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## Peter Kropotkin and His Influence on Czech Anarchism

### ABSTRACT

In the Czech lands of the late 19th century and early 20th century, anarchism represented a marginal current on the fringe of the labour movement. The social groups inclining to anarchism were miners and weavers in North and East Bohemia as well as intellectuals in Prague. The anarchist movement in the Czech lands was mostly radical, not violent and mainly responding to the development of the Social Democratic Party, which was accused of suppressing individualism. While anarchists generally published a great number of journals of high intellectual quality, there were no significant anarchist thinkers in the Czech lands. If in the 1880s the major role was played by anarchist Johann Most, in the 1890s and at the beginning of the 20th century this role belonged to Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin. His teaching appealed to Czech anarchists mostly because of its moderate character and rejection of terror, and for his promotion of cooperation, individuality, ethics and social justice. Free individuals gathered in communes and the federations of communes formed the ideal society for Kropotkin. Kropotkin's ideas are still alive in present anarchist and anti-globalisation movements.

Keywords: *Czech labour movement, anarchism, Kropotkin, Habsburg*

*The archetype of a great Russian man is always the hero of social love who is at the same time the martyr and victim of this love. And among all those heroes, martyrs and victims of social love the two greatest men are called Tolstoy and Kropotkin.*<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the labour movement in the 19th and 20th century, Europe was divided into a great number of more or less important ideologies and organisations. Anarchism represented a marginal current among them. It is not easy to characterise anarchism as an individual ideology or movement. Although it is thought to be as old as the human desire for freedom, the pilgrimage of anarchism through the history of the labour movement started at the end of 18th century. Emil Zola then reported on anarchism: “this is an eternal black poem, old as mankind, as an evildoing, as pain”.<sup>3</sup>

Anarchism remained relatively unsuccessful in the Czech labour movement as this ideology struggled with the same problem as other political currents in modern Czech society during the last third of the 19th century: the emancipation of the Czech nation was primarily national and cleavages within the society were seen through the prism of nationalism. Priorities other than the nation were considered a betrayal.<sup>4</sup>

This study traces the influence of one of the most famous anarchists, Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), on Czech anarchism. It looks at the ideological origins of his ideas and conceptions concerning the future composition of a “just” society. It also seeks to explain why Kropotkin played an important role in the Czech labour movement. Parts of this study are based on ten years of in-depth research and my PhD dissertation on Kropotkin, which I defended at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague.<sup>5</sup> I pursued some further studies of the topic over the following years.<sup>6</sup> My new interest in the subject was later encouraged by discussions with Robert Putnam in Canada, where

- 1 Stanislav K. Neumann: *Stati a projevy (Essays and Speeches)*, Prague 1973, p. 209 (titles translated by the author).
- 2 This article was written as part of the P17 Program *Sciences About Society, Politics and Media*, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague.
- 3 Emil Zola, in: *Omladina (Youth)*, 28 March 1899.
- 4 Miroslav Hroch: *V národním zájmu (In National Interests)*, Prague 1995; in: Miroslav Hroch: *Na prahu národní existence (On the Eve of National Existence)*, Prague 1999.
- 5 Lenka Rovná: *P.A. Kropotkin a jeho vliv na české anarchistické hnutí (P.A. Kropotkin and His Influence on the Czech Anarchist Movement)*, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, Kandidátská disertační práce, Prague 1985.
- 6 Lenka Rovná: *Českij anarchism i vlijanije Petra Kropotkina (Czech Anarchism and the Influence of Peter Kropotkin)*, in: Irina I. Blauberg (ed.), *Petr Alexejevič Kropotkin, Filosofija Rossiji pervoj poloviny XX veka*, Institut Filosofiji RAN, Moscow 2012, pp. 300–332.

he lectured on the reform of the Italian civil service sector. Putnam's research on the efficiency of public service and its medieval roots corresponded with Kropotkin's ideas in *Mutual Aid, A Factor of Evolution*.<sup>7</sup> Kropotkin had been heavily criticised for his idealistic and simplistic approach. Putnam, however, stated that he was inspired by Kropotkin and supported his thoughts.<sup>8</sup> Influenced by the Russian anarchist, Putnam came to the conclusion that cooperation and mutual aid were more important for the development and progress of democratic societies than competition, and he was also criticised for his conclusions. It is interesting to note that the present anti-etatist, anti-globalist, anti-capitalist and environmental movements use anarchist ideas in their vocabulary and that their programmes remain reminiscent of Kropotkin's teachings.

The popularity of Kropotkin's philosophical and social conceptions is also related to the general admiration of his personal attributes. Surprisingly, even Soviet authors were inspired by his multifaceted personality. Valentina Tvardovskaja wrote in 1966 that he was a "magnificent personality, talented scientist, and passionate revolutionary".<sup>9</sup> Fedor Poljanskij commented: "The wide popularity of Kropotkin could be explained by his personal charm. As a person of exceptional qualities, accompanied by sincerity, a humble nature and devotion to the revolution in the broad sense he gained a lot of passionate admirers."<sup>10</sup> Also Natalya Pirumova dedicated her monograph to Kropotkin as she greatly admired his humanism.<sup>11</sup> Anna Lebedjeva, an alumna of the Historical Faculty at Moscow State University, dedicated her master's thesis from 1984 to Kropotkin, who was her great grandfather.<sup>12</sup>

Neither anarchism nor Kropotkin have lost their attraction for social scientists around the world.<sup>13</sup> "The rise of a global anti-capitalist protest movement is widely regarded as

7 Petr A. Kropotkin: *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, 1.ed., London 1902.

8 Robert D. Putnam/Robert Leonardi/Raffaella Y. Nanetti: *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions*, in *Modern Italy*, Princeton 1994.

9 Valentina A. Tvardovskaja: *Predisloviije*, in: Petr A. Kropotkin: *Zapiski revoljucionera* (The Introduction in: *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*), Moscow 1966, p. 5.

10 Fedor Ja. Poljanskij: *Kritika ekonomičeskich teorij anarchisma* (Critique of the Economic Theories of Anarchism), Moscow 1976, p. 126.

11 Natalya M. Pirumova: *P.A. Kropotkin*, Moscow 1972.

12 Anna Lebedjeva: *Revolucionnaja dejatel'nost' P.A. Kropotkina. Formirovanije social'nogo ideala Anarchokomunisma* (Revolutionary Activities of P.A. Kropotkin. The Formulation of the Social Ideal of Anarcho-Communism), Dipl. MGU, Moscow 1984.

13 Georges Woodcock/Ivan Avakumovic: *The Anarchist Prince: A Biographical Study of Peter Kropotkin*, London 1950; Daniel Todes: *The Scientific Backgrounds of Kropotkin's Mutual Aid*, London 1993; Graham Purchase: *Peter Kropotkin, Ecologist, Philosopher and Revolutionary*, PhD Thesis, Sydney 2003; Raphaëlle Beaudin-Fontainha: *L'éthique de Kropotkin*, Paris 2010.

a sign of anarchism's revival", wrote social scientist Ruth Kinna in 2007.<sup>14</sup> This view has been supported by many others who saw connections between anarchist anti-etatism, anti-globalist movements and federal structures in future societies.<sup>15</sup>

The life and thinking of Kropotkin attracted the attention of several researchers in his homeland after the fall of the Soviet regime. The turning point was the 150th anniversary of Kropotkin's birth in 1992. The Committee for the Creative Heritage of P.A. Kropotkin was established at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, Dimitrov and Saint Petersburg, where a great number conferences were organised. The anniversary and related activities resulted in publications of some of Kropotkin's as well as an analysis by a research team focusing on the same topic: Vyacheslav Markin, Alexander Gordon, Sergej Udarcev, V. F. Pustarnakova, Anna Lebedeva, A. A. Mkrtychan and others.<sup>16</sup> Thanks to Pussy Riot, Kropotkin's name came again into the spotlight through their popular anti-Putin song *Kropotkin-Vodka*.<sup>17</sup> The anti-capitalist and anti-establishment movements, especially after the global financial crisis of 2008, are – mostly instinctively but sometimes also deliberately – close to Kropotkin's idea of an anarchist and anti-etatist society.<sup>18</sup>

This study of Czech anarchism and Kropotkin's influence does not primarily concentrate on the general history of the movement but mainly on the ideological developments of anarchist concepts and on the role of Kropotkin's teachings among other thinkers. The collection of data is based on primary sources, comprising archival materials from conferences, congresses and meetings, political documents, correspondences, essays and articles about anarchism as well as judicial transcripts from multiple trials of anarchists.

14 Ruth Kinna: Fields of Vision: Kropotkin and Revolutionary Change, in: *SubStance* 36:2 (2007), pp. 67–86, p. 67.

15 *ibid.*, p. 83.

16 Vyacheslav A. Markin: *Neizvestnyj Kropotkin (Unknown Kropotkin)*, Moscow 2009; Oleg S. Safronov: *Politicheskiye i istoricheskije vzgljady P.A. Kropotkina (Political and Historical Views of P.A. Kropotkin)*, Voronezh 2008; A. G. Kassirov: *Petr Alexejevich Kropotkin: nauka, nravstvennost', revolucija (Peter Alexejevich Kropotkin: science, ethics and revolution)*, Murmansk 2010; Andrej D. Suchov: *P.A. Kropotkin kak filosof (P.A. Kropotkin as a philosopher)*, Moscow 2007. See also Pavel I. Talerov: *K istoriografiji anarchistskich vozzrenij P.A. Kropotkina (To the historiography of anarchist thoughts of P.A. Kropotkin)*, in: Irina I. Blauberg (ed.), *Petr Alexejevič Kropotkin, Filosofija Rossiji pervoj poloviny XX veka, Institut Filosofiji RAN*, Moscow 2012, (pp. 355–374) p. 367.

17 Will Hodgkinson: The surreal fate of Pussy Riot, in: *The Times* (online), 1 August 2012, at: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/music/article3493297.ece> (accessed on 13 November 2013); for the lyrics, see: [http://www.songtextmania.com/kropotkin-vodka\\_songtext\\_pussy\\_riot.html](http://www.songtextmania.com/kropotkin-vodka_songtext_pussy_riot.html) (accessed on 13 November 2013).

18 Mi Park: *Imagining a Just and Sustainable Society: A Critique of Alternative Economic Models in the Global Justice Movement*, in: *Critical Sociology* 39:1 (2013), pp. 65–85.

I have also collected personal files of some Czech anarchists, including Stanislav Kostka Neumann, Bohuslav Vrbenský, František Cajthaml-Liberté, Vilém and Čeněk Körbers and Theodor Bartošek. The files that were originally placed at the Archive of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Prague have been relocated to the National Archive. At the core of the research stands the analysis of the anarchist press, which provided a rich amount of information on the fragmented movement. Many of the journals existed for only a short period. Most impressive was the quality and depth of the philosophical and sociological essays that were read not only by intellectuals, but primarily by miners and textile workers who supported the journals with their subscription fees. Secondary sources on the history of Czech anarchism at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were provided by the writings of Jan Měchýř, František Jordán, Vratislav Čapek, Theodor Hudeček, Renata Wohlgemuthová, Jiří Tůma, Václav Štěpán, Václav Tomek and Ondřej Slačálek, who has been personally active as an anarchist.<sup>19</sup>

My research followed the hypothesis that factions of the Czech labour movement at that time were trapped between the dichotomy of nationalism and internationalism within Social Democracy. This combined with their oppression by the state authorities encouraged them to radicalism and anarchism. Kropotkin's ideas appealed mainly to the intellectuals in Prague, for ethical reasons, and to the less skilled miners and textile workers, due to his anti-etatism and anti-authoritarianism reacting against the authoritarian ideas of Social Democrats.

The first introductory part very briefly explains the origins of the Czech labour movement in the broader framework of the Habsburg Monarchy and the place of anarchism on its margins. The short second part describes the basics of Kropotkin's teachings. The third section demonstrates the influence of Kropotkin's ideas on the Czech anarchist movement.

19 Václav Tomek/Ondřej Slačálek: *Anarchism: Freedom against Power*, Prague 2006; Others such as: Martin Bastl: *Anarchismus v České republice (Anarchism in the Czech Republic)*, Středoevropské politické studie, Brno 2000; Miroslav Mareš: *Anarchistický terorismus v České republice po roce 1989 (Anarchist terrorism in the Czech Republic after 1989)*, Prague 2004.

## Anarchism and the Origins of the Czech Labour Movement

During the 18th and 19th century, the industries of the Czech lands produced two thirds of the output of the Habsburg monarchy.<sup>20</sup> In the late 1840s, the Czech labour movement was formed together with the national democratic movement.<sup>21</sup> During the 1848 revolution, the claims of the Czech revolutionaries on the barricades, who were mostly students, workers and craftsmen from Prague, were of rather national than social nature.<sup>22</sup> In 1874, however, the idea of uniting all workers from the empire succeeded.<sup>23</sup> In spring of that year delegates representing the workers' associations met to found the Social Democratic Party in Austria. 10 delegates from the industrial centres of the Czech lands spoke on behalf of several dozen local organisations. The Czech branch of the Social Democratic Party was founded in Prague in spring 1878.<sup>24</sup> Even though the party formed in secret, their manifesto, *Czech Nation and Social Question*, was published in the workers' journal *Budoucnost* (The Future).<sup>25</sup> It was then acknowledged that the improvement of the employees' social conditions had to be reached by legal means, and that also international solutions to the social question had to be found. This marked a departure from the exclusively national approach. The state apparatus responded by suppressing the activists and thus causing a cleavage within the labour movement into moderates and radicals.

The Czech labour movement in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century oscillated between nationalism and internationalism as well as between legal reformism and revolutionary radicalism.<sup>26</sup> Not all representatives of the labour movement felt com-

- 20 Otto Urban: *Kapitalismus a česká společnost. K otázkám formování české společnosti v 19. století.* (Capitalism and Czech society. As to the questions of Czech society in 19th century) Prague 2000, p. 37.
- 21 Vladimír Macura: *Znamení zrodu: české národní obrození jako kulturní typ* (The sign of birth: the Czech national revival as a cultural type), Jinočany 1995; Robert Auty: *Language and Society in the Czech National Revival*, in: *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35:84 (1956), pp. 241–248.
- 22 Jiří Kořalka: *Češi v Habsburské říši a v Evropě 1815–1914: Sociálně historické souvislosti vytváření novodobého národa a národnostní otázky v českých zemích* (Czechs in the Habsburg Monarchy and in Europe 1815–1914: Social and historical relatedness in the creation of modern nation and national questions in Czech lands), Prague 1996.
- 23 Hartmut Zwahr: *Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung im Länder- und Territorienvergleich 1875*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 13:4 (1987), pp. 448–507.
- 24 Jiří Kořalka/Jiří Malíř: *Československá sociálně demokratická strana dělnická* (The Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party of Workers), Prague 2005.
- 25 Otto Urban: *Česká společnost 1848–1918* (Czech Society 1848–1918), Prague 1982, p. 348.
- 26 Jan Křen: *Konfliktní společenství Češi a Němci 1780–1918* (Conflict commonwealth, Czechs and Germans, 1780–1918), Prague 1990.

fortable with this cleavage. Thus, the groundwork for anarchism as a marginal current was prepared.<sup>27</sup>

## The Basics of Kropotkin's Teachings

Peter Kropotkin was born in 1842 into an aristocratic family related to Prince Rurik, who has been remembered as the founder of Russia in the ninth century. After completing his degree at the prestigious grammar school Pazhevskij Korpus, which was then attended by the sons of the richest aristocratic families, Kropotkin served alongside his brother Alexander in the army in Siberia. He worked hard during this time by writing many commentaries about the geography and life of the people and other topics associated with Siberia, including reforms of exile policies and prisons. On his return to Saint Petersburg, Kropotkin studied mathematics at the Physical-Mathematical Faculty. He published articles and processed the materials he had brought from Siberia. In *Research on the Ice Age* Kropotkin subsequently mapped the former glaciations around the world.<sup>28</sup> In 1872, he left for Switzerland, the cradle of Russian revolutionary emigration, where he met the circle of Bakuninists and the workers united in the Jura Federation, which was the federalist and anarchist section of the International Workingmen's Association, also known as First International.<sup>29</sup> He wrote that "the Parisian Commune is a horrible case of social outburst without properly designated ideals".<sup>30</sup> The experiences during his visit in Switzerland – the meetings with the followers of Michail Bakunin,<sup>31</sup> the ideology of the Narodniks<sup>32</sup> and his readings of other anarchist thinkers, especially Pierre Joseph

- 27 Jana Machačová/Jiří Matějček: *Nástin sociálního vývoje českých zemí 1781–1914* (Outline of Czech social development, 1781–1914), Prague 2010; Miroslav Hroch: *V národním zájmu* (In national interest), Prague 1995; Miroslav Hroch: *Na prahu národní existence* (On the eve of national existence), Prague 1999; Arnošt Klíma: *Economy, Industry and Society in Bohemia in the 17th–19th Centuries*, Prague 1991.
- 28 Brian Morris: *The Anarchist-Geographer: An Introduction to the Life of Peter Kropotkin*, Minehead 2007.
- 29 Peter A. Kropotkin: *The Commune of Paris, Freedom Pamphlets, Vol. 2*, London 1895 (based on the French original version published in *Le Révolté* on 20 March 1880).
- 30 Peter A. Kropotkin: *Zapiski revoljucionera* (Notes of the Revolutionary), Moscow 1966, p. 281.
- 31 For the life and ideas of Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876), see Edward Hallett Carr: *Michael Bakunin*, New York 1975; Brian Morris: *Bakunin: The Philosophy of Freedom*, Montréal/New York 1993; Pavel V. Glazkov: *Filosofija svobody M. A. Bakunina* (Philosophy of Freedom of M. A. Bakunin), Saint Petersburg 2008.
- 32 Narodniks were young educated intellectuals from the upper and middle classes in Tsarist Russia who wanted to improve the life of the poor masses in the last third of the 19th century;

Proudhon<sup>33</sup> encouraged Kropotkin to become an anarchist. In 1874, he was imprisoned in Saint Petersburg's Petropavlovsk Fortress for his activities in the labour movement, and his brother was sent to exile in Siberia. With the help of his fellow prisoners, Kropotkin succeeded in escaping from the prison and left Russia. He was then hoping to stay abroad only for several months; but he would return after forty years. Kropotkin first lived in Switzerland, from where he was expelled, and after several stays in Britain he settled in France. But also in France he was imprisoned and sentenced to five years in prison because of his involvement in the labour movement. Many representatives of culture and science pleaded for his release.<sup>34</sup> Victor Hugo organised a petition signed by the most brilliant scientists of Victorian Britain. After three years, Kropotkin was freed and he settled in Britain until the end of his exile. George Bernard Shaw then wrote about him that he was "lovely to the holiness with his vigorous red beard and kind outlook he could remind one of a shepherd from Delectable Mountains".<sup>35</sup> During his stay in Britain, Kropotkin developed his theoretical conception of anarcho-communism in stressing the evolutionary and moderate aspects of social changes.<sup>36</sup>

The core of Kropotkin's teaching was based on the following conviction: "Free the individual, because without a free individual there is no free society [...] people, be free and trust in the nature of a free man. His biggest vices come from the power he has over others, or the power he is subjected to."<sup>37</sup> In *Memoirs of the Revolutionary* he proposed to replace the state by communes and associations of communes.<sup>38</sup> Kropotkin pleaded for common ownership of the means of production and thus his anarchism comprised communist elements. He rejected violence, approving it only as the last resort. Kropotkin's writings were basically in line with the philosophy of the anarchist doctrine. This becomes evident in *Justice and Morality* (1888–1889), *Anarchy, its Philosophy and Ideal* (1896), *Communism and Anarchy* (1906), *Modern Science and Anarchy* (1913), *Mutual Aid*

Peter Kropotkin: La vérité sur les exécutions en Russie, suivie d'une esquisse biographique sur Sophie Perowskaya, "Édition du Révolté", Geneve 1881.

- 33 Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) trusted in the evolutionary change of society. The future society would be composed of production communes. Private property as well as a federation of production communes was for him a guarantee for personal freedom; Georges Woodcock: Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Life and Work, New York 1972.
- 34 Vyacheslav A. Markin: Kropotkin, Zhizn'zamechatel'nykh liudei (Kropotkin, Life of Outstanding People), Moscow 2009, pp. 199–204.
- 35 Quoted in: James W. Hulse: Revolutionists in London: A Study of Five Unorthodox Socialists, Oxford 1970, p. 53.
- 36 Georges Woodcock: Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements Harmondsworth 1963, pp. 184–196.
- 37 Peter Kropotkin: Mladým lidem (To Young People), Prague 1920, p. 64.
- 38 Peter Kropotkin: Paměti revolucionářovy (Memoirs of a Revolutionary), Vol 2., Prague 1906–1907, pp. 137–140.

as a *Factor of Evolution* (1902) and also in *Ethics* (1904–1921), which were also inspired by positivism, social Darwinism and the polemics of Marxism.<sup>39</sup> Kropotkin wrote: “without mutual aid there is no possible contest, there is no courage, no initiative, no solidarity – and there is no victory! This is an unavoidable defeat”.<sup>40</sup>

The last years of Kropotkin’s life could be characterised as “[t]he years of frustration”.<sup>41</sup> In June 1917, after 40 years in exile, Kropotkin arrived in Saint Petersburg and was welcomed by 60,000 people led by the Prime Minister Kerenskij. The military orchestra played the *Marseillaise*, which became an anthem in Russia. Kerenskij offered Kropotkin a position in the government, even as prime minister, which Kropotkin rejected. Kropotkin criticised the “red terror” after the October revolution of the same year in the letter he wrote to Lenin.<sup>42</sup> His book *Ethics* was a psychological defence against the cruelties of the “war-communism” in Soviet Russia. Surrounded by his unfinished work, Kropotkin died on 8 February 1921. His teaching, full of deep humanism and love of mankind, would influence many thinkers and also play an important role in the anarchist and labour movements around the world.

## Kropotkin’s Influence on Czech Anarchism

Forty years after its emergence, the Czech labour movement was confronted with the ideology of anarchism, which first manifested itself as a political consciousness in Czech society and later resulted in the formation of a political party.<sup>43</sup> In the late 1870s and early 1880s, the Czech lands were subject to the persecution of the growing labour movement. Like in Germany and Austria, new political strategies were then discussed. The opinions among workers were divided into two major streams: moderate and radical. The most radical wing was influenced by the Austrian leader Johann Most (1846–1906), who was disappointed by the strategies of the Social Democrats, who he had represented in the German *Reichstag* (1874–1878). The politician felt that the parliamentary road towards social justice would not be fast enough and instead preferred a “propaganda of action”.<sup>44</sup>

39 Peter Kropotkin: *Anarchistická morálka (Anarchist Morality)*, Prague 1919, p. 37.

40 *ibid.*, p. 38.

41 James W. Hulse: *Revolutionists in London*, Oxford 1970, pp. 166–191.

42 Vyacheslav A. Markin: *Vozvrashchenie P.A. Kropotkina v Rosiiu 1917–1921 (The return of P.A. Kropotkin to Russia)*, in: Irina I. Blauberg (ed.), *Petr Alexejevich Kropotkin, Filosofija Rossiji pervoj poloviny XX veka*, Institut Filosofiji RAN, Moscow 2012, pp. 11–36, p. 19.

43 Jiří Kořalka/Jiří Malíř: *Československá sociálně demokratická strana dělnická (Czech Slavic Social Democratic Party of Workers)*, Prague 2005.

44 Renata Wohlgemuthová: *Cestou k břevnovskému sjezdu 1878 (On the Road to Brevnov’s Congress 1878)*, Prague 1978, p. 50; Frederic Trautmann: *The Voice of Terror: A Biography of Johann Most*, Westport 1980; Johann J. Most: *Der kommunistische Anarchismus*, Frankfurt am Main 2000.

Many workers, lacking education, political experience and strong leadership, were in favour of the “shorter” road suggested by Most, who promised that an early revolution would bring a quick solution to their hardship. The persecuted Most was forced to leave the country and began publishing the journal *Freiheit* (Freedom) in London.<sup>45</sup> Most’s illegal pamphlets, however, were still accessible to the Czech workers, also because of their size: the flyers were very slim, so that they could be smuggled within small bamboo sticks that were thrown through open pub windows into their pockets.

The Polish journalist Kulczycki, who published writings about anarchism, wrote that Johann Most in 1902 had promoted terrorist methods of class struggle.<sup>46</sup> His contemporary Josef Hybeš suggested the workers’ widespread support for Most’s tactics and their radical and anarchist tendencies were a result of the oppression by Austrian authorities.<sup>47</sup> The moderates rejected Most’s ideas, but the majority of workers in Austria and the Czech lands were inclined to follow his radical approach. *Freiheit* published manuals, for example on how to produce poison, dynamite, recommended assassinations, explosions, rifles, and the poisoning of needles.<sup>48</sup> According to contemporaries and the press, many of the workers involved in the movement were not only following radical tactics but also anarchist ideology.<sup>49</sup> The moderates, who were still believing in the gradual state-socialism of the German theoretician Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864), distinguished themselves from the radical majority of workers influenced by *Freiheit*.<sup>50</sup> Most was first imprisoned and later expelled from Britain for supporting the assassination of the Russian Tsar. After his immigration to the United States, his influence was fading.

The number of violent acts was much lower in the Czech lands than in Austria, where individual terror did not have the same level of support. The propaganda of direct action predominantly inspired people in Prague and North Bohemia, especially in the mining

45 Vratislav Čapek: Dějiny českého a rakouského anarchistického hnutí v 80. a 90. letech 19. století (History of the Czech and Austrian Anarchist Movement in the 80s and 90s of the 19th century), Prague 1951, pp. 10–13.

46 Ludwíg Kulczycki: Současný anarchismus (Contemporary Anarchism), Prague 1910, pp. 190–191.

47 Josef Hybeš: Radikální taktika (Radical Tactics), Brno 1910, pp. 8–9.

48 August Krčál: K dějinám dělnického hnutí v Rakousku 1867–1894 (On the History of the Labour Movement in Austria 1867–1894), Liberec 1894, p. 39; František Jordán: Problémy rozkolu dělnického hnutí v českých zemích na umírněné a radikály, 1879–1889 (The Problems of the Division of the Labour Movement in the Czech Lands between Moderates and Radicals. 1879–1889), Prague 1965, p. 54.

49 Josef Hybeš: Radikální taktika; August Krčál: K dějinám dělnického hnutí v Rakousku 1867–1894.

50 Peter H. Marshall: Demanding Impossible: A History of Anarchism, Oakland 2010.

and industrial towns of Duchcov and Teplice. The persecutions were harsh: spreading political leaflets, for instance, could result in many years of imprisonment.<sup>51</sup>

At that time one could distinguish between three branches of the movement:

1. The moderates, who stressed the legal road towards a just society;
2. The radicals, under the leadership of Josef Boleslav Pecka;
3. And the anarchists, under the influence of the journal *Freiheit* and Johann Most's ideology of radical action.<sup>52</sup>

The moderates were relying on the state and believed in gradual reforms; the road to freedom they saw as paved by education. The radicals were expecting an imminent revolution and did not want to waste any time on workers' education. The third stream, the anarchists, who were still under the influence of *Freiheit*, focused on revolutionary change organised by a hard core of revolutionaries trained for individual terrorist acts, and they expected the *proletariat* to follow.<sup>53</sup>

The approaches of the moderates and the radicals were merging in the middle of the 1880s. The unification of the labour movement in Austria and the Czech lands was prepared during joint meetings of both groups in Brno in 1885 and resulted in the resurgence of the Social Democratic Party in 1887. The movement's unity across the whole monarchy was cemented at a congress in Hainfeld that was held from 30 December 1888 to 1 January 1889.<sup>54</sup>

Anarchism remained still attractive for the workers, even though the journals published by the united party, *Rovnost* (Equality) in Brno and its counterpart *Gleichheit* (Equality) in Vienna, criticised the anarchists who had been pushed towards the fringes of the labour movement. An interesting example is the workers journal *Věk svobody* (Age of Freedom), edited by Vilém Körber (1845–1899), which moved from its centrist position to anarchism. In 1886, the journal had accused anarchists of intending to mislead inexperienced workers.<sup>55</sup> However, only a few years later, the same journal (with the

51 For instance, Josef Pačes was sentenced to prison for 16 years for printing a leaflet inspired by Johann Most; Vratislav Čapek: *Dějiny českého a rakouského anarchistického hnutí v 80. a 90. letech 19. století*, p. 44–45.

52 Jan Měchýř: *Počátky dělnického hnutí na hornickém severu* (The Beginnings of the Labour Movement in the Mining North), Prague 1967, p. 294.

53 Ludwig Kulczycki, *Současný anarchismus*, pp. 190–191; Rudolf Rocker: *Johann Most, Das Leben eines Rebellen*, Berlin 1924.

54 Vladimír Dubský/Vlastimila Křepeláková/Vladimír Suchopár: *Přehled dějin dělnického hnutí do roku 1917* (Survey of the Czech Labour movement until 1917), Prague 1982, pp. 184–185.

55 *Věk svobody* (Age of Freedom), 13 November 1886.

slightly new name *Nový věk svobody* [New Age of Freedom], but under the same editor) published a fierce criticism of social democratic leaders, who were perceived as behaving the same way as capitalists and suppressing the free will of workers.<sup>56</sup> A contemporary observer, August Krčál, commented that, with the knowledge improvement among the movement's participants, the distinction was made between terror and "pure ideals of anarchy".<sup>57</sup>

The creation of a centralised Social Democratic Party generated opposition particularly from those who did not want to be squeezed into the narrow framework of party discipline or were opposed to the authoritative behaviour of the party leaders. Among the diversity of emerging opposition groups were the ones who called themselves "Independent Socialists". At the beginning, these Independents did not have any ideological platform, but they were slowly moving towards anarchism.<sup>58</sup> The impulses for this shift again came from Vienna: the journal *Volksprese* (People's Press), edited by Adolf Heimann and Rudolf Hanser, criticised the centralised leadership of Social Democrats, especially the journal *Arbeitszeitung* (Work Newspaper).<sup>59</sup> Körber was expelled from the Social Democratic Party and subsequently reintroduced his radical paper, *Nový věk svobody* (New Age of Freedom), with Heimann's support. Körber was travelling around North Bohemia at that time, agitating the workers and responding to their radical affinities.<sup>60</sup> The Independents tried to appeal to as many workers as possible with the aim to erode the Social Democratic Party. Körber wrote in his article *To the Organisation*: "dissatisfaction with the official party, as it is calling itself, has been growing for a long time. Now it has burst out into reality [...] and thus our tactics have to be federalist and not centralist."<sup>61</sup>

After the congress of the Independents, the movement received a further stimulus with the new leadership represented by the older anarchist activists Johann Rissman and August Krčál. Their manifesto, published on 28 August 1892 in the newspaper of the Independents, *Zukunft* (Future), was inspired by the writings of Kropotkin and Pierre Joseph Proudhon. Compared to the previous approach formulated by Johann Most, they

56 *Nový věk svobody* (New Age of Freedom), 1 November 1893.

57 August Krčál: *K dějinám dělnického hnutí v Rakousku 1867–1894* (To the History of the Labour Movement in Austria 1867–1894), Liberec 1894, p. 81.

58 Václav Štěpán: *Český anarchismus od začátku 90.let 19.století do roku 1914* (Czech Anarchism from the beginning of 90s of the 19th century till 1914), Dissertation, Prague 1966, pp. 12–13.

59 Vratislav Čapek: *Dějiny českého a rakouského anarchistického hnutí v 80. a 90.letech 19.století*, p. 55.

60 Jan Měchýř: *Počátky dělnického hnutí na hornickém severu*, p. 12; Vratislav Čapek: *Dějiny českého a rakouského anarchistického hnutí v 80. a 90.letech 19.století*, pp. 56–57.

61 *Nový věk svobody*, 31 March 1892.

rejected terror and announced themselves part of a new anarchy that would be based on ethics.<sup>62</sup> In 1892 and 1893, the individual centres of anarchism played a formative role in shaping the common future of the Czech anarchist movement. Between 1894 and 1897, these efforts culminated in the organisation of a great number of common activities, including the Labour Day celebrations on 1 May 1896, which involved several groups of the movement, but not the Social Democrats. The greatest event was the miners' strike in North Bohemia in 1896. Anarchists led the strike, while social democratic leaders agitated against it. The strike was defeated in two weeks, and the resentments towards the Social Democratic Party intensified.<sup>63</sup>

The upswing of the anarchist movement in the middle of the 1890s was also marked by the foundation of several newspapers and journals. Besides the abovementioned *Omladina* (Youth) and *Nový věk svobody* (New Age of Freedom) as well as the previously established Viennese *Volné listy* (Free Papers) and *Volný duch* (Free Spirit), in 1895 *Pokrok* (Progress), *Proletář* (Proletariat) with the supplement *Karabáč* (Lash), *Volnost* (Freedom) and *Matice dělnická* (Workers' Matrix), were published. At the beginning of 1897, moreover, four issues of Alois Haber's and Antonín Kalina's *Nový kult* (New Cult) were published. On the one hand, one could therefore argue that the anarchist movement had consolidated its strength, whereas, on the other hand, one should also recognise that it still remained relatively decentralised and scattered. The workers from the mines and the textile workshops, especially the miners from the North, then started to cooperate with the members of a youth movement called *Pokrokové* (Progressive), whose views were represented by the journal *Omladina*. The progressive movement of the 1890s was heterogeneous and served as an umbrella for various groupings of young students and young workers. Nevertheless, the anarchists, with their negative attitude towards strict organisation and subordination, have never been able to concentrate their forces on continuous activities.<sup>64</sup>

Representatives of the anarchist movement met at the first anarchist conference on 5 April 1896 in Hnidousy, a village close to the mining centre of Kladno, not far from Prague. The resulting manifesto claimed the anarchist movement to be independent from the Social Democrats, and it rejected the strategy of gaining political rights on the basis of legal methods without the simultaneous achievement of economic rights. The anarchists feared the establishment of a socialist state, which would replace the capitalist state and threaten the individual rights of the people. Their manifesto promoted the education of workers to prevent their abuse by leaders and dependence on authority. The anarchists, furthermore, expressed their opposition to private ownership and their

62 Vratislav Čapek: *Dějiny českého a rakouského anarchistického hnutí v 80. a 90. letech 19. století.*, p. 69.

63 Václav Štěpán: *Český anarchismus od začátku 90. let 19. století do roku 1914.*, p. 34.

64 *ibid.*, p. 35.

support for workers' associations. Last but not least, the manifesto distanced itself from individual terror and privileges based on nationality, ethnicity, religion or sex.<sup>65</sup>

The anarchist manifesto of 1896 signalled the shift from the Most's teachings to Kropotkin's conceptions of anarcho-communism, emphasising the freedom of individuals and the cooperation of individuals. Shortly thereafter, the *Omladina* youth movement began to actively support the anarchists. The Social Democratic Party had frustrated the young workers and students, who felt it was time to set up their own organisations. This young movement centred on the journal *Omladina*, which started to quote Kropotkin and publish his essays, and which also supported the actions organised by Körber.<sup>66</sup> František Lorenc and Stanislav Neumann, who was nicknamed the Anarchist Apostle, represented the young generation. Lorenc then translated some of Kropotkin's writings for the journal.<sup>67</sup> The *Omladina* movement was going through a complicated development process in the early 1890s, with splits and merges of different groups. At their congress on 17 September 1893 in Horní Litvínov, a mining town in North Bohemia, a new federalist programme was adopted and the members announced their new common name: *Neodvislí* (The Independents). This movement would become one of the major streams in Czech anarchism.<sup>68</sup>

Another substantial group of Czech workers inclining towards anarchism acted in Vienna and centred on the journal *Volné listy* (Free Papers). After the disclosure of its conspiracy actions, several leaders of this group were imprisoned. Amongst those sent to prison was František Modráček, who had tried to merge the *Omladina* movement with a Viennese terrorist group. In 1894, the government organised a trial against *Omladina*: 68 young people were sent to prison, including the poet and writer Neumann, Alois Rašín, who would later become the first Minister of Finance after the First World War, and František Modráček, who would turn into a centre-right Social Democrat.<sup>69</sup> In 1896, when the anarchist manifesto was published in the Czech lands, there were three major streams on the platform of anarchism:

1. The Independents, who can be described as a more radical group of workers, who split from the Social Democratic Party and were led by Vilém Körber (1844–1899);

65 *Volný duch* (Free Spirit), 28 August 1896.

66 Stanislav K. Neumann: *Vzpomínky* (Memoirs), Prague 1946; Stanislav K. Neumann: *Politická epizoda* (Political Episode), Prague 1911.

67 *Omladina*, 6 August 1892.

68 Antonín P. Veselý: *Omladina*, Prague 1905, pp. 17–18.

69 Antonín Čížek, Alois Hajn: *Proces s tak zvanou "Omladinou"* (The Trial of the so-called *Omladina*), Kolín 1894; František Modráček's granddaughter Petra Buzková (1965) was one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party in the Czech Republic after 1989 and later the Minister of Education.

2. The Progressive movement of the 1990s, which was represented by young students and workers centring upon the journal *Omladina* (which was used also as the name for the movement) who would later call themselves also Independents;<sup>70</sup>
3. And the Viennese Czech associations of workers with anarchist inclinations that were represented by the journal *Volné listy*.

The authors of the anarchist manifesto and publishers of the individualistic journal *Volný duch* (Free Spirit), Alois Haber and Antonín Kalina, also initiated the anarchist movement in Prague. Their articles read like this: “[...] enthusiastic speeches by Bakunin, Kropotkin or for instance Mazzini, Garibaldi, Kosuth and others, will be read and listened to in the future, rather than the dry scientific reasoning of Marx, Engels, Levey and Rodbert.”<sup>71</sup>

From 1894 on, *Moderní revue* (Modern Revue), a new journal of very high artistic quality, was issued in Prague. With its anti-authoritarian spirit and defending the ideal of the free individual, it corresponded to individualistic anarchism.<sup>72</sup> The Czech anarchism of the 1890s was dominated by Kropotkin’s ideas and his rejection of individual terror as an instrument. In 1898, *Omladina* published many Kropotkin’s most crucial writings.<sup>73</sup> At the turn of the century it became apparent that the changing self-awareness of Czech anarchists was influenced by several thinkers and reflected a range of different opinions over time. Neumann then wrote that “the person who needs theoretical justification and moral encouragement for his social optimism can find it only in the solemn logic of [Jean] Grave, in the gentle humanism of Kropotkin, in the clear wisdom of [Élisée] Reclus, in the non-acquisitive braveness of heroes”.<sup>74</sup>

If in the 1880s the main hero of Czech anarchism was Johann Most, in the 1890s and at the beginning of the 20th century it was Kropotkin. His ideals were closely followed by the Czech anarchists’ vision of a just society: “we, the ones who believe that it would be against every human development if the capitalist python wins, hope that the days

70 Martin Kučera: Kulturně politická aktivita pokrokařského hnutí (Cultural political activity of Progressive movement), in: Český časopis historický (Czech Historical Review), 92, 1994, č.1, pp. 63–76.

71 Volný duch (Free Spirit), 5 May 1895.

72 František Buriánek: Generace buřičů, Básníci z počátku 20.století (The Generation of Rebels, Poets from the beginning of the 20th century), Prague 1968, pp. 30–33; Jan Měchýř: Neodvislí socialisté v českém dělnickém hnutí na počátku 90.let 19.století (Czech Independent Socialists in Czech Labour Movement in 90s of 19th century), in: Československý časopis historický (Czechoslovak Historical Review), 2, 1965, pp. 180–201, p. 192.

73 Lenka Rovná: P. A. Kropotkin a jeho vliv na české anarchistické, p. 162.

74 Omladina, 29 August 1900; Stanislav K. Neumann: Politická epizoda (Political Episode), Prague 1911, p. 83.

of bright socialism, as predicted by Kropotkin, will come.” And he continued: “we hope that a truly free and educated individual will create an ideal society.”<sup>75</sup> The Czech anarchists were convinced that education and general freedom would be the best means to achieve their goals.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, Kropotkin’s theories and writings aimed at the creation of a more scientific type of teaching. His books were translated and published not only by the anarchist press. They attracted a wide circle of readers, so that Kropotkin’s new anarcho-communist model gained followers also from other branches of the heterogeneous labour movement in the Czech lands.<sup>77</sup>

The journal *Horník* (Miner), which was distributed for the readership of independent miners who at the turn of the century were moving from the representation of trade union interests to the ideology of anarchism, published an article in 1901 that characterised Kropotkin in the following way:

A man of humble and ordinary bonhomie, with a face shining with great kindness; he is a keen teacher, exceedingly happy when he speaks to his disciples who trust him, because he is also fostering confidence in their development, which is supposed to bring humankind the realisation of the ideal world, where work will be a joy and happiness of life [...].<sup>78</sup>

Kropotkin’s significance was also emphasised in the *Anarchist Revue*, again alongside the importance of Reclus and Grave: “the unclear desires of radicals and independent socialists had to be embraced by Kropotkin, Reclus and Grave, in order to turn them into trustworthy thoughts for intelligent people, and for the lucid sail of anarchism to appear on the dark horizon.”<sup>79</sup> Neumann described his own path towards anarchism as based on the influence of Kropotkin’s memoirs, and he himself would become the most zealous propagator and translator of Kropotkin.<sup>80</sup>

Kropotkin’s anarcho-communism, which accentuated the necessity to abolish the state and collaborate in the field of economic struggles, helped to forge unity as it turned the attention of its followers to programmatic tasks and concrete activities: patiently educating the masses, gradually preparing for the end of capitalism, and progressively

75 Stanislav K. Neumann: *Vzpomínky* (Memoirs), p. 68.

76 Karel Vohryzek: *Abeceda anarchismu* (Alphabet of Anarchism), Lom 1899, p. 16.

77 *Neodvislost* (Independence), 1 January 1893.

78 *Horník* (Miner), 25 April 1901.

79 Journal title translated by the author: *Dělníci a intelektuelní* (Workers and Intellectuals), in: *Anarchistická revue* (Anarchist Revue) 1:1 (1905).

80 Stanislav K. Neumann: *Vzpomínky* (Memoirs), p. 84.

creating the basis for political organisation.<sup>81</sup> While not all Czech anarchists had as much patience as Kropotkin demanded, and Vilém Körber and Karel Vohryzek attacked each other in the anarchist press in dispute over the question of individualism, the anarchists' conference of May 1898 in north-eastern Bohemia brought a compromise to Czech anarchism: individualism was marked as the philosophical – and communism as the economic side of anarchy.<sup>82</sup>

The assassination of Elizabeth, the wife of the Austro-Hungarian emperor Franz Josef, by the Italian anarchist Luigi Lucchini in Geneva in 1898, caused further oppression from above.<sup>83</sup> The movement in Vienna was affected first, and Jan Opletal, the editor of *Matice dělnická* (Matrix of Workers), expelled to Pilsen. Also the anarchist associations in the Czech lands were subject to persecution, but they continued to exist, pursuing a process of ideological unification and closer organisational structure. In January and February 1899, two conferences were held in the mining centres of Duchcov and Most.<sup>84</sup> The organisation of anarchist conferences, however, still proved difficult as the movement remained fractured. It had only few official representatives and was short of financial means. The anarchist journals hence continued to play the major role in unifying the movement, even though their existence was often short-lived due to their lack of funding and constant personal quarrels.

The Czech anarchists had great expectations about the organisation of the anarchist congress, which their delegates were meant to attend, parallel to the fifth congress of the Second International on the occasion of the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1900. Both the suppression of the potential delegates in the Czech lands as well as of the potential congress in France did not allow for this desired encounter, which some Czech anarchists had envisaged to reunite the divided parts of their movement and to provide an important impulse for future activities. Even though the Austrian police did not significantly undermine the general preparation for the congress, several anarchist leaders were imprisoned beforehand. Among them was also Körber, who died after his release. Five thousand workers participated in his funeral in order to bid farewell to the leader, and to the 19th century.<sup>85</sup>

81 Renata Wohlgemuthová: Příspěvek k dějinám českého anarchistického hnutí v letech 1900–1914 (A Contribution to the History of the Czech Anarchist Movement in 1900–1914), Prague 1971, p. 10.

82 Karel Vohryzek: O hnutí (About the Movement), in: Omladina, 25 August 1898.

83 Jan Galandauer/Miroslav Honzík: Osud trůnu habsburského (The Fate of the Habsburg's Throne), Prague 1983.

84 Renata Wohlgemuthová: Příspěvek k dějinám českého anarchistického hnutí (A Contribution to the History of the Czech Anarchist Movement), p. 11.

85 Vratislav Čapek: Dějiny českého a rakouského anarchistického hnutí v 80. a 90. letech 19. století., p. 150; Václav Štěpán: Český anarchismus od začátku 90.let 19.století do roku 1914.,

The 20th century was entered by a modern Czech society, which comprised a wide spectrum of political parties and movements. The persecutions of anarchists then encouraged them to rethink the ideological orientation of their movement, from which two main centres further evolved: Prague, where mainly connected with Neumann and other intellectuals as well as with his journal *Nový kult* (New Cult), and North Bohemia, where the miners were trying to establish an independent organisation based on trade unions and neo-corporatism. The miners' strike in January 1900, when 65,000 miners stopped working for eight weeks demanding an eight-hour workday and higher wages, marked a turning point. The strike was eventually defeated, but it helped the miners learn their lesson and understand the importance of organisation.<sup>86</sup> If the anarchist movement wanted to survive, it had to be organised.<sup>87</sup> This was also the message of the conference held in Duchcov, North Bohemia, on 2 September 1900, where Neumann, Vohryzek and Antonín Bouček represented the Prague faction. The resulting agenda was the formation of politically independent organisations.<sup>88</sup>

Subsequently, the anarchist movement in North Bohemia split again: the representatives of the autonomous federative unions around the *Horník* lost interest in both the original programme and ideology of the movement, and began to concentrate on more practical aims. They were heading towards anarcho-syndicalism. František Hajšman and Hynek Holub, who both sought to protect anarchism's ideological purity and were inspired by the Prague faction, represented the second major group. However, their journal, *Duch českého severu* (The Spirit of the Czech North), did not attract many followers.<sup>89</sup>

The anarchists in Prague were following the development in North Bohemia with apprehension. The Prague faction, moreover, was also divided in itself: the leaders of the workers' associations complied with *Omladina*, Vohryzek and Čeněk Körber (1897–1951, Vilém Körber's son); whereas Neumann's editorial office of *Nový kult* pooled intellectuals, mainly writers.<sup>90</sup> The young generation of poets and writers who were devoted to the ideals of freedom and social justice in their anarchist ideology sought to abandon decadence and exclusiveness, and to turn towards "real life". Neumann, who wished to offer a "hospitable shelter for all young talents", published essays, studies, polemics, cri-

pp. 70–71; Renata Wohlgemuthová: Příspěvek k dějinám českého anarchistického hnutí, p. 14.

86 Jan Havránek: Hornická stávka roku 1900 v Severočeském hnědohelném revíru (The Miners' Strike in 1900 in the North Bohemian Brown Coal Ground), Prague 1953.

87 Renata Wohlgemuthová: Příspěvek k dějinám českého anarchistického hnutí, p. 18.

88 Horník (Miner), 13 September 1900.

89 Renata Wohlgemuthová: Příspěvek k dějinám českého anarchistického hnutí, pp. 20–22.

90 Fráňa Šrámek: Umění a lid (Art and People), in: Omladina, 30 March 1905.

tiques, stories, poems and political commentaries.<sup>91</sup> The most popular authors remained Kropotkin and Grave.<sup>92</sup> Besides Neumann, there were many other outstanding Czech personalities, who were influenced by anarchism at that time.<sup>93</sup> (For example František Gellner, Fráňa Šrámek, Karel Toman, Jiří Mahen, Rudolf Těsnohlídek, Josef Mach and Leo Freimuth; to some extent also Marie Majerová, Helena Malířová and Viktor Dyk, to name but a few.) Thanks to their participation in the movement they developed a sense of collective solidarity with the common people of the Czech lands.

This new current in the Czech anarchist movement led to the establishment of three organisations:

1. *The North Bohemian Federation of Miners* with 705 members was founded in September 1903 and united trade union associations in Most, Duchcov, Teplice and the surroundings. The Federation was headed by František Hajšman and took over the journal *Omladina*;<sup>94</sup>
2. *The Czech Federation of All Unions* was founded in November 1904 and its thousand members came mostly from the north, including Červený Kostelec, Dvůr Králové, Liberec and their surroundings. Due to the popularity of its chairperson, Karel Vohryzek, many members from the North Bohemian Federation of Miners changed to the Czech Federation of All Unions. Vohryzek assumed the respected journal *Omladina*. Only a small group in Duchcov, headed by Josef Hajšman and Čeněk Körber, did not join and began publishing the journal *Bezvládí* (Government Vacuum). As the document from the founding congress of the Czech Federation of All Unions in December 1904 stated, federative autonomy became the organisational framework.<sup>95</sup>
3. *The Czech Anarchist Federation* was founded in Prague on Christmas 1904. Groups from Prague, North Bohemia, Hořice, Mladá Boleslav and surroundings claimed themselves to be followers of Kropotkin.<sup>96</sup>

91 František Buriánek: *Česká literatura 1. poloviny XX. století* (Czech Literature of the 1st half of the XXth century), Prague, 1981, pp. 77–80; František Buriánek: *Generace buřičů* (The Generation of Rebels), Prague 1968.

92 Nový kult, 2 November 1901; Jitka Pražáková: *České anarchistické časopisy* (Czech Anarchist Journals), Dipl, Prague 1961; Eva Strohsová: *Cesta S. K. Neumanna ke komunistické straně* (The Road of S. K. Neumann towards the Communist Party), Prague 1954.

93 František Buriánek: *Generace buřičů*, p. 98–99.

94 Jan Měchýř: *Hornický sever s komunisty* (The Mining North with the Communists), p. 15.

95 *Omladina*, 1 December 1904.

96 Stanislav K. Neumann: *Kalendář neodvislého dělnictva na rok 1900* (Calendar of Independent Workers for 1900), Prague 1900, p. 2); *Omladina*, 20 October 1904.

The years from 1904 to 1908 were a very hectic period in the history of Czech anarchism. There were three organisations representing two directions in anarchism: anarcho-syndicalism and Kropotkin's anarcho-communism. The existence of 20 titles of anarchist papers serves as evidence for the movements' multiple activities.<sup>97</sup> The rise of the anarchist movement during that period, however, was again weakened by the disputes among its leaders and culminated in the proclamation of the Czech Federation of All Unions to give up political work and be neutral. This, in fact, meant abandoning the anarchist doctrine. The police persecution of (former) anarchists in 1908, finally resulted in the dissolution of the Federation and the disintegration of the movement into small scattered groups.<sup>98</sup>

The militarisation of the Czech society caused the rise of an antimilitarist and pacifist movement, which was joined by some anarchists. Especially the young people supported antimilitarism. A number of anarchist students, led by Vlastimil Borek, Sláva Herlas and Stanislav Kupr, then published a new journal *Mladý průkopník* (Young Pioneer). The whole editing board of this journal was sentenced to prison by the Habsburg authorities in 1911.<sup>99</sup> The anarchist writers Fráňa Šrámek and František Gellner played the most important role in the antimilitarist movement. After the First World War, moreover, the world-renowned book by the anarchist Jaroslav Hašek, *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka* (The Good Soldier Švejk), was published.

Next to their involvement in the antimilitarist movement, the Czech anarchists inspired by Kropotkin participated in anticlerical activities.<sup>100</sup> The relationship between workers and farmers was also an important theme in the anarchist journals. Vohryzek, for example, published a whole series of articles, entitled *Production Cooperatives of Farmers*, arguing that farmers should organise together with workers.<sup>101</sup> His ideas were inspired by Kropotkin's writings *Fields, Factories and Workshops* and *Affluence for All*.<sup>102</sup>

It is interesting to note that some anarchists also cooperated with the youth of the National Socialist Party, which was represented by the journal *Nové proudy* (New Streams). The formation of the National Socialist Party in 1897 had been greatly sup-

97 These included *Nový kult* (New Cult), *Matice svobody* (Matice of Freedom), *Hornické listy* (Papers of Miners), *Práce* (Labour), *Proletář* (Proletarian), *Omladina* (Youth), and later *Nová Omladina* (New Omladina), *Komuna* (Commune), Neumann's *Anarchistická Revue*, the satiric journal *Šibeničky* (Small Gallows), the propagandist paper *Chudás* (The Pauper) and the journal for children edited by Michael Kácha *Klíčení* (Germination); see Václav Štěpán *Český anarchismus od začátku 90.let 19.století do roku 1914*, pp. 107–108.

98 Jiří Tůma: Bohuslav Vrbenský, Ústí nad Labem 1980, pp. 17–18.

99 Jan Beránek: *Rakouský militarismus a boj proti němu v Čechách* (Austrian Militarism and the Struggle against it), Prague 1955, p. 133.

100 Peter Kropotkin: *Anarchistická morálka* (Anarchist Morality), Prague 1919, p. 30.

101 *Omladina*, 13 August 1903.

102 *Omladina*, 3 March 1904.

ported by workers who stressed national question against internationalism, then the Social Democratic Party's preference. The dichotomy of the two streams – national and international – ultimately brought the guiding organisational framework to the divided Czech labour movement of the early 20th century.

Bohuslav Vrbenský, a studious theoretician to whom Kropotkin's anarchism served as an intellectual base, then transpired as a leader of the movement.<sup>103</sup> He prepared a programme for the creation of the Czech Anarchist Federation. Michael Kácha, who fundamentally disagreed with Vrbenský's organisational plans for the movement, represented the opposition to important details of the proposed programme. He accused it of being in denial of the anarchist principles and decided to propose an own one. Consequently, a dispute between realist and fundamentalist approaches flamed up. Both proposals, involving complex theoretical reflections and movement agendas, were forwarded to a number of different anarchist groups for discussion,<sup>104</sup> before the Congress of the Czech Anarchist Federation met for the first time during the Easter holidays in 1914. Vrbenský argued that the anarchists already were a party with a programme dealing with important problems, including trade unions, national questions, culture and economics. His main argument was that they were more than a theoretical or moral movement, but rather a political party with clear goals and strategies.<sup>105</sup> Michael Kácha protested against Vrbenský's proposal and rejected the creation of a political party for principal reasons. For him an "anarchist political party" was an oxymoron.<sup>106</sup> After a very heated discussion about both draft programmes, Vrbenský's proposal was approved with very minor opposition.<sup>107</sup>

The argument between Vrbenský and Kácha took place during the heyday of the theoretical debates in Czech anarchism, and it further energised the movement. Many letters of Czech anarchists that testify their intellectual potential, desires, believes and hopes have been preserved in the archives.<sup>108</sup> The Easter Congress did not adopt the party name initially recommended by Vrbenský, but the title was taken as the basis for what would be called the Federation of Czech Anarchist Communists. Several anarchist

103 Jiří Tůma: Bohuslav Vrbenský, p. 20.

104 Renata Wohlgemuthová: Příspěvek k dějinám českého anarchistického hnutí (A Contribution to the History of the Czech Anarchist Movement), p. 61.

105 The Draft of a Programme for the Establishment of the Party of Czech Anarchist Communists prepared by Vrbenský for the Congress of the Czech Anarchist Federation in April 1914, A ÚML ÚV KSČ 67/4.

106 The Protest against the Draft of Dr. Vrbenský on the Establishment of the Czech Anarchist Communist Party prepared by M. Kácha, A ÚML ÚV KSČ 67/4.

107 Minutes from the Congress of the Czech Anarchist Federation, Archive of the Institute of Marxism Leninism, Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, A ÚML ÚV KSČ 67/4.

108 A ÚML ÚV KSČ 67/4.

conferences were held during the summer of 1914 in the Czech lands. The elections of the delegates to the World Anarchist Congress in London had to be organised organised.<sup>109</sup> The First World War, hitherto the most fatal military conflict the world had ever witnessed, interrupted this anarchist revival.

The prevalence of the antimilitary movement and the oppressive reactions from the Austrian officials, including the banning of the anarchist press, contributed to the dissolution of the Federation of Czech Anarchist Communists, as several movement members would later report. Bohuslav Vrbenský, Vlastimil Borek, František Bartošek, Michael Kácha, Čeněk Körber and others were imprisoned immediately after the outbreak of the war. Many anarchist workers, especially those who had committed sabotage, were dragged in chains to do their frontline duty. Václav Draxl, for example, was sent to prison for 10 years at Terezín fortress alongside other anarchists. After the death of Emperor Franz Joseph I in November 1916, they were amnestied, which did not necessarily mean that they were then able to freely choose where to go, as they were often sent to dangerous places and forced to serve under dreadful conditions.<sup>110</sup>

The situation during the First World War proved, once more, that the anarchists' success was dependent on their organisation. In the newly established Czechoslovakian state, they attempted to closely cooperate and better coordinate their activities with other radical streams and groupings to overcome their isolation. There was, for example, a long antimilitary cooperation with the National Socialist youth proven during the war.<sup>111</sup> As the anarchist press reported, the National Socialists still wanted to win over the miners in North Bohemia and textile workers in the northeast, while the anarchists aimed "to step out of the shadows of hopeless circles, with their conspirative aftertaste, and walk into the bright forum of the Czech public".<sup>112</sup> At the Eighth Congress of the National Socialists, from 30 March until 1 April 1918, the National Socialist Party and smaller parties, like the Federation of Czech Anarcho-Communists, the Czech Democratic Party and parts of Tomáš Garigue Masaryk's Realist Party, merged to form the Czech Socialist Party, as it was called. The radical programme of the new party aimed at the end of workers' exploitation.

109 Renata Wohlgemuthová: *Příspěvek k dějinám českého anarchistického hnutí* (A Contribution to the History of the Czech Anarchist Movement), p. 69.

110 *Nezávislá socialistická strana dělnická v Československu, Dokument o dějinách jejího vývoje* (The Independent Socialist Workers Party in Czechoslovakia, A Document about the History of their Development), in: *Příspěvky k dějinám KSČ* (Contributions to the History of the Czechoslovak Communist Party) 4 (1966), p. 557.

111 Jan Měchýř: *Hornický sever s komunisty* (The Mining North with the Communists), Liberec 1975, pp. 51–52; Jurij Křížek: *Vznik Československa* (The Foundation of Czechoslovakia), Prague 1978, pp. 57–58.

112 Červen (June), 3 March 1919.

The requests of the anarchists concerning the party programme were met, as state socialism and the socialisation of production were rejected.<sup>113</sup> Despite the organisational merger, however, the anarchists wanted to stay ideologically independent. Their representatives occupied only two important positions in the first Czechoslovak government under Prime Minister Karel Kramář: Vrbenský served as Minister of Supply; Neumann worked first as member of the National Council, and later in the Lower House of the Parliamentary National Assembly.<sup>114</sup> The publications of the journal *Červen* (June) suggested that the Czech anarchists remained relatively independent. The journal was founded and inspired by Neumann and became the intellectual platform for a number of young Czech artists, writers, poets and painters under the influence of anarchist socialism.<sup>115</sup> The pages of *Červen* were filled with articles by anarchist theorists, most of all Kropotkin. His contributions could be found in each issue.

On 1 and 2 February 1919, one year after the formation of the Czech Socialist Party, the anarchist leaders met at the independent anarchist congress. 34 delegates attended, representing 4,600 supporters.<sup>116</sup> The alliance with the National Socialists proved difficult. The delegates quoted Kropotkin many times; especially a journalist, the feminist Luisa Landová-Štychová, introduced his ideas to the congress.<sup>117</sup> Vrbenský defended the participation of anarchists in state structures. He argued that, after all, also the programme of the National Socialist Party was anarchist and the only future revolution would be the revolution of labour.<sup>118</sup> The two committed anarchists Neumann and Jaroslav Štych (scientist and husband of Landová-Štychová) expressed their general aversion to state authority, but at the same time supported the young Czechoslovak state.<sup>119</sup> *Červen* became “the weekly for radical streams and cultural politics”. The journal turned into a forum for anarchist contributions of high intellectual quality, publishing essays by Kropotkin and the Czech authors Neumann, Vrbenský, Landová-Štychová, Fráňa

- 113 Jiří Tůma: Na cestě ke komunistické straně (On the Road towards the Communist Party), Liberec 1975, pp. 16–17.
- 114 Jiří Tůma: Bohuslav Vrbenský, pp. 40–41.
- 115 Jaromír Lang: Neumannův Červen (Neumann's June), Prague 1974, pp. 61–64.
- 116 Jiří Tůma: Na cestě ke komunistické straně (On the Road towards the Communist Party), p. 24.
- 117 Zápis ze sjezdu Federace českých anarchistů, konaný 2.2.1919 (Minutes from the Congress of Czech Anarchists, held 2 February 1919), rukopisný záznam (manuscript), A ÚML ÚV KSČ, 67/5.
- 118 Zápis ze sjezdu Federace českých anarchistů, konaný 2.2.1919 A ÚML ÚV KSČ, 67/5.
- 119 Usnesení sjezdu FČAK o sloučení s Čsl. stranou národně socialistickou a zásady sloučení ze dne 2.2.1919 (The Resolution of the congress of FČAK about the unification with the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party and the principles of the unification from 2 February 1919), A ÚML ÚV KSČ 67/5.

Šrámek, Helena Malířová, Vlastimil Borek, Antonín Bouček, Emil Vojtauer, and Hugo Sonnenstein, as well as anarchists from around the world.<sup>120</sup>

The left wing of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party was formed by a group under the anarchist leadership of Vrbenský, Borek and Draxl. A smaller but ideologically compact group was organised by Neumann, who had begun to flirt with Bolshevik Russia. Kropotkin himself did not reject the socialist revolution, even though he expressed reservations against Lenin.<sup>121</sup> In his article, *Anarchists and the 3rd International*, Neumann explained why anarchists, who had initially rejected Marxism, started to respect it and abandon their petty bourgeois and romantic past.<sup>122</sup> The meetings of Neumann's group in the North Bohemian town Lom, on 30 April and 13 May 1920, resulted in the publication of a proclamation to the North Bohemian proletariat that called for the unification of left socialists in the communist party.<sup>123</sup> Neumann's faction of former anarchists then formed the Union of Communist Groups. The poet Sonnenschein and the writer Malířová represented the Union at the Second Congress of the Communist International in Moscow.<sup>124</sup> Sonnenschein and Malířová still succeeded in visiting Kropotkin before his death in the following year. Kropotkin welcomed the foundation of a democratic state, but he expected the revolution against capitalism to follow.<sup>125</sup>

The left wing of Czech anarchists joined the Czechoslovak Communist Party after its establishment in May 1921. The last issue of *Červen* was published on 8 December 1921. Neumann declared that the era of individual journals was over and the time for collective action had come; what was needed in Czechoslovakia was a journal of proletarian culture.<sup>126</sup> The moderate group of anarchists represented by Vrbenský still enjoyed the support of North Bohemian miners, textile workers from the northeast, the anticlerical forces represented by *Volná Myšlenka* (Free Idea) and Theodor Bartošek, and parts of the workers' and students' youth. They formed the left wing of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party. As the party was shifting towards the centre, the anarchists were becoming increasingly unwanted. In response to their refusal to vote for the Law for the Protection of the Republic in 1923, they were eventually excluded from the party and founded the Inde-

120 Jaromír Lang: Neumannův *Červen*, p. 72.

121 Jiří Tůma: *Na cestě ke komunistické straně* (On the Road to the Communist Party), p. 36–39.

122 *Červen*, 21 April 1920.

123 *Červen*, 13 May 1920; Jiří Tůma: *Na cestě ke komunistické straně* (On the Road to the Communist Party), pp. 50–51.

124 The III. International, also called Communist International, was founded in 1919 in Moscow under the auspices of V.I. Lenin. It gathered national communist parties under the influence of the Soviet Communist Party.

125 *Červen*, 11 November 1920.

126 *Červen*, 8 December 1921; Jaromír Lang: Neumannův *Červen*, pp. 301–310.

pendent Czechoslovak Socialist Party, under the leadership of Vrbenský.<sup>127</sup> This partly cooperated closely with the newly founded Independent Social Democratic Party, led by the Members of Parliament Vilém Brodecký, Robert Klein and Vincenc Charvát.<sup>128</sup> Together they formed the Socialist Union.<sup>129</sup> The unifying congress met in Prague on 28 and 29 June 1924. The Independent Social Democrats participated only during its preparation and later rejoined the Social Democratic Party.<sup>130</sup> In 1925, the Second Congress of the Independent Czechoslovak Socialist Party under Vrbenský confirmed the merger with the Communist Party, which concluded an era of Czech anarchism.<sup>131</sup>

## Conclusion

During the history of the Czech labour movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, anarchism influenced the movement's fringes to different degrees. Anarchism's journey through the history of the Czech labour movement can be divided into several stages:

First, the division of the Czech labour movement between moderates and radicals characterised the 1880s. Some of the radicals were influenced by the tactics of individual terror, which were introduced by the Austrian anarchist Johann Most. These radicals formed the platform of Czech anarchism. This group remained active within the framework of the Social Democratic Party, even though it was directed against the leadership and ideology of the party.

Second, the 1890s marked the organisational split of the anarchist groups from the Social Democrats. The Czech anarchists then abandoned Most's individualist anarchism, adopted the ideology of Kropotkin's anarcho-communism, and called themselves Independent Socialists. Kropotkin's impact on the movement was particularly strong during this period.

Third, at the beginning of the 20th century, Czech anarchists promoted Kropotkin's collectivist idea to drop free associations and to form large organisations. The ideological

127 Jiří Tůma: Bohuslav Vrbenský, p. 81.

128 In 1921 the Social Democratic Party split, two thirds of members formed the Czechoslovak Communist Party under the influence of the III. International, a centrist minority preserved the Social Democratic Party and a small group of leftists formed the Independent Social Democratic Party.

129 Renata Wohlgemuthová: Cesta anarchokomunistické skupiny B. Vrbenského ke KSČ (The Road of the anarcho-communist Group of B. Vrbenský to the Czechoslovak Communist Party), in: Československý časopis historický (Czechoslovak Historical Review), Issue 5, Prague, (1961), pp. 495–514; p. 508.

130 Ustavující sjezd – sjezdové materiály Socialistické sjednocení, 28.–29.6.1924 (Constituent Congress – congress materials of the Socialist Unification), A ÚML ÚV KSČ 51/30.

131 Jiří Tůma: Na cestě ke komunistické straně (On the Road to the Communist Party), pp. 135–136.

background of these organisations depended on their particular needs and orientation; the miners in North Bohemia formed the Czech Federation of all Unions and supported economic theories, which eventually led them to the positions of non-doctrinal anarcho-syndicalism. The anarcho-communism of the Prague centre was popular mainly among intellectual and literary circles, stressing the philosophical aspects of this ideology. In 1914, with the intensive theoretical discussions about the future of the movement, Czech anarchism experienced its heyday. Michael Kácha then defended Kropotkin's classic anarchism. Bohuslav Vrbenský's viewpoint, in contrast, was concentrated on the contemporary challenges for the movement and advocated the foundation of an anarcho-communist party. Vrbenský's succeeded, just before the unifying efforts were interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War.

Fourth, between 1918 and 1925, the Czech anarchists searched for their place within the labour movement. This led them first to the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, where they again were divided: the group around Neumann merged with the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The group represented by Vrbenský was expelled from the Socialist Party and formed the Independent Socialist Party before it also merged with the Communist Party. Kropotkin then helped Czech anarchists position themselves within the labour movement. The fact that he had not completely rejected the Bolshevik revolution played an important role and brought Czech anarchists to the Communist International.

It has thus become evident that anarchism represented a marginal stream in the Czech labour movement, and only narrow groups of workers in two industrial regions were influenced by it. In the Czech lands, anarchism did therefore not adopt any specific form on its own and was open to external influence from anarchist organisations in other countries.

After the fall of Communism in 1989, many anarchist groups of different backgrounds were formed in the Czech Republic, mainly among young people. The manifesto of the Anarcho-Communist Alternative states:

The common goal is to organise activities that will lead to the abolition of the capitalist system, which is not free, socially unjust and unsustainable. We are in favour of the replacement of capitalism by free, non-state and non-class societies of communal and productive self-governments and autonomous federations. Such a society we call anarchist communism.<sup>132</sup>

These words were based on Kropotkin's writings. Kropotkin has been respected by generations of Czech anarchists and served as a reference point for many contemporary

132 *Minimanifest kolektivu Anarchokomunistická Alternativa (Manifesto of the Anarcho-Communist Alternative)* from 18 August 2003, at: <http://aka.anarchokomunismus.org/?page=manifest> (accessed on 3 November 2013).

theoreticians and intellectuals. Kropotkin's vision of a society formed by free individuals in free communes and federations is still a source of inspiration, especially in the years after the last global financial crisis and the ongoing search for a sustainable solution.<sup>133</sup>

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133 Lee A. Dugatkin: *The Prince of Evolution: Peter Kropotkin's Adventures in Science and Politics*, Charleston 2011; See the introduction of the paper.

