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## Trends in Anti-Fascist and Anarchist Recruitment and Mobilization

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### *Abstract*

For many, the discourse on anarchists' violence belongs to the past, to an era that shocked the world but ended a long time ago. However, this assumption is not accurate in the twentieth-first century. It ignores the reality that allows extremists to rise from the dust, gain popularity and use available tools to promote themselves and their ideas, and thus, to pose a new potential threat. While most of the research on radicalization and political violent extremism focuses on jihadism or the contemporary right-wing extremism, it is important not to ignore the reaction that right-wing extremists created and provoked in the past, which is still relevant in our days: left-wing extremism, which is embodied today in violent anarchists and anti-fascists. This article sheds light on the contemporary left-wing extremism and violent mobilization in Europe and North America, its reflections on the Internet and in music, and its violent activity at home against "fascist" representatives (such as right-wing extremist groups and individuals), and even abroad, against other "fascist" representatives, such as the Islamic State organization. The purpose of the article is to examine this under-researched phenomenon while focusing on popular and recent modes of mobilization and recruitment of this "new revolutionary left", which reflect a threat that is developing in Europe, North America and the Middle East – but not from the jihadi or right-wing aspects, but from anti-fascist and anarchists' militancy aspect.

### *Article History*

Received Aug 1, 2017  
Accepted Feb 16, 2018  
Published: Mar 30, 2018

**Keywords:** Anti-Fascism, Anarchism, Left-Wing Extremism, Political Violence, Terrorism

### Introduction

The July 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, reminded world leaders of the existence of an old enemy of the "state" in its nationalistic, hierarchical and capitalistic form: the anarchists, who

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use various names to describe themselves, such as "the Black Bloc", "anti-fascists", "anti-authoritarians", "anti-capitalists" and the like. For some militant anti-fascists and especially for the anarchists, the G20 represents the economic face of right-wing "fascism". Thus, it is their obligation to fight against these manifestations of capitalism and nationalism. The anarchists were responsible for looting stores, vandalizing the streets and burning cars and garbage in Hamburg. Their intent was not a secret. They prepared for the summit via social networks (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) and other online anti-fascist platforms.<sup>2</sup>

The anarchists' preparations for the G20 summit included the publication of a document titled "An Anarchist Guide to the 2017 G20 Summit in Hamburg with a Review of Previous G8 and G20 Protests." According to this document, which was distributed on anarchist and anti-fascist platforms, "historically, anarchists have utilized" these kind of summits "as opportunities to dramatize our opposition to the hierarchical bureaucracies that govern our world, in hopes of inspiring ever wider resistance."<sup>3</sup> Besides that, the preparations were accompanied by militant anti-fascist propaganda videos, some of which included anti-fascist music, which also presented a wild, anti-establishment, aggressive and militant image of the protesters.

These videos were distributed under the title "Welcome to Hell", which was the official name of the anti-G20 protests. They reflected a clear and violent statement both towards the German authorities and towards the countries participating in the conference. One of the videos posted on the *Autonome Aktion Europe* Facebook page, provides a glimpse into the anarchist activity in Europe. In it, masked anti-fascists appear, sometimes waving black and red flags and holding flaming flares. Towards the end of the clip a masked man appears, holding an iron chain

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the *Autonome Aktion Europe* Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/AutonomeAktionEurope/> (not available); and the following related websites: <http://g20hamburg.org/> (available), and <http://g20-entern.org/> (not available) (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>3</sup> [Anonymous], "An Anarchist Guide to the 2017 G20 Summit in Hamburg with a Review of Previous G8 and G20 Protests", *Gatorna*, June 29, 2017. <https://gatorna.info/threads/an-anarchist-guide-to-the-2017-g20-summit-in-hambu-680/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

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with a four-toothed ball, which looks like a deadly weapon, marching through the streets of Hamburg.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this study is to shed light on the modern Anti-Fascist Movement (AFM) and its anarchist core, while focusing on its modes of mobilization.<sup>5</sup> Thus, it analyzes online and off-line anti-fascist activity in the context of anarchist terrorism, as well as the modern anti-fascist "soundtrack" that accompanies this activity. This article assesses the potential consequences of the AMF, which is growing as a reaction to another disturbing phenomenon: the rise of fascism in its nationalist form, i.e. Right-Wing Extremism (RWE) on one hand, or the more familiar threat of jihadists on the other. If right-wing extremists ("fascists") need the jihadists (another type of "fascists"), as was admitted by a prominent European right-wing extremist, who said that "the irony is that we actually need a jihad,"<sup>6</sup> Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) needs the "fascists" to justify itself and its actions. As noted by the Norwegian police security service (PST) in the 2018 annual threat assessments report, "left-wing extremists, just like right-wing extremists, have a broad interpretation of self-defence, [and] this could contribute to lowering the threshold for committing violence and to increasing the conflict level."<sup>7</sup>

The current mobilization of the AFM might be in part linked to the rise of right-wing politicians and right-wing extremist movements: the "fascists". Besides that, it is indirectly linked to the war in Syria and to the rise of the Islamic State organization (formally known as ISIS), which has persecuted minorities, terrorized the entire world and created a wave of immigration to

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<sup>4</sup>Autonome Aktion Europe, "Fight Capitalism, Fight G20", *Facebook*, June 20, 2017.

<https://www.facebook.com/AutonomeAktionEurope/videos/731595207022856/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>5</sup> See: M. Testa, *Militant Anti-Fascism: A Hundred Years of Resistance* (USA, Oakland: AK Press, 2015); Mark Bray, *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook* (USA, NY: Melville House Publishing, 2017)

<sup>6</sup> Simon Wright and Colin Cortbus, "British Nazi Jihadis: Fanatics Use ISIS Training Video to Prepare to Fight Race War", *The Mirror*, December 20, 2014. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-nazi-jihadis-mirror-investigation-4847059>; see also Farid Hafez, "The (sexual) Inferiority Complex of White Supremacists: Charlottesville and the Call for 'White Sharia'", *The Bridge Initiative*, Georgetown University, August 21, 2017. <http://bridge.georgetown.edu/sexual-inferiority-complex-white-supremacists-charlottesville-call-white-sharia/>

<sup>7</sup> See: "Threat Assessment 2018", *The Norwegian Police Security Service* (Politiets Sikkerhetstjeneste – PST), Norway, Oslo, 2018, p. 21. <https://www.pst.no/globalassets/artikler/trusselvurderinger/annual-threat-assessment-2018.pdf>

Europe. In other words, as noted by Roger Eatwell, Peter R. Neumann, Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Julia Ebner and others, Islamist extremism has triggered RWE,<sup>8</sup> that in its turn triggered LWE.<sup>9</sup>

Anarchists have always been willing to resort to violent actions, but the war in Syria provided them the opportunity to become, once again,<sup>10</sup> a real transnational movement that mobilizes and recruits individuals, and places armed, disciplined and organized groups into different fronts. As it seems, the events that resulted from the "Arab Spring" have directly and indirectly increased anarchist activism in Europe and North America as well as in the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> Since the protests that broke out in Syria in 2011 turned into a bloody civil war, the situation can be defined as "anarchy". This is the background to the rise (and fall) of ISIS, an Iraqi insurgent terrorist organization that attracted attention due to its well-produced propaganda

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<sup>8</sup> Roger Eatwell dubbed this process as "cumulative extremism". See: Roger Eatwell, "Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain", *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 2, April-June 2006: 204-216; Roger Eatwell and Matthew J. Goodwin, "The 'New' Extreme Right in Twenty-First-Century Britain", in Roger Eatwell and Matthew J. Goodwin (eds.), *The New Extremism in 21st Century Britain* (USA, NY: Routledge, 2010): 1-20, p. 7; Julia Ebner, *The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far Right Extremism* (New York & London: I. B. Tauris, 2017), p. 10; Peter R. Neumann, *Radicalized* (New York & London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), p. 185; Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hans Brun, "A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement", *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence*, 2013. [http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/ICSR-ECJM-Report\\_Online.pdf](http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/ICSR-ECJM-Report_Online.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Gilligan, "Anti-Fascists Fuel the Fire of Hate", *The Telegraph*, June 15, 2013.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/andrew-gilligan/10122496/Anti-fascists-fuel-the-fire-of-hate.html>

<sup>10</sup> Leena Malkki, "Radicalisation and Terrorism in History: Lessons from the Radical Left Terrorist Campaigns in Europe and the United States", in Rik Coolsaet (ed.), *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences* (UK: Ashgate, 2011, second edition): 69-81, pp. 73-75.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Cornell, *Unruly Equality: U.S. Anarchism in the Twentieth Century* (USA, California: University of California Press, 2016), p. 2; Clifford Baverel, "Modern Anarchism in Social Movements. From the Arab Spring to the Occupy Wall Street Movement", *Émulations*, numero 19, Winter 2016/2017. <http://www.revue-emulations.net/archives/19-perspectives-on-social-movements-from-south/modern-anarchism-in-social-movements-from-the-arab-spring-to-the-occupy-wall-street-movement>; Yeghia Tashjian, "The Fruits of "Arab Spring"; Islamism, Anarchism & Feminism", Turkey, Konya: *Strategic Outlook*, April 2013. [http://www.strategicoutlook.org/publications/The\\_fruits\\_of\\_Arab\\_Spring\\_Islamism\\_Anarchism\\_Feminism.pdf](http://www.strategicoutlook.org/publications/The_fruits_of_Arab_Spring_Islamism_Anarchism_Feminism.pdf); and, "Syrian Kurdistan Takes a Different Route to the Arab Spring – a First Hand Experience – Audio", *Workers Solidarity Movement*, October 22, 2014. <https://www.wsm.ie/c/syrian-kurdistan-eyewitness-audio> (accessed 26.09.2017)

and terror campaign, and because of its ability to attract tens of thousands of foreign volunteers and fighters, among them thousands of Europeans.

Nonetheless, jihadi foreign fighters are not the only ideologically motivated volunteers in the Middle East. In recent years we witnessed another extremist movement that is recruiting foreign volunteers for the war in Syria, which in addition to fighting against ISIS, is establishing a new society based on a radical philosophy: the AFM. Although it is important not to exaggerate the challenges that the AFM poses, we should be aware of its militant anarchist core who encourage violence against their opponents and seek to implement their worldview in their own Western countries and societies as well as abroad, in Syria.

This article addresses a number of questions: What is anti-fascism in the twentieth-first century? How does the anarchist discourse, either via online activity or via songs, reflect the modern AFM and help to mobilize its supporters and activists? How does contemporary anarchism relate to the "Arab Spring" and more specifically, to the war in Syria? Does this war pose a new security and social challenge to Europe and North America, this time in the form of experienced para-military anarchists? And finally, what are the potential consequences of this anarchist and anti-fascist activity?

## Methodology

To answer the questions above, this article is built on an analysis of publicly available primary sources published by anti-fascists and anarchists on the Internet (forums, websites, blogs and social network sites) and by different anti-fascist bands. Additionally, the article uses relevant publications such as videos and photographs documenting the experiences of anti-fascists both from the Syrian civil war and from other places where they operate. Besides an analysis of primary sources, the article uses relevant research literature and various media reports on anti-fascist and anarchist activity in Europe and North America.

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To analyze the primary sources, this article used Grounded Theory methodology<sup>12</sup> and snowball sampling<sup>13</sup> for finding relevant anti-fascists' songs and webpages. For example, the search on *YouTube* for the Spanish words "alerta antifascista" yielded 9,410 results; many of whom are official and unofficial video-clips of songs written by various anti-fascist bands from Spain, Germany, Mexico, and elsewhere. After watching some of these video-clips *YouTube* "suggested" to me to watch a variety of anti-fascists bands from different genres of music (punk, metal,<sup>14</sup> hip-hop, rap, and more). Additionally, searching for "antifascista française" yielded 627 results which included songs by French and other anti-fascist artists, as well as documentary films about the AFM.<sup>15</sup>

This article also draws on a data from anarchist and anti-fascist online platforms that are easy to find on search engines (such as Google), some of whom were the focus of former research.<sup>16</sup> Searching "antifascist websites" on Google, for example, yielded 159,000 results that included (on the first page) the following webpages: antifascistnetwork.org; antifascistnews.net; refusefascism.org; afainatl.wordpress.com; and itsgoingdown.org. The *It's Going Down* (IGD) website defined itself as "a news platform for reports, podcasts, columns, and analysis of revolt and social movements from a revolutionary anarchist perspective,"<sup>17</sup> and seemed to be very popular among anarchists and anti-fascists. The IGD Twitter account, which had more than

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<sup>12</sup> See: Carla Willig, *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* (USA, NY: Open University Press, 2013, third edition) 69-82.

<sup>13</sup> See: "Snowball Sampling", *Research Methodology*, [no date]. <https://research-methodology.net/sampling-in-primary-data-collection/snowball-sampling/> (accessed 08.03.2018)

<sup>14</sup> For an excellent list of anti-fascist metal songs and bands, see the following Twitter thread by Vice journalist Kim Kelly: <https://twitter.com/GrimKim/status/898213016315060225> (accessed 18.02.2018)

<sup>15</sup> Such as "The Antifascists" (2017), directed by Patrik Öberg and Emil Ramos. For further information see the film's official website: <http://www.theantifascists.se> (accessed 18.02.2018); or the "Antifa: The Skinheads' Hunters" (*Antifa: Chasseurs de Skins*) (2008), directed by Marc-Aurèle Vecchione.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example: Christian Neumayer, "Nationalist and Anti-Fascist Movements in Social Media", in: Axel Bruns, Gunn Enli, Eli Skogerbo, Anders Olof Larsson and Christian Christensen (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics* (USA, NY: Routledge, 2016): 296-307.

<sup>17</sup> It's Going Down Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/IGD\\_News](https://twitter.com/IGD_News); Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IGDnews/>; Instagram account: <https://www.instagram.com/its.going.down/>; and *Tube* channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ItsGoingDown> (accessed 20.02.2018)

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33,500 followers linked to other militant anti-fascists in the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

Indeed, little attention was given to anti-fascist online activity so far and more research on this subject is needed to extend the academic literature and knowledge on these platforms and their role in recruitment, mobilization and violent confrontations in Europe, the United States and beyond. As M. Testa, an anti-fascist blogger and a member of the Anti-Fascist Network, explained in his book on militant anti-fascism, the Internet and digital media "is now an essential part of the anti-fascist struggle, as is the propagation of information in mainstream media." However, he concluded that anti-fascists need to maintain a consistent presence on the streets in addition to truly oppose and fight fascism.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Historical Context of Anarchist Terrorism**

While terror-like activities are not new in Europe, modern terrorism began with the acts of violence that occurred during the Jacobin rule in France and continued with what was called the "Reign of Terror" of Robespierre.<sup>19</sup> According to David C. Rapoport, a dynamic process consisting of four waves of terrorism that struck Europe followed the era of terror in France. This process began with anarchist terrorism that lasted from the late nineteenth century and ended in the 1920s.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, anarchists, especially in the United States, continued into the Twentieth Century.<sup>21</sup> After the anarchist wave came the ethno-nationalist (anti-colonialist) wave, that was reflected in the activities of terrorists' organizations such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque underground. This wave was followed by the "New Left" terrorism wave, which was

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<sup>18</sup> Testa, 2015, p. 318.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Chalk, *West European Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: The Evolving Dynamic* (UK, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p. 46.

<sup>20</sup> For further reading about Anarchist Terrorism, see: Richard Bach Jensen, "The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880–1930s", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 21, Issue 1, 2009: 89-109.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the September 1920 Wall Street bombing is blamed on Italian-American anarchists.

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reflected by terrorists' groups such as the Baader-Meinhof and the Red Army Faction and the Italian Red Brigades.<sup>22</sup> The fourth wave is the religious wave, the most powerful manifestations of which are the Islamists (jihadis).<sup>23</sup>

Researchers such as Peter R. Neumann, and Jeffery Kaplan,<sup>24</sup> claim that we are now at the fifth wave of terrorism. This article argues that the first (anarchist) wave is still relevant for Europe and North America and should be considered a potential threat, especially due to the connection between Western militant anti-fascists and radical left-wing armed groups that operate in Syria. Some of these groups are currently fighting against ISIS, a terror organization that is considered by them a fascist oppressor that must be eradicated. Indeed, there is a flock of foreign anti-fascist volunteers to Syria, where they can gain combat experience (including urban warfare) and learn how to operate weapons. All of this poses a serious challenge not only to right-wing extremists, but also to the general public and even to individual states.

In Europe, as well as in North America, all these "waves" of terrorism were the result of the development of movements that called for a fundamental and immediate change in the society in which they operated, and therefore were considered "radical." Some of them were violent, and, thus, "extremists" for their willingness to use force to achieve their goals. Although not all of these movements were essentially violent, some turned to militaristic and violent tendencies, marking their enemies as representatives of evil - a negative factor that must be immediately eliminated. Examples of this can be found in the development of the New Left, which, although it did not achieve its goals, became a significant challenge for security agencies in Europe since the

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<sup>22</sup> For further information and a comparison of left-wing terrorism and jihadi terrorism, see: Malkki, "Radicalisation and Terrorism in History", in Coolsaet (ed.), 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Neumann, 2016, pp. 10-16; See also Frank Gregory, "Policing the 'New Extreme' in Twenty-First-Century Britain", in: Eatwell and Goodwin (eds.), 2010: 85-102, p. 85.

<sup>24</sup> See: Jeffery Kaplan, *Terrorist Groups and the New Tribalism: Terrorism's Fifth Wave* (USA, NY: Routledge, 2012).

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1960s, due to the Vietnam war and even later, because of the rise of white supremacist groups in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

According to Stuart Burns, while the "Old Left" operated under the shadow of the Communist Party in every country, and these parties were subordinate to the Soviet Union, the New Left "was represented by a young and much more individualistic spirit,"<sup>26</sup> disenchanted with the Soviet Union. Although violent tactics and violent rhetoric were not common, yet, violent individuals and groups were an inseparable part of a new LWE that crystallized within an anti-fascist and anti-capitalist framework.<sup>27</sup> Burns also argued that "in an era heralded by centrists as signifying the 'end of ideology'," the New Left "rebelled against ideology from within [...] and embodied a flexible vision at once moral and political, utopian and practical, personal and structural." Furthermore, "it was new because it expressed not just a political analysis but a cultural and psychological need."<sup>28</sup>

As part of the New Left, Europe witnessed the rise of the AFM that attracted anti-globalists, anti-capitalists, and other left-wing radicals and revolutionaries,<sup>29</sup> along with minorities that were targeted by right-wing extremists. The AFM has also attracted anarchists,<sup>30</sup> who since the 1970s began to propagate their call for arms, a call that was echoed in the infamous *Anarchist Cookbook*. This revolutionary manual, originally published in the United States, contains instructions for manufacturing of home-made bombs, and information required for the use of guns, knives or explosives. It also contains instructions for sabotage actions and for

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<sup>25</sup> Neumann, 2016, pp. 22-28.

<sup>26</sup> Stewart Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy* (USA, Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers, 1990), p. 181.

<sup>27</sup> A glance into the modern anti-fascist scene and its violent rhetoric and acts during the 1970s and 1980s can be found in the French documentary "Antifa: The Skinheads' Hunters" (2008). See: Marc-Aurèle Vecchione (director), *Antifa: Chasseurs de Skins*, France: 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Burns, 1990, p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> Chris Dixon, "Building 'Another Politics': The Contemporary Anti-Authoritarian Current in the US and Canada", *Anarchist Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (2012): 32-60, p. 33.  
[https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/sites/default/files/as20.1\\_02dixon.pdf](https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/sites/default/files/as20.1_02dixon.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> For further information on the AFM, see: Sean Birchall, *Beating the Fascists: The Untold Story of Anti-Fascist Action* (UK, London: Freedom Press, 2010).

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creating mayhem as part of the war against "the state".<sup>31</sup> Yet, as Richard Bach Jensen noted, just a tiny minority of anarchists turn into "terrorists".<sup>32</sup>

### **Anarchism and The War Against the State**

Anarchist thought is based on revolutionary theories developed in the nineteenth century by various thinkers, such as the French Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) and the Russian Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876). The latter wrote and fought against the Czarist regime in Russia. Bakunin and others spread the idea of destroying the state and its mechanisms as a step towards the establishment of a new, egalitarian and better society. Although Bakunin was not a great fan of terrorism, anarchist thought inspired anarchists, as well as other (non-leftist) terrorists. These terrorists actually implemented the idea of "propaganda by deed."<sup>33</sup> According to Peter Chalk, the importance of the anarchist tradition that echoed throughout Europe in the nineteenth century should not be underestimated because it shaped the development of modern terrorist thought.<sup>34</sup>

The anarchist idea spread throughout the world, with great influence in the most prominent democratic and capitalist countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. These countries, which absorbed waves of refugees from various places, became a hotbed of anarchist theories that continued to influence many, especially of the younger generation. This was also the case in France, Italy, and Spain, which predicated an outbreak of anarchist activity that plunged the European continent into regions of violence, incitement and fear.<sup>35</sup> Nowadays,

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<sup>31</sup> About the *Anarchist Cookbook*, see: "Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Files on The Anarchist Cookbook, 1971-1999", *U.S. Department of Justice*, January 26, 2011. [http://www.governmentattic.org/4docs/FBI-AnarchistsCookbook\\_1971-1999.pdf](http://www.governmentattic.org/4docs/FBI-AnarchistsCookbook_1971-1999.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Richard Bach Jensen, "Nineteenth Century Anarchist Terrorism: How Comparable to the Terrorism of al-Qaeda?", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 20, Issue 4, 2008: 589-596, p. 589.

<sup>33</sup> Chalk, 1996, pp. 46-49.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>35</sup> For further reading on Anarchist violence in the Nineteenth-Century Western Europe, see: Amaro del Rosal, *La Violencia, la Enfermedad del Anarquismo* (Spain, Barcelona: Ediciones Grijalbo, 1976); Clara E. Lida, *Anarquismo*

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because of the rise of right-wing extremist political parties and movements in Europe and North America, anarchist ideas continue to sweep and mobilize young men and women into a confrontation with the "forces of oppression".<sup>36</sup>

It is important to understand the anarchists' view of the state because it lays the ideological foundations and theories for violence and justifies it for targeting state's institutions and high rank officials. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century anarchists moved from "the pen" to hold instead "the sword". They justified violence for implementing their goals and creating mayhem. This, in their opinion, will lead eventually to the revolution, at the end of which the state will be abolished and individuals will gain absolute and true freedom.<sup>37</sup>

When the use of violence became the norm among anarchists, and terrorism was embraced by a small but yet aggressive and dangerous minority of them, the victims were diverse. They included civilians, religious and church clergy, police officers, high ranking officials and virtually anyone associated with the "state,". Thus, the following is a partial list of heads of state who were assassinated: in 1897, the Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Canovas del Castillo; In 1898, Elizabeth, the Empress of Austria; In 1900, the Italian king, Umberto; and a year later an anarchist assassinated the president of the United States, William McKinley.<sup>38</sup>

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*y Revolución en España del XIX (Spain, Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1972); Alexander Varias, Paris and the Anarchists (USA, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1996).*

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the following reports on clashes between Right wing extremists and anti-fascists which took place in Sweden, England and Canada: "Dozens Arrested in Sweden as Neo-Nazis, Anti-Fascists Clash with Police", *Reuters*, September 30, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-sweden-nazis/dozens-arrested-in-sweden-as-neo-nazis-anti-fascists-clash-with-police-idUKKCN1C50FK>; Neil Docking, " Right-Wing Activists Jailed Over Violent Clashes Between Neo-Nazis and Anti-Fascists in Liverpool", *Liverpool Echo*, November 24, 2017. <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/right-wing-activists-jailed-over-13951561>; The Canadian Press, "Dozens Arrested as Far-Right Groups, Counter-Protesters Clash in Quebec City", *Montreal Gazette*, November 26, 2017. <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/anti-immigration-anti-fascist-groups-ready-to-face-off-in-quebec-city>

<sup>37</sup> Jeff Sparrow, "In the End, We Forget the Anarchists, Bombers and 'Lone Wolves'. But the Hysteria They Provoke Stays with Us", *The Guardian*, January 2, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/02/in-the-end-we-forget-the-anarchists-bombers-and-lone-wolves-but-the-hysteria-they-provoke-stays-with-us>

<sup>38</sup> Neumann, 2016, p. 16.

To a large extent, World War I symbolizes the decline of anarchism in Europe, and the rise of Bolshevik communism as representing the political left-wing around the world. Thus, by the 1930s anarchism was weak and was engaged in little violence, with the exception of Spain. However, the end of the "Great War" brought about authoritarian and destructive forces: Fascism and Nazism. In response, anti-fascist individuals, groups and organizations began to operate in various countries, which together would form a transnational movement with militant characteristics. In 1920s' Britain, for example, a pro-fascist organization provoked the creation the AFM, a fierce opposition from radical and militant left-wing ideologies, which raised fears of clashes between the two rival camps, as happened in Italy-on the eve of Benito Mussolini's rise to power.<sup>39</sup>

After World War II anti-fascism continued to be an active factor in post-war Europe. Although for a period of time anti-fascists were involved in non-violent resistance, inspired by figures such as Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, it would not be enough to stop the surge of RWE. As Nigel Copsey explained, "transnational anti-fascism extends well beyond 1945, indeed well beyond the so-called 'era' or 'epoch' of fascism, for serious attempts were made at establishing a militant international anti-fascist network during the 1990s."<sup>40</sup> In the twentieth-first century they succeeded.

A number of events of international importance had a decisive influence on the development of the anarchist movement in the twentieth century. The first was the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), in which one side, which contained a mix of democrats, Marxist and anarchist that was supported by the Soviet Union; while on the other side, Franco's nationalists, were

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<sup>39</sup> Nigel Copsey, *Anti-Fascism in Britain* (UK, London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 7; Daniel Penny, "An Intimate History of Antifa", *The New Yorker*, August 22, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/an-intimate-history-of-antifa>

<sup>40</sup> Nigel Copsey, "Crossing Borders: Anti-Fascist Action (UK) and Transnational Anti-Fascist Militancy in the 1990s", *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2016: 707-727.

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supported by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.<sup>41</sup> Although Franco's victory was a devastating blow to the anarchist movement, it was still "alive". Furthermore, Spain remains a hotbed of violent anarchist activity, due to neo-Fascists that are still active in the country.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, as in the past, when anarchist and communist volunteers came to fight with their Spanish comrades, today, Spain's anti-fascists are traveling to help their comrades in Syria.<sup>43</sup>

One of the most important events in the development of the AFM with its anarchists' spearhead was "The French Revolution of 1968".<sup>44</sup> As one researcher wrote, "for libertarian, autonomist, left-communist and anarchist movements across post-war Europe, the political, social, and cultural upheavals of 1968 provided both a contemporary touchstone and a turning point in their modern histories."<sup>45</sup>

According to Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville, young and extremist French students found an outlet for their militancy in tiny, zealous and fierce groups that were not associated with any political party. These were not unique to France, but rather were part of a wider phenomenon that took place at the same time in the Western world. These various groups were not created by international connections, rather "because many young people in the West spontaneously reached the conclusion that their parents' world is already ripe for the violent

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<sup>41</sup> See: Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union, and Communism* (USA: Yale University Press, 2004)

<sup>42</sup> With groups such as the anti-Islamic "Spanish Defence League" (La Liga de Defensa Española), the Spanish branch of the French right-wing extremist youth movement "Generation Identity" (Generation Identitaire), or the youth wing of the National Democracy (Democracia Nacional) political party; for further information, see: Sergio Garcia, "Los Nuevos Movimientos Sociales de Extrema Derecha en España", *AlGhuraba*, No. 3, Comunidad de Inteigencia y Seguridad Global, November 2017: 50-70. [https://issuu.com/ciseg/docs/alghuraba\\_3\\_v3](https://issuu.com/ciseg/docs/alghuraba_3_v3)

<sup>43</sup> The Spanish civil war is the most familiar example for anarchists' recruitment and mobilization, where thousands of volunteers flocked to Spain to participate in the struggle against the Spanish manifestations of fascism, led by general Franco. To a comparison between the involvement of foreign fighters in the 1930's Spain and nowadays Syria, see: Dietrich Jung, "Foreign Fighters: Comparative reflections on Syria and Spain". *Middle East Insight*, No. 132, September 14, 2015. [https://mei.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Download\\_Insight\\_132\\_Jung.pdf](https://mei.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Download_Insight_132_Jung.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> See: Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville, *The French Revolution, 1968* (UK, London: Heinemann, in association with Penguin Books, 1968). This article uses the Hebrew edition of Seale and McConville's book, published in 1969.

<sup>45</sup> Rich Cross, "British Anarchism in the Era of Thatcherism", in Evan Smith and Matthew Worley (eds.), *Against the Grain: The British Far Left from 1956* (UK, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014):133-152, p. 134.

restoration" of the existing political systems.<sup>46</sup> These students reacted to the wars in Vietnam and Algeria, which to them resembled the violent mechanisms of the capitalistic West. For many young revolutionaries and left-wing militants, the chaotic events and atmosphere of 1968 in Europe were an opportunity to revive the anarchist movement, this time in the form of a much more attractive and wider framework: anti-fascism.

In the United States, anarchists found that they could continue to operate within the framework of a wider nonconformist social movement that called for "nonviolent direct action" against the establishment, and as part of mass disobedience to the law and the authorities.<sup>47</sup> Although this was a nonviolent movement, it included anarchists who advocated violence in addition to achievement of their goals.<sup>48</sup> This New Left movement began to operate in the United States in the 1970s and gained momentum throughout the 1980s. It influenced other socio-ecological movements and significantly helped to form communities that adopted both direct action tactics and spread revolutionary ideas that sometimes justified violence.<sup>49</sup> These ideas were adopted by anti-fascists in Europe who turned them into symbols of opposition to the oppressive establishment. As it seems, nowadays a new generation of anarchists is trying to build decentralized defense groups that will be ready for violent confrontation with the State.

### **The Soundtrack of Modern Anarchists and Anti-Fascists**

As Andrew Cornell argued, "culture has always been vital to anarchism."<sup>50</sup> Thus, in addition to truly understand contemporary militant anti-fascists and enrich the literature about this phenomenon one needs to be aware of its musical scene. Nowadays, it reflects the anti-fascists'

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<sup>46</sup> Seale and McConville, 1969, p. 31.

<sup>47</sup> See: Barbara Epstein, *Political Protest and Social Revolution* (USA, California: University of California Press, 1991)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Cornell, 2016, p. 285.

uncompromising stand against any form of "oppression" through lyrics and videos, and it used to challenge policies that the AFM opposes. In many instances we can notice how they call for violence as a justified tool to stop "fascism" from spreading. Therefore, music, as in other political subcultures, supplies the soundtrack to anti-fascists' activities.

In this regard, a study published by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that "songs with violent lyrics increase aggression related thoughts and emotions and this effect is directly related to the violence in the lyrics."<sup>51</sup> According to another study, "listening to violent music has an effect on aggression." Moreover, "watching violent music videos [...] has a strong effect on violent tendencies."<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, it is important to be aware of this particular modern anti-fascist music scene that plays a role in the recruitment and mobilization of fans to political activism,<sup>53</sup> and sometimes justifies violence as a necessary act to stop "fascists" and to oppose "the state".

Music is an essential part of modern radical subcultures. While the musical aspect of right-wing extremism and subculture is well-researched and known as an expression of an identity and a sense of belonging to a wider community, for propaganda and recruitment;<sup>54</sup> we lack appropriate academic literature about the musical aspect of left wing extremism. According to Steven Windisch and Pete Simi, right-wing extremism uses "print mediums, films, radio broadcasts, audio recorded speeches, and music as well as the internet" for propaganda.<sup>55</sup> "These

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<sup>51</sup> See: Craig A. Anderson and Nicholas L. Carnagey, "Exposure to Violent Media: The Effects of Songs with Violent Lyrics on Aggressive Thoughts and Feelings", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 84, No. 5, 2003: 960-971. <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-845960.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Eliana Tropeano, "Does Rap or Rock Music Provoke Violent Behavior?", *Journal of Undergraduate Psychological Research*, Vol. 1, 2006: 31-34, p. 33. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.578.2378&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, the case of British anarcho-punk: Cross, "British Anarchism in the Era of Thatcherism", pp. 136-148

<sup>54</sup> See, for example: Robert Futrell, Pete Simi and Simon Gottschalk, "Understanding Music in Movements: The White Power Music Scene", *The Sociological Quarterly*, Volume 47, No. 2, 2006: 275–304; and Steven Windisch and Pete Simi, "Neo-Nazi Music Subculture", in: Stephen E. Brown and Ophir Sefiha (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Deviance*, 2017: 111-121.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.



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forms of propaganda," they stated, "include emotion-laden information targeted at a particular audience, which is designed to utilize significant influence in terms of both beliefs and practices." Correspondingly, "propaganda creates a narrative intended to resonate with target audiences to achieve various goals including persuading individuals to initiate and sustain organizational commitment."<sup>56</sup> In the same manner, music is playing an essential role for left-wing extremists, who use this form of propaganda as a medium, for expression and as a recruitment and mobilization tool.

The anti-fascist music scene began in the 1980s and substantially expanded in the 1990s, due to the rise of right-wing extremist political parties in Europe, such as the French National Front or the British National Party. In this context the AFM attracted attention again, which intensified in light of neo-Nazi and racists' street-violence.<sup>57</sup> These right-wing extremists, who sometimes coalesced under common names, such as Combat 18 (C18),<sup>58</sup> shocked the societies in which they operated and provoked a strong counter-reaction from their nemesis: the anti-fascists.<sup>59</sup>

According to Mark Bray, the author of *The Antifa Handbook*, "there's a huge overlap between radical left politics and the punk scene."<sup>60</sup> Bray noted that during the 1980s, anti-fascists in North America and in parts of Europe "grew up as a way to defend the punk scene from the neo-Nazi skinhead movement." Furthermore, he claimed that "the fascist/anti-fascist struggle was essentially a fight for control of the punk scene."<sup>61</sup> From the anti-fascists' point of view, the only

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> See: K. Bullstreet, *Bash the Fasc: Anti-Fascist Recollections 1984-1993* (UK, London: Kate Sharpley Library, 2001); Copsey, 2016.

<sup>58</sup> The numbers 1 and 8 of Combat 18 resemble the alphabet letters A (Adolf) and H (Hitler). See: Nick Lowles, *White Riot: The Violent Story of Combat 18* (UK, Preston: Milo Books Ltd, 2001)

<sup>59</sup> See: Roger Eatwell, "Responses to the Extreme Right in Britain", in: Eatwell and Goodwin (eds.), 2010: 211-230, p. 225; In the UK, neo-Nazi presence led to the formation of the Anti-Nazi League. See: Copsey, 2000, p. 3, pp. 133-141, p. 151; in the twentieth-first Century, the rise of the English Defence League (EDL) led to the creation of United Against Fascism organization.

<sup>60</sup> Thomson, "'No Fascist USA!': How Hardcore Punk Fuels the Antifa Movement", September 9, 2017.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

appropriate response to neo-Nazi and fascist violence was anti-fascist violence. Indeed, in the United Kingdom, the country in which C18 was established and from which it spread to other countries, anti-fascist groups, such as the Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) and Red Action, appeared as a reaction.<sup>62</sup> It fought to eradicate the racist affliction that had spread in their society and threatened the fabric of relations among the various populations of England.<sup>63</sup> For European anarchists and anti-fascists, this struggle was physical, but also subcultural, and it was reflected in the punk-rock music scene.

As for the United States, according to Chris Dixon, "The first strand begins in the anarchism of the 1990s," when mostly young people were involved in anarchist activism and "were connected through a series of predominantly white and middle-class subcultural scenes, often rooted in punk rock, across the US and Canada."<sup>64</sup> Dixon added that,

These anarchist scenes and networks were animated not only by a shared counterculture, but also by shared politics and practices. The politics, drawn from classical anarchism and more recent forms of radicalism, included a commitment to egalitarianism, mutual aid, and freedom as well as a far-reaching critique of domination. The practices, especially influenced by the North American nonviolent direct action movement and European autonomous movements, included engaging in confrontational direct action, organising through collectives and affinity groups, and making decisions using consensus process.<sup>65</sup>

However, nonviolent direct action did not satisfy those militant anarchists who sought to end United States' hegemony and accepted the use of violence as a tool to achieve these goals. The AFM was an effective way for anarchists to cooperate with other left-wing radicals, under one

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<sup>62</sup> Mark Hayes, "Red Action – Left-Wing Political Pariah: Some Observations Regarding Ideological Apostasy and the Discourse of Proletarian Resistance", in Smith and Worley (eds.), 2014: 229-246, p. 240.

<sup>63</sup> Eatwell, "Responses to the Extreme Right in Britain", pp. 225-226.

<sup>64</sup> Dixon, 2012, pp. 35-36.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

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umbrella, and thus to spread their ideology among like-minded people. Another tool that helped to attract radicals was music, which is still an effective tool for recruiting and mobilizing the young generation. As in North America, where popular bands such as *Sonic Youth*, *Rage Against the Machine* or *Green Day* empowered anti-fascism,<sup>66</sup> Europe's anti-fascists' scene – which is part of contemporary radical youth subcultures<sup>67</sup> – also mixed politics, militant activism and music.

This is also true to our days, when songs of anti-fascist bands provide the soundtrack for anti-fascist violence. For example, in Spain, the anarchist punk band *Sin Dios* (Without God) published in 1993 the album "Alerta Antifascista", in which the theme song opens with the following explanation: "the struggle against fascism is the struggle for freedom, against racism, sexism, the capital, and every authority." According to this song, anti-fascists need to organize a "self-defence" (cells or groups) in addition to confronting fascists (i.e. right-wing extremists) wherever they are, because one cannot expect the government, which supposedly protects and shelters the "fascists", to do so.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, as Mark Bray explained, anti-fascism "can variously be described as a kind of ideology, an identity, a tendency or milieu, or an activity of self-defense."<sup>69</sup>

For past and present militant anti-fascists, physically opposing and attacking the Nazis on the streets is part of reality,<sup>70</sup> as well as a part of its music scene. For example, the California-based *Total Chaos* punk band released in 1995 the album *Patriotic Shock* that included the song "Kill the Nazis", in which the band sing: "kill the Nazis, kill 'em dead, kill the Nazis, smash their

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<sup>66</sup> Jamie Thomson, "No Fascist USA!": How Hardcore Punk Fuels the Antifa Movement", *The Guardian*, September 9, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/sep/09/no-fascist-usa-how-hardcore-punk-fuels-the-antifa-movement>

<sup>67</sup> John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class", In Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (NY & London: Routledge, 2006): 3-59, pp. 4-9.

<sup>68</sup> See: Mrnetosanchez666, "Sin Dios - Alerta Antifascista", *You Tube*, August 28, 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOligXWECQM> (accessed 29.11.2017)

<sup>69</sup> Penny, "An Intimate History of Antifa", *The New Yorker*, August 22, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> See, for example: Luke O'Brien, "The Nazi Puncher Dilemma", *The Huffington Post*, December 10, 2017. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nazi-punch-antifa\\_us\\_59e13ae9e4b03a7be580ce6f](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nazi-punch-antifa_us_59e13ae9e4b03a7be580ce6f)

heads." The Frankfurt based *Stage Bottles* band, for example, which according to its Facebook page creates "Melodic Punk rock with a Saxophone and strong antifascist lyrics", recorded a song titled "Sometimes Antisocial but Always Antifascist" (1999) in which the band sings: "When I can see all the fascists around; I feel the hate on my mind; Give 'em a kick; Give 'em a punch..."

Another anti-fascist band is the Scottish *Oi Polloi*, that recorded the song "Let the Boots do the Talking" (1999). In it they stated that they remember when anti-fascists fought against the British Union of Fascists, led by Oswald Mosley, that was active in the 1930s: "When we see the fash," they sing, "we let the boots do the talking." More examples from recent years can be found in many countries around the world. Wherever fascists are present we see its anti-fascist counter-reaction, even in its musical and subcultural forms.<sup>71</sup> An older *Oi Polloi* song is "Nazi Scum" (1990), in which the band advocates anti-fascist violence:

We must clear the streets of Nazi scum;  
Make them safe again for everyone;  
No longer will we have to walk in fear;  
Of scum who have no place here;  
If we unite the battle can be won;  
Stop the problem before it's really begun;  
Find them - Grind them - Grind them!  
Nazi scum - your time will come.

In Germany, two anti-fascist bands are the punk-rock *ZSK* and the Rap band *Irie Révoltés*, both are using anti-fascist lyrics and symbols (such as the black and red flag of AFA) to spread their world-view, to encourage other anti-fascists and to mobilize them into a confrontation with their rivals. *ZSK* recorded the song "Antifascista" (2013), in which they claim that German cities are

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<sup>71</sup> Dixon, 2012, pp. 35-36.

not a safe place for fascists. "You ain't getting a single meter, cause there's nothing on here, you will have to confront thousands of us," they declared.<sup>72</sup>

Another anti-fascist (Rap-Metal) band is the Russian *Moscow Death Brigade* (MDB), which appears in their video-clips and concerts wearing ski masks and anti-fascist flags. The MDB uses English and Russian in their songs, which include threats to Nazis as well as political messages. As the band stated in their song "It's Us" (2014), "Our music's making kids bash Nazis on the parking lot."<sup>73</sup> In their song "Papers, Please!" (2015) they refer directly to the refugee crisis in Europe, while mocking and attacking those who do not help the refugees and thus, sentencing them to death:

Not all was apathy - fallacy, lost humanity;  
Progressive wanna-be society begets another malady;  
No remedy, humanitarian calamity another people denied the right to live with  
vanity;  
Another Human race catastrophe;  
Another instance of entitled masses showing lack of empathy;  
Authorities are waging war, you people lie in idleness;  
Refuse to take responsibility for leaders' violence.<sup>74</sup>

In the "Papers Please" video clip the singers appear while behind them there is a group of masked men with two flags. One of the flags mentions Fire and Flames Music, an online anti-fascist

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<sup>72</sup> See: ZSK Berlin, Antifascista, *YouTube*, May 5, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q15qLdQ9bNM> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>73</sup> See: Moscow Death Brigade, "It's Us - Official", *YouTube*, June 11, 2015. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\\_qmZOZsiyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_qmZOZsiyk) (accessed 29.11.2017)

<sup>74</sup> See: Moscow Death Brigade, "Papers, Please! Official Video 2015", *YouTube*, October 19, 2015. <https://youtu.be/n0e5oZ2WoLA> (accessed 29.11.2017)

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commercial company that markets "revolutionary" music and clothing;<sup>75</sup> while the second flag mentions the 161 Crew, an anarchist group from Poland,<sup>76</sup> which may have a presence in Syria. This subject will be expanded later on in this article. Another example is the German anti-fascist (and anarchist) metal band *Wolf Down*, whose latest album, titled "Incite and Conspire" (2016), contains a theme song that is calling for "War - on authority" and "reborn - through insurgency". The formal video-clip of this song, as well as the lyrics, advocate arson attacks as a useful weapon to confront the "fascist oppressor". As the band puts it:

Opressor, our pack has traced your scent;  
Retribution for your deeds our only intent;  
Forged bonds of resistance across the earth;  
You can't crush the movement's oncoming rebirth;  
This is the sound of raging hearts beating as one;  
Our burning matches will incite a firestorm;  
This is the anthem of those born with raised fists;  
We are the conspiracy of arsonists.<sup>77</sup>

There is a reason why *Wolf Down* chose to embrace arson attacks, even if literally. As described in the following pages, "arson attacks" are the favorite weapon of nowadays anarchists. The most recent example is from the United States, where the metal band *Stray from The Path* has published a new song just a few days after the G20 summit ended, titled "Good Night Alt-Right". In it, American right-wing extremists (Alt Right Movement) are being threatened with violence, in response to their hatred and acts: "if you preach hate," screams the singer, "then expect hate."

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<sup>75</sup> Fire and Flames Music's website: <https://www.fireandflames.com>; and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fireandflamesmusic/> (accessed 29.11.2017)

<sup>76</sup> 161 Crew's website: <http://161crew.bzzz.net>; and Twitter account: [https://twitter.com/161\\_crew](https://twitter.com/161_crew) (accessed 29.11.2017)

<sup>77</sup> See: End Hits Records, "Wolf Down - Incite & Conspire (Official Music Video)", *You Tube*, January 27, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWmYjqUX9KM> (accessed 09.07.2017)

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The video clip shows two armed anti-fascists breaking into a neo-Nazi (and an alleged Republican) house, tying up and beating the owner, and tattooing a Swastika on his forehead.<sup>78</sup>

These bands, which use violent rhetoric, can be seen as the representatives of the AFM, and they reflect Eatwell's "cumulative extremism" theory, in which one type of extremism ignites and provokes a reaction from other types of extremism. Although many scholars focus on the rise of RWE as a response to Islamist extremism,<sup>79</sup> this article suggests that the same is happening with RWE and LWE. This is, however, true not just for the subcultural and musical aspect of left-wing extremists, but also for the evolution of the AFM.

The songs' lyrics, added to the anarchist and anti-fascist ideology and historical experience, helps us understand how tens of thousands of (mostly) young anti-fascists from Europe and North-America are mobilized and recruited for confrontations with their right-wing extremist rivals on the one hand, and the police and other the law enforcement personnel on the other, for they all represent different aspects of the same source of all evil that must be eliminated and replaced by a new revolutionary order. Furthermore, as in the past, anti-fascists used festivals (such as the Rock Against Racism events in the 1970s or the 2002 Love Music Hate Racism events) to recruit and mobilize the youth,<sup>80</sup> so do modern anti-fascists.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> See: Sumerian Records, "Stray from the Path - Good Night Alt-Right (Official Music Video)", *You Tube*, July 12, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yy-SiZSlmhI> (accessed 13.07.2017)

<sup>79</sup> See, for example: Jamie Bartlett and Jonathan Birdwell, "Cumulative Radicalisation Between the Far-Right and Islamist Groups in the UK: A Review of Evidence", *Demos*, November 2013. <https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos%20-%20Cumulative%20Radicalisation%20-%20205%20Nov%202013.pdf>

<sup>80</sup> David Renton, "Anti-Fascism in Britain, 1992-2012", in Smith and Worley (eds.), 2014: 247-263, pp. 252-253.

<sup>81</sup> Such as the 0161 Festival in Manchester, England, which aim to unite European anti-fascists under the same flag. See: <http://0161festival.com> (accessed 18.02.2018); or the "United We Stand" festival that took place in Paris, February 2016.

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## The Revival of Anarchism in the Twentieth First Century

As in the past, modern anarchists are seeking the destruction of the state, its borders, its financial system, its structure, and its law-enforcements bodies (i.e. the police, the courts and incarcerations and the army). According to the UK-based Anarchist Federation (AF), "as anarchist communists we fight for a world without leaders, where power is shared equally amongst communities, and people are free to reach their full potential." The AF also stated that it is "supporting working class resistance to exploitation and oppression, it organizes alongside our neighbours and workmates, hosts informative events, and produces publications that help make sense of the world around us."<sup>82</sup>

One of these informative events took place in Saint Imier, Switzerland, on August 2012, when the International Anarchist Organization (IAO) held a conference in commemoration of a similar event held in the same place 140 years earlier (in 1872), that led to the formation of modern-day anarchism and anti-fascism. Hundreds of anarchists participated in the 2012 conference, among them individuals and groups from the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden and elsewhere. According to a participant, the IAO is seeking "to abolish all forms of authority – political, economic, social, religious, cultural or sexual."<sup>83</sup>

The Anti-fascist French Facebook page, "Anti-Facho", states that the anti-fascist ideology is based on firm opposition to any manifestation of neo-fascism, neo-Nazism, racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and sexism. "Our mission," as it stated, "is to fight against the fascist ideology that persists in our modern societies," and thus "to denounce the fascist wave that sweeps over the world, to inform [about the fascist danger], and [to] propose actions of struggle."<sup>84</sup> According to a brochure which was published by Montreal Anarchists,

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<sup>82</sup> The Anarchist Federation website: <https://afed.org.uk/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>83</sup> John Heilprin, "Global Anarchists Flock to Meeting in Switzerland", *The Seattle Times*, August 8, 2012. <http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/global-anarchists-flock-to-meeting-in-switzerland/>

<sup>84</sup> The Anti-Facho Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Anti.Facho> (accessed 10.11.2015)

Anarchists oppose all forms of oppressive power. we strive for a world based on self-determination and mutual aid. As the world veers towards tyranny, only grassroots direct action can keep our communities safe. [...] Anarchists see the imposition of racism, class society, nationality, gender and patriarchy all playing parts in creating a world where a few own everything and the rest are forced to work for them in order to survive. A world that is also held in place by institutions of direct control in the form of police and prisons.<sup>85</sup>

In other words, there is a correlation between the goals of the anarchists and those of the anti-fascists. Both share similar goals and cooperate, but yet – can it be deduced from this that the two are one? Indeed, under the anti-fascist framework, which is less provocative and antagonist, anarchists can join forces with other left-wing radicals, identify with their struggle, and promote it in other countries as well.<sup>86</sup> Anarchists organize in communities and networks that help them to protect each other and fight as one against "the oppressors" (i.e. governments, corporations, banks and political parties), while rejecting both the political-capitalist right and the political-socialist left. "Anarchism," according to the Montreal Anarchists, "means destroying the forces that seek to keep us on our knees." In our context, it reflects the negation of democracy and its perception as a negative factor that supposedly helps suppress the masses and separates people.<sup>87</sup>

In addition to fighting against "the oppressors" anarchists use a variety of actions, including protests, marches, publications of material and information, and violence, which they justify because of the "fascist nature" of the state (any state). While armed struggle is nothing new for anarchists, arson attacks, nowadays, seems to be a much more common weapon of

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<sup>85</sup> Montreal Contra-Info, "What the Fuck is Anarchism?", *Its Going Down*, April 12, 2017.  
<https://itsgoingdown.org/what-the-fuck-is-anarchism/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>86</sup> Brendan Clifford, "European Left-wing Extremism in the 21st Century", *Intelligence Fusion*, March 2, 2017.  
<https://www.intelligencefusion.co.uk/single-post/2017/03/02/European-Left-wing-extremism-in-the-21st-Century>

<sup>87</sup> Montreal Contra-Info, "What the Fuck is Anarchism?", *Its Going Down*, April 12, 2017.

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choice in their war against the representatives of contemporary fascism than before.<sup>88</sup> Examples were evident on the streets of Hamburg, during the G20 economic summit, where anarchists were rioting, vandalizing, looting and burning cars (and garbage).

In his book on anti-fascism in Britain (2000), Nigel Copsey concludes that there is hope that the public in Britain will embrace multiculturalism, so that fascism will no longer have a place in society, and accordingly, anti-fascist activity will not be necessary.<sup>89</sup> Although seventeen years have passed since then it seems that this ideology has not disappeared. Furthermore, as was admitted by several European politicians, multiculturalism has failed, a feeling, which was echoed among many others in the continent. Moreover, in light of the rise of movements and parties identified with the right-wing throughout Europe it is clear that "fascism" is still a threat. Thus, since "fascism" is still around, so is the "anti-fascism" that Copsey wished to disappear.

Although the AFM is not considered a terrorist network or organization by most of the countries around the world, it is clear that anti-fascists and especially anarchists incite violence against their enemies ("the fascists") and are becoming more radical and militant, especially due to Donald Trump's presidency,<sup>90</sup> that empowered white supremacists in the United States, and as a reaction to right-wing extremists' activity and violence.<sup>91</sup> An example for this can be found in confidential documents of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in which they refer to

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<sup>88</sup> See, for example: "Le Pen Campaign HQ in Paris Targeted by Arson Attack", France 24, April 13, 2017.

<http://www.france24.com/en/20170413-france-arson-attack-targets-marine-le-pen-campaign-headquarters-paris>

<sup>89</sup> Copsey, 2000, p. 193.

<sup>90</sup> See: "Antifa and the Rise of Far-Left Activism in the Era of Trump", *The National* (Canada), September 22, 2017.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/thenational/antifa-and-the-rise-of-far-left-activism-in-the-era-of-trump-1.4304049>

<sup>91</sup> The most recent act of Right wing violence happened in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12, when a white supremacist rammed a car into anti-fascist protesters, killing one. This incident sparked a violent reaction from anti-fascists. See, for example: Thomas Fuller, Alan Feuer and Serge F. Kovalski, "'Antifa' Grows as Left-Wing Faction Set to, Literally, Fight the Far Right", *The New York Times*, August 17, 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/17/us/antifa-left-wing-faction-far-right.html>; and, Kyle Swenson, "Black-Clad Antifa Members Attack Peaceful Right-Wing Demonstrators in Berkeley", *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2017.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/08/28/black-clad-antifa-attack-right-wing-demonstrators-in-berkeley/>

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anti-fascists as "domestic terrorists."<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, according to the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness of the State of New Jersey,

Violent confrontations between Antifa members and white supremacists — as well as militia groups — will likely continue because of ideological differences and Antifa's ability to organize on social media. In the past year, Antifa groups have become active across the United States, employing a variety of methods to disrupt demonstrations.<sup>93</sup>

This is true for the United States as it is for Europe, where left-wing extremist groups and individuals are able to move freely from one place to another, thereby reinforcing their friends in other countries, and thus, to build transnational networks.<sup>94</sup> Examples for that can be found at the Hamburg G20 summit (July 2017), where anarchists and other left-wing extremists flocked to Germany, to protest against world leaders, capitalism and globalism.<sup>95</sup> It also seems that the AFM is gaining more and more media attention and thus, becomes attractive to more activists who wish to stand against what they see as a growing threat posed by fascist politicians, movements, groups and individuals. Thus, the radicalization of contemporary anarchists is not a unique problem for the United States or the United Kingdom. It is relevant for other countries as well, such as Sweden, which in recent years witnessed a surge in militant anti-fascists.<sup>96</sup>

Although it seems that the AFM is becoming more radical and militant, anti-fascists and even anarchists were not always considered as a threat. At the beginning of the Twentieth-First Century the attitude towards LWE varied from country to country. For instance, according to the

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<sup>92</sup> Josh Meyer, "FBI, Homeland Security Warn of More 'Antifa' Attacks", *Politico*, September 1, 2017.

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/01/antifa-charlottesville-violence-fbi-242235>

<sup>93</sup> Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, "Anarchist Extremists: Antifa", *The State of New Jersey*, June 2017. <https://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/analysis/anarchist-extremists-antifa>

<sup>94</sup> Henry Langston, "Will This Summer Belong to Europe's Far-Left Terrorists?", *Vice News*, June 11, 2012. [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/the-return-of-left-wing-terror-in-europe](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/the-return-of-left-wing-terror-in-europe)

<sup>95</sup> See, for example: [Anonymous], "An Anarchist Guide to the 2017 G20 Summit in Hamburg with a Review of Previous G8 and G20 Protests", *Gatorna*, June 29, 2017.

<sup>96</sup> "The Rise of Sweden's Far-Left Militants", *Vice News*, May 29, 2014.

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/av47y4/the-rise-of-swedens-far-left-militants](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/av47y4/the-rise-of-swedens-far-left-militants)

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United States 2015 *Country Reports on Terrorism*, anarchist terrorism poses a threat only for two European countries: Italy and Greece. In Italy, "terrorist and criminal activity by domestic anarchists and other violent extremists remained a threat,"<sup>97</sup> and in Greece, the "two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki, experienced occasional, relatively small-scale anarchist attacks."<sup>98</sup>

Violent and militant anarchists in Europe, North America and elsewhere, under the umbrella of the AFM, formed transnational networks that nowadays have a presence in many countries around the world. There are several reasons for the revival of the AFM in recent years: it is a reaction to right-wing populist parties and politicians on the one hand, and to violent right-wing extremist street movements, on the other. Both right-wing politicians and street movements were fueled by the influx of immigrants into Europe and by jihadi terrorism in the continent, and their activities led anti-fascists to realize that they must push back against the surge of the right.<sup>99</sup> However, other countries share the view that anarchists do not constitute a danger. In Norway, for example, the PST does not consider left-wing extremists as an element which poses a threat on Norway's security, but rather as a local problem that might destabilize public order. In its 2016 *Threat Assessment* report, the PST noted that:

Any violent attacks by left-wing extremists will probably be directed at individuals or events they associate with right-wing extremism. It is highly probable that left-wing extremist groups will take part in public demonstrations and in demonstrations against views or policies they perceive as examples of right-wing extremism. It is also possible that left-wing extremists will try to make use of demonstrations to identify opponents or

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<sup>97</sup> Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2015", *United States Department of the States*, June 2016, p. 125. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258249.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>99</sup> For further information, please see: Daniel Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe: Current Developments and Issues for the Future", *PRISM*, Volume 6, Number 2, July 2016: 85-104, pp. 94-97. [http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism\\_6-2/Koehler.pdf](http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_6-2/Koehler.pdf); Amanda Kutner, "EU Far Right Exploits Fear of Terrorism", *Counter Extremism Project*, June 30, 2015. <https://www.counterextremism.com/blog/eu-far-right-exploits-fear-terrorism>; Nick Robin-Early, "How The Refugee Crisis Is Fueling The Rise Of Europe's Right", *The Huffington Post*, January 3, 2017. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/europe-right-wing-refugees\\_us\\_562e9e64e4b06317990f1922](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/europe-right-wing-refugees_us_562e9e64e4b06317990f1922)

provoke violence. Any confrontations may also be directed against police officers at the scene.<sup>100</sup>

According to the PST 2017 *Threat Assessment* report, "It is very unlikely that left-wing extremists will carry out terrorist attacks against Norwegian interests in 2017."<sup>101</sup> However, "An increase in right-wing extremist activity is likely to lead to greater left-wing extremist activity."<sup>102</sup> In its 2016 *Annual Report*, the Dutch security service AIVD stated that, "the influx of migrants stagnated in 2016 [...] led to public confrontations between the far left and the far right on several occasions."<sup>103</sup> It does not seem to matter if countries will halt or continue to accept immigrants, because for right-wing extremists the "enemy" is not at the doors, he is inside the house. Therefore, immediate and drastic acts are required; and thus, left-wing militants are also required to counter this with immediate and drastic actions.

It is evident that RWE, either in its political or social forms (i.e. street movements, such as the "English Defense League", "Soldiers of Odin", or the "Identitarian Movement"), are on the rise not only in Norway but in other European countries as well. That is a sign for troubles to come, especially due to the continuation of the migration crisis. However, according to the Europol, anarchist terrorism increased in 2016, but only three European Union states were targeted: Spain, Italy and Greece. In its latest "Terrorism Situation and Trend Report" it is stated that:

In 2016, left-wing and anarchist terrorist groups or individuals in the EU carried out 27 attacks. This was a sharp increase, compared to the number of attacks that occurred in

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<sup>100</sup> "Threat Assessment 2016", *The Norwegian Police Security Service* (Politiets Sikkerhetstjeneste – PST), Norway, Oslo: 2016, p. 19. [http://www.pst.no/media/81093/PST\\_Brosjyre\\_Trussel\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.pst.no/media/81093/PST_Brosjyre_Trussel_ENG.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> "Threat Assessment 2017", *The Norwegian Police Security Service* (Politiets Sikkerhetstjeneste – PST), Norway, Oslo: 2017, p. 19. [http://www.pst.no/media/82645/pst\\_trusselvurd-2017\\_eng\\_web.pdf](http://www.pst.no/media/82645/pst_trusselvurd-2017_eng_web.pdf)

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), "Annual Report 2016", *Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations*, The Netherlands, The Haag, 2016, p. 8. <https://english.aivd.nl/publications/annual-report/2017/04/04/annual-report-2016>

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2015. EU Member State authorities arrested 31 people related to left-wing and anarchist terrorism in 2016, most of them in Spain.<sup>104</sup>

According to Europol's report, "left-wing and anarchist extremist groups and individuals remained a public order threat in a number of EU Member States." The report noted that anarchists' "activities included riots, arson attacks, criminal damage and spreading of propaganda." In addition, "left-wing and anarchist extremists continued to take advantage of lawful demonstrations to launch violent attacks against governmental property and law enforcement." It is also clear to Europol that "anarchist groups and individuals tended to be more violent" than other "left-wing extremist movements."<sup>105</sup>

It is likely that anarchist terrorism is more prevalent in Italy, Greece and Spain than elsewhere in Europe not only because of the influx of immigrants to these countries' shores, but because of socio-economic instability, which combined with immigration and jihadi terrorism has led to a surge of right-wing extremist groups and movements in Europe and North America in general. Nevertheless, this phenomenon – in which jihadism (Islamic militant extremism) is assisting right-wing militant extremism, that in its turn is provoking left-wing militant extremism – exported from south-west Europe to the rest of the continent and even across the ocean.

### Online Anarchist and Anti-Fascist Platforms

Anti-fascists, as well as other extremists (i.e. right-wing or jihadis), are very active on the Internet (the World Wide Web).<sup>106</sup> The Internet, with its social networks, is an ultimate tool for extremists

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<sup>104</sup> "Te-Sat: European Union Terrorism Situation and trend Report 2017", *Europol*, June 2017, p. 42.

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/2017-eu-terrorism-report-142-failed-foiled-and-completed-attacks-1002-arrests-and-142-victims-died>

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

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(of any kind) who want to propagate messages to cross-borders audiences, as well as instructions (operational or technical) to activists worldwide. This tool is also being used for recruitment and mobilization.<sup>107</sup> A transnational tool such as the Internet is of great importance to contemporary militant anarchists, who ignore borders and seek to influence both their supporters and rivals. On the one hand – it is used to recruit and mobilize more activists, and to organize activities and actions. It can also be used to defy their opponents, to incite against them and to present an uncompromising and persisting opposition to "fascism" in its different forms.

The G20 violent events were a result of violent rhetoric and incitement that anarchists and militant anti-fascists spread via their online platforms. One of these platforms was the *linksunten.indymedia* website, that became the first-ever anarchist website to be banned in Germany after the riots that took place in Hamburg.<sup>108</sup> According to Thomas de Maizière, the German ministry of interior, "the prelude to the G-20 summit in Hamburg was not the only time that violent actions and attacks on infrastructural facilities were mobilized on linksunten.indymedia," which he defined as the "most influential online platform for vicious left-wing extremists in Germany."<sup>109</sup>

There are many Facebook pages, Twitter accounts,<sup>110</sup> blogs, websites and forums that are being used by anti-fascists in general, and by anarchists in particular. These platforms serve for communication purposes, as a source of information and inspiration, and as a mobilization and recruitment tool. Manuals with instructions for manufacturing of homemade bombs or weapons,

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<sup>107</sup> See: Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Nick Kaderbhai, "Research Perspectives on Online Radicalisation: A Literature Review 2006-2016", *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation*, 2016. <http://icsr.info/2017/05/icsr-vox-pol-paper-research-perspectives-online-radicalisation-literature-review-2006-2016/>; and Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, The New Challenges* (USA, Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2006).

<sup>108</sup> Edmund Heaphy, "Germany, in a First, Shuts Down Left-Wing Extremist Website", *The New York Times*, August 25, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/world/europe/germany-bans-far-left-antifa-website.html>

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.; see also: <https://www.indymedia.org/el/2017/09/988285.shtml> (accessed 18.02.2018)

<sup>110</sup> According to the anarchist *It's Going Down* website, anarchists and other left-wing militants should avoid Facebook and use Twitter instead, which is considered a better tool to remain anonymous. See: "Forming an Antifa Group: A Manual", *It's Going Down*, February 16, 2017. <https://itsgoingdown.org/forming-an-antifa-group-a-manual/> (accessed 18.02.2018)

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such as "The Anarchist Cookbook", are also present on some of these platforms.<sup>111</sup> Local branches of the AFM use platforms such as the *Leeds Anti Fascists* blog,<sup>112</sup> in which the homepage reads "fighting fascism in our streets and communities." Although these platforms are not necessarily associated with a known group, they all serve the same purposes and advocate the same ideas and goals.

Some platforms are not dedicated to a specific location, but rather to a specific group, such as the *Anti-Fascist Action* website,<sup>113</sup> or the *Anti-Fascist Network* website.<sup>114</sup> Still other platforms are used to promote anarchism and "direct action" against the manifestations of "fascism", such as the *b9ace* blog,<sup>115</sup> the *Revolutionary Left* Forum,<sup>116</sup> the *Anarchist News* website,<sup>117</sup> the *Anarkismo* website,<sup>118</sup> the *325Nostate* blog,<sup>119</sup> the *Insurrection News World Wide* blog,<sup>120</sup> and the IGD website, mentioned above and earlier.<sup>121</sup> These sites operate in English, but their message is global, as befits a transnational movement. Many other websites, forums and social networks accounts operates in a variety of languages.

Social networks are a useful and essential tool for anarchists just as they are for jihadis on one hand or for right-wing extremists on the other. Social networks are undoubtedly an important medium that can be used for organizing events, marches and demonstrations, for recruitment of volunteers and money and for mobilization of people. It is worthwhile mentioning some of the

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<sup>111</sup> See, for example, the following publications that appears on anarchists' online platforms: [Anonymous], *Recipe for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook, A Moveable Feast* (USA, Washington: CrirnethInc Workers' Collective, 2004). <https://www.indymedia.org.uk/media/2008/08/407528.pdf> (accessed 09.09.2017); and also a copy of *The Anarchist Cookbook* on the *Unite Youth Dublin* website:

<https://uniteyouthdublin.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/anarchist-cookbook-william-powell.pdf>

<sup>112</sup> The *Leeds Anti-Fascist* blog: <https://leedsantifascists.wordpress.com> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>113</sup> The *Anti-Fascist Action* website: <http://antifascistaction.tumblr.com> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>114</sup> The *Anti-Fascist Network* website: <http://antifascistnetwork.org> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>115</sup> The *b9ace* blog: <http://b9ace.noblogs.org> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>116</sup> The *Revolutionary Left* forum: <http://www.revleft.com/vb/forum.php> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>117</sup> The *Anarchist News* website: <https://anarchistnews.org> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>118</sup> The *Anarkismo* website: <http://anarkismo.net> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>119</sup> The *325.nostate* blog: <http://325.nostate.net/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>120</sup> The *Insurrection News World Wide* blog: <https://insurrectionnewsworldwide.com> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>121</sup> The *It's Going Down* website: <https://itsgoingdown.org> (accessed 09.07.2017)

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most important Facebook pages: the *Revolution News* page, which was created in October 2012 and has since then accumulated more than a million "likes";<sup>122</sup> or the Czech "Antifa.cz", that began operating in 2008 and has since then accumulated more than 260,000 "likes".<sup>123</sup>

The French "Anti-Facho" page mentioned earlier, which began operating in 2008, has accumulated more than 30,000 "likes" in less than ten years. The *Insurgency News* blog also use Facebook account that has over 50,000 "likes". The *Art of Resistance* Facebook page is another platform used by anarchists. It is sharing, according to its name, the will to "resist" the "oppressor".<sup>124</sup> It is not known from where the page operates, but most of its publications are in English. The page began operating in 2012 and has since then accumulated more than 73,000 "likes".

Another anarchist propaganda Facebook page is the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF). It brings together anarchist groups and organizations from around the world.<sup>125</sup> The IAF, which was founded after the "student revolt" of 1968, has united anarchists from France, Spain and Italy. Today it also includes anarchists from Latin America (Mexico, Chile and Brazil). This demonstrates the willingness to unite under one framework that part of which core members who hold the most radical positions, advocate the use of violence as a legitimate tool to resist "fascism" and celebrates violence as a justifiable reaction.<sup>126</sup>

Just as in the case of the anti-fascist music scene, in many anarchists' statements and declarations on the web, include the militant rhetoric and promise to continue the fight against "fascism" in its different forms. For example, after a white supremacist murdered an anti-fascist

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<sup>122</sup> The *Revolution News* Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RevNews/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>123</sup> The Antifa.cz Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ANTIFA.CZ>. See also the Antifa.cz website: <http://antifa.cz/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>124</sup> The *Art of Resistance* (فن المقاومة) Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Artofresistance2012> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>125</sup> Online platforms of the International of Anarchist Federations (accessed: 16.09.2017)

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalOfAnarchistFederations>

- Website: <http://i-f-a.org>

<sup>126</sup> See: Peter Beinart, "The Rise of the Violent Left", *The Atlantic*, September 2017.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/the-rise-of-the-violent-left/534192/>

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protester in Charlottesville (August 12, 2017) and after a rally of white supremacists in Sacramento, California, anti-fascists burned a truck that belongs to a neo-Nazi skinhead. In a statement signed by a group named "Anti Nazis At Night" (ANAN), which took responsibility for this arson attack, the group promised that right-wing violence will provoke a reaction: "They [fascists] cannot continue to attack, kill, and stifle us! We [anti-fascists] will fight back! For a world free of fascism in all of its oppressive manifestations!"<sup>127</sup> Moreover, the bloody confrontations between anti-fascists and right-wing extremists led to the formation of the anti-fascist militia Redneck Revolt, that was established "as an anti-racist, anti-fascist community defence formation."<sup>128</sup>

All these anarchists/anti-fascist online platforms show clear solidarity and support for the Kurdish people and their fight for freedom and against "the forces of hate", such as the Nazis in the past, and as ISIS today.<sup>129</sup> These Facebook pages, empowered by hundreds of similar Twitter accounts, are a central element in the operation of the international "anti-fascist" networks and in the application of the anarchists' "direct action" tactics. Anarchists' online activity exposes others to their messages and actions. This ensures a continuous clash between them and their various rivals, which is likely to get only worse, as demonstrated below. These social anarchist/anti-fascists' networks enable the recruitment and mobilization of activists for a transnational struggle against "fascism", either at home or abroad.

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<sup>127</sup> See: "Sacramento Nazi's Truck Torched (USA)", *325nostate*, August 23, 2017.  
<https://325.nostate.net/2017/08/23/sacramento-nazis-truck-torched-usa/> (accessed 09.09.2017)

<sup>128</sup> Online platforms of Redneck Revolt:

- Website: <https://www.redneckrevolt.org>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RedneckRevolt/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RedneckRevolt>

<sup>129</sup> See, for example, the English-Kurdish Anarchists in Support of Rojava-Kurdistan (انارشیستهای مدافع کوبانی) Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AnarchismandRojava> (accessed 16.07.2017)

### **The Anarchist Terrorist Threat**

As seemed evident during the Hamburg G20 summit in July 2017, and in many other incidents, as well as in the anti-fascist and anarchist music scene, they consider violence a legitimate tool aimed at stopping their opponents and disrupt their activities. Moreover, arson attacks seem to be the anarchists' preferred mode of violence, along with demonstrations and confrontations against right-wing groups and individuals. According to Europol 2017 "Terrorism Situation and Trend Report",

Arson campaigns continued to occur in EU Member States with active anarchist communities. Groups and individuals employed unsophisticated IIDs or flammable liquids to torch their targets. In Germany, for example, anarchist extremists carried out numerous arson attacks in 2016, mainly targeting police and private vehicles on the streets. Belgium experienced similar problems with arsons of cars and cell-phone masts. In Greece and Italy, anarchists are believed to be behind a number of incendiary attacks on vehicles and property as well as on banks.<sup>130</sup>

Anarchist violence and militancy, as demonstrated earlier, is not new, neither in Europe nor in North America. It is also not foreign to South America either, where anarchists continue to target those whom they consider their enemies. In recent years the revival of the anarchist terrorism and violence wave, which, it seems, is not going to fade away any time soon, was quite evident. In 2013, for example, Molotov cocktails were thrown at a military building, a church and a prison in the cities of Pau and Tarbes in southern France. The French authorities arrested two people on suspicion of being anarchist terrorists, one of them a French citizen and the other a Spanish

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<sup>130</sup> "Te-Sat: European Union Terrorism Situation and trend Report 2017", *Europol*, June 2017, p. 43.

citizen. The French, Damien Camelio, in his early thirties, was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison.<sup>131</sup> Online expressions of support and solidarity for him followed promptly.<sup>132</sup>

Incidents with anarchist motives occurred in Italy as well. In June 2014, for instance, the offices of the Democratic Party in Florence were attacked; and on the same month two anarchists were sentenced to various prison terms for armed attacks on financial institutions.<sup>133</sup> The two were members of a violent organization named the "Informal Anarchist Federation",<sup>134</sup> which *Vice News* described as "a nihilistic-anarchist network that brings chaos to the town next to you."<sup>135</sup> This organization cooperates with anarchist groups from various countries, such as Greece.<sup>136</sup>

Greece has suffered from the violent awakening of anarchists. Since 2003, a number of anarchist organizations and groups has been active there, targeting mainly financial and institutional buildings, as well as foreign representative offices in the country. In 2003, an RPG rocket was fired at the US Embassy in Athens and a decade later the German ambassador to Athens was fired at. 2013 was marked by an increase in anarchist attacks.<sup>137</sup> On April 26, 2014, a car bomb exploded near the Greek Central Bank. An anarchist organization called

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<sup>131</sup> See: Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Report on Terrorism, 2014", *United States Department of State*, June 2015, p. 104. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239631.pdf>

<sup>132</sup> See, for example, a publication on the Spanish-Anarchist blog "Instinto Salvaje" (Savage Instinct), translated from French to Spanish and Italian: "Francia: 2 Años de Carcel al Compañero Anarquista Damien Camelio", *Instinto Salvaje*, March 6, 2014. <https://instintosalvaje.noblogs.org/post/2014/03/06/francia-2-anos-de-carcel-al-companero-anarquista-damien-camelio/> (accessed 06.03.2014; not available); see also: "Francia – ¡En libertad el compañero Damien Camelio!", *La Rebelion de las Palabras*, July 18, 2017. <https://vozcomoarma.noblogs.org/?p=17396> (accessed 08.03.2018)

<sup>133</sup> "Country Report on Terrorism, 2014", pp. 119–120.

<sup>134</sup> See: Francesco Marone, "A Profile of the Informal Anarchist Federation in Italy", *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (March 2014), 21–25. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss3.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> Jake Hanrahan, "Meet the Nihilist-Anarchist Network Bringing Chaos to a Town Near You", *Vice*, February 13, 2013. [http://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/read/the-fai-are-the-worlds-true-anarchists](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/the-fai-are-the-worlds-true-anarchists)

<sup>136</sup> "Greek Domestic Terrorism", *Counter Terrorism 2014 Calendar*, the National Counter Terrorism Center, 2014, p. 124. [http://www.nctc.gov/site/pdfs/ct\\_calendar\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nctc.gov/site/pdfs/ct_calendar_2014.pdf)

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

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"Revolutionary Struggle" took responsibility for the act.<sup>138</sup> Three days later, a booby trapped parcel was sent to a police station in central Greece. As mentioned earlier, Italy, Greece and Spain, in addition to their economic instability, are all in the "frontline", dealing with immigration from North Africa and the Middle East. This ignited RWE to an immediate reaction; which provoked a counter-reaction from LWE.

In December 2014, shots were fired at the Israeli Embassy in Athens, without causing any damage or injuries.<sup>139</sup> About two months later, an anarchist organization called "The Popular Fighters Group" claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>140</sup> In November 2015, a bomb exploded at the entrance to the offices of the Greek Business Federation, near the Greek parliament. There were no injuries in this incident, and slight damage was caused. Although it is not known who was behind the explosion, anarchists are the main suspects, since they carried out similar attacks in the past,<sup>141</sup> it is not unrealistic to assume that it was an anarchist act<sup>142</sup> In 2017 Greek anarchists, mainly from the "Conspiracy of Cells of Fire", continued to terrorize their perceived enemies, including EU officials.<sup>143</sup>

Among anarchists, December 2015 was labelled "Black December". During that period, anarchists intended to cause disorder and insecurity, in order to undermine the capitalist society and the establishment. The websites associated with anarchists were full of publications from all

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<sup>138</sup> Boubour As and Random Anarchists (translation & editing), "Revolutionary Struggle: A Collection of Letters, Texts and Communiques From an Armed Group in Greece and their Accused...", *Secours Rouge*, [n.d.].

<http://rotehilfesch.noblogs.org/files/2014/07/Gesammelte-Erk%C3%A4rungen-eng.pdf>. (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>139</sup> "Country Report on Terrorism, 2014", p. 114.

<sup>140</sup> "Greek Anarchist Group Says It Shot Up Israeli Embassy", *The Times of Israel*, February 4, 2015.

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/greek-anarchist-group-says-it-shot-up-israeli-embassy/>

<sup>141</sup> "Athens Bomb Explodes Near Greek Parliament", *BBC*, November 24, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34907489>

<sup>142</sup> "Bomb Explodes Outside Greek Business Federation Offices in Athens: Police", *Reuters*, November 24, 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/eurozone-greece-blast/bomb-explodes-outside-greek-business-federation-offices-in-athens-police-idUSL8N13J04Q20151124>

<sup>143</sup> Lizzie Dearden, "Greek Police Find Eight More Parcel Bombs Intended for EU Officials as Anarchist Terror Campaign Continues", *The Independent*, March 21, 2017. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greek-police-eight-parcel-bombs-letter-eu-officials-imf-paris-office-germany-finance-ministry-a7641241.html>



over the world documenting attacks on various levels: from broken glass windows and graffiti spraying on "establishment-buildings", through torching of cars and buildings, to more violent attacks involving the use of various weapons. "December is a great starting point," wrote one of the main anarchists' websites, since it is a "dark" month, that is, light hours were limited. Therefore, there are more opportunities to sow destruction and sabotage.<sup>144</sup>

More attacks occurred in Italy, Greece and other European and non-European countries such as Mexico, Brazil and Chile. In January 2016, a statement by a new organization called the Anti-Fascist Revolutionary Front, called for actions to form a global anti-fascist and anarchist front to combat the rise of the so-called "modern fascism". All this suggests that the anarchist "direct action" is not only gaining momentum in Western Europe, but it is also becoming more crystallized and, much more violent than in recent years.<sup>145</sup>

This is also the case in the United States, where the election of Trump to President led to the rise of RWE, which in turns evoked the rise of the American AFM. As "Violet", an American anti-fascist from Philadelphia, told *Vice*: "police violence is no more justified than anti-fascist violence."<sup>146</sup> Because policemen are symbols of a "fascist regime", he said violence against them is justified. According to "Violet", anti-fascists' violence is equal to the American police and army's violence. His colleague, "Ash", stated that she accepts violence as a tool to "minimize" (RWE) violence.<sup>147</sup>

Western Anarchists' involvement in violent struggle against "fascism" is not limited to the West. The clearest manifestation for this unfamiliar and under-researched phenomenon, which requires a separate study, can be found with the formation of the International Revolutionary

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<sup>144</sup> "Materia Negra – Black December (Para Los Hermanos)", *Insurrection News*, December 26, 2015.

<https://insurrectionnewsworldwide.wordpress.com/2015/12/26/materia-negra-black-december-para-los-hermanos/> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>145</sup> "'Communique 1' from the Anti-Fascist Revolutionary Front", *325 Nostate*, January 19, 2016.

<http://325.nostate.net/?p=18579> (accessed 09.07.2017)

<sup>146</sup> "The Black Bloc: Inside America's Hard Left", *Vice*, November 2, 2017.

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/7x44xd/the-black-bloc-inside-americas-hard-left](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/7x44xd/the-black-bloc-inside-americas-hard-left)

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

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People's Guerrilla Forces (IRPGF).<sup>148</sup> The IRPGF is part of the People's Protection Units (YPG), a Kurdish militia with affiliation to the radical (Marxist-Leninist) left-wing, which attracted unknown number of Western volunteers,<sup>149</sup> some of whom are anti-fascists that flocked to Syria in order to participate in the war against ISIS, and to help the Kurds to build a new revolutionary entity.

The IRPGF started operating in Rojava, Syria, in March 2017. According to its first video, the group defines itself as "a militant armed self-organized and horizontal collective working to defend social revolutions around the world, to directly confront capital and the state, and advance the cause of anarchism." Furthermore, the group stated that it will cooperate with other local anti-fascist forces against "all imperialist, fascist and counterrevolutionary forces." This video shows members of the IRPGF shooting a Kalashnikov and RPG and even detonating an improvised explosive device.

IRPGF online activity reveals the involvement of foreign fighters in its ranks, among them Turks, French, Spanish, Polish and Greeks. And, as a transnational anarchist group that fights in Syria, its messages are not limited to the Middle East. For example, the group announced its support for Belarus anarchists, as well as for Spanish and Argentinian anarchists that were detained by "fascist" governments. Furthermore, in one of the photos the group published on its Twitter account (see below) nine armed and masked men appeared, while one of them is holding a sign, dated to May 9, 2017, that reads "161 Crew in the area."<sup>150</sup> Another

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<sup>148</sup> See: Clare Maxwell, "Anarchy in the YPG: Foreign Volunteers Vow Turkish 'Revolution'", *Middle East Eye*, May 10, 2017. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/revolution-volunteers-form-anarchist-brigade-ypg-1459563614> (accessed 08.03.2018); and, "Building Anarchist Forces: The IRPGF and the International Struggle", *It's Going Down*, April 28, 2017. <https://itsgoingdown.org/building-anarchist-forces-irpgf-international-struggle/> (accessed 08.03.2018)

<sup>149</sup> See: Henry Tuck, Tanya Silverman and Candace Smalley, "'Shooting in the Right Direction': Anti-ISIS Foreign Fighters in Syria & Iraq", *The Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, Horizons Series No. 1, 2016. <http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ISD-Report-Shooting-in-the-right-direction-Anti-ISIS-Fighters.pdf>

<sup>150</sup> From the IRPGF Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/irpgf/status/862666004920500224> (accessed 29.11.2017)

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fighter is holding the AFA red-black flag, and two others are holding the IRPGF flag (a red Kalashnikov on black background).



The videos, photos and messages that the IRPGF has published since its creation are part of a campaign aims at recruiting and mobilizing more anarchists to action against representatives of "fascism", either at home or abroad. Thus, there is a risk that post-war anarchists, with experience in the battlefield, might return to their countries and continue their war: either against ISIS supporters or against right-wing extremists. Unfortunately, both are flourishing recently.

## Conclusion

The second decade of the Twentieth-First century is characterized by the intensification and increase of violent anarchists, who once again regard violence as a legitimate tool for the purpose

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of "self-defense" and "struggle" against "fascist" opponents. There might be several reasons for that: a) the availability of the Internet, which enables left-wing extremists, especially among the young generation, to form transnational radical communities; b) the surge in right-wing extremist political parties and street movements; And, c) the existence of battlefronts near Western Europe, such as in Syria and Ukraine, where different extremists from hostile ideologies, including anarchists and anti-fascists, can travel to easily, join a fighting force, and get trained.

From various publications on Facebook pages, one can learn about the attraction of anarchists and left-wing extremists from around the world to the battlefront in Syria. It is possible that these anarchists will in the future become the vanguard of the new left-wing militant activism in the West. It is also possible that upon the return home of these anti-fascist volunteers some of them might pose a challenge and a threat not merely to right-wing extremists, but to public order and safety as well and even become a serious security threat. Thus, security authorities will have to contain or deal with this challenge, which they are unlikely to be able to ignore.

It seems that, for anti-fascists and anarchists, their struggle against "fascism" in its different forms resembles the "brotherhood and sisterhood" of the anti-fascist movement, as one of the Moscow Death Brigades' songs is titled. In this regard, it is clear how militancy and justified violence against "fascists" are embodied within the anti-fascist music scene, which is a useful tool for the recruitment and mobilization of a young and angry generation of leftist revolutionaries, as well for incitement against political opponents.

In light of the war in Syria and the presence of anarchists on the battlefronts, such as the IRPGF, another challenge is embodied in the potential of post-war anarchists or anti-fascists organizing themselves in para-military groups, similar to some anarchists in United States. With their experience, these veterans can build terrorist networks that one day might participate in riots or even a revolt against the state from within. Yet, this threat is negligible compared with the threats posed by both right-wing extremists and jihadists. In other words, it is necessary to be aware of the anarchists' challenge, but one has to be careful not to exaggerate it.

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There are, of-course, ramifications of the current socio-political situation in Europe and North America: The intensification of the clash with right-wing extremists might turn from street violence and confrontations into a more militaristic urban warfare. Furthermore, there is a risk of cooperation with other violent individuals or groups, the transfer of knowledge and information, and the execution of terrorist attacks against state officials and political opponents, especially from right-wing extremists. Right wing or left-wing politicians who do not share the same revolutionary views may possibly become targets as well.

The extensive use of the internet, especially of social networks, by anarchists and anti-fascists, enables thousands from around the world to take part in the ongoing "war" between "right-wing capitalism" and the anarchist world-view. It is important to mention that although anarchists are using the Internet extensively, this activity itself is not considered as posing a serious threat. Nonetheless, in light of the involvement of anarchists in violence at "home" (in Europe and North America) and in the Syrian war, Western governments should revise their view of anarchists and their roll in present and future riots, violence and looting.

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Ariel Koch: Trends in Anti-Fascist and Anarchist Recruitment and Mobilization



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ISSN: 2363-9849

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