

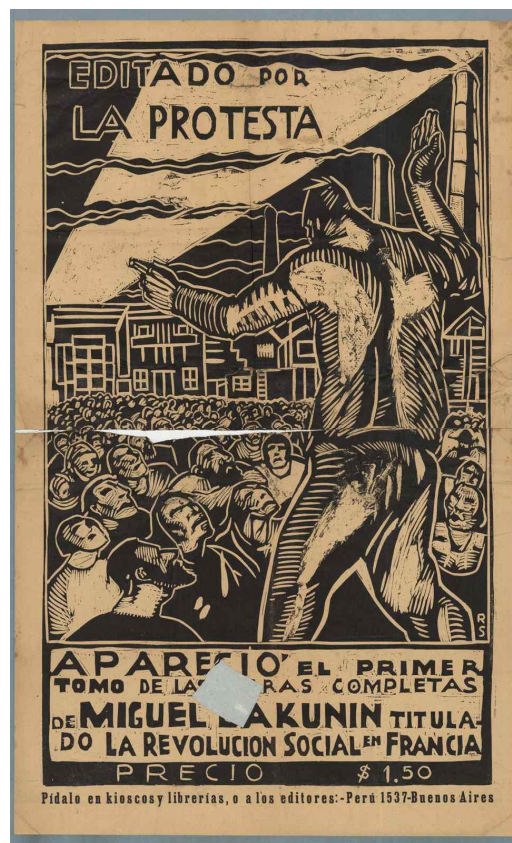
# The IISH Collection of Argentinian Anarchist Newspapers

The IISH collection of [Latin American Anarchist Newspapers](#) is extremely rich, containing almost a thousand journals, mostly collected by [Max Nettlau \(1865-1944\)](#), one of the great collectors of historical material on anarchism.

Nettlau's collection comprises [971 anarchist and labour newspapers](#) from Latin America, as well as pamphlets, leaflets, manuscripts, and ephemera. The Argentinian collection is by far the most extensive, with 413 periodicals, alongside journals from Mexico (146), Brazil (139), Uruguay (98), and Chile (73).

Anarchists groups considered the dissemination of libertarian ideology a powerful tool for mobilizing the working class. They organized study groups, promoted debate, and went to great efforts to produce journals and propaganda material.

Those journals published articles from well-known European thinkers, debates on political ideas, and information about important issues for workers, such as labour organization, strikes, and the lack of labour rights in Argentina.



LA PROTESTA, 1924

Poster advertising the publication of Bakunin's *Complete Works* by the journal *La Protesta*

<https://search.socialhistory.org/Record/838554>

This exhibition was created by Leticia Fernandes Rodrigues da Silva (Reinwardt Academie) for the Latin American Desk at the IISH.

Thanks are due to Lucas Poy for his contribution.

Anarchist propaganda used a straightforward language, trying to disseminate libertarian ideas in a way that everyone could understand, thereby attracting the sympathy of workers.

The names of some journals clearly targeted the masses: *Acción Obrera*, *La Voz del Campesino*, *L'amico del popolo*, *Solidaridad Obrera*, and *Tribuna Proletaria*.



ACCIÓN OBRERA, 01 MAY 1924

ACCIÓN OBRERA, 01 MAY 1925

This newspaper was edited by the furniture industry workers' union. The message of this image is one of "Strength through Union".

The majority of the journals presented just text, but some included interesting satirical drawings.

Political cartoons were used to depict the conflict between labour and capital and to illustrate the exploitation of the worker by the employer, frequently represented as a fat, greedy man wearing a tailcoat and top hat.



ACCIÓN OBRERA, JULY 1925

IN THE BOSSES' DOMAINS

“A programme to encourage ‘free labour’ (Planned by the Society of Furniture Makers and Joinery Workshops)”



ACCIÓN OBRERA, MAR/APR 1926

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOUR  
“Who will win?”

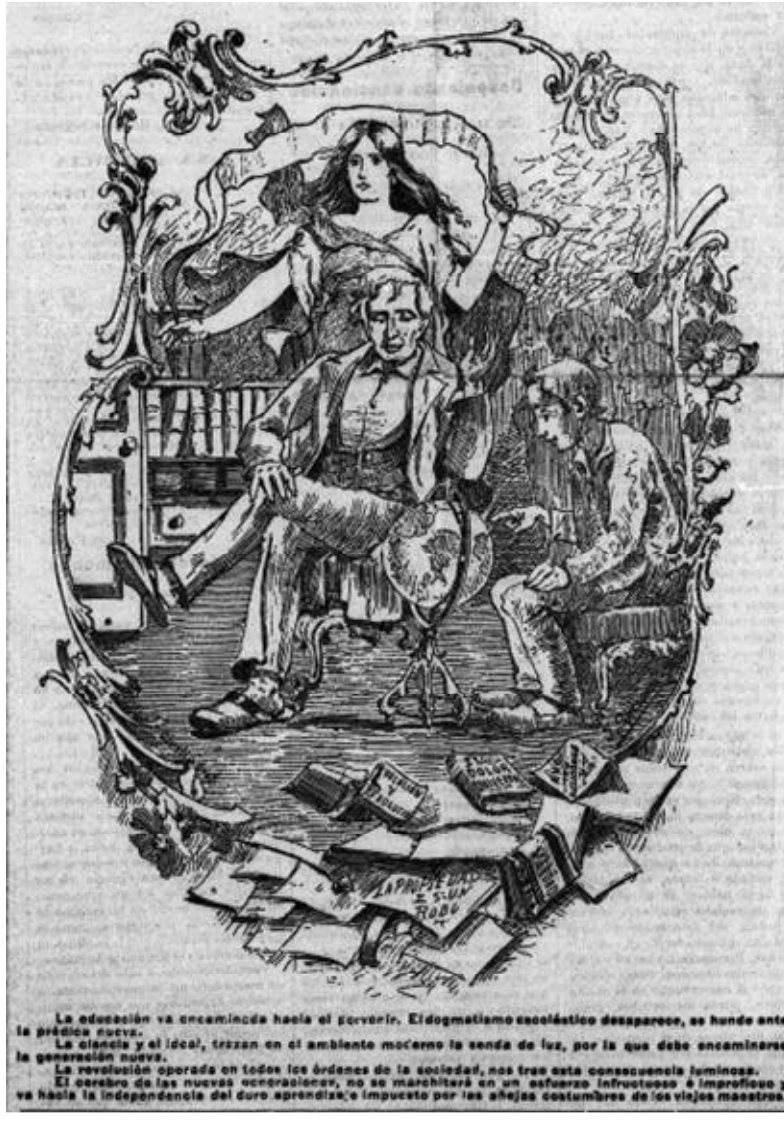


ACCIÓN OBRERA, AUGUST 1925

A SCENE FROM THE REALM OF THE “FREE”  
“Boss: I don’t need you any more. Try to recover from the accident you had at work, and maybe later on, if I need someone, we’ll talk.”

The libertarian message aimed at a deeper transformation in society, leaving behind bourgeois morality for a new order based on freedom and solidarity.

It was an optimistic view about a fortunate and bright future based on science, rationality, and progress, contrasting sharply with religious obscurantism, prejudice, and ignorance.



### LA PROTESTA, 03 JULY 1904

“Education is on its way to a new future. Scholastic dogmatism is being discarded, overwhelmed by the new vision.

In this new modern world, science and idealism are showing the path of enlightenment for the new generation to follow.

A revolution is sweeping through every order of society, ushering in this brilliant future.

The new generations will not have their brains deadened with fruitless, unproductive effort, but will be freed from the rigid notions forced on them by old teachers and their worn-out methods.”

Freedom is an ideal recurrent in anarchist propaganda. We can find it in the names of journals such as *Acción Libertaria*, *El Emancipado*, *El Libertario*, *Idea Libre*, *Juventud Libre*, *Libre Iniciativa*, *Tierra Libre*, *Liberación*, and *Via Libre*.



VIA LIBRE, 1920

“The people with their heads held down and enchained”



TIERRA LIBRE, 1922

The picture celebrates the anniversary of the Haymarket Affair, the origin of the May Day commemoration.



Liberty has also been symbolized by the image of a woman with a torch, illuminating the path towards enlightenment. It is sometimes suggested by light or the sun, announcing a bright new dawn.

This symbolism is reflected, too, in the names of some journals: *Claridad*, *La Antorcha*, and *La Aurora*.

From 1895 to 1905, once a year, an illustrated almanac version of the famous newspaper founded by Errico Malatesta was published. The almanac included texts from celebrated European libertarian thinkers, poems, and a socialist calendar presenting important dates for the movement.



LA QUESTIONE SOCIALE  
1895 AND 1899



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### LA QUESTIONE SOCIALE, 1898

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The image shows a woman, symbol of freedom, playing a clarion to awaken the worker so he can fight his attacker. On the body of the beast is written: religious hypocrisy, capitalism, and fake patriotism.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “clarion” derives from the Latin word *clarus* [bright and clear], and the expression “clarion call” means a “a strongly expressed demand or request for action”.

Awakening is a frequently used metaphor: the people must awake from their slumbers and fight for the revolution that will herald new times.

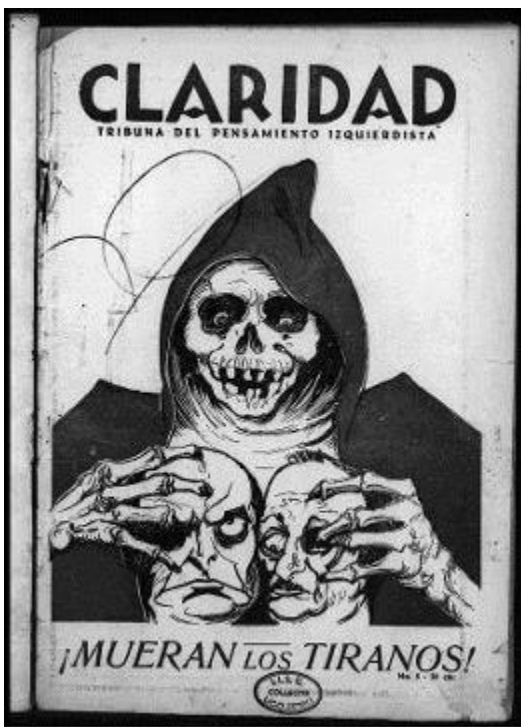
The idea of a promising future appears in the names of journals such as *Adelante*, *Despertar*, *El Porvenir*, *El Precursor*, and *La Nueva Era*.

Destruction is also a frequent theme in the anarchist iconography: it is necessary to destroy the basis of current society so that a new one can be built. Only through revolution can a new society based on solidarity and freedom be created, built on the ruins of capitalism and the bourgeoisie.



EL BURRO, 17 NOVEMBER 1918

“THE MAXIMALISM MARCH: The only force that will establish peace and justice in the world. Yet another step, and the God-Capital Empire will be overthrown.”



CLARIDAD, NOVEMBER 1926

“Death to the tyrants!”



The concept of Justice is often present in anarchist discourse.

With the social revolution, justice will triumph and the enemies of the proletariat – the bourgeoisie, the state, the church, and the military – will be judged and sentenced:



LA PROTESTA, 01 MAY 1904

“The proletarian world calls on all the tyrants who oppress today to answer on the great day of universal justice.”

In this image we see an allegory of Judgment Day: Justice (*Justitia*) is standing before her throne, observing the trial of the oppressors by the people.



LA QUESTIONE SOCIALE, 1902

This image presents another version of the woman with torch. This time she is holding a machete and leading the path to social emancipation. At her feet lie defeated beasts representing the military and Christianity (symbolized by the Christogram JHS).

In the background we see wreckage and scaffolds, symbolizing the destruction of the established order and the sentencing of the enemies of the new order.



CLARIDAD, OCTOBER 1926

“The red devil of new ideas will annihilate the black beast of obscurantism in this century”

Anti-religious propaganda was frequent in the Argentinian anarchist press, with newspapers dedicated entirely to anticlericalism. Anarchists often used political cartoons and caricatures to portray religious figures as conservative and obscurantist, and as obstructing the freedom and progress of the people.



ACCIÓN OBRERA, 01 MAY 1924, p. 4

“PENSIONS ACT: Through their combined efforts, the employers’ association, the patriotic league, clericalists, the judicial profession, and the military manage to profitably milk the eternal dairy cow [the people]”

The names of the newspapers sent a direct message opposing religious fanaticism and the hypocrisy of the church.

*El Azote* (1909-1912) had a provocative subtitle: “*Periódico hebdomadario contra la lepra clerical y los gobernantes a base de machete*” [The Scourge – A weekly newspaper that’s raising a machete against corrupt clergy and the ruling classes.



EL AZOTE, 14 APRIL 1912

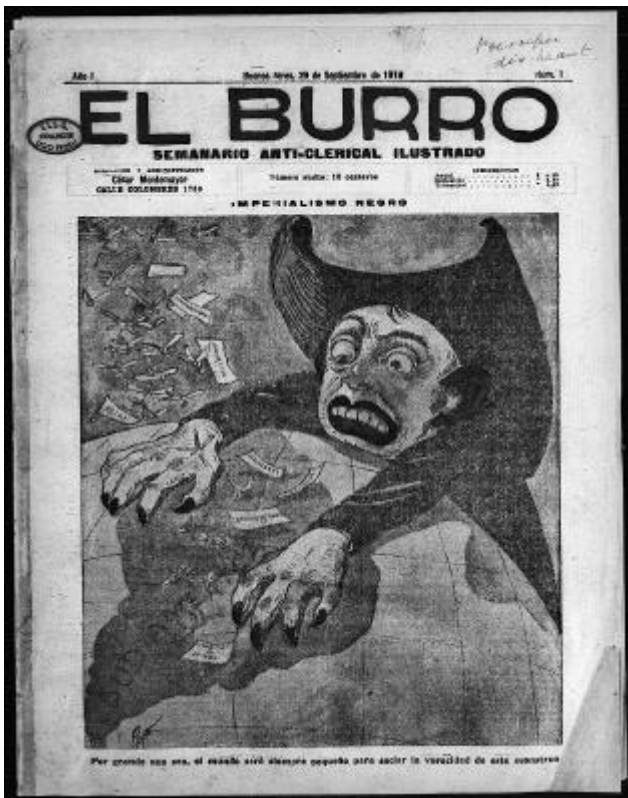
“Joe Public: Why are you carrying that bucket of hot water?

El Azote: To take down that badly made tailor’s dummy. Can’t you see, pin-stripe trousers on one side and a cassock on the other!”

The image represents the union of conservative forces against the interests of the people. The cartoon shows a mannequin, half bourgeois, with a large moustache and carrying a club; the other half is a priest, wearing a soutane and holding a rosary.

On the rosary is written “obscurantism, fanaticism, and backwardness”. On the club, we read “legality, honesty, advancement, and justice”.

*El Burro – Semanario Anti-Clerical Ilustrado (1918-1930)*  
The Donkey – Anticlerical Illustrated Weekly Newspaper



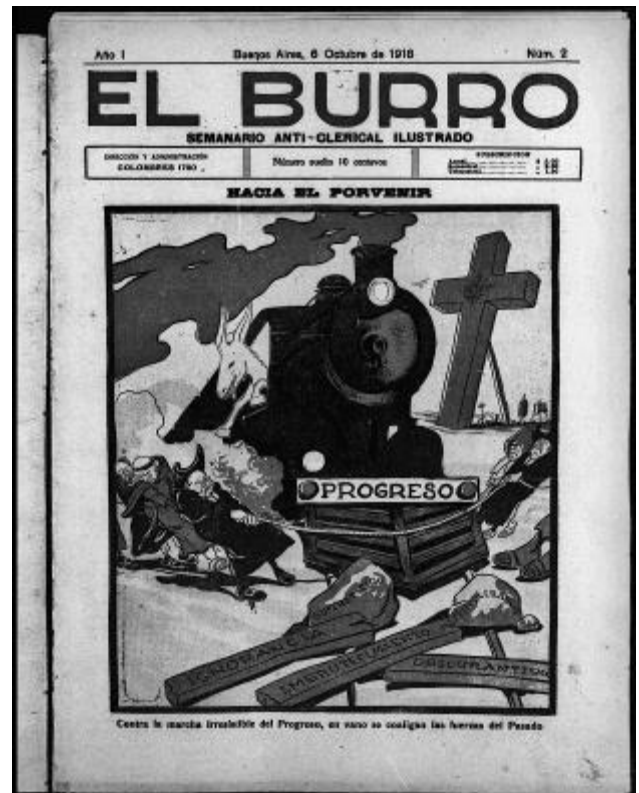
“**BLACK IMPERIALISM** – Though the world is big, it will never be big enough to satiate the voracity of this monster”

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EL BURRO, 29 SEPTEMBER 1918

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The priest here is represented as a greedy creature, with long black nails and monstrous features, trying to hold on to the South American continent.



“**TOWARDS THE FUTURE** – Against the irresistible march of progress, the forces of the past unite in vain”

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EL BURRO, 06 OCTOBER 1918

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In this cartoon we see priests, representing the church, trying to stop the train, representing progress. On the obstacles placed on the track we can read the words “ignorance”, “superstition”, “brutalization”, “intolerance”, and “obscurantism”.



*El Peludo – Bi-semanario satírico anti-clerical ilustrado*

The Hairy – Anticlerical Satirical Twice-Weekly Newspaper

These images show a subject central to anarchist discourse: the enemies of the workers, capitalism, government, the church, and the bourgeoisie.



1 – 5 September 1922: “The most difficult test for the people”

2 – 5 May 1928: “Proletarians, take the world!”

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## EL PELUDO

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*International anticlerical  
Illustrated twice-weekly  
newspaper*



The anticlerical propaganda had a humorous tone, although it was not averse to criticism of stories of corruption and sexual depravity within the Catholic Church. The drawings draw heavily on irony to deconstruct the image of the clergy.



EL AZOTE 29 AUGUST 1909 (COVER)

- Father, the Good Lord forgot to give us our daily bread today. Could you give it to us, as He hasn't?
- What an idea! Are you crazy?
- But... aren't you a minister of God?
- To receive alms, damn it, not to give them!



EL AZOTE 29 AUGUST 1909 (COVER)

- Don't be worried that I've caught you in flagrante. As Saint Augustine says in one of his maxims: "Love God and do what you will". You can be sure that you're not committing a sin.
- Do you love God?
- Of course I do.
- Right then... off we go!





“This little angel will not pass through the eye of a needle”



“Even the dogs are beginning to practice direct action”

Some of the symbolism used by anarchists, such as the red flag, the Paris Commune, and May Day, were shared with the socialists.

The red flag is still a powerful symbol for the labour movement and it became a unifying symbol of identity for all workers.

The Paris Commune and the celebration of International Workers' Day on May Day, 1 May, are symbolic of the heroic fight of workers for their rights.



18 MARCH 1889

Celebration of the twenty-seventh anniversary of the Paris Commune and the first year of the Socialist Workers' Centre in Bahía Blanca.

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ABC DEL SOCIALISMO , 01 MAY 1900

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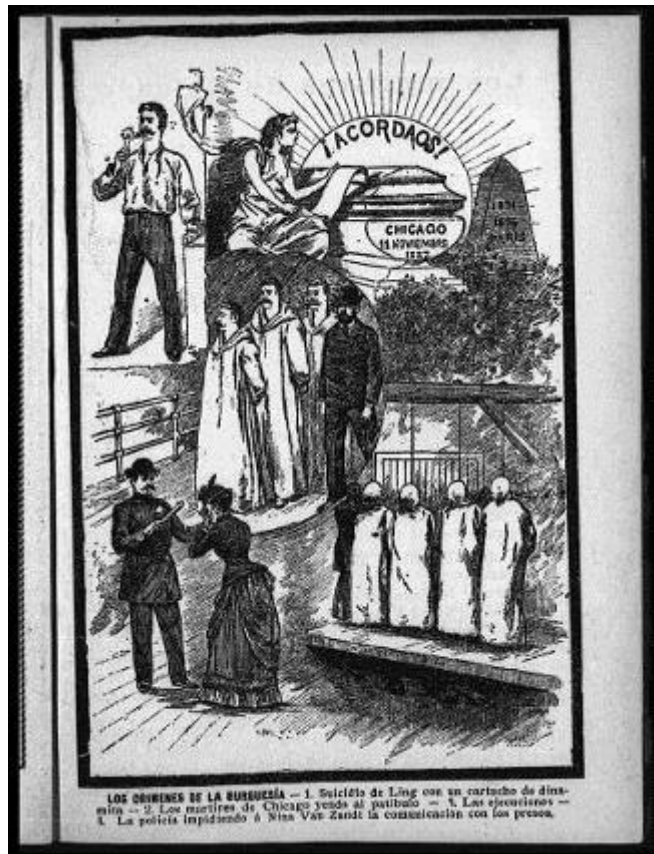
“Hurrah to the Universal Proletariat”  
“Hurrah to the First of May”  
“Eight-hour working day”  
“Abolition of militarism”

Here, too, we see *Justitia* on her pedestal, surrounded by workers celebrating May Day.



The celebration of International Workers' Day on 1 May commemorates the Haymarket Affair in Chicago in 1886, when four workers were killed by the police during a strike to demand a statutory maximum eight-hour working day.

Since then, 1 May has come to symbolize the international union and solidarity of all workers.



LA QUESTIONE SOCIALE, MARCH 1897, p. 34



PAN SINTESIS DE TODA IDEA MUNDIAL,  
30 APRIL 1935

Although socialists and anarchists shared some symbols, they differed fundamentally on the power struggle.

Anarchists believed that participation in the political system was not the way to achieve the deep transformation that would be needed to change the balance of power in favour of the people. For them, only revolution could annihilate bourgeois capitalist society and bring power to the people.



VOLUNTAD, 01 SEPTEMBER 1930

“Be a man; do not vote!”

VIA LIBRE, MARCH 1920, p. 36

“Political Philosophy of the Moment”



FILOSOFIA POLITICA DEL MOMENTO

## Anarchism in Argentina

Argentinian anarchism flourished between c. 1880 and 1930, influenced mostly by Italian and Spanish immigrants, some of whom already had ties with anarchism in their home countries. <sup>[1]</sup> The movement grew significantly in the rapidly growing industrialized region of Buenos Aires, but it was also present in other cities, including Rosario, Santa Fe, La Plata, Mar del Plata, and Bahía Blanca. <sup>[2]</sup>

Two renowned Italian anarchists played a decisive role in the dissemination of anarchism in Argentina: [Errico Malatesta \(1853-1932\)](#), who lived in Buenos Aires from 1885 to 1889, and [Pietro Gori \(1865-1911\)](#), who was in Argentina from 1898 to 1902. <sup>[3]</sup>

Errico Malatesta had a significant role in the spread of anarchism in Argentina. During his stay in Argentina Malatesta was highly active in the anarchist movement. The year he arrived in Buenos Aires, he created a social study circle and edited the [La Questione Sociale](#) newspaper. <sup>[4]</sup> He went to great efforts to disseminate anarcho-communist ideas among the immigrant working class, promoting debates with workers of all political views. <sup>[5]</sup>

One of the early important events that helped spread anarchist ideology was the first bakers' strike in January 1888. <sup>[6]</sup> In 1886 [Ettore Mattei \(1857-1915\)](#) had convinced the bakers to found their own federation, and invited Malatesta to draft its articles of association, a draft that was subsequently used many times as a model for other workers' unions. <sup>[7]</sup>



Bertoni, Luigi. [Photo.]: Left Malatesta.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/30051002756713>



Progreso de la Boca. Semanario de Boca y Barracas., et al.

1870 - XX Settembre - 1898: Gori, Pietro. 1898.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/30051001190393>

In 1888 the new Bakers' Federation organized its first successful strike, despite strong police repression: after a strike lasting ten days, workers managed to secure a thirty per cent wage increase, and this inspired other workers' organizations (such as the shoemakers, also influenced by Malatesta) to be set up and promoted the idea that anarchists could be relied on to organize workers. <sup>[8]</sup>

Malatesta was responsible, too, for bringing together the two conflicting streams of anarchism at the time: the anarcho-syndicalists, who believed that action on the part of workers and organized through unions was an important weapon in the struggle for labour rights, and individualist anarchists, who believed that by organizing into unions workers would eventually end up rejecting revolution and adopting reformist objectives. <sup>[9]</sup> He was well known for his conciliatory character and his remarkable willingness to debate not only with different anarchist streams, but also to collaborate with the socialists in order to ensure united action. <sup>[10]</sup>

Pietro Gori was a remarkable orator and organized several conferences and debates, helping spread anarchist ideas among workers and intellectuals. <sup>[11]</sup> He played a decisive role in the foundation of the Federación Obrera Argentina (FOA) in 1901. <sup>[12]</sup>

The FOA was a milestone for the labour movement in Argentina. Soon afterwards, the socialist-oriented unions broke with the FOA and created the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT). The FOA played a key role in organizing boycotts and strikes, including the first general strike, in 1902. <sup>[13]</sup>

Anti-anarchist repression became stronger following a series of strikes in 1902, especially with the enactment of the Residence Law (*Ley de Residencia*), which allowed the authorities to rapidly deport any foreigner involved in subversive actions. Despite the persecution and deportation of hundreds of militants, the movement continued to grow between 1900 and 1910. <sup>[14]</sup>

Anarchism attracted a great number of workers due to its formidable propaganda. Over the years, several strikes were organized by anarchist groups, attracting massive support from the working class. <sup>[15]</sup> They managed to mobilize important sectors in Buenos Aires, including construction, railway, and harbour workers. The 1 May protest organized in 1904 attracted around 50,000 demonstrators. <sup>[16]</sup>

In 1904, on the occasion of its fourth congress, the FOA formalized anarcho-communism as its guiding principle, and became the FORA (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina), including the word “Regional” to symbolize its internationalism. <sup>[17]</sup> Anarcho-communism remained hegemonic inside the FORA until 1915, when syndicalists gained control of the organization. <sup>[18]</sup>

The anarchist movement made a significant contribution to the education and growing consciousness of the working class in Argentina, supporting workers’ organizations and contributing to the creation of a proletarian counter-culture that had a fundamental impact on the history of the Argentinian labour movement. <sup>[19]</sup>

During the first decade of the twentieth century the anarchists managed to mobilize a great number of workers and organized several strikes that had a major impact on important sectors of the economy, including agro-exports and urban services. <sup>[20]</sup> With general strikes being used as a powerful weapon, the country was beset by several conflicts that succeeded in securing improved labour conditions, including better wages and freedom of association.



Fedeli, Ugo. [Photo.]: Gori, Pietro.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10622/30051002354196>



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2 - Zaragoza, G. p.181.  
3 - Bayer, O. p. 111.  
4 - Zaragoza, G. p. 91, 92.  
5 - Poy, L. pp. 234-239  
6 - Bayer, O. p. 112.  
7- Yerril, P. and L Rosser p.10,11.  
8 - Poy, L. pp. 52-54  
9 - Oved, Y. p.1  
10 - Zaragoza, G. p. 105  
11 - Zaragoza, G. p. 244  
12 - Zaragoza, G. p. 291  
13, 14 - Oved, Y. p.2  
15 - Bayer, O. p. 114  
16 - Yerril, P. and L Rosser p.19  
17 - Oved, Y. p.2  
18 - Yerril, P. and L Rosser p.24  
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