

Anarchist Anti-Fascism

Analyses and Strategies in the 1920s and 1930s

By Jens Kastner

When Donald Trump railed against Antifa and anarchists in 2017, the Washington Post first had to explain to its readers who or what he was referring to. It was self-evident that Antifa and anarchism somehow belonged together. First of all, it goes without saying that anarchists are anti-fascist. In theory and practice, anarchism aims to abolish domination, a particular form of which—in a minimal definition—must be considered fascism, among others.

The founding figures of anarchism, such as Mikhail Bakunin and Voltarine de Claire, had not yet been confronted with fascism. An anti-fascist stance only had to develop with the emergence and rise of fascism in the early 1920s. Even though they are far less familiar than Marxist analyses of fascism and have often been and continue to be excluded from textbooks and debates, there have also been various attempts within anarchism to grasp fascism theoretically. The first theoretical study of fascism was written from an anarchist perspective in 1921 by the Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri in his book *The Preventive Counter-Revolution: Reflections on Fascism*.

The lecture does not offer a systematic, chronological history of anarchist anti-fascism. Rather, it traces important positions that have been developed in different periods and different regions within anarchist theory on fascism, based on central issues. With a focus on the 1920s and 1930s, it explores central themes in anarchist analyses of fascism, such as the relationship between fascism and economics, militarism, social psychology and the religious character of fascism, anti-Semitism, and finally the international dimension (of both fascism and anti-fascism), and discusses their relevance for today's struggles.