



THE CIENFUEGOS PRESS ANARCHIST REVIEW

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Cienfuegos Press, Over the Water, Sanday, Orkney, KW17 2BL, U.K.

ANARCHY

J R White



With Introduction

"From Loyalism to Anarchism"
by Albert Meltzer

The Meaning of Anarchism

J R White

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Published by Cienfuegos Press, Over the Water, Sanday,
Orkney, KW17 2BL UK

Originally issued under the auspices of the London Freedom
Group, 2 Malden Crescent, London NW3.

ISBN No. 0 904564 42 8

From loyalism to anarchism

1. White, J R

2. Anarchism and anarchists - Great Britain -
Biography

1. White, J R

II. Meltzer, Albert

335'.83'0924 HX885

ISBN 0-904564-42-8

Designed by C. Badminton

Typeset by SALSEDO

Printed by Belfast Anarchist Collective (BAC)

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British soldiers in Dublin, 1920.

From Loyalism to Anarchism

**An Introduction by
Albert Meltzer**



J.R.WHITE

J R WHITE: From Loyalism to Anarchism

Field Marshal Sir George White VC held almost every honour the British Army could bestow, especially after his defence of Ladysmith (which was a traumatic battle for the British Government since the public was shaken by the fact that the Boers were defeating the 'invincible' British Army, and needed a successful seige or two, at least, to restore confidence).

He belonged to the Anglo-Irish landowning class, the equivalent of Germany's "Junkers", who one as the other supplied the most militaristic of officers born as they were with a garrison mentality, surrounded in their infancy by an alien peasantry of an alien faith.

Sir George's son, born in Co. Antrim, James Robert (always known as Jack) White, naturally went into the Army, first saw action in Magersfontein (South Africa) crushing a Boer rebellion. It was a strange beginning for his subsequent political career; but he learned to hate militarism even though accepting the fact of war. At Doorknop he was one of the first to go over the top to find one terrified boy of 17 left in the redoubt. As the rest came over the ridge one officer cried, "Shoot him" and White is said to have replied, "Do so, and I'll shoot you." Hardly the stuff of which lifelong militarists are made.

White got the DSO (but that may have been a tribute to his father the General); later he went as aide de camp to his father as Governor of Gibraltar — when he learned rudimentary Spanish that later served him in good stead.

Soon after he dropped out of the Army and bummed around Europe, teaching in Bohemia (which had in those days a strong attraction for liberal minded people, standing in relation to Austria as Ireland to England), working as a ranch hand in Canada and finishing back in Ireland. It was the pinnacle of Carsonism. Sir Edward Carson was organising the Protestants into a bigoted Toryism, preparing to use

if necessary armed insurrection against the Liberal Government if it went ahead with Home Rule. J R. White organised one of the first Protestant meetings, at Ballymoney, to rally Protestant opinion against the Unionist Party with its "bigotry and stagnation" that associated the ethnic identity of Northern Irish Protestants with conservatism. Another Protestant, Sir Roger Casement, coming from the titled establishment, also spoke.

Protestants had in fact for years been in the forefront of fighting for Irish independence. It was natural that the industrialised part of the country, the North, which happened to be where the Protestant workers were, and where the Anglo-Irish gentry had as great a dominance as elsewhere on the island, should be in the forefront of struggle. It was only when the working class of the north began to fear wage under-cutting from the Irish Catholics in the south that tensions began; these were skilfully fanned by the "gentry" and in particular Carson (coming from a successful career as an English lawyer and making a Tory come-back against the Liberal Party victories in England) provoked the tensions that have never since subsided. It never occurred to Protestants like White, any more than it had done to Wolfe Tone, that there was any conflict in independence for Ireland and belonging to a ethnic minority over the country. The Northern Protestants were far less anti-Catholic than many Republicans, coming from a Catholic background, were anti-clerical. The R.C. Church was then the enemy of republicanism and excommunicated those who resisted. The hierarchy, cast into a Statist mould ever since the settlement of Maynooth whereby the (anti-Catholic) English Tories endowed a seminary for Irish (RC) priests thus introducing the only priests regarded favourably by the English upper class, the French refugee priests (bitterly anti-revolutionary and hating anything that savoured of disloyalty to the State) who influenced generation after generation with the doctrine of non-resistance. It was this principle of non-resistance that led inevitably to violence later. It meant that the police repression also conducted by the military

could ride over the people unmolested; until the point came where resistant violence erupted.

White in the Labour Movement

As a result of Ballymoney, J R White was invited to Dublin. There he met James Connolly and there he was converted to socialism (though he told me once he had originally accepted the principle of libertarian socialism in Bohemia but had been 're-introduced' to socialism, as syndicalism and as Marxism, in Dublin). He was always more of a syndicalist than a marxian socialist (he described himself at the time as a guild socialist).

It was Connolly's syndicalism (the SLP-brand) that impressed him at the time. He offered his services to the strike committee in Liberty Hall (centre of the Irish Labour movement in Dublin) speaking on platforms alongside Bill Haywood (of the Chicago-based IWW) and Connolly, as well as well-known figures who supported the strike (such as Sheehy Skeffington). A Peace Committee was formed with a view to conciliation in the great Dublin lock-out; under White's chairmanship it became the Civic Committee, and his proposal to form a Citizens' Army, the strikers being drilled by him, was enthusiastically accepted. From being a figure popular in the Irish socialist movement as coming from the Anglo-Irish Protestant ascendancy and lending it respectability, he had become a major figure in the working class movement.

At a mass meeting of strikers James Larkin and J R White called for volunteers for military training, as a defence force. Some ten thousand were there, and almost all volunteered. They were directed to the Transport Union hall — only forty came, but it was a beginning, and it grew to 250. The strike never came to a confrontation, however. It had almost petered out when, at Butt Bridge, police charged an unemployed procession which White and four other Citizens Army men led. They fought desperately all the way to the police station.

This battle shocked Irish opinion — which was much more conservative and restrained than subsequent nationalist agitation and the current labour struggles would suggest. A more respectable organisation, the Irish Volunteers, was organised by the John Redmond wing of the Irish parliamentary party. Then came the bombshell, the Curragh Mutiny. British Army officers, organised by Carson, declared they would not obey orders to march against the Ulster Volunteers, the Protestant force that had been set up in Belfast with strong Establishment support. It opposed the British Liberal Government's policy of evolution, and threatened armed rebellion if it went forward with its plans.

The Irish Volunteers declared that what was presumed legal in the case of the Ulster Volunteers must surely be legal for them; and the Citizen Army declared that Irish workers too had the right to bear arms. White offered the fully-equipped and drilled Citizens Army at the disposal of the Irish Volunteers to receive the extraordinary reply that it could not possibly enter into relations with a body that had recently been in conflict with the police!

White was determined however to make a stand and offered his personal services to the Irish Volunteers, his place in the Citizens Army being taken by Larkin. He went to Derry, where there was a brigade of Volunteers largely ex-British Army like himself. But he was shaken by the "sectarian" attitudes he found. Coming from Dublin, where these attitudes did not exist, he could not understand the hatred what had grown up between Catholic and Protestant workingmen in the North. When he tried to reason with them, they merely took for granted he was "defending his own". He was asked bluntly whether he would fight against the Loyalists. White replied unequivocally No. "My aim is to unite Irishmen against England, not to divide them among themselves." For that answer he was removed from his command. He had taken another command of Volunteers in Tyrone when World War I broke out.

War & the Republic

It is a mistake to think that Ireland as a whole had taken a firm anti-imperialist stand by 1914, or even by 1916. Redmond offered fullest support for the war. The nationalists were out on a limb. Casement sought the co-operation of Germany on the grounds that England's peril was Ireland's opportunity; Connolly and Larkin not supporting the war, confined themselves to labour struggles at the beginning; Padraig Pearse and those who opposed the war were very much a minority without popular support. White thought (like Redmond), that this was Ireland's opportunity if she co-operated. Many others had the same idea of rewards for co-operation in the wonderful new world that would be created after the war, and some of them got them too — (like the women's suffrage movement, or the Zionists). He thought the Volunteers could be transformed into a defence force within Ireland, and so relieve the Army. This was regarded with suspicion and rejected by Whitehall, when Captain White joined an Australian ambulance unit, his association with Casement — going back to their joint meeting in Ballymoney — was held against him and he was constantly under suspicion of being a spy.

He became disgusted with the horrors of the war and was leaving his unit when he heard of the 1916 rising. The labour movement of Connolly and Larkin had united with the Nationalists to declare a Republic. It was short-lived; receiving little support. Pearse certainly never expected that it would. Public opinion was with the Irish soldiers fighting overseas, and felt that a rising was "stabbing them in the back". But the unexpected brutal repression, in which the British Army did not hesitate to shell Dublin, caused a revulsion that spread through the whole country, and led finally to the establishment of the Free State.

Most of the leaders of the rebellion were sentenced to be shot (with the exception of the American-born De Valera). Connolly, wounded had to be taken on a stretcher to his execution. White took the one step that he felt might save

Connolly — he rushed to South Wales and tried to bring the Welsh miners out on strike. For that he was sentenced to three months imprisonment.

In the Wilderness

He had been, he felt, consistent, but was left in a political wilderness. He was for an independent Ireland in which both communities could, he felt, exist together. It was possible in the South, it was in the North that he ran up against suspicion and bigotry on both sides. From then on he was regarded as a "Shinner" by the Loyalists of the North, one who had opposed the war and supported the Taigs; and as an Orangeman by the republicans, one who had supported the war! He moved towards the Communist Party, which with the opening up of the Russian Revolution, seemed to offer hope for the world. But he never joined it, having reservations about its plans for Ireland. The position of John Maclean in Scotland appealed to him. He approached MacLean with a view of a Socialist Republic movement in Ireland, and worked for a time with Sylvia Pankhurst's anti-parliamentary communist movement.

He wanted to organise a Citizens' Army of strikers once again, this time in England, at the time of the General Strike. The Communist Party had a fit when it was proposed to them. It is an odd commentary on his background that he was immediately approached by the Imperial Fascisti, who were indeed organising a "citizens' army" very much approved of by the authorities, who had heard he wanted to do the same thing and assumed automatically that it must be *against* the strikers! Was he not an Irish Protestant? That attitude made White furious. He was emphatically against the Establishment and an anti-Fascist from the beginning. He was in Italy during the workers' occupation of the factories: once again he wanted to use his British Army training to form a citizens' army. Nobody in the socialist movement wanted to know; the only ones using force against the Fascists were the Anarchists. At that time White retained

the bourgeois prejudice against Anarchist thought and would not contact them.

His private life became an obsession to Jack White. He had always opposed the bigotry which said the Roman Catholic Church was a menace. Now he became to be aware that after all, there was something to be said for that point of view. The intolerant Protestants could not say the R.C. Church was intolerant if it were not the case. Priests began to intervene in his married life. His domestic disagreements led to a series of kidnappings of the daughter in a tug-of-love case complicated by difference of religion. He was obsessed with this question during the thirties. Politically he took the line of the IRA then in its Stalinist period, the present Officials. But he was increasingly perturbed about the growth of fascist support coming from the Catholic wing. "The green of Ireland is being corrupted by the mustard gas of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia," he said. Though in the main Irish fascism came from those who had fought against the IRA in the civil war, following the formation of the Free State, there were elements in the IRA too, some of which later came to found the Provisionals.

The outbreak of the Spanish civil war brought White's contention to a head. The Irish fascist movement, under General O'Duffy, immediately organised to send a contingent to help General Franco. The IRA organised an Irish column to fight him. It was a natural command for Capt. White.

Incidentally the Irish Republican Brigade was a proof of how "Catholics" and "Orangemen" could work together in a common cause. In the first months of the Spanish war it did sterling work. White was thrilled with the collectivisation in Spain, and also with the volunteer militia. He learned with amazement that this was the work of the Anarchists (from whom he had refrained in Italy). In addition to his work with the Irish brigade at the front, he showed Spanish volunteer militia how to use firearms, and also train women in the villages on the way to Saragossa on the use of small-

arms for defence. What, however, he could not stomach was the fact that the Irish, like the rest of the International Brigade, were being increasingly manipulated by the Communist Party. He had never accepted the CP; he had just not seen an alternative. Now he saw an alternative.

There was a clash between Jack White and Frank Ryan, the CP's top man — who accused White of being a "Trotskyite" and a traitor, in the same way that he had been accused in Derry of being an "Orangeman" and a traitor! It is interesting in regard to record that Frank Ryan, at the close of the Civil War, went from a Spanish prison to work for Hitler only a matter of months after the civil war had ended (to opposition from the CP who thought it should go on and were unaware that Moscow would change the line). White offered his services to the CNT, relinquishing his International Brigade command.

The policy of the CNT, was that they did not want foreign volunteers. They had enough support at the time. What they wanted was arms. They wanted people on the outside desperately. Unlike the CP who wanted to build up artificial support within Spain, they wanted support outside Spain where there was barely none at all. They also wanted the International Brigades dissolved but did not like openly to say so. They knew they were being used to build up CP support but the public as a whole was sold on the idea of support from the outside world with the "inevitable" but mythical eventual Russian intervention. White was asked to do his best to dissolve the Irish Brigade, and to work for the CNT in London. IN the course of a few months in Spain he had become a convinced Anarchist. His pamphlet on Anarchism follows this introduction.

I met White in 1937 when we were organising support to Spain. The "ambassador" for the CNT-FAI in London was Emma Goldman. They spoke at a number of meetings together though there was a clash of opinion between them.

It may seem curious to those who think of Emma Goldman in terms of her pre-WWI campaigns in the USA; but whereas White was in favour of including such matters

as sexual emancipation into propaganda, she vigorously opposed it. "The essential thing now is Spain, Spain, Spain," she insisted.

It was also instructive to listen to the discussions between Matt Kavanagh and Jack White. Kavanagh was a Liverpool-Irish worker; his experiences totally different from White's. For the young Anarchists of the 30s, of whom I was one, and right until the 50s, Matt was our link with the traditional working class Anarchism of the past and our mentor as no other. They worked together on a survey of Irish labour and Irish aspirations, in relation to Anarchism.

With much else, including White's study of the little known Cork "Soviet", unfortunately, this is irretrievable, lost. (White died in Ireland in 1940 and his heirs disposed of his papers). Their study would have been very applicable today, with the situation in the North of Ireland, where the best of both Protestant militants and Catholic militants are moving increasingly to a libertarian position; but not knowing how it can be maintained in the "realities" of the situation.

Albert Meltzer

For the first part of this article I am indebted to an article by Gerard Burns, librarian at the Southern Education and Library Board, Craigavon, Co. Armagh (in the Irish Times Sept 15 1978). Mr Burns terminated his article with White's imprisonment at Pentonville, when Casement was executed the same week. For the second part I am relying on many meetings with Jack White and Matt Kavanagh in the thirties.



Citizens Army guard outside Irish Republican Headquarters, Liberty Hall, Dublin, 1916.

The Meaning of Anarchism

J R White

PART I

THERE has been bloodshed between Anarchists and Stalinist Communists in Catalonia. Many are asking: (1) Is there so deep-rooted a difference of principle as to provide a philosophical basis for a physical clash? (2) What is the fundamental principle of Anarchism? (3) If the Anarchists have a definite and different philosophy, will it work in this wicked world? I propose to contrast Anarchism with Socialism and Communism, confining my use of the word Socialism to include points where Socialists and Communists agree. The Socialists say:

The State has been formed on a class basis to preserve the domination of one class by the domination of the others. To achieve liberation, therefore, we must get possession of the State. When we become masters by election or by insurrection we will abolish its *raison d'être* which is the division of society into a possessing and an exploited class. Then the State will wither away and will give place to an economic administration of things, which will no longer have to safeguard the privileges of a minority but to minister to the needs of all. But to abolish the State one must first capture it and use it to destroy the cause which has given it birth — the inequality between the majority which produces everything and the minority which consumes a disproportionate amount of the product of the majority's labour. That is why it is all important to secure the election of as many M.P.'s and Municipal Councillors as possible. Their installation will mean so much less to accomplish on the day of the revolution, when we shall have in the persons of our elected representatives guards within the citadel to throw open the gates to us.

To this the Anarchists reply:

The State contains a corrupting influence in itself. The people have always been deceived (when they are not machine-gunned) by the revolutionaries who in their ignorance the people have hoisted to power. Consequently, to destroy the State, one must not begin by *becoming* the State; for in doing so one becomes automatically its preserver. One becomes so by force of circumstance, without conscious dishonesty, inevitably,

because things appear under a different aspect and so many difficulties and duties crop up that no revolutionary turned politician can remain a single-minded revolutionary. The State corrupts the purest and the best. So to keep our revolutionary virtue, we must not expose ourselves to its pernicious infection. It is not from above with the machinery of the oppressive State, that one can abolish class-society. It is from below that we must wage the war against the privileged class and undermine the foundation of their privileges.

"We will expropriate them by law," say the Socialists.

"We can do it without you and your laws," reply the Anarchists. "We know how to strip the bourgeoisie by direct action. Our direct action is a series of attacks incessantly renewed, delivered at one point to-day and another to-morrow; an endless sequence of major and minor crises, schooling the exploited in practical war against the exploiter and preparing them for the final crisis of the general strike. We feel no need of voting to impose masters on ourselves. We are anti-parliamentarians, abstentionists. In one thing we are faithful Marxists: Did not Marx say 'The emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves'? Well, we are workers and we will emancipate ourselves. As for you Socialists who offer to liberate us, if we listened to you we should only prepare one more disillusionment for the proletariat. For once become a Government, you would do to us who are the people just what every Government has always done."

It would seem that the Anarchists have justification for their mistrust, not only in the lessons of history but in the nature of things. Anarcho-syndicalism applies energy at the point of production; its human solidarity is cemented by the association of people in common production undiluted by mere groupings of opinion. Affinity of interests is more stable and more powerful than affinity of opinions. Disunity begins where differences of abstract opinion can no longer be harmonised and resolved in collective work. We cannot surrender the cause of human freedom to any combination of incongruities, to any 'popular front' whose incompatible elements can guarantee nothing but the obligation to compromise. In any popular front, groups and elements are accepted whose economic

interests run counter to those of the proletariat. In the people who compose it there are intellectual and moral affinities, which may disappear under pressure. It is dangerous to place people between the appeal of the conscience and reason and the appeal of these interests. These fragile affinities cannot exist in the groupings of anarcho-syndicalism; stronger than any bond of sentiment or of reason there is a bond of interest which unites them, the only stable and solid bond of unity.

The Socialists reply that Anarcho-Syndicalist propaganda, just because it makes flank attacks and raids on Capitalism, because its primary object is the defense of local and regional interests, is inadequate to make conscious revolutionaries. Anarcho-syndicalism is good for guerilla but unsuited to serious organised warfare. Its efforts must automatically be lacking in concentration. Co-ordination and centralisation of effort can be the work only of a Party whose horizon is not limited to a town or an industry but embraces all the complex factors of a national or international situation. In our common interest of the revolution, Socialist and Anarcho-Syndicalist action must combine.

The Anarchists answer the Socialists: "Where is your logic? You assert that in the society which you intend to build, economic groupings will be the only ones and public authority will be limited to the necessary administration to ensure the production and distribution of objects necessary to people's existence. Why then wait for the revolution to give to economic groupings their vital creative function? Let them take the importance today they will have tomorrow. You admit the State is the effect of class exploitation and its function is to maintain it. We prefer to attack the cause. Leave the workers to fight their own battle on their own ground. Don't ask them to saddle themselves with political masters, who the day after they conquer state power will want, like all conquerors, to remain the masters.

Between employer and worker there is a brutal vis-à-vis.

Against the tremendous power of the State one must stoop to tactics; sometimes one has to combine these tactics with those of other Parties. The proletariat finds it hard to follow these long-range operations, or it gets concerned with their detail, missing their whole scope: thus it risks contradicting a political habit of mind, which slowly atrophies the revolutionary spirit.

The working class, economically organised, is sufficient unto itself, it needs only to be conscious of its power; electoral and parliamentary combinations can only delay the day of self-realisation."

Steklov, in his history of the First International, speaks of the split in it as caused by the past of the international proletariat rising in revolt against its future. He means by this that Bakunin and the Anarchists thought it was possible to jump straight from the decay of feudal aristocracy, which from 1848 began definitely to collapse in favour of bourgeois industrialism, to the proletarian revolution.

"The broad masses of the workers," says Steklov, "for the time led astray by Bakunin, returned to the broad river of International Socialism." Dare we reply that the broad river of revolutionary destiny, for a time mapped correctly by Marx over a stage of its course, shows signs of reverting to a deeper bed charted by the genius of Bakunin.

Marx was, "par excellence", the prophet of the industrial proletariat; any developments depending solely on that proletariat had to await its growth and class-conscious solidarity; and that growth and solidarity had to await in turn the maturity, not to say the over-ripe bursting, of the bourgeois order. This patient dependence on ripening external conditions gives to Marxism an element of fatalism in sharp contrast with the unconditioned spontaneity of Anarchism.

"Anarchism does not wait. It acts in the individual and in small groups to build up social forms, which shall be, as near as possible, embryos of the fully-developed Anarchist society."*

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and any philosophy of action preaching present revolt as the best preparation for future revolution on a wide scale starts with an appeal to the fighter and people of action rather than the theoretician, which is psychologically sound. To the seer the Kingdom of Heaven is always at hand, and its proximity calls for immed-

iate preparation. And though the seers are generally wrong in their time forecast, they are often more right than the scientist about the fundamentals of cataclysmic change.

Bakunin was a seer, Marx was a Scientist. Bakunin was greatly influenced by the just and elemental protests of the peasants ruined by dawning Capitalism, and he believed he could enlist the revolting bourgeois intellectuals in the service of complete social liquidation. He was wrong as to the time. But Marx was wrong in his scientific belief that revolution would spread automatically out of the most highly industrialised countries. The revolt not of Germany or France but of Ireland and Russia during the Great War is one up for Bakunin's *rapproch* with elemental human and one down for Marx's analysis of the scientifically-conditioned mass.

"What!" I hear someone exclaim. "You place the Irish National Rebellion on a par with the Russian proletarian revolution and use both to discredit the accuracy of Marxian analysis! What heresy run to insanity is this?"

Just a minute, friend; I am pleading for two things: spontaneous voluntarism versus scientific social conditioning, and the elemental vitality retained by a peasantry, as indispensable features in revolution. I am suggesting that though the industrial proletariat has the strongest incentive to make the revolution, they are too mechanised and lack the vital force ever to do so unaided, and that therefore a social science based on industrial economics alone as the determining factor is inevitably misleading. Do the facts support me or do they not? Has successful revolution ever been achieved in a highly-industrialised country? It has not. If we analyse the factors in the most recent revolutions we are familiar with, those of Ireland, Russia and Spain, in conjunction with the frustration of revolution in highly-industrialised countries, we may have to conclude it is something deeper than bad tactics and treacherous leadership which has thrown out our calculations. Perhaps the Marxians and even Marx have omitted elemental and human factors, which can express and manifest themselves better through the vehicle of Anarchism. I am not saying Marx was wrong. Obviously he was very largely right. I am suggesting that he did not say the last word about the individual and collective "unconscious" when he interpreted so scientifically the consciousness of the industrial worker.

If we compare the Irish and Russian revolutions, the former has two advantages over the more exclusively proletarian

nature of the latter. It preceded it in time, the Dublin rising of 1916 antedating even the Kerensky Revolution by about a year, and it is surpassed in its voluntarism. It was essentially an insurrection of a conscious and voluntary minority forestalling and creating mass conditions rather than await their ripening. If Nationalism has any function in paving the way for International Revolution, Ireland showed that function at its best. In Ireland, Republican Nationalism combined with Irish International Socialism (Connolly and the Citizen Army) against the common Imperial enemy, and in so doing made the only repudiation of the Great War in Western Europe long before the chaos and social military breakdown caused by the war *compelled* that repudiation, as in Russia, and later to some extent in Germany.

This voluntarism, scorning to calculate consequences and creative of new mass-conditions, is the essence of Anarchism with its distrust of majorities and "l'illusion majoritaire" and its respect of spiritual quality rather than numerical quantity. The Anarchist recognises, implicitly if not explicitly, that there are two reasons, one emotional and creative, arising from inner-spontaneity, the other "rational" and dead because its premises are in the past or present *status quo* and it is therefore reduced to calculate consequences in terms of the past or present *status quo* rather than create new forms.

The State-worship of Communist and Socialism has its source in the failure to lay enough stress on the inner spontaneity of people, and a consequent enslavement to outer externalised forms, such as the State as the source and key to power. The people's only road to real freedom lies in the voluntary co-ordination of their maximum individual spontaneity. All social panaceas that seek to supersede that co-ordinated spontaneity, even as a means to the alleged end of restoring it, must lead not to freedom but to the loss of such freedom as the people have achieved and to increasing depths of tyranny.

PART II

Having brought the Anarchism v. Socialism argument, with which this article opened, to its psychological and philosophical head, let us apply it to recent history in Spain, recent history still pregnant with problems of world-shaking importance.

If people's inner spontaneity is a factor of importance in revolution, increasing in direct ratio with the mechanical perfection and international consolidation of the forces of Fascist repression, are we not apt to overlook the surprises in the unknown destiny of people in our scientific forecasts of the mechanical destination of society? May not our oversight damage our insight into unexpected factors in revolutionary development? We must not divorce the spiritual qualities of a people from our scientific assessment of their place in economic evolution. Almost we might say that if human spontaneity has to become more dynamic and intense to triumph over intensified and universalised reaction, each succeeding revolution must be more Anarchist in its principle and practice than the last. Socialistic centralisation would thus become counter-revolutionary in effect and have latent affinity with counter-revolutionary forces, no matter how revolutionary its slogans or even its intentions.

Now Spain is deeply impregnated with the psychology, the principle and the practice of Anarchism. It would, I think, be false to insulate this principle and practice of Anarchism from the Spanish racial characteristic of human dignity. The sense of human dignity seems to be consubstantial with every Spaniard and undoubtedly it inspires the Anarchist goal of general freedom and solidarity and the educational voluntary associative methods leading towards it. The situation in Spain today compels us to ask the question: What is the surest guarantee against the triumph of Fascism? Is it the Anarchist psychology and tradition of the Spanish people expressing itself in its own Anarcho-Syndicalist forms or is it centralised State Socialism imposed, or alleged to be imposed, in the interests of maximum military efficiency and the maximum efficiency of production to feed the fighting fronts? May not this efficiency be too dearly bought, if it is bought at the price of damping the revolutionary enthusiasm of the Spanish people and splitting their revolutionary unity even in the interests of a unified command? One might even add with trepidation a further question: Whither is this State centralisation in the interests of Spanish "democracy" leading? We are assured it is aimed at, and will lead to the speedy defeat of Franco. Have not the Second and Third Internationals agreed to meet to further that most desirable object? So, I note, have the Ambassadors of the capitalist Powers

already met and conferred with the Valencia Government. Let us hope they have agreed to co-operate in the speedy defeat of Franco. That, however, is uncertain. One thing is certain. Anarchist leaders have been displaced, imprisoned, murdered, groups of Anarchists have been massacred by Socialist-Communists and the Anarchist idea of revolution, collectivisation of industry and as far as possible the agricultural village - communities, is being stopped and undone. The Anarchists had defeated not only Franco in Catalonia but had superseded the economic order, which Franco is fighting to save and restore. Now the Socialist-Communists are saving and restoring it instead, not for him, of course, but to speed up his defeat. Meanwhile large sections of the Spanish people have misunderstood; things were too puzzling.

When they saw their worker's military and economic committees dissolved, their worker's militia abolished, themselves disarmed and finally the telephone building which they had won by repeated attack from the Fascists in July, forcibly seized from their syndicate by the Govt. assault guards, they came out on the streets and erected barricades. They thought their revolution was being destroyed instead of saved. Their misunderstanding was increased by the arrival of French and British warships in Barcelona and the landing of French marines, while the open allies of Franco, the Germans and Italians, continued to blockade them outside the threemile limit. The strange coincidence of the arrival of the French and British warships just at the moment when the workers came out on the streets to save a revolution they believed to be threatened, has been mixed up in their simple proletarian minds with the previous fact that the French and British had been blockading them all along under cover of a non-intervention pact and that the Valencia Government sent troops and threatened to send more to suppress what they thought was the defence of their revolution.

These simple people have been called "uncontrollables". In point of fact they were very easily controlled and went back to their work after six days of almost entirely defensive fighting. One can only hope they will not regret their docility.

I note that the epithet "uncontrollable" is reserved for my Anarchist comrades. Their fellow criminals in the joint misunderstanding are mostly "Trotskyites". A "Trotskyite",

so far as I understand the term, is someone who thinks Marx meant what he said when he spoke of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the transition period from Capitalism to Communism. Mr. Emile Burns, in his book *Communism, Capitalism, and the Transition*, has put the matter in a nutshell, not only as regards what should happen in theory but what did actually happen in the Russian Revolution. He might have been writing of the revolution that the simple Spanish "Trotskyites" thought they were defending. "All executive positions," writes Mr. Burns, "which had formerly been filled by appointment from above had to be made elective and the elected persons had to be subject to recall at any moment by the bodies that elected them; therefore from the first day of the revolution the command of armed forces was taken over by elected deputies; the factory workers were armed and fought all the most vital battles; the officials in State Departments were replaced by workers; the managers in the factories were replaced or controlled by councils of workers; the existing Law Courts were abolished and Worker's Courts with elected judges took their place; wherever Soviet order was established, elected worker's Committees took the place of appointed officials."

Now that is precisely the kind of order that the Spanish "Trotskyites", in common with other Spanish "uncontrollables", thought they were fighting to preserve and maintain from May 2nd to 7th in Barcelona.

But I would hate to be thought a "Trotskyite", for I remember it was Trotsky who helped to smash all that sort of thing at Kronstadt. So I must perforce be an "uncontrollable".

What is the difference between a "Trotskyite" and an "uncontrollable"? I expect I am simple, too, but I will give the only definition my simplicity can rise to. A Trotskyite is a Marxist who has stuck to Marx, who believes for instance, that it is their converging or conflicting economic interests which will determine sooner or later — perhaps sooner, alas! — whether the Capitalist "democracies" will or will not help the Spanish people, led by the present Valencia Government, to defeat Franco and the relics of the clerical aristocratic order, which he seeks to preserve.

Not being a Marxist, I offer no opinion.

And an "uncontrollable" is an Anarchist who has stuck to Anarchy and who is not, therefore, primarily concerned with the shades or strata of Capitalism, but with revolution by

direct action; who believes with Marx indeed that emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves, but with Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta, that free humanity must be substituted for the State, and that when Anarchists take part in a Government, they allow themselves to be deflected from their proper task and become corrupted by association with an instrument of tyranny. The first false step in Spain was the association of Anarchist leaders with the Government and the State. Had they given all their energies to co-ordination and unified command of CNT Collectives and Anarchist military units, instead of sacrificing Anarchist principles and control to compromises with a Government, the uncontrollables would have remained in control of themselves and ready for co-ordinated action with other sections instead of being sacrificed to a State dictatorship through a political party.

Illustration overleaf:
British soldiers in Belfast, 1980.





Citizens Army Parade, 1915.