

von der »nation introuvable« (S. 401), der er gleichwohl ein starkes Nationalbewußtsein, aber geringes Rechtsbewußtsein zuschrieb. Angesichts dieser widerspruchsvollen Hoffnungen und Befürchtungen mußten auch Liebknechts Konzeptionen zur Realisierung des Nationalstaats, denen er alle anderen politischen und gesellschaftlichen Fragen unterordnete, widerspruchsvoll bleiben: »Nirgends eine Fahne, um die wir uns ohne Überzeugungsoffer schaaren können« (S. 67).

Es gehört zu den Verdiensten dieser Edition Georg Eckerts, daß sie nicht nur die politischen Konzeptionen Wilhelm Liebknechts, sondern auch die Probleme nationalstaatlicher Politik im Reichsgründungsjahrzehnt aus der Sicht deutscher Demokraten plastisch werden läßt.

Dieter Langewiesche

Archives Bakounine/Bakunin-Archiv, publiées pour l'Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis Amsterdam par Arthur Lehning, Vol. V: Michel Bakounine et ses Relations Slaves, 1870 - 1875, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1974, pp. IXC, 586, cloth, 220 fl.

Volume V of Arthur Lehning's meticulously edited *Archives Bakouine*, like the two volumes that preceded it, deals principally with Bakunin's Russian activities. Volume III was devoted to *Gosudarstvennost' i anarkhiia* [The State and Anarchy], a work of 1873 intended mainly for the revolutionaries of Russia, and, indeed, Bakunin's only major work in Russian. Volume IV documented the »Nechaev Affair« and the rise and fall of Bakunin's relationship with that would-be leader of a Russian uprising. This latest volume both supplements the previous two with material dating back to 1869-70, and extends the documentation to 1875. It traces Bakunin's efforts to make contact with the young generation of Russians, and to some extent with other Slavic activists, in the wake of the Nechaev debacle. Bakunin's Russian activities had been interrupted by the break with Nechaev in 1870 and then by the conflict with Marx in the International. In 1872 he began trying to pick up the threads once again. His interest centered on the fairly sizable Russian student colony of Zurich, the history of which was chronicled by Dr. J. M. Meijer in his *Knowledge and Revolution* (Assen, 1955). Bakunin now turned to these youthful émigrés to recruit followers, spread his anti-state views, and create new conspiratorial organizations.

This volume necessarily lacks a single focal point, for Bakunin's relations with other Russian émigrés touched on virtually every aspect of his wide-ranging activities. Among the items included are three pamphlets which Bakunin wrote in 1869 and 1870 during his collaboration with Nechaev. They were addressed to Russia's revolutionary youth and contained Bakunin's views on the methods and objectives of the Populist movement that was soon to arise. (In one of these pamphlets Bakunin explicitly directed the young revolutionaries to »go to the people«.) Peter Lavrov, another émigré mentor of the Populist movement, appears in this volume as it traces the unsuccessful effort by Bakunin and his followers to publish a joint review with Lavrov. Switzerland contained enemies of Bakunin as well as friends and followers, and in the documents we see Nicholas Utin, a staunch partisan of Marx in Geneva, supplying Marx and Engels with material to be used against Bakunin in the International. Also included are an obituary of Herzen, in which Bakunin maintained that Herzen had remained a firm opponent of the tsarist regime to the end of his days and had never made his peace with Alexander II; and a letter to a French newspaper objecting to a boast by another Russian that the death penalty was not practiced in Russia. Though his interests and activities were international in scope, Bakunin never ceased to regard himself as a critic of Russian conditions and a spokesman for the Russian revolutionary movement.

Thus, in addition to the main subject, Bakunin's Zurich circle, the volume touches on the

themes of earlier volumes: the collaboration with Nechaev, the conflict within the International, Bakunin's conception of revolution in Russia. As in previous volumes in this series, the first part of the book presents Bakunin's own writings, many of them hitherto unpublished manuscripts or bibliographical rarities, grouped into eighteen sections. The second part consists of French translations of the works written in Slavic languages, while in the third part a series of Appendixes presents writings by other individuals relating to the subjects covered in the volume. The editor's extensive historical and bibliographical introduction and thorough annotations form a solid scholarly framework for the texts. Photographs of some of the principals and facsimile pages of manuscripts and original editions add an element of immediacy to the documents.

Bakunin expounded his anarchist principles not in neat theoretical packages – his few theoretical works are highly discursive and were never finished – but in a disorderly accumulation of fragments, letters and topical articles. When sorted out and collated by Arthur Lehning's prodigious labors, they show Bakunin consistently battling the political and metaphysical abstractions, and their spokesmen, that formed the objects of his criticism throughout his anarchist period. All led to some form of hierarchical authority and exploitation, he was convinced. One of those abstractions was nationalism, and his attempt to join forces with a Polish émigré group in Zurich foundered on his anti-national and anti-state principles. »Doctrinaire revolutionaries«, with Marx foremost among them, remained high on his list of opponents, as did scientific elitists who claimed political power on the basis of superior knowledge. Leave your schools and universities, he told the students of Russia, and go to the people. But remember that »the educated youth must be neither the master, nor the protector, nor the benefactor, nor the dictator of the people, but only the midwife of their spontaneous emancipation, the unifier and organizer of their efforts and of all their forces« (p. 15). And most of all he rejected the principle of the state and excoriated all those who upheld it. Political power corrupts, he insisted, and no one is immune to its corrupting influence. It is a law of human nature that admits of no exceptions: even Socrates or Christ would have been oppressors and exploiters had they become kings, ministers, or officials (pp. 139–40). »Take the most ardent revolutionary and put him on the All-Russian throne, or give him the dictatorial power that our green revolutionaries dream of so much, and in a year he will be worse than Alexander Nikolaevich« (p. 55). Government is a conspiracy against the people, and it must be countered by a »people's conspiracy«.

The creation of conspiratorial revolutionary organizations was the very keynote of Bakunin's political activity. The centerpiece of this volume is his attempt to form such an organization, or organizations, among the Russians and other Slavs of Zurich. These organizations had a genealogy that dated back to 1864, when Bakunin created an International Brotherhood during a stay in Italy. (The documentary record of this Brotherhood from 1864 to 1868 is to be the subject of a subsequent volume of the *Archives Bakounine*.) In 1868, after failing to persuade the League of Peace and Freedom to adopt his principles, Bakunin and his followers formed the International Alliance of Socialist-Democracy. The Alliance applied for membership in the First International but was refused admittance as a separate organization; its sections entered the International individually, and Bakunin claimed that the Alliance dissolved itself in 1869, but Marx contended that it remained in existence secretly. This became one of the main charges levelled against Bakunin at the time of his expulsion from the International.

In 1869–70 came Bakunin's association with Nechaev and unrealized plans for new Russian and international revolutionary conspiracies. In 1872, Bakunin created three new associations in Zurich, the connections among them not fully clear. The first one, the Russian Brotherhood, founded in March of 1872, consisted of Bakunin and four Russian

students. Bakunin continued to place great importance on the revolutionary role of Russia's educated young people. In 1869 he had characterized »this legion of declassed young men« as a substitute for Sten'ka Razin, the revolutionary spark that would ignite a popular uprising (p. 15). Having failed to establish a link through Nechaev to the activists within Russia, Bakunin now turned to the émigré students in Zurich.

At the same time, he was eager to establish a broader Slavic organization, and, probably with this in mind, he sought an affiliation between his Russian Brotherhood and a Polish group, the Polish Social-Democratic Association of Zurich. The dream of Slavic unity was an element of Bakunin's outlook that went all the way back to 1848–49. Relations with the Poles broke down because Bakunin, as an anarchist, insisted that social revolution, not restoration of the historic Polish state, was the only way to achieve Polish freedom. (The secretary of the Polish Social-Democratic Association, Adolf Stempkowski, was an agent of the Third Section and was soon to betray Nechaev to the police.) Nevertheless, as Lehning points out, Bakunin was the first important Russian revolutionary since the Decembrists to seek cooperation with the Poles against the tsarist regime. Even without the Poles, Bakunin did create a Slavic Section, consisting of Russians, Serbs, a Croat and a Czech. This Slavic Section then affiliated with the Jura Federation of the International. Finally, also in 1872, Bakunin formed a new International Brotherhood, the program of which is reproduced in this volume. Its relationship to the Russian Brotherhood is hazy, but at least one member of the latter, Arman Ross [Mikhail Sazhin], also belonged to the International Brotherhood. The programs of the two organizations were essentially identical, and both were based on the program of the Alliance of 1868. Only in Italy did the International Brotherhood show some signs of life for a few years.

In June, 1873, the Russian government issued a decree in effect forbidding Russian women to study in Zurich, and the émigré colony as a whole soon disintegrated. Bakunin's group broke up, and although he continued to take an interest in Russian and Slavic affairs, the Zurich colony ceased to be the focus of his attention.

As was the case with most of Bakunin's conspiratorial organizations, neither the Russian Brotherhood nor the International Brotherhood had much practical significance. Despite the element of fantasy they displayed, however, Bakunin's revolutionary organizations were more than mere play-acting. One must agree with Arthur Lehning's observation that the various organizational programs that Bakunin drew up from 1864 to 1872 are important not in their own right but for the light they shed on Bakunin's political theory and social philosophy (p. LIV). As suggested by the great detail he lavished on their statutes, Bakunin regarded these organizations not merely as instruments of revolution but as embodiments of the new fraternal relations that would prevail among men after the revolution. Whereas most of his other writings concentrated on criticism of his opponents or on revolutionary theory, his organizational statutes spelled out the positive elements of his anarchist social vision. And to the extent that the groups actually functioned, they were practical proving-grounds for his anarchist principles, the only opportunity he had to put them to the test. The theory and the practice of these associations, then, offer a revealing commentary on Bakunin's social theory.

The most striking feature of the International Brotherhood – and this may be the key to all of Bakunin's conspiratorial organizations – is that it was meant to be precisely what its name suggests: a true fraternity, and not merely an organization pursuing certain political and social objectives. The statutes Bakunin drew up for it made it a tightly-knit community, the sole focus of the individual member's life and loyalties. Everyone who joins it, Bakunin wrote, »devotes himself irrevocably, body and soul, thought, will, passion and action, with all his abilities, energy, and fortune, to the service of the social revolution. The association will henceforth become his fatherland and all its members his brothers,

more precious than all his blood relatives [...]« (p. 189). Here was an element not unique to Bakunin but characteristic of much of the Russian revolutionary movement. Unlike his West European counterparts, who, to one degree or another, could legally and openly engage in political activity, the Russian radical had to go underground. He was forced to break most of his ties with his family, former friends, and social class, and in many cases accept a life of exile or emigration. The underground organization and its cause took the place of these other ties and inevitably became the object of unusually intense loyalties. A prime example of this phenomenon was, of course, Bakunin himself, whose revolutionary activities had almost totally isolated him from the attachments of his youth. Hence his preoccupation with the personal and moral relations of the association's members in addition to its purely political tasks.

This same element, of course, had been manifested in the famous »Catechism of a Revolutionary«, with its ringing declaration that the revolutionary is a »lost man« who has broken all his ties with society. In the »Catechism«, however, which the preceding volume of the *Archives Bakounine* showed to have been in all probability the work of Nechaev rather than Bakunin, it had taken on psychopathic overtones. The »Catechism« rejected not just competing claims on the revolutionary's loyalty but all moral scruples as well; it projected an image of the revolutionary as arsonist. The Nechaev Affair had focused Bakunin's attention on the relationship of the members of the revolutionary conspiracy. In fact, his primary criticism of Nechaev was that he had treated his friends like enemies, exploiting and manipulating his revolutionary comrades as well as his adversaries. Relations between members of the International Brotherhood were to be on a very different footing. »Our brotherhood is founded on mutual respect for our human dignity and our liberty. Each brother will halt with respect before the conscience and intimate life of his brother and will enter into it only when invited to do so. Severe towards ourselves, we must not be such inexorable censors in regard to each other; we must get used to pardoning our mutual weaknesses, knowing all too well that each of us is full of them [...] We will not spend our time disparaging ourselves, and we will forgive our brothers a great deal [...]« (p. 189). Toleration and mutual respect, personal autonomy and collective solidarity were the fundamental principles of the Brotherhood. Relations between its members were to be determined not by the abstract, impersonal forces of government and law, but by the spontaneous harmony of fraternal love. Here were all the ideals of the future anarchist society, realized first of all in the revolutionary organization struggling to achieve that society. The underground conspiracy for Bakunin was a microcosm of the stateless community of brotherly harmony, and a model for it. Perhaps this was one of the many elements of Bakunin's thinking that Marx, with his very different temperament and political experiences, could not understand and that consequently fed his suspicions of Bakunin's intentions.

Neither in theory nor in practice did the Brotherhood fully carry out its ideals. Bakunin wrote into its program his familiar strictures against any kind of revolutionary dictatorship or provisional government, since »all governmental power, however revolutionary and transitory it claims to be, can have no other object than to perpetuate itself« (p. 182). Yet, to ensure the revolution's success, »it is obviously necessary that there be a force, a collective invisible organization, which, while obeying a frankly and completely revolutionary program and pushing it to its furthest consequences, abstains from any governmental or official interference, and thereby can exert an influence all the more effective and powerful on the spontaneous movement of the masses [...]«. On the day after the revolution the members of this organization must »organize and direct the anarchy and the formidable outburst of the masses' revolutionary passions, without restraining them« (p. 184). Thus a »collective invisible organization«, with its own revolutionary program,

was to exert an »influence« on the people and »direct« their revolutionary energies – but without turning into a revolutionary dictatorship or a provisional government! The problem of the relationship between the conscious elite and the spontaneous masses was one that particularly plagued the revolutionary movement in Russia, where the gulf between the two was so wide, and both the Populist movement that was just getting under way and the later Marxist movement were forced to confront it. For all his rejection of »Jacobinism«, a rejection which was doubtlessly sincere, and his clear insight into the dangers of revolutionary elitism, it was a problem that Bakunin himself never satisfactorily resolved. The program of the International Brotherhood, an organization dedicated to the eradication of all political hierarchy, raises as many questions on this subject as it resolves.

The statutes of the International Brotherhood contain a remark that casts yet another shadow on its role as a model anarchist community. Bakunin gave the general assembly of the organization, which he called the »Constituent Assembly«, the right not only to suspend or exclude errant members but to condemn them to death if necessary (p. 192). The Brotherhood was truly a community, against which, as Bakunin says, it was possible to commit »treason« (p. 190). But in a community based solely on fraternal solidarity and spontaneous mutual respect, how is »treason« to be defined, and on what grounds is a death sentence to be applied? In the last analysis, it must depend on the subjective feelings of one's comrades, on an unpredictable group consensus, and it may well be asked whether this is a very secure guarantee of the individual liberty and human dignity that were to prevail in the new community.

On the practical level, we must turn to the history of the Russian Brotherhood, which shared the International Brotherhood's program and actively functioned for a time as a group. It was not a harmonious one. When the plans for a joint review with the Lavrovists fell through, Bakunin's followers set up a book-printing operation of their own in Zurich at the beginning of 1873. The little group was soon rent with antagonisms and split up. Arman Ross went to London and established a printing-press there, while the remainder of the group, centered around Zamfirii Ralli-Arbore (a Rumanian from Bessarabia), set up a printing shop in Geneva.

Mutual recriminations now ensued between the two factions. Bakunin refused to break with Ross, who had succeeded Nechaev as the young collaborator on whom his hopes centered, and consequently alienated the Ralli group. One of the members of this group, Alexander El'snits, complained to James Guillaume that Ross had behaved in an »authoritarian« manner (at one point he had locked his colleagues out of the printing plant in Zurich), and that Bakunin had defended him. »Bakunin's conduct towards us in regard to the printing house, that is, in the first truly practical revolutionary affair that had come up since we became associated with him, left us in no further doubt that Bakunin, while preaching to us the principles of collectivism, was deceiving us; that those sermons served him merely as a means of exploiting the purest and most honest sentiments« (p. 459). There was also considerable wrangling over the amounts of capital that each of the founders of the printing house had contributed, over receipts and accounts, and over the terms of the enterprise's liquidation.

These charges and counter-charges seem to reflect what the anarchists called »bourgeois sensibility« rather than the fraternal relations that were supposed to prevail among them. A similar imbroglio, the Baronata affair, soon led to a temporary break and permanent cooling of relations between Bakunin and Ross. The latter disapproved of the purchase of Baronata, a villa near Locarno which was to provide the protection of Swiss citizenship for Bakunin and serve as a haven for international revolutionaries. The disastrously ill-conceived project resulted only in the financial ruin of Carlo Cafiero, a young Italian

follower of Bakunin, and the alienation of some of Bakunin's closest associates.

In view of these disputes, it is ironic to read of Bakunin's refusal to speak to a law professor who came to Locarno from Russia to meet him, on the grounds that he could have nothing in common with a jurist (p. 467n). Bakunin's followers might well have profited by placing some of their relations on a legal, contractual footing. When it came to practical, and especially financial activities, the spirit of comradeship proved too weak a cement to hold them together. If this committed little band of anarchists could not govern their personal relations on the basis of fraternal solidarity alone, could this principle prove sufficient for the larger society that was to take shape after the anarchist revolution?

The members of the Ralli group were so disillusioned with Bakunin that even though they upheld many of his ideas they began to belittle his significance as a revolutionary. The tsarist authorities, they asserted in a publication of 1875, exaggerated Bakunin's importance: »his influence on the Russian revolutionary movement was always very weak, even trifling« (p. 484). After all the turmoil and disappointment in his relations with the émigrés in Switzerland, Bakunin voiced an understandable note of resignation in a letter to Ogarev at the end of 1874. He had withdrawn from all »practical activity«, he told his old friend, and was now spending much of his time reading. »Enough of teaching, my friend, in our old age let us once again take up learning, it is more cheerful« (p. 228).

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Anthony Masters, Bakunin. The Father of Anarchism, Sidgwick & Jackson, London 1974, XXIII, 279 S., Ln., £ 5.95.

Popular history – history written by non-scholars for a broad audience – is much like the proverbial »little girl who had a little curl«: when it is good, it is very good, but when it is bad, it is horrid. When done well, it can convey the historical color and drama that scholarly studies tend to stifle, and it often possesses a literary flair which most academics lack; it lends itself particularly well to biography and is adept at bringing to life the striking personalities of history. These qualities can compensate for the conceptual shallowness and scantiness of documentation which are common failings of the genre. Anthony Masters' attempt at a biography of Michael Bakunin suffers painfully from all the defects of popular history without displaying any of its redeeming virtues. Roderick Kedward, in his Foreword, terms the book an »exciting biography« which makes »a substantial contribution to the reappraisal of Bakunin« both as a thinker and as an activist. Alas, the book is neither exciting nor substantial, and it makes little contribution to our understanding of Bakunin.

Judging from the footnotes and bibliography Masters does not read Russian, and he has relied on secondary works for most of his material. In consequence, he draws heavily on standard interpretations, principally E. H. Carr's biography, which are badly in need of rethinking. In addition, the author lacks the historical perspective to deal adequately with a figure who swam, at one time or another, in nearly every intellectual, political, and revolutionary current of mid-nineteenth century Europe. The result is a cliché-ridden image of Bakunin set against a very hazy historical background.

The book gets off on the wrong footing from the start with its Prologue, a description of what Bakunin (or »Michael«, as the author insists on calling him throughout) might have been thinking and feeling as he visited his family on his way to Siberian exile in 1857. This sort of fictionalized history is as irritating as it is useless. Masters' explanation of Bakunin's development as a revolutionary rests on the familiar assertion that Bakunin was sexually impotent, or at least indifferent, and that his political commitment provided a kind of emotional substitute for sexual activity. He finds in Bakunin an »inner loneliness«