## Anarchism in Barcelona on the eve of the Civil War: Understanding the Social Revolution through Social History.

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Natàlia Espachs Casellas University of St Andrews, School of History, 2023-2024 Word Count: 4.539 On July 20th of 1936, the president of Catalonia, Lluís Companys, gave up his power to the anarchists pronouncing these words: 'Today you are the masters of the city (Barcelona) and of Catalonia because you have beaten fascism, if you don't need me or if you do not want me as a President of Catalonia, tell me now and I will become one more soldier to the struggle of fascism'<sup>1</sup>. This moment is highly relevant as it illustrates the extent that the influence of anarchism had reached in Catalonia in the 1930s especially in its radicalized faction, the FAI. Indeed, the study of anarchism and its radicalization during the Second Republic is crucial to understand what set the ground for the social revolution that took place in the summer of 1936. This question has been source of debate among historians for decades. In the 20th century, historiography was still highly influenced by the Francoist portrayal of anarchism as something irrational and chaotic. Eric Hobsbawm, for instance, described the anarchist movement in Spain as a 'utopian, millenarian and apocalyptic' movement.<sup>2</sup> However, by the end of the century, the emergence of social history, and new approaches like E.P.Thomson's 'History from below', inspired a shift in historiography on this matter. This led to studies such as Temma Kaplan's, a social analysis of Andalusian anarchism which stressed that anarchism in Andalusia was also a well-organized movement which advocated for worker's concerns. <sup>3</sup> If we apply this social approach to Barcelona, we see that indeed, the socio-economic conditions of the population always interact with the spread of an ideology and play a major role in its radicalization. Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to build on this thesis and provide an analysis of why and how anarchism was so widespread in Barcelona, as well as how the socio-economic conditions of the working classes fostered its radicalization in the 1930s. Firstly, we will analyze how the urbanistic peculiarities of Barcelona contributed to the spread of anarchism. Secondly, we will see how culture also contributed to its expansion. These two points will help us understand why Barcelona was one of the main centers of anarchism at the eve of the Civil War. In the second part of the essay, we will cover the change of the nature of anarchism in the 1930s and its consequences. This will help us understand why it was the anarchist groups who took power when war broke out.

Recently, many historians have emphasized the value of urban history for studying social movements. Tom Goyens, one of its pioneers, declared 'Social movements make, transform, and are possible in space and places. Alternative and revolutionary practices always interact with space'.<sup>4</sup> In his study he showed how the German-speaking neighbors in New York helped the emergence of anarchist ideology in the city.<sup>5</sup> If we apply this methodology to Barcelona the results are very interesting. We observe a link between the spread of anarchism and the neighborhoods with the poorest living conditions. The immigration waves that took place in Barcelona in the 1910s and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lluís Companys in Joan García Oliver De julio a julio. Un año de lucha (Valencia, 1937) as in Julián

Casanova, Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain: 1931-1939 (New York, 1997). P. 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, (Manchester, 1968)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Temma Kaplan, Anarchists of Andalusia: 1868-1903 (New York, 1977)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Tom Goyens 'Social space and the practice of anarchist history', *Rethinking History*, 13:4, pp. 439-457.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid.

1920s fueled a rapid expansion of the city. New proletarian neighborhoods were created in the old part of the town, for example, the Barri Xino, Ploblenou or Sants. New areas started to emerge as well in the outskirts of Barcelona, for instance, Torrassa in Hospitalet de Llobregat. Due to the speed of this expansion, these neighborhoods lacked many basic facilities. For instance, some streets lacked lighting, drainage water and electricity.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in particular the outskirts of the city, were mainly composed of shanty houses. It is calculated that, in 1932, in Barcelona there were 1.400 shanty houses.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the density of population in these neighborhoods was higher. For instance, it is estimated that in the Barri Xino, there were 1.000 inhabitants per square kilometer, 10 times higher than the average density of population in Barcelona.<sup>8</sup> It was in these neighborhoods, with the lowest living conditions, that we see a higher rate of affiliations to libertarian movements. For instance, 52% of the affiliated to CNT from the textile, metal and construction sectors, lived on the outskirts of the city.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the further one got from the center, where the conditions worsened, the more radical the ideology was. The biggest number of affiliations to the FAI was among the people living on the outskirt neighborhoods. There, the number of affiliated was 2.4 times superior to the rest of Barcelona.<sup>10</sup> This comparison shows how there was indeed a clear link between the conditions of the barris <sup>11</sup>and affiliations to social movements.

However, the poor conditions in these neighborhoods fostered a strong sense of community among the people that lived in them. For instance, a testimony, Juan, declared 'Whenever someone was taken sick, the first thing a neighbor with a little spare cash did was to leave it on the table.... There were no papers to be signed, no shaking of hands. 'Let me have it back once you're back at work'. And it was repaid, peseta by peseta when he was working again. It was a matter of principle, a moral obligation.'<sup>12</sup> This declaration shows how the poor conditions of the working class *barris* helped foster a sense of kinship and solidarity among workers. Another example that proves this is the common practice of when a child was born their godparents were often neighbors from the *barri*.<sup>13</sup> Another factor that might have fostered the creation of bonds among the people from the *barri* was cohabitation with non-members of the family nucleus. Between 1900 and 1936 it is estimated that 44% of members of the CNT cohabitated.<sup>14</sup> Susanna Tavera has argued that one of the factors that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Chris Ealham, Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona 1898-1937 (New York, 2005) p. 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Chris Ealhm, 'Crime and punishment in 1930s Barcelona', *History today*, 43:10,

<sup>&</sup>lt;https://www.historytoday.com/archive/crime-and-punishment-1930s-barcelona>, [7/3/2024].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Chris Ealham, 'Anarchism and Illegality in Barcelona, 1931-1937', Contemporary European History, 4:2, (1995), pp. 133-151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> José Luis Oyón, 'The split of a working-class: city urban space, immigration and anarchism in inter-war Barcelona, 1914-1936', Urban History, 36:1, (2009), pp. 86-112. p. 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> *Ibid*. p. 102.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Catalan word for neighborhood.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Interview with Arcos, *Vivir*, interview with 'Juan', November 1977 as in *Chris Ealham Anarchism and the city* (London, 2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ma T. Fernández de Sas, P. Pages Blanch (Coord.) Diccionari bibliogràfic: M. Iñíquez, *Enciclopèdia histórica*, as in José Luis Oyón 'La ruptura de la ciudad obrera y popular. Espacio urbano, inmigración y anarquismo en la Barcelona ed Entreguerras: 1914-1936', 58, (2007), pp.123-150. p.142.

held together anarchists, despite the ideological discrepancies in the 1930s, was through different forms of solidarity and coordination.<sup>15</sup> These acts of kinship in *barris* are an example of how, indeed, solidarity bonds and a sense of community were essential in the anarchist movement.

Finally, the proletarian barris were provided with leisure spaces that not only fostered the expansion of political ideas but also helped create a sense of community among residents. The most notable examples were the *ateneus*, spaces dedicated to discussion and the democratization of culture. They organized activities such excursions into nature for intellectual exchanges, or plays, which their plots were often anti-clerical and radical left-wing. Additionally, they had cooperative shops where they offered foodstuff at reduced prices.<sup>16</sup> All these activities were instrumental in spreading political ideas and building a sense of common experience among the working-class residents of the barris. Bars were also vital spaces for political freedom and expression. The socialist Karl Kautsky noted that in Germany, 'taverns were seen as the last refuge for political freedom for the working class'.<sup>17</sup> Bars in Barcelona were prevalent in all proletarian barris, some of the most popular ones in 1930s being la Criolla, bar Marsella or la Tranquilidad. However, Mary Donovan has argued that bars also contributed to the repression of the working-class.<sup>18</sup> Bars were often associated with immorality. Therefore, the great quantity of them in proletarian barris, contributed to the association of the working-class to moral decadence.<sup>19</sup> For instance, the chronicler Rafael Nogeras wrote 'Ah Barcelona, if you had any shame not a single house would remain standing in the Barri Xino'.<sup>20</sup> This not only shows how the locals interact with the space and shapes their subjectivities, but also those who do not live in it.

Considering the above, we can state that Barcelona's urbanistic particularities did favour the expansion of the libertarian movement. However, to fully understand its spread among its population, we must assess the role that culture played in it. As the example of the *ateneus* has shown, one of the major axes of anarchism was the belief of reaching emancipation by cultivating 'cerebral dynamite'<sup>21</sup>. This led to the creation of multiple 'rationalist schools' for working-class children.<sup>22</sup> The first one was the 'Modern School' by Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, which set as a model for other schools in Barcelona and even in the rest of Spain. Great part of the children that attended were migrants that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Susanna Tavera, 'Anarchism or anarchisms? The history of heterogeneous revolutionary deployment,

<sup>1930-1938&#</sup>x27;, Catalan Historical reviews, 5:101-116. pp.101-116. p. 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Chris Ealham Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, p. 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> J.S. Roberts, Tavern and politics in the German Labor movement (1980) in Social history of leisure ed.

Gerhard Huck, 123-40. As in Tom Goyens 'Social space and the practice of anarchist history' p. 450.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Mary Kate Donovan 'Mapping Chinatown in 1920s and 1930s Barcelona: how el Raval Became el Barrio Chino, Arizona *Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*, 20 (2016), pp. 9-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Rafael Nogueras i Oller, *Les tenebroses* (1905). Consulted in *Endrets*, < <a href="https://www.endrets.cat/textos/el-carrer-de-migdia-oda-numero-2-a-barcelona/3191">https://www.endrets.cat/textos/el-carrer-de-migdia-oda-numero-2-a-barcelona/3191</a>>, [3/7/2024].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Juan Mir (ed.) *Dinamita cerebral. Antologia de cuentos anarquistas.* (1977, Barcelona) as in Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona*, p. 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Chris Ealham, Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, p. 47.

came from other parts of Spain with higher levels of illiteracy.<sup>23</sup> For instance, this testimony of a young boy from Andalusia illustrates how these schools not only helped poor children to have access to education but also put them into contact with anarchism since a very young age: 'I'm Andalusian and I moved to *l'Hospitalet* when I was nearly 10 years old. I learnt everything I know from the anarchists. I was 14 or 15 and I didn't know how to read or write. I learnt at the night school organised by the libertarians.'<sup>24</sup> Considering the role of schools, as well as the *barris* and the facilities in them, we could state that anarchism was to some extent, a result of social and cultural influence. Many of its components had been had exposed to its culture from a very young age and had established bonds under these institutions and places. Therefore, anarchism was not just an ideology for them, but rather a result of the culture inside the community that they have grown up and the ideas that they had been listening to since they were young.

Another essential factor of the strong hold that anarchism had was the role of the press. This was highly connected to education, as many students from these schools then became publicists for the magazines.<sup>25</sup> As Susana Tavera has shown, the press in a mass society not only helped promote political consensus but also social and cultural movements.<sup>26</sup> Especially in movements such as anarchism that had no hierarchy, the press was key for mobilisation and the building of ideology. Therefore, it is no coincidence that, out of the 7328 anarchist issues that were published in Spain from 1890 to 1915, almost half were in Barcelona. 27 When it comes to the 1930s magazines like Solidaridad Obrera played an important role in, for example in organising the strikes that increased during this decade. Furthermore, some historians like Martha Grace Duncan have recently stressed how anarchism had its martyrs and secular rituals which at times made it resemble a religion.<sup>28</sup> This has been argued to explain its widespread appeal in Spain. Considering this new hypothesis, if we analyse the press, we see that indeed it played an important role in the creation of martyrs for the movement. For instance, the case of Andrés Arranda Oritz, a young worker that was executed for having committed robbery in the 1930s. The numerous publications of his case in anarchist journals led to a group of anarchists to kill his executioners.<sup>29</sup> This case illustrates the power that anarchist press had not only in creating a common culture but also in mobilising the population in the 1930s.

Finally, when it comes to gender, anarchism prior to the Civil War was a masculine movement, however, it was thanks to the role of culture that it reached women as well. If we analyze the active members of the CNT and FAI almost all were men, and their policies were mainly focused

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Francisco Manzanares, cited in Marin, 'Llibertat' p. 485 as in *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Susanna Tavera, 'Anarchism or anarchisms? The history of heterogeneous revolutionary deployment, p. 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> James Michael Yeoman, *Print culture and the formation of the anarchist movement in Spain*, 1890-1915, (Routledge, 2020). p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Martha Grace Duncan 'Spanish Anarchism Refracted: Theme and Image in the Millenarian and Revisionist Literature', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23:3, pp.323-346 as in *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Chris Ealham, 'Crime and Punishment in Barcelona', p.31-34.

on the workplaces typically masculine. What is more, Mariano Rodriguez Vazquez, general secretary from the CNT, declared, 'we know it is more pleasant to give orders than to obey... Between the woman and the man, the same thing occurs. The male feels more satisfied having a servant to make his food, wash his clothes... That is reality. And, in the face of that, to ask that men cede (their privileges) is to dream'.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, despite women's emancipation not being considered within the movement, they were still present in the rear guard. School was coeducational, ateneus were open to everyone and women also were publishers in magazines such as La Revista Blanca. This shows how despite not being formally included, the anarchist ideas of emancipation and equality might have reached them. This led some women to form small groups of anarchist women in 1934.<sup>31</sup> One of the creators, Soledad Estorach, declared: 'women would come to a meeting once-maybe they'd even join-or come, for example, on a Sunday excursion, or to a discussion group-they'd come once and never be seen again... Even in industries where there were many women workers-textiles, for example-there were few women who ever spoke at union meetings. We got concerned about all the women we were losing, so we thought about creating a women's group to deal with these issues'.<sup>32</sup> Ultimately, these small groups laid the ground for the creation of their own liberation movement in 1936, with groups such as, Mujeres Libres.

In these first two parts, we have seen how cultural and urban factors are crucial to explain the persistence and expansion of anarchism in Barcelona in the 1930s. However, to understand the three months of revolution that took place Barcelona in 1936, we need to assess what led to the radicalisation of anarchism in the 1930s. It is at this time that instead of the more 'ideological' anarchism of the previous decades, there was a rise in violent actions close to the expropriations that happened at the beginning of the war. In this case as well, the socio-economic conditions played a crucial part in it. One of the key factors that changes at that time is the rise of unemployment. It was mainly because of a decline in investment in public works and a change in the global economy due to the Great Depression. This did not have the same impact in Spain as in other countries, but it still contributed to the financial problems that the Republic was facing.<sup>33</sup> As a result, the levels of unemployment increased drastically. There are reports of 300 workers visiting employers on the same day.<sup>34</sup> However, the only statistics about unemployment come from CNT surveys, which stated that, in 1933, 285,898 workers were unemployed.<sup>35</sup>. We should be careful as it is possible that these were overstated. The lack of data from the government shows how little action they were taking to tackle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Mariano R. Vázquez, "Avance: Por la elevación de la mujer," *Solidaridad Obrera* (10 October 1935) as in Martha A.Ackelsberg, 'Separate and Equal? Mujeres Libres and Anarchist Strategy for Women's Emancipation', *Feminist Studies*, 11:1, (1985), pp.63-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Soledad Estorach, interview with author, Paris, 4 Jan. 1982 as in *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Albert Balcells, 'La crisis económica dels anys trenta del segle XX', *Bulletí de la Societat Catalana d'Estudis Històrics*, 24 (2013), p. 349-365.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Chris Ealham, Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, p. 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> *Ibid*.

the problem. Moreover, we see a link between unemployment and anarchist affiliation. For instance, in 1933, two thirds of the CNT were unemployed.<sup>36</sup> This shows how in the 1930s there was a great part of the population that was excluded from the labor market. Thus, the only way to improve their socio-economic conditions was through revolution.

One of the most affected groups with the high rates of unemployment were the first and second generations of migrants that came with the migration wave of 1920s from the South and East of Spain. Most of them occupied unskilled jobs, mainly in the construction field. This has been explained by Enric Uncelay Da Cal as a result of the changes in the labor market in the 1920s. By the time they arrived in Barcelona, the demand of unskilled jobs was higher, due to the increase of pressure on the construction sector by the creation of new neighborhoods.<sup>37</sup> However, we should also take into consideration the high levels of illiteracy which were 70% higher than in Catalan households. This might have been an obstacle to have access to skilled jobs. However, by the 1930s great part of them had lost their job. According to *Solidaridad Obrera* in 1933, 80% of workers on the construction field were unemployed. <sup>38</sup> Moreover, the majority of these migrants, because of their economic situation, lived in the neighborhoods with the worst living conditions. For instance, 74% of the residents living on the outskirts of the city were migrants.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, considering that bad living conditions and unemployment are two factors linked to the raise of anarchism, it is no surprise that great part of the members of the CNT and FAI were migrants. Between 1930 and 1936, only 35.1% of the anarchists in the CNT came from a Catalan household. In the FAI this was even lower, with only 32.6 %.<sup>40</sup>

However, we should be careful when making a link between immigration and anarchism. Especially when using primary sources from the authorities as they often use xenophobia to condemn anarchism. The majority of the migrants in the libertarian movement during the Second Republic were born in Barcelona. The average age of the CNT and FAI members in the 1930s was 30.3 for the CNT and 29 for the FAI. <sup>41</sup> If we contrast this with testimonies like Manuel Llama's, which said that he joined the CNT at thirteen years old and then the FAI at eighteen.<sup>42</sup> We see that great part of those affiliated to anarchist syndicates were the children that had migrated at a young age and then grew up

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Solidaridad Obrera (7 February 1933) as in Jason Graner & José Benclowicz, 'The only solution is revolution: the Spanish Confederación Nacional de Trabajo and the problem of unemployment in Republican Spain, 1931-1933'. Labor History, 59:4, (2018), pp.375-397.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Enric Ucelay Da Cal 'El Pueblo contra la clase: populismo legitimador, revoluciones y substituciones políticas en Cataluña' (1936-1939), Ayer, 50, (2003), pp.143-197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Solidaridad Obrera (19 June 1933) as in Jason Graner & José Benclowicz, 'The only solution is revolution: the Spanish Confederación Nacional de Trabajo and the problem of unemployment in Republican Spain, 1931-1933'. Labor History, 59:4, (2018), pp. 375-397.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Chris Ealham, Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, p. 124

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Ma T. Fernández de Sas, P. Pages Blanch, *Diccionari bibliogràfic* as in M. Iñíquez, *Enciclopèdia histórica*, as in Jason Garner & José Benclowicz, 'The only solution is revolution: the Spanish Confederación Nacional de Trabajo and the problem of unemployment in Republican Spain' p. 142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> *Ibid*. p. 142

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Testimony of Manuel Llamas as in Kate Ferris (ed.) MO4939 Civil War and Dictatorship in Spain, Document reader vol.1, p. 3.

experiencing the worst living conditions of the city. Another fact that proves this point is that the majority of the *trentistas* leaders, which was the most moderate faction of the anarchists during the 1930s, were not born in Barcelona. For instance, Angel Pestaña or Juan López Sánchez. Joan Peiró, one of the most influential *trentista*, is one of the few exceptions of moderate anarchists born in Barcelona. However, it is important to note that, he lived most of his early life in Mataró. Meanwhile, if we assess the early life of the members of the most radical faction of anarchism in the 1930s, the majority of them were born and raised in the proletarian neighbors of Barcelona. For instance, Mariano Rodríguez Vázquez. Ultimately, these two examples prove how the socio-economic conditions of the city interact with the radicalization of the ideology.

Finally, as we can see, the key to explaining the changing nature of anarchism in the 1930s is the change in the socio-economic conditions. However, Albert Balcells has argued, that the stability of a regime does not only depend on its economic situation but rather on the legitimization of its institutions. One of the main obstacles the Republic had to face was indeed the high expectations that the working class had on it. When they saw these were not going to be fulfilled, many workers started opposing it instead.<sup>43</sup> Anarchists already stated its opposition to the 'bourgeois Republic' in January 1932, with the Alt Llobregat revolt. The delegitimization of the Republic by many workers, in addition to the increase in unemployment, led to a drastic political radicalization. This turn in anarchism is reflected in the schism in 1932 within the movement between the *trentistas* and the *faistas*. The latter was the predominant one and those that represented the radicalized version of the movement. This led to the popularization of the idea that, as the system was corrupt and exploited the working classes, it was morally correct to commit robbery. An anonymous testimony *in Solidaridad Obrera* reflects this ideology and this link between anarchism and criminality: 'I am a pure anarchist and I rob banks, yet I am incapable of robbing the poor like others do'.<sup>44</sup>

This turn led to a drastically increase of criminality in Barcelona. For instance, in 1934 fourteen robberies were committed in Barcelona while two years later this raised to 72. What is more, it is calculated that there were 55 attacks with bombs in Barcelona in 1932, while one year later there were 211.<sup>45</sup> We could state that because of the radicalization of anarchist ideology and criminality was quickly erased. The press played an important role in spreading these ideas among the working-classes. *Tierra y Libertad* published in 1933, 'robbery does not exist as a "crime"... It is one of the complements of life'.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, Chris Ealham, has stressed, that these young anarchists because of their frequent visits to the bars in the *Barri Xino*, anarchists mingled with actual criminals.<sup>47</sup> What proves this, is a report from the police in 1934 of several arrests that they made in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Albert Balcells, 'La crisis económica dels anys trenta del segle XX'. p. 363

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> *Solidaridad Obrera*, (6-10 November 1931) as in Chris Eahalm, Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, p. 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Albert Balcells, 'La crisis económica dels anys trenta del segle XX', p. 359.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Tierra y Libertad, (9 of June 1933) as in Chris Eahalm, Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, p. 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Chris Ealham, Class Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, p. 128.

the *Barri Xino*. It states that it was composed by 'a mixture of anarchists and robbers',<sup>48</sup> who were later discovered to have robbed 300 gold watches and radios.<sup>49</sup> The increase in robbery led to a harsher repression from the authorities. For instance, the 'Ley de los Vagos y Maleantes' or the use of blacklists. The latter played an important role as condemned workers to illegality. For instance, Josep Martorell, who was blacklisted after demonstrating in a woodworker's strike. Following this, he devoted his life to criminality and became a 'Public enemy number 1'.<sup>50</sup>

In light of the above we can see that, the socio-economic factors of the 1930s played a significant role in the spread and shaping of anarchism. This leads to several key conclusions. Firstly, to understand the prevalence of anarchism in Barcelona, we should always consider the importance of the *barris*, which fostered a sense of community and solidarity among the working classes. Anarchism in Barcelona became not just an ideology but a shared culture that permeated the lives of many working-class people. Schools and *ateneus* provided access to culture for those who otherwise would have been excluded. Moreover, when they grew up, they could still be immersed into this common culture due to the influence of the press, which was also a key instrument in spreading ideas and mobilizing the working-class. As we can see, the press offered a community to people who were almost excluded from society due to their socio-economical position. Further proof of this, is how it was this sense of community and shared culture that helped women, despite being excluded formally from anarchism, to create their own emancipation movement.

Furthermore, we see that the change of the socio-economic conditions of Barcelona in 1930s is one of the major factors of the radicalization of the movement. José Luís Oyón has provocatively labeled the Short Summer of Anarchy in 1936 as the 'revolution of the poor'. This was to argue that rather of an ideological revolution was a result of the bad living conditions of the working-classes for decades.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, while anarchist ideology was strong and there were many people that firmly believed in it, it is true in the 1930s it intertwined with criminality. This was a result of the popularization of the idea that the State was corrupt, therefore, it was legitimate to commit robbery. Moreover, the disillusionment because of the high hopes they had for the Republic fueled frustration among the poorest populations in Barcelona. All this helps explain the success of the radical syndicalism in Barcelona in the 1930s. And therefore, why after the coup d'etat of 1936, in Barcelona and Catalonia, the lower sectors of society undertook the revolution that they had been longing for.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> La Vanguardia, (27 December 1934) as in *ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> José Luis Oyón, 'The split of a working-class: city urban space, immigration and anarchism in inter-war Barcelona, 1914-1936', p.

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