

Blood and Bombs:
How the Anarchists fueled Russian Revolution
(tentative)

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History 497
10/20/2006

“I am an anarchist because I scorn and detest all authority, since all authority is founded on injustice, exploitation and compulsion over the human personality. Authority dehumanizes the individual and makes him a slave”¹

N. Petrov October 1917

The anarchist movement and the idea of a stateless society was not a new one for Russia. Plagued with a series of poor dictators, a failed economy, and growing disenchanted working class, the outlook of the country seemed bleak. Emerged were ideas of salvation that took in the form of Communism, Marxism, and Socialism. But these are known to all and any text book could give you a more detailed analysis that I can in these brief fifteen page summary. What I can do, is show the underbelly of the political movement during the revolution of 1917, and the events prior, which in my opinion is far more interesting than you would find in any standard read, and from an anarchists perspective to boot. Unaware to many, the anarchist role in the Revolution of 1917 was significant, and their involvement in the political and social events prior impacted its outcome.

A good time to begin would be the year 1905, and then further analyze the events for the next 12 years. First though, why was the idea of state of anarchy so popular compared to the Marxists views of the time? The anarchists sharing views similar to the liberals and socialists, hating the centralized governments. Fueled by the emergence of the industrial revolution which created a zombie like working class, the anarchists hope to fuel a revolution by the growing disenchanted industrial working class. What separated them from other political groups were there extreme views. Broken into three distinct groups, they were composed as followed:

Anarchist-Communist – Sought a free federation of communities where each person was rewarded

according to their needs. Influenced heavily by Bakunin and Kropotkin (Discuss Later), and had little use for large industries and labor organizations.

Anarcho-Syndicalists – Focused on industrial production, with a focus on expansion. Decentralized labor organizations where workers had control over their own fate. Their goal was to introduce tighter worker control over production breaking down the monopoly practices of factory committees in regards to employment.

Individualist Anarchists – rejected the ideas of both above groups, since they are based around workers organizations. “Only unorganized individuals, they believed, were safe from the coercion and combination and thus capable of remaining true to the ideals of anarchism”². Of the three, this group attracted the least number of followers

Many of the anarchist groups were built on the works of Bakunin and Kropotkin.

Insert some history of the two and more detail of the two including other famous writers of the time, it is important to inform the reader of who you are referring to.

Marxism’s influence on Bakunin was significant. “His anarchism was the product of a synthesis of many revolutionary influences other than the most important one – Marxism”³ He protested all forms of centralized power including industrial, political, and economical. He believed that by decentralizing labor, with worker and agriculture communes would “accomplish a total reconstruction of social values and a regeneration of humanity”⁴

His disciple Kropotkin, believed that the new society would emerge from the ruins of the old. He

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disagreed with Bakunin views of wealth distribution of wages based on ones capacity, which was similar to Marx's. Kropotkin believes a wage system would be established based on ones need, with the individual deciding what is deemed necessary to survive.⁵

With that being noted now some history of the anarchist movement, and why 1905 was the magic year of development.

In 1904, we have the popular consensus upset over the war with Japan in February 1904, and the people blamed the government for their defeat. We also have the situation in St. Petersburg where a series of strikes were conducted and lead to Bloody Sunday on January 9th.

Manifesto of October 17, which stated no law would be in effect without the consent of the State Duma, neglecting the declining economic standards of peasant and workers.

All which gave a boost to radical movement, and led into the Revolution of 1905. “Before 1905, there had been a mere twelve or fifteen active anarchists....but by spring there were five circles, composed of about sixty members”⁶ The following year, the number grew to 300.⁷ Their goals were to completely destroy the capitalist and the state to secure the future. While late in numbers and for the same goal, many came to the disagreement of how it should be done.

The two anarcho-communist groups that formed at this time were the Chernoe Znamia and Beznachalie both which mitigated terrorism against the bourgeoisie. The Znamia, composed of youth between the ages of 16-20, was the largest, with followers composed of the provinces from the west and south Russia. The Beznachalie group was “a mixture of Bakunin's faith in society's castaways, Nechaev's demand for bloody vengeance against the privileged classes, Marx's concepts of class

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struggle and permanent revolution, and Kropotkin's vision of a free federation of communities.⁸”

- How about you discuss more about the groups above and their impacts? how about some details about what the anarchists did to make this bland paper more lively

What were the results of this anarchist movements and uprising of 1905?

- Boost in group following as noted before.
- Huge Martyrology of anarchists.
- Anarchist's trials and the heads roll.

The year 1905 was just a prelude to what is going to happen, it was necessary, and laid the groundwork for a “true” social revolution that was yet to come.

At the time, their only alliances were the Bolsheviks, the only other radical group in Russia who sought the same goal of abolishment of the .bourgeois state. Their views clashed of the timing when to strike, with the Bolsheviks continually to stall for time, and the anarchists pressing for an immediate uprising.

Between the years of 1905-1917, what is going on? We have the numerous conferences between the anarchist groups throughout Europe discussing the perfect time to attack. Establishments of Anarchist Red Cross in 1907, and finally in 1911, the first signs of the anarchist revival in Russia. Distraction of WWI in 1914, but the debate rages on “defensist” and antimilitarists anarchists. Finally in 1917 we begin to see some action which began in the strikes and bread riots of Petrograd. This turn of events bared all the marks of the social revolution that the anarchists waited a dozen years for. Emerging were anarchist sleeper cells throughout Petrograd that resided in the munitions plants. Forming from the working class, ranging from bakers to blacksmiths movement was different than previous ones in 1905,

which were primarily focused on the outskirts and border region. But the February revolution fell short, and though it overthrew the monarchy, it was unable to overthrow the state, all in all, not much was accomplished, and the people were not happy. According to an Anarchist-Communist, when asked what happened he replied, “Nothing Special. In place of Nicholas the Bloody, Kerenskii the Bloody has mounted the throne”⁹

Lenin’s involvement on the Russian anarchists was HUGE. How about you discuss that more here.

It was at this time that the anarchists sided with the Bolsheviks to rise in power.

In 1917 the Anarchist-Communist was responsible for seizing numerous houses and declaring them common ground to all.

The anarchists set itself apart from other radical groups in Russia due to their implacable opposition of state in any form. “Though the anarchists shared Lenin's determination to destroy the provisional government, Bakunin's warning about the power-hungry Marxists lingered in their thoughts.”

Talk More about the October Insurrection

Talk more about the downfall of Russian anarchist,