

Just an Old-fashioned Love Song!

This study offers an intellectual and social history of anarchism in Europe from its founding by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in 1840 to its defeat in Spain in 1939, and in the United States from its beginnings during the 1830s to the death of Murray Bookchin in 2006. Because historiography treats losers shabbily, there is little awareness today that, before 1917, Marxism exerted a greater influence virtually only in Germany, and that even after this date anarchism was the stronger force in the European revolutionary movements until World War II. The achievement of classical anarchism is that, for a brief moment in the history of Europe, it was able to demonstrate that it was not only conceivable, but also practically realizable, to overcome compulsion as the structuring principle of social organization.

And the following is the result of my study of the intellectual and social history of anarchism: Because of their anti-capitalism, the classical anarchists tended to form false coalitions, namely with those who did not want to abolish compulsion, not even to reduce it a little bit, but to expand it in a hitherto unknown way. Of course, they were not the only ones to blame. The bourgeois, enlightened, and liberal forces distanced themselves from the anarchists. The extended hands of the anarchists were often rejected by them. Can anything be deduced from this for the future? for a better strategy? The study concludes with my reflections on this question. Because anarchism has more to offer than just an old-fashioned love song.

Stefan Blankertz

Just an Old-fashioned Love Song?

*Splendor & Misery
of Classical Anarchism*

Stefan Blankertz, 1956, anarchist since 1970, published many books on political philosophy. He is also a novelist and a poet.

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THAT'S WHAT ANARCHISTS ARE SAYING!

"A revolution imposed either by official decree or by force of arms is no longer revolution, but the opposite of revolution, for it necessarily provokes reaction."
— *Mikhail Bakunin, 1871*¹

"Socialists are authoritarians, anarchists are libertarians. Socialists want to come to power, no matter whether by peaceful or by violent means; and once in power, they want to impose their program on the masses either by dictatorship or by democracy. The anarchists, on the other hand, believe that government can only do evil, and that by its very nature it either defends an already existing privileged class or creates a new one; and instead of striving to put themselves in the place of the rulers of the day, they want to overthrow any form of organization that gives some people the opportunity to impose their ideas and interests on others. By giving each person full liberty and, it is understood, the economic means to make liberty possible and effective, anarchists want to open the way for evolution toward better forms of social interaction that will arise from experience. It seems odd that even today, after what has happened and is happening in Russia, there are still those who believe that the difference between socialists and anarchists is merely that of wanting revolution either *adagio* or in haste. Lenin is certainly a revolutionary and a revolutionary in haste: but Lenin is an authoritarian, a fanatic whom history will place alongside the Torquemadas and Robespierres; and, although Lenin disagrees with some of the official socialists,² he is surely a socialist and doing what the anarchists have been saying for fifty years that the socialists would do if they ever managed to seize power."
— *Errico Malatesta, 1921*³

¹ Michel Bakounine, *L'Empire knuto-germanique* (1871), in *CEuvres*, vol. 2, ed. by James Guillaume, Paris 1907, p. 335. (No English edition spotted.)

² By "official socialists" Malatesta presumably had in mind social democrats ("liberals" in the current American political coordinate system).

³ Errico Malatesta, *Socialisti e anarchici: La differenza essenziale* (originally published in *Umanità Nova*, Sept. 3, 1921), in *Scritti*, vol. 1, ed. by Luigi Fabbri, Geneva 1934, pp. 209f. (As far as I can see, there is no English edition. What a pity!)

“There is nothing un-Anarchistic about any [proposal of economic and social organization] until the element of compulsion enters and obliges unwilling persons to remain in a community whose economic arrangements they do not agree to.” — *Voltaire de Cleyre*, 1901¹

“Property is the greatest revolutionary force that exists and can be opposed to power. [...] The most rationally and liberally constituted State, animated by the most just intentions, is still an enormous power, in a position to crush everything around it, unless it is counterbalanced. [...] Where can we find a power capable of counterbalancing the terrific power of the State? There is none other than property. [...] Why, you may ask, wouldn't this counterweight be found just as well in possession or fiefdom? Because possession, or fiefdom, is itself a dependency of the State; because it is included in the State; because, consequently, instead of opposing the State, it comes to its aid. [...] To act as a weight counter public power, to balance the State, and thus to secure individual liberty: this, then, is the principal function of property in the political system. Eliminate this function, or, what amounts to the same thing, remove the unconditional character from property [...]; impose conditions on it, declare it non-transferable and indivisible: it immediately loses its force, it no longer weighs anything; it is reduced to a mere benefit, a precarious thing; it is a dependency of government, without any strength against it. [...] Modern property [...] can be seen as the triumph of liberty. It is liberty that has made it, not, as it seems at first sight, against the law, but by a far superior intelligence of the law. [...] The power of the State is a power of concentration; give it momentum – and all individuality will soon disappear, absorbed into the collectivity; society will fall into communism; property, in contrast, is a power of decentralization; because it is unconditional, it is anti-despotic, anti-unitary; it is in property that the principle of all federations lies: and this is why property, unconditional in essence, transported into a political society, immediately becomes

¹ Voltairine de Cleyre, *Anarchism* (originally published in *Free Society*, Oct. 13, 1901), in *Selected Works*, ed. by Alexander Berkman, New York 1914, p. 102.

republican. The accusation that property is an obstacle to the equality of conditions and fortunes is far more deserved by fiefdom and possession, which seem to have been established for diametrically opposed purposes. It is a fact of universal history that nowhere has land been more unequally distributed than where the system of simple possession has prevailed, and where the fiefdom has superseded the allodium [hereditary property]; and conversely, that the states in which liberty and equality are most commonly found are those governed by property.” — *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, 1864¹

“The basic form of socialist culture is the federation of communities with independent economies that exchange with each other. *Society is a society of societies of societies; a covenant of covenants of covenants; a commonwealth of communities of communes; a republic of republics of republics.* Only here is freedom and order, only here is spirit, a spirit which is self-sufficiency *and* community, unity *and* independence. The independent individual, for whom no one interferes in his affairs; the domestic community of the family, for whom home and farm are their world; the local community, which is autonomous; the office or the community association, and thus the ever more comprehensive associations with an ever smaller number of tasks – that's what a society looks like, that alone is socialism, which is worth working for, which can save us from our misery. Any attempt to extend the compulsive regimen of our time in states and federations of states, and to extend its reach even further into the economic sphere than has already been seen, is futile and misguided. This police socialism, which stifles all originality and original activity, would only be the seal of the total disintegration of our peoples. We human beings can only unite in a natural way where we are in close proximity, in real contact with one another.” — *Gustav Landauer*, 1911²

¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Théorie de la propriété* (just before 1865; published posthumously in 1866), Brussels 1871, pp. 136-147. (There is a draft translation by Shawn P. Wilbur, *Theory of Property*, published online 2014, pp. 69-74.)

² Gustav Landauer, *Aufruf zum Sozialismus* (1911), Frankfurt/M. 1967, pp. 166f. English edition: *For Socialism*, St. Louis, MO 1978, pp. 125-7.

I FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

1

Losers get bad press. Although victimhood has become one of the highest honors in “woke culture,” only the victims chosen by the ruling opinion (the opinion of the rulers) are declared victors. The classical anarchists undoubtedly belong to the losers of history, perhaps even to its most beautiful losers; but since they rejected political rule as a principle of social organization and did not protest against one group of rulers in order to side with the aspirations of its rivals for power, the rulers, however hostile they may otherwise be among themselves, are unanimous: No, these victims must not be remembered! Let them rot on the dung heap of history. The fact that the anarchists bear a part of the blame for this will not be concealed in the present study.

2

The period of classical anarchism is easy to outline. It begins with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who in 1840 first identified himself as an “anarchist” in the sense of a political position. In a fictional discussion with a potential constituent, he has the constituent ask him:

“You are, of course, a republican.” – Proudhon denies.
“But a democrat you are, I hope!” – “No.”
“Are you supposed to be a monarchist?” – “Even less.”
“But then, what on earth are you!” – “I’m an anarchist.”¹

Classical anarchism ended in Europe with the defeat in the Spanish Civil War in 1939. The brutal regimes of bolshevism (“communism”) and fascism interrupted the tradition of liberty. The revolutionary social democrats, since their split from the reformists in Russia in

¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (1840), Paris 1849, p. 237. (Cut short of allusions to the political camps of the time. English edition translated by Benjamin R. Tucker: *What is Property?*, Princeton, MS 1876, p. 272.)

1903, called themselves bolsheviks (representatives of the majority), then communists, and their doctrine, after Lenin's death, Marxism-Leninism. I use the terms synonymously; but regarding the term communism, it is important to note that it is sometimes used differently from Marxism-Leninism, as in the case of communist anarchism. However, standardizing terminology out of context would sound strange. By fascism, I mean the specific historical movements and regimes in Italy, Portugal, Germany, Spain, etc., movements that applied the term fascism to themselves. A comparison with movements today that refuse to be classified as fascist may be useful in one case or another but is irrelevant to my question here. The extent to which the brief resurgence of anarchism during the legendary, already historic youth protests of the 1960s was accompanied by a transformation, not to say reversal, of classical anarchism is also part of the considerations I will make in this study. In the United States, there is an unbroken line of tradition, and the demarcation of classical anarchism remains somewhat arbitrary. One possibility would be to say that it ended there at about the same time as it did in Europe with the death of Emma Goldman in 1940. For me, classical anarchism in the United States ends with Paul Goodman and the new era begins with the Bakunin of the 20th century: Murray Rothbard. But how to classify the other Murray, Murray Bookchin?

It is much more difficult to define precisely what actually characterizes classical anarchism than it is to narrow down the time period. In terms of the concept and original use of the word anarchism, it is essentially about rejecting compulsion as a principle of social organization. While this definition is still vague, it is nonetheless not trivial. The use of the word anarchism as an unsubstantial term for pure militancy is largely an external attribution intended to be defamatory (i.e., usually not a self-description of anarchists) but has been adopted by some rioters. I can show that this does not capture the essence of classical anarchists: those who mean mere rioting by anarchy cannot claim to use the label anarchist meaningfully. A variant of the attribution that the anarchist would be nothing but a terrorist is the fatwa issued in 1971 by the evil spirit of the East German

opposition and later advocate of an eco-dictatorship, Wolfgang Harich: Harich said that anarchism is characterized by a "revolutionary impatience."¹ Anarchists pursue the same goal as we communists, Harich implied, but cannot wait until the economic and social conditions are ripe. Ironically, this was precisely the charge that reformist social democrats leveled at the bolsheviks, i.e., the very bolsheviks on whose behalf Harich was speaking: they could not wait until the conditions for a liberated society came about, as defined by Marx, but they wanted to impose it by force like the anarchists; an example of this kind of argument:

CUNOW 1920: "The theory of bolshevism [...] is nothing but a return to Bakunism, to certain teachings of Mikhail Bakunin. Bakunin, too, fought against all state authority and demanded that immediately after the hoped-for victory of the revolution the smashing of the State must begin, i.e., the breaking up of all state institutions."²

I can show that this is not in the spirit of the classical anarchists either: they did not pursue the same goal as the communists, nor were they characterized by a pronounced revolutionary impatience. Nevertheless, within the definition that anarchism is directed against the principle of compulsion, there are different approaches in classical as well as contemporary anarchism, and it remains to be examined whether they fit together or which of them are capable of forming a coalition and which are possibly mutually exclusive.

3

Although historical accuracy had to be maintained in the broad strokes as well as in the details of the pictures I sketch, I am not a neutral observer; rather, I am someone who has been writing anarchist

¹ Wolfgang Harich, *Zur Kritik der revolutionären Ungeduld: Eine Abrechnung mit dem alten und dem neuen Anarchismus*, Basel 1971.

² Heinrich Cunow, *Die Marx'sche Geschichts-, Gesellschafts- und Staatstheorie: Grundzüge der Marx'schen Soziologie*, vol. 1, Berlin 1920, p. 335.

theory for a good five decades. Within the anarchist spectrum, I take a definite position, that of anarcho-capitalism. My point here is not to name and objectively credit every historical anarchist theorist or practitioner and every anarchist group or movement; my point is to ask what a particular theorist or practitioner and anarchist group or movement contributes to clarifying the question of a meaningful theory and a purposeful strategy of anarchism. My goal is to promote anarchism, not to look at it. Is this a futile labor of love because anarchism is just a blip in history? I will show the opposite.

In terms of historical scope, today's point of view considers that classical anarchism serves history only as a blip, while the effective line of the critique of compulsion (equated with the critique of capitalism) lies in Marxism: Anarchism, along with some other political offshoots of the 19th century, is seen as a precursor rather than a competitor of Marxism; some of the anarchists, most notably Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, are explicitly stamped to be "early" socialists¹ as if later Marxism represented "proper" or "mature" socialism. Ironically, Marxism as an effective political force now is also a thing of the past, after it turned out that instead of reducing, it mercilessly intensified compulsion, which finally not only failed morally, but also became socio-economically dysfunctional. Nevertheless, Karl Marx, completely divorced from what he himself meant, wrote, and wanted, continues to exert an effect today via the assertion that state compulsion is necessary to create a good and just society, to be able to rule out discrimination, to save the climate, to protect the people or whatever it may be concretely about. In this sense, all contemporary political currents are "leftist," if one grants Marxism sovereignty over the definition of being "Left," a term that is in itself contentless; in fact, this would also mean that those are leftists who call them-

¹ "Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was a French early socialist." This is the beginning of the German Wikipedia article about him (seen on 07/17/2023). The English Wikipedia article does not use this phase but characterizes him as a libertarian socialist (seen on 08/10/2023). However, it links to a list of "pre-Marx socialists" with Proudhon in the category "Early socialist and proto-socialist philosophers and political theorists," where he is lumped together with the ancient Roman statesmen Gaius and Tiberius Gracchus as well as the 18th century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

selves "rightists" or are called so. But neither the classical anarchists nor Karl Marx bothered about the Left and the Right. Left and Right were wing names for bourgeois politics in the parliaments, something they wanted nothing to do with.

The dominance of Marxism both in the revolutionary – bolshevik – and in the reformist – social democratic – opposition is a retrospective construction, a historiography from the perspective of the supposed victors. Before 1917, the situation was quite different. A significant influence of Marxism can only be found in Germany. But there was no real revolutionary situation in Germany after 1848. Instead, reformist social democracy took hold, based not only on Marx but even more on Wilhelm Liebknecht. Marx was not happy with German social democracy either, as his scathing criticism of the famed Gotha Program in 1875 showed. In the margins of Mikhail Bakunin's great (but unfinished) work "Statism and Anarchy," from which Marx learned Russian, he piquantly jotted at the very point where Bakunin was polemicizing against the "Marxist" idea of a people's state: "The people's state [Volksstaat] of Liebknecht is nonsense."¹

That Proudhon's influence was clearly stronger in France was indirectly admitted even by Marx himself. On the occasion of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, which resulted in the establishment of the (second) German Reich, Marx wrote to Engels:

MARX 1870: "The French need a beating. If the Prussians win, so the centralization of *state power*² which will be useful to the centralization of the German working class. The German preponderance would also shift the center of gravity of the West European working-class movement from France to

¹ Karl Marx, *Notes on Bakunin's Book "Statism and Anarchy"* (1875), in *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 18, p. 636. (English edition published in *Collected Works*, vol. 24, Moscow 1989, p. 521. The translation implies that Marx directed his criticism at Bakunin, not Liebknecht. I interpret this passage differently: Marx distanced himself from Liebknecht in saying that Bakunin's argument was fighting a bogeyman. The grammar of the German original is unambiguous, the semantics are not.)

² Original English.

Germany [...]. Its preponderance on the world stage over the French would at the same time be the preponderance of our theory over Proudhon's.”¹

Marx would not have written this if Proudhon were only peripheral to the French revolutionary movement of the working classes.

Actually, Proudhonism in France is a remarkable phenomenon. For Proudhon, oxherd, typesetter, temporarily a private scholar supported by a rich friend, then a petty clerk, was not at all what one imagines of a revolutionary leader to be. He was neither a gifted orator, nor a skilled conspirator, nor a great organizer. As his main philosophical point of reference, he chose G.W.F. Hegel, and a sometimes rather strenuous dialectic pervades his writings. But he was able to inspire the revolutionary movement with one idea – the idea that people can master their lives without being coerced by political rulers, that they can master their lives even better themselves than with being coerced by political rulers!

At the end of the Franco-Prussian War, France was indeed defeated. However, amid this defeat an uprising took place in Paris with the formation of the “Paris Commune.” It lasted only a few days, before being crushed by the remaining French state under the benevolent supervision of the Prussian victors; but it fueled the revolutionary movement throughout Europe. The idea that animated the Paris Commune was precisely the Proudhonist program of federalism: local self-government. Marx could now not help writing about it (and claiming that it corresponded exactly to his ideas).² It took Lenin later some effort to interpret away the decentralized communalism that Marx praised here, in order to be able to attach the Marxist label to his democratic centralism without making a fool of himself.³

¹ Karl Marx in a letter to Frederick Engels on July 20, 1870, in *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 33, p. 5. (English edition: *Marx and Engels Correspondence*, New York 1968, p. 292.)

² Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (1871), incl. drafts, in *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 17, pp. 313-365. (English edition: *Selected Works*, vol. 2, Moscow 1969, pp. 178-244.)

³ Vladimir I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (1917), ed. by Todd Chretien, Chicago, IL 2014, pp. 89ff.

Proudhon's successor as the identifying figure of European anarchists was Mikhail Bakunin, Marx's intimate enemy, from 1867 on. The enmity emanated from Marx, not Bakunin. Marx denounced Bakunin as a tsarist informer to counter his growing influence. Only afterwards did Bakunin return Marx's hostility by the same unsavory means. Unlike Proudhon, Bakunin was a hot-blooded revolutionary, a networker, an organizer; he exerted his influence less through publications than through presence, through personal charisma, through letters, sometimes book-length, that he sent across Europe. Along with Marx, he must be considered the main promoter of the International Workingmen's Association, later declared the “First International.”¹ It had been founded in 1864, and the Proudhonists undoubtedly constituted most of its members. In September 1872, Marx and Engels used trickery to boot out Bakunin. On the substance Marx and Engels accused him, among other things, of being a pan-Slavist (i.e., a nationalist who wanted to unite all Slavic peoples into one great empire).² Given that Bakunin's followers were based in the Swiss Jura, Italy, France, and Spain, this was a rather blunt sword. In fact, Bakunin's henchmen – or old Proudhonists – formed the *de facto* majority of the International's rank and file, who felt so offended by the maneuver that the International lived a miserable existence from then on until it was liquidated in 1876, and no one shed a tear for it.

The anarchists were not the only alternative to Marxism within the European opposition. I have already mentioned Wilhelm Liebknecht and his social democratic program to transform Germany increasingly into a welfare state. In England, the legendary “Fabian Society” advocated a similar strategy (meanwhile, the Fabianists play

¹ The Second International is that of the Social Democratic, the Third that of the Communist and the Fourth that of the Trotskyist parties.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association: Report and Documents Published by Decision of the Hague Congress of the International* (1874), *Collected Works*, vol. 23, London, UK 1988, pp. 454-580; the accusation of pan-Slavism is to be found on pp. 558-560. French in original. (German edition in *Marx Engels Werke*, vol. 18, pp. 327-471; on the pan-Slavism accusation see pp. 444-7.)

an important diabolical role in the narratives of some conspiracy theorists; but that is another story). In the Romanic countries, syndicalism emerged, i.e., a revolutionary variant of trade unions fused with anarchism. In Russia the Narodniki (“Friends of the People”) and their philosophical wing, the Nihilists, advocated a socialism based on the traditional Russian village community, the Mir; afterwards they took the name “Social Revolutionaries.” They were competitors of Marxism and had a larger following than the latter.

As late as 1917, the Bolsheviks by no means formed most of the revolutionary movement. The Bolsheviks claimed that they represented the majority and the reformist social democratic Mensheviks, on the other hand, the minority; but this was based on an unrepresentative selection of delegates present at the party’s 1903 convention that sealed the split in Russian social democracy: henceforth there was a revolutionary and a reformist wing. After the February Revolution of 1917, the reformist forces that carried it out committed the strategic mistake not to realize the people’s peace will and decided to continue to participate in the anti-German coalition of the First World War. The Bolsheviks, under the benevolent supervision of the German Reich, took advantage of this to stage a *coup d’état* in October.

By 1922, the Bolsheviks had imposed themselves on Russia with great brutality, and as a result claimed for Marxism that it was the only serious revolutionary theory with the only promising strategy. The opponents of the revolution were also satisfied because the recognition of the supremacy of Marxism finally relieved them of an irksome confrontation with the anarchist idea of the possibility of organizing a society without rulers. Despite all their hostility to Marxism, they agreed with it on one point: There ought to be compulsion by the State.

The achievement of classical anarchism is to be found in one point: For a moment in European history, it was able to present not only as conceivable, but also as practically realizable, that the principle of compulsion could be overcome as a structuring element of social organization. There is an inner coherence to the fact that the ruling

historiography (= historiography of the rulers) does everything in its power to erase from historical memory the possibility of a practical implementation of non-compulsion. As a pure idea, reduced to a utopian, unrealistic beautiful reverie, anarchy is no longer dangerous. Outside of Europe, (classical) anarchism played a role in the United States, which I discuss in the second part of this study: American anarchism differs significantly in approach from European anarchism, except for the brief period of revolutionary anarchism supported by German, Italian, and Russian immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which resembled the European variety.

I will not dwell on revolutionary anarchism in Latin America (especially Mexico and Argentina) and the Caribbean (especially Cuba). In Asia, anarchism had a strong bastion mainly in China. The influential Chinese writer Ba Jin (巴金, 1904-2005), for example, was an anarchist: He composed his pseudonym from the initial character for Bakunin (巴枯宁) and the final one for Kropotkin (克鲁泡特金). There are also anarchist influences in Africa; for example, starting from the former Portuguese colonies. Of note is the Nigerian Sam Mbah (1963-2014) and his book “African Anarchism” (1997). The influence of anarchism on Zionism is represented by Martin Buber.

4

Note on the term “State:” For the sake of simplicity, I sometimes refer to the State (its organized violent compulsion) as if it were an acting person; what is meant are the State’s institutions, what is meant is the State’s apparatus with the people who control it or parts of it or who act in its name and on its behalf (such as heads of state, government officials, parliamentarians, judges, bureaucrats, representatives of interest groups). The concept of the State that the various anarchist theorists employ differs in many details, sometimes severely. During the reasoning, it will become clear what is to be understood by State in each case. (But this is not a treatise on the theory of the State.)¹

¹ For an outline of my General Theory of the State, see Appendix 3.

The title of this study reflects the header of the last essay Paul Goodman wrote in 1972, “Just an Old-fashioned Love Song.” Two years later, the German translation appeared posthumously with its original header in the first volume of the legendary “Unter dem Pflaster liegt der Strand”¹ series edited by Hans Peter Duerr and published by the anarchist Karin Kramer Verlag. Goodman’s friend and executor, Taylor Stoehr, changed the header in the collections he edited to the rather boring “Freedom and Autonomy.” The question mark is meant to suggest that for me it need not be just a nostalgic recollection.

Scattered throughout my study and summarized in its last chapter, I revolve around opportunities and possibilities of a future-oriented strategy of anarchism. Get out of the melancholy! that actually it would have been a beautiful thing, once, to stand up for liberty, but it was wasted, what a pity. Goodman had remarked in 1970 that conservatives wanted to go back a few decades, but that a neolithic conservatism was needed.² Yet as early as 1965, Murray Rothbard’s analysis said that precisely because conservatives were backward-looking, they always stood for a lost cause, have been inherently pessimistic, and could not point the way to a better future.³

The present study is the elaboration and continuation of impromptu lectures I gave to young libertarians in 2022. Another impulse came from the “Vincent Sessions” with Michael von Prollius, an ongoing dialog between a classical liberal and an anarchist since 2016, which is not (only) about the differences, but (also and above all) about the commonalities. We published some pieces from this in 2022.⁴ This altogether gave me the impulse to think about the social history of anarchism in relation to that of classical liberalism. My study is

¹ “Under the pavement you’ll find the beach.”

² Paul Goodman, *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservatism*, New York 1970, p. 191.

³ Murray Rothbard, *Left and Right: The Prospects for Liberty* (1965), San Francisco, CA 1979, p. 5.

⁴ Michael von Prollius and Stefan Blankertz, *Bakunin und Mises in eine Front!? Die Vincent Sessions*, Berlin 2022.

a reconstruction of social history and the history of ideas, not a systematic unfolding of the economics, sociology, and psychology of anarchism, nor a comprehensive presentation of all anarchist solutions to pending social problems, nor a discussion of their feasibility.

I accomplished the translation into English with the help of DeepL and the assistance of DeepL Write. Although the overall performance of the artificial intelligence is surprising, it is sometimes still more artificial than intelligent. But without its help, I would not have been able to finish the translation. So, I thank all the programmers involved in the creation of DeepL. In terms of content, I made only minor changes to my German text. When translating a quote from the original languages (German, French, Italian), I first give the original source and then (if available) an English version as a reference. If I don’t know the original language (Hebrew, Old French, Russian), I give only the English version. In the bibliography, I have almost exclusively listed English editions.

6

In 1919, Gustav Landauer joined the short-lived Munich Soviet Republic, only to give up after a few days, repelled by the Bolsheviks’ behavior. This did not prevent the victorious state troops, led by the Social Democrats, from both arresting him as a ringleader and looting and murdering him in prison. His friend Martin Buber recalled participating in a debate on political terror initiated by Landauer in the Soviet Council. Landauer pallidly followed the justifications of terror; only Buber intervened and formulated counter-arguments, which he supported with historical examples.

BUBER 1929: “My [conservation] partner did not go into this. But he, too, tried to back up his apology for the terror with examples. ‘Dzerzhinsky,’¹ he said, ‘the chairman of the Cheka [the Bolshevik secret service] could sign a hundred

¹ Feliks Dzierżyński, 1877-1926, founder and first head of the Cheka, then of the GPU, the precursor of the NKVD and the KGB.

death sentences in a day, but with a perfectly pure soul.' – 'That's the very worst thing,' I said, 'that pure soul on which you don't spill a drop of blood! It's not the soul that matters, it's the responsibility.' My partner looked at me with clueless superiority. Landauer, who was sitting next to me, put his hand on mine. His whole arm was shaking."¹

Landauer knew he had gotten involved with the wrong people. Let us look at how this happened and what we can learned from it for the future.

EUROPE

¹ Martin Buber, *Erinnerungen an einen Tod* (1929), in *Buber Werkausgabe*, vol. 11.1, Gütersloh 2019, p. 322f. This is the very worst thing, the clueless superiority of the ruling jugglers of virtue terror knitted on the Left as well as on the Right. They are really at peace with themselves.