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# Anarchy and the Nation: German Anarchism, Nationalism, and Revolution in Spain, 1933-1937

Matthew Hall

*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

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ANARCHY AND THE NATION: GERMAN ANARCHISM, NATIONALISM, AND  
REVOLUTION IN SPAIN, 1933-1937

by

Matthew Hall

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

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ABSTRACT  
ANARCHY AND THE NATION: GERMAN ANARCHISM, NATIONALISM, AND  
REVOLUTION IN SPAIN, 1933-1937

by

Matthew Hall

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014  
Under the Supervision of Professor Winson Chu

The relationship between anarchism and nationalism is poorly articulated in the scholarly literature and heavily contested within the modern anarchist movement. Between 1933 and 1937, a group of German anarchists, living in Spain and caught in that country's civil war and revolution in 1936, dealt with this question in their time in exile in Barcelona. Never explicitly confronting the issue of nationalism within their ranks, the *Gruppe Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten im Auslands* (Gruppe DAS) nevertheless used nationally motivating iconography, discourse, and institutions to strengthen their constituencies and attract new ones. Driven by the demographic and social-situation in pre-war and wartime Barcelona, and motivated by their belief that the NSDAP was the real enemy of their movement, the war waged in Spain by the German anarchists was as nationally conscious as it was anarchist. By creating German-centric institutions, through isolation within the city of Barcelona, and under pressure to perform in the Civil War (particularly when confronted with German enemies, i.e. the NSDAP), the German anarchists began to understand their struggle as both anarchistic and national in nature.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

<b>Gruppe DAS</b>	<i>Gruppe deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten im Auslands</i>	German Anarcho-syndicalists in Exile
<b>FAUD</b>	<i>Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschland</i>	Free Workers' Union of Germany
<b>FVdG</b>	<i>Freie Vereinigung deutsche Gewerkschaften</i>	Free Association of German Trade Unions
<b>SPD</b>	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland</i>	Social-Democratic Party of Germany
<b>KPD</b>	<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschland</i>	Communist Party of Germany
<b>NSDAP</b>	<i>National Sozialistische deutsche Arbeits Partei</i>	National Socialist German Workers' Party
<b>CNT-FAI</b>	<i>Confederación Nacional del Trabajo-Federación Anarquista Ibérica</i>	National Confederation of Labor-Anarchist Federation of Iberia
<b>POUM</b>	<i>Partei Obrera Union Marxista</i>	Unified Marxist Workers' Party
<b>FKAD</b>	<i>Föderation der Kommunistische Anarchisten Deutschland</i>	Federation of Communist-Anarchists in Germany
<b>CEDA</b>	<i>Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas</i>	Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups
<b>SRDF</b>	<i>Sozialrevolutionäre deutsche Freiheitsbewegung</i>	Social-Revolutionary Libertarian Movement of Germany
<b>PSUC</b>	<i>Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya</i>	Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia
<b>PSOE</b>	<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i>	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
<b>UGT</b>	<i>Unión General de Trabajadores</i>	General Union of Workers
<b>Räterepublik</b>		Council Republic
<b>Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya</b>		Catalan Left Republican Nationalist Party
<b>Nacionales</b>		Nationalists (the Francoists)



**Figure 2** German militiamen (and possibly women) in camp at the Aragon Front. From *Die soziale Revolution*, Is. 3 (January 1937) 1.



## INTRODUCTION

In the German anarchists' militia newspaper, *Die soziale Revolution*, published in the spring of 1937, an above-the-fold front-page cartoon depicted a group of stylized Nazi soldiers leading a group of caricatures representing the factions within the Spanish *nacionales* forces, as well as a representative of Italian fascism.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the cartoon was clear: the NSDAP not only intervened in Spain, but also virtually controlled the insurgent military and political forces. Alone, such a cartoon exemplified the broader left-wing position that the NSDAP controlled every fascist movement in Europe, especially in Spain. However, the existence of this cartoon in the newspaper of the *Gruppe Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten im Auslands* (Gruppe DAS, the political representatives of German anarchists exiled in Spain in the 1930s) brings new significance to the image. This *Die soziale Revolution* cartoon represented but a piece of a wide variety of evidence showing that anarchists exiled from Germany experienced a kind of "national awakening" in Spain. In other words, because of demographic and socio-economic forces, a greater degree of national solidarity occurred with the German anarchists' community, centered in Barcelona. Furthermore, Swiss, Austrian, and ethnic Germans melded into a collective, forming a new kind of *Grossdeutschland* national consciousness, with the view that the NSDAP as a threat intrinsic to their survival, not only as leftists but also as Germans. This national awakening spurred the creation of

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<sup>1</sup> Figure 7, *Die soziale Revolution*, Is. 5-6 (February 1937), 1; this cartoon is discussed in detail in chapter 6; The term *nacionales* ("nationals" in Spanish) is used throughout to denote the rebel forces against the Republican government in Spain. This denotes their distinction from the later Francoist *Falange Espanola Tradicionalista y de las JONS*, created after the reconstitution of the rebel forces in 1937. Furthermore, the use of the Spanish term for Nationalists, rather than the more common English translation, creates a separation between the ideologically neutral idea of "nationalism" and the ideology that became Francoism, later in/after the war. The term "Nationalists" was most often used in English sources, though the Spanish themselves preferred *nacionales*; Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006) 37.

work collectives, militia units, and social centers, all aimed at combatting this perceived threat.

The issue of national consciousness and the place of the nation (or even the definition of the term) have been contested space within anarchism from its inception. As with other socialist and liberal veins of thought, anarchism both rejected nationalism and embraced it, though in the latter case, the embracing usually occurred under the guise of some form of popular self-determination.<sup>2</sup> Present-day anarchists abandoned this position after 1945, along with many of the mass-political positions of the prewar anarchist movement. This abandonment of previous positions created a paradox within the historiography of interwar anarchism, given the activist bent of many scholars studying the ideology. First, the ideas that linked anarchism to liberalism, like its relationship with nationalism, go largely unremarked in the modern historiography. Exceptions to this historiographical problem exist, of course, but the study of anarchism, especially in the interwar period, remains largely focused on the element of resistance against fascism and the movement's relationship to the industrial labor movement. This narrowing of anarchist ideology to conform, it seems, to contemporary theoretical paradigms, is obviously a problem for historians, and an issue that this thesis works to resolve, using the example of the German exiles in Spain. This resolution works to both historicize the study of past anarchisms, as well as broaden the understanding of German anarchism specifically.<sup>3</sup> German anarchism remains a field largely studied with the

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<sup>2</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2007), 2.

<sup>3</sup> The pluralization of "anarchisms," used here, is intentional and designed to reflect the diversity of anarchist thought. This diversity occurred to such a degree that anarchist ideologies were contradictory and mutually exclusive at times. For example, anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-capitalism cannot coexist today, nor can anarcho-syndicalism and the radical individualism of people like Max Stirner. This, it seems, calls for the use of a pluralization to indicate anarchism's plurality at times.

intent of illustrating the idea of resistance to fascism, which, while not an inaccurate or irrelevant part of the movement's past, was never the entire story.

To illustrate the point that anarchism prior to 1945 was hardly disengaged from the politics of national consciousness, two points come to mind. The best illustration came in the person of Mikhail Bakunin, one of anarchism's godfathers and a figure who remains influential in modern anarchist thought. Bakunin never clearly stated his position on the nation in a documented theoretical sense, but his involvement in the Polish independence struggle of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as his borrowing from Mazzini when formulating the "Propaganda of the Deed" illustrated an attachment to nationalist politics. Secondly, this disconnect between theory and practice within anarchism allowed for unorthodox ideological assemblages. In other words, unlike Marxism, where theory dictated practice, anarchism's anti-hierarchical nature allowed for a dissonance in praxis, leading to movements influenced by the theoretical "dogmas" of anarchist thinkers. Both points show the problems with examining anarchism through a contemporary ideological lens, one that restricts the thinking about past anarchism to conform to the thinking of present anarchism.

Looking specifically at the study of German anarchism, to the movements interwar period, to the movements period in exile (beginning in 1933), to their exile experience in Spain, and their experience in that country's civil war, we see decreasing levels of interest and engagement from historians of any adjacent topic. Even within the study of the Spanish Civil War, where German anarchists played a greater role than at any point since Germany's post-World War I revolutionary period, as illustrated by the writings of historians like Burnett Bolloten, little time is spent on anything related to the

exiles' actions in Spain. This becomes increasingly problematic when one considers Germans' and Germany's importance to the Spanish Civil War generally. Anyone with a passing familiarity of the war is aware of the German involvement in the conflict. On the right, the NSDAP sent the "volunteer" Condor Legion, mostly composed technical advisors, pilots, and armor to aid Franco's *nacionales*.<sup>4</sup> On the left, members of the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschland* (KPD), living in exile in the Soviet Union, France, and elsewhere, came to Spain as part of the International Brigades, often acting as Stalin's hatchet men among the *brigadistas* (with all the blood such a moniker entails).<sup>5</sup> One also finds a smattering of other Germans among the journalists and commentators covering the conflict, most notably Franz Borkenau, whose sympathies for communism ended with what he witnessed in Spain.<sup>6</sup> These groups play a role in the analysis here, but only on the periphery. The subjects of this paper are a small group of German anarchists living in exile in Barcelona, composing the Gruppe DAS. Culled mostly from the *Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschland*, the German member of the syndicalist International Workingmen's Association, along with a collection of other council-communists, general anarchists, and libertarian-leaning leftists, the Gruppe DAS represented the German opposition to both Hitler and Stalin in Spain.

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<sup>4</sup> Perhaps most importantly for the *nacionales* effort, Hitler authorized the use of German Junkers to fly Franco's Army of Africa across the Republican controlled Straits of Gibraltar in the opening days of the conflict, in what was the largest airlift to date; Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006) 136-137.

<sup>5</sup> For example, German *brigadistas* assassinated the POUM leader Andres Nin following the May Day events of 1937. Dressed in Nazi uniforms, they broke into a prison and killed Nin in a purported jailbreak, designed to discredit Nin among revolutionaries. Prior to this, the Stalinists portrayed POUM members as fascists in propaganda, usually seen as allied with the Nazi regime. By using Germans to kill Nin, the Stalinists were able to confirm his (and by extension, the POUM's) guilt; Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 273.

<sup>6</sup> See: Franz Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (New Haven: Phoenix Press, 2000) 280-285.

The goal of this paper is to examine the national consciousness of the German anarchist exiles in Spain. As noted above, the modern historiography of anarchism, especially in Germany, often ignores the relationship between anarchy and the nation. A tendency pervades within the anarchist community, and among its historians, to portray anarchism as either immune to nationalist influence or in denial about the national character of their personal beliefs and actions. The central contention here is that these exiles were not immunized to national feelings, nor did they deceive itself about the role of the nation in its organization in Spain. Rather, they grappled regularly with what it meant to be part of a cultural community united by language, custom, and shared prejudices. Here, these negotiations between anarchism and nationalism are examined to shed light on the specific experiences of the German anarchists in Spain. Specifically how the exiles lived, how they interacted with the Spanish and Catalans around them, and how they effected and were affected by the Civil War, as well as the general relationship between nationalism and anarchy, both intellectually and organizationally, within the exile community.

Before proceeding to the historiography specifically, a clarification of terms and language may be helpful. Nationalism, used repeatedly throughout this text, is often used interchangeably with national consciousness; specifically in regards to the German anarchists (other uses of “nationalism” in discussion of generalities are intentional). The mixing of these terms is intended to show the varying degree to which the German anarchists existed on a sort of sliding scale. National consciousness is conceived here as the acknowledgment and/or acceptance of national heritage, while nationalism is the politicization of that heritage. The term “nation” as used here, indicates the

geographically determined, culturally bounded, and/or politically defined existence of an ethnic group. In other words, Germans were those hailing from a geographic place known as Germany, but also those belonging to a German culture (Sudeten Germans, Austrians, and Swiss Germans), all of which was understood politically, through a framework developed over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Germany of their past enculturated the German anarchists in Spain into this political framework, whether they realized or accepted the enculturation, and whether those realizations had practical consequences. The realization and acceptance can be termed “national consciousness,” while more overt politicizations indicate nationalism. Finally, a brief note on the German spellings used here. Many of the spellings found throughout this text do not conform to modern or contemporary spellings in German (“Staatsangehoerigen” in Barcelona for example). This is due largely to the lack of umlaut keys on Spanish typewriters when the documents were produced. Furthermore, the difficulties the German anarchists had with reading Spanish (to say nothing of Catalan) also created some creative spellings for Spanish and Catalan words, spellings that might change from one use of the word to the next.

### **Literature Review**

The above questions delineated the general goals of this project. Beyond these, this study is also part of a larger anti-teleological trend that began roughly thirty years ago and has gained significant momentum in the last twenty years. This trend has been an effort to rehabilitate anarchism, in some cases ideologically, as an answer to the perceived threats of globalization and the loss of bi-polarity in international politics, or at

the very least academically, as the archives of Spain, the Eastern Bloc, and the Soviet Union have become available. It should be noted that these goals are not mutually exclusive, but rather that they work in tandem, given the contentious and heavily politicized nature of anarchism's history in relation to Marxism and Marxist history. Harold Barclay notes that it was fallacious that history labeled anarchists such as Buenaventura Durruti and Nestor Mahkno utopian dreamers, unable to understand the complexity of human interaction.<sup>7</sup> Jeff Pratt rightly notes that the fall of the Soviet Union showed that anarchism did not have a monopoly on historical failure, as Marxists long asserted.<sup>8</sup> Thus, with this stigma removed, researchers' no longer need to justify their work in terms of explaining this failure, but can rather analyze anarchist's experiences on their own terms. This problematic relationship between Marxism and anarchism, both historically and historiographically, colored both the material being studied and the analysis of those who studied it previously. Nonetheless, the broader goal, beyond the study of nationalism and anarchism, is to further this anti-teleological trend and to understand anarchism and anarchists in their own historical context.

Within the historiography of the Spanish Civil War is an additional teleology, albeit one that has been exorcised to a greater extent than that concerning anarchism. First noted in 1968 in Noam Chomsky's "Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship," many histories of the civil war still ignore the native political context in favor of a teleological understanding which makes World War II the end point and the conflict between Stalinism and Nazism the narrative driver of the Civil War's history. This is not to say that these issues are not relevant, but that they cannot overshadow the actual conflict in

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<sup>7</sup> Harold Barclay, *People Without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchy* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1990), 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> Jeff Pratt, *Class, Nation and Identity: The Anthropology of Political Movements* (Pluto Press, 2003), 7.

Spain, which was driven more by concerns of centralism versus regionalism and libertarian revolution versus republican reformism versus conservative reaction. By incorporating more information into the literature about foreign anarchists like the Gruppe DAS, this study adds complexity to our understanding of the Spanish Civil War and the revolution, helping to remedy the teleological interpretation of the Spanish Civil War created by historians such as Hugh Thomas, Gabriel Jackson, Stanley Payne, and, to a lesser extent, Paul Preston.<sup>9</sup> With the “end” of communism, the civil war and attendant revolution became less of an “ideological football,” allowing researchers such as Chris Ealham to carry on the work begun (not without some controversy) by Burnett Bolloten in the 1970s. Both Bolloten and Ealham’s works, which centered the revolution, will form the foundation of this study, along with Antony Beevor’s general history of the civil war.<sup>10</sup>

Whereas Bolloten constructs a history of the revolution in political and military terms, Chris Ealham seeks to identify the broader context in which the Spanish revolution occurs. In his book *Anarchism and the City*, he lays out a thick description of the anarchist movement within Barcelona, intersecting the movement’s history with the history of the city and the culture of both the bourgeoisie and the proletarian *barrios*. Ealham’s book offers an important foundation for understanding the alien world into

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<sup>9</sup> This is not to say that the contributions of Thomas, et. al. is irrelevant, or that this thesis does not owe a great deal to them. Without the immense scholarly efforts of these researchers, none of this work on the Spanish Civil War would be possible. This project, though, exists in such a niche that their contribution exists as a kind of superstructure. In other words, it is always present and necessary for the thesis to maintain any shape or meaning, but rarely is it readily apparent or visible; Noam. Pateman Chomsky, *Chomsky on Anarchism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005), 42–74.

<sup>10</sup> Beevor’s book is relevant because he is the only historian of the broader Civil War to treat the Revolution evenly and actually mentions the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria, the militia of the German anarchists in Spain. He is the only scholar to so directly (if briefly) mention the German anarchists; Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 272.



which the anarchists from Germany entered between 1933 and 1937.<sup>11</sup> In particular, his discussion of the close-knit barrios reveals the type of closed communities the exiles found themselves in as of 1934, something that may have encouraged stronger ethnic or national identifications among the Germans. Ealham's work also reflects the sort of ethnographic approach that will be taken in this study of the Gruppe DAS. Also relevant here is Temma Kaplan's *Red City, Blue Period*, an ethnohistory of Barcelona in the age of Pablo Picasso. Kaplan's text focuses primarily on the "symbolic landscape" or the various religious, civic, and political symbols that defined Barcelona's heavily stratified class culture. These symbols would of course affect the relationship of the German anarchists to their home in exile, and these effects were quite different from the effects had on their Spanish counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the ethnographic style of Ealham and Kaplan's works, the specific historiography of the German anarchists thus far has been the exclusive province of more conventional political and military histories, focusing primarily on the Gruppe DAS and the "Erich Mühsam" Centuria. This historiography includes Dieter Nelles, Andreas Graf, and Gerd-Rainer Horn, all of whom deal with the German anarchists in Spain, specifically. Authors Hans Manfred Bock, Hartmut Rübner, and Ulrich Linse should also be added, though their work deals with the German anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movement in the Weimar Republic. Nonetheless, this type of background is important for establishing a baseline of study in terms of the inherited theory and structure of the

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<sup>11</sup> Chris Ealham, *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (AK Press, 2010), 178.

<sup>12</sup> Temma Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1992) 1-12.

Gruppe DAS and the German anarchists in Spain more generally.<sup>13</sup> The Gruppe DAS, according to these authors, was a tightly organized group, with self-help committees, militia units, and eventually publishing apparatuses and work-collectives to offer jobs to exiled Germans. More importantly, however, was that much of this structure sprung up around the Gruppe DAS near the start of the Spanish Civil War; prior to this, very little appeared in the way of formal assistance or organization among the German community, aside from some publications by the German leadership of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA).

Concerning this type of groundwork, Ulrich Linse's work is particularly important, with its focus on the German anarchist movement prior to and during World War I. A portion of Linse's work focuses on Erich Mühsam and Gustav Landauer, both figures who created the theoretical backbone of the World War I-era anarchist movement in Germany and greatly influenced the writings of Rudolf Rocker, the primary anarchist theorist of the interwar period generally and of the Gruppe DAS in particular. Linse's focus on Landauer's and Mühsam's desire to separate the state from society and culture is important for understanding the "national" question in the case of the Gruppe DAS in Spain.<sup>14</sup> With these three authors, Rocker, Landauer, and Mühsam, we see the internal debate not just within anarchism, but also within German anarchism specifically over the concept of nation and its relationship to the state. Similarly, but on the structural level,

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of exactly what anarcho-syndicalism is see: Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe, "The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism," in *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective* (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1990), 1–24.

<sup>14</sup> Mühsam and Landauer were considered martyrs of the German anarchist movement, a position which will be relevant for discussing the way in which the Germans constructed their nationalism. Furthermore, Landauer's theoretical writings must have been influential on the Germans in exile, including his writings on the State and culture. These would be influential on identity formation; Ulrich Linse, *Organisierter Anarchismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich von 1871*, Beiträge zu einer historischen Strukturanalyse Bayern im Industriezeitalter, Band 3 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1969), 138.

the histories of the *Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschland* written by Rübner and Bock reconstruct the inner workings of the German anarcho-syndicalist movement prior to the *Machtergreifung*, allowing us to see what elements of the FAUD may have been imported from Germany.<sup>15</sup> Whether this continuity is relevant remains to be seen, but such attachment to known structures could support the argument that the German anarchists in Spain were just as German as they were anarchists.

Returning to the researchers directly studying the Gruppe DAS (or at least, German anarchism in the period of the Spanish Civil War), it is important to reiterate that these histories come primarily from a political-military angle. The second, narrower historiographical trend they engage is that of the resistance to fascism and Nazism prior to and during World War II. This is the primary focus of the book, edited by Andreas Graf, *Anarchisten gegen Hitler*, to which Graf, Nelles, and Horn all contributed.<sup>16</sup> While this book covers anarchist resistance in Italy, Spain, France, and the Netherlands, as well as Germany, Horn's section in particular is relevant for this topic, as he seeks to establish how revolutionary symbols, meaningful to one group, may seem un-(or even anti-) revolutionary to another. An English translation of this article also serves as the introduction to his edited volume of Charles and Lois Orr's letters, entitled *Letters from Barcelona*, detailing the American couples experience during the revolution there.<sup>17</sup>

Nelles and Graf, on the other hand, contextualize the German anarchists' involvement in Spain within the Europe-wide anarchist resistance to fascism. This

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<sup>15</sup> Hans Manfred Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918 bis 1923: Ein Beitrag zur Sozial- und Ideengeschichte der frühen Weimarer Republik* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993) 153-187; Hartmut Rübner, *Freiheit und Brot: Die Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Anarchosyndikalismus*, Archiv Für Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte, Band 5 (Berlin: Libertad, 1994) 17-25.

<sup>16</sup> Andreas G. Graf, *Anarchisten gegen Hitler*, 1., Aufl. (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Lois Orr and Charles Orr, *Letters from Barcelona: An American Woman in Revolution and Civil War*, ed. Gerd-Rainer Horn (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009) 31-66.

embraces the groups stated internationalism as their reason for participating; something this study seeks to complicate. Furthermore, the Graf and Nelles articles both describe the Gruppe DAS in political terms and create a timeline of their involvement, both useful as it is work that will not need to be done, ground-up, in this thesis. One last work worth mentioning is Patrick von zur Mühlen's *Spanien war ihre Hoffnung*, which looks at the anarchists, as well as the other German exiles, allotting similar amounts of space to each. Von zur Mühlen's book, though not seeking to compare the groups' nationalist positions as this study does, certainly helps clarify the political landscape for Germans in Spain.<sup>18</sup>

One final group of sources, before moving on to the methodology, are a pair of works dealing with the relationship between anarchism and nationalism, directly, though not in the context of Germany, specifically. The first is Mina Grauer's "Anarcho-Nationalism: Anarchist Attitudes towards Jewish Anarchism and Zionism" (1994). Grauer's work is one of the few that references the theorists discussed in chapter two. She discusses the views of Rudolf Rocker and Gustav Landauer, alongside Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, in regards to the "Jewish question" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Grauer's thesis is that, "[a]t the risk of transgressing the boundaries of anarchist dogma, Jewish anarchists looked for a scheme that would combine anarchist theory with a possible solution to the Jewish question for national identity." She goes on to explain that three means of dealing with nation/national consciousness existed within

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<sup>18</sup> An example of this lack of connection between movements in the scholarship would be the work done on KPD volunteers, both in the revolutionary militias and the International Brigades. Much of this scholarship, both in English and from East and West Germany, fails to connect these organizations to the non-Stalinist Left in Spain, even though they frequently collaborated until the end of the Revolution in 1937. Instead, they are presented as the sole monolithic German Left organization in Spain; Josie McLellan, "The Odyssey of the German Volunteers" In *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: remembering the International Brigades, 1945-1989*, by Josie McLellan, 14-42 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004) 33; Patrik von Zur Mühlen, *Spanien war ihre Hoffnung: Die deutsche Linke im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg 1936-1939* (Berlin [u.a.]: Dietz, 1985) 66-73.

anarchism: outright rejection, a gradualism which saw national consciousness as a step on the path to internationalism, and an acceptance and attempt to synthesize anarchy and the nation, which she argues was unique to Jewish anarchists.

The second work in this category is Benedict Anderson's *Under Three Flags*, which details the relationship between the international anarchist movement at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the various nationalist movements occurring on the global periphery at the same time. Anderson notes that anarchism was "Just as hostile to imperialism, [but had] no theoretical prejudices against 'small' and 'ahistorical' nationalisms, including those in the colonial world." *Under Three Flags* focuses primarily on the Spanish anarchist movement (the most prominent such movement internationally) and the nationalist struggle in the Spanish (and later US) held Philippines. However, the book does touch on other facets of the international anarchist movement, including the activities of American and British anarchists, and the theoretical constructs of German anarchist Rudolf Rocker. Anderson argues that these themes are all linked by the "high valency" of nationalism.<sup>19</sup> While the general thinking behind the book, that the enmity between anarchism and nationalism is fallacious, is agreed with here, the overall concept and execution of *Under Three Flags*, with its focus on anti-colonialism and the reception of anarchism in that context leaves something to be desired when studying non-colonial anarchists.

Much of the research to this point on the Gruppe DAS has fallen within a paradigm of resistance to fascism, be it in Germany, in Spain, or in more

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<sup>19</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (Verso: London, 2007) 1-2.

nonconventional places, such as the German merchant marine.<sup>20</sup> This study seeks to break with that paradigm by shifting the focus directly onto the Gruppe DAS and German anarchists in Spain generally, in hopes of understanding them on their own terms, rather than just via the oppositional category of “not Nazis.” Certainly their mentality of resistance played a large role in their understanding of their homeland, but the category of resistance can neglect those elements of culture that do not enrich or enable resistance. By seeking to understand the Gruppe DAS as a cultural community, much as one would study other diaspora groups, this work allows the “rough edges” of the group show, those that may not be reconcilable with anarchism or resistance, but were nonetheless part of the experience of those German anarchists living in Spain. This approach to the Gruppe DAS and to the tensions between anarchism and the nation both continue a broader discussion on the subject of nationalism. Furthermore, this offers some framework for examining aspects of the anarchist movement that does not conform to the type of “libertarian socialism” which typifies our current understanding of anarchism.

Finally, a few methodological works are worth mentioning here. While a number of works influenced the ideological position of this thesis, from works on anarchist theory to the German *Alltagsgeschichte* movement, the most important works were anthropological texts. Anthropology offers a useful auxiliary discipline, helping to discern the particularities of a community whose records were extensive, but not always informative for the historian. The usefulness of anthropology comes from its focus on symbolic meaning, taboo, and enculturation, all points pivotal to the understanding of the

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<sup>20</sup> This is a specific reference to Nelles article in the *Anarchisten gegen Hitler* compendium, titled “Der Widerstand der Internationalen Transportarbeiter Föderation (ITF) gegen Nationalsozialismus und Faschismus in Deutschland und Spanien;” Dieter Nelles, “Der Widerstand der Internationalen Transportarbeiter Föderation (ITF) gegen Nationalsozialismus und Faschismus in Deutschland und Spanien,” in *Anarchisten gegen Hitler*, ed. Andreas Graf, pp. 114-155 (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2001).

relationship between the nation and anarchy in this case. This, of course, allows the researcher to examine the German anarchists in Spain as the sort of cultural community, noted previously, which is something that history alone seems to have some difficulty with. In particular, three anthropologists' works have been influential here: cultural anthropologists Sally Faulk Moore and David Graeber, and social anthropologist Jeff Pratt.

As previously mentioned, the Gruppe DAS specifically (and the German anarchist exiles generally) are examined here at a theoretical, structural, and community level. This shows the interplay between stated theory, pragmatic organization, and community reception of, processing of, and response to (anti-)nationalism by the German anarchists. Second, this study will utilize Jeff Pratt's diachronic-synchronic analytic model, from his book *Class, Nation and Identity*. Pratt's work allows for the reconstruction of how the Gruppe DAS evolved over time and how other political and social entities in wartime Barcelona affected that evolution, including the CNT-FAI and NSDAP. By engaging the subject from these various positions, the goal is to create as comprehensive a picture of this community as possible. This comprehensiveness revealed contradictions between stated theory and practice, elite versus rank-and-file discourse, effects on the Gruppe DAS ideological stances *vis-a-vis* other Germans in Spain, and how these various pieces changed over time. Essentially, this approach will follow Geertz's "thick description", although it privileges information on the relationship between anarchism and national consciousness within the community. The goal is to reconstruct the environment and actions of the Gruppe DAS, creating the anarchist and revolutionary contexts in which these Germans' national constructions were shaped. This context is essential, since the

nation as imagined by Gruppe DAS members is inseparable from their anarchism and their experiences in Spain.<sup>21</sup>

While Pratt's work is broadly influential here, particularly in relation to the understanding of the organizational structures of the exile community, Sally Faulk Moore's work on taboos, ideology, and social indeterminacy offers more direct relevance to the construction of the exile community's national consciousness. Faulk Moore's "Uncertainties in Situations: Indeterminacies in Culture" allows historians to understand the construction of cultures, navigating between taboos (like nationalism for anarchists) and isolation (such as the German's exile in Spain).<sup>22</sup> Of note here is the piece's use in understanding the geographic and demographic peculiarities of life in Barcelona, relating to the Germans' settlement in the city after 1933. Whereas Pratt's *Class, Nation and Identity* is a broad text creating a large theoretical framework, Faulk Moore's work deals with a specific problem within the sources on the exile community. While the issues with the source material are noted below, worth mentioning now is the large absence of "rank-and-file" documents from the archives, as well as the tabooedness of the nation within anarchism. While anarchism in the past has been more open to national struggles, by the 1930s, the shift away from this openness occurred, obscuring frank discussions of the subject in the records.<sup>23</sup>

Lastly, David Graeber's work on anarchist ideology, from an anthropological perspective, forms the final piece of the methodological structure here. Graeber's *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* offers historians a model for understanding

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<sup>21</sup> Pratt, *Class, Nation and Identity*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Sally Faulk Moore, "Uncertainties in Situations: Indeterminacies in Culture," in *Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology*, ed. Sally Faulk Moore and Barbara Myerhoff (Cornell University Press, 1975), 32–53.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



anarchism's internal dynamics, particularly between theoretical constructs and on-the-ground activism. Graeber noted that unlike Marxism, anarchism lacks the clear cohesion between theory and practice which allows for an overt connection between the two. Whereas, "1. Marxism has tended to be a theoretical or analytical discourse about revolutionary strategy. 2. Anarchism has tended to be an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice." This means that a constant dialogue occurred between the elites (those who make theories) and the non-elites (those more likely to act upon those theories).<sup>24</sup> For purposes here, this disconnect is relevant because it supports the idea that modern anarchism's ahistorical view of anarchism's past fractures our present understanding of that past. To invoke some rudimentary physics, this operates something like the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. Whereas historians utilize theories and contemporary understandings thereof to pinpoint discourses in the past, anarchism does not allow this. Either one can understand the relevant ethical discourse of the time, on its own terms, or how either that discourse is viewed (or obscured) by modern discourses; the two cannot overlap, however.<sup>25</sup>

### **Archival Material**

The primary source material for this thesis reflects the tabooeness of the subject at hand within the anarchist movement. While nationalism and the nation were discussed frankly and played a far more significant role than modern theorists play and historians often acknowledge, the situation, especially by the 1930s, became increasingly fraught.

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<sup>24</sup> David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004), 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

While the anarchism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century utilized the liberal nationalist theories of the day, as described by Anderson, to further their own cause, fascism in the interwar period confronted anarchists with a form of nationalist ideology completely incompatible with anarchism. This interaction with fascism eventually led to Rudolf Rocker's condemnatory *Nationalismus und Kultur*, which heralded the postwar shift away from any sort of nationalism in favor of a starkly anti-nationalist position. The sources of the German exiles in Spain reflected this in the relative lack of open discussion of nationalism and the nation. Instead the historian is forced to look for coded references in the sources, or unacknowledged, likely unnoticed tendencies towards nationalism within the community that, while not spoken of openly, showed a willingness to make use of nationalist thinking for pragmatic, symbolic, or truly nationalistic purposes.

This thesis utilizes three types of primary sources extensively. First are the official, public publications of the Gruppe DAS and the exile community. Meant for consumption by members of the exile community as well as Germans outside the anarchist movement, these included the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, *Die soziale Revolution*, and the German language *Boletín*. These publications represented the discourse between members of the elite (i.e. leaders of the Gruppe DAS, the IWA, and theoreticians like Landauer and Mühsam) and the community itself. Other published sources of this sort included the writings of Landauer, Mühsam, and Rocker, specifically pertaining to anarchist theory. Again, the purpose of such texts was instructive and represented the closest anarchism came to forming a "party line." Important to note is the chronological placement of these materials. Landauer's important works appeared in the period from 1895 to 1914, Mühsam's from 1921 to 1932, and Rocker's from 1918 to 1937. By the

same token, the German *Boletín* was published prior to 1936, *Die soziale Revolution* from January to June 1937, and the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* in January 1937. The obvious gap here was the period from July to December 1936. The significance of this gap is that it came at the height of the revolution. In this period, the still-coalescing nature of the German community's political and military efforts meant they created few official publications. Furthermore, germane discussions of nationalism became necessary only after this initial revolutionary period, as all the parties involved cast about for new ways to motivate the increasingly restless proletariat of Barcelona.

The second relevant sets of sources were official, private documents. This included militia rosters, visas, and official internal memoranda. Most pertinent here were the militia rosters and a list of names and addresses known as the "*Liste der deutschen Staatsangehörigen in Barcelona*." This latter source is particularly relevant, given that it allowed for the pinpointing of the settlement patterns of Germans living in Spain. Furthermore, the document predates the revolution and civil war, having been created sometime in 1935, making it one of only a few sources from that period. The militia rosters serve a similar purpose, albeit in the period of the war itself. That is, that these sources allow the researcher to understand the demographic and geographic situation of the Germans in Spain, allowing us to reconstruct the world they lived in a three dimensional way. Furthermore, documents like the militia rosters reveal the Gruppe DAS's official preoccupation with categorization along national lines. By notating typewritten pages to indicate which country of origin each name was associated with, the true, multiethnic nature of the ostensibly "German" "Erich Mühsam" Centuria.

Furthermore, it allows the researcher to see the kind of hierarchies created by interjecting national categories into supposedly non-hierarchical situations.

The last significant set of primary sources came from the personal writings of those involved. Much of this was again elite discourse, composed of correspondence and memoir of leaders and ideologues associated with the movement. The desperate nature of these sources, both in terms of authorship and chronology, meant that no solid meaning could be drawn from these documents overall, as with the official documents above. However, three significant points do stand out. Within these documents, much of the most overt references to the “national question” were made, particularly in the memoirs as the authors, like Rudolf Michaelis, attempted to justify their actions. Next, the letters particularly between Helmut Rüdiger, Augustin Souchy, Michaelis, and Emma Goldman, create a kind of sinew, shedding light on aspects of the community’s history that went unacknowledged in official documents. Finally, these personal correspondences also include the best outsider’s perspectives on the war, including Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia*, and the published letters of Charles and Lois Orr. Without the documents of the NSDAP’s *Abwehr* (military intelligence) agents in Barcelona, little can be said of what the German anarchist exiles’ community looked like from the exterior. However, the general information of Orwell and the specific, albeit fleeting, information allowed the reconstruction of this façade to some degree.

### **The Pages Ahead**

The following thesis encompasses the period from 1933 to 1937, though the first chapter does deal primarily with the period from 1895 to 1933, when Landauer and Mühsam were most active. Within the 1933-1937 timeframe, the text breaks down along

thematically based, but chronologically organized lines. In other words, while the chapters progress chronologically, the subject matter within each chapter is thematic and does overlap with the periods of surrounding chapters to some degree. Therefore, chapter one covers 1895 to 1933, chapter two covers 1933 to 1936, chapter three covers 1936 and 1937, while the final two chapters deal with 1937 exclusively. This periodization and focus on thematic chapter construction arose for two reasons. First the period dealt with here is relatively short while the information presented is somewhat episodic in nature. In other words, the compressed total timeframe combined with long periods of inaction interspersed with bursts of activity dealing with the nation, meant that thematic organization became necessary. By focusing on the themes discussed below, the thesis became more organizationally coherent. Therefore, the chapters themselves follow something of a formula of a brief context, followed by discussion of the relevant material, and then a conclusion.

Chapter 1 begins with a more in-depth discussion of the present thinking within anarchism on the nation, followed by a discussion of the origins of mass-political anarchism in Germany, after 1871. This leads into a discussion of Landauer and Mühsam's theories on the relationship between the nation and anarchism. Throughout, effort is made to illustrate the how both theorists not only represented German anarchism's foremost theorists on the nation, but also how they directly influenced the exile community in Spain.

Chapter 2 then transitions to the exile community itself, focusing on the demographics and urban geography of the community in Barcelona and how these factors effected their day-to-day lives and the construction of a separate German anarchist

culture in the city. The primary purpose here was twofold: first, to understand the exact living situation, in a three dimensional way, of the Germans in Spain, and second to cover the time period from 1933-1936, when archival material is sparsest.

Chapter 3 offers the first look at the political organization of the German exile community. On the one hand, this focus on organization offered context for the subsequent chapters, while on the other hand, it allowed for the examination of the most pragmatic elements of the Germans' national consciousness. The manner in which the Gruppe DAS approached this pragmatism was exemplified best in the construction of auxiliaries (like the "Mühsam" Centuria) and rivals (like the SRDF). These groups expressed the nationalism of their members in ways that the Gruppe DAS itself, bounded by its politically elite position and the taboo of the nation, could not.

Finally, chapters 4 and 5, covering the spring of 1937, showed the apex of national development within the German community. While the support of a national cause was never explicit, the language and symbols of both the elites and regular members becomes more nationally inclined. In chapter 4, the focus shifted to the regular membership again, examining how members of the "Mühsam" Centuria and the community at large followed a new propaganda line that portrayed the NSDAP as the primary targets of aggression, as well as helped to bolster this narrative with their own experiences. Chapter 5, on the other hand, returned to the elite discourse, as portrayed in printed official documents, aimed at the community and general public, reflected a progressive shift, both pragmatic and idealistic, towards national consciousness.. This focus on the NSDAP not only portrayed them as opponents in the struggle between

anarchism and fascism, but also in a struggle between differing views of what it meant to be German.

The narrative arch across all five chapters seeks to establish the growing national consciousness, even nationalism within the German anarchist exile community in Spain. The period from 1933 to 1937 showed the effects of the community's isolation from their Spanish counterparts, their organizational peculiarities focused on broadening their appeal as Germans rather than anarchists, and their linguistic and symbolic discourse to establish the NSDAP as the primary enemy of Germans (not just German anarchists) in Spain. These factors developed a community engaged in the type of "dialogue on revolutionary practice" discussed by Graeber, specifically a dialogue with the very national influences that engaged with anarchism in the previous century but were quickly passing out of fashion with the rise of fascism and totalitarianism across Europe. This places the Gruppe DAS and their affiliated community on the cusp of a shift in anarchism, making them both the apex of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mode of anarchist thought, as well as a group rapidly growing obsolete as the period wore on. However, this obsolescence only remains so as long as anarchism need not engage with an enemy far more powerful than itself, and engages communities disinclined to anarchist thinking. With the spread of neoliberal thought and the collapse of its Communist and social democratic competitors, one wonders how much longer this dialogue between the nation and anarchy may lie dormant.

## I. TOWARDS A GERMAN ANARCHISM

The Anti-Socialist Laws, enacted under Bismarck starting in 1878, created a unique situation in Germany. In essence, the law dictated that organizations that wished to exist at the national level could not have political affiliations. The purpose of the law was to break the association between the Free Trade Unions and the Social Democrats, as part of an effort to disable or dismantle that party. In practice, it decentralized both the labor movement and the party claiming to represent it. For the trade unions this meant that the majority disavowed political association, while a minority formed a semi-legal federation which associated on a national level, but only acted on the local level.<sup>26</sup> This network of local trade unions, the *Freie Vereinigung der deutschen Gewerkschaften*, though it originated to maintain close ties with the SPD, quickly became alienated from the party.<sup>27</sup> In the era of emergent mass politics and Bernstein's reform socialism, the small size and more radical bent of the FVdG created friction both inside and outside the organization and by the 1890s, it largely composed itself of syndicalists and anarchists.<sup>28</sup> Parallel to this development in the German labor and socialist movements, the German anarchist movement also saw resurgence in interest and refocussing on working-class politics. Breaking from the extremely marginal and liberal focus of the pre-1880s

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<sup>26</sup> Worth noting was the only tacit way that the Free Trade Unions abided by this law. In practice, there was a fair amount of political activity on their part, despite their national organization.

<sup>27</sup> The FVdG is referred to as a "localist" trade union federation. In this case, "Localism" is the term used to describe the style of decentralized trade unionism practiced by the FVdG. This decentralization focused on local organization over national or international endeavors; Hans Manfred Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement: A Rediscovered Minority Tradition," in *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective*, trans. Wayne Thorpe (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1990), 59–62.

<sup>28</sup> Anarchism and syndicalism were hardly unified ideologies at this point. While anarcho-syndicalism would become a stand-alone ideology by the 1930s, the syndicalists of the late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries considered themselves a separate set of ideas, while anarchists were wary of the purely industrial, economic motivations of the syndicalists.



Stirnerite egoist school of thinking, the post-Paris Commune German anarchism became the voice of revolutionary workers' resistance to the prevailing industrial and political order in the newly constituted *Reich*. Anarchism's rising profile in the German labor movement came largely from a new order of socialist-inspired thinkers, including Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam.<sup>29</sup>

This new line of anarchist thinking and activism, centering on Berlin, Munich, and the Rhineland, came to a head during the First World War, especially at the end, under the stress of the impending German defeat. With the wave of strikes and desertions accompanying the collapse of the Western Front, the anarchists became intrinsically involved in the *Räte* (councils), particularly in Munich and the Ruhr valley in the Rhineland. The anarchists' activities in the councils, being more revolutionary than the dominant social democratic, were brutally suppressed alongside the nascent communists by the *Freikorps* in 1919, with the consent of the republican government. Similar suppressions followed through the early 1920s, as the anarchists and syndicalists, in the newly christened *Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschland* (FAUD), played important roles in the "Red Army of the Ruhr" and the strikes accompanying the communist uprisings in 1921. With this revolutionary activity and the emergence of a state-socialist society in Russia came a new generation of anarchist thinkers, many of whom propelled the German iteration of the ideology further from its mid-19<sup>th</sup> century liberal roots.<sup>30</sup>

Within the Weimar period, two anarchist theorists dominated the intellectual scene: Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam. Friends before and during the war, both suffered imprisonment and eventually death at the hands of the *Freikorps* and the NSDAP,

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<sup>29</sup> Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 59–64.

<sup>30</sup> Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 70–73.

respectively. While alive, however, they expanded the German anarchist literature on socialism and the nation, and Mühsam eventually inspired the name and motivations of the Germans fighting in Spain. Furthermore, their ideological positions represented the uniqueness of German anarchism within the larger intellectual tradition of the ideology, both in contemporaneous geographic terms and over the ideology's history.

Moving forward, two questions come to mind when studying the intellectual intersections of anarchism and the nation, in a thesis dealing with a specific group of anarchists, in a specific time and place. First: of what use is a broad analysis of historical theory to us when analyzing such a specifically located group?<sup>31</sup> Second: if some use is established, how do we go about analyzing the ideas of these theorists in a meaningful way? Entering the nebulous world of historic theory, specifically when dealing with anarchism, seems to be of limited use in understanding how the German anarchists in Spain constructed their sense of nation. This of course refers back to Graeber's "Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology," on anarchism's preoccupation with the "practice of revolution."<sup>32</sup> Historian Mina Grauer notes that anarchists seen breakings with traditionally anarchist positions on the nation were and are ostracized by the activist/theoretician community for violating what she calls "anarchist dogma."<sup>33</sup>

However, as the introduction pointed out, no such unified body of theory approaching a

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<sup>31</sup> After all, Ruth Kinna notes Marie Fleming's objections that, "the study of sages imposes a putative, yet meaningless, unity of tradition on a set of ideas that are not only diverse but also often incompatible... and overlooked the extent to which it was 'a movement that... developed in response to specific social-economic grievances in given historical circumstances.'" This analysis highlights the uneasiness of some historians of anarchism with falling back on a group of specific theorists as stand-ins for the entire movement or ideology; Ruth Kinna, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 17.

<sup>33</sup> This is not the appropriate term for the intellectual consensus among anarchists about a given topic. While such consensus on some subjects does exist, it is never complete enough to be all encompassing on a level comparable to other political theories. This is attributable to anarchism's lack of a coherent root-theorist or theorists. Even in its earliest form, with Proudhon and Bakunin, there were striking differences which only deepened and multiplied as time passed; Mina Grauer, "Anarcho-Nationalism: Anarchist Attitudes towards Jewish Nationalism and Zionism," in *Modern Judaism* (February, 1994), 3.

“dogma” exists, and present-day anarchist thought warped our understanding of anarchism’s past to a significant degree.

Present day anarchists are acutely concerned with national questions, mostly viewing them in the negative. Currently, the understanding of historians of anarchism (many of them anarchists or “fellow-travelers” themselves, including historians like Graf and Nelles) relies on a largely teleological view of anarchism, which seeks to make past anarchist views conform to present anarchist philosophies. Often, these attempts at conformity mean excising those theorists who deviate from the norms of a particular strain of present-day anarchism from the debate entirely. This is central to Ruth Kinna’s discussion of books collating groups of theorists who then act as proxies for the entire ideology and the movement following it.<sup>34</sup> It is also an important point to keep in mind when discussing anarchism’s relationship with the nation. While Grauer notes, correctly, that the nation was seen as a natural phenomenon, largely analogous to our anthropological definition of culture, but innate, modern anarchism rejects even this.<sup>35</sup> Based on appropriate modern understandings of the political nature of the nation and the anthropological definition of culture, this rejection may be appropriate today, but is ahistorical when applied to the anarchism of the past.

Works by modern, post-1968 anarchists such as Bob Black, Hakim Bey, Paul Zerzan, and Fredy Perlman have warped the popular and academic view of anarchism’s relationship with the nation to some degree, creating a situation wherein readers may think that the two (anarchy and the nation) are and have always been, mutually exclusive

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<sup>34</sup> Kinna, *Anarchism*, 12-18.

<sup>35</sup> Grauer, “Anarcho-Nationalism,” 4; Grauer is discussing Bakunin here, but she says virtually the same thing about each anarchists understanding of the nation, i.e. that they are natural and exist, but that nationalism is unnatural and a tool of the State.

and opposed. As should be apparent from the existence of this thesis, this is a problematic assertion at best and wrong at its most egregious. This chapter endeavors to show how past anarchists in Germany conceive of the nation in different, often contradictory ways, but always with some small caveat that allowed feelings of cultural/national loyalty to flourish, even if unintentionally.<sup>36</sup> Herein lays the problematic nature of asserting that anarchism has always been completely anti-nationalist.

Finally, the warping effects of present-day anarchism on our understanding of past anarchisms seem to be the direct result of the works of one of the theorists examined later: Rudolf Rocker. Rocker's conflation of the nation with the state anticipated a similar tack taken by many modern anarchists. Today, the consensus among historians is that the nation is a social construct, something created by the interplay between centralizing early modern states and reactions for and against this centralization by their resident populaces.<sup>37</sup> Rocker's anticipation of this position and the adoption of his views by many anarchists today seem prescient, but at the time he was writing *Nationalism and Culture* in 1937, the majority of social theorists, both politically and scientifically minded, held a far different position. While Rocker and others agreed about the constitution of the nation (i.e. that it was an entity bound by language, practice, and tradition), others, both social scientists and other anarchists, diverged from him in their view that nations and cultures were analogous. Today the understanding is that nations are politically constructed results of the State and that culture is a broader term that can

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<sup>36</sup> To reiterate, Landauer and Mühsam did not differentiate between nation and culture in a meaningful way, as is seen in the following discussion of their works.

<sup>37</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Cornell University Press, 2009), 75.

and often does challenge State expectations and desires.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, while it is tempting to critique past anarchists' constructions of the nation based on their incorrect definition of what exactly a nation is, we must keep the discussion, both academically and politically, in a historical place.

Modern day anarchists have largely arrived at the same position on the nation/nationalism as contemporary social theorists, either by following developments in fields like history, anthropology, political science, etc., or by a convergent evolution from their own theoretical positions. Before continuing on to a broader discussion of Landauer and Mühsam, the position of a modern anarchist might be illustrative of the void separating the understandings of past anarchists from those in the present. Political scientist Ruth Kinna parses modern anarchist positions on the nation in her *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide*. After discussing the works of past anarchists on nationalism, including Rocker and Kropotkin, Kinna notes that anarchist Fredy Perlman, "picks up on some of Rocker's themes."<sup>39</sup> Kinna goes on to note that Perlman's views diverge from Rocker's in his opinion that nationalism predated the nation, and that "nationalism was never about patriotic self-determination or emancipation, but always about domination and control." If Gellner is to be believed, this opinion seems correct. However, it also illustrates the dangers of not historicizing the subject of study. Again, anarchists like Landauer and Mühsam, especially, worked with different understandings of the

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<sup>38</sup> Arjun Appadurai argues that while the State helps to construct the nation, the extenuating factors related to the sort of factors detailed by Anderson in *Imagined Communities* also come to bear, specifically in the way that national feelings are detached, ultimately, from the State's control. This means that while the people of a given space, such as a neighborhood, may exhibit nationalistic feelings spurred on by the State, for the end use of the State, if those feelings come into conflict with the aims of the State, then the population is more likely to continue with its own feelings, rather than automatically change course because of the State's dictate; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 178–199.

<sup>39</sup> Kinna, *Anarchism*, 77.

composition of a nation than modern anarchists like Perlman. Kinna goes on to note that Perlman attacks those who equate the nation with a territorially bound, customarily, linguistically, and traditionally homogenous group.<sup>40</sup> Perlman's "The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism," from which Kinna is drawing in this section, argues that cultural homogeneity was a "mere pretext" for the State's exercise of power, and that only those forms of cultural expression deemed appropriate by the "national police" were allowed to survive the construction of the nation-state.<sup>41</sup> Again, this argument makes sense from our perspective, but the point here is to draw attention to the modern anarchist understanding of the nation so that we can work to avoid it warping the examination of Landauer's and Mühsam's anarchism, which, as Kinna notes earlier in her book, existed in response to specific historical contexts.<sup>42</sup>

Returning to Mina Grauer's work, she offers a useful frame on which to build an understanding of the intellectual problems between anarchy and the nation.<sup>43</sup> As discussed in the introduction, Grauer's piece examines the relationship of various Jewish and non-Jewish anarchists to the "Jewish Question." Of particular interest here was Gustav Landauer, examined in depth in this chapter and deeply invested in anarchism, nationalism, and (of less importance to this paper) Zionism.<sup>44</sup> Grauer's thesis, that, "[a]t the risk of transgressing the boundaries of anarchist dogma, Jewish anarchists looked for

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Fredy Perlman, "The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism," *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, 37 (Summer, 1993), <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/fredy-perlman-the-continuing-appeal-of-nationalism>.

<sup>42</sup> Kinna, *Anarchism*, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Knepper's "The Other Invisible Hand" expounds further on similar themes; Paul Knepper, "The Other Invisible Hand: Jews and Anarchists in London before the First World War," *Jewish History* 22, no. 3 (January 1, 2008): 295–315.

<sup>44</sup> Rocker's contribution to this period, discussed briefly in the introduction, is explored further in the later chapters.

a scheme that would combine anarchist theory with a possible solution to the Jewish quest for national identity,” is inadequately supported in the article, which focuses to long on non-Jewish anarchists. When Jewish anarchists are discussed, Grauer holds a primordialist and highly problematic position on the attractiveness of nationalism as opposed to anarchism.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, Grauer’s work is important for two reasons. First, the focus on the relationship between Jewishness, anarchy, and nationalism is relevant since Jews also played a prominent role in the German anarchist movement.<sup>46</sup> Second, while Grauer’s primordial (and highly problematic) construction of nationalism/the nation does not allow for their sort of spiritual and intellectual (or possibly anthropological) conception of the nation, she nonetheless shows how Landauer and Kropotkin all conceived of just that sort of nation.<sup>47</sup> Succinctly, this chapter establishes the intellectual currents of the interwar German anarchist movement, upon which it built its organization in Spain, under the auspices of the Gruppe DAS. The goal is to show how certain anarchist theories about the nation, such as its innateness to being human, its conflation with the present-day idea of culture, and its perceived political inertness (when nationalism was suppressed) allowed the Gruppe DAS to utilize the nation as a component of their organizing efforts in Spain prior to and during the Civil War.

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<sup>45</sup> “The third approach, advocated mainly by Jewish anarchists, such as Bernard Lazare and Hillel Solotaroff, seeks to come to terms with all aspects of nationalism. This approach, which was formulated as an answer to the Jewish problem, is based on the most realistic premises, as it recognizes the power of nationalism and the futility of the fight against it.” Obviously, based on Jeff Pratt’s study of the similarity between class and national movements, the last clause makes little sense, as a class movement could be just as compelling and realistically grounded as a national one; Grauer, “Anarcho-Nationalism,” 3-4.

<sup>46</sup> Most of “Anarcho-Nationalism” focuses on the nebulous Jews of Bakunin and Proudhon’s anti-Semitic rants, Landauer’s *Geist*, or the Jewish community of London’s East End, among whom Kropotkin and Rocker, in particular, worked; See: Grauer, “Anarcho-Nationalism,” throughout (1-19).

<sup>47</sup> Grauer draws a direct link between “[t]he need to belong to a distinct” group and this group being composed of a linguistically, traditionally, and territorially bounded unit. Throughout the piece she continues to allude the innateness of the nation for humanity, never acknowledging the possibility that it is constructed; Grauer, “Anarcho-Nationalism,” 1, 4.

### **The Mystic and the Martyr**

The two men discussed in this chapter come from very distinct perspectives on the relationship between the State, the nation, and anarchism. Some of this can be attributed to their differing circumstances, something that is expected. The goal however, is not simply to identify points of difference and their origins. The more important purpose is to identify the intellectual origins, both explicit and implicit, of the Gruppe DAS's relationship with their own national background. This is essential, as it both illustrates the unique relationship German anarchists had with the nation and the fact that this relationship appeared to predate their arrival in Spain, attributing the relationship to more than a simply exile's identification with the homeland.

#### ***Gustav Landauer: The Mystic***

Gabriel Kuhn, translator and historian of interwar German anarchism, argues that Gustav Landauer was the most influential anarchist in Germany, excepting Rudolf Rocker, and was more influential in terms of his attention to domestic issues (Rocker was more concerned with international issues).<sup>48</sup> Born in the state of Baden in 1870, just prior to the formation of the German Empire, Landauer spent much of his youth as a socialist and member of the SPD. This changed as he grew older and embraced the anarchist communism of Petr Kropotkin. Besides his works on anarchist philosophy, Landauer was also known in German literary circles for his translation of Shakespeare into German, and in philosophical circles for his influence on Martin Buber, a close friend and editor of his papers after his death. Landauer became involved in the Bavarian *Räterepublik* under Levine in 1919, following the assassination of Kurt Eisner. Though a minister, the short-lived nature of this anarchist take-over in Munich meant Landauer had

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<sup>48</sup> Gabriel Kuhn, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 10.



little policy influence. The Freikorps, after retaking Munich, eventually murdered him on 2 May 1919. Landauer was Jewish, a characteristic shared by Mühsam and associated with Rocker.<sup>49</sup>

Landauer's primary contribution to the anarchist discussion of the nation in Germany was comes from two sources: his "Dreißig sozialistische Thesen," which Mina Grauer references in her article, and his article "Do Not Learn Esperanto!" The former was originally published in *Die Zukunft* in 1907, the latter, also in 1907, in *Die Freie Generation*. Both articles highlight similar aspects of Landauer's views on the nation, largely focusing on "cultural regeneration and self-determination," and which, as Grauer notes, were in line with Kropotkin's gradualist position on the subject.<sup>50</sup> The similarity to Kropotkin is unsurprising, since Landauer was an anarcho-communist, a strain which Kropotkin originated in the period Landauer was working. "Dreißig sozialistische Thesen" also outlines another important aspect of Landauer's views, namely the relationship between the nation and the State, and the concept of *Geist* (spirit), the key to Landauer's distinction between the two.

Landauer's article, "Do Not Learn Esperanto!" works as an excellent example of Landauer's view that independent cultures were not only important, but also central, to anarchism. He argues that only artificial or "trivial, petty, and unimportant things can be expressed by an artificial product..."<sup>51</sup> In other words, nothing of substance could be adequately expressed in a made up language like Esperanto. He goes on to state that the

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<sup>49</sup> Ulrich Linse, *Gustav Landauer und die Revolutionszeit, 1918/19 : Die politischen Reden, Schriften, Erlasse und Briefe Landauers aus der November-Revolution* (Berlin: Karin Kramer Verlag, 1974) 5-23; Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918 bis 1923*, 168-174; Gabriel Kuhn, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010) 10.

<sup>50</sup> Kuhn, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, 276.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

creation and implementation are counter to anarchism for two reasons. First, it represents the type of reformist, “gradualist” action that anarchists were supposed to oppose. Rather, he argued, anarchists should “abolish... the conditions that keep humans from learning foreign languages.”<sup>52</sup> Secondly and more deeply tied to his personal philosophy, Landauer notes that the imposition of Esperanto would “be disastrous... as there is nothing more important for anarchism than to delve into the depths of our mind and our spirit... No artificial language can ever do this.”<sup>53</sup> Here we see Landauer link his position on Esperanto to his views, expressed in the “Dreißig sozialistische Thesen,” that anarchism is not only about mechanical economic and political processes, but also about the individual human being. Furthermore, Landauer’s expression here also points to his belief that a person could embody multiple identities simultaneously.<sup>54</sup> For example, one could be both a German, Jewish, and an anarchist, as he was, without these ideas coming into conflict. Landauer saw Esperanto as a barrier to reconciling these ideas, and in large part, to reconciling nations to anarchism. Furthermore, this piece reflects another common theme among all the theorists: that anarchism’s solution to this question is a practical one. In many ways, Landauer’s opposition to Esperanto was its impracticality. Despite his reputation as a mystic, Landauer’s opposition and opinion here was quite even: that Esperanto was a perfect example of radicals, relying on the reasonable assumption that a common language could be mechanically useful, forgetting that their constituencies would not have access to such materials and opportunities.<sup>55</sup> In other

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>54</sup> Landauer, “Dreißig sozialistische Thesen,” 55.

<sup>55</sup> Kuhn, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, 276.

words, that it was a waste of time to teach German workers Esperanto when other, more important things, needed to be imparted so that a future anarchy might function properly.

Landauer's second significant statement on the nation comes in his "Dreißig sozialistische Thesen," an article from *Der Zukunft* that went on to influence two of his other works: *Revolution* and "Aufruf zum Sozialismus."<sup>56</sup> However, in the latter two pieces, Landauer tends eschewed most of his discussion of the nation to focus on other matters, mainly his conception of socialism. His centering of both arguments on the concept of "*Geist*," though, shows a commitment to a coherent body of anarchist theory, in which an understanding of the nation and its role in anarchism played an important part. In "Thesen," Landauer discussed socialism, then community, nation, state, and ended with a discussion of *Geist* as a means of tying together the first three subjects. *Geist*, as Gabriel Kuhn notes, is a difficult word to define in English. The transliteration means "spirit" and for many students learning the German language, their first encounter with the term might be "ghost." However, the most accurate definition here would be something akin to intellectual and spiritual life. Kuhn notes that,

"[The] philosophical notion of Geist – for example in Hegel – lies somewhere between 'intellect' and 'soul;' as such, it can apply to an individual (in which case it might also be understood as an individual's 'essence') as well as to a community, a people, an era, even a place; it defines individual or collective identity beyond its mere physicality (hence the major attacks on the term by materialists). Landauer uses Geist much in this sense. In a speech during the Bavarian Revolution, a few months before his death, he offers one of the most concise definitions: 'Geist is when knowledge, emotion, and will unite and become an active force.' In a less philosophical context, Geist can also be a close equivalent to 'mind' or 'reason.'"<sup>57</sup>

In "Thesen," long before he gives the cogent definition noted at the end of the quote from Kuhn, Landauer's use of *Geist* approximates the "essence" of an individual, a

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 31, n. 47, n. 148.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 12–13.

community, and a nation.<sup>58</sup> We saw a similar essentializing of personal and cultural characteristics in “Do Not Learn Esperanto!,” very much rooted in the ideas we see here. In using *Geist* in this way, to tie together his ideas, the individual becomes deeply connected, through “spirit,” to the community, the nation, and ultimately to the ideal of socialism. This is not to say that Landauer is a nationalist, in the political sense. He spends the latter half of “Thesen” ridiculing the boundaries of the State as, “*seltsam zitternde, zuckende, krause und verrückte*” (“strangely trembling, twitching, frizzy, and crazy”) and “*kindisch*” (“childish”).<sup>59</sup> Rather, in seeking to link all of these things, Landauer argued the inevitable linking of individuals and communities via common culture, of which language played the biggest part. He even refers to France and Germany as “*Sprachverien[en]*” (language associations), which illustrated his belief that the most important elements holding these States together were their common languages. Following this, he discussed the belief that while language was necessary to hold together both the state and the nation, the *Geist* of language was felt in the nation, but was absent in the State, rendering it illegitimate.<sup>60</sup> Throughout “Dreißig sozialistische Thesen,” Landauer argues that individuals bound in communities, united into nations by language, are superior to States, both in terms of this legitimacy granted by their culture, and in their organic and logical (and apparently adult) organization.

All of these facets, the idea of regeneration, the concept of *Geist*, and his views on the role of the community, amounted to a body of work that was highly concerned with the role of the nation within anarchism, in a way less evident in the following authors.

This was in part due to him being Jewish and attuned to the debates of Zionism, as

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<sup>58</sup> Landauer, “Dreißig sozialistische Thesen,” 58-59.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 60-61.

Grauer noted.<sup>61</sup> However, it also seems to be linked to his being German in a time when the exact meaning of this was still very malleable. While the ability to hold multiple identities, individual, cultural, communitarian, and national, were attributable to his Jewishness and feelings of being both German and Jewish, ethnically speaking, other facets of his philosophy seem uniquely German. For example, he dwelled not on the Jewish working-class, with which he also had contact, but rather on the German working-class. His examples of nations revolve around the continental dichotomy, France and Germany, while his use of Jews as examples was exclusively to illustrate, along with Christianity, the historical role of religion and spirituality to bind communities. He also discusses, albeit briefly, the ideas of “Blut und Boden” (“blood and soil”), which became central to Weimar conservative and later Nazi conceptions of the nation.<sup>62</sup> This centrality of language, both for practical and philosophical reasons, holds the greatest comparison to the Gruppe DAS’s construction of the nation while in Spain. As we will see later, their ideas on the subject grew out of a practical linguistic necessity into a philosophical idea and praxis of organization.

One final note should be made of Landauer’s Jewish heritage. Grauer’s contribution here was more theoretical than factual, in that it showed the means by which a group of anarchists (those identifying as Jews culturally) negotiated the nationalist/anarchist divide. Landauer, as well as Mühsam, below, did not, however, identify as Jewish. Jewishness, to both men, remained a tertiary, or even quaternary identity, after their anarchism, “German-ness,” and in Mühsam’s case, male-ness. Landauer did, however, supply one important point to the discussion of Jewish national

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<sup>61</sup> Grauer, “Anarcho-Nationalism,” 7-10.

<sup>62</sup> Landauer, “Dreißig sozialistische Thesen,” 59-62; Landauer, “Do Not Learn Esperanto!” 276-278.

identity that was both revealing of his anarchism and (German) nationalist in its character.

In his *Thesen*, as well as his “Do Not Learn Esperanto!,” Landauer addresses Jewish workers directly, but only in the same context as other national groups (e.g. the German or French workers).<sup>63</sup> However, Landauer does not attempt to supply any special conditions for Jewish people (as a stateless people) within his anarchism, nor does he show any affinity or disdain (as Bakunin and Proudhon did) for Jewishness. Rather, Jews are *persona non grata*; they are a separate ethnic group, worthy of an anarchist movement of their own (an endorsement of their national status), but nothing beyond this. This position carried over to the German exiles in Spain, it seems, as Jews, despite being present in the militias and the community, go largely unremarked in the historical record. Only with great difficulty are they identified, usually via records from later in life, after they abandoned their anarchism. Beyond this, and despite the preponderance of Jewish anarchists in the German movement, Jewishness made no significant contribution to the anarchist discussion of nationalism in this context. Rather, it appeared more relevant in the pre-World War I period, in the context of the struggles detailed in Anderson’s *Under Three Flags*.

### ***Erich Mühsam: The Martyr***

Erich Mühsam was one of a handful of people who carried on the philosophy of Gustav Landauer, after the latter’s death. While Landauer’s works were published and distributed between the broader anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movement in Germany, they would have simply been recycled had it not been for two men: Martin Buber and Erich Mühsam. Both played an important role in expanding upon Landauer’s ideas,

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<sup>63</sup> Landauer, “Dreißig sozialistische Thesen,” 60; Landauer, “Do Not Learn Esperanto!,” 4.

though only the latter is of interest to us here. Buber's contribution to Zionism and the Kibbutz movement bear the mark of the dialogue he carried on with Landauer, but there is no evidence his ideas carried into the Gruppe DAS or the anarchist movement in Germany during the inter-war period. Mühsam, on the other hand, was a central figure for the Gruppe DAS due to his "martyrdom" by the NSDAP in 1934 at the Oranienburg concentration camp.

The ideas that Mühsam brought to the discussion of the nation were similar to Landauer's in many ways, largely starting from the same liberal point of view and making the same assertion about the "inertness" of the nation.<sup>64</sup> From here, he went on to argue for, in his *Liberating Society from the State*, what could be characterized as a more negative view of the nation than Landauer's and one colored by the *völkisch* nationalism in vogue in this time in Germany. In summary, Mühsam begins with a view of the nation comparable to Landauer's, but becomes increasingly antagonistic towards the concept of the nation by the early 1930s, as his view transitions from a liberal to a *völkisch* understanding. Furthermore, he comes to identify the nation as the culmination of not only State domination, but also hierarchy and domination in general, linking it to religious, priestly hierarchies and patriarchy.

Mühsam was born in Berlin in 1878 to a Jewish middle-class family. His involvement in anarchism began at an early age and he became involved in the illegal anarchist anti-militarist activity prior to and during World War I. This led to his involvement in the Bavarian *Räterepublik*, eventually resulting in his imprisonment near

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<sup>64</sup> This idea, proposed by Landauer and Mühsam, that the nation preceded nationalism and that without such a mobilizing ideology, the nation is relatively harmless and lacks any inherent political quality.

Bomberg and the death of his close friend and associate Landauer.<sup>65</sup> Following the commutation of his life sentence, he was released on parole in 1924 and he resumed his artistic pursuits, put on hold during the war and his imprisonment. He was the editor of the journal *Fanal* and was heavily involved in the homosexual rights movement in Weimar. A cabaret performer, Mühsam frequently satirized NSDAP leader Adolf Hitler and this, combined with his violent and revolutionary speeches in the late Weimar period, led to his arrest after the *Machtergreifung*. He was interned in the Oranienburg concentration camp near Berlin and eventually died under suspicious circumstances. The Nazis claimed he had committed suicide, though evidence suggests he was lynched by camp guards.<sup>66</sup>

Mühsam defined the nation as a “grouping of peoples, thus a spatially connected community of human beings belonging together by virtue of common living conditions, language and customs. The concepts nation and people are approximately equivalent, insofar as they are simply used for distinguishing the parts of humanity gathered together in different lands. Nationality means belonging to a people.”<sup>67</sup> This statement made clear exactly what Mühsam thought about the nature of the nation, and strongly implied that he felt it relatively immutable. Following this, however, he notes that this definition does not attribute anything more than “distinguishing characteristics,” rather than any sort of inherent quality.<sup>68</sup> Mühsam goes on to note that “[nationalism] is the mindset which holds one’s own state to be distinguished above all others... Nationalism is the glorified

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<sup>65</sup> Erich Mühsam, “1919-1924: Imprisonment,” in *Liberating Society from the State and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, ed. Gabriel Kuhn (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011).

<sup>66</sup> Erich Mühsam, *Liberating Society from the State and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, ed. Gabriel Kuhn (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011).

<sup>67</sup> Mühsam, *Liberating Society from the State*, 33.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.



consecration of the state concept, the transference of the authoritarian family morality onto the people.”<sup>69</sup> Two important facts should be noted here: first, that the nations precede nationalism, *vis-à-vis* the quote at the top of the paragraph, and because of this, nationalism is merely the State attempting to utilize the nation for its own ends; and secondly, this is the first time we see Mühsam link patriarchy (“authoritarian family morality”) to nationalism. Mühsam later noted that nationalism elevates the purely descriptive term nation to a political ideal, giving it a familiar sense of authority to that of “church doctrine and family feeling...”<sup>70</sup>

This issue of patriarchy and a gendered reading of the nation is not one pursued among German anarchists in this period, with the exception of Mühsam. This is not to say that German anarchists were unconcerned about the relationship between men and women in German society. The FAUD was active in women’s liberation efforts, focusing on issues like reproductive rights and to a lesser degree equality for women in the workplace. The FAUD also had a highly active women’s auxiliary, the *Syndikalistische Frauenbund* (Syndicalist Women’s Federation), led by Rudolf Rocker’s wife, Milly Witkop-Rocker.<sup>71</sup> However, much of the ideological underpinning of these efforts borrowed from other ideologies, or linked to a more generalized desire for greater egalitarian relations. Mühsam, on the other hand, dedicates a full third of “The World View of Anarchism,” the first half of his *Liberating Society from the State*, to the problem of patriarchy, giving it equal footing to the problems of religion and nationalism

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Mühsam, *Liberating Society from the State*, 34.

<sup>71</sup> Dieter Nelles, “Anarchosyndicalism and the Sexual Reform Movement in the Weimar Republic,” in *Free Love and the Labour Movement* (presented at the Socialism and Sexuality, Amsterdam: International Institute for Social History, 2000), 2–7; Bock, “Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement,” 78.

for anarchism. Much of his analysis focuses on inequitable relationships between men and women resulting from the “tyranny the family.”<sup>72</sup> The intersection between this and the nation/nationalism comes from Mühsam’s progressive view of history. He believed that patriarchy, then religion, created hierarchies that reinforced the authority of one another, and then that these ideas reinforced the states use of nationalism as a means of legitimating itself.<sup>73</sup> For Mühsam, the state’s domination of “*der Volk*” through nationalism was merely an extension of a man’s domination of his wife.

Having spent several pages describing the various ways the state uses nationalism to further its own domination of society, Mühsam declared it self-evident why nationalism and anarchism are incompatible. Again, this is unsurprising. Like Landauer, he maintains a practical relationship with the concept of nation, but like nearly all anarchists, he sees nationalism as problematic. What is perhaps most important, compared to Landauer, is the lack of gradualism in Mühsam’s conception of nationalism. Landauer, as a gradualist like Kropotkin, saw a muted nationalism and national self-determination as a necessary stage on the route to an internationalist future.<sup>74</sup> Mühsam, at this point, seems to have turned on this idea. Instead, he sees nations as inherent, innate, but largely inert parts of the human experience, while nationalism is a dangerous authoritarian ideology that is incompatible to and opposed by anarchism. Mühsam’s development away from Landauer continues here, where he breaks with the Landauerian idea of nations as part of the anarchist future, and argues that instead, these natural feelings should either be suppressed by a greater desire for international federalism.

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<sup>72</sup> Mühsam, *Liberating Society from the State*, 34.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 33-35.

<sup>74</sup> Grauer, “Anarcho-Nationalism,” 3-4.

Feelings of closeness to the nation, for Mühsam, were closely tied to the relationship between an individual and the land. He states that, “[naturally,] there exists an intimate intellectual-spiritual connection of man with the earth, but only where labor and life grow directly out of the soil.”<sup>75</sup> He goes on to note that only peasants still have this closeness to the land, while other groups, such as the urban proletariat, have largely lost it. So too has the state, since Mühsam sees the state as incompatible with being a peasant. He notes that a peasant feels no real love for the state, which is alien and distant from their experience, but rather feels a far more localized affinity for “home” (*Heimat*). To coopt this localized affinity for home among peasants, Mühsam asserts that the state invented the idea of “*Vaterland*.” By implementing these ideas of Fatherland, the state tried to utilize the peasants’ natural closeness to the earth for their own ends, according to Mühsam.<sup>76</sup> This idealization of the peasant relationship to the land comes surprisingly close to the *volkish* notions common among right-wing nationalists in this period. While it was hardly the same as the NSDAP’s “*Blut und Boden*” (“blood and soil”), there does seem to be some synchronicity between Mühsam’s ideas and those of the far right.

In conclusion, Mühsam’s philosophies drew from Landauer’s ideas in the beginning, not just in his liberal view of the nation, but also in his general ideas on anarcho-communism and his belief that the workers’ movements, be they anarchist, socialist, or communist, needed to work together for the good of the working class as a whole. In terms of his construction of the nation, Mühsam takes a similar view to Landauer that nations are natural occurrences, something akin to what we might refer to as a culture today, with the important caveat that Landauer and Mühsam see nations as

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<sup>75</sup> Mühsam, *Liberating Society from the State*, 36.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

unchanging in many ways. While small developments may occur through time, overall, the belief is that nations remain largely homogenous and consistent throughout their existence, save extinction or conquest. The key differences in their philosophy on the subject of the nation come in two areas. First, Mühsam finds the nation's *Geist* (Landauer's word) in the land and a more vaguely defined cultural homogeneity (see the definition of nation above), rather than language as Landauer believed. Second, and linked to the first, is the more *völkisch* view of nations that Mühsam had. Lastly, Mühsam set himself apart from Landauer with his linking of patriarchy and nationalism, both of which he sees as ideologies validating the state's domination of its subject peoples.

### **The Intellectual Milieu of German Anarchism and the Gruppe DAS**

The works of Landauer and Mühsam represent an intellectual milieu available to the members of the Gruppe DAS and other anarchists in exile, in both Spain and elsewhere. However, they influenced the exiled German movement unequally. Beginning with Gustav Landauer, his relationship with the Gruppe DAS is easy to establish. Most prominently, Landauer figured heavily into Max Nettlau's articles on anarchism in Germany in the number ten issue of *Soziale Revolution*, the German language militia newspaper for anarchists.<sup>77</sup> Nettlau, an individualist anarchist from Austria, traced the history of anarchism in Germany from Johann Most to Landauer and on to the inter-war period, after Landauer's death. His primary focus is on Landauer's idea of an "ethical community of free men [mankind]." He goes on to reference Landauer's "*Dreißig sozialistische Thesen*" (1907), as well as *Revolution* and *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*, both influenced by "Thesen," though he did not delve into Landauer's

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<sup>77</sup> Max Nettlau, *Soziale Revolution* (Spring, 1937), 3-4.

construction of the nation directly.<sup>78</sup> Overall, Nettelau's piece was informative about, if somewhat critical of, Landauer's body of work.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, prior to the NSDAP *Machtergreifung*, the anarcho-syndicalist press, *Der Syndikalist*, associated with the FAUD, made regular use of Landauer's work in the newspaper, as well as regular republishing of his works for new audiences. While it is always a risky proposition to assume that such works were being read by the average worker, literacy efforts were central to the FAUD's cultural work, and the union had a lively local print culture, according to Hans Manfred Bock. Furthermore, Bock notes in his *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus* that Landauer was highly influential among the FAUD and the broader syndicalist and anarchist movement following his death in May 1919.<sup>80</sup>

Erich Mühsam is an even easier figure to link to the Gruppe DAS. To begin with, he was a martyr of near-religious status among German anarchists in Spain, with the German anarchist militia unit named the "Erich Mühsam" Centuria. Political officer Rudolf Michaelis also notes that German anarchists were eager to share the works and ideas of Mühsam with their Spanish comrades, the most important of which was his book, *Liberating Society from the State*.<sup>81</sup> Secondly, prior to 1933, Mühsam was heavily involved in the German anarcho-communist movement via the *Föderation Kommunistische Anarchisten Deutschland*, the FKAD (the German Federation of

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 3-4; Much of Nettelau's criticism focusses on the communitarian nature of Landauer's ideas and history with the SPD and his continued efforts to wed the ideas of anarchism more closely to the reformist socialism of that party. This is in line with Nettelau's criticism of communist and syndicalist anarchism. In fact, it is somewhat surprising that Nettelau would write for or be published in a journal that is explicitly anarcho-syndicalist in orientation.

<sup>80</sup> Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 77-78; Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918 bis 1923*, 155.

<sup>81</sup> Rudolf Michaelis, *Hans Bronnen - Mit der Centuria "Erich Mühsam" vor Huesca: Erinnerung eines Spanienkämpfers anlässlich des 100. Geburtstages Erich Mühsam* (Berlin: Oppo-Verlag, 1995), 10.

Communist Anarchists).<sup>82</sup> His most prominent contribution here was to work for closer relations between the FKAD, the FAUD, and other communist groups, including the KAPD and KPD (though success was negligible here). Finally, Mühsam's position as a publisher and playwright meant his ideas were disseminated widely among German anarchist and, unlike Landauer; he had direct control over this dissemination.<sup>83</sup>

In conclusion, both Landauer and Mühsam had strong ties to the German exile community in Spain, both directly through political influence or more indirectly through their writings and martyrdom status. It is worth reiterating that these authors were members of an intellectual milieu that the Gruppe DAS and other anarchists could draw on, rather than a progressive chain of ideas, for the purpose of this study. However, some note should be made of the progression that is evident in the work of these three on the subject of the nation and nationalism. Beginning with Landauer, we see a certain affirmation of anarchism's roots in liberalism, as well as a more liberal view of the nation. This carried through to Mühsam, but with a limited infusion of *völkisch*-ness, reflecting the increase in such ideas among German nationalists in this period. In addition, Mühsam begins to sour on the idea of the nation, rendering it more inert than Landauer, and removing its status as a source of *Geist* for people. Finally, both Landauer and Mühsam represent a body of theory within German anarchism which stood in opposition to modern anarchists' dismissal of the nation as a compatible idea with anarchy. Both theorists also created the ideological space for the nation which the

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<sup>82</sup> Linse, *Organisierter Anarchismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich von 1871*, 127; Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 67.

<sup>83</sup> It is worth noting that the German's seem relatively unique in their naming conventions for their anarchist groups, in that they always included "Germany" in the title of their organizations. Compare this to the Spanish, whose groups had some geographic identifiers (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*, most notably), but never included a nation-state name in their titles.

German exiles in Spain used to motivate their constituencies in Barcelona. This space remained largely ignored outside studies of Jewish anarchism (such as Grauer's). Having thus created the ideological space in the period prior to 1933, the focus now shifts to the literal space carved out of Barcelona between 1933 and 1936 by the exiles themselves.

## II. THE GEOGRAPHY OF EXILE

The discussion in the first chapter centered on two points. First, the theoretical underpinnings of national consciousness within German anarchism, and secondly, the chronological period preceding the German anarchists' exile to Spain. In many ways, this discussion mirrored the longer historical and historiographical tradition of studying anarchism, which tended to focus on "big men" (and these histories almost exclusively focused on males) rather than on movements or events anarchists participated in or inspired.<sup>84</sup> In this chapter, how the membership influenced development of a national consciousness within German anarchism in Spain will be the primary focus of investigation. First, based on the unique existence of a theoretical national consciousness within anarchism (as illustrated by Landauer and Mühsam), from this point forward the discussion no longer centers on the theoretical possibility of anarchist nationalism. Rather, the discussion assumes the existence of a national consciousness and investigates that existence in the geographic context of Spain. Essentially, in the subsequent chapters, German anarchism is examined as a Janus-faced ideology, one that both rejects the nation and embraces it simultaneously.

This brings us to another important facet of the discussion of the German anarchists and the nation going forward: that this discussion must be nuanced. Beyond the level of "theory," either we see no explicit discussion of the nation, among the rank-

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<sup>84</sup> It would be unfair to implicate all theorists as lacking a concern for female anarchists and indeed the history of anarchism has done better than most historical fields in addressing "big women." Emma Goldman and Louise Michel have been recurring characters in many groupings of anarchist theorists. Still, doing slightly better than most in the field of gender is hardly saying much, especially prior to the 1980s, when most of the theorist-centric works on anarchism were written; Ruth Kinna, *Anarchism, Beginners Guides* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 17.



and-file or in the official movement organs, like *Die sozialistische Revolution*. They do bring up elements of Landauer's *Dreißig sozialistische Thesen* and there is some overt rejection of the abstract "nation," but largely they remained silent on the topic. However, one cannot simply take a Rankian approach to the subject and assume silence signifies lack of concern or rejection.<sup>85</sup> Instead the theoretical discussion of the nation and anarchism encourages the researcher to take an anthropological view of the subjects and assumes the German community in Spain treated the nation as a cultural taboo. This gets to the heart of the anthropological dimension of this text, because it defines the silence of the exile community in Spain as telling, rather than a simple absence of sources or lack of feeling. Later chapters discuss the "elite discourse" on the subject of the nation and nationalism, particularly their coopting of language and symbols to strengthen the German anarchist organizations in Spain. This discourse, however, occurred later, between July 1936 and May 1937, while the focus here is on the period from 1933 to 1936, preceding the Civil War itself. During this period, the geographic shift from Germany to Barcelona complicates the taboos that dominate the ideological interactions of a culture, in this case the German anarchist exile culture.

Alongside the anthropological concerns over taboos and relative silence in the source material, geography also comes to play a larger role in the story of the German anarchists here. While the previous discussions of Landauer and Mühsam noted their

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<sup>85</sup> Addressing von Ranke's holding of the letter of the source above all else. This approach is unhelpful in cases such as this because of the taboo nature of the subject as described here. This taboo was less present among the rank-and-file, but here we encounter the other problem with von Ranke's approach: that the silent subject is unimportant. When dealing with the bottom rung of societies hierarchies this is problematic. Most workers are silent in terms of sources. That is certainly true in this case, and it means we must find other means of addressing their worldview, ones that do not necessitate their explicit acceptance or denial of ideas. Instead, either we must ascertain their meaning in a roundabout way, or we must find meaning through some auxiliary social-scientific framework, one that will allow us to reconstruct the past in broader strokes than those preferred by history; Georg Iggers & James Powell, *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse University Press, Syracuse NY: 1990), 45-57.

geographic location and indicated how this location may have been somewhat influential on their theories, Germany remained a relatively abstract concept in that chapter. It was a generalized idea more than a constructed geographic location for both this author and the three theorists themselves. Going forward, however, Barcelona, Catalonia and Aragon, and Spain become far more significant than mere stages or concepts for the thought-experiments of anarchist philosophy. Instead, these geographic locales played significant roles in the story of the German anarchists. In particular, the urban geography of Barcelona and the political and cultural structure of Catalonia were central to the shift in German anarchism from an internationally focused movement to one with a greater national consciousness. From a movement perspective, geography becomes even more important when the origin-geography of many of the members of the Gruppe DAS is considered. While higher profile anarchists were involved in the Bavarian *Räterepublik*, the mass of anarchist activity in Germany following World War I occurred in Berlin and the Rhineland-Ruhr region.<sup>86</sup> In other words, these were not areas of traditionally significant locales for German nationalism. Berlin's cultural diversity and intense working-class activism sheltered the FVdG and FAUD from nationalistic pressures of places like Bavaria. Much the same was true of the Rhineland, where the SPD, KPD, and Zentrum outstripped nationalist parties in elections. Furthermore, the centrality of both regions in the stopping of the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch and the Ruhr insurrection, and the centrality of anarchists to these events, indicates at least some rejection of German nationalistic movements within Germany's anarchist community.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> See: Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918 bis 1923*, 288-318; This entire work goes into detail about the various anarchist sects and actions across Germany during the revolutionary period.

<sup>87</sup> Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918 bis 1923*, 288-318.

This contrast of German origins and Spanish terminuses tells us that either the route to Spain or the sudden arrival in a very alien context in 1933-34 had an important effect on the German anarchists. They did not leave Germany nationally conscious in any visible way.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, Hans-Manfred Bock tells us that the FAUD was an internationalist organization to its own detriment, focusing too much on combating the Red International of Trade Unions with the IWA and neglecting the building of their native anarcho-syndicalist movement.<sup>89</sup> We can see this internationalism further in the FAUD's "*antiwahl*" (anti-voting) pamphlet from 1932. Here, they declare "*Gegen den Nationalismus – Internationalismus!*" (Against nationalism – internationalism!), a sentiment reflecting the orthodox anarchism of the FAUD in Germany. This is further reflected in their bulletin on anarchist theory, the monthly magazine, *Die Internationale*.<sup>90</sup> Obviously, the FAUD in Germany, until the end, was internationalist, requiring us to wonder what changed between 1932 and 1933. The answer, it would seem, was geography. It was simple to be internationalist when surrounded by Nazis, but

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<sup>88</sup> Hans Manfred Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement: a Rediscovered Minority Tradition," in *Revolutionary Syndicalism: An International Perspective*, trans. Wayne Thorpe (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1990), 59–80; Andreas G. Graf and Dieter Nelles, "Widerstand und Exil deutscher Anarchisten und Anarchosyndikalistinnen (1933-1945)," in *Die Unsichtbare Front: Bericht über d Illegale Arbeit in Deutschland (1937)* (Berlin: Libertad Verlag, 1997) 176-177; Dieter Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalistinnen und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 33, no. 4 (1997): 500–518; Gerd-Rainer Horn, "The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language: Foreigners' Perceptions of Social Revolution (Barcelona 1936-1937)," in *Letters From Barcelona: An American Woman in Revolution and Civil War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 36-39; These texts all deal extensively with the period between 1930 and 1934, when anarchists left Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, often being pulled by the revolutionary fervor of their Spanish comrades and being pushed by the increasingly reactionary regimes in their home countries. None of these authors comment on the national feelings of the exiles, possibly for reasons discussed in the introduction, but more probably because visible national identifications did not exist upon their leaving.

<sup>89</sup> Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 73.

<sup>90</sup> "Schafft die Arbeiterfront gegen den Faschismus" (Freie Arbeiter Union Deutschlands (Anarcho-Syndikalistinnen), 1932).

became something else entirely when outside the comfortable cultural context of Germany.

Beyond these geographical shifts, these organizational structures, or lack thereof, are the other half of the story of German anarchism in Spain. Here again, nuance is important. While national consciousness seems not to have been of much legitimate concern among anarchists in Germany, at a base level it was of some obvious importance in Spain, since there the Germans organized themselves along national lines (or at least along cultural lines). This “cultural caveat” is included since the Gruppe DAS included Germans, Swiss, Austrian, Czech, and Baltic individuals, though the latter two groups seem to have at least been partially ethnic Germans.<sup>91</sup> However, the pan-German nature of the Gruppe DAS does not make it internationalist, and German history shows us that quite the opposite is true. Much the same can be said of the dual German-Jewish identity of several of the anarchists. A simple rejection of anti-Semitism by the Gruppe DAS was just that, a simple rejection. In many cases, there appear to be individuals of Jewish origin, but no comment is made on the matter, indicating the degree to which this seemed irrelevant to the Gruppe DAS and to the individuals themselves.<sup>92</sup> It could be indicative of internationalism or an inclusive nationalism, and in this case, the latter seems more likely.

This chapter focuses on the community of German anarchists, primarily in Barcelona. A significant portion of this group came to experience the heady early days

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<sup>91</sup> “Roster of militia volunteers in the International Section of the Durruti Column,” microfilm (Barcelona, 1936), Federación Anarquista Ibérica - Archivo de la Oficina de Propaganda Exterior CNT/FAI (1918-) 1936-1939 - Grupo DAS-Consulado Aleman, International Institute for Social History.

<sup>92</sup> “Liste der deutschen Staatsangehörigen in Barcelona,” microfilm (Barcelona, 1936), Federación Anarquista Ibérica - Archivo de la Oficina de Propaganda Exterior CNT/FAI (1918-) 1936-1939 - Grupo DAS-Consulado Aleman, International Institute for Social History.

of republicanism in Spain. These early-comers to Spain were engaged in what Dieter Nelles refers to as “revolutionary tourism.”<sup>93</sup> Much like Charles and Lois Orr or George Orwell, these individuals (and they were always individuals or couples; no significant groups transferred from Germany to Spain prior to 1933-34) came to see the success of Spanish Republicanism and the potential for further revolution in Europe’s most anarchist-leaning country. Nelles’ assertion that German anarchists, as well as others, were engaged in revolutionary tourism reads as somewhat dismissive of the intentions of this early cohort, a dismissiveness that seems very misplaced in the broader historical context. This is largely because these early visitors to Spain came for two reasons: one was to visit Spanish colleagues who had lived for a time in Germany during the Primo de Rivera period.<sup>94</sup> The second was out of a prescient belief that things in Germany were moving irreversibly towards a conservative or Nazi dictatorship, one that would lead to the suppression of all left-wing groups, including the small German anarchist movement.

To credit Nelles, the observational interests of the Germans in Spain, particularly between 1931 and 1933, lends their visits an impermanence that would continue to be problematic. The earliest German visitors intended to stay no longer than a few months and were ill equipped in many cases when the *Machtergreifung* trapped them in 1933. When Hitler and the Nazis began persecuting leftists, including the FAUD and FKAD (the German anarcho-communist federation), the anarchists knew that Spain was a good choice for exiles. Unfortunately their earlier, casual contact with the country left them

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<sup>93</sup> Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,” 501–502.

<sup>94</sup> Robert Kern, *Red Years/Black Years: A Political History of Spanish Anarchism, 1911-1937* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978), 153–154.

with shallow, if any, roots in Spain.<sup>95</sup> This compounded the problem further, given the Spanish anarchist isolationism towards other anarchist organizations and the international IWA.<sup>96</sup> This meant that help for incoming refugee anarchists, from Germany and elsewhere, was limited to requests for technical support in organizing and propaganda efforts, and rarely extended into help finding housing, employment, or social services. This lopsided relationship left many Germans without a well-grounded anarchist community in Spain. Instead, they turned to their national compatriots, who were concentrated in certain parts of the city and formed salient points of cultural and political contact. These points were central to the fertilization and growth of a sense of nation among the German anarchists in Spain.

### **Understanding the Geography of Exile**

Upon arrival in Spain, but before the outbreak of hostilities, the German community in Spain was its most stable geographically. After the civil war broke out in 1936, there appeared to be some condensing of the exile communities in general, both Germans and others. However, this is partly conjectured, as no hard primary sources exist denoting such movement, as existed detailing the locations of the pre-war residency distributions. What information we have on the para-war period indicates a tightening of exile communities, as noted by Charles and Lois Orr, and discussed in Dieter Nelles' work on the German exiles. Much of our understanding of this pre-war period comes from a document giving the names and addresses of "deutsche Staatsangehoerigen"

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<sup>95</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 503.

<sup>96</sup> Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution: The Left and the Struggle for Power During the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 240.

(German citizens) in Barcelona.<sup>97</sup> This source gives us little information on individual Germans, but it does help to understand some dynamics of the community. For instance, the group was predominantly single males, though some presumably family units do exist. These family units are mostly husband-wife/brother-sister pairs (there is no clear indication of which might be the case, so it cannot be assumed that they were all married pairs). However, some groups do appear to have children. Furthermore, cross-referencing the “Staatsangehoerigen” list with the militia rosters inferred that many within the community remained non-combatants when the Civil War broke out, though the reasons for this are also unclear.

### ***Anarchism in Spain, 1898-1936***

Anarchism came to Spain in the 1870s with acolytes of Mikhail Bakunin who, like their mentor, actively recruited among peasant societies they felt most apt to accept anarchism. This initial anarchist movement gained the most traction among the landless agricultural laborers in southern Spain, primarily in Andalusia, Murcia, Valencia, and to a lesser extent Extremadura.<sup>98</sup> These anarchists helped create the image of anarchism as a millenarian ideology, with an apocalyptic fanaticism rooted in the regions Catholicism.<sup>99</sup> While Jerome Mintz and Jeff Pratt illustrate this was not at all the case, and that the insurrectionary anarchism rooted in the region was seen as the best means of dealing with the *braceros* appalling working conditions, the idea stuck, nonetheless and colored the international anarchist movement as fanatical, violent, and irrational until the present day. This was not helped, of course, by the extremely violent and doomed Cantonist revolt,

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<sup>97</sup> “Liste der deutschen Staatsangehoerigen in Barcelona.”

<sup>98</sup> Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: The Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 131–132.

<sup>99</sup> Pratt, *Class, Nation and Identity*, 62.

supported by the nascent anarchist movement, especially in Valencia, which helped bring down Spain's first republic in 1873.<sup>100</sup>

By 1898 and the loss of Spain's overseas empire to the United States, however, the nature of anarchism in Spain had changed greatly. Industrialization had accelerated in the intervening years in the northern provinces of Catalonia, Asturias, and the Basque Country, creating a demand for cheap industrial labor in cities like Barcelona and Bilbao, and in the Astrurian and Cantabrian mines. This demand was filled by the same landless laborers who had initially adopted anarchism and many brought their politics with them to the industrial setting. Murcians and Andalusians living in the Barcelona *barrios* immediately began protesting against appalling working conditions in the textile factories and metallurgical works, protests only exacerbated by the malnourished, ill clad, and choleric Spanish troops returning from Cuba and the Philippines. With a weak parliamentary system (the two parties, Liberals and Conservatives, merely alternated power, their majorities secured by corrupt *caciques* or political bosses); there was only a weak social-democratic movement to challenge the anarchists on the left. This often led to open warfare between the police or military and the radical anarchists, who still maintained the insurrectionary tendencies of their *bracero* past.<sup>101</sup>

After an appalling second attempt by the Spanish government in northern Morocco in 1909, which saw the Spanish called up workers from the northern cities to serve in the Second Rif War, the tensions exploded between anarchist-oriented workers and the army on July 9 of that year. This event, known as Tragic Week, would be the first in a series of clashes that would eventually culminate in Franco's *Reconquista* of

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<sup>100</sup> Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 1–16; Pratt, *Class, Nation and Identity*, 62–65; Jerome R. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Indiana University Press, 2004) 23.

<sup>101</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 1–33.



Spain in 1936-1939. While the anarchists were soundly suppressed (for a time) by martial law in Barcelona, the new heart of Spanish anarchism, the long-term result was the reconstitution of the anarchist movement. The violent, insurrectionary element continued through secret societies that would eventually culminate in the creation of the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* in 1927. A new, less violent but equally insurrectionary strain came into existence in the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT) in 1910. The CNT played a central role in the aftermath of World War I, when Spain went through the *Bienio Rojo*, two years of strikes, insurrections, and street-violence which, along with the Spanish military disaster at Annual in 1921, gave rise to the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.<sup>102</sup>

The Primo de Rivera dictatorship marked a shift in the Spanish practice of the *pronuncimiento*, when officers would declare the end of governments in events that were one part coup d'état and one part political pageantry. Rather, Primo's rise gave the Spanish right a new taste for dictatorial power, which it could use to crush the revolutionary left. Furthermore, the rise of the Spanish socialist party (PSOE) since the Tragic Week gave Primo left-wing advantage against the anarchists, which he used to both stabilize his regime and to sow divisions between workers in the CNT and the socialist *Union General del Trabadorjes*. Much like the right's new taste for power and the clashes between the brutalized Moroccan colonial troops and the anarchists, these divisions would later resurface in the Spanish Civil War.<sup>103</sup>

In the later 1920s, Primo's dictatorship suffered a political setback that had toppled leaders from America to Germany: the start of the Great Depression.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 10–22.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Admittedly, it came to Spain earlier than other countries, but when the full weight of the depression hit in 1929, the dictatorship, always built on charisma and empty promises, collapsed. Its demise was sped along by renewed anarchist activism (the anarchist organizations had been officially banned in this period), allied with invigorated liberal and socialist republicanism. This culminated in the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931. The anarchists predicated their initial support of the anarchists for the republican PSOE-Liberal coalition on the promise of reforms to agrarian and labor laws. These proved to be insurmountable problems for the new government when they met with extreme, sometimes violent opposition from the right.<sup>104</sup>

The second election, in 1933, led to the victory of a right-wing coalition, led by Jose Maria Gil-Robles known as the CEDA. The CEDA victory led to the *Bienio Negro* (Two Black Years), when the meager gains of the PSOE-Liberal coalition were reversed and the right reorganized itself along increasingly fascist lines. The mounting pressures on the left led to the creation of a Popular Front coalition of Liberal, communist, and socialist parties, supported by the anarchists. Their victory in the December 1935 elections created fear among the CEDA and their allies, many of whom had not anticipated the left's recovery. This fear, coupled with the anarchists and revolutionary socialists' belief that a social revolution was imminent, created a violent atmosphere, rife with assassinations and street fighting between right and left. These events culminated in the abortive coup d'état, led by generals Sanjurjo, Franco, Mola, and Quiapo de Llano, on 17-19 July 1936 which devolved into the Spanish Civil War.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 78–86; Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 130–169.

<sup>105</sup> Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 229–315; Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 130–169.

Barcelona deserves special attention; given its centrality to both Spanish anarchism and to the story of the German exiles. The city's historical divisions reappeared clamorously with the fall of the monarchy in 1931. Before 1919, when Primo de Rivera disbanded constitutional politics in Spain, the emergent Spanish syndicalist movement and the industrial anarchist movement centered on Barcelona, the focus of the latter having shifted from the Andalusian peasant class.<sup>106</sup> These radicals controlled much of the cities "red ring" of industrialization, with some exceptions. Particularly, the socialist or republican leaning skilled workers of Gracia remained stalwartly opposed to the more violent and confrontational anarchists.<sup>107</sup> Ahead of the proletariat in the social hierarchy, the Barcelona bourgeoisie divided between the two Catalan nationalist-republican parties, the *Lliga* and the *Esquerra*, representing right and left republicans, respectively, with other members of the bourgeoisie finding a home among the Spanish national parties, particularly the Liberals who represented Spanish industrial interests.<sup>108</sup>

In 1919, carried on the wave of revolution sweeping post-war Europe, the Barcelona working classes began rioting, supported by the anarchists, syndicalists, and socialists. With a history already marred by uprisings and in an increasingly unstable political situation, the military subjected Barcelona to a brutal form of martial law that

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<sup>108</sup> The older party was the *Lliga*, and it eventually abandons all but a veneer of Catalan nationalism. Representing the richest Catalan's and the largest Barcelona industrialists, the party became increasingly wary of not only the Catalan and immigrant working classes, but also the *Esquerra*, whose ideology it viewed as a sort of "closeted" socialism. This was not an unfair categorization and shows how even in the most politically well-organized forms of nationalism within Spain, there existed a great, sometimes violent, variability. Originally, the *Lliga* was formed by Catalan businessmen in Barcelona wary of Madrid's less than capitalistic approach to economics, often at the expense of Barcelona's trade and industrial strength; Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 1-5.

eventually spread across Spain with Primo's coup d'état.<sup>109</sup> This coup led to the flight of a number of Spanish anarchists, many finding a home in Germany, then undergoing its own revolutionary period and with its own resurgent anarchist movement. This interaction between exiled Spanish anarchists and the German anarchist movement laid the groundwork for the reverse occurring, when the NSDAP drove the German anarchists into exile.<sup>110</sup> Following the fall of Primo's dictatorship, the Spanish anarchists returned to Spain, helping to elect the first republican Cortes with their tacit acceptance of parliamentary voting by CNT members and their active support of the newly liberated labor movement.<sup>111</sup>

In the subsequent two years, from the birth of the Republic in 1931 to the arrival of the German anarchists in 1933-1934, saw the increasingly radical anarchist movement rebel against the central government in Madrid. Broken promises for industrial and agricultural reform, as well as the regrouping of the political right under Gil Robles CEDA, precipitated this radicalization. In Barcelona, this led to the domination of the peripheral barrios by the CNT-FAI, particularly the new industrial barrios in Llobregat and L'Hopitalet. Also included were the traditional anarchist strongholds in Poblenou, Poble Sec, and Clot, which, while closer to the city center, still represent the "red ring" dominating most of Europe's industrial suburbs.<sup>112</sup> The radicalization and incubation of the FAI insurrectionaries in the outer barrios also led to a kind of revolutionary xenophobia, where the isolated and often besieged radical workers in these neighborhoods became suspicious of outsiders and ossified in their approach to

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 18-22.

<sup>110</sup> Kern, *Red Years/Black Years*, 173.

<sup>111</sup> Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 229–264; Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 58–61, 130–139.

<sup>112</sup> See fig. 5 at the end of the chapter for the location of Barcelona's "red ring" as well as specific barrios.

anarchism generally. Furthermore, from a simple geographic perspective in relation to the German exiles, many of these barrios were difficult to reach, designed as they were to be cut off from the city center where most of the Germans settled.

Much of the core support for this type of analysis comes from the work of two scholars in particular, Chris Ealham and Temma Kaplan, authors of *Anarchism and the City* and *Red City, Blue Period*, respectively. The interdisciplinary background of both (in anthropology and history) proved invaluable in understanding both the overall urban geography of Barcelona, as well as the particular position that this put the German exiles in while they lived there. In both cases, the authors divide their analysis between the “bourgeois” and “proletarian” cities. These distinctions were important, since the *barrio* a person lived in greatly influenced their social group. For example Poble Sec, home to “a sizable proportion” of the city’s workers in 1888, became the heart of a good deal of working class culture along the Paral·lel, which bisected the *barrios* west end.<sup>113</sup> By the same turn, the *L’Eixample*, to the northwest of the *Plaça de Catalunya*, was envisioned as a cross-class neighborhood; the reality is that it quickly turned into the new center of the bourgeois city and the center of bourgeois culture.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, while the *L’Eixample* remained firmly bourgeois and the center of their city, the working-class heart of Barcelona, culturally, if not politically, moved further afield as the city industrialized further in the 1920s. These socio-political demarcations only hardened further by the time the German exiles arrived in 1933.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 3.

<sup>114</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 25.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 85-101.

### **The German *L'Eixample*: Geography, Isolation, and the Nation in Exile**

The position of the Gruppe DAS headquarters seemed to isolate them from the majority of anarchist-leaning barrios in Barcelona (figures 3 and 5). Initially, this seemed to indicate the problem faced by the German anarchists, as this isolation could spawn the kind of nationalistic feelings seen later, in the Civil War period. However, that would appear to be the case if one is merely looking at these offices in relation to the Spanish anarchist barrios and the headquarters of other Spanish anarchist groups in the El Barri Gotic once the Civil War begins. When compared to the population distribution of German anarchists living in the city, however, this shift in locale makes more sense. While still at some distance from the apparatuses of Spanish anarchism, the September 1936 move from Pg. de Maragall to the Pg. de Gracia placed the Gruppe DAS, the political center of German anarchism, closer to the population it claimed to represent.<sup>116</sup> This allowed them to be both closer to their constituents as well as provide better services to the community as a whole.<sup>117</sup>

The patchwork of social and economic zones that were the Barcelona barrios discussed above presented problems even for the Spanish. What has been discussed in less detail is what this meant for internationals in the city. Some groups had a long cultural connection to the city, such as the Italians and the French, who had trade and political connections to the city stretching back to the Middle Ages. Even for anarchists specifically, both cultures had a strong connection with Barcelona, as Illegalists and

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<sup>116</sup> The Pg. de Maragall was in the Guinardo barrio, a bourgeois area, though the headquarters was on the margins of more working-class neighborhoods. The Pg. de Gracia headquarters existed firmly between the bourgeois *L'Eixample* and the more bourgeois parts of Gracia, just northwest of the *Avinguda Diagonal*; addresses gained from letters within the Gruppe DAS archives, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.

<sup>117</sup> "Liste der deutschen Staatsangehoerigen in Barcelona."; "Roster of militia volunteers in the International Section of the Durruti Column."

revolutionaries of various stripes had traversed the Pyrenees and the western Mediterranean at various points to avoid the state and continue their political operations.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, an Italian brought anarchism to Spain initially, starting the first Bakuninist students' clubs in Barcelona in the 1860s.<sup>119</sup>

Germans, however, had a less tangible connection to the city. While there was an industrial connection between Barcelona, which really began flourishing at the same time Germany did, during the second industrial revolution of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, socially and politically there was less connection. Overall, what those Germans in the city tended to be spies and military attaches that operated during World War I, or the even more abstract German involvement in the Spanish conflict in Northern Morocco in the same period.<sup>120</sup> In terms of direct connection between anarchists from both countries, as we noted in Chapter 1, the connection remained largely a one-way street, with the Spanish anarchists fleeing to relatively free Weimar Germany in the 1920s to escape Primo de Rivera.<sup>121</sup> This created a situation where only the well-travelled elite of German anarchism ever had any real contact with the Spanish, let alone visited Spain. It was in this alien situation that the majority of German exiles found themselves in 1933, when they began coming to Spain in any large numbers.

The core resource for this section is the list of German citizens compiled by the Gruppe DAS. Unable to find work, and with little assistance from their comrades in the

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<sup>118</sup> David Berry, *History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945* (Oakland, Edinburgh, West Virginia: AK Press, 2009), 204.

<sup>119</sup> Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 217.

<sup>120</sup> Sebastian Balfour, *The Deadly Embrace* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2002) 83-100; Balfour explores the German government's involvement in the Rif War as primarily a matter of supplying conventional weaponry to the Army of Africa. However, he also postulates, convincingly, that the Spanish used mustard gas on the Moroccan population, particularly in the period from 1924-1927, when the region became more or less pacified. His supposition, based on archival and archeological findings, as well as remembrances of Rif tribesmen, was that the German government supplied the Spanish with the gas.

<sup>121</sup> Kern, *Red Years/Black Years*, 173.

CNT-FAI, the German anarchists often faced a situation only marginally better than their situation at home in Germany.<sup>122</sup> Thus, the Gruppe DAS compiled a list of these individuals, along with their addresses, though the reason for this is unclear. We know these five-hundred people were affiliated with the Gruppe DAS, as their names appear on militia rosters, but it is unclear the exact purpose of compiling such a list. Nonetheless, it leaves the historian with an invaluable resource for understanding the geography of German anarchism in Barcelona. This brings us to another important point about this source. As it gives us names and addresses, but leaves us with no personal information, making it little more than a graveyard, telling us where people are in the historical record, but nothing about who they are. Furthermore, the list only deals with those in the Barcelona region. While roughly 14% of the addresses exist outside Barcelona proper, we have no way of knowing from the archival material available whether this 14% would grow if the study expanded to include areas outside Barcelona direct environs.<sup>123</sup> Finally, while the majority of the addresses could be found on a map, there were approximately 10% that for a variety of reasons could not be found (reasons including: the illegibility of the source, egregious misspellings of Spanish words by the original authors, or post-Franco renaming of streets).<sup>124</sup>

However, all of these problems aside, we are able to ascertain certain geographic and statistical facts about the Germans in Spain, based on this information. Before we delve into the geography, we should attempt to paint a fuller picture of the German

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<sup>122</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 515.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid; It seems unlikely that it would grow much, since the consensus seems to be that nearly all of the German anarchists operating in Spain based their operations in Barcelona, in a failed attempt to remain close to the power-center of both the revolution and their Spanish counterparts.

<sup>124</sup> "Liste der deutschen Staatsangehörigen in Barcelona."



community, based on the information we have. To begin with, nearly 28% of Germans living in Spain cohabitated, 78% of these cohabitants sharing a surname (indicating either blood or marital relationship), telling us that many of the German's in Spain came as individuals or couples, but rarely large extended families, in keeping with the idea of these individuals as exiles, rather than refugees.<sup>125</sup> In some cases, these are almost certainly parents with children, such as the Todtmann's on the Carrer Claret.<sup>126</sup> However, in most cases the cohabitants appear to be husband and wife pairs. Exploring the issue of gender further, we find that thirty percent of the individuals in Spain were women, most of whom either cohabitated or appear to be married to others on this particular list. We also find a number of women who appear to be married to militia members not represented in this particular list.<sup>127</sup>

All of these statistics paint a deeper picture of the German community in Spain, particularly in regards to gender. Unlike the International Brigades, who are the more famous, less revolutionary counterparts of organizations like the Gruppe DAS, we see from this list that the Germans in Spain were operating in a very different set of cultural circumstances. They were not merely on a military-ideological mission to defend Spain, but one could argue acted in defense of their community, much as the Spanish were. In other words, the fighting on the Aragon Front (the main theater for the German anarchists) was very much a localized fight, as it was for the other militiamen/women from Barcelona and its environs, a fight focused on defending Barcelona, their families, and way of life. Only abstractly was it to defend some greater idea of Spain or the Republic or even the Revolution. This is in opposition to the image of the Civil War as a

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

standard military conflict with clear fronts and rears and home fronts, an image fostered by the professionalized militarism of the Popular Army and the International Brigades.<sup>128</sup> It is not until the PSUC and the *Esquerra* begin forcing regularization on the militias in early-1937 that we see a disappearance of this sense of directly defending one's home and, as Orwell notes, Barcelona begins to become more bourgeois and disconnected from the conflict in Aragon.<sup>129</sup>

Finally, there is the direct geographic location of the Germans in Barcelona. Their location in the city of Barcelona is significant for two reasons. First, as hinted above, it makes sense of the Gruppe DAS shifting its headquarters to the Pg. de Gracia from the Pg. de Maragall. This shift was somewhat closer to the city center and the other revolutionary organizations operating in Spain (about one kilometer closer), but still left the group isolated on the outer ring of the city, in a neighborhood that Ealham tells us was either socialist or republican in its politics. However, when we note the locations of German anarchist residency in Spain (Fig. 3), we see that their new headquarters actually brought them into a very central location for their constituency. We discussed in the last chapter how the isolation of the headquarters of the Gruppe DAS undoubtedly fostered a sense of independence from the Spanish and international anarchist movements (the IWA's headquarters was also located in El Barri Gotic).<sup>130</sup> This close proximity to their core constituency (Germans, and especially those who were not well integrated into the Gruppe DAS because of the previous lack of affiliation with a German anarchist organization, per the DAS's requirements), only helped to strengthen their "German-

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<sup>128</sup> Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 302.

<sup>129</sup> George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 1980), 74.

<sup>130</sup> Figure 4; location of the headquarters based on official letters from Helmut Rüdiger, head of the IWA, in the Gruppe DAS archives, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.

ness”. In fact, Lois Orr, an American observer of the conflict in Spain from the revolutionary perspective tells us in one case that the Germans transformed the consul’s house into a home for “victims of fascism,” but elsewhere we see it referred to as the “*deutsches haus*,” because of preference for Germans living there.<sup>131</sup>

The second important point to note about the residency patterns of German anarchists in Barcelona has to do with class and proximity. As with the Gruppe DAS headquarters, the Germans in Barcelona lived some distance not only from the city center, but also from working-class barrios altogether. Forty-three percent lived north of the Diagonal, which bisects Barcelona, separating the more affluent north from the less affluent south, and a total of forty-six percent lived in the outer rings of the city, away from the main scenes of action altogether.<sup>132</sup> Lastly, as seen in figure 2, the city of Barcelona is socio-economically different from other European cities in that it has both a working class inner city, as well as an atypical distribution of industry outside the city. Rather than the industrial suburbs of Paris, London, or Berlin, Barcelona’s industry remained near the harbor in the city-center, and pushed out along the coast and west of Montjuic towards the Llobregat. This meant that the bourgeoisie settled in the suburbs like L’Eixample and later Sant Gervasi, or coopted more affluent working-class suburbs, like Gracia and Guinardo.

When we compare this overall irregularity with German settlement patterns, the picture is striking. The Germans tended to settle in more affluent areas, with only a tiny percentage settling in the working-class barrios. For example, 80 of the addresses available (or roughly thirty-six percent) were in L’Eixample (“the Extension”), conceived

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<sup>131</sup> Orr and Orr, *Letters from Barcelona*, 75; Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,” 513.

<sup>132</sup> “Liste der deutschen Staatsangehörigen in Barcelona”; See Also: Figure 5.

as an interclass neighborhood in a rather liberal-utopian way in the urban-renewal period sweeping Europe in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>133</sup> In reality, this neighborhood became the core of the Barcelona middle to upper class, geographically speaking. This is also true of the Sant Gervasi, Tres Torres, and Les Corts neighborhoods, where we find a further twenty-three percent of the Germans. By comparison, only about thirteen percent of the Germans lived in areas that could be considered working-class, like Poblenou and El Raval.<sup>134</sup> In two of the most working-class and most anarchist barrios, Poble Sec and Clot, there was no German anarchist residency. Finally, the one working-class barrio with at least some German residency was Gracia, a neighborhood of mostly “petty bourgeois” and skilled workers that leaned more republican or socialist (and later communist) than it ever leant anarchist.<sup>135</sup>

To illustrate further just how central this western part of the city was to the Germans, as opposed to the revolutionarily and geographically central El Raval and El Barri Gotic, we have to further institutional elements to add to the mix. While these were institutional, they were the kind of institutional structures that sprung up from the community itself, unlike the political organizations, like the Gruppe DAS, which were imposed, in a way, by the leaders of the German anarchist community. The first was a child-care center and school, located at Laforja 86, in the Sant Gervasi neighborhood. The center was advertised in *Die soziale Revolution* to all emigrants with children as a way to nourish the children “bodies and spirits.”<sup>136</sup> One will note the similarity of this

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<sup>133</sup> “Liste der deutschen Staatsangehoerigen in Barcelona.”

<sup>134</sup> Figure 4; “Liste der deutschen Staatsangehoerigen in Barcelona.”

<sup>135</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 47; Approximately 16.36% of the Germans lived in Gracia. The extraneous percentages can be found in Fig. 3.4, and can be best explained as other less significant (but still bourgeois) concentrations in places like Sant Antoni and Fort Pienc.

<sup>136</sup> *Die Soziale Revolution* (January 8), 2.

language to Landauer's, which seems more than coincidental given Landauer's frequent use of the term *geist* and commitment to education. Beyond this connection, the real value of this information about the child-care center is its location. While Spanish children saw a mixing of the barrios, if not the classes because of the revolution, the German sought to isolate its own children further from the Spanish in Sant Gervasi, a neighborhood that would have been at least ambivalent if not hostile towards the revolution.<sup>137</sup> This is not selfish or inherently nationalistic desire, but maintaining this isolation speaks to the preference of the Germans for keeping separate culturally and institutionally. We have no evidence for a fear of losing their children to Spanish culture, but this does represent a further example of attempting to isolate themselves from the Spanish to maintain a cultural purity for some future purpose.<sup>138</sup>

The second institution was the ASY-Verlag, a German anarchist publishing house operating under the auspices of the CNT's own publishing collective. The ASY-Verlag is responsible for the publication of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, as well as *Die soziale Revolution* and other assorted anarchist propaganda material aimed at Germans. Collectively run by the rank-and-file of the Gruppe DAS, and envisioned as an educational tool for all Germans, not just anarchists, it marks a crossover from the institutional structures of the German anarchists into the broader German community.<sup>139</sup> This reflects the desire to spread their ideas and desire for unity beyond their anarchist constituency, and to do this along national lines.

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<sup>137</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 47.

<sup>138</sup> This future purpose was undoubtedly the return to Germany and the fight against the NSDAP.

<sup>139</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 5.

Again, though, the pertinent information here is not the existence and purposes of the ASY-Verlag, but what it tells us about the continuing “nationalization” of German anarchism in Spain. While the Deutsche Informationendienst was located in the old city and represents the faction of the Gruppe DAS most closely associated with the IWA, the ASY-Verlag was located at Aribau 18, in the heart of the German region of the city in L’Eixample.<sup>140</sup> The Informationendienst began to fade as the primary means of disseminating information to the community as the more formal *Die soziale Revolution* came into being in January 1937, evidenced by the Informationendienst-published bulletin’s disappearance at that time.<sup>141</sup> This shows a shift, both in focus and geography, away from internationalism in this period, paralleling the increased expression of the nation among German anarchists in early 1937. In both these instances, small though they are, these institutional shifts represent a shift of mentality, away from internationalism and towards a focus on national organization.

The German settlement patterns reveal something more unexpected. While the initial hypothesis here was to look for extremely scattered and isolated German settlement, figure 3.4. shows that the Germans were actually quite concentrated, not just in terms of their density in a handful of barrios (eighty-two percent in five barrios), but also in density on particular streets. The individual German anarchist on streets such as Aribau, Muntaner, and Casanova could expect to meet not only other Germans (there were 5,500 Germans in Spain by late 1936, so the prospect was never that low), but other German anarchists.<sup>142</sup> So rather than finding a widely scattered population seeking ethnic solace at the now closer Gruppe DAS headquarters on the Pg. de Gracia, we instead find

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<sup>140</sup> *Die soziale Revolution* (Issue 2, no date) 5.

<sup>141</sup> *Deutsche Informationendienst* (Last issue).

<sup>142</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 51.

a veritable “German district” in some parts of the city, with the Gruppe DAS moving in to fill the perceived needs of a highly concentrated community of German anarchists.

### **Cultural Production and the Conditions of Exile**

Anthropologist Sally Faulk Moore tells us that every interpersonal interaction acts for the reproduction of culture, centered on the ideas of situational adjustment, regularization, and indeterminacy.<sup>143</sup> Through this formula, we see the importance of the geographic conditions of the exiles in Barcelona. Faulk Moore studied the dichotomy that existed within cultures between purity and impurity, and how a given culture dealt with the impurity, since by the very nature of the condition, impurities are taboo. Historians might dismiss Faulk Moore’s focus as primitive or religious, but anthropologically, she is dealing directly with the issue of ideology and its disconnect from daily life. She notes that there is little congruence between social structure and ideology and that social situations are “fraught” because of competing contradictory ideologies governing real world situations.<sup>144</sup> In terms that apply to the exiles in Barcelona: the realities of exile, economic stress, and increasing Spanish societal strife superseded the ideological concerns of anarchism and gradually shifted the priorities of the exiles. The reason the geographic distribution of the exiles is relevant here stemmed from the interpersonal nature of Faulk Moore’s concerns. The exile community needed

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<sup>143</sup> These terms, situational adjustment, regularization, and indeterminacy are defined thusly: situational adjustment refers to the way people of varying statuses within a community interact, describing how a lower status person will speak on a topic one way with a peer, but differently with a person of higher status or lower status; regularization describes how these modes of communication become encoded with repeated interactions; and indeterminacy describes how they never become wholly codified because of the variable and sometimes unclear relationships between the people involved; Sally Faulk Moore, “Uncertainties in Situations: Indeterminacies in Culture,” In *Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology*, Sally Falk Moore and Barbara Myerhoff, eds. Pp. 210-240. Reprinted in Sally Falk Moore, *Law as Process: An Anthropological Approach*, Chapter 1, pp. 32-53 (Cornell University Press: 1975), 39.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

to be compact and relatively geographically isolated, before such day-to-day interpersonal interactions could occur.

Of course, this brings forth the limitations of anthropology in this context, namely that such interactions are essentially unobservable in the historical record. On the level of official discourse changed, but popular discourse in this case is largely absent, at least prior to the Civil War itself. In place of this observable popular discussion of the nation, this Faulk Moore's work suggest that established interpersonal relationships produced a popular dialogue, unobservable to historians, but that spurred the official discourse seen in the documentary texts. In other words, the chronology here suggests that the establishment of an exile community created the conditions for a national consciousness to form, even among this nominally internationalist group. Obviously, this is an imperfect method, but one that nonetheless helps to explain how the German anarchists in Spain went from internationalist to a fault in Germany, but became increasingly nationalistic once in Spain, particularly as the official discourse, discussed later, articulated a nationalist feeling.<sup>145</sup>

### **Conclusions**

Between 1933 and 1936, nearly several thousand Germans, approximately 5,500, came to Spain to escape the Nazi regime. Most of these were of a leftist persuasion, including many communists, socialists, and anarchists. While numbers of anarchists are difficult to ascertain with any certainty, they probably numbered between 500 and 600 individuals and included families as well as those travelling alone. Of those people, most were unaffiliated with any anarchist organization within Germany, but became affiliated with the anarchist movement in Spain. The reasons for this are unclear, but this type of

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<sup>145</sup> This official statement on the nation, along with the popular discourse, is discussed in later chapters.



community became the core of German anarchist contributions to the Spanish Civil War, and fostered the sense of national identification that begins to emerge as the war and Revolution began in earnest in July 1936. The settlement patterns observed here, combined with knowledge of the coming sense of nationalism among the community, allows the reader to witness how geography and cultural production create a community based around both a shared political philosophy and a shared heritage. Given that many of the community members affiliated with anarchism only upon arrival in Spain, the importance of the ideology cannot be discounted. However, the growing sense of solidarity based on cultural similarity, seen in the coming chapters, reveals how complicated this sense of community was in practice.

### III. WAR, REVOLUTION, AND WORK

A number of historians covered the events of the Spanish Civil War over the course of the last seven and a half decades, with Helen Graham asserting that more was written on the conflict than any war besides World War I and World War II.<sup>146</sup> The first comprehensive overview of the subject was Hugh Thomas's *The Spanish Civil War* (1961) and since then Paul Preston, Stanley Payne, Gabriel Jackson, and Antony Beevor have written a number of notable works on the war in its entirety, as well as many specialized works besides.<sup>147</sup> These generalized works covered the Spanish anarchist and revolutionary story to varying degrees, with greater scrutiny given in later works by Preston and Beevor.<sup>148</sup> Contemporaneous to the revolution itself, George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* describes the struggle in ways still relevant to the history of the events generally, as well as to the situation of the German anarchists specifically. Fighting on the Aragon Front, stretching from the Pyrenees border with France to the Ebro River near Zaragoza, Orwell's experience occurred side by side with that of the exile militiamen (and women), though his acknowledgment of this occurs only briefly.<sup>149</sup> It was in this region, with the fighting centered primarily on the Ebro River and the town of Huesca in central Aragon, that the anarchist militias saw the majority of their combat.

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<sup>146</sup> Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), ix.

<sup>147</sup> The specialized works of interest here were covered in the literature review earlier in the chapter. Some that were not mentioned but that are of note are the works on gender and the conflict by Martha Acklesberg and Mary Nash (See bibliography).

<sup>148</sup> Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*; Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge*, Revised and Expanded Edition (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007) 119.

<sup>149</sup> Orwell's *Catalonia* does not go into extensive detail about the exile communities in Barcelona. However, there is some mention of the German volunteers with Orwell's unit. These soldiers appear to have been members of the *Kommunistische Partei-Oppeposition* (KPO), a splinter organization from the Weimar period associated with the POUM. The KPO militiamen were used as shock troops by the Spanish, for reasons that are not immediately clear; See Fig. 7, App. 1; Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 75.

This included the militia units associated with the Gruppe DAS, such as the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria and the German units in the Column Durruti, named after the Catalan anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti, killed in Madrid in October of 1936.<sup>150</sup>

The significance of the Aragon Front was three-fold. First, it was relatively stable for the first year of the war, with the *nacionales*’ forces being poorly equipped and undermanned and the revolutionaries who controlled the front on the Republican side being poorly armed and organized. Furthermore, the initial stages of the conflict left the town of Zaragoza, anarchism’s second city in Spain, in the hands of the *nacionales*. This weakened the anarchist position politically and militarily, depriving them of both manpower and the authority to take full control over northeastern Spain.<sup>151</sup> This created a soft spot behind the Republican lines, by allowing the *rabassaires* vintners in rural Catalonia to maintain their ties to the socialists, communists, and, above all, the *Esquerra*.<sup>152</sup> This political fragmentation between the anarchist leaning Aragonese frontier and Barcelona allowed non-anarchist politics to continue functioning, despite the impotence of those political units during the initial uprising and early phases of the war.<sup>153</sup> Finally, the main points of entry for most internationals coming to Spain prior to and during the civil war remained Girona and Barcelona, making the Aragon Front the closest action to much of the initial exile, refugee, and volunteer community.<sup>154</sup> This included the German exiles living in Barcelona as of July 1936, as well as those coming later, once the war began.

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<sup>150</sup> Dieter Nelles, “The Foreign Legion of the Revolution: German Anarcho-Syndicalist and Volunteers in Anarchist Militias during the Spanish Civil War,” n.d.

<sup>151</sup> Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 66, 78, 204–205.

<sup>152</sup> Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 93–107.

<sup>153</sup> Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 62–63.

<sup>154</sup> This changed to some degree when the Soviets created the International Brigades and began ferrying foreign volunteers through Barcelona quickly to the isolated Brigade headquarters at Albacete, in what is now New Castile.

The German anarchist exile community in Barcelona coalesced around Helmut Rüdiger, the IWMA chairmen, in 1934. The group worked to find Germans jobs and housing in the city, and to integrate them into the Spanish anarchist movement. As we will see later, the goal was never to assimilate the Germans, but simply to preserve their community in anticipation of the Nazi regimes' collapse in Germany. This led to the Germans never feeling completely comfortable in Spain, both because they were not attempting to assimilate, and because the Spanish were not interested in assimilating them. This meant that when the war broke out, the Spanish viewed the Germans with suspicion, not just as outsiders, but also as outsiders who might be associated with the NSDAP presence in Barcelona. This led the Gruppe DAS, by way of proving themselves to their Spanish comrades, to attack and seize the NSDAP headquarters and the German consulate in Barcelona.<sup>155</sup>

This seizure gave the Gruppe DAS, among other things, a more permanent residence for its members and a headquarters for the organization in the German consul's house in the barrio Gracia. They also gained a large number of NSDAP documents, which they would publish into the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* in 1937, attempting to prove that the Nazis were controlling events behind the scenes in Franco's Spain.<sup>156</sup> Besides these residential and propaganda efforts, the Gruppe DAS also formed a collective to employ their members, alongside the Spanish collectives that formed in the early, revolutionary days of the Civil War. Finally, as noted above, the Germans formed militia units, which participated in the initial fighting in Barcelona and then saw action on the Aragon Front. Presumably, these units eventually folded into the Popular Army in the summer of 1937,

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<sup>155</sup> Nelles, "The Foreign Legion of the Revolution: German Anarcho-Syndicalist and Volunteers in Anarchist Militias during the Spanish Civil War," 10.

<sup>156</sup> Rudolf Rocker, "PROTOKOLL Über Die Tätigkeit Die Gruppe DAS," September 14, 1936.

although by that point, the trail more or less “goes cold” as to the actions and whereabouts of the majority of the German anarchists.<sup>157</sup>

Losing track of the Gruppe DAS members was a result of the suppression of the revolution and the anarchists in May and June 1937 by the now Stalinist dominated Republic. Pressure from Stalin to root out reactionaries, fascists, and above all Trotskyists was well documented in Orwell’s *Catalonia*, and little more needs to be said of these events.<sup>158</sup> Essentially, the Stalinists in Catalonia and Spain at large sought to fulfill this desire by pursuing the formerly Trotskyist *Partido Marxista Unificacion Obrera* (POUM), a communist group allied with the anarchists. This culminated in street fighting during the week of May Day in 1937 and the subsequent imprisonment and murder of large numbers of POUM and CNT-FAI members, crippling both organizations.<sup>159</sup> These nominally judicial actions persecuted non-Spaniards in particular, and one witness, an American socialist named Lois Orr, believed as many as 1,200 Germans (not all anarchists) were imprisoned in Barcelona in this period, with an untold number killed.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Nelles, “The Foreign Legion of the Revolution: German Anarcho-Syndicalist and Volunteers in Anarchist Militias during the Spanish Civil War,” 13

<sup>158</sup> Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 121–179.

<sup>159</sup> Burnett Bolloten gave one of the best studies of the entire conflict between the mostly anarchist revolutionaries and the Stalinists. For more information, see: Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution: The Left and the Struggle for Power during the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 167-192.

<sup>160</sup> Orr and Orr, *Letters from Barcelona*, 196–198.

### German-Anarchist Organization

Shortly after arrival in Spain, the exiled elite of the German anarchist movement set about building political organizations within the refugee community.<sup>161</sup> It would be unfair to say that they set about organizing the community in a totalistic way. Rather, they were primarily concerned with the construction of the political apparatuses by which the community could remain anarchist. This harkens to the tabooeness of the subject of nationalism. While the goal was never to combat nationalism among the German anarchists in Spain, there was always an effort made to show that the Germans were nonthreatening to the Spanish populace.<sup>162</sup> When the revolution broke out, there were propaganda efforts, as we will see, to show that the Germans' priorities were in Spain and not elsewhere.<sup>163</sup> Nonetheless, the organizations created by the elite helped to foster a stronger sense of unity along national lines among the Germans, and some efforts were made to detach the exiles from anarchism altogether in favor of pan-German, pan-leftist solidarity against the NSDAP and fascism generally.

The four organizations examined below, the Gruppe DAS itself, then the IWA, the two German anarchist militia organizations, and lastly, the *Sozialrevolutionäre deutsche Freiheitsbewegung* or SRDF, represented the German anarchists in Spain politically, produced the majority of employment, propaganda, and political life, and

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<sup>161</sup> While the terms "elite" and "leadership" or "leaders" are used interchangeably here, elite is perhaps the most appropriate term, since the personal authority these individuals (i.e. Rüdiger, Souchy, etc.) exercised was limited. Much of their authority was derived from the positions they held and their personal charisma (especially in Michaelis' case).

<sup>162</sup> The very lack of concern about the possibility of nationalism among the German anarchist community can be attributed to three possibilities. One is simply that these sources have not survived, although this seems unlikely, since the loss of sources discussing how to deal with the problem would need to include the loss of sources discussing these sources. The second possibility is that there was, genuinely, no nationalist problem among the German community (something this author obviously does not believe). Finally, and most likely, the Germans were willing to ignore a manifestation of nationalism that benefited them.

<sup>163</sup> Rocker, "PROTOKOLL Über Die Tätigkeit Die Gruppe DAS."

offer the historians the most salient source material for examining the Germans in detail. Furthermore, key elites such as Augustin Souchy, Helmut Rüdiger, and Rudolf Michaelis revealed the tensions between the international and national concerns of German anarchism in Spain, acting as avatars of the organizations they led.<sup>164</sup> Finally this section will examine the fringe desire to abandon anarchism altogether in exchange for a more pan-leftist approach to the Revolution or a pan-German resistance to the perceived Nazi presence in Spain.

We have already discussed the basic history of the German organizations in Spain, and there is no need to revisit that. Therefore, the story began with the Gruppe DAS as the paramount organization dedicated specifically to German anarchism. Begun in 1936, the Gruppe DAS was centrally important for German exile anarchists because of its close ties to Spanish anarchism. The rank-and-file anarchist (discussed in Chapter 2) had a great deal of difficulty fostering a significant connection between them and their Spanish counter-parts and the DAS facilitated what relationships existed.<sup>165</sup> The second key was the Gruppe DAS's international connections, both through other Gruppe DAS organizations elsewhere in Europe and its relatively close connection to the IWA, weak though it was by this point.<sup>166</sup> This allowed the Gruppe DAS to act as an advocate for Germans both on the international stage and in Spain. Therein lay the central point of not only this chapter, but also this thesis: that the Germans in Spain were not only advocating for Spain or anarchism, they were advocating for themselves as Germans, with goals for

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<sup>164</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 504–506.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.; Graf and Nelles, "Widerstand und Exil deutscher Anarchisten und Anarchosyndikalist (1933–1945)," 74.

<sup>166</sup> Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 1979, 207; This connection with the IWA was facilitated by Helmut Rüdiger, the IWA General Secretary.

Germany and a set of institutions and cultural practices that drove a *German* anarchist agenda.

Even within the organizational structure of the Gruppe DAS, though, we see a significant concern about maintaining “German-ness”. While often framed as something prohibitive to German integration in Spain, “German-ness” was never something to be surrendered. Rather Germans acted as Germans, but as anarchist Germans, to show that not all of them were Nazi agents or sympathizers (and therefore sympathizers with the *nacionales* cause). This fear within the Gruppe DAS, which emanated from their propaganda, is one of the core features of the organizations motives towards their main constituency. In his memorandum on the July Days involvement of the Gruppe DAS in Barcelona, Rudolf Rocker notes that the Germans stormed the offices of known NSDAP members and the German consul as a sign of their loyalty to the Spanish cause and to illustrate that they were not those (the NSDAP) Germans.<sup>167</sup> Rudolf Michaelis, in his memoir, echoes this sentiment.<sup>168</sup> In both cases, the authors take great pains to show the German contribution to the Spanish cause. They both also take great pains to show that this was not done by making equal sacrifices to the Spanish in the fighting on the barricades, but by taking on the German counterparts to the *nacionales*, i.e. the NSDAP. By doing this, Rocker and Michaelis argued, the German anarchists redeemed themselves in the only way they could, by defeating their own fascists.

Of course, “German” was used in the broadest sense of the term. In reality, Gerd-Rainer Horn notes a handful of anarchists from Austria and Switzerland were also present

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<sup>167</sup> Rocker, “PROTOKOLL Über Die Tätigkeit Die Gruppe DAS.”

<sup>168</sup> Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria* “Erich Mühsam,” 4.



in Spain.<sup>169</sup> The Gruppe DAS became the primary advocate for these individuals as well, helping them cross the border and folding them into other German anarchist institutions in Spain. Thus, with the exception of the militias as we shall see, these other German's disappear.<sup>170</sup> Their identities, beyond speaking German do not seem to matter to the Gruppe DAS. This could be attributed to anarchist internationalism, but for the Gruppe DAS constantly identifying "German-ness" as a core attribute of the organization mostly through their propaganda. The group was German, the newspaper is for the German community in Barcelona, the militias allowed Germans to fight. Again we are confronted with the paradox of utilitarian "nationalism" for the sake of internationalism or real nationalism for the sake of German unity in a foreign land, even if the German's being unified were not actually German, by nation-state of origin, at least.

The third major feature of the Gruppe DAS was its exclusiveness. One needed to be both a German and a member of a German anarchist group in Germany (all dissolved under the Third Reich by this point) to join the organization.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, while the group helped Austrians and Swiss cross the frontier from France, they could not become members.<sup>172</sup> This exclusivity is important for two reasons. First, it illustrates to us that not one or the other, but both "German-ness" and anarchism were important to the elites of the Gruppe DAS. Again, this is partly a practical concern, that the membership be members of an anarchist organization in Germany helped to prevent infiltration by NSDAP agents in the months before the outbreak of revolution and the expulsion of

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<sup>169</sup> Horn, "The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language: Foreigners' Perceptions of Social Revolution (Barcelona 1936-1937)," 37, 46.

<sup>170</sup> The discussion of the militias below delves into this question in more detail.

<sup>171</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 500–501; Graf and Nelles, "Widerstand und Exil deutscher Anarchisten und Anarchosyndikalisten (1933-1945)," 83–84.

<sup>172</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 507.

(visible) Nazis from Barcelona. The fact that a member must also be German, however, tells us that the organization was not created for the purpose of integration but, again, for advocacy. The second important point to make about the exclusivity of the Gruppe DAS, however, was that it caused those who wished to fight for the revolution as Germans, but did not meet the criteria for joining the Gruppe DAS, to look elsewhere for their organizational means for helping the war/revolutionary effort.<sup>173</sup>

This expressed itself in two ways. For those individuals (relatively few, as it were) that could, there was some opportunity to join the CNT-FAI or other Spanish anarchists groups, such as the *Amigos del Durruti*. This organization (with a somewhat international in character) focused on a no-compromise approach to anarchism, which rejected the CNT's joining of the Caballeros government and any attempt to "professionalize" the militias.<sup>174</sup> German representation in such internationalist, orthodox anarchist groups was never more than a handful, however.<sup>175</sup> Far more commonly, Germans tended to broaden their ideological focus. We know from the works of other historians, such as Jennifer Guglielmo book *Living the Revolution*, on Italian women's traversal of the ideological spectrum back and forth from anarchism to socialism to communism and even fascism, that this sort of ideological transience was not uncommon, especially for anarchists.<sup>176</sup> Even Gustav Landauer, the most well known of

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<sup>173</sup> This is of course extremely important when one considers that both nation and anarchy were important to the Gruppe DAS. By excluding some people from their revolutionary efforts, the Gruppe DAS sacrificed some of their anarchism for their national identifications.

<sup>174</sup> Bolloten talks at length about the controversy over professionalization, which was largely viewed (and not incorrectly so) as a means of getting rid of the anarchists and other revolutionaries in the militias, and to build a force that could be turned on these radicals, once the Republicans won the war; Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 1979, 237–245.

<sup>175</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 516–518.

<sup>176</sup> Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*. (Chapel Hill: Univ Of North Carolina Pr, 2012), 7.

the German anarchists, began life as a Social Democrat and never completely shed his earlier parliamentary thinking.<sup>177</sup>

In Spain, though, ideological lines hardened quickly for Spaniards after the revolution began. While allied, there was a great deal of friction, for example, between the pseudo-Trotskyist POUM and the CNT-FAI, resulting in the CNT-FAI doing little to defend the POUM from the Stalinist PSUC until it was too late.<sup>178</sup> For Germans, however, this was never quite the case. While there was little transition between the far-left and the KPD, there was some connection between the SPD, anarchist, and opposition communist (KPO) exiles in Spain. In his book, *Spanien war ihre Hoffnung*, Patrik von zur Mühlen details these relationships, as well as the tension between the KPD and the rest, with a good deal of detail.<sup>179</sup> We see further examples with Willi Marckwald, an anarchist theater director, who worked with the Germans in the POUM, but was merely an associate of the Gruppe DAS, having never been a member of an official anarchist group in Germany, only a sympathizer.<sup>180</sup>

Eventually, the exclusionary mentality of the Gruppe DAS and the veritable xenophobia of Spanish anarchists caused some members of the Gruppe DAS to advocate

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<sup>177</sup> Linse, *Gustav Landauer und die Revolutionszeit, 1918/19: Die Politischen Reden, Schriften, Erlasse und Briefe Landauers aus der November-Revolution*; Gustav Landauer, "Revolution," in *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>178</sup> We also get a strong sense of this tension from George Orwell, particularly during the May Days. The militia setting does not bely this friction, but it is important to remember that the militias were far more segregated than the Barcelona streets. Rudolf Michaelis tells of fighting in proximity with the "Carlos Marx" Centuria, and Orwell's unit operated around Huesca with anarchist militias, but the units were never mixed; Bolloren, *The Spanish Revolution*, 1979, 236; Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*; Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria "Erich Mühsam"*, 18.

<sup>179</sup> Patrik von zur Mühlen, *Spanien war ihre Hoffnung: Die deutsche Linke im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg 1936-1939*, Dietz-Taschenbuch ; 12; Variation: Dietz-Taschenbuch ; 12. (Berlin [u.a.]: Dietz, 1985), 105.

<sup>180</sup> The Germans in the POUM seem, at least on the surface to be somewhat better integrated than their anarchist counterparts, either because the POUM had fewer members and a less established culture than the Spanish anarchists, or because Germans had been in leadership positions within the organization itself (rather than auxiliary groups) for some time. Furthermore, one has to wonder if the requirement of prior membership in a specific group was an irony lost on the German anarchists in Spain, or if the utilitarian desire to avoid infiltration merely caused them to ignore it; Orr and Orr, *Letters from Barcelona*, 120-121.

for a pan-German, pan-“leftist” organization. This eventually manifested in the creation of a small, short-lived group known as the Social-Revolutionary German Freedom Movement (*Sozialrevolutionäre deutsche Freiheitsbewegung*, SRDF). The SRDF was led, awkwardly, by the husband of a leader of the Gruppe DAS, and proposed gathering German socialists, anarchists, communists, and even opposition Nazis, under the same banner to fight more effectively for the revolution, and against the NSDAP.<sup>181</sup> This seems like a fairly transparent transformation of the Spanish revolution into a proxy war against Hitler, especially given the desire to include exiled NSDAP members and that the organization was created in the spring of 1937, after a fairly pronounced propaganda effort painting the NSDAP regime in Germany as the real enemies in the Spanish Conflict.

While the SRDF was short-lived, very small (even by the fairly generous standards on organizational size for this paper), and dysfunctional to the point of uselessness, it nonetheless represents a highly keen sense of identity in regards to the Germany for some anarchists. Had this organization been the product of the SPD or the KPD exiles in Spain, its nationalistic sympathies would be less surprising, but it originated from the Gruppe DAS and those affiliates dissatisfied with their conduct of the war.<sup>182</sup> It shows that as the conflict went on, more and more drove the community to Germanize, increasingly in opposition of the leadership of Helmut Rüdiger and Augustin

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<sup>181</sup> Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,” 516.

<sup>182</sup> Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,” 517-518.

Souchy, both of whom discouraged the SRDF for various reasons.<sup>183</sup> This progressive Germanization of the exiles in Barcelona illustrates the community's desire to use the Spanish Civil War as a touching off point for a triumphal return to Germany. It illustrated instead the abandonment of the international revolutionary model put forward by Rüdiger as a means to claim Germany away from Hitler, for anarchism. Instead, a red-and-black colored German ideology replaced the Rüdiger model, looking to use a pan-leftist ideology to motivate a pan-Germanic fighting force in the overthrow of the NSDAP regime.

Helmut Rüdiger headed the IWA from 1934-1940, when it collapsed in exile in (and along with) France at the outset of World War II, lacking member organizations and support from the scattered partisans fighting fascism in Spain, France, Sweden, and Germany itself. As we discussed in chapter one, the IWA had always been a heavily German influenced organization since its reconstitution in 1922 in Berlin.<sup>184</sup> The group was never headed by anyone other than German, and the focus of Germany's anarcho-syndicalist leaders on supporting the IWA had come at the expense of organizing their native FAUD effectively.<sup>185</sup> In some ways, the situation in Spain then is a reversal of this. The IWA, under Rüdiger (certainly no nationalist) becomes increasingly concerned with maintaining a focus on the problem of Germany for the international anarchist movement. While this is not inherently nationalistic, the IWA and Gruppe DAS worked closely, with Rüdiger having deep connection particularly in the ASY-Verlag, the

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<sup>183</sup> The most paramount of these reasons being that the organization was not anarchist. Hans Manfred Bock does detail, though, the tendency in the German anarchist movement to fear "uneducated" elements within the movement who might "cross-pollenate" with non-anarchist ideologies, something that probably was not left behind in Germany; Ibid.; Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement."

<sup>184</sup> Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 79–80.

<sup>185</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 513.

German anarchist publisher in Barcelona, and with the *Deutsche Informationendienst*, a publishing and broadcasting office serving German exiles (mostly anarchists) in Barcelona.<sup>186</sup> However, this closeness seems to have influenced Rüdiger's foreign policy with the IWA over time, and this in turn influenced his positions toward the German anarchist community around him. He became increasingly worried, it seemed, with their overt German behavior around the Spanish, and afraid they would lose focus of the larger aim, to turn the revolution in Spain into a revolution abroad, particularly in Germany.<sup>187</sup>

Augustin Souchy was the opposite of both the SRDF's pan-German approach and Rüdiger's German-internationalist approach. While both approaches carried tinges (or stains, in the SRDF case) of German nationalism in their overt concern of how to turn the Spanish situation into a boon for (their version of) Germany, Souchy believed exclusively in the integration of Germans into Spanish anarchism for its own sake.<sup>188</sup> This made him more or less the ultimate internationalist of the approaches. Souchy argued with Rüdiger for a stronger association with the Gruppe DAS and for better integration of the German militia units into the Spanish militia organization.<sup>189</sup> Much of this can be attributed to his background. Always involved in the German movement, he was also a world traveler who went to a multitude of countries before the Spanish Civil War and even more after. Souchy, unlike Rüdiger or Michaelis, was born on the border between the German and Russian empire, on the periphery, rather than in the center near Berlin. He was a polyglot

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<sup>186</sup> Kern, *Red Years/Black Years*, 87.

<sup>187</sup> Letter, "Helmut Rüdiger to Emma Goldman," February 1937; Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige," 506.

<sup>188</sup> Nelles discusses this at length in: Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg", 510; and we see further evidence in Souchy's own writings and in his correspondence with Emma Goldman; Letter, "Emma Goldman to Augustin Souchy," December 1936.

<sup>189</sup> Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 273.

who was as likely to write in English or Spanish or Russian as German.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, while he probably had the closest relationship with individual Spanish anarchists of anyone involved in the German movement, he spent the least amount of time in Spain between 1934 and 1937.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, he was likely to be in the Catalanian or Aragonese countryside during his visits, rather than in Barcelona, the center of the Spanish movement and the German community.<sup>192</sup> If the SRDF represents the desire to Germanize fully the anarchist exile community in Spain, and Rüdiger represents the middle-road of German focus for international revolutionary gain, then Souchy sits on the other end of the spectrum, abandoning Germany in favor of his anarchism.

Finally, we come to the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria, the last political institution of anarchist “German-ness” in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Again, we see the transitional nature of these organizations in the forming of the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria, as well as the official homogenization of the Germans in Spain.<sup>193</sup> The “Erich Mühsam” Centuria was one of two German militia units formed after the July Days in Barcelona.<sup>194</sup> The other was a combined French and German unit that fought in the Durruti Column (the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria was in the Ascaso Column, named after Durruti’s friend Francisco Ascaso, who was shot and killed in a suicidal charge on the Artikazana

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<sup>190</sup> This is abundantly clear throughout his correspondence with Emma Goldman, Helmut Rüdiger, and Michaelis; Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige,” 509.

<sup>191</sup> Agustín Souchy, “*Vorsicht, Anarchist!*”: *Ein Leben für die Freiheit ; politische Erinnerungen* (Darmstadt; Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1977), 134.

<sup>192</sup> Souchy’s writings on the peasant collectivization in Aragon exemplified this, especially in conjunction with his letters to Rüdiger, Goldman, and Rocker, which emanated from France, London, and Stockholm, but, rarely from Barcelona or Madrid.

<sup>193</sup> The cultural homogenization that occurred in a “grass-roots” way within the exile community is discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>194</sup> The “July Days” of course being the period after 18 July 1936, when the Revolution broke out in response to the attempted coup d’état. This should not be confused with the “May Days” the following year when the Stalinist suppressed the Revolution, beginning on 1 May 1937.

Barracks in Barcelona on 21 July 1936).<sup>195</sup> We see in the records between both units an interesting phenomenon. On the one hand, we have the “Mühsam” Centuria, mentioned rarely in the Gruppe DAS archival records. The other unit, more widely recorded, however, is never named, but merely indicated as the “Germans in the Durruti Column.” The front-page article of the very first issue of *Die soziale Revolution* told of a single unit, although what the unit's name or other identifiers remains unknown.<sup>196</sup> This was unusual since militia units, especially foreign ones, were named after important figures in anarchist history, usually associated with the home-country of the militiamen in the unit (hence, the “Mühsam” Centuria).<sup>197</sup> While the Spanish often filled out militia units, amalgamating various internationals in the same way seemed to work poorly. It is possible that the Durruti Column’s Franco-German unit's lack of a name was due to an inability to get along.<sup>198</sup>

Furthermore, this brings us to the issue of classification by the Germans within the militia. Spanish anarchists composed roughly fifty-percent of the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria, along with a few other nationalities, mostly Swedes.<sup>199</sup> This is admitted to in Rudolf Michaelis’s memoir.<sup>200</sup> Michaelis, however, leaves out that many of the groups “German” members, were only German insofar as their ethnicity. Based on what we know about the “Germans” in the International Section of the Durruti Column, these included a number of Swiss, Austrian, and *volkdeutsch* from the Sudetenland and Upper

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<sup>195</sup> “Im kampf um die Freiheit,” *Die soziale Revolution*, January 1, 1937, 1 edition; Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria “Erich Mühsam,”* 13.

<sup>196</sup> “Im kampf um die Freiheit.”

<sup>197</sup> Antony Beevor gives good accounting of this naming practice in his *The Battle for Spain*, noting that an American Sacco and Vanzetti Column also appeared; Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 227.

<sup>198</sup> The names were chosen democratically, so poor unit cohesion between French and German members could have led to the lack of a name; Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 148.

<sup>199</sup> Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria “Erich Mühsam,”* 17.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.



Silesia.<sup>201</sup> Yet, rather than make the same sort of effort to classify various militia members as one or another German nationality, the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria is recorded sparsely and exclusively as German. We can also not attribute this to the inherently more ethnically diverse unit in the Durruti Column, since the French members are never mentioned in dispatches, indicating the Gruppe DAS’s sole interest in what they see as the German membership.<sup>202</sup> As far as the Gruppe DAS is concerned, the Durruti Column’s hybrid French-German unit is German, and treated it as such in Gruppe DAS records. Without better records of the “Mühsam” Centuria, we are left with only the remembrances of Michaelis and his letters to Helmut Rüdiger and the Gruppe DAS between October and April 1936-1937, and in neither case does he make mention of any Germans other than those from Germany “proper.”<sup>203</sup> Again, it seems unlikely that there were not Swiss, Austrian, or other Germans in the Centuria, since a sizable percentage of the Durruti Column’s Germans were not from Germany.<sup>204</sup> Here, as with the ethnic Germans being placed under Gruppe DAS “protection” as they crossed the frontier, we see the German anarchists laying claim to their Austrian, Swiss, or *volkdeutsche* fellows.<sup>205</sup> Here, though, the claim is less passive or benign, coming across instead as the “Mühsam” Centuria and the Gruppe DAS erasing preferred national identities.

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<sup>201</sup> “Roster of militia volunteers in the International Section of the Durruti Column.”

<sup>202</sup> *Die soziale Revolution*; Gruppe DAS sources on the militia; The disparity in between the propaganda discussion about the militia and the discussion within the Gruppe DAS is interesting in this regard, since the latter makes no mention of the French *milicianos*, while the former discusses the Germans and French as a single unit. This seems to lend some support to the idea that, while one could not ignore the French in the propaganda material since militiamen might have read the account and thought the lack of their French comrades odd, the Gruppe DAS felt no such compunction and maintained their strictly German focus.

<sup>203</sup> Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria “Erich Mühsam,”* 10.

<sup>204</sup> Unlike in the previous chapter, where we will see some more exact figures on the German anarchist community in Barcelona, such a precise list does not exist here. With the comings and goings of casualties, deserters, and those on leave, what we have given only a sense of the ethnic composition of the Durruti Column’s Germans, not a precise figure.

<sup>205</sup> Horn, “The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language: Foreigners’ Perceptions of Social Revolution (Barcelona 1936-1937),” 42.

The above organizations have three important things in common. They were meant to represent Germans anarchists or sometimes Germans in general, but never just anarchists. Next, the groups were all led by leaders of Germany's anarchist movement, but were multi-national in terms of their Germans, and multi-ethnic even beyond that (including, as they did, Spaniards, Catalans, and Swedes, among others). Finally, these organizations were fragmented in their approach and incapable of working together at times, let alone with their counterparts in the emigrant community. This unity through disunity only strengthened their points of commonality, namely the more nationally motivated commonalities: German advocacy and German leadership. If they could not agree on their endgame or execution of the revolution, they certainly agreed on their constituency.

### **Opportunity and Xenophobia Behind the Barricades**

During the Civil War, employment opportunities opened for German exiles that did not exist prior to July 1936, when internationals had difficulty finding work. Compounding this initial difficulty and still slightly hindering efforts begun in 1936 was the mistrust and dislike of foreigners, especially Germans, within the Spanish anarchist movement. Unlike the militias and German cultural centers described above, which existed largely independent from the Spanish anarchists, the work collectives established by the German anarchists required far more technical support from the native CNT. This became increasingly true with the outset of hostilities, as the CNT took over much of the industrial production in the city. Because of this dependence, the issue of Spanish xenophobia and German work became linked in this period. This creates the opportunity

to both discuss the economic life of German anarchists in Spain, as well as the synchronic situation created by Spanish anarchists' dislike for the exiles.<sup>206</sup>

Earlier, it was noted that the Spanish anarchists viewed themselves not only as the most powerful and relevant exponents of European (and possibly even world) anarchism, but more-or-less as the only viable catalyst for anarchist revolution. The outbreak of revolution in Spain only reinforced this, serving to prove the Spanish anarchist movement correct in its vision of, "We will create the revolution in Spain; Copy it and there is your international revolution."<sup>207</sup> The failure of any viable alternative to Spanish anarchism internationally left foreign anarchists in Barcelona in a position of weakness, one that they could only seek to equalize through technical aid and the hope that the Spanish version of "international revolution" would prove correct. This was certainly the case for the Germans, who were particularly weak due to the more-or-less thorough destruction of their native movement in 1933, and the essential toppling of the former heads of international anarchism, namely Augustin Souchy and Helmut Rüdiger. Both Souchy and Rüdiger were still quite powerful, with many international connections and control of the IWA (respectively), both things that the CNT-FAI needed in the fight against the *nacionales*. Nonetheless, Souchy and Rüdiger aside, the Spanish anarchists had little use for the less influential German anarchists, aside from using them as soldiers.

Here we can refer again to Rudolf Michaelis. In two letters written nearly a year apart in 1934 and 1935, we see how little use the Spanish had for the Germans.

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<sup>206</sup> For information on the organizational structure of the CNT collectives and its control over work during the revolutionary period of the civil war, see: Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 175.

<sup>207</sup> This particular opinion from the CNT came during a conference of the IWA in Paris in 1932. At this point, the German FAUD was in the process of going into exile, while the Spanish movement, recently released from their own exile, felt in a position to dictate terms to their international comrades; Kern, *Red Years/Black Years*, 142; Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 1979, 155; Brennan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 146.

Michaelis speaks of being hungry and tired and spending a fair amount of time wandering, homeless and with little else to do. We can see in Michaelis' situation the connection between joblessness and Spanish xenophobia. Lest there be some confusion about this, he writes to Rocker that he is "Allein jetzt" or alone now, going on to say that this is nothing particularly new.<sup>208</sup> In these early days, it is apparent that the German community, as Nelles noted, was not large or well organized.<sup>209</sup> It is clear from Michaelis condition that the Spanish did little to ameliorate this. The tone of this letter is strikingly different to the ones Michaelis would write to Rüdiger during the war, when he was acting political officer in the "Erich Mühsam" Centuria.<sup>210</sup>

In the case of the militias, like the "Mühsam" Centuria, the Spanish reversed their usual chauvinism and decided that the Germans were obvious shock troops for the militias. Orwell describes this in *Homage to Catalonia*, noting that it seemed founded on nothing more than the fact they were Germans, and perhaps, therefore, were more warlike than the Spanish or other foreigners.<sup>211</sup> This may have also been linked to the "Erich Mühsam" Centuria's procurement of a machinegun from the consular facilities in Barcelona, which put them in a position of prestige among the poorly armed militias.<sup>212</sup> All this aside, however, it left the Germans in the uncomfortable position of being expected to die for an organization (the CNT-FAI) that wanted to have little to do with

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<sup>208</sup> Letter, "Michaelis to Rüdiger" (1934).

<sup>209</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 511.

<sup>210</sup> Letter, "Rudolf Michaelis to Helmut Rüdiger," (undated).

<sup>211</sup> Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 49.

<sup>212</sup> Antony Beevor goes so far as to identify the Mühsam Centuria as a "machinegun company," an identification that is misplaced, since no such military organization existed in the independent militias, beyond some strategic and tactical planning; Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 278.

them otherwise.<sup>213</sup> In an effort to ameliorate this, and with only the barest assistance from the CNT-FAI, the Germans decided to contribute to the war-effort and lighten their economic burden by creating their own collective. Constituted as a leatherworking and saddle-making operation, it offered employment for a number of Germans who would otherwise have had no means of sustaining themselves.<sup>214</sup>

This collective exemplified not only the Germans working towards internationalists aims, but it fulfilled the same function as the ASY-Verlag and the childcare center. In essence, it helped to reinforce the cultural and even physical isolation of the Germans away from their Spanish counterparts. Even here, with the most overtly non-national enterprise, Germans still managed to put themselves in a cultural “echo chamber.” Certainly other Germans found some work outside the collective, but it was formed in November of 1936 explicitly to put Germans to work, and so it did.<sup>215</sup> Now we are able to see how the Germans in Spain managed to live, work, and even fight in some isolation from the Spanish counterparts, reflecting the geographic isolation of chapter 2. This was driven by the necessity of the Spanish desire to deal with foreigners as little as possible, as well as by the material and cultural needs of the German community.<sup>216</sup> This factor, of employment segregation driven by Spanish xenophobia and practical material needs, helped to reinforce the “German-ness” of those affiliated

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<sup>213</sup> Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,” 510.

<sup>214</sup> *Die Soziale Revolution*, Is. 10, 1937.

<sup>215</sup> Horn, “The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language: Foreigners’ Perceptions of Social Revolution (Barcelona 1936-1937),” 33; “Liste der deutschen Staatsangehörigen in Barcelona” Aside from the various Germans working in propaganda, the militias, and a smattering of other efforts, such as Willi Marckwald’s theatrical endeavors, most Germans worked in the collective or were unemployed, hence those who were under the suzerainty of the Catalan state (including Marckwald for a time).

<sup>216</sup> Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,” 506; Horn, “The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language: Foreigners’ Perceptions of Social Revolution (Barcelona 1936-1937),” 17.

with the Gruppe DAS in a way that was unexpected and unintentional for the Germans. Nonetheless, this reinforcement served their purposes, both in terms of aiding in the Spanish conflict and the apparent goal of maintaining some sort of independent identity for future political or revolutionary purposes at home in Germany.

## V. HOW LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS CONSTRUCT THE NATION

With the community firmly established by 1936, and the exiles' political and cultural institutions began forming, the German anarchists began a project of homogenizing the various ethnic factions under their purview in Barcelona. While the geographic argument centered on an understanding of the geography of Barcelona, this project of homogenization became very much about erasing geography. Many members of the militias, as well as the affiliates of the Gruppe DAS (though not the members), were not nationally German. However, the motivational discourse within the community centered on German issues, not Austrian or Swiss ones. This meant that a sort of national homogeneity needed to be reached between the related but distinct cultures within the community. Furthermore, the sources show that the community was concerned with the preservation of and education in their German heritage, as much as they were with the propagation of their anarchism. In other words, the type of linguistic constructions now familiar to historians, constructions that aimed to label and homogenize culturally at the expense of anarchist internationalism/universalism.<sup>217</sup> While the Spanish anarchists wholly left aside the national question to the Catalan *Esquerra* and the Popular Front, the internationals in Spain, particularly the exiles, were interested in the preservation of their own versions of German, Italian, or French culture. For the exile Germans and Italians,

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<sup>217</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006) 75; Faulk Moore is also important here, as a great deal of the homogenization, and the two-way dynamic that it was, reflects the situational adjustment seen in chapter 2; Sally Falk Moore, "Uncertainties in Situations: Indeterminacies in Culture" In *Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology*, Sally Falk Moore and Barbara Myerhoff, eds. Pp. 210-240, Reprinted in Sally Falk Moore, *Law as Process: An Anthropological Approach*, Chapter 1, pp. 32-53. (Cornell University Press, 1975) 47.

there was a much more dire need to preserve their own breed of anarchism, indeed a national anarchism, as it was being eliminated in their own countries.<sup>218</sup>

This propagation of “national anarchism” for the Germans presented in two distinct ways, though it is doubtful these were exclusive to the Germans.<sup>219</sup> First, the Germans were particularly interested in the preservation of a distinct community, particularly through language, seen particularly in their publication of German newspapers. Secondly, Germans’ adhered to a symbolism that can best be described as a hybrid of anarchist and nationalist, but rarely one or the other. This is an extension of Jeff Pratt’s assertion that the building of class-based and nation-based movements happen in similar ways, contra (Pratt notes) to the assertions of authors like Gellner and Anderson.<sup>220</sup> Indeed, this assertion that the symbols of German anarchists in Spain were hybrid anarchist-nationalist symbols is more than Pratt himself argues. However, outside their native context (Germany), the German anarchists in Spain saw their traditional class based symbolism and hagiography take on a second, equal meaning as a rallying point for Germans culturally. Emanating largely from the rank-and-file, this symbolism is neither the theoretical possibility of a unified anarchism and nationalism, nor the political negotiation of anarchy and the nation seen previously. Instead this symbolic life represented the community’s emotional and psychological dealings with its exile in Spain

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<sup>218</sup> Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, 17.

<sup>219</sup> These were probably common to many exile groups in Spain, but since the Germans are the focus of this paper, their experience will be the focus here. For example, David Berry’s *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945* spends some time on the Spanish Revolution and reveals similar national preferences towards French anarchism over international anarchism that precipitated this study (in the German case, of course); David Berry, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945* (Edinburgh, AK Press:2009) 265-275.

<sup>220</sup> Pratt, *Class, Nation and Identity*, 3–7.



and alienation from the German homeland, while they simultaneously dealt with their existence in a relatively friendly political context.<sup>221</sup>

### **Anarchists into Germans**

In terms of language, this, as much as the geographic segregation of German anarchists, acted to isolate Germans from Catalans and the Spanish in Barcelona. This was in part, again, due to the low degree of education in Spanish among the Germans (let alone knowledge of German between the Spanish), but also due to a conscious effort, not only by German elites and organizations, but also by the community to relegate Spanish to the language of communication with outsiders. While cooperation and coordination with local anarchists was important, little attempt was made socially to integrate the communities.<sup>222</sup> This was most evident in the interest in the use of German as the primary means of communication within the community. While this can be seen (and should be seen, in part at least) as a matter of convenience, this was not the whole reason for the use of German as the primary means of communication between Germans. In his *“Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,”* Dieter Nelles tells us of the ideological conflict between Helmut Rüdiger and Augustin Souchy, where Souchy favored closer ties with the CNT, while Rüdiger wished to strengthen the role of the IWA over the constituent groups, particularly the CNT. This led to a situation wherein Rüdiger ended up defending

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<sup>221</sup> It should be noted here that the use of German symbols could also be alienating to other German-speakers (from Austria, especially), and to Scandinavians and non-German Central Europeans that were often lumped into Gruppe DAS-run groups for the convenience of the FAI-CNT.

<sup>222</sup> This is largely evidenced by the lack of visible effort in the sources available. At the elite level, coordination occurred, but it was often limited to just that, the elite level. There is virtually no evidence of connection beyond the individual level between Germans and Spaniards.

German interests, a fact exemplified by his preference for communication in German, while Souchy tended to communicate in Spanish, even within the Gruppe DAS.<sup>223</sup>

One particularly striking example of the homogenizing influence of German language among those under the Gruppe DAS umbrella was Martin Gudell. He also offers us a glimpse into the way that thoughts on national identity were relatively similar across political divides in this period. Gudell was of mixed German and Lithuanian descent.<sup>224</sup> Certainly close to the elite of the Gruppe DAS, he was outside the small circle of figures described previously. His correspondence in Spain was also quite extensive and he communicated in no less than four languages, a fact that in and of itself makes him more elite than the average metalworker coming to Spain, but also leaves us with far more of a record than most of the regular members of the Gruppe DAS. While German, Spanish, and some English feature throughout his official writings, much of Gudell composed much of his personal correspondence in Lithuanian, mostly to family and friends.<sup>225</sup> While this could merely be a utilitarian desire to communicate with ease to his family, it is hard to believe that he could not have done this in German, had he identified as such. However, to ease communication with his German colleagues, he did not choose to write in a neutral language such as English or Spanish, both known by the elites of the Gruppe DAS, but instead he wrote in German.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 516–518.

<sup>224</sup> The knowledge of Gudell's heritage comes from two sources. One is that he was capable of communicating in both German and Lithuanian, something we can see in his correspondence. Second, we have the IISG archival guide for his papers. While sparse in information, they do note that he was Lithuanian, though he is further categorized as German; International Institute for Social History, "Martin Gudell papers" (accessed on 5 January 2013) <http://www.iisg.nl/archives/en/files/g/ARCH00529.php>.

<sup>225</sup> Martin Gudell, "Letter," October 1936, Martin Gudell Papers, International Institute for Social History.

<sup>226</sup> Gudell to Emma Goldman, "Letter," November 1936, Martin Gudell Papers, International Institute for Social History.

It is difficult to say how much this influenced Gudell's national feeling or how it may have influenced others coming from the fringes of German's geographic space in Eastern and Central Europe. It is possible, though, to identify how this has affected the understanding of which Gudell was, and by extension, how he was viewed by the German anarchist elite. While these personal writings indicate someone of Baltic heritage with an affinity towards the Lithuanian language, historical records repeatedly identified Gudell as German, be it the writings of Dieter Nelles or in the archival guides to the Social History archive in the Netherlands.<sup>227</sup> This could be due to the Helmut Rüdiger, the German leader of the IWA, helping to deposit many of the group's records in Amsterdam, following the Spanish Civil War.<sup>228</sup> Furthermore, the ahistorical nature of these national labels speaks to the broader difficulty in dealing with the Gruppe DAS and their national feelings and identity while in Spain. Often, as explored previously, the organization of Germans into nationally defined groups was about convenience and community, as well as politics. However, the cost of joining a community in this way, at least in Gudell's case, was the homogenization of his identity into a broader collective. This parallels the usefulness of a national consciousness for states in their struggle to centralize their territory, as described by Gellner.<sup>229</sup> Localized identities become lost as individuals take on an identity associated with a broader collective, something counter to our conception of anarchy, but completely in line with the function of the nation.

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<sup>227</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 507.

<sup>228</sup> The official circumstances of how the Gruppe DAS papers found their way to Amsterdam is unknown. The FAI archives, which they are currently a part of, were brought over piecemeal at the end of the Civil War. It is unclear whether the Gruppe DAS archives were a part of this, but it is known that Rüdiger helped with the transportation of the FAI archives.

<sup>229</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 37.

This issue of homogenization of those who could be termed marginally German brings us to another aspect of the relationship between language, community, and nation among German anarchists in Spain: the use of German as the *lingua Franca* for communicating with non-Germans associated with the Gruppe DAS. We find two examples of this in the historical record. First, we can look to the letters of Charles and Lois Orr, Americans who observed the conflict from the revolutionary perspective. The Orr's were members of a dissident communist splinter group in Louisville, Kentucky, and came to Spain when the revolution broke out to witness the goings-on first hand.<sup>230</sup> Though associated with the POUM, they had many friends and acquaintances among other leftist groups, including the anarchists. One of these was Willi Marckwald, a thespian from Berlin who wanted to "make a theater" in Barcelona. At one point Charles Orr notes that the time Lois spent with Willi was greatly increasing her skill with German, though at the detriment of her Spanish.<sup>231</sup> Gerd-Rainer Horn notes elsewhere in his published edition of the Orr's letters, that this was not merely the Orr's revolutionary tourism in action. Rather, this was a problem for all exiles living in Barcelona, especially the Germans. They (the Germans) preferred to communicate in German and had great difficulty, and no affinity for, learning Spanish, let alone the far more common Catalan.<sup>232</sup>

The second example comes from the memoir of Rudolf Michaelis, the political officer of the *Erich Mühsam* Centuria. Michaelis was responsible for the political education of those in the militia and, with Willi Winkleman, the military education as

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<sup>230</sup> Orr and Orr, *Letters from Barcelona*, 15–16.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid; Gerd-Rainer Horn, who published (unabridged) the Orr's letters from Barcelona, notes that the Orr's never learned much Spanish and never learned any Catalan.

<sup>232</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 507.

well.<sup>233</sup> This task was made exponentially easier, according to Michaelis, but the discovery of “*politische und kulturelle*” works among the NSDAP documents seized from the consulate in Barcelona. From this “*kleiner Bibliothek*” Michaelis and Winkleman taught both the Swedish and German members of the centuria, both on military matters and political ones mostly focused on the NSDAP.<sup>234</sup> Though both were fluent in Spanish, this was left to an “*Aragoner*,” not inappropriate from a practical standpoint, but probably difficult since the Aragonese peasant in question appears not to have spoken German (let alone Swedish).<sup>235</sup> Nor did he speak the kind of Spanish that would have been understandable to the majority of the Spanish, and not just natives of the Catalonia-Aragon linguistic region. This focus on anti-Nazi cultural propaganda by the political elite in the centuria seems odd from a purely anarchist perspective, especially when one considers that of the roughly one hundred members of the militia, only fifty-six were “*Internationale*” according to Michaelis.<sup>236</sup> This included the Swedish members mentioned earlier, as well as grouping all Germans (Swiss, Austrian, German, and “*volksdeutsche*”) into one category.<sup>237</sup> The remaining half of the group was Spanish of various backgrounds. In other words, the “*Erich Mühsam*” Centuria engaged in systematic homogenization via education (*Ausbildung*) of various not only German groups, but also Scandinavian volunteers and to a lesser extent the Spanish incorporated to fill out the centuria.

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria “Erich Mühsam,”* 6.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>237</sup> “Roster of militia volunteers in the International Section of the Durruti Column.”; Indeed, Michaelis makes no effort to delineate the various German groups at all, despite the evidence that many were not Germans from Germany proper; Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria “Erich Mühsam” vor Huesca*, 7.

To look at the problem of language from the other side, it is important to remember that Spain, as a land where people spoke Spanish, is a place that barely exists today, and has never been closer to existing at any point in the past, especially not in the 1930s. In 1936, when the Civil War began, one could expect to find four completely distinct languages in Spain (Spanish, Gallegos, Catalan, and Basque), as well as innumerable dialects of Spanish that would be nearly unintelligible to one another. While this situation of unintelligible dialects would be familiar to Germans, it offered cold comfort when actually trying to learn the language.<sup>238</sup>

While Castellan would be useful for communicating in most instances, it was less than useful for communicating with members of the Barcelona working-class, their socio-economic counterparts in Spain. As Chris Ealham noted in *Anarchism and the City*, the working-class was drawn from two groups. Many were Catalan speaking peasants from the rural regions of Catalonia, Valencia, and Aragon. Many more were Andalusian and Murcian braceros who spoke a dialect of Spanish still infused with enough Arabic *patois* to make them prime targets of racism from the Catalan authorities, never mind Franco's "Reconquista."<sup>239</sup> Furthermore, these were not merely the social counterparts of the Germans in Spain, but also the ideological counterparts, as these workers in barrios like Poble Sec, Clot, and L'Hospilet carried much of the anarchist activism in Spain out.<sup>240</sup> In all of this, the linguistic isolation of the Germans in Spain was both self-imposed by a desire to continue speaking German, as well as by their outsider status in a place where

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<sup>238</sup> Though dated, Gerard Brenan still has one of the best discussions of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Iberian Peninsula at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; See: Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*, 180-182.

<sup>239</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 72.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

gaining cultural entry was made nearly impossible by the unintelligible weaves of languages and dialects.

### **Anarchist Symbols, National Symbols**

The second part of the cultural construction engaged in by the Germans in Spain, leading to their sense of isolation and strengthening their “German-ness”, was their symbolic life. Gerd-Rainer Horn talks extensively of symbolism in his article on the subject, “The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language.”<sup>241</sup> In this article, Horn discussed first the initial impression of internationals coming into Spain, including many Germans and Austrians. Stating that their reception on trains painted with slogans and bedecked in the red/black and red of the CNT/UGT must have been thrilling, “particularly... after a long and tortuous journey from their... native lands,” one is forced to ask, what, if anything, changed after this initial reception?<sup>242</sup> Indeed, at first glance both in Horn’s article and the archival material, the sentiment of internationalist revolutionary fervor ran quite high. What about this initial reception fades and leaves behind the nation as the only thing to which the exiled revolutionary to cling? The answer, it would seem, has to do with identifiable symbols. Certainly, as we have noted, linguistic isolation, or even the geographic isolation described previously, helped to drive this, but at the end visual culture proved equally compelling and gave a strong sense that the Germans in Spain were focused not on saving Spain, but motivating themselves to save Germany.

There are two types of symbols on offer here. The first is the physical symbol, that which serves as a banner behind which a movement coalesces (in the case of the

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<sup>241</sup> Horn, “The Language of Symbols and the Barriers of Language: Foriegners’ Perceptions of Social Revolution (Barcelona 1936-1937),” 17.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

Germans in Spain, it was a literal banner). The second is the hagiographic symbol. This symbol represents, or purports to represent, the ideology of the saint-makers. Horn's article deals with the Spanish symbols appearing to the internationals entering Spain, and how these groups processed the Spanish symbolism.<sup>243</sup> Here, the lens turns back on the Germans. Looking at the symbols of the "Erich Mühsam" Centuria, both the beatification of Mühsam and the physical symbols of the Centuria, particularly the flag of the militia, this focus on German revolutionary symbols helped to foster the desire of "return" that helped to drive the Germans in their fight against the *nacionales*.<sup>244</sup>

First, there was the hagiographic representation of Mühsam, who, as noted was a complicated character politically. Over the course of his life, he became less violent in his approach to anarchism, abandoning the "Propaganda of the deed" style anarchism of his youth by the late 1920s to 1930s, according to Ulrich Linse.<sup>245</sup> He also became less pan-leftist, and as the 1920s and early '30s progressed he became less interested in engaging with the KPD and its various splinters. This coupled with his readier acceptance of nationalistic approaches to anarchism. What makes him an interesting choice for the Gruppe DAS to choose as their symbol among the foreign militias was Mühsam's lack of affiliation with the FAUD, the organization in Germany that formed much of the Gruppe DAS's membership and associates in Spain.<sup>246</sup> While no evidence exists pertaining to the debate over what to name the Centuria, Rudolf Michaelis's memoirs indicated the popularity of Mühsam in anarchist circles as one impetus. While

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Borrowing the idea of "return" from the Palestinian situation in modern Israel, a parallel that, while not exact, is a useful connection to make here.

<sup>245</sup> Ulrich Linse, "'Propaganda by Deed' and 'Direct Action': Two Concepts of Anarchist Violence," in *Social Protest, Violence and Terror in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Wolfgang Mommsen and Hirschfeld (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 219.

<sup>246</sup> Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 74.



Mühsam was an “anarchist without adjectives” in the same vain as Rudolf Rocker, rather than an anarcho-syndicalist like the FAUD/Gruppe DAS, he was popular among both the intellectual elite and the rank-and-file workers of German anarcho-syndicalism.<sup>247</sup>

This popularity was something that the Germans attempted to impart to their Spanish colleagues on the Aragon Front near Huesca. On the train from Barcelona to the front, Michaelis described sharing stories and poems of Mühsam with the militias Spanish members and other members of the Ascosa Column aboard the train. This included the German words to the “*Räte-Marsailles*,”

*“Auf Völker in den Kampf!  
Zeigt Euch der Brüder wert!  
Die Freiheit ist das Feldgeschrei,  
Die Räte sind das Schwert!”*

(“People in the Fight!  
Show yourself worthy of the brothers!  
Freedom is the battle cry,  
The councils are the sword!”)<sup>248</sup>

While this is undoubtedly a revolutionary song, it is also fairly nationalistic, at least for anarchists. Using the term “*Volk*,” already a complicated and nationally imbued term for “people” in 1936, and describing the German council republics, specifically in Bavaria, after World War I, this song is as much about German history as about revolution. The song also shows a willingness by the German anarchists to “misremember” the past, as the councils were as important for communist history as they were for anarchists, perhaps more so.

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<sup>247</sup> Michaelis, *Mit der Centuria* “Erich Mühsam,” 10.

<sup>248</sup> This song comes from the German revolution following World War I, which centered around a conflict between the moderate SPD, the receding right-wing forces of the deposed Kaiser, and a number of insurgent leftists, including anarchists. Much of this conflict centered around the place of the newly constituted councils, which sprang up in factories and barracks around Germany at the end of the war; Ibid, 5.

Finally, we have the physical symbol of the “Erich Mühsam” Centuria: their flag. Michaelis stated in his memoir that, under their “black and red flag, embroidered with the names of [their] unforgettable comrades, bestially murdered by the Nazis at Oranienburg, in Aragon [they] made their stand.”<sup>249</sup> Immediately we can reconstruct two things about this flag. One is that it was the red-black flag of anarcho-syndicalism/anarchist communism which had been in existence for many years, probably since the Paris Commune (a connection Michaelis himself makes).<sup>250</sup> Second, emblazoned on the flag were the names of not only Mühsam but other anarchist victims as well. Michaelis notes that this is not unlike the “Camillo Berneri” and “Louis Bertoni” militias in the Italian section of the Durruti Column.<sup>251</sup> What Michaelis does not comment on, however, was how unlike the Spanish flags this was. The CNT-FAI flags were emblazoned instead with the names of unions, collectives, or simply the two federations.<sup>252</sup>

This tells us something about the state of the Germans in Spain. While they were undeniably anarchist, their symbols, perfectly internationalist and anarchist if they operated in Germany, took on new meaning to distinguish them as *German* anarchists. They could certainly have carried a purely red-black flag into battle. They did not, however. They chose instead, consciously or not, to set themselves apart from their Spanish comrades. When combined with their tendency to simplify their German identities and to espouse a specifically German hagiography, an image of a very *German* anarchist community in Barcelona and at the Aragon front comes into view. Reinforced

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<sup>249</sup> “Unter einer schwarz-roten Fahne, bestickt mit den Namenslettern unseres unvergesslichen, im KZ Oranienburg von den Nazis bestialisch ermordeten Kameraden, werden wir in Aragonien unseren Mann Stehen” ; Ibid, 4.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 170–188.

by what we know of the relative successes (or at least attempts) at playing on the “German-ness” of the community by their own propagandists in Barcelona, we see how Germans who came to Spain as anarchists became Germans over time. To make some association to similar realizations by other historians, this is an “anarchists into Germans” phenomenon, to borrow from Eugene Weber.

#### IV. FIGHTING THE REAL ENEMY

As noted previously, Spain is central to this story. Otherwise, this story could have been told in the context of Germany, without the extra complicating factors that the Spanish Civil War brought to the German experience in exile. Prior to this, we dealt almost exclusively with the positions of the Germans themselves, either theoretically or organizationally. Furthermore, this dealing has been almost entirely self-referential. Landauer and Mühsam concerned themselves with the positions of anarchism and nationalism at a theoretical, and in some ways inherently international level.<sup>253</sup> Certainly, their German connections inform their positions, but they were referring to the position of anarchism to something else, in this case a national consciousness, and were not concerned with *German* anarchism, specifically. Something similar occurred for the German organizations in Spain. Here, they were concerned with what exactly a German organization should be, and how that organization should function to meet the needs of

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<sup>253</sup> The inherent internationalism comes from the theoretical nature of the work and the intention of its authors for reading outside of Germany by non-Germans, especially in Rocker’s case.

the German community. Again, the concern is introspective, intended to analyze the Germans' own relationship to each other and their political beliefs.

Both stemming from and contributing to the dialogue analyzed in the last chapter, the official discourse on the nation reached its nationally conscious apex in the spring of 1937. At this point, the German community had been isolated for nearly three years from their Spanish comrades; they had dealt with their enemies in the NSDAP in Barcelona, and invested a considerable amount of blood and political capital into the Spanish revolutionary project. The reflection of this in the official discourse became most obvious in the printed work of the anarchist exiles, examined here. The turn towards propaganda showed how the Germans related to the Civil War and how they found their place within it. This revealed that the German leadership, under whose previous political education of the émigrés fell, was concerned with how the outside world viewed the Spanish conflict.<sup>254</sup> Particularly, the leadership, including Souchy and Rüdiger, were concerned that the world did not sufficiently appreciate the degree to which the NSDAP was involved in Spain. Given the amount of documents pointing to a deep connection between the Nazis and the *nacionales*, this position was unsurprising.<sup>255</sup> This concern precipitated the publication of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch: Dokumente über den Hitlerimperialismus*, detailing the Nazi-*nacionales* conspiracy in Spain.<sup>256</sup> Of course, this focus was partly the work of propagandists trying to focus on a more recognizable

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<sup>254</sup> Letter, "Souchy to Goldman," 15 October 1936; Letter, "Rüdiger to Goldman," 4 November 1936.

<sup>255</sup> The documents from the German consulate indicated that the Germans assured the *nacionales* military support in the case of a coup.

<sup>256</sup> Gruppe Das Deutsche-Anarcho-Syndikalisten, ed., the *Schwarz-Rotbuch: Dokumente Über den Hitlerimperialismus* (Barcelona: Centro de Administracion Municipal, Empresa Colectivizada CNT, 1937), 1–7.

group for the purposes of mass-mobilization than the cabal of uncharismatic generals who instigated the Spanish conflict.

This idea of a purely international political point weakens, though, when considering the degree to which the Gruppe DAS focused on the NSDAP in the propaganda aimed at its own members. For this reason, one cannot separate these focuses on the NSDAP and must instead seek to understand them as a single unit, bound together by a common genuine belief that the Nazis and Hitler was the real enemy. Germans were to keep their minds on the Nazis, even as they fought against Franco and the rest in the Spanish Civil War's first year. This section focusses on an in depth discussion of the propaganda of the Gruppe DAS, looking at how that propaganda drew on familiar symbols for German anarchists to rally around, dispersed those symbols in a way that mobilized support both at home and abroad, and how this propaganda effort reached and was received by the regular membership in Spain.

### **Anderson and the Centrality of Print to the Nation**

Benedict Anderson's work has become largely synonymous with the study of nation and nationality. While his most famous work *Imagined Communities* has been largely absent from this thesis, it seems appropriate that we would bring it in now, given its study of "print capitalism" as a driving force behind creating the "imagined community." Anderson's ideas of a homogenous, non-linear, spatially compact nation, created by the reading of the written word, predates this period by several decades (or maybe a few centuries), but the general contours of print as a carrier of the nation is central to this part of the thesis.<sup>257</sup> Primarily, Anderson argued quite extensively for the importance of newspaper and books, being mass-produced in ever-greater quantities from

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<sup>257</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9–36.

the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, in creating the mass consciousness that allowed people in disparate regions to unify in meaningful ways.<sup>258</sup> This unification around non-local issues, introduced by the printed word, worked in the opposite too. While Anderson only briefly touches on this, the printed word in the right context can also be divisive. Such was the case for the Gruppe DAS in Spain.

While a paper with a national focus could engender nationalism in a population, one with an anarchist focus could just as easily engender a stronger anarchist movement among that same population. If we take Anderson's conceit to its natural conclusion, "print capitalism" creates the climate for identity formation around the nation, but could be just as formative to other identities. By neutralizing Anderson in this way, the Gruppe DAS choice to use the nation becomes significant. What we see with the Gruppe DAS's printed works, specifically *Die soziale Revolution*, was that the Germans still engendered a national identity, in spite of the explicitly anarchist focus of the newspaper, thanks to the its implicit nationalism. While they printed a plethora of anarchist theory articles and reprints of Spanish or Catalan language pieces, translated into German, this was no different from a local paper carrying national economic data or letters to the editor concerned exclusively with national issues.<sup>259</sup> In other words, these pieces were informative and helped to bring the Germans into the revolution, but the primary focus of the paper was "local news," i.e. things pertaining to Germany, Germans, and German issues. This was in part practical, since the targeted audience of the paper was German. However, practicality, as this thesis strives to show repeatedly, was a poor insulator against the infiltration of nationalism. So, somewhat in opposition to Anderson's thesis,

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 67–70.

<sup>259</sup> Examples of these theory articles and reprints can be seen in every issue, but particularly important pieces included.

the broader issues presented in *Die soziale Revolution* retreated into the background as “local” German issues took precedence.

In the case of the propaganda produced by the Gruppe DAS, mostly in the form of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* and *Die soziale Revolution*, there was an overt attempt at creating solidarity within the German community and between the German community and the Spanish community. In the latter case, this could be termed true internationalism, in a way, since the intention was not relationships between individuals but rather national communities.<sup>260</sup> In the former case, the solidarity formation comes in two forms, one aimed at bolstering the German understanding of the anarchism’s past in Germany, and the second focused the identification of the NSDAP as the prime evil for anarchists internationally and for Germans in particular. Of course, these were Germans in the *Grossdeutsch* sense of the term, as the propaganda aimed at Germans, but also Austrians, Swiss, and various other German minorities from around central Europe.<sup>261</sup> The subsequent section discusses these issues in depth as the thesis analyzes the particulars of much of the material pertaining to educating the membership of the Gruppe DAS and its affiliates.

By focusing on “international relations,” *German* anarchism, and the NSDAP, the propaganda of the Gruppe DAS took on a noticeably nationalistic tone. Granted, this was subsumed under the talk of revolutions, collectives, and Buenaventura Durruti, but even with these markers of anarchism, one never loses sight of the fact that this is propaganda

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<sup>260</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9–36.

<sup>261</sup> “Vorwaerts Oder Rueckwaerts? Eine Kritik Der Kommunistischen Parolen,” *Die Soziale Revolution*, March 1937, 9 edition; This is an excellent example of this kind of theory article, particularly in that this article focuses on the ideological differences between the Gruppe DAS and the KPD, illustrating both the theoretical education *Die soziale Revolution* and the fact that the Gruppe DAS remained an anarchist organization, in opposition to the designs of groups like SRDF.

published by Germans, concerned with German problems, and discussing a particularly German slant on issues; all going beyond the fact the paper was printed in German.<sup>262</sup>

Divided into two parts around the primary propaganda vehicles of the German community, the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* and *Die soziale Revolution*, this section utilizes these to gain access into the important elements of German propaganda in Spain. Other sources of propaganda existed besides this, most notably the German language radio broadcasts in Barcelona and the publications of the *Deutsche Informationendienst*. However, the former appears not to have survived the Civil War and World War II, assuming there was ever any recording or transcript of the broadcasts to begin with. The latter case, as we shall see, offers us an interesting foil for the information posted in *Die soziale Revolution* and will be returned to at the end of this section.

### **The Schwarz-Rotbuch and the Focus on the NSDAP**

The *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, with its distinct focus on informing the outside world about the discoveries made by the Gruppe DAS in the German consulate in Barcelona, gave the sharpest view of the Gruppe DAS's burgeoning focus on the NSDAP as not only the primary, but the sole real enemy of the exiles in Spain. To this end, the Gruppe DAS, with the ASY-Verlag, compiled the documents purporting to show a long-term association between the aborted junta *cum* civil war of July 1936 and the NSDAP in Germany.<sup>263</sup> It appears, despite the dismissal of Paul Preston, that the Gruppe DAS was partially correct in this assumption, though their conviction drove them to identify the

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<sup>262</sup> *Die soziale Revolution*, February 1937, 5.

<sup>263</sup> The ASY-Verlag was the German anarchist publishing house in Barcelona.



NSDAP as a more stable and plotting group than they really were.<sup>264</sup> Nonetheless, the goal of the Gruppe DAS was to publish not only a German, but also a Spanish, French, and English version of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, all intended to take the German anarchist case against the Nazis to the international community. We know from Rüdiger and Souchy's correspondence with Emma Goldman that lack of coordination between the Spanish and Germans, and between the Germans and their international allies, stymied these efforts and so the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* never experienced the type of influence intended.<sup>265</sup>

However, this lack of impact does not negate the book as an indicator of national feelings at the organizational level among the Germans in Spain. For example, the very existence of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* tells us that the Germans focus was as much on linking their present struggle to a past enemy and possible future confrontation, as it was about fighting the *nacionales*. Second, given the late date at which point the Germans assembled and finally published this book, it appeared they were primarily interested in bolstering a national case. As Orwell notes, Barcelona became less revolutionary as the months dragged on and the anarchists began casting about for motivators on the front and the home front.<sup>266</sup> Undoubtedly the Germans were doing the same, in this case via a national cause. Again, there were combinations of pragmatic and ideological motivations.

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<sup>264</sup> It is worth noting that a communist version of the documents was published around the time of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*. No copies of this text appear to be in existence, though Emma Goldman notes that it was being published by the same group that published the "Brown Book," a fabrication that attempted to pin the blame for the Reichstag fire on the NSDAP. This raises some concerns about the credibility of the communist version of these documents; Emma Goldman, "Letter from Emma Goldman to Augustin Souchy," February 1937; Gruppe Das Deutsche-Anarcho-Syndikalisten, the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, 273–278; Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, 117.

<sup>265</sup> Letter, "Goldman to Souchy," 14 January 1937.

<sup>266</sup> Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 162; This point is further corroborated, as evidenced later in the chapter by the shifts in focus in *Die soziale Revolution*.

Certainly the Gruppe DAS were primarily interested in motivating the German community to keep up the revolutionary fight, but they were also following an established line of thought, prevalent throughout the revolution but bearing special fruit in the German case, that the NSDAP were the real enemy in Spain. This is perhaps best exemplified in the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* with the book's subtitle, "*Dokumente über Hitlerimperialismus*." Clearly, the Gruppe DAS focused not on fascism in general, or even the Nazis in general, but personalized their enemy in Adolf Hitler. Secondly, they do not accuse the NSDAP of simply interfering with domestic Spanish politics, starting the civil war, or engaging in counterrevolutionary activity. Instead, they accused the Nazis of engaging in an imperialist conquest and the Gruppe DAS spends much of the book displaying and building on documents they believed to support this claim.<sup>267</sup> The irony is that, despite Paul Preston's assertion to the contrary, the *nacionales* do seem to have acted on certain assurances by the NSDAP leadership.<sup>268</sup> Rather than engaging this conclusion, though, the Gruppe DAS instead makes a larger claim that the NSDAP was actually attempting to claim Spain as a colony.

The majority of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* was a compilation of documents and their transcriptions, all culled from the NSDAP headquarters in Barcelona in the early days of

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<sup>267</sup> Gruppe Das Deutsche-Anarcho-Syndikalisten, the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, 4.

<sup>268</sup> This sentence may strike some readers as preposterous, since much of the older historiography and such luminaries as Preston and Ian Kershaw have argued that the NSDAP supported the *nacionales* impetuously. However, the assertion here that some assurances were in place is based on two things: the documents displayed within this book, many of which were contained in the Gruppe DAS archives at the International Institute for Social History, and the belief that these documents were legitimate. Given the behind the scenes concern over the publication of the book, and the scale of the project relative to the size of the available archives on the whole, and the lack of documents indicating forgery or cover-up thereof, it seems highly unlikely that some degree of cooperation between the Nazis and the *nacionales* was not going on prior to the attempted coup d'état. Most likely this was happening with the Spanish believing they had some German support and local German officials offering said support independent of the German state. Given the polycratic nature of Nazi Germany, this is not surprising; Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, 64.

the revolution.<sup>269</sup> Interspersed throughout this is a continuation of the argument made in the title of the piece, that: the NSDAP acted on imperialist motivations in Spain.<sup>270</sup> For example, the introduction to the chapter entitled “*Arbeits-Methoden und Gebiete der deutschen faschistischen Auslands-Organisationen*,” describes the methods by which individual Nazis worked to gain control of Spain, before bringing war to all of Europe.<sup>271</sup> The end of the book contained a long section detailing the means by which the NSDAP planned to enact its colonization of Spain, and the assurances granted Franco and the generals in the event of coup d’état.<sup>272</sup> Finally, it is important to remember that, while this book only exists in its German form, designed for German consumption, the Gruppe DAS intended to publish English, Spanish, and French versions later. Due to conflict with the Stalinists, the Gruppe DAS never accomplished this. The significance of this intention to publish in other languages is interesting for one reason in particular. It shows the Gruppe DAS’s interest in motivating Germans first, even when more powerful English or French allies might have been useful. The letters between Emma Goldman, Augustin Souchy, and Helmut Rüdiger reflected this. While Goldman pressed them to complete an English version, neither Souchy nor Rüdiger seemed particularly interested.<sup>273</sup> Despite their relatively internationalist aims, their primary interest was in

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<sup>269</sup> Rocker, “PROTOKOLL Über Die Tätigkeit Die Gruppe DAS.”

<sup>270</sup> Gruppe Das Deutsche-Anarcho-Syndikalistin, the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, 17, 62–63, 107.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>273</sup> Letter, “Goldman to Rüdiger,” March 1937; Emma Goldman acted as the chief fund-raiser and advocate for the Spanish Revolution in Britain during the first year of the conflict and had extensive correspondence with Souchy and Rüdiger. Her letters are some of the best organized of the correspondence we have for both figures, including their own archives at the IISG. Souchy in particular seemed to be quite disorganized, and his archival collection exemplifies someone who did a poor job of maintaining his records. Rüdiger was less so, but nonetheless, Goldman’s letters offer a particularly useful outsider’s view of the German organizations in Spain.

disseminating information within the German community, including beyond political lines.

### **Die soziale Revolution and German “Tourism”**

In contrast to the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, *Die soziale Revolution* is a complicated piece of work. While the former focused, as noted above, on the single issue of “*Hitlerimperialismus*” and the connections between *nacionales* “puppets” and Nazi puppet-masters, the *Revolution* covered these issues as well as the news (local and international), educational material on anarchism, socialism, and German anarchist history, as well as the story of the German anarchists in Spain to that point. First published in January 1937, a mere five months before the Stalinists began crushing the revolution in Catalonia and Aragon, the *Revolution* fell into a similar category as the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, in that it comes at the end of the revolutionary fervor. Again, this seems to be because the Gruppe DAS leadership were casting about for a means to create unity and were most successful with more nationality-centered pieces.<sup>274</sup>

Three useful examples of this exist, spanning the entire run of *Die soziale Revolution*. The first issue, published in January 1937 contained a number of articles again focusing on the NSDAP. Several pointed out the presence of German soldiers in Spain, as well as NSDAP technical support, and notes that these individuals posed as tourists or acted under “legitimate” diplomatic guises. This included articles such as one titled “‘Deutsche touristen’ in Spanien,” which argued that many spies for Nazi Germany acted as people on vacation or observers of the *nacionales* military in the early days of

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<sup>274</sup> Although, at the risk of belaboring this point, the Gruppe DAS was concerned primarily with German Germans, rather than Swiss, Austrian, or other Germans, and so wrote their articles with this in mind. It seems highly improbable that this did not have some effect on those Germans not from Germany.

the conflict.<sup>275</sup> This line of thought continued in the article, later in the issue, titled “*Nazi-Deutschland liefert keine Waffen...*” (a quote from one of the documents seized from the NSDAP). This article details the lie that the Nazis supplied weapons to the *nacionales*.<sup>276</sup> Interestingly, the piece begins detailing the attributes of “*Germantum*,” attributes such as, “...*das ist seine Aufrichtigkeit, seine Abneigung gegen jede Art von Lüge und Fälschungen.*”<sup>277</sup> While the piece notes that these were detailed in Nazi textbooks studying the *Volk*, it would be difficult for a German reading the piece not to want to identify with these attributes. A detailed account of how the NSDAP lied about its supplying of weapons, in direct contradiction to these qualities followed this.<sup>278</sup> This asked the readers to identify with certain good, innate attributes of being German, attributes described by the NSDAP, then showed the reader that the NSDAP cannot live up to these attributes. This argument is being made based on “German-ness”, not anarchism, and reflects the dualistic nature of German anarchism, that it needed to rely on both elements in Spain to maintain a strong propaganda narrative.

In issues “7-8” (a double issue due to problems with publishing regularly), *Die soziale Revolution* contained an even greater focus on Germans (broadly).<sup>279</sup> This issue, with five to follow, is the high water mark of the German focus in *Die soziale Revolution*. In this issue, the Gruppe DAS focuses less on reprinting CNT articles and even on the war, opting instead to print stories about the goings on in Germany, Switzerland, and the Saarland. Again, all of the articles maintain a dual German-anarchist focus. For

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<sup>275</sup> “Deutsche touristen’ in Spanien,” *Die soziale Revolution*, January 1937, 1.

<sup>276</sup> “Nazi Deutschland liefert keine Waffen...” *Die soziale Revolution*, January 1937, 3.

<sup>277</sup> Essentially, that Germans are sincere and dislike lying and falsification; “Nazi Deutschland liefert keine Waffen...” *Die soziale Revolution*, January 1937, 3.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Irregular publishing, a problem already seen with the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, plagued the Gruppe DAS from beginning to end.

example, the article on the Saarland, titled “*Die Bergarbeiter des Saargebietes wenden die direkte Aktion an*,” details the direct action campaign of Saar coal miners following the plebiscite that returned the Saar to Nazi Germany in 1935.<sup>280</sup> Interestingly, the plebiscite occurred in 1935 and the direct action campaign discussed happened in mid to late 1936. In other words, these events were, at best, tangential to the goings on of the Germans in Spain in the spring of 1937, both temporally and geographically. Granted, the Gruppe DAS published the article in the center of the paper, but of the twelve total pages, only the first three dealt with the Spanish Revolution and Civil War. After this, the focus is markedly on German news, no matter how old or peripheral. Indeed, the information contained in issue 7-8 pertaining to the civil war was reprinted from CNT papers such as *Solideridad Obrera*.<sup>281</sup> Never in the entire run of the paper do the Germans write their own articles about what is happening in the war, unless it affected Germans specifically.<sup>282</sup>

As noted above, issue 7-8 marked the high point of *Die soziale Revolution* German focus. The final issue of the paper (number 13) dealt almost exclusively with the attack on the POUM and the CNT-FAI by the Stalinist PSUC and its allies. This “civil war within the Civil War” has been detailed extensively by other authors notably Orwell and was discussed briefly earlier, precluding further discussion.<sup>283</sup> The obvious editorial shift it caused, however, was of some interest. While the focus on motivating Germans via nationality largely ended at this stage, what replaced it was an attempt to motivate

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<sup>280</sup> “Die Bergarbeiter des Saargebietes wenden die direkte Aktion an,” *Die soziale Revolution*, March 1937.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> For example, in issue 10, a letter criticizing the “militarization” of the militias is written by a German militiaman. Also in that issue, an extensive article is written on German run collectives in Spain. So, even when the information pertains to the Civil War and Revolution, it also needed to pertain to the German community; “Reorganization der Front,” *Die sozial Revolution*, Issue 10 (no date), 2.

<sup>283</sup> The best work on this, once again, was Burnett Bolloten’s book *The Spanish Revolution: the Left and the Struggle for Power during the Civil War*.

German anarchists as anarchists. In other words, the enemy had changed. Whereas the Gruppe DAS established the NSDAP as the primary enemy prior to this, the final two issues identify the Stalinists as the primary enemy.<sup>284</sup> Lacking as strong a connection to Germany, this new enemy was attacked for being statist socialists, unfit to carryout, and indeed an enemy to, the revolution in Spain.<sup>285</sup> Once again, the pragmatic use of understandable propaganda foci by the Gruppe DAS was seen. Communists had been a well-established enemy of the FAUD and anarchists in Germany, much like the NSDAP, and in opposition to the poorly understood *nacionales*.<sup>286</sup> Again, the point is not that the German anarchists were overt nationalists, but that they opportunistically used nationalistic imagery to motivate their audience when an appropriate ideological foe was ill defined or unavailable.

### **National Images**

Another fascinating source of information in *Die soziale Revolution* was the political cartoons and propaganda images. Though appearing irregularly, there were several in the newspaper's time and they often found pride-of-place on the front page and always portrayed the ideological position of the organization.<sup>287</sup> Three out of the dozen or so images that should be classified as purely propaganda were published in Issues 2, 5-6, and 7-8.<sup>288</sup> While in the above section we discussed a certain trajectory in the publication of *Die soziale Revolution*, a sort of bell-curve from mild focus on Germany and Germans as news items, to "*Germantum*" becoming the center of *Revolution's*

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<sup>284</sup> *Die soziale Revolution*, 1 May 1937; *Die soziale Revolution*, June 1937, 5.

<sup>285</sup> "Katalonian nach der Mai-Provokation," *Die soziale Revolution*, June 1937, 1-2.

<sup>286</sup> Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 71.

<sup>287</sup> See figures for cartoons.

<sup>288</sup> This is opposed to images that were of both propaganda and documentary value, i.e. photographs. I hesitate to label these photographs because, for example, the image in Issue 7-8 was constructed from photographs as a collage, so it would be inaccurate to make some sort of photograph, non-photograph distinction here.

editorial slant, to the eventual fading of “German-ness” into the background as other, non-German enemies arose.

In Issue 7-8 of the newspaper were the images in Figure 6, two side-by-side reproductions of “Catalonian” propaganda posters.<sup>289</sup> This reproduction of CNT images was not uncommon in *Die soziale Revolution*, though they were often accompanied by with articles reproduced from Spanish anarchist publications.<sup>290</sup> Here, though, were two standalone images, one created by the Generalitat (the Catalan republican government), and the other created by the CNT. There are three things to notice here. First, there is no editorial criticism of the Republicans in this image. Both were merely shown together without comparison or comment. The second thing to notice is the use of the swastika in the Generalitat image. Swastikas were frequently used to indicate the *nacionales* in Republican propaganda, not necessarily to indicate Nazis.<sup>291</sup> This is different from the manner seen later in the Gruppe DAS-produced images. Finally, presented side by side, the community surrounding the Gruppe DAS, i.e. the other German anarchists in Barcelona, identified readily with the Generalitat’s image, more so than the CNT-FAI image. While generic workers and peasants, the subject of the CNT-FAI image, were certainly of interest to the Gruppe DAS, the idea of smashing swastikas was probably far more motivating. As noted above, to the Spanish, the swastika was a generic symbol of fascism. Orwell even believed he saw a swastika on a *nacionales* flag in *Homage to Catalonia*, later deciding that this was probably unlikely and confirming that the memory

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<sup>289</sup> *Die soziale Revolution* (March 1937), 6.

<sup>290</sup> Examples of this can be seen in issues 2 and 3 of *Die soziale Revolution*; ASY Verlag, *Die soziale Revolution*, 1937.

<sup>291</sup> Again, other examples of this practice can be seen within *Die soziale Revolution* with other Spanish propaganda images.



was probably a false one, created by Republican propaganda.<sup>292</sup> To the German anarchists, however, the sight of a swastika invoked the Nazis specifically, not just generic fascists. To support the idea that this image would be most affecting for German anarchists, it featured near the end of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, after a call to arms against the Nazis.<sup>293</sup> In comparison, the Gruppe DAS used no other CNT-FAI images in the book.<sup>294</sup>

This carried over to the second image here, a cartoon from Issue 5-6 depicting an explicitly German soldier leading a group consisting of the allies of the *nacionales* (Figure 7). In the foreground, a soldier, with swastika belt-buckle, hobnailed boots, and spiked helmet, leading a Moroccan *regulares* and an Italian soldier by the hand, while the symbols of the *nacionales* themselves, a clergyman and a *Tercio* (the Spanish foreign legion), followed behind.<sup>295</sup> This image further reinforced the Gruppe DAS belief that the NSDAP was motivated not by fascist internationalism, but by imperialism. The propagandists depicted the Italians (in a rather racist fashion) as apes, while the Moroccan's became inexplicably child-like. The Gruppe DAS believed that the Italians were not acting independently (something we now know to be completely incorrect), while Morocco in particular was seen as a target of Nazi imperialism, building on

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<sup>292</sup> Orwell noted in later editions that he may, in fact, have misremembered seeing a swastika painted on the flags of the *raquette* forces fighting on the Aragon Front. As seen in the previous chapter, this mistaken attribution of Nazism and Nazi symbols to enemies was not uncommon among those fighting in the civil war, though in Orwell's case, it falls more or less into the category of using the swastika as a universal symbol for fascism. Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 53.

<sup>293</sup> Gruppe Das Deutsche-Anarcho-Syndikalisten, the *Schwarz-Rotbuch*, 331.

<sup>294</sup> One other element to consider in the publication of these images is the period. As noted above, later issues in *Die soziale Revolution* tended to refocus on the Spanish Revolution, then under threat from the Soviet Union's support of the Republicans. This refocusing can be seen to some degree in this image, with the images indicating that the best means of "smashing the swastika" (destroying the Nazis) is through support of the revolution. So the Gruppe DAS wanted to draw back from their previous engagement with national politics, to some degree, in favor of a resurgent "revolutionism."

<sup>295</sup> *Die soziale Revolution* (February 1937), 1.

historical precedent from before World War I.<sup>296</sup> Finally, the cartoonist drew the German soldier in the lead, with more soldiers bringing up the rear behind the *nacionales*. The obvious implication here is that the Nazis are the leaders of the uprising, looking to lay claim to Spanish territory and that the Spanish were merely followers in a Nazi scheme, with the Italians in the even worse position of subhuman servants. Again, the Gruppe DAS focusses not on the *nacionales* as the enemy, but rather the Nazis. Furthermore, *Die soziale Revolution* featured this picture on the front page of the issue, above the fold, in a way that undoubtedly gained notice from even casual passersby and lacked any of the ambiguity of the later image from the Generalitat. The image left no doubt whether the image of the swastika would invoke the NSDAP in a reader. Instead, the image forced the reader to think of the Nazis in a very specific role: that of imperialist conqueror and enemy of both Germans and Spaniards.

Lastly, from *Die soziale Revolution* came the cartoon from Issue 2 (Figure 8).<sup>297</sup> The caption describes the conversation between two soldiers, Germans, who describe the scruffy man on the sidewalk as an “*ausländischer Soldat*” or foreign soldier. This is in spite of his obviously being a caricature of a Spanish soldier, with peaked cap, dark hair, and more casual uniform. The heading of the cartoon was “*In Cadiz,*” a city controlled by Franco from the beginning of the conflict. Clearly the men in this picture, with that single exception, represented German fighters, meaning that those at the *Die soziale Revolution* believed the Germans controlled the city of Cadiz and what is more, viewed it as a German city. This cartoon is an extension of the discussion from Issue 1 of *Die*

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<sup>296</sup> This references the Tangiers Incident, as well as long standing German adventurism in Northern Morocco, even when the conflict was being carried out more or less independently from the Spanish state. For more information on German involvement in Spanish Morocco, see: Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>297</sup> *Die soziale Revolution* (January 1937), 6.

*soziale Revolution*, which discussed the German “tourists” in Spain, or Nazis and German soldiers who came under false pretenses. This illustrates the degree to which the Gruppe DAS believed the NSDAP controlled the Spanish situation on Franco’s side. The reappearance of the German soldier caricature also seems interesting, especially since his spiked helmet and sabre remain unremarked in the cartoon’s dialogue. In many ways, this appears as a cartoon dehumanization of the Nazi soldier, an act which, while political, is shared across the ideological perspective. What makes it relevant here is the nationalistic way in which this portrayal occurs. Rather than simply drawing the soldier as a Brownshirt (after all, adding a swastika would be easier than an entire Prussian costume), the artist drew the soldier as explicitly German, but German in non-political terms. An actual World War I soldier dressed in this fashion may well have been a conscripted anarchist, but here his caricature is used to denote a kind of Germany that the author dislikes.<sup>298</sup> By making the figure relatively non-ideological, the artist creates oppositional categories where himself and like-minded individuals as very much German, ethnically and nationally, but politically anarchist, while the NSDAP and its lackeys in Spain were the type of old, Prussian imperial-style nationalism.

Finally, this brings up a comparison that must be made between *Die soziale Revolution* and the bulletin published by the *Deutsche Informationendienst*. The latter was published from mid-1935 through 1936, though only the latter issues survived, and was published under the suzerainty of the CNT-FAI.<sup>299</sup> Spanish propaganda translated

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<sup>298</sup> The precedent for such depictions of German soldiers was not uncommon as a means of representing Imperial German nationalism, and even in the Weimar period it might represent the sort of nationalism displayed by the DNVP or other conservative parties. However, there was usually some understanding that the NSDAP was not in the same nationalistic vein, and therefore they were usually represented differently. This seems to indicate that the Gruppe DAS cartoonist was as much opposed to a particular kind of nationalism, broadly, as he was to the NSDAP, specifically.

<sup>299</sup> Helmut Rüdiger, *Deutsche Informationendienst*, issue 6 (1935) 2.

into German constituted much of the DID bulletin and it gave no editorial space to specifically German issues. Contrast this with *Die soziale Revolution*, which consisted, on the whole, of mostly German themed articles. In this case, the timeline of publication is very significant. Rüdiger published the bulletin in a period when integration of Germans into the Spanish movement was still seen as a possibility by he and others, but while the German community was still poorly organized and such publications would have done little to reflect actual popular sentiment on the ground, prior to the revolution.<sup>300</sup> The publication continued through the early months of the conflict. It is important to remember that motivation was an important reason behind publication here, as the goal was never merely to inform, but to mobilize. If the bulletin is compared with *Die soziale Revolution*, the former was apparently intended to motivate through anarchism, while the latter operated using both anarchism and opportunistic nationalism focused on the Nazis. It seems likely, based on accounts of the weakening of revolutionary feelings in late 1936 and 1937, that the Gruppe DAS shifted its editorial focus in *Die soziale Revolution*, to address a community no longer motivated by revolutionary platitudes alone.

***Were the Nazis the Enemy? Reflecting on the Efficacy of Gruppe DAS Propaganda***

The effectiveness of the Gruppe DAS's propaganda is somewhat difficult to ascertain. Sparse evidence from the organization's regular members or affiliates survived the war, as discussed previously, and other extenuating factors muddled the circumstantial evidence available to historians.<sup>301</sup> We do have some evidence, however,

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<sup>300</sup> Kern, *Red Years/Black Years*, 147.

<sup>301</sup> Extenuating circumstances in this case refers to the suppression by the Stalinists in mid-1937, the eventual collapse of the Republic and the fall of Barcelona in 1939, accompanied by the flight, exile, and

and this section will seek to interrogate these resources to identify places where members apparently received the propaganda line and processed that line in two important ways. First, there is evidence of the German anarchists misremembering their wartime experiences in such a way that the NSDAP is brought to the forefront. The Spanish *nacionales* never approached the pathos given to the Nazis by the anarchist propaganda, largely due to their foreignness, the difficulty in defining exactly whom they were, and of course the ready-made villain status of the NSDAP for those on the German left.<sup>302</sup> The second way in which the membership processed the propaganda was via “bottom-up” targeting of the NSDAP in non-propaganda ways. In other words, not only the anarchist political apparatus attacked the NSDAP, but the broader German community did as well.

In the case of the German anarchist veterans “misremembering” the events of the conflict, there is one particularly salient example. In *A Las Barricadas*, Volker Hoffman’s documentary about Helmut Kirschey, a German militiaman, returning to Spain in the 1980s, Kirschey is seen discussing the Durruti Column’s advance up the Ebro toward Zaragoza.<sup>303</sup> The events Kirschey describes occurred in late 1936, when the anarchist militias were still on the offensive, before the lines hardened in the ways Orwell describes in *Homage to Catalonia*.<sup>304</sup> Kirschey recalls at one point being attacked by a

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imprisonment of many Germans in France, and most importantly, the outbreak of World War II, which damaged or destroyed a good deal of historical material.

<sup>302</sup> Difficulty in defining the *nacionales*, because their forces were so disparate, including Moroccans, the Carlist *Raquettes*, members of the Peninsular Army, the Army of Africa, and the *Guardia Civil*, all of which would have been present on the Aragon Front amongst the ad-hoc forces there, or well known to the exiles (such as the *regulares* and the *Tercio*, or Foreign Legion); for more on the *nacionales* see: Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 253-262. This details Franco’s melding of these forces into a single unit, the *Falange Espanola Tradicionalista y de las JONS*. The fact that this occurs at or after the purview of this thesis is the justification for not referring to these forces as Francoists, since Franco was not in complete control until mid-1937.

<sup>303</sup> This is the same documentary referenced in the introduction; Volker Hoffman, *A las Barricadas* - Teil 3/6, Youtube, Adobe Flash Player video file, 9:56, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQmnKcO\_z3s] (accessed July 7, 2010).

<sup>304</sup> Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 321; Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 97.

German Stuka dive-bomber, flown by a German pilot who he could see as the plane flies close overhead, strafing the column.<sup>305</sup> While Kirschey's account is engaging and probably holds some elements of truth, it is highly problematic. For instance, Stuka's are not introduced until somewhat later in the conflict, probably late in 1937 or early 1938. What is more is that the Germans had a minimal presence in Spain in late 1936 and probably no presence at all along the Ebro in Aragon at this time.<sup>306</sup> What was probably a strafing run by a Spanish *nacionales* pilot became a confrontation between the German anarchists and the Nazis in Kirschey's mind. While the relevant material might have been lost, it seems unlikely that an attack by the members of the Kondor Legion would not be mentioned elsewhere, given the obvious propaganda value.

This brings us to a second example of the influence the Gruppe DAS propaganda had on the rank-and-file membership of the organization. This comes in the form of a letter written by the "anarchistische Emigranten" to Adolf Hitler. It is unclear whether the document was sent (though it seems unlikely that it would have made it very far past the Reich Chancellery mailroom if it was), but it nonetheless is revealing about the anarchists focus from very early on in the conflict. The letter, which is two pages long and printed on official party letterhead, was entitled "*Offener Brief an den 'Fueher,'*" and begins "*Geliebter Fueher!*" ("Beloved *Fueher!*"). The major concern of the letter seemed to be to inform Hitler that the Gruppe DAS was aware of the NSDAP's illegal involvement in Spain and the specific involvement of the *Duetsche Arbeits Front* (DAF) and its leader, Anton Leistert. Indeed, much of the letter mocks both Hitler and Leistert, calling them

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<sup>305</sup> Volker Hoffman, *A las Barricadas* - Teil 3/6, Youtube, Adobe Flash Player video file, 9:56, [[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQmnKcO\\_z3s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQmnKcO_z3s)] (accessed July 7, 2010).

<sup>306</sup> Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 247; Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, 187.

names, and (one assumes) sarcastically saluting their authority (or in Leistert's case, recent loss of it).<sup>307</sup>

In many ways, this document, written at an unknown date shortly after the seizure of NSDAP offices by the Gruppe DAS, represents the most honest information about the regular members of the Gruppe DAS. The piece contained spelling errors, inexperienced typing, and appears to have been written rather haphazardly, with the exception of one rather long quotation in the middle.<sup>308</sup> One can almost imagine several anarchists standing around a desk in some recently expelled Nazi clerk's office, egging one another on to mock "der Fuehrer." While the organizations propaganda and official correspondence appears dour and serious in its discussions of the war, revolution, and anarchism generally, this piece reflects exhilaration, probably stemming from the authors' recent victory over the Nazis. Finally, it represents two important things about the Gruppe DAS propaganda efforts. While they focus on the NSDAP in the later propaganda discussed above, this document precedes those by six months, falling under the period of the bulletin of the DIS, which as we saw was unconcerned with specifically German issues. While Kirschey's misremembering can be attributed to effective propaganda during the war, this letter represents the communities existing focus on the Nazis. This tells us that the Gruppe DAS propaganda was as much about responding to community desires, as it was about strengthening the communities bond for practical purposes through the identification of a common enemy.

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<sup>307</sup> Letter, "To Hitler," Federación anarquista Ibérica Archive, "International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam," undated.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

### **Rudolf Rocker: the Backlash Against Nationalism**

Of course, not everyone in the German anarchist community sided with this new national anarchism coming out of Spain.<sup>309</sup> With the publication of *Nationalism and Culture*, Rocker positioned himself as an opponent to the rebirth of nationalism within the anarchist movement.<sup>310</sup> As discussed previously, anarchism had at one point a closer relationship with nationalism, one that was largely forgotten or ignored in the post war period. Traditionally viewed as a backlash against the violent nationalism of the fascist period, Rocker's book was also a response to the growing nationalism within the anarchist movement of the 1930s, specifically the German movement.<sup>311</sup> Rocker's contribution to the anarchist's study of nationalism was also the longest lasting and was one of his most important philosophical contributions.<sup>312</sup> Rocker's work on the subject of the nation, *Nationalismus und Kultur*, was a significant work for many reasons and brought about the modern understanding of anarchism's relationship to the nation as noted earlier (vis-à-vis Fredy Perlman and others).<sup>313</sup> Other authors writing on the

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<sup>309</sup> While only briefly in Spain in 1937, Rocker associated closely with the German exile community there, both through his correspondence with Rüdiger, Souchy, and Michaelis, and with his concise discussion of the July Days in 1936, where he discusses the uprising and the Germans' contributions therein.; Rocker, "PROTOKOLL Über Die Tätigkeit Die Gruppe DAS."

<sup>310</sup> Rocker was a contemporary of Mühsam and Landauer in many ways, all roughly the same age. They also worked together in promoting anarchism in Germany and abroad. Unfortunately, Rocker lived the longest, with Landauer's death in 1919 and Mühsam's death in 1934. Rocker also published his seminal work (both in its contribution to the study of nationalism and anarchism, and its standing as his *magnum opus*) after the death of both, in 1937; Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 80.

<sup>311</sup> Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 137.

<sup>312</sup> Rocker's other important contribution to anarchism is more significant to anarchism itself, which is his development of the ideology of anarcho-syndicalism; See: Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice*; This text was written in 1937, before the end of the Spanish Civil War and the collapse of the formal anarchist resistance in Germany (in 1938). In many ways, the ideas of both texts informed the present view of anarchism's ideological stances concerning the nation and the labor movement and were responsible for codifying both in ways that were not the case in the period before their publications.

<sup>313</sup> Rocker had a devoted English-language following from his time working in London and was living in the United States in 1937, when *Nationalismus und Kultur* was published. It was eventually translated and published in English, in its entirety, in 1947, with a reprint in 1978. For that reason, I will be using the 1978 English edition. From this point forward, the book will be referred to by its English title; Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, vii-viii.



subject of the nation, from historians to social scientists and political theorists, have also cited this book, giving him perhaps the highest standing among academics of any anarchist scholar.<sup>314</sup> However, this is less important here than the content of his ideas on the subject of the nation and what those ideas said about the saliency of nationalism to anarchism in 1937.

Rudolf Rocker was born in Mainz in 1873, like Mühsam and Landauer to a middle-class family. He went into exile to avoid conscription into the Imperial Army and ended up in London in 1894. There he became involved in the East End working-class Jewish community, eventually becoming the editor of the Yiddish journal *Arbeiter Fraynd*. The journal was suppressed in 1915, doing much to crush the Jewish anarchist movement in Britain, and Rocker was imprisoned as an enemy alien. Upon his release in late 1918, he returned to Germany and became involved in the rebirth of the FVdG.<sup>315</sup> This led to his subsequent involvement in the FAUD and the IWMA, the latter of which Hans Manfred Bock blames for draining focus and manpower away from the domestic FAUD, something for which Rocker bears some responsibility. The rise of the NSDAP led to Rocker's exile in the United States, first in New York, then in California. He was instrumental in returning the body of his close friend, Emma Goldman, to the United States for burial, and continued to write on the subject of anarcho-syndicalism until his death in 1958 of natural causes.

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<sup>314</sup> Those outside the anarchist movement drawn to *Nationalism and Culture* included Bertrand Russell, Thomas Mann, and Albert Einstein, as evidenced in the letters written by all three after the book's publication; See: *The Philosophy of Rudolph Rocker's Forthcoming Book, 'Nationalism and Its Relations to Culture.'* In the Labadie Collection, University of Michigan (accessed: 17 July 2013); Bock, "Anarchosyndicalism in the German Labour Movement," 78–79; Margaret Vallance, "Rudolf Rocker-A Biographical Sketch," *Journal of Contemporary History* 8, no. 3 (July 1973) 76-77; Vallance's work is somewhat dated, but the information therein is a good start for anyone interested in learning more about Rudlof Rocker n a relatively balanced way.

<sup>315</sup> Rudolf Rocker, "The Beginnings of German Syndicalism," in *Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library* (Feb. 2008), 1-2.

Rocker initially intended *Nationalism and Culture* to be a brief study of nationalism, to be published in 1933.<sup>316</sup> It would be the culmination of several years of research on the subject by Rocker, but nowhere the six-hundred-page tome it became by its publication in 1937. Rocker's explanation for this decision, as stated in his "Preface to the English Edition," was that the events in Germany (the ascent of the NSDAP to power) demanded a more comprehensive analysis of the topic and a broadening of its readership beyond the originally intended German audience.<sup>317</sup> This led to an extensive study of the development of the state through history (in this case, a very Euro-centric view of history), with the subjects of the nation and nationalism only becoming the central focus in chapter fifteen. However, while the topic was greatly expanded beyond Rocker's original intent, the material dealing with the nation and nationalism directly are significant, both in what they represented about the German anarchism of that period and their dissention from events on the ground in Spain.

Rocker begins his specific discussion of the subject by addressing the concept of nationalism.<sup>318</sup> Unlike Mühsam, who briefly defined the nation and then spent the majority of his study on nationalism, Rocker does the inverse of this. Only in chapter fifteen did he directly address nationalism, defining it as a form of religious fundamentalism. Here we can see a similarity to Mühsam's view that nationalism stemmed from the older religious hierarchies that had underpinned the state. This definition of nationalism as a form of religious fundamentalism also conforms to the present ideas of Colin Ward and Fredy Perlman, who conceive of nationalism in

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<sup>316</sup> Henceforth, the book will be noted by its English title, as that edition was used by the author to develop this thesis; Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, vii.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid, 250.

approximately the same terms. Furthermore, Rocker saw fascism and National Socialism as the ideological culmination of and praxis of nationalism and its unification with the state.<sup>319</sup> This is similar to the Marxist view of fascism as the final stage of capitalism, except in the anarchist understanding, politics, as well as economics, were in play, and so the defeat of liberalism was essential to the unification of nationalism and the state in the form of fascism.

It is also here that Rocker makes his argument conflating the nation with the state, though the subsequent four chapters expand on the idea. As Grauer noted in her article, this is one of the primary differences between Rocker and Landauer (and by extension Mühsam). At times, this conflation of the nation and the state seems to come close to a primordialist understanding of nations.<sup>320</sup> From this point on, chapters one through four of book two, Rocker delved into the various ways the nation was constructed through western history, in each case noting how the conceptions were incorrect or untenable. Largely, these anticipate either our current understandings or were based on understandings of concepts like race which were not yet considered the scientific consensus.

This is evident in Rocker's analysis of the concept of the nation in the first three chapters of book two of *Nationalism and Culture*. In the first case, he interrogated the idea of a nation as a community of descent and shared interest. His conclusion here was that a nation could not be these things, since class divisions would inevitably supersede any shared interest. This he links to the community of descent with the concept of a

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>320</sup> Again, this is not problematic, since we must maintain a historicist understanding of these authors ideas. However, it should be noted nonetheless, since many contemporary anarchists utilize Rocker's ideas as a basis for their understanding of the nation/nationalism; Grauer, "Anarcho-Nationalism," 7-11; Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, 240-250.

“community of destiny,” with shared spiritual and material interests.<sup>321</sup> Again, however, Rocker stated a belief that the bourgeoisie and industrialist can never have any shared interest with the working-class and furthermore, that the demands of international capitalism meant that these individuals could never have any genuine national feelings, as their economic interests were bound to no such territorial manifestations.<sup>322</sup> The idea of a nation as a community of language was dealt with in a similarly short manner, with Rocker stating that,

“[language] is, therefore, no characteristic of a nation; it is even not always decisive of membership in a particular nation. Every language is permeated with a mass of foreign speech elements in which the mode of thought and intellectual culture of other people’s lives. For this reason, all attempts to trace the so-called ‘essence of the nation’ to its language fail utterly to carry conviction.”<sup>323</sup>

This is a direct contradiction of Landauer’s ideas, though he did not say so explicitly.

Nonetheless, we see Rocker dismiss the basis of both Landauer and Mühsam’s understanding of the nation, further illustrating his belief that the nation was a proxy for the state, rather than a stand-in for culture.

In summary, Rudolf Rocker’s ideas on the nation and nationalism were a departure from previously held understandings of the subject among German anarchist ideologues. His conflation of the nation with the state, rather than the nation with culture, was distinct from Landauer and Mühsam. In addition, his view that nationalism was a form of religious fundamentalism anticipates the modern anarchist movements’ view, and incorporates his experience with fascism, which Landauer never experienced and Mühsam never had time to analyze fully, given the premature deaths of both men. Rocker’s distinct position from previous anarchists’ interrogations of the subject is

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 259-261.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 276-277.

important because, while Rocker was highly influential among the Gruppe DAS and other exiled anarchists (and among the pre-exile anarchist movement in Germany), his opinions seemed partly informed by the German exiles nationalist turn. This departure and the likely influence of anarchist politics in Spain showed the shift that German anarchists' politics made while in exile. Whether this would have created extensive repercussions, such as the "Platformist" controversy of the 1920s, or if it would have faded, like Kropotkin's support of the Entente against Germany in World War I, is difficult to say.<sup>324</sup> In the end, the development seen in the national consciousness of German anarchists in Spain was cut short by external events, which ended both the revolution and drove the exile community out of sight of historians.

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<sup>324</sup> The Platformist debate in anarchism was created by a call from Nestor Mahkno, leader of the Ukrainian "Black Army" during the Russian Civil War, for anarchists to form a clear platform of ideas to combat Bolshevism. Kropotkin created a stir in the anarchist movement for his Russophile stance against "German tyranny" during the war, arguing that a victory by the Entente would be the lesser of two evils. The Platformist debate divided the anarchist movement and led some anarchists to convert to council communism, while Kropotkin's declaration was largely forgotten, with the Entente victory and his subsequent death in 1923; Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame. The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*, Vol. 1 (Oakland: AK Press, 2009) 247–263.

## CONCLUSION

Of course, the entire story of the German anarchist exiles and their burgeoning national consciousness is not a particularly fulfilling one. Anyone who studied the Spanish Revolution, or had any affinity for the politics of that conflict, knows that the entire process ended before any resolution or catharsis could be achieved. In the spring of 1937, during the week surrounding May Day in Barcelona, the Stalinist PSUC and their republican allies provoked the anarchists as an excuse to dismantle the revolutionary militias and arrest the POUM and any anarchist deemed a threat to the Communist-republican hegemony growing in Madrid. Orwell noted that the city he found when he returned from the front in late-April 1937 was wholly different from the city he left earlier that year. Barcelona became increasingly disillusioned with the revolution and old class divides, hidden when the bourgeoisie donned the workers' *monos* in fear in July 1936, reappeared by the spring of 1937. With these class divides reappearing, In Barcelona and elsewhere in Republican Spain, returned the calls for a "republic of order."<sup>325</sup> The old elites, whether they truly supported the regime or not, called on the Prieto government to suppress the radicals. Backed by Josef Stalin's *cheka*, the response to these calls would be devastating.<sup>326</sup>

### **Cut Short: the Repression and Disappearance of German Anarchism in Spain**

Overall, the brief "civil war within the Civil War" between the revolutionaries, primarily the POUM and the CNT-FAI, and the Stalinist PSUC and their Republican

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<sup>325</sup> Ealham, *Anarchism and the City*, 189–194.

<sup>326</sup> Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 1979, 451–478.

allies in the Generalitat left many dead and far more in prison.<sup>327</sup> George Orwell and, Charles and Lois Orr both spent time in the makeshift jails and dungeons used to house these political prisoners. Furthermore, both managed to escape a worse fate by virtue of their national origins and the fears of the Republicans that the British and the Americans would be driven further from their cause if harm came to their citizens.<sup>328</sup> The same cannot be said for the Germans, let alone the Italians, Hungarians, Austrians, or others from totalitarian countries, whose death or long imprisonment in Spain would not be ameliorated (or might even be welcomed) by their native governments.

Lois Orr noted that the Republic, following the May Day clashes in May 1937, imprisoned nearly 1,200 Germans.<sup>329</sup> While not all were anarchists, she makes special effort to note that “many” were. Obviously, this is an impression, not unlike Orwell’s, but the observation is telling, since she made it of only the Germans. As for harder numbers on how many German anarchists were imprisoned, no such information exists. Given the nature of the arrests and the already shoddy record keeping within the Gruppe DAS in this period in 1937, it is impossible to know if Orr’s number is accurate, or the exact number indicated by the “many” observation she made. Furthermore, no figures existed on how many were killed in the summary executions and kangaroo courts that followed these arrests. These were, after all, the Stalinist Terrors coming to Spain, with the Soviet government using the Civil War and repression of the revolution to root out

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<sup>327</sup> Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 1979.

<sup>328</sup> Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 77; Orr and Orr, *Letters from Barcelona*, 196–197.

<sup>329</sup> Orr and Orr, *Letters from Barcelona*, 196–197.

Trotskyist and other dissidents from the Moscow party line.<sup>330</sup> Anarchists and especially non-Spanish anarchists were hit hardest in Spain, after the quasi-Trotskyist POUM.<sup>331</sup>

Following the collapse of the revolution and the purges in May and June of 1937, most of the German anarchists disappear completely from sight in the historical record. The Republicans suppressed their newspapers and formal organizations, and the plans to publish more copies of the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* in different languages never came to fruition. The “Erich Mühsam” Centuria and other Spanish and foreign anarchist militias disbanded, with a few Spanish exceptions, and the members, those not imprisoned or killed, drifted into formal Popular Army units.<sup>332</sup> Lastly, some anarchists, most likely including some Germans, left Spain after the fall of the Revolution. Dejected at the thought of fighting for a bourgeois government, let alone the Stalinists, these individuals went into (a second) exile in France or elsewhere. This eventually included Souchy and Rüdiger, the former continuing his international travels, while the latter moved to Sweden and took up work with the Swedish anarcho-syndicalist SAC, remaining there for much of the rest of his life.<sup>333</sup> Rudolf Michaelis seemed to stay in Spain, though evidence of this was sparse. Following World War II, he resolved it better to live in a socialist

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<sup>330</sup> Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution*, 1979, 451–478.

<sup>331</sup> An interesting aspect of the disproportionate suppression of foreigners by the Stalinist is the shift in party line that occurred directly prior to the Spanish Civil War. When the direct opposition to “social fascism” failed, especially against the SPD in Germany, this led to a shift towards the Popular Fronts first in France, then elsewhere. This shift left the old confrontational Stalinists exposed, particularly those in Germany, whose dismembered movement could hardly sustain itself, let alone make a radical shift in tactics, though it tried. This, compounded by the NSDAP’s virulently anti-Soviet policies and positions, made Germans, especially, prime targets for Stalinist repression; Ibid., 457.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 463; Nelles, “Deutsche Anarchosyndikalistin und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg,” 515; The “Iron Column,” an anarchist militia from Valencia, managed to stay intact long after this point, though the Republic greatly curtailed their political activities. They, however, were the exception, as most other units were dismantled and forced to join the Popular Army, if the members managed to escape jail sentences.

<sup>333</sup> Souchy, *Vorsicht, Anarchist!*, 147.



country than a free country and moved to East Germany.<sup>334</sup> Others came to similar conclusions, though they were forced to either renounce their previous anarchism or, if they were lucky enough to serve in the International Brigades, could rely on their position as *brigadistas* to earn them recognition in the new communist Germany.<sup>335</sup>

All of this is to say that the project of nationalizing the German anarchist movement, begun in Spain, never bore fruit. Certainly, the evidence compiled here showed that a dialogue occurred between ideals of the nation and anarchy, but no resolution was reached, as the project ended in the violence of the May Days. Though a necessity created by the exiles isolation from their anarchist peers, both geographically and culturally, predicated their flirtation with nationalism, no final form gained traction in the community. Evidence existed of both an official discourse on the nation, as well as a popular discourse which acted to homogenize the groups and cultures associated with the Gruppe DAS. These factors certainly helped to make the German anarchists effective on the battlefield and helped to preserve their participation in the war to a greater degree than other anarchists groups, such as the French and Italians, neither as prevalent in the archives of the FAI. Nonetheless, the German anarchists did not succeed in their project of preserving their community as a seed of resistance for the future revolution in Germany itself, though through no fault of their own.

### **The German Anarchists and the Nation**

Over the course of the 1920s and 1930s, German anarchism underwent a number of changes, precipitating their eventual entrance into a direct dialogue on the nation

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<sup>334</sup> Nelles, "Deutsche Anarchosyndikalisten und Freiwillige in anarchistischen Milizen im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg," 515.

<sup>335</sup> Josie McLellan, "The Odyssey of the German Volunteers," in *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering the International Brigades, 1945-1989* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), 14–42.

between 1936 and 1937. Beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 1920s, theorists like Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam grappled with the role of the nation in anarchist politics, usually conflating it with culture and eventually concluding that its proper place was as a benign ancillary ideology. This falls into Anderson's definition of the role of nationalism within the anarchist movement in this period, where the two ideologies coexisted and fed off one another. In this period, Landauer's and Mühsam's relatively peripheral ideas on the subject had little effect on the anarchist movement within Germany, as it rose and fell following World War I, and as it began preparing for what it saw as the inevitable take-over of Germany by the NSDAP.

When the *Machtergreifung* did occur in 1933, the German anarchists retreated into exile, mostly in Barcelona, where their physical and cultural separation from the native Catalan population left them isolated from anarchist culture generally. Between 1933 and 1936, the German exiles built a community culturally independent of, and self-reliant from, the Catalan anarchist culture of Barcelona. During this time, and especially after the outbreak of hostilities in July 1936, the Germans constructed institutions, social, civic, and eventually military and political, which were as much based on their "German-ness" as on their anarchism. As the year from July 1936 to May 1937 wore on, these German-centered institutions produced an elite discourse focused on the NSDAP as the primary enemy in the conflict and sometimes even precipitating a turn away from anarchism in favor of pan-German, pan-leftist politics. Meanwhile, these institutions and discourses created a feedback loop of sorts within the community, one which sought to reinforce this "German-ness" at the expense of competing cultural characteristics, and which began the process of myth making and symbolism integral to the existence of a

nationalist ideology. While rarely losing sight of their anarchist roots (the abortive SRDF being a particular exception), the Gruppe DAS and their affiliates in Barcelona, originated a new ideology, one that hoped to reconquer Germany, not just for anarchism, but also for the true, anti-fascist Germans.

Using archival documents saved in the CNT-FAI archives by the International Institute for Social History, historians are able to piece together not only the broader story of German anarchism in Spain, but also this specific story of anti-fascist versus fascist “German-ness.” Of particular relevance were the newspapers (such as *Die soziale Revolution*) and the personal various official memoranda of the Gruppe DAS and its affiliates, like the “Mühsam” Centuria and the SRDF. These documents allow researchers to reconstruct the dialogue occurring within the German exile community, often “below the radar” so to speak, given the increasingly taboo nature of the nation as a subject of anarchist discourse. These documents allowed for two significant points to be made: first, that the nature of Barcelona and the Spanish anarchist movement isolated the Germans from their ideological comrades and laid the groundwork for the aforementioned discourse; and second, that this discourse occurred on the elite and non-elite level in tandem, but often for different reasons. While the elites (leaders like Rüdiger) often used the nation pragmatically, the regular membership held a more idealistic attachment to their national identity, one that helped to create a feedback loop, reinforcing the elite propaganda discourse.

### **Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: the Relevance of the Gruppe DAS Today**

What, then, is the lesson concerning the German anarchists toying with nationalism in Spain, if no solid conclusion was reached by the exiles with themselves?

First, this information showed continuity between the anarchist ideas of the 1900s to the 1930s, a continuity founded on the particularisms of the German anarchist movement and influenced by their origins within the Social Democratic Party and its affiliations with the labor movement in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The second crucial revelation here is that the Gruppe DAS and its affiliates in Spain represented one of the variegated ways which anarchism dealt with nationalism generally. As Anderson argues in *Under Three Flags*, the anarchists of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century held an affinity for anti-colonial movements, particularly in Europe's overseas holdings and in the colonized territories of the Russian, German, and Austrian empires of Eastern Europe. However, the fact that the German exiles in Spain dealt with these issues as well showed a remarkable correlation with the kind of colonial "blowback" which Mark Mazower referenced in his book *Dark Continent*.<sup>336</sup> Using the language of colonization to describe the actions of the NSDAP in Spain, and seeking to unify disparate ethnic groups under a single national banner, the Gruppe DAS worked to enable German anarchist exiles to better defend themselves against what was at times framed as a colonial power with no real attachment to the nation itself.<sup>337</sup>

By positioning themselves as not only anarchist resisters to fascism, but also German nationalist resisters to the NSDAP, the Gruppe DAS hoped to motivate their affiliates and other Germans in the fight against fascism broadly. Furthermore, this nationalism was not simply a pragmatic use of familiar tropes for the sake of political gain. The exile community in Barcelona developed a grassroots desire to see a more

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<sup>336</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2000), 41–75.

<sup>337</sup> This of course references the discussion from chapter six about the article in *Die soziale Revolution*, where the Gruppe DAS indicated the NSDAP's inability to live up to the ideals of "*Germanium*."

German form of anarchism practiced, one that would reinforce not only their political principles, but those principles in conjunction with a distinctly German culture and praxis, which could be used to displace the NSDAP once the revolution spread from Spain. This not only to the creation of German-centric elite discourses (via newspapers and other publications) but also to institutions aimed at the preservation of German anarchist culture. While the terminus of these ideas is impossible to predict, the trend presented here was telling. The members of the exile community in Spain apparently hoped not only for an anarchist revolution, but also for the kind of culturally distinct movements discussed by Landauer in his “Do Not Learn Esperanto!”

Finally, a last piece of relevance is worth discussing here. While this thesis has preoccupied itself with only one small group operating in a small geographic and temporal space, the larger narrative is important to consider. That is of course the broader meaning of nationalism within the anarchist movement. Anderson’s *Under Three Flags* is mentioned earlier as an indicator of the kind of preexisting affinity for nationalism held by anarchists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, this discourse largely disappeared in the era following World War II. With the collapse of mass-movement anarchism at the end of the Spanish Civil War (if not earlier, under the assault from Stalin and his allies), anarchism retreated into what Murray Bookchin referred to, derisively, as “life-style” anarchism. Bookchin’s critique centered largely on anarchism’s involvement in single-issue politics, such as feminism and sexual freedom, at the expense of mass-movement working class and environmental politics.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Murray Bookchin, “Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: The Unbridgeable Chasm,” *The Anarchist Library*, 1995, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/murray-bookchin-social-anarchism-or-lifestyle-anarchism-an-unbridgeable-chasm>.

This critique, while rooted in the kind of “man-archist” misogyny identified with Bookchin, does help to explain the disappearance of nationalism from the anarchist realm of ideas in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The German anarchists in Spain focused on broad, multi-group mobilization and needed multiple tools beyond anarchism to help motivate (would-be) constituencies. The kind of small group, targeted politics of the era following 1968 (the year when anarchism saw resurgence in popularity) allowed anarchists to criticize nationalist positions, both those inside and outside the movement. This, of course, is the discourse in which theorists like Fredy Perlman are involved. Perlman’s critique of nationalism inside and outside the nationalist movement is rooted in his lack of need of such geographically and historically contextualized ideologies in a political climate that demands only opposition to a few individual problems.

Going forward, the study of anarchism, and especially German anarchism, needs to return to a geographically located form of interpretation. Ethnohistories like Pratt’s *Class, Nation and Identity* have already done this, leading to a peculiarity where anthropologists often produce the best historical research on anarchism today. Furthermore, while anarchism’s “heyday” occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the movement continued to be influential internationally beyond this period and remains so, sometimes quite fiercely, in pockets around the globe. One need not look further than the events in Greece in 2008 and 2009 to understand that anarchism is far from a dead ideology, nor is it a fossil of a bygone era, as the old communist movements became after 1989. Certainly, a study of the national politics of a small group of German exiles in Spain in the 1930s is only a small piece of a much larger, more complicated mosaic. Nonetheless, it is a mosaic which historians have long neglected for a variety of reasons, including

contradictory politics and simple ambivalence. The world today, though, with its interconnectivity, ascendant liberalism, and massive class inequality is not unlike the world of the 1890s, and with that world seems to come a resurgent anarchism. Even if this piece contributes little to the other historiographies (of nationalism, Germany, or the Spanish Civil War), it can contribute something to the historiography of anarchism, a field that becomes increasingly relevant as the years progress.

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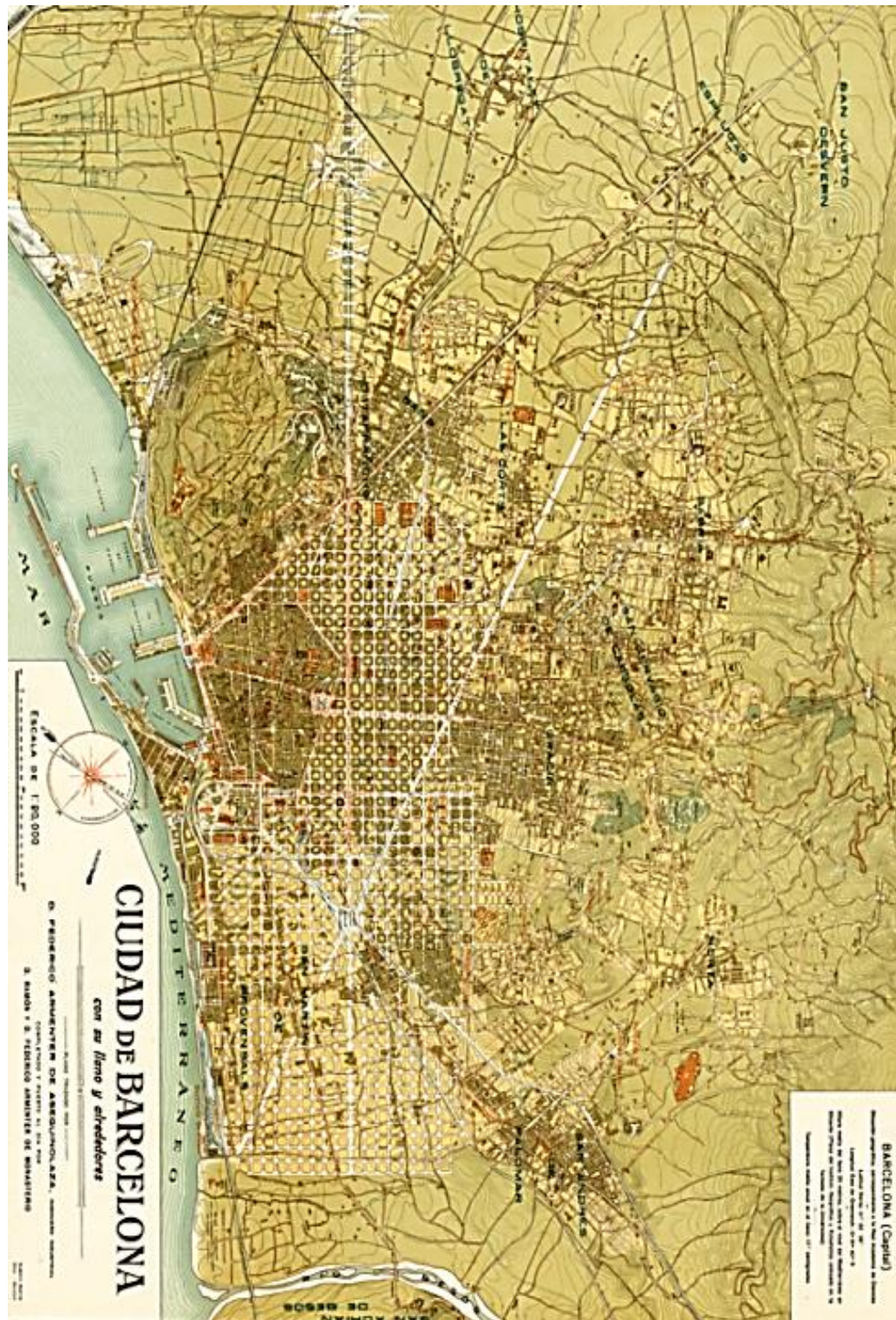
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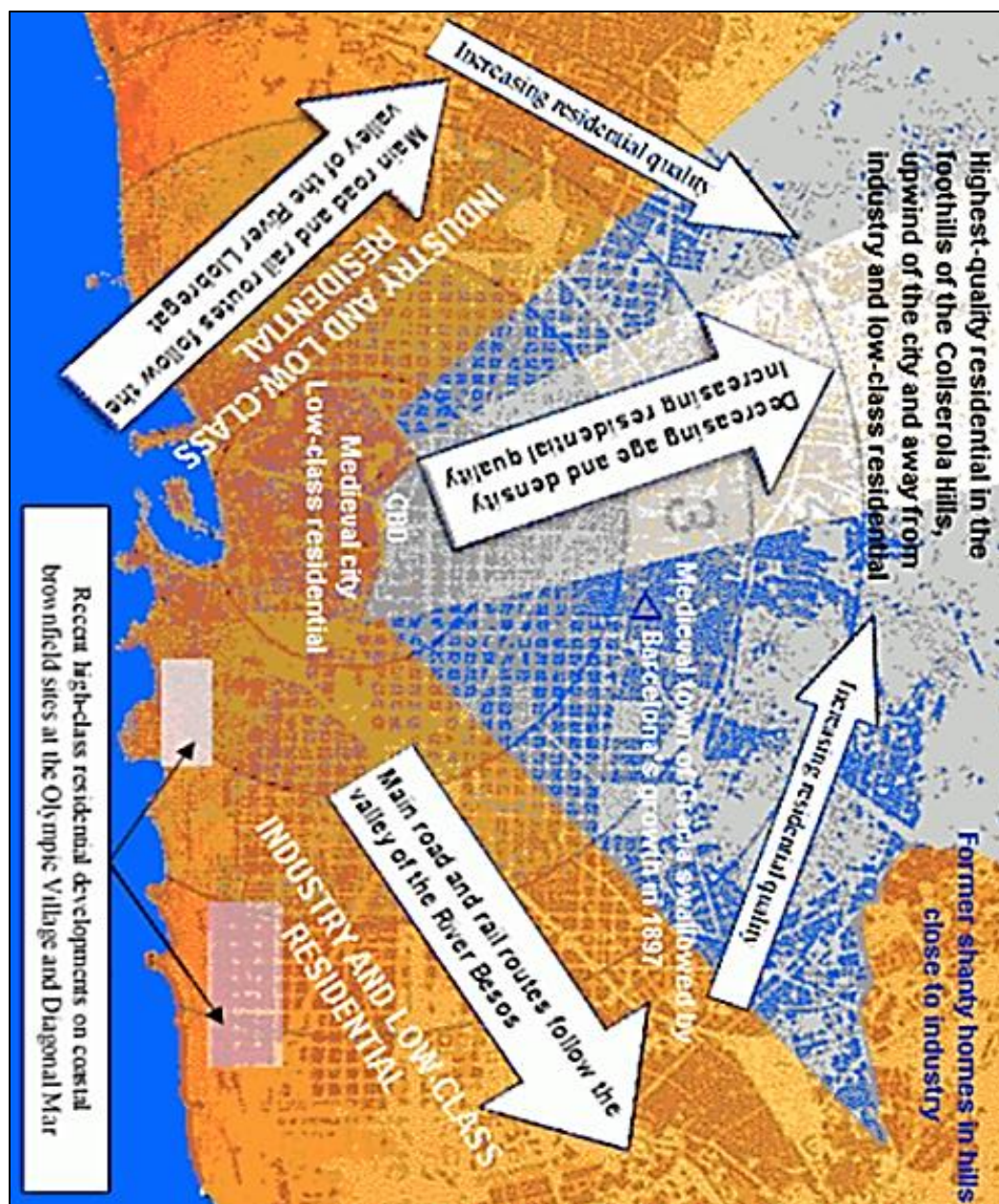


## APPENDIX A



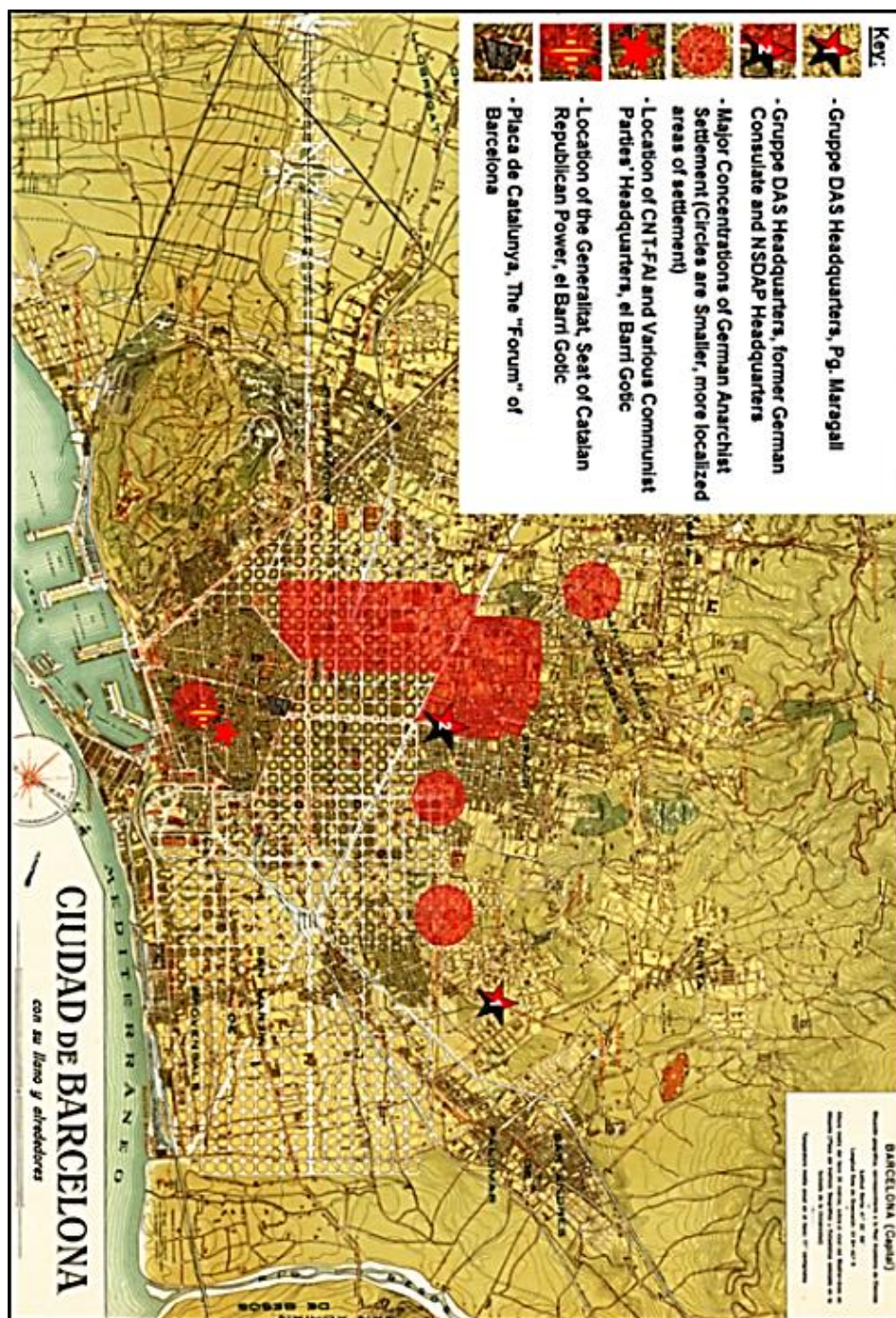
**Figure 3** Map of Barcelona from 1919. While certain regions grew greatly after 1919, the map still offers a very accurate representation of the relevant areas, especially compared to modern maps or Franco-era maps.



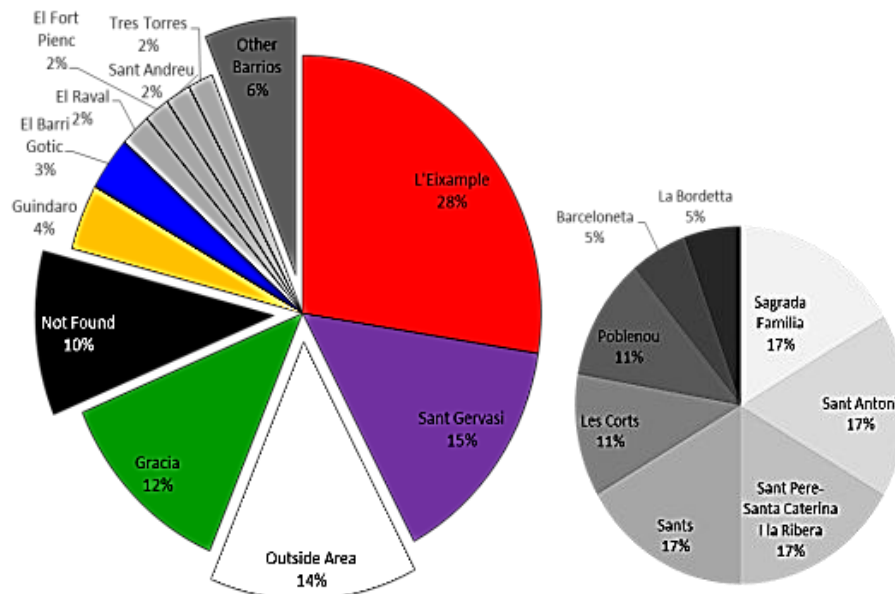
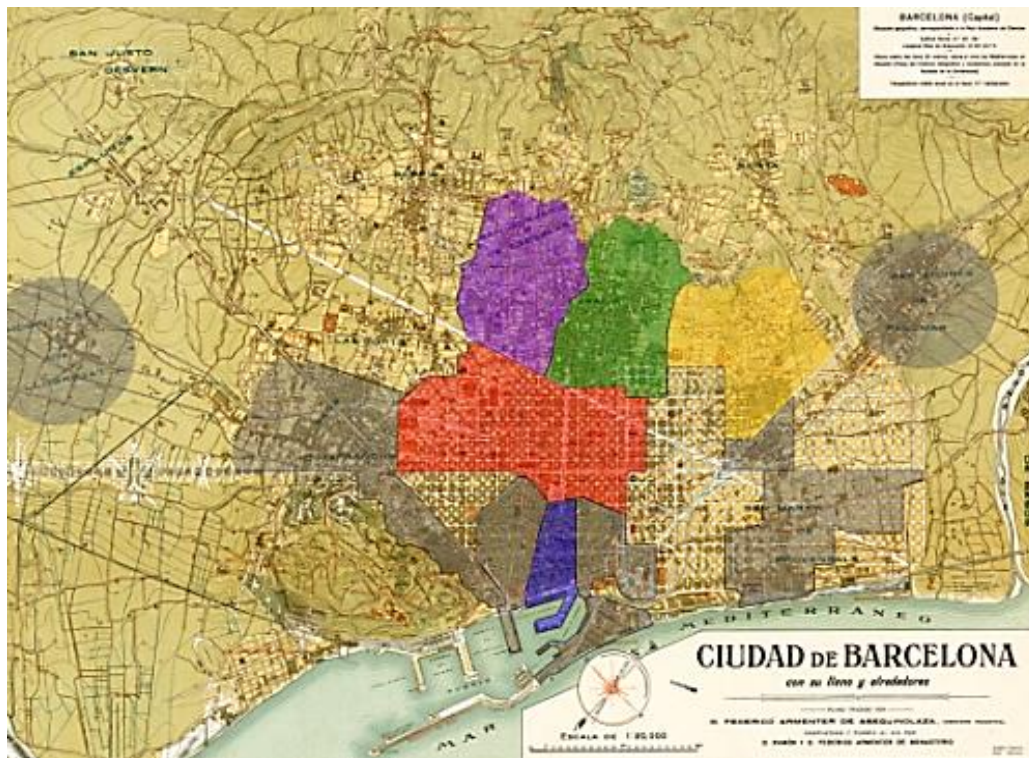


**Figure 4** This map shows how industry and population have spread through Barcelona's history. Note the direction of spread for working class (orange), middle class (blue), and upper class (white) housing.



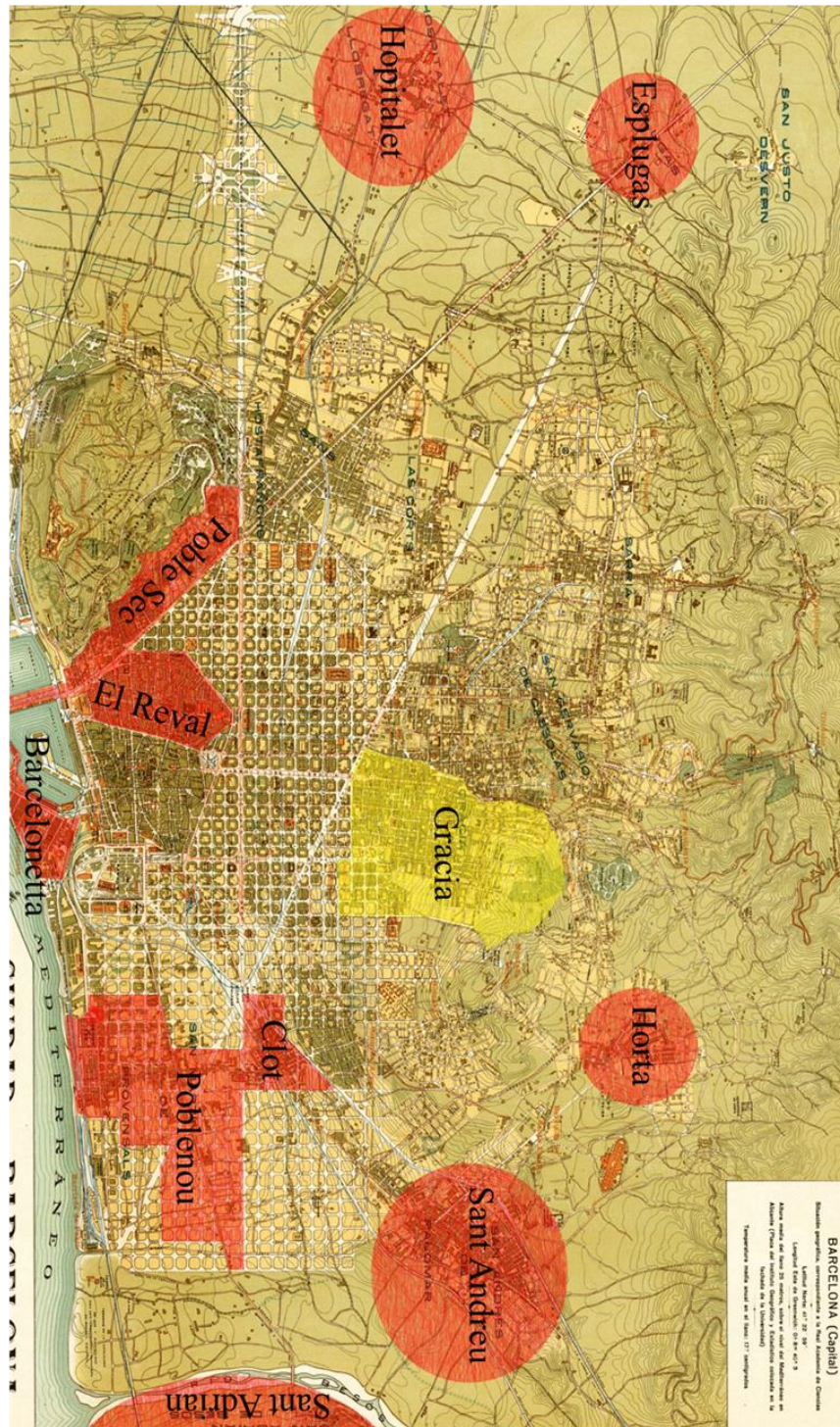


**Figure 5** This map shows both the dominant areas of the city where Germans were living and the locations of significant organizational headquarters, relative to each other and these areas of dense settlement.



**Figure 6** This map shows the five main barrios where the Germans settled upon arriving in Barcelona. As we can see from the graphs below, 82% settled in these barrios. The remainder settled elsewhere, many outside the working class barrios, highlighted in grey on the map. The grey areas in the graphs simply note the remaining 18% of Germans living elsewhere.





**Figure 7** This map shows the various barrios active in the anarchist movement (red). Also included is the Gracia barrio, where many skilled workers lived and home to more socialists and Esquerra republicans than anarchists (yellow).

## APPENDIX B

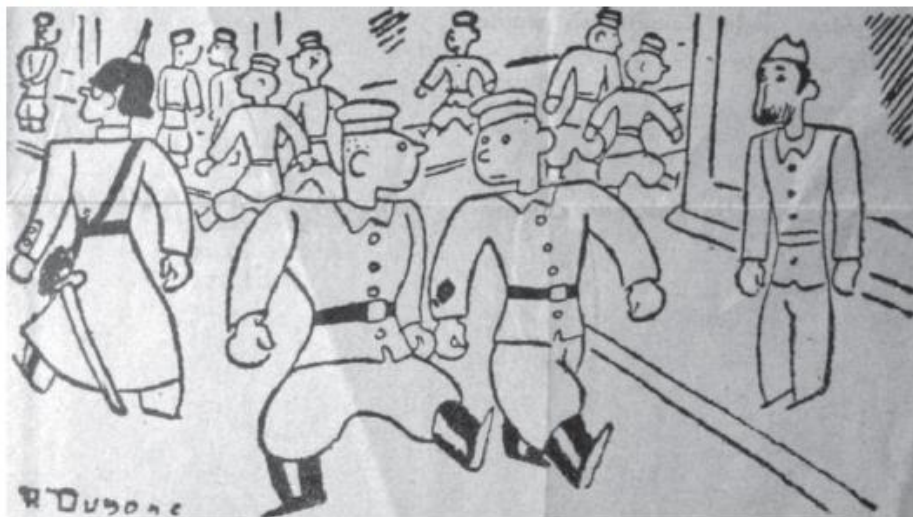


**Figure 7** Spanish propaganda cartoons, featured in *Die soziale Revolution*, Is. 7-8, March 1937. The Generalitat produced the first image, the CNT-FAI produced the second.



**Figure 8** Cartoon from Die soziale Revolution, Is. 5-6, February 1937.

### In Cádiz



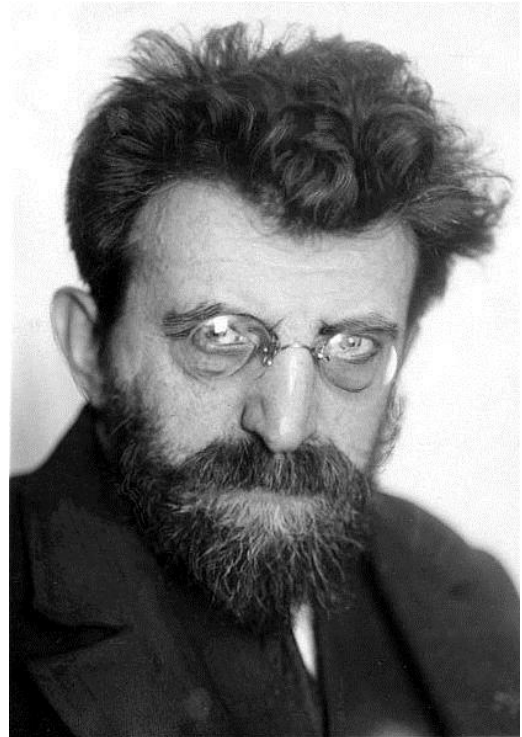
Du, Hans, was ist denn das dort für ein Kerl, der uns immer so anstiert?  
Nichts weiter, Fritz, ein ausländischer Soldat, ein Spanier

**Figure 9** Cartoon from Die soziale Revolution, Is. 2, 11 January 1937



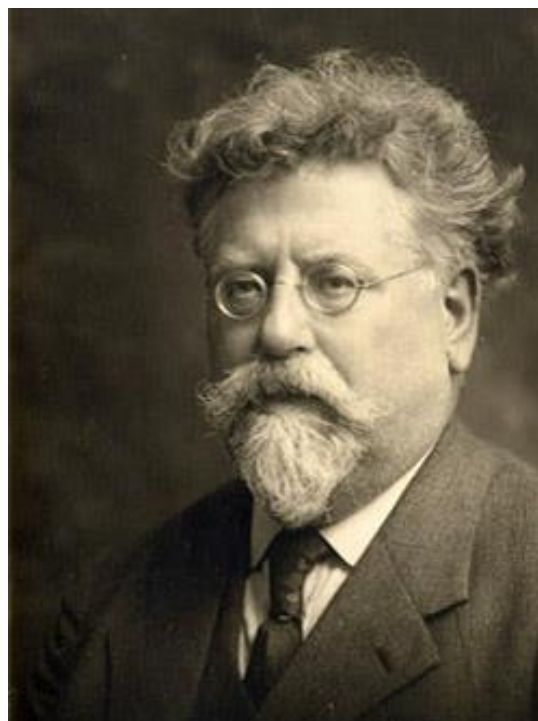


**Figure 12** Gustav Landauer, circa 1890.



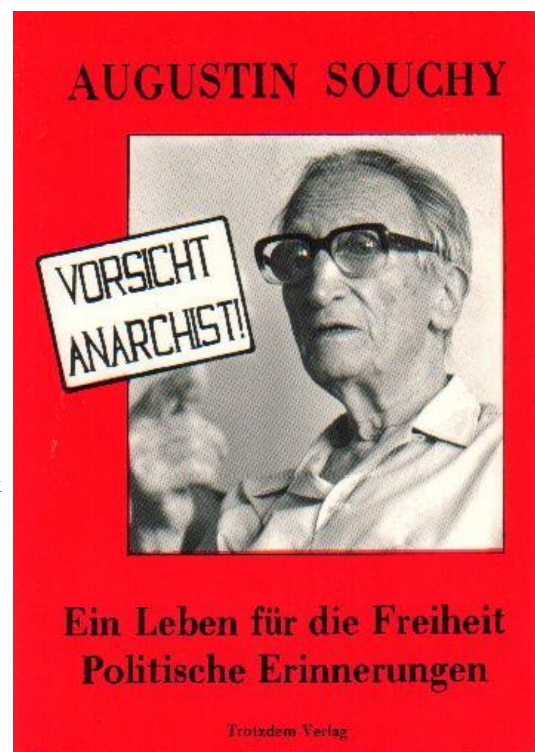
**Figure 10** Erich Mühsam, circa 1931.

**Figure 11** Rudolf Rocker, circa 1950.





**Figure 10** Helmut Rüdiger, 1953.



**Figure 9** Augustin Souchy, on the cover of his book *Vorsicht Anarchist!*, age 90.



**Figure 8** Rudolf Michaelis, photo by Margaret Michaelis, Berlin, date unknown.







**Figure 11** Back cover of Das Schwarz-Rotbuch, circa 1937. Composite image declaring that Hitler's aims were "today in Spain, tomorrow the world."