefect already knew about the journal.<sup>196</sup> That was its first and only issue.<sup>197</sup>

Between November 1893 and April 1894 Gori held several 'by invitation-only' conferences in Milan<sup>198</sup> during which the Sicilian lawyer discussed current affairs and the anarchist critique of society.<sup>199</sup> Topics varied from criminology to economics and from sociology to anarchist ethics and principles.<sup>200</sup> According to Milanese police chief, Gori was the leader of the Milanese anarchist movement.<sup>201</sup> Authorities had set a network of spies to keep Gori under constant surveillance in order to arrest him on any possible occasion. It was not difficult for police to find an excuse: on 15 July 1891 Gori

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<sup>191</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, pp.118-19. See also ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, *Stampe L-M*, fasc. 20, police chief to judge, Milan, 24 January 1894, includes a police description of Pessina and Gori.

<sup>192</sup> 'Al lettore', *Lotta Sociale*, Milan, 1 January 1894.

<sup>193</sup> Many meetings had been held in order to raise funds for the anarchist publication. On 8 April 1893 around thirty anarchists met at the *Circolo Degli Amici* in *Via Bramante* 42. They collected only 'tre lire' in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector III section to police chief, Milan, 8 April 1893.

<sup>194</sup> 'Perché una rivista?', *Lotta Sociale*, Milan, 1 January 1894.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, n. 2567, police chief to Milan prefect, Milan, 30 December 1893.

<sup>197</sup> The first issue of this publication is available in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, fasc. 20, *Lotta Sociale*, a. I, n. I, Milan, 1 January 1894, tipografia Editrice di Flaminio Fantuzzi. For the confiscation order see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, 'minuta', Milan, n.d. (but 1 January 1894) and ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 121, n. 9, *Sequestro del periodico 'Lotta Sociale'*, police chief to attorney general, Milan, 1 January 1894. See also 'Cronaca. A proposito del sequestro de 'La Lotta Sociale'', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 4 January 1894: the Milanese radical newspaper expressed its dissent from the activity of the authorities.

<sup>198</sup> See 'Cronaca', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 25-26 November 1893, which reported on a conference titled 'Anarchici o delinquenti?' See *Il Secolo*, 23 January, 4 and 18 February, 16 and 22 March 1894. See also, ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84: meetings and conferences were held at the *Consolato Operaio* in *Via Campo Lodigiano* 8, at the *Circolo Operaio milanese* in *Via Terraggio* 5, and at the *Circolo Radicale di Porta Magenta* in *Corso Vercelli* 41.

<sup>199</sup> See 'Cronaca', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 19 February 1894, reporting the conference titled 'Il Ministero in stato d'accusa' (18 February). On this conference see also ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 89, *Partito Socialista 1892-1899*, n. 661, Milan, 19 February 1894, *Comizio di protesta contro il governo*.

<sup>200</sup> Topics included: 'Rivolta o rivoluzione' (23 January 1894); 'Dal cristianesimo all'Umanesimo' (4 February 1894); 'Il Ministero in stato d'accusa' (18 February); 'Il vostro ordine e il nostro disordine' (16 March 1894). The text of the latter conference was published in P. Gori, *Opere XI, Conferenze politiche*, reported also in P. Gori, *Scritti scelti*, Cesena, 1968, and published separately in Turin in 1959.

<sup>201</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 48, 3071, police chief to prefect, Milan, 18 July 1891.

was arrested and charged with ‘*camminata sovversiva non autorizzata*’ (non-authorized subversive walk).<sup>202</sup>

From the second half of 1892 the Italian state increased its repression of anarchists. News coming from France regarding Ravachol and his violent acts were condemned in Italian newspapers and contributed to the criminalization of the anarchist movement.<sup>203</sup> Around 40 Italian anarchists were expelled from France.<sup>204</sup> Among them were Malatesta, Merlino and Dionigi Malagoli who decided not to return to Milan.<sup>205</sup> The editorial board of *L’Amico del Popolo* was charged with violations of press regulations.<sup>206</sup> Authorities organised an information system that kept anarchists under constant surveillance.<sup>207</sup> Spies and informers contributed to maintaining a network of surveillance of anarchists, and thus to turn surveillance into direct intervention.<sup>208</sup> Authorities tried to ‘surprise’ anarchists during their meetings<sup>209</sup> so that they could be charged with ‘*associazione di malfattori*’.<sup>210</sup> Shopkeepers who allowed anarchists to hold meetings in their premises were threatened with loss of their licenses.<sup>211</sup> In this way, anarchists were forced to hold only clandestine meetings or improvised assemblies outside factories. Moreover, clandestine meetings and secret initiatives soon became illegal activities and were seen as a conspiracy. As a result, anarchists grew more distant

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<sup>202</sup> See ‘Corriere giudiziario. Gli anarchici’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 15-16 July 1891; ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 48, and P.Gori, *Opere I*, p.26.

<sup>203</sup> After 29 March 1892 *Il Secolo* began to publish news related to Ravachol. On Ravachol see J. Maitron, *Ravachol et les anarchistes*, Paris, 1964.

<sup>204</sup> ‘Quaranta anarchici espulsi’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 31 March-1 April 1892; and ‘Contro gli anarchici’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 1-2 April 1892.

<sup>205</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>206</sup> See articles in *Il Secolo*, *L’Italia del Popolo* and *La Lombardia*, 6-7, 7-8 February, 28-29 April, 26-30 July 1892. See also ‘Corriere giudiziario. Processo di stampa’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 12-13 November 1893 on the trial of the editorial board of *L’Amico del Popolo* special edition titled ‘*Veritas*’, published on 16 June 1893. For this see also the authorities’ order to confiscate the journal, in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 131, *Stampe*, fasc. 12, n. 1097, *Circolare*, Milan, 16 June 1893.

<sup>207</sup> Since February 1892 the police chief had ordered specific procedures to keep files on anarchists, see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to inspectors of all sections, Milan, 11 February 1892. See also ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to all inspectors, Milan, 28 August 1893, with which the chief constable stressed the fact that while ‘the anarchist group has grown’, police records had not been updated.

<sup>208</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to prefect, Milan, 8 October 1893.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, inspector VIII section Pirovano to police chief, Milan, 2 April 1893. See also ‘La questura e gli anarchici’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 15-16 November 1893; ‘Sempre la questura e gli anarchici’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17-18 November 1893; ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to prefect, Milan, 18 November 1893: ‘[The police chief’s office] was informed that on the evening of 16 November Milanese anarchists were supposed to hold a meeting at the *Circolo Operaio Istruttivo* in *Via Leonardo da Vinci 57*. The usual ‘surprise’ was set and our agents ... were able to identify and arrest all twenty-five participants ... Anarchist publications were found in the club and on the arrested.’

<sup>210</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, police chief to prefect, Milan, 7 November 1893.

<sup>211</sup> See *ibid.*, police chief to inspector VII section, Milan, 13 October 1893 which includes also a list of shops attended by anarchists.

from the workers' movement and individualist anarchism became stronger. A lack of perspective and the failure of revolutionary discourse transformed the idea of revolution into an ideal of permanent revolt which occasionally resulted in radical and violent acts.<sup>212</sup> Repression, individual violent acts and ultimately ostracism by socialists<sup>213</sup> contributed to the criminalisation of the entire anarchist movement.

Gori offered an explanation of why many anarchists turned towards the radicalisation of the clash between themselves and the state. Gori identified state restrictions of liberties and justice as the root cause of terrorist acts.<sup>214</sup> According to him, 'there was a persistent effort by the accused (individualist) anarchists to deny any chance of forming associations'.<sup>215</sup> On the pages of a special issue of *L'Amico del Popolo*, published on 29 May 1892, Gori contributed to the debate between organisational and anti-organisational tendencies, expressing his view on the necessity of having an organisation.<sup>216</sup> Significantly, the journal also included an article titled 'Dinamite' (Dynamite), in which the individual act of rebellion was justified and theorised as a conscious expression of anarchism, and as a part of collective action for the emancipation of workers:

The explosions in Paris and in other countries have confused the bourgeoisie that ... furiously turns towards the anarchists and the authors of these explosions, using every possible means to repress the great idea of liberty and equality: ... anarchists, the real revolutionaries who fight for a true and complete liberty approve and justify these deeds ... For the people's emancipation there is only one means: revolution, the last hope; and by revolution we do not mean merely a popular and collective revolution, but rather all those individual acts that try to destroy the actual bourgeois system and that constitute the prelude of the greater social revolution.<sup>217</sup>

Eventually, what anarchists were fighting for was their right to express their opinions. They wanted a legitimate space within the Milanese political arena, but what they

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<sup>212</sup> Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani da Bakunin a Malatesta (1862-1892)*, p.272.

<sup>213</sup> Several times socialists denied anarchists the opportunity to speak during socialist meetings. See for instance 'La conferenza dell'avv. Gori', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 4-5 April 1892.

<sup>214</sup> P.Gori, *Opere, IX, Pagine di vagabondaggio*, p.60; Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p.69 and ff; N. Dell'Erba, *Giornali e gruppi anarchici in Italia 1892-1900*, pp.67-68.

<sup>215</sup> 'Il processo Malatesta e compagni innanzi al Tribunale Penale di Ancona,' prefaced by Pietro Gori, Buenos Aires 1899, reported in U. Fedeli, 'Momenti e uomini del socialismo-anarchico in Italia, 1896-1924', *Volontà*, 10-11, Genoa, 1960, p.613; G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla settimana rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1915)*, p.38.

<sup>216</sup> 'Il Socialismo', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, s.e. 29 May 1892. See also N. Dell'Erba, *Giornali e gruppi anarchici in Italia 1892-1900*, p.22.

<sup>217</sup> 'Dinamite', *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, s.e. 29 May 1892.

received was opposition from the state and exclusion from other parties. In January 1893 there were three trials of anarchists.<sup>218</sup> Some of them were charged with ‘singing anarchist songs’<sup>219</sup> or ‘talking about social revolution’.<sup>220</sup> In June 1893 several con-men declared themselves to be anarchists, perpetuating the equation between anarchists and criminals.<sup>221</sup> In November 1893, 63 anarchists were brought to trial.<sup>222</sup> Police made further arrests of anarchists in January<sup>223</sup> and March 1894.<sup>224</sup>

In the aftermath of the ‘*Fasci Siciliani*’ movement and the uprising in Lunigiana, Prime Minister Crispi launched an attack against anarchists and the labour movement in general. In Milan anarchists tried to organise a protest against this climate of repression and restrictions of liberties. In February 1894 Milanese anarchists called for a general assembly inviting anarchists, socialists and all those who dissented from Crispi’s reactionary policies.<sup>225</sup> They were repudiated by the socialists who preferred to express their protest through their party delegates’ initiatives in parliament.<sup>226</sup> Milanese anarchists published two issues of *L’Amico del Popolo*. In the issue published on 18 February 1894 anarchists analysed their differences with the socialists.<sup>227</sup> The issue published on 25 March 1894 was ironically titled ‘*Abbasso gli anarchici*’ (Down with the anarchists) in which they complained about the derogatory campaign that institutions and other parties were conducting against anarchists.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> On 10 January 1893 four anarchists were put on trial for ‘resisting arrest and beating with keys the head of agent Benamati’ in *Il Secolo*, Milan, 10-11 January 1893. On 12 January 1893 three young men were accused of ‘subversive cries and instigations to hate the bourgeois class’ in ‘Corriere giudiziario. Una coda al processo delle sassate’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 12-13 January 1893. Finally, four anarchists were also charged with instigating hate among social classes; see ‘Corriere giudiziario. Un altro processo di anarchici’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 22-23 January 1893.

<sup>219</sup> On the arrested see ‘Un altro processo di anarchici’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 22-23 January 1893. In ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 51, *Disordini e scioperi 1894-1895*, n. 1871, police chief to inspector III section, Milan, 14 April 1893.

<sup>220</sup> See ‘Gli anarchici in tribunale’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 10-11 January 1893, describing a trial against five anarchists accused of resistance against police agents who had intervened to halt the anarchists’ talks on ‘social revolution.’ During the trial Giosué Brusa, an eighteen year old anarchist, threw a stone at a policeman who was giving his testimony. When Brusa heard his sentence he yelled ‘Long live anarchy!’ The judge replied: ‘*Vaa a fat curaa!*’ (Milanese dialect for ‘Go and get cured!’)

<sup>221</sup> See ‘Corriere giudiziario. Falsi spezzati d’argento’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 28-29 June 1893.

<sup>222</sup> ‘Sessantatré anarchici tradotti in questura’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 6-7 November 1893, and ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, il questore al prefetto, Milan, 7 November 1893. On 5 November 1893 sixty-three anarchists met at the *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Manfredini* in *Via Vittoria* 53. Eleven foreign anarchists were present at the meeting and then expelled from Italy.

<sup>223</sup> ‘Processo per direttissima agli anarchici’, *La Lombardia*, Milan, 9 January 1894.

<sup>224</sup> See ‘Lo scioglimento del Circolo Risveglio’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 22 March 1894.

<sup>225</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 51, n. 380, police chief to Milan prefect, Milan, 6 February 1894.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, police chief to Milan prefect, Milan, 8 February 1894.

<sup>227</sup> ‘I socialisti legalitari e noi’, *L’Amico del Popolo*, Milan, s.e. 18 February 1894.

<sup>228</sup> ‘Abbasso gli anarchici’, *Abbasso gli anarchici*, Milan, 25 March 1894.

### 3.6 Individualist responses: Caserio and Caspani (1894-1900)

The constitution of a modern reformist socialist party that gave priority to the concept of gradual reforms within the system – including the acceptance of parliamentary politics – put an end to 15 years of debates between anarchists, socialists and workerists. Appeals for unity vanished. A growing opposition between socialists and anarchists replaced the 1880s cooperation between workerists and anarchists. An organised national Socialist Party inspired anarchists to strengthen their organisations. Milanese anarchists tried to establish themselves in the territory through clubs and conferences. Yet their analysis of society misjudged situations for potential radical changes like the economic crisis of 1890-1891. Despite the huge amount of initiatives that anarchists were able to organise in the period 1891-1894, Milanese anarchists did not achieve their goal of channelling the masses into a revolutionary course. Although organisational stances were prevailing, anarchists were not able to recruit new workers. Instead, they organised existing members. This interpretation is supported by the fact that most of the main activists were typographers or bookbinders; hence they could read anarchist and subversive material. However, they were not experiencing the same living conditions and needs of factory workers. Many factory workers remained attracted to the socialist party because it supported gradual improvements of wage and working conditions. Authorities forced anarchists to have private conferences, to hide and to hold secret meetings. The state escalated its repression against anarchists in order to halt the radicalisation of the labour movement. Protests had spread from Sicily<sup>229</sup> to Lunigiana.<sup>230</sup> Anarchists represented the weakest link and were easily repressed. Lack

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<sup>229</sup> On the *Fasci siciliani* see S. Romano, *Storia dei Fasci siciliani*, Bari, Laterza, 1959; F. Renda, *I Fasci siciliani 1892-1894*, Turin, Einaudi, 1977; E.J. Hobsbawm, *I ribelli. Forme primitive di rivolta sociale*, pp.123-46; G. Salvemini, *Movimento socialista e questione meridionale*, edited by G. Arfé, Milan, 1968, p.26; B. Croce, *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915*, Bari, 1966, p.205; R. Marsilio, *I Fasci siciliani*, Milan, Ed. Avanti!, 1954; S.F. Romano, 'I Fasci dei lavoratori ed il movimento popolare siciliano nella storia d'Italia alla fine del secolo XIX', *Movimento operaio*, vol.6, 1954, pp.858-907; L. Briguglio, 'Operaismo 'lombardo' e Fasci siciliani', in *I Fasci siciliani, II*, pp.31-47; N. Colajanni, *In Sicilia. Gli avvenimenti e le cause*, Rome, 1894.

<sup>230</sup> G. De Gregorio, 'Gli anarchici nella vita di Carrara (1889-1894), I, Quadro economico sociale e lotte di partiti', *Movimento operaio e socialista*, vol.17, 1971, pp.263-309; R. Bertolucci, *Milleottocentonovantaquattro. Storia di una rivolta*, Carrara, G.R. Anarchici riuniti, 1981; U. Fedeli, *Anarchismo a Carrara e nei paesi del marmo. Dall'Internazionale ai moti del '94*, Pisa, 1994; R. Mori, *La lotta sociale in Lunigiana (1859-1904)*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1958; G. Bianco, 'Rivoluzionarismo anarchico in Lunigiana nel 1894', *Il movimento operaio e socialista in Liguria*, vol.7, 1961, pp.335-52; A. Bernieri, *Cento anni di storia sociale a Carrara (1815-1921)*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1961; G. Vatteroni, *'Abbasso i dazi, viva la Sicilia'. Storia dell'insurrezione carrarese del 1894*, Carrara, 1993; S. Romano, *Crispi*, Milan, Bompiani, 1986.

of organisation, government repression and opposition from the Socialist Party decreased the effectiveness of anarchist propaganda and prevented Milanese anarchists from developing a solid organisational structure, which had a centrifugal effect and facilitated individual responses.

Although state repression particularly hit those who were the most active members within the movement, many unknown militants continued to carry on their ideas and beliefs individually in their everyday life in factories, in the countryside and in workers' organisations. However, the lack of a coordinated organised strategy, coupled with the call for direct action made it difficult for anarchist ideas to get much traction within the working class, while the better organised legalitarian socialists enjoyed ideological dominance within the working class. In addition, defining the anarchist movement as a radical revolutionary movement favoured the spreading of individual acts of rebellion. What is now known as individualist anarchist terrorism finds its origins within this framework of state repression, belief in an immediate revolution and lack of organisation. The series of violent individual responses by anarchists against European political figures in the 1880s and 1890s needs to be distinguished from the conscious ideological position which at the beginning of the twentieth century many anarchists chose to endorse.

A sense of permanent rebellion replaced the search of an effective revolutionary strategy. Solid theories of individual anarchism developed only after the publication in Italy of Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own*.<sup>231</sup> In the 1890s the noise made by a few examples of 'propaganda of the deed' muffled previous organisational attempts. Nevertheless, violence as a means was one of several possible choices available to individualist anarchists. Many unknown anarchists had to deal with police arrests and a lack of organisation. The majority of Milanese anarchists did not endorse violence. Even though disseminating the idea was important, their survival was more urgent. The life story of Sante Caserio is significant because it epitomises the cognitive process that caused many anarchists to endorse violence as a reaction to the misery and injustice they were experiencing.<sup>232</sup> At the same time, Caserio's story is unique. Yet, ultimately, it was the high profile of his victims that made him famous.

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<sup>231</sup> See Chapter Four for an in-depth analysis of individualist anarchism.

<sup>232</sup> On Caserio see in particular DBAI, *ad nomen*; MOIDB, *ad nomen*; P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.35-54; M. Frantel, *Caserio*, Paris, 1934; G. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, pp.313-14 and 346; R. Gremmo, *Sante Caserio*, Biella, ELF, 1994; 'Sante Caserio editore dell'opuscolo di propaganda anarchica 'Amore e odio' di Antonio Caspani', *Storia Ribelle*, no.13, 2002-2003, pp.1201-

Motta Visconti is a town 25 kilometres southwest of Milan. Here on 9 September 1873 Martina Broglia gave birth to her last child, Sante Geronimo Caserio, the youngest of six brothers. His father, Giovanni, died when Sante was 14. When he was 11 he was sent to Milan and in 1886 Sante became a baker's boy. Later, he admitted that he had become an anarchist in 1891. Caserio belonged to the new generation of Milanese anarchists. A few years after the 1889 series of arrests, the number of Milanese anarchists tripled. Most of the anarchists arrested in those years were young men and women between 14 and 17 years of age.<sup>233</sup> When Caserio became an anarchist he was only 18.

Young people of the lowest classes were exposed to anarchist ideas through pamphlets, leaflets and manifestos distributed around the city. Alfredo Labajani, Francesco Cafassi, Arnaldo Nosotti and Raffaele Petrali were *'martinitt'* (Milanese dialect for orphans) when they first read some anarchist publications that had 'illegally' penetrated the orphanage.<sup>234</sup> Several individuals constituted Gori's circle of friends and most of them were young men.<sup>235</sup> Many of them were arrested in March 1894 together with 200 other anarchists while attending a conference held at the anarchists' club *Il Risveglio* organised by Gori and Cafassi.<sup>236</sup> Almost all of them were arrested more than once. Anarchists were charged with episodes of violence as well as with subversive activities, such as distributing anarchist pamphlets or singing revolutionary anthems.

Caserio was one of these anarchists. In 1947 Antonio Caspani wrote an interesting portrait of his friend and comrade Sante Caserio.<sup>237</sup> Their friendship began in the early 1890s when they met in the anarchist club of *Via Santa Sofia*. Caspani's job was putting up posters, but he also enjoyed writing. He was the author of a short text titled *Amore e odio* (Love and hate) published by the *Biblioteca dell'Amico del*

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05; S. Catanuto, F. Schirone, *Il canto anarchico in Italia nell'Ottocento e nel Novecento*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2001.

<sup>233</sup> Among the anarchists arrested in October 1892 there were also two young girls, Maria Roda and Ernesta Quartiroli, fifteen and seventeen years old respectively. See 'Tribunale penale di Milano. La direttissima contro gli anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17-18 October 1892.

<sup>234</sup> See DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>235</sup> See Giovanni Baracchi, Enrico Carrara, Felice Mazzocchi, Carlo Frigerio, Arcangelo Faccà, Mauro Fraschini, Luigi Losi and Davide Viganò in DBAI, *ad nomen*. An exception is Carlo Colombo, who was already forty when police records indicate him as an anarchist. Later Colombo was accused of being accomplice of Gaetano Bresci, the king's murderer. See chapter 4 and DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>236</sup> See 'Lo scioglimento del Circolo Risveglio', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 22 March 1894. See also the authorities' order to shut down the club in ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 110, fasc. 95, *Società. Divertimenti*, Milan, 14 March 1894.

<sup>237</sup> On A. Caspani see DBAI, *ad nomen*, and D. Marucco, 'Processi anarchici a Torino tra il 1892 e il 1894', in *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo*, pp.217 ff. In Marucco, Caspani is spelt Cassani, but it is the same person. See M. Antonioli, 'Caspani Antonio Ernesto', in DBAI, I, p.336.

*Popolo*.<sup>238</sup> On the last page of the anarchist paper was a request to send orders for those texts to the editor, Sante Caserio.<sup>239</sup> This is how Caspani described Caserio:

Tranquil young man, sensitised to the misery of this society made up of the corrupted and the corruptors, where the most insolent richness is next to the worst misery. Caserio was affected by the sight of beggars and, moved to tears, told me: 'If I were a mendicant, I would beg with a knife in my hand.' As a baker's boy he was able to provide some loaves of bread and feed some of the unemployed comrades. In this matter, he was peculiar. A comrade did not need to humiliate himself in asking; Caserio understood and provided bread to those who were hungry. In Caserio's opinion, a comrade was a brother, someone like him, and someone else's need was his own need. Caserio was a communist-anarchist.<sup>240</sup>

Caspani and Caserio shared ideals, readings, friendship, and even the eventual risks of being anarchist activists.<sup>241</sup> Both Caserio and Caspani were active militants: their activities aimed at disseminating anarchist ideas and organising comrades:<sup>242</sup>

With his own savings [Caserio] wanted to constitute and finance a group of comrades based in *Porta Genova*. He rented a garret in *Corso Genova* 17. Here there were just some chairs and an oil lamp. However, this group had something special: a red-and-black flag with the words 'Penniless communist-anarchist group' written on it. That group of comrades was very numerous and members were active in propagating the ideas in the city and in the countryside. Caserio was very active until he was attracted by the French anarchist movement.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Other publications sponsored by *L'Amico del Popolo* Library included P.Kropotkin, *Il Salaricato; La morale anarchica*; P.Gori, *Alla conquista dell'avvenire* and *Veglie anarchiche*.

<sup>239</sup> See *L'Amico del Popolo* of 5 December 1891, 9 January and 23 January 1892, although the editorial board of *L'Amico del Popolo* declared that they were not aware of this initiative, see *L'Amico del Popolo*, Milan, 23 January 1892.

<sup>240</sup> E. Caspani, 'Testimonianze Sante Caserio', *Il Libertario*, La Spezia, 30 July 1947, cited in R. Gremmo, 'Sante Caserio editore dell'opuscolo di propaganda anarchica 'Amore e odio' di Antonio Caspani', *Storia Ribelle*, pp.1204-05.

<sup>241</sup> See the letter sent by Caspani to Caserio while he was in Paris, and in which he thanked his friend for sending him two copies of *L'Amico del Popolo*, dated 13 April 1892, in D. Marucco, 'Processi anarchici a Torino tra il 1892 e il 1894', in *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo*, pp.223-24. In that letter Caspani complained that Gori's name appeared too many times: according to Caspani, more activists had to take on responsibilities.

<sup>242</sup> Caspani was the recipient of anarchist material to be distributed in Milan, see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 58, 'Diffusione di giornali anarchici per il 1 Maggio'.

<sup>243</sup> E. Caspani, 'Testimonianze Sante Caserio', *Il Libertario*, La Spezia, 30 July 1947, cited in R. Gremmo, 'Sante Caserio editore dell'opuscolo di propaganda anarchica 'Amore e odio' di Antonio Caspani', *Storia Ribelle*, p.1205.

Before joining the French anarchist movement, on 26 April 1892 Caserio was arrested in Milan for distributing an antimilitarist pamphlet titled *Giorgio e Silvio*,<sup>244</sup> and during a police raid at the club in *Via Santa Sofia*.<sup>245</sup> Five years later Caspani was also arrested for distribution of the pamphlet titled *I socialisti anarchici al popolo*.<sup>246</sup> In France as well as in Italy, governments were eliminating the most active members of revolutionary parties. Ravachol, Henry, Vaillant, while considered terrorists and criminals by the rest of society, were becoming heroes in the eyes of some young anarchists.<sup>247</sup>

Caserio stabbed the French President Sadi Carnot on 23 June 1894 in Lyon. For this action Caserio was executed on 16 August 1894 and soon he became a martyr in the anarchist movement.<sup>248</sup> In Milan many anarchists were found with relics-style objects praising Caserio and were subsequently charged. Some others declared their approval of his actions. In the aftermath of Caserio's act, Prime Minister Crispi launched his final attack against the anarchists: special laws were approved and thousands of anarchists from all over Italy were put on trial and sentenced to either prison islands or '*domicilio coatto*' (forced domicile).<sup>249</sup> In Milan, authorities believed that by eliminating Gori, the Milanese anarchist 'sect' would collapse.<sup>250</sup> Caspani and Gori and many others from his circle of friends fled to Switzerland, particularly to Lugano which became a sort of

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<sup>244</sup> The text was a dialogue between two soldiers, by Emilio Silvieri; 25,000 copies were printed and 10,000 distributed. The pamphlet suggested soldiers turn their weapons against their officers and not against the people. See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, Milan, 16 March 1892 and *L'Italia del Popolo*, Milan, 3-4 May 1892.

<sup>245</sup> 'Altri arresti di anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 23-24 January 1893.

<sup>246</sup> For this see DBAI, *ad nomen*. Moreover, see ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 111, *Stampe. Opuscoli clandestini e sequestri*, fasc. A, n. 1336, inspector Salvi to police chief, Milan, 14 July 1897, regarding the pamphlet titled '*I lupanari di Milano di Ernesto Caspani*', informed that sixteen copies of that pamphlet had been confiscated.

<sup>247</sup> E. Caspani, 'Testimonianze Sante Caserio', *Il Libertario*, La Spezia, 30 July 1947, cited in R. Gremmo, 'Sante Caserio editore dell'opuscolo di propaganda anarchica 'Amore e odio' di Antonio Caspani', *Storia Ribelle*, p.1205.

<sup>248</sup> On Caserio's execution see also 'L'esecuzione di Caserio', *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 16-17 August 1894; and 'La fine di Caserio', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 17 July 1894.

<sup>249</sup> See 'I provvedimenti di P.S. contro gli anarchici', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 4-5 July 1894; A. Boldetti, 'La repressione in Italia: il caso del 1894', *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, vol.6, no.4, October 1977, pp.481-515; R. Canosa, A. Santosuosso, *Magistrati, anarchici e socialisti alla fine dell'Ottocento in Italia*, pp.34-50; R. Majetti, *L'anarchia e le leggi che la reprimono in Italia*, Milan, 1894; Zagaglia [L. De Fazio], *I coatti politici in Italia. La repressione nell'Italia umbertina*, Casalvelino Scalo, Galzerano Editore, 1987; E. Croce, *Nel domicilio coatto. Noterelle di un relegato*, Lipari, 1900; A. Boschi, *Ricordi del domicilio coatto*, Turin, 1954; P. Calcagno, *Verso l'esilio. Memorie di un anarchico confinato in Valsesia alla fine dell'Ottocento*, Vercelli, 1976.

<sup>250</sup> ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector III section to police chief, Milan, 19 July 1894.

crossroads for Italian anarchists in exile.<sup>251</sup> Milanese authorities arrested anarchists in September and October 1894. Milanese anarchists Luigi Losi, Edoardo Milano and Mauro Frascini were investigated for the planting of bombs in Milan between the end of 1894 and the beginning of 1895.<sup>252</sup> Repression against anarchists spread all over Europe. In February 1895 the Swiss government also expelled Italian anarchists. In one of his most famous poems Gori described those anarchists, those idealists rejected by the same society they wanted to change, as ‘errant knights’ moved by the ‘ideal of love’.<sup>253</sup> Nevertheless, within the public imaginary anarchists’ acts of violence against European leaders prevailed over their ideals.<sup>254</sup> In the aftermath of the murder of Austrian Empress Elizabeth of Austria by the Italian anarchist Luccheni (10 September 1898), an international anti-anarchist conference was held in Rome in November-December to coordinate European governments actions against the libertarian movement.<sup>255</sup>

The limits and deficiencies of the Milanese anarchist movement were consolidated by state repression. Crispi’s special laws eliminated a huge part of the libertarian movement. Anarchist leaders ended up either on prison islands or in exile. When most European states started to endorse tough laws against the anarchists many of them decided to move to the American continent. The most famous leaders of the Italian anarchist movement travelled from the north to the very south of the American continent disseminating their ideas. They went to colonies of Italian migrants and organised workers in Brazil, Argentina and the USA. Malatesta, Merlino, Galleani are some of the best-known Italian anarchists who moved to America. A substantial Italian colony was in Paterson, New Jersey. From Paterson, in 1900 Gaetano Bresci left the USA to return to Italy to kill the King, Umberto I.<sup>256</sup> The episodes in Milan in May

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<sup>251</sup> *Il Secolo* reported the police arresting anarchists, ‘Contro gli anarchici’, *Il Secolo*, Milan, 3-4 July 1894. On Gori’s exile see, ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, inspector. III section to police chief, Milan, 11 July 1894.

<sup>252</sup> Frascini and Milano were suspected of being the bomb makers and of having sent a bomb to Losi in Milan.

<sup>253</sup> P.Gori, ‘Addio a Lugano’, in P. Gori, *Opere, II, Battaglie*, La Spezia 1911.

<sup>254</sup> Other Italians carried out violence against political leaders: in 1878 Giovanni Passannante stabbed the new king Umberto I; in 1894 Paolo Lega shot Crispi and Caserio killed Carnot; in 1897 Michele Angiolillo shot the Prime Minister of Spain, Antonio Canovas; in 1898 Luigi Luccheni killed Empress Elizabeth of Austria, and finally in 1900 Gaetano Bresci killed the King of Italy. For all of them, see DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>255</sup> J. Bach, ‘The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol’, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.16, 1981, pp.323-47.

<sup>256</sup> On Gaetano Bresci see in particular MOIDB, *ad nomen*; DBAI, *ad nomen*; R. Gremmo, *Gli anarchici che uccisero Umberto I. Gaetano Bresci, il ‘Biondino’ e i tessitori biellesi di Paterson*; A. Petacco, *L’anarchico che venne dall’America. Storia di Gaetano Bresci e del complotto per uccidere Umberto I*;

1898, when hundreds of people were brutally slaughtered by the state's representatives, were nothing but the demonstration of state's power and monopoly of violence.<sup>257</sup> Innocent people were put on trial as the instigators of riots. Bava Beccaris, the author of those massacres, was rewarded by the king. Bresci decided to vindicate Milan's innocent victims.

Bresci's story has been told several times, though there is still an aura of mystery around him and the plot to kill the king.<sup>258</sup> Literature on Bresci is quite substantial and telling his story again is not the purpose of this work. However, Bresci's act marked the final stage of a radical clash between anarchists and the Italian state. Despite winning a battle (the king's murder), the anarchist movement lost the war. The *Fatti di Maggio* demonstrated both the anarchists' lack of organisation and the state's brutality in dealing with working class protest. At the dawning of a new century, the Milanese anarchist movement was mostly destroyed. Bresci's act was perceived by many anarchists as the apex of a civil war. However, while the authorities' response to Bresci's deed was prompt and straightforward, not all Italian anarchists sympathised with him. Anarchists of Rome, Messina and Ancona, for example, criticized Bresci and denied him their solidarity, on the basis of the 'inviolability of human life'.<sup>259</sup> Similarly, from Argentina Pietro Gori condemned the deed, but he also justified its author who

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G. Galzerano, *Gaetano Bresci. Vita, attentato, processo, carcere e morte dell'anarchico che 'giustiziò' Umberto I*; L.V. Ferraris, 'L'assassinio di Umberto I e gli anarchici di Paterson', *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, vol.55, 1968, pp.47-64; U. Alfassio Grimaldi, *Il re 'buono'*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1971; F.S. Merlino, *La difesa di Gaetano Bresci alla Corte d'Assise di Milano*, Paterson, 1917; A. Labriola, *Storia di dieci anni (1899-1909)*, prefazione di Nicola Tranfaglia, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1975 (1st edition Milan, Il Viandante, 1910). See also primary sources in ASM, *Tribunale di Milano. Sentenze Penali 1862-1939*, Procedimento Penale contro Bresci Gaetano ed altri, relativo al delitto di regicidio in danno di Umberto I di Savoia, bb. 1-3.

<sup>257</sup> On the *Fatti di Maggio*, see P.Valera, *Le terribili giornate del Maggio '98*, Milan, Casa Editrice La Folla, 1898; P. Valera, *I cannoni di Bava Beccaris*, Milan, Giordano Editore, 1966; VV.AA., *1898: cannonate a Milano*, Milan, Colibri, 1998; C. Levy, 'The centre and the suburbs: social protest and modernization in Milan and Turin, 1898-1917', *Modern Italy*, vol.7, no.2, 2002, pp.171-88. On Milan at the end of the century see in particular F. Fonzi, *Crispi e lo 'Stato di Milano'*, Milan 1965; A. Canavero, *Milano e la crisi di fine secolo (1896-1900)*, Milan, Unicopli, 1998; U. Fedeli, 'Momenti e uomini del socialismo anarchico in Italia. 1896-1924', *Volontà*, vol 13, 1960, pp.608-19; N. Colajanni, *L'Italia del 1898. Tumulti e reazione*, Milan 1898. On Italian history and the authoritarian turn at the end of the century see B. Croce, *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915*, pp.213-31; G. Volpe, *Italia moderna, II, 1898-1910*, Florence, 1949, pp.1-74; R. Colapietra, *Il Novantotto. La crisi politica di fine secolo 1896-1900*, Milan-Rome, 1959; N. Valeri, *La lotta politica in Italia dall'Unità al 1925. Idee e documenti*, con una premessa di G. Spadolini, Florence, 1973, pp.245-78; G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna, VII, La crisi di fine secolo e l'età giolittiana 1896-1914*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1974, pp 11-93; G. Manacorda, *Crisi economica e lotta politica in Italia 1892-1896*, Turin, Einaudi, 1968, pp.105-40; F. Cordova, *Democrazia e repressione nell'Italia di fine secolo*, Rome, 1983.

<sup>258</sup> See in particular R. Gremmo, *Gli anarchici che uccisero Umberto I. Gaetano Bresci, il 'Biondino' e i tessitori biellesi di Paterson*.

<sup>259</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.161 and 164.

was, according to Gori, the inevitable product of state repression and unjust policies.<sup>260</sup> Such responses represented a sort of self defence, due to public opinion's outrage against the ideological and political mentors of he who had killed the '*Re buono*' (the good king). In fact, there were those who defended and justified Bresci. In Milan, some anarchists sang out of tune, for example Libero Tancredi, who expressed his understanding and approval in the pages of *Il Grido della Folla*: 'Those who hurl abuse at the murder, should remember that ... killing a king is nothing but an accomplished revolution – not by many – but by only one individual'.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p.165.

<sup>261</sup> Libero Idercant, 'Luglio 29', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 29 July 1905.

## Chapter Four

### The Milanese Anarchist Movement 1900-1915

*'I do not care at all if other people are religious people: Buddhist or Muslim. I do love to be a religious person. After all, I am not a member of any club or lodge. I am an individualist [anarchist].'*  
L. Rafanelli, *Una donna e Mussolini*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1975, p.42.

*'He who delegates will always be deceived or betrayed.'*  
Lavinio Vingagli [Giovanni Gavilli], 'La Parata', *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 27 January 1906.

Anarchist intellectuals have been studied in the past and their lives and works have already been documented. It can be said that their cultural legacy is perhaps the most positive and long-term effective outcome of Milanese anarchism, and the most significant contribution of Milanese anarchists to Italian anarchism. Intellectuals such as Giovanni Gavilli, Ettore Molinari, Nella Giacomelli, Giuseppe Monanni, Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Libero Tancredi (alias Massimo Rocca), Oberdan Gigli, Luigi Molinari, Luigi Fabbri, Armando Borghi, Filippo Corridoni and Maria Rygier significantly influenced the development of Milanese and Italian anarchism through their debates on individualism and communism, organisations and anti-organisational stances, revolutionary syndicalism, state and libertarian pedagogy, antimilitarism, pacifism and intervention in the First World War. Historians have already studied and analysed this complex area of research. Telling these anarchists' lives again is not the purpose of this study. This study acknowledges the outcomes, problems and different interpretations coming from many years of historiographical debate, and recognises that much has already been said. This work has benefitted from previous research by other scholars. My debt to their works continuously appears throughout my notes.

Despite the differences among historians, the image of the Milanese anarchist movement that they have depicted shows Milan, at the turn of the century, as the centre of Italian individualist and anti-organisational anarchism. Articles and correspondence written by anarchist intellectuals have been studied in great detail. There is little left to add to existing studies. This study proposes neither a new interpretation of Italian anarchism nor does it shed new light on the historiographical debate regarding individualists versus communists. Rather, this study tries to explain what other scholars have described. In order to do this, it is necessary to step outside and pose a few 'big' questions. For the scope of this research it is important to understand why the anti-

organisational current was predominant in Milan. Were other relevant streams of anarchism present? Were all Milanese anarchists both individualist and anti-organisational? Were differences among individualist anarchists evident? Is it correct to talk about different kinds of individualism, as Mattia Granata suggests?<sup>1</sup> To these and other questions this study suggests some answers.

This chapter examines the Milanese anarchist movement in the period between 1900 and 1915. The two dates are marked by Gaetano Bresci's deed and by the Italian intervention in the First World War. Bresci's act of killing the head of state represented the end of individualist anarchism's 'heroic phase'<sup>2</sup> which had produced figures such as Sante Caserio, Michele Angiolillo and Luigi Luccheni.<sup>3</sup> The idea of revolution carried out by a vanguard of revolutionaries had influenced the ideological and political development of Italian anarchism for over 40 years. Carlo Pisacane's idea of 'propaganda by the deed', as it had been perceived and experienced by Italian anarchists in the second half of the nineteenth century, revealed itself to be ineffective in the struggle against capitalism and the Italian state.<sup>4</sup> The attempt made in Capolago in 1891 to organise Italian anarchists into a federation of free organisations was crushed by three waves of repression in 1894, 1898 and 1900. Government repressions in 1894 and 1898 had the consequence of cutting off links between individuals and groups, and between the anarchists and the labor movement.<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of the new century Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti inaugurated a new season of Italian politics. Cooperation with Catholics and socialists produced a series of social reforms aimed at improving the Italian welfare system. In the 15 years preceding the war, Italian left-wing parties, groups and organisations increased the number of their members, and developed new forms of protest and means of negotiation, signified by the first general strike in 1904. In a more liberal age, Italian

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<sup>1</sup> M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*, p.19.

<sup>2</sup> G. Sacchetti, 'Comunisti contro individualisti. Il dibattito sull'organizzazione nel 1907', *Bollettino del Museo del Risorgimento*, p.25; see also M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.61.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>4</sup> In 1857 the Italian revolutionary Carlo Pisacane, one of the precursors of Italian socialism, distinguished between 'propaganda of the idea' and 'propaganda by the deed': 'Propaganda of the idea is a chimera, the education of the people is an absurdity. Ideas result from deeds, not the latter from the former, and the people will not be free when they are educated, but will be educated when they are free. The only work a citizen can do for the good of the country is that of cooperating with the material revolution: therefore, conspiracies, plots, attempts, etc., are that series of deeds through which Italy proceeds toward her goal.' C. Pisacane, *La rivoluzione*, Bologna, Augusto Illuminati, 1967, p.206, cited in N. Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892*, p.13.

<sup>5</sup> M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, p.232.

anarchists seized the opportunity to clarify their theories and reconstitute the movement. The idea of an immediate revolution had been defeated and was slowly replaced by practical attempts to establish the basis for a long-term evolution of humankind towards anarchy. The romantic idea of revolution did not disappear, however. It softened its violent features and moderated its Jacobin ‘want-it-all-and-now’ impatience. Yet anarchists did not lose their rebel nature which survived as a state of mind and a way of life. Italian communist-anarchists were trying to organise themselves and their efforts built up to the Rome Congress of June 1907. In the same period, the anti-organisational current peeped through the Milanese anarchist arena.

According to Antonioli, ‘[a]t the beginning of the twentieth century ... the Milanese anarchist movement was almost non-existent’.<sup>6</sup> Milanese anarchism had survived as a ‘state of mind’ and a ‘philosophical school’, but not as an active political subject. In the prior three decades Milanese anarchists had been unable to establish strong links with the working class. The last wave of government repression had demonstrated that anarchism did not have deep roots in Milan. Until then, the history of the Milanese anarchist movement seemed to confirm E.J. Hobsbawm’s interpretation of anarchism:

[C]lassical anarchism is thus a form of peasant movement almost incapable of effective adaptation to modern conditions, though it is their outcome ... And thus the history of anarchism, almost alone along modern social movements, is one of unrelieved failure, and unless some unforeseen historical changes occur, it is likely to go down in the books with the Anabaptists and the rest of the prophets who, though not unarmed, did not know what to do with their arms, and were defeated forever.<sup>7</sup>

Was the history of anarchism in Milan one of ‘unrelieved failure’? In Milan, anarchism was not able to take root deeply within a specific social class. Unlike other local anarchist movements, Milanese anarchists did not identify themselves with an occupational category, a job, or even a suburb. Milan was not a city dominated by a single big factory which would have allowed anarchists to define an area of intervention. Nor was it possible to identify the movement as a political subject within a specific economic or social struggle. Unlike Carrara, Turin, La Spezia, Ancona, and

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<sup>6</sup> M. Antonioli, ‘Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo’, in *Anna Kuliscioff e l’età del riformismo*, p.275.

<sup>7</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, p.92.

other localities, Milanese anarchists did not have a pole of attraction that could help to clearly identify all the different political factions, thus uniting anarchists and workers against the same opponent.

Yet, although state repression had wiped out a generation of Milanese anarchists, anarchism survived. There were relationships with the working class and anarchism was not a petit-bourgeois phenomenon only. The Milanese proletariat was indeed disorganised and reticent to organisation. It was not homogeneous and it was spread throughout a fragmented industrial territory. However, it had also been involved in the past in several episodes of rebellion.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, instability, a lack of organisation, and a high turnover did not allow anarchism to establish itself in Milan as an ongoing active political subject within the labour movement.

Since its early days, Milanese anarchism seemed to be marked by an invisible border line separating, on the one side, the intellectuals and, on the other, the mass of militants and unknown activists of the movement. Was the division real? The anarchist intelligentsia consisted of journalists, writers, authors, poets, lawyers, teachers and academics. They wrote and published journals, theatre plays, classics of Italian and international anarchism, manifestos, pamphlets, letters and the correspondence of other comrades. Their propaganda aimed at inspiring a revolutionary consciousness among their readers. Yet figures like Luigi Molinari, Rafanelli, Molaschi, and even Gavilli were not only intellectuals, they were also activists. Speaking at public meetings or participating in committees and other initiatives was part of their lives as anarchists. Given their role of writers, they could address debates and influence opinions. They became social and ideological points of reference for other anarchists.

In many cases, these intellectuals were not originally from the Lombard capital. Most of the anarchist intellectuals operating in Milan came from Italy's central regions such as Tuscany and Emilia Romagna. Often, Milan was not their final destination. This reveals another aspect of the city, not only as a pole of migration but also as a place of transition. The Milanese anarchist movement became the stage for a continuous parade of cameo appearances. As a result, the movement lacked stability. More importantly, there was a missing link between the anti-organisational intellectuals and the rest of the movement. There was no contiguity between the intellectuals who wrote about organisation and individualism, and working-class militants. Nonetheless, the

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<sup>8</sup> For the struggles of the Milanese workers in the nineteenth century, see M.A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan, 1881-1901*, and V. Hunecke, *Classe operaia e rivoluzione industriale a Milano, 1859-1892*.

contribution of intellectual anarchists coming from other Italian regions was crucial for the process of theoretical clarification and physical reconstitution that the Milanese anarchist movement faced in the first decade of the twentieth century.

During the Giolitti period, the Milanese anarchist movement could appear as a movement dominated by bourgeois intellectuals. However, it is not possible to identify the Milanese anarchist movement with a single social class, a profession, or a party. The Milanese anarchist movement cannot be completely identified with the intellectuals without an analysis of the movement's real social composition. The Milanese individualist anarchist journals *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana* were among the most read anarchist journals in Italy. In the pages of these journals there was space for debates and polemics, and they were open to all the voices of anarchism. This study suggests that Milanese anarchism was not dominated by individualist anarchist intellectuals. Rather, Milanese anarchism was a workshop that gave birth to different experiments. Anti-organisational individualists, organisational communists, libertarian pedagogists, antimilitarists and revolutionary unionists were all representatives of the Milanese anarchist movement. In Milan, theories of anarchism and social anarchist practices were complementary; they influenced, intertwined and integrated with each other.

The importance of the Milanese anarchist cultural legacy might be better understood and valued if it is seen within a broader context, a picture that includes other streams of Milanese anarchism that explains why the anti-organisational tendency was dominant. These streams make more sense when they are displayed together because they represent different façades of the same construct. They provide a set of theories and practices that integrate with each other, and they help us to understand how the Milanese anarchist movement was oriented. Moreover, in order to comprehend the complexity of the movement, it is necessary to switch from the general framework to the individual dimension and vice versa. In this chapter, the general framework is provided by the description of Milanese anarchist milieus and their main characters, through the interpretations that historians have given of Milanese individualist anarchism. The individual dimension is given by the lives of some secondary characters, 'those at the back of the stage, forming the choir, unknown and unseen by

the audience'.<sup>9</sup> This study tells the stories of some unknown activists who endorsed anarchist campaigns in Milan in the first decade of the century. It investigates their social background, their age, their level of education, their mobility, cultural and social points of reference, system of learning and area of intervention. It suggests an interpretation of how they tried to embody anarchism. From the analysis of this sample it is possible to suggest that the Milanese anarchist movement was a transclass movement and that translocal events and contexts were decisive in interrupting periods of apathy and political inactivity.

Davide Turcato's study of the influences of transnational contexts on the history of Italian anarchist groups in the USA offers a comprehensive explanation as an alternative to the 'advance and retreat' theory used by many historians of Italian anarchism.<sup>10</sup> Turcato's theory is useful for interpreting the history of Milanese anarchism too. Milanese anarchists responded to translocal events producing original practical experiments of anarchism in action. The martyrdom of Francisco Ferrer y Guardia and rebellions against the military offered, to Milanese anarchists, the opportunity not only to prove their internationalist sensibility and humanity, but also their will to turn anarchist ideas into action; to make anarchism work. In addition, the Milanese anarchist movement demonstrated its will to overcome its political apathy caused by repression and inner faults.

The lack of social and political identification with the working class and the need for foreigners to spark action allowed Milanese anarchists to identify and to address some specific issues. They chose different areas of intervention, real and urgent struggles that could overcome the abstract clash between anarchists, on one side, and the state and capitalism, on the other side. For instance, the contribution of Milanese anarchists to the development of revolutionary syndicalism at the beginning of the twentieth century has to be placed within the ideological framework of organisational versus anti-organisational anarchists. Moreover, many anarchists abandoned the idea of a coming revolution and started to look at education as a revolutionary tool for raising anarchist consciousness among younger generations. The example of the Spanish educator Francisco Ferrer, executed in 1909, inspired Milanese anarchists, led by Luigi

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<sup>9</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Alla ricerca dello pseudonimo perduto', *Rivista Storica dell'Anarchismo*, vol.9, no.1, 2002, p.74.

<sup>10</sup> D. Turcato, 'Italian anarchism as a transnational movement 1885-1915', *International Review of Social History*, vol.52, 2007, pp.407-44.

Molinari, to work towards the constitution of a secular, non-denominational, anti-nationalist and anti-class system of education, a ‘Modern School.’

The majority of Milanese anarchists were active in spreading anti-militarist ideas, within and outside the military. Many anarchists campaigned against the military institution, and a further stimulus was given by the Italian colonial wars in Africa. This anarchist campaign against militarism intensified in 1914 when the First World War broke out. There was a straight line that united antimilitarist anarchist campaigns with the debate among anarchists regarding intervention in the Great War. For this reason, this topic deserves a separate and more detailed space in the next chapter of this study.

#### **4.1 Milanese individualist anarchism**

##### **4.1.1 Historiographical debates and interpretations of individualist anarchism**

At the end of the nineteenth century, the ‘failure’ of Milanese anarchists was mainly due to the dispersion of their efforts, to the lack of connections among groups and individuals, to the fragmentary nature of their actions, and last but not least, to government repression. In September 1903, the Milanese anarchist journal *Il Grido della Folla* invited its readers to ‘begin an intense work of propaganda, to organise conferences and play roles’, to work in order to reach out to those workers who were dissatisfied with the socialists.<sup>11</sup> The journal acknowledged the lack of anarchist clubs as another explanation of the failure of the anarchist movement in Milan. However, a few months before the article was published, there had been an attempt to form an anarchist club. Some anarchists had constituted a *Gruppo autonomo socialista anarchico l’Avanguardia* (Autonomous socialist-anarchist group Vanguard).<sup>12</sup> Anarchists based in three different suburbs, *Porta Garibaldi*, *Porta Volta* and *Porta Tenaglia*, came together to form a group of individuals, freely associated, without any central committee. This group of anarchists began to print and sell commemorative postcards of Chicago’s martyrs as a fundraising activity for *Il Grido della Folla*. The club did not last long.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, this example indicates, at the beginning of the century, the existence in Milan of anarchist activists who tried to overcome the

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Propaganda’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 17 September 1903.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Il gruppo ‘L’Avanguardia’’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 8 January 1903.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Comunicato’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 18 February 1904.

ideological debate between organisational and anti-organisational tendencies that was dominating in the pages of anarchist journals.

There are many other stories of anarchist praxis in Milan in the period covered by this chapter. For instance, there was a *Comitato Pro Vittime Politiche* (For Political Victims Committee, or CPVP) campaigning for the release of all political prisoners. Moreover, some anarchists were active in the suburb of *Porta Venezia* solving the scarcity of houses for workers. In addition, after the 1905 Russian Revolution, a committee in support of the Russian people was formed, and it proposed a strike as a statement in favor of the Russian people. Anti-militarist initiatives were launched, especially after the Masetti and Moroni episodes.<sup>14</sup> Daytrips to the countryside were organised to celebrate May Day and to spread anarchist ideas in towns and hinterland suburbs with a high proportion of blue-collar workers and peasants. Finally, workers attended daytrips organised by Milanese anarchists to Clivio, in the province of Como, to visit the first Modern School, inspired by Francisco Ferrer.

Other projects like the ones mentioned above seem to be dismissed by historians of Italian anarchism. Until now, in telling the history of the Milanese anarchist movement, historians have focused on ideological debate regarding the meaning of anarchism. Most of all, they have studied Milanese anarchists' cultural legacy. What is still available and accessible to historians is the enormous body of literature produced more than a century ago. Books, pamphlets, memoirs, biographies and accounts of conferences have been systematically analysed. Particularly, articles published in the two main anarchist journals of that period, *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana* have been used as a lens to study not only the problems and perspectives of the Milanese anarchist movement, but also its cultural milieu. From previous accounts of the Milanese anarchist movement it would appear that the group of individualists was predominant. Not much is said about other currents.<sup>15</sup> It seems they have faded into the background, giving way to the public image of Milan as the centre of Italian individualist anarchism.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter Five.

<sup>15</sup> See M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a Milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, pp.61-107, and D. Romeo, 'Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana: l'influenza di Francisco Ferrer y Guardia e della sua scuola moderna razionalista', *Storia in Lombardia*, pp.69-103.

<sup>16</sup> M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.70.

Since 1959 Italian historians have been distinguishing among different streams of anarchism. For the period 1900-1914, Enzo Santarelli identified six currents in the Italian anarchist movement:<sup>17</sup> first, Errico Malatesta and Luigi Fabbri have been identified as the charismatic figures of the communist-anarchist current; second, Sorel is said to have influenced Italian anarchist syndicalism; third, anti-militarists and the pacifists are put together under the same umbrella; different goals are pursued by anarchists dedicated to libertarian pedagogy; there are also local based groups, and finally, there are the individualists, influenced by Max Stirner's ideas. In relation to the problem of organisation, historians have separated organisational communists, like Malatesta, from anti-organisational communists who were identifiable with the figure of Luigi Galleani.<sup>18</sup> These streams, which developed both nationally and among communities of Italian anarchists abroad, had their representatives in Milan. Thus, in order to understand Milanese anarchism and why the individualist tendency was predominant, it is necessary to shed light on the relationship between anarchism and individualism, on their differences and similarities. Other historians have done this kind of analysis. For the purpose of this study, it is important to stress the effects of this relationship on the Milanese anarchist movement. In particular, other historians' interpretations of currents of Italian anarchism are used here to highlight streams, main characters and cultural milieus in Milan between 1900 and 1915. This general picture will give the framework within which particular dimensions will be described in the second part of this chapter.

At first sight, the term 'individualism' appears to be disconnected from the idea of a workers' movement. Indeed, individualism, which was born in the 1880s as a reaction to state repression and to the lack of effective organisations, developed in the 1890s in opposition to the organisational stances of legalitarian socialists.<sup>19</sup> In other words, during 1880-1900 individualism was based on anti-organisational assumptions, but only at the end of the century did philosophical, literary and artistic influences help define this specific ideological stream of anarchism.

The distinction between anarchism and individualism was described by Pier Carlo Masini in 1981: 'To recap the relationship between anarchism and individualism,

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<sup>17</sup> E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, pp.178-79.

<sup>18</sup> G. Sacchetti, 'Comunisti contro individualisti. Il dibattito sull'organizzazione nel 1907', *Bollettino del Museo del Risorgimento*, p.25.

<sup>19</sup> M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.56.

it is possible to say that all anarchists are individualist, but not all individualists are anarchist.<sup>20</sup> With this distinction Masini highlighted the difference between the anarchists' human being-centred position and the individualists' ego-based stance. However, in Antonioli's opinion, during 1890-1900 individualism was not a homogeneous phenomenon.<sup>21</sup> Rather, different tendencies were united by the common refusal of organisations. In particular, Milanese individualists 'were not thrilled by "party" anarchism'.<sup>22</sup> Within this framework, the sensational act performed by an individual represented a way to reclaim his/her own autonomous and conscious political choice.<sup>23</sup> As a result, if fortuitous circumstances had produced anti-organisational individualism, between the two centuries a tactical issue became a matter of principle.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, Masini introduced the distinction between 'individualism of the means' and 'individualism of the end'.<sup>25</sup> While the former stood as a series of anarchist activities aimed at marking a rupture with state institutions, on the other hand, individualism of the end, or ethical individualism, was more about moral and philosophical issues, and it was influenced by literature, philosophy and art.<sup>26</sup> However, according to Antonioli, the shift from anti-organisational individualism to individualism of the means did not occur in a smooth way.<sup>27</sup> Some anarchists considered the isolated sensational act as a conscious political answer to the state's monopoly of violence. As a result, this kind of act was then used by authorities and the mass media to spread the stereotype of anarchists as terrorists.

Although individualism of the means remained restricted to a small minority within the anarchist movement, in the 1890s some anarchists began to lay the theoretical foundations of this specific stream. Paolo Schicchi represented this kind of individualism. He was a controversial character who epitomized the figure of the polemical, violent and quarrelsome anarchist.<sup>28</sup> Schicchi refuted Malatesta and

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<sup>20</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p.193.

<sup>21</sup> M. Antonioli, P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.56.

<sup>22</sup> C. Levy, 'Italian anarchism, 1870-1926', in D. Goodway (ed.), *For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice*, p.67.

<sup>23</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p.227.

<sup>24</sup> A. Dadà, *L'anarchismo in Italia: fra movimento e partito*, p.45; M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.57.

<sup>25</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p.193.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p.194.

<sup>27</sup> M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.59.

<sup>28</sup> See M. Corsentino, 'Paolo Schicchi', *Volontà*, vol.18, 1965, pp.627-37, and R. Souvarine [R. Siglich], *Vita eroica e gloriosa di P. Schicchi*, Naples, Giuseppe Grillo, 1957.

Merlino's organisational stances through debates in anarchist journals. He appealed to direct action and social expropriation. Schicchi did not refuse the use of violence. On the contrary, the issue of violence, a never ending dilemma within the anarchist movement, revealed an irremediable gap between the two tendencies, individualist anarchists such as Schicchi and communist anarchists such as Malatesta. The latter did not refuse violence aprioristically: violence was considered to be a necessity for revolution.<sup>29</sup> Malatesta did not believe the bourgeoisie would hand power over in a peaceful way. However, he justified the use of violence only as an act of individual and collective legitimate defense.<sup>30</sup> At the very basis of Malatesta's anarchism there was love for humanity.<sup>31</sup> According to individualist anarchists such as Schicchi and Ciancabilla, however, there were no innocent people within bourgeois society.<sup>32</sup> The issue of violence and the intransigence of individualist anarchists helped the movement to clarify its ideological positions. Although characters like Schicchi remained a minority, a series of circumstances contributed to spread their ideas. External factors and inner dynamics within the anarchist movement impeded individualism of the means. Bresci's deed symbolically closed this phase.

At the beginning of the new century, a different kind of individualism developed. What Masini described as individualism of the end considered the individual act from Nietzsche's *Übermensch* perspective, rather than from the traditional revolutionary stance.<sup>33</sup> The appearance of ethical individualism was due to the publication for the first time in Italy of Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own*. The Italian translation, *L'Unico e la sua proprietà*, was published in 1902 by the *Fratelli Bocca*, and according to Adriana Dadà, together with the spread of Nietzsche's ideas, it contributed to the development of an 'antisocial ideology', 'unconnected with the traditional struggles' and the theoretical elaborations of the anarchist movement.<sup>34</sup> Dadà gave a severe judgment of individualism, defined as a 'disruptive tendency' and a

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<sup>29</sup> E. Malatesta, 'Un peu de theorie', *En-Dehors*, 21 August 1892, in G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.199.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.200.

<sup>32</sup> G. Ciancabilla, 'Questioni di tattica (fra anarchici)', *L'Agitazione*, Ancona, 17 February 1897, cited in M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.61.

<sup>33</sup> Antonioli & Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.61.

<sup>34</sup> A. Dadà, *L'anarchismo in Italia: fra movimento e partito*, p.61.

‘degeneration’ of anarchism.’<sup>35</sup> In addition, considering individualists’ theoretical debates as provocative activities, Dadà approved Gino Cerrito’s interpretation of Italian individualism. In Cerrito’s words, Leda Rafanelli and Giuseppe Monnani’s ‘revolutionary esthetics ... was more damaging to the Italian anarchist movement than [ministers such as] Nicotera and Crispi’.<sup>36</sup> Rafanelli and Monnani, charismatic figures of the Milanese individualist milieu, exemplified the anarchists’ intransigence. They opposed the participation of anarchists in conferences and congresses, unless on the behalf of the individual.<sup>37</sup>

Ethical individualism refused permanent organisations as well as the use of violence. Contrarily to the individualism of the means, ethical individualism also refused communism and collectivism, preferring instead a vague form of liberalism. According to Cerrito, this sort of behavior demonstrated a lack of understanding of the real world, and in particular of the changes that the workers movement was going through.<sup>38</sup> Cerrito judged negatively the journal *La Protesta Umana*, defined as follows:

An indigestible vegetable soup, with unspecified colors, to the extent that often it seems as if this ideological confusion reflected the theoretical inconstancy of its publishers and editors, and their practical incapacity to present a coherent discourse.<sup>39</sup>

Cerrito was very critical of the writers of the Milanese journals who opposed anarchists’ participation in trade unions:

[They were] deaf to every call coming from Italian groups to constitute a specific organisation; they [chose] trivial expressions towards the national Italian anarchist congress of Rome 1907, which, illogically, was also open to the anti-organisational [anarchists].<sup>40</sup>

Cerrito’s interpretation of individualist anarchism was not the only one. In 1976 Maurizio Antonioli had already offered a different interpretation of individualism: ‘it

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall’insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell’anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, p.131.

<sup>37</sup> Narengo, ‘La nostra vittoria dopo il Congresso di Genova’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 14 January 1905.

<sup>38</sup> Cerrito, *Dall’insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell’anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, p.80.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.132.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

would be a mistake to think of a homogeneous individualism'.<sup>41</sup> Antonioli acknowledged the predominant presence of anti-organisational and individualist anarchists in Milan. However, he identified three types of individualism: social, abstract, and pure intellectual individualism. According to Antonioli, social individualism could be identified with the anti-organisational current *tout court*. It claimed the 'absolute priority of the individual' within a solidarity social framework. This tendency mirrored a specific sector of the Milanese working class, on the fringe of the movement, opposed to organisation, and unable to pursue goals, despite its propaganda. Social individualism was well expressed by the Milanese anarchist journal *Il Grido della Folla*, which was the first anarchist paper in Milan after Bresci's act and the consequent repression of the Milanese anarchist movement.

#### **4.1.2 *Il Grido della Folla*: theoretical debates and main contributors**

Italian individualists gathered around the publication programme of Milanese anarchists. *Il Grido della Folla* became the major individualist journal at the beginning of the century.<sup>42</sup> The paper commenced publication at the end of 1902 and continued until 1907, despite changes and interruptions.<sup>43</sup> *Il Grido della Folla* contributed to reconstituting the Milanese anarchist movement and to clarifying ideological positions within anarchism. At the beginning of its experience the journal aimed at gathering anarchists together to fight 'struggles for the human redemption', since they had been dispersed by previous repressions.<sup>44</sup> A generation of militants had been wiped out.<sup>45</sup> Only a few anarchist militants were left in Milan. For the sake of the movement, the contribution of anarchists, both charismatic intellectuals and unknown activists coming from other Italian regions, was crucial. Soon Milan became a workshop of ideas and debates.

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<sup>41</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, p.282.

<sup>42</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.198-99.

<sup>43</sup> See 'Come e dove nacque Il Grido e da chi fu dettata la circolare di fondazione', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 November 1906; see also L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, pp.159-61 and p.185; F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)', in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.314-15 and tomo II, p.85.

<sup>44</sup> Tic, 'Il Grido della Folla' agli amici lettori', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 14 April 1902.

<sup>45</sup> M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, p.232.

The anarchists' desire to 'serenely discuss' their ideas was restrained by the prosecutor's zealous activities.<sup>46</sup> The director of public prosecutions ordered the seizure of the first six issues of *Il Grido della Folla*. He decreed that any apology for anarchy, made under any circumstances and any form, constituted an apology for crime. Thus, praise of anarchy made through any publication was considered to be a public instigation to commit a crime.<sup>47</sup> Authorities had not realised that the accused article published by *Il Grido della Folla* was a mere reproduction of definitions of anarchy, copied from other sources, included encyclopedia and mainstream newspapers, and pasted into the same article. The journal was able to display the authorities' bias against anarchists and 'unmasked with evidence the government of false liberals'.<sup>48</sup> The directors of *Il Grido della Folla* reminded the authorities that the use of violence by some anarchists in the past had been caused by a similar repressive attitude:<sup>49</sup> 'It's indeed this provocative system that creates impatient and violent anarchists.'<sup>50</sup> Moreover, authorities tried to obstruct the organisation and administration of *Il Grido della Folla*. For example, in order to collect its correspondence and money from its postal box, the administrators of *Il Grido della Folla* were requested by police to inform on its members.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the authorities' diligent work, Milanese anarchists were able to carry on a project that could meet their need of spreading anarchist ideas in a city such as Milan, which was considered a melting pot of cultures and politics.<sup>52</sup> The importance of *Il Grido della Folla* consisted of its role in reporting not only the problems and objectives of the Milanese anarchist movement but also the contradictions in Italian politics. Most of all, *Il Grido della Folla* demonstrated the anarchists' will to interrupt a long period of apathy. Apart from a few single issues, *Il Grido della Folla* was the first Milanese anarchist journal after *Lotta Sociale* (1894).

The journal offered the opportunity for expression of different tendencies. Nobody within the journal's editorial board tried to impose a specific doctrine or theory. On the contrary, they tried to inspire debates, discussions and exchanges of ideas. In an

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<sup>46</sup> '2° numero, 2° sequestro!', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 May 1902.

<sup>47</sup> 'Sequestro', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 19 April 1902.

<sup>48</sup> 'In trappola', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 31 May 1902.

<sup>49</sup> 'Provocazione', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 17 May 1902.

<sup>50</sup> '2° numero, 2° sequestro!', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 May 1902.

<sup>51</sup> See Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, Milan, Tipografia Enrico Zerboni, 1909, for an account of *Il Grido della Folla*'s vicissitudes.

<sup>52</sup> '2° numero, 2° sequestro!', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 May 1902.

article dealing with the issue of organisation, the journal emphasized its open-minded attitude:

What we will say will be some individuals' expression, shared by many, but that is not binding for all our Milanese friends ... In such an important centre like Milan, there is space for all, and each one, according to one's own character and perspectives, can make a contribution.<sup>53</sup>

Most of the Milanese anarchists defined themselves as individualists. However, many of them did not aspire to 'the absolute isolation of individuals'.<sup>54</sup> On the contrary, pushing for 'free anti-authoritarian groups', the anarchists of *Il Grido della Folla* expressed, in a way, what Antonioli described as social individualism. The type of individualism revealed by *Il Grido della Folla* seemed to coincide with the anti-organisational current *tout court*. The same article explained how an anti-organisational tendency was born out of the existing organisations which denied individuals freedom to manifest themselves. Moreover, organisations were seen as an easy target for police persecution.<sup>55</sup> Times were not easy for anarchists even under the Giolitti government. If caught with a pamphlet or *Il Grido della Folla* in his coat-pocket, an anarchist could face arrest and police persecution for an indefinite time.<sup>56</sup> *Il Grido della Folla* criticized those journals that did not raise their voice against the continuous persecution of the anarchist paper.<sup>57</sup> However, the violence and intransigence expressed by the language used in its articles enhanced the sense of isolation of *Il Grido della Folla*.<sup>58</sup>

The ideological debate was sparked by the writings of individualists like Giovanni Gavilli, the Corbella brothers and other young contributors.<sup>59</sup> Their abstract individualism revealed a rebel nature, frustrated and imbued with egocentric and anti-social ideas. In Antonioli's opinion, this individualism was no longer anarchism, because 'it replaced "harmony of solidarity" with individual competition, "libertarian ethics" with the most cynical amorality, [and] the individual's affirmative action with the Ego's cult'.<sup>60</sup> While Gavilli's individualism was the expression of a protesting

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<sup>53</sup> 'Organizzazione? I', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 19 June 1902.

<sup>54</sup> 'Organizzazione? II', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 27 June 1902.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> U. Fedeli, *Giovanni Gavilli, 1855-1918*, p.28.

<sup>57</sup> 'L'Italia del Popolo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 May 1902.

<sup>58</sup> 'Libertà consolidate', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 10 May 1902.

<sup>59</sup> For a biography of Attilio Corbella and his brother see DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>60</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, p.283.

anarchism, based on moral integrity and distrust of collectivity,<sup>61</sup> the Corbella brothers' individualism was intended as a 'complete lack of ethics, sincere selfishness and conscious individual property'.<sup>62</sup> This egoistic form of anarchism, launched by the Corbella brothers in 1903-1904, did not receive much support.<sup>63</sup> However, it found its main referent in Libero Tancredi (real name Massimo Rocca) and his publishing activities during 1906-1907.<sup>64</sup> An expression of Tancredi's iconoclastic tendency was the journal *Il Novatore* (The New Man).<sup>65</sup> On its pages, disrespectful words praised redeeming violence and approved homicides and thefts on the basis of a cynical indeterminate ethics.<sup>66</sup>

Organisational anarchists, included national figures of the anarchist movement such as Luigi Fabbri and Malatesta, intervened in the discussion. Concerned by the spreading of this sort of abstract individualism, in the autumn of 1903, Fabbri published an article titled *L'individualismo stirneriano nel movimento anarchico*,<sup>67</sup> followed by Malatesta's *L'individualismo nell'anarchismo*.<sup>68</sup> Their strong criticism of this 'philosophical speculation'<sup>69</sup> had the snowball effect of causing reactions among anarchists, especially from the individualists. The Corbella brothers believed that Stirner's theory represented the real libertarian idea,<sup>70</sup> while those who tried to conciliate anarchism with socialism were not anarchists at all, since it implied that they accepted the rule of morality and justice.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Berti, *Errico Malatesta*, pp.436-41.

<sup>62</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, p.120. See also, Lodovico Corbella, 'Individualismo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 19 June 1904.

<sup>63</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.193-209, and in particular p.205. See also Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, p.17.

<sup>64</sup> For a biography of Libero Tancredi (alias Massimo Rocca), see DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>65</sup> From which the term 'novatorismo', see L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, pp.187-88.

<sup>66</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, pp.109 and ff; M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, p.283.

<sup>67</sup> L. Fabbri, 'L'individualismo stirneriano nel movimento anarchico', *Il Pensiero*, Rome, 25 October and 10 November 1903, cited in P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.203-09.

<sup>68</sup> E. Malatesta, 'L'individualismo nell'anarchismo', *L'Agitazione*, Ancona, 17 April 1897.

<sup>69</sup> L. Fabbri, 'L'individualismo stirneriano nel movimento anarchico', *Il Pensiero*, Rome, 25 October 1903.

<sup>70</sup> L. Corbella, 'Max Stirner e l'anarchismo', *Il Pensiero*, Rome, 16 February 1904.

<sup>71</sup> A. Corbella, 'Per una pseudocritica dell'individualismo stirneriano (a Luigi Fabbri)', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 18 February 1904. See also A. Corbella, 'Atei o religiosi', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 18 February 1904; Freigegeist [L. Corbella], 'Sincerità', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 17 March 1904; Palin [A. Corbella], 'Cattivo equivoco', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 28 May 1904; Freigegeist [L. Corbella], 'Egoismo-anarchismo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 5 June 1904; L. Corbella, 'Individualismo', *Il Grido*

Corbella's polemical interventions vexed other anarchists who were discontented with an ideological and theoretical debate that was going nowhere,<sup>72</sup> although exchanging ideas was indeed the journal's goal. On the pages of *Il Grido della Folla* there was also space for organisational stances: in a very original way, the difference between socialists' collectivism and anarchists' communism was explained and it was shown how the actual bourgeois society was naturally heading towards socialism. In fact, education, art and infrastructures, which once had been privileges for riches, were now available to all, without class distinction.<sup>73</sup>

Within this framework, some Milanese individualist anarchists tried to carve a space between abstract individualists and organisational socialist anarchists. Oberdan Gigli represented the 'reaction of more moderated individualists compared with the extreme positions of the Corbella brothers'.<sup>74</sup> The debate turned around central issues of the anarchist ideology. In particular, the prickly question of organisation involved socialist organisational anarchists as well as anti-organisational individualists such as Gigli.<sup>75</sup> A general rejection of organisations was justified on the basis of the incompatibility between absolute freedom and party policies,<sup>76</sup> intransigence versus reformism.<sup>77</sup> The refusal was extended to the participation of anarchists in the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* (General Confederation of Labour, CGdL),<sup>78</sup> and into skepticism about workers' economic struggles for better wages.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, the

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*della Folla*, Milan, 26 June 1904; Palin [A. Corbella], 'A un anarchico per bene', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 13 August 1904.

<sup>72</sup> Un brontolone, 'Le follie espansioniste del 'Grido'', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 10 September 1903. See also A. Vitulo, 'Lettera aperta a Palin e Freigeist', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 September 1904; G. Scarlatti, 'Atto di contrizione', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 9 July 1904; S. Volja Neret, 'Parole e parole', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 28 May 1904; S.R., 'Discutendo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 13 August 1904.

<sup>73</sup> 'Perché siamo socialisti anarchici?', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 17 May 1902.

<sup>74</sup> Antonioli & Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.69. See Gigli's articles addressed to the Corbella brothers: O. Gigli, 'Anarchismo. Il mio anarchismo (agli amici Corbella)', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 October 1904; O. Gigli, 'Le due tendenze', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 March 1904.

<sup>75</sup> See for instance, L. Di Gergob [O. Gigli], 'Chi siamo e che vogliamo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 30 May 1902.

<sup>76</sup> A. Cerchiai, 'Cosa si intende 'anarchicamente' per organizzazione', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 April 1903. See also Antonioli & Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.71.

<sup>77</sup> S. C., 'Nel nostro movimento', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 2 April 1903. See also Homo, 'Uno sguardo al movimento anarchico italiano', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 2 April 1902.

<sup>78</sup> According to Gigli, he who joined the Chamber of Labour was no longer an anarchist, see Lina di Gergob [O. Gigli], 'Un risveglio', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 30 May 1903; 'Quisquillie?', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 20 June 1903.

<sup>79</sup> L. di Gergob [O. Gigli], 'Sullo sciopero', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 April 1903. See also, 'Gli anarchici e le organizzazioni operaie', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 27 August 1903; Victor, 'Ancora dell'Associazione', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 22 January 1903; 'Organizzazione? Gli anarchici e le

anti-organisational front was not homogeneous. Besides those who praised the individual act of self determination, a less intransigent approach to organisations was emerging,<sup>80</sup> particularly in regards to the participation of anarchists in workers' unions and the CGdL. The traditional anti-organisational stance collided with the necessity of finding an effective praxis.<sup>81</sup> Anti-organisational anarchists could not ignore the importance that organisations such as the CGdL and unions were gaining through a capillary presence throughout the region, placing themselves as ongoing points of reference for workers.

While anti-organisational anarchists feared the effects on the movement of an institutionalised party, on the other hand, socialist anarchists 'claimed their right to exist'.<sup>82</sup> For them, endorsing an organisation, or a party, meant avoiding the frontal clash with society as a whole. In order not to be labeled as a 'subversive sect' and to avoid their isolation from the rest of the worker movement, they had to differentiate between an economic-political system and human society. According to their anti-organisational opponents, with the acceptance of the actual political system, socialist anarchists risked acknowledging the state. Besides, this was also the position of the legalitarian socialists. In other words, while at the end of the nineteenth century organisational stances were due to the necessity of offering a point of reference to anarchists, in the following years, the need for organisations was due to the anarchists' assertion of their right to exist within the official political arena. Yet, although local and regional anarchist organisations began to appear again throughout Italy, anti-organisational anarchists gathered around *Il Grido della Folla*.

Both anti-organisational and individualist anarchists refused the idea of an anarchist party. The range of positions was wide. The traditional anti-organisational communist anarchist current was represented in Milan by Ettore Molinari and Nella Giacomelli, the main figures behind the experience of *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana*. Molinari and Giacomelli criticized Malatesta's organisational socialist anarchism, and defined themselves as 'individualists of the means, [and] communists of

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associazioni operaie', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 24 July 1902; L. di Gergob [O. Gigli], 'Camere del Lavoro. Polemiche... elettorali', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 17 July 1902; di Gergob [O. Gigli], 'Su l'organizzazione. Discussioni... inutili', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 23 April 1903; G. Baldazzi, 'Gli anarchici e le organizzazioni operaie', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 July 1903; G. Baldazzi, 'Per una proposta', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 12 March 1903.

<sup>80</sup> L. di Gergob [O. Gigli], 'Chi siamo e che cosa vogliamo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 14 August 1902.

<sup>81</sup> See *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 24 July 1902.

<sup>82</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p.175.

the end'.<sup>83</sup> This meant that they did not want to impose rules on anyone, and instead they accepted every kind of cooperation in order to achieve libertarian goals. In this way, the lack of pre-set strategies and methods became a conscious political choice: 'Our strategy is to fight in open order, without leaders, without codes, without binding strategies or dogma.'<sup>84</sup>

*Il Grido della Folla* had quarrels with some anarchist journals of other cities, particularly *L'Agitazione* of Ancona and other anarchists from Rome.<sup>85</sup> However, the end of *Il Grido della Folla* was marked by conflicts within the editorial board, mainly due to administrative issues.<sup>86</sup> As a result, *La Protesta Umana* (1906-1909)<sup>87</sup> was founded by a group of contributors to *Il Grido della Folla* who disagreed with the director Gavilli. The co-founders of the new journal were Molinari, Giacomelli, Giuseppe Manfredi and Ricciotti Longhi, defined by Gavilli as 'la tetrarchia' (the government of the four).<sup>88</sup> Their aim was to continue the activities of the initial *Il Grido della Folla* and in particular, continuing their 'anti-organisational propaganda'.<sup>89</sup> Gavilli, on the other side, kept publishing his own journal, which was titled *Grido della Folla*, intentionally written without the article 'Il'.<sup>90</sup> The two journals, *La Protesta Umana* and *Grido della Folla*, were ideologically on the same side, though personal disputes continued for some time. Gavilli was defined by his former comrades and colleagues as 'un succhione' (a sucker, intended to mean a parasite).<sup>91</sup>

As with the old *Il Grido della Folla*, disputes, police persecution and financial problems also marked the activities of *La Protesta Umana*.<sup>92</sup> At the end of 1907, Paolo

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<sup>83</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, p.17.

<sup>84</sup> Lavinio Vingagli, 'A chi non ci conosce', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 4 December 1902.

<sup>85</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, pp.12-13.

<sup>86</sup> 'Per intenderci', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 27 October 1906.

<sup>87</sup> *La Protesta Umana* was published in Milan between 13 October 1906 and 20 November 1909, with an interruption due to financial problems from 14 August 1909 to 30 October 1909. During this time *La Protesta Umana* was replaced by the publication of *La Questione Sociale*, a weekly magazine that had Giuseppe Monanni and Leda Rafanelli as editors. See L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, pp.198-99 and 225-26; G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, pp.131-34; F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)', in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.64-65.

<sup>88</sup> See 'Manfredi, Giuseppe', in DBAI, II, p.77.

<sup>89</sup> 'Per intenderci', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 27 October 1906.

<sup>90</sup> See L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I, ad nomen*.

<sup>91</sup> See 'Sulla bara del 'Grido della Folla'', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 20 October 1906; and I compagni della Protesta Umana, 'Le gesta d'un gesuita', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 22 December 1906.

<sup>92</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, p.22.

Schicchi became the director of the journal, but his experience did not last long. A nasty dispute between Schicchi and Molinari-Giacomelli terminated their cooperation. Schicchi wrote a small book in which he criticized Milanese anarchists, and defined Milan as a city of little importance, since it did not contribute to the anarchist movement, neither from an economic nor from an intellectual point of view.<sup>93</sup> Molinari and Giacomelli replied with another booklet.<sup>94</sup> Yet all these debates demonstrated the contradictions lived by many anarchists: the divergence between theory and praxis, ideals and everyday life was as damaging as police persecution, because it reinforced the image of anarchists as hypocrites. Ettore Molinari highlighted anarchists' frustration; 'it's absolutely impossible to impose anarchist ideals'.<sup>95</sup> Coherence and education represented the best tools for a long-term strategy. In Molinari and Giacomelli's words, 'the purification of our environment, the elevation of our consciences' were the major tasks of 'anarchists of today and tomorrow'.<sup>96</sup>

#### **4.1.3 *La Protesta Umana*: debates and contributors**

At the beginning of the century, Molinari and Giacomelli represented perhaps the most charismatic team within the Milanese anarchist movement. Milanese anarchists gathered around their cultural milieu. *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana* were read by individualist and communist anarchists. Their activity inspired other industrious partnerships, such as Monanni-Rafanelli, Rafanelli-Molaschi, and Rygier-Corridoni. According to Cerrito, '*La Protesta Umana* became the most widely read anarchist journal of that period'.<sup>97</sup> In its first issue the founders of *La Protesta Umana* affirmed that the journal 'did not belong to any sect', but was 'open to every healthy and sincere streams of anarchism, fighting with any means the struggle against the State and capital'.<sup>98</sup>

According to Berti, the anti-organisational stances of Milanese anarchists gathered around Molinari-Giacomelli and *La Protesta Umana* shed a light on significant

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<sup>93</sup> P.Schicchi, *Le degenerazioni dell'anarchismo, I, Mentecatti e delinquenti*, La Spezia, 1909, pp.67-75.

<sup>94</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp.60-63.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.63.

<sup>97</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, p.131.

<sup>98</sup> 'Incominciando!', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 13 October 1906.

stream of Italian anarchism.<sup>99</sup> *La Protesta Umana* represented Italian anti-organisational anarchism.<sup>100</sup> Within an industrial and modern city such as Milan, Berti defines as ‘schizophrenic behavior’ the idea of Milanese anarchists representing a revolutionary alternative for those workers who were not members of unions, such as shoemakers, bakers, builders and typographers, and for those who were only relatively affected by the process of modernisation.<sup>101</sup> They constituted the underground of the Milanese anarchist movement. Skeptical of socialist reformism, these workers, on the fringe of the labour movement, were reluctant to be organised by unions and parties, and were more sensitive to calls for direct action. Thus anarchists’ criticism of worker organisations increased their isolation and contributed to spreading the idea of Milanese anarchism as ‘aristocratic and populist’ as well as ‘individualist and plebian’.<sup>102</sup> A similar description is given by Antonioli, who describes the Milanese anarchist movement as ‘atypical’, ‘mob agitator’, and ‘aristocratic’.<sup>103</sup>

In Berti’s opinion, Ettore Molinari, the first anarchist academic in Milan, epitomised this behavior, characterised by rational and emotional aspects, symptoms of what Berti metaphorically indicates as schizophrenia.<sup>104</sup> His anarchism combined positivism and science with individualism and romantic rebellion, Bakunin’s revolutionary urge with Kropotkin’s harmonious spontaneity.<sup>105</sup> What emerged clearly was the scientific justification for the superiority of anarchist ethics. According to its founders, the title *La Protesta Umana* indicated the very essence of anarchism, which first of all is ‘a human protest’, the revolutionary voice of suffering humankind. Within this framework, Molinari’s rigorous explanation of anarchist morals was matched by his partner’s view. Nella Giacomelli stood up against everyday politics, malicious and opportunistic politicians, whether they were legalitarian socialists or liberals.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.444.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p.443. See also, ‘Per la Protesta Umana’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 3 November 1906.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p.444.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Antonioli & Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.70.

<sup>104</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.443.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p.444. See also, P.C. Masini, ‘Il giovane Molinari’, *Volontà*, vol.29, 1976, pp.469-76, and *La Protesta Umana* [E. Molinari-N. Giacomelli], ‘Sincerità’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 24 November 1906.

<sup>106</sup> On Giacomelli see DBAI, *ad nomen*; see also, F. Montanari, *Libertarie. Quattordici figure esemplari di donne anarchiche*, Reggio Emilia, 2007, pp.55-60; P.C. Masini, ‘Le due passionarie dell’Anarchia in Italia’, *Storia Illustrata*, no.191, October 1973, pp.119-28; M. Antonioli, ‘Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)’, *Rivista Storica dell’Anarchismo*, vol.1, no.1, 1994, pp.7-34. By Giacomelli see in particular: Ireos, [N. Giacomelli], ‘Solidarietà’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 29 December 1906; ‘Nel tempio del mostro’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 27 June 1903; ‘In tribunale. Processo per la sassaiola di via Legnano’, *Il Grido*

Despite its anti-organisational orientation, *La Protesta Umana* tried to find a common ground between Stirner's extreme individualism and Kropotkin's mutual aid: according to Gigli, this middle way was the avoidance of both complete isolation and centralisation of powers. The journal also refused those individualist tendencies that supported unnecessary violence, thefts and breaching of ethics on behalf of selfish needs, in other words the Tancredi and Corbella stream.<sup>107</sup> Yet the main contributors of *La Protesta Umana* distrusted organisations, which were potential 'spies' nests', and pushed for an increase in individual and collective propaganda to be made on any public occasion.<sup>108</sup>

Within this theoretical framework, Milanese anarchists of *La Protesta Umana* refused to participate in the Rome anarchist national congress, since, according to them, anarchism refused delegation.<sup>109</sup> On the same basis they also repudiated the international anarchist congress of Amsterdam in 1907.<sup>110</sup> In regards to the national congress, held in Rome between 16 and 20 June 1907, Milanese anarchists reasserted their opinion that the best propaganda was made in the pages of journals rather than among a small circle of people.<sup>111</sup>

The authorities tried in every way to interrupt the cultural activity carried on by Milanese anarchists. Many directors, editors and contributors were arrested, charged and trialed; seizure of issues was a recurrent event; 29 out of 60 trials ended with a conviction.<sup>112</sup> In addition, *La Protesta Umana* told of a ridiculous attempt made by policemen to deliver a bomb to its editorial office.<sup>113</sup> This clash reached its climax in 1906 when the young anarchist Angelo Galli was killed. His funeral was painted by

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della Folla, Milan, 11 June 1903; 'Vi sobillo, compagni', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 July 1903; 'Impressioni sul congresso socialista', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 April 1904.

<sup>107</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p.197.

<sup>108</sup> N.d.R., 'Risposta all'articolo di Edoardo Acutis 'Intendiamoci'', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 27 July 1907.

<sup>109</sup> 'Un Congresso Anarchico Italiano?', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 4 May 1907.

<sup>110</sup> See 'Il Congresso Internazionale Anarchico di Amsterdam', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 14 September 1907; see also M. Antonioli, *Il sindacalismo italiano. Dalle origini al fascismo. Studi e ricerche*, Pisa, BFS, 1997, and M. Antonioli, *Anarchismo e/o sindacalismo. Introduzione a Dibattito sul sindacalismo. Atti del congresso internazionale anarchico di Amsterdam (1907)*, Florence, Cp, 1978.

<sup>111</sup> Milanese anarchists criticised Fabbri, see Y, 'Il Congresso anarchico Italiano', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 15 June 1907.

<sup>112</sup> Ireos, 'Lo scannatoio', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 21 December 1907.

<sup>113</sup> See 'Le bombe ammaestrate della Questura. Le canagliate del questore Bondi e della Teppa di S. Fedele contro la 'Protesta Umana'', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 27 July 1907.

Carlo Carrá and the painting became a symbol of the struggle between anarchists and the state.<sup>114</sup>

Following the dispute with Schicchi, Molinari and Giacomelli tried to convince Malatesta to return from London and take over the direction of *La Protesta Umana*. They aimed at making the journal a newspaper. Malatesta refused to be the editor of an individualist journal. Thus, Molinari and Giacomelli turned towards Giuseppe Monnani who remained as the editor of *La Protesta Umana* until its last issue in 1909.

#### **4.1.4 *La Libreria Editrice Sociale* and other journals: Monanni, Rafanelli, Molaschi and their individualisms**

Antonioli's third type of individualism – pure intellectual individualism – corresponds to what Giorgio Sacchetti described as the Rafanelli-Monanni's stream.<sup>115</sup> A significant difference between Tancredi and Monanni's stream was represented by their different approach to militarism and war. Monanni, and Rafanelli in particular, always condemned the military institution and the Italian intervention in the First World War. Tancredi and a few other individualist anarchists saw the war from a different point of view. It was a very short step for them to endorse the fascist revolution a few years later.<sup>116</sup> Contrarily to Tancredi's line, the individualism of Giuseppe Monanni was circumscribed to a more cultural and intellectual area of intervention.<sup>117</sup> The anarchic-individualist stream was given a boost in 1907 with the publication in Florence of *Vir*, an anarchist journal directed by Monanni. When he moved to Milan in 1909 together with Rafanelli, Monanni and his partner contributed to the adventure of *La Protesta Umana*. Moreover, they initiated four other journals: *Sciarpa Nera* (1909-1910), *La Questione Sociale* (1909), *La Rivolta* (1910) and *La Libertà* (1913-1915).<sup>118</sup> Monanni's legacy to Italian anarchism is revealed by his activity as a publisher of Italian and international classics. In Milan, Rafanelli and Monanni gave birth to the anarchist publisher *Libreria Editrice Sociale* (LES, 1909-1914), which had significant importance

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<sup>114</sup> See 'Per l'assassinio dell'anarchico Angelo Galli', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 3 November 1906; 'Un episodio della lotta di classe. Verdetto di jene. Campane a stormo', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 17 November 1906.

<sup>115</sup> G. Sacchetti, 'Comunisti contro individualisti. Il dibattito sull'organizzazione nel 1907', *Bollettino del Museo del Risorgimento*, p.25.

<sup>116</sup> See Chapter Five.

<sup>117</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, p.283.

<sup>118</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I, ad indicem*.

for the diffusion of culture in Italy. Franco Schirone has comprehensively reconstructed the history of the LES, which, after the interruption caused by the First World War, continued its activities as *Casa Editrice Sociale* (1920-1926) first, and *Casa Editrice Monanni* later (1927-1933). It published works by Gori, Reclus, Stirner, Tolstoy, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Giuseppe Ferrari, Nietzsche, Romain Rolland, William Morris and Jack London.<sup>119</sup> Their publications reached prison islands and universities. Monanni and Rafanelli's publishing house was also a meeting place, a cultural and ideological milieu where a younger generation of anarchists was gathering. It was a period of cultural fervor. In his memoirs, Ugo Fedeli describes that period:

We were a restless youth, both intellectually and politically, eager to stir up the dominant muggy atmosphere [...]. We were not supermen but we thought we were superior. Our individualism was not the result of reading Stirner or Nietzsche – although we read every book we could, and we found Max Stirner's *The Ego and its Own*, cold and too rational for our enthusiasm ... – neither Stirner nor Nietzsche were the decisive factor in our position.<sup>120</sup>

Leda Rafanelli and her unique individualist anarchism has been the object of study since the publication of the second edition of her memoirs in 1975.<sup>121</sup> In them, Rafanelli recounted her friendship with a young socialist by the name of Benito Mussolini. Since then, Rafanelli's story has aroused a lively interest in how intimate the relationship was, although the issue has little historiographical importance. She has been recently rediscovered and been the object of studies and conferences. In the public sphere, Rafanelli was a writer and a publisher. She started to work in typography when she was 16. Rafanelli was self taught and she produced a huge body of literature made up of articles, books, novels, pamphlets and tales. Through conferences and anarchist publications, Rafanelli campaigned against militarism and colonialism. She supported the initiatives promoted by Luigi Molinari for a Modern School based on the teachings of Francisco Ferrer, was a feminist, and a woman of the twentieth century. She was an

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<sup>119</sup> Jack London was censored by the fascist regime. See F. Schirone, 'La Casa Editrice Sociale', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, pp.95-116; F. Schirone, 'La Casa Editrice Sociale. Un esperimento di cultura anarchica (1909-1933)', in F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli tra letteratura e anarchia*, Reggio Emilia, Biblioteca Panizzi, pp.81-142; F. Schirone, 'La Casa Editrice Sociale', in M. Antonioli (ed.), *Editori e tipografi anarchici di lingua italiana tra Otto e Novecento*, pp.141-78.

<sup>120</sup> U. Fedeli, *Da una Guerra all'altra. Brani di vita di un rivoluzionario*, cited in M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a Milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.79.

<sup>121</sup> L. Rafanelli, *Una donna e Mussolini*.

individualist anarchist and a charismatic figure within the Milanese anarchist movement.<sup>122</sup>

Attention has been drawn to Rafanelli being both anarchist and Muslim at the same time. Leda went to Egypt when she was 20 years old. There she became a Muslim and learnt Arabic in order to read the Koran. For the rest of her life, Rafanelli respected four of the five commandments of Islam, but she never went to Mecca. Her house in *Viale Monza* in Milan had Arabic-style furnishing, cushions and rugs on which Rafanelli, dressed in Arabic clothes, served coffee to her guests. A green flag with the 99 names of Allah hung on a wall. Strong scents of the Orient and Africa were present in incense and oils. A brazier was always lit, both in ‘winter and summer’.<sup>123</sup> As an anarchist and a faithful Muslim, how did she reconcile the two beliefs? Gabriele Mandel Khân and Enrico Ferri have given a description and an interpretation of Rafanelli’s Islamic anarchism:<sup>124</sup> Sufi Islam and anarchism found in Rafanelli middle ground, made of freedom of thought and love for humanity.<sup>125</sup> However, according to Ferri, anarchism has faith only in the individual.<sup>126</sup> Within a modern society that constantly looks forward to future and progress, ‘anarchism is an atheistic humanism that places the individual at the beginning, means and end of itself’.<sup>127</sup> Ferri has tried to show the incompatibility between Islam and anarchism,<sup>128</sup> and he has affirmed that Rafanelli’s attempt to conciliate Islam and anarchism worked only in her private sphere, while, as an anarchist activist she had to refuse her god.<sup>129</sup>

What can the life of Leda Rafanelli tell us? Why is her experience relevant for a better understanding of Milanese anarchism? The complexity of defining and interpreting anarchism reveals the anti-dogmatic nature of anarchism. Anarchism allowed Rafanelli to express herself, free to develop her human potential, including her spiritual side. Rafanelli’s uniqueness represents only one of the many ways Italians and Milanese anarchists tried to embody anarchism. With her writings and publishing

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<sup>122</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>123</sup> L. Rafanelli, *Una donna e Mussolini*, p.36.

<sup>124</sup> G.M. Khân, ‘Leda Rafanelli’, in F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli tra letteratura e anarchia*, pp.143-50; E. Ferri, ‘Leda Rafanelli: un anarchismo islamico?’, in F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli tra letteratura e anarchia*, pp.151-82.

<sup>125</sup> G.M. Khân, ‘Leda Rafanelli’, in F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli tra letteratura e anarchia*, p.149 and E. Ferri, ‘Leda Rafanelli: un anarchismo islamico?’, in F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli tra letteratura e anarchia*, p.176.

<sup>126</sup> E. Ferri, ‘Leda Rafanelli: un anarchismo islamico?’, in F. Chessa (ed.), *Leda Rafanelli tra letteratura e anarchia*, p.169. Ferri’s statement can be misleading for community-oriented anarchists.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p.175.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p.176.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

activities, Rafanelli was free. She was free when she could write and publish. Her cultural production represented an example of anarchist praxis, a specific kind of individualism, her own individualism. Nevertheless, studying the complexity and uniqueness of her thought allows us to understand the spirit of anarchists at the beginning of the century: a permanent state of rebellion against the status quo and a constant yearning for freedom were expressed by Rafanelli in her everyday anarchic life, free to choose her Oriental clothes, habits and costumes, free to be herself. Rafanelli was an anti-conformist even within the anarchist movement. She did not follow a model of anarchism, but was anarchically free to be herself. As she wrote in 1920:

Anarchists live their life like nomadic people. They do not follow a specific path, but their own path, according to their nature, to their way of thinking, and also to their temper.<sup>130</sup>

Was Rafanelli's Islamic anarchism nothing more than a personal and intellectual choice? How is Rafanelli's orientalism explained? As Edward Said has suggested, orientalism is a way of knowing the other and the construction of the other is fundamental for the construction of the self.<sup>131</sup> Rafanelli was a daughter of her time, influenced by other cultures and fascinated by the Orient, particularly Egypt and Islam. Rafanelli expressed her orientalism according to her nature and her times. The use of words that remind us of Rudyard Kipling, such as 'savage' and 'pure' to refer to the 'warm' Africa, the Other, reflected Rafanelli's specific historical framework. At the beginning of the twentieth century, reactions to the development of an industrialised mass-society brought an extraordinary period of cultural fervor which affected also women and their role in Western societies. Within this historical framework, Rafanelli's character needs to be placed. The discovery of the 'Oriental tendency of her soul' brought her to develop an interest in occultism, astrology and magic. Besides, fascination with the Orient was part of European culture. Since the eighteenth century, the Orient was thought suitable for study and display in museums; the relationship between the Orient and the West was a relationship of power, domination and complex hegemony. According to Said, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, as well as a realm of self construction. For Rafanelli, the Other became the ideological framework

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<sup>130</sup> L. Rafanelli, *L'Eroe della folla*, 1920, cited in M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*, p.13.

<sup>131</sup> See E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, London, Penguin, 1995.

to understand the world and herself. Unlike the Western dominant discourse, Rafanelli projected her curiosity and desires onto the Orient, rather than her fears.

Rafanelli's personal choice of embracing a non-Western religion was not unique, however. For example, theosophy was a singular experiment of Western ideas and reinterpretations of Indian philosophy.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, in those same years, the suffragettes gained popularity on both sides of the Atlantic, empowering women as citizens and active political subjects. The initiatives carried on in Great Britain by Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst before the First World War mirrored the activism of Rafanelli and other women in Milan. Rafanelli never wrote religious propaganda. On the contrary, with the pamphlet '*A l'Eva schiava*' (To Eve, the slave), published in 1907, she addresses women and invites them to refute patriarchal religions and their priests, because, she writes, 'the worst enemy of a man is within the man'.<sup>133</sup>

Finally, Rafanelli was also an activist. How far did she affect the anarchist movement and class organisations in Milan? Does her story explain class, gender hierarchies and state formation? How did these forces shape collective organisations, the anarchist movement and their struggles? From an analysis of the Milanese anarchist movement at the beginning of the century, it appears that Rafanelli was a charismatic figure within the anarchist movement thanks to her publications, articles, conferences and support of other initiatives. She was part of a specific cultural milieu around which other militants gathered. However, the group of individualist anarchists she was part of was not the only one in existence. In Milan there was a network of groups and individuals, who tended to read the same journals, go with the same initiatives, and thereby support each other's campaigns in solidarity. The Milanese anarchist movement was made up of individuals from all social classes. Different groups and streams of anarchism coexisted, within which Rafanelli's Islamic and individualist anarchism was only one of many personal and intellectual choices. Rafanelli played an important role but was not the leader of the anarchist movement. She contributed to its shape, as much as she was influenced by ideologies and practices of her time. On a national scale, it might be possible to say that Rafanelli's anarchism epitomises the eclecticism and the broad spectrum of the Italian left in the twentieth century. Rafanelli's personal journey

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<sup>132</sup> Founded at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Helena Petrovna Blavatskij, theosophy affirmed the validity of every religion and it glorified the Hindu civilization. At the beginning of the new century, Annie Besant gave to the Theosophical society a social and political aspect that contributed to the raising of a nationalist movement in India.

<sup>133</sup> L. Rafanelli, *A l'Eva schiava (Religione)*, Florence, Libreria Rafanelli-Polli e C., 1907.

represents an intellectual experiment, one of the many produced by the Italian left at the beginning of the twentieth century, whose creativity and originality deserves further investigations and analysis.

According to Antonioli, social individualism was predominant until 1910-1911, when another stream within the anarchist movement, known as anarchist syndicalism, offered to Milanese anarchists a different area of intervention.<sup>134</sup> Between 1911 and 1915, Rafanelli and Monanni's publishing activity remained the only point of reference for many Milanese individualist anarchists. After the war, the advance of fascism brought more cultural repression. Censorship and the seizing of books prevented Monanni and Rafanelli from continuing their activity. A few years ago Mattia Granata completed an original study on Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi and Maria Rossi.<sup>135</sup> The historian revealed the development of Molaschi's individualist thought through his correspondence both with his wife, Maria Rossi, and with his friend and comrade, Leda Rafanelli. Through the reading of these personal letters, Granata has reconstructed the 'austere' character of Molaschi,<sup>136</sup> the evolution of his ideas, his individualism and his nihilist phase. His cultural background was influenced mainly by Nietzsche and Stirner; his social points of reference were represented by Luigi Molinari, Monanni and Rafanelli. Molaschi was among the most charismatic figures within the individualist milieu in Milan in the period between the War and the end of the Red Biennium (1920). With the Italian social and political background of those years, Granata has also offered an interpretation of the Milanese anarchist movement. From the reading of Granata's work, the Milanese anarchist movement appears as a 'homogeneous network of individuals' based on solidarity. In Maria Rossi's words:

The environment was unique. ... what kept us united was the sense of solidarity ... [for example, although] we were not sympathizers of syndicalism, ... when there were demonstrations [or] strikes ... we took part in them ... it was [a way to] support those who were affected.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, p.284.

<sup>135</sup> M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*.

<sup>136</sup> Letter by Carlo Molaschi to Maria Rossi (9 July 1916), cited in M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*, p.35.

<sup>137</sup> Interview to Maria Rossi by V. Mantovani and P. Finzi, 22 November 1974, cited in M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*, p.21.

Despite the presence of different tendencies, the movement was homogeneous because it was made up of individuals who shared the same general principles and who were united by solidarity. Many of them were individualist anarchists. On the one hand, this would explain the lack of strong anarchist organisations in Milan, and thus the incapacity to effectively transform the appeals made by anarchist journals for social change into something real. On the other hand, all these individuals were tied together through links of ‘solidarity and reciprocal help’. It was a horizontal network based on mutual aid that had Gavilli, Tancredi, Molinari-Giacomelli, Monanni-Rafanelli, Molaschi-Rossi, Luigi Molinari, Armando Borghi, Ugo Fedeli, Maria Rygier and Filippo Corridoni as cultural and social points of reference. Over the first 20 years of the twentieth century, Milanese anarchists gathered around a few milieus led by charismatic figures, usually intellectuals and their publishing activities. While many studies have been undertaken on these primary figures of the Milanese anarchist movement, not much has been said about those who constituted the broader movement.

#### **4.2 For a social portrait of the Milanese anarchist movement between 1900 and 1915**

The aim of this section is to present a social portrait of the Milanese anarchist movement. For this purpose, a sample of some 40 anarchists has been used to map the movement’s social composition. The sample is too small to reach absolute conclusions. Personal stories have been correlated in order to give a meaningful picture of the general movement. For this purpose, it is necessary to switch back and forth from the general framework to the particular dimension using a good deal of evidence in order to illustrate what happened on a larger scale. Biographies have been used as sources and as representative of a significant issue, and thus they had to be embedded in a solid discussion of Milanese anarchism.

This analysis had defined three main areas of intervention. Anarchists tended to aggregate around social and cultural milieus, but rather than circles they were networks of people gravitating around one or more charismatic figures. In addition, anarchists were active on the occasion of specific issues. Local and trans-local events and contexts offered, to Milanese anarchists, the opportunity to carry on campaigns and actions. Their praxis was the result of factors directly linked to the nature of the movement, to

the importance and value of a specific struggle, to the Milanese and Italian social and political context, and to the media-related activities of anarchist intellectuals in Milan.

In the years between 1900 and 1915 Milanese anarchists focused on education, revolutionary syndicalism and anti-militarism.<sup>138</sup> First, the spreading of an alternative educational system, based on the teaching of Francisco Ferrer, involved many activists who looked on libertarian pedagogy as a long term revolutionary tool. In Milan, the anarchist lawyer Luigi Molinari became the point of reference for this approach to education. His activities aimed at opening the first public Modern School as an alternative to the government's nationalistic and religious school institutions. Molinari was successful until the First World War broke out and wiped away his work. Milanese anarchists gathered around Molinari offering support in realising this experiment. Revolutionary syndicalism was the second area of intervention. The evolution of the Italian economic, social and political system had created the basis for the development of organised trade unions, new practices of bargaining, new social and cultural references. The *Unione Sindacale Italiana* (USI) and its Milanese section (USM) represented an alternative pole of attraction for those anarchists who rejected the individualists and socialists' appeals. After 1910-1911, Milanese anarchists were likely to follow the general inclination of the Italian anarchist movement to form organisations and to join workers' struggles. In Milan, the constitution of a revolutionary union was followed shortly by the formation of a *Fascio Libertario Milanese* (Milanese libertarian group, FLM). Attempts to relate in a more systematic and effective way to the working class and the worker movement had their climax during the Red Week of June 1914. With the outbreak of the First World War Milanese anarchists shifted their focus to anti-war campaigns.

#### 4.2.1 Methodology

This qualitative research began at the State Archive in Milan (ASM) with consulting the police files related to the period 1900-1939. Secondary sources, mainly Detti-Andreucci's *Movimento Operaio Italiano Dizionario Biografico* (MOIDB) and the *Dizionario Biografico degli Anarchici Italiani* (DBAI), identify the names of anarchists who were active in Milan between 1900 and 1915, and who were genuine anarchists. In

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<sup>138</sup> For a discussion on Milanese anarchists and anti-military campaigns see Chapter Five.

fact, authorities often labelled as anarchists certain individuals who were neither activists nor anarchists.<sup>139</sup> The next step was comparing the names collected with those present in the DBAI. At the Casellario Politico Centrale of the Central State Archive in Rome (ACS, CPC) information has been double-checked. From an initial number of 350 persons, and through the reading of police files and collected biographies, around 40 anarchists who were in Milan during the period have been selected. Different criteria have been used to choose the sample, including extent of the available data, relevance of individuals' biographies and significance of their activism within the broader picture of Milanese anarchism. In fact, the analysis does not include occasional sympathizers but mainly focuses on activists. These are the anarchists who do not often appear in books, unless briefly associated with other main figures. These are some of the anarchists who constituted and genuinely represented the Milanese movement.<sup>140</sup> As a result, this sample gives a good in-sight into Milanese anarchism without distorting its meaning.

The study of the group's social composition has focused on several factors: age and generation of participants, their education and literacy rate, geography and mobility, job and occupational category, cultural and social milieu, and production of various media and areas of intervention. The data collected has offered some recurrent patterns. The analysis of this data does not propose definitive interpretations. Rather, it would suggest hypotheses and propose further questions around the success of the anti-organisational current among Milanese anarchists. The information suggests that the majority of the activists were not originally from Milan; indeed, in more than half the cases Milan was just a transition place. The Milanese anarchist movement was in need of external contributions in order to reconstitute itself after the repression of the Crispi government at the end of the nineteenth century. In addition, the continuous mobility and turnover of people affected the movement's ability to establish groups and strong links among them. There was a high level of literacy and general basic reading skills were sufficient to obtain and process information and develop class consciousness.

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<sup>139</sup> For an insight into how to consider police sources, see in particular C. Bermani, G.N. Berti, P. Brunello, M. Franzinelli, A. Giannuli, L. Pezzica, C. Venza, *Voci di compagni schede di questura, considerazioni sull'uso delle fonti orali e delle fonti di polizia per la storia dell'anarchismo*, Milan, Centro Studi Libertari, 2002.

<sup>140</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.443: according to the historian, Milanese anarchist activists numbered around one hundred, 'cifra assai elevata' (very high number). He takes this figure from the reading of 'Per la 'Protesta Umana'', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 3 November 1906, which tells of a meeting regarding the administration of the journal. More than one hundred comrades attended the meeting: 'I compagni intervennero in numero discreto, oltre un centinaio, e s'interessarono alla discussione apertasi sulla Protesta Umana.'

The data on job categories reveals an equal presence of blue collar workers and those employed in the service sector. Within the Milanese anarchist movement there was a great division of jobs. Yet among these job categories, some types played a more central role. For example, traders, artisans, typographers – compositors and pressmen – could read and write. They had access to literature. They could read *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana*, and they could contribute to theoretical debates through letters, correspondence, articles, asking questions and offering ways forward. Often they chose to use a pseudonym in order to make police investigations more difficult. The use of a pseudonym has facilitated the identification of the individuals' social points of references. Moreover, the social diversity of this sample shows the presence of members of different social classes: petit-bourgeois, proletarians and sub-proletarians were all represented.<sup>141</sup> In this regard, it can be argued that the Milanese anarchist movement was a trans-class movement.

Ultimately, this study manifests a divergence between the revolutionary vision of those anarchists who directed journals, and the sense of rebellion of artisans and traders to form into regiments, as well as the reality of working in a factory, side by side with socialists, reformists, and members of trade unions and leagues. The analysis of the Milanese anarchist movement's social composition helps us to understand the 'dominance' of anti-organisational stances within the Milanese anarchist movement, even among those categories of workers who could have needed a sort of organisation, especially in a developing industrial city such as Milan.

#### **4.2.2 The Milanese anarchist movement's social composition in 1900-1915**

Among the anarchists selected for this study, six were in their teens, 20 were in their 20s, 13 were in their 30s and only one man was already in his 40s when he was described by the police as one of the 'known' anarchists in the city.<sup>142</sup> There is no evidence of any other significant more than 40-year-old anarchists active in Milan in 1900-1915.<sup>143</sup> How can this generational make-up be explained? The organisational and communist tendency that had prevailed among Milanese anarchists during 1870-1890

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<sup>141</sup> For the purpose of this study, members of the elites who repudiated their class of origin and became anarchist activists in Milan in 1900-1915 have not been found.

<sup>142</sup> See 'Colombo', in DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>143</sup> See ASM, *Fondo Questura*, b. 84, *Anarchici*, and ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, bb. 935-940, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*.

was not successful. That generation of anarchists was wiped out by government repression: some were in exile, some were sent to prison islands, and others had died.<sup>144</sup> As a consequence, at the beginning of the century young anarchists constituted most of the Milanese anarchist movement. Besides, youth continued to represent fertile ground for the rebellious nature of anarchist ideas and among these, in particular, the rejection of authority.

The data collected shows that one third of the anarchists were born in Milan, one third in Lombardy and the remaining third came from other Italian regions, mainly central zones such as Romagna, Marche, Tuscany and Umbria. However, almost 70 percent moved away from Milan. Among those anarchists who left Milan only one third were Milanese. Furthermore, the percentage of those anarchists who left Milan is equally distributed among the work forces. Thus, it seems evident that Milan was not only a pole for migration but a place of temporary transition before travel to other destinations. Moreover, migration affected the activities of both charismatic intellectuals and unknown activists. Perhaps job opportunities were among the reasons the anarchist blue-collar workers were forced to move. Another reason was police persecution that pushed many activists to flee and continue their activities elsewhere. Nevertheless, the process of physical reconstitution of the Milanese anarchist movement was concurrent with its theoretical debates, and in order to reconstitute the movement, the contribution of anarchists coming from outside Milan became crucial.

At the beginning of the century workers' education was no longer considered a possible danger for social order.<sup>145</sup> Quite the opposite, their education was seen as an opportunity to improve industrial production and the economy in general. Yet, according to the 1901 census, 48.5 percent of Italians were still not able to read and write.<sup>146</sup> The data for Lombardy indicates only 21.6 percent of illiterate citizens, while in Milan the percentage of illiteracy dropped to 10 percent. Unfortunately, the sample used for this study is not complete: data is unavailable for 16 cases. Out of the

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<sup>144</sup> 'Il Grido della Folla agli amici lettori' and 'Nelle persecuzioni', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 14 April 1902; Il Grido della Folla, 'A raccolta!', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 14 May 1903; Il Comitato Pro Vittime Politiche, 'Libertà alle vittime del '98', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 July 1904; see also M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, p.279.

<sup>145</sup> C. Besana, 'Il sistema educativo e i luoghi della formazione', in A. Colombo (ed.), *Fiducia e speranza. Note per una storia dell'intrapresa economica e sociale in Lombardia*, Milan, Istituto Regionale di Ricerca della Lombardia, 2008, p.19, available at <http://www.irer.it/Rapportifinali/Fiduciaesperanza2008.pdf>, retrieved on 16 December 2009.

<sup>146</sup> R.S. Di Pol, *Scuola e popolo nel riformismo liberale d'inizio secolo*, Marco Valerio, 2002, p.45.

remaining 24, only one had not completed primary school. It is important to keep in mind that not all the anarchists selected were from Lombardy. Yet, at first sight, the data collected for this study, in regards to literacy rates, seems to contradict the national level. Among the anarchists selected for this study, only one person finished his university degree, and another completed high school. Significantly, the anarchist who graduated pursued an artistic career, becoming a painter. Generally speaking, among Milanese anarchists, there was a low level of illiteracy. On the one hand, this factor could have affected the anarchist movement in terms of numbers. In fact, workers with basic reading skills could read Milanese anarchist journals, while anarchist meetings and public speeches could reach out those illiterate workers. To what extent the language used in those publications was accessible and understandable to workers with a low level of literacy represented another matter. On the other hand, it can be argued that perhaps the language used by anarchist contributors, and in particular intellectuals and editors, occasionally obstructed the spreading of their own ideas. Articles based on abstract concepts, as well as vexing personal polemics among contributors, had the opposite effect to what those journals were aiming at.

Data on literacy levels and education were directly linked to job category. Almost everyone worked - data related to professions is available for 37 cases. The urban characteristics were confirmed by the labour force employed in the manufacturing, commerce and service sectors. By 1901 the manufacturing sector had become the main employer of Milanese workers.<sup>147</sup> None of the anarchists selected was employed in the agricultural sector. The 1901 census industrial pattern is reflected by the mix of jobs represented by the sample. In fact, 19 of the anarchists selected were employed in the manufacturing sector and 18 in the commerce and service sector. A large proportion of the sample was employed in the metal industry (seven cases) - which reflects the expansion of this industry in the city - followed by textile, printing machine, rubber and chemicals sectors (eight cases). The decline of the garment industry was mirrored by the low number of anarchists employed in this sector (four cases). Even within the tertiary sector, the sample reflects the trend revealed by the 1901 census. Workers employed in professions, arts, utilities and public accommodation in the service sector were 45 percent of the Milanese working force.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, many anarchists selected were skilled workers - electricians, plumbers and painters (six cases)

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<sup>147</sup> L.A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan*, pp.61-67.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p.65.

–or traders (five cases) or were employed in the utilities and accommodation sectors (four cases). Not surprisingly, among the anarchists selected only three were employed in banking, insurance and government sectors. The overall picture of the Milanese anarchist working force mirrors the city's mixed urban function.

Unemployment affected every social class and did not distinguish between mental, administrative or physical work.<sup>149</sup> However, it was not only unemployment rates forcing workers to migrate. Authorities prosecuted many anarchists who were directors or editors of *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana*. It was difficult for an anarchist journal to survive. For instance, in its first year of life *Il Grido della Folla* was seized 11 times, and on 18 occasions its contributors and editors were arrested.<sup>150</sup> Similar vicissitudes were experienced by *La Protesta Umana*. For this reason, 13 (33 percent) of the anarchists selected wrote for journals using a pseudonym. Fear of losing their job might have been among the reasons. Yet the use of a pseudonym did not prevent 11 of these 13 anarchists from leaving Milan in order to escape arrest and court orders. In terms of belonging to a social milieu, most of the anarchists gathered around the promoters of journals such as *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana* – Gavilli, Molinari-Giacomelli, Monanni-Rafanelli, Molaschi, Rygier-Corridoni, Armando Borghi and Luigi Molinari – represented the main points of references for Milanese anarchists. More than 30 percent of the selected anarchists contributed to journal activities with articles, or even being temporary editors, until the authorities began to prosecute them.

These figures do not allow definitive conclusion. They cannot be used to draw an absolutely accurate picture of Milanese anarchism. However, they offer a tool to interpret structures and problems of the Milanese anarchist movement. An interpretation and explanation of why the anti-organisational current was successful can be found in the relationship between occupational patterns and ideological stances. For example, the Milanese anarchist intelligentsia offered an abstract, positivist vision, aimed at inspiring a revolutionary consciousness among the readers of its publications. On the other hand, blue-collar workers, professional and skilled workers expressed a rebellious, impatient, and at times even riotous nature. The appeals of anarchist intellectuals for revolution were translated by the rest of the movement into episodes of spontaneous rebellion. However, a revolution also needed organisation, which Milanese anarchists did not

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<sup>149</sup> M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.70.

<sup>150</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico milanese agli inizi del secolo', in *Anna Kuliscioff e l'età del riformismo*, p.280.

have. District based clubs, and organisations such as the FLM and the USM were not effectively prepared for a revolution. Thus, appeals for revolution collided with the lack of organisation and the rebel nature of the Milanese proletariat, and, as a result, anti-organisational stances prevailed both on the pages of Milanese anarchist journals and within the movement.

This interpretation is still not complete. What a social analysis cannot tell through its data about the Milanese anarchist movement instead can be used to explain some complementary aspects and shed light on the broader picture. For example, solidarity played an important role among Milanese anarchists. Given the low number of anarchists in the city, it is highly possible that only a few degrees of separation divided an anarchist from his comrades. This personal knowledge allowed Milanese anarchists to move and interact within small networks. As a result, Milanese anarchists joined, supported, and occasionally were involved in different campaigns. The crucial issue that diversified Milanese anarchists' positions was the individual's approach to organisation, but rather than creating walls, variety of opinions did not imply straight forward decisions on which side to take. Milan became a workshop that offered several different options from which to choose. There were no right and wrong sides. Instead, there were different perspectives, different visions of what it meant to be an anarchist.

#### **4.2.3 Milieus, journals, persecution: stories of unknown anarchist activists**

This series of short biographies helps us to understand the nature of the Milanese anarchist movement, in particular, its social network, how it worked and how it was directed. Milanese anarchists had multiple connections and social points of reference, however, apart from publishing activities, they were unable to develop effective and long-term practices. Their activities were mainly one-off events or the result of exceptional circumstances. Yet these secondary characters shared many similarities. Common features were arrests, being temporary directors of *Il Grido della Folla* or *La Protesta Umana*, migration and progressive detachment from the movement. As activists, most of their time was spent in spreading information, theories, critical views and anarchist ideas among the working class. This was possible through important journals such as *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana*, but also through public speeches given among workers in factories. According to *La Protesta Umana*, Milanese anarchists had achieved good results in the previous decades, particularly in terms of

anti-parliamentary campaigns, competition with the socialists, and participation in workers' struggles, signified by the contribution of anarchists in the first general strike. These events meant, according to the Milanese journal, the 'existence of an anarchist voice within the proletariat'.<sup>151</sup>

The anti-anarchist international conference, held in Rome in 1898, failed to reach firm decisions on international and national goals.<sup>152</sup> One year after the May 1898 riot, a two-year pardon was granted to the 3,000 people who were released.<sup>153</sup> Among these were many Milanese anarchists who tried to revive their activities. One of them was Davide Viganó.<sup>154</sup> Together with Sante Callegari, Felice Mazzocchi, Carlo Scolari, Carlo Colombo and others, he tried to reconnect Milanese militants with the periphery. Viganó was arrested in Corsico, a southwestern Milanese district, while he was collecting issues of the anarchist journal *La Questione Sociale*, published in Patterson (USA), in order to redistribute them.<sup>155</sup> The activity of spreading anarchist ideas through journals was repressed by police. Milanese anarchists were isolated and kept under surveillance. Particular attention was paid to those militants who received anarchist publications. Anarchists were accused of rebellion against police order, instigation to cause riots and to commit crimes, participation in strikes and in non authorised public gatherings.<sup>156</sup> Police behavior was criticised by *Il Grido della Folla*. According to the Milanese journal, police brutality was due to the training of policemen who used violence against the weakest, rather than to a specific government policy.<sup>157</sup>

Despite police persecution, Milanese anarchists gathered around influential figures, and were able to restart their activities. Gavilli moved to Milan in 1904 and soon became one of the most significant figures within the anarchist milieu.<sup>158</sup> It might be said that Gavilli's most significant contribution to anarchism was his stint at *Il Grido della Folla*.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, Gavilli was active in other initiatives than writing, so that

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<sup>151</sup> 'Risposta de 'La Protesta Umana' ad una lettera firmata Riteau', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 24 November 1906.

<sup>152</sup> N. Dell'Erba, *Giornali e gruppi anarchici in Italia, 1892-1900*, pp.138-42.

<sup>153</sup> A. Canavero, *Milano e la crisi di fine secolo (1896-1900)*, pp.312-13.

<sup>154</sup> See DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>155</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 5409, *Viganó Davide*.

<sup>156</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, p.64.

<sup>157</sup> See 'La polizia di Milano e gli anarchici', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 30 March 1906. A confirmation was partly given by a correspondence between the Milan prefect and the Minister of Internal Affairs. According to the prefect, policemen preferred not to belong to the political squad, see ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1905, b. 20, fasc. *Milano*, Milan prefect to the Minister of Interior, 30 July 1905.

<sup>158</sup> U. Fedeli, *Giovanni Gavilli, 1855-1918*, p.27.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

many anarchists turned to him. Gavilli constituted the *Comitato Pro Vittime Politiche* (Pro political victims committee, CPVP).<sup>160</sup> This committee campaigned for the liberation of all political prisoners. It denied the authorities' claim that with the release of Pietro Calcagno nobody else was kept on prison islands.<sup>161</sup> Another committee, the *Comitato Milanese Pro Popolo Russo* (Milanese Committee in support of the Russian people), was formed after the 1905 Russian Revolution. The group aimed at supporting the 'victims of the Russian autocracy' and showing solidarity with Maxim Gorki, who had been sentenced to death. The committee pushed for a general strike and demonstrations throughout Italy.<sup>162</sup> An act of vandalism against the Russian consulate in Milan was reported by the prefect.<sup>163</sup> Some individuals manifested solidarity with the Russian revolution during the performance of Gorki's play at the *Manzoni* theatre. Leaflets were thrown from the balconies and slogans against the Czar were yelled out in symbolic protest.<sup>164</sup>

Milanese anarchists promoted initiatives in defense of the working class. A crucial concern was represented by the scarcity and expense of accommodation. Milanese anarchists proposed a form of civil disobedience as a protest against the rise of rental prices.<sup>165</sup> In an article published by *Il Grido della Folla*, 'Schiavo Libertario' (a pseudonym), incited readers to rebellion:

Let's get our homes, let's refuse all together to pay rent on the due date and we will win. They cannot kick out the entire population, indeed! We are the labour, we are the living society, we have numbers too; thus, what do we miss? Unity is strength, we can if we want!<sup>166</sup>

The initiative was carried on by a group of renters located in *Porta Venezia*, but it was unsuccessful.<sup>167</sup> Milanese anarchists were too isolated and lacked stable organisation, so that episodes of rebellion remained one-off events instead of generating the expected snow-ball effect and a rebellion on a bigger scale.

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<sup>160</sup> See G. Gavilli, 'Pro vittime politiche', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 27 October 1903; Il Comitato fra vittime politiche, 'Libertà alle vittime del '98', *Il Grido della Folla*, 16 July 1904; Uno del comitato fiorentino, 'Agitazione pro vittime politiche', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 10 September 1904.

<sup>161</sup> On Pietro Calcagno see, 'Calcagno liberato?', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 2 October 1902.

<sup>162</sup> 'Comitato pro popolo russo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 4 February 1905.

<sup>163</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1905, b. 20, 14 October 1904.

<sup>164</sup> 'Manifestazione abortita', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 4 February 1905.

<sup>165</sup> Schiavo Libertario, 'Alla conquista dell'alloggio gratuito', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 23 October 1902.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Alcuni socialisti anarchici, 'Per gli affitti di casa', *Il Grido della Folla*, 23 April, 1903.

Occasionally, violence broke out. In May 1903, 15 anarchists were arrested for resistance to police agents in *Via Legnano*, in the Musocco district, after the annual commemoration of the victims of May 1898. Gaetano Abbiati was one of those 15 anarchists.<sup>168</sup> He was born in 1872 in Casorate Primo (Pavia), southwest of Milan. Abbiati never completed primary school and became a mechanic. Abbiati had been identified as an anarchist by the police since 1892, associated with Giovanni Gavilli's milieu, which included Giovanni Straneo, Guido Mazzocchi, Carlo Colombo and Giovanni Vignati. According to the authorities, Abbiati was not the brightest mind, but he was known in the anarchist milieu because of his firm convictions and his predisposition to criminal acts. Throughout his life, Abbiati alternated work, activism and time in prison. Constantly spied on by the police, Abbiati left Milan to search for work, to meet radical Italians resident abroad and to escape police surveillance. Arrested several times, Abbiati embodies many aspects of the typical militant: ready for action, often on the move, supporter of Milanese anarchist propaganda through subscriptions to journals and lending his name as an editor.<sup>169</sup>

Gavilli's presence in Milan was partly due to Giovanni Straneo. Straneo was very close to Gavilli from the first time they met in 1901, at which time Straneo invited Gavilli to Milan to give a speech at a public gathering. Straneo was born in Alessandria, a Piedmontese provincial centre.<sup>170</sup> Unlike Abbiati, Straneo was able to complete primary school. The two met in Milan, where Straneo had moved in 1900 to work at the *Elvetica* plant. He was a *fabbro ferraio* (blacksmith). Despite being initially attracted to the Socialist Party, Straneo soon became very active within the anarchist milieu. He was one of the co-founders of *Il Grido della Folla* in 1902, and, for a short time, he was also the administrator. After his arrest in May 1903, Straneo became more involved with the blacksmith league (*Lega Fabbri Ferrai*). His contribution to the anarchist movement decreased, and later was limited to subscriptions to journals such as *Cronaca Libertaria* and *Umanità Nova*. During the dispute between Gavilli and the other editors of *Il Grido della Folla*, Straneo took Gavilli's side.

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<sup>168</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 5, *Abbiati Gaetano*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 935, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Abbiati Gaetano*.

<sup>169</sup> Both for *La Protesta Umana* (8 days, replacing Davide Viganó), and for *Umanità Nova* (between January and march 1921)

<sup>170</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 4968, *Straneo Giovanni*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 940, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Straneo Giovanni*.

The first director of *Il Grido della Folla* was Giovanni Vignati.<sup>171</sup> He also contributed to the journal with articles, signed with the pseudonym of ‘*Basletin*’, or ‘*Nasun*’ (Milanese dialect for ‘big nose’).<sup>172</sup> Vignati was born in Milan in 1880.<sup>173</sup> He was a shoemaker. As with many others, Vignati received and distributed national and international anarchist publications. In January 1900 Vignati and other anarchists had a meeting in which they decided to reconstitute the Milanese anarchist movement based on district groups. They also decided to publish a journal.

By October 1903, there had already been a meeting of Milanese anarchists to discuss the journal which had received strong critiques from its readers. *Il Grido della Folla* was accused of conceding too much space to abstract and philosophical discussion.<sup>174</sup> Gavilli’s polemical character pushed towards more debates and went too far causing conflicts within the managing collective.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, ‘intellectual contributors’ to *Il Grido della Folla* were criticised for writing ‘excellent’ articles and hiding behind the use of pseudonyms.<sup>176</sup> *Ireos* (Nella Giacomelli) replied to the accusation asserting that letting authorities know their real names was useless martyrdom. Moreover, the articles were worthy *per se*, and not because of the names signing them.<sup>177</sup> Fundraising events did not help the journal’s financial situation.<sup>178</sup> A special meeting was held in April 1905 to find a way to solve the financial crisis, but it ended with a quarrel.<sup>179</sup> Carlo Colombo, manager of the journal, was accused of being responsible for the situation and for making a profit for himself.<sup>180</sup>

Colombo was born in 1855 in Merate, a town in the province of Como.<sup>181</sup> He worked as a shoemaker and as a doorkeeper. His name appeared on police files while he was in his 40s. According to them, Colombo was in correspondence with Italian anarchists in London and Paterson, where Bresci came from, so he was investigated in

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<sup>171</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell’anarchismo, I*, p.160, where Vignati Giovanni becomes Vignati Giuseppe.

<sup>172</sup> ‘Vignati Giovanni’, in DBAI, II, p.682.

<sup>173</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 940, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Vignati Giovanni*.

<sup>174</sup> ‘Riunione anarchica’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 27 October 1903.

<sup>175</sup> U. Fedeli, *Giovanni Gavilli, 1855-1918*, p.32.

<sup>176</sup> *Ireos*, ‘Pettegolezzi dell’ambiente anarchico’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 15 April 1905.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.* Dir. Gen. P.S. Div. AA.GG. e RR. 1905, b. 20, fasc. *Milano*, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 1 April 1905.

<sup>179</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1905, b. 20, Milan Prefect to Minister of Interior, 21 April 1905, on the meeting held on 18 April 1905.

<sup>180</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1905, b. 20, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 13 August 1905.

<sup>181</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 1416, *Colombo Carlo*.

relation to the Bresci affair.<sup>182</sup> Colombo is also reported by police as the leader of the group that gave birth to *Il Grido della Folla*.<sup>183</sup> Colombo was arrested many times for possession and distribution of subversive publications. Forced to escape from Italy, he went to Geneva, Bern and back to Milan in 1906 where he was temporarily director of *Il Grido della Folla*. Forced to flee again, still restless, Colombo moved to Paris, Lugano, Nice, returning to Milan in 1908 where he was arrested again, this time for possession of a pamphlet describing how to prepare explosives. His vicissitudes with the Italian police became known to a wider audience through the publication of articles by newspapers such as *Il Tempo* and *L'Italia del Popolo*. After his arrest for the May 1903 episode in *Via Legnano*, Giacomelli had written an article about him.<sup>184</sup> Arrested again in 1909 for booing during Turati's public speech, Colombo lived his last two years obsessed by police persecution. The 'always present' and 'never ending' Colombo was 'one of the most energetic and sincere figures of the Milanese libertarian movement'.<sup>185</sup>

At the beginning of August 1905, the last issue of *Il Grido della Folla* was published.<sup>186</sup> There was an attempt to continue the project: a proposal was launched for a new journal to be started titled *L'Anarchico* and directed by Massimo Rocca with the contribution of Mazzocchi, Molinari, Giacomelli and Giuseppe Manfredi.<sup>187</sup> However, it did not eventuate. Instead, on 11 November 1905 Milanese anarchists of Gavilli's milieu published the *Grido della Folla*.<sup>188</sup> Colombo remained as the new journal's director.<sup>189</sup>

One month later, the new journal resumed a campaign to inform public opinion about those anarchists sentenced to life, like Luccheni, the murderer of Empress Elizabeth of Austria.<sup>190</sup> However, Gavilli's *Grido della Folla* did not last more than a year. In 1906 the clash between Gavilli and the other editors, such as Molinari, Giacomelli, Longhi Ricciotti and Manfredi, was too extreme to be solved. Molinari and

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<sup>182</sup> 'Colombo Carlo', in DBAI, I, p.423. See also G. Galzerano, *Gaetano Bresci. La vita, l' attentato, il processo e la morte del regicida anarchico*.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. See also, 'Cronaca locale', *L'Allarme*, Genoa, 9 July 1904.

<sup>184</sup> See Ireos, 'Vi sobillo compagni!', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 July 1903.

<sup>185</sup> L. Galleani, *Figure e figure*, Newark, 1930, in 'Colombo Carlo', in DBAI, I, p.423.

<sup>186</sup> La Redazione, 'Tramonto', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 11 August 1905.

<sup>187</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., b. 20, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 16 August 1905.

<sup>188</sup> U. Fedeli, *Giovanni Gavilli, 1855-1918*, p.32.

<sup>189</sup> The *Grido della Folla* was published from 11 November 1905 to 15 August 1907, with an interruption between 15 December 1906 and 22 June 1907. Another edition of *Il Grido della Folla* was published in Milan from 11 November 1910 to 17 June 1911 without the collaboration of Gavilli. See L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, pp.185 and 238-39.

<sup>190</sup> See Gli anarchici di Milano, 'Provocazione', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 14 May 1903 and Il medico di turno, 'Era pazzo', *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 23 December 1905.

Giacomelli accused Gavilli of authoritarianism and, in particular, of financial mismanagement.<sup>191</sup> Unlike Straneo, Guido Mazzocchi did not follow Gavilli. Together with his brother Felice, Guido Mazzocchi had co-founded *Il Grido della Folla* in 1902.<sup>192</sup> At the end of *Il Grido della Folla*'s experience, Mazzocchi joined Molinari and Giacomelli's project of *La Protesta Umana*, to which he occasionally contributed. Mazzocchi was born in 1877 in Milan, and came from an upper-class family. Despite graduating from university with a degree in law, he pursued the career of a painter. Authorities described him as one of the most active militants, sly and dangerous.<sup>193</sup> However, with the outbreak of the First World War, he became an enthusiastic interventionist.<sup>194</sup>

In October 1906 *La Protesta Umana* started its publication and most of the credit went to the Molinari-Giacomelli pair. Other personalities moved around this project, in particular, together with Molinari and Giacomelli, Ricciotti Longhi and Giuseppe Manfredi. Unlike Molinari and Giacomelli, Manfredi and Longhi have faded into oblivion. Their short time as anarchist activists with a significant role within the movement was cut short by police persecution.

Born in Milan, Longhi was a scrap iron dealer, and only 20 years old when he took part in the May 1898 barricades in *Porta Ticinese*.<sup>195</sup> He was one of those 3,000 released one year later. Longhi supported *Il Grido della Folla* first, and then *La Protesta Umana*, with distribution, fundraising, and administration, perhaps to compensate for a lack of skills in writing. Often in prison, Longhi was also arrested with another 14 anarchists in May 1903 in *Via Legnano*. Found guilty several times for petty crimes, Longhi remained under police surveillance even when he moved away from the movement in the 1910s. In 1921 he was jailed for two weeks on suspicion of participating in the Diana explosion. In 1920 Longhi was still supporting anarchist propaganda with a subscription to *Umanità Nova*, but by the end of the decade, he switched to a more conservative lifestyle. According to Antonioli, Longhi represents the typical Milanese anarchist militant of the early twentieth century.<sup>196</sup> In an article

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<sup>191</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, p.21.

<sup>192</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 3182, Mazzocchi Guido; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Mazzocchi Guido*.

<sup>193</sup> 'Mazzocchi, Guido', in DBAI, II, p.133.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 2828, *Longhi Napoleone Giuseppe Ricciotti*.

<sup>196</sup> 'Longhi Ricciotti Napoleone Giuseppe', in DBAI, II, p.37.

published on *La Protesta Umana*, the anarchist activist of the new century was no longer the ‘*vendicatore* [avenger] of all infamy and bourgeois injustice ... Today anarchists are simple propagators of social ideals.’<sup>197</sup> Nonetheless, the journal still occasionally used violent words: ‘[b]e careful, scoundrels of the Bench and of the Parliament ... because we are going to lose our patience, and it would not be the first time we hit it right!’<sup>198</sup>

Unlike Longhi, and despite completing only primary school, Giuseppe Manfredi demonstrated a good writing ability.<sup>199</sup> Manfredi was born in Cilavegna (Pavia) in 1883, and he was 20 years old when he moved to Milan. Here, he was taken on as a baker. From the end of 1902, Manfredi started to write for *Il Grido della Folla*,<sup>200</sup> using the pseudonyms of ‘*Virgulto*’, ‘*prof. Virgulto*’, ‘*Pacifico*’ and ‘*Râma*’.<sup>201</sup> Manfredi became a close friend of Molinari, Giacomelli, Gigli and Augusto Norsa,<sup>202</sup> with whom he was arrested in 1903 for assaulting police officers.<sup>203</sup> Manfredi started to play a bigger role within the administration of *Il Grido della Folla*. He took Molinari and Giacomelli’s side in the dispute with Gavilli, and actively contributed to *La Protesta Umana*. However, police persecution interrupted his activism. After a temporary period of residence in Switzerland, Manfredi returned to his home town Cilavegna and his only connection with the anarchist movement was via correspondence with Giacomelli.

Apart from Longhi and Manfredi, other figures from the Molinari-Giacomelli’s milieu help to give a more comprehensive picture of the Milanese anarchist movement. They highlight patterns and similarities. For example, Luigi Brambilla was one year younger than Manfredi, and like him originally from Pavia province. Luigi also switched to the anarchist side after being initially attracted by socialist ideas.<sup>204</sup> Like Manfredi, Brambilla was temporarily the director of Milanese journals and they both spent time in Italian prisons.<sup>205</sup> Unlike Manfredi, Brambilla did not return to Italy once

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<sup>197</sup> ‘Risposta della ‘Protesta’ all’articolo di Domenico Zavattero ‘Per l’amnistia’’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 16 March 1907.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Alla canaglia che ci vuol morti’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 20 April 1907.

<sup>199</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 2984, *Manfredi Giuseppe*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, fasc. *Manfredi Giuseppe*; P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell’epoca degli attentati, ad indicem*.

<sup>200</sup> See a review of Eltzbacher, in *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 4 December 1902.

<sup>201</sup> M. Antonioli, ‘Alla ricerca dello pseudonimo perduto’, *Rivista Storica dell’Anarchismo*, pp.79-80.

<sup>202</sup> At that time Manfredi and Norsa were respectively administrator and director of *Il Grido della Folla*. See a biography of Norsa in DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>203</sup> ‘Manfredi Giuseppe’, in DBAI, II, p.77.

<sup>204</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 817, *Brambilla Luigi*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 936, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Brambilla Luigi*.

<sup>205</sup> ‘Brambilla Luigi’, in DBAI, I, p.247.

he moved to Paris in 1907: however, in the French capital Brambilla continued to see Italian anarchists.

Ernesto Cantoni (1874-1929) has been described by Antonioli as ‘one of the most enigmatic and restless figures of the Milanese anarchist movement’.<sup>206</sup> Cantoni’s enigma and restlessness are related to his continuous movement throughout Europe and South America in order to escape police surveillance. Cantoni’s troubles with the authorities started when he escaped to Paris after the May 1898 riot. Constantly on the move, several times Cantoni was forced to change names, such as Ernesto Rizzotti and Ernesto Milanese. To Milanese anarchists, Cantoni was simply ‘*Risott*’ (Milanese dialect for Risotto).<sup>207</sup> Although his relationship with Italian anarchists faded during the 1910s, Cantoni continued to move from one place to another, demonstrating a high level of distress caused by police persecution. Cantoni’s story is graphic in this regard. It epitomises a feature that was common to many anarchists, and this was the constant level of persecution by authorities, to such an extent that it forced many anarchists to give up their activism. Cantoni’s distress was perhaps extreme. However, it is not difficult to understand, given the police tenacity to spy on a harmless and scared anarchist.

At the beginning of 1906 there was an attempt to publish a journal aimed at dealing only with workers’ conditions, struggles and current affairs.<sup>208</sup> It was an attempt to focus on more urgent issues, rather than philosophical discussions. The journal was titled *L’Operaio* and its publication was announced by *Grido della Folla*.<sup>209</sup> This project did not last long: only one issue was published.<sup>210</sup> Ferruccio Furlani (1879-n.a.), the anarchist behind this project, arrived in Milan in 1898 from Verona. Employed as a mechanic, like many other anarchist activists, Furlani was arrested more than once and was forced to migrate.<sup>211</sup> A few months after the attempt to publish *L’Operaio*, Furlani was involved in a tragic episode: the death of Angelo Galli.

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<sup>206</sup> M. Antonioli, ‘Cantoni Ernesto’, in DBAI, I, p.311.

<sup>207</sup> M. Antonioli, ‘Alla ricerca dello pseudonimo perduto’, *Rivista Storica dell’Anarchismo*, p.79.

<sup>208</sup> See ‘L’Operaio’, in F. Della Peruta, ‘I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)’, in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.17-18. This journal is not mentioned by L. Bettini.

<sup>209</sup> See ‘Nuovo giornale’, *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 27 January 1906.

<sup>210</sup> See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 937, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Furlani Ferruccio*, Milan police chief to prefect, 12 September 1906.

<sup>211</sup> ‘Furlani Ferruccio’, in DBAI, I, pp.647-48; see also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 936, fasc. *Furlani Ferruccio*.

On 10 May 1906 the Milanese proletariat protested against the carnage that occurred in Calimera di Lecce (Lecce province). Milanese anarchists also participated in the general strike called on that occasion. Furlani was demonstrating near the *Macchi e Passoni* plant, together with Carlo Gelosa, Enrico Recalcati, and Angelo Galli. According to the police report, Galli was leading a group of rioters who wanted to get inside the plant in order to ensure that all workers had left their work place. For this reason, Galli was killed by one of the plant guardians.<sup>212</sup> Milanese anarchists' version of the story was different: Galli had been stabbed in his back after being provoked.<sup>213</sup> At the trial, the guardian was found not guilty. Milanese anarchists organised a rally to protest against the verdict.<sup>214</sup> At the Angelo Galli's funeral more clashes occurred between anarchists and police. The scene was impressed in Carlo Carrá's memory.<sup>215</sup> The futuristic artist reproduced what he saw on canvas in a work titled, *I funerali dell'anarchico Galli* (1911).

During the clash that saw Galli die, the Milanese anarchist Carlo Gelosa (1882-1941) was stabbed twice. Nonetheless, he was then sentenced to 20 months in prison. The authorities began reporting on Gelosa in 1904.<sup>216</sup> In August 1905, for one week he was the director of *Grido della Folla*. After the death of Galli, while on parole, Gelosa escaped from Milan. He went to Paris, returning to Milan in 1909, after amnesty was granted. Gelosa spent the rest of his life between France, Milan and Reggio Emilia, where he worked as mechanic. He stayed in touch with the local anarchist movement, but his activism slowly faded. The journal *La Protesta Umana* published a portrait of Gelosa, 'a twenty year old kid, despite his body growth; a naïve of anarchism; he was not born for heroism or elegance'.<sup>217</sup>

One of the aims of *La Protesta Umana* was to report on projects and actions with a revolutionary scope. In August 1907, the journal announced the constitution of a *Comitato pro arrestati nelle dimostrazioni* (Committee of support for the arrested during demonstrations): activities included legal and financial support, promotion of

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<sup>212</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1024, *Partito socialista, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Galli Alessandro [socialista, fratello dell'anarchico Galli Angelo]*, Milan prefect, 21 May 1906.

<sup>213</sup> See X.Y.Z., 'Per l'assassinio dell'anarchico Angelo Galli', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 3 November 1906.

<sup>214</sup> 'Verdetto di iene', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 17 November 1906; 'La passeggiata di protesta', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 1 December 1906; 'Dallo sciopero alla morte', *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 12 May 1906, and 'Cronaca locale' and 'Angelo Galli', *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 12 May 1906.

<sup>215</sup> See DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>216</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 2326, fasc. *Gelosa Carlo*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 937, fasc. *Gelosa Carlo*, which includes information on Enrico Recalcati.

<sup>217</sup> X.Y.Z., 'Un episodio della lotta di classe', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 17 November 1906.

public gatherings and counter information.<sup>218</sup> A special fundraising event was launched for the journal's former directors and administrators who were in jail.<sup>219</sup> *La Protesta Umana* reported the existence of an anarchist group named 'Fa ciò che vuoi' (Do as you please). It was not a revolutionary group, but it aimed at 'increasing propaganda among the people, through journals and pamphlets'.<sup>220</sup> The necessity of keeping workers informed, often in competition with socialists and unionists, was a crucial issue. *La Protesta Umana* tried to renew its contents and format. In January 1908, a new column was added, titled 'Discussioni e polemiche', in order to keep personal polemics and ideological debates separated from the rest of the news.<sup>221</sup>

In February 1908 the idea of making *La Protesta Umana* a daily newspaper was launched, despite persecution for the barbed comments after the carnage of S. Severo and Rome.<sup>222</sup> Molinari was the author of this project.<sup>223</sup> Malatesta, while he was in London, received a letter in which Molinari and a few others asked him to become the director of the newspaper.<sup>224</sup> Malatesta's reaction was furious.<sup>225</sup> He did not expect such an offer, because in the past *La Protesta Umana* had criticized him and Luigi Fabbri. Moreover, Malatesta was skeptical about having an anarchist newspaper: according to him, a daily newspaper could not remain independent since director and editors had to negotiate with the authorities in order to avoid its constant seizure.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, Malatesta believed that commitment to managing a daily newspaper would have meant withdrawing energies from the revolutionary struggle. A social revolution was the only thing that could make him return to Italy. According to Malatesta, the proposal coming from the Milanese anti-organisational anarchists was hypocritical because a newspaper was already a form of organisation.<sup>227</sup> Malatesta criticised Milanese anarchists for being superficial and trivial and he could not understand why they had chosen him for that

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<sup>218</sup> 'Cronaca locale', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 3 August 1907.

<sup>219</sup> 'Cronaca locale', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 10 August 1907.

<sup>220</sup> 'Comunicati', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 21 September 1907.

<sup>221</sup> *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 5 January 1908.

<sup>222</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, p.20, and *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 4 April 1908.

<sup>223</sup> See Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, p.25. 'Libertad' was one of the pseudonyms used by Luigi Molinari, see ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, fasc. *Molinari Luigi*. See also M. Antonioli, 'Alla ricerca dello pseudonimo perduto', *Rivista Storica dell'Anarchismo*, p.78.

<sup>224</sup> In February 1908, while he was in London, Malatesta received a letter coming from Milan, and signed 'Tuoi Luigi Molinari – Ettore Molinari – Vittorio Fabrizioli – E. Manfredi – A.G.L. Cermenati', see ACS, CPC, b. 2949, fasc. Malatesta Errico, letter of police spy 'Virgilio', London, 11 February 1908.

<sup>225</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 2949, letter of 'Virgilio', London, 12 February 1908.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid

<sup>227</sup> Ibid

particular project.<sup>228</sup> Therefore, Malatesta remained in the UK and the Milanese anarchists' project did not go ahead.<sup>229</sup> *La Protesta Umana* became a daily newspaper only for one month, between 20 February and 20 March 1909, during the election, in order to campaign against parliamentary politics.<sup>230</sup> Despite their failure, Milanese anarchists had given birth to the first instance of an anarchist daily newspaper.

From 1910-1911, also in Milan, anarchists began to look more closely at organisations and workers' struggle. The most significant attempt to constitute an anarchist organisation in Milan was represented by the *Fascio Libertario Milanese* (Milanese libertarian group, FLM). This group was formed in October 1912 and it gathered anarchist activists with an organisational tendency. At the end of June 1914 the FLM agreed to participate in the anarchist congress held in Florence with the aim of forming an anarchist national federation. Moreover, the project included the constitution of an anarchist union of Lombardy to join the national federation. However, the congress was postponed and nothing else happened.<sup>231</sup>

Arturo Ferrari was one of the anarchists involved in this organisational project.<sup>232</sup> Ferrari was born in Cremona (Lombardy) in 1888 and moved to Milan when he was 18 years old. In 1907 Ferrari joined the '*Gruppo anarchico per la difesa di Acciarito*' (Anarchist group for Acciarito's defense). His name is also mentioned in relation to the episode of May 1908 when Milanese anarchists tried to disrupt mass in the main cathedral.<sup>233</sup> After 1912 his main area of intervention was the organisation of a revolutionary group, the anti-militarist campaign and libertarian pedagogy. In February 1912 Ferrari organised a meeting to address ways to affirm Ferrer's innocence.<sup>234</sup>

### 4.3 Milanese anarchists and Ferrer's libertarian pedagogy

The meeting organised by Ferrari was one of the many initiatives in which Milanese anarchists were involved in relation to the vicissitudes of Francisco Ferrer y Guardia

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<sup>228</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 2949, 'Virgilio', 21 May 1908.

<sup>229</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 2949, 'Virgilio', 21 February 1908.

<sup>230</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, p.29.

<sup>231</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 28 June 1914. See also ACS, CPC, b. 2013, fasc. *Ferrari Arturo*, b. 582, fasc. *Bertoni Corrado*, and b. 2729, fasc. *Latini Aida*.

<sup>232</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 2013, fasc. *Ferrari Arturo*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 936, fasc. *Ferrari Arturo*.

<sup>233</sup> For this episode see the introduction to this study.

<sup>234</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, 14 February 1912.

and his '*Escuela Moderna de Barcelona*' ('Modern School'). Ferrer (1859-1909) founded the *Escuela Moderna* in Barcelona and dedicated his life to pedagogy.<sup>235</sup> His drama began in 1906 when he was arrested on the accusation of complicity in the attempt against the life of King Alfonso XIII.<sup>236</sup> Three years after his release, due to his proven innocence, Ferrer was arrested again, jailed and executed. He was accused of being the instigator of riots in Barcelona in July 1909. Ferrer's first arrest caused a series of demonstrations throughout Europe and across different political factions. After 1906 Milanese anarchists started to follow Ferrer's case.

Much of the credit for this long term campaign goes to Luigi Molinari (1866-1918), an anarchist lawyer who dedicated most of his life to libertarian pedagogy and education through the institution of the *Università Popolari*, the journal *L'Università Popolare*, and the constitution of a Modern School in Milan.<sup>237</sup> Moreover, Molinari was involved with the project of making *La Protesta Umana* a daily newspaper.<sup>238</sup> He offered funds and the use of his printing workshop. However, he suddenly withdrew his support.<sup>239</sup>

Milanese anarchists and left-wing parties tried to form an organisation with the purpose of coordinating demonstrations in support of Ferrer. In December 1906 a meeting was held at the head office of the *Federazione Socialista Milanese* (Milanese Socialist Federation) and a committee was formed. Groups with different political

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<sup>235</sup> On Ferrer see: Mario Lodi, *Introduzione alla edizione in italiano di Francisco Ferrer Guardia, La Scuola moderna e Lo Sciopero Generale*, Lugano, Ed. La Baronata, 1980; Giancarlo Bertoni, 'Francisco Ferrer Guardia e La Scuola Moderna', *Il Lavoratore*, Lugano, 4 May 1990; Roger Boussinot, *Piccola Enciclopedia dell'anarchia*, Milan, Garzanti, 1978, pp.91-92; *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 November 1909; Lucia Cavaglia, 'Il problema educativo nel pensiero anarchico dell'ultimo ottocento', *Volontà*, vol.28, no.5, Genoa, Sett-Ott. 1975, pp.376-82; Milena Puccini, 'Francisco Ferrer e la Scuola Moderna', *Volontà*, vol.24, no.3, Pistoia, May-June 1971, pp.189-92; Tina Tomasi, *Ideologie libertarie e formazione umana*, Florence, La Nuova Italia, 1973, pp.214-23; L. Rafanelli, *L'ultimo martire del libero pensiero*, Milan, Libreria Editrice Sociale, n.d.; F. Codello, *Educazione e anarchismo. L'idea educativa nel movimento anarchico italiano (1900-1926)*; F. Codello, 'La buona educazione'. *Esperienze libertarie e teorie anarchiche in Europa da Godwin a Neil*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2005, pp.472-88, see in particular pp.472-73 for a detailed bibliography of Ferrer.

<sup>236</sup> The anarchist Matteo Morral tried to kill the Spanish King with a bomb explosion on 31 May 1906, during the celebration of the royal wedding. Previously Morral had been employed by Ferrer at the Barcelona's Modern School. See F. Ferrer, 'Come ho conosciuto Matteo Morral e le mie relazioni con lui', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 November 1909; G. Galzerano, 'Il fallito attentato di Matteo Morral', *Volontà*, vol.28, no.6, Pistoia, November-December 1974, pp.427-31.

<sup>237</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, fasc. *Molinari Luigi*; ACS, CPC, b. 3337, fasc. *Molinari Luigi*; MOIDB, *ad nomen*; DBAI, *ad nomen*; P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.28-30 and 189-91; *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 30 September 1918.

<sup>238</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, pp.25-26.

<sup>239</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, fasc. *Molinari Luigi*, Milan police chief, 21 July 1908.

orientations were represented on the committee.<sup>240</sup> The meeting was organised by the *Gruppo Libertario Milanese* which was a newly established organisation, formed by anarchists and by revolutionary socialists. It was an organisation that accepted direct action, worker organising and propaganda as revolutionary tools. In particular, worker organisations were meant as training grounds to prepare workers for struggles with libertarian aims. Propaganda was conceived as any form of informative action in any field, from anti-militarism to anti-capitalism. Comunardo Braccialarghe was the secretary and Alessandro Galli, Angelo's brother, the correspondent.<sup>241</sup>

In relation to the demonstrations in support of Ferrer, the *Gruppo libertario* aimed at transforming popular indignation into direct actions of rebellion. Yet anarchists' extremism was opposed by other parties. Anarchists cooperated with socialists, reformists and republicans on this specific issue, but they also underlined their ideological differences every time they had the opportunity. For example, during a meeting held in March 1907 at the *Salone dell'Arte Moderna*, a republican speaker outraged the anarchists when he said that he who attacked the Spanish king - Matteo Moral - was '*un disgraziato*', a wretch. Such a comment belittled the political meaning of that deed. Anarchists held a different opinion. For them, Moral was a martyr. Luigi Molinari justified Moral, who had been pushed to act as a reaction to the misery of his people. On the contrary, according to Molinari, the Spanish government was responsible.<sup>242</sup>

Milanese anarchists seized the momentum given by the campaign for Ferrer to spread their ideas. Compared to other parties, anarchists appeared more determined. Not only they did show solidarity with Ferrer and the journalist Nakens,<sup>243</sup> but they also expressed a more aggressive approach in order to achieve the release of the prisoners. Comunardo Braccialarghe, on behalf of the group, threatened the Spanish ambassador in Italy.<sup>244</sup> Unlike Nakens, after one year Ferrer was released,<sup>245</sup> only temporary though,

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<sup>240</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, *Anarchici-Agitazioni pro Ferrer e Nakens*, Milan police chief to prefect, 15 December 1906.

<sup>241</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, 24 December 1906.

<sup>242</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, 26 March 1907. See also, 'Comizio pro Ferrer e Nakens', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 30 March 1907, and P.Marconi, *La libertà selvaggia. Stato e punizione nel pensiero anarchico*, Venice, Marsilio Editore, 1979.

<sup>243</sup> Nakens was a journalist who had hosted Moral for one day, and for this reason he had been arrested. See F. Ferrer, 'Come ho conosciuto Matteo Moral e le mie relazioni con lui', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 November 1909.

<sup>244</sup> *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 30 March 1907.

<sup>245</sup> Nakens and Matha were found guilty, see *La Lombardia*, Milan, 8, 10 e 13 June 1907, in ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933.

because in July 1909, as soon as Ferrer returned from London, he was arrested again on a charge of inspiring the ‘tragic week’ in Barcelona.<sup>246</sup> Anarchists of Madrid published a manifesto addressed to anarchist European groups with the aim of promoting an international demonstration.<sup>247</sup> Milanese anarchists answered the call, but it was useless, because Ferrer was executed soon after on 13 October 1909. Francisco Ferrer became a martyr of the libertarian movement. His life inspired Milanese anarchists to pursue unity, to overcome divisions, and to work together for the realization of Ferrer’s project in Milan. Moreover, Ferrer’s vicissitudes helped Milanese anarchists overcome a long period of political apathy. The sterile discussion of philosophy held in Milanese anarchist journals gave way to practical experiments. Yet Ferrer’s episode demonstrated the importance of a trans-local event for the activities of the Milanese anarchist movement.

Despite points of divergence, Milanese anarchists shared the protest with other parties. Initially, other political groups refused the anarchists’ proposal of a general strike, and instead called for a demonstration. Such news pleased the police chief.<sup>248</sup> Filippo Turati, leader of the Milanese socialists and party ideologue, tried to influence the protest movement, recommending not having a general strike if there was no chance of winning.<sup>249</sup> Despite Turati’s advice, Milanese workers initiated a spontaneous strike on 14 October. Police identified the Milanese anarchist Armando Luraghi as the main instigator of this project.<sup>250</sup> Luraghi had already put forward the idea of a strike on 12 October 1909, before Ferrer’s execution.<sup>251</sup> On the next day, with an inflammatory speech he achieved his goal.<sup>252</sup> On 14 October the strike began at the *Comi* plant (ex *Miani e Silvestri*) with the participation of 4,000 workers. Soon, the strike spread to other factories. A public gathering was held at the Arena. At the end of the demonstration, workers and demonstrators left the Arena heading towards the city centre. In *Largo Cairoli* they stopped trams and forced passengers to get off. Police

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<sup>246</sup> See R. Boussinot, *Piccola Enciclopedia dell’Anarchia*, Milan, Garzanti, 1978, pp.91-92.

<sup>247</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 21 September 1909.

<sup>248</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, telegram to Milan prefect, 13 October 1909.

<sup>249</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 13 October 1909. See also ‘Milano.Cinquantamila persone in piazza’, *Avanti!*, Rome, 15 October 1909. More information in mainstream newspapers, see for instance ‘Il Comitato e i disordini di ieri sera per la fucilazione di Ferrer’, *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 14 October 1909.

<sup>250</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 13 October 1909.

<sup>251</sup> For this, see ‘Due comizi per Ferrer – L’idea d’uno sciopero abbandonata’, *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 13 October 1909.

<sup>252</sup> ‘Il comizio e i disordini...’, *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 14 October 1909, which reports Luraghi’s speech.

intervened and the demonstrators left without rioting.<sup>253</sup> The prefect confirmed that it was a spontaneous strike, carried out by workers without the CGdL's authorisation.<sup>254</sup> According to Milanese anarchists, the strike was successful and the credit went to all those who sacrificed their freedom to resist state violence and the parties' bureaucracy.<sup>255</sup> Even the city council expressed its solidarity with Ferrer.<sup>256</sup> In the evening of 14 October, a demonstration was held in *Piazza Duomo*.<sup>257</sup> At the end of the meeting, according to the police, a few thousand demonstrators tried to move towards the Spanish consulate. They were driven back by agents. A policeman was hit by a stone, bullets were fired, and many people were arrested.<sup>258</sup>

On 15 October demonstrations continued throughout the day. Around 10,000 workers gathered in *Via Farini* and tried to inflict damage on two Catholic churches.<sup>259</sup> Anti-clergy sentiment was spreading among demonstrators. More than 3,000 people gathered at the Arena in the afternoon and public speeches were made. Armando Luraghi spoke on behalf of the anarchists. He suggested continuing the protest until the release of Maria Rygier<sup>260</sup> and the abolition of the pact between the Italian state and the Catholic Church.<sup>261</sup> Despite Luraghi's effort to continue the general strike, the opinion of the CGdL prevailed. Luraghi joined a temporary committee which approached the city council and asked for the abolition of religion as a school subject, and for the release of Maria Rygier and all the demonstrators who had been arrested in those days, numbering about three hundred.<sup>262</sup> In the evening, three thousand people gathered in the *Piazza Duomo*. The strike was definitely called off. Some demonstrators then moved towards the Spanish consulate, but they were driven back again. This time clashes broke

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<sup>253</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief Bondi telegram, 14 October 1909. See also 'Il tumultuoso sciopero generale a Milano', *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 17 October 1909; *Avanti!*, Rome, 17 October 1909; *Il Secolo*, Milan, 13, 14, 15 and 16 October 1909.

<sup>254</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933 Milan prefect telegram to Milan military division General, 14 October 1909.

<sup>255</sup> 'La protesta di Milano', *La Questione Sociale*, Milan, 16 October 1909.

<sup>256</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief telegram, 14 October 1909.

<sup>257</sup> See ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., Div. AA.GG. e RR., 1909, b. 5, fasc. *Milano*.

<sup>258</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 14 October 1909. See also 'La Camera del Lavoro di Milano proclama lo sciopero generale per 24 ore. Il comizio e i disordini di ieri sera', *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 15 October 1909.

<sup>259</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief telegram to prefect, 15 October 1909. See also, 'I rivoluzionari tentano appiccare il fuoco a due chiese?', *Il Secolo*, Milan, 15 October 1909.

<sup>260</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of Maria Rygier, see the following chapter.

<sup>261</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief telegram to prefect, 15 October 1909. Rygier was detained in Mantova for her anti-militarist activities.

<sup>262</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, and ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1909, b. 5, Milan prefect telegram to Minister of Interior, 15 October 1909. People arrested in those days numbered more than 300.

out.<sup>263</sup> A policeman was shot. Moreover, according to the police report, five or six thousand strikers tried to attack the municipal prison. The attempt ended with many arrests. The same outcome resulted for those demonstrators who tried to climb the King's statue in the *Piazza Duomo*.<sup>264</sup> The day after, strikers went back to their factories. Once again, without a specific plan of action, anarchists had not been able to seize the moment of general rebellion within the Milanese proletariat.

Within this series of demonstrations, Felice Boscolo (1883-?), a typographer, was charged with shooting an agent.<sup>265</sup> He had already been arrested in May 1903 following the events of *Via Legnano*, and then released due to lack of evidence. Despite his very young age, Boscolo was an active militant in the anarchist movement. He received and distributed the anarchist press, and he moved within the milieu of *Il Grido della Folla*. Nonetheless, due to family issues at the age of 21 Boscolo tried to commit suicide. After his arrest in 1909, *La Protesta Umana* launched a campaign for his release. Indeed, Boscolo was released in May 1910, but only briefly: he was arrested again two years later.

The initiatives to remember Ferrer continued. Comunardo Braccialarghe proposed erecting a plaque on the town hall in memory of Ferrer. His proposal was, however, rejected.<sup>266</sup> One year later, Milanese anarchists tried to dedicate a street to the Spanish martyr. They wanted to change *Via Arcivescovado* into *Via Francisco Ferrer*. Once again, anarchists received a rejection.<sup>267</sup> In 1910, commemorations for Ferrer were held separately. On the one side, republicans and socialists decided to commemorate Ferrer on 16 October to coincide with the opening of the new Chamber of Labour. Alternatively, anarchists chose the date of 13 October.<sup>268</sup> Milanese anarchists held a meeting in which Molinari, Rafanelli and Guglielmo Guberti talked about Ferrer and the Modern School. Despite the authorities' concerns, violence did not break out.<sup>269</sup> At midday, around 750 workers left their place of work and headed towards *Porta Ticinese*. Police intervention prevented them from advancing further.<sup>270</sup> On the occasion of the third anniversary of Ferrer's execution, Milanese anarchists published a manifesto

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 936, fasc. *Boscolo Felice*; ACS, CPC, b. 781, fasc. *Boscolo Felice*.

<sup>266</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1909, b. 5, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 2 November 1909.

<sup>267</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, 10 October 1910.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 12 October 1910.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., Milan police head quarter telegrams to update the prefect, 13 October 1910.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

in which they associated Ferrer's commemoration with a strong critique of the Italian war in Libya.<sup>271</sup> The manifesto concluded with an appeal for the release of all political prisoners, for the end of the war, and with the threat to follow the example of the French Revolution of 1789.<sup>272</sup> Police seized 10,000 copies of this manifesto and two anarchists were arrested: Pietro Mandelli and Carlo Rivellini.<sup>273</sup> In 1913, authorities were concerned with the distribution of an audio record titled '*La fucilazione di Ferrer*' (Ferrer's execution). However, Milanese police were not able to find it.<sup>274</sup> In addition, around 500 people attended a public meeting in remembrance of Ferrer. Yet each year the initiatives tended to be more peaceful and to focus on spreading Ferrer's ideals. In the long term, Ferrer's name faded into the oblivion of history, with the exception of the anarchist movement which has kept his name alive.

#### 4.3.1 Luigi Molinari's milieu: the *Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer* of Milan

In 1901 Francisco Ferrer founded, in Barcelona, the Modern School,<sup>275</sup> based on a secular and rationalist educational method, aimed at pulling the monopoly of education in Spain away from the clergy. The Spanish conservative educational system cemented class and gender inequality. Ferrer's method, on the other hand, through its scientific approach, aimed at questioning conventional truths and authority. Moreover, the Modern School encouraged creativity and free thought; it taught art, gardening, sexual education and hygiene, job apprenticeships and games. In Woodcock's words:

Ferrer's Escuela Moderna was only one of many experiments in Catalonia and the villages of Andalusia aimed particularly at bringing literacy to adult peasants and industrial workers. For purposes of propaganda, Ferrer's personal reputation as an educationalist was inflated out of all proportion by the anarchists after his death; he was in fact a rather dully orthodox rationalist, with a narrow unimaginative mind, and the few writings he left show little in the way of an original conception of education. Yet to rebel at all against the Church

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<sup>271</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1912, b. 36, *Movimento anarchico*, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 2 October 1912.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., 1913, b. 41, cat. J4, *Movimento sovversivo*, Minister of Interior to Milan prefect, 4 October 1913, and Milan prefect to Minister, 20 October 1913. See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, fasc. *Disco fonografico intitolato 'La fucilazione di Ferrer'*.

<sup>275</sup> See Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, *La Escuela Moderna. Postuma explicacion y alcance de la ensenanza racionalista*, Barcelona, 1912, translated in Italian, F. Ferrer y Guardia, *La Scuola Moderna*, Lugano, Ed. La Baronata, 1980.

domination of education in Spain of the late nineteenth century was perhaps enough to expect of any man, as Ferrer's fate was to show.<sup>276</sup>

According to Emma Goldman, '[t]he social purpose of the libertarian Modern School ... was "to develop the individual through knowledge and the free play of characteristic traits, so that he may become a social being"'.<sup>277</sup> Furthermore, in Luigi Molinari's opinion it was crucial to develop the social being of workers, from serfdom to freedom, from unawareness to consciousness, from ignorance to knowledge.<sup>278</sup> Molinari's ideas did not come out of the blue. At the beginning of the twentieth century, education was seen as a means to solve social problems. Compared to insurrectional methods, schools and education were slower tools, though supposedly more effective in the long term. Modern Schools tried to oppose the nationalistic and religious approach of the state school institution. Molinari's libertarian pedagogy aimed at making workers aware of their strength and their rights. It was a sort of cultural revolution in preparation for social and political change.

In 1901 Molinari began to publish the journal *L'Università Popolare*,<sup>279</sup> supported by the homonymous publishing house. Although the journal focused on pedagogy, education and science, it also contributed to political and ideological debate among anarchists, educationists, anti-militarists and anti-clericalists.<sup>280</sup>

Soon after Ferrer's first arrest in 1906, Molinari proposed constituting a Modern School in Italy.<sup>281</sup> Molinari received enthusiastic encouragement, even from Ferrer who

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<sup>276</sup> G. Woodcock, *Anarchism, A history of libertarian ideas and movements*, pp.370-71.

<sup>277</sup> E. Goldman, 'The Social Importance of the Modern School', in *Red Emma Speaks*, Wildwood House, 1979, p.121, in P.Marshall, *Demanding the impossible. A History of Anarchism*, p.405.

<sup>278</sup> L. Molinari, 'Bisogna Leggere! Bisogna Studiare!', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15-31 March 1913. On the modern school see also VV.AA., *Istruzione popolare nell'Italia liberale*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1983, pp.105-10; Milena Puccini, 'Dalla pedagogia positivista alla scuola libertaria', *Volontà*, vol.23, no.5, Pistoia, September-October 1970, pp.357-62; M. Puccini, 'La Scuola Moderna in Italia', *Volontà*, vol.24, no.4, Pistoia, July-August 1971, pp.311-15. On Luigi Molinari and his project for a Modern School in Milan, see D. Romeo, 'Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana: l'influenza di Francisco Ferrer y Guardia e della sua scuola moderna razionalista', *Storia in Lombardia*, pp.69-103.

<sup>279</sup> *L'Università Popolare*'s first issue was published in Mantova on 15 February 1901. In December 1906 it moved to Milan. With the 15 May-1 June 1913 issue the journal became '*Bollettino della Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer Milano*'. The last issue was published in April-May 1918. A special issue was released on 20 September 1918 dedicated to Luigi Molinari. See L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, pp.149-50.

<sup>280</sup> See M. Puccini, 'L'Università Popolare e la Scuola Moderna in Italia', *Volontà*, vol.23, no.3, Pistoia, May-June 1970, pp.214-20. See also M. Puccini, 'L'educazionismo anarchico – Luigi Molinari e l'Università Popolare', *Volontà*, vol.23, no.4, Pistoia, July-August 1970, pp.296-306; VV.AA., *La cultura milanese e l'Università Popolare negli anni 1901-1927*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1983.

<sup>281</sup> See L. Molinari, 'Al pubblico italiano. Ai colleghi della stampa popolare italiana', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 April 1907.

was detained in Madrid.<sup>282</sup> Moreover, during the anarchist congress in Rome, participants voted to support Molinari's project.<sup>283</sup> Nonetheless, it took three years to see the first attempt at a Modern School in Italy. At the end of January 1909, a Modern School was inaugurated in the town of Clivio.<sup>284</sup> This was possible through the commitment of a group of workers who collected enough subscriptions to build a kindergarten and a primary school. A school bulletin was published from November 1910. This experiment did not last long, however. The First World War and financial troubles caused the school to close. The school only had 12 students. Molinari entirely supported this project financially and through the pages of his journal, defending it from other parties' critiques.

After Ferrer's death, Molinari dedicated himself to spreading Ferrer's teaching and to realizing his dream of establishing a Modern School in Milan. Soon after Ferrer's execution, Molinari published a special issue of *L'Università Popolare* entirely dedicated to Ferrer.<sup>285</sup> In addition, Molinari spoke at several conferences and anywhere it was possible to spread knowledge of Ferrer's life and educational methods.<sup>286</sup> Conferences were held not only in Milan but also in other towns. In order to reach out to other places, Molinari organised daytrips to Clivio: workers went to Clivio to learn and to support financially the local Modern School.<sup>287</sup> However, once popular indignation at Ferrer's death had faded away, Molinari's task became more difficult. Enthusiasm had given way to apathy. According to Molinari, 'in Italy, only the anarchists ... feel the duty [and want] the realisation of a Modern School'.<sup>288</sup> Molinari could only count on anarchist activists:

The Modern School must be anarchist and as such, it can only be sustained through anarchists' activities and sacrifice. Begging or waiting for the cooperation of those who tremble with fear in front of our ideas ... is illogical if not cowardly.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> See *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 May 1907.

<sup>283</sup> See *Il Pensiero*, Rome, 1 June-16 July 1907.

<sup>284</sup> See Giancarlo Bertoni, 'Un'utopia realizzata: la Scuola Moderna di Clivio', *Il Lavoratore*, Lugano, 30 November 1990; L. Molinari, 'La calunnia è un venticello...', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 August-1 September 1910; L. Molinari, 'La Scuola Moderna di Clivio', *L'Università Popolare*, 1 April 1912; See also ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., Div. AA.GG. e RR., anno 1912, cat. G1 Associazioni, b. 31, *Como e Milano*.

<sup>285</sup> See *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 November 1909.

<sup>286</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, conferences pro Ferrer and Scuola Moderna; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, fasc. *Molinari Luigi*; ACS, CPC, b. 3337, fasc. *Molinari Luigi*.

<sup>287</sup> See *L'Università Popolare* from 1 May 1910 onwards; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933.

<sup>288</sup> L. Molinari, 'Primo Maggio di riflessione', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 April-1 May 1910.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

Domenico Zavertero, Pietro Gori and Luigi Fabbri responded positively to Molinari's appeal for a Modern School, but their effort produced only 10 issues of a homonymous journal published in Bologna.<sup>290</sup> Molinari's project involved anarchists both on a theoretical and on a practical level. Not every anarchist agreed on the necessity of building an alternative school system. For example, Maria Rygier believed that a modern school was counterproductive. According to her, the starting point of a revolutionary consciousness was class struggle in the workplace.<sup>291</sup>

Moreover, Malatesta was skeptical about this project, and he considered educationists as naïve dreamers:<sup>292</sup> he was concerned that education would replace the idea and importance of political revolution.<sup>293</sup> Molinari replied that education was a complementary method to political revolution.<sup>294</sup> Rafanelli intervened in the debate: the creation of a Modern School was a project that needed to be carried out together with all the other anarchist experiments and projects.<sup>295</sup> Paolo Schicchi<sup>296</sup> and Carlo Molaschi<sup>297</sup> expressed their support for Molinari.

Among the Milanese anarchists Raffaele Cormio was one of the most enthusiastic about this project. Cormio (1883-1952) was born in the south of Italy, in Molfetta (Bari), and he moved to Milan at the beginning of the century.<sup>298</sup> Cormio became a member of the *Consiglio Direttivo della Società Scuola Moderna di Milano* (Managing Committee of the Modern School of Milan). His main areas of intervention were the Modern School, anti-militarist campaigns and the FLM. After the war, however, he embraced fascism. During his activity to support the Modern School, Cormio based his belief on thinkers such as Reclus, Leibniz and Buisson.<sup>299</sup> Maria Rossi (1891-1990) became an enthusiastic supporter of Molinari and his libertarian

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<sup>290</sup> Lucia Cavaglia, 'Il problema educativo nel pensiero anarchico dell'ultimo ottocento', *Volontà*, vol.28, no.5, Genoa, September-October 1975.

<sup>291</sup> M. Rygier, 'A proposito di Scuole Moderne', *Il Pensiero*, Rome, 16 January 1911.

<sup>292</sup> E. Malatesta, 'Insurrezionismo o evolucionismo?', *Volontà*, Ancona, 1 November 1913.

<sup>293</sup> See E. Malatesta, 'A proposito di Scuole Moderne', *Volontà*, Ancona, no.25, 1913, and E. Malatesta, 'Ancora sull'educazione. Per intenderci', *Volontà*, Ancona, no.26, 1913.

<sup>294</sup> L. Molinari, 'Ancora per i nemici della Scuola Moderna', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 November-1 December 1913.

<sup>295</sup> L. Rafanelli, *La scuola borghese*, Milan, Libreria Editrice Sociale, n.d., pp.3 and 5.

<sup>296</sup> Schicchi to Molinari, 25 March 1913, published in *L'Università Popolare*, in D. Romeo, 'Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana: l'influenza di Francisco Ferrer y Guardia e della sua scuola moderna razionalista', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.90.

<sup>297</sup> C. Molaschi, 'Lungo il cammino...', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, July-August 1915, in D. Romeo, 'Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana: l'influenza di Francisco Ferrer y Guardia e della sua scuola moderna razionalista', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.90.

<sup>298</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 936, fasc. *Cormio Raffaele*; ACS, CPC, b. 1417, fasc. *Cormio Raffaele*.

<sup>299</sup> R. Cormio, 'Dopo un anno!', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 May-1 June 1914.

pedagogy. Her contribution to anarchism has been hidden for too long behind her husband, Carlo Molaschi, and she deserves further research. Many anarchists gathered around Molaschi and Rossi, and among them there was Armando Luraghi. Armando (1883-1911) was born in Milan.<sup>300</sup> In April 1904 he became the director of *Il Grido della Folla*. With the end of *La Protesta Umana*, Luraghi followed Monanni and Rafanelli and worked as the director of *La Rivolta*. He also contributed by writing articles, signing with the pseudonym of ‘*Ombra*’ (Shadow) or just ‘*O*’.<sup>301</sup> Luraghi joined the pro-Ferrer demonstrations: in September 1910 he was reported by police as one of the speakers at a public meeting in Vigevano. Luraghi was arrested several times, so that he had to migrate to Switzerland. Luraghi died of consumption when he was still very young.<sup>302</sup>

In 1910, Clivio’s Modern School was associated with a conspiracy against the King, and, two years later, it was also accused of complicity with Antonio D’Alba, who had attempted an attack on King’s life.<sup>303</sup> Despite these negative rumors, in 1912 Molinari announced the possibility of building a Modern School in Milan.<sup>304</sup> Molinari’s project was based on the idea of a cooperative. Workers were invited to become share holders apportioning one day of their salary.<sup>305</sup> Molinari aimed at collecting *Lire* 250,000 to open the school by October 1913.<sup>306</sup> For this purpose, Molinari organised a central committee and several local subcommittees, with the intention of spreading information about the Modern School of Milan, collecting support throughout Italy, and coordinating fundraising and subscriptions. By February 1913, Milan had its own subcommittee.<sup>307</sup> Molinari encouraged all kinds of support, according to the motto: ‘from everyone according to one’s strength, and to everyone according to one’s needs’.<sup>308</sup> Moreover, Molinari had to ensure that the project was lawful.<sup>309</sup>

On the pages of *L’Università Popolare* there were debates, and different opinions were expressed regarding the Modern School. A critique of the current

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<sup>300</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 2886, fasc. *Luraghi Armando*.

<sup>301</sup> M. Antonioli, ‘Luraghi Armando’, in DBAI, II, p.49.

<sup>302</sup> ‘Note e notizie’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 10 June 1911.

<sup>303</sup> See L. Molinari, ‘La calunnia è un venticello...’, *L’Università Popolare*.

<sup>304</sup> L. Molinari, ‘La Scuola Moderna a Milano’, *L’Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 November 1912. See also L. Molinari, ‘Ancora la Scuola Moderna a Milano’, *L’Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 December 1912.

<sup>305</sup> L. Molinari, ‘La Scuola Moderna a Milano’.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> See L. Molinari, ‘Pro Scuola Moderna ‘Francisco Ferrer’ a Milano’, *L’Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 February 1913.

<sup>308</sup> L. Molinari, ‘La Scuola Moderna’, *L’Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 June-1 July 1910.

<sup>309</sup> See L. Molinari, ‘Ancora la Scuola Moderna a Milano’.

educational system represented the starting point.<sup>310</sup> Molinari's idea of a pedagogy based on love and freedom<sup>311</sup> characterised not only the position of most anarchists but also socialists, republicans, radicals, free thinkers, revolutionary unionists,<sup>312</sup> mainstream newspaper,<sup>313</sup> contributions from abroad, a few town councils<sup>314</sup> and even Masonic lodges.<sup>315</sup> Molinari's multi-directional approach to fundraising disappointed some anarchists. In particular, they were not happy with the idea of collecting money from the Masons, socialists and republicans.<sup>316</sup> Conversely, Molinari worked to unite every party and organisation that opposed denominational education, regardless of their political stand, in order not to have a pre-set method of teaching based on a specific ideology, including the anarchist one.

On 20 April 1913 the cooperative *Società Anonima Cooperativa 'Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer'* was founded, and its statute was promulgated.<sup>317</sup> The anarchist Raffaele Cormio became a member of the cooperative's committee.<sup>318</sup> Activities included conferences in Italy and Switzerland,<sup>319</sup> recreational activities such as parties, plays and dances,<sup>320</sup> and the constitution of a group, named '*Gruppo Ciclo-Alpino*', in order to spread information even to those isolated little towns up in the mountains.<sup>321</sup> In June 1914, Molinari bought some land in Lambrate, an eastern suburb of Milan.<sup>322</sup> He could only deposit a small sum, but collection of money was going well. The Red Week of June 1914 helped socialists win the local election in Milan.<sup>323</sup> Molinari did not expect particular advantages from this change of administration. On the contrary, Molinari complained that socialists refused to seize the opportunity to set

<sup>310</sup> See F. Ciarlantini, 'I difetti della Scuola primaria italiana ed i maestri', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 January-1 February 1913. See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933.

<sup>311</sup> L. Molinari, 'La Scuola Moderna 'Francisco Ferrer' a Milano (comunicazioni e discussioni)', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15-31 March 1913.

<sup>312</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, conference pro Ferrer, 12 October 1913.

<sup>313</sup> See L. Molinari, 'Appello ai liberi pensatori italiani', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 January 1913.

<sup>314</sup> See *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 March 1914 and *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 March 1914.

<sup>315</sup> See L. Molinari, 'La Massoneria e la Scuola Moderna F. Ferrer di Milano', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 August 1913.

<sup>316</sup> 'La Massoneria Italiana e i sovversivi', *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 13 January 1906.

<sup>317</sup> See 'Riassunto del verbale della prima Assemblea Sociale 'Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer in Milano'', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 May 1913.

<sup>318</sup> See 'Statuto della Società Cooperativa Anonima 'Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer di Milano'', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 May 1913.

<sup>319</sup> See ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., cat. G1, b. 121, and ACS, CPC, b. 3337.

<sup>320</sup> See *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 May 1913, and 1-15 March 1915.

<sup>321</sup> See *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1 August 1913.

<sup>322</sup> L. Molinari, 'Il terreno per la Scuola Moderna a Milano c'è!', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 May-1 June 1914. See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 23 October 1914.

<sup>323</sup> On Red Week in Milan see chapter 5.

up a socialist educational system.<sup>324</sup> Then the war broke out. In summer 1914 Molinari was still confident that it was possible to realize his project.<sup>325</sup> In September the construction of the *Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer di Milano* (Modern School Francisco Ferrer of Milan, SMFFM) began.<sup>326</sup> On 4 April 1915 the SMFFM opened its gates to workers' children: every Sunday the venue was used for recreational activities.<sup>327</sup> Soon after, other initiatives for adults were introduced: conferences, courses of French language, history and first aid. Membership cost was one *Lira*. Sunday schools were popular in Milan, but Molinari tried to combine recreation with socialist education.<sup>328</sup> However, this experiment did not last long. In August 1915, authorities decreed the end of the SMFFM, because, according to the prefect, it represented a serious danger to public order.<sup>329</sup> Molinari hoped he merely had to postpone his plans,<sup>330</sup> but he was not able to give money back since construction had already started. Yet, he did not want to wait until the end of the war.<sup>331</sup> Molinari was full of ideas for the Modern School: an astronomic observatory, a library, and a museum to clear minds from prejudices and superstition.<sup>332</sup>

The war was almost over when suddenly Molinari died on 12 July 1918. Milanese anarchists tried to carry on Molinari's project, dedicating an issue of *L'Università Popolare* to him. That was its final issue. The anarchists decided to finish paying off the land. A committee was formed with the aim of continuing the School's administration, and included Caio Siro (alias Ciro) Baraldi, Vittorio Fabrizioli, Giovanni Mariani, Carlo Molaschi, Aldo Moresco, Maria Rossi, Mario Senigagliaesi, Antonino and Rodolfo Vella. After many conflicts between socialists and anarchists for the administration of the School, in November 1918 Molinari's experiment died.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> See L. Molinari, 'Dopo il ciclone rivoluzionario', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 July 1914.

<sup>325</sup> See L. Molinari, 'La Scuola Moderna F. Ferrer a Milano (comunicazioni e discussioni)', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 August 1914.

<sup>326</sup> L. Molinari, 'La Scuola Moderna F. Ferrer a Milano (comunicazioni e discussioni)', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 October 1914.

<sup>327</sup> L. Molinari, 'I Piccoli Pionieri della Scuola Moderna', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 April 1915.

<sup>328</sup> See L. Molinari, 'Ricreatori popolari', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, September 1916.

<sup>329</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., cat. G1, b. 121, note to Minister of Interior, 7 September 1915.

<sup>330</sup> L. Molinari, 'Pro Scuola Moderna Milano', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, September-December 1915.

<sup>331</sup> L. Molinari, 'Dopo la guerra?', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, July 1916.

<sup>332</sup> See 'Esposizione permanente annessa alla Scuola Moderna', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 January 1915. See also La Direzione della Scuola Moderna Francisco Ferrer, 'Urania – Per la istituzione di un Osservatorio Astronomico Popolare', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 15 August and 15 September 1917.

<sup>333</sup> D. Romeo, 'Il movimento anarchico a Milano nell'età giolittiana: l'influenza di Francisco Ferrer y Guardia e della sua scuola moderna razionalista', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.102.

Who were some of these anarchists supporting Molinari? Where did they come from and what happened to them after the end of the Milanese Modern School? Ciro Baraldi (1871-1948), typographer, had moved to Milan in 1906.<sup>334</sup> He gravitated towards Molinari's milieu and contributed to anarchist journals such as *Il Pensiero*, *Il Grido della Folla* and *La Protesta Umana*, writing with the pseudonym of 'Oric'. Mario Senigagliesi (1891-1932), office clerk, was very active with the anti-militarist campaign and he was constantly supervised by police. Senigagliesi was particularly active during the post-war period and he was considered by police as being one of the most influential leaders.<sup>335</sup> According to authorities, Randolfo Vella (1893-?), photographer, was the 'official spokesman of the Milanese anarchists', attending several meetings in Milan and the nearby towns.<sup>336</sup> Vella was among the cofounders of the SMFFM on 25 August 1918. Moreover, after the war, Vella was particularly active: he chaired the local CdL when Malatesta came to visit Milan on 30 December 1919.<sup>337</sup> Vella contributed to the first anarchist newspaper, *Umanità Nova*, using several different pseudonyms: 'Demos', 'Giusto Volcedo', 'Il Bersagliere', 'Il sonnambulista', 'Uno della tribù'. His older brother Antonio (1886-?) was a sulphur miner.<sup>338</sup> Unlike his brother, Antonio's period of activism was quite short: Antonio was arrested in June 1908 while he was distributing 'subversive' leaflets. After his arrest Antonio moved away from the movement. Luigi Masciotti (1882-?) was one of the few anarchists who completed high school.<sup>339</sup> He was born in Verona and moved to Milan in 1909. Employed as an office worker, Masciotti wrote articles and literary reviews for journals such as *La Demolizione* and *La Protesta Umana*, using pseudonyms such as 'Masciotty' and 'Ramiro Amari'.<sup>340</sup> After the war, Masciotti worked with *Umanità Nova*'s editorial board. In the same year he moved to Clivio where he directed both the bulletin and the kindergarten of the local Modern School. However, after being accused of

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<sup>334</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 310, fasc. *Baraldi Caio Siro detto Ciro*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 935, fasc. *Baraldi Caio*.

<sup>335</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 940, fasc. *Senigagliesi Mario*.

<sup>336</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 5344, fasc. *Vella Randolfo*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 940, fasc. *Vella Randolfo*.

<sup>337</sup> P. Finzi, *La nota persona. Errico Malatesta in Italia (dicembre 1919/luglio 1920)*, pp.74-75.

<sup>338</sup> For Vella Antonio see 'Vella Randolfo', in DBAI, II, p.664.

<sup>339</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 3124, fasc. *Masciotti Luigi*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, fasc. *Masciotti Luigi*.

<sup>340</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Alla ricerca dello pseudonimo perduto', *Rivista Storica dell'Anarchismo*, p.79, and 'Masciotti Luigi', in DBAI, II, pp.116-17.

mismanagement, Masciotti moved away from anarchism, eventually embracing fascism.<sup>341</sup>

From this overview, it appears that many of the anarchists involved with Molinari's milieu and the idea of libertarian pedagogy were predominantly typographers, teachers and white-collar workers with an above average literacy level. It can be hypothesized that these kinds of workers were more inclined to think of education as a revolutionary tool, compared with other workers. They embraced a long-term revolutionary vision which focused on organising teaching methods according to libertarian principles. Their revolutionary perspective did not find a fertile ground, however. On the one hand, the world conflict played an important role in wiping away practical experiments; but more importantly, the Milanese proletariat and Milanese anarchists in particular did not provide the right background and the effective feedback Molinari was looking for. According to their rebel nature, Milanese anarchists tried to seize the moment of popular indignation when Ferrer was executed. They were not successful and their actions lost momentum. Once again, lack of organisation and of a long-term strategy within the whole movement was crucial. Rebellion did not translate into revolutionary deeds.

#### **4.4 Milanese anarchists and labour movement**

The relationship between Milanese anarchists and the labour movement was not straightforward and consistent. Several factors weighed upon this relationship, creating a wide range of interpretations of, and approaches to, syndicalism. Thus, the period covered in this chapter has been divided into three stages: the first shorter period looks at Milanese anarchists between 1900 and 1904, on the eve of the first general strike in Italy. The second period, from 1904 to 1911, is marked by a number of workers' massacres and by a growing attention to workers' organisations. The last period examines the activities of the *Unione Sindacale Italiana* (Italian Syndicalist Union, USI) and its Milanese section, the *Unione Sindacale Milanese* (Milanese Syndicalist Union, USM) until the outbreak of the First World War.

The first period (1900-1904) saw Milanese anarchists debating in the pages of *Il Grido della Folla* their participation in workers' organisations, including the General

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<sup>341</sup> See R. Gremmo, 'La scuola moderna degli anarchici di Clivio', *Storia ribelle*, no.2, 1996.

Confederation of Labour and the Chamber of Labour. In addition, Milanese anarchists responded to the workers' massacre of Torre Annunziata in 1903. The 1904 general strike had an impact on Milanese anarchists. Between 1904 and 1911 Milanese anarchists became more proactive: their approach to workers' movements changed and their critiques softened. Workers' massacres continued and different tendencies emerged on how to relate to the labour movement and workers' organisations.

As individualist appeals began to lose their hold over anarchists, revolutionary syndicalism appeared as a valid and effective alternative. The gas workers' strike of 1913 demonstrated that the Milanese proletariat was still ready to fight and the events of Red Week confirmed this impression. With the outbreak of the world conflict, Milanese anarchists shifted their attention towards anti-militarism and anti-intervention in war. Perhaps, the most significant difference, in comparison with the previous two short periods, lies in the presence of two charismatic points of reference: Armando Borghi and Filippo Corridoni. Different personalities with different ideological perspectives, they were both able to attract Milanese anarchists around them, offering a sort of certainty and stability which was lacking in the previous years.

#### **4.4.1 Critiques (1900-1904)**

The starting point of anarchist perspective on worker organisations was the rejection of the idea of delegating to them claims for workers' rights and wages. Consequently, the centralised and authoritarian structure of worker's unions was not well regarded by anarchists. Yet participation in the labour movement was considered positively in terms of an opportunity for anarchists to spread revolutionary ideas, as long as anarchists did not try to take power within unions. In addition, anarchists criticized workers' struggles based on pay demands and wage claims: this kind of struggle was considered useless in distributing wealth more equitably, serving to create rivalries and hierarchies among workers in different sectors.<sup>342</sup> Anarchists believed that when workers achieved a pay rise, goods also increased in price, affecting consumers and their budgets.<sup>343</sup> On the other hand, pay rises were often achieved after workers' strikes, thus confirming the

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<sup>342</sup> 'L'avvenire dei sindacati operai', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 23 July 1903.

<sup>343</sup> 'Sindacalismo e rivoluzionarismo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 December 1905. See also N.d.R., *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 30 December 1905, and Un tipografo, 'Le Camere del Lavoro e gli anarchici', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 19 June 1902.

anarchist belief in the usefulness of strikes. However, anarchists criticized partial strikes and instead invited workers to produce for themselves:

From now on, workers should not leave their job, but instead, they should start to work and to produce for themselves. This would be the first serious attempt at conquering the means of production for the good of the community.<sup>344</sup>

Anarchist propaganda was insistent, but their plans were isolated.<sup>345</sup> Appeals to transform unions into a ‘core of future society’,<sup>346</sup> into free ‘associations of producers to replace bourgeois capitalism’,<sup>347</sup> were scarce. Milanese anarchists participated in the CdL’s activities, but their extreme means and ends were not well tolerated by the managing elite of the CdL.<sup>348</sup>

After the massacre of Torre Annunziata in 1903,<sup>349</sup> Milanese anarchists organised a march to raise money for all political victims. A committee, ‘*Pro vittime del piombo regio*’ (In support of the victims of royal bullets), was formed. Giovanni Gavilli was the main founder. However, soon after its foundation, the committee broke up.<sup>350</sup> The initiative did not receive much support since many anarchists thought it was hypocritical to ask for money from the bourgeoisie and other parties.<sup>351</sup> In doing so, they also received from other journals indictments of apathy towards the workers’ movement. Anarchists replied that the workers’ movement was badly led by socialists and that was why they did not care about it.<sup>352</sup>

Anarchists behaved with a hint of contemptuous indifference towards the masses, considered as immature and unprepared for the revolution. Yet the general strike of 1904 changed this impression somewhat. Workers reacted positively to this test, unlike political parties and workers’ associations which continued to show little decision-making power and scarce courage. Milanese anarchists maintained their negative judgment of workers’ organisations, not because of the workers, but because of

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<sup>344</sup> ‘Camera del Lavoro-Conferenza Rigola’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 2 October 1902.

<sup>345</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall’insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell’anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, pp.70-71.

<sup>346</sup> ‘L’avvenire dei sindacati operai’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 23 July 1903.

<sup>347</sup> ‘Alla Camera del Lavoro’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 17 June 1905.

<sup>348</sup> ‘Alla Camera del Lavoro’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 23 October 1902, reported that the anarchist Giovanni Padovan was expelled by the CdL.

<sup>349</sup> On 31 August 1903 seven workers were killed and 40 injured, see R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione. Storia delle classi subalterne in Italia, II*, p.175.

<sup>350</sup> For ‘Comitato pro vittime piombo regio’ see ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 295, note to Milan police chief, 16 November 1903, and note to Milan Carabinieri, 6 October 1903.

<sup>351</sup> See ‘Una passeggiata di protesta e di beneficenza’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 10 September 1903.

<sup>352</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 295, report on a congress at the Arena.

the political elite these organisations generated.<sup>353</sup> Anarchists held a negative opinion of the CGdL but maintained that agitation from within it was important.<sup>354</sup> Similarly, anarchists did not respect the CdL, because they thought it was an authoritarian organisation, scared of calling a general strike and too eager to accommodate government interests.<sup>355</sup>

#### 4.4.2 From the first general strike to the Libyan war (1904-1911)

The first general strike in Italy happened in September 1904, following the massacre of workers in Buggerru and Castelluzzo.<sup>356</sup> Buggerru and Castelluzzo were not isolated events: Berra Ferrarese (27 June 1901), Candela (8 September 1902), Giarratana (13 October 1902), Torre Annunziata (31 August 1903) and Cerignola (17 May 1904), were followed by massacres in 1905 in Taurisano and 1906 in Scorrano and Muro Leccese.<sup>357</sup> ‘Between 1901 and 1904, policemen under Giolitti’s direct orders ... used weapons, killing around 50 workers and [leaving] more than 500 wounded ....’<sup>358</sup> According to Del Carria, Giolitti understood how to contain the relationship with the labour movement: when the rebellion was local, Giolitti used an iron hand indiscriminately, while when the rebellion was national, Giolitti preferred to leave policemen in their headquarters.<sup>359</sup>

Milan was the strike’s capital city.<sup>360</sup> Milanese anarchists joined revolutionary socialists led by Arturo Labriola<sup>361</sup> and pushed workers to strike and to keep resisting. However invitations to be intransigent were not sufficient. The strike found revolutionary groups completely unprepared and without a coherent strategy. The lack of direction and real goals let the protest remain an emotional outburst that was

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<sup>353</sup> ‘Dallo sciopero alla morte’, *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 12 May 1906.

<sup>354</sup> Codino, ‘La nuova trappola per gli operai’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 1 December 1906.

<sup>355</sup> See ‘Cronaca locale. Più che umiliante!’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 13 July 1907; ‘Perchè non vogliono lo sciopero generale’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 9 November 1907; ‘I muratori e lo spirito crumiresco delle organizzazioni’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 11 May 1907.

<sup>356</sup> G. Procacci, *La lotta di classe in Italia agli inizi del secolo XX*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1972, pp.382 and ff; R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione. Storia delle classi subalterne in Italia, II*, Rome, Savelli, 1979, pp.143-98; ‘Il primo sciopero generale in Italia’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 24 September 1904.

<sup>357</sup> See *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 6 December 1905 and *Grido della Folla*, Milan, 30 March 1906. See also R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione. Storia delle classi subalterne in Italia, II*, p.175, n. 144.

<sup>358</sup> D. Tarantini, *La maniera forte*, Verona, Bertani, 1975, p.182.

<sup>359</sup> R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione. Storia delle classi subalterne in Italia, II*, p.184 and p.193. See also ‘Il primo sciopero generale in Italia’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 24 September 1904.

<sup>360</sup> R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione. Storia delle classi subalterne in Italia, II*, p.182.

<sup>361</sup> ‘Il primo sciopero generale in Italia’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 24 September 1904.

extinguished soon after the first moments of indignation.<sup>362</sup> Milanese anarchists blamed the apathy of workers' organisations for the failure of the strike.<sup>363</sup> Conversely, workers' behavior received positive comments.<sup>364</sup> Milanese anarchists emphasized that 'it was not a matter whether civil wars were due to monarchical, republican, or so called liberal government ...'.<sup>365</sup> Workers' massacres would not have happened if the proletariat had shown more dignity and political consciousness. Thus anarchists had to continue their idealistic and romantic educational propaganda, otherwise, the goal was not worth the effort.<sup>366</sup>

On the pages of *La Protesta Umana*, Milanese anarchists proposed two ways forward: first, they justified the use of violence during strikes on the basis that police and army intervened to protect capitalists, who were outnumbered by workers.<sup>367</sup> Second, anarchists suggested the use of a 'reasoned' strike: workers were encouraged to work, to own the fruit of their work, and to share it with needy people outside the factories.<sup>368</sup> They interpreted sabotage as revenge against the bourgeoisie.<sup>369</sup>

In October 1907, a group of workers of *Miani e Silvestri* plant in Milan, at the end of a strike of gasmen, threw stones at a train which carried blacklegs. The *Carabinieri* replied by shooting at the crowd. It was known as the massacre of Pietrasanta.<sup>370</sup> Milanese workers called for a general strike.<sup>371</sup> However, reformist socialists took over the strike and called it off. Anarchists' efforts to invite people to rebel were useless.<sup>372</sup> The Milanese anarchist journal *La Protesta Umana* highlighted the contradictions of mainstream media in regards to workers' struggles and the use of violence.<sup>373</sup> One month later, *La Protesta Umana* wrote that those *Carabinieri*

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<sup>362</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, pp.188-89.

<sup>363</sup> 'Il primo sciopero generale in Italia', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 24 September 1904.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>365</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 295, *Agitazioni politiche 1903-1914*, fasc. *Agitazioni pei fatti di Torre Annunziata sett.-nov. 1903*, report on congress at the *Arena*, 4 October 1903, and report on public gathering for Torre Annunziata's episode, held at the schools of *Corso di Porta Romana* 10, 11 September 1903.

<sup>366</sup> 'Passeggiata e Comizio di protesta per le vittime di Torre Annunziata', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 8 October 1903.

<sup>367</sup> 'Il diritto alla violenza negli scioperi', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 20 April 1907.

<sup>368</sup> 'L'agitazione dei tramvieri. Tattica nuova?', *La Protesta Umana*, 16 November 1907.

<sup>369</sup> Nadrebo, 'Sabotage', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 25 May 1907.

<sup>370</sup> 'Lo sciopero generale di Milano. Piombo reale e piombo regio. Le prove generali della Rivoluzione', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 19 October 1907; 'Le agitazioni milanesi. Lo sciopero generale. Viltà collettiva borghese', *La Battaglia Proletaria*, Milan, 19 October 1907.

<sup>371</sup> 'Lo sciopero generale di Milano', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 19 October 1907.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>373</sup> 'Cronaca locale. Palle di rimbalzo', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 2 November 1907. See also 'La vanda socialista nello sciopero generale', *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 26 October 1907.

responsible for the massacre were still ‘very free’.<sup>374</sup> The Milanese journal was active in denouncing government initiatives and inspiring workers’ agitations. For instance, *La Protesta* launched a campaign against the construction of new prisons, inviting workers to refuse to work on them.<sup>375</sup>

#### 4.4.3 Organisation and revolutionary syndicalism (1911-1915)

Reformist socialists were struggling to represent workers’ discontent, allowing the anarchists to extend their influence proportionally to socialists’ compromising approach to politics. Anarchists acted as radical and loyal supporters of workers’ emancipation. Maria Rygier explained during a conference that socialists and unionists competed for the dominance of the working class in order to satisfy their own personal interests.<sup>376</sup>

The contribution of Milanese anarchists to workers’ struggles was important because they brought intransigence and complexity: anarchists seized specific struggles to reaffirm libertarian principles such as critiques of the state, church and military. Anarchist struggles were fought with a ‘universalist’ spirit which tried to oppose partial interests carried on by unions.<sup>377</sup> Anarchists aimed at the complete liberation of humankind rather than the economic emancipation of the working class.<sup>378</sup>

During Giolitti’s period, industrialisation engendered rapid growth of the working class.<sup>379</sup> Under Malatesta and Fabbri’s guidance, unions were to be transformed into libertarian foci. Malatesta considered unions as places in which to spread anarchist ideas, in order to remove workers from reformist socialists’ dominance. Most of all, Malatesta saw syndicalism as a means for political revolution, and not as a self-sufficient project. On the other hand, Fabbri thought of syndicalism as a crucial tool for anarchism since it prevented anarchists from shifting towards individualist

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<sup>374</sup> ‘La nota del Segretario di redazione a proposito dell’eccidio di Ponte Pietrasanta’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 9 November 1907.

<sup>375</sup> Epifane-Ireos [Ettore Molinari-Nella Giacomelli], *Un triste caso di libellismo anarchico. (Risposta ad un turpe libello di Paolo Schicchi)*, pp.24-25.

<sup>376</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., 1911, b. 14, *Ordine Pubblico*, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 3 February 1911, regarding Rygier’s conference titled ‘Gli anarchici e l’organizzazione operaia’.

<sup>377</sup> A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, p.136.

<sup>378</sup> S. Arcangeli, *Malatesta e il comunismo anarchico italiano*, Milan, Jaca Book, 1978, p.105.

<sup>379</sup> See I. Barbadoro, *Storia del sindacalismo italiano*, La Nuova Italia, Florence, 1973; D. Marucco, R.Tos, *Capitalismo e lotte operaie in Italia: 1870-1970*, Turin, Società Editrice Internazionale, 1976; G. Procacci, *La lotta di classe in Italia agli inizi del secolo XX*; A. Pepe, *Movimento operaio e lotte sindacali 1880-1882*, Turin, Loescher Editore, 1975; S. Merli, *Proletariato di fabbrica e capitalismo industriale. Il caso italiano 1880-1900*, Florence, La Nuova Italia, 1973; A. Camarda, S. Peli, *La conflittualità operaia in Italia 1900-1906*, G. D’Anna, Messina-Florence, 1979.

tendencies.<sup>380</sup> In Milan, many organisational anarchists were employed in factories where they could carry on distributing anarchist propaganda among their fellow workers.<sup>381</sup>

This situation was a concern for the authorities, since unemployed workers seeking employment in Milanese factories could easily join the subversives. According to the Milanese prefect, at the end of 1911 Milan was the capital city of extreme forces such as the anarchists, the unionists and the revolutionaries.<sup>382</sup> Indeed, there was a revival of revolutionary activity due to an increase in unemployment, a drop in wages and massive migration. The war in Libya did not harness the expected wealth. In the last months of 1911 many workers and strikers were arrested during demonstrations against the war.<sup>383</sup>

Anarchists pushed for a general strike rather than specific ones. This approach was geared towards gaining increased anarchist influence among the unemployed and un-unionised. For the same reason anarchists tended to prefer participation in the CdL rather than joining federations of workers' unions.<sup>384</sup> On many occasions anarchists criticised union leaders for interrupting strikes despite workers' will to continue. For example, in May 1911 during a public meeting of gasmen, the anarchist Montanari invited them 'not to trust the Chamber of Labour' because during the last strike the managing elite had betrayed workers who wanted to continue the protest.<sup>385</sup> In September 1912, during a rally, Luigi Molinari was able to convince the audience to approve a general strike for the following day. The CdL rejected the decision on the basis that un-unionised workers did not have the power to launch a general strike.<sup>386</sup>

Within the Milanese anarchist movement there were three different positions regarding participation in workers' unions. Between those anarchists who were supportive and those who were not, there was a middle position held by those who believed in individual and independent commitment. Among those anarchists who

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<sup>380</sup> P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell'epoca degli attentati*, p.221. See also M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, pp.203-63.

<sup>381</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1911, b. 14, fasc. *Milano*, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 28 November 1911.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>383</sup> G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, pp.169-70.

<sup>384</sup> M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, p.28.

<sup>385</sup> See ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1911, b. 14, Milan IV Division police chief to Minister of Interior, 31 May 1911.

<sup>386</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, cat. 43, *Sindacati, Leghe, Corporazioni, etc.*, in particular b. 1044, *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro (1911-1928)*, Milan police chief to prefect, 25 September 1912.

rejected any involvement with unions were intellectuals active in producing journals. *La Questione Sociale* offered an explanation of this position: the task of the anarchists was to stimulate individuals, rather than claiming wage rises or better conditions. Anarchists had to work towards the complete elimination of exploitation and hierarchies.<sup>387</sup> Conversely, those who supported unions highlighted the contribution of Milanese anarchism to workers' struggles. In doing this, the anarchists also stressed the difference between themselves and the socialists who tried to impose their personal interests upon the collectivity.<sup>388</sup>

Armando Borghi was the main point of reference for Milanese anarchists who were involved with the labour movement.<sup>389</sup> Borghi held many conferences in which he explained the utility of syndicalism and workers' organisations. In September 1909 there was a meeting organised by the *Gruppo sindacalista* and by the *Gruppo comunista anarchico di Milano*. During this meeting, Borghi supported organisational stances, while Luraghi spoke on behalf of the individualist tendency, asserting that no organisation could be trusted. Borghi replied, highlighting the contradiction of an anarchist who is also the director of a journal, and thus, forced to exercise a form of authority.<sup>390</sup>

Borghi tried to combine propaganda with practical activities: in 1911 during a campaign against food price rises, he was able to convince the Milanese working class not to follow the socialists' project of joining this specific campaign with a general action in support of universal suffrage.<sup>391</sup> Furthermore, Borghi participated in the metalworkers' struggle of 1913,<sup>392</sup> strongly criticising government policy and ending up in jail.<sup>393</sup> Borghi received support from many Milanese anarchists because of his coherent position: he was critical of both the individualists and the organisationalists.

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<sup>387</sup> 'Sull'anarchismo', *La Questione Sociale*, Milan, 2 October 1909.

<sup>388</sup> Fernando Sibilla, 'Idee e fatti', *La Questione Sociale*, Milan, 18 September 1909.

<sup>389</sup> For Borghi see DBAI, *ad nomen*; MOIDB, *ad nomen*; A. Toninello, *Sindacalismo rivoluzionario, anarco-sindacalismo, anarchismo*, pp.62-67; VV.AA., *Atti del convegno di studi: Armando Borghi nella storia del movimento operaio italiano ed internazionale*, Bologna, Bollettino del Museo del Risorgimento, 1990; M. Antonioli, *Armando Borghi e l'Unione Sindacale Italiana*.

<sup>390</sup> 'Le vie dirette dell'azione proletaria', *La Questione Sociale*, Milan, 18 September 1909.

<sup>391</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1911, b. 20 cat. C1, *Ordine Pubblico*, fasc. *Agitazioni (Milano)*, Milan prefect telegram n. 10295 to Minister of Interior, 29 January 1911.

<sup>392</sup> See ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1913, b. 27 cat. C2, *Movimento sovversivo-Confederazione Generale del Lavoro-Unione Sindacale Italiana*.

<sup>393</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., 1913, b. 27, Milan prefect telegram to Minister of Interior, 18 June 1913, and Bologna prefect to Minister of Interior, 12 October 1913.

Commitment to unions' activities represented a middle ground, in order to avoid both anarchists' isolation and authoritarian tendencies.<sup>394</sup>

Compared with Malatesta, Borghi was not an organisational anarchist and did not consider syndicalism a secondary activity within a revolutionary strategy. Alternatively, like Fabbri, Borghi gave unions a crucial role.<sup>395</sup> Since the International anarchist congress in Amsterdam in 1907, Malatesta had ascribed to syndicalism a secondary function:<sup>396</sup> unions were a means to improve job conditions, but they were not sufficient to make a revolution. He approved of an organised labour movement, but he could also see the risk of unions shifting towards non-anarchist positions.<sup>397</sup> Borghi, as a point of reference for unionist anarchists, was able to find an approach to syndicalism that did not confuse it with anarchism: first, syndicalism represented the means and not the end; second, struggles for economic rights were parallel to social revolution.

Those Milanese anarchists who were involved with unions' activities always tried to maintain their independence and to remain loyal to their libertarian principles. They did not create independent groups, but they joined revolutionary and socialist unions. Within these organisations, anarchists differentiated themselves from the revolutionary socialists led by Arturo Labriola<sup>398</sup> on matters such as parliamentary politics, universal suffrage, and eventually the war in Libya. In contrast, Labriola and his followers were in competition with the reformist socialists for the dominance of left-wing parliamentary politics.<sup>399</sup> Labriola and his group were criticized by Maria Rygier for their insensitivity to campaigns against militarism, clericalism and violence in state institutions such as prisons and reformatories.<sup>400</sup> Anarchists and revolutionary socialists shared their opposition to reformism and negotiations, and they both aimed at direct action, including the use of violence if this was necessary.<sup>401</sup> Unlike anarchism,

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<sup>394</sup> See E. Falco, 'L'Alleanza Libertaria' e il convegno anarchico di Roma del 1907', and G. Sacchetti, 'Comunisti contro individualisti. Il dibattito sull'organizzazione del 1907', *Bollettino del Museo del risorgimento*, respectively pp.33-44 and 23-32.

<sup>395</sup> E. Falco, 'L'Alleanza Libertaria' e il convegno anarchico di Roma del 1907', *Bollettino del Museo del risorgimento*, pp.34-35.

<sup>396</sup> See in particular M. Antonioli, *Anarchismo e/o sindacalismo. Introduzione a Dibattito sul sindacalismo. Atti del congresso internazionale anarchico di Amsterdam (1907)*.

<sup>397</sup> S. Arcangeli, *Malatesta e il comunismo anarchico italiano*, p.113.

<sup>398</sup> On Labriola see MOIDB, *ad nomen*; D. Marucco, *Arturo Labriola e il sindacalismo rivoluzionario in Italia*, Einaudi, Turin, 1970.

<sup>399</sup> M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, p.81.

<sup>400</sup> See M. Rygier, *Il Sindacalismo alla sbarra. Riflessioni d'una ex sindacalista sul Congresso omonimo di Bologna*, Bologna, Libreria Editrice la Scuola Moderna, 1911.

<sup>401</sup> A. Riosa, *Il sindacalismo rivoluzionario in Italia*, Bari, De Donato, 1976, pp.209-16.

Labriola affirmed that revolutionary syndicalism came from Marxism which had been betrayed by reformist socialists.<sup>402</sup>

Another point of reference for Milanese anarchists involved with unions was Filippo Corridoni.<sup>403</sup> F. Corridoni (1887-1915), who was active in Milan from 1905, was not an anarchist, but rather a revolutionary unionist. Unlike Labriola, Corridoni campaigned against militarism and together with Rygier he founded the Milanese libertarian and anti-militarist journal *Rompete le file!*<sup>404</sup> In March 1913 Corridoni initiated the Milanese branch of the USI, named *Unione Sindacale Milanese* (USM).<sup>405</sup> One year later Corridoni was one of the leaders of the Milanese proletariat during the demonstrations of Red Week. When the First World War broke out, Corridoni unexpectedly volunteered to fight against Austria and Germany, which he considered the core nations of militarism. Corridoni died during the war.<sup>406</sup>

Before Corridoni shifted towards pro-interventionist positions, Milanese anarchists had appreciated Corridoni's anti-militarism, his appeals for general strikes and his opposition to the CGdL. However, anarchists were suspicious of Corridoni's tendency to advocate a centralised management of workers. In particular, Milanese anarchists criticised Corridoni's idea of industrial national unions. According to Antonioli, from 1911 workers began to unite, according to a specific plant or an industrial branch, rather than being based on the same profession category.<sup>407</sup> This was due both to a change within the metal-working sector, and to the advance of a new kind

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<sup>402</sup> M. Rygier, *Il Sindacalismo alla sbarra. Riflessioni d'una ex sindacalista sul Congresso omonimo di Bologna*, pp.19-21.

<sup>403</sup> On Corridoni see MOIDB, *ad nomen*.

<sup>404</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, pp.201-03. See next chapter.

<sup>405</sup> On the USI see 'Breve storia dei movimenti anarcosindacalisti', *A-rivista anarchica*, vol.4, no.28, Milan, May 1974; the USM's statute in ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., G1, *Associazioni*, b. 124, *Unione Sindacale Milanese*; G. Careri, *Il sindacalismo autogestionario. L'U.S.I. dalle origini a oggi*; A. Giovannetti, *Il sindacalismo rivoluzionario in Italia. L'azione diretta, le lotte e le conquiste proletarie*; U. Fedeli, 'Breve storia dell'USI', *Volontà*, 1957, p.519; G. Trevisani, *Lineamenti di una storia del Movimento Operaio Italiano*, Milan, 1958-1965, vol.III; A. Borghi, *Anarchismo e sindacalismo, conferenza tenuta a Roma il 4 Aprile 1922*, Rome, 1922; D. Guerin, 'L'anarchismo nei consigli di fabbrica italiani', in D. Guerin, *L'anarchismo dalla dottrina all'azione*, p.117; D. Guerin, 'L'anarchismo si isola dal movimento operaio. Gli anarchici nei sindacati', in D. Guerin, *L'anarchismo dalla dottrina all'azione*, p.77; B. Russel, *Socialismo Anarchismo Sindacalismo*, Milan, Longanesi, 1969; B. Vanzetti, *Lettere sul sindacalismo*, Ed. Antistato, 1957; R. Rocker, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, London, Freedom Press, 1973; M. Antonioli, *Armando Borghi e l'Unione Sindacale Italiana*; A. Lehming, *L'anarcosindacalismo, scritti scelti*, Pisa, BFS, 1994; M. Antonioli, *Il sindacalismo italiano. Dalle origini al fascismo*, Pisa, BFS, 1997.

<sup>406</sup> See MOIDB, *ad nomen*; M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, pp.13-56 and 265-302; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1043, *USI 1912-1921*, fasc. *Corridoni Filippo ... socialista rivoluzionario antimilitarista*.

<sup>407</sup> M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, pp.20-21.

of worker, less skilled and more subjected to the market's fluctuations.<sup>408</sup> Corridoni suggested organising workers according to plants, as a base for a future national industrial union.<sup>409</sup> Corridoni's advice was accepted by most of the Milanese proletariat, which formed 'leghe' (leagues, unions) based on plants.<sup>410</sup> Corridoni's strategy also received support from anarchists, especially after the constitution of the USM in 1913, which represented an alternative to the CGdL.

The Milanese Chamber of Labour saw the participation of many anarchists.<sup>411</sup> Many of them were also involved with the *Fascio Libertario Milanese* (FLM), for example Vittorio Ghigini, Aida Latini, Guglielmo Guberti, Arturo Ferrari and Corrado Bertoni. It can be argued that those anarchists involved with the FLM were organisational and union supporters. This was confirmed by the journal *Il Giornale anarchico* in regards to a meeting held by Domenico Zavattero in 1912, during which members of the FLM argued against individualist anarchists.<sup>412</sup>

Who were these organisational anarchists? Among them there was Corrado Bertoni (1883-1971). He had joined both the FLM and the USI after being active in anti-militarist campaigns. He was a painter, and police described him as a man with 'pochissima coltura' and 'cattiva fama in pubblico pel suo carattere irascibile' (very little culture and a bad reputation because of his hot-tempered character).<sup>413</sup> In 1909 Bertoni was the director of *Rompete le file!* In 1913 he became the director of *L'Avanguardia*, a unionist journal, and one year later, director of *La Guerra Sociale's* first issue, an interventionist journal. In 1913 he was arrested during the strike of metal workers and was sent back to Ferrara, his home town.<sup>414</sup>

The year 1913 saw workers fighting for economic and political claims.<sup>415</sup> Milanese anarchists joined this protest movement, both within and outside the USM's initiatives. The relationship between Milanese anarchists and the USM was marked by cooperation, but also by critiques. For instance, anarchists supported Corridoni during his arrest, and criticized Fulvio Zocchi, Corridoni's temporary replacement in the summer of 1913, for his negotiation during the railroad workers' struggle. The anarchist

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., p.33.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., p.34.

<sup>411</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1043, Milan police headquarter to prefect, 30 March 1913.

<sup>412</sup> See 'Conferenza 'Domenico Zavattero'', *Il Giornale Anarchico*, Milan, 27 July 1912.

<sup>413</sup> See DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 582, fasc. *Bertoni Corrado*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 935, fasc. *Bertoni Corrado*; see also *Umanità Nova*, 19 June 1971.

<sup>414</sup> See ACS, CPC, b. 582, fasc. *Bertoni Corrado*, and DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>415</sup> A. Pepe, *Lotta di classe e crisi industriale in Italia. La svolta del 1913*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1978.

minority within USM formed a separate group and asked for his resignation.<sup>416</sup> Milanese anarchists also criticized Corridoni over his idea of forming two big national unions, one for metal workers and another for peasants.<sup>417</sup> Different views on the theory and organisation of the USI demonstrated the existence of two currents within it: the anarchist tendency represented the minority compared with the revolutionary unionist stream led by Alceste De Ambris.<sup>418</sup> The debate on national industrial unions also involved Borghi, who agreed with Corridoni's idea; Malatesta and Fabbri, through the pages of *Volontà*, published in Ancona, expressed their doubts.<sup>419</sup> Corridoni's project faced a growing opposition. With the outbreak of the Red Week, and soon after of the First World War, an interventionist and nationalistic stream emerged within the USI, and eventually it contributed to wiping away Corridoni's plan.

Milanese anarchists played an important role of check and balance within the USM. When it appeared evident that the USM's budget was badly managed, anarchists criticized the managing elite.<sup>420</sup> Soon after the Red Week, anarchist unionists declared themselves to be against the War and opposed Corridoni and De Ambris's interventionist choice.<sup>421</sup> During the USI Congress in Rome, De Ambris's pro-war line was rejected by the majority and his leadership was dismissed, replaced by an anarchist one. Borghi became the general secretary of the USI and also in Milan the anti-interventionist current was dominant. Here, during a demonstration in support of political prisoners, Borghi announced that he would have preferred the release of anti-interventionist comrades rather than interventionist ones.<sup>422</sup> Most of the Milanese anarchists remained anti-interventionists, while a few exceptions, like Vittorio Ghigini and Arturo Ferrari, moved to the interventionist side. Latini, conversely, remained

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<sup>416</sup> M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, p.297-300; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1043. On Zocchi, see MOIDB, *ad nomen*.

<sup>417</sup> ACS, G1, b. 124, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 6 March 1914. See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1043, Milan police chief to prefect, 19 May 1914. See also M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, pp.49-56.

<sup>418</sup> On De Ambris see MOIDB, *ad nomen*.

<sup>419</sup> M. Antonioli, *Azione diretta e organizzazione operaia*, pp.54-55.

<sup>420</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1043, Milan police chief to prefect, 8 October 1914.

<sup>421</sup> ACS, G1, b. 124, Milan police headquarter to Minister of Interior, 13 August 1914. For the anti-war stance of the USM see also 'Dal mio diario di guerra', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 September 1914 and 'O.d.g. dell'USI contro la guerra', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 October 1914.

<sup>422</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, cat. 8 *Agitazioni e scioperi 1913-1929*, b. 296, *Agitazioni politiche*, Milan police chief telegram, 19 November 1914.

active in spreading anti-militarist ideas. Latini was arrested in March 1915 while she was handing out leaflets inviting soldiers to rebel and disobey military discipline.<sup>423</sup>

It is also significant to report a few notes on Comunardo Braccialarghe. He was born in the Marches, in Macerata, and was active within the Milanese anarchist movement from 1903, when he participated in the tin workers struggle.<sup>424</sup> Braccialarghe focused his activism on anti-militarist and unionist campaigns. However, he slowly moved away from the anarchist movement, finally joining the Socialist party in 1907. In *Il Grido della Folla's* words,

Comunardo Braccialarghe was a tireless agitator and anarchist propagandist within the CdL. He contributed a lot to the outbreak of the general strike. He started well, but he ended up overpowered by the parliamentary reformism. What a pity!<sup>425</sup>

This chapter began with Hobsbawm's interpretation of anarchism as 'unrelieved failure' and asked if the Milanese anarchist movement in the period 1900-1915 matched this opinion. The picture that has been drawn has demonstrated that Hobsbawm was too pessimistic. Despite continuous police persecution, Milanese anarchists were able to restart their activities after the Bresci episode, they increased in numbers, joined workers' struggles and organisations and they were active in several projects. Within the Milanese anarchist arena, different streams of anarchism coexisted. Yet, in the long term, inner faults and state repression overweighed the efforts of Milanese anarchists. Despite the calls for revolution, Milanese anarchists were unable to translate into actions the words of rebellion launched by Milanese anarchist journals. Peculiar characteristics of the city, of the industrial relationship and of the Milanese labour movement did not help anarchists to channel their efforts into something more organic. Episodes of rebellion stood as one-off events. However, Luigi Molinari's project of a Modern School demonstrated the will of Milanese anarchists to establish a libertarian model of education that could have outcomes in the *longue durée*. Once again, their attempt was wiped away by the storm that hit Europe in 1914.

This chapter has encompassed the theories and practices that Milanese anarchists espoused in the period 1900-1915. In doing this, an analysis of the social composition

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<sup>423</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 2360, fasc. *Ghigini Vittorio*; b. 2013, fasc. *Ferrari Arturo*, b. 2729 fasc. *Latini Aida* e b. 582, fasc. *Bertoni Corrado*.

<sup>424</sup> See MOIDB, *ad nomen*; DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 809, fasc. *Braccialarghe Comunardo*; G. Procacci, *La lotta di classe in Italia agli inizi del secolo XX*, p.391.

<sup>425</sup> 'Il primo sciopero generale in Italia', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 24 September 1904.

of the movement was integrated by short biographies in order to draw a broad picture. These were the stories of unknown secondary characters of the local movement. The analysis revealed the young age of those militants, an overtly male presence, as well as their social and regional origins. The picture that has been drawn exposes the Milanese anarchist movement as a cross-class movement, influenced by trans-local events and contexts, subjected to instability, and formed by small networks of individuals connected by common social and ideological points of references, as well as by solidarity with one another. Moreover, the movement appeared to be dependent on the mobility of people. At the beginning of the century, the Milanese anarchist movement was reconstituted with the contribution of activists coming from other regions. This feature turned out to be a weakness for the movement, since the continuous interchange of activists affected its ability to effectively connect with workers. Yet, when the First World War broke out, Milanese anarchism revealed itself not to be a complete failure. Despite a few cases of anarchists supporting the intervention in war, most of them found solace in the understanding that their anti-militarist stances were righteous.

## Chapter Five

### Anti-militarism, Red Week and WWI (1904-1918)

*'It seems to me that is sufficient to declare oneself to be an anarchist in order to implicitly affirm one's aversion to war.'*

E. Malatesta, letter to L. Molinari, in *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 November 1914.

*'The Anarchists refuse to be party to the present State organisation and to support it by infusing fresh blood into it.'*

P. Kropotkin, 'Anarchism', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1910.

*'If my soldiers began to think, not one would remain in the ranks.'*

Frederick the Great, cited in a Milanese anarchist anti-military leaflet, 1912, in ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089

In June 1914, strikes and massive demonstrations throughout the country occurred with episodes of rebellion and insurgency within the military. These days of social disturbance are known as '*Settimana Rossa*' (Red Week). During the Red Week, Milanese workers were at the forefront of this movement of protest. On 10 June, a huge number of Milanese workers took part in a general strike. The newspaper *Il Secolo* reported that the anarchist Aida Latini was at the head of the procession:

[A] column of around 100 strikers ... moving from *Largo Vitruvio* through *Corso Buenos Aires* and towards *Porta Venezia*. Along their way, shopkeepers were forced by strikers to shut their business, not without resistance. Opposite *Via Felice Casati* ... a cart carrying bricks ... was seized. Bricks were collected and thrown against a train that was coming from Venice ... Soon after, a cavalry squadron charged the demonstrators. The police chief arrested seven people included the anarchist Aida Latini, who followed the agents to the police headquarter in *Via Settembrini*, waving a slipper in the air.<sup>1</sup>

The workers' demonstration of June 1914 exposed the lack of organisation of Milanese anarchists. Despite several episodes of rebellion and insurrection occurring during the Red Week, the marginality of Milanese anarchists within the labour movement appeared evident. Milanese anarchist tried to fire up the demonstrations. During public meetings held at the *Arena*, the anarchists protested against speakers like Paolo Valera and Luigi

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<sup>1</sup> 'Le due giornate di sciopero generale', *Il Secolo*, 10-11 June 1914. See also 'Come si è svolto lo sciopero generale a Milano', *Avanti!*, Milan, 11 June 1914.

Molinari who were sceptical of transforming the general strike into insurrection.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, big words on revolution were never translated into actions. The Red Week also exposed the intersection between the labour movement and the anti-militarist campaign. The attempted full-scale insurrection of June 1914 began with a demonstration for the release of two anti-militarist anarchist soldiers, Augusto Masetti and Antonio Moroni. In Italy, anti-militarism was born at the dawn of the new century and since that beginning, became one of the most important campaigns endorsed by anarchists.<sup>3</sup> The anti-militarist rebellion found in Milan a fertile ground. Moreover, despite the reformist and moderate attitude of the General Confederation of Labour and the Chamber of Labour, often Milanese workers demonstrated a more revolutionary stance, which was due to the propaganda activities of anarchists and of the *Unione Sindacale Italiana*. Within this framework of interdependence between anarchism, anti-militarism and the labour movement, the Milanese anarchist movement exemplifies Italian anarchism.

In Milan, the anti-militarist campaign went together with debates among anti-organisational and organisational anarchists. The concepts of homeland and army were criticised. Anti-militarist journals were published and diverse activities were carried out by Milanese anarchists, such as forming committee, running conferences, rallies and protests. The anti-militarist campaign had the merit of tying together individuals and groups of anarchists from different perspectives: their critique of the military institution united them under the same umbrella. Moreover, within the anti-militarist campaign, women played a major role. Through conferences, articles and presence at rallies, anarchists such as Nella Giacomelli, Leda Rafanelli, and Aida Latini emerged as key figures, whether with their words, or with their slippers. It was a significant change. Within the anarchist movement women increased in number and their contribution was particularly evident in the anti-militarist campaign and the Modern School project. In Milan, the campaign against the military gained momentum in 1912 when the protest of the Milanese soldier Antonio Moroni became public. Soldiers Moroni and Augusto Masetti became icons of the Italian anti-militarist movement.

Soon after the Red Week, WWI broke out. The dispersion of efforts together with government repression had the consequence of silencing the anarchists' voice

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<sup>2</sup> 'Il Comizio di ieri all'Arena', *Avanti!*, Milan, 11 June 1914.

<sup>3</sup> On anti-militarism in Italy in its early stage, see G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L'antimilitarismo dal 1861 all'età giolittiana*, and P. Dogliani, *La 'Scuola delle Reclute'. L'Internazionale giovanile socialista dalla fine dell'Ottocento alla prima guerra mondiale*, pp.73-116.

against the military and the war. Nevertheless, a new hope was coming from Eastern Europe: the 1917 Russian revolution appeared as an opportunity to revitalise both the workers and the anarchist movements. Not for long, however. Italian anarchists became disillusioned with reports made by comrades on the real conditions in Russia, and later with news of the repression of the Machno movement in Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> The Russian revolution exposed the polarity between anarchists and Marxists in regards to the concepts of power, dictatorship and role of the state.<sup>5</sup>

This study is in debt to Cerrito and Oliva's works.<sup>6</sup> They have researched anti-militarism in Italy and the role played by Italian anarchists within it. But how did Milanese anarchism relate to the broader story of Italian anarchism and the anti-militarist movement? What was the contribution of Milanese anarchists to the Red Week? What was the relevance of Milanese anarchism for the anti-war movement? To these and other questions, this chapter offers some answers.

### 5.1 Anti-militarism

The International Anti-Militarist Association (IAMA) was founded on 25 June 1904 during the Amsterdam Anti-Militarist Congress.<sup>7</sup> In *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, Cerrito asserts that 'the [anti-militarist] movement that was born at the beginning of the century ... reaffirms the indispensable use of revolutionary violence'.<sup>8</sup> According to Cerrito, however, the possibility of an instrumental use of Tolstoy's method of pacifist refusal was not excluded, and 'rebellion [was] not only seen as a means to destroy the army, which defends privileges and supports wars, but also as a way of raising people's revolutionary forces and to

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<sup>4</sup> E. Cinnella, 'Machno nella rivoluzione ucraina del 1917-1921', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.7, no.1, 2000, pp.9-46. See also, N. Makhno, *La rivoluzione russa in Ucraina (Marzo 1917-Aprile 1918)*, Ragusa, La Fiaccola, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.632.

<sup>6</sup> See G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, Pistoia, Edizioni RL, 1968, and G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L'antimilitarismo dal 1861 all'età giolittiana*.

<sup>7</sup> On the Congress see M. Almereyda, 'Il congresso antimilitarista di Amsterdam', *Il Pensiero*, Rome, 1 August 1904, quoted in G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.3. See also A. Heering-E. Geraets, 'Domela Nieuwenhuis e il movimento anarchico italiano 1890-1910', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.1, no.2, 1994, pp.65-93.

<sup>8</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.7.

develop libertarian stances.’ Cerrito affirms that ‘the anti-militarism of the International Association [was] anti-patriotic and anti-authoritarian’.<sup>9</sup>

During the Amsterdam congress, however, it was difficult to find unity among anarchists, evangelicals and Tolstoy’s followers.<sup>10</sup> Yet the Dutch anarchist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis was elected secretary of the IAMA. At the beginning of the twentieth century, anti-militarist propaganda became a central issue for the Italian anarchist movement. A few journals began to focus on this specific topic. *La Folla* of Milan, *La Pace* of Genoa, and *Il Libertario* of La Spezia were amongst these publications.<sup>11</sup> In Italy, the journal *La Pace* (Peace), published in Genoa after August 1903, was entirely dedicated to this subject.<sup>12</sup> *La Pace* became also the official journal of the Italian section of the IAMA, which was based in Turin. Milanese anti-militarists did not have their own journal. *Il Grido della Folla* tried to fill the gap with articles expressing severe judgments on the idea of homeland and war. The army was strongly criticized, particularly for its role in the repression of workers’ protests. The journal *Agitiamoci!*, instead, focused specifically on the release of political prisoners. Its subtitle was ‘*Esce quando può*’ (it is published when it is possible).<sup>13</sup> The journal was founded in Milan at the end of 1907 as an initiative of the *Comitato Pro Vittime Politiche* (Committee in support of political victims, CPVP). The aim was to support all those people persecuted by the ‘bourgeois reaction’ and, in particular, those ‘hundreds of individuals who were in prison because they had asked for some bread.’<sup>14</sup> Some other Milanese anarchists announced the project of publishing an anti-militarist journal, titled *La Cartucciera* (Cartridge belt), but they were not successful.<sup>15</sup>

Anti-militarist feelings did not come out of the blue. Anarchist anti-militarism was not founded on moral ground. It was different from a generic pacifism and from Tolstoy’s teachings. Tolstoy’s anti-militarism represented an alternative for those workers who disagreed with the anarchists’ direct actions. Conversely, anarchist anti-militarism was based on class struggle and social-political principles. According to

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> A. Quasi, ‘L’antimilitarismo italiano agli inizi del secolo’, *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, vol.11, no.1, 1982, pp.124-25.

<sup>11</sup> G. Cerrito, *L’antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.4 and ff.

<sup>12</sup> G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L’antimilitarismo dal 1861 all’età giolittiana*, p.181.

<sup>13</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell’anarchismo, I*, pp.209-10, and F. Della Peruta, ‘I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)’, in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, p.52.

<sup>14</sup> Vice Pulcino, ‘La libertà di pensiero in Italia’, *Agitiamoci!*, Milan, 22 December 1907.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Comunicati’, *Agitiamoci!*, Milan, 22 December 1907.

these principles, the army represented a cornerstone of the state and a guardian of capitalism. The military was an obstacle on the path to proletarian redemption. Militarism was fought on an ideological level. The concept of authority, patriotic ideals and war among nations were criticized. A general strike was proposed as a means to boycott armed struggles between classes and between nations.<sup>16</sup> The army was seen as an institution aimed at defending economic privileges and social injustice. In Fabbri's words: '[w]ithout the army, without soldiers, without people who exercise violence as a job, then political and economic privileges will not be able to persist.' Fabbri continued his analysis affirming that '[a]s long as there will be a government, as long as there will be a parliament, and thus as long as there will be laws, policemen and soldiers will be needed to make people observe the law.' Fabbri identified a point of convergence between anarchists and anti-militarists:

Logically, he who fights against militarism fights also the authoritarian system; he who wants to be a real anti-militarist has to be an anarchist too. Vice versa, an anarchist is interested in spreading his own ideas; he has the duty of being anti-militarist, because militarism is the most hideous form of authoritarian violence and the first enemy of freedom.<sup>17</sup>

Milanese anarchists' anti-militarist campaign had different purposes: first, the destruction of the army through acts of rebellion and through the desertion of conscripts; second, the release of all prisoners detained for political reasons or for participating in workers' strikes, victims of state repression and military violence. Finally, the anti-militarist campaign amplified the voice of those who opposed the Italian war in Libya. Yet, given the lack of unity and organisation among Milanese anarchists, initiatives arose from significant events. The drama of Augusto Masetti and Antonio Moroni, discussed later in this chapter, developed from this climate and stimulated other anti-militarist initiatives.

Anti-militarist debates exposed the presence of different ideas among anarchists. An issue at stake, for example, was represented by conscription. Despite their opposition, enlistment and desertion, even in peace time, were both seen as possible alternative approaches. Being recruited meant, for the anarchists, the opportunity to attract members of the army from within the military institution, through the spreading

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<sup>16</sup> Comitato Nazionale Torino, 'Antimilitarismo', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 23 February 1906. See also the reply of the editorial board.

<sup>17</sup> L. Fabbri, 'La lotta antimilitarista', in L. Fabbri, *Questioni urgenti*, Paterson, N.J., cited in G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.7.

of ideas that undermined patriotism and authority. Moreover, even within the anti-militarist movement, contrasts between organisational and anti-organisational anarchists became evident. Some anti-organisational anarchists refused to take part in anti-militarist meetings and organisations: ‘Our anti-militarism is not able to attend congresses.’<sup>18</sup> Anti-militarism, as well as anti-clericalism, was seen as a way of life: ‘It shows itself and it works everywhere, restlessly. Within the family, through individual, moral and legal relationships, sometimes in the streets, everywhere, every time it’s needed.’<sup>19</sup> This kind of anti-militarism did not need agendas or items to be voted at congresses, because ‘[i]t is in our own consciousness and it works through a constant action ... Our propaganda is constituted of deeds ...’ Nonetheless, also in Milan many anarchists took part in the constitution of the first Italian section of the IAMA. On 25 August 1904 Libero Merlino spoke at the meeting held at the *Salone dell’Arte Moderna*,<sup>20</sup> explaining the need for an anti-militarist organisation to oppose the ‘misery caused by wars and permanent armies’.<sup>21</sup> According to Miles, author of an article published by *Il Grido della Folla*, this organisation had to be inclusive:

As within chambers of labour and unions there are socialists, republicans and anarchists without any of these rejecting their own ideals ... , so can we fight against militarism, within the international anti-militarist [organisation], without giving up an inch of our principles.<sup>22</sup>

Within the country, Italy’s colonial project had to face the opposition of anarchists and anti-militarists. Demonstrations and strikes were repressed by police and the army. The anti-militarist movement was characterised more than any other by the activities of anarchist women. Zelmira Binazzi, Maria Rygier, Leda Rafanelli, Emma Pagliai, Ersilia Mazzoni and Nella Giacomelli moved the role of women away from the margins of the anarchist movement.<sup>23</sup> Women were at the forefront of the anti-militarist campaign. With their words, articles and conferences, women influenced and led the movement. Anarchist women emphasised education and respect of human life. The link between anti-militarism and education was expressed in a pamphlet addressed to mothers. With

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<sup>18</sup> Qualcuno, ‘Il Congresso per il Libero Pensiero’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 September 1904. See also P.C. Masini, *Storia degli anarchici italiani nell’epoca degli attentati*, p.218.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Conferenza Merlino’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 September 1904.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Atto costitutivo della Associazione Internazionale Militarista’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 10 September 1904.

<sup>22</sup> Miles, ‘La funzione pratica di una internazionale antimilitarista’, *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 3 September 1904.

<sup>23</sup> See DBAI, *ad nomen*. See also F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, *La donna e il Militarismo*, Rome, 1906.

this pamphlet, Leda Rafanelli urged the teaching of other ‘noble aspirations’: ‘If only children could read our books that are seized, and that are full of wise advices and affection for brotherhood ... But those books are banned.’<sup>24</sup> Rafanelli criticized the education system that pushed children to ‘get excited about war stories.’ According to Rafanelli, through war-stories ‘the child ... dreams of becoming a soldier’:

And he imagines seeing the ENEMY falling dead to the ground, of seeing his troops winning, dirty with enemy’s blood ... and so, the hatred for another man develops in the brains of children ...<sup>25</sup>

Thus, anti-militarist education was seen by anarchist women as an effective tool for long-term change. According to Rafanelli, mothers could ‘take those thoughts away from children, teaching those noble aspirations and the love that men, by natural laws, must give one another ...’ In doing this, children would have been placed ‘on the true road of light and future freedom’.<sup>26</sup>

Maria Rygier became one of the leaders of the anti-militarist movement. She was born in Florence in 1885 and in 1904 moved with her mother to Milan.<sup>27</sup> Despite a conservative education, Maria joined the Socialist party and began to contribute to socialist, unionist and anarchist journals.<sup>28</sup> Her house became a meeting place for activists. Within this milieu, Filippo Corridoni emerged as a leading figure.<sup>29</sup> In 1907, Rygier participated in the constitution of the IAMA. Together with Corridoni, Rygier founded the anti-militarist journal *Rompete le file! (Dismissed!)*.<sup>30</sup> Soon the journal became the mouthpiece of Milanese anti-militarists. For Rygier and Corridoni anti-militarism represented a powerful tool to push towards social revolution. The journal’s subtitle indicated a compromise between anarchists and revolutionary unionists influenced by Sorel: ‘The army cannot be ignored. The army has to be conquered. We will make the revolution with the army, not against it.’<sup>31</sup> The journal suggested the use of radical direct action in order to undermine the concept of homeland. According to Cerrito, the journal, influenced by Gustave Hervé’s *La guerre sociale*, used an

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<sup>24</sup> Leda Rafanelli, *Alle madri italiane*, Florence, Libreria Editrice G. Nerbini, n.d., pp.6-7.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>28</sup> M. Antonioli, ‘Nazionalismo sovversivo?’, *Rivista storica dell’anarchismo*, vol.9, no.1, 2002, p.17.

<sup>29</sup> MOIDB, *ad nomen*.

<sup>30</sup> On *Rompete le file!*, published first in Milan and then in Bologna, and forced by authorities to interrupt its activities in 1913, see L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell’anarchismo*, I, pp.201-03.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

‘aristocratic and demagogic language’ that deceived the reader, and it encouraged the use of ‘drastic remedies in order to defeat the military and to undermine the idea of homeland’.<sup>32</sup> Cerrito’s use of the adjective ‘aristocratic’ might be interpreted as a subtle critique of Rygier and Corridoni. However, it is not surprising, since both of them, with the outbreak of WWI, joined the interventionist camp. According to Bosworth, within this group, ‘the great majority nourished a deep belief in their intellectuality and self importance’.<sup>33</sup> Rygier and Corridoni’s ‘aristocratic’ language fits this description. The journal’s subtitles explained its program in a nutshell: ‘né un soldo né un soldato al militarismo’ (neither a penny nor a soldier to militarism) and ‘nostra patria il mondo intero’ (the world is our homeland). With the first issues, the journal addressed its ideological principles: ‘The army counts for nothing but to protect robberies committed by the elite, by the bourgeoisie.’<sup>34</sup> The final goal was ‘to dissolve the army; the strike of weapons is our goal’.<sup>35</sup> Yet, according to the journal, proletarians needed to ‘understand that they do not have a homeland ... and that ... their only enemies are those who prevent them from being emancipated. Only then the social question will be on its way to be solved’.<sup>36</sup> Along this line, homeland was defined as a ‘prejudice instilled in ignorant minds by the dominant class in order to justify its thefts’.<sup>37</sup>

The journal *Rompete le file!* was distributed for free inside barracks, and it was a co-production of anarchists and revolutionary unionists. Despite their ideological differences which were occasionally remarked, anarchists and revolutionary unionists worked side by side.<sup>38</sup> At first sight, a point of divergence between anarchists and revolutionary unionists was represented by Hervé’s idea of the ‘armed nation’ and his belief in the necessity of having an army to defend the revolution.<sup>39</sup> However, the main difference rested upon the approach to anti-militarism, and the different political use that anarchists and unionists made of it. In fact, according to Cerrito, the anti-militarism of revolutionary unionists, which initially was a means of propaganda, became ‘exclusive’ and, eventually, confused with the real end.<sup>40</sup> This was not the case for the anarchists, who ascribed to anti-militarism a purely instrumental function in the making

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<sup>32</sup> G. Cerrito, *L’antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.15.

<sup>33</sup> R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini’s Italy*, London, Allen Lane, 2005, p.53.

<sup>34</sup> *Rompete le file* [editors], ‘Incominciando’, *Rompete le file!*, Milan, 2 February 1907.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Spartacus, ‘Divagazioni sulla patria’, *Rompete le file!*, Milan, 2 February 1907.

<sup>38</sup> G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L’antimilitarismo dal 1861 all’età giolittiana*, p.181.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.182-90.

<sup>40</sup> G. Cerrito, *L’antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.15.

of a libertarian society. Moreover, anarchists allowed more flexibility in terms of strategy and means in this campaign. An article published by *La Protesta Umana* emphasized the importance of this multiplicity: ‘... As human beings are different one from another ... so it is absurd to force everyone to endorse the same form of propaganda.’<sup>41</sup> An example helped to explain this eclectic position:

It is possible that a soldier, who is not so brave as to kill a braided murderer, might feel strong enough to sabotage the railway in order to prevent a military train from taking our brothers to the border butchery or to repress a strike; another soldier, instead of shooting at our brother-workers, might fire blanks; another one might be able to spread anti-militarist pamphlets in the barracks; finally, another one might think to convince his mates at the *osteria*, during leisure hours. Therefore, we say that all forms of anti-militarist propaganda are useful; only one form would be ineffective, all together they complete each other and they lead our aspirations to victory.<sup>42</sup>

Anarchists translated into deeds these indications, inside and outside of the military institution. They used the eloquence of speakers and the appeals of writers; symbolic individual actions spread throughout the country; the refusal, as well as the acceptance of conscription was based on ideological reasons. Recruitment was seen as a way to live side by side with soldiers and try to convince them to switch to the proletarians’ side. Revolutionary unionists shared this method of propaganda within the army, believing that the individual act of rebellion was useless and damaging. Unlike anarchists and revolutionary unionists, the socialists were not keen on denouncing the military institution *tout court*. On the one hand, socialists looked at the parliament as the proper place for reforming the army, particularly through the reduction of military budget and reforms of military organisations.<sup>43</sup> Socialists’ moderate anti-militarism appeared to be the result of their concern for Italy’s financial debts. Yet even among the socialists there were some individuals who sympathized with Hervé’s program.<sup>44</sup>

The diversity of thought within the anarchist movement was translated into different types of initiatives to campaign against militarism and the war in Libya. Publications and conferences were not the only means of propaganda. Episodes of radical direct actions recalled the heroic phase of individualist anarchism and made,

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<sup>41</sup> La Protesta Umana [editors], ‘Antimilitarismo’, *La Protesta Umana*, Milan, 1 December 1906.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> A. Quasi, ‘L’antimilitarismo italiano agli inizi del secolo’, *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, vol.11, no.1, 1982, p.140.

<sup>44</sup> G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L’antimilitarismo dal 1861 all’età giolittiana*, pp.182-91.

once more, the anti-dogmatic nature of anarchism evident. An example of direct action had Giovanni Manfredi as the protagonist. Manfredi was an individualist anarchist and a reader of *Il Grido della Folla*. Like many other Milanese anarchists Manfredi became involved with the anti-militarist campaign. He expressed his protest against the military with a sensational act. On 20 January 1904, near the *Teatro La Scala*, Manfredi stabbed a lieutenant with a knife. On the knife's handle he had carved the words: 'W l'anarchia, W la rivoluzione sociale, Morte ai parassiti' (Long live anarchy, long live social revolution, death to parasites). The lieutenant did not die. Manfredi explained that his deed was a protest 'against militarism and against non productive costs'.<sup>45</sup>

The anti-militarist campaign encompassed other related issues, such as the condition of revolutionaries in Russia, the disciplinary regiments and the release of political prisoners. Anti-militarism glued together different campaigns and protagonists. After 1905 Milanese anarchists began to denounce the repression of Russian revolutionaries. Critiques of the Russian government became a leitmotiv of the anti-militarist campaign.<sup>46</sup> During a meeting held on 14 January 1906, Gavilli stressed the necessity of abolishing the military that was trying to repress the revolution.<sup>47</sup> The anti-militarist campaign had just begun to spread throughout Italy. Pamphlets, leaflets, manifestos, journals and single issues were printed and distributed among soldiers and conscripts. The *compagnie di disciplina* (disciplinary regiments) increased their ranks especially through the presence of anti-militarist anarchists. Influenced by the reading of *Rompete le file!*, deserters fled to Switzerland and to France. Authorities replied persecuting the journal's editors: in October 1907 Corridoni was sentenced to several years of prison, and a few months later Rygier was also brought to trial. By then, Rygier had become the leader of the Italian anti-militarist movement.<sup>48</sup> To replace the seizing of *Rompete le file!*, single issues were published. On 9 May 1907, a single issue titled *Rompete le righe!* (Break ranks!) was published in Milan for the commemoration of the May 1898 victims. Attention was paid to the psychological aspect of the anti-militarist campaign:

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<sup>45</sup> 'L'attentato della *Scala*', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 21 January 1904. More information on Giovanni Manfredi has not been found.

<sup>46</sup> See *Il Giacobino di guardia*, 'In Russia', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 16 December 1905; Ravachol [Massimo Rocca], 'Il significato di una bomba', *Il Grido della Folla*, Milan, 6 May 1905.

<sup>47</sup> ASM, *Gabineto di Prefettura*, b. 937, fasc. *Gavilli Giovanni*, police chief's note, 15 January 1906.

<sup>48</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.17.

we need to change the soldier's psychology; we need to turn him from a slave of braided officials to a man who thinks about what he does; only then, we won't have more 1898s.<sup>49</sup>

In the meantime, the journal *Rompete le file!* moved to Bologna where it began to be published again in 1909. The political sense of the anti-militarist campaign became evident: this propaganda represented a potential treat for the political and social order.

Despite police persecution, Milanese anarchists were able to carry out different kind of activities together with socialists and revolutionary unionists. Some attempts were not successful, such as the constitution of *Comitati Antimilitaristi per la Diserzione* (Anti-militarist committees supporting desertion).<sup>50</sup> Other initiatives were part of a national scale campaign. For example, the insurance fund named *Il soldo al soldato* (Money to the soldier), was nation-wide and saw anarchists working together with chambers of labours and socialist youth clubs. During the war in Libya, members of this redundancy fund received a monthly check, and, in exchange, they were asked to spread anti-militarist propaganda – books and pamphlets – within the army. Authorities were aware of this organisation but they could not persecute soldiers' family members. Yet the effectiveness of *Il soldo al soldato* was limited to the funds available.<sup>51</sup> A similar initiative was carried out in France and in Belgium, and it represented an 'attempt to set up a long term anti-militarist campaign within the army ...'.<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, attempts to raise anti-militarist consciousness among soldiers generated frustration.

Anarchists and anti-militarists in general developed even more sophisticated and original means of propaganda. On the occasion of the Libyan war,<sup>53</sup> in 1911 a libertarian committee against the war was founded in Milan.<sup>54</sup> At the end of the year, Milanese anarchists organised a public meeting to protest against the war and publicized

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<sup>49</sup> Enjolras, 'Martiri?', *Rompete le righe!*, Milan, 9 May 1907.

<sup>50</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089, *Antimilitaristi. Propaganda sovversiva fra i militari*, Minister of Interior to Milan prefect, 1 February 1909.

<sup>51</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089, Minister of Interior to prefects, 11 July 1912. See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089, Minister of Interior to Milan prefect, 9 June 1913.

<sup>52</sup> G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L'antimilitarismo dal 1861 all'età giolittiana*, p.218.

<sup>53</sup> On anti-militarism during the Italo-Lybian war see: G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L'antimilitarismo dal 1861 all'età giolittiana*, pp.203-16; Francesco Malgeri, *La guerra libica (1911-1912)*, Rome, Ediz. Di Storia e Letteratura, 1970; G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna, VII*, pp.312-29; M. Degli Innocenti, *Il socialismo italiano e la guerra di Libia*, Rome, Edizioni Riuniti, 1976; M. Puccini, 'La polemica antireligiosa e antimilitarista. L' 'Università Popolare' di fronte all'impresa di Libia e alla guerra mondiale', *Volontà*, vol.24, no.5, Pistoia, September-October 1971, pp.369-84.

<sup>54</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 937, fasc. *Ferrari Arturo*, police chief's note, 30 December 1911; See also ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., 1911, b. 47 cat. K1, *Movimento anarchico*, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 28 November 1911.

the initiative with the spread of leaflets in factories.<sup>55</sup> One month earlier they had also tried to distribute some anti-militarist posters coming from Parma. However, they had been caught by the police.<sup>56</sup> During the Libyan war, Milanese anarchists redoubled their efforts and arose as the vanguard of the anti-militarist movement. During the demonstrations against the Italian colonial project in Africa, two soldiers became symbols of the Italian anti-militarist and anti-war movement. One of them, Moroni, was based in Milan.

## 5.2 Masetti and Moroni

The anti-militarist campaign gained strength from the Masetti episode. On 30 October 1911, just before leaving for the conflict in Libya, the Bolognese anarchist soldier Augusto Masetti shot at his group's leader, colonel Stroppa, yelling out '*Viva l'anarchia! Abbasso la guerra!*' (Long live anarchy! Down with the war!).<sup>57</sup> This episode generated polemics, debates and a massive campaign for the release of Masetti. The soldier was placed in custody in a mental hospital. Government propaganda advocated the introduction of death penalty for such acts and accused the anti-militarist and anarchist movements of being responsible for the shooting. Anarchists replied elevating Masetti to the status of an icon of anti-militarism and organised a campaign to support him. *Rompete le file!* became the mouthpiece of this campaign. In the journal there was space for analysis, justification of Masetti's deed, critiques of and accusations against conservative media and the bourgeoisie:

The hatred of the bourgeois media, which ... accuses all anarchists of complicity, is the clearest demonstration of the extraordinary importance that our enemies give to the deed of our Hero.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S 1911, b. 47, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 3 December 1911.

<sup>56</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1911, b. 44 cat. J1, *Antimilitarismo*, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 7 November 1911.

<sup>57</sup> MOIDB, *ad nomen*, DBAI, *ad nomen*: Masetti was arrested on 30 October 1911 and released from the mental hospital on 15 September 1919.

<sup>58</sup> Gli Anarchici, 'Il nostro pensiero sull'attentato di Augusto Masetti', *Rompete le file!*, Milan, 1 October 1911. This text was also printed as a manifesto. See also G. Oliva, *Esercito, paese e movimento operaio. L'antimilitarismo dal 1861 all'età giolittiana*, pp.233-35.

Masetti was considered a hero because ‘nothing like that had happened in the past. ... nobody had dared to challenge militarism so openly ....’<sup>59</sup> Soldiers were seen as victims and an appeal to Italian mothers was launched:

Italian mothers, you mourn your sons killed in the hideous African war; young outcasts with a uniform, [who have been] pushed towards a cruel destiny by the blind will of governments; be grateful to your vindicator.<sup>60</sup>

Of course, the vindicator was the anarchist Masetti. According to Masetti’s supporters, he was the anarchist avenger who had to be ‘praised’ by those ‘miserable families of conscripts, who have to pay with misery and hunger for the imperial dream of the bourgeoisie’, and by ‘proletarians of Italy, who can see ... economic and moral redemption being postponed’.<sup>61</sup> Anarchists declared their ‘unconditional solidarity with Augusto Masetti’.<sup>62</sup> This stance was a way to affirm the righteousness of their anti-military choice: ‘so that our civilization is not dishonoured by the horrors of war; so that the workers’ jobs are not the production of tools of death and oppression against their brothers; so that the wonderful discoveries of human genius are not used to destroy.’<sup>63</sup>

The campaign for Masetti’s release saw a huge participation of Milanese anarchists. They recounted the reasons the Italian government was at war in Africa. These causes were found in the imperial aspirations of the king and in the greediness of the *Banco di Roma* (Bank of Rome).<sup>64</sup> Moreover, according to the anarchist Armando Borghi, the Italian war in Libya had increased the gap between the war monger bourgeoisie and the working class.<sup>65</sup> The initiatives in support of Masetti spread throughout the country. In this turbulent climate, judges decided not to sentence Masetti to life imprisonment. Instead he was sent to a mental hospital for criminals. This outcome did not halt the anarchists’ campaign for the release of Masetti. They wanted Masetti to be either moved to a civilian mental hospital in case he was diagnosed insane or, even better, to be set free.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Gli Anarchici, ‘Il nostro pensiero sull’attentato di Augusto Masetti’, *Rompete le file!*, Milan, 1 October 1911.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089, not dated manifesto, signed by *Gli anarchici* and printed for the commemoration of Ferrer.

<sup>65</sup> A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, p.134.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, pp.137-38.

In Milan, the most active anarchists for the release of Masetti were Luigi Molinari, Leda Rafanelli, Aida Latini, Arturo Ferrari, and Augusto Norsa.<sup>67</sup> For all anarchist activists, the campaign in support of Masetti and against militarism in general represented an opportunity for unity, an inspiration to be active and finally a means of solidarity. In fact, the anti-militarist campaign did not wipe away the problems of the Milanese anarchist movement: police persecution, financial problems, and lack of resources and of militants remained constant throughout this intense period of grassroots activities. Moreover, the Milanese anarchist movement confirmed some of its long standing attitudes: in order to present itself as an active political subject, the movement responded to specific events (such as Masetti's arrest) or to a trans-local context (such as the Libyan war). The means of propaganda were, as always, committees, rallies, manifestos, leaflets, pamphlets and conferences, often advocating a general strike.<sup>68</sup> Here is reproduced the text of one of the anti-militarist leaflets prepared by Milanese anarchists:

Worker-soldier! (...) Government, nationalists, capitalists, politicians, bloodsuckers, policemen, spies, and all those, who (...) yesterday were beating your brothers because they were protesting against the war, will tell you: Go on, soldier, get killed for the greatness of Italy, to extend its borders beyond the Mediterranean! That's what the golden scoundrel will tell you, but you will not believe it. In reality, they send you to kill and to get killed for their own interests, because they need to exploit new horizons. And when the war will be over, and you will have buried your dead, (...) you will claim bread and work for yourself and for your brothers; they, your oppressors, will reply with the same answer they have always used: bullets, massacres and prisons. Worker-soldier! Remember Frederick the Great who said 'If my soldiers began to think, not one would remain in the ranks.' Look after your only property - your life - for the people's goal which is also your goal: desert from the army and get armed only against privileges, for Social Revolution and for Anarchy.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, police chief's note, 2 February 1912 and 6 February 1912. See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, bb. 937-940, *Anarchici, Pratiche individuali*, and ACS, CPC, *ad nomen*.

<sup>68</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., 1914, b. 23, cat. C2, *Agitazioni*, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 23 January 1913.

<sup>69</sup> Available in ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089.

In July 1912, Milanese anarchists supported Molinari and Norsa's project of a weekly journal titled *Il Giornale Anarchico*.<sup>70</sup> During a meeting held on 16 June 1912, Norsa announced the names of its editors (E. Molinari, L. Molinari, N. Giacomelli, Felice and Guido Mazzocchi) and recommended avoiding polemics among anarchists.<sup>71</sup> In its first issue, anarchists criticised false beliefs about war promoted by the government:

Warmongers say they bring civilization to barbarians. Let's see. Civilization means wealth, science, freedom, justice, it means ... giving up and condemning brutal fights, and it means the progression of solidarity, and of voluntary and conscious cooperation ... Is this what soldiers, paid by the Bank of Rome, go to Africa for?<sup>72</sup>

In 1912 the anti-militarist campaign added a new theme: the drama of Antonio Moroni shed light on disciplinary regiments. The Milanese soldier Antonio Moroni was a sympathiser of anarchism. With a letter to an anarchist journal Moroni denounced the climate of oppression that he had to face because of his ideas. Moroni was prosecuted for his statements and was transferred to a disciplinary regiment.<sup>73</sup> Several organisations, such as the *Fascio Libertario Milanese*, the *Sindacato dei ferrovieri* (Railway-workers union), the Socialist Party, the USI and other unions joined the campaign in support of Moroni. Several meetings and gatherings were held throughout the city. A manifesto was released with an appeal to save Moroni, and 'to avoid a crime':

Workers! Militarism has caught another of our comrades and is torturing him in its disciplinary regiments, because he is guilty of having declared his revolutionary ideas. The Milanese printer Antonio Moroni has been destined to ... martyrdom following the report of the police chief Cosentino, who described Moroni as a fervent anti-militarist. We invite you to the first of a series of conferences to protest, to ask for freedom for our comrade, to cry our reproach to the stranglers of freedom ... Not one activist shall desert his spot.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, pp.249-50, and F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)', in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, p.137.

<sup>71</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 565, *Riviste e Periodici*, Milan police chief to prefect, 18 June 1912. See also ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 565, Milan police chief to prefect, 15 and 16 May 1912 and 17 June 1912.

<sup>72</sup> *Il Giornale Anarchico*, Milan, 27 July 1912.

<sup>73</sup> For Moroni, see MOIDB, *ad nomen*; DBAI, *ad nomen*; L. Lotti, *La settimana rossa, ad indicem*, G. Cerrito, *Dall'insurrezionalismo alla Settimana Rossa. Per una storia dell'anarchismo in Italia (1881-1914)*, *ad indicem*, G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.30 and ff.

<sup>74</sup> Manifesto titled 'Per impedire un delitto', in ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089.

On the evening of 22 March 1913, Milanese anarchists demonstrated with all their boldness. After a conference named ‘*Socialismo e Anarchismo*’, they marched towards the gaol where Moroni was detained. Around 20 anarchists and other revolutionaries stood up and called for Moroni, yelling out cries of sympathy for him. The arrival of policemen made the anarchists run away.<sup>75</sup> At the beginning of 1913, two letters were sent to Masetti and Moroni and they were signed by a supposed anarchist group *La cravatta nera* (Black tie). Authorities were concerned with the existence of this subversive organisation. Soon they found out that such a group did not exist and the two letters were the work of Pietro Mandelli ‘in order to gain importance for himself and for the letters’.<sup>76</sup> Along this line, a subscription of 10 *Lire* to the anarchist journal *L’Avvenire Anarchico* of Pisa made by an alleged ‘communist anarchist group of Milan’ was actually the work of Arturo Ferrari and another few anarchists who disagreed with Luigi Molinari and the promoters of *Il Giornale Anarchico*.<sup>77</sup> According to authorities, these episodes were not isolated events but, rather, represented a tendency within the Milanese anarchist movement:

So far in Milan there is not any anarchist group, despite the propaganda carried out for this purpose by known anarchists such as Ferrari Arturo, Norsa Augusto and others (...). Due to the fact that they do not have their own premises, small groups of anarchists met during non-working days in some *osteria* in different suburbs. There they talk about libertarian journalism, about the so called political victims and other current affairs. Often, during these meetings they agree to write or to send subscriptions to libertarian journals, on behalf of alleged anarchist groups of *Porta Tenaglia*, or *Porta Villa* or *Porta Vigentina*, etc ... names used on that occasion, according to the place where the meeting has been held, in order to give importance to the deed. Real groups with some form of long-term organisation are not born and they are not going to be. So far, all the attempts made to constitute a general organisation failed because of the disagreement among the promoters: when the well known Giovanni Gavilli was in Milan, meetings in *osterie* were frequent and correspondence with anarchist journals on behalf of inexistent groups with pompous names were inspired by him. Other did so, and they continue to do it.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1914, b. 23, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 25 March 1913.

<sup>76</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, fasc. *Gruppo Anarchico ‘La Cravatta Nera’*. For Mandelli’s letters see ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1914, b. 23, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 24 January 1913.

<sup>77</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 22 May 1912.

<sup>78</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 16 May 1912.

The long-standing organisational crisis of the Milanese movement was evident to the authorities. In 1913, rumours of a regional anarchist congress organised by the *Fascio Libertario Milanese* did not impress the Milan prefect who wrote:

Given the period of apathy which seems to dominate this subversive organisation ..., the possibility is not to be excluded that such a congress is not going to happen, like many other proposals or initiatives which did not find support both within and without the *Fascio*.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, the anti-militarist campaign carried out by anarchists helped them unify, despite their ideological differences. In fact, the struggle against the military institution brought together organisational and anti-organisational anarchists, supporters of libertarian pedagogy and revolutionary unionists. An opportunity for unity was offered by the several meetings that were held in the city. Formal and informal meetings were neither the gateway to the revolution nor did they have a huge public impact, especially if they were held privately. But it was not anything the anarchists' could control. The authorities prevented anarchists from having public meetings fearing the spread of anti-militarist propaganda.<sup>80</sup>

The government's repressive attitude illustrated its concern about the power of anti-militarist ideas. Authorities worried that anarchists were acting together with other political organisations, such as the republicans, socialists and revolutionary unionists. The unity of Italian left parties represented a true threat. The Milanese committee was composed of 15 individuals from the anarchist, socialist, revolutionary unionist and republican movement, whose purpose was to coordinate propaganda and actions against the disciplinary regiments. In addition, Milanese left-wing parties and organisations, including the anarchist *Fascio Libertario Milanese*, joined the national committee in support of Moroni. Among the economic and political groups supporting the national committee were the *Unione Sindacale Milanese*, Chamber of Labour, *Partito Socialista Sez. Milanese* (Milanese branch of the Socialist party), *Circoli Repubblicani* (Republican clubs), *Circolo Giovanile socialista rivoluzionario* (Socialist revolutionary youth club), *Fascio Libertario Greco* (Greco libertarian group), *Liberio Pensiero* (Free thought group), *Comitato Pro Masetti* (Committee in support of Masetti).<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 29 July 1913.

<sup>80</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089, Milan police chief to prefect, 25 June 1914.

<sup>81</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 1089, Milan police chief to prefect, 22 March 1914. See also ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1914, b. 23.

Thus the anti-militarist campaign, and in particular initiatives for the release of Masetti and Moroni, had the effect of bringing together different sectors of the Italian left. On the eve of the First World War, this unity represented a serious concern for the government. The outbreak of Red Week and its consequent failure marked a turning point for Italian anarchists who saw, once again, revolution on the horizon. Yet, like the horizon, as the anarchists moved one step forward, so did the revolution.<sup>82</sup>

### 5.3 Red Week

In May 1914 Italian revolutionaries, led by Malatesta and Borghi, decided to hold a demonstration in support of Masetti on the first Sunday of the following month (7 June 1914). On this date, an official celebration of the anniversary of the Italian Statute was on the agenda. A series of conferences and meetings were held throughout the country supporting the release of Masetti and Moroni. In case of violence with the police, the organisers planned a general strike. Where authorities prohibited the initiatives, meetings were held at the local chambers of labour. In Milan, despite the arrest of some revolutionaries, including the anarchist Vittorio Ghigini, the situation was relatively peaceful. At the *Casa del Popolo* Luigi Molinari and Leonardi spoke on behalf of the anarchists, Filippo Corridoni for the *Unione Sindacale*, Franco Marinai for the *Camera del Lavoro*, Giovanni Bitelli for the *Sindacato Ferrovieri* and Franco Ciarlantini for the socialists.<sup>83</sup> According to the socialist newspaper *Avanti!*, during the meeting an item proposed by Molinari was approved:

The Milanese people, gathered together in a meeting (held privately because of the bullying of authorities) against the disciplinary regiments, acknowledges that such a inhuman system of torture is the result of militarism, a barbaric economic-social institution, and wishes that the movement might spread throughout Italy and might intensify its actions against the military institution, which is an open and evident violation of any basic concept of freedom and justice. [The Milanese people also] sends its warm regards to all martyrs of anti-militarist thought.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> See E. Galeano's poem, *Ventana sobre la Utopía*: 'Ella está en el horizonte -dice Fernando Birri-. Me acerco dos pasos, ella se aleja dos pasos. Camino diez pasos y el horizonte se corre diez pasos más allá. Por mucho que yo camine, nunca la alcanzaré. ¿Para que sirve la utopía? Para eso sirve: para caminar.'

<sup>83</sup> *Avanti!*, Milan, 8 June 1914.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

On 10 June 1914, the situation in Ancona degenerated: two casualties and a series of riots, including episodes of rebellion within the army, caused a national general strike. Popular discontent erupted in the Adriatic region and spread rapidly through other regions. Rural and urban workers were all involved. Railway services were cut off, landlords' properties raided and troops disarmed. Under the leadership of anarchists and the USI, for a few days this national insurrection seemed to be the beginning of a social revolution. In Milan, the USI and the Chamber of Labour launched a general strike without waiting for approval from the CGdL. Moreover, the Chamber of Labour and the Milanese socialist section did not approve the CGdL's order to interrupt the strike. The city centre was controlled by police forces and fights occurred in *Porta Venezia* and in *Piazza Duomo* when groups of strikers tried to invade the city centre. One thousand people were arrested and Corridoni was one of them. According to the historian Santarelli, 'given the presence of unionists and socialist revolutionaries, Milan represented the vanguard of insurrection in Northern Italy'.<sup>85</sup>

Milanese anarchists did not stand out during the revolt. They joined other parties, trying to support strikers. The Red Week in Milan caused one fatality and several injuries. This overview is from the police report:

On the 9<sup>th</sup>, groups of strikers forced shops to close. In *Piazza Duomo*, a regiment of *carabinieri* that moved to drive back a strong group of strikers was targeted with shootings and stones. The cavalry charged several times. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, there were shootings between a column of nationalists and a group of strikers. Riots continued and police forces were targeted again with shootings and stones.<sup>86</sup>

On this occasion the controversial figure of Aida Latini emerged. Latini (1882-1932), Carlo Molaschi's former partner, was originally from Tuscany. She moved to Milan and after 1908 Latini had been active in spreading anarchist ideas among workers.<sup>87</sup> Latini was arrested, then released and then arrested again during the general strike of railroad workers.<sup>88</sup> She never contributed articles to anarchist journals; rather, she preferred grass-roots activism, influencing other workers with speeches, actions and her own determination. This determination grabbed the attention of police who described Latini

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<sup>85</sup> E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, p.161. See also L. Lotti, *La settimana rossa*.

<sup>86</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., 1914, b. 22, cat. C2, *Agitazioni*. On the Red Week in Milan see also ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1914, b. 23, cat. C2, fasc. *Milano*, Milan police chief to Minister of Interior, 13 August 1914.

<sup>87</sup> DBAI, *ad nomen*; ACS, CPC, b. 2729, fasc. *Latini Aida*; ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 938, fasc. *Latini Aida*.

<sup>88</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 2729.

as a 'violent character'. Latini was involved with the anti-militarist campaign; however, her anarchist comrades began to view her with suspicion when she showed sympathy for fascism.

During the Red Week the Italian revolutionary movement came very close to overthrowing the monarchy. Yet it was not defeated by the power of the government. Conversely, on this occasion, the ambivalence of the CGdL became evident. Members of the CGdL were ordered to go back to work. The insurrection collapsed. The defection of moderate trade unionists brought the movement to an end. Anarchists and revolutionaries remained disillusioned with the CGdL. However, the pattern established in the Red Week was going to be repeated six years later. After the events of the Red Week, the Milanese anti-militarist committee had to focus on the people arrested, especially railway workers and unionists. A special subcommittee was formed for this purpose, constituted by a republican, a revolutionary socialist, the anarchist Arturo Ferrari for the FLM and Vittorio Ghigini for the USI.<sup>89</sup> During a meeting held two months after the uprising, Ghigini, who was also a member of the FLM, affirmed that 'people had to rise against the unjustified persecution'.<sup>90</sup> Ghigini was born in Sondrio in 1887 and was an anti-militarist activist until the outbreak of WWI. In 1914 Ghigini was among the subscribers to a memorandum aimed at organising and coordinating anarchists from Switzerland and Lombardy.<sup>91</sup> Although the project did not eventuate, Ghigini stood out from the Milanese anarchist movement as an organisational activist. During a meeting he proposed that the entire Milanese population gathered in front of the tribunal on the occasion of Corridoni's trial.<sup>92</sup> The anti-militarist campaign continued until WWI broke out. With the world conflict the anti-militarist front crumbled. Anarchists were forced by state repression, conscription and censorship to retreat to individual positions. Thus any attempt at unity within the movement was undermined. Yet the freedom to choose one's position was a dominant feature of anarchism. Freedom of thought prevailed also within a context of war.

During the Red Week, Malatesta and the anarchists were said to have played the role of the subversive vanguard. This interpretation is a leitmotiv of anarchist historiography, which tends to stress the insurrectional and spontaneous nature of

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<sup>89</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S., 1914, b. 23, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 23 July 1914.

<sup>90</sup> ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1914, b. 23, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 11 July 1914.

<sup>91</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 2360, fasc. *Ghigini Vittorio*. In 1915 Ghigini became an interventionist. See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 937, fasc. *Ghigini Vittorio*.

<sup>92</sup> See ACS, *Min. Int.*, P.S. 1914, b. 23, Milan prefect to Minister of Interior, 12 July 1914.

anarchism, strengthening the anti-anarchist positions of historians such as Hobsbawm.<sup>93</sup> According to Antonioli, however, this interpretation, although supported by the anarchist movement's tendency to focus on the key role of a revolutionary vanguard, does not catch the organisational stances of Italian anarchism. In fact, in terms of historiography, the Red Week represented the 'ideal end of a revolutionary process which had matured during the first six months of 1914, and the logical outcome of Italian anarchism's ideological and political renewal since 1912'.<sup>94</sup> The recovery of the anarchist movement was especially due to the proletariat's reactions to the Libyan war as well as to the launch of anti-militarist campaigns after the episode of Masetti. According to Antonioli, a feature of the Italian anarchist movement in 1914 is the attempt to organise itself on a national scale.<sup>95</sup> Different reasons were offered to justify this interpretation: the economic crisis of 1907 and the costs of the war in Africa, together with the crisis of socialist reformism, gave to revolutionary left-wing parties the opportunity and the necessity to define strategic lines of intervention. The birth of the USI in 1912 testified to this turning point. However, at the beginning of the century the relationship between anarchism and the labour movement was not sufficiently strong, and individualist tendencies within the anarchist thought did not improve this relationship. On the contrary, anarchists revealed a general lack of understanding of how industrialisation and the economy in general were changing the country. When the debate between individualists, communists, anti-organisational and organisational anarchists reached an end, the 1913 economic crisis emphasised a need for organisation. However, once again anarchists proved to be unable (or perhaps unwilling) to take over the leadership of the workers' movement. The gap between means and ends was too wide to be filled so quickly. Despite the numerous regional and national congresses that were held in those years, a lack of resources, of means and of an effective proposal, alternative to reformism and syndicalism, did not help anarchists. Eventually, the outbreak of the First World War suddenly interrupted organisational plans and activities run by Italian anarchists.

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<sup>93</sup> See for example L. Lotti, *La settimana rossa*, and E. Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*.

<sup>94</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Il movimento anarchico italiano nel 1914', *Storia e politica*, p.235.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p.237.

## 5.4 The First World War

The outbreak of the war had a massive impact on European political parties and organisations. The Italian and the Milanese anarchist movements were not an exception. Initially Italy opted for neutrality. However, the wise decision of staying out of the war did not last long. Although the great majority of Italians backed neutrality, and anti-interventionist demonstrations spread throughout the country, the government's plan to push for Italian entry into the war succeeded. This decision was supported by some young intellectuals who looked at the intervention in war as an opportunity to form a 'modern' Italy. The presence of a few interventionists among Italian anarchists worked as a filter within the movement. Their presence helped to clarify ideological stances.

Interventionist anarchism was a 'minor phenomenon'<sup>96</sup> that has received too much attention. In fact, according to Masini, it would be incorrect to describe it as a phenomenon, or a current of anarchism, or even a theme for debating.<sup>97</sup> Rather, it was the personal choice of a few individuals.<sup>98</sup> Despite being a common case among European left-wing organisations, the existence of interventionist anarchists became a controversial issue because of their fame. In fact, Libero Tancredi, Oberdan Gigli and Mario Gioda were known for their articles and contributions to individualist anarchist journals.<sup>99</sup> Libero Tancredi, for example, had already moved towards nationalistic positions after the war in Libya.<sup>100</sup> In August 1914, together with unionists and republicans, Tancredi founded the first *Fascio rivoluzionario d'azione internazionalista*, and with an article of his Tancredi pushed Mussolini to expose himself as an interventionist.<sup>101</sup> Gioda and Gigli belonged to the Milanese individualist milieu and their writings mainly dealt with the philosophy of anarchism. The sudden turn taken by Maria Rygier, the 'Joanne D'Arc' of Italian anti-militarism, caused more

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<sup>96</sup> R. De Felice, 'L'interventismo rivoluzionario', in VV.AA., *Il trauma dell'intervento: 1914-1919*, Florence, Vallecchi, 1968, cited in M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.7.

<sup>97</sup> P.C. Masini, 'Gli anarchici italiani tra interventismo e disfattismo rivoluzionario', *Rivista storica del socialismo*, January-March 1959, pp.208-11, and 'Gli anarchici tra neutralità e intervento (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.8, no.2, 2001, pp.9-22.

<sup>98</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.7.

<sup>99</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di anarchici interventisti (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.2, no.1, 1995, pp.77-112.

<sup>100</sup> See L. Tancredi, *Dieci anni di nazionalismo tra i sovversivi d'Italia*, Milan, Il Rinascimento, 1918. It is a collection of some of his writings from 1905. On Tancredi see also M. Antonioli, 'Nazionalismo sovversivo?', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, pp.9-34.

<sup>101</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.38.

comment. Her betrayal of what she had fought for until a few months earlier was instrumentally used by other interventionists. For example, the former revolutionary socialist Benito Mussolini speculated on these individual cases to justify and legitimize his own sudden radical switch.<sup>102</sup> Molinari argued against Mussolini's opinion:

It is time to end this opportunistic lie that a considerable number of anarchists support the war ... Who are, then, these war monger anarchists? Maria Rygier and Libero Tancredi! The former represents nobody but herself; she is free to contradict her noble past and abandoning to their destiny those proletarians in whom she had instilled an anti-militarist consciousness. The latter has never been an anarchist, in scientific terms. His anarchism really is a synonym of chaos, and on this point he surely agrees with the bourgeois newspapers, to which he has always contributed and to which he is giving a benevolent service.<sup>103</sup>

A few months later, in January 1915, Molinari reminded those anarchists who were sensitive to war sirens that the war created by the dominant elites was not the solution for the *questione sociale*:

We do not have to stay still, but we have to continue our struggle in every way and with every means in the field of ideas and everyday life, against dominators of every nation, of every race, of every political party! Always against dominators, never against proletarians!<sup>104</sup>

A few other revolutionaries joined the interventionist front. Despite being a minority,<sup>105</sup> interventionist anarchists were sufficiently determined to publish their own journal, *La Guerra Sociale*, which expressed Hervé's influence on the revolutionary journal.<sup>106</sup> The director of *La Guerra Sociale* was Edoardo Malusardi, who also moved

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<sup>102</sup> On Rygier see, M. Rygier, *Sulla soglia di un'epoca. La nostra patria*, Rome, Libreria Politica Moderna, 1915 and M. Rygier, 'La bancarotta della politica monarchica in Italia', *Il Libertario*, La Spezia, 13 August 1914; For an insight into Mussolini's turn towards intervention and the contribution of French capital see G. Salvemini, *Mussolini diplomatico (1922-1932)*, Bari, Laterza, 1952, pp.419-31.

<sup>103</sup> Letter by Molinari, dated 22 September 1914, sent to Mussolini and published on *L'Università Popolare*, 1-15 October 1914. See also letters of Molinari to N. Giacomelli in M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, pp.15-26.

<sup>104</sup> L. Molinari, 'Ad Arturo Ferrari', *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 January 1915.

<sup>105</sup> M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.8, Antonioli affirms that it is not possible to count the number of interventionist anarchists since they are just 'a bunch of individual cases ...'

<sup>106</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, pp.270-71.

from individualist anarchism to interventionism and finally to fascism.<sup>107</sup> Interventionist anarchists believed in the necessity of fighting to prevent the establishment of a German world order and European militarisation. They also identified war with the idea of revolution. War was seen as an opportunity for a real social change in favour of the European proletariat.<sup>108</sup>

As a matter of fact, most of the interventionist anarchists eventually moved closer to fascism revealing a pattern that developed from individualist anarchism, to interventionism, to nationalism and eventually fascism.<sup>109</sup> Yet among Italian interventionist anarchists there was no prominent figure, as occurred in other countries with the defection of influential figures such as Kropotkin, Malato and Guillaume. In 1915, anarchists from different countries met in London to discuss Kropotkin's unexpected turn.<sup>110</sup> A manifesto supporting the war produced by some eminent anarchists was published in March 1916 in the French journal *La Bataille syndicaliste*. It was written by Kropotkin and Jean Grave and it was called the 'Manifesto of the Sixteen'.

During the first months of war, Malatesta could not express his position in regards to the conflict. All his correspondence was stopped and searched. Since the reasons for his silence were unknown to the rest of the movement, Malatesta's absence soon became a source of concern for Italian anarchists. Finally, in October 1914 a letter sent by Malatesta to Luigi Molinari was published in *L'Università Popolare*. The text helped to clarify Malatesta's choice and, given his leading role within the movement, it also explained the position of the majority of Italian anarchists. In Malatesta's words:

It seems to me that is sufficient to declare oneself to be an anarchist in order to implicitly affirm one's aversion to war and to any other collaboration with governments and bourgeoisie which... have created this appalling catastrophe...<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> See DBAI, *ad nomen*. See also M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di anarchici interventisti (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.105.

<sup>108</sup> Oberdan Gigli, 'Perché siamo interventisti', *La Guerra Sociale*, Milan, 10 February 1915.

<sup>109</sup> M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a Milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.86.

<sup>110</sup> On Kropotkin and WWI see A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, p.155 and G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, pp.40-41. See also J. Maitron, *Pierre Kropotkin et le Manifeste des Seize, Actes du soixante-sixième congrès des Sociétés savantes*, Rennes, 1951, Paris, 1951.

<sup>111</sup> E. Malatesta, letter to Luigi Molinari dated 9 October 1914 and published in *L'Università Popolare*, Milan, 1-15 November 1914. See also G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.43.

According to Cerrito, Malatesta's position against the war has a solid 'ethical foundation':

[I]t is the irreducible opposition to the useless and damaging cult of violence which produces war and reaction; it is the distinction between violence as a necessity of revolutionary defence, and violence as a system to solve social problems.<sup>112</sup>

Soon after the publication of the 'Manifesto of the Sixteen', Malatesta's position in regard to Kropotkin's choice became clear: Malatesta affirmed that such a manifesto could not be written by anarchists, but rather by 'statesmen':

who, [although] they deny it, are statesmen without any doubt. And nothing, nothing coming from this opportunistic deed makes our comrades any longer different from politicians, moralists, philosophers of the government ...<sup>113</sup>

When Italy joined in the world conflict, authorities began to interrupt the activity of many dissenting journals, included *Coerenza* and *La Libertà* of Milan.<sup>114</sup> *Coerenza* lasted less than three months and, in 1915, *La Libertà* also ceased publication. Its editor, Giuseppe Monanni, had not answered his call-up.<sup>115</sup> The journal had lasted two years. Throughout Italy, only a few other anarchist publications were able to survive, such as *L'Avvenire Anarchico* of Pisa. The number of single issues and journals of a very short period published in war time increased. Despite Malatesta's forced silence, it was possible to read anti-militarist writings by Luigi Fabbri on *Volontà* of Ancona, by Corrado Bertoni on *Le Réveil-Il Risveglio* of Geneva, by Luigi Galleani on *Cronaca sovversiva* from USA, and of course, by Luigi Molinari in *L'Università Popolare*.<sup>116</sup> In the pages of *L'Università Popolare*, Molinari allowed anarchists to express their anti-militarist ideas. A special column was added, titled '*Il mio diario di guerra*' (My diary of war).

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<sup>112</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.44.

<sup>113</sup> E. Malatesta 'Anarchists have forgotten their principles', *Freedom*, London, November 1914, and 'Pro-government anarchists', *Freedom*, London, April 1916.

<sup>114</sup> *Coerenza* was an anti-militarist journal published by Milanese revolutionaries. The director was Corrado Bertoni and Luigi Molinari was among the contributors. It was published from February until May 1915. See F. Della Peruta, 'I periodici di Milano. Bibliografia e Storia (1860-1904)', in F. Della Peruta, *Bibliografia della stampa periodica operaia e socialista italiana (1860-1926)*, pp.169-70. Bertoni was also involved with *La Libertà*, whose director was Giuseppe Monanni, see L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, p.257.

<sup>115</sup> V. Beretta, 'Giuseppe Monanni, un editore anarchico del Novecento', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.78.

<sup>116</sup> P.C. Masini, 'Gli anarchici tra neutralità e intervento (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.11.

Milanese individualist anarchists ostracised individuals such as Tancredi, Gioda, Gigli, Malusardi, Rygier, and Paolinelli.<sup>117</sup> During the war anarchists tried to organise several demonstrations. Anti-war protests were held in Milan despite the lack of resources and the presence of nationalists and interventionists.<sup>118</sup> In October 1914 Luigi Molinari wrote:

In Milan, anarchists have demonstrated their aversion to war not only through opposition against the local section of the USI, but also through conferences and publications. And I believe that the comrades of [the journal] *Libertà* are also against the war, as is shown by Giuseppe Monanni's articles written for *Avanti!* and Leda Rafanelli's for *Volontà* of Ancona.<sup>119</sup>

In order to strengthen the campaign against the war, on 24 October 1914 Milanese individualist anarchists started to publish the weekly journal *Il Ribelle*.<sup>120</sup> According to police files, the main promoters of this project were Carlo Molaschi, Umberto Mincigrucci, Guglielmo Guberti, Leda Rafanelli, Mario Mantovani, and Giovanni Fontanelli.<sup>121</sup> The journal was founded by Carlo Malighetti, who edited the first issue and then turned the job over to Molaschi.<sup>122</sup> In its pages Molaschi affirmed the useless tragedy of war.<sup>123</sup> Milanese individualist anarchists gathered around this project. This milieu saw the active participation of young anarchists such as Ugo Fedeli.<sup>124</sup> The journal aimed at saving the purity of individualism, jeopardized by the interventionist position of other individualists. The publication wished to demonstrate that individualist anarchism opposed homeland and war. Despite some extreme interpretations of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and their disdain for the 'human herd', Milanese individualist anarchists opposed war.<sup>125</sup> Molaschi rejected the idea that

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<sup>117</sup> According to Antonioli, Attilio Paolinelli was one of those few individualist anarchists who were able to return to and be accepted again by the anarchist movement, despite their defection during the war. See M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.9.

<sup>118</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.47 and ff.

<sup>119</sup> Letter of L. Molinari who argued against Mussolini, was published in *L'Avvenire Anarchico*, Pisa, 15 October 1914, cited in G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.42.

<sup>120</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, p.268.

<sup>121</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief note, 8 October 1914 and 20 October 1914.

<sup>122</sup> P.C Masini, M. Antonioli, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.81, note 122.

<sup>123</sup> 'Programma', *Il Ribelle*, Milan, 24 October 1914. See also 'Gli anarchici e la guerra', *Il Ribelle*, 24 October 1914, and Charles L'ermite, 'L'anarchismo nell'ora attuale', *Il Ribelle*, Milan, 2 January 1915.

<sup>124</sup> M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, pp.88-89.

<sup>125</sup> 'Per chi ci vuol seguire!', *Il Ribelle*, Milan, 6 February 1915.

individuals could sacrifice themselves for causes such as homeland, democracy, Latinity, civilization and the bourgeoisie. In Molaschi's words, 'if I have to sacrifice my life for a cause, it will be for my own cause'.<sup>126</sup> Only 10 issues of *Il Ribelle* were published. Molaschi was arrested during a demonstration and spent one month in prison. Soon after his release, Italy joined the war. *Il Ribelle* 'died' with the intervention of Italy in the war.<sup>127</sup> When *Il Ribelle* ceased publication, Rafanelli and Molaschi began to publish *Cronaca Libertaria* (3 August 1917 - 1 November 1917).<sup>128</sup> This journal was born as a replacement of *Il Libertario* of La Spezia, which had been recently suppressed. The main subeditors were Rafanelli and Molaschi, but the journal was still administered in La Spezia by Pasquale Binazzi.<sup>129</sup> Among the contributors were Camillo Berneri and Nella Giacomelli (pseudonym *Petit Jardin*). Like many other journals that opposed the war, *Cronaca Libertaria* was suppressed soon after the defeat of Caporetto (October 1917).

In September 1914 Rafanelli was amongst those anarchists who published in Milan the single issue titled *Abbasso la guerra, il militarismo, le patrie* (Down with the war, militarism and homelands).<sup>130</sup> The journal addressed a peculiar issue that had been raised by a few anarchists who had declared their support for war: how would anarchists see an invasion by the Germans or by the Hapsburg army? According to Rafanelli, there was no difference between King Victor's *carabinieri* and Kaiser William or the Tsar's soldiers.<sup>131</sup> Along this line, Nella Giacomelli confirmed all her anti-patriotic and anti-nationalist feelings expressed before the war, and declared her indifference to a potential invasion of Italy.<sup>132</sup> In this publication there was also space for appeals to join the army and sabotage it from within:

The real revolutionary must not desert the army, either in peace or in war time – his place is there – inside – to complete his task of subversion... It's easy, peaceful, and comfortable to find a

<sup>126</sup> C. Molaschi, 'La mia neutralità!...', *Il Ribelle*, Milan, 24 October 1914. See also Charles l'Ermite, 'Anarchismo, patria e guerra', *Il Ribelle*, Milan, 15 January 1915.

<sup>127</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'Dal superuomo all'umanità', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 15 January 1922.

<sup>128</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, pp.274-75. *Il Libertario* was suppressed on 30 May 1917.

<sup>129</sup> On Pasquale Binazzi, see DBAI, *ad nomen*.

<sup>130</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, p.266, and ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 933, Milan police chief to prefect, 10 August, 27 August and 3 September 1914. See also R. Gremmo, "'Abbasso la guerra', un giornale anarchico del 1915", *Storia ribelle*, n. 12, 2002, pp.1112-22.

<sup>131</sup> L. Rafanelli, 'Il nostro grido', *Abbasso la guerra, il militarismo, le patrie*, Milan, 1 September 1914.

<sup>132</sup> See Petit Jardin [N. Giacomelli], 'La più grande mistificazione, da Hervé a ... Mussolini', *Volontà*, Ancona, 8 August 1914, and Petit Jardin, 'In pieno patriottismo! Da Hervé a Mussolini: da Mario Goda ad Oberdan Gigli', *Volontà*, Ancona, 22 August 1914, in M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.10.

few *Lire* and take the train for Lugano or somewhere else, according to a false belief of anti-militarist propaganda, which is desertion. Instead he needs to go ... and act.<sup>133</sup>

Nonetheless, given its geographical position, Milan became a strategic centre for deserters. Switzerland was a few hours distant and some Milanese anarchists, including Molaschi, helped comrades from other regions to escape from Milan to Switzerland.<sup>134</sup>

The controversial issue of anarchists' attitude towards an eventual German invasion found space in Mussolini's journal *Il Popolo d'Italia*, who used a manifesto written by Libero Merlino on behalf of Milanese anarchists in order to criticise them. The manifesto 'welcomed' Germans in Italy: 'Germans are welcomed in Italy. Either they are more civilised and they come to civilise us; or they are barbarians, and they come to be civilised.'<sup>135</sup> In April 1916 a clandestine anarchist manifesto was distributed in Milan in order to organise, on the occasion of May Day, a demonstration against the war.<sup>136</sup> In Milan, anarchists tried to disturb demonstrations held by anti-anarchist political parties. For example, on May Day 1916, Milanese anarchist women were able to interrupt a public gathering which saw Mussolini as one of the main speakers.<sup>137</sup>

Groups and federations of anarchists from Italian northern and central regions met at the anarchist congress held in Ravenna in August 1916.<sup>138</sup> The insurrectional line defined at the Ravenna Congress was reaffirmed by Luigi Galleani in a special edition of *Cronaca Sovversiva* (18 March 1916), and was expressed with the motto 'against war, against peace, for revolution'. The same line was adopted by the USI during a meeting held in Florence in June 1916.<sup>139</sup> Despite the war, Milanese anarchists seemed to experience a time of fervour. Initiatives were not always related to war. For example, from August to October 1916 socialists, anarchists, the *Confederazione del Lavoro* and the USI came together to participate in the campaign to save Carlo Tresca, an Italian

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<sup>133</sup> 'Contro la diserzione', *Abbasso la guerra, il militarismo, le patrie*, Milan, 1 September 1914.

<sup>134</sup> M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.89.

<sup>135</sup> 'Ben vengano!', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, Milan, 19 February 1915, in M. Antonioli, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la prima guerra mondiale. Lettere di Luigi Fabbri e di Cesare Agostinelli a Nella Giacomelli (1914-1915)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, p.21.

<sup>136</sup> ACS, CPC, b. 4193, fasc. *Rafanelli Leda*, mod. B, 18 May 1916.

<sup>137</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.49, note 101. See also VV.AA., *Un trentennio di attività anarchica 1914-1945*, Cesena, L'Antistato, 1953, pp.13-14.

<sup>138</sup> The congress' report was published in *Sempre*, *Almanacco di Guerra e di Classe*, 1 maggio 1917, pp.97 and ff., now in G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.54, nota 116.

<sup>139</sup> USI meeting's minutes published in *Sempre*, *Almanacco di Guerra e di Classe*, 1 maggio 1917, pp.84 and ff.

anarchist who had been sentenced to death in Minnesota. Several demonstrations were held throughout Italy. The initiative also helped to connect anarchist groups through the *Comitato d'Azione Anarchica* (Committee of Anarchist Action) which had been formed during the Ravenna congress. On 8 October a rally was held in Milan as well as in other major cities. The Milanese rally was defined by Cerrito as 'spettacolare' (stunning).<sup>140</sup> Numerous groups and organisations of socialists, anarchists and unionists took part in the demonstration.<sup>141</sup>

At the news of a revolution in Russia, also Italian anarchists praised Lenin.<sup>142</sup> Initially anarchists were sympathetic with the Russian revolution and the Bolsheviks.<sup>143</sup> At the beginning, not only Bolsheviks were seen as violating Marxist doctrine, but they also represent the possibility of having a successful revolution. In the same way, Lenin symbolised the idea of revolution. Every revolutionary could give different meanings to the concept of revolution and the Russian revolution fitted them all. Only a few year later anarchists developed a better understanding of what was going on in Russia, and they began to criticize the outcomes of the Russian revolution. The repression of Nestor Machno and his movement in Ukraine (1917-1921) by the Red Army represented a turning point. In 1921-1922 conferences and articles of Italian anarchists condemned the imprisonment of anarchists and other dissenters in Russia.<sup>144</sup> Despite their initial lack of knowledge of the real situation in Russia, Milanese anarchists decided to refuse to participate in the International Congress of Anti-war Revolutionary Socialists held in Stockholm. The Milanese anarchist journal *Cronaca Libertaria* and other influential anarchists such as Nella Giacomelli and Luigi Fabbri were against the participation.<sup>145</sup> Since *Cronaca Libertaria* was administered in La Spezia by Pasquale Binazzi, who supported the participation of Italian anarchists in the Stockholm congress, it was possible to read articles advocating this position.<sup>146</sup>

However, the news of a successful revolution was overshadowed by local events. On 21 August 1917 riots broke out in Turin, soon after followed by

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<sup>140</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.57.

<sup>141</sup> Sempre, *Almanacco di guerra e di classe*, 1 maggio 1917, pp.91 e ff., in G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, pp.57-58. See also Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica 1914-1945*, Cesena, L'Antistato, 1953, reprinted by Samidzat, Pescara, 2002, pp.17-28.

<sup>142</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, p.60, note 130.

<sup>143</sup> See also P.C. Masini, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la rivoluzione russa', *Rivista storica del socialismo*, pp.135-69.

<sup>144</sup> See Chapter Six for Milanese conferences and publications on the Russian revolution.

<sup>145</sup> G. Cerrito, *L'antimilitarismo anarchico in Italia nel primo ventennio del secolo*, pp.60-61.

<sup>146</sup> See for example P.Binazzi, 'A proposito di Stoccolma', *Cronaca Libertaria*, Milan, 17 August 1917.

demonstrations in Milan and other northern industrial centres.<sup>147</sup> Subversive propaganda played an important role in the outbreak of riots. However, once again anarchists were not able to seize the moment. The *Comitato d'Azione Anarchica* was not strong enough to channel anarchists' efforts into a collective and organised action. In terms of organisation, better outcomes were achieved after the war, when the *Unione Anarchica Italiana* (Italian anarchist union, UAI) was founded.<sup>148</sup> During the last year of war, authorities increased repression and persecution of anarchists who remained further isolated from the rest of the anti-war movement. Similar situation affected the USI.<sup>149</sup>

The anti-militarist campaign revealed, once more, the inability of anarchists to develop an effective political strategy: tackling the army and its role within society did not prevent Italy from intervening in the world conflict; it did not prevent the emergence of ultra-nationalist groups and, eventually, fascism; finally, it did not prevent the defection of a few 'anarchists' who moved first towards the interventionist side and later joined in fascism. Once again, the anti-dogmatic nature of anarchism revealed its strength and its weakness. On the one hand, the anti-militarist campaign helped anarchists to emerge as an active political subject. Anarchists played the role of vanguard within the anti-militarist movement. On the other hand, however, different opinions amongst anarchists on how to tackle the issue gave way to a dispersive discourse that ended up with the loss of momentum at a crucial moment. The Red Week, which had begun with a demonstration for the release of anti-militarist anarchist soldiers Masetti and Moroni, highlighted the interconnection between anarchism, anti-militarism and the labour movement. Yet this connection revealed itself to be weak. With the defection of the CGdL, the workers gave up the factories. The Red Week collapsed and, within a few weeks, there were mass arrests of strikers and anarchists. Despite the overall failure of that experience, the Red Week illuminated important issues: first, workers rose to the occasion and demonstrated the crisis of institutional parties. Second, despite being important tools in the formation of an anarchist consciousness, education and propaganda were limited in terms of revolutionary potentiality. Finally, the Red Week showed that anarchism was not dead. Malatesta and his comrades led the insurrection. Yet, as a subversive minority, anarchists also showed their inability to lead the masses, hence the increasing gap between anarchists and

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<sup>147</sup> C. Levy, 'The centre and the suburbs: social protest and modernization in Milan and Turin, 1898-1917', *Modern Italy*, pp.171-88.

<sup>148</sup> See Chapter Six.

<sup>149</sup> A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, pp.188-89.

masses. Nonetheless, at the end of the world conflict revolutionary hopes had not yet disappeared.

## Chapter Six

### From post-war to fascism (1919-1926)

*'Metal workers! ... do not abandon the factory, do not give it up, do not give up arms! If today you leave the factories, tomorrow you will be decimated ....'*

'La battaglia dei metallurgici è la battaglia di tutto il proletariato', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 11 September 1920.

*'Milan begins a strike. Ancona goes back to work. It is the same old mistake that resulted in the failure of revolution in Italy ...'*

'Per un'azione generale ed immediata', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 22 July 1922.

In Italy, the end of World War I ushered in a time of economic, social and political crisis. The transformation from war to peace resulted in an outbreak of social tension, caused in particular by the increase in the cost of living. During the 'Red Biennium' (1919-1920), a series of strikes and militant actions culminated in the occupation of large estates (summer 1920) and the seizure of many factories (September 1920).<sup>1</sup> The Socialist Party was the strongest organisation of the Italian left: between 1918 and 1920 party membership expanded and branch numbers increased. Moreover, the Socialist Party controlled the largest union confederation, the CGdL, which had more than 2 million members in 1920.<sup>2</sup> The Socialist Party's newspaper, *Avanti!*, was the most widely read left-wing newspaper. At the 1919 elections, 256 seats between the Socialist Party and the newly formed *Partito Popolare* (Popular Party) gave them the majority. Yet the Italian socialist movement was divided between a moderate faction, the reformists, and a more extremist wing, the maximalists. Eventually, in January 1921 the Communist Party was founded as a result of a minority breakaway from the Socialist Party.<sup>3</sup>

In this climate of social and political fervor, Italian revolutionaries and anarchists in particular foresaw an opportunity for radical social change. In 1919, the *Unione Anarchica Italiana* (Italian Anarchist Union, UAI) came into being as a result of the Italian anarchists' attempt to coordinate an increasing number of militants. These organisational efforts were translated into the publication of an anarchist newspaper.

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<sup>1</sup> See in particular P.Spriano, *L'occupazione delle fabbriche, settembre 1920*, Turin, Einaudi, 1964; G. Bosio, *La grande paura. Settembre 1920: L'occupazione delle fabbriche*, Rome, Samoná e Savelli, 1970; and G. Maione, *Il biennio rosso. Autonomia e spontaneità operaia nel 1919-1920*.

<sup>2</sup> R. Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo: L'Italia dalla grande guerra alla Marcia su Roma*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1991, pp.299-300.

<sup>3</sup> See P.Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*, vol.I, *Da Bordiga a Gramsci*, Turin, Einaudi, 1967.

*Umanità Nova* was founded in 1920 in Milan with Errico Malatesta as the director. With daily sales of 50,000 copies, *Umanità Nova* became, in some areas, the most widely read newspaper among workers.<sup>4</sup> This success was due to the anarchists' stronger influence of those years. Furthermore, anarchists increased their presence within the revolutionary syndicates of the *Unione Sindacale Italiana*. In 1920 the USI could count half a million members and the anarchist Armando Borghi was its secretary.<sup>5</sup>

However, was revolution really possible? Or was it instead an illusion created by a distorted image of Italian economic and social reality? Actually, the Red Biennium was more the end of a dream than the beginning of a revolution. The occupation of the factories failed and the workers' movement was ushered into a deep crisis which ended, eventually, with the expulsion of Nazi troops in 1945.

The rise of fascism corresponded to the crisis within the Italian left. Anti-proletarian and counter-revolutionary feelings of the agrarian and industrial capitalists of Northern Italy found, in Benito Mussolini, the national leader of a series of local anti-socialist groups.<sup>6</sup> The rise of fascism was responsible for 3,000 victims.<sup>7</sup> Fascist squads assaulted socialists, communists, unionists and anarchists. Unions' locals and socialists' premises were attacked. As fascist violence became widespread so the opposition to fascism developed and anarchists were at that opposition's forefront. Anarchists joined the *Arditi del Popolo* in direct action against fascists.<sup>8</sup> Anarchist appeals to all the forces of the left were rejected by Socialists, who instead signed a 'peace agreement' with Mussolini (summer 1921).<sup>9</sup> Eventually, the pact was not honored by fascist squads. They expanded their violence and intimidations, which culminated in the 1924 Matteotti affair. By then, fascism had already taken over the government.

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<sup>4</sup> L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana. L'anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla guerra di Spagna (1919-1939)*, p.43; A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, p.209; P. Finzi, *La nota persona. Errico Malatesta in Italia (dicembre 1919/luglio 1920)*, p.151.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Antonioli, *Armando Borghi e l'Unione sindacale italiana*. See also G. Careri, *Il sindacalismo autogestionario. L'U.S.I. dalle origini a oggi*.

<sup>6</sup> R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini*, London, Oxford University Press, 2002, p.150. For an anarchist perspective on the rise of fascism, see L. Fabbri, *La controrivoluzione preventiva*; C. Berneri, *Mussolini grande attore*; P.C. Masini, *Mussolini. La maschera del dittatore*, Pisa, BFS, 1999. On Fabbri and Berneri's interpretations of fascism, see L. Pezzica, 'Luigi Fabbri e l'analisi del fascismo', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.2, no.2, 1995, pp.5-22; and G. Carrozza, 'Berneri e il fascismo. Problemi e chiavi di lettura', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.8, no.2, 2001, pp.23-44.

<sup>7</sup> M. Franzinelli, *Squadristi: protagonisti e tecniche della violenza fascista 1919-1922*, Milan, 2003, p.169.

<sup>8</sup> On the *Arditi del popolo* see in particular M. Rossi, *Arditi non gendarmi! Dall'arditismo di guerra, agli arditi del popolo (1917-1922)*, Pisa, BFS, 1997; E. Francescangeli, *Arditi del popolo: Argo Secondari e la prima organizzazione antifascista (1917-1922)*, Rome, Odradek, 2000; and A. Staid, *Gli arditi del popolo. La prima lotta armata contro il fascismo (1921-1922)*, Ragusa, Edizioni La Fiaccola, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini*, pp.158-59.

An event that, with hindsight, contributed to the advance of fascism was the bomb explosion at the Diana Theatre in Milan on 23 March 1921.<sup>10</sup> The episode was the deed of a few anarchists who were active in Milan, but it had national repercussions for the entire Italian anarchist movement. Government repression and fascist violence worked together for the defeat of workers' and anarchist movements. After the Diana episode, anarchists and their information activities were the first to be hit. Fascist violence stormed *Umanità Nova*'s premises as well as the locals of other anarchist journals. Once fascism became a dictatorship, the laws on the press prevented anarchists and the opposition in general from having a legitimate voice in the country.

This chapter examines Milanese anarchism from 1919 to 1926, the year of the fascist laws impacting on the press. The first section focuses on the theoretical contribution of Carlo Molaschi. His cultural production is used as a lens to analyse the development of individualist anarchism. Attention has been paid to Molaschi's journals, such as *Nichilismo* and *Pagine Libertarie* published between 1920 and 1922. How did Molaschi's thought fit into Italian anarchism? Was Molaschi's anarchism representative of a specific group of Milanese anarchists? Was he an influential activist? Did Molaschi's writings and publications influence the development of Milanese anarchism? Why is his case relevant?

The second section of this chapter focuses on the Red Biennium and the participation of Milanese anarchists. During this period, which saw an increase in unions' activities, Italian anarchists gave birth to the *Unione Anarchica Italiana* (1919). Was this the apex of the Italian anarchist movement? Were anarchists at the forefront of a revolution? This chapter uses *Umanità Nova* (1920-1922) as a lens to understand what went wrong and why the Milanese anarchist movement failed to translate their propaganda into action.

This historical analysis raises the issue of violence, major protagonist of the last section of this chapter. Although this issue has always played an important role within anarchist thought, and anarchism carries a tradition of violent acts (including their theoretical justifications), post-war anarchist violence needs to be contextualised within that turbulent period. In Milan, as well as in the rest of Italy, violence was expressed in different ways. First, the Italian state opposed workers' claims with violence, generating anger and frustration. Second, anarchists were not only fighting against the State and capitalism, but also against their armed hand, the fascist squads. While in Italy anarchists and *Arditi del popolo* represented the first expression of Italian anti-fascist

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<sup>10</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*.

resistance in what became a sort of civil war, in Milan Mussolini was able to channel war 'arditism' towards fascism. Moreover, Milanese anarchists used violence to attack institutions and symbols of power and social injustice, such as Bruno Filippi's targets in 1919. Finally, violence was also used as a means to highlight the reaction against the anarchist movement, like the bomb explosion at the Diana theatre, caused by the prolonged imprisonment of Malatesta and others. This episode had national and long term consequences: it caused greater repression against the anarchists, who were the extremist wing of the revolutionary movement in Italy, and eventually it contributed to the rise of fascism. Overall, the situation of Milanese anarchists is representative of Italian anarchism: during the post war, what had started as a dream of revolution progressively turned into a civil war, and eventually it became a war of resistance against the rise of fascism.

### 6.1 Carlo Molaschi

For the anarchist movement, the war worked as a filter. A few belligerent individualist anarchists moved towards the interventionist side, while the overwhelming majority of Italian anarchists opposed the war. According to Antonioli, 'on the eve of WWI individualism was an extremely limited phenomenon'.<sup>11</sup> In Milan, with their publishing activity, Giuseppe Monanni and Leda Rafanelli's ethical individualism continued to represent a point of reference within the Milanese anarchist movement.<sup>12</sup> However, their influence began to wane. In those years Carlo Molaschi emerged as a charismatic figure within the individualist milieu.

Unlike Rafanelli and Monanni, Molaschi was born in Milan, in 1886.<sup>13</sup> In the early years of the twentieth century, Molaschi began to appear in anarchist meetings and to take part in activities such as the distribution of subversive flyers, which led to his first arrest in 1901. Molaschi's early writings are dated to 1902 and he started to sign his articles with the pseudonym of '*Charles l'Ermite*'. In those years Molaschi was attracted to Luigi Molinari and his campaign for the constitution of a Modern School. It was within this milieu that Leda Rafanelli introduced Molaschi to Maria Rossi, a

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<sup>11</sup> M. Antonioli & P.C. Masini, *Il sol dell'avvenire. L'anarchismo in Italia dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, p.81.

<sup>12</sup> F. Schirone, 'La Casa Editrice Sociale', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, pp.95-116.

<sup>13</sup> See DBAI, *Molaschi, Carlo*.

primary school teacher with a passion for libertarian ideas and Francisco Ferrer's pedagogical ideals.<sup>14</sup> Molaschi and Rossi married in the spring of 1918.

During the period of Italian neutrality (August 1914 - May 1915), an anarchist journal titled *Il Ribelle* was published in Milan (24 October 1914 – 20 March 1915).<sup>15</sup>

As Molaschi explained later, the journal was influenced by Nietzsche:

I wrote *Il Ribelle* influenced by Nietzschean thought. Even if someone affirmed the F. Nietzsche was the father of the Great War, I believed that a free individual must not sacrifice one's life for the masters' war.<sup>16</sup>

Molaschi denounced the conflict as the triumph of complacent stupidity. Like the philosopher Nietzsche, Molaschi tried to break apart the European mix of irrationality, humanitarianism and will. Admittedly, Nietzsche's philosophy was not for the masses, since it ascribed them a lower place on the social ladder; hence Molaschi's disdain for the 'human herd'. Molaschi's interpretation of Nietzsche was insightful: Nietzsche was not a nationalist. On the contrary, the German philosopher was proud of being a good European. Overall, what connected Molaschi to Nietzsche's philosophy was the highly intelligent criticism of human nature as something irrational that had to be affirmed morally as well as intellectually.

Despite his anti-militarism, at the beginning of 1918 Molaschi did not escape enlistment. He spent a few months as a soldier in a relative quiet zone, away from the front line. Nonetheless, this experience marked the rest of his life and in particular the development of his thought. At the end of the war, Molaschi moved towards nihilist positions: 'Disdain has become hate and superb isolation has become incitement to action and demolition!'<sup>17</sup> What did Molaschi's nihilism mean? Molaschi's nihilism was a form of extreme pessimism, an 'absolute denial of every truth and hope'.<sup>18</sup> Nihilism meant the loss of significance of all those 'absolute' values, such as God, truth, goodness, as well as nationalism and homeland. Nihilism meant the denial of all existence or of its knowledge. Nihilism represented the historical process within which these values lost importance. Nihilism was the logical outcome of European decay.

At the end of the war the desire for action was wide-spread among both ex-soldiers and civilians. The evolution of Molaschi's anarchism became relevant within

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<sup>14</sup> For a biography of Maria Rossi, see DBAI, *Molaschi, Carlo*, and M. Granata, *Lettere d'amore e d'amicizia: la corrispondenza di Leda Rafanelli, Carlo Molaschi, Maria Rossi (1913-1919): per una lettura dell'anarchismo milanese*.

<sup>15</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, pp.268-69. See also chapter 5 of this study.

<sup>16</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'Dal superuomo all'umanità', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 15 January 1922.

<sup>17</sup> C. Molaschi, 'Per un quotidiano anarchico', *Iconoclasta!*, Pistoia, 25 July 1919.

<sup>18</sup> C. Molaschi, 'Il nichilismo del nord', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 20 April 1920.

the Milanese anarchist scene because of his role as writer, editor and publisher. According to Granata, Molaschi's nihilist position influenced many other individualist anarchists.<sup>19</sup> From April 1920 Molaschi began to publish the anarchist journal *Nichilismo*, with the aim of 'affirming individualist anarchist principles'; 'resisting the degeneration of socialism within Italian anarchism'; and finally in order to give rise to an authentically anarchist artistic and literary movement.<sup>20</sup> According to Granata, the journal *Nichilismo* was the result of different factors: the destructive urge that was born out of the war pushed the editor Molaschi, Fedeli and other young contributors to an extreme form of individualism<sup>21</sup> - a form of individualism that denied everything: 'Our anarchism does not build, it destroys'.<sup>22</sup>

However, after the first issues, according to Ugo Fedeli, the extreme editorial line of *Nichilismo* faded away, giving way to a more 'pro-activist' approach.<sup>23</sup> Later Molaschi clarified that *Nichilismo* was a very personal publication.<sup>24</sup> In fact, articles were often full of abstract ideas with references to Stirner, Nietzsche and other intellectuals.<sup>25</sup> The journal's last issue was published on 5 March 1921, a few weeks before the bomb explosion at the Diana theatre. However, this time, suspension was not caused by government repression or financial debts. There were contrasts between editors and contributors, who wished to stimulate the journal with other kinds of articles. Fedeli was one of the main critics of Molaschi's editorial line.<sup>26</sup> In the first issue of his new journal, Molaschi explained the reasons for suspending *Nichilismo*:

We killed the journal because there was a contrast between title and contents. *Nichilismo* represented the ideals of two people, the editors. Other contributors followed other paths, they had other ideals ... The editors could not fill the journal's sixteen pages by themselves. It would have been absurd, and the journal would have been extremely boring.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> M. Granata, 'Molaschi, Carlo', in DBAI, II, p.195.

<sup>20</sup> I compilatori di *Nichilismo*, 'Per la vita di "Nichilismo"'. Risposta a Ugo Fedeli', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 6 June 1920.

<sup>21</sup> M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a Milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, p.96.

<sup>22</sup> Noi, 'Nulla', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 20 April 1920.

<sup>23</sup> U. Fedeli, 'La stampa anarchica in Italia', *L'Individualista*, Milan, 1 February 1921.

<sup>24</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'Dal superuomo all'umanità', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 15 January 1922.

<sup>25</sup> See for instance, C. Molaschi, 'Il nichilismo del nord', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 20 April 1920; F. Delaterra, 'L'individualismo di Tolstoi', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 5 July 1920; Erinne Vivani, 'L'individualismo anarchico', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 24 August-9 September 1920; Leda Rafanelli, 'La morale buddhista', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 25 October 1920.

<sup>26</sup> See U. Fedeli, 'Per la vita di "Nichilismo"', *Nichilismo*, Milan, 20 June 1920.

<sup>27</sup> Noi [C. Molaschi], 'Da "Nichilismo" a "Pagine Libertarie"', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 16 June 1921.

Fedeli's explanation of that contrast offered another perspective, highlighting problems that can be ascribed to the anti-dogmatic nature of anarchism:

With its lack of feeling and its unilateral nature, the journal does not satisfy the majority of the readers. This happens because the journal gives its readers the impression that only the editors have the knowledge and the right tools to understand such a broad and multiform theory that is individualist anarchism. The biggest fault of our publications is that the editor plays the role of the censor who knows everything and, thus, can say what is good or what is bad, what is true or what is false.<sup>28</sup>

After the war, the evolution of Molaschi's thought corresponded to a period of intense activity. In 1919 Molaschi founded a bookshop named '*Tempi nuovi*' (New Times), and he joined the *Comitato pro vittime politiche* (Committee in support of political victims, CPVP).<sup>29</sup> Molaschi moved from a position of overwhelming disdain for the masses, towards a more open-minded and tolerant approach. In that period Molaschi abandoned individualism in favor of mutualism and solidarity. This change of attitude was signified by his participation in the creation of the communist-anarchist newspaper, *Umanità Nova*, in the summer of 1920, his membership in the UAI, as well as by the publication of his new journal, *Pagine Libertarie*. The first issue of *Pagine Libertarie* was published three months after the Diana episode.<sup>30</sup> With that issue Molaschi tried to explain that the new journal was not different from *Nichilismo*. Both publications had the same editors and the same programme. According to Molaschi, the editors considered anarchism as a philosophy of life and anarchists as real human beings who live everyday life, and are exposed to good and evil like everyone else.<sup>31</sup> Yet, despite his genuine intentions to justify himself, the evolution of Molaschi appeared evident: later Molaschi wrote a sort of memoir, in which he explained his internal development and offered reasons for the transformation of his anarchist ideals.<sup>32</sup>

In an article published in November 1921, soon after the third congress of the UAI, Molaschi described the anarchist movement as an ethical movement rather than an economic one, and he saw anarchism as way to solve the 'social question' through solidarity and mutualism.<sup>33</sup> A major shift in his thought had occurred. Molaschi

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<sup>28</sup> U. Fedeli, 'La stampa anarchica in Italia', *L'Individualista*, Milan, 1 February 1921.

<sup>29</sup> DBAI, *Molaschi, Carlo*.

<sup>30</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo, I*, pp.306-07.

<sup>31</sup> Noi, 'Da 'Nichilismo' a 'Pagine Libertarie'', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 16 June 1921.

<sup>32</sup> See Carlo Molaschi, 'Dal superuomo all'umanità', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 15 January 1922, and also, C. Molaschi, 'Impressioni di Congresso', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 25 November 1921.

<sup>33</sup> C. Molaschi, 'Impressioni di Congresso', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 25 November 1921.

expressed a critique of the individualist anarchist stream, which he judged unable to solve people's everyday problems:

I do not mean to say that the individualist thought has failed, but that its praxis has degenerated because of some people's extremism. (...) it has fed the disdain for the masses, glorifying the super-man. And the super-man is anti-anarchist.<sup>34</sup>

Molaschi's critique of individualism targeted the cornerstones of his former ideals: Stirner and Nietzsche:

With his gospel of pure selfishness, Stirner has tried to destroy individual's feelings, and super-man's presumptuous selfishness has led to the adoration of the Ego. But an anarchist must not have the Ego's ferocity or Zarathustra's boredom.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, terms such as love and resurrection started to appear in Molaschi's writings to testify to a shift towards a more 'ecumenical' approach: 'Anarchism cannot split up from love,'<sup>36</sup> 'because anarchism is not vendetta, but is love, resurrection, life and brotherhood'.<sup>37</sup>

In support of his ideas, Molaschi began to reference Benjamin Tucker and his type of individualist anarchism:<sup>38</sup>

I insist on introducing Tucker's idea in order to demonstrate that anarchist individualism is not only an abstract and metaphysical conception, but it is also based on reason and reality.<sup>39</sup>

Molaschi aimed at refuting the assumption that an individualist anarchist had to be anti-social: 'This is a bias that many comrades continue to hold, and thus their thinking in regards to individualism is based on this wrong introductory statement.'<sup>40</sup> According to Molaschi, Tucker represented 'the typical individualist anarchist' and his idea of an association of free men demonstrated that individualists were social beings who could not escape from social life: 'On the contrary, in such organisation individualists would

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Noi, 'Da 'Nichilismo' a 'Pagine Libertarie'', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 16 June 1921.

<sup>36</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'Dopo tre mesi', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 16 June 1921.

<sup>37</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'L'atto individuale', *Pagine libertarie*, Milan, 5 August 1921.

<sup>38</sup> Benjamin Tucker (1854-1939) was an eminent American individualist anarchist. He was an editor and a publisher. His main publication was the journal *Liberty*. In the USA Tucker was the first publisher of Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* (New York, 1907). For an introduction to Tucker see P.Marshall, *Demanding the impossible. A history of anarchism*, pp.389-91.

<sup>39</sup> B.R. Tucker, 'L'Associazione dei Liberi', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 16 June 1921, followed by a note signed 'c. l'e.' (*Charles l'Ermite*).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

accept team work, mutualism and all those forms of social activities that require the cooperation of individuals.<sup>41</sup>

The second great shift in Molaschi's anarchism was represented by a new interest in education and propaganda. Molaschi noticed that within the anarchist movement there were still some youthful elements who believed that the individual deed was the purest form of anarchist praxis: 'These young people are impressed by the history of the anarchist movement, still dominated by characters such as Ravachol, Henry, Vaillant and many other bombers.'<sup>42</sup> However, according to Molaschi, more than Henry's bomb, it was his speech in court that had contributed to the advance of anarchist ideas. For this purpose Molaschi used to refer to one of Reclus' most famous sayings: one's life is the real propaganda of the deed.<sup>43</sup>

In regards to the concept of revolution, although admitting its necessity, Molaschi acknowledged the existence of rebels rather than revolutionaries: 'too many anarchists do not know what anarchy is. They lack consciousness ...'.<sup>44</sup> The issue was not merely the replacement of the bourgeois order with a proletarian regime. For Molaschi, anarchism meant radical change of values, ethics, and customs. In addition, in order to achieve this ethical subversion, 'anarchist souls' had to be forged through education:

It is not enough to create rebels and then leave them to their blind instincts; we need to give them a consciousness, a faith and skills. They need to know what they want and where they have to go.<sup>45</sup>

Molaschi's critique of violent individual acts was influenced by the Diana episode, which he saw as a crime of passion: 'The Diana episode did not have an aim or a hope; it was *per se*, a passion agitated by exasperation, desperation and blind violence, expressed with a horrible deed.'<sup>46</sup> Molaschi did not reject violence as a necessity for self defense and as a means to achieve utopia. Nevertheless, Molaschi distinguished between fascist violence and the horrible and desperate violence of the Diana bombing, and the latter from the violence of a revolution.<sup>47</sup> In Molaschi's eyes, the authors of the Diana's massacre had to be mourned as well as the victims of the bomb explosion. They

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'L'atto individuale', *Pagine libertarie*, Milan, 5 August 1921.

<sup>43</sup> See Carlo Molaschi, 'L'atto individuale', *Pagine libertarie*, Milan, 5 August 1921, and Carlo Molaschi, 'L'anima anarchica', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 20 July 1921.

<sup>44</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'L'anima anarchica', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 20 July 1921.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'Dopo tre mesi', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 16 June 1921.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

were all victims of contemporary society, which had generated atrocities, violence and evil.<sup>48</sup> Hence, the necessity for Molaschi to educate anarchist souls, to create idealists who aimed for a higher good, rather than rebels taking revenge because of personal pain, anger and frustration, in his own words:

The proletarian revolution has failed partly because of the leaders, partly because of the masses. Therefore, we need to create a new consciousness. Within humankind, the anarchist soul must be a light and a guide towards the future.<sup>49</sup>

Molaschi's biographical story needs to be located. Molaschi's individualism was only one among a multiplicity of anarchisms and cannot be used to locate all the different directions taken by Milanese anarchists. Nonetheless, his intellectual development offers a matrix through which it is possible to understand a larger spectrum of ideological positions. It can be said that the development of Molaschi's anarchism mirrors the historical process of Milanese anarchism between 1900 and 1926. In the first 15 years of the century, the Milanese anarchist movement lacked a serious revolutionary perspective; thus theoretical disputes and clarifications were anarchists' main focus. A major shift occurred after the war. Revolution was no longer seen as a utopian dream. Many workers, as well as anarchists, believed that revolution was coming soon. Thus, theoretical debates among anarchists on organisation and individualism lost importance. Ethical individualism gave way to organisational efforts, which were reflected in the constitution of anarchist formations, such as the UAI and its local branches. Moreover, the relative downturn of ethical individualism corresponded to an escalation of individual acts of violence, a resurgence of the propaganda of the deed. Molaschi's disdain for the 'human herd' first and nihilism later are not related to those episodes of direct action that hit Milan between 1919 and 1921. Similarly, Nietzsche and Stirner cannot be used as scapegoats for the same episodes. Holding responsible for bomb explosions Nietzsche and Stirner's books or Molaschi, Monanni and Rafanelli's anarchist publications that referred and interpreted the works of these two philosophers would be ahistorical. Those episodes of violence were part of the legacy of 1880-1918 Europe. Among the outcomes of the war was the widespread crisis of European society in general as well as an identity crisis in thousands of individuals. Protagonists and techniques of the war continued on a smaller scale, bearing the nihilist feeling of action and destruction. Also Carlo Molaschi, after the war, went through a deep crisis and his anarchism was subjected to significant changes of perspective. His

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Carlo Molaschi, 'L'anima anarchica', *Pagine Libertarie*, Milan, 20 July 1921.

development needs to be contextualised within a specific historical framework: the Italian Red Biennium and the rise of fascism.

## 6.2 Red Biennium

In the post war period, like other European revolutionaries, Italian anarchists also began to realise the opportunities on offer to radically transform society. As already mentioned, the world conflict contributed to separate the anarchist movement from those individualist and anti-organisational elements who, initially, joined the interventionist side, and, later, the fascist movement. In the forefront of the possibilities, as well as the risks given by those fervent years, Italian anarchists reviewed the need to organise themselves into a national federation of free associations. Other factors contributed to push Italian anarchists towards a federation: first of all, the experience of the Russian revolution with its myths and contradictions shed light on the anarchists' long-standing necessity to combine revolution with the protection of individual and collective liberties. Secondly, the rise of fascism and its growing popularity among the lower classes demonstrated a lack of unity within the proletariat and the need for anarchists to close ranks against fascist violence. Finally, the experience of the First World War and the outcomes of the Russian Revolution forced Italian anarchists to find an effective way to deal with a modern proletariat and its organisations.

Within this framework, in April 1919 Italian anarchists met in Florence and gave birth to the *Unione Comunista Anarchica Italiana* (Italian Communist-Anarchist Union, UCAI). However, as Berti points out, the lack of a clear programme, strategies and alliances, as well as the need to justify 'comunista', demonstrated the inability to combine different streams of Italian anarchism.<sup>50</sup> In other words, the first anarchist national organisation of the twentieth century was still at an embryonic stage. It was the result of a long tradition of attempts to organise Italian anarchists, a tradition that can be traced back to Capolago in 1891.<sup>51</sup> The UCAI was a work-in-progress. One year after its foundation, in July 1920 Italian anarchists met in Bologna and changed the name UCAI to *Unione Anarchica Italiana* adopting Errico Malatesta's programme.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, *Umanità Nova* functioned as the UAI's journal and many members of the UAI were

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<sup>50</sup> G. Berti, 'Il programma anarchico', in *L'Unione anarchica italiana. Tra rivoluzione europea e reazione fascista (1919-1926)*, pp.29-38.

<sup>51</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>52</sup> See P.La Torre, 'Il congresso della UAI di Bologna (1920)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.8, no.2, 2001, pp.83-116.

also members of the USI, the revolutionary trade union. The most significant aspect of this fervour among Italian anarchists, as highlighted by Antonioli, was the fact that with the increase of social tension the issue of organisation was set aside in favour of a larger collaboration among different kinds of anarchists.<sup>53</sup> The revolutionary perspectives of the post war period contributed to level out the differences between anti-organisational and organisational, individualists and communist anarchists. With a few exceptions, anti-organisational anarchists accepted the creation of a national federation and the adoption of Malatesta's programme.<sup>54</sup>

The collection of police files in the Milanese State Archive related to the local anarchist movement in 1919-1920 mirrors the fervour of that period.<sup>55</sup> There are several reports of anarchists' meetings, individuals' files, and requests for information. Strikes and other workers' agitations were a source of fear and concern for the authorities who identified anarchists as a revolutionary vanguard and the main agitators behind 'subversive' actions. From reading primary sources - police files, anarchist publications and anarchists' memoirs - and literature on this topic - mainly Mantovani's research,<sup>56</sup> but also Antonioli, Berti, Di Lembo and Finzi - it is possible to draw a picture of the Milanese anarchist movement that is both comprehensive and accurate. It is essential to include this image within the broader context that was the Italian political and social framework of the interwar period in order to highlight patterns and external influences on the inner development of Milanese anarchism. Likewise, it is important to show the peculiarities of Milanese anarchism, especially in terms of how it contributed to the development of Italian anarchism, and Italian history in general. It is not extreme to argue that the Diana episode had repercussions not only on Italian anarchists but on Italian society as a whole: eliminating from the struggle the revolutionary vanguard of the Italian proletariat, the government repression of anarchists facilitated the rise of fascism and eventually paved the way for Mussolini's takeover. At the same time, Milan proved to be a meeting place for different political and ideological streams. It was in the Lombard capital, the alleged individualist and anti-organisational centre of Italian anarchism, that Italian anarchists gave birth to the first anarchist newspaper, a communist-anarchist publication, founded and directed by Malatesta and open to every

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<sup>53</sup> M. Antonioli, 'La nascita dell'UAI e gli anarchici individualisti e antiorganizzatori', in *L'Unione anarchica italiana. Tra rivoluzione europea e reazione fascista (1919-1926)*, pp.97-104.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.104.

<sup>55</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, cat. 39, *Partiti, anarchici, parte generale, 1915-1930*, bb. 934-940.

<sup>56</sup> In compiling his massive work on the Diana's episode, Vincenzo Mantovani used, among his sources, the correspondence kept in the Rome State Central Archive between the Milanese prefect and the ministers in the capital. See V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.686 for a list of primary sources. This material has not been consulted for this study.

current and voice of anarchism.<sup>57</sup> Milanese anarchism revealed its experimental nature, originating some of the best ideas and some of the worst practices. It was in Milan where different streams of anarchism had coexisted and continued to coexist until fascism, first with its violence and later with its laws, completely eliminate anarchist militants from the city. Significantly, it was in Milan that Mussolini founded his first *Fasci di combattimento*.

How was the Milanese anarchist movement composed in the years after the war? The end of the Great War meant the return home of soldiers, political prisoners and deserters. Soldiers in particular struggled to come to terms with the end of the war and with a new beginning in a country that did not recognize them and that could offer only an increased cost of living, unemployment, social unrest and divisions. Thanks to these restless elements the Milanese anarchist movement restarted its activities. With a few exceptions, most of the Milanese anarchists were workers who ‘endorsed anarchism for its libertarian ideas’, as pointed out by Mario Perelli (1899-1981) in a later interview.<sup>58</sup> According to Perelli, Milanese anarchists ‘had a sense of independence, a personality that was different from the masses’. In Perelli’s opinion, Milanese anarchists refused not only the idea of being organised but also the idea of class struggle that diminished the appreciation of individuals.<sup>59</sup> A different interpretation was given by Augusto Micelli (1888-1989) in an interview recorded in 1987:

At that time there were many individualists who rarely came to meetings. We knew them because we met at meetings or other initiatives. But they did not come often to *Umanità nova*’s. For example, Monanni, who was a very good comrade, was an individualist. He lived in his bookshop, at his place, but he did not see other comrades. I went to visit him many times. Leda Rafanelli was with him. She was interesting, very interesting, but they came only a few times to meetings. Like many others. Also Molaschi, at the beginning he was an individualist: then he got closer to us, communist-anarchists as we were called ... There was enthusiasm among everybody. Honestly, today I cannot see that enthusiasm. It was beautiful. We met often, we saw each other often. We used to meet every Sunday morning at the *Villa Comunale*. We were always twenty-thirty comrades! We used to meet in *Porta Venezia*, at the *Villa Comunale*. There were many initiatives.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> E. Malatesta, ‘I nostri propositi’, *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 26 February 1920.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with M. Perelli, 10 maggio 1973, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.51.

<sup>59</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.51.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with A. Micelli by F. Schirone, Milan, 24 September 1987, in F. Schirone, ‘Intervista ad Augusto Micelli’, *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 23 April 1989, now in F. Schirone (ed.), *Cronache anarchiche. Il giornale Umanità Nova nell’Italia del Novecento (1920-1945)*, Milan, Zero in Condotta, 2010, p.163.

In this interview Micelli affirmed that the anarchist movement was supported by the masses especially thanks to *Umanità Nova*, the communist-anarchist newspaper. Enthusiastic adherence was given to the idea that soon something was going to happen, that revolution was on the horizon, and that it was ‘anarchy’s eve’.<sup>61</sup>

At the Florence Congress of 1919 Emilio Spinaci and Ettore Molinari represented Milanese anarchists: they were elected members of the UCAI’s coordinating committee and were invited to launch fund-raising activities for an anarchist newspaper.<sup>62</sup> The activities of the Milanese anarchist movement had restarted at the end of 1918: on 22 December, 15 anarchists met to discuss the possibilities of a revolutionary movement, which, according to them, ‘was soon to come’.<sup>63</sup> On 11 January 1919 a few people attended a conference held by Umberto Mincigrucci. The theme of the evening was the life and works of Pietro Gori.<sup>64</sup> This meeting was only the first of a series of conferences organised by the new anarchist group named *Circolo libertario di cultura sociale* (Libertarian club of social culture).<sup>65</sup>

This was the beginning of a new energetic period for Milanese anarchists. Police reports inform us of many meetings, conferences, assemblies, gatherings and demonstrations of anarchists between 1919 and 1921. Meetings were held in a *trattoria* in *Via Frisi*, at the USI’s locals, in two coffee bars in *Corso Buenos Aires*, or at the *Villa Comunale* and the *Giardini Pubblici* (Public garden) of *Porta Venezia*.<sup>66</sup> Several conferences were organised in the periphery, in smaller industrial centres such as Sesto San Giovanni,<sup>67</sup> or they were simply spontaneous meetings in parks and other open-air settings.<sup>68</sup> From a closer reading of these files, it is possible to notice a distinctive pattern: anarchists initiatives were often a response to workers’ militancy. In fact, the workers’ demonstrations of June and July 1919 inspired Milanese anarchists to resume action, while the 1920 strikes and occupation of factories brought more anarchist demonstrations and arrests of charismatic figures. The June 1919 demonstrations

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.164.

<sup>62</sup> On Emilio Spinaci see DBAI, *ad nomen*; V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana, ad indicem*; L. Fabbri, *Luigi Fabbri. Storia di un uomo libero, ad indicem*; L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana. L’anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla guerra di Spagna (1919-1939), ad indicem*. On E. Molinari see Chapter Four.

<sup>63</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, *Anarchici, 1915: propaganda contro la guerra*, fasc. *Partito anarchico, conferenze e comizi 1919*, Police chief to Prefect, Milan, 25 December 1918.

<sup>64</sup> On Pietro Gori, see Chapter Three.

<sup>65</sup> *Avanti!*, Milan, 10 January 1919, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.51.

<sup>66</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.92.

<sup>67</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, anarchist conferences held by Rodolfo Vella and Napoleone Vanelli.

<sup>68</sup> See interview to Maria Rossi by V. Mantovani, 21 March 1975, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.92.

against the cost of living (*caro-viveri*) were followed by meetings of anarchists discussing the long-standing issue of organisation. Often the anarchists participated in socialists' meetings. During these meetings, the anarchists distinguished themselves from the socialists with strong appeals to seize the moment and push for a general uprising, thus revealing their impatient nature. On the 25 June 1919 a conference was held in the school courtyard in *Corso di Porta Romana* attended by 400 people.<sup>69</sup> In the following weeks many other meetings were organised by anarchists to discuss the matter of organisation within the Milanese anarchist movement. Organisational and anti-organisational Milanese anarchists met several times in order to find a solution, a compromise between the two parties. On 26 June 1919, 'around 50 anarchists belonging to the UCAI met at the USI's Milanese headquarter in *Via Achille Mauri*'. The police report mentions the following:

The meeting was called by Spinaci Emilio, an anarchist with a police record, who aimed at constituting an anarchist organisation. For this purpose he distributed membership cards with fixed membership fees. ... However, Spinaci did not find support for his initiative among the participants because they are individualist anarchists who do not accept discipline or regulations. They do not even want to give their names, and thus, they do not want the membership card. Therefore, Spinaci was not successful. Among many other issues, individualist anarchists proposed creating anarchist groups in different suburbs and it seems that this proposal was accepted as being feasible. In the meantime, I notify you that Spinaci, residing in *Via Molino delle Armi*, was arrested last night.<sup>70</sup>

Other meetings were held on the following days. On 2 July 1919 the anarchist Napoleone Vanelli spoke at the socialist club of Sesto San Giovanni in front of 200 people, and the day after anarchists and socialists met at the Milanese headquarter of the USI. On this occasion, socialist Luigi Repossì informed anarchists that they were allowed only one speaker, to be announced a few days in advance to the Socialist Party. Milanese anarchists refused to go along with this policy.<sup>71</sup> Three days later, a meeting of around 60 anarchists was held in the same venue. During this gathering, the 19-year-old Bruno Filippi incited the audience to continue strikes and demonstrations and to assault armouries. Moreover, the police report kept in the Rome State Archive specifies

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<sup>69</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.91.

<sup>70</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 28 June 1919.

<sup>71</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 4 July 1919.

that in Milan there were 2,000 anarchists.<sup>72</sup> The following day demonstrators asked for a 50 percent reduction in the price of food and attacked several shops. Around 2,200 people were arrested.<sup>73</sup> Among those arrested there were, of course, many anarchists. Around 200 of them met on 9 July 1919 at the Milanese USI's locals: here, individualists and communists, according to the police report, were able to come to an agreement. The two factions of anarchism agreed to work together to raise money to publish a newspaper and to put more action into propaganda among workers.<sup>74</sup>

The demonstrations for the *caro-viveri* and the failure of the general strike of 20-21 July 1919 'left the working class with a sense of disappointment and tiredness'.<sup>75</sup> In particular, the two day general strike that paralysed Italy at the end of July was preceded by an 'exceptional atmosphere of excitement' among workers.<sup>76</sup> However, the outcome was not what revolutionaries were expecting: socialist and unions leaders did not lead the masses to a general uprising. On 23 July around 25 anarchists met for a debriefing of those two days. Frustration was dominant: the common opinion was that the moment was not favourable for a revolution.<sup>77</sup> Someone disagreed. As a result, 'the first terrorist group' was born.<sup>78</sup> Bruno Filippi, Aldo Perego and Guido Villa<sup>79</sup> endorsed the propaganda of the deed: in order to shake the sleeping masses, isolated acts of violence were seen as more effective than conferences. On 29 July 1919, the day after a metallurgical workers' strike, a bomb exploded at the Milanese Palace of Justice. The significance of that date was clear enough: in those hours the Queen and the King of Italy were remembering Umberto I, killed by the anarchist Bresci 19 years earlier. Nonetheless, police did not have any idea who was responsible for the explosion. Despite fears and concerns regarding anarchists having violent aims and 2,000 rifles,<sup>80</sup> the authorities did not know names. One month later, a bomb was planted to hit the house of Giovanni Breda, owner of the famous metallurgical factory. The explosion did not result in any victims. Two days later, another bomb made a lot of noise but inflicted

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<sup>72</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 5 July 1919, and ACS, 'Rapp. ufficio spec. d'investigaz. al dir. gen. P.S.', 7 July 1919, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.93.

<sup>73</sup> R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione. Storia delle classi subaltern italiane dal 1860 al 1950, III*, p.76.

<sup>74</sup> ACS, 'Rapp. ufficio spec. d'investigaz. al dir. gen. P.S.', 13 July 1919, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.96.

<sup>75</sup> G. Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia. Lezioni di Harvard*, Milan, 1975, p.225.

<sup>76</sup> Quote of Nenni in R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione. Storia delle classi subaltern italiane dal 1860 al 1950, III*, p.83.

<sup>77</sup> ACS, 'Rapp. ufficio spec. d'investigaz. al dir. gen. P.S.', 26 July 1919, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.97.

<sup>78</sup> G. Mariani, *Memorie di un ex-terrorista*, Turin, Mariani, 1953, p.25.

<sup>79</sup> See DBAI, *ad nomen* and V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana, ad indicem*.

<sup>80</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, pp.91-94

no casualties. This time, the device was set to hit the house of the senator, marquis, president of the *Società meccanica lombarda*, and former major of Milan, Ettore Ponti. Another bomb was placed in the central train station on 28 August, but it failed to explode.<sup>81</sup> In his memoirs published in 1953, Giuseppe Mariani writes that the instigator of those bomb attacks was Bruno Filippi.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Filippi's writings published in the anarchist journal *L'Iconoclasta* of Pistoia confirmed his attitude on direct action.<sup>83</sup>

Nonetheless, the activities of Filippi and his group were not the only initiatives carried out by Milanese anarchists. In August police reported nine meetings which prepared the constitution of the *Unione Anarchica Milanese* (Milanese anarchist union), a section of the UAI, founded on 9 August 1919.<sup>84</sup> The idea of local and regional sections of the UAI was developed during the anarchist Congress held in Legnano on 13 May 1919. On that occasion it was also decided to increase anti-militarist propaganda and to avoid isolated acts.<sup>85</sup> This directive was not endorsed by every anarchist in Milan. On 7 September 1919 a bomb exploded at the *Circolo dei Nobili* (the Noblemen's Club) of the *Biffi Café*, next to the Gallery in the city centre. The remains of the only victim were later identified: it was Bruno Filippi, the bomber. This episode led to the hunting of anarchists. Filippi's closest comrades were arrested and meetings between anarchists became less frequent.<sup>86</sup> Anarchist conferences were prohibited as well as the hanging of anarchist posters for the November 1919 elections.<sup>87</sup> At the end of this turbulent year, the Milan police chief, Giovanni Gasti, reporting to the Prefect, gave a picture of the anarchist movement:

I notify you that the anarchist movement of this province is quite important, more in terms of activities than the number of its members. The real participants, both communists and individualists, are not more than 150. The resources available to the most influential leaders (Carlo Molaschi, Vella Rodolfo and Senigalliesi Mario) are limited to *Lire* 80,000 and they were collected in Milan for the anarchist newspaper '*Umanità Nova*' which is not born yet and [there are also] a few thousands *Lire* for political victims, [especially those] arrested for the anarchist plot (this fund raising activity is mainly carried out by

<sup>81</sup> For these three episodes see V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, pp.108-11.

<sup>82</sup> G. Mariani, *Memorie di un ex-terrorista*, p.26.

<sup>83</sup> See in particular, Bruno Filippi, 'Parla la dinamite!', *L'Iconoclasta*, Pistoia, 13 September 1919. The article was published six days after Filippi's death.

<sup>84</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, police reports related to meetings of 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 22 August 1919.

<sup>85</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 30 May 1919.

<sup>86</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, police reports related to meetings in September, October and November 1919.

<sup>87</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 7 November 1919.

Molaschi). It appears that, apart from the publication of the newspaper, anarchists do not have at the moment any other purpose but propaganda, included propaganda among troops. I add that this office tends to focus its vigilance on those anarchists involved with this activity. There are no common plans with anarchists from other provinces. Even the demonstration for the return of Malatesta to Italy ... is temporarily quiet.<sup>88</sup>

With this report the Milan police chief reconsidered the number of active militants – 150 instead of 2,000 – and excluded the existence of other terrorist plots. According to Gasti, the only activities were propaganda and fund-raising for *Umanità Nova*. Moreover, the agitation for the return of Malatesta no longer represented a concern. Significantly, only 10 days after this report, Errico Malatesta arrived in Italy, ending a long series of attempts to return.<sup>89</sup> The old Italian revolutionary was ready to settle in Milan and direct the first anarchist daily newspaper, *Umanità Nova*.

After the war, the publication of new journals helped anarchists to resurrect their forces and to restart activities of propaganda. Individualist and communist, organisational and anti-organisational anarchists improved their comradeship and their debates lost the previous polemical features. Moreover, the common refusal of war had united anarchists and socialists. In particular, anarchists shared revolutionary stances with the Socialist Youth Federation and with the maximalist wing of the Socialist Party. In other words, a greater sense of tolerance and comradeship among socialists and anarchists marked the first months of the post-war period and anarchists attended socialist assemblies. However, the reformist wing of the Socialist Party, Turati and his *Critica Sociale*, and the leaders of the CGdL continued to oppose anarchists, although their opposition was mainly expressed through indifference. Finally, despite the lack of institutional relationships between anarchists and the USI, local sections of the revolutionary union were in many cases led by anarchists, who shared with the national USI revolutionary and self-management stances. Often Milanese anarchists used the premises of the local section of the USI, located in *Via Achille Mauri* 8, for their meetings. At the beginning of 1920, an alternative venue was the Socialist club in *Porta Venezia*. There, in February 1920, a meeting saw the participation of ‘the Bolshevik’ Alfredo Interlenghi to discuss the opportunity for an agreement between individualist

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<sup>88</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 15 December 1919.

<sup>89</sup> See P. Finzi, *La nota persona. Errico Malatesta in Italia (dicembre 1919/luglio 1920)*, pp.53-64, and G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, pp.639-45.

and communist anarchists.<sup>90</sup> Most of all, February 1920 was marked by the intense activity of propaganda produced by Errico Malatesta: he was called to give speeches in many Italian centres. Everywhere Malatesta was acclaimed as the ‘Italian Lenin’, a name that the old revolutionary did not like at all.<sup>91</sup> Between 20 and 24 February Malatesta spoke at three meetings held respectively at the Milanese Chamber of labour, in Legnano and in Turro. On 26 February 1920 the first issue of *Umanità Nova* was published in Milan. Its premises were in located in *Via Carlo Goldoni* 3. In those pages, Malatesta explained the newspaper’s aims:

We are anarchists, in the real sense of the word; it means that we want to destroy the social order within which men, fighting against each other, exploit and oppress one another, or tend to exploit and oppress another. [We want this] in order to achieve the constitution of a new society within which everyone finds complete liberty, maximum satisfaction of needs and desires, in solidarity and love with every men: [in other words] full development of one’s intellectual and emotional potentials. Nobody can say exactly what the real forms, with which such liberty and well being for all may be realized, are. Nobody, especially if an anarchist, could think to impose on other people what he considers the best form. The only way to discover the best form is freedom, freedom to meet, freedom to experiment, complete freedom without any other limit but others’ equal freedom.<sup>92</sup>

With this article Malatesta acknowledged the existence of different types of anarchists, although ‘often it is just a matter of different interpretations of the same ideals and aspirations’.<sup>93</sup> In that climate of renewed cooperation Malatesta could not see ‘reasons why these different categories of comrades could not work together for a common goal’.<sup>94</sup> Then he moved to enunciate the principles and purposes of anarchists: from fighting against ignorance, religion, hate amongst nations, and economic and political institutions, to abolition of states, constitutions of free anarchist associations, communism of land and means of production, and free public services, such as education and health. Malatesta was aware that such a program would have found agreements as well as theoretical opposition. Yet, as he pointed out, theoretical disquisitions were not the aim of the publication. On the contrary, *Umanità Nova* was meant to be a fighting tool, a driving force behind workers’ emancipation. According to

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<sup>90</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 18 and 20 February 1920.

<sup>91</sup> See G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, pp.645-51.

<sup>92</sup> E. Malatesta, ‘I nostri propositi’, *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 26 February 1920.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

Malatesta, 'revolution was inevitable and imminent' and anarchists had to expand their role of idealistic vanguard or prophets preaching in the desert: 'We have to be a lively force that continuously and effectively works to shape events.'<sup>95</sup> In order to do so, anarchists had to bring their propaganda to the masses:

We have to make our voice heard, as well as our action among workers' struggles and any other popular movements. Everywhere and every time we have to inspire sufferers, to arouse their trust in their own strength, and to push them to act in cooperation with their comrades ...<sup>96</sup>

Malatesta was wrong in considering the revolution 'imminent and inevitable'. However, anarchist propaganda among Milanese workers immediately had an effect. On 28 February, at the *Bianchi* metallurgical factory, workers refused the suspension of work due to a lack of power, decided by the employer. On that occasion workers approved the anarchist Paganini's motion of going back to work on the following Monday.<sup>97</sup>

On Sunday 29 February 1920, an assembly was organised at the school of *Porta Romana* to discuss the claims of the invalids of war. Among the participants someone noticed the presence of Malatesta and soon he was asked to give a speech. The meeting ended peacefully and rumour of a spontaneous march towards *Piazza Duomo* began to spread. Authorities tried to prevent this rally with the use of force: two people were shot dead and five injured.<sup>98</sup> Police brutality also hit people sitting on a tram. A general strike to protest against this episode of state violence was called for the following day. Tram drivers were the first category of workers to launch the strike. In the next four days strikes and massive assemblies followed one another. On Monday 1 March, Milan was paralysed by a general strike that saw the participation of every category of workers. On the following day, a huge assembly was held in the *Piazzale dell'Umanitaria*, where Malatesta, Borghi, Vella, Mariani and Binazzi spoke on behalf of the anarchists. However, disagreement began to arise between anarchists and socialists: the Socialist Party and its organ *Avanti!* called the strike off. Yet, on Wednesday 3 March, Milanese workers continued their protest and after midday, despite the ban by the police, they met at the *Arena* for a large gathering called by

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> P. La Torre, 'Il congresso della UAI di Bologna (1920)', *Rivista storica dell'anarchismo*, vol.8, no.2, 2001, p.86. See also Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, pp.33-34.

<sup>98</sup> See *Avanti!*, Milan, 2 March 1920; A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, pp.207-08; and P. Finzi, *La nota persona. Errico Malatesta in Italia (dicembre 1919/luglio 1920)*, pp.121-22.

anarchists.<sup>99</sup> The only speakers were anarchists and delegates of the USI. The arrests of several people concluded the day.

Polemics between socialists and anarchists were carried on in the pages of *Avanti!* and *Umanità Nova*. On 4 March *Avanti!* accused anarchists of being *disfattisti* (defeatists). *Umanità Nova* replied on behalf of the anarchists:

Defeatist! Yes sir, we were defeatist during the war, when with all our strength we tried to open the eyes of proletarians, so that they could see the deep where the bourgeoisie threw them off. We are defeatist today when we say to workers that it is time to study economic problems and it is time for them to create organs within the factories in order to take them over. We are defeatist when we oppose the evangelic “cross your arms” with the revolutionary “occupy the factories”!<sup>100</sup>

In the middle of the Red Biennium, contrasts between socialists and anarchists revealed deep incurable theoretical and practical divisions. The effects of anarchist propaganda were visible: their presence was massive and workers seemed to follow them. Even socialist leaders such as Turati and Kulishoff demonstrated a certain disappointment in acknowledging that *Umanità Nova*, and not *Avanti!*, was the most widely read newspaper among workers.<sup>101</sup> Anarchists were able to call for huge assemblies, such as the demonstration against the Hungarian dictator Horthy on 21 March: on that occasion 100,000 people gathered at the *Arena* and they heard Binazzi and Borghi speaking on behalf of the anarchists.<sup>102</sup>

Such fervour among Milanese anarchists was translated into more efforts to constitute local, provincial and regional anarchist federations. Several meetings were held for this purpose at the beginning of April. On 1 April, at the Socialist Club of *Porta Venezia*, around 40 anarchists met to constitute a district anarchist club; three days later, at the USI's head office around 25 anarchists founded another branch of the UAI, named *Gruppo comunista-anarchico*.<sup>103</sup> Conferences and public gatherings followed one another: Armando Borghi, Virgilia D'Andrea, Rodolfo Vella and Errico Malatesta

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<sup>99</sup> A. Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898-1945)*, pp.208-09.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Disfattismo!’, *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 5 March 1920.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Lettera a Turati’, 16 August 1920, in F. Turati, A. Kuliscioff, *Carteggio, V, Dopoguerra e fascismo (1919-1922)*, Turin, Einaudi, 1978 (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1953), p.386, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.211.

<sup>102</sup> See *Umanità Nova*, 22 March 1920, and ‘Lettera a Turati’, 21 March 1920, in F. Turati, A. Kuliscioff, *Carteggio, V, Dopoguerra e fascismo (1919-1922)*, p.298, in V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.201.

<sup>103</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 2 April 1920 and 5 April 1920.

were the speakers in a series of conferences held in Sesto San Giovanni.<sup>104</sup> On 30 May 1920 anarchists from Lombardy met in Milan for the first regional anarchist congress.<sup>105</sup>

The report by the Milan police chief informed the Prefect of the anarchists' agenda:

During the congress, the constitution of the Lombardy anarchist Federation was examined with the aim of intensifying propaganda through anarchist publications, speakers and organisation of meetings and conferences. Such a constitution, motioned by the Milanese group, was approved. Then the national anarchist congress, which will be held in Bologna 1 – 4 July, was discussed. Lombardy anarchist groups decided to participate, sending one delegate. Finally, themes for discussion at the national congress were debated: the economic organisation of workers, factory worker's committees, and the constitution of Soviets. In regards to the first theme, participants criticised the actions of reformist socialists and of the major economic organisations, which were seen as the cause of workers' selfishness and their lack of revolutionary stances. Thus, in order to inspire a libertarian spirit among workers, revolutionaries need to employ the tools of the class struggle such as factory worker's committees and, eventually, taking possess of the factories themselves. In regards to factory worker committees, the Congress affirmed the necessity not to give them too much technical importance so that they do not become cooperationist organs but can remain revolutionary ... . Finally, in regards to the constitution of Soviets, it was affirmed that Soviets must be the spontaneous outcome of the revolution rather than the imposition of a communist apparatus within a bourgeois regime ... .<sup>106</sup>

Even within this restless situation, anarchists tried to remain coherent in their ends: they were aware that revolutionary tools such as soviets and workers' committees were not the end but the means of a libertarian revolution. At the Bologna congress, Italian anarchists constituted the *Patto d'Alleanza* (Pact of Allegiance), which basically obliged anarchists to act in accordance with the 'responsibilities taken towards other members of the organisation'.<sup>107</sup> More importantly, the UAI stressed the idea that the Union did not hold 'the monopoly of anarchism':

it considers as comrades even those anarchists who are not members, but who are intransigent in the struggle against government and capitalism; and it maintains with them good

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<sup>104</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Monza Vice Prefect to Milan Prefect, 21 and 25 April 1920, and Milan Prefect to Minister of Interior, 4 May 1920.

<sup>105</sup> See ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 3 June 1920.

<sup>106</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 3 June 1920.

<sup>107</sup> U. Fedeli (ed.), *Federazione Anarchica Italiana: Convegni e congressi, 1944-1962*, Genoa, Edizioni della libreria della F.A.I., 1963, pp.131-36.

relationships, of friendship, solidarity and mutual aid in all those initiatives on which everyone agrees.<sup>108</sup>

The second national congress of Italian anarchists was held in a crucial historical time. National and international events were debated and discussed (the Russian revolution, the Third International, soviets and their character, etc.). At this congress Malatesta's motion was approved and published as *Il nostro programma* (Our programme).<sup>109</sup>

In Milan, the national congress was anticipated by a huge demonstration. Rumors of a new war in Albania had become more frequent. On 22 June an assembly was held at the *Arena* 'against militarist adventures and against reaction'.<sup>110</sup> At the end of the assembly, a crowd moved towards *Foro Bonaparte* and *Via Dante*. Police tried to block the way. Shootings broke out. Citizens were seen shooting at groups of workers from surrounding apartments. Some demonstrators shot back. In *Via Dante* barricades were built. The resistance of the demonstrators was repressed by the intervention of two armored cars in *Largo Cairoli*. Other conflicts broke out in *Via Legnano*, and soldiers were seen but refused to assault the crowd.<sup>111</sup> Several demonstrators were arrested, among which were the anarchists Armando Borghi, Corrado Quaglino and Ugo Fedeli. The soldiers' refusal to shoot at demonstrators was not the only episode of mutiny. On 26 June in Ancona, a soldiers' revolt broke out just before embarking for Albania.<sup>112</sup>

At the end of July, Milanese workers were involved in a series of demonstrations supported by anarchists. On 30 July, anarchists and the USI participated in the strike called by workers of the metallurgical factory *Miani e Silvestri*, protesting against a reduction in their wages.<sup>113</sup> Metal workers under the banner of the FIOM (*Federazione italiana operai metallurgici*) were at the forefront of protest in August 1920.<sup>114</sup> At the USI's national congress (La Spezia, 17 August 1920), metal workers' organisations declared the necessity to continue the struggle, and for this purpose they welcomed the employment of every possible means, including the simultaneous occupation of factories.<sup>115</sup> Only two days earlier, Italian anarchists had met in Florence

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. See also 'Unione Anarchica Italiana Patto d'Alleanza (Bologna 1-4 Luglio 1920)', in VV.AA., *L'Unione anarchica italiana. Tra rivoluzione europea e reazione fascista (1919-1926)*, pp.265-66.

<sup>109</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, pp.681-93.

<sup>110</sup> See *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 22 June 1920 and V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, pp.237-49.

<sup>111</sup> 'L'agguato', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 24 June 1920.

<sup>112</sup> 'Rivolta militare ad Ancona', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 27 June 1920.

<sup>113</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.47.

<sup>114</sup> G. Manacorda, *Il socialismo nella storia d'Italia*, vol.II, pp.431-36.

<sup>115</sup> R. Sacconi, 'L'azione metallurgica. La grande battaglia dei metallurgici', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 26 August 1920.

at the national congress in support of political victims: also on that occasion participants agreed to intensify the struggle.<sup>116</sup>

On 28 August an article published in *Umanità Nova* highlighted the presence of anarchists within the worker movement:

All those opponents who usually say that anarchists are only a few, should be convinced of the contrary by now. This modest publication which received so much proletarian support is the clearest demonstration that the anarchist movement is a mass movement; it is a movement that mirrors a huge component of the public arena. Friends and enemies should see it as significant.<sup>117</sup>

Two days later, a manifesto in solidarity with political victims and the Russian revolution was proclaimed by *Umanità Nova*, the UAI, the USI, the Socialist party and the CGdL.<sup>118</sup>

It seemed that the moment was right for the final strike moved by left wing political parties and economic organisations against Italian capitalism. On 31 August 1920 Milanese metal workers of *Alfa Romeo* found their factory shut and supervised by police as a reaction to the strike called against the unfair dismissal of 200 fellow workers. It was the last straw. Immediately, metal workers' unions called for the occupation of factories. The response was massive. Three hundred factories were occupied in Milan. *Umanità Nova* commented upon the occupation in these terms:

The occupation of 300 factories in Milan happened simultaneously at 5pm. After the closing of *Alfa Romeo*, workers understood immediately that the only way to prevent the closing and the occupation by police forces was to remain united inside the factories. Workers surrounded offices and captured directors, chiefs and clerks. They put sentries at the gates and hoisted black and red flags on top of the premises .... Whatever the outcome of this movement, it is certain that the consciousness of metal workers is alive, and that they are aware of their strength. This will be auspicious for an eventual revolution.<sup>119</sup>

On the sixth day of occupation, the anarchist newspaper incited workers to resist and it warned them with a sinister prediction: 'Workers have barricaded themselves in their fortresses kicking out capitalists. Once again the government is unable to react and

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<sup>116</sup> There were Malatesta and Clodoveo Bonazzi for the UAI, Gigi Damiani for *Umanità Nova*, Dante Pagliai and Emilio Spinaci for the CPVP of Milan. See 'Il Convegno Pro Vittime Politiche. Gli aderenti, i non aderenti e le deliberazioni prese', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 18 August 1920.

<sup>117</sup> La redazione, 'Il nostro primo semestre', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 28 August 1920.

<sup>118</sup> 'Il Convegno di Bologna. Per le vittime politiche! Per la Russia rivoluzionaria!', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 31 August 1920.

<sup>119</sup> 'Gli operai metallurgici prendono possesso delle fabbriche', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 1 September 1920.

looks for an agreement with workers. If the government is able to make them leave the factories, then it will betray all its promises, included the liberation of all political prisoners. It will quickly prepare and organise new means of defence against workers in order to rescue, once again, the bourgeois boat.<sup>120</sup> On the same line was Malatesta's speech to workers at the *Bianchi*'s:

Whatever the outcome, you must be ready: the movement might extend to other factories, mines and land, without the government being able to stop it. But if they use force, you do not have to be scared. The entire Italian proletariat is with you, as well as Italian revolutionaries. Then, it will be the decisive battle, and you will be the ones who have started the struggle for the complete emancipation of workers.<sup>121</sup>

The issue was clear: leaving factories now would have meant losing the fight and giving authorities the opportunity to occupy them again. It was all-or-nothing: agreeing to bosses' concessions meant the beginning of the end for the workers' movement. Cooperation between occupied factories and exchange of goods was the only way to resist. Solidarity of other workers became crucial. Even more important was the behaviour of soldiers: a refusal to shoot at protesters could have meant revolution-in-progress. On 9 September Malatesta continued to incite workers: he talked to workers at *Miani e Silvestri*, *Breda* and *Officine Elettro-Ferroviarie*. But the situation was taking another direction: the CGdL and the Socialist party met on 10 June in the Milan town hall and decided to take over the direction of the worker movement.<sup>122</sup> *Umanità Nova* launched a final appeal to workers:

'Metal workers! Regardless what the 'managers' will decide, do not abandon the factory, do not give it up, do not give up the arms! If today you leave the factories, tomorrow you will be decimated ....'

The appeal also addressed soldiers:

And you soldiers, our brothers, remember that those arms you have been given to defend privileges and to massacre proletarians, who aspire to emancipation, can be used against oppressors and in favour of workers' redemption.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> 'Metallurgici, attenti!', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 7 September 1920.

<sup>121</sup> E. Malatesta's speech, 7 September 1920, cited in Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, pp.51-52.

<sup>122</sup> G. Arfè, *Storia del socialismo italiano (1892-1926)*, p.280, and L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana. L'anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla guerra di Spagna (1919-1939)*, pp.80-84.

<sup>123</sup> 'La battaglia dei metallurgici è la battaglia di tutto il proletariato', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 11 September 1920.

After the war, anti-militarist propaganda continued to be an important theme. *Umanità Nova* gave space to this issue with the column 'La voce del soldato' (the soldier's voice). The anarchist newspaper reported the news of episodes of rebellion among troops as well as solidarity between soldiers and strikers.<sup>124</sup> However, the Red Biennium and soldiers' behaviour in regards to workers' insurrections showed that anti-militarist propaganda had not been effective enough, particularly within the army. The meeting between the CGdL and the PSI was seen by anarchists as an attempt to betray workers' revolutionary efforts. Nonetheless, anarchist support of the occupation of factories continued to be effective: on 12 September other industrial units, such as the chemical factory *Carlo Erba* and the wires and pneumatics producer *Pirelli*, were occupied in order to supply metal workers with primary resources.<sup>125</sup> However, the turning point arrived a few days later: on 18 September the CGdL accepted the government's promise of acknowledging the participation of unions in the control and management of factories. The CGdL's order to abandon factories followed immediately. Such an order would not find a positive response among anarchists, who, instead, tried to seize the revolutionary moment. The agreement signed in Rome by the CGdL and Italian industrial élite gained the support of the FIOM, the main union confederation of metal workers, which described the agreement as a victory for the proletariat. Malatesta, in the pages of *Umanità Nova*, expressed the anarchist view:

Workers will be leaving the factory with the idea that they have been betrayed; they will leave with anger and feeling of revenge. They will leave but they will learn the lesson.<sup>126</sup>

Malatesta was right: revolution had never been so close. Although the FIOM had proposed a referendum among workers to decide about the Rome agreement, leaders of the metal workers confederation called the occupation off. The agreement became official on 4 October as the *Patto D'Aragona-Giolitti*.

The failure of the Red Biennium suggests several explanations. Italian revolutionaries were unable to steer the workers' movement towards their aims. Not only did they miss an opportunity, but they were also going to face an intense wave of repression. Conversely, Italian anarchists' attempts to channel workers' stances towards a general uprising once again were shown to be ineffective, despite the existence of a

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<sup>124</sup> M. De Agostini, 'Umanità Nova quotidiano a Milano. Febbraio 1920-marzo 1921. Un tentativo di spoglio', in F. Schirone (ed.), *Cronache anarchiche. Il giornale Umanità Nova nell'Italia del Novecento (1920-1945)*, pp.55-56.

<sup>125</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.53.

<sup>126</sup> E. Malatesta, 'Il controllo sindacale sulle aziende', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 19 September 1920.

national organisation and the propaganda of a popular newspaper. Anarchists were outnumbered. However, are not revolutions the product of vanguards' initiatives? Even though anarchists had a long tradition of anti-militarist propaganda among troops, they did not receive enough support from the soldiers, which was essential for making a revolution. At the same time, the CGdL and Socialist party's leaders played a major role in the defeat of 1919-1920 workers' movement. It is difficult to measure the specific weight of all these factors and it seems that the main historiographical question of 'what-went-wrong' will continue to remain controversial.

Another possible explanation for the inability of anarchists to channel the workers' movement towards a revolution might be found in the anarchist movement's lack of a national leader. Especially Malatesta, but also Borghi, Binazzi, Galleani and others, were very influential characters with a special charisma. Unlike fascism, which 'could not survive and flourish without a genuine national leader',<sup>127</sup> none of those anarchists became 'the leader' of the Italian anarchist movement. Malatesta believed in revolution, but he did not want to lead it. For him, revolution was a people's matter, stressing that 'it will be whatever people will make of it ... in order to be truly emancipatory, revolution cannot be the activity of intellectuals or a party, but it has to be the work of the masses, as many as possible.'<sup>128</sup> Anarchists failed to see that they were not followed by the masses, in particular the peasant movement. Anarchists had 'the illusion' that masses were willing to be their protagonist.<sup>129</sup> In Berti's words:

The occupation of factories was not a missed chance for revolution, but on the contrary, it was the inevitable outcome of the absence in Italy of any revolutionary perspective that could decisively steer the social conflict.<sup>130</sup>

With the failure of the Red Biennium, anarchists slowly shifted their emphasis to a different struggle: government reaction and fascist violence.

For Milanese anarchists, in October 1920 events followed quickly one after another: a meeting was held on 5 October and saw the participation of Malatesta, Damiani, Borghi, and D'Andrea on behalf of *Umanità Nova*, the USI and the UAI. They agreed on a demonstration in support of all political prisoners. The protest was called for 14 October. The day before Armando Borghi, one of the most influential figures among anarchists, was arrested. The demonstration took place in every major Italian city. In Milan, the day was also marked by the explosion of two bombs at the

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<sup>127</sup> R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini*, p.159.

<sup>128</sup> E. Malatesta, 'L'Alleanza Rivoluzionaria', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 13 March 1920.

<sup>129</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.607.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p.693.

Cavour Hotel. Police could not find the culprit: they searched the premises of *Umanità Nova* and arrested Alfredo Porcelli, Corrado Quaglino and Dante Pagliai. Moreover, police searched Malatesta and Damiani's apartments.<sup>131</sup> Their absence prevented them from being arrested on that day. It was a matter of hours, however. On 17 October, Malatesta was arrested together with the editor of *Umanità Nova*, Carlo Frigerio.<sup>132</sup> More than 80 anarchists were arrested, included several contributors of *Umanità Nova*, which continued, nonetheless, to be published. Government repression hit the most influential anarchist figures and, in doing this, it aimed at striking the whole anarchist movement. Without some of the main leaders, the anarchists had to face a state reaction which, conniving with fascist violence, had the aspects of a preventive counter-revolution.<sup>133</sup>

The anarchist newspaper continued to denounce the climate of counter-revolution: in the 12 months police had killed 283 people and wounded 1,250 throughout Italy.<sup>134</sup> *Umanità Nova* remained a dissenting voice and it was not acceptable to the authorities: on 26 October another search of the newspaper's premises resulted in the seizure of all account books. It was a clear attempt to obstruct the only voice of the anarchists. Nothing was left but desperate protests:

We are left alone to fight for our comrades' liberty and for all victims of the bourgeois government. We still yell hard, now as ever, our aversion to this old and corrupted society. When we will not be able to say anything else, we will repeat the cry that always has echoed from our ranks during the repression: Long live social revolution! Long live anarchy!<sup>135</sup>

This turbulent year ended with an increase of fascist violence: as Malatesta had predicted, once the factories were abandoned, reaction and repression prevailed. On Christmas Eve *Umanità Nova* wrote in regards to the charge against Malatesta and other anarchists:

Malatesta and comrades remain in prison; others are facing the threat of joining them. Another assault is going to hit *Umanità Nova*. Italian anarchists, it is up to you to defend them!<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*, p.293.

<sup>132</sup> See DBAI, *Frigerio, Carlo*.

<sup>133</sup> See L. Fabbri, *La controrivoluzione preventiva*.

<sup>134</sup> 'Dodici mesi di civiltà e libertà italiana. I prodigi del piombo regio. La Rivoluzione non darebbe tante vittime!', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 20 October 1920.

<sup>135</sup> *Umanità Nova*, 'Nuova perquisizione e sequestri a Umanità Nova', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 26 October 1920.

<sup>136</sup> 'Anarchici d'Italia, difendeteli voi!', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 24 December 1920.

### 6.3 From the Diana bombing to fascism

With the failure of the Red Biennium, Milanese anarchists poured their efforts into campaigning for the liberation of Malatesta, Borghi and Quaglino. On 5 January 1921, the Milanese newspaper *Corriere della Sera* reported the charges against the three anarchists: they were accused of taking part in a terrorist plot organised by anarchists in connection with *Umanità Nova* and the USI.<sup>137</sup> Three weeks later, the national anarchist union launched an appeal in defence of all political prisoners:

Workers! Comrades! Defending political victims, you defend yourselves! Protesting against the unfair charge against Malatesta and his comrades, you will prevent an attack against those few liberties you are left with! Liberating political prisoners, you will take an important step towards your own liberation.<sup>138</sup>

However, Milanese anarchists did not have many opportunities to act. The authorities were cracking down on anarchists, and prohibiting their meetings.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, the presence in Milan of fascist squads increased tensions and prevented peaceful negotiations.

In March 1921 this combustible climate reached its apex. On 15 March, after five months of imprisonment, Malatesta, Borghi and Quaglino began a hunger strike as a protest against the prosecutors who had not yet decided to close the investigation and fix a date to begin their trial. It was clear that the authorities were trying to prolong the imprisonment of Malatesta and his comrades. The dramatic situation of Malatesta in particular, a 70-year-old hunger striker in jail, caused a popular surge of disdain. From 19 March *Umanità Nova* started to give alarming news about Malatesta's health, inviting everyone to do anything possible for his liberation.<sup>140</sup> On 22 March, anarchists and the USI called for a general strike in solidarity with Malatesta and his comrades. The atmosphere was turbulent: only two days before, on 20 March 1920, a column of fascists, returning from a rally, had assaulted a building in Greco Milanese occupied by workers' families, who were guilty of exposing a red ribbon on a window. A woman

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<sup>137</sup> *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 5 January 1921, in Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.61.

<sup>138</sup> UAI, 'Contro la reazione e per le vittime politiche. Appello ai lavoratori d'Italia', *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 23 January 1921.

<sup>139</sup> For example, the *Federazione Anarchica Lombarda* had organised for 14 January a public assembly to commemorate Pietro Gori. The conference was forbidden by the police. The Milanese socialist section, as a protest, took the initiative of organizing the commemoration at the Casa del Popolo. See Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, pp.61-62.

<sup>140</sup> See *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 19-23 March 1921.

and a black shirt were killed. Violence led to more violence. The day after, 21 March 1920, fascists attacked a socialist club in Foro Bonaparte and the worker, Giuseppe Inversetti, was beaten to death.<sup>141</sup> As a result, protests against Malatesta's detention continued and expanded throughout Italy. On 23 March *Umanità Nova* opened with a dramatic headline: 'Comrades! Malatesta is dying!'<sup>142</sup>

What happened on 23 March 1921 at the Diana theatre represented a watershed in Italian history. This episode and the events and people who brought it about have been described and analysed by Vincenzo Mantovani.<sup>143</sup> According to his reconstruction, Giuseppe Mariani, Ettore Agiggins and Giuseppe Boldrini were responsible for that violent deed. Moreover, Mattia Granata has shed light on this episode with his research on Ugo Fedeli's activism in Milan.<sup>144</sup> His study reveals that the bomb exploded at the Diana theatre was part of a plot that saw Fedeli and other young anarchists as the co-protagonists. Their aim was to create the conditions not only for Malatesta's release but also for a broader uprising.<sup>145</sup> However, it is not the purpose of this study to repeat this story. What is important to stress here is the effects that such a deed had on Italian anarchists and civil society in general. This episode dealt a fatal blow to the Italian anarchist movement: the accidental killing of innocent people caused widespread repression against anarchists. *Umanità Nova* was forced to move to Rome. Many anarchists, although they were not involved or even aware of that plot, escaped and left the city in fascist hands. Arrest warrants were signed for Gigi Damiani, Virgilia D'Andrea and Angelo Faggi who had published a document with which they invited workers to intensify the agitations in support of Malatesta.<sup>146</sup> The struggle was definitely lost. More importantly, the elimination of several influential militants of the anarchist movement facilitated fascists taking over the main centres. Progressively, all the major cities were occupied by squads of blackshirts. What had started as a revolutionary dream was now a war of resistance.

Malatesta understood immediately the seriousness of that deed and ceased his hunger strike. In the meantime, fascist violence broke out: *Umanità Nova*'s premises and printing works were assaulted and the Milanese office of the USI was set on fire. Thus, the anarchist newspaper was forced to suspend publication. In solidarity with the

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<sup>141</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 118, *Ordine pubblico*, Milan Police chief to Prefect, 22 and 23 March 1921. See also V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana, ad indicem*.

<sup>142</sup> *Umanità Nova*, Milan, 23 March 1921.

<sup>143</sup> V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*.

<sup>144</sup> See M. Granata, 'Ugo Fedeli a Milano (1898-1921). La formazione politica e la militanza attraverso le carte del suo archivio', *Storia in Lombardia*, pp.61-107, particularly pp.102-07.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p.105.

<sup>146</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.65.

Milanese newspaper, on 7 April the weekly journal *Il Libertario* of La Spezia wrote that it would continue the publication of *Umanità Nova* every week with a special issue. In the same issue there was a description of the situation in Milan:

It is difficult to say how many comrades are in jail. Police do not reveal their names. In the meantime, police keep an eye on those who have not yet been caught. Editors of *Umanità Nova* cannot go back to their houses... Now that they have achieved their goal with arson, destruction and seizure, police are now plotting so that *Umanità Nova* cannot reemerge. (...) But we do not bend our shoulders (...), we lift our heads up not just to defend ourselves from accusations, but to reaffirm our will to exist, against everything and everyone.<sup>147</sup>

On 14 May in Rome, *Umanità Nova* restarted its biweekly publication.<sup>148</sup> The appeal not to give up was repeated in the article titled 'Continuing and beginning':

We entrust the defence of our rights to the Roman proletariat. We ask our comrades to finish our action. To our honest opponents (if they exist) we say: criticise us and fight us with thoughts. To everyone else, to the government, to nationalist fascism ... we show with facts – and the publication of *Umanità Nova* is a fact – that anarchists do not abandon their position whatever happens or threatens them.<sup>149</sup>

Despite the continuous arrest of other anarchists and *Umanità Nova*'s contributors, included Cesare Agostinelli, Nella Giacomelli and Augusto Norsa, at the beginning of July *Umanità Nova* restarted its daily publication.<sup>150</sup> At the end of that month, the trial of Malatesta and his comrades began and finished four days later with their acquittal.<sup>151</sup>

After the Diana episode, Milanese anarchists struggled to restart their activities and to connect with workers as they had a few months before. They focused instead on campaigning for the liberation of political prisoners. In June, Carlo Molaschi gave birth to his *Pagine Libertarie*.<sup>152</sup> At the end of October, during the demonstration in support of Sacco and Vanzetti,<sup>153</sup> anarchists from Lombardy met in Milan at the regional anarchist congress: there were groups from Milan, Sesto San Giovanni, Monza,

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<sup>147</sup> *Il Libertario*, La Spezia, 7 April 1921.

<sup>148</sup> From 14 May to 29 June 1921, the journal was published in Rome as *L'Umanità Nova*. See L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, p.290.

<sup>149</sup> 'Continuando e cominciando', *L'Umanità Nova*, Rome, 14 May 1921, *numero di saggio*.

<sup>150</sup> See F. Schirone (ed.), *Cronache anarchiche. Il giornale Umanità Nova nell'Italia del Novecento (1920-1945)*.

<sup>151</sup> See E. Malatesta, *Autodifesa davanti alle Assise di Milano e altri scritti*.

<sup>152</sup> L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, p.306.

<sup>153</sup> The story of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti is well known. Their case received international attention and demonstrations for their release were organised all around the world. There is a huge literature on these two Italian anarchists executed in the USA in 1927. For an introduction, see DBAI, *ad nomen*. See also P.V. Cannistraro, 'Mussolini, Sacco-Vanzetti, and the Anarchists: the Transatlantic Context', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol.68, no.1, 1996, pp.31-62.

Legnano, Greco and Turro. Anarchists from Tuscany participated as well.<sup>154</sup> On that occasion it was decided to intensify the campaign for political victims and to increase anarchist propaganda. Similar aims were confirmed by anarchists meeting in Ancona in the following days at the third national congress of the UAI.<sup>155</sup> With the participation of more than 120 delegates, anarchist Luigi Fabbri and Armando Borghi were some of the most influential figures of the Italian anarchist movement just before fascism. The dramatic situation that anarchists were facing in Italy also pushed them to look at improving relationships with anarchists of other countries.

That the situation was heading towards a critical stage was demonstrated by a completely different *modus operandi* of authorities towards anarchists and fascists. Renzo De Felice wrote in *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*: ‘when fascists increased their violent direct actions, they [were] conniving with police forces.’<sup>156</sup> On 20 November, police prevented anarchists from meeting at the premises of *Via Campo Lodigiano* for Sacco and Vanzetti’s sentence. Six days later, the ‘subversive’ and mutilated Furlani was given a jail sentence of 16 years and 8 months for the incidents in Greco Milanese on 20 March 1921. Conversely, on 16 December the Milan Court of Assizes found all the fascists charged with the murdering of Giuseppe Inversetti not guilty.<sup>157</sup>

The new year began with a huge demonstration held in Rome in support of Sacco and Vanzetti. Malatesta was the main speaker.<sup>158</sup> In 1922 Malatesta spent most of his time in Rome focusing on the publication of *Umanità Nova*.<sup>159</sup> At the end of January, following a tragic episode of fascist violence in Apulia, *Umanità Nova* launched an appeal in order to resist with every means fascist violence and government repression. In particular, the anarchist newspaper indicated workers’ strikes as the most effective tool to extend the protest:

The government has disarmed workers in order to facilitate fascist actions, and thus in many places it can be difficult to oppose violence with armed resistance. Do whatever you can. Workers have still the power of labor. Without labor there is no life. Every time there is a fascist attack, workers must refuse to work, not just for one day, as a platonic sign of protest, but for an indefinite period of time with the aim of obstructing social life. It will be whatever will be. Anarchists should work to

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<sup>154</sup> ASM, *Gabinetto di Prefettura*, b. 934, Milan Police chief to Minister of Interior, 31 October 1921.

<sup>155</sup> L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana. L’anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla guerra di Spagna (1919-1939)*, pp.117-23.

<sup>156</sup> R. De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario (1883-1920)*, Turin, Einaudi, 1965, p.603.

<sup>157</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.74.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

<sup>159</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.732.

extend every movement as much as they can. To work, immediately!<sup>160</sup>

The appeal to resist fascist violence and government repression was translated into a new popular front called *Alleanza del Lavoro* (Labour Alliance), constituted by the railway workers union and aimed at uniting all left-wing forces.<sup>161</sup> *Umanità Nova* – thus Malatesta - welcomed the project: '[o]f course we give our support and sympathies to what should represent the awakening of the Italian proletariat'.<sup>162</sup> In Milan, anarchists focused on the situation of political prisoners. On 24 February, the anarchist CPVP announced that all prisoners accused of taking part in the Diana episode had started a hunger strike.<sup>163</sup> News regarding the trial followed news of fascist violence. On 30 March, the railway worker Emilio Corazza was killed by fascists at the *Circolo Ferrovieri* (the railway workers' club). More than 100,000 people attended his funeral three days later.<sup>164</sup> At the end of April, *Umanità Nova* published a summary of recent fascist actions.<sup>165</sup> A few days earlier, anarchists had held an international conference which saw the participation of the Russian foreign minister; they met again in November 1922 in Genoa.<sup>166</sup> Anarchists confirmed their solidarity with the Russian revolution, but they also launched an appeal for the release of all anarchists detained in Russian prisons.<sup>167</sup> *Umanità Nova* published an article on the situation in Russia: according to Italian anarchists, the revolution in Russia had been betrayed:

Revolution has halted and it has created a new despotism. The state, the great enemy of individuals' liberties, has risen again with its terrible repressive laws, with the force of weapons, with the violence of a dictatorship, with prisons, with everything that is tyranny and opposes revolution.<sup>168</sup>

Moreover, the Italian anarchists launched an appeal for solidarity with Russian anarchists: '[i]n Russia, anarchists do not have any liberty. In this way, revolution is just a mean joke! Well, despite the Italian repression, we still have the strength to offer our solidarity to eastern comrades and to protest against dictators who employ repressive methods already used by despots and the bourgeoisie, in order to strangle the revolution

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<sup>160</sup> 'Anarchici, a voi!', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 27 January 1922.

<sup>161</sup> L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana. L'anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla guerra di Spagna (1919-1939)*, pp.133-38.

<sup>162</sup> See *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 9 February 1922.

<sup>163</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.77.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>165</sup> See *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 26 April 1922.

<sup>166</sup> See P.C. Masini, 'Gli anarchici italiani e la rivoluzione russa', *Rivista storica del socialismo*, p.168.

<sup>167</sup> See *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 10 April 1922.

<sup>168</sup> 'Viva la rivoluzione!', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 10 April 1922.

(...).<sup>169</sup> The situation of anarchists in Russia continued to occupy columns of *Umanità Nova*: an interview by Malatesta with the Russian anarchist Sandomirsky<sup>170</sup> was shortly followed by another article by Malatesta on the same topic, which ended with an appeal for the release of all political prisoners detained in Russia.<sup>171</sup> Despite their propaganda, these events revealed the Italian anarchists' loss of revolutionary aspirations and their increasingly defensive nature.

The trial of the Diana bombers began on 9 May 1922. The anarchists Giuseppe Mariani, Ettore Aguggini and Giuseppe Boldrini were defended by a former anarchist, the lawyer Francesco Saverio Merlino. Together with other anarchists, they were charged with conspiracy, bomb explosions, crimes against persons and properties.<sup>172</sup> The sentence was given at the end of the month: on 31 May Mariani and Boldrini were sentenced to life by the Milan Court of Assizes. Aguggini was sentenced to thirty years in prison. Other anarchists were found guilty of conspiracy and sentenced to relatively minor penalties. During the trial, Malatesta wrote an article with which he expressed understanding and compassion for the bombers:

Those men were our comrades, good comrades, always ready to sacrifice themselves for others' good. Their tragic deed was an act of sacrifice and devotion. These men have killed and massacred in the name of our idea, in the name of their and our dream of love. Here lies the tragedy that torments many of our comrades. It is absurd and impossible to claim this deed, because it is against our feelings and against our propaganda. [However,] to condemn the authors is ungenerous, unfair and impossible. We need to understand ... The Diana bombers were overwhelmed by a noble passion, and every man should halt before them, thinking about the devastations that such a noble passion can produce in human minds. The Milanese jury faces a distressing issue. Will they understand that those young men, under the final judgment before the law, are not responsible because their passion was created by the brutality and injustice of the police and authorities?<sup>173</sup>

Malatesta's words were an attempt to contextualise the tragic deed within a specific climate of frustration, anger, and despair that many anarchists were experiencing in those months. The detention of Malatesta and his comrades represented the tip of the iceberg. In the background lay the failure of the Red Biennium and the clash with the

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> E. Malatesta, 'Un anarchico russo sulla situazione del suo paese', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 30 April 1922.

<sup>171</sup> See *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 4 May 1922.

<sup>172</sup> See V. Mantovani, *Mazurca blu, la strage del Diana*.

<sup>173</sup> E. Malatesta, 'Tormento d'animo', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 17 May 1922.

blackshirts. Once the storm caused by the Diana episode passed and hopes for revolution faded away, the opposition to fascist violence remained the only field of action for left-wing political organisations, including the anarchists.

The idea of a popular anti-fascist front united by a common task was expressed by *Umanità Nova* on 28 May 1921. The article was inspired by clashes in Rome between fascists and the Roman population of the *Tiburtino* suburb which had caused casualties and injured several people. The anarchist newspaper wrote in regards to these clashes:

On the one hand, they demonstrate the fascists' goal of conquering the capital city ..., and on the other hand, they are proof that the Roman population will not be affected by oppression and is able to make itself respected. ... It is time to ask every man of progress, socialists, communists, republicans, anarchists not to renounce their aims ... but to forget outbursts and personal animosity, and to work together, in this moment of common danger, against the common enemy, for a common action.<sup>174</sup>

The defeat of revolutionaries and anarchists in the defense of Sestri Ponente - an industrial suburb in Genoa - against fascist squads brought *Umanità Nova* to write the following:

If it is not possible to extend the resistance movement to a national scale ... then nothing is left but to dissolve parties and organisations and constituting secret committees for direct action.<sup>175</sup>

The idea of secret committees was at odds with the invitation made a few days later, following workers' strikes in Piedmont and Milan against fascism:

Milan begins a strike. Ancona goes back to work. It is the same old mistake that resulted in the failure of revolution in Italy ... We must act, all of us, everywhere. It does not matter what one wants to do: it is either ... fascism ... or (...) the transformation of the social order (either through a modest reform or with a liberating revolution). Nothing can be achieved without people's direct action. Today there is still time for action. Tomorrow will be too late!<sup>176</sup>

The prediction was not far from the truth. By the end of July 1922 clashes between fascists and anti-fascists spread throughout the north of Italy, from Romagna to Tuscany. Strikes followed fights, revenge attacks followed one another. In the first days

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<sup>174</sup> 'Due giornate di sciopero a Roma contro il fascismo e la polizia. La situazione', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 28 May 1922.

<sup>175</sup> 'Le leggi contro le società segrete sono state abolite', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 14 July 1922.

<sup>176</sup> 'Per un'azione generale ed immediata', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 22 July 1922.

of August 1922, fascist squads occupied several town halls of major centers. The *Arditi del popolo* (People's brave ones) stood as a group of ex-soldiers who aimed at defending workers from fascist violence.<sup>177</sup>

Like fascism, *arditismo* was also a product of the First World War. Yet it developed as an anti-fascist organisation to the extent that 'writing the history of *Arditi del popolo* means to write the history of militant anti-fascism, outside bourgeois parliamentary democracy'.<sup>178</sup> The civil war was in its final stage.<sup>179</sup> It started in Livorno, on 1 August, when clashes produced nine casualties and 18 people were injured.<sup>180</sup> The Italian anarchist union launched the final appeal:

It is our firm opinion that this is not time for sterile words; time has come for urgent action... The Italian anarchist union supports all proletarians who have been attacked, regardless of their political affiliation. The Italian anarchist union encourages, as always, all workers – beyond divisions, programs and organisations – to unite for a common action of defense and resistance.<sup>181</sup>

Similarly, on 2 August the *Alleanza del Lavoro* called for a general strike against fascist terror. The day after, during the strike which saw the participation of every type of workers, clashes between fascists and left-wing militants broke out in several cities. In Milan, fascists attacked the premises of *Avanti!*, the socialist newspaper.<sup>182</sup> Editors, contributors, socialists, communists and anarchists joined together to defend it. It was a significant episode, and perhaps the last, of anti-fascist popular resistance before the March on Rome.<sup>183</sup> *Umanità Nova* commented the day after:

The heroic resistance in Milan, Genoa, Ancona, Parma, Pistoia – heroic and desperate resistance of men armed only with their noble desire to save the flag – could not solve the situation by themselves... The last barricades are falling, of course, but they fall after being defended with blood, with the sacrifice of a population that is defeated, but does not give up. It is a defeat, it is not abdication! Proletarian Ancona is not dead. Rebel Genoa

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<sup>177</sup> See A. Staid, *Gli arditi del popolo. La prima lotta armata contro il fascismo. 1921-1922*; L. Balsamini, *Gli arditi del popolo e la guerra*, Casalvelino Scalo, Galzerano, 2002; E. Francescangeli, *Arditi del popolo. Argo Secondari e la prima organizzazione antifascista (1917-1922)*; M. Rossi, *Arditi non gendarmi! Dall'arditismo di Guerra, agli arditi del popolo. 1917-1922*.

<sup>178</sup> R. Del Carria, *Proletari senza rivoluzione, II*, Milan, Oriente, 1970, p.188, cited in A. Staid, *Gli arditi del popolo. La prima lotta armata contro il fascismo. 1921-1922*, p.13.

<sup>179</sup> 'Borghesia e governo hanno scatenato la guerra civile!', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 6 August 1922.

<sup>180</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.87.

<sup>181</sup> UAI, 'In piedi contro la reazione!', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 1 August 1922.

<sup>182</sup> 'La sede dell' 'Avanti' nuovamente incendiata a Milano', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 6 August 1922.

<sup>183</sup> L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana. L'anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla guerra di Spagna (1919-1939)*, pp.139-41.

is not dead. Milan is not dead.... They will rise again tomorrow, because tomorrow belongs to freedom, and not to slavery. Hail to the fallen soldiers! Hail to the fighters! Saving yourselves is the great ancient teaching that has to be renewed today.<sup>184</sup>

As a result of this violent situation, on 11 August 1921 *Umanità Nova* was forced to suspend its daily publication. It was impossible to distribute copies because sellers were threatened and several militants had been arrested, killed, or were on the move. In its first issue as a weekly journal, *Umanità Nova* described a long series of episodes of fascist violence.<sup>185</sup> Two months later, Mussolini reached Rome, called by the King to form a new government. During the invasion of Rome by blackshirts *Umanità Nova*'s premises and typography were destroyed. On 28 October, *Umanità Nova* was not distributed, even if it had already been printed. The end of *Umanità Nova* in Italy was just postponed: on 2 December 1922 *Umanità Nova* suspended its publication.<sup>186</sup> However, thanks to the activities of Italian anarchists abroad, the journal continued to be published during its 'exile', first in New York (1924-1925), then in Buenos Aires (1930 and 1932), and finally in Paris (1932-1933).<sup>187</sup>

It was the beginning of the fascist repression of dissenting voices. In February 1923 Carlo Molaschi was forced to end the publication of *Pagine Libertarie*. Printers and contributors of the anarchist press were arrested, like Molaschi, Fioravante Meniconi, and Mario Mantovani. In addition, Giuseppe Monanni and Leda Rafanelli were arrested, the premises of their *Casa Editrice Sociale* were searched and all records and stock were seized. Monanni's introduction to Rafanelli's first edition of her memoirs, *Una donna e Mussolini*, revealed that Mussolini was particularly interested in the 1910s' correspondence between Rafanelli and the future *duce*.<sup>188</sup>

Since its beginning, the new fascist government persecuted anarchists and their activities. On 1 July 1923, the fascist newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* complained that it was still possible to read copies of the anarchist journal *L'Adunata dei Refrattari* in the public lecture room of *Corso Vittorio Emanuele*.<sup>189</sup> In January 1924 Malatesta was still

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<sup>184</sup> *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 4 August 1922, cited in Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.88. I have not been able to retrieve this issue of *Umanità Nova*.

<sup>185</sup> 'Barbarie!', *Umanità Nova*, Rome, 19 August 1921.

<sup>186</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, p.734.

<sup>187</sup> F. Schirone (ed.), *Cronache anarchiche. Il giornale Umanità Nova nell'Italia del Novecento (1920-1945)*, pp.193-246. *Umanità Nova* was published also during the Resistance in WWII (Florence, Genoa and Rome) and it is still published nowadays.

<sup>188</sup> See G. Monanni's preface to first edition of L Rafanelli, *Una donna e Mussolini*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1946 and P.C. Masini's introduction to the 1975 edition. See also G. Sacchetti, 'Un editore anarchico e Mussolini. Giuseppe Monanni (Arezzo 1887 – Milano 1952)', *Annali Aretini*, pp.317-27.

<sup>189</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.94.

able to begin the publication of his last journal, *Pensiero e volontà*.<sup>190</sup> During the election campaign of March 1924, the UAI could still carry out initiatives, call anarchists to join protests and mass actions, and address comrades abroad to inform them about the current situation, invite them to support the UAI financially and morally, and to form organisations.<sup>191</sup> The June 1924 Matteotti affair inflamed the situation further and set the ground for the end of individual and collective liberties in Italy.

Mussolini's speech on 3 January 1925 marked the beginning of the fascist regime. Free journalism, one of the few tools to express dissent, was suppressed and the press was surrendered to the executive's control. Mussolini had begun to take legislative measures against the press as early as July 1923. On 31 December 1925, the new press regulations were announced: opposition's organs of information were seized. Finally, on 9 November 1926, opposition's MPs, anti-fascist parties and their organs were all suspended and dissolved.<sup>192</sup>

In the same year, there were the last episodes of anarchist resistance. Isolated anarchists were still trying to connect with anti-fascists abroad and initiatives were carried out, such as the preparation and distribution of flyers. In May, Ersilio Belloni and Landi were arrested in Milan while they were distributing a manifesto of the UAI, prepared for May Day.<sup>193</sup> In Rome, the anarchist Gino Lucetti threw a bomb at Mussolini's coach on 11 September 1926.<sup>194</sup> In Bologna, the 14-year-old anarchist Zamboni was killed by the angry mob after he allegedly shot at a fascist parade.<sup>195</sup> These episodes contributed to the creation of the *Tribunale Speciale per la Difesa dello Stato* (Special Tribunal for State Defence). As a result, thousands of anarchists, communists, socialists, unionists, republicans and other political dissenters ended up *al confino* (prison islands).<sup>196</sup>

Arrests of anarchists continued throughout 1926 and 1927. In Milan, a bomb exploded on 12 April 1928 at 10am in Piazzale Giulio Cesare, in front of the entrance of

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<sup>190</sup> G. Berti, *Errico Malatesta e il movimento anarchico italiano e internazionale 1872-1932*, pp.751-61, and L. Bettini, *Bibliografia dell'anarchismo*, I, pp.318-19.

<sup>191</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.96, and L. Di Lembo, *Guerra di classe e lotta umana. L'anarchismo in Italia dal biennio rosso alla guerra di Spagna (1919-1939)*, p.142.

<sup>192</sup> See V. Castronuovo, *La stampa in Italia dall'Unità al fascismo*, Bari, Laterza, 1970.

<sup>193</sup> Anonimi Compagni, *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914-1945)*, p.102.

<sup>194</sup> See DBAI, *Lucetti, Gino*; G. Galzerano, 'Attentati anarchici a Mussolini', in VV.AA., *L'Antifascismo rivoluzionario*, Pisa, BFS, 1993, pp.77-98; and R. Lucetti, *Gino Lucetti. L'attentato contro il duce (11 settembre 1926)*, Carrara, Cooperativa Tipolitografica, 2000.

<sup>195</sup> See DBAI, *Zamboni, Anteo*; T. Chiaretti, L. Drudi Demby, G. Mingozzi, *Gli ultimi tre giorni. 1926. Attentato Zamboni: un'occasione per le leggi speciali*, Bologna, Cappelli, 1977; B. Dalla Casa, *Le molte storie del caso Zamboni*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2000.

<sup>196</sup> A. Dal Pont, S. Carolini (ed.), *L'Italia al confino, 1926-1943*, Milan, La Pietra, 1983.

the Milan trade fair, just before the arrival of the king. There were 18 dead and 70 people were injured. Despite the lack of evidence, the government news agency *Agenzia Stefani* reported the arrest of 500 people. All the anarchists who were still free were arrested, including Molaschi, Giacomelli, Libero and Henry Molinari. Then, mysteriously, police investigations were suspended, and the episode remained unsolved.<sup>197</sup>

On 30 November 1929, the Special Tribunal found the anarchists Giuseppe Peretti, Pietro Costa, Umberto Biscardo and others guilty of ‘attempting to rebuild in Milan, Verona and other localities the *Anarchist Party*, dissolved by the authorities’.<sup>198</sup> Only the stupidity of fascist authorities could symbolically sign the end of the ‘anarchist party.’ Since its beginning anarchists had been continuously struggling, between being a party and a movement, between organisation and anti-organisation, communism and individualism, violence and peace, means and ends. Fascism wiped away almost every pocket of resistance. Only after 25 July 1943, new hopes rose again and Italian and Milanese anarchists had the chance to restart their work. First, they had to finish the job they had not completed in 1919-1922: defeating fascism. Milanese anarchists contributed to the popular movement of resistance forming the Bruzzi-Malatesta Brigade operating in Milan and Lombardy. But, as they say, that is another story.

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<sup>197</sup> For this episode see M. Franzinelli, *I tentacoli dell’Ovra*, Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 1999, pp.77-90, and F. Giulietti, *Il movimento anarchico italiano nella lotta contro il fascismo, 1927-1945*, Manduria-Bari-Rome, Lacaita, 2003, pp.43-45.

<sup>198</sup> DBAI, *Peretti, Giuseppe*, emphasis added.

## Conclusion

This study began with a cliché about anarchists and bombs. Yet examples of the use of explosives have rarely appeared in this study. It was not a deliberate omission, however. Simply, bomb attacks by Milanese anarchists in the period 1870-1926 were very few. Although, in Europe, use of Nobel's invention had reached a terrifying climax by the 1890s, it was only after the Great War that the use of explosive devices for political aims manifested in Milan. Thus, the picture of Milanese anarchism that has been drawn here contrasts with the conventional stereotype of anarchists. On the contrary, this research has demonstrated the overtly experimental nature of Milanese anarchism. This study has confirmed Milan as a significant nursery for some of anarchism's most imaginative ideas - for example the Modern School - and, perhaps, some of its least effective practices. This work has examined more than fifty years of the history of the Milanese anarchist movement. It has demonstrated patterns of behaviour and themes of belief manifested by Milanese anarchists. Some of these themes altered with time. Some of these patterns remained constant.

Since its origins, the Milanese anarchist movement has depended on external protagonists and trans-local events. These two factors revealed themselves to be crucial in preventing anarchists from being marginalised within the political arena by presenting themselves as an active political subject. As a matter of fact, each major turning point for Milanese anarchism has mirrored in large part the assimilation of external theories and practices. These external influences have played an important part in the formation of anarchist identities in Milan.

Anarchists from other regions contributed to the development of anarchism in Milan particularly through their publishing activities. Bakunin's anarchist ideas found space in Milanese internationalist journals such as *Il Gazzettino Rosa* and *Il Martello*. In the 1890s Milanese anarchists gathered around the Sicilian lawyer Pietro Gori and his publication, *L'Amico del Popolo*. At the turn of the century, *Il Grido della folla* and *La Protesta Umana*, the most widely read individualist anarchist journals, saw the crucial contribution of non-Milanese anarchists. The first Italian anarchist newspaper, *Umanità Nova*, was initially published in Milan and was directed by the Neapolitan Errico Malatesta. The intense activity of the publishing house *Casa Editrice Sociale* was the work of two anarchists from Tuscany: Giuseppe Monanni and Leda Rafanelli. In addition, Milanese anarchists responded to trans-local events and their interpretations

originated further ideas and practices. For example, in the early 1870s the clash of ideas and personalities within the International Working Men's Association was mirrored by a camouflaged competition within the Milanese *Circolo operaio* between Bakunin and Marx's supporters. As a result, Milanese internationalists oscillated between the mutually contradictory alternatives of Bakunin's revolutionary and libertarian urge, Marxist socialism, and factory workers-based exclusivist theories. At last, Bakunin's influence over the Milanese branch of the IWA determined the formation of a distinctive ideological paradigm. Within this paradigm, the concept of revolution was a part of the Milanese anarchists' answer to the 'social question'. Yet failed attempts at social uprising in other regions together with state repression illustrated the anarchists' short-sighted perspective. Milanese anarchists did not fit into the existing political arena. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the concept of evolution started to replace the idea of a short-term violent revolution, in Milan the anarchists attempted to translate into actions the teaching methods of the Spaniard Ferrer y Guardia. Following this model, Luigi Molinari's project of a rationalist and positivist Modern School found wide support among Milanese anarchists. At the same time, anti-militarism became an important theme endorsed by anarchists, especially during the Italian colonial war in Libya. Anti-militarist initiatives blended together with the insurrections of Red Week and then, apart from a few isolated exceptions, with anti-war stances.

How to explain the importance of external inputs for Milanese anarchism? Given its geographical position, Milan has always assimilated ideas coming from other regions of Italy as well as from the rest of Europe. Milanese anarchists interpreted and translated some of these ideas in their own ways, contributing to the richness of anarchist thought. For Milanese anarchists, Bakunin, Cafiero, Malatesta, Nietzsche, Stirner, Ferrer and others represented cultural, social and political points of reference. Inspired by these sources, different streams of anarchism coexisted in Milan across the decades. Milanese anarchists gathered in milieus. Divisions were due to different interpretations of anarchist ideals. Recurrent themes highlighted similarities and contrasts among these milieus. Different ideas on revolution, organisation, individualism, trade unionism, education and violence demonstrated frictions that demand explanations. For example, government repression and competition with the socialists can be used to explain a lack of organisation, the use of the propaganda of the deed and violence. Yet other factors shift the emphasis onto those structural elements which characterised the Milanese anarchist movement throughout the period studied.

The Milanese anarchists did not appear to influence the Milanese working class to any great degree. The Milanese anarchist movement failed to establish solid connections with workers in the city and with the rural class in the countryside. The reasons for this lie in the industrial structure of Milan, its fragmented nature and lack of dominant factories. A fragmented industrial sector meant a dispersion of efforts and a constant struggle to establish and maintain links between groups. Moreover, these efforts were undermined by the continuous turnover of militants. Milan was a city of immigration as well as emigration. Yet often militants were forced to move by the state repression. In addition, competition with socialists and unionists did not facilitate the anarchists' task. All these factors contribute to the instability of the relationships between Milanese anarchists and the working class.

Despite the existence of embryonic anarchist groups in a few factories, Milanese anarchists demonstrated a lack of a coherent strategy of engagement with workers. This void resulted in isolated and disjointed episodes of rebellion rather than effective revolutionary strategies. Milanese workers' insurrections saw the participation of anarchists as individuals rather than as an organised group. Whilst Milanese anarchists fitted into existing practices, workers institutions and categories, where they stimulated further development of workers' actions, the anarchists were never able to channel their revolutionary efforts and workers' demonstrations into the beginning of a revolution. Even during the Red Week and the Red Biennium, Milanese anarchists failed to lead the masses. This lack of corporate organisation was also mirrored in the anarchist presence in the city. On a number of different occasions, Milanese anarchists tried to form district-based clubs that could coordinate the activities of militants and facilitate the interconnection between them and the urban social framework. The number of militants was always too small to allow groups to survive police repression and the rate of population turnover. The result was a periodic reflux: the anarchists turned their focus from practice to theory, from organisation to propaganda among workers.

Writing and publishing was their most effective activity and constitutes the legacy of the Milanese anarchist movement. Facilitated by the entrepreneurial nature of the Milanese publishing sector, anarchist journals were numerous. Often these publications did not survive police repression. In other cases, financial debts forced anarchists to interrupt their activities. Nevertheless, this substantial body of material represents a lens through which to read the Milanese anarchist movement clearly without the ideological filters imposed by police bias or literary licence. The reading of these sources and the analysis of data collected lead to the firm conclusion that the

Milanese anarchist movement was a trans-class movement with a strong youth presence and a relative absence of women. All social classes and job categories were represented. Blue-collar workers, artisans and skilled workers turned their ideals into different actions according to their social background and cultural points of reference. In doing this, often the propaganda of Milanese anarchist journals appeared disconnected from the economic and social reality of the working class. The latter was more sensitive to the socialist and unionist appeals for class actions and economic claims, while skilled workers and artisans were reticent to organisation. Factory workers were more attracted by economic issues than by the anarchist holistic approach to the *questione sociale*. Conversely, anarchist ideas found fertile ground in the youth. Yet, for an anarchist, often activism represented a stage of life. Disillusion, frustration and, of course, state repression deeply conditioned the development of militants as political subjects. Moreover, frequent waves of state repression tended to hit the most influential and experienced figure within the anarchist movement; hence the long-standing discontinuity between generations of anarchists. Women entered the male territory of political life at the beginning of the new century. However, anarchist women active in the political domain, such as Giacomelli, Rafanelli, Rossi and Latini, appeared to be isolated cases rather than the collective outcome of class actions. While introducing new feminist perspectives, by constructing a narrative about female anarchists, those women reinforced the convention of anarchism as a broad ideological paradigm, within which feminism was a part and not the whole.

State repression influenced the development of the Milanese anarchist movement to a great extent, indeed. From the very early stage of anarchism, the authorities tried to silence the anarchists' voice. Zealous policemen and prefects applied every government capacity to the suppression of the anarchists' 'subversive sect'. Due to the 1870s repression of Italian internationalists, Milanese anarchists were forced to the margins of the lawful political arena. Once they were denied the possibility to act in a legal framework, anarchists were forced to go underground and to hold clandestine meetings in order to avoid police persecution. In this way, state repression fed both clandestine illegal activities and violence. These two features of the post 1870s anarchist movement were related by the belief that the propaganda of the deed was something more than a symbolic act. It was a conscious opposition to authority and its institutions. Whether as a symbolic isolated act or as a way of life, the propaganda of the deed was the expression of a vicious circle constituted by repression, illegality and violence. Spying on individuals brought arrests, trials, seizure of journals, censorship,

exiles, prison islands, and eventually the fascist Special Tribunal. Yet after each wave of repression anarchists were able to rise again. In Milan anarchism survived Crispi's anti-anarchist laws as well as the hunting of anarchists after Bresci's deed. Nor could fascism completely wipe the anarchist presence from the city. Where does this irreducible nature of Milanese anarchism come from? In part it must be due to the multi-faceted expression of anarchism and diversity in the pursuit of anarchist ideals which developed over time in the context of political repression.

The history of the Milanese anarchist movement is a history of ideas and practices but it is not just the history of an ideological paradigm. It is also a history of people with their ideals, hopes, contradictions, misery and splendour. It is the history of their efforts to achieve the horizon of Galeano's poem, to reach Utopia. The history of the Milanese anarchist movement exemplifies the full spectrum of understandings, ideas, theories, practices, and initiatives that characterise Italian anarchism and the eclecticism of the Italian left in general. The experimental nature of Milanese anarchism has been demonstrated throughout this study. Different ideas of anarchism coexisted and gave force to ideological debates. Organisational and anti-organisational anarchists, individualist and communist anarchists, revolutionary trade unionists and libertarian educators were all represented in the Milanese anarchist movement. The relative dominance of the individualist stream needs to be contextualised within a specific framework that considers the process of historical development of anarchism in Milan. As already mentioned, the diversity of positions rested upon different approaches to the meaning of anarchism and, in particular, to the dialectic between means and ends. This dichotomy marked the history of anarchism like other ideological paradigms. What was the best way to change the status quo and to form an anarchist society? How would this society function? These two questions influenced every other idea and topic. First, the issue of organisation of anarchist groups was raised. In the 1870s the Milanese working class was emerging in its modern form. In the 1880s an organisational stance prevailed among Milanese anarchists.

Yet any effort to organise anarchists and to engage with workers was repressed by the police. In the 1890s anti-organisational positions were born out of a reaction to previous failures to organise anarchist militants. Moreover, legalitarian socialists introduced the issue of political representation. The role of parliamentary politics became a dividing issue. If anti-organisational stances were born as a reaction to previous failures, at the turn of the century individualist anarchism became a way of life. Yet debates on individualism and communism, influenced by the reading of Stirner

and Nietzsche, highlighted the existence of different kinds of 'individualisms'. The angry and anti-social individualism of Gavilli and Schicchi, for example, was far removed from Monanni and Rafanelli's ethical individualism. Similarly, the latter was different from Ettore Molinari and Giacomelli's individualism of the deed and communism of the end. Milanese individualist anarchism was a complex geography of anti-organisational reactions, Stirner's egoism, Nietzsche's will and superman, together with a lack of revolutionary perspectives and a pessimistic vision of the masses. As a result, Milanese anarchist publications debated theories, ideas, suggestions and critiques. In other words, in the first decade of the twentieth century, a lack of revolutionary perspective corresponded with an increase in theoretical discussion. This material constitutes a huge part of the legacy of the Milanese anarchist movement. No other local anarchist movements of other major centres in Italy has published as much as Milanese anarchists did. This intense activity continued during and after the Great War. Significantly, as the revolutionary hopes of Italian workers increased, the importance of theoretical discussions in the pages of anarchist journals declined.

At the same time more emphasis was placed on organisational efforts. Milanese anarchists responded to specific historical moments, such as the Red Biennium and the rise of fascism, neglecting previous unproductive polemics. The series of insurrections that occurred during the Red Biennium were seen by many anarchists as an anticipation of revolution. The way they responded to this opportunity, whilst dispersive and unsuccessful, was also brave and congruent with their ideals. Thus, while conserving diversity within the movement, Milanese anarchists demonstrated unity. This unity provided a meaningful cause for anarchists who had to face the violence of fascist squads. It was no longer a revolutionary dream. It became a fight to survive as a political group and as individuals. It became a civil war. It became a war of resistance. As seen in Chapter Six, the bomb explosion at the Diana theatre represents a watershed in the history of Milanese and Italian anarchism.

Milanese anarchism never died - neither with the Diana bombing nor with fascism. The explanation for its survival lies in the anti-dogmatic nature of anarchism. It is not possible to limit anarchist thought to a formula or a definition. Through analysing the contributions of many anarchists, whether famous intellectuals or unknown militants, this thesis has demonstrated the truthfulness of Wakeman's quote, according to which 'there are as many variations of anarchism as there are anarchists.'<sup>1</sup> Yet the richness of anarchist thought revealed itself to be also its weakness. Here lies another

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter One.

reason for the Milanese anarchists' failures: the pursuit of a total and complete freedom prevented Milanese anarchists from imposing their ideas on the masses. Episodes of propaganda of the deed, justified by the need to shake the masses, resulted in counter-productive reactions. The concept of imposing anarchist ideas was a contradiction. Milanese anarchists did not have a leader. Rather, they gathered around influential characters. Bakunin, Pezza, Gori, Gavilli, Giacomelli, Ettore and Luigi Molinari, Rafanelli, Monanni, Molaschi and Borghi were not, at any time, the leaders of the Milanese anarchist movement. Not even Malatesta, the 'Italian Lenin', played this role. Their charisma was influential in addressing opinions and coordinating activities. However, none of them stood out as 'the leader'. In the modern age, when ideologies replaced religion, political leaders were needed as replacements for the Messiah. Milanese anarchists refused to welcome a Messiah and, by relying solely on the power of their ideals, they failed to attract the masses.

Nonetheless, even without the support of the masses or a Messiah, Milanese anarchists were able to express the importance of dissenting, of rebelling and of claiming full autonomy, not just for their own sake but for all humankind. These ideas are bullet-proof. State repression and the fascist regime could not take from Milanese anarchists those ideals of absolute freedom and social equality. They could not destroy the anarchists' inner protest that, as it has well elucidated by Max Nettlau, 'never yields and keeps fighting in each individual soul against the good God'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter One.

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