David Kohn, Olonetzki, Mark Mratchny, Olga Taratuta, Fanny Baron & Guyevski released from prison for one day to go to Kropotkin's funeral. Moscow 1921.

ANARCHY 81

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Anarchism in Russia

NICOLAS WALTER

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION falls this month. More precisely, the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution falls on November 7 (the confusion over months arises from the use of the Julian Calendar, which continued in Russia until after the Revolution; in the same way, the February Revolution was in March). This is the occasion for much celebration among Communists, and for the publication of many books and articles about the Revolution on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In all the excitement about the October Revolution and the Communist regime it established, other aspects of the Russian Revolution and other political groups involved in it may be forgotten. Our particular interest is of course in the libertarian side of the Revolution and in the part played by the anarchist movement. Fortunately, it is possible to redress the balance in the light of a new history of the Russian anarchists, which has been published in this anniversary year and at last fills a gap previously left by chapters in books on anarchism in general or on Russian politics in general (and by a Stalinist history published thirty years ago).

The Russian Anarchists, by Paul Avrich, is a very expensive but very valuable book.* It devotes 300 pages—including over 800 footnotes, a bibliography of nearly 600 titles, and 16 illustrations—to the heroic and tragic history of the anarchist movement in Russia. The author is an Associate Professor of History at Queen's College, New York, and the book is one of the Columbia University "Studies of the Russian Institute". It is a work of real scholarship, based almost entirely on the original sources, clearly and simply written, as impartial as a study of such a subject can be, and enormously informative. No future account of Russian anarchism, or of anarchism in general, can afford to ignore it, and it will not be replaced for a long time.

★ ★

The period covered by the book runs from the appearance of small anarchist groups in western Russia just before the 1905 Revolution to the suppression of the large anarchist movement throughout the country soon after the Bolshevik Revolution; in addition there is an account of the origins of the movement at the beginning, and an account of the fates of the leaders after its fall at the end.

To begin at the beginning, I must say I am not happy about the

*Princeton University Press, $7.50; Oxford University Press, £3.

account of the origins of the movement. Russia played an important part in the history of anarchism from the start, if not before; there was a long tradition of anarchy in Russian social and religious movements, some of the main leaders of the nineteenth-century anarchist movement were Russians, there was virtually continuous anarchist activity among Russian exiles from the 1860s onwards, and there was much anarchist activity in the Russian populist and socialist movement during the 1860s and 1870s and even the 1880s.

But instead of having a full introduction dealing with each of these factors before the main story begins, we are given in Chapters 1 and 2 a description of the revolutionary situation at the beginning of the twentieth century, an account of the conversion of socialists to anarchism in 1903, summaries of the ideas of Bakunin and Kropotkin, a series of brief references to peasant revolts and religious sects, to Aksakov, Herzen and Tolstoy, to the Petrashevski and Chaikovski Circles, and to the exiled followers of Bakunin and Kropotkin, and so back to the socialist converts of 1903.

In explanation, Avrich says that "no revolutionary anarchist movement arose in Russia before the twentieth century"; this may be true, but it misses the point, which is that it doesn't necessarily mean there was no anarchist movement at all, and in fact there was one for forty years before the twentieth century. Avrich follows Franco Venturi's book on Russian populism by saying that "no genuinely Bakuninist organisation was founded on Russian soil during his lifetime"; again, this may be true, but it misses the point. Bakunin left Russia in 1861 and lived in exile until his death in 1876—that is, throughout his career as an anarchist; no exile managed to run an organisation inside Russia before the twentieth century (when Lenin succeeded in doing so), though Bakunin got nearer than anyone else. The point is that there were several anarchist or at least anarchic organisations in Russia from the time of Bakunin onwards.

Avrich agrees that Bakunin "cast his unique spell" over many populists and that "his influence was felt" by some of the workers who were active during the 1870s, but there is more to it than that. As Isaiah Berlin says in his introduction to the English translation of Venturi's book, *Roots of Revolution*, anarchism was one of the ends which were "universally accepted" in the populist movement, and in his book Venturi gives many examples of individuals and groups in the movement who were anarchist in their means as well as their ends. Avrich names only one anarchist who was active in Russia between 1861 and 1903—Nechayev; but Nechayev, as he says, was "less a genuine anarchist than an apostle of revolutionary dictatorship". I think it is worth naming some of the other more genuine anarchists, to show exactly what I think is wrong with this part of the book.

* *

ONE OF THE FIRST of the populists who went "to the people" was an anarchist—Ivan Orlov, who met Bakunin in Siberia in 1860 and led an "apostolate" to the peasants from Kazan in 1863; Avrich does not mention him. He mentions Zhukovski's paper *Narodnoye Delo* (*The People's Cause*), published in Switzerland in 1868, but not that it was circulated among students in St. Petersburg. He mentions Ralli's paper *Rabotnik* (*The Worker*), published in Switzerland from 1875 to 1876, but not that it was circulated among workers and peasants in and around Moscow. He mentions Bakunin's Russian Brotherhood and Ralli's Revolutionary Commune of Russian Anarchists, formed in Switzerland in 1872 and 1873 respectively, but not the anarchist groups and groups influenced by anarchists which existed in Russia then and later.

There were several anarchists in the Chaikovski Circle, which worked in St. Petersburg from 1872 to 1875 and led the great movement "to the people" in 1873 and 1874, apart from the well-known example of Kropotkin; the most important were Sergei Kravchinski (Stepniak), who was first a famous activist and then a famous author in the revolutionary cause, before joining the ILP in 1893, and Nikolai Chaikovski, the leader of the group, who attended the International Anarchist Congress in London in 1881 and helped to found FREEDOM in 1886, before becoming a leading Co-operator and Social Revolutionary and ending as the head of the anti-Bolshevik Government of Archangel in 1918. There were also many anarchists in the Union of South Russian Workers, which was active in Odessa from 1873 to 1875, and of the earliest propagandists among the St. Petersburg group at the same time, two leaders, Vyacheslav Dyakov and Alexei Siryakov, were anarchists.

Genuine anarchist organisations certainly appeared in Russia before Bakunin died. The *buntars* (rebels) who were active in Ukraine during the 1870s were virtually pure Bakuninists, though Bakunin refused to support some of their more extreme actions (such as the Chigirin conspiracy of 1876-7, in which three *buntars* persuaded hundreds of peasants near Kiev that the Tsar favoured a peasant rising against the nobles). The All-Russian Social-Revolutionary Organisation, which was active in Moscow in 1875, was in close touch with Ralli in Switzerland, distributed his paper, and was pretty well purely anarchist; the speeches made by two of its leaders, Sofia Bardina and Pyotr Alekseyev, at the Trial of 50 in 1877 were suppressed by the authorities and printed by Russian anarchists in Switzerland for circulation in Russia. Anarchists in the Trial of 193 in 1877-8 included Feofan Lermontov and Sergei Kovalik, who had both been associated with Bakunin in Switzerland before returning to join the movement "to the people", and above all Ippolit Myshkin, whose speech at the trial made a sensation and was also suppressed officially and circulated unofficially in Russia; Kropotkin's programme for the Chaikovski Circle, which was an important part of the prosecution evidence at this trial, was openly anarchist, but it is not mentioned by Avrich.

Anarchist activity survived the death of Bakunin and the great trials of the 1870s, and was important both in the wider populist movement and in the growing working-class movement. The South Russian Workers Union, formed in Kiev in 1879 and revived in 1880-1, was largely anarchist; its main leader, Pavel Akselrod, was a Bakuninist.

The Northern Union of Russian Workers, active in St. Petersburg from 1876 to 1880, had anarchist tendencies and in 1878 adopted a programme calling for virtual federalist collectivist anarchism; its main leader, Georgi Plekhanov, was a Bakuninist (he led the pioneering demonstration of workers in the Kazan Square in 1876). The second *Zemlya i Volya* (Land and Liberty), which was the umbrella organisation of the populist movement from 1876 to 1879, had strong anarchist tendencies and a virtually anarchist programme; Utechin describes *Zemlya i Volya*, in his history of *Russian Political Thought*, as "predominantly Bakuninist". *Obshchina* (*The Commune*), the anarchist paper published in Switzerland in 1878, which is not mentioned by Avrich, was widely read by members of *Zemlya i Volya* in Russia.

When *Zemlya i Volya* split over the question of tactics in 1879, there was strong anarchist influence on both sides, at least for a time. *Narodnaya Volya* (The People's Will, or Liberty) adopted terrorist means, though its ends were the same as before at first; but soon the extreme methods had the usual paradoxical effect of moderating the aims, so that the eventual assassination of Alexander II in 1881 was carried out in the name of a Constituent Assembly, though there was still a libertarian programme in the background. *Chorny Peredel* (The Black Partition) rejected terrorist means and stuck to the old methods of propaganda and agitation, and its ends were also the same as before; most of the definite anarchists in the populist movement who were not in prison or in exile went with *Chorny Peredel*, and Utechin describes it simply as "Bakuninist".

But during the period of extreme reaction after 1881, the leaders of *Chorny Peredel* who had been anarchists—notably Akselrod and Plekhanov—became Marxists, and began to lay the foundations of the Social-Democratic Party, later to split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. At the same time, *Narodnaya Volya* was succeeded by the Social-Revolutionary Party. The anarchist tradition was thus eclipsed in Russia during the 1880s; but it was not a total eclipse. Both the Social Democrats and the Social Revolutionaries were under some anarchist influence for a time, and it was at this point, as Avrich himself says, that Tolstoyan groups began to appear. When Kropotkinian exiles began sending anarchist literature into Russia again during the 1890s, and when Social Revolutionaries and Social Democrats began turning to anarchism soon afterwards, they were doing so in the light of a long tradition of anarchist agitation and activity in Russia.

For Avrich to suggest that "only the prolific pen of Peter Kropotkin . . . kept the dream of an anarchist movement alive" between 1876 and 1902 is a serious error, and for him not to mention any of the individuals and groups I have listed is a serious omission in a book of this kind. I hope that a second edition will give a proper account of the first forty years of the Russian anarchist movement.

* *

THINGS GET BETTER when the main story begins, on page 38. Avrich shows that the revived movement had two origins, one external and one internal. On one hand were the efforts of Kropotkinian exiles to get

anarchist literature into Russia and reopen the discussions of the 1870s, and on the other hand were the conversions of socialist individuals and groups working inside Russia to a belief in anarchism. Thus there were Atabekian's Anarchist Library and the Geneva Group of Anarchists, active from 1892 in producing pamphlets and books in Switzerland and smuggling them into Russia; the Russian translation of Kropotkin's book *The Conquest of Bread*, published in London in 1902 with the title *Khleb i Volya* (*Bread and Liberty*); and the *Khleb i Volya* group, formed in Geneva in 1903, which published a paper with that title and continued the production of pamphlets and books for Russian readers. All this meant a stream of anarchist communist propaganda into Russia, rising to a flood in 1902 and 1903.

The converts to anarchism appeared in several parts of western Russia, especially among the minority nationalities, and came mostly from the *Bund* (the Jewish section of the Social-Democratic Party), and from the Polish Socialist Party, the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party, and the Social-Revolutionary Party. The first important collective conversion was that of Bund members in Bialystok in 1903 (the year of the Kishinyov *pogrom*, which was the climax of the semi-official anti-semitic campaign), who formed an anarchist communist group to organise direct action against the regime in place of socialist propaganda and agitation.

From these two origins developed the two main streams of the new movement. The distinction between them is rather confused because both kinds of anarchists called themselves anarchist communists, but apart from that there was little in common between the anarchist groups of Moscow and Kiev, which generally followed the Kropotkinian line of *Khleb i Volya* and concentrated on peaceful methods of action, and such organisations as the mainly Jewish *Chornoye Znamya* (Black Banner) of western Russia and the mainly Russian *Beznachaliye* ("rulelessness" = Anarchy) of St. Petersburg, which advocated—and practised—direct action including "expropriations" (armed robberies), political assassination, and even indiscriminate terrorism.

Apart from the two kinds of anarchist communists, who were divided by personal differences as well as political principles, there were some individualists and a growing number of syndicalists. The Russian syndicalist movement more or less followed the pattern of western Europe, developing within the labour movement independently of anarchist inspiration, and only later coming under direct anarchist influence. But there were differences resulting from the peculiarities of the Russian situation. There was not the reaction against the compromises of moderate socialists in office, because there were no moderate socialists in office in Russia. There was a much stronger reaction against intellectualism, following the Russian tradition; this was most strikingly expressed by Jan Waclaw Machajski, a Polish socialist, who warned against the danger of a new class of "mental workers" who would use a socialist revolution to replace the bourgeoisie and continue the oppression of the real workers, and who established an independent movement from 1898 onwards which took up a position between the anarchists and the Marxists (something like the *Solidarity* Group in this

country today). And although there was the reaction against terrorism, the Russian tradition was so strong that even the syndicalists sometimes resorted to terrorist methods.

★ ★

BY 1905 THE RUSSIAN ANARCHISTS had taken their place on the Russian left and were comparable with the anarchists of the rest of Europe and of North America. Like the other left-wing groups, they had little to do with the beginning of the 1905 Revolution, but they played an active part in subsequent events, and it could even be said that the 1905 Revolution was objectively an anarchist revolution. The military mutinies, peasant risings and workers strikes (culminating in a general strike), led to the establishment of soldiers' and workers' councils (the famous Soviets) and peasants' communes, and the beginning of agrarian and industrial expropriation—all along the lines suggested by anarchist writers since Bakunin. This aspect of 1905 is mentioned by Avrich, but he—like the anarchists themselves—tends to concentrate on the sectarian affairs of the conscious anarchists rather than on the unconscious anarchism of the popular disturbances. (Incidentally, it seems strange that the great debate about syndicalism and the general strike at the International Anarchist Congress of 1907 did not include any reference to the Russian general strike of October 1905, even by the Russian delegates who had taken part in the Revolution.)

The period of reaction after 1905 resembled that after 1881, and had the same effect on anarchist activity. Avrich describes how the movement in Russia was violently crushed, and the preparation for the next Revolution was left to the exiles in western Europe and North America. But a group of Kropotkinians appeared in Moscow in 1911, and by 1914 the anarchist tide was rising again. The First World War greatly intensified the revolutionary situation in Russia and caused a considerable increase in anarchist activity and support. But at the same time the Russian movement was seriously weakened because the best-known anarchist who supported the war effort happened to be the best-known Russian anarchist and the ideological leader and personal inspiration of the Russian anarchists—Kropotkin himself. Few of the Russian exiles followed him (the main ones were Cherkezov and Maria Korn), but many of the anarchists in Russia did follow him; as a result the movement was deeply divided and the majority was dangerously discredited. The former Kropotkinians who opposed the war joined the anarcho-syndicalists, who now formed one of the main streams in the movement, the other still being the militant anarchist communists, while the faithful Kropotkinians became a relatively insignificant rump. This was the position in 1917, when the best-known phase of the Russian anarchist movement began.

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NOW A DISTINCTION IS OFTEN MADE between the two 1917 Revolutions along Marxist lines; the February Revolution, which replaced the Tsarist regime with the Provisional Government, is distinguished from the October Revolution, which replaced the Provisional Government with the Bolshevik regime. An anarchist analysis of the 1917 Revolutions leads to a different distinction; the political revolutions—that is, both the February and October Revolutions—are distinguished from the social revolution. The Marxist analysis concentrates on the transfer of power from one regime to another (or from one class to another, to use the appropriate jargon), whereas the anarchist analysis concentrates on the transfer of power from the state to the people.

Avrich mentions this aspect of the 1917 Revolutions, but again he quite reasonably follows the anarchists themselves in tending to concentrate on their own affairs. In the perspective of fifty years, however, it is possible to see that the embryonic social revolution of 1917 was one of the most important events in the history of Russian anarchism, even if the anarchists themselves had little to do with it at first. Voline called it the "Unknown Revolution", but he was one of the people most responsible for making it known, and it is up to us to make it better known. But first let me deal with the anarchist movement itself.

As in 1905, the anarchists, like the other left-wing groups, had little to do with the beginning of the Revolution, though some did take part in the Petrograd disturbances which led to the fall of the Tsarist regime, but again they played an active part in the subsequent events. The working-class groups, which had appeared during the war, were soon reinforced by intellectuals returning from exile. Anarchist communists and anarcho-syndicalist groups were formed in Petrograd, Moscow, and other large towns. Magazines and pamplets were widely circulated. Anarchists became prominent in many trade unions and Soviets. During the summer of 1917 the anarchist movement was more influential in Russia than ever before.

But there were two obstacles which prevented this influence being exerted as effectively as it might have been. One was that, as always, the movement was divided. Kropotkin, who returned to Russia in June after forty years in exile, was honoured by the anarchists for his past work but was isolated from them by his support of the war. His only public action was to take part in the State Conference in August, when he called for the establishment of a republic and the renewal of the military offensive. Thus the anarchist communists were deprived of their natural leader and discredited by his association with liberals and Mensheviks. They were also discredited by some of their militants in Petrograd, who seized a villa and tried to seize a printing press after the February Revolution, and later helped to organise the abortive military rising known as the July days. Moreover, the anarchist communists were divided among themselves by personal as well as political differences. All this left most of the serious work for the social revolution to the anarcho-syndicalists, of whom more later.

The other obstacle was that the anarchists found themselves allied with the Bolsheviks. Both sections of the Social-Democratic Party at first supported the Provisional Government as the representative of the first—bourgeois—stage of the revolution in Marxist theory, but when Lenin returned to Russia in April he quickly persuaded the Bolsheviks that it was already time for the second—proletarian—stage, and that it

was up to them to replace the Provisional Government with a dictatorship of the proletariat based on the Soviets. This meant that the anarchists were no longer alone in opposing the Provisional Government and the war, and although they still distrusted their old enemies they were impressed by Lenin's repudiation of orthodox Marxism and recognition of the relevance of anarchism; indeed many Social-Democrats—Bolsheviks as well as Mensheviks—actually thought Lenin had or would become an anarchist, and some anarchists thought so too.

The result was that during the summer of 1917 there was a sort of honeymoon, during which the anarchists and Bolsheviks worked together, both encouraging the soldiers and sailors to desert or take over the armed forces, both supporting the Social Revolutionaries in encouraging the peasants to take over the land, and both encouraging the workers to take over industry. Both were rather unwillingly involved in the July Days, and in the autumn both were involved in preparing to destroy the Provisional Government altogether.

If the Bolsheviks hadn't used the slogan *All power to the Soviets* and hadn't talked so much about the seizure of power, the anarchists might have been forgiven for believing that this honeymoon would last for ever. In September, however, when the Bolsheviks won majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, the anarchists did begin to remember their old distrust of their new allies. But they still joined the Bolsheviks in attacking the Democratic Conference, which met in September, and they also attacked the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which were due to be held in November and which even the Bolsheviks paid lip service to.

When on November 7 the Provisional Government was overthrown by the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, under Bolshevik leadership, many anarchists either took part or welcomed the event, believing that it would at last clear the way for the social revolution. But on the same day it was announced that the Provisional Government would be replaced by a "Soviet Government", and the Council of People's Commissars, which was set up the next day, was not only a full-scale government but was composed entirely of Bolsheviks. The self-appointed Provisional Government of liberals and Mensheviks was replaced by the self-appointed Soviet Government of Bolsheviks; Lenin had returned to orthodox Marxism and had established a dictatorship of the proletariat, represented by the dictatorship of the Communist Party (as the Bolsheviks called themselves from March 1918). The honeymoon was over, though it took the anarchists some time to realise it, and some of them never did.

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AT THIS POINT let me return to the social revolution. After the October Revolution many anarchists called for a third revolution, which would overthrow the Communist regime as the Tsarist and bourgeois regimes had been overthrown, and would begin the social revolution. But the social revolution had already begun, and indeed it could more accurately be called the first revolution, since it actually began before the February Revolution. In fact it caused the February Revolution, just as it later

caused the October Revolution.

The abdication of the Tsar and the formation of the Provisional Government on March 15, had been preceded by more than a week of popular disturbances culminating in a general strike and the beginning of both insurrection and expropriation. The February Revolution was carried out not to continue or even to control this growing social revolution but to prevent it. Thus Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, told the Tsar on March 11: "The situation is serious. There is anarchy in the capital. The government is paralysed. It is necessary immediately to entrust a person who enjoys the confidence of the country with the formation of a government." Thus Shulgin, the conservative leader in the Duma, said on March 14: "If we don't take power, others will—those who have already elected some scoundrels in the factories." Thus Rodzianko told Ruzski, the military commander, on March 15: "Such anarchy developed that the only chance to prevent it threatening the existence of the state was for the Duma and myself to try and take the movement into our own hands. . . . Power slips from my control, and anarchy is reaching such proportions that I am forced to nominate a Provisional Government tonight."

This social revolution was not prevented by the February Revolution, and it spread and deepened during 1917. This was particularly true of industry. The anarcho-syndicalist doctrine of workers' control was put into practice to such an extent that in the end more than half the factories in the country were affected. There was a virtual peasant insurrection in the countryside. Within a few days of the February Revolution more and more of the class which made up over 80 per cent of the population of the country began to put into practice the policy which had headed the programme of the populist movement and after that of the Social-Revolutionaries and the anarchists—the land was seized from the landowners and either divided among the peasants or else handed over to the peasant communes. And the army disappeared from the front. The peasant conscripts, who made up the rank and file, drifted back to their villages and joined the social revolution.

The anarchists supported and participated in this process, but they did not begin it, and it would have occurred without them. The same is true of the Bolsheviks, but the difference was that the anarchists favoured the social revolution because they favoured the social revolution, while the Bolsheviks favoured the social revolution because it could be used to bring about the political revolution they really wanted. The result was that when the Bolsheviks seized power, they had done so partly—if not largely—by adopting anarchist policies, which meant that the anarchists were in a very strong position but at the same time a very vulnerable position, since when the Bolsheviks began to change their policies the anarchists would be the first to embarrass them by saying so.

But at first the Bolsheviks were careful not to break with their left-wing allies—including the anarchists and, in the countryside, the Left Social-Revolutionaries—and, more important, not to alienate the

popular support which had swept them to power. The draft Decree on Workers' Control and the Land Decree handed industry over to the workers' councils, and the land to the peasants and the peasants' communes, and the Peace Decree proposed immediate negotiations to end the war. The anarchists could criticise the form of the new regime, but they could only welcome its first actions. When the Communists dissolved the Constituent Assembly, with its Social-Revolutionary majority, in January 1918, the anarchists approved; and the soldiers who dispersed the deputies were led by an anarchist.

But soon the situation changed. In December 1917 the government began the nationalisation (or "statisation"—*ogosudarstvleniye*) of the economy. During 1918 the workers' councils were absorbed into the trade unions, and the trade unions were subordinated to the state; and at the same time poor peasants' committees were organised against the richer peasants and the peasants' communes, and were also subordinated to the state. During 1918 the Communists began to attack their allies, and the anarchists were the first on the list.

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BUT THE ANARCHISTS were still strong. Avrich estimates that at this time there were about 10,000 active anarchists in Russia, not counting the followers of Tolstoy or Makhno, or the many more thousands of sympathisers. The anarchist communists were disorganised, but their daily paper, *Burevestnik* (*The Stormy Petrel*), had a circulation of 25,000. The anarcho-syndicalists, joined by the anti-war Kropotkinites, had a formidable organisation based on their vigorous participation in the workers' councils; they were particularly strong in the heavy industry of Petrograd, among the bakers, printers, railmen and the leather workers of Moscow, the miners of the Donets basin, and the cement workers and dockers of the Black Sea ports. The anarcho-syndicalist weekly paper, *Golos Truda* (*The Voice of Labour*), was run by a group of remarkable intellectuals and maintained a high level of argument.

Despite their sympathies with the Bolsheviks before the October Revolution, and their welcome of the first actions of the new regime, the anarchists were quick to attack what they called the "commissarocracy" (*komissaroderzhaviye*) and to criticise the nationalisation of the economy, and they were the first to point out that the Soviets were no longer a revolutionary institution and had become a mere vehicle for party dictatorship. They also joined the other anti-war left-wing groups —including many Bolsheviks—in rejecting the Brest-Litovsk Treaty; they called for guerrilla warfare against the Germans, not negotiations with them. This was all bad enough, but what was worse was that some anarchist communists began to prepare for armed resistance to the government. This gave the Communists their excuse, and in April 1918 the offensive began. The *Cheka* (the Extraordinary Commission for the Suppression of Counter-Revolution, Sabotage and Speculation—the first name for the Communist political police) carried out armed attacks on the anarchist organisations first in Moscow and then in other towns, and in May the anarchist papers were suppressed. During the summer of 1918 the Russian anarchist movement went underground again after just over a year of open activity.

Anarchist resistance to the government took two forms. Some anarchist communists, especially in Moscow and the south, turned to terrorism again, as did the Left Social-Revolutionaries. In September 1919 the climax of this tendency was reached when the "Underground Anarchists" joined the Left Social-Revolutionaries in a bomb attack on the Moscow Communist Party Committee meeting, killing 12 members and wounding 55. (The wounded included Steklov, the future historian of the First International and biographer of Bakunin, and Yaroslavski, the future historian of Russian anarchism—the strong anti-anarchist bias they showed in their writings is therefore not surprising, though Yaroslavski went so far that Avrich calls his well-known book "probably the worst history of the anarchists".) This led to a reaction similar to that after 1905, and, although Lenin agreed that "ideological" (*ideiny*) anarchists were not involved in such outrages and denied that they were persecuted, the whole militant movement was violently crushed by the Cheka without any such distinction.

The anarcho-syndicalists, on the other hand, stuck to more moderate methods of resistance. In August 1918 they held their first All-Russian Conference in Moscow, and started a new paper, *Volny Golos Truda* (*The Free Voice of Labour*). They continued their carefully argued opposition to the Communist regime, describing it as both "state communism" and "state capitalism", and adding that the proletariat, far from being emancipated by the October Revolution, had been subjected to the party dictatorship of a "whole bureaucratic system" run by a "new class" of intellectuals turned administrators. Thus, within a year of the establishment of the Communist regime, the Russian anarchists (together with Machajski, who took exactly the same position in 1918) had already anticipated the criticism which was later to be made by so many disillusioned Communists and ex-Communists from Aleksandra Kollontai and Trotsky down to Djilas and Paul Cardan. Avrich gives a full account of this, but he doesn't seem to be aware of its significance in the history of Russia, of anarchism, and of Communism.

The anarcho-syndicalists soon paid for being ten or twenty years ahead of their time. *Volny Golos Truda* was suppressed for taking this line in September; but in November the anarcho-syndicalists held their second All-Russian Congress in Moscow, and they continued their campaign in the Soviets and the workers' organisations. For a time it even seemed possible that the division between them and the anarchist communists might be closed. A new organisation, the Moscow Union of Anarcho-Syndicalist-Communists, was formed early in 1919 and it started yet another paper, *Trud i Volya* (*Labour and Liberty*). But *Trud i Volya* was suppressed as well in May 1919, and the Union soon collapsed. The old division was being reopened by differing reactions to the Civil War, which was beginning to threaten not only the Communist regime but the whole Russian left with the military restoration of the old regime.

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THE CIVIL WAR posed the anarchists—and the other left-wing opponents of the Communists—with an insoluble problem. They could continue to oppose the government, risking its defeat by the Whites and the establishment of a bourgeois or even monarchist regime; or they could support the government during the emergency, risking the indefinite postponement of the third revolution. In general, the anarchist communists took the first course, and defended the good against the bad, while the anarcho-syndicalists (and individualists) took the second course, and defended the bad against the worse.

Some anarchists became what were later called "fellow-travellers". There were those who fought and even died in the Communist forces, like Shatov and Zheleznyakov (the militant Kronstadt sailor, who had carried out the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, and was killed in action in July 1919). There were those who worked in the Communist administration, either in non-political jobs like Borovoi, Rayevski, Schapiro and Voline, or in political jobs like Ge (an anarchist communist who had become prominent in the Soviets and ended as a Cheka official). These anarchists did not actually become Communists, but there were a few who did, like Roshchin and Novomirski. The anarchist communists bitterly attacked the "Anarcho-Bolsheviks" or "Soviet anarchists", but Ge was by no means the only anarchist who supported the government. In 1918 Karelin had formed the so-called All-Russian Federation of Anarchist Communists, which published the paper *Volnaya Zhizn* (*The Free Life*); and in 1920 the Gordin brothers formed the Universalists, which published the paper *Universal*: both groups followed the fellow-travelling line, and indeed it was difficult not to, at least by implication or omission, during 1919 and 1920.

The most serious attempt to solve the problems raised by the Civil War was made in Ukraine, and the result was the most important episode in the whole history of Russian anarchism. The *Nabat* (Alarm) Confederation of Anarchist Organisations, which had been formed in 1917, became during 1918 the centre of the most successful approach to "united" (*yediny*) anarchism, including anarchist communists, anarcho-syndicalists and individualists, under the leadership of Voline, Arshinov, and Aron and Fanya Baron. At the same time, Makhno raised the insurgent Army of Ukraine to fight the German invaders and Ukrainian nationalists and also to establish peasant anarchism in the liberated areas. The *Nabat* group held that the first task was to defeat the White Armies, without joining the Red Army, and it was drawn to Makhno by both political and geographical factors; in 1919, when it was suppressed by the Communists, its leaders joined Makhno.

The story of the Makhno movement (*Makhnovshchina*) is well known, and this is not the place to retell it. Avrich adds nothing to it except that he puts it in its proper context of the history of the Russian populist and anarchist movement, and not just of the Russian Civil War. What he does not do is to realise its crucial significance in that context; for the *Makhnovshchina* was the single documented, undisputed, and unforgotten example of anarchism in action which was practical, constructive, and popular. At a time when Russian anarchism had become

the hope of world anarchism, Ukrainian anarchism—as put into effect by the *Makhnovshchina*—became the hope of Russian anarchism.

But the fate of Makhno was determined by military rather than political considerations. His political success was the result of his military success and his ultimate military failure meant political failure as well. When the Civil War went badly in the south, the Communists saw Makhno as an ally and tolerated or even helped him; when the war went well, they saw him as an enemy and ignored or even hindered him. And he was so important to them that the periods of their friendship coincided with periods of freedom for anarchists in the rest of Russia, while periods of hostility coincided with periods of persecution. When the Insurgent Army finally drove the Whites out of Ukraine, in November 1920, the Red Army immediately attacked it, completing its destruction in August 1921; and at the same time the Cheka began the final suppression of the anarchist movement throughout Russia.

The anarchists were still strong in 1920. Anarchist papers were suppressed, but anarchist literature was widely circulated; the anarcho-syndicalists remained active and influential in the labour movement; the Workers' Opposition within the Communist Party adopted much of the anarcho-syndicalist policies and criticisms of the government; and Kropotkin, released from his isolation by the conclusion of the war, protested strongly against Communist excesses to the socialists of western Europe and to the Communist government itself.

But at the beginning of 1921, while Makhno was fighting for his life, the government began to ban anarchist pamphlets and books as well as papers, and to arrest all known anarchist leaders; the Workers' Opposition was roughly brought to heel; and Kropotkin died. His funeral in Moscow, in February 1921, which was attended by 100,000 people, represented the last open anarchist demonstration in Russia. Aron Baron, the anarcho-syndicalist leader who was allowed out of prison for the occasion, caused a sensation when he "cried out in defiant protest against the new despotism, against the butchers at work in the dungeons, against the dishonour which had been brought upon socialism, against the violence with which the government was trampling the revolution under foot" (this speech, which was described by Victor Serge, is not mentioned by Avrich).

A few weeks later, the Kronstadt Rebellion broke out and was crushed by the government. Most of the rebels were not anarchists, but some were, and anarchist influence was certainly strong; and the anarchists in the rest of the country who were still free openly sympathised with the rebellion. Krondstadt meant the end of the revolutionary purpose of the Communist government, and the fall of Kronstadt meant the end of left-wing opposition to it; this included the end of the anarchist movement. The only concession after Kronstadt was that some imprisoned anarchists were allowed to leave the country. In August 1921, hunger-strikes by anarchist prisoners during the founding congress of the Profintern (the Red International of Trade Unions) led to protests from foreign syndicalists, and in September the first shootings of anarchist leaders during the third congress of the Comintern (the

Communist—"Third"—International) led to an international uproar; to appease foreign socialists, several imprisoned leaders were released and expelled from the country. Several others who were still free also left Russia, and Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, who had returned from the United States after the Revolution, once more left their native land, this time for good.

Berkman wrote in his diary: "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 forsworn, 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 under foot. The Revolution is dead; its spirit cries in the wilderness." And he concluded: "I have decided to leave Russia." By the end of 1921, all was over, and Avrich has nothing to tell but the sad story of the victims, who were imprisoned, banished, and executed, and the exiles in Germany, France and the United States, who tried to keep their movement alive as the Bakuninists had done half a century before and to tell the truth about what they had done and had been done to them.

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DESPITE MY SERIOUS COMPLAINT about the beginning of the book, and some minor complaints (mostly about the omission of details)—all of which would be met most effectively by making the book longer—I think this is an essential history to read and refer to for anyone who is interested in anarchism. Avrich doesn't try to discuss the significance of the Russian anarchist movement for anarchists, but what he does is make it possible for this to be properly discussed. The main questions which are raised are as follows.

Why did Russia play such a prominent part in the anarchist movement? Why did the Russian populist movement, which came so near to anarchism, end by turning in the opposite direction? Can the ideas of Bakunin and Kropotkin, which have tended to dominate anarchist thought, be understood without reference to their anarchist background? Why, despite its origins did the Russian anarchist movement owe so much to western influences? Can the divisions between anarchists and other left-wing groups, and among anarchists themselves, be closed without betraying the principles of anarchism? Why do anarchists find it so difficult to avoid dogmatism and sectarianism on one side, and syncretism and collaborationism on the other? Can anarchism be put into practice without military force—or with it? Why was the Communist regime, which the anarchists saw through immediately after it was established, able to fool so much of the left for so long? Can anything be done to destroy the false "liberal" reputations of Lenin, who reacted against his own anarchist deviation of 1917 by outlawing the anarchist movement, and Trotsky, who was in charge of the attacks on Makhno and Kronstadt? What did the Spanish anarchists learn from their Russian comrades, and how do the Spanish and Russian Revolutions compare? What have other anarchists learnt from the

Russian experience, and what can still be learnt from it? Remembering Kropotkin's remark in 1920 that "this is how *not* to bring about the Revolution", how is the Revolution to be brought about, if it is to be brought about at all?

At the end of a discussion of such questions, another question is bound to be raised. The last known anarchists still living in Russia disappeared during the 1930s, in Stalin's great Purges, and the last event recorded by Avrich is the closing of the Kropotkin Museum in Moscow, soon after his wife's death in 1938. Has there been any anarchist activity in Russia during the last thirty years, and is there any hope for Russian anarchism in the future?

We know that some recent rebels against the Communist regime, who would previously have been called petit-bourgeois liberals or Trotskyists, have been called anarchists by the authorities (this is particularly true of writers and artists); but we do not know whether they would be called anarchists either by themselves or by us. We can detect anarchist ideas in the work of Yesenin and Pilnyak (who were both actually associated with the Left Social-Revolutionaries), of Zamyatin and Zoshchenko, and of Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak (now known to be Sinyavski and Daniel, who were imprisoned in 1966); but it is doubtful whether they would. Aleksandr Yesenin-Volpin and Josif Brodski, poets who have both been imprisoned and released several times, have both been called anarchists, and they do seem about as near to anarchism as any Russians we know of. But the real question is whether other writers or students ever come across Bakunin and Kropotkin or independently work out anarchist ideas, whether workers ever think about workers' control of industry or peasants ever think about the redistribution of the land, or—more important—whether anyone who moves towards anarchism ever goes further than reading or thinking. This is the question we cannot answer; when we can, it may be time for Avrich to describe the Russian anarchist movement during the forty years after its fall, as well as during the forty years before its rise.

One last question is raised by this book. Now that there are good books in English about the anarchist movements in China, India, and Russia, isn't it time there were some about those in America, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain? And what about this country? We have had no Revolution recently, and no *Makhnovshchina*, but we have an anarchist tradition going back to Godwin and Winstanley and a continuous movement since the 1880s. Where are the historians?

AN AWARD FOR "ANARCHY"

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Marxism and the Russian Revolution

ELIZABETH SMITH

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION is an occasion which anarchists might be expected to greet with mixed feelings; many will view with a jaundiced eye and a wry smile the militarist-nationalist jubilations of the Soviet Union. Certainly there was a lot wrong with the 1917 Revolution from a libertarian viewpoint, but it is worth while studying it more closely before rejecting everything associated with it—for instance, the Marxist philosophy professed by the Bolshevik Party which the Revolution brought to power. The taint attaching to Marxism due to its long association with the "Great October Socialist Revolution, Beginning of a New Era in History"[1] can be rationalised or modified by an examination of its actual rôle: the influence exerted by Marxist ideology on the course of events, and also the extent to which events conform to a Marxist analysis.

For a start, I refer to the obvious Marxist document, the Communist Manifesto, produced in 1847-48. This gives an outline of historical development through successive phases of the class struggle leading to the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie in the era of industrial capitalist economy, and traces "the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat". According to the Marxist view of society, a proletarian revolution cannot occur without the presence of certain objective conditions, resulting from the capitalist system, but when these conditions do exist revolution is inevitable. This does not mean that those who achieve consciousness of the realities of the class struggle should wait passively for the Great Dawn; on the contrary, they work to spread consciousness amongst the masses and participate actively in struggles, supporting immediate aims of the workers with a clear understanding and long-term view of the whole situation. The theoretical conclusions of this "most advanced and resolute section" of the proletariat express in general terms the actual relations they find in the existing system of production. Thus the proletariat of each country, in conflict with its national bourgeoisie, must take account of specific national circumstances—the state of the economy, the stage of historical development, and the consequent tactics necessary to bring forward the revolution. The application of Marx's ideas to the Russian situation was the self-appointed task of V. I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

By the second decade of the 20th century Russia was still far from being an advanced capitalist country, since about 80% of the population were peasants, but co-existent with the backward agrarian economy there

were certain well-developed capitalist features, in connection with which the concept of the proletariat and its struggle had obvious relevance. Although there had been industry in Russia since the 17th century, it was not until the late 19th that its increasingly rapid expansion began to assume the proportions of an Industrial Revolution. The process of industrialisation was particularly a feature of the reign of the last Tsar (Nicholas II, who acceded in 1894), and its pace was rapid because its late start meant that the most advanced methods, achieved more laboriously in other countries, could be adopted at once. Capitalism in Russia was characterised by the large extent of foreign investment and by the definitive role of the state, factors symptomatic of, and contributing to the failure to develop a native industrial-capitalist bourgeoisie. Before the First World War, however, things had advanced far enough to bring this necessary class into being as a discernible group (admittedly lacking in numbers and in the history of struggle conducive to class-consciousness and cohesion), which might be viewed as capable of fulfilling its historic role. Similarly, accelerated industrialisation had precipitately created an urban proletariat, comprising only a small percentage of the population but mainly concentrated in large up-to-date factories. In 1914 over half the workers were in works employing more than 500, and nearly a quarter in works with over 1,000.[2] Surrounded by hundreds in the same situation, individuals could more easily see their day-to-day problems as part of a wider class conflict, and were readily accessible to propaganda.

The workers had already made their presence felt, in the revolutionary year 1905 when the extent and scale of disturbances seriously shook the regime and wrested the concession of a Parliament (Duma) from the autocracy. There was renewed evidence of proletarian consciousness in the years before the war, after the industrial upsurge of 1910-11. The Lena Goldfields massacre of 1912, when hundreds were killed in the repression of an economic strike, sparked off an "explosion in the working-class"[3] beginning with a wave of protest strikes and demonstrations in April and May 1912 and continuing in a movement of political and economic strikes until 1914. Strikes were illegal—an aspect of the outdated policies of tsardom which probably benefited the workers in the long-run by inhibiting the growth of conventional trade unions, easily absorbed into the system, and thus forcing them to rely on direct action. According to Trotsky, the political strike was the fundamental method of struggle until wartime hardship brought regression to more purely economic motivation. Large numbers of those involved in industrial disturbances were part of the influx of labour from the countryside renewed after 1910, but there was also a significant group of militant youth, "hereditary" proletarians who had known no other way of life, as well as older workers with experience of many years in industry. Together these elements made up a fairly promising picture from a revolutionary viewpoint; 3 million factory workers, nearly a million miners, and about 800,000 railwaymen[4] could be considered an effective vanguard for action.

The vanguard was, however, a very small proportion of the Russian

Empire's population, which was about 174 millions in 1914. In Russia the words of the Communist Manifesto had to be modified, especially the assertion that "The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air". In Russia what was required, in order to involve the immense majority, was the inclusion of the peasantry, and here Marx was helpful only within limits, since his ideas were not primarily concerned with the agrarian sector. Marx saw the small peasant as both capitalist, owning the means of production, and worker, providing his own labour, and envisaged the development of capitalist farming and the growth of a landless labouring rural proletariat; in tsarist Russia, at least, there is a good case for regarding the peasant economy as a separate non-capitalist system.[5] Lenin, on the other hand, achieved a more plausible analysis of the peasant situation by applying Marxist theories of class conflict to the existing stratification observable in the Russian countryside. In "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", published in 1899, Lenin distinguished three groups of peasants:

Group	Size of Holdings	% of rural population	% of land held by group
Kulaks	more than 50 acres each	12	31
Middle peasants	35-50 acres	7	7
Poor peasants	less than 35 acres	81	35

The tendency, as Lenin saw it, was for capitalism in the countryside to grow, the Kulaks steadily increasing their wealth and power while the poorer groups were forced to become wage-labourers; the middle group would tend to diminish as some of its members managed to become Kulaks, while others, in larger numbers, joined the ranks of the poor. This process was retarded by the existence of the Communes, the peasant institutions adopted by the state when serfdom was ended in 1861. Ownership of peasant land, together with civic responsibility, was vested in the whole village community instead of being left to individuals; periodic redistribution of land was intended to preserve equality of wealth, but this practice had not been carried out regularly or uniformly, and the system was moving towards collapse. Its dissolution was hastened by the agrarian reforms of Stolypin, Prime Minister from 1906, who "aimed at co-operating with and assisting the development of the capitalist forces in the countryside"[6] and helped to effect a rural bourgeois revolution by encouraging withdrawal from the Commune, consolidation of holdings, and purchase of land from the great landowners and from destitute peasants. "By 1917 half of the land left to the gentry in 1861 had passed into the hands of the peasantry, whether as lessees or purchasers."[6]

Russian agrarian and industrial development may be seen proceeding along parallel lines of growing capitalism, with the agrarian line, although not so far advanced, also moving towards a potentially

revolutionary situation. To admit the possibility of a successful peasants' revolt we must deviate from Marx's view of such movements as being doomed to failure and in any case essentially reactionary unless subordinated to a proletarian revolution. Lenin was more inclined to grant peasants the status of potential revolutionaries, given the correct political approach; although he emphasised the leading role of the proletariat his frequent use of the phrases "workers and peasants" and "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" showed his awareness of the other "lowest stratum of present society" and its importance. The appropriateness, in Russia, of this deviation or elaboration was demonstrated by events. Even before the First World War there were indications of peasant consciousness growing—occasional awareness of revolutionary currents, conversion of village assemblies into political meetings, extension of hostility from the immediate landlord to a wider dimly-apprehended system. There were limits, of course; a peasant's horizons were narrow, he did not come into contact with vast numbers of his own class or with political activists. Narodnik attempts by people from a different environment to go out and convert the dark masses had generally met with predictable failure, leaving peasant thought in the sidetracks of religion, folklore and local patriotism. Meanwhile daily life, though filled with the realities of class conflict, did not leave much time or energy for the pursuit of long-term revolutionary aims.

The necessary widening of horizons and extension of contacts was brought by the war, when large numbers of peasants were conscripted into the Tsar's army and thus, according to some doctrinaire Marxists, became proletarianised, which would explain their participation in the revolution. The term "proletarianisation" does not ring true, but the war undeniably expanded consciousness amongst the lower ranks in each hierarchical structure—industry, agriculture and army. It was to be a workers', soldiers' and peasants' revolution. Army service increased contact within classes and reflected conflict between classes in the subjection of soldiers to their middle- and upper-class officers, while in society at large wartime highlighted the nature and weakness of tsarism. Labour laws stifled all working-class activity, and the people were urged to forget their differences and unite against the foreign enemy. The initial success of the appeal to patriotism, in Russia and throughout Europe, was a setback to the hopes of revolutionary socialists, but as the war progressed worse setbacks were suffered by the regime, whose slogans lost the power of conviction in the face of defeat and general hardship. The state was manifestly unable to afford protection—the traditional justification for the exaction of service and obedience—except to the ruling class who, as Trotsky pointed out, still managed to live in luxury; the personnel of government at the top changed frequently, and the bureaucratic machine failed to fulfil its appointed functions.

At the turn of the year 1916-17 it was apparent to the Police Department and to army officers, amongst others, that a revolutionary situation existed. The expected outbreak occurred on 23rd February, 1917,[7] when it seemed as if the people were at least realising and

spontaneously exercising their power. The movement originated in Petrograd with strikes, demonstrations, and the take over of the state's instruments of power—public buildings, prisons, police stations and army barracks. Police and soldiers mutinied instead of carrying out their appointed task of repression, realising that their interests coincided with those of the insurgent masses, not of the disintegrating tsarist state. The mass revolt was in essence anarchic, the people against the state rather than a direct confrontation of classes, but in effect it enabled a bourgeois revolution to occur in politics. On the 27th of February the Duma, latest in the succession of Parliaments appointed (and incidentally reduced in representation and power) since 1905, refused to disband when ordered to do so by the Tsar and formed a Provisional Government. On the 2nd of March, Nicholas II abdicated in favour of his brother who, after considering the position, declined to become Tsar unless he should be asked by the forthcoming Constituent Assembly to accept the post.

In the words of the latest Soviet History of the USSR: "The profound social and economic changes in the era of imperialism, and the long years of struggle for emancipation in which the people had participated, had created the conditions for a bourgeois—democratic revolution". But a further stage than usual in such revolutions had been achieved by the creation and prominence of the Soviets, councils of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies elected by their own comrades. The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies held a position of "dual power" with the Provisional Government. Another advance on similar takeovers by the bourgeoisie in western countries was the extent of liberalisation in reaction to tsarist repression, e.g. the immediate establishment of universal suffrage from the age of 18, which made Russia more democratic than, for instance, contemporary Britain. Thus the people were taken through the experience of Parliamentary representation and perhaps prevented from being diverted later towards reformist ends.

In contrast to former suppression of debate on political matters, left-wing parties could now present their views openly, and there was a general increase in political awareness. At first the Social Revolutionaries were dominant in the Soviets and therefore amongst the most conscious of the masses, but they lost support as disillusionment with the government (which their right and moderate factions supported) increased. The Bolshevik Party seized the opportunity to press its case. In 1903 the Bolsheviks had broken away from the other (Menshevik) wing of the Social-Democratic Party; since then they had set up cadres of militants in factories, the administration and the army. In 1917 the party began to extend its influence significantly and to attract widespread notice through meetings, lectures, leaflets, and a widely-circulated daily paper. Two-thirds of the membership were workers,[8] and the party slogans for peace, land, bread, and "all power to the soviets" expressed proletarian demands. But the Bolsheviks did not quite fit the description in the Communist Manifesto:

"The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

"They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

"They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement."

These requirements were fulfilled only if the Bolsheviks are accepted as the one real working-class party, in the role of understanding advisers to the mass of the proletariat. In fact their intention to "shape and mould" is obvious, at least in retrospect; it was less easily seen at the time because their slogans were so acceptable. They showed a certain flexibility (or opportunism) when proletarian stirrings occurred, notably in the July Days; to begin with they opposed what they regarded as ill-timed manifestations against the government, then they tried to assume direction of the risings, only to share in their defeat. When Lenin had returned to Russia in April and shocked many of his comrades[9] by saying the Provisional Government had to be overthrown, his programme allowed time for developing towards a proletarian revolution, and he constantly warned against "misplaced" anarchic action. The threat from the left, i.e. the possibility of premature, diffuse, revolutionary outbreaks by the workers, Lenin acknowledged as the greatest danger facing the party—the danger of the proletariat taking matters into their own hands, disregarding "their" party.

The peasants, at any rate, were already assuming control of their own affairs, expropriating landlords often before or against the directives of Provincial Soviets. Village soviets secured and distributed local land, to face the authorities with an accomplished fact. Their direct action was supported by the predominantly peasant army, and contributed largely to the disintegration of the armed forces through soldiers' eagerness to participate in the share-out. The peasant movement was apolitical as far as theoretical formulation were concerned, but provided a source of support for any party prepared to confirm the peasants in their possession of the land. Parties and their differences were largely unknown, and Bolsheviks, if they had been heard of, were regarded with hostility and suspected of being German spies (a situation described by Trotsky as a temporary weakness in relation to the peasantry due to the party's not sharing peasant illusions). Bolshevik peasant policy had not penetrated to the people it concerned.

In industrial areas, however, Bolshevik policy was frequently known and approved of, in the absence of any equally radical alternative; libertarians in particular failed to assert themselves, although Trotsky mentions a tendency towards anarchist sympathies amongst the workers, arrogantly denying it any practical significance except as a gauge whereby the Bolsheviks could assess the steam-pressure of the revolution. Support for the Bolsheviks was implicitly conditional on fulfilment of their slogans—Voline recounts a conversation with a worker, showing readiness to reject them if they betrayed their expressed ideals.[10] The danger of letting them achieve a position of power, which they could consolidate to preclude rejection, was not realised; the nature of the Bolshevik regime was not foreseen, while the regime of the Provisional Government under Kerensky was seen and increasingly disliked. The

war was still on, the economy was still deteriorating, the state showed its continued oppressive character—hundreds of workers were killed in the summer demonstrations which were followed by a return to repressive measures, including the banning of the Bolsheviks.

Kerensky and Co. succeeded in alienating all sections of society, but dissatisfaction did not mean a desire to go back to tsardom, as was shown by the failure of General Kornilov's attempted counter-revolution in August. Compared with the right-wing threat, even though it had proved ineffectual and had disintegrated for lack of support, the Bolsheviks appeared as a far lesser evil, and almost immediately won majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, and later in several provinces. It now became clear to Lenin that the preconditions for revolution existed in Russia: the "correctness of the proletarian path" becoming "increasingly clear to the masses"; the "incredible" development of a peasant revolt; the weakness of the current executive committee of the ruling class; and furthermore, the international situation, where Lenin saw "widespread mass ferment" marking the "threshold of the world proletarian revolution". In his view it would be treachery to the Russian masses and to the workers of the world if the party did not take decisive action before the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, due to meet on October 25th: and the form of action was to be an armed insurrection.

Lenin had written: "To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class . . . upon the revolutionary spirit of the people . . . upon the crucial moment . . ."[11] but it was actually upon conspiracy and upon their own party that the Bolsheviks relied in October 1917. The entire process of organising the "revolution" took about a fortnight. On the 10th the Party's Central Committee decided for insurrection by a majority of ten to two; on the 16th the Petrograd Soviet set up a Military-Revolutionary Committee of 48 Bolsheviks, 14 left Social-Revolutionaries, and four anarchists (who presumably thought it was a good idea to get rid of the government). On the appointed night, 24th-25th October, the planned coup d'etat was carried out in Petrograd by means of a minor military operation directed by the "handful of professional revolutionaries"[12] comprising the party leadership, supported by several thousand troops and Red Guards. Key points were occupied and within 24 hours the Winter Palace, the centre of resistance, was taken and members of the government (except Kerensky, who had fled) were arrested. Similar seizures of power were effected in other towns: more resistance was encountered in Moscow, but the government forces were nowhere strong enough to defend themselves. Absence of support for the Kerensky regime did not necessarily mean unqualified welcome for the Bolsheviks, whose support, if it was as massive as they claimed, generally stayed passive. Those whom they claimed to represent were presented with a fait accompli. Nowhere did the Bolsheviks place their trust in popular action, nowhere did they ask whether the people wanted to place their trust in the Bolsheviks. October 1917, because of the lack of popular participation, has a much less revolutionary appearance than

February.

But there was, after all, little reason why posters announcing the overthrow of the Provisional Government should not be welcomed by the workers; and in the country the peasants likewise had no motive for opposition to the Bolsheviks, so they remained quiet and indifferent, preoccupied with the land question. The new regime now had to justify itself, and the first step was to grant the outstanding demands for an end to the war and the takeover of land by the peasants. The nationalisation decrees legalised what spontaneous action had already achieved in many places; in October the workers did not wait for party directives before expropriating capitalists. The Bolsheviks in power ratified the people's revolution, but at the same time their achievement of power spelt the beginning of the end for that revolution.

The Communist Manifesto predicted: "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e. of the proletariat organised as the ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible," but at the time of the Paris Commune (1871) Marx stated that the condition of popular revolution was "not to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one group to another, as has been done hitherto, but to destroy this machine". From these premises Lenin concluded that it was necessary to ". . . *insist* on the necessity for a state in this period (of transition from bourgeois to proletarian rule), although in accordance with Marx and the experience of the Paris Commune, not the usual parliamentary bourgeois state, but a state *without* a standing army, *without* a police opposed to the people, *without* an officialdom placed above the people". We know how far from fulfilling this ideal the Russian state is. Although the measures taken by the Bolsheviks to establish themselves as something more than "another episode in the comedy of governmental succession"[13] were similar to those outlined in the Manifesto, the subsequent course of events was quite different from that predicted: "When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character". The Bolshevik consolidation of power did not, of course, lead Russia towards this utopian stage. The state could not begin to wither away while its organs were being retained and strengthened, even if the military machine was called the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and the police and bureaucracy were alleged to be acting with, not against the people.

Marxists as well as libertarians perceived and criticised the direction things were taking, e.g. Rosa Luxembourg's denunciation of Leninist tactics:

> "The essence of socialist society consists in the fact that the great working mass ceases to be a regimented mass and itself lives and directs in free conscious self-determination the whole political and economic life. . . .
>
> "The proletarian revolution needs for its purposes no terror, it hates and abominates murder. . . . It is no desperate attempt of a

minority to fashion the world after its own image, but the action of the great mass of the millions of the people which is called to carry out the mission of history to transform historical necessity into reality."[14]

There was therefore something wrong with the Bolshevik Revolution from the viewpoint of Marxism, and even of Leninism, particularly the libertarian Leninism expressed in "The State and Revolution". Some explanation of this lies in the insecurity of the regime in the midst of a hostile capitalist world, but these are not grounds for justifying such acts of repression as were taken against the Ukrainian peasant anarchists and the Kronstadt sailors in revolt.[15] Voline describes Lenin's attitude to revolution as almost libertarian, except with regard to the state; I suggest that his attitude to the state was almost libertarian, except with regard to the revolution which had brought him to power and which he thought had to be preserved and defended even at the cost of some of its ideals.

The menace of international capitalism was one which Lenin had hoped not to have to deal with. In 1917 he proclaimed the imminence of world revolution, and in the words of E. H. Carr, "Nor was this vision of the rapid spread of a fraternal communication of revolution as fantastic as it may appear to later generations which know that it was belied by the event". There were significant proletarian stirrings in many parts of the world, including Germany, Eastern Europe, "Red" Clydeside, and Latin America—some having little to do with Bolshevism, but almost all given added impetus by the news of the 1917 Revolution. But there was no comparable success to follow that of Russia; instead the forces of world reaction became more determined to combat the danger of popular uprisings and gained an access of strength from their suppression. According to Lenin's earlier statements this should have meant the collapse of the Russian Revolution, and in fact it contributed largely to its perversion into a powerful, centralised Bolshevik state. In a revolutionised world there would have been much more hope for libertarianism.

The failure of world revolution is one reason for denying that a "Marxist Revolution" occurred in Russia in 1917, but it was a reasonably valid expectation at that time, if ever, that the workers of the world might unite, rise and lose their chains. More serious objections to the "Marxist" title are that the October Revolution was a coup d'etat carried out by a self-styled correct leadership distinguished from other political groups mainly by its claim to Marxist philosophy and by its long-term success; and that the Bolshevik take-over interrupted instead of inaugurating the workers' and peasants' revolution which was already proceeding. Marxist ideology as an influence on the course of events is clearly relevant in considering the Bolsheviks and their supporters, although it was not and is not usually claimed to have been the inspiration of the masses. We can still use it to understand and analyse the position and actions of the masses, but the Russian Revolution showed that in two significant ways Marxism did not fit events: firstly, it was demonstrated that the peasants *could* play a revolutionary role; and

secondly, it has proved that the tendency of a state is not to wither away, but to strengthen and perpetuate itself by continuing exploitation of the people.

NOTES.

[1]Chapter title in *A Short History of the USSR*, vol. 2, by the Soviet Academy of Sciences Institute of History; edited by Samsonov et al.
[2]Figures from *A Survey of Russian History* by B. N. Sumner, published 1944.
[3]Phrase from L. Haimson who describes these events in *Slavic Review*, 1964 and 1965.
[4]Sumner (see 2).
[5]e.g. Chayanov *On the Theory of Peasant Economy* written in Russia in the '20s.
[6]C. Hill *Lenin and the Russian Revolution* (1947).
[7]Dates Old Style—add 13 days to translate.
[8]Hill (see 6).
[9]The Soviet History mentions those who disapproved of Lenin's April theses with the Bible-style description "who subsequently betrayed the Revolution".
[10]Voline *1917: The Russian Revolution Betrayed*, published by Freedom Press.
[11]Quotations from Lenin *Selected Works*, vol. 6.
[12]F.-X. Coquin *La Revolution Russe*, 1965.
[13]Preface to Voline (see 10).
[14]Programme for the First Congress of the Spartakusbund, December 1918. Quoted by E. H. Carr in *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 3—see this for international situation.
[15]See Voline *The Unknown Revolution* (Freedom Press); also I. R. Mitchell "Thoughts on the Third Russian Revolution" in ANARCHY 72, 1967.

Kronstadt diary

ALEXNDER BERKMAN

PETROGRAD, 1921

February 28—Strikers' proclamations have appeared on the streets today. They cite cases of workers found frozen to death in their homes. The main demand is for winter clothing and more regular issue of rations. Some of the circulars protest against the suppression of factory meetings. "The people want to take counsel together and find means of relief," they state. Zinoviev asserts the whole trouble is due to Menshevik and Social Revolutionist plotting.

For the first time a political turn is being given to the strikes. Late in the afternoon a proclamation was posted containing larger demands. "A complete change is necessary in the policies of the Government," it reads. "First of all, the workers and peasants need freedom. They don't want to live by the decrees of the Bolsheviki; they want to control their own destinies. We demand the liberation of all arrested socialists and non-partisan workingmen; abolition of martial law; freedom of speech, press, and assembly for all who labour; free election of shop and factory committees, of labour union and Soviet representatives."

March 1—Many arrests are taking place. Groups of strikers surrounded by Chekists, on their way to prison, are a common sight. Much indignation in the city. I hear that several unions have been liquidated and their active members turned over to the Cheka. But proclamations continue to appear. The arbitrary stand of the authorities is having the effect of rousing reactionary tendencies. The situation is growing tense. Calls for the *Utchredilka* (Constituent Assembly) are being heard. A manifesto is circulating, signed by the "Socialist Workers of the Nevsky District", openly attacking the Communist regime. "We know who is afraid of the Constituent Assembly," it declares. "It is they who will no longer be able to rob us. Instead they will have to answer before the representatives of the people for their deceit, their thefts, and all their crimes."

Zinoviev is alarmed; he has wired Moscow for troops. The local garrison is said to be in sympathy with the strikers. Military from the provinces has been ordered to the city: special Communist regiments have already arrived. Extraordinary martial law has been declared today.

March 2—Most disquieting reports. Large strikes have broken out in Moscow. In the Astoria I heard today that armed conflicts have taken place near the Kremlin and blood has been shed. The Bolsheviki claim the coincidence of events in the two capitals as proof of a counter-revolutionary conspiracy.

It is said that Kronstadt sailors have come to the city to look into the cause of trouble. Impossible to tell fact from fiction. The absence of a public press encourages the wildest rumours. The official papers are discredited.

March 3—Kronstadt is disturbed. It disapproves of the Government's drastic methods against the dissatisfied workers. The men of the warship *Petropavlovsk* have passed a resolution of sympathy with the strikers.

It has become known today that on February 28 a committee of sailors was sent to this city to investigate the strike situation. Its report was unfavourable to the authorities. On March 1 the crews of the First and Second Squadrons of the Baltic Fleet called a public meeting at Yakorny Square. The gathering was attended by 16,000 sailors, Red Army men, and workers. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet, the communist Vassiliev, presided. The audience was addressed by Kalinin, President of the Republic, and by Kuzmin, Commissar of the Baltic Fleet. The attitude of the sailors was entirely friendly to the Soviet Government, and Kalinin was met on his arrival in Kronstadt with military honours, music, and banners.

At the meeting the Petrograd situation and the report of the sailors' investigating committee were discussed. The audience was outspoken in its indignation at the means employed by Zinoviev against the workers. President Kalinin and Commissar Kuzmin berated the strikers and denounced the *Petropavlovsk* Resolution as counter-revolutionary. The sailors emphasized their loyalty to the Soviet system, but condemned the Bolshevik bureaucracy. The resolution was passed.

March 4—Great nervous tension in the city. The strikes continue; labour disorders have again taken place in Moscow. A wave of discontent is sweeping the country. Peasant uprisings are reported from Tambov, Siberia, the Ukraine, and Caucasus. The country is on the verge of desperation. It was confidently hoped that with the end of civil war the Communists would mitigate the severe military regime. The Government had announced its intention of economic reconstruction, and the people were eager to co-operate. They looked forward to the lightening of the heavy burdens, the abolition of wartime restrictions, and the introduction of elemental liberties.

The fronts are liquidated, but the old policies continue, and labour militarization is paralyzing industrial revival. It is openly charged that the Communist Party is more interested in entrenching its political power than in saving the Revolution.

An official manifesto appeared today. It is signed by Lenin and Trotsky and declares Kronstadt guilty of mutiny (*myatezh*). The demand of the sailors for free Soviets is denounced as "a counter-revolutionary conspiracy against the proletarian Republic". Members of the Communist Party are ordered into the mills and factories to "rally the workers to the support of the Government against the traitors". Kronstadt is to be suppressed.

The Moscow radio station sent out a message addressed "to all, all, all":

> Petrograd is orderly and quiet, and even the few factories where accusations against the Soviet Government were recently voiced now understand that it is the work of provocators. . . . Just at this moment, when in America a new Republican regime is assuming the reins of government and showing inclination to take up business relations with Soviet Russia, the spreading of lying rumours and the organization of disturbances in Kronstadt have the sole purpose of influencing the American President and changing his policy toward Russia. At the same time the London Conference is holding its sessions, and the spreading of similar rumours must influence also the Turkish delegation and make it more submissive to the demands of the Entente. The rebellion of the *Petropavlovsk* crew is undoubtedly part of a great conspiracy to create trouble within Soviet Russia and to injure our international position. . . . This plan is being carried out within Russia by a Czarist general and former officers, and their activities are supported by the Mensheviki and Social Revolutionists.

The whole Northern District is under martial law and all gatherings are interdicted. Elaborate precautions have been taken to protect the Government institutions. Machine guns are placed in the Astoria, the living quarters of Zinoviev and other prominent Bolsheviki. These preparations are increasing general nervousness. Official proclamations command the immediate return of the strikers to the factories, prohibit suspension of work, and warn the populace against congregating in the streets.

The Committee of Defence has initiated a "cleaning" of the city.

Many workers suspected of sympathizing with Kronstadt have been placed under arrest. All Petrograd sailors and part of the garrison thought to be "untrustworthy" have been ordered to distant points, while the families of Kronstadt sailors living in Petrograd are held as hostages. The Committee of Defence notified Kronstadt that "the prisoners are kept as 'pledges' for the safety of the Commissar of the Baltic Fleet, N. N. Kuzmin, the Chairman of the Kronstadt Soviet, T. Vassiliev, and other Communists. If the least harm be suffered by our comrades, the hostages will pay with their lives".

"We want no bloodshed," Kronstadt wired in reply. "Not a single Communist has been harmed by us."

The Petrograd workers are anxiously awaiting developments. They hope that the intercession of the sailors may turn the situation in their favour. The term of office of the Kronstadt Soviet is about to expire, and arrangements are being made for the coming elections.

On March 2 a conference of delegates took place, at which 300 representatives of the ships, the garrison, the labour unions and factories were present, among them also a number of Communists. The Conference approved the Resolution passed by the mass meeting the previous day. Lenin and Trotsky have declared it counter-revolutionary and proof of a White conspiracy.

RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL MEETING
OF THE CREWS OF THE FIRST AND
SECOND SQUADRONS OF THE
BALTIC FLEET

Held March 1, 1921

Having heard the report of the representatives sent by the General Meeting of Ship Crews to Petrograd to investigate the situation there, Resolved:

1. In view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers and peasants, immediately to hold new elections by secret ballot, the pre-election campaign to have full freedom of agitation among the workers and peasants;

2. To establish freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, for anarchists and Left socialist parties;

3. To secure freedom of assembly for labour unions and peasant organizations;

4. To call a non-partisan conference of the workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt, and of Petrograd Province, no later than March 19, 1921;

5. To liberate 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. To elect a commission to review the cases of those held in prison and concentration camps;

7. To abolish all *politodeli* (political bureaus) because no party should be given special privileges in the propagation of its ideas or receive the financial support of the Government for such purposes. Instead there should be established educational and cultural commissions, locally elected and financed by the Government.

8. To abolish immediately all *zagraditelniye otryadi* (Armed units organized by the Bolsheviki for the purpose of suppressing traffic and confiscating foodstuffs and other products. The irresponsibility and arbitrariness of their methods were proverbial throughout the country).

9. To equalize the rations of all who work, with the exception of those employed in trades detrimental to health;

10. To abolish the Communist fighting detachments in all branches of the Army, as well as the Communist guards kept on duty in mills and factories. Should such guards or military detachments be found necessary, they are to be appointed in the Army from the ranks, and in the factories according to the judgment of the workers;

11. To give the peasants full freedom of action in regard to their land, and also the right to keep cattle, on condition that the peasants manage with their own means; that is, without employing hired labour;

12. To request all branches of the Army, as well as our comrades, the military *kursanti*, to concur in our resolutions;

13. To demand for the latter publicity in the press;

14. To appoint a Travelling Commission of Control;

15. To permit free *kustarnoye* (individual small-scale) production by one's own efforts.

Resolution passed unanimously by Brigade Meeting, two persons refraining from voting.

PETRICHENKO, *Chairman Brigade Meeting.*
PEREPELKIN, *Secretary.*

Resolution passed by an overwhelming majority of the Kronstadt garrison.

VASSILIEV, *Chairman.*

Kalinin and Vassiliev voted against the Resolution.

March 4—Late at night. The extraordinary session of the Petro-Soviet in the Tauride Palace was packed with Communists, mostly youngsters, fanatical and intolerant. Admission by special ticket; a *propusk* (permit) also had to be secured to return home after interdicted hours. Representatives of shops and labour committees were in the galleries, the seats in the main body having been occupied by Communists. Some factory delegates were given the floor, but the moment they attempted to state their case, they were shouted down. Zinoviev repeatedly urged the meeting to give the opposition an opportunity to be heard, but his appeal lacked energy and conviction.

Not a voice was raised in favour of the Constituent Assembly. A millworker pleaded with the Government to consider the complaints of the workers who are cold and hungry. Zinoviev replied that the strikers are enemies of the Soviet regime. Kalinin declared Kronstadt the headquarters of General Kozlovsky's plot. A sailor reminded Zinoviev of the time when he and Lenin were hunted as counter-

revolutionists by Kerensky and were saved by the very sailors whom they now denounce as traitors. Kronstadt demands only honest elections, he declared. He was not allowed to proceed. The stentorian voice and impassioned appeal of Yevdakimov, Zinoviev's lieutenant, wrought the Communists up to a high pitch of excitement. His resolution was passed amid a tumult of protest from the non-partisan delegates and labour men. The resolution declared Kronstadt guilty of a counter-revolutionary attempt against the Soviet regime and demands its immediate surrender. It is a declaration of war.

March 5—Many Bolsheviki refuse to believe that the Soviet resolution will be carried out. It were too monstrous a thing to attack by force of arms the "pride and glory of the Russian Revolution", as Trotsky christened the Kronstadt sailors. In the circle of their friends many Communists threaten to resign from the Party should such a bloody deed come to pass.

Trotsky was to address the Petro-Soviet last evening. His failure to appear was interpreted as indicating that the seriousness of the situation has been exaggerated. But during the night he arrived, and today he issued an ultimatum to Kronstadt:

> The Workers' and Peasants' Government has decreed that Kronstadt and the rebellious ships must immediately submit to the authority of the Soviet Republic. Therefore, I command all who have raised their hand against the socialist fatherland to lay down their arms at once. The obdurate are to be disarmed and turned over to the Soviet authorities. The arrested commissars and other representatives of the Government are to be liberated at once. Only those surrendering unconditionally may count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic.
>
> Simultaneously I am issuing orders to prepare to quell the mutiny and subdue the mutineers by force of arms. Responsibility for the harm that may be suffered by the peaceful population will fall entirely upon the heads of the counter-revolutionary mutineers.
>
> This warning is final.
>
> TROTSKY, ...
> *Chairman Revolutionary Military*
> *Soviet of the Republic.*
>
> KAMENEV,
> *Commander-in-Chief.*

The city is on the verge of panic. The factories are closed, and there are rumours of demonstrations and riots. Threats against Jews are becoming audible. Military forces continue to flow into Petrograd and environs. Trotsky has sent another demand to Kronstadt to surrender, the order containing the threat: "I'll shoot you like pheasants." Even some Communists are indignant at the tone assumed by the Government. It is a fatal error, they say, to interpret the workers' plea for bread as opposition. Kronstadt's sympathy with the strikers and their demand for honest elections have been turned by Zinoviev into a counter-revolutionary plot. I have talked the situation

over with several friends, among them a number of Communists. We feel there is yet time to save the situation. A commission in which the sailors and workers would have confidence, could allay the roused passions and find a satisfactory solution of the pressing problems. It is incredible that a comparatively unimportant incident, as the original strike in the Trubotchny mill, should be deliberately provoked into civil war with all the bloodshed it entails.

The Communists with whom I have discussed the suggestion all favour it, but dare not take the initiative. No one believes in the Kozlovsky story. All agree that the sailors are the staunchest supporters of the Soviets; their object is to compel the authorities to grant needed reforms. To a certain degree they have already succeeded. The *zagraditelniye otryadi*, notoriously brutal and arbitrary, have been abolished in the Petrograd province, and certain labour organizations have been given permission to send representatives to the villages for the purchase of food. During the last two days special rations and clothing have also been issued to several factories. The Government fears a general uprising. Petrograd is now in an "extraordinary state of siege"; being out of doors is permitted only till nine in the evening. But the city is quiet. I expect no serious upheaval if the authorities can be prevailed upon to take a more reasonable and just course. In the hope of opening the road to a peaceful solution, I have submitted to Zinoviev a plan of arbitration signed by persons friendly to the Bolsheviki:

> To the Petrograd Soviet of Labour and Defence,
>
> CHAIRMAN ZINOVIEV:
>
> To remain silent now is impossible, even criminal. Recent events impel us anarchists to speak out and to declare our attitude in the present situation.
>
> The spirit of ferment manifest among the workers and sailors is the result of causes that demand our serious attention. Cold and hunger had produced discontent, and the absence of any opportunity for discussion and criticism is forcing the workers and sailors to air their grievances in the open.
>
> White-Guardist bands wish and may try to exploit this dissatisfaction in their own class interests. Hiding behind the workers and sailors they throw out slogans of the Constituent Assembly, of free trade, and similar demands.
>
> We anarchists have long exposed the fiction of these slogans, and we declare to the whole world that we will fight with arms against any counter-revolutionary attempt, in co-operation with all friends of the Social Revolution and hand in hand with the Bolsheviki.
>
> Concerning the conflict between the Soviet Government and the workers and sailors, we hold that it must be settled not by force of arms, but by means of comradely agreement. Resorting to bloodshed, on the part of the Soviet Government, will not—in the given situation—intimidate or quieten the workers. On the contrary, it will serve only to aggravate matters and will strengthen

the hands of the Entente and of internal counter-revolution.

More important still, the use of force by the Workers' and Peasants' Government against workers and sailors will have a demoralizing effect upon the international revolutionary movement and will result in incalculable harm to the Social Revolution.

Comrades Bolsheviki, bethink yourselves before it is too late! Do not play with fire: you are about to take a most serious and decisive step.

We hereby submit to you the following proposition: Let a commission be selected to consist of five persons, inclusive of two anarchists. The commission is to go to Kronstadt to settle the dispute by peaceful means. In the given situation this is the most radical method. It will be of international revolutionary significance.

ALEXANDER BERKMAN
EMMA GOLDMAN
PERKUS
PETROVSKY

Petrograd, March 5, 1921.

March 6—Today Kronstadt sent out by radio a statement of its position. It reads:

Our cause is just, we stand for the power of Soviets, not parties. We stand for freely elected representatives of the labouring masses. The substitute Soviets manipulated by the Communist Party have always been deaf to our needs and demands; the only reply we have ever received was shooting. . . . Comrades! They deliberately pervert the truth and resort to most despicable defamation. . . . In Kronstadt the whole power is exclusively in the hands of the revolutionary sailors, soldiers, and workers—not with counter-revolutionists led by some Kozlovsky, as the lying Moscow radio tries to make you believe. . . . Do not delay, Comrades! Join us, get in touch with us: demand admission to Kronstadt for your delegates. Only they will tell you the whole truth and will expose the fiendish calumny about Finnish bread and Entente offers.

Long live the revolutionary proletariat and the peasantry!

Long live the power of freely elected Soviets.

March 7—Distant rumbling reaches my ears as I cross the Nevsky. It sounds again, stronger and nearer, as if rolling toward me. All at once I realize that artillery is being fired. It is 6 P.M. Kronstadt has been attacked!

Days of anguish and cannonading. My heart is numb with despair; something has died within me. The people on the streets look bowed with grief, bewildered. No one trusts himself to speak. The thunder of heavy guns rends the air.

March 17—Kronstadt has fallen today.

Thousands of sailors and workers lie dead in its streets. Summary execution of prisoners and hostages continues.

March 18—The victors are celebrating the anniversary of the Commune of 1871. Trotsky and Zinoviev denounce Thiers and Gallifet for the slaughter of the Paris rebels. . . .