

Trouble in Moscow: From the life of the “Liesma” [“Flame”] Group

[This account covers the Latvian anarchists’ activities in Moscow, up to the Cheka raids of April 1918, when the Bolsheviks attacked anarchists in the city in the name of “Law and Order”]

The group was founded in August 1917 and from the beginning worked in the syndicalist direction.

Before its foundation comrades worked independently, as well as together with existing Russian groups. Later, in view of much greater efficiency if comrades could communicate in Latvian, working with Latvian workers, comrades decided to unite in a permanent group and found quarters which could be open at any time to interested workers, where existing anarchist literature would be available for their use, where on certain days comrades would be able to come together, read lectures, organise “question and answer” evenings for comrades and the broader public. But because such quarters were difficult to find, members gathered once a week in a tiny private apartment, where they were only able, packed like sardines, to review and discuss the most important issues for the group.

When the October revolution started all comrades subscribed either to the Red Guard or to the anarchist fighting organisation, and took the most active part in the October battles, extending their solidarity (hand in hand) with the formerly oppressed but now empowered and oppressing Bolshevik-Communists.

Other comrades, who at the time of the fighting were at the printing house “*Moskovski Listok*” (*The Moscow Sheet*), fought a fierce battle against the Junkers and only because of the cowardice of soldiers who had been called to the assistance of the anarchists after two days of fierce fighting were they disarmed and subjected to the Junker’s violence. Together with coats and hats, also the whole capital of the group – several hundred roubles – was looted. (One of the comrades happened to have the money on him). Thus the group again remained without any means, and we had to postpone our plans to open permanent quarters for an indefinite time.

But time went on. Comrade Bolsheviks, who seized the Government’s money, started to fall behind the growing revolution and, unable to forget their God Marx’s holy words that social revolution is only possible with the concentration of capital and that a lot of time was needed to reach it, it was necessary to step upon the tail of the revolution, so that it wouldn’t derail

from its prescribed path and topple the theory laid out in the thick volumes of Marx’s *Capital*.

All this made comrades think that there was no time to wait until capital would “concentrate” in their cash box in order to rent quarters; quarters had to be acquired now, in the nearest future, irrespective of how and by what means. As social expropriations were already happening in other cities, where private houses, shops, factories and other private property were being nationalised, our comrades considered this a justified and important step in continuing the revolution, and decided to look out for an appropriate building where we could start our club.

In the end such a house was found in Presnensk Pereulok number 3. It was a small house without furniture and needed repairs in order to make living in it possible, but the group still occupied it and after a couple of weeks the Latvian Anarchists’ Club of the “Liesma” group opened there.

In that time, as best we could, we bought in books and literature for our reading table and every Sunday public lectures were held which often attracted an audience of over a hundred people. On Wednesday evenings we organised theoretical reading circles for our comrades themselves, where various political issues were discussed. Special focus was upon the spreading of anarchist ideas, which in the end set the group on a distinct communist [anarchist-communist, not Bolshevik] platform.

With the growth of the group, many and various new needs appeared, one of the most important of which was the need to find a way to publish literature, because it was impossible to gather large masses of people in the tiny building – we had to give the masses something to read. We had to organise communes, show the masses an example and instil in them faith in the future free order (system). In order to realise all this we needed a larger building and financial means, money.

In January the group occupied a house in Malaja (Little) Dimitrovka, but because the house was inhabited, we had to share it with the earlier inhabitants (the owner of the house), and the group took only half of the house. The other half of the house with all the belongings (except for some furniture and the library) was given to the owner with the right to rent it.

[pto]

Trouble in Moscow

The Club is now moving to the new quarters, while the former house is being renovated for a commune (communal flat).

The group started publishing literature. Because of lack of resources, at present only three pamphlets are being published and the other texts will be printed gradually, at the end of each job when the main work has been finished.

Apart from the ideological work, the group has also founded a Fighting Unit with acting members. So that the Fighting Unit could be self-reliant (independent), full ammunition and food parcels for all members were received from the main Red Headquarters. Their task was to defend the revolution, together with the Moscow workers, against the counter-revolutionary element that only waited to raise its head again.

With the arrival of the Latvian group from Kharkov on the order of the Revolutionary Committee, Group "Liesma", together with the Russian group "Kommuna" occupied a manor house in Vedenski Pereulok (side street), with two "fleugels" (out buildings), where only three people lived. One of these "fleugels" was occupied by "Kommuna", which had only just been organised and still didn't have their own quarters. The other "fleugel" was occupied by "Liesma" for the comrades from Kharkov, who had to come to Moscow at the beginning of April.

But because there were exceptionally many historical things in the newly occupied house – precious porcelain, old silver, famous masters' paintings, extensive libraries and an enormous collection of various ancient icons, the value of which was enormous (indescribable), after an evaluation by some artists both groups decided that, considering that [no] one person was able to use such treasures, which were not in the possession even of many a museum, and which were absolutely out of the reach for a wider public, they consider it their duty to see to it that all these historical treasures should be accessible to the broadest masses of people.

The group established contact with the members of the City Art Committee who took it upon themselves to organise and open a museum, which was also done in the first days of April.

Also, the group "Liesma" established contacts with the actors of the Moscow Latvian Theatre in order to open a Latvian Anarchist Theatre, which promises good results and has met a sympathetic response from the actors. A common united meeting of representatives of both theatres was planned on 12 April, at which the foundation of the Latvian Workers' Theatre would be laid. "But man supposes and God disposes"... In the night of 11/12 April we were woken up by a terrible noise, amid shooting and noise we could hear people screaming. In the first moments we

couldn't ask anybody either. All rooms were overfilled with soldiers, who were on a horrible looting spree – they just went mad like beasts who broke out of cages – who were ready to tear you to pieces with their teeth for every word you dared to say.

Later we found out that the unexpected guests were a unit of the Soviet government army, the Latvian Riflemen and others, and that on orders of the government we were arrested for some dark deeds, and like in October from the side of the Junkers, now on the orders of the Bolsheviks we were to be destroyed. After several days of torture in the cellars of the Kremlin and behind the walls of Butyrka Prison, we were recognised as "ideological revolutionaries" and were released with the following words from the high authorities: "we fight against bandits, but we leave ideological workers in peace".

We were recognised as "ideological" workers, but only after our ideological work had been completely destroyed, the literature which had cost us so much efforts and selfless work was burned, the printing press confiscated, all the capital looted. Rendered harmless, we were let off to go where we wanted.

But it is possible to suppress a man, not an idea, and the "Liesma" group, having been robbed twice, did not stop its activities but renewed its work again with twice as much dedication and energy.

Pooling our last strength and means together, we started replacing our literature and started publishing our magazine to spread our ideas even more energetically.

"R"

The author of this article, "R", was Janis Birze (Remus), a Latvian anarchist who had taken part in the 1905 Revolution in the Baltic, first as a member of the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party (LSDSP) then as a member of the Anarchist-Communist group "Liesma" and the leader of an anarchist fighting group that carried out numerous expropriations and attempted assassinations in Riga. Arrested in 1907, he was sentenced to 6 years hard labour on 2 April 1908, which he served in Riga and Pleskav (Pskov) prisons, afterwards being exiled to Jenisejas district (Siberia), in the region of Kansk, Vidrina pagasts. Freed by the revolution in March 1917, Birze re-formed "Liesma" in Moscow as this article describes. Of his subsequent life all that is known is that he worked in the Soviet Union in the trade sphere during the 1920s and 30s. His last known place of work was Novosibirsk, where "his life was ended" (according to a Soviet account written in 1962) at the end of the 1930s.

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Thanks to Phil Ruff for providing this text.

Otello Gaggi: Victim of Fascism and Stalinism

OTELLO GAGGI, AN EXEMPLARY CASE

Summer 1944. The Italian communist Togliatti, minister without portfolio in the new Bonomi government (which has recently taken over from Marshal Badoglio) receives an expected and lengthy missive from Mexico City. The signature at the foot of the letter cannot but have startled the one-time conspirator known as 'Ercoli', now comfortably ensconced in a ministerial chair in Rome. Victor Serge, one-time leading Bolshevik, leader of the international Trotskyist Opposition, a writer and historian of world repute, had decided to write to the Italian communist leader with a query that, given the times and the war then raging in Europe, must have struck the letter's recipient, busy as he was, as absurd and bizarre. What had become of anarchist working man Otello Gaggi from San Giorgio Valdarno (in the province of Arezzo) who had fled to the USSR as a political refugee? Here are a few extracts from Serge's letter:

"TO MINISTER PALMIRO TOGLIATTI, MINISTER OF THE ANTIFASCIST GOVERNMENT IN ROME Minister, Since 1926 you have been the Communist Party of Italy's representative in Moscow. A member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, secretary of that executive for the Latin countries, charged with confidential missions in Spain, you enjoyed the complete trust of the Russian government. As required you collaborated with the Commissariat of the Interior, to wit, that government's political police. It was to you that Italian refugees harassed by the GPU would address their appeals from prison, without any effect (...) Whatever became of the Italian antifascists who fled to the USSR at a time when the Russian revolution was generously offering a haven to the persecuted the world over? (...) What has become of the Tuscan syndicalist Otello Gaggi, sentenced to a thirty year prison term by the Arezzo Court in 1921 for having defended his village against the fascist gangsters; arriving in the USSR in 1923, he was arrested on grounds unknown in 1935 and the following year applied in vain to be allowed to go to Spain to fight? Joaquin Ascaso, delegate of the Caspe militias, Emilienne Morin, the Durruti Column delegate and Alfonso De Miguel, press delegate of the CNT, telegraphed Stalin in support of Gaggi's application. The Italian antifascists never received any answer and Gaggi has disappeared.

What has become of Luigi Calligaris ?... What has become of Francesco Ghezzi (...)?

They have vanished without trial. And were not defended. Have they been executed? When? Why? (...)
Victor Serge

Gaggi was one of the many. He was born on 6 May 1896, the son of a steelworker. He was not a leader

and not an intellectual around whom public opinion might be mobilised. He was an ordinary working man, a real social fighter. His native Valdarno is generous territory with solid libertarian roots, a land of miners and workers and peasants who, since the end of the 19th century, had begun to chip away at the old stereotype that depicted the subjects of the grand-dukes as long suffering. From an early age, as was only to be expected, he belonged to the anarchist movement there and was deeply involved in the epic events of, first, the social struggle, and then of the post-Great War years. An anti-militarist, he participated in anti-war activities mounted by local anarchists and the Socialist Youth Federation, targeting the disciplinary battalions and then opposing the Libyan expedition in 1911. After Italy entered the Great War in 1915, he was called up but deserted time and again, was captured, shipped to the front lines and sentenced to a prison term before being released under the amnesty of February 1919. He was active in the USI (Italian Syndicalist Union) which in the Valdarno area was led by Attilio Sassi. That organisation, a leftwing revolutionary syndicalist breakaway from the reformist GCdL (General Labour Confederation), had seen its ranks swell in the area during the war years as 5,000 miners who quit the CGdL flooded into it. In the Valdarno in Arezzo, Malatesta was on home turf: as late as the 1970s you could hear elderly militants talking of the crowds that showed up for his rallies in the "Gioco del pallone" square in San Giovanni, about the clashes between the miners and the forces of law and order and of the first acts of thuggery by the fascists.

After the fascist attacks against individual militants and the premises of various labour and popular associations and institutions got properly under way at the end of the so-called "Red Biennium", on 23 March 1921 there were serious clashes in San Giovanni Valdarno with the fascist expeditionaries from Florence and this triggered rioting throughout the nearby mining district of Castelnuovo. Premises were seized and barricades thrown up and a bomb was tossed into the mine administration office. A group of workers, Gaggi among them, was later charged with premeditated armed conspiracy. Gaggi went on the run. Gaggi, who was a premature partisan, found himself aligned with those who held that they had to defend themselves by force of arms from the rising tide of fascist violence and he joined the *Arditi del Popolo* (People's Commandos). These units welcomed volunteers of every persuasion, inspired by an antifascist libertarian outlook, but were afforded official backing only by the anarchist movement. With the police on his trail and forced to go underground in San Marino, Gaggi was given a 30 year prison sentence by the

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courts in Arezzo and like other Valdarno workers was forced into exile.

But where was he to go? Among the various options open to him (although he didn't have a long time to mull it over), the possibility of going to the USSR, to the 'socialist homeland' looked most inviting. There was already an existing escape line headed by the new-born Communist Party of Italy which offered help indiscriminately to any antifascist in need of its services. Even though since the early 1920s there had been no shortage of awful hints about anti-anarchist reprisals mounted by the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky, and despite the disappointing audience that Armando Borghi (the USI's general secretary) had in Moscow with Lenin himself in 1920, in spite of the appeals for the release of anarchist prisoners that had been presented to Soviet Foreign Minister Chicherin in Italy, in spite of all this, we can still see how many thought at the time that this might be just some sort of a passing crisis, a misunderstanding due to the straits in which the revolution found itself and that everything would be sorted out later.

From the outset, enthusiasm for the victorious Russian revolution had spread through the entire worldwide workers' movement. Moreover, the Communists could scarcely be regarded as anything other than brothers since they filled Mussolini's prisons, in equal and even greater numbers than any other antifascist faction.

Gaggi, a childhood friend of some of those who were then supporters of the new-born Communist Party of Italy, would probably have reasoned along these lines. He boarded a Soviet vessel that dropped him off in Odessa. Reaching Moscow in 1923 after a long and roundabout trip, he received a warm welcome from the substantial (200-300 strong) Italian antifascist colony there already. But, as was the case with every new arrival, along with Gaggi there arrived a dossier noting his political history as compiled by a number of his countrymen, Party officials and completed by the Soviet police.

He found work as a doorman with a large firm in Petrovka Street in central Moscow. He picked up and took classes in Russian (he who could barely read and write in Italian) so that later he was able to carry out sterling work as a translator and interpreter. He continued to show an interest in developments in Italy and in the USSR, whilst holding on to his anarchist beliefs. His wife was a Russian citizen employed by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Gaggi lived with her for ten years and they had a son together. So his life in Moscow, his new home, was made up of small pleasures, a longing for the Valdarno and Arezzo and Florence and larger worries that loomed as Stalin came to power. His enthusiasm for

politics was still evident in discussions within the Italian exile community with which he remained in touch, and with many others he met in his day to day work. In 1929, the libertarian syndicalist refugee from Milan, Francesco Ghezzi, was arrested and deported to Suzdal [NE of Moscow]. This signalled the start of a crackdown on leftist dissidents among the Italian colony. In 1930 Gaggi approached the Italian embassy to sound his chances of returning to Italy, his lawyer having suggested in a letter from Italy that the case against him and his sentence might be reviewed. In June 1933 a gathering of Italian exiles from Moscow, Kiev and Odessa, heard a proposal from Giuseppe Sensi that they all adopt Soviet nationality. Gaggi was reluctant to do so as he still hoped somehow to get back to Italy. The Italians split into "orthodoxes" and "dissidents". Gaggi was one of the latter.

In December 1934, the USSR had entered one of the darkest periods in the history of the international communist movement. With the murder in Leningrad of the Soviet leader Kirov as a pretext, the Stalinist purges got properly under way. This tremendous purge even hit the Bolsheviks of the old guard before spreading through the Comintern parties. Suspicion, slander and denunciation ate into the motley community of Italian antifascist refugees. In December 1934, Otello Gaggi was inexplicably arrested by the GPU. And since the building where he worked as doorman housed the Argentine embassy, one of the charges levelled at him was that he was a spy for that South American nation. A nonsensical charge. He was accused of belonging to a Trotskyist counter-revolutionary organisation headed by another Italian exile, Luigi Calligaris, a follower of Amadeo Bordiga. The interrogation records show that under questioning in the Lubyanka, Gaggi denied the charges of counter-revolution and Trotskyism but agreed that he shared Calligaris's view that there was no freedom in the USSR and that workers' lives were wretched there. He conceded that he had been corresponding with a group of Italian anarchists in Paris, among them Umberto Tommasini.

The courts in Moscow sentenced him to three years' hard labour in Siberia under Article 58, Paragraph 10 of the Soviet Penal Code! In an attempt at sarcasm, the Russian Bolshevik judges had thereby shown that they were ten times more "clement" than their Italian fascist counterparts who had sentenced this anarchist trade unionist from the Valdarno to thirty years. Gaggi was banished to the province of Arkhangelsk in northern Russia, 1,000 kilometers from Moscow. Two years after that, he was deported to Kazakhstan in Central Asia, after which his trail goes cold.

By who knows what freakish means, he managed from a camp in Siberia to communicate to comrades in

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Paris his desire to come and fight the fascists in Spain, as well as the plea he had made to that effect to the Soviet authorities.

After some inevitable mishaps, the Tuscan exile got through and dozens of telegrams were sent off to Stalin, signed by CNT and militia leaders, calling for Gaggi to be set free and for him to be allowed to come to Spain!

No reply was ever received and nothing was heard of Gaggi again. And so it stands.

Giorgio Sacchetti

[adapted from a paper read to the Libertarian Festival in Reggio Emilia, Italy (1990) later published in *Umanità Nova* of 30 September 1990, and from a review of his book *Otello Gaggi, vittima del fascismo e dello stalinismo* (Pisa 1992)]

A Letter From Francesco Ghezzi

Dear Friends,

The June 2008 Bulletin mentions a “Russian (and other) anarchists in the Gulag” research project. Among the “others” was : Francesco Ghezzi. Whoever has read Victor Serge’s *Memories of a Revolutionary* already knows how Ghezzi, who was one of his closest friends in USSR, had courage enough to go with him to the train station, in 1936, when eventually Serge was allowed to leave the country. Ghezzi, who was again arrested in 1937, died at Vorkuta in 1942.

What makes me to write you, is more precise.

It is already known that after he had been arrested in 1937 and when he faced the GPU, saying he was still an anarchist, and proud to be an anarchist, he recalled having sent a letter to protest to the GPU when the Bolsheviks had arrested Nicolas Lazarevitch, in Moscow, on Oct. 8th, 1924. Now working on the Lazarevitch papers, thanks to the fine inventory of Alexander Goriounov, I came across the rough copy of this letter, written at the risk of his life (or at least, of his freedom) : written in Italian, it is sent to Agranov – one of the GPU’s most terrible elements.

Though I don’t know if it might be of any use I send you its text, anyway, since it gives an idea of the courage of such men.

Sincerely

Luc Nemeth, Paris

Yalta, 31-12-1924

Il compagno Nicola Lazarevic si trova detenuto da tre mesi presso la G.P.U. di Mosca per ragioni politiche.

Noi abbiamo conosciuto Lazarevic in Italia nel 1920 durante i movimenti rivoluzionari e abbiamo imparato ad amarlo per la sua fede rivoluzionaria, per averlo sempre visto in prima fila nelle lotte, devoto alla causa operaia. Come noi egli dovette fuggire e

rifugiarsi in Russia perchè perseguitato e noi siamo molto addolorati nel saperlo perseguitato anche da questo governo. Noi ci domandiamo costernati, come se lo domandano vari altri rifugiati politici in Russia e operai rivoluzionari all’estero che conobbero in Lazarevic un campione della classe operaia, come mai si possa arrestare un operaio consimile anche ammettendo che avesse fatto della propaganda rivoluzionaria e comunista con concetti che contrastano colle direttive ufficiali del governo russo, mentre si lasciano in libertà tanti borghesi sabotatori i quali non attendono che il momento per impiccare tutti gli operai.

Ciononostante pero noi vogliamo credere che presto mettiate Lazarevic in libertà e che possa venire qui in Yalta a lavorare con noi la terra nelle nostra colonia agricola.

Saluti rivoluzionari

Francesco Ghezzi

Ghezzi’s letter to Agranov (courtesy of Luc Nemeth):

Yalta, 31-12-1924

Comrade Nicola Lazarevic [Nicholas Lazarevitch] has been three months in the custody of the Moscow GPU for political reasons. We made Lazarevitch’s acquaintance in Italy in 1920 during the revolutionary disturbances there – and learnt to love him for his revolutionary faith and because we had always seen him in the front ranks of struggles, committed to the workers’ cause. Like us, he was forced to flee and sought refuge in Russia because he was persecuted and we are greatly saddened to discover that he has been persecuted by this government as well. Dismayed, we wonder, as a number of other political refugees in Russia and revolutionary workers abroad do, how on earth a worker of his calibre could have been arrested, even assuming that in his revolutionary communist propaganda he has employed ideas at odds with the official directions of the Russian government, whilst so many bourgeois saboteurs just itching for the chance to string up all the workers are left at liberty.

Notwithstanding which we would like to believe that you will shortly set Lazarevitch free and that he may come here to Yalta to join us in working the soil of our agricultural settlement.

Revolutionary greetings,
Francisco Ghezzi.”

Source: Lazarevitch papers: BDIC (Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine)
6, Allée de l’Université F-92001 Nanterre Cedex
<http://www.bdic.fr/index.php>

An Italian Anarchist in the Gulag

FRANCESCO GHEZZI – ITALIAN ANARCHIST IN VORKUTA

Victor Serge remembered the Milan worker, Francesco Ghezzi (who ended his days in a soviet gulag in 1942) as “thin and lanky”. Thanks to the recent publication of the records of the trial held after he was arrested in 1937, we now have some detail about how he ended his days. Born in Milan on 4 October 1893 into a working class family, Ghezzi started work at the age of seven and was an anarchist by the age of sixteen. Between 1914 and 1921 he was linked to the USI and active in political protests and anti-imperialist campaigning. He was often forced into exile in Paris or Switzerland to avoid police harassment. In 1919 he was arrested and jailed for his part in the orchestration of an uprising in Zurich but was freed after a campaign by public opinion, only to be expelled from Switzerland right after that for his opposition to a patriotic demonstration. In the wake of the Diana theatre bombing in Milan in 1921, in order to get him out of the way of the anti-anarchist crackdown, the USI sent him as its anarcho-syndicalist delegate to the Profintern. Relations between anarcho-syndicalists and the leaders of the Party were very strained by that point. The Profintern refused to acknowledge trade union autonomy and arrests were becoming more and more frequent. Few denounced the violence behind the crackdown; following on-the-spot protests from Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, a few anarchists and anarcho-syndicalist prisoners were freed and some of these took part in the foundation congress of the IWA in Berlin in 1922. Attending that congress illegally and speaking on behalf of the USI, Ghezzi was then arrested by the German police who meant to hand him over to the Italian state. According to his wife Olga, Ghezzi had been tried in absentia and sentenced to death by the Italian fascist government, should he return to Italy. The leftwing press launched a campaign for his release. Lawyer Michel Fraenkel secured a document certifying that Ghezzi was a soviet citizen; and thanks to support from the soviet foreign minister Narkomindel, Ghezzi made it back to the Soviet Union. From 1923 to 1926 Ghezzi lived and worked on a farming commune in Yalta and strove to reestablish contacts with foreign anarchists. In 1926 he found a job as a workman in Moscow. He helped establish liaison between the Russian anarchists who were operating semi-underground by this time and their counterparts abroad. With the philosopher Borovoy (a pamphlet from whom Ghezzi managed to smuggle out of the country) and others, he joined the Kropotkin Museum team, leaving it in 1928: conflict erupted within the Museum between the ‘ideological’ anarchists and the ‘anarcho-mystics’ led by Alexey Solonovich. The anarchists who dropped out of the Museum set up

a new Black Cross in competition with the Black Cross of the ‘anarcho-mystics’ and Ghezzi looked after donations coming in from abroad. In 1929 and 1930 he was caught up in a further wave of arrests, charged with engaging in counter-revolutionary activity: on 31 May 1929 he was sentenced to three years in a labour camp and shipped off to political isolation in Suzdal, 250 kms. northeast of Moscow. A massive campaign to secure his release was launched abroad. The French novelist Romain Rolland sent a letter to the soviet writer Maxim Gorky to get him to intercede with Stalin, with whom he was friendly: Gorky was hesitant but finally raised the matter with Stalin and with OGPU leader Genrikh Yagoda, but to no avail. But thanks to the urgent lobbying, Ghezzi was freed after he had been dispatched to exile in Kazakhstan in 1931, but was required to remain in the Soviet Union. He then made his way back to Moscow where he became a workman again, graduated from the Technical Institute and took as his second wife Olga Gaake, by whom he had a daughter. From the evidence gathered it appears that Ghezzi still clung to his own anarchist and anti-bolshevik opinions. In Moscow he carried on liaising with the outside world and offered to harbour activists fleeing from exile. In 1933, through the Red Cross, he lobbied for the release of the Trotskyist Gurevitch and helped Victor Serge’s exiled wife, Lyubov Rusakova-Kibaltchitch. In 1936 Ghezzi made repeated requests to be sent to Spain as a volunteer, but permission was denied. On 5 November 1937 Ghezzi was rearrested: the charge was engaging in counter-revolutionary activity in his workplace and being a Nazi supporter. Inquiries took a month. Ghezzi repudiated all the charges, including the charge of being pro-Trotskyist. Up until he was convicted he was held in the Lubyanka, the NKVD’s internal prison, before being dispatched to a labour camp inside the Arctic Circle, even though prison doctors had diagnosed him with TB. On 3 April 1939 the NKVD Special Commission sentenced him to eight years’ hard labour and a fortnight later he was moved to the Vorkutlag (the Vorkuta camp). In 1943, a further NKVD decree sentenced him to be shot, but sentence was not carried out because Ghezzi had died on 3 August 1942. In 1956, following an application by Olga Ghezzi, Khrushchev agreed to reopen the Ghezzi file and to rehabilitate him. Some of the witnesses whose depositions had been used in his arrest in 1937 retracted these, insisting that the statements had been extracted from them through violence. On 21 May 1956 the Moscow court declared that “the evidence against him was insufficient” and the NKVD verdict was overturned.

From *Bollettino Archivio G. Pinelli* (Milan) No 27, July 2006

Yarchuk on the Anarchist Red Cross (1924)

A Letter from Yarchuk

Dear Comrades:

In one of the recent numbers of the “Freie Arbeiter Stimme” I learned that the American Anarchist Red Cross has resumed its activities.

I heartily congratulate the comrades who again have undertaken this most important work.

In the days when Tzarism reigned in Russia, the American Anarchist Red Cross was famous for its energetic work in helping the Russian comrades persecuted at that time.

Hundreds of Anarchists who were tortured in the Tzaristic prisons and fortresses, all those revolutionists who have gone through the great inquisition in their fight for freedom, found great help and relief in the devoted work of their comrades of the American Anarchist Red Cross.

The revolution came. The doors of the prisons opened, the tortures of the exiled were at an end.

A great number of revolutionists left the cold, solitary, miserable Siberia, and returned to revolutionary Russia, where they at once became a part of the great movement.

With body and soul, and full of energy, they spread all over Russia, to propagate their ideal, and call the peasants and workers to organize for the final conflict, to destroy the old society completely, and organize life on a new ideal basis, devoid of God, Tzar and masters.

The American Anarchist Red Cross, in that great moment of enthusiasm realizing that the time when the triumph of the persecuted proletariat over their masters was approaching, gave up their activities.

The American Anarchist Red Cross could then feel, see and realize that their work was not in vain. By the great solidarity of its work the Anarchist Red Cross not only saved the lives of the comrades, but still more helped to keep up the spirit and love for the great struggle for freedom.

Great uncontrollable hopes! Several years elapsed. Enthusiasm! Joy! Hope passed with the storm in the struggle for the great unattainable ideal for complete freedom...

The Russian Revolution is destroyed!

What did happen during those few years? In the height of the world's imperialism, in February, 1917 the proletariat of Russia raised the banner of revolt, a revolt which brought thousands of victims for the great cause, and destroyed the vast capitals which for years have been saved with the sweat and blood of the Russian proletariat.

Their desperate struggle was final; with their enthusiasm they were ready to infect the proletarians of the world. Their slogan became. “Long live the solidarity of the world proletariat.”

In October came the final challenge to the arch enemies of the workers – power and capital. This was too much for the world's capitalists and governments. In their great fright that the proletariat of the world would follow the Russian brothers, they determined to crush the Russian revolution. The memorable blockade followed, troops from all sides surrounded Russia. Their only purpose was to choke the great enthusiasm of the Russian revolution.

The heroic struggle of October brought to the foreground the best sons of Russia who perished in the final battle for freedom.

They died, but they helped to bring to life the dictatorship of “Sovnarkom” (Soviet of Workers’ and Peasants’ Comm’s). The workers of Russia fought for Social Revolution; instead winning they suffered the most terrible losses. They are shattered; their battling organizations, the immediate Soviets in the factories and shops, destroyed Everything for which they paid with the blood of their comrades and abominable sufferings was seized by the Bolshevik governmental machine. The revolutionists who propagated the free communism, those fighters who gave their life and energy for the final and complete overthrow of the government, dictators and power, those have undergone the most terrible persecutions under the new power, “Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” In the prisons, where epidemics of all kinds and miseries prevailed, these were the only places where Anarchists were found.

Our imprisoned comrades, tormented by hunger, tzinga [scurvy], tuberculosis and all other famous prison tortures, are constantly struggling with the administration and Cheka for some kind of human treatment, for at least a bit of freedom within the prison walls. At times, however, the torment of hunger was so great that everything else, as books, the right to see friends, fresh air, etc. was forgotten; the comrades were so weak and sick that they hardly found strength to move from their places.

In 1920, however, when demands for better treatment of prisoners began to penetrate from Europe and America, the conditions were somewhat improved.

But in Russia itself help for prisoners is not tolerated. The organizations, which our comrades outside tried to organize in order to help the imprisoned, were persecuted and destroyed by the Cheka, which gave “plots” as its reasons.

Another method of Nicholas the Second was revived by the Bolsheviks – to exile the revolutionists to Siberia and other desolated places, where the comrades met with great disaster.

At such a time you, my American comrades, again took up the work of the Anarchist Red Cross, which discontinued in 1917, never dreaming that the time

Yarchuk on the Anarchist Red Cross (1924)

would come again when our comrades would be dispersed in exile and your work in the Anarchist Red Cross become of great necessity again.

Those who have lived through the persecution of the Czaristic regime, in far Siberia and the fortresses, have then gone through all the struggles of the revolution and are at present again in the same miseries of being exiled, and tormented.

However, those heroic spirits who were able to withstand all this, and who again have the comradely aid and encouragement of their comrades on the other side of the ocean, are still full of hope and energy, and are ready again to struggle for the attainment of our ideal – the Social Revolution and Free Communism.

With comradely greetings and best wishes for success,

Your comrade

E. Yarchuk

Behind the Bars, 1, January 1924.

New pamphlet

A Grand Cause : The Hunger Strike and the Deportation of Anarchists From Soviet Russia by Grigorii Petrovich Maksimov (G. P. Maximoff) with a biographical essay by Anatoly Dubovik

Maksimov (better known to western readers as G. P. Maximoff) was Secretary of Russia's Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation and editor of *Golos Truda* (*The Voice of Labour*). He experienced at first hand the Bolshevik repression which crushed other revolutionaries and subordinated popular revolt to party dictatorship.

This is his story of the 1921 hunger strike in which some of the leading lights of Russian anarchism staked their lives in a desperate gamble to expose Bolshevik repression – and win their freedom. It has been footnoted by the Kate Sharpley Library to throw the light on the stories of other Russian anarchists as part of our Anarchists in the Gulag, Prison and Exile Project.

Maksimov's years of exile were dedicated to anarchist activism and propaganda, criticising the Leninist counter-revolution and attempts to extend solidarity to anarchist prisoners in Russia. He died in 1953 and was buried in Chicago's Waldheim Cemetery.

ISBN 9781873605745 Anarchist Library #20
£3 (or £2 to subscribers) / \$3

Anarchists in the Gulag, Prison and Exile Project

More information and texts at

<http://gulaganarchists.wordpress.com/>

London Anarchist Bookfair Sat. 18th October
www.anarchistbookfair.co.uk

ONE OF THE BANDITS

(In Memory of Comrade Khodounov)

During the wrecking of the Moscow Anarchist Federation [April 1918], the Bolshevik authorities executed one of the Federation's most active workers, Comrade Khodounov.

He was known as an honest and sincere comrade not only among Anarchists but wherever he had an opportunity to work.

He was one of the workers of the Telephone shops and as such he enjoyed high confidence among his fellow employees. He organized an Anarchist group at the factory. The workers elected him as their representative to the Soviet of one of the Moscow boroughs.

During the October days comrade Khodounov organized a fighting unit consisting of Anarchist workers living in various districts of Moscow. He spent several sleepless night at the sessions of the Soviet which at that time were held day and night. And he was one of the first to announce to the Federation the joyful news of the final victory of the workers.

Due to his energy the Telephone shops passed into the hands of the workers. As one of the organizers of this enterprise, comrade Khodounov threw himself into his work, spending days and nights at his task, neglecting even the most necessary rest.

When the food crisis came, the workers of the Telephone shops designated comrade Khodounov as the delegate of their purchasing committee which went south to obtain bread. Khodounov came back to Moscow after a six week absence. That was just on the eve of the break-up of the Federation by the Bolshevik authorities.

Among the victims of this savage, unwarranted assault upon the revolutionary organization of Moscow Anarchists was also comrade Khodounov. He was arrested as "a bandit", dragged to the Criminal Department of the Police and booked as an underworld character. This was done in spite of the fact that even the Bolsheviks paid homage to him as a member of the Borough Soviet and as an active worker of the Central Soviet.

On the way to the prison this "bandit" was shot. And then the Bolsheviks keep on affirming that they are combating only the casual criminal element among the Anarchist and not Anarchism as an honest, ideological movement.

("Uralsky Nabat", No. 2, 1919).

The Guillotine at Work p.388-9

Philip Ruff on Janis Zhaklis ("Peter the Painter")

Interviewed by Ian Bone on Zhaklis, the Siege of Sidney Street and Latvian anarchism. Links at:
ianbone.wordpress.com/2008/09/14/peter-the-painter-the-truth/

Borovoi: from individualism to the Platform



ALEXEI BOROVOI

Alexei Alexeyevich Borovoi was born on October 30, 1875 in Moscow in a general's family. However, he wasn't attracted to a military career, and after graduating from Moscow University he stayed on to teach at the Faculty of Law. Borovoi's sphere of interests was pretty wide, even in his student years and included history, philosophy, political economy, pedagogy, music, and literature. He had an interest in Marxism which he greatly respected throughout his life.

In the Autumn of 1904 Borovoi was visiting Paris on a professional business trip. A comprehensively educated person, he was intellectually ready to accept anarchist teachings, however, he came to it quite on his own, and quite unexpectedly even for himself: "No one taught anarchism to me, didn't persuade me, didn't infect me," – Borovoi remembered much later – "Suddenly, out of some unknown depths a great, well-formed, enlightening, united thought was born in me. With unusual clarity, with victorious cogency a feeling of an attitude that was new to me was born in me... I stood up from the bench in the Luxembourg Garden as an enlightened, passionate, uncompromising anarchist, and I still remain one."

As an anarchist, Borovoi belonged for most of his life to the individualist current, however, he never shared the extremities of individualism such as the philosophical systems of Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche and always remained outside any strict confines of movements and currents. But it is doubtless that in his person anarchism has gained, to quote later researchers, "an adherent who was original, romantic and devoid of any dogmatism," a brilliant writer whose "magnificent figurativeness, daring fabulousness of style and speech betray a poet, an artist of the word, rather than what is commonly known as a theorist."

In the Autumn of 1905, when the revolution that had started a few months before was at its peak, Borovoi

returned to Russia and resumed work at Moscow University. In April 1906 he read Russia's first legal, open lecture on anarchism which was a big success with the intelligentsia – "Social ideals of modern humanity."

The early Borovoi is characterized by an original synthesis of Marxist views on sociology and history with an individualist philosophy that was close to Stirnean views. He regarded the history of civilization as a succession of social systems that replace one another and are notable for the ever increasing degree of personal freedom. Feudal absolutism is replaced by the bourgeois regime with democratic freedoms and development of machinery and science. It will inevitably be replaced by state socialism which will in a revolutionary manner destroy the exploiters, the propertied classes, establish state control over all economic and social life, and deal with social problems such as poverty and unemployment. However, at the same time it will retain the spiritual enslavement of humanity by the "all-embracing authority of socialist chauvinism." The development of humanity will be crowned by the society of unlimited individual freedom naturally replacing socialism, – Anarchy. Young Borovoi considered individualism to be the only consistent anarchist system and saw in Kropotkin's anarchist communism, first of all, an internal contradiction between the individual and society, the collective, as well as a denial of absolute personal freedom. Sometimes he even proclaimed that communism and anarchism are mutually exclusive concepts. Borovoi referred to the search for the way to combine the individual's absolute freedom with the interests of the entire society as the "scientific theory of anarchism" and viewed it as his chief task as a theorist. He saw the most promising ways to achieve that in the maximum development of science and machinery which was supposed to cause complete abundance of material welfare.

Starting from 1906, Borovoi lectured on anarchism in different Russian cities and took part in the activities of the Logos publishing house which printed anarchist literature without preliminary [government] permission. He also wrote several articles for an "Individualist" collection. The lectures often took the form of anti-government propaganda, and Borovoi was even sentenced to a month in gaol for one.

But Borovoi himself remained unconnected with the immediate revolutionary struggle and anarchist organisations of any sort, so the numerous Russian anarcho-communists and syndicalists viewed him as a faux anarchist who was in fact advocating parliamentary democracy in a social-democratic spirit. Borovoi was particularly scathingly attacked at the Amsterdam International anarchist congress in the Summer of 1907. One of Russia's leading anarchists Vladimir

Borovoi: from individualism to the Platform

Zabrezhnev in his report “Advocates of individualist anarchism in Russia” referred to his anti-communist and individualist theories as “Nitzschean phrase-mongering.”

In late 1910 Borovoi faced the threat of a court case related to the anti-state direction of the Logos publishing house. Such a crime was punishable by up to a year in gaol, so he preferred to escape abroad. After settling in France, Borovoi got a job teaching political economy and history at the Russian Popular University and at the Free College of Social Sciences, the latter of which was founded by French anarchists. His personal acquaintance with them got Borovoi interested in the theories and practices of the French proletarian syndicalist movement and caused him to fundamentally revise his own individualist attitude. In his lectures Borovoi has now claimed support for revolutionary syndicalism which denied parliamentarism and aimed for the reconstruction of the society via social revolution. He still remained quite sceptical of classic anarchist communism though.

In 1913 the Czarist government proclaimed an amnesty for political criminals to coincide with the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty. Upon his return to Russia Borovoi worked as a social and political journalist for St. Petersburg and Moscow magazines. He was also preparing a new work dedicated to the syndicalist movement. The result of this work, the book *Revolutionary Creativity and Parliament*, was published in 1917.

The second Russian revolution which started in February 1917 was greeted not just by a philosopher who dreamt of abstract ideals of anarchy. Borovoi was then an active propagandist who took part in the practical work of organisations and groups of like-minded people. As early as April 1917 Borovoi co-organised the syndicalist Federation of Unions of Workers of Intellectual Labour which united teachers, doctors etc. He also edited their paper *Klich (The call)*. Unfortunately, the Federation didn't gain much support from the Russian intelligentsia and broke up in late 1917. In the spring of 1918 Borovoi initiated the creation of the Union of Ideological Propaganda of Anarchism and its printed organ, daily newspaper *Zhizn (Life)*. Borovoi's comrades in the Union were veterans of the revolutionary anarchist movement: Pyotr Arshinov, Iuda Grossman-Roschin, and our old pal Vladimir Zabrezhnev who criticised Borovoi so passionately just ten years ago.

As we'd already mentioned, individualism was inherent in Borovoi's ideas throughout his life, and his 1917 and 1918 articles, as well as his new book *Anarchism* bear a remarkable imprint of these views. Denying any authority and coercion, the writer never fails to emphasise that “for anarchism never, under no

circumstances, will harmony between the personal and social principles be achieved. Their antinomy is inevitable. But it is the stimulus for continuous development and perfection of the individual, for denial of any ultimate ideals.” Thus for Borovoi the chief importance is given not to Anarchism as the aim but to Anarchy as the continuous quest for the aim: “No social ideal, from the point of view of anarchism, could be referred to as absolute in a sense that supposes it's the crown of human wisdom, the end of social and ethical quest of man.”

Zhizn newspaper was closed by the Soviet authorities in the Summer of 1918 along with other organs of anarchist propaganda. A year later his comrades in the Union of Ideological Propaganda left the organisation. Some joined the Bolsheviks, and some, like Arshinov, joined the mass anarchist movement of the Ukraine, the *Makhnovschina*. Borovoi remained the Union's sole leader but he didn't stop working for it. As late as 1922 he organised lectures on the history and theory of anarchism, and participated in publishing classic anarchist literature. Borovoi actually propagated anarchism among the students of Moscow University and other institutes of higher education. He lectured on the history of socialism, the workers' movement, the newest trends of capitalism etc. It has to be mentioned that his high standing as a scientist was confirmed by the granting of the status of professor by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Moscow State University in 1919.

Borovoi's views kept changing over time. By the early 1920s they have shed the remainder of individualism and gotten closer to classic anarchism. Borovoi himself referred to his views as “anarcho-humanism.” Now he accepted a possibility of conciliation between social and personal interests on the basis of socialist collectivism. Borovoi's views of the time were set out in his most thought-through and deep book, 1921's *Individual and Society in the Anarchist Worldview*.

In late 1921, using the attempt of the students of the Communist University to organise an open debate “Anarchism vs. Marxism” (the two contrary ideologies were to be defended by Borovoi and the member of the Bolshevik Central Committee Nikolai Bukharin) as a pretext, the authorities ousted Borovoi from the Moscow State University – he was accused of being anti-Soviet. In Autumn 1922 he was stripped of his status as a professor and banned from teaching. After that Alexei Alexeyevich had to master the profession of an economist. But even in the 1920s, when legal anarchism was being put under increasing pressure, he continued to play an active role in the anarchist and social movement. He worked as an editor at the anarcho-syndicalist publishing house *Golos Truda (Voice of Labour)*, was a member of several historical

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societies and the Scientific section of All-Russian Public Committee (VOK) for the immortalization of Peter Kropotkin. His participation in VOK was particularly significant as it permitted him to lecture at the Kropotkin Museum which until 1929 remained the only legal refuge of anarchism in the land of Soviets. Borovoi was the secretary of the Scientific section, and in 1925 he was elected as the deputy chairman of the Committee.

In the Summer of 1927 a group of veteran Moscow anarchists (including Borovoi) attempted to organise a campaign to support fellow anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti who were sentenced to death in the USA. They expected that the campaign, aside from its immediate purpose, would permit them to openly propagate anarchist ideas as well as to raise their voice in support of exiled and gaoled anarchists in the USSR. The anarchists repeatedly applied for a permission for a solidarity meeting from the Moscow city Soviet but in the end it was denied.

However, the short existence of the Bureau for the Defense of Sacco and Vanzetti played an important role in consolidating the Moscow anarchists. Around veterans such as Vladimir Barmash, Alexei Borovoi, Nikolai Rogdayev, and Vladimir Khudolei some of the “old guard” who didn’t abandon their views as well as youths who were just discovering anarchism started to gather.

They formed an underground group which established connections with the staff of the Paris-based anarchist magazine *Delo Truda* (*Cause of Labour*) which was published by Arshinov and Nestor Makhno. After studying the famous Platform they took it as the foundation of their views. Borovoi’s practical participation in the activities of the Barmash-Khudolei group included compiling the collection of articles *Ten Years of the October [Revolution]* which gave a political and economic analysis of the first decade of Bolshevik rule. The text of the collection was illegally transferred abroad and published as a pamphlet in Paris. Borovoi also organised the struggle against “anarcho-mystics” – “an ugly outgrowth on the body of anarchism,” as he characterized this “esoteric” teaching which attempted to replace the scientific atheism and class approach of Kropotkin and his followers with vague “Templar” legends about angels and demons and reactionary arguments about the uselessness of revolutionary struggle and any attempts to violently transform society.

In early 1929 *Delo Truda* published a collective letter by the Moscow anarchists who greeted the activity of the magazine and the group that published it as the only thing that can lead revolutionary anarchism out of crisis. The letter was co-signed by Borovoi, and such an appraisal of the activities of the Platformists – who were in favour of a single centralised organisation of

anarchist communists, of comradely discipline and responsibility; all of which were things ten years ago unthinkable for Borovoi – signified the final break with individualist anarchism.

In May 1929 Borovoi was arrested by the OGPU, along with other Moscow comrades. They were accused of “active work to create illegal anarchist groups in Moscow, distribution of anti-Soviet literature, connections with anarchist emigration.” On July 12 the Special Conference of the OGPU sentenced him to three years’ exile to Vyatka.

Liberation from this exile didn’t bring any serious easing of the conditions of life for the old anarchist. The security organs forbade Borovoi from living in the large cities and limited his choice of jobs. He spent the last years of his life in Vladimir working as an accountant, in isolation and poverty.

Alexei Alexeyevich died on November 21, 1935.

The Russian State Archive of Literature and Art still holds Borovoi’s sizeable personal archives. It includes a manuscript of his book about Fyodor Dostoevsky, correspondence with Andrei Bely, Alexander Blok, Valery Bryusov, Boris Pasternak, Alexander Chayanov and many other artists and scientists, plus unfinished memoirs. One day Borovoi’s unpublished works on philosophy, history, anarchism will be extracted from the archives...

Anatoly Dubovik, 2008. Translated by Szarapow.

Letter from Memorial

[We] (including A. Dubovik who is the curator of anarchist section) are working on compiling an encyclopaedic dictionary “Opposition and resistance of Russia’s socialists and anarchists to the Bolshevik regime (October 1917 - mid-20th century)” (supervised by K. N. Morozov, Doctor of History).

The project will extensively cover the problems of prison resistance and generally fates of anarchists and socialists in political isolators and concentration camps. I have to mention that we try not to refer to this as “Anarchists in the GULAG” or “Socialists in the GULAG” because their prison epic has started in 1918, long before the very GULAG system was created. And the majority of them, paradoxically enough, didn’t spend any time in the GULAG camps, moving from concentration camps to political isolators and exile. In early to mid-thirties they got into political isolators from exile, and then were sentenced to death. At least such a picture is visible as regards the socialist-revolutionaries. We are interested in co-operation with everyone who has professional interest in these problems, and are open to co-operation.

from Memorial’s K. Morozov.

See <http://socialist.memo.ru> [Russian-language]

On the edge of life: Memories of an anarchist 1943-44 [Review]

In recent months there have been quite a good number of interesting publications connected with anarchism, in the broad sense. Among them are memories of Pawel Lew Marek, for which I waited with increasing interest and impatience for a long time. Those feelings were further increased after reading some fragments in issue no.21 of *Inny Swiat*.

In June 2006 the book was published. Finally! It was worth waiting for. The book is completely unique, as its publishers wrote. In fact I could finish this review of Pawel Lew Marek's book at this point by stating that "it is advised that it is to be read by members of the present so called anarchist movement" in Poland. And that's it. Full stop. 600 copies will allow it to be reached, with no problems, by all living anarchists between Bug and Odra (two Polish rivers-translators note). But to satisfy the needs of the *Inny Swiat* editorial team I will write about it a little bit more, although I will probably not be able to emphasize the privilege of this unique position.

The memories of P.L. Marek are an exhilarating and interesting read, however banal the title may sound (which reminds me of *Memoirs of a revolutionary* by P.Kropotkin. Which I highly recommend.) It is only a pity that author decided to describe only two years of his interesting life. But thanks to numerous appendices and notes created, thanks to the research (the time frame of which stretches before and beyond 1943-44,) the book is a must have! To every person interested in the history of anarchism on Polish lands, it is a real treasure chest of knowledge. From the shadows of (not so ancient) history and oblivion, emerges on its pages, the Anarchist Federation of Poland. An organisation so legendary and enigmatic, that it is almost unknown to anarchists of the present day, and historians of all kinds.

Since its creation in 1926, the Anarchist Federation of Poland has spread ideas of anarchy in Poland. The activity of its members allowed their ideas to survive through the hard years of the Nazi occupation and the beginnings of the Communist regime.

Heard of, and spoken of even less than the Anarchist Federation of Poland are the "Syndykalistyczna Organizacja Wolnosc" (S.O.W.: Syndicalist Organization for Freedom).

Active during World War II it was an organization that was made up mostly of anarcho-syndicalists, and a large majority of former AFP members. Now finally we can learn about some of these people, not only their names and surnames and achievements.

The author begins his memories in July 1943. Those that are alive are seen armed in solidarity and mutual aid, trying to defeat the horrors of the Nazi occupation. "On the edge of life" is also a testimony of a small fragment of the Polish Jews' tragedy during the

war. Pawel Lew Marek apart from being an anarchist was also a Jew. For the Nazis this was a crime in itself and the only punishment for such a crime, according to them, was death! In the difficult and tedious daily struggle for survival the author of these memories had two things on his side, a group of comrades and good people, and his "Aryan" looks. As a result he managed to find shelter and a job as a caretaker in a school, where after some time he started skilfully propagating ideas of anarchism and syndicalism among the youth.

This book about the times of WW II, when our comrades from SOW lived and were active, gives a positive example that even under difficult or extreme conditions everything is possible and emphasizes that solidarity and mutual aid when kept alive, can create miracles. As one of the heroes of "Memories", Karol Swierczynski says "There must be a will and aim and then you will also find possibilities." It is worth thinking about and remembering in some years.

Lots of joy, (if I can call it that) was caused by the part of the book about the Warsaw Uprising [1944]. For Pawel Lew Marek the two months of Uprising were times of freedom and possibilities of meeting with his wife, who also had to hide because of her nationality. The description of their meeting is one of the most moving and heart-warming parts of the book. It is very interesting that, in August, Karolina Marek took part in the Uprising in the ranks of National Armed Forces (NSZ: right wing underground unit) and it was only after passing through the sewers from the Old City to Central Town that she joined the Syndicalist Brigade. The participation of this unit in the Warsaw Uprising is one of many "blank pages" of history. Half a century had to pass for us to learn what happened with anarchists and syndicalists during the hot summer of '44. An excellent read by one of the co-founders of the Syndicalist Brigade, Syndicalist Insurgent Cooperation SPP ([AKA Syndicalist Uprising Platform] uniting Association of Polish Syndicalists and SOW) and editor of *Syndicalist* (main paper of the SPP).

I would like to add that this book is not addressed only to anarchists, although it is for them especially, because it lets us learn how and with what our comrades lived a few dozen years ago in Poland, and what their problems, ideas and dilemmas were.

On the pages of *Inny Swiat* I would like to thank Michal Przyborowski, Lukasz Dabrowski and Rafal Gorski for publishing it. Anarchy will never forget you!

Admiral. From *Inny Swiat* #24. Trans S.

For more on by Pawel Lew Marek and extracts from *On the Edge of Life: Memories of An Anarchist 1943-44* see *KSL Bulletin* 50-51. See also "Black-Red Company in Warsaw Uprising (1944) against Nazi Occupation" in *Abolishing the Borders from Below*, #31 (February 2008).

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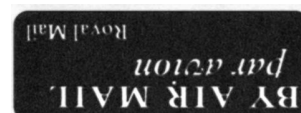
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