

THE MARXIST-LENINIST RESEARCH BUREAU  
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ANARCHISM

INTRODUCTION

An anarchist (from the Greek 'anarkhos', meaning

" . . . . without a chief or head,  
(Charles. T. Onions (Ed.): 'The Oxford Dictionary of English  
Etymology'; Oxford; 1985; p. 35).

is defined as

" . . . one who admits of no ruling power'.  
( 'Oxford English Dictionary', Volume 1; Oxford; 1989; p.  
438).

and anarchism as

" . . . the principles or practice of . . . anarchists".  
( 'Oxford English Dictionary', Volume 1; Oxford; 1989; p.  
438).

In other words, anarchism

" . . . looks upon all law and government as invasive,  
the twin sources of nearly all social evils. It therefore  
advocates the abolition of all government as the term is  
understood today".  
( 'Encyclopedia Americana', Volume 1; New York; 1977; p.  
777).

Bearing important similarities to anarchism is syndicalism,  
defined as a

" . . . movement which started in France ('syndicat' is  
the French word for trade union) in the 1890s, and aimed at  
transferring the control and ownership of the means of  
production not to the state but to the unions".  
(Alan Bullock & Stephen Trombley (Eds.) 'The New Fontana  
Dictionary of Modern Thought'; London; 1999; p. 853).

The syndicalist movement was permeated by

" . . . the Bakuninist anarchist tradition, particularly  
in France, Switzerland, Italy and Spain",  
(Alan Bullock & Stephen Trombley (Eds.): *ibid.*; p. 853)..

giving rise to anarcho-syndicalism, which was an

" . . . attempt, which reached its climax at the turn  
of the (20th  
-- Ed.) century, to unite anarchist and trade union  
politics. . . . It  
vanished after World War I".  
(Alan Bullock & Stephen Trombley (Eds.): *ibid.*; p. 30).

The founding ideologists of anarchism were the British  
social philosopher William Godwin (1756-1836), the German 'Max  
Stirner' (pseudonym of Johann Schmidt) (1806-56), the French

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-65), and the Russians Mikhail

Bakunin (1814-76) and (Prince) Pyotr Kropotkin (1842-1921).

#### THE PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM-LENINISM

According to the founding statement of the Communist International in January 1919, the aims of Marxist-Leninists are that the working class should seize political power, establish its rule ('the dictatorship of the proletariat') and proceed to build a socialist society:

"The working class must first take possession of the organised political power of the state and by its aid crush the resistance of the capitalist class and organise society anew".

(Friedrich Engels: Letter to Philipp van Patten, 18 April 1883, in: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: 'Selected Correspondence: 1846-1895'; London; 1943; p. 416-17).

"The task of the proletariat . . . is to seize State power. . . . The seizure of state power means the destruction of the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie and the organisation of a new proletarian apparatus of power.

This new apparatus of power should embody the dictatorship of the working class. . . . that is, it should be the instrument for the systematic suppression of the exploiting classes and for their expropriation. . . .

The dictatorship of the proletariat must be the lever for the immediate expropriation of capital and for the abolition of private property in the means of production and their transformation into national property".

(Invitation to the 1st Congress of the Communist International, in: Jane Degras (Ed.): 'The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents', Volume 1; London; 1971; p. 2)

In other words, the cornerstone of Marxism-Leninism

" . . . is the masses, whose emancipation, according to its tenets, is the principal condition for the emancipation of the individual. That is to say, according to the tenets of Marxism, the emancipation of the individual is impossible until the masses are emancipated. Accordingly, its slogan is: 'Everything for the masses'".

(Josef V. Stalin: 'Anarchism or Socialism?' (hereafter listed as 'Josef V. Stalin: 1952'), in: 'Works', Volume 1; Moscow: 1952; p. 299).

Thus, according to Marxism-Leninism, in order to prepare for and carry through the socialist revolution it is necessary to build

" . . . comprehensive, centralised and disciplined proletarian organisations",

(Programme of the Communist International, adopted at its 6th Congress, in: Jane Degras (Ed.): op. cit., Volume 2; p. 518).

and to adopt

" . . . methods of mass organisation and mass struggle".

(Programme of the Communist International: in: Jane Degras (Ed.): ibid,

THE PRINCIPLES OF ANARCHISM  
Abolition of the State

In contrast to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, anarchism stands, first of all, for the elimination of every kind of state, including the state of working class political power, the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"The State connotes DOMINATION. . . . Consequently, there is no other means of emancipating the people economically and politically, of providing them with well-being and freedom, but to abolish the State, all States". (Mikhail Bakunin: 'A Criticism of State Socialism' (hereafter listed as 'Mikhail Bakunin: 1968'); London; 1968; p. 8).

Both anarchists (whom anarchists regard as 'revolutionary socialists') and Marxist-Leninists (whom anarchists regard as 'authoritarian communists') claim that they desire

" . . . the creation of a new social order".  
(Mikhail Bakunin: 'Marxism, Freedom and the State' (hereafter listed as 'Mikhail Bakunin: 1950'); London; 1950; p. 18).

But whereas Marxist-Leninists maintain that the building of this new social order must begin with the seizure of political power, by the working class:

"The Communists believe they must organise the workers' forces to take possession of the political power of the State".  
(Mikhail Bakunin (1950): *ibid.*; p. 18).

anarchists maintain that the building of the new social order must begin with the liquidation of the state; that is to say, they

" . . . organise with a view to . . . the liquidation of the State".  
(Mikhail Bakunin (1950); *ibid.*; p. 18).

Abstention from Political Activity

Secondly, anarchists preach abstention from political activity. For example, the 'International Workingmen's Association' (the 'First International')

" . . . was set up in 1864 by trade unionists",  
(Paul Thomas: 'Karl Marx and the Anarchists'; London; 1980; p. 255)

and became an ideological battleground between Marxists and the anarchists, the latter insisting that the International

" . . . was organised not for the political struggle, but only for

economic ends".  
(Mikhail Bakunin: 'The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State', in: Sam Dolgoff (Ed.): 'Bakunin on Anarchy': Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism'

(hereafter listed as 'Mikhail Bakunin (1973)'); London; 1973; p. 301).

Hence, according to anarchism, any attempt to commit the International

" . . . to a positive political policy . . . will be immediately demoralised".

(Mikhail Bakunin (1973): *ibid.*; p. 301).

Indeed, Marx pointed out that anarchists

" . . . scorn all revolutionary action, i.e., action arising out of the class struggle itself, all concentrated social movements, and therefore all those which can be carried through by political means (e.g., the legal limitation of the working day)".

(Karl Marx: Letter to Dr. Ludwig Kugelmann, 9 October 1866, in: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: *op. cit.*; p. 214).

and Engels confirmed that

" . . . as for Bakunin the state is the main evil, nothing must be done which can maintain the existence of any state, whether it be a republic, a monarchy or whatever it may be. Hence, therefore, complete abstention from all politics. To perpetrate a political action, and especially to take part in an election, would be a betrayal of principle".

(Friedrich Engels: Letter to Theodor Cuno, 24 January 1872; in: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: *ibid.*; p. 320).

as does the Programme of the Communist International:

"Anarchism . . . denies the need for comprehensive, centralised and disciplined proletarian organisations, and so leaves the proletariat defenceless against the powerful capitalist organisations".

(Programme of the Communist International', in: Jane Degras (Ed.): *op. cit.*, Volume 2; p. 518). . . .

#### 'Libertarianism'

One of Proudhon's most famous phrases is

" . . . the principle of the revolution . . . is Liberty".

(Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: 'Les Confessions d'un R,volutionnaire'; Brussels; 1849; p. 280).

while Kropotkin describes individual liberty as

" . . . that most valuable of conquests".

(Pyotr Kropotkin: 'The Place of Anarchism in Socialistic Evolution'; London; 1886; p. 14).

Consequently, anarchists sometimes call their doctrine

5

libertarianism.

However, the liberty which anarchists demand is not clearly defined. In particular, the fact that, in a capitalist society, liberty for the working class involves restricting the liberty of

the capitalist class, is evaded.

In fact, the 'liberty' which the anarchists demand is the liquidation of the state, since, in the view of anarchists

" . . . no state whatever can be legitimate".  
(Alan Bullock & Stephen Trombley (Eds.): op. cit.; p. 479).

But, according to Marxism-Leninism, socialism cannot be built unless the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat has first been established:

"The revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory, and to push forward to the final victory of socialism unless, at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principal mainstay".  
(Josef V. Stalin: 'The Foundations of Leninism', in: 'Works', Volume 6; Moscow; 1953; p. 112).

#### Individual Terrorism

Some, though not all, anarchists carry out acts of individual terrorism (such as assassinations, bombings, kidnappings, etc.)

" . . . which it was mistakenly thought would arouse the people to undertake their own liberation. . . . A few mainly isolated individuals took to the practice of assassinating symbolic figures to draw attention to injustice. During the 1890s a king of Italy, a president of France, a president of the United States, an Empress of Austria and a prime minister of Spain fell victim".  
(George Woodcock: 'Anarchism: A Historical Introduction', in: George Woodcock (Ed.): 'The Anarchist Reader'; London; 1977; p. 43).

For example, Kropotkin writes:

"Perhaps it may be said . . . 'What right have you . . . to kill . . . a tyrant?

Perovskaya (Sofia Perovskaya (1853-81), Russian anarchist -- Ed.) and her comrades killed the Russian Tsar. And all mankind, . . . recognised their right to do as they did".

(Pyotr Kropotkin: 'Anarchist Morality', in: Roger N. Baldwin): 'Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets'; New York; 1927; p. 99-100)..

Bakunin's enthusiasm for the 'propaganda of the deed'

" . . . swept Europe and America at the turn of the century. . . . Even Malatesta, Kropotkin and Emma Goldman were tempted by the thought that assassinating the rich and powerful would lead to a workers'

6

revolt".

(Alan Bullock & Stephen Trombley (Eds.): op. cit.; p. 30).

In fact,

". . . incidents attributed to anarchists include the attempted assassination of German Emperor William I in 1878; the attempt on the life of the German princes in 1883; and the assassinations of President Sadi Carnot of France in 1894, of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria in 1898, of King Humbert I of Italy in 1900, and of US President McKinley in 1901".  
( 'Encyclopedia Americana', Volume 1; New York; 1977; p. 778).

In contrast, the Communist International

" . . . decisively rejects individual terrorism. In rejecting this method of struggle, it is guided exclusively by the principles of revolutionary expediency. This has nothing in common with the petty-bourgeois attitude to the revolutionary use of force. . . . Communists reject the employment of individual terror since individual acts which attempt to take the place of the mass struggle can only demoralise our movement, split our forces and diminish our striking power".  
(Theses on Current Questions of the International Communist Movement, 6th ECCI Plenum, in: Jane Degras (Ed.): op. cit., Volume 2; p. 257).

#### The Struggle in the International Movement

In Lenin's words, Marxist-Leninists understand that

" . . . after the proletariat has conquered political power it must utterly destroy the old state machine and substitute for it a new one consisting of the organisation of armed workers. . . . The anarchists . . . deny that the revolutionary proletariat should utilise its state power, its revolutionary dictatorship".  
(Vladimir I. Lenin: 'The State and Revolution: The Marxist Doctrine of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution', in: 'Selected Works', Volume 7; London; 1946;, p. 106).

There is, therefore, an irreconcilable contradiction between this Marxist aim to establish a state of working class power and the anarchist aim of liquidating all states, including the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"The Anarchists are real enemies of Marxism. Accordingly, . . . a real struggle must be waged against real enemies".  
(Josef V. Stalin: op. cit.; p. 299).

The 'International Workingmen's Association' (the 'First International')

" . . . was set up in 1864 by trade unionists",  
(Paul Thomas: op. cit.; p. 255).

in order

" . . . to create a central means of unity and cooperation between

7

the associations of workers which already exist in the various countries and aim at the same goal, namely, the

protection, the rise and the complete emancipation of the working class". (Statutes of International Workingmen's Association,, in: Paul Thomas: *ibid.*; p. 255).

and the annual congresses of the International

" . . . turned into battles between Marx and Bakunin, who headed the Italian, Spanish and French Swiss contingents'. (George Woodcock (Ed.): *op. cit.*; p. 41).

since

" . . . Marx opposed this anarchist nonsense from the first day it was put forward . . . by Bakunin. The whole . . . internal history of the International Workingmen's Association is evidence of this. From 1867 onwards the anarchists were trying, by the most infamous methods, to conquer the leadership of the International; the main hindrance in their way was Marx". (Friedrich Engels: Letter to Philipp van Patten, 18 April 1883, in: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: *op. cit.*; p. 268).

The result of five years of struggle

" . . . was the expulsion, at the Hague Congress, Sept. 1872, of the Anarchists from the International, and the man who did most to secure that expulsion was Marx". (Friedrich Engels: 'On the Occasion of Karl Marx's Death, in: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels & Vladimir I. Lenin: 'Anarchism and Anarcho-sydicalism'; Moscow; 1977; p. 172).

The struggle continued in the early years of the Communist International. As Lenin wrote to the Communist Party of Germany in August 1921:

"Until sufficiently strong, experienced and influential Communist Parties have been built, at least in the principal countries, we shall have to tolerate semi-anarchist elements at our international congresses, and to a certain extent it is even useful to do so. It is useful in so far as these elements serve as a 'bad example' for inexperienced Communists, and also in so far as they themselves are still capable of learning something. All over the world anarchism is splitting up, . . . into two trends: . . . one in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the other opposed to it. We must allow this process of disintegration among the anarchists to mature and become ripe. . . .

It goes without saying, however, that the semi-anarchist elements can and should be tolerated only within certain limits. In Germany we tolerated them for quite a long time. The Third Congress of the Communist International submitted an ultimatum to them. . . . If, now, they have voluntarily resigned from the Communist International, all the better. . . . They have saved us the trouble of expelling them". (Vladimir I. Lenin: 'A Letter to the German Communists', in: 'Selected Works', Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 291).

In recent times, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, small anarchist groups were active in a number of countries:

"More or less at the same time the 'United Red Army' developed in Japan out of the student organisation 'Zenga Kuren', the 'American Students for a Democratic Society' (SDS) gave birth to the 'Weathermen', and some of the German students . . . founded the 'Red Army Fraction' (RAF). . . . There were other such groups in Italy (the 'Red Brigade'), and on a much smaller scale in Britain ('Angry Brigade'), France ('Direct Action'), Belgium ('Fighting Communist Cells') . . . and Turkey".  
(Walter Laqueur: 'The Age of Terrorism'; London; 1987; p. 236).

#### CONCLUSION

Since anarchism rejects the principles of scientific socialism, of Marxism-Leninism, it can play only a negative, reactionary, disruptive role in the struggle for socialism.

This is well illustrated by the activity of the (anarchist) Makhno Movement in Soviet Russia after the socialist revolution of November 1917. This was led by the Ukrainian anarchist Nestor Makhno (1899-1934), and from 1918 to 1921 .

" . . . fought . . . the Red Army without respite".  
(Daniel & Gabriel Cohn-Bendit: 'Obsolete Communism: The Left-wing Alternative'; London; 1968; p. 220).

until

" . . . the summer of 1921, when it was finally crushed by the Red Army".  
(Daniel & Gabriel Cohn-Bendit: *ibid.*; p. 220).

The Manifesto of the Insurrectional Makhnovite Army declared that the aim of the movement was the abolition of the Soviet state:

"Only by overthrowing all governments, every representative of authority, by destroying all political, economic and authoritarian lies, wherever they are found, by destroying the state, . . . can we . . . advance . . . towards socialism".,  
(Manifesto of Insurrectional Makhnovite Army, in: Daniel & Gabriel Cohn-Bendit: *ibid.*; p. 222).

In August 1921, Makhno

" . . . was forced . . . to surrender to the Romanian authorities".  
(*'Great Soviet Encyclopedia'*; Volume 15; New York; 1974; p. 344).

#### CONCLUSION

Anarchism thus represents a reactionary anti-socialist political trend. It is

" . . . a reflection of the petty-bourgeois protest against the

9

development of large-scale capitalist production, which tended to ruin the petty-bourgeoisie, against the exploiting essence of the



state, which safeguarded the interests of big capital".  
(Preface to: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels & Vladimir I.  
Lenin: op. cit.; p. 7).

and Engels bluntly depicts it as the creation of

" . . . would-be great men who would like on the cheap  
to play an important role. It seems as if anarchism were  
specially made for this purpose".  
(Friedrich Engels: Letter to Johann Becker, 16 December 1882,  
in: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels & Vladimir I. Lenin: *ibid*,  
p. 170).

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