Missing the Anti-Colonial Point of Historic Anarchist Debates

K. C. Sinclair

2026

Contents

The Mexican Revolution 3
The Great War for Colonies 6
The Colonization of Palestine 9

Given that we live in a society that promotes ignorance and superficiality, perhaps it shouldn't be all that surprising that current day anarchist discussions of historic inter-anarchist debates usually miss the point when it comes to colonialism (and imperialism more generally.)

Anarchists do not somehow become immune to colonial society's influence simply by making abstract and hollow declarations of opinion. Knowledge and comprehension require actual commitment and curiosity, and these are sadly rare qualities among the European, Euro-American and Euro-Canadian anarchists of today.

This article is an attempt at a brief analysis of what's been missing in recent anarchist discussions of three historic inter-anarchist debates. The term "debates" is used here in the widest sense of a general disagreement rather than some formally-held event or correspondence. Specifically, I refer to the debates between Luigi Galleani and Ricardo Flores Magón over the Mexican Revolution, between Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta on the First World War, and between Emma Goldman and Reginald Reynolds on Palestine.

In the case of Reynolds, we should note that he considered himself a fellow traveler and sympathizer of anarchism, wrote regularly for the anarchist periodicals edited by Vernon Richards, and married the socialist-turned-anarchist Ethel Mannin, but did not self-identify as an anarchist, so my phrase "inter-anarchist debate" must also be understood in the broadest sense.

The Mexican Revolution

The anarchist periodical *Tinderbox* and the anarchist website *The Transmetropolitan Review* (TTR) have recently invoked the Galleani-Magón debate, though without even being aware of it in the former case.

The individual who writes articles at the TTR website claimed in May of this year that the historic anarchist Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) made a "fateful alliance with Pascual Orozco," the latter being a bourgeois revolutionary who, with the help of Pancho Villa, took control of Ciudad Juárez in 1911. The author makes no distinction between the on-the-ground forces of the PLM and the Junta (leadership board) of that organization, which, from Los Angeles obviously could not directly control the actions of every individual on the frontlines in Mexico, even if they had wanted to.

TTR goes on to sell the lie that at the time, "the PLM was willing to work with anyone against Madero, and they took positions in Orozco's rebel government alongside oligarchs and hacienda owners, something which further isolated the PLM from anarchists."

In reality, Magón and the rest of the Junta, in their periodical, *Regeneración*, called for violent resistance to Orozco once he took control of Juárez, denouncing him as bourgeois and openly accusing him of being on the wrong side of the revolution, specifically because he was trying to disarm other revolutionaries and was friendly with the rich.

To be clear where TTR wasn't, the anarchists they claim the PLM isolated themselves from are specifically the Italian-American anarchists associated with the periodical, *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Subversive Chronicle), edited by Galleani.

TTR seems to forget for a moment that the PLM, or at least its Junta, were anarchists too, so they technically could not become isolated from themselves as individual anarchists even if they could become isolated from Italian-American anarchists. In reality, it was the Italian-American anarchists who chose to isolate themselves from the Mexican anarchists and the social revolution

in Mexico as a whole, because the Italian-Americans were racist and ignorant regarding the dynamics of social revolution, particularly Indigenous, peasant and rural revolution.

Some of the Italian-Americans had traveled to Mexico to take part in the revolution but then returned home to slander it in the pages of Galleani's periodical, much to his approval. TTR, with their false claims about bourgeois collaboration, soft-pedals the racism that the Italian-American anarchists used to justify their opposition to the PLM and their denigration of the Mexican Revolution in general. It can't be that TTR is merely unaware of this racism, because they have already specifically mentioned it earlier in their article.

The author openly admits that in the pages of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, "month by month, the language grew more insulting and venomous, as well as racist."

TTR even discuses a racist quote from Galleani, but fails to mention that this quote had already been discussed by historian Kenyon Zimmer in his 2015 book, *Immigrants Against the State*. Galleani, in his periodical, had preposterously claimed that a less industrial country like Mexico, populated primarily by Indigenous peoples, mestizos and Black people (of various ancestries), was less likely to engage in a social revolutionary movement than a more industrial country populated primarily by white people.

TTR, furthermore, falsely claims that "the involvement of Italian anarchists in the Mexican Revolution of 1910 is a moment in history that remains obscure not just to contemporary anarchists, but also to academic historians." This is ironic given that TTR rarely provides citations or references for any academic (or otherwise) documentation that they draw from, and several academics have in fact written something, in various languages, about the Galleani-Magón debate, for example Zimmer, as just mentioned.

Magón's periodical, along with other prominent anarchist periodicals of the era besides *Cronaca Sovversiva*, also carried the debate, so modern day anarchists have no one but themselves, their monolingualism and their lack of curiosity (or sincerity) to blame for their own lack of knowledge of anarchist history.

Prominent anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin and Voltairine De Cleyre, as well as a few Italian-American anarchists not associated with Galleani, strongly and publicly took the side of the PLM Junta, but TTR never mentions it, content to merely do their own (racist) smear campaign against the Junta, much as the Italian-American anarchists centered around Galleani's periodical did back in the day.

Magón, in an April of 1912 issue of *Regeneración*, even referred to Galleani by name as being among "our enemies," due to his part in the "smear campaign" against Mexican revolutionaries, including anarchists. But you would not have any clue about this if you were curiosity-impoverished enough to have TTR as your only source.

Aside from TTR, an anonymous contributor to the offline anarchist combat-fetishist periodical, *Tinderbox*, also invoked the *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *Regeneración* anarchists in an article titled History Drowned in Lethe published in the Spring of 2026 issue.

This article carries even greater irony than the writing of TTR, given that the *Tinderbox* contributor complains that today's anarchists don't reference anarchist history enough, particularly the history of the anarchists of *Cronaca Sovversiva*. Instead, or so we're told, anarchists too often reference statist (or at least non-anarchist) revolutionaries in places like Rojava or Chiapas.

The author even lumps together specific organizations such as the modern Zapatistas and the defunct marxist Quebec Liberation Front with "anti-colonial struggles" as such, over-generalizing that "the relevance of these experiences to an anarchist revolutionary project is tenuous."

An Indigenous anarchist might be surprised to discover from such an enlightened settler that their own struggle against colonialism has nothing to offer their own anarchist struggle for freedom, or vice versa, but this is of no concern to the charlatan historian who wrote the article. In fact, as we complete our reading of their article, we discover that the history of anarchism in Mexico is only worth the mere mention of some anarchists having existed there during the era of the (racist) Italian-Americans.

We find no mention of the fact that some of the anarchists in Mexico were Indigenous, or of the fact that the PLM Junta embraced the anti-colonial struggle of the Yaqui and other peoples, these being struggles that the *Tinderbox* writer has just told us only have a "tenuous" relation to "an anarchist revolutionary project."

It appears that it is not so much the anarchist revolutionary project in general that the *Tinderbox* writer is concerned with but more so the specifically racist, white, colonialist, American anarchist project, Mexicans and Indigenous peoples within Mexico be damned, whether anarchist or not. Since the Galleani-Magón debate isn't even mentioned, the writer obviously can't address the racism behind it, nor the general misunderstanding of the dynamics of peasant social revolution that Kropotkin chastised the Italian-Americans of being ignorant of as well.

The *Tinderbox* author asks us if the revolutionary Spain of the 1930s is "really the only experience of anarchists that could nourish our imaginations," neglecting to consider, of course, that the situation there also directly involved colonialism, specifically the colonization (and potential decolonization) of Morocco, the military conquest of which had already caused an uprising within Spain itself back in 1909.

A few North African anarchists or fellow travelers even joined the anarchist militias during the Spanish Civil War. But pay no mind. The *Tinderbox* writer laments a blinkered outlook on the part of others while they themself just represent more of the same.

The author even lumps together the American anarchist periodical, *Man!*, with the Italian-American anarchists, specifically their periodical, *L'Adunata dei Refrattari*, without mentioning the fact that the editor of *Man!*, the Romanian-born Jewish-American anarchist, Marcus Graham, specifically addressed colonialism and anti-colonialism, for example in Palestine and Ethiopia. These are precisely the anti-colonial resistance movements that the *Tinderbox* writer has just told us are probably irrelevant to anarchism. Meaning that *Man!* should have been castigated instead of included within the pantheon of acceptability.

The American-centric *Tinderbox* author also makes no mention of the fact that Graham contributed, during and after the Second World War, to the British anti-colonialist anarchist periodicals, *War Commentary* and *Freedom.* For the author, print anarchism only reappears on Earth with the anarchist turn taken by the writers at *Fifth Estate* in Michigan in the mid-1970s.

The author shows no sign of awareness that veteran Spanish-Canadian and Italian-Canadian anarchists, Federico Arcos and Attilio Bortolotti were just across the river in Windsor, and were visiting Michigan, eventually influencing the anarchists and fellow travelers there such as Fredy Perlman, who certainly can't be accused of thinking that the relation between Indigenous peoples and the struggle against the State is merely tenuous.

Why go to all the effort of complaining about other anarchists drowning history in the fictional river Lethe when you yourself are busy drowning it in the real life rivers Detroit, Thames, Sacramento, Ebro and Rio Grande, all the while hoping that nobody hears the screams? Hopefully the *Tinderbox* contributor is just arrogantly ignorant and not a compulsive liar like *The Transmetropolitan Review* writer seems to be.

Thankfully, at least one former *Tinderbox* collective member subsequently wrote and posted online a modest article titled Goodnight Eurocentric Pride, responding to *Tinderbox's* trash.

But unfortunately, that response provoked a response of its own, this time by a real space cadet going by the pseudonym Star Gazer, who was more than happy to ramble on at length while spreading disinformation, and again, completely ignoring the Galleani-Magón debate, the racism behind it, and, for the most part, colonialism in general.

Lest we think that they were merely racist, the space cadet also reveals themselves as sexist and ageist when they bizarrely and callously choose to exploit the subject of sex tourism in South East Asia as the bleach with which to white-wash American imperialism.

The space cadet's argument amounts to a truly gymnastic attempt to render equivalent two distinct categories, specifically, the individual American sex tourist and the opponent of American imperialism, as if American sex tourism in South East Asia wasn't itself an aspect of American imperialism.

Settler-imperialist anxiety can truly twist the mind, along with one's tactical choice of argumentation. Everything the settler projects onto others they already feel guilty of themselves, whether they or their ancestors are the actual perpetrator.

The Great War for Colonies

The next debate, the argument between Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta about the First World War, I have already addressed at length in my previous article, *Anarchism and Revolutionary Defeatism*. However, it's worth noting that the debate was brought up again recently in the September of 2026 book, *Constitutionalising Anarchism*, by Ruth Kinna and Alex Prichard, as well as on an episode of the podcast, *It Could Happen Here*, released that same month. Anti-colonialism, as a crucial point of the debate, again gets the short end of the stick.

Kinna and Prichard in their new book essentially reiterate Kinna's spurious argument from one of her previous books, 2016's *Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition*, where she argued that "Kropotkin's position was consistent with his conception of anarchism and he defended it in these terms," that position being one in favor of the side of the Allies, the colonial powers of France, Belgium, Britain, Russia, Japan and later Italy, as they fought against their fellow colonial powers, Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire (not to mention Bulgaria.)

Kinna in her 2016 book, incredibly, even defends Kropoktin's support for the Allies, all of them colonizers, by appealing to his long history of support for national liberation. Kropotkin himself was well aware that the Allies had colonies in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. He simply engaged in a rhetorical strategy of avoiding the matter once the war began.

Kropotkin, like Joseph Stalin after him, wanted a popular front. The colonized of the Global South would have to take a backseat to Belgian and French citizens, or a place on the front lines in the French Army of Africa, where they would be treated as second class humans at best, or cannon fodder at worst. French military recruitment even sparked several rebellions within Africa, but this is of no apparent concern to Kropotkin, or Kinna for that matter.

Kinna, with a century of hindsight in her favor, when discussing Kropotkin's stance appears as unaware that colonialism took place on other continents and that the peoples of the colonies

were deserving of liberation from European powers like France, regardless of Kropotkin's prioritization of France and the other Allies in the heat of the moment.

"Facing up to the French failure to implement the revolutionary plan hatched in 1792, in 1914 Kropotkin held fast to the principle of national defence against oppression," Kinna claims, failing to ask how the people of the Congo could be defended from Belgium, or how the people of Senegal could be defended from France if Kropotkin was busy urging support for the very powers that were colonizing them.

For Kropotkin, opposing Germany trumped all other concerns, at least during the war. According to Kinna, Kropotkin was right that Germany was colonizing France. But wasn't France colonizing Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean? Kropotkin and Kinna have no answer, at least none they want to openly declare.

Kinna, naturally, doesn't so much as bother mentioning that opposition to the Allies' colonialism factored into the stance that other anarchists such as Errico Malatesta, Emma Goldman and Lilian Wolfe took against Kropotkin's euro-centric position.

Kinna references Malatesta's article, *Anarchists Have Forgotten Their Principles*, but conveniently neglects to mention his specific references to the French colonization of Morocco and the Belgian colonization of the Congo, nor does she mention that Kropotkin offered no counter-argument to Malatesta on that front.

In 2026's *Constitutionalising Anarchism*, Kinna and Prichard absurdly claim that "contrary to Goldman's assertion, Kropotkin's endorsement of the Entente's [the Allies'] fight was an expression of a consistent antiwar stance."

"Confusingly, Kropotkin's support for the Entente in 1914 sprang from his conception of a martial morality," or so we're meant to believe, as if Africans and Asians don't count as moral subjects.

"The war," for Kropotkin, "was a struggle between life-affirming and life-sapping regimes" Kinna and Prichard tell us, and apparently we're supposed to think he was right about this, even if we are among the life-sapped due to being the subjects of French, Belgian, British, Russian, Japanese or Italian colonialism.

The fact that the war didn't end war or colonialism; that fascism and another World War followed; that Palestine still suffers today as a result of British, Soviet, American and Zionist imperialism; and that Kanaky still struggles today against French colonialism, more than century later, is all of no great importance. Defending Kropotkin's honor, no matter the human cost, is made the primary objective.

In the topsy-turvy world of the academic, colonial empires can fight for national liberation. Support for war can be anti-war. But in the real world, this is far from the case, and the rest of us have to suffer for it.

Turning now to the recent episode of *It Could Happen Here* on the anarchist split over the Great War, host Andrew (of YouTube's Andrewism fame) begins by explaining that Malatesta and Kropotkin, as well as other anarchists, "clashed intellectually over the nature of war, history, national struggle, and revolutionary change," but Andrew also offers basically no discussion of Malatesta's specifically anti-colonial reasoning for opposing Kropotkin's stance on the war.

We are at least informed that the "First World War emerged from decades of imperial rivalry, colonial competition, military expansion, and competing alliance systems among Europe's great powers."

We are told that Malatesta wrote, contra Kropotkin that "the only war worth fighting was one of liberation, and there was no siding with national agglomerations."

However, this could possibly lead to a misunderstanding, because Malatesta explicitly favored wars of national liberation, for example the war waged by Libyans against their Italian colonial rulers. What Malatesta opposed was wars between and among nation-states, or between and among imperialist states.

He did not oppose nations as such. After all, "nation" and "national" are not exclusively synonyms for the nation-state, or for the imperialist state for that matter. The word "nation" can also be a synonym for an oppressed people such as the Libyans, the Palestinians or the Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Andrew at least, unlike Kinna, reads aloud the quote about Belgian colonialism in the Congo (and other incidences) from Malatesta's *Anarchists Have Forgotten Their* Principles. But again, Andrew provides no commentary on it's significance to the debate.

Andrew then brings up Kropotkin's support for "national liberation struggles," as if this was a point of contrast with Malatesta. The real difference, in the case of the Great War, was that Kropotkin was pretending to forget about Africa and the other continents brutalized by the colonial powers that he was busy rallying behind.

In Kropotkin's opinion, anti-militarists advocating a general strike within a "targeted" nation were "siding with the invaders and making social revolution more difficult to carry out in the future," Andrew explains to us.

"This is, for me," Andrew says, "a somewhat compelling argument."

"I feel this way about current struggle," Andrew explains, going on to add that "while the worker has no friend in the states of the world, and I don't think it should be framed as a matter of campism, the way we see running rampant today, it is undeniable that there are some victories and defeats that will be more or less preferable to the viability of the struggle long term."

This, however, appears as absurd when we have knowledge of the fact that Malatesta did not disagree on that point, he only disagreed with Kropotkin regarding colonialism and militarism!

He even said as much in a response to none other than Benito Mussolini, as I discussed in my *Anarchism and Revolutionary Defeatism* article, and as Davide Turcato had already discussed before me in the book, *Anarchism: 1914–1918, Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War*, edited by Ruth Kinna and Matthew. S Adams.

Malatesta admitted to Mussolini that he hoped particularly for a German defeat. But under no conditions would he advocate for collaboration with the Allies in order to help make it happen. Participation in the war effort would be more harmful than the benefit of a German defeat.

Andrew declares, "I am rooting against an Israeli victory anywhere," as if Malatesta would have disagreed but Kropotkin would have concurred. The point is precisely that Kropotkin was the one who brushed aside the matter of colonialism in World War I, not Malatesta or his comrades.

Andrew states that they think Kropotkin "mischaracterized the anarchist position, or perhaps did not give them enough credit," but it's far from clear what Andrew means by this, given the lack of discussion of the anti-colonial aspect of Malatesta's position.

"I share Malatesta's criticism of the pitfalls of lesser evilism as he kinda predicted World War II," Andrew says.

I would add that this was not just a case of "kinda," but one of being basically correct for most intents and purposes. Malatesta wrote in *Anarchists Have Forgotten Their Principles* that, "after a

long war, an enormous loss of life and wealth, both sides being exhausted, some kind of peace will be patched up, leaving all questions open, thus preparing for a new war more murderous than the present."

Andrew also presents us with this very quote, by way of Matthew S. Adams' quotation of Malatesta, rather than directly from the man himself, whose article has been freely available online for about two decades at this point, at the very least.

Andrew then quotes from the 1915 International Anarchist Anti-War Manifesto which Malatesta, Goldman and Wolfe signed, among others. That manifesto specifically drew attention to French and British colonial conquests in various parts of the Global South. But Andrew reduces this to a matter of Malatesta rejecting the argument of "the lesser evil."

Malatesta certainly did reject that argument, but what he also rejected was the idea that colonialist-imperialist states could engage in a national liberation struggle and at the same time hold onto their colonies.

Andrew even says that they get "where Kropotkin is coming from too, as I see parallels to the situation today vis-a-vis American imperialism and the flawed actors that resist it," as if Malatesta was a tankie or campist, and as if Kropotkin had a leg rather than a colonial subject's throat to stand on.

Andrew explains that they "generally share Malatesta's sentiment," but also think that "there's room for a more sympathetic appraisal of Kropotkin's position."

If there really is some middle ground between just freeing the colonies and making your colonial subjects fight for you in a war against fellow colonial powers, I'm not sure I even want to hear it. It would probably sound too much like postmodern garbage to these elderly ears of mine, and I don't want my fellow colonized subjects' calls for solidarity to be drowned out by a bunch of noise about poor little France and Belgium and how their loot got stolen by fellow thieves.

"It's easy, I think, to reduce this story to Kropotkin standing alone, betraying anarchism," Andrew claims, but I'd add that just because something's easy doesn't mean it's wrong, and in fact, I'd say it really should be easy to oppose colonialism rather than support colonial powers when they're invaded by a peer.

But I'm just a Native, what do I know? I suppose that when I'm told to line up and fight for my colonizer my question should be "how soon can I enlist" rather than "when are you gonna end your invasion of my country?"

Or else maybe I should spout some kind of waffling nonsense about how both sides of the argument for and against colonialism have a point.

The Colonization of Palestine

Finally, we come to the 1930s Goldman-Reynolds debate on Palestine, which Anthony Zurbrugg brought up in an article published on the *Anarchist Studies* blog in March of 2024. This debate was only natural to resurrect in the context of the escalation of the war on Palestine that Israel launched in late 2023, and thankfully Zurbrugg's discussion of it is less jarring than the aforementioned cases.

Zurbrugg first sketches out, though not comprehensively, various historical anarchist responses to Zionism, before honing in on the Goldman-Reynolds debate that was published in

the anarchist periodical *Spain and the World*, edited by Vernon Richards and supported by Lilian Wolfe. Zurbrugg starts out on the wrong foot by mis-attributing editorship of the periodical to Goldman, but we can perhaps hand-wave this away as a simple mistake and lack of attention to detail.

The meat of the matter is the actual argument over Palestine and its colonization by British and Zionist forces. However, Zurbrugg partly misses the point.

Zurbrugg somehow even claims that Goldman "distinguished between Zionism which she opposed, and the rights of Jewish working people."

However, this is difficult to believe if you actually read Goldman's article, including the quote that Zurbrugg themself provides, where Goldman claims that the "land should belong to those who till the soil," and that Jewish immigrants had "reclaimed wastelands and have turned them into fertile fields and blooming gardens." This statement stands out as an early example of what's now known as Zionist hasbara (explaining), in other words, settler colonialist propaganda, in this case building upon the colonialist theory of John Locke.

Zurbrugg describes Goldman's response to Reynolds as merely naïve, adding that "the willingness of Jewish kibbutz members to do manual labour did not, of itself, imply a commitment to broad radical change," and that "such tropes concealed facts: people lived on these so-called 'wastelands' before new settlers came in, these were not 'empty' lands; also, it did not follow that because settlers were making 'wasteland' more productive that their interests should prevail."

Zurbrugg continues, explaining that "non-Jews were not routinely asked to join the kibbutz; they were unwelcome," and adding that "there was little or no solidarity in joint occupation and cultivation of land by Arabs and Jews together."

All of this is good to point out, but we are left longing for a stronger condemnation of Goldman's reactionary Zionist response to Reynolds, all the more so since she herself frames it as anti-Zionism.

Zurbrugg does not directly discuss Goldman's spurious accusation that Reynolds was merely opposed to Jewish immigration to Palestine, but does quote from Reynold's response to Goldman, where he wrote, "the prime question is not whether I approve of Jewish immigration, but who shall decide on its extent," with Reynolds adding that "at present, it is determined by a foreign government – our own [Britain] — whose decisions are enforced upon an unwilling population at the point of the bayonet."

Reynolds correctly identifies British imperialism and its Zionist sub-contractor as the primary contradiction when it comes to Palestine in the inter-war period. Goldman, however, has attempted to apply the magician's trick of misdirection. Zurbrugg has no commentary of their own on Reynolds' anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist challenge, and Goldman's failure to meet it. Zurbrugg even neglects to quote from Reynold's specific rejection of Goldman's Zionist and Lockean argument.

Reynolds writes, "as to the statement that 'the land should belong to those who till the soil,' I neither accept it nor see its relevance to Emma Goldman's case" adding that "ideally speaking, the land should 'belong' in my opinion, to the whole community — since all wealth comes out of it."

Reynolds continues, asserting that "if I accept Emma's statement, then the land in Palestine should have belonged to the Arab peasant; and the Arab landlords had no right to sell it to Jewish immigrants who dispossessed these Arab tenants."

"That is the only sense I can make out of Emma's statement, unless she means that the land belongs to whoever can grab it — i.e. that it belonged first to the Arab fellaheen but now belongs to those who pushed the Arab off," Reynolds writes, adding that "'finding is keeping' is a good motto for conquistadores and imperialists, but not, I should have thought, for Anarchists."

Goldman never responded to Reynold's clear-eyed take-down of her colonialist argument, and Zurbrugg doesn't even mention this fact, deflating any sense of the decisiveness of Reynold's critique and its relevance to our present day.

Zurbrugg also makes no mention of the highly problematic Zionism of later anarchists such as Murray Bookchin and Sam Dolgoff, who explicitly defended the Israeli state in the 1980s, even while it was busy terrorizing Lebanon as well as Palestine. Western imperialism and its sponsorship of Israeli settler colonialism is not a factor of importance in Zurbrugg's framing, let alone the most crucial factor.

Zurbrugg does at least mention Jewish-British anarchist Albert Meltzer's important early article on Palestine that was published in *Spain and the World's* successor, *Revolt!* in 1939. But even here we are provided only with Meltzer's initial condemnation of "colonisation" (this being a direct quote from Meltzer, not a use of scare quotes) and his hopes for the "co-operation of the Arab revolutionaries throughout the Near East" with the "anti-Zionist Jewish minority."

The crucial conclusion of Meltzer's article is left out, that being his argument that "the struggle must be against Imperialism first, against Zionism secondly, and lastly against the bourgeois nationalist government when created," an order of business that many present day Euro/American anarchists would sneeze at rather than embrace.

For the campist Euro/American anarchist, a Palestinian resistance organization or the Iranian government are the equivalents of the American government, just another expression of Power like any other, and American citizens have no responsibility for the history and present of Western imperialism in South West Asia, or for the conditions that such imperialism has created or exacerbated, conditions that potentially contribute to the use of authoritarian methods of organization by the resistance.

The fact that America supports imperialist and warmongering dictatorships in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates while decrying the (supposedly) same thing in Iran is of no importance to the Euro/American campist anarchist. People in Iran or Yemen have no right of resistance to Western imperialism because they come from authoritarian cultures and live under authoritarian regimes, unlike the enlightened anarchist of the West, who, not noticing the contradiction, supports a camp that includes Gulf monarchs and Israeli politicians, because the Ukrainian state needs all the weapons it can get.

In reality, Europeans and Americans must take some measure of responsibility and oppose the imperialism of their own states, even if that imperialism militarily benefits the war effort of a state they are soft on, such as Ukraine.

As Malatesta argued in his 1914 article, *Our Foreign Policy*, "for an anarchist, the primary enemy is the oppressor who is closest to him, and against whom he can fight more effectively."

In North America, we are raised by colonialist-imperialist society to think that the main bad guy is whatever Global South country our masters declare to be the enemy of the week. Surely, as anti-authoritarians, we can do better than merely riding our master's coat tails off to war.

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)
Anti-Copyright



K. C. Sinclair
Missing the Anti-Colonial Point of Historic Anarchist Debates
2026

Retrieved on November 8, 2026 from historykeepshappening.wordpress.com

usa.anarchistlibraries.net