

We Do Not Fear Anarchy, We Invoke It

The First International and the Origins of the Anarchist Movement

Robert Graham



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★ WE INVOKE IT ★**

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Introduction

On September 28, 1864, delegates representing European workers met at Saint Martin's Hall in London, England, to create the International Workingmen's Association (the "International" or "IWMA"). Stirring speeches were given regarding "the fraternity of peoples" and the "cause of labour."¹ But, who would have suspected that from this organization would ultimately spring an international anarchist movement? After all, none of the delegates identified themselves as anarchists and there were no recognizably anarchist movements in Europe at the time.

The stated purpose of the organization was not even to create an international revolutionary movement, but to provide support for workers across national boundaries in their struggles against an increasingly international capital. In response to strikes in England and France, capitalists were bringing in lower-paid "blacklegs," or "scabs," from other countries to replace striking workers, foiling attempts to improve working conditions. Work was also being sent abroad to countries with lower wages and workers who could be more easily exploited.

Yet, by 1872, when the anarchist Michael Bakunin (1814–1876) and his associate, James Guillaume (1844–1916), were expelled from the International at the instigation of Karl Marx (1818–1883), a significant portion of the International's constitutive associations had adopted an anarchist stance. Those associations reconstituted the International along antiauthoritarian lines and provided the foundation for an international anarchist movement.

The purpose of this book is to describe how this came about. I do not pretend to present a work of original scholarship. My goal is simply to present a historical narrative, which, unlike other works on the International, focuses on the anarchist currents within the organization and how, from these various currents, an international anarchist movement emerged in the early 1870s. In the process, I will be referring to some original documentation neglected in other works on the subject. My hope is to dispel some common misconceptions and sometimes misrepresentations regarding the ways in which anarchist ideas spread within the International, leading to the creation of avowedly anarchist movements, primarily in France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland, but also in Russia, Germany, and the Americas.

Before the International was founded in 1864, there were people who sometimes identified themselves as anarchists, but it would be difficult to describe them as forming part of an anarchist movement. One of the premises of this book is that anarchism only assumed the status of a genuine movement after people with anarchist sympathies became involved in popular struggles, starting with the struggle of European workers for self-emancipation. Consequently, I distinguish between anarchism as a body of ideas and anarchist movements.

In the first chapter, I survey the various anarchist currents in Europe that predated the International. I do this in order to show that anarchist ideas had already emerged in Europe, particularly during the revolutionary struggles that swept across the continent in 1848–1849, and to

¹ L.E. Mins (ed.), *Founding of the First International: A Documentary Record* (New York: International Publishers, 1937), 5.

demonstrate what influence, if any, they had on the emergence of anarchist tendencies in the International.

Despite the focus of this book, I do not agree with the view that “anarchism” can only be conceived as a historically embodied movement or movements having a common genesis in the struggles within the International between the so-called authoritarians (Karl Marx, his allies, and the “Blanquists,” followers of the French revolutionary Auguste Blanqui) and antiauthoritarians (Bakunin and his associates). Such a “genealogical” or “historicist” approach conflates anarchism as a body of ideas with anarchism as a movement. It results not only in a Eurocentric approach to anarchism, but one that excludes from the anarchist pantheon even those European anarchists who were active prior to the founding of the International, such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) and Joseph Déjacque (1821–1864).²

This approach also precludes the possibility of anarchist ideas and movements emerging independently at different times and places in different circumstances. If during an era of social upheaval in China around 300 CE, a Daoist like Bao Jingyan expressed views substantially similar to those expressed 1500 years later by European anarchists during another era of social upheaval, and the latter’s views are generally accepted as “anarchist,” then there is no reason why Bao Jingyan cannot be described as an anarchist too.³

Bao Jingyan’s motto was “Neither Lord Nor Subject,” which is remarkably similar to the nineteenth-century anarchist battle cry, “Neither God Nor Master.” As with later self-proclaimed anarchists, Bao Jingyan opposed hierarchy and domination, seeing them as the cause of poverty, crime, exploitation, and social conflict; rejected religious beliefs that justified such a state of affairs; looked forward to the revolt of the masses; and advocated a voluntary society without rank or status, and the inequalities of wealth and power that inevitably accompany them. If adherence to such beliefs by a European worker or intellectual in the nineteenth century qualifies them as an anarchist, then so should Bao Jingyan should qualify as well, despite the temporal and geographical distances that separate them.

In order to determine whether someone’s views, or a movement, can be described as “anarchist,” an analytical approach is unavoidable. One must come up with some identifying or defining characteristics of anarchist doctrines and movements that distinguish them from other ideas and movements. One cannot simply rely on self-identification. Just because someone claims to be an anarchist does not make it so. By the same token, just because someone never identified him- or herself as an anarchist does not mean that his or her ideas cannot be qualified as anarchist.

Neither can anarchism be reduced to the ideas (and actions) of particular individuals. This sometimes leads to the fallacy that anarchism is whatever particular anarchists say it is, regardless of their personal idiosyncrasies, inconsistencies, and foibles; or, worse, that anarchism is whatever these individuals said and did, before they identified themselves as anarchists (Bakunin) and after they had ceased to do so (Proudhon). If anarchism is nothing but the sum of all the ideas and actions of everyone who ever identified themselves as anarchists, then anarchism would simply be an incoherent mishmash of contradictory ideas and approaches.

² Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*, (Counter-Power Volume 1), (Oakland: AK Press, 2009).

³ Etienne Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, trans. H.M. Wright (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 243; Robert Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One: From Anarchy to Anarchism (300 CE –1939)*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005), 1–4; A. John Rapp, *Daoism and Anarchism: Critiques of State Autonomy in Ancient and Modern China* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012).

As will be seen, the members of the International who came to describe themselves as anarchists did so on the basis of some fundamental tenets that they quite self-consciously argued distinguished them from other currents in the International. They also recognized as anarchists people who held similar views and had influenced them in coming to their own conceptions of anarchism, such as Proudhon. What, then, were those views that distinguished them, and those they regarded as their precursors, as anarchists?

During his polemics within the International against the “authoritarians” and “bourgeois socialists,” Bakunin set forth six primary grounds for distinguishing his anarchism from the views of his opponents: first, his rejection of any kind of institutional, coercive authority (antiauthoritarianism); second, his opposition to the modern state, even as a “transitional” power to abolish capitalism (antistatism); third, his opposition to any participation in existing systems of government or “bourgeois politics” (antiparlamentarianism); fourth and fifth, his advocacy of voluntary federation during the struggle against capitalism and the state and in a postrevolutionary society (federalism), so that the revolutionary means were consistent with the revolutionary ends (libertarianism); and sixth, his call for the immediate abolition of the state and capitalism through direct action, including insurrection and the expropriation of the means of production by the workers themselves (social revolution).

In identifying Proudhon as an anarchist, Bakunin focused on Proudhon’s critique of the state and private property, his opposition to the authoritarian politics of the Jacobins and any sort of “revolutionary” dictatorship, and his concept of “agro-industrial federation,” a libertarian form of socialism wherein the state and capitalism are replaced by voluntary federations of agricultural, industrial, and communal organizations with no central authority above them. Where he differed from Proudhon was in his advocacy of insurrection and expropriation and in his rejection of Proudhon’s view that capitalism and the state could be gradually supplanted through the creation and ever-widening expansion of voluntary associations of workers, peasants, professionals, and other functional groups with access to free credit through their own credit unions, or a “people’s bank.”

Following Bakunin’s approach, anarchism, whether his, Proudhon’s, or someone else’s, can be distinguished from other doctrines on the basis of its antiauthoritarianism, antistatism, antiparlamentarianism, federalism, libertarianism, and advocacy of direct action. Bakunin included Proudhon in the anarchist camp despite Proudhon’s opposition to insurrection and expropriation and his gradualist approach. Bakunin recognized that, despite these differences, Proudhon was still an anarchist. Both advocated direct action, though Proudhon favored a nonviolent approach.

While Proudhon and Bakunin were both proponents of “social” revolution, Proudhon’s social revolution was conceived in gradual, pacific terms, not in insurrectionary terms, in contrast to Bakunin. Furthermore, all socialists of their era agreed on the need for some kind of “social” revolution, given the failure of the preceding “political” revolutions (the French Revolution and the European revolutions of 1848–1849). Consequently, advocacy of social revolution does not distinguish anarchism from other doctrines, such as socialism.

For the purposes of this study, therefore, I will proceed on the basis that anarchism can be defined as a view that rejects coercive authority, the state, and participation in existing systems of government, and that advocates federalism (or voluntary association), libertarianism, and direct action. This is consistent with Proudhon and Bakunin’s conceptions of anarchism and, as will be seen in the chapters that follow, the views of those members of the International who came to identify themselves as anarchists and to create an international anarchist movement.

Arguably, some of these six defining characteristics can be derived from the others. For example, the state and government can be seen simply as specific examples of coercive authority, so that antiauthoritarianism is the primary defining characteristic of anarchism. As Sébastien Faure (1858–1942) put it, “whoever denies Authority and fights against it is an Anarchist.”⁴ Be that as it may, in historical terms, I believe that it was on the basis of these six characteristics that anarchism came to be distinguished from other political orientations. These six criteria help flesh out the content of anarchism in a more substantive sense, providing a more robust and “political” conception of anarchism as something more than mere antiauthoritarianism. To define anarchism simply on the basis of what it is that anarchists oppose fails to take into account the positive anarchist alternatives to authoritarian institutions and practices that also distinguish anarchism from other doctrines.

The antiauthoritarian wing of the International can be seen as a precursor to both anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism. The term “syndicalism” is derived from the French word for trade union, *syndicate*. Revolutionary syndicalism can be broadly defined as the doctrine that the working class, through its own trade union organizations, can abolish capitalism and the states that protect it, by means of working-class forms of direct action, such as strikes, boycotts, and sabotage, culminating in a general strike, the expropriation of the capitalists by the workers themselves, and the creation of workers’ self-management.

Revolutionary syndicalists also favored federalist forms of organization similar to the voluntary federations advocated by anarchists. However, some syndicalists did not completely oppose political participation, arguing only that the revolutionary unions themselves should remain independent from political parties, while their members were free as individuals to participate in politics and to support the political party of their choice. Thus, revolutionary syndicalism can be described as “apolitical” in this sense, whereas anarchism is explicitly “antipolitical”; that is, anarchists are opposed to participation in existing political institutions, political parties, and elections. Syndicalists who adopted an anarchist stance often referred to themselves as “anarcho-syndicalists” to distinguish themselves from the “apolitical” revolutionary syndicalists. As we shall see, there were both anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist elements in the International.

My use of the term “libertarianism” to refer to Bakunin’s view, shared by other anarchists and most syndicalists, that “liberty can only be created by liberty,” may be confusing to contemporary readers but is historically accurate.⁵ Long before advocates of *laissez-faire* capitalism began identifying themselves as “libertarians” around the mid-twentieth century, anarchists had already been calling themselves libertarians as early as Joseph Déjacque in the 1850s.⁶ During the 1890s in France, “libertarian” became a popular synonym for “anarchist” because people who identified themselves as “anarchists” were liable to imprisonment under the so-called *lois scélérates*, or “exceptional” laws, banning anarchist propaganda.⁷ “Libertarian socialism” and “libertarian communism” became terms used by anarchists to distinguish their views from what they regarded as the “authoritarian” socialism and communism of the Marxists, primarily on the basis that anarchists advocated libertarian means for achieving anarchist ends.

Another point of clarification: the International Workingmen’s Association is today commonly referred to as the First International. However, other than in the title to this book, I will be

⁴ George Woodcock (ed.), *The Anarchist Reader* (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 62.

⁵ Michael Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, ed. by A. Lehning (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 270.

⁶ Joseph Déjacque, “The Revolutionary Question,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 60–63.

⁷ George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (New York: Meridian, 1962), 314.

referring to it simply as the “International.” This is mainly because that is how it was referred to at the time of the events recounted in this book. The International only came to be referred to as the “First” International after the founding of the so-called “Second” International in 1889, which was dominated by Marxist political parties, and from which the anarchists were excluded in 1896 on the basis that they were opposed to participation in existing political systems. Then there was the Marxist-Leninist “Third” International created by the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Russian Revolution, which became an instrument of Soviet foreign policy, and the “Fourth” International, founded by Trotsky and his followers in 1938 after his break with Stalin.

The tendentious use of the “Second,” “Third,” and “Fourth” International labels (and then “Fifth” or “Sixth,” *ad infinitum* or *ad nauseum*, depending on your point of view) suggests that the only legitimate heirs to the “First” International were the various Marxist political parties, whether social democratic or Marxist-Leninist. However, as I hope to show in this book, the anarchists were as much, if not more so, the successors to the “First” International as were subsequent Marxist political parties. In fact, when the International was split in 1872 by the effective expulsion of the anarchists at the Hague Congress, there were no clearly Marxist political parties or movements, nor would there be until the 1880s.

One of the main purposes of this book is to show that the so-called “First” International played a much more important role in the emergence of anarchist movements in Europe than it did in relation to Marxist ones. After the split in 1872, the antiauthoritarian wing of the International continued for several years, and it was through the debates within the antiauthoritarian International that not only anarchist movements but also the basic principles of modern anarchism were developed.

One final note regarding the front cover and title to this book: the image on the front cover is of a *pétroleuse*, an almost mythical figure created by the reactionaries following their suppression of the Paris Commune during the last week of May 1871, which became known as “the bloody week.”⁸ The *pétroleuses* were accused of setting fire to Paris while it was under attack by French army troops sent in by the national government in Versailles. Louise Michel (1830–1905) admitted at her trial before the military tribunal that she participated in the burning of Paris, as she “wanted to block the Versailles invaders with a barrier of flames,” but claimed that she had acted on her own.⁹ Some 30,000 men, women, and children were killed by the Versailles army and by enraged mobs of “bourgeois,” upper- and middle-class Parisians who despised the Communards for their modest attempts to create a more egalitarian society.

The title of this book is a quotation from Bakunin, written in 1868, three years before the Commune, as part of a polemic against those revolutionaries who believed that only a revolutionary government, imposing its own dictatorship, was capable of bringing any revolution to a successful conclusion.¹⁰ As we shall see, Bakunin and the anarchists disagreed.

⁸ The front cover illustration is by “Lefman,” and was published in *The Communists of Paris 1871: types-physiognomies-characters*, compiled by the anti-Communard illustrator and caricaturist, Charles Albert d’Arnoux, under his professional name, “Bertall,” and printed by Édouard Blot et fils aîné in Paris and London in 1873. The original French edition was published in Paris in the summer of 1871 under the title, *Les Communeux, 1871, Types, Caractères, Costumes*.

⁹ Louise Michel, “In Defence of the Commune,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 105.

¹⁰ Bakunin, “What is the State,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 86.

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Chapter One: Anarchism Before the International

Although there were no anarchist movements in Europe at the time of the founding of the International in September 1864, there were or had been a number of people who identified themselves as anarchists before then. There had also been people and movements that had exhibited anarchist characteristics, particularly during the English and French Revolutions. Although they did not identify themselves as anarchists, some of their opponents did.

During the English Revolution (1642–1651), a group calling itself the “Diggers” tried to establish egalitarian communities on “waste” (unoccupied) lands. Their most eloquent spokesperson was Gerrard Winstanley (1609–1676). In his pamphlet, *The New Law of Righteousness* (1649), he advocated holding things in common and distributing wealth according to need, achieving this through nonviolent direct action, “for the manifestation of a righteous heart shall be known, not by his words, but by his actions.”¹

As with later anarchists, Winstanley opposed all manner of authority, for “every one that gets an authority into his hands tyrannizes over others.”² He urged people to reject “dominion and Lordship one over another,” and the use of coercive means to create a free society, for “Tyrannie is Tyrannie in one as wel [sic] as in another; in a poor man lifted up by his valour, as in a rich man lifted up by his lands.” One may kill “a Tyrant, but hold fast the same Tyrannie and slaverie over others in his own hand.” By occupying waste lands and growing and sharing their own food, the Diggers hoped to inspire others to create a society where “the blessing of the earth shall be common to all” and “none Lord over others.”³

The Digger movement was small and short lived. They were driven off of the lands they occupied, their homes and furniture destroyed, and threatened with death by the local authorities and landowners should they ever return. Their historical influence appears to have been negligible. Despite the similarities in their views, only passing reference was made by the philosophical anarchist William Godwin (1756–1836) to Winstanley and the Diggers in his *History of the Commonwealth* (1824–1828), although Godwin believed that “the five years from the abolition of the monarchy to Cromwell’s *coup d’état* challenge in its glory any equal period of English history.”⁴

Following the English Civil War, anarchist ideas reappeared in Europe in some utopian and satirical literature. In 1676, Gabriel de Foigny (1630–1692), a defrocked priest, published in Geneva *Les aventures de Jacques Sadeur dans la découverte et le voyage de la terre australe*, in which he depicted an imaginary society in Australia where people lived without government, religious institutions or private property. They believed that the only law was man’s reason

¹ Winstanley, “The New Law of Righteousness,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 11.

² *Ibid.*, 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

⁴ Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Harper Perennial, 2008), 199.

and that it is “the Nature of Man to be born, and live free.”⁵ De Foigny was considered a heretic and imprisoned for his efforts. A year after his death in 1692, an abridged English translation of *Les adventures* appeared as *A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis*. According to Max Nettlau, de Foigny’s book was “reprinted and translated many times,” becoming “well known” throughout Europe.⁶

Jean Meslier (1664–1729), a priest from the Champagne area of France, wrote a political *Testament* in the 1720s, in which he denounced the alliance of church and state, calling on the people to keep for themselves “all the riches and goods you produce so abundantly with the sweat of your brow, and to let “all the great ones of the earth and all nobles hang and strangle themselves with the priests’ guts.”⁷ Similar sentiments were expressed by the French *philosophe* Denis Diderot (1713–1784), who wrote in 1772 that “nature has made neither servant nor master—I want neither to give nor to receive laws... weave the entrails of the priest, for want of a rope, to hang the kings.”⁸ During the French Revolution this was transformed into the slogan “Humanity will not be happy until the last aristocrat is hanged by the guts of the last priest.”

On the eve of the French Revolution of 1789, Sylvain Maréchal (1750–1803) published some fables and satirical works evincing an anarchist stance, picturing in one “the life of kings exiled to a desert island where they ended up exterminating each other.”⁹ He attacked religion and promoted atheism, with his secular calendar forming the basis of the Revolutionary calendar adopted by the Jacobins in 1793. In 1796, in the face of the growing reaction, he wrote his *Manifesto of the Equals*, in which he called on the people of France to march over the bodies of “the new tyrants... seated in the place of the old ones,” just as they had “marched over the bodies of kings and priests.” Maréchal sought “real equality” through “the communal enjoyment of the fruits of the earth” and the abolition not only of “individual property in land” but of “the revolting distinction of rich and poor, of great and small, of masters and valets, of governors and governed.”¹⁰

Maréchal gave expression to the anarchist tendencies in the French Revolution (1789–1795), particularly among the “anti-Jacobin” revolutionary Left, which rejected state terrorism and “revolutionary” dictatorship, advocating direct action and direct democracy. They were found among those called the *enragés*, the most militant of the revolutionaries who allied themselves with the *sans-culottes*, the lower classes, the “working poor.” The *enragés* sought economic and political equality, not mere “legal” equality (equality before the law), pushing for popular self-government and the redistribution of wealth.

At the beginning of the French Revolution, after the fall of the Bastille in July 1789, the people of Paris began to organize their own districts, which then federated with each other, and to administer their own affairs, leading to the creation of the Commune of Paris. “Government by representation” was “reduced to a minimum,” with “the final right of legislating and administering” belonging “to the citizens... in the general assemblies of the districts.”¹¹ For the anarchist communist Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), this creation of the Commune “*from the bottom upward*,”

⁵ Marie Louise Berneri, *Journey Through Utopia* (London: Freedom Press, 1982), 198.

⁶ Max Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1996), 12.

⁷ James Joll, *The Anarchists*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 14.

⁸ Berneri, *Journey Through Utopia*, 202.

⁹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 11.

¹⁰ Sylvain Maréchal, “Manifesto of the Equals,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 28.

¹¹ Peter Kropotkin, quoting S. Lacroix, *The Great French Revolution: 1789–1793* (1909), trans. N. F. Dryhurst (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 184.

accustoming the masses “to act without receiving orders from the national representatives,” was an example of “the principles of anarchism” being put into practice.¹²

But at the same time as ordinary people were creating their own organs of self-government in Paris, various political factions were attempting to consolidate their power at the national level. The two political groups of the greatest relevance to this study were the Girondins and the Jacobins. The Girondins are often portrayed as the more moderate faction, with the Jacobins being blamed for the infamous “Reign of Terror”; but, as Kropotkin points out, the Girondins also “considered the revolutionary tribunal and the guillotine as the most efficacious wheels of government,” demanding the heads of their Jacobin opponents, declaring war against Austria, Great Britain, and Holland, and inciting their own massacres of royalists, clerics, and more radical revolutionaries.¹³

The Girondins were only “moderate” in that they were “republicans” who favored a constitutional monarchy. On social issues, they were conservative, the party of “order,” opposed to the abolition of feudal rights without indemnification, government measures designed to alleviate the desperate economic situation of the poor, and the directly democratic districts and sections of the Commune of Paris. Defenders of private property, regarding it as “*one of the most sacred bases of social order*,” they called for a “*coup d’état*, a third revolution, which must ‘beat down anarchy’” by dissolving and destroying the Commune of Paris and its sections and “the clubs which preach disorder and equality!”¹⁴

Concerned that Paris was slipping out of their control, they began advocating “federalism,” or greater provincial autonomy, in order “to incite the counter-revolutionary forces of the middle classes in the manufacturing towns and the fanaticism of the peasants in Normandy and Brittany against the revolutionists of Paris.”¹⁵ The association between federalism and “counterrevolutionary provincialism” was to continue well into the nineteenth century, making it difficult to “establish the political space for decentralisation within the revolutionary and republican tradition” in France.¹⁶ Indeed, in his celebrated address on the Paris Commune of 1871, Marx sought to discredit Proudhon’s federalism by equating it with the “dream” of the counterrevolutionary Girondins “to break up into a federation of small States... that unity of great nations,” which had “now become a powerful coefficient of social production.”¹⁷

It was Proudhon and the anarchists who later rehabilitated federalism as a revolutionary concept. They did so as part of their critique of Jacobin authoritarianism, “revolutionary” dictatorship, and state terrorism. However, as Kropotkin points out, the Jacobins were not an authoritarian monolith. The most advanced among them wanted “to abolish the last vestiges of feudalism, and then to equalise property, to destroy the great landed estates, and give the land to all,” proclaiming “the universal right of well-being.”¹⁸ This group, which constituted only a minority of the Jacobins, came close to the radical egalitarianism of the *enragés*. Yet, as middle class republicans, the majority of the Jacobins were not willing, in the words of the Jacobin Jean Henri Hassenfratz

¹² Kropotkin, *Great French Revolution*, 183–184.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 346.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 368 & 369.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹⁶ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 172.

¹⁷ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. by D. McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 543.

¹⁸ Kropotkin, *Great French Revolution*, 343.

(1755–1827), to “allow attacks to be made on property,” as they needed the support of the middle class in their struggle against the Girondins for political supremacy.¹⁹

As long as the people avoided pillaging the homes of the middle class, the Jacobins were happy to use popular discontent to force the Girondins out of positions of power. At the end of May 1793, the Jacobins worked with the *enragés* and other radical elements from the Parisian sections to expel the leading Girondins from the National Convention, then nominally ruling revolutionary France. By August 1793, the Jacobins had turned against the *enragés*, initiating a prosecution for sedition against one of the *enragés*’s most eloquent militants, Jacques Roux (1752–1794), who had demanded action against the speculators who were driving up prices, hoarding goods, and reducing the *sans-culottes* to abject poverty.

In July 1793, the Jacobins had taken control of the Committee of Public Safety, which under the Girondins was already creating a bureaucratic police apparatus. In September 1793, the committee undertook the direct supervision of the “revolutionary committees of the sections, which held powers of judicial police, including that of arrest,” helping turn them “into organs of the central government” and making them “mere branches of the republican hierarchy.”²⁰ The Jacobin Club of Paris, the membership of which had increased ten-fold, from 800 in 1791 to 8,000 in 1793, provided a pool of “officials of the new bureaucracy... and police centres which the Government used for discovering its enemies and for getting rid of them.”²¹

By the fall of 1793, the Committee of Public Safety had laws in place to justify the arbitrary arrest, imprisonment and execution of suspected “counterrevolutionaries.” Numerous Girondins and royalists were tried and executed between October and December 1793. Then came the turn for the “extremists”: first, the *enragés*, like Jacques Roux, who cheated the guillotine by committing suicide in February 1794; and then, the Hébertists, who had brought Roux up on charges of attacking “the sovereignty of the people.”²² Jacques-René Hébert (1757–1794) had himself been an advocate of revolutionary terrorism, recommending an “itinerant guillotine” for dispatching counterrevolutionaries.²³ He and several of his confederates were executed in March 1794.²⁴ With their base of support in the Commune of Paris, they were considered a threat to the power of the Jacobins. Then, in April 1794, came the turn of Georges Danton (1759–1794) and his allies.²⁵ The Jacobins felt they were too close to the Girondins and suspected them of plotting a *coup d’état*.

The Jacobins pursued a policy of centralizing power in a few hands, which controlled the bureaucratic state apparatus, and then used that apparatus to exterminate their political opponents, all in the name of defeating the “counterrevolution.” The architect of this strategy was Maximilien Robespierre (1758–1794), who regarded the triumph of either the Girondins or the *enragés* as being “equally fatal to liberty and national authority.”²⁶ In June 1794, Robespierre brought in a new law providing for even more summary trials, resulting in the execution of 1351 “counter-revolutionaries” in just forty-six days.²⁷

¹⁹ Ibid., 401.

²⁰ Ibid., 513 & 509.

²¹ Ibid., 509.

²² Ibid., 504–505 & 545–546.

²³ Ibid., 512.

²⁴ Ibid., 546.

²⁵ Ibid., 548.

²⁶ Ibid., 553.

²⁷ Ibid., 560.

As Kropotkin notes, the “people of Paris soon sickened with the horror of seeing the procession of tumbrils carrying the condemned to the foot of the guillotine.”²⁸ When the National Convention ordered the arrest of Robespierre and the Jacobin leadership on July 27, 1794, virtually no one came to their aid. They were executed the next day, amid great celebration.²⁹ Instead of safeguarding the revolution, the Jacobins, through their policy of state terrorism, had ensured the triumph of reaction.

This was a point made by one of the surviving enragés, Jean Varlet (1764–1837), after the downfall of the Jacobins. He, along with thousands of enragés and sans-culottes, had participated in the insurrection of May 31–June 2, 1793, which resulted in the expulsion of the Girondin leadership from the National Convention, unwittingly assisting the Jacobins in replacing the Girondin dictatorship with a “ghastly dictatorship” of their own, “dressed up with the title of Public Safety.”³⁰ In hindsight, Varlet could see that “despotism” had merely “passed from the palace of kings to the precincts of the committees.”³¹

For Varlet, the Jacobins’ use of state terrorism had only succeeded in turning the people against the revolution and in centralizing power in the hands of a few. Under the arbitrary rule of the Committee of Public Safety, two thirds of citizens became “mischievous enemies of freedom” to “be stamped out,” with “*Terror*” being “the supreme law; the instrument of torture an object of veneration.” From a Jacobin perspective, Varlet charged, “if the executioners are no longer the fathers of the nation, freedom is in jeopardy.”³²

In a passage that some have described as an anarchist manifesto, Varlet denounced “revolutionary government” as a contradiction in terms:

What a social monstrosity, what a masterpiece of Machiavellianism is this revolutionary government! To any rational being, *government* and *revolution* are incompatible, unless the people wishes to set its constituted authorities in permanent insurrection against itself, which would be absurd.³³

Varlet therefore called upon the French people to arise once again against their new masters.

Unlike the Girondins, the Jacobins, and even the Hébertists, the enragés were radical egalitarians in both an economic and a political sense. They agreed with Sylvain Maréchal that “the revolting distinction,” not only between “rich and poor, of great and small,” but also between “masters and valets, of governors and governed,” should be abolished. This is why both the Girondins and the Jacobins denounced them as “anarchists.” According to the Girondin leader Jacques-Pierre Brissot (1754–1793), what the enragés wanted was “anarchy,” the defining features of which were “Laws that are not carried into effect, authorities without force and despised, crime unpunished, *property attacked*, the safety of the individual violated, the morality of the people corrupted, no constitution, no government, no justice.”³⁴

Jacques Roux, as with later anarchists, recognized that there can be no freedom without equality, writing that “Freedom is but an empty phantom if one class of men can starve another with impunity. Freedom is but an empty phantom when the rich man can through his monopoly

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 568–569.

³⁰ Jean Varlet, “The Explosion,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 23.

³¹ Ibid., 24.

³² Ibid., 25.

³³ Ibid., 24.

³⁴ Kropotkin, *Great French Revolution*, 351.

exercise the right of life and death over his fellow men.”³⁵ Although he did appeal to the revolutionary government to put an end to speculation and hoarding, he also incited the Parisian crowds to take direct action by looting shops and called on the Parisian sections to take control of the distribution of the “necessities of life.”³⁶

Varlet defended the direct democracy of the Parisian sections against the measures imposed by the Jacobins to deprive them of any real power and to turn them into mere instruments of the central government. Inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), he argued that only the people in their directly democratic assemblies could express the “general will,” and that all elected deputies and representatives should be subject to recall so that they could not substitute their individual wills and interests for those of the people. He also defended the right of the people to insurrection against any government that put itself above them.³⁷

However, it was not a French revolutionary but an English philosopher, William Godwin, who provided the most coherent and comprehensive articulation of anarchist ideas around the time of the French Revolution, William Godwin. In 1793, after Louis XVI had been executed and France had become a republic, Godwin published *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* (reissued in 1795 and 1797 as *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness*), which contained a penetrating critique of inequality, property rights, government, and coercive authority in general. While Godwin’s influence on the European continent was negligible, his book created a sensation in England at the time of its original publication, and excerpts from it continued to be published by British socialists well into the nineteenth century.³⁸

From an anarchist perspective, the most important parts of Godwin’s book were his critiques of representative government, revolutionary violence, coercive authority, the “rule of law”, and private property.

Godwin considered representative government to be fatally flawed. In the first place, government laws and policies are not the result of direct debate among the people, but the result of the debates of elected representatives who represent particular interests. Decisions are made by majority vote of the representatives, who invariably vote along party lines. Even when a debate is not cut short by the ruling party, the “minority, after having exposed, with all the power and eloquence, and force of reasoning, of which they are capable, the injustice and folly of the measures adopted, are obliged... to assist in carrying them into execution,” since all the representatives are required to uphold the law. For Godwin, “nothing can more directly contribute to the depravation of the human understanding and character” than to require people to act contrary to their own reason.³⁹

During parliamentary debates, which must come to a close with a vote of the assembled representatives, the “orator no longer enquires after permanent conviction, but transitory effect. He seeks to take advantage of our prejudices than to enlighten our judgement. That which might otherwise have been a scene of patient and beneficent enquiry is changed into wrangling, tumult and precipitation.”⁴⁰

³⁵ Joll, *The Anarchists*, 2nd ed., 28.

³⁶ Kropotkin, *Great French Revolution*, 503, fn.

³⁷ Jean Varlet, *Declaration of the Rights of Man in the Social State* (1793). www.marxists.org.

³⁸ Peter Marshall (ed.), *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin* (London: Freedom Press, 1986), 10.

³⁹ William Godwin, “Enquiry Concerning Political Justice,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 18–19.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

This is particularly true during revolutionary upheavals. Reasoned and impartial debate “can scarcely be pursued when all the passions of man are afloat, and we are hourly under the strongest impressions of fear and hope, apprehension and desire, dejection and triumph.” Revolutions invariably provoke counterrevolution. When “we lay aside arguments, and have recourse to the sword,” amidst “the barbarous rage of war, and the clamorous din of civil contention, who shall tell whether the event will be prosperous or adverse? The consequence may be the riveting on us anew the chains of despotism.” To combat the counterrevolution, the revolutionaries suppress freedom of expression and resort to terror, organizing “a government tenfold more encroaching in its principles and terrible in its proceedings” than the old regime.⁴¹

Despite regarding revolutions as being “necessarily attended with many circumstances worthy of our disapprobation,” Godwin recognized that “revolutions and violence have too often been coeval with important changes of the social system.” While we should “endeavour to prevent violence,” during revolutionary upheavals we cannot simply “turn away our eyes from human affairs in disgust, and refuse to contribute our labours and attention to the general weal.” Rather, we must take “proper advantage of circumstances as they arise, and not... withdraw ourselves because everything is not conducted according to our ideas of propriety.”⁴² Godwin’s critique of revolutionary violence must not therefore be misconstrued as tacit support for the injustices that the revolutionaries sought to overturn.

Godwin argued that coercion and its positive correlate, inducements offered by those with wealth and power, distort political debate and moral discussion by causing people to evaluate a policy or course of conduct in terms of the punishments or rewards attached to them rather than on their intrinsic merits. Coercion and inducements also have a debilitating effect on both persons in power and the people who obey or follow them. Instead of acting in accordance with their own reason, people act under the threat of punishment or the promise of some benefit, and those with the power to coerce or reward no longer need to present reasons in support of the policies or actions they seek others to follow. This constitutes “a tacit confession of imbecility,” for it “is a poor argument of my superior reason that I am unable to make justice be apprehended and felt... without the intervention of blows” or the offering of a bribe.⁴³

Godwin was therefore opposed to coercive law enforcement, for the law as an institution is “merely relative to the exercise of political force, and must perish when the necessity for that force ceases.”⁴⁴ Godwin recognized that force was necessary in order to protect private property and the resulting inequality in fortunes. “The spirit of oppression, the spirit of servility, and the spirit of fraud,” Godwin wrote, “are the immediate growth of the established system of property.”⁴⁵ With the “fruitful source of crimes” consisting of “one man’s possessing in abundance that of which another man is destitute,” property must be placed “upon an equitable basis” in order to “put an end to the system of *coercion* and *punishment*,” represented by the law and government, necessary to maintain existing inequalities of wealth and power.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid., 16–17.

⁴² Ibid., 17.

⁴³ Ibid., 20–21.

⁴⁴ William Godwin, “Of Law,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 173.

⁴⁵ William Godwin, “Enquiry Concerning Political Justice,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 22.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 21.

As with the enragés and the more radical Jacobins, Godwin argued that everyone “is entitled, so long as the general stock will suffice, not only to the means of being, but of well being.”⁴⁷ Where he differed from the enragés was in his approach to social change, preferring a process of gradual enlightenment over direct action and insurrection, frowning on collective action in general. Godwin regarded cooperation as an “evil” to be avoided, because it requires individuals to sometimes act in conformity with the views of others rather than in accordance with their own reason.⁴⁸

Although Godwin defended English radicals accused of high treason, and argued against government suppression of freedom of speech and assembly, he criticized the radicals for fomenting “civil contention.”⁴⁹ One of the radicals, John Thelwall (1764–1834), complained that the problem with Godwin’s approach was that “it should at once recommend the most extensive plan of freedom and innovation ever discussed by any writer in the English language, and reprobate every measure from which even the most moderate reform can rationally be expected.”⁵⁰

While Godwin had some “influence on such early socialist writers as William Thompson and Thomas Hodgskin,” the British reformer Robert Owen (1771–1858), and the Chartist labor movement in Britain (1838–1848), by the time the International was founded in 1864, he had long since faded into obscurity.⁵¹ By then, what little was known about Godwin and his work was that he was the subject of Thomas Malthus’s attack in the latter’s “An Essay on the Principle of Population” (1798), in which Malthus argued that food production could not keep up with population growth, such that any attempt to create a more equitable society could only lead to disaster.

Malthus’s essay on population became notorious in radical circles, for it was used against any proposals for social change, becoming a mainstay of antisocialist propaganda. During the 1848 Revolution in France, Proudhon published an essay against “The Malthusians,” denouncing the conservatives for claiming, as with Malthus, that “at the banquet of Nature there is not room for all.”⁵² Kropotkin later argued that, contrary to Malthus, “the productive powers of the human race increase at a much more rapid ratio than its powers of reproduction,” such that it was perfectly feasible to create “well-being for all,” much as the enragés and Godwin had envisaged.⁵³

What was less known was that Godwin had published his own reply to Malthus, in which he argued, much like Proudhon, that we should not “sit down for ever contented with all oppression, abuses and inequality, which we now find fastened on the necks, and withering the hearts, of so great a portion of our species.”⁵⁴ As with Kropotkin, Godwin disputed that population growth must always outstrip food production, instead seeing government as one of the chief causes of poverty and inequality, such that “the nourishment of human beings in civilised society, can never, unless in the case of seasons peculiarly unfavorable, sustain any other difficulty, till the whole globe has been raised to a very high degree of cultivation, except as arises from political institutions.”⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 40.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 196.

⁵⁰ Nicolas Walter, *The Anarchist Past and Other Essays* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2007), 49.

⁵¹ Ibid., 39.

⁵² Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Property is Theft! A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology*, ed. by Iain McKay (Oakland: AK Press, 2011), 355.

⁵³ Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (1892), (New York: New York University Press, 1972), 51.

⁵⁴ Marshall, *Anarchist Writings*, 138.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 139.

Following the French Revolution, Europe entered into a prolonged period of reaction. In 1795 and 1796, there were some failed attempts at insurrection in Paris. François-Noël (“Gracchus”) Babeuf (1760–1797) and his Conspiracy of Equals plotted to overthrow the ruling Directory, which had replaced the National Convention (and the Committee of Public Safety) as the governing power in France. While advocating a kind of communism, the conspirators were not anarchists. Sylvain Maréchal’s *Manifesto of the Equals* had been rejected by the Conspiracy’s “secret directory” because it did not recognize the need for a transitional revolutionary dictatorship.⁵⁶ Before the Conspiracy could carry out its plans, the conspirators were arrested and Babeuf was executed.

Surviving French revolutionaries were harassed, imprisoned, deported or exiled. Workers’ associations and strikes had already been banned in 1791. Both the Girondins and the Jacobins saw trade unions as threats to state power. The French police kept close watch over workers and radicals in order to ensure that they were unable to build up any popular movements or to stir up social unrest, regardless of who was in power, whether it was the Directory (1795–1799), Napoléon (1799–1815), or the restored Bourbon monarchy (1815–1830). There were occasional strikes and machine-breaking, but nothing on a sustained level until the 1830 July Revolution in France, which led to the replacement of the Bourbon monarchy with a constitutional monarchy under Louis-Philippe (1773–1850).⁵⁷

There were, however, two intellectual movements in France that were to have a lasting influence on subsequent socialist and anarchist movements: Saint-Simonism and Fourierism. Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) was a French aristocrat of liberal sympathies who participated in the American Revolution and narrowly survived the French Revolution. In the early nineteenth century, he began publishing works promoting a “science of humanity” that would provide the basis for the rational reorganization of society, eliminating war and poverty.

He thought society should be run by those best able to create and manage productive enterprises, industrialists, financiers and their technical functionaries, for the benefit of “the most numerous and poorest class.” He was one of the first advocates of central economic planning as a means to avoid the periodic crises, unemployment, and poverty resulting from unregulated, or laissez-faire, capitalism. He proposed huge projects to facilitate trade and commerce and to provide jobs, such as continental railway networks and a canal between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans (in fact, after his death, some of his followers were instrumental in the construction of the Suez Canal).

He did not see any necessary conflict between capitalists and workers, but thought that those with greater technical or financial expertise, such as scientists, engineers, industrial managers, technicians, and bankers, would be in the best position to direct the workers in accordance with a centrally coordinated economic plan that would increase production to meet the needs of all. As G. D. H. Cole notes, Saint-Simon’s “doctrine anticipates modern notions of technocracy in his insistence on the master-function of the industrial experts and organisers as against both the politicians and the rest of the unproductive classes,” such as the landed aristocracy.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ian Birchall, *The Spectre of Babeuf* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 65.

⁵⁷ Roger Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1: The Age of the Artisan Revolution, 1815–1871* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 45–53.

⁵⁸ G.D.H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought, Volume I: The Forerunners, 1789–1850* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 49.

Saint-Simon can therefore be seen as an early proponent of “scientific socialism,” for his idea that government and political conflict would give way to the politically neutral, “rational,” and “scientific” industrial organization of society, with coercive state authority being replaced by the so-called administration of things, was influential in both socialist and anarchist circles.

However, neither Saint-Simon nor his various followers can be described as anarchists. Their concept of industrial organization was hierarchical, with the various scientific, financial, and technical experts “administering” things in accordance with a rational economic plan that they themselves devised. The workers were to follow these plans as directed by the technocratic elite. Saint-Simonism was a doctrine of “industrial order,” not freedom and equality, with several Saint-Simonians becoming successful venture capitalists.

An offshoot of Saint-Simonism was “positivism,” as developed by one of Saint-Simon’s early collaborators, Auguste Comte (1798–1857). Comte continued Saint-Simon’s project of constructing a “science of society,” which he called “sociology.” This new “social science” was supposed to discover, using a scientific, or “positivist,” approach, the laws that govern the development and workings of human societies. Comte was no socialist, and his views regarding the need for an intellectual elite to govern society were even more authoritarian than those of the Saint-Simonians.

However, despite his project to create a new positivist religion of “Humanity” to replace Christianity, much as Saint-Simon and some of his other followers, most notably Barthélemy-Prospér Enfantin (1796–1864), had also attempted, Comte’s application of a “scientific” approach and methodology to the study of human societies was very influential among nineteenth-century advocates for social change. Positivism promised a way to determine how societies function without recourse to religious precepts and provided for the possibility of discovering ways to transform society for the better. The problem was how to utilize a positivist approach without engaging in top-down “social engineering.”

More important in the development of European anarchism was Charles Fourier (1772–1837). Although Proudhon often criticized Fourier and his followers, there were personal and intellectual connections between Fourier and Proudhon. Proudhon had worked with Fourier briefly, supervising the publication in 1829 of one of Fourier’s most influential books, *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire*. “For six whole weeks,” Proudhon later recounted, “I was the captive of this bizarre genius.”⁵⁹

As with Saint-Simon, Fourier had lived through the French Revolution. Imprisoned for a time, he almost became another victim of the Terror. He witnessed the hoarding and profiteering that occurred during the Revolution and sought to develop a libertarian alternative, by which everyone would not only be guaranteed their means of subsistence but would also be able to engage in productive work that they found fulfilling and enjoyable. “Morality teaches us to love work,” Fourier wrote, “let it know, then, how to render work lovable.”⁶⁰

Fourier recognized that in order to survive in the emerging capitalist economy, workers were compelled to take whatever work they could find, regardless of their personal talents, aptitudes, and preferences. They had to work long hours under deplorable conditions, only to see their employers reap the fruits of their labors while they continued to live in poverty. The new economy was “nothing but... a league of the minority which possesses, against the majority which does

⁵⁹ George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987), 13.

⁶⁰ Charles Fourier, “Attractive Labour,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 32.

not possess the necessities of life.”⁶¹ The workers were therefore justified in forming their own associations to combat such a state of affairs.

Fourier was also an early advocate of sexual liberation. Foreshadowing the work of Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957), Fourier argued that people should be free to satisfy their sexual needs and desires and that the repression of such desires is not only harmful to the individual but one of the foundations of a repressive society.⁶²

Fourier, however, did not advocate revolution. He hoped to attract financial benefactors to fund the creation of communes or “phalanxes” where each person would rotate through a variety of jobs each day, free to choose each task, doing what they found to be enjoyable, giving expression to their natural talents and passions. Each member of the phalanx would be guaranteed a minimum of material support and would be remunerated by dividends from the phalanx’s operations. While later anarchists agreed that work should be freely undertaken, enjoyable, and fulfilling rather than an onerous burden, they found Fourier’s more detailed plans regarding the organization of society to be too constrictive and his idea that wealthy benefactors would bankroll the abolition of their own privileged status, naïve.

Socialist ideas began to gain some currency in Britain and France during the 1830s, following the weakening of British laws prohibiting trade union organizations in the mid-1820s and the 1830 July Revolution in France.

In Britain, trade unions, or “workers’ combinations,” had been banned in 1799, just as they had been in France eight years earlier. In both cases, the authorities were concerned about organized workers challenging the existing order and impeding the development of capitalism. During the French Revolution, the sans-culottes in Paris had taken direct action against hoarders and speculators, demanding real equality and political power through the Parisian sections and districts. Toward the end of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, English workers began direct action campaigns against employers who were introducing new methods of work and machinery to reduce wages by making many workers redundant.

Perhaps the most notorious direct action campaign in England was the Luddite movement from 1811 to 1816, during which English workers smashed textile machines, laid siege to mills, attacked their owners, and went on strike to protect their falling wages. They were said to be led by the largely apocryphal “General” or “King” “Ned Ludd.” The Luddites were not anarchists, but their revolt against capitalist industrialization provided an example of the direct action tactics and working-class self-organization later advocated by some anarchists.⁶³

When the ban on trade unions was lifted in England in the mid-1820s, trade unions sprang up across country, despite stiff penalties still being attached to working-class direct action (machine-breaking remained a capital offense). Around the same time, a new generation of writers took up the cause of the workers, advocating something very close to an anarchist form of socialism.

Drawing on the recently formulated “labor theory of value” in the emerging field of “political economy,” they expressed economic views that foreshadowed those of Proudhon and subsequent anarchists. Thomas Hodgskin (1783–1869) argued that because labor was the ultimate source

⁶¹ Ibid., 33.

⁶² Daniel Guérin, “Sexual Liberation,” in *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume Two: The Emergence of the New Anarchism*, ed. by R. Graham (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009).

⁶³ Kirkpatrick Sale, *Rebels Against the Future: The Luddites and Their War on the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1996).

of economic value, the workers “should receive the whole product of their labour.”⁶⁴ He advocated a kind of “market socialism,” by which workers would exchange the product of their labors “without any capitalist monopoly to skim off the surplus over their subsistence needs.”⁶⁵ He put no faith in legislative reform, looking to the workers instead “to achieve their own salvation” through their nascent trade union organizations.⁶⁶

William Thompson (1775–1833) also relied on a labor theory of value in support of a libertarian conception of socialism. He argued that the workers should use their trade union organizations to invest in cooperative enterprises that would ultimately replace capitalism with egalitarian communities organized along the lines proposed by Robert Owen, utilizing modern technology to create an abundance of wealth to be enjoyed by all. As with later anarchists, he regarded “government as the upholder of the old, bad system of private monopoly of the means of production,” and therefore looked “mainly to the workers to find means for their own emancipation.”⁶⁷ He was an early advocate of workers’ self-management, arguing that the solution to capitalist exploitation was the creation of “a new social order in which the control of industry would pass into the workers’ hands.”⁶⁸

In 1830, the reactionary Bourbon monarchy was overthrown in France, replaced by a constitutional monarchy under Louis-Philippe, the “Citizen King.” Workers who had supported the July Revolution soon came into conflict with the new regime, adopting direct action tactics similar to those used earlier in England. Machines were smashed and workers struck for better working conditions and higher wages, leading to working-class uprisings in Lyon in 1831 and again in 1834. There was an unsuccessful republican insurrection in Paris in 1832, which had significant working-class support. Despite the July Revolution, the conditions of the French workers were continuing to deteriorate.

The failure of yet another “political” revolution to address the subordinate status and exploitation of working people later provided support for the view that only a “social revolution” could improve the situation of the working class. The print worker Auguste Colin lamented in 1831 that the July Revolution had simply replaced the Bourbon monarchy with a “financial aristocracy” interested only in exploiting the workers’ labor.⁶⁹

After the 1834 Lyon uprising was put down, French workers responded in fundamentally different ways. Some looked to underground organizations to seize power, inspired by tales of Babeuf’s Conspiracy of Equals. Others advocated coordinated industrial action through mass-based trade unions, whereas others promoted the creation of workers’ associations to replace capitalism with a system of workers’ cooperatives, citing the ideas of Robert Owen in Britain.⁷⁰

However, it was under Owen’s influence in Britain during the 1830s, not France, that the first mass-based trade union movement arose, which had the explicit goal of replacing capitalism with a form of socialism based on workers’ cooperative associations.

Following the July Revolution in France, agricultural workers in England, who were among the poorest and most exploited, had begun another direct action campaign to improve their

⁶⁴ Cole, *History of Socialist Thought, Volume I*, 111.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 112.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 117.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 121.

⁶⁹ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 51.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 64.

living and working conditions. Threshing machines that were putting them out of work were destroyed; stacks, crops, barns, and mills were burned; and farm and mill owners were threatened and sometimes attacked, as “riotous assemblies” demanding higher wages and reductions in tithes began to spread across southern England. Industrial establishments and machinery were also attacked, such as iron foundries, paper mills, sawmills, and threshing machine factories. The uprising lasted from around August 1830 into early 1831, becoming known as the “Swing Riots” because of the threatening letters sent out to landowners and manufacturers under the name of “Captain Swing.”⁷¹

The riots were eventually put down, with 19 men being executed, over 600 being imprisoned, and another 500 being “transported” to the British penal colonies in Australia. Such harsh treatment was not enough to quell working-class discontent. The idea of a general strike, albeit to secure political reforms, was put forward by William Benbow in 1831–1832, who called it a “Grand National Holiday.”⁷² Robert Owen tried organizing a “National Equitable Labour Exchange,” through which workers would directly exchange material produced by their own cooperative associations based on the amount of labor time required for its production, and worker-controlled producers’ cooperatives and cooperative stores spread across Britain.⁷³ Then in 1833–1834, workers in the burgeoning trade union and cooperative movements united to create the “Grand National Consolidated Trades Union,” an “ambitious attempt to combine the entire force of labour for a direct onslaught on the capitalist system,” anticipating, albeit on a national scale, the International, at least as later conceived by Bakunin and the anarchists.⁷⁴

British capitalists responded by locking out and blacklisting workers on a scale so vast that the Grand National Union was unable to mount effective resistance. Some workers, such as the “Tolpuddle Martyrs,” were singled out for special persecution in order to make an example of them. Six workingmen were arrested in March 1834 because they had formed an agricultural workers’ association to strike for better wages. They were convicted of “administering unlawful oaths” and sentenced to seven years in an Australian penal colony. Such prosecutions had the intended effect of intimidating many workers from participating in the new labor movement. This combination of capitalist retaliation and government persecution resulted in the collapse of the Grand National Union movement “by the latter months of 1834.”⁷⁵

By the mid-1830s, given the increasing capitalist exploitation, the failure of political reforms, the seeming impossibility of positive social change within existing institutions, and the role of the coercive government apparatus in maintaining massive disparities in wealth and power, conditions appeared ripe in both Britain and France for the emergence of anarchist movements. However, in Britain, socialists formerly involved in the Owenite, cooperative, and Grand National Union movements turned their attention to political reform, convinced that the only way forward would be to win the vote for workingmen and then to change the laws for the benefit of working people through control of Parliament. This led to the Chartist movement, lasting from around 1838 to 1848, which was ultimately unsuccessful in achieving its demands.

At the beginnings of the Chartist movement, there was a radical left wing that “looked forward to open revolt, or at the least to some sort of ‘Grand National Holiday’ or General Strike, as

⁷¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Georges Rudé, *Captain Swing* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001).

⁷² Cole, *History of Socialist Thought*, Volume I, 128.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 126–127.

the only possible way of enforcing the enfranchisement of the working classes or securing the economic changes they demanded,” but they did not call for the abolition of the state.⁷⁶ After 1839, when a number of Chartist leaders were imprisoned on various grounds, the majority of the Chartists had lost any belief “in their power to wage a successful revolutionary war.”⁷⁷ It would be another forty years before there were any glimmers of an anarchist movement in Britain.⁷⁸

There was one English writer around this time who expressed ideas coming close to an anarchist position, whom Marx was later to accuse Proudhon of plagiarizing: John Francis Bray (1809–1897). In 1839, he published *Labour’s Wrongs and Labour’s Remedies, or the Age of Might and the Age of Right*, in which he argued that socialism could not be achieved through political reform because the existing systems of government were themselves the product of the economic system. He therefore argued that the workers should give priority instead to transforming the economic structures that were the true cause of their misery.

The means he proposed for doing this was the creation of workers’ “companies” that would exchange with each other, without any capitalist intermediaries, the goods they produced based on the amount of labor required to produce them—a form of “exchange without exploitation,” much like the “equivalent exchange” Proudhon was soon to advocate in France. There would be individual property or ownership by the workers of what they produced and of what they received in exchange for it, but the means of production would be “common property,” to which everyone would have equal access.⁷⁹

As with Hodgskin and Thompson before him, Bray was hostile “to government, which he regarded as an instrument for the protection of property against the rightful claims of the producers.”⁸⁰ It was his conviction that “the present arrangement of society must be totally subverted, and supplanted by” a socialist system created and controlled by the workers themselves, much as the anarchists in the International were later to argue.⁸¹ However, unlike them, Bray never called himself an anarchist. The first person to do so was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, a year later, in his groundbreaking work, *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*.

Proudhon, like Bray and unlike Marx, came from the working class. His maternal grandfather had been a revolutionary during the French Revolution, and his family remained supporters of the republican cause. His father was a cooper and then an unsuccessful small businessman, running a cottage brewery and tavern for a time. After that, the family lived and worked on his maternal grandfather’s farm.

After his father lost a lawsuit, reducing the family to poverty, Proudhon had to quit school and find a trade. He became a printer and a compositor. By the age of twenty, he was working with Charles Fourier, reviewing with him the proofs for Fourier’s *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire*. In this book, Fourier presented a summation of his critique of existing society and his proposed alternative, a society based on the principles of “mutual association” and “passionate attraction,” in which people would live and work in “phalansteries” or agro-industrial communes.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 146.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁸ John Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse: The Lost History of the British Anarchists* (London: Paladin Books, 1978), 15–16.

⁷⁹ Cole, *History of Socialist Thought, Volume I*, 138.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁸¹ Ibid., 137.

People would rotate through a variety of jobs, on a daily basis, with each job providing an outlet for a particular talent or capacity.

In *What is Property?*, Proudhon criticized Fourier for advocating individual remuneration based on each worker's contribution of capital, labor, and skill to production, because the source of economic value is not capital, or even superior skills, but the "collective force" of associated labor; in which case, according to Proudhon, there should be an "equality of wages" rather than wage differentials between workers.⁸²

For Proudhon, "capital can be exchanged, but cannot be a source of income."⁸³ Property, in the form of capital, was "theft" because the capitalists asserted complete control over, or exclusive ownership of, things that they had not produced by their own labor, and which naturally existed (such as land, air, and water) or were produced by others (the workers), but which the capitalists had appropriated for their own benefit. The workers' access to the very means of production that they had created through their own collective labor was controlled by their capitalist employers, who then paid them only a portion of the economic value produced by the workers using those means of production, keeping the lion's share for themselves.

During the 1830s, Proudhon's life was typical of a skilled tradesman in France. He tramped around the country looking for work, survived a cholera outbreak in Paris, and had trouble supporting himself by his own labor. He saw firsthand, along with many other workers, how the 1830 July Revolution had failed to result in any benefit to the working class. When he asked the mayor of Toulon for help in finding work, the mayor's advice to him was "to go away" and quit bothering him.⁸⁴

His initial involvement in socialist politics came when he was offered the editorship of a Fourierist paper, *L'Impartial*. Although he insisted that the paper should be unabashedly republican, he foreshadowed his subsequent anarchist views by suggesting that the paper "invite the population to make themselves capable of managing their own affairs," dispensing "with all ministerial and constitutional hierarchy." He resigned from the paper on his first day, after finding out that everything he wrote had to be reviewed and approved by the local prefect before it could be published.⁸⁵

His antipathy towards authority increased when his brother was called up for military service and ended up committing suicide when his commanding officer tried to embroil him in an embezzlement scheme. Proudhon's family had already been financially ruined by lawsuits. He had seen the indifference of the government to the plight of workers like himself and its special concern to censor any criticisms of its role in maintaining their impoverished and subordinate status. No wonder that he later described the law as "spider webs for the rich and powerful, steel chains for the weak and poor, fishing nets in the hands of the Government."⁸⁶

For Proudhon, government was "but the reflection of society."⁸⁷ In a society based on private property ("theft"), where "by the necessity of things, property, riches, comfort, all go on one side, poverty on the other," the very function of government is nothing other than "the defence of the

⁸² Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 118–119.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁸⁴ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 20.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

⁸⁶ Proudhon, "The General Idea of the Revolution," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 54.

⁸⁷ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (1851), intr. by R. Graham (London: Pluto Press, 1989), 60.

rich against the poor.”⁸⁸ Abolish capitalism, and there will be “no further need of government.”⁸⁹ Authority and capitalism go hand in hand, such that “the abolition of the exploitation of man by man and the abolition of the government of man by man are one and the same formula.”⁹⁰

From Proudhon’s perspective then, socialism and anarchism were inseparable from each other. You cannot have one without the other. Thus, in *What is Property?*, after proclaiming that “property is theft,” Proudhon declared himself an anarchist. He conceived of socialism in terms of “free association,” the “sole function [of which] is to maintain equality in the means of production and equivalence in exchanges.”⁹¹ Achieve “the economic Revolution,” Proudhon argued, and “the State must entirely disappear.”⁹²

But, despite his emphasis on freedom and voluntary association, Proudhon had some affinity for the Saint-Simonian idea of replacing coercive government with “scientific” or rational administration. The rational organization of society requires a “search for the system of society... or the science of politics,” which “exists quite independently of the will of sovereigns, the opinion of majorities, and popular beliefs.”⁹³ It will then be possible to create a “scientific socialism,” in which “the sovereignty of the will yields to the sovereignty of reason.”⁹⁴ All “questions of legislation and politics” will then become “matters of science, not of opinion,” to be determined on the basis of statistical analysis.⁹⁵ Since “the opinion of no one is of any value until its truth has been proven, no one can substitute his will for reason, — nobody is king.”⁹⁶ Social science, just like socialism then, implied a positive kind of anarchy.

But Proudhon could not accept the technocratic administrative hierarchies envisaged by the Saint-Simonians. Instead, he advocated workers’ self-management, with workers receiving a polytechnic education and rotating between jobs, in order to improve and combine their respective skills and to avoid a stupefying division of labor. Where an industry required specialized technical expertise, such experts “must be chosen from the workers by the workers themselves.”⁹⁷ It is impossible to conceive of “a system which has all its pieces and details in place,” such that “all the rest of us have to do is implement it.” This is because “social science is infinite; no single human can ever understand it all.”⁹⁸ Science, just as much as production, is a collective endeavor, over which no one individual can claim mastery.

What is Property? was well received in radical circles. Marx described it at the time as “the first resolute, pitiless, and at the same time scientific investigation” of private property.⁹⁹ Some workers began embracing “*anti-political and anarchist ideas*,” as they themselves described them in a short-lived paper, *L’Humanitaire*, in 1841.¹⁰⁰ *L’Humanitaire* published a biography of Sylvain Maréchal, as these workers moved away from the authoritarian communism of Babeuf towards

⁸⁸ Ibid., 62.

⁸⁹ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 480.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 496.

⁹¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, “What is Property,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 38.

⁹² Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 480.

⁹³ Ibid., 133.

⁹⁴ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, “What is Property,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 37.

⁹⁵ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 134.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 119.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 161.

⁹⁹ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 132.

¹⁰⁰ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 65.

a kind of anarchist communism. Their paper was suppressed after only a couple of issues, with its editor, Gabriel Charavay (1818–1879), being sentenced to two years in prison.¹⁰¹

Proudhon himself was opposed to communism—namely, the holding of everything in common and distribution of wealth according to need. He could not see how communism could exist without a state that would dictate the work each person was to perform and determine how goods were to be distributed. He did not think that a communist system could tolerate voluntary associations, because they would seek to exercise control over their own resources and affairs. Communism promoted a false equality, “by placing labour and laziness, skill and stupidity, and even vice and virtue” on equal footing.¹⁰² Under communism, according to Proudhon, either labor would be compulsory, in order to ensure that enough was produced to satisfy everyone’s needs, or the productive members of society would be forced to share what they produced with the unproductive members of society, replacing capitalist exploitation with parasitism.

The idea that the workers ought to receive the full benefit of their labor was common among workers in France during the 1840s. It was largely on the basis of such views of just entitlement that the workers felt exploited. The capitalists were seen as completely undeserving of the profits they extracted from the often hard labor of the workers. As an alternative to capitalism, some French workers began trying to create networks of mutual aid societies and cooperatives that would exchange goods and services directly between themselves on the basis of the amount of labor contributed, in order to achieve the kind of “equivalent exchange” that Proudhon had also been advocating.

In Lyon, these workers called themselves *mutuellistes* (mutualists). Proudhon came into contact with them during the 1840s when he went to work there. The *mutuelliste* movement had its beginnings in the mid-1830s, when some workers turned towards “association,” under the influence of Robert Owen, in light of the unsuccessful “class warfare” represented by the workers’ insurrections of 1831 and 1834.¹⁰³ By the mid-1840s, when Proudhon arrived in Lyon, there was a network of workers’ associations in the city with some 10,000 members.¹⁰⁴

Proudhon’s exposure to the Lyon *mutuellistes* helped him develop a more consistent anarchist conception of social change. “The new socialist movement,” he wrote, “will begin with a fact *sui generis*, the war of the workshop.”¹⁰⁵ The workshop was the primary locus of class struggle, because it was becoming “the constitutive unit of society” under capitalism.¹⁰⁶ Just as “the family was the building block of feudal society, the workshop is the building block of the new society.”¹⁰⁷ The “war of the workshop” would not be conducted through insurrectionary means, but rather by multiplying the workers’ associations, with the workers “organized among themselves, without the assistance of the capitalist... marching by Work to the conquest of the world.”¹⁰⁸

In developing an anarchist conception of socialism that emphasized the self-organization of the working class for the achievement of workers’ self-management, Proudhon, contrary to Marx

¹⁰¹ Jacques Droz (ed.), *Histoire générale du socialisme*, Volume 1 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), 391.

¹⁰² Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 132.

¹⁰³ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class*, Volume 1, 69–70.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁰⁵ K. Steven Vincent, *Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 149.

¹⁰⁶ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *The System of Economical Contradictions, or the Philosophy of Misery* (1846), trans. B. Tucker (Boston: Benj. R. Tucker, 1888), 259.

¹⁰⁷ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 496.

¹⁰⁸ Vincent, *Proudhon*, 148.

and his followers, was not articulating the views of the “petty bourgeoisie,” but rather those of the skilled workers, the “artisanate,” who “still felt that the triumph of industrial capitalism was not yet inevitable.”¹⁰⁹ Ideas like those of Proudhon also held some appeal for the farm laborers and “rural cash-crop petty producers,” whose economic situation was always precarious.¹¹⁰ As the German anarchist Gustav Landauer (1870–1919) was later to remark, what Proudhon was trying to do was to show “to the people of his nation and his time, predominantly small farmers and craftsmen, how they could achieve socialism without waiting for the tidy progress of big capitalism.”¹¹¹

As with other skilled workers, Proudhon could see that industrialization was making many of them redundant, subjecting them to factory discipline and rote work, and reducing them to poverty. Modern industry was creating both “overproduction and destitution.” No matter how great “the pace of mechanical progress,” Proudhon observed, the ultimate effect was to “make the chains of serfdom heavier, render life more and more expensive, and deepen the abyss which separates the class that commands and enjoys from the class that obeys and suffers.”¹¹²

The solution was not to return to a preindustrial, crafts-based economy, as Marx was later to accuse Proudhon, but to give the workers control over their collective endeavors. Against those “philanthropic conservatives” who wanted “to go back to the feudal farming period,” Proudhon argued that “it is not industry that is at fault, but economic chaos,” for the workers’ increasingly desperate situation.¹¹³

Proudhon was not alone in developing anarchist ideas in the 1840s. In Germany, some of the “Young,” or “Left” Hegelians, were also moving toward an anarchist position. The Young Hegelians were radical students of the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), who were turning his idealistic philosophy on its head, formulating a materialist and atheist philosophy utilizing Hegel’s “dialectical” method. Marx and Bakunin were both part of this intellectual movement, which was to have a lasting impact on each of them. At the time, Marx described the Young Hegelian project as the “*ruthless criticism of everything existing*.”¹¹⁴ Bakunin later wrote that “the so-called *revolutionary* Hegelians... tore away the conservative mask from [Hegel’s] doctrines and revealed in all its nakedness the merciless negation that constitutes their essence,” far surpassing “the most frenzied Russian nihilists with their cynical logic.”¹¹⁵

Bakunin himself stands out as one of the Young Hegelians who emphasized the negative side of the dialectic, writing in 1842 that “the passion for destruction is a creative passion, too.”¹¹⁶ Although it would be another twenty-five years before he identified himself as an anarchist, even as a Young Hegelian Bakunin was denouncing “the existing conditions of the State,” writing that the revolutionary Hegelians had “no other program than the destruction of whatever order prevails at the time.”¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 82.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹¹¹ Gustav Landauer, *For Socialism* (1911), (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1978), 61.

¹¹² Proudhon, “The System of Economic Contradictions,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 41.

¹¹³ Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution*, 49–50.

¹¹⁴ Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), 13.

¹¹⁵ Michael Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (1873), ed. & trans. by M. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 131 & 142.

¹¹⁶ Michael Bakunin, “The Reaction in Germany” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 44.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

In 1843, another Young Hegelian, Edgar Bauer (1820–1886), published a critique of church and state, emphasizing the necessary relationship between religious belief and political authority, something which was to become a prominent theme in Bakunin’s later anarchist writings.¹¹⁸ Bauer criticized the French Revolution for being merely a political revolution. Having failed to eliminate “the inequality of possessions,” the revolutionaries were unable to create a “free community.”¹¹⁹ Their mistake was in believing that “true freedom is to be realized in the state,” when the “very word, ‘freedom’, is repugnant to the state.”¹²⁰ Without abolishing inequality and the state, it was inevitable that religion would be revived and the revolution would degenerate into tyranny.

Marx and some later commentators accused Bauer of remaining an idealist, as when he wrote that political forms “are not at all accidental; they are creations of the human spirit.” Yet Bauer’s critique, when shorn of its idealist phraseology, appears to be based on more of a structural or institutional analysis. In response to those who “say that a wise administration will rule wisely,” Bauer retorted that “it lies in the nature of administration to assume police supervision and to resist critique.”¹²¹ Similarly, “crimes are the complements of institutions, their reverse image. Robbery and murder are a result of private property, because this possession itself is a kind of robbery.”¹²² For Bauer, the state cannot “endure without stability, without police supervision, without stern military command.” Consequently, anarchy in its negative sense “is the beginning of all good things.”¹²³ Anarchy in positive terms is the “free community,” with “no private property, no privilege, no difference in status, no usurpatory regime.”¹²⁴

Bauer’s book was immediately suppressed by the Prussian authorities. He was convicted of sedition and sentenced to four years in prison, of which he served two years between 1846 and 1848. Marx criticized Bauer and his brother Bruno in *The Holy Family* (1845) and *The German Ideology* (1846), in which Marx reproached their “Critical Criticism” for ignoring the reality of class struggle and the materialist basis of historical development.¹²⁵

Another Young Hegelian with anarchist sympathies who provoked Marx’s ire was Karl Grün (1817–1887). Marx derisively referred to Grün’s humanistic socialism as “True Socialism.”¹²⁶ Grün applied Ludwig Feuerbach’s (1804–1872) critique of the Christian God as the alienated projection of human consciousness to the institution of private property, with property being conceived as the alienated external embodiment of collective labor that must be returned to common control. At first, Grün came close to an anarchist communist position, but after he became acquainted with Proudhon in Paris he moved closer to Proudhon’s mutualist conception of anarchism, which aimed to achieve “exchange without exploitation” rather than completely abolishing individual remuneration.¹²⁷

¹¹⁸ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 54.

¹¹⁹ Edgar Bauer, “The Struggle of Critique with Church and State” (1843), in *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology*, ed. by L. S. Stepelevich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 268.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 267 & 269.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 272.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹²⁵ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 131–133.

¹²⁶ Cole, *History of Socialist Thought, Volume I*, 244.

¹²⁷ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 56–57.

Besides developing his own libertarian conception of socialism, Grün helped introduce the writings of the French socialists to a German-speaking audience. By the mid-1840s, Grün and Marx had become ideological rivals “for the leadership of the German émigrés in Paris.”¹²⁸ Concerned about Grün’s growing influence, Marx denounced him to Proudhon as a “literary swindler, a charlatan,” who was using Proudhon and other “well-known authors... as a ladder” for his own self-advancement.¹²⁹ Perhaps Marx was unaware that Grün had been explaining his, Feuerbach’s, and other German writers’ ideas to Proudhon, who could not read German, and that he was working on a German translation of Proudhon’s *System of Economic Contradictions*; otherwise, Marx may not have spoken of Grün to Proudhon in such harsh terms.¹³⁰

In any event, Proudhon knew Grün well enough not to be taken in by Marx’s slanders, diplomatically suggesting that Marx “may have seen” Grün “in a false light.”¹³¹ Seriously misjudging Marx’s character, appealing to him to “reverse a judgment resulting from momentary irritation” while “in an angry frame of mind,” Proudhon asked Marx if he would help Grün sell his German translation of the *System of Economic Contradictions*.¹³² Instead, Marx wrote his own scathing reply to Proudhon’s book *The Poverty of Philosophy*, in which he set about to demolish Proudhon’s reputation, much as he had already done to Grün and Bauer.

But the Young Hegelian who expressed the most radical ideas and incurred Marx’s greatest scorn was Max Stirner (1806–1856). Although it may be more accurate to describe Stirner as a “nihilistic egoist” than an anarchist,¹³³ Marx certainly regarded Stirner as an anarchist, later accusing Bakunin of translating “Proudhon’s and Stirner’s anarchy into a savage Tartar dialect.”¹³⁴

Stirner denied not only the legitimacy of all authority but also the validity of all political and moral values, which were nothing more than “spooks” or “wheels in the head” used by the powerful to deceive people into subordinating themselves to these greater “ideals.” Anticipating radical Freudian psychoanalysis, Stirner argued that “Every Prussian carries his gendarme in his breast... The spy and eavesdropper, ‘conscience,’ watches over every motion of the mind, and all thought and action is for it a ‘matter of conscience,’ i.e., police business.”¹³⁵ For Stirner, the state, religion, and personal conscience were equally despotic.

Despite Marx’s claim that Stirner’s critique never “descended from the realm of speculation to the realm of reality,” lacking any kind of class analysis,¹³⁶ Stirner was well aware that the power of the state, and that of the capitalists whose property it protects, rested on the “*slavery of labour*. If *labour* becomes *free*, the State is lost.” If the workers became aware of the “enormous power in their hands... nothing would withstand them; they would only have to stop labour, regard the product of labour as theirs, and enjoy it.”¹³⁷

But Stirner was no socialist. He was as opposed to common ownership as he was to private property. With either “society” or the capitalists having the power to assert ownership over

¹²⁸ Cole, *History of Socialist Thought*, Volume I, 244.

¹²⁹ Stewart Edwards (ed.), *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*. trans. E. Fraser (London: Macmillan, 1970), 149.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 153–154.

¹³³ R. W. K. Paterson, *The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

¹³⁴ Marx, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 547.

¹³⁵ Max Stirner, “The Ego and Its Own,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 45.

¹³⁶ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 182–183.

¹³⁷ Max Stirner, “The Ego and Its Own,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 46.

things, becoming “the individual’s fearful master,” the individual’s access to and use of those things is limited by an external power.¹³⁸ Denying any notions of just entitlement, Stirner argued that property is whatever one has the power to control: “I give myself the right of property in taking property to myself.”¹³⁹ Stirner therefore had no respect for the law, the “cement” by which “the State is held together”; whenever the egoist’s “advantage runs against the State’s,” he “can satisfy himself only by crime.”¹⁴⁰

Stirner had no use for political revolution either, for the result is always “a *new master* set in the old one’s place.”¹⁴¹ Instead he called for insurrection, “a rising of individuals, a getting up, without regard to the arrangements that spring from it... The Revolution aimed at new *arrangements*; insurrection leads us no longer to *let* ourselves be arranged, but to arrange ourselves.”¹⁴² What must be avoided is the creation of new institutions to which the individual will yet again be subordinated. At most, the individual egoist can enter into temporary unions or relationships with others, and only for so long as it remains to his or her own advantage.

Stirner’s book, *The Ego and Its Own* (1844), created a sensation among the Young Hegelians and other German radicals, prompting several of them to write refutations of his ideas. Among the Young Hegelians, Arnold Ruge (1802–1880) and Feuerbach wrote rejoinders to his work. Marx and Engels devoted a large portion of *The German Ideology* to their attack on Stirner. The “true socialist” Moses Hess (1812–1875), who was close to Grün in his ideas at that time (and lumped together with him by Marx), published a socialist critique of Stirner. In spite of the debates over his ideas, which continued on into 1847, Stirner found virtually no one sympathetic to them.¹⁴³ By 1847, revolutionary storms were already forming over Europe, and German radicals turned their focus towards more important issues. Stirner’s book quickly faded into obscurity. It was not until the 1890s that there was to be a revival of interest in Stirner’s ideas, primarily among individualist anarchists.

Although it would still take some time before Bakunin was to become an anarchist, the Young Hegelians’ critique had a lasting impact on him, and through him, on the development of anarchist ideas. Particularly important was their critique of religion and the relationship between religious belief and belief in the necessity and legitimacy of political authority. Also important were the broader Young Hegelian critique of “idealism” and the adoption of a materialist worldview; not in a strict Marxist sense, but in the sense that material reality is basic and ideas are a product of that reality, not the other way around. The Young Hegelian critique resulted in a materialist atheism that emphasized human agency, because there are no divine or supernatural forces to which people are subject, nor which can protect or deliver them from their earthly misery.

The anarchist ideas that came to have some influence among German workers during the 1840s, particularly in the *émigrés* communities in France and Switzerland, were the libertarian socialist ideas of people like Hess, Grün, and through him, Proudhon. As Nettlau argues, Marx and Engels’s “continuous polemical campaign against the libertarians” throughout this period is evi-

¹³⁸ Ibid., 49.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 50.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 48.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁴² Ibid., 50.

¹⁴³ Paterson, *Nihilistic Egoist*, 12–13.

dence of their concerns regarding “the intellectual ascendancy” of anarchist ideas at the time.¹⁴⁴ It did not matter to them whether anarchism was conceived in socialist or, in Stirner’s case, starkly individualist terms. Anarchist heresies had to be eradicated by one means or another—a hostile attitude that Marx and Engels carried with them into the International twenty years later.

Disregarding the personal animosity that Marx and Engels often displayed towards their perceived ideological rivals, there were a number of theoretical grounds that they put forward in opposition to anarchist ideas. First and foremost was Marx’s theory of historical development, or “historical materialism.” In his polemic against Proudhon, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx argued that before the working class would “be able to emancipate itself it is necessary that the productive powers already acquired and the existing social relations should no longer be capable of existing side by side.” The transformation of the workers into a revolutionary class therefore “supposes the existence of all the productive forces which could be engendered in the bosom of the old society.”¹⁴⁵ Before socialism, libertarian or otherwise, can be achieved, capitalism must first reach its fullest stage of development. Any attempt to abolish capitalism prior to the development of productive powers reaching the point where those powers can no longer be constrained within capitalist economic relationships is doomed to failure.

Before the workers can attain political power, the bourgeoisie, or capitalist class, must become the dominant class. The workers therefore “must take part in the middle-class revolution as a condition preliminary to the Labour revolution” because “their own struggle with the bourgeoisie can only break out on the day the bourgeoisie triumphs.” This is because “in the interests of its commerce and industry, the bourgeoisie must create against its will the conditions for the unity of the workers, and the unity of the workers is the first requisite for their victory.”¹⁴⁶ The conditions for the unity of the workers are the creation of an industrial proletariat united by factory work and similar large-scale industries into a class-conscious force capable of imposing its interests through “the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

According to Marx, what Proudhon and the anarchists failed to understand was that in the absence of an industrial proletariat corresponding to an advanced stage of capitalist development, a social revolution resulting in the abolition of capitalism and the achievement of some form of socialism was simply impossible. What they also failed to understand was that as the capitalist mode of production organizes “the proletarians into a class,” the proletariat organizes itself “into a political party.”¹⁴⁷ A party led, of course, by the communists (Marxists in other words), because “they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.”¹⁴⁸

Armed with their superior theory, the communists will lead the proletariat to “the conquest of political power.”¹⁴⁹ The proletariat, represented by the communists, will then be in a position to abolish private property and its own existence as a class by expropriating the property of the bourgeoisie and centralizing “all instruments of production in the hands of the State,” in order “to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.”¹⁵⁰ Only then will the productive forces

¹⁴⁴ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 58.

¹⁴⁵ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 213–214.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 237.

reach the stage of development necessary to sustain a communist society in which everyone will have access to whatever they need.

From Marx's perspective, because of their failure to grasp this process of historical development, the anarchists sought to abolish the state when the material conditions were not ripe, ensuring the failure of the revolution. By attempting a social revolution before capitalism had created the productive forces no longer capable of being constrained within capitalist economic relationships and the corresponding bourgeois political systems, the anarchists were retarding both the development of the forces of production necessary for the creation of a socialist society and the development of the conditions necessary for the emergence and eventual triumph of a working-class political party. By failing to appreciate the need for a working-class party that would lead the workers first through a bourgeois revolution and then to the "dictatorship of the proletariat," which would then lead to the abolition of all classes, the anarchists were allegedly ensuring the triumph of the counterrevolution.

The anarchists saw things differently. These opposing ideas would soon be put to the test as a wave of revolutions swept over Europe, beginning in Sicily in early 1848, then France in February 1848, and then Germany and various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Although the Italian revolutionary Carlo Pisacane (1818–1857) participated in the Sicilian and Italian Revolutions of 1848, he had not yet formulated his ideas regarding the "free association of individuals and... of communes" that would justify putting him in the anarchist camp.¹⁵¹ The only country where anarchist ideas had any real currency during the 1848 European revolutions was France, largely due to Proudhon's efforts, and even there Proudhon failed to take a consistently anarchist approach.

In February 1848, a working-class insurrection in Paris led to the overthrow of the constitutional monarchy of Louis Philippe. A provisional republican government was proclaimed; but, unlike the 1830 July Revolution, this time the (male) workers insisted on their own right to vote. In addition, they "forced the middle-class Republicans... to include" the socialist Louis Blanc (1811–1882) in the government and "to guarantee the 'right to work'."¹⁵²

Although Proudhon had helped build street barricades in February, he lamented that the workers had "made a revolution without ideas."¹⁵³ He proceeded to remedy this lack by writing a series of pamphlets, newspaper articles, and books in which he set *The Solution to the Social Problem*, which was also the name of one of his first revolutionary pamphlets of March 1848.¹⁵⁴

Here is not the place to detail all of Proudhon's activities during the period from February 1848 to December 1851, when Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte (1808–1873) made himself ruler of France through a coup d'état. Instead, I will focus on the development of Proudhon's anarchism, for it was his anarchist ideas that were to have the greatest influence on the emergence of avowedly anarchist movements from out of the International in the early 1870s.

In *The Solution to the Social Problem*, Proudhon coined a phrase that subsequent anarchists were to become fond of quoting: "Liberty [is] not the daughter but the *mother* of order." He set forth his conception of "the ideal republic" as "a positive anarchy," in which "every citizen, by doing what he wishes and only what he wishes, participates directly in legislation and in government,

¹⁵¹ Carlo Pisacane, "On Revolution," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 66.

¹⁵² Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 131.

¹⁵³ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 118.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

as he participates in the production and the circulation of wealth.”¹⁵⁵ What Proudhon was proposing was that the government be replaced by a system of mutual exchange organized around a democratically controlled “people’s bank” or “Bank of Exchange,” with “delegates chosen by all branches of production and of the public service.”¹⁵⁶

These delegates would be subject to an “imperative mandate... and permanent revocability.” What this means is that the delegates must act in accordance with the mandates or instructions given to them by the people who elected them, such that when the latter “are discontented” with the actions of their delegates, they can “recall and dismiss them.”¹⁵⁷ “Delegate democracy” is intended to be a form of direct, not representative, democracy. “Delegates” are not supposed to substitute their views for those of the people who have elected or “delegated” them. “Representatives,” on the other hand, while purporting to act in the overall interests of those who elect them, are not bound to act in accordance with the instructions of their electors. The use of revocable delegates with imperative mandates was continued by Proudhon’s followers and other antiauthoritarians in the International. In contrast, Marx and his allies favored the use of representatives who were free to support policy positions contrary to the views of the people they were claiming to represent.

With delegates from every branch of production and the public service, the bank would act in “the general welfare,” becoming “the true representative of the people.” Being “equal and identical with the totality of citizens,” the bank’s general assembly would render any separate government administration unnecessary. The bank would issue notes and provide low-interest loans based on the amount of labor represented by any particular product or service, so that “all agricultural, manufacturing, commercial companies, corporations and associations” would be able to exchange products and services of equivalent value “under the patronage of and in partnership with” the bank.¹⁵⁸

Proudhon compared this system of direct democracy to representative government, which in contrast “says that *the People reigns and does not govern*, which is to deny the Revolution.” Government “of the People by the People” is incompatible with “representation of the People” by those with the political wiles and money to get themselves elected as the people’s so-called representatives. For Proudhon, “there is not and never can be legitimate representation of the People.”¹⁵⁹ Proudhon anticipated that the election of representatives to a National Assembly would result in an assembly divided along class and regional lines representing a variety of conflicting interests that would only end up “damaging the Revolution,” leading the people to “disavow their representatives’ politics” through another insurrection, “analogous with that of February” 1848.¹⁶⁰

Subsequent events were to prove Proudhon right. The April 1848 election returned an assembly of representatives composed of “500 neo-royalists... 200 moderate Republicans and around 100 Radicals.”¹⁶¹ As Proudhon saw it, “The cause of the proletariat, proclaimed with spirit on the barricades of February, has just been lost in the elections of April.”¹⁶² The unwillingness of the

¹⁵⁵ Henry Cohen (ed.), *Proudhon’s Solution of the Social Problem* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1927), 45.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁵⁷ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 273.

¹⁵⁸ Cohen, *Proudhon’s Solution*, 77–78.

¹⁵⁹ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 267–268.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁶¹ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 133.

¹⁶² Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 125.

majority of the National Assembly to adopt any policies that would ameliorate the condition of the working class led to another insurrection in June 1848, involving “some 50,000 Parisian workers... Of these, 1,500 were killed and 12,000 arrested.”¹⁶³

Proudhon had allowed himself to be nominated as a candidate in the April elections, but was unsuccessful. He took the results of the April 1848 elections as support for his seemingly counterintuitive warning to the workers in March that “Universal suffrage is counter-revolution.” He foresaw then how universal (male) suffrage within the context of a representative form of government could be used to maintain and legitimize existing inequalities of wealth and power, much as it continues to be used today (with an even broader suffrage). According to Proudhon, the newly elected National Assembly was dominated “by the priests, by the Legitimists, by the Dynastics, by the most conservative and most backward-looking elements in France.”¹⁶⁴

Proudhon insisted that only a “social” or “economic revolution” could prevent “the retreat towards royalty, despotism and barbarism.”¹⁶⁵ He continued to believe that “social reform will never come from political reform; on the contrary, political reform must come from social reform.”¹⁶⁶ This is why he focused on changing the economic system instead of political institutions, advising the workers to “leave the politicking and the eloquence to the bourgeois.” The “place to do battle with property” was the “workshops and in the market place,” not the political clubs with all their “speechifying.”¹⁶⁷

Prior to the conservative-dominated National Assembly convening at the beginning of May 1848, Proudhon called upon the provisional government to transform the Bank of France into a “people’s bank,” asking himself, “why should I not use things as they are, to change things as they are?”¹⁶⁸ Unsurprisingly, his proposal was not accepted. On the eve of the opening session of the National Assembly, Proudhon called instead upon the workers to create their own representative body in opposition to the bourgeois National Assembly, “a state within the state,” that would “orchestrate exchange, credit and commerce between workers.”¹⁶⁹ He advocated revolution “*from below*” through “collective activity” and “popular spontaneity,” denouncing socialism imposed by the state as revolution “*from above*... the intervention of power in everything,” representing the “absolutist initiative of the State... pure governmentalism” that would only result in “the oppression of the wills of those below.”¹⁷⁰ He exhorted his fellow revolutionaries instead to “work with us for the demolition of government... for the transformation of Europe and the world.”¹⁷¹

As can be seen, Proudhon was having difficulty in articulating a consistently anarchist approach, appealing to the provisional government to initiate economic change, running for election to the National Assembly, and then proposing that, rather than abolishing the state, the workers create their own representative assembly to initiate the economic changes the provisional government had declined to implement, and which the National Assembly would undoubtedly oppose. Proudhon seemed unsure about which must come first, political change or economic change. For the time being, despite claiming that the workshop, not the political arena, was the

¹⁶³ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 134.

¹⁶⁴ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 310.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 310.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 310.

¹⁶⁸ Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution*, 178.

¹⁶⁹ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 321.

¹⁷⁰ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 143.

¹⁷¹ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 397.

place to do battle against property, Proudhon was tilting in a political direction, culminating in his election to the National Assembly in the by-elections of early June 1848. However, Proudhon's experiences as a deputy in the National Assembly, and the failed workers' insurrection later that June, helped turn him back towards a more anarchist position.

Contrary to Marxist claims that Proudhon was the representative of the petite bourgeoisie, "most of the votes for Proudhon were cast in working-class districts of Paris."¹⁷² Proudhon's influence among the French working class had been spreading steadily since he had begun publishing a daily newspaper, *Le Représentant du Peuple*, in April 1848. The future Communeard Gustave Lefrançais (1826–1901) later noted that "*Le Représentant du Peuple* was soon more in demand than any other radical paper, and was eagerly torn from the hands of the vendors as soon as it appeared on the streets."¹⁷³ On its masthead the paper proclaimed: "What is the Producer? Nothing. What should he be? Everything!"¹⁷⁴

But as much as Proudhon's paper helped spread his ideas among the workers, his election to the National Assembly isolated him from them. As he later put it, as soon as he "set foot on this parliamentary Sinai, I ceased to be in contact with the masses... One has to experience this isolation called a national assembly to understand how the men who are the most completely ignorant of the state of a country are nearly always those who represent it."¹⁷⁵

On June 21, 1848, the National Assembly abolished the national workshops that had been created as a palliative for the unemployed, offering them instead "the choice of joining the Army, draining malaria-infested marshes... or accepting low-paid casual jobs with Paris entrepreneurs."¹⁷⁶ When the Parisian workers rose in revolt on June 23, 1848, Ferdinand Flocon (1800–1866), a Jacobin democrat with socialist sympathies, advised the National Assembly, where Proudhon was present, that the insurrection "was being directed by political factions and supported from abroad."¹⁷⁷ At first, Proudhon was taken in by this misrepresentation. Then, while the street fighting was still raging, he "took advantage of his representative's insignia to walk in the areas where the combat was in progress," and soon, in his own words, "became convinced that the insurrection was socialist."¹⁷⁸

While Paris was still under martial law, Proudhon published a call in *Le Représentant du Peuple* for "all tenants and farmers," and even the National Guard that had put down the June uprising, to petition the National Assembly for the postponement and reduction of rental payments for accommodation and land that were coming due on July 15, 1848.¹⁷⁹ The authorities considered this a deliberate provocation, and this issue of *Le Représentant du Peuple* was immediately suppressed.

Proudhon used his status as a deputy to present to the National Assembly an expanded proposal that he argued would lead to the gradual "abolition of property," by which he meant income that was not attributable to one's own labor.¹⁸⁰ During the debate, Proudhon indicated that if the property owners refused to implement his proposed reforms, "we would ourselves proceed

¹⁷² Robert L. Hoffman, *Revolutionary Justice: The Social and Political Theory of P.-J. Proudhon* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1972), 136.

¹⁷³ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 124.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁷⁵ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 425.

¹⁷⁶ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 133–134.

¹⁷⁷ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 426.

¹⁷⁸ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 130.

¹⁷⁹ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 341.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 349.

with the liquidation without you.” When asked what he meant by that, Proudhon responded that “When I used those pronouns *you* and *we*, it was self-evident that at that point I was identifying *myself* with the proletariat and identifying *you* with the bourgeois class.”¹⁸¹ Other representatives indignantly accused Proudhon of fomenting “social warfare.” His proposal was defeated by a vote of 691 to 2, with only a *mutuelliste* deputy Proudhon knew from his days in Lyon voting with Proudhon in favor of the motion.¹⁸²

Marx, in his account of Proudhon’s speech, denied that Proudhon in any way represented the workers when he so courageously spoke before the National Assembly following the June massacres. Rather, Proudhon was “compelled to speak as a democrat in the face of the whole bourgeois” assembly only for the sake of realizing his own “petty-bourgeois illusion” regarding settling “the antagonism between capital and labour, between proletariat and bourgeoisie” by means of equivalent exchange.¹⁸³ This was shortly after Marx and Engels had published false allegations that Bakunin was a czarist spy, which they only reluctantly withdrew after the alleged source of the allegations, George Sand (1804–1876), denied there was any truth to them.¹⁸⁴ These incidents provide telling examples of how Marx and Engels dealt with their perceived ideological opponents even, as we shall see, during the debates within the International over twenty years later.

Despite the caricatures of Proudhon as a doctrinaire anarchist purist who refused any participation in conventional politics, he was deeply involved in the political debates during the 1848 French Revolution, both through his publications and through his work as a deputy in the National Assembly. Thus, when Proudhon came to express a more consistent anarchist position in his memoir regarding the events of 1848, *Confessions of a Revolutionary* (1849), he did so on the basis of bitter experience, not abstract principles.

Proudhon’s articles denouncing capitalism and exploitation were reaching a wider audience, with the last few issues of *Le Représentant du Peuple* in August 1848 having a circulation of about 40,000. Proudhon added to the paper’s masthead, “What is the capitalist? Everything! What should he be? Nothing!” When the paper was suppressed at the end of August, he soon started a new one, *Le Peuple*, which immediately began selling a similar number of copies.¹⁸⁵

Proudhon’s newspaper articles were often more radical than were his actions. In October 1848, he published his “Toast to the Revolution,” based on a speech he had given to a banquet of around 2,000 people, in which he spoke about “permanent revolution.”¹⁸⁶ He argued that the February Revolution, having proclaimed “the predominance of labour over capital,” could only be completed by the people “acting upon themselves without intermediary”; that is, through their own direct action and not through their so-called representatives.¹⁸⁷

He continued to advocate his concept of a “mutualist” anarchism throughout the fall of 1848, while still participating in the political debates regarding the course of the Revolution, particularly with respect to the adoption of a new constitution and the creation of the office of the

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 350–351.

¹⁸² Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 135.

¹⁸³ Marx, “Proudhon’s Speech Against Thiers,” in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 66, August 5, 1848. Reprinted in Marx & Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 7*, (New York: International Publishers, 1978), 321–325.

¹⁸⁴ Mark Leier, *Bakunin: The Creative Passion* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 139.

¹⁸⁵ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 136–137.

¹⁸⁶ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 359.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 366.

president, who would be the chief executive officer of the new republic. Proudhon became notorious for declaring that he “voted against the Constitution because it is a Constitution.” Political constitutions set forth the division of powers between various branches of government, which instead of being divided should simply be abolished. In place of a “constitutional” division of powers, which leaves the people powerless, Proudhon proposed an anarchist society, “a mass of free citizens, negotiating on the question of their interests, either individually or in councils, carrying out all the tasks of labour and society without any intermediaries.”¹⁸⁸

But in the same declaration of his anarchist opposition to political constitutions, Proudhon gave a more prosaic reason for his vote against the constitution: that it would “imperil rather than guarantee liberty” by creating “a presidency, with all its prerogatives, ambitions and culpable hopes.”¹⁸⁹ Proudhon, in his role as a socialist political representative, in contrast to his role as a self-proclaimed anarchist, opposed the new constitution because it concentrated executive power in the office of the president, creating a kind of elected dictatorship, legitimized by universal suffrage.

In his November 1848 election manifesto, Proudhon argued that the workers should continue their efforts to create their own means of equivalent exchange through self-managed credit unions and producer and consumer cooperatives, which would enable the workers to “become masters of it all, through the successive affiliation of producers and the liquidation of property without the proprietors being despoiled or indemnified.”¹⁹⁰ While he would “be delighted if the State were to contribute through its budgetary provisions to the emancipation of the workers,” he insisted that control of these bodies remain in the hands of the workers themselves.¹⁹¹ Instead of advocating the “expropriation by the State of the mines, canals and railways,” which would leave the workers in the position of wage laborers, employed by the state instead of by capitalists, Proudhon wanted “the mines, canals, railways handed over to democratically organised workers’ associations operating under State supervision.”¹⁹² This limited role for the state was a position Proudhon was to return to in *The Principle of Federation* (1863).

After Louis Bonaparte was elected president in December 1848 by an overwhelming majority, Proudhon attempted to create a “Bank of the People,” without government assistance, based on voluntary memberships and subscriptions. The bank was to have three branches, the main branch being the bank itself, which would provide low-interest loans to its members, secured by their current and future production. Affiliated with the bank would be “syndicates” of production and consumption, “free and democratic” workers’ companies or corporations that would coordinate their activities and receive financing through the bank.¹⁹³ The bank would have a “*central bureau of supply and demand*” that would coordinate production and consumption in order to prevent scarcity or overabundance of products and the poverty and unemployment that would result.¹⁹⁴ The hope was that this system of worker self-management would eventually replace capitalism without the need for state intervention or the forceful expropriation of the capitalists—a strategy more consistent with Proudhon’s anarchist principles.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 427.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 375.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 375–376.

¹⁹² Ibid., 377.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 391.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 393.

The bank was unsuccessful, for a variety of reasons. Although it attracted 27,000 primarily working-class members, their modest subscriptions did not provide the bank with enough capital to operate effectively.¹⁹⁵ In addition, Proudhon was sentenced to three years in prison and assessed a hefty fine for sedition in March 1849, as a result of denouncing Louis Bonaparte as “the personification of all reactionary ideas... conspiring with all the monarchical cliques, with the Jesuits, with absolutists, for the enslavement of the people.”¹⁹⁶ Proudhon decided to wind up the bank, concerned that it would fall into the wrong hands while he was in prison.

Proudhon was right to worry about government interference. The ascendant Right in France regarded working-class institutions and associations as “a genuine threat to employer authority,” such that “even the most modest, ‘apolitical’ cooperative posed an implicit threat to the capitalist order.” Consequently, from 1849 to 1850, “hundreds of cooperatives were harassed or suppressed” by government authorities.¹⁹⁷

Proudhon began his term of imprisonment in June 1849, after his whereabouts were betrayed by an informer. During his imprisonment, he wrote and published two of his most influential and explicitly anarchist books, *Confessions of a Revolutionary* (1849) and *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (1851). Bakunin and his future associate, James Guillaume, were later to publish a summary of Proudhon’s views, *Anarchy According to Proudhon* (1873), drawing mainly from these two works.¹⁹⁸

In *Confessions of a Revolutionary*, Proudhon again rejected socialism “from above,” organized by the state, arguing that only “the masses armed with their intelligence” can make the revolution, creating socialism “from below” through their own initiative and action. “Governments are God’s scourge, established to *discipline* the world... Their role is not to create change but to control it.”¹⁹⁹

Returning to his arguments in *What is Property?*, Proudhon declared that the “exploitation of man by man... is theft” and the “government of man by man is slavery,” both sanctioned by religious institutions.²⁰⁰ He therefore denounced the triumvirate of capital, religion, and the state:

Capital, which in the political field is analogous to *government*, in religion has *Catholicism* as its synonym. The economic idea of capitalism, the politics of government or of authority, and the theological idea of the Church are three identical ideas, linked in various ways. To attack one of them is equivalent to attacking all of them... What capital does to labour, and the State to liberty, the Church does to the spirit... The most effective means for oppressing the people would be simultaneously to enslave its body, its will and its reason. If socialism is to reveal its truly positive aspect, free from all mysticism, all it will have to do is denounce the idea of this trinity.²⁰¹

Proudhon, despite his preference for peaceful change through the creation and multiplication of workers’ associations and related institutions, such as a people’s bank, defended the right of the people to revolt against the authorities ruling over them in order to “claim their liberty,” including “by force of arms.”²⁰² He argued that the military should be controlled by the people,

¹⁹⁵ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 144.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁹⁷ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 151–152.

¹⁹⁸ Daniel Guérin, “From Proudhon to Bakunin,” in *Our Generation*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1986), 30.

¹⁹⁹ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 398–399.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 400.

²⁰¹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 43–44.

²⁰² Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 463.

who would “appoint the hierarchy of their military chiefs, the simple soldiers and national guards appointing the lower ranks of officers, the officers appointing their superiors.”²⁰³

But while there was still a semblance of democracy, Proudhon took the position that the constitution should be defended against Louis Bonaparte’s dictatorial ambitions. Instead of supporting insurrection, such as was attempted by some radical republicans in June 1849, Proudhon advocated a tax strike across France that, by depriving the government of all revenue, would result in “socialism” becoming “a law of necessity and part of the practice of the state.” Others on the Left opposed Proudhon’s proposal for, as Proudhon put it, if the people “refused to pay its taxes once, it would never pay them again and government would become impossible.” The Jacobins, Proudhon wrote, “need a government and with it a budget, secret funds, as many as possible. In short, the counterrevolution was admirably defended by the organs of the revolution,” the Jacobins themselves.²⁰⁴

Proudhon’s anarchist writings continued to reach a broad audience. In the fall of 1849, the exiled Russian socialist Alexander Herzen (1812–1870) provided Proudhon with money to start a new paper, *La Voix du Peuple*, in which he conducted polemics against the government and the state socialists. “According to Herzen, the demand for the new paper was greater than ever; 40,000 copies would normally circulate, but whenever Proudhon wrote a special article, 50,000 to 60,000 were printed, and sold so quickly” that the next day the few remaining copies were being sold at a much higher price.²⁰⁵

Proudhon distinguished himself from the Jacobins and the socialist politicians who saw a positive role for the state by again identifying himself, and those who agreed with him, as “*anarchists*.”²⁰⁶ Proudhon denied “government and the State, because we affirm that which the founders of States have never believed in, the personality and autonomy of the masses.”²⁰⁷ He looked forward to the time when, “labour having organised itself, in accordance with its own law, and having no further need of law-maker or sovereign, the workshop will banish government.”²⁰⁸ He argued that political authority and private property cannot exist without the other, such that “an attack upon one is an attack upon the other,” for both are based on “the principle of AUTHORITY.”²⁰⁹

By the fall of 1849, anarchist ideas were beginning to spread throughout France and in parts of Germany. Several “mutualist” publications emerged in France from 1848 to 1850.²¹⁰ In Toulouse, the young journalist Anselme Bellegarrigue called for political abstention, seeing “no middle ground” between “unlimited liberty or oppression to the death.”²¹¹ In 1850, he published an anarchist manifesto in Paris, *L’Anarchie, Journal de l’Ordre*, arguing, much as Proudhon had, that “anarchy is order, whereas government is civil war.”²¹² He regarded Proudhon’s newspaper, *La Voix du Peuple*, as one of the few to break “with the old routine.”²¹³

²⁰³ Ibid., 443.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 469.

²⁰⁵ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 154.

²⁰⁶ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 480.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 483.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 497.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 505–506.

²¹⁰ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 66.

²¹¹ Ibid., 68.

²¹² Anselme Bellegarrigue, “Anarchy is Order,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 59.

²¹³ Anselme Bellegarrigue, *Anarchist Manifesto* (1850), (London: Kate Sharpley Library, 2002), 10.

Proudhon himself did not yet advocate political abstention. In April 1850, he supported the candidacy of the novelist Eugène Sue (1804–1857), urging the bourgeoisie to “vote with the workers,” for “the proletarians are our strength,” the greatest bulwark against counterrevolution.²¹⁴ Despite Sue and other radical candidates being elected, the Right continued to control the National Assembly, using their majority to disenfranchise three million working-class voters at the end of May 1850 in order to prevent the Left from making any further inroads toward power.

With the French government remaining under the control of the reactionaries, many workers became disillusioned with electoral politics, adopting a policy of abstention similar to that advocated by Bellegarrigue. Jean-Pierre Drevet (1806–?), formerly a working-class supporter of Louis Blanc’s state-sponsored socialism who had participated in the June 1848 insurrection, published a pamphlet in 1850, *Le socialisme pratique*, in which he wrote that “we don’t want anything to do with ‘politics’, since it is politics which has deceived the peoples of the earth.” Sounding much like Proudhon and Bellegarrigue, he argued that politics “requires *gendarmes*, prisons... bailiffs... [and] an Army.” He therefore urged the workers “to organize production in a way to benefit themselves” instead of waiting for political reforms—something which they had been doing since the beginning of the Revolution in February 1848.²¹⁵ In Paris alone, “some 50,000 Paris workers may have participated in cooperative ventures between 1848 and 1851. Three hundred associations were established in 120 trades.”²¹⁶

An associate of Proudhon’s, Charles-François Chevé, published a *Socialist Catechism* in 1850, setting forth the basic principles of mutualist anarchism. The pamphlet had originally appeared in the October 29, 1849, edition of Proudhon’s *La Voix du Peuple*.

In Montauban, near Toulouse, Élisée Reclus (1830–1905), then a twenty-one-year-old university student, wrote in 1851 that anarchy is “the highest expression of order” and looked forward to a time when “nations shall no longer feel the need of subjecting themselves to the tutelage of a government or of another nation.”²¹⁷ He had recently returned from Germany, where in 1849 the Young Hegelian Arnold Ruge had advocated the “self-government of the people... the abolition of all government, a social order which in reality is an ordered anarchy.” Ruge conceived of anarchy, much as Edgar Bauer had in 1843, as “the free community and the co-operation of men who make their own decisions and who are in all respects equal comrades.” Bauer himself continued to advocate antiauthoritarian views, but had moderated his public expression of them, no doubt in fear of further imprisonment.²¹⁸

Bakunin was active in the revolutionary movements in Germany between 1848 and 1849, but not yet an anarchist. He advocated national liberation for the Germanic and Slav peoples of Europe, based on a form of democratic socialism, through a revolution of the workers and peasants, arguing that “the *bourgeoisie* had revealed itself as a specifically counterrevolutionary force.”²¹⁹ Marx and Engels wasted no time in denouncing Bakunin’s “Pan-Slavism.” Engels argued that the Slav peoples were “necessarily counterrevolutionary” and that the role of civilizing and enabling “them to take part in... historical development” was reserved to the “big monarchies” of Prussia and Austria, which, by absorbing “all these small, stunted, and impotent little nations into a single

²¹⁴ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 163.

²¹⁵ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 151.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 149.

²¹⁷ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 69.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹⁹ E. H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 178.

big state,” would complete the process of “political centralization,” which had “become a historical necessity... as a result of the powerful progress of industry, trade, and communications.”²²⁰

At times, Bakunin came closer to an explicitly anarchist position, as when he wrote that he believed “neither in constitutions nor laws... We need something else: spirit and vitality, a new world without laws and thus free.”²²¹ By May 1849, Bakunin was in Dresden, where he met the composer Richard Wagner and participated in the uprising “against the King of Saxony.”²²² At the time, Wagner was a revolutionary with “a profound sympathy for the free associations of the future.”²²³ Nevertheless, he felt that Bakunin “overstepped in every direction even the extremest bounds of radicalism.”²²⁴

Despite Bakunin’s misgivings about the insurrection, which he thought “ill-conceived” and poorly executed, he acted, according to Wagner, with “wonderful sangfroid,” fighting till the end.²²⁵ When the revolt was put down by Prussian troops, Bakunin “was arrested with other leaders of the insurrection” and then began a lengthy imprisonment in various German, Austrian, and Russian dungeons, before being exiled to Siberia in 1857, from where he did not escape until 1861.²²⁶

The last of the revolutionary movements in the German-speaking countries of Europe was defeated in the Rhineland in August 1849. By 1852, the reaction in Germany had “crushed” any anarchist tendencies there.²²⁷ Anarchist ideas were only reintroduced in Germany in the mid-1870s, after the split in the International between the authoritarians and antiauthoritarians.

Back in France, things went from bad to worse. Proudhon remained in prison, sometimes in solitary confinement, for continuing to defend the Revolution against the reactionary onslaught. In “Vive l’Empereur!,” Proudhon predicted that Louis Bonaparte would make himself emperor through a coup d’état, which is exactly what happened in December 1851.²²⁸ Proudhon argued that such a *coup* should be met by the people themselves seizing the Bank of France and then destroying “(to cries of ‘Long Live the Emperor’) the files of the notaries, solicitors and registrars and all the titles of credit and property.”²²⁹ Destroying mortgage records and titles to property was something Bakunin and other anarchists were also later to advocate.

In May 1850, *La Voix du Peuple* was ordered to cease publication. Its successor, simply called *Le Peuple*, appeared sporadically until October 1850, when a heavy fine forced an end to it as well.²³⁰ Despite all this and his continued imprisonment, Proudhon was able to publish *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* in July 1851. It quickly sold out its first edition of 3,000 copies. A second edition was printed that August. Thus, despite the suppression of his newspapers, Proudhon was still able to reach a wide audience through his books.

In *General Idea of the Revolution*, Proudhon set forth an anarchist conception of socialism based on voluntary association and workers’ self-management. Proudhon argued that larger collective

²²⁰ Engels, in *Bakunin*, 140–141.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

²²² Shatz, in *Statism and Anarchy*, xviii.

²²³ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 58.

²²⁴ Wagner, in *Statism and Anarchy*, xix.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Shatz, in *Statism and Anarchy*, xix–xxii.

²²⁷ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 59.

²²⁸ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 161.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, [165].

enterprises should be owned and managed by the workers themselves. Each worker would “participate in the gains and losses” of the enterprise in which he worked “in proportion to his services.” Although there would be some wage differentials, each worker would rotate through the different positions, gaining “an encyclopedic aptitude and a sufficient income” and avoiding a degrading division of labor.²³¹

Society would be composed of a variety of functional and autonomous groups, voluntarily federated with one another, forming a complex interlocking network based on individual contracts or agreements between free and equal parties. If “one part of the citizens should find themselves, by the contract, subordinated and exploited by the others, it would no longer be a contract; it would be a fraud, against which annulment might at any time be invoked justly.” Each contract should instead “increase the well-being and liberty of every citizen,” imposing “no obligation upon the parties, except that which results from their personal promise of reciprocal delivery,” without “any external authority,” for “no matter the system of representation or of delegation of the governmental function,” there would be “*necessarily* alienation of a part of the liberty and means of the citizen.” Proudhon described this contractarian or mutualist conception of socialism as a positive form of “Anarchy.”²³²

In true anarchist fashion, Proudhon denounced the age-old alliance between church and state as forever being “the soul and body of conservatism,” regarding religion as “the oldest manifestation of government and the highway for authority.”²³³ Proudhon’s antireligiosity distinguished him from many of his more pious socialist contemporaries. For Proudhon, “the supreme work of the Revolution” was “to do away with” the reactionary Catholic Church.²³⁴

With respect to the legal system, Proudhon denied the right of society to imprison alleged criminals, “under pretext of reforming them, in one of those dens of violence [prison], stigmatized, put in irons, tortured in body and soul, guillotined, or, what is even worse, placed, at the expiration of their term, under the surveillance of the police, whose inevitable revelations will pursue them wherever they may have taken refuge.”²³⁵ The justice system was but a means for “these capitalists, these proprietors, these rich men... who enjoy [the government’s] protection and favor,” to sit in judgment “of the poor.”²³⁶ Proudhon therefore called for the “complete, immediate, abolition of courts and tribunals, without any substitution or transition,” as “one of the prime necessities of the Revolution,” even “if social liquidation” and “the organization of economic forces” should take another twenty-five to fifty years.²³⁷

Proudhon again criticized the Jacobins and state socialists for wanting to centralize power in the hands of the state, treating all those “who speak in favor of liberty and local sovereignty” as “*Federalists*” and counterrevolutionary Girondins. Abolish capitalism, “this last remnant of the ancient slavery,” Proudhon argued, and “both citizens and communities will have no need of the intervention of the State.”²³⁸ But if “the Revolution allows any portion of government to remain, it will soon return in its entirety.”²³⁹

²³¹ Proudhon, “The General Idea of the Revolution,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 56–57.

²³² *Ibid.*, 53.

²³³ Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution*, 247–248.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 249.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 258.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 259.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 260–261.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 268–269.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 280.

Proudhon called for worldwide revolution, for the revolution “would perish, even in France, if it failed to become universal.”²⁴⁰ He looked forward to the time when, with “Capitalistic and propriety exploitation stopped everywhere, the wage system abolished, equal and just exchange guaranteed,” and the “police, judiciary, administration, everywhere committed to the hands of the workers,” economic and industrial organization would replace “the governmental and military system in the colonies as well as in the great cities; finally, the free and universal commingling of races under the law of contract only: that is the Revolution.”²⁴¹

Proudhon consequently condemned national governments that, “pretending to establish order among men, arrange them forthwith in hostile camps, and as their only occupation is to produce servitude at home, their art lies in maintaining war abroad, war in fact and war in prospect.” Governments arouse and manipulate nationalist feelings, such that the “oppression of peoples and their mutual hatred are two correlative, inseparable facts, which reproduce each other, and which cannot come to an end except simultaneously, by the destruction of their common cause, government.” The “fundamental, decisive idea” of the Revolution is therefore: “NO MORE AUTHORITY, neither in the Church, nor in the State, nor in land, nor in money... no more antagonism, no more war, no more centralization, no more governments, no more priests.”²⁴²

In his summary of *General Idea of the Revolution*, Marx dismissed Proudhon’s anarchism as a “Stirnerian” recipe.²⁴³ Engels agreed, deriding Proudhon’s “pseudo-philosophical interpretation of history” and his “pretentious and superficial... critique of politics... worthy of a schoolboy.” Proudhon’s argument that “Authority and Freedom are irreconcilable contradictions” ignored the reality and necessity of political power given the current state of economic and technological development. Yet, in the same breath, Engels accused Proudhon of stealing his and Marx’s argument in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that “government is nothing but the power of one class for suppressing the others, and that it will disappear together with the disappearance of class contradictions.”²⁴⁴ Given that Proudhon had already elaborated his anarchist conception of socialism before the *Manifesto* was ever published in French, there is more truth to his remark regarding Marx’s *Poverty of Philosophy*: “The true meaning of Marx’s work is that he regrets that I have thought like him everywhere and that I was the first to say it.”²⁴⁵

Marx and Engels remained opponents of anyone on the Left who advocated “a federative republic,” or who would “attempt to cripple the central government by the utmost possible autonomy and independence for the communities and provinces.” Instead, in light of the defeat of the revolutionary movements in Germany, they advocated that the workers “not only strive for a single and indivisible German republic, but also within this republic for the most determined centralization of power in the hands of the state authority. They must not allow themselves to be misguided by the democratic talk of freedom for the communities, of self-government, etc.” Instead of abolishing the state or reducing its power to a minimum, as Proudhon advocated, Marx and Engels claimed that “it is the task of the really revolutionary party to carry through the strictest centralization” of power.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 281.

²⁴² Proudhon, “The General Idea of the Revolution,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 57–58.

²⁴³ Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), 38.

²⁴⁴ Engels, in *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 39–40.

²⁴⁵ Joll, *The Anarchists*, 2nd ed., 50.

²⁴⁶ Marx, *Selected Writings*, 284.

Despite Proudhon's spirited and audacious defense of "the principle of Anarchism" in the face of the growing reaction, there was little he could do to prevent the triumph of the Bonapartist counterrevolution.²⁴⁷ In December 1851, Louis Bonaparte seized power in a coup d'état. A year later, he proclaimed himself Napoléon III, emperor of France, after reinstituting universal (male) suffrage and holding a national referendum to legitimize his dictatorship. Any chance of a revolutionary anarchist movement arising in France was set back a generation.

Even before Bonaparte's coup, the government had already taken steps to suppress the socialists and left-wing republicans. Proudhon was still in prison and his papers had been suppressed, as had numerous other publications advocating "subversive" ideas. Leading socialists, revolutionaries, and left-wing politicians were also in prison or in exile, including Louis Blanc, Victor Considerant (1808–1893), Alexandre-Auguste Ledru-Rollin (1807–1874), Charles Delescluze (1809–1871), François Raspail (1794–1878), Armand Barbès (1809–1870), and Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881).

Cafés where workers would discuss politics "were closed down or subject to curfew." Left-wing municipal councils "were dissolved and popular mayors, who posed a danger because of their control over municipal policing, were dismissed—even jailed." Workers' associations and cooperatives were harassed, and their leaders sometimes arrested for, among other things, supporting "wage strikes." In Nantes, a group of cooperatives was "dissolved on the grounds that their members had maintained written contact with Proudhon."²⁴⁸ After the coup, the campaign against workers' cooperatives continued, with many more being dissolved by the authorities.

Bourgeois republicans, such as the writer Victor Hugo (1802–1885), who had supported the suppression of the June 1848 workers' insurrection and even Bonaparte's campaign for president, found it difficult to inspire the workers to now take up arms against Bonaparte's coup in order to defend "middle-class law and order and restore a constitution which had not so much as given them the right to work."²⁴⁹ On the day of the coup, Proudhon warned Hugo that he was "fostering illusions, for the people will not stir," such that "fighting now would be sheer madness."²⁵⁰ Unfortunately, Proudhon was right. Only a handful of workers joined Hugo on a hastily constructed barricade that "was more symbolic than practical" in the once militant Parisian neighborhood of Saint-Antoine. The barricade was quickly taken by Bonapartist troops, and Hugo's friend, the socialist representative Jean-Baptiste Baudin (1811–1851), was shot dead.²⁵¹ Hugo, and numerous other surviving opponents of the coup, such as the socialist politician Pierre Leroux (1797–1871), fled abroad or were forced into exile.

Among those who went into exile were several young anarchists, including Bellegarrigue, who went to Central America, never to return to France.²⁵² Joseph Déjacque (1821–1864), who was later to write some important anarchist criticisms of Proudhon, first went to England and then to the United States, only returning to France around 1861.²⁵³ Ernest Coeurderoy (1825–1862), who

²⁴⁷ Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution*, 301.

²⁴⁸ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class, Volume 1*, 182–184.

²⁴⁹ Georges Duveau, *1848: The Making of a Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 162–163.

²⁵⁰ Vincent, *Proudhon*, 203.

²⁵¹ Duveau, *Making of a Revolution*, 162–163.

²⁵² Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 68.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 75–76.

had participated in the June 1849 insurrection that Proudhon had opposed, had been in exile ever since, dying in Switzerland in 1862.²⁵⁴

Proudhon tried to make the best of a bad situation by publishing a book, *Le révolution sociale démontrée par le coup d'état du 2 décembre*, in which he endeavored to persuade Napoléon III that he had no choice but to continue the social revolution begun in February 1848. Napoléon III remained unmoved, but he was adept at portraying himself as “the workers’ friend,” whose government cultivated “an image of itself as a regime concerned with workers’ conditions,” despite banning strikes and trade unions.²⁵⁵

Some important works were published by French anarchists in exile during the 1850s. In 1852, Coeurderoy published in London and Brussels *De la révolution dans l'homme et dans la société*. In 1854, he published several more works in London, including his most notorious *Hurrah! ou la révolution par les cosaques*. According to Nettlau, “Clearing the ground after a catastrophe that has destroyed the old order, preparing it, sowing far and wide the seeds of the new idea in full measure, and then—at harvest time—rebuilding: these were Coeurderoy’s ideas,” similar to those later developed by Kropotkin.²⁵⁶

Around 1854, Déjacque published in New York a pamphlet, *The Revolutionary Question*, in which he called for the abolition “of government in all its guises”; religion, “be it Catholic or Jewish, Protestant or other”; private property; “the family based on marriage, the authority of father and spouse”; the laws of inheritance; and all “authority, privilege and strife.” In their place he advocated “anarchy... complete, boundless, utter freedom to do anything and everything that is in human nature.”²⁵⁷ He called on the people to take “direct possession of its sovereignty” and to “make way for the organized commune.”²⁵⁸

Around the same time another French exile in New York, Félix Pignal, published his *Philosophie de l'insoumission ou pardon à Cain*, in which he set forth a “vast concept of anarchism,” recognizing “diversity in its practical applications, in accordance with the intentions and characters of those involved.”²⁵⁹ Pignal argued that domination, subordination, and servitude are the inevitable “consequence of every belief in God.” Declaring war on all power and authority, Pignal called for the establishment of “revolutionary communes” without “the jobs of judge, priest, policeman, thief and torturer,” where the producers would freely exchange their products, without any capitalist intermediaries to exploit them.²⁶⁰ His pamphlet made its way to Europe, where it was read by French refugees from the regime of Napoléon III.

In 1854, revolution came late to Spain, after the other European revolutions had been defeated. But, similar to those revolutions, the 1854 Spanish Revolution was primarily an attempt to establish a form of representative or parliamentary democracy to replace yet another reactionary European monarchy. There was at least one libertarian voice then in Spain, Francisco Pi y Margall (1824–1901), who published *La reacción y la revolución* that same year.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 77–78.

²⁵⁵ Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class*, Volume 1, 199.

²⁵⁶ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 80.

²⁵⁷ Joseph Déjacque, “The Revolutionary Question,” in *Anarchism*, Volume One, 60–61.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 63.

²⁵⁹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 72.

²⁶⁰ Felix Pignal, *The Philosophy of Defiance, or Pardon for Cain* (New York, 1854). libertarian-library.blogspot.ca.

Pi y Margall was influenced by the Young Hegelians and Proudhon. He adopted Feuerbach's argument that "Man is god unto himself," who creates "his own reality."²⁶¹ He advocated "unity in variety," another concept taken from Hegelian philosophy, but which complimented Proudhonian ideas regarding decentralization, communal autonomy, and voluntary association.²⁶² As with Proudhon, Pi y Margall advocated replacing government with voluntary contracts, or "*pactos*," arguing that "society based upon *authority* ought... to give way to society based upon *contract*."²⁶³

Echoing Proudhon, for Pi y Margall, "every man who lays hands upon another man is a tyrant."²⁶⁴ He therefore condemned "as tyrannical and absurd all forms of government," such that "*the constitution of a society without power is the ultimate of my revolutionary aspirations*." He sought to "*divide and sub-divide power*" until "*I shall destroy it*." Consequently, he regarded "anarchy," in a positive sense, as the "inevitable consequence" of democracy and individual sovereignty.²⁶⁵

Spanish workers began calling for an "association among all the associations" of workers in the various trades and industries to replace the existing system of government.²⁶⁶ They argued that the political revolution must be accompanied by a social revolution, for a merely "political revolution will... turn sterile if it is not followed by a social revolution." Their goal was to achieve a "social" federation of the working classes that would "wipe out the new tyranny" represented by capitalism and the state.²⁶⁷

As with the European revolutions of 1848, the Spanish Revolution of 1854 was ultimately unsuccessful. Workers' associations were proscribed in late 1855, and the monarchy was forcibly restored in July 1856. Pi y Margall's journal, *La Razón*, was suppressed, and he retreated to the Basque country. Later, under the influence of Proudhon, he became a federalist.

Despite being able to remain in France until the late 1850s, when he had to take refuge in Belgium for a few years following the suppression of his book *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l'église* (1858), Proudhon had trouble getting anything published under the dictatorship of Napoléon III. He could not get permission to print a political review, and in 1854 his book *The Philosophy of Progress* was banned.²⁶⁸ He published the ironically entitled *Stock Exchange Speculator's Manual* in 1854, but without his name on it. The book was surprisingly successful, possibly due to its misleading title, giving Proudhon enough confidence to add his name to it when the third edition came out in 1856.²⁶⁹

Through the *Manual*, Proudhon was again able to put before the French public his concept of a socialist "industrial democracy."²⁷⁰ Consistent with his earlier mutualist proposals, Proudhon argued that in an industrial democracy, "all workers, instead of working for an owner who pays them and keeps their product, work for one another and thereby contribute to a common product

²⁶¹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 56.

²⁶² Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years, 1868–1936* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1978), 21.

²⁶³ Francisco Pi y Margal, "Reaction and Revolution," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 63.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.* In *Confessions of a Revolutionary* (1849), Proudhon wrote: "Whoever lays his hand on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant. I declare him my enemy" (Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 395–396).

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 63–64.

²⁶⁶ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 89.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 86–87.

²⁶⁸ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: 186 & 191*.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.

²⁷⁰ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 611.

from which they share the profit.” Each productive group would federate into larger workers’ associations, which would provide a “mutual guarantee of work, that is, supply, consumption and adequate market among the various associations.”²⁷¹

Around the time that Proudhon published the fourth edition of the *Manual* in France in 1857, Déjacque began to develop an anarchist critique of Proudhon from exile in the United States. In response to Proudhon’s attack on the French feminist Jenny d’Héricourt, Déjacque wrote an open letter to Proudhon, *De l’être-humain mâle et femelle* (1857). The motto prefacing the letter, “Qu’est-ce que l’homme? rien. – Qu’est-ce que la femme? rien. – Qu’est-ce que l’être-humain? – TOUT” (“What is man? Nothing. What is woman? Nothing. What is the human being? Everything”), was a parody of the masthead from Proudhon’s newspaper *Le Représentant du Peuple* (“What is the Producer? Nothing. What should he be? Everything!”). Proudhon, and later some of his followers in the International, believed that a woman’s place was in the home as housewife and mother. Déjacque rejected those views as being inconsistent with Proudhon’s avowed anarchism, advising him to instead “speak out against man’s exploitation of woman” and not to “describe yourself as an anarchist, or be an anarchist through and through.”²⁷²

For Déjacque, “humanity is humanity: I do not establish hierarchic distinctions between the sexes and races, between men and women, between blacks and whites. The difference in sexual organism is no more than the difference in skin color a sign of superiority or inferiority.”²⁷³ In New Orleans, he “urged armed slave rebellion within hearing of the slaves themselves,” and was a great admirer of the abolitionist John Brown, whom he regarded as a “Spartacus who called the modern helots to break their chains, the blacks to take up arms.”²⁷⁴

In 1858, Déjacque began publishing a paper in New York, *Le Libéraire*, making him the first person to use the word “libertarian” as a synonym for “anarchist.” In addition to publishing his ambitious work on an anarchist utopia, *L’humanisphere*, Déjacque continued his anarchist critique of Proudhon.²⁷⁵ He rejected Proudhon’s mutualist ideas, arguing in favor of a kind of anarchist communism. He dared Proudhon to be “frankly and wholly anarchist and not one quarter anarchist, one eighth anarchist, one sixteenth part anarchist,” urging him to press “on to the abolition of contract, the abolition not merely of the sword and of capital, but also of property and authority in every guise.”²⁷⁶

According to Nettlau, *Le Libéraire* “had a limited, though not too small, circulation, particularly in the United States, as well as London, Brussels and Geneva.”²⁷⁷ Déjacque maintained contact with French refugees in the United States and Europe and was part of the anarchist wing of the “International Association” (1855–1859), a precursor to the International.²⁷⁸

Déjacque and the French anarchists in New York and London developed a critique of bourgeois republicanism, which they held responsible for the defeat of the 1848 French Revolution.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 615–616.

²⁷² Joseph Déjacque, “On Being Human,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 71.

²⁷³ Joseph Déjacque, *In the Sphere of Humanity: Joseph Déjacque, Slavery, and the Struggle for Freedom*, ed. by J. C. Hartman and M. A. Lause (University of Cincinnati Libraries, 2012), 31. drc.libraries.uc.edu-Humanisphere.pdf?sequence=1.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 20 & 180–181.

²⁷⁵ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 75.

²⁷⁶ Joseph Déjacque, “On Being Human,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 68.

²⁷⁷ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 76.

²⁷⁸ Arthur Lehning, *From Buonarroti to Bakunin: Studies in International Socialism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 150–260.

For them, the interests of the republicans and the workers were fundamentally opposed. The republicans used the workers in order to achieve and consolidate their own power, replacing aristocratic rule with capitalist exploitation and leaving the workers in a subordinate and impoverished position. The attitude of the French anarchists was summed up by Déjacque who, in response to a republican who accused him of dividing the opposition to their “common foe,” Napoléon III, said that the “common enemy... is all who, in London and Paris, dream of governing to better guarantee their social privileges against proletarian demands, the one in the name of Empire, the other in the name of the Republic.”²⁷⁹

The massacre of the insurgent Parisian workers during the June Days in 1848 epitomized the republican betrayal of the working class. In a speech at the June 1858 meeting of the International Association in New York commemorating the tenth anniversary of the June Days, the French refugee Jean-Baptiste Monfalcon argued that the workers must do away with all leaders and masters and overthrow the bourgeoisie, as the bourgeoisie had previously overthrown the aristocracy.²⁸⁰

In London, the French anarchists grouped themselves around the Club of Free Discussion.²⁸¹ They refused to elect a club president or executive council, rejecting all hierarchical organization as authoritarian. They too “denounced the provisional [French] government of 1848, which born on the barricades of Paris, and because of its cowardice and treason was responsible for the slaughter of June” 1848.²⁸²

Federalist and anarchist ideas began to have some influence in Italy in the 1850s. In the mid-1850s, Proudhon was in contact with the Italian federalist Giuseppe Ferrari (1811–1876).²⁸³ Ferrari “advocated a loose Italian federation compatible with Proudhon’s own federative principles.”²⁸⁴ Proudhon may also have had some influence on the Italian revolutionary, Carlo Pisacane, who toward the end of his life came to advocate a libertarian socialism similar to that of Proudhon.

Pisacane had fought for the short lived Roman Republic of 1849, defending the Republic against French troops who ultimately defeated the Republic and restored the pope to temporal power. Pisacane went into exile, returning to Calabria in 1857 as part of a revolutionary expedition against the Kingdom of Naples, where he was killed in action.

Shortly before he died, Pisacane indicated his support for a form of socialism based on contracts between free and equal parties, guaranteeing “absolute freedom to every individual.” He called for the abolition of hierarchy, authority, and “man’s exploitation of his fellow-man.” Instead, everyone should have the “right to enjoy all of the material assets available to society” and the “fruits of one’s own labours.” He therefore advocated an “economic revolution,” and not merely a political one.²⁸⁵

Should there be any need for public officials or deputies, they could not “be appointed other than by the people” and would “at all times be subject to recall by the people.” Anticipating the

²⁷⁹ Déjacque, *Sphere of Humanity*, 13.

²⁸⁰ Lehning, *Buonarroti to Bakunin*, 200.

²⁸¹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 73.

²⁸² Lehning, *Buonarroti to Bakunin*, 206.

²⁸³ Woodcock: *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 186.

²⁸⁴ Hoffman, *Revolutionary Justice*, 213.

²⁸⁵ Carlo Pisacane, “On Revolution,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 65–66.

doctrine of “propaganda by the deed,” Pisacane argued that the most effective propaganda is revolutionary action, for ideas “spring from deeds and not the other way around.”²⁸⁶

It does not appear that the anarchist aspects of Pisacane’s ideas attracted any Italian adherents, or were even well known among his comrades.²⁸⁷ Although Bakunin’s future associate, Giuseppe Fanelli (1827–1877), who was instrumental in introducing anarchism to Spain in 1868, was a friend of Pisacane who fought with him in Calabria, it was only after an Italian anarchist movement emerged in the 1870s that Pisacane’s libertarian socialist writings were rediscovered.²⁸⁸

In the late 1850s, Proudhon began moving away from an anarchist position toward a socialist federalism that recognized a limited role for the state. In *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l’église*, Proudhon made what he himself described as a “decisive concession.” As history has always been witness, anarchy “has no more reason for being in human society than disorder in the universe.”²⁸⁹ Although there was a certain irony to these remarks, by 1862 he acknowledged that if he “began in 1840 with *anarchy*, which was the logical conclusion of my critique of the governmental idea, then I finished with *federation*, the necessary basis of right among the European peoples and, later, of the organization of all States.”²⁹⁰

In 1863, Proudhon set forth his federalist conception of socialism in more detail in *The Principle of Federation*. He proposed an “agro-industrial federation” of functional and communal groups, which would create a “federated state,” the role of which would be limited to “that of general initiation, of providing guarantees and supervising” the relationships between the federated groups. The “execution of its orders” would be “subject to the approval of the federated governments and their responsible agents.”²⁹¹ The federal state would therefore “no longer [be] a government” in a traditional sense, but the agent of the federated groups, exercising delegated powers under their “strict control.”²⁹²

Proudhon no longer believed, as he did when he wrote *General Idea of the Revolution* in 1851, that “political functions” could be “reduced to industrial functions,” with “social order” arising “from nothing but transactions and exchanges.”²⁹³ There was still a need for some kind of government to settle disputes between the federated groups and to provide “by common means for all matters of security and mutual prosperity.”²⁹⁴ “Anarchy” was therefore to remain a “perpetual desideratum; that is, an ideal to be guided by but which was unlikely ever to be achieved.”²⁹⁵

Proudhon’s explicitly anarchist writings of the 1840s and early 1850s did not inspire the creation of any self-avowed anarchist movements, although some French workers agreed with his antipolitical stance. His federalist ideas of the early 1860s were more influential. In France, he succeeded in rehabilitating federalist ideas of decentralization and local control as revolutionary concepts, despite the counterrevolutionary connotations associated with them since the time of

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 67–68.

²⁸⁷ Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864–1892* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 12.

²⁸⁸ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 92; Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 119.

²⁸⁹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l’église*, vol. ii. *Oeuvres, nouvelle édition*, Volume 8 (Paris: Rivière, 1930), 160.

²⁹⁰ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 686.

²⁹¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *The Principle of Federation* (1863), ed. & trans. by R. Vernon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 49.

²⁹² Proudhon, “On Federalism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 74.

²⁹³ Proudhon, *Principle of Federation*, 11.

²⁹⁴ Proudhon, “On Federalism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 73.

²⁹⁵ Proudhon, *Principle of Federation*, 12.

the French Revolution. His federalist ideas were also influential in Spain and Italy, two countries with regional, cultural, and, in Spain, linguistic groups, that desired greater autonomy and independence from any central government.

Proudhon's federalist ideas were particularly influential in Spain, where Pi y Margall translated *The Principle of Federation* into Spanish.²⁹⁶ In the early 1860s, the future anarchist collectivist Juan Serrano y Oteiza (1837–1886) gave lectures on Proudhon in Madrid. According to Anselmo Lorenzo (1841–1914), one of the founders of the Spanish anarchist movement, even then Serrano y Oteiza was expressing “the criterion of pure revolution, a principle that would some years later correspond perfectly to the ideas brought to us” by Bakunin's anarchist envoy to Spain, Giuseppe Fanelli.²⁹⁷

In Belgium, libertarian ideas began gaining currency in the early 1860s. Hector Morel (1821–1891), a Belgian worker, published a pamphlet in 1862, *Les nationalités considérées au point de vue de la liberté et de l'autonomie individuelle*, in which he gave expression to a “libertarian and revolutionary anti-patriotism.”²⁹⁸ César De Paepe (1841–1890), who was soon to play an important role in the International as part of the Belgian delegation, described “anarchy” in 1864 as “the dream of those who love complete liberty; idol of the true revolutionaries.”²⁹⁹

The early 1860s also marked the return of Bakunin to Europe. In 1861, he escaped from Siberia, traveling from Japan to the United States and then back to Europe, arriving in London in late December. In January, he was welcomed back by a delegation of British workers, including Ambrose Cuddon (1790–1879), a former Owenite who had adopted a mutualist form of anarchism.³⁰⁰

Bakunin, having been away in prison and exile during the reaction that engulfed Europe after 1849, still embraced the national liberation movements of the 1848 European revolutions. He attempted to establish contact with the youthful radicals of the “Young Russia” group, which was seeking to overthrow the czar. In 1863, he tried to join an expedition of Polish rebels who were to join in a Polish revolt against Russian rule, but the expedition never made it to Poland, and the uprising there was crushed. He saw how the Polish rebels were divided between aristocrats who wanted to restore a Polish empire including Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and democrats who aspired to representative government, but even they lacked any real social program. By the end of 1863, according to Nettlau, Bakunin had abandoned any hope in national liberation movements that, even when they had democratic aims, would simply replace one ruling class with another.³⁰¹

In 1864, Bakunin went to Italy, where he began to move toward an anarchist position while developing programs for adoption by “revolutionary brotherhoods” of like-minded individuals. Bakunin's various “brotherhoods” were to be united by a common cause and program, largely set by Bakunin himself. His hope was that these brotherhoods would inspire revolutionary movements throughout Europe, and to some extent they did, as it was largely through them that revolutionary anarchist ideas were spread across much of the continent.

²⁹⁶ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 50.

²⁹⁷ George Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 101.

²⁹⁸ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 74.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

We can see then that, on the eve of the founding of the International in September 1864, anarchism was in the air but had not yet anywhere become a movement. Anarchist ideas had been developed and debated in France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, the United States, and even in Britain (albeit without the anarchist label in the British case). Glimmers of anarchism had appeared in Italy through the posthumous writings of Carlo Pisacane. But it was through the debates within the International over the proper direction of the workers' movement that anarchism was really to come into its own.

Chapter Two: The Founding of the International

The workers who created the International in 1864 did so on their own initiative, without ideological guidance from any particular political faction. Although Marx was eventually delegated the task of drafting the *Inaugural Address* and founding *Rules of the International*, he had only been formally invited to attend the inaugural meeting in September 1864, hours before it began.¹ As Benoît Malon (1841–1893) later put it, the International had no founders; rather, “it came into existence, with a bright future, out of the social necessities of our epoch and out of the growing sufferings of the working class.”²

The founding of the International had been years in the making. In the mid-1850s, a delegation of French workers traveled to England to meet with English workers and European exiles for the purpose of establishing a “*Universal League of Workers*.”³ The French delegates were followers of Proudhon and sought in effect to create an international mutualist association, with the aim of establishing a transnational network of workers’ productive and consumer cooperatives that would eventually displace the capitalist economic regime. They denounced capitalism as a system “in which riches are only for those who do nothing to produce or earn them, and crushing poverty is the lot of the producers of the riches!”⁴ They therefore sought “the emancipation of workmen from the tyranny of employers.”⁵ Although an “executive committee was elected” and it was “resolved to issue an appeal to the trade unions,” the league never became a functioning organization.⁶

In England there already existed an “International Committee” with English, French, German, Polish, Italian, and Spanish representatives. Although its main purpose was to champion democracy in Europe, one of the committee members, Ernest Jones (1819–1869), made clear his view that the committee was “no mere crusade against aristocracy. We are not here to pull one tyranny down, only that another may live the stronger. We are against the tyranny of capital as well.”⁷ Jones, a former Chartist who had earlier been imprisoned for his labor agitation, later joined the International but focused his activities on achieving universal male suffrage in England.

After the April 1856 meeting with the French delegates to establish the Universal League of Workers, the International Committee issued a manifesto *To All Nations*, which, among other things, proclaimed that “monarchy is not only in the Government, it is in the workshop, in property, in the family, in religion, in the economy, the manners, the blood of the people. It is from

¹ L. E. Mins, *Founding of the First International*, 57.

² Henryk Katz, *The Emancipation of Labor: A History of the First International* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 2.

³ G. M. Stekloff, *History of the First International* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1928), 29.

⁴ Lehning, *Buonarroti to Bakunin*, 233.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁶ Stekloff, *History of the First International*, 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

everywhere that we must turn it away: and everywhere, for all the people, the social problem is the same; to substitute labour for birth and wealth as origin and warranty of and right in society.”⁸ The committee therefore called for the establishment of an “International Association” of “socialist and revolutionary national societies” that would coordinate their propaganda “and so prepare the success of the future revolution.”⁹ Several branches of the International Association were established, representing various countries, including sections in the United States, where Joseph Déjacque became a member.¹⁰

The most radical members of the International Association were French refugees in London and the United States, many of whom, including Déjacque, were anarchists. Déjacque published articles in *Le Libertaire* setting forth their position. They believed that the workers could achieve their liberation only by adopting a revolutionary socialist program that clearly separated them from the bourgeois republicans who had betrayed them in June 1848.¹¹

Under the influence of the French anarchists, the association itself began moving toward an anarchist position, publishing an appeal *To the Republicans, Democrats and Socialists of Europe* in December 1858. From their perspective, there was “no difference between an absolute monarchy and a bourgeois republic: where there are classes and privileged castes, there is slavery and despotism.” The association criticized the Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) for calling on the workers to support the bourgeois republicans, who would simply replace Europe’s monarchies with “oligarchic” regimes where the workers would continue to be “robbed of the fruits of their toil.” They were skeptical of the republican trinity of “liberty, equality and fraternity” as long as one “social class is forced to sell its labour” and “one man is master and others slaves.”¹²

Ultimately, divisions arose within the association between the anarchists, the republicans, and those who favored centralized organization. The anarchists persuaded other members of the association to replace its “Central Council” with a “secretariat” that would serve only as a correspondence bureau coordinating communications between the various branches. Women were to have equal status in the association, a position long championed by Déjacque and his associates. The purpose of the revamped association was “to propagate the principles of the social revolution,” by which was meant: “Absolute negation of all privileges; absolute negation of all authority; liberation of the proletariat.” Existing forms of government were to be replaced by “an administration nominated by the people, submitted to their control, and at any time revocable.”¹³

The members of the International association who favored more centralized organization reconstituted the association’s central committee under the old rules of the association. However, both the anarchist and centralist associations petered out after many of the French refugees returned to France when they were amnestied in August 1859.¹⁴ By “the beginning of the sixties both the International Committee and the International Association had disappeared from the political arena.”¹⁵

⁸ Ibid., 29–30.

⁹ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰ Arthur Lehning, “Une lettre de Joseph Déjacque à Pierre Vésinier, 20 février 1861,” in *Bulletin of the International Institute of Social History*, vol. VI, no. 1, 1951.

¹¹ Lehning, *Buonarroti to Bakunin*, 200.

¹² Ibid., 201–202.

¹³ Ibid., 203–204.

¹⁴ Ibid., 205.

¹⁵ Stekloff, *History of the First International*, 32.

The French anarchists who did not immediately return to France formed the Club of Free Discussion in London. Déjacque published reports of their meetings in *Le Libertaire* until he himself returned to France in 1861.¹⁶ At their meetings, they continued not only to denounce bourgeois republicans but also state socialists, such as Louis Blanc, for vainly seeking reforms through government institutions. The club adopted a revolutionary socialist stance, remaining “faithful to its conviction that everything that is evil in civil society is the fatal consequence of established authority.” They would close their meetings with cries of “Vive l’Anarchie!”¹⁷

Several “former members of the International Association” later joined the International Workmen’s Association.¹⁸ Among them was Alfred Talandier (1822–1890), an advocate of producers’ cooperatives who regarded them, as did Proudhon and later Bakunin, “as a means of substituting the political organization of society by the industrial organization of labour, which would ultimately result in the liquidation of the national state.”¹⁹ At one time, Talandier also became a member of Bakunin’s Revolutionary Brotherhood, for which Bakunin prepared an anarchist program in 1866.²⁰

There were renewed contacts between English and French workers at the London Exhibition, a world’s fair held in 1862. A group of French workers had persuaded the French government to provide funding to send working-class representatives to the exhibition. Among them was Henri Tolain (1828–1897), a bronze-engraver from Paris influenced by Proudhon, but by no means his slavish follower. Among other things, Tolain was never an anarchist.

As a young man, Tolain had participated in the Revolution of 1848. During the 1850s, he was involved in various working-class mutual aid societies (trade union associations remained illegal). In the fall of 1861, he published a letter calling on the government to allow the workers “to organize and agitate freely.”²¹ At the time, not only were trade unions and strikes still illegal, but French workers did not even enjoy the right of freedom of assembly.

When Tolain went to the London Exhibition with a small group of French workers, they were welcomed by a committee of English workers, including Ambrose Cuddon, the English anarchist who had been part of the delegation that had welcomed Bakunin back from exile in Siberia.²² The English workers organized a reception for about 70 French workers, including Tolain and his group, at the Freemason’s Hall. Some 500 English workers and their families attended.²³ Cuddon spoke at the meeting, remarking that “the social problem could easily be solved if men were to abandon hypocrisy.”²⁴

G. W. Harris, who had been the secretary of the International Association and also part of the delegation that greeted Bakunin, addressed his “French brothers” on behalf of the English workers, stating that “So long as there shall be employers and working men, competition between employers, and disputes about wages, union amongst the working classes will be their

¹⁶ Lehning, *Buonarroti to Bakunin*, 206.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 329–330.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 174 & 190.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 174; Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 64–93.

²¹ Julian P. W. Archer, *The First International in France 1864–1872: Its Origins, Theories, and Impact* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997), 3.

²² Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 101.

²³ Archer, *The First International in France*, 1.

²⁴ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 101.

only means of safety.”²⁵ To great applause, he called for the creation of an international workers’ association. Talandier, another veteran of the International Association, was also at this meeting. Jean-Baptiste Bocquet, a refugee from the French Revolution of 1848 associated with the Russian exile Alexander Herzen, then “proposed the formation of a London-based ‘corresponding committee’ to facilitate an exchange of ideas between French and English workers.”²⁶ Although it would be another two years before a new international association of workers was created, the August 1862 reception at the Freemason’s Hall set the stage for the founding of the International in September 1864.

Bocquet revisited the idea for an international workers’ association a year later when Tolain and another group of French workers, who were to form the nucleus of the original Paris section of the International, returned to London to meet again with English workers, purportedly to show their support for the Polish uprising against Russian rule that Bakunin was then seeking to join. They met with members of the London Trades Council, including William Cremer (1828–1908) and George Odger (1820–1877), who were both to become, along with Tolain and Bocquet, founding members of the International. It was agreed that the English workers would “prepare an address to the workers of France,” and from there they would establish an international association.²⁷

It took some time for the address from the English workers to be completed. It was not published until December 1863, and then a copy had to be sent over to France. The address built upon the earlier suggestion of the French workers to create a “grand fraternity of peoples,” not only to “discuss the great questions on which the peace of nations depends” but also, more pragmatically, to create international working-class solidarity, so that employers would no longer be able “to play us off one against the other, and so drag us down to the lowest possible condition.”²⁸

Back in France, Tolain and other French workers put forward the idea that, for the workers to have true representatives in the legislature, they should elect worker candidates. Tolain published a pamphlet, *A Few Facts About the Paris Elections*, in which he argued that the “loud voice of universal suffrage is all we have with which to make ourselves heard.”²⁹ In May 1863, two of Tolain’s associates ran for office in Paris (Tolain withdrew his own candidacy). They received only a handful of votes. When by-elections were called for March 1864, they realized that they needed to do a better job explaining “to the Parisian worker the necessity of having candidates from their own class.” To support Tolain’s candidacy in the by-elections, he and a group of fifty-nine other workers issued a manifesto, which became known as the *Manifesto of the Sixty*.³⁰

Tolain wrote the *Manifesto* with the help of “a Republican journalist, Henri Lefort.”³¹ In it, they argued that the workers were “in need of direct representation” from among their own number “in the precincts of the legislative body... the only place where workers could worthily and freely articulate their wishes and stake their own claim to the rights enjoyed by other citizens.”³² For despite enjoying “equal” political rights, the workers’ “interests remain subordinated to other

²⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁹ Daniel Guérin, (ed.), *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism, Book One* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1998), 82.

³⁰ Archer, *The First International in France*, 11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³² Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 90.

interests,” the interests of capital. The Sixty called for social as well as political emancipation, the right to form workers’ associations “for the peaceable defence of our wages, and to make provision against unemployment.”³³ Instead of trades councils composed of employers and workers, the Sixty called for councils “made up exclusively of workers,” echoing Proudhon’s concept of “industrial democracy” and foreshadowing the position that would be adopted by a majority of the International’s delegates at the Basel Congress in 1869.³⁴

The Sixty dreamt of “freedom of labor, credit, solidarity” in addition to the universal suffrage, “freedom of the press,” freedom of assembly, and the complete “separation of Church and State” desired by the “democratic bourgeoisie.”³⁵ They also wanted “free and compulsory primary education” in order to nurture and reinforce “the sense of human dignity,” the awareness of one’s rights and duties, that would enable everyone to appeal “to reason and not to force in the realization of his desires.”³⁶

The Sixty signatories, including Louis-Eugène Varlin (1839–1871), who later took a more militant stance, made a point of distancing themselves from the earlier Proudhon, assuring the *Manifesto*’s readers that they were not about to adopt Proudhon’s battle cry from the 1848 French Revolution: “What is the worker? Nothing! What should he be? Everything!”³⁷ For “it is not for us [the workers] to destroy the rights deservedly enjoyed by the middle classes, but rather to secure for ourselves the same freedom to act.” They denied that they would use freedom of association to organize strikes, sharing Proudhon’s view that “the adversaries on both sides would ultimately achieve nought but ruination for some and misery for the rest.”³⁸

But Proudhon took a different stance toward the elections. Throughout the 1840s and 1850s he had argued that the people would only achieve “true representation” through their own autonomous organizations, not through parliamentary institutions.³⁹ Seeing how Napoléon III had used universal suffrage and elections to legitimize his rule, with workers’ associations and socialist propaganda both being banned, Proudhon had advocated abstention from voting since 1857.⁴⁰

In the lead-up to the elections of May 1863, Proudhon was involved in a campaign for “active abstention,” the casting of blank ballots to protest the misuse of universal suffrage as a prop for Napoléon III’s regime.⁴¹ For Proudhon, the casting of blank ballots constituted an explicit “repudiation not only of the regime but of all those who, though in opposition, would swear loyalty to the Emperor.”⁴² When the Sixty sought his support before the elections of March 1864, he remained adamant: “no representatives and no candidates.” Proudhon argued that the whole *raison d’être* of Napoléon III’s Empire had been throughout the “defeat of red socialist democracy... under the regime that has ruled over us since 1852” and that “our ideas, if not our persons, have been, so to speak, placed outside of politics, outside of government, outside of the law.”⁴³ Nevertheless,

³³ Ibid., 87.

³⁴ Ibid., 89.

³⁵ Ibid., 88 & 91.

³⁶ Ibid., 91.

³⁷ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 124.

³⁸ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 87–88.

³⁹ Vincent, *Proudhon*, 178.

⁴⁰ Hoffman, *Revolutionary Justice*, 220.

⁴¹ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 83.

⁴² Hoffman, *Revolutionary Justice*, 221.

⁴³ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 95–96.

Proudhon regarded the *Manifesto* as proof that the French working class had “stepped onto the political stage, bearing an idea which, sooner or later, must transform society and government from top to toe.”⁴⁴

The “active abstention” campaign in the March 1864 elections was more successful than Tolain’s candidacy, with some “4,556 spoiled votes” in the Department of the Seine (Paris), while Tolain “won only 424 votes.”⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the renewed activity of the French working class helped persuade Napoléon III to relax the laws against trade unions in an effort to placate the workers. In May 1864, the French government reduced its prohibitions against workers acting collectively in dealing with disputes with employers, although strikes “for higher wages” or that “interfered with the ‘free exercise of industry or of labor’” remained illegal, as did “public meetings and associations of more than twenty members.”⁴⁶

In April 1864, Tolain sent a reply to the English workers’ December 1863 address, but matters continued to progress very slowly. In the ensuing months, Victor Le Lubez (1834–?), a French refugee in London, at the request of Tolain and Lefort, pressed the English workers to convene an international congress. At the end of August 1864, Le Lubez published a letter in the *Bee-hive*, an English working-class paper, indicating that the French workers had already “elected their delegates, who are waiting with some impatience to be summoned to London” for the congress. At the beginning of September 1864, the English workers finally announced that the congress would be held on September 28, 1864, at Saint Martin’s Hall in London.⁴⁷

Prior to the meeting, Le Lubez asked Marx if he could, in Marx’s own words, “supply a German worker to speak at the meeting.”⁴⁸ Marx nominated his friend, Johann Georg Eccarius (1818–1889), a German tailor and former member of the Communist League, to attend as a representative of the German workers. It was only on the day of the meeting that Cremer asked Marx himself to attend.⁴⁹ Marx sat on the main platform but did not speak at the meeting. He did manage to get himself appointed to the newly constituted General Committee of the International (later the General Council), with Eccarius as the vice president, and later persuaded its members to entrust him with writing the *Inaugural Address* and *Provisional Rules of the International*.

The meeting at Saint Martin’s Hall was packed. There was standing room only, with some 2,000 people in attendance.⁵⁰ Odger read out the address from the English workers welcoming the French delegation. Tolain responded on behalf of the French workers, calling for “the people’s voice” to “make itself heard on all the great political and social questions, thus letting the despots know that the end of their tyrannical tutelage has arrived.”⁵¹

Tolain decried how, under capitalism, “the division of labour tends to make of each workman a machine in the hands of the high lords of industry,” with the workers being “reduced to starvation.” He urged “labourers of all countries” to unite against the division of “humanity into two classes—an ignorant common people, and plethoric and big-bellied mandarins,” for the only way for the workers to save themselves was “through solidarity.”⁵²

⁴⁴ Ibid., 84.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 83–84.

⁴⁶ Archer, *The First International in France*, 13.

⁴⁷ Mins, *Founding of the First International*, 53–54.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁰ Archer, *The First International in France*, 19.

⁵¹ Mins, *Founding of the First International*, 8.

⁵² Ibid., 9–11

Le Lubez, on behalf of the French delegation, then proposed that workers' commissions be established throughout Europe, with a central commission in London to "suggest questions for discussion."⁵³ George Wheeler, on behalf of the English workers, endorsed the proposal to create an international workers' association, and a resolution was passed to create a committee (which became the General Council) "to draw up the rules and regulations for such an association" and to organize a congress for the following year in Brussels.⁵⁴

Marx regarded the International as a useful vehicle for spreading his ideas, particularly among the English workers, whom he regarded as the most advanced proletariat in Europe. He had little respect for anyone else's ideas, describing a draft "declaration of principles" that Le Lubez prepared based on the statutes of the Mazzinian Italian Workers' Societies as "appallingly wordy, badly written and utterly undigested... crusted over with the vaguest tags of French socialism." Marx "was firmly determined that if possible not one single line of the stuff should be allowed to stand."⁵⁵

Marx ensured that he was appointed to the subcommittee responsible for drafting the *Provisional Rules of the International* and persuaded the subcommittee to have him prepare, in addition to the provisional statutes, an *Address to the Working Classes*, which became known as the *Inaugural Address of the International Workingmen's Association* (although it had been written several weeks after the actual inauguration of the International). He was careful to couch the *Address* in terms that would not alienate the English trade unionists, avoiding "the old boldness of speech" found in his earlier writings, such as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, at least for the time being.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, the *Address* was carefully crafted by Marx to incorporate, among other things, elements of his thought antithetical to Proudhonism and anarchism. Immediately after extolling "co-operative factories" as a "victory of the political economy of labour over the political economy of property," something with which Proudhon and his followers would agree, Marx then argued that "co-operative labour," without the assistance of the state, "will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries."⁵⁷

Contrary to Proudhon's mutualist schemes, Marx argued that cooperatives, dependent on what he somewhat dismissively referred to as "the casual efforts of private workmen," could never displace capitalism. To develop "co-operative labour" on a scale capable of supplanting capitalism required "national" (i.e., governmental) "means." Consequently, Marx claimed, to "conquer political power has... become the great duty of the working classes." This, in turn, would require "the political reorganisation of the working men's party."⁵⁸ Thus, the seeds of the conflict in the International between Marx, the Proudhonists, and later, the anarchists, were planted by Marx himself in the *Inaugural Address*.

True to his word, Marx was able to "throw out" Le Lubez's "declaration of principles," even though the subcommittee had endorsed the "sentiments" contained within it.⁵⁹ All that remained

⁵³ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 48–49.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 49–50.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 36–37.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 49–50.

were two phrases from the statutes of the Italian Workers' Societies that Marx "was obliged" to include in the preamble to the *Provisional Rules of the International*: the acknowledgment of "truth, justice and morality," as the standard of conduct for the International and its members, and the Mazzinian slogan "no rights without duties, no duties without rights."⁶⁰

Marx also managed to repeat in the preamble to the *Provisional Rules*, albeit more ambiguously, the commitment to political action, writing that "the economical emancipation of the working classes is... the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means."⁶¹ But this was far too subtle for the French members of the International, who often translated this part of the preamble simply to read: "the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate." The French-language version of the *Rules of the International* adopted at the 1866 Geneva Congress used this wording, which was later relied upon by the anarchist tendencies in the International in support of their rejection of the Marxist insistence on the need for working-class political parties.⁶²

Within days of the General Council accepting Marx's *Inaugural Address* and *Provisional Rules*, he was visited by Bakunin, who was traveling to Italy. They had not seen each other since 1848. In a letter to Engels, Marx wrote that he "liked him very much, more so than previously." Bakunin told Marx that he thought the 1863 Polish uprising "had been defeated by two things, the influence of Bonaparte [Napoléon III] and, secondly, the hesitation of the Polish aristocracy in openly and unambiguously proclaiming *peasant socialism* from the outset." Bakunin indicated that from now on he would "only involve himself in the socialist movement." Overall, Marx remarked to Engels, Bakunin was "one of the few people whom after 16 years" he felt had "moved forwards and not backwards."⁶³

Ironically, in light of subsequent events, Marx appears to have attempted to enlist Bakunin as an envoy for the International in Italy to combat Mazzini's influence among Italian workers. At Marx's request, Bakunin provided Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882), the other prominent Italian patriot, with a copy of the *Inaugural Address*. A few months after their meeting in London, Bakunin reported back to Marx that it would take some time to build a socialist movement in Italy, where the workers were poor and demoralized. With respect to Mazzini, Bakunin thought that his "most serious mistake [was] continuing to think that the initiative for the new [socialist] movement would come from Italy," when it was already coming from England and France, and maybe even Germany.⁶⁴

While Bakunin advised Marx to have patience, within three years he had laid the foundations for an Italian anarchist movement.⁶⁵ In 1868, Bakunin and his Italian associates became active in the International. Until then, the International had little or no presence in Italy. The Mazzinian workers who had joined the International in the fall of 1864 had withdrawn by "the spring of 1865," perhaps because of Mazzini's disapproval of Marx's *Inaugural Address*, which ran counter to Mazzini's rejection of class struggle.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Ibid., 40 & 50.

⁶¹ Ibid., 39.

⁶² "Statutes of the First International" in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 78.

⁶³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 42: Marx and Engels, 1864–1868* (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 18–19.

⁶⁴ T. R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 28.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 77.

After his meeting with Marx at the beginning of November 1864, Bakunin paid a visit to Proudhon in Paris on his way back to Italy. Perhaps they discussed the International, but all that Bakunin later recounted was that he told Proudhon that he remained “an incorrigible idealist,” by which Bakunin meant that Proudhon was too preoccupied with “metaphysical doctrine”—namely, abstract ideals—, whereas Marx at least had the virtue of being a materialist who regarded ideas as the product of material conditions. Nevertheless, Bakunin thought that Proudhon, being “a revolutionary by instinct,” had “understood and felt liberty much better than” Marx.⁶⁷

By this time, Proudhon was very ill, but also very determined to finish his response to the renewed activity of the French workers in the book *On the Political Capacity of the Working Classes*, which was published a few months after his death in January 1865. Benoît Malon, who became one of the leading figures in the French branch of the International, later wrote that Proudhon’s political testament “became overnight *the book* of the most studious and intelligent part of the French proletariat.”⁶⁸

Proudhon was aware of the role of the French workers in establishing the International, which he regarded as evidence that “democracy everywhere,” as with the working class, was “becoming aware of itself; it recognises its solidarity” across national borders.⁶⁹ Given the growing class consciousness of European workers, Proudhon set out in his book *On the Political Capacity of the Working Classes* to provide a guide for achieving their emancipation from economic servitude and political subordination. The book was framed as a considered response to the French workers’ *Manifesto of the Sixty*.

One of the most influential themes of Proudhon’s book was his emphasis on the need for the workers and peasants to separate themselves from bourgeois politics and institutions in order to create a mutualist society through their own self-managed organizations. He described this as a “new” form of democracy, which he called “worker” or “industrial” democracy rather than a form of “anarchy.” Be that as it may, by this time Proudhon was defining “anarchy” itself as “a kind of government or constitution in which the public and private conscience... suffices by itself to maintain order and guarantee all liberties,” with “the principle of authority, police institutions, preventive or repressive measures, bureaucracy, taxes, etc.,” being “reduced to their most simplest expression” and centralized government giving way to “federative institutions and communal mores.”⁷⁰

Proudhon continued to advocate the creation of a mutualist economy based on reciprocal obligations and guarantees meant to ensure the equivalent exchange of products and services between the workers, thereby eliminating capitalist exploitation. Although he recognized that adjustments would have to be made to accommodate children, women, the sick, and the elderly, in contrast to the “equality of wages” that he had advocated in the 1840s, Proudhon was now of the view that workers with greater skills and higher productivity should “receive a greater salary”—a position closer to that of Fourier and his followers.⁷¹

In the spirit of the *Manifesto of the Sixty*, Proudhon also sought to put forward economic proposals that would “reconcile the keenest sympathies of the petit bourgeois, small manufacturers

⁶⁷ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, ed. by Sam Dolgoff (Montreal: Black Rose, 1980), 26.

⁶⁸ K. Steven Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism: Benoît Malon and French Reformist Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 10.

⁶⁹ Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 266.

⁷⁰ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 721, 725 & 735.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 739.

and small shopkeepers with the new [worker] democracy.”⁷² Proudhon not only did not have any problems with small-scale enterprises, provided that they exchanged their services and products based on equivalent values, but he felt that they helped protect the independence of those involved in them while counteracting any tendencies toward economic monopoly and political centralization.

For Proudhon, workers’ associations were never an end in themselves. These types of associations were justified in large-scale enterprises, such as mining, industrial manufacturing, and transportation, in order to ensure that these larger enterprises were managed and controlled by the workers involved in them rather than being controlled by capitalists or the state.⁷³ Associated workers, along with everyone else, would exchange their products and services on the basis of equivalent values. Proudhon’s argument that workers’ associations were only necessary in large-scale enterprises was to be taken up by Tolain and some of the other French delegates at subsequent congresses of the International during the debates on the “collectivization” of property.

Proudhon argued that, “in the new Democracy the political principle must be identical with and adequate to the economic principle.” For him, the only “political principle” compatible with economic mutualism was “the federative principal” developed in his earlier works.⁷⁴ He therefore championed “municipal liberties” and called for a federation of communes in place of the centralized state.⁷⁵ Anticipating the mortal struggle between the Paris Commune and the French state, Proudhon argued that as long as municipal communes remain subordinate to the state, “it is inevitable that one day or another... conflict will break out” between them.⁷⁶

Parallel to mutualist economic institutions and contractual relationships of equivalent exchange would be a political federation of communes based on voluntary association, with each commune being “free to quit” the federation “*at will*.”⁷⁷ The federated communes would create a federal council, made up of recallable delegates “subject to re-election,” with mandates from their respective communes. Any executive positions created by the delegates would also be “subject to recall.” Society would then be composed of interconnected federations of self-managed enterprises and institutions, at the economic and political levels, with the federated groups and individuals being free to join or secede from the constitutive groups and federations. Therefore, the political “abstraction of people’s sovereignty” would be replaced by the “effective sovereignty of the labouring masses which rule and govern” through their associations, trades bodies, exchange networks, self-managed enterprises, communal assemblies, and federations.⁷⁸

In his book *On the Political Capacity of the Working Classes*, Proudhon set forth a more concrete picture of the agro-industrial federation he had proposed in the *Principle of Federation*, as an alternative to capitalism and the centralized state necessary to maintain an economic system based on exploitation and a society riven by class conflict. Through his final book, Proudhon was able to posthumously influence the debates within the International, the development of a more explicitly anarchist theory of federation, and the creation of the Paris Commune.

⁷² Ibid., 748.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 751, fn. 26.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 765.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 769.

⁷⁷ Proudhon, “On the Political Capacity of the Working Classes,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 74.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 75.

Proudhon argued that the French elections of 1863 and 1864 had shown the futility of the workers participating in the “hollow parliamentarism” of the bourgeois republicans. It was time for the working class to fight its own battle for self-emancipation rather than setting “its sights on winning yet another battle on behalf of its masters,” postponing “its emancipation... by [another] half century.”⁷⁹

The French members of the International in Paris took Proudhon’s notion of workers’ autonomy very seriously. They accepted at face value the reference in the *Provisional Rules of the International* to the emancipation of the working class being the task of the workers themselves. For them, it was important that the International have an “essentially working-class character.”⁸⁰ As far as they were concerned, this meant that in the Paris section of the International only workers should be admitted. This brought them into conflict with some of the other French members of the International, including Le Lubez (a self-employed teacher) and Lefort (a journalist), who in turn accused Tolain and the Parisian internationalists of being Bonapartist agents.⁸¹

When the conflict between the two groups reached the General Council, although it purported not to take sides, it did indicate that it did “not sanction the principle” espoused by the Paris group “that none but an *ouvrier* [worker]” should be admitted into the International.⁸² Not a surprising position, given the prominent role Marx, a *petit bourgeois* intellectual, played on the council. Furthermore, Marx thought that he could use Lefort “to draw into the International French workers active in the cooperative movement.”⁸³ The Paris internationalists protested when Marx had the General Council appoint Lefort as the “Defender General” of the International in France, forcing the rescission of his appointment, which ultimately led to Lefort’s resignation from the International itself.⁸⁴

Following Proudhon’s death on January 19, 1865, Marx did not waste any time in yet again attempting to discredit him. On January 24, 1865, he wrote a “political” obituary for Proudhon, which was published in the German workers’ paper *Der Sozialdemokrat* in February 1865.⁸⁵ Never one to recognize his own hypocrisy, Marx derided Proudhon as one who saw through “the eyes of a French small-holding peasant (and later *petit bourgeois*),” still refusing to acknowledge that Proudhon, unlike him, came from the working class. He repeated the canard that Proudhon had taken the phrase “property is theft” from the Girondin Jacques-Pierre Brissot and dismissed his “schoolboyish... knowledge of ‘political economy’.”⁸⁶

Illustrating his own intellectual snobbery as the scion of a *petit bourgeois* German family who had obtained a university doctorate, “Dr. Marx” scoffed at Proudhon’s “clumsy repugnant show of erudition of the self-taught.” He concluded that Proudhon’s “Charlatanism in science and accommodation in politics [were] inseparable from” his *petit bourgeois* “point of view,” insinuating that Proudhon was a class collaborationist who tried to make Napoléon III “palatable to the

⁷⁹ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 724.

⁸⁰ Archer, *The First International in France*, 31.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 28–30.

⁸² *The General Council of the First International, 1864–1866* (Moscow: Progress Publishers), 77.

⁸³ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 384, fn. 44.

⁸⁴ Archer, *The First International in France*, 29–32.

⁸⁵ Marx, “Letter to J. B. Schweizer,” in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 20: Marx and Engels, 1864–1868* (New York: International Publishers, 1985), 26–33.

⁸⁶ Robert Hoffman, in *Revolutionary Justice*, debunks the claim that Proudhon had somehow plagiarized Brissot, 46–47.

French workers.”⁸⁷ Marx’s contempt for Proudhon—and anything smacking of anarchism—was to continue unabated for the duration of the International’s existence.

Anarchist tendencies first began to emerge within the International itself in 1865, when the Parisian and Belgian sections of the International were created. Several of the Parisian members had signed the *Manifesto of the Sixty* and were generally Proudhonist in orientation. The more moderate “Proudhonists,” centered around Tolain and Ernest-Édouard Fribourg, were in favor of a republic and electoral participation, although they were careful not to advocate political activity by the International itself, as this would only lead to its prohibition by the French authorities. There were more strict Proudhonists, such as Félix-Eugène Chemalé (1838–?), an architect’s clerk, who agreed with Proudhon’s policy of abstention from electoral activity. The Parisian section also included more radical workers, such as Varlin and his associate, Nathalie Lemel (1827–1921), both bookbinders; Malon, a dyer; Antoine-Marie Bourdon (1842–?), an engraver; and Zéphirin Camélinat (1840–1932), a bronze metal worker, who were more in tune with the growing militancy among French workers. Varlin and Lemel participated in the bookbinders’ strikes of 1864 and 1865 and were involved in the creation of workers’ credit unions, cooperatives, and other mutual aid societies.

In June and July 1865, the Paris internationalists took issue with another group of workers that had published a call in a Bonapartist paper for “state aid” for workers’ cooperatives. The Paris internationalists rejected such an approach, arguing that the “total emancipation of the workers” through “the abolition of the proletariat and of slavery whatever may be its form” could only be achieved by the workers themselves.⁸⁸ In preparation for the congress of the International that was supposed to be held soon in Brussels, the Paris internationalists developed a series of questions for discussion that illustrate the broad scope of their approach: questions about the relationship between morality and religion, the means of action, female and child labor, education, unemployment, strikes, associations, standing armies, the “relation between capital and labour,” and labor being “the duty of all.”⁸⁹ They looked to the revived cooperative movement in France as a way of creating a network of mutualist workers’ organizations capable of eventually replacing capitalism.

Meanwhile, the first functioning section of the International in Belgium was organized in July 1865. Several of the founders of the Belgian section were Proudhonists.⁹⁰ The typesetter, César De Paepe, who was to become one of the Belgian section’s most prominent members, regarded anarchy as the ultimate ideal, although not an immediately realizable goal.⁹¹ He was influenced by Proudhon and the Belgian socialists, such as Napoleon de Keyser (1806–?), who advocated communal ownership and a federation of independent communes, to be achieved by revolutionary means.⁹² At the time, De Paepe was critical of communism as being incompatible with individual liberty and sought rather to achieve equality and freedom, resulting in the “full enfranchisement of the individual.”⁹³

⁸⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 20, 33.

⁸⁸ Archer, *The First International in France*, 39.

⁸⁹ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 398, fn. 112.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 401, fn. 126.

⁹¹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 103.

⁹² G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought, Volume II: Marxism and Anarchism, 1850–1890* (London: Macmillan, 1954), 68.

⁹³ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 13.

Unable to hold a full-blown congress in Brussels, where the government had reaffirmed legislation enabling it to deport political refugees, the General Council instead arranged for a conference in London for September 1865. Tolain, Fribourg, and Varlin were among the French delegates. De Paepe attended as the Belgian delegate. With the meeting being held in London, the General Council was well represented. Both Marx and Eccarius were there. The delegates agreed to hold a congress in Geneva the following May, where they would discuss many of the topics that had first been proposed by the Paris internationalists in July 1865.

De Paepe made a number of notable contributions to the conference. In accordance with the views of Belgian socialists like de Keyser, De Paepe argued that all land should be held in common, but that each worker was entitled to the fruits of his labor.⁹⁴ He would raise the issue of collective ownership of land again at the Lausanne Congress of the International in 1867. De Paepe's position was eventually adopted by a majority of the International's delegates at the 1868 Brussels Congress. It was referred to as "collectivism" at the time of the International to distinguish it from Proudhon's mutualism, which envisaged ownership of the land by those who worked it, and "communism," where either the state would hold the land in common or individual entitlement would give way to distribution of goods based on need.

In response to a proposed resolution condemning Russia and supporting Polish independence, De Paepe argued, as had Proudhon, that Polish independence would only benefit the nobility and the clergy (a position that Bakunin had also come to adopt). The Polish peasantry would be no better off. As for checking Russian influence, a position dear to Marx's heart, De Paepe said that it was better to check "the influence of *all* governments in Europe," as the others were no better.⁹⁵ He thought that "the French government was quite as dangerous to liberty as the Russian," having put pressure on the Belgian government to enact the law providing for the deportation of political refugees that had made it necessary to postpone the planned congress in Brussels in the first place.⁹⁶

De Paepe also argued that it was important to distinguish Russia from the Russian people, whose strivings for "land and liberty" ought to be supported.⁹⁷ He suggested that the Polish peasantry adopt these watchwords as their own.⁹⁸ Bakunin, of course, was also a strong supporter of the Russian revolutionary movement. In 1862, in response to a new generation of radicals who were becoming active in Russia, Bakunin had sketched out his own "program of Land and Liberty."⁹⁹

De Paepe spoke in favor of the resolution put forward by the French delegates that the relationship between religion and the "social, political and intellectual development of the people" be added to the agenda for the Geneva Congress. He suggested that those who believe in a higher being, and who were its "humble servants," were not likely to achieve "their own emancipation" or independence.¹⁰⁰ His position was similar to that of Bakunin, who by this time had come to the conclusion that religion "translates into the tutelage of the church and state, the despotism

⁹⁴ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 238.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 429, fn. 280.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 429, fn. 280.

⁹⁹ Leier, *Bakunin*, 168.

¹⁰⁰ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 248.

of princes, and the brutal and hypocritical exploitation of the popular masses for the profit of a corrupt minority.”¹⁰¹

At the party at the end of the conference celebrating the first anniversary of the International, Marx recommended his critique of Proudhon, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, to Tolain and Fribourg.¹⁰² Needless to say, Marx’s attempt to turn them against Proudhon was completely unsuccessful.

Around the time of the London Conference, Bakunin was beginning to develop his anarchist views and to attract adherents to them in Italy. In September and October 1865, he published a number of articles in an Italian paper, *Il Popolo d’Italia*, in which he denounced the reactionary role of religion and argued that the workers were “the sole producer of wealth in society.” He therefore urged his readers to support the workers “in their struggle against ‘the proprietors of capital, land [and] revenue’.”¹⁰³

Expressing a position similar to that of De Paepe in Belgium, Bakunin argued that there “is no real liberty without equality, not only in rights but in reality. Freedom in equality, here is justice.” Bakunin advocated a kind of anarchist federalism, with society being organized “not from top to bottom, nor from the centre to the circumference, but from the bottom to the top and from the circumference to the centre.”¹⁰⁴

The Geneva Congress was later postponed to September 1866, largely due to the General Council’s failure to prepare far enough in advance for it. The issue of standing armies was one of the topics the French members of the International had put on the agenda for the congress. The issue became more pressing in May 1866, when there was talk of war between Prussia and Austria. War did come in June, with the Prussians taking a significant amount of territory from Austria, leading to the eventual unification of Germany during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871.

Toward the end of May 1866, a group of French students published a manifesto against war. Marx privately accused them of being an ignorant “Proudhonist clique,” whose belief in Proudhon and demand that, to abolish war, one must abolish “poverty and ignorance,” made them “grotesque.”¹⁰⁵ According to Julian Archer, they were actually followers of the veteran French revolutionary, Auguste Blanqui.¹⁰⁶ Either way, the manifesto did contain anarchist elements, denouncing “nationalities, fatherlands, different races, [and the military] balance” of power as “empty words void of meaning,” and called for a revolution.¹⁰⁷

The French branch of the International, made up of French expatriates in London, responded to the students, heralding the coming social revolution through which “man will not only become master of his person but also of his labour.” Agreeing with the students that nationalities and fatherlands were empty words, the French branch declared that the “poor have no country, in all lands they suffer from the same evils, and they therefore realise that the barriers put up by the powers that be the more thoroughly to enslave the people must fall,” leading to “the great federation of the peoples.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ Leier, *Bakunin*, 171.

¹⁰² Archer, *The First International in France*, 61.

¹⁰³ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 41.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 417, fn. 213.

¹⁰⁶ Archer, *The First International in France*, 63.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 370.

The French students responded enthusiastically to the address from the French branch of the International, pledging their support for the workers in their struggle for human emancipation.¹⁰⁹ The Paris section of the International published its own declaration, focusing on “financial feudalism” as the cause of war and the workers’ misery—a position consistent with the analysis developed by Proudhon in his book *War and Peace*.¹¹⁰ As Fribourg put it, for the French workers opposed to war, “their prime concern was to solve the social problem,” something which they would soon be dealing with at the Geneva Congress.¹¹¹

All of this was too much for Marx. Recognizing the anarchist tinge to the students’ denunciations of war, he dismissed their views as “Proudhonised Stirnerism.” Making clear his opposition to Proudhon’s anarchist federalism, he derided their proposals that everything “be dissolved into small ‘groups’ or ‘communes’, which in turn are to form an ‘association’, but no state.”¹¹²

In preparation for the Geneva Congress, the Paris internationalists had in fact suggested that the workers organize cooperatives to establish a mutualist system of equivalent exchange between themselves, with the International itself being transformed into an international network of workers’ cooperatives. As Tolain explained, through this system of “mutuality and reciprocity,” products would “belong solely to the producer and, thus, the capitalist [would] no longer exist.”¹¹³ This was similar to the proposal put forward by the French delegates who had called for the creation of a Universal League of Workers back in 1856—a proposal that was also inspired by Proudhon.

In March 1866, Marx’s *Inaugural Address* had been published in *Libertà e Lavoro*, an Italian republican paper with a working-class orientation.¹¹⁴ Bakunin was beginning to have some success in connecting with young radical Italian republicans who were becoming disenchanted with Mazzini’s pious nationalism and his denial of the reality of class conflict. In February 1866, at a meeting in Naples “to protest a series of new taxes imposed by the government,” Bakunin’s Italian associates called for social revolution, liberty, an end to centralized government and its attendant bureaucracy, and the replacement of the national army with people’s militias, denouncing the use of military force by the new Italian state against its own people.¹¹⁵

In the summer of 1866, Bakunin prepared a program for his Revolutionary Brotherhood, a loose-knit group of people whom Bakunin sought to recruit for the purpose of a European social revolution. One of the French members was Élisée Reclus, who was soon to join the International and would later become one of the foremost advocates of anarchist communism.¹¹⁶ Bakunin was most active in recruiting members in Italy, where he was still residing. He felt that, “after the complete shipwreck of all the other parties, ideas and motives” following the creation of an Italian monarchy in 1861, there was left “only one possible live force in Italy, and that is the social revolution.”¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 201–202.

¹¹⁰ Archer, *The First International in France*, 63.

¹¹¹ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 421, fn. 235.

¹¹² Ibid., 418, fn. 218.

¹¹³ Archer, *The First International in France*, 65.

¹¹⁴ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 46.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 47.

¹¹⁶ Marie Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisée Reclus and Nineteenth-Century European Anarchism* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 62 & 67.

¹¹⁷ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 60.

The program set forth in more detail the ideas that Bakunin had begun publishing in Italy in the fall of 1865. His guiding principle was liberty and equality for all, since “Man is truly free only among equally free men.” Bakunin argued that political and economic organization must therefore be based on “free association and free federation.” Rejecting “*any principle of authority and of raison d’État* [reasons of State],” Bakunin argued that “*Order in society must be the outcome of the greatest possible development of all local, collective and individual liberties.*”¹¹⁸

In political terms, this meant the abolition not only of official state-sanctioned religious institutions but also of “the *custodial, transcendental, centralist State*” itself, the “lackey and alter ego of the Church, and as such the permanent source of poverty, degradation and subjugation among the people.” This would require the abolition of national banks and “*all other State credit institutions... all central administration, bureaucracies, standing armies and State police.*”¹¹⁹ Bakunin argued that members of the Revolutionary Brotherhood “*must therefore renounce the so-called principle of nationality,*” which was used by monarchs, oligarchies, and the bourgeoisie “to deceive the people and to set them at loggerheads so as to further enslave them.”¹²⁰

However, at this time Bakunin did not advocate the complete abolition of governmental institutions. Rather, he called for “*a free federation of autonomous communes*” based on “*the majority vote of all of the inhabitants—adult men and women alike.*”¹²¹ The communes would federate into regional, provincial, national, and ultimately international federations. At each level there would be a federal “parliament” with representatives from each of the federated groups (at the regional level, representatives from each of the federated communes; at the national level, representatives from each regional federation and directly elected representatives from each commune; and so on). At this stage in the development of Bakunin’s ideas, his conception of federalism was not significantly different from Proudhon’s.

Bakunin shared Proudhon’s views on the need to provide young people with a polytechnical, or “integral,” education that would break down the separation between manual and “intellectual” labor. Proudhon had argued that modern factory work and the division of labor were replacing “manual skill” with “the perfection of the apparatus,” inverting “the roles of man and material... the spirit is not in the worker, it has passed into the machine; what ought to be the worth of the worker has become for him a brutalization.”¹²² Bakunin agreed that, under capitalism, manual work was being “reduced to a purely mechanical action, devoid of mind and intelligence.”¹²³ For Bakunin, the solution was to remove the “unequal line drawn between intellectual and manual labour... When the thinker works and the worker thinks, free, intelligent labour will emerge as humanity’s highest aspiration.”¹²⁴

It was on economic and social issues that Bakunin was beginning to part company with Proudhon. Bakunin called for the “*Abolition of class, rank, privilege, and distinction in all its forms*” and “*Complete equality of political rights for all men and all women.*”¹²⁵ Proudhon had never advocated the complete abolition of classes, nor did he advocate equal rights for men and women.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 65.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 66.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 88.

¹²¹ Ibid., 71.

¹²² Hoffman, *Revolutionary Justice*, 303.

¹²³ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 80.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 82.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 66.

Anticipating the revolutionary syndicalists, Bakunin looked to the workers' associations to "provide the whole of human society with a new constitution, no longer divided into nations but into different industrial groupings... organized according to the requirements not of politics but of production," ultimately forming "one vast economic federation" that would "regenerate the world."¹²⁶ Proudhon had advocated that workers' "companies" or "corporations" self-manage only larger undertakings, such as factories and railways. The scope of workers' self-management was to become an issue in the International, as the collectivists, led by De Paepe, argued for a more expansive conception of worker self-management based on the collectivization of all means of production—a position virtually indistinguishable from Bakunin's.

For Bakunin, the land, natural resources, and the means of production belonged to all, but each individual must "earn his living by his own work, or run the risk of being considered a parasite, an exploiter of the wealth (i.e. the labour) of others, and a thief." Bakunin was articulating the same "collectivist" position that was to be adopted two years later by a majority of the delegates at the International's 1868 Brussels Congress—a position based on a notion of just entitlement derived from the view, shared by Bakunin, that labor "is the sole producer of wealth" in society.¹²⁷

But it was on the rights of women that Bakunin most clearly separated himself from Proudhon. Not only were women to have the same political rights as men, they were to be free to marry and divorce "in accordance with their desires."¹²⁸ In order to ensure that women's freedom had a material foundation, Bakunin argued that child-rearing and education should be a shared social responsibility. Proudhon had been opposed to divorce and felt that fathers should be responsible for overseeing their children's education.

Consistent with the positions previously articulated by Déjacque, Proudhon, and the French anarchist refugees in London, Bakunin argued that only an all-encompassing social revolution was capable of liberating the people. But his proposed strategy was much different from Proudhon's. He argued that revolutionaries should create both public and secret organizations to spread the revolution, beginning in "the most fertile soil," then "sweeping like a universal holocaust across the flimsy barriers of nations and bringing all States tumbling in its wake, embracing first the whole of Europe, and then the world."¹²⁹

Despite Bakunin's call for "*rigorous discipline*" within the Revolutionary Brotherhood, based on "the reciprocal commitment contracted by each of its members toward the others," his Italian "brothers" remained a rather undisciplined group.¹³⁰ Around the time that Bakunin was promulgating the principles of the brotherhood, several of its Italian members went off to fight for Italy, which had joined Prussia in its war against Austria. Many of them soon became disillusioned with the war and came to the realization that Bakunin was right about the counterrevolutionary nature of patriotic campaigns. Bakunin's critique of the war "vindicated [him] in the eyes of many republicans and, consequently, his prestige increased in southern Italy," where he was most active.¹³¹

In preparation for the Geneva Congress, Marx drafted the instructions to be followed by the delegates from the General Council who would be attending the congress. In the section on

¹²⁶ Ibid., 70 & 83.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 78.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 83.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 91.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 93.

¹³¹ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 56.

child labor, Marx explained how “through *general laws*, enforced by the power of the state... the working class do not fortify governmental power. On the contrary, they transform that power, now used against them, into their own agency.”¹³² He repeated his earlier critique of workers’ cooperatives, which, restricted “to the dwarfish forms into which individual wage slaves can elaborate [the cooperative system] by their private efforts,” could “never transform capitalistic society.” Capitalism could only be abolished “by the transfer of the organised forces of society, viz., the state power, from capitalists and landlords to the producers themselves.”¹³³

We see here Marx’s advocacy of legislative reforms through the existing political system, despite that system being, from his point of view, a product, and not a cause, of the existing capitalist mode of production, and his claim that the workers must obtain state power in order to abolish capitalism. Far from putting forward ecumenical proposals acceptable to the various political tendencies within the International, “which allow of immediate agreement and concerted action by the workers,” as Marx claimed, he was again trying to establish as official policies of the International positions that mandated not only political participation but also the achievement of state power by the workers, thereby excluding any contrary anarchist approaches.¹³⁴

On the eve of the congress, Marx gave instructions to his allies within the International regarding the conduct of the congress. He told J. P. Becker (1809–1886), leader of the German-speaking Geneva section that was hosting the congress, and through him, François Dupleix, a member of the French-speaking Geneva section, that they were to ensure that Marx’s Swiss lieutenant, Hermann Jung (1830–1901), was “made President of the congress” instead of Odger and to prevent Cremer from being elected as general secretary. They were also to make sure that the president of the General Council was elected by the members of the council in London rather than by the congress delegates, under the pretext that the president of the General Council was “a figure of *merely local importance*.”¹³⁵

Despite the claims of some commentators that Marx, in alleged contrast to Bakunin, eschewed secrecy but was rather, in E. H. Carr’s words, “a lifelong believer in publicity,” he was in continual and private communication with his allies throughout the course of the International for the purpose of outmaneuvering whomever he saw as an ideological opponent.¹³⁶ Odger and Cremer’s alleged sin was making compromises with the English bourgeoisie against Marx’s wishes. By the fall of 1866, Marx was claiming that he was “having to run the whole Association” by himself.¹³⁷

The Geneva Congress was held at the beginning of September 1866. Among the delegates were several people who were later to be identified with the protosyndicalist and anarchist currents in the International, including Varlin, Malon, and James Guillaume (1844–1916), a Swiss teacher; Adhémar Schwitzguébel (1844–1895), an engraver, also from Switzerland; and Albert Richard (1846–1925), a dyer from Lyon. In addition to approving the *Rules of the International* (both in their different English and French versions and regarding the “subordinate” status of political movements), representatives from England, France, Germany, and Switzerland debated the role

¹³² *General Council, 1864–1866*, 345. For a restatement of the anarchist argument that state reforms actually disempower the workers by causing them to look to and depend on the state to represent their interests instead of relying on their own self-managed organizations and direct action, see Michael Taylor, “Anarchy, the State and Cooperation,” in *Anarchism, Volume Two*, 385–390.

¹³³ *General Council, 1864–1866*, 346.

¹³⁴ Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 43.

¹³⁵ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 42*, 314–315.

¹³⁶ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 323.

¹³⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 42*, 328.

of strikes and the position of women in the working-class struggle. Varlin and Bourdon advocated equal rights for women in opposition to Tolain and his group, who agreed with Proudhon that a woman's place was in the home.¹³⁸

On the issue of strikes, the French delegates did not expressly oppose them but argued that, given the situation in France, where civil liberties were curtailed, mutual aid associations were the only effective means of struggle.¹³⁹ Tolain, Fribourg, and some Swiss Proudhonists had the congress unanimously endorse the view that the abolition of "salaried status," or wage labor, was the ultimate goal.¹⁴⁰ The French delegates proposed a minimum wage, which was also accepted by the congress. Marx's instructions to the delegates from the General Council included the call for an eight-hour day, which received the acceptance of most of the delegates. Some of the more cautious of the French Proudhonists were leery of mandatory hours of work being enforced by the state.¹⁴¹ There was an inconclusive debate on the role of religion, with the French delegation protesting against religious influence in society, but the delegates did agree on the necessity of combating all forms of religious prejudice.¹⁴²

Tolain also argued, albeit unsuccessfully, that only manual workers should be allowed membership in the International, in order to ensure the self-emancipation of the working class.¹⁴³ The English delegate, James Carter, pointed to Marx as someone who had "devoted all his life to the triumph of the working classes" and who should therefore be allowed into the International despite not being a worker.¹⁴⁴ Tolain responded that Marx was right not to have accepted nomination as a delegate to the congress and that, by doing so Marx himself had shown that the congress should only be composed of manual workers.¹⁴⁵ The congress ultimately decided that "each branch" of the International would "determine its own membership criteria."¹⁴⁶

As a show of opposition to Tolain's view, the English members of the General Council nominated Marx for president of the council on their return to England (Marx had already achieved his goal of having the executive of the council elected by the council's members rather than by the delegates to the International's congresses). Marx, being more diplomatic, declined, proposing Odger instead, whose bourgeois sympathies apparently did not disqualify him from at least holding this position.¹⁴⁷

The *Mémoire* presented by the French delegates at the Geneva Congress illustrates both the influence of Proudhon and the divergent perspectives already emerging among the French internationalists. The French delegates looked forward to "the emancipation of the proletariat by the proletariat itself," regarding capital as their "accumulated labour."¹⁴⁸ Along with Proudhon,

¹³⁸ Jacques Freymond et al., (eds.), *La première internationale: recueil de documents*, Volume 1 (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1962), 50.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 44.

¹⁴⁰ Archer, *The First International in France*, 69.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁴² Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 52–53.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 56.

¹⁴⁴ Archer, *The First International in France*, 74.

¹⁴⁵ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 56.

¹⁴⁶ Archer, *The First International in France*, 136.

¹⁴⁷ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 36.

¹⁴⁸ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 86–87.

they supported the equal exchange of products between the producers themselves and opposed interest charges on loans as immoral.¹⁴⁹

On the issues of instruction, education, and the family, the majority followed Proudhon's view that the family is the basis of society and argued against a state education system, citing a lengthy passage from Proudhon's 1851 publication, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*.¹⁵⁰ There, Proudhon argued that fathers should be free to choose the schools for their children, that teaching should be a self-governing profession, and that education cannot be divorced from work, but that instruction and apprenticeship must be combined, providing for both a scientific and practical education through the workers' own associations.¹⁵¹ He criticized the existing education system for creating elitist "seminaries of aristocracy," which "support, strengthen, and fortify the distinction between classes," instead of providing equal education for all.¹⁵² He saw no need for government intermediaries "between the student and the schoolroom, between the shop and the apprentice," concluding that a worker-controlled system of education could not "depend upon the State: it is incompatible with government."¹⁵³

The French internationalists agreed on the need for an "integral education" for the workers and their children that was both scientific and vocational, but a minority led by Varlin and Bourdon (a Fourierist) disputed the position of Proudhon, Tolain, and the majority of the French delegation that the patriarchal family should be primarily responsible for the education of children, arguing that education was a social responsibility.¹⁵⁴ For them, access to education should not be limited by existing inequalities in the means of individual families, nor by the improvidence and caprice of the children's fathers. They proposed public funding of education, which was to be administered by "truly democratic" communes, because no father had the right to refuse his children an education while a free and equal society required nothing less.

Bakunin had taken a similar position in his program for the Revolutionary Brotherhood. While children "belong neither to their parents nor to society but to themselves and their future liberty," society "has the right and duty to tend to them because its own future depends on the intellectual and moral guidance they receive."¹⁵⁵

This approach to education was followed not only by Bakunin and many of the French internationalists but also by the later antiauthoritarian and anarchist tendencies in the International and the anarchist movements that were to emerge from them. In 1869, Bakunin wrote a series of articles on "integral education" for the Swiss internationalist paper *L'Égalité*, in which he explicitly drew out the anarchist implications of Proudhon's arguments against state-controlled education while rejecting the latter's patriarchalism.¹⁵⁶ One of the pioneers of libertarian education was the French internationalist Paul Robin (1837–1912). He first entered the International in Brussels, but in 1869 moved to Geneva where he joined the editorial board of *L'Égalité* and became friends with Bakunin.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 88–89.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 89–92.

¹⁵¹ Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution*, 273–274.

¹⁵² Ibid., 275.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 275–276.

¹⁵⁴ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 95–98.

¹⁵⁵ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 84.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin: Bakunin's Basic Writings, 1869–1871*, ed. by Robert M. Cutler (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1985), 111–125.

¹⁵⁷ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 64.

The French delegates to the Geneva Congress rejected the state as a “superior authority” that would think, direct, and act in the name of all, stifling any initiative whatsoever.¹⁵⁸ Citing once again a passage from Proudhon’s *General Idea of the Revolution*, they adopted his view that social, economic, and political relations should be based on contracts providing reciprocal benefits for specific purposes, thereby preserving the independence and equality of the contracting parties, for, in Proudhon’s words, the mutualist contract “imposes no obligation upon the parties, except that which results from their personal promise of reciprocal delivery: it is not subject to any external authority: it alone forms the law between the parties: it awaits their initiative for its execution.”¹⁵⁹ The French delegates distinguished this “mutualist federalism” from a communist government that would rule over society, regulating all social and economic functions.¹⁶⁰

Marx dismissed the French delegates’ contributions to the Geneva Congress as empty “Proudhonist phrases. They babble about science and know nothing.”¹⁶¹ Conflating reforms “which can be carried through by *political means*” with “*revolutionary action*,” Marx accused the Paris internationalists of opposing any “action arising out of the class struggle itself,” when in fact the Paris internationalists simply thought that the class struggle should be conducted by the workers themselves through their own organizations, and not through political processes dominated by bourgeois politicians. The Paris internationalists were articulating a conception of working-class self-emancipation, which emphasized workers’ autonomy, personal liberties, and equality through reciprocity. That their goals, and the means of achieving them, were different from what Marx advocated did not mean that they were preaching “ordinary bourgeois economy, only Proudhonistically idealised,” as Marx claimed.¹⁶²

One thing that Marx did understand was the degree to which the French proletariat was still influenced by Proudhon, whom Marx accused of corrupting it with his “sham criticism.”¹⁶³ However, while the positions put forward by the Paris internationalists at the Geneva Congress hinted at the anarchist implications of their approach, they did not yet openly call for the abolition of the state. The issue of state power was not to come to a head until after the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871, and even then only some of the surviving French internationalists adopted an anarchist position.

Despite Marx’s attempts at moving the French internationalists away from Proudhon and toward a more Marxist position, the Geneva Congress marked “the apex of Proudhon’s influence with the working-class leadership in France and in the International.”¹⁶⁴ At the 1867 Lausanne and 1868 Brussels Congresses of the International, many of the French internationalists began moving away from Proudhon’s mutualism toward a collectivist position, while remaining committed to Proudhon’s federalist ideas.

¹⁵⁸ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 99.

¹⁵⁹ Proudhon, “The General Idea of the Revolution,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 53.

¹⁶⁰ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 99.

¹⁶¹ Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 43.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 43–44.

¹⁶⁴ Archer, *The First International in France*, 75.

Chapter Three: The Debates on Property

The next congress of the International was in September 1867 in Lausanne, Switzerland. After the Geneva Congress in September 1866, the French internationalists had continued to develop proposals for transforming the International into a mutualist organization that would establish Proudhonian banks of exchange across Europe. The banks would provide both “free credit” to workers’ cooperatives and a network for them to exchange their goods and services among themselves.¹ But before this could be done, a majority of delegates at the upcoming congress in Lausanne would have to embrace the scheme. In the meantime, some of the Paris internationalists issued “a public appeal to form a Federation of Labor,” which would create a local network of workers’ cooperatives by providing them with credit and a means for exchanging their products based on “reciprocity of services.”² Although a Parisian federation was eventually formed in the fall of 1869, it was a federation of trade union organizations, not workers’ cooperatives.

In February 1867, the Paris branch of the International asked the General Council to include the following items on the agenda for the Lausanne Congress: (1) “Mutualism as the basis of social relations.” (2) “Capital and labour.” (3) “Equality of men and women in social functions.” (4) “Definition and role of the state.”³ This would then enable them to raise these issues at the congress in order to convince the other delegates to adopt their mutualist perspective.

A series of strikes in France during the first part of 1867 received some support from the International and even from some of the more conservative French mutualists, such as Tolain. *Le Courrier Français*, a newspaper associated with the Tolain group, offered to open its pages to striking French miners, and the Parisian section of the International issued an appeal on their behalf.⁴ There were also strikes by French bronziers, who received significant financial support from the English internationalists, with Tolain, Fribourg, and Camélinat traveling to London to seek help on behalf of the French workers.⁵ Several of the Paris internationalists were or had been bronze metal workers, including Tolain and Camélinat.

In the spring, the Paris internationalists provided support to striking spinners and weavers in northeastern France, who were being forced to work longer hours “without any raise in salary.”⁶ They were also being subjected to fines for failing to operate new machinery correctly. The Paris internationalists came to the support of striking fabric printers and issued “an appeal for solidarity” at the request of the General Council and on behalf of English rail workers.⁷ However, the Paris internationalists would not provide support where the only purpose of the strike was a wage increase, as they did not think that wage strikes would have any lasting effect. The strikes

¹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 80.

² *Ibid.*, 80.

³ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 351–352.

⁴ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 24.

⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 83.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

they supported dealt with broader issues, such as the arbitrary authority of the employers and the punitive measures taken by them against their employees.

In Belgium, a tailors' strike in April 1867 resulted in a "10 percent rise in wages" after receiving financial help from the Paris and London branches of the International.⁸ The success of the workers who received the support of the International in labor disputes in France, England, and Belgium increased the prestige and popularity of the International among the European working classes.

Both Malon and Varlin were involved in the creation of worker-controlled savings societies that were used to fund consumers' cooperatives in the fall of 1866 and the spring of 1867. Some employers implemented a blacklist of society members, concerned that the savings would be used as strike funds. The Paris branch of the International successfully combated the blacklist by canvassing financial support for the blacklisted workers.⁹

The cooperative movement in France was now beginning to equal the movement of 1848–1849, and many cooperative members began joining the International. They included not just urban workers but also agricultural laborers.¹⁰ Various branches of the International outside of Paris supported the cooperative movement as a way to achieve the mutualist economic system long advocated by Proudhon. The Swiss internationalists also supported the cooperative movement and established some cooperatives in Geneva.¹¹

Bakunin was still recruiting members into his Revolutionary Brotherhood, including De Paepe in Belgium, who joined the brotherhood in May 1867.¹² In Italy, Bakunin was continuing to move disillusioned republicans toward an anarchist path. In the fall of 1866, he had been involved in the publication of a pamphlet, *The Italian Situation*, which set forth a radical socialist critique of Mazzini and Garibaldi's nationalism. Whether Italy was ruled by a king or a president, the people remained enslaved. The pamphlet argued that the workers and peasants were the only force capable of transforming Italian society. What they needed to do was to destroy the "three secular tyrannies," the "church, the centralized state, and... social privileges."¹³

In August 1867, Bakunin's associates began publishing a paper in Naples, *Libertà e Giustizia*, which contained articles written by them and Bakunin. It reprinted writings by Marx and Proudhon, reported on the International, and indicated the paper's agreement with the principles for which the International stood. It continued the critique of Mazzini's republicanism begun in *The Italian Situation* and "warned the workers not to expect anything from governments, priests, or even republicans," pointing to the example of the June 1848 workers' uprising in Paris.¹⁴ The June 1848 workers' insurrection had become a touchstone for anarchists, such as Déjacque and the French refugees in London during the 1850s, and for Bakunin, for it showed in stark terms the class conflict between the workers and the bourgeois republicans.

Libertà e Giustizia also published a series on "the peasant," which set forth views regarding the revolutionary potential of the peasantry that Bakunin had been expressing since the late 1840s.

⁸ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 27.

⁹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 86–87.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹¹ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 361, fn. 156.

¹² Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 336.

¹³ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 59.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 67–68.

When Marx saw the first two issues of the paper, he immediately suspected Bakunin's influence, particularly with respect to the critique of Mazzini.¹⁵

In June and July 1867, the General Council began preparations for the Lausanne Congress. Marx had no difficulty getting himself appointed to the committee charged with developing the program for the congress. It was determined that two principal questions would be addressed at the congress: (1) "The practical means by which to enable the International... to fulfil its function of a common centre of action for the working classes, female and male, in their struggle tending to their complete emancipation from the domination of capital" and, in a nod to the French Proudhonists, (2) "How can the working classes utilise for the purpose of their own emancipation the credit which they now give to the middle classes and the government."¹⁶ Marx saw the inclusion of the second question as an opportunity to debunk Proudhon's and the French internationalists' views regarding free credit and exchange banks. He was looking for someone to translate into French his forthcoming book, *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy: Volume One*, in the hope that it would "emancipate the French from the erroneous views under which Proudhon with his idealised petty bourgeoisie has buried them."¹⁷

When in July 1867 the Paris internationalists republished the agenda for the Lausanne Congress that they had proposed in February, Marx had the General Council pass a resolution to be communicated to the Paris branch that "no branch has a right to put forth a programme of its own, that the Council alone is empowered to draw up the Congress programme."¹⁸ Marx was already trying to turn the General Council into an executive power rather than an administrative and coordinating body—something to which the expatriate French members in London had expressed their opposition prior to the Geneva Congress.¹⁹

This resolution was also intended as a rebuke of the Lausanne section, which in March 1867, and in anticipation of the congress, had published an appeal that had invoked Proudhonian mutualism as "the basic principle of the International" and had "rejected communism."²⁰ The Paris branch was in contact with the Lausanne section and, in June 1867, issued a joint appeal to the General Council demanding that it "immediately publish the final programme" for the congress.²¹

In Geneva, Becker was involved in organizing a congress there of the League of Peace and Freedom, which was timed to allow delegates from the Lausanne Congress to attend. The Geneva section of the International endorsed the league's program, and the league invited the International to send representatives to its congress.²² Again, Marx was not pleased by such independence of spirit. He delivered a speech to the General Council in which he argued that, consistent with his economic theories, "large standing armies were the necessary result of the present state of society" and that the members of the league who preached pacifism and disarmament wanted "peace-at-any-price," leaving "Russia alone in the possession of the means to make war upon the rest of Europe."²³

¹⁵ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 42, 420.

¹⁶ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 138.

¹⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 42, 368.

¹⁸ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 144.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 406, fn. 151.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 355, fn. 119.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 359, fn. 148.

²² *Ibid.*, 132, 305, fn. 177, & 362, fn. 163.

²³ *Ibid.*, 152.

The council then dutifully passed Marx's motion that "the delegates of the Council be instructed not to take any official part in the Peace Congress, and to resist any motion that might be brought forward at the [Lausanne] Congress tending to take an official part."²⁴ Marx was giving marching orders to the delegates from the General Council who were to attend the Lausanne Congress, emphasizing that their participation in the congress would not be as delegates representing any groups of workers, but rather as representatives of the General Council bound to follow its directives. Although Becker was not a member of the General Council, after the Lausanne Congress was over Marx became furious with him for having "disrupted the agenda we had planned" and for providing "the Parisians [Proudhonists] with the opportunity to let themselves go."²⁵

The Lausanne Congress was attended by delegates from Switzerland, France, Belgium, England, Italy, and Germany. De Paepe and Guillaume were among them. De Paepe debated the more conservative French mutualists on the collectivization of land, which he supported, arguing that if large industrial and commercial enterprises (such as railways, canals, mines, and public services) should be considered collective property to be managed by companies of workers, as the mutualists agreed, then so should the land. Although the land is not a product of collective labor, neither is it the product of individual labor. The peasant and farmer, as much as the worker, should be entitled to the fruits of their labor, without part of that product being appropriated by either the capitalists or the landowners—a position that De Paepe argued was consistent with "the mutualist program," which demanded "that the whole product of labour shall belong to the producer."²⁶ With no consensus emerging on this issue, further debate was deferred to the next congress in Brussels.²⁷

De Paepe and the French mutualists did agree on the need for the workers to create their own financial institutions to provide credit and a means of exchange for goods and services between the producer and consumer cooperatives that these institutions would finance. Eccarius, no doubt with Marx's support, accused the mutualists of being "lost in clouds of abstraction."²⁸ He argued that the workers would have to achieve state power before they would be able to establish a national bank.²⁹ Nevertheless, he proposed virtually the same thing as De Paepe and the French mutualists, that the working class pool their funds to create credit unions that would provide capital for cooperative enterprises.³⁰ This proposal was unanimously approved by the congress delegates.

The French mutualists expressed concerns about for-profit cooperatives with "salaried employees" creating a "fourth estate" of working-class cooperative shareholders that would exploit their employees. The way to avoid this was through the application of Proudhon's mutualist principles of "justice and reciprocity", which would ensure that goods were "sold at cost" so that no one would profit from the labor of others. This position was adopted by the delegates at the Lausanne Congress, together with an amendment from Eccarius that modern, large-scale industry was in any event making "cooperative labor a necessity for all" by eliminating small-scale production.

²⁴ Ibid., 153.

²⁵ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 42, 428.

²⁶ Stekloff, *History of the First International*, 128.

²⁷ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 128–129 & 151–155.

²⁸ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 32–33.

²⁹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 100.

³⁰ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 33.

As Archer points out, by “adopting this amendment,” the Lausanne delegates were “unwittingly [accepting] Marx’s concept of the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few capitalists.”³¹

De Paepe was not always at the forefront of the debates in the International. The position taken by De Paepe and the majority of the Belgian internationalists on the proper place of women in society was virtually indistinguishable from that taken by the majority of the French delegates at the Geneva Congress. Eugène Hins (1839–1923) and Paul Robin signed a minority report, in which they argued that women were entitled to the same independence and dignity as male workers, which could only be achieved through the federation, solidarity, and collective action of all workers, male and female.³² The congress took a conservative approach on these kinds of issues, endorsing the view that “Woman, by her physical and mental nature, is called naturally to the peaceful and multifarious duties of the home: there is her domain.”³³ With respect to education, the congress passed a resolution that “placed responsibility for it with the child’s father,” the patriarchal position of the majority of the French Proudhonists that Varlin and Bourdon had opposed at the Geneva Congress.³⁴

The French mutualists put forward their view of the limited role of the state in a liberated society, echoing the views developed by Proudhon in *The Principle of Federation*.³⁵ Essentially, the state was to have an executive power only, upholding the reciprocal obligations of the people that they freely assumed through mutual contracts and guarantees between organizations under their direct control.³⁶ Taken together with the French mutualists’ view that enterprises involving collective labor should be managed by the workers’ themselves, this emphasis on control from the bottom up laid the foundations for the syndicalist and anarchist collectivist currents that were soon to emerge within the International itself.

Some of the Geneva delegates raised the issue of whether a lack of “political liberties was an obstacle to social emancipation and whether or not labor should call for the right of assembly and free press.”³⁷ Although some commentators suggest that this put Tolain and other Proudhonists in an uncomfortable position, Tolain and the other French internationalists supported the rights of assembly and freedom of the press—rights they still lacked, but which had been campaigning for since before the founding of the International.³⁸ They were not about to support the Bonapartist censorship and proscription of their and the International’s publications (the French police had seized some 800 copies of the International’s statutes sent to the Paris section by the General Council).³⁹

Although Tolain argued that the issue should not be added to the congress’s agenda, probably because the French sections of the International were in danger of being banned if considered political organizations, all but two delegates supported without debate a resolution that “the social emancipation of workers is inseparable from their political emancipation.”⁴⁰ This did not neces-

³¹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 100.

³² Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 215–221.

³³ Archer, *The First International in France*, 102.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

³⁵ Proudhon, “The Principle of Federation,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 72–75.

³⁶ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 231–232.

³⁷ Archer, *The First International in France*, 98.

³⁸ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 91.

³⁹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 81.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

sarily mean support for electoral participation. Prior to the congress, the Swiss internationalist paper *La Voix de l'Avenir* had published an article on the extension of the suffrage to English workers, writing that soon they would see, as their French and Swiss counterparts had already learned, that being able to vote would not change anything. When the English workers exercised their right to vote, they, like the French and the Swiss, would “understand that liberty does not exist on voting day. The state, political parties, the law crush the liberty of the individual and the liberty of minorities.”⁴¹

A majority of delegates to the Lausanne Congress voted in favor of a resolution from Tolain, seconded by De Paepe, of clear Proudhonist inspiration, regarding support for the peace congress in Geneva. The resolution called for “the abolition of standing armies,” but emphasized that peace can only “be consolidated by a new order of things which shall no longer recognise in society the existence of two classes, one of which is exploited by the other.” This was further to the general “aim of the Association,” which was “to bring about with the utmost dispatch the emancipation of the working class and its liberation from the power and influence of capital, and also to effect the formation of a confederation of free States throughout Europe.”⁴² It was but a small step for Bakunin to later persuade the protoanarchist elements in the International that a “free state” was a contradiction in terms and that a lasting peace could only be achieved through the abolition of both capitalism and the state.

At the time, however, Bakunin himself was still sometimes referring to a “federalist” state in positive terms. Bakunin and some Italians who were later to help found the first Italian sections of the International attended the Geneva Peace Congress, where he argued for a “United States of Europe,” setting forth a position similar to that adopted at the Lausanne Congress of the International and consistent with the socialist federalism Proudhon had been advocating in his final works.⁴³ As Bakunin later summarized his position, for peace to be achieved, the existing system of centralized, bureaucratic, and militarist states must be replaced “by a new organization based solely upon the interests, needs and inclinations of the populace... owning no principle other than that of the free federation of individuals into communes, communes into provinces, provinces into nations, and the latter into the United States, first of Europe, then of the whole world.”⁴⁴

Several of the Lausanne delegates attended the Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom in Geneva after the Lausanne Congress had concluded, including Tolain, De Paepe, Richard, and Guillaume.⁴⁵ It was there that many of them first met Bakunin. When “Bakunin’s name was announced, a ripple of excitement spread over the hall” where the congress was being held:

As with heavy, awkward gait he mounted the steps leading to the platform... the cry passed from mouth to mouth: “Bakunin!” Garibaldi, who was in the chair, stood up, advanced a few steps, and embraced him. This solemn meeting of two old and tried warriors of revolution produced an astonishing impression... Everyone rose, and there was prolonged and enthusiastic clapping of hands.⁴⁶

⁴¹ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 360, fn. 151.

⁴² Stekloff, *History of the First International*, 106.

⁴³ Proudhon, “On Federalism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 72–77.

⁴⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 95–96.

⁴⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 103.

⁴⁶ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 343.

Guillaume spoke at the league's congress on behalf of the International, arguing that "the emancipation of the working class and its liberation from the power and influence of capital" were necessary for any viable peace program.⁴⁷ Despite not being part of the International's official delegation as per Marx's instructions, Eugène Dupont (1831–1881), one of Marx's lieutenants from the General Council, nevertheless took the podium. Consistent with Marx's views, he argued that "peace is not a principle, it can only be a result." To obtain a lasting peace, "it is necessary to do away with laws that oppress labour, and to turn all citizens into a single class of working people; in a word, to accept the social revolution with all its consequences."⁴⁸

When Bakunin spoke at the league's congress, he attacked the "false principle of nationality, which has been invented... by the despots of France, Russia, and Prussia only in order to stifle the supreme principle of liberty." He regarded "the present centralized States" as the greatest impediment to peace and called for them to be replaced by voluntary federations.⁴⁹ It was around this time that Bakunin published an article in *Libertà e Giustizia* in which he first publicly proclaimed himself an anarchist.⁵⁰

Dissatisfied with the continued influence of the French Proudhonists in the International at the Lausanne Congress, Marx vowed to attend the next congress in Brussels where he would "personally deliver the *coup de grâce* to those Proudhonist jackasses."⁵¹ Eccarius had made things worse by writing reports on the Lausanne Congress for the *Times* of London, where his mocking of the Proudhonists was used to discredit the International as a whole, to the great displeasure of some of the English members on the General Council.⁵² Despite the backfiring of this manoeuvre, Marx assured Engels that the International would soon be in their hands: "When the next revolution comes, and that will perhaps be sooner than might appear, we [Marx and Engels] will have this mighty ENGINE at our disposal."⁵³

Following the September 1867 Geneva Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom, Bakunin began preparing an essay, "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism," which set forth in more detail the ideas he had expressed at the congress. The essay develops a number of important themes that were to form the basis of Bakunin's anarchism.

With respect to the modern state, Bakunin argued that the "centralized, bureaucratic and by the same token militarist State," which claims sovereignty over its territory and recognizes no law above it, must be in a state of "permanent war" against all the other states that also claim sovereign power.⁵⁴ Each state must "seek to become the most powerful. It must devour lest it be devoured, conquer lest it be conquered, enslave lest it be enslaved, since two powers, similar and yet alien to each other, could not coexist without mutual destruction."⁵⁵ He therefore denounced the "principle of nationality" as "nothing but a decoy offered by the forces of reaction to the spirit of revolution."⁵⁶ However, federalism was not sufficient unto itself to guarantee liberty. The

⁴⁷ Ibid., 344.

⁴⁸ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 368–369, fn. 198.

⁴⁹ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 345.

⁵⁰ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 26.

⁵¹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 42*, 423.

⁵² *General Council, 1866–1868*, 371, fn. 211.

⁵³ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 42*, 424.

⁵⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 95.

⁵⁵ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 133.

⁵⁶ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 97.

federalism of the Southern states in the American Civil War was based on slavery. Federalism in capitalist nations would likewise be vitiated by wage slavery.⁵⁷

Bakunin emphasized the reality of class conflict in the modern state between the “*privileged classes* constituting all those whose privilege stems from land and capital or only from bourgeois education, and the disinherited *working classes*, deprived of capital and land and even elementary schooling.”⁵⁸ In the modern world, “the civilization of the few is still founded... upon the forced labor and the comparative barbarism of the many.”⁵⁹ Thus, “just as the ancient states perished through slavery, the modern states will likewise perish through the proletariat.”⁶⁰

Bakunin criticized Mazzini and other patriotic republicans for their notions of stoic self-sacrifice, “dedicating and sacrificing [themselves] to the motherland, living only to serve her, and joyfully dying for her.” Being “ready to sacrifice his own” liberty, the patriotic republican “will readily sacrifice that of others.” In contrast, a socialist “takes his stand on his positive right to life” and “intends to enjoy it to the full.”⁶¹

Bakunin praised Proudhon for his anarchist conception of socialism, “based on individual and collective liberty and upon the spontaneous action of free associations, obeying no other laws than the general laws of social economy... excluding all governmental regimentation and State protection.”⁶² Drawing from the lessons of 1848, Bakunin shared the views of Déjacque and the French anarchist refugees in London during the 1850s that both bourgeois republicanism and state socialism had been discredited by the defeat of the 1848 French Revolution. The bourgeois republicans had paved the way for Napoléon III by suppressing the June 1848 workers’ uprising.

As for state socialism, which Bakunin defined as a system in which the “full satisfaction of the needs and legitimate aspirations of the working classes was to be provided by the State,” the counterrevolutionary role of the state during the 1848 French Revolution had shown that the state could not be used to achieve socialism.⁶³ In addition, state socialism and state communism required a top-down organization that would prescribe and impose a particular conception of socialism, a form of social organization “alien to the utmost liberty of individuals and associations,” without which true equality could not be achieved. Bakunin therefore declared that “liberty without socialism is privilege and injustice, and... socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality.”⁶⁴

Socialism was to be implemented by the people themselves through their own associations rather than through the “regulatory authority” of the state, by which Bakunin meant not only cooperatives, credit unions, trade unions, and mutual aid societies but also “the international league of workers of every land”—namely, the International itself.⁶⁵ To achieve the revolution, Bakunin looked to “the factory and urban workers” in Western Europe; and, in Eastern Europe, “to the peasantry.” The petite bourgeoisie had “become too fearful, too timid and too sceptical to take any decisive step on their own account.”⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 108.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 112.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 108.

⁶¹ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 101–102.

⁶² Ibid., 100.

⁶³ Ibid., 103–104.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 105 & 108.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 107.

The growing activity of the International in working-class struggles resulted in the persecution of the French internationalists. At the end of December 1867, the homes of several of the Paris branch's members were raided by the police, and then the entire fifteen-man executive commission, including Tolain, Chemalé, and Camélinat, was charged with "belonging to an unauthorized association of more than twenty members."⁶⁷ During the prosecution, the statement in Marx's *Inaugural Address* that "To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes" was used to show that the Paris branch was a forbidden "political" organization, realizing Tolain's fears regarding the consequences of publicly adopting such language. At the conclusion of the trial, the "Paris branch was ordered to dissolve itself, and the defendants were fined 100 francs each."⁶⁸

Although publicly denouncing the prosecution of the Paris internationalists, Marx privately indicated that the prosecution was "very agreeable for me, since it means that the [Proudhonist] jackasses have been hindered and interrupted in their discussion of the programme they had already drawn up for the *congress of 1868*."⁶⁹

A new nine-man commission was elected by the members of the Paris branch in March 1868, including Varlin, Bourdon, and Malon. They began collecting funds to assist construction workers in Geneva during the latter's successful strike in March–April 1868 for higher wages and a ten-hour day. In Switzerland, the internationalists supported the tailors' strike in Lausanne. In March 1868, the Belgian internationalists came to the aid of striking miners, ten of whom were killed by government forces sent to suppress the strike, and began organizing the miners into branches of the International.⁷⁰

Strikes were also becoming more common in Italy, with a two-day general strike in Bologna in April 1868.⁷¹ By this time, Bakunin's Revolutionary Brotherhood had several Italian members, including Giuseppe Fanelli, the architect and engineer who was soon to introduce Bakunin's anarchist program to Spanish militants. Fanelli and other members of the brotherhood, such as Attanasio Dramis (1829–1911), Raffaele Miletì (1821–?), and Carlo Miletì (1821–1892), were veterans of the Italian revolutionary movement who had fought with Pisacane and Garibaldi.⁷²

In May 1868, the Paris branch's nine-man commission was fined 100 francs and sentenced to three months in jail for providing support to the Geneva strikers. The nine members began their prison terms toward the end of June 1868.⁷³ Consequently, when the next congress of the International was convened in Brussels in September 1868, Varlin and Malon were still in prison in France.

In July 1868, Fribourg and Chemalé published a program for a review in Paris, *Le Fédéraliste*, which argued for the emancipation of the proletariat "without ever calling on the assistance of authority." They sought to create a mutualist "political, economic, agricultural, and industrial federation."⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Archer, *The First International in France*, 112.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁶⁹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 42, 520.

⁷⁰ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 26–27.

⁷¹ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 34.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 19–20.

⁷³ Archer, *The First International in France*, 114–115.

⁷⁴ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 389, fn. 294.

In Lyon, there had been an ongoing split between the socialist and the “political” factions, with the political faction supporting the republican cause. Richard was the leader of the socialist faction, who received, somewhat surprisingly, the support of Dupont on the General Council for being “on the true path,” wanting “to change the substance and not just the form of society.”⁷⁵ Neither faction was spared police harassment, to the point that the Lyon branch reported to the General Council in May 1868 that it was “under police surveillance and could not hold a meeting where all branch members could be present.”⁷⁶ The fining and then imprisonment of the executive of the Paris branch led to a massive decline in membership in the International in France, largely due to the fear of being subject to similar punishment.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, some of the French internationalists were able to attend the Brussels Congress, including Tolain, Richard, and Jean-Louis Pindy (1840–1917), a cabinet maker from Paris who was later to express the protosindicalist views of many of the French internationalists at the 1869 Basel Congress. Hins and De Paepe were among the Belgian delegates.

In June 1868, Marx and his allies on the council, primarily Dupont and Jung, tried to have the congress moved from Brussels to London, on the pretext that the Belgian laws allowing for the summary expulsion of foreigners put the non-Belgian delegates at risk of arrest and deportation.⁷⁸ It would appear that the primary reason for the proposed move was to enable Marx to attend the congress to champion his views and to give the “Proudhonist jackasses” the drubbing Marx had promised them after the Lausanne Congress.⁷⁹

Although Bakunin did not attend the Brussels Congress, he had joined the Geneva section of the International in July 1868 and, shortly after the congress, he applied for his Alliance of Socialist Revolutionaries (also known as the Alliance of Socialist Democracy) to be admitted into the International.⁸⁰ De Paepe read a letter from Bakunin, the “Russian socialist,” to the delegates, conveying his regrets; and, toward the end of the congress, the principle points of Bakunin’s program of “Russian Socialist Democracy” were presented to the delegates, in which Bakunin called for the abolition of the right of inheritance, the complete equalization of the political and social rights of women with men, and the abolition of marriage as a religious, political, legal, and civil institution. He also advocated the creation of a free federation of free associations, both agricultural and industrial.⁸¹ One of the members of the Revolutionary Brotherhood, and later the Alliance, Saverio Friscia (1813–1886), was supposed to attend the Brussels Congress but was unable to make it in time.⁸²

The Brussels Congress continued the movement from Proudhonian mutualism to collectivism within the International. Marx and his allies on the General Council had ensured that the issue of public ownership of land was put back on the agenda.⁸³ When the debate on the collectivization of land deferred at the Lausanne Congress was resumed at the Brussels Congress, De Paepe led the argument for collective ownership of land. He proposed that forests, agricultural land, canals, roads, telegraph lines, quarries, mines, and railways be collectively owned but managed

⁷⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 117.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 119 & 141.

⁷⁸ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 213–214.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 389–390, fn. 298.

⁸⁰ Guillaume, in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 36–37.

⁸¹ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 252 & 391.

⁸² Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 36.

⁸³ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 189 & 227.

by companies of workers.⁸⁴ Anticipating Proudhonist objections of the kind expressed by Léon Fontaine (1834–1895), a delegate from Brussels, that collective ownership “leads to communism,” De Paepe cited passages from *What Is Property?* to show that Proudhon’s critique of private property provided support for a collectivist position.⁸⁵ De Paepe also mentioned Bakunin’s view that agricultural associations should work the land, enjoying a right of possession, while the land itself would belong to all.⁸⁶

De Paepe went further, arguing on behalf of the Belgian delegates that the workers’ “societies of resistance” and trade unions, through which they organized and coordinated their strike and other activities, constituted the “embryo” of those “great companies of workers” that would replace the “companies of the capitalists” by eventually taking control of the means of production—for, according to De Paepe, the purpose of trade unions and strike activity was not merely to improve existing working conditions but to abolish the wage system. This could not be accomplished in one country alone, but required a federation of workers in all countries, who would replace the capitalist system with the “universal organization of work and exchange.”⁸⁷

Here we have the first public expression within the International of the basic tenets of revolutionary and anarchist syndicalism: that through their own trade union organizations, through which the workers waged their daily struggles against the capitalists, the workers were creating the very organizations through which they would bring about the social revolution and reconstitute society, replacing capitalist exploitation with workers’ self-management.

This was in contrast to the Marxist approach expressed by Eccarius during the debate on whether land should be collective property. Eccarius argued for state ownership and control of the land, “declaring that the state, by managing all agricultural labor and putting machines at its disposal, was the vehicle for creating abundance.”⁸⁸ Eccarius knew Marx’s ideas well enough: communism, meaning the abolition of classes, private property, and wage labor, required that the means of production had been developed to a point where there would be material abundance for all, and it was through the state that this would be accomplished.

It is worth noting the kind of internal structure the protosyndicalist elements in the International advocated and adopted for their prefigurative working-class organizations. For example, the statutes for the cooperative restaurant established by Varlin, Lemel, and other French internationalists in Paris in 1868, *La Marmite* (the “Cooking Pot”), provided for the administration of the cooperative’s daily affairs by a council of delegates elected by the general assembly of the cooperative’s members. These delegates were to be elected for six-month terms and subject to recall. The council was to have administrative powers only, with the general assembly making all policy decisions.⁸⁹

At the Brussels Congress, De Paepe tied these ideas regarding the prefigurative and transformative role of the workers’ societies and unions to the concept of integral education, which would constitute the point of departure for the “intellectual transformation” that would go hand in hand with the transformation of society, replacing “ignorance” and “the domination of capital” with

⁸⁴ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 39.

⁸⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 127; Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 368.

⁸⁶ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 378.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 283–284.

⁸⁸ Archer, *The First International in France*, 127.

⁸⁹ Eugène Varlin et al., *La Marmite, société civile d’alimentation, statuts* (Paris, 1868). Reprinted in *L’Association internationale des travailleurs en France* (Paris: EDHIS, 1988).

science, work, and mutual exchange.⁹⁰ Some of the French delegates argued in favor of a modified version of Proudhon's approach to education, proposing that parents have responsibility for their children's education up to the age of eight; and then, from age eight to fourteen, the education of children would be the responsibility of "communally financed and controlled schools," in which teaching would essentially be a self-regulating profession.⁹¹ Several other French delegates supported the concept of integral education independent from church and state.

A proposal was put forward for trade union federations that would consolidate the strike funds of the local unions, with a federal council "to decide upon the advisability and legitimacy of future strikes." Tolain argued that each union should be able to make its own decisions, but the initial proposal was accepted.⁹² However, when the Paris internationalists helped create the Federal Council of Parisian Trade Unions in November 1869, its central committee functioned as a coordinating agency without any executive power, following the Proudhonist model of federation and in contrast to the General Council of the International, which was increasingly assuming the role of a governing body.⁹³

The delegates again debated the eight-hour day. The French delegate Émile Aubry (1829–1900), from Rouen, argued that the only viable way to reduce the length of the working day was to create producers' cooperatives that would "be able to reduce the hours of work" within those cooperative enterprises, which would eventually replace capitalist companies, thereby reducing working hours across the board. In response to this essentially Proudhonist position, Richard suggested that reducing the workday would give "the worker time to prepare his own emancipation." Another French delegate argued that industrialization provided the basis for reducing the workday because machines enabled the worker "to produce more in less time."⁹⁴

The way to prevent the employers from instead laying off employees, lowering wages, and replacing skilled workers with "unskilled labor" was for the workers to form unions to protect themselves from wage and manning reductions.⁹⁵ Marx's spokesman, Eccarius, chimed in that machines increased productive power to the point where socialism would become possible. The congress ultimately accepted "the necessity of mechanization," but also that "the only way workers could come to possess machines was through mutual credit funding the creation of cooperatives."⁹⁶ In order to prevent the development of "an exploitative caste of bourgeois, property owning workers" who maintained control of the cooperatives by imposing excessive membership fees on new members, the delegates adopted a recommendation that "all workers' organizations eschew profits on capital" and that the International's members get involved in the cooperatives to keep them on the right path.⁹⁷

The Brussels and Liège branches of the International came out in support of the long-standing French proposal to create an international bank of exchange "to render credit democratic and egalitarian and to simplify the relationship between producer and consumer."⁹⁸ Moses Hess, the former "true socialist" of Marx's scorn in the 1840s, was now a delegate at the congress, squarely

⁹⁰ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 284–285.

⁹¹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 123–124.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 121.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

in Marx's camp. He insinuated that the Proudhonists were "a small sect" whose ideas regarding a bank of exchange were "contested by the greatest economists," notably Marx in *The Poverty of Philosophy*.⁹⁹ The German delegates recommended that the workers read Marx's *Capital*, in keeping with Marx's wish that *Capital* would free the workers, especially in France, from Proudhon's "erroneous" petit bourgeois views.¹⁰⁰

When the General Council, under Marx's guidance, published the proceedings of the Brussels Congress, the resolution regarding the need for nonprofit cooperatives was omitted—no doubt because the resolution proposed a course of action that Marx regarded as not only futile but retrogressive.¹⁰¹ According to Marx's theory, nonprofit cooperative enterprises are simply incapable of creating the material abundance necessary for the transition to communism. The capitalists, through their profit-making enterprises, based on their appropriation of the "surplus value" created by the workers, and their need to reduce labor costs in order to increase profits, increase production through technological innovation and mechanization to the point where the productive capacity is no longer capable of being constrained within capitalist economic relationships. Nonprofit workers' cooperatives are not only incapable of competing against capitalist enterprises, they are incapable of creating the massive increase in productive capacity that would make socialism and communism possible, and capitalism obsolete.

The Brussels Congress also passed a resolution against war, calling for a general strike by European workers to prevent war—a proposition that Marx described as "Belgian idiocy" but that was to become a basic tenet of later anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements.¹⁰²

In the lead-up to the Brussels Congress, Bakunin had the League of Peace and Freedom invite delegates from the congress to attend the league's upcoming congress in Bern, as some had done the year before in Geneva. The league issued a circular, at Bakunin's instigation, suggesting that the League give "political expression" to "the great socio-economic interests and principles which are now being so triumphantly developed and disseminated by the great International Association of Working Men."¹⁰³ Bakunin thought this would give the league a real purpose.

Prior to the Bern Peace Congress, Bakunin had persuaded the league's central committee to adopt his radical program and put it before the delegates at the congress for their acceptance. The program recognized three fundamental and inseparable "aspects of the social problem: the religious question, the political question, and the economic question."¹⁰⁴ The league's delegates therefore were to be asked to affirm the following propositions:

1. That religion, being a matter for the individual conscience, must be eliminated from political institutions and from the domain of public instruction, in order that the churches may not be able to fetter the free development of society.
2. That the United States of Europe cannot be organized in any other form than that of popular institutions united by means of federation and having as their basic principle the equality of personal rights, and the autonomy of communes and provinces in the regulation of their own interests.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰⁰ *General Council, 1866–1868*, 400, fn. 348.

¹⁰¹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 133, fn. 48.

¹⁰² Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 40.

¹⁰³ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 352.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 350.

3. That the present economic system requires a radical change if we wish to achieve that equitable division of wealth, labor, leisure, and education, which is a fundamental condition of the liberation of the working classes and the elimination of the proletariat.¹⁰⁵

However, in response to the league's invitation, the delegates to the Brussels Congress endorsed Marx's position that "the League of Peace has no reason to exist in the presence of the work of the International," and hence invited the league's members to instead join the International.¹⁰⁶ Varlin and Malon, although still in prison, were among a number of French internationalists who signed a protest against this resolution, for "no association, not even the International, had 'the right to believe itself the sole expression of the aspirations of an epoch,'" which was also a position shared by Bakunin.¹⁰⁷

Bakunin attended the Bern Peace Congress with several Italian members of his Revolutionary Brotherhood, including Friscia, Fanelli, Carlo Gambuzzi (1837–1902), Cristiano Tucci, and several other persons who, under Bakunin's influence, were gravitating toward a social revolutionary anarchist perspective, such as Élisée Reclus, Nicholas Zhukovsky (1833–1895), and Albert Richard, who had just attended the Brussels Congress as a delegate from Lyon.¹⁰⁸

Reclus spoke in favor of the federalist position championed by Bakunin, but emphasized that federations should not be based on existing geographical units, such as the communes and provinces created and imposed by the state, but upon "the autonomy of productive associations and groups formed by these associations."¹⁰⁹ That is, people would be free to form a variety of voluntary associations through which they would coordinate their collective endeavors; a horizontal network rather than an inverse pyramid organized "from the bottom up," as Proudhon and Bakunin liked to put it.

Bakunin himself had suggested in his 1866 program for the Revolutionary Brotherhood that it was "highly probable that eventually, bursting the bounds of the present-day communes, provinces and even States," the workers' associations would "provide the whole of human society with a new constitution, no longer divided into nations but into different industrial groupings."¹¹⁰ It was this more fluid and dynamic conception of federation as an ever-changing and evolving network of voluntary associations that was later to be adopted by anarchist communists, like Kropotkin, during the debates within the antiauthoritarian International regarding the federalist structure of a future free society.

Consequently, when Bakunin called at the Bern Peace Congress for "the destruction of all states" in order to achieve lasting "freedom, justice and peace," he now proposed in their place "a world federation of free productive associations of all countries."¹¹¹ Bakunin had come to the view that it was only through international organizations of workers, such as the International, that a global federation could possibly be achieved. Bakunin therefore argued, consistent with the position of many internationalists, that social and economic equality was necessary for securing peace.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 37; Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 389.

¹⁰⁷ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 18; Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 449–450.

¹⁰⁸ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 82; Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 165.

¹⁰⁹ Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 71–72.

¹¹⁰ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 70.

¹¹¹ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 357.

Bakunin also endorsed the principle of collective property recently adopted at the Brussels Congress. As a result, Bakunin, as with De Paepe at the Brussels Congress, was denounced as a communist by some of the more orthodox Proudhonists at the peace congress—something he was at pains to deny.¹¹² At the time, communism was conceived by both its proponents and opponents as something that could only be achieved and maintained through the power of the state.

Bakunin distinguished collectivism from communism after expressing his astonishment that Gustave Chaudey (1817–1871), a delegate to the peace congress and Proudhon’s literary executor, did not understand the difference:

I am not a communist, because communism concentrates and swallows up in itself for the benefit of the State all the forces of society, because it inevitably leads to the concentration of property in the hands of the State, whereas I want the abolition of the State, the final eradication of the principle of authority and patronage proper to the State, which under the pretext of moralizing and civilizing men has hitherto only enslaved, persecuted, exploited, and corrupted them. I want to see society and collective or social property organized from below upwards, by way of free association, not from above downwards, by means of any kind of authority whatever.¹¹³

Bakunin nevertheless argued for “the economic and social equalization of classes and individuals,” by which he meant the creation of a society “in which there would no longer be the shadow of that fatal separation of men into two principal classes: that which is called the intelligent class and the class of workers—the one representing domination and the right of command, and the other eternal submission.” Bakunin admitted that it “would perhaps have been better to say the suppression of classes, the unification of society by the abolition of economic and social inequality,” but he thought that the reference to the “equalization of individuals” as well as classes should have made this point clear.¹¹⁴ Instead, a delegate who was much smaller than Bakunin lampooned his advocacy of equality of persons by suggesting that Bakunin wanted everyone to be able to fit into each other’s clothes—a point illustrated in a cartoon printed in the album commemorating the peace congress showing Bakunin trying to put on his critic’s trousers.¹¹⁵

Unable to persuade the league to adopt the basic principle that one of the prerequisites of peace was economic as well as political equality, Bakunin and his comrades publicly withdrew from the league at the end of the congress.¹¹⁶ It was at this point that Bakunin created the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy (the Alliance), which Marx later claimed was intended to secure Bakunin’s personal control of the International.

Nevertheless, even before Marx became concerned about Bakunin’s alleged attempt to take over or “split” the International through the Alliance, he was beginning the preparations for a campaign against him. Marx had already suggested, prior to the 1867 Geneva Peace Congress, that the League of Peace and Freedom would only assist Russian imperialism through its talk of pacifism and disarmament.

Then, a few weeks after the September 1868 Bern Peace Congress, Marx provided his friend Sigismund Borkheim (1825–1885) with copies of Engels’s 1849 denunciations of Bakunin’s “Pan-

¹¹² Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 1, 450–451.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 451; Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 356.

¹¹⁴ Michael Bakunin, “Second Address to the Second Congress of Peace and Freedom,” September 1868, trans. by Shawn Wilbur. blog.bakuninlibrary.org (last accessed October 27, 2014).

¹¹⁵ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 14.

¹¹⁶ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 358.

Slavism.” That Borkheim was to write an article “about the Pan-Slav democratic movement,” based on Engels’s critique of something Bakunin wrote twenty years earlier, illustrates how Marx was still trying to portray Bakunin as a “Pan-Slavist” who failed to recognize the important historical role of the Prussian and Austrian Empires in centralizing power and “civilizing” the backward and reactionary Slav peoples.¹¹⁷ Despite Marx and Engels’s initial concerns that Borkheim (whom they referred to as the “nincompoop”) would go too far in his attack on Bakunin after the Alliance applied for affiliation to the International, they were only too happy for Borkheim to portray Bakunin as an inveterate Pan-Slavist seeking Russian domination.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 43: Marx and Engels, 1868–1870* (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 121.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 154, 156, 190, 219, 223, & 607, fn. 274.

Chapter Four: Bakunin and the Alliance

When Bakunin joined the International in 1868, he had already created a loose-knit revolutionary organization, which ultimately became the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy, with members primarily in Italy, France, and Switzerland; later in Spain, and among Russian exiles. The Alliance gave more focused expression to the anarchist tendencies within the International and laid the groundwork for the self-avowed anarchist movements that were to emerge from it.

Unlike earlier incarnations of the Alliance and Bakunin's various revolutionary brotherhoods, the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy, created after Bakunin and his associates renounced the League of Peace and Freedom in September 1868, was a public organization. However, existing alongside it was a clandestine "International Brotherhood," and perhaps even another secret Alliance.¹ Bakunin later claimed that it was his Italian and French comrades who wanted "to preserve its inner intimate character of a secret society."² While Bakunin scholar Arthur Lehning states that the "secret Alliance never really existed," there is no doubt that Bakunin had a group of intimates with whom he tried to spread his revolutionary doctrines throughout Europe, both within and outside of the International.³ What Bakunin sought to do, in his own words, was "to form an invisible network of dedicated revolutionaries" who would help "to organize and accelerate the universal Revolution."⁴

Nevertheless, as Carr notes, most of Bakunin's various "brotherhoods," "unions," and "societies," including the secret Alliance, largely existed only in his own imagination.⁵ An organization such as the secret Alliance, which "had no list of members, no agreed rules or program (since Bakunin's numerous drafts were all made on his own responsibility), no officers, no subscriptions, and no regular meetings," was nothing more than a "myth," albeit a myth that Bakunin convinced others to believe in.⁶ James Guillaume, who joined Bakunin's "most intimate circle" in the fall of 1868, described the so-called secret Alliance as "nothing more than an intimate group among the most devoted accepting its programme."⁷ Guillaume contrasted this kind of group, a "free association of men who were uniting for collective action, without formalities, without ceremonies or mysterious rites," to "the classic type of secret society where one had to obey orders coming from above."⁸

Even Mikhail Sazhin (1845–1934), a Russian revolutionary who went by the name of Armand Ross, agreed with Guillaume that, despite his own subsequent falling-out with Bakunin, "during

¹ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 363.

² Arthur Lehning, "Bakunin's Conceptions of Revolutionary Organisations and Their Role: A Study of his 'Secret Societies'," in *Essays in Honour of E. H. Carr*, ed. by C. Abramsky (London: Macmillan, 1974), 73.

³ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 173–174.

⁵ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 438–439.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 439.

⁷ Lehning, "Bakunin's Conceptions of Revolutionary Organisations," 76.

⁸ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 371.

the whole of the six or seven years of my intimate friendship with Bakunin, Guillaume and others, there was nothing that could indicate that there was ever a plot, or a secret alliance, between us.”⁹ According to Sazhin, there “were no ‘dagger-fights’, no statutes, initiation ceremonies or any other rites connected with secret societies. Occasionally we came together to consider matters, and sometimes we came individually,” but there was no “conspiracy.”¹⁰

While that may have been the practice among the revolutionary “brothers,” the “theory” certainly left something to be desired, at least from an anarchist perspective. In his 1866 program for the International Brotherhood, Bakunin argued that the brotherhood, in order to be effective and to preserve “the security of each of its members,” would have to be a “secret society... subject to *rigorous discipline*.” Each candidate for membership must “understand that he can join this association only in order to serve it.” The members were to have two duties above all others: first, toward the brotherhood itself, and, secondly, “towards each member of this society.”¹¹

In the rules for the Italian branch of the brotherhood, Bakunin indicated that a “central committee” of three to five members would provide “supreme direction” for the branch, with the local sections being “directed by the central committee through a general staff (*stato maggiore*) appointed by” the central committee and assisted by lieutenants and sublieutenants in the local sections.¹² The central committee would be elected by the membership as a whole at a general meeting, and could be removed from office by the membership at a general meeting also. Bakunin’s secret societies were to be based on a form of representative rather than direct democracy, with the members electing an executive that would then issue directives to the groups and individuals belonging to the society that they were bound to follow, unless and until the general membership decided to remove any or all of the members of the central committee from office.

Ironically, Bakunin’s secret societies had much the same structure and relationship to their members as the General Council of the International eventually had toward the groups and individuals belonging to the International, with the major difference being that the central committees Bakunin envisaged for his secret societies were always to be elected from and by the membership. The General Council, in contrast, was able to and did appoint people to the General Council, with such appointments only to be ratified by the general membership at the next congress of the International. Although this does make Marx and Engels’s criticisms of Bakunin’s dictatorial ambitions ring rather hollow, the dangers of a “central committee” arrogating to itself increasing powers are amply illustrated by the transformation of the General Council from an administrative body into a governing authority.

In another program for the International Brotherhood from 1868, Bakunin explained that the brotherhood would act as “a kind of revolutionary general staff” that would guide the insurgent people through “the thick of popular anarchy which will constitute the very life and all the energy of the revolution.” Acting “as intermediaries between the revolutionary idea and the popular instinct,” the Brotherhood would provide that “*unity of revolutionary thought and action*” necessary to ensure “the triumph of revolution over reaction.”¹³

⁹ Lehning, “Bakunin’s Conceptions of Revolutionary Organisations,” 81, fn. 57.

¹⁰ Ibid., 76.

¹¹ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 93.

¹² Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 51.

¹³ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 172.

Thus, Bakunin was an advocate of what others have described as “dual organization” or “organizational dualism.”¹⁴ In order to ensure that any revolutionary upheaval resulted in a genuine social revolution by which the masses abolished capitalism and the state by taking direct control of the means of production, without any new “revolutionary” authority asserting control from above, Bakunin thought it was necessary for anarchists to organize their own groups dedicated to the anarchist cause. These groups of committed revolutionaries would coordinate their actions in order to incite rebellion; to encourage the workers and peasants through their own organizations and direct action to expropriate the capitalists and to abolish the state, creating a federation of industrial, agricultural, and communal associations in their place; and to prevent the state from being reconstituted by any political party, from either the Left or the Right, as the reconstitution of the state in any form would mark the end of the social revolution and the triumph of reaction.

While Bakunin regarded the Alliance as being “the necessary complement to the International,” he emphasized that the two organizations were to “perform different functions.” The function of the International was “to unify the working masses... regardless of nationality and national boundaries or religious and political beliefs.” The “Alliance, on the other hand, tries to give these masses a really revolutionary direction.”¹⁵

The various documents Bakunin drafted in 1868 for adoption by the public Alliance and its related, clandestine organizations, such as the International Brotherhood, summarized the views that Bakunin and his associates were proposing in Italy, France, Switzerland, among Russian exiles, and soon in Spain. The program of the Alliance was, together with the *Rules of the International*, to become one of the founding documents of the Spanish anarchist movement.

The program the Alliance submitted to the General Council of the International when it applied for membership was signed by, among many others, Bakunin, Becker (who at this time was on friendly terms with Bakunin and had submitted the Alliance’s program to the General Council for approval), Zhukovsky, and Bakunin’s wife, Antonia (which elicited a sarcastic note from Marx when he reviewed the program).¹⁶ Marx referred to Bakunin as a “hermaphrodite” because the program advocated the “equalisation of classes and individuals of both sexes.”¹⁷

The intention was for the Alliance to become part of the International. Accordingly, the Alliance endorsed the principles adopted by the International at its congresses. In addition to becoming affiliated with the International, the Alliance was to have “a special mission to study political and philosophical questions on the basis of the grand principle of the universal and genuine equality of all human beings on earth,” providing “sincere socialist democrats of Europe and America with the means of being understood and of affirming their ideas, without any pressure from the false socialism which bourgeois democracy finds necessary to apply these days.”¹⁸

The Alliance stood for “atheism, the abolition of cults and the replacement of faith by science, and divine by human justice.” Pursuant to “the decision reached by the last working men’s Congress in Brussels,” the Alliance endorsed the transformation of “the land, the instruments of

¹⁴ Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, Volume 1, 252.

¹⁵ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 157.

¹⁶ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 21: *Marx and Engels, 1867–1870* (New York: International Publishers, 1985), 209–210.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 208–209.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

work and all other capital” into “the collective property of the whole of society,” to be “utilized only by the workers” through their own associations.¹⁹

Consistent with the position taken by the more advanced elements among the French and Belgian internationalists, such as Varlin and Robin, the Alliance came out in favor of “equality of the means of development for all children of both sexes from the cradle onward—maintenance, upbringing and education to all levels of science, industry and the arts.” The Alliance was clearly to the left of the more orthodox Proudhonists in the International, embracing collectivism and advocating sexual equality.²⁰

On the role of the state, the program of the Alliance was ambiguous. The Alliance did not reject all political action, but only “political action whose target is anything except the triumph of the workers’ cause over Capital.” The state’s functions were to be scaled down “to the simple administration of the public services,” ultimately being absorbed “into the universal union of free Associations, both agricultural and industrial.” The Alliance repudiated “any policy based on so-called patriotism and national rivalry,” recognizing that social transformation could only be achieved “on the basis of international workers’ solidarity.”²¹ Marx insinuated that this “anti-patriotic” stance would simply play into the hands of Russia.²²

In his contemporaneous program for the International Brotherhood, which was kept within the brotherhood and its potential members, Bakunin’s rejection of the state became more apparent. He denounced the Blanquists and other like-minded revolutionaries who dreamt of “a powerfully centralized revolutionary State,” for this “would inevitably result in military dictatorship and a new master,” condemning the masses “to slavery and exploitation by a new pseudo-revolutionary aristocracy.” In contrast, Bakunin and his associates did “not fear anarchy, we invoke it.” Defining “anarchy” as “the unrestricted manifestation of the liberated life of the people,” Bakunin envisaged the “popular revolution” being organized “from the bottom up, from the circumference to the center, in accordance with the principle of liberty, and not from the top down or from the center to the circumference in the manner of all authority.”²³

However, Bakunin was careful to distinguish between destroying repressive institutions, like the state and private property, and attacking individual members of the ruling classes. He argued that the Jacobins’ use of the guillotine against the aristocracy during the French Revolution “did not succeed in destroying” it. Far more effectual was “the confiscation of its properties.” The physical extermination of the aristocracy “proved particularly ineffective... since power resides less in men themselves than in the circumstances created for men of privilege... by the institution of the State and its natural basis, *individual property*.” Instead of killing the aristocrats, it is better “to destroy property and the State,” thereby avoiding the “inevitable reaction which no massacre has ever failed and ever will fail to produce in every society.”²⁴

Harkening back to the revolutionary barricades of 1848 and anticipating the revolutionary barricades of the 1871 Paris Commune, Bakunin argued that the revolutionary commune must “first radically and totally destroy the State and all State institutions,” replacing them with a “standing federation of the Barricades.” Instead of a revolutionary dictatorship, there would be “a Revolu-

¹⁹ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 174.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 174–175.

²² Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 21, 209.

²³ Bakunin, “Program of the International Brotherhood,” in *Anarchism*, Volume One, 85–86.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

tionary Communal Council composed of one or two delegates from each barricade, one to each street or district, vested with plenary but accountable and removable mandates." All "productive capital and the means of production" would be expropriated "on behalf of the workers' associations," which would "put them to collective use." The insurgent commune would renounce "all claims to govern and interfere with the provinces" and send "revolutionary propagandists" into the countryside, "particularly among the peasants, who can never become revolutionaries on principle or by any kind of dictatorial decree, but only under the influence of the revolutionary fact itself."²⁵ In this passage, Bakunin anticipated the program of the most revolutionary among the Paris Communards three years later, based on the directly democratic federations of the insurgent people, not on an authoritarian "Committee of Public Safety" or any other kind of revolutionary dictatorship, including one of his own.

The program of the Alliance gave expression to the views of many radicals within the nascent socialist and working-class movements in Europe, including many members of the International. It expressly adopted the recent endorsement of collectivism by the majority of delegates to the Brussels Congress. It stood for the view widely held among working-class radicals that the worker should be entitled to the full product of his labor. It embraced atheism, science, and the rational use of technology—positions that had been argued for by French and Belgian delegates to the International since the founding Geneva Congress in 1866. It sided with the more advanced elements in the International in supporting equal rights for women and by recognizing that the upbringing and education of children were social responsibilities. Finally, it endorsed the concept of workers' self-management rather than state control of production, arguing that production should be managed by the workers' own "agricultural and industrial associations," which would ultimately supplant the state through an international federation of workers' associations, consistent with the position of De Paepe and other collectivists within the International.

In December 1868, the Alliance applied to be admitted as a branch of the International, based on the program summarized above. The Alliance was to have its own "Central Bureau" in Geneva, where most of the signatories, including Bakunin at the time, were residing. Local and national affiliates were to apply for membership in the International through the Central Bureau of the Alliance (at the time there were branches of the Alliance in Lyon, Marseille, and Naples).²⁶ While Marx found this nothing more than an attempt to usurp the authority of the International's General Council, that local groups would first affiliate with a larger (regional or national) federation, and by that means become affiliated with the International, was not only consistent with the International's own statutes but also a common practice within the International itself, albeit only at the regional or national level.²⁷

The French Proudhonists who helped found the International had always insisted that the International be a federation of workers, with each branch or section of the International having considerable autonomy, including developing their own rules for membership, such as the Paris branch's requirement that all members be workers.²⁸ Although the Paris branch excluded intellectuals from membership, which would have meant that Marx himself would have been excluded had he lived in Paris, that did not prevent the Paris branch from affiliating with the International, nor was it contrary to the International's statutes. When the Parisian internation-

²⁵ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 170–171.

²⁶ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 363–364.

²⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 21, 209.

²⁸ Archer, *The First International in France*, 136.

alists created a separate federation of Paris trade unions in 1869, there was no objection from Marx or the General Council.

Marx immediately saw the Alliance's program and rules as not only an attempt by Bakunin to take over control of the International but also to further Russian interests.²⁹ Marx had the General Council authorize him to send out a confidential communication "to the respective central councils in the various countries" represented in the International denouncing the Alliance, declaring its rules "defining its relations with the *International*... null and void," and forbidding the admittance of the Alliance into the International.³⁰

Marx argued that to allow "the presence of a second international body operating within and outside the *International Working Men's Association* [would] be the most infallible means of its disorganization." This would lead to any number of competing international groups trying to infiltrate the International, making it "a plaything for intriguers of *all race and nationality*."³¹ As Engels put it, there could be no "state within the state," an essentially Jacobin notion that there can only be one central and supreme authority within any movement or organization, showing once again how the concept of federalism as an interlocking network of organizations with no supreme authority above them was entirely foreign to Marx and Engels's outlook.³² Marx and Dupont therefore added to Marx's communication a reference to the resolution at the Brussels Congress that the League of Peace and Freedom had no reason to exist, and so neither did the Alliance, since their "aim and principles were identical with those of the *International*."³³

But it was not only Marx and the General Council that objected to an "international within the International." De Paepe and the other members of the Belgian Federal Council of the International agreed with Marx and Engels's views, sending a letter to the Alliance that repeated much the same criticisms, including that the Alliance would constitute a kind of "State within the State" and, as such, would not only unnecessarily duplicate the work of the International but would also be harmful to the cause of the proletariat, stirring up conflict and, sooner or later, bringing about a schism within the International.³⁴ Even though the Alliance never even attempted to usurp the authority of the General Council, with its members simply opposing the council's attempts to arrogate to itself more and more powers, this became a self-fulfilling prophecy, for the Alliance was increasingly seen by Marx, Engels, and their allies as a threat to their ideological hegemony. However, when the split finally came in 1872, with the expulsion of Bakunin and Guillaume from the International at Marx and Engels's instigation, the Belgian internationalists sided with the (former) members of the Alliance, not with Marx and Engels.

Around the same time that Marx was distributing the confidential excommunication of the Alliance, of which Bakunin was then unaware, Bakunin wrote to Marx, who had tried to use a young Russian revolutionary in Switzerland as his unwitting informant regarding Bakunin's activities there.³⁵ Marx's stratagem was too clever by half, as his correspondent did not appreciate the role that Marx had assigned him and simply told Bakunin that Marx had been asking after

²⁹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 190 & 218.

³⁰ Ibid., 198; *The General Council of the First International, 1868–1870* (Moscow: Progress Publishers), 388–389.

³¹ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 388.

³² Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 192.

³³ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 389, fn.

³⁴ César De Paepe, *Entre Marx et Bakounine: Correspondance*, ed. by B. Dandois. Paris: Maspero, 1974), 76.

³⁵ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 202.

him.³⁶ Bakunin took the opportunity to tell Marx how he had “come to understand better than ever how right you [Marx] were when you followed, and invited us to follow, the great high road of economic revolution, and abused those of us who were losing themselves in the by-roads of national, or purely political, adventures... My country is now the International, of which you are one of the principal founders. You see then, dear friend, that I am your disciple and proud to be one.”³⁷

Illustrating his appreciation of Marx’s theory that classes are ultimately to be abolished—as Bakunin himself had advocated in his 1866 program for the Revolutionary Brotherhood—, Bakunin felt it necessary to explain why the Alliance’s program instead referred to “the equalization of classes and individuals,” which, according to Marx and his subsequent followers, suggested some sort of reconciliation of the classes, as preached by various religious and “bourgeois” socialists at the time.³⁸

Bakunin told Marx that the Alliance had used the phrase at the September 1868 Bern Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom because of the “stupidity and final impenitence [or incomprehension]” of the league’s predominantly bourgeois delegates.³⁹ By couching the debate in terms of equality, Bakunin claimed that the Alliance was then able to unmask the League’s bourgeois delegates as opponents of “all of the conditions of a real and serious equality.” Bakunin acknowledged that perhaps it would have been better if the Alliance had instead proposed to the peace congress delegates the “radical suppression of the economic causes of the existence of the different classes, and the economic, social and political equalization of the environment and the conditions of existence and development for all individuals without difference of sex, nation and race.” With respect to the Alliance’s program as a whole, Bakunin remarked that he and Marx should “have much to say to one another,” unaware that Marx had already trashed it.⁴⁰

Marx never understood the different roles Bakunin assigned to the International and to the Alliance, nor to any of Bakunin’s clandestine organizations. The Alliance, public or otherwise, was supposed to be an organization of revolutionary socialists dedicated to abolishing capitalism and the state and steering any revolution in an anarchist direction. The International, in contrast, provided, in embryonic form, the industrial and agricultural federations of workers and peasants that were to replace capitalist enterprises and state institutions. As Bakunin put it, the local trade union sections of the International “bear in themselves the living seeds of the new society which is to replace the old world. They are creating not only the ideas, but also the facts of the future itself.”⁴¹

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1868, Fanelli had traveled to Spain to organize sections of the International. Assuming that the Alliance would be accepted for membership in the International, he presented both the Alliance’s program and the *Rules of the International* to the people he met with in Spain when persuading them to join the International. Through the late fall of 1868 and into

³⁶ Ibid., 203.

³⁷ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 365.

³⁸ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 311.

³⁹ Michael Bakunin, “Letter to Karl Marx,” December 22, 1868, trans. by Shawn Wilbur. blog.bakuninlibrary.org (last accessed October 25, 2014).

⁴⁰ Ibid. Despite Bakunin’s explanation for the use of this infelicitous phrase regarding the equalization of classes and Marx’s own acknowledgement that Bakunin’s use of the phrase was “a mere slip of the pen” (*General Council, 1868–1870*, 311), in his subsequent attacks on Bakunin, Marx continued to refer to Bakunin’s reference to the equalization of classes as proof that Bakunin was a complete ignoramus.

⁴¹ Bakunin, “The Organization of the International,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 94.

early 1869, Fanelli met with representatives of the Spanish working-class movement from a variety of backgrounds, including printers, masons, engravers, students, artists, and professionals. Sections of the International were organized in Madrid and Barcelona.⁴²

Fanelli was himself a member of the Alliance, as were Gambuzzi and Friscia, who helped found the first Italian section of the International in Naples in early 1869.⁴³ Workers in Italy were organizing themselves into mutual aid societies and societies of resistance, and the strike wave that began in the country in 1868 continued into 1869.⁴⁴ Stefano Caporusso, a tailor; Cristiano Tucci, the carpenter who had attended the 1868 Bern Peace Congress with Bakunin; Francesco Cirma, another carpenter; and Antonio Giustiniani (1816–1895), a clay sculptor, comprised the executive of the Naples section. By April 1869, the Naples section was claiming a membership of 1200.⁴⁵

From December 1868 until February 1869, a wave of peasant revolts swept across Italy, until they were put down by military force. Italian peasants “arose in spontaneous protest” against a punitive milling tax, “converging on local town halls, and when their pleas fell on deaf ears, they stormed the buildings, burned official records, and destroyed the new counting devices at the mills.”⁴⁶ It should not be surprising then that Bakunin and other anarchists were to emphasize the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, in contrast to Marx and his followers, who looked almost exclusively to the emerging industrial proletariat as *the* agent of revolutionary change.

In February 1869, the Alliance responded to the General Council’s rejection of its application to affiliate with the International by proposing that it be split into local and regional sections of the International. Given the General Council’s previous repudiation of the Alliance, the Alliance thought it prudent to obtain the council’s approval of its program.

In March 1869, Marx sent the council’s response. He informed the Alliance that its principle of the *equalization* of classes should be replaced by the *abolition* of classes; a theoretical point, the nuances of which were probably lost on most members of the International, but which the Alliance accepted.⁴⁷ In July 1869, the Geneva branch of the Alliance was acknowledged as a section of the International.⁴⁸ Ironically, the Geneva Federation of the International “refused to accept the local Section of the Alliance as an affiliated body despite the acceptance of this same body by the General Council,” demonstrating the power of the local federations to control admittance into their own organizations—the very power that Marx insisted the Alliance should renounce in order to become affiliated with the International.⁴⁹

Lest it be considered that Marx permitted the Alliance to join the International out of fairness to Bakunin and tolerance for opposing views, in his private correspondence he indicated that he felt that he had been left no choice. If the General Council rejected the revised version of the Alliance’s program and did not allow it to join the International as a local group in compliance with the International’s *Rules*, then Marx feared that the General Council would “be denounced as counterrevolutionaries.” On the other hand, if the Alliance were admitted into membership, he told Engels, Bakunin would be able to “trumpet... forth” his radical program and “compromise

⁴² Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 16–17.

⁴³ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 30–31.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁵ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 86–87.

⁴⁶ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 33.

⁴⁷ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 311.

⁴⁸ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 56.

⁴⁹ Cole, *History of Socialist Thought: Volume II*, 125.

us” at the upcoming congress of the International in Basel, Switzerland.⁵⁰ Engels attempted to assuage Marx’s concerns by describing this as nothing more than a “stupid Russian trap into which people in this country [England] will surely not fall.” Engels thought it especially clever that Marx was requiring the Alliance to provide a census of its membership, as this would “act like a bucket of cold water over their phrase-mongering heads.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 235.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 237.

Chapter Five: The 1869 Basel Congress and the Syndicalist Consensus

The September 1869 Basel Congress of the International represented a watershed moment in the emergence of anarchist movements in Europe. It was the first congress that Bakunin attended, where he debated both the more conservative mutualists and Marx's followers. The Basel Congress was the most representative congress of the International, with a majority of the delegates adopting policies in favor of collective property and revolutionary trade unionism (syndicalism), envisaging workers' organizations as the model of the future free society, in addition to being organs of working-class struggle.

The delegates to the Basel Congress confirmed that the International was not going to be just a defensive organization providing assistance to workers involved in labor disputes with their employers, although such practical support was one of the main attractions of the International for many workers. The delegates affirmed that the ultimate goal of the International was to replace capitalism with the free association of free producers.

Despite their agreement with Marx and Engels that the International Alliance was not only useless but also harmful to the interests of the International's members and the cause of the proletariat, the Belgian Federal Council agreed with much of the Alliance's program.¹ Then, in February 1869, the Belgian internationalists published an article written by De Paepe on "The Present Institutions of the International in Relation to the Future."² It expanded upon the views put forth by De Paepe at the 1868 Brussels Congress. It was republished by Guillaume's *Le Progrès* in April 1869 and then by *L'Égalité* in May 1869.³

In this document, the Belgian internationalists argued that the International carried within itself the institutions of the society of the future. The International's local sections were like communes, uniting workers of all trades within an area without distinction, dealing with all matters of interest to them regardless of their particular trade or profession. In this respect, they were superior to trade unions organized along craft lines that resulted in workers in the same area belonging to different unions. Each section would have an administrative committee that, in contrast to governmental administrators, would implement the decisions made by the workers in each section rather than imposing upon them decisions made from above.

The local sections, being geographically based, would establish consumer cooperatives for selling at a fair price the goods produced by the workers' cooperatives. The sections would also organize the integral education, combining intellectual and vocational instruction, endorsed by the delegates to the Brussels Congress.

The "societies of resistance," which functioned like trade unions, organizing and funding resistance to the employers—including strikes—within the particular trades and industries, would be

¹ De Paepe, *Entre Marx et Bakounine*, 74–75.

² Arthur Lehning, (ed.), *Michel Bakounine et les conflits dans l'internationale, 1872* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 255–256.

³ *Ibid.*, 391, fn. 71.

responsible for organizing and coordinating production in the future society. When the time for the “social liquidation” of existing society came, the societies of resistance would transform the workshops into worker-controlled cooperatives.

Mutual aid societies would take on the responsibility of providing universal insurance against sickness, disability, old age, and death. Credit unions would be transformed into banks of exchange, as proposed by the Belgian delegates at the Brussels Congress, providing the basis for the equal exchange of products and services by the federated groups and their members. The court system would be replaced by elected juries, like the ones already used by some sections of the International to deal with disputes with employers.

The different workers’ organizations would create a federal council, as some sections of the International already had or were about to do, composed of delegates from the various groups. The federal councils would act as facilitators between the federated groups and assist in the rational reorganization of work based on the interests of all; first, on a communal basis, and then, by means of countrywide and international federations of the various groups. The International would continue to function as a central bureau of correspondence that would provide information to coordinate production and distribution, replacing the conflicts and wars between existing nation-states with fraternal ties based on just and rational organization.

The Belgian circular concluded that the International contained within itself the seeds of all of the institutions of the future society that would emerge from out of the shell of the old. That the present workers’ organizations provided the basis for the society of the future is an idea that goes back at least to Proudhon and that was agreed with by many of the French internationalists, as well as by Bakunin and his associates. They also shared the belief that both the working-class movement and the society of the future should be organized on a federalist basis, with control from the “bottom up,” not from the top down—a position that Marx later claimed would only introduce “anarchy” into the ranks of the workers.⁴

In addition to these more theoretical discussions, the International and its various branches and sections had become more active in providing and coordinating financial support for striking European workers. At the beginning of 1869, ribbon-weavers and dyers were locked out by their employers in Basel. The International’s Basel branch helped coordinate support for the locked-out workers, some 300 of whom were then blacklisted by their employers for belonging to the International. The Basel branch then sent out an appeal to other branches of the International requesting financial support for the fired workers. The Paris branch, among others, raised funds for the Basel workers, “denouncing the ‘jealous and insatiable bourgeoisie’ of Basel” while noting that the struggle of the Basel workers was “the type that we support every day in every country.”⁵ With the support of other branches of the International, the Basel workers were able to break the lockout.

Then, in March 1869, there was a series of strikes in Geneva for which the International was held responsible. Stonecutters and bricklayers first went on strike when their employers refused to implement wage increases agreed to as part of a settlement of an earlier strike. The striking workers received support from other workers in the Genevan building trades, demonstrating a newfound solidarity across craft lines. Then the typographers went on strike for higher wages. The reaction of the Genevan bourgeoisie was even more provocative than the bourgeois of Basel.

⁴ Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 74.

⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 151.

According to Bakunin, who was living in Geneva at the time, young bourgeois men had taken to carrying revolvers in order to “protect” themselves from possible physical attacks by the workers. At the end of March 1869, a group of these bourgeois detained some Genevan workers for several hours until members of the International secured their release.⁶ The Genevan bourgeoisie convened an assembly to denounce the International and to demand “freedom to work,” which then, as now in much of the United States and other parts of the world, meant the freedom to exploit the workers without the workers being free to oppose such exploitation through their own trade union organizations and collective action.⁷

Bakunin, along with Charles Perron (1837–1909), another member of the Alliance, Bakunin responded to these bourgeois provocations in *L'Égalité*, a paper published by the newly formed Romande Federation of the French-speaking internationalists in Switzerland. Contrary to stereotypical portraits of Bakunin as a revolutionary hothead, Bakunin warned the workers that now was not the time to engage the bourgeoisie in street warfare. Instead, he argued that the International’s members should continue to “organize ourselves and enlarge our Association” through propaganda and by participating in the workers’ daily struggles, so that the “workers of all lands—the peasants in the countryside as well as the urban factory workers,” would come to realize that the International was “their only refuge against exploitation by the Bourgeois, and the only force capable of overthrowing the arrogant power of the members of the bourgeoisie.”⁸

Echoing the views of the Belgian and French internationalists, Bakunin called for the creation of “as many cooperatives for consumption, mutual credit, and production as we can, everywhere, for though they may be unable to emancipate us in earnest under present economic conditions, they prepare the precious seeds for the organization of the future, and through them the workers become accustomed to handling their own affairs.”⁹

Citing the growing strike activity among workers throughout Europe, Bakunin observed that when “strikes spread out from one place to another, they come very close to turning into a general strike,” which could “result only in a great cataclysm which forces society to shed its old skin.”¹⁰ By organizing and supporting strikes, the International would increase the “collective strength” of the working class “across political boundaries and professions,” until the workers were “sufficiently organized” to replace capitalism and the state with an international association of workers based on “equal justice for all and freedom for everyone.”¹¹ Here we have one of the first expressions within the International of the notion of the general strike as a means of revolutionary social transformation.

In the spring of 1869, the Naples section of the International in Italy published a bulletin containing the program and statutes of the organization. Citing the International’s support of the successful stonecutters’ and bricklayers’ strikes in Geneva in March and April of 1869, the Naples section argued that “only the International was capable of improving the moral and economic lot of the workers.”¹²

⁶ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 145.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 212, fn. 61.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 148–149.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 149–150.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 147 & 150.

¹² Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 87.

In Spain, the newly formed Barcelona section of the International issued a manifesto in the spring of 1869 calling for the working class to overthrow “social tyranny,” now that the “political tyranny” of the monarchy had been overthrown in September 1868.¹³

In Belgium, the government’s response to strikes by metal workers was to send in the army, which killed several workers and wounded many others at an ironworks in Seraing. Hins went there after the workers called on the International for help, but at most the International was able to provide only financial support. The Belgian branch of the International appealed to the workers to remain calm, but some miners went on strike in Borinage, resulting in another massacre of Belgian workers. Hins, De Paepe, and other members of the Belgian branch were arrested and imprisoned for a month, and the International was held responsible for fomenting the unrest that led the government to send in the troops.¹⁴

The General Council of the International issued a statement, written by Marx, denouncing the “Belgian Massacres.” Marx wrote that the Belgian capitalist “wants his workman not only to remain a miserable drudge, overworked and underpaid, but, like every other slave-holder, he wants him to be a cringing, servile, broken-hearted, morally prostrate, religiously humble drudge. Hence his frantic fury at strikes.”¹⁵ Marx noted that Belgium’s army was too small to do anything other than to oppress the workers. He commended the Belgian branch for trying “hard to calm the excitement of the workmen on strike,” preventing even more bloodshed.¹⁶ He did not suggest that strikes could be used as a revolutionary weapon, but appealed for financial support for the Belgian workers. This was consistent with Marx’s view that strikes were an economic, not a political, weapon; the working-class conquest of political power was the only way to effect real change.¹⁷

In the spring of 1869, Bakunin began contributing to another Swiss internationalist paper, *Le Progrès*, published by James Guillaume in the city of Le Locle. He set forth his revolutionary anarchist views in a series of articles, denouncing the state as “the altar on which the real freedom and welfare of peoples are immolated for the sake of political grandeur,” with “the governing and property owning class” being “to the State what the sacerdotal class of religion, the priests, is to the Church.”¹⁸ In a remarkable passage, Bakunin anticipated theories of the “new class” that were to emerge after the 1917 Russian Revolution, in order to explain how there can be a ruling class even after capitalism has been abolished. “The State,” Bakunin wrote, “has always been the patrimony of some privileged class: the priesthood, the nobility, the bourgeoisie, and finally, after every other class has been exhausted, the bureaucratic class, when the State falls or rises—whichever you wish—into the condition of a machine.”¹⁹

In an article published in *L’Égalité* in April 1869, which called for the support of the revolutionary movement and people of Russia living under czarist autocracy, Bakunin emphasized the need for members of the International as “representatives of the cause of the international emancipation of labor and of the working-men of all countries” to reject all “national preferences.”

¹³ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 107.

¹⁴ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 48.

¹⁵ *General Council, 1868–70*, 315.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁷ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 54–55.

¹⁸ Bakunin, “What is the State,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 87.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* See also Nico Berti, “The New Masters,” and Noam Chomsky, “Intellectuals and the State,” in *Anarchism, Volume Two*, 394–413.

Far from being a Pan-Slavist, Bakunin argued that the members of the International should “pay no attention to the interests, ambitions, and vanities of [their] political homelands.” Rather, they should regard “oppressed workers of all countries” as their “brothers,” for “the only foreigners or enemies we know are the exploiters of the people’s labor.”²⁰

In France, various internationalists were debating whether to get involved in the elections scheduled for May 1869. Chemalé and other Proudhonists advocated abstention, citing Proudhon’s remarks in *The Political Capacity of the Working Classes* that if the French proletariat set “its sights on winning yet another battle on behalf of its masters... its emancipation may be postponed by [another] half century.”²¹ Varlin dismissed them as Proudhonist enragés and persuaded “the majority of Parisian Internationalists to present independent worker candidates in opposition to bourgeois candidates” in the May 1869 elections.²² Some internationalists outside of Paris were also in favor of electoral participation, including Albert Richard in Lyon and André Bastélica (1845–1884) in Marseille, whom Bakunin had recruited into the Alliance, although both were later to adopt an abstentionist position.²³

Believing that “it would be impossible to organize the social revolution while we live under a government as arbitrary” as that of Napoléon III, Varlin argued that putting forward a slate of working-class candidates would emphasize the division between “the people and the bourgeoisie.”²⁴ Only two working-class candidates associated with the International were put forward and they never got past the first round of voting, with the Varlin group then throwing its support behind radical candidates instead. In order to prevent even them from getting elected, Napoléon III’s government withdrew many of its official candidates so that less radical candidates would win the second round.²⁵

On the eve of the first round of the elections, Bakunin published an article on the International in *L’Égalité*, in which he quoted from a Viennese social democratic paper that “the recent crimes of the privileged class in Belgium... show that it has everywhere been decided to answer the legitimate complaints of the workers with the arguments of brute force and the eloquence of bayonets.”²⁶ In a follow-up article, he drew the anarchist conclusion that “States must be abolished, for their only mission is to protect individual property, that is, to protect the exploitation by some privileged minority of the collective labor of the masses of the people.”²⁷

The “weapon” to abolish nation-states and the transnational capitalist economic regime enforced by them was nothing other than the International itself, “the organization of the might of the workers... across State frontiers.”²⁸ Citing the passage in the French version of the International’s *Rules* that “the economic emancipation of the worker is the great goal to which every political movement must be subordinated,” Bakunin argued that the International and its members must therefore reject “all bourgeois, monarchical, liberal, or even radical democratic politics; for we know both that bourgeois politics neither has nor can have any goal other than the con-

²⁰ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 158.

²¹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 148–149; Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 724.

²² Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 21.

²³ Archer, *The First International in France*, 156 & 160.

²⁴ Jean Maitron et al., (eds.), *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1964), 277.

²⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 150.

²⁶ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 156.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

solidation and extension of bourgeois power, and that this power is founded exclusively on the dependence of the worker and on the exploitation of the worker's labor."²⁹ Bakunin emphasized the statement in the preamble to the *Rules* that "*the emancipation of the workers must be accomplished by the workers themselves.*"³⁰

Bakunin also argued that the program of the International must "inevitably result in the abolition of classes (and hence of the bourgeoisie, which is the dominant class today), the abolition of all territorial States and political fatherlands, and the foundation, upon their ruins, of the great international federation of all national and local productive groups."³¹ The idea that not only was it through the workers' own trade union organizations that capitalism would be abolished but that these organizations would also provide the basis for the future organization of society had first been introduced by De Paepe at the Brussels Congress and was reiterated by him in his widely read February 1869 article, "The Present Institutions of the International in Relation to the Future." This approach was soon to be endorsed at the Basel Congress in September 1869. Here Bakunin was emphasizing the role of the International itself in this process, "an earnest international organization of workers' associations from all countries, capable of replacing this departing political world of States and bourgeoisie."³²

Bakunin was an advocate of integral education based on scientific, industrial, and practical instruction that would enable each person to engage in both intellectual and manual work so "that there should no longer be either workers or scholars but only human beings."³³ He believed that without an equal integral education for all, the "one who knows more [would] naturally rule over the one who knows less; and if between two classes just this one difference in education and upbringing existed, it would be enough to produce all the others in short order, and the human world would find itself in its present state, divided anew into a large number of slaves and a small number of rulers, the former working for the latter, as is the case now."³⁴ Those with greater education would become the experts, planners, and directors of the workforce. The technobureaucrat would take the place of the capitalist employer, and the worker would continue to have to obey a master above him.

In the month leading up to the September 1869 Basel Congress, Bakunin published a series of articles on the relationship between socialist theory and proletarian practice. He argued that the workers were "*socialist without knowing it...* because of all the conditions of their material existence and all the needs of their being, whereas others are socialist only by virtue of their intellectual needs." What the workers were lacking was "only socialist thought." While education and propaganda were "excellent means," they were "insufficient" to inspire the workers to overthrow existing society. Rather, it was "*through practical action,*" the "workers' solidarity in their struggle against the bosses" by means of "*trade-unions, organization, and the federation of resistance funds,*" that workers would become conscious of their own power to create a society that would provide them with "a fully human existence in terms of material well-being and intellectual development."³⁵

²⁹ Ibid., 90.

³⁰ Ibid., 89.

³¹ Ibid., 100.

³² Ibid., 110.

³³ Bakunin, "Integral Education," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 221.

³⁴ Ibid., 220.

³⁵ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 102–103.

When the workers saw that through their own collective action they could reduce their working hours and increase their wages, engaging in a “wholly material struggle,” they would “very soon abandon every preoccupation with heaven,” and socialism would come to replace religion in their minds. As the workers became “delivered from religious oppression,” they would recognize their “true enemies: the privileged classes... and the State, which exists only to safeguard all the privileges of those classes.” Through “the progressive expansion and development of the economic struggle” then, each worker would come to “recognize himself to be a revolutionary socialist, and he will act like one.”³⁶

Bakunin contrasted the revolutionary socialism of the workers, arising from their daily struggle to improve their economic circumstances, with the “bourgeois socialism” of bourgeois radicals and reformers, such as the members of the League of Peace and Freedom.³⁷ The bourgeois socialists could be divided into two groups: “the partisans of *bourgeois politics*... and the so-called *practical men*, who advocate *bourgeois cooperation*.”³⁸

As for participation in bourgeois politics, even when allied with bourgeois revolutionaries, Bakunin argued, as had Proudhon, that the workers would simply be assisting bourgeois radicals in achieving power, “leaving economic and social relations as before.” Bakunin pointed to the experience of 1848 to show that even with significant political changes, such as the institution of universal male suffrage, the workers would still lack “the material resources necessary to make political freedom a reality.”³⁹

With respect to putting forward working-class candidates, Bakunin predicted that, even if any were elected, these “worker-deputies, transplanted into a bourgeois environment... will in fact cease to be workers and, becoming Statesmen, they will become... perhaps even more bourgeois than the Bourgeois themselves. For men do not make their situations; on the contrary, men are made by them.”⁴⁰ The fate of Marxist Social Democratic parties, as well as other radical political parties, like the Greens, has repeatedly confirmed Bakunin’s prediction.

Bakunin concluded that “since a revolution is necessary even to achieve the bourgeoisie’s ideal of complete political freedom with republican institutions; and since revolutions can succeed only thanks to the people’s might—for all these reasons, this strength must stop being used to pull chestnuts out of the fire for Bourgeois Gentlemen. It must from now on contribute only to the victory of the people’s cause, the cause of everyone who labors against everyone who exploits labor.”⁴¹

Instead of getting involved in electoral politics, Bakunin advocated that the workers organize across national boundaries by joining the International, which would coordinate the distribution of strike, or “resistance,” funds, “with the aim of reducing working hours and increasing salary.”⁴² As workers obtained higher wages and shorter hours, they would then see that through their collective action they could transform society, with their improved economic conditions and leisure time providing them with the kind of resources that would enable them to do so.

³⁶ Ibid., 103.

³⁷ Ibid., 105.

³⁸ Ibid., 106.

³⁹ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 108.

⁴¹ Ibid., 109.

⁴² Ibid.

In addition to this direct economic struggle against their employers, Bakunin again recommended the creation of “cooperative associations in every country and locality.”⁴³ He was careful to note that these cooperatives must follow the general principles of the International in order to avoid becoming mere profit-making enterprises controlled by a small group of workers exploiting the labor of others, citing the resolution on cooperatives from the Lausanne Congress regarding the danger of creating a “fifth estate” of wage laborers employed in cooperative enterprises.⁴⁴

Cooperatives in which all workers were equal members would serve three important purposes. “First,” Bakunin wrote, cooperatives would accustom the workers “to organize, pursue, and manage their interests themselves, without interference either by bourgeois capital or by bourgeois control.” Second, worker-controlled cooperatives would provide an economic infrastructure that would enable “society [to] pass from its present situation” of capitalist control and exploitation “to one of equality and justice without too many great upheavals.”⁴⁵ Finally, worker-controlled cooperatives could generate additional income for the workers’ “resistance” funds and provide the workers with credit during strikes.⁴⁶ Similar proposals were promoted by the internationalists in France.

While Bakunin ensured that he would be a delegate to the Basel Congress by obtaining mandates from sections of the International in Naples and Lyon and also encouraged his associates to attend, he certainly made no concerted effort to pack the congress with delegates in support of his outlook.⁴⁷ The only meeting he attended to nominate delegates was in Geneva. Two supporters of revolutionary collectivism were nominated, François Brosset and Fritz Heng, but Bakunin was not. The third delegate, Jacques Grosselin, was part of the reformist faction.⁴⁸

Of the seventy-eight delegates attending the Basel Congress, only a handful could be said to be familiar or in general agreement with Bakunin’s views: Albert Richard and Louis Palix (1829–?) from Lyon, Schwitzguébel, Brosset, Heng, Guillaume, and possibly Fritz Robert (1845–1899) and Tanner Jaillet from Switzerland. Also, Paul Robin from Belgium (although he had moved to Geneva in August); the two Spanish delegates, Gaspar Sentiñón (1835–1902) and Rafael Farga Pellicer (1844–1890), both of whom were involved in the founding of the Barcelona section of the International under Fanelli’s inspiration in early 1869;⁴⁹ and the Italian delegate, Stefano Caporusso, a Neapolitan union activist who had been associated with Bakunin since 1866.

Nevertheless, when, prior to the Basel Congress, Becker proposed that the International’s branches be organized on the basis of language groups (so that there would be one German-speaking branch, instead of separate German, Austrian, and German-speaking Swiss branches), Marx attributed this scheme to Bakunin, without any evidence, and accused him of wishing “to become the dictator of the European workers’ movement. He should be careful. Otherwise he will be officially excommunicated”—a threat Marx made good on three years later at the Hague Congress.⁵⁰ Engels suggested that “the time has come to give [Bakunin] once and for all what he deserves and ask the question whether a pan-Slavist can be a member of an international work-

⁴³ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 151.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 213, fn. 69.

⁴⁷ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 377.

⁴⁸ James Guillaume, *L’Internationale, documents et souvenirs (1864–1878)*, Volume 1 (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d’édition/Stock, 1905–1910), 186; Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 376–377.

⁴⁹ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 17.

⁵⁰ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 333.

ers' association... He should not imagine that he can play a cosmopolitan communist for the workers, and a burning national pan-Slavist for the Russians."⁵¹ Engels suggested that Borkheim be given the task of exposing Bakunin.

Borkheim published an article in the German social democratic paper *Die Zukunft*, accusing Bakunin of being a Pan-Slavist and implying that he was the witting or unwitting tool of the Russian czar. The charges were completely false, but that did not stop Marx's German supporters, such as Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826–1900) and August Bebel (1840–1913), from spreading these lies in the weeks before the Basel Congress.⁵² At the congress, Bakunin demanded a "court of honor" to vindicate him. Liebknecht denied accusing Bakunin of being a Russian spy, claiming that he had only "accused Bakunin of damaging the International by the foundation of the Alliance"—an accusation that would have originated with Marx, with whom Liebknecht was in regular correspondence. However, he also admitted that he took Bakunin's failure to respond to Borkheim's attack as evidence that what Borkheim had said about Bakunin was true. When the Basel Congress's "court of honor" found Bakunin not guilty of these charges, Bakunin "declared himself completely satisfied" and then lit his cigarette with the written decision.⁵³

More important at the Basel Congress was the debate regarding the present and future role of trade unions. Jean-Louis Pindy, delegate from the *chambre syndicale* of carpenters in Paris, expressed the views of many of the internationalists when he presented his report, which the Belgian internationalist Hins helped him write, on the role of "societies of resistance" and trade unions.⁵⁴ Their views were very similar to those of Bakunin and his associates.

In existing society, they wrote, the trade unions help "one another out by means of money loans, organizing meetings to discuss social issues and, in concert, taking steps of mutual interest." The workers begin to "sense that their interests are interlinked" and that "the future requires an organization that reaches beyond the precincts of the towns and, ignoring frontiers, establishes a sweeping reallocation of work around the globe."⁵⁵

Ultimately, government will be "replaced by the assembled councils of the trades bodies, and by a committee of their respective delegates, overseeing the labor relations which are to take the place of politics," so that "wage slavery may be replaced by the free federation of free producers." Pindy advocated a geographical federation "on the basis of town or country" as a counterpart to these federations of producers, which would lead "to the commune of the future, just as the other mode of [trade union] organization leads to the labor representation of the future"—a concept of interconnected industrial and communal federations that can be traced back to Proudhon.⁵⁶

Pindy emphasized that the means adopted by the trade unions must be shaped by the ends that they hoped to achieve. For him, and many other internationalists, "the ideas that we have on the organization of work in the future can serve us well in establishing the societies of resistance in the present."⁵⁷

⁵¹ Ibid., 336.

⁵² Guillaume, in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 1980, 38. For contemporaneous articles directed by Bakunin toward both European workers and Russians in which Bakunin denounces the czar and Pan-Slavism, see *From Out of the Dustbin*, 157–159, 160–166 & 198–200.

⁵³ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 381–383.

⁵⁴ Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique*, 190.

⁵⁵ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 184.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Jacques Freymond et al., (eds.), *La première internationale: recueil de documents*, Volume 2 (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1962), 108.

De Paepe, Hins, and the Belgian internationalists put forward similar views. For them, trade unions will first “organize the proletariat, through their federation and their groups,” until they constitute “a State within a State, a workers’ economic State in the midst of the bourgeois political State.” The workers’ state within the state “will naturally be represented by the delegates from the workers’ corporations which, while providing for the workers’ present needs, will also constitute the embryo of the administration of the future.” As Hins put it, the trade unions will become “the organization of free exchange, operating through a vast section of labour from one end of the world to another. They will replace the old political systems; in the place of a confused and heterogeneous representation, there will come into being the representation of labour.”⁵⁸ This idea that the existing political system would be replaced by industrial organization in which the workers would have direct representation had first been put forward by Proudhon, but was now being given a more revolutionary emphasis.

The Basel Congress therefore declared that “all workers should strive to establish associations for resistance in their various trades,” forming an international alliance so that “the present wage system may be replaced by the federation of free producers.”⁵⁹ This was the high-water mark of the federalist, antiauthoritarian currents in the First International, and it was achieved at its most representative congress, with delegates from England, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain.⁶⁰ While the position taken by some of the French and Belgian delegates on the role of the state was ambiguous, it was clear that a consensus was emerging among the Belgian, French, Italian, Spanish, and a significant portion of the Swiss internationalists that the task of the International was to create an international federation of trade unions that would assist each other in their struggle against capitalism, while at the same time creating a counter-power to the state, which would lead to the abolition of capitalism and the state, to be replaced by “the free federation of free producers.”

In addition to adopting an essentially revolutionary syndicalist position, the Basel Congress reaffirmed the support of the majority for some form of collective property, despite the continued opposition of the more conservative of the French mutualists. Bakunin supported the position of the majority of collectivists that the soil should be “cultivated and exploited by the solidarised [federated] communes.” A minority of the collectivists, supported by De Paepe, among others, proposed that individual farmers and, preferably, agricultural associations, would pay rent “to the collectivity” for the occupation and use of the land.⁶¹

Bakunin argued that the majority position would result in “a social reorganization from bottom to top, while the position of the minority presupposes a State” to collect and redistribute land rent.⁶² Bakunin concluded that, because the state’s primary purpose was to provide “the sanction and guarantee of the means by which a small number of men appropriate to themselves the product of the work of all the others,” it was necessary to abolish the political, juridical, national, and territorial state in order to prevent it from continuing to do so. Bakunin thus became the first delegate to set forth a clearly anarchist position at one of the International’s congresses.⁶³ Marx’s ever-present agent, Eccarius, who later presented Marx’s arguments against abolishing

⁵⁸ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 121–122.

⁵⁹ Rudolph Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (1938), (London: Pluto Press, 1989), 72.

⁶⁰ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, 8–12.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 61 & 67.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 67.

the right of inheritance, suggested that the state need not be a Napoleonic one, accompanied by masses of canons, but could be transformed once the working class had achieved power.⁶⁴

Richard agreed with Bakunin that, after property had been collectivized, “the state no longer had a *raison d’être*.”⁶⁵ In place of private property and the state would be a kind of collectivist mutualism, with the various groups and associations freely federating by means of mutual economic contracts.⁶⁶ The delegates of the Rouen Federation proposed that the “management of collectivized property be handled by the autonomous commune”—a communalist conception of socialism that had its roots in Proudhon’s federalist mutualism.⁶⁷

Hins had sided with the more conservative French mutualists at the Brussels Congress, opposing the collectivization of property in favor of individual ownership of land. At the Basel Congress, however, he explained the reason for having since come around to the collectivist position, helping illuminate why a solid majority of the delegates were now avowed collectivists. Individual ownership of land would permit owners to charge rent to the cultivators of the land, creating a class of *rentiers* living off the labor of others. As long as individual ownership of land continued, it would still be possible for large tracts of land to be held in the same hands, reintroducing an “agricultural proletariat” and economic inequality.⁶⁸

Hins recognized that there were differences between collectivists and communists regarding exactly how the economy would be organized after the revolution, but suggested that each could try to put their schemes into practice, and experience would then decide.⁶⁹ This was similar to the position taken much later by advocates of “anarchism without adjectives,” following disputes among the anarchists themselves over whether the future society should be collectivist or communist.⁷⁰

In addition to embracing the collectivist position, Hins argued that the abolition of private ownership, which was maintained by force, could only be achieved by a countervailing force. As an example, he cited the changes that occurred during the French Revolution, not because the National Assembly changed the laws, but because the peasants made those changes a reality with their pikes and pitchforks.⁷¹ The report presented by De Paepe on behalf of the Belgian delegates as a whole emphasized that the workers were no longer content to patiently await the transformation of existing property relations by a slow, pacific, and gradual evolution, for they had suffered long enough. Therefore, social change would be achieved “not by *evolution*, but by *revolution*.”⁷² This view was shared by many of the internationalists, marking a further departure from Proudhonism.

Even during his avowedly anarchist period from the 1840s to the early 1850s, Proudhon argued that the workers, through their own mutualist organizations, would “at no time need a brusque uprising, but will become all, by invading all, through the force of principle.”⁷³ In con-

⁶⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁶⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 169.

⁶⁶ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, 65.

⁶⁷ Archer, *The First International in France*, 169.

⁶⁸ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, 70.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 71.

⁷⁰ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 134–153.

⁷¹ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, 70–71.

⁷² Ibid., 80.

⁷³ Vincent, *Proudhon*, 148.

trast, Bakunin and his associates agreed with the Belgian internationalists that capitalism and the state could only be abolished through a far-reaching social revolution.

Much has been made of the debate on the abolition of the right of inheritance at the Basel Congress, where Bakunin persuaded a majority of the voting delegates to adopt his position, albeit without an absolute majority due to a significant number of abstentions, while the position put forward by Marx through the General Council was voted down.⁷⁴ Regardless of the merits of their respective positions, the result of the votes caused Marx sufficient concern regarding Bakunin's influence within the International to lead him to instigate a campaign of vilification against Bakunin, ultimately resulting in Bakunin's expulsion from the International at the 1872 Hague Congress.

Nevertheless, there are noteworthy aspects to Bakunin's argument in support of the abolition of the right of inheritance. The first is that it was consistent with the widely held view among the internationalists and many workers that they should be entitled to the full product of their labor. The corollary of this is that people should not be able to amass property through the labor of others, even by the good fortune of inheritance from a wealthy relative. From a Marxist perspective, these moral views of just entitlement are irrelevant, being themselves the product of the existing economic structure destined to disappear along with capitalist economic relations. Marx rejected any appeals to "abstract right," by which "every possible form of oppression had been justified," preferring to speak of "social necessity" as determined by the degree of technological development of the means of production.⁷⁵ Bakunin did not feel constrained by such dogma, for he never fully embraced Marx's theory of "historical materialism," with its technological determinism and economic reductionism.

Varlin, who voted in favor of the abolition of the right of inheritance, agreed with Bakunin that to maintain the right of inheritance in the current conditions would be to sanction inequality. Some children would be well provided for from their fathers' estates, while other children would remain deprived, through no fault of their own. Still less could one justify, from a collectivist perspective, the "right" of someone to transfer "his" property to someone outside of his family, bestowing upon them a completely unearned benefit.⁷⁶

Bakunin and Varlin were consistent in their rejection of patriarchal rights, whether to dispose of one's "property" or to determine what sort of education should be provided to one's children. Varlin had argued at the Geneva Congress that education was a social responsibility—a position shared by Bakunin and the Alliance. At the Basel Congress, Bakunin expressly tied the abolition of the right of inheritance to the need for an integral education freely available to all, arguing that "as soon as the right of inheritance is abolished, society will have to take responsibility for all costs of the physical, moral, and intellectual development of all children of both sexes."⁷⁷

The second noteworthy aspect of Bakunin's argument was his emphasis on the role of the state in creating and perpetuating class privilege and exploitation. Bakunin argued that, "if some individuals in present-day society do acquire... great sums, it is not by their labor that they do so but by their privilege, that is, by a juridically legalized injustice."⁷⁸ Although for Bakunin it was "indisputable that everything called a juridical or political right in history has only been the

⁷⁴ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, 95–96.

⁷⁵ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 120–121.

⁷⁶ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, 93–94.

⁷⁷ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 127.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

expression or the result of an established fact,” that right “becomes in turn the cause of future events, itself a very real, very powerful fact that must be overthrown if we wish to arrive at an order of things different from what now exists.”⁷⁹

Bakunin and subsequent anarchists believed that the abolition of capitalism would not automatically result in the abolition of the state and other hierarchical power relationships, but that the state and those relationships must also be abolished, for it is “the political state and the juridical family which guarantee and sanction individual property.”⁸⁰ Marx, on the other hand, was quite clear that the legal right of inheritance was part of the “juridical superstructure” that would simply disappear as “the natural result of a social change superseding private property in the means of production.”⁸¹

Bakunin’s third point in favor of abolishing the right of inheritance illustrates his antipathy, shared by later anarchists, to revolution from above through a coercive state apparatus. With respect to peasant smallholders, he argued that, “if we tried to expropriate these millions of small farmers by decree after proclaiming the social liquidation, we would inevitably cast them into reaction, and we would have to use force against them to submit to the revolution.” On the other hand, if the right of inheritance were not abolished, the peasant smallholders would continue to “leave these parcels to their children, with the State sanctioning their property rights” through coercive law enforcement.⁸² Better then to “carry out the social liquidation at the same time that you proclaim the political and juridical liquidation of the State,” such that the peasants will be left only with “possession *de facto*” of their smallholdings, which, “deprived of all legal sanction” and no longer being “shielded under the State’s powerful protection... will be transformed easily under the pressure of revolutionary events and forces” into collective property.⁸³

Marx claimed that, to the contrary, it was the abolition of the right of inheritance that “would be sure to raise an almost insurmountable opposition which would inevitably lead to reaction.”⁸⁴ But, “if the state had the power to appropriate the land,” general “expropriation could be carried” out and the right of inheritance would be gone because there would no longer be any private property to inherit.⁸⁵ It is difficult to see how the wholesale abolition of private property by the state would generate less opposition than ceasing to enforce inheritance rights.

In the meantime, Marx proposed that “inheritance duties,” or estate taxes, be increased, with “the funds hence derived” being used for the “purposes of social emancipation,” as if substantial estate taxes would not generate any significant opposition.⁸⁶ Furthermore, if such measures were implemented by a purportedly socialist government, it would be put in the uncomfortable position of maintaining the system of private property while trying to ameliorate the resulting inequalities through a redistributive tax system—measures that have subsequently generated substantial opposition indeed, and where they still exist, have yet to lead to “social emancipation.”⁸⁷

⁷⁹ Ibid., 132.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 322–323.

⁸² Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 132.

⁸³ Ibid., 133.

⁸⁴ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 130.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 132.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 324.

⁸⁷ Thomas Piketty, in his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2014), after demonstrating that the right of inheritance ensures that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, suggests measures similar to those proposed by Marx; but, unlike Marx he is not a socialist. Such redistributive taxation schemes, by

Marx did concede that the English and American “testamentary right of inheritance,” by which an individual can stipulate by a will or other testamentary disposition what is to be done with his property after death, even disinheriting his own family, appeared “an arbitrary and superstitious exaggeration of the principles of private property themselves,” and therefore should be limited, if not abolished.⁸⁸

Varlin, Richard, Robin, Hins, Schwitzguébel, and Guillaume were among the delegates who supported the abolition of the right of inheritance, representative of a significant number of French, Belgian, and Swiss internationalists who favored a revolutionary collectivist, protosyn-dicalist position. The two Spanish delegates, Sentiñón and Farga Pellicer, also supported the resolution, as did the Italian delegate, Caporusso. Most of those opposed to the resolution were the more conservative French mutualists, such as Tolain and Chemalé, and Marx’s then-few follow-ers, such as Eccarius and Liebknecht. Pindy also voted against the resolution, probably because at the time he had not yet embraced a collectivist position but supported some forms of individual property, as had Proudhon.⁸⁹ De Paepe abstained, although during the debate on the resolution he argued that abolishing the right of inheritance was neither useful nor likely to serve as a means of “social liquidation”—the phrase then used in internationalist and socialist circles to refer to the expropriation and redistribution of private property.⁹⁰

The Basel Congress was the last truly representative congress of the International. The Franco-Prussian War in 1870 and the Paris Commune in 1871 made it difficult to hold a congress, while the Hague Congress of 1872 was stacked by Marx and Engels with delegates of dubious creden-tials. One must therefore look at the activities of the various International sections themselves between 1869 and 1872 to see how the antiauthoritarian, revolutionary collectivist currents in the International eventually coalesced into a European anarchist movement.

Before doing so, it is necessary to mention the ongoing campaign against Bakunin, which was based on misrepresentation and innuendo. As will be seen, it was the opponents of the anarchist tendencies in the International who tried to blame Bakunin for the movement toward antistatist collectivism by resorting to blatant personal attacks rather than recognizing that Bakunin was giving expression to ideas similar to those already held by many members of the International, particularly in Belgium and France, or towards which they were clearly gravitating.

Bakunin, having thought that the “court of honor” at the Basel Congress had cleared his name, then saw Moses Hess publish in October 1869 an article against him in a Parisian paper edited by Charles Delescluze, a Jacobin republican unsympathetic toward anyone opposed to the repub-lic and the revolutionary government that would be necessary to create it, whether Proudhon, Bakunin, or any other anarchist. Hess’s article accused Bakunin of “unconsciously serving the in-terests of reactionary Pan-Slavism.”⁹¹ In addition, Hess claimed that Bakunin, through his “secret intrigues,” was trying to destroy the International and had been associated with a police spy.⁹²

reducing the huge disparities in wealth and income today, are proposed by people like Piketty as a way of ensuring the continuation of capitalism, not its abolition—albeit with less extremes of inequality, which are seen as posing a threat to the stability of the capitalist system.

⁸⁸ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 324.

⁸⁹ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 2, 95.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹¹ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 383.

⁹² Leier, *Bakunin*, 247.

At the request of Bakunin's old comrade Alexander Herzen, Delescluze published "a letter from Herzen in defense of Bakunin," accompanied by a halfhearted apology that there had been no intention to question "Bakunin's political honor."⁹³ Bakunin himself had begun writing a lengthy response, but it had degenerated into an anti-Semitic rant and, probably on the advice of Herzen, was left unfinished and never submitted.

In New York, a German-language workers' paper published an article at the end of October 1869, which baldly asserted that Bakunin was a Pan-Slavist *agent provocateur* in the service of Russia. How else to explain his escape from death and then exile in Siberia after his capture in Dresden in 1849?⁹⁴

Both Herzen and Bakunin suspected that Marx was behind these attacks. Herzen asked Bakunin why he did not take on Marx directly for orchestrating the campaign against him. Bakunin responded that now was not the time. If he "declared war on Marx, three-quarters of the International would turn against" him. Better to marshal his forces. In the meantime, Bakunin could take on Marx's underlings, building his support within the International by debunking their unfounded and unprincipled attacks. Marx still deserved respect for "his enormous services to the cause of socialism," despite his personal animosity toward Bakunin. Bakunin stated that "I should never forgive myself if, from motives of personal revenge, I destroyed or diminished [Marx's] undoubtedly beneficial influence." He would later "have to enter into conflict with him, not for a personal offence, but on a matter of principle, on a question of state communism."⁹⁵

Unfortunately for Bakunin, Marx did not feel a reciprocal need for restraint. He was convinced that Bakunin was trying to take over the International and accused him of orchestrating attacks on the authority of the General Council, attributing to Bakunin responsibility for articles in *L'Égalité* that Marx claimed were intended to undermine the General Council.⁹⁶ The articles in question were not even written by Bakunin but mainly by Paul Robin. Guillaume later dismissed most of them as "puerile teasing."⁹⁷ Contrary to information provided in Geneva to Marx by Henri Perret (1825–1896), a more conservative member of the Romande Federation opposed to revolutionary socialism and hostile toward Bakunin, Bakunin had left Geneva in October 1869 and was no longer contributing articles to *L'Égalité*.

The articles in question hardly constituted concerted attacks on the General Council, raising such mundane issues as the failure of the General Council to publish information bulletins regarding the conditions of workers in the countries where the International was present (as required by Articles 2 and 3 of the International's *Rules*); a suggestion that an English federal council be created so that the General Council could concentrate on international affairs; a question regarding a dispute between different factions of German workers, the Lassalleans under Johann Baptist von Schweitzer (1833–1875) and the Social Democrats under Liebknecht; and criticisms of the General Council's position on Ireland (although Guillaume, in *Le Progrès*, had generally agreed with the General Council's position).⁹⁸

One article did advocate abstention from political activity, but that was in no way contrary to the International's *Rules*. Such a policy would only have constituted an attack on the General

⁹³ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 384.

⁹⁴ Arthur Lehning, (ed.), *Michel Bakounine et les autres* (Paris: Union Générale D'Éditions, 1976), 271.

⁹⁵ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 385.

⁹⁶ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 364 & 404–405.

⁹⁷ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 1, 248–252.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 249.

Council if the council had been able to impose participation in political activity as an official policy—something Marx was unable to do until after the defeat of the Paris Commune and the decimation of the ranks of the French internationalists, many of whom held or had come to adopt an abstentionist position before the collapse of Napoléon III's regime in September 1870.⁹⁹

At the General Council's meeting held on December 14, 1869, Marx launched into a full-scale attack on *L'Égalité*, taking the position that a newspaper "had no right to put such questions." Questions could only be put to the General Council by the secretary of the section to which the members belonged.¹⁰⁰ So much for full and open debate within the International.

At the next meeting of the General Council, Marx attempted to further circumscribe the rights of the members of the International to express views contrary to his own by saying that neither *L'Égalité* nor Guillaume's paper, *Le Progrès*, had any "right to complain" about reformist political programs being advocated by other groups within the International. This was allegedly because two congresses of the International had endorsed limiting the working day to eight hours, and that could only be done by "existing governments."¹⁰¹ Therefore, the antipolitical program of the anarchists was contrary to the International's policies and should not be expressed in publications purporting to be affiliated with the International, for it was contrary to the provision in the International's statutes that "*the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means.*"¹⁰²

Of course, as noted above, those opposed to participation in bourgeois politics, such as Bakunin, argued that the way to reduce the hours of the working day was through strikes and other industrial action, not through legislative reforms. Furthermore, when the International's delegates voted in favor of policies to reduce the hours of the working day, they were not advised that this would mean that the expression of abstentionist views within the International would henceforth be proscribed—something that would have infuriated the Proudhonist delegates.

In the official statement of the General Council addressed to the Federal Council of the Romande Federation, Marx justified the General Council retaining direct control over the English sections of the International by arguing that, despite having "all the *material* necessary for the social revolution," the English workers lacked "*the spirit of generalisation and revolutionary fervour.*" Only the General Council can provide them with this," thereby accelerating "the truly revolutionary movement here, and in consequence, *everywhere.*" With the General Council "being in the *happy position of having its hand directly on this great lever of proletarian revolution*, what folly, we might say even what a crime, to let this lever fall into purely English hands!"¹⁰³

Thus, Bakunin was correct to later claim that, according to Marx's theory, "the most advanced countries, and consequently those most capable of producing social revolution, are the ones where modern capitalist production has reached its highest point of development."¹⁰⁴ As Marx wrote in the General Council's address to the Romande Federation, because "the *material conditions*" for the destruction of "landlordism and capitalism" were "the most mature" in England, that is where the revolution would begin, and from which it would spread across the globe.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 639, fn. 507.

¹⁰⁰ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 195.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 405.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 402.

¹⁰⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 258.

¹⁰⁵ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 402.

Marx's comments also illustrate his preference for top-down organization. The English workers, despite being at the center of world capitalism, making "England alone... the *lever* for a serious *economic* revolution," could not be entrusted with their own federal council to administer their affairs.¹⁰⁶ Apparently, for Marx, the emancipation of the working class was not always the task of the workers themselves.

Marx sent out confidential communications attacking Bakunin to various members of the International, including Varlin, but focused his attention on the Belgians, who, as we have seen, had developed revolutionary syndicalist views close to those of Bakunin.¹⁰⁷ When Eugène Hins objected, saying that Bakunin was undeserving of such attacks, Marx responded that Hins did not know what he was talking about and suggested that he had been misled by Bakunin.¹⁰⁸ Despite Marx's dismissive comments, Hins was correct that Perret and the other Genevan internationalists opposed to Bakunin and his associates represented the "reactionary" or conservative faction among the Genevan internationalists, opposed to revolutionary change and the collectivization of property.¹⁰⁹

Toward the end of the Basel Congress, Guillaume met with Varlin and described to him the revolutionary socialist program being developed by Bakunin, himself, and their associates. Varlin told Guillaume that he shared their ideas, and the two agreed to maintain closer contacts.¹¹⁰ Varlin agreed with De Paepe and Bakunin that it was through the workers' own trade union organizations and strike activity that they would create "the organization of the revolutionary forces" of labor necessary to abolish capitalism.¹¹¹

Varlin described the position adopted "almost unanimously" by the delegates at the Basel Congress as "collectivism, or non-authoritarian communism," which was to be achieved by a "European social revolution."¹¹² In November 1869, Varlin advised Richard that it was imperative to "begin right now to study the means of organizing labor just after the revolution takes place," so that after the "suppression of all institutions that stand in our way... we will be completely ready in such a way that by suddenly substituting a much better organization for the one we will sweep away, even the most incredulous and stubborn individuals will immediately be on our side."¹¹³

For the Paris internationalists like Varlin, it was important that each trade union belonging to a federated group maintain its independence from any central authority. At the end of May 1869, Varlin had persuaded several unions to endorse a proposal from the Bronze-Workers' Credit Society to create a "federal council" of trade unions in Paris that would pool resources to create and allocate a common strike fund, with "each trade union [being] represented on the council by a number of delegates proportionate to the union's membership... all the while retaining its autonomy."¹¹⁴ When the Federal Council was finally founded by twenty unions in November 1869,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 401.

¹⁰⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 43*, 492; Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 44: Marx and Engels, 1870–1873* (New York: International Publishers, 1989), 26.

¹⁰⁸ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 43*, 430.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 424; Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 375–376; Leier, *Bakunin*, 240; Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 1, 180–181 & 183–186.

¹¹⁰ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 1, 215.

¹¹¹ Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique*, 277.

¹¹² Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 1, 258, fn. 1.

¹¹³ Archer, *The First International in France*, 193.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 153–154.

after having been delayed by police harassment, the council adopted the organizational model originally proposed by the bronze-workers.¹¹⁵ A similar administrative structure was adopted when the Paris sections of the International created the “Federation of Parisian Branches of the International” in April 1870.¹¹⁶

Varlin supported the vision of the future free society proposed by Pindy at the Basel Congress with dual federations: one comprising the workers’ trade and labor organizations, the other local and regional areas.¹¹⁷ In his report on the Basel Congress, Varlin expressed the views of many of the French internationalists when he wrote that the workers’ own organizations, the trade unions and societies of resistance and solidarity, “form the natural elements of the social structure of the future.”¹¹⁸ By March 1870, he was writing that, short “of placing everything in the hands of a highly centralized, authoritarian state which would set up a hierarchic structure from top to bottom of the labour process... we must admit that the only alternative is for the workers themselves to have the free disposition and possession of the tools of production... through co-operative associations in various forms.”¹¹⁹

During 1869 and into 1870, the French internationalists organized workers throughout France, coordinating and supporting various strikes, including one of predominately female silk workers in Lyon.¹²⁰ Varlin saw strikes as a “school of struggle” that would unite the workers, preparing them for the day when they would be strong enough to assert control over the fruits of their own labor.¹²¹ For Varlin, the “preliminary question of all social reform” was “the organization of the revolutionary forces of labor.”¹²² Trade unions, being collective organizations, “accustom people not only to get along with one another... but also to organize themselves, to discuss and to reason from a collective perspective.” Consequently, trade unions “form the natural elements of the social edifice of the future; it is they [that] can be easily transformed into producers associations” on the day of the revolution.¹²³

Malon agreed that through strikes, even when unsuccessful, the workers acquire “the sentiment of solidarity and liberty,” preparing them “for the social revolution.”¹²⁴ Bakunin had expressed views very similar to those of Varlin and Malon in his articles on strikes and the organization of the International in the spring and summer of 1869.

Sentiñón spent the autumn of 1869 meeting with workers and internationalists in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and France to obtain information, establishing ties with other European workers that would assist the Spanish sections of the International in developing their organization and program. He thought the situation in Spain was promising, as the peasants were just as radical as the workers there.¹²⁵

Back in Spain, Farga Pellicer and other internationalists started a paper in Barcelona, *La Federación*, in which they publicized the revolutionary syndicalist ideas of the Belgian international-

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 198.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 192.

¹¹⁷ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 45.

¹¹⁸ Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique*, 278.

¹¹⁹ Eugene Schulkind (ed.), *The Paris Commune of 1871: The View From the Left* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 64.

¹²⁰ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 46.

¹²¹ Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique*, 277.

¹²² Archer, *The First International in France*, 202.

¹²³ Ibid., 196.

¹²⁴ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 22.

¹²⁵ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 1, 241.

ists and Bakunin's more explicitly anarchist views.¹²⁶ In November 1869, *La Federación* published a Spanish translation of De Paepe's February 1869 article, "The Present Institutions of the International in Relation to the Future." The translated article described the International as containing "within itself the seeds of social regeneration... it holds the embryo of all future institutions."¹²⁷

In March 1870, a regional federation of Rhône workers affiliated with the International was founded at a meeting attended by Richard, Palix, Varlin, Bastélica, and Schwitzguébel, with Varlin acting as honorary chairman. Bakunin sent his regrets, warning the workers not to be "duped by bourgeois radicalism" and advising them not to participate in bourgeois politics.¹²⁸ The Belgian internationalists presented their views to the meeting by means of a paper written by De Paepe that condemned "mere reform movements and bourgeois radicals"—a position that was "praised" by the delegates at the meeting, who called for "revolutionary socialist action."¹²⁹ When the Parisian sections of the International formed their own federation in April 1870, Varlin stated that it was "against the juridical, economic, political, and religious order that we must bend our efforts."¹³⁰

In the Marseilles region, Bastélica was very busy organizing branches of the International. Among others, he recruited Charles Alerini (1842–1901) in Barcelonnette, who became "one of Bakunin's most important disciples in France."¹³¹

Bakunin continued to argue that the workers should abstain "from all participation in bourgeois radicalism" and should instead rely on their own autonomous organizations, based on the factories and associations, "the creation of workers' relief funds, the tools for the struggle against the bourgeoisie and their federations, not only national but also international, and the creation of chambers of labour." When "the hour of revolution strikes," the revolutionaries would then be able to proclaim "the liquidation of the State and of bourgeois society" and to affirm "juridical and political anarchism and the new economic organization from the bottom up and the circumference to the centre."¹³²

Marx claimed that this anarcho-syndicalist program was a "caricature" derived from his own doctrines, as if anarchist ideas did not exist before Marx.¹³³ Not only did he get this wrong, he described his own program that Bakunin was supposed to be bastardizing as "the transformation of the existing States into Associations" of workers, which Marx described as his own "last end."¹³⁴ Neither Bakunin nor the anarchists who preceded him, including Proudhon, Déjacque, and the French anarchist refugees in London, advocated transforming existing states into a federation of workers' associations; rather, the workers' associations would abolish, not transform, the state, replacing capitalism and the state with workers' self-management.

Marx further claimed that the anarcho-syndicalist refusal to participate in bourgeois politics would leave governments free to do the bidding of the bourgeoisie.¹³⁵ To the contrary, what

¹²⁶ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 29.

¹²⁷ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 121.

¹²⁸ Archer, *The First International in France*, 233, fn. 122.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 212; David Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism: A Study of the Political Activities of Paul Brousse, 1870–90* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 287, fn. 45.

¹³² Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 117–118.

¹³³ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 490.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 490–491.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 491.

Bakunin and like-minded individuals were saying was that the workers should not have to wait for socialists to be elected, not even working-class ones, or, more realistically, to wait even longer for a socialist government to achieve power in order to obtain changes in their working and living conditions.

The workers could begin now to make those changes themselves through collective action, such as strikes, and in the process create self-managed, working-class organizations, such as co-operatives, mutual aid societies, credit unions, societies of resistance, and trade unions, which would eventually become strong enough to replace capitalism and abolish nation-states, instead of trying to achieve the impossible—the transformation of the coercive, hierarchical and bureaucratic state apparatus into horizontal federations of democratic and egalitarian workers' associations. This is what De Paepe and the Belgian internationalists had advocated in "The Present Institutions of the International in Relation to the Future" and what Bakunin and his associates were also proposing.

In January 1870, Malon had come out in favor of political participation, arguing against Richard, who now shared Bakunin's views, that to abstain would be to abandon "the movement" against the Second French Empire "to the direction of those interested only in politics."¹³⁶ Varlin was putting less faith in electoral activity, writing as early as November 1869 that he was not expecting much from some upcoming by-elections: "Four more bourgeois republicans will enter the Legislative Body and that is it."¹³⁷ By the time of Napoléon III's May 1870 plebiscite to legitimize his political "reforms," Varlin was clearly on the side of the abstentionists, for the time had come, in Varlin's words, for the workers "to disabuse themselves of the representative system" of Napoléon III—the position that Proudhon had advised Varlin and other French workers to take back in 1864.¹³⁸

In April 1870, the Paris Federation of the International issued a manifesto calling for mass abstentions, because this was the method of protest that Napoléon III feared most.¹³⁹ The manifesto denounced the massacres of striking workers, conscription, and the onerous tax burden being imposed on the workers to bankroll Napoléon III's imperialist escapades abroad. In addition, the manifesto called for the establishment of the "Democratic and Social Republic" and the collectivization of large undertakings and services, such as mines, canals, railways, and banks.

Returning to his previous abstentionist position, Malon noted that among striking workers one "does not concern oneself... with the plebiscite, even less with parliamentary debates," for the workers were "quite prepared for the social revolution," illustrating how many of the French internationalists had moved closer toward the position of Bakunin and his associates.¹⁴⁰

In May 1870, Bakunin published a pamphlet, *The Bears of Berne and the Bear of St. Petersburg*, lamenting the degree to which "democratic" and "republican" Switzerland was making itself the servant of autocratic governments in Russia, Italy, and France by expelling or extraditing revolutionaries taking refuge in the country. In explaining how an ostensibly democratic state could be doing the bidding of imperialist despots, Bakunin further developed his critique of bourgeois

¹³⁶ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 21.

¹³⁷ Archer, *The First International in France*, 192.

¹³⁸ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 22.

¹³⁹ Jean-Louis Pindy et al., *Manifeste antiplébiscitaire* (Paris, 1870). Reprinted in *L'Association internationale des travailleurs en France* (Paris: EDHIS, 1988).

¹⁴⁰ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 22.

democracy, providing additional support for his arguments against participation in bourgeois politics.

"The whole deception of the representative system," Bakunin wrote, "lies in the fiction that a government and a legislature emerging out of a popular election must or even can represent the real will of the people."¹⁴¹ There were essentially two reasons why "democratic" government was a fiction. The first was structural: "Simply the change of position and hence of perspective" of those who become elected representatives, for even "the most raging rebels" end up becoming "the most cautious of conservatives as soon as they attain power." The second was economic: The "people have neither the leisure nor the necessary education to occupy themselves with government. Since the bourgeoisie have both, they have, in fact if not in right, exclusive privilege" to govern in their own interests.¹⁴²

But, must not candidates represent the interests of others in order to get elected? When campaigning for office they will claim to do so, but "once the elections are over, the people return to their work and the bourgeoisie to their profitable businesses and political intrigues." In an era of twelve-hour workdays, at least six days a week, for subsistence wages, the people simply lacked the resources "to supervise the political actions of their representatives" in between elections.¹⁴³

In the first part of 1870, *La Federación* published a series of articles by Bakunin, in which he argued that "the liberation of the Proletariat" can only be achieved through "the economic struggle of the Proletariat against the governing class carried out in solidarity."¹⁴⁴ However, when the Spanish internationalists founded the Federación Regional Española (FRE—Spanish Regional Federation) in June 1870, they did not adopt Bakunin's rejection of all participation in bourgeois politics, but left it to each member to decide whether to participate.¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the FRE was generally anarchist in orientation. Farga Pellicer declared at the June 1870 founding congress that: "We want the end to the domination of capital, the state, and the church. Upon their ruins we will construct anarchy, and the free federation of free associations of workers."¹⁴⁶ In addition, the FRE adopted a form of organization based on anarchist principles: "There were no paid trade union officials or bureaucratic hierarchies, and power flowed from the bottom upward." The base unit of the FRE was the craft union. These "craft unions of different trades in an area were [then] grouped into a local federation; and the local federations of the various regions in Spain were united by the Spanish Federal Committee," but the base units were "not bound to any decision made at the regional or national levels," permitting the FRE "to expand or contract according to the prevailing circumstances."¹⁴⁷

The FRE adopted a position regarding cooperatives similar to that of the Belgian internationalists, Bakunin, and his associates. Although the delegates to the founding congress recognized that cooperatives, on their own, would never displace capitalism, they agreed that cooperatives encouraged "cooperative habits" and "a spirit of mutual aid among the workers" that would help provide the basis for a future socialist society.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ Bakunin, "The Illusion of Universal Suffrage," in *Anarchism Volume One*, 87.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 88–89.

¹⁴⁴ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 19.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴⁶ Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia, 1868–1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 75.

¹⁴⁷ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 20–21.

¹⁴⁸ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 53.

In Italy, the internationalists were able to settle some strikes in Naples in the fall of 1869; but, in January 1870, Caporusso tried to lead a strike at a leather factory, resulting in his arrest and imprisonment and the suppression of the Neapolitan internationalist paper *L'Eguaglianza*.¹⁴⁹ By the summer of 1870, the internationalists in Italy were in "a state of complete demoralization."¹⁵⁰

In Switzerland, the International was already being split into two opposing factions by the spring of 1870. One faction, representing the better-off Swiss workers who had the right to vote, came increasingly under the sway of Marx and sought piecemeal reforms through the existing political system.¹⁵¹ The other faction, whose most eloquent spokesmen were Guillaume and Bakunin, advocated collectivism and social revolution. The reformists, under the leadership of Nicholas Utin (1841–1883), a young Russian émigré who was Marx's ally and Bakunin's avowed opponent, first forced Bakunin out of the pages of the internationalist paper *L'Égalité*, in which Bakunin had published some of his most influential articles in 1869.¹⁵² Marx took some credit for this, claiming that his attack on *L'Égalité* under the auspices of the General Council had resulted in Bakunin's ouster from its pages.¹⁵³

As a result of his experiences in the Swiss labor movement, Bakunin came to the view that those workers "who are the most cultured, who earn more and live more comfortably than all the other workers" are also the least revolutionary. "By virtue of its relative well-being and semi-bourgeois position, this upper layer of workers is unfortunately only too deeply saturated with all the political and social prejudices and all the narrow aspirations and pretensions of the bourgeoisie."¹⁵⁴ These more privileged workers, who "are semibourgeois" by reason of "self-interest and self-delusion," naturally "oppose the Revolution because they fear that the Revolution will ruin them."¹⁵⁵ Bakunin's views on this issue were echoed in subsequent Marxist theories of the "labor aristocracy."

The split between the reformists and the revolutionaries among the Swiss internationalists ultimately led to the creation of the Jura Federation, which was to play a significant role in the emergence of an avowedly anarchist movement in Europe. In April 1870, the reformists, under the influence of Marx and the leadership of Utin, engineered the split by refusing to admit the Alliance (which had already been accepted into the International) into the Swiss Romande Federation, despite a majority of delegates, led by Guillaume, voting in favor of admission. Soon thereafter, Utin, who was engaged in a concerted campaign to discredit Bakunin, began the process of having Bakunin, Zhukovsky, and two other members of the Alliance expelled from the Geneva section of the International.¹⁵⁶

Marx had continued his underhanded campaign against Bakunin, sending a confidential communication in March 1870 to German Social Democrats that contained even more scurrilous accusations against Bakunin than he had provided to the Belgian internationalists at the beginning of the year. Among other things, Marx accused Bakunin of having attacked "Western civilization" before the League of Peace and Freedom, as a barbarous Russian capable only of spouting

¹⁴⁹ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 91.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁵¹ Leier, *Bakunin*, 240.

¹⁵² Some of Bakunin's most important articles from *L'Égalité* are reproduced in Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*.

¹⁵³ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 424.

¹⁵⁴ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 294.

¹⁵⁵ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 185.

¹⁵⁶ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 430–431.

absurdities, “empty babblings,” and “outworn platitudes” is wont to do.¹⁵⁷ He repeated the charge that Bakunin, through the Alliance, was trying to take over the International, thereby destroying it.

Bakunin allegedly exercised complete control over *L'Égalité*, despite having been so easily pushed out by Utin, and over *Le Progrès*, which Marx described as Bakunin's own “little private journal... under the editorship of a fanatical adherent of Bakunin, a certain *Guillaume*.”¹⁵⁸ As if the only people who could stand by Bakunin despite Marx's calumnies were mesmerized fanatics. Then Marx made the claim that Bakunin had attempted to take control of the International by putting forward his proposal for the abolition of the right of inheritance at the Basel Congress, demonstrating the degree to which Marx reacted to anyone daring to oppose his views, as not only a personal attack but also an attack on the International—as if the International were his personal patrimony.¹⁵⁹

Bakunin's alleged scheme, for which there is not one shred of evidence, was to discredit the General Council by having his resolution accepted, forcing the Council's resignation *en masse*, and then transferring the Council to Geneva, where it would be subject to his personal control, although Bakunin had told everyone in Geneva before the Basel Congress that he would be leaving Geneva after the congress was over.¹⁶⁰ Bakunin was to have accomplished his scheme by stacking the delegates to the Basel Congress with his supporters, resorting to “fraudulent” credentials for Guillaume and others—a claim that was completely false.¹⁶¹

Stymied in his nefarious schemes to control the International, Bakunin then allegedly orchestrated the “campaigns” by *L'Égalité* and *Le Progrès* against the General Council, excommunicating any Swiss sections that opposed him.¹⁶² Far from having the power to excommunicate anyone, it was in fact Bakunin who was excommunicated by Marx's allies. First, by Perret and the reformist faction of the Geneva branch, which refused to accept the Alliance into membership and ensured that Bakunin was not nominated as a Genevan delegate to the Basel Congress; then, by Utin taking over *L'Égalité*; and then, by the lot of them denying admittance of the Alliance into the Romande Federation and expelling Bakunin from the Geneva section of the International.¹⁶³ One of the reasons they were able to do this was because Bakunin had left Geneva back in October 1869 and, for the most part, was not there to defend himself against their attacks (or to realize his “plan” to take over the International).

As Leier notes, Marx concluded his “confidential communication” with “an outright fabrication, probably passed on to him by Utin.”¹⁶⁴ Marx claimed that Bakunin had misappropriated funds from Herzen's estate following his death in January 1870. Herzen, who was as unfairly attacked by Marx as was Bakunin, had allegedly obtained the funds from “the pseudo-socialist Pan-Slavist party in Russia.”¹⁶⁵ For the German readers of Marx's communication, this would

¹⁵⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 112–113.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁶⁰ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 1, 181–182.

¹⁶¹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 115.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 115–116.

¹⁶³ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 1, 182; James Guillaume, *L'Internationale, documents et souvenirs (1864–1878)*, Volume 2 (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition/Stock, 1905–1910), 4–10; Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 428–431.

¹⁶⁴ Leier, *Bakunin*, 254.

¹⁶⁵ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 123.

have implied that both Herzen and Bakunin “were supporters of the Russian empire, that both were in essence little more than agents of the tsar, and that Bakunin was a thief.”¹⁶⁶

Bakunin only became aware of the existence of this document, but not its exact contents, when “it was mentioned in the trial of Liebknecht, Bebel and Adolf Hepner [1846–1923] held at Leipzig in March 1872.”¹⁶⁷ However, at the end of April 1870, Liebknecht published in *Der Volksstaat* another article by Borkheim that repeated the charges regarding Bakunin misappropriating funds from the Russian “Pan-Slavist” fund after the death of Herzen.¹⁶⁸ Marx also provided this misinformation to his son-in-law, Paul Lafargue (1842–1911), then in Paris, so that it could be spread among the internationalists there in order to “counteract” Bakunin’s influence.¹⁶⁹

Although Bakunin was unaware of the extent of Marx’s secret campaign against him, he was well aware of Utin’s campaign, as it had been conducted more publicly. Bakunin realised that these attempts to exclude, discredit, and isolate him were but “the forerunner of the battle which we shall have to wage at the next General Congress of the International.”¹⁷⁰ Unsurprisingly, Marx convinced the General Council to side with the Genevan reformists who had expelled Bakunin, forcing the revolutionaries to create a separate Swiss section of the International, which eventually became the Jura Federation. Marx described Guillaume, who had petitioned the General Council for relief, as a “brute” and scoffed at him for calling himself a professor (in French, *professeur* is also a synonym for teacher, which was Guillaume’s profession), again exhibiting Dr. Marx’s petit bourgeois prejudices against those of lesser academic standing.¹⁷¹

However, at that time, Marx lacked sufficient power and influence to expel either the Alliance or Bakunin from the International itself—something that would have to wait until the 1872 Hague Congress. The future Jura Federation henceforth became a center of opposition to Marx’s attempts to take control of the International and, in the process, began to formulate a clearly anarchist position, declaring after the split with the Genevan reformists that “all participation of the working class in the politics of bourgeois governments can result only in the consolidation and perpetuation of the existing order.”¹⁷²

In France, the authorities, worried about the growing strength of the International, began another round of prosecutions of the most active internationalists in April and May of 1870. Several internationalists were arrested, and in July 1870, Varlin, Malon, Pindy, and four other internationalists were sentenced to one year in prison “for conspiring to overthrow the Empire.”¹⁷³ Robin, who had recently moved to Paris, and twenty-six less prominent internationalists were given two months in prison merely for being members of the Paris Federation, which was ordered disbanded.¹⁷⁴ Varlin had escaped to Belgium, and Bastélica to Spain.¹⁷⁵ Everyone was released from prison in early September 1870 after the start of the Franco-Prussian War, upon which they were “welcomed by the masses as heroes.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁶ Leier, *Bakunin*, 254.

¹⁶⁷ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 283, fn. 19.

¹⁶⁸ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 18.

¹⁶⁹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 492–493.

¹⁷⁰ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 430.

¹⁷¹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 479–480.

¹⁷² Guillaume, in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 39.

¹⁷³ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 22.

¹⁷⁴ Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique*, 278.

¹⁷⁵ Archer, *The First International in France*, 205 & 221.

¹⁷⁶ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 47.

Before concluding this chapter, it is necessary to discuss the role of Bakunin's secret societies in more detail. Bakunin advocated the use of such societies to foment revolution, not to take over the International. Bakunin disagreed with Richard's suggestions that during the revolution a "Revolutionary State" was needed "with power enough to suppress domestic and foreign reaction." Instead, the members of the secret revolutionary society would act "like invisible pilots in the thick of the popular tempest... without insignia, titles or official rights, and all the stronger for having none of the paraphernalia of power."¹⁷⁷

In distinguishing this approach from the much more authoritarian schemes of the young Russian revolutionary Sergei Nechaev (1847–1882), Bakunin argued that "the sole object of a secret society must be not to create an artificial force outside the people, but to arouse, unite and organize spontaneous popular forces."¹⁷⁸ The "chief aim and purpose" of "social revolutionary anarchists" hence was to "*help the people towards self-determination on the lines of the most complete equality and the fullest human freedom in every direction, without the least interference from any sort of domination, even if it be temporary or transitional, that is without any sort of government control.*"¹⁷⁹

The secret society would guide "the people exclusively through the natural, personal influence of its members, who have not the slightest power, are scattered in an unseen web throughout the regions, districts and communes, and, in agreement with each other, try, in whatever place they may be, to direct the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the people towards the plan that has been discussed beforehand and firmly determined... the plan for the organization of popular liberty."¹⁸⁰

Although there is really no substance to Marxist claims that Bakunin was trying to establish himself as the invisible dictator of the International, he did not maintain a clear separation in practice between the role of the secret societies of dedicated anarchist revolutionaries and the International as a federation of autonomous workers' organizations. Bakunin and many of his associates did play a dual role, working within the International to steer it in an anarchist direction and working together outside of the International to bring about an anarchist social revolution.

As the indefatigable anarchist revolutionary Errico Malatesta (1853–1932) admitted many years later, the anarchists within the International, just as much as Marx and his allies, "sought to make use of the International for our own party aims. The difference lay in that we, as anarchists, relied chiefly on propaganda, and, since we wanted to gain converts for the anarchist cause, emphasised decentralisation, the autonomy of groups, free initiative, both individual and collective, while the Marxists... wanted to impose their ideas by majority strength—which was more or less fictitious, by centralisation and by discipline. But all of us, Bakuninists and Marxists alike, tried to force events rather than relying upon the force of events."¹⁸¹

Bakunin was never in a position to impose his personal dictatorship on anyone, and he quite consciously rejected such a role, telling Richard that he had no desire to "become the Garibaldi of the social movement."¹⁸² For Bakunin, the triumph of individual dictatorship, even his own,

¹⁷⁷ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 178–180.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁸¹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 131.

¹⁸² Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 182.

would only “bring about a terrible fiasco,” the triumph of bourgeois politics, and the defeat of the socialist movement.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Ibid., 181.

Chapter Six: The Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune

The Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune had an enormous impact on the International and the development of European anarchist movements. Bakunin publicized and tried to put into action his views about turning the war into an armed uprising and creating revolutionary communes throughout France and then Europe. The more radical French internationalists tried to move the Paris Commune in a revolutionary, libertarian socialist direction and opposed those who favored revolutionary dictatorship. Significant conflicts began to emerge between those who favored a more centralized organization, such as Marx and various Blanquist elements within the International, and the federalists who favored worker's self-management, decentralization, and voluntary federation.

On the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, July 11, 1870, the French internationalists, "as men, as citizens, as workers," issued a protest against the war addressed to "the workers of all countries," denouncing war as "the systematic destruction of the human race." Noting how war is used by governments to suppress civil liberties, they proclaimed that they no longer recognized frontiers. They argued that the war could only be a "fratricidal war" that would divide the working class, leading to "the complete triumph of despotism" on both sides of the Rhine.¹

Despite the most prominent Parisian internationalists being in prison, the protest against the war drew widespread support, and the International continued to grow, with "fourteen new local branches" being created in Paris by the end of July.² Members of the Marmite cooperative restaurants that Varlin and Lemel had helped organize also joined the International. Some of the new branches were created by former Blanquists who thought they could use the International for their own revolutionary purposes.³ Curiously, this did not create any problems for Marx, who welcomed them with open arms and later allied with them to expel Bakunin and Guillaume from the International.⁴

The French protest against the war was accompanied by one from the Belgian internationalists, in which they also argued that a war between France and Germany would be a "fratricidal struggle" where the workers' blood would be spilt for the vainglory of their rulers. Contrasting the bloodthirsty designs of the ruling class to the working class's desire for self-emancipation, the Belgian internationalists argued that the social revolution the workers sought had no need for "a bloody baptism," but would be accomplished through propaganda and "fraternisation" between workers across frontiers.⁵ After war was declared, the Belgian internationalists denounced it as

¹ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 65–66.

² Archer, *The First International in France*, 209.

³ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴ Among the Blanquists Marx was happy to associate with were C. V. Jaclard, H. Verlet, J. Johannard, and G. Flourens. See Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 43*, 442, 480, 485, 488, 674, 680 & 700.

⁵ C. De Paepe *et al.*, *Première protestation and Deuxième protestation* (Brussels, 1870). Reprinted in *L'Association internationale des travailleurs en France* (Paris: EDHIS, 1988).

a war of “the despots against the people” and called on the people to respond with a “war of the people against the despots”—a position that Bakunin was soon to champion.⁶

It took the French internationalists some time to regroup after the war began on July 19, 1870. Many of the leading French militants were in prison or in exile. The surrender of Napoléon III and a large French army to the Prussians at Sedan at the beginning of September led to the creation of a “Government of National Defence” on September 4, 1870. The new government released the imprisoned French internationalists. However, they lacked a sufficiently developed organizational infrastructure to try implementing any kind of workers’ self-management. They had to deal as best they could with the situation now confronting them. In Marseilles, Alerini and a group of internationalists, together with some radical republicans, tried to seize the city hall in August 1870, but the attempt was unsuccessful.⁷

Around the same time that Marx was writing the General Council’s (first) address on the Franco-Prussian War at the beginning of the conflict, he sent a letter to the leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, which speaks for itself:

“The French need to be overcome. If the Prussians are victorious, the centralization of State power will be useful to the centralization of the German working class. Moreover, German ascendancy will transfer the centre of gravity of the European workers’ movement from France to Germany... the German working class is superior to the French, considered both theoretically and from the viewpoint of organization. On a world scale, the ascendancy of the German proletariat over the French proletariat will at the same time constitute the ascendancy of *our* theory over Proudhon’s.”⁸

For Marx, one drawback to the war was that it had frustrated his plans to transfer the next congress of the International, tentatively scheduled for September 1870, from Paris to Mainz, Germany, where he enjoyed more support.⁹ Amsterdam was suggested as an alternative by the Belgian internationalists, but Marx privately acknowledged that he could not count on majority support there. He was concerned that a majority of delegates would instead support Bakunin’s anarchist program.¹⁰ He needed the congress to be postponed “until conditions [were] more favourable.”¹¹ The General Council then dutifully postponed the congress to an indefinite time and location.¹²

In Switzerland, the government sent 50,000 troops to protect its borders, calling up many members of the International for military service. This decimated the ranks of the internationalists there. In addition, the reformist faction called a halt to all strike activity pending a resolution to the war. When some of the workers refused to halt their strike, one of them was killed by one of the “patriotic” workers who had gone back to work.¹³

Guillaume supported the continuation of strike activity, suggesting that one of the few things the workers could do in response to the war was to stop working, citing the resolution from the 1868 Brussels Congress calling for a general strike in response to any European conflict.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 68.

⁸ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 284, fn. 22.

⁹ *General Council, 1868–1870*, 238.

¹⁰ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 44*, 25–26 & 33.

¹¹ Ibid., 25.

¹² *The General Council of the First International, 1870–1871* (Moscow: Progress Publishers), 50.

¹³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 65–66.

He reprinted a similar proposal from a contributor to the German social democratic paper *Der Volksstaat*, who suggested that an international general strike would soon bring an end to the war.¹⁴ Unfortunately, no one else seemed prepared or able to take up these proposals. Guillaume thought that in France itself the question was no longer one of a general strike to stop the war, but of social revolution.

This was an idea that Bakunin was soon to expand upon. In August 1870, he began writing his response to the Franco-Prussian War, *Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis*, which Guillaume edited and published in pamphlet form in September 1870. It is a crucial text in the development of social revolutionary anarchism.

Anticipating the subsequent response of the French ruling class to the Paris Commune, Bakunin wrote that if “the bourgeoisie had to choose between the masses who rebel against the State and the Prussian invaders of France, they would surely choose the latter.”¹⁵ The bourgeoisie could only play a counterrevolutionary role—a theme that Bakunin had emphasized in his articles from 1869.

With the French state in virtual collapse, Bakunin argued that now was the time for the “people armed” to make the social revolution.¹⁶ Only a popular uprising could save France, an uprising that would also result in “the fall of privileged France,” the France of the bourgeoisie that had kept Napoléon III in power. Bakunin therefore proclaimed that “the popular uprising is the social revolution.”¹⁷

Marx, in contrast, argued that any such scheme “would be a desperate folly” and that the French working class should support the provisional government, even though, as he acknowledged, it was composed, at least in part, of royalists and “middle-class Republicans, upon some of whom the insurrection of June 1848, [had] left its indelible stigma.” Marx’s advice to the workers was to work within the bourgeois political system so that they could “calmly and resolutely improve the opportunities of Republican liberty,” which would somehow “gift them with fresh Herculean powers for the regeneration of France, and... the emancipation of labour.”¹⁸

Bakunin felt that there was not enough time to dismantle the Bonapartist governmental apparatus and replace it with a democratic, let alone revolutionary, one, while Marx admitted that the royalists had “seized the strongholds of the army and the police.”¹⁹ For Bakunin, it was time to “give the initiative of action to all the revolutionary communes of France.”²⁰ The only two classes capable of doing so were “the *workers* and the *peasants*.”²¹

For the social revolution to succeed, Bakunin argued that it was essential that the peasants and workers ally with each other, despite the mutual distrust between them. The way to cement an alliance between the workers and the peasants was to encourage the peasants to “take the land and throw out those landlords who live by the labour of others,” inciting them “*to destroy, by direct action, every political, juridical, civil, and military institution,*” establishing “*anarchy through the*

¹⁴ Ibid., 70.

¹⁵ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 186.

¹⁶ Michel Bakounine, *Lettres à un Français sur la crise actuelle* (September 1870). Reprinted in *L'Association internationale des travailleurs en France*. (Paris: EDHIS, 1988), 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 340–341.

¹⁹ Ibid., 340.

²⁰ Bakounine, *Lettres à un Français*, 6.

²¹ Ibid., 10.

whole countryside.”²² A social revolution in France, rejecting “all official organization” and “government centralization,” would lead to “the social emancipation of the proletariat” throughout Europe.²³

Against the Jacobins, Blanquists, and other advocates of revolutionary government, Bakunin argued that socialism could not be imposed on the peasants (or anyone else) by force and violence. That would simply drive them into the arms of reaction. In addition, it would require “the whole machine of the State rebuilding itself piece by piece. The machine reconstituted, they would soon have the machinist, the dictator, the emperor. All that would infallibly occur, because it is the logic of things.”²⁴ In addition to a new dictator, “the reconstitution of the principle of authority” would result in the creation “of a privileged class of State functionaries.”²⁵

Bakunin consequently opposed a “revolution by decree” by a so-called revolutionary state, calling instead for the incarnation of “*revolutionary facts*” through the direct action of the people themselves, “the only effective, consistent and true system, without the intervention of any official or authoritarian violence.”²⁶

Shortly after completing his *Letters to a Frenchman*, Bakunin tried to put his ideas into practice, traveling to Lyon, where he met up with Richard, Palix, Bastélica, and some other internationalists and revolutionaries. Contrary to Marx’s contemptuous account, repeated by careless historians, Bakunin did not spend one day trying to abolish the state.²⁷ He spent almost two weeks in Lyon helping reorganize the internationalists and trying to mobilize the workers to support the establishment of a revolutionary commune, rather than continuing to serve as cannon fodder for the bourgeoisie.

Only after a large demonstration, which called for “a levy on the rich and the appointment of army officers by free election,” did Bakunin and his associates issue a proclamation advocating the abolition of the “administrative and governmental machine of the State,” the replacement of the judicial apparatus by “the justice of the people,” the suspension of taxes and mortgages, the funding of “the federated communes” by a levy on “the rich classes,” and ending with a call to arms. The proclamation was enthusiastically received, but Bakunin’s own associates, especially Richard, were reluctant to put it into practice.²⁸

When the municipal council tried to reduce the pay for workers engaged in municipal works, thousands of Lyon workers protested outside the city hall, enabling Bakunin and his associates to seize the hall and reiterate their demands. General Paul Cluseret (1823–1900), who had obtained his rank during the American Civil War, was supposed to organize a popular militia, but was more intent on reaching a compromise with the republicans, telling the crowd he had no intention of challenging the existing city council.²⁹

Bakunin argued that it was crucial that the revolutionaries rally the workers and the working-class elements of the National Guard rather than staying in the hall issuing proclamations.³⁰

²² Bakunin, “Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis”, in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 103.

²³ Bakounine, *Lettres à un Français*, 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 19–20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ Stewart Edwards, *The Paris Commune 1871* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 96.

²⁸ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 419–420.

²⁹ Louis Greenberg, *Sisters of Liberty: Marseille, Lyon, Paris and the Reaction to a Centralized State, 1868–1871* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 236.

³⁰ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 96–97.

Control of the hall passed back and forth between the protesters and the National Guard, but eventually the Guard recaptured the hall, and Bakunin was arrested. He was freed by a small group of his associates and some sympathetic Guardsmen and then made his way to Marseilles, where he stayed with Bastélica, eventually returning to Switzerland.³¹

Despite attempts by Marx, his followers, and some historians to portray the Lyon uprising as a tragicomic farce, as Paul Avrich points out, news “of the Lyon Commune touched off a chain reaction up and down the Rhone valley and through Provence.” There were attempts to establish revolutionary communes in “Toulouse, Narbonne, Cette, Perpignan, Limoges, Saint-Étienne, Le Creusot, and other towns.”³² Paul Robin and some internationalists in Brest tried to establish a revolutionary commune there at the beginning of October, but were also unsuccessful.³³

The most significant attempts were made at the end of October in Marseilles and Paris. General Cluseret, Alerini, and Bastélica were involved in the attempt to create a revolutionary commune in Marseilles, but it was fatally compromised when someone accidentally shot the Government of National Defence’s newly appointed prefect. He survived relatively unscathed, but the shooting turned people against the revolutionaries.³⁴ The government rallied its troops and surrounded the city hall, pointing cannons at it. The commune lasted for about five days.³⁵

In Paris, at the end of October 1870, there were demands for immediate municipal elections by a large and angry crowd following the surrender of France’s largest surviving army at Metz. At first, the National Guard refused to do anything, unlike the situation in Lyon, and the crowd was led to believe that the government had agreed to the elections. The Central Vigilance Committee—which prominent members of the International had helped organize—and some Blanquists called for a commune but nominated people of different classes and politics to sit on its executive, including the industrialist and government’s Minister of Works Pierre-Frédéric Dorian, because he had done a good job ensuring the supply of arms to the French army.³⁶

Blanqui himself showed up late in the day, but by then the government was mobilizing some of the National Guard to intervene. Delescluze tried to mediate a resolution, securing an agreement that no one would be arrested. Early the next morning, the radicals dispersed. The government did not honor the deal, later condemning Blanqui to death. He evaded capture until the very “eve of the Commune” in March 1871 and was then held in prison for the next eight years.³⁷ He was released in 1879 after he was elected to the National Assembly (but was not allowed to take his seat because he was still in prison at the time of the election itself).

In Paris, the more radical internationalists did not take an explicitly anarchist position, calling instead for the creation of a “Workers’ and Peasants’ Republic.” But this “republic” was to be none other than a “federation of socialist communes,” with “the land to go to the peasant who cultivates it, the mine to go to the miner who exploits it, the factory to go to the worker who makes it prosper”—a position very close to that of Bakunin and his associates.³⁸ One difference between the Parisians and those associated with Bakunin was that some of the former continued

³¹ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 422–423.

³² Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 236.

³³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 102–103.

³⁴ Greenberg, *Sisters of Liberty*, 182–183.

³⁵ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 115–118.

³⁶ Edwards, *Paris Commune 1871*, 78–79.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 84–85.

³⁸ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 25.

to participate in national politics. The radical internationalists in Paris put forward some forty-three candidates for election to the National Assembly in February 1871, but only Malon was elected (among the unsuccessful candidates were Varlin and Pindy).³⁹

The Parisian internationalists did not put inordinate focus on participation in the conventional political system, but were active in the creation of “vigilance committees,” which were organized on a neighborhood basis throughout Paris and operated independently from the government. Varlin was elected as the chair of the provisional Central Vigilance Committee.⁴⁰ The revolutionary socialist Gustave Lefrançais was also a member of that committee. The Paris internationalists declared that the vigilance committees were to serve as “the first elements of the future revolutionary Commune,” emphasizing their desire for federalist organization from the bottom upwards.⁴¹

This was consistent with the views that Bakunin had sketched out two years earlier regarding the “standing federation of the Barricades” that was to be established, together with a “Revolutionary Communal Council” made up of delegates from each barricade, to form the revolutionary “Commune.”⁴² It must be emphasized that Bakunin and other advocates of abstention from participation in bourgeois politics within the International never took the position that revolutionaries should not participate in or help create popular organs of self-management during political crises. To the contrary, that is exactly what they advocated revolutionaries and members of the International should be doing.

In the fall of 1870, the General Council sent Auguste Serrailier (1840–?) to Paris as their envoy. Once there, he first tried to convince the Paris Federation to work with the republicans in the political arena. The Federation maintained its abstentionist position, but indicated that its members were free to engage in political action (the same position that was taken by the Spanish FRE at its founding congress in June 1870 and that was later adopted by the revolutionary syndicalist Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT—General Confederation of Labour) in France around the turn of the century).⁴³

Unable to get the Paris Federation to commit itself to political action, Serrailier tried to set up a rival organization, one of the main purposes of which was to adopt, on behalf of all of the members of the Paris Federation, Marx’s policy of participation in national politics with the aim of seizing political power.⁴⁴ Serrailier was in favor of working with the Blanquists, well-known advocates of revolutionary government.⁴⁵ Both Marx and Serrailier claimed that participation in politics was mandated by the International’s *Rules*. Although Serrailier’s manoeuvre was ultimately unsuccessful, it again demonstrates not only Marx’s commitment to participation in bourgeois politics, but his continuing attempts to impose such a policy by means of top-down organization.

Back in London, Marx cemented his position by having the nine members of the General Council present at one of its meetings, including himself, elect Engels to the council.⁴⁶ It is important

³⁹ Ibid., 27–28.

⁴⁰ Edwards, *Paris Commune 1871*, 67.

⁴¹ Ibid., 73.

⁴² Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 170–171.

⁴³ Archer, *The First International in France*, 247.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 249; *General Council, 1870–1871*, 140–141.

⁴⁵ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 140–141.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 66.

to remember that the General Council, which Marx was increasingly transforming into an executive authority rather than an administrative body, was able to and did add new members to the council without them having been nominated or delegated to sit on the council by any branches or sections of the International. When some French internationalists tried to change this in the fall of 1871, so that each country would nominate its own delegates to the council, they were rebuffed.⁴⁷

This made it very easy for Marx to stack the council in order to ensure that his positions would prevail. The sitting council members determined who else could be on the council, which sections would be admitted into the International, and who from among the council's members would act as the "corresponding secretaries" for the various countries with sections that had been accepted by the council into membership. At meetings of the General Council, the corresponding secretaries would assume the role of representatives of the national branches of the International for which they were responsible, without having to be nominated or delegated by those branches to do so.

The Paris Federation made clear its position regarding the autonomy of the International's branches when it amended its statutes in mid-March 1871 to accord as "much autonomy as possible" to "the Federation and its branches"—the branches being "free to formulate whatever internal rules and organization they wished as long as they conformed to the spirit of the International."⁴⁸ More pointedly, the revised statutes expressly provided that each branch enjoyed "freedom of opinion on the solution of social issues," including whether to participate in conventional politics, contrary to the attempts of Marx and Serrailier to impose political participation as a mandatory policy.⁴⁹

By February 1871, the vigilance committees were calling for "the elimination of the privileges of the bourgeoisie, its elimination as governing caste, and the assumption of political power by the workers. In a word, social equality. No more employers, no more proletariat, no more classes."⁵⁰ The committees looked forward to a federation of "revolutionary Communes of the country and the principal workers' centres," with "all facilities... to be placed in the service of the International."⁵¹

Early in the morning of March 18, 1871, the national government sent troops into Paris to seize cannons held by the Paris National Guard. When the soldiers were surrounded by a crowd of people at Montmartre, and General Claude-Martin Lecomte (1817–1871) ordered them to load their weapons and fix their bayonets, they refused to do so. With the national army's failure to capture the cannons, crowds and barricades spread throughout the working-class districts of Paris. The army was ordered to pull back across the river Seine, and the national government began its withdrawal to Versailles. The Central Committee of the National Guard ordered the seizure of the Hôtel de Ville (city hall), proclaimed the establishment of the Paris Commune, and called for elections to be held on March 26 for a 92-member council.

The council held its inaugural meeting on March 28, with Proudhon's old friend, Charles Beslay (1795–1878), reluctantly accepting the position of president.⁵² Some of the more moderate liber-

⁴⁷ Ibid., 489.

⁴⁸ Archer, *The First International in France*, 253.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 90.

⁵¹ Ibid., 91.

⁵² Edwards, *Paris Commune 1871*, 187.

als and radicals chose not to take their seats, while others soon resigned from the council. The majority of the council were Jacobins and Blanquists, “with the Internationalists forming a fairly compact minority.”⁵³

After the proclamation of the Commune, the Parisian internationalists played a prominent role. On March 23, 1871, they issued a wall poster proclaiming the “principle of authority” as being “incapable of re-establishing order in the streets or of getting factory work going again.” For them, “this incapacity constitutes [authority’s] negation.”⁵⁴ Continuing in this antiauthoritarian vein, they indicated that their advocacy of the “autonomy of each Commune remove[d] any trace of coercion” from their demands. They were confident that the people of Paris would “remember that the principle that governs groups and associations is the same as that which should govern society”—namely, the principle of voluntary federation.⁵⁵

Malon was on the committee that drafted the Commune’s program, which was mostly written by Pierre Denis (1828–1907), a Proudhonist member of the International. The program called for the “total autonomy of the Commune extended to every township in France,” to be restricted only by the right to an equal autonomy for all the other communes.”⁵⁶

The Communards assured the people of France that the “political unity which Paris strives for is the voluntary union of all local initiative, the free and spontaneous cooperation of all individual energies towards a common goal: the well-being, freedom and security of all.” The Commune was to mark “the end of the old governmental and clerical world; of militarism, bureaucracy, exploitation, speculation, monopolies and privilege that have kept the proletariat in servitude and led the nation to disaster.”⁵⁷

There were renewed attempts to establish revolutionary communes in other areas of France. In Marseilles, internationalists were involved in creating a commune near the end of March 1871, but the National Guard and the municipal council both withdrew their support. The national army attacked at the beginning of April, “leaving 52 dead, 150 wounded, and 850 arrested.”⁵⁸ Bastélica had been sent to Paris to assist the Communards, while Alerini was able to escape to Spain.⁵⁹

Around the same time in Le Creusot, a “socialist-republican” committee called for support for the Commune. Albert Leblanc (1844–?), an anarchist from Lyon, declared that “the Commune is the suppression of ministers, Prefects, and the Police. No more soldiers, only an armed citizenry.” National army troops were sent in, there were mass arrests, and “large numbers of workers” were sacked from their jobs as punishment.⁶⁰

In Narbonne, a commune was proclaimed that “lasted a week, during which time the local garrison fraternized with the popular forces, and delegates from other towns in the region arrived to try to generalize the movement.” When the national government in Versailles brought in Algerian troops, “the town was threatened with bombardment, and... the revolutionaries were forced to surrender.”⁶¹

⁵³ Cole, *History of Socialist Thought, Volume II*, 147.

⁵⁴ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 111.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁵⁸ Archer, *The First International in France 1864–1872*, 273.

⁵⁹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 140.

⁶⁰ Edwards, *Paris Commune 1871*, 177.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

In Lyon, members of the International, including some of Bakunin's associates, tried organizing a commune at the end of March and again near the end of April 1871. The revolutionaries issued a pamphlet indicating their desire for "communal autonomy, the goal and the end of the political revolutions," which would open "the wide, free, and pacific way to the social revolution." The attempt at establishing a commune was put down by government troops, leaving "twenty-one dead [and] dozens wounded."⁶²

The internationalists were a minority within the Paris Commune, and not all of them supported the socialist federalism espoused in varying degrees by Varlin, Malon, Pindy, and the more militant Proudhonists. Several Blanquists and former Blanquists had already joined or created Parisian sections of the International, even creating their own rival federation in the fall of 1870.⁶³ The socialist federalists revived the original Paris Federation and remained the majority group within the International in Paris. Despite the minority position of the socialist federalists and Proudhonists in the Commune itself, if both groups are taken together, they constituted "the largest single group in the Paris Commune."⁶⁴

The federalist and antiauthoritarian internationalists felt that the Commune represented "above all *a social revolution*," not merely a change of rulers.⁶⁵ As the Proudhonist journalist Auguste-Jean-Marie Vermorel (1841–1871) put it, the "error of preceding governments must not be continued, that is to say there must not be a simple substitution of workers in the places occupied previously by bourgeois... The entire governmental structure must be overthrown with the aim of reconstructing one according to a new plan based upon principles of justice and science."⁶⁶

For the federalist internationalists, this did not mean state ownership of the economy, but collective or social ownership of the means of production; that is, the associated workers themselves would be running their own enterprises. The typographical workers called for the workers to "abolish monopolies and employers through adoption of a system of workers' cooperative associations. There will be no more exploiters and no more exploited. We will thrive working or we will die fighting."⁶⁷ The mechanics and metal workers' unions took a similar position, advocating "the formation of workers' associations, which alone can transform our position from that of wage-earners to that of associates."⁶⁸ In April 1871, the Paris Federation of the International "called upon [the Commune's] Commission of Labor and Exchange" to facilitate the formation of "trade unions for taking over workshops abandoned by their owners."⁶⁹

The social revolution was pushed forward by female internationalists and radicals, such as Nathalie Lemel, Louise Michel, and Elisabeth Dmitrieff (1850–1918). Lemel and Dmitrieff belonged to the Association of Women for the Defence of Paris and Aid to the Wounded, which issued a declaration demanding "No more bosses. Work and security for all — The People to govern themselves — We want the Commune; we want to live in freedom or to die fighting for it!"⁷⁰ They shared the view of many of the Parisian internationalists that "the only way to re-

⁶² Archer, *The First International in France*, 271–272.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 246–248.

⁶⁴ Edwards (ed.), *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 31.

⁶⁵ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 182.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 165. A popular working-class slogan from the 1831 Lyon uprising had been: "Live working or die fighting."

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁶⁹ Archer, *The First International in France*, 259.

⁷⁰ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 172.

organize labor so that the worker enjoys the product of his work is by forming free producers' cooperatives which would run the various industries and share the profits."⁷¹

To ensure unity in the struggle, they argued that the Commune should "consider all legitimate grievances of any section of the population without discrimination of sex, such discrimination having been made and enforced as a means of maintaining the privileges of the ruling classes."⁷² Consequently, they called for "the abolition of all competition between men and women workers, since their interests are absolutely identical and their solidarity is essential to the success of the final and universal strike of Labor against Capital."⁷³

Lemel and other workers involved with the Marmite cooperative restaurants federated with other groups, such as mutual aid societies, to provide food to the poor during the siege of Paris and then during the Paris Commune. According to Louise Michel, Lemel saved "many people from starving to death" and "was a veritable *tour de force* of devotion and intelligence."⁷⁴

Michel was herself active in the Montmartre women's and men's vigilance committees. The two committees worked closely together, "because people didn't worry about which sex they were before they did their duty. That stupid question was settled."⁷⁵ The committees coordinated the supply of food and shelter for Montmartre's inhabitants, "requisitioning," when necessary, from the often absent bourgeois and the "profiteers," the food and goods they had hidden away, giving them to the people.⁷⁶

The Commune published an appeal to French farmers and peasants, written by André Léo (1824–1900), a feminist libertarian socialist and Malon's companion for several years. The appeal echoes Bakunin's approach in *Letters to a Frenchman*, emphasizing the workers and peasants' common interest in their social emancipation of peasants and workers. "Whether in the city or in the countryside," she wrote, "...there is insufficient food, clothing, shelter or assistance for those who produce the world's wealth. An oppressor is an oppressor whether he be a big landowner or an industrialist."⁷⁷ She assured the farmers and farm workers that what the Commune wanted was that the "LAND BELONG TO THE FARMER, THE TOOLS OF PRODUCTION TO THE WORKERS, WORK FOR ALL."⁷⁸

The need to win the peasants over to the cause of the social revolution was a theme that Bakunin returned to in *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*. At the time, peasants comprised the majority of laborers in Europe. Without their support, any revolution was likely to fail.

Largely written in the fall of 1870, while Bakunin reflected on the failure of the short-lived Lyon Commune, *The Knouto-Germanic Empire* was published in April 1871, around the same time as Léo's appeal to French farmers and peasants. Bakunin tried to distribute it as widely as

⁷¹ Stewart Edwards (ed.), *The Communards of Paris, 1871*. Trans. by J. McNeil (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 135.

⁷² Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 173.

⁷³ Edwards, *Communards of Paris*, 135.

⁷⁴ Carolyn Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Commune* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 84.

⁷⁵ Louise Michel, *The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel*, ed. & trans. B. Lowry & E. Gunter (University of Alabama Press, 1981), 58.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁷⁷ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 152.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

possible from his base in Switzerland, fearing the worst if the social revolution remained isolated in Paris.

As with his *Letters to a Frenchman*, it was directed mainly toward French internationalists and revolutionaries. In many respects, it constituted a continuation of the arguments he had set forth in that earlier pamphlet. Bakunin reviewed the reasons behind the failure of the Lyon uprising in September 1870 and emphasized the continuing need to establish revolutionary communes throughout France.⁷⁹ He urged the Parisian revolutionaries to go to the countryside to provoke a peasant insurrection by offering the peasants the “immediately great material advantages” that would result from a social revolution, such as the land itself and the abolition of debts.⁸⁰

Bakunin again warned the workers against supporting bourgeois republicans, for they “are the most rabid and passionate enemies of the Social Revolution... animated with the most firm resolve to preserve and maintain all the principles, all the *sacred foundations*, of existing society, and to preserve all those economic and juridical institutions which have for their necessary consequence actual slavery of the people.”⁸¹ For Bakunin, there existed “a gulf between the bourgeois and the proletarian worlds.”⁸²

Emphasizing a point made in his earlier writings, Bakunin argued that a “revolution that is imposed upon people—whether by official decree or by force of arms—is not a revolution but its opposite, for it necessarily provokes reaction.”⁸³ The antiauthoritarian internationalists and federalists within the Commune adopted a similar position, opposing the creation of a five-man “Committee of Public Safety” by the Jacobins and Blanquists that was to exercise central control over the Commune. By creating such a committee, they argued, the Commune had “surrendered its authority to a dictatorship.”⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the antiauthoritarians vowed that they would continue to fight for “[p]olitical freedom” and the “emancipation of the working class.”⁸⁵

Among the internationalists opposing the creation of a committee of public safety were those closest in their views to Bakunin and his associates: Varlin, Malon, Pindy, and Lefrançais. Also opposed were several Proudhonists, some of whom, such as Charles Longuet (1839–1903), also belonged to the International, as well as Vermorel and Proudhon’s friends, Charles Beslay and the painter Gustave Courbet (1819–1877).⁸⁶

Observing the unfolding events from Switzerland, Guillaume regarded the federalism of the Paris Commune “in the sense given it years ago by the great socialist, Proudhon,” as “above all the negation of the nation and the State.” For Guillaume, such socialist federalism constituted a “true state of *anarchy* (in the proper sense of the word)... since there is no longer a centralized state and the Communes enjoy the full exercise of their independence.”⁸⁷ The Belgian internationalists similarly hailed the Commune for overthrowing “the regime of exploitation, abuse, bureaucracy and parasitism.”⁸⁸

⁷⁹ Michel Bakounine, *L’Empire knouto-germanique et la révolution sociale* (1871), in *Oeuvres*, Volume II (Paris: Stock, 1980), 351–352.

⁸⁰ G. P. Maximoff, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism* (New York: Free Press, 1953), 405.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 221–222.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 281.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 404.

⁸⁴ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 187.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁸⁶ Benoît Malon, *La troisième défaite du prolétariat français* (Neuchâtel: Guillaume, 1871), 318.

⁸⁷ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 191.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 195.

Bakunin described the Paris Commune to the Swiss internationalists as the beginning of a European social revolution, with the International playing a leading role. What was necessary was to deepen the solidarity of the workers “in their daily life,” to win over the peasantry to the cause of the social revolution, and for the International to organize the people into a revolutionary force, following the example of the Parisian internationalists, “who have organized the people of Paris and whose steady efforts have made the Paris Commune possible.”⁸⁹

The Commune was savagely repressed by French state forces, with the connivance of the Prussians, leading to wholesale massacres that claimed the lives of some 30,000 Parisians, including leading internationalists like Varlin, and the imprisonment and deportation of many others, such as Nathalie Lemel and Louise Michel. A handful of internationalists, including Malon, Léo, Lefrançais, Bastélica, and Pindy, went into hiding and were eventually able to escape to Switzerland and England.

As David Stafford notes, the brutal suppression of the Commune further “weakened that part of the Proudhonist *credo* which placed faith in a gradual and peaceful evolution.”⁹⁰ Proudhon’s mutualism was seen as completely incapable of dealing with counterrevolutionary violence. As Malon bitterly commented, for “the governing class, just as the masters of slaves in antiquity, and just as the barons of the Middle Ages and slave owners... anything is permitted in order to place the exploited masses in revolt back under the yoke. Consequently, when soldiers are faced with proletarians who demand their place in the sun, extermination is the rule.”⁹¹

In June 1871, immediately after the suppression of the Commune, some Spanish internationalists published a manifesto in support of the Commune, warning the bourgeoisie that the recent events in Paris “have demonstrated to us that if one day we [internationalists] are dragged into the class struggle, if we have been burned, if we have been assassinated, then we shall be obliged to reduce these three extremes to one: We shall blow up the cities and with them you [the bourgeoisie] too.”⁹²

The surviving Communards and internationalists came to agree with Bakunin that there was an abyss between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, including liberals and republicans. Writing soon after the defeat of the Commune, Malon noted that there was now “nothing in common between bourgeois liberalism and worker socialism.”⁹³

Bakunin later acknowledged that the revolutionary socialists, “at the head of whom our friend Varlin naturally takes his place, formed in the Commune only a very small minority indeed,” and that the International numbered “scarcely a few thousand individuals.”⁹⁴ Bakunin lauded his fallen comrades for their “conviction that in the Social Revolution... the action of individuals counted for almost nothing and the spontaneous action of the masses should count for everything. All that individuals can do is elaborate, clarify and propagate the ideas that correspond to the popular feeling, and, beyond this, to contribute by their ceaseless efforts to the revolutionary organization of the natural power of the masses.”⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 65.

⁹⁰ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 20.

⁹¹ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 38.

⁹² Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 32.

⁹³ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 38.

⁹⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 200 & 202.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 203.

While Bakunin recognized the Commune as “a bold and outspoken negation of the State” at the national level, he criticized the Jacobin and Blanquist majority for setting up “a revolutionary government,” organizing “themselves in reactionary Jacobin fashion, forgetting or sacrificing what they themselves knew were the first conditions of revolutionary socialism.”⁹⁶

For Bakunin, the defeat of the Commune discredited the “authoritarian communist type of thinking,” exemplified by Marx and his followers, that “a Social Revolution can be decreed and organized, whether by a dictatorship or whether by a constituent assembly resulting from some political revolution.”⁹⁷ Instead of seizing state power, revolutionaries must seek to destroy “once and for all the historic cause of all the violent acts, the power, and the very existence, of the State” by “giving back their complete freedom to the masses, groups, communes, associations, individuals even,” leading to “the free association or federation of workers” from “the bottom upwards.”⁹⁸ The Paris Commune, Bakunin wrote, represented the “first demonstration, both splendid and practical,” of the revolutionary socialism being embraced “by the proletariat of the Latin countries,” which Bakunin described as “Proudhonism widely developed and pushed right to these, its final consequences.”⁹⁹

For a very brief period, it appeared that Marx himself agreed with some of these points, writing in his May 1871 *Address to the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association on the Civil War in France* that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.”¹⁰⁰ With the “communal régime once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old centralized Government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers.”¹⁰¹

“The Commune,” Marx stated, “was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class-rule.”¹⁰² For the anarchists, it is the people themselves, not a “revolutionary government,” who are to act as the “lever” for uprooting the economic foundations of capitalism by expropriating the means of production through their own direct action.

Marx praised the Commune for wanting “to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labour, into mere instruments of free and associated labour,” but then claimed that this mutualist socialism, or collectivism, inspired by Proudhon and adopted by Bakunin and the majority of internationalists, was actually the “communism” that he himself had been advocating—a transparent attempt to appropriate the legacy of the Commune for Marx’s own sectarian purposes, profiting from the enormous prestige the Commune was assuming in revolutionary circles.¹⁰³ Marx’s remarks, and those of subsequent Marxist commentators, simply ignore the role of the Proudhonist and protosyndicalist elements within the Commune.

According to Marx, the “Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time.”¹⁰⁴ The Commune, as a governing body, albeit one based on

⁹⁶ Ibid., 199 & 202.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 204.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 198.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 204.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 206.

¹⁰² Ibid., 207.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 208.

¹⁰⁴ Marx, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 632.

universal suffrage, was both to determine and implement policies and programs, rather than the workers themselves being able to develop and implement social and economic policies through their own associations, trade unions, and workplace organizations. Despite his references to the “self-government of the producers,” Marx was not an advocate of workers’ self-management or communal federalism. Marx sought to discredit Proudhonian federalism by associating it with the “federation of small States, as dreamt of by Montesquieu and the Girondins,” insinuating that Proudhonian federalism was at heart a bourgeois, if not outright counterrevolutionary, doctrine.¹⁰⁵

Further discounting the federalism of the Parisian internationalists and the Proudhonists, Marx claimed that the “few important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed... but were to be discharged by Communal, and therefore strictly responsible agents.”¹⁰⁶ While the bourgeois state machinery was to be abolished, there was still a need for a central government because, according to Marx, “that unity of great nations,” despite perhaps being “originally brought about by political force, has now become a powerful coefficient of social production.”¹⁰⁷ Even before the Commune was mercilessly destroyed by the national government based in Versailles, Marx had expressed the view that the “Central Committee [of the National Guard] surrendered its power too soon, to make way for the Commune,” yet again demonstrating his preference for centralized control.¹⁰⁸

The “Communal Constitution,” according to Marx, was supposed to have “brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and these secured to them, in the working men, the natural trustees of their interests.”¹⁰⁹ That the central towns were to lead the rural districts, with worker representatives in the central towns acting as the “trustees” of the farmers’ and peasants’ interests, was precisely the kind of paternalistic approach that Bakunin had warned against and that Léo and other internationalist Communards had tried to assure the farmers and peasants was not their intention.

Bakunin later argued that the Commune’s heroic example “was so striking that the Marxists themselves, who saw all their ideas upset by the uprising, found themselves compelled to take their hats off to it. They went even further, and proclaimed that its programme and purpose were their own... This was truly a farcical change of costume, but they were bound to make it, for fear of being overtaken and left behind in the wave of feeling which the rising produced throughout the world.”¹¹⁰ The change of costume did not last long, with Marx in September 1871 engineering the adoption by the International’s General Council of a mandatory policy of political participation within existing state political institutions, with the ultimate aim being the assumption of state power by working-class political parties.

For Bakunin, what made the Commune important was “not really the weak experiments which it had the power and time to make,” but “the ideas it has set in motion, the living light it has cast on the true nature and goal of revolution, the hopes it has raised, and the powerful stir it has produced among the popular masses everywhere, and especially in Italy, where the popular awakening dates from that insurrection, whose main feature was the revolt of the Commune and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 633.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 633–634.

¹⁰⁸ Schulkind, *Paris Commune*, 198.

¹⁰⁹ Marx, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 634.

¹¹⁰ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 261.

the workers' associations against the State."¹¹¹ Bakunin's defense of the Commune against the attacks of the veteran Italian revolutionary patriot Giuseppe Mazzini played an important role in the "popular awakening" in Italy and the rapid spread of the International there.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 261.

Chapter Seven: From Out of the Ashes:

The Defeat of the Commune and the Rise of the International in Italy and Spain

Bakunin's defense of the Paris Commune against the attacks of the Italian nationalist and veteran revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini raised the profile of the International in Italy and helped spread Bakunin's social revolutionary anarchist views there. The Spanish anarchists' support for the Commune attracted widespread sympathy among the Spanish workers and peasants, but instilled fear in the Spanish ruling classes.

In July 1871, Mazzini denounced the Commune and the International for their atheism, materialism, and internationalism. Bakunin wrote a response within days, which was published and distributed by internationalists throughout Italy in August. Bakunin's pamphlet *Response of an Internationalist to Mazzini* helped win over a new generation of Italian radicals to Bakunin's ideas and ensure that the Italian sections of the International adopted a social revolutionary anarchist position.

For Bakunin, and the Italian revolutionaries who began flocking to the International, Mazzini's denunciation of the Commune, less than two months after its fall, was unforgivable. As Bakunin wrote, at "the very moment when the heroic populace of Paris, in its noblest hour, was being massacred in its tens of thousands, women and children and all, in defence of the most humane, the most just and highest cause that history has ever seen, *the cause of the emancipation of workers all over the world*; at the moment when the hideous coalition of all the obscene reactionaries who today are celebrating their victorious blood-bath at Versailles, not content with the mass-murder and imprisonment of our brothers and sisters of the Paris Commune, is also spewing out all the slanders which only a boundless viciousness can imagine," Mazzini "has the audacity to deny not only the justice of their cause but also their sublime, heroic dedication, and portrays the people who gave up their lives for the deliverance of all the world as a common mob."¹

Mazzini's attack on the Commune, Bakunin noted, completely discredited his pious nationalism, marking Mazzini's "final break with revolution," as he "joined the ranks of international reaction" marching with the European ruling classes "beneath the banner of God" against the proletariat.² Andrea Costa (1851–1910), then a twenty-year-old Italian socialist, later recounted how, by "being pitiless against the fallen Commune and by ascribing the fall of France mostly to materialistic doctrines, Mazzini especially alienated the warmest and most generous part of the youth, raised on the new science. It was on the corpse of the Commune—fecund in its ruins—that the struggle between the old spirit and the new was engaged."³

Bakunin, Mazzini, and their respective supporters continued their polemic throughout the fall of 1871. As Ravindranathan notes, "Mazzini's continued identification of the International's ideol-

¹ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 223.

² *Ibid.*, 225 & 215.

³ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 107.

ogy with that of Bakunin enhanced his reputation, providing even greater exposure to Bakunin's doctrines" throughout Italy.⁴

Bakunin argued that Mazzini, despite being "one of the noblest, purest personalities of this century," based his pious patriotism on several false principles: "The cult of God and of divine and human authority"; "faith in the messianic destiny of Italy as queen of nations"; "the political lust for State grandeur and glory, necessarily based upon hardship for the people"; and "that passion for uniformity which they call unity and which is the graveyard of liberty."⁵

To Mazzini's charge that the Communards and other modern revolutionaries were materialists and atheists, Bakunin replied that "so we are," but denied that this meant that the revolutionaries rejected "liberty, justice, humanity, beauty, truth."⁶ To the contrary, Bakunin argued, they simply wanted to make these things a reality for everyone on earth rather than something that could only be attained in heaven.⁷ Drawing on his background in Young Hegelian philosophy, Bakunin explained how "the first thinkers... extracted from all the real beings they knew—themselves included, of course—everything which seemed to them to constitute their power, movement, life and intelligence," calling "this by the generic name of *spirit*," and then "gave the rest... the name of *matter*."⁸

Bakunin conceived of material reality as essentially dynamic, "produced and incessantly re-produced anew by the conjunction of an infinity of actions and reactions of all kinds and by the continual transformation of the real beings who are born and die in its depths."⁹ Through a dialectical process, in which "every development implies in a sense the negation of its point of departure," the "materialists start out from the conception of matter to arrive at... the idea," while the "idealists" start from their imaginary "pure" ideas of "the immortal soul and free will" to "arrive at the cult of public order, like Adolphe Thiers," who ordered the mass slaughter of the Communards, and "of authority, like Mazzini," with both of them thereby consecrating the "organization of perpetual serfdom."¹⁰

Morality is not something imposed by God, but something that "stems from the very nature of human society, a nature whose real roots must be sought not in God but in the animal."¹¹ Mazzini denounced socialism, Bakunin argued, because "socialism, seen from the moral viewpoint, is the advent of *human respect* to replace the voluntary bondage of *divine worship*."¹²

Showing the degree to which Bakunin was influenced by Marx's economic theories, Bakunin claimed that "the development of economic forces has always been and still continues to be the determinant of all religious, philosophical, political and social developments."¹³ He then connected this view to the *Rules of the International*, arguing that because "the economic subjection of the man of labour to the monopoliser of the means of labour... lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms," the "economic emancipation of the working classes is the great end to which

⁴ Ibid., 125.

⁵ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 214.

⁶ Ibid., 217.

⁷ Ibid., 218.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 219.

¹⁰ Ibid., 220. Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877) was the chief executive of the French government in Versailles.

¹¹ Ibid., 221. That the roots of morality are to be found in the study of human animality is a concept much more fully developed by Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid* and *Ethics*.

¹² Ibid., 223.

¹³ Ibid., 224.

every political movement ought to be subordinate as a simple means”—a close variant of the English-language version of the *Rules*.¹⁴ This suggests that the difference in wording between the French and English versions of the International’s *Rules* was not the real basis of the profound disagreements between Marx and the anarchist tendencies in the International, since the antiauthoritarians effectively used both interchangeably.¹⁵

Prior to the debate between Bakunin and Mazzini, the International in Italy had been making slow progress. Carlo Cafiero (1846–1892), then an agent of Marx and Engels who was supposed to be combating Bakunin’s influence in Italy, had been working with Gambuzzi and a then-seventeen-year-old Malatesta to revitalize the Neapolitan section of the International in the summer of 1871. Italian translations of Bakunin’s *Letters to a Frenchman*; an article by the Swiss internationalist and ally of Bakunin, Adhémar Schwitzguébel, “War and Peace”; and an article by Albert Richard on the International, were distributed in the Naples area.¹⁶ The authorities were sufficiently concerned about the activities of the revived Neapolitan section that they ordered it dissolved in August 1871.¹⁷

Bakunin had been meeting and corresponding with numerous Italian radicals throughout the spring of 1871, including long-time associates and members of the International, Fanelli, Gambuzzi, and Friscia. Guillaume and Bakunin had arranged for the distribution of Bakunin’s *Knouto-Germanic Empire* pamphlet in various parts of Italy that summer, as well as the Swiss internationalist newspaper *Solidarité*, edited by Guillaume.¹⁸

Friscia was still active in Sicily, helping to reconstitute the Sicilian section of the International in late 1870 or early 1871. The section raised funds for the Communards, and began publishing its own newspaper in July 1871, *L’Eguaglianza*, which became “the foremost organ supporting the communards and the International in Sicily.”¹⁹ *L’Eguaglianza* joined in the criticisms of Mazzini arising from his opposition to the International and the Paris Commune, while Friscia publicly asked Mazzini why “he had now chosen to side with his enemies against his former disciples,” reprinting an article Mazzini wrote in 1852 “expressing the need to abolish the proletariat and emancipate the workers from the tyranny of capital.”²⁰

In Spain, the internationalists supported the Paris Commune, and some of the French political refugees, such as Alerini, ended up there. During the Dos de Mayo celebrations in 1871 commemorating the Spanish uprising against Napoléon, the Spanish internationalists expressed “their solidarity with the communards and recognized French-Spanish unity in the struggle against their common enemy, the bourgeoisie.”²¹ The internationalists became identified with the cause of the Commune and the militant strike action that was spreading across Spain, increasing their support among Spanish workers and peasants.²²

As a result, the Spanish government began threatening to outlaw the FRE. Sentiñón and Clemente Bové, who had signed the Spanish International’s manifesto supporting the Commune,

¹⁴ Ibid., 224–225.

¹⁵ See Cutler, in Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 209, fn. 32.

¹⁶ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 118.

¹⁷ Ibid., 118.

¹⁸ Ibid. & 120–121.

¹⁹ Ibid., 126–127.

²⁰ Ibid., 106.

²¹ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 33.

²² Ibid., 31.

were arrested and imprisoned.²³ As a precautionary measure, the FRE's Federal Council temporarily relocated to Lisbon, where "they founded the Portuguese section of the International."²⁴ However, after the Spanish internationalists returned to Spain, the Portuguese section came under the control of a group that sided with Marx and the General Council. An anarchist movement in Portugal did not really emerge there until the 1880s.²⁵

The Spanish internationalists of the FRE held a clandestine conference in Valencia in September 1871, still concerned about government repression (a legitimate concern, as the FRE was outlawed in January 1872). They tried to revamp the organizational structure of the FRE, but the resulting system of committees, subcommittees, and local and regional sections was unworkable.²⁶ The process for workers to obtain strike funds was so cumbersome that the larger local unions would just go on strike on their own, with other workers resorting to wildcat strikes, where they would spontaneously refuse to work.²⁷

The FRE's Federal Council had both anarchist and socialist elements, but the socialists, who allied themselves with Marx and the General Council, eventually formed their own short-lived and relatively ineffectual organization in 1872.²⁸ Prior to the split, the Federal Council had adopted an attitude toward strikes similar to that of some of the French internationalists. The kind of strike that was most important, and therefore justified access to strike funds, was a defensive one against "reduced wages," "increased hours without increased wages," and "blacklisting because of membership in the International."²⁹

In Spain, branches of the International had been established based on the *Rules of the International* and the program of the Alliance. Subsequently, some of the Spanish internationalists established their own "alliance," which was separate from the Geneva section of the Alliance that had been accepted into membership in the International. Contrary to Marx's allegations, the "Spanish Alliance" was not controlled by Bakunin nor was it part of any plot to destroy the International from within.³⁰ As one historian of Spanish anarchism has written, "it cannot be said that he [Bakunin] manipulated or otherwise used the Spanish Alliance as a tool for his own subversive designs."³¹

Concerned about Bakunin's influence in Spain, the General Council had Engels send a letter to the Spanish Federal Council in February 1871, telling them that "the best means of liberating the workers from [the] domination of the old [political] parties is to found in each country a proletarian party with its own policy," expressing "the conditions of emancipation of the working class."³² Although some variation in policies between the working-class political parties in each country may be required "according to the particular circumstances in each country," the general "principles and the aim of the proletarian policy," and therefore of each country's working-class

²³ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 2, 164.

²⁴ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 95.

²⁵ João Freire, *Freedom Fighters: Anarchist Intellectuals, Workers, and Soldiers in Portugal's History* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2001), 7–8.

²⁶ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 73.

²⁷ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 83.

²⁸ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 73–75.

²⁹ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 83.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 75, fn. 18.

³¹ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 42.

³² *General Council, 1870–1871*, 480.

political party, would “be identical, at least in the Western countries” of Europe.³³ Thus, several months before the September 1871 London Conference of the International, Engels was sketching out what was to be imposed by the conference as mandatory policy within the International, emphasizing the need not only for working-class political parties but also for ideological uniformity.

It is important to note the general nature of the anarchist movement that was developing in Spain. The Spanish internationalists organized workers and peasants not only on the basis of their “craft,” or the kind of work they did, but on a more general basis, regardless of their particular craft or skill, uniting all the workers and peasants involved in a particular industry on a federalist basis, much like the Industrial Workers of the World were to do later in North America. Following the program outlined by De Paepe in “The Present Institutions of the International in Relation to the Future,” the organizations of the workers and peasants were to be both “the means by which producers would control future anarchist society, and the instruments through which they would fight contemporary authorities.”³⁴

There were also important cultural and communal aspects to Spanish anarchism. Anarchist men would meet in neighborhood cafés, while the women, despite the anarchists’ fervent anti-clericalism, would often meet in churches, where they would coordinate their activities; share experiences, literature, and propaganda (with literate anarchists sometimes reading material aloud to the others); organize various forms of mutual aid, such as cooperatives and support for striking workers and peasants; and discuss such issues as “mass secular education, and women’s emancipation,” both of which were strongly supported by the anarchists.³⁵

The Spanish anarchists agreed with Bakunin’s critique of the bourgeois “juridical” family, supported by the church, in which women and children were subject to the authority of their husbands and fathers. At the September 1871 Valencia Conference, one of the internationalists argued that instead “the family should be based on love, liberty, and equality.”³⁶ As Temma Kaplan notes, the anarchists “seem to have been among the earliest social theorists whose mass movement grasped the relationship between family psychology, revolutionary personality, and political freedom.”³⁷

In addition to penning his critique of Mazzini, Bakunin was preparing a second installment of *The Knouto-Germanic Empire*, with his reflections on the Paris Commune to serve as the introduction.³⁸ He sent page after page to Guillaume for editing and publication, but there were insufficient funds to publish it. Nevertheless, these pages contain some of Bakunin’s most original and insightful material, much of which was published after his death, such as his essay on “God and the State,” which became one of his most widely translated and circulated writings.³⁹

In “God and the State,” Bakunin set forth his most sustained argument against the principle of authority, which he argued originated in religious belief. Religion, particularly Christianity, creates an imaginary “Supreme Being,” extrapolating from the forces of nature, which then be-

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 79.

³⁵ Ibid., 85–86.

³⁶ Ibid., 87.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 195.

³⁹ Michael Bakunin, *God and the State* (1916), (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), ix.

comes the imaginary creator of the universe.⁴⁰ This “God” is omnipotent and omniscient, the original cause of everything, who determines what is right and wrong, issuing commandments from on high that everyone must obey or be condemned to eternal damnation. People must love and obey the “Lord” above, because without him they would be literally nothing, unable even to distinguish right from wrong.

The use of violence in human affairs requires some sort of religious or moral sanction; otherwise, it would constitute brute force, with one purveyor of violence having no more legitimacy than another. The masses therefore “must be induced to morally recognize” those who wield power over them.⁴¹ Religion, being the basis of “morality,” provides that sanction for the earthly authorities who rule over the people in the name of God.

As society becomes more secularized, so do the justifications for authority, culminating in secular theories of the state that mirror religious justifications of authority. As Bakunin explained in an earlier essay, according to these theories, without state authority there is nothing to prevent people “from killing each other, plundering each other, insulting each other, and in general from hurting each other.”⁴² Prior to the creation of the state, it was claimed that “the distinction between good and evil did not exist.”⁴³ Only the state, through its laws, has the authority to determine what is right and wrong, what is permissible and impermissible, imposing a secular order that mirrors the hierarchical order imposed by the church. In both cases, the institutions of the church and the state provide the basis for their own justification, and morality is reduced to “whatever conduces to the preservation, the grandeur and the power” of them.⁴⁴

“This explains why,” Bakunin wrote, “the entire history of ancient and modern states is merely a series of revolting crimes,” for from this perspective there is “no horror, no cruelty, sacrilege, or perjury, no imposture, no infamous transaction, no cynical robbery, no bold plunder or shabby betrayal that has not been or is not daily being perpetrated by the representatives of the states, under no other pretext than those elastic words, so convenient and yet so terrible: ‘for reasons of state’.”⁴⁵

In “God and the State,” Bakunin also developed a critique of secular justifications for authority based on claims to scientific knowledge and technical expertise. This critique was aimed at the “positivist” followers of Auguste Comte, who had purported to develop a scientific theory of society (“sociology”), by which state laws and government policy would be determined, and of Marx, the creator of the “*doctrinaire* school of German Communism,” with all its scientific pretensions.⁴⁶

That Marx and Engels regarded their theory of socialism as a *scientific* theory is scarcely debatable. Let us recall Marx’s denunciations of Proudhon’s “Charlatanism in science” and the scientific ignorance of his followers, with the implication being that Marxism, unlike Proudhonism, was scientific.⁴⁷ It was no coincidence that Engels later described Marxism as “scientific social-

⁴⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁴¹ Ibid., 83.

⁴² Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 130.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁵ Bakunin, “Program of the International Brotherhood,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 84.

⁴⁶ Bakunin, *God and the State*, 55.

⁴⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 20*, 29 & 33; Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 42*, 281; Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 43. Ironically, it was Proudhon himself who had proclaimed the need for a “scientific socialism” in *What is Property?* (Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 133).

ism” in his essay “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,” in order to emphasize its alleged superiority over other conceptions of socialism, including anarchism.⁴⁸ Marx wrote the introduction to the 1880 French edition of “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,” which he commended as “an *introduction to scientific socialism*,” and praised Engels for formulating “certain general principles of scientific socialism” as early as 1844.⁴⁹

Bakunin was concerned about people accepting claims to scientific and intellectual authority based on faith in “science,” just as they had accepted religious claims to authority based on faith in “God,” resulting in a society in which science is “venerated without comprehending” it.⁵⁰ There was a danger that the *savants*, the scientists and intellectuals, would become a secular priesthood that “would soon end by devoting itself no longer to science at all, but to quite another affair... its own eternal perpetuation by rendering the society confided to its care ever more stupid and consequently more in need of its government and direction,” fleecing the people “in the name of science, just as they have been fleeced hitherto by priests, politicians of all shades, and lawyers, in the name of God, of the State, of judicial Right.”⁵¹ It was “time to have done with all popes and priests... even if they call themselves Social Democrats.”⁵²

Bakunin further denied the legitimacy of claims to political power or authority based on claims to scientific or intellectual authority, by referring to the limitations of scientific theory itself. Scientific theories are constantly changing and may be discarded completely if subsequently proven to be false. Consequently, “human science is always and necessarily imperfect” and incomplete.⁵³ If we were “to try to force the practical life of men, collective as well as individual, into strict and exclusive conformity with the latest data of science, we should condemn society as well as individuals to suffer martyrdom on a bed of Procrustes, which would soon end by dislocating and stifling them.”⁵⁴

Bakunin’s solution to these problems was “not to destroy science—that would be high treason to humanity—but to remand it to its place.” This would be achieved through the integral education advocated by him and other members of the International. With everyone, male and female, receiving both a practical and scientific education, “the masses, ceasing to be flocks led and shorn by privileged priests,” would be able to “take into their own hands the direction of their destinies.”⁵⁵

The rejection of “all legislation, all authority, and all privileged, licensed, official and legal influence, even though arising from universal suffrage, convinced that it can turn only to the advantage of a dominant minority of exploiters against the interests of the immense majority in subjection to them,” was, Bakunin indicated, “the sense in which we are really Anarchists.”⁵⁶

⁴⁸ Engels, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition, 683–717.

⁴⁹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 24: Marx and Engels, 1874–1883* (New York: International Publishers, 1989), 339 & 335.

⁵⁰ Bakunin, “On Science and Authority,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 89.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 90 & 92.

⁵² Bakunin, *God and the State*, 62.

⁵³ Bakunin, “On Science and Authority,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 89.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵⁶ Bakunin, *God and the State*, 35.

This rejection of legal government, or “the rule of law,” is one of the defining characteristics of anarchism that clearly distinguishes it from other socialist doctrines.⁵⁷

In other portions from *The Knouto-Germanic Empire*, Bakunin made clear that, in advocating the abolition of the state, he was not advocating the abolition of society.⁵⁸ Contrary to individualist anarchists, such as Stirner, Bakunin argued that far from “diminishing and constricting the freedom of the individual, society creates it. Society is the root and branch, liberty the fruit.”⁵⁹ For Bakunin, being free meant “being acknowledged, considered and treated as such by another man, and by all the men around” oneself. “Liberty is therefore a feature not of isolation but of interaction, not of exclusion but rather of connection, for the liberty of any individual is nothing more or less than the reflection of his humanity and his human rights in the awareness of all free men.”⁶⁰

Bakunin developed the concepts of positive and negative liberty long before the twentieth-century liberal intellectual Isaiah Berlin; but, unlike Berlin, he argued that meaningful freedom requires both.⁶¹ From Bakunin’s perspective, real freedom, as opposed to freedom in the abstract, has three aspects. The first is “eminently positive and social; it is the full development and full enjoyment of all human faculties and powers in every man, through upbringing, scientific education and material prosperity, which cannot be provided for all without the collective physical and intellectual labour of society as a whole.”⁶²

The “second aspect of liberty is negative. It consists in the rebellion of the human individual against all authority, whether divine, collective or individual.” This negative liberty consists in freedom from “the tyranny of men, the individual and social authority embodied and legalized by the State.”⁶³

The third aspect of liberty is the reciprocal awareness and recognition of the freedom of each other. As Bakunin put it, “I cannot truly call myself free until my liberty, in other words my dignity as a man, and my human right, which consists in not obeying any other man”—a kind of negative freedom—and in “behaving only in accordance with my own convictions”—a kind of positive freedom—, “are reflected in the equally free awareness of all men and return to me confirmed by the assent of all the world.”⁶⁴

In his writings from 1871, Bakunin had yet to develop a focused theoretical critique of Marxism. He did point out that Marx’s arguments about Russia being responsible for Prussian imperialism failed to apply a Marxist analysis to the situation in Prussia and Germany, suggesting that such an analysis, centered on the development of capitalism within Germany and the power of the Prussian aristocracy, would provide a more credible explanation for Prussian actions.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ See Alan Ritter, “Anarchy, Law and Freedom,” in Robert Graham (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume Three: The New Anarchism (1974–2012)*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2012), 113–119.

⁵⁸ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 151.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 145. That Carr should describe Bakunin as a Stirnerian individualist simply illustrates how superficial was his own understanding of Bakunin’s ideas (Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 451). For an excellent theoretical analysis of Bakunin’s anarchism, see Paul McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin: The Philosophical Basis of His Anarchism* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2002).

⁶⁰ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 147.

⁶¹ Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁶² Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 149.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶⁵ Bakounine, *L’Empire knouto-germanique et la révolution sociale* (1871), in *Oeuvres*, Volume II (Paris: Stock, 1980), 476–481, fn.

While Bakunin continued to object to the campaign of lies and misrepresentations that Marx had been engineering against him, he still referred to Marx's *Capital* as a "magnificent work," containing "nothing other than a sentence of death, scientifically motivated and irrevocably pronounced," against the bourgeoisie, "not as individuals," but as a class.⁶⁶ Bakunin knew of no other work that contained "an analysis so profound, so luminous, so scientific, so decisive... and so merciless... of the formation of bourgeois capital and the systematic and cruel exploitation that capital continues exercising over the work of the proletariat."⁶⁷

Meanwhile, Marx had continued his campaign against Bakunin unabated, asking the Utin group to prepare a pamphlet against Bakunin as early as August 1870, after having just informed the majority group of the Romande Federation that they would have to take a different name.⁶⁸ He denigrated Bakunin's role in the 1848–1849 revolutions in Europe, for which Bakunin paid so dearly (arrested, put in chains, condemned to death, and then imprisoned for eight years before being exiled to Siberia), describing Bakunin's position as nothing more than "sentimental Pan-Slavism!"⁶⁹ Marx also took steps to ensure that Bakunin would not be able to marshal sufficient support for his views at future conferences and congresses of the International by choosing locations more favorable to himself.⁷⁰

In March 1871, Marx had sent Elisabeth Dmitrieff to Geneva and then Paris, where she founded the Association of Women for the Defence of Paris and Aid to the Wounded.⁷¹ While in Geneva, Dmitrieff joined Utin's group and claimed that the Alliance had never been accepted into the International.⁷² Members of the Alliance had retained the letter from the General Council in July 1869 confirming its acceptance, but Utin, Perret, and their clique claimed that the letter was a forgery.⁷³ This played right into Marx's hands, for the Alliance now had to appeal to the General Council to confirm its membership, just as the majority group of the Romande Federation had had to appeal to the General Council when the Utin/Perret group claimed that name for itself in 1870.⁷⁴

This set the stage for Marx to excommunicate the Alliance at the September 1871 London Conference of the International. In July 1871, Marx privately indicated his plan: although accepted into the International in 1869, the Alliance had remained an international organization and therefore had never qualified for membership.⁷⁵ Marx had prevented the 1870 congress of the International from being held in Amsterdam, where, by his own admission, Bakunin would have had enough support to prevent Marx from taking action against him.⁷⁶ The September 1871 London Conference marked the beginning of the end of a single International, and the definitive break between Marx and his followers and the federalists and anarchists who opposed him.

⁶⁶ Michael Bakunin, *The Capitalist System* (1871), (Champagne: Libertarian Labor Review, 1993).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fn. 2..

⁶⁸ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 44, 5 & 26–27.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 27. Marxian scholar Roman Rosdolsky notes the racist overtones of Marx and Engels's views on Pan-Slavism in "Engels and the 'Nonhistoric' Peoples: The National Question in the Revolution of 1848." *Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory*, no. 18/19 (1987).

⁷⁰ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 44, 33.

⁷¹ Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades*, 71.

⁷² Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 2, 158–159.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁴ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 44, 5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

While Marx and Utin were scheming against Bakunin and the Alliance, Bakunin's friends in Switzerland were busy making plans to rescue surviving Communards hiding in Paris. Charles Perron, one of the original members of the Alliance, obtained forged documents to get the Communards out of France. Guillaume then arranged for Adhémar Schwitzguébel to smuggle them into Paris, where he met up with Léo, who was then able to escape to Switzerland.⁷⁷ Malon had escaped a week earlier. He had been hidden in a safe place by friends of Guillaume in Paris.⁷⁸ Had either of them been caught, they would have faced possible execution and certain imprisonment. Other Communards who managed to escape to Switzerland included Lefrançais and the old Proudhonist Charles Beslay.⁷⁹ Robin and Bastélica had instead escaped to England.

Pindy astonished everyone when he appeared in Switzerland the following year. Unknown to his comrades, he had been sheltered for twelve months in Paris by a seamstress, who then became his wife. At least three unfortunate men who had been mistaken for him had been shot, and everyone presumed he had met the same fate.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 2, 166–167.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 169–170.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁸⁰ Peter Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (1899), (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), 284 & 393.

Chapter Eight: Very Real Splits in the International

By September 1871, when Marx and Engels convened the London Conference of the International, the political orientation of the majority of the internationalists in Italy, Spain, and the Swiss Jura was anarcho-syndicalist in all but name. Among the surviving French internationalists, most of them were federalists and collectivists, and some were outright anarchists, such as Bastélica, Bakunin's associate from Marseilles. The Belgian internationalists also favored federalist collectivism, and can be considered revolutionary syndicalists. Nevertheless, at the conference, Marx and Engels carefully orchestrated the adoption of a policy requiring the creation of workers' political parties and their participation in national politics.

The London Conference was not a proper congress of the International. It was a "private" conference organized by Marx and Engels. They were concerned that if a congress or conference was held on the continent, the federalists and anarchists associated with Bakunin would be too well represented. Marx and Engels took steps to ensure that Bakunin's supporters would be held to a minimum and that their supporters would be well represented.

The majority faction of the Romande Federation was not advised of the conference, despite having asked the General Council to resolve which group was entitled to call itself the Romande Federation. Being unable to send any delegates to the conference, the majority group sent a letter instead to be read by Robin, who was to attend the conference as a nonvoting member of the General Council. The majority group asked that no decision be made at the conference regarding which section was the legitimate Romande Federation because the majority group was unable to present its case. The majority group took the position that the issue should be left for the next general congress of the International, but that in the meantime the General Council could investigate and prepare a report.¹ This proposal fell on deaf ears, as the General Council had already decided that the Utin/Perret group was the legitimate representative of the Romande Federation. That is why Utin and Perret were invited to the conference and were given full voice and vote.²

In addition to ensuring Utin and Perret's attendance at the conference, upon whose support Marx and Engels could rely, Marx easily persuaded the General Council to determine itself how many and which members of the General Council would be able to vote at the conference, against the objections of Bastélica, who argued that the issue should be decided at the conference itself.³ The General Council decided that all of its members could attend and speak at the conference, but only seven of the council's corresponding secretaries and six other members of the council

¹ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 2, 188–190.

² *General Council, 1870–1871*, 448; Stekloff, *History of the First International*, 208.

³ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 269.

would have the right to vote, while the six other members would be chosen through a vote by those members of the General Council present at its preconference meeting.⁴

The seven corresponding secretaries, which included Marx (for Germany), Engels (for Italy), Eccarius (for the United States), John Hales (1839–?), for England, as the English still lacked their own federal council), Patrick McDonnell (1845–1906, for Ireland), and Dupont (for France), were appointed on the basis that they would represent “those countries not appointing” their own delegates, as Engels put it.⁵ Marx and Engels were thus assured of at least six more votes (the seventh corresponding secretary was James Cohn, for Denmark, but he did not participate in the conference).⁶

Bastélica again objected, stating that he had the confidence of the Marseilles branch, and argued that the French refugees in London ought to be able to elect three delegates—as the council itself had previously decided—, rather than Dupont, one of Marx’s supporters, being designated to represent France.⁷ In fact, Dupont was not even the corresponding secretary for France and had let his membership on the General Council lapse.⁸ Robin also argued that the French were entitled to their own delegates. Despite the presence of several French refugees, some of whom were on the General Council, Marx successfully argued that the French were not entitled to any delegates of their own, no more than were “Italy, Germany and America,” ignoring that no one from any of those countries was at the conference, other than the German exiles on the General Council, such as Marx and Engels themselves.⁹

It is not clear if the Italians were even invited to the conference. In any event, Engels hardly represented their views, as most of them supported Bakunin. As for the United States, an irrevocable split was already developing there between the German immigrants, loyal to Marx, and the English-speaking Americans, such that Eccarius’s ability to represent their views was also highly suspect.¹⁰ None of the General Council members who so generously gave themselves a vote at the conference had any mandate or instructions from any of the national councils, branches, or sections, and cannot be said to have acted either as their representatives or as their delegates.

Of the six members at-large elected by the General Council to act as its own representatives at the conference, only Bastélica could be expected to support Bakunin and the Swiss federalists. The rest, with the possible exception of Thomas Mottershead (1825–1884), could be counted on to support Marx (Serrailier, Leó Frankel (1844–1896), Jung, and the French Blanquist Édouard Vaillant (1840–1915)).¹¹ With respect to the issue of making participation in bourgeois politics mandatory policy, Mottershead was clearly a supporter of political action, belonging to several groups committed to working within the English parliamentary system, such as the Labour Representation League and the Land and Labour League.¹²

⁴ Ibid., 276.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 89.

⁷ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 271 & 275.

⁸ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 89.

⁹ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 276.

¹⁰ Timothy Messer-Kruse, *The Yankee International: Marxism and the American Reform Tradition, 1848–1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 158–166.

¹¹ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 276.

¹² H. Collins & C. Abramsky, *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement: Years of the First International* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 95 & 165.

The problem with having members of the General Council making important and mandatory policy changes for the International's members was that, as Hales himself admitted, a majority of them had never been elected by the delegates at a general congress of the International.¹³ Now here they were determining who would make up thirteen of the twenty-two delegates at the London Conference.

There were six delegates from Belgium, including De Paepe, and one delegate from Spain, Anselmo Lorenzo. De Paepe did not play an effective role at the conference, where he proved "indecisive and easily succumbed to pressure."¹⁴

Lorenzo was unfamiliar with the conflicts within the International but then witnessed first-hand Marx's attacks on Bakunin and the Alliance at the conference. There he saw Marx "descending from the pedestal where my admiration and my respect placed him to the most vulgar level. Some of his partisans had fallen to even greater depths by practising adulation, as if they were vile courtiers facing their master."¹⁵

Just before the London Conference, the Spanish internationalists had held a conference in Valencia at which they declared themselves in favor of "collective property, anarchy and economic federation," by which they meant "the free universal federation of free agricultural and industrial workers' associations."¹⁶ According to Lorenzo, the only matter to be discussed at the London Conference that had an authentically working-class and emancipatory nature was the "Memoir on Organization" from the Valencia Conference that he was to present, but the General Council and the majority of the delegates were not interested in dealing with how to constitute a revolutionary force nor in giving it a form of organization that adopted a line of conduct that would accomplish its goals. Instead, they were preoccupied with "the question of command" and of giving the International, this "great union of men," a "chief."¹⁷

Even before the conference began, Marx could count on the support of at least ten of the General Council's voting members, including himself and Engels, as well as Utin and Perret, giving him a majority. At most, Bakunin could count on Bastélica, but as things turned out, he proved no match for Marx. Without anyone to advocate on behalf of Bakunin, the Alliance, Guillaume, or the majority Swiss Federation, it was difficult for them to garner the support of the seven remaining delegates—the six Belgians and Lorenzo. Even if Bastélica had more effectively defended Bakunin and the Swiss federalists, he could have only put together a block of about eight votes, far short of the number needed to prevent the Marxist majority from having their way. Needless to say, the agenda for the conference was prepared by Marx and Engels.¹⁸ As Carr comments, "it was clear that the dice had been well and truly loaded."¹⁹

With Marx's support, Vaillant put forward a resolution on the inseparability of the political and economic struggles. The target of Vaillant's resolution was the surviving group of French internationalists who advocated federalism, abstention from participation in bourgeois politics, and opposition to the revolutionary dictatorship espoused by Blanqui. It must be remembered that within the International, as opposed to the Commune, the majority of French international-

¹³ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 269–270.

¹⁴ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 94.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁶ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 2, 199.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹⁸ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 268 & 315–316.

¹⁹ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 442.

ists had been federalists and the Blanquists were in the minority—the opposite of the situation within the Commune itself, where the Blanquists and Jacobins had constituted the majority. Even more significant is that, in his campaign against Bakunin, the Proudhonists, and the federalists within the International, Marx allied himself with the authoritarian Blanquists to stamp out these anarchist heresies. Despite his qualified support of the Commune’s challenge to the French state, Marx was neither in favor of free federation within the International nor as a model for a revolutionary government.

Lorenzo and Bastélica opposed Vaillant’s motion on the ground that such a significant policy position could only be adopted after an open debate at a properly convened congress of the International, with full representation from the various sections. Furthermore, the conference was not supposed to deal with matters of principle, but of organization only.²⁰ Marx brushed aside these criticisms, claiming that the General Council had the power to present “a programme for discussion at the [general] congresses” of the International.²¹ He supported Utin’s motion that the resolution be given to the General Council “to draw up the final text of the resolution.”²²

This enabled Marx to refine the wording of the resolution, which was then published to the various sections of the International at the beginning of October 1871 as the official policy of the International.²³ The final version of the resolution provided that, against the “collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party”; consequently, the “constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the Social Revolution and its ultimate end—the abolition of classes.”²⁴

The Marxist majority effectively overturned the resolution from the Basel Congress that the General Council was “to provide for the alliance of the trade unions of all countries” for the purpose of replacing “the present wage system” with “the free federation of free producers.”²⁵ One of the nonvoting delegates at the London Conference was Pierre-Louis Delahaye (1838–1897), a member of the Paris Federation and a refugee from the Paris Commune, who proposed, in opposition to the resolution directing the formation of working-class political parties, that the Basel resolution be implemented—as it ought to have been—by the organization of an international trade union federation, aspiring for “administrative decentralisation,” which would eventually lead to the creation of the “real commune of the future,” based on workers’ self-management.²⁶

Marx opposed this resolution by initially denying that any resolution to this effect had been passed at the Basel Congress. After he was corrected, he then dismissed the proposal as “a pious wish” that could never be achieved, because trade unions could only represent “an aristocratic minority” of workers, not the vast majority of poor workers and peasants. He therefore argued that trade unions “can do nothing by themselves,” remaining a “minority” without any “power over the mass of proletarians—whereas the International works directly on these men.” The International did not need trade unions “to carry along the workers,” as the International was “the

²⁰ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 90–91.

²¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 22: Marx and Engels, 1870–1871* (New York: International Publishers, 1986), 616.

²² *Ibid.*, 618 & 706, fn. 415.

²³ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 94..

²⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 283, fn. 20.

²⁵ Rucker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 72.

²⁶ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 22*, 688, fn. 271.

only society to inspire complete confidence in the workers.”²⁷ Marx’s statements make clear that either he did not read or he chose to ignore the Spanish internationalists’ “Memoir on Organization,” which showed how revolutionary unions can be organized without being limited to skilled trades but can also include poor workers and peasants.

Marx’s position clearly foreshadowed that of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, with the “Communist Party” standing in the place of the International, that “only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Communist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people.”²⁸ Marx’s choice of words is very telling: trade unions “have no power *over* the mass of proletarians,” in contrast to the International, which presumably did. And there was no doubt in Marx’s mind that the General Council was “a governing body, as distinct from its constituents,” not simply an administrative body.²⁹

Marx and the other delegates understood that endorsement of Delahaye’s proposition would be inconsistent with the resolution mandating political action by the proletariat. Consequently, Delahaye’s proposal was voted down. In its place, the majority of delegates passed a resolution inviting the General Council “to assist” trade unions in entering “into relations with the Unions of the same trade in all other countries”—the General Council acting merely as an “international agent of communication between the national Trades’ Societies.”³⁰ This fell far short of providing “for the alliance of the trade unions of all countries” for the purpose of replacing “the present wage system” with “the free federation of free producers.” Yet again, a small group of largely self-appointed “delegates” were changing policies agreed to by the delegates at a general congress who, unlike the delegates at the London Conference, had genuine mandates from their respective councils, branches, and sections.

The London Conference also purported to ban secret organizations, sects and “separatist bodies under the name of sections of propaganda,” reaffirmed the alleged power of the General Council “to refuse the admittance of any new group or section,” and threatened to “publicly denounce and disavow all organs of the International” that had the temerity to deal with “questions exclusively reserved for the local or Federal Committees and the General Council.”³¹ The targets of these resolutions were not just Bakunin, the Alliance, and the French-speaking Swiss internationalists who opposed the reformist Geneva section, but a new section of the International that former members of the Alliance, such as Zhukovsky, and Communard refugees, including Gustave Lefrançais, had tried to form in Geneva in September 1871: the “Section of Revolutionary Propaganda and Action.”³² The Geneva Alliance had been dissolved in August 1871, so Marx took the opportunity to ensure that neither it nor any similar organization would be able to join the International again, despite the original statutes containing no prohibitions regarding the names that sections of the International could use to identify themselves.³³

Marx’s other targets included Robin and the Swiss federalist papers *Solidarité* and *Le Progrès*. Utin had by now told Marx that it was actually Robin, and not Bakunin, who had written the (relatively innocuous) articles in *L’Égalité* in the fall of 1869, which had so infuriated Marx that

²⁷ Ibid., 614.

²⁸ Lenin, in *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 327.

²⁹ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 270.

³⁰ Ibid., 443.

³¹ Leier, *Bakunin*, 263.

³² Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 46–47.

³³ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 447–448.

he had denounced them in his “confidential” communications to the various national councils in 1870, ascribing them to Bakunin.³⁴ The London Conference specifically denounced *Le Progrès* and *Solidarité* for publicly discussing issues that the council claimed should be kept secret (presumably the same sort of issues the discussion of which had earned Marx’s previous condemnation, such as whether federal councils, national branches, and their respective sections and members of the International should be required to participate in bourgeois politics).³⁵

The federalist majority of the French-speaking Swiss internationalists protested through Robin against the General Council’s recognition of Utin’s minority group as the Romande Federation, and asked that the dispute between the two groups be left for resolution by a full congress of the International.³⁶ Utin personally attacked Guillaume, Bakunin, and the Alliance, with the support of Marx and Engels.³⁷ Unsurprisingly, the General Council continued to side with Utin’s group. Guillaume’s majority faction would either have to join the Utin group or reconstitute themselves as a separate section, under the name of “Jura Federation,” which is what they ultimately did.³⁸ For standing up to the Marxists on behalf of the majority of the French-speaking Swiss internationalists, Robin was expelled from the General Council soon after the London Conference, and Bastélica resigned in solidarity shortly afterwards.³⁹

Utin accused Bakunin of being an “aristocratic pleasure seeker... totally ignorant of Russian affairs,” in the pay of the Russian secret police, and responsible not only for writing Nechaev’s notorious *Catechism of a Revolutionary* but also for Nechaev’s murder of the Russian student Ivan Ivanov.⁴⁰ Marx, who had been collecting this misinformation from Utin since 1870, disingenuously agreed with De Paepe that Bakunin “could not be condemned without hearing his defense,” but then persuaded the General Council to authorize Utin to prepare a full report on the so-called Nechaev affair.⁴¹ Marx then used Utin’s handiwork as the basis for expelling Bakunin from the International at the Hague Congress in September 1872.

Marx and Engels had published accusations that Bakunin was an agent of the Russian secret police as far back as 1848, and various allies of theirs had attempted to revive these false charges to discredit Bakunin prior to the 1869 Basel Congress, including Wilhelm Liebknecht, who was forced to admit there was no basis to them.⁴² The charges were then repeated in German-language, pro-Marxist papers in Leipzig and New York in 1870.⁴³ Marx and Engels’s Spanish operatives again “tried to revive the rumour that Bakunin was a police spy” in 1872, around the time of the Hague Congress.⁴⁴ At the beginning of the Hague Congress in September 1872, the German Social Democrats actually republished the story from Marx and Engels’s 1848 *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* that had accused Bakunin of being a Russian agent provocateur.⁴⁵

³⁴ Ibid., 399–407.

³⁵ Ibid., 449.

³⁶ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 91.

³⁷ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 195–196 & 201.

³⁸ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 92.

³⁹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 195–198.

⁴⁰ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 92–93.

⁴¹ Ibid., 93.

⁴² Guillaume, in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 28 & 38.

⁴³ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 283, fn. 18.

⁴⁴ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 74.

⁴⁵ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 248.

One of the “administrative” measures adopted at the London Conference gave the General Council the power to send its own delegates to attend the meetings of all federal councils, branches, and sections.⁴⁶ However, the conference made clear that the federal councils, branches, and sections had no right to elect delegates to represent them at meetings of the General Council. The General Council retained the power to determine who could be on the General Council. To allow the councils, branches, and sections to choose who represented them on the General Council would be to substitute “the influence of local groups... for that of the whole *International*,” as if the General Council was somehow more representative of the membership as a whole.⁴⁷

The “Federalist French Section of 1871,” in exile in London, was subsequently denied admission into the International because it had, among other things, included in its statutes a requirement that it be able to send its own delegates to the General Council. As its name implies, the “Federalist Section” was committed to the principles of working-class democracy and federalist organization. Its members included surviving members of long standing in the International, such as Camélinat.⁴⁸

Marx also used the London Conference to change the wording of the French version of the International’s *Rules*, even though the original French version of the *Rules* had been adopted by the French delegates to the Geneva Congress in 1866.⁴⁹ He had added to the provision regarding “the economical emancipation of the working classes” being “the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate” the concluding words contained in the English version of the *Rules*: “as a means.”⁵⁰

Marx, of course, had known of the differences in wording between the French and English versions of the *Rules* for years, but had never raised the issue at any congress of the International, either the 1867 Lausanne Congress, the 1868 Brussels Congress, or the 1869 Basel Congress. Instead of putting the issue to a democratic vote of the delegates to a general congress, he waited until the London Conference where he had virtually guaranteed himself a majority of the so-called delegates, none of whom had a mandate from the French-speaking members of the International to make such a change.

After Marx had the change in the wording of the French statutes confirmed at the September 1872 Hague Congress, Émile Aubry, the moderate Proudhonist from Rouen, pointed out that the original French sections of the International had joined the International on the basis of the version approved at the 1866 Geneva Congress. And yet the French sections were not consulted regarding the change to the statutes upon which their original affiliation to the International had been based.⁵¹

Far from being a triumph for Marx, as Henryk Katz claims, the London Conference provoked heated responses from various quarters and helped alienate a majority of the International’s sections from the General Council, giving renewed impetus to the anarchist currents within the International.

⁴⁶ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 441.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 490–491.

⁴⁸ Lehning, *Bakounine et les conflits dans l’Internationale*, 442–446.

⁴⁹ *General Council, 1870–1871*, 463.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 451.

⁵¹ Aubry, in Jacques Freymond *et al.*, (eds.), *La première internationale: Recueil de documents*, Volume 3 (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1962), 137.

In Switzerland, Utin triumphantly paraded the General Council's resolution reaffirming the legitimacy of the Geneva-controlled Romande Federation even before the other London Conference resolutions had been published, emphasizing Marx's role in the dispute by identifying him as the author of the resolution.⁵² Utin used the London Conference resolutions to further attack the majority group and Bakunin. According to Guillaume, Malon, who was now living in exile in Switzerland and had previously been on good terms with Utin, "critically questioned... and vigorously reproached him" for his conduct. Léo published an article in defense of the Alliance and privately indicated that the Communard refugees in Switzerland were now waging "a campaign against the resolutions of the London Conference, which are [centralist] and authoritarian, and against Karl Marx, the evil genius, the Bismarck of the International Association."⁵³

Guillaume, Schwitzguébel, and Auguste Spichiger (1842–1819), three stalwarts of the majority Swiss faction, quickly organized a congress of Swiss sections in Sonvillier, Switzerland, in November 1871, with sixteen delegates representing nine sections attending the congress. Prominent Communards and other French refugees were involved in drafting the *Sonvillier Circular*, including Malon, Lefrançais, and Jules Guesde (1845–1922).⁵⁴

While insisting that they represented the majority of the French-speaking Swiss internationalists, the congress changed its name to Jura Federation, an idea that had first been broached within the Swiss Federation itself in the fall of 1870. The articles of the Jura Federation expressly provided that its Federal Commission was "invested with no authority," but merely played "the part of an information, correspondence and statistical bureau." It was not to "meddle in any way in the internal governance of the Sections," which were to "retain their absolute autonomy," with each section making "no commitment other than to abide by the clauses of these present federal statutes." In further contrast to the General Council's attempt to ban factions within the International and to impose ideological uniformity, the articles of the Jura Federation provided that each section had "every latitude" to "enter into local or special federations with one another."⁵⁵ The statutes of the Jura Federation became the model for other federations that sided with it.

The newly constituted Jura Federation then issued the circular to the other members of the International protesting the conduct of the General Council. The *Sonvillier Circular*, as it became known, stated that: "If there is one incontrovertible fact, borne out a thousand times by experience, it is that authority has a corrupting effect on those in whose hands it is placed," and the "General Council was no exception to this inescapable law." It was "natural" that the members of the General Council—having, "in their own eyes, become a sort of government"—would come to regard "their own particular ideas... as the official theory enjoying exclusive rights within the Association." Hence the attempt of the General Council, albeit "in good faith and to ensure the success of their own particular doctrine... to introduce the authority principle into the International" and to make mandatory their ideal of "the conquest of political power by the working class."⁵⁶

The *Sonvillier Circular* appealed to other members of the International to retain "that principle of autonomy of the Sections which has been the basis of our Association thus far"; the unity of the International being based "upon a free federation of autonomous groups" rather than

⁵² Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 94.

⁵³ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 47.

⁵⁴ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Volume 2, 232–233.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 236–237.

⁵⁶ "The Sonvillier Circular," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 96–97.

being built “upon centralization and dictatorship.”⁵⁷ The *Circular* stated that the great end of the International, the “emancipation of the workers by the workers themselves,” could only be achieved “free of all directing authority” because it is impossible for “an egalitarian and free society to emerge from an authoritarian organization.”⁵⁸

The “society of the future should be nothing other than the universalization of the organization with which the International will have endowed itself.” Consequently, the International, “as the embryo of the human society of the future, is required in the here and now to faithfully mirror our principles of freedom and federation and shun any principle leaning towards authority and dictatorship.”⁵⁹ Engels mocked these views in his response to the *Circular*, thereby mocking the branches of the International that had adopted similar positions, such as the Belgian and Spanish Federations, writing that just “now, when we have to defend ourselves with all the means at our disposal, the proletariat is told to organise not in accordance with requirements of the struggle it is daily and hourly compelled to wage, but according to the vague notions of a future society entertained by some dreamers.”⁶⁰

The *Sonvillier Circular* put forward much the same position as had been proposed by the Belgian internationalists and endorsed by a majority of the delegates to the 1869 Basel Congress, but was more explicitly anarchist, recognizing neither a role for any “directing authority” within the International nor in a future free society. The *Circular* reiterated the view that the International was to provide the organizational basis for a postrevolutionary society and, therefore, that the means adopted by the workers must be consistent with their end, the “free federation of free producers” of which Pindy spoke at the Basel Congress—a position with which Marx and Engels fundamentally disagreed.

Zhukovsky and Guesde joined the Jura Federation at the Sonvillier Congress. Malon, Lefrançais, and some other French refugees briefly remained in the Geneva section controlled by Utin, where they unsuccessfully “attacked the resolutions of the London Conference.”⁶¹ They were forced to choose between the minority Romande Federation and the Jura Federation, with the result that they were expelled from the Geneva section after declaring their support for the Jura Federation.⁶²

Bakunin did not attend the Sonvillier Congress, but afterwards wrote to his various contacts in the International urging them to support the *Sonvillier Circular*, referring to it as “a solemn protest in the name of liberty, the true principle of the International, against the dogmatic and governmental pretensions of the General Council.”⁶³

The federalist French section of Communard refugees in London also issued a protest in December 1871 against the actions of the General Council at the London Conference, defending the principles of federalist “autonomy” against the “authoritarian pretensions” of the General Council.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Ibid., 97.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 97–98.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 23: Marx and Engels, 1871–1874* (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 66.

⁶¹ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 48.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 47.

⁶⁴ Lehning, *Bakounine et les Conflits dans L’Internationale*, 450–451.

In December 1871, the Jura Federation published a booklet, *The People's Almanac* for 1872, with an excerpt from a longer article that Bakunin had written in July 1871, which Guillaume entitled "The Organization of the International." The *Almanac*, which was distributed mainly in Switzerland and Belgium, also contained an article on collectivism by Schwitzguébel, in which he distinguished it from "authoritarian communism" by emphasizing that collectivism recognized the right of individuals and groups to the product of their labor and that each association was free to determine the method by which the fruits of their collective labor would be distributed among their members.⁶⁵

Bakunin's article drew out the antistatist implications of an international federation of workers, arguing that the International must, "as its name sufficiently suggests," abolish "all borders," since "the goal of the organization of the International is not the creation of new States or new despotisms but rather the radical destruction of all private dominions" protected by state power.⁶⁶ Every state is "oppressive and exploitative internally, mutually hostile if not seeking conquest externally," and therefore the negation of "humanity."⁶⁷ Bakunin opposed hierarchical organizations such as the church and the state because they "impose themselves authoritatively, officially and violently upon the masses by using the collective strength of the organized masses" against them. Consequently, if the International were to become an authoritarian and hierarchical organization "able to organize itself into a State, we—its convinced and passionate partisans—would become its most bitter opponents."⁶⁸

Consistent with the approach endorsed by the majority at the Basel Congress, Bakunin argued that the task of the International was to "organize the masses of the people... not from the top down like the States do... but from the bottom up, taking... the social existence of the masses and their real aspirations as the point of departure, inducing the masses to group, harmonize, and equilibrate themselves in conformity with [the] natural diversity of occupations and stations in life."⁶⁹ Through these functional organizations that would be controlled by the people themselves, the people would ultimately replace capitalism and the state with workers' self-management. The internationalists were to help "them to do so" through "the organization of the trades sections," propaganda, and coordinated agitation among the people.⁷⁰

Bakunin disagreed with the view, which he identified with "the nowadays triumphant authoritarian party within the International" (namely, Marx and his cohorts), that "to be sure of following the path leading to the full emancipation of the proletariat," it was necessary for the majority of the International's members to be directed by "a group of men who possess the knowledge, the philosophy, and the policy of socialism."⁷¹ Bakunin was "convinced that the moment the International... is divided into two groups—one comprising the vast majority and composed of members whose only knowledge will be a blind faith in the theoretical and practical wisdom of their commanders, and the other composed only of a few score individual directors—from that

⁶⁵ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 2, 257–258.

⁶⁶ Bakunin, *From Out of the Dustbin*, 141 & 139.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 141–143.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

moment this institution which should emancipate humanity would turn into a type of *oligarchic State*.”⁷²

Anticipating Marx’s attempt to turn the General Council into the International’s “directing authority” at the London Conference a few months after this was written (in July 1871), Bakunin argued that “this learned, clairvoyant, and cunning minority, carefully hiding its despotism behind the appearance of obsequious respect for the will of the sovereign people and for its resolutions, would yield to the necessities and requirements of its privileged position, thus assuming along with all its responsibilities, all the rights of government.”⁷³ Bakunin’s solution was not to substitute his “personal dictatorship” for that of this “learned” minority, as the Marxists claimed, but to ensure that every member of the International “has considered, reflected on, and been penetrated by the knowledge, the philosophy, and the policy of socialism,” so that the International would no longer “be divided into two groups, the majority blind tools and the minority skilled manipulators.”⁷⁴

In December 1871, three groups of internationalists in Italy came out in support of the *Sonvillier Circular*: the newly created Milan section, the “Emancipation of the Proletariat” group in Turin, and the Agrigento section in Sicily, with which Friscia was still associated.⁷⁵ The Milan paper *Il Gazzettino Rosa* published the *Sonvillier Circular* together with a letter from “a group of internationalists,” in which they endorsed the Jura Federation’s call for a congress of the International in order to combat the “authoritarian tendencies demonstrated by the General Council” at the London Conference, being convinced that “the principle of the autonomy of the sections and the regional and national federations constitutes the true strength of the International.”⁷⁶ The Agrigento section issued a similar declaration.⁷⁷ By the end of January 1872, the Bologna section had also declared itself in favor of the *Circular*.⁷⁸

The original Italian section of the International in Naples was still following an anarchist path. Toward the end of 1871, it issued a broadsheet advocating a kind of anarchist collectivism. It proclaimed that “the instruments of labor and raw materials belong to the whole of humanity” and that “everyone is entitled to enjoyment of the entire product of his labor.”⁷⁹ It called for an equal, integral education for all, and it insisted that all associations and federations “should be voluntary and achieved from the bottom up.”⁸⁰ The Neapolitan section then declared its solidarity with all workers’ associations around the world that shared its goals.

The Belgian Federation held a congress in late December 1871, where, after reading out the *Sonvillier Circular*, the delegates adopted a position virtually identical to that of the Jura Federation.⁸¹ The Belgian internationalists declared that the International had always been “an asso-

⁷² Bakunin, “The Organization of the International,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 95.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 95–96.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷⁵ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 142–144.

⁷⁶ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 252–253.

⁷⁷ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 144.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷⁹ Errico Malatesta, *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, ed. by D. Turcato (Oakland: AK Press, 2014), 9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 255.

ciation of fully autonomous federations” and that the General Council “was only a center for correspondence and advice,” without expressly criticizing the General Council’s conduct.⁸²

In November 1871, the Madrid internationalist paper *La Emancipación*, then edited by José Mesa (1840–1904), who was beginning to ally himself with Marx and Engels and would later help found the Spanish Socialist Party, published an equivocal commentary on the London Conference resolution mandating the creation of workers’ political parties. While the article agreed that the workers were in need of their own political organization, corresponding to their “proper interests,” and that the workers must separate themselves “from all the old political parties formed by the possessing classes,” it also advised the workers to “stay away with scorn from the ballot boxes which will never lead to our emancipation.”⁸³

In December 1871, the Barcelona internationalist paper *La Federación*, edited by Farga Pellicer, who had remained in contact with Bakunin, published the *Sonvillier Circular* and endorsed the Jura Federation’s call for a congress of the International, as quickly as possible, in order to determine the proper role of the General Council.⁸⁴ *La Emancipación* published the *Sonvillier Circular* soon thereafter.

However, Marx and Engels had by then dispatched Marx’s son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, to Spain to combat Bakunin and anyone sympathetic to anarchism. As a result, during the period leading up to the September 1872 Hague Congress, the Spanish sections of the International were racked by dissension.⁸⁵ Lafargue worked with Mesa to turn *La Emancipación* into a Marxist mouthpiece, publishing attacks on Bakunin and the Alliance and accusing Bakunin of being a police spy, the perennial falsehood that Lafargue had picked up from Marx back in Paris.⁸⁶ At Marx and Engels’s suggestion, Lafargue also had *La Emancipación* publish a Spanish translation of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, a good indication that they still endorsed the fundamental premise of the *Manifesto*, the “conquest of political power by the proletariat.”⁸⁷

The Marxist campaign against anarchist influence in the Spanish sections of the International reached its lowest point in the spring of 1872 when *La Emancipación* published a list of members of the Spanish Alliance, “exposing their former comrades to police reprisals.”⁸⁸ The International had been banned by the Spanish government in January 1872.⁸⁹ In retaliation, the Marxist faction was expelled from the Madrid Federation, whereupon they formed their own federation, which, predictably, was “immediately recognized by the General Council.”⁹⁰ However, with the “overwhelming majority of the Madrid Federation” and the FRE supporting the “*Aliancistas*,” the split “achieved virtually nothing for Lafargue” and his group.⁹¹

The Marxists were also campaigning against any French internationalists suspected of supporting Bakunin, using much the same underhanded methods and showing no solidarity with members of what had now become in France an illegal organization (the International was officially outlawed there in March 1872). For example, Marx and Engels accused Malon of being

⁸² Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 113.

⁸³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 245–246.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁸⁵ Juan Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organisation: The History of the F.A.I.* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1986), 34–35.

⁸⁶ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 74; Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 43, 492.

⁸⁷ Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 484.

⁸⁸ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 75; Kaplan gives the date as April 1872, in *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 96.

⁸⁹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 273.

⁹⁰ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 98.

⁹¹ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 75.

a “Bakuninist,” and false rumours were spread regarding his conduct during the Commune.⁹² Bastélica was subject to similar attacks.⁹³ Marx’s agent, Utin, accused the French refugees who published *La Révolution Sociale* in Switzerland of being Bonapartists and the Jura Federation of supporting Bismarck’s persecution of Social Democrats in Germany.⁹⁴

Although they had banned “secret” organizations from the International, Marx and Engels were not averse to working in secret with their supporters to destroy the reputations and influence of Bakunin and his associates within the International. Much of their campaign of falsehoods and misrepresentations is summarized in their “private” communication—spread far and wide prior to the Hague Congress—, the notorious pamphlet *Fictitious Splits in the International*.⁹⁵ The very title of the pamphlet established an Orwellian precedent for future Marxist propaganda, describing as “fictitious” the very real splits that were developing within the International between the Marxist and Blanquist supporters of political action, centralized authority, and revolutionary government and the protosyndicalist and anarchist currents that supported workers’ self-management and argued that the organization and practice of the International should mirror the free society of the future.

There simply is not enough space to catalogue all the lies and half-truths in Marx and Engels’s pamphlet, many of which I have already dealt with, such as the “representative” nature of the London Conference and its authority to revise the statutes and policies of the International. I will just highlight some of the more glaring passages.

Among other things, Marx and Engels suggested that the London Conference’s resolution banning “fraudulent” sections from the International had given “the international police a long-awaited excuse to start a noisy campaign ostensibly for the unrestricted autonomy of the workers whom it professed to protect against the despicable despotism of the General Council,” thereby implying that the authors of the *Sonvillier Circular* and any of its supporters were either police dupes or agents and that the General Council had banned “fraudulent” sections as a security measure to prevent the police from infiltrating the International.⁹⁶

Without any evidence, Bakunin was accused of “preaching the ideas of Pan-Slavism and racial war.”⁹⁷ The League of Peace and Freedom that Bakunin had at one time belonged to was allegedly “founded in opposition to the International,” thereby implying that Bakunin was initially an opponent of the International.⁹⁸ Bakunin then joined the International “to replace the International’s General Rules” with his own “makeshift programme” and “to replace the General Council by his personal dictatorship.”⁹⁹

Having been foiled at the Basel Congress in his alleged plot to have the General Council transferred to Geneva, Bakunin began orchestrating an “incessant war... not only against the General Council but also against all International sections which refused to adopt” his “sectarian” program, as if Bakunin had tried to force the reformist sections to adopt an anarchist program.¹⁰⁰ Marx and Engels again complained of *L’Égalité*’s alleged campaign against the General Council,

⁹² Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 158, fn. 33; 160, fn. 46.

⁹³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 2, 261.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 280–282.

⁹⁵ *General Council, 1871–1872*, 356–409.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 360.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 361.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 366.

quoting from Marx's January 1870 "confidential communication" to all the national branches of the International.¹⁰¹ They even compared *L'Égalité* to the "League of Public Welfare," an "association of feudal gentry" in France during the 1400s opposed to Louis IX's centralization of power under the monarchy (if the analogy held, then that would make Marx and Engels coregents of the International).¹⁰²

The vote by the majority of delegates at the April 1870 Romande Federation meeting to admit the Geneva Alliance into the federation was transformed by Marx and Engels into an "attempt to take over the leadership of French Switzerland," when the reformist Utin group used the vote to justify setting up a separate French-speaking Swiss federation from which the anarchists were effectively banned.¹⁰³

Guillaume was repeatedly denounced, as were Malon, Zhukovsky, Léo, Bastélica, and Lefrançais. Malon and Lefrançais were singled out for abuse because of their opposition to the General Council giving itself the power—quoting from the London Conference resolutions themselves—"to publicly denounce and disavow all newspapers calling themselves organs of the International which, following the precedents of *Le Progrès* and *Solidarité*, should discuss in their columns" the kinds of issues that had been raised by *L'Égalité* in the fall of 1869.¹⁰⁴ Marx and Engels attempted to discredit Malon and Lefrançais's argument that this resolution "aimed a blow at freedom of thought and its expression" by claiming that the bourgeois and reactionary press had leveled the same criticisms against the resolution.¹⁰⁵

To discredit the Jura Federation, Marx and Engels quoted reports from *La Révolution Sociale* that simply gave an honest appraisal of the state of the working-class movement in Switzerland following the Commune. Then they contrasted that situation with the rest of Europe, where the International was allegedly growing by leaps and bounds under the firm leadership of the General Council.¹⁰⁶ But, as Marx and Engels admitted, the International was effectively illegal in Germany and had been decimated in France, which had been one of their excuses for holding the "private" London Conference instead of a congress of the International in the first place.¹⁰⁷ In fact, the only countries in which the International was really growing were Spain and Italy, under the influence of Bakunin, particularly as a result of Bakunin's polemic against Mazzini.

Throughout this truly execrable pamphlet, Marx and Engels attempted to destroy the reputations of their ideological opponents within the International by associating them with various persons allegedly guilty of numerous petty and more substantial crimes, such as police informers, petty thieves, and embezzlers; and the enemies of socialism, such as bourgeois republicans, neo-Jacobins (like Félix Pyat (1810–1889)), monarchists, and other assorted reactionaries and authoritarians.¹⁰⁸

But Marx and Engels really plumbed the depths when they devoted an entire section to Albert Richard and Gaspard Blanc, former associates of Bakunin who, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, called for the restoration of Napoléon III. Marx and Engels seriously suggested that

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 367–368.

¹⁰² Ibid., 368 & 576, fn. 337.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 368.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 384–385.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 385.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 400.

¹⁰⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 23, 65; *General Council, 1871–1872*, 244.

¹⁰⁸ *General Council, 1871–1872*, 369, 374, 375, 376, 395 & 403.

Richard and Blanc were giving voice to the views of Bakunin and the Communard refugees in Switzerland associated with the exile journal *La Révolution Sociale*.¹⁰⁹

They concluded their pamphlet by claiming that the Jura Federation and their allies within the International were simply playing into the hands of the Bonapartists and other reactionaries by proclaiming “anarchy in proletarian ranks.” The antiauthoritarians, following the example of “their master Bakunin,” allegedly wanted to replace the organization of the International, under the guidance of the General Council, “with anarchy,” understood in a completely negative sense, “at a time when the old world [was] seeking a way of crushing” the International. The “international police [wanted] nothing better.”¹¹⁰

Earlier, they had suggested that the view of the Jura Federation (shared by the Belgians and Spaniards, although that goes unmentioned) that the International was “the embryo of the future human society,” if put into practice, would have entailed the Communards casting “away all discipline and all arms,” acting as if the “New Jerusalem” had already arrived.¹¹¹ That Marx and Engels were categorically opposed to the workers creating self-managed organizations that would abolish capitalism and provide the basis of the future socialist society could not have been made more clear by even their anarchist opponents.

It should come as no surprise that the term “Marxist” was first used by the subjects of Marx and Engels’s vitriolic attacks to describe the group Marx and Engels had gathered around themselves to combat Proudhonist, federalist, and anarchist tendencies within the International by any means necessary, instead of being used simply to identify those who agreed with Marx’s theoretical views.¹¹²

Malon, for one, was no puppet of Bakunin, but a genuine representative of the revolutionary federalist currents within the French International. However, at the time, their positions were very similar, albeit independently arrived at, as Malon’s 1872 definition of socialism illustrates:

Abolition of classes. Integral and professional education assured to each child. The instruments of labor, land, and tools returned to those who work... [who] will have the right to the integral product of [their] labor, once social expenses are filled. Transformation of oppressive and parasitic political states into a vast and free federation, of industrial and agricultural groups, of communes, of regions, of nations, of continents, united by the great law of human solidarity.¹¹³

What Marx and Engels failed to understand was that Bakunin “merely gave precision to attitudes already adopted” by other members of the International.¹¹⁴

In Italy, new sections of the International were being formed all across the country, mainly by people who agreed with Bakunin’s critique of capitalism and the state and the need for a broad-based social revolution of the workers and peasants. In March 1872, Italian internationalists organized a regional congress of the Bologna *Fascio Operaio*, with delegates from eighteen sections, including some from as far away as Naples.¹¹⁵ The congress purported to take a neutral position regarding the conflict between the General Council and the Jura Federation, but in recognizing both as merely “offices of correspondence and statistics,” implicitly sided with the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 404–407.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 407.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 399.

¹¹² Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 15.

¹¹³ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 52.

¹¹⁴ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 55.

¹¹⁵ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 156.

Jura Federation.¹¹⁶ More importantly, the Bologna Congress adopted an anarchist position rejecting the state and endorsed “political abstentionism,” although “no one directly representing [Bakunin’s] views attended the congress.”¹¹⁷

“By mid-April 1872... the strength of the [International] in Italy can be placed at about fifty sections.”¹¹⁸ The majority of the internationalists in Italy were anarchists, and their numbers and influence would increase after Cafiero made his definitive break with Engels in June 1872. Up until then, Engels had been privately corresponding with Cafiero as part of his and Marx’s campaign against Bakunin. In addition to his ceaseless personal attacks on Bakunin, which Cafiero found distasteful and ill-advised, Engels had, among other things, told Cafiero “that Bismarck and Victor Emmanuel had both rendered enormous service to the revolution by bringing about political centralization in their respective countries,” again emphasizing that despite their praise for the Paris Commune, Engels and Marx were no federalists.¹¹⁹

Engels had misled Cafiero regarding the nature of the London Conference resolution mandating the creation of workers’ political parties, claiming that the resolution “did not require the organization of political parties in all cases.”¹²⁰ Having read Engels’s private praise for the political centralization achieved by Bismarck and Victor Emmanuel and Marx and Engels’s *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Cafiero told Engels that his “*communist program* is, for me, at its most positive, a gross reactionary absurdity,” as it was calling “for *the conquest of political power by the proletariat*” and “the constitution of a new State” that Engels had told him in their private correspondence would “apparently be sufficiently *strong*, that it will first of all begin by *teaching illiterates to read, by fighting brigandage and the camorra* and by *educating* the people, who, through the years, will then *gradually* obtain the use of that much longed-for *capital*; while the State, having thus completed the great work of emancipation, will slowly merge itself in a new State *sui generis: an economic State* with all its *unitary centralization* and its industrial armies, especially agricultural.”¹²¹

The conduct of the General Council had, for Cafiero, provided “all the proofs of a *strong government*, replying to whoever attacked its principles, with insinuation, slander, and the whole series of personal intrigues, which form the quintessence of the strong policy of a model State.”¹²² Just as the antiauthoritarian federalists and anarchists within the International saw the federalist organization they championed in the International as the “embryo” of a future free society, so they saw the General Council as foreshadowing what a Marxist revolutionary government would look like.

Contrary to Ravindranathan’s doubts regarding “how well Cafiero understood the premises of Marxian ideology,” Cafiero understood them very well, as was inadvertently confirmed by Engels soon after Cafiero broke with him.¹²³ In a letter from July 1872, Engels “ascribed Marxism’s failure to establish itself [in Italy] to Italy’s lack of a modern industrial proletariat,” describing Italy as “a

¹¹⁶ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 48.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.; Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 156.

¹¹⁸ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 161.

¹¹⁹ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 284, fn. 21.

¹²⁰ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 144.

¹²¹ Ibid., 171; the reference to industrial armies, especially for agriculture, is taken straight from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 490).

¹²² Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 51.

¹²³ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 171.

backward nation of peasants.”¹²⁴ The revolution was to be led by the industrial proletariat in those countries that possessed a “big industry,” with their concomitant centralization of production and state power.¹²⁵

At the beginning of August 1872, the Italian internationalists held a congress in Rimini at which they founded the Italian Federation of the International. With delegates from across Italy, the Rimini Congress incorporated in its “program... the original preamble to the [International’s] statutes,” providing that “the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves.”¹²⁶ The structure of the Italian Federation was designed to preserve “the local autonomy and free initiative of sections and individuals,” with membership being “open to all workers’ societies that accepted the Federation’s program.”¹²⁷ The only central bodies were to be correspondence and statistics commissions with no authority.¹²⁸

The Rimini delegates endorsed strikes as an important means of “developing the spirit of class solidarity necessary to fight against capitalism,” although they “believed that strikes were of little use as a means to improve the workers’ economic condition.”¹²⁹ This was similar to the position taken by some of the French internationalists, such as Varlin and Malon, and the Spanish internationalists, soon to be reiterated at the antiauthoritarian Saint Imier Congress.

The Rimini Congress rejected the London Conference’s resolution mandating workers’ political parties and “denounced Marx’s ‘Private Circular’ of May 1872”—namely, Marx and Engels’s not so private attack on Bakunin and all those associated with him, the *Fictitious Splits in the International*. By its conduct, the General Council had demonstrated its “lust for authority,” which was completely contrary to “the revolutionary sentiment of the Italian proletariat.”¹³⁰

The Italian internationalists concluded the Rimini Congress by breaking “all solidarity with the General Council of London, and affirming more and more... economic solidarity with all the workers.” They proposed that “all those sections that do not share the authoritarian principles of the General Council... send their representatives on September 2, 1872, not to *The Hague*, but to Neuchâtel in Switzerland” for an “anti-authoritarian Congress.”¹³¹ Despite Bakunin’s urgings to the contrary, the Italian Federation maintained its boycott of the Hague Congress, reducing the support Bakunin could rely on there, but also demonstrating that Bakunin had far from dictatorial powers over the antiauthoritarian sections and federations of the International.

Other federations opposing the General Council did not agree with the idea of holding a separate antiauthoritarian congress at the same time as the Hague Congress, but instead chose to send delegates to The Hague. It was only after the Hague Congress that they decided to hold a meeting of the antiauthoritarian sections at Saint Imier in Switzerland.

In Belgium, Hins and a significant portion of the Belgian Federation followed a position close to that of Bakunin and his associates. With them, Hins regarded the Paris Commune as “the fulfillment of antiauthoritarian Socialism.”¹³² After the London Conference, he argued for the abolition of the General Council, which he regarded as an authoritarian organization. A small majority of

¹²⁴ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 53.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 58.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 58–59.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 58.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 59.

¹³⁰ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 177.

¹³¹ Ibid., 178.

¹³² Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 113.

the Belgian Federation was not prepared to go that far, and instead advocated curtailing “the powers of the General Council.”¹³³

In July 1872, Bakunin helped persuade a group of mainly Russian and Serbian students and political refugees to create a Slav section of the International in Zurich, which affiliated with the Jura Federation.¹³⁴ Bakunin drafted the Slav section’s program in August 1872. The program is important because, as Arthur Lehning notes, the ideas it sets forth “are essentially those accepted by the ‘anti-authoritarian’ federations of the International after the Conference of London.”¹³⁵

The Slav section expressly indicated its acceptance of “the anarchist revolutionary programme,” calling for the “abolition of the State, law, property and the juridical concept of the family,” to be replaced by “the organization of popular life, from the bottom upwards, based on collective work and property,” and “the completely free federation of private individuals in associations or in autonomous communes, or... in great homogeneous associations united by the similarity of their interests and social aims.”¹³⁶

The Slav section, “believing in materialism and atheism,” vowed to “fight against all forms of religious worship, against all official and unofficial Churches,” because “the concept of anything divine” invariably serves as “the consecration of every sort of slavery.”¹³⁷

Demanding “for women as well as for men not only liberty, but equality of rights and obligations,” the Slav section called for “egalitarian, scientific education, without sexual discrimination.” However, “as the enemy of government,” it rejected “with horror governing bodies composed of scholars, as being the most treacherous and harmful of all.”¹³⁸

The Slav section rejected both “Pan-Slavism, that is, the liberation of Slav nations with the help of the Russian empire, and Pan-Germanism, that is, liberation at the hands of the bourgeois German civilization.”¹³⁹ Opposing nationalism and the state as being “incompatible with the freedom of the proletariat,” the Slav section looked to the International as the means by which to emancipate the proletariat and to create “an international, fraternal union of peoples” based on liberty and equality.¹⁴⁰

Given this task, the International could not contain within it “any sort of higher authority or government,” but must be based on the “free federation of autonomous sections,” with “complete solidarity of individuals, sections and federations in the economic struggle of the workers of all countries against their exploiters.”¹⁴¹ Each section of the International was therefore to have:

1. a. the freedom of philosophical and social propaganda;
2. b. political freedom, so long as it does not interfere with the freedom and rights of other sections and federations;
3. c. freedom in the organization of national revolution; [and]

¹³³ Ibid., 114.

¹³⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 166; Guillaume, in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 46.

¹³⁵ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 166.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 175–176.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 176.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 175.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 175–176.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 176–177.

4. d. freedom of association with sections and federations of other countries.¹⁴²

Similar positions were to be endorsed by the antiauthoritarian sections of the International at the Saint Imier Congress.

The Hague Congress at the beginning of September 1872 was an ignominious affair. Marx and Engels manipulated the composition of the congress to ensure a majority that would affirm the London Conference resolution on political participation, expel Guillaume and Bakunin from the International, and transfer the General Council to New York to prevent the antiauthoritarians from challenging their control.¹⁴³ As a result, Marx and Engels alienated even some of their own supporters.

Marx and Engels did what they could to “pack” the congress with delegates who would support their positions. Engels paid the travel expenses of five members of the General Council, and Marx solicited “mandates” from sections that could not send their own delegates.¹⁴⁴ Over twenty members of the General Council went to the congress, although many of them were listed as delegates for other sections (including Marx and Engels).¹⁴⁵ By the time the Hague Congress began, the Marxists had assembled “a majority of two to one, or perhaps more.”¹⁴⁶

Typical of the “mandates” solicited by Marx was the one from New York section No. 1, which instructed Marx to ensure “a taut organisation and above all centralisation in the fullest sense of the word” in order to combat “the machinations of *Bakunin*, *Guillaume* and their associates, who intend to decentralise the International... in order to gain more elbow room for their personal intrigues and to cripple our movement.”¹⁴⁷

For all their bluster about the need to stop Bakunin from destroying the International from within, Marx and Engels effectively euthanized the wing in favor of political action by transferring the General Council to New York, to the shock and dismay of many of their allies against Bakunin, such as Vaillant and the other French Blanquists, who quit the Hague Congress in disgust. They described the transfer of the General Council to New York as nothing other than the “collapse” of the International itself, as it “fled from the revolution across the Atlantic Ocean.”¹⁴⁸

In *Fictitious Splits in the International*, Marx and Engels had commended the “official” Romande Federation for passing a resolution to “exclude forever from the International Bakunin, Guillaume and their supporters.”¹⁴⁹ At the Hague Congress they succeeded, even though the committee charged with investigating the “secret” Alliance had been unable to determine whether the Alliance still existed.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Bakunin and Guillaume were expelled on the basis of “private” testimony provided by Marx to the committee after it had already met with Guillaume, when Marx produced a letter from Russia indicating that Bakunin’s former associate, Nechaev, had threatened Bakunin’s Russian publisher when the latter had demanded that Bakunin repay the advance he had received to translate Marx’s *Capital* into Russian.

¹⁴² Ibid., 177.

¹⁴³ Leier, *Bakunin*, 265–269.

¹⁴⁴ Hans Gerth, (ed.), *The First International: Minutes of the Hague Congress of 1872* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), xv–xvi.

¹⁴⁵ *The Hague Congress of the First International, September 2–7, 1872* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 331–332.

¹⁴⁶ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 131.

¹⁴⁷ *Hague Congress*, 316.

¹⁴⁸ Leier, *Bakunin*, 268.

¹⁴⁹ *General Council, 1871–1872*, 403.

¹⁵⁰ *Hague Congress*, 481.

There was no evidence that Bakunin was even aware of the threat, nor was Guillaume given the opportunity to respond to this new “evidence,” but it was sufficient for the committee to recommend not only Bakunin’s expulsion but also the expulsions of Guillaume, Schwitzguébel, Malon, and two other French members of the International.¹⁵¹ After the congress voted to expel Bakunin and Guillaume, with the motion to expel Schwitzguébel being only narrowly defeated, Engels indicated that no further expulsions were necessary, as the expulsions of Bakunin and Guillaume would “suffice as an example.”¹⁵² Unsurprisingly, the Marxists and Blanquists had voted as a block for the expulsions of Bakunin and Guillaume.¹⁵³

After the committee had interviewed Guillaume, it advised him that it had come to “no serious result.” It was only after it interviewed Marx that it changed its mind. Marx later admitted that the letter from Russia, the source of which he kept secret even from the committee, “had done its work.”¹⁵⁴ The portion of the committee’s report finding Bakunin guilty of “dishonest dealings” and “fraud” in relation to the repayment of the advance from his publisher and recommending the expulsions of Bakunin, Guillaume, and the others, was “in substance the work of Marx.”¹⁵⁵ There can be no question that Bakunin and Guillaume were expelled from the International without even the semblance of a fair hearing.

Even Archer, whose sympathies for Marx and hostility toward Bakunin are readily apparent, admits that the Hague Congress was not “really representative of labor.”¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the few antiauthoritarian and federalist voices that were heard at the Hague Congress anticipated the positions that were to be taken by several national federations after the congress, when they met at Saint Imier in Switzerland to reconstitute the International along antiauthoritarian lines, rejecting the Marxist rump that had “fled across the ocean.” The antiauthoritarian minority, comprising the Belgian, Dutch, Spanish, and Jurassian delegates, issued a statement on the last day of the congress identifying themselves as “adherents of autonomy and federation,” committed to “the principles of federal autonomy.”¹⁵⁷

Before his expulsion at the end of the congress, Guillaume said that “two great ideas run side by side in the movement, that of centralization of power in the hands of a few, and that of the free federation of those whom the homogeneity of the economic conditions in each country has united behind the idea of common interests in all countries,” not behind “the conception of a single brain” (a reference to Marx).¹⁵⁸ He added that the sections did not need the General Council for the economic struggle, as the council had never organized a strike, nor was it needed for the political struggle, as it had never put up any barricades.¹⁵⁹

Tomás González Morago (?–1885), from the Spanish Federation, said they were in favor of abolishing the General Council or retaining it only as “a centre for correspondence and statistics.”¹⁶⁰ In their view, the General Council should have “no power whatever, neither over the sections

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 482.

¹⁵² Ibid., 106.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 104–105.

¹⁵⁴ Carr, *Michael Bakunin*, 450.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Archer, *The First International in France*, 299.

¹⁵⁷ Gerth, *The First International*, 229–230.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 207.

¹⁵⁹ *Hague Congress*, 149.

¹⁶⁰ Gerth, *The First International*, 208.

nor over federations.”¹⁶¹ The Spanish Federation would not tolerate any more power being given to the General Council, as the federation was “free and autonomous.”¹⁶²

The Belgian delegates took a similar position, with Désiré Brismée (1822–1888) saying that they did “not wish the General Council to have any power.”¹⁶³ He mentioned that one of their sections, in the Vesdre valley, even demanded the “complete abolition of the General Council”—the same position that Hins had been advocating before the congress.¹⁶⁴ The other Belgian delegates agreed with Morago that the General Council should be nothing more than an “information bureau.”¹⁶⁵ When it was suggested that the General Council be moved from London to Brussels, Brismée said that the Belgian Federation was “anti-authoritarian and would refuse to apply the principle of authority recognised by the [Hague] Congress.”¹⁶⁶

Alfred Herman, another Belgian delegate, pointed out that “in the Belgian Federation there can be no abuse of powers because it is composed of delegates who are answerable to their mandatories.”¹⁶⁷ This, of course, was in contrast to the General Council, which could not only appoint its own members in between congresses but had specifically rejected any scheme by which the council would be made up of delegates with mandates from their respective national federations.

Lest there be any doubt remaining about Marx’s position on this issue, he first responded by rejecting Brismée’s suggestion that the General Council function as an information bureau, saying that he “would rather abolish the General Council than... transform it into a letter box.”¹⁶⁸ He then suggested that the International would soon be taken over by journalists, police spies, agent provocateurs, monarchists, and windbags if the General Council did not have the power to suspend not only sections and branches but also entire national federations.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, according to Marx, the right of individual sections “to form federations freely... cannot exist.”¹⁷⁰

Contrary to the claims of Marx, Engels, and their followers, the anarchists were not “secret” authoritarians trying to impose their “dictatorship” over the International. In contrast to the Marxists and Blanquists, the anarchist and federalist sections of the International advocated and practiced a form of direct democracy, using recallable delegates having imperative mandates expressing the views of the sections that had authorized them to attend municipal, regional, national, and international gatherings in the name of those sections.

At the Hague Congress, Alerini spoke for the antiauthoritarians when he again put forward their view that the national federations should nominate their own delegates, subject to “the right of recall,” to sit on the General Council.¹⁷¹ Morago and Nicolás Alonso Marselau, on behalf of the Spanish Federation, repeatedly emphasized that the Spanish delegates could only vote in accordance with their mandates.¹⁷² Serrailier, whom Marx and the General Council had sent to

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 209.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 210.

¹⁶⁵ *Hague Congress*, 71.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 81.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 78.

¹⁶⁸ Gerth, *The First International*, 211.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 212.

¹⁷⁰ *Hague Congress*, 74.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 88. Needless to say, Alerini’s proposal was quickly rejected by the Marxist majority (ibid., 89).

¹⁷² Ibid., 47, 52, 56, 79–81 & 112.

Paris to set up a separate Paris Federation committed to political participation, argued against the General Council being composed of recallable delegates from the national federations and against imperative mandates, stating that the delegates should be free to vote as they wished, to which Guillaume responded that the delegates would then be representing no one other than themselves.¹⁷³

Marx and Engels even changed the voting procedure at the Hague Congress to ensure that the votes would be in their favor. At the Basel Congress, despite thirty-two delegates voting in favor of Bakunin's resolution in support of abolishing the right of inheritance and only twenty-three voting against, the resolution did not pass, because once the abstentions were counted, the thirty-two votes in favor did not represent an absolute majority. The abstentions at the Hague Congress no longer counted, so that the resolutions put forward by Marx and Engels could be passed without an absolute majority. Guillaume objected to this change of procedure, but to no avail.¹⁷⁴ Because the anarchist and federalist delegates honored their mandates (with some exceptions, such as the delegate from Rouen who voted with the Marxists in violation of his mandate), they had to abstain from voting on issues for which they had no mandate, leading to a significant number of abstentions on several resolutions.

The Spanish delegates argued that votes should be weighted to reflect how many members each delegate actually represented, as some delegates represented only a handful of members while others represented hundreds of them. Engels personally spoke against that position, which was then rejected by the Marxist and Blanquist majority.¹⁷⁵

When the congress turned to the new provision in the International's *Rules* mandating the creation of working-class political parties, Guillaume noted that the term "abstentionists" was "an ill-chosen phrase of Proudhon's" to describe the antiauthoritarians' position, which was better described by Hins at the Belgian Federation's congress as the refusal to engage in parliamentary politics. But that did not mean that the antiauthoritarians were opposed to political struggle. What they advocated was a different kind of political struggle, outside of parliaments—namely, "social revolution" and "the destruction of bourgeois politics, of the state."¹⁷⁶

With respect to the proposal to insert into the International's *Rules* the London Conference resolution that "the constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social revolution" and to further provide that "the conquest of political power has therefore become the great duty of the working class," Guillaume noted that this wording was based on Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto*, which referred to the "organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party" and called for the "conquest of political power by the proletariat."¹⁷⁷

Guillaume then pointed to the immediate political program set forth in the *Manifesto*, which called for the centralization of "all instruments of production in the hands of the State, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class"; the centralization of credit, communications, and transportation "in the hands of the state"; and the establishment "of industrial armies, especially

¹⁷³ Ibid., 88 & 71.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 91.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 203.

¹⁷⁶ Gerth, *The First International*, 219.

¹⁷⁷ Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 481 & 484.

for agriculture.”¹⁷⁸ He suggested that the resolution on the conquest of political power essentially called for the same thing—namely, state socialism.

With respect to the claim in the *Manifesto* that the state would disappear with the disappearance of classes, Guillaume pointed out that the centralization of production would still require industrial armies and a general staff, such that authority would continue to exist.¹⁷⁹ The antiauthoritarians, on the other hand, did not reject political struggle, rather they rejected “the seizure of political power,” demanding instead “the destruction of the state as an expression of political power.”¹⁸⁰

Longuet, the former Proudhonist and future son-in-law of Marx, responded that, without the “centralisation of forces” by a working-class political party, “nothing [would remain] of the International.” The day after the Hague Congress, in a speech in Amsterdam, Marx said much the same thing. Having “proclaimed the necessity for the working classes to fight the old disintegrating society in the political as well as the social field,” Marx opined, the Hague Congress “rightly believed that it was wise and necessary to increase the powers of its General Council and to centralise, in view of the impending struggle, activity which isolation would render impotent.”¹⁸¹

At the Hague Congress, Longuet argued that anyone expressing contrary views, such as “Guillaume and his teacher and master, Bakunin,” could not be allowed to “belong to the I.W.A.”¹⁸² And that, in a nutshell, was the position of Marx and his supporters. The International could no longer be an international association of workers with different views regarding how best to achieve the emancipation of the working class. There was only one way to achieve that, and that was by the formation of working-class political parties under centralized control. Anyone who disagreed with that would face expulsion, just like Bakunin and Guillaume, of whom an example had already been made.

The response of the antiauthoritarians was swift. Barely a week after the Hague Congress, they held their own congress in Saint Imier, where they reconstituted the International independent of the shell organization now controlled by Marx and Engels through the General Council. The opponents of the Marxist-controlled International were united in their rejection of the concentration of power in the General Council, regardless of whether the council sat in London or New York. They also shared a commitment to directly democratic federalist forms of organization. Some were completely opposed to the formation of working-class political parties to achieve state power, while others were opposed to making that a mandatory policy regardless of the views of the membership and local circumstances. The reconstituted antiauthoritarian wing of the International was to have anarchist, syndicalist, and, for a time, reformist elements.

Bakunin was unable to attend the Hague Congress. If he had tried traveling to The Hague either through France or Germany, he would have faced almost certain arrest. Learning of his and Guillaume’s expulsion from the International, Bakunin began developing a more incisive critique of Marxism that went beyond simply criticizing Marx and Engels’s underhanded tactics and dealt with the theoretical underpinnings and limitations of Marx’s theories. In the process, Bakunin began to more clearly demarcate the theoretical differences between anarchism and Marxism.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 490.

¹⁷⁹ *Hague Congress*, 84.

¹⁸⁰ Gerth, *The First International*, 219.

¹⁸¹ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 23, 255.

¹⁸² *Hague Congress*, 163.

Bakunin did not agree with Marx that classes could be defined simply in relation to the role they played in production. Neither did Bakunin agree that the proletariat was destined to abolish all classes and the states necessary to maintain class rule by creating working-class political parties that would take political power and then centralize control over the means of production, creating the economic basis for a socialist or communist society where coercive government would ultimately become unnecessary.

Bakunin rejected the view that “the urban and industrial workers,” through their political parties should rule over “the rural proletariat,” as the urban workers would then constitute a “new aristocracy” of exploiters.¹⁸³ At the time, the urban proletariat formed only a minority of the laboring classes.¹⁸⁴ Consequently, Bakunin did not advocate a purely proletarian revolution, but the revolt of the masses. For Bakunin, the “*flower of the proletariat*,” which “alone [was] powerful enough... to inaugurate and bring to triumph the Social Revolution,” was not the “upper layer” of workers “unfortunately only too deeply saturated with all the political and social prejudices and all the narrow aspirations and pretensions of the bourgeoisie.” Rather, it was “that great mass, those millions of the uncultivated, the disinherited, the miserable, the illiterates... that eternal ‘meat’ (on which governments thrive), that great *rabble of the people*.”¹⁸⁵ The antiauthoritarian internationalists generally agreed, organizing peasants and unskilled workers as well as craft and factory workers.

But, for Bakunin, Marx’s conception of proletarian political power was itself a “sham.” The urban proletariat, consisting of “tens or hundreds of thousands of men,” would never be able “to wield [political] power effectively.” Instead, power would be wielded over them by “a group of men elected to represent and govern them,” leaving the workers to be the “slaves, puppets and victims of a new group of ambitious men.”¹⁸⁶ Foreseeing the quality of life in the future Soviet Union, Bakunin described a “workers’ state” as “a barracks regime for the proletariat, in which a standardized mass of men and women workers would wake, sleep, work and live by rote.”¹⁸⁷

Since the urban proletariat could not exercise collective political power directly, but only through its so-called representatives, Bakunin predicted that a socialist government, even a “transitional” one—whether an elected assembly or a revolutionary dictatorship—would be controlled by a “new class” of intellectuals, bureaucrats, and political functionaries, based on “a new hierarchy of real or bogus learning,” and the world would be “divided into a dominant, science-based minority and a vast, ignorant majority. And then let the ignorant masses beware!”¹⁸⁸

Bakunin attacked the very notion of central planning, which in his view was based on a simplistic view of science. No one man or “group of intellectuals, no matter how great their genius,” would be “able to embrace and understand the plethora of interests, attitudes and activities” necessary to plan, coordinate, and direct the postrevolutionary economy or the revolutionary movement.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 253–254.

¹⁸⁴ In the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx himself admitted that, in Germany, “the majority of the ‘toiling people’... consists of peasants, and not of proletarians” (Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 536). In his notes on Bakunin’s *Statism and Anarchy*, Marx acknowledged that, in fact, the peasant “forms a more or less considerable majority... in all the countries of the West European continent.” (Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 543.)

¹⁸⁵ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 294.

¹⁸⁶ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 255.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 259.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 237 & 266.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 240.

As for Marx's theory of history, Bakunin argued that the "political State" is not "always the product and faithful reflection of its economic situation." Other factors, such as "political, judicial and religious institutions," also have an effect "on the economic situation." What Marx failed to recognize was that just as economic "hardship produces political slavery—the State," political "slavery—the State—reproduces and maintains hardship as a condition of its existence, so that in order to destroy hardship the State must [also] be destroyed."¹⁹⁰ The idea that it is not enough to abolish capitalism to create a free society has remained a central anarchist tenet to this day.

Before dealing with the emergence of avowedly anarchist movements from the "antiauthoritarian" International reconstituted by the federalist and anarchist sections of the organization at the Saint Imier Congress, it is worth noting that the expulsion of Bakunin and Guillaume from the International, the centralization of authority within the General Council, and the transfer of the council to New York by no means brought an end to Marx and Engels's campaign against the anarchists. What this shows is that, for Marx and Engels, the anarchist tendencies in the International did not simply represent a problem internal to the organization that had been resolved by the Hague Congress. Anarchism was perceived by them, and rightly so, as an ideological rival on the revolutionary Left. Anarchism, therefore, had to be discredited, regardless of which organizations the anarchists chose to participate in.

Marx and Engels's attacks on anarchism had begun in the 1840s in their attacks on Stirner and Proudhon and did not end with their "victory" at the Hague Congress. To portray Marx and Engels's campaign against the anarchists as an unfortunate measure that they were forced to adopt in order to save the International from Bakunin and the anarchists, as several commentators have done, is insupportable, as the campaign continued well after they had allegedly "saved" the International by reducing the New York-based version into a distant and irrelevant rump.¹⁹¹

Marx and Engels continued to publish articles and pamphlets against anarchist ideas after 1872 and to campaign more privately against perceived anarchist heresies in their correspondence. In the late summer of 1873, they published their pamphlet *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association*, which simply repeated the half-truths and falsehoods found in their earlier pamphlet *Fictitious Splits in the International* and material from the report Utin had prepared for them for the Hague Congress to justify Bakunin's expulsion from the International.¹⁹²

At the end of 1873, Marx published in Italy an article called "Political Indifferentism," in which he ridiculed the anarchists' opposition to participation in bourgeois politics and denounced them for repudiating the "revolutionary dictatorship" of the "transitory" workers' state necessary "to crush the resistance of the bourgeois class."¹⁹³ He even castigated the anarchists for advocating the creation of broad-based unions that transcended craft lines and claimed that the anarchists were therefore opposed to participation in both "political and economic movements."¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 256.

¹⁹¹ Archer and Carr provide fairly typical examples; see Archer, *The First International in France*, 295–296, and Carr, *Karl Marx: A Study in Fanaticism* (London: Dent, 1934), 256.

¹⁹² Marx and Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 23*, 454–580. After carefully preparing his hatchet job on Bakunin, Utin had quit the Romande Federation and eventually returned to Russia, having received a pardon from the czar after renouncing his political views, such as they were. He later became "rich as a contractor to the czar's war machine" (Leier, *Bakunin*, 253).

¹⁹³ Ibid., 392–393.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 393.

Engels's essay "On Authority" was published alongside Marx's article on political indifference. In it, Engels argued that revolutions are of necessity authoritarian and that, if the revolutionary party "does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain [its] rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries."¹⁹⁵ But Engels went even further, arguing that the anarchist concept of workers' self-management was itself a ridiculous pipe dream, for there can be no "organisation without authority." The "automatic machinery of a big factory is much more despotic than the small capitalists who employ workers ever have been... Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom in order to return to the spinning wheel."¹⁹⁶

While the anarchists associated with the antiauthoritarian International did not advocate a return to handcraft technology, no more than Proudhon had, they did take a more critical approach to technology than did Marx and Engels, recognizing that capitalists designed their factories and workshops to facilitate not only their exploitation of the workers but also their domination of them. The anarchists advocated decentralized, human-scale technology combining manual and intellectual labor, designed to make work enjoyable, based on the view that, in Kropotkin's words, "human life is of more account than machinery and the making of extra profits." Where technology is designed to meet human needs, including the need for meaningful and enjoyable work over which one exercises control, "aided by the motor and the machine," people will be able to "choose the branch of activity which best suits their inclinations." Into the "factories and workshops," people will no longer "be driven by hunger, but will be attracted by the desire of finding an activity suited to their tastes."¹⁹⁷

With respect to the organization of work, the anarchists, starting with Proudhon, advocated democratic self-management by the workers themselves, who would collectively decide how to organize and run their workplaces. When in need of technical expertise, as Bakunin argued, the workers, as with anyone else, may consult various "authorities" on the subject, comparing "their opinions, and [choosing] that which seems... the soundest"; listening "to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge"; but "reserving always" the "incontestable right of criticism and censure."¹⁹⁸ Any "specialist minds required" at a particular workplace will be equal "members co-operating side by side with" the workers, with no special status above them.¹⁹⁹

Although Bakunin and the anarchists involved in the International rejected terrorism as counterrevolutionary, they never suggested that nothing can be done to combat the counterrevolutionaries. Nevertheless, they were of the view that the best way to combat the counterrevolution is by making the most of the revolution, by seizing not only the fields, factories, and workshops but also the weapons without which the counterrevolutionaries would be powerless. Consequently, Bakunin argued that "after the workers have joined into associations and made a clean sweep of all the instruments of labour and every kind of capital and building; armed and organized by streets and *quartiers*, they will form the revolutionary federation of all the *quartiers*, the federative commune," through which they will "organize [their] common defence against the enemies

¹⁹⁵ Engels, in *ibid.*, 425. And still some people claim that Marx and Engels did not advocate a coercive "workers" state, albeit one that was supposed to "wither away."

¹⁹⁶ Engels, in *ibid.*, 423–424.

¹⁹⁷ Kropotkin, "Fields, Factories and Workshops," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 118.

¹⁹⁸ Bakunin, "On Science and Authority," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 90.

¹⁹⁹ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, 82–83.

of the Revolution.”²⁰⁰ As Malatesta later put it, the “most powerful means for defending the revolution remains always that of taking away from the bourgeoisie the economic means on which their power rests, and of arming everybody... and of interesting the mass of the population in the victory of the revolution.”²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 179.

²⁰¹ Errico Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, ed. & trans. by V. Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1977), 173.

Chapter Nine: The Antiauthoritarian International and the Emergence of the Anarchist Movement

Many historical treatments of the International end with the Hague Congress, leaving the impression that, after Marx and Engels engineered the move of the General Council to New York, the International expired soon thereafter.¹ But what expired was only the Marxist rump, which was never able to attract many adherents.

The Blanquists had left the International before the Hague Congress was officially over, taking with them some of the surviving French members. The English had been uncomfortable with Marx's revolutionary politics and authoritarian leadership style even before the Hague Congress. Afterwards, Hales condemned the Hague Congress resolutions and suggested to the members of the Manchester Federation of the International that Marx's "life of exile and proscription has led him into a tortuous path of intrigue that would damn the association."² By December 1872, the British Federal Council had split into pro-General Council and independent British labor factions.³

The German internationalists were still split between the Lassalleans and the more Marxist Social Democrats, with the Lassalleans denouncing "what happened at the Hague Congress."⁴ By the time they united in 1875 to form the German Socialist Party, the Marxist International was effectively defunct, and the newly united party's program still contained many Lassallean elements, leading Marx to write his now well-known, but then unpublished, *Critique of the Gotha Program*.⁵

Despite the decisions of the London Conference and the Hague Congress regarding the necessity of working-class political parties for the purpose of the conquest of political power, no genuine Marxist political party emerged from the Marxist wing of the International, let alone one capable of leading the proletariat to power.⁶ Contrary to popular misconceptions, the Inter-

¹ J. Freymond & M. Molnár, "The Rise and Fall of the First International," in *The Revolutionary Internationals, 1864–1943*, ed. by M. Drachkovitch (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 28, provides a fairly typical example.

² Collins & Abramsky, *Marx and the British Labour Movement*, 268.

³ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁴ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 140. The "Lassalleans" were followers of the German Socialist Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864), who advocated a kind of state socialism to be achieved through universal suffrage and the election of a socialist party, to which the trade unions would be affiliated.

⁵ Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 525–541. One thing Marx made clear in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* was that, during the "political transition period" between "capitalist and communist society," the state would "be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*" (at page 538). Given that Marx did not use the word "dictatorship" in a nonauthoritarian sense when denouncing Bakunin for attempting to establish his own personal dictatorship over the International, and Marx's emphasis on the need for the workers to suppress capitalism by force, it should be clear that when Marx advocated revolutionary dictatorship he meant exactly what he said.

⁶ David McLellan, *Marxism After Marx: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1979), 20–23.

national played a far greater role in the creation of an avowedly anarchist international revolutionary movement, starting at the Saint Imier Congress in Switzerland.

The Saint Imier Congress began on September 15, 1872, just eight days after the Hague Congress. It was attended by delegates from Spain, France, Italy, and Switzerland, including Guillaume, Schwitzguébel, Bakunin, Cafiero, Malatesta, Fanelli, Costa, Farga Pellicer, Morago, Lefrançais, and Pindy.⁷ A “regional” congress of the Jura Federation was held in conjunction with the “international” congress, with many of the same delegates, as well as members of the Slav section, such as Zamfir Arbore ([1848–1933], who went under the name of Zemphiry Ralli) and other French-speaking delegates, including Charles Beslay.⁸

The assembled delegates adopted a federalist structure for a reconstituted International, with each section having full autonomy, declaring that “nobody has the right to deprive autonomous federations and sections of their incontrovertible right to decide for themselves and to follow whatever line of political conduct they deem best.” For them, “the aspirations of the proletariat can have no purpose other than the establishment of an absolutely free economic organization and federation, founded upon the labour and equality of all and absolutely independent of all political government.” Consequently, turning the London Conference’s resolution on its head, they proclaimed that “the destruction of all political power is the first duty of the proletariat.”⁹

With respect to organized resistance to capitalism, the delegates to the Saint Imier Congress affirmed their position that the organization of labor, through trade unions and other working-class forms of organization, “integrates the proletariat into a community of interests, trains it in collective living and prepares it for the supreme struggle,” by means of which “the privilege and authority” maintained and represented by the state will be replaced by “the free and spontaneous organization of labour.”¹⁰

While the antiauthoritarian internationalists entertained no illusions regarding the efficacy of strikes in ameliorating the condition of the workers, they regarded “the strike as a precious weapon in the struggle.” They embraced strikes “as a product of the antagonism between labour and capital, the necessary consequence of which is to make workers more and more alive to the gulf that exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat,” bolstering their organizations and preparing them “for the great and final revolutionary contest which, destroying all privilege and all class difference, will bestow upon the worker a right to the enjoyment of the gross product of his labours.”¹¹

Here we have the subsequent program of anarcho-syndicalism: the organization of workers into trade unions and similar bodies based on class struggle, through which the workers will become conscious of their class power, ultimately resulting in the destruction of capitalism and the state, to be replaced by the free federation of the workers based on the organizations they created themselves during their struggle for liberation.

The resolutions from the Saint Imier Congress received statements of support from the Italian, Spanish, Jura, Belgian, and some of the English-speaking American Federations of the Interna-

⁷ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 3, 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹ “The St. Imier Congress,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 98–99.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

tional, with most of the French sections also approving them.¹² In Holland, three out of the four Dutch branches sided with the Jura Federation.¹³ The English Federation, resentful of Marx's attempts to keep it under his control, rejected "the decisions of the Hague Congress and the so-called General Council of New York."¹⁴ While Hales did not support revolution, he advised the Jura Federation that he agreed with them on "the principle of Federalism."¹⁵ At a congress of the Belgian Federation in December 1872, the delegates there also repudiated the Hague Congress and the General Council, supporting instead the "defenders of pure revolutionary ideas, Anarchists, enemies of all authoritarian centralisation and indomitable partisans of autonomy."¹⁶

By the fall of 1872, internationalists were regrouping in France. There was a secret meeting in Saint-Étienne, where the delegates decided to join the antiauthoritarian International represented by the Saint Imier Congress. They passed resolutions "in favor of autonomous groups and abstention from parliamentary activities."¹⁷ The Rouen Federation repudiated the Hague Congress and its delegate to the congress, who had violated his mandate by supporting Marx. The federation confirmed that it accepted "no other authority in the International than that of [the] federations, which must conserve their autonomy to administer themselves as they see fit."¹⁸ The Rouen Federation therefore supported the "minority" of federalist and anarchist delegates who had opposed the Marxists at the Hague Congress.¹⁹

However, the International in France suffered a serious blow when one of Marx's agents, Jean-Philippe-Émile Dentraygues (1836–?), who had supported Marx at the Hague Congress, was arrested in December 1872. He was found with many incriminating documents that were then used to prosecute and imprison internationalists active throughout France while he assisted the police by becoming an informer.²⁰ Another French delegate to the Hague Congress who supported Marx, Van Heddeghem, was a police spy.²¹ Despite Marx and Engels's claims that only a centralized organization could prevent the International from being taken over by police agents and counterrevolutionaries, the General Council itself had been infiltrated by a French government spy, to whom Marx had confided that he never "would have taken" the extreme measures adopted at the Hague Congress if he "had not seen that the Belgians, the Dutch, and the Spanish had let themselves be won over by the Jurassians, the people of Michael Bakunin."²²

Jules Guesde, then an anarchist, argued that the rapid suppression of the revived International following Dentraygues's arrest demonstrated the folly of the kind of centralized organization the Marxists had been trying to establish in France.²³ Centralized organizations were vulnerable because the police only needed to strike at the center of the organization to paralyze or destroy it. But, when the working class "organize[s] itself anarchically," the arrest of one man would not

¹² James Guillaume, *L'Internationale, documents et souvenirs (1864–1878)*, Volume 3 (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition/Stock, 1905–1910), 37–47.

¹³ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 138.

¹⁴ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 3, 51.

¹⁵ Collins & Abramsky, *Marx and the British Labour Movement*, 270.

¹⁶ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 138.

¹⁷ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 291.

¹⁸ Archer, *The First International in France*, 299.

¹⁹ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 3, 138.

²⁰ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 31.

²¹ Katz, *Emancipation of Labor*, 139.

²² Archer, *The First International in France*, 299.

²³ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 34–35; Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1868* (San Francisco: AK Press, 2002), 35–36.

lead to the collapse of the organization, as it had in this case, because each autonomous section would be left to carry on its work, with the arrest of one traitor at worst compromising only the section in which he was involved.²⁴

One of Dentraygues's opponents was Paul Brousse (1844–1912), a member of the Montpellier section of the International who had voted against sending Dentraygues to the Hague Congress, where Dentraygues dutifully "voted for the 'marxists'." Brousse was therefore suspected of being a "Bakuninist" and was expelled from the Marxist controlled Montpellier section in September 1872. He then joined the Jura Federation. He went into hiding after Dentraygues's arrest and made his way to Barcelona in early 1873. There, he began publishing with other French refugees, including Alerini, an anarchist newspaper intended for distribution in France, *La Solidarité Révolutionnaire*, which promoted a social revolutionary anarchist position. Through *La Solidarité Révolutionnaire* and other publications, "the French exile group in Barcelona helped to keep alive and spread the socialism of the International in the South of France, laying the groundwork for its anarchist commitment" in the early 1880s.²⁵

Regarding Spain itself, the Spanish Federation of the International held its third congress in Córdoba toward the end of December 1872. There were "fifty-four delegates representing 20,000 workers in 236 local federations and 515 trade sections." According to Murray Bookchin, the "Córdoba congress created what is generally regarded as the 'typical' form of Anarchist organization in Spain." Consistent with the position taken at the Saint Imier Congress, the Federal Council of the Spanish Federation was "reduced to a mere 'Federal Commission for Correspondence and Statistics'." Each trade section and local federation was recognized as having full autonomy, free to disaffiliate from the national federation, to determine their own courses of action, and whether to support any actions initiated by the other sections or local federations. With its "formally decentralized organization," the success of the Spanish Federation depended "largely upon initiatives from below."²⁶

The Jura Federation continued to publish its *People's Almanac*. Its 1873 edition contained Jules Guesde's critique of universal suffrage as a means of legitimizing capitalist exploitation and the authoritarian governments necessary to maintain it.²⁷ Anarchists liked to quote from the article after Guesde founded a Socialist political party in France along Marxist lines in the early 1880s.

In March 1873, the Italian internationalists held a congress in Bologna, with much difficulty owing to police harassment and the arrest of many of the delegates, including Cafiero, Malatesta, and Costa. The stated purpose of the congress was "to affirm once more *Truth, Justice* and revolutionary *Morality*, to further tighten the bonds of solidarity which connect us to sister [foreign] federations, to continue to welcome the movement which the Congress of Rimini undertook for our Association, [and] to propose the spontaneous federation of the workers' forces in Anarchy and Collectivism."²⁸

The Bologna Congress reaffirmed the Italians' support of the antiauthoritarian International founded at Saint Imier. The congress supported the Saint Imier position on strikes being valuable insofar as they constituted "a dress rehearsal or a prelude to an insurrection."²⁹ The delegates de-

²⁴ Skirda, *Facing the Enemy*, 35.

²⁵ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 31–32, 34, 36–37 & 45.

²⁶ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 77.

²⁷ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 3, 40.

²⁸ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 185.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

clared “war against God, the state, and private property” and their support for “atheism, materialism, anarchism, federalism, and collectivism.” Consistent with the position advocated by Bakunin, “they advocated a revolutionary alliance between the city workers and peasant masses.”³⁰

The Bologna Congress “recommended that sections organize according to job categories and federate into craft and trade unions,” instead of combining “workers of different occupations” in individual sections, as had been the previous practice in most areas. Each regional federation, each section, and every member was to enjoy full autonomy, as long as they did not act contrary to the Italian Federation’s general goal: “The complete and direct emancipation of the proletariat through the efforts of the proletariat.”³¹ Such a goal entailed rejection of “any cooperation or complicity with the political intrigues of the bourgeoisie, even if they called themselves democrats and revolutionaries.” Consistent with anarchist principles, the Bologna resolutions were submitted “to all the member sections in the country for their approval.”³²

Following his release from jail in May 1873, Costa and other members of the Italian Federation’s “Correspondence Commission” renewed their organizing activities, establishing “twenty new sections” by August 1873. “Throughout the rest of 1873, [Costa] criss-crossed Italy, preaching the new gospel of anarchism and meeting with considerable success,” creating or reorganizing “several federations, including those of the Romagna, Marche, Umbria, Piedmont, Liguria, Venice, Naples, Tuscany, and Sicily.”³³

In Belgium, the internationalists debated the use of the general strike “as *the* means to social Revolution” at their April 1873 congress in Verviers.³⁴ They also discussed bringing agricultural workers within their movement in order to ensure its success. Laurent Verrycken (1835–1892) emphasized the need to prepare for the day after the revolution, so that there would be something in place of the overthrown bourgeois social order, thereby avoiding a useless bloodletting.³⁵ The Belgian Federation adopted a policy in favor of the general strike at its congress in August 1873, urging all federations and sections of the antiauthoritarian International to work toward the organization of the general strike and to abandon “partial” strikes against individual employers except in the case of “legitimate defence”—a position very similar to that of the French internationalists before the time of the Paris Commune.³⁶

In the summer of 1873, there was a series of rebellions and insurrections in Spain, but the Spanish internationalists played a significant role in only two of them, “the risings at Alcoy and at Sanlúcar de Barrameda.”³⁷ The Alcoy uprising was provoked by an attempt by the local mayor to suppress a general strike supported by five to six thousand workers affiliated to the Spanish Federation, whose Federal Commission was then based in Alcoy. The striking workers were seeking a reduction in hours and wage increases. After the mayor “insulted and slandered the workers and sided with the manufacturers,” the internationalists later recounted, “thus destroying the rights and the freedom of the striking workers and challenging them to fight,” the workers

³⁰ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 72–73.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 186.

³³ *Ibid.*, 187.

³⁴ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 290, fn. 14.

³⁵ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 3, 173.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁷ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 47.

protested at the town hall. The mayor then ordered the local guards to fire on the crowd, “killing one worker and wounding several others.”³⁸

The workers obtained weapons and laid siege to the town hall, which they seized after about twenty hours of fighting. The mayor “was shot and killed after firing his pistol point-blank at the workers who were arresting him.” Unfortunately for the workers and internationalists, the mayor had sent for troops prior to his demise. Although the internationalists “established a Welfare Committee to manage the town... its most pressing task was to negotiate favorable surrender terms” with the approaching government troops.³⁹

The Sanlúcar uprising was triggered by a judge who shut down the local council of the FRE and declared its members outlaws toward the end of June 1873.⁴⁰ A large crowd of workers congregated in the town plaza, prompting the city council, police, and the wealthy to flee. The local council of the FRE then “seized the town hall” and held “elections to choose a permanent revolutionary commission.” The “FRE members who had been deposed by the judge were elected by acclamation.” The FRE led the local resistance to the government troops that had been sent in to restore order and, despite a brief setback, were able to maintain control of the town for just over a month. The revolutionary commission, “composed primarily of anarchists, suspended Mass, turned out the Escolapian Fathers... from their school and the Franciscan Mother of God nuns from their convent, and declared a property tax to replace the hated *consumo*,” an internal excise tax.⁴¹

After government troops regained control of Sanlúcar at the beginning of August 1873, “150 men and women were imprisoned” and another 200 were rounded up in the following weeks. Many “were transported to the Philippines and Mariana Islands, where several died of tropical diseases. Others rotted in dungeons without ever coming to trial.”⁴²

The Alcoy uprising was vilified in the bourgeois press, not only in Spain but also in England and France.⁴³ Engels used the incident to denounce general strikes as a worse than useless “Bakuninist” tactic in his pamphlet *The Bakuninists at Work*, resulting in the Marxist and social democratic opposition to the general strike as a revolutionary weapon that was to last for at least the next thirty years.⁴⁴ From an anarchist point of view, what was significant was that, for “the first time, the industrial proletariat in Spain had acted as an independent insurrectionary force.”⁴⁵ As Kaplan writes, despite “its ultimate defeat, Sanlúcar stood as a beacon” for Spanish anarchists, “just as the Paris Commune remained a symbol for all European socialists of what revolutionary community might be like.”⁴⁶

In Barcelona, the Spanish internationalists had tried to provoke an insurrectionary general strike a few weeks before the Alcoy uprising but it “collapsed when the Government drafted large sections of the working class into the Army to fight the Carlists,” who were seeking to take

³⁸ Ibid., 46.

³⁹ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 84.

⁴⁰ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 105.

⁴¹ Ibid., 105–107.

⁴² Ibid., 107.

⁴³ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 47.

⁴⁴ See Arnold Roller (Siegfried Nacht), *The Social General Strike* (Chicago: Debating Club, 1905). The Marxist Social Democrats in Germany were well known for denouncing the general strike as “general nonsense” (Joll, *The Anarchists*, 2nd ed., 193).

⁴⁵ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 85.

⁴⁶ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 110.

over Spain. Brousse and some internationalists had earlier attempted a “communal” insurrection by seizing the city hall, but they failed to garner any popular support. Although the attempted communal insurrection in Barcelona was even less effective than the general strikes there and in Alcoy, Brousse remained critical of the general strike and continued to support communal insurrections instead as “the vehicle of the Revolution,” looking to the Paris Commune and Sanlúcar for inspiration.⁴⁷

There was an ongoing debate within the antiauthoritarian International regarding the respective roles of the commune and trade union organizations, with some putting greater emphasis on one over the other. But even the Jura Federation, which generally took an anarcho-sindicalist approach, cited the revolutionary Paris Commune as “the first practical formulation of the anarchist program of the proletariat.”⁴⁸

In mid-August 1873, French internationalists again regrouped at a secret congress in Lyon. Thirty delegates attended, generally of a revolutionary collectivist orientation. They reaffirmed the autonomy of the sections while establishing a regional council for eastern France, with plans for similar councils in the other regions. The Eastern Council then arranged to send delegates to the upcoming antiauthoritarian congress of the International in Geneva in September 1873.⁴⁹

The Geneva Congress was attended by delegates from England, France, Spain, Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland. The English delegates, Hales and Eccarius (Marx’s former lieutenant), were only interested in reviving the International as an association of workers’ organizations and in disavowing the Marxist-controlled General Council and International that had been transferred by Marx and Engels to New York. They had not become anarchists, as Hales made clear by declaring anarchism “tantamount to individualism... the foundation of the extant form of society, the form we desire to overthrow.” Accordingly, from his perspective, anarchism was “incompatible with collectivism.”⁵⁰

The Spanish delegate, José García Viñas (1848–1931), responded that anarchy did not mean disorder, as the bourgeois claimed, but the negation of political authority and the organization of a new economic order. Brousse agreed, arguing that anarchy meant the abolition of the governmental regime and its replacement by a collectivist economic organization based on contracts between the communes, the workers, and the collective organizations of the workers—a position that can be traced back to Proudhon.⁵¹

Most of the delegates to the congress were antiauthoritarian federalists, and the majority of them were clearly anarchist in orientation, including “Farga Pellicer from Spain, Pindy and Brousse from France, Costa from Italy, and Guillaume and Schwitzguébel from Switzerland.”⁵² Also within the anarchist camp were García Viñas from Spain, who was close to Brousse; Alerini, the French refugee now based in Barcelona; Zhukovsky, the Russian expatriate who remained close to Bakunin; François Dumartheray (1842–1931), another French refugee who had joined the Jura Federation; Jules Montels (1843–1916), who had been a former provincial delegate of the Commune, responsible for distributing propaganda in France on behalf of the exiled group, the

⁴⁷ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 37–38 & 41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁹ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 291–292.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁵¹ Jacques Freymond *et al.*, (eds.), *La première internationale: recueil de documents*, Volume 4 (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1962), 56–57.

⁵² Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 248.

“Section of Revolutionary Propaganda and Action”; and two of the Belgian delegates, Laurent Verrycken and Victor Dave (1845–1922).⁵³

The American Federal Council sent a report to the congress in which it indicated its support for the antiauthoritarian International. The Americans were in favor of freedom of initiative for the members, sections, branches, and federations of the International and agreed with limiting any general council to purely administrative functions. They felt that it should be up to each group to determine whether to adopt the general strike as a revolutionary weapon. They concluded their address with “Long live the social revolution! Long live the International!”⁵⁴

At the congress itself, while the delegates agreed to abolish the General Council as a central governing body, there were disagreements over whether the antiauthoritarian International should have any central organization at all. Brousse, Alerini, Dave, and Costa argued that any such organization was both unnecessary and posed the risk of usurping the autonomy of the sections, which is exactly what had happened with the original General Council.⁵⁵ Bakunin privately agreed, writing Zamfir Arbore (Ralli) after the congress that in his view any central body, regardless of its formal limitations, “would have its agents, its own official propaganda, its official statistics, its personal liaisons and consequently its schemes. Sooner or later it would be without fail transformed into a sort of government.”⁵⁶

Here we have the beginnings of the “antiorganizational” current in the anarchist movement, which came to reject all formal organization for similar reasons.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, at the 1873 Geneva Congress, the Jura model was ultimately agreed to, with a federal bureau to be established that “would be concerned only with collecting statistics and maintaining international correspondence.” As a further safeguard against the federal bureau coming to exercise authority over the various sections and branches, it was to “be shifted each year to the country where the next International Congress would be held.”⁵⁸

The delegates continued the practice of voting in accordance with the mandates that had been given to them by their respective federations. Because the International was now a federation of autonomous groups, each national federation was given one vote, and the statutes were amended to explicitly provide that questions of principle could not be decided by a vote. It was up to each federation to determine its own policies and to implement those decisions of the congress that it accepted.⁵⁹

There was a lengthy debate over the general strike. The Belgian internationalists supported the general strike “as the principal means of inaugurating the social revolution.”⁶⁰ Brousse was critical of the general strike but did not specifically reject it, arguing instead that its usefulness depended on the particular circumstances and suggesting that a “communalist movement” in

⁵³ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 28–29 & 49–50; and Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 6–7.

⁵⁴ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 39–41.

⁵⁵ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 49–50.

⁵⁶ Bakunin, at blog.bakuninlibrary.org (last accessed August 28, 2014), trans. Shawn Wilbur. It does not appear that Bakunin recognized that the same concerns applied to the “central committees” he proposed for his various secret societies.

⁵⁷ The Italian anarchist Luigi Galleani (1861–1931) became one of the best-known advocates of the antiorganizational position. See Galleani, “The End of Anarchism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 119–124.

⁵⁸ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 249.

⁵⁹ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 81–85.

⁶⁰ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 249.

France would be more effective.⁶¹ The general strike in Alcoy was cited by Alerini as an example of what could be achieved through the general strike, making Alerini a “convinced partisan of the general strike as a revolutionary means.”⁶² Farga Pellicer “remained optimistic about the potential of the general strike,” despite the recent setbacks in Spain.⁶³ Costa was in favor of the general strike as a social revolutionary means but described more limited strike activity as “dust thrown into the eyes of the workers.”⁶⁴ Guillaume disagreed, arguing that “the partial strike should not be despised as an effective weapon during the prerevolutionary stages of the struggle,” but the Jura delegation made clear that it regarded the general strike as “the only kind of strike competent to bring about the complete emancipation of the workers.”⁶⁵

The issue of whether nonworkers should be allowed to belong to the antiauthoritarian International was raised, and Costa, who was still a student when he became involved in the Italian socialist movement, argued that it would be inconsistent with the International’s goal of abolishing classes “to consecrate in the very bosom of our association the distinction between classes that we wish to abolish... For me, there are only two categories of men, those who want the revolution and those who do not.”⁶⁶ García Viñas expressed the Spanish Federation’s position that membership should be open to all of the exploited, regardless of whether they were manual or “intellectual” workers.⁶⁷

Antoine Perrare (1841–1912), a Commune refugee now living in Geneva, described how the bourgeois intellectuals had used their superior education to control the Marxist-affiliated Romande Federation.⁶⁸ He and some of the other working-class delegates, such as Dumartheray, therefore argued that the International, as an association of workers, should be composed of manual workers only. Other working-class delegates, such as Spichiger from the Jura Federation, disagreed. At the end of the day, the antiauthoritarian International decided, as had the original International, to remain open to nonworkers while being careful to emphasize that the emancipation of the working class remained the task of the workers themselves.⁶⁹

Despite remaining open to “intellectual” workers, the members of the antiauthoritarian International were predominantly working class at this time. For example, the “great majority of Italian internationalists” were “salaried workers, journeyman artisans, and independent artisans” engaged in a variety of occupations. By the spring of 1874, the Italian Federation had 155 sections with over 30,000 members.⁷⁰

In Spain, the FRE had always been mainly a federation of workers’ associations and trade unions, with the bulk of its members in Barcelona, Valencia, and Madrid.⁷¹ However, it also “attracted a large following among the landless labourers (*braceros*) and small-plot owners of

⁶¹ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 51.

⁶² Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 3, 117.

⁶³ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 56.

⁶⁴ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 74.

⁶⁵ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 250.

⁶⁶ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 75.

⁶⁷ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 94.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 90–96.

⁷⁰ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 78 & 75.

⁷¹ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 83.

Andalusia and the Levante.”⁷² In France and French-speaking Switzerland, the internationalists included artisans, teachers, students, journalists, and workers. When Kropotkin first made contact with the Jura Federation in Switzerland, he immediately noticed that the “separation between leaders and workers” that he saw in the Utin-controlled Geneva section “did not exist in the Jura Mountains... there was not a question upon which every member of the federation would not strive to form his own independent opinion.”⁷³

In Belgium, some of the strongest support for the anarchist currents in the International came from the weavers of the Walloon Region.⁷⁴ The eastern section of the Belgian Federation limited its membership to people “employed in a manual trade,” such that “even foremen were excluded”—a position similar to that adopted by the original French internationalists who had wanted to keep intellectuals, including Marx, out of the International.⁷⁵

In the fall of 1873, the Jura Federation continued to organize workers in Switzerland and to coordinate support for striking workers in other countries, even soliciting contributions from Swiss and German groups associated with the Marxist faction, with Guillaume ever hopeful of a *rapprochement*. The Jura Federation’s *People’s Almanac* for 1874 focused on the distinction between the centralized state and a federation of communes. Lefrançais even went so far as to argue that the workers should seek to take control of the local administrative functions of the communes with the aid of elections, in order to learn how to manage their own affairs.⁷⁶ This was later to become Brousse’s position.

Bakunin, demoralized by the Marxists’ incessant attacks, but encouraged by the reconstitution of the International along antiauthoritarian lines, resigned from the Jura Federation in October 1873. Recognizing that by “birth and personal status—though certainly not by sympathy or inclination—I am a bourgeois” whose “only useful work” was propaganda, Bakunin wrote that now was “the time not for ideas but for action, for deeds. Above all, now is the time for the organization of the forces of the proletariat. But this organization must be the task of the proletariat itself.”⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that with the Marxists and Blanquists now out of the reconstituted International, Bakunin did not take the opportunity to impose his “personal dictatorship,” as Marx had so often charged was his true purpose, but instead ceased his direct participation within the International. So much for Bakunin’s alleged “dictatorial” ambitions.

However, Bakunin did not retire from all revolutionary activity. In 1873, he helped Guillaume put together a selection of Proudhon’s most anarchist writings: *Anarchy According to Proudhon*, taken mainly from *Confessions of a Revolutionary* and *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*.⁷⁸ That same year he published *Statism and Anarchy* in Russian. Twelve hundred copies were printed in Switzerland and then smuggled into Russia.⁷⁹ The subtitle, *The Struggle of the Two Parties in the International Working Men’s Association*, illustrates the importance of the International in the development of European anarchism. *Statism and Anarchy* was published with a companion volume, *The Historical Development of the International*, which contained arti-

⁷² Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 79; see also Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 76–77, for a cross-section of the FRE’s membership in Andalusia.

⁷³ Kropotkin, *Memoirs*, 282 & 286.

⁷⁴ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 254.

⁷⁵ Kropotkin, *Memoirs*, 281.

⁷⁶ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 3, 165–167.

⁷⁷ Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 352.

⁷⁸ Guérin, “From Proudhon to Bakunin,” in *Our Generation*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1986).

⁷⁹ Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, xxxv.

cles by Bakunin and others, directly relating to the conflict within the International between the anarchists and the “authoritarians.”⁸⁰

Statism and Anarchy expanded on a number of themes found in Bakunin’s later anarchist writings. With respect to his theory of the new bureaucratic class, Bakunin pointed to the recently formed state of Serbia as an example of a country with “neither a nobility nor very big landowners, neither industrialists nor extremely wealthy merchants,” which nevertheless was in the process of creating “a new bureaucratic aristocracy.” Despite their good intentions, the young people being recruited to fill positions in the Serbian state bureaucracy would quickly become “bureaucrats from head to toe,” for as “soon as they enter state service... the iron logic of their position, the force of circumstances inherent in certain hierarchical and profitable relationships,” would make “itself felt.”⁸¹ Instead of the bureaucrats serving the people, the Serbian people’s “sole purpose” would become enabling “Serbian bureaucrats to live a fatter life.”⁸²

In the section dealing with Marx’s view that the proletariat should raise itself “to the level of a ruling class,” Bakunin argued that in reality this meant “government of the people by a small number of representatives,” who would then constitute “a privileged minority.” These representatives would “no longer represent the people but themselves and their own pretensions to govern the people.”⁸³ It would “scarcely be any easier on the people if the cudgel with which they are beaten is called the people’s cudgel.”⁸⁴ The so-called revolutionary government would be controlled by “the leaders of the communist party,” who would come to “form a new privileged scientific and political class.”⁸⁵ Despite the scorn of Marx and his followers regarding Bakunin’s intellectual abilities, it was Bakunin, not Marx, who accurately predicted the outcome of Marxist seizures of power in the twentieth century.

Bakunin also accurately predicted the results of Marxist Social Democratic parties participating in parliamentary politics. Bakunin argued that “the election to the German parliament of one or two workers” was “not dangerous” to the existing economic and political system. In fact, it was “highly useful to the German state as a lightning-rod, or a safety-valve.”⁸⁶ Unlike the “political and social theory” of the anarchists, which “leads them directly and inexorably to a complete break with all governments and all forms of bourgeois politics, leaving no alternative but social revolution,” Marxism “inexorably enmeshes and entangles its adherents, under the pretext of political tactics, in endless accommodation with governments and the various bourgeois political parties—that is, it thrusts them directly into reaction.”⁸⁷

As for Marx’s claims that the “dictatorship of the proletariat” was merely “a necessary transitional device for achieving the total liberation of the people” while “anarchy, or freedom, is the goal,” Bakunin noted the contradiction that “for the masses to be liberated they must first be enslaved.” Bakunin argued, to the contrary, that “no dictatorship can have any other objective than to perpetuate itself, and that it can engender and nurture only slavery in the people who endure

⁸⁰ Ibid., 186 & 236, fn. 135.

⁸¹ Ibid., 52.

⁸² Ibid., 54.

⁸³ Ibid., 177–178.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 181.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 193.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 179–180.

it. Liberty can only be created by liberty, by an insurrection of all the people and the voluntary organization of the workers from below upward.”⁸⁸

Marx commented on these passages in his notes on *Statism and Anarchy*, suggesting that Bakunin’s only alternative to the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat was “for the proletariat not to undertake any action but to sit and await—the day of *general liquidation*, the Last Judgment.”⁸⁹ While Bakunin presented many concrete alternatives to revolutionary dictatorship, Marx’s remarks would suggest that Marx himself did not see any.⁹⁰

Although Bakunin was a militant atheist, he recognized that religious belief was “not so much a mental delusion as a protest of life, will and passion against the unbearable burden” of existence by the impoverished masses. The church was therefore “a kind of celestial tavern, just as the tavern is a sort of celestial church on earth. In church and tavern alike [the masses] forget, at least momentarily, their hunger, their oppression, and their humiliation”—a view similar to Marx’s that religion is “the *opium* of the people.”⁹¹ Bakunin thus argued that “the people’s religiosity [could] be eliminated only by a social revolution, and not by the abstract, doctrinaire propaganda of the so-called free-thinkers.”⁹²

In his discussion of the Russian peasant commune, the *mir*, Bakunin pointed out its limitations as a patriarchal institution founded on the “despotism of the husband, the father, and the elder brother.” Anticipating Reichian psychoanalysis, Bakunin argued that an individual “[h]abituated to obedience within the family” will continue “to obey and to bend with the wind in society as well.” If someone “is the head of a family, he will be an unlimited despot at home but a servant of the *mir* and a slave of the tsar.”⁹³

The 1872 program of the Slav section of the Jura Federation was appended to *Statism and Anarchy*, which emphasized the need for an international association based on “the full solidarity of individuals, sections, and federations in the economic struggle of the workers of all countries against their exploiters,” without any central authority, such as the General Council, above them.⁹⁴ Bakunin did not object to the “anarchist” label, but rather embraced it, because it signified that he and those with similar views were “in fact the enemies of all power, knowing that power corrupts those invested with it just as much as those compelled to submit to it.”⁹⁵ The distribution of *Statism and Anarchy* within Russia itself helped plant the seeds of a Russian anarchist movement, with Bakunin’s ideas playing “a large part in bringing about the atmosphere which led to the movement ‘to go to the people’” in the mid-1870s.⁹⁶

In January 1874, the Spanish anarchists were again forced underground. Nevertheless, they were able to secretly hold a congress in June 1874, at which the issue of the general strike was again debated. Without “rejecting completely the general strike tactic as a pacific method of

⁸⁸ Ibid., 179.

⁸⁹ Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 547.

⁹⁰ For more discussion of Marx’s notes on *Statism and Anarchy* and the differences between anarchism and Marxism, see my “Marxism and Anarchism on Communism: The Debate Between the Two Bastions of the Left,” in Shannon Kurt Brincat, (ed.), *Communism in the 21st Century* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2013).

⁹¹ Marx, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 54.

⁹² Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, 206–207.

⁹³ Ibid., 210. See “Wilhelm Reich and the Mass Psychology of Fascism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 444–448.

⁹⁴ Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, 220.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁹⁶ Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1960), 429.

ultimately changing society,” the congress advised “the workers to undertake an open and decidedly revolutionary path.”⁹⁷ The Jura Federation continued to support the general strike as, in Schwitzguébel’s words, “a revolutionary act capable of bringing about the liquidation of the existing social order and a reorganization in accordance with the socialist aspirations of the workers.”⁹⁸

In Italy, the internationalists pursued an insurrectionary approach, which they tried to put into practice in 1874, but without the support of the rest of the antiauthoritarian International.⁹⁹ After months of planning, and despite the preemptive arrests of Costa, the main organizer, and some others, the internationalists attempted to spark an insurrection in Bologna that was supposed to spread out into the surrounding regions. A few hundred insurrectionaries were involved, but many of them were arrested before they got to Bologna, where Bakunin was waiting for them. He remained hidden for a few days and then had to return to Switzerland disguised as a priest.¹⁰⁰

Because of the mass arrests of internationalists in Italy, the Italian Federation also went underground and decided not to send any delegates to the public congress of the antiauthoritarian International in Brussels in September 1874.¹⁰¹ At the time of the Brussels Congress, the antiauthoritarian International continued to be an association of national federations, not all of which adopted an anarchist position. Eccarius attended as the English delegate, and there were even two delegates representing German workers. Eccarius and the German delegates were in favor of a workers’ state and political participation. The other delegates were from Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, and France. The ongoing proscription and prosecution of internationalists in Spain resulted in Farga Pellicer having to attend the congress under the name of “Gómez.”¹⁰²

The most significant debate was the one over public services. De Paepe, on behalf of the Belgian internationalists, argued that if public services were turned over to the workers’ associations, or “companies,” the people would simply “have the grim pleasure of substituting a worker aristocracy for a bourgeois aristocracy,” since the worker companies, “enjoying a natural or artificial monopoly... would dominate the whole economy.” Neither could all public services be undertaken by local communes, since “the most important of them,” such as railways, highways, river and water management, and communications, “are by their very nature fated to operate over a territory larger than that of the Commune.” Such intercommunal public services would therefore have to be run by delegates appointed by the federated communes. De Paepe claimed that the “regional or national Federation of communes” would constitute a “non-authoritarian State... charged with educating the young and centralizing the great joint undertakings.”¹⁰³

However, De Paepe took his argument one step further, suggesting that “the reconstitution of society upon the foundation of the industrial group, the organization of the state from below upwards, instead of being the starting point and the signal of the revolution, might not prove to be its more or less remote result... We are led to enquire whether, before the groupings of the workers by industry is sufficiently advanced, circumstances may not compel the proletariat of the large towns to establish a collective dictatorship over the rest of the population, and this for

⁹⁷ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 59.

⁹⁸ Joll, *The Anarchists*, 2nd ed., 179.

⁹⁹ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 86.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 92–93.

¹⁰¹ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 250.

¹⁰² Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 3, 210–211, fn. 4.

¹⁰³ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 187, 190–191 & 194.

a sufficiently long period to sweep away whatever obstacles there may be to the emancipation of the working class. Should this happen, it seems obvious that one of the first things which such a collective dictatorship would have to do would be to lay hands on all the public services.”¹⁰⁴ De Paepe had effectively repudiated his own views from 1869—portrayed in his article “The Present Institutions of the International in Relation to the Future”—that the workers’ own self-managed organizations would provide the basis for the social structure of a future socialist society.

De Paepe’s position was opposed by several delegates, including at least one of the Belgian internationalists, Laurent Verrycken. He spoke against any workers’ state, arguing that public services should be organized by “the free Commune and the free Federation of communes,” and their execution should be undertaken by the workers who provided them, under the supervision of the general association of workers within the Commune, and by the communes in a regional federation of communes. Farga Pellicer (“Gómez”), on behalf of the Spanish Federation, said that “for a long time they had generally pronounced themselves in favour of anarchy, such that they would be opposed to any reorganization of public services that would lead to the reconstitution of the state.” For him, a “federation of communes” should not be referred to as a “state,” because the latter word represented “the political idea, authoritarian and governmental,” as De Paepe’s comments regarding the need for a “collective dictatorship” revealed.¹⁰⁵

The most vocal opponent of De Paepe’s proposal was Schwitzguébel from the Jura Federation. He argued that the social revolution would be accomplished by the workers themselves “assuming direct control of the instruments of labor”; thus, “right from the first acts of the Revolution, the practical assertion of the principle of autonomy and federation... becomes the basis of all social combination,” with “all State institutions”—the means by “which the bourgeoisie sustains its privileges”—foundering in the “revolutionary storm.” The various trades bodies will then be “masters of the situation,” and the workers, having “banded together freely for revolutionary action,” will stick “to such free association when it comes to organization of production, exchange, commerce, training and education, health, and security.”¹⁰⁶

In a series of articles published on the eve of the Brussels Congress, Brousse developed a critique of the structure of the International itself. He argued that prior to the Geneva Congress of 1873, the International had too closely mirrored the hierarchical political organizations of the bourgeoisie, with the congresses of delegates acting as a kind of workers’ parliament making policy decisions binding on the federations, sections, and members, and the General Council acting as an executive authority. This “political” structure represented not only a workers’ “state within the state,” as the Belgian internationalists had described the International in 1869, but also a state within the International, as Bakunin had argued.

This approach had been rejected by the antiauthoritarians in the International, Brousse said, when they broke away from the Marxist International. The International could only be a free federation of “the sections and their federations,” based on the workers’ economic organizations, through which the workers would replace capitalism and the state with a voluntary and spontaneous “economic” order reflecting the “‘true’ structure of society,” without any governing au-

¹⁰⁴ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 252. In *No Gods, No Masters*, Guérin omits this passage from his excerpts from De Paepe’s speech, making the anarchist opposition to De Paepe appear merely as an argument over terminology, which is exactly how De Paepe tried to portray it, when it constituted a fundamental disagreement not only over the future structure of a socialist society but the very means of achieving it.

¹⁰⁵ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 3, 222 & 224.

¹⁰⁶ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 198–199.

thority. Thus, the issue for Brousse was not how “public services” should be organized, but rather “how *all* branches of production”—and the International itself—ought to be organized.¹⁰⁷

On the issue of political action, the Belgian delegates to the Brussels Congress continued to advocate working outside of the existing political system, albeit partly because they did not yet have universal suffrage in Belgium. Nevertheless, they claimed that they did not expect anything from the suffrage or from parliament and that they would continue to organize the workers into the trades bodies and federations through which the working class would bring about the social revolution, revealing that, as a group, the Belgian Federation did not yet share De Paepe’s doubts that the free federation of the producers would not be the means, but only the result, of a revolution.

The French delegate indicated that the French internationalists remained antipolitical, seeking to unite the workers “through incessant propaganda,” not to conquer power, but “to achieve the negation of all political government,” organizing themselves for “the true social revolution.”¹⁰⁸

The congress ultimately declared that it was up to each federation and each Democratic Socialist party to determine for themselves what kind of political approach they should follow.¹⁰⁹ It is fair to say, however, that as of September 1874, the majority of the antiauthoritarian International continued to embrace an anarchist or revolutionary syndicalist position. At the end of the 1874 Brussels Congress, the delegates issued a manifesto confirming their commitment to collectivism, workers’ autonomy, federalism, and social revolution. In a word, nothing less than the original goal of the International itself: “The emancipation of the workers by the workers themselves.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 60–63.

¹⁰⁸ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 3, 225.

¹⁰⁹ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 350.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 370–371.

Chapter Ten: From Collectivism to Communism and Propaganda by the Deed

From 1875 to 1876, the Spanish and Italian Federations were hamstrung by the repressive policies and actions of their respective national governments. Nevertheless, the Italians participated in and spurred fruitful debates within the antiauthoritarian International regarding two controversial topics: anarchist communism and “propaganda by the deed.”

“Non-authoritarian communism” was a phrase that Varlin had used to describe the collectivist position taken by the majority of delegates at the Basel Congress in 1869. In the Jura Federation’s *People’s Almanac* for 1874, Malon distinguished “federalist and anti-authoritarian communism” from “state communism,” but argued it should be left to the workers’ associations to determine how to distribute “the products of social labour” among their members, with a portion being withheld for the “collectivity” in accordance with the general interest and the particular rules of each association.¹

In March 1876, Malon made clear that, in his view, the individual worker should be entitled to the product of his or her labor in order to guarantee individual liberty; essentially, the collectivist position that had been adopted at the 1868 Brussels Congress of the International.² However, such a “guarantee” was made necessary for Malon by his movement toward state socialism, as he agreed with De Paepe that the provision of public services required an “administrative apparatus” above the workers’ associations and local communes.³ Anarchist opponents of De Paepe’s position referred to this as the “public service state.” In addition to Malon, Lefrançais also supported De Paepe’s position.⁴ That individual property provided a guarantee of individual liberty in the face of state power was an idea that had originated, at least among the socialists, with Proudhon.⁵

In 1874, Guillaume prepared an essay called “Ideas on Social Organization,” in which he suggested that after the revolution, when “production comes to outstrip consumption,” it “will no longer be necessary to stingily dole out each worker’s share of goods.” Instead, everyone “will draw what he needs from the abundant social reserve of commodities,” and the communist principle of distribution according to need would be substituted, “to the greatest possible extent,” for the collectivist principle of distribution according to one’s individual labor.⁶ Although Guillaume’s essay was not published until August 1876, other internationalists were already familiar with it, including Cafiero, who circulated an Italian translation of the essay among his comrades.⁷

¹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 3, 167.

² James Guillaume, *L’Internationale, documents et souvenirs (1864–1878)*, Volume 4 (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d’édition/Stock, 1905–1910), 11.

³ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 54.

⁴ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 202.

⁵ Proudhon, *Property is Theft!*, 779–780.

⁶ Guillaume, in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 361.

⁷ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 139; Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 112.

In February 1876, Dumartheray, one of the French refugees living in Switzerland, made the first reference to “anarchist communism” in print, indicating that this idea was now being discussed among the antiauthoritarian internationalists. Dumartheray had been a working-class supporter of the French communism that predated Marxism. In March 1876, Élisée Reclus “delivered a talk in recognition of communist anarchism” at a meeting of antiauthoritarian internationalists in Lausanne, which made a lasting impression upon Dumartheray and other participants at the meeting.⁸

In their criticism of Malon’s position in favor of the “public service” state and the consequent need to guarantee to individual workers a right to the product of their labor in order to ensure their independence, the Jura Federation indicated they preferred to be called “collectivists,” although they could also be described as “non-authoritarian communists,” so as to distinguish themselves from the “authoritarian communists” of “the school of Marx and Blanqui.”⁹ A contributor to the federation’s *Bulletin* argued that Malon’s distinction between “collective property” and the “richesses,” or “products of social labour,” to which individual workers were to be entitled, was incoherent. Consequently, the fruits of collective labor—just as much as the capital infrastructure that was used to produce them—should be held in common.¹⁰ During the debate on the “public service” state at the October 1876 Bern Congress, Guillaume referred to the anarchist collectivists, including himself, as “anti-authoritarian communists.”¹¹

In October 1876, the Italian Federation adopted an anarchist communist position on the basis that “the notions of *mine* and *yours* have no reason for being” in a free society—a position markedly similar to the views expressed by Gerrard Winstanley during the English Revolution.¹² Malatesta later explained that the Italian internationalists concluded that, because of the difficulty of distinguishing between collective and individual property, and in determining each person’s rightful share, “the only solution that can realize the ideal of human brotherhood and eliminate all the insoluble difficulties of measuring the effort made and the value of the products obtained is a communist organization” of production and distribution.¹³ Following the Bern Congress of the antiauthoritarian International in late October 1876, Cafiero and Malatesta expressed the Italian position as follows: “*The contribution by all towards the meeting of each and everyone’s needs*” is “the only rule of production and consumption compatible with the principle of solidarity.”¹⁴

“Propaganda by the deed” was an idea that had been developing for some time. The Italian revolutionary Carlo Pisacane had stated in his “political testament” in 1857 that “ideas spring from deeds and not the other way around.”¹⁵ The Italian internationalists rediscovered his writings around 1875.¹⁶ In the midst of the Franco-Prussian War, Bakunin wrote that “from this very moment we must spread our principles, not with words *but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda.*”¹⁷

⁸ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 138.

⁹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹² Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 110.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁴ Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 12.

¹⁵ Carlo Pisacane, “Political Testament,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 68.

¹⁶ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 119.

¹⁷ Bakunin, “Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 101.

During the uprisings in Spain in the summer of 1873, *La Solidarité Révolutionnaire* in Barcelona described “revolutionary action” as the most advanced form of “revolutionary propaganda”: when the people do battle at the barricades with the “mercenaries of reaction,” it forces the attention of others, such that they can no longer remain indifferent.¹⁸ Thus, even when unsuccessful, revolutionary uprisings like the Paris Commune and Sanlúcar constituted powerful examples that would serve to inspire the masses in the future.

The usefulness and wisdom of trying to provoke insurrection became a matter of debate within the antiauthoritarian International following the Italian internationalists’ abortive uprising in Bologna in 1874. Malon, who had moved to Italy in 1872, with an eight-month sojourn in Lugano, Switzerland, in 1876, encouraged Italian internationalists to reject insurrectionism and to recognize a positive role for the state, and therefore to participate in bourgeois politics in certain circumstances, for the workers were better off under a republic than under a monarchy.¹⁹ At a meeting of a small breakaway group of Italian internationalists in Lugano, in April 1876, Malon denounced anarchist revolutionaries within the International as the “promoters of the unfruitful agitation that for the past three or four years has disorganized and thinned out the forces of the socialist party.”²⁰ He advised the Italian internationalists “to reject false theories such as the spontaneity of the masses.”²¹

The majority of the Italian internationalists continued to support an insurrectionary strategy. Malatesta and Cafiero, for instance, described in late 1876 “the *act of insurrection*, designed to assert socialist principles through deeds,” as “the most effective method of propaganda.”²² At the October 1876 Bern Congress, Malatesta had said that the revolution consisted much more in facts than in words.²³ Despite the criticisms of Malon and the reformists who agreed with him, the Italian Federation experienced a resurgence in 1876–1877.²⁴

At the Bern Congress of the antiauthoritarian International, Brousse had indicated his view that generally “the deed is better than the word.”²⁵ He was instrumental in founding the anarchist paper *Arbeiter-Zeitung* in Bern in order to reach a German-speaking audience. In December 1876, its editors stated that they were “primarily supporters of propaganda by the deed, of propaganda through action, always provided of course that this be treated seriously and not in an infantile fashion.”²⁶ The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was smuggled into Germany, providing “a centre for anarchist activity” there.²⁷ According to Rudolf Rocker, it was the “first organ in the German language which represented explicit anarchist principles.”²⁸

The debate over the “public service” state continued at the Bern Congress, with De Paepe now openly advocating that the workers “seize and use the powers of the State” in order to create a socialist society.²⁹ Most of the delegates rejected De Paepe’s position, including Brousse,

¹⁸ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 39–40.

¹⁹ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 54–55.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

²¹ Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians*, 216.

²² Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 11.

²³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 95.

²⁴ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 108.

²⁵ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 469.

²⁶ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 79.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

Guillaume, and Malatesta.³⁰ Malatesta argued for “the complete abolition of the state in all its possible manifestations.”³¹ While Guillaume and some of the other veteran antiauthoritarians liked to avoid the “anarchist” label, Malatesta declared that “Anarchy, the struggle against all authority ... always remains the banner around which the whole of revolutionary Italy rallies.”³² Both Malatesta and Guillaume made clear that, in rejecting the state, even in a “transitional” role, they were not advocating the abolition of public services, as De Paepe implied, but their reorganization by the workers themselves.³³

Guillaume also took De Paepe to task for repeating the claim of Marx and the Social Democrats that the antiauthoritarians held themselves aloof from the workers’ daily struggles by refusing to participate in bourgeois politics. He pointed out that the Social Democrats’ immediate political goals were indistinguishable from those of the radical bourgeoisie. By refusing to work within the existing political systems, the antiauthoritarians presented a real socialist alternative to the radical republicans who had no intention of abolishing capitalism. Instead of subordinating themselves to the political ambitions of the radical bourgeoisie, the antiauthoritarians continued to encourage the workers to gain a sense of their own collective strength by organizing trade unions and similar bodies, through which they would fight the capitalists on “the economic terrain.”³⁴

Far from holding themselves aloof from the workers’ daily struggles, the antiauthoritarians were involved in them much more directly than the social democrats, who focused their energies on periodic political campaigns, watering down their demands in order to gain the support of the middle class. The consequence was that the Social Democratic parties sought to subordinate the trade unions to their own needs, interfering with the ability of trade unions to engage in industrial action, especially if the political parties felt that particular actions would harm their electoral prospects.

As Brousse pointed out, the socialists who advocated political participation also had to compromise any commitment they had to social revolution by publicly limiting themselves to working within the existing political system. Eventually, as was already happening in France, they would abandon any commitment to social revolution in favor of piecemeal legal reforms. The anarchists and antiauthoritarians were under no such constraints and would continue to organize the workers for the purpose of making the social revolution.³⁵

Guillaume also responded to the charge of some of the German-speaking delegates that the “anarchists” and “Bakuninists” wanted not only to abolish the state but also all social relationships, and that the anarchists rejected collective action. He pointed out that when the antiauthoritarians spoke of “the abolition of the State,” they meant the abolition of the authoritarian institutions comprising the state, the government over the people by the bourgeoisie, and class rule.³⁶

The antiauthoritarian “collectivists,” or antiauthoritarian “communists,” did not advocate the abolition of society, Guillaume stated, but the creation of a society based on “the free federation of free industrial and agricultural associations, without artificial frontiers and without govern-

³⁰ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 104.

³¹ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 114.

³² Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 37–38.

³³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 104.

³⁴ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 459–460.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 460.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 466.

ment.”³⁷ Brousse added that it was not so much a question of which social relationships would replace capitalism and the state, but rather which existing relationships, relationships that were in the process of being created, and possible future relationships would be established between individuals and groups as society was reorganized on a libertarian basis.³⁸

As for the social democratic view that the capitalist-class state could be replaced by a “people’s state,” Guillaume argued that this would put power in the hands of a new class of privileged state bureaucrats even more powerful than existing governments, exercising both political and economic control over the people—an analysis very similar to that of Bakunin.³⁹ The German-speaking anarchist Friedrich August Reinsdorf (1849–1885) argued that, if the “people’s state” maintained the same kind of coercive apparatus, like the criminal justice system, to enforce its laws as was relied upon by the capitalist class, then it would be a “police state” rather than a “people’s state” that the Social Democrats would be creating.⁴⁰

The Italian internationalists continued to see their federation as a revolutionary organization, open to “all revolutionaries, without distinction of class,” according to Malatesta, because the “goal of the social revolution is not only the emancipation of the working class, but the emancipation of the whole of humanity.”⁴¹ Consequently, the Italian Federation did not follow a syndicalist approach. Malatesta warned of the dangers of English-style trade unionism, which he regarded as a “reactionary institution.”⁴² The problem with English trade unionism was that the unions limited their aims to improving wages, benefits, and working conditions instead of seeking to abolish capitalism and the state by means of social revolution.

Nevertheless, Malatesta believed that “through the development of the principle of solidarity and the universalization of collective labour, production and exchange in all areas will become public services. But these services will not be organized from the top down, by the State; they are the spontaneous, natural and necessary result of social life, of the progress of science, of the development of needs,” having “their reason for being and finding their means of action” in the social body itself.⁴³ Although Malatesta claimed that no one could presume to say how postrevolutionary society would be organized, his comments on the public services issue indicate that he foresaw the reorganization of society on the basis of self-managed functional groups designed to meet the needs of the people—a position that came to be adopted by other proponents of anarchist communism.

The Bern Congress was attended by French- and German-speaking delegates from Switzerland, French delegates in exile, De Paepe (on behalf of the Dutch and the Belgians), delegates from the Spanish and Italian Federations, and the Russian exile Zhukovsky. Although Bakunin had died in July 1876, his shadow still loomed large, mainly because of the ongoing attacks directed against the antiauthoritarians by the Marxist Social Democrats, who accused them of seeking to create disorder in the workers’ ranks, just as Bakunin allegedly had done within the original International.

³⁷ Ibid., 467.

³⁸ Ibid., 469.

³⁹ Ibid., 467.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 486.

⁴¹ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 115.

⁴² Ibid., 115.

⁴³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 104.

Marx and Engels had continued their campaign against the anarchists (“Bakuninists” in Marxist parlance) since the publication of Engels’s attack on the Spanish anarchists, *The Bakuninists at Work*, in late 1873. *The Bakuninists at Work* was republished in New York in the spring of 1874. In early 1875, Engels published a series of articles on “refugee literature” in *Der Volksstaat*, in which he rehashed much of the material attacking Bakunin in *Fictitious Splits in the International* and *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men’s Association*, portraying Bakunin as not only the wrecker of the International but also as a vainglorious man who had sought to establish his own personal dictatorship.⁴⁴ When the Russian revolutionary Peter Tkachev (1844–1886) responded to some of these attacks, Marx thought that what Tkachev wrote was “so stupid, that Bakunin may have contributed.”⁴⁵ Engels republished the section on the Russian revolutionaries as a pamphlet called *On Social Relations in Russia* later that year.⁴⁶ In the fall of 1875, he was still circulating copies of *The Bakuninists at Work* and *On Social Relations in Russia*, along with copies of *The Communist Manifesto*.⁴⁷

When the Russian revolutionary Peter Lavrov (1823–1900) published an article about Bakunin’s funeral in the July 15, 1876, edition of his paper *Vpered!*, in which Bakunin was described as a revolutionary “giant,” Marx was beside himself, describing the article as “disgustingly sycophantic” and castigating Lavrov for trying to curry favor with the “Bakuninists.”⁴⁸ The article mentioned the desire of the antiauthoritarian internationalists to reconcile with the Social Democrats by reuniting the International, with each federation being free to decide its own position on political action.

Marx and Engels would have none of that. Marx warned former members of the International, such as Liebknecht and Frankel, about attending the October 1876 Bern Congress of the anti-authoritarian International, denouncing the antiauthoritarians as “long-standing conspirators against the International.”⁴⁹ A couple of weeks before the Bern Congress, Becker, who had been one of the founding members of the Geneva section of the Alliance, published an attack on the antiauthoritarian internationalists, with Engels’s subsequent approval, concerned that some of the German workers were showing interest in working with the antiauthoritarians.⁵⁰ Guillaume had been in discussions with some of the German Social Democrats about having them join the antiauthoritarian International, pointing out that under its revised statutes, each federation was free to determine what approach it would take to political action. But Becker’s broadside ruined any chance of reconciliation, rekindling “passions that had died down for a time,” with “hostility once again” erupting between the anarchists and the Social Democrats.⁵¹

Malatesta spoke directly to Bakunin’s legacy at the Bern Congress. He paid tribute to Bakunin’s role in establishing the International in Italy, where he provided the Italians with their “first revolutionary education.” He denounced the “shameful calumnies” directed against Bakunin and

⁴⁴ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 24, 20–25 & 29–49.

⁴⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 45: *Marx and Engels, 1874–1879* (New York: International Publishers, 1991), 59.

⁴⁶ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 24, 100.

⁴⁷ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 45, 105.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 154 & 157.

⁵⁰ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 506–511; Engels, in *Collected Works*, Volume 45, 173.

⁵¹ Peter Kropotkin, “Western Europe,” in *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*, ed. by M. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 205–206.

said that Bakunin would always have a place in the hearts of all Italian socialists.⁵² Nevertheless, Malatesta rejected the “Bakuninist” label, because he and his comrades did “not share all Bakunin’s theoretical and practical ideas, and because above all, we follow ideas and not men, and rebel against this habit of embodying a principle in a man.”⁵³

The concept of “propaganda by the deed,” which Bakunin helped inspire, was put into practice in 1877 by antiauthoritarian internationalists in Switzerland and Italy. In March 1877, Brousse and a group of internationalists organized a demonstration in Bern to commemorate the Paris Commune. The previous year, a similar demonstration “had been attacked by a hostile crowd,” and the carrying of the red flag of socialism had been banned.⁵⁴ About 250 demonstrators, mostly internationalists and French refugees, including Brousse, Schwitzguébel, Spichiger, Pindy, Kropotkin, and Guillaume, again carried the red flag through the streets of Bern. The police seized one of the flags, and street fighting ensued. A couple of demonstrators were arrested but were soon set free after the remaining demonstrators went to the police station to demand their release. For Brousse, the point of the demonstration was, as he put it in his August 1877 article on propaganda by the deed, to lay out “for Swiss working folk in the public square, that they do not, as they thought they did, enjoy freedom.”⁵⁵

The demonstration garnered international attention, with “twenty-nine of the participants” eventually being “brought to trial—again amidst considerable publicity—in August.”⁵⁶ Guillaume, who had been a reluctant participant, was given forty days in jail; while Brousse, who was the main instigator of the demonstration, was given thirty days, but was also “banished from the Berne Canton for three years.”⁵⁷ Guillaume thought the demonstration produced more harm than good, but Brousse, at least prior to his imprisonment, was enthusiastic, with the membership of the Bern section of the antiauthoritarian International having doubled in the immediate aftermath. Moreover, the demonstration and the attendant publicity “had produced a good effect amongst the clandestine groups of the International” in France.⁵⁸ However, after the imprisonment of Guillaume, Brousse, and several other internationalists and Brousse’s expulsion from Bern, the publication of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* ceased and the Bern section effectively collapsed.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the Italian internationalists had attempted to provoke a peasant uprising around Benevento in April 1877. Before they were captured, Malatesta, Cafiero, and about two dozen other anarchists were able to enter only two villages, where they burned tax records, land titles, and other official documents at the town halls, while urging the peasants to collectivize the land. The Italian authorities were aware of what was being planned and had dispatched “a counterinsurgency force consisting of twelve thousand troops” to the area, enabling them to contain the attempted insurrection.⁶⁰

Malon made his break from the antiauthoritarian internationalists irrevocable by characterizing the actions of the Italian anarchists as “downright insane.”⁶¹ Guesde also denounced the

⁵² Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 487.

⁵³ Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 207.

⁵⁴ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 81.

⁵⁵ Paul Brousse, “Propaganda By the Deed,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 151.

⁵⁶ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 83.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 113–114.

⁶⁰ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 123.

⁶¹ Vincent, *Between Marxism and Anarchism*, 56.

Italians, as he moved toward a Marxist position.⁶² One of the participants, Pietro Cesare Ceccarelli (1843–1886), later acknowledged that they knew they could not succeed, but as partisans “of propaganda by the deed, we wanted to carry out an act of propaganda; persuaded that revolution must be provoked, we carried out an act of provocation.”⁶³

Brousse also extolled the Benevento affair as an example of propaganda by the deed, writing in his article on that subject that the Italian internationalists “from Benevento went one better” than the Bern demonstrators: “They did not bother to demonstrate just one self-evident fact to the people. They took over two small communes, and there, by burning the archives, they showed the people how much respect they should have for property.” By returning their taxes “and the weapons that had been confiscated from them” by the authorities, the Italian internationalists “showed the people the sort of contempt they should have for government.” For Brousse, it did not matter that such exemplary instances of direct action were unsuccessful, for the “idea will have been launched, not on paper, not in a newspaper, not on a chart... having sprung to life, it will march, in flesh and blood, at the head of the people.”⁶⁴

The Benevento affair predictably led to a renewed persecution of the Italian internationalists. Nevertheless, the failed uprising drew “considerable notice to the International and its socialist program,” and the Italian Federation gained “many new adherents.” As Nunzio Pernicone notes, “contrary to conventional wisdom,” the Benevento affair “did not diminish the appeal of anarchist socialism for Italian workers, and undoubtedly enhanced it in the eyes of some.”⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the antiauthoritarian International was enjoying a resurgence in France. The “Lyon Plot” trial in April 1874, concerning the failed attempt at establishing a commune there, had seen the imprisonment of twenty-six militants “for affiliating themselves with the forbidden International and for concealing weapons,” with the result that the antiauthoritarian International temporarily “ceased to function in France even as a secret organization.”⁶⁶ However, by 1876, Brousse, Montels, and Pindy had renewed contacts with underground French internationalists, smuggling pro-abstentionist pamphlets into France, reviving the “Section of Revolutionary Propaganda and Action” in Switzerland affiliated with the Jura Federation, and publishing an *Almanac of the Commune* in December 1876. The *Almanac* contained several articles directed specifically toward French workers, including critiques of bourgeois law and education in France by Reclus, an article on class struggle by Schwitzguébel, a direct appeal to French workers, an article on the revival of the French workers’ movement, and an article on Paris under the Commune. A Parisian internationalist claimed that the workers there continued to reject “State” or “authoritarian” socialism, despite the replacement of Napoléon III’s Empire with a “democratic” republic.⁶⁷

The *Almanac* also contained an article by the Russian anarchist Zemphiry Ralli, drawing “a direct parallel between the ‘natural’ socialism of Russia” in the mir, or *obschina*, and “that of the West in the Paris Commune.”⁶⁸ Ralli argued among his revolutionary Russian compatriots that the Jacobin and Blanquist majority in the Commune had discredited the very idea of state socialism,

⁶² Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 100–101; Guillaume, Vol. 4, 185–186.

⁶³ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 119.

⁶⁴ Paul Brousse, “Propaganda By the Deed,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 151.

⁶⁵ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 127.

⁶⁶ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 292.

⁶⁷ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 118.

⁶⁸ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 302, fn. 63. The *obschina* was a Russian peasant community.

as the “revolutionary government” of the Commune had proven itself incapable of making the social revolution, trying instead to impose “simple palliatives” by decree. For the social revolution to have been achieved, the people in arms needed to destroy the existing order and then, freed of their chains, create for themselves a new society based on “individual autonomy, autonomy of groups, of *artels*, of [workers’] corporations.”⁶⁹

Ralli later developed his views in an even more anarcho-syndicalist direction, emphasizing the constructive role that the workers’ own directly democratic organizations would play in remaking society.⁷⁰ For Ralli, “all workers in all countries, in all States, [had] one enemy—the landlord and the government.” He also provided an anarchist view of the International to the revolutionaries in Russia, communicating his ideas of “anarchist Populism” within Russia through the newspaper *Rabotnik*, “the first attempt to found a working class organ in the Russian language.”⁷¹

In May 1877, Reclus began publishing *Le Travailleur* in Geneva, along with Lefrançais, Zhukovsky, Ralli, and other members of the Geneva “Section of Revolutionary Propaganda and Action.” Although *Le Travailleur* published a variety of views, many articles were from an anarchist perspective. *L’Avant Garde*, which Brousse, Kropotkin, and Pindy began publishing from Switzerland in June 1877, was much more explicitly anarchist in orientation. It became the official organ of the reconstituted French Federation of the International.⁷² The French Federation called for “Collectivism, Anarchy and [the] free Federation” of autonomous communes, to be achieved by an international social revolution. The antiauthoritarian International would help ensure the success of the revolution by uniting the workers across borders and by providing an organizational base for the coming insurrection.⁷³

In Belgium, a minority of the internationalists remained committed to an anarcho-syndicalist position, but De Paepe and the majority of the Belgians were now becoming more involved in conventional political activity, seeing a need for Socialist political parties to represent the workers and ultimately to achieve power, following the example of the German Social Democrats.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, the antiauthoritarian International continued to gain adherents among different groups, such as the Democratic Association of Patras in Greece, which had sections throughout the country. Based on the summary of the recent Bern Congress, the Greeks indicated that there was “a complete harmony between our ideas and the principles of your program.”⁷⁵ In the summer of 1877, they wrote the Jura Federation that “we are convinced that the solution of the social question is not possible without the social revolution.”⁷⁶

A section of the International in Uruguay affiliated itself with the antiauthoritarian International, advising the Jura Federation of their “desire to strengthen our Association through solidarity,” marching united in “the great work that you have undertaken.”⁷⁷

⁶⁹ Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 439. An *artel* is a cooperative of artisans; a “corporation,” in this sense, is like a guild or producers’ cooperative and should not be confused with a capitalist joint-stock company.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 441.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 529.

⁷² Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 104.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 108–109.

⁷⁴ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 119–122.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

Despite Guillaume's reluctance to adopt the anarchist label, the July 1877 edition of the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* stated that, a year after the death of Bakunin, "the revolutionary anarchist party is stronger and more vibrant than ever." The *Bulletin* went on to say that, regardless of what their adversaries claimed, there never was something called "Bakuninism" nor any "Bakuninists," but rather "there was and there still are men united by a common program and by a passion for justice and equality."⁷⁸

At the beginning of August 1877, the Jura Federation held its annual congress at Saint Imier, the last to be attended by Guillaume, who was to move to France in 1878. According to Guillaume, it was at the 1877 Saint Imier Congress that "all the points [of] the anarchist and collectivist programme were fully expounded in public for the first time."⁷⁹ At the end of the second day of the congress, the delegates marched through town with the red flag, this time without incident, in stark contrast to the Bern demonstration the previous March.⁸⁰

Several veteran internationalists were in attendance, as well as some newer faces, such as Kropotkin. Schwitzguébel, Spichiger, Pindy, Montels, Brousse, and Costa were also there. German anarchists in Berlin sent their "fraternal greetings."⁸¹ The recently revived "Section of Revolutionary Propaganda and Action" from Geneva submitted a report emphasizing the growing gap between the revolutionary anarchists and the Marxist socialists who had denounced the Bern demonstration and the Benevento uprising. For the Geneva group, solidarity with other socialists was only possible where there was agreement on "(a) the abolition of the State, (b) political abstention, (c) the inanity of working-class candidates [and] (d) the value of various means of propaganda," including propaganda by the deed.⁸²

A couple of weeks later, the French internationalists held a secret congress, with delegates from twelve sections, including Brousse, Montels, and Pindy. The congress recommended propaganda by the deed, adopted a "collectivist and anarchist program," and urged its members, where they had influence, "to give the strike a revolutionary socialist character" by calling on the workers to take possession of the means of production.⁸³

In September 1877, the antiauthoritarian International held a congress in Verviers, Belgium, which was to be its last. Guillaume, Brousse, Montels, and Kropotkin attended, as well as García Viñas and Morago from Spain. "Rinke and Werner represented sections in both Switzerland and Germany, while there was a strong delegation from the Verviers region, the last stronghold of anarchism in Belgium."⁸⁴ Costa represented Greek and Egyptian socialists who were unable to attend, as well as the Italian Federation.⁸⁵

On behalf of the Italian anarchists, Costa defended their conduct at Benevento, indicating that they were "convinced that only *action* can give the people consciousness of their own strength."⁸⁶ The Spanish delegates argued that the social revolution must be international in scope in order to succeed. Brousse and Costa agreed, with the proviso that it was the duty of each revolutionary

⁷⁸ Ibid., 217.

⁷⁹ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 38.

⁸⁰ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 4, 229.

⁸¹ Ibid., 237.

⁸² Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 94.

⁸³ Ibid., 104–105.

⁸⁴ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 4, 258; Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 308, fn. 41; Ibid., 94–95.

⁸⁵ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, Vol. 4, 258.

⁸⁶ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 137.

to provide moral and material support whenever and wherever revolution bursts forth, as some countries were closer to revolution than others.⁸⁷

Emphasizing the need for revolutionary action, the delegates recognized “solidarity in fact in revolutionary socialist action” as being “not only the most practical, but the most indispensable means of assuring the triumph of the social revolution.”⁸⁸ Costa argued that it was their “duty to put... solidarity into practice and to prove it through facts.”⁸⁹ The Spanish delegates reported that the “course of conduct followed in Spain is propaganda by the deed and separation from all bourgeois organizations.”⁹⁰ At this time, “propaganda by the deed” was conceived by the anarchists along the lines originally proposed by Brousse, as collective forms of direct action intended to provoke, incite, and inspire the masses to revolt.

There was also a debate over the respective merits of collectivism and communism, with Costa and Brousse arguing in favor of an anarchist communist position, while the Spanish delegates indicated that the Spanish Federation continued to support collectivism. Guillaume suggested that “different solutions for the distribution [of goods] will be arrived at within the groups themselves” during the revolutionary process.⁹¹ This position, leaving the particular form of economic organization to be worked out by the participants themselves, later came to be known as “anarchism without adjectives.”⁹² It was popularized by the Spanish anarchists as a way of surmounting the ideological conflicts between the anarchist collectivists, who still believed that wealth should be distributed on the basis of each person’s labor, and the anarchist communists, who advocated distribution according to need.

De Paepe did not attend the congress, as he was preparing for his rapprochement with social democracy and parliamentary politics at the World Socialist Congress that was about to begin in Ghent. In anticipation of the Ghent Congress, the delegates to the Verviers Congress passed several resolutions emphasizing the limited bases for cooperation between the now predominantly anarchist-oriented antiauthoritarian International and the Social Democrats. For the Verviers delegates, collective property—which they defined as “the taking of possession of social capital by the workers’ groups” rather than by the state—was an immediate necessity, not a “far-off ideal.”⁹³

On the issue of political action, the delegates indicated that class antagonism could not be resolved by government or some other political power, but only “by the unified efforts of all the exploited against their exploiters.” They vowed to combat all political parties, regardless of “whether or not they call themselves socialists.” With respect to trade union organization, they confirmed their view that unions that limit their demands to improving working conditions, reducing the working day, and increasing wages “will never bring about the emancipation of the proletariat.” To be revolutionary, trade unions must adopt as their principal goal “the abolition of the wage system” and “the taking of possession of the instruments of labour by expropriating them” from the capitalists.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 95 & 300, fn. 48.

⁸⁸ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 259.

⁸⁹ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 95.

⁹⁰ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 64.

⁹¹ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 140.

⁹² Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 134–154.

⁹³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 263.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 264.

Unsurprisingly, despite Guillaume's hopes for reconciliation between the social democratic and revolutionary anarchist wings of the socialist movement, no such reconciliation was reached at the Ghent Congress, nor at any subsequent international socialist congresses; the so-called "Second" International finally barred anarchist membership altogether at its 1896 international congress in London.⁹⁵ In the late 1870s, however, the anarchists remained the left wing of the socialist movement. As Pernicone notes, anarchism "was still the dominant school of Italian socialism in the summer of 1878."⁹⁶ Much the same could be said about Spain.

The French anarchists at *L'Avant-Garde* continued to exercise some influence in France. The French Federation published manifestos in the fall of 1877 advocating abstention from participation in all bourgeois politics and calling "once again for insurrection in the shape of a Communard uprising." In anticipation of a workers' congress in Lyon, planned for January 1878, the French anarchists put forward their own program in *L'Avant-Garde*, arguing for revolutionary trade unions on the model discussed at the Verviers Congress. For them, freedom and equality could never be achieved through participation in the existing political system, since "no class would ever voluntarily abandon control."⁹⁷

At the French workers' congress in Lyon in late January 1878, Ballivet, a "delegate of the mechanics' union of Lyon" and "a member of a secret section of the International," which was still outlawed in France, presented resolutions in favor of collectivism that had been "drawn up by Brousse, Kropotkin, Montels and Dumartheray." Ballivet urged the assembled workers to adopt a revolutionary syndicalist program: "The complete separation from all bourgeois politics; the organization of trades unions for revolutionary ends; the creation of propaganda and study groups; and the federation of these trades unions and study groups in order to exploit areas of popular agitation and direct them to revolutionary ends." "In a word," as Ballivet said to the Lyon Congress delegates, "to bring forth, from the very heart of existing society, the organization of the free society of the future."⁹⁸ Thus, the French internationalists of the late 1870s remained faithful to the syndicalist vision of the original internationalists, such as Varlin and Pindy (with Pindy himself continuing to champion such ideas from exile in Switzerland).

The anarchist implications of this approach had now become abundantly clear. In the January/February 1878 edition of *Le Travailleur*, Reclus "defended the use of anarchy and anarchist on etymological and practical grounds." Anarchy was the goal that they sought to achieve, and both their friends and enemies called them anarchists, so they might as well adopt the label, as it was "sufficiently uncommon in usage as to be an aid in drawing attention to themselves."⁹⁹ "In remaining sincerely anarchists, enemies of the state in all its forms," Reclus wrote, "we have the advantage of deceiving no one, and especially of not deceiving ourselves."¹⁰⁰

The Belgian Federation held its last "regional" congress in Brussels, in December 1877, with the Antwerp section indicating it had already withdrawn from the International. The majority of the Belgian sections now supported participation in bourgeois politics in order to improve the condition of the working class, while claiming that social revolution remained their ulti-

⁹⁵ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 263–264.

⁹⁶ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 140.

⁹⁷ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 110–111.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 111–112.

⁹⁹ Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 126.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

mate aim.¹⁰¹ Only the Verviers section continued to support an anarchist approach. By January 1878, most of the former Belgian internationalists had joined the newly formed Belgian Socialist Party.¹⁰² However, in Germany, anarchists affiliated with the antiauthoritarian International were gaining ground, appealing to German workers unhappy with the gradualist and parliamentary approach of the Social Democrats. Some prominent Social Democrats eventually defected to the anarchist camp—the most noteworthy among them being the then-parliamentary deputy Johann Most (1846–1906).¹⁰³

When Kropotkin traveled to Spain in the summer of 1878, he found a vibrant anarchist movement, albeit one with conflicting tendencies. The Spanish Federation then had about 80,000 members.¹⁰⁴ The Andalusians and various groups in Madrid and Catalonia supported class warfare, believing that “it was necessary... to combat their enemies by whatever means possible.” The “insurrectionists” sought to provoke social revolt, regarding the International’s primary role as being the organization of the workers to prepare for and precipitate the social revolution. The “syndicalist” faction, based in Barcelona, sought “to organize both industrial and agricultural workers into unions, and then to link them by means of a national federation of unions,” regarding these revolutionary unions as “the living germs of the new social order”—essentially, the same position that had been adopted at the 1869 Basel Congress of the International.¹⁰⁵

The Jura Federation was itself in decline, with many of its members having been effectively blacklisted by the employers. The publication of its *Bulletin* was canceled in March 1878. Even *Le Travailleur* was experiencing difficulties, despite its nonsectarian approach, merging into *L’Avant Garde* in June 1878. A committee of “five members of the French Federation” formed a collective editorial board, which also included Schwitzguébel and Spichiger, but Brousse remained the guiding spirit of the newspaper.¹⁰⁶

In August 1878, the Jura Federation held a congress in Fribourg. Only eight delegates attended, including Brousse, Schwitzguébel, Spichiger, and Kropotkin, representing seven sections. Nevertheless, a number of important issues were discussed. A letter from Reclus was presented summarizing the points later set forth in his pamphlet *Evolution and Revolution*, in which he argued that revolution is the natural result of progressive evolution.¹⁰⁷ To the bourgeois supporters of “Social Darwinism,” or “survival of the fittest,” Reclus responded that “the workers, who have at once the right and the might” will “make use of both to bring about a revolution for the benefit of all... powerful as may be the Master... he will be weak before the starving masses leagued against him.”¹⁰⁸

Reclus affirmed the anarchist rejection of the state, but emphasized that “if we are anarchists, the enemies of any master, we are also international collectivists.” He foresaw that, in a postrevolutionary society, “production will exactly meet needs,” with “the distribution of all wealth between men” being “taken away from the exploiter and carried on through the normal functioning of the whole of society.” Brousse supported this communist approach, arguing that “with each

¹⁰¹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, Vol. 4, 297–301.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 311–312.

¹⁰⁴ George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Anarchist Prince: Peter Kropotkin* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 166.

¹⁰⁵ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 70–71.

¹⁰⁶ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 124–125.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹⁰⁸ Élisée Reclus, “Evolution and Revolution,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 270–271.

one working *according to strength*, that is to say as long as the work remains ‘attractive’ for him, there will be such an increase of wealth that without depriving his neighbours, each one will be able to take from it *whatever he needs*.”¹⁰⁹ However, Brousse now regarded communism as a long term goal, not something that could be immediately achieved.¹¹⁰ Kropotkin spoke in favor of collective ownership of the means of production, but felt that “the sharing of the products of labour” should be in accordance with “the method found most appropriate by the communes and associations” rather than a set formula, which represented a position similar to that of Guillaume.¹¹¹

Both Brousse and Kropotkin argued, in Kropotkin’s words, that “the coming revolutions will have to be carried out under the flag of the municipal and agricultural communes.”¹¹² Brousse took this a step further, suggesting that anarchists participate in communal elections for “propaganda” purposes.¹¹³ Schwitzguébel agreed that promotion of communal autonomy “could provide the starting-point for popular agitation and open the way for the eventual realization of anarchist principles.” Rudolf Kahn (1851–?), who had worked with Reclus on *Le Travailleur*, spoke strongly against Brousse’s arguments in favor of political participation.¹¹⁴ While Kropotkin supported the idea of communal autonomy, he argued that anarchists must refuse putting “into action any tactic which could lead to the strengthening of the already tottering idea of the state.” Anarchists must therefore “seek to awaken in the people by theoretical propaganda and above all insurrectional acts, the popular sentiment and initiative, from the point of view both of violent expropriation and the disorganisation of the state”—a position shared by the majority of the Italian internationalists.¹¹⁵

Although Schwitzguébel suggested that it might be time for a new international workers’ organization with “a practical, immediate goal,” the delegates concluded the congress by calling for the “collective appropriation of social wealth, the abolition of the state in all its forms, including the would-be central office of public services” advocated by De Paepe, and for “a comprehensive exposition of the theoretical and practical programme of anarchist, collectivist and revolutionary socialism.” This was a project that Kropotkin was soon to undertake.¹¹⁶

In December 1878, the Swiss authorities suppressed publication of *L’Avant-Garde* after it published several articles in relation to a series of assassinations and attempted assassinations of Russian autocrats and European royalty.¹¹⁷ In June 1878, Brousse had published an article, “Hoedel, Nobiling and Propaganda by the Deed,” in which he criticized the attempts by Hoedel and Nobiling on the life of the German kaiser for lacking any element of deliberate collective action, in contrast to the Bern demonstration and the Benevento uprising, and for expressing republican rather than socialist values.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 46–47.

¹¹⁰ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 117.

¹¹¹ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 48.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 118.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹¹⁵ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 48.

¹¹⁶ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 121; *Ibid.*, 39 & 49.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 122–126.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 123 & 256–259.

In November 1878, *L'Avant-Garde* published an article on the attempted assassination of King Alfonso of Spain.¹¹⁹ Although it “began by stating that regicide was not one of the aims of the International, nor was it one of its approved methods, its object being to change *institutions*, not to kill tyrants,” the article “then went on to say that in certain circumstances assassination could provoke a revolutionary situation.”¹²⁰ Schwitzguébel wrote an article entitled “The Regicides,” which suggested more effective means of assassinating kings for those who thought this would lead to revolution. Schwitzguébel’s article “provoked a forceful protest from Pindy,” who was opposed to such tactics.¹²¹

Although the German anarchists were not directly involved in the 1878 assassination attempts on the German kaiser, August Reinsdorf was later executed for allegedly planning another attempt on the kaiser’s life a few years later.¹²² Reinsdorf had been one of the most active anarchist propagandists within Germany, whom Liebknecht and the German Social Democrats had denounced to the police.¹²³ But it was only in the early 1880s that some of the German anarchists “turned to terrorism in response to the period of severe repression inaugurated by the passing of the anti-socialist law of 1878,” which had outlawed socialist organizations in Germany.¹²⁴

To replace *L'Avant-Garde*, Kropotkin organized the publication of a new paper, *Le Révolté*, in February 1879, with Dumartheray and George Herzig (1856–1923), a young Genevan anarchist. Kropotkin felt that “the chief duty” of *Le Révolté* was to “make one feel sympathy with the throbbing of the human heart all over the world, with its revolt against age-long injustice, with its attempts at working out new forms of life,” for it “is hope, not despair, which makes successful revolutions.”¹²⁵ The new paper, explicitly anarchist in orientation, was a great success: it “soon attained a circulation far greater than that ever enjoyed by *L'Avant-Garde*,” which had a circulation of around 200; *Le Révolté*’s rose to 2,000.¹²⁶ *Le Révolté* was not only the most successful anarchist paper of its time—helping to spread anarchist ideas throughout Europe, particularly in France—but it also outsold competing socialist papers, until *Le Cri Du Peuple*, a French socialist paper, began appearing in 1883.¹²⁷

In Italy, Costa had published a letter in July 1879 signalling his abandonment of anarchism for parliamentary reformism. Cafiero, on behalf of the Italian Federation, wrote a response in September 1879, arguing that a parliamentary Socialist party, even if its ultimate aim was supposed to be anarchist communism, “would inevitably condemn and exclude revolutionaries out of fear that their actions would compromise peaceful propaganda in the eyes of the government and provoke repression.” But instead of seeking to revive the International, Cafiero argued that, in the face of the government persecution and suppression that had decimated the Italian Federation, anarchist social revolutionaries had to go underground. “Why,” Cafiero asked, “must we display all our forces to the public, i.e., to the police, so that they can know how and where to strike us?”¹²⁸

¹¹⁹ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, fn. 31.

¹²⁰ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 124.

¹²¹ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 87–88.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 91.

¹²³ Kropotkin, “Western Europe,” in *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*, 216.

¹²⁴ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 91.

¹²⁵ Kropotkin, *Memoirs*, 418.

¹²⁶ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 132; Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 311, fn. 7.

¹²⁷ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 119.

¹²⁸ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 169.

The Jura Federation continued to operate publicly, with Kropotkin being firmly of the view that “during the preparatory period” leading up to the social revolution, anarchists “ought to concentrate all of our efforts upon widespread propaganda on behalf of the idea[s] of expropriation and of collectivism.” These comments were in a paper called “The Anarchist Idea from the Point of View of Its Practical Realization,” which Kropotkin presented at the October 1879 congress of the Jura Federation in La Chaux-de-Fonds.¹²⁹

Kropotkin felt that a European social revolution was imminent. He called for expropriation of the means of production “by the workers of town and countryside themselves”—the position consistently taken by the antiauthoritarians in the International. Echoing the Italian internationalists’ conception of propaganda by the deed, Kropotkin argued that the “expropriation of social capital and the taking of it into common ownership... in a given locality... will become the most potent method for propagating the idea and the mightiest engine for mobilization” of those workers who “might yet hesitate to proceed with expropriation.”¹³⁰

Kropotkin therefore advocated anarchist participation in the workers’ daily struggles. While “sticking to the practicalities of the matter,” anarchists should “seek to broaden theoretical notions and awaken the spirit of independence and revolt” among the workers, for “the best way of shaking” the governmental edifice and to bring about the social revolution “would be to escalate the economic struggle.”¹³¹ This was similar to the position Bakunin had put forward within the International.

And as Bakunin had also argued, for the social revolution to succeed it must spread to the countryside. For his part, Kropotkin suggested that anarchists “undertake, in villages adjacent to the towns, ongoing propaganda in favor of expropriation of the land by the rural communes.” He foresaw the coming revolution being led by the insurgent “Commune, independent of the State, abolishing the representative system from within its ranks and effecting expropriation of raw materials, instruments of labor and capital for the benefit of the community.”¹³²

At the Jura Federation’s congress itself, Kropotkin added that anarchist communism was the ultimate goal, the “abolition of all forms of government and the free federation of producer and consumer groups,” with “collectivism as a transitory form of property”—a view very similar to that held by Guillaume.¹³³ The program Kropotkin presented at the October 1879 congress was an effective recapitulation and summary of the position that the anarchists in the International had been developing since the 1869 Basel Congress.

In France, anarchist members of the International were working within a revitalized workers’ movement to steer it in an anarchist direction. In anticipation of another French workers’ congress in the fall of 1879, *Le Révolté* published an article in May 1879 calling on the congress to create a program for “a distinct new party, a purely workers’ party,” which would act locally to achieve the collectivization of property.¹³⁴ At the Marseilles Congress in October 1879, the anarchist delegates supported the resolution on collectivism, which called for the means of production to be put “in the hands of the Communes and producers’ groups,” echoing the position

¹²⁹ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 233.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 231–232.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 234–235.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 233–235.

¹³³ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 49.

¹³⁴ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 155.

taken at the Basel Congress some ten years earlier. They also supported the call for a workers' party, but not participation in parliamentary politics.¹³⁵

At the July 1880 congress of the French workers of the Center (a geographical area, not a political position), Jean Grave (1854–1939) spoke on behalf of a significant minority of anarchist delegates, denouncing electoral participation as a diversionary tactic that would impede the revolution.¹³⁶ He told the delegates that “all the money spent in appointing deputies would be more wisely used to buy dynamite to blow them up.”¹³⁷ At the August 1880 workers' congresses of the South, in Marseilles, and of the East, in Lyon, anarchists succeeded in persuading the delegates to reject political participation, with the Southern Federation adopting an anarchist program. For the Southern Federation, revolution was “a spontaneous insurrectionary movement of the oppressed class against the oppressive class,” not something to be achieved through the existing political system.¹³⁸

Rudolf Kahn, who remained opposed to participation in bourgeois politics, had moved to Paris in 1880 where, among other things, he published an antielectoral pamphlet, *La question électorale*; perhaps “the first anarchist pamphlet published there” since the time of the Commune.¹³⁹ At the Le Havre Congress of the French workers in November 1880, Kahn persuaded the delegates to adopt “libertarian communism” as their ultimate goal, following the example of the Jura Federation, which had adopted an anarchist communist position at its October 1880 congress.¹⁴⁰ On the issue of political participation, the Le Havre Congress passed a resolution implying that, if participation in the municipal and legislative elections of 1881 did not achieve any positive results, the workers would return to a strategy of “revolutionary action, pure and simple”—a clear concession to the anarchists at the congress.¹⁴¹

By the summer of 1880, Kropotkin had been persuaded, most likely by Reclus and Dumartheray, to adopt anarchist communism as the immediate goal of the anarchist movement. They decided to argue in favor of anarchist communism at the next congress of the Jura Federation in October 1880 in La Chaux-de-Fonds.¹⁴²

“Discussion at the Congress,” Caroline Cahm writes, was “centred on the programme drawn up by Schwitzguébel... which was communalist and collectivist.”¹⁴³ The program distinguished “anarchist socialism” from the “authoritarian socialism” of those who wanted to seize power—a process that would result in an authoritarian “communist State.”¹⁴⁴ The program looked to the commune as the basis of the coming revolution, with “the federation of trades bodies” providing the internal organization of the commune.¹⁴⁵ Schwitzguébel, Pindy, and other veteran interna-

¹³⁵ Ibid., 157.

¹³⁶ Louis Patsouras, *The Anarchism of Jean Grave: Editor, Journalist and Militant* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2003), 27.

¹³⁷ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 140.

¹³⁸ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 165 & 319, fn. 59.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 322, fn. 80.

¹⁴⁰ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 58–59.

¹⁴¹ Stafford, *From Anarchism to Reformism*, 171.

¹⁴² Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 51–52.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 52.

¹⁴⁴ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 244.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 247.

tionalists still associated communism with state socialism and were concerned that the workers would do so as well.¹⁴⁶

Although Reclus and Kropotkin advocated a communist social economy, they were careful to emphasize that they were not proposing a system of communal government. In May 1880, Kropotkin had already clarified that, for him, the “commune” was “no longer a territorial agglomeration; it is rather a generic name, a synonym for the grouping of equals, knowing neither frontiers nor barriers.” At the October 1880 congress, Reclus declared that up “to now, the communes have only been little states... We are no more communalists than statistes; we are anarchists. Let us not forget that.”¹⁴⁷

Kropotkin said that what distinguished “anarchist socialism” from the other schools of socialist thought was that the latter did not believe that a social revolution was immediately possible, whereas the anarchists did. For Kropotkin, it was “expropriation, carried out by the people... which alone can invest the coming revolution with the requisite power to overcome the obstacles being erected in its path.” Kropotkin argued that the Jura Federation should no longer identify itself as “collectivist,” given that various state socialists and reformists had now adopted the label, and that it was time to openly declare themselves communists.¹⁴⁸

Reclus and Cafiero supported Kropotkin’s endorsement of anarchist communism, arguing that collectivism was based on an incoherent distinction between collective property and the products of collective labor. As Reclus put it, if the means of production are collectively owned and “work is performed by everyone, and the quantity and quality of products are due precisely to concerted endeavor, to whom might these legitimately belong, other than to the united body of workers?” He therefore argued that “products owed to the labor of all should be the property of all, and each person should be free to avail of his portion in order to consume it as he sees fit, with no regulation other than that emanating from the solidarity of interests and the mutual respect between associates.”¹⁴⁹

However, according to Kropotkin, it was Cafiero who convinced the majority of younger delegates, over the concerns of Schwitzguébel and Pindy, to endorse anarchist communism. At Kropotkin’s request, Cafiero had prepared a speech in support of anarchist communism, and his speech carried the day.¹⁵⁰

Cafiero began by arguing that anarchy and communism were two aspects of the same “revolutionary ideal.” He defined “anarchy” as “war against every authority” and, more positively, as the “full and complete liberty” of individuals, groups, and associations, freely federated with each other and then into “the commune or district,” the “region, and so on,” until free federations encompassed the entire globe.¹⁵¹

Cafiero defined “communism” as “the taking of possession, in the name of all humanity, of all the wealth existing in the world,” which would then be shared by all “according to the principle: FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS FACULTIES, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS.” He then expressed this communist principle in more libertarian terms: “FROM EACH AND TO

¹⁴⁶ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 55 & 57.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁴⁸ Guérin, *No Gods, No Masters, Book One*, 238–239.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹⁵⁰ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 52.

¹⁵¹ Carlo Cafiero, “Anarchy and Communism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 109.

EACH ACCORDING TO HIS WILL,” making clear that in an anarchist communist society, people would freely choose how they would contribute to the common wealth.¹⁵²

Cafiero argued against this “common wealth” being put in the hands of any government “representatives,” “trustees,” or “intermediaries” of any kind, for they would soon “end by representing only themselves.” Instead, “the land, the machines, the workshops, the houses, etc.,” would be held and made use of “in common” by the people directly, with everyone enjoying the “right to a share of the human wealth,” regardless of where they came from or their individual contribution to production.¹⁵³

With the abolition of capitalism, Cafiero foresaw a more rational organization of production that would result in abundance for all. Echoing comments that Proudhon had made in his critique of private property, Cafiero noted that if “the collective labour of ten men achieves results absolutely impossible to an isolated man, how great will be the results obtained by the grand co-operation of all the men who today are working in opposition against one another!”¹⁵⁴

With respect to machinery, Cafiero pointed out that “many machines remain unused solely because they do not return an immediate profit to the capitalist!” Backbreaking and dangerous work could be done by machines, if it were not cheaper for the capitalists to use day laborers. Instead of the worker being a slave to the machine, “which comes to drive him from the factory, to starve him, degrade him, torture him, crush him,” under anarchist communism “the machines will themselves be at his service, helping him and working to his benefit.”¹⁵⁵

Cafiero also argued against anarchist collectivism on a number of grounds. If wealth were distributed based on the “value” of each person’s contribution to production, inequality would soon be reestablished, “since he who manages to acquire more wealth will already be raised by that very thing above the level of the others.” Furthermore, because of the collective nature of modern production, it would be impossible to “determine what is the share of the product of one and the share of the product of another.”¹⁵⁶

Cafiero stated that “individual distribution of products would re-establish not only inequality between men, but also inequality between different kinds of work,” with the dirty work being left for the poor, who from economic necessity have to do it. People would not be free to choose their work based on “vocation and personal taste,” and the poor and unskilled would have to take the work that others avoided for cleaner, safer, and more rewarding occupations. “Thus would be reborn idleness and industry, merit and demerit, good and evil, vice and virtue; and, in consequence, reward on one side and punishment on the other: law, judge, policeman, and jail.”¹⁵⁷

With respect to goods that were in short supply, Cafiero argued that they too should be distributed on the basis of need, not so-called merit. Even in existing society, if a family did not have enough food, the children and the elderly would get fed first, despite not bringing any money

¹⁵² Ibid., 109.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 110.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 111. Proudhon first expressed the idea of “collective force” in “What is Property” (*Anarchism, Volume One*, 34–37).

¹⁵⁵ Cafiero, “Anarchy and Communism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 111.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 112.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

into the household. The same principle should apply “in the great humanitarian family of the future.”¹⁵⁸

Cafiero challenged the distinction drawn by the Marxist Social Democrats between “values of use and values of production. Use values are those which we use to satisfy our own personal needs: the house we live in, the food we consume, clothes, books, etc.; whereas production values are those we use for production: the factory, the stores, the stable, shops, machines and instruments of labour of every kind.” The Social Democrats argued that only “values of production,” not the “means of consumption,” should be considered collective property. Cafiero replied that there was no coherent distinction between use values and values of production. Houses, clothing, and gardens were as necessary for production as machinery, stables, and meadows, for without food and shelter people would be unable to produce anything.¹⁵⁹

Marx himself had conceded, in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, that during the transitional phase when the “*revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*” would increase productive capacity and suppress the bourgeois counterrevolution, transcending capitalist economic relations by further developing the material basis for a communist society, workers would be paid based on the amount and kind of work they performed, providing them with their individual “means of consumption,” or personal property. Marx acknowledged that this “transitional” state socialism (a kind of collectivism) would result in inequality, but from his perspective this was simply an “inevitable” defect “in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society,” which would still be in the process of transformation. For Marx, talk about “rights” and just entitlements was just that, “obsolete verbal rubbish... ideological nonsense... so common among the democrats and French Socialists,” but which he, with his “scientific socialism,” had long since left behind.¹⁶⁰

For the anarchists, talk about morality, rights, and justice was not “verbal rubbish.” It was on the basis of their moral views and conceptions of justice that they opposed capitalism, using much the same vernacular as the workers themselves. Property was “theft,” and the capitalists were unjust exploiters of the workers’ labor. When the antiauthoritarians reconstituted the International and revised its statutes, they retained the reference to “truth, justice and morality” and the slogan “no rights without duties, no duties without rights,” both of which Marx had only reluctantly included in the original statutes as a sop to the Mazzinians.¹⁶¹ And when Dumaertheray, Malatesta, Reclus, Kropotkin, Cafiero, and other anarchists moved from a collectivist to a communist position, it was largely because it was impossible to devise any way to determine fairly the value of each person’s contribution to the common wealth and to avoid the inequality that would result, as Marx himself acknowledged, under any wage system.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 113.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Marx, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., 529–531 & 538.

¹⁶¹ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 74–75.

Chapter Eleven: The End (of the International) and the Beginning (of the Anarchist Movement)

The Italian Federation held its last congress in Chiasso, Switzerland, in December 1880. By then, Cafiero had adopted an extreme stance. In his article “Action,” published in *Le Révolté* that same month, he wrote that “our action must be permanent rebellion, by word, by writing, by dagger, by gun, by dynamite, sometimes even by the ballot when it is a case of voting for an ineligible candidate... Everything is right for us which is not legal.”¹ This doctrine later came to be known as “illegalism.”

Under the influence of the Russian revolutionaries, the majority of whom were not anarchists, Cafiero was moving away from the original conception of propaganda by the deed as a form of collective direct action designed to inspire the masses to revolt toward one that embraced individual acts of violence. He quoted Carlo Pisacane’s now rediscovered slogan that “ideals spring from deeds and not the other way around.”² Pisacane himself had described Agésilao Milano’s (1830–1856) bayoneting of King Ferdinand of Naples in 1856 as “more effective propaganda than a thousand books.”³ Cafiero argued that “it is action which gives rise to ideas, and which is also responsible for spreading them across the world.”⁴

Eighteen delegates attended the Chiasso Congress, including intransigents like Cafiero and the more reformist socialists associated with Malon, such as Enrico Bignami (1844–1921).⁵ Although all factions agreed on anarchist communism as their ultimate goal, they “were now too far apart to reunite.” The anarchists continued to oppose participation in electoral politics and to reject any action on behalf of the workers “that did not seek the emancipation of labor from capital.”⁶ In any event, as a result of government repression, the Italian Federation “no longer existed as a viable organization.”⁷

The assassination of Czar Alexander II in March 1881 by the Russian social revolutionary group the People’s Will (Narodnaia Volia) made a lasting impression among many anarchists, including Cafiero, who mistakenly believed the Russian social revolutionaries to be anarchists “organized in secret, independent circles, linked together only by their common objective” of overthrowing the czarist autocracy.⁸ In fact, from its inception, the People’s Will adopted “the principle of a

¹ Carlo Cafiero, “Action,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 152.

² Ibid.

³ Carlo Pisacane, “Political Testament,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 68. For the corrected text identifying Milano as the Italian national hero and not the city, see my blog: robertgraham.wordpress.com.

⁴ Cafiero, “Action,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 152.

⁵ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 182–183.

⁶ Ibid., 183.

⁷ Ibid., 155.

⁸ Ibid., 189.

centralized, hierarchical, disciplined organization,” and their immediate political goal was some form of constitutional government.⁹

Kropotkin, having been directly involved in the Russian revolutionary movement prior to his escape from the Peter and Paul Fortress in Saint Petersburg in 1876, had a more realistic view of the Russian revolutionaries, some of whom he knew personally. He noted that, in fact, the executive of the People’s Will had expressly repudiated anarchism. Kropotkin regarded “the Bakuninist tradition” as having been “broken in Russia.” He was sure that Bakunin himself would have rejected individual acts of terrorism (as indeed he had) and instead “would have said: The bomb is too little to destroy the autocratic colossus.”¹⁰ What was needed was a widespread, peasant-based social revolution whereby the dispossessed would seize the land and workplaces to manage them for the benefit of all.

In late December 1880, in Belgium, the anarchists—who “had reorganized themselves after the defection of De Paepe and still maintained some strength among the Walloon miners—held a congress in Brussels where the idea of reconstituting the International was discussed.”¹¹ The last congress of the antiauthoritarian International had been held at Verviers, Belgium, in 1877. The Belgian anarchists lost one of their more effective members when Victor Dave was arrested in Germany in 1881 and imprisoned for two and a half years for distributing anarchist propaganda.¹² There was not to be a resurgence of the Belgian anarchist movement until around the mid-1890s.¹³

Kropotkin supported the idea of reconstituting the International, but argued that a parallel secret organization was necessary to coordinate revolutionary activities, given the repression to which anarchists were then subject in Europe.¹⁴ To this, Malatesta proposed the creation of “a third organization—an international revolutionary league.”¹⁵ The league was to be composed of revolutionaries who “would work together in promoting insurrection against governments” while “retaining their right to pursue their different programmes.”¹⁶ What this meant was that the league would be an alliance of revolutionaries dedicated to overthrowing existing regimes, but who did not necessarily share the same views regarding the internal structure appropriate to a revolutionary organization nor the structure of postrevolutionary society.

Kropotkin disagreed with this approach, arguing that it was not “enough to overthrow the government, to put ourselves in its place and decree the revolution,” setting “ourselves up as an army of conspirators, with all the characteristics of the old secret societies with their leaders and deputy leaders.” For the revolution to succeed, it was necessary that “the workers of the towns and the peasants, in revolt against any government, in each locality, in each town, in each village, take over *themselves* the wealth belonging to the exploiters, without waiting for this benefit to be granted by some government” or group of self-styled revolutionaries.¹⁷ Malatesta had more confidence that once the government was overthrown, the people would then take control of their own affairs without allowing themselves to be subject to a new revolutionary government.

⁹ Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 650.

¹⁰ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 144.

¹¹ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 257.

¹² Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse*, 40.

¹³ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 228–229.

¹⁴ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 145.

¹⁵ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 192.

¹⁶ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 147.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

An international congress of “social revolutionaries” resembling the broad-based coalition envisaged by Malatesta, including anarchists, Blanquists, and revolutionary socialists, was eventually held in London in July 1881. Among the delegates were Kropotkin, Malatesta, Herzig, Louise Michel (recently returned from exile in New Caledonia), and Francesco Saverio Merlino (1856–1930), who had taken the place of Cafiero, Malatesta, and Costa as one of the Italian anarchists’ most effective organizers. Also present were Johann Neve (1844–1896), a German social revolutionary associated with Johann Most; Josef Peukert (1855–1910), an Austrian anarchist communist; Frank Kitz (1849–1923) and Joseph Lane (1851–1920), from England; S. Figueras and another, unknown, delegate from Spain; Edward Nathan-Ganz (1856–1934), from the United States, but representing the Mexican Workers’ Confederation; and, most disastrously, the police spy and agent provocateur “Serraux,” from Paris, who published the inflammatory paper *La Révolution Sociale*.

“Serraux” was partly successful in persuading the delegates to endorse some extreme positions, although Kropotkin did prevent him from having the word “morality” removed from the congress’s program. The resolution that “the time has come to pass from the period of affirmation to the period of action, and to unite verbal and written propaganda, whose inefficacy has been demonstrated, with propaganda by deed and insurrectionary action,” however, expressed a view then common among many anarchists, similar to the views expressed earlier by Bakunin and the Italian internationalists on the need for revolutionary action.¹⁸

Although Cafiero did not attend the congress, regarding it as a waste of time, the delegates adopted a position on the need for illegal action similar to his own, proclaiming that “illegality... is the only way leading to revolution.” The congress recommended that “organisations and individuals taking part in the International Workingmen’s Association... give great weight to the study and application” of the “technical and chemical sciences,” at the urging of Nathan-Ganz.¹⁹

Nathan-Ganz was a shady character who claimed to be a doctor and former military officer with expert knowledge of modern warfare. His real name was Eduard Nathan, and he was a con artist, fraud, and swindler who contributed some of his ill-gotten gains to social revolutionary and anarchist causes. Unlike most anarchists, he believed that the end justified the means. He advocated an alliance of all revolutionaries, authoritarian and anarchist, to overthrow the existing order through revolutionary warfare. He wrote articles on “Revolutionary War Science,” extolling the destructive power of dynamite, and many anarchists regarded him with suspicion. Peukert later described him as the “model of an arrogant insolent fop.”²⁰

After the congress, Nathan-Ganz managed to publish a couple of articles in the German socialist paper *Freiheit*, then based in London.²¹ Johann Neve was the editor of *Freiheit* while Johann Most was in an English prison for publishing an article celebrating the March 1881 assassination of Czar Alexander II.²² In his second article in *Freiheit*, Nathan-Ganz had advocated robbery and extortion as ways to fund the revolutionary cause, which resulted in him being barred from publishing any more articles in the paper.²³ Not even social revolutionaries like Neve were prepared to support this kind of “illegalism” as a revolutionary strategy.

¹⁸ Ibid., 155.

¹⁹ Ibid., 157–158.

²⁰ Heiner Becker, “The Mystery of Dr. Nathan-Ganz,” in *The Raven*, vol. 2, no. 2, October 1988, 118–145.

²¹ Ibid., 137.

²² Heiner Becker, “Johann Most in Europe,” in *The Raven*, vol. 1, no. 4, March 1988, 304.

²³ Becker, “The Mystery of Dr. Nathan-Ganz,” 137.

Most had moved to London at the end of 1878 after being released from prison in Germany, following a six-month sentence for denouncing Christianity and advocating atheism. The recently enacted antisocialist laws made it impossible for him to continue his political work within Germany. During the previous ten years, Most had already spent over five years in prison for his socialist and atheist views, despite having been twice elected to the German Reichstag.²⁴

He was becoming far too radical for the German Social Democrats, who expelled him from their party in August 1880. After that, he became a convinced social revolutionary, but not yet an anarchist, although he began publishing anarchist material in *Freiheit*, including articles by Reinsdorf and Bakunin, in the fall of 1880. He no longer believed that socialism could be achieved by parliamentary means. The existing social order, which was maintained by force, could only be overthrown by force.

However, at the time, Most agreed with Marx and Engels on the need for a revolutionary state during the transition from capitalism to socialism, which would use force to crush the bourgeois counterrevolution. Whereas Bakunin did not fear anarchy, Most, the social revolutionary, did “not fear the tyranny of the revolutionary proletariat.”²⁵ Echoing Engels’s comments in his essay “On Authority,” Most argued that after overthrowing the existing order, “it would be sheer madness” for the revolutionaries “to lay down [their] weapons and to proclaim the universal brotherhood.” Instead, it was necessary “to build a firmly constructed organization... to seize political power entirely and simply to proclaim a *reign of terror*.”²⁶ Thus, when Most first advocated revolutionary terrorism, he was an advocate of “the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” and, as with many other social revolutionaries, not an anarchist at all.

Given the clear differences between the anarchists and the social revolutionaries on the need for a revolutionary dictatorship, it should not be surprising that out of the 1881 London Congress “neither a secret nor a public organisation materialised,” marking the effective end of the antiauthoritarian International rather than its revival.²⁷ But the congress did not mark the end of the international anarchist movement. To the contrary, it was in the early 1880s that anarchism really came into its own. And even though there was no longer a functioning International Workingmen’s Association, various revolutionary socialist, trade union, and anarchist groups continued to express their adherence to the antiauthoritarian International’s program and the “Black” International that was ostensibly created at the July 1881 London Congress to carry on its work.

Prior to the congress, the French anarchists had definitively broken from the other revolutionary socialists at the congress of the Center in Paris, convening “their own Revolutionary-Socialist Congress” in May 1881, where “some two hundred militants... voted in favor of propaganda by deed and the abolition of property... and against participation in political action.” According to George Woodcock, “1881 can thus be taken as the year in which a separate and avowedly anarchist movement began its independent career in France.”²⁸

Although the French anarchist movement during the 1880s had “an active membership averaging 3,000,” through their speeches, writings, and various activities, people like Louise Michel, Jean Grave, Sébastien Faure, Émile Pouget (1860–1931), Reclus, and Kropotkin “gave the anarchist movement far more importance, in the eyes of workers and intellectuals alike, than its numerical

²⁴ Becker, “Johann Most in Europe,” 295.

²⁵ Ibid., 299–301.

²⁶ Ibid., 301–302.

²⁷ Woodcock and Avakumovic, *The Anarchist Prince*, 181.

²⁸ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 294–295.

strength might lead one to expect.” By “the end of the decade the two leading Paris anarchist journals, *La Révolte*,” the successor to *Le Révolté*, edited by Grave, “and *Le Père Peinard*,” edited by Pouget, “sold between them more than 10,000 copies each week.”²⁹

In the Lyon area, workers were engaging in more militant forms of direct action. They were going on strike and were physically attacking some of their employers.³⁰ In the mining region of Montceau-les-Mines and Le Creusot, Kropotkin reported that the workers “were holding secret meetings, talking of a general strike,” and blowing up “the stone crosses erected on all the roads round the mines” by the ultra-reactionary Catholic mine owners.³¹ The French anarchists regarded these actions as the first of many revolts that would lead to an anarchist social revolution. Instead of attacking political targets, as the Russian revolutionaries had been doing, the French workers were “attacking their real enemies, the economic oppressors.”³²

After several bombs went off in Lyon—one of them at an all-night bourgeois café, where a worker who tried to damp the fuse was killed—the authorities decided to pin the blame on the anarchists, and Kropotkin and several French anarchists were arrested. Concerned that there was no real evidence against them, the authorities charged them with belonging to the International, which remained outlawed in France despite the general amnesty granted to the surviving Communards in 1879 and a “republican” government then being in power.

The trial provided international publicity for the anarchist cause and contributed to the legend of the International, even though Kropotkin had the chief of the secret police admit during the trial that, after the 1881 London Congress, Kropotkin had been unable to revive the International in France because the workers “did not find it revolutionary enough!”³³ Kropotkin told the court that while it would “be a very good thing if we could come and tell you that we belonged to the International,” the International no longer existed in France.³⁴

The defendants read out in court a manifesto that Kropotkin had prepared, which was then widely republished and translated. The problem was not this or that kind of government, they said, but “the governmental idea itself” and “the principle of authority.” The defendants called for all capital to be put “at the disposal of all in such a way that none may be excluded, and that in turn no one may get possession of a part to the detriment of the rest.” They concluded by saying that, “Scoundrels that we are, we demand bread for everyone, work for everyone, and for everyone independence and justice too!”³⁵ Kropotkin and several others were sentenced to five years in prison, but they were pardoned after serving three years of their sentences.

Soon after the sentencing of the anarchists in the Lyon trial, Louise Michel and Émile Pouget were involved in a demonstration of the unemployed in Paris, which turned into a “bread riot.” The demonstration had been organized by a radical trade union, the *chambre syndicale* of carpenters. Michel spoke to the crowd, telling them to keep “close ranks” so as to avoid being “swept away like sheep to the slaughterhouse” by the police, who wanted “to prevent us from associating freely with each other” to demand “the right to work.”³⁶

²⁹ Ibid., 295–296.

³⁰ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 180.

³¹ Ibid., 181.

³² Ibid., 182.

³³ Ibid., 180.

³⁴ Iain MacKay (ed.), *Direct Struggle Against Capital: A Peter Kropotkin Anthology* (Oakland: AK Press, 2014), 80.

³⁵ MacKay, *Direct Struggle*, 83.

³⁶ Edith Thomas, *Louise Michel* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009), 207.

When the police charged the crowd, Michel called upon them “to march through Paris together, asking for work and for bread. Long live the Social Revolution!” Someone “passed her a black rag fastened to the end of a stick and, with her improvised banner, she moved to the head of the crowd.”³⁷ This was one of the first uses of a black flag by an anarchist, which soon came to be adopted by many anarchists as the symbol of anarchy. Michel wrote that the “black flag, with layers of blood upon it from those who wanted to live by working or die by fighting, frightens those who want to live off the work of others.”³⁸

The demonstrators took bread from some bakeries to feed themselves, with Michel telling them not to “hurt the bakers.” The police used a form of “kettling” to trap the demonstrators with a barricade of omnibuses, whereupon they set upon the demonstrators, indiscriminately attacking them “with the greatest of savagery.” In the *mêlée*, the police struck several bystanders, including “a former police prefect.”³⁹ But it was not the police who were to be punished. Michel was ordered arrested, and a few weeks later turned herself in at a Parisian police station.

At her trial, Michel described the black flag that she carried at the demonstration as “the banner of strikes and of suffering.”⁴⁰ She denounced the proceedings as “a political trial... aimed through us, at the anarchist party,” which the authorities dealt with severely, sentencing Michel “to six years’ imprisonment plus ten years’ police surveillance” and Pouget “to eight years’ imprisonment and ten years’ surveillance.”⁴¹ They were released after three years, “pardoned” along with Kropotkin and some of the Lyon anarchists, against Michel’s protestations. She said that she did not want to leave the prison “until everybody leaves.”⁴²

During her trial, Michel described herself as a “woman who dares to conduct her own defence, who dares to think, who rejects the Proudhonian alternative ‘housewife or courtesan’.”⁴³ In the original International, the French Proudhonists had indeed agreed with Proudhon that the proper role of a woman was as a housewife. Varlin, Bakunin, and many other antiauthoritarians within the International had rejected these patriarchal views, advocating equal rights and freedom for women, and there were some women who played an important role within the revolutionary movement associated with the International, such as Nathalie Lemel and André Léo. But it was in the 1880s that women like Michel took on a more prominent role in the anarchist movement as it began to emerge as a distinct force on the revolutionary Left.

Michel wrote that what women “want is knowledge and education and liberty.” Echoing the words of Joseph Déjacque, she invited men to join in the “struggle for the rights of women,” so that “men and women together will gain the rights of all humanity.” She looked forward to a time when people “will no more argue about which sex is superior than races will argue about which race is foremost in the world.”⁴⁴ She called for the achievement of anarchist communism through a spontaneous general strike—an idea that had first been introduced during the debates within the International.⁴⁵

³⁷ Ibid., 207.

³⁸ Michel, *The Red Virgin*, 193–194.

³⁹ Thomas, *Louise Michel*, 208.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 219.

⁴¹ Ibid., 221 & 223.

⁴² Ibid., 250.

⁴³ Ibid., 221.

⁴⁴ Louise Michel, “Women’s Rights,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 242.

⁴⁵ Thomas, *Louise Michel*, 302.

After his release from prison in 1886, Kropotkin went to England, where he felt he would have greater liberty to express his views without risk of further imprisonment. There, along with a group of English anarchists, he helped found the anarchist paper *Freedom*. Next to Kropotkin himself, the most important contributor to the paper was Charlotte Wilson (1854–1944), who was also the paper’s editor. She had come out in favor of anarchism within the socialist Fabian Society in the fall of 1884. She formed a study group that familiarized itself not only with “the writings of continental socialists such as Marx and Proudhon” but also with “the history of the international labour movement,” in which the International had played such an important role.⁴⁶

Wilson and the *Freedom* group shared Kropotkin’s anarchist communist views. Wilson rejected the Marxist view of the necessity of a “centralized ‘administration of productive processes,’” the so-called administration of things, as “a mere reflection of the present middle-class [bourgeois] government by representation upon the vague conception of the future” that would ensure the survival of the state following the revolution. Instead, she looked forward to existing authoritarian institutions and capitalism being replaced by “voluntary productive and distributive associations utilizing a common capital, loosely federated trade and district communities practising eventually complete free communism in production and consumption.”⁴⁷ This would be achieved by “direct personal action” that would “bring about a revolution in every department of human existence, social, political and economic.”⁴⁸ Wilson freely admitted that these were not new ideas, but simply her summary of the views of European anarchists—views that had been spread across Europe by the anarchist members of the International.⁴⁹

But there was a more direct connection between the International and the English anarchists than Wilson’s study group. Frank Kitz was a dyer by trade who had become acquainted with several English veterans of the International through their group, the “Democratic and Trades Alliance,” in 1874.⁵⁰ By the late 1870s, partly under the influence of Neve, he had become a revolutionary socialist. Joseph Lane, who may have joined the International in the early 1870s, was becoming a prominent working-class organizer in London’s slums. Around the same time as Kitz, he had also been moving toward an antiparliamentary socialist position. By 1880, Kitz and Lane were working together, getting thrown out of meetings for proposing not only the abolition of the unelected English House of Lords but the House of Commons, too. Both of them attended the 1881 London Congress as English delegates.⁵¹

While Johann Most was on trial for celebrating the assassination of Czar Alexander II, Lane helped Kitz put out several issues of an English-language version of *Freiheit*. In late 1884, Lane and Kitz joined the Socialist League, the majority faction of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) opposed to the authoritarian approach of the leader of the minority faction, the early English Marxist, H. M. Hyndman (1842–1921). The SDF was originally called the “Democratic Federation.” Founded in 1881, it adopted a socialist program in 1883. In 1884, it became the SDF. The majority of the SDF, including Lane and Kitz, despite unseating Hyndman from his “permanent presidency” in August 1884, left the SDF at the end of 1884 to form, along with William

⁴⁶ Walter, *The Anarchist Past*, 221.

⁴⁷ Charlotte Wilson, “Anarchism,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 129.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁴⁹ Walter, *The Anarchist Past*, 222.

⁵⁰ Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse*, 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

Morris (1834–1896), the more radical Socialist League.⁵² The antiparliamentary libertarian socialist William Morris was one of the best-known members of the Socialist League. His later book *News from Nowhere* (1890) was regarded by many as a depiction of an anarchist utopia, although Kropotkin and some other anarchists did not necessarily agree with Morris's opposition to modern technology.

Unfortunately, the Socialist League itself “soon developed parliamentarist and antiparliamentarist fractions.”⁵³ The Marxist faction included Marx's daughter, Eleanor, and was under the direct influence of Engels. Following a pattern established by Marx and Engels in the International, the Marxists at first tried to get the league to adopt a “constitution inspired by Engels,” committing the league to electoral action. When this was unsuccessful, the Marxist minority began working “secretly to win branches [of the League] over to a parliamentarist policy.”⁵⁴ To confuse matters even more, the socialists in favor of parliamentary participation were now calling themselves “collectivists,” which may have encouraged some of the anarchists to adopt a communist position in order to ensure there was no confusion between the two groups.

Among those who adopted an antistatist, or “free” communist, position were Lane and Kitz. In 1887, Lane published his pamphlet *An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto*, setting forth the views of the antiparliamentary socialists in the league. Although Lane liked to avoid the anarchist label, later writing that he saw no need to frighten the workers “with that terrible word *Anarchy*,” his views were virtually indistinguishable from those of the anarchists within the International and the anarchists of the 1880s, who continued to focus on the need for revolutionary working-class organizations.⁵⁵ He denounced both God and master, opposed participation in bourgeois politics and the patriarchal institution of marriage, and rejected mere reformism in favor of social revolution.⁵⁶

In Italy, some of the former internationalists, such as Malatesta, continued to follow a similar path, while explicitly identifying themselves as anarchists. As a result, despite “its myriad problems and weaknesses, Italian anarchism clung tenaciously to life throughout the 1880s,” maintaining strength “in Piedmont, Liguria, Umbria, Rome, and Naples” and even continuing to surpass the socialists “throughout Tuscany and the Marches until the 1890s.”⁵⁷ In 1883, Malatesta returned from exile, helping revitalize the Italian anarchist movement by publishing an anarchist newspaper, *La Questione Sociale*, and by forging new ties with the workers' movement. Various sections of the antiauthoritarian International were reorganized. By 1884, there were “seven regional federations, forty-six sections, twenty-two circles, and sixteen groups” affiliated with the revived Italian Federation.

In 1884, the Italian Federation adopted a program crafted by Malatesta that “accepted collectivism as a transitional phase” in the attainment of an anarchist communist society.⁵⁸ The program incorporated much of the International's original statutes, retaining the reference to “*truth, justice and morality*,” as the basis for revolutionary conduct, and the Mazzinian slogan “No

⁵² Ibid., 24–36.

⁵³ Walter, *The Anarchist Past*, 215.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 218.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 217.

⁵⁷ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 201.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 209–211.

rights without duties, no duties without rights,” expressing the anarchist commitment to moral reciprocity and responsibility.⁵⁹

While Malatesta agreed with the spirit of the original preamble to the *Rules* that “the economic emancipation of workers is the only way that justice and the common good can triumph,” he maintained the Italian Federation’s commitment to the emancipation of humanity as a whole, “without distinctions as to creed, color, and nationality.”⁶⁰ He continued to support women’s liberation, describing the “subservience of woman to man” as ranking “among the greatest injustices we have inherited from past ages.” He demanded “the very same freedom and guarantees of unhindered development” for women as for men.⁶¹

Although Malatesta agreed with social revolutionaries like Most that force would be necessary to overthrow the existing social order that was maintained by force, as an anarchist, he strongly opposed any attempt to replace existing regimes with a “revolutionary” government or dictatorship. Malatesta argued that it was the task of the anarchists, organized in a revived International, to spread the revolution, “pushing [it] as far as it will go, preventing the means of production and communication from being monopolized by those who operate them and giving encouragement to the ever-wider federation of communes and [workers’] corporations; they will be the ones to watch out lest any party monopolize power or attempt a backlash.”⁶²

In Austria, where Peukert published the anarchist communist paper *Die Zukunft* until forced into exile in 1884, “the powerful Radical faction of the Social Democratic Party was anarchist in all but name... and for a brief period from 1880 to 1884 the Austro-Hungarian labor movement was probably more strongly impregnated with anarchist influences than any other in Europe outside Spain and Italy.”⁶³

Upon his release from prison in late 1882, Johann Most moved himself and *Freiheit* from England to the United States. It was there that he came to adopt a revolutionary anarchist position, albeit advocating a form of collectivism rather than communism. In 1883, Most was instrumental in founding the International Working People’s Association (IWPA) in Pittsburgh, a conscious continuation of the antiauthoritarian International that claimed affiliation with the so-called Black International. Delegates from across the United States, with proxies from British Columbia and Mexico, adopted a program largely written by Most, which called for the “destruction of the existing class rule... by energetic, relentless, revolutionary and international action” and the “establishment of a free society based upon co-operative organization of production.”⁶⁴

One of the most influential groups within the IWPA was based in Chicago, where the anarchists advocated a form of anarcho-syndicalism that became known as the “Chicago Idea.” They “rejected centralized authority, disdained political action and made the union the center of revolutionary struggle as well as the nucleus of the future society.” One of the most influential Chicago anarchists was Albert Parsons (1848–1887), who described the revolutionary trade union as “an autonomous commune in the process of incubation,” the “embryonic group of the future ‘free

⁵⁹ Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 34–35.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶³ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 431.

⁶⁴ “The Pittsburgh Proclamation,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 192.

society,” harkening back to the position of the Belgian and Spanish internationalists, which had also been embraced by Bakunin and his associates.⁶⁵

The Chicago anarchists regarded trade unions as fighting organizations that would not only work toward the social revolution but would also struggle for immediate improvements for the workers. At the beginning of May 1886, the Chicago anarchists and several unions in which they were involved were on strike for the eight-hour day. On May 3, 1886, there was a scuffle outside a factory where the owner had brought in “scabs,” or “blacklegs,” to replace locked-out workers. The police attacked the crowd, killing four to six workers and injuring many more. The Chicago anarchists called for a protest meeting the next day. As it was coming to a close, the police again attacked the crowd. Someone threw a bomb, several policemen and demonstrators were killed, either by the bomb or by the police indiscriminately shooting into the crowd, and many more were injured.

Several leading anarchists, including Parsons, were arrested and then framed for the bombing. Parsons and three other anarchists—August Spies (1855–1887), George Engel (1836–1887), and Adolph Fischer (1858–1887)—were executed on November 11, 1887. Louis Lingg (1864–1887) cheated the hangman by committing suicide in prison on the eve of the executions. They became known as the Haymarket Martyrs. Their executions helped to establish May 1st as the international day of the workers, and they inspired a new generation of radicals, such as Emma Goldman (1869–1940), to embrace the anarchist cause. However, their executions and the subsequent general repression of the anarchist movement in the United States seriously reduced the influence of anarchists within the American labor movement for decades. It was not until the Industrial Workers of the World was founded in Chicago in 1905 that anarchists were again to play a prominent role in the United States labor movement.

The American movement for the eight-hour day and the trial and execution of the Haymarket Martyrs made a deep impression among the anarchists of Spain, where the anarchist movement maintained its working-class character. For the Spanish anarchists, the violent response of the authorities to the eight-hour movement emphasized its revolutionary nature and the repressive nature of the state, “whether it was the autocratic kind found in Russia or the democratic republic (*república modelo*) as represented by the United States.”⁶⁶

In September 1881, the Spanish Federation of the International had reconstituted itself as the Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española (FTRE—Workers’ Federation of the Spanish Region), which adopted an avowedly anarchist program. When the Spanish Federation was dissolved in 1881, it had about 3,000 members.⁶⁷ At the founding congress of the FTRE, there were 140 delegates “representing 162 federations through Spain.”⁶⁸ By the time of the FTRE’s second congress in September 1882, it had “218 federations, 663 sections, with a membership of 57,934.”⁶⁹ The Spanish anarchists supported “the abolition of the political and juridical states currently in existence,” seeking “to replace them with a free federation of free associations of free producers.”⁷⁰ The anarchists of the FTRE also continued to support collectivism, but not without significant disagreement. A substantial minority, possibly representing a majority of the Andalusian

⁶⁵ Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 73.

⁶⁶ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 158.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶⁸ Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 104.

⁶⁹ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 83.

⁷⁰ José Lluas Pujols, “What is Anarchy,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 125.

anarchists, argued that the collectivists held “bourgeois notions of property and social organization” and that collectivization could not answer the needs of the great mass of rural poor and unemployed.⁷¹

As a result of the sometimes acrimonious disputes between the anarchist collectivists and the anarchist communists, some of the Spanish anarchists began to develop the idea of “anarchism without adjectives.” The phrase is attributed to the Cuban-born anarchist Fernando Tarrida del Mármol (1861–1915), who argued in the late 1880s that, “to advance the revolutionary cause... it was not necessary for one to adopt either a collectivist or a communist perspective; rather one had only to subscribe to the general principles of anarchism.” Tarrida regarded this approach as being more consistent with the anarchist commitment to individual freedom, for any anarchist worthy of the name “could never impose a preconceived economic plan on anyone.”⁷²

The concept of “anarchism without adjectives” had been foreshadowed in the debates on anarchist communism within the antiauthoritarian International, when Guillaume and the Swiss members of the Jura Federation had argued that the workers themselves would determine, through a process of trial and error, which forms of economic organization best suited them.⁷³ By the mid-1880s, Malatesta had begun moving toward a similar position. In his 1884 program for the revived Italian Federation, he argued that, during the revolution, people must be free to try a “variety of organizational arrangements... in one place there will be collectivism, in another it will be communism, in some more backward locations property may very well be split between the commune residents.” Nevertheless, he still regarded anarchist communism as the ultimate goal. He was confident that, through this process of free experimentation “progress, at a greater or lesser speed, towards anarchist communism will be made.”⁷⁴

By the late 1870s, a Regional Workers’ Association had been organized in Portugal, but it had developed from the Marxist-oriented Portuguese Federation of the International and was aligned with the Portuguese Socialist Party. Around 1880, some of its members started to move toward an anarchist position. However, a significant anarchist movement only arose in Portugal after Reclus visited there in 1886, where he made a lasting impression speaking about the revolutionary anarchist communist position that had been developed within the antiauthoritarian International. Consequently, the Portuguese anarchist movement was for many years predominantly anarchist communist in orientation.

In 1887, the Lisbon Communist Anarchist Group issued a manifesto that can “be considered the charter of Portuguese anarchism.” The manifesto denounced capitalism and the state, calling for their elimination, and rejected “patriotism or nationalism, racial, religious and linguistic egotism,” and any participation in bourgeois politics. The manifesto advocated “abstention from voting, desertion from the army, violent strikes,” and illegal action. Through the ensuing chaos, the anarchists, in solidarity with all groups that sought to overthrow “the contemporary social system,” would “proceed with social” liquidation, with “Communism and Anarchy” inscribed on their banner.⁷⁵ This position was similar to the one Cafiero had promoted around the time of the 1881 London Congress.

⁷¹ Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 139.

⁷² Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 137.

⁷³ Freymond, *La première internationale*, Vol. 4, 534.

⁷⁴ Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 62.

⁷⁵ Freire, *Freedom Fighters*, 9.

The legacy of the antiauthoritarian International was particularly felt in Latin America, where “anarchism far exceeded Marxism in importance until after the success of the Russian Revolution.”⁷⁶ One way in which anarchist ideas were spread in Latin America was by European anarchists traveling there during periods of repression in Europe, sometimes permanently emigrating, including Italian anarchists, such as Malatesta, who spent time in Argentina in the 1880s, helping found some of the first trade unions there; Portuguese anarchists, such as Neno Vasco (1878–1923) in Brazil; and Spanish anarchists, such as Antoine Pellicer Paraire (1851–1916), a veteran of the FTRE who went to Cuba, Mexico, and the United States before settling in Argentina in 1891.⁷⁷

Malatesta took with him to Argentina the ideas he had developed for the revived Italian Federation, laying “the basis for the growth of the anarchist movement through his organizing activities and theoretical contributions.”⁷⁸ French-, Italian-, and Spanish-speaking sections of the International had been established in Argentina in the 1860s, but it was not until around 1876 that some of the remaining internationalists “embraced Bakunin’s ideas and set up a ‘centre of labour propaganda’” that began publishing anarchist material.⁷⁹ In the fall of 1879, a section of the International affiliated with the antiauthoritarian International was reestablished in Buenos Aires.⁸⁰

In the mid-1880s, some Belgian internationalists from the Verviers area, including Emile Piette (1847–1894), emigrated to Argentina, where they continued to promote the anarchist communist line that had been adopted by the majority of the antiauthoritarian internationalists in the late 1870s. Possibly through the positive influence of Malatesta, “there were fewer clashes (in Argentina)” between the anarchist communists and the collectivists, who remained influential among the Spanish-speaking anarchists.⁸¹

For a brief period of time after Malatesta left Argentina in 1889, the “antiorganizationalists” became the most prominent anarchist tendency in Argentina.⁸² The antiorganizationalist stance can also be traced back to the International, for it was the transformation of the International’s original General Council from an administrative body into a governing one that had convinced some of the internationalists that even “correspondence bureaus” contained the seeds of authoritarianism, such that any permanent forms of organization should be rejected in favor of more fluid, *ad hoc* groups of like-minded individuals. The ease with which the police could infiltrate and suppress more public anarchist organizations and their membership also had its effect on moving some anarchists toward an antiorganizationalist position.⁸³

But, with the arrival in Argentina in the early 1890s of several “Spanish anarchists who had participated in labor activism through the Spanish Workers’ Federation,” including Pellicer Paraire, a “significant impetus” was again given to the anarchist “pro-organizationalists” in Argentina. Following the example of the original Spanish internationalists, the Argentine anarchist move-

⁷⁶ John M. Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860–1931* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 17.

⁷⁷ Antonio Pellicer Paraire, “The Organization of Labour,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 196.

⁷⁸ Juan Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia: Anarchist Culture and Politics in Buenos Aires, 1890–1910* (Oakland: AK Press, 2010), 14.

⁷⁹ Max Nettlau, *A Contribution to an Anarchist Bibliography of Latin America* (London: Kate Sharpley Library, 2000), 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 14.

⁸³ Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 177–178.

ment “inserted itself into Argentine society through the creation of institutions for workers’ self-defense,” such as “resistance societies, countless centers and cultural circles, schools, libraries, and newspapers,” becoming “the most significant oppositional force in Buenos Aires in the first decade of the twentieth century.”⁸⁴

In Uruguay, the workers’ “Regional Federation of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay” had affiliated with the antiauthoritarian International in 1875. One of its leading members was the French Commune refugee Renaud-Reynaud, who wrote its statutes.⁸⁵ In 1877, the Montevideo section, including construction workers and carpenters, also joined the antiauthoritarian International.⁸⁶ The Uruguayan anarchist movement remained primarily working-class in orientation, with the result that in Uruguay “anarchist predominance in worker and revolutionary circles continued uninterrupted until the end of the 1920s.”⁸⁷

Around the time that the International was being founded in Europe, an anarchist movement began to emerge in Mexico. The first Mexican anarchists formed a group in 1865 called La Social, which they described as an “internationalist section,” suggesting an affiliation with the International. However, contrary to John M. Hart’s conjecture, they could not have sided with the anarchist wing of the International in 1865, as there was none at that time (Bakunin himself did not join the International until 1868).⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the first Mexican anarchists developed a revolutionary conception of anarchism that was remarkably similar to the ideas Bakunin was elaborating during the same period. They advocated that the peasants seize the land, that the workers take over their workplaces, that the workers and peasants reject participation in the existing political system, and that the state and capitalism be abolished, with a libertarian socialist society to take their place.

Between 1868 and his execution in 1869, Julio Chávez López, a young anarchist revolutionary, led a peasant uprising in the Chalco municipality (equivalent to a U.S. county). Calling for “Abolition OF THE GOVERNMENT, ABOLITION OF EXPLOITATION,” Chávez López and a group of anarchist revolutionaries would incite Mexican peasants to take over the *haciendas*, burn the local government archives, and take whatever arms and money they could find before moving on to liberate the next village.⁸⁹

In urban areas, anarchists organized the workers into mutual aid societies and societies of resistance and were instrumental in launching “the first successful strike in Mexican history.” The anarchists were already in the process of forming a federation of workers’ groups in 1869 when they received a circular from the International’s 1866 Geneva Congress, which inspired them to create the “Gran Círculo de Obreros de México.”⁹⁰ However, this really illustrates how much the Mexican anarchists were independently arriving at approaches similar to those of the European anarchists, more than any real influence of the latter upon the former based on a document that took three years to make its way to Mexico. The Mexican anarchists also faced similar conflicts with the reformists as had their European counterparts, with the reformists taking control of the

⁸⁴ Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 15.

⁸⁵ Eduardo Colombo, “Anarchism in Argentina and Uruguay,” in *Anarchism Today*, ed. by D. Apter & J. Joll (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 222–223.

⁸⁶ Nettlau, *Contribution to an Anarchist Bibliography*, 5.

⁸⁷ Colombo, “Anarchism in Argentina and Uruguay,” 223.

⁸⁸ Hart, *Anarchism*, 30.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46–47.

Gran Círculo in late 1872, around the same time that the anarchists were being expelled from the International at the Hague Congress.

As in other parts of Latin America, European anarchists emigrated to Mexico, bringing with them news and ideas regarding revolutionary movements. One of the Spanish émigrés, Carlos Sanz, purportedly “read out a letter from ‘Farga Pellicer and Bakunin’” to a meeting of Mexican workers in March 1873 commemorating the Paris Commune in March 1873.⁹¹ When the first Mexican General Workers’ Congress was held in March 1876, the anarchists made clear their support for the antiauthoritarian International.

The working-class Mexican anarchists around the revived La Social group adopted a red and black flag, some of which would bear the inscription “La Social, Liga Internacional del Jura” (“La Social, International League of the Jura”), a clear reference to the Jura Federation, indicating affiliation with the antiauthoritarian International.⁹² Between 1879 and 1882, the Mexican anarchists organized over sixty “regional sections working in urban areas throughout the country,” making them “the strongest force in Mexican labor.” In 1881, they convinced a majority of the reorganized Mexican Workers’ Congress, comprising “one hundred affiliated societies and a total enrolled membership of 50,236,” to affiliate with the antiauthoritarian International.⁹³

Spanish anarchists were also involved in the creation of a Cuban anarchist movement during the 1880s, carrying with them the ideas and organizational approaches developed by the Spanish Federation of the International and its successor, the FTRE. Anarchists organized strikes by Cuban tobacco workers and a workers’ alliance (Alianza Obrera), which adopted an explicitly anarchist program. Anarchists played a prominent role in the first Cuban Workers’ Congress in 1887, which adopted a six-point program similar to that of the antiauthoritarian sections and federations of the International. The program opposed “all vestiges of authority” within workers’ organizations, indicating the congress’s rejection of centralized, hierarchical organization, and supported voluntary federation and solidarity between all the workers’ organizations, with each group enjoying complete autonomy.⁹⁴

By the turn of the century, anarchist ideas and movements were spreading across the globe, including significant anarchist movements in Spain, Italy, France, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru; smaller but noteworthy movements in England, the United States, Russia, Germany, Sweden, Holland, and Belgium; and emerging anarchist movements in Japan and China. Even the Marxist historian E. J. Hobsbawm had to concede that, before the 1917 Russian Revolution, “the bulk of the revolutionary left was anarcho-syndicalist, or at least much closer to the ideas and the mood of anarcho-syndicalism than to that of classical marxism.”⁹⁵

The anarchists within the International played an important role in establishing anarchism as a worldwide movement, debating and developing what constitute today the leading ideas of modern anarchism. The issues they raised at the time continue to reverberate to this very day.

One of the key points made by the anarchists in the International was the need for revolutionary organizations to mirror the society that they hoped to achieve. In order for any revolution to succeed in liberating people and to avoid one ruling class simply replacing another, the organizational structures used to transform society must be voluntary, nonhierarchical, noncoercive, and

⁹¹ Nettlau, *Contribution to an Anarchist Bibliography*, 6.

⁹² Hart, *Anarchism*, 58.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 58–59.

⁹⁴ Frank Fernández, *Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement* (Tucson: See Sharp Press, 2001), 21.

⁹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries* (London: Abacus, 1993), 73.

self-empowering. Hence, the anarchist insistence that means be consistent with ends and that everyone should have an equal voice. Instead of party- or governmental-type organizations with bureaucratic hierarchies and “representatives” who at best represent the interests of a few, the anarchists insisted on individual autonomy, voluntary association, and the use, only when necessary, of recallable delegates subject to imperative mandates, with no independent policy-making powers of their own.

Tensions and disagreements arose among the anarchist themselves within the International regarding exactly which types of organization, if any, were conducive to achieving an anarchist society (or “anarchy,” in a positive sense). Bakunin, and since his time, the platformists, have argued in favor of “dual organization,” with dedicated groups of anarchists sharing a common platform or program forming their own organizations, which then work within broader-based organizations or movements, such as the International itself, to steer those movements and organizations in an anarchist direction. Others, particularly the antiorganizationalists, objected that such organizations created an elite group of revolutionaries, or vanguard, which would act as the *de facto* leadership of these broader-based movements and organizations, assuming control of them instead of fostering the self-empowerment of the people.

A middle course was sketched out by Malatesta, who was critical of the platformists but rejected the extreme position of the antiorganizationalists. Malatesta also developed a perceptive critique of the International itself and the anarchists’ role within it. The rapid ideological evolution among the various delegates to the International’s congresses, Malatesta later wrote, “quickly turning mutualist, collectivist, communist, revolutionary, and anarchist,” was not “reflective of any actual and simultaneous evolution in the vast majority of members” of the International, which was originally formed as an international association of workers for the purpose of providing “a broader base for the economic struggle against capitalism,” not as a revolutionary organization.⁹⁶

All of the various factions within the International, whether Proudhonist, Marxist, Blanquist, or anarchist, “tried to force events rather than relying upon the force of events.”⁹⁷ The International could not be “simultaneously a society for economic resistance, a workshop of ideas, and a revolutionary association.”⁹⁸ While Malatesta clearly saw a role for specific anarchist organizations, he felt that workers’ organizations should be independent of any particular political group, including anarchist ones. It was up to the workers to find their own path, with anarchists fighting alongside them instead of dragging them along behind them. The adoption of an anarchist approach should “happen freely and gradually, as consciences expand and understanding spreads,” rather than the anarchists striding ahead alone under “the illusion that the masses understood and [were] following them,” or, worse, trying to foist their views on others.⁹⁹

Malatesta also pointed out the limitations of workers’ congresses and majority rule. In practical terms, “congresses are attended by whoever wishes and can, whoever has enough money and who has not been prevented by police measures.”¹⁰⁰ Consequently, they are not even truly representative bodies. The only congresses compatible with anarchist values are those that do not attempt “to lay down the law”; any decisions emanating from them must not be “obligatory

⁹⁶ Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 328–329.

⁹⁷ Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, 131.

⁹⁸ Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 329.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 329–330.

¹⁰⁰ “The Platform and its Critics,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 428.

rules but suggestions, recommendations, proposals to be submitted to all involved,” which “do not become binding and enforceable except on those who accept them, and [only] for as long as they accept them.”¹⁰¹

When decisions are made by a majority vote of delegates to a congress, at best the decisions are made “by the majority of a majority, and these could easily, especially when the opposing opinions are more than two, represent only a minority.” Although “it is often necessary for the minority to come to accept the opinion of the majority,” because “there is an obvious need or usefulness in doing something and to do it requires the agreement of all,” such “adaptation on the one hand by one group must on the other be reciprocal, voluntary and must stem from an awareness of need and of goodwill to prevent the running of social affairs from being paralyzed by obstinacy” rather than being “imposed as a principle and statutory norm.”¹⁰²

As for the use of recallable delegates with imperative mandates, as the experience of the Hague Congress demonstrated, this can lead to abuses. Delegates can act contrary to their mandates, supporting measures that the group they represent rejects. After such measures are passed at the congress, the group must then accept them against their wishes, or repudiate them at the risk of being expelled from the organization for going against the so-called will of the “majority.” Delegates who remain true to their mandates cannot vote on issues for which they have no mandate, giving free rein to delegates of opposing views and to those who do not wish to conform to the mandates that they have been given.

With respect to specifically anarchist organizations, Malatesta was of the view that anarchists would be able to exert more influence over the course of events by associating together, whether for the purposes of propaganda, agitation, or revolutionary action. He also argued that the rejection of public organization to avoid police prosecution actually made it easier for the authorities to suppress the anarchist movement, by isolating anarchists and cutting them off from broader public support.¹⁰³ Yet he also recognized that people have differing views, such that the creation of a unified anarchist movement, as envisaged by the platformists, was a chimera. Instead of trying to achieve ideological uniformity, Malatesta suggested that anarchists of different tendencies simply organize their own groups, which was consistent with the general anarchist view in favor of voluntary association.¹⁰⁴

But, what should the relationship be between anarchist groups and broader-based social movements? Recalling the International slogan that the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves, Malatesta reminded his fellow anarchists that they were “not out to *emancipate* the people; we want to see the people *emancipate themselves*.” What anarchists therefore needed to do was to foster “all manner of popular organizations” in order to accustom people to act for themselves, without relying on people in positions of authority to act for them.¹⁰⁵

There had been opposing views within the antiauthoritarian International regarding whether the anarchists should strive to create mass-based organizations that would become powerful enough to sweep away the existing social system and whether these should be exclusively working-class organizations. Some anarchists focused on the idea of the revolutionary commune, and others advocated interlocking federations of producer, consumer, and communal or

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 430.

¹⁰² Ibid., 429.

¹⁰³ Errico Malatesta, “The Duties of the Present Hour,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 182–183.

¹⁰⁴ Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 238–241; “The Platform and its Critics,” 426–427.

¹⁰⁵ Malatesta, *Method of Freedom*, 243.

geographical groups. Still, others came to adopt Malatesta's view that what anarchists should be doing was to work with the people in their own organizations, such as trade unions, encouraging them to take direct action and to work toward the social revolution.

The two most prominent anarchist currents that emerged from the antiauthoritarian International were anarcho-syndicalism and anarchist communism. The anarcho-syndicalists advocated the transformation of society by means of revolutionary trade unions that would provide the basis for a postrevolutionary society. The anarchist communists advocated interlocking networks of ever-changing voluntary associations to meet people's multifarious needs and wants. For the most part, the disagreements between the anarcho-syndicalists and the anarchist communists were not over libertarian communism, as most of the anarcho-syndicalist organizations eventually adopted programs in favor of communism, as opposed to collectivism.¹⁰⁶ The disagreement was over how to achieve anarchist communism and what an anarchist communist society would look like.¹⁰⁷

As Malatesta pointed out, the problem with mass-based trade union organizations is that many of their members were not anarchists, not even revolutionaries. To maintain or increase their membership, the unions had to represent the interests of all of their members and achieve immediate improvements in working conditions. While a useful means for demonstrating the value of solidarity and sometimes increasing class consciousness, the unions either tended toward conservatism, as in England, or, like the International, had a leadership far more radical than most of its members.

Kropotkin's views were similar to Malatesta's. Although he believed that the "syndicate is absolutely necessary," being "the only form of workers' association which allows the direct struggle against capital to be carried on without a plunge into parliamentarianism," he recognized, as did Malatesta, that the syndicate "does not achieve this goal automatically, since in Germany, in France and in England, we have the example of syndicates linked to the parliamentary struggle, while in Germany the Catholic syndicates are very powerful, and so on."¹⁰⁸ Kropotkin believed, as Bakunin had done, that it was necessary for anarchists to work within the unions in order to spur the workers on to revolution.

While Malatesta advocated working within unions, he advised anarchists against assuming any positions of authority within them.¹⁰⁹ Anarchists needed to preserve their independence in order to keep the workers on a revolutionary path, avoiding the inevitable compromises that all but the most dictatorial of leaders must make when representing a broad-based constituency

¹⁰⁶ "The Workers' Federation of the Uruguayan Region (FORU): Declarations from the 3rd Congress," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 199; "The CNT: Resolutions from the Zaragoza Congress," in *ibid.*, 466.

¹⁰⁷ This is a point entirely lost on Schmidt and van der Walt in *Black Flame*, where they take me to task for suggesting that anarcho-syndicalism and anarchist communism represented two different but related currents in the broader anarchist movement, claiming that to distinguish between anarchist communism and anarcho-syndicalism is neither "useful or accurate" because most anarchist communists allegedly "championed syndicalism," while "the majority of syndicalists endorsed anarchist communism" (124–125). While some anarchist communists favored syndicalist methods, many others did not, despite their admiration for the revolutionary *élan* of the syndicalists. The differences between anarchist communists and syndicalists are well brought out in the debate between Malatesta and the French syndicalist Pierre Monatte, at the 1907 International Anarchist Congress in Amsterdam, reprinted in *Anarchism, Volume One* (206–211).

¹⁰⁸ Kropotkin, in *Short History of Anarchism*, 280–281.

¹⁰⁹ "Pierre Monatte and Errico Malatesta: Syndicalism-For and Against," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 210.

with conflicting views and interests and when having to work within the existing economic and political systems.

Other anarchist communists preferred to work within small affinity groups, but these different forms of organization were not mutually exclusive. In Spain, for example, the most dedicated anarchists maintained close-knit affinity groups while at the same time working within the broader-based anarchist workers' federations. Today, many anarchists advocate not only working within broader-based social movements but also helping to establish popular movements that, from their inception, adopt decentralized, affinity-group-based organizational structures that form horizontal networks and popular assemblies where power remains at the base, and not in a hierarchical administration, bureaucracy, or executive.¹¹⁰

But this concept can also be traced back to the International, for it was the federalists, anti-authoritarians, and anarchists in the International who insisted that the workers' own organizations, including the International itself, should be directly democratic, voluntary federations freely federated with one another, for they were to provide the very basis for the future free society. Contemporary anarchists have simply developed more sophisticated ways of implementing these ideas and preventing movements from being co-opted and transformed into top-down organizations.

Gone is the "inverted" pyramid of the nineteenth-century anarchists, with smaller-scale groups federating into larger and more encompassing federations, ultimately resulting in international federations composed of groups from lower-level federations, such as national or regional ones. The problem with these kinds of federations is that the higher-level federations can be transformed into governing bodies, particularly in times of crisis, as Marx and Engels attempted to transform the International's General Council into an executive power after the suppression of the Paris Commune.

Instead of federations organized "from the bottom up," many contemporary anarchists advocate interlocking horizontal networks like those used in various global movements against neoliberalism, such as the "horizontalidad" movement in Argentina and the Occupy movement; networks with no centers, not even administrative or "federalist" ones.¹¹¹ These contemporary movements have been able, at least for a time, to break out of the isolation to which autonomous anarchist communist groups in late nineteenth-century Europe were prone prior to the renewed involvement of many anarchists in the workers' movement in the mid-1890s, which gave rise to various revolutionary and anarcho-sindicalist movements in Europe and the Americas.

What is different about contemporary anarchist approaches to organization is that they bridge the gap between the affinity group, popular assemblies, and the broader networks of similar organizations and movements in a way that nineteenth-century anarchist communist groups were unable to do, without relying on the more permanent forms and institutions utilized by the anarcho-sindicalists in their federalist organizations. Syndicalist organizations were always in danger of being transformed into top-down bureaucratic organizations, as eventually happened with the French CGT during the First World War and even more so after the Russian Revolution, when the CGT came under the control of the Marxists. Under the pressure of the Spanish Civil War, even the anarcho-sindicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT—National Confederation of Labour) in Spain began turning into a bureaucratic organization.

¹¹⁰ Graeber, "The New Anarchists," in *Anarchism, Volume Three*, 1–11.

¹¹¹ Marina Sitrin, "Horizontalidad in Argentina," in *Anarchism, Volume Three*, 358–362.

In many ways, these contemporary forms of anarchist organization mirror the anarchist communist vision of a society in which, in Kropotkin's words, "ever modified associations... carry in themselves the elements of their durability and constantly assume new forms which answer best to the multiple aspirations of all."¹¹² By making these kinds of organizations, like affinity groups, the basis of their horizontal networks, contemporary anarchists have created nonhierarchical organizations that not just prefigure but realize, in the here and now, the organizational forms consonant with an anarchist communist future, within the context of broader movements for social change.

Somewhat surprisingly, another part of the legacy of the International is the influence of Marxism, albeit Marxism as a critique of capitalism and a theory of class struggle. Bakunin thought Marx's *Capital* a much more incisive critique of capitalism than anything Proudhon ever wrote. Reclus was at one time in discussions with Marx about translating *Capital* into French.¹¹³ Johann Most produced a popular summary of *Capital* when he was still a Social Democrat, but Marx's economic class analysis continued to have an influence on him after he became an anarchist. Carlo Cafiero prepared his own summary of *Capital* for Italian readers and often referred to it in his anarchist writings.¹¹⁴ In the book that Albert Parsons put together while awaiting execution in a Chicago jail, *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis*, he included lengthy excerpts from Marx's *Capital* and the *Communist Manifesto*, together with the trial speeches of himself and the other Haymarket Martyrs and writings on anarchism by Kropotkin, Reclus, and some other American anarchists.¹¹⁵

Malatesta later remarked that the anarchists in the International, even those who had not read Marx, "were still too Marxist."¹¹⁶ By this he meant that they had been too much influenced by Marx's theory of history, according to which capitalism produced its own gravediggers, the revolutionary proletariat. For Malatesta, this had too much the air of inevitability to it, and it exaggerated the role of economic circumstance in creating class consciousness. It also underestimated the role of conscious choice and determination in revolutionary social transformation. Neither revolution nor anarchy was inevitable. They had to be fought for self-consciously, not as a merely instinctive revolt against oppression, which could just as easily result in some form of revolutionary dictatorship, or the restoration of the *status quo* without the desire for freedom and clear ideas about how to achieve it.

Nevertheless, the anarchists in the International who admired Marx's critique of capitalism, while rejecting his politics, never agreed with the Marxist view that classes and coercive political power, as exemplified by the state, would disappear once capitalism was abolished. Bakunin, Guillaume, and other anarchists in the International argued, to the contrary, that if the state and other authoritarian institutions were not also abolished, a new ruling class would arise comprising those in control of the state. Although rarely given credit for it, this theory of the "new class" originated with the anarchists in the International, despite being appropriated, without acknowledgement, by some dissident Marxists after the advent of Stalinism.

¹¹² Kropotkin, "On Anarchism," in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 142.

¹¹³ Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 63.

¹¹⁴ Becker, "Johann Most in Europe," 296; Carlo Cafiero, *Revolution*, ed. & trans. by N. McNab (Edmonton: Black Cat Press, 2012).

¹¹⁵ Albert Parsons, *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis as Defined by Some of Its Apostles* (1887), (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2003).

¹¹⁶ Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 209.

Perhaps the most controversial legacy of the antiauthoritarian International is the concept and practice of “propaganda by the deed,” which has now become virtually synonymous with terrorism in the popular imagination. But propaganda by the deed, as originally envisaged and practiced by the anarchists in the International, merely constituted exemplary forms of direct action intended to inspire and provoke the masses to revolt. The anarchists in the International—and particularly Bakunin—rejected terrorism as counterrevolutionary, despite widespread misconceptions to the contrary. It was only after the onset of the assassination campaigns by the Russian revolutionaries against the czarist autocracy in the late 1870s that some anarchists began to advocate individual acts of violence against the ruling class, although they were a very small minority. In countries like France, Italy, and Spain, where there were thousands of self-identified anarchists, only a handful resorted to assassinations and bombings, and then only for a relatively brief period in the 1890s.

Even though Kropotkin did write in his 1881 essay “The Spirit of Revolt,” just before the social revolutionary congress in London, that individual and collective acts of revolt accomplish “more propaganda in a few days than thousands of pamphlets,” he did not mean individual acts of terrorism.¹¹⁷ Kropotkin later made the point that individual acts of violence against people in positions of authority, including assassinations, are not meant as acts of propaganda at all, but are an expression of popular vengeance. You “do not kill a man to make propaganda,” Kropotkin wrote, “you kill him *because he is a viper and you hate him*.”¹¹⁸

Malatesta criticized those “comrades who expect the triumph of our ideas from the multiplication of acts of individual violence,” arguing that “bourgeois society cannot be overthrown” by bombs and knife blows, because it is based “on an enormous mass of private interests and prejudices, and sustained, more than it is by the force of arms, by the inertia of the masses and their habits of submission.” Malatesta felt that such tactics isolated anarchists from the people. He instead called on anarchists to “live among the people and to win them over... by actively taking part in their struggles and sufferings,” for the anarchist social revolution can only succeed when the people are “ready to fight and... to take the conduct of their affairs into their own hands.”¹¹⁹

Genuine acts of revolutionary terrorism, which are intended to instill feelings of terror among the ruling classes, encourage passivity among the people by creating incapacitating fear and reliance on others to change society through spectacular acts of violence. Propaganda by the deed was originally intended to achieve the opposite effect, inspiring people to take matters into their own hands and to act for themselves while building up confidence in their power and ability to change the world through their own direct action.

In his memoirs, Kropotkin wrote that if the Europe of the late 1870s “did not experience an incomparably more bitter reaction than it did” after the Franco-Prussian War and the fall of the Paris Commune, “Europe owes it... to the fact that the insurrectionary spirit of the International maintained itself fully intact in Spain, in Italy, in Belgium, in the Jura, and even in France itself.”¹²⁰ One can say, with equal justification, that anarchism itself, as a revolutionary movement, owes its existence to that same revolutionary spirit of the International from which it was born in

¹¹⁷ Cahm, *Kropotkin*, 162. Kropotkin later regretted that he had not made this more clear, as he had actually written “The Spirit of Revolt” in anticipation of the 1881 London Congress in order to counteract the views of those social revolutionaries and anarchists who regarded terrorism as a form of “propaganda by the deed.” See *ibid.*, 160.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Malatesta, “The Duties of the Present Hour,” in *Anarchism, Volume One*, 181–183.

¹²⁰ Kropotkin, “Western Europe,” in *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*, 213.

the working-class struggles in Europe during the 1860s and 1870s. It was from those struggles, and the struggles within the International itself regarding how best to conduct them, that a self-proclaimed anarchist movement emerged. As Kropotkin observed, it was within the “Spanish, Italian, Belgian and Jurassic” Federations of the International that “developed now what may be described as *modern anarchism*.”¹²¹

¹²¹ MacKay, *Direct Struggle*, 170.

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