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The Basques and the Spanish Civil War

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Source: *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 25, No. 100 (Dec., 1936), pp. 529-566

Published by: [Irish Province of the Society of Jesus](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30097608>

Accessed: 03/08/2011 22:16

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# THE BASQUES AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

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“**T**HERE can be few parts of the world,” writes Mr. Rodney Gallop, in his admirable and authoritative *Book of the Basques*, “about which so many wild and inaccurate statements have been made and so much irresponsible and unauthoritative literature has been written, as that region of South-West France and North-West Spain which is inhabited by the Basques. The mystery surrounding the origins and history of the Basque race, the difficulty of their uncouth tongue, and the great reserve which they display in all their contacts with the outside world—a reserve to which is due, in all probability, their survival as a race—have invested them with an air of remoteness and woven around them an atmosphere of romance.”

This article will attempt principally to describe and discuss the parts played by the Spanish Basques in the history of the Second Republic and the Civil War. It will be obvious that an adequate explanation of the conduct of so enigmatic a people in a series of peculiarly complicated situations cannot be given in a few pages, the more so since these situations can only be properly appreciated against a background of Basque history. It should be possible, however, to trace the tortuous course of the Basque Statute of Autonomy during the last five years and to throw some light on the reasons which led the Basque Nationalists to side with the enemies of their religion against their fellow-Catholics and fellow-Basques of Navarre.

## I

The Basque people are not wholly Spanish: they inhabit three provinces in France (Labourd, Basse-Navarre and Soule) which form part of the *département* of the Basses-Pyrénées, as well as the four in Spain which here chiefly concern us:

Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya, Alava and Navarre. The very names of the capitals of these four provinces—San Sebastián, Bilbao, Vitoria and Pamplona respectively—give an idea of the diversity of the population within a relatively small area. There is one of Spain's largest and most efficient industrial cities; there are summer resorts scattered along the coast and about the Guipúzcoan Highlands, the largest of these (San Sebastián) being the most famous and popular watering-place in the whole of Spain; there are ancient cities famed in history which have now sunk to the level of second-rate provincial capitals or third-rate market towns; and there are innumerable hamlets situated in some of the remotest parts of the Pyrenees, almost as far from civilization as any hamlets in Spain. It is natural that the strength of that national feeling which creates the Basque problem should vary considerably from one province to another. It is most marked in Guipúzcoa, a sea-board province with abundant agricultural wealth, which stretches westward from the French frontier-town of Irún. It persists also in the more westerly province of Vizcaya, noted chiefly for minerals and orchards, though it weakens considerably towards the farthest borders of that province. It is weaker still in the south-westerly province of Alava, where Castilian is more generally spoken than in other parts of the Basque country. Finally, in Navarre, that province of ungainly shape reaching southward to the extreme limits of the region yet stretching also north-eastward to the French Pyrenean frontier, it is at once weak and strong. In the south, it assimilates to Castile; in the north, there are many places in which Castilian is hardly spoken. Navarre has, in general, considerable national consciousness; yet a consciousness also—justified by its unique history—of dissimilarity from the three remaining provinces. Strongly Basque as it is, it will probably always constitute one of the chief problems of an autonomous Basque country.

The independence and stubborn determination of the Basques has for centuries been proverbial. It is significant that, whereas the other provinces of Spain are named after their capital cities, the four Basque provinces retain their

ancient names. These, until recently, were almost the only remaining marks of the considerable privileges which the Basques used to enjoy. Their famous legal rights, or *fueros*, dated from the early Middle Ages, when the Moorish invaders were being expelled from Northern Spain; and these they retained after the union of the Spanish kingdoms, when similar privileges were lost by other parts of Spain under the centralizing rule of the post-Conquest sovereigns. Nearly all the *fueros*, however, were taken, first from Navarre and later from the other three provinces, in the nineteenth century, as a result of the two Carlist Wars in the fourth and eighth decades of that century respectively, when the Basques, and especially the Navarrans, rallied to the standard of the Pretender and, on each occasion for several years, opposed by arms the claims of the ruling descendant of Ferdinand VII, the King who came to the Spanish throne after the defeat of the Napoleonic invasion.

Deprived of privileges which amounted in the sum to local autonomy, and allowed to retain only certain economic rights which came into general notice during the dispute of 1934 over the so-called "Concierto Económico,"<sup>1</sup> the Basques made the recovery of some degree of self-government one of their principal aims. Being a non-assertive people, with a language and a literature known to hardly any but themselves, they received much less publicity than their fellow-strugglers for autonomy, the Catalonians, who had been steadily advancing new claims and steadily gaining new adherents during the greater part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. The substitution of the Second Republic for the Monarchy, in April, 1931, had been due in no small measure to Catalonia's co-operation with the revolutionaries who afterwards formed the provisional Republican Government and this fact received full recognition in the deference which from the beginning the Provisional Government showed to the Catalonians and the relative speed with which their Statute

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<sup>1</sup> As limits of space preclude a return to this subject, I may perhaps be allowed to refer the reader to its treatment in my recent book, *The Spanish Tragedy* (London, 1936), pp. 153-4.

of Autonomy was piloted through the Cortes. It was otherwise with the humble Basques. Contrast the *éclat* with which, in Barcelona, on April 14, 1931, Colonel Macià proclaimed to vast crowds "the Catalanian State, which, with all cordiality, we shall endeavour to incorporate in the Federation of Iberian Republics," and the scene, towards the end of the same week, in the little town of Guernica, once the seat of a Basque parliament. Here, on April 17, the Basques attempted to proclaim an autonomous State, presumably within the same federation. But, when their representatives arrived at the historic oak which gives its name to the Basque national anthem, they found that the Government had sent reinforcements of Civil Guards and military to disperse them, that the Mayor of the town had forbidden the proclamation and recommended the inhabitants to stay within doors, and that cars and coaches containing Nationalist supporters from a distance were ordered to "move on" or to return whence they came.<sup>1</sup> The promoters of the attempt bowed to this display of force, but it made them only the more determined to obtain a Statute of Autonomy; and to them the story of the five and a half years from April 1931 to October 1936 is principally the story of how they attained their ambition.

## II

The question of regional autonomy in Spain is closely bound up with the question of federalism, which recurs so frequently in discussions on Spanish politics that it cannot be wholly disregarded even in a brief article. The arguments with which Spanish federalists support their proposals are attractive. Here, they say, is a country in which at least five clearly distinguished languages are spoken and in which there are rather more than that number of regional entities. Taking into account the very diverse nature of the needs and the demands of these peoples, what is there to prevent their forming a "United States of Iberia" and achieving a

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<sup>1</sup> *La Publicitat*, April 18, 1931.

unity which gives full scope to this diversity? Most of the political arguments which can be, and frequently are, opposed to these contentions are easily answered. The real obstacle to the establishment of such a system is to be found in the character of the Spanish people. They are individualists to the highest degree; they can admit the existence of only two colours, black and white; they would fight to the death for a principle rather than meet their opponents round a table to work out a compromise. It is strange that a federalist solution for the present troubles should have been recently proposed by an eminent Spanish professor<sup>1</sup>; for, if such a solution were psychologically possible, it would have been thought of and worked out long before the War began.

At the same time, it must be admitted that federalists in Spain are very tenacious of their ideas and seem likely to figure largely in, if not indeed often to dominate, the councils of any regions which are granted autonomy. Nor must it be forgotten that federalism in Spain is about as old as republicanism. In 1873, the Constituent Cortes of the First Spanish Republic were federalist in character: the Constitution which they drew up but were unable to enforce divided Spain and the Spanish colonies into seventeen "states," of which, it should be noted, Navarre was one, while the "Basque regions" (*i.e.*, the three remaining provinces) formed another.<sup>2</sup> The attempt to establish such a federation, it may be feared, would end in failure, reaction and a return to complete centralization. A less drastic scheme, in which regions with no desire for autonomy should be allowed central government, might prove more successful. The importance of the federalist ideal in our present discussion, however, consists, not so much in the possibility of its realization in the near future, as in the influence of federalists upon the autonomy campaigns now taking place or lately ended and in the collaboration of Catalonia and the Basque provinces in matters in which each of them is interested.

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<sup>1</sup> José Castillejo: "Peace in Spain through Federation." (*Manchester Guardian*, October 2, 1936).

<sup>2</sup> The text of this constitution, together with a number of other useful documents, is given by A. Rovira i Virgili in his *Catalunya i la República*, Barcelona, 1931.

The attempt at a dramatic proclamation of the Basque State in April 1931 having been frustrated, the Nationalists set out determinedly to attain autonomy for their country by means which the Constitution of the Second Republic, duly promulgated in December 1931, now made legal. This Constitution provided that, though federation of autonomous regions could not be allowed, any group of provinces might apply for the recognition of a Statute of Autonomy which had been approved, first, by a majority of its town councils and, next, by at least two thirds of the total number of electors in the provinces. As early as June 1931, the draft of such a Statute had been drawn up by the Society of Basque Studies and published, with a view to general discussion, at San Sebastián. It included within the autonomous region the four Basque provinces and any other regions of whose inhabitants not less than eighty per cent. might solicit inclusion. It made Basque the official language of the new State, while recognizing Castilian for certain purposes and providing for schools in which Castilian should be the medium of instruction. It conceded a generous proportion of legislative and executive functions to the Central Government, including the control of religious confessions and congregations, national defence, foreign affairs and inland revenue. To the new State were to pertain principally the administration of justice, the maintenance of public security and the control of education.

The first town councils to debate this draft, those of Guipúzcoa, suggested a number of important amendments, the chief of which was that the Basque State should have the right to regulate its own relations with the Church. In this matter the town councils of the other provinces followed suit, a fact which cannot too carefully be noted. This was the period in which the Republican Government, after having failed entirely to cope with the anticlerical rioters of May 1931, was using its large Left majority, gained in the July elections, to persecute the Church and, in particular, the religious Orders. The Basques are among the most devout of all the peoples even of the "most Catholic country in

Europe," and, at this stage, there was no conflict between the Right and the Left of the Basque Nationalist party. Both sides had suffered through the suppression and suspension of newspapers by the Government, which had affected the Basque country more than any other region. Both sides had vehemently opposed the anticlerical articles of the Constitution, as a result of which the Basque deputies had withdrawn from the Cortes. But soon, under the influence of the extremists, both in the Basque provinces and in Madrid, opposition to the idea of a separate religious concordat began to grow. M. Gaëtan Bernoville, in an interesting and well-informed article on this subject in *Etudes*,<sup>1</sup> quotes from several personal interviews which he had at this time with leading Basque politicians and which correspond exactly with the impressions that I myself gathered in Madrid. Even while the Constitution of the Second Republic was being passed in a House in which the Basque deputies abstained from voting, the Government was taking benevolent cognisance of the draft Statute and encouraging its promoters to proceed with it and to present it in the Cortes.<sup>2</sup> Such benevolence, it might be thought, showed a highly forgiving spirit, and in fact the Government could afford to be forgiving, since the question of the Concordat, having been raised, could not fail to drive a wedge between the Left and the Right of Basque nationalism—in which event there was little doubt (given the then existing state of parties in the Cortes) that the Left would prevail.

The irrevocable cleavage between the Navarrans and their fellow-Basques came in June 1932, over four years before its results made themselves so tragically felt in the Civil War. The draft Statute, after a long period of discussion, was laid before the representatives of the town councils of the four provinces and was duly approved by them. Of the Navarran councils, however, only 123 voted for the Statute, while 109 voted against it, 35 abstaining: less than half having voted in its favour, Navarre was *ipso facto* excluded from it. The other majorities were enormous. For Guipúzcoa, the figures

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<sup>1</sup> Paris, October 5, 1936, pp. 75-89.

<sup>2</sup> Decree of December 8, 1931, published in the Press of the following day.

were 84 to 2 in favour, with 3 abstentions; for Alava, 52 to 11 in favour, with 14 abstentions; and for Vizcaya, 109 to 1 in favour, with 6 abstentions.

The secession of Navarre, though by no means unexpected, was a great blow to those autonomists who had striven, in season and out of season, to foster the idea of Basque-Navarran unity, attempting to bring Navarre to see herself as the most venerable and picturesque of the four sister regions whose union under an autonomous *régime* was necessary to that *régime's* success. "We are all the children of the great Basque nation," ran a manifesto drawn up by a group of mayors in 1931, "in which Navarre is the senior partner. We have been brought to realize once again the historic errors committed by our people. Basques and Navarrans, we have lived apart from each other, if not actually in conflict with each other . . . This suicidal separation must once and for all be brought to an end. Like Catalonia, the Basque provinces must be united in their claims, or our disunity will lead Madrid to take advantage of our differences and make us mere provinces of a central organization. Madrid stands for centralization, and centralization, unfortunately, has not ended with the advent of the new *régime*."<sup>1</sup>

Men who felt thus would not easily be consoled for the defection of the Navarrans, which to Madrid meant—if not all they had said—at least the drawing of closer bonds between the projected Basque Statute and the socialistic anti-clerical Constitution of 1931. The tragedy of the cleavage lay in fears not so much of an excessively centralized form of government as of the widening of the gulf between Left and Right among the Basques themselves. Among the Navarrans, and among the Conservatives of the three other provinces, Carlism, which had flagged on the death of Don Jaime, the Carlist pretender, in 1931, and the succession to the claimancy of Don Alfonso Carlos, a man of 82, took on a new life, either in its original form or in the modified form of monarchism of a more general kind. Among the supporters of the Basque Centre and Left a *rapprochement* began with the Left Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> Cñ. M. Trilla: "L'actitud de Navarra." In *La Publicitat*, June 17, 1931.

ment in Madrid, which in June 1932 seemed likely to remain in power for some years and to succeed in passing through the Cortes a Basque Statute of Autonomy in all its stages.

The member of the Government who acted as *liaison* officer in this *rapprochement* was the Socialist Finance Minister, Don Indalecio Prieto. Needless to say, Sr. Prieto has the closest connections with the Basque country—otherwise he would have had little chance of success. Both his career as a journalist and his fortune as a politician are associated with Bilbao. He is a convert, and a comparatively recent one, to autonomy rule—again an attractive *rôle* in which to appear before autonomists. He is an able parliamentarian and a skilful debater. In this quality, he wrote a letter, in September 1932, to the President of the Diputación de Vizcaya which to-day reads almost like a manifesto. It was, in fact, more than a manifesto: it was a plan of action skilfully set before a suggestible group of people at a moment when their hopes were high and their emotions easily worked upon—the moment when the Catalanian Statute of Autonomy had just been promulgated.

The letter is too long to analyze in full,<sup>1</sup> but some indication of its main arguments is essential. Some of the autonomists, it seemed, were still toying with the idea of a revised draft of the Statute which would be favourably received by the Navarrans. This question, writes Sr. Prieto, must be dealt with at once. Now that the Catalanian Statute has passed the Cortes, a Basque Statute, if duly presented, cannot fail to do the same. But if it were delayed too long, an anti-autonomist Government might be in power in Madrid and then it would be another story. These Navarrans, urges Sr. Prieto, who seem to have no idea of what they really want, must be brought to the point or got rid of once and for all. Perhaps, after all, "if they cannot support the Statute spontaneously and enthusiastically," it would be better to get rid of them . . .

There is another matter, continues Sr. Prieto, stepping more delicately. The Right group of the Basque Nationalists

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<sup>1</sup> It is dated September 21, 1932, and published in *El Sol* of September 23.

must not object to a little plain speaking. In 1930, they refused their co-operation to the Republicans during the last stages of the fight against the Monarchy. Now that the Monarchy is dead, they are allying themselves (as they did, for example, in the elections of July 1931) with the most implacable enemies of the Republic. The Government really cannot allow this if it is to support their desire for autonomy. And there is worse to come. They have been nursing "Vaticanist aspirations" which are "wholly at variance with the nature of a lay State like the Republic." "Their clericalism is so impassioned that they forget how few votes they have in the Cortes and how it is our votes, not theirs, that will win them the Statute."

It is needless to follow the letter to its end: in its later stages it becomes almost a diatribe against the unfortunate traditionalists and an exposition of the "misgivings they have awakened by their frankly reactionary attitude." It did its work. The Navarrans, pressed to come in at once or to stay out, stayed out. The bulk of the Basque autonomists, flattered and pleased that so doughty a champion had been won over to fight for them, moved more closely to the Left, and the Basque provinces were henceforth divided into two opposing camps, in which the Left held a marked predominance.

### III

On November 5, 1933, the plebiscite laid down by the Constitution of the Republic was held in the three provinces. With Navarre excluded, the councils of Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Alava had approved the Statute in a revised form by large majorities, and a short campaign in the country secured hardly less striking majorities from the people. In Guipúzcoa, over 87 per cent. of the electors voted in its favour; in Vizcaya, about 89 per cent.; and in Alava, almost exactly 50 per cent. The most remarkable figures were recorded in San Sebastián, where 94 per cent. of the votes cast were favourable.

It looked now as though the Statute would go straight through the Cortes; but, unfortunately for its supporters, the change of Government which Sr. Prieto had forecast

now took place. Ever since the partial municipal elections held in the spring of 1933, the Government's popularity had been declining; and, after much obstructionism in the Cortes and a series of ineffective Governments, the President of the Republic dissolved the Constituent Cortes in mid-October. A fortnight after the Basque plebiscite had been held, general elections brought back a parliament in which the strongest group was the Right and in which the Right and the Centre combined had almost four times as many seats as the Left.

This meant inaction, in more fields than that of regional autonomy; and, for the whole of the twenty-seven months during which the Centre and Centre-Right groups held power, there was little real progress. The Statute duly went to the Cortes, but parliamentary delays, together with the representations of the Alavan minority, held it in Committee until the following February. At the end of that month a long and inconclusive debate, in which the opponents of regional autonomy, now so numerous, made full use of the Alavan figures, provoked a Government crisis of some importance. In the months which followed, there were frequent incidents concerned with the Statute—such as the publication by Don Rafael Picavea, in the *Voz de Guipúzcoa*, of an outspoken article threatening separation—but the main question was carried no farther. Had the plebiscite resulted, as the Catalanian plebiscite did in 1931, in virtual unanimity, things might have been different; but the argument that Alava was slowly going the way of Navarre was a plausible one, and, in a period when progress of any sort was slow, it sufficed to arrest the passage of the Statute completely.

#### IV

The Centre-Right Government having collapsed of inanition, there came the well-known events of the present year: the elections of February, which returned the Left coalition known as the Popular Front, with a useful majority; the displays of violence which followed the declaration of the results; the deposition of President Alcalá Zamora and the succession to the Presidency of Sr. Azaña; the weeks of

continual strikes, sabotage, arson and assassination which culminated in the murder of Sr. Calvo Sotelo ; and finally the military revolt which led to the Civil War. It became fairly clear, once hostilities had started, on which side each party would enlist. There was no longer room for a Centre group, and such members of the Centre group parties as escaped assassination by Left extremists and remained in Spain would, it appeared, gravitate to the Right. The parties comprising the Popular Front would in all probability remain more or less closely united till the end of the war ; and, while true Liberals could hardly remain attached to a political coalition which had flouted the principles of democracy, they would probably find it prudent—at any rate if they remained in Madrid or Barcelona—to register conformity with the Government, particularly as the insurgents would be unlikely to establish a State of which they could approve.

What of the Regionalists ? In Catalonia the answer to that question was simple. The Esquerra, or Republican Left, had been by far the strongest group, almost without intermission, since their electoral triumph of April 1931. And in February 1936 their prestige had increased tremendously with the reinstatement in office of President Companys and his colleagues of the Generalitat, who had been in prison since the frustration of their rebellion in October 1934.

The probable action of the Basque Nationalists was forecast with less confidence by those who had not followed the fortunes of the Basque Statute of Autonomy. Since the Navarrans, whether Carlists or no, were almost solidly behind the insurgents, it was argued that the three Basque provinces would preserve the solidarity of the race by turning rebel also. More plausibly (for there seems no reason why the autonomists should have cast in their lot with those who had seceded from their cause) it was argued that the three Basque provinces would not—*could not*, indeed—fight by the side of the burners and pillagers of churches, seminaries and convents against those who aimed at the rebuilding of the traditional Spain to which in the main they themselves adhered. But those who thought thus had not taken into account the history of the

past five years. The Basque Statute was lying on the table, as it were, in the Cortes, awaiting approval. As the price of Basque support in the War, immediate approval could now be wrung from the Popular Front. The religious clauses had been shelved by agreement, at the suggestion—or something more—of Don Indalecio Prieto; but they could always be re-inserted at a later date, when the Basque State was securely on its feet. To join forces with the Popular Front would mean lying down for a time with some strange bedfellows, but the end would justify the means. That was apparently the way in which the Basque Nationalists themselves argued, for they plunged at once into the struggle on the Government side and provided the Government with a badly needed rejoinder to those who claimed that the struggle was one of Christianity against paganism. Incidentally, they were remarkably successful as a moderating influence throughout the campaign in their own territory: to their representations is credited the lack of damage done in San Sebastián, and hardly any reports of the burning of churches by Government supporters have been received from the Basque country.

It has frequently been said that the insurgents would have done well to offer autonomy to the Basques in return for their co-operation or that the Basques should at least have approached them in that sense before supporting their enemies. Unfortunately the treatment of Catalonia by the last military dictator, Primo de Rivera, was too fresh in the minds of autonomists to make such an approach from their side feasible, while, as for the insurgents, one would hardly expect them to have offered the very contrary of what was, even in the first week of the war, their declared policy. Whatever General Franco's New Spain is or is not to be, there seems little doubt of its being rigidly unitary. No sort of regional autonomy is likely to be tolerated. "Spain will be organized," reads the Chief of State's programme-speech of October 1, "on broad totalitarian lines, by means of those national institutions which assure its totality, unity and continuity." The sole hint which he gives of an awareness

of regional distinctions of character or culture is an assurance that the "peculiarities of the regions" will be respected, according to the "old national tradition," without loss of national unity. The most generous interpretation that one could put upon this sentence would be the restoration of certain minor *fueros*—far less, certainly, than the Basques could ever accept as satisfactory. And if it be remembered that these are the words of one who has not yet conquered, it would seem premature to interpret them generously at all. The Basques know, as the Catalonians know, how little they can expect to gain from any military dictatorship; for which reason it seems likely that the Basques, and later the Catalonians, if such a course becomes necessary, will die in the last ditch before they surrender the degree of autonomy which they have won.

## V

For to the Basques, at long last, autonomy came. The Left kept its word, and when on October 1, for the first time since mid-July, the Cortes met, according to constitutional rule, adjourning thereafter until December, they did not adjourn until they had passed the Basque Statute of Autonomy, by means of one simple motion, in all its stages.

It has not yet been revealed precisely what negotiations took place before the Basque Nationalists consented to fight with the Popular Front: how they obtained the assurance that those parties in the coalition which were opposed to regional autonomy would be overborne; and how it was arranged that there should be no opposition. We can no doubt hazard guesses as to all these things—not least easily, it is to be feared, as to the last. In any case, when, late in September, the Basque Nationalist leader, Sr. Aguirre, left the Government and a new party nominee, Sr. Irujo, took his seat in the Cabinet as Minister without portfolio, this was understood to indicate that the retiring Minister was to become the first President of the new Basque State.

To those few deputies who were present at the re-assembly of the Cortes in October and who had also followed the long and violent debates of four years earlier on the Catalonian

Statute, the contrast between these and the short, smooth passage of the Basque Statute must have been amazing. Each of the fourteen articles was read by a secretary and passed without discussion. And so in a quarter of an hour the Statute became law !

Substantially the new Statute is identical with that approved by the town councils of Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Alava on August 6, 1933, and by the plebiscite of November 5 of the same year. The three provinces are to be known as the País Vasco ; Basque and Castilian are both to be official languages of the State (or, more exactly, of the " autonomous region "), Castilian being used for all relations with the Central Government and both languages for official notices. Among the functions of the País Vasco is to be complete freedom as to electoral legislation and local government, policing and public safety, interior communications, libraries and museums, hygiene and public health. It is to be free to create and maintain educational institutions of every kind and grade (including universities) though the Central Government may also maintain existing institutions and create others, and, for the present, the State University degree will be demanded as heretofore.

These are only a few of the provisions of the Statute, but they will give some idea of the extent of the autonomy that has been attained.<sup>1</sup> Temporary articles are added to the text, to remain in force only during the War. There is no reference, in either the permanent or the temporary articles, to the religious question.

A week after the Statute had become law, such parts of the Basque country as were still in Government hands celebrated the great event at Guernica and elected Don José Antonio de Aguirre as the first President of their Provisional Government. Under the traditional oak-tree the President took the oath of loyalty, read the list of his first Government, set out that Government's policy, and declared that its first

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the length of the text of the Statute and the economies that are being made in paper during the War, most newspapers in Madrid and Barcelona content themselves with giving a brief summary. The full text, however, will be found in the *Vanguardia* for October 2 and 3, 1936, in two instalments.

concern should be to do its part towards bringing Spain victory and peace.

There for the moment we must leave the new Basque Government, bracing itself to meet an onslaught which may well end in its annihilation but strengthened by the knowledge that it has now something to fight for, which it could not otherwise have gained. What it will accomplish and what policy it will pursue, if it remains in being, time may show. In a recent statement which one would suppose to have been inspired by the Basque Nationalist leaders, Sr. Irujo described the threefold aim of the then still unlegalized State as the humanization of the War (in which, with the freeing of hostages and the exchange of non-combatant prisoners, it has attempted to lead the way), the establishment of a Federal Republic, and the creation of a "new politico-social order."<sup>1</sup> The last two ideals merit a concluding word.

It is of real interest to find federalism coming up again immediately a new region has been granted autonomy. "The transformation of the unitary Republic into a federal one," said Sr. Irujo, "I consider to be an immediate and imperious necessity for the security and normal development of the *régime*." In a federal constitution, "which at once draws a distinction and creates a bond between the peoples," not only the internal problems of Spain will find their solution, "but perhaps also those of the whole Peninsula and of Morocco and possibly those of Europe." This is a stupendous claim: it would be interesting to hear it defended.

As to the new political and social order which the Basque Nationalists envisage, we are told that they consider it "a religious question emanating from the principles of universal fraternity, social justice and the equality of mankind which are incarnated in the Catholicism that we fervently proclaim and practise." That and no more. On so meagre a statement we cannot adequately pronounce judgment: it is by its interpretation and application that it must stand or fall.

E. ALLISON PEERS

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<sup>1</sup> *El Sol*, September 27, 1936.

were created. Our ultimate attitude depends on whether it is to take place here on earth in a human paradise, or whether it is to be realised in a life beyond the grave.

Behind anarchism may be the same sense of man's exile and the same longing for freedom which inspires the poet, but the freedom it seeks is objectless and turns inward and destroys itself. It is based upon the law of retaliation and the hatred of the past, of all tradition and all history. It is therefore by nature sterile and joyless, and its prophets have been almost without exception tortured personalities. Ultimately, too, the majority of anarchist doctrines topple over into various forms of collectivism or communism. The programmes of Bakunin and Kropotkin are examples. Refusing another life in which the torments, conflicts and contradictions of this will be resolved, and moved by a burning conviction of the imperfections of the only world he knows and believes in, the anarchist has no choice but to revolt against existence itself; his passion for absolute liberty becomes a mania and vents itself in theories of man in isolation, man "his own government, his own law, his own church, a system within himself"; or else he dreams of men combining in social harmonies, of a social existence which runs as smoothly as a ballet.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton has said that the world is full of christian truths run wild, and it is indeed remarkable that the anarchist doctrine should offer a paraphrase, even though it be a perverse and naturalistic one, of the christian doctrine of the fall of man. According to the mythology of anarchism, evil entered into the world when man yielded to the temptation to exercise authority over his fellowmen. Authority is the serpent which has contaminated human existence at its source. From these premises follow the revolutionary conclusion that it is essential to destroy authority with all its works and pomps, and that once man is freed from external restraints he will by a series of regenerations attain his inherent goodness and innocence—something like the Garden of Eden. It will have been noted that, in the anarchist theory, human misery is not attributed to any inherent defect of human nature;

it is not a defect of intelligence and still less of any original sin of which we bear the guilt at our birth and still retain the effects. Authority is the sole culprit; human misery is wholly and entirely due to the artificial environment in which man has imprisoned himself as a result of the exercise of authority. Nothing could be plainer than that such a doctrine is not merely a revolt against historical institutions, but is in its essence a radical expression of atheism and naturalism. It presupposes (1) absolute personal freedom as the highest good; (2) the intrinsic goodness of human nature and of all natural impulses; (3) the self-sufficiency of man and his independence of any higher principle, whether supernatural or otherwise.

If Bakunin is the father of modern anarchism, Rousseau may claim to be its godfather. Rousseau brought the Pelagian heresy up to date. For him, as for St. Augustine's adversary, man is born good and can never sin so long as he follows his natural impulses. Just as Pelagius dispensed with divine assistance, so Rousseau held that the natural man should be able to dispense with institutions based on compulsion. His doctrine of natural goodness, with his idealization of the state of nature and the free play of instinct and impulse, proved to be one main cause of the revolutionary optimism which has generated such frightful destructions from that day to this. The other chief factor was of course the doctrine of progress, though it was not present to Rousseau in its modern form.

It is of course arguable that the *Contrat Social* cuts straight across Rousseau's philosophy of individualism; that the *Contrat Social* is pure collectivism. It may be so, but Rousseau himself thought otherwise. He was satisfied that he had found "a form of association by which each, being united with all, should yet obey only himself and still be as free as before." The solution was a fraudulent mystification, but the important point is that as far as Rousseau was concerned the contradiction between individualism and collectivism was overcome. For him the essential thing was to save the freedom of the individual; and so, in his eyes, organised society was always a second best and his philosophy, hostile

to the idea of the State, remained anti-social and anarchical in its influence. It was his sentimentality, *not* his logic, that transformed individualism into a religion and thus started the movement of ideas along the downward slope to anarchism. His creed was so beautifully clear and simple once his assumptions were accepted. Men were naturally good; it was only institutions that made them bad. The remedy seemed to be simple. Remove the existing order—feudal absolutism in Rousseau's day, capitalism in our day—and you will find an ideal system ready-made underneath. The crux was how to do all this without recourse to violence. Governments do not give up the ghost without a struggle. It was at this point that anarchism violated its first principle and decided to use force to end force; and just like the communist who asserts that the State is only a means to the abolition of the State, the anarchists continue to regard force as a means to end force. On the horns of this dilemma anarchism is impaled and continues to wriggle in vain. The school of Kropotkin and Tolstoy has adopted the only logical and consistent course, that is to say, pacifism; but the central anarchist tradition has not only refused pacifism, but, as the world knows, has gone to the opposite extreme and become a byword for terrorism.

The dogmas of human perfectability, individualism and progress, reinforced by the illusion that beneath existing institutions lies a better world ready-made and only waiting to be revealed—this was Rousseau's fatal legacy to the nineteenth century, and to this tradition rather than to that of Hegel and Marx belongs the philosophy of modern anarchism.

While the theory of anarchism gave rise to two schools of thought—one individualistic and pacifist, the other communistic and terrorist—they continued to influence one another. Broadly speaking, the former remained a philosophical and literary movement. Its influence was limited in so far as it refused to sanction the use of force. This passive or negative type of anarchism culminated, towards the end of the century, in Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance to evil—which, as events have shown, lends itself in the end to connivance with

evil. In retrospect, it is clear that anarchism, which might equally well be described as the principle of absolute individualism, was the magnetic pole of the nineteenth century.

To catalogue and differentiate all the varieties of nineteenth century anarchism, one would have to visit every hole and corner of the century. But one variety which dwarfs all others, and which indeed came to dominate the whole western world, is the free capitalism of the Manchester school. Doctrines as far apart as economic individualism, Stirner's egotheism, and Nietzsche's superindividualism, although opposed in many respects, are all fruits of the anarchist philosophy. All presuppose man's ability to transform himself and his world by his own unaided efforts. By the second half of the nineteenth century we reach the point at which anarchism, once the religion of individualism, begins to pass over into anti-individualism. And by the end of the century the whole development of naturalistic humanism has culminated in antihumanism.

If what presumes to be a doctrine of absolute freedom works out as the most terrible of tyrannies, it is because it enlists force to attain the unattainable. At first sight, the pacifist and terrorist schools of anarchism seem to lie worlds apart; there seems nothing in common between Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance and the vandalism of Bakunin and his dynamitards. What affinity, it may be asked, can there be between the pacifists who repudiate the use of force and the anarchists of Irun and Barcelona whose slogan is *viva dinamita*? The affinity is a good deal closer than it ought to be; for, as Professor Hearnshaw has aptly pointed out, the force which the disciples of Tolstoy and Kropotkin object to is force applied by others to themselves. They are by no means so strongly opposed to force applied by themselves to others, and their passive resistance soon transmutes itself into active resistance; their active resistance into defensive aggression; and their defensive aggression into the open assault of the storm troops of Bakunin. It is no mere coincidence that some of the worst war-mongers in England to-day should have been the pacifist and conscientious objectors of

yesterday and that nowhere has the propaganda of the Third International met with a greater success than in the so-called organisations in defence of peace and against Fascism.

Were it not for the virus of Russian Nihilism, anarchism might have continued on its way largely as an utopian and philosophical movement. Michael Bakunin was chiefly responsible for combining the two, and thus creating the modern movement of terroristic anarchism. An aristocrat and an intellectual, Bakunin was in many ways a typical representative of the romantic pseudo-revolutionist and conspirator whom the Russian despotism was breeding in shoals towards the middle of the nineteenth century. The more startling and far-fetched a movement or theory, the more likely it was to appeal to men keenly conscious of their helplessness in face of the Czarist autocracy. Besides being a born conspirator, Bakunin was a born poseur and this must be taken into account in any estimate of the programme which he expounded. But if he did not mean every word of his to be taken literally, some of his associates did; and the last twenty years have seen the terrible effects of what a contemporary, like Turgenev, judged to be a crude parody of Byron's Cain.

The great Russian novelist saw the type emerging and did not like it. These Nihilists were harmless enough at first, like noisy children intent upon the exhilarating job of house-wrecking. "What can be smashed," wrote one of them, "must be smashed. Whatever stands the blow, is good. What flies into smithereens is rubbish. At any rate, hit out, right and left; there will be and can be no harm from it." The vandalism cultivated by Russian revolutionists existed at first in combination with slavophil and materialistic tendencies which were in the course of time to give rise to the opposing Anarchist—Slavophil and Marxian parties. In his novels, *On the Eve*, *Fathers and Children*, and *Rudin*, Turgenev has embodied the conflict of ideas of these days, and was acquainted with their chief spokesmen, Bakunin, Herzen, Pisarev, and Ogarev. He was impressed by their enthusiasm, but disliked their ideas as strongly as he was capable of disliking anything, particularly Bakunin's outcry

against the rottenness of the educated classes, the emptiness of European civilization, and the very idea of civilization itself. Bakunin and he had been friends in youth, but in later years he saw in him "nothing but a played-out agitator, a flighty, irresponsible demagogue, a Rudin not lucky enough to have met death on a barricade."

What exasperated Turgenev most of all was the way in which these restless revolutionists were obsessed with the idea of Russia's unique and Messianic destiny. They might abuse the middle classes, but the middle class which would emerge from the Russian revolution would be more philistine, more bureaucratic, more mean-spirited than the old easy-going middle class. So Turgenev predicted, and with even more remarkable foresight predicted that, given freedom, so far from becoming a land of freemen, Russia would become a land of tyrants and dogmatists, the seat of a new Imperialism, narrow-minded, cruel, and repulsive, which would beat the old Imperialism hollow at its own game. Or perhaps there was worse to follow. Perhaps the ultimate destiny of the human race was to achieve the caste organisation achieved by the ants and bees.

Bakunin was one of the revolutionary wing of young Hegelians which congregated in Berlin in the forties and to which Marx belonged. German philosophy, above all that of Hegel, has proved to be the root of great evil. But in so far as Hegelianism positively influenced Bakunin, its influence was towards atheism. Feuerbach, the leader of the Left Hegelians, had produced in his work, *The Essence of Christianity*, a secular religion of humanity reminiscent of that of Auguste Comte which Marx and Bakunin hailed as a knock-out blow for all systems of supernatural religions. Religion meant for the former simply an aspect of economics. It was an intensely personal matter with Bakunin. He had been looking for an avenue of escape from the problem of God which had haunted him in his youth, and now Feuerbach had shown him the way out. Writing at this time of his transition to the new religion of man and revolution he states : "I sought God in man, in his freedom, and now I seek God

in revolution." From this time on he was to be the apostle of destruction for destruction's sake, of revolution as a religion and an art; and how far he had travelled may be judged from his maxim : "The lust for destruction is a creative lust." About this time too he talks about the "inner Satan" in man ; the impossibility of revolution without the aid of that first and greatest of all revolutionaries hidden in every human being ; he speaks of the necessity of awakening bestial appetites and wrenching the existing world from its hinges by a supreme diabolical effort. What would come after this orgy of universal nihilism was a secondary consideration. Had not chaos given birth to the stars ?

Under the influence of Rousseau, Fourier, the Left Hegelians, and the 1848 revolution, Bakunin developed into a militant anarchist and atheist. The central idea of his book, *God and the State*, is that the destruction of authority requires the destruction of the idea of God as the source of all authority. From this develops his militant atheism ; "the Church and the State, these two are my *bêtes noires*." Voltaire had said : "If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent Him." Bakunin condemns this epigram, which he inverts : "If there is a God, He should be destroyed." The difference between the agnosticism of the eighteenth century and the militant atheism of the nineteenth comes out very clearly when we compare these two sayings. The former regards God as a negation ; and while considering that this particular negation called God may, like the minus sign in mathematics, have its uses, it refuses to get excited over what is after all non-existent. But Bakunin, on the other hand, writes and acts as if God was a reality. That this was the case is shown by his favourite proof of God's non-existence : "If God exists, then man is a slave. But man can and must be free ; then God does not exist. There is no escape from this dilemma ; hence it is necessary to choose." In the proposition (which he repeats time and again) that denial of God was not enough, that it was necessary to destroy Him, Bakunin betrays his revolt against God to be a real revolt against a God really existing. It is not possible to revolt

against a negation, and only in these terms is it possible to account for the hatred of God with which Bakunin became obsessed almost to the point of madness, and which at the present day is the core and essence of communism and anarchism. His arguments have ever since been incorporated in the revolutionary anti-religious tradition; and though the social and economic ideas of Marx were to triumph over those of Bakunin, the latter's satanic hatred of religion is perhaps the most living thing in Russia's inheritance from the nineteenth century, and by communists the world over he is regarded as the major prophet of militant atheism.

The quarrel between Bakunin and Marx, which was to wreck the First International, originated in personal antipathies as well as in differences of principle. Their ultimate ideal might be the same—a classless and stateless society of free producers. But true to his principles, Bakunin point-blank refused the State and the political struggle which Marx insisted were essential means to the ends they had in common. It is strange that Bakunin, who had the vision to perceive that the ends obtained are determined by the means used and who, on that account, rejected the State which has not proved to be the temporary and passing thing Marx claimed it ought and would be, should nevertheless have made exactly the same mistake by advocating the employment of force as the sole means to end all force whatsoever.

Many years were to pass before their differences came to a head; and in the meantime Bakunin came in turn under the influence of the ideas of Proudhon and under the direct influence of the eccentric German terrorist, Wilhelm Weitling. As an utopian socialist who denied the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism, Weitling had already a good deal in common with Bakunin. Schemes of destruction filled both their heads to the exclusion of any serious consideration of the nature of the society which would follow the disappearance of state-organised society. It was easy to assume, as they assumed, that with the disappearance of the State a system of anarchist communism would automatically appear. But how was it going to work?

Bakunin, at a loss for constructive ideas, answered this question by borrowing largely from Proudhon's mutualism, which by the way originated with the Cork economist, William Thompson. According to mutualism the chief relations between citizens would be based on free agreement and regulated by a system of account keeping ; quarrels would be settled by arbitration. Proudhon was neither in favour of class violence nor in favour of collectivism ; but Bakunin transferred his mutualist ideas from their natural setting and used them to support a system of anarchist collectivism.

Where Bakunin came nearest to Proudhon was in his repudiation of all governmental and bureaucratic action ; in his denial that legislation, even when issuing from universal suffrage, could have any validity ; and in his claim for full autonomy for each nation, each district and each commune, as well as in the general assumption that in such a system the individual would at last attain full freedom. At first sight it is puzzling how Bakunin, who relied upon the " inner Satan " to accomplish the revolution, should assume that this gentleman would become altogether domesticated once the revolution was over. The explanation would seem to be that Bakunin, like Rousseau and Marx, regarded evil as a social *not* a personal product, so that the reign of freedom meant the death of the old Adam and the advent of a new type of humanity. The fact that the spark of truth in Proudhon's reaction against statism lends some glimmer of sanity even to the half demented philosophy of Bakunin is proof that the former was sometimes on the right track. The really fantastic thing common to both is the assumption that, in an economically free and just society, the will to domination or the inclination to evil will be unknown. While there may be some slight ground for optimism of this sort in regard to the society envisaged by Proudhon where at least the individual is to be permitted to own property and to exercise a personal initiative, it is little short of madness to expect anything of the sort to happen in a system of anarchist collectivism, and Bakunin's doctrine of the freedom of each as possible only in terms of the freedom of all is just such

another mystification as Rousseau's theory of *The General Will*.

Marx, who had a soft corner in his heart for Bakunin and Weitling so long as they confined themselves to the rôle of avenging angels, was not at all shocked by their advocacy of frankly criminal methods. In fact he was as sure as they were that the existing order, however rotten, would not collapse of its own accord; and he was therefore in whole-hearted agreement that, since the diseases from which society was suffering would have to come to a crisis before they could be cured, it would be a good thing to aggravate them and, indeed, by every possible method to bring them to the last extreme. The worse, the better! All this appears in Marx's work under the dignified name of the doctrine of increasing misery, and as a matter of fact it remains to the present day a part of the communist programme to use the criminal elements in society to ensure that the communist bid for power, once the revolution is in full swing, may acquire its maximum momentum.

The struggle of principle between Marx and Bakunin recalls in some respects the struggle between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the beginning of the present century. Marx, like Lenin, stood for rigid authority and strict discipline within the Party and for absolute adherence to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bakunin, the Trotsky of the revolutionary scene in those days, was a romantic revolutionary and a feckless theorist in Marx's eyes. The Jew and drill-sergeant in Marx could never take kindly to the theory of anarchism, which in one of his early works, *German Ideology*, he attacked bitterly in the person of its leading German representative, Max Stirner. It was not the terrorist side of the anarchist programme that repelled and infuriated Marx. As we have seen, he borrowed freely in this respect. It was the rank heresy of the view that the proletariat was not a separate class with an exclusive and Messianic destiny; that the revolution must refuse the political struggle as leading down a blind alley; and that without political preparation or propaganda the revolution could be achieved overnight.

In 1862 Bakunin escaped from prison in Russia, and in 1864 met Marx in London, from whom he learned of the founding of the First International in that year. He promised his help and they parted on good terms, Bakunin to go to Italy to sow the seeds of the anarchist movement there. In 1867 he moved to Geneva and next year founded the "Alliance of Socialist Democracy," which was generally called at the time "The Alliance," and which operated first in an organisation "The League of Peace and Freedom" and then within the First International itself. The Alliance declared itself atheist, demanded the levelling of all classes, and condemned participation in politics as opportunist and reactionary. The result was that when the new society applied to the General Council to be affiliated to the International as a separate organisation, with its own constitution and its own programme, Marx used his influence to have the application turned down. From his headquarters at Geneva, Bakunin had already created a powerful and wide-spread movement and next year came to the Basle Congress to fight it out with Marx.

At the Basle Congress Bakunin had strong support, particularly among the Belgian, Swiss, Italian and Spanish delegates, of which four of the latter were present; and he might well have gained the upperhand, had not the Franco-Prussian War interrupted the proceedings of the International, which did not meet again until Sept. 1871, when the decision of the London Conference proved to be in Marx's favour. The abortive insurrection attempted by Bakunin at Lyons in the preceding year and his complicity in the Nietchayev affair, with the details of which the European Press was ringing, convinced the majority of the General Council of the necessity of getting rid of Bakunin if the whole organisation was not to be branded as a hot-bed of crime and banditry. In the light of this incident the soul of terrorist anarchism stood revealed. It was the lightning flash that lit up the depths, and by an extraordinary coincidence there was then living in Russia a novelist with precisely those qualities of genius essential for a successful exploration of the strange world of Nihilism; for there can be little doubt that Dostoevsky had

the Nietchayev affair in mind in writing *The Possessed*. In its insight into the cruel and depraved spirit that atheistic terrorism inevitably breeds in its disciples this novel is worth dozens of academic treatises.

Nietchayev first appeared in Geneva in the spring of 1869. His chief characteristic was his complete unscrupulousness and his absolute devotion to Bakunin, whose teaching he accepted blindly. In the autumn of 1869 he returned to Russia, and with Bakunin's authority organised terrorist groups there. The following passage from one of the manifestoes addressed by Bakunin to the Russian students, from whose ranks were to come the leaders of anarchism, will give some idea of his teaching: "Robbery is one of the most honourable forms of Russian national life. The brigand is a hero; the defender, the popular avenger, the irreconcilable enemy of the State . . . He who does not understand robbery can understand nothing in the history of the Russian masses . . . It is through brigandage only that the vitality, passion, and force of the people are established . . . The brigands scattered in the forests, the cities, and villages of all Russia, and the brigands confined in the innumerable prisons of the Empire, form an unique and invisible world, strongly bound together, the world of the Russian revolution." With his head full of such admirable precepts as these Nietchayev was hard at work when suddenly the authorities got on his track. Suspecting a student named Ivanov of being a government spy, Nietchayev, aided by other members of the group, murdered him and again fled to Europe, leaving his unfortunate associates in the lurch. The whole affair bears too close a resemblance to what happens in Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed* to be a mere coincidence; and indeed the following words, in which Bakunin describes the character of his associate, might be a description of the chief conspirator in Dostoevsky's work. "For Nietchayev," says Bakunin, "truth, mutual confidence, real and strict solidarity only exist between a dozen individuals who form the *sanctus sanctorum* of the Society. All the rest are to serve as blind instruments . . . they are conspiracy-fodder . . . In the

name of the cause it is his duty to gain possession of your whole person without your knowledge . . . If your friend has a wife or a daughter, he will manage to seduce her and give her a baby in order to force her to break away from official morality and into a revolutionary protest." Here indeed is the fine flower of increasing misery: Capitalism does not work fast enough; it is up to the revolution to aid it in multiplying paupers and prostitutes; and with their aid will come the *Brave New World*.

Those arrested in connection with the Nietchayev affair were mostly students, and in the course of their trial in the summer of 1871 the prosecution made public a number of unsigned documents glorifying banditry and crime. They included Bakunin's notorious *Revolutionary Catechism*, and most of them were written by him. "The anarchist," says the *Revolutionary Catechism* (which was popular reading in Barcelona at least up to the other day), "has only one aim, one object of study, namely destruction . . . Between him and society there is war to the death—incessant, irreconcilable. He ought to be ready to kill with his own hand all who obstruct the revolution—and himself be prepared in the cause of the revolution to suffer torture or to die." When we recollect that this is a fair specimen of the sort of literature on which the anarchists in Spain have been fed and brought up for over two generations, recent occurrences there will not appear a matter for surprise. The revelation of one of the leading figures of the First International in such a lurid light was in all conscience bad enough, but worse still was the connection of the Alliance and its Russian branch with the International disclosed in the course of the trial. Little wonder that the General Council, which contained the usual proportion of amiable socialists, should have been in a hurry to dissociate itself from Bakunin and from his confederates and methods.

Immediately after the London Conference the Bakuninists declared war on Marx and on the General Council. They accused Marx of attempting to impose himself and his authoritarian theories on the International. It was really a struggle

for the control of the International, and the methods by which Bakunin attempted to bring it into his own hands were those of chicane and intrigue. But they were gentlemanly compared with those employed by Marx. The Congress which was to decide the issue and for which both parties had been preparing feverishly met at the Hague in Sept. 1872. Having already broken off all relations with the General Council, the Italian Bakuninists sent no representatives; but the four Spanish delegates as well as eight Belgian and four Dutch delegates were on Bakunin's side. They were fatally handicapped on account of the absence of Bakunin himself, and in his absence were heavily outvoted first on the question of political action and then on the question of Bakunin's expulsion. The reason given for his expulsion was his connection with the Nietchayev affair.

It was a Pyrrhic victory for Marx; for if Bakunin failed to bring the International under his own control, he succeeded in splitting it from top to bottom. The decision to transfer the General Council from London to New York caused further secessions, and though it was said that it had fled from the revolution over the Atlantic Ocean, it was really in flight from the incorrigible Bakunin. The Sixth Congress of the International, which the General Council in New York called for the 8th Sept., 1873, in Geneva, was mainly concerned, so to speak, with arranging for its decent burial. A counter Congress held by Bakunin at Geneva on the 1st Sept. is evidence that anarchism was at this time a more vital force than Marxism and was making rapid headway in the Latin countries, as may be seen from the attendance of delegations from France, Spain, Italy, and Switzerland.

In truth the First International died at the Hague Congress in Sept., 1872, although not until 1876 was a formal certificate of death issued by the General Council in New York. After 1872 the two chief protagonists of free communism and state communism went their separate ways never to meet again, Marx and his disciples to preach mainly in eastern, central and northern Europe the gospel of the class war and the machiavellian political manoeuvre for the conquest of power

which we recognise to-day in the United or Popular Front : Bakunin, on the other hand, went with his disciples, Cesar de Paepe, Carlo Cafiero, James Guillaume, and Schwitzguebel to launch in Italy, Spain, Southern France, Portugal and the French and Italian parts of Switzerland their respective anarchist movements.

For Bakunin Italy and Spain always seemed to offer the most promising fields, for these countries appeared to his fevered imagination to possess a particularly virulent brand of the lumpenproletariat, the hobo-proletariat, which for him was the real germ carrier of the social revolution. In both countries sections of the peasantry were submerged in misery and destitution, and in consequence banditry had become endemic in parts of the countryside. There, too, was the educated and half educated youth without prospect of making a career in bourgeois society ready to provide revolutionary leadership. In a word, all the elements to which he attached such great importance in Russia—the hobo-proletariat, the *Jacquerie*, the banditry, the restless and discontented youth from middle class families—all these elements were, he believed, to be found in their quintessential and most inflammable state in Italy, Spain, and Russia.

On the eve of the Congress of the First International held at the Hague in Sept. 1872, the Latin federations—Spanish, Italian, Belgian and Swiss—had constituted among themselves a federal union which followed Bakunin. Within these federations developed what may be described as modern anarchism. In the rest of Europe Bakunin's influence gradually declined. As we have mentioned, his followers held a Congress in 1873 in Geneva which was comparatively successful ; but Congresses held in 1874 in Brussels, in 1876 in Berne, and in 1877 in Ghent showed that outside the Latin federations anarchism was a declining force. The disgust with which the Sinn Féin movement regarded parliamentary methods of agitation after the Home Rule fiasco of 1914 was mild compared with the disgust with which the anarchists viewed the participation of socialists in parliamentary politics. To this is to be traced their failure to win mass support outside

the Latin countries—in which, in any case, parliamentary institutions did not lend themselves readily to schemes of social reform. The remarkable successes achieved by the social democratic party in Germany along political and parliamentary lines left the Latin anarchists unmoved in the conviction that direct action—"the propaganda of the deed," as Bakunin puts it—was the only form of action consistent with the principles of the social revolution.

When Bakunin died in 1876, the anarchist movement had already struck deep roots in Italy, Spain and Russia. The great anarch was dead, but his spirit and ideas lived on in these countries. There were a variety of factors which particularly predisposed the Spanish social revolutionary movement to anarchism: the fierce individualism which modern historians all note to be the outstanding characteristic of the Spanish people; the backwash of Masonic and Liberal ideas which, since the anti-Catholic legislation of Mendizábal between 1837 and 1844, had steadily undermined the authority of the Church; the sudden development of the factory system and small scale industry against the background of a countryside traditionally Catholic; the confusion of ideas, the social tensions the miseries and brutal exploitations of the worker which the new industrial capitalism everywhere brought in its wake; the infiltration from the beginning of the century of the doctrines of the utopian socialists; and, above all, the fact that the social revolutionary movement was at the cross-roads, undecided which way to turn, just when Bakunin's influence began to be felt. All these diverse tendencies, each in its own field, helped to prepare the ground for anarchism.

It is significant that the doctrines of Rousseau and the utopian socialists reached Spain through the same channel as they had reached Bakunin, that is to say, through Fourier. Fernando Garrido, who in 1845 founded the first socialist journal in Spain, *La Atracción*, popularised Fourier's ideas; and the year 1868, which saw the expulsion of the Bourbon dynasty, also saw the arrival in Spain of the first representative of the International in the person of Farinelli, of the Bakunin

school—soon followed by Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law. Thus the stage was set in Spain for a struggle between Bakuninists and Marxists. In the interlude of six years, 1868–74, between the expulsion of Queen Isabel and the return of her son Alfonso XII to the throne, the Spanish government indulged in some wild political experiments. In Feb. 1873 the Cortes voted a Republic, but it was to remain a dead letter. At all events, in the prevailing confusion the anarchist and socialist movements made rapid headway, more particularly in Barcelona, Cordova, Oviedo, and Saragossa. In 1868 socialists and anarchists had come together to form a branch of the International, which did not, however, obtain recognition from the General Council until 1871 and which all this time was secretly linked to Bakunin's Alliance. Bakunin's interests and ideas were well looked after within the Spanish organisation by Farinelli and the young Barcelona journalist, Anselmo Lorenzo, and against them Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law, was unable to make headway. Two Congresses were held in Barcelona, one in 1870, the other in 1872, attended by 150 labour associations. In a few years the Spanish branch of the International had gathered 25,000 members, and its progress had so far exceeded Bakunin's expectations that in April of that year he wrote to congratulate his Spanish supporters: "What Italy has lacked up to the moment was not the correct instinct, but the organisation and the idea. Both are now developing so rapidly that together with Spain Italy is perhaps at this moment the most revolutionary country." That Spain has become one of Bakunin's strongholds is further shown by the fact that in 1872 the Spanish branch joined the union of Latin federations and sent four representatives to support Bakunin at the Hague Congress in Sept. of that year. The national Congresses of 1872 and 1873, at Saragossa and Cordova, completed the split between the Marxists who styled themselves *autoritarios* and the followers of Bakunin known as *anti-autoritarios*. Despite some secessions, the triumph of Bakunin was decisive and complete. Not until 1931 did the Marxists rise again as a major force in this left-wing politics of Spain. But the

anarchists were shortly to give Spain a foretaste of what anarchism meant. Before the year 1873 was out, they had drawn first blood. With Fourier's aphorism, "Civilisation is the enemy," as their watchword they played a large part in the insurrections which followed the abortive proclamation of a Republic by the Cortes.

The ups and downs of the anarchist movement between the Restoration in 1874 and the advent of Francisco Ferrer in the '90's need not delay us long. It was in these years the movement passed from theory to practice; the dragon's teeth scattered in the cities and villages of Spain by Bakunin's disciples, Lorenzo, Salvochea, and Mella, produced its first crop of assassins and vandals. The romantic halo which had surrounded anarchism so long as it was just a theory vanished, and it was seen that the unflattering description of man as "a ravenous animal delighting in human blood" seemed to fit the facts more closely than Rousseau's picture of the noble savage. With Francisco Ferrer Russian Nihilism acclimatised itself in Spain. It was the hand of this "University Pugachoff" unchained the storm that has ever since continued to rage against the Catholic Church, and which even in the nineties showed its mad lust of destruction in such acts as the bombings of Corpus Christi processions. The atheistic schools established by Ferrer under the name *Escuela Moderna* were also schools for terrorists, and the men trained in them played a leading part in the terrible outbreak in Barcelona in 1909 and in the entire subsequent development of the anarchist movement.

To-day the Spanish anarchists have two main organisations. The one, until 1931 illegal, is called the *Federación Anarquista Iberica* (Iberian Federation of Anarchists) and is commonly referred to by its initials F.A.I. A few years ago it had approximately 10,000 members, but probably has many more now. It was founded in 1911 as a *corps d'élite* of doctrinaires, and its main function has been to co-ordinate the efforts of the anarchist unions and to safeguard the anarchist orthodoxy. The other is the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (National Confederation of Labour) commonly called the C.N.T. It

had over 500,000 members a year ago and now has close on a million. The anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. was founded at the beginning of the century under the influence of a combination of the ideas of Bakunin and Sorel.

It is undeniable that between syndicalism and anarchism there is a very close relationship. Based on the notions of self-help and self-government in industry, in themselves fruitful conceptions, syndicalism represents a sort of proletarian Sinn Féin. "Ourselves Alone" is the basic idea of all forms of syndicalism; but like the Sinn Féin movement, at a certain stage in its development syndicalism turned from mutualism and passive resistance to violence. The doctrine that society should be organised for the producers by the producers, and that economic action was the only effective action, since politics were but economics in a disguised form, was in the direct tradition of Proudhon and Bakunin, and was therefore bound to make a strong appeal to Spanish anarchists. The anarchists detest any kind of centralisation, and syndicalism seemed to offer just the right solution to the problem of organisation without centralisation. But above and beyond all this, it was a cult of violence, a technique of direct action unconnected with politics or politicians. Indeed some of the leading French syndicalists, as for example Pelloutier and Pouget, were anarchists of the Bakunin or dynamite school. How readily syndicalism, with its abhorrence of the State, its pathetic faith in the general strike and its cult of violence and sabotage, slides into mere destructive anarchism is quite evident from its history in Italy and in Spain.

Although not so strong numerically as the Marxist "General Union of Workers" (Unión General de Trabajadores), with its membership of more than a million, the C.N.T. is in every other respect at least as strong throughout Spain, and stronger in Catalonia where it controls 70% of the Reds. The feud between Marx and Bakunin persists to the present day between the U.G.T. and the C.N.T., though it is true that since the beginning of the civil war their common guilt for individual and mass murders and the motive of self-preservation have tended to bring them into temporary alliance. Three years

ago nobody could have suspected that they would lay aside their personal and doctrinal differences and join in the fight for any sort of State. For the anarchist, next to the Church, the State is the arch-enemy. It is an abomination to be wiped off the face of the earth. Politics and political parties are equally anathema to him, for what are politics but the tentacles by which the State feeds itself! He will neither have hand, act, nor part in sending anyone to parliament, there to be corrupted, demoralised, and weaned from faith in the one and only weapon of the working class, *direct action*—that is the redemption of society by the blood of its enemies. The anarchist leader, Angel Pestanao, called upon his followers to take no part in the general election of 1931, and at the height of the risings in the Asturias and in Catalonia in Oct. 1934, the anarchist leaders turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the communists and the socialists for united action. Their newspapers *Solidaridad Obrera* and *Tierra y Libertad* even went the length of attacking the revolutionary movement.

All the more surprising, then, is the fact that the anarchists were persuaded to throw in their weight with the Popular Front. Contrary to the non-political principles which they had cherished for seventy years, they recommended participation in the general election of Feb. last. It is true no anarchist candidates were included in the lists of the Popular Front. Yet their voting power was sufficient to decide the election in its favour. No doubt their change of attitude was due in the main to the knowledge that the rank and file would vote in the election even in the teeth of explicit instructions not to do so. For all that, it is no small tribute to the tactical skill and persuasive powers of the representatives in Spain of the Third International that they should have coaxed this ferocious bird, half goose, half vulture, off its perch. It is no exaggeration to say that, with the arrival in the political arena of the anarchists side by side with the marxists, anarchy itself arrived on the scene; for no other word can do justice to the state of affairs which has existed in the country since February. Books on the present situation written from opposite points of view, such as *The Spanish Tragedy* by Prof. Allison Peers and *Spain To-Day* by E. Conze, as well as

reliable reports arriving from Spain, establish beyond all doubt that since February the so-called democratic ministers have been merely a row of puppets which the marxists and anarchists set up or pulled down as they pleased, until finally in August the rude fist of Largo Caballero swept them off the board and the Red atheist dictatorship came forward in its naked reality.

Although the best authenticated reports from Spain show that the anarchists have lived up to their terrible reputation and at least at the outset of the war literally exhausted the possibilities of insensate cruelty, it is impossible not to recognise the superiority of the anarchist passion for liberty over the Marxian will to power. In the scale of anarchist values there is nothing higher than liberty, nothing worse than coercion. Could there be a greater irony than that such a doctrine should have engendered such infra-human and anti-human baseness? Thus the secretary of the Anarchist Federation of Barcelona broadcasts the following order: "Let the people forget all scruples about artistic treasures and moral values. Kill your father, your mother, your children; but from the blood we spill may the liberty and freedom of the revolution arise"! And this message is neither better nor worse than scores of others. What are we to think of this phenomenon? The religion of revolution inspired by the faith of creating a heaven on earth, of raising man to the stature of a god, creates instead a hell upon earth and debases man to the level of the beast. Having denied God in the name of man, man ends up by denying and torturing himself in the name of an inhuman collectivity. Whence this terrifying paradox? It has occurred again and again in history. Separate humanity from the living waters which spring perpetually from their source in divinity, and humanity rots away until it becomes less than human. To be wholly human is all that man can ever hope to be. Long before the revolutionary era Pascal looked at the world and his conclusion was: *Qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête*. Never has the case against the religion of revolutionary optimism been put with such insight and in so few words.

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