VLAD BRĂTULEANU

A brief history of Anarchism in Romania

Pagini Libere is an anarchist editorial collective.

We are a decentralized, non-hierarchical, autonomous group. Our goal is to offer works and publications (including, but not limited to books, brochures, and fanzines) in the hope that they will inspire and disseminate alternative views and practices to those imposed by our current authoritarian capitalist system.

The libertarian-socialist tradition has always witnessed the unrestrained circulation of pamphlets, clandestine prints, and hastily edited materials. In the vein of this tradition, our materials can be used, adapted, or modified by whosoever desires, as long as they are not distributed commercially. We ask, whenever possible and in an unobtrusive manner, that those who use all or parts of our materials specify their origin.

Pagini Libere collective is aware of the ecological impact of physical books, so we remind you to:

Share

your books with your loved one, family or community.

Donate

the books you do not need anymore.

Don`t throw away

a book, however deteriorated.

Repair

Make time to repair a book and give it a chance to enlighten the minds of others.

Don`t buy what you don`t need

Don`t buy books just for decoration.
Buy only what really interests you.

pagini-libere.ro
facebook.com/editurapaginilibere
instagram.com/paginilibere
editurapaginilibere@protonmail.com

Already published:

45. *bell hooks* – Feminista politika
46. *bell hooks* – Megérteni a patriarchátust
47. *Carmen Gheorghe* – Fejünkbe húzzuk a szoknyáinkat a roma feminizmusért
48. *Carolina Vozian* – Könyv, kégli, kéreg, kuckó, kvártély
49. *CrtimethInc.* – Az én mint Másik. Reflexiók az öngondoskodásról
50. *David Graeber* – Te anarchista vagy? A válasz meglephet!
51. *Georgiana Aldessa Lincan* – A fehér privilégium felhasználása a társadalmi igazságosságért folytatott harcban
52. *Giorgio Agamben* – Az ellenőrző államtól a destituáló hatalom praxisáig
53. Határokon átívelő feminista manifesztum
54. *Két Düsznómia* – A személyes egyben politikai – javaslatok baloldali aktivista körökben alkalmazható jó gyakorlatokra
55. *Kimberlé Crenshaw* – Az interszekcionalitás sürgőssége
56. *Vincze Enikő* – Küzdelmek a társadalmi reprodukció terén világjárvány idején: Lakhatási igazságosság Romániában
57. *Murray Bookchin* – Libertárius municipalizmus
58. *Oana Dorobanțiu* – Szövetségesség és performativitás: mit jelent szövetségesnek lenni?
59. *The Ongoing Collective* – Anarchafeminista Manifesztum 1.0

III. In English

60. *Adina Marincea* – This is NOT a love story! LoveKills, punk and the first 20 years of anarcha-feminism in Romania
61. *Cosmin Koszor-Codrea* – Science popularization and Romanian anarchism in the nineteenth century
62. *Cristian-Dan Grecu* – Csipike – the Communist Pipsqueak
63. *M.E.K.A.N.* – Ecstasy in the time of cholera
64. *Vlad Brătuleanu* – A Brief History of Anarchism in Romania
65. Essential Strike Manifesto for the 8th of March / A nélkülözhetetlen sztrájk március 8-i manifesztuma / Manifestul grevei esențiale de 8 martie

IV. Other Languages

66. *M.E.K.A.N.* – Ekstase in Zeiten der Cholera
67. *Veda Popovici* – La Police assassine ! Pratiques et principes pour une solidarité féministe contre la répression.

BOOKS:

I. In Romanian

1. Nicolas Trifon: un parcurs libertar internaționalist – interviuri
2. *Iuliu Neagu-Negulescu* – Arimania
3. *Mihail Bakunin* – Dumnezeu și Statul

Already published:

BROCHURES

I. In Romanian

1. ***A. Răvășel*** – Mircea Rosetti
2. *Adina Marincea* – Asta (nu) e o poveste de dragoste! LoveKills, punk și primii 20 de ani de anarcha-feminism în România
3. *Adrian Tătăran* – Panait Mușoiu
4. Anarhie relațională, nu libertarianism! Mic ghid de re-imaginat relațiile noastre de zi cu zi
5. Anarhismul și vechea mișcare socialistă
6. *Andie Nordgren* – Anarhia relațională (introducere de *hopancarusel)*
7. Anuarul Anarhivei 2020
8. *bell hooks* – Să înțelegem patriarhatul
9. *Carolina Vozian* – Carte, cocon, cochilie, cameră, chirie
10. *CCRI / EZLN* – O declarație pentru viață și alte texte (2020-2021)
11. *Colin Ward* – Anarhismul ca teorie a organizării
12. *CrimethInc* – Vot vs. Acțiune Directă
13. *Cristian-Dan Grecu* – Csipike – piticul comunist
14. *David Graeber* – Ești un anarhist? Răspunsul te-ar putea surprinde!
15. *David Graeber* – Noii anarhiști
16. *David Graeber* – Speranța în comun
17. *Dennis Fox* – Anarhism și psihologie
18. *Necunoscut* – Slogane din mai 68
19. *Emma Goldman* – Căsătorie și iubire
20. *Emma Goldman* – Gelozia: cauze și posibile remedii
21. *Emma Goldman* – Nu există Comunism în URSS
22. *Errico Malatesta* – Anarhia
23. *Giorgio Agamben* – De la un stat al controlului către un praxis al puterii destituente
24. *Institutul pentru Studii Anarhiste* – Genul
25. *Ionuț-Valentin Cucu* – Kurzii, între naționalism identitar și federalism libertar
26. *Lucy Parsons* – Principiile anarhiei
27. *Martin Veith* – Neobosit! Iuliu Neagu-Negulescu
28. *Mechel Stanger* – Amintirile unui anarhist din România
29. *M.E.K.A.N.* – Demoni Dansatori: cugetări provizorii asupra mișcării free party siciliene
30. *Mihail Bakunin* – Catehism revoluționar
31. *Murray Bookchin* – Municipalismul libertar
32. *Murray Bookchin* – Revolta marinarilor din Kronstadt
33. *Philip Richlin* – 10 reguli pentru o societate non-violentă
34. *Piotr Kropotkin* – Ordinea
35. *Robert Graham* – Ideea generală a Revoluției la Proudhon
36. Sub același acoperiș: Antologia revendicărilor și analizelor pentru dreptate locativă - o perspectivă intersecțională în contextul pandemiei COVID-19
37. Suprarealism și anarhism
38. *Veda Popovici* – Poliția Ucide! Practici și principii pentru o solidaritate feministă anti-represiune
39. *Vlad Brătuleanu* – Anarhismul în România

II.In Hungarian

40. A Combahee River Collective Nyilatkozata
41. *Adina Marincea* – Ez (nem) egy szerelmi történet! LoveKills, punk és az anarchafeminizmus első húsz éve Romániában
42. *Angela Davis* – Reformáljuk meg vagy számoljuk fel a börtönöket?
43. *Audre Lorde* – A düh használatairól: a rasszizmusra válaszoló nők
44. *Audre Lorde* – Életkor, rassz, osztály és nem: Nők újradefiniálják a különbséget

In 1923, during a series of lectures on political parties and doctrines organised by the Romanian Social Institute, Nicolae Petrescu – who took the floor on the matter of anarchism –, concluded: "we do not have a proper militant or theoretical anarchist movement."[1] His claim had a categorical tone, leaving no room for doubt. The subject seemed therefore closed, despite the fact that during another set of conferences about the new Romanian Constitution, anarchism was at one point brought into discussion as a threat to democracy. Perhaps Petrescu was convincing enough and it is clear that his opinion was also shared by the academic community: to date, next to nothing has been written in Romania about anarchism on Romanian soil, or about anarchist ideas in a Romanian context. Indeed, today no anarchist movement is known to a wider audience. While these things are clear, one may wonder how the following statement should be judged:

> Radovici had his Socialist library quite well supplied, and he made it available to all of us [...] By chance or due to Radovici's preferences, most of the works were anarchist publications. For every Paul Lafargue or Benoît Malon, you would find a Jean le Vagre (Jean Grave), a Kropotkin, an Élisée Reclus (the great geographer), a Bakunin, or a Domella Nieuwenhuis – the Dutchman ...[2]

These lines are taken from the memoirs of I.C. Atanasiu, a socialist militant from the Old Kingdom[3], and his account refers to the period when he was introduced to the socialist circles in Bucharest (sometimes around 1884) by Radovici, the brother of one of the frontmen of the first Romanian socialist party.

1. Nicolae Petrescu, "Anarchism", in *Political Parties and their Doctrines. Nineteen Public Lectures organised by the ISR*, Tiparul Cultura Națională, Bucharest, 1923, p. 198.
2. I.C. Atanasiu, *The Socialist Movement*, Ed. Adeverul, Bucharest, 1932, p. 12.
3. The Old Kingdom usually denotes the modern Romania state, roughly between 1881 and 1918. Geographically, it comprised the territories of Wallachia and Moldova (without Bukovina and Bessarabia).

When there was something written about anarchism, however, it was usually done with the purpose of discrediting and compromising it. Cases in point are the work of Ana Bazac, *Anarchism and modern political movements*[4], and that of a certain Mircea Vâlcu-Mehedinți[5]. In spite of a thorough analysis of the main strands of anarchism, Ana Bazac's work uses a discourses that is profoundly influenced ideologically (anarchism is labelled a petit bourgeois manifestation) and does not offer precise information about the possible anarchist presence in Romania at that time. The second work has the merit of publishing documents from the archives of the *The Commissariat of the Police* and that of the *General State Security Service*. The document selection is actually meant to support the arguments advanced by the author, according to which socialism and anarchism are political currents and movements exclusively alien and harmful to Romanian political life.[6]

One can thus notice the absence of theoretical, objective texts discussing anarchism in Romania, during a period when the movement was at its peak in other countries: the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. What the current study contributes, first and foremost, is the fact that it is the first to examine anarchism in Romania from a historical point of view. The research takes into account all the forms of anarchism that existed in Romania up to 1945: the first part of the research examines the period before the emergence of the first anarchist groups; the second part presents a form of anarchism that is similar and contemporary to its nineteenth century European counterpart; the third part inspects a few forms of anarchism that flourished in the twentieth century – these are particularly interesting to analyze, as they have many distinguishing particularities and Romanian researchers did not offer it its due attention. Last but not least, the article attempts to salvage anarchist ideology, showing the multiple forms it took and attempting to demonstrate how it was wrongfully associated with the symbol of sinister terrorism, a symbol which the movement has never been able to entirely get rid of.

4. Ana Bazac, *Anarchism and the Modern Political Movement*, Editura Universitară, Bucharest, 2002.

5. Mircea Vâlcu-Mehedinți, *Anarchism, Socialism*, Ed. Mircea Vâlcu-Mehedinți, Bucharest, 2008.

6. Throughout this article, I will be referencing some of the documents published in Mircea Vâlcu-Mehedinți's book. I have verified the accuracy of the texts he edited by comparing them with the documents found in the archives of the *Service of the Romanian Secret Services*.

NOTES ON THE TEXT AND ITS TRANSLATION:

The present study was initially published under the Romanian title "Anarhismul în România", as an article in Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review, vol. XI, nr. 2, 2011, pp. 274-285. A revised and updated version under the same title followed in 2018, distributed as a brochure by our publishing collective. The present translation closely follows the latter version. Many of the works and articles referenced throughout the text and its footnotes are only accessible to a Romanian readership; a few of these, as well as many other related contemporary fragments are available in German, in the works of Martin Veith: *Unbeugsam! ein Pionier des rumänischen Anarchismus: Panait Muşoiu and Militant! Stefan Gheorghiu und die revolutionäre Arbeiterbewegung Rumäniens*. Also, Eugen Relgis' 1952 article "Libertaires et pacifistes de Roumanie" has been recently republished as a brochure by C.I.R.A. Marseille and is now available for a French readership. We hope to one day make more of these historical publications available to an international audience.

The titles of Romanian journals and newspapers from the interwar period have often been modelled on the French archetype, with the title in the abstract third person singular form (e.g. *Vegetarismul*, similar to French *Le végétarisme*, literally *Vegetarianism*, cf. with English T*he Vegetarian*). When translating these into English, we have opted to style them in the general English definite singular gender-neutral form (such as *The Daily Spectator*, *The Peaceful Revolutionist*, etc.): *The Vegetarian, The Humanitarian, and not Vegetarianism, Humanitarianism*, as their original meaning would imply. In order to make the text easier to follow, we only kept the English titles for books and articles that are only available in Romanian. In case you would like to know more about their original titles and content, drop us a line.

Their efforts most certainly aimed towards the creation of a movement. An important observation would be that all the groups and individuals participating in this form of militantism could not be identified: taking into account the difficulty of organizing, quite typical for anarchists throughout history,[59] and also the existence of people like Valeriu Buja, it is quite possible that there were many other anarchists, who did not sign any article, or did not appear on any list. Buja was almost unknown amongst the Romanian radicals: after a short experience as a drifter when he was 17 or 18 years old, he returned to his native village where he remained until his death, approximately ten years later. He would have remained unknown if not for publishing some articles and if Eugen Relgis would not have written his obituary in the pages of a magazine. With all these aspects in mind, there is no doubt that the role of the Romanian anarchists was quite limited. On the other hand, the study has underlined the fact that the anarchists had some sort of a contribution to the 1907 Peasant Revolt.

A third conclusion is that anarchism cannot be associated with terrorism and destruction anymore. Its Romanian version shows, once again, how diverse and rich this ideological current was. In Romania, like everywhere else in Europe, anarchist terrorists were few in numbers, acting on their own or in small groups,[60] and sometimes with a dubious morality. Some were of foreign origin and stayed in Romania for a limited amount of time. Anarchism in Romania had terrorists, but it also had people who sought to live a moral life, hermits, ascetics, and individuals that were dedicated, above all, to individual liberty, a highly valued principle nowadays. The same geographical territory hosted a generally rare ideological strand inspired by anarcho-individualists – it brought into attention that the final aim of any revolution and of life in general is the liberation of the individual, thus subordinating and conditioning the social revolution. By removing the ideas about the state and the social revolution, it also removed a great deal of the utopian characteristics of anarchism, as well as the totalitarian potential which, starting with the period of the Jacobin terror, had always accompanied violent revolutions.

59. George Woodcock, *Anarchism. A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Meridian Books, The World Publishing Company, Cleveland, New York, 1962, p. 239.

60. *Ibidem*, p. 301.

Taking into consideration that the present study is one of political history, documents represent a large and integral part of the sources that were employed. Nevertheless, in order to approach this study methodologically, I started from a work on political theory – *Anarchism* by George Crowder.[7] Equally useful were the works regarding the history of the anarchist movement, which I have cited over the course of this study.

By anarchism we understand the revolutionary ideology represented, first and foremost, by theoreticians such as Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin, Piotr Kropotkin, and Max Stirner; its organizational and mass form was found in the militant movements which appeared in the last part of the nineteenth century, culminating during the Spanish Civil War. Throughout history, the anarchist movement (or rather movements) was a political force comprising militant groups, numerous publications, and ideologists that supported these activities. Up until the end of the Spanish Civil War, in 1939, it was predominantly proletarian.

Anarchism, a revolutionary Western political philosophy, shares its origins with liberalism and socialism in the Enlightenment;[8] it is based upon a rational critique of authority and sees he abolition of the state as its main objective.[9] According to its doctrine, a new social order, based on the free association of all individuals, would emerge, replacing the state. For anarchists, there is an irreconcilable antagonism between the principle of individual liberty, considered to be a supreme value, and that of authority. The movement – also called 'libertarian'[10] – has emphasized the importance of the struggle against capitalism, more so than its ideologists. Over the course of time, anarchism underwent

7. George Crowder, *Classical Anarchism: the Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991.

8. James Joll, *The Anarchists*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1980, p. X; this idea is also one of the most important theses in George Crowder's work on anarchism.

9. Several authors (including George Woodcock, referenced in this study) define anarchism as the rejection of any form of authority. While also targeting the authority of the Church and even that of the family, anarchist critique was primarily aimed against the state. Kołakowski's description of the anarchist movement from the end of the nineteenth century is relevant in this regard; he observed that the movement brought together a great variety of ideological tendencies which shared the idea that the state was the main hindrance on the path towards liberty (see Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 2, *The Golden Age*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978, p. 19).

10. Libertarian is a translation of French *libertaire*, a term coined by early French anarchist Joseph Déjacque. In English, it is usually rendered as Libertarian Socialism, so as to distinguish it from other forms of political thought.

different mutations, both in practise and in theory. Up until the beginning of the twentieth century, the collectivist and communist tendencies dominated anarchism, not only doctrinally, but more importantly if one takes the number of adherents into accounts. With the rise of syndicalist activities at the beginning of the twentieth century, a new type of anarchism emerged: anarcho-syndicalism. Another ideological nuance has preceded mostly all of those specified beforehand, although its influence amongst anarchists has been limited: individualist anarchism, an approach that was increasing the emphasis put on individual liberty. It found many adherents in the United States of America in the nineteenth century, but it manifested itself in Europe only after the *fin de siècle*, most notably in France, as a reaction to anarcho-syndicalism. Its characteristics will be presented in more detail in the last section of this article.

This study is less of an exhaustive analysis of the subject, and more of a whodunit (or rather whydunit) that will focus on a network of historical characters. To this end, I have used, first and foremost, the libertarian oriented press and documents from the archive of the *General Directorate of the Police* and of the Secret Services.

We will ignore details that are of a more sensationalist nature – indeed, the well known anarchists Errico Malatesta and Nestor Makhno have passed through Romania, but their presence has had little to no influence in the development of the local movement. Such an investigation will always be burdened by the manner in which the documents used the term 'anarchism', as this can sometimes be misleading: despite the absence of a a clearly visible movement, the term was frequently used at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries; it appears in speeches and in the press of the time, as well as in documents of the authorities and in the memoirs of some socialists. Even Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea gave it much attention; anarchists were apparently everywhere, being reported even in Bucharest, on the *Victory Avenue*. Only in some of these cases has the term been properly used.[11]

The appearance of a strand of anarchist thinking in the country can be observed as early as the end of the nineteenth century. There are, however, two phases of anarchism as a movement, one beginning at this time, and the second having an ephemere existence during the interwar period and being of a very different nature.

11. Nicolae Jurcă, *The History of Social-Democracy in Romania*, Ed. Ştiinţifică, Bucharest, 1993, p. 104.

the Spanish Civil War.[56] In 1947 Eugen Relgis left Romania, finally settling down in Uruguay.[57] This is when the second phase of of his activity as a militant begins, but this was equally the moment when anarchism in Romania ceased to exist, as the movement's other important personality, Mușoiu, had already died in 1944.[58]

CONCLUSIONS

This study has presented itself as a first, timid step towards a history of anarchism in Romania. While it is in no way exhaustive, it points out some essential elements and primary figures. Our study has shown that anarchism had a presence in Romania. A rudimentary movement was born at the end of the nineteenth century and, contrary to ideas promoted by some of the authors mentioned in the introduction, it was established by local elements (although an estimation of the influence of foreigners over the local groups is still necessary). Through publications such as *The Idea Magazine*, anarchist ideas have been introduced in Romanian culture. In addition to this, the present study has brought to light the existence of a group whose type is rarely seen in the history of radical ideas. Thus, with the history of group formed around *The Vegetarian*, an important contribution to the study of individualist anarchism in Europe is made.

A second conclusion that can be drawn is that, despite a certain gap, Romanian anarchism followed the same theoretical steps as the rest of Europe: collectivist and communist anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism and, last but not least, anarcho-individualism, all these subcategories having found an expression in the Romanian context.

The discussion about an actual movement could be seen as an exaggeration, if we were to take into account the small number of people who supported anarchism. However, the term was used in relation to the a general tendency and to the objectives of some historical personalities that become involved with this form of militancy, and not the outcome of their actions.

56. http://militants-anarchistes.info: http://militants-anarchistes.info/spip.php?article1394&lang=fr; http://militants-anarchistes.info/spip.php?article5046, accessed June 25th 2018.

57. *Ibidem*.

58. http://militants-anarchistes.info/spip.php?article4162, accessed June 25th 2018.

citizen, when I neither wish to be a Romanian citizen, nor a French one, nor any other nationality, but a man, a brother to everyone?[53]

Analyzing the modes of living proposed by foreign anarchist thinkers further lead to discussing the possibilities of setting up a libertarian inspired colony in Romania, the beginning of this debate also marking the beginning of the end for *The Vegetarian*. Issue after issue, the magazine proposed establishing a colony, under the heading "The colony's page", the models suggested being those of Kropotkin and Reclus, as well as the principle of mutual aid (it is not yet clear if it was influenced by Proudhon's mutualism). The initiative did not manage to attract volunteers, not even after discovering that in 1908 there had been a Tolstoyan colony in Bessarabia.[54] This discouraging failure was accompanied by an older problem: the publication needed the material support of its subscribers. Ionescu-Căpățână had to ensure the magazine's printing out of his own funds. It is hard to estimate the number of those interested in the publication, because the number of subscribers can neither reflect the total number of readers, nor that of the more or less radical Romanian vegetarians from 1932 to 1934. Based on the assessments of Ionescu-Căpățână, in Bucharest, the vegetarians were "in quite a considerable number."[55] In any case, the editorial collective considered that a minimum of 500 subscribers would have been needed to cover the costs of the publication. The constant calls published in each and every issue show that the number was never reached, although another aspect of the problem was that many readers did not pay their subscriptions, or were taking the publication, promising to pay for it with another occasion, which never happened. The financial hardships played a decisive role in the dissolution of *The Vegetarian*. The crisis became more and more acute and their last issue, published in 1934, reflected the editorial collective's isolation from the general public of Greater Romania. In 1935 Ion Ionescu-Căpățână left the country and moved to France. During the last part of the Interwar Period, both him and Relgis were involved in supporting the Republican cause at the time of

53. Valeriu Buja, "The Path of Man", in *The Humanitarian*, year I, n. 8, April 1929, p. 195.
54. "The Colony's Page", in The Vegetarian, year II, n. 13, December 1933, p. 1.
55. Ion Ionescu-Căpățână, "To those who think that they have understood our Purpose", in *The Vegetarian*, year II, n. 8-9, August 1933, p. 40.

THE MOVEMENT'S PRECURSORS

The origins of Romanian anarchism lie alongside the beginnings of the socialist movement from the Old Kingdom, at the end of the nineteenth century. Before proceeding to their study, it might be a good opportunity to mention here the name of the Romanian and Bessarabian revolutionary Zamfir Arbore. His extensive activity guarantees him an important place alongside the precursors of anarchism.

Zamfir Arbore (also known as Zamfir Ralli or Zamfir Arbore-Ralli) is probably the first Romanian who assumed the label of anarchist. At the same time he can also be considered one of the precursors of the anarchist movement in Russia.[12] For the present study, the most important period of his biography is his stay in Switzerland, during the 1870s.

Following his release from the tsarist prisons, where he was jailed in 1869 for participating in the students' movement in Sankt Petersburg,[13] the young Zamfir Arbore arrives in Zürich in 1872.[14] Shortly afterwards, he joins a small group of Russian refugees, gathered around Mikhail Bakunin. In 1873, the group established a printing house, with the aim of spreading anti-tsarist ideas amongst the Russian intelligentsia. The relationship between Arbore and Bakunin was very close at first, with Arbore becoming Bakunin's secretary for a short period.[15] Not long after, the two become estranged and Arbore moves to Geneva, where he contributes to the founding of an organisation named the Revolutionary Commune of the Russian Anarchists[16] and where he sets up another printing house.[17] It is important to mention that Arbore was, first of all, a narodnik revolutionary, or a nihilist, devoted to the fight against Russian absolutism. It is under these circumstances that, in 1878, he travels to the Old Kingdom of Romania in order to start spreading anti-tsarist ideas amongst the Russian soldiers who were fighting in the Russo-Turkish War.[18] This is also the

12. According to Paul Avrich, there was no anarchist movement in Russia before the beginning of the twentieth century; see Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, AK Press, 2005, p. 37.
13. Zamfir C. Arbore, *In Exile*, Institutul de Editură Ralian şi Ignat Samitca, Craiova, 1896, pp. 61-63.
14. *Ibidem*., p. 142.
15. *Ibidem*., pp. 153-155.
16. Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*... .
17. Arbore, *In Exile*..., p. 157.
18. See "My Departure from Geneva. Propaganda in the Russian Army", in *Ibidem*., pp. 386-409.

place where he decides to remain for the rest of his life. A detail worth mentioning in this context is that, in 1879, Arbore hosted at his home in Ploiești a crucial meeting for the subsequent emergence of the socialist movement in Romania. The socialists gathered at Arbore's home decided the unification of all the existent socialist groups from Bucharest and Iași into a common organisation. The meeting paved the way for the first socialist congress, which was called during the same year.[19] Taking this into account, we might even consider that Arbore helped plant the seeds of the social democratic movement in Romania.

THE 1880-1919 PERIOD

Nicolae Jurcă, a historian of Romanian social democracy, barely mentions the anarchist tendencies of some of the socialists at the end of the nineteenth century, tendencies that have finally been overcome by the reformist and legalist strands promoted by Ioan Nădejde. The author brings a small but important contribution to the history of Romanian anarchism in his *History of social-democracy in Romania*, capturing the diversity within the social-democratic movement: between the two socialist centers in the Old Kingdom – Bucharest and Iași – the one in Bucharest was the most radical during the 1880s. It is there that the *'Human Rights Circle for Social Studies'* , was established by a group that was influenced by the ideas of Bakunin, Reclus, and Kropotkin, ideas brought to Romanian by students that had studied abroad. The circle managed to survive for six years, between 1884 and 1890, but, due to the new model of organization imposed by Nădejde, inspired by social-democracy, all anarchist traces were eliminated.[20] In spite of the apparent end of anarchism, the socialist movements would continue to be a source of libertarian revolutionaries. Actually, it is precisely after this period that anarchism started gaining notoriety. The terrorist attacks in France, which ended in 1894, had sent a shockwave throughout Europe. Reactions promptly appeared: Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea published two articles, rushing to distance anarchism from socialism, probably wanting to protect the party's image against all associations that would have been harmful to it.

19. Jurcă, *The History of Social-Democracy*..., pp. 12-13.
20. *Ibidem*, pp.18-20.

take place. The practical expression of these characteristics of radical vegetarianism should have materialized, as we shall see next, in the form of a colony established by volunteers.

Inevitably, there was a political connotation to the idea of giving up the values and elements of urban civilization, as well as to the notion of personal liberation. Moreover, the issues linked to the efforts made for liberation would emphasize sooner or later the limits of individual revolution – a revolution within the limits of the existent society. In order to cultivate and free oneself, the individual needed not only a healthy diet and a free consciousness, but also leisure time – time devoted only to oneself. The main obstacle to this was the necessity to make a living within the contemporary system – more precisely, the fundamental problem was the labour day. Practicing a revolutionary and an individualistic way of life collided with the social routine that everyone felt. At this point, Romanian individualism turned towards the social problem, and, thus, began resembling classical anarchism. The small group around The Vegetarian no longer seemed like a mere club and it acknowledged its political orientation. Of course, the word 'anarchism' is still nowhere to be found. A comprehensive article argues in favor of the need for leisure time: leisure is essential for the evolution of civilization and of the self, and this leisure can either be gained by reducing work hours, or by giving up luxury that makes people work more.[52] In the first case, the solutions proposed by Kropotkin and Reclus are mentioned, and in the second case those of Henry David Thoreau.

Other articles with a similar tone can be found in *The Vegetarian*: Valeriu Buja, influenced by Thoreau, published a long article about his attempt at living a simpler life, isolated for 3 years near a lake. Judging by his biography written by Relgis, who had been his colleague at *The Humanitarian*, Buja did not live the agitated and dangerous life of a militant, but had the ardour of one. This is also visible in his own phrases, that clearly bear the stamp of libertarian ideas. He wrote in *The Humanitarian*:

> By what right am I being kept between borders, between laws, when I wish to fraternize with my fellow man? [...] In itself, the state system is egocentric and immoral. By what right am I being limited by something – State, Nation, Class – to be a Romanian

52. N. Zberea, "Vegetarianism...", pp. 13-14.

prejudices and he ends by determining that liberty is "the holiest and most precious thing for man."[48] The individualism promoted by Ionescu-Căpățână and his companions was one that sought to influence lifestyle and even over clothing preferences, in the extent that clothes could inhibit the development of the individual (not only psychologically and philosophically, but as a corporeal being). Clothes and bodies were perceived as being closely bound together. The individual was not only encouraged to choose well what he wore, but sometimes even not to wear anything. The vegetarian diet was contributing to the purification and personal development, freeing the individual from useless luxury[49] and from the domination over the animals, used as food. Eugen Relgis wrote about those that practiced nudism in Germany:

> Forgotten are the hypocritical moralisms, the vermin of vices, the social horrors. Man is there, under the radiant sun, happy to breath, happy to purify himself in that solidarity of nature, which has stripped him of reluctance, rank, class.[50]

The newspaper published an article written by the French anarcho-individualist Han Ryner, for whom a liberation like the one described above would lead to 'ethical liberty', thus making the one liberated this way a man "suffering from humanity."[51] All these celebrations of the natural state would obviously push the militant journalists towards an eulogy of the primitive man and of a presupposed golden age, an age that could have been recreated by each and every individual through revolutionary action. We do not find in the pages of *The Vegetarian* any nostalgia for the historical past, although it is true that the idea of returning to a primitive form of life might generally suggest the presence of such a sentiment. And, in this case, similar to many others from different countries, the rejection of contemporary values rather resembled (at least partially) a 'retreat to the citadel' type of liberty, a freedom in isolation, that Isaiah Berlin compared with the negative liberty and the positive liberty. Except that, in parallel with isolation, a positive affirmation of new values and ideals would

48. Ion Ionescu-Căpățână, ''Individualism and Frugivorism", in T*he Vegetarian*, year II, n. 2, January 1933, p. 1.
49. N. Zberea, "Vegetarianism, the Path towards a New Life", in T*he Vegetarian*, year II, n. 7, June 1933, p. 14.
50. Eugen Relgis, "Escape from the City", in *The Vegetarian*, year II, n. 7, June 1933, p. 9.
51. Han Ryner, "Ethical Liberation", in *The Vegetarian*, year II, n. 2, January 1933, p. 4.

During the period between 1884 and 1890, probably the most important figure of Romanian anarchism appears: Panait Mușoiu. We find him initially amongst the socialists. After the 'purges' led by Nădejde, "he leaves Bucharest because of his anarchist ideas and settles in Galați where he is excluded from the local organization."[21] Returning to Bucharest, he would become known by the authorities as the main anarchist theoretician and leader. These were troubled times: the attacks in Europe had made the spectre of anarchism spread even over Romania, preoccupying not only the social-democrats, but also the authorities. The attention that the secret services gave to the issue reveals a real concern. Up until the eve of the Balkan Wars, the secret services were surveilling the anarchist movement almost exclusively and permanently. By comparison, the socialists rarely appeared in the classified documents. This fact is not accidental: in parallel with the evolution of a local movement, there were many foreign anarchists in the foreign in the Old Kingdom, either living here or just passing through – in 1900, for instance, the presence of some Italian anarchists amongst the Italian workers who were working at a building site of a hotel in Sinaia was recorded. At the same time, as a countermeasure, an agreement made between several European states, including Romania, came into effects; a secret treaty was signed 1904. According to it, the states in question were sharing information regarding the anarchists who were expelled by either of them, and also mentioning the possible destinations they were heading to. During 1900-1911, rumours and reports about attack plans circulated in the country, in a general climate nurtured by expellings promoted by the media, like the one of Adolf Reichmann, a French anarchist.

Meanwhile, writing relentlessly, Mușoiu publishes, alongside Panait Zosîn, the *Social Movement* (ro. *Mișcarea Socială*) journal, and in 1900 a new publication – *The Idea Magazine* (ro. *Revista Ideei*) – during a time when the disorganised socialist groups had not yet recovered after the disbanding of the party. In 1899, Iuliu Neagu-Negulescu started contributing to both editorial projects. *The Idea Magazine* also translated the works of classic authors of Antiquity (Plato's works, for example), classical socialist works (*The Communist Party Manifesto*), and even the works of some liberal thinkers such as John Stuart Mill; in the list of books it published, one can also find the writings of explicitly anarchist authors like Max Stirner or the French anarchist Han Ryner, and of the American individualist,

21. *Ibidem*, p. 21.

Henry David Thoreau[22]. Writings by Bakunin and Kropotkin have also been published.

Based on the documents found in the archives of the secret services, anarchist activities appear to have reached their peak after 1905.[23] Different groups started meeting at Panait Mușoiu's house, in Bucharest, around Traian Street. A fiery enthusiasm can also be noticed within the socialist circle of the *Romanian Workingmen* (ro. *România Muncitoare*), located in the Amzei Market in Bucharest, the radicals from there also being anarchists under Mușoiu's influence. Others – as it is also shown in the documents – were active in smaller groups from different cities. A few individuals were under surveillance, suspected of being members of the movement. In Ploiești, in 1907, the group *The Craving* (ro. *Râvna*) was established, which one year later became the *Libertarian Circle* (ro. *Cercul Libertar*), this time finding itself in opposition with the Bucharest leader. The group published a newspaper, *Modern Times* (ro. *Vremuri Noi*).[24] In 1907, a list of known anarchists in Romania, assembled by the secret services, contained around 20 names. The number is ridiculously small for a movement, but another list, from the same year, containing the employees working in state institutions that were subscribed to the *The Idea Magazine*, shows two interesting aspects: firstly, the fact that the numbers of adherents and sympathisers was higher – the list containing, this time, roughly 50 names, and these were only those that were receiving the newspaper by subscription; secondly, it shows once more the concerns that the authorities had, now even more preoccupied with the growth of the movement and mostly by the possible infiltrations or the simple presence of its members in the state institutions. The concern is explicitly expressed in the report of a secret service agent, declaring that the phenomenon is serious and that the state harbours individuals working through propaganda against it. The most important excerpt from the document is the

22. I consider the label of 'individualist' most suited for Thoreau. It is difficult to place him in a precise ideological category. Scholarly literature on the subject never mentioned him having any direct connection to European anarchism; neither could he be connected to its American forms, since he predates the latter. Some authors, such as Jean Proposiet, see Thoreau as a precursor to anarchism. Concurrently, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the ideas found in his main works are almost identical to those of the European anarchist ideologists. For a study emphasizing Henry David Thoreau's individualistic doctrine, see George Kateb, "Democratic Individuality and the Claims of Politics", in *Political Theory*, vol. 12, n. 3, August 1984, pp. 331-360.

23. See The Central National Historical Archives, *The Commissariat of the Police and General Security*, 8/1905; 37/1906; 1/1907; 35/1907; 119/1911.

24. Vâlcu-Mehedinți, *Anarchism*..., p. 44.

of this imbecile society."[44] By leaving the city and renouncing meat, one could easily give up even clothes: nudism had become a revolutionary practice.

Therefore, organizing the workers was no longer important, the object of social revolution being totally eliminated,[45] while the aspects related to private life became essential: food, sexual liberation and anything that threatens the autonomy of self-will. For some of the vegetarians, meat consumption was the source of all social evils.[46] Even though the characteristics of this ascetic anarchism can be found in other contexts too – different colonies of naturists and nudists were established in Spain,[47] for instance – from a historical point of view, this trend was a marginal one within the framework of anarchism. In Romania, the only adherents were grouped around *The Vegetarian*.

As a short detour from the strand investigated here, the fact that, for those that have chosen the path of violence, anarchism was linked to an existence constantly on the brink, a fact clearly described in the memoirs of Victor Serge, a French individualist, deserves to be mentioned. The illegalists – a name given to the anarchist bandits – like the Bonnot Gang in France and Belgium, had abandoned the field of politics, becoming some sort of early 'Bonnie and Clyde' gang, ending up as tragically as the famous film characters. In retrospect, illegalism seems like a digression; however, it remains a part of this new type of anarchism.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned idea regarding the abandonment of the social and political revolution as an end goal, the possible doubt regarding the character of the small vegetarian movement can nevertheless be surpassed: the fact that the group around *The Vegetarian* never talked about revolution and was not describing itself as anarchist does not mean that its orientation was not anarchist. Moreover, a series of elements clearly suggest the anarcho-individualist influence. In a 1933 article, Ionescu-Căpățână writes some phrases that can very well have been written by a French anarchist inspired by Max Stirner. He declared himself an individualist and noticed that in certain situations the 'social reform' begun for some individuals with their own person, the society of the future being created by them amidst everyday life. He continues by writing that the beginning has always been a severe purification, the giving up of

44. *Ibidem*, p. 180.

45. Serge, *Memoirs*..., p. 18.

46. Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France*... .

47. Joll, *The Anarchists*... , p. 235.

one starts from Émile Armand's disciples that stated, quoting Stirner, that "all things are nothing to me."[37]

The other direction, in no way less inspired by the above slogan (but which has filtered to a smaller extent other influences too), could have lead, through the same ideas, either towards passivity and indifference, or towards active political activity.[38] In these situations, the transformation of the ego was promoted by the founding of colonies, libertarian schools and papers, or by renouncing contemporary lifestyle and values. Among the anarchists that chose the latter, for the naturists[39] "the revolution should not be economical and collective, but human and personal, and the central points of interest had to be body hygiene and the diet."[40] The purpose was the cleansing of the self, the liberation of one from all that was evil. The solution meant the return to a primitive state, renouncing meat and, sometimes, any animal based products (dairy products, for example), or even the cooking of food. Modern industrial civilization is the supreme evil, with all its values.[41] A difference can occur here between them and the classic anarchists, who were opposing the effects of modern civilization, but not modernity in itself. For them, the problem was, first of all, political and only afterwards economical, not technological. A stateless society is not a return to primitivism.[42] However, in this instance, leaving the harmful and corrupt spaces of the industrial city also served for purification, as fresh air and good food had to free the individual from the servitude to "the interests that were at the root of war and economical struggle."[43] The primitivists and nomads praised the first people and the individual who is "freed of all moral and material bondages

37. Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, University of Iowa Press, 2002, p. 23.

38. Skirda, *Facing the Enemy*... , p. 72.

39. Jean Maitron, who studied the French individualists, as well as other authors, such as James Joll, use the terms 'naturists', 'primitivists', 'nomads', and 'nudists' in order to differentiate the various tendencies within the anarchist movement. In the following fragments, I have adopted the same terminology.

40. Jean Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France*. Vol. I – des origines a 1914, Ed. Gallimard, Paris, 1992, p. 379.

41. *Ibidem*, p. 380.

42. One must mentions that not all utopian societies in literature were urban utopias: the classical ones (such as Thomas More's *Utopia*, for instance), but also the proletarian ones, saw an evolution within the frame offered by urban space; Fourrier and his disciples, however, reject the city, while Henry David Thoreau outright abandoned it; Russian populism was an unique case, since the mass of the population lived in the countryside and the revolutionaries considered that this way of life should be maintained, since it constituted the essence of the identity of the Russian people.

43. Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France*... .

one arguing that the propaganda done by these individuals had contributed to the outbreak of the 1907 Peasant Revolt.[25] The agent who concluded the report this way was without a doubt referring to anarchists, because the document concerns the evaluation of the influence that *The Idea Magazine* had. There are examples supporting this last idea. For example, the authorities had identified and surveilled for a long time Nicolăescu-Cranta, a village teacher and one of Mușoiu's friends, who "has contributed a lot to the Peasant Revolt by the speeches he held in front of people."[26]

In 1909 there was an attempt on the prime-minister's life, committed by a former railroad worker. Some sources directly call him a syndicalist, while others label him an anarchist. However, there is a chance that the attempt had actually been orchestrated by the Secret Services.[27] The assassin had undoubtedly convinced the anarchists from the cafes from the Văcărești area, where new groups – thought to be in contact with the "well known theoretician of anarchism, Panait Mușoiu" – had appeared.[28] "Formed at the Rackovskian Syndicalist School",[29] these "groups of libertarian propaganda"[30] may have numbered around 16 to 20 members. In 1911, the services charged with surveilling the Romanian libertarian movement concluded that "the movement [...] received a strong boost lately"[31] and that "libertarian propaganda [...] has unfortunately registered remarkable advances"[32]. In this context, the fact that anarchism begins slowly disappearing from the State's Security vizor is interesting, especially during a time when European conflicts, starting with those in the Balkans, gain intensity. The interest shifts towards spies and some Bulgarian citizens, whose activity was considered to be suspect in the wake of the wars that Romania would also participate in. If indeed the Romanian movement started being stronger and stronger and its members were planning attacks against

25. *Ibidem*, pp. 37-38.

26. The Central National Historical Archives, T*he Commissariat of the Police and General Security* fund – 35/1907, folio 25r.

27. Jurcă, *The History of Social-Democracy*...., pp. 63-64.

28. ANIC, The DPSG fund, file 119/1911, folio 2v.

29. *Ibidem*, folio 1v. A reference to Christian Rackovski, a radical socialist who was active in Romania. The phrasing in the document is ambiguous. From the above quoted passage, it can be deduced that the document was referring to a version of anarcho-syndicalism that was influenced by Rackovski's ideas.

30. *Ibidem*, folio 7r.

31. *Ibidem*, folio 1r.

32. *Ibidem*, folio 9r.

the most important political figures in the country, it is still unclear why the State Security had completely given up surveilling it. The First World War left the political and social life in Romania fully disoriented, and we can imagine that the disruptive effect it had on the socialist movement also extended to the anarchist groups, since they were considerably weaker and less developed. It is certain, however, that in the new post-1918 political configuration, the dossiers of the State Security and of the Police do not mention anything about it, anarchism losing the attention it had up until then in favour of a different type of revolutionary radicalism: Bolshevik Communism.

THE 1918-1947 PERIOD

The second phase of Romanian anarchism is linked to Eugen Relgis. A prolific writer and newspaper editor, he also knew Mușoiu. During the 20s he started his campaign, seeking to create the *Humanitarian Movement* – pacifist and anti-militarist. Through this initiative, in addition to opposition to all wars, the pre-WWI libertarian influences reappear. The new movement's manifesto, written in 1923, does not bear the mark of a specific ideology. It is Relgis's deliberate decision not to advance a doctrine that would be common to all humanitarians.[33] He is sufficiently convincing, however, to obtain Panait Mușoiu's support and that of six or seven other people, who will sign the manifesto. In any case, regarding *The Humanitarian* (ro. *Umanitarismul*) newspapers (one of the two Relgis started in the 20s), founded in 1929, the libertarian influences are perceived in a very clear manner: names like Han Ryner and Domela Nieuwenhuis frequently appear between its pages, even if sometimes only through quotes inserted here and there. At one point, the publication receives a donation from the individualist anarchist Émile Armand. Furthermore, Relgis had a very rich correspondence with him and also handled the translation of one of his books. Between 1924 and 1932, 24 centers of the adherents of the Humanitarian Movement are being formed across Romania.[34]

Four years after he had given up on *The Humanitarian*, Relgis frequently contributed to the new newspaper, *The Vegetarian* (ro. *Vegetarismul*), founded

33. Eugen Relgis, "The Word Humanitarianism", in The Humanitarian, year I, n. 5, January 1929, pp. 68-70.

34. http://militants-anarchistes.info/spip.php?article5046&lang=fr, accessed June 25th 2018.

in 1932 by Ion Ionescu-Căpățână. There, he continued to advocate his pacifist ideals, but he also took an interest in the different aspects of radical vegetarianism. Similarly, this magazine does not declare its explicit support for a certain ideology. However, the fact that this vegetarianism was conceived as having an ethical and social character needs to be mentioned,[35] as this particular aspect draws a clear line between the aforementioned vegetarianism and the vegetarianism motivated exclusively by medical considerations. The vegetarianism promoted by *The Vegetarian* did not have only social, economical and medical implications, but an almost religious overtone. Those who would like to study the ideas of the editorial group around Ionescu-Căpățână, should make a comparison between this and the individualist anarchist school of thought that developed in France between 1900-1905. The similarities would prove to be astonishing.

The ideas presented in *The Vegetarian* at that time belong to a different type of anarchism, different from that of the militants active in the nineteenth century. In some instances, like in the case of the individualism influenced by Max Stirner, anarchism had become unrecognizable. In France, Stirner's ideas gained unique characteristics. Little has been written in general about individualists, and the works dedicated to them have been almost exclusively centered on the French groups. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a part of the libertarian revolutionaries in France had radically changed their view, feeling that the revolution, which had not yet come, cannot be expected in vain, and has to be lived on the spot by each and everyone. This return towards the individual, towards an interest for "philosophy and the art of lifestyle"[36] was closer to bourgeois values, to the bohemian way of life, sometimes to an ascetic introspection, rather than to socialism. The new individualism, more radical than the bourgeoisie one, and, in fact, still anti-bourgeois, opened up new possibilities. The realization of the revolutionary ideal had to be made real in day to day life, in one's personal life, rather than to be explored in the future through syndicalist action (the anarcho-syndicalist solution), or through insurrection. The return to the individual took two directions: one of them, a Stirner-like direction, quickly descended into criminal violence. Indeed, anything is possible, if

35. "Our Intended Purpose", in T*he Vegetarian: Journal for the Popularization of Vegetarianism and Frugivorism*, (henceforth *The Vegetarian*), year I, n. 1, 1932, p. 1.

36. Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization From Proudhon to May 1968*, AK Press, 2002, p. 71.