

# ‘Deserter in Scandinavia’: Augustin Souchy, Transregional Networks, and the Scandinavian Syndicalist Press, 1914-1919

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## ABSTRACT

This article explores the Scandinavian syndicalist movement during the First World War through the experiences of the German anarchist Augustin Souchy. Exiled to Scandinavia in 1914, his five years in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark illuminate the revolutionary impetus of the Scandinavian syndicalist movement and, simultaneously, the crucial role of the revolutionary press – editors, distributors, translators, contributors, and correspondents – in forging transregional networks of solidarity across national borders. In fact, beyond the pragmatic function of publishing anarchist propaganda, this article highlights that the community around the revolutionary press in Scandinavia provided sanctuary and refuge for exiled revolutionaries such as Souchy.

**Keywords:** *syndicalism, Scandinavia, exile, transregionalism, press*

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## INTRODUCTION

The German anarchist Augustin Souchy (1892-1984), according to his friend Abe Bluestein, ‘had a knack to be at the centre of historic developments’.<sup>1</sup> However, he is probably best known for being one of the founding secretaries of the International Working Men’s Association in 1923, for being one of the editors of the influential German anarcho-syndicalist paper *Der Syndikalist* in the interwar

years, and for his involvement in the anarcho-syndicalist trade union National Confederation of Labor (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*) during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>2</sup> Often overlooked, however, are his five years in exile in Scandinavia during the First World War, which were significant for his later experiences in Spain, as he established long-lasting friendships with Swedish syndicalists Albert Jensen and John Andersson, learned valuable lessons about cooperativism in Denmark during the war, and became 'a preeminent publicist of the anarchist revolution abroad, capitalizing on his multilingual talents', as Jesse Cohn puts it.<sup>3</sup> In extant scholarship on Souchy, his activities in Scandinavia are rarely mentioned, but examining his years in exile in Scandinavia reveals not only a great deal about syndicalism in that region, but also connects that history to broader issues and longer traditions within the anarchist and syndicalist movements across the world.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Souchy fled Germany for Stockholm. As a committed anarchist anti-militarist, he was happy to leave Germany and take up residence in neutral Sweden. The non-belligerent Scandinavian countries had strong anti-militarist movements at the time, spurred on by syndicalists and general resistance against state warfare, stretching back to the early twentieth century and the emergence of the so-called 'young socialist' movements in these countries.<sup>5</sup> His five-year sojourn in Scandinavia – during which time he was deported from Sweden to Norway, from Norway to Denmark, and from Denmark back to Sweden – overlapped with some of the most monumental events in global and Scandinavian left-wing history, including the First World War, the socialist peace congress in Stockholm, the Russian Revolution, the Storming of the Stock Exchange in Copenhagen in February 1918, the German Revolution, demonstrations to free syndicalist prisoners from the 1908 *Amalthea* affair in Malmö, and the Spanish flu. During his time in exile in Scandinavia, Souchy encountered some of the most prominent Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish anarchists and syndicalists, such as the Swedes Emil Manus and his wife Eva Löfgren, Albert Jensen and his Norwegian life partner Elise 'Ottar' Ottesen, and the Danes Christian Christensen, Andreas Fritzner, Carl Iversen, and Lauritz Hansen. Through these figures – editors, contributors, translators, distributors, and correspondents – he also connected with the Swedish periodicals *Brand*, *Syndikalisten*, and *Nya Folkviljan*, and the Danish periodicals *Solidaritet* and *Den Røde Krig*.

In exile Souchy relied on a well-established transregional Scandinavian network and the sanctuary afforded by the revolutionary press. In fact, as this article explores, the revolutionary press in Scandinavia served two specific func-

tions beyond disseminating propaganda by the word. First, it connected the Scandinavian syndicalist movement into an informal, yet tightknit network across the region. In other words, connected historically and linguistically, the syndicalist movements in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were not confined within national borders but extended beyond the state to encompass a much larger, integrated movement through these periodicals. That said, while transnational in nature, the Scandinavian syndicalist movement was more transregional with an emphasis on mobility and collaboration across Denmark, Norway, and Sweden than integrated into wider international syndicalist networks.<sup>6</sup> At a time when anarchist historiography has embraced the global turn – a necessary and invigorating new direction – this article treats regionality as a central unit of analysis and acknowledges variabilities of anarchist and syndicalist movements across the globe.<sup>7</sup> Second, this transregional network, in turn, allowed revolutionaries such as Souchy to enter a safe space in exile, a syndicalist network of solidarity and comradeship, and to find refuge within the revolutionary communities around the syndicalist and anarchist press of Scandinavia. That is, the transregional syndicalist press in Scandinavia – the editors, correspondents, translators, distributors, and reading rooms – provided a means of survival for anarchists and syndicalists in exile. This combination of propaganda by the word and propaganda by the deed, of ‘comradely engagement’, as Kathy Ferguson puts it, ‘was a powerful source for the political energy of sustaining anarchist communities’.<sup>8</sup> Such forms of solidarity (food, shelter, work, friendship), of providing sanctuary and means of survival through the communities around the revolutionary press, were not always prevalent among anarchists in exile, as Constance Bantman argued in relation to French anarchists in exile in London.<sup>9</sup> However, I am not claiming a uniqueness to the Scandinavian movement, but rather suggesting that the revolutionary press of the syndicalists performed a function well beyond the pragmatics of publishing propaganda.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, following Ferguson’s astute insight, this article illustrates how the revolutionary press did not simply propagate anarchist and syndicalist information but how it, in and of itself, created the movements through acting as nodal points of solidarity across borders.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, Souchy’s exile in Scandinavia reveals a great deal about state-repression of anarchists and syndicalists through imprisonment and deportation as well as, conversely, the fragility of passports as a form of state-sanctioned identification. In fact, resisting the state and its borders, Souchy relied on this transregional syndicalist network to subvert the legitimacy of the state through fake passports and covert identities.<sup>12</sup>

In pursuit of these arguments, my aim here is three-fold. First, to illuminate the historical significance of the Scandinavian syndicalist movement, its revolutionary ambitions, and its role as a safe haven for exiled revolutionaries. Second, to bring to light the transregional networks of Scandinavian syndicalists through Souchy's exile. Third, to emphasise the role of the revolutionary press in forging this network and in providing refuge. While there is a growing body of scholarship on syndicalism in Sweden, and to a lesser extent Denmark, historians have often overlooked the transregional and inter-Scandinavian dimensions of these movements.<sup>13</sup> This has ramifications for understanding the history of syndicalism in Scandinavia, reducing the analysis of these movements to the confines of national histories, rather than illuminating the ways in which these movements across Scandinavia were connected – an aspect that this article explores through Souchy's travels. At the same time, scholarship on anarchism and syndicalism during the First World War has largely overlooked the impact the war had in Scandinavia and how the transregional Scandinavian movement, in fact, offered a space to resist the imperialist war.<sup>14</sup> Extending these inquiries, and drawing particularly on Souchy's brief memoirs of his time as a 'deserter in Scandinavia', the Danish anarchist historian Carl Heinrich Petersen's interview with Souchy from 1967, and articles from *Solidaritet*, this article opens a window on to the entangled, transnational world of Scandinavian anarchism and syndicalism, the importance of the communities around the revolutionary press as sanctuaries, while also illuminating issues of social democracy, anti-militarism, and the politics of state and police repression.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, while Souchy's memoirs serve as a guide, to fully appreciate the revolutionary impetus of the Scandinavian transregional networks, embodied by the press, the analysis of debates from the contemporaneous syndicalist press, archival material from across Denmark and Sweden, and memoirs from other central figures, allows us to understand the role of transregionality and the function of the communities around the revolutionary press more clearly.

### **EXILE IN SWEDEN: ANTI-MILITARISM, STRIKES, AND HIGH TREASON, 1914-1917**

Souchy was born in Racibórz, Poland, then part of the German empire, to a social democratic father, who initiated him into socialism. In his childhood home, Souchy encountered Russian revolutionaries who had gone into exile after the 1905 revolution, and he decided to become a 'revolutionary' himself. In 1911,

when he was studying chemistry in Vienna, he joined the Socialist Federation (*Sozialistische Bund*), led by Gustav Landauer. Members of the Socialist Federation were kept under strict surveillance and, when the First World War broke out in August 1914, he was expelled to Germany and found his way to Berlin. In the German capital, he fell ill with a heart problem and was granted permission to travel to Sweden for convalescence.<sup>16</sup>

During the initial months of the war, passports were not required to travel across Europe, so he easily obtained landing permission in Sweden. German immigrant anarchists, Souchy recalled, should just state: 'I am a cabinet maker', to avoid attracting suspicion. Making his way to Stockholm, Souchy lodged with the Swedish anarchist Emil Svensson, a printer from Scania known as 'Emil Manus' for his eagerness for more manuscripts and one of the editors of the anarchist periodical *Brand*, and his wife Eva Löfgren, herself an active syndicalist, but soon after moved to premises a few streets away.<sup>17</sup> Manus was also a committed anti-militarist and had ignored the draft summons. When the police came to get him, Souchy recalled, 'he rolled himself up in a carpet so short that his legs were sticking out. In this outfit he was brought to the barracks, but released after a short time'.<sup>18</sup> However, in early 1917, Manus was sentenced to four months in prison for publishing anti-militarist material in a pamphlet entitled *Tyska Faran*, a monthly paper published by *Brand*, which was commuted after the end of the war.<sup>19</sup> Released after a few months, Manus and Löfgren, who herself had been imprisoned for four months in 1917 for publishing a pamphlet entitled *Fred och Revolution* (1917), absconded to Copenhagen in the autumn of 1917.<sup>20</sup> In Denmark, Manus later co-edited the anarchist periodical *Den Røde Krig*, the organ of the Young Socialist Federation (*Ungsocialistisk Forening*, USF), in collaboration with the Danish anarcho-syndicalist Andreas Fritzner. In Stockholm, Souchy took an active part in the anarchist-inclined 'young socialist' movement and wrote for the anarchist and syndicalist papers *Brand*, edited by Henrik 'Hinke' Bergegren, and *Syndikalist*, the latter edited by Gustav Sjöström, as well as left-socialist papers such as *Stormklockan* and *Tiden*.<sup>21</sup> Bergegren was a magnificent speaker, Souchy recalled, and 'exerted great influence, especially among the younger socialists'.<sup>22</sup> A central topic in these anarchist, syndicalist, and left-socialist papers was anti-militarism, a movement that preoccupied the Scandinavian left at the time. In addition to writing for these papers, which did not bring in enough money, Souchy worked as a language teacher, an occupation that would sustain him in Denmark as well. While writing propaganda by the word was important for Souchy, as is also evident, the revolutionary press in

Sweden and Denmark provided sanctuaries for Souchy, and Manus and Löfgren, respectively, when they were expelled.

The First World War had divided the international socialist movement into a pro-Entente faction (minority) and an anti-militarist faction (majority), a division also reflected within the Swedish socialist movement. In February 1916, the left-wing socialist Abraham Karl Erik Hedén agitated in *Stormklockan* for a general strike among workers in case Sweden was dragged into the war. A month later, in March 1916, the young socialists within the Social Democratic Youth Association (*Socialdemokratiska Ungdomsförbundet*) organised a peace congress at The People's House (*Folkets Hus*) in Stockholm. Having been falsely informed that Bolshevik revolutionaries attended and that a revolution was in the planning, the Stockholm police was alarmed by the anti-militarist agitation at the congress and soon after three of the organisers, the left-wing socialists Hedén and Carl Zeth Konstantin 'Zäta' Höglund as well as the anarchist young socialist Lars Ivan Oljelund, who took over as editor of *Brand* after Bergegren in 1916, were arrested and charged with high treason. After Oljelund's arrest, Carl Johan Björklund, another friend of Souchy's and Manus', assumed editorship of *Brand*.<sup>23</sup> Hedén was eventually acquitted, while Höglund received a one-year prison sentence and Oljelund eight months. The revolutionary press, as it was, certainly provoked fear among the authorities, testifying to the crucial role of the press in anti-militarist agitation. As Souchy recalled it, the so-called treason trial manifested the differences within the Swedish social democratic movement, with Häglund establishing the Swedish Social Democratic Left Party (*Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Vänsterparti*) shortly after his release in May 1917.<sup>24</sup>

After the revolution in Russia in March 1917, well-known Russian revolutionaries in exile, perhaps most famously V.I. Lenin and Peter Kropotkin, passed through Stockholm on their way back to Russia.<sup>25</sup> 'Lenin and his comrades came from Switzerland', Souchy recalled, and 'got an enthusiastic reception'.<sup>26</sup> Souchy even met the Indian revolutionary M.P.T. Acharya, co-founder of the Indian National Committee, then in Stockholm for the peace congress organised by the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee within the social democratic Bureau of the Socialist International.<sup>27</sup> With the overthrow of the Tsarist regime and with the Kerensky government in power, Russia and Germany agreed to exchange prisoners of war in neutral Stockholm. Expecting the German soldiers to arrive in Stockholm, Souchy tapped into the strong Scandinavian anti-militarist movement and wrote a flyer to be distributed by Swedish young socialists to the German soldiers arriving at Stockholm central station, encouraging the soldiers to lay down their arms

and agitate for peace upon their return to Germany: 'We, the working people of Europe and the entire world are not enemies: we want peace, freedom, justice, and humanism, which we hope to find in Socialism and in a free order'.<sup>28</sup> Souchy's flyer also ended in the hands of the German ambassador to Sweden, who reported it to the Swedish authorities. As Souchy was the only German among the Swedish young socialists, he was easy to find and was subsequently expelled from Sweden on 19 May 1917 for violating orders of neutrality, despite massive public protests.<sup>29</sup>

## REVOLUTION IN DENMARK: TRANSREGIONAL NETWORKS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PRESS, 1917-1919

A Swedish police officer escorted Souchy on to the train heading for the Norwegian border, from where he proceeded to Kristiania (now Oslo). In the Norwegian capital, he was met by three Norwegian police officers and brought straight to the local police station, where he was locked up in a cell for a week. After a week in solitary confinement, Souchy was deported again, this time to Copenhagen, Denmark. Almost three years into the First World War, visa regulations were now in place and, as his passport had expired, upon landing in Copenhagen, Souchy was brought to the local police station. The Danish police wanted to deport him back to Norway, but Souchy explained that he had just been expelled from there. Instead, the Danish police suggested that he should be deported to Sweden. Souchy happily agreed, without informing them that he had already been expelled from Sweden only eight days before. Landing in Malmö, just a short ferry-ride across from Copenhagen, Souchy noticed two exits: one for Scandinavians, who were not required to produce identification papers, and one for non-Scandinavians. Asked by the border control if he was Swedish, Souchy replied an affirmative: '*Jaha*' [yes], and re-entered Sweden without any problems.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Souchy circumvented the requirement to prove his identity by invoking a Swedish identity.

In Malmö, Souchy proceeded directly to the offices of the anarchist paper *Nya Folkviljan*, founded by Carl G. Schröder and, from September 1915, edited by Karl Fernström, the later chronicler of the 'young socialist' movement in Sweden.<sup>31</sup> A veteran of the Swedish anarchist young socialist movement, Schröder had set up *Nya Folkviljan* as a periodical with anarchist leanings in 1906 to provide a southern Swedish alternative to the Stockholm-focused *Brand*.<sup>32</sup> Not knowing where else to turn, it was the revolutionary press that served as a natural site of sanctuary for Souchy. However, arriving at *Nya Folkviljan*, the local anar-

chists informed Souchy that the Swedish police had already made inquiries about him, probably on account of the Norwegian police, and it became clear that he had to return to Denmark. After all, he had a criminal record in Sweden and risked deportation to Germany. At the time, alcohol prohibition was still in effect in Sweden, prompting many Swedes to travel to Denmark 'to get their fill of Danish aquavit', as Souchy recalled, by the short ferry-crossing from Helsingborg to Helsingør.<sup>33</sup> The busy ferry-route usually required no travel documents, allowing Souchy to re-enter Denmark without any problems.

In Helsingør, he was met at the ferry by the Swedish anarcho-syndicalist Albert Jensen, then living in Copenhagen with his Norwegian partner Elise Ottesen. Jensen was foreign correspondent for the syndicalist weekly *Solidaritet*, edited by Christian Christensen, as well as for *Den Røde Krig*, a task he had also been responsible for in Norway for the anarchist periodical *Direkte Aktion*, which had led to his expulsion from Norway to Denmark in 1914 for anti-militarist agitation. In fact, ever since his anti-militarist agitation during the troubles around the dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden, Jensen had been a prominent and well-respected voice among Scandinavian anti-militarists. With the outbreak of the war, however, his agitation was no longer tolerated by the Norwegian authorities.<sup>34</sup> While in Denmark, Jensen still contributed to *Syndikalistten*, as did Manus and Christensen. As Ottesen was pregnant at the time, Jensen did not want to alarm her but only said that he was going to the ferry to meet a friend. As the hours passed by, Ottesen was concerned that Jensen had boarded a ferry to Sweden and been caught by the Swedish police or that he had been arrested during the widespread labour unrest in Copenhagen, just as Christensen had. Ottesen was relieved when they returned safely in the evening. Having benefitted from the transregional syndicalist network herself, Ottesen later noted that Souchy's journey, being deported from Sweden to Norway to Denmark, was not unusual during the First World War.<sup>35</sup>

In Copenhagen, Jensen brought Souchy to the offices of *Solidaritet* on Korsgade in Nørrebro, at the time a poor working-class area, where he was heartily welcomed by Christensen.<sup>36</sup> *Solidaritet* was the organ of the revolutionary trade union Federation of Trade Union Opposition (*Fagoppositionens Sammenslutning*, FS), founded by Christensen, Andreas Fritzner, and Lauritz Hansen, among others, in 1910. In contrast to the syndicalist movement in Sweden, which drew its inspiration from anarchism, the Danish syndicalist movement was more inspired by Marxism in line with the Industrial Workers of the World.<sup>37</sup> Souchy recalled that Christensen was a 'compelling agitator,



both verbally and in writing, and his appeals to the emotions affected everyone who heard him'.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, Hansen, the general secretary, had a different demeanour, Souchy said: 'his means of agitation were especially satire and irony and a tough sense of humour, and he was such a hard hitting debater that his opponents would rather avoid him'.<sup>39</sup>

Fritzner was a well-known figure in the Scandinavian anarchist and syndicalist environment at the time. In the summer of 1908, he had been involved in the so-called *Amalthea* affair in Malmö harbour. The dockworkers in Malmö were on strike but shipowners brought in seventy to eighty British scabs from Hull to break the strike. To scare them off, some Swedish young socialists decided to explode a bomb next to the *Amalthea* ship where the strike-breakers were lodged. Spending time in Scania during 1907, Fritzner had many friends among the young socialists in Malmö, including Algot Rosberg and Anton Nilsson, the latter affiliated with Sjöström and *Syndikalisten*. In early July 1908, Rosberg travelled to Copenhagen and arranged with Fritzner to buy the fuse for the bomb, which they tested in a pond in the Botanical Gardens, before Rosberg returned to Malmö. In the early hours of 12 July 1908, Nilsson rowed to the *Amalthea* and placed the bomb on the side of the ship, which then went off and could be heard across Malmö. Unfortunately, as it was a hot summer night, the scabs had decided to sleep on the deck and, consequently, the explosion killed one person and injured several others. The main culprits, Rosberg, Nilsson, and Alfred Stern, were quickly arrested, as was Fritzner when he arrived in Malmö a few days later, ostensibly on a mission to recruit subscribers to Christensen's short-lived paper *Socialistisk Arbejderblad*. The editor of *Nya Folkviljan*, Schröder, was also caught up in the frantic arrests after the deed but was soon released. Rosberg and Nilsson were sentenced to death, soon after commuted to life sentences, while Stern was sentenced to life in prison. Fritzner was acquitted two months later, claiming that he thought the fuse was intended for fireworks, but was expelled from Sweden. However, in collaboration with some Russian revolutionaries in Denmark, Fritzner soon after plotted to liberate Rosberg, Nilsson, and Stern from prison and bring them to safety in Denmark. When the three Swedish young socialists were removed to another prison, and the Russian revolutionaries in Copenhagen were arrested by the police, the plan was abandoned.<sup>40</sup> From prison, however, Rosberg wrote an indicting essay about class struggle and the necessity of direct action, which was translated into Danish by Fritzner for the anarchist periodical *Ny Tid* in November 1908.<sup>41</sup> Fritzner's involvement in the *Amalthea* affair is evidence of the well-established transregional Scandinavian networks that Souchy encountered ten years later.

Connecting with the Danish syndicalists in early June 1917, Souchy first stayed with Carl Iversen, the distributor of *Solidaritet*, who lived in Baggesensgade, a short walk from the offices of *Solidaritet*, and since removed to the offices of the USF, which also served as a reading room for *Den Røde Krig*, in Vesselsgade around the corner. While he had a roof over his head, he struggled to find food. He reconnected with Manus, who was unemployed at the time, and the two of them received bread and butter from a Swedish friend who worked as a dishwasher in a hotel. At the time, Manus and Löfgren were active in the Danish anarchist and syndicalist milieu, with Manus frequently giving lectures on anarchism and syndicalism in the 'Karl Marx' discussion club and Löfgren speaking at USF events, and both writing for *Solidaritet* and *Den Røde Krig*. However, Souchy realised that he had to register in Denmark to find a job. As a German citizen, he would not be able to do this. Instead, he wrote to his friend Ernst J. Lundqvist, a left-socialist journalist and contributor to Manus and Oljelund's short-lived paper *Revolutionen*, who he had met in the Royal Library in Stockholm, who then sent Souchy his birth certificate.<sup>42</sup> With this in hand, Souchy went to the Swedish consulate and, as he spoke Swedish with a northern accent, obtained a Swedish passport without any further problems. Now operating under the name 'Lundqvist', Souchy obtained a job as a German language teacher at the Berlitz language school in Copenhagen.

In early November 1917, after a year-long campaign by syndicalists and young socialists, many of the protests led by the anarchist young socialist publisher Axel Holmström, a former distributor of *Brand*, the remaining two prisoners from the *Amalthea* affair, Rosberg and Nilsson, were released from prison. Stern had already been released in the spring.<sup>43</sup> Upon release, Holmström interviewed Nilsson, and several welcome parties were held throughout Malmö and Copenhagen in the weeks after, with Christensen and Löfgren giving speeches at the meeting in Copenhagen.<sup>44</sup> Souchy also took part in the celebrations and gave a lecture. 'This was a feast for all liberals and progressives in Sweden', he recalled, and he befriended Nilsson, who soon after went to Russia.<sup>45</sup>

In early 1918, Souchy witnessed an attempt at revolution in Denmark. Throughout the war, there had been widespread unemployment, food rationing, and scarcity of fuel and housing, which led to growing unrest among the workers during the harsh winter of 1917. The Danish syndicalists had already established the Association of the Unemployed (*De Arbejdsløses Organisation*, DAO) in 1909, which enabled unemployed workers to unite and organise across trades. At the beginning of the war, the Social Democratic Federation (*Socialdemokratisk*

*Forbund*, SDF), led by Thorvald Stauning, had supported the DAO and the agitation of the unemployed, and in September 1916, the SDF gained a seat in the Danish government. On 9 January 1918, around 9,000 workers marched to the Danish parliament to deliver their petition against the government's attitude towards unemployed workers. Stauning and Lauritz Hansen led the march, at Hansen's suggestion singing 'The Internationale' along the way to lift the spirit of the protesting workers.<sup>46</sup> Arriving at the parliament building, Hansen and Stauning went in to negotiate with the government, while Christensen and Thøger Thøgersen, a prominent anti-militarist syndicalist and later communist, riled up the workers in the courtyard with speeches on unemployment and anti-militarism.<sup>47</sup> Inside, Hansen and Stauning negotiated with the Danish ministers, the issue about poverty benefits was especially important. Negotiating on behalf of the DAO, the syndicalists wanted thirty Kroner per week but, through Stauning's intervention, the government ministers only conceded to give nineteen Kroner.<sup>48</sup>

A few weeks later, it became clear that Stauning and the SDF had sold out the syndicalists and the workers, causing an irreconcilable rift between the social democrats and the syndicalists. On 11 February 1918, under the auspices of the DAO, Christensen and Fritzner called for two meetings for card-carrying trade union members only: one held at The People's House (*Folkets Hus*) in Copenhagen, where Fritzner spoke, and one at the Workers' Assembly Hall, where Hansen and the well-known anti-militarist syndicalist Poul Gissemann spoke. After the meetings, the unemployed assembled at the nearby Greengrocers Square (*Grønttorvet*) and soon a procession led by Gissemann, Fritzner and his wife Emma, and a syndicalist carpenter named Alfred Mogensen marched towards the Stock Exchange, the very symbol of capitalism and exploitation, especially of those who had profited from the war. Along the way, shots were fired from the crowd, scaring the police off, but the police did not know where they were heading and failed to intervene until it was too late. Bringing with them a sign saying: 'The gambling den is closed by order of the unemployed!', Fritzner and Gissemann went ahead of the demonstration and overpowered the security guards at the Stock Exchange – upon entry, Gissemann shouted: 'Get out, all you crooks, thieves, and bandits!' – allowing the demonstrators to rush in when they arrived shortly after. The battle raged over the next few hours, with unemployed workers and syndicalists beating up stockbrokers and wealthy traders, until the police finally cleared the Stock Exchange late in the evening. Skirmishes continued in the surrounding streets throughout the night.<sup>49</sup>

Souchy witnessed the Storming of the Stock Exchange but only as 'an inter-

ested spectator', he said, probably aware of his precarious position in Denmark and wanting to stay out of trouble. In fact, Souchy later assessed, 'the rebellion of the discontented was limited to sporadic outbursts; a revolutionary situation did not exist'.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, as Souchy also conceded, the uprisings in Denmark throughout early 1918 led to concrete results: from 1 January 1920, the ten-hour working day was reduced to eight hours. What is more, the realities of direct action became clear to the powerful elite, who had seen what had happened in Russia and feared that a revolution was on its way in Denmark. However, another consequence was that several of the syndicalist leaders were arrested, including Fritzner, Gisseman, Hansen, and even Christensen, even though he had not been present at the unrest but was working in the offices of *Solidaritet*.<sup>51</sup> The young syndicalist Niels Johnsen assumed editorship of *Solidaritet* until Christensen's release in April 1918, a role that soon led to Johnsen's persecution by the Copenhagen police.<sup>52</sup>

While Souchy associated closely with the Danish and Swedish anarchists and syndicalists in Copenhagen, through the Berlitz school he gained employment as a private language tutor with a landowner by the name of Munch on the island of Lolland, situated off the coast of Zealand and close to Germany. During his six months on Lolland, he gained some practical insight into agriculture, discussing with the Polish migrant workers on the estate, as well as observing the Danish cooperative system, to which even the largest landowners contributed. Souchy would draw on these experiences when he went to Spain during the civil war almost twenty years later.<sup>53</sup> Returning to Copenhagen sometime in the autumn of 1918, Souchy wrote frequently for *Solidaritet* and *Den Røde Krig* under the pseudonym August Melker (sometimes Melcher). He wrote lengthy articles on the German *Kaiserreich*, socialism, anarchism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as an article on Landauer and Erich Mühsam.<sup>54</sup>

The Storming of the Stock Exchange was a premonition of further unrest in 1918. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1918, there were several protests against police brutality and militarism. In fact, while Denmark had remained neutral throughout the war, there were concerns that the country would be dragged into war as a belligerent, with workers being enlisted. The syndicalists were the most active anti-militarists in the Association of Consistent Antimilitarists (*Foreningen for konsekvente Antimilitarister*), set up by Johnsen, Gisseman, and Mogensen, among others, in September 1915, and their paper *Militærnegteren*.<sup>55</sup> While Fritzner, Christensen, and Hansen had been released after their brief arrest following the Storming of the Stock Exchange, with young socialist comrades raising bail money, Christensen, Hansen, Johnsen, and

Thøgersen were arrested again in August 1918 for leading these protests against police brutality.<sup>56</sup> During their imprisonment, the FS veered more towards anarchism, especially influenced by Jensen, and on 10 November 1918, the first of several protest meetings against the arrest of Christensen and Hansen as well as Thøgersen and Johnsen took place at Greengrocers Square, with speeches from Fritzner and Gisseman, among others. The protesters demanded the release of Christensen, Hansen, and Johnsen (Thøgersen had been released by then) by 6pm the next day. If their demand was not met, they would call for a general strike on 13 November. The prisoners were not released but a general strike did not occur either. However, about forty-thousand protesters assembled at Greengrocers Square on the 13th, kicking off several days of riots, with the police arresting about fifty people, mostly syndicalists and speakers from the protest meetings.<sup>57</sup> Revolution was in the air, and the end of the war and the German Revolution set in motion new hopes for the Danish syndicalists. In fact, while Souchy was sceptical that the German Revolution would allow him to return to Germany, the Danish and Swedish syndicalists believed that world revolution was impending. As Fritzner later asserted: 'Yes, goddammit, we wanted a revolution', and Manus declared in *Solidaritet* that revolution was on its way across all of Europe: 'Within syndicalist and anarchists circles, they have aimed at this [revolution] through their agitation, which has become the most prevalent after the First World War'.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps sceptical of their revolutionary ambitions, Souchy was nevertheless impressed with the anti-militarist spirit of the 'young Danish conscientious objectors, who did not want to kill or to be killed, and refused to submit to military training'.<sup>59</sup>

A few days after the protests at Greengrocers Square, Danish syndicalists met and agreed to dispatch two comrades to Berlin to ask the Spartacists for help with fomenting a revolution in Denmark.<sup>60</sup> Fritzner and Aage Jørgensen, a syndicalist member of the anti-militarist Zimmerwald movement who had been to Russia and worked for the Russian Telegram Agency (ROSTA) in Copenhagen, ventured on to Germany.<sup>61</sup> Travelling through war-torn and revolutionary Germany was no easy task, but with the help of Danish and German sailors and soldiers, who had laid down their arms, they made it to Berlin. Proceeding immediately to the offices of the Spartacists' paper *Rote Fahne*, Fritzner and Jørgensen met Karl Liebknecht, but soon realised that the Spartacists were busy with their own revolution and could not offer assistance to the Danes. Returning to Denmark on fake passports eight days later, Fritzner was arrested in his home the day after, while Jørgensen also made it to Copenhagen. At the time, Fritzner later recalled, about half of the leaders of the Danish syndicalist movement had been imprisoned.<sup>62</sup>

## 'DEPORTED': THE SPANISH FLU AND EXILE, 1919-1920

Three waves of the Spanish flu swept across Denmark from July 1918 to the autumn of 1920. For the syndicalists, the disease was also a matter of class, with workers living in abysmal conditions in poor and dense housing areas, especially in Nørrebro. As Vilhelm Zürich wrote in *Solidaritet* in November 1918: 'There is probably no doubt that the plague that is raging across Europe, and which has now cast its bacteria [sic] across Denmark, has been provoked on occasion of the powerfuls' mistreatment of humanity'.<sup>63</sup> Jensen and Ottesen were struck by the Spanish flu. In Copenhagen, Jensen and Ottesen had continued working as editors, translators, and correspondents for Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian papers. Associating with many of the Russian exiles in Denmark, they had helped one of them, Lubinsky, publish a small book on trade opportunities between Russia and Denmark and Norway, respectively, bringing them some income to establish a home in Nørrebro, not far from the offices of *Solidaritet*.<sup>64</sup> They spent evenings learning to play chess by the light of an outside lamppost. When they became ill, Ottesen was aware that the overcrowded local hospitals would not admit foreign patients, but during her pregnancy (Ottesen and Jensen's son died only days after being born in October 1917) she had befriended a female doctor who helped them recover.<sup>65</sup>

Holed up in a small room with a dim window facing a grey courtyard in Nørrebro, Souchy also fell victim to the Spanish flu. Ottesen realised that she had to help him and initiated her doctor into Souchy's story, and Souchy was eventually admitted to the Catholic Saint Elisabeth's Hospital, in the care of German nuns, under the name of Lundqvist. Ottesen visited him every day, but he did not recognise her. One day, one of the nuns asked Ottesen why he always spoke German during his fever spells, to which Ottesen replied that 'Lundqvist' had studied for years in Germany. At that very moment, Souchy woke up, recognised Ottesen and said: 'Ottar, remember that Ernst Lundqvist must not die!'<sup>66</sup> The nuns did not suspect anything and Souchy soon recovered. In other words, the Scandinavian transregional syndicalist network, with a nodal point in Copenhagen, saved Souchy's life.

In the summer of 1919, Jensen and Ottesen were deported from Denmark due to a mix-up. Ottesen had befriended a young woman who was working as a secretary to the prominent Danish shipowner Albert Jensen. One day, a letter from one of the contributors to *Brand* addressed only to 'Albert Jensen, Copenhagen' arrived at the shipowner Jensen's offices and the secretary read it out loud to him. The Finnish military chief of the 'Whites', Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, who had

defeated the Bolshevik 'Reds' in the Finnish civil war, was coming to Copenhagen, and the letter-writer asked Jensen, the syndicalist, to organise protests in the Danish capital. Shipowner Jensen immediately called the police, when the secretary mentioned that the letter was probably intended for the syndicalist Jensen. The next morning, the police arrived at Jensen and Ottesen's home with deportation papers. Forced to leave all their belongings behind, the Danish police escorted them to the ferry to Malmö, stamped their passports 'DEPORTED', and explained that, officially, they were deported due to housing shortages. Ottesen protested against her deportation, which led to the decision being repealed, but Jensen did not. Instead, he now had to serve the 'missing' four months in prison in Malmö for absconding from his military service many years earlier, while Ottesen proceeded to Stockholm to set up a new home. It was here they welcomed well-known anarchists Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and Alexander Schapiro only a few years later after their escape from Russia in January 1922. Souchy helped pack up Jensen's books in Copenhagen and send them to Ottesen in Stockholm.<sup>67</sup> For five years, like Souchy, Jensen and Ottesen had relied on a well-established transregional Scandinavian network and the revolutionary press for providing sanctuary and jobs.

Upon Jensen's release four months later, comrades from Sweden and Denmark threw him a welcome party in Malmö. Souchy joined the Danish comrades but, on their arrival in Malmö, he was the only one asked for his passport. Showing his 'Lundqvist' passport, the immigration officer confronted Souchy, who instantly realised that he had to confess that he was not 'Lundqvist'. For two years, Souchy had resisted the state and its border regime through fake passports, relying on a Scandinavian transregional syndicalist network and the revolutionary press for his survival. Souchy now occupied the prison cell that Jensen had recently vacated. At the court trial, Souchy was sentenced to six months in prison for violating passport regulations, one month for violating his previous deportation order, and denial of re-entry to Sweden.<sup>68</sup> His time in Malmö prison, however, was relatively comfortable. In Denmark, he had started writing a pamphlet *Diktatur och Socialism* (1919), which he finished while in prison, and he completed his biography of Landauer there as well, published by Axel Holmström in 1920.<sup>69</sup> But Souchy's time in prison was brief. In the wake of the German Revolution, the German general Erich Ludendorff had escaped to Sweden on a fake Finnish passport without facing prosecution, though he was eventually expelled in February 1919. Souchy's lawyer insisted that, if Ludendorff did not face prosecution, Souchy should also be released. Indeed, Souchy was soon released but still faced deportation from Sweden. Worried about returning to Germany, despite the war being over, he applied for permission

to remain in Sweden and was temporarily held in police custody while awaiting the decision.<sup>70</sup> He spent Christmas 1919 alone in Malmö prison, with no guards on duty, but a few days later his request to stay in Sweden was denied. Souchy was placed on the ferry from Trelleborg in Sweden to Sassnitz in Germany but hid on board, hoping to disembark in the middle of the night to avoid the guards. However, the ferry returned immediately to Trelleborg with Souchy. During the return-crossing, Souchy shaved off his beard, 'changing my looks from a middle-aged man to a 20-year-old youth', as he explained to some Swedish comrades, and waited until the dark of the night to jump ship in Trelleborg.<sup>71</sup> When he landed, eight to ten local policemen flashed their lights on him and brought him to the local prison. He spent New Year's Eve in the local prison and on 2 January 1920 the Swedish police escorted him to the German authorities in Sassnitz. On German territory again after more than five years in exile, Souchy avoided prosecution for draft dodging and soon made his way to Berlin.<sup>72</sup> Souchy's deportation order was officially rescinded in December 1932, allowing him to return to Sweden again.<sup>73</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Souchy's five-year exile as a 'deserter in Scandinavia' opens a window on to the syndicalist movement during some of the most tumultuous years during the First World War. Casting a light on the movement and its revolutionary impetus, his travels across Sweden, Norway, and Denmark illuminate the ways in which syndicalists in Scandinavia had forged a strong transregional network by the time Souchy arrived. As is evident, a national approach to understanding the history of syndicalism in Scandinavia thus fails to properly capture the revolutionary and transregional network that welcomed Souchy. This network, indeed, enabled the likes of Manus, Löfgren, Jensen, Ottesen, and Fritzner, as well as Souchy to find refuge and collaborate across borders. Their collaboration across the region was facilitated by the Scandinavian revolutionary press, which connected the transregional movement, providing sanctuary, jobs, and lodging when needed. In fact, figures such as Jensen, Ottesen, Manus, and Löfgren had travelled via similar networks, working as foreign correspondents, editors, and writers for anarchist and syndicalist periodicals across Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. When Souchy arrived, he did not connect with a German diasporic syndicalist movement but instead entered and benefited from an already existing network of Scandinavian syndicalists and their press. The revolutionary press served as a first point of



contact for exiled anarchists such as Souchy and, even further, this transregional network provided Souchy with a means to resist the state, to reject the authority of state-sanctioned passports, and to survive the Spanish flu. While the Russian and German revolutions of 1917 and 1918 never spread to Scandinavia, as the Danish and Swedish syndicalists had hoped, the revolutionary spirit of the Scandinavian syndicalists was important for providing sanctuary for revolutionaries like Souchy in exile. By emphasising these issues, this article pushes the boundaries of transnational approaches to anarchist historiography, encouraging scholars to take regionality more seriously. It shows the crucial role of the press in forging transregional syndicalist networks across Scandinavia during the First World War, and the importance of understanding how the syndicalist press forged anti-national networks of hospitality and solidarity during an ultra-nationalistic war.

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