

The Russian Anarchist Movement During the First World War



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The start of the First World War forced anarchists to define their own position and act in conformity with it in making decisions about practical work.¹ The words of one of their leaders, V. M. Voline, would undoubtedly have echoed those of many political activists of that time: “This war represents, any way you look at it, a phenomenon on an historically immense scale. Its consequences cannot be confined within the limits of the war itself. Its countless and profound reverberations will spread in all directions over a period of many years. It will leave a deep imprint on the whole 20th century. It will be, of course, the beginning of a whole new era – an era protracted and colossal both as to its scope and as to its content and consequences. . . . The war is, in itself, only the prelude to a whole series of large-scale upheavals, displacements, transformations and insurgencies.... For by rocking to its foundations the swamp that is the historical life of nations, a swamp which was stable but beginning to decay here and there, the war has stirred up in its stagnant waters more than one storm, more than one hurricane. . . .”²

Prior to 1914 no single event had caused such a sharp demarcation among anarchists. Authors writing in the mainstream of official Soviet historiography in the 1920s and 1930s denied any sort of anti-war activity on the part of anarchists in 1914–1917.³ But by the 1960s to 1980s, such activity was covered in general works on the history of Russian anarchism.⁴ Since the beginning of the 1990s, new works have appeared devoted to analyzing the views and actions of ideologists and participants of the anarchist movement in the capitals and individual regions of the Russian Empire,⁵ However, a comprehensive study of the anti-war efforts of the anarchists has not been produced. Moreover, most historians still ignore the activities of emigrant anarchist organizations, although the controversies unfolding in exile also had their effect on those who remained in Russia.

In the late 19th – early 20th centuries, anti-militarism was an important component of the ideology of anarchism. Kropotkin denounced modern wars as the struggle of capitalist elites for spheres of economic influence. Judging by his arguments in **Words of a Rebel** (1885) and **Modern Science and Anarchism** (1913), his views remained unchanged for many years.⁶ In 1885 he wrote: “When we fight today, it is to guarantee our great industrialists a profit of 30%, to assure the financial barons their domination at the Bourse, and to provide the shareholders of mines and railways with their incomes of tens of millions of dollars. . . . Opening new markets, imposing one’s own merchandise, whether good or bad, is the basis of all present-day politics. . . .”⁷ “The reason for modern war is always one and the same,” he declared in 1913, “it is the competition for markets and the right to exploit nations backward in industry. . . . In fact, all wars in Europe during the last 150 years were wars fought for trade advantages and the rights of exploitation.”⁸ At the same time, Kropotkin did not distinguish between the great powers. The prevention of war, according to theorists of anarchism, should be effected by propagandizing desertion, and in the event a mobilization was announced, the workers of the belligerent countries should launch a general strike, which could develop into an anarchist social revolution.⁹ It’s impossible to agree that thinking about “practical steps and measures in the event of a large-scale war, like World War I,” “did not find serious reflection in the theory of anarchism.”¹⁰ The Russo-Japanese War confirmed the anti-militarist stance of the Russian anarchists. Kropotkin condemned the plans of aggression of both sides. “Real war,” he asserted, “is the triumph of the basest capitalist instincts, against which any thinking person must fight.”¹¹ This position was shared by the Russian anarchist organizations. Thus, the anarcho-communists of Białystok, laying the blame for the conflict with Japan on “the owners” and the state, called upon the workers, peasants, and “lumpen-proletarians” to disrupt mobilization and disorganize military industry and transport. They expected that the mass anti-war movement would grow into a revolution: “Appropriate all wealth for common use – set up communes, thereby annihilating the state, so the communes will be stateless. . . . Let the homeless organize bands to attack private property; let the workers organize strikes and riots, and the peasants seize the land and stocks by force – taking everything they need. Attack the government agencies protecting capital, and refuse to pay taxes and duties.”¹² Thus the Russian anarchists developed and propagandized a system of actions under conditions of war.

In studying anarchist defencism,¹³ researchers focus on support for the countries of the Entente, viewed as defending democratic gains of the workers from Germany’s militarism and conservative values. But among the anarchists there were also defencists of the pro-German type, such as Eric Mühsam and Bruno Wille (Germany), and Michael Cohn (USA).¹⁴ According to the political prisoner F. M. Puchkov, among the “anarchist-expropriators” found in Russian prisons there were many “Germanophiles,” pinning their hopes for amnesty on a German victory.¹⁵ However, this position was neither widespread nor represented in the Russian-language press. The Russian defencists supported the positions of P. A. Kropotkin. In his first “Letter about current events,” published in September 1914 in the newspaper *Russkie Vedomosti* [Russian Gazette], he appealed to the Russian public to “help Europe

crush German militarism and German imperialist aggression – the enemy of our most cherished covenants.”¹⁶ An Allied victory, he believed, would lead to the re-organization of states on a federal basis and the granting of independence or autonomy to national minorities.¹⁷ This appeal by the acknowledged leader of the international anarchist movement shocked many of his followers. Some, like Saul Yanovsky, one of the prominent figures of the anarchist movement in the USA, blamed Kropotkin for preventing the anarchists from presenting a united front against the War, thereby strengthening their influence: “I can’t make sense of him in a positive way. . . . How nice it would be if we could make use of the war for our ideas, if only he and some others hadn’t suddenly become such flaming patriots!”¹⁸

Among the defencists there were other well-known anarchists: V. N. Cherkezov, M. I. Goldsmit, A. A. Borovoy, S. M. Romanov, V. V. Barmash, and B. A. Verkhoustinsky. Anarchist defencism was a very contradictory phenomenon. While the writings of Kropotkin and Goldsmit were not chauvinistic, on the other hand Borovoy in his article “The War,” published in 1914 in the newspaper *Nov’* [Virgin Soil], contrasted the good nature of the Slavs with the belligerence of the Germans: “Russia is traditionally a peace-loving country – gentle, quick to overlook an insult, laid-back, and easy-going in the Slavic fashion There has to be a direct and terrible threat to our freedom in order to arouse us. It took everything solemn and dull in the German national character to raise us to a boil. And now we must boil with anger and hatred, for this anger and hatred of ours is sacred.”¹⁹ Expressing his hatred for the Germans, Cherkezov argued that since time immemorial, aggressiveness and hatred of the Slavic and Romance peoples had been congenital to them. He denied any importance for world progress for the achievements of German culture and science, claiming that the advanced ideas and discoveries of the Germans were borrowed from the English and French.²⁰ On February 28 1916, the position of the pro-Entente defencists received its generalized formulation in the “Manifesto of the Sixteen,” signed by 15 anarchists (a place name was wrongly identified as a person). Laying the blame for launching the war on Germany, they called on German workers to overthrow the Kaiser and renounce annexations. All anarchists were encouraged to assist the armed forces of the Entente.²¹ An example of such activity Kropotkin considered the patrolling of the shores of England by fishermen-volunteers to ensure the delivery of food.²²

There exist various explanations for the origins of anarchist defencism. P. N Milyukov believed that Kropotkin had always been a patriot and recalled meeting him on 10 February 1904: “We found Kropotkin in a state of terrible agitation and indignation at Japanese treachery. . . . How could it be that this foe of Russian policy, and in general any war, turned out to be a thoroughgoing Russian patriot? Kropotkin immediately won me over to his position, a position which he held without qualification, as if it was the voice of instinct – of national sentiment – which he was vocalizing.”²³ According to I. S. Knizhnik-Vetrov, at the London congress of anarcho-communists (“khlebovoltsi”) in 1906, Kropotkin quashed an anti-war resolution: “He suggested the possibility of a German attack on Russia, called Wilhelm II a ‘crowned gendarme,’ and spoke about Wilhelm’s insidious plans with great

hatred.”²⁴ Kropotkin’s Francophilia played a role in the formation of his “defencist” position.²⁵ The sympathies of the Russian anarchists for France had an ideological basis. The French revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries determined the political development of the countries of Europe to a significant degree. In the 1870s the ideas of Bakuninism and Proudhonism were widely disseminated in France, and anarchists regarded the Paris Commune of 1871 as an example of an anti-authoritarian organization of society.²⁶ The militant acts of Ravachol, Auguste Vaillant, and Émile Henry influenced the tactics of certain currents of anarcho-communists (the “chernoznametsi” and “beznachaltsi”). The revolutionary syndicalist unions of France were considered by many anarchists in Russia to be the model of a radical labour movement. In 1914 not only defencists, but also some internationalists, did not hide their preference. “Needless to say,” admitted A. A. Karelin, “our sympathies are with the French.”²⁷

The position of the defencists was also influenced by the ideas of M. A. Bakunin during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871.²⁸ Having a strong anti-German bias (he even identified German culture with authoritarian militarist ideology), Bakunin predicted catastrophe in the event of the defeat of France.²⁹ “I came [to Lyon],” he declared, “because I’m deeply convinced that the cause of France is again the cause of humanity, and that her fall, and her enslavement by a regime which will be imposed on her by Prussian bayonets, would be the greatest misfortune in terms of freedom and human progress.”³⁰

“One thing is certain beyond the shadow of a doubt,” argued Kropotkin in 1914. “If Germany triumphs, the war will not bring liberation; it will bring Europe new and even more severe enslavement. The rulers of Germany are not keeping this under wraps. They themselves have announced that they started the war with goals of conquest.”³¹ Kropotkin also began to divide the warring states into oppressors and freedom fighters. Thus, in one of his conversations during the First Balkan War, he claimed that “victory of the Slavs over Turkey and the disappearance of Turkey as a State should be welcomed as a victory for statelessness: at least one State would have disappeared from the face of the earth.”³² As a rule, defencists recognized the usefulness of national-liberation movements in terms of their “radicalization and moving things along the social-revolutionary rails.”³³

However, it’s hardly correct to associate defencism solely with personal sympathies and the influence of theoreticians. Crucial was the objective state of the labour movement. Before the war, the revolutionary-syndicalist unions of France, upon which the majority of Russian anarchists pinned their hopes for revolution in Europe, were in a noticeable state of decline. The stabilization of the standard of living, and the growth in earnings brought about by the development of industry, led to a lessening of the radicalism of both the tactics and the demands of strikers. The tendency of the leaders of the *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT) to seek negotiated solutions to conflicts increased, and the influence of the CGT’s reformist wing became stronger.³⁴ In the countries which entered the First World War, the masses were overwhelmed by a wave of patriotic fervour. “The tidal wave passed and we

were swept away,” wrote the anarchist Pierre Monatte.³⁵ “We were totally confused, lost our heads,” confessed Alphonse Merrheim, leader of the CGT’s internationalist opposition. “How come? Because at that point the working class of Paris, caught up in an overwhelming paroxysm of nationalism, would not have allowed the security forces the bother of shooting us. They would have shot us themselves.”³⁶ As a result, the CGT refused to declare a strike in response to the outbreak of war, urging workers to “defend the nation”³⁷. Patriotic zeal, accompanied by mass demonstrations and anti-German riots in the cities, was observed in Russia as well. As the Bolshevik journalist A. T. Radzishvsky recalled: “On July 19 (Old Style) the war started, damaging the revolutionary mood and weakening it tremendously. Tens of thousands of workers and hundreds of thousands of citizens who had previously sympathized with the movement, were completely befuddled and dutifully made their way to the recruiting depots.”³⁸ In 1914 the strikes which took place in Russia in the vast majority of cases were not anti-war in character, but were associated with economic demands.³⁹

However, Kropotkin’s position was not supported by the majority of Russian anarchists, either in exile or in Russia. The defencists didn’t even have their own journal in the Russian language. Rejection of Kropotkin’s stance was largely due to the tradition, important for anarchists, of opposition to militarism and the state. To abandon this tradition was impossible. In addition, defencism implied at least a temporary collaboration with the government of Nicholas II, which would benefit from the ideas of the defencists.⁴⁰ And that, in itself, was unacceptable to anarchists.

The opinion of the internationalists was expressed in the “International Anarchist Manifesto on the War,” signed by 37 anarchists (including the Russian anarchists Bill Shatov, Iuda Grossman and Alexander Schapiro). Its authors characterized the war as imperialist, noting that both sides were pursuing annexationist goals. Responsibility for unleashing the war was attributed to capitalists, landlords, and bureaucrats; an armed insurrection was seen as the only means of putting an end to military activity, an insurrection which would develop into a global social revolution, eliminating the root causes of international conflicts – the state and capitalist relations.⁴¹ Anarchist groups and periodicals repeatedly expressed these sentiments. Thus, the newspaper *Rabocheye znamya* [The Banner of labour] called for “a forcible end to the war by the collective will of the working classes,” the propagandizing of anarchist communism, and the creation of an International of labour organizations “on the basis of anti-statism, anti-patriotism, and anti-militarism.”⁴² The general strike was recognized in editorials of *Golos Truda* [The Voice of Labour] as an effective means of struggle against war and militarism,⁴³ and the defeat of the Russian Army was considered, by analogy with the events of 1905, as a factor contributing to the unfolding of the revolution.⁴⁴ “First of all, and the sooner the better – revolution, followed by, or coincident with it, a revolutionary war of liberation against all forms of violence and against all those who traffic in it – Russian, German, and the rest”, wrote V. M. Voline.⁴⁵

The vast majority of supporters of the “International Anarchist Manifesto on the War” (Vsevolod Voline, Gregory Raiva, Alexander Ge, etc.) shared the ideas of cosmopolitanism, most consistently developed by Ge. In his opinion, the patriotic stance of socialists was a logical consequence of their recognition of the right of nations to self-determination.⁴⁶ In the ideology of national liberation movements, Ge saw “elements which could potentially become nationalistic in time.”⁴⁷ On the contrary, it seemed to him that the causes of war could be eliminated only by “internationalizing all cultural values and by the cultural assimilation of all civilized peoples.” He hoped that the coming social revolution would lead to the surmounting of national sentiments, thereby providing equal access of people to the achievements of contemporary culture.⁴⁸ In contrast, another ideologue of the anti-war fraction of anarchists, Georgi Gogelia, expressed his misgivings concerning inter-ethnic relations in Transcaucasia. Denouncing the aggressive aspirations of the Entente powers, he accused the Russian government of trying to annihilate the Georgian people with the help of Armenian immigration: “After Armenia was annexed by Russia . . . a huge emigration of Armenians to Georgia was begun, to the industrial centre, intensifying the artificial mixing up of peoples long practiced so diligently by tsarist Russia At the hands of the ‘liberator of peoples,’ Georgians await the unhappy fate that befell the Jews – the loss of their territory.”⁴⁹

Most internationalists sympathized with Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and V. I. Lenin.⁵⁰ But there were also those who maintained the traditional skepticism toward social-democracy. Thus, in April 1915 in the pages of *Strana polnochi* [Country of midnight], an information bulletin published by Apollon Karelin, a member of the Brotherhood of Free Communalists implied that the antiwar protests of Liebknecht’s supporters were insincere.⁵¹ Karelin himself advocated reconciliation with the anarchist-defencists. While indirectly acknowledging Kropotkin’s correctness in a letter to him, Karelin explained his own position as based on opportunist motives and the desire to be in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement: “My dear teacher, I read your letters about the war and saw the full force of your arguments But . . . if we – my comrades and I – endorsed your point of view, there would be no one to carry our black banners in the daily struggle which will begin immediately after the war.”⁵² In 1916 Karelin openly justified the position of the defencists: “P. A. Kropotkin, without changing his opinions in the slightest, regarded the current war as a phenomenon which we cannot prevent and from which we must derive as much benefit as possible While protesting against the war, it’s possible to come to the conclusion that we must take part in it Kropotkin’s sympathizers, gun in hand, go at the Germans because they are convinced that a German victory will delay the triumph of our doctrine by a century, i.e. will not be a lesser evil than the death of any of us!”⁵³

The ideas of the internationalists found expression in the following periodicals of the Russian anarchist diaspora: *Golos Truda* (New York, 1911–1917), *Nabat* [The Tocsin] (Geneva, 1914–1916), *Rabocheye Znamya* [The Workers’ Banner] (Lausanne, 1915–1917), *Rabochaya Mysl’* [Labour Views] (New York, 1916–1916), and *Vostochnaya Zarya* [Eastern Dawn] (Pittsburgh, 1916). The most important organizations of anarchist-emigrants were

under their influence, especially the Federation of the Unions of Russian Workers of the USA and Canada (FSRR) [often referred to as simply the Union of Russian Workers (URW)]. Founded at a constitutional congress in Detroit on July 1–6 1914, it was composed of 24 North American anarchist organizations with a total membership of more than 600. Adopting an anarchist program, the FSRR published anarchist literature and rendered aid to anarchists in Russia. *Golos Truda* was the mouthpiece of the Federation. Since the newspaper published the best anarchist writers, the quality of its anti-war materials increased, as well as its popularity among emigrants in America and Europe. In 1911–1914, its reach extended also to Russian territory. The Moscow Groups of Anarcho-Syndicalists (MGAS) maintained contact with *Golos Truda*. According to Lazar Lazarev, it was under the influence of its anti-militarist articles that members of the FSRR refused to register for military service and evaded conscription into the American army, resulting in arrests and prison sentences (in some cases, up to 5–10 years).⁵⁴

The anarchist diaspora in Europe did not have a unique centre. The most influential groups of Russian anarcho-communists were Volnaya Volya [Free Will] (England); Trud [Labour], and Bratstvo Vol'nykh obshchinnikov [The Brotherhood of Free communalists] (France); Nabat [The Tocsin] and Rabochiy mir [Worker's world] (Switzerland). Each group was composed of 5–30 individuals.⁵⁵ Their press organs were *Rabocheye Znamya* and *Nabat*. In March 1915 Karelin published one issue of the bulletin *Strana polnochi*. In contrast to *Golos Truda*, these publications were issued irregularly and seldom reached Russia. In addition, as Lydia Ikonnikova-Gogelia recalled, the French police already in 1914 had a list of Russian anti-militarists. On August 3–4, after mobilization had been declared, arrests were carried out among them involving searches and the confiscation of documents.⁵⁶ In 1916 V. M. Voline was persecuted for propaganda against the war; after being arrested, he spent several months in an internment camp. Being then expelled from the country, in August 1916 he was compelled to move to the USA.⁵⁷

Emigré groups distributed anti-war leaflets. In April 1915 the Genevan *Nabat* came out with the proclamation “First of May. Citizens!” In 1916 five more leaflets appeared: “Protest” (Zürich *Rabochiy mir*); “On the Latest News” and “Response” (Geneva); “Protest” (Paris); and “To all the oppressed.”⁵⁸ The last leaflet was published in October – November 1916 in various printshops in Stockholm. The press run was several thousand copies, part of which was confiscated by the Swedish police. The Russian military attaché in Sweden even suggested that the leaflet was the handiwork of German intelligence; however, this allegation was not confirmed.⁵⁹

Campaigning against the war, activists of the FSRR organized lecture tours and debates with defencists (Social Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries). Thus, in late 1915, N. Mukhin lectured in Chicago and Cleveland, and in March 1916 his speech on “The War, Patriotism and the Fatherland” was heard in Detroit and Rochester. In early September 1915, L. Lazarev explained “The Relationship of P. Kropotkin to the European War” in Detroit. In the autumn

of 1916, the Federation organized a lecture tour for G. Raiva through Bridgeport, Chester, Cleveland, and Detroit, where he talked about the war and plans for the creation of a new International. In November 1916 – January 1917, V. Voline travelled to Cleveland, Chicago, and Detroit, sharing his thoughts on anarchism, syndicalism, war, and the general strike.⁶⁰

An important activity of emigrants was smuggling agitators and literature into Russia, after normal connections had been disrupted by the war. In September 1915, the editors of *Rabocheye Znamya* announced the collection of funds for this purpose.⁶¹ Nikolai Petrov-Pavlov, living in the Japanese possession Dairen, near the Russian sphere of influence in Manchuria, smuggled the publications of Russian emigrant-anarchists into Russia through Harbin, and also by means of sailors from Vladivostok. In 1915 alone he was able to send part of the press run of the journal *Nabat* across the border, along with the brochures *Novoye Yevangeliye* [The New Gospel] and *Za mir* [For peace].⁶² In Petrograd, anarchist publications were received through Arkhangelsk (probably with the help of sailors of merchant ships).⁶³ According to Lazarev, in 1915 the editors of *Golos Truda* created several propaganda groups in Russia. In the spring of 1916 some of their activists returned to their native land to distribute newspapers and establish contacts.⁶⁴ In November 1916, for example, Sherbanenko, a company clerk of the 28th Reserve Infantry Battalion in Kharkov, received a brochure from America entitled “For whom is the soldier fighting?” encouraging the refusal of military service.⁶⁵ Agitational materials also made their way into Russia through the Anarchist Red Cross (AKK), based in New York. Starting in 1913, the AKK collected and remitted funds to political prisoners and exiles in 25 locations in Russia. Thanks to its efforts, a questionnaire was distributed to prisons and places of exile to determine the opinions of prisoners and exiles about the First World War. Subsequently, the results of this survey were released, indicating the anti-war sentiments of the majority of the respondents.⁶⁶

Emigrants also helped Russian deserters. This type of assistance was organized by Petrov-Pavlov. Funds were directed through his address for sustainment and travel expenses to Japan, Australia, and America for fugitives from military service. Correspondence with their relatives was also forwarded through the same address. This was financed by donations of anarchists and Bundists living in the USA, and also by the relatives of deserters and fugitive political prisoners. In February 1916, Petrov-Pavlov petitioned the Japanese government for permission for around 50 deserters in Dairen to move to Korean territory.⁶⁷ He also carried on correspondence with exiles living in Siberia (anarchists and social-democrats), sending some of them money and anarchist literature, and helping them to make their way abroad illegally.⁶⁸ In 1915 the content of his correspondence was discovered by the French military censor, and at the end of October 1916, Petrov-Pavlov was arrested by the Japanese police at the request of the Russian consul and extradited to Russia.⁶⁹

The anarchist movement experienced an upswing in 1914–1917 on the territory of the Russian Empire. If in 1914–1915 their groups (with half a dozen up to 50 members) were active in eight or nine cities, by 1916 – early 1917 the movement already had a presence in

17 cities.⁷⁰ The most numerous concentrations were in Petrograd (in 1916 there were six organizations with a total of 100 members)⁷¹ and Moscow (in 1916 – seven groups and 73 participants).⁷² In total, according to the data of V. V. Krivenky, there were about 300 anarchists in Russia at the beginning of 1917. A process of gradual consolidation of the movement took place, creating major centres. Thus, in the spring of 1914, the “Group of Exiled Anarcho-Communists of Eastern Siberia” appeared, bringing together several dozen individuals.⁷³ In Petrograd, the city-wide Northern Union of Anarchists and Northern Group of Anarchists, uniting the district organizations of the capital, were formed in 1914 and 1916, respectively. There was a marked tendency to establish interregional connections. Thus, in 1914–1916, emissaries from Petrograd visited Baku, Briansk, Yekaterinoslav, Kiev, Moscow, Odessa, Tula, and Kharkov.⁷⁴ In 1916 the leader of the United Groups of Anarchists of the Vyborg District [Petrograd] created an organization in Moscow.⁷⁵ Early in 1917, the Petrograd anarchist N. Lebedev formed an underground circle of workers in Kazan.⁷⁶ In December 1914 and the autumn of 1916, unsuccessful attempts were undertaken to hold a national congress of Russian anarchists.⁷⁷

The anti-war activities of anarchist organizations in Russia were primarily in the field of propaganda. Under the conditions of underground work, it was difficult to conduct such propaganda orally and in public. This situation is illustrated by an episode from the life of V. A. Posse, a journalist and well known publicist of the ideas of pacifist anarchism, revolutionary syndicalism, and cooperative activities. In August 1914, during a lecture tour to the cities of the Volga and Ural regions, he visited Sarapul. Here he delivered a lecture about Germany and the Germans, debunking propaganda myths: “I pointed out that war in general is nasty, mean, and cruel, but that the Germans are no more savages than the English, the French, or us, the Russians. I evoked the geniuses of German literature, art, and science, recalled what we had learned from the Germans, and expressed confidence that after the war we would be friends with the Germans, that we would learn from each other not to fight, but to work and create. I warned against the harassment of Germans living in Russia as innocent of the crimes of Wilhelm.”⁷⁸ The lecture led to the persecution of Posse in the local Black Hundreds press, where he was almost openly called a German and Austro-Hungarian spy. At his next lecture police officers showed up in large numbers. A day later, immediately after a sermon in the local cathedral by Archbishop Ambrose, leader of the local Black Hundreds, a crowd of parishioners tried to lynch Posse in the nearby town square. Only the intervention of a court official, who happened to be in the vicinity, saved the life of the anti-militarist lecturer. By an order of the governor of Viatka province, where Sarapul was located, Posse was hit with a heavy fine. Then the Minister of the Interior imposed a ban on Posse’s lecturing activities until the spring of 1916.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the anarchists tried to conduct propaganda at mass meetings. Thus, on August 15 1916, A. Skvortsov and S. Levin spoke at an illegal gathering of workers of Kharkov plants, declaring that the war was in the interests of the capitalists, who were getting rich at the expense of the proletariat. In an effort to demolish the arguments of the defencists, they

insisted that in the event of victory by the Entente, the material situation of the workers would worsen as a result of Russia's huge debt to its allies. On October 11 1916, Skvortsov took part in student demonstrations in Kharkov, shouting the slogan "Down with the War, Long Live the Revolution!"⁸⁰

More noticeable was printed propaganda. According to P. O. Korotich, in 1914–1916 at least 27 anarchist leaflets and proclamations were published in Russia.⁸¹ As a rule, they were duplicated by hectograph or shapigroph. Quite often handwritten leaflets were distributed. Only rarely were groups able to set up underground printshops. Thus, the Moscow Groups of Anarcho-Syndicalists, jointly with the Bolsheviks, acquired a mimeograph machine, and then expropriated a press from a printing establishment. Attempts to publish periodicals were made on several occasions: in 1914–1915 the "Group of Labour Anarcho-Communists" in Petrograd published one issue of the bulletin *Anarkhia*,⁸² and the Northern Union of Anarchists published two issues of the journal *Anarkhist*, printed by hectograph. In addition, the Northern Group of Anarchists published the propaganda brochures "Fundamentals of Anarchism" and "Three Enemies: Hunger, Ignorance and Fear"⁸³ in 1915.

The first anti-militarist leaflets appeared already in the autumn of 1914. The most famous of them were: "To soldiers!" (October, Irkutsk) and "To all workers" (November, St. Petersburg).⁸⁴ During the period August 1914 to January 1917, the Petrograd anarchists alone produced 13 leaflets (in 1914 – 1, in 1915 – 9, in 1916 – 3).⁸⁵ It's possible to gauge the number of copies in circulation by police reports. Thus, during searches and arrests among the members of the Group of Worker Anarcho-Communists in Petrograd, 100 copies of the appeal "Comrades! Ten years ago. . ." and 85 copies of "The War and Revolution"⁸⁶ were confiscated. Circulation of leaflets produced by the Moscow Groups of Anarcho-Syndicalists were in the 1,000 – 2,000 range.⁸⁷ These leaflets were addressed mainly to workers and distributed at worksites. In particular, in August 1915 the leaflets of the Northern Group of Anarchists "Concerning the War" and "Comrades! Working Russia and the Russian Proletariat. . ." were read at the Putilov metalworking plant, the Baltic shipbuilding works, and the Petrograd Mechanical plant.⁸⁸ During the winter and spring of 1916, anarchists arriving in Moscow from Petrograd under the direction of V. I. Fyodorov handed out the brochures "Fundamentals of Anarchism" and "The March against the War" at the Military-Industrial Plant No. 1, as well as at the "Dynamo", "Dux," "Dobrov & Nabgolts," and "Bara" plants⁸⁹. In September 1916 leaflets appeared in Moscow at the Mikhelson and Dux plants and at the Sokolniki streetcar shops. According to the police, "some of the workers reacted sympathetically to the leaflets"⁹⁰. Labour conflicts were regularly exploited for propaganda purposes. For example, on October 27 1915 during a strike at the "Phoenix" plant in Petrograd, an appeal was distributed calling for stopping the war by means of a social revolution⁹¹.

Most leaflets indicated their target audience ("To all workers," "Workers!," "Brother soldiers!," "Comrade workers!," "Pipefitters!," "Working men and women!"⁹²) and broadcast

slogans (“Down with the War!,” “Down with your bloody wars!,” etc.⁹³). They contained a candid assessment of the progress of the war, characterized in terms such as “a bloody game of governments,” “fratricidal war,” “an immense worldwide slaughter,” etc.⁹⁴ The situation of Russia was portrayed as catastrophic: “The losses of our troops exceed two million. Each day of war incurs over 40,000 casualties and costs 200 million [rubles].”⁹⁵ A new note sounding in anarchist propaganda was the accusation of treason, found in a particularly strident form in a MGAS leaflet distributed in November 1916 entitled “The Liberation of the workers must be dealt with by the workers themselves.” “We remember,” the leaflet said, “the names of Sukhomlinov and Myasoedov, whose treason contributed to the more efficient destruction of the Russian army. We know that treason has found a home in the royal palace, and around the young tsarina are grouped a circle of Germanophiles with agents in neutral countries. That is why there is such a ruthless extermination of Russian workers and peasants at the Front. That is why our losses have attained such terrible numbers – almost nine million people, more than the losses of Germany and Austria combined.”⁹⁶

This MGAS leaflet is interesting because it includes the strategy for political struggle which led to the toppling of Nicholas II from the throne in the February Days of 1917. Accusing the government of failing to solve the “food crisis,” the leaflet predicted the imminence of starvation if public initiative was stifled by actions of the bureaucracy. For their own part, the authors of the leaflet proposed that workers take advantage of the conflict between the State Duma and Nicholas II: “Comrades, we urge you again to take in your hands the glorious weapon of proletarian struggle and strike a decisive blow to your worst enemy. Let the opening day of the State Duma be marked by a general strike of the Moscow proletariat. On this day the bourgeoisie is preparing to exert pressure from the parliamentary rostrum and thus our sworn enemy will be dealt blows from both sides.”⁹⁷ Thus the struggle for the anarchist ideal was shifted to a distant future (unusual for anarchists in the early 20th century), and the immediate goals announced to be the overthrow of the autocracy, the cessation of the war, and the granting of political freedoms and an amnesty.⁹⁸

Propaganda work in the army and in the fleet was carried on by the well known anarchists A. A. Borovoy, A. G. Zhelezniakov, G. P. Maximoff, et al. “I had already made up my mind about a question which had been tormenting me,” recalled Maximoff, who had the option of an exemption from military service. “Rather than avoid mobilization, I would go as a soldier and live together with the people under the same conditions, sharing all their hardships and carrying on anti-war and political propaganda in the barracks.”⁹⁹ In 1915 he became a volunteer non-combatant in the 176th reserve infantry regiment, stationed in Krasnoye Selo near Petrograd. There Maximoff talked to soldiers, criticizing the war and the policies of Nicholas II, and carefully explaining the ideas of anarchist self-management. As one of the most literate, he won the confidence of the lower ranks of his company, and was sent by them to see the deputy of the State Duma Alexander Kerensky with a petition against the use of corporal punishment by commanders.¹⁰⁰ A. Zhelezniakov served in the 2nd Baltic naval depot in 1915–1916, and then on the training vessel “Okean.” In his letters he informed the

Moscow anarchists about the morale of the sailors and his own activity (he was able to set up a system of distributing leaflets and literature to servicemen).¹⁰¹ In 1915 the “Group of Worker Anarcho-Communists” inserted their leaflets in newspapers in an effort to deliver them to soldiers.¹⁰² The smuggling of anti-war leaflets to the Front and the delivery of weapons in the reverse direction was carried out by members of MGAS.¹⁰³ The Northern Union of Anarchists hoped to recruit soldiers for attempts on the lives of the high command staff. For this purpose in 1916, it was planned to create combat groups from members of the Petrograd garrison.¹⁰⁴

The appeals addressed to soldiers first of all mentioned the hardships of the war and ascribed the responsibility for them to the tsarist government and the capitalists: “You, soldiers, have shed your blood for the interests of the tsar and capitalism, and you, doomed to perish, are forced to starve and freeze in the trenches, dressed in miserable rags, and treated like ‘cannon fodder’ and a ‘pile of shit.’”¹⁰⁵ The leaflets suggested that “the lives and health of the soldiers themselves are considered by the command to be less valuable than bullets”; “and what a vile attitude the government has towards the wounded, what pitiful handouts are tossed their way by plump gentlemen, and what outrageous restrictions are put on the benefits available to casualties of war.”¹⁰⁶ The deterioration of the socio-economic situation of the country was closely linked with the conduct of the war: “At the same time, all the material burdens of the war fall on the poor; taxes grow at an incredible rate, and so do the appetites of the manufacturers and merchants, who are inflating the cost of goods, engaging in embezzlement, impoverishing the families of reservists, starving the unemployed.”¹⁰⁷ Pointed out especially was the harsh treatment meted out by the authorities to those in the rear: “Your blood has been poured out on the great killing fields of people who have been set against one another by the emperors and governments of all the belligerent states. This is being done in the name of despotic power and in the name of the capitalistic bourgeoisie, which, while the guns roar and the people’s blood flows, are robbing your wives, fathers and mothers. And for any attempt at protest, the police, on the orders of the government, shoot unarmed workers, women, the elderly, and children.” Thus the repression was blamed on the police, not on soldiers.¹⁰⁸ In these appeals, false rumours were propagated, clearly at odds with the defeatist position of the anarchists: “They say our traitorous generals, headed by the Tsarina Maria, sold Germany our plans for military operations; and this betrayal cost our ravaged country dearly. Millions of human lives have been exposed to certain death thanks to the treacherous government and generals.”¹⁰⁹ There were also reports about social unrest among workers and soldiers in Austro-Hungary and Germany, which were taken as evidence of impending revolution.¹¹⁰ “In order to put an end to the reckless behaviour of predators who are leading the masses to subject to them to mass slaughter, it is necessary to destroy the state . . . ,” it was stated in leaflets. “The labouring masses are faced with the task of destroying the capitalist system and annihilating the state by means of violent revolution, and seizing the land, the factories, and all the belongings of the upper class and making them available for common use.”¹¹¹

In an effort to expand the number of their supporters, the anarchists helped deserters. In 1916, a report of the Petrograd Okhrana noted that “the highest percentage of the membership of anarchist groups are the soldiers-deserters, as well as people evading compulsory military service and living illegally.”¹¹² According to the police, “these people, enticed by the prospect of having their living expenses paid by an organization, willingly join anarchist groups, are trained as cadres, and obediently carry out expropriations as directed.”¹¹³ Meanwhile, there was a “significant number of deserters living in the capital without any visible means of support.” Anarchists were able to provide them not only with money, but also false documents.¹¹⁴ Thus, A. Tyukhanov, while being supported by MGAS in the summer of 1914, arranged for the production in one of the printshops of “white tickets” (certificates of exemption from military service), for distribution among anarchists and their sympathizers who wanted to avoid conscription.¹¹⁵ Passport books and other documents were also prepared. So, when an apartment in Petrograd was searched on March 16 1916, the anarchist P. D. Filimoshkin was caught manufacturing fake graduation diplomas from the Bogorodsky Elementary School.¹¹⁶

There are also instances of anarchists deserting from the army and navy. For example, in June 1915, a group of anarchists in Moscow, made up of Latvian bootmakers organized by Belevsky-Berzin, planned the escape of the Anarchist Gayl, who had been drafted into the army.¹¹⁷ In August 1915, K. A. Tsesnik, a private in the 143rd Dorogobuzhsky Infantry Regiment, escaped from the Peter the Great Hospital in Moscow. Later Tsesnik would become an activist of the anarchist group in Kharkov. On May 30 1916, the anarchist E. P. Rudzinsky deserted from the 29th Infantry Reserve Regiment.¹¹⁸ In 1916, Zhelezniakov escaped from the training ship “Okean.”

In their anti-war activities, the anarchists found common ground for collaborating with the socialist parties. As early as the autumn of 1914, anarchists, SRs, and social-democrats in Kharkov discussed the joint publishing of anti-war leaflets. In early February 1915, there were meetings in Moscow of anarchists, SRs and anarcho-syndicalists who opposed the war.¹¹⁹ However, due to differences between them, these meetings did not lead to results. The prerequisites for mutual action were more favourable in prisons and places of exile, where conditions of living together and struggling for prisoners’ rights united representatives of various ideological tendencies. In 1916, some exiled anarchists in Tomsk joined a Military-Socialist Union which included Bolsheviks, SRs, and Mensheviks.¹²⁰ In the Khersonskaya hard labour [*katorga*] prison, anarchists took part in a survey of attitudes to the First World War, its characteristics, and expected outcomes, organized by the SR-Maximalist B. Zhadanovsky. The survey revealed a preponderance of internationalist, defeatist attitudes. In the spring of 1916, the Kherson *katorzhniks* put out an illegal handwritten journal *Svobodnyye mysli* [Free thoughts], which included discussions about the war. Among its writers and creators were the anarchists A. N. Andreyev, Vinokurov, and K. Kasparov.¹²¹

Thus, during the First World War, anti-militarist propaganda occupied an important place in the activities of Russian anarchists, contributing to the spread of their influence and the growth of the movement among workers, employees and deserters, who filled the ranks of the anarchist organizations. No less important was the active work among soldiers and sailors. It's significant that during this period some of the anarchists advocated a strategy of struggle which was applied in the February days of 1917.

* * * * *

Commentary (added by the author for the English edition of this essay):

Khlebovoltsi – an anarcho-communist tendency in Russian anarchism in the early 20th century. Its name derived from the newspaper *Khleb i Volya* [Bread and Freedom] published in 1903–1905. The leading theoreticians of this tendency were P. A. Kropotkin, G. I. Gogelia, and M. I. Goldsmit. They believed that the immediate goal of the impending revolution should be a stateless communist system. The *khlebovoltsi* endorsed methods of struggle aimed at transforming the anarchist movement into a mass movement: economic strikes, acts of individual (including worksite) terror, sabotage, and armed revolts. The emphasis was on the organization of strikes and revolts as a means for workers and peasants to achieve partial improvements in their economic situation. Also encouraged was the struggle for political freedoms (but not for parliamentarism or a constitution) by means of revolutionary methods. Kropotkin, Gogelia, and Goldsmit imagined the social revolution in the form of a general strike with the seizure of the means of production, leading to an armed uprising which would result in the elimination of state power and private property, and the immediate re-organization of society on the basis of anarcho-communism. The role of organizing the “free communist society” was to be filled by the labour unions (syndicates) created in the development of the labour movement. Inspired by the experience of the labour movement in France, as well as the outstanding successes of general strikes and the appearance of the first trade unions in Russia, the anarcho-communist *khlebovoltsi* in 1905–1907 pushed for the wider application of the revolutionary-syndicalist strategy of struggle. In their writings, P. Kropotkin, G. Gogelia, and M. Goldsmit encouraged anarchists to create labour unions which were independent of the political parties, unions which were based on the organizational principles of self-management and federalism, and used the tactic of “direct action” (the struggle of workers on behalf of their own socio-economic interests without recourse to organs of state power or political parties). By taking part in the everyday struggles of workers and propagandizing anarchist ideas, the anarchists were to prepare the labour unions for their role as the basic organizational force of the social revolution and the organizers of production in the future anarcho-communist society. The culmination of this work was to be the creation of an All-Russian trade union federation based on the principles of revolutionary syndicalism. While acknowledging syndicalism as the key strategy of the anarchist movement, the *khlebovoltsi* proposed to combine various forms of struggle, and envisaged the parallel existence of anarchist ideological (“party”) organizations and labour unions.

Black Hundreds (Chernosotentsi) – the name applied in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century to members of ultra-rightwing, conservative-monarchist and anti-semitic parties. The name originates from the expression “black sotnia,” in the 16th – 17th centuries designating city wards (*slobodas*, *sotnias*) which were populated by merchants and craftsmen who paid taxes to the treasury and were subject to compulsory service to the state. In contrast, the inhabitants of the so-called “white *slobodas*” were dependent on the feudal lords (*boyars*) and the church. Monarchists embraced the term, comparing themselves with the legendary “black hundreds” of Nizhny Novgorod. In 1611–1612, the inhabitants of this city, led by their *starosta* [elected leader] Kuzma Minin (Kuzma Minich Zakharyev), created a people’s volunteer militia which defeated the Polish-Lithuanian army and drove it out of Moscow. The first Black Hundreds organizations (Russian Assembly, Union of the Russian People) appeared in 1903 –1905. The most influential conservative-monarchist parties were the Union of the Russian People, headed by A. I. Dubrovin, and the Russian People’s Union of the Archangel Michael, led by V. M. Purishkevich. In 1907 more than 500,000 people took part in the movement. The goals they were striving for were the restoration of absolute monarchy, the instituting of privileges for the Russian and Orthodox population, and the restricting of the rights of Jews, Poles, and other ethnic and religious minorities. The social base of the movement consisted of the conservative nobility and the merchant class, urban craftsmen and traders, and some workers. In Western Ukraine, the movement attracted the support of Orthodox peasants who were in conflict with Polish Catholic landowners. The Black Hundreds enjoyed the endorsement of the tsar Nicholas II. Funds for their activities were made available by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire. As means of struggle, they

employed printed propaganda, mass demonstrations, elections to parliament (the State *Duma*), pogroms, and terrorist acts. The Black Hundreds created their own militias, organizing numerous pogroms directed against “enemies of the state” (Jews, revolutionaries, and intelligentsia). The movement peaked in October – November 1905. Their militants also carried out a series of political assassinations. Among their victims: one of the Bolshevik leaders N. E. Bauman, and important figures of the Constitutional Democratic Party M. Y. Herzenstein and G. B. Yollo. In 1916 V. Purishkevich was one of the organizers and perpetrators of the murder of G. E. Rasputin, who had acquired the reputation of a “saint” and a “miracle-worker” and exerted a strong influence on the tsar and tsarina. The monarchists also created labour organizations, whose members acted as strike-breakers during strikes. Anti-semitic propaganda played a major role in the activities of the Black Hundreds. In 1913 in Kiev, their propaganda was instrumental in fabricating a court case against a Jewish clerical employee, M. Beilis, on a charge of committing the ritual murder of A. Yushchinsky. However, owing to pressure from liberal and socialist public opinion, the Black Hundreds’ scheme was thwarted – the jurors acquitted Beilis. Subsequently, one of the leaders of the monarchists, N. E. Markov II, gained notoriety as a popularizer and distributor of the anti-Semitic literary forgery “Protocols of the Elders of Zion.” In the 1930s –1940s in the field of anti-semitic propaganda, he collaborated with the leading ideologues of Hitler’s Germany, J. Goebbels and A. Rosenberg, publishing his own articles in various Nazi publications. In the 1910s, the Black Hundreds movement went into decline. After the overthrow of the monarchy in February 1917, monarchist organizations were banned. Most of them ceased to exist. In contemporary Russia, the ideas of the Black Hundreds have found resonance not only among the members of organizations of Russian nationalists, but also among artists, scientists, and even high-ranking public officials.

Tsarina Maria – Maria Feodorovna, née Marie Sophie Frederikke Dagmar (1847–1928). Daughter of King of Denmark Christian IX. In 1866–1894, wife of Alexander III Alexandrovich, tsar of Russia. Mother of Tsar Nicholas II. Headed the Russian Red Cross and the Department of Institutions of the Empress Maria, which administered almshouses, founding hospitals, orphanages, and educational institutions for orphans. Maria Feodorovna was in moderate opposition to Nicholas II, and was skeptical of his abilities as a statesman. For example, in 1915 during World War I, she convinced her son to decline the post of Supreme Commander of the Russian Army. Maria opposed the marriage of Nicholas with Princess Alix of Hesse-Darmstadt (Alexandra Feodorovna), never concealing her hatred for her. Maria Feodorovna especially despised the influence of the new tsarina on the policies of Nicholas II. The charge of espionage made against her by the author of the leaflet mentioned in the text above was apparently based on rumours rather than any solid evidence. After the overthrow of the monarchy, she left for Crimea. In April 1919, she emigrated to Great Britain, then to Denmark. She declined to participate in any way in the political activities of Russian emigrants.

Anarcho-communists-“chernoznamentalsi” – a radical current in Russian anarchism at the beginning of the 20th century. Emerging in 1905, it derived its name from the newspaper *Chernoye znamye* [Black banner]. Its ideologues were I. S. Grossman, V. Lapidus, G. K. Askarov (Jacobson), and G. B. Sandomirsky. Grossman criticized Kropotkin for remnants of “liberal federalism” and “elements of utopian idealism left over from the 18th century.” He called for the eradication of “abstract-humanist tendencies” and the creation of anarchist theory based on ideas about the struggle of mankind against forces of oppression (against nature, originally, but, with the onset of class society, against the exploiting classes) as the moving force of history (*Chernoye znamye*, 1905, № 1, p. 10). The *chernoznamentalsi* considered their social base to be the working class and the peasantry, as well as the unemployed and criminalized strata of the urban population. While recognizing the importance of fighting for economic demands in developing the revolutionary consciousness of workers and peasants, they rejected any legal forms of struggle. They opposed the establishment of trade unions, offering illegal anarchist groups as an alternative. Giving the highest priority to an “energetic assault on the property of the bourgeoisie,” the *chernoznamentalsi* encouraged such means of struggle as individual and mass terror, expropriations, strikes, sabotage, riots, and armed uprisings. The participation of anarchists

in the struggle for political freedoms was rejected on the grounds that this would lead to a mitigation of class contradictions. At the 1st Conference of the *chernoznametsi* in the autumn of 1905 in Białystok, a division into two factions took place. The “bezmotivniki” [motiveless ones] considered their most urgent task “motiveless anti-bourgeois terror,” i.e. the murder of bourgeoisie, landlords, state officials, etc. purely for their membership in the “exploiting” classes. The second faction, the “communards,” while not rejecting terror, proposed to concentrate all their efforts on organizing armed revolts in the cities with the goal of creating “temporary revolutionary communes” which would provide examples of anarchist transformations of society to working people. Along with the *khlebovoltsi*, the *chernoznametsi* became one of the most influential tendencies in Russian anarchism, exerting an impact on the labour movement and anarchist groups in Białystok, Warsaw, Odessa, and Yekaterinoslav.

Anarcho-communist beznachaltsi – a radical insurrectionist tendency in Russian anarchism in the early 20th century. Formed in 1904 – 1905. It derived its name from the Group of Anarchists-Communists “Beznachaliye” [Without Authority]. The leading theoreticians of the *beznachaltsi* were S. M. Romanov and N. V. Divnogorsky. They declared themselves adherents of an ideology which combined the ideas of P. Kropotkin, M. Bakunin, M. Stirner, and S. Nechaev. They maintained close links with French anarcho-individualists who were disciples of Albert Libertad. The *beznachaltsi* considered their own social base to be the “lumpen-proletarian” strata of the cities (the unemployed, as well as semi-criminal groups), regarding them as the bearers of a communist consciousness: “Tramps – as an element undermining the foundation of slavish submissiveness – are a revolutionary element, cultivating the notion of the least amount of labour and, owing to historical circumstances, the idea of human leisure” (Bidbey [S. M. Romanov], *Concerning Lucifer, the great spirit of rebellion, “irresponsibility,” anarchy and anarchism*, [n. p., 1904], p. 19). In addition, they were recruiting among students, bohemians, workers, and peasants. The *beznachaltsi* assumed that insurgency, expropriation, and terror, carried out by groups of lumpen-proletarians, would set off a mass worker-peasant revolt, which would mark the beginning of a social revolution. The need to engage in the everyday struggle for socio-economic demands, to take part in labour unions and peasant organizations, was therefore dispensed with. The *beznachaltsi* recognized only guerilla warfare, along with printed and oral propaganda.

Vladimir Alexandrovich Sukhomlinov (1848–1926) – general, Minister of War of the Russian Empire from March 1909 to July 1915. In the 1910s public opinion associated his name with corruption, and providing protection for shady dealers and persons suspected of having links with foreign intelligence services. Many Russian politicians blamed Sukhomlinov for the Russian Army’s lack of technical proficiency for modern warfare, as well as inadequate supply services for the troops at the front. The opposition press and politicians believed the cause of these problems to be the corrupt schemes used by Sukhomlinov in dispensing defense orders. On July 15 1915 he was dismissed from his ministerial post. An investigation of Sukhomlinov’s activities as minister was begun. On March 8 1916 he was discharged from the government service, and on April 29 of the same year arrested and incarcerated in the Trubetskoy Bastion of the Peter and Paul Fortress [Petrograd]. On October 11 1916, following the intervention of Nicholas II and a number of senior officials, Sukhomlinov was transferred to house arrest. After the overthrow of the monarchy, he was put on trial on August 10–12 1917. Sukhomlinov was found guilty of the unpreparedness of the army for war and sentenced to life in prison at hard labour, commuted to imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress and deprivation of all the privileges of a retired general. After the October Revolution, he was moved to the Kresty Prison [Petrograd]. On May 1 1918 he was released under an amnesty and soon emigrated to Germany.

Sergey Nikolaevich Myasoedov (1865–1915) – an officer of the Russian Army, the main figure of a sensational spy scandal. His military service began in the 105th Orenburg infantry regiment. In 1892 he transferred to the Special Corps of Gendarmes. From 1894 to 1901 he was the deputy, and from 1901 to 1907 the chief, of the railway gendarme detachment at the frontier station of Verzhbolovo. Due to its location, Myasoedov was

able to establish connections with high officials of Russian and Germany who crossed the border. In particular, he was on friendly terms with the German emperor, Wilhelm II. In 1907 Myasoedov was transferred to the reserve and took up business activities. He was one of the founders of the Northwest Steamship Company. In 1909 he became acquainted with the Minister of War, V. A. Sukhomlinov. Thanks to his friendship with the minister, Myasoedov was reinstated in the service and settled into a job in the War Ministry. In 1912 he was openly accused of espionage by A. I. Guchkov, a deputy in the State Duma from the right-liberal Octobrist Party. And although an investigation failed to establish Myasoedov's involvement in espionage, he was transferred to the reserve again. In August 1914, he voluntarily joined the army and was appointed a translator in the headquarters of the 10th Army. On February 18 1915, he was arrested by counter-intelligence on charges of espionage and looting. The grounds for suspicion were the testimony of Lieutenant J. Kołakowski, who had been recruited by German intelligence while in German captivity. Kołakowski testified that Myasoedov was identified to him by a German officer as an agent for collecting and transmitting information. According to General B. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, Myasoedov was caught red-handed trying to show secret documents to a German intelligence agent. On March 18 1915 he was sentenced to death by a military court and hanged soon after. In connection with the Myasoedov case, 19 of his relatives and friends were arrested, including his wife Klara Samuilovna Goldstein, the daughter of a rich merchant. The Myasoedov case dealt a severe blow to the reputation of his friend, the Minister of War V. Sukhomlinov, who was soon forced into retirement. Discussions are still ongoing among researchers as to whether Colonel Myasoedov was guilty of espionage. The version according to which he was innocent has received wide distribution. Its proponents believe that this case was fabricated in an attempt by the higher circles of the Russian empire to find a scapegoat for the succession of defeats. On the other hand, the political opposition, in the form of liberal politicians and the generals close to them, used the case to demonstrate to the public the moral corruption of the people close to the tsar Nicholas II.

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1 See: Petrogradskaya federatsiya anarkhistov [Petrograd federation of anarchists], 1923 // International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam, Senya Fléchine papers: f. 84 [an English translation is available here: <http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/gxd3d2>]; L. Lipotki, Russkoye anarkhicheskoye dvizheniye v Severnoy Amerike. Istoricheskiye ocherki. [The Russian anarchist movement in North America. Historical essays.] // Ibid. Lipotkin papers, B. 1.; N. Driker, Khersonskaya katorga v dni voyny [Kherson katorga (hard labour) in days of war] // Katorga i ssylka. [Katorga and exile.], (Kiev: 1924), pp. 71–80; V. Khudoley, Vospominaniya anarkhista [Memoirs of an anarchist] // Volna № 46 (1923), pp. 32–37; idem, Anarkhicheskiye techeniya nakanune 1917 goda [Anarchist currents on the eve of 1917] // Mikhailu Bakuninu. 1876–1926: Ocherki istorii anarkhicheskogo dvizheniya v Rossii. [To Mikhail Bakunin. 1876–1926: Essays on the history of the anarchist movement in Russia.], (Moscow: 1926), pp. 314–322; G. P. Maximoff, V gody voyny (Iz zapisok anarkhista) [During the years of war (From the notes of an anarchist)] // Letopis' revolyutsii. [Chronicle of the revolution.], Vol. 1 (Berlin: 1923), pp. 243–268; A. N. Tyukhanov, Palubnaya pokhodka. [Sea legs.] (Moscow; Leningrad: 1931).

2 V. E. [V. M. Voline], Kray zavesy [The Edge of the curtain] // Golos truda № 50 (27 August 1915), p. 2.

3 Ya. Yakovlev, Russkiy anarkhizm v Velikoy Russkoy revolyutsii [Russian anarchism in the Great Russian revolution], (Moscow: 1921); B. I. Gorev, Anarkhizm v Rossii (ot Bakunina do Makhno) [Anarchism in Russia (from Bakunin to Makhno)], (Moscow: 1930); V. Zalezskiy, Anarkhisty v Rossii [Anarchists in Russia], (Moscow: 1930); Ye. M. Yaroslavskiy, Anarkhizm v Rossii [Anarchism in Russia], (Moscow: 1939).

4 V. V. Komin, Anarkhizm v Rossii. [Anarchism in Russia.], (Kalinin: 1969), pp. 124–127; Ye. M. Kornoukhov, Bor'ba partii bol'shevikov protiv anarkhizma v Rossii. [The Struggle of the Bolshevik Party against anarchism in Russia.], (Moscow: 1981), pp. 107–112; S. N. Kanev, Revolyutsiya i anarkhizm: iz istorii bor'by revolyutsionnykh demokratov i bol'shevikov protiv anarkhizma (1840–1917 gg.) [Revolution and anarchism: from the history of the struggle of revolutionary democrats and Bolsheviks against anarchism (1840–1917)], (Moscow: 1987), pp. 255–259. Certain topics have been examined by foreign researchers; see, in particular: P. Avrich, The Russian anarchists (Princeton: 1967), pp. 116–119.

5 A. A. Shtyrbul, Anarkhistskoye dvizheniye v Sibiri v 1-y chetverti XX veka. Antigosudarstvennyy bunt i negosudarstvennaya samoorganizatsiya trudyashchikhsya: teoriya i praktika. [The Anarchist movement in Siberia in the 1st quarter of the 20th century. Anti-statist revolt and non-statist self-organization of workers: theory and practice.], Part 1, (Omsk: 1996); V. V. Kriven'kiy, Anarkhisty [Anarchists] // Politicheskiye partii i obshchestvo v Rossii 1914–1917 gg. [Political parties and society in Russia 1914–1917.], (Moscow: 1999), pp. 46–61; P. O. Korotich, Rossiyskiye anarkhisty v gody Pervoy mirovoy voyny: ideologiya, organizatsiya, taktika (1914–1918 gg.) [Russian anarchists during the First World War: ideology, organization, tactics (1914–1918)], Dissertation of candidate of historical science, (Moscow: 2000); V. P. Suvorov, Anarkhizm v Tverskoy gubernii: vtoraya polovina XIX v. – 1918 g. [Anarchism in Tverskaya province: second half of the 19th cent. – 1918], Dissertation of candidate of historical science, (Tver: 2004); V. P. Sapon, Apollon Andreyevich Karelin: Ocherk zhizni. [Apollon Andreyevich Karelin: the profile of a life.], (Nizhny Novgorod: 2009).

6 For details about the views of P. A. Kropotkin, see: G. B. Sandomirsky, Torzhestvo antimilitarizma. [The Triumph of anti-militarism.], (Moscow, 1920); idem, Kropotkin i Frantsiya [Kropotkin and France] // Petr

Kropotkin. Sbornik statey. [Peter Kropotkin. Collection of articles.], (Petersburg, Moscow: 1922), pp. 168–176; J. Grave, Iz moikh vospominaniy o Kropotkine [From my memories of Kropotkin] // Ibid., pp. 179–185; I. Grossman-Roshchin, Kharakteristika tvorchestva P. A. Kropotkina. [Characteristics of the creative work of P. A. Kropotkin], (Petersburg, Moscow: 1921); M. Pierrot, Kropotkin i vojna [Kropotkin and the War] // P. A. Kropotkin i yego ucheniye. Internatsional'nyy sbornik, posvyashchonnny desyatoy godovshchine smerti P. A. Kropotkina. [P. A. Kropotkin and his teachings. An International collection, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the death of P. A. Kropotkin], (Chicago: 1931), pp. 161–166; G. Woodcock and I. Avakumovich, The Anarchist Prince: A Biography of Peter Kropotkin (London: 1950); M. Miller, Kropotkin (Chicago: 1976), pp. 220–236; N. M. Pirumova, Petr Alekseyevich Kropotkin. (Moscow; 1972), pp. 183–189; A. A. Mkrtychyan, «Vsyakogo ugnetatel'ya lichnosti ya nenavizhu» [“I hate anyone who oppresses people”] // Trudy Komissii po nauchnomu naslediyu P.A. Kropotkina. [Proceedings of the Commission on the scientific heritage of P. A. Kropotkin], (Moscow: 1992), pp. 3–17; I. V. Petushkova, Petr Alekseyevich Kropotkin i I Mirovaya vojna [Peter Alekseyevich Kropotkin and the World War I] // Trudy Mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferentsii, posvyashchonnoy 150-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya P.A. Kropotkina. [Proceedings of the International scientific conference commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of PA Kropotkin.], 2nd ed., (Moscow: 1997), pp. 88–98; D. G. Kostenko, Oboronchestvo Kropotkina v gody I mirovoy voyny [The Defencism of Kropotkin during World War I] // Trudy Mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferentsii, posvyashchonnoy 150-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya P.A. Kropotkina. 3rd ed. (Moscow: 2001), pp. 44–55.

7 P. A. Kropotkin, Rechi buntovshchika [Words of a Rebel], (Moscow, 2009), pp. 42–43.

8 P. A. Kropotkin, Khleb i Volya. Sovremennaya nauka i anarkhiya. [Bread and Freedom. Modern science and anarchy], (Moscow, 1990), p. 499.

9 F. Domela-Nieuwenhuis, Vopros o militarizme [The Question of militarism] // Anarkhizm. Sbornik. [Anarchism. A Collection.], (Moscow: 1999), pp. 235–237; G. B. Sandomirsky, Torzhestvo antimilitarizma, pp. 10–11.

10 P. O. Korotich, , Rossiyskiye anarkhisty v gody Pervoy mirovoy voyny, p. 51.

11 Khleb i Volya. [Bread and Freedom.], 1904, № 8, p. 6.

12 Anarkhisty. Dokumenty i materialy. 1883–1935 gg. [Anarchists. Documents and materials. 1883–1935.], Vol. 1 (Moscow: 1998), p. 51.

13 “Anarchist defencism” was not a term used by proponents of this tendency, but neither was it pejorative. Pejorative terms applied to this anarchist defencism included “anarchist-patriotism” and “anarchist-democratism.” There were other varieties of defencism on the left, e. g. the “revolutionary defencism” of the Russian SRs, Mensheviks, and even the Bolsheviks for a time.

- 14 P. Shreyer, Nemetskiye anarkhisty i voyna [German anarchists and the war] // Nabat, May–June, 1915, № 2, p. 20; P. Avrich, Anarchist Portraits. (Princeton: 1988), p. 294. Mühsam soon switched to an anti-war stance.
- 15 N. M. Puchkov-Bezrodnyy, Politicheskaya katorga ob imperialisticheskoy voyne [Political prisoners about the imperialist war] // Proletarskaya revolyutsiya [Proletarian revolution], November 1924, № 11(34), p. 209.
- 16 P.A. Kropotkin, Anarkhiya, yeyo filosofiya, yeyo ideal: Sochineniya. [Anarchy, its philosophy, its ideal: Collected works.], (Moscow: 1999), p. 704.
- 17 Ibid., p. 712.
- 18 State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), f. 5969 (M. I. Gol'dsmit), op. 2, d. 28, l. 74 ob.
- 19 Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), f. 1023 (A. A. Borovoy), op. 1, d. 79, l. 64.
- 20 G. B. Sandomirsky, Torzhestvo antimilitarizma, pp. 42–43.
- 21 P. A. Kropotkin i yego ucheniye. Internatsional'nyy sbornik, posvyashchonnyy desyatoy godovshchine smerti P. A. Kropotkina, pp. 341–343.
- 22 Michael Confino, ed., Anarchistes en exil: Correspondance inédite de Pierre Kropotkine à Marie Goldsmith, 1897–1917, (Paris: 1995), p. 526.
- 23 P. N. Miliukov, Vospominaniya [Memoirs], (Moscow: 1991), pp. 153–154.
- 24 I. S. Knizhnik, Vospominaniya o P.A. Kropotkine i ob odnoy anarkhistskoy emigrantskoy gruppe [Memories of P. A. Kropotkin and a certain anarchist emigrant group] // Krasnaya letopis'. [Red chronicle.], 1922, № 4, p. 35.
- 25 See: G. B. Sandomirsky, Kropotkin i Frantsiya, pp. 170–171; N. M. Pirumova, op. cit., pp. 184–185; I. V. Petushkova, op. cit., p. 91; D. G. Kostenko, op. cit., pp. 44–46.
- 26 M. A. Bakunin, Parizhskaya kommuna i ponyatiye o gosudarstvennosti [The Paris Commune and the concept of statism] // Bakunin M.A. Izbrannyye sochineniya. [M. A. Bakunin. Selected works.], Vol. 4 (Petersburg; Moscow: 1920), pp. 247–266; P. A. Kropotkin, Rechi buntovshchika, pp. 63–73.

27 Golos Truda, 1914, № 6, p. 3.

28 See: K. [M. I. Gol'dsmit] Bakunin i voyna [Bakunin and war] // Golos truda, 1914, 13 November, № 11. p. 1; P. A. Kropotkin, Anarkhiya, yeyo filosofiya, yeyo ideal: Sochineniya, p. 705.

29 G. B. Sandomirsky, Kropotkin i Frantsiya, p. 171; N. M. Pirumova, op. cit., p. 184.

30 M. A. Bakunin, Anarkhiya i Poryadok: sochineniya. [Anarchy and Order: collected works], (Moscow: 2000), p. 408.

31 P. A. Kropotkin, Anarkhiya, yeyo filosofiya, yeyo ideal: Sochineniya, pp. 718–719.

32 I. S. Grossman-Roshchin, K kritike osnov ucheniya P. A. Kropotkina, p. 152.

33 V. V. Dam'ye, Anarkhizm i natsional'nyy vopros v XIX–XX vekakh [Anarchism and the national question in the 19th–20th centuries] // Natsional'naya ideya na yevropeyskom prostranstve v XX veke. Sbornik statey. [The National idea in the European region in the 20th century. Collection of articles.], Vol. 2, (Moscow: 2005), p. 204. This aspect of Kropotkin's defencism was first noted by M. Pierrot (M. Pierrot, op. cit., pp. 163–164. See also: A. A. Mkrtichyan, op. cit., p. 3).

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35 A. Skirda, Individual'naya avtonomiya i kollektivnaya sila. Obzor libertarnykh idey i praktik ot Prudona do 1939 g. [Individual autonomy and collective force. A Survey of libertarian ideas and practice from Proudhon to 1939], (Paris, 2002), p. 129. Skirda's book is available in English as: Facing the Enemy: a History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1948, (AK Press/Kate Sharpley Library, 2002).

36 Ibid.

37 V. V. Dam'ye, Zabytyy Internatsional, pp. 47–48.

38 Yu. N. Kir'yanov, Sotsial'no-politicheskiy protest rabochikh Rossii v gody Pervoy mirovoy voyny (iyul' 1914 – fevral' 1917 gg.). [Social-political protest by the workers of Russia during the First World War (July 1914 – February 1917).], (Moscow: 2005), p. 40.

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43 P. A. Kropotkin i voyna [P. A. Kropotkin and the War] // Golos truda, 1915, 2 October, № 5, p. 1.

44 See: Po povodu desyatiletia [Apropos of the decade] // Golos truda, 1915, 22 January, № 21, p. 1.

45 Golos truda, 1915, 3 September, № 51, p. 2.

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47 Golos truda, 1915, № 33, p. 3.

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49 K. Orgeiani [G. I. Gogeliya], Anarkhisty i voyna [Anarchists and the War] // Golos truda, 1915, 30 April, № 34, p. 2.

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52 V. P. Sapon, op. cit., p. 41.

53 Rabochaya mysl', 1916, № 1, column 13.

54 IISH: Lipotkin papers: B. 1, pp. 128–130, 133, 135–136.

55 According to an estimate of A. A. Borovoy, there were around 100 Russian anarchists in Paris alone in early 1917. (RGALI, f. 1023, op. 1, d. 85, l. 1).

56 IISH; Maximov papers, Folder 1.

57 IISH: Lipotkin papers, B. 1, p. 305.

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59 GARF, f. 102, DP OO, op. 1916, d. 12, t. 3, l. 270d–270d ob.

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