

The

New

Thinker

THE NEW THINKER

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EDITORIAL.

There is much truth in the old adage, "There is nothing new under the sun," particularly when referring to thought, & perhaps a more apposite title for our magazine would have been "The Re-Thinker"; for it is our intention to re-examine in its pages those attitudes & situations which have crystallized with the passing of time into a concrete, static, one - dimensional over-simplification; & we believe that the diversity of life & human outlook is such that we should constantly question current values & judgements, constantly probe the official representation of the past, root out error and falsification, search for the lost, the concealed, the destroyed, & ever strive for further enlightenment to guide our present progress & colour our dreams of the future.

To this end we will summon the aid of those whom history has over-looked or under-estimated, & whom their contemporaries silenced with derision, neglect, incomprehension, or the butt of a rifle. We will test their prophecies on the touchstone of the present, & revalue their criticisms of the world in which they lived & the alternatives they presented. And in particular we will listen to those whose ruling passion was the love of freedom, & whose only dogma was that authority must be resisted & tyranny overthrown, because to those people in particular, history has been unkind.

In a century where the nation state has become the Godhead of a new theology, where centralization is identified as the direction of progress, and where the encroachment of that state upon the liberty of the individual far outstrips his increasing material well-being, the longing for freedom, is a dangerous emotion which must be quickly & discreetly suppressed, for if allowed to grow & to spread it will first undermine & finally utterly destroy the existing hierarchical framework of present day society, - based on privilege, reinforced by artificially induced need, & maintained by official violence.

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For our first issue, we have chosen to concentrate upon the somewhat inevitable subject of the Bolshevik coup d'etat in 1917, commonly mis-called a revolution. Many other people at this time are casting light on what happened in Russia in that fateful year, but we think that even so, the observations of Emma Goldman on the situation there, and her reflections on the nature of revolution in general, are a valuable contribution to the current debate. Also, we have resurrected the incredible Nestor Makhno, whose achievements in the Ukraine rank among the most impressive military exploits of the century. The full story of this amazing, semi-literate peasant remains to be told, & his name rarely appears in today's reference books. Yet on Sept. 26th, 1919, this man changed the course of history by his brilliant victory over Denikin's forces. In the words of Denikin himself, he "had the effect of disorganizing our rear & weakening the front at the most critical stage of its existence," and thus paved the way for the ultimate Bolshevik victory over the Whites.

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K R O P O T K I N T O L E N I N .

At Dmitrov, a small town some 60 kilometres from Moscow, where he lived, Kropotkin took an active part in the local life, & often the peasants came to ask his advice & to beg him to intercede with the authorities on their behalf. At the beginning of 1920 the postmen of Dmitrov asked him to inform Lenin of their deplorable situation. Their monthly wage was not even enough to buy 10 lbs. of bread & they could not stay alive unless they were provided with food; however, their supply was 2 months late. Kropotkin, therefore, sent a letter to Lenin to appraise him of the situation: here is the second part of it in which he passes from particular facts to general considerations.

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"Living as you do in Moscow at the centre of things, you cannot be aware of the true nature of things in the country. You need to live in a small village, in close contact with the daily life, with its needs & its adversities, with its hungry people, adults & children, with the endless procedures in the various offices that you have to go through in order to obtain the licence to buy a miserable oil-lamp, to know the truth about actual suffering. And you can only draw one conclusion. You must restore as soon as possible more normal conditions of life. Things cannot go on much longer like this & we are heading for a bloody catastrophe. Neither the locomotives of the Allies nor the exportation of grain, cotton, linen, leather & other things which we badly need ourselves can help the population.

One thing is certain. Even if the dictatorship of one party is a useful way of delivering a blow to the capitalist regime, (which is by no means certain), it is absolutely detrimental to the creation of a new social order.

To achieve this social order the constructive work must be done by local forces, but this has not been allowed to take place & cannot be seen anywhere. Instead one meets at every turn individuals who have never known the real conditions under which people live, & who commit the most gross errors which cost the lives of thousands of people & ruin entire regions.

Consider for example the stockpiling of firewood, or, last spring, the stockpiling of seed...

Without the participation of local forces, without constructive work proceeding from the bottom to the top, & carried out by the workers & peasants themselves, the construction of a new life is impossible.

It is obvious that such a construction, motivated from the bottom, ought to be the work of the Soviets. But Russia is no longer a Republic of Soviets, except in name. The power & influence of the Party men, in other words, more frequently the new adherents to communism, (the men devoted to the idea stay, for the most part, in the city centres), have already annihilated the influence & constructive force of that institution which promised so much: --- the Soviets. They are no longer Soviets; they are the committees of that Party which rules Russia, & their constructive work suffers from all the ill-effects of bureaucracy.

To find some way out of the present disorder, Russia must revert to the creative spirit of local forces which, as I have seen, are quite capable of becoming the greatest factor in the shaping of a new life. The sooner one realizes the absolute necessity of this solution, the better. The people will, as a result, be more disposed to accept the new forms of social life. But if the present situation lasts, the very word "socialism" will become a curse, as happened in France to the idea of equality during the 40 years after the rule of the Jacobins."

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The above letter was sent from Dmitrov & is dated March 4th, 1920. Kropotkin's advice to restore power to the Soviets was, of course, ignored & his prediction of consequent events was proved to be accurate. The "bloody catastrophe" he feared took place about ten years later, when, under Stalin, the colossal purges of uncooperative peasants were carried out --- the best part of 6,000,000 kulaks were arrested, deported or shot. If not "socialism," then at least the word "communism" has become identified with tyranny & the suppression of freedom. And the "dictatorship of one party" only succeeded in replacing one kind of capitalism with another.

Anarchists believe that perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from the Russian Revolution --- certainly the one which is most consistently ignored --- is that a free society can never be imposed upon people by a minority group, be they ever so radical. And any minority which seizes power, no matter how well-intentioned their policies, must end up diametrically opposed to the local & spontaneous aspirations of the people over whom they rule.

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"There is no intellect that can devise a social organization capable of satisfying each & all... The State is government from above downwards of an immense number of men, very different from the point of view of the interests & the aspirations directing them. --- The State is government of all these by some or other minority, & it is impossible that this minority could know & foresee the needs, or satisfy with an even justice the most legitimate & pressing interests in the world. There will always be discontented people because there will always be some who are sacrificed."

(MICHAEL BAKUNIN).

THE FAILURE OF THE RUSSIAN
REVOLUTION.

by Emma Goldman.

This month the rulers of Russia are putting on one of the country's greatest celebrations in its history. Ostensibly, this celebration will be to commemorate the victory of the 1917 Revolution: but in actual fact it celebrates the defeat of the Revolution and the successful seizure of State power achieved by the Bolsheviks. In order to present a more realistic evaluation than that which we anticipate will be offered by mass media, we are reprinting part of one of the chapters of Emma Goldman's book, "My Further Disillusionment with Russia."

Thus the social revolution took place in Russia in spite of the industrial backwardness of the country. But to make the Revolution was not enough. It was necessary for it to advance & broaden, to develop into economic & social reconstruction. That phase of the Revolution necessitated fullest play of personal initiative & collective effort. The development & success of the Revolution depended on the broadest exercise of the creative genius of the people, on the cooperation of the intellectual & manual proletariat. Common interest is the leit motif of all revolutionary endeavour, especially on its constructive side. This spirit of mutual purpose and solidarity swept Russia with a mighty wave in the first days of the October-November Revolution. Inherent in that enthusiasm were forces that could have moved mountains if intelligently guided by exclusive consideration for the well-being of the whole people. The medium for such effective guidance

was on hand: the labour organizations and the cooperatives with which Russia was covered as with a network of bridges, combining the city with the country; the Soviets which sprang into being responsive to the needs of the Russian people; & finally, the intelligentsia whose traditions for a century expressed heroic devotion to the cause of Russia's emancipation.

But such a development was by no means within the programme of the Bolsheviks. For several months following October they suffered the popular forces to manifest themselves, the people carrying the Revolution into ever-widening channels. But as soon as the Communist Party felt itself sufficiently strong in the government saddle, it began to limit the scope of popular activity. All the succeeding acts of the Bolsheviks, all their following policies, changes of policies, their compromises and retreats, their methods of suppression and persecution, their terrorism and extermination of all other political views--all were but the means to an end: the retaining of the State power in the hands of the Communist Party. Indeed, the Bolsheviks themselves (in Russia) made no secret of it. The Communist Party, they contended, is the advance guard of the proletariat, & the dictatorship must rest in its hands. Alas, the Bolsheviks reckoned without their host--without the peasantry, whom neither the razvyortska, the Tcheka, nor the wholesale shooting could persuade to support the Bolshevik regime. The peasantry became the rock upon which the best-laid plans & schemes of Lenin were wrecked. But Lenin, a nimble acrobat was skilled in performing within the narrowest margin. The new economic policy (NEP) was introduced just in time to ward off the disaster which was slowly but surely overtaking the whole Communist edifice.

The NEP came as a surprise & a shock to most Communists. They saw in it a reversal of everything that their party had been proclaiming--a reversal of Communism itself. In protest some of the oldest members of the Party, men who had faced danger & persecution under the old regime while Lenin & Trotsky lived abroad in safety, left the Communist Party embittered & disappointed. The leaders then declared a lockout. They ordered the clearing of the Party ranks of all "doubtful" elements. Everybody suspected of an independent attitude & those who did not accept the NEP as the last word in revolutionary wisdom were expelled. Among them were Communists who for years had rendered most devoted service. Some of them, hurt to the quick by the unjust & brutal procedure, & shaken to their depths by the collapse of what they held most high, even resorted to suicide. But the smooth sailing of Lenin's new gospel had to be assured, the gospel of the sanctity of private property & the freedom of cut-throat competition erected upon the ruins of four years of revolution.

However, Communist indignation over the NEP merely indicated the confusion of mind on the part of Lenin's opponents. What else but mental confusion could approve of the numerous acrobatic political stunts of Lenin & yet grow indignant at the final somersault, its logical culmination? The trouble with the devout Communists was that they clung to the Immaculate Conception of the Communists State which by the aid of Revolution was to redeem the world. But most of the leading Communists never entertained such a delusion. Least of all Lenin.

During my first interview I received the impression that he was a shrewd politician who knew exactly

what he was about & that he would stop at nothing to achieve his ends. After hearing him speak on several occasions & reading his works I became convinced that Lenin had very little concern in the Revolution & that Communism to him was a very remote thing. The centralized political State was Lenin's deity, to which everything else was to be sacrificed. Someone said that Lenin would sacrifice the Revolution to save Russia. Lenin's policies, however, have proved that he was willing to sacrifice both the Revolution & the country; or at least part of the latter in order to realize his political schemes with what was left of Russia.

Lenin was the most pliable politician in history. He could be an ultra-revolutionary, a compromiser & conservative at the same time. When like a mighty wave the cry swept over Russia, "All power to the Soviets!" Lenin swam with the tide. When the peasants took possession of the land & the workers of the factories, Lenin not only approved of those direct methods but went further. He issued the famous motto, "Rob the robbers," a slogan which served to confuse the minds of the people & caused untold injury to revolutionary idealism. Never before did any revolutionary interpret social expropriation as the transfer of wealth from one set of individuals to another. Yet that was exactly what Lenin's slogan meant. The indiscriminate & irresponsible raids, the accumulation of the wealth of the former bourgeoisie by the new Soviet bureaucracy, the chicanery practised towards those whose only crime was their former status, were all the results of Lenin's "Rob the robbers" policy. The whole subsequent history of the Revolution is a kaleidoscope of Lenin's compromises & betrayal of his own slogans.

Bolshevik acts & methods since the Oct. days may seem to contradict the NEP. But in reality they are links in the chain which was to forge the all-powerful, centralized Govt. with State Capitalism as its economic expression. Lenin possessed clarity of vision & an iron will. He knew how to make his comrades in Russia & outside of it believe that his scheme was true Socialism & his methods the Revolution. No wonder that Lenin felt such contempt for his flock which he never hesitated to fling into their faces. "Only fools can believe that Communism is possible in Russia now," was Lenin's reply to the opponent of the NEP.

As a matter of fact Lenin was right. True Communism was never attempted in Russia unless one considers 33 categories of pay, different food rations, privileges to some & indifference to the great mass as Communism.

In the early period of the Revolution it was comparatively easy for the CP to possess itself of power. All the revolutionary elements, carried away by the ultra-revolutionary promises of the Bolsheviks, helped the latter to power. Once in possession of the State the Communists began their process of elimination. All the political parties which refused to submit to the new dictatorship had to go. First the Anarchists & Left Social Revolutionaries, then the Mensheviks & other opponents from the Right, & finally everybody who dared aspire to an opinion of his own. Similar was the fate of all independent organizations. They were either

subordinated to the needs of the new State or destroyed altogether as were the Soviets, the trade unions & the cooperatives -- 3 great factors for the realization of the hopes of the Revolution.

The Soviets first manifested themselves in the revolution of 1905. They played an important part during that brief but significant period. Though the revolution was crushed, the Soviet idea remained rooted in the minds & hearts of the Russian masses. At the first dawn which illuminated Russia in Feb. 1917, the Soviets revived again & came into bloom in a very short time. To the people the Soviets by no means represented a curtailment of the spirit of the Revolution. On the contrary, the Revolution was to find its highest, freest, practical expression through the Soviets. That was why the Soviets so spontaneously & rapidly spread throughout Russia. The Bolsheviks realized the significance of the popular trend & joined in the cry. But once in control of the Government the Communists saw that the Soviets threatened the supremacy of the State. At the same time, they could not destroy them arbitrarily without undermining their own prestige at home & abroad as the sponsors of the Soviet system. They began to shear them gradually of their powers & finally to subordinate them to their own needs.

The Russian trade unions were much more amenable to emasculation. Numerically & in point of revolutionary fibre they were still in their childhood. By declaring adherence to the trade unions obligatory the Russian labour organizations gained in physical stature, but mentally

they remained in the infant stage. The Communist State became the wet nurse of the trade unions. In return, the organizations served as the flunkies of the State. "A school for Communism," said Lenin in the famous controversy on the functions of the trade unions. Quite right. But an antiquated school where the spirit of the child is fettered & crushed. Nowhere in the world are labour organizations as subservient to the will & dictates of the State as they are in Bolsheviki Russia.

The fate of the cooperatives is too well known to require elucidation. The cooperatives were the most essential link between the city & the country. Their value to the Revolution as a popular & successful medium of exchange & distribution & to the reconstruction of Russia was incalculable. The Bolsheviki transformed them into cogs of the Government machine & thereby destroyed their usefulness & efficiency.

It is now clear why the Russian Revolution was a failure. The political power of the Party, organized & centralized in the State, sought to maintain itself by all means at hand. The central authorities attempted to force the activities of the people into forms corresponding with the purposes of the Party. The sole aim of the latter was to strengthen the State & monopolize all economical, political & social activities - even all cultural manifestations. The Revolution had an entirely different object & in its very character was the negation of authority & centralization. It strove to open ever-larger fields for proletarian expression & to multiply the

phases of individual & collective effort. The aims & tendencies of the Revolution were diametrically opposed to those of the ruling political party.

Just as diametrically opposed were the methods of the Revolution & the State. Those of the former were inspired by the spirit of the Revolution itself: i.e. by emancipation from all oppressive & limiting forces; in short, by libertarian principles. The methods of the State, on the contrary - of the Bolsheviki State as of every government - were based on coercion, which in the course of things necessarily developed into systematic violence, oppression & terrorism. Thus 2 opposing tendencies struggled for supremacy: the Bolsheviki State against the Revolution. That struggle was a life-&-death struggle. The 2 tendencies contradictory in aims & methods, could not work harmoniously: the triumph of the State meant the defeat of the Revolution.

It would be an error to assume that the failure of the Revolution was due entirely to the character of the Bolsheviki. Fundamentally, it was the result of the principles & methods of Bolshevism. It was the authoritarian spirit & principles of the State which stifled libertarian & liberating aspirations. Were any other political party in control of the government in Russia the result would have been essentially the same. It is not so much the Bolsheviki who killed the Russian Revolution as the Bolsheviki idea. It was Marxism, however modified; in short, fanatical governmentalism. Only this understanding of the underlying forces that crushed the Revolution can present the true lesson of that world-stirring event, for it was a libertarian

step defeated by the Bolsheviki State, by the temporary victory of the reactionary, the governmental idea.

The libertarian principle was strong in the initial days of the Revolution, the need for free expression all-absorbing. There was only a comparative handful in the great vastness of Russia to keep those fires lit - the Anarchists, whose number was small & whose efforts, absolutely suppressed under the Tsar, had had no time to bear fruit. The Russian people, to some extent instinctive Anarchists, were yet too unfamiliar with the true libertarian principles & methods to apply them effectively to life. Most of the Russian Anarchists themselves were unfortunately still in the meshes of limited group activities & of individualistic endeavour as against the more important social & collective efforts. The Anarchists, the future unbiased historian will admit, have played a very important role in the Russian Revolution, a role far more fruitful than their comparatively small number would have led one to expect, yet their work would have been of infinitely greater practical value had they been better organized & equipped to guide the released energies of the people toward the reorganization of life on a libertarian foundation.

It remains true, as it has through all progress, that only the libertarian spirit & method can bring man a step further in his eternal striving for the better, finer & freer life. Applied to the great social upheavals known as revolutions, this tendency is as potent as

in the ordinary evolutionary process. The authoritarian method has been a failure all through history & now it has again failed in the Russian Revolution. So far human ingenuity has discovered no other principle except the libertarian, for man had indeed uttered the highest wisdom when he said that liberty is the mother of order not its daughter. All political tenets & parties notwithstanding, no revolution can be truly & permanently successful unless it puts its emphatic veto upon all tyranny & centralization, & determinedly strives to make the revolution a real revaluation of all economic, social & cultural values. Not mere substitution of one political party for another in the control of the Government, not the masking of autocracy by proletarian slogans, not the dictatorship of a new class over an old one, not political scene shifting of any kind, but the complete reversal of all these authoritarian principles will alone serve the revolution.

In the economic field this transformation must be in the hands of the industrial masses: the latter have a choice between an industrial State & anarcho-syndicalism. In the case of the former the menace to the constructive development of the new social structure would be as great as from the political State. It would become a dead weight upon the growth of new forms of life. For that reason syndicalism alone is not sufficient unto itself. It is only when the libertarian spirit permeates the economic organizations of the workers that the manifold creative energies of the people can manifest themselves, & the revolution be safeguarded & defended. Only free initiative & popular participation in the

affairs of the revolution can prevent the terrible blunders committed in Russia. E.g., with fuel only 100 versts (about 60 miles) from Petrograd there would have been no necessity for that city to suffer from cold had the workers' economic organizations of Petrograd been free to exercise their initiative for the common good. The peasants of the Ukraine would not have been hampered in the cultivation of their land had they had access to the farm implements stacked up in the warehouses of Kharkov & other industrial centres awaiting orders from Moscow for their distribution. These are characteristic examples of Bolshevik governmentalism & centralization which should serve as a warning to the workers of Europe & USA of the destructive effects of Statism.

The industrial power of the masses, expressed through their libertarian association, anarcho-syndicalism, is alone able to organize successfully economic life & carry on production. On the other hand, the cooperatives working in harmony with the industrial bodies, serve as the distributing & exchange media between city & country, & at the same time link in fraternal bond the industrial & agrarian masses. A common tie of mutual service & aid is created which is the strongest bulwark of the revolution, far more effective than compulsory labour, the Red Army or terrorism. In that way alone can revolution act as a leaven to quicken the development of new social forms & inspire the masses to greater achievement.

But libertarian industrial organizations & cooperatives are not the only media in the interplay of the complex phases of social life. There are cultural forces which, though closely related to the economic activities, have yet their own functions to perform. In Russia the State became the sole arbiter of all the needs of the social body. The result was complete cultural stagnation & the paralysis of all creative endeavour. If such a debacle is to be avoided in the future the cultural forces, while remaining rooted in the economic soil, must yet retain independent scope & freedom of expression. Not adherence to the dominant political party but devotion to the revolution, knowledge & ability, & above all, the creative impulse should be the criterion of fitness for cultural work. In Russia this was made impossible almost from the beginning of the Oct. Revolution by the violent separation of the intelligentsia & the masses. It is true that the original offender in this case was the intelligentsia, especially the technical intelligentsia, which in Russia tenaciously clung, as it does in other countries, to the coat tails of the bourgeoisie. This element, unable to comprehend the significance of revolutionary events, strove to stem the tide by wholesale sabotage. But in Russia there was also another kind of intelligentsia, one with a glorious revolutionary past of 100 years. That part of the intelligentsia kept faith with the people, though it could not unreservedly accept the new dictatorship. The fatal error of the Bolsheviks was that they made no distinction between the two elements. They met sabotage with wholesale terror

against the intelligentsia as a class, & inaugurated a campaign of hatred more intensive than the persecution of the bourgeoisie itself - a method which created an abyss between the intelligentsia & the proletariat & reared a barrier against constructive work.

Lenin was the first to realize the criminal blunder. He pointed out that it was a grave error to lead the workers to believe that they could build up industries & engage in cultural work without the aid & cooperation of the intelligentsia. The proletariat had neither the knowledge nor the training for the task, & the intelligentsia had to be restored in the direction of the industrial life. But the recognition of one error never safeguarded Lenin & his Party from committing another. The technical intelligentsia was called back on terms which added disintegration to the antagonism against the regime.

While the workers continued to starve, engineers, industrial experts & technicians received high salaries, special privileges & the best rations. They became the pampered employees of the State & the new slave drivers of the masses. The latter, fed for years on the fallacious teaching that muscle alone is necessary for a successful revolution & that only physical labour is productive, & incited by the campaign of hatred which stamped every intellectual a counter-revolutionary & speculator, could not make peace with those they had been taught to scorn & distrust.

It is true that most intellectuals consider themselves a class apart from & superior to the workers, but social conditions everywhere are fast demolishing the high pedestal of the intelligentsia. They are made to see that they, too, are proletarians, even more dependent upon the economic master than the manual worker. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to bring home to the workers the rapid proletarianization of the intellectuals & the common tie thus created between them. If the western world is to profit by the lessons of Russia, the demagogic flattery of the masses & blind antagonism toward the intelligentsia must cease. That does not mean however that the toilers should depend entirely on the intellectual element. On the contrary, the masses must begin right now to prepare & equip themselves for the great task the revolution will put on them. They should acquire the knowledge & technical skill necessary for managing & directing the intricate mechanism of the industrial & social structure of their respective countries. But even at best the workers will need the cooperation of the professional & cultural elements. Similarly the latter must realize that their true interests are identical with those of the masses. Once the two social forces learn to blend into one harmonious whole, the tragic effects of the Russian Revolution would to a great extent be eliminated. Not hatred, but unity; not antagonism, but fellowship; not shooting, but sympathy - that is the lesson of the great Russian debacle for the intelligentsia as well as the workers. All must learn the value of mutual aid & libertarian cooperation. Yet each must be able to remain independent

in his own sphere & in harmony with the best he can yield to society. Only in that way will productive labour & educational & cultural endeavour express themselves in ever newer & richer forms. That is to me the all-embracing & vital moral taught by the Russian Revolution.

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I have tried to point out why Bolshevik principles, methods & tactics failed, & that similar principles & methods applied in any other country, even of the highest industrial development, must also fail. I have further shown that it is not only Bolshevism that failed, but Marxism itself. That is to say, the STATE IDEA, the authoritarian principle, has been proven bankrupt by the experience of the Russian Revolution. If I were to sum up my whole argument in one sentence I should say: The inherent tendency of the State is to concentrate, to narrow & monopolize all social activities; the nature of revolution is, on the contrary, to grow, to broaden, & disseminate itself in ever-wider circles. In other words, the State is institutional & static; revolution is fluent, dynamic. These two tendencies are incompatible & mutually destructive. The State idea killed the Russian Revolution & it must have the same result in all other revolutions, unless the libertarian idea prevail.

Yet I go much further. It is not only Bolshevism, Marxism & Governmentalism which are fatal to revolution as well as to all vital human progress. The main cause of the defeat of the

Russian Revolution lies much deeper. It is to be found in the whole Socialist conception of revolution itself.

The dominant, almost general idea of revolution, particularly the Socialist idea, is that revolution is a violent change of social conditions through which one class, the working class, becomes dominant over another class, the capitalist class. It is the conception of a purely physical change, & as such involves only political scene shifting & institutional rearrangements. Bourgeois dictatorship is replaced by the "dictatorship of the proletariat," or by that of its "advance guard," the Communist Party; Lenin takes the place of the Romanovs; the Imperial Cabinet is rechristened Soviet of People's Commissars; Trotsky is appointed Minister of War, & a labourer becomes the Military Governor General of Moscow. That is, in essence, the Bolshevik conception of revolution as translated into actual practice. And with a few minor alterations it is also the idea of revolution held by all other Socialist parties.

This conception is inherently & fatally false. Revolution is, indeed, a violent process. But if it is to result only in a change of dictatorship, in a shifting of names & political personalities, then it is hardly worth while. It is surely not worth all the struggle & sacrifice, the stupendous loss in human life & cultural values that result from every revolution. If such a revolution were even to bring greater social well-being, which has not been the case in Russia, then it would also not be worth the terrific price paid: mere improvement can be brought about without bloody revolution.

In my opinion, a thousand fold strengthened by the Russian experience, the great mission of revolution, of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION, is a fundamental transvaluation of values, not only of social, but also of human values. The latter are even preeminent, for they are the basis of all social values. Our institutions & conditions rest upon deep-seated ideas. To change those conditions & at the same time leave the underlying ideas & values intact means only a superficial transformation, one that cannot be permanent or bring real betterment. It is a change of form only, not of substance, as so tragically proven by Russia.

It is at once the great failure & the great tragedy of the Russian Revolution that it attempted (in the leadership of the ruling political party) to change only institutions & conditions while ignoring entirely the human & social values involved in the Revolution. Worse yet, in its mad passion for power the Communist State even sought to strengthen & deepen the very ideas & conceptions which the Revolution had come to destroy. It supported & encouraged all the worst antisocial qualities & systematically destroyed the already awakened conceptions of the new revolutionary values. The sense of justice & equality, the love of liberty & human brotherhood, these fundamentals of the real regeneration of society, the Communist State suppressed to the point of extermination. Man's instinctive sense of equity was branded as weak sentimentality; human dignity & liberty became a

bourgeois superstition; the sanctity of life, which is the very essence of social reconstruction, was condemned as unrevolutionary, almost counterrevolutionary. This fearful perversion of fundamental values bore within itself the seeds of destruction. With the conception that the Revolution was only a means of securing political power, it was inevitable that all revolutionary values should be subordinated to the needs of the Socialist State; indeed, exploited to further the security of the newly acquired governmental power. "Reasons of State," masked as the "interests of the Revolution & of the people," became the sole criterion of action, even of feeling. Violence, the tragic inevitability of revolutionary upheavals, became an established custom, a habit, & was presently enthroned as the most powerful & "ideal" institution. Did not Zinoviev himself canonize Dzerzhinsky, the head of the bloody Tcheka, as the "saint of the Revolution?" were not the greatest public honours paid by the State to Uritsky, the founder & sadistic chief of the Petrograd Tcheka?

This perversion of ethical values soon crystallized into the all-dominating slogan of the CP: THE END JUSTIFIES ALL MEANS. Similarly in the past the Inquisition & the Jesuits adopted this motto & subordinated to it all morality. It avenged itself upon the Jesuits as it did on the Russian Revolution. In the wake of this slogan followed lying, deceit, hypocrisy & treachery, murder, open & secret. It should be of utmost interest to students of social psychology that two movements as widely separated in time & ideas as Jesuitism & Bolshevism

reached exactly similar results in the evolution of the principle that the end justifies all means. The historic parallel, almost entirely ignored so far, contains a most important lesson for all coming revolutions & for the whole future of mankind.

The ultimate end of all revolutionary social change is to establish the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to liberty & well-being. Unless this be the essential aim of revolution, violent social changes would have no justification. For external social alterations can be & have been accomplished by normal processes of evolution. Revolution, on the contrary, signifies not mere external change, but internal, basic, fundamental change. That internal change of concepts & ideas permeating ever-larger social strata, finally culminates in the violent upheaval known as revolution. Shall that climax reverse the process of transvaluation, turn against it, betray it? That is what happened in Russia. No! The revolution itself must quicken & further the process of which it is the cumulative expression; its main mission is to inspire it, to carry it to greater heights, give it fullest scope for expression. Only thus is revolution true to itself.

Today is the parent of tomorrow. The present casts its shadow far into the future. That is the law of life, individual & social. Revolution that divests itself of ethical values, thereby lays the foundation

of injustice, deceit & oppression for the future society. The means used to prepare the future become its cornerstone. Witness the tragic condition of Russia. The methods of State centralization have paralysed individual initiative & effort; the tyranny of the dictatorship has cowed the people into slavish submission & all but extinguished the fires of liberty; organized terrorism has depraved & brutalized the masses & stifled every idealistic aspiration; institutionalized murder has cheapened human life, & all sense of the dignity of man & the value of life has been eliminated; coercion at every step has made effort bitter, labour a punishment & has turned the whole of existence into a scheme of mutual deceit, while reviving the lowest & most brutal instincts of man. A sorry heritage to begin a new life of freedom & brotherhood.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that revolution is in vain unless inspired by its ultimate ideal. Revolutionary methods must be in tune with revolutionary aims. The means used to further the revolution must harmonize with its purposes. In short, the ethical values which the revolution is to establish in the new society must be initiated with the revolutionary activities of the so-called transitional period. The latter can serve as a real & dependable bridge to the better life only if built of the same material as the life to be achieved. REVOLUTION IS THE MIRROR OF THE COMING DAY; IT IS THE CHILD THAT IS TO BE THE MAN OF TOMORROW.

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M A K H N O

On July 25th 1935, Nestor Makhno, hero of the peasant insurrection in the Ukraine, died of TB in a Paris hospital. He was only 45 years old having been born at Gultai Poyle on October 27th. 1889. Makhno was the son of a poor peasant and began work when he was 8 years old. At 16 he joined the revolutionary movement and at 18 he was arrested as the chief of a conspiracy against the State and condemned to death. On account of his youth the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment & in prison he studied & acquired some education. There also he met several comrades & prepared himself for future struggles.

Liberated by the revolution of 1917, he returned in February to his native village & immediately set himself to work. The fact that he was himself a peasant, together with his heroic past & his tremendous energy & activity, made him in a few months the soul of the Ukrainian peasants' struggle for emancipation.

"He organized," said Alexander Berkman in his book 'The Bolshevik Myth,' "a workers' commune and the first soviet in the district, and systematically encouraged the peasants to resist the big landowners. When the German & Austrian troops invaded the Ukraine, & Herman Skoropadsky with their help started the repression of the growing agrarian rebellion, Makhno was one of the first to organize the defence of the revolution. The movement spread rapidly over the whole of the region, the audacity & guerilla tactics of the peasant fighters spreading panic amongst the enemy, while the population regarded them as their friends & defenders. Makhno's fame covered the whole province & he appeared as the saviour of the oppressed who regarded him as the great liberator."

The small forces which followed Makhno soon increased into an army fully provided with arms, provisions, machine-guns & artillery. ("His army at times contained as many as 50,000 men, but it never ceased to be swift in its operations; even the infantry never marched but rode in light peasant carts, and it was Makhno's extraordinary mobility which brought him most of his victories & preserved him so long from annihilation..." Woodcock, 'Anarchism.')

The majority of these troops were peasants who used to return to their usual occupations as soon as they had chased the enemy out of their district, but they took up arms again as soon as Makhno, whom they affectionately called 'Batko' (Father) asked them to do so. The Makhnovist movement spread throughout the whole of the South Ukraine. Although guerilla bands were fighting the invaders in other parts of Ukraine, they had no social consciousness and were fighting purely for patriotic reasons. "Makhno, on the contrary," said Berkman, "had unfurled the black flag of the Russian anarchists with a well-defined programme: autonomous communes of free peasants; negation of any kind of government, & complete autonomy based on the principle of equally shared work. Free soviets of peasants and workers independent of the Bolshevik soviets were to have an informative & executive role, rather than one of coercion & authority." (1)

The Communists recognized that Makhno was an outstanding military genius, but they also saw that the diffusion of his anarchist ideas endangered the dictatorship of their own party. While they endeavoured to use Makhno in their own interests, they attempted to destroy the fundamental character of the movement. Makhno's victories over the invading armies & the counter-revolutionary generals induced the Bolsheviks to ask him to join forces with the Red Army, while preserving for his bands a certain autonomy.

Makhno accepted & his troops became the Third Brigade of the Red Army. But the Bolshevik hopes of absorbing the rebel peasants into their army went up in smoke. In Makhnovist territory, the influence of the Communists was nil, and they were not even able to maintain their organizations. Finally, under various pretexts, they banned him in the hope of alienating him from the sympathies of the peasants.

Every conceivable slander was used against Makhno by the Bolsheviks who even went to the extent of putting a price on his head, but when Wrangel from the South, with arms & equipment provided by the allies, occupies Russian territory as far as Moscow, & Makhno fought side by side with the Bolsheviks against him, they were full of praise for the heroism & courage of their valuable ally. As soon as Wrangel's defeat had been achieved, Trotsky ordered the Makhnovist troops to be dissolved. They refused & scornfully fought against the intolerable impositions of the dictator.

When the attacks of the counter-revolutionaries had been crushed, the Bolsheviks were able to concentrate their entire strength against the Ukrainian revolution, & succeeded in crushing their independence. On November 26th, 1920, in a concerted series of moves, the Tcheka arrested all the known anarchists in the areas of the Ukraine under their control, invited the Makhnovist commanders in the Crimea to a conference at which they were seized & immediately shot, & disarmed all their men except for a single cavalry unit, which ~~was shot~~, fought its way out and set off for Gulyai Polye. Makhno eventually found refuge in Poland, where he was imprisoned and threatened with being handed over to the Russian government. Finally he was liberated & was able to cross over to Germany & reach Paris. There, during the ten years of his exile until his death in 1935, he still had to face the persecutions of the Comintern.

Note.

(1) "In every one of these communes there were a few anarchist peasants, but the majority of their members were not anarchist. Nevertheless, in their communal life they behaved with that anarchist solidarity of which, in ordinary life, only toilers are capable whose natural simplicity has not yet been affected by the political poison of the cities. For the cities always give out a smell of lying & betrayal from which many, even among the comrades who call themselves anarchists, are not exempt.

Every commune comprised 10 families of peasants & workers, i.e. a total of 100, 200 or even 300 members. By decision of the regional congress of agrarian communes, every commune received a normal amount of land, i.e. as much as its members could cultivate, situated in the immediate vicinity of the commune & composed of land formerly belonging to the pomeschiki. They also received cattle & farm equipment from these former estates.

The absolute majority of labourers saw in the agrarian communes the happy germ of a new social life, which would continue as the revolution approached the climax of its triumphal & creative march, to develop & grow, & to stimulate the organization of an analogous society in the country as a whole, or at least in the villages and hamlets of our region." (Extract from 'La Revolution Russe en Ukraine,' Paris, 1927).

(The above article first appeared in 'War Commentary,' Oct. 1941, & has been slightly amended for reproduction here... Ed.)
