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# Heresy

from the Anarchist Encyclopedia — S. Faure

Sébastien Faure

1934

**Heresy:** (from the Greek haireisis; from hairen to choose.)  
Doctrine condemned by the Catholic Church

As soon as it was in possession of a certain power thanks to its recognition by kings and emperors, the Roman church forgot all of the persecutions suffered by its founders.

As soon as it was armed with its redoubtable influence over monarchs and lords, it delivered a pitiless and bloody war against those men who didn't bow to its commands. The fifteen centuries during which it reigned as the uncontested master in Europe are nothing but a long series of crimes that it perpetrated and committed in the name of religion. There were veritable massacres of entire populations.

The most famous are: the massacre of the Albigensians (13<sup>th</sup> century), the wars of the Reformation, St. Bartholomew (1572), the dragonnades of the Cevennes, the Massacre of the Innocents.

The Council of Verona (1183) ordered the bishops of Lombardy to deliver to justice those heretics who refused to convert. A little later a secret tribunal was established: the Inquisition, for the seeking out and punishment of heretics. Up till

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Retrieved on November 15, 2011 from marxists.org

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the last century this tribunal sent to the stake, after horrible tortures, people suspected of heresy. In 1766 a young man of 19, the chevalier de La Barre, was decapitated, then burned, for not having saluted a procession and on suspicion of having mutilated a crucifix.

Over the past fifty years the Church has lost much of its influence and aside from Spain, where it still spreads terror, it is almost completely disarmed in confronting heresy. Which is a great good.

Everything that constituted a step towards progress was considered a heresy by the church. Did we not see the Italian mathematician Galileo, for having written a book in which he explained that the sun is the center of the solar system and not the earth, that the latter circled around the sun like the other planets that reflect its light, did we not see this 70 year old man forced to abjure on bended knee in 1633 his so-called heresy? And did he not die blind because of the nine years of semi-captivity inflicted on him by the Inquisition?

At the Council of Trent (1545–1563) the church created a Congregation of the Index, which has as object the examination of published books and their condemnation if they are judged dangerous. Up till the 19<sup>th</sup> century the effect of its condemnation was to have the book burned...and sometimes its author! This congregation still exists; fortunately its judgments are inoperative.

As we have seen, a heresy almost always contained a large measure of truth.

What is more, the definition given by bourgeois dictionaries suffices to affirm the revolutionary character of heresy.

“False or absurd opinion,” is written in the Larousse.

Is it not thus that all the privileged have qualified the opinions of thinkers who concluded that revolt and the total reorganization of society were necessary?

Anarchism is thus considered a heresy by all political parties, because it demonstrates the harmfulness and duplicity of all the so-called doctrines of all colors.

But it is a heresy that will succeed in prevailing and which will finish by ruining all the commandments of all religious and political churches.