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Theodor Plievier
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1919

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Anarchy

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In the direction of the flaming dawn, over the expanse of Slavic fields and steppes, over the Russia of the Soviets, the land of Lenin, Trotsky and the millions and millions of primitive, natural people, from the midst of hard-fisted, uncultured peasants and workers, from the womb of a barbarically healthy, future-pregnant national body: from the primal power grown into the earth, the last day of old Europe rises, the end of a world era dawns.

The mighty explosion of the national spirit that had come of age had blasted the Tsar's throne, this violent and arbitrary rule of Russian decadence over the broad masses of the people. Eighteen moons later, war-weary soldiers overthrew the German empire. And under the calculating tables of the French capitalist regime, under the skull-towered slave throne of world-ruling Old England, Bolshevik tinder smolders.

The communist waves that run from east to west, that rise above opposing reactionary blocs in mighty cascades of foam, that flare up into prophetic lightning in the Hungarian Soviet, in the proclamation of the Soviet Republic in Bavaria, in political strikes in England and Germany, in rallies of French socialists and in street fights in Italian cities, these storm waves of communism roar the death

knell of old Europe — and the witness prelude to a new world epoch.

The extreme peaks of socialism announce the end of the old era; Spartacists and Bolsheviks drum up the death whirlwind for it. They are the last consequence of the materialistic epoch: the primal power of broken-away slaves against the violence of the oppressors, violence against violence — a doubly murderous wrestling match — the end.

Spartacism and Bolshevism are the fires that burn up the old order, but fires that consume themselves in the process. To be a Spartacist means to destroy — but also to destroy yourself.

The clash of capitalism with socialism has the aggressive, feverish, senseless, suicidal nature of the act of witnessing. Capitalism and socialism, these most powerful currents, these most fully grown children of the materialistic world epoch, give birth to the new age in a mighty embrace, in the discharge of highly tense contradictions.

Capitalism and socialism are the opposite poles of a slave system; the world of modernity hangs within their boundaries: factories roar, wage slaves toil, palaces are built, people die in ditches, church bells ring, soldiers commit murder and arson, Jews on the stock exchange haggle, people starve, demonstrations of worn-out workers erupt.

These opposing elements push, push, rub, heat, ignite each other, and raise the world to a raging fever. The contact of extremes, the clash of the most extreme cultural peaks, causes the world to explode — the world revolution.

In the flaring fires of the coming upheavals, the cultural globe “capital-labor” is shattered, the world of masters and servants is atomized.

And the primal melody of eternal renewal resounds stronger and more definitely through the brains of the European masses. It is the belief in the self, the primal religion of humanity rising from the depths of personal life: individualism.

Not the end of the world — the turning point of the world is the capitalist-socialist blood orgy of violence; Celebration of joy, ecstasy, the flames of the rising morning. A new world era is dawning over Europe’s bloody night.

The Messiah is near:

Year one of the anarchist era.

The anarchist does not believe in the masses. He does not want to lead or educate them. He only believes in himself, the individual. He does not become a martyr to his teaching, because his teaching is his life and only the waves of his actions are his propaganda. Anarchist actions are rooted in simplicity, beauty, strength and culminate in a lack of authority; they are worlds away from violence and transgressions, they are affirmations of life, prayers for the future: wake-up calls that go through the masses, destructive and soliciting.

The number of free people who have overcome the external forces of violence (state, church, society) and the internal spiritual forces (Christianity, socialism, communism) and have found their way back to the reality of their personal existence is growing: recognizers of the original religion of humanity, priests of the anarchist idea.

The sun of a new age is rising higher and higher. Twilight waves of knowledge are rolling through the minds of millions of yearning people: unveiling, revealing, pointing the way. The fulfillment of an ancient prophecy becomes reality; as a powerful desire for happiness it flames through the blood of men and women, shining from their eyes.

Brothers and sisters, you children of the eternal spirit, you who are sun-happy and full of life, you carry the seeds of new humanity in your souls. In your own brain lies the hell of slavery, in the depths of your own being the eternal sky of freedom shines blue.

Let the powers of the old times fall, let them sink into nothingness, shatter on the edge of the finite. When the fumes of decay of European decadence penetrate your brain and want to cloud your senses, then believe in yourselves! Believe in the light that must always be created anew, think of the shining spirits, Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Stirner... think of the will for truth of the individual human being who dives into himself in order to raise a world of purity and simplicity to the light from the depths of his own ego.

Stock companies, trusts, armies, naval fleets, churches, municipalities, states are shattered by the battle-hardened will of conscious individuals. Only rubble and remnants remain of the proud organizations of matter: the chaos of a new "Let there be light!"

Communism is the watchword of the present. Solidarity, socialization, protection of the weak are the dazzling slogans, the crystallization nuclei that gather ever larger, ever more powerful masses of people around them. The time of soulless mechanics and technology, the age of the rule of matter over the spirit, is celebrating its greatest triumph. The flat spirit of the herd rules and determines all details of public life. Mass instincts are the dictators of this period of decline of the capitalist world epoch...

...of decline, because the downfall of this world epoch is near. Communism is the final consequence of capitalism that creates herds. The communist idea was born in the stifling atmosphere of pale factory slaves, grew in the dull decks of ships and barracks, and matured to its full size and breadth in the herd misery of war.

The peoples of Europe have lost the voice of the wise man from the Syrian desert; They, who had stamped their entire culture with the name of that thinker, had themselves forgotten him... betrayed him.

They spoke of him as divine, they tore away everything human from him; they separated him from the flowers, the waving cornfields and the warm scent of this earth and placed him in the cold heaven of an abstraction. To him who taught them: "When you pray, go into your room..." they have erected temples for this simple man that reach up into the high clouds, and his teaching, which had sprung from the gnawing pains of a poet, from the lengths of his life of suffering, which is eternally true, eternally alive — this soul of his they buried behind the grave walls of their churches, handed it over to the gravediggers' hands of their priests.

The greatest of his teachings, the admonitions to simplicity and plainness, they have trampled into the dust and instead have piled thrones for the idols: power, violence, insatiable greed.

Europe did not invent gunpowder, but it bred subhumanity, which enslaved peoples through the power of fire and tore furrows into the face of the earth. Europe did not feed foreign peoples, but it packed the fruits of foreign parts of the world in boxes and pressed them into bales; it has captured all the beauty of these Earth was converted into commodities and dragged into its own construction. It ripped open the belly of the earth, mined coal and ore, built factories, machines, airships and cannons.

The Europeans worked until they collapsed in the white light of their arc lamps, they jumped from record to record, led armies of conquerors through distant lands: they conquered the whole earth and lost themselves in the process.

Above the ground of the trampled: "What good would it do you if you gained the whole world and yet suffered loss of your soul?", above the words of their god trampled into the dust, they whirled a mad dance around the golden calf, sacrificing 375 million Europeans to the Baal of modern technology: the machine gun and telegraph pole culture. And the structures of steel and iron, the dead organizations of their societies and states, sucked life force from the human bodies that served them... devoured human souls.

In the Europe of large organizations, it was not individuals who lived, but herds: social classes, parties, churches, industrial hordes, states. The individual was not anchored in himself, his life and actions were not determined by the center of his own ego — instead, the party, society, the church, the state ruled over him.

In Europe, the hereditary land of the Aryans, there were no longer any people, neither individuals nor free members of freely chosen communities, only members, fellow brothers, fellow citizens. The individual was a soulless part of a whole that stood above him: building block, human matter.

From this docile, soulless and irresponsible human material, with thousands upon thousands of mechanical forces, the peoples of Europe built the Tower of Western Babel, they established the rule of nations that, in excessive greed, in insatiable hunger for

fire that warms him, work that nourishes him, joys and celebrations that bring beauty into his life. Moderation determines and regulates his forms of existence. He knows that simplicity is the basis of healthy life and knows that the monstrous is the breeding ground of the sick and the doomed. He defends private property, calls legally acquired property the root of the freedom and selfhood of the individual and fights capitalism, the state and state socialism as transgressions. Anarchy is the greatest possible freedom of the individual under the social ties of the economy; it is the most natural and most humane worldview. But it is not a dogma that church fathers or party popes hand over to the masses ready-made. Each individual must achieve it for himself, must bring his world and his form of existence to light from the depths of his own ego. Anarchy is selfhood and originality, a stream from the depths of life: humanization.

It is not a political system that must melt individuals down in order to become form; it is a belief that carries its fulfillment within itself, the religion of the earth, paradise in this world.

But the great mass of people see this benevolent, life-giving star in the sky of the spiritual world through the murky mists of the bourgeois daily press; where there is bright sunlight, they see red fire, where there is power — brutality; they fear anarchy like the Christian fears eternal damnation, they see chaos, ruin, the end in it..

...as if there could be a bloodier, more perverse time than this, a time in which noble minds lie in chains in the catacombs of state prisons because of their political beliefs and decadent weaklings in officer uniforms are allowed to smash the skulls of these defenseless people with impunity, a time in which degenerate, incited masses of people attack each other like blind creatures of a subterranean race, in which men and women are raped and torn apart and insane street mobs drag bloody corpses through cities in triumph and sink them in dark waters: martyrs of the belief in the good in the masses.

as Christ's love of humanity is from the decadent love of modern Christians, pacifists and Salvation Armies...

...it is crystallized strength, an energy illuminated by knowledge of all the needs and sufferings of humanity.

Those who were animated by a kind spirit were always the bearers of new life in the epochs of humanity's decline. Buddha is the shining light of a legendary ancient India sunk in eternal night. Through the night of the fall of the Mediterranean Empire, through the veil of decay of the Roman Empire with its feasts, drinking bouts, Praetorian Guards, gladiator circuses, baths, orgies, the single spirit of Christ shines and works love through two millennia...

...and from the bankruptcy of this present age, from the carrion-hungry cries of loot from speculators, market Jews, generals, advertising leaflets, newspapers, billboards, law books, from this glaring, nerve-racking disharmony, voices of violated nature rise to heaven: trumpet cries of the new age.

Voices from the Far East unite with the proponents of true humanity from the countries of the West in one idea: a policy of goodness and universal love, which does not aim at the well-being of states, church communities or other soulless organizations, but at people, the individual human being freed from all idols.

Anarchy is the religion of the individual, the belief in the spark of God in man and in Eden on this earth. The anarchist is the natural man. He scorns everything that he has not acquired with his own hands, with his own strength. He denies the world of inherited wealth, inherited language, views, customs, tablets of law; he shatters the ghost of the world of idols into which he was born and stands up for himself, grows into a personality from the core of his own being, becomes human and creates human forms of existence for himself...

...no house that, with a large suite of rooms, turns his wife and his housemates into slaves of dead objects, no work that accumulates treasures and no hour of pleasure that is based on the suffering of his fellow human beings, but a roof that protects him, a

power, in free release of their predatory instincts, fell upon one another to tear each other apart, that tore down the aberration of their order — that with their own hands lit the funeral torch of this world epoch: war.

Church bells, orders and alarm drums called the European slaves together into war hordes. Herds lay in the trenches, hordes rolled over land, rolled along railroads, crossed the sea in steel-armored ships, armies lay in the dust and mud of the countries, armies lived in wave-washed battleships, armies worked in factories. Europe was all barracks, all factory — and in its back of the front and big city life it had become all brothel. France, England, Germany: three flags, three hordes.

We lay on the dank decks of ships, in damp holes in the ground, in the straw of the barracks and cattle wagons. We pushed, shot and bit like mad dogs, saw the fire of sudden battles with bloodshot eyes, drank the stench of decay from towering pyramids of corpses. We sank into a mad night of bloody horror, staggering helplessly into the blood-stained chaos of the European past.

We! — Not you, not me! — We! The regiment! The army! The people! Humanity!

We had no will, no desire, no responsibility. Above us stood the power that thought for us, that fed us, made us bed, imposed suffering and hardship. This demonic power chased thousands upon thousands to ruin, smashed people down like oxen, threw storm waves of living human bodies into nothingness...

...then the masses found a will, on the edge of nothingness, in the shadow of death, the mass soul was born: Communism.

Communism is the united will of the oppressed against the fist of the oppressor. The thousand-year empire of the communists is the table set for everyone (the general right to free grazing, Nietzsche), the perspective of the goulash cannon that feeds everyone, expanded to gigantic proportions.

It is not free individuals, but the same herds that bore the burden of the old order on their backs that are the foundations of com-

munism. These hordes have only emancipated themselves; they have freed themselves from the rule of their generals, factory owners and church fathers; they have overthrown the papacy of the old order, but have instead installed a new one: democracy, the rape of the individual by the shallow spirit of the masses.

Under a collectivist social order, the individual does not determine the form of his individual life; he does not grow from the core of his own being, does not stand on the strength of his own personality. The individual becomes average, a template, a mass product. The democratic dictatorship of the majority over the minority of more highly developed individuals is intellectual flatland. The elimination of the struggle for life that increases strength means stagnation.

In its revolutionary push forward, in its emancipation from the powers of the old days, communism is a step towards the ultimate goal of humanity; it is the awareness of the masses, the maturity of the peoples.

But in the realization of its ideals, in its establishment in clearly defined, recognized social forms, communism is stagnation. There is more to develop in man than a sense of solidarity; man has higher goals, such as the full common manger and those spiritual pleasures that the taste of the masses could grant him. The view into all secrets, the paths to the deepest depths and the highest heights of life are open to man. But only the man who has grown to full height from the core of his own being is capable of reaching for the high and highest flowers of this earth. –

Family, caste, nation, commune are pupations from which we must emerge; they are passages, steps to becoming human.

We had learned to subordinate the interests of the family to the broader interests of the class and class interests to those of the state. We have destroyed the state in its autocratic form; in the current upheavals we are experiencing the masses becoming independent, in the coming world revolution we see the peoples becoming free from the powers of state rule that stand above them – and we will

also experience liberation from popular rule, and we will also overcome this last ghost, the spirit of the Commune.

The banners of the communist idea are still fluttering on street barricades, intrepid fighting spirits are still giving communism movement and vitality; but these men, these torches of bright fanaticism will die out, will perish from their own one-sidedness. Only a few, only the original ones, will win; they will recognize and move on... uphill to the lonely heights of individualism, to the freedom of the individual: to anarchy.

Anarchy! An order without authority, built on the moral strength of liberated individuals! The original religion of humanity, the creed of the future and those to come!

The anarchist idea arose from the depths of humanity, from the vast steppes, dense forests, from the muscular arm of the primitive barbarian who smashed the skull of the border crosser with a stone. The power of the individual against the power of the other was the beginning – the primal force purified by sins, wars and errors of many millennia and developed into goodness, morality against morality: anarchy is the goal of human development.

All higher development goes through the gate of overcoming. By overcoming the innate inertia I force my limbs and my brain to work, build, think, condense, create higher forms of existence for myself. By overcoming bad habits I make room for good ones. Over the carcasses of vices that have been crushed and stamped into the dust, I enter the heaven of higher life..

...through dirt to purity, through weakness to strength, through the doomed night of the capitalist-socialist world order to the flaming morning of anarchy, through the colorlessness of communism to the shining clarity of individual humanity!

Excess strength leads to goodness, to that great, true goodness that alone can be a link between people, that is the foundation of the anarchist world order. This goodness is as far removed from the distorted, common journalistic concept of the word goodness