

ANARCHY

A Graphic Guide

Written & Illustrated by

Clifford Harper



Camden Press

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I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart Philip Boys, who stuck with it.

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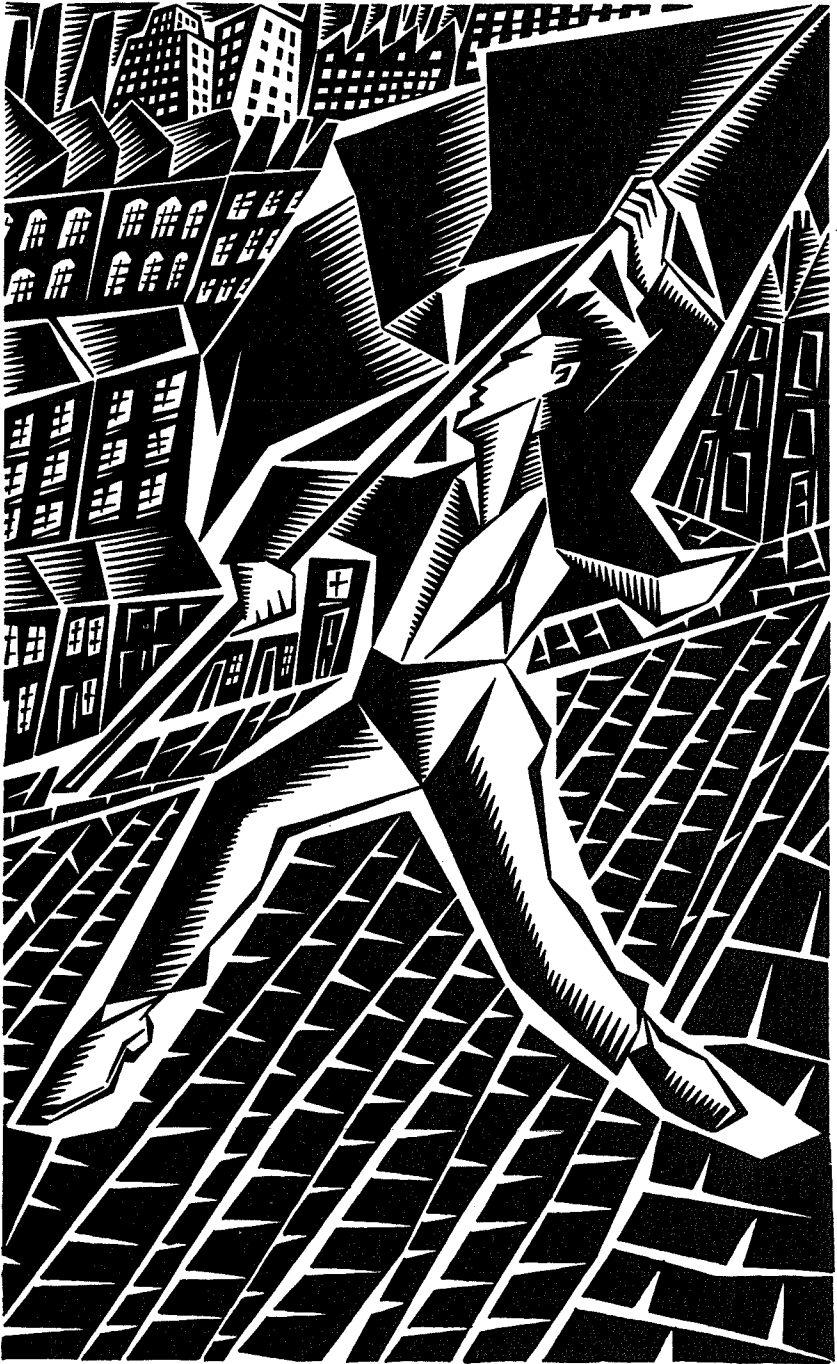
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Anarchism properly has no history — i.e. in the sense of continuity and development. It is a spontaneous movement of people in particular times and circumstances. A history of anarchism would not be in the nature of political history, it would be analogous to a history of the heart-beat. One may make new discoveries about it, one may compare its reactions under varying conditions, but there is nothing new of itself.

Muriel Spark
— from *The Girls of Slender Means*

Anarchism originated among the people, and it will preserve its vitality and creative force so long only as it remains a movement of the people.

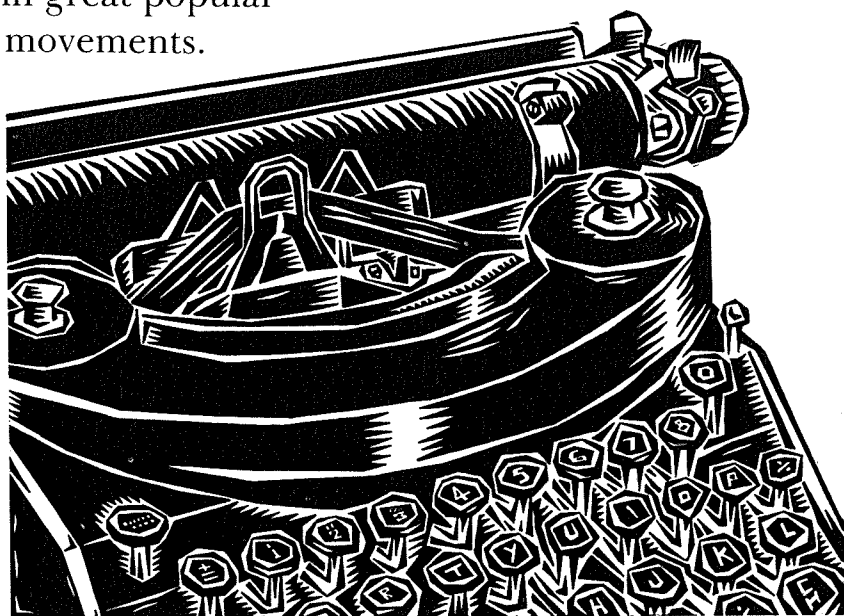
Peter Kropotkin

This book is for Jenny Ashworth



Like all really good ideas, Anarchy is pretty simple when you get down to it — human beings are at their very best when they are living free of authority, deciding things among themselves rather than being ordered about. That's what the word means — 'Without Government'. A lot of the time most of us know this anyway (though there are a few oddballs in the world who actually enjoy being pushed around), but we also know just how difficult it can usually be doing anything for yourself — if you try you're likely to break some law or contravene some regulation or other.

But throughout human history people have tried to do just that. To live freely. Sometimes on their own, sometimes in small groups, sometimes in great popular movements.



That's what *Anarchy — A Graphic Guide* is all about. It's a brief account of some of those people and some of those attempts to build a world and live a life free of imposed authority. And remember — you're not holding a history book in your hands, *Anarchy* is about ordinary people, just like you and me.

What it describes is going on somewhere right now, maybe nearer than you think.



Be seeing you,
Clifford Harper

ONE





THE FREE SPIRIT

'I have created all things ...'

From the eleventh century onward, Europe experienced immense social and economic changes. Agriculture, industry, towns and markets developed rapidly, population grew, the bonds of feudalism that tied serf and free peasant to lords and Church were breaking. There were new restrictions, but also new opportunities for freedom. Although the wealthy and powerful attempted to increase the people's burdens and encroach upon their liberties, in the countryside peasants often refused to pay taxes or to labour without payment and demanded rights to the land. Many escaped to the towns, whose *'air makes people free'* — there was no serfdom. But as the gap between wealth and poverty grew, increasing numbers reacted radically and sought to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth where *'all things are in common.'*

The **Free Spirit** was probably the world's first major anarchist movement, flourishing throughout the Middle Ages in virtually every part of Europe. It began in 1200 among Paris intellectuals gathered around **William Aurifex** as a rebellion against the totalitarian power of the Church. Openly contemptuous of monks (their clothing — a patched red cowl — was a parody of a habit) they would disrupt church services by engaging priests in subtle and eloquent debates. The Free Spirit refused to wait for an afterlife of punishment or reward: they wanted to enjoy

Paradise on Earth, here and now.

Although the central group was swiftly executed by the church for 'heresy', their ideas spread from town to town,



particularly along wool and cloth trade routes. Women and artisans such as the weavers of Antwerp were especially receptive. All renounced property, power and privilege, and lived on what they could beg. As they became more confident, the Free Spirit increasingly rejected the ideas of the age: they refused all restraints, affirmed absolute freedom and acknowledged no authority other than their own experience.

In 1259 they were excommunicated, the Church being especially horrified by the many Free Spirit women living in communal households — in Cologne they numbered 2000. Their chief sin, said the bishops, was their independence; they were, *'idle, gossiping vagabonds who refuse obedience to men under the pretext that God is best served in freedom.'* Everything about them was banned: the wearing of their characteristic garments, the cry of *'Bread for God's sake!'*, even the giving of alms, became offences punishable by death. Yet, refusing to purchase absolution by recanting or pleading lunacy, hundreds were burned or drowned for their belief in freedom.



Forced underground, the *'Little Brothers and Sisters'* became a mobile intelligentsia that spread into Spain, Italy, Bavaria and beyond. Never a single church with a unified dogma but a proliferation of like-minded groups, their vivid message was carried by word of mouth:

'God was free and created all things in common . . . Theft is lawful. Eat in an inn and refuse to pay. If the landlord asks for money he should be beaten . . . The free person is right to do whatever givest them pleasure. I belong to the liberty of nature, and all that my nature desires I satisfy . . . Sex is the delight of Paradise; and the delight of Paradise cannot be sinful.'

Their propaganda also included the written word. Although **Marguerite Porete** was burnt at the stake in 1310, her *Mirror of Simple Souls* was covertly distributed across Europe for several centuries.



Though the Free Spirit chiefly dressed miserably, they sometimes went naked — ‘one ought not to blush at anything natural’ — or dressed in a ‘costly and dissolute fashion’ to express their spiritual perfection. While all declared themselves to know God intimately — even to be God — a few went further. The Free Spirit women of Schweidnitz, for example, claimed they had ‘Perfection greater than God’s and so no longer have any need of Him.’ As one declared:

‘I have created all things. I created more than God. It is my hand that supports Heaven and Earth. Without me nothing exists.’

THE PEASANTS REVOLT

‘... in the fields under rain and snow ...’

Such ideas gripped the imagination of the students who swarmed to 14th century Oxford, and together with radical wandering clergy — ‘Hedgerow Priests’ — they spread the Free Spirit message among peasants, and the beggars, prostitutes, worn-out soldiers, deserters, unskilled and unemployed of the urban underworld.

In the spring of 1381, soldiers roamed the English countryside, extorting further taxes from the peasants to finance the hated war in France. In June, resistance exploded into open fighting, and within a week thousands of peasants stormed castles and manor houses, destroying all the land records they could find. The peasants of south-east England came together in two huge armies and marched on the capital. On June 12th, the rebel host

reached the outskirts of London and camped at Blackheath, where the hedgerow priest **John Ball** preached this sermon:

'If we are all descended from one father and mother, Adam and Eve, how can the lords say or prove that they are more lords than we are — save that they make us dig and till the ground so that they can squander what we produce?'

'They are clad in velvet and satin, set off with squirrel fur, while we are dressed in poor cloth. They have wines and spices and fine bread; we have only rye and spoilt flour and straw, and only water to drink. They have beautiful residences and manors, while we have the trouble and the work, always in the fields under rain and snow. But it is from us and our labour that everything comes with which they maintain their pomp. Good folk, things cannot go well in England, nor ever shall, until all things are in common and there is neither villein nor noble, but all of us are of one condition.'

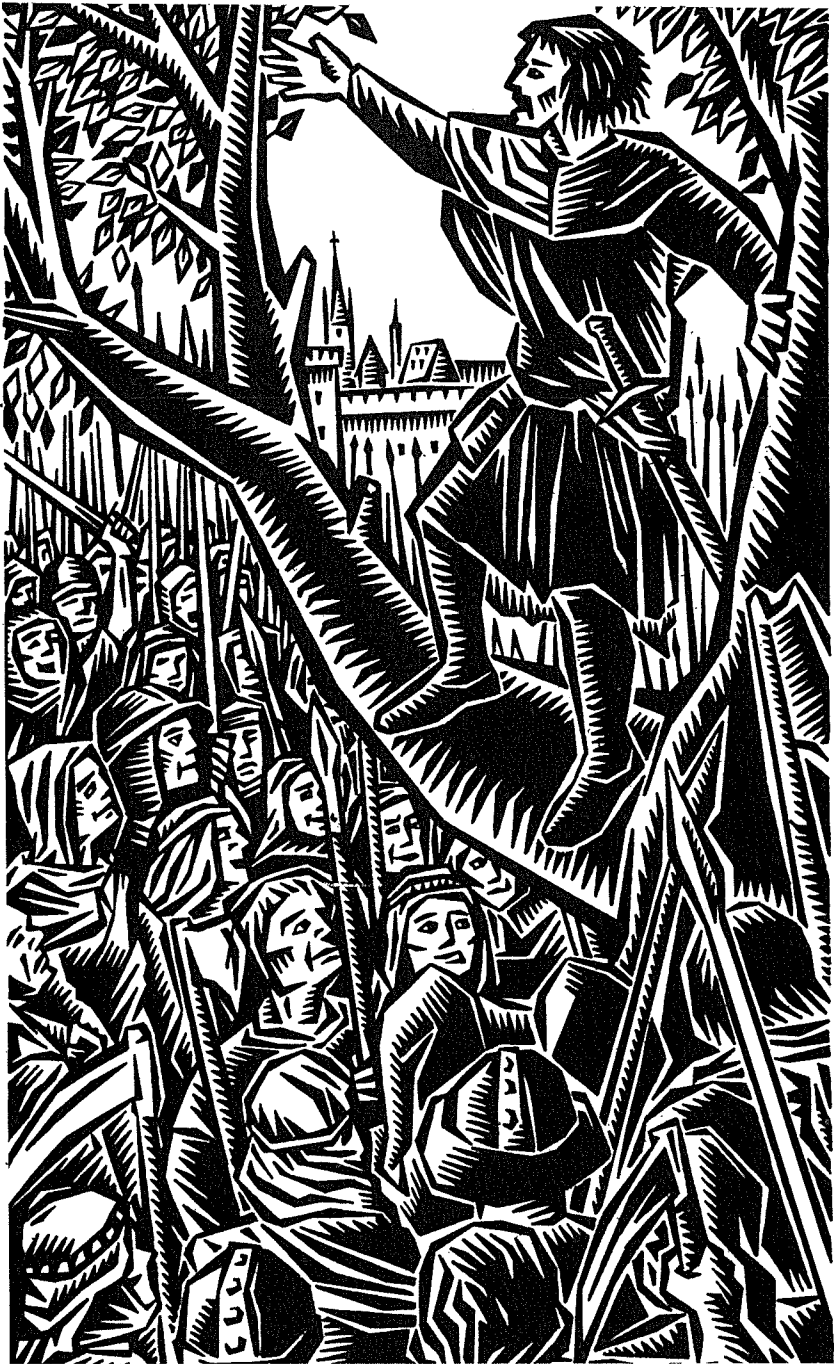
Next morning, the people of London threw open the city gates in welcome and the rebels marched in unopposed. Their first act was to burn down the Savoy Palace of the hated government chief, John of Gaunt, and then to destroy London's prisons and free the prisoners. A terrified government pretended to grant the peasants their demands — which included pardons to all who had participated in the insurrection — but secretly prepared to strike back.

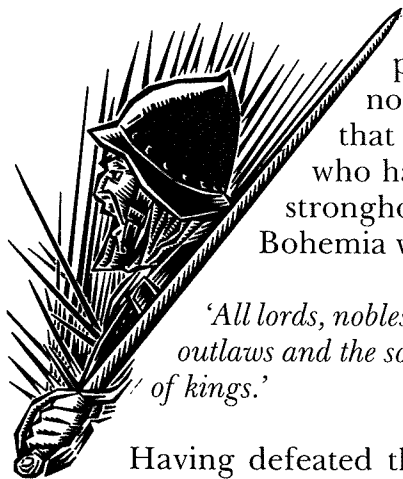
They began by murdering the peasant's leader, **Wat Tyler**. In the confusion and disarray that followed, the peasants were easily scattered, and throughout the summer and autumn they were hunted down and massacred *'like animals of the forest'*.

THE TABORITES

'... and the kingdom shall be handed over ...'

Although in southern England they had been defeated, the Free Spirit was to emerge with equal force 40 years later in Czechoslovakia, under the banner of the **Taborite**





movement. Following savage persecution by church and nobles, the Taborites announced that on February 10th, 1420, all who had failed to join them in their stronghold in the hills of southern Bohemia would face their wrath:

'All lords, nobles and knights shall be cut down like outlaws and the sons of God shall tread on the necks of kings.'

Having defeated the local rulers, they took the towns of Usti and Pisek and liberated the entire area, proclaiming the end of all feudal bonds, taxes, rents and private property. In their place, the Taborites established egalitarian communities:

'All shall live together as brothers, none shall be subject to another. The kingdom shall be handed over to the people of the Earth, who will know nothing of 'mine and thine'.

Thousands burnt their own homes to the ground and donated all portable property to their new community. The Taborite armies, led by **John Ziska**, penetrated deep into present-day Germany, reaching Nuremberg in 1430.

Four years later, however, they were annihilated at the battle of Lipan. Yet in spite of military defeat, Taborite pamphlets

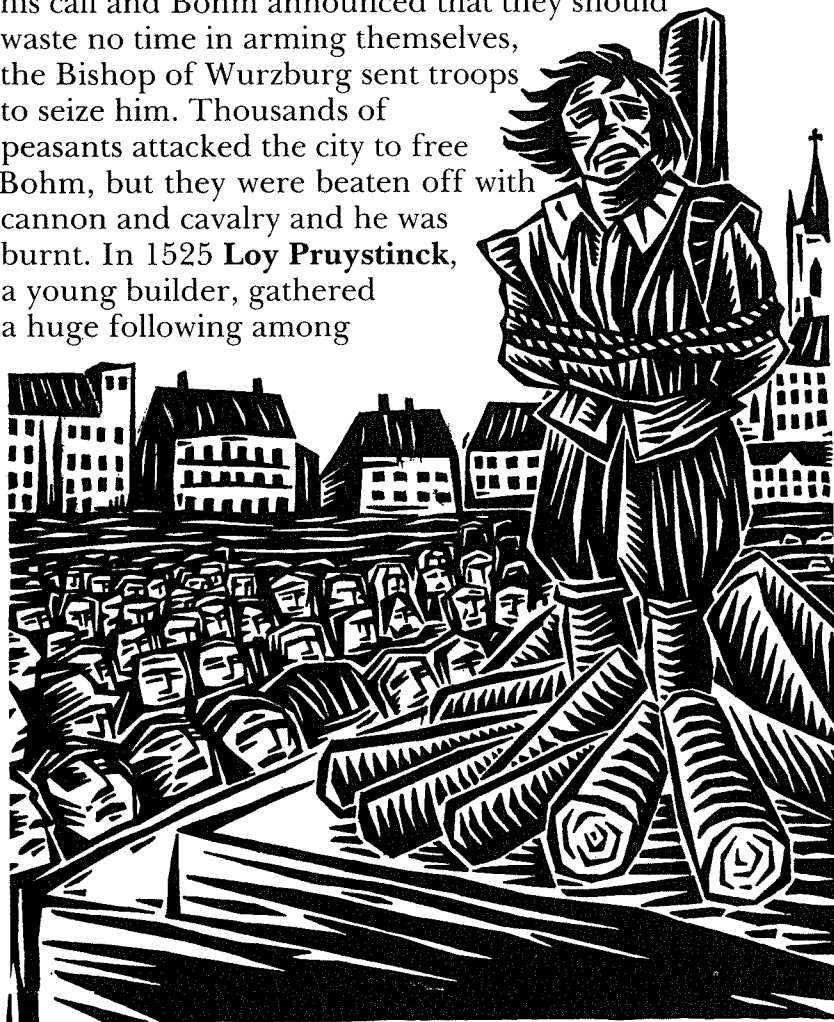


calling on people to *'rise in rebellion against their superiors and make an Earthly Paradise'* continued to circulate.



In 1474, a shepherd and pub entertainer, **Hans Bohm**, called on the villagers of Niklashausen to *'overthrow all rulers, great and small, and the woods and fields will be free to all men.'* When peasants from all over Germany flocked to

his call and Bohm announced that they should waste no time in arming themselves, the Bishop of Wurzburg sent troops to seize him. Thousands of peasants attacked the city to free Bohm, but they were beaten off with cannon and cavalry and he was burnt. In 1525 **Loy Pruystinck**, a young builder, gathered a huge following among



the prostitutes, beggars and thieves of Antwerp. His movement was eventually suppressed, but meanwhile in Tournai a tailor, **Quintin**, was attracting thousands to his meetings. Like so many of this early generation of anarchists, Pruystinck and Quintin were burnt at the stake.

RANTERS AND DIGGERS

“All the world is now in a Ranting humour . . .”

Free Spirit anarchism reached its most developed form in 17th century England, among the **Ranters** and **Diggers**. The tumultuous years of revolution and civil war ended with the execution of the king and the dictatorship of Cromwell. But, for the people, life was in no way improved by these events. Then, as now, anarchism



found fertile soil in which to grow among the embittered, betrayed soldiers, the landless peasants and wretched slum dwellers of the towns and cities.

London's thousands of Ranters met in taverns — *'the true House of God'* — where they would drink and smoke, grow light and loose, sing, whistle, shout, swear, and *'talk too much'* — that is, they would *rant*. They were pacifists, preferring to be *'dead drunk every day of the week than killing of men'*; but otherwise they held that there were no sins: *'swearing, drunkenness, adultery and theft are as holy as God.'* In their eyes:

'Parity, equality and community will establish universal love, peace and perfect freedom.'



Their immense popularity prompted the state to act punitively, meting out imprisonment, banishment and even death for little more than outraging bourgeois sensibilities. As Cromwell said of one Ranter: *'She was so vile a creature as I thought her unworthy to live.'*

The 1640s also saw bad harvests and steep rises in both food and taxes, and the end of the war threw thousands of soldiers onto the streets. Throughout the south of England:

'The poor did gather together in troops and seized upon corn as it was carried to market, and divided it among themselves saying they could not starve, and necessity dissolves all laws and government, and hunger will break through stone walls.'

At Burford, in 1649, entire regiments mutinied and were savagely put down. At Walton-on-Thames, soldiers burst into a church to announce the abolition of taxes,

ministers, magistrates and the Bible. At nearby St. George's Hill on the same day, 30 men and women, led by **Gerard Winstanley**, dug up waste land and began planting crops.

'They invite all to help them', wrote an observer, 'and promise meat, drink and clothes. They say they will be four or five thousand within ten days.'



Winstanley's Digger community never grew above 50 people, though other groups sprang up across the land.

From the very outset they were viciously attacked by the local gentry, who destroyed their cottages, crops and tools and drove off their cattle. Diggers were repeatedly beaten up and Winstanley himself twice thrown into jail. In March 1650, when their new cottages were put to the flame and they were all threatened with murder, the Diggers admitted defeat and returned to obscurity.

Their experiment prompted Winstanley to write the first thorough explanation of anarchist-communism, *The Law of Freedom*. Published in 1652, it begins with the demand for all to own, till and plant the land in common and to make its



produce freely available. All able-bodied people should follow useful co-operative work and no-one is to employ another as labour. Young children will first be educated by their parents before going to school to learn a trade, art or science in order to play their part in productive work. Politics will be decentralised; any need for a state will be



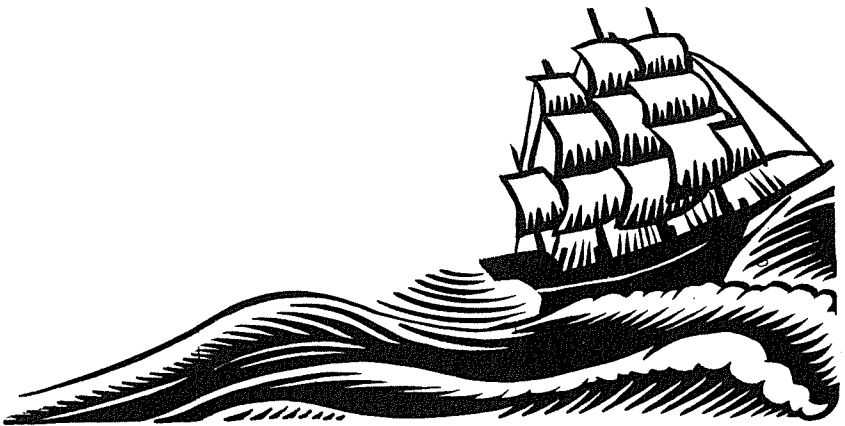
removed when everyone is involved in their own community's administration. Public officials, where necessary, will be elected for one year only.

But central to Winstanley's plan was the abolition of private property in land as the basis of true freedom. Equal access for all to all resources was the essential freedom from which all other freedoms were held to flow:

'Take notice that England is not a free people till the poor that have no land have a free allowance to dig and labour the commons and so live as comfortably as the landlords that live in their enclosures. And that not only this common or heath should be taken in and manured by the people, but all the commons and waste ground in England and in the whole world shall be taken in by the people in righteousness, not owning any property but taking the earth to be a common treasury.'



TWO



LET REASON PREVAIL

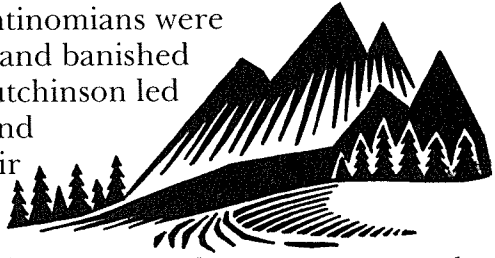
'Meddle not with government ...'

Many felt the likelihood of ending oppression and corruption in Europe was now so distant that they placed all their hopes in the new colonies of America, where their *'freed Spirit'* would build a community bound by a common faith and individual conscience.

In 1634, **Anne Hutchinson** arrived in Boston from England. A woman of *'ready wit and bold spirit and a popular speaker'*, her many followers called themselves Antinomians — they were *against the law*. When one of them, **Henry Vane**, was elected Governor of Massachusetts, and another, **Henry Wheelwright**, preached a sermon inciting rebellion against the state and the establishment of an anarchist society, the authorities were quick to act. Vane was defeated at the



next election and the Antinomians were found guilty of sedition and banished from the state. Anne Hutchinson led the group to Rhode Island where they founded their own colony.



Quaker immigrants made equally bad subjects since they were strongly opposed to bearing arms, taking oaths and even to voting. As William Penn, who gave his name to the state of Pennsylvania, advised:

'Meddle not with government, never speak of it; let others say or do as they please; meddle not with business nor money; but understand how to avoid it, and defend yourselves upon occasion against it.'



The 18th century brought new waves of immigrants into North America. And with them came the new ideas of the Enlightenment concerning humanity's natural goodness and the possibility of limitless social improvement. As these pioneers moved westwards, further and further away from the old order, they became increasingly ready to resist officials and compulsory taxes, and to rebel against the rulings of a government thousands of miles distant. Such people were unmoved by ideas of nation or territory and would band together simply for companionship and mutual aid. All these elements combined to form the 'native' anarchism that played such an important part in the birth of the American revolution of 1776.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

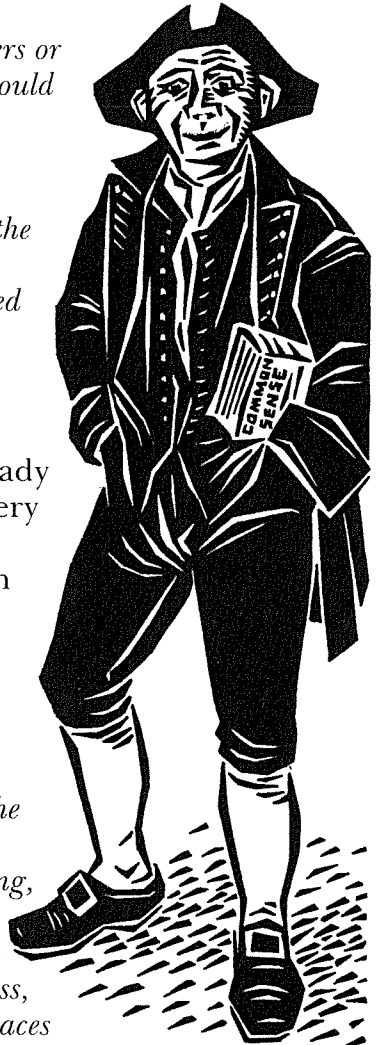
'A conspiracy against Government'
(Bernard Shaw on the American Constitution.)

The revolution's leading intellect was **Thomas Jefferson**, the son of Blue Ridge Mountain pioneers and a firm believer that *'that government is best which governs least.'*

'Were it left to me whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter. I am convinced that those who live without government enjoy infinitely greater happiness than those who live under the European governments. Under the pretext of governing, they have divided their nations into two classes, wolves and sheep.'

When **Tom Paine** arrived in Philadelphia in 1774, he was already famous for his opposition to slavery and his championing of women's rights. He immediately sided with the rebels. As he wrote in his *Common Sense*:

'Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. Society is in every state a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst an intolerable one. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise.'



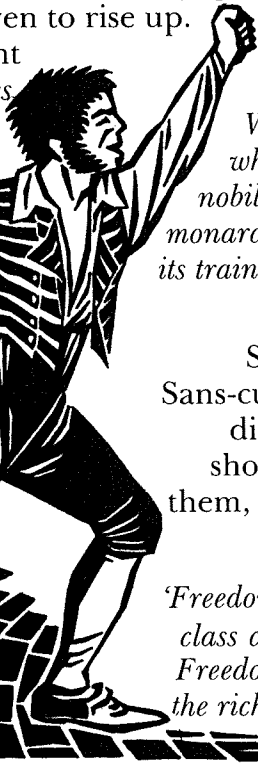
America taught Tom Paine that what holds people together is common interest, a force far greater than any government commands. As society progresses, so co-operation grows and the need for government decreases. On his return to England, Paine was an immense influence on **William Godwin**, whose *Political Justice*, published in 1793, laid the foundations of anarchist philosophy.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

'We know who our friends are ...'

Godwin's generation was also inspired by the French revolution of 1789, an event which, though not anarchist in its aims and methods, was dramatically influenced by the spirit of anarchism. In the spring of 1793, after four years of civil war, social upheaval and rocketing food prices, the **Sans-culottes**, the very poorest people of Paris, were finally driven to rise up.

and the Girondin government was toppled. *'We are the poor an association of artisans and peasants. We know who our friends are: those clergy, the nobility, the feudal systems, tithes, monarchy and all the ills which follow in its train, those whom the aristocrats have called the "anarchists".'*



Shoulder to shoulder with the Sans-culottes, and leading people in direct action to seize food from shops, were the **Enragés**. One of them, soon to die in prison, was the ex-priest **Jacques Roux**:

'Freedom is but an empty phantom if one class can starve another with impunity. Freedom is but an empty phantom when the rich can exercise the right of life and death over their fellows.'

Another was **Jean Varlet**, one of Paris's most popular street orators:

'We cannot prevent ourselves being distrustful even of those who have won our votes. Kings' palaces are not the only homes of despots.'

Varlet too was imprisoned, but he survived to write *The Explosion*, a vehement attack on the Jacobin government:

'What a social monstrosity is this revolutionary government. For any rational being government and revolution are incompatible — unless the people is willing to set up its delegates in a permanent state of insurrection against themselves, which is absurd.'

Fighting alongside the Enragés and Sans-culottes, was the **Society of Revolutionary Republican Women**. In fact, the riots of February and June which overthrew the Girondin government were primarily the work of women. It was they who daily experienced the effects of high prices and food shortages. The Society was founded in May by a young actress, **Claire Lacombe**:

'Our rights are those of the people, and if we are oppressed we shall resist oppression'.

Throughout that year the Society was at the heart of the ferment, linking the fight against rising prices with a struggle for economic and political liberty. Claire Lacombe was soon arrested, and the Society came under government attack:

'Since when have women been allowed to deny their sex and behave like men? Since when has it been decent to see women abandoning their domestic duties, and their children's cradles, to go out into the public arena and make speeches . . . to perform the duties nature intended men to do?'

By the winter, the Society, along with the Enragés and Sans-culottes, had been effectively eliminated, though the tradition of mass popular action and democracy they initiated survived to influence all the revolutions of 19th-century Europe.





WILLIAM GODWIN

'To free the human mind from slavery ...'

William Godwin's heart 'beat high with great sentiments of Liberty' at the news of the French Revolution, an event which inspired him to write the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. Published in February 1793, it was the first book to state 'in a quite definite form the political and economic principles of anarchism.'

Two months previously, Tom Paine had fled to France to escape a death sentence for publishing *The Rights of Man*. The government discussed prosecuting Godwin as well but dropped the idea in the belief that, at three guineas, it would be too expensive to reach a wide audience. They were mistaken. Hundreds of groups of workers around the country clubbed together to buy *Political Justice* and discuss its ideas. It also became for a time the creed of the Romantic poets. The book brought Godwin immediate fame:

'He blazed as a sun in the firmament of reputation, no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever Liberty, Truth and Justice was the theme, his name was not far off.'

Godwin regarded society as a natural phenomenon originating in the natural world and capable of developing towards a better order: an egalitarian, decentralised society based upon the voluntary exchange of material wealth. This ideal world of individual justice and equality would be attained through education and propaganda rather than political activities since in his view political and even revolutionary changes can only be temporary unless founded upon a deeper change in moral attitudes.

He was convinced that government is both unnecessary and harmful to the conduct of human affairs, arguing that since government is the single most powerful influence upon human character and behaviour, it is government itself that must be held responsible for the majority of the world's problems. If the principle of government and its effects were removed then the human mind would naturally develop to a greater state of reason, justice and truth:

'With what delight must every well-informed friend of mankind look forward to the dissolution of political government, of that brute engine which has been the only perennial cause of the vices of humankind, and which has mischiefs of various sorts incorporated with its substance, and not otherwise to be removed than by its utter annihilation!'

Government in practice works mainly for the rich, favouring individual power and enhancing *'the imagined excellence of wealth'*. It encourages competition, envy and greed; supports economic inequality; creates social disruption, hunger and war, and is the principal enemy of the *'most desirable object: the intellectual and moral happiness of the human species.'* Humanity, once freed from government, would be capable of indefinite improvement:

'Perfectibility is one of the most unequivocal characteristics of the human species, so that the political as well as the intellectual state of humanity may be presumed to be in a course of progressive improvement.'

Of course, human perfectibility has limits and restrictions. Old age, death, physical and moral weaknesses are examples, and these are inevitable. But others, the most important of which are government and authority, can and must be avoided. The opportunity to do this lies within the very nature of human society since it is within society that the greatest possible scope for freedom exists: freedom for experiment, discovery, invention, creativity and the exercise of free will. Authority, however, restricts all of these and diverts the intellect away from natural justice. Once freed from the chains of authority, the intellect would naturally move closer to a greater state of natural justice.



Justice is central to Godwin's philosophy. The origins of society lie in the need for mutual aid between people, and it is moved by the principle of justice: *'A rule of conduct originating in the connection of one being with another,'* which

demands that we do all we can for the welfare and assistance of others. *'I am bound,'* he writes, *'to employ my talents, my understanding, my strength and my time for the production of the greatest quantity of general good.'*

But the general good must never be put above that of the individual: *'Society is nothing more than an aggregation of individuals. Its claims and duties must be the aggregate of their claims and duties, the one no more arbitrary than the other.'* Society exists for the benefit of the individual, not the other way round. In fact, the greatest improvement of society will come from the improvement of the individuals within it; from that which *'enlarges the understanding, supplies incitements to virtue, fills us with a generous conscience of our independence and carefully removes whatever can impede our exertions.'*

Once it is accepted that the independence of the individual is supreme, it follows that all individuals are equally supreme — that no one is any more important than any other. In other words, all human beings are equal and as such have equal claims to justice.

Justice and equality cannot be served by government, then, which can only exist to promote inequality and injustice. Government, or any form of authority, has no claims or rights over the individual, nor should its laws be obeyed. Only the individual's own understanding can reveal, and only the individual can decide, what is just and



right conduct. If government were removed, and individuals were guided instead by their own reason, there would be a society of *'unrestrained concord'*.

Godwin's emphasis upon individual judgement does not

exclude the possibility of common or collective decision-making. He points out that, at best, the two processes are very similar. When individuals meet together to discuss a problem the methods of debate and argument follow closely the way the individual mind arrives at its own conclusions. Both are *'means of discovering right and wrong, and of preparing particular propositions with the standards of eternal truth.'* But even so, such common decisions can never become laws with power over the individual; for Godwin there is only one possible law, reason itself:

'Its decrees are irrevocable and uniform. The functions of society extend, not to the making, but to the interpretation of law; it cannot decree,



it can only declare that which the nature of things has already decreed . . .

If collective decisions go beyond reason, individuals must resist them. Godwin emphasises truthful persuasion and passive resistance to unjust decisions, with force and violence only to be used as a final desperate measure when all else fails. The best method, he says, is direct and individual contact, not political groups. Such groups, he explains, inevitably rely more upon weight of numbers than reason. At times it may be necessary to create temporary '*associations*' in order to defend freedom, but:

Human beings should meet together not to enforce but to inquire. Truth disclaims the alliance of marshalled numbers.'

This emphasis upon small, temporary groups joining naturally in loose association has been central to anarchist practice and theory ever since.

Godwin described an anarchist society as being decentralised and simplified. Localised administration will replace complex, centralised states and lead to a world-wide republic free from national borders. People will work collectively and take freely from common storehouses, deciding their needs for themselves without those '*most pernicious of all practices*', money and exchange. With the abolition of accumulated property and economic inequality, which '*Treads the powers of thought in the dust, extinguishes the sparks of genius and reduces the great mass of humankind to be immersed in sordid cares*', everyone would be '*united to their neighbour in love and mutual kindness a thousand times more than now; but each one would think and judge for their self.*'

Personal relations will be based on equality and friendship, not possessive constraint. Thus Godwin condemns marriage as '*the worst of properties*' because it attempts (and usually fails) to make a past choice permanent. Similarly, children must become free from the domination of parents and teachers: '*No human will be expected to learn anything but because they desire it*'. Education

will take place in small, independent schools or better still through individual instruction. To put the responsibility for education in the hands of government is for Godwin a terrible danger:

'This is an alliance of a more formidable nature than the old alliance of church and state. Government will not fail to employ it to strengthen its hands and perpetuate its institutions.'

As the revolution in France descended into tyranny, and in England the reaction against radicalism grew, Godwin's fortunes fell. He was viewed with the 'same horror as of a ghoul, or a bloodless vampyre'. In 1797 his idyllic life with **Mary Wollstonecraft**, feminist and author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ended abruptly in tragedy when she died giving birth to their daughter Mary.

Years of hardship, poverty and obscurity now followed.

In 1812, the young poet **Percy Bysshe Shelley**, eager to meet the author of *Political Justice*, called at Godwin's lonely house. Shelley had just been expelled from Oxford University for writing a pamphlet, *The Necessity of Atheism*, which began with the words 'There is no God ...' He was introduced to Mary and the two fell immediately and deeply in love, running away together two years later. Shelley was greatly influenced by Godwin's philosophy, which he went on to introduce, via his poetry, to a new audience, becoming in the process the first and the greatest of all the anarchist poets.



In the spring of 1836, at the age of 80, Godwin died. He had spent the whole of his adult life, he said, trying 'to do my part to free the human mind from slavery.'

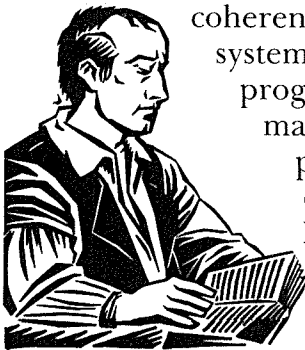
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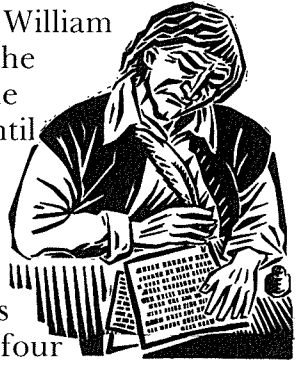
THE IDEA

'Anarchism originated among the people ...'

Although Gerard Winstanley and William Godwin had begun to unfold the philosophy of anarchism in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was not until the second half of the 19th century that anarchism emerged as a

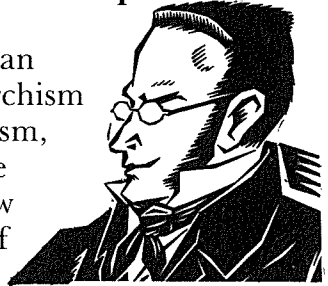


coherent theory with a systematic, developed programme. This was mainly the work of four

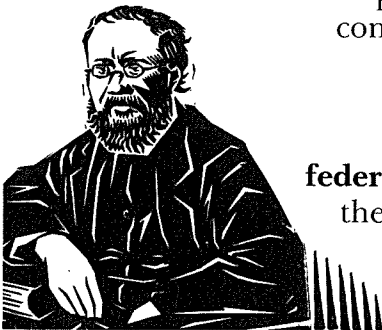


people — a German, **Max Stirner** (1806-1856), a Frenchman, **Pierre Proudhon** (1809-1865), and two Russians, **Mikhail Bakunin** (1814-1876) and **Peter Kropotkin** (1842-1921).

Born in the atmosphere of German romantic philosophy, Stirner's anarchism was an extreme form of individualism, or **egoism**, which placed the unique individual above all else — state, law or duty. It remains a cornerstone of anarchism.

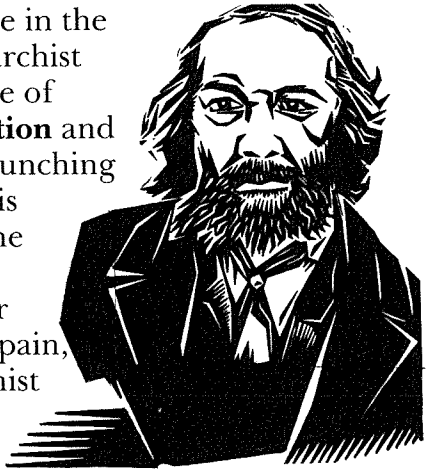


Individualism by definition includes no concrete programme for changing social conditions. This was attempted by Proudhon, the first to describe himself openly as an anarchist.

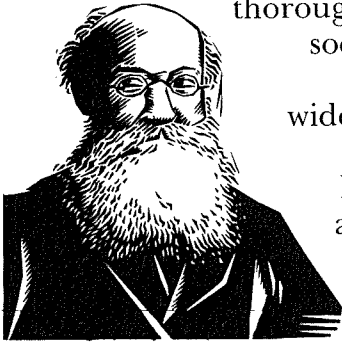


His theories of **mutualism** and **federalism** had a profound effect on the growth of anarchism as a mass movement, and spell out clearly how an anarchist world could function and be co-ordinated.

Bakunin, the central figure in the development of modern anarchist activism, emphasized the role of **collectivism, mass insurrection** and **spontaneous revolt** in the launching of a free, classless society. His ideas became dominant in the 20th century among large sections of the radical labour movement — especially in Spain, where the first major anarchist social revolution took place.

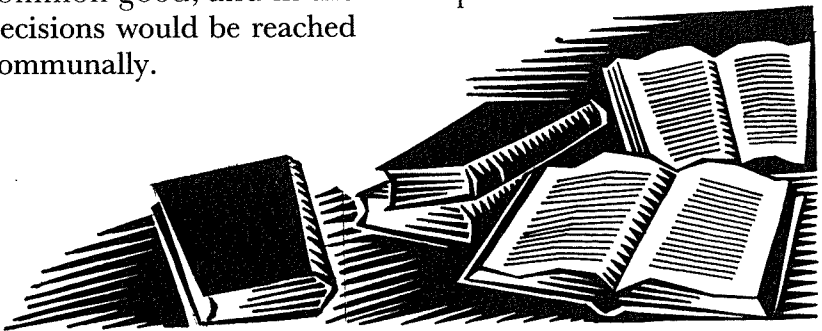


Kropotkin, a scientist by training, fashioned a sophisticated and detailed anarchist analysis of modern conditions linked to a thorough-going prescription for a future society — **anarchist-communism** — which continues to be the most widely-held theory among anarchists.



The various theories are not, however, mutually exclusive: they are inter-connected in many ways, and to some extent refer to different levels of social life.

Individualism relates closely to the conduct of our private lives; mutualism, to our general relations with others. Production under anarchism would be collectivist, with people working together for the common good, and in the wider political and social world decisions would be reached communally.





MAX STIRNER

Nothing is more to me than myself . . .

Max Stirner was born in 1806 in Bayreuth, to poor parents. His six years as a student of philosophy in Berlin were constantly interrupted by having to care for his increasingly insane widowed mother. In 1835 he scraped through his exams and began his first, unpaid, teaching job. Two years of

depressing poverty culminated in marriage to his landlady's daughter, who died the next year in childbirth. 1839 saw improved fortune with a five-year contract to work at Madame Gropius's Institute for the Instruction and Cultivation of Superior Girls. His new-found financial stability contrasted sharply with the mounting political and intellectual unrest in the surrounding world.



In 1840, Stirner entered the notorious circle known as the **Free Ones**: clamorous student radicals and bohemians, among them the young Marx and Engels, who gathered in the smokey, drunken atmosphere of

Hippel's Cafe. The communist Arnold Ruge was so shocked by what he saw and heard there that he stormed out, shouting:

'Social transformation was never inaugurated by a drunken rabble!'

Among the many women at Hippel's was the wealthy 25-year-old **Marie Daenhardt**, a noted billiard player, cigar smoker and beer drinker who insisted on accompanying the Free Ones to the nearby brothels. After such evenings Stirner would return home alone to toil late into the night on his mysterious manuscripts. In 1843, at a chaotic ceremony in his lodgings, Max and Marie were married. Nobody remembered to bring a wedding ring. With a steady job and a wealthy wife, Stirner now completed his master work.

The Ego and Its Own — 'The most revolutionary book ever written' — burst like a thunderstorm upon radical Berlin. It threw down a series of uncompromising challenges to every religious, political or philosophical orthodoxy, whether 'right' or 'left', 'progressive' or 'conservative'. Immediately it was at the centre of all attention, provoking

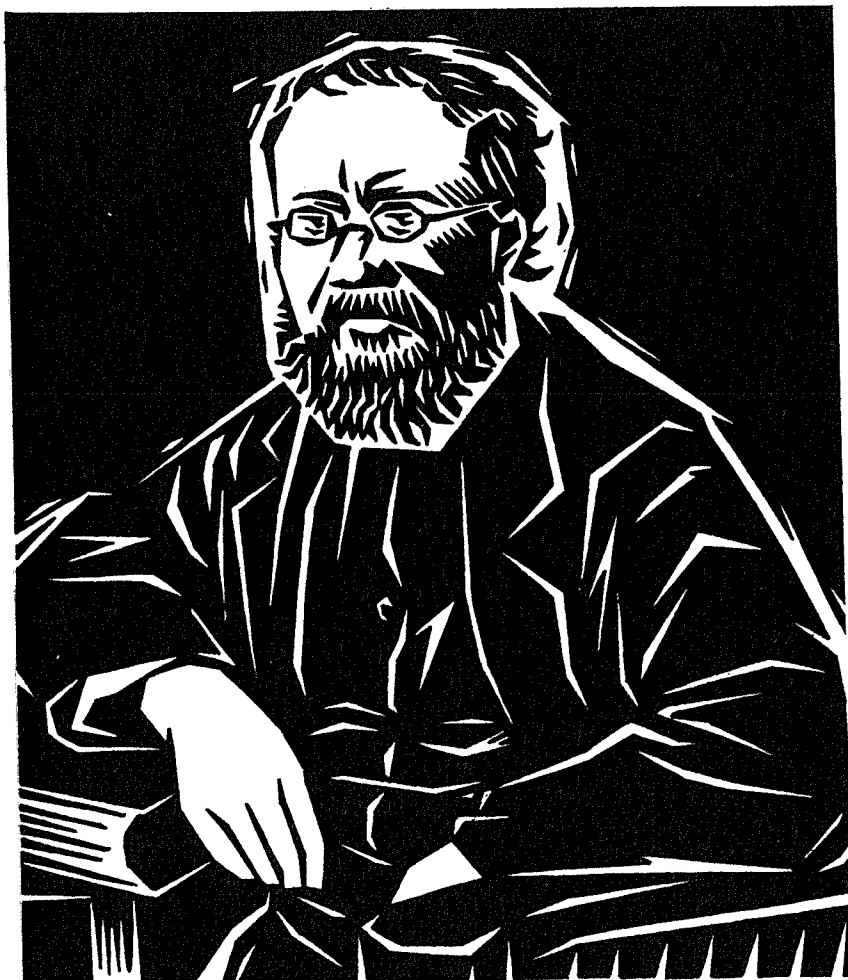
abuse and outrage and catapulting Stirner from humble obscurity to glorious notoriety.

'What is not supposed to be my concern! First and foremost, the Good Cause, then God's cause, the cause of mankind, of truth, of freedom, of humanity, of justice; further, the cause of my people, my prince, my fatherland; finally, even the cause of Mind, and a thousand other causes. Only my cause is never to be my concern. Shame on the egoist who thinks only of himself!

'Away with every concern that is not altogether my concern. You think at least the 'Good Cause' must be my concern? What's good? What's bad? Neither has meaning for me. The divine is God's concern; the human is down to humans. My concern is neither the divine nor the human, not the true, good, just, free, etc., but is unique, as I am. Nothing is more to me than myself!'

'Nothing is more to me than myself.' This is Stirner's essential truth. Everything beyond the individual must be seen as a false and tyrannical abstraction. The free individual, or 'egoist', must turn his or her back on such ideas as the state, society, religion, nation, morality, duty and obligation. All of these demand the continual sacrifice of the individual's own existence to the 'greater' good. Stirner insists that individuals should live only for themselves, bowing down to no one and to nothing, and that they should expect the same of others. A true individual will always recognise, and so automatically safeguard, the uniqueness of other individuals. Only this, the 'union of egoists', can guarantee the freedom of the individual — and that of all other individuals.

Stirner's individualist anarchism, which seeks the end of all authority and asserts nothing in its place except the unique reality of the individual, has had a tremendous influence upon anarchism. It has been especially attractive to artists, who possess a great deal of independence in their creative activity.



PROUDHON

'What is Property?'

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was born in 1809 in the Franche-Comté region of eastern France. His mother was a cook; his father a cooper, brewer and failed tavern keeper. Part of Proudhon's childhood was spent as a cowherd in the Jura mountains, an experience

which inspired him with the ideals of the free peasant life that shaped all of his philosophy. He was almost entirely self-educated; at 19 he won a scholarship to study in Paris



but his family's destitution forced him to quit. He became apprenticed to a printer and later started his own firm in Besançon. It soon failed, leaving him in debt for the rest of his life.

Moving to Paris, he witnessed the discontent of the urban workers and began to associate with revolutionary groups. In 1840 Proudhon published *What is Property?*, a work which Marx described as ‘penetrating ... the first decisive, vigorous and scientific examination’ of the subject.

In that work, Proudhon makes an important distinction between the ownership of objects for personal use, which he refers to as *possessions*, and *property* — the factories, tools, land, raw materials and so on, by means of which profits are made. It is to the power of property to exploit the labour of others that Proudhon refers in a famous and characteristically paradoxical passage:

If I were asked to answer the question: “What is slavery?” and I should answer in one word, “Murder!”, my meaning would be understood at once. No further argument would be needed to show that the power to take from someone their thought, their will, their personality, is a power of life and death, and that to enslave a human is to kill them. Why, then, to this other question: “What is property?” may I not likewise answer, “Theft”?

Property, and the political system which supports it, must be abolished, but possession — the effective control of the necessities of work and life — is the precondition for individual liberty. All workers must have complete rights

over what they produce but not over the means of production: *'The right to products is exclusive; the right to means is common.'* Thus the earth's resources should belong to no one, and society's wealth of productive abilities and techniques be everyone's inheritance. Proudhon was convinced that keeping property in private hands assured the exclusion of the majority from their rights to a just share of social wealth.

Proudhon was also critical of communism, which seeks equality and recognises the importance of social production but ignores the need for individual independence. In his view anarchism is the highest state of society since it promotes both justice and independence.

According to Proudhon, the true laws by which a society functions emerge naturally from society itself and automatically provide the necessary order to human life and activity. They are not imposed from above and certainly have nothing to do with government — in fact, government seeks to disrupt the development of spontaneous co-operation between free individuals. The task of relieving society from the burdens of authority and property falls to the working class:

'Workers, labourers, whoever you may be, the initiative of reform is yours. It is you who will accomplish that synthesis of social composition which will be the masterpiece of creation, and you alone can accomplish it ... And you, men of power, angry magistrates, cowardly proprietors, have you at last understood me? ... Do not provoke the outbreaks of our despair, for even if your soldiers and policemen succeed in suppressing us, you will not be able to stand up to our last resource ...'



For this vague threat the government charged him with ‘*crimes against public security*’, but a jury refused to convict. In 1843 he arrived in Lyons, a city whose long tradition of revolt was still keenly recollected. The idea of a widespread association of workers was gaining ground in the city, linked with an emphasis upon economic action. Proudhon joined a secret society of manual workers opposed to political action:

‘The social revolution is seriously compromised if it comes through a political revolution . . . The new socialist movement will begin by the war of the workshops.’

Proudhon was always profoundly opposed to any reorganization of society which merely proposed to exchange one set of leaders for another. In 1847, having joined leading revolutionaries of the day in Paris, Proudhon rejected Marx’s plans for a political organisation:

‘Let us not make ourselves the leaders of a new intolerance. Let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion, even if it be the religion of logic, of reason.’

He urged instead direct economic action, ‘*to bring about the return to society, by an economic combination, of the wealth which was withdrawn from society by another economic combination.*’

Such was the strength of Proudhon’s following among radical workers that Marx resorted to abuse and misrepresentation to get his way. The divide between anarchism and Marxism began to open.

But all such disputes were swept away in the February insurrection of 1848, a popular movement whose principal demands were universal suffrage and an end to monarchy. Proudhon immediately joined the rebels on the barricades, though he had misgivings about their aims. The Second Republic was soon declared, but Proudhon recognised its limitations. ‘*They have made a revolution without ideas,*’ he wrote. ‘*It is necessary to give a direction to the movement.*’

This was the task he now set himself. He began by starting the world's first regular anarchist newspaper, *The People's Representative*, whose banner heading declared: 'What is the Producer? Nothing. What should he be? Everything!' In its columns he continually emphasized that 'the proletariat must emancipate itself without the help of the government', and attacked the myths of voting and parliaments.

In June, the discontented workers of Paris once again rose against the government. Proudhon joined their ranks, recognising that here in the first rising of the working class was a new element in the revolution. Throughout the



savage repression that followed, during which many workers were shot by firing squads or transported to penal colonies, Proudhon was unshaken in his open support of the workers. In response, the government silenced his newspaper. When the ban was lifted, its heading was expanded to read:

'What is the Capitalist? Everything! What should he be? Nothing!'

His extremism in asserting the primacy of class struggle and the need to side with the workers as a class (and not just some vague group, 'the people') isolated him from many radicals. With its circulation now at forty thousand copies, the government finally closed *The People's Representative* down. Expecting this, Proudhon and his friends had already made plans for a new paper, *The People*. In it he described the recently elected French president, Louis Napoleon, as the 'personification of reaction conspiring to

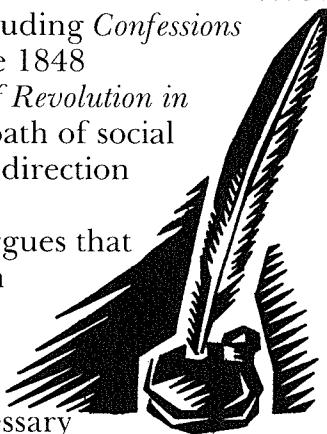
enslave the people'. (His foresight was remarkable: a few years later Louis-Napoleon, nephew of Bonaparte, staged a coup and declared himself Emperor.)

Proudhon went into hiding to avoid arrest, but he was charged with sedition and sentenced in his absence to three years in jail. He was soon captured and imprisoned in Doullens fortress, although much of the time he was able to write for his new paper, *The Voice of the People*. This was his most popular journal yet, selling sixty thousand copies an issue. In May 1850, it was suppressed like the others, this time for '*Provocation to Civil War*'. Proudhon used the rest of his prison term to write books, including *Confessions of a Revolutionary*, an analysis of the 1848 revolutions, and *The General Idea of Revolution in the 19th Century*, which traced the path of social progress to date and indicated the direction it must take in the future.

In the *General Idea*, Proudhon argues that human society is not separate from nature, but part of it; natural regulations and limitations cause humanity to develop and achieve freedom. Revolution is just as necessary — and just as unavoidable — as birth, growth and death:

'A revolution is a force against which no power, divine or human, can prevail, and whose nature it is to grow by the very resistance it encounters . . . The more you repress it, the more you increase its rebound and render its action irresistible, so that is precisely the same for the triumph of an idea whether it is persecuted, harassed, beaten down from the start, or whether it grows and develops unobstructed . . . The revolution advanced, with sombre and predestined tread, over the flowers strewn by its friends, through the blood of its defenders, over the bodies of its enemies.'

The revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, he wrote, merely succeeded in replacing the absolute rule of feudal monarchy with the dominance of the capitalist state. In his view *all* forms of state organisation were '*Nothing but chaos,*



servicing as a basis for endless tyranny'. The 19th century therefore required a further revolution, a total economic change where the state is replaced by a new form of social organisation, based on associations of workers:

'The importance of their work lies not in their petty union interests, but in their denial of the rule of capitalists and governments which the first revolutions left undisturbed. Afterwards, when they have conquered the political lie, the groups of workers should take over the great departments of industry which are their natural inheritance.'

Once this has been achieved the way will be open to a free anarchist society based on mutualism. Proudhon here laid the foundations for the development of the anarchist and syndicalist movements that were to follow, describing the basic ideas of direct workers' control in a decentralised and federated society:

'In place of laws, we will put contracts; no more laws voted by the majority or even unanimously. Each citizen, each town, each industrial union will make its own laws. In place of political powers we will put economic forces . . . In place of standing armies, we will put industrial associations. In place of police, we will put identity of interests.'

After his release from jail, Proudhon's extremism made it difficult for him to find work and it was not until 1858 that he found a publisher for his most comprehensive work to date, *Justice in the Revolution and in the Church*. Within a week, six thousand copies were sold before the government stepped in to seize the remainder. Proudhon was charged with crimes against public morality, religion and the state, and sentenced to a further three years imprisonment. Proudhon promptly fled to Belgium, where he wrote *War and Peace*, a work whose analysis of the roots and dynamics of war as well as its title are evident in **Leo Tolstoy's** novel.

In 1862, Proudhon accepted an amnesty and returned to France. He quickly completed work on his theory of federalism which has had a profound influence on

anarchist thinking ever since.

On the Federal Principle, published in 1863, is a summary of his views on nationalism and an attempt to extend the field of anarchy from the industrial and economic level to world society in general. Anarchy proper he believed still lay some centuries in the future and would be preceded by a stage of social development based on federations at every level. Thus federation would begin locally, where people would voluntarily associate together to organize and control their own lives. Coordination (rather than administration) of associations and communes would be achieved through their involvement in ever more encompassing but equally freely chosen confederations.

Proudhon was strongly opposed to nationalism: a philosophy which in his view could only lead, first, to the domination of the populations which united behind 'their' strong centralised governments, and then to international rivalry and war. Central governments were to be abolished and nations replaced by geographical confederations of regions. Europe, for instance, would become a confederation of confederations where the smallest local federation would have as much importance as the largest. The political organisation and decisions of society would then pass from the base upwards.

By this time Proudhon had a strong following and he was influential in the abstentionist movement that formed before the 1863 election:

'I say to you with all the energy and sadness of my heart: separate yourselves from those who have cut themselves off from you . . . It is by separation that you will win. No representatives, no candidates.'

This has been the position of all anarchists towards politics and voting ever since.

In the last two years of his life, and in spite of very poor health, he produced perhaps his most influential work, *On the Political Capacity of the Working Classes*, a last testament which wove together the strands of his various theories into a final cohesive statement about the mission of the

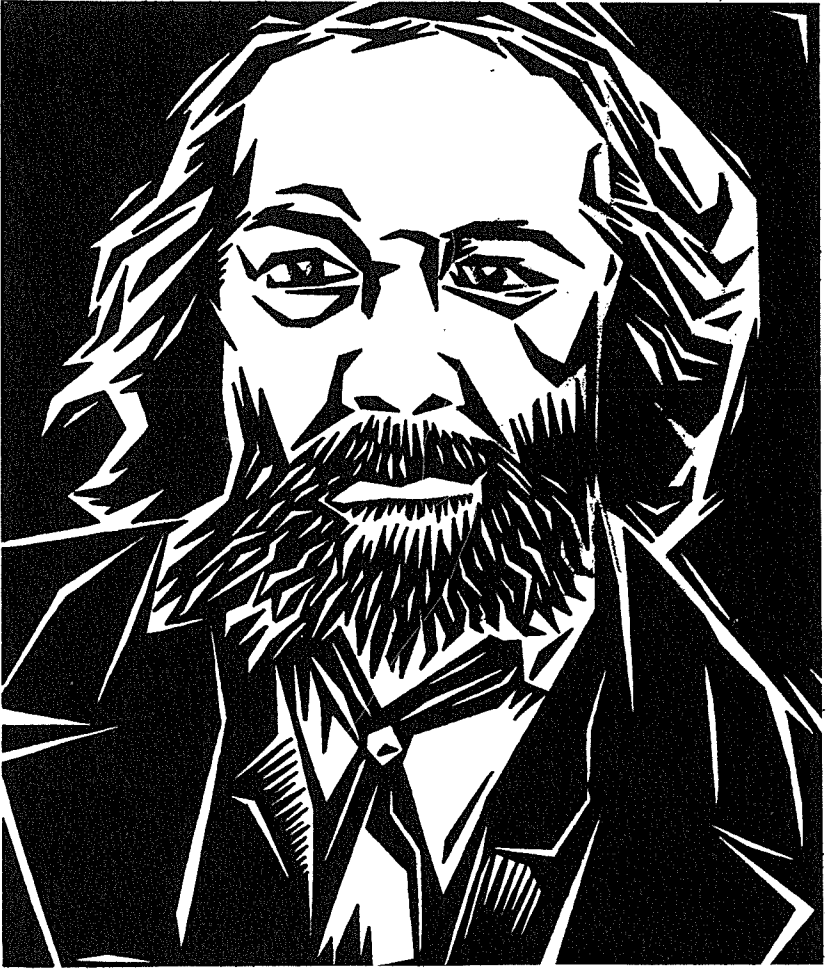
proletariat as an independent force in social progress:

'To possess political capacity is to have the consciousness of oneself as a member of the collectivity, to affirm the idea that results from this consciousness, and to pursue its realization. Whoever unites these three conditions is capable.'

He believed that the French workers were now approaching the fulfilment of these conditions. They were already well aware of their place within a collective group — the working class — whose interests were distinct from those of other classes within society. Furthermore, their class consciousness was leading them towards mutualism, the idea of a society organised along egalitarian lines, and federalism, the means whereby equality could be attained.

Proudhon died in January 1865, soon after he had received with joy the news that the International Workingmen's Association had been formed, largely through the efforts of his followers. The acceptance of Proudhon's ideas by a wide section of the working class was demonstrated by the immense procession that accompanied his funeral, an acceptance that ensured the emergence of anarchism as a major force in modern history and provided a lasting basis for later anarchists to build their theory upon.





BAKUNIN

'In the thick of the popular tempest ...'

Mikhail Bakunin was born in 1814 into the Russian aristocracy. At 21 he quit the St Petersburg Artillery School to study philosophy in Berlin, where he came under the influence of Hegelian 'Left' philosophy. It was at this time that he developed his famous dictum: *'The urge for destruction is a creative urge.'* In contrast

to Hegel's emphasis on the positive in the dialectic, Bakunin's 'revolutionary negation' sees the negative as the driving force of history.

For the young Bakunin, a new world could only emerge through the total destruction of the old. The true aim of history is the liberation of humanity, and true liberation is only possible through an absolute break with the past. This absolute break — revolution — is an act of absolute negation by the whole of humanity against all authority. The aim — liberty — and the method — revolt — go hand in hand.

He was already suspicious of the communists:

'Theirs is not a free society, a really live union of free peoples, but a herd of animals, intolerably coerced and united by force, following only material ends, utterly ignorant of the spiritual side of life.'

In 1844, he met with Proudhon and Marx in Paris. His enthusiasm for national independence movements, however, and in particular for a general rising linked to revolutions in subject nations, was vehemently opposed by Marx and Engels. A rift was opened between them that continued to widen. In 1848, a speech calling for Polish independence caused the French government to expel him.

The following year Bakunin rushed to Dresden where, in **Richard Wagner's** words, he was a 'capable and cool-headed leader' of the May insurrection. As Wagner, who had been beside him on the barricades, recalled: *'Everything about him was colossal. He was full of a primitive exuberance and strength.'*



This exuberance led to his arrest in Saxony, where he was sentenced to death. Extradition to Austria followed and he was again sentenced to death. Russia then demanded his repatriation and he was thrown without trial into the cells of the Peter-Paul Fortress for six years. Imprisonment and exile to Siberia broke his health forever. Yet in 1861 he made a dramatic escape, all of Europe reading of his sensational journey to London via Japan and America.

On his arrival in Britain, Bakunin's first words were to enquire where in Europe he could find unrest. '*Quiet,*' he wrote, '*which everyone rates so highly, is the greatest disaster that can befall a human being.*' On hearing that there was none, he responded: '*Then what are we to do? Must I go to Persia or India to stir things up? It would drive me mad to sit and do nothing.*'

For three years he threw his energy into the movement for Polish independence. The failure of the 1863 insurrection forced him to turn away from national towards international revolution and in 1864 in Italy he formed an international secret society, the **Fraternity**: '*Invisible pilots in the thick of the popular tempest.*'

In 1868, Bakunin joined the International Workingmen's Association — the First International — a Europe-wide federation of radical organisations. It had no unified official programme, its policy being defined within its various federations and by its frequent Congresses. But although a great variety of organisations were affiliated to the International, its General Council was dominated by an authoritarian socialist faction around Marx.

According to Marx, the social and economic development of all class societies was governed by '*scientific laws*' whose workings could only be understood by those who studied them closely using his methods. Social evolution was gradual for great periods of time until a revolutionary change occurred. In all previous revolutions one ruling class was replaced by another, which had grown in strength '*in the womb*' of the old society. Under capitalism, therefore, workers should form a centrally-organised, disciplined political party to seize state power and establish



the *'dictatorship of the proletariat'*. Such ideas appalled Bakunin.

Bakunin's critique of Marx's authoritarianism opened the debate on two vital problems of modern revolutionary theory and practice: the role of radical intellectuals, which he ironically dubbed *'savants'*, and Marx's notion of *'scientific socialism'*.

For Bakunin the revolutionary *'tempest'* is created by the inevitable course of events and can be triggered by trivial causes. Organised groups can assist the revolution's birth by propaganda and action, but only if these ideas echo the desires of the masses. These groups should never be separate from the masses and indeed must seek to prevent the consolidation of power in the hands of an elite by continually emphasizing free association.

Only the masses, completely involved and in absolute control, can make a real revolution. It cannot be made on their behalf, organised or directed by a *'revolutionary'* nucleus who believe they know best. Such a revolution, argued Bakunin, must be seen as *counter-revolutionary*. The *savants* believe themselves superior to the masses and destined to be a future dominant class, a new aristocracy.

According to Bakunin, Marxism is the ideology of a new class in search of power. They talk of the overthrow of capitalists, of liberation and an end to exploitation, but in reality the radical intelligentsia see the revolution as a glorious opportunity to further their career prospects. Should they come to power, this elite would use its *'science'* to justify its domination of the masses. According to Bakunin, such people are the *'quintessence and the scientific expression of the bourgeois spirit and the bourgeois interest.'*

Marx's talk of objective *'scientific laws'* of social evolution driven by inevitable economic developments — *'laws'* which only Marx and his disciples could *'interpret'* — served only to mystify the workers. By preaching patience and postponing revolt, and by replacing revolution with *'alliances'* with bourgeois parliamentary parties until the *'inevitable final crisis'* of capitalism occurred, Marx was

selling the working class into perpetual slavery. For Bakunin, Marx's inflated theorising was mumbo-jumbo; a new religion with a new priesthood whose Earthly Paradise, set in some unknown future, was merely yet another ideology of continued oppression.

However, at this time the most popular ideas within the International were not those of Marx but of Proudhon, whose federalism and mutualism formed the foundations of Bakunin's concept of **collectivism**. In contrast to Marx's calls to conquer the state in order to take control of its apparatuses, both Proudhon and Bakunin looked forward to a society of free federations of free associations of free workers.

Collectivism soon became the stated policy of the Italian and Spanish federations, the largest in the International, and increasingly popular with the Swiss, Belgian and French groups. Marx, alarmed by the popularity of Bakunin's anti-authoritarian collectivism, threatened him with '*Excommunication*'! He began a campaign of slurs and lies against Bakunin, and a committee set up to investigate these charges resulted in majority vote to expel Bakunin.

Marx recognised that it was essential to remove Bakunin if the International was to be transformed from its current structure as a confederation of autonomous federations into a system of political parties directed by Marx himself. It was at this time that by arbitrary methods Marx succeeded in pushing a resolution to that effect through the International. The Swiss federation called a further Congress where the charges against Bakunin were proven false. An International Congress also fully supported Bakunin, and condemned and totally rejected Marx's General Council and its plans. In their view, the duty of the workers was the destruction of political power. Compromise



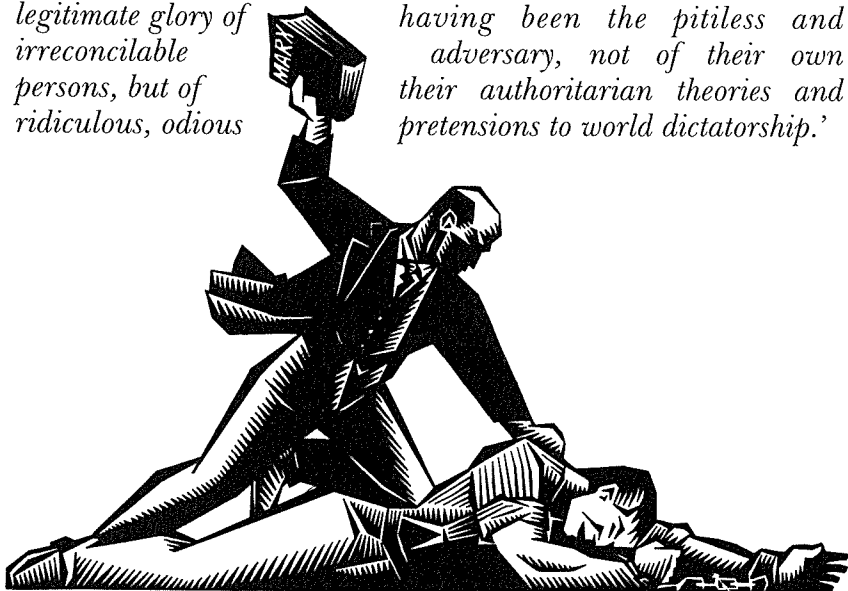
with bourgeois politics, including parliamentarism, was rejected, and the organisation of new institutions of political power was seen to be as dangerous as any existing government. The Congress was a total defeat for Marx. In response he moved the General Council to the safety of New York, where it faded into irrelevance.

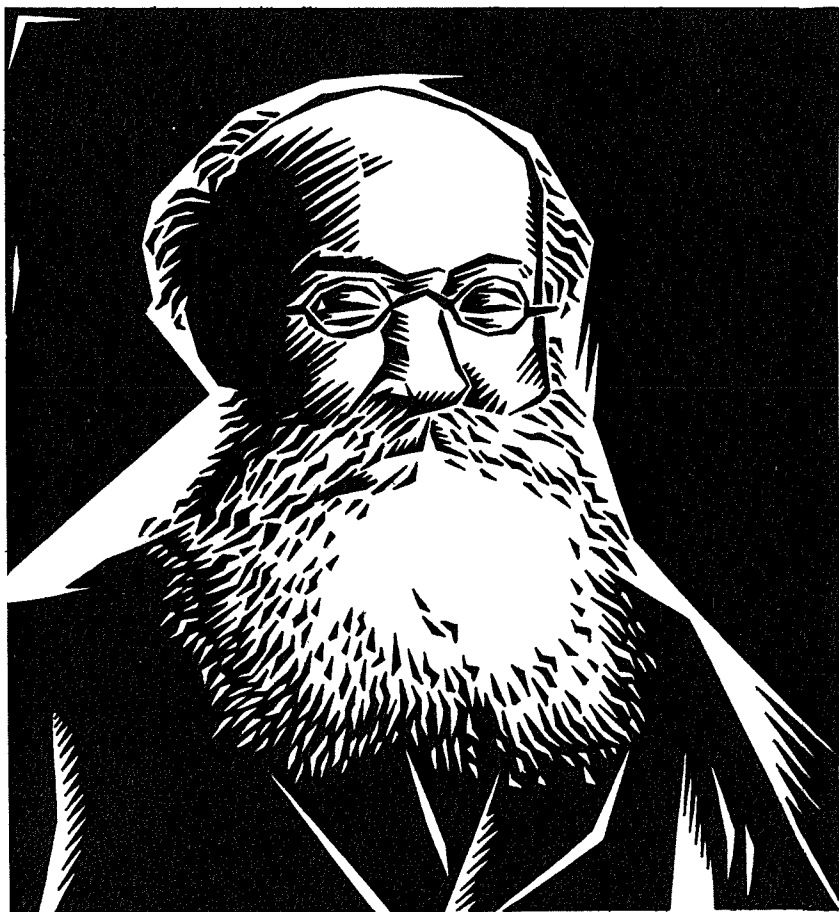
Exhausted by a life of struggle and worn down by the slanders and intrigues of the Marxists, Bakunin died at Berne on July 1st, 1876. His first fifty years established him throughout Europe as an heroic — indeed, an almost mythic — figure.

His legacy is enormous. The ideas he developed in the last ten years of his life spread rapidly throughout Russia, and the theories of collectivist anarchism and revolution were the basis of the anarcho-syndicalism which inspired mass movements in France and the Spanish Revolution of 1936. But most importantly, Bakunin's profound and pioneering critique of authoritarian (or state) socialism, and his remarkable prophecy of the course of its subsequent development still holds good today.

'My name will live on, and to this name will attach the real, legitimate glory of irreconcilable persons, but of ridiculous, odious

having been the pitiless and adversary, not of their own their authoritarian theories and pretensions to world dictatorship.'





KROPOTKIN

'Our work is clear ...'

Peter Kropotkin was born a prince of an illustrious military family, in 1842. As a boy he entered the Corps of Pages, Russia's most exclusive academy, becoming its star pupil and serving as personal page to Tsar Alexander. A brilliant future lay ahead of him: a commission in the Guards, where he would soon be made a general, followed at least by the governorship of a

province. Instead at 20 he astonished everyone by choosing to join the lowly regiment of Amur Cossacks.

The young prince was already on the side of liberal reform and had developed a passion for scientific discovery. The posting to Siberia offered the opportunity to pursue both interests. His first job was to report on prisons and salt-mines, where hard-labour, tuberculosis and scurvy united with bitter cold to bring terrible suffering and death to the prisoners. The experience opened his eyes to the nature of autocratic government.

'I began to appreciate the difference between acting on the principle of command and discipline and acting on the principle of common understanding. I may say now that I lost in Siberia whatever faith in state discipline I had cherished before. I was prepared to become an anarchist.'

In retreat from these grim realities, Kropotkin set out to explore Siberia. He journeyed for years throughout the region in the company of Cossacks and hunters, covering in all over fifty thousand miles. The geological and geographical discoveries he made were a tremendous



contribution to scientific knowledge and established his international reputation. During this time Kropotkin met many political exiles, including the populist novelist and poet Mikhailov who had been sentenced to penal servitude in 1861 for circulating subversive leaflets. Shortly before his death from tuberculosis, Mikhailov introduced

Kropotkin to Proudhon's ideas.

In 1866, a group of Polish prisoners disarmed their guards and set off to cross the Mongolian mountains for China, hoping eventually to sail around the world to Europe and freedom. Hunted down by Cossack troops, they were captured and several were executed. Kropotkin quit the army in protest and returned to St Petersburg to become a student at the university and continue his geographical work. In 1871, he was offered the prestigious secretaryship of the Russian Geographical Society, but he now recognised that his choice lay elsewhere:

'What right had I to these higher joys when all round me was nothing but misery and struggle for a mouldy piece of bread; when whatsoever I should spend to enable me to live in that world of higher emotions must needs be taken from the very mouths of those who grew the wheat and had not bread enough for their children?'

He travelled first to Zurich, where hundreds of Russian exiles were gathered around pro- and anti-Bakuninist factions, then to Geneva, and finally to the Jura mountains,



a stronghold of anarchism. Here he was introduced to **James Guillaume** and **Adhemar Schwitzguébel**, who had brought Bakunin's ideas to the watchmakers of the area. The manner in which these strongly independent peasant craftworkers discussed the principles and the possibilities of social justice finally determined Kropotkin's position:

'The egalitarian relations which I found in the Jura mountains; the independence of thought and expression which I saw developing in the workers and their unlimited devotion to the cause appealed strongly to my feelings; and when I came away from the mountains, after a week's stay with the watchmakers, my views upon socialism were settled; I was an anarchist.'

On his return to Russia, Kropotkin threw himself into underground activity among the workers of St Petersburg. In 1874 he was arrested and imprisoned in the Peter-Paul Fortress, where he became seriously ill. Two years later he made a dramatic escape, and in 1877 reached the Jura again.

Kropotkin was immediately welcomed into the inner circles of the anarchist movement, and he spent the next few years travelling throughout western Europe as an agitator and organiser. Switzerland was for a time his base but he was expelled in 1881 for praising the assassination of Tsar Alexander II as an *'heroic act'*. He then moved to France, but following a wave of riots and bombings in that country he was arrested and imprisoned for three years. International protest and his ill-health eventually led to his release and in 1886 he arrived in England, where he lived for the next thirty years.

Kropotkin now felt that the movement must go beyond discussion of theory and develop concrete anarchist alternatives to immediate social problems. In his newspaper *Le Révolté* and in countless pamphlets and books, Kropotkin dealt in a vivid, journalistic style with contemporary social questions of economics and history. His optimism and clarity made his writing so popular that his ideas — generally called **Free** or **Anarchist Communism** — soon circulated around the world and became a great influence upon the anarchist movement everywhere.

Most anarchists see no great contradiction between Kropotkin's and Bakunin's anarchism, regarding Bakunin as being more concerned with questions of how to

overthrow the existing order and Kropotkin with the forms of organisation that should replace it.

Unlike Bakunin's revolution — an immense destruction or sweeping away of the old order, Kropotkin's was even at its origin a constructive act. To prevent the establishment of new forms of power, the workers must know that their revolution is the starting point of an entirely free society. All attempts to create a new 'revolutionary government' must be checked, while every step towards a greater freedom and equality must be encouraged. Reformism and hesitation are fatal; only total and rapid transformation can prevent a return to the old order. For Kropotkin, the Paris Commune of 1871 clearly signposted the direction for the revolution: the commune would become a voluntary association of all groups of individuals within it, uniting with other communities to form a freely co-operating regional and worldwide network which would replace all states and governments.

'When these days shall come — and it is for you to hasten their coming — when a whole region, when great towns with their suburbs, shall shake off their rulers, our work is clear; all equipment must be returned to their true owners, everybody, so that each may have their full share in consumption, that production may continue in everything that is necessary and useful, and that social life, far from being interrupted, may be resumed with the greatest energy.'



In Kropotkin's anarchist-communist society there could be no wages for labour (both Proudhon's mutualism and Bakunin's collectivism contained systems of payment for labour time); for Kropotkin any kind of wage (even if it took the form of labour cheques or credits) was a form of compulsion. In the commune all goods and services will be freely available to whoever needs them. Need, not work, should decide how things are distributed, and in a free society need can only be defined freely. Like Proudhon, he recognised that the wealth of society is created collectively — it is impossible to measure any individual's contribution — so the social wealth must be enjoyed collectively also.

Inequality and private property in factories, land and so on must be abolished, but capitalism is not to be replaced by state ownership — the authoritarian socialist's ambition — but by the international system of voluntary co-operation, Kropotkin pointed out that elements of such a system already exist — the international postal system is one example — and there is no logical reason why such



voluntary co-operation cannot become universal. It is more practical and sensible way to organise a complex, modern society than capitalist competition or state planning, especially as most of the world's suffering comes from the chaos and waste that is associated with these systems. If all the energy and labour that goes into such unproductive activities as militarism and bureaucracy were directed

instead into socially useful activity, there would be enough to satisfy everyone's needs.

In a free, anarchist world productive activity too would be very different from what it is today under capitalism. The sub-division of labour, dangerous factory conditions, meaningless tasks, boredom, frustration, want and compulsion, would all be replaced by the satisfaction of freely chosen, varied and useful occupations. In such a society, human activity, once artificial restrictions are removed, will be naturally directed to the general good of all.

'People's exclusive purpose in life is not eating, drinking, and providing shelter for themselves. As soon as their material wants are satisfied, other needs, which generally speaking may be described as of an artistic nature, will thrust themselves forward. These needs are of the greatest variety; they vary in each and every individual, and the more society is civilized, the more will individuality be developed, and the more will desires be varied.'



A constant argument used against those who believe that human society is capable of fundamental progress is that it is *against nature*. Godwin had been told that any improvement in the condition of people would inevitably lead them to breed faster, and hence to wipe out any advance that was made. In the middle of the 19th century it became a commonplace of scientific and political thought

that the basic laws of society are also those of nature (a view which of course Godwin and Proudhon shared), but that life in nature is always and everywhere *'red in tooth and claw'*. Darwin and his associates talked of animal life as an endless *'gladiators' show* where the rule of strength ensured the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weakest, and who enlarged this idea to include primitive human society as a *'continuous free fight'*.

Kropotkin's travels in Siberia and Manchuria and the scientific observations he made there had convinced him that the opposite was the case. He argued instead that such perpetual struggle would in fact have been fatal to any species because it would have cancelled out the advantages gained from living in a group or society. It is certainly inconsistent with the development of human society. In his view, cooperation and social solidarity, not struggle and competition, are the vital elements for the success and survival of animal life.



In his book *Mutual Aid* (1902), Kropotkin collected impressive scientific evidence to support these ideas. If there is a struggle it is against natural circumstances — climate, food supply and so on — and not between individual animals of the same species.

'Life in societies enables the feeblest animals to resist, or to protect themselves from the most terrible and beasts of prey; it permits long life; it enables the species to rear its young with the least waste of energy; it enables gregarious animals to migrate in search of new abodes. While admitting that force, swiftness, protective colours,

cunningness, and endurance to hunger and cold, are so many qualities making the individual or the species the fittest under certain circumstances, we maintain that under any circumstances sociability is the greatest advantage in the struggle for life. Those species that willingly abandon it are doomed to decay; while those animals which know best how to combine have the greatest chance of survival and of further evolution, although they may be inferior to others in each of the faculties, except the intellectual faculty.'

The 'intellectual faculty' itself is further evidence of the importance of sociability. Language, experience, knowledge, culture; all these can only grow from a shared, social life, which also creates the day-to-day practice of a 'collective sense of justice' which for Kropotkin is at the very heart of society. Justice, solidarity, co-operation and mutual aid are essential in human society. Without them everyday life would soon come to a halt, and it is these, not coercive, centralised, authoritarian government, that ensure the growth and vitality of society.

Kropotkin's lasting contribution was to place anarchist theory on a scientific basis and to provide a vision of great optimism and hope for the future. Kropotkin saw anarchism as the highest expression of a biological need for animals to form social groups. His scientific studies provided proof that the general direction of human history was continually towards liberty, in spite of anything that authority imposed, and that further progress was inevitable. Following an all-embracing social revolution society will continue to grow and change in directions unimaginable to people living in the present authoritarian world. Society is naturally developing to secure a life of '*well being for all*', in which collective productivity will be put to collective use — anarchism.

His last years were unhappy ones. Kropotkin mistakenly supported the First World War because he believed that Germany was more authoritarian than its opponents, a position which separated him from most anarchists. In 1917 he returned to Russia, where he was hailed as a great

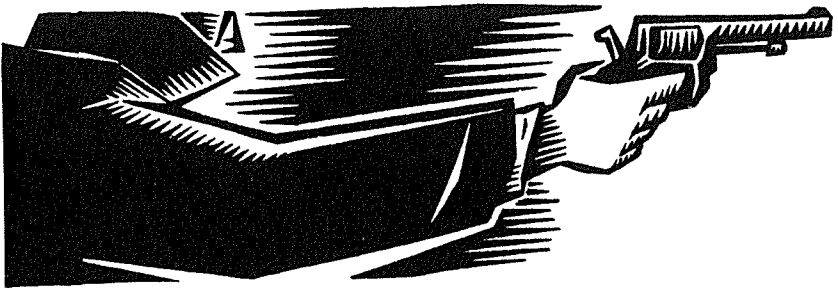
revolutionary. But he soon clashed openly with Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Old, infirm and isolated he nevertheless continued to call for anarchist revolution:

'A social revolution cannot be accomplished by a central government . . . To trust to the genius of party dictators is to destroy all the independent nuclei, trade unions and local co-operative distributive organisations, turning them into bureaucratic organs of the party . . . This is not the way to accomplish revolution.'

Kropotkin died on February 8th, 1921. As his coffin passed through the Moscow streets, a five mile long procession of mourners formed. In red letters on the anarchists' black banners were written the phrase: *'Where there is authority there is no freedom.'*



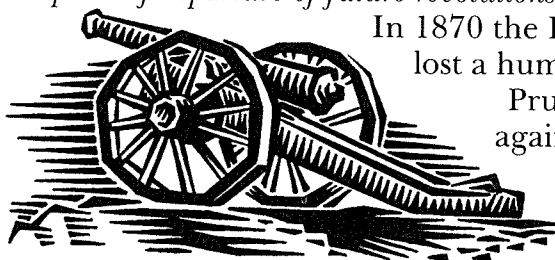
FOUR



THE PARIS COMMUNE

'A place where people still laugh ...'

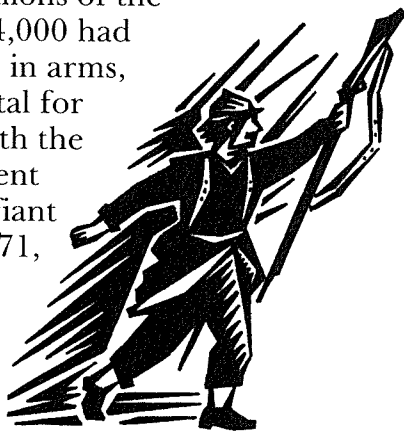
Rooted in a history of revolution from 1789 through to the workers' revolts in the 1830s and 1840s, the Paris Commune of 1871 was the first great urban insurrection of modern times. For anarchists it was proof of their vision. As Kropotkin wrote: *'A new idea was born ... the point of departure of future revolutions.'*



In 1870 the French government lost a humiliating war against Prussia. Popular anger against the government sparked a chain of revolts throughout France. As the

Prussian army closed around Paris its populace rushed to join the neighbourhood battalions of the National Guard and soon 384,000 had volunteered. With the people in arms, the government fled the capital for Versailles and made peace with the Prussians. Next the government had to regain control of a defiant Paris, and on March 18th, 1871, it sent in troops to regain the National Guard cannon.

Soldiers refused to fire on the jeering crowds, though, and turned their weapons on officers, shooting their commander. The Commune had begun.



Leading the spontaneous rising, the National Guard seized public buildings, churches and houses of the wealthy and handed them over to the numerous political 'clubs' and committees which sprang up. The people became involved in running the entire city, delegates being elected on a

temporary basis and having constantly to report back to their districts. By May, 43 factories were cooperatively run and the Louvre museum was a munitions factory run by a workers' council.

The Commune gave priority to education — one child in three would otherwise have had no schooling at all — and the National Guard evicted nuns and priests from the city's schools. An all-women committee, including the anarchist Louise Michel, organised classes for women, and opened girls' schools and day nurseries near the factories.

One of the most striking aspects of the Paris Commune was its carnival atmosphere. It was a *'festival of the oppressed'*: the city had *'all the signs of being on holiday . . . The excitement was so intense that people moved about as if in a dream . . .'* Paris was *'a place where people still laugh.'* But it was only to last for 73 days. With the city under continuous siege, food became scarce and soaring prices led to extreme hardship.





On May 1st, government troops entered the starving city. Seven days of bitter fighting followed before, one by one, all of the Commune's barricades were overcome. A terrible slaughter followed. Squads of soldiers and armed members of the bourgeoisie roamed the streets, killing and maiming at will. At least 30,000 communards died in the aftermath.

PROPAGANDA BY DEED



The defeat of the Commune left the French workers defenceless and gave the bourgeoisie a new confidence. Existing industry, mainly carried out in small craft workshops, was rapidly transformed by the development of production-line factories. Workers were powerless. Long hours, low wages and rigid discipline meant greater poverty; any attempt to organise a union meant the sack and starvation. In reply, anarchists began a campaign of violence. The era of 'Propaganda by the Deed' had begun.

'Placid and carefree sleeps the bourgeoisie, but the day of shuddering and fear, of ferocious tempests, of bloody revenge is approaching. The savage, blinding light of explosions begins to light up its dreams, property trembles and cracks under the deafening blows of dynamite, the palaces of stone crack open providing a breach through which will pour the wave of the poor and the starving.

Here is the hour of revenge, the bombs have sounded the charge — by Dynamite to Anarchy!



For 20 years the anarchists struck out with bomb, pistol or dagger at every King, President, Minister or millionaire that came within reach:

1878, St Petersburg: **Sergei Kravchinski** kills head of Russian Secret Police.

1878, Madrid: **Giovanni Passanante** attempts to kill King of Italy.

1880, Madrid: **Otero** attempts to shoot King and Queen of Spain.

1884, Germany: **August Reinsdorf** attempts to blow up Kaiser Wilhelm

1886, Paris: **Charles Gallo** hurls vitriolic acid at stockbrokers crowding the Stock Exchange, crying: *'Long live anarchism! Death to the bourgeoisie! Bunch of idiots!'*

1891, Barcelona: **Paulino Pallas** attempts to blow up Spanish General Campos.

1891, Barcelona: **Santiago Salvador** hurls a bomb into crowded theatre, killing 22.

1892, Pittsburgh: **Alexander Berkman** attempts to kill Henry Clay Frick, head of steelworks.

1892, Paris: **Emile Henry** bombs police station, killing 5. Bombs café, kills 1. Shoots 3 policemen.

1892, Paris: **Auguste Vaillant** throws bomb into Chamber of Deputies. At his execution he cries *'Long live anarchy! My death will be avenged!'*

1894, Lyon: **Santo Caserio** kills French President Carnot to avenge Vaillant.

1897, Barcelona: **Michele Angiolillo** kills Spain's Prime Minister Del Castillo.



1898, Geneva: **Luigi Luccheni** kills Austria's Empress Elizabeth.

1898, Paris: **Claude Etievant** shoots two policemen.

1900, Geneva: **Gaetano Bresci** shoots Italy's King Umberto.

1901, Buffalo: **Leon Czolgosz** assassinates President McKinley.

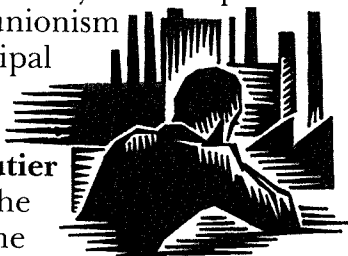
1906, Madrid: **Mateo Morral** hurls bomb at Spain's King and Queen.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

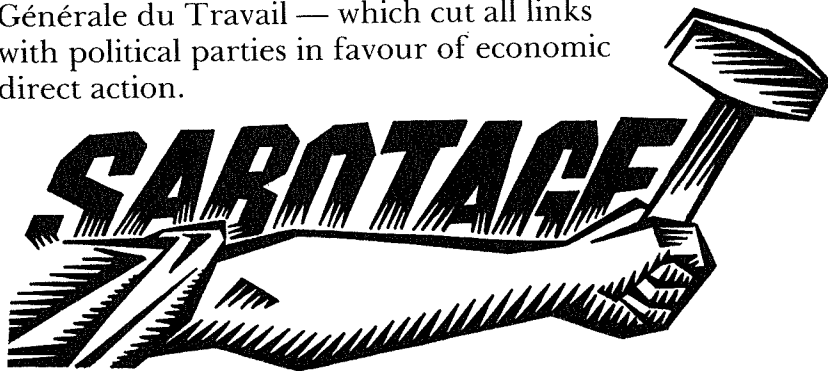
This message was immediately understood by the workers. Before then they'd dare not even speak of wage rises or unions, but the *'Whiff of dynamite'* changed all that. There was widespread sabotage; over-zealous managers were beaten up, and the bosses' chateaux were bombed. Popular songs celebrating the anarchists' actions, whistled around the factory, would make bosses think twice before sacking a troublemaker. The workers rediscovered their courage, and from this developed Anarcho-syndicalism, a mass-movement which aimed at the abolition of government by means of a nation-wide General Strike, and the management of society by the working class.

The original purpose of trades unions (*syndicats*) in France, as elsewhere, was largely confined to the improvement of wages and conditions at work. More-obviously *political* activity was generally left to political parties. But in the 1890s militant unionism was increasingly seen as the principal source of revolutionary action.

The major figures in this development were **Fernand Pelloutier** and **Emile Pouget**. When in 1895 he was elected General Secretary of the



Independent Labour Exchanges, Pelloutier seized his opportunity to overcome workers' ignorance of their own interests and power by means of systematic political education. He began by transforming the Exchanges into workers' universities; then into centres of mutual aid, and finally into centres of propaganda for anarchism. In 1906 the Exchanges united with the syndicats to become the CGT — Confederation Générale du Travail — which cut all links with political parties in favour of economic direct action.



The cornerstone of anarcho-syndicalism was direct action — machine breaking, consumer boycotts, intimidation of strike breakers, and violence against bosses and their wealth. Such actions, it was believed, would, when joined with anarchist education, both cement solidarity

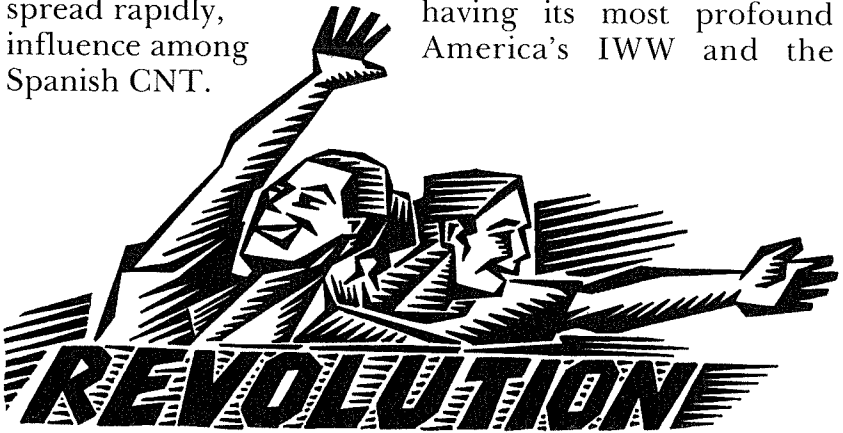


between workers and at the same time widen the gulf between workers and their masters. Direct action would increase class conflict, and eventually lead to the General Strike. With the workers united in their syndicats,

GENERAL STRIKE



the prototypes of the anarchist society, the General Strike would mark the defeat of the capitalist system. From 1902 to 1914 the CGT dominated French labour. Its ideas spread rapidly, having its most profound influence among America's IWW and the Spanish CNT.



ART AND ANARCHISM

The resurgence of anarchism in the late 19th century found support not only among industrial workers but also from the avant garde of French artists, especially painters and poets. Symbolist poetry already had a reputation as the literature of rebellion. Its major figures — **Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, Stéphane Mallarmé** and **Charles Baudelaire** — had fashioned their poetry in violent opposition to the established dogmas of rigid structure and mannered, artificial language. Symbolists insisted that poets must be absolutely free to create and use their own forms. More importantly, the guiding principles must be the poet's own unique, subjective experience. Poetry is best created and understood by allowing the imagination total

freedom of interpretation. As the Symbolist **Stuart Merrill** explained:

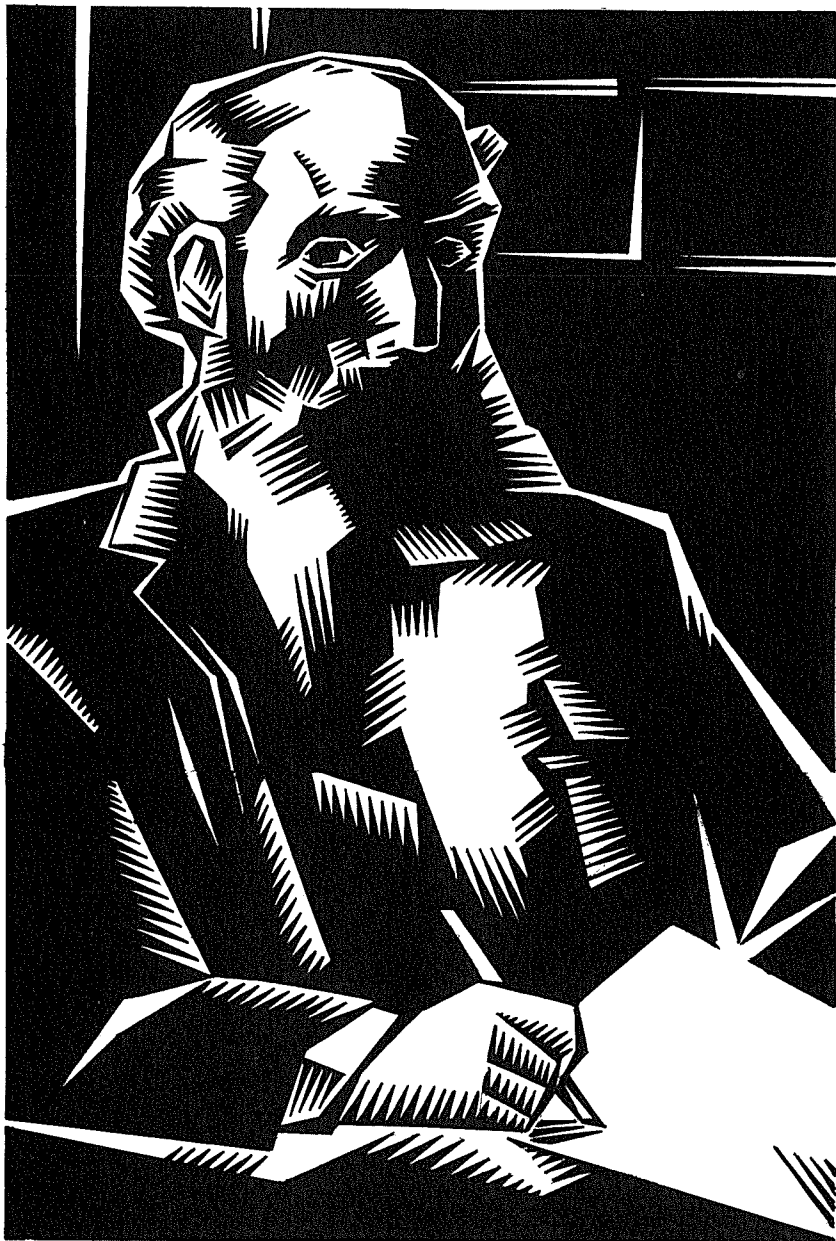
‘What makes the strength of Symbolist theory is precisely its anarchy. It demands of the poet that they be significant, that is, individual, and that they reveal themselves in thought and emotion by images as general as possible. The Symbolist is the anarchist of literature.’

Stirner’s *The Ego and Its Own* was widely read in Symbolist circles and such writers as Felix Fénéon, Gustave Kahn, Emile Verhaeren, Bernard Lazare, Pierre Quillard and Paul Adam openly endorsed anarchism, the latter saying of Ravachol, the anarchist assassin, that *‘a saint has been born to us.’*

Support for anarchism was even stronger among the painters. The leading Impressionist artist, **Camille Pissarro**, regularly produced lithographs for the newspaper *La Révolte*, and although often without money, he twice saved the paper from bankruptcy by paying all its debts. Key figures in the Neo-Impressionist movement — **Paul Signac, Henri-Edmond Cross, Charles Angrand, Theo van Rysselberghe** and **Maximilien Luce** among them — were also anarchists and frequently gave work to the anarchist press. Pissarro’s children became artists and anarchists. The book *The Anarchist Peril*, published in 1894, contained twelve illustrations by his sons and grandsons, Lucien, Georges, Félix and Rodo, and in 1901 Lucien illustrated a children’s book by the anarchist writer **Jean Grave**. This is how the novelist and anarchist **Octave Mirbeau** described the Pissarro family:

‘... in his old age, surrounded by fine sons, all artists, all different! Each follows his own nature. The father doesn’t impose on any of them his theories, his doctrines, his way of seeing and feeling. He lets them develop themselves according to the sense of their vision and of their individual intelligence.’

In Pissarro's words: *'It's a beautiful and happy thing that these children have this love of art. Our epoch is so sad that one can at least feel oneself live in a dream of beauty.'*



FIVE



A NEW WORLD

'Put forth such an argument ...'

American anarchism can be divided into two general movements: so-called 'native' individualism, stemming from the Puritan tradition of respect for personal liberty and conscience, and the radicalism of the new immigrants. The people who arrived in America during the last half of the 19th century, chiefly from southern and eastern Europe, brought with them a working-class consciousness arising from the experience of oppression in their homelands. But in the mid-19th century, America's conscience was savagery and system of slavery aroused by the hypocrisy of the slavery.



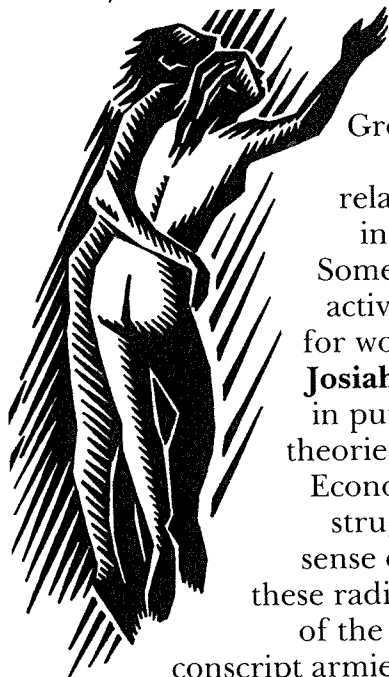
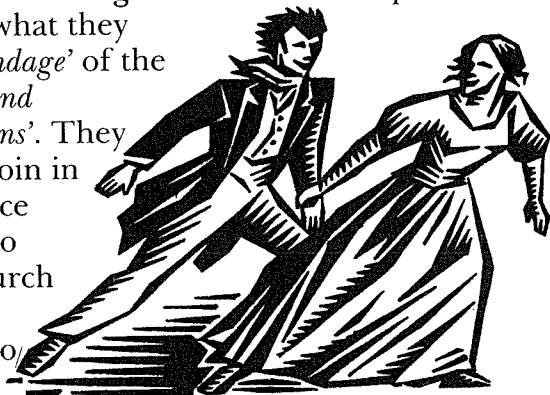
THE COME-OUTERS

At the heart of the American anti-slavery movement of the 1840s was a very influential and powerful group of anarchists known as the **Come-outers**, or **No-organisationists**.

The Come-outers were especially strong around Cape Cod, where they numbered around 300, and among the textile workers of Lynn, Massachusetts. Their opposition to slavery in the South quickly developed into a complete denial of church, government and every form of '*social bondage*', including marriage and sexual inequality. Many of the '**Cape Coddors**' renounced money and property, went naked in the summer, and pursued a life of

'harmonious self-government': an anarchist society whose laws were unwritten and based solely on the moral approval of the community.

The sisters **Sarah** and **Angelina Grimke** escaped to the Come-outers from what they described as the *'bondage'* of the churches' *'spiritual and ecclesiastical plantations'*. They urged everyone to join in non-violent resistance against *'all slavery'*, to refuse to attend church services or to pay taxes. Angelina, who would not be married by a clergyman or *'bind herself with words'*, married her *'soul-mate'*, **Theodore Weld**, at a ceremony organised by their friends.



Many others interested in living a life free from the chains of church and state formed themselves into self-supporting communities. Groups of women and men strove to find new ways of living and relating to one another in equality, individual liberty and conscience. Some, such as **Frances Wright**, were active abolitionists and campaigners for women's rights. Others, including **Josiah Warren**, were more interested in putting into practice the economic theories of Proudhon.

Economic instability and the growing struggle over slavery intensified the sense of alienation and despair felt by these radicals. They viewed the Civil War of the 1860s with horror. Its immense conscript armies, mass state-organised violence

and the factory system that grew up in its wake were, for them, even greater forms of slavery than any seen before.

THE GREAT RISING OF 1877

The years after the American Civil War saw a tremendous growth in industry, followed by a severe economic depression. Increasing workers' militancy culminated in the nation-wide uprising of July 1877. Drastic wage cuts forced the West Virginia Railroad workers to strike. The militia were called out and violence erupted.



The strike spread along the rail lines and the spark of rebellion was carried to the workers and the great army of unemployed in the cities. Soon 100,000 were involved in this spontaneous, leaderless strike, and in the city of St. Louis it developed into a systematically organised total shut-down — the first wildcat general strike in history.

THE BLACK INTERNATIONAL

Following the failure of revolutions in mid-19th-century Europe and the subsequent repression, hundreds of thousands of immigrants poured into the United States from eastern and southern Europe — the heartlands of anarchism — and settled in the great cities of New York and Chicago. In October 1881, the Black International Congress met in Chicago, where delegates from fourteen



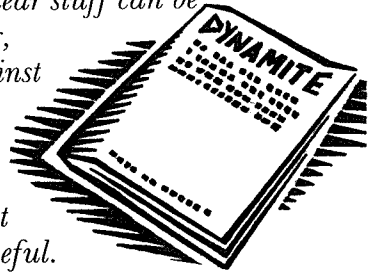
cities unanimously declared their opposition to representative democracy. In their view, only the use of force could establish the anarchist society.

JOHANN MOST



In 1882 the German, **Johann Most**, ended a sixteen-month sentence in a London prison (it was his fifth jail term) for writing in praise of the assassination of the Russian Tsar Alexander. He immediately headed for the USA, where he toured the country urging workers to rise against the state, and published a pamphlet, *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare: A Manual of Instruction in the Use of Preparation of Nitro-Glycerine, Dynamite, Gun-Cotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons, etc. etc.*:

'In giving dynamite to the downtrodden millions of the globe, science has done its best work. The dear stuff can be carried in the pocket without danger, while it is a formidable weapon against any force of militia, police or detectives that may want to stifle the cry for justice that goes forth from plundered slaves. It is something not very ornamental, but exceedingly useful.



It can be used against persons and things. It is better to use it against the former than against bricks and masonry . . . A pound of this stuff beats a bushel of ballots all hollow — and don't you forget it.'

THE CHICAGO IDEA

Johann Most organised the International Anarchist Congress in Pittsburgh in 1883, where a manifesto was drawn up:

First: Destruction of the existing class rule, by all means, by energetic, relentless, revolutionary and international action.

Second: Establishment of a free society based upon co-operative organisation of production.

Third: Free exchange of equivalent products by and between the productive organisations without commerce and profit-mongery.

Fourth: Organisation of education on a secular, scientific and equal basis for both sexes.

Fifth: Equal rights for all without distinction of sex or race.

Sixth: Regulation of all public affairs by free contract ... resting on a federalistic basis.'

The Congress was dominated by the anarchists from Chicago, who had a tradition of armed resistance (in 1877 armed workers' groups such as The Bohemian Sharpshooters had marched in public). Their blend of unionism and robust anarchism aimed at a collective, 'no-government' society — the Chicago Idea — was the driving force behind



the twenty two unions which united in the following year to form the Central Labour Union. They resolved:

'Urgently to call upon the wage earning class to arm itself in order to be able to put forth against their exploiters such an argument which alone can be effective: Violence.'

THE HAYMARKET AFFAIR

In 1886, two anarchists, **Lucy** and **Albert Parsons**, walked arm in arm with their children down Chicago's Michigan Avenue. They walked at the head of 80,000 workers in the world's first ever May Day parade.

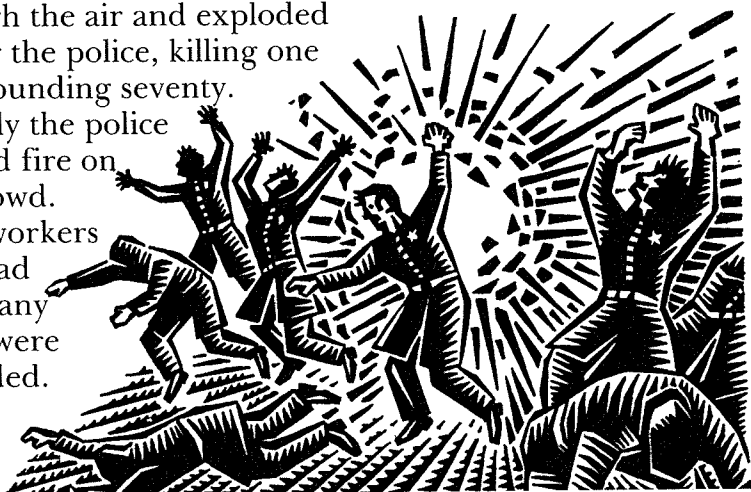
At that moment, 340,000 workers in 12,000 factories across the country downed tools to demand the 8-hour day in order to spread work among the thousands made unemployed by new 'labour saving' machinery. The next

day, Chicago police attacked peaceful strikers with guns and clubs, killing and wounding several. On May 3rd, Chicago anarchists led 6,000 striking lumberworkers to the aid of strikers at the McCormick Harvester factory. Again the police attacked with no provocation and again several strikers were killed or wounded. Outraged, the anarchists called a protest meeting for the next day at the Haymarket, urging workers to come armed.

The meeting was peaceful and a shower of rain soon sent away most of the large crowd. When only 200 remained the police suddenly attacked. In the confusion, a bomb sailed through the air and exploded among the police, killing one and wounding seventy.

In reply the police opened fire on the crowd.

Four workers fell dead and many more were wounded.



It has never been discovered who threw the Haymarket bomb, but it was certainly none of the eight anarchists who were brought to trial for it. Six of them were not even there and the other two were clearly innocent, yet a trial of perjured testimony, a packed jury, biased judge and an

hysterical press ensured a verdict of guilty. In spite of a world-wide protest and a second trial, the four

'Haymarket Martyrs', including **Albert Parsons**, were hanged.



Six years later, the state governor released the survivors from jail, admitting that there had been no evidence to link any of the eight with the Haymarket bomb. Lucy Parsons remained politically active in Chicago for another 55 years.

EMMA GOLDMAN AND ALEXANDER BERKMAN

In 1889, a recent immigrant from Russia, **Emma Goldman**, sat in a cafe in New York's Lower East Side.

Nearby sat another Russian,

Alexander Berkman.

So began a lifelong love affair that has inspired anarchists ever since.



Together the young lovers attended the lectures of Johann Most and became convinced of the value of '*propaganda by the deed*', the eloquence of direct action.

In 1892, striking steelworkers at Homestead, Pennsylvania, were gunned down by company police. Armed with pistol and dagger, Alex and Emma headed for the steelworks. Posing as a journalist, Alex entered the office of the company chairman, Henry Clay Frick, and opened fire,



hitting him twice before stabbing him. The wounds were superficial, however,

and Alex was jailed for 14 years. Meanwhile Emma organised a strike of women garment workers, urging



them to violence:

'Ask for work. If they don't give you work, ask for bread. If they don't give you work or bread, then take the bread.'



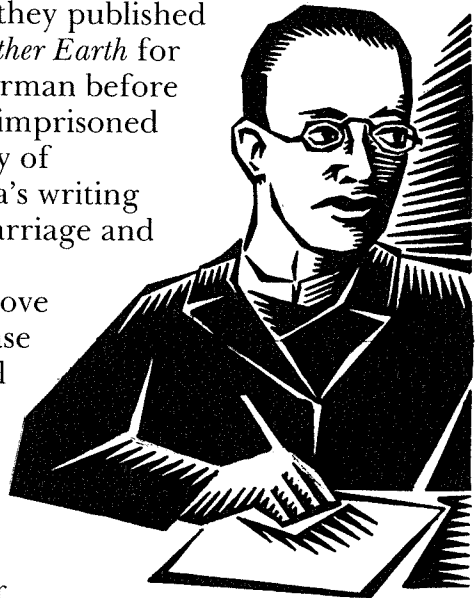
This speech earned her a year in jail. But once released she began speaking out again: on women's suffrage, on birth control and sexuality, and on anarchism.

Emma was by now a nationally known figure, and her meetings were packed. One listener, the Polish immigrant **Leon**

Czolgosz, was so

inspired that he obtained a handgun and in 1901 shot dead William McKinley, the US President. As a result, a law was soon passed excluding anarchist immigrants. In 1906, Alex

was freed and together they published the monthly journal *Mother Earth* for 11 years. Like Lilian Harman before her (Harman had been imprisoned in 1886 for her advocacy of free-love unions), Emma's writing and speeches against marriage and prostitution and for contraception and free love led to a trial — in this case for 'speaking on medical questions'. Their campaign against the United States' entry into the First World War sent them to jail for a further



two years. In 1919, during the 'Red Scare', they were 'sent back to Russia' along with 249 other radicals.



THE I.W.W.

In 1905 the 45,000-strong Western Federation of Miners, with its tradition of *'negotiation by dynamite'*, sent delegates to a meeting in Chicago of 200 workers' representatives. So began the I.W.W. — **The Industrial Workers of the World.**

From the outset the I.W.W. was determined to overthrow capitalism. Its weapons were industrial unionism, workers' solidarity, class struggle and direct action. It fought on two fronts, not only against the bosses but also against the existing unions, which divided workers by organising on a strict craft basis. The IWW organised *across* industries, intending to create *'One Big Union'* to embrace all workers everywhere. In this way they hoped for a General Strike. — *'One Big Strike'* — which would usher in the anarchist society.

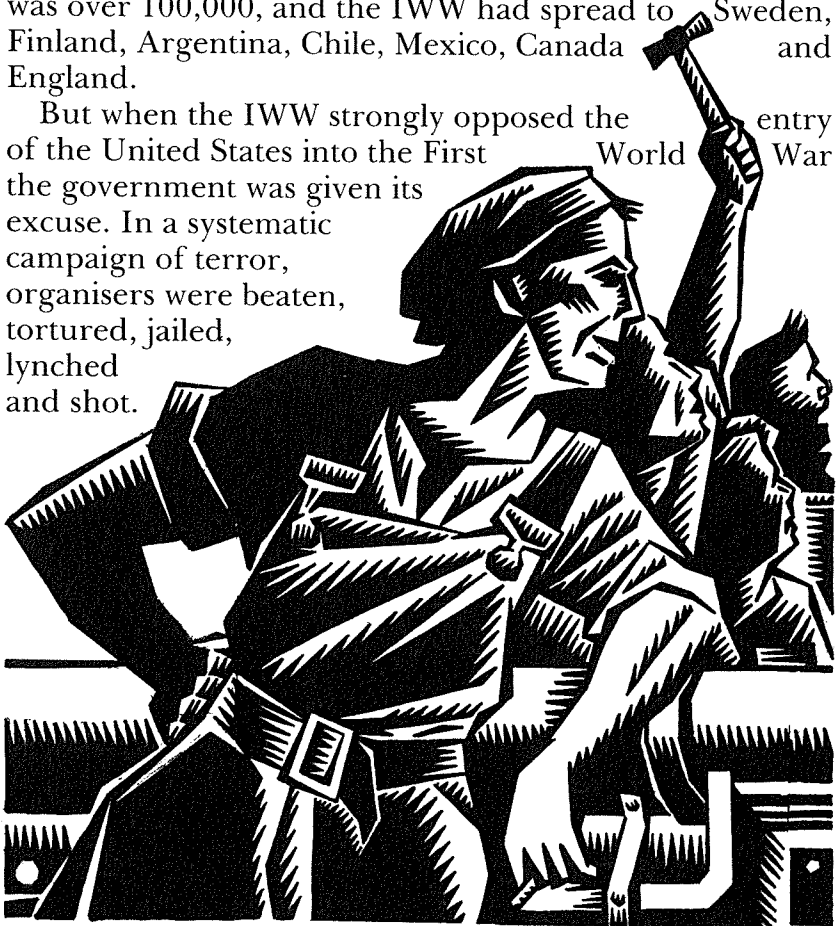


Its first targets were the migrant farm workers and lumberjacks of the west. These 'hobos', who were skilled in direct action but contemptuous of politics and centralised organisation, gave the IWW its anarcho-syndicalism. It then turned to the harshly-exploited workers of Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana, who were ready for violence and receptive to the IWW message. In 1912 the IWW arrived among the Italian mill workers of St. Lawrence.

Twenty-five thousand joined in a bloody strike, which resulted in complete victory for the workers.

Next to fall to the IWW was the so-called 'hot-bed of anarchism', the textile town of Paterson, New Jersey, where 25,000 strikers fought management all summer long. 1913 saw 20,000 Akron rubber workers on strike behind the IWW. The mere rumour of IWW action prompted Henry Ford to raise wages in Detroit. In 1916, 16,000 Finnish iron miners in Minnesota called on the IWW to lead the strike that gained them shorter hours and higher wages, and 18,000 Kansas and Oklahoma farmworkers also joined up. By the next year, membership was over 100,000, and the IWW had spread to Sweden, Finland, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Canada and England.

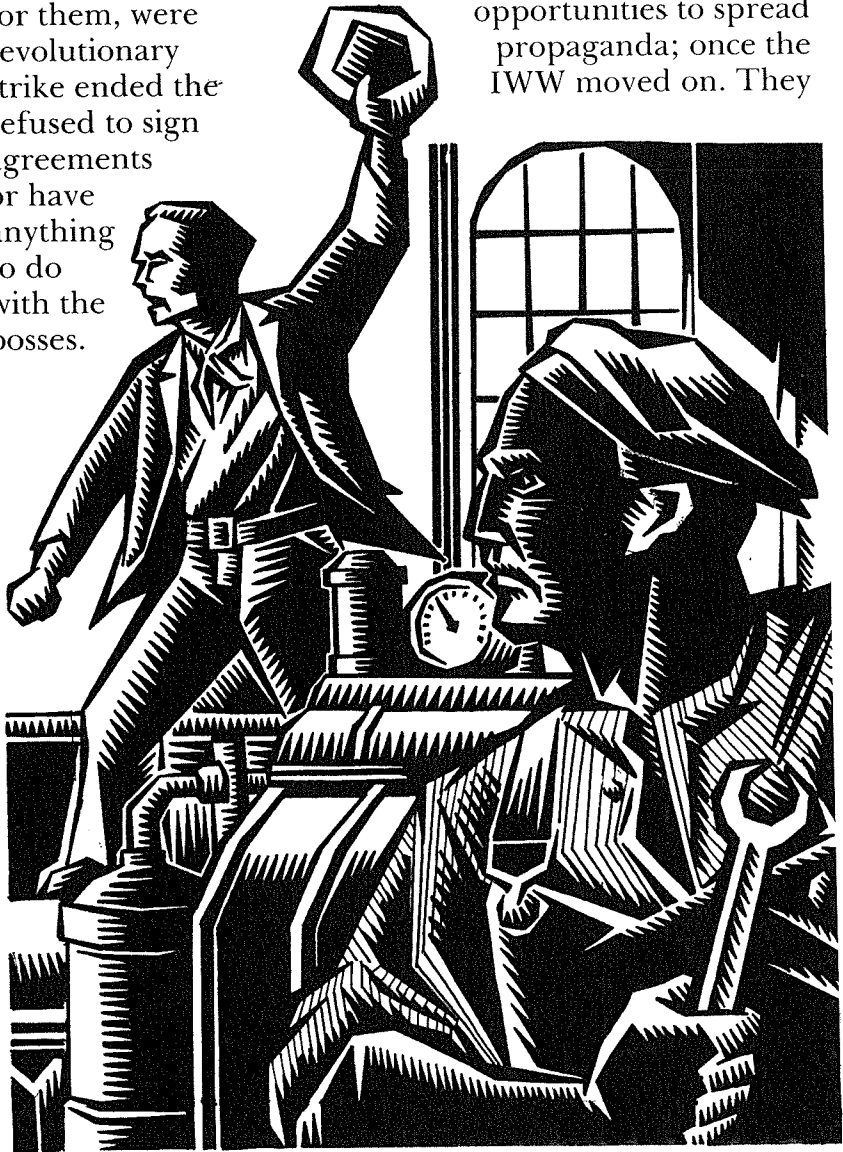
But when the IWW strongly opposed the entry of the United States into the First World War the government was given its excuse. In a systematic campaign of terror, organisers were beaten, tortured, jailed, lynched and shot.



IWW premises were raided, attacked and destroyed. Funds and records were seized. Within 2 years the IWW was broken.

The IWW version of anarcho-unionism emphasized *engagement* — agitation, propaganda, direct action — rather than long-term systematic organisation. Strikes, for them, were revolutionary strike ended they refused to sign agreements or have anything to do with the bosses.

opportunities to spread propaganda; once the IWW moved on. They



The IWW structure was deeply democratic, with a distrust of leaders and a contempt for politics coupled to a real enthusiasm for violent struggle to reach a revolutionary world.

The IWW was not alone in facing persecution in the government's paranoid 'Red Scare'. Massive police raids swept up thousands of radicals; in one 'Red Raid' alone, 2,500 people were arrested. The police were especially interested in the strong anarchist movement in the Italian immigrant communities, and on May 3rd, 1920, the anarchist **Andrea Salsedo** 'fell' to his death in New York while in police custody. Two days later two Italians, **Nicola Sacco**, a cobbler, and **Bartolomeo Vanzetti**, a fish peddler, were arrested in Massachusetts and charged with robbery and murder. Although the charges were completely false they were tried and found guilty. Despite the massive, worldwide demonstrations and years of legal appeals protesting their innocence they were sentenced to death in 1927.

The sentence provoked a hurricane of outrage. Thousands marched to the US embassy in London, angry crowds filled the Paris streets, general strikes were called in Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico, demonstrators fought police in Morocco and protests were also seen in Bucharest, Vienna, Berlin, Stockholm, Lisbon, Madrid, Ottawa, Tokyo, Cape Town, Petrograd and Moscow. In the US itself hundreds of thousands struck in New York, police riot-gas and shotguns met crowds in Chicago and 10,000 silk workers struck in New Jersey.

Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted on August 23rd, 1927. As the news flashed around the world an incredible wave of anger erupted, with rioting in London, Geneva and Paris. The US knew little of this, however, as in Hollywood the order was given for all newsreels to be destroyed. Fifty years later the Governor of Massachusetts officially pardoned the two anarchists, declaring them innocent of any crime.

SIX

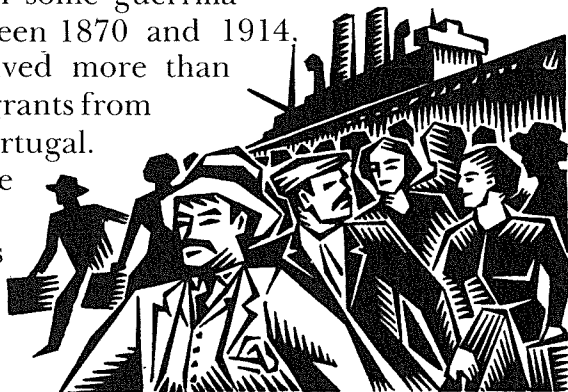


LATIN AMERICA

'Not with a hat in your hands, but a rifle in your fists ...'

Anarchism has been a powerful and popular force throughout Latin America since the waves of European immigration at the end of the 19th century. Although its strength declined during the 1920s, in recent years anarchism has been especially important in Bolivia and within some guerrilla movements. Between 1870 and 1914, Brazil alone received more than one million immigrants from Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Among them were many anarchists, including a tireless writer and union organiser, the Italian **Oreste Fistori**.



Anarcho-syndicalism soon dominated the radical movement, but when a flood of violent, bloody strikes resulted in increasing government repression many anarchists were deported. The First World War brought economic disaster to the workers and food prices rocketed. In July 1917, 20,000 strikers in São Paulo fought pitched battles with the police.

During the same period in Argentina the anarchist movement was one of the largest in the world. Particularly strong among dockworkers, mechanics, bricklayers and bakers, by 1905 anarchists dominated the Argentine Regional Workers Federation (FORA) and in May 1910 they organised a General Strike. Police attacked union offices and newspapers and hundreds of anarchists were jailed or deported. In response, the main theatre in Buenos Aires was bombed, an event which prompted even greater repression. In 1922, delegates from Argentina and Chile represented 300,000 workers at the International

Syndicalist Conference in Berlin, but by the 1930s anarchism in both Brazil and Argentina had ceased to exert real influence.

Peru and Bolivia also had an active anarchist movement. In Peru the movement was influenced by **Manuel Prada**, founder of the National Union and Director of the National Library, a centre for the fight for individual liberty and the abolition of all state and private property. Prada was particularly concerned with the oppression of women and Indians by the Church. One of the followers, **Victor Haya**, founded the popular University for Workers and Indians in 1921. In 1923, Haya was deported after a large anti-church demonstration he had led ended in the death of five demonstrators.

Anarchism also spread to Central America, Mexico and Cuba. In 1897, printworker **Romera Rosa** led the formation of the first national union in Puerto Rico, the FRO, and large crowds always gathered to hear **Louisa Capetillo**, an anarchist champion of women's rights and free love. There were many anarchist groups in San Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica, and also in Nicaragua, where in the 1920s the anarcho-**Sandino** was at the centre of radical ferment.



MEXICO

Mexico's tradition of rebellion stretches back beyond the struggles against Spanish colonialism to the Indian risings against the Aztec Empire. In the 1860s the arrival of immigrants carried anarchist ideas to village bandits, at that time waging a constant guerrilla war against landlords

of immense semi-feudal estates or haciendas. The demands of the anarchist Agraristas for local autonomy, land seizure and an end to government corruption also gained support among the Indians, whose traditions embraced both egalitarian self-government and suspicion of politics. Such popular activity laid the foundations for the 1911 revolution against the US-supported dictator Porfirio Diaz.

In 1865, the clandestine Bakuninist group La Social was formed, and **Plotino Rhodakanaty**, a Greek immigrant, opened a peasant school in Chalco to teach reading and writing, the skills of oratory and organisation, and the principles of anarchism. In 1869, a former student, **Chavas Lopez**, led a 1500-strong peasant rising which took several towns before Lopez was captured and killed.

By 1878, La Social had become a mass movement



with sixty groups across the country, and was the inspiration for numerous autonomous agrarian collectives:

The following years saw risings in twelve states. For eighteen months before he was gunned down, **Zalacosta**, editor of the anarchist *La Internacional*, led hundreds of peasants in running battles with government troops, sacking haciendas and redistributing land. With his death in 1880, co-ordination collapsed and the risings were easily crushed.

Slowly the demoralised movement reorganised. In 1910, eighty armed peasants led by **Emiliano Zapata** seized a hacienda and redistributed the land. Hundreds of peasants flocked to the Zapatista Liberation Army. In his revolutionary *Plan de Ayala*, Zapata called for:



'The land free, free for all, without overseers and masters. Seek justice from tyrannical governments, not with a hat in your hand but with a rifle in your fists.'

Even after Diaz had been toppled, men and women Zapatistas had to continue to fight to free their land. By the following year, 1912, the 12,000 soldiers of the Liberation Army



were fighting a guerrilla war, holding off government armies and even attacking the capital, Mexico City. Organised in small, village-based groups, the Zapatistas were able to drive back the government troops again and again.



Throughout the liberated regions the peasants were freed of landlords and government, but it was not to last. In 1916, 30,000 troops were sent to suppress them, yet the resistance of the peasants was only destroyed after the ambush and murder of Zapata himself in 1919.

Present day Mexico faces increasing unrest in both city and countryside. Landless peasants flock to Mexico City's squalid shanty towns, swelling its population to over 18



million. In 1969, new 'Zapatistas' formed. In 1973, twenty soldiers died in peasant ambushes in Acapulco. In 1976, in Culiaca hundreds of peasants seized land.

Throughout Mexico over 500 died in clashes with government troops, while the Brigade of Peasant Executioners were active in Morello, the home state of Zapata.

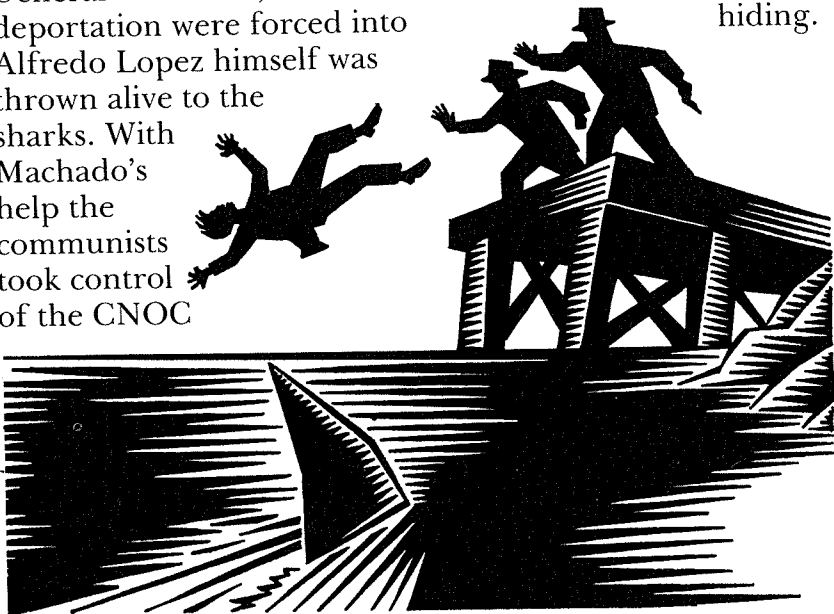
CUBA

Anarchism is also at the centre of Cuba's long history of struggle for independence and freedom; a struggle which continues today.

The Spanish exiles of the 1880s led this campaign for 30

years. Anarchists drafted the Cuban Independence Resolution at the first Workers Congress in 1892, and the anarchist General Workers League led the first General Strike. Many anarchists fought in the 1895 insurrection against Spanish rule, including the rebel army commander **Armando André**. Following independence in 1898, the Havana tobacco workers, led by anarchist **Gonzales Lozana**, called a General Strike during which 20 workers died. Anarchists were also central within the 200,000-strong co-operative movement.

In spite of increasing repression, anarchism grew. **Alfredo Lopez** was elected General Secretary of the National Confederation of Cuban Workers (CNOOC), and by 1925 Cuba's strongest union, the Brewery Workers, was anarchist-controlled. During the savage dictatorship of General Machado, anarchists who survived murder or deportation were forced into hiding. Alfredo Lopez himself was thrown alive to the sharks. With Machado's help the communists took control of the CNOOC



in 1931, but resistance continued and in 1933 the anarchist Trolley Workers Union called a General Strike. The communists, in return for government posts, offered to break the strike, but they failed and the Machado regime

was overthrown. With the promise of continued control of the unions, the communists went on to help another dictator, Batista, to power.

Over the next 20 years the Cuban anarchist movement was weakened by persecution and exile, but the few remaining anarchists continued to struggle against Batista. In 1959, overwhelmed by militant opposition, he fled. However, the new dictatorship of Fidel Castro immediately filled the jails with thousands of Cubans who had only recently fought against Batista. Castro's secret police closed the door on freedom: the Co-op movement was crushed, newspapers were 'requisitioned', and over half a million Cubans fled the country.



Che Guevara, the leading Cuban revolutionary, left Cuba to spread revolution to Bolivia. Condemned by fellow communists as a 'New Bakunin', Guevara gave precedence to direct action, violent confrontation with the state, and propaganda by the deed. In spite of the government having deported many organisers in the 1950s and early 1960s,

anarcho-syndicalism was still a powerful force among Bolivian miners. In 1967, having found himself isolated in the countryside, Guevara was ambushed and killed.

Abraham Guillen, a Spanish anarchist exile, believed like Guevara that a handful of determined fighters could defeat state forces. Wedding militant Bakuninism to guerrilla warfare, Guillen argued in his book *Strategy of the Urban Guerrilla* that revolution can be generated by armed groups and that dictatorships are particularly vulnerable because of the great hostility they face from the population.



But unlike Guevara, who had favoured rural struggle, Guillen argued that the city — the *'concrete jungle'* — was the most favourable terrain on which to fight.

Strongly influenced by Guillen's theories, it was just this battleground that the Tupamaros, Uruguay's national liberation movement, chose. Despite their small numbers these urban guerrillas seriously threatened the government for over ten years.



SPANISH ANARCHISM

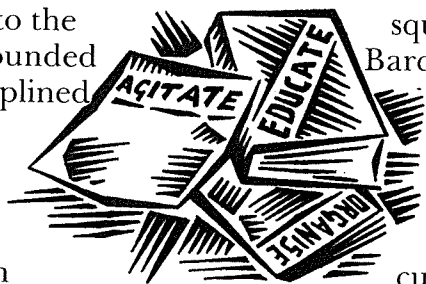
Anarchism's greatest strength and success was in Spain, where peasant

traditions of autonomous village life and violent uprisings made it fertile ground. After a section of the International was established there in 1868 by Bakunin's Italian follower **Giuseppi Fanelli**, the movement quickly grew to over 20,000.

Spanish anarchism succeeded because it linked the traditions of village collectivism, mutual aid and self-management with the workings of the new industrial city. Spanish workers, like those of Paris in 1871, Petrograd in 1917 and Gdansk in 1981, continued to move between village and city and so possessed a living memory of a non-capitalist culture that opposed the experience of the atomised, regulated factory and city.

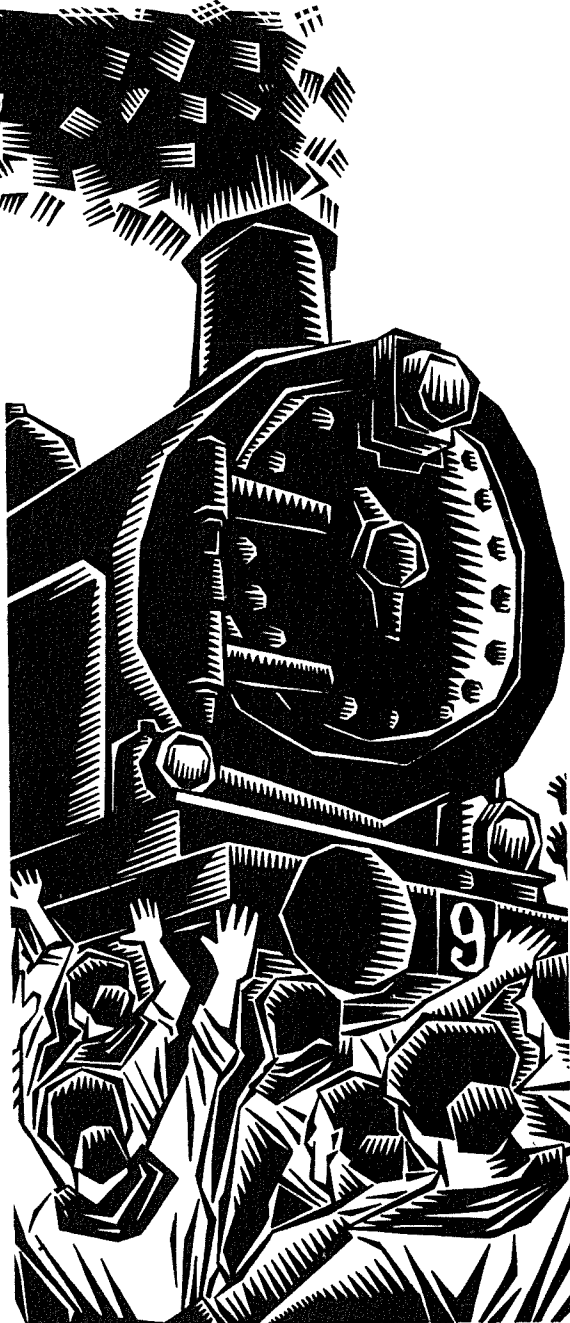
Barcelona, a great seaport and textile centre, accounted for 70% of Spain's industry and was the regional capital of Catalonia. The hordes of *murcianos* — landless peasants — who flocked to the squalid shanty towns that surrounded Barcelona, were the vast, undisciplined lumpen-proletariat that provided its mass base. Sixty-five years of persistent agitation and organisation culminated in

the largest, most far reaching revolutionary movement of modern times — by 1936 the semi-secret **Anarchist Federation of Iberia (FAI)** had 30,000 activists and the anarcho-syndicalist **CNT** had a membership of 1,500,000.



THE TRAGIC WEEK

On July 11th, 1909, the government announced general conscription for its Moroccan war. As thousands gathered at the rail depots and docksides to see the soldiers off, sadness turned to anger. Women blocked the rail tracks to halt troop trains and a Committee for a General Strike, led by anarchists **Jose Remero** and **Miguel Moreno**, called thousands of workers out of the Barcelona factories. The socialists frantically tried to contain the *'anarchist turmoil'* as a simple protest against the war, but the anarchist call for an insurrection was taken up in the



workers' districts. Barricades were thrown up and arms distributed. Ferocious assaults against their barracks swept the police from the streets, troops refused to fire on the crowds, and many women, especially prostitutes, joined in the fighting. Barcelona was in open insurrection for a week. The railways were dynamited to prevent troops reaching the city and a wave of anti-church anger led to the burning down of 80 churches.

Large army units eventually arrived and, in spite of furious resistance, by July 31st the last worker's barricades were overcome by artillery, leaving 600 workers dead. Martial law was imposed throughout Spain, and 500 were tried for insurrection.



FRANCISCO FERRER AND THE FREE SCHOOLS

Among those facing the military court was a teacher, **Francisco Ferrer**. Although he had not been near Barcelona at any time during the rising, he was charged with being '*head of the insurrection*'.

Ferrer had discovered anarchism in the clubs and bars of Paris, where he had been exiled after the 1885 republican uprising. It was there that he met the anarchist **Paul Robin**, head of the Cempuis school and the inspiration for the



League for Libertarian Education. Ferrer, then 24 years old, dreamed of creating a similar school in Spain. Having been left a million francs by a benefactor, Ferrer opened his Modern School in Barcelona on September 8th, 1901. Until that time, Spanish schooling was entirely controlled by the Church. Only one town in three had a school, and all schools were supervised by priests, with teachers sworn to uphold Catholic dogma. Ferrer intended his Modern School to challenge all that:

'I want to form a school of emancipation, concerned with banning from the mind whatever divides people, the false concepts of property, country and family so as to attain the liberty and

well-being which all desire. I will teach only simple truth. I will not ram dogma into their heads. I will not conceal one iota of fact. I will teach not what to think but how to think.'

Ferrer was opposed to both Church and State schooling:

'Rulers have always taken care to control the education of the people. They know their power is based almost entirely on the school and they insist on retaining their monopoly. The school is an instrument of domination in the hands of the ruling class.'

The Modern School had no rewards or punishments, exams or marks — the everyday 'tortures' of conventional schooling. And because practical knowledge is more useful than theory, lessons were often held in factories, museums or the countryside. The school was also used by the parents, and Ferrer planned a Popular University.

'Higher education, for the privileged few, should be for the general public, as every human has a right to know; and science, which is produced by observers and workers of all countries and ages, ought not be restricted to class.'

The Modern School was also a propaganda centre, a training ground for revolutionary activity:

'We don't hesitate to say we want people who will continue to develop. People constantly capable of destroying and renewing their surroundings and themselves: whose intellectual independence is their supreme power, which they will yield to none; always disposed for better things, eager for the triumph of new ideas, anxious to crowd many lives into the life they have. It must be the aim of the school to show the children that there will be tyranny as long as one person depends on another.'

Soon the school had 125 pupils and the example spread. By 1905 there were 50 similar schools in Spain. On Good Friday of that year, Ferrer led 1700 children in a demonstration for free education. Within weeks the government acted and forcibly closed all the schools. Earlier that year anarchists had twice thrown bombs at Spain's King Alfonso. One of them, **Mateo Morral**, worked

at the Modern School's printing press and was a close friend of Ferrer. For this Ferrer was jailed for a year. On his release he travelled throughout Europe spreading the Free School message.

After returning to Spain, Ferrer was again arrested following the Tragic Week of 1909 and was executed by



firing squad. But his death did nothing to diminish the force of his ideas. Modern Schools were founded in Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, China, Japan and, on the greatest scale, in the USA.

STELTON MODERN SCHOOL

In the USA over the next 50 years more than 30 such schools were formed. The best known, at Stelton, New Jersey, ran from 1915 to 1953; the longest experiment in anarchist education and communal living in history. A pupil, **Ray Miller**, remembers that:

'Boys and girls swam together nude to be natural and avoid hang-ups. I felt the anarchists were the only people with the right attitude towards life. Personal relationships were the most important thing. People were allowed to develop their own potentialities. You didn't live according to rigid rules, but could do what you wanted, as long as you didn't interfere with the rights of other people.'

'We did everything ourselves — we were gardeners, typesetters, cooks — we did everything with our own two hands. Instead of merely reading A Midsummer Night's Dream, we put on the play, and put it on outdoors. The grownups got involved too. I never avoided taking part in anything — whereas later in



high school everything seemed a chore. I went through four years of high school but didn't make a single real friend. In Stelton everyone was my friend. I can't remember anything we did or any of the teachers at grammar school, except they read the Bible to us every morning . . . school was a blank. On the other hand, I remember a great deal about Stelton. Stelton was not only a school but a community; it wasn't just education — it was living.'

MODERN TIMES

The early years of the 20th century were a time of intense revolutionary action. Across the world, from Moscow to San Francisco, pressure for radical change was reaching explosion point.

In Russia the 1905 revolution saw the appearance of the first workers' councils — the Soviets. In 1909 Spain's industrial centre, Barcelona, was in open anarchist revolt. The workers of France were seized by militant anarcho-syndicalism. In the USA the dynamic IWW appeared unstoppable. Mexican peasants, fired by anarchist slogans, were embarking on a far-reaching revolution. Among the workers of South America anarcho-syndicalism was harvesting wide support. The British feminist movement, in which many anarchist women were involved, was turning to extreme direct action in the struggle for social and sexual freedom. The international artistic avant garde was increasingly exploring anarchist ideas in poetry, literature, drama and painting. With Free Schools in virtually every country, anarchist principles of education were gaining popularity. The existing order was under determined assault from all sides.

The astonishing atmosphere of that time can be felt by even a brief glance at Edwardian England's long, hot summer of 1911. The country was seized by an unprecedented wave of unrest. Beginning in July at the port of Southampton, a seamen's strike spread quickly to Liverpool and Hull, bringing in dockworkers and



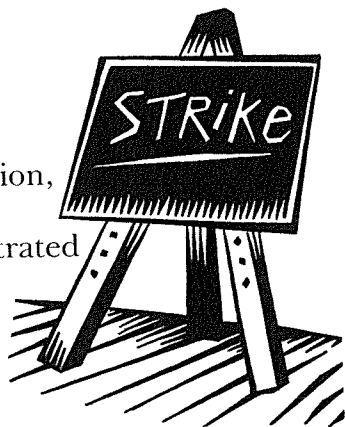
millworkers. At Hull the pay rise offered to the 15,000 strikers was greeted by a roar of: *'Let's fire the docks!'* A town councillor who'd witnessed the Paris Commune said he'd never seen anything like this: *'Women with hair streaming and half naked, reeling through the streets, smashing and destroying!'*

The strikes spread to the railways and most other transport workers. By mid-August every major port and town was affected. In Wales, troops gunned down two strikers and street fighting led to the army taking control in Liverpool.

By the beginning of September the heat wave was over and England was cooling down. Then, at a tiny Welsh school on September 5th, a note calling for a strike was passed round from hand to hand. When the culprit was punished by the teacher all his classmates deserted the schoolroom and took to the streets in protest. The next day Liverpool's schools were hit by strikes, and then Manchester's. From there the fever spread as far south as Portsmouth, north to Glasgow and Leith; by mid-September at least 62 towns and cities were affected.

Throughout the country children of all ages, some as young as three years, went on strike. In Dundee alone, 1500 children were involved. The demands included an

end to corporal punishment, extra holidays, shorter hours and payment for coming to school. Completely self-organised, with their own methods of communication, the children formed strike committees, picketed and demonstrated, attacked school buildings, and fought battles with strike-breakers and police. Although the school strikes soon ended, they show something of the extent of radical ferment in society on the eve of the First World War.



It is the duty of fathers to punish wayward and rebellious children, and our rulers can be very stern fathers indeed. In response to the wave of revolt that had threatened to topple them from their pillars of authority, leaders of all kinds — politicians, bosses, bureaucrats, priests, generals — were busy planning and preparing a particularly severe punishment for their unruly subjects.

The carnage that followed the defeat of the Paris Commune was a warning of what was to come. Although the bourgeoisie prefers to be seen as intelligent, sensitive and cultured, it is capable of such inhuman barbarity that any ordinary person is left paralysed with horror. Behind a facade of patriotism, democracy and civilisation the ruling class was organising a slaughterhouse into which, from 1914 to 1918, sixty million men would be herded. By the end of it more than eight million would be dead and sixteen million wounded. The French government, for example, marched eight and a half million into the trenches. Four and a half million of them were either wounded or killed.

Dazzled at first by flags and cheering, and confused by slogans, by 1917 the survivors had taken enough. Entire French regiments quit the trenches and marched on Paris, only to be turned back by cavalry and artillery. Massive mutinies brought Russia to the edge of revolution. The 20th century had begun in earnest.



SEVEN



RUSSIA

'Always leaders . . . let us try to do without them for once . . .'

The new century saw Russia gripped by such famine that peasants were driven to seize grain and plunder their masters' houses. Economic depression gripped northern textile cities and the mines, oilfields, factories and ports of the south. In 1903 Baku oil workers battled with police. From Odessa a general strike spread through the Ukraine. The Minister of Education and the Minister of the Interior were assassinated. Students and young workers, determined to destroy the existing order, turned to the writings of Bakunin and Kropotkin for inspiration and with dynamite and pistol hurled themselves against the State.

In 1905 Russia's disastrous war with Japan brought thousands onto the streets of Petrograd in protest. Almost a thousand were killed or wounded by soldiers. The outrage of 'Bloody Sunday' reverberated throughout Russia. Workers' councils — **Soviets** — appeared for the first time to coordinate militant action. Working people, many of them recently arrived from the countryside to find employment in the vast new factories, elected representatives from their own class whom they could trust and whom they could remove at once if unsatisfactory. Strikes paralysed production, oppressed national groups on the borderlands rebelled, peasants burned and looted, and insurrection broke out in Moscow.

The revolt, although short-lived, inspired the young anarchist movement. In spite of increased repression, its 'Battle Detachments' raided gunshops and armouries in search of the Browning pistols they cherished. Officials, police and bosses



were murdered and countless *'expropriations'* of banks and houses of the wealthy took place. Gun battles with police ended in death, jail or torture.

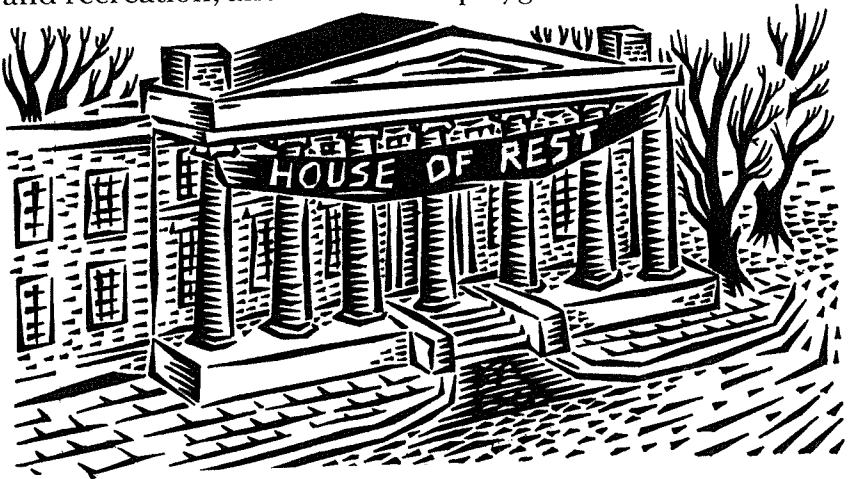
REVOLUTION IN PETROGRAD

In February 1917, the women of Petrograd erupted in furious bread riots. Strikes broke out and the people rose against the government. Soon troops joined the uprising, and again Soviets were formed. The Tsar abdicated and a Provisional Government was



established. This revolution, as a participant observed, was *'a purely spontaneous phenomenon, not at all the fruit of party agitation.'* People were *'fired by a sense of unlimited freedom, a liberation from the restraints of their society.'*

Workers from the huge Putilov factory marched with the slogan *'Down with Authority and Capitalism'* on black banners. Anarchist workers' groups in the Vyborg district and the Kronstadt dockyards were joined by the Baltic Fleet sailors. Anarchists seized the mansions of the rich. One became *'The House of Rest'*, with rooms for reading, discussion and recreation, and a children's playground in the garden.



The Provisional Government ordered the anarchists out, but fifty Kronstadt sailors rushed to their defence and Vyborg workers demonstrated against the eviction. When the authorities condemned squatting '*without the agreement of the owners*', the anarchists liberated a nearby jail and welcomed the prisoners into the villa. Government troops attacked, killing one anarchist and arresting sixty sailors and workers, sparking off the July rising. Armed sailors, soldiers and workers demanded justice for the evicted anarchists. The Krönstadt anarchists urged the 1st Machine Gun Regiment to begin a new rebellion, and Trotsky had to rescue a Minister kidnapped by Kronstadt sailors.



OCTOBER

On his return to Russia in April of 1917, Lenin sniffed anarchism in the air. He promptly jumped on the bandwagon with his so-called *April Theses*, which called for the government to be replaced by Soviets, and the army and police by a popular militia. Fellow-marxists were aghast. According to one:

'Lenin has now made himself a candidate for one European throne that has been vacant for thirty years — the throne of Bakunin! Lenin's new words echo something old — the superannuated truths of primitive anarchism.'

They were even more appalled by his *State and Revolution*, which urged peasants to organise themselves freely into communes, sweep away capitalism and transfer the economy to the control of the '*whole of society*'. '*So long as there is a state*', Lenin declared, '*there is no freedom; and when there is freedom, there will be no state.*'

Lenin's words convinced the anarchists to join the Bolsheviks in overthrowing the Provisional Government. Ignoring elections for a Constituent Assembly on the grounds that *'political power is not worth a rotten egg'*, anarchists urged workers to seize the factories, and peasants the land. As one anarchist woman wrote:

*'Down with words! Down with resolutions! Long live the deed!
Long live the creative work of the toiling masses!'*

Anarchists joined Trotsky's Military Revolutionary Committee which, in October, organised the overthrow of the government.

COUNTER REVOLUTION

But the honeymoon between anarchists and Bolsheviks ended the next day. An all-powerful Central Soviet was duly formed, but composed of Bolsheviks only. Now anarchists talked of a *'third and last stage of the revolution'*, and Kronstadt sailors warned that they could as easily turn their cannon on the Bolshevik government as they had on the Provisional one. As they put it, *'Where authority begins, there the revolution ends.'*

Through Russia anarcho-syndicalist principles of factory committees and workers' control were gaining support, especially in shipyards and docks, bakeries, mines, and among post and telegraphy workers. At first Bolsheviks supported these ideas, but once in power they pushed for centralised state control.

Echoing

Bakunin, anarchists charged that the Bolsheviks were *'self-seeking intellectuals'* who had ridden to power on the backs of the workers and peasants. By spring 1918, the



rift was complete. One night in April, the Cheka — the Bolshevik's secret police — raided twenty six Moscow anarchist centres.

At the '**House of Anarchy**', Black Guards fought back, killing 12 police, but 50 anarchists were killed or wounded and over 500 thrown in jail.

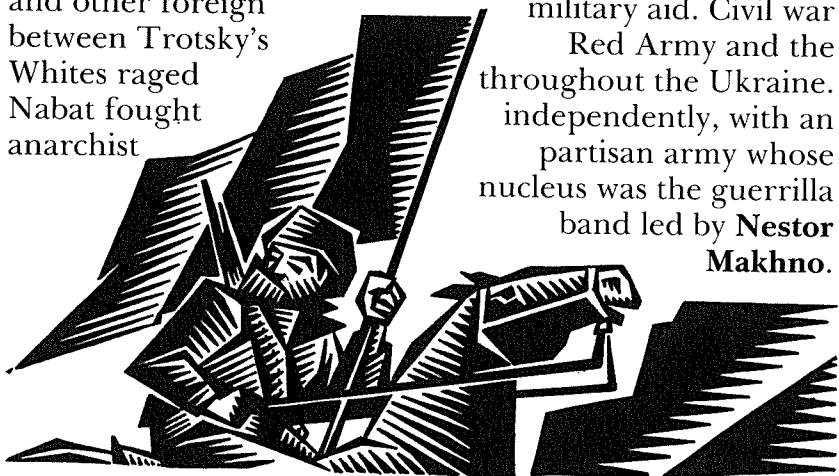
UKRAINE

Escaping from the Bolshevik terror, anarchists headed for the '*cradle*' of the movement, the '*wild fields*' of the Ukraine. In the autumn of 1918 the **Nabat**, the Confederation of



Anarchist Organisations, was formed in Kharkov. Denouncing the Bolshevik party as an '*official, administrative-political and even police apparatus of the new boss-exploiter, the state*', Nabat called for world-wide revolution based on free federations of urban and rural communes.

But first they had to defeat 'White' invading armies of anti-revolutionary forces backed by British, French, US and other foreign military aid. Civil war between Trotsky's Whites raged throughout the Ukraine. Nabat fought independently, with an anarchist partisan army whose nucleus was the guerrilla band led by **Nestor Makhno**.

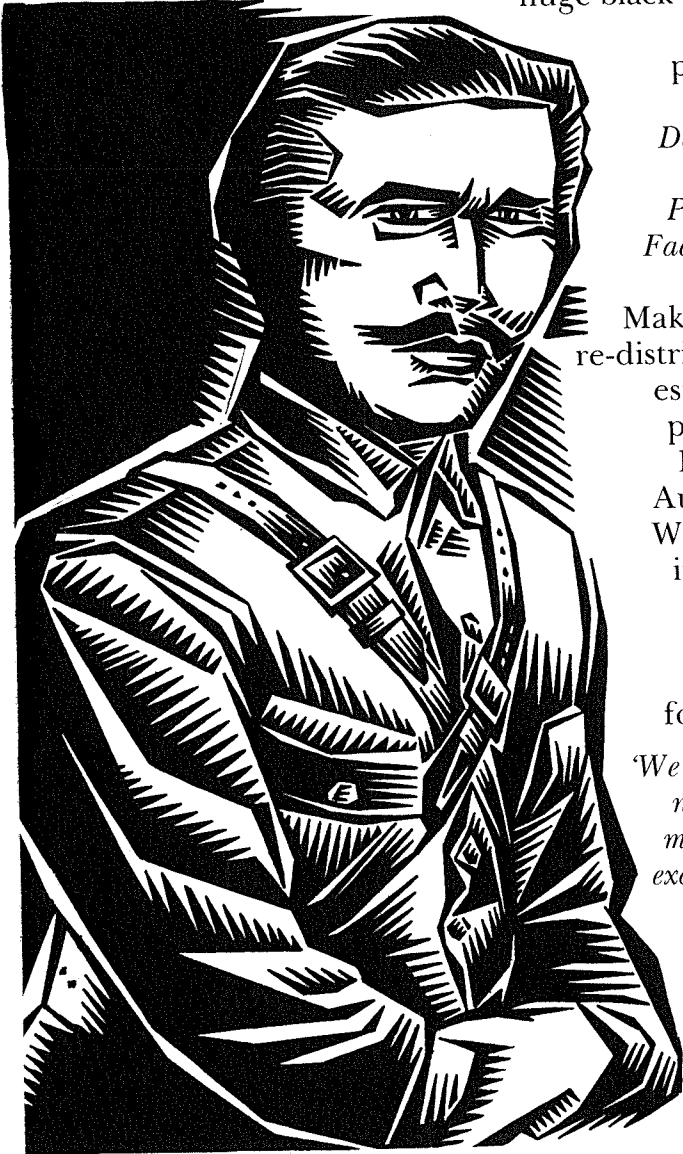


MAKHNO

In 1908 Nestor Makhno had been given a life sentence for the assassination of a police chief. Freed in 1917, he was elected head of the Soviet of Peasants and Workers in Gulyai-Polye. With an armed band marching behind a huge black banner on

which was proclaimed 'Liberty or Death — The Land to the Peasants, the Factories to the Workers', Makhno began re-distributing the estates to the peasants. In 1918, when Austrian and White armies invaded the Ukraine, Makhno's partisans fought back:

'We will conquer not so that we may follow the example of past years and hand over our fate to some new master, but to take it in our own



hands and conduct our lives according to our own will and our own conception of truth'.

By the following spring the invaders were driven out and Gulyai-Polye was free from external control. Organising regional conferences of peasants, workers and insurgents, Makhno began to establish anarchist communes based on equality and mutual aid.

At first the Bolsheviks hailed him as a 'courageous partisan' and 'great revolutionary', but subsequently attacked him as an 'anarcho-bandit'. Two Cheka agents were sent to assassinate Makhno, but the agents were caught and themselves shot. When Makhno invited Red soldiers to the Congress, a furious Trotsky declared him an outlaw, banned the Congress and sent troops to break up the anarchist communes.

At this moment the Whites invaded again, driving on Moscow. Bolsheviks and anarchists were sent reeling, yet Makhno's army counter-attacked successfully. Trotsky used the time he had been given to re-organise the Red Army. By Christmas the Whites were expelled. Makhno's anarchists promptly entered Ekaterinoslav, threw open the jails and told the people that they were now free to organise their own lives. Freedom of speech, press and assembly was declared for all except authoritarian parties, which were dissolved. Bolsheviks were advised to *'take up some honest trade'*.



'It is up to the workers and peasants to organise themselves and reach mutual understandings in all areas of their lives and in whatever manner they think right. We have had enough of leaders! Let us try to do without them for once!'

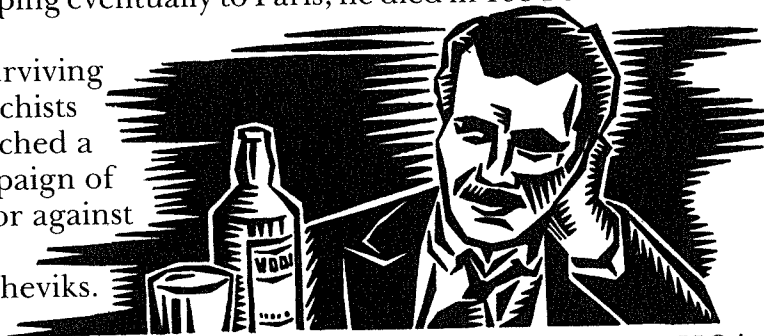
Again Trotsky outlawed Makhno and serious fighting raged for eight months until Whites invaded yet again. Trotsky appealed for Makhno's help, promising in return the release of all imprisoned anarchists and complete freedom of expression, short of urging the overthrow of the Bolshevik government. The Whites were finally defeated.

With victory secure, Trotsky shot all the Makhnovist military commanders, attacked Makhno's HQ and wiped out the staff. The Cheka arrested members of the Nabat in Kharkov; throughout Russia, anarchist clubs, groups and newspaper offices were raided and closed down. Although badly wounded, Makhno, together with the remnants of his insurgent army, evaded the Bolsheviks for a year. Escaping eventually to Paris, he died in 1934 of alcohol and TB.

Surviving anarchists launched a campaign of terror against the Bolsheviks.

In

September 1921, they blew up the Communist Party HQ in Moscow, leaving 67 dead or wounded.



REPRESSION

During 1920, peasant revolts against the Bolsheviks occurred in 22 provinces and there were 118 centres of resistance. In Tambov province the Peasant Workers' Union held their region for a year until defeated by massive military intervention in 1921.

The Bolshevik's policy of enforced 'War Communism', put into practice by the Red Army, created conditions far worse than had existed before the revolution; grain was seized, and there were whippings and mass executions of peasants. Popular hatred of his new system, in both village and factory, became focussed upon one man: Leon Trotsky, the leader of the Red Army.

During his years as military boss Trotsky developed some startling new marxist ideas which placed him on the far right of the Bolsheviks. In his view, the new socialist state should become the '*most ruthless form of government imaginable*'. Socialism itself he defined as the '*organisation of workers along new lines, their adaptation to these, and their re-education, with a view to a constant increase in productivity*'. He excused this return to serfdom by claiming that: '*under certain conditions, slavery represented progress,*' because it, '*led to a rise in production*'. The Red Army was the way to ensure this much desired rise. Workers would be '*militarised*'. Non-workers — '*deserters from the work-front*' — should be '*assembled in disciplinary battalions or else relegated to the concentration camps*'. For reasons beyond Trotsky's understanding these ideas were not given a rapturous welcome by the industrial workers of Russia.

KRONSTADT

Chronic famine now swept a Russia dominated by a ruthless one-party State. Factory committees and village assemblies were silenced and workers' control denounced. The Cheka herded thousands of revolutionaries into camps, or simply shot them on the spot.

In February 1921, Petrograd workers took to the streets in protest. The Bolsheviks imposed a curfew and martial law. The naval base at nearby Kronstadt sent delegates to join the strikers. In March, its sailors mutinied. *In view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers and peasants*', they issued a 15-point-programme to revitalise the revolution:

"KRONSTADT"

RESOLUTION

1. New elections to the Soviets by secret ballot, with freedom to carry on agitation beforehand for all workers and peasants.
2. Freedom of speech and of the press for workers and peasants, for anarchists and left-socialist parties.
3. Freedom of assembly for trade unions and peasant organisations.
4. A non-party conference of the workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt and Petrograd province.
5. Liberation of all political prisoners of socialist parties, as well as all workers, peasants, soldiers and sailors imprisoned in connection with the labour and peasant movements.
6. Election of a commission to review the case of those being held in prison and concentration camps.
7. Abolition of all political sections in the armed forces. No party should be given special privileges in the propagation of its ideas or receive the financial support of the state for such purposes. Instead cultural and educational commissions should be established, locally elected and financed by the state.
8. Removal of road-blocks between town and country.
9. Equal rations for all working people, with the exception of those employed in trades detrimental to health.
10. An end to Party detachments in all branches of the army, as well as the Party guards kept on duty in factories

and mills. Should such guards or detachments be found necessary, they are to be appointed in the army from the ranks and in the factories and mills at the discretion of the workers.

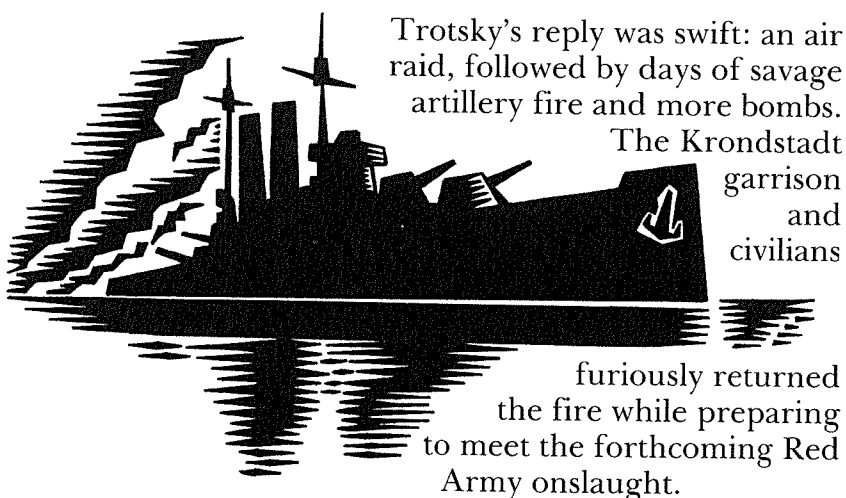
11. Full freedom of action for peasants in regard to the land, and the right to keep cattle, on condition that the peasants manage with their own means and do not hire labour.

12. A request to all branches of the army, including officer trainees, to endorse this programme.

13. The press to give the programme wide publicity.

14. Appointment of mobile workers' control groups.

15. Authorisation of handicraft production, provided no wage labour is involved.



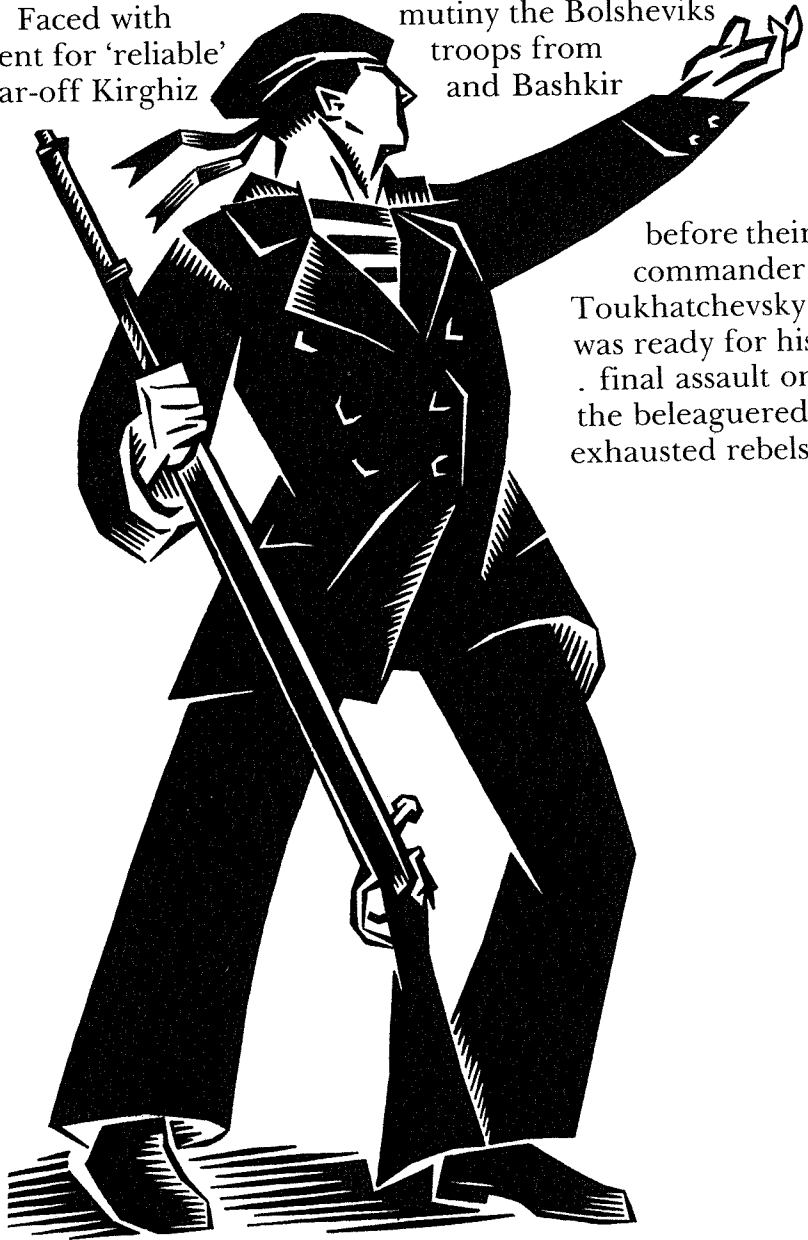
It began on March 8th. Two battalions of the 561st Regiment advanced across the ice, but on reaching the rebel lines they surrendered, leaving their officers to return alone. Next, the Orchané Regiment refused to attack. And when two more regiments mutinied rather than proceed, they were disarmed by force. Meanwhile Trotsky's artillery continued to pound Kronstadt.

Although 'reorganised', the 561st again refused to fight

'against our brothers'. Some Red Army units lost half of their men to their own bullets — machine gunned in the back 'to prevent them surrendering to the rebels.'

Faced with mutiny the Bolsheviks sent for 'reliable' troops from far-off Kirghiz and Bashkir

before their commander, Toukhatchevsky, was ready for his final assault on the beleaguered, exhausted rebels.





On March 16th, a massive 4-hour artillery barrage opened the attack, followed by assault from the air. At midnight, the Red Army advanced. It took them five hours to gain entry to the town, and 24 hours of bitter and terrible street

fighting before they could overwhelm the sailors' and workers' militia.

Official figures speak of at least 5,000 killed and wounded on the Government side. The rebel losses will never be known. Thousands died or disappeared in the 'revolutionary tribunals' that followed. 8,000 Kronstaders fled over the ice to

Finland, and 15,000 sailors were kicked out of the Fleet.



A new wave of arrests swept the country and on September 21st the anarchist poet **Lev Chernyi** was shot by the Cheka. The anarchists were scattered to the prison camps, where they died of illness, hard labour or Cheka executioners. Those who evaded the net fled their homeland to a life of exile. Among them were Emma Goldman and Alex Berkman, who wrote:

'Grey are the passing days. One by one the embers of hope have died out. Terror and despotism have crushed the life born in October. The slogans of the revolution are foresworn, its ideals stifled in the blood of the people. The breath of yesterday is dooming millions to death; the shadow of today hangs like a black pall over the country. Dictatorship is trampling the masses underfoot. The revolution is dead; its spirit cries in the wilderness . . . I have decided to leave Russia.'

On February 8th, 1921, Peter Kropotkin died of pneumonia. Lenin's offer of a state funeral was ignored,

and 20,000 marched behind his coffin in the last anarchist demonstration witnessed in Moscow. They carried black banners declaring their hatred of the new order: *'Where there is authority, there is no freedom'*, and *'The liberation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves'*. As the procession passed the Butyrki prison the inmates sang anarchist songs and shook the bars of their cells.

The anarchists were an immense influence on the popular revolution because their aims coincided with the people's desire to sweep away



state and capital. For a brief moment it did seem possible that a social revolution would destroy all authority and create a decentralised society of voluntarily cooperating free individuals. But the anarchists' warning that power corrupts all who wield it — that authority stifles the revolutionary spirit and robs people of freedom — was ignored.

So a new despotism arose on the ashes of the Tsarist state. With the defeat of Kronstadt the final act in the struggle for Russia's freedom was concluded. As Lenin declared: *'The time has come to put an end to opposition, to put the lid on it. We have had enough opposition'*. This was the real accomplishment of the Bolsheviks — to succeed so rapidly and so completely in halting the revolution, and in its place to impose a totally authoritarian rule. As Alex Berkman wrote from exile: *'Bolshevism is of the past, the future belongs to people and their liberty'*.





EIGHT



DADA

'The total negation of everything that had existed before ...'

Throughout the war, neutral Switzerland was a haven for radicals, deserters, pacifists and artists fleeing the insane carnage. In Zurich's Cabaret Voltaire in 1916, **Hugo Ball**, a young poet and theatre director, and **Emmy Hennings**, a cabaret dancer and singer, began a movement which aimed, through the destruction of Art, to assault the entire bourgeois order.

A dazzling array of artists from the various movements — Cubism, Expressionism, Post-symbolism and Futurism — that together formed the international radical artistic avant garde gravitated to the Cabaret. On July 14th, the anarchist poet **Tristan Tzara** declaimed his *Manifesto of Mister Fire Extinguisher*. Dada had arrived. This 'poem' attempted through its creation of a climate of chaos, disorder and vehement contradictions to destroy — to 'negate' — established order. Dada soirées became increasingly abstract and extreme. *The Admiral Seeks a House to Rent* was read by several people speaking simultaneously in different languages, accompanied by whistles, bangs, groans, bells, drums and blows on the tables. Tzara, in his *Notes for the Bourgeois*, explained that these poems: '*provided the possibility for the spectators to link for themselves suitable associations with the characteristic elements of their own personality ...*'

Dadaists saw Art as the ultimate symbol of bourgeois culture, and as such attacked it relentlessly. But at the same time they believed that Art could be re-defined as the embodiment of the total experience of being in the world. So Dada had two aims: first, to destroy through Art the entire social order; second to achieve through Art a total freedom. This freedom is not simply an end to the tyrannies of bourgeois culture, or an increase of political freedom, but complete liberation from order itself. That is, they sought the end of all existing rationality and logic, the



normal and the acceptable. As **Hans Richter** explained:

'Art must be set on its way towards new functions which can only be known after the total negation of everything that had existed before — until then, riot, destruction, defiance, confusion. And the role of chance is not an extension of the scope of Art, but a principle of dissolution and anarchy in Art — anti-Art.'

Dada sought to break the shackles that inhibit and condition the conscious mind, shackles that prevent the creation or recognition of freedom in a mind too confused by the absurd contradictions of a modern world — a world where, for example, governments execute criminals for the 'crime' of murder but mutually engage in mass slaughter. Dada recognised that these shackles could be broken by allowing chance, irrationality and disorder to develop, and this would reveal the possibilities of a new world which would itself be one of constant change, of no rules, of constant, spontaneous, individual creativity — a world of Art.



The Berlin rising of 1918 gave the Dadaists the perfect chance to put their ideas into practice. **Richard Huelsenbeck** and **Raoul Hausmann** rushed to the city and in April formed the Dadaist Revolutionary Central Council. Their manifesto demanded:

The international revolutionary union of all creative and intellectual men and women on the basis of radical communism.

The introduction of progressive unemployment through comprehensive mechanisation of every field of activity.

Only through unemployment does it become possible for the individual to achieve certainty as to the truth of life and finally become accustomed to experience.

The immediate expropriation of property — that is, its socialisation — and the communal feeding of all. Further, the erection of cities of light, the gardens of which will belong to society as a whole and prepare humanity for a state of freedom.

Daily meals at public expense for all creative and intellectual people.

The compulsory adherence of all priests and teachers to the 'Dadaist Articles of Faith.'

The adoption of a Dadaist poem as a state prayer.

The compulsory requisition of churches for performance of Dadaist music and poetry.



The creation of 150 circuses for the enlightenment of the proletariat.

The immediate regulation of all sexual relations according to the views of International Dadaism through the establishment of a Dadaist Sexual Centre.

Berlin's revolutionary Council responded to the Dadaists' plan by appointing Huelsenbeck Commissar of Fine Arts! Around him gathered artists such as **Franz Jung**, **John** and **Weiland Heartfield**, **George Grosz**, **Walter Mehring**, **Hans Richter** and **Kurt Schwitters**.

Meanwhile, in Cologne, **Max Ernst** and **Johannes Baargeld** had founded the **Dada Conspiracy of the Rhineland**. Their anarchist magazine *Der Ventilator* achieved sales of twenty thousand before it was suppressed by the authorities. In 1920, **Hans Arp** joined them to produce the first major Dada exhibition. The only entrance to the exhibition, which was held in a courtyard behind a cafe, was through a public lavatory. As visitors filed through they were greeted by a young girl, dressed as if for her first catholic communion, reciting obscene rhymes. Among the exhibits was a sculpture by Ernst made of (extremely hard) wood with an axe and a note attached inviting the public to destroy the work.

Back in Berlin, the anarchist and Dadaist **Johannes Baader** had proclaimed himself '*Superdada, President of the League of Superdadaist Intertelluric Nations and Representative of the Desks of Schoolmaster Hagendorf*'. At the ceremony that inaugurated the new German government in 1919 Baader threw posters into the audience nominating himself President of the Globe.

COUNCIL COMMUNISM

Throughout the First World War socialist parties and trades unions stood squarely behind their governments' programmes of mass slaughter, and on the home front co-operated in the prevention and breaking of strikes.

With their actions declared illegal, workers were forced to create new forms of organisation. Wildcat strikes swept Europe. In Britain, the syndicalist Shop Stewards' movement briefly elbowed the unions from the mines, shipyards and munitions factories. The end of the war initiated a further outburst throughout Europe of workers' councils. Hungary's General Strike in 1918 followed a wave of sabotage and violent strikes, and led to many factory takeovers by workers' councils during the Soviet Republic of 1919. In the same year, Italy's metal workers formed a network of councils which organised mass occupations of factories in 1920.



But it was in Germany that we see the best example of Council Communism. Workers had turned against the unions, and the navy mutinies in 1918 sparked a total revolt. Beginning in the ports of Kiel and Hamburg, existing authority in most towns and regions was replaced by spontaneous councils of workers, soldiers and peasants. Bavaria became the first Council Republic, with the anarchists **Gustav Landauer** and **Erich Muhsam** joining the Munich council. The Bavarian Republic was brutally suppressed by 100,000 troops. Landauer was beaten to death in the street and Muhsam died in the Oranienburg concentration camp in 1934.

THE CENTRE OF THE SYSTEM

In January 1933, the leader of the National Socialist Workers' Party, Adolph Hitler, was elected Chancellor of Germany. Eager to take part in the expected battle between workers and fascists, a young Dutchman, **Johan van der Lubbe**, hitchhiked to Berlin. But he didn't find what he expected:

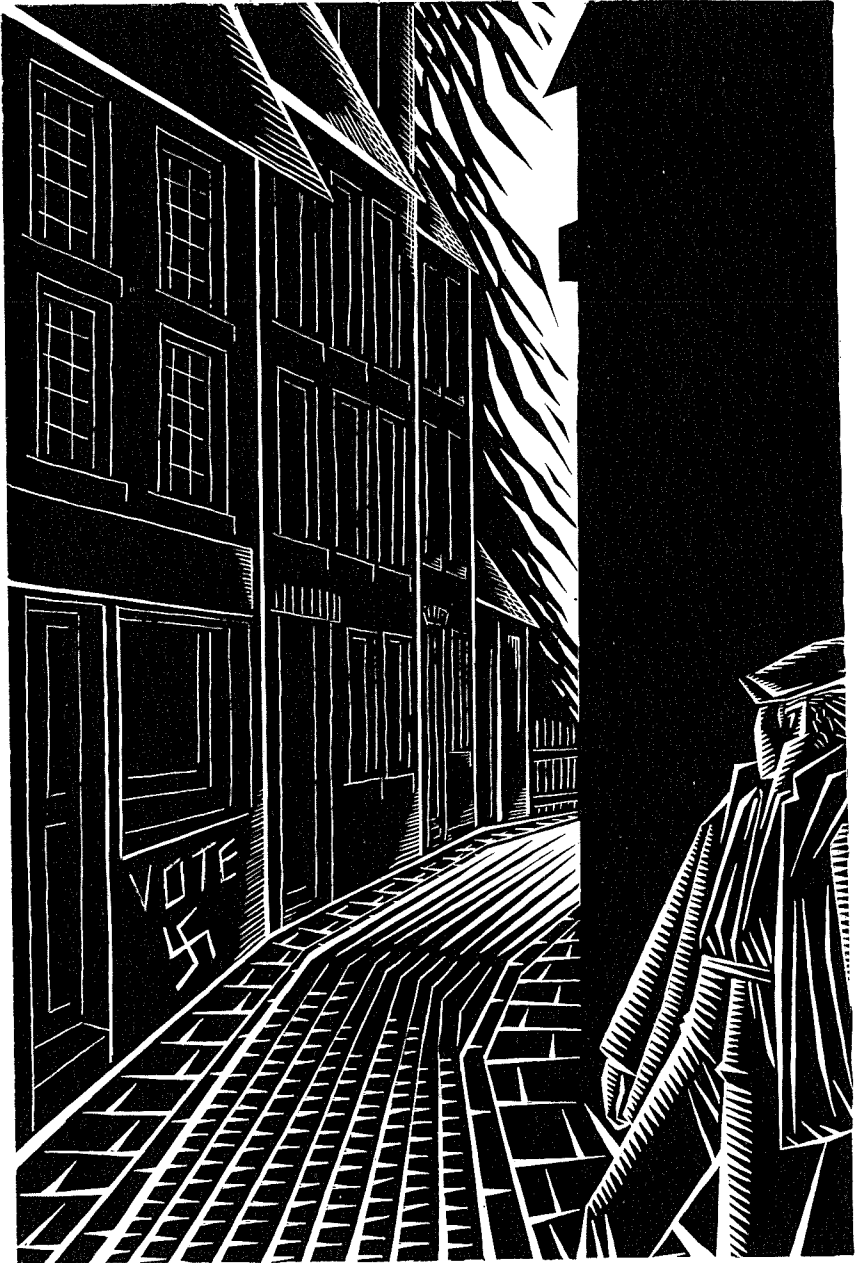


'I was a Communist until 1929. What I didn't like about the Party was the way they lord it over the workers — the masses themselves must decide what to do. I decided to go to Germany to see for myself. I spoke to workers in the street, discussed ways and means, asked them to demonstrate — all I was told was "take the matter to the Party". Since the workers would do nothing I had to do something myself. I didn't wish to harm people but the system itself: official buildings — the welfare office, city hall, the palace. When these

fires failed I decided on the Reichstag (Parliament) as the centre of the whole system.'

The Nazis used the destruction of the Reichstag to ensure their victory in the election. Van der Lubbe's act of

defiance was almost the only one. Why did the majority of Germans not oppose the rise of fascism?





WILHELM REICH

According to **Wilhelm Reich**, the answer lay in the way people were conditioned during childhood to avoid natural and spontaneous acts — especially sexual ones:

'Under natural conditions the vital energies regulate themselves spontaneously, without compulsive duty or compulsive morality.'

In patriarchal authoritarian social orders, emotional

expression is inhibited and sexual desire is rigorously frustrated. In such circumstances children soon acquire 'pleasure anxiety' — a fear of pleasurable excitement which ultimately destroys the capacity for full and complete orgasm.

Unspent energy is dammed up in the body where it feeds a variety of pathological but 'normal' conditions, including submissiveness and cruelty. It also appears in what Reich called 'character armour': rigid body postures, habitual facial expressions, chronic muscular spasms, and stiff, awkward movements. Such behaviour, he observed, is prevalent among people in all authoritarian regimes, but especially fascist ones. For Reich:

'The orgasmically unsatisfied individual develops an insincere character and a fear of any behaviour which has not been thought out beforehand.'

Incapable of spontaneity and naturalness, individuals hide in safe, dependable actions, seeking security in a system that tells them what to do. Barriers to sexual satisfaction also cause hate; and hate, when internalised, creates characters amenable to authoritarianism; people sacrifice happiness for the comfort of regimented conformity.

Reich's ideal society, a 'work democracy' of 'self-governing' individuals free of authority, dependency and cruelty, could only be reached by eliminating compulsive marriage and the patriarchal family, our most repressive systems, and by ensuring that all people can enjoy sexuality without interference or fear of pregnancy. Such self-regulated individuals would never depend on or submit to irrational political structures and would spontaneously seek to satisfy all social needs. It would not even be necessary to impose on a nation utilities such as a railway or postal system — they would simply grow from the social needs of transportation or mail delivery. In short, government itself would soon disappear.

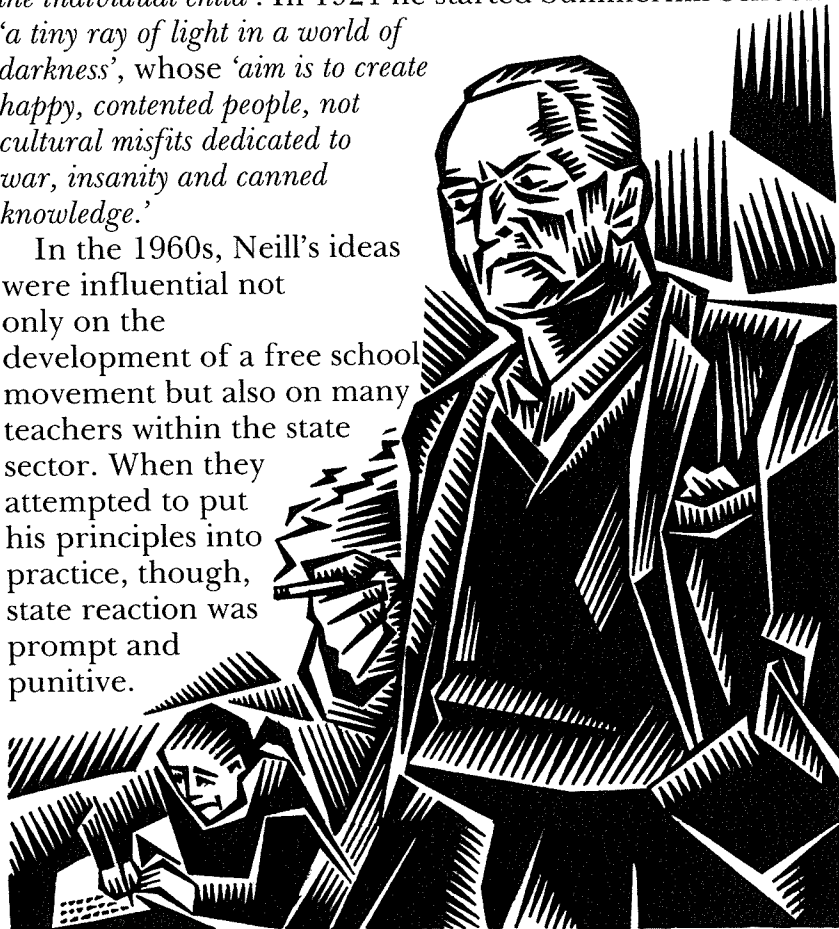


A.S. NEILL

A.S. Neill, a close associate of Reich, also emphasized that child-rearing lay behind authoritarian social orders. A teacher, he had left the state system of education on the grounds that *'state schools must produce a slave mentality because only a slave mentality can keep the whole system from being scrapped'*.

If the family is a miniature state for training children in obedience, the school is a large family with the teacher as father. Both thrive on guilt. Neill wanted to replace them with *'a free school, with self-government and self-determination of the individual child'*. In 1921 he started Summerhill School: *'a tiny ray of light in a world of darkness'*, whose *'aim is to create happy, contented people, not cultural misfits dedicated to war, insanity and canned knowledge.'*

In the 1960s, Neill's ideas were influential not only on the development of a free school movement but also on many teachers within the state sector. When they attempted to put his principles into practice, though, state reaction was prompt and punitive.



SPAIN

Wherever fascism's origins lay, by the mid-1930s it seemed unstoppable. In Spain, however, it was halted for a while by the world's strongest anarchist movement.

The Spanish Confederation (CNT) was formed in 1911 from a federation of workers' and unions that had



National of Labour formed in federation of peasants' been inspired by

French anarcho-syndicalism. Completely independent, its goal was the overthrow of capitalism and the state and the establishment of an anarchist-communist society. This they believed could only be done by the workers and peasants seizing the means of production in order to produce and distribute goods and services in the interests of the community.

STRUCTURE

The CNT was a non-hierarchical, or horizontal, federation of many unions — *sindicatos*. Each union was made up of workers grouped each in their own particular trade. Such unions joined together

in local or district federations which in turn were grouped into regions. The CNT itself was formed out of these regional



federations. Regular union assemblies elected delegates to all organisations. It was known as the 'Union of sacrifice': there were no permanent bureaucrats or paid officials, and all union activity was done after work

hours. The national federation was directly responsible to the regions and so on down to the base — the assemblies of workers and peasants.

REBELLION

By 1919, membership stood at one million. Continually outlawed, it organised massive general strikes. Originally the CNT supported the Russian revolution but once the nature of Bolshevik dictatorship was revealed it cut all links with Moscow.

Declared illegal in the 1920s, the CNT fought countless gun battles with police and fascists. Out in the open again with the downfall of the monarchy in 1930, it prepared for revolution. The first rising, in Catalonia in 1932, was swiftly put down. In the following year, workers and peasants throughout Catalonia, Andalusia and Levant took up arms but they too were defeated with incredible cruelty. 1934 saw the army slaughter hundreds of miners in an uprising in Asturia.

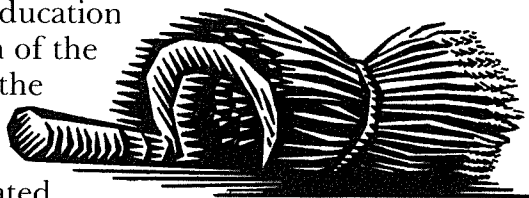
REVOLUTION

July 18th, 1936. The army, led by General Franco, launched their coup against the government. Instead of an easy victory they met immediate, massive resistance from the people. With the rebels supported by the military and police, and the government in ruins, the worker and peasants seized the administration of the country and organised a voluntary, revolutionary militia to fight the well-armed fascists. The workers' committees, peasants' assemblies and democratic militias were very similar to those of the Paris Commune and Russian Revolution. The Spanish people were not fighting to defend the government but to create a revolutionary society.

COLLECTIVISATION

Behind the battle lines Spanish society was transformed by a sweeping social revolution. Seventy years of intense

struggle, anarchist education and the organisation of the CNT had prepared the people to put into practice 'The Idea'.



Collectives were created

by the free initiative of the people, not imposed by decree. Factories, mills, mines, docks, workshops, transport, public services, utilities and shops were re-organised and administered without bosses, managers or state. In the countryside, yields



increased by over half when three million peasants organised themselves in two thousand anarchist

collectives. This revolutionary transformation involved eight

million men, women and children, fighting against overwhelming odds to realise their anarchist society.

REACTION

From the outset this revolution was sabotaged. While fascist Italy and Germany poured men and munitions into the rebel army, the 'democracies' refused to aid the Republicans. The Republican government itself withheld money and resources from the anarchist collectives.

Only Stalin sent arms, and then only on condition that the tiny Spanish Communist Party be given government positions and the popular militias be 're-organised'. The communists refused arms to the CNT militias at the front and began disarming the Barcelona workers; attacks on anarchists were stepped up. On May 2nd, 1937, the CNT issued a warning:

'The guarantee of the revolution is the proletariat in arms. To attempt to disarm the people is to place oneself on the wrong side of the barricades. No councillor or police commissioner, no matter who he is, can order the disarming of the workers, who are fighting



fascism with more self-sacrifice than all the politicians in the rear, whose incapacity and impotence everybody knows. Do not, on any account, allow yourselves to be disarmed.'

COUNTER REVOLUTION

Next day the Barcelona central telephone exchange, run by the CNT, was attacked. Thousands of workers took up rifles behind their barricades. Fighting spread, and soon the government and communist troops were surrounded in their strongholds. The anarchist militias prepared to quit the front for Barcelona. But instead of directing the struggle, some of the CNT leadership now holding government posts tried to halt the fighting and find a compromise. Meanwhile thousands of government troops converged on the city. Confused and demoralised by their leadership's betrayal, the workers ceased fire and laid down their arms.

DEFEAT

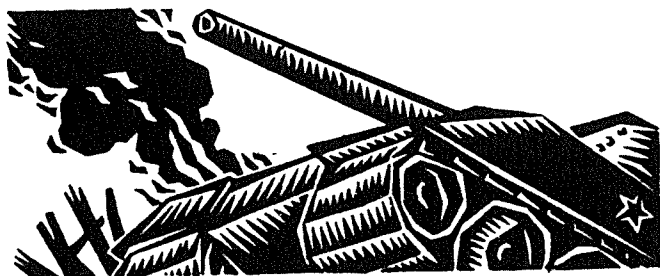
With Catalonian anarchism broken, the communists seized power. The revolution was lost, though the war dragged on for two more bloody years.

The factories were forcibly returned to their owners and the collectives put under state control. Morale at the front collapsed: troops were more afraid of communist execution squads than of fascist bullets. Popular hatred of the communists was such that one communist general said:

'We cannot retreat. We must stay in power at all costs, otherwise we shall be hunted down like predatory animals in the streets.'

The end was near. The 're-organised' Republican army tried one last offensive at Ebro, with 70,000 casualties. As tens of thousands fled into France, General Franco's fascist army entered Barcelona on January 26th, 1939. The revolution was over.

NINE



A REGIME OF TYRANNY

With the defeat of the world's strongest anarchist movement, the authoritarian state — democratic, communist, fascist — was now triumphant everywhere and the stage cleared for the ultimate expression of its triumph — war. Within months of the fall of Barcelona the world was engulfed in destruction and death.

The scale of the Second World War's suffering, chaos and waste defies understanding; numbers lose any meaning. As in the First World War, yet on an even greater scale, politicians, bureaucrats, industrialists and generals ran riot in their worship of death. Whole societies were mobilised for war. Entire populations were uprooted and scattered. Complete cities, with centuries of history, were obliterated in a single night. Immense armies fought futile battles in deserts and snow. The world's material wealth was concentrated upon destruction. Scientists focussed their minds upon creating terrible weapons to kill yet more people more quickly. After six years, the monstrous orgy culminated in a final, split-second of agony over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In all, at least forty-five million people died, nearly half of them Russian.

When the flames and smoke died away, further horror was revealed in a list of names that now symbolise the capacity of the modern state to order and plan mass extermination: Oranienburg, Ravensbruck, Buchenwald, Treblinka, Dachau, Birkenau, Belsen and Auschwitz. An immense state organisation had been created with the single task of eradicating human beings as economically as possible. Bureaucrats and clerks arranged all the detailed procedures of annihilation: they organised transport and delivery timetables from all areas of Europe to unloading points at concentration camps and administered death to nine million people. The discovery of this modern barbarism could only produce the deepest pessimism. As George Orwell wrote: *'If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face — for ever.'*



HUNGARY

Stalin died on March 6th, 1953. Within months a workers' revolt in Czechoslovakia was quickly crushed. Shortly afterwards, a rebellion sparked off by Berlin building workers spread throughout East Germany and was subdued by Russian tanks after days of bitter street-fighting. In June 1956, Polish workers struck in Poznan for workers' control, higher pay and lower prices. As the strike spread, thousands took to the streets and a full-scale uprising seized the city. Cries of *'Freedom and Bread'* and *'Out with the Russians'* were only silenced by the use of tanks.

In Hungary, in 1956, the Writers' Union Congress denounced 'the regime of tyranny'. The poet **Konya** asked:

'In the name of what morality do the Communists consider themselves justified in committing arbitrary acts against their former allies, staging witch-trials, persecuting innocent people, treating genuine revolutionaries as if they were traitors, gaoling and killing them? In the name of what morality?'

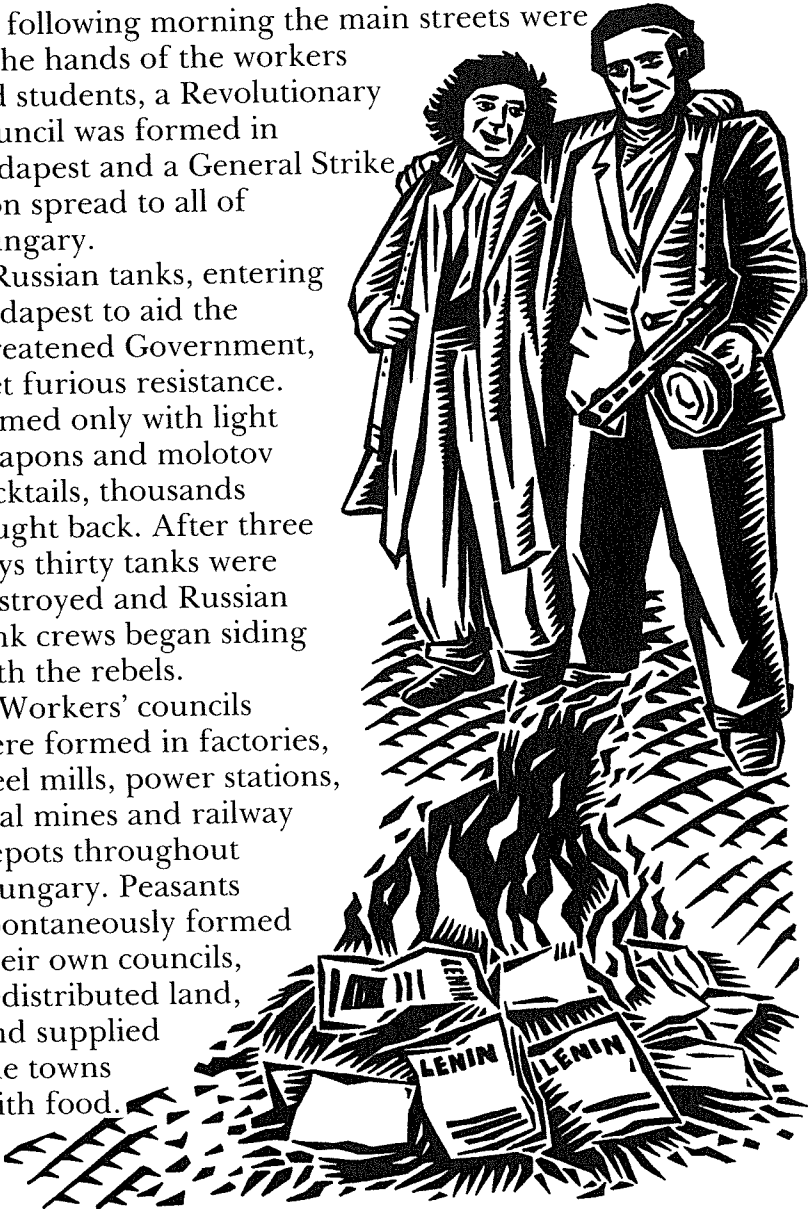
On October 23rd, 1956, in Budapest, 155,000 demonstrated *'in solidarity with our Polish brothers and sisters'*. Marching on the radio station, they paused to tear down a huge statue of Stalin but its jackboots held fast. The radio station was ringed by the AVO, the hated security police. Without warning they machine-gunned the peaceful crowd.



The Hungarian revolution had begun. The night shift at an arms factory rushed truck loads of weapons to the city centre, where thousands of workers had gathered. Police and soldiers handed their arms over to the people. By early the following morning the main streets were in the hands of the workers and students, a Revolutionary Council was formed in Budapest and a General Strike soon spread to all of Hungary.

Russian tanks, entering Budapest to aid the threatened Government, met furious resistance. Armed only with light weapons and molotov cocktails, thousands fought back. After three days thirty tanks were destroyed and Russian tank crews began siding with the rebels.

Workers' councils were formed in factories, steel mills, power stations, coal mines and railway depots throughout Hungary. Peasants spontaneously formed their own councils, redistributed land, and supplied the towns with food.



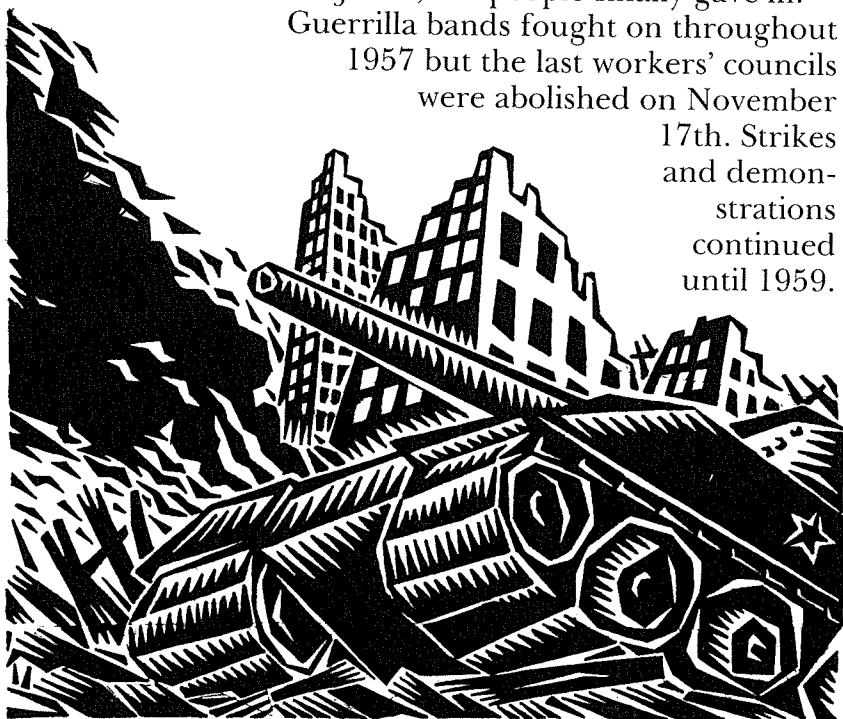
From the first day liberated radio stations broadcast the news across the country.

With the General Strike complete, the councils began to federate and within a week established a Council Republic. Government ceased to exist. The workers' councils then issued an ultimatum — the strike would continue until all Russian troops quit the country. On October 30th, the Red Army tanks pulled out of Hungary. It seemed as if the people had won.

But on November 4th the tanks returned. Having regrouped beyond the borders, fifteen Russian divisions, now with six thousand tanks, fell upon the Hungarian people. All major cities were pounded by artillery fire. In Budapest, the workers' districts bore the brunt of the assault. The people fought back as best they could, but the entire city was shelled continuously for four days and soon lay in ruins. After ten days of terrible fighting, with thousands dead and injured, the people finally gave in.

Guerrilla bands fought on throughout 1957 but the last workers' councils were abolished on November

17th. Strikes and demonstrations continued until 1959.



TEN



THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATIONISTS

'Our ideas are in everyone's minds ...'

The lessons of Hungary were not lost on a tiny band of dissident western radicals and artists who in 1957 formed the **International Situationists**. Throughout the following decade, they exerted a major and profound influence upon all revolutionary thought and activity.

In the years between their founding and self-dissolution in 1972 they developed a highly sophisticated and coherent understanding of modern, repressive society and the aims and tactics required to 'supersede' it and reach a new world of absolute freedom. Their ideas and methods lay at the heart of the May 1968 revolt in France and have shaped and influenced radical groups and currents in dozens of countries around the world.

Although the core of the group never exceeded forty people, and at times was fewer than ten, its effects and legacy have been enormous, while the full potential of Situationists' ideas are possibly still not realised. These ideas appeared between 1958 and 1969 in the twelve issues of their magazine, the *Internationale Situationniste*, and in several pamphlets and books, most importantly *The Revolution of Everyday Life* and *The Book of Pleasures* by **Raoul Vaneigem**, and *The Society of the Spectacle* by **Guy Debord**, who also edited the magazine.

Their writing contains a hard-nosed, merciless criticism of the timidity and limitations of most 'radical' opposition, including anarchism, while condemning the left, the unions and parties for their involvement in the existing order. The bottom line of Situationist theory is that *'the greatest revolutionary idea is the decision to rebuild the entire world according to the needs of the workers' councils ...'* Hungary in 1956 was only the latest example of this popular attempt to bypass the state and achieve a self-managed direct democracy; councils emerged in every revolutionary

upsurge of the 20th century — in Petrograd in 1905 and 1917, in Germany in 1919, in Turin in 1920, and in the Spanish agricultural and industrial collectives of 1936.

Situationism argued that all other voices of political or cultural resistance were either hopelessly compromised or lacking any real clarity of understanding: *'the workers' councils are the only answer. Every other form of revolutionary struggle has ended up with the very opposite of what it was originally looking for.'*

This faith in workers' councils was not unique. Other French radicals held the same belief — the anarchists of Noire et Rouge or the ex-Trotskyists of Socialisme ou Barbarie, for instance. But the Situationists went further and constructed a brilliant critique of the modern world. Its origins lay in a fusion of extreme radicalism, avant-garde art — several were ex-members of the neo-Dadaist Mouvement Lettriste — and the theories of the poet **Lautréamont**, who had argued that *'Poetry must be made by all'*.

The tradition of radical art movements — post-Symbolist poetry, Dadaism, the original Surrealists — held that the ultimate aim of art was revolution, and vice versa. Their ambition was for a world in which art becomes life and life becomes art. Artists become revolutionaries through their desire to realise and create what lies within themselves — their subjectivity. Creative subjectivity is in essence revolutionary because in its attempts to fulfil its aims it must come up against the bounds of this repressive society. In order to succeed in its aims it must break through any restraints.

Radical creative activity, with its goal of the total liberation of all desire, signposted the route Situationism was to take in its search for the *'Northwest Passage'* out of present repressive existence. It located this passage from the world as it 'appears' — from the banal tyranny of the modern bourgeois order into the world *'that has never been'* — within the map of 20th century art, a landscape of freedom and experiment with everyday life. As the Dadaist

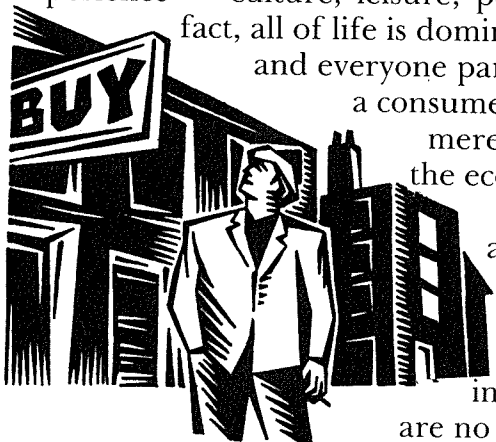
poet Tristan Tzara said 40 years before, *'The modern artist does not paint but creates directly . . . Life and art make One.'*

In 1916 at the Cabaret Voltaire the Dadaists had attempted the total recreation of everyday life while denouncing the claims of art to be superior and special, aiming to suppress art once and for all. In the 1920s the Surrealists tried to re-direct the artistic impulse into the recreation of everyday life while at the same time continuing to produce works of art — *'to realise art without suppressing it'*. Situationism, however, intended to *supersede* art: to finally suppress it as a special, separate activity — 'Culture' — and to transform it into everyday life.

The dominance of bourgeois rule over everyday life could be superseded by a radical art. This was Situationism's point of departure, leading to an all-embracing assault on the nature of modern society — its division of labour, its schism between work and thought, its abundance of material wealth and the poverty of its everyday existence — a society where *'faced with the alternative of love or a garbage disposal unit, young people of all countries have chosen the garbage disposal unit.'*

In a society organised around the choice of what to consume, art is no different from a garbage disposal unit. Consumer capitalism imposes a universal structure, based upon the commodity, which radiates out onto every experience — culture, leisure, political organisation. In fact, all of life is dominated by the commodity and everyone participates in social life as a consumer. Modern life becomes mere survival, dominated by the economy of consumption.

In the 19th century alienation was located in capitalist production, but in the 20th century it has shifted into everyday life. People are no longer simply alienated



producers but also alienated consumers, with all human relations modelled on exchange and consumption. We become alienated from our own lives, which become objects to be consumed. The Situationists defined this as the 'Spectacle':

'The first phase of the domination of the economy over social life brought the degradation of being into having. The total occupation of social life by the spectacle leads to having becoming appearing.'

Humanity becomes a vast audience of the spectacle, a one-way communication of experience, a show to which it cannot reply, spectators of their own lives reduced to a state of abject isolated passivity — *The*

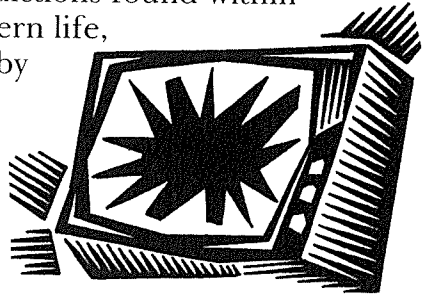


Spectacular-commodity-society'. This is imposed everywhere on everyday life by a 'totalitarian management', which shapes how we wish to behave. It replaces action with passivity, thought with dumb contemplation, living with materialism, and desire with needs. It says *'That which appears is good, that which is good appears'*, while in times of 'crisis' it promises nothing but simply says *'It is so'*.

'The show is over. The audience get up to leave their seats. Time to collect their coats and go home. They turn around . . . No more coats and no more home . . . The spectator feels at home nowhere because the spectacle is everywhere.'

This was how the Situationists saw things. The arena of revolutionary struggle was no longer located in capitalist economic production, but within everyday existence. Life

itself had been stolen. Revolution's *project*, then, is to recreate — to reconstruct — life. The Situationists set out to expose the everyday contradictions found within the banal emptiness of modern life, contradictions experienced by everyone — *'our ideas are in everyone's mind'* — not yet as ideas, though, but as *desires*. For this enormous split between desire and ideas, between what people



accept and what they want, is now part of everyone's life. They intended to bridge the gap between desires and ideas: to make the contradictions so clear, and the link so real, that everyone would have to act upon the

understanding. Although the desire to reconstruct everyday existence is almost invisible in the overwhelming shadow of the spectacle, it is universal. In a thousand ways, in acts of refusal and rebellion, scattered and isolated, men and women attempt to recreate their own lives out of their desires. Just as the spectacle is *'both the result and the project of the existing mode of production'*, this reconstruction of life is both the result and the project of revolution.

This was the way to supersede — to 'leave' —

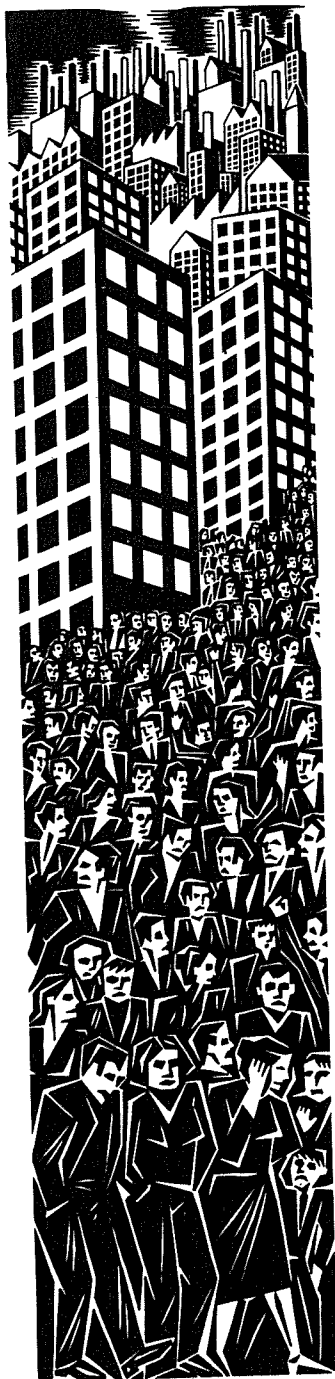
modern times: *'Ours is the best way so far towards getting out of the 20th century.'*

Situationist theory emphasised the affirmation of pleasure and of love. Desire unleashed would make *'a clean sweep of all the values and rules of everyday behaviour'*.

'People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth.'

They urged people to *'take their desires for reality'* and quoted with approval the 19th century utopian philosopher **Charles Fourier**:

'Never sacrifice present good for the good to come. Enjoy the moment. Avoid any matrimonial or other association that does not satisfy your passions from the very beginning. Why should you work for the good to come when it will exceed your desires anyway and you will have in the Combined Order only one displeasure, that of not being able to double the length of days in order to accommodate the immense range of enjoyments available to you?'





THE PROVOS

Situationism's emphasis on art as both tactic and goal, coupled with an attack on all existing specialised art forms, gained widespread support among artists. For them, it proposed a concrete strategy for confronting social conditions. Such ideas took immediate hold with the anarchists and artists of Amsterdam, traditionally an anti-authoritarian city.

Anarchist and artist **Robert Grotveld** began his 'happenings' in 1964, and with **Roel van Duyn**, **Rob Stock** and others went on to found the magazine *Provo*. Its first issue reprinted a 1910 pamphlet on bomb making — *The Practical Anarchist*. With a circulation among Holland's youth of over 30,000, *Provo* soon mushroomed into a mass movement.

In March 1966, Holland's Crown Princess Beatrix married a German Prince, Claus von Amsberg, a man suspected of neo-Nazi connections. The Provos transformed the State wedding into a perfect 'situation'. After police reacted to a smoke bomb attack in the royal coach with savage beatings, the demonstration escalated into days of widespread rioting.

The popularity of the Provos was soon confirmed when they received 13,000 votes in the city elections, partly on the strength of their 'White Plans' to solve critical urban problems. For example, they began to tackle the housing shortage by painting the doors of empty buildings — including the Town Hall itself — white, and urging the young or homeless to occupy them.

One of their most famous activities was to counter the destructive effects of the private motor car by leaving white bicycles in the streets for the use of everybody.

PROVOS' BICYCLE PLAN

'Amsterdammers! The asphalt terror of the motorised bourgeoisie has lasted long enough. Human sacrifices are made daily to this latest idol of the idiots: car power. Choking carbon monoxide is its incense, its image



contaminates thousands of canals and streets.

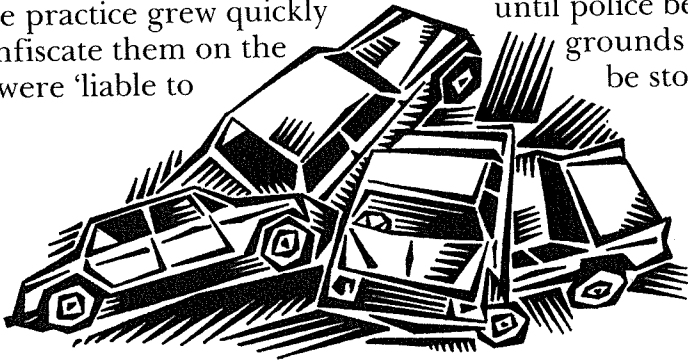
'PROVO's BICYCLE PLAN will liberate us from the car monster, PROVO introduces the WHITE BICYCLE, a piece of PUBLIC PROPERTY.

'The white bicycle is never locked. The white bicycle is the first free communal transport. The white bicycle is a provocation against capitalist private property, for the white bicycle is anarchistic.

'The white bicycle may be used by anyone who needs it and then must be left for someone else. There will be more and more white bicycles until everyone can use white transport and the car peril is past. The white bicycle is a symbol of simplicity and cleanliness in contrast to the vanity and foulness of the authoritarian car. In other words: 'A BIKE IS SOMETHING, BUT ALMOST NOTHING!'

The practice grew quickly to confiscate them on the grounds that they were 'liable to

until police began grounds that be stolen!'



THE COUNTER CULTURE

These ideas — simultaneously both utopian and practical — could not for long be confined to one country, or even one continent. Spreading like a contagious disease, they were carried by the cultural and political avant-garde to London, New York, and to the area of San Francisco known as Haight Ashbury.

Among Situationist prescriptions for the overthrow of the '*spectacular commodity society*' were wildcat strikes, sabotage, looting and riot; in their view, these and not the

more traditional political strategies were the authentic forms that the future struggle would take. The long hot summer of 1965 seemed to prove them right.

WATTS

In August, Los Angeles' black ghetto, Watts, erupted in three days of open rebellion. Attempts at peace talks failed utterly: there were no leaders of the spontaneous revolt to talk *to*. Beginning with liquor stores and gun shops the populace started a carnival of systematic pillage, looting and arson. Order could only be restored by the use of an entire infantry division supported by tanks. 32 people were killed, 800 wounded and 3000 were arrested. Fires alone cost the city 30 million dollars.

For Situationists, Watts was a *'rebellion of worker consumers against commodities. Deprived of future, they reject commodity exchange through theft and gift.'* In New York, the radical group **Black Mask** linked that rebellion with their own struggle against the art establishment:

'A new spirit is rising. Like the streets of Watts we burn the revolution. We assault your Gods . . . We sing of your death. DESTROY THE MUSEUMS . . . Our struggle cannot be hung on the walls. Let the past fall under the blows of revolt.

The guerrilla, the blacks, the people of the future, we are all at your heels. Goddamn your culture, your science, your art. What purpose do they serve?

Your mass-murder cannot be concealed. The industrialist, the banker, the bourgeoisie,

with their unlimited pretence and vulgarity, continue to stockpile art while they





slaughter humanity. Your life has failed. The world is rising against your oppression. There are people at the gates seeking a new world. The machine, the conquering of space and time, there are the seeds of the future which, fed from your barbarism, will carry us forward. We are ready...

...
'LET THE STRUGGLE BEGIN.'

THE BEATS

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the USA in apartments, jazz clubs and coffee bars, the generation of writers and poets known as the **Beats** had also been calling for the world to take a new direction. Although their outlook was never defined, if the Beats had any political philosophy it was an anarchist one. This was clearly spelt out in some poetry, especially that of **Alan Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, Laurence Ferlinghetti, Diane di Prima** and **Tuli Kupferberg**.

*'... The Charleston on Charles St
featuring my Sister Eileen
and the Kronstadt sailors ...
Civilians telling cops to move on ...
The world an art
Life a joy
The village come to life again ...'*

— from *Greenwich Village of my Dreams*, Tuli Kupferberg.

*'... advocating the overthrow of government is a crime
overthrowing it is something else
altogether, it is sometimes called
revolution
but don't kid yourself: government
is not where it's at: it's only
a good place to start:
1. Kill head of Dow Chemical
2. Destroy plant
3. Make it unprofitable for them
to build again
i.e., destroy the concept of money*

as we know it, get rid of interest, savings, inheritance . . .
— from *Revolutionary Letter No. 9, Diane di Prima.*
' . . . In Golden Gate Park, the peacocks

Scream,
wandering through falling leaves.

The Kronstadt

sailors are marching

Through
the
streets of
Budapest.

The stones
Of
the barricades
rise up
and shiver
Into form.

They take the shapes
of the peasant armies
of Makhno.

The Streets are
lit with torches.

The gasoline
drenched bodies
Of the Solvetsky
anarchists

Burn at every
street corner.

Kropotkin's starved
corpse is borne

In state past the
offices

Of the cowering
bureaucrats.

In all the Politisolators
Of Siberia the partisan
dead are enlisting.

Berneri, Andreas Nin,

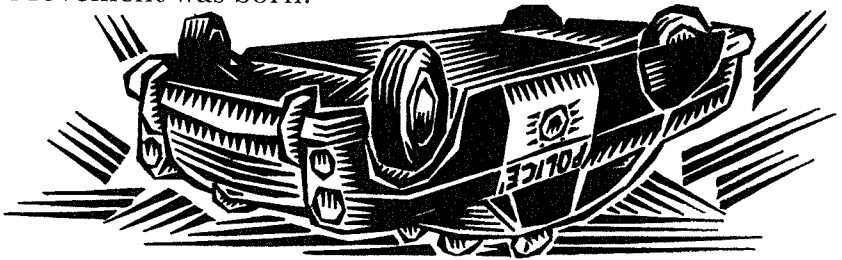


*Are coming from Spain with a legion.
Carolos Tresca is crossing
The Atlantic with the Berkman Brigade.
Bukharin has joined the Emergency
Economic Council. Twenty million
Dead Ukranian peasants are sending wheat . . .'*

— from *Noretov-Noretsyh*, Kenneth Rexroth.

BERKELEY

The University of California's Berkeley campus provided, in 1964, the flashpoint for the growing student unrest. Attempting to halt the spread of radical ideas the authorities called in the police to arrest a student activist. 7000 students seized the police car and held it 'captive' for 2 days until their demands were met. The Free Speech Movement was born.



The next year, the students united with local youth in a battle against the University's plan to re-develop a vacant lot. The protestors occupied the land, bombing and burning construction machinery and buildings to create the 'People's Park'.

THE DIGGERS

In 1966 San Francisco was faced with a major crisis when thousands of young people, fleeing parents, schools and jobs, began to arrive homeless and broke in the city. The authorities' response was to refuse any aid, so the people found their own solutions through voluntary action and mutual aid.

The Diggers, named after the 17th century English

anarchists, set about dealing with the problems. First they opened a free clinic to halt the growth of venereal disease and drug damage, then a free store where donated goods were given away. Next the Diggers organised free housing in the form of communes and spread information via free newspapers. Eventually they declared Haight Ashbury a 'Free City'.

The Diggers' example was repeated across the USA. The world had witnessed nothing like it since the days of the Free Spirit. Spreading like wildfire via thousands of 'underground' newspapers with millions of readers, the 'Counter-Culture' grabbed the minds of an entire generation. All existing notions were questioned and alternatives suggested in politics, sexuality, art, education, psychology, work, family and relationships.

In no time at all these ideas were transformed into practice as people set up Free schools, communes and collective workshops, or simply turned their back on the consumer world and with only a sleeping bag headed for the open road.



STRASBOURG

Berkeley's student revolt was echoed in France. In 1966, Strasbourg students elected five Situationists to run the Student Union. Once in control, their first act was to use all the funds to publish Situationist pamphlets. Their second act was to dissolve the Union.

Outraged, the University authorities dragged the

Situationists into court where they were charged with 'misappropriating student funds'. The Judge summed up with these words:

The accused have never denied the charge, they freely admit making the Union pay 5000 francs for printing 10,000 pamphlets inspired by the Situationist International. These publications express ideas which have nothing to do with the aims of a student union. One has only to read their publications for it to be obvious that these five students, scarcely more than adolescents, lacking any experience of real life, their minds confused with ill-digested philosophical, social, political and economic theories and bored by the drab monotony of their everyday life, make the empty, arrogant and pathetic claim to pass judgement and even heap abuse upon their fellow students, professors, God, religion, the clergy, the government and political and social systems of the entire world. Rejecting all morality and restraint, their cynicism does not hesitate to preach theft, an end to all studies, the suspension of work, total subversion and world revolution with unlicensed pleasure as its only goal. In view of their basically anarchistic character these theories and propaganda are socially noxious. Their wide dissemination in both student circles and among the general public, by the local, national and foreign press, is a threat to the morality, the studies and the good name of the University, and thus the very future of the students of Strasbourg.'

The judge was right. Such ideas did indeed threaten all of France's 600,000 students, especially the prospect of 'unlicensed pleasure'. At Strasbourg, mass debates on sexual liberty followed; at Antony the guard house that segregated the women's dormitories was attacked and demolished, and at Jussieu the students abolished all sexual regulations. At Nanterre, near Paris, **Les Enragés**, a small group of 'college bums' aligned to the Situationist International, led mixed groups of students in the occupation of the segregated dormitories. With breathtaking speed this act by a tiny group was almost to bring the entire French state to its knees and to restore to the modern world the vision of revolution.

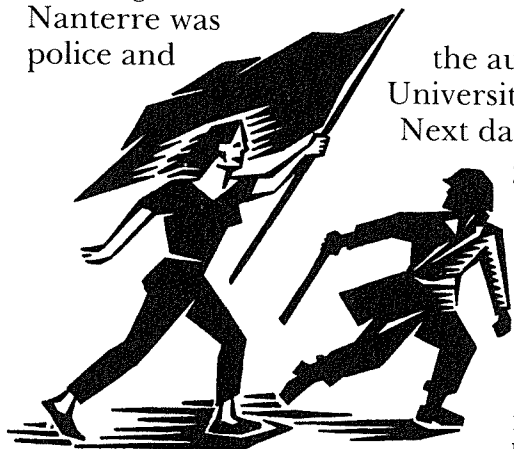
ELEVEN



MAY 1968

'A satisfactory conclusion ...'

Expelled by the Nanterre authorities, the anarchists, led by **Daniel Cohn-Bendit**, promptly called a protest demonstration. The arrival of 80 police infuriated many students, who quit their studies to join the battle and drive the police from the university. Inspired by this support, the anarchists seized the administration building and held a mass debate. The occupation spread, Nanterre was entirely surrounded by police and the authorities shut down the



University.

Next day the Nanterre students gathered around Cohn-Bendit at the Sorbonne University in the centre of Paris. Under continual police pressure, and with over 500 arrested, anger finally erupted into five hours of street fighting.

The police even attacked passers-by with clubs and tear gas. Cohn-Bendit was seized and 'questioned'.

A total ban on demonstrations and the closure of the Sorbonne brought thousands of students out onto the streets. Increasing police violence provoked the construction of the first barricades, and an entire night of fighting left 350 police injured. On May 7th, a 50,000-strong protest against the police was transformed into a day-long battle through the narrow streets of the Latin Quarter. Police nerve gas was answered with molotov cocktails and the chant *'Long Live the Paris Commune'*. The dawn saw 250 police lying injured.

By May 10th, continuing massive demonstrations forced the Education Minister to negotiate with Cohn-Bendit. But even as they talked, outside in the streets 60 barricades



appeared. Young workers were now joining the students, and the trades unions condemned the police violence. Huge demonstrations throughout France culminated on May 13th with one million people on the streets of Paris.

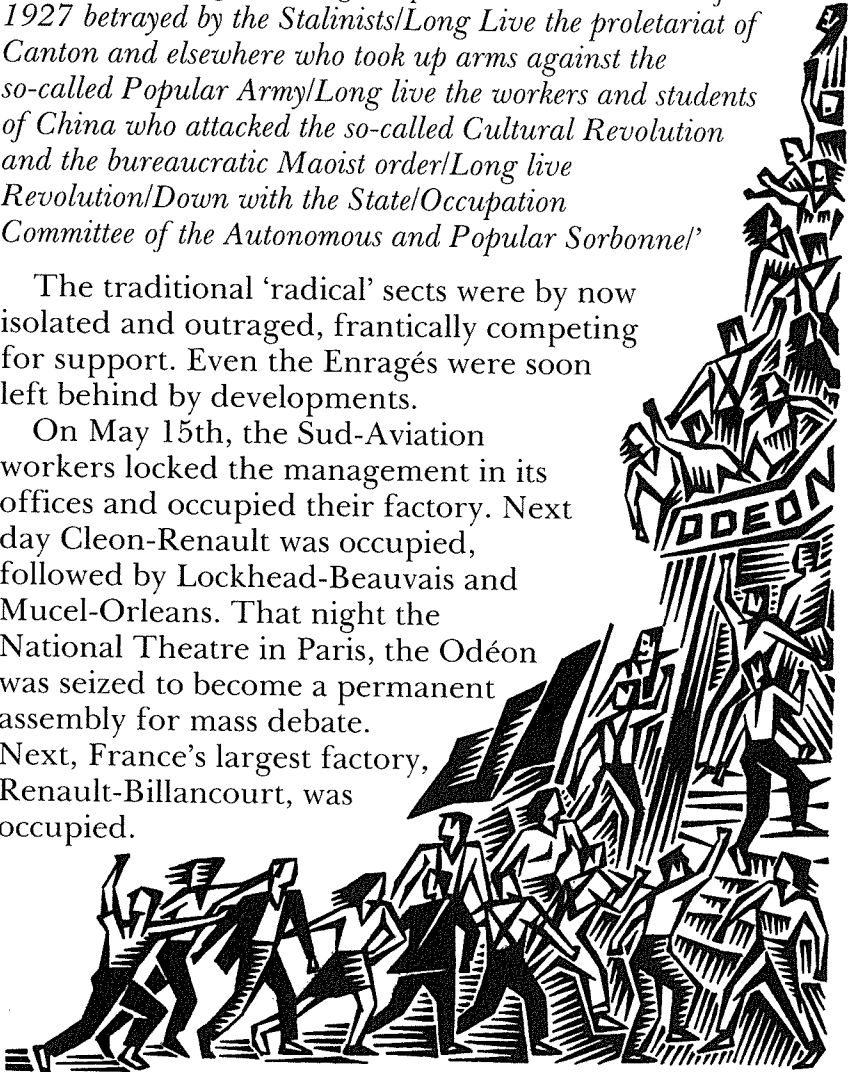
Faced with this massive protest the police quit the Latin Quarter. Students immediately seized the Sorbonne, electing an Enragé, **René Riesel**, head of the Occupation Committee. Occupations soon followed in every French university. From the Sorbonne came a flood of

propaganda, leaflets, proclamations and posters, among them a series of telegrams to the world's rulers:

'May 17/1968/Politbureau of the Chinese Communist Party/Gate of Celestial Peace/Peking/Shake in your shoes bureaucrats/The international power of the workers councils will soon wipe you out/Humanity will only be happy when the last bureaucrat is strung up by the guts of the last capitalist/Long live the factory occupations/Long live the great proletarian revolution of 1927 betrayed by the Stalinists/Long Live the proletariat of Canton and elsewhere who took up arms against the so-called Popular Army/Long live the workers and students of China who attacked the so-called Cultural Revolution and the bureaucratic Maoist order/Long live Revolution/Down with the State/Occupation Committee of the Autonomous and Popular Sorbonnel'

The traditional 'radical' sects were by now isolated and outraged, frantically competing for support. Even the Enragés were soon left behind by developments.

On May 15th, the Sud-Aviation workers locked the management in its offices and occupied their factory. Next day Cleon-Renault was occupied, followed by Lockheed-Beauvais and Mucel-Orleans. That night the National Theatre in Paris, the Odéon was seized to become a permanent assembly for mass debate. Next, France's largest factory, Renault-Billancourt, was occupied.



By May 17th a hundred Paris factories were in the hands of their workers. Within three days the strike and occupations were general, with six million people involved. The Sorbonne Enragés immediately prepared to join the Renault workers. Led by anarchist black and red banners, 4000 students headed for the occupied factory.



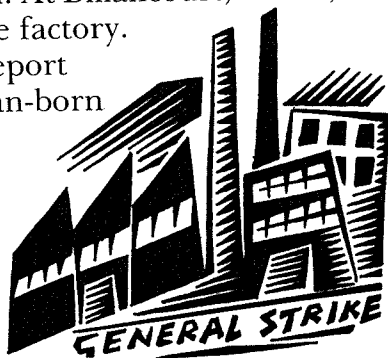
The state and the unions were now faced with their greatest nightmare — a student-worker alliance. Ten thousand police reservists were called up and frantic union officials rushed to bar the factory gates. Their way blocked, the students were

unable to make any contact with the workers.

The Communist Party, faced with revolution — a *'most pressing danger created by anarchists and other troublemakers which it is essential we defeat'* — urged their members to crush the revolt. They united with government and bosses to agree speedily on a series of reforms — wage rises, shorter hours, better conditions. But when they returned to the factories to announce their success, they found they were too late and totally out of touch. At Billancourt, the 25,000 workers jeered them out of the factory.

A government attempt to deport Cohn-Bendit — he was German-born — sparked another huge demonstration in Paris.

Although condemned by unions and communists, it still attracted thousands of workers. Finding their route to the Town Hall blocked by riot police, the bitterest fighting yet seen erupted. The



Stock Exchange was set alight and two police stations sacked. On the same day battles also took place in Lyons, Bordeaux, Nantes and Strasbourg.

The future was now in the balance. As street

demonstrations grew and the occupations continued, President De Gaulle prepared to use 'other means'. Secretly, his top generals readied 20,000 loyal troops for use against Paris. On May 30th, one million government supporters marched through the capital chanting 'Cohn-Bendit to the gas ovens' — he was Jewish. De Gaulle announced the choice: a general election, or civil war.

Para-military groups began to appear, T.V. studios were occupied by police, and after a skirmish armed police overran the occupied Post Office in Rouen. On June 7th, police made an assault on the Flins steelworks which started a four-day running battle. It left one worker dead and a hundred injured. Three days later, Renault strikers were gunned down by police: two died and eleven were seriously injured.

In response, renewed fighting broke out around the 73 barricades in the Latin Quarter, ending with the Sorbonne shutting down and over 1000 injured. On June 12th, all demonstrations were banned, radical groups outlawed and their members arrested. Under attack from all sides, with escalating state violence, intensifying reaction and communist and union sell-outs, the General Strike and the occupations crumbled.

May 1968 was summed up by the Situationists in this way:

'If it failed, it was only because its spontaneous orientation towards Workers' Councils was in advance of all preparations for it . . . "The dawn which in a single moment lights up the whole shape of a new world", that was what we saw that May in France. The red and black flags of workers' democracy flew together in the wind. The axe is laid to the root of the trees. Now we are sure of a satisfactory conclusion to all we have done.'



TWELVE



THE REFUSAL OF WORK

'These people — they want revolution ...'

The worldwide anti-authoritarian ferment of the 1960s in France almost overthrew the state and marked a turning point for modern society. This new radicalism questioned every aspect of social life — sexual relations, family, property, education, culture, politics and money. Although this challenge developed in the high schools and universities, in France it reached young workers in the factories and was only halted with the aid of a desperate and frantic left. But this was only temporary. The struggle was to resume with even greater vigour within a year, this time aiming for the very heart of capitalism — the idea of work itself.

The illusion of post-war political calm and compromise was shattered. The role of socialist and Marxist parties was recognised as a fraud, centralised bureaucracy revealed as deeply authoritarian, and trade union leaders seen to act openly in the interests of capitalism. Never again could politicians, bureaucrats, leftists and union bosses be relied upon to smooth things out. In future, less subtle methods would be required.

ITALY 1969

'... a bad year for production ...'

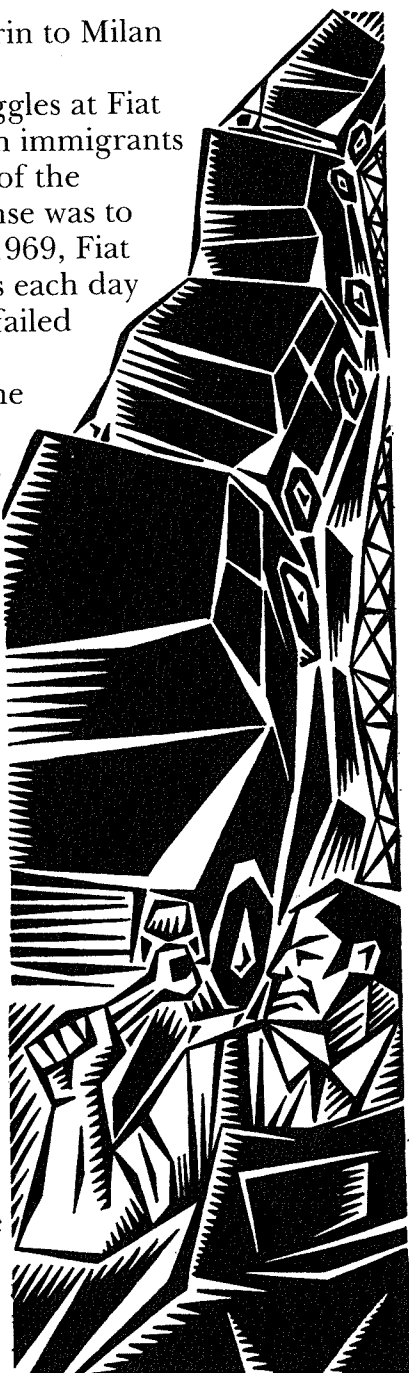
Italy, like most of the world, had experienced conflict in its universities, but the students had made strong contacts in the factories, especially Fiat, Turin and Pirelli, Milan.

1969 began in the ordinary way with bosses and unions settling down to their ritual dealings over wages and productivity. Suddenly the giant Fiat works, known as the '*slave camp*', erupted and thousands of young workers seized and occupied the factory. From behind their barricades, and in defiance of their union, the strikers imposed their own demands for higher wages and reduced work loads. During the '*Hot Autumn*', this autonomous

wildcat activity spread from Turin to Milan and throughout Italy.

The driving force of the struggles at Fiat were the newly-arrived southern immigrants. Outraged at the inhuman pace of the assembly lines, their first response was to refuse to turn up for work. In 1969, Fiat lost 20 million working hours as each day 10% of the 180,000 workforce failed to clock in. Strikes cost Fiat a further 20 million hours. But the workers soon developed even tougher forms of action against the hated conditions. Their detailed knowledge of the complex factory enabled them to bring everything to a halt simply by staging a mini-strike at just the right point on the production line. Added to the continuous wildcats was an endless wave of spontaneous 'meetings' plus frequent and costly sabotage.

Work wasn't the only target. For too long the unions had connived with the bosses to ensure that production was never interrupted. The young workers now believed that their strength lay in their mass presence on the factory floor and not with isolated union officials left to negotiate in the manager's office. If management wanted to discuss changes, they must meet workers face to face on



the factory floor — if they dared. This new approach to industrial bargaining left the unions redundant and challenged the bosses. As Agnelli, the head of Fiat, put it:

'Today, indiscipline and illegality are rife: strikes, stoppages and marches inside the factory. Protests against speed-up conditions, gradings — against everything! The unions say they know nothing about it, and I can well believe it! These people aren't fighting for reforms — they want Revolution!'

The success of 'these people' forced the state to employ a new policy, the 'Strategy of Tension'. An atmosphere of uncertainty and fear was deliberately created to ease the passage of harsher measures against radicals.

This 'new policy' was introduced in Milan on December 12th, 1969. A bomb exploded in a crowded bank, leaving 16 dead and 88 wounded. This bomb and many that followed were the work of fascist groups closely connected to the Italian Secret Police. But anarchists were accused and heavy repression followed. Two Milan anarchists, **Giovanni Pinelli**, a railway worker, and **Pietro Valpreda**, a dancer, were arrested and interrogated. According to the police, Pinelli 'confessed' but managed in the presence of six police to reach a window, open it and 'jump' to his death four floors below.

Despite this strategy — 145 bombings, massive police round-ups, 10,000 workers awaiting trial — the 'refusal of work' spilled from the factories out into the wider community. What had begun as a demand for a working week reduced to 40 hours and for rest periods, turned into resistance against speed-up, sabotage of the assembly line, rejection of unions and the seizure of factories, and led to the rejection of the entire system of work. This refusal spread into every aspect of life, affecting the whole of Italian society. It gained ground among new waves of students, urban youth, school children — in December 1970 over 500 schools were occupied — and led to such actions as fare strikes for free transport, rent strikes, and thousands of dwellings being squatted by the homeless.



By the mid-1970s this rebellion had developed into a mass movement — **Autonomy** — which united young factory workers, students, urban youth, ‘marginals’ and the unemployed. From the experiences of the late 1960s it inherited a deep distrust of the unions, the Communist Party and other forms of centralist politics, preferring to create new ways of organising. Squatting entire neighbourhoods in the big cities, young workers formed large communes: traditional ways of living were put aside in favour of collective experiments, including many gay communes. Everything was being transformed, particularly by feminism. In the cities, ‘wildcat’ radio stations such as Bologna’s **Radio Alice** — kept the movement in touch with itself.

In Milan in 1976, 20,000 young people came together for a music festival before taking to the streets to battle with the police. That autumn the movement directed its energies towards ‘*autonomous price-setting*’. Tens of thousands descended on the city centres of Milan, Rome and Bologna to expropriate goods from luxury stores and to declare price reductions at cinemas, theatres and restaurants.

The most dramatic attempt at price-setting came later that year at La Scala opera house in Milan. December 7th marks the start of the new opera season, an annual



jamboree for the city's bourgeoisie, with the price of a ticket more than a worker's weekly pay. Milan's Autonomists announced that they could not permit this *'deliberate provocation'*. War was declared on La Scala. Opening night saw the opera house ringed by thousands of heavily-armed riot police; the night-long battle left 7 youths seriously injured and 300 imprisoned. The opera was performed.

PUNK

'They must be Russians . . .'

The Italian rebellion was soon to be taken in new directions and to further heights by youth in Britain. 1975 was a year of high unemployment and a steeply rising cost of living. One Friday night that winter, a new music group performing in front of an audience of art students so outraged the concert's organisers that the power was cut off after only ten minutes on stage. The **Sex Pistols** had arrived. As a critic was later to say of their music: *'The fact that it isn't disciplined prevents me from liking it.'*

The Sex Pistols were a catalyst: the 'lost generation' of the '70s, were galvanised into the Punk movement by the music of this and the many bands that followed. Combining music and lyrics of extreme anger and energy they spoke for their audience:

'That's what's bothering kids today. They feel restricted in everything they try to do . . . With the Pistols they get some kind of freedom. In this day and age you've got to learn to spit in authority's face, otherwise they'll pin you down.'

Throughout 1976 punk grew in popularity and the Sex Pistols released their first single, *Anarchy in the U.K.* In December, they appeared on a T.V. chat show with their manager Malcolm McLaren, an ex-art student who possessed a knowledge of anarchist and situationist theory. He explained to the viewers how the Sex Pistols were following Bakunin's theory that *'In order to create you must first destroy'*. Viewers were outraged by what they saw and heard that night. One, a lorry driver, was *'So furious that he*

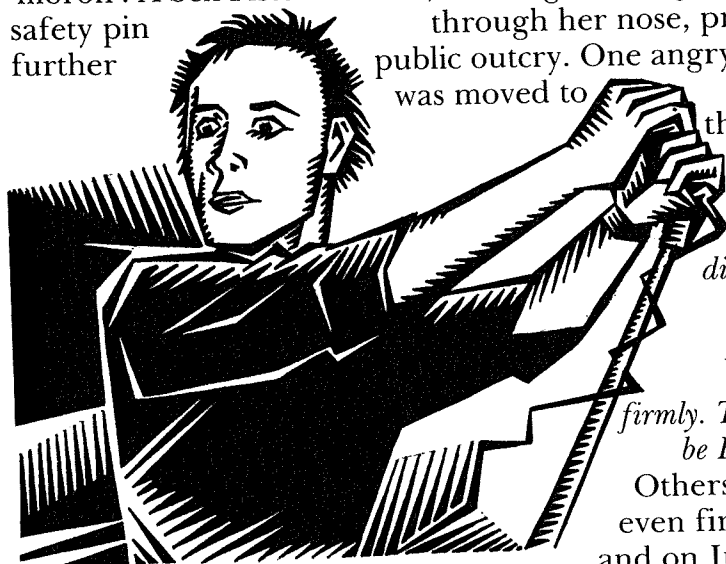
ANARCHY IN THE U.K.

SEX PISTOLS



kicked in the screen of his £380 colour television' in order to prevent his family witnessing any more.

But the spectacle was to continue. 1977 was Jubilee Year, the 25th anniversary of the crowning of Queen Elizabeth II. The nation rejoiced. As their contribution to the celebrations the Sex Pistols released *God Save the Queen*, which described her as being, among other things, a 'moron'. A Sex Pistols T-shirt, showing Her Majesty with a safety pin through her nose, provoked public outcry. One angry reader was moved to write to the press:



'I hope whoever had this disgraceful T-shirt printed is punished firmly. They must be Russians.'

Others took an even firmer line and on June 20th

Johnny Rotten, the Sex Pistols' vocalist, was ambushed by a group of middle-aged men who slashed his face with razors.

Nobody was safe. At a public parade in London a young punk stepped from the crowd and opened fire on the Queen — with a toy pistol. With Johnny Rotten now branded Public Enemy No. 1, the Sex Pistols were prevented from performing in the U.K. and a total ban was placed on radio plays of their record. Even so, *God Save the Queen*



climbed to the top of the charts.

Punk now appeared throughout Britain. Disillusioned and cynical youth everywhere adopted the simple and direct message of anarchy, creating with their clothes a visible metaphor of their philosophy. A century earlier, **Oscar Wilde**, who was sympathetic to anarchism, had said that *'one should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art'*. McLaren himself had opened 'Sex', later renamed 'Seditionaries', as an 'anti-fashion' clothes shop in Chelsea. Punk fashion parodied the society of the time by the use of self-conscious irony. Symbols of slavery and bondage, such as chains and leather; of negation and revolt, black and anarchy; and of poverty and hardship, torn and patched



fabric, were all woven together into an anti-fashion. Punks became works of art — or anti-art — each one an original. As one observer wrote at the time: *'Punk is a mode of anarchy as much as the Dadaist 'Cabaret Voltaire'. And who's heard of that?'*

FEMINISM

'Feminism practises what anarchism preaches . . .'

Feminism and anarchism have always been closely linked. The world's oldest anarchist newspaper, *Freedom*, was founded in 1886 by a woman, **Charlotte Wilson**. Many outstanding feminists were also anarchists, including the pioneering **Mary Wollstonecraft** and the tireless champion of women's freedom, **Emma Goldman**:

'The extraordinary achievements of women in every walk of life have silenced forever the loose talk of woman's inferiority. Those who still cling to this fetish do so because they hate nothing so much as to see their authority challenged. This is the characteristic of all authority, whether the master over his economic slaves or man over woman. However, everywhere woman is escaping her cage, everywhere she is going ahead with free, large strides.'

Although opposition to the state and all forms of authority had a strong voice among feminists of the 19th century, the 'second wave' of feminists, beginning in the 1960s, was founded upon anarchist practice. The new feminist movement developed its own forms of organisation at the heart of which was the small 'consciousness raising group', usually composed



of close friends. From a base of thousands of these groups grew the larger, international movement. This structure closely echoed the 'affinity groups' that played a central part in the growth and success of the anarchist movement in Spain.

During these early years feminism was completely free of leaders and led. Decentralist and federalist — features best seen in the thousands of magazines, newspapers and pamphlets that wove the movement together, its lack of dogma, its total rejection of any single ideology or line, and, most importantly, its disdain for hierarchies within the movement, all appeared spontaneously without any pre-conceived programme or direction from above. As **Cathy Levine** has written:

'All across the country, independent groups of women began functioning without the structure, leaders, and other factotums of the male left, creating independently and simultaneously, organisations similar to those of anarchists of many decades and regions. No accident, either.'

Peggy Kornegger drew attention to the strong connections to anarchism which could be seen not only in the practice but also in the ideas of feminism:

'The radical feminist perspective is almost pure anarchism. The basic theory postulates the nuclear family as the basis for all authoritarian systems. The lesson the child learns, from father to teacher to boss to god, is to OBEY the great anonymous voice of Authority. To graduate from childhood to adulthood is to become a full-fledged automaton, incapable of questioning or even of thinking clearly. We pass into middle-life, believing everything we are told and numbly accepting the destruction of life all around us.'

From these positions it was a short step to the activity of autonomous direct action. Here **Carol Erlich** describes the network of individuals, groups and collectives that began to emerge, focussing upon immediate concerns and projects:

'Developing alternative forms of organisation means building

self-help clinics instead of fighting to get one radical on a hospital board of directors; it means women's video groups and newspapers,



instead of commercial television and newspapers; living collectives instead of isolated nuclear families; rape crisis centres; food co-ops; parent-controlled daycare centres; free schools; printing co-ops; alternative radio groups and so on.'

However by the late 1970s this experience was in danger of being forgotten when feminism became influenced, and soon dominated, by left-wing ideologies. At the same time it began to be diverted away from independent direct action towards mass reformist campaigns, with hierarchical and centralist organisation, directed towards the ultimate source of authority, the state.

For feminists aware of anarchist ideas the dangers were clear and familiar. In response, 'anarcha-feminism' emerged, a small but vocal movement within feminism. For a brief time its ideas gained popularity but by 1980 it had virutally ceased to exist as an organisation. It had received little support from the male-dominated anarchist movement which saw anarcha-feminism as a threat to its position, and faced considerable opposition from Marxist and reformist feminists seeking control of the movement.

At this point many moved into other the growing anti-movements.

anarcha-feminists activities, especially nuclear and peace



PACIFISM

Many anarchists reject violence. The pacifist tradition within anarchism is long, stretching from the Ranters through **Leo Tolstoy** into today's peace movements, where anarchism has a strong influence.

All anarchists are anti-militarist and oppose capitalist war, but many support revolutionary violence, saying that

physical force is necessary to overthrow entrenched power and to resist state aggression. For such people the question of violence in revolution is secondary. As Alex Berkman explained:

'It's the same as if rolling up your sleeves for work should be considered the work itself. The fighting part of revolution is merely the rolling up of your sleeves. The real, actual task is ahead.'

But some anarchists take a different stand, arguing that anarchism and violence are in contradiction. To force anyone to act against their free will by the threat, or use, of physical violence is an act of power. Anarchists must oppose, not use, power. Many also believe that violence is counter-productive, civil disobedience and non-violent direct action providing better roads to radical change.

In 1917 Emma Goldman and Alex Berkman organised the No-Conscription League to encourage resistance to the war. Charged with conspiracy they were jailed for two years and then deported. The Industrial Workers of the World also emphasised the value of non-violence, stating that violence, *'the basis of every political state in existence, has no place in this organisation'*, and pointing out to striking workers that *'their power rested in their folded arms'*. When war began the IWW called for a General Strike on the grounds that *'the workers fight the wars, the bosses reap the profits'*. But the threat of a radical anti-war movement provoked a ruthless wave of government repression. Hundreds were jailed and the IWW was broken for good.

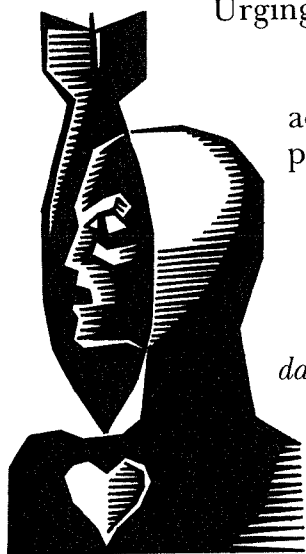
Fifty years later another war — Vietnam — saw a new and larger anti-war movement appear, again with a strong anarchist presence. Important in the early years was the New York Workshop in Nonviolence, which published the influential anarchist magazine *WIN*. Among its members were the anarchist pacifists **Julian Beck** and **Judith Melina** of the Living Theatre, anarchist poet **Tuli Kupferberg** and the General Strike for Peace group. Along with the pacifist Circle in San Francisco, which included poet Kenneth Rexroth, they were decisive in guiding the growing



resistance to militarism and the state.

Paul Goodman, anarchist writer, teacher and poet, was the major inspiration to the peace movement. Born in 1911, he began writing in the 1930s. But although influential in the anarchist, bohemian and artistic scene of 1950s New York, and closely connected to the Living Theatre, it was only in 1960 with his book *Growing up Absurd* that he achieved international recognition. Goodman urged the young to reject sexual conformity, racism and violence and to celebrate life and love.

'In a society that is cluttered, over-centralised, and over-administered we should aim at simplification, decentralisation, and de-control.'



Urging a popular, mass-based, non-violent peace movement, his influence was enormous. He was even invited to address a government conference for planners:

'You people are unfitted by your commitments, your experience, your recruitment and your moral disposition. You are the military-industrial complex of the United States, the most dangerous body of men at the present in the world, for you not only implement our disastrous policies but are an overwhelming lobby for them, and you expand and rigidify the wrong use of brains, resources and labour so that

change becomes difficult. Most likely the trends that you represent will be interrupted by shambles of riots, alienation, ecological catastrophes, wars, and revolutions, so that current long-range planning, including this conference, is irrelevant.'

The peace movement united hundreds of thousands in opposition to the Vietnam war. Mass campaigns of civil disobedience, resistance to military conscription and non-violent direct action all played a major part in bringing peace to Vietnam. Today's peace movements continue to practice non-violence in the struggle against nuclear weapons. Again civil disobedience and direct action are the main tactics for protestors who demonstrate, picket, blockade and trespass against nuclear arms, while others take tremendous risks when they deliberately enter nuclear test areas. Radical pacifism remains a powerful force against the state as increasing numbers echo the old cry: *'Wars will end when men refuse to fight.'*



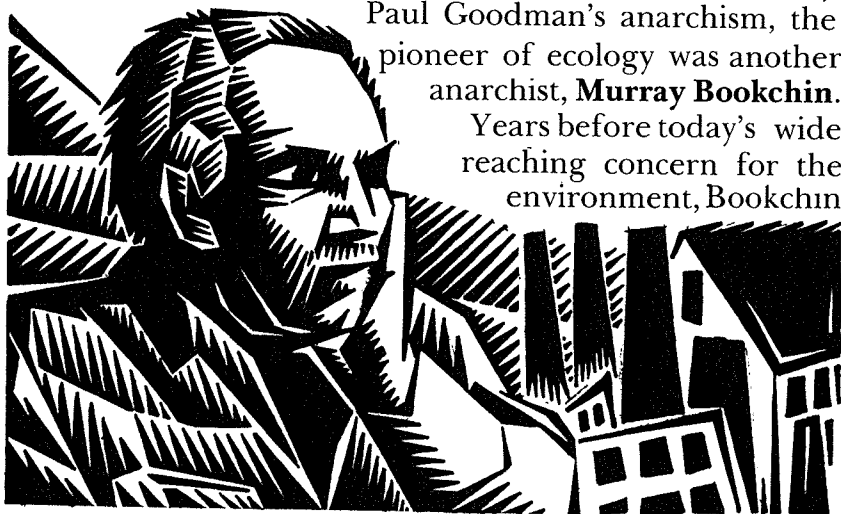
ECOLOGY

International protest against nuclear energy has adopted the same tactics as the anti-war movement. The anti-nuclear campaigns grew from the ecology movement's struggle to halt the increasing ruin of the planet and to offer an option to the short-term, destructive priorities of the industrial state.

The list of disasters — *Aberfan, the Torrey Canyon, Three Mile Island, Seveso, Flixborough, Bhopal, Chernobyl, Upper Rhine* — grows longer and the chance of a catastrophe of even greater proportions escalates day by day. The nuclear state promises a new totalitarianism as it attempts to placate mass fear with lies and cover-ups, while mega-technology threatens to lay waste the whole world.

Just as the peace movement was influenced at its birth by Paul Goodman's anarchism, the pioneer of ecology was another anarchist, **Murray Bookchin**.

Years before today's wide reaching concern for the environment, Bookchin



produced a far-sighted analysis of the problems of the ecological crisis, and in his writing laid the foundations of the ecology movement.

In such books as *Our Synthetic Environment*, *Crisis in Our Cities*, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, *The Limits of the City*, *Towards the Ecological Society* and *The Ecology of Freedom*, Bookchin explores the questions of ecology, nuclear energy, pollution, urban crisis and the breakdown of community. His solutions for a 'social ecology' are firmly anarchist: he advocates the liberating potential of technology within a de-centralised society and the absolute necessity of healing the split between nature and humanity. With his insistence of an anti-authoritarian politics, Bookchin has established anarchism at the centre of the ecology movement.



OUT OF THE RUINS

'We have no fear ...'

On September 18th, 1985, as Mexico City's eighteen million inhabitants began another day, a massive earthquake struck. When the ground stopped shaking and the dust cleared away, a scene of complete destruction was revealed. The densely populated downtown district, about 10% of the city, lay in ruins. The crowded Tepito neighbourhood, at the centre of the earthquake zone, was devastated. The high-rise tower blocks that ringed Tepito had been toppled, hurling thousands of tons of concrete and steel onto the houses below. Beneath the chaos of girders and rubble many people lay helplessly trapped.

Rescue came quickly. As the tremors died down and the ground became still the survivors began the job of rescue. They were soon joined by people from the relatively unharmed districts close by. With nothing but shovels and bare hands they struggled to free their neighbours from the ruins. They worked non-stop, digging into the wreckage, shifting aside great weights of rubble to reach the survivors; many rescuers took great risks to pull people to safety.

As the work went on, more and more people arrived to help. Around the centre of devastation a network of aid and assistance sprang up.

The survivors in to be sheltered by relatives,

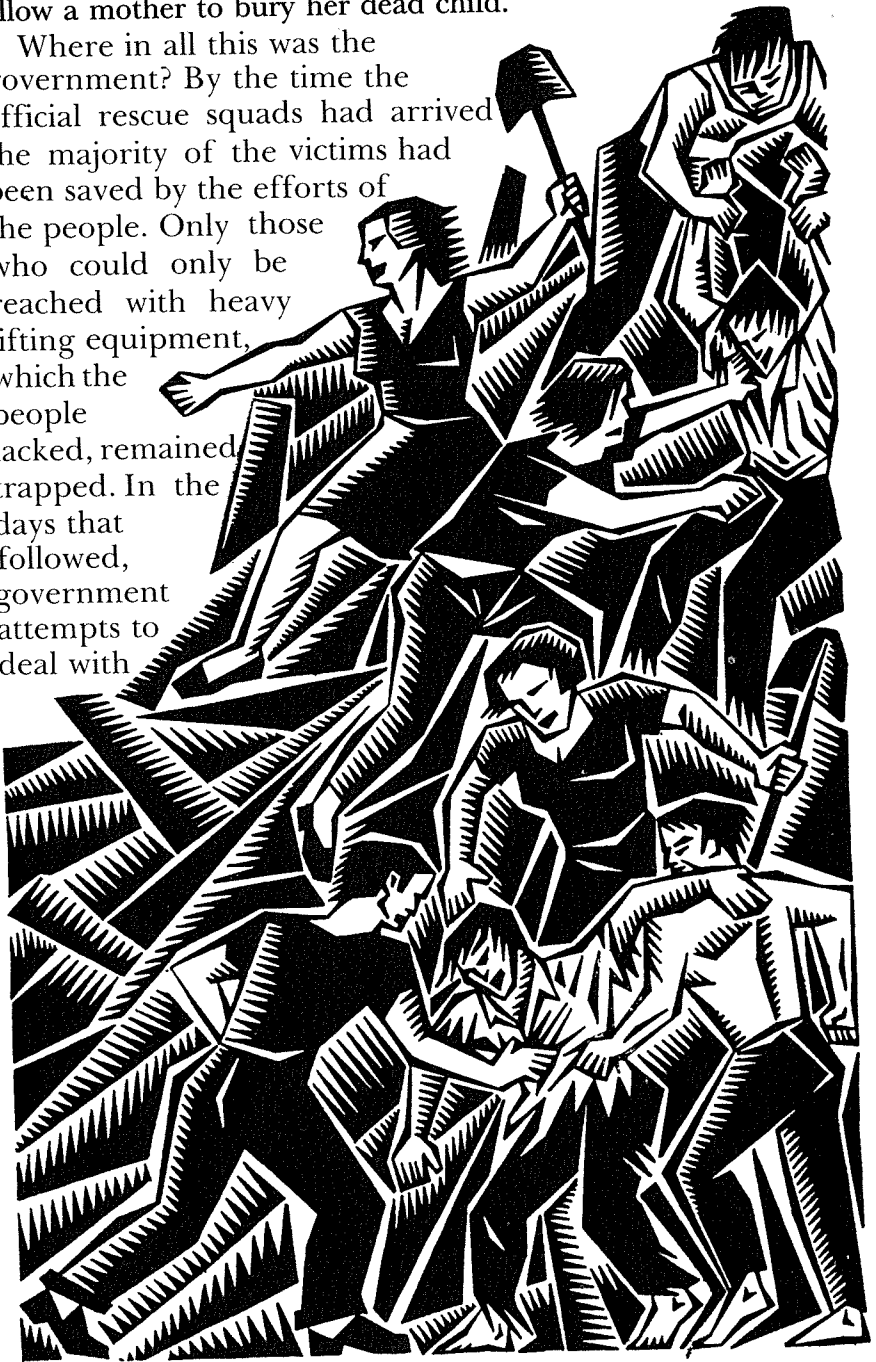


more people
centre of
network of
sprang up.
homeless
were taken
sheltered
neighbours and

strangers. Food and clothing were freely shared out among the victims in a completely spontaneous and self-organised movement of mutual aid and co-operation. One example among many shows the level of human solidarity that the ordinary people of Mexico City were expressing: a woman, overjoyed at finding her husband alive, gave all the money she possessed to bribe a policeman who was refusing to

allow a mother to bury her dead child.

Where in all this was the government? By the time the official rescue squads had arrived the majority of the victims had been saved by the efforts of the people. Only those who could only be reached with heavy lifting equipment, which the people lacked, remained trapped. In the days that followed, government attempts to deal with



the crisis continued to be pitifully inadequate, and the people saw clearly that had things been left to the government the suffering would have been even greater. In the face of the inefficiency of fire and emergency crews, and the incapacity of the officials and police, only the spontaneous efforts of the ordinary people resulted in help and support for the survivors of the disaster.

But the world's media told a different story. Television and newspapers depicted a helplessly crippled city peopled only with passive, stunned, suffering victims; the government told journalists that they *'were completely in control'*. Both government and media were deliberately blind to the reality on the ruined streets.

The popular movement of mutual aid and solidarity that followed the earthquake did not appear from nowhere. For the ordinary people in the overcrowded tenements, slums and shanty towns of Mexico City, life is in many ways one long series of disasters and suffering, of poverty, hardship and chaos. Without a strong and continually inventive network of support, it would never rise even to the level of mere survival. The government, which is concerned only with maintaining an illusion of 'order', does little to help; if anything, it is responsible for increasing the misery.

Shortly before his death in 1936 on the Aragon front, the Spanish anarchist **Buenaventura Durruti** had this to say on the subject of destruction:

'We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world, here in our hearts. That world is growing this minute.'



AN AUTHOR SPEAKS

'I hate slimy objectivity ...'

The author or the artist praised by the papers observes that his work has been understood: a miserable lining to a coat of public utility. Some learned journalists see it as an art for babies.

I have recorded fairly accurately Progress, Law, Morals, and all the other magnificent qualities that various very intelligent people have discussed in so many books in order, finally, to say that even so everyone has danced according to their own personal boomboom, and that they're right about their boomboom.

People think they can explain rationally, by means of thought, what they write. But it's very relative. Thought is a fine thing for philosophy, but it's relative. There is no ultimate truth.

Do people really think that by the meticulous subtlety of logic, they have demonstrated the truth and established the accuracy of their opinions? By sticking labels on to things, the battle of the philosophers was let loose, money-grubbing, mean and meticulous weights and measures. I hate slimy objectivity, the science that considers that everything is always in order.

The artist protests: every page should explode, either because of its staggering absurdity, or the enthusiasm of its principles, or its typography. I have no right to drag others in my wake, I'm not compelling anyone to follow me, because everyone makes their own art in their own way. Do we make art in order to earn money and keep the bourgeoisie happy?

I destroy the drawers of the brain, and those of social organisation. Being governed by morals and logic has made it impossible for us to be anything other than impassive towards policemen, the cause of slavery. Putrid rats. Morality infuses chocolate into everyone's veins. This is not ordained by supernatural forces, but by a trust of

ideas merchants and academic monopolists.

I am against systems; the most acceptable system is that of having none or no principle. On the one hand there is



a world tottering in its flight, linked to the infernal gamut; on the other hand the new people: uncouth, galloping, riding astride hiccups. People who join us keep their freedom. We don't accept any theories.

Everyone must shout — There is great, destructive, negative work to be done. To sweep, to clean. The cleanliness of the individual materialises after we've gone through folly, the aggressive, complete folly of a world left in the hands of bandits who have demolished and destroyed the centuries. With neither aim nor plan, without organisation — uncontrollable folly, decomposition.

I assure you there is no beginning, and we are not afraid. We aren't sentimental. We are like a raging wind that rips up the clothes of clouds and prayers, we are preparing the great spectacle of disaster, conflagration and decomposition. Preparing to put an end to mourning, and to replace tears by sirens spreading from one continent to another, clarions of intense joy, bereft of that poisonous sadness.

After the carnage we are left with the hope of a purified humanity. Out of a need for independence, out of mistrust for the community, to reinstate the fantasy of every individual. To fight for and against thought can suddenly, infernally, propel us into the mystery of daily bread and the lilies of the economic field.

Every product of disgust that is capable of becoming a negation of the family is dada. Protest with the fists of one's whole being in destructive action — DADA. The acquaintance with all the means hitherto rejected by the sexual prudishness of easy compromise and good manners — DADA. Abolition of logic, the dance of those incapable of creation — DADA. Liberty — DADA DADA DADA. The roar of the contorted pains, the interweaving of contraries and of all contradictions, freaks and irrelevancies — LIFE.

—freely adapted from Tristan Tzara's *1918 Dada Manifesto*.

