

**GROOTE OPENLUCHT MEETING  
TER HERDENKING VAN DE OPRICHTING DER  
INTERN=ANTI=MIL=VER=IN 1904  
EN HET UITBREKEN VAN DE  
WERELDOORLOG IN 1914**



**ONTWENEN LITHO CHRIS LEBEAU**

**SPREKERS**

EMMA GOLDMAN	RUSLAND
LUCIEN HAUSSARD	FRANKRIJK
PIERRE RAMUS	OOSTENRIJK
ALBERT DE JONG	NEDERLAND
B-DE LIGT	NEDERLAND
N-J-C-SCHERMEHORN	NEDERLAND

**IN DE TUIN VAN HET VOLKS-GEBOUW  
TE DEN HAAG PRINSENGRACHT = 73  
OP ZONDAG 27 JULI DES NAMIDDAGS  
1 UUR**

**GEDRUKT OP DE DRUKKERIJ LANKHOUT**

Anarchism and Peace History

Guest Editor: Dominique Miething



**ADCs**

2025.2

*Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* (ADCS) is an international peer reviewed and open access journal to the study of new and emerging perspectives in anarchist thought. ADCS is an attempt to bring anarchist thought into contact with innumerable points of connection. We publish articles, reviews/debates, announcements and unique contributions that: (1) adopt an anarchist perspective with regards to analyses of language, discourse, culture, and power, (2) investigate various facets of anarchist thought and practice from a non-anarchist standpoint, and (3) investigate or incorporate elements of non-anarchist thought and practice from the standpoint of traditional anarchist thought.

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# Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies

**Anarchism and Peace History**

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Editor: Allan Antliff



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# Anarchism and Peace History<sup>1</sup>

Dominique Miething\*

A poster created in the year 1924 by Chris Lebeau (1878–1945) graces the cover of this issue, setting the tone for the overarching theme. This introduction to the relationship between anarchism and peace history partly serves to commemorate Lebeau’s commitment against violence and war, presenting four of his artworks alongside their historical context, thereby also shedding new light on the anarchist origins of the broken rifle (see “Example 4” below), a peace symbol, a true classic among the many icons that have emerged from religious and secular traditions.

## Chris Lebeau (1878–1945)

Joris Johannes Christiaan (Chris) Lebeau was one of the most versatile Dutch artists of the early twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Trained in applied arts, his work embodied the ideals of Art Nouveau, while his portraits during the 1930s showed a notable turn towards realism. Beyond his artistic range, Lebeau was an anarchist, a pacifist, a vegetarian, and a theosophist. Ultimately, his ethical and political convictions led him to active nonviolent resistance against the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

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Lebeau was born in Amsterdam on 26 May 1878 into a working-class family. During his youth, he helped his father, Jacques Charles Lebeau (1840–1909), a machinist, distribute the socialist journal *Recht voor Allen* (Justice for all). The editor in charge was the later anarchist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846–1919). Lebeau’s mother, Grietje Scholte (1839–1912), a seamstress, worked to keep the family afloat during periods of dire poverty. From an early age, Lebeau demonstrated remarkable artistic talent. He studied at the Amsterdam Kunstnijverheidsschool Quellinus between 1892 and 1895, and at the Rijksschool voor Kunstnijverheid between 1895 and 1899. During the last two years of the century, Lebeau took drawing lessons at the Vâhanaschool, founded by the architects J. L. Mathieu Lauweriks (1864–1932) and Karel de Bazel (1869–1923). Their individualist-anarchist inspired approach was not a conventional art academy, but a small teaching circle linked to “the Vâhana Lodge, the artists’ wing”<sup>3</sup> of the Amsterdam Theosophical Society.

Lebeau mastered batik, exhibiting it at the 1900 Paris World Exhibition, and designed damask, book illustrations, glassware, stained glass, theatre décor, lamps, carpets, and banners. His work ranged from intimate ex-libris designs (e.g., for the anarchist Bart de Ligt [1883–1938]), and posters to monumental wall paintings in public buildings, for instance in the wedding room of Amsterdam City Hall (Stadthuis Amsterdam) and in the Old Catholic Church (Fredericus en Odulfuskerk) in Leiden. Here, one mural entitled “Faith” shows Sacco and Vanzetti (the two Italian immigrant anarchists executed in 1927 at Charlestown State Prison, Massachusetts, United States), standing in front of Gandhi and Lenin. Lebeau also pursued graphic arts—lithography, woodcuts, and drawings—as well as oil painting (e.g., a portrait of his friend, the anarchist Albert de Jong [1891–1970], and of the German Dada artist Hannah Höch [1889–1978]).

Politically, Lebeau embraced anarchist-communism infused with theosophical ideals, advocating a spiritually grounded form of social justice. His religious beliefs were different from those of the Christian anarchists around Dirk Lodewijk Willem van Mierop (1876–1930) and Felix Ortt (1866–1959). Lebeau instead stood closer to those of the anarchist journal *Licht en Waarheid* (Light and Truth), which

looked to Eastern philosophy for inspiration. He abstained from alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea, and meat-eating, and he refused commissions that conflicted with his beliefs, such as designing royal portraits for postage stamps or glassware intended for alcoholic drinks.

Lebeau produced caricatures, illustrations and posters for the Internationale Anti-Militaristische Vereeniging (IAMV) and its journal *De Wapens Neder* (Lay down your arms, or: Down with the weapons). He also collaborated with anarchist journals such as *Bevrijding* (Liberation) and *De Moker* (The Sledgehammer). In 1904, Lebeau—an admirer of William Morris and Walter Crane—co-founded the Nederlandsche Vereeniging voor Ambachts- en Nijverheidskunst (Dutch Association for Craft and Industrial Art), an arts-and-crafts association aligned with critiques of industrial capitalism. Though Lebeau never was a political organizer, in 1922 he even appeared on the electoral list of the short-lived Kunstenaarspartij (Artists Party).

In May 1940, when the German military invaded the Netherlands, Lebeau began helping persecuted Jews after the general strike of 25-27 February 1941 against the Nazi occupation. Arrested with his wife Maria Sophia Herman on 3 November 1943, he took full responsibility, securing her release. Offered freedom in exchange for renouncing illegal work, he refused. Deported first to Herzogenbusch concentration camp (Kamp Vught) and later to Dachau, he continued to live by his convictions even in captivity—maintaining his vegetarianism and sharing scarce food with others. He died in Dachau on 3 April 1945, only weeks before the camp's liberation.<sup>4</sup> In 1981, Yad Vashem, Israel's central memorial institution to the victims of the Shoah, recognized Lebeau and Herman as Righteous Among the Nations.<sup>5</sup>

### **What is peace history and how does anarchism figure in it?**

Humanity has not yet saved itself from the “scourge of war”, as the United Nations Charter's Preamble proclaimed in 1945. A part of humanity still clings to the myth that war and its preparation can somehow preserve life, regardless of whether the justification is ‘defense’ or ‘deterrence’ or ‘liberation.’<sup>6</sup> Humanity has not yet created a system of ‘collective security’ that could prevent another world war,

including the use of nuclear weapons, and all the devastating consequences of a subsequent nuclear winter.<sup>7</sup> Recent arms developments in cyberspace and space, as well artificial intelligence and so-called autonomous weapons systems, reinforce this fact, as does the modernization of nuclear arsenals worldwide and the record high global military spending of 2.718 billion US dollars in the year 2024 alone.<sup>8</sup> The sheer existence and everyday activity of the military contributes to about 5.5% of global carbon emissions, “meaning that if the world’s militaries were a country, they would be the fourth largest emitter in the world”—a conservative estimate considering that the real “global military carbon footprint” most likely lies beyond these numbers, especially in relation to actual war-fighting and its subsequent ecological destruction, as well as due to unreliable government figures on these emissions which acutely threaten the continued existence of life on our planet Earth.<sup>9</sup>

Discontent, despair and the willingness to stem these and other instances of violence may be stimulants for engaging with “peace history – the application of historical method to the study and attainment of world peace”<sup>10</sup>. As Peter van den Dungen and Lawrence S. Wittner point out, this particular way of looking at the past through a specific lens—the norm of peace—is in itself “part of a wider emancipatory process” akin to enquiries into abolitionist, feminist, labor and social history. Therefore, peace history forms a necessary complement to “military history and the history of war” and to “diplomatic history, which covers relations among states, including war.”<sup>11</sup> Adding to the aforementioned stimulants of enquiry we may also put forth a political imperative of engaging with peace history, because, as American historian Merle Curti argued, “the search for an end to war cannot afford to ignore precedents”<sup>12</sup>. While research into notions of and actions for peace may look back as far antiquity and beyond, the primary objects of study since peace history’s “first phase” in between the two world wars have been the “movements and campaigns – and the ideas and individuals associated with them – that were opposed to war and that laboured to create alternatives to violent conflict”<sup>13</sup>, namely, but not limited to what we refer to by the umbrella term: pacifism.

Peace history, therefore, sometimes and somewhat misleadingly equated with the history of pacifism<sup>14</sup>, has emerged since the early twentieth century as a distinct field of study that foregrounds the practices, movements, and ideas devoted to the pursuit of nonviolence, reconciliation, and social justice across time. While traditional diplomatic and military histories often privilege the narratives of states and conflicts, peace history redirects attention toward the everyday struggles and intellectual traditions that sought to prevent or stop war. Thus, the term “war resistance” certainly belongs into this short definition as well:

“Pacifism is not new to the twentieth century. Understood as the refusal on grounds of principle to perpetrate or sanction acts of violence, pacifism is at least as old as the Christian community. Resistance to military conscription and refusal to volunteer for armed service is a corollary to pacifism known to the early Christian church, to medieval sects, and to modern peace churches such as the Mennonites, the Brethren, and the Quakers. This conscientious objection was institutionalized in Anglo-Saxon tradition by limited exemptions from conscription in the American Civil War and in World War I. But exemptions were then limited to objection to all war on religious grounds, whereas by the First World War pacifism had evolved the further corollary of resistance to conscription itself and on political as well as religious grounds: we may call this composite position *war resistance*. All those who refuse to fight or who work for peace are, of course, war resisters [...]

Resistance to war and the conscripting state has been the consistent witness of a few persons throughout our century. But, moreover, it has been a social and political program, changing in form and rationale. From the First World War to the Second, for example, a kind of general strike against war was the primary program of organized war resisters. In the same period, however, the revolutionary implications of war resistance

were developed, together with a receptiveness to other forms of nonviolent action. The full flowering of this development came after World War II, notably in the challenge to nuclear arms and in opposition to the American war in Vietnam.”<sup>15</sup>

At its core, modern peace history interrogates the structures of power, nationalism, and violence, while amplifying the roles of activists, intellectuals, communities, and organizations that envisioned alternatives based on cooperation and solidarity.<sup>16</sup>

This framework readily intersects with anarchism, “a doctrine that aims at the liberation of peoples from political domination and economic exploitation by the encouragement of direct or non-governmental action”<sup>17</sup>. Historically, anarchism has developed as a political philosophy and social movement since the nineteenth century. Anarchists criticized the legitimacy of hierarchical authority and sought to build decentralized, non-coercive forms of social organization.<sup>18</sup> For this reason, they have also been identified as the anti-authoritarian, or libertarian strand of socialism, posing an alternative to reformist social democracy and authoritarian communism.

Both peace history and anarchism, we could allege in a rather idealized and simplified fashion, are united by a refusal to naturalize violence—whether “direct”, “structural” or “cultural”<sup>19</sup>—and by a commitment to imagining and practicing social orders based on justice and equality. These general commonalities, however, are not meant to brush over the highly divergent ideological and ethical aspirations within the anarchist and pacifist movements. Neither *the* peace nor *the* anarchist movement are timeless phenomena spurred by a homogeneous body of ideas. Assuming as much would result in an inadequate understanding of the broad spectrum of cultural, economic, ethical, political and religious beliefs and circumstances that have led people over time to commit differently to the cause of peace. Unlike religious pacifism (as practiced by Quakers since the time of George Fox [1624–1692]), which stresses nonviolence and conscientious objection as moral duties, and socialist antimilitarism (as debated within the International Workingmen’s Association since

1864), which condemns war as an instrument of capitalist exploitation, liberal-democratic pacifism (as institutionalized, for instance, in International Peace Congresses since 1843) seeks to prevent military conflict through arbitration, disarmament, international law, and trade interdependencies that discourage war between nation-states.

Peace history, as we define the term here, is the study of past ideas, movements, and individuals dedicated to preventing and resisting war, and building lasting and worldwide peace, with particular attention to the overlapping traditions of pacifism, antimilitarism, and nonviolent resistance against violence and war.

To this day, no comprehensive scholarly portrayal gives an account of the historical relationship between anarchism (the “poltergeist” of peace history, see Sophie Scott-Brown’s article in this issue) and pacifism.<sup>20</sup> Canonical works, in varying degrees, indeed include important references to anarchism, yet most often these are either limited to analyzing the “quasi-anarchist”<sup>21</sup> positions of Christian sects such as the Russian Doukhobors<sup>22</sup>, whose faith led them to refuse conscription and any collaboration with the military, or to dedicated chapters on the most obvious connection between the pacifist tradition and anarchism, that is the thought of Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), or entire studies to his most famous disciple, the Indian lawyer and champion of nonviolent resistance, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) and his adherents.<sup>23</sup> Canadian historian Peter Brock aptly summarized the Russian novelist’s doctrine:

“Tolstoy, like other anarchists, wished to base the organization of society on consent, on cooperation, and not on force. Since war represents the maximum known application of injurious force, war resistance featured prominently in Tolstoy’s program. Not only was war a negation of the Law of Love. To fight for the nation-state meant submission to the most powerful organ of human oppression in its most bestial form. An “instinctive” and “spontaneous” affection for the land of one’s birth Tolstoy regarded as excusable. But patriotism, in his view, was an ignoble passion which

should be curbed if unfortunately it could not always be totally eradicated. For the state was inevitably an instrument for waging war against other states. Anti-militarism, therefore, seemed to Tolstoy to be both a manifestation of Christian love and an act of defiance directed against the very seat of human evil. On many occasions he declared his support of conscientious objection and wrote in defense of individual objectors, whether these were Russian intellectuals or Russian peasants, Balkan Nazarenes or Christian pacifists in Japan. The abolition of compulsory military service would, he believed, undermine the edifice of state oppression. Slowly, yet inexorably, acts of individual resistance to the military machine would effect the destruction of government and its replacement by a cooperative society.”<sup>24</sup>

Although Tolstoy’s radical social critique (see also Irina Gordeeva’s article in this issue) greatly appealed to atheist anarchists as well<sup>25</sup>, strict adherence to nonviolence remained a minority position in the anarchist tradition, in blatant contradiction to the oft-repeated insistence on the means-ends-relationship. In the words of Gustav Landauer (1870–1919), who advocated the principle of active nonviolent non-cooperation (see also Hanna Delf von Wolzogen’s article in this issue): “An end can only be reached if the means are already colored by the color of the end. Never can nonviolence be attained through violence.”<sup>26</sup> Conversely, also note the apologetic interjection by Errico Malatesta (1853–1932), who was convinced that “[...] anarchist violence is the only violence that can be justified, the only violence that is not criminal. [...] Real anarchist violence ceases where the need for defence and liberation ceases.”<sup>27</sup>

Commenting on such irreconcilable positions, political scientist Geoffrey Ostergaard (1926–1990), himself an admirer of Gandhi, rightly observed:



**Figure 1.** Chris Lebeau, “Bevrijding—1828–1928—Tolstoinummer,” *Bevrijding* [Utrecht], no. 95 (September 1928): cover page.

“The ambivalent attitude towards violence of mainstream anarchists was one reason why anarchism and pacifism developed as separate movements in the 19th century, despite their common opposition to war and militarism and their shared historical roots. (Kropotkin, not unfairly, claimed the Anabaptists among the precursors of modern anarchism.) But it was not the only reason. Most anarchists were militant atheists [...] Church was coupled with State, and religion was seen as part of the fraud which ruling classes used, along with force, to maintain dominance. In addition, most anarchists perceived the peace movement as irredeemably bourgeois and liberal, weak in its analysis of the causes of war, and absurdly naive in seeking to establish international peace while wishing at the same time to retain the state.”<sup>28</sup>

Over time, a distinct strand within the anarchist movement has accepted affiliation with both anarchism and pacifism, as exemplified by the aforementioned Landauer, Clara Wichmann (1885–1922), Jo Meijer (1895–1969), Dorothy Day (1897–1980), George Woodcock (1912–1995), April Carter (1937–2022) and many others. The continued existence of this strand is exemplified today by a variety of groups worldwide. Nonviolence remains a cornerstone of their actions and reflections.<sup>29</sup> Mostly irrespective of this historical base, the similarities and the confluences of anarchism and pacifism have, in recent years, become the subject of research, for example in philosophy<sup>30</sup> or political science<sup>31</sup>. The breadth of historical enquiry has understandably focused on anarchist antimilitarism. These studies are invaluable as they include contextualization of the debates and interactions with the broader peace movement.<sup>32</sup> But precisely these are not their main focus.

### **The ambiguous meaning of “anarchy” as a communicative obstacle**

A central conceptual difficulty in bringing peace history into dialogue with anarchism lies in the semantic and disciplinary dissonance surrounding the very term “anarchy”.<sup>33</sup> In the field of International

Relations, “anarchy” conventionally refers to the absence of a supranational organization above sovereign states (e.g., some form of world government), often connoting lawlessness, insecurity, and perpetual risk of conflict. This usage reinforces a Hobbesian imaginary in which peace is fragile, guaranteed only by balances of power or hegemonic authority. In the words taken from the classic *Leviathan* (1651), written by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679):

“[...] it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man. For WAR, consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of *time*, is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather, lieth not in a shower or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.

[...] Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

[...] the condition of mere nature, that is to say, of absolute liberty [...] is anarchy, and the condition of war: that the precepts, by which men are guided to avoid that condition, are the laws of nature: that a commonwealth, without sovereign power, is but a word without substance, and cannot stand: that subjects owe to sovereigns, simple obedience, in all things, wherein their obedience is not repugnant to the laws of God”<sup>34</sup>

Anarchists, by contrast, reclaim “anarchy” as a positive horizon of their political thought and actions: a social order grounded in mutual aid, voluntary cooperation, and in the abolition of economic exploitation and hierarchical domination, whether political, cultural etc.<sup>35</sup> In the words of the geographer Élisée Reclus (1830–1905) taken from his article “L’Anarchie” published in the Parisian anarchist paper *Les Temps nouveaux* in 1895:

“Anarchy is far from being a new theory. The word itself, in its accepted meaning of ‘the absence of government’ and ‘a society without leaders,’ is of ancient origin [...]

But if anarchy is as old as humanity, those who represent it nevertheless bring something new to the world. They have a keen awareness of the goal to be attained, and from all corners of the earth they join together to pursue their ideal of the eradication of every form of government. The dream of worldwide freedom is no longer a purely philosophical or literary utopia, as it was for the creators of the Cities of the Sun [*La città del sole*, written in 1902 by Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639)] and the New Jerusalems. It has become a practical goal that is actively pursued by masses of people united in their resolute quest for the birth of a society in which there are no more masters, no more official custodians of public morals, no more jailers, torturers and executioners, no more rich or poor. Instead there will be only brothers who have their share of daily bread, who have equal rights, and who

coexist in peace and heartfelt unity that comes not out of obedience to law, which is always accompanied by dreadful threats, but rather from mutual respect for the interest of all, and from the scientific study of natural laws.

No doubt this ideal will appear chimerical to some of you, but I am sure that it will also seem desirable to most, and that you can see in the distance the ethereal image of a peaceful society in which men, henceforth reconciled with one another, will let their swords go to rust, melt down their cannons, and disarm their ships.”<sup>36</sup>

The gulf between these two conceptions poses a cognitive barrier to integrating anarchism into peace history, since the same term denotes both the condition supposedly justifying state sovereignty (disorder to be contained) and the condition anarchists envision as the fullest realization of peace (a society beyond coercion, exploitation and violence). To write a peace history attentive to anarchism thus requires not only empirical recovery of anarchist contributions to nonviolent and emancipatory struggles, but also a conceptual reorientation—resisting the exclusively pejorative framing of “anarchy” whilst taking seriously anarchists’ affirmative use of the term. Bridging this divide demands critical reflexivity about how disciplinary vocabulary encodes political assumptions about order, violence, and the possibilities of peace.

### **This issue’s goals**

The goals of this issue at hand are both archival and analytical. First, it seeks to bring to light little-known or previously overlooked textual and visual sources that illuminate anarchism’s place within peace history. By unearthing such material, the issue aims to expand the empirical foundations of the field while also broadening its interpretive horizons. A second goal is to trace connections, often neglected in existing scholarly literature, between mainstream pacifist movements and anarchist traditions, as well as between the political ideas

that animated them. In doing so, the contributions highlight convergences and tensions that complicate linear narratives of peace activism. The issue also emphasizes the importance of identifying gaps in knowledge and pointing to areas where further research is required, thereby inviting sustained scholarly engagement. Methodologically, this issue underscores the significance of transnational approaches, in order to map the circulation of ideas, the operation of networks, and the coordination of campaigns across borders. Finally, it gives deliberate attention to some figures who have remained in the margins of Anglophone historiography due to linguistic limitations.

As the individual contributions to the issue clarify, numerous anarchists themselves were fully committed to the peace movement or at least interacted significantly with it—albeit oftentimes critically, and some of these anarchists worked against the apologia of violence as a political means within their own movement<sup>37</sup> or campaigned to prevent and end specific wars independently of the peace movement. In turn, pacifists who have deliberately and explicitly distanced themselves from anarchists have been influenced by ideas that emerged from anarchism. Preceding the article abstracts below are the following four non-exhaustive sketches, in which I attempt to provide examples of anarchist history’s entanglements with peace history from the period until the end of the Second World War.

### **Example 1: Coining and contesting the term “pacifism”**

The origin of the term “pacifism” itself is a telling tug over its contested meaning. Writing an article for the liberal Brussels newspaper *L'Indépendance Belge*, published on August 15, 1901, the French notary Émile Arnaud (1864–1921) closed with the following plea:

“But the conclusion [...] is that our great party needs a *name*, that it does not have this name, and that this absence is considerably hindering our progress. None of the words in the dictionary is adequate to our program. We are not only “pacifiques,” we are not only “pacificants,” we are not only “pacificateurs.” We are all of these at once, and something else too: we are, in a word, *Pacifists*.

And besides, to designate our party, we need a name with *ism*, such as royalism, Bonapartism, imperialism, republicanism, radicalism, opportunism, progressivism, socialism, collectivism, anarchism. And this name, quite natural, but which has never been used to our knowledge at least, is: *pacifism*.”<sup>38</sup>

Arnaud’s intervention was a reaction to other contemporary terms already in use such as “friends of peace” (*amis de la paix*) and other suggestions such as “federalist” (by Russian sociologist, International Relations scholar and peace activist Jacques [Jakov Alexandrovich] Novicow [1849–1912] earlier during the same year in the Parisian journal *La Revue [ancienne “Revue des Revues”]*) or the term “Young Europe” (suggested by the founder and president of the Italian Peace Society, Beniamino Pandolfi [1836–1909], in an 1896 issue of the Austrian pacifist journal *Die Waffen nieder!*).<sup>39</sup> Apparently, Arnaud felt that in order to become effective, the peace movement needed a term ending with the suffix *-ism* so characteristic of other more easily recognizable ideologies, thus elevating “pacifism” to the same status. Simultaneously though, coining the term “pacifism” was a rhetorical move to distance adherents of the peace movement programmatically from existing parties and ideologies, or to influence them all, depending on one’s own vantage point.

Eventually, Arnaud succeeded, as evidenced, for example, by the fact that the Austrian writer Bertha von Suttner (1843–1914), openly endorsed the term a few weeks later (see also Victor Méric’s opposition to “pacifists” in the section “Example 4” below). Suttner, together with her co-founder of the German Peace Society (*Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft*) in 1892, Alfred Hermann Fried (1864–1921), opined: “[...] ‘Pacifism’ [...] is an international word that can be used in the same way in all languages, and therefore best reflects the international nature of the movement. It is similar in sound and meaning to modern words like socialism and feminism.”<sup>40</sup>

The term then quickly gained traction because Arnaud incorporated it into his own reports and motions already at the Tenth Universal Peace Congress in Glasgow from September 10-18, 1901:

“The negative programme of Pacifism [...] is anti-War-ism. Our business is the positive part of the pacific programme, that is to say, the organisation of Peace. [...] the peoples and Governments will and can renounce the employment of force only when a juridical solution of international conflicts shall have been established and accepted. The reduction of armaments will come about as a consequence of the reciprocal confidence that will be established. [...]”<sup>41</sup>

At that time, Arnaud was the president of the International League of Peace and Freedom (*Ligue Internationale de la Paix et de la Liberté*<sup>42</sup>). Acting from this influential position, he proposed the following amended motion, which was first initiated by the Quaker Ellen Robison (1840–1912):

“Considering that morality is one and universal, and that it forbids all hate, all violence, and all injustice between man and man, and that it enjoins or commands fraternity and love, the Congress believes that persistent efforts should be made to induce Governments and citizens of all States to conform with the great moral law, and therefore declare themselves against war and militarism; and the Congress appeals to all the educators of all countries, and all races, and all beliefs.”<sup>43</sup>

The motion was adopted with only one dissenting vote, as the conference protocol notes. The fact, however, that the motion was drafted originally by a Quaker may explain the text’s cosmopolitan tone as well as the suggestive categorical rejection of all violence, which for many of the other congress’s liberal pacifist attendees certainly did not entail a rejection of the legitimacy of defensive warfare. Moreover, the explicit condemnation of “militarism” warrants caution, for the nature and causes of the same were understood quite differently here than in socialist circles.

The League, presided over by Arnaud then, was founded more than three decades earlier, in September 1867 in Geneva at its first congress organized by the journalist Charles Lemonnier (1806-1891) and the jurist Émile Acollas (1826–1891), both from France. Not only liberals such as John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) supported the League initially, but also an anarchist minority, represented by people such as Élisée Reclus and César De Paepe (1841–1890), was sympathetic. The program of the founding congress demanded:

- “1. The creation of a United States of Europe.
2. The establishment of all the rights and principles that revolutions called for—self-determination, freedom of conscience, abolition of standing armies, abolition of race prejudice, freedom of speech and assembly, the right to work, mass public education, and the ‘harmony of economic interests in freedom.’
3. The establishment of a permanent international organization to struggle for the program’s aims across boundaries.”<sup>44</sup>

Without a doubt, the establishment of a supranational league of nation-states was anathema to the anarchists present just as the final injunction in the above-cited second demand (“harmony of economic interests ...”) clashed with the socialist call for the class struggle. Thus, and not least, the controversial anti-capitalist stance taken by Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876) who acted as a member of the League’s 1868 planning committee for their second congress at Berne—a veritable snapshot overlap of liberal, socialist and anarchist efforts for peace—suggests that there is much to discover in peace history and its relation to anarchism.<sup>45</sup>

Restricting anarchism’s place within the broader peace movement to antimilitarism in contradistinction to pacifism may not be adequate if we, for instance, consider how the thrust for social justice emanating from the workers movement in the nineteenth century came to shape the very notion of “peace” itself. Acknowledging as much, the social reformer and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1931, Jane Addams

(1860–1935), delivered her first ever public anti-war speech on 30 April 1899 at Chicago's Central Music Hall. At that time, she acted as one of the Vice Presidents of the American Anti-Imperialist League, an organization founded in reaction to the Spanish-American War (April 21–August 13, 1898) and the resulting annexation of the Philippines. Addams reminded her audience:

“We must also remember that peace has come to mean a larger thing. It is no longer merely absence of war, but the unfolding of life processes which are making for a common development. Peace is not merely something to hold congresses about and to discuss as an abstract dogma. It has come to be a rising tide of moral feeling, which is slowly engulfing all pride of conquest and making war impossible.

Under this new conception of peace it is perhaps natural that the first men to formulate it and give it international meaning should have been workingmen, who have always realized, however feebly and vaguely they may have expressed it, that it is they who in all ages have borne the heaviest burden of privation and suffering imposed on the world by the military spirit.

The first international organization founded not to promote a colorless peace, but to advance and develop the common life of all nations was founded in London in 1864 by workingmen and called simply ‘The International Association of Workingmen.’ They recognized that a supreme interest raised all workingmen above the prejudice of race, and united them by wider and deeper principles than those by which they were separated into nations. That as religion, science, art, had become international, so now at last labor took its position as an international interest. A few years later, at its third congress, held in Brussels in 1868, the internationals recommended in view of the Franco-German war, then threatening, that ‘the workers resist all war as systematic murder,’ and in case of war a universal strike be declared.”<sup>46</sup>

Today we know that it was not the First International in unison pushing for anti-war resolutions, but rather some independent socialists within, and that anarchists such as the Belgian physician and lawyer César De Paepe, and later, the Dutch social-democrat and former preacher Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, who both wanted to stop every war with “conscientious objection, or, what is the same, [...] a general cessation of work”<sup>47</sup>. The anarchists’ anti-national and cosmopolitan proposals within this international forum were always subject to social democratic dominance, above all from the German SPD, which favored parliamentary and gradualist strategies. The majority feared that calls for mass refusal of service or a general strike would provoke repression and undermine the credibility of socialism as a responsible political force. Instead, they endorsed more moderate resolutions urging peace efforts and arbitration through political channels, demands which were compatible with proposals put forth by liberal peace societies.<sup>48</sup> Eventually however, neither pacifist nor antimilitarist strategies were able to prevent, for instance, the German Wars of Unification (1864, 1866, 1870-71), let alone the First World War.

### **Example 2: The anarchist as peace historian**

Among the early figures in the field of peace history Bartholomeus (Bart) de Ligt from the Netherlands holds a particularly significant place. A pastor-turned-anarchist, de Ligt combined his deep commitment to nonviolence with a far-reaching documentation of the antecedents of the idea of ‘direct action against war’, as indicated in the title of his 1931 book *Vrede als Daad: Beginselen, Geschiedenis en Strijdmethoden van de Direktie Aktie tegen Oorlog* [Peace as Action: Principles, History and Methods of the Struggle of Direct Action Against War]. A year later, de Ligt published the second volume, intending to add another two. An expanded French edition appeared in 1934 under the title: *La Paix Créatrice: Histoire des Principes et des Tactiques de l’Action Directe contre la Guerre* [Creative Peace: History of the Principles and Tactics of Direct Action Against War], but de Ligt died unexpectedly before he could finish the final volumes.<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 2.** Exlibris for *Bart de Ligt*. Chris Lebeau, Sept[ember] 1927. Reproduced with kind permission by Bert Groeneveld.

At the age of 21, when he was a theology student at Utrecht University in 1904, Bart de Ligt published his first text, an article in support of a jailed conscientious objector. Scholars have drawn a plausible connection between this earliest publication and his later books in terms of method:

“It is not surprising that *La Paix Créatrice*, his *magnum opus*, is a history of the idea of peace as witnessed in the concrete acts of individuals and small groups. He discussed not so much the theoretical peace plans of past thinkers as the actual peace deeds of past and contemporary war resisters. De Ligt chronicled the history of radical pacifism and anti-militarism rather than internationalism. In this two-volume work [...] de Ligt documented the origin and development of the personal witness against war in the tradition and culture of China, India, Sumeria, Egypt, Persia, Israel, Greece, Rome, and of Europe up to his day. He was able to demonstrate that non-violent struggle was a widespread phenomenon not confined to any historical period, group, race, or moral or religious belief. His examples were drawn from all periods of history and from all parts of the world.”<sup>50</sup>

Activists and social scientists alike have affirmed de Ligt’s pioneering role and credited him with being an inspiration to their own study of the subject. For example, the famous writer Aldous Huxley (1894–1963), involved with the Peace Pledge Union at the time, lauded *La Paix Créatrice* as “the most complete history of Pacifist ideas and practice”<sup>51</sup> and “a work of wide and profound learning, indispensable to those who would study the history of peace and of ‘the things that make for peace.’”<sup>52</sup> Even Hans Wehberg (1885–1962), expert in international law and editor of the German language periodical *Die Friedens-Warte* [The Peace-Watch], who, while noting that de Ligt “was [...] not in favor of the bourgeois peace movement and the standpoint represented in these pages”, praised his book as “an excellent documentation” and eulogized de Ligt: “As a historian and pacifist, de Ligt will be held in high esteem even by those who do not share his views on the rejection of any use of violence in international life.”<sup>53</sup>

Three decades later, praise for *La Paix Créatrice* came from George Lakey (1937–), co-founder of the Quaker Action Group in Philadelphia against the Vietnam War, when he introduced a new edition of Ligt's most famous book—the only one published in English—*The Conquest of Violence* (1937), originally published in French under the title: *Pour vaincre sans violence* [To win without violence] (1935).

“The *Conquest of Violence* is a classic work in the literature of war and revolution, and it has contemporary relevance. A young black student who read it recently told me that it made the best case he had seen for nonviolent struggle.

Bart. de Ligt [...] faced the pervasive fact of violence and the social dynamic of injustice. A scholar of wide learning who had published a study of historic religious attitudes toward war, *La Paix Créatrice* (2 vols., 1934), he wrote in Holland at a time of wars and fear of wars—a time like ours. The Spanish Civil War and the Italian invasion of Ethiopia were heavily on his mind, and a second world war was on the horizon. There is a tremendous sense of urgency in this book; it is as though there was not even time enough to footnote all the cases of nonviolent action that are recounted.”<sup>54</sup>

Reading both works side by side, one feels tempted to agree with Lakey's sympathetic criticism; the extensive apparatus of footnotes in *La Paix Créatrice* is not mirrored in the *Essay on War and Revolution* (“Réflexions sur la guerre et la révolution”), as de Ligt subtitled the *Conquest of Violence*. Instead, where appropriate, he directed his readers to the forerunner work in numerous footnotes.

The positive evaluations continued into the mid-1990s, as evidenced by Peter Brock, author of several canonical works in the history of peace. At the request of two de Ligt-biographers, Herman Noordegraaf and Wim Robben, Brock reflected on rereading *La Paix Créatrice* again fifty years after its publication. His essay elaborates

on the differences between the Dutch and the French version, on the “grand design” of the project itself, and lays out the “controversial aspects” of the book, before making a final remark on the “personal commitment” of the author: “Like Gandhi, De Ligt emphasized the need for continuous struggle, albeit nonviolent, to attain the goals of universal peace and social justice. Work for peace remained the direct responsibility of the individual as it had been, he believed, since the idea of peace first emerged in antiquity. It could not be left to organizations and governments. [*La Paix Créatrice*] though it has shortcomings, is undoubtedly one of wide horizons and deep historical understanding. It deserves, on that account alone, to be considered a key study in the development of peace history.”<sup>55</sup>

Equally noteworthy is de Ligt’s last historical book, a biography of *Erasmus. Begrepen uit de geest der Renaissance* [Erasmus. Understood in the Spirit of the Renaissance], which also remains untranslated into English.<sup>56</sup> The book bears, as Peter van den Dungen elucidates, “autobiographical overtones”:

“De Ligt often made a clear distinction between ‘official, state-supporting pacifism’ and the anti-militarism of direct action. The former approach he associated with a tradition going back at least to [Hugo] Grotius: it aimed to tame war, but did not condemn defensive war. But de Ligt distinguished between those who condemned war and those who strove for a comprehensive peace (and for the creation of a society from which it could emerge). [...] He recognized in Erasmus a kindred spirit who, four centuries before, had fought, even though in a feudal-Catholic form, not only against war and violence, but also for the idea of free thought and for the liberation of humanity. Erasmus, like de Ligt, wanted to sweep away a stale, bigoted, degenerate, and militaristic Christianity.”<sup>57</sup>

All of de Ligt’s historical research was a corollary to his anti-militarist activities, including the founding of the International Anti-Militarist Bureau against War and Reaction in 1921 (he acted as one of

its secretaries until 1936), his editorship, since June 1930, of *Bevrijding* (Liberation), initially the journal of the *Bond van den Religieuze Anarcho-Communisten* (Union of Religious Anarcho-Communists), which programmatically changed its subtitle to *Maandblad gewud aan de vernieuwing van het socialisme* (Monthly magazine devoted to the renewal of socialism), and his public controversy with Mahatma Gandhi, whom he eventually met in Geneva on December 8, 1931. Their meeting was preceded by an exchange of letters between 1928 and 1930, in which they debated the ethics of nonviolence.<sup>58</sup>

De Ligt criticized Gandhi for his participation in British military efforts during the Boer War between 1899 and 1900, in the Zulu Rebellion of 1906, and the First World War. He argued that such actions compromised Gandhi's commitment to nonviolence and disqualified him as the moral successor to Tolstoy, who had subordinated national interests to universal human needs. Gandhi responded by acknowledging his involvement in these conflicts but explained that his actions were driven by a sense of duty and a belief in the potential for moral growth within the British Empire. He saw his participation, particularly in medical services, as a form of nonviolent service rather than support for war. Gandhi admitted that his adherence to nonviolence was not yet perfect and that he was striving toward absolute fearlessness and purity in his practice of *ahimsa* (nonviolence). De Ligt urged Gandhi to adopt a more radical stance against all forms of violence, emphasizing the need for a universal commitment beyond nationalistic aims.

Aside from Gandhi, de Ligt criticized another prominent pacifist of the times, namely "George Lansbury [1859–1940] (whose personal crusade in 1937 to preserve peace involved appeasement of the dictators). In both cases de Ligt was one of the very few dissenting voices from within the peace movement."<sup>59</sup> Instead of appeasement, de Ligt proposed active nonviolent resistance on a large scale, or, in today's language, civilian-based or social defense. Conscious of the fact that such an approach would require systematic conceptualization, de Ligt had already presented his "Plan of Campaign Against All Wars and Preparation for War" at the July 1934 meeting of the War Resisters' International (WRI) at Welwyn, England. Though this com-

prehensive proposal was appreciated in de Ligt's immediate circles, the Plan never achieved the stage of practical implementation. When the Peace Pledge Union issued the Plan as a stand-alone pamphlet in 1939<sup>60</sup>, Nazi Germany's intent to subdue Europe had long been in the planning.

In the United States, the publication of a pamphlet entitled "What If We Should Be Invaded? Facing a Fantastic Hypothesis" in March 1939, written by Jessie Wallace Hughan (1875–1955) under the impression of Franco's victory, aided by Hitler and Mussolini, in the Spanish Civil War, can be interpreted as an echo of de Ligt's proposal. Two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the War Resisters League in New York issued a slightly altered version of Hughan's pamphlet, which by now must have appeared to her contemporaries outside of pacifist circles even more "fantastic" than when it was initially published. Anticipating such antagonistic sentiments, Hughan cautioned in her foreword: "We deal with three wholly hypothetical conditions: a voluntarily disarmed country, an unprovoked invasion of this country by a foreign power, and a government and people who have decided to resist this invasion by non-violent methods. Since none of these conditions is a reality, none of the suggestions here presented can be taken as referring to the present conflict."<sup>61</sup>

Bart de Ligt's Plan and his historical studies should be regarded as part of a wider project to create and institutionalize what he referred to as the "Science of Peace". He outlined the course of such science in his inaugural lecture of the first Summer School of the *Academie de la Paix* held near Paris at Jouy-en-Josas, France, in August 1938, one month before his death. De Ligt began his lecture by stating that modern war has come to depend on modern science. The German *Wehrwissenschaft* to him is a poignant example of this development: "This concerns not only military science in the strict sense of the word and the organization of agricultural, industrial and social life, but also aims at developing all the physical, moral and intellectual forces of the nation in the direction of absolute war."<sup>62</sup> According to de Ligt, "modern scientific war" was made possible by the "universal prostitution of the mind"<sup>63</sup>, and for that reason he assigns special responsibility to the intellectuals.

It has been noted that de Ligt already anticipated, although in different terminology, today's common distinction between a "negative" and a "positive" peace<sup>64</sup>, and only the latter can be the true goal of a worthy science: "This peace is not a temporary state of non-war, a period of calm between a past war and a future one, but a permanent and definitive state above all war and all non-war. [...] This peace, which could only be attained in a system of universal justice, thus demands the abolition of all forms of injustice and exploitation."<sup>65</sup>

Such definition also raises the question of the methods used in the fight against injustice and exploitation, which necessarily leads to an examination of the Marxist dogma:

"In our day still the Marxists go on glorifying civil war with arguments which are becoming more and more obsolete, whilst all experience from the World War till the civil war in Spain demonstrates irrefutably that civil war only turns the revolution from its most essential aims. One may safely say that, generally speaking, armed collective defence has lost its meaning, because the means of war used by a people, class or race in order to defend itself, attacks and corrupts in the first place the people, class or race in question."

If violence is neither an acceptable nor a capable means in emancipatory struggles, then anyone working for a science of peace will have to reflect on how to develop and employ effective nonviolent resistance:

"Still it is natural, and from a moral point of view obligatory, that men should defend their rights and their liberties and fight against injustice for the establishment of a social order which coincides with peace. The science of peace should therefore elaborate a whole system of non-violent fighting and prepare a new system of education for individuals and the masses. In a word, whereas the science of war, having reached its culminating point, can only aim at totalitarian war, the science of peace can only aim at

totalitarian peace. This means that all the moral and intellectual forces of men in all professions and all branches of science and art, must be mobilized in the service of peace and its natural complement: social justice.”<sup>66</sup>

Buried under the rubble not only of the Second World War, but also under the relentless ideology of violence across the political spectrum from left to right, Bart de Ligt’s œuvre merits rediscovery.

### **Example 3: “Mutual Aid” and its reception in the peace movement**

Two years into the First World War, the Austrian publicist Leopoldine Kulka (1872–1920) contributed an article to *Jus Suffragii*, the official journal of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. She addressed the apologists of the mass murder in the trenches:

“Those who uphold war are always telling us that struggle is a law of nature. But as certain as this law of struggle, discovered by the great Englishman Darwin, there exists a second law, that of mutual help. The great Russian Kropotkin, in his investigation has discovered and proved what a tremendous part this law plays in the whole animal world and in the case of primitive man, and also in our existence which is so apparently full of strife. To bring it to its fullest development is the task of our civilisation. And to whom should this law appeal more, who could feel more at once with it, than woman?”<sup>67</sup>

Kulka, a delegate to the remarkable International Congress of Women at The Hague in late April 1915, here affirms the ideological, ethical and scientific relevance of Peter Kropotkin’s *Mutual Aid*, first published as a book in 1902, to the peace movement, and to its feminist adherents not least.

The book challenged the Social Darwinist idea that evolution is driven solely by competition, arguing instead that cooperation is equally fundamental to survival and progress. Drawing on examples from animal behavior, human history, and communal traditions, Kropotkin showed that solidarity and mutual support are natural forces shaping both biology and society. The book provided a scientific and ethical foundation for anarchist thought, countering capitalist individualism and the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* (“war of all against all”<sup>68</sup>) with a vision of voluntary cooperation. Its influence has extended beyond anarchism into anthropology, sociology, and ecology, and it remains a key text for understanding the role of cooperation in nature and human communities.

Nevertheless, the reception of Kropotkin’s book and the concept more generally within the wider peace movement appears to be an understudied subject. As indicated by Kulka’s remark, Kropotkin was and remained clearly visible on some pacifist’s intellectual horizons, and we find further evidence attesting to this in a canonical 1922 German language handbook *Die Friedensbewegung* (The peace movement), which recommends *Gegenseitige Hilfe* (Mutual Aid) under the extensive section “Newer pacifist literature”.<sup>69</sup>

Not always, however, credit is explicitly given to Kropotkin when using the term as such. Take, for instance, the avowed anti-anarchist Alfred Hermann Fried from Austria:

“Nowhere in nature does the ‘struggle for existence’ lead to the extinction of one’s own species. Among all living beings, this fate is observed only in humans. In contrast, throughout nature, *the law of ‘mutual aid’* prevails within species. The struggle for existence is only legitimate in the struggle of humans against the forces of nature, for only there is it productive. And it is precisely this struggle that drives humans to organization. *Thus, even the natural law of struggle justifies pacifism.*

To eliminate war from interstate relations, humans do not have to ‘become angels,’ as is skeptically claimed. They only need to truly be what they are by nature: *egoists* who, however, must first learn to truly recognize their true interests.”<sup>70</sup>

Fried’s quest to “organize” the world, in order to replace “anarchy”<sup>71</sup> by international arbitration and voluntary cooperation of nation-states was bound up with a rhetorical strategy to make pacifism palatable even to the staunchest of German patriots. Thus, additionally inserting the name of the Russian-born anarchist Kropotkin, may, in his view, not have helped to elevate pacifism’s reputation.

Fried’s reference to the concept differs sharply from that of the WRI. In July 1925, the organization held a major conference in Hoddesdon, near London, an event at which the delegates amended their original “Statement of Principles” from their founding conference in 1921 at Bilthoven, Netherlands. Following a debate on the organization’s “attitude to the state”, in which even Emma Goldman (“a visitor”) took a lively part, the delegates did refrain from the anarchist’s categorical rejection of the state, and instead opted for a pragmatic proposal put forth by the historian Hans Kohn (1891–1971) from Mandatory Palestine, who, according to the conference protocol, “said he thought that anarchists were right in their theories, but the W.R.I. existed for the practical purpose of resisting war. They should concentrate upon the objective of taking from the State the right to dispose of human life.”<sup>72</sup> Kropotkin’s spirit, then, is found in the final sentence of their amended “Statement”:

“[...] The State exists for man, not man for the State. The recognition of the sanctity of human personality must become the basic principle of human society. Furthermore, the State is not a sovereign self-contained entity, as every nation is part of the great family of mankind. We feel, therefore, that consistent pacifists have no right to take up a merely negative position, but must devote themselves to abolishing classes, barriers between the peoples, and to creating a worldwide brotherhood founded on mutual service.”<sup>73</sup>

Both Fried and the WRI invoke Kropotkin's concept as a catchword to reinforce their divergent anti-war agendas. A thorough study of this reception history would need to examine more closely the distinct strategies adopted within the broader peace movement in their engagement with "mutual aid".

#### **Example 4: The broken rifle and Chris Lebeau – on the origins of a peace symbol in anarchism**

Chris Lebeau's remarkable lithograph on the cover of this issue centers around the broken rifle, a peace symbol that usually appears as a standalone emblem for antimilitarist organizations such as the WRI.<sup>74</sup> Here, however, the surrounding aesthetic amplifies the act itself: we witness a uniformed soldier actively rendering useless his weapon by breaking it over his knee whilst standing in front of a massive building engulfed in flames. Magnifying the left-hand side of the poster we can detect two capitalized Dutch words: "MUNITIEFABRIEK" next to the still-smoking chimney of an ammunition factory, and "KAZERNE" on the lower right-hand side, where a barracks is ablaze.

In 1924, the poster alerted contemporary passersby to a "Grand Open-Air Meeting in Commemoration of the Founding of the International Anti-Militarist Association in 1904 and the Outbreak of the World War in 1914".<sup>75</sup> However, only regular readers of *De Wapens Neder*, the monthly organ of the International Anti-Militarist Association (*Internationale Anti-Militaristische Vereeniging*, IAMV) in the Netherlands, edited by Bart de Ligt at the time, would have noticed that the Lebeau's motif was a slightly modified version from an earlier lithograph included in the monthly's May issue, prior to the Meeting. While at first glance very similar, there are differences: the inserted title "Weg met het militarism" [Down with militarism] sends a clear message, the lines are more accentuated, soldiers are parading in the background and in front of what appears to be a burning government building.

The July meeting, then, was to be held in the city center of The Hague, the government seat of the Netherlands, and also home to the Peace Palace. Inaugurated in 1913, this iconic building accommodat-

# DE WAPENS NEDER

I A M V

MAANDORGAAN VAN DE INTERNATIONALE  
ANTIMILITARISTISCHE VER. IN NEDERLAND

20<sup>DE</sup> JAARGANG N<sup>o</sup> 5 MEI 1924

I A M B

## EEN OPROEP TOT DIENSTWEIGERING

Een correspondent van het I.A.M.B. schrijft uit Noorwegen:

Kamerad!  
 Sedert gij den laatste brief ontvangen hebt, is hier voor het militarisme veel veranderd ten goede. Het laat het in het kort volgen.

Op een geconveneerde vergadering den 10den Februari jl., was aanwezig waren Norsk Social-Anarchistisk Forbund, Norsk Syndikalistisk Federation, Venstrekommunistisk Ungdomsforening — dat wil dus zeggen:

noorsche, anarchisten, syndicalisten en revolutionaire jeugd

— besloot men om gezamenlijk de antimilitaristische agitatie weer te hand te nemen.

De laatste organisatie was gedurende 4 jaren aangestoten bij Moskou, maar kon zich temslotte niet langer verenigen met het optreden van het bolsjewistisch militarisme.

Op deze geconveneerde vergadering kwamen de drie organisaties overeen, om gezamenlijk een oproep uit te zenden aan de noorsche dienstplichtigen, met het doel

massa-dienstweigering

te wekken.

Reeds rekenen wij op een aantal van 300 dienstweigerers, leden der drie genoemde organisaties, die bij de eerstvolgende lichter weigeren zullen.

Wij hebben besloten, dat

galkluidende verklaringen

door de dienstweigerers zullen worden ingezonden.

Het grootste gedeelte van de noorsche vakbeweging zal met ons mee werken in deze poging om aan het militarisme hier een knak te geven.

De eerste vergadering die we hielden, was bezocht door een duizendtal dienstplichtigen. Honderden moesten worden telargesteld, omdat de zaal reeds overvol was.

Nadat onze oproep in verschillende bladen is gepubliceerd geworden, zijn reeds 14 personen, die er mede te maken hebben,

door de justitie vervolgd.

Binnen eenige weken moeten zij voor de rechtbank verschijnen.

Een redacteur van een arbeidersblad in Stavanger, Olsen Hagen, is reeds veroordeeld tot 6 maanden gevangenisstraf voor het plaatsen en schrijven van sommige antimilitaristische artikelen. We souden gaarne weten, dat het I.A.M.B. een protest inzond aan het noorsche ministerie van Justitie te Kristiania. Handte spoedig en zoudt hij dan copie van dat ingezonden protest, opdat ik het weer in de verschillende noorsche bladen kan publiceren.

Hierbij ook de vertaling van den oproep. Deze is thans voor de tweede maal gedrukt en gaat te 10.000 ex. Ons landelijk comité bestaat uit 1 personen: één van elke organisatie. Dan komen de plaatselijke comité's, bestaande uit gewonen toekomstige dienstweigerers.

SCHERMERHORN

is voorgesteld voor den Nobelprjs; het Noorsch Social-Anarchistisch en het Sweedsch Anarchistisch Verbond hebben evenzoo Kamerad bij het Nobel-comité voorgesteld voor den vredesprjs 1924, met de motivering, dat Schermerhorn een van de beste strijders voor vreedzame is.

Ik zal je verder op de hoogte houden van hetgeen hier gaat gebeuren.

OPROEP AAN DE DIENSTPLICHTIGE JEUGD

De strijd tegen de kapitalistische militaire macht is altijd een noodzakelijkheid geweest voor het arbeidersvolk, indien het tot economische en sociale vrijheid zou willen komen. Deze strijd heeft in hooge mate bijgedragen tot het verenigen der arbeiders, omdat allen bespezen, dat de weg ter bevrijding leidt over de



versterking van het kapitalistische militarisme heen.

Er valt niet aan te twyfeld, of ons leger is een klasse-leger.

Bij iedere staking toch van eenige betrekken worden de soldaten oproepen om de onderkruipers te beschermen. De hoofdreden waarom een leger staande wordt gehouden, is om het tegen den invendigen vijand te kunnen aanwenden de arbeidersklasse zoo noodig naar te staan, telkens wanneer deze zich verrijft om daar eischen met kracht ingewilligd te krijgen.

Het is al lang geen geheim meer, dat de soldaten onder den algemeenen dienstplicht verded zijn in

betrouwbare en onbetrouwbare elementen.

Alleen de betrouwbare, de trouwe beschutten van het kapitalisme worden, zoo noodig, oproepen en gewapend, om de arbeiders naar te slaan.

Het moet allen arbeiders duidelijk gemaakt worden, wat het werkelijk doel van het leger is. Iedere arbeider moet in het staatsleger een vijandige organisatie zien, en behoort zich ervan bewust te zijn, dat wanneer het om strijd tegen de arbeidersklasse te doen is, «ik, die in het leger dienst doe,

schandelijker dan een onderkruiper handeld.

Ondergeteekende organisatie, gesteund door de Norsk Arbeidsparti, hebben daarom besloten

zich te verenigen tot een organisatie van samenwerking om de arbeidersklasse, en

vooral de jeugd tot een meer energiek strijd tegen het klasse-leger op te waken.

Wij roepen de gaasche arbeidersjeugd toe, allen militairen dienst te weigeren!

Zagt duidelijk en klaar, dat ge het kapitalistisch-leger niet wilt steunen, noch de blaatte in stand houden, dat het leger in den strijd tussehen kapital en arbeid onpartijdig zou wezen.

Wij weten, dat zulk een dienstweigering opnieuw de rechtsapparaten in werking zal brengen, en we zijn verplicht, dien dienstplichtigen, die aan ons parool gevolg zouden willen geven, erop te wijzen, dat die oppoering tot vervolging en straf zal leiden. Maar we weten ook, dat deze strijd een strijd is

in het belang der arbeidersklasse.

dat de arbeidersjeugd door een georganiseerde dienstweigering het leger voor het gehele volk wil ontmaskeren als een werktuig in handen van de heerschende klasse.

In dat zij in haar strijd de sympathie en den zedijken steun erven zal van allen, die er een volksgaveur in zien, dat de kapitalistische klasse door het leger haar

economische dictatuur bevestigt.

Wij doen tenaastte een beroep op alle georganiseerde arbeiders om de actie der arbeidersjeugd actief te steunen, door achter dezen oproep een versterking van het leger

de georganiseerde macht der vakbeweging te plaatsen: door het boycotten van alle militaire transporten en van alle vereerdig van oorlogsmaterialen.

WEIGERT SOLDAAAT TE ZIJN!  
WEIGERT ALLEN MILITAIREN ARBEID!  
OP VOOR DE MILITAIRE STAKING!

Venstre-kommunistisk Ungdomsforening  
Hakon Meyer Nils Hovstad

Norsk Social-Anarchistisk Forbund  
Malfred Bergseth

Norsk Syndikalistisk Federation  
Anton Kristiansen

Latere berichten melden, dat niet in de wereld zuden van dezen oproep gevolgd werd door het behygen van groote vergaderingen, welke oetnemd slaagden.

De eerste vergadering te Kristiania, in het gebouw «Samfund», was zoo bezocht door jongmensen, die weldra zoudes worden oproepen, dat honderden belangstellenden op straat moesten blijven staan.

«De heeren bolsjewieken hebben nu ook een oproep aan de noorsche arbeiders uitgezonden, waarin ze de dienstplichtigen opwekken, om aan onze oproep geen gehoor te geven, maar naar de kazernes te gaan om daar de wapens te herree gebruiken, en dan te beginnen onder leiding van Moskou een roed leger te vormen.» Ze zien in deze beweging een groot gevaar voor het roed militarisme. Ze ontzien zich niet, om afschouwen er reeds verscheidene kamervaden vervolgd worden, flink op de antimilitaristen af te geven. Hun invloed neemt echter zielderoven af, en hun actie is slechts mogelijk door den steun, dien zij uit Moskou krijgen.

Het revolutionaire antimilitarisme dringt diep door onder het volk. De toenemende vervolgingen woken geestdrift onder de menigte.

Wegens het plaatsen van den oproep worden reeds vervolgd de redacteurs van «Revelt», «Arbeiderbladet», «Roda Ungdom», «Alarna» (het laatste blad is dat der syndicalisten. Het voorlaaste is dat der revolutionaire jeugd).

Figure 3. Chris Lebeau, “Weg met het militarisme,” *De Wapens Neder* [The Hague] 20, no. 5 (May 1924): 1.

ed an array of organizations that grew out of the liberal-democratic peace movement of the nineteenth century: the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Peace Palace Library of International Law, the Carnegie Foundation (which paid for the building), and since 1923 also the Hague Academy of International Law, as well as the United Nations' International Court of Justice (1946-present). Reportedly, Nieuwenhuis at the time could not let this inaugural event pass by without sarcasm: "The Peace Palace is open; war can begin."<sup>76</sup>

Not far away from the Peace Palace—a mere 2 kilometers on foot—the advertised antimilitarist event took place in the garden of Prinsengracht 73 on Sunday afternoon, 27 July 1924. From the names of speakers provided in the poster's lower left corner we learn that six anarchists were expected to speak, most prominently at the top of the list stood Emma Goldman (1869–1940), followed by the French printer Lucien Eugène Haussard (1893–1969), and an Austrian representative of the WRI, Pierre Ramus (1882–1942). Unsurprisingly, the strong current of Dutch antimilitarism was represented by Albert de Jong, Bart de Ligt, and a nephew of Nieuwenhuis, the former Christian minister N[icolaas]. J[acob]. C[ornelis]. Schermerhorn (1866–1956).

Indeed, Emma Goldman, after her recent escape from Soviet Russia via Berlin, heading for France onto England, accepted an invitation to speak at the event, apparently memorable enough to merit inclusion in her autobiography:

"My Dutch visa permitted a stay of only three days, yet long enough to address the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Anti-Militarist Society, organized by our grand champion of peace, our old comrade, Domela Nieuwenhuis. Dutch secret-service men watched the house of my host, de Ligt. They followed us to the station and waited until my train pulled out. At the same time the Dutch Government was entertaining another visitor, a Soviet representative. No limit was put on his stay, nor were his movements shadowed. When I expressed surprise that a reac-

tionary government like that of Holland should offer hospitality to an emissary of the Communist State, my friends smiled. ‘Russia is a wheat-producing country and Rotterdam a good centre for the distribution of her exports,’ they explained.”<sup>77</sup>

In the aftermath of the July Meeting, *De Wapens Neder* carried reports and presented a photograph of Haussard, Goldman and Ramus on its September issue cover page (see Brigitte Rath’s article in this issue for a reproduction). Indeed, the Meeting had “international character”, according to the caption of the “snapshot” of the three anarchists. It probably was Bart de Ligt himself, the editor at the time, who continued the photograph’s voluminous caption with a rhetorical question: “Doesn’t this immediately contradict the assertion, made by some, that antimilitarism is actually just ‘Dutch stubbornness,’ which only undermines Dutch ‘independence,’ while this is unknown abroad?”<sup>78</sup>

There is little doubt as to the reasons for inviting Goldman. Two and a half years after the beginning of the First World War, the United States entered the fighting on the European battlefields on 6 April 1917. Goldman, who had warned early on about the preparedness movement, “the road to universal slaughter”<sup>79</sup>, reacted to the introduction of compulsory military service under the Selective Service Act by founding the No-Conscription League. On June 4, the eve of the first draft day, a large meeting was held at which Goldman called on all young men to examine their conscience and refuse enlistment. The fact that Goldman viewed compulsory military service not only as a state-sanctioned training system for organized murder, but also as a fundamental threat to the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of the individual, especially the freedom of conscience, thus constituting an attack on democracy itself, is illustrated by the inscription on a gravestone on the cover of the following day’s issue of her journal *Mother Earth*: “JUNE 5th/IN MEMORIAM/AMERICAN DEMOCRACY.” This issue also included the No-Conscription League manifesto.<sup>80</sup>

While scholars have not explicitly connected Goldman's League to other contemporary initiatives, it seems clear that she and Alexander Berkman (1870–1936) drew their inspiration from pacifist organizations such as the British No-Conscription Fellowship, founded in November 1914 in London by Fenner and Lilla Brockway (1888–1988 and 1889–1974) and Clifford Allen (1889–1939), and from the American Anti-Enlistment League, founded in 1915 in New York City by Jessie Wallace Hughan, Tracy Dickinson Mygatt (1885–1973) and John Haynes Holmes (1879–1964), with whom Goldman had maintained a lively correspondence. Therefore, Goldman's warm greetings to her Dutch friends of the IAMV five years after the meeting at The Hague serve as a reminder of her continued commitment to peace:

“I congratulate the IAMV on its splendid struggle of 25 years against the most crushing machine in the world: militarism and war. The service to the sanctity of life and human integrity of your organization and the Dutch comrades has been tremendous. May you continue in the brave fight until the human race will be imbued with the spirit of freedom, justice and love. Until it will build a new world based on the unity and harmony of mankind and not on mutual hate and destruction.”<sup>81</sup>

Goldman's letter was published in a special issue of *De Wapens Neder* on the occasion of the IAMV's anniversary. Following an initiative by Nieuwenhuis, the IAMV was founded during an antimilitarist congress between 26-28 June 1904 in Amsterdam.

As to the origins of the broken rifle, the commonly held view asserts that this peace symbol made its print debut on the cover page of *De Wapens Neder* in January 1909 (Vol. 5, No. 1).<sup>82</sup> While it is correct that the symbol became an unmistakable marker for anarchist anti-militarism before the First World War—note that the German anarchist weekly *Der freie Arbeiter* carried the broken rifle in its header from April 1909 until March 1932—, the true origin needs to be predated to a full five years earlier: the broken rifle time appears for the first on the cover page of the very first issue of the French anarchist journal *L'Action Antimilitariste* (1904-1905).

# L'Action Antimilitariste

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LÉONARD, — Angoulême: L. B. BARRIÈRE, — Ju-  
zeville: F. FERRIER, — Brest: HENRI BARRIÈRE,  
— Saint-Etienne: M. A. BARRIÈRE, —

les criminels palliatifs qu'on  
vous propose pour étouffer vos  
doutances.

En dehors de toute personna-  
lité et de toute coterie, le journal  
s'efforcera toujours d'atteindre  
révolutionnaire et agres-  
sif.

Il s'agit d'être à ceux qui sont  
propagateurs de l'efficacité de nos-  
tre propagande de ne pas nous  
méseuser toute concurrence.

LA REDACTION.

## A QUI LES BALLES?

S'il s'agit d'être à ceux qui sont  
propagateurs de l'efficacité de nos-  
tre propagande de ne pas nous  
méseuser toute concurrence.

Entre deux crimes: telle est la  
situation du jeune gars quittant le  
foyer bourgeois de l'ouvrier pour la  
brève du soldat.

Qu'on porte que son oreille, hypno-  
tisé par une telle consigne, attendant

pour être reconnus citoyens. Tant  
qu'ils ont gagné quelques sous pour  
acheter leur pain, la Patrie est venue  
réclamer sa dîme, ils ont payé l'impôt  
et se sont achetés. Vous en faites  
autant. Vos parents n'avaient ni eux  
ni champs, ni maisons, ni domaines.  
Toute leur existence lie ont dû payer  
pour s'acheter sous un toit des inter-  
pètes des sautons. Vous en faites  
autant. Quand vos parents sont deve-  
nus vieux, ils ont cessé de travailler,  
la Patrie qu'ils ne payaient plus les a  
renvies et leur a refusé du pain, com-  
prenez sur le terre à quoi il eux, ils n'ont  
pas mangé, ils n'ont pas repus leur  
tête, ni abrité leur corps, ils sont  
morts dans un fossé, sur un grabat ou  
à l'hospice mendiant. Vous en ferez  
autant.

Toute votre vie ne passera à payer  
le luxe d'avoir une Patrie et quand  
vous lui tendrez la main elle ne vous  
reconnaitra pas, elle vous reniera, elle  
vous tuera. C'est que, voyez-vous, en  
degit du droit que vous payez d'avoir  
une Patrie, vous n'en avez point qui

de douleur, le sang coulant à flots; tout  
en mathématisant les assassinats glo-  
riaux, M. Frédéric Passy se croise les  
bras et ne bouge pas.

C'est que le pacifiste est un être sin-  
gulier et complexe. On arrête devant un  
mal, il veut bien en condamner les ef-  
fets, mais se refuse absolument à voir  
la cause. Il reconnaît volontiers que  
ces effreuses boucheries ou destructions  
tant de lentes inconséquences sont à la  
face abscondes, inutiles et criminelles,  
seulement et vous lui expliquez qu'il n'y  
a qu'un seul remède: le désarmement  
complet et la suppression absolue des  
armées; et vous lui montrez que la  
source du mal réside justement dans  
ces armées permanentes, réunies  
pour les nations qui les entretiennent,  
dans cette conception saugrenue et  
d'essence religieuse: le patriotisme, et  
en dernier lieu, dans l'idée d'auto-  
rité, où à l'aise le pacifiste se vaille la  
face et le visage des cœurs d'effroi. Il se  
marrie plus.

Les pacifistes constituant une douzaine  
qui est bien d'être rare, il y en a eu à  
toutes les époques. Il est si facile de  
discourir, de condamner en paroles,  
voilà même de mener et de se mettre  
un mandat en collier. On ne risque pas  
grand chose à ce jeu. Aussi les laïcs des  
pacifistes s'allongent-elle et prend-elle  
de proportion raisonnable.

Les yeux maintenant qui possèdent  
leur pensée, il faut foudroyer, il y a douze an-

rien y avoir de commun entre les paci-  
fistes et nous. Les uns ont insisté par  
un vague et pléurnichard humanita-  
risme, les autres par leur croyance en  
un être divin. L'antimilitarisme est une  
toute autre conception. C'est la révolte  
voici et consciente, non pas en vertu  
de lois divines, mais en nom des droits  
imprescriptibles de l'individu. L'anti-  
militarisme s'élève contre l'idée de Pa-  
trie, s'insurge contre la servitude mili-  
taire et journal, par leur les moyens,  
la suppression des armées et des propé-  
dites, qui sont entrainés la fin des  
guerres et des exploitations.

Nous avons autre chose à faire, que  
de verser des larmes de crocodile sur  
les champs de bataille. Nous avons à  
nous adresser au peuple doulé en a  
faussé l'esprit et le jugement: c'est le  
quel on a éveillé les instincts grossiers,  
le plus des canailles, le sold des fa-  
teurs, aux yeux doulé on a bien fait  
d'induire les des patrons, le claquant  
des panaches, les chamarrures et les  
d'armes.

Il nous faut extirper de l'âme du peup-  
le, ou s'en débarrasser. Il faut lui des-  
siller les yeux en le forçant à voir, à  
regarder ce qui se passe au-delà des  
roulottes, en lui montrant clairement  
l'entraîne humaine, savoir, souffrir, et  
résister pour la cause humaine: il faut  
réveiller sa conscience en lui faisant  
toucher du doigt les monstruosité, les  
inutilité, les crimes, sans nombre, des

Figure 4. L'Action Antimilitariste. Organe mensuel de combat 1, no 1 (September 15, 1904): 1.

Encircled by the motto “Not a man, not a penny for militarism” (« Pas un homme, Pas un centime pour le militarisme ») and against the backdrop of a rising sun, two strong hands break a rifle in two. On the same page is an article by Victor Méric (1876–1933) entitled “Pacifistes”. The content betrays its author’s contemporary need to delineate ideological positions:

“Generally speaking, there can be nothing in common between the pacifists and us. Some are inspired by a vague and whiny humanitarianism; others by their belief in divine beings. Antimilitarism is a completely different concept. It is a deliberate and conscious revolt, not in virtue of divine laws, but in the name of the inalienable rights of the individual. Antimilitarism rises up against the idea of the Fatherland, rebels against military servitude and pursues, by all means, the abolition of armies and borders, which alone will bring about the end of wars and exploitation.”<sup>83</sup>

The short-lived French journal, heir to earlier antimilitarist organizations from France such as the *Ligue antimilitariste*, 1902, and the *Ligue des antipatriotes*, 1886, was the counterpart to the much longer-lived *De Wapens Neder* (1903-1940), and both served as organs for the IAMV. The Dutch journal “was published in an edition of 35,000 copies during World War I, and by 1924 it had thirty international branches, together with representation from 60 Trade Unions and several anarchist societies.”<sup>84</sup> The fact that editors borrowed their journal’s title—whether affirmatively or critically is yet to be decided—from the best-selling 1886 German-language novel *Die Waffen nieder!* by Bertha von Suttner, who went on to edit an influential pacifist monthly of the same title between 1892 and 1899,<sup>85</sup> showcases yet another overlap between the anarchist and pacifist tradition. As we have seen before, Suttner and A.H. Fried came from a very different tradition of peace activism, one that sought to influence public opinion in favor of peaceful settlement of disputes and against imperialism, advocating arbitration, disarmament and a reorganization of international “anarchy” that existed among the nation-states, replacing it by an “organized pacifism”.

The tentative public success of pacifist and antimilitarist ideas and organizations in the aftermath of the millions of deaths on the battlefields of the First World War began to stagnate and even reversed after the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the growing of fascism in Europe. It became obvious that the League of Nations was incapable of maintaining world peace, particularly in safeguarding the interests of smaller or less powerful states such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

A woodcut by Chris Lebeau, published in the Christmas number of 1933, captures the crisis of pacifism and antimilitarism during this period. Towering over two pathetic-looking figures, a giant muscular worker effortlessly breaks the rifles of the recently appointed Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler (below the giant’s right hand), and that of the prominent pacifist and physicist Albert Einstein (below the giant’s left hand). The antimilitarist giant apparently prevents a gunfight between Hitler and Einstein, or what they supposedly represent here: “fascist militarism” and “socialist militarism”, because, according to the artwork, “fascism, militarism, nationalism” are “one”.

30<sup>STE</sup> JAARGANG

Prijs 10 cent

# DE WAPENS NEDER

MAANDORGAAN VAN DE INTERNATIONALE ANTIMILITARISTISCHE VEREENIGING IN NEDERLAND

## KERSTNUMMER 1933

Tegen  
fascistisch  
militarisme

Tegen  
socialistisch  
militarisme



**FASCISME, MILITARISME, NATIONALISME  
Dus zijn EEN.  
ANTIMILITARISME!**

**Figure 5.** Chris Lebeau, “Tegen fascistisch militarisme. Tegen socialistisch militarisme. FASCISME, MILITARISME, NATIONALISME – Dus zijn EEN. ANTIMILITARISME!” *De Wapens Neder* 29 [wrong count on the cover page], no. 12 (December 1933, Keerstnummer): 1.

What happened that Albert Einstein (1879–1955), in the 1920s and early 1930s a public, yet critical supporter of the League of Nations and also of the War Resisters' International, ended up as a subject of ridicule on an antimilitarist caricature (an unfair one, to say the least, in the face of the antisemitic attacks against him by the Nazi regime, and the fact that he abhorred the totalitarian system of the Soviet Union, which at the time built up its Red Army, after it had already introduced a conscription system in 1925)?

Nothing short of a “shock”<sup>86</sup> befell the antimilitarist movement in the summer of 1933, when Einstein distanced himself from his decades-long commitment to conscientious objection and other tenets of pacifism. In the year before, Einstein, speaking at a press conference on 22 May 1932, together with the British pacifist Arthur Ponsonby (1871–1946), had taken a decisive stand against the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments held in Geneva under the auspices of the League of Nations:

“Since it has become apparent that the negotiations in Geneva are not progressing in such a way as to lead to a practical disarmament program which would be essential if the world is to be saved from the horror of a new war, we believe the time has come for the peoples of the world to take the matter into their own hands. They must insist on complete disarmament within five years, and on the immediate renunciation of war under any circumstances. At the same time, they must request the abolition of conscription and the immediate cessation of the military draft and of the production of arms and munitions.

The peoples of the world must be prepared to achieve these goals by refusing, both individually and collectively, to perform military service or to participate in the production and transportation of war materials.”<sup>87</sup>

Invoking Einstein's name was not uncommon in European pacifist and antimilitarist writings, and he was frequently asked to lend his worldwide reputation in support of various peace causes. But when

Einstein was invited to appear for the defense at the trial of the two Belgian conscientious objectors and anarchists Léo Campion (1905–1992) and Marcel Dieu (pseudonym: Hem Day, 1902–1969), jailed in Brussels, the famous physicist sent the following reply on July 20, 1933:

“What I shall tell you will greatly surprise you. Until quite recently we in Europe could assume that personal war resistance constituted an effective attack on militarism. Today we face an altogether different situation. In the heart of Europe lies a power, Germany, that is obviously pushing toward war with all available means. This has created such a serious danger to the Latin countries, especially Belgium and France, that they have come to depend completely on their armed forces. As for Belgium, surely so small a country cannot possibly misuse its armed forces; rather, it needs them desperately to protect its very existence. Imagine Belgium occupied by present-day Germany! Things would be far worse than in 1914, and they were bad enough even then. Hence I must tell you candidly: Were I a Belgian, I should not, in the present circumstances, refuse military service; rather, I should enter such service cheerfully in the belief that I would thereby be helping to save European civilization.

This does not mean that I am surrendering the principle for which I have stood heretofore. I have no greater hope than that the time may not be far off when refusal of military service will once again be an effective method of serving the cause of human progress.

Please bring this letter to the attention of your friends, especially the two who are now in prison.”<sup>88</sup>

Einstein’s turnaround was reported in the press around the globe, and for years on bitter reactions ensued from his former antimilitarist sympathizers. They reprinted the letter and slandered him an “apostate”<sup>89</sup>, but most all of them ignored the problem that Einstein had

put forth: how to defend against a military invasion by an aggressor so profoundly evil as the Nazis.<sup>90</sup> When challenged again in 1935, Einstein spelt out that refusing military service under totalitarian rule “means martyrdom and death for those courageous enough to object.”<sup>91</sup>

Franco’s victory in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) appeared already to resolve the question of whether fascism had to be halted by military means. For the majority of anarchists, support for the anti-fascist militias was a matter of course (see on this controversy also the contribution by Mark Antliff in this issue). When the history of anarchism is examined and narrated through the perspective of peace history, however, it becomes easier today to reflect upon the necessary side-effect of such a decision: the emergence of a distinctly anarchist militarism, and its manifestations in Spain.<sup>92</sup> In connection with the earlier Ukrainian War of Independence (1917-1921) and the “Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine,” led by Nestor Makhno (1888–1934), we likewise encounter the related phenomenon of atrocities perpetrated by anarchist militias.<sup>93</sup>

Complicating this matter further was the question of whether the anarchists, in contradiction to their antimilitarist principles, should support the Allied powers in the Second World War. While this question may appear, on the surface, like a mere repetition of a similar row during the First World War<sup>94</sup>, a new rift between anarchists after 1939 came to the fore most starkly in relation to the assessment of the uniquely murderous character of Nazism and the need to defend democracies against it.

Many Jewish anarchists such as the circle around the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* (New York), but also others such as Grigorii Maksimov (1893–1950), Alexander Shapiro (1882–1946), Diego Abad de Santillán (1897–1983), and Max Nettlau (1865–1944) supported the position of Milly Witkop (1877–1955) and Rudolf Rocker (1873–1958), who advocated against appeasement, and for military intervention against Germany, because a Nazi victory would have meant the destruction of all the freedoms won since the French Revolution. Rocker, who had received direct assistance from Einstein in securing a

permanent visa for the United States after his life-saving escape from Nazi Germany following the Reichstag fire on 27 February 1933,<sup>95</sup> noted:

“To claim that we could be indifferent to who wins this terrible struggle is to cover the backs of the cowardly murderers and prepare the world for the blessings of Hitler’s ‘new order’. [...] By making the fight against the dictatorship and the cannibalism of the totalitarian state the order of the day, we do not believe for a moment that bourgeois society is the best of all worlds [...] Only when the world has been freed from the plague of the militarization of social life and from every tendency toward a total termite state will new possibilities for constructive creation open up to it. [...] If the working classes of society were unable to build a dam against the crimson tide of war, then at the very least the dreadful lesson of recent history should serve them as a spur to bring such catastrophes to an end once and for all.”<sup>96</sup>

Similar in this regard to Einstein and also Bertrand Russell (1872–1970)<sup>97</sup>, Rocker’s position ran counter to that of the anarchist *Freedom* group in London, which did not pay special attention to the novel threat posed by the Nazis in general, and its antisemitic crimes in particular. Shocked by receiving the news of the Shoah, Mollie Steimer (1897–1980) wrote to her friend Milly Witcop, the wife of Rudolf Rocker, on 22 September 1943: “Last night I read again about those *death houses* created by the Germans to exterminate the Jews, and I thought I’d go mad. The worst of it is that there is *no real indignation* shown about it *anywhere!*”<sup>98</sup>

Perhaps the most critical self-reflection came from Helmut Rüdiger (1903–1966), who fled to Sweden in early 1939 where he survived the war, working for the anarchist-syndicalist Central Organisation of Swedish Workers (SAC). In a long letter addressed to Rocker, written nearly two weeks after the official surrender of Nazi Germany, Rüdiger polemicized against the “‘idiocy of neutrality’ in our movement”

during the war: “I was not ‘neutral,’ nor did I take refuge in cheap phrases about a proletarian world revolution, but rather tried, with my modest means, to contribute to Germany’s defeat.” Rüdiger even described the French syndicalists as “unpaid collaborators of Hitler’s fifth column” and continued:

“When I look to England – I occasionally read War Commentary – I find that the English anarchists also seem to have very little sense of historical proportion and perspective. Our activities in Sweden must appear to these people as purely counter-revolutionary. [...] Well, I am grateful to the English people for all they did in 1940 to repel the invasion, while our comrades there raged against the ‘imperialist war,’ together with the Stalinists, by the way.

[...] In this situation, I have come to understand that our fate is linked to that of democracy, even if we are a revolutionary faction, a critical minority.”<sup>99</sup>

In view of positions such as these it becomes clearer why the broken rifle, after 1945 at the latest, lost its exclusive attachment to anarchist antimilitarism that was so characteristic of the time before the First World War. This trend did not escape the poet Erich Mühsam (1878–1934), who in his typical biting irony made an example of his fellow anarchist Pierre Ramus, the WRI representative from Klosterneuburg, Austria, when commenting on the gradual transfer of the peace symbol into the hands of the so-called absolutist (Tolstoyan) pacifists as early as 1927:

“In the past, when we had universal conscription in Germany, the most important fight against the state was the anti-militarist one. Back then, the sign of the broken rifle meant: smash the state’s weapons, refuse to carry them for the state! - In the meantime, the old German military state has collapsed, and the anti-militarist propaganda, which used to be the preserve of the most radical members of the proletariat, has become the common property of all bourgeois paci-

fists. They shout: Never again war! and preach unctuously against bloodshed. No citizen wants to see that this beautiful vision of the future can never become reality as long as capitalism has not been eliminated in revolutionary struggle, because it is not his way to get to the roots of an evil. He likes to reform methods, but touching the system is too troubled a business for him. And the anarchists? Conservative and lost in their childhood memories, they forgot to take off their rifle pins, and when the pacifists pinned them on, they even forgot the original meaning of the symbol and happily adopted the one that their new friends attached to it. In the anarchist movement, sentimental pacifist negators of violence were able to gain a foothold! The German anarchists, one of whose best, August Reinsdorff, laid his head on the scaffold, became the laughing stock of the revolutionary workers as non-violent kohlrabi apostles. Certainly, this incredible aberration seems to have been overcome in almost all anarchist circles outside Klosterneuburg, but it is sad enough that it was possible.”<sup>100</sup>

At the time of Mühsam’s polemic, the anarchist founder of the Berlin Anti-War Museum, Ernst Friedrich (1895–1967), played a pivotal role in popularizing the peace symbol by distributing broken rifle-shaped broches and lapel pins that he sold as “anti-murder badges”<sup>101</sup> (see also Julian Nordhues’s article in this issue<sup>102</sup>). These were also advertised in the pages of Ramus’s journal *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* out of Vienna.

Today, the broken rifle mainly signifies the struggle for the human right to conscientious objection against military service and conscription, although the symbol has not lost its historical connection to antimilitarism. Various non-governmental organizations have forged it into their logos, for instance the L’Union pacifiste de France, whose monthly’s header features the broken rifle alongside a striking epigraph from the anarchist Louis Lecoq (1888–1971) whose hunger strike in the early 1960s pressured the French government

into legalizing conscientious objection: “If it were proven to me that by waging war, my ideal had a chance of taking shape, I would still say no to war. Because you cannot build a *humane society* on piles of corpses.”<sup>103</sup>

A comprehensive, transnational history of the broken rifle is yet to be written, and yet to be curated is a beautifully illustrated and richly contextualized public exhibition on this peace symbol.<sup>104</sup>

## Contributions to this issue

**Hanna Delf von Wolzogen** examines Gustav Landauer’s (1870–1919) reflections on peace and war through his letters, writings, and political engagements during the First World War and the German Revolution. Landauer, a leading anarchist thinker, warned against European militarism in his journal *Der Sozialist* long before 1914. Through parables, dialogues, and correspondence, Landauer articulated an alternative vision of political life rooted in sociability, love, and mutual aid rather than coercion. His letters from 1914–1918 illustrate both his sharp critique of nationalist intellectuals and his insistence that philosophy and cultural life remain vital against the ideology and deadly practice of war.

During the German Revolution of 1918–19, Landauer accepted a leading role in the Bavarian Council Republic, advocating for a federation of autonomous communities and cultural renewal as the foundation of socialism. However, his disillusionment with authoritarian and militarized strategies of revolution deepened, culminating in his final letters that stress the primacy of creative, nonviolent forms of liberation. Arrested and murdered in May 1919, Landauer left behind a legacy that links anarchism, pacifism, and cultural philosophy, offering enduring insights into the challenges of fighting for peace in times of censorship and war.

**Brigitte Rath** reconstructs the intertwined biographies of Pierre Ramus (Rudolf Großmann) and Olga Misař, two leading figures of Austrian anarchist pacifism during the first half of the twentieth century and situates them within the broader history of the War Resisters’

International. Rath, using gender as an analytical category, highlights how both activists, though united in their rejection of militarism and advocacy of conscientious objection, differed in style, emphasis, and political strategies. Ramus, whose trajectory led from American anarchist circles to Austrian antimilitarist networks, developed a combative, highly public intellectual persona, publishing widely and seeking to anchor anarchism in everyday cooperative practice. Misař, by contrast, emerged from the women's movement and brought to the anarchist milieu skills of organization, transnational networking, and public communication that were crucial to sustaining the Austrian WRI branch.

**Alberto Castelli** explores the political thought of Andrea Caffi (1887–1955), situating him as a critical yet often overlooked voice in twentieth-century debates on revolution, violence, and the state. Beginning with his formative experiences in Russia and Germany, the text traces how Caffi's early socialist sympathies and encounters with intellectual figures such as Georg Simmel shaped his worldview. His disillusionment with the First World War, followed by his critique of Bolshevism, reinforced his conviction that political violence, regardless of ideology, inevitably leads to new forms of domination. Caffi's writings on fascism highlight his understanding of it as both a symptom of Europe's moral and civilizational crisis and as a manipulative exploitation of mass disorientation. Rejecting simplistic political remedies, he advocated for antifascism grounded not in armed struggle but in intellectual and ethical renewal.

Central to his philosophy is a radical critique of the state as intrinsically coercive, incapable of fostering justice or freedom. Instead, Caffi envisioned "society" as a fragile but essential sphere of spontaneous sociability, grounded in human solidarity and free from domination. In his later works, particularly *Violence and Sociability*, he argued that genuine revolution could only emerge from cultural and moral transformation, cultivated by small groups of committed individuals rather than mass movements or militarized parties.

The essay concludes that Caffi's rejection of violence and his emphasis on the moral and cultural dimensions of social change anticipate later nonviolent struggles of the twentieth century. His thought offers a powerful reminder that liberation requires not merely political conquest but the nurturing of alternative forms of coexistence that embody the very values of freedom and humanity they seek to secure.

**Irina Gordeeva** portrays the Tolstoyan movement in Russia during the early twentieth century and its pioneering role in the origins of peace research. Emerging from Leo Tolstoy's ethical and religious philosophy and from the populist movement (*narodnichestvo*), Tolstoyanism developed into a radical pacifist and Christian-anarchist movement that united intellectuals and peasants in a vision of social transformation through nonviolence, freedom of conscience, and communal justice. The study highlights how Tolstoyans not only advocated conscientious objection to military service but also created extensive archives documenting acts of resistance, thereby laying the groundwork for what later became known as Peace Studies. Figures such as Vladimir Chertkov, Konstantin Shokhor-Trotsky, Mikhail Muratov, and Valentin Bulgakov pursued research that blurred boundaries between scholarship, activism, and human rights defense. Their efforts to theorize nonviolent revolution, reinterpret desertion as a form of mass protest, and link grassroots religious traditions with global currents of nonviolence anticipated modern approaches to peace and conflict research, as well as some theoretical trends of the new social history and people's history. Although suppressed under Bolshevik rule and largely erased from official memory, the Tolstoyans' intellectual and practical legacy reveals an early, underexplored foundation of nonviolent thought and peace activism in Russia.

**Julian Nordhues** details the work of Ernst Friedrich, anarchist, pacifist, and founder of the Berlin Anti-War Museum (1925), focusing on his visual strategies of anti-militarist agitation in the Weimar Republic. Friedrich is best known for his photo book *Krieg dem Kriege* (War against War, Vol 1 [1924], Vol 2 [1926]), which used shocking medical images of disfigured soldiers alongside ironic captions to expose the brutal realities of the First World War and to challenge militarist propaganda. While scholarship has often emphasized the book's

“shock rhetoric,” this study situates Friedrich’s work within broader intermedial and political contexts. His activities included editing anarchist journals, curating exhibitions, staging poetry and theatre performances, creating postcards and radio broadcasts, all of which targeted youth and sought to construct a counter-world to militarist traditions.

The article highlights how Friedrich’s integration of photographs into political discourse anticipated a visually driven counter-public sphere. By juxtaposing images of war atrocities, mutilated bodies, and civilian executions with sarcastic commentary, Friedrich subverted nationalist iconography and broke taboos of war representation. His approach paralleled contemporary anti-war works such as Karl Kraus’ *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (The Last Days of Mankind), which similarly employed satire, collage, and documentary evidence to dismantle propaganda and expose war crimes.

Press reception, both supportive and hostile, underscored the provocation of Friedrich’s work: left-liberal outlets praised his courage, while nationalist associations condemned his attack on military honor. Ultimately, *Krieg dem Kriege* stands as a political intervention that challenged the culture of remembrance in Weimar Germany and exposed the violent underpinnings of state and militarism.

**Mark Antliff** unearths and analyzes the ideological and personal exchanges between Herbert Read (1893–1968) and John Middleton Murry (1889–1957) during the Spanish Civil War, situating their debates within the broader development of pacifism and anarchism in Britain. Read’s 1937 manifesto “The Necessity of Anarchism”—first serialized in *The Adelphi* and later expanded in *Poetry and Anarchism* (1938)—is often interpreted as his first major articulation of anarchist thought. Yet the essay was written in direct dialogue with Murry’s “The Necessity of Pacifism” (1937), a key text of Britain’s Peace Pledge Union. Murry’s Christian socialism advanced an “absolute” pacifism grounded in faith and nonviolent resistance, rejecting anarchism as ethically irresponsible and overly individualistic. Read, by contrast, drew on psychoanalysis, medieval scholasticism, and anarchist theory to argue that the state itself was the root cause of war, and that its

dissolution—even by violent means—was the prerequisite for peace. Through detailed analysis of their writings, the article highlights their divergent responses to Marxism, fascism, democracy, and religion, as well as their contrasting views on the cultural role of rationalism, imagination, and faith. Central to their debate was the Spanish Civil War, dismissed by Murry as irrelevant but embraced by Read as the defining event that confirmed anarchism's necessity. By reconstructing this overlooked intellectual dialogue, the article reveals how anarchism and pacifism were intertwined yet contested traditions on the eve of the Second World War. Antliff further argues that their debates over means, ends, and the ethics of violence prefigured postwar shifts toward prefigurative, nonviolent resistance within both anarchist and pacifist movements.

**Kate Bredeson** presents her edited collection of Judith Malina's unpublished diaries from May 1968, making available a new primary source that provides an important perspective on the intersections of anarchism, nonviolence, theatre, and revolution. Malina (1926–2015), co-founder of the avant-garde company The Living Theatre, devoted her artistic and political life to what she called the “Beautiful Nonviolent Anarchist Revolution”.<sup>105</sup> Drawing on influences including Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht, and Antonin Artaud, she, with husband and artistic partner Julian Beck, developed a theatrical practice aimed at merging performance with direct political action. Her diaries—spanning decades and intertwining personal, professional, and political spheres—serve as an intimate record of her evolving commitment to pacifism, collective living, and cultural resistance.

The May 1968 entries document Malina's experiences in Paris and Avignon during the student and worker uprisings in France. Malina, alongside Beck and Carl Einhorn, witnessed and participated in debates, actions, and demonstrations, including the occupation of the Odéon Theatre. Her reflections capture the tension between violent and nonviolent strategies, the role of art as revolutionary spectacle, and the precarious balance between utopian ideals and political realities. She envisioned revolution as the eradication of all forms of systemic violence—economic, cultural, bureaucratic, and physical—through nonviolent, collective transformation.

**Sophie Scott-Brown**'s review essay assesses two recent contributions to peace history—*The Oxford Handbook of Peace History* (2023) and Jerry Elmer's *Conscription, Conscientious Objection, and Draft Resistance in American History* (2023)—through the lens of anarchist critiques of state power. The article argues that anarchism, though largely absent from mainstream peace historiography, remains a vital “poltergeist” within the field, continually challenging assumptions about authority, coercion, and the conditions of peace.

The *Oxford Handbook* surveys dominant themes, methods, and debates in peace history but largely frames peace within liberal paradigms of conflict management, social reform, and international order. While chapters occasionally register dissent—addressing inequality, gender, and race—its overall approach sidelines anarchist-pacifist traditions and reduces peace to a managed extension of state power. By contrast, Elmer's focused legal history of U.S. conscription from the Civil War to Vietnam demonstrates how draft laws entrenched state control over civil life, while also highlighting how conscientious objection and draft resistance became key sites of contestation. His study reveals the law's dual role as both an instrument of coercion and a resource for resistance, emphasizing the creative alliances and direct actions that emerged from anti-draft struggles.

Together, these works underscore the tension between institutionalized peace narratives and anarchist visions of dispersing power. The review suggests that the future of peace history depends on acknowledging anarchism's disruptive insights into state violence, resistance, and the social imagination required to build alternatives.

**Eric Laursen** reviews William Marling's *Christian Anarchist: Ammon Hennacy—A Life on the Catholic Left* (2022), exploring the paradoxical life of Ammon Hennacy (1893–1970). Once a tonguetied high school debater, Hennacy became a celebrated pacifist, tax resister, street orator, and radical Christian anarchist. Curiously, it was his background in door-to-door sales that shaped his rhetorical style, enabling him to connect with people one-on-one while advocating nonviolence, anti-war resistance, and spiritual transformation. Influenced by Tolstoy, Berkman (who he knew in prison), Gandhi,

and the Sermon on the Mount, Hennacy promoted a “one-man revolution,” grounded in personal responsibility and moral witness rather than collective ideology. His activism spanned prison resistance, fasting, tax refusal, and leadership within the Catholic Worker movement, although his restless spirituality led him through multiple faiths. Marling captures Hennacy’s tireless agitation and complex relationships but leaves aside questions about his broader political legacy that are increasingly relevant today. Ultimately, Hennacy exemplified an uncompromising, deeply personal form of anarchism that sought to transform society through individual moral awakening.

## Notes

1 I am grateful to my colleagues Nina Franzke and Alice Kordt (Freie Universität Berlin) for their assistance with formatting and proofreading some of the articles for this issue.

2 My biographical sketch here largely follows the Dutch account given by Rudolf de Jong, “LEBEAU, Joris Johannes Christiaan,” in: *Biografisch Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, Vol. 6, ed. Pieter J. Merteens et al. (Stichting tot Beheer van Materialen op het Gebied van de Sociale Geschiedenis, 1995), 135–138. A slightly extended and updated version is found on the BWSA website (maintained by the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam): <http://hdl.handle.net/10622/1E9B0272-84C0-42E6-9F36-CF3999717C1B>. Additional biographical information stems from the exhibition catalogue by Mechtheld de Bois, *Chris Lebeau 1878–1945* (Drents Museum Assen/Frans Halsmuseum Haarlem, 1987).

3 Susan R. Henderson, “Architecture and Theosophy: An Introduction,” *Architronic: The Electronic Journal of Architecture* 8, no. 1 (1999): 1–4. <https://oaks.kent.edu/journals/architronic-electronic-journal-architecture/vol8/iss1/architecture-and-theosophy>.

4 While his fellow prisoner Nico Rost gave the night from April 1 to 2 as Lebeau’s date of death (see de Bois, *Chris Lebeau ...*, 50fn37), the records held at The Arolsen Archives – International Center on Nazi Persecution indicate that Lebeau died in the morning of April 3 (see <https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/de/document/10170972> and <https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/de/document/10170973>).

5 “Lebeau Joris; Partner: Herman Maria,” *Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center*, Israel, <https://collections.yadvashem.org/en/righteous/4043336>

6 Mulford Q. Sibley, *The Political Theories of Modern Pacifism* (Garland Publishing, 1972), 11–30. Mulford Quickert Sibley (1912–1989) was an American Quaker and political scientist who actively supported the civil rights movement. He contributed to *Liberation. An Independent Monthly* (1956–1977), which was also a forum for outspoken anarchist-pacifists such as George Woodcock (1912–1995) and Paul Goodman (1911–1972). Sibley, thus, represents the affinity between anarchism and pacifism in the early phase of the so-called Cold War, reflecting about these two political traditions in numerous publications, for example in a publication series of the Pacifist Research Bureau based in Philadelphia (*The Political Theories of Modern Pacifism: An analysis and criticism*, 1944), and in a brochure entitled *Pacifism, Socialism, Anarchism. Which way to peace and justice?* (War Resisters League, 1980).

7 Joshua Coupe, Charles G. Bardeen, Alan Robock, Owen B. Toon, “Nucle-

ar Winter Responses to Nuclear War Between the United States and Russia in the Whole Atmosphere Community Climate Model Version 4 and the Goddard Institute for Space Studies ModelE,” *Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres* 124, no. 15 (2019): 8522–8543.

8 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2025. Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security. Summary* (Oxford University Press, 2025), 4. [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/yb25\\_summary\\_en\\_v2.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/yb25_summary_en_v2.pdf)

9 Ellie Kinney, Stuart Parkinson, Lennard de Klerk et al., How increasing global military expenditure threatens SDG 13 on Climate action (Conflict and Environment Observatory, May 2025). <https://ceobs.org/how-increasing-global-military-expenditure-threatens-sdg-13-on-climate-action/>; Stuart Parkinson and Linsey Cottrell, *Estimating the Military’s Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions* (Scientists for Global Responsibility; Conflict and Environment Observatory, 2022). [https://ceobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SGRCEOBS-Estimating\\_Global\\_Military\\_GHG\\_Emissions\\_Nov22\\_rev.pdf](https://ceobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SGRCEOBS-Estimating_Global_Military_GHG_Emissions_Nov22_rev.pdf)

10 Peter van den Dungen and Lawrence S. Wittner, “Peace History: An Introduction,” *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 4 [Special Issue on Peace History] (July 2003): 363–375 (363).

11 Ibid.

12 Cited in *ibid.*, 365.

13 van den Dungen and Wittner, “Peace History ...,” 363.

14 For instance, as in the title of the otherwise indispensable book *Varieties of Pacifism: A Survey from Antiquity to the Outset of the Twentieth Century*. (Syracuse University Press, 1990) by Canadian historian Peter Brock (1920–2006), a towering figure in peace history.

15 Charles Chatfield, “Introduction,” in: *War Resistance Through World War II*, ed. Charles Chatfield (Garland Publishing, 1975), 13f.

16 David Cortright, *Peace. A History of Movements and Ideas* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

17 Ruth Kinna, *Anarchism* (One World, 2005), 3.

18 See, for instance, George Woodcock, *Anarchism. A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Penguin, 1983).

19 Following the tripartite notion of violence (“direct”, “structural” and “cultural”) as developed by Johan Galtung (1930–2024) since the late 1960s.

20 An exception is the excellent albeit brief survey provided by Charles Chatfield, “Introduction,” in: *War Resistance Through World War II*, ed. Charles Chatfield (Garland Publishing, 1975), 13–45, who convincingly argued that the “political source [for modern pacifism and war resistance] lay in socialism, and the philosophical in idealistic anarchism, whether religious or secular” (14f.) See also the two short entries: Anthony J. Nocella II. and

Abraham P. DeLeon, “Anarchists in the Peace Movement” and Howard Clark, “Anarchist Theory and Peace,” in: *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace, Vol. 1*, ed. Nigel J. Young (Oxford University Press, 2010), 45-51. Another short but concise account, mainly focused on the relationship between the German anarchist movement and the peace movement, is by Ulrich Linse, “Anarchismus und Pazifismus,” in: *Die Friedensbewegung. Organisierter Pazifismus in Deutschland, Österreich und in der Schweiz*, ed. Helmut Donat and Karl Holl (ECON Taschenbuch, 1983), 20–25.

21 A term used by Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton University Press, 1972), 443 and Cortright, *Peace*, 195.

22 See, for example, Christian Bartolf and Dominique Miething, “‘Flame of Truth’: the global significance of Doukhobor Pacifism,” *Russian Journal of Church History* 4, no. 4 (Special Issue: History of Christian Peacemaking and Pacifism, edited by Dr. Nadezhda Beliakova) (2023): 6–27.

23 See, for example, Geoffrey Ostergaard and Melville Currell, *The Gentle Anarchists: A Study of the Leaders of the Sarvodaya Movement for Non-Violent Revolution in India* (Clarendon Press, 1971).

24 Peter Brock, *Varieties of Pacifism. A Survey from Antiquity to the Outset of the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse University Press, 1998), 86.

25 Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchism,” in: *The Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition* (Cambridge University Press, 1910), 914–919 (918). Emma Goldman, “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For,” in: *Anarchism and other Essays* (Mother Earth Publishing, 1910), 53–74 (69).

26 Gustav Landauer, “Anarchische Gedanken über Anarchismus,” *Die Zukunft* 37, no. 4 (1901): 134–140. See Dominique Miething and Christian Bartolf, “Gustav Landauer and the Revolutionary Principle of Non-Violent Non-Cooperation,” in: *The German Revolution and Political Theory*, ed. James Muldoon and Gard Keets (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 215–235. Landauer’s willingness to work for peace in non-anarchist pacifist organizations such as the *Bund Neues Vaterland* (New Fatherland League) and his activity as chairman of the Berlin branch of the *Zentralstelle Völkerrecht* (Central Office for International Law) were fondly remembered by Ludwig Quidde, the later Nobel Peace Prize laureate of 1927, on the occasion of the Eighth German Pacifist Congress, see *Achter deutscher Pazifistenkongreß einberufen von der Deutschen Friedensgesellschaft und der Zentralstelle Völkerrecht, Berlin 13. bis 15. Juni 1919 Preußischen Herrenhaus, Verhandlungsbericht* (Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1919), 11–12.

27 Errico Malatesta, *The Anarchist Revolution. Polemical Articles 1924–1931*, edited and introduced by Vernon Richards (Freedom Press, 1995),

28 Geoffrey Ostergaard, *Resisting the Nation State. The Pacifist and Anarchist tradition*, Studies in Nonviolence No 11 (Peace Pledge Union, 1982),

15–16.

29 See, for instance, the German journal *graswurzelrevolution*, published since 1972. Its “Working Group Anarchism and Nonviolence” edited two volumes of: *Je mehr Gewalt, desto weniger Revolution. Texte zum gewaltfreien Anarchismus & anarchistischen Pazifismus*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe Anarchismus und Gewaltfreiheit (Verlag Graswurzelrevolution, 2018 [Vol. 1, 2022 [Vol. 2]). See also Sebastian Kalicha, *Gewaltfreier Anarchismus & anarchistischer Pazifismus. Auf den Spuren einer revolutionären Theorie und Bewegung* (Verlag Graswurzelrevolution, 2017).

30 Andrew Fiala, “Anarchism and Pacifism,” in: *Brill’s Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy*, ed. Nathan J. Jun (Brill, 2018), 152–170.

31 Alex Christoyannopoulos, “Mapping the landscape between pacifism and anarchism: Accusations, rejoinders, and mutual resonances,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 27, no. 1 (2024): 407–429. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481241257806>.

32 Ruth Kinna and Matthew S. Adams, *Anarchism 1914–1918. Internationalism, Anti-Militarism and War* (Manchester University Press, 2018); Ulrich Bröckling, “Zwischen ‘Krieg dem Krieg!’ und ‘Widerstrebet dem Übel nicht mit Gewalt!’ Anarchistischer Antimilitarismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich vor 1914,” in: *Gewaltfreiheit. Pazifistische Konzepte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Andreas Gestrich, Gottfried Niedhart and Bernd Ulrich (LIT, 1996), 39–59; Ulrich Bröckling, “Kriege gibt es nur weil es Staaten gibt – Facetten anarchistischer Militärkritik 1849–1934,” in: *Schule der Gewalt. Militarismus in Deutschland 1871 bis 1945*, ed. Wolfram Wette (Aufbau Verlag, 2005), 111–131; Gernot Jochheim, *Antimilitaristische Aktionstheorie, Soziale Revolution und Soziale Verteidigung* (Haag+Herchen, 1977). A noteworthy exception is the depiction of the activism of Dwight Macdonald (1906–1982) and other anarchists within the American peace movement in: Daniel Akst, *War by Other Means: The Pacifists of the Greatest Generation Who Revolutionized Resistance* (Melville House, 2022).

33 Recently, this problem has been thoroughly analyzed by Alexandre Christoyannopoulos, “An Anarcho-Pacifist Reading of International Relations: A Normative Critique of International Politics from the Confluence of Pacifism and Anarchism,” *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2022): 13pp. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqac070>

34 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 84 and 235. Emphasis in the original.

35 See the instructive account in Kinna, *Anarchism*, 108–157.

36 Élisée Reclus, “Anarchy [1894],” in: *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity. Selected Writings of Elisée Reclus*, ed. John Clark and Camille Martin (PM Press, 2013), 120–131 (120f.).

37 On the critique of anarchist glorifications of violence see Collectif Désobéissances libertaires, *Une Critique Anarchiste de la Justification de la Violence. Réponses aux écrits de Peter Gelderloos et des tendances autoritaires au sein du black bloc* (Atelier de création libertaire, 2019).

38 Émile Arnaud, “Le Pacifisme,” *L’Indépendance Belge*, August 15, 1901, 2. Emphasis in the original. Translation from the French is mine. The original reads: « Mais la conclusion que nous avons tirée de l’étude de M. Novicow est qu’il faut à notre grand parti un *nom*, que ce nom il ne l’a pas, et que cette absence nuit considérablement à nos progrès. Aucun des mots du dictionnaire n’est adéquat à notre programme. Nous ne sommes pas seulement des “pacifiques”, nous ne sommes pas seulement des “pacifiants”, nous ne sommes pas seulement des “pacificateurs”. Nous sommes le tout à la fois, et autre chose encore : nous sommes, en un mot, des *Pacifistes*.

Et d’ailleurs, pour designer notre parti, il nous faut un nom en *isme*, comme au royalisme, au Bonapartisme, à l’impérialisme, au républicanisme, au radicalisme, à l’opportuniste, au progressisme, au socialisme, au collectivisme, à l’anarchisme. Et ce nom, tout naturel, mais qui n’a jamais été à notre connaissance du moins, employé jusqu’ici, c’est : le *pacifisme*. »

39 Karl Holl, “Pazifismus,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Band 4*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck (Klett-Cotta, 1978), 767–787.

40 Alfred Hermann Fried, “Friedensfreund, Föderalist oder Pacifist?” *Die Friedens-Warte* 3, no. 29/30 (9 September 1901: 118–120 (119).

41 *Proceedings of the Tenth Universal Peace Congress, held in the St. Andrew’s Hall, Glasgow, From 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1901* (Office of the International Peace Bureau, 1902) 74–76.

42 The *Ligue Internationale de la Paix et de la Liberté* founded in Geneva should not be confused with the one founded a few months earlier in Paris, bearing a “confusingly similar name”, as historian Sandi E. Cooper rightly pointed out: the *Ligue international de la paix et de la liberte*, founded in April 1867 by French humanist Frédéric Passy (1822-1912), who in 1899 founded, together with William Randall Cremer, the Inter-Parliamentary Union. See Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism. Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 35 (endnote 10).

43 *Proceedings of the Tenth Universal Peace Congress*, 63

44 Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism*, 37.

45 *Ibid.*, 36–41.

46 Jane Addams, “Democracy or militarism,” in *The Chicago liberty meeting, held at Central Music Hall, April 30, 1899*, ed. Central Anti-Imperialist League (Chicago: Central Anti-Imperialist League, 1899), 35–39 (36f.).

- 47 De Paepe as cited in Arthur Müller-Lehning, *Die Sozialdemokratie und der Krieg. Der revolutionäre Antimilitarismus in der Arbeiterbewegung* (Verlag Der Syndikalist [Fritz Kater, Berlin], 1924), 7. Translation is mine.
- 48 On the debate within the International revolving around the strike as a means to prevent war, see Wolfgang Kruse, “Der Antikriegsstreik in der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung,” in: Gestrich et al., *Gewaltfreiheit ...*, 60–79.
- 49 Bart de Ligt, *Vrede als Daad: Beginselen, Geschiedenis en Strijdmethode van de Directie Aktie tegen Oorlog* [Peace as Deed: Principles, History and Methods of the Struggle of Direct Action Against War] (Van Loghum Slaterus, 1931/1933); Bart de Ligt, *La Paix Créatrice: Histoire des Principes et des Tactiques de l'Action Directe contre la Guerre* [Creative Peace: History of the Principles and Tactics of Direct Action Against War]. Two Volumes (Marcel Riviere, 1934).
- 50 Peter van den Dungen, “Jacob ter Meulen and Bart de Ligt as Pioneers of Peace History,” in: *The Pacifist Impulse in Historical Perspective* [Festschrift for Peter Brock on the occasion of his 75th birthday], ed. Harvey L. Dyck (University of Toronto Press, 1996), 52–72 (66). See also the instrumental article: Gernot Jochheim, “Bart de Ligt (1883–1938). Gewaltlosigkeit und antimilitaristische Aktion,” in: *Wider den Krieg. Große Pazifisten von Kant bis Böll*, ed. Christiane Rajewsky and Dieter Riesenberger (C. H. Beck, 1987), 103–110.
- 51 Aldous Huxley, *An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism* (Chatto & Windus, 1937), 18.
- 52 Aldous Huxley, “Introduction,” in: Bart de Ligt, *Conquest of Violence. An Essay on War and Revolution* (Routledge, 1937), ix.
- 53 Hans Wehberg, “Bart. de Ligt†,” *Die Friedens-Warte* 38, no. 6 (1938): 309–310.
- 54 George Lakey, “Introduction,” in: Bart de Ligt, *The Conquest of Violence* (Garland Publishing, 1972), 5.
- 55 Peter Brock, *Bart de Ligt (1883-1938). Reflections on Rereading “La Paix Créatrice” after Fifty-One Years* (Bart de Ligt-Fund / Foundation for Active Nonviolence, 1994), 24. Brock, in his *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton University Press, 1972), had already credited de Ligt with being a formative influence on his own scholarship, finishing on a critical note: “Unfortunately, in places the narrative is marred by a tendency toward erratic historical interpretation and a rather doctrinaire approach.” (505)
- 56 Bart de Ligt, *Erasmus. Begrepen uit de geest der Renaissance* [Erasmus. Understood in the Spirit of the Renaissance] (Van Loghum Slaterus, 1936).
- 57 van den Dungen, “Jacob ter Meulen and Bart de Ligt ...,” 65f.
- 58 The complete exchange of letters was first published and introduced

- with a scholarly introduction under the title: *The Breath of my Life. The Correspondence of Mahatma Gandhi (India) and Bart de Ligt (Holland) on War and Peace*, ed. Christian Bartolf (Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum, 2000).
- 59 van den Dungen, “Jacob ter Meulen and Bart de Ligt ...”, 65.
- 60 Bart de Ligt, *Plan of Campaign against War and all Preparation for War* (Peace Pledge Union, 1939).
- 61 Jessie Wallace Hughan, *Pacifism and Invasion* (War Resisters League, 1942).
- 62 Bart de Ligt, *Introduction to the Science of Peace, Peace Academy Lectures*, No. 1 (Peace Pledge Union, 1939), 9.
- 63 Bart de Ligt, *Introduction to the ...*, 15.
- 64 Jochheim, “Bart de Ligt ...”, 104. This notion was coined by Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–191.
- 65 Bart de Ligt, *Introduction to the ...*, 20.
- 66 Bart de Ligt, *Introduction to the ...*, 31.
- 67 *Jus Suffragii*, 1 April 1916, 95. I am grateful to Dr. Brigitte Rath (Vienna) for providing me with this reference from her book *Frei denken, frei leben. Die Biographie der Olga Misař* (Mandelbaum Verlag, 2025).
- 68 Thomas Hobbes in his *De Cive* (1642), as cited in the introduction of Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xviii.
- 69 *Die Friedensbewegung. Ein Handbuch der Weltfriedensströmungen der Gegenwart*, ed. Walter Fabian and Kurt Lenz (Schwetschke, 1922), 310.
- 70 Alfred Hermann Fried, *Kurze Aufklärung über Wesen und Ziel des Pazifismus* (Verlag der ‘Friedens-Warte, 1914), 22f. Emphasis in the original. Translation is mine.
- 71 *Ibid.*, 7 and 9.
- 72 *War Resisters of the World. An Account of the Movement in twenty countries and a Report of the International Conference held at Hoddesdon, Herts., England, July 1925* (War Resisters’ International, 1925), 30.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 10.
- 74 The WRI’s “main magazine” is also called *The Broken Rifle* (since 1986), <https://wri-irg.org/>
- 75 I am grateful to Henrike Vellinga (Universiteit Leiden) for introducing me to the digital resources of Delpher (Royal Library of the Netherlands) and to Peter van den Dungen (Bradford University) for providing me with additional information on the 1924 antimilitarist gathering at The Hague.
- 76 As cited in Rudolf de Jong, “Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis: Anarchist and Messiah,” *Delta, A Review of Arts, Life and Thought in the Netherlands* 13, no. 4 (Winter 1970–71): 65–78 (76).
- 77 Emma Goldman, *Living my Life*, Vol. 2 (Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), 959.

78 The original caption reads: “De serie foto’s die van den Landdag der I.A.M.V. op 27 Juli j.l. werden gemaakt, openen wij met een kiek van het drietal, dat het internationaal karakter aan de meeting gaf: Lucien Haussard (Frankrijk), Emma Goldman (Rusland) en Pierre Ramus (Oostenrijk). Logenstraft dit niet onmiddellijk de bewering, die van zekere zijde wordt gedebiteerd, dat antimilitarisme eigenlijk alleen maar “Hollandsche eigen-wijsheid” is, die alleen de Hollandsche ‘zelfstandigheid’ ondermijnen zou, terwijl men in het buitenland daar niet van weet? Het is jammer, dat onze buitenlandsche kameraden allem in Den Haag konden spreken. Van hoeveel beteekenis ware het geweest, als zij een tournée hadden kunnen houden. Maar slechts enkele uren voor den aanvang van de meeting met den trein gearriveerd, moesten zij den anderen dag weer vertrekken, niet uitgerust nog van de heenreis naar ons land. Zij hadden slechts enkele uren vrijheid van bewegen en spreken van de Nederlandsche autoriteiten verkregen ...” *De Wapens Neder* 20, no 9 (September 1924), 1.

79 Emma Goldman, “Preparedness, the road to universal slaughter,” *Mother Earth* 10, no. 10 (1915): 331–338.

80 Emma Goldman, “The no conscription league,” *Mother Earth* 12, no. 4 (1917): 112–114.

81 Emma Goldman, in: *25 Jaar Oorlog aan den Oorlog, 1904–1929* [Special Number of *De Wapens Neder*], ed. Arthur Müller-Lehning and Albert de Jong (Internationale Anti-Militaristische Vereeniging, 1929), 16.

82 This account is given, for instance, by Ed Hedemann, “History of the Broken Rifle Logo,” <https://www.warresisters.org/history-broken-rifle-logo/> and in the blog-entry by Andreas Müller, “Die Geschichte vom ‘Zerbrochenen Gewehr,’” May 18, 2024, <https://anarchismus.de/blog/geschichte-die-geschichte-vom-zerbrochenen-gewehr>, a well-illustrated case study of the broken rifle’s usage though almost exclusively within the German anarchist movement.

83 Victor Méric, “Pacifistes,” *L’action Antimilitariste. Organe mensuel de combat* 1, no 1 (September 15, 1904): 1. Translation is mine.

84 Chatfield, *International War Resistance ...*, 18f.

85 The monthly *Die Waffen nieder! Monatsschrift zur Förderung der Friedens-Idee* (1892-1899) has been fully digitized by the Austrian National Library: <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC02801796>

86 Jochheim, *Antimilitaristische Aktionstheorie*, 386ff. provides more context to this “shock”.

87 *Einstein on Peace*, ed. Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden, preface by Bertrand Russell (Schocken, 1968), 168.

88 Albert Einstein to Alfred Nahon, in: *Einstein on Peace*, 229.

89 See *Einstein on Peace*, 232.

90 A host of these responses from the Netherlands are documented in: Jochheim, *Antimilitaristische Aktionstheorie*, 388ff.

91 Albert Einstein, “A Re-Examination of Pacifism [January 1935],” in: *Einstein On Politics*, ed. David E. Rowe and Robert Schulmann (Princeton University Press, 2007), 284–286. Several historians and scholars have studied cases of nonviolent resistance to Nazism, though the field is smaller compared to work on armed resistance or collaboration. Key scholars include Jacques Semelin (*Unarmed Against Hitler: Civilian Resistance in Europe, 1939–1943* [Praeger Press, 1993]) and Nathan Stoltzfus (*Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany* [Rutgers University Press, 1996]). Studies such as these provide extreme-test cases that highlight both the limits and the surprising possibilities of nonviolent action in brutally repressive contexts. More recent studies in political science such as Erica Chenoweth and Maria J Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (Columbia University Press, 2011) provide the comparative theory and mechanisms that explain why those rare acts worked and why large-scale nonviolent mobilization against Nazism was very difficult.

92 Henry Brown, “The Anarchist in Uniform: The Militarisation of Anarchist Culture during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939).” *Contemporary European History* 33, no. 1 (2024): 305–22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777322000285>.

93 “... whole villages having been plundered and most of their inhabitants massacred by marauding bands (the followers of the anarchist chieftain Nestor Makhno gaining an especially bad name in this respect).” Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914*, 439. Brock here probably hints at one of the more notorious cases during the war, namely the Eichenfeld massacre of 1919. See for a recent study, Sean Patterson, *Makhno and Memory. Anarchist and Mennonite Narratives of Ukraine’s Civil War, 1917–1921* (University of Manitoba Press, 2020).

94 During the First World War, anarchists had already faced a profound internal conflict over whether to support the Allied powers or to maintain neutrality. Peter Kropotkin, together with fifteen other anarchists, signed the *Manifesto of the Sixteen* (1916), contending that a German victory would pose a greater danger to social progress and that anarchists therefore had a duty to support the Allied war effort. This intervention reacted to *The Anarchist International and the War* (1915) written by Errico Malatesta, who argued that the war was nothing more than a clash of rival imperialist powers and that anarchists, as internationalists, should reject participation on either side. The resulting debate fractured anarchist circles across Europe and underscored the persistent tension within the movement between an-

ti-militarist principles and the perceived necessity of resisting authoritarian threats.

95 See inventory numbers 36, 92, and 223, Rudolf Rocker Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

96 Rudolf Rocker, “Das Gebot der Stunde” [unpublished manuscript, 4 pages, undated], Inventory number 318, Rudolf Rocker Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. Translation from the German is mine. This archival material and the letters referenced in endnotes 97-98 were first quoted extensively in the pioneering research by Werner Portmann and Siegbert Wolf, »Ja, ich kämpfte« Von Revolutionsträumen, ›Luftmenschen‹ und Kindern des Schtetls. Biographien radikaler Jüdinnen und Juden (Unrast, 2006), 289–292.

97 “Ever since the war began I have felt that I could not go on being a pacifist; but I have hesitated to say so, because of the responsibility involved. If I were young enough to fight myself I should do so, but it is more difficult to urge others. Now, however, I feel that I ought to announce that I have changed my mind [...]” Letter by Bertrand Russell, in: *The New Statesman and Nation* XIX, no. 485 (June 8, 1940): 719.

98 Mollie Steimer to Milly Witkop, 23 September 1943, Inventory number 99, Rudolf Rocker Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. Emphasis in the original.

99 Helmut Rüdiger to Rudolf Rocker, 20 May 1945, Inventory number 188, Rudolf Rocker Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. Emphasis in the original. Translation from the German is mine.

100 Erich Mühsam, “Die Anarchisten,” *Fanal* [Berlin] 1, no. 7 (April 1927): 97–104 (102).

101 An example of such an advertisement is found in *Die Freie Jugend* [Berlin] 8, no. 3 (1926), 5. Ernst Friedrich’s reception in non-German speaking countries certainly deserves further study, see, for instance, the reprint of his pamphlet “Was klagst Du, Soldat?” [“What are you complaining about, soldier?”] translated into Dutch in *De Wapens Neder. Maandorgaan van de Internationale Antimilitaristen Vereeniging in Nederland* [The Hague] 20, no. 5 (May 1924): 2.

102 Nordhues’ original research also figures in the recently published comprehensive biography: Agnes Imhof, *Ein Brennglas des Jahrhunderts. Der Friedensrebell Ernst Friedrich* [A burning glass of the century. The peace rebel Ernst Friedrich] (Reclam, 2025).

103 Emphasis in the original. See also, for instance, the logo of Connection e.V. – International Support of Conscientious Objectors and Deserters (<https://en.connection-ev.org/>).

104 As far as I am aware, the only curatorial attempt revolves around the

Belgian city of La Louvière is: *Le Fusil Brisé, 1921-2021* (2021), curated by Andrea Della Vecchia and Michel Host, and Achille Van Yperzeele.

105 For further context information on the anarchist-pacifist positions within The Living Theatre, see also Allan Antliff, “Poetic Tension, The Aesthetic Politics of the Living Theatre,” in *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab’s Saloon to Occupy Wall Street*, ed. Tom Goyens (University of Illinois Press, 2017), 142–160. <https://doi.org/10.5406/illinois/9780252041051.003.0008>



## Gustav Landauer – Letters on Peace and War

Hanna Delf von Wolzogen\*

In 1919, the year of the German revolution, the anarchist Gustav Landauer (1870–1919) published a small volume entitled *Rechenschaft* [Accountability] with Paul Cassirer (1871–1926), renowned art dealer and editor.<sup>1</sup> It contains articles by Landauer from the journal he edited, *Der Sozialist*. In this journal, Landauer had warned of the danger of a European war since 1909 but remained largely unheard. The volume is introduced by a parable entitled *Of Snow and the King of England; of Eggs, Apples, Wheat, Oats and Nonsense; of Love and the Community*. The parable describes a conversation between mother, father and child about the consequences of globalization. The parable includes a prescient prophecy: “Creating something on a grand scale and with expediency would only work if there was a really great love of humanity, a very universal one.”<sup>2</sup>

In the weeks when the volume *Rechenschaft* entered the printing stage, a reading from Goethe’s *Märchen* [Fairy Tale] was scheduled as the third Goethe matinée [“Goethe-Morgen”] at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. In Landauer’s lecture notes, we find next to Goethe’s sentence: “Of the rulers of the world: ‘There are three who rule on earth: wisdom, appearance and violence’”, Landauer’s comment: “But now – at last, at last! – the temple is lifted up from the depths, into the open, into the light, into the public, into effectiveness, to the river over which the bridge now leads – a new one joins the rulers of the world: love.”<sup>3</sup> Restricted by wartime censorship, Landauer’s comment can also be read as a political statement in the public discourse.

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We may find ourselves surprised that a revolutionary mind such as Landauer would, moreover, refer to Goethe's novella *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderter* [Conversations of German Refugees] (1795), or that Landauer would quote from fairy tales or parables when he actually felt the urge to give an account of his political activism.<sup>4</sup> A closer look reveals what Landauer appreciated so much about this particular novella. After all, it is a description of a meeting of friends, whose conversations interweave with tales, each of which is recited by one of the participants. Goethe's conversations read as a prototype for a possible, previously unknown interconnection of literature and sociality; a bridge, a crossing of boundaries; a revolution?

The volume *Rechenschaft* concludes with a letter sent by Landauer on Christmas 1916 to the American President Woodrow Wilson, who led the peace negotiations between the Allied and Central Powers during the First World War. This letter, quasi as a counterfactual act with little chance of success, followed the tradition of Immanuel Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden* [Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch] (1795). Here, Landauer writes of the individual's and a peoples' "capacity for peace", of "permanent peace institutions" that should be created, congresses in which "openness, publicity and reciprocity" could be practiced. He frames these mechanisms as an effective supplement to the *Declaration of Human Rights* of 1789;<sup>5</sup> or, in a sense: Goethe's *Unterhaltungen* read programmatically, and actualized in a current perspective.

Ideas such as peace, it could be concluded, must, in order to become historically effective, be embodied in personalities who publicly stand up for them and permanently secured by institutions. Landauer apparently wanted to set an example:

"I am waiting to speak to the people only when there is once again a people ["Volk"] and a union of peoples ["Völkerverbindung"], freedom of speech among my own people and to all peoples. For the time being, I want to show that I have the right to do so. I give an account of what I said in the years before the war, as publicly as I was able to."<sup>6</sup>

Landauer associates the semantic shift in perspective within the concept of peace only hinted at here with fundamental new perspectives on what can be meaningfully understood by history, by European modernity, by revolution. He had expressed his theoretical views on this in the essay *The Revolution* (1907), in the *Call to Socialism* (1911) and in numerous individual essays. A year prior to his *Rechenschaft*, he had published the anthology *Letters from the French Revolution* (1919).<sup>7</sup>

With the beginning of the war in August 1914, Landauer's prognoses had taken on an undreamt-of explosiveness, but he was now practically condemned to silence. In March 1915, *Der Sozialist*, like other dissident journals, had to cease publication. Friendships also broke up due to divergent attitudes to the war. Landauer told his friend, the Austrian philosopher Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923) that “my task has grown like my loneliness”<sup>8</sup>. Instead of explicit political polemics, Landauer now gave lectures on Romanticism, Classicism and Goethe. With the decline of public activity, friendship networks became more important, and letters more than ever turned into forums for theoretical self-understanding. Some of these surviving letters on peace and war are presented here.

## **Before the War**

A literal man of letters, Landauer observed socio-political conditions and criticized texts with a sharp analytical eye. As such, he also gave an account of others, often unsparing and sometimes hurtful to his friends.<sup>9</sup> In 1902, for example, he described his impressions of the English in a letter to his cousin Rosa Landauer. Living with his second wife, the poet Hedwig Lachmann (1865–1918), in London at the time, Landauer writes:

“[...] The landscape here is lovely, but all in all it's nicer in Germany. They are a rusty, arch-conservative Chinese people here, without any upswing or inner freedom. They believe they have leased freedom and have no idea that freedom is not something you can sit on, that it requires longing and the ability to change. They properly long for peace now; because for most of them the war was a damned bad business.”<sup>10</sup>

Here, Landauer refers to the Second Boer War (1899 - 1912), which ended with great losses for the British Empire.

In the fall of 1912, Landauer again took up a literary form in his didacticized Socratic dialogues *Vom Krieg* [Of War].<sup>11</sup> Against the backdrop of the First Balkan War, which the Balkan League (Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia) waged against the Ottoman Empire under Russian patronage, Landauer discussed the logical and semantic complications arising from the word “war” (or delusion, madness, truth, life, death, bravery and heroism) in modern times. In a long letter by him and Hedwig Lachmann, expressing their gratefulness for Christmas gifts, Landauer addressed a comment made by Hedwig Mauthner (1872-1945) on these Socratic dialogues on war:<sup>12</sup>

“I do not know for sure whether I should be happier for myself or for you that you find the dialogues on war realpolitisch [displaying Realpolitik]. I cannot find anything new in it; [...]”<sup>13</sup>

### Start of the War

One day after the first shelling of Belgrade on July 29, marking the beginning of the war, Landauer wrote from Karlsruhe to Max ‘Malte’ Müller (1887–1943), the printer of *Der Sozialist*, who was to be drafted into the army one year later:

“... nothing in writing about what moves us. I repeat: let us continue to work quietly, and let us publish what is ours! [...]”

There are bad times ahead, worse than most people realize. [...] Do not take this sobriety [“Nüchternheit”] the wrong way; [...]”<sup>14</sup>

The chauvinistic frenzy of enthusiasm into which European, and in particular German intellectuals fell after their respective governments declared war upon another also divided the Forte Kreis, a circle of renowned European writers, artists, and philosophers gathering between 1910 and 1915 with the intention to bring about reconcili-

ation on the continent. Under the motto “Forte dei Marmi”—both a reference to the Italian sea town where the circle was constituted and to John Ruskin’s *Fors Clavigera*—, the group had met in June 1914 on the initiative of Erich Gutkind (1877–1965) and Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932) to discuss effective means against the impending war. Participants were the German writer Theodor Däubler (1876–1934), the Swedish psychologist Poul Bjerre (1876–1964) and the painter and writer Ernst Norlind (1877–1952), the Dutch writer Henri Borel (1869–1933), the Prussian government councilor Florens Christian Rang (1864–1924), the Austrian philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965) and his friend Landauer, who had initially cancelled.<sup>15</sup> But as early as September, Landauer informed his Dutch friend van Eeden that he did not want to “meet in a circle with Gutkind and Rang at this time”<sup>16</sup> and probably not later either. While the correspondence among the circle’s members continued, Landauer addressed Buber in no uncertain terms even before he gave the circle<sup>17</sup> an unequivocal rejection:

“[...] I must now no longer delay the message to the circle that I do not belong to it and that my earlier belief that this was a circle in which I belonged was a mistake and a well-intentioned imposition on myself. I address this communication to you, but I use the harsh words which I am about to utter only to you, and would like to leave it to you to reveal to the circle the meaning of my declaration and your impression, on which I am counting, that my decision is unalterable and that the reason which determines me is sound. In this way I hope to unite, as well as it can be done, the unavoidable truth and the desirable mercy.

It is possible and even probable that an even closer examination of the person of Rang and my inner relationship to him would also have brought me to this realization that there must be a divorce. I was as good as decided when a beautiful and true letter from Borel made me pause again and resolve to wait. [...] from now on, I no longer have the right to take part in the correspondence of that circle.

I no longer have the right, because I feel a disregard for another member of the circle that is so definite and final that it exceeds the limits of more than superficial and tolerant intercourse and thus – for me – explodes the circle; it may be made whole again after my departure. This other member is Gutkind, whom I must regard as intellectually and spiritually inferior on the basis of a letter he wrote to Romain Rolland on October 27, a copy of which was handed to me.

Spiritually inferior above all because his lack of self-awareness increases to an immodesty that leads him to disgrace others, [...] who have come together with him in a circle, in the most hopeless way. What should the fine, honest, strong-minded, pure-feeling Romain Rolland think of van Eeden's German friends and of the circle when a stranger approaches him with *this* letter and [...] declares that he is speaking authoritatively in the name of the absolute, and when Rolland now reads this consummate nonsense, in which crudeness and cowardly, will-less submission to officialdom are hidden behind mystical phrases? Such an unshakeable confusion of fermenting but by no means fermented leftovers from reading with reality, such a misjudgment of his own smallness, which prevents him from recognizing the shameful consequences of his intrusiveness for others, I must well describe as spiritual, no longer merely intellectual inferiority.

I regard Erich Gutkind as mentally inferior because, without a word of explanation, as if it must be self-evident, he identifies the *war*, which must take the place of the previous peace of the worst decay with the war that, on a completely different level, has broken out between the European states and is being waged by the European peoples against each other; because, without a word of explanation, he applies to this war between states and its expected consequences words such as the consummation of man-god, Dionysian

exuberance, silence in the sacred grove and similar words of the highest consecration; because he finally makes it clear enough that this war, in the particular form of the war of the German Empire against the English Empire, is identical for him with a war of the transcendental and 'mystical-musical' prevailing in the German spirit against the British atomizing 'feuilletonists' Bacon, Locke and Hume, so that this war of murder would be the machine on which the tendency flickering in Erich Gutkind's books would be manufactured.

I do not want to be in a circle [...] if there is someone in it at whom, while recognizing his good nature and his search for the noble, I have to laugh predominantly. I cannot be in a circle with anyone who does not wage his own *war*, but has it delivered to his house by the great political powers, because what they are doing bears the same name of war. I do not want to deny that I could still respect someone who, from a very high and very tragic view of the world, could find an effect of the Absolute even in this European war of the most atrocious kind; but the condition would be that those who wage *their* war against this war with every fiber of their hearts and minds would not be denied that they too could be representatives of the Absolute. Gutkind, however, who takes as the absolute an external object lying before his senses, identifies his own mixture of barrage of words and misinterpreted scientific hypotheses unreservedly with the official acts of his home government and calls this concoction the Absolute, whereas he dismisses with apodictic disdain the most honorable, most ardent, purest and most intimate revolt against this wild confusion of peoples as a relativism that does not even come into consideration. I find this attitude, especially when it is that of a German who believes his nation to be victorious against a Frenchman tormented by pain, as cowardly

as it is insolent; I find that the German members of the circle must be ashamed to their inner core of this unqualified spokesman; [...]"<sup>18</sup>

His friendship with Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923), Landauer's mentor in the realm of the critique of language, also entered a serious crisis. Although he was not unaware of Mauthner's nationalist views, Landauer had no understanding for the fact that Mauthner did not draw any practical conclusions from his own philosophy of language. Landauer placed a polemical allusion against Mauthner's denigration of the French philosopher Henri Bergson in one of the most important periodicals on modern theatre and literature in the German-speaking world, *Die Schaubühne*<sup>19</sup>:

"[...] I face up to you; by sending a copy of the 'Schaubühne'; [...].

As chance would have it, my last contribution to this journal contained a turn against you [...].

Quite apart from the chauvinistically agitated framing, I found the essay saddening. What on earth could you possibly have to be angry about Bergson? Because the whole tone in which you speak about him to a lay audience is angry. Show me a single passage where he makes a concession to theology, and I will show you three for him where words of yours can be misinterpreted in exactly the same way. He makes *teleological* attempts, seeks a creative principle in development apart from causality – that has nothing to do with the legend of creation except the word. [...].

How on earth should it be a disgrace to arrive at the same results as Schelling through new paths of very diligent research? Is it shameful to make a positive attempt out of a longing that you may well call religious? Is it not true that it does not speak against the originality of philosophers that their results are always the same?

I object to your tone. It would have been worth your while [...] to refute Bergson's apparently positive results. You would then have had no choice but to encounter the linguistic critic Bergson again and again in your research, to shake his hand and laughingly note the place where he – out of insurmountable longing – turns away from criticism and yet becomes a believer in words again. But why on earth do you get angry? Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, too, have become fashionable, and are what they are. [...]

You will see from the rest of this little article that we cannot understand each other in matters of what I call chauvinism and disgusting retaliation. That is, I already know, *you* will understand *me*. But I do not understand you. You, Fritz Mauthner, author of 'Sprachkritik' [criticism of language], you, Fritz Mauthner, a recognized and famous writer who is listened to and who is in no way politically ostracized, has a high task at that time – had. You once told me that I was, here and there, a kind of inspiration for courage. I wish I had been more.

[...]. I had hoped that mankind would not now lack your wonderful prudence and calmly investigative objectivity. [...]. You apologize for doing philosophy 'in these times'! When should one do it? Is there a better remedy for madness and murder than philosophy? We are the ones under attack; we are surrounded by enemies and have to defend ourselves at the greatest risk to our lives? Nothing else applies now? – Certainly; only that philosophy has to say that all others have exactly the same right to be in exactly the same desperate mood, that philosophy knows that all are under attack and all are only in defense; that philosophy knows that this is madness. It is enough! Calling this out that would now be the task of philosophy.

Of philosophy, not of the individual philosopher. He should preserve himself and speak carefully, so that we can benefit from him later. I have never postulated heroism, certainly not from others. But when I see the opposite, when someone apologizes for doing philosophy ‘in these times’ – Fichte, in 1813, did not apologize when he gave his lecture on the theory of science – then I can become sad. I am sad anyway, so that I sincerely ask you to forgive me for not preferring to remain silent. But to be completely silent about what moves the world is not possible; and so I must touch on the truth for a moment, since we are friends. [...]”<sup>20</sup>

Landauer’s extended his critique of Fritz Mauthner also to his friend’s wife Hedwig Mauthner, who volunteered as a physician in a military hospital. Taking a cue from Hedwig Mauthner’s own formulation, Landauer replied:

“[...] You write: ‘With clarity, sobriety or even irony, I am of no use at all to those who have to fight.’ You mean: the one who has to fight on the battlefield. Correct. But who claimed anything like that? No one. My specification ‘on the battlefield’ was necessary; for there are others who do not want to give up their fight even now, when it is not exactly easy, and they are certainly helped by clarity and everything that cannot be separated from it. If you do not feel the shame of the stupor, befuddlement and drunkenness of almost all our intellectuals as the worst of our time, you [...] shall hear that others feel it. Others, soldiers too. [...]

[...] The real ‘but’ that I find in your letter, however, does not concern my wife or me, but you. [...] What I am speaking of is that in the whole letter there is nothing of yourself, of your own tone, of your particularity, which we love. Who knows if you are not proud of it and think that now is not the time to be special. Perhaps you think you are writing the language of the people. But no, you write the language of the newspapers,

the German newspapers; you write the language of abnormal credulity, very poor observations, completely inadmissible generalizations and the grossest injustice. I take every opportunity to inform myself, and I know from the mouths of Prussian soldiers, officers and doctors that the wounds caused by enemy (especially French) infantry bullets generally heal perfectly, that there is not a single proof of the use of dum-dum bullets; but that, however, through indirect wounding (previous impact of the bullet), the bullet very often becomes a dum-dum bullet without the participation of the shooter and causes internal lacerations. [...]

Have you seen a single pair of pierced eyes yourself? I say in advance: no. *All* these reports, which at the beginning appeared to be fully authenticated, have been proved to be hysterical lies. [...]

I readily admit, however, that in this war, as in all others, the noblest, but also the crudest, elements have been awakened in the men, and furthermore that innately crude and criminal elements have gone to war with them and have often (not always) become even more brutish there. But to read from you, to read underlined, that you *know* that 'our soldiers' do not do that, is agonizing, not for your sake, but for the sake of example. Such are you, you barbarians and barbarian-screamers of all nations! I, on the other hand, know a priori that 'the' French are no less civilized and no less noble than 'the' Germans [...].

I also know field post letters from the French, Belgians, Russians, English – they are as beautiful and moving as many of ours. These men also believe with the same earnestness and the same right as ours that they are faithful to a great holy cause even unto death. I also know that many of our warriors, through the suffering and the seriousness they experience, come to an intimacy and beauty of soul that they did not have before.

And it is often the same with mothers and fathers. I know all this as you do, because I experience it as you do. I know that in this war humanity has proved itself to be completely healthy, in possession of all its hidden powers. Those who did not know this before can now hope again, hope towards the utopian. For if this will be dragged on for so long in this most miserable of all state wars, which arose from the hopeless non-ingenuity [“Ungenialität”] and imitation of the past [“Vergangenheitsimitation”] by our state leaders and only because there is no powerful genius, but only nothing but bureaucratic epigones, if this genius now rises up from the peoples, then we want to work to ensure that at some point it will rise again and in a different way for the sake of humanity. We want that. And *our* ‘sobriety or even irony’ will not prevent us from doing so once peace is restored; just as it has not prevented us in the past or now from waging what is our own war. But I may assume that you are only warlike when the states and, through them, the masses are warlike, so that you succumb to the mood of the masses [...].”<sup>21</sup>

The notion “wartime Christmas” (Kriegsweihnachten), then in common usage, was a dirty word for Landauer. He told his friends that Christmas was not celebrated in his house as long as there was no peace. He wrote to the writer and dramaturge Julius Bab (1880–1955), who was stationed in Königsberg:

“[...] Christmas joy can be brought to the children and to each other with very little means [...] My children have known for many weeks that there will be no Christmas here this year because of the war, and that Christmas will be made up for at some time of the year immediately after peace is declared. [...] This ‘peace’ will only be so-so – but at least we will not be too disturbed in the world we are building for ourselves. But now! no, my dear, this year we are celebrating Christmas by not celebrating it. [...]”<sup>22</sup>

Many of Landauer's anarchist friends were drafted into military service and had to serve in lower ranks at the front. This included Hugo Warnstedt (1877–1947), weaver and editor of the magazine *Der Anarchist* from Leipzig. Landauer's letter offers a glimpse into the difficulties anarchists faced under the dire atmosphere of the war mania:

“I have not written for a long time; it is gradually becoming more and more difficult to endure this time, and I think the apathy that comes over me at times is a sort of natural remedy, like sleep. But now I have pulled myself together, for I realize that you must receive news if you are to continue to delight me with your letters. [...].

The paper [*Der Sozialist*] has now entered its 7th year and will continue to appear without interruption, if it can be honored and if [Max ‘Malte’] Müller is not taken by the devil. I hope you will receive the issues from Leipzig. After all, they can only be suggestions; an attempt to give comfort to those who understand that we are here unchanged and unbroken, and the hope that we will stand our ground when our more humane, bloodless war can begin with the return of peace. [...]

I hope you receive good and regular news from home. [...]<sup>23</sup>

After the failure of the Forte Circle, Martin Buber endeavored to bring together committed opponents of the war. A first meeting apparently took place in Weimar in January 1915. Among those present were the Expressionist poets and playwrights Walter Hasenclever (1890–1940) and Franz Werfel (1890–1945) as well as the journalist Kurt Pinthus (1886–1975). The philosopher Max Scheler (1874–1928) seemed interested.<sup>24</sup> Landauer intended to join, drafted the letter to Scheler, but remained skeptical, as he informed Buber:

“[...] Perhaps it would be good if I sent you a copy of what I replied to Dr. Scheler. I therefore suggest that we steel our courage and faith. The outward obstacle is really only the state of war; I deliberately release this word ‘only’ from out of the pen and do not find it grotesque at all. The two of us want to discuss the matter properly again soon; I believe we will postpone the right beginning until after the conclusion of peace; [...]. The best thing would be if you could soon succeed in founding your monthly [*Der Jude*, 1916-1928]. [...]”<sup>25</sup>

Landauer also maintained a skeptical distance from the group around Ernst Joël (1893–1929), an exponent of the Berlin Freistudentenschaft (a liberal student body), whose magazine *Der Aufbruch* Landauer supported with several contributions. While placing cautious hope in this wing of the Youth Movement that rejected the authoritarian traditions of the German Student Corps, Landauer nevertheless wrote to Hedwig Lachmann:

“[...] But this movement among young people, which is now stirring from all sides and almost always comes at me in some way, is at least worth noting. The bad thing is, as you say, that this search is usually not linked to modesty and eagerness to learn, but to arrogance. [...]. After all, there are increasing signs that, when the war is over, the official empire will find itself facing strong opposition beyond all parties, not to mention the turmoil that will break out in all parties and from all parties against each other; the legacy of the Burgfrieden [political truce between the German Empire’s parliamentary parties] will be tumultuous enough, and we will try to give meaning and direction to all this turmoil. If only it were that far. Actually, I cannot bear this life [...]”<sup>26</sup>

But Landauer by no means lived a life of contemplative solitude. He had to give lectures in order to earn a living for his family, especially since wartime censorship and a shortage of paper meant that publish-

ing opportunities in publishing houses and journals were increasingly limited. During this time, Landauer lectured on Romantic poetry and philosophy, on Goethe, Kleist, Strindberg and Shakespeare, but also on socialism to Jewish students.<sup>27</sup>

City life was becoming increasingly expensive and difficult. Martin Buber had also moved to the small rural town of Heppenheim an der Bergstraße, where Landauer visited him in May 1916. Immediately afterwards, he wrote a critical letter to his friend, which, together with its consequences, became known as the “Kriegsbuber” [War Buber]-affair.<sup>28</sup> Landauer’s critique of his friend goes to the heart of what Buber envisioned as a new Jewish community in cultural Zionism and what Landauer envisioned as a socialist community. The difference that Landauer establishes by reading Buber’s 1916 speech *Der Geist des Orients und das Judentum* [The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism]<sup>29</sup> is for him a question of the theory and practice of language criticism – and a matter of intellectual honesty. Due to its length, only a few passages are reproduced here:

“[...] This time, just like when we said goodbye in Berlin, it was about confirming our community by being together, this community that existed before the war and that should outlast it. I cannot even say that the things we were talking about now were particularly disturbing to me when we were together: I was not with the War Buber [“Kriegsbuber”] and had almost forgotten him.

After my return home, however, I read your slogan in ‘Der Jude’ and would now like to talk about the first of your speeches in the ‘Der Geist des Judentums’ (The Spirit of Judaism) [...]. Your slogan and these passages belong together and are very painful to me, very repugnant and very close to incomprehensibility.

Despite all your objections, I call this kind of [writing] aestheticism and formalism and say that you – to yourself – have no right to speak publicly about the political events of the present, which are called the

world war, and to categorize these confusions in your beautiful and wise generalities: utterly inadequate and outrageous things come out of it.

[...] In the midst of this war and in connection with the war policy, to separate Germany from all other European states, to reproach them for their guilt against the peoples of the Orient, to present Germany as the only called redeemer nation, without restriction, without reference to how Germany had endeavored in recent decades to make up for what it had failed to do for external reasons through conquest-colonization [...], that is war policy, that is officialism. [...] What you do not say about the others is even worse than what you say about the Germans. Or do the pogroms and the Jewish policy of Russia perhaps prevent you, the politicizer, from recognizing that the Russian spirit is unspeakably closer to the Jewish and Oriental spirit than the German?

What you do in your introductory essay 'Die Losung' is of the same spirit, albeit more complicated. [...]

So first you describe the Jew of our day, the Jew on the battlefield, hundreds of thousands in the various armies. They, in all state armies, wage war not out of compulsion, you say, but in fulfillment of overwhelming duty. That is an almost childish simplification; psychology is, of course, the last and best thing; but non-psychology and non-analysis, when it comes to facts, is even worse. [...]: I feel personally denied by this description, which is no exception, of the state of mind of the Jews, who harbor the passionate desire to experience and suffer the fateful hour of Europe through war. But I also feel denied by the thousands and tens of thousands of poor fellows who do not know what their duty is, but who, out of overwhelming duty (namely to live!), submit to the compulsion because this way they can hope to escape with their

lives. [...] No, in the dullards of whom you speak, however, there lives [...] the feeling that this madness is none of their business, and that they will be shot if they do not submit [...].

‘At least community’ – for you, that is what this war has brought, to people in general and to the Jews in particular. And that is precisely what I call aesthetic and formalistic. No living human being feels this way and needs such detours; and the ‘spirit of Europe’ that you find active in this war *this* time, a communal spirit of division, is a completely inanimate construction. We can only speak of historical things in historical terms, not in formal schematism. [...]

Dear Buber, somehow it should at least have been recognized that among the hundreds of thousands of Jews, say 23 to 37 were not drawn into this war out of a sense of overwhelming duty, not out of passionate desire. [...]

To tell you this was necessary for the sake of honesty. [...]”<sup>30</sup>

Even the members of the *Aufbruch*-circle were not spared Landauer’s criticism, especially those whom he held in high regard, such as the law student and writer Rudolf Leonhard (1889–1953). Leonhard was drafted as a volunteer and had become a pacifist as a result of his war experiences. After reading Leonhard’s article “Vom Gelächter” in *Der Aufbruch*, Landauer sent critical thoughts to the author and attached his own essay *Ein Weg deutschen Geistes* [A path of the German spirit]:<sup>31</sup>

“[...] Some time ago I read your little article in which you prophesied or proclaimed the end of laughter and had the feeling that, thank God, objectively it has no meaning, but it is a confession of suffering youth; let us hope that it does not always remain suffering. He who suffers tends to react, but is not productive, is

depressed and can do nothing outwardly, but can only confess his condition as a lyricist; confess. However, the confessor, as the archetype of the restricted person, should limit himself to himself and his condition; something completely distorted must emerge if he makes his condition the norm and applies this standard to others. And now we have got the mess: you are projecting your dissatisfaction onto Goethe! I can already see how next time you will pick on Spinoza and characterize his nature on the basis of the anecdote about his laughing at the spider and the fly. But there are countless degrees of participation in this wide world, and anyone who is both strong and innocent of the events he witnesses has every right not to sink. The battle painter, if he only creates a work of art, has the right to take the most horrific as a picture, and it is the greatness of Goethe that he preserved his work and did not break at every sight of the deeds and misdeeds of others. What you are actually asking of someone like Goethe is that he should have been ready for the madhouse as a student in Strasbourg at the latest! [...] You want [Jakob M. R.] Lenz [1751–1792], you do not want Goethe. You do not want leaders who are limited by their task; you want the broken ones: the bigger, the better.

If ever there was a poet of peace, it is Goethe. For precisely what you want, I know of no purer, more beautiful, more humane companion than Goethe again and again. The essay I enclose will tell you what I mean by that. Also because, for the sake of what we are striving for together, there must be no doubt about how far apart we are in quite decisive matters that concern education and youth in particular. [...]"<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, the wartime censorship banned further writings by Landauer: “[...] My activity has been properly stopped,” he wrote to Hugo Warnstedt, adding with a slight degree of satisfaction: “Libera-

tory thought is indeed very harmful to the Feldkrieg and to the Burgfrieden.”<sup>33</sup> Here, Landauer engages in wordplay by coining the term “Feldkrieg” which alludes not only to the similar sounding German compound word “Weltkrieg” – World War –, but also to the common and propagandistic abbreviation of “Schlachtfeld” – battlefield – to “Feld” (field), oftentimes used in the militarized public discourse at the time to erase the semantics of blood and death from the imagination. “Burgfrieden” literally means ‘castle peace’ and denotes the patriotic suspension of domestic political conflicts and economic disputes in the German Empire during the First World War, similar to the “Union sacrée” in France.

Assessing the Central Powers’ peace offer of December 12, 1916, Landauer came to a realistic conclusion:

“[...] Unfortunately, all I expect from the peace offer is an intensification of the fighting. That negotiations or a ceasefire could really follow is a completely unimaginable thought to me. Of course, it is not the willingness to make peace that matters, but the terms of peace, for if the German government were to go so far as to suggest simply stopping and leaving everything as it was before 1914, the others would also say ‘no’. But how many will have hoped and been bitterly disappointed! [...]”<sup>34</sup>

Landauer explained in detail to the writer Auguste Hauschner (1850–1924) and his cousin Hugo Landauer (1868–1933) why he considered President Woodrow Wilson’s policy plausible. In December 1916, Wilson had called for all warring parties to disclose their war aims and in January 1917, in a speech in the Senate, had pleaded for a “peace without victory” and a lasting peace order, but had then declared war on the German Empire on April 1, 1917, in view of its unrestricted submarine warfare. Here are passages from Landauer’s letter to Hugo Landauer dated February 17, 1917:

“[...] Not only do I understand Wilson perfectly, but I have also predicted everything, both his call for permanent peace and the German submarine war

and its inevitable consequences. His position is quite logical. [...] This is what the matter looks like to any unblinded eye; and when ‘Germany’ whines: ‘We have no cruisers to wage the trade war bloodlessly, to seize enemy merchant ships and confiscate contraband; *therefore*, we must wage it bloodily with U-boats,’— what, then, is a neutral state, uninvolved in the war, to say to such an inane utterance from a madman? What business is it of America whether Germany is victorious? whether Germany is forced by legitimate blockade under international law to ask for peace? – The truth is that Germany is on the way to being defeated and that it is now making the last, futile attempt, according to the conviction of all those with insight, to win outside of international law. The horrible thing is that everyone, but most of all we Germans, will have to suffer namelessly until our leaders publicly admit what they already know very well in secret. If ever there was a reason for a responsible head of state to break off diplomatic relations, Wilson now had it. [...]

The war had no meaning when it broke out, and if, as they had conceited themselves, the Germans had won before the end of 1914, it would still have had none. Now, however, it has had one for a long time, and *that* explains the perforce double position of a sensible, free, worthy man of peace like Wilson: this is a war against war, is, should be, the last war. That the German Empire allowed history to assign it the role of being the representative of war is the fault, shame and punishment of us all, without exception. Should the other states always put up with the fact that we put up with this military and quarrelsome caste as a government and that we draw the leading spirit of our people from the most stupidly limited type of person, the high school professor? [...]”<sup>35</sup>

The February Revolution of 1917 in Russia initially aroused Landauer's hopes for peace or far-reaching changes. On March 24, he wrote the following hopeful letter to the poet and philosopher Margarete Susman (1872–1966):

“[...] Yes, that is a great thing – no matter when and how the disfigurement comes upon her, which cannot fail to happen. Now it is pure. The new Russia will continue the war, but from new motives, from the motives which guide the best in England and America; this war has acquired a meaning and I fear – I hope – that its outcome will also have one.

I believe in a revolution in Germany too, but not during this war and not in the first years after it. The Russian people *have* the leadership by the spirit; in Russia there is a nation in which peasants, workers, petty bourgeois, wealthy citizens and intellectuals are essentially united. We do not have that; we do not have a civil society that participates in the reorganization of relations; we have the opposition between bourgeois and workers, workers and peasants, bourgeois and peasants; and we do *not* have the opposition that would be necessary between the large landowners and the bureaucracy on the one hand and the peasants on the other. The intellectuals who have now, during the war, turned to politics are still far too weak and confused.

But the revolution that Germany failed to make in earlier times must somehow be made up for: perhaps this war is the first stage; perhaps the Germans will be forced from outside to do some of the things they cannot do from the inside.

As terrible as it sounds, I see no other end to this war than through hunger and the complete exhaustion of economic forces in Germany; [...]. –

By a reorganization of our domestic conditions, by a great, noble word to the outside world about the future community of nations and the related reorganizations of the army, we could have peace immediately; we will have clever imitations of what is necessary; but too insincere, too weak and too late. [...]”<sup>36</sup>

During these months, when the German public’s positive attitude towards the war began to change, Landauer’s voice also gained traction. His writings found an audience and publishers sought to collaborate with him. The pianist and active cultural politician Leo Kestenberg (1882–1962) was a long-time friend of Landauer. As editor with the publishing house of Paul Cassirer, Kestenberg planned the publication of Landauer’s essays. In December 1917, Landauer thus sent him a concept, noting with a certain degree of satisfaction:

“[...] It was not my fault that before the outbreak of the war my socialist journalism had almost the character of private publications; I had gotten up a little too early. In the course of these war years, as you know and as I know even better, things have changed; the seekers have found me. It must now be important to me not to come to the people as a newcomer at almost 50 years of age, but to make my previous, hidden work public at the same time as my new, more distant activity.

My plan, which I would like to realize together with the publisher Paul Cassirer, is therefore as follows:

1) To publish a book immediately after the restoration of the rule of law, entitled: *Rechenschaft*. – This is intended to collect in chronological order the essays I published in the last six years before the beginning of the war and at the beginning of the war itself on the issues of peace, war and international politics. [...]

2) A book consisting of the volume ‘Die Revolution’ [The Revolution] published in Buber’s collection ‘Die Gesellschaft’ (Rütten & Loening) and my ‘Aufruf zum

Sozialismus' [Call to Socialism]. These two belong together. [...] The 'Call to Socialism', which is highly coveted by educated people, has only been published in a decent edition of 250 copies, which has been out of print for years. [...]

3) My collected essays in two or three volumes. My journalism is now 27 years old and is scattered in journals, most of which are completely inaccessible. Only that which is completely alive and which I fully represent will be included; and it will become a work that has unity, character and strength.

4) The work that you propose: the exposition of what socialism is to me, in connection with the new internal and external conditions of individuals, peoples, states and economies growing out of the war. This should appear immediately after the three other publications, but not without them and not before them. [...]”<sup>37</sup>

The war situation became increasingly unbearable with food and fuel in short supply. Then, hopeful expectations in January – “I believe with some confidence that we will be close to peace on January 1, 1919 [...]”<sup>38</sup> – alternate with stoic perseverance – “Because one only waits for the possible, I am not waiting for peace. [...]”<sup>39</sup> In October 1918, a major step toward peace happened: after the dismissal of Count Hertling (1843–1919), Prince Max von Baden (1867–1929), who had signed the Supreme Army Command’s request for an immediate armistice, was appointed Reich Chancellor. Writing to the German actress and theatre director Louise Dumont (1862–1932) on October 8 of that year, Landauer commented:

“[...] I am very satisfied with the turnaround in politics; but it is only a beginning, and only a beginning towards peace. The people who out of desperation have resorted to a People’s State as a means, and those who for the same reason go along with it or clench their fists in their pockets – all that must go! The fruit of this transformation must first grow within the

people and the entire administration; for the Germans everything comes from above and therefore appears to the outside world as a sham and a ruse—which it partly is. [...]”<sup>40</sup>

On the same day, he explained to Adolf Neumann (1878–1953), head of the Rütten & Loening publishing house in Frankfurt am Main, what he meant by this. Landauer went on to outline the policy of the revolutionary government in the state of Bavaria headed by his friend Kurt Eisner (1867–1919), a leading figure of the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD):

“[...] Because, to put it bluntly, I do not expect an armistice on land, sea and air in the very near future. Wilson’s reply will, I foresee, be an important and worthy document and will, like everything this man has said so far, bring us closer to peace; but it is not yet time, we are not there yet. [...] we must also do it militarily, not without boundaries, but to the borders, to the borders of 1815. [...] now we must also do it with heart and mind; this includes the accompanying feeling of remorse and nobleness. [...] since we are defeated in the area of which we were masters, we are forced to be leaders in the area from which we were furthest removed. And over this gloriously inviting paradox—in all the horror—my heart, and another by my side, would exult if I still had the strength. But I will continue to do my duty. [...]”<sup>41</sup>

But the recent developments in Russia, the October Revolution and its consequences, prompted Landauer to warn Auguste Hauschner, during the final days of the German Empire, on 4 November 1918:

“[...] the general conditions and years of desolation that lie ahead of us! What I can do to save us from the imminent danger of the Bolsheviks, I will do. But I look gloomily into the world; destiny must come to an end; what we few do will, I fear, be too late or too early. [...]”<sup>42</sup>

## During the Revolution

On November 7 and 8, 1918, Eisner was elected president of the Bavarian Workers' Peasants' and Soldiers' Council and proclaimed the People's State of Bavaria. Summoning Landauer to Munich, Eisner requested him to participate in the "oratorical transformation of souls".<sup>43</sup> On November 22, Landauer then reported the following about the situation in Munich to his cousin Hugo, who himself had sent him a revolutionary program:

"[...] I was with Kurt Eisner every day and I believe that I will continue to work well with him. You have probably read his proclamations and programmatic declarations; nowhere has everything progressed so well and purely as in the Republic of Bavaria. Had the revolution not been inserted into the appalling liquidation of the war, we could be in good spirits and begin fundamental transformations. But now there can be no question of any of this; how can one think of such a thing when, for example, one does not yet know whether Bavaria will still have coal in the middle of next week? Your program is very good in many respects; you only forget that in this situation one cannot draw a line between yesterday and today, but must look for temporary help from day to day in order to continue living.

For example, nothing would be more desirable than to put an end to the supremacy of Prussia and the central government in Berlin; revolutionary development is also going this way; we could most beautifully follow this path of a federation of autonomous republics; there can only be talk of a national assembly and the refoundation of the empire when the most important political and social matters have been accomplished; for if this national assembly comes to being now, before a new spirit and new institutions are in place, it will merely be the dull, malicious activities of the old parties under a new employer. Yes, but: the Entente demands a central government recognized by the people

for the peace negotiations; the danger that they will treat us as we treated the Russians is very great –! What could help is a revolution also in the Entente countries; but will it come at the right time? Perhaps it could also help if those responsible in the Entente countries were convinced of how prosperous the German republics are, that there is a development that must not be disturbed. But those bourgeois governments perhaps fear orderly socialism even more than the Bolsheviks!

In short, I now see only the possibility of adapting to the situation from day to day and of saving the ship from failure with the greatest caution. In the course of this continuance it will always be possible to insert this and that in the direction of our aspirations; but for the time being it will not be possible to transform things on a large scale according to a fixed, definite program; such dangers are accumulating from all sides, threatening complete destruction, that *for the time being* we must be glad that the old apparatus of war economy and civil service continues to function.

Also, the bourgeois citizens are so frightened, and, as far as they are active at all, they are so anxious to carry on the old shenanigans with their old parties, that the only cornerstone of the revolution is now in fact the workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils. I have become a member of the Central Workers' Council of the Republic of Bavaria and see that I can work there for our cause of socialist buildup; moreover, I am going to carry on barracks propaganda and have already begun (that was wonderful), because I am speaking to people who will soon spread all over the country. You should see about getting into the Baden Peasants' Council. [...]"<sup>44</sup>

In his letter of December 1918 to Georg Springer, the director of the Berliner Volksbühne (literally: Berlin People's Stage), whose artistic advisory board Landauer had been a member of since its inception in the early 1890s, Landauer expressed the clash between his disil-

lusionment with the reality of revolutionary politics and his ideal of a federation of communities working for a new democratic culture, against authoritarian Prussian centralism:

“I am at home with the children for 2 days – otherwise Munich, Hotel Wolff – and am working on corrections and correspondence from morning till late at night. So it will have to be short, but I must write to you, you brave man of work! If people of your stature for political and social matters worked together in *one* body with our often so miserable proletarians, so that they learned what free and responsible labor is – what a blessing that would be! [...] I want a new realm in which every danger of mob rule and tyranny is excluded: for this we need the federation of autonomous republics, whose place of assembly can be Wetzlar or Jena rather than Berlin. I want a true peace realm of labor; Berlin’s capitalist and military ostentatiousness, puffed up in the Gründerzeit [lit. founders’ period], cannot be its capital; and the Waterkant, Hanover, Westphalia and the Rhineland as far as Frankfurt must get away from Prussia. This is not separatism or particularism, but federalism, where culture grows from the bottom up, not to the top, but to the federation; only such universal conditions guarantee me a public sphere that helps private life to become beautiful. For everything depends on this: that individuals no longer sacrifice themselves to an inflated, power-seeking whole, but that the whole helps to bring joy into people’s working lives and leisure lives. [...]”<sup>45</sup>

Christmas 1918 is of particular significance. It is the first Christmas after the death of Hedwig Lachmann in February of the same year, and it is the first Christmas after the war. On Christmas Day, Landauer replies to Auguste Hauschner’s note of condolence:

“[...] Thank you, dear friend, for feeling with us. Kurt Eisner and his wife and children spent Christmas Eve here with us, and these dear 5 people helped us to

get over the difficult times. The first Christmas tree [“Lichterbaum”] since 1913, the first festival of peace! I only feel like I am on vacation in this world, with the children and with the revolution, and that’s why I’m so radically and peacefully quiet at the same time. May there also be equanimity in you; I know of nothing better to wish for the year that is now coming. [...]”<sup>46</sup>

The mid-January elections in Bavaria had resulted in a defeat for Eisner and the USPD. On the first anniversary of Hedwig Lachmann’s death, on February 21, 1919, Landauer travelled to Krumbach. At the station, he was shocked to learn of Eisner’s assassination by Anton Graf von Arco auf Valley (1897–1945), a member of the ultra-ethno-nationalist (*völkisch*) Thule Society. On March 13, Landauer wrote to Leo Kestenbergl:

“[...]... As for me, the time has now come to go back to my desk. I certainly hope that you will receive the first piece of Kropotkin’s ‘Fabrik etc.’<sup>47</sup> as early as next week. Personally, I can only say that I am at peace, and that the children are well and very fond of me. [...]”<sup>48</sup>

For his birthday on April 7, Landauer was unable to travel to his daughters in Krumbach as he had planned. Instead, he sent them a telegram and a postcard to Fritz Mauthner, from whom he had received a birthday greeting:

“Thank you, dear friend. The Bavarian Council Republic has given me the pleasure of making my birthday today a national holiday. I am now the commissioner for public education, teaching, science, the arts and much more. If I am given a few weeks, I hope to accomplish something; but it is easily possible that it will only be a few days and then it will have been a dream.”<sup>49</sup>

But just a few days later, the situation became threatening. Although the Palm Sunday Putsch of April 13, 1919, was repelled, it heralded the end of the Bavarian Council Republic. The government of

Johannes Hoffmann, member of the Majority Social Democratic Party of Germany (MSPD), who had fled to Bamberg, received military support from the Reich government and rightwing-extremist Freikorps militias. The armed resistance organized by the second, Soviet-led Council Republic under Eugen Leviné (1883–1919) was crushed on May 3, 1919. Even if it had prevailed, Landauer could no longer follow their aims, as he testified to the Action Committee in the Wittelsbacher Palais in Munich. This was Landauer's very last letter:

“I continued to make myself available to the Council Republic for the sake of the cause of liberation and the beautiful human life, when the old Central Council had been replaced by an organization that seemed to be supported by the confidence of the Munich working class. You have not yet made use of my services. In the meantime, however, I have seen what your reality looks like in contrast to what you call a ‘sham council republic’ [“Schein-Räte-Republik”]. I understand the struggle to create conditions that allow every human being to share in the goods of the earth and of culture differently than you do. I therefore note – which was no secret before – that the aversion to joint work is *mutual*. Socialism, when realized, immediately brings all creative forces to life; I deplore that I have to see that you do not understand this, neither in the economic nor in the intellectual sphere.

This message remains strictly private on my part; far be it from me to disturb in the least the difficult work of defense, the leadership of which the M. A. [Münchener Arbeiterschaft = workers of Munich] had entrusted to you. But I lament most painfully that it is only to a small extent my work, a work of warmth and upswing, of culture and rebirth, which is now being defended.

Munich, April 16, 1919.

G. L.”<sup>50</sup>

At that time, Landauer was no longer in the city. He was arrested in Eisner's house in Groß-Hadern near Munich on May 1 and taken to Stadelheim prison, where soldiers murdered him on May 2, 1919.<sup>51</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Gustav Landauer, *Rechenschaft* (Paul Cassirer, 1919).
- 2 Gustav Landauer, “Vom Schnee und vom König von England; von Eiern, Äpfeln, Weizen, Hafer und Unsinn; von der Liebe und von der Gemeinde,” *Der Sozialist* 1, no. 3 (15.03.1909): 23–24.
- 3 The “Goethe Morning” was planned for October 6, 1918; cf. Landauer’s lecture notes as: “Zu Goethes Märchen,” in *Dichter, Ketzer, Außenseiter. Essays und Reden zu Literatur, Philosophie und Judentum*, ed. Hanna Delf (Akademie Verlag, 1997), 50–51 and Gustav Landauer to Louise Dumont, Oct. 3, 1918, in *Gustav Landauer: Briefe 1899–1919*, ed. (and) annotated by Hanna Delf von Wolzogen (with the participation of Jürgen Stenzel and Inga Wiedemann), 7 volumes (V&R unipress, 2023), vol. III, 545f. and VI, 465f. (hereafter: *GL Briefe*, vol., page).
- 4 Cf. Goethe, “Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderter,” In Goethe: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4.1, ed. Karl Richter et al. (Hanser, 1988), 436–550 (545), cf. the commentary: 1040–1074. First described by Ulrich Gaiert, “Soziale Bildung Gegen ästhetische Erziehung. Goethes Rahmen der ‘Unterhaltungen’ als satirische Antithese zu Schillers ‘Ästhetischen Briefen’ I–IX,” in *Poetische Autonomie? Zur Wechselwirkung von Dichtung und Philosophie in der Epoche Goethes und Hölderlins*, ed. by Helmut Bachmaier (Klett-Cotta, 1987), 207–272.
- 5 Gustav Landauer, “Friedensvertrag und Friedenseinrichtung,” in *Rechenschaft*, 199–205.
- 6 Landauer, *Rechenschaft*, 5.
- 7 Cf. Gustav Landauer, *Die Revolution* (Rütten & Loening, 1907) and *Aufruf zum Sozialismus* (Verlag des Sozialistischen Bundes, 1911) as well as Gustav Landauer, ed., *Briefe aus der Französischen Revolution* (Rütten & Loening, 1919).
- 8 Landauer to Mauthner, Nov. 2, 1914, in *GL Briefe* V, 577.
- 9 On Landauer as a writer of letters, see Hanna Delf von Wolzogen, “Schreibszenen,” in *GL Briefe* IV, 33–62.
- 10 Landauer to Rosa Landauer, March 27, 1902, in *GL Briefe* I, 246.
- 11 Cf. y. [Gustav Landauer], “Vom Krieg. Erster Unterricht,” *Der Sozialist* 4, no. 21 (1.11.1912): 165–167; “Zweiter Unterricht,” *Der Sozialist* 4, no. 22 (11.11.1912): 175–178; “Ein Zwischengespräch,” *Der Sozialist* 4, no. 24 (Christmas 1912): 195f.; “Dritter und letzter Unterricht,” *Der Sozialist* 5, no. 7 (1. 4. 1913): 55f.
- 12 Hedwig Mauthner (1872–1945), wife of Fritz Mauthner (1949–1923), influential critic of the *Berliner Tageblatt* and author of *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (Cotta, 1901/02), whose basic ideas Landauer reformulated politically and theoretically.

- 13 Landauer to Hedwig Mauthner, December 28, 1912, in *GL Briefe II*, 428.
- 14 Landauer to Max Müller, July 30, 1914, in *GL Briefe II*, 559.
- 15 On the “Forte Circle”, see *GL Briefe V*, 495f.; See also Richard Faber and Christien Holste, eds., *Eine utopische Intellektuellenassoziation zur europäischen Friedenssicherung* (Königshausen und Neumann, 2001). The circle correspondence, insofar as Landauer was involved in it, is reproduced in *GL Briefe II*, 560 to III, 143. See also: Marcel Poorthuis, “The Forte-Kreis. A Utopian Attempt to Spiritual Leadership over Europe,” *Religion & Theology* 24 (2017): 32–53.
- 16 Landauer to van Eeden, Sept. 24, 1914, in *GL Briefe II*, 565. Erich Gutkind, whose mystical-theosophical speculations (*Siderische Geburt*, 1910) were read among intellectuals as a quasi-religious event. The then national-conservative jurist and theologian Florens Christian Rang, a friend of Gutkind, understood nation-building through war in metaphysical categories; see Lorenz Jäger, *Messianische Kritik. Studien zu Leben und Werk von Florens Christian Rang* (Böhlau, 1998).
- 17 Landauer to the “Forte Circle”, August 22, 1915, in *GL Briefe III*, 131–139.
- 18 Landauer to Martin Buber, October 28, 1914, in *GL Briefe II*, 574–576. Emphasis in the original.
- 19 Cf. Fritz Mauthner, “Wer ist Henri Bergson?” *Berliner Tageblatt* 43 (13.9.1914): 2. Beiblatt 1f.; Gustav Landauer, “An Romain Rolland,” *Die Schaubühne* 10, no. 38 (24.9.1914): 196–198, see also *GL Briefe V*, 505f.
- 20 Landauer to Fritz Mauthner, September 29, 1914, in *GL Briefe II*, 566–568.
- 21 Landauer to Hedwig Mauthner, December 18, 1914, in *GL Briefe II*, 591f. Emphasis in the original.
- 22 Landauer to Julius Bab, December 16, 1914, in *GL Briefe II*, 589f.
- 23 Landauer to Hugo Warnstedt, January 26, 1915, in *GL Briefe III*, 37f.
- 24 On this group, about this little is known, see *GL Briefe VI*, 39f.
- 25 Landauer to Martin Buber, February 27, 1915: *GL Briefe III*, 47f. The monthly mentioned is *Der Jude* [The Jew], which Martin Buber published from 1916 until 1928.
- 26 Landauer to Hedwig Lachmann, July 28, 1915, in *GL Briefe III*, 112. Nevertheless, Landauer was unconditionally committed to the rehabilitation of Ernst Joël after the ban on the monthly *Der Aufbruch*; see *GL Briefe VI*, 134.
- 27 Mentioned among others in the letter to Hugo Landauer, March 25, 1916, in *GL Briefe III*, 214. Cf. also the list of lectures and works in *GL Briefe VII*, 395–415.

- 28 The “Kriegsbuber” affair between Buber and Landauer was first analyzed by Paul Mendes-Flohr, *From mysticism to dialogue: Martin Buber’s transformation of German social thought* (Wayne State University Press, 1989), first published in German: *Von der Mystik zum Dialog: Martin Bubers geistige Entwicklung bis hin zu “Ich und Du”* (Jüdischer Verlag, 1978); Most recently by Dominique Bourel: *Martin Buber. was es heißt, ein Mensch zu sein. Biografie* (Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2017).
- 29 Martin Buber, “Der Geist des Orients und das Judentum,” in *Vom Geist des Judentums. Reden und Geleitworte* (Wolff, 1916), 9-48 and Martin Buber, “Die Losung,” *Der Jude* 1, no. 1 (1916): 1-3; cf. *GL Briefe VI*, 194-197 for the context.
- 30 Landauer to Martin Buber, May 12, 1916, in *GL Briefe III*, 230-234. It is unknown when they resolved their differences; according to Mendes-Flohr, *Von der Mystik ... the conflict left a mark on Buber’s philosophy*.
- 31 Rudolf Leonhard, “Vom Gelächter [On laughter],” *Der Aufbruch* 1, vol. 2/3 (August/September 1915): 32; Gustav Landauer, “Ein Weg deutschen Geistes,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, no. 36 (6.2.1916): 1-4.
- 32 Landauer to Rudolf Leonhard, May 25, 1916, in *GL Briefe III*, 241f.
- 33 Landauer to Hugo Warnstedt, July 1, 1916, in *GL Briefe III*, 262.
- 34 Landauer to Hugo Landauer, Dec. 14, 1916, in *GL Briefe III*, 316.
- 35 Landauer to Hugo Landauer, Febr. 9, 1917, in *GL Briefe III*, 328f. Emphasis in the original. Landauer had already printed passages from Woodrow Wilson’s election speeches during his first presidency: see also *Der Sozialist* 5, no. 22 (15.12.1913): 171 and excerpts from Woodrow Wilson, *Nur Literatur. Betrachtungen eines Amerikaners* [Mere literature], translated by Hans Winand (G. Müller, 1913) under the title “Schöpferkraft,” *Der Sozialist* 6, no. 1 (1.1.1914): 1-3.
- 36 Landauer to Margarete Susman, March 24, 1917, in *GL Briefe III*, 336f. Emphasis in the original.
- 37 Landauer to Leo Kestenberg, Dec. 13, 1917, in *GL Briefe III*, 410f.
- 38 Landauer to Julius Bab, Jan. 1, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 417.
- 39 Landauer to Auguste Hauschner, June 27, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 510.
- 40 Landauer to Louise Dumont, Oct. 8, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 551.
- 41 Landauer to Adolf Neumann, Oct. 8, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 552.
- 42 Landauer to Auguste Hauschner, Nov. 4, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 570.
- 43 Kurt Eisner to Landauer, Nov. 14, 1918, in *GL Briefe VI*, 493.
- 44 Landauer to Hugo Landauer, Nov. 22, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 582-584. Emphasis in the original.
- 45 Landauer to Georg Springer, Dec. 13, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 619f.
- 46 Landauer to Auguste Hauschner, Dec. 25, 1918, in *GL Briefe III*, 632.
- 47 This refers to Landauer’s translation of *Fields, Factories and Workshops*.

Boston 1899, authorized by Peter Kropotkin as: *Landwirtschaft, Industrie und Handwerk: oder: die Vereinigung von Industrie und Landwirtschaft, von geistiger und körperlicher Arbeit*, published in Berlin with S. Cavalry & Co in 1904.

48 Landauer to Leo Kestenberg, March 13, 1919, in *GL Briefe III*, 690.

49 Landauer to Fritz Mauthner, April 7, 1919, in *GL Briefe III*, 714.

50 An den Aktionsausschuß, Munich, April 16, 1919, in *GL Briefe III*, 719f. Emphasis in the original. On the editorial history of this final letter of Landauer see: *GL Briefe VI*, 678.

51 On the perpetrators' identity see Rainer Brüning, "Die Ermordung von Gustav Landauer am 2. Mai 1919 in München," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 167 (2019): 167-213. <https://doi.org/10.57962/regionalia-19801>





## Anarchists for Peace: Olga Misař, Pierre Ramus and the Austrian section of the War Resisters' International

Brigitte Rath\*

In the winter of 1920, Viennese anarchists met weekly on Saturday evenings at the Cafe Stallburg in Habsburgergasse for discussions.<sup>1</sup> A lively report of one such evening was penned by Dr. Kurt Sonnenfeld (1893–1938). Writing for the daily *Neues Wiener Journal*, the journalist provided what appears to be a verbatim excerpt from a speech he witnessed at the event:

“We do not want to get rid of the murderers, but of murder itself! We reject armed violence and demand the destruction of all weapon stocks. Workers, refuse to produce ammunition with which to murder your brothers! Soldiers, break the rifles and become human beings and brothers! We will not achieve anything with brute force. Whoever commits an assassination – even if he does so for the noblest of reasons – ceases to be an anarchist at that moment. Only the spirit can liberate us.”<sup>2</sup>

The speaker is identified as Pierre Ramus, whose acquaintance with Sonnenfeld dates back to the war, as the reporter himself tells his readers. Their friendship may explain the general sympathy for anarchist ideals expressed in this newspaper report, while clearly noting the differences between the various strands of anarchism in relation to the question of violence. In all of the reporter's descriptions of the discussion's atmosphere – “in the spirit of Tolstoy, Kropotkin and nonviolence”<sup>3</sup> – it is remarkable that Sonnenfeld only refers to one additional participant explicitly by name:

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“Olga *Misar* speaks and shows in every word that she is not only a witty writer, but a truly noble and kind woman. As Ramus came to nonviolence through the clarity of his intellect, so did Misar through the warm-heartedness of her feelings.”<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, we learn far less from the report about Olga Misar or how she contributed to the discussions than about the previous speaker. Sonnenfeld’s introduction of her also contains different gendered attributions of what is considered male and female, as he couples these with the dichotomy reason and emotion.

With the benefit of hindsight, it can be stated: two of the best-known Austrian anarchists took part in this discussion: the charismatic and controversial Rudolf Großmann (1882–1942), who called himself Pierre Ramus (after the French humanist Petrus Ramus, 1515–1572), and the peace and women’s rights activist Olga Misar (1876–1950). Both were engaged in the anarchist movement and in the Austrian *Bund der Kriegsdienstgegner* [League of War Resisters]: the Austrian branch of the War Resisters’ International (WRI). Ramus and Misar had a lot in common: both were popular speakers, both had Jewish and secular backgrounds, and both had to leave their country after the Nazi annexation of Austria in March 1938. But there were also crucial differences between them, as the following analysis will reveal.

### **Biographical approach**

Pierre Ramus’ biography is quite adventurous. Leaving his home in Vienna at the age of 16 to live with friends of his parents in the USA,<sup>5</sup> he there got involved with anarchism, came in contact with Johann Most (1846–1906) and Emma Goldman (1869–1940) and, after his participation in the 1902 Paterson (New Jersey) silk dyers strike, was sentenced to jail and fled to England. He was active in London as a public speaker and publisher. Participating in a circle around the famous Petr Alekseevič Kropotkin (1842–1921), Ramus in 1903 met his future wife, the anarchist Sophie (Sonja) Ossipowna Friedmann (1884–1973), who had fled from Russia. Both resettled to Austria in 1907. Two years later they moved to Klosterneuburg, a

town in Lower Austria located about 20 km from Vienna. They had two daughters, Lilly (1907–2000) and Erwina (1910–1993).<sup>6</sup> In 1907, Ramus published his *Anarchist Manifesto*, in which he argued that “[t]he anarchists are consistent antimilitarists because they do not want to conquer the state, but to eradicate it.”<sup>7</sup> Ramus’ ideas stood in contradistinction to the influential pamphlet *Militarism and Antimilitarism* published during the very same year by his contemporary, the German social-democrat Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919).<sup>8</sup> Ramus was influenced by Kropotkin, the famous Russian novelist Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the pacifist publicist Eugen Heinrich Schmitt (1851–1916).<sup>9</sup>

The Großmann couple published the bi-weekly *Wohlstand für alle* [literally: Welfare for all] until July 1914 and, from 1918 onwards, the weekly *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* [literally: Realization<sup>10</sup> and Liberation]. The tireless Rudolf Großmann wrote, corresponded, spoke and organized countless lectures, demonstrations and discussions mainly under the banner of the *Bund herrschaftsloser Sozialisten* [literally: the League of Non-Governmental Socialists, or: League of Socialists without Domination] in Vienna and in the Styria region, but also in other small towns across Austria.<sup>11</sup> He was not only active on a regional level, but also transnationally, travelling to attend conferences, to give talks and to network. Großmann combined his political and everyday life by supporting the cooperative community settlement Eden, which was founded west of Vienna in 1921 by a variety of people identifying as anarchists, theosophists, Quakers, and more generally as social reformers.<sup>12</sup> Großmann also promoted the ideas of the Spanish pedagogue and school reformer Francisco Ferrer (1859–1909), and advocated contraception, because he believed the economic situation of families should not be exacerbated by a high number of children. Consequently, he called for the ban on vasectomy to be lifted. Later on, he even organized vasectomies, especially in Styria, and was charged by the authorities. In a 1933 trial, he defended himself and was acquitted.<sup>13</sup>

Pierre Ramus (Rudolf Großmann) called for conscientious objection to military service at a meeting in May 1914. Grown out of diary entries and newspaper articles, his book *Friedenskrieger des Hinterland-*

es. *Der Schicksalsroman eines Anarchisten im Weltkriege* [literally: The Peace Warrior of the Hinterland. The Fateful Novel of an Anarchist during the World War] appeared in 1924, describing his experience of being accused of espionage and imprisoned and confined to house arrest.

Ramus and Olga Misař's biographies share many features, even if her life was not as adventurous as his, mainly for gendered reasons. Born to an assimilated Jewish cloth merchant family, she migrated during her youth with her family to Bradford in the northern textile industry districts of England. Therefore, both knew the English culture and language very well, albeit from different perspectives. Back in Vienna she finished school and married the Czech born mathematician and astronomer Wladimir Misař (1872–1963), who worked as a teacher and later on became the secretary of the Grand Lodge of Vienna. In 1900, their twins Olga (1900–1952) and Vera (1900–1934) were born. From 1908 onwards, Olga Misař participated in the radical women's movement, the protection of motherhood and the suffrage movement. She worked as a journalist for the press of the women's movement, both locally and transnationally, and contributed to Viennese newspapers. She was later able to apply the experiences she had gained in the women's movement to mixed-gender movements after the war. These included networking, making transnational comparisons, and organizing movements through a variety of public relations activities, such as demonstrations, publications, organizing discussions, and participating in conferences, to name just a few activities.<sup>14</sup>

In April 1915, she was one of the few Austrians who attended the International Congress of Women at The Hague and stayed active in the Women's International League for Peace of Freedom (WILPF), an organization for which she gave talks, did translations and participated in the Executive Committee. She also wrote for WILPF's journal (which changed its title throughout its long existence from *International* to *Pax et Libertas* to *Pax International*), took part in meetings of the Executive Committee and participated in nearly all of its international Conferences until 1937.



**Figure 1.** Olga Misar in 1919. Photo: Wiener Bilder. *Illustriertes Familienblatt* 24, no. 6, February 9, 1919, 7.

The acquaintance between the Großmanns and the Misaršs dates to the year 1917. From 1919 onwards, Olga Misarš frequently published in *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* and gave many lectures on anarchism, antimilitarism and feminism. In the winter of 1919, she published her book *Neuen Liebesidealen entgegen* [literally: Towards new ideals of love], discussing partnership and the living together of heterosexual couples outside of traditional marriage as sanctified by the church and the state. Many of Misaršs contemporaries derogatorily referred to such relationships as concubinage. At this time, she lived for some months with Ernst Viktor Zenker (1865–1946), a writer, journalist, member of Austria's Imperial Council (the *Reichsrat*), and a jack of all trades. Incidentally, Zenker, although critical of anarchism, was also one of the first scholars of this ideology and movement, as evidenced by his most famous 1895 German language book *Der Anarchismus. Kritische Geschichte der anarchistischen Theorie* (translated into English in 1897 and into Russian in 1906). In February 1919, when Austrian women finally received active and passive voting rights, Misarš ran for office with the social-liberal Demokratische Mittelstandspartei founded by Zenker. In their program, peace was a central topic, a unique selling point:

“The Republic of German-Austria should be a place of peace after the devastating storms of the World War. [...] We will advocate for the formation of a League of Nations through which the peace of Europe will be permanently secured, which would restore to us, those separated by the sea and our old markets, our connection with the rest of the world and reopen the door to the faraway world. We are a party of peace and a party of freedom.”<sup>15</sup>

In April and May 1921, together with the journalist Dr. Kurt Sonnenfeld, Misař took over the editorship of *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* during Ramus’ two-months absence when he attended an anti-militarist congress at The Hague. Sonnenfeld commented on Misař’s activities: “In the Apolloneum, comrade Olga Misař spoke in her warm-hearted and witty manner about ‘Persecution of the Jews’ and about ‘Peace and Freedom.’ Her lectures were well attended and met with lively applause.”<sup>16</sup> After returning to Vienna, Ramus expressed his gratitude to Sonnenfeld and Misař, “whose active participation as a writer and speaker for our overall movement in Austria gives us true joy of heart.”<sup>17</sup>

As guest-editor of Ramus’ journal Misař was able to publish an auto-fictional short story about a Sunday excursion to the Vienna Woods, in which she gained political insights from everyday experiences. Warning of a resurgence of the monarchy and another war, she wrote: “*Will this people defend themselves?* Not with guns, but by refusing to work and by renouncing their allegiance?”<sup>18</sup> This attested to her capability as a writer, echoing a similar call she made one year earlier for heightened political activism and education: “If people valued the well-being of the masses, the personal well-being of each individual, and were determined to protect their freedom, even de-throned kings would no longer be dangerous.”<sup>19</sup>

Olga Misař’s extensive lecture activities, her participation in conferences of the *Bund herrschaftsloser Sozialisten* in Graz, her involvement in individual thematic groups such as the “Free School” group in the spirit of Francisco Ferrer as well as her appearances at demonstrations and numerous lectures also document her deep involvement with the anarchist movement.

In May 1920, Misař borrowed the title of the bestselling novel *Die Waffen nieder!* by the Austrian Nobel Peace Prize laureate Bertha von Suttner (1843–1914) for her own article: “Lay down your arms!” Misař’s text was a statement against the introduction of a standing army as provided for in the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in September of the previous year. After the war, she fundamentally criticized the willingness to fight, because she could not comprehend that people were not more committed to nonviolence after they had experienced

“... how every blow was followed by a counterblow, how every cruelty and oppression has only provoked revenge, so that all suffering has become futile on top of everything else, how people have become so brutalized that they no longer shy away from anything, so one is pushed with all one’s might to the thought – there is only one way out of all this misery – *the weapons must fall silent!*”<sup>20</sup>



**Figure 2.** The Bund herrschaftsloser Sozialisten in 1922. Seated in the center, front row from left to right: Sophie (Sonja) Ossipowna Friedmann (with a copy of *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* in her right hand), Pierre Ramus, and Olga Misař. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Reason, the superior spirit and the heart spoke in favor of this, she believed. Nothing could be expected from the governments, and thus, the people (or in the case of multi-ethnic Austria: the peoples) had to take their fate into their own hands and stop using weapons. She also did not accept economic arguments for working in the armament industry and explicitly pleaded: "... no woman should produce ammunition, love a soldier, bear children for the purposes of the state!" Misař anticipated the possibility of a turning point in history, "when the fate of nations is decided in a way other than by blood and murder".<sup>21</sup>

### **The war resisters movement in Austria**

The young anarchist activist Alfred Saueracker (1882–1987) took part in the founding conference of Paco (Esperanto for "peace") in the Dutch town of Bilthoven from 22-25 March 1921. This was the third and final meeting of several European peace activists at the house of the Quaker couple Kees Boeke (1884–1966) and Beatrice Boeke-Cadbury (1884–1976), which resulted in the creation of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Service Civil International, and the War Resisters' International. One year later, Saueracker set up the Austrian *Bund der Kriegsdienstgegner*.<sup>22</sup> Another two years later, in 1924, when Saueracker had to leave Austria, Olga Misař took over as secretary and represented one of the few women in this political field in her country.

Due to the difficulty of preserving records, individual membership and the total number of members of the *Bund der Kriegsdienstgegner* (BKG) is not easy to verify, since no relevant documents seem to have survived. The dual membership with the *Bund herrschaftsloser Sozialisten* can be estimated at around 4,000 people. The activists of the BKG used a variety of different agitation methods to spread their ideas and find supporters. By founding regional groups as well as organizing demonstrations, lectures, theater and scenic performances, publications, leaflets, articles in magazines, translations, and the use of new media such as film and slide shows, they addressed a broad range of potentially interested people. They aimed at changing public discourse and ultimately wanted to grow into a mass movement.

To this end, Olga Misař in 1925 anonymously published a draft essay entitled “What the War Resisters want”<sup>23</sup>. Her text addressed the readers of the BKG journal and stated not only the most common misconceptions and stereotypes about pacifism in the public imagination, but also made suggestions on how to counter them, especially at gatherings of people interested in questions of war and peace, where people could be won over by convincing arguments. Here is an exemplary excerpt from her text:

“You have to defend yourself! It is always possible for governments to persuade people that they must defend themselves. During the world war, all nations believed they were on the defensive. If you arm yourself in order to be safe from attack, you must be better armed than the enemy, which leads to an arms race, to the financial ruin of nations and, as experience teaches, to a tense situation which of its own accord leads to war. Therefore, the greatest security today lies in defenselessness. This is especially true for the future, because the poison gas war will target the arsenals and armament centers; where these are completely absent, a nation will be safest.

One cannot allow oneself to be slaughtered without defense! Certainly not, but the people have other and more effective weapons than guns. The workers dominate the whole economy; they produce everything that is indispensable for life. If they refuse to work and resort to a general strike, if they sabotage the war by destroying the weapons, they are stronger than any opponent and need not sacrifice themselves.

It is wrong to refuse military service only at the moment of war; it is better to work beforehand to prevent the causes of war. The opponents of military service are quite clearly aware that only a socialist economic and social order will eliminate the deepest causes of wars, and they are also working towards realizing such an order. However, it sees its special task in calling on people to refuse military service.

What is the business of women in the movement?

During the World War, women produced munitions, replaced men in factories and offices, and gave money, labor, and intellectual support to the war effort. We must teach women to withdraw all support from the war effort, to raise their children for peace from birth, and to help men in their struggle against the war and to learn to understand the movement.”<sup>24</sup>

After the WRI had moved their headquarters to London, its secretary Herbert Runham Brown (1879-1949) and his colleague, the language teacher and pacifist Martha Steinitz (1889–1966), organized the first triennial international conference in 1925 at Hoddesdon, about 30 km from London.<sup>25</sup>

The Austrian delegation was represented by Pierre Ramus, Olga Misrař, the architect Francis Skillman Onderdonk (1893–?) of the Tolstoy League [*Tolstói Bund*<sup>26</sup>], and the lawyer and historian Franz Kobler (1882–1965). The delegation’s composition not only showed the strength of the movement but also epitomized these representatives’ economic and cultural capital. Franz Kobler, editor of the German language anthology *Violence and Nonviolence*, reported on the progress of preparing this epoch-making book.<sup>27</sup> Together with Martha Steinitz, Kobler continued work on this project for three years until it was finally ready for publication on the occasion of the next international WRI conference at Sonntagsberg in 1928. Kobler and Steinitz brought together an impressive “who is who” of different pacifist strands from all over the world, debating “The Problem of Violence” (Part 1), “The Emergence and Development of Active Pacifism” (Part 2), and “The Methods and Practices of Active Pacifism” (Part 3). Onderdonk was engaged in rather different outreach activities. He had produced a film about the “No More War” demonstration in Vienna 1922 and now conceived of the plan to purchase traveling cinema equipment and films that could be used to tour the villages in those countries where the WRI was represented. He carried out this practice himself in the USA during the 1930s.<sup>28</sup>

Ramus, in his opening statement at the 1925 Hoddesdon conference, addressed the fact that violence was exercised by the state. Thus, he categorically rejected the acceptance of alternative service, for this would only perpetuate the legitimacy of any warfaring state as such. The non-anarchist – especially the socialist – conscientious objectors did not share this view, and the gathering accepted both forms of war resistance.

At the closing event in London, Pierre Ramus thanked WILPF and the Quakers for their help after the First World War. A small group of Quakers came to Vienna after 1918 in order to do charity work against hunger.<sup>29</sup> In predominantly Catholic Austria the Quakers' history has not received the attention this humanitarian aid deserves. Ramus, the anarchist, nevertheless could not resist a dig at what he perceived as a liberal-pacifist approach in the WILPF's plea for recognizing arbitration tribunals between nation-states in times of conflict. Echoing Kropotkin, Ramus ended with an appeal to each individual human being for mutual aid in the fight against violence and war. In the final section of the conference's report, Pierre Ramus outlined the activities of the *Bund herrschaftsloser Anarchisten*. Olga Misař presented the country report. Arguing that participants of the BKG be recruited from beyond the anarchist movement, Misař assessed:

“Our membership is by far smaller than we would like to see it. Many members cannot pay their fees owing to unemployment, but they still remain members; many are so care-worn with the difficulties of daily life that they lose their interest in social questions. Much bigger is the number of those who come to our meetings who are interested in our campaigns, and who read our paper, and the number of people who every year come to our No More War demonstrations is very big. Of course we must admit that the interest in a demonstration is of the most superficial type; the comers to our meetings are far more serious, and only our regular members may be considered as really loyal and reliable.

There are some problems which are continually alive in our ranks. Many members think that only anarchists, opponents of the State, can be real War Resisters, and that, if we accept non-anarchist members we can only do that with the intention to make them into anarchists. Others think that everybody who declares his intention to resist war service belongs to us, and that it is in the interest of our cause to link up as many friends as possible and from all possible schools of thought. A strong organisation of War Resisters might make it appear unadvisable to prosecute it and might avert the Government altogether from introducing conscription. Only experience will show whether the War Resisters will also become anarchists, but at any rate the refusal to do war service is the main object.”<sup>30</sup>

At the conference, Misař had, or perhaps seized, fewer speaking opportunities than Ramus, for example, to express her attitude towards opposing military service. A similar pattern occurred at the 1928 Sonntagsberg conference: Misař was intensively involved in organizing the conference and gave a welcome address to the participants, as did Ramus. But, unlike him, she did not participate in the discussion. This also reveals a gendered reality. Nevertheless, her vital role in the WRI literally comes to light in a specific pictorial representation: in the group photo of at the closing session of the 1925 conference, Misař is placed in a central position.



**Figure 3.** Helene Stöcker, Olga Misař, Herbert Runham Brown, Martha Steinitz, Marianne Rauze attending the first Triennial WRI conference at Hoddesdon, England, July 3-6, 1925. War Resisters’ International Archive, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Ramus knew how to position himself as an important figure in the international network of anarchist peace activists. Thus, he attempted to elevate his importance not only through a higher frequency in contributions to discussions, but also in posing for additional photographs, as evidenced by a group shot in which he poses with the well-known American anarchist and organizer of the 1917 No Conscription League, Emma Goldman, along with the French Lucien Haussard (1893–1969) at the anti-militarist congress in The Hague in 1924.<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 4.** Lucien Haussard, Emma Goldman and Pierre Ramus at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Anti-Militarist Association, July 27, 1924, The Hague. Reproduced in *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* 4, no. 37 (1924): 1 and here from: *De Wapens Neder* 20, no. 9 (September 1924).

The WRI itself tried to practice gender equality by assigning four female members, out of a total of nine members, to its executive committee, the International Council, in 1925: the well-known German philosopher, and the League for the Protection of Mothers activist and pacifist Helene Stöcker (1869–1943), the French journalist, pacifist and anarchist Marianne Rauze (1875–1959), the American lawyer and feminist Elinor Byrns (1876–1957) and Olga Misař.

In 1928, Misař went on to organize the second International Conference of the WRI in Austria in Sonntagsberg, a small village approximately 80km west of Vienna and home to the cooperative “Gemeinschaft” [Companionship]. From 27 to 29 of July, around 150 participants gathered here. The Austrian country report again was presented by Olga Misař and Pierre Ramus. He criticized the Socialist and Communist Parties for their militaristic behavior during the Fire at the Palace of Justice in July 1927.<sup>32</sup> After these violent events the cooperation of peace organizations became more urgent. In November 1927, the Committee for Internal Disarmament was formed in Vienna, with a large number of peace associations, one of which was the BKG. Beatrice Hoysted, a Quaker from England who had established the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Austria, acted as secretary, and the retired State Councilor August Kemetter (1866–1945) as president. Olga Misař described the development of this association: “Its task was to enforce the disarmament of all armed formations”<sup>33</sup>.

Olga Misař in 1923 had already published together with Helene Stöcker and Martha Steinitz a history of Conscientious Objectors in Germany and Austria,<sup>34</sup> a testimony to their historical consciousness and a clear case of female networking in the peace movement. At the third International Congress of the WILPF in Vienna, Misař took up the demand for a strike against war. Such demand had already been expressed at the 1919 congress of WILPF in Zurich, in different words. Now, she herself presented the “pledge not to serve in the armed forces”, and made clear:

“If we are at present faced with the danger of war, we must seek a remedy at the moment, and that remedy can only consist in the people refusing to take up arms and support war in any way. No man who calls himself a friend of peace may pick up a weapon, no woman may go into a factory which manufactures arms or ammunition. The people have it in their power not to wage war if they are clear that they do not want war. Diplomats can decide on wars, generals can draw up war plans and give orders to march; it is of no use if the people do not want it.”<sup>35</sup>

The possibility of such a strike against war was heatedly discussed, but because of the opposition of the English and American branches, such measures were not taken up by the WILPF but left to the decision of individual branches.<sup>36</sup>

## Epilogue

The Fascist government in Austria, in the aftermath of the civil war-like events in 1934, dissolved the Austrian BKG just as it did other socialist associations and parties.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the BKG the official accusation against Olga Misař was that she had played a significant role in the Social Democrats from 1917 to 1918. By disputing this accusation, she delayed the dissolution but was unable to stop it.<sup>38</sup>

Faced with the spread of Fascism and the Spanish Civil War, many peace activists changed their attitude towards the categorical rejection of violence. The most prominent case was Albert Einstein (1879-1955), who felt that he could no longer openly call for conscientious objection and disarmament after Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor on 30 January 1933. Olga Misař followed Einstein's example a few years later, resigning from the WRI's Executive Committee in 1937 with a letter explaining her motives to Herbert Runham Brown: "For a considerable time I have had the feeling that many of my pacifist friends do not realize the meaning of *the great changes* that have come over the world and that have thoroughly altered the state of things and the ways of thinking."<sup>39</sup> Misař closed with the following thought: "When will we realize that peace does not drop from the sky, it grows from below."<sup>40</sup>

Misař and Ramus both had to flee from Austria in March 1938, when the Nazis seized control of the country. The Misař couple's house was searched because Vladimir, as secretary of the Grand Lodge of Vienna and a peace activist, was considered an enemy of the regime just as his wife. But unlike her he was not of Jewish origin. In April 1939, the couple was able to leave the country with the help of the WRI and moved to Enfield near London.

Pierre Ramus' escape was spectacular, as was his life. He also received help from the secretary of the WRI, Grace Minnie Beaton (1898–1957), leaving Austria by crossing over the Alps near Nauders in the direction of Switzerland. Later, Ramus was deported to France, where he stayed with his daughter Lilly and her husband. From Morocco he managed to board a ship to Mexico. Ramus died after a week on sea following a heart attack. On August 29, 1942, Martha Steinitz wrote to Grace Beaton: “The news of Pierre Ramus’ death, somehow, is not believable. I thought so much aliveness could never be killed. I am glad he died in freedom, though, and full of optimism.”<sup>41</sup>

Both Misař and Ramus worked for war resistance, but in different ways. Ramus was unforgiving against political rivals from the right and from the left. Misař, in contrast, showed greater ability to work with others, probably due to gendered expectations and customs, and also owing to her experiences in the women’s movement. Their activist legacy continues to be an inspiration for us today.

## Notes

- 1 I am grateful to Dr. Dominique Miething for his editorial work, especially for translating this text and the primary sources into comprehensible English. All mistakes are mine.
- 2 Kurt Sonnenfeld, “Bei den Wiener Anarchisten,” *Neues Wiener Journal*, February 1, 1920, 4.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
- 5 The specialist on Austrian anarchism is Reinhard Müller, who has supported my research by answering all my questions. Reinhard Müller, *Der abenteuerliche Anarchist Karl F. Kocmata 1890-1941* (Verein zur Förderung libertärer Bibliotheks und Archivkultur 2022), 23–27. Since 1932, the estate of Rudolf Großmann is stored with the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Its contents have been digitized. See also Christian Neubauer, *Rudolf Großmann, (Pierre Ramus) und der österreichische Anarchismus von 1907 bis 1934*, PhD dissertation, 3 Volumes (University of Vienna, 1999). This dissertation contains a breadth of material but is partly imprecise; a general overview on anarchism in Austria with a negative view of Pierre Ramus is found in Gerfried Brandstetter, “Sozialdemokratische Opposition und Anarchismus in Österreich 1889–1918,” in *Im Schatten der Arbeiterbewegung*, eds. Gerhard Botz, Gerfried Brandstetter, Michael Pollak (Europaverlag 1977), 29–97; See also the collected works: Pierre Ramus, *Gesammelte Werke, Biographische Skizzen*. Ed. Gerhard Senft, Bd.1 (Monte Verità, 2017). On the everyday life of the Großmann family, see Lilly Schorr, “‘Mein Vater Pierre Ramus’—ein Gespräch,” in *Ein grosser freiheitlicher Erzieher: Pierre Ramus (1882–1942). Hommage à la non-violence* (Verlag Gegenseitige Hilfe, 2000) 27–40.
- 6 Reinhard Müller, “Wer pessimistisch in die Zukunft blickt, offenbart seinen schwachen Willen” *Anarchistischer Kampf während des Austrofaschismus. Graz 1937* (Edition Grundrisse, 2016).
- 7 Pierre Ramus, *Das anarchistische Manifest* (M. Lehmann, 1907), 15.
- 8 See also Monika Bernold and Stefanie Stümpel, “Rudolf Großmann und der anarchistische Antimilitarismus - Ein sogenanntes gescheitertes Konzept,” *Jahrbuch für Zeitgeschichte* [Vienna] (1984/85): 77–122.
- 9 Reinhard Müller, “Der aufrechte Gang am Rande der Geschichte,” in *Auf dem Weg in die Freiheit (Anstöße zu einer steirischen Zeitgeschichte)*, eds. Robert Hinteregger, Karl Müller, Eduard Staudinger (Leykam, 1984), 163–196.
- 10 *Erkenntnis* as a philosophical concept may also denote knowledge, cognition, understanding or finding.
- 11 For an overview on Ramus’ writings see extensive bibliography com-

piled by Reinhard Müller (Graz, Austria): <https://www.ramus.at/werkverzeichnis/pierre-ramus-werkuebersicht/>

12 See Andreas Gautsch, *Ein Edelanarchist aus Eden. Über den Anarchisten und Antimilitaristen Alfred Saueracker/Alfred W. Parker* (Institut für Anarchismusforschung [Vienna], 2016).

13 Gerhard Senft, “Es gibt kein Gesetz, das die Armut, das Elend, die Not verbietet...” in Pierre Ramus, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 2 (Monte Verità, 2020), 9–59.

14 Brigitte Rath, *Frei denken, frei leben. Die Biographie der Olga Misar* (Mandelbaum Verlag, 2025).

15 As quoted in Johannes Hawlik, *Die politischen Parteien Deutschösterreichs bei der Wahl zur konstituierenden Nationalversammlung 1919*, PhD dissertation in 3 Volumes (University of Vienna, 1971), Vol. 3, 71.

16 “Unsere Agitation und Bewegung,” *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* 3, no. 26 (1921): 4.

17 “Ein Dankeswort!” *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* 3, no. 27 (1921): 4.

18 Olga Misar [sic!], “Unser Sonntagsausflug,” *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* 3, no. 20 (1921): 3. Emphasis in the original.

19 Olga Misar [sic!], “Die Waffen nieder,” *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* 2, no. 34 (1920), 1–2.

20 Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

21 Ibid.

22 Devi Prasad, *War is a Crime Against Humanity. The Story of the War Resisters’ International* (War Resisters’ International, 1969), 555 [I assume he is the person No. 19 in the group-photo, whose name was forgotten]; see also Gautsch, *Ein Edelanarchist aus Eden*.

23 Anonymus [Olga Misar], “Was wollen die Kriegsdienstgegner? Disposition für einen Einführungsvortrag in die Bewegung,” *Der Kriegsdienstgegner. Organ des Bundes der Kriegsdienstgegner Österreichs* [Vienna] 2, no. 4 (September-Oktober 1925): 3. Reprinted in: *Krieg ist der Mord auf Kommando. Bürgerliche und anarchistische Friedenskonzepte. Bertha von Suttner und Pierre Ramus*, ed. Beatrix Müller-Kampl (Graswurzelrevolution, 2005), 242–246.

24 Ibid, 244–245.

25 The manifold activities of Martha Steinitz are the subject of research carried out by Dr. Dominique Miething (Freie Universität Berlin), author of a first biographical sketch, see: Dominique Miething, “Martha Steinitz (1889–1966),” in: *[Hi]stories of the German-Jewish Diaspora*, August 08, 2025. <https://diaspora.jewish-history-online.net/article/gjd:article-33>.

26 The Tolstoy League was founded by Francis Skillmann Onderdonk, born on October 18, 1893, in New York, who had studied architecture in

Vienna. The League was headquartered in his house at Hockegasse 71 in the middle-class 18<sup>th</sup> district. Onderdonk left Vienna in 1925. The organization continued to exist and regularly held lectures, signed manifestos, and participated in demonstrations.

27 Franz Kobler, ed., *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit. Handbuch des aktiven Pazifismus* (Rotapfel Verlag, 1928). See also Evelyn Adunka, "Franz Kobler (1882-1965): Rechtsanwalt und Historiker," in: *Menora. Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, ed. Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum für europäisch-jüdische Studien, Potsdam (Piper, 1994): 97–122.

28 John Whiteclay Chambers II, "The Peace, Isolationist, and Anti-interventionist Movements and Interwar Hollywood," in: *Why We Fought. America's Wars in Film and History*, eds. Peter C. Rollins, John E. O'Connor (The University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 196–225.

29 Sheila Spielhofer, *Stemming the Dark Tide. Quakers in Vienna 1919–1942* (Sessions, 2001); Olga Misař wrote about her meeting with Quakers in London 1922: Olga Misař [sic!], "Die Quäker," *Neues Wiener Journal*, 13 November, 1922, 7. On the connection between the WRI and the Quakers see Christian Scharnefsky, "Aktiver Pazifismus, radikale Kriegsdienstverweigerung und Religion," in „Friede auf Erden“. *Religiöse Semantiken und Konzepte des Friedens im 20. Jahrhundert* (=Beiträge zur historischen Friedensforschung 12), ed. Helke Stadtland (Klartext, 2009), 171–191.

30 *War Resisters of the World. An account of the Movement in twenty countries and a Report the International Conference held at Hoddesdon, Herts., England, July 1925.*, ed. War Resisters' International (War Resisters' International, 1925), 62.

31 See this issue's introduction for further information on the 1924 meeting at The Hague.

32 *Kriegsdienstverweigerer in vielen Ländern. Bericht über die Bewegung in 21 Ländern und über die Internationale Konferenz in Sonntagsberg* (Österreich) Juli 1928 (Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner, 1928), 75.

33 Olga Misař, "Zur Frage der inneren Abrüstung in Österreich," *Die Frau im Staat* 9, no. 12 (1927): 3–5.

34 Martha Steinitz, Olga Misař, and Helene Stöcker, eds., *Kriegsdienstverweigerer in Deutschland und Österreich* (Die neue Generation, 1923).

35 "Dritter Internationaler Frauenkongreß," *Neue Freie Presse* [Vienna], July 16, 1921, 9.

36 "It emerged that a group of women was fundamentally opposed to conscientious objection because they wanted to prevent war from breaking out, rather than fighting it at the very moment it began. These women were in favor of political work and influencing governments, but it turned out that they belonged to a relatively small group. Another group of Quakers,

who, as a matter of principle, do not take any kind of pledge or oath because they see this as a return to unfreedom.” Olga Misař, “Das Gelöbnis, keinen Waffendienst zu leisten,” *Erkenntnis und Befreiung* 3, no. 37 (1921): 1–3.

37 Emerich Talos, *Das austrofaschistische Österreich 1933-1938* (LIT-Verlag, 2017).

38 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Vereinsakte Bund der Kriegsdienstgegner 3878.

39 Olga Misař, quoted in: Devi Prasad, *War is a Crime Against Humanity. The Story of the War Resisters' International* (War Resisters' International, 2005), 449. Emphasis in the original.

40 Ibid.

41 War Resisters' International Archives, folder 142, International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam.





# State, Violence, and Revolution in the Political Thought of Andrea Caffi

Alberto Castelli\*

## The Errant Knight of Wars and Revolutions

Andrea Caffi was born in St. Petersburg in 1887 to Italian parents; his father was a costume designer for the imperial theaters. From a very young age, he was strongly influenced by the Russian populist tradition, which exalted the solidarity-based aspects of rural communities in opposition to both the oppressive intrusiveness of the State and the competitive, individualistic nature of Western society.<sup>1</sup> He embraced socialism at a very young age, following a visit to the Putilov industries, where he was deeply shaken by the workers' dire conditions. This inclination was further influenced by reading an unspecified volume by Proudhon, an author to whom he would remain deeply attached throughout his life.<sup>2</sup> Before turning twenty, he took part in the revolutionary events of 1905, for which he was arrested.<sup>3</sup> He was released thanks to an inquiry by the Socialists Filippo Turati, Leonida Bissolati and Andrea Costa at the Camera dei Deputati (a Chamber of the Italian Parliament).<sup>4</sup>

In 1907, he left Russia and settled in Berlin, where he attended the lectures delivered by the sociologist Georg Simmel. In the German capital, Caffi also met the young Antonio Banfi, a future prominent Milanese philosopher, with whom he became a friend and collabora-

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tor.<sup>5</sup> Banfi himself shared a vivid memory of his meeting with Caffi: “Confucio Cotti and I were looking at the lecture timetable. [...] Then Andrea Caffi approached us, with his fiery red hair and eyes ablaze with sunlight, an errant knight of wars and revolutions. He had come from Russian prisons, from which he had been released thanks to a speech by Filippo Turati in Parliament, and he laughed about it just as he later laughed at the shelling of the Argonne, at the gunfire of Sabotino, which he faced with his gun slung over his shoulder, ready to die but not to kill. Yet those days in Berlin were ones of introspection and study. Pointing to a name, he said to us: ‘This is the man for us.’ And so, we became the three devoted disciples of Georg Simmel.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1910, Caffi cooperated with Giuseppe Prezzolini, then editor of the journal *La Voce*, where he published, together with Banfi and Cotti, the article “*Per il congresso del libero cristianesimo*.”<sup>7</sup> In this piece, the three authors expressed hope for the emergence of a new, free Christianity, born of “a disrupted world, of a brilliant act, irreducible to purely intellectual terms of humanity.” They envisioned a renewed religion capable of providing guidance and meaning to life and human actions in a society that had undergone sudden and profound changes. Such a religion, the three authors clarified, “is not speculation, it is not *Weltanschauung*, it is life, or rather, it is the perfect unity in which the inseparability of the practical and the theoretical is revealed in the spirit.”<sup>8</sup> The three young men, in short—drawing on the themes of the great German intellectuals from Nietzsche to Simmel—were in search of a deeply felt religion capable of giving meaning to existence. They were concerned about losing themselves in the anomie of mass society, and were wary of simplistic ideologies that tended to replace serious reflection on man, society, and history with a series of empty slogans.

At the beginning of World War I, Caffi became actively involved: a choice driven, on one hand, by the conviction that the future of socialism and democracy depended largely on the collapse of the authoritarian Central Powers; and on the other, by the moral need to share the fate of the many men heading towards death.<sup>9</sup> He joined the French army (the *Légion étrangère*), fighting in the Argonne;

and then, after May 20, 1915, he was called to arms in Italy, where he first fought on the Trentino front, eventually, thanks to the efforts of Daria Malaguzzi Valeri, wife of Antonio Banfi, being assigned to the command of the Fourth Army in Belluno as an interpreter.<sup>10</sup> During this period, Caffi realized that the hopes he had placed in the war as a means of democratic progress were illusory. The conflict appeared to him as a political and moral catastrophe, as well as a material one: “For eleven months,” he wrote to Daria Malaguzzi Valeri, “the crust of barbarism has been forming and solidifying, threatening to suffocate me. But this is rhetoric; the truth is that all of us, the few brothers faithful to other dreams, suffer greatly and there is still no end in sight.”<sup>11</sup>

During the war, Caffi maintained an epistolary relationship with the political activist Umberto Zanotti Bianco, and once the conflict was over, he joined him in Rome. He took part in the activities of La Giovane Europa (Young Europe), a movement founded by Zanotti Bianco himself, Gaetano Salvemini, and Giuseppe Antonio Borgese with the aim of contributing to the creation of a fair international order capable of easing tensions between states. In the journal of La Giovane Europa, *La Voce dei popoli*, Caffi published “*The Russian Revolution and Europe*”, an essay that was highly critical of the Bolsheviks and which, among other things, was considered by the prominent liberal antifascist Piero Gobetti (1901–1926) to be the most important work on the subject.<sup>12</sup> Caffi denounced the authoritarian nature of the Bolshevik party and organization. He noted that Lenin’s party structure resembled that of the secret societies that flourished in Europe between 1820 and 1848: it was a closed organization, highly centralized, completely impervious to external demands, governed by agents of the Central Committee, and ultimately denying any ideal of freedom and justice. Once in power, Lenin governed thousands of federated Soviets using the same organizational structure he had established for his party: “a militarism more rigid and unscrupulous than that which sustained the dynasty of Peter the Great for two centuries.”<sup>13</sup> The result of this policy—implemented after the war and the Russian civil war (1917–1922)—was that “resources of every kind [were] depleted and scattered; institutions [were] either atrophied or altered beyond recognition; habitual mechanisms [were] at times

broken, at times entirely derailed. [...] Military discipline, with its inevitable degree of arbitrariness, abuses, and encouragement of fraud and tyranny, [fostered] an imbalance in individual will between the two extremes of mechanical obedience and equally blind rebellion.”<sup>14</sup>

In 1919, Caffi moved to Milan to join his brother Luciano and became involved with the prominent Milanese daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. He was sent to Batumi, in Georgia, and to Constantinople, from where he contributed several articles to the *Corriere della Sera* about the ongoing conflicts in the region.<sup>15</sup> In January 1920, he crossed the Black Sea, traveled to Odessa, and joined the international relief mission organized by Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen. During his journey across Russia, he wrote to Zanotti Bianco: “The true torment of my conscience is my passivity thus far in the Russian Revolution and its offshoots. I already knew it before, but here it has now become tangible to me the immense sum of heroism and self-sacrifice pervading the cataclysm, the relentless struggle of the Moscow Republic, and the work now being undertaken to economically regenerate Russia. (...) I am about to go to Moscow; there I will see things more clearly. Besides, Europe should have made up its mind long ago excusing itself with claims of insufficient information is nothing but Byzantine sophistry. The Entente has done so much harm to Russia that I believe it will never be forgiven. A prompt peace - political, if that’s what you prefer - but one that definitively puts an end to any hiring of mercenaries and all the orgies of special envoys, who do nothing but associate themselves with the most sordid racketeering.”<sup>16</sup>

His admiration for the “relentless struggle of the Moscow Republic” did not prevent him from opposing Bolshevik policy. He organized “a joke that could not last”: “clippings from foreign newspapers, carefully chosen to raise as many doubts as possible in the mind of a still honest militant of the Third International, were translated into Russian, printed, and distributed”. The punishment for this “joke” was a one-month stay at Lubyanka, “where the death row appeals were made every night in a rather disorderly manner.”<sup>17</sup> Caffi was released thanks to the intervention of his friend, Comintern member Angelica Balabanova (1878–1965); however, he was forced to remain in Russia

because the Soviet secret police, the Cheka, confiscated his passport. He worked in an office for the promotion of Italian-Russian trade exchanges in Moscow. Only on June 2, 1923, was he able to leave for Riga, and by the 13th of the same month, he was in Rome.<sup>18</sup>

## Understanding and Fighting Fascism

In 1924, he worked in the secretariat of *Il Popolo*, the organ of Don Luigi Sturzo's Partito popolare Italiano (Italian people's party), and in the Associazione per il Mezzogiorno (Association for the South) promoted by Umberto Zanotti Bianco.<sup>19</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> March 1924, Caffi wrote to Zanotti Bianco sharing observations on the relationship between shared social customs and individual contributions: these are useful for understanding his interpretation of fascism and, consequently, his idea of revolution. "The true morality cannot be entirely identified; it is always in part an 'ungraspable social aura,' a lingering of traditions, common ways of feeling shared by all, of affections and instinctive duties surrounding the person; it is an environment in which not only the living of today manifest, but also the dead (even from centuries ago) – and the yet unborn who will continue the same life ordered according to eternal laws; in short, it is the presence of something divine in everyday life". Within the scope of this collective "lingering of traditions", "personal conscience" comes into play, the contribution of each individual, who has the task of "disrupting and moving, breaking down existing forms [...] and creating forms suited to our purposes". Such a function, however, "is [...] vital only insofar as it applies to some 'living matter', as it modifies the spiritual spontaneity of society without breaking it, without imposing forms, abstract and empty, that violently conceal 'the undefeated shapelessness of the mass.'"

Such an imposition of abstract and empty forms, actually, did occur with the upheavals brought about by the war. These have stifled spontaneous—as in not imposed by a power from above—spirituality: "Not only has rationalism and moralism created unnatural schematic phantoms, and therefore atheistic ones – but also the cult of the 'force in itself', the 'sublimated tradition', and 'artistic Machiavellism'—in short, impulses of the soul that at first glance might seem like sponta-

neous, lush, effervescent vitality (economic activism in Croce's meaning), yet are the cerebral or ignorant perversion (I think of the effects of half-baked culture) of desires that seem all the more burning, the greater the exacerbation for the absence of any real goal."<sup>20</sup>

The characteristics and depth of this European crisis were detailed by Caffi in a 1925 article titled "Sul tramonto della civiltà europea."<sup>21</sup> To clarify the origins of the possibility of a Spenglerian 'decline' of Europe, Caffi gave voice to what he described as an "apocalyptic conception", according to which the "systematic orgy of mechanical rapidities" that ravaged European peoples between 1914 and 1918 annihilated the "creations" and "values" of civilization. In the postwar period, the "new tastes of the masses", the "spread of standardizing 'Americanism'", and the "wretched fate of the 'intellectual classes'" confirmed the "death sentence" of European civilization. Finally, it should be added that the effects of this crisis stroke a Europe already afflicted by "economic and demographic imbalances", "national fanaticisms", "unjust and unworkable treaties", and "class antagonisms either excessively exacerbated or dangerously distorted by [...] institutions no longer vital or [by] ruling classes neither capable nor 'worthy.'"<sup>22</sup>

Seven years after these reflections, in the essay written in Paris and titled *La dottrina fascista. O il fascismo nella storia superiore del pensiero*, Caffi again argued that dictatorship arose "not from hidden depths but from the turmoil of confused aspirations that stirred the ranks, from which Mussolini sought to command obedience". These were "ranks" accustomed to violence, to blind obedience in the factory and under arms, to the most vulgar demagoguery, and to the belief in the possibility of solving complex problems through sudden and definitive actions: a "rabble of misfits and unbalanced individuals," born from an unprecedented crisis, desperate, and utterly devoid of any capacity for planning.<sup>23</sup> The eruption of these masses into politics could lead to no positive development, but only the establishment of a new form of tyranny, masked as a revolution through the skillful manipulation of popular moods by unscrupulous leaders. The outcome of all this, just a few years after the fascist conquest, was the suppression of all manifestations of spontaneous life in society: "an extension of

militarism to all branches of administration and social organization, carried out with a ruthlessness and pushed to extreme consequences, to which never before, at least among Western peoples, had a 'warrior' lord dared to go."<sup>24</sup>

In the early 1930s, Caffi became involved with the Giustizia e Libertà (Justice and Liberty) movement, led by Carlo Rosselli (1899–1937), who had gathered around him, in Paris, numerous activists and intellectuals determined to fight Mussolini's regime. Between 1932 and 1935, therefore, Caffi participated in discussions concerning the methods and objectives of the antifascist struggle within the movement.<sup>25</sup> In the article "In margine a due lettere dall'Italia", published in 1934 in the movement's official publication *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*,<sup>26</sup> he explained that, since fascism was the result of a deep crisis in European civilization, antifascism could only consist of an equally profound action that struck the true roots that produced it. In other words, if fascism was the symptom of a "necrosis" of the European social and moral fabric, it was clear that the remedy could not be confined to the realm of power management (it could not consist, for example, in the simple overthrow of Mussolini's government). It had to include measures that eliminated the root causes of that crisis, that strengthened social bonds, and that rebuilt civil coexistence. The way out of the crisis, that is, could not be resolved by a simple political change; instead, it had to build the foundation of a new civilization through a deep and patient work of reconstruction impacting every aspect of what makes life human.

From this perspective, Caffi argued for the necessity of opposing fascism through the activities of an intellectual and revolutionary elite tasked with educating and shaping consciences, and capable, in the long run, of overcoming the violence of fascist domination. According to Caffi, there was no lack of examples of the effectiveness of this strategy in history: "The desert of powerless ascetics has defeated the empire of Diocletian (...) the 'underground Russia', that is, a handful of outlaws and 'nobodies', ended up devouring Tsarism, despite the bayonets, the centuries-old prestige, and all the support of Western plutocracy."<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, Caffi noted that no violent revolution had ever achieved the goal of true human liberation and that,

ultimately, authoritarian reaction had always “crushed the drive of the popular masses, yearning for real emancipation”. In his view, therefore, a drastic choice was necessary: either definitively abandon “any use of organized violence in relations between human communities”, or resign oneself to the impossibility of building a more just and free society.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the most striking and meaningful formulation of how Caffi understood antifascism is found in a letter he wrote to Carlo Rosselli on July 22 (probably) 1933. “A movement capable of awakening serious interest in people’s consciences must subordinate politics to certain broader spiritual values and frame political action within a comprehensive vision of social engagement (education, economy, customs) [...]. To put back in place ‘a world out of joint,’<sup>29</sup> it is necessary for an ideology to take shape that is well-represented by genuine ‘elites’ and sufficiently ingrained in broad segments of society - truly worthy of a pivotal moment in universal history. Thus, an immense effort of critical thinking, indispensable creation, apostolate, and heroic examples are required, the kind inspired by true faith (I don’t speak of ‘heroic deeds’, which naturally have their value, but of the heroism of an entire life). What remains of my life I would dedicate to nothing else than the liberation of Europe: 1 from the deadly encrustations of the pre-war period, 2 from the hideous scum of the war. I believe the two must be destroyed together because one sustains the other; false democracy, plutocracy, communist dictatorship, and fascist dictatorship feed off each other, providing one another with pretexts to appear ‘necessary or desirable.’”<sup>30</sup> To heal from the moral and civil illness that gave rise to fascism, political activism alone was insufficient; it was necessary to administer a deeply acting cure to the patient. Those who wished to take on this task should not have aimed for power, nor should they have used political violence (with all that it entailed); instead, they had to follow their conscience, ‘go to the people’ with an apostolic mission, study thoroughly, rebuild social life, propose new ideas, and offer radical solutions.

## The State and the Political Lesson of the Twentieth Century

Caffi's reflections on antifascism deepened, after the war, to become a true critique of violence as a means to build a better civilization. To understand circumstances in which his thinking occurred, it is necessary to make a brief reference to the biography of Caffi's greatest friend and disciple: Nicola Chiaromonte (1905–1972). The two had met in Paris, they had shared their closeness to *Giustizia e Libertà*, but above all, their analysis of fascism and their ideas on how to fight it. During the war, Chiaromonte had found refuge in New York, where he had come into contact with personalities such as Hannah Arendt, Mary McCarthy, and Dwight Macdonald. The latter—as is well known—was an intellectual aligned with socialist ideals, but profoundly nonconformist and intolerant of all orthodoxies. In 1944, Macdonald had founded the magazine *politics*, gathering around it young intellectuals such as Paul Goodman, Charles Wright Mills, Lewis Coser and many others. Regarding foreign policy, Macdonald and the editors of *politics* took resolutely pacifist positions, so much so that, already in the editorial of the first issue, Macdonald stated that the moral reasons put forward to legitimize war—even the one against Hitler—were fictitious and deceptive; aimed only at concealing the harsh reality of a conflict in which justice had no place. Therefore, while it was true that socialists could not remain passive in the face of the advance of Nazism, it was equally true that the war waged by American capitalism could not represent a desirable solution.<sup>31</sup>

Chiaromonte's arrival on the editorial team of *politics* brought fresh impetus to the pacifist orientation of the magazine and its director. Indeed, it was thanks to Chiaromonte that a series of essays were published which played a crucial role in developing a nuanced and profound critique of political violence. Among these, *Violence and Sociability* by Caffi stood out.<sup>32</sup>

To understand the critique of political violence that Caffi offered in *Violence and Sociability*, it is necessary to focus on three issues he discussed in essays written during the second half of the 1940s: his conception of the State and politics, the lesson he learned from violent revolutionary experiences, and the role of what he called 'society'.

Let us first consider the conception of the State and politics. One of the clearest formulations of this conception can be found in his 1946 essay *Society, the "Elite", and Politics*. Caffi argued that "the State does not know any other end nor any other reason for existence but its own perpetuation and its own power. Whether it is incarnated in a Riche-lieu, Bismarck or Stalin, the State cannot tolerate anything 'outside the State', nor regard the people as anything but an object *taillable à merci* (taxable at will) and society (that is, the fabric of spontaneous and creative relations between individuals and groups) as anything but a senseless and irksome obstacle."<sup>33</sup> In an essay from 1951 titled *Nation and State*, Caffi revisited the topic, arguing that "to begin with the old Hesiod, the prophets of Israel, and Buddha, right down to Robert Owen, Proudhon, Tolstoy and Gandhi, all those who, in history were able to achieve a lucid awareness of our condition have always refused to admit that any sort of 'imperial power' was compatible with the needs of truth and justice. To wish to improve the State, just as to wish to 'humanize' war, is an illusion with which fearful men drug themselves to escape the reality of Pascal's *espaces infinis* and their infinite silence. One cannot live if one does not forget these spaces, or if one does not veil them with more or less conventional lies. But what really counts is that the free man does not live on illusion."<sup>34</sup>

Caffi's conception of the State, as it emerges from these excerpts, had much in common with anarchism: the State institution is seen as an intrinsically repressive and coercive body, the main cause of oppression<sup>35</sup>. That is the reason why Caffi sought to ensure that "the operations of the State and of its judges, soldiers, police, and 'leaders' of every category are reduced as much as possible. To reduce the space on which each person among them performs his necessary evil, to diminish the time of his perilous powers, to block with as many obstacles, controls and guarantees as possible the effectiveness of their 'interventions' will be the task of the good citizen and the respectable man."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, political relations, on the one hand, were 'necessary', as they could not be eliminated from the social life of human beings; and on the other hand, they were inhuman, as they were dominated by the logic of conflict. They had to be limited to the smallest possible scope, and one should not make the mistake of believing that they represented useful tools for building a society in which freedom, justice, and sociability could flourish.

To understand the antithesis that Caffi identifies between the sphere of political relations and the progress of civilization, it is worth considering his most significant essay, *Violence and Sociability* (later published as *A Critique of Violence*), which serves as a kind of conclusive focus of his reflections on violence. At the beginning of the essay, Caffi wrote: “My thesis is that a ‘movement’ which has its aim assuring men bread, freedom and peace, and that therefore intends to abolish wage labor, the subordination of society to the coercive apparatus of the State (or Super-State), the separation of men in classes as well as in foreign and potential hostile nations, must give up considering as useful or even viable the various means of organized violence, that is: a) armed insurrection; b) civil war; c) international war (even against Hitler ... or Stalin); d) a regime of dictatorship and terror to consolidate the ‘the new order.’”<sup>37</sup> The use of these means, according to Caffi, could only perpetuate oppression and lead to the betrayal of the socialist ideal. No war, whether civil or between states, could be won without a well-organized, efficient army based on a hierarchical structure capable of suppressing the wills and desires of individuals and making them act like automatons. The moment such an army or militia system was created, however, it was no longer a struggle of free men against oppression, but a clash between two armies led by two ruling castes that, in similar ways, wielded oppressive power and forced their soldiers into war. The conclusion was that it made no sense to aim at fostering freedom and justice through war, because putting oneself in a position to win it automatically meant abandoning the ideals for which it was waged.

Revolution (the struggle for a more humane and civilized society), according to Caffi, had nothing to do with the use of weapons, the manipulation of the masses through empty slogans, or the skillful management of power, because these methods led only to new forms of oppression. Revolution, on the other hand, consisted of a constant and tireless effort to cultivate what is human in individuals: to inspire their desire for authentic experiences, spontaneous sociability, personal independence, and a life free from degradation.

The subject that, according to Caffi, should have triggered such a revolutionary process was represented by small groups of dissenters, an intellectual elite driven by deep ideals, who, through a kind of cultural contagion, aimed for the non-immediate political goal of transforming consciences through words and example. “Today—wrote Caffi—the multiplication of groups of friends sharing the same anxieties and united by respect for the same values could have more importance than almost any propaganda machine. Such groups would not need compulsory rules nor orthodox ideologies. They would not rely on collective action, but rather on individual initiative and the solidarity that can exist among friends who know each other well and among whom no one pursues goals or personal power”. Caffi had in mind the strength of the early Christians, those lacking a “well-defined episcopal hierarchy”, but capable of conquering entire peoples; and he had in mind the “the cenacles of libertines and encyclopedists” of the 18th century who were able to carry out “an irresistible propaganda, establishing contacts among free spirits from one end of Europe to the other”. In short, he had in mind groups driven by the goal of transforming “ways of thinking and customs rather than things, society rather than institutions” enacting “a real change into the world.”<sup>38</sup>

### ‘Society’

In the passage above, the subject that should have brought about “a real change” is defined by Caffi with expressions such as “cenacles” or “groups of friends” and “free spirits”, but on several occasions, he referred to it as ‘society’. Therefore, it is worth considering what the characteristics of ‘society’ were and how he described it in detail. In his 1942 essay *The Individual and Society*, Caffi outlined the concept of ‘society’ with these words: “The interests and relations which develop during the hours of separation from the obligatory productive or official governmental labors form the wrap and woof of the ‘life of society’. And if prosperity lasts for some time, a caste is produced that is emancipated from the necessity of work (and so from the desire to pray) and, at least up to certain point, attached to the seductions of private life, sometimes even those of the ‘inner life’, and freed from the ambition of dominating.”<sup>39</sup> In short, ‘society’ spontaneously forms in periods

of relative calm and prosperity among individuals who, having the opportunity to enjoy a sphere of freedom from work, could cultivate sociability, develop human relationships, and resolutely refuse to think and act on the logic of the will to dominate typical of the political sphere. Naturally, in 'society', there is no hierarchy, and equality is not understood as mere economic equality, nor as a situation of equal rights regulated by law. Rather, the equality that prevails in 'society' resembles what Proudhon spoke of when, in the famous fifth chapter of *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*, he defined equality as "what the Latins called *humanitas*, — that is, the kind of sociability which is peculiar to man. Humanity, gentle and courteous to all, knows how to distinguish ranks, virtues, and capacities without injury to any. It is the just distribution of social sympathy and universal love."<sup>40</sup>

These considerations point to a second peculiarity of 'society': it does not identify with any specific social class or economic group but is exclusively shaped by how individuals interact with one another within it. "The intermediate case interposing itself between the rulers and the people and freed from material necessities has been called 'society' par excellence. It cannot be identified either with an economic class (distinguished, that is, by the role it plays in the 'system of production') or with the 'political class', Pareto's elite, and much the commodious limbo called 'middle classes.'"<sup>41</sup> What distinguishes 'society', is rather the quality of the relationships that develop within it: only in 'society', indeed, "are the miser, the intriguer, the vain, the domestic tyrant, and the dissolute condemned by opinion and mocked by satire as clearly 'negative' types, 'inhuman' (or '*too* human') and therefore 'anti-social.'"<sup>42</sup> 'Society', in short, is by definition a circle in which individuals, free both from the chains of necessity that trap the populace and from the dynamics of domination typical of political and hierarchical relations, could cultivate gentle relationships open to genuine brotherhood and human solidarity. "Only in 'society', among people, some of whom have renounced the brutal prerogatives of rulership, while others (certainly, less numerous) have succeeded by force of will or fortunate circumstances in escaping the shackles of servitude, only there can one expect examples of real heroism (and not its surrogate, such as is produced by military discipline); of true saintliness (very different from the vaporous exhalations regulated by magic, dogmas, utilitarian superstitions);

of true wisdom (which is a very different thing from adaptation to an ineluctable necessity); of true love (which has no connection with the delights pre-established and protected by the web of conjugal or family conventions, nor with the flaccid habits which a household economy renders comfortable, without, however, demanding any individual sacrifice).”<sup>43</sup>

‘Society’ could be defined as a realm where “there exists a sphere of intimate experiences and relations with their fellows in which one can *forget* every economic goad and all constraint stemming from the politico-social ‘hierarchy’. This is a sphere of security, of continuity, of norms spontaneously accepted by reason and sentiment: the sphere of *peace*.”<sup>44</sup> It is worth noting in passing that this “sphere of *peace*”, according to Caffi, represented humanity’s true aspiration—their genuine ideal of happiness—which runs through all eras and civilizations. According to Caffi, even when political or religious doctrines drove people to heroic sacrifices and fierce battles, they did so by envisioning a world of sociability that would be established at the end of the struggle, and a deep sense of brotherhood among those who fought for the just cause.

An additional characteristic of ‘society’ has already emerged from the passages cited above: ‘society’, in order to truly embody the values of humanity and sociability, must avoid any compromise with power. According to Caffi, ‘society’ could only be a group of free spirits who were far from power, who stand beyond the boundaries of the political sphere, united by a deep sociability and respect for shared values, and who oppose their human and intellectual wealth to “the whips and scorns of time”. Politics is the realm of force, and this, by definition, is incompatible with the values of humanity, solidarity, and fraternity that ‘society’ expresses. Therefore, “society and its elite can be what they are only if they rigorously accept the principle of having nothing to do with the world of violence.”<sup>45</sup>

Caffi is fully aware that ‘society’ is very fragile; it has no capacity to withstand the upheavals that history periodically undergoes. Society, in other words, requires relative political, economic, and social stability, and is easily destroyed by the emergence of any conflict. In

particular, in twentieth-century Europe, the formation and survival of 'society' have proven to be highly problematic. In this regard, in *Society, the "Elite" and Politics*, Caffi wrote: "it is clear that the fabric of relations and common actions that forms society is of an extreme fragility. After the hecatombs of 1914-1918, there was not much left of European society at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and after the second devastation experienced by all the civilized countries, it would be hard to find even vestiges of it". In periods of violence, there is no place for 'society' because human consciousness diminishes, and the individual "loses his footing and joins the pack of howling wolves, forgetting the patrimony of culture to fall back on the elementary reactions of patriotism, or to behave as a member of a specific social class, blinded by more or less sordid resentments."<sup>46</sup>

As mentioned above, 'society' should strive to "transform ways of thinking and customs" in order to push towards a model of coexistence that is, as far as possible, non-oppressive. However, it must be emphasized that this does not mean that 'society' should identify itself with the oppressed, as it would lose its distinctive characteristics and merely share in their suffering. Its task is rather to influence the mindset of both the ruling class and the dominated class, while remaining external to both. In short, Caffi assigns to 'society' a pedagogical role that must be fulfilled without any compromise with power and without falling into the elemental reactions driven by resentment, which would inevitably arise from a complete identification with the perspective and mindset of the oppressed.

'Society' does not aim to become a majority or to lead the masses in the struggle against oppression; on the contrary, it asserts with dignity its role as a fragile minority caught between the lower classes and the government, and demonstrates to both, by example and words, that it is desirable and (perhaps) possible to coexist in a less violent manner. 'Society', in other words, is made up of groups of people who are aware of their own marginalization and of the fact that their ideas will not easily resonate among others; yet it is through this very awareness of marginalization that society attempts, in a slow and indirect manner, to inspire both the ruling class and the lower classes with its ideas and practices of civility. 'Society', as Caffi understands

it, therefore, should not be regarded as a circle of strictly apolitical intellectuals: the fact that it does not compromise with power does not mean it must withdraw from political and economic affairs. Its task, on the contrary, is precisely to present itself as an example of a way of life that stands in contrast to the violence of political power. Its goal, in short, is to ensure that sociability can be practiced here and now, to develop and nurture it at every moment, allowing it to grow upon itself until it becomes a fully-fledged tradition. Only in this way can mechanisms for the genuine transformation of human life be set into motion.

## Conclusion

To make a revolution, after the First World War (even against the extreme violence of fascism) and after the Second World War, meant for Caffi to rebuild the conditions in which ‘society’ could once again take shape and revitalize the social fabric. From 1917 until his final writings, Caffi tirelessly repeated that, if the goal was to free human beings from oppression and restore their dignity, no purely political victory, no seizure of power, and above all no violent action could ever achieve significant aims. Caffi put forward these ideas at a time when they could hardly have been appreciated, as political violence seemed justified by the conditions imposed on European peoples by Nazi-Fascist domination<sup>47</sup>. However, today we know that those ideas must be taken seriously. We know that many non-violent struggles aimed at “transforming ways of thinking and customs” before changing political systems achieved success in the second half of the 20th century. Consider, for example, the movements for the emancipation of Black people in the United States and South Africa; the impact of the dissident intellectuals of Charter 77, or that of Solidarity on the authoritarian regimes of the former Soviet bloc. On the contrary, we also know that many military victories by the oppressed, after achieving political power, have turned dreams of freedom into authoritarian nightmares, as millions of people in Indochina, Latin America, and Africa can attest. From such experiences, we should not conclude that political violence is always inappropriate or that the type of struggle proposed by Caffi is a one-size-fits-all solution. History and politics are highly complex domains that can never be reduced to general

laws. Rather, those experiences compel us to acknowledge that Caffi had strong reasons to caution against believing that violence contributes to the building of a more civilized society. He insisted that a liberation struggle worthy of the name would do well to “subordinate politics to certain broader spiritual values” and to channel revolutionary energies toward immediately creative goals. Those experiences urge us to recognize, in short, that Caffi was not wrong in arguing that often the most effective response to oppression—the one that can truly eliminate it—lies in radically rejecting the oppressor's violence and the world it creates. Rather we should strive to nurture a society by nonviolent means, a society of peace and coexistence.

## Notes

1 On Russian populism remains essential Franco Venturi, *Roots of revolution: a history of the populist and socialist movements in 19th century Russia*, with a revised author's introduction; translated from the Italian by Francis Haskell; introduced by Isaiah Berlin (London, Phoenix Press, 2001). Original edition: *Il populismo russo* (Turin, Einaudi, 1952). It is worth noting that Caffi himself contributed to this work by Venturi, and he is mentioned by the author in the second edition. See Caffi's letter to Venturi, now published by Marco Bresciani in *Franco Venturi e la Russia. Con documenti inediti*, edited by Antonello Venturi (Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2006), 460–462.

2 See Marco Bresciani, *La rivoluzione perduta. Andrea Caffi nell'Europa del Novecento* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009), 27. In general, about Caffi's life see Nicola Chiaromonte, *Introduction*, in *A Critique of Violence* (Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1970), vii–xxiii. Original edition *Critica della violenza* (Bompiani, 1966).

3 G. Bergamasco, “L'arresto in Russia di un italiano”, *Avanti!* June 21, 1906, 1.

4 See *Atti parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati* (Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1906), vol. VIII, June 21, 9116 and 9118. See also “Nelle carceri Russe”, *Avanti!*, Dec. 24, 1906, 1.

5 About Banfi see Fulvio Papi, *Il pensiero di Antonio Banfi*, (Parenti, 1961); and more recently Fulvio Papi, *Vita e filosofia, la scuola di Milano, Banfi, Cantoni, Paci, Preti* (Guerini e associati, 1990).

6 See Daria Banfi, *Umanità* (Reggio Emilia, Franco, 1967), 120–121. A letter from Berlin by Scipio Slataper to Elody Oblath, dated November 18, 1911, also bears witness to the personality and cultural depth of the young Caffi: “He [Caffi] is more cultured and perhaps kinder than I am. He has lived, worked, and studied. He has lived in all nations among workers, peasants, intellectuals, and revolutionaries. He has organized leagues, spent months in prison, been sentenced to death, and has watched almost all his closest friends die, one by one, while he remained far away, in Europe—an Europe that knew nothing, could do nothing, and wanted nothing for the thousands of good and intelligent brothers who were perishing. He never uses grand words, but humble and simple ones, like someone who has witnessed things greater than himself. And he is cultured. You should hear him, you who are startled by my learning. He knows history, with a marvelous clarity of vision”. Scipio Slataper *Lettere alle “tre amiche”*, edited by I. Caliaro, M. Favero, R. Norbedo, (De Gruyter, 2022), 265–266.

7 Antonio Banfi, Confucio Cotti, Giuseppe Caffi, “Per il congresso del libero cristianesimo”, *La Voce*, Sept. 8, 1910, 390 (Caffi's name was Andrea Giuseppe). Regarding Caffi and this article, Prezzolini wrote: “If Caffi had had a different character, he could have represented any European university with great

dignity, as he spoke Russian, Italian, German, and French fluently. According to some, the article was primarily Caffi's work, but out of modesty, he chose to share its responsibility and merit with two close companions from that period of his life". Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Prezzolini alla finestra* (Pan, 1977), 75.

8 "Per il congresso del libero cristianesimo", 390.

9 A passage from a letter to his friend Antonio Banfi, written from the Italian front, vividly illustrates how much Caffi values brotherhood, solidarity, and tangible bonds: "I would so much like to think a little. To read Vico and Galileo less sporadically (and not with despairing nervousness) ... to listen to some Mozart, Beethoven, Mussorgsky. Nothing, nothing! I do not dare hope for more beautiful things: to regain the warm admiration of a handful of chosen friends, to grow and shape myself together with souls that gently permeate you, to feel in a single moment, in a vision, in a flash, the entire marvelous and infinite complexity of human life—historical and present—heavy with overflowing energies, earthly, and uplifted by all spiritual daring". Andrea Caffi, *Lettera ad Antonio Banfi*, Jan. 10 1916, Archivio Banfi Reggio Emilia (from now on ABR).

10 Andrea Caffi, *Lettera ad Antonio Banfi*, Dec. 31, 1915, ABR.

11 Andrea Caffi, *Lettera a Daria Banfi*, 1915, ABR. About the friendship between Caffi and Banfi, see Marcello Gisondi, '*La Jeune Europe*': *Masses, Anti-militarism and moral Reformation in the Banfi-Caffi Correspondence (1910-1919)*, in *Visions and Ideas of Europe during the First World War*, edited by Matthew D'Auria and Jan Vermeiren (Routledge, 2020), 150-167.

12 A. Caffi, "La rivoluzione russa e l'Europa", *La Voce dei popoli*, I, nn. 5-6-7, 1918, now in Andrea Caffi, *Scritti politici*, edited by G. Bianco (La Nuova Italia, 1970), 1-61. See P. Gobetti, "Rassegna di questioni politiche", *Energie Nuove*, II, Jul. 25, 1919, 132-139.

13 *La rivoluzione russa*, 29.

14 *La rivoluzione russa*, 19.

15 See *La rivoluzione perduta*, 72-73.

16 Andrea Caffi, *Letter to Zanotti Bianco*, Mar. 1 1920 in Umberto Zanotti Bianco, *Carteggio 1919 - 1928* (Laterza, 1989), 118.

17 Andrea Caffi, *State, Nation, and Culture*, (1950), in *A Critique of Violence*, 93-94.

18 See A. Caffi, *Lettera a Zanotti Bianco*, Jun. 15 1923, in Umberto Zanotti Bianco, *Carteggio 1919 - 1928*, 397.

19 On *Il Popolo*, Caffi wrote four articles: "Vladimir Ulianov I. Gli anni della gioventù", Feb. 5 1924; "Vladimir Ulianov II. Dalla Socialdemocrazia al Comunismo", Feb. 7; "Vladimir Ulianov III. Dalla dittatura alla morte", Feb. 12, 1924; "Apparenze e realtà della N.E.P. bolscevica", Nov. 23, 1923. See Marco Bresciani, *La rivoluzione perduta*, 98-102.

- 20 Andrea Caffi, *Letter to Zanotti Bianco*, Mar. 29, 1924, in Umberto Zanotti Bianco, *Carteggio 1919 - 1928*, 514 - 519.
- 21 “Sul tramonto della civiltà europea”, *La Vita delle Nazioni*, I, nn. 6-7, Oct. 15, 1925; now in Andrea Caffi, *Scritti politici*, 63-72.
- 22 “Sul tramonto della civiltà europea”, 64 and 66.
- 23 Andrea Caffi, *La dottrina fascista. O il fascismo nella storia superiore del pensiero*, edited by Alberto Castelli (Biblion, 2022), 8.
- 24 *La dottrina fascista. O il fascismo nella storia superiore del pensiero*, 9.
- 25 According to Aldo Garosci, Caffi was “the soul” of the first issues of “Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà”. Aldo Garosci, *Vita di Carlo Rosselli* (Vallecchi, 1973), 238-239.
- 26 Andrea Caffi, *In margine a due lettere dall'Italia* (original edition 1934), now in Andrea Caffi, *Scritti politici*, 165-180.
- 27 *In margine a due lettere dall'Italia*, 167.
- 28 *In margine a due lettere dall'Italia*, 171.
- 29 In English in the original text.
- 30 Andrea Caffi, “Lettera a Carlo Rosselli”, *Storia in Lombardia*, n. 2, 1996, 165-166. See Alberto Castelli, *Andrea Caffi e la rivoluzione delle coscienze, in Eretici e dissidenti. Nuovi protagonisti del XIX e XX secolo tra politica e cultura*, edited by Giovanna Angelini and Arturo Colombo (Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2006), 206-234; Alberto Castelli, *The Peace Discourse in Europe (1900-1945)* (Routledge, 2019), 191-204.
- 31 Dwight Macdonald, “Why politics”, *politics*, n. 1, 1944, 1-8.
- 32 *Violence and Sociability* was drawn from a letter Caffi wrote to Chiaromonte from France. The letters between Caffi and Chiaromonte are now in Caffi – Chiaromonte, *Cosa sperare?: il carteggio tra Andrea Caffi e Nicola Chiaromonte: un dialogo sulla rivoluzione, 1932-1955*, edited by Marco Bresciani (Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2012). It is worth noting that among these “pacifist” essays, *politics* published “*L'Iliade ou le poème de la force*” by Simone Weil (it was translated by Mary McCarthy at Chiaromonte’s request as “The Iliad, or The Poem of Force” *politics*, November 1945); “Revolution, Sociolatriy and War”, by Paul Goodman, *politics*, December 1945; and “The Root is Man” by Dwight Macdonald, *politics* April 1946.
- 33 Andrea Caffi, *Society, the “Elite” and Politics*, in *A Critique of Violence*, 74.
- 34 Andrea Caffi, *Nation and State*, in *A Critique of Violence*, 111-112.
- 35 For a study on the convergences and differences between anarchism and pacifism, see Alexandre Christoyannopoulos, “Mapping the landscape between pacifism and anarchism: Accusations, rejoinders, and mutual resonances”, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 27, no 1 (2024), 1-23.
- 36 Andrea Caffi, *Nation and State*, 112.

- 37 Andrea Caffi, *A Critique of Violence*, in *A Critique of Violence*, 35.
- 38 Andrea Caffi, *A Critique of Violence*, in *A Critique of Violence*, 51.
- 39 Andrea Caffi, *The Individual and Society*, in *A Critique of Violence*, 13.
- 40 Pierre Joseph Proudhon, *Qu'est-ce la propriété?* (1840), chapter 5, note 2.
- 41 *The Individual and Society*, 14.
- 42 *The Individual and Society*, 13.
- 43 Andrea Caffi, *Society, the "Elite" and Politics*, in *A Critique of Violence*, 78.
- 44 *The Individual and Society*, 16.
- 45 *Society, the "Elite" and Politics*, 79.
- 46 *Society, the "Elite" and Politics*, 79.
- 47 Claudio Pavone, *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza* (Bollati Boringhieri, 1994), 419. English translation, *A Civil War: a History of the Italian Resistance* (Verso, 2014).



# The Tolstoyan Movement in the Early Twentieth Century and the Origins of Peace Research in Russia

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## Introduction

Tolstoyanism is an ethical thought current and a religious-social movement that emerged in Russia and spread around the world in the late 1880s under the influence of the works of the novelist and social critic Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910). It gained especially wide recognition in the first third of the twentieth century. Tolstoyans in the Russian Empire defined themselves through the concept of freedom: they preferred to call themselves “free Christians” or, more broadly, adherents of a “free-religious” worldview. They rejected all dogmas and authorities as forms of violence against the mind and asserted their right to freely explore and critique any religion or idea, guided by the voice of conscience, love, and reason, which they regarded as the voice of God himself.<sup>1</sup>

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Tolstoyans created a mass movement in Russia. It was a rare example of an anarchist and pacifist-oriented movement that succeeded in bringing together both intellectuals and ordinary people, in uniting religious and secular traditions in its values, and in combining radicalism with constructive humanism in its goals and methods. The Tolstoyan radical movement focused on practical work and everyday resistance, and it proved strikingly effective in the medium-term historical perspective, even though it was eventually suppressed and erased from historical memory.

There are still very few studies on the peace activism of the Tolstoyan movement, its social base, and its connection to popular religious movements, despite the wealth of sources on these topics found in

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the numerous and extensive Tolstoyan archives in Russia.<sup>2</sup> Historians face a major task: to write both an intellectual and social history of the Tolstoyan movement, *considering its national as well as its trans-national dimensions*. The aim of this article is unassuming: to show how Russian Tolstoyans in the first third of the twentieth century, while building a radical pacifist movement and participating in revolutionary processes, sought to identify its social base by establishing ties with ordinary people and studying their practices of resistance, thus making their contribution to the emerging field of peace and nonviolence studies.

### **From Tolstoy Studies to Tolstoyan Studies – the state of research on the worldwide movement**

One of the large yet scarcely explored Tolstoyan collections that are still waiting to be tapped into by scholars at the Manuscript Department of the Russian State Library, Moscow (OR RGB), is the personal archive of the literary scholar Konstantin Shokhor-Trotsky (1892–1937).<sup>3</sup> It contains more than 4,000 archival files and houses a unique collection of documents on the history of conscientious objection, Christian anarchism, and pacifism in Russia. These materials accumulated during the many years of work by Shokhor-Trotsky on the unpublished book *Leo Tolstoy and the Struggle for the Idea of Peace*, as well as through the Tolstoyans' public activity within the radical-pacifist movement.

Overall, only a modest contribution to the history of Peace Studies has come out of Russia. At the very start of the twentieth century, however, the pioneering works by Ivan Bliokh (Jean de Bloch) (1836–1902) and Yakov Novikov (1849–1912) on theories of war prevention and the peaceful settlement of international relations were published in the Russian Empire. These writings remain unmatched in the influence they exerted on contemporaries and the subsequent development of peace research, largely because neither the Russian Empire nor Soviet Russia ever saw the emergence of an independent academic field even remotely resembling Peace Studies.<sup>4</sup>

The research of Shokhor-Trotsky and other Tolstoyans in the field of peace history, which is the focus of this article, has not been mentioned in academic literature. Likewise, the history of the radical pacifist and religious-anarchist movement to which they belonged remains largely unknown. This lack of scholarly attention has given rise to various misconceptions, such as the claim made by one historian, who dismisses Tolstoyan pacifism as “unscientific” and “moralizing,” in contrast to the supposedly “scientific” pacifism of Russian liberal peace societies.<sup>5</sup>

This article intends to shed light on the Tolstoyans’ collective “project” to study the history of the Russian popular religious-anarchist and anti-militarist movement. Their enterprise was the first attempt to write a history of pacifism and nonviolence in the Russian Empire and Soviet Russia. In many ways, the Tolstoyans anticipated the approaches of contemporary Peace Studies and other historiographical fields in their framing of problems and selection of research methods.

There are plenty of works devoted to the literary achievements of Leo Tolstoy and the influence of his social and religious ideas on humanity. However, the Tolstoyan movement and particularly its pacifist character, remained on the margins of scholarly attention for a long time.

In the mid-1970s, Soviet dissidents were the first to pay attention to the history of the Tolstoyan movement. Mark Popovsky (1922–2004), a prominent Soviet writer, happened to meet some of the pioneering Tolstoyans and began gathering a large archive consisting of copies of their memoirs and correspondence. As a rule, the Tolstoyans, whom Popovsky met, were people without university degrees or even secondary education. Nevertheless, he was struck by their remarkable erudition, their knowledge of history, philosophy, religious thought, and ethics, as well as their personal moral integrity and intellectual independence.

In 1983, Popovsky's book *Russkie muzhiki rasskazyvaiut (Russian Peasants Speak)* was published in London.<sup>6</sup> His book sought to answer the question "where have the Tolstoyans gone?" while also raising broader questions, such as what the Russian folk were truly like, whether freedom was among their core values, and whether they were capable of resisting totalitarianism. The history of the Tolstoyan movement and its tradition of non-conformity offered some hope for a positive answer.

In parallel with Popovsky's research, the dissidents Dmitrii Zubarev (b. 1946) and Arsenii Roginsky (1946–2017) began publishing the memoirs of Tolstoyans.<sup>7</sup> In 1989, the book *Memoirs of Peasant Tolstoyans* was released in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in a large print run. It contained abridged and annotated memoirs of the Tolstoyans of peasant origin.<sup>8</sup> William Edgerton (1914–2004) translated the book into English.<sup>9</sup> Not long before that, he had been genuinely surprised to learn about the strong and influential Bulgarian Tolstoyan movement, with its numerous agricultural communes, vegetarian societies, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, and bookstores.<sup>10</sup>

The popular, peasant-based character of the Tolstoyan movement struck all of these authors. For the dissidents, publishing their works on the Tolstoyans was, above all, an intellectual "going to the people," an encounter with a previously unknown form of grassroots nonconformism. The memory of repression and an interest in the Tolstoyan communitarian movement were also significant motivations. Tolstoyan pacifism and conscientious objection to military service were noted as a potentially valuable subject for future research.

The first scholar to analytically study the Tolstoyan pacifist movement as part of the broader transnational pacifist movement was Canadian historian Peter Brock (1920–2006).<sup>11</sup> He has revealed the traces of Russian Tolstoyanism in Western archives and libraries and reconstructed its history as a pacifist movement, stressing their activism in defence of the conscientious objectors.<sup>12</sup> He complained about the inaccessibility and loss of some archives that could help write a detailed history of the Russian pacifist movement.<sup>13</sup>

In 1996, Italian historian Antonella Salomoni (b. 1956) published a book on the role of Leo Tolstoy's religious ideas in Italy.<sup>14</sup> She was the first to point out the significance of these ideas for the European religious and social movements of the 20th century. Salomoni demonstrated that the Tolstoyan movement had a political and even radical character, which she described as "Christian anarchism." Salomoni perceptively grasped the transnational nature of the movement, writing that: "Tolstoyism influenced the fate of Catholic reformism (also known as 'modernism'), penetrated various layers of society: it took root in democratic pacifism and revolutionary anti-militarism, inspired a brief but intense period of the anarcho-Christian movement, became a cause of fierce ideological struggle within anarchist organizations, and achieved great success in the international social democratic movement."<sup>15</sup> Moreover, she concluded that Tolstoyism was not merely a simple appendage or offshoot of Tolstoy's ideas: individual Tolstoyans often disagreed with Tolstoy himself on a range of issues (e.g. his attitude towards women and marriage) and developed their own, sometimes markedly different, views on the problems of social action and political participation.

Despite this headway, the Tolstoyan movement has not found its place in research on the history of nonviolent forms of protest in Russia. In the comprehensive reference work *Protest, Power, and Change: An Encyclopedia of Nonviolent Action*, there is an entry on Tolstoy himself, but none on the Tolstoyans as a movement, despite their close connection to both the theory and practice of nonviolent action.<sup>16</sup> Only one Russian case is consistently reproduced in works on the history of nonviolent resistance: the story of the First Russian Revolution, whose interpretation has long since become outdated, both methodologically and factually.<sup>17</sup>

Recently, further research into this phenomenon has become possible in conjunction with the opening up of the Tolstoyans' archives, which were deliberately hidden from the public during the *communist era*. This allowed a line to be drawn between the studies of Tolstoy and his legacy and the studies of Tolstoyans as independent thinkers and public actors. The foundational research by Charlotte Alston has been published in her book titled *Tolstoy and His Disciples: The History of a*

*Radical International Movement*.<sup>18</sup> Alston explores how Tolstoy's ideas influenced the theory and practice of social movements in many countries; she also traces back the international connections of the Tolstoyans. Anarchism, socialism, conscientious objection, anti-militarism, the denunciation of the state, peace, the theory of non-resistance, vegetarianism, communitarianism, and land reform were among the main issues discussed by the international community of the Tolstoyans.

### **Who were the Tolstoyans? A short history of the Tolstoyan radical pacifist movement in Russia**

The Tolstoyans did not have nor did they attempt to develop a common doctrine; instead, they were united by a set of shared ethical notions: the belief in conscience as the voice of God within the individual, which surpasses all external authorities, including the state and the church; the idea of the universal brotherhood of humanity; and the principles and values of nonviolence. At the turn of the century, this movement self-identified as a radical pacifist and religious anarchist movement with three main principles: nonviolence, freedom of conscience, and social justice.

Tolstoy never referred to himself as an anarchist, since at the time anarchism was largely associated with a non-religious and even anti-religious movement that often embraced violence. Nevertheless, beginning with the German scholar Paul Eltzbacher (1868–1928), researchers have classified him as a Christian anarchist. The Tolstoyans, by contrast, repeatedly described their movement as a form of religious anarchism.<sup>19</sup> They also openly expressed their sympathies toward other wings of anarchism, some of whom could be considered their closest allies within the Russian and transnational pacifist movements. Both during Tolstoy's lifetime and retrospectively, the Tolstoyans applied the concept of "Christian anarchism" to his ideas.

The radicalism of the Tolstoyan pacifist movement was rooted in its revolutionary character. It aimed at social action and the total transformation of society through peaceful, nonviolent change, change in individuals, their ideals and values, everyday life, and interpersonal

relations. The ultimate goal of the pacifists was to establish a universal brotherhood of all humankind through a nonviolent, spiritual revolution. The Tolstoyans developed a theory of nonviolent revolution grounded in Tolstoy's ideas and the global philosophy of nonviolence and civil resistance.

Tolstoy was "himself an apostle of nonviolent social revolution, spokesman for a radical transformation of the existing order by nonviolent means."<sup>20</sup> From the late 1870s onward, the theme of nonviolence and social change became one of the central concerns of Tolstoy's religious and publicistic writings. His political philosophy was highly unconventional, as it combined a radical critique of the existing social system and the spiritual condition of the privileged classes with an equally radical rejection of revolutionary ideas based on the use of force. Tolstoy believed the personal moral self-perfection of man would lead to changing society for the better: there is no need to change other people—change yourself, save your soul.<sup>21</sup>

Tolstoy also rejected the Hegelian view that couched history as the fulfillment of self-improving Reason.<sup>22</sup> He believed that while a person is historically determined, he is ethically free, and therefore that it is impossible to ascribe a goal of conscious influence to history; a person can only take care of their soul. Tolstoy's philosophy of history assumed the importance of the interaction of many ordinary people's wills rather than historical laws or "great" personalities.<sup>23</sup>

Tolstoy envisioned the "true revolution" as an act of "Christian disobedience" by the people themselves: a refusal to comply with the directives of secular and ecclesiastical authorities, to serve in the military or the police, to obey superiors, to pay taxes, to work for landlords and capitalists, and so on. He believed that if everyone stopped submitting to a violent state and began to "live as free people," the government would be paralyzed, and slavery would be abolished. Thus, Tolstoy's idea of a peaceful revolution did not involve collective action, much less the creation of a social movement. For him, the question of changing social life was a matter of individual religious and ethical choice, a personal effort to transform his or her way of life.<sup>24</sup>

The Tolstoyan communitarian movement of the last quarter of the nineteenth century followed from Tolstoy's approach. At that time, Tolstoyans represented the strand of Russian populism (*narodnichestvo*) that sought to overcome feelings of alienation while also searching for a peaceful alternative to the ideal of the violent revolutionaries. Participants in the communitarian movement pursued radical goals for transforming society through moral self-perfection, but they did not yet think in revolutionary terms. On the contrary, they contrasted their ideal with that of the revolutionaries, associating the latter with violent methods of social change.<sup>25</sup>

The Tolstoyans were pushed toward public activism by participating in famine relief during the years 1891/92 when they came face to face with the state's inability to address large-scale social problems. They were also deeply affected by the case of the Doukhobors in the Caucasus, who, in 1895, collectively refused military service and burned their weapons, actions that led to violent repression by the Cossacks and authorities.<sup>26</sup> Witnessing the arbitrariness of the Russian state and the Orthodox Church, the brutal persecution of sectarians, revolutionaries, and dissenters of all kinds, as well as the poverty of the common people and widespread social injustice, the Tolstoyans concluded that improving life for the better required not only individual spiritual effort, but also coordinated public action. As a result, they decided to create their social movement.

Tolstoyans actively worked to build their movement: they founded periodicals, published and distributed literature, articulated their ideals and program, engaged in popular education, sought out like-minded individuals and allies, discussed methods of nonviolent protest, took part in public debates, defended freedom of conscience and the rights of conscientious objectors and all those persecuted for their religious beliefs, built mutual aid networks, and, when circumstances permitted, established public organizations.

Publishing projects were especially important for the development of the pacifist movement. The first publishing endeavor of the "Tolstoyans" was the uncensored, *samizdat*-style journal *The Archive of L. N. Tolstoy*<sup>27</sup>, twelve issues of which were released between 1894 and 1896

in Moscow by Fedor Strakhov, Pavel Bir'ukov, Vladimir Chertkov and Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov with Tolstoy's participation. Its content included articles by the Tolstoyans as well as by Western Christian socialists, anarchists, and pacifists, featuring critiques of the existing social order, materials on the history of popular religious movements, and reflections on how and by what methods one might engage in nonviolent struggle against the government.

Forced into emigration, the Tolstoyans founded the *Free Word* publishing house, located in London. The publishing house was headed by Vladimir Chertkov (1854–1936), Tolstoy's best friend, who was actively assisted by his wife, Anna (1859–1927).<sup>28</sup> In addition to a series of books and pamphlets, the publishing house also produced two periodicals: the journal *Svobodnaia Mysl'* (*Free Thought*) (1899–1901), the newspaper *Svobodnoye Slovo* (*Free Word*) (1901–1905), and *Listki "Svobodnogo Slova"* (*Leaflets of the Free Word*) (1898–1902). The mission of the Tolstoyan publishing hub abroad was to print and disseminate the writings of Tolstoy that were banned in Russia, as well as other works that would serve as "a sincere protest against every falsehood, violence, and form of enslavement."<sup>29</sup> Tolstoyan periodicals circulated among sectarians, God-seekers, and religious anarchists from various walks of life, but also among students and revolutionaries.<sup>30</sup>

When inaugurating a section titled *News From Russia's Life Today* in the October 1899 issue of *Listki "Svobodnogo Slova,"* Chertkov wrote that this section was specifically dedicated to that side of contemporary Russian life which was forbidden to be discussed in the press within Russia, namely, "almost all of the most vital glimpses of the developing human consciousness, every striving of individuals and gatherings of people toward light and freedom, every manifestation of the awakening among Russian people of the need to defend their natural rights, their human dignity, and the demands of their conscience."<sup>31</sup>

Tolstoyan publications deliberately focused on questions of ethics and methods of protest. They drew attention to the specific forms of popular resistance to economic oppression and to the suppression of

freedom of conscience, as well as to the methods used by the student movement, which had recently gained momentum. Each issue of the journal included a section devoted to conscientious objection, featuring a chronicle of the movement and explanations of the motivations behind the refusals.



**Figure 1.** Vladimir Chertkov and the staff of the publishing house *Svobodnoye Slovo* in the repository of Leo Tolstoy’s manuscripts. Christchurch, England, 1906 (L. N. Tolstoy, *Life and Work: Documents, Photographs, Manuscripts* [Photobook / Special photography by S. Tkachenko; Compiled and text by M. Loginova et al.] (Planeta, 1995), 395).

It was in the pages of *Svobodnoye Slovo* (*Free Word*) that the theory of “nonviolent revolution” began to take shape. Since 1903, the Tolstoyan Ivan Tregubov (1858–1931) had been developing the idea of a “general peaceful strike” as the first step toward a nonviolent revolution. In Tregubov’s view, in addition to the two traditional paths in society, “the path of obedience and the path of violence,” a third path was possible: “the path of conscious indignation,” that is, the “Christian path” of nonviolent resistance. Tregubov proposed that

people adopt a tried-and-tested means of collective workers' struggle, a strike, as a method of fighting both the Orthodox Church and the Russian autocracy. He believed that such a strike would only be effective if it were both general and peaceful.<sup>32</sup>

In Tregubov's view, the general peaceful strike consisted in refusing to participate in church rituals and to fulfill state obligations — above all, refusing military service; in boycotting the production and construction of tools and facilities that allowed the state to maintain its power; in refusing to pay taxes used to support the Church and supply the army; and so on. Later, after the events of January 1905, Tregubov wrote with enthusiasm about the very idea of Father Georgy Gapon's (1870–1906)<sup>33</sup> peaceful procession with a petition to the Tsar. He saw it as “a peaceful, unarmed strike,” organized on religious grounds, and close in spirit both to Tolstoyanism and to the Russian people.<sup>34</sup>

In 1904, Chertkov summarized the Tolstoyan position in a brochure titled *About Revolution: Violent Revolution or Christian Liberation?*, which included a preface by Tolstoy. Christian teaching does not permit violence, according to Chertkov, and it does not at all prescribe blind obedience to the government. He acknowledged the necessity of resisting autocratic power and of replacing it when “it becomes harmful to the public good.”<sup>35</sup> However, he insisted this must be done, “by a person with a Christian understanding of life,” and only through nonviolent means, for example, through civil disobedience, as demonstrated by the American Christian publicist Adin Ballou (1803–1890) in his book *Christian Non-Resistance* (1846).<sup>36</sup>

In Chertkov's view, “every true revolution in human life always begins within a person, in their consciousness, and only afterward manifests in the transformation of external social structures.”<sup>37</sup> He argued that the theory of non-cooperation and passive resistance was “far more revolutionary” than any of the theories of the violent revolutionaries because it aimed at improving internal human motives and at perfecting relations between people.

In this concept, the influence of the *populist (narodnik)* idea was strong: Chertkov believed that “unresentful disobedience” corresponded to “the kindly and ungrudging character that is generally inherent in the Slavic people.” Moreover, Chertkov was convinced that it was precisely the Russian people who understood that the struggle should be “not for replacing a bad government with a better one, but for the absence of any government at all.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1907, Chertkov republished the brochure under a new title: *Our Revolution*, supplementing it with appendices, two of which reflected on the experience of the 1905–1907 revolution and, in particular, the general strike of autumn of 1905. Chertkov wrote with admiration that this “enormous” and “completely peaceful” strike revealed “the power of peaceful disobedience to the government,” paralyzing the state apparatus and forcing the government to make concessions.<sup>39</sup> He expressed confidence that Russia was approaching “that true revolution, carried out within the inner consciousness, without which no genuine improvement in the conditions of the people’s life is possible.”<sup>40</sup> For its success, he believed, a rise in the “rational religious consciousness of the people” was essential, that is, a long period of self-improvement and spiritual education of the nation.<sup>41</sup>

The defense of the conscientious objectors was the main focus of the Tolstoyans’ activities from the very inception of their movement. They collected information about objectors, provided them with legal and material support, and disseminated information to the public about the motives behind their refusals. This work was carried out under the auspices of the Moscow Vegetarian Society, which, since 1909, had served as the main organizational center of the Tolstoyan movement. The Tolstoyans sought to influence lawmakers and to initiate legislation in the State Duma that would ease the plight of conscientious objectors. However, the issue was not resolved either under the tsarist regime or under the Provisional Government.

At the beginning of the First World War, the Tolstoyan pacifists were virtually the only public force in Russia that did not succumb to patriotic sentiment and openly declared their principled rejection of the war. They drafted several anti-war appeals, for which they were

arrested and put on trial in 1916. Almost all of them were acquitted. This acquittal, reflecting strong sympathy from both the public attending the trial and from the court itself, was a sign that the ideas of nonviolence had begun to win over public opinion.

During the war, the Tolstoyans directed their preaching of nonviolence toward soldiers, workers, peasants, and women. The number of refusals to serve in the military rose sharply, and the pacifist movement became more democratic, with an increasing number of peasants joining its ranks. At the same time, the movement became more radical: the Tolstoyans' vision of the desired revolution transcended national borders, and the idea of "universal brotherhood" as the ultimate goal of human development took root in their rhetoric and ideology. From that point on, the phrase "all people are brothers" became the slogan of the Tolstoyan pacifist movement.<sup>42</sup>

### **Tolstoyans and the revolutionary processes of 1917 until the early 1920s**

Tolstoyans viewed the events of February 1917 in Russia as the "non-violent revolution" they had long dreamed of. The "bloodless" fall of the autocracy was, in their eyes, the result of an "anarcho-religious" movement led by the native, "guileless and good-natured" Russian people, who, for several centuries, had been "rejecting" state violence and resisting it through passive resistance.<sup>43</sup> The Tolstoyans insisted that the popular masses became discontented and ceased to obey not under the influence of political propaganda, but primarily as a result of their independent inner development.<sup>44</sup>

After the Bolsheviks' rise to power, during the Civil War and "war communism," the Tolstoyans realized that the Bolsheviks' moral values and ideals were fundamentally different from those of persons with "free religious" convictions. From the early 1920s onwards, they and other like-minded Christian pacifists openly criticized the Bolsheviks. The free Christians were convinced that, alongside the external, materialistic, and violent revolution, an invisible, spiritual, and peaceful revolutionary process was taking place in Russia, one in which the

authors felt themselves to be participants. They saw themselves as a distinct force within the revolution, rooted in the sectarian-peasant masses and critical of the “violent” revolutionaries—the Bolsheviks.

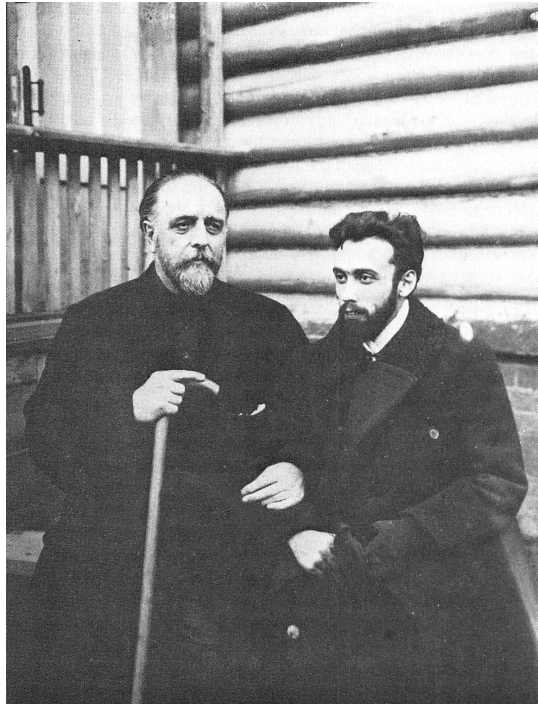
The idea of the incompleteness of the revolutionary process and the need for a new, spiritual revolution was the central theme of all Tolstoyan public discourse throughout the 1920s. The Tolstoyans continued their struggle for their revolution in the same way as before: by working toward the spiritual awakening of the people.<sup>45</sup> Despite the fact that the explosion of violence among the people during the revolutionary period deeply disappointed some Tolstoyans, they continued to develop their movement with support from sectarian communities, placing particular emphasis on educational and moral upbringing projects. During these years, the Tolstoyan movement underwent further democratization,<sup>46</sup> which was reflected in the composition of Tolstoyan organizations, the readership of Tolstoyan periodicals, and the makeup of Tolstoyan agricultural communes.

In a short period between 1917 and 1922, the radical pacifists were able to develop their legal organizations and press. In June 1917, they founded the *Moscow Society of True Freedom* (OIS) in memory of Leo Tolstoy. The programmatic document: “An essay on the foundations of true freedom” outlined their main principles, including the rejection of any kind of violence, a rejection of war, state borders, and private land ownership. The society’s main purpose was “through moral improvement of people to achieve the transformation of human society based on state violence in the stateless community where complete freedom in all matters of faith and life ... could be secured.”<sup>47</sup> The OIS societies were established in numerous cities and villages across Russia.

For a short while between 1921 and 1923, Tolstoyans collaborated with the Soviets in the framework of the “sectarian project of the Bolsheviks,” aimed at reinforcing the social base of the Bolshevik revolution among the peasantry.<sup>48</sup> The Bolsheviks relied on Tolstoyans and sectarians as the most literate, best-educated part of the peasantry, whose worldview predisposed them to collective forms of business management. They would provide an example of a communist life-

style and husbandry to other, petty-bourgeois-minded peasants. Very quickly, by the end of 1923, when religious communists faced reprisals, this project folded.

In the autumn of 1918, the Tolstoyans established an interdenominational body for the defense of the rights of conscientious objectors – *the United Council of Religious Communities and Groups* (OSROG). Its founders envisioned OSROG as an alternative to the Bolshevik *Soviety*, a nationwide representative body that would express the views and convictions of various religious movements on all matters affecting their interests.<sup>49</sup> In some cities, OSROG established local branches and created an institution of OSROG's experts. The Chairman of OSROG was Vladimir Chertkov, and his deputy was Konstantin Shokhor-Trotsky.



**Figure 2.** Vladimir Chertkov and Konstantin Shokhor-Trotskii, Moscow, early 1930s (Mark Aleksandrovich Popovsky, *Russkie muzhiki rasskazyvaiut: Posledovateli L.N. Tolstogo v Sovetskom Soiuse, 1918-1977* (Overseas Publications Interchange, 1983), 35.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the Tolstoyans and sectarians, as well as their historical ties with the Bolsheviks, the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Republic issued the decree "On Exemption from Military Service on Religious Grounds" on January 4, 1919. The decree provided not only for alternative service for objectors but also for the possibility of complete exemption from military duty on religious grounds. It entrusted OSROG with the task of assessing the beliefs of religious pacifists for the courts responsible for making exemption decisions. However, the decree only partially resolved the issue: from the very beginning, its provisions were frequently violated at the local level. Conscientious objectors continued to be punished harshly, in some cases even executed, and new laws and regulations were quickly adopted to restrict the decree's application.

The Tolstoyans' success in uniting peaceful, communitarian sectarian groups was so evident that the Soviet authorities began to perceive them as a threat to their existence. As early as 1923, the Bolsheviks launched a propaganda campaign against the Tolstoyans, and repressions began targeting them and other pacifists. OSROG was shut down, and the activities of the Tolstoyan OIS societies were banned, as was the publication of Tolstoyan periodicals. Subsequently, the Tolstoyans continued their activities unofficially, centered around the Moscow Vegetarian Society. They transferred their discussions of the ideas of religious pacifism mostly onto the pages of clandestine *samizdat* published in Soviet Russia, as well as to the transnational press maintained by their associates abroad.

In the late 1920s and 1930s, many active figures of the "free-religious" movement were subjected to repression. The last remaining nodes of the pacifist network in the Soviet Union were the Tolstoyan agricultural communes. Under constant pressure from the state these communes existed in isolation and were no longer involved in the dissemination of Tolstoy's ideas. All of these structures were destroyed in the late 1930s, during the Great Purges.

*The social base of the radical pacifist movement: the Tolstoyans in search of a popular tradition of nonviolent resistance*

The first Russian Tolstoyans were representatives of the social and intellectual elite of the Russian Empire. However, they sought to build their movement as a unified social force that included both the Tolstoyan intellectuals and members of popular sectarian movements. In the view of radical pacifists, Tolstoy's ideas of nonviolence were closely tied to a folk tradition, which gave them hope that the Russian radical pacifist movement could become a genuine social movement with a broad social base.

Thanks to their advocacy and outreach, Tolstoyan leaders acquired extensive contacts and enormous prestige among Russian sects and the peasantry. Apart from the Tolstoyans, the representatives of some other religious and ethical and religious groups declared, individually or collectively, their support for pacifism. Among them were the *Doukhobors*, *Molokans*, *Malevantsy*, *S'utaevtsy*, *Dobroliubovtsy*, Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Mennonites, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovahists (Il'in's followers), New Israelites, spiritual monists, *trezvenniki* (Orthodox temperance movement), spiritual monists, as well as individual God-seekers.

On the one hand, the mass social base of the movement developed naturally. The Tolstoyans had extensive experience interacting with peasants and members of various sectarian groups, gained during the time they lived in agricultural communes and sought to provide the local population with medical, juridical, and agronomic assistance. In their efforts to draw closer to the peasantry, they followed Tolstoy's example, his practices of self-simplification, and his vision of a natural, moral way of life.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Tolstoyans began collecting materials on the history of Russian religious movements to record "every individual episode of disobedience and resistance to the state and the Orthodox church".<sup>50</sup> After 1897, such materials were collected in England by the editorial office of the *Svobodnoye Slovo* (*Free Word*) publishing house. However, almost the entire archive, except the published materials, has been lost.<sup>51</sup>

Although some Tolstoyans had a university education and even studied history, their project was carried out outside of academic scholarship. In keeping with Tolstoyan principles, most of them rejected the state and were skeptical of its institutions, including universities. Nevertheless, they regarded their work on studying popular protest as scholarship, closely connected with the practice of social struggle and the enlightenment of society.

In the 1910s–1920s, several Tolstoyans and their supporters continued to research this subject through archival work and direct engagement with representatives of religious dissent. Nowadays, numerous Tolstoyan archival collections contain an extraordinarily rich array of materials that they gathered on the history of Russian sectarianism. Different parts and numerous copies of the Tolstoy sectarian collection can be found in the fonds of the OR RGB, of the Russian State Archives of Literature and Arts (RGALI), of the Scientific and Historical Archive of the State Museum of the History of Religion (NIA GMIR), and the Department of Manuscript Fonds of the Leo Tolstoy State Museum (OR GMT).<sup>52</sup>

### **Conscientious objection in the history of the Russian radical pacifist movement<sup>53</sup>**

The Tolstoyans built their “free-religious” movement on folk traditions of disobedience, while also carefully studying the experience of Western religious and pacifist movements. They concluded that the values of nonviolence and the practices of nonviolent resistance were a fundamental, though hidden and unarticulated, part of the spiritual traditions of the Russian people. They believed that the role of educated individuals was to develop an up-to-date pacifist social movement based on these values and traditions.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of the population of the Russian Empire, the peasantry, was not eager to serve in the army. However, this reluctance to serve in the army was not rooted in **aversion to violence**. Adherence to ethical principles that forbade bloodshed or the use of force was relatively rare in Russian popular culture, which was traditional-

ly intertwined with everyday violence. The commandment “Thou shalt not kill” concerned only a few sectarian groups and individual representatives of religious dissent. The Orthodox Church was largely indifferent to this commandment and even hostile toward pacifism. Nevertheless, within sectarian circles, the Tolstoyans identified a number of practices that they interpreted as a form of proto-pacifism, a potential foundation for the development of a genuine, ethically grounded commitment to nonviolence.

The doctrines of Russian religious dissenters in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were still in the process of formation and were subject to external influences. As a result, their pacifism was often situational; it would appear and disappear depending on the circumstances.<sup>54</sup> Only three original pacifist religious movements emerged on Russian soil, whose doctrines were formed without the influence of foreign religious movements: the *Doukhobors*, the *Trezvenniki*, and the *Dobrolubovites* (disciples of A. Dobrol’ubov).

The sectarian refusals of military service typically took the form of passive evasion or desertion, and never developed into a coherent or organized social movement. In most cases, as noted by the Tolstoyans, their motivation for refusing military service was not connected to nonviolence but was part of a broader tradition of non-cooperation with the state. The most widespread form of refusal in this milieu was associated with the phenomenon of “eschatological nonconformism”: a desire to escape the control of the Antichrist state, which manifested in a variety of social practices. Sometimes this took the form of escape through self-isolation of the religious group or flight to neighboring countries. Another common form of protest was the symbolic refusal of citizenship, expressed through rejection of passports, oaths, tax payments, participation in censuses and military service, registration of marriages and baptisms, socially and politically accepted titles, submission to laws and authorities, and even, in later periods, abstention from voting.

In the Russian Empire, some religious dissenters were inclined toward pacifism but did not seek to refuse military service for social reasons. A restraining factor was the need for wealthy members of

the community to demonstrate their loyalty to the state. Such groups included, for example, the Molokans, Mennonites, Evangelical Christians, and Baptists.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, during the First World War and the early years of Soviet rule, there was an explosive growth of pacifist sentiments and conscientious objection within these communities.<sup>56</sup>

The Tolstoyans hoped that such anti-state sentiments within sectarianism could serve as a foundation for the development of the pacifist movement. One case in particular instilled hope: in the 1890s, the Doukhobors were a religious group that showed the greatest receptiveness to Tolstoy's preaching of nonviolence, after which part of their community gradually adopted the positions of absolute pacifism, Christian anarchism, and communism.

The Tolstoyans observed the dynamics and changes in the motivation behind refusals of military service in Russia. They attached particular importance to individual objectors, those refusals based on the call of personal conscience. Such refusals differed in several respects from the religious objections of sectarians, which were rooted in group loyalty and often uncritical adherence to the principles of their religious community. The motive behind individual refusals was a personal, well-considered decision not to serve, based on the incompatibility of the very nature or conditions of military service with the person's inner moral convictions.

Individual objectors often expressed multiple motives, both religious and secular, simultaneously. Such refusal could stem from both an aversion to killing and a rejection of taking an oath for religious reasons, as well as a protest against the alienation of one's own body, which is inevitable in military service. Objectors pointed to their disgust with public undressing before the medical commission, life in the barracks and wearing military uniforms, military drill, obedience to orders from superiors, physical exercises, weapons training, and other drills, as well as the memorization of prayers. They also expressed rejection of military-issued items, military food, and other bodily practices associated with the soldier's position.

Unlike these individual conscientious objectors, sectarians considered the use of various kinds of cunning, pretense, and even outright deception and fraud acceptable to remain faithful to their religious principles. They distinguished between “external” and “internal” obedience and were lenient toward the former, much like the *beguny* (religious fugitives) differentiated between “bodily” and “spiritual” submission to authorities, and under certain conditions, the former was permitted.<sup>57</sup>

In their use of such methods, sectarians were no different from other peasants, for whom, as James C. Scott has shown, “infrapolitics” were characteristic, including “neglect in performing work, simulation, false, superficial consent, feigned understanding, evasion, petty theft, illicit trades, poaching, gossip, sabotage, arson, sneak attacks and murder, anonymous threats, and so forth.”<sup>58</sup> Scott regarded this type of resistance to be a “weapon of the weak,” especially prevalent in authoritarian societies where open protest and disagreement with authority are brutally suppressed by harsh repression.

When Scott remarked in the preface to the Russian edition of his book that “Russia has its own impressive history of evading the state,” he was unaware that it also has an even more striking history of popular resistance to it.<sup>59</sup> When he wrote that “quiet, unassuming, quotidian insubordination, because it usually flies below the archival radar, waves no banners, has no officeholders, writes no manifestos, and has no permanent organization, escapes notice [of historians],”<sup>60</sup> he did not know that in Russia, the Tolstoyans had assembled a vast archive of peasant passive resistance. Scott could not have known this because the Tolstoyan archives remained restricted for a long time, and the religious-anarchist legacy of Tolstoy and the Tolstoyans had simply never been studied.

Unlike popular protests against conscription, the social movement founded by the Tolstoyans was characterized by ongoing reflection on the moral purity of protest methods and the relationship between goals and means of struggle. They sought to make protest open and honest, grounded in carefully considered, freely chosen values. Tolstoyan conscientious objectors tended to publicly articulate their

position; they aimed to discuss their views and motives, often appealing to “conscience” arguments, quoting the Bible. Some even framed their refusal in socio-political terms, drawing on the works of Tolstoy, foreign thinkers, scholars, and religious advocates of nonviolence. They consciously preferred severe punishment rather than serving in the military during peacetime, which, from the standpoint of threats to life and health, was often harmless and the likelihood of actual weapon use and the risk of becoming a killer were very low. The severity of their punishment often far exceeded the deprivations they would have faced had they accepted military service. Finally, individual conscientious objectors typically sought to find like-minded people and form a social movement; they created networks of mutual support that over time acquired a human rights character.

During the First World War, the number of conscientious objectors sharply increased. The Tolstoyans attributed exceptional significance to this phenomenon. Radical pacifists within the movement saw the refusal of military service as the first herald of a future nonviolent revolution. They concluded that the spiritual revolution, the revolution of brotherhood, had begun with Jesus Christ and was now continuing among the ordinary Russian people.<sup>61</sup> The Tolstoyans considered it their task to actively promote the development of anti-war consciousness in society along a “free religious,” genuinely pacifist direction.<sup>62</sup>

### **“Leo Tolstoy and the Struggle for the Idea of Peace”: an attempt to reconstruct the Tolstoyan research idea**

An analysis of archival inventories and biobibliographical materials on the Tolstoyans suggests that Shokhor-Trotsky’s work on his book was part of a broader Tolstoyan effort to write a history of conscientious objection to military service in Russia. This was a collective undertaking that involved Shokhor-Trotsky himself (organizing the collection of materials, corresponding with objectors and other involved individuals, working in archives, and engaging in human rights advocacy); Klavdiya Platonova (1893–1973) (correspondence); Vladimir Chertkov (developing and promoting the idea of nonviolent revolution, and human rights work); his wife, Anna Chertkova (cor-

respondence); the scholar of religion Mikhail Muratov (1892–1957) (researching attitudes toward military refusal among representatives of various religious movements, collecting archival materials, conducting surveys among objectors, writing articles and lectures, and human rights defense); and Aleksandr Nikitin-Khovansky (who worked as a typist on a Remington typewriter).<sup>63</sup> Later, Valentin Bulgakov (1886–1966) joined this common cause. He was the only member of this circle who, after the onset of repression against the Tolstoyans, found himself in emigration and was able to continue developing the topic of conscientious objection and nonviolent revolution.

Konstantin Shokhor-Trotsky was a disciple of Leo Tolstoy, a literary scholar, and a staff member of the Tolstoy Museum. In the 1920s and 1930s, he served on the editorial board of Tolstoy's *Collected Works* (PSS). Shokhor-Trotsky actively participated in nearly all of the Tolstoyan public initiatives: he was a member of the MVO and the OIS, and published in Tolstoyan periodicals. Since 1918, he had served as deputy chairman and expert of OSROG.

Shokhor-Trotsky did not agree to being called a Tolstoyan; he considered himself a “religious anarchist-individualist.” Being a “resolute, absolute antimilitarist and a committed opponent of all violence,”<sup>64</sup> he refused military service both under the Tsarist regime and in Soviet times (in the first case, he was imprisoned; in the second, he was released). In 1931, during a political “purge,” he was dismissed from the Tolstoy Museum because he was a “latent” Tolstoyan.

A reader of the *Yasnaya Polyana Notes* by Tolstoy's personal physician, Dushan Makovitsky (1866–1921), who, from 1904 until 1910 when Tolstoy died, recorded everything said in the Tolstoy household, cannot help but notice that refusals of military service were among the most frequent topics of conversation (their number rose sharply during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905).<sup>65</sup> Tolstoy, his like-minded associates, in the lives of almost all of which was a refusal (from a bureaucratic career or military service, from a privileged position, or from ownership, etc), and guests discussed news about objectors and read the numerous letters Tolstoy received from them.

During these years, Tolstoy wrote several articles that addressed the issue of refusing military service. Makovitsky notes that at the time, the collection of information on objectors was being undertaken by Ivan Nazhivin (1874–1940), Ivan Tregubov, and Pavel Bir'ukov (1860–1931); the idea of publishing a book on the subject was raised more than once.

Shokhor-Trotsky began collecting documents on conscientious objectors and writing the book *Leo Tolstoy and the Struggle for the Idea of Peace* in early 1911. Given Tolstoy's deep concern with the issue of refusal, it is possible that Shokhor-Trotsky saw his work as fulfilling Tolstoy's unofficial legacy. According to Muratov, the book was intended to be a major study on the history of conscientious objection to military service.<sup>66</sup> All those involved in the project referred to their work as “research.”

Shokhor-Trotsky aimed to study and describe two sources of the radical-pacifist movement in Russia: the folk religious tradition and Tolstoy's ideas, with the goal of establishing a connection between them. His work proceeded along several lines: research into Tolstoy's anti-militarist writings; work with Tolstoy's archive, including his articles and letters from conscientious objectors; the search for materials about Tolstoy in other archives; the study of anti-militarist statements and activities of Tolstoyans; research in libraries and archives to uncover materials on the history of military refusal; and the collection of information about conscientious objectors, including correspondence with them and with anyone who possessed information about them.

The most precious part of the archive of materials for the book *Leo Tolstoy and the Struggle for the Idea of Peace* consists of folders containing information about conscientious objectors—the “human documents,” as Muratov called them.<sup>67</sup> The Tolstoyans learned about objectors through the press and networks of like-minded individuals formed around the MVO and OIS, as well as Tolstoyan circles, communities, and publishing houses. Between 1917 and the early 1920s, such information was collected by OSROG; later, it was gathered by Vladimir Chertkov and his son, Vladimir Chertkov Jr. Shok-

hor-Trotsky sent letters to his friends and supporters, asking them to maintain this initiative. A network of correspondents emerged, helping to collect the necessary data according to a specific plan.

Upon learning of a case of refusal, the Tolstoyans and their associates would begin correspondence with the objector himself, who was usually in prison or a penal battalion, as well as with his acquaintances and relatives, in order to clarify the details of the refusal. They were interested in the specific charges, the place and conditions of the objector's detention (with the aim of providing legal and material support), as well as his religious affiliation, biography, and motives for refusal. Individual folders were compiled, containing this correspondence, newspaper clippings and excerpts, and all materials and references received about that person. Since the concept of refusing military service was, for Tolstoyans, closely tied to the notion of conscience, a phenomenon they sought to study and explain to their contemporaries, the collection contains a large number of ego-documents: letters, autobiographies (often confessional), and memoirs. Tolstoyans also kept lists of objectors, organized by year and religious group, to analyze the movement and use the data in their human rights work.

Part of the archive concerns not contemporary but historical cases of refusal and consists of excerpts from books, archival materials, and periodicals on the history of the peasantry and various religious groups in the Russian Empire and abroad, as well as their relationship with the state, their attitudes toward military service, forms of protest, and, more broadly, manifestations of religious anarchism among the people. The materials in the archive were intended for publication, and it can be assumed that a documentary collection on the topic of conscientious objection needs to be prepared.<sup>68</sup> However, in 1923, Muratov grieved that only a small portion of the materials had been published, and that only abroad: "We still do not have an article or a book that aims to summarize and synthesize the information collected."<sup>69</sup>

The Tolstoyans' project was closely tied to the practice of social and political struggle: their research was a part of their human rights work, through which they provided legal assistance to those imprisoned for refusing military service, visited prisons, raised funds, and established connections with members of the public and legislators. They aimed to explain the motives behind such refusals and to promote the adoption of laws that would exempt objectors from punishment.<sup>70</sup>

Howard Zinn would likely have admired the Tolstoyan methods of researching, collecting, and preserving archives. In his essay addressed to archivists, he argued that their "supposed neutrality is ... a fake," because "a job of collecting, sorting, preserving, making available, the records of the society" can serve either to uphold the status quo or to challenge it. If the archivist chooses the path of social critique, then "the rebellion of the archivist against his normal role is not ... the politicizing of a neutral craft, but [the] humanizing of an inevitably political craft."<sup>71</sup> Like true people's historians, the Tolstoyans documented the history of the poor, oppressed, and persecuted, but above all, those among them who protested. They recorded both the lived experience of ordinary people participating in a social movement and society's response to this growing movement.

The materials collected by the Tolstoyans were used in drafting numerous petitions to the authorities, both before the Revolution and during the Soviet period. In 1912, Shokhor-Trotsky submitted a memorandum to the State Duma, accompanied by an appendix titled *Brief Information on Those Who Refused Military Service in Russia on Religious Grounds*, which included a proposal for replacing military service with forms of peaceful labor.<sup>72</sup> In 1917, for the Provisional Government, Shokhor-Trotsky and Chertkov prepared a new *Memorandum on the Treatment of Those Who Refuse Military Service for Religious Reasons*.<sup>73</sup> Neither the State Duma nor the Provisional Government adopted legislation that would ease the plight of conscientious objectors, although preparatory work had begun.

In a 1917 memorandum, its authors described conscientious objectors as “uncommon individuals” who were “guilty only of following the voice of their conscience and their love for all living beings by refusing to take part in military affairs.” The Tolstoyans proposed their plan for establishing an alternative civilian service, along with a procedure for verifying the sincerity of the objectors’ beliefs to ensure the right to substitute military service with civilian duty.<sup>74</sup> A year and a half later, this plan (with some modifications) would be adopted by the Bolsheviks and form the basis for the creation of OSROG.

The authors also put forward their views on the possibility of granting full exemption from military service to the most radical conscientious objectors. According to the Tolstoyans’ plan, such individuals should be allowed “to settle on a plot of land designated by the government in a region where the weak development of state structures would be more consistent with their rejection of state authority, but where the conditions of life would require labor and strength of spirit.”<sup>75</sup>

In the appendix, the Tolstoyans published documents titled *On the Characteristics of Different Types of Refusals*, materials on the history of the issue’s discussion in the State Duma, and information about individuals who had refused military service, including descriptions of instances of “mockery” directed at them. Analyzing the objectors’ motivations, the Tolstoyans argued that religious freedom should also apply to “*metaphysical views that are not religious*,” and proposed that anyone with sincere anti-militarist convictions, including atheists, should be exempted from military service.<sup>76</sup>

After the revolutions of 1917, information about conscientious objectors was disseminated through the Tolstoyan press, letters to the authorities, public reports and lectures, and other forms of educational outreach carried out by the MVO and the OIS in Moscow and across the country. The Moscow branch of the OIS became a kind of “people’s university.” In 1918, it even hosted courses in “free religious knowledge” for workers, peasants, artisans, minor civil servants, and demobilized soldiers. The primary aim of these courses was a comprehensive study of Tolstoy’s worldview and way of life. In addition, the program included lectures on the history of religious

and moral teachings, free-religious and anarchist movements, issues of peace and anti-militarism, the history of the land question, and the teachings of the political economist Henry George (1839-1897), as well as vegetarianism, the “international language” (most likely Esperanto), and similar topics. For example, Shokhor-Trotsky gave a lecture titled “From the History of Refusals of Military Service on Religious Grounds,” while Muratov gave lectures on religious movements in Russia, including presentations such as “Russian Society and Sectarianism” and “On the Current Tasks in Studying the Religious Life of the Population.” Chertkov delivered an entire series of talks, including “On the Free Christian Understanding of Life,” “On True Anarchism,” “The Anti-War Movement in England,” “On Violent Revolution,” “The Spiritual Consciousness of the Russian People,” and many others.<sup>77</sup>

The courses sparked lively public interest, with up to two hundred people attending each lecture, but they lasted only one season.<sup>78</sup> Members of the OIS also visited barracks and factories, where they gave talks and distributed “free-Christian” literature. Lecturers traveled to other cities and towns across Russia, conducting educational work among sectarians, peasants, and workers. The OIS also operated an Information Bureau, where inquiries about conscientious objection were most often answered by Klavdiya Platonova, Shokhor-Trotsky’s wife.<sup>79</sup>

### **Mikhail Muratov and his studies on religious anarchism and antimilitarism in Russia**

Another important participant in the Tolstoyan project was Mikhail Muratov, a writer and scholar of Russian religious sectarianism. He was involved in the cooperative movement, worked at the Tolstoyan publishing house *Posrednik*, and was a member of the Society of Friends of Peace and the OIS. In 1917, Muratov graduated from the Faculty of History and Philology at Moscow University. Muratov was born into a family of revolutionary populists (*narodniki*), but associated himself to a youth circle whose members believed that the key condition for Russia’s renewal was “the people’s self-activity.” They carried out educational work in rural areas.

In 1912, Muratov grew sympathetic to the Tolstoyans and began studying the issues of popular religiosity. To this end, he traveled throughout Central Russia, the Caucasus, and Siberia.<sup>80</sup> He combined archival and library research with personal encounters with representatives of various religious movements. Muratov met with them in taverns, teahouses, during prayer meetings, in prisons, and within Tolstoyan organizations. Like Shokhor-Trotsky, Muratov's research was closely tied to his active work with OSROG.

Muratov was the author of several articles on conscientious objectors, which were prepared for publication and submission to government bodies between 1917 and 1923. His archive has preserved several drafts and unpublished works on the topic.<sup>81</sup> At Irkutsk State University, between 1920 and 1923, Muratov taught a specialized course entitled "History of Russian Sectarianism," one of the lectures of which was devoted to conscientious objection.<sup>82</sup> In his writings, Muratov named Vladimir and Anna Chertkov, as well as Konstantin Shokhor-Trotsky, as his predecessors in the study of the problem of conscientious objection.

Muratov writes that "the history of refusals from military service is rich in 'human documents' that recount with extraordinary sincerity how a worldview was formed – one that makes it impossible to take part in war in any form."<sup>83</sup> Drawing on such documents, he compiled an essay on the history of conscientious objectors in Russia, focusing on the motives of the objectors and the diversity, complexity, and inner contradictions of their religious beliefs. He distinguishes between those whose refusal was driven by a rejection of collaboration with the "Antichrist's authority," and those who believed that military service was incompatible with the commandments of Christ.<sup>84</sup> Muratov was especially interested in cases of individual refusals of military service, which had previously been rare but were beginning to increase. These refusals, he noted, "are not necessarily connected to membership in any particular sect; they are often the result of an inner process, independent of any external influence."<sup>85</sup>

Muratov presents numerous personal testimonies, offering extensive quotations from letters and other documents, allowing the objectors to speak for themselves without drowning out their voices with his own interpretations or generalizations. His use of “human documents” and stories of faith-driven martyrs, executed for their refusal to serve, is meant to evoke a deep emotional response in readers. The author believed that the powerful example of true Christians had an uplifting effect on ordinary people and even on common deserters, whose acts of fleeing from war could spark a chain reaction and evolve into a genuine social movement inspired by the example of these “Christian martyrs.”<sup>86</sup>

### **Opponents of War: *an anarchist survey of the conscientious objectors in Russia***

The materials on conscientious objectors collected by the Tolstoyans, along with their inquiries, formed the basis for a substantial memorandum in the form of an article titled *Opponents of War*, compiled by the Tolstoyans around 1922, which appears to have remained unpublished. I have found the text in three archives: one copy in the Muratov collection,<sup>87</sup> two copies in the Chertkov collection,<sup>88</sup> and one in the archive of War Resisters’ International (WRI) at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam.<sup>89</sup> It is most likely a work of collective authorship: the text shows clear thematic links to Muratov’s articles, includes material from the Shokhor-Trotsky collection, and contains textual parallels with Chertkov’s writings, as well as direct quotations from them.

The appearance of the article is linked to the campaign waged against the OSROG, which peaked in 1921, the year when three OSROG experts, including Shokhor-Trotsky, were put on trial for allegedly issuing unreliable certificates on religious beliefs (and ultimately acquitted). The People’s Commissariat of Justice accused OSROG of having “turned into a hotbed of anarcho-antimilitarist propaganda,” “condoning and even initiating refusals from military service” and acting “in a way that undermines the military strength of the Red Army.”<sup>90</sup>



The authors of the article acknowledge the January 4, 1919 — decree as a major achievement, but they draw attention to the fact that OSROG, the body entrusted with carrying out expert assessments in cases of conscientious objection, faced numerous obstacles in its work. They saw their task as describing “the main features of the anti-militarist movement which, in various forms and to varying degrees, is currently manifesting itself among the Russian people.”<sup>91</sup> In particular, the article is a systematic anarchist survey intended to assist all those involved in making decisions about granting exemptions from military service by helping them understand the kinds of convictions held by conscientious objectors and the different types and nuances of attitudes toward conscription that exist within their circles.

The article is divided into four chapters. Chapter I, *The Promptings of Conscience that Lead to Refusals*, discusses various religious groups and the motives for refusal that are typical for each of them. Chapter II, *The Attitude of Objectors Toward Military Service*, examines refusals of varying degrees of radicalism—from agreeing to serve without bearing arms to complete non-cooperation with the state. Chapter III, *The Two Extreme Wings of Those Who Refuse to Fight*, addresses deserters and “independents” (individual refusals), describes the functions of OSROG, including its role as an expert body certifying the “sincerity” of objectors, and responds to criticisms of OSROG’s work. Chapter IV, *Modern Christian Martyrs*, presents “human documents” about executions carried out “for freedom and brotherhood” during the Civil War in the camps of both Reds and Whites, and recounts popular impressions of these executions. At its core, the main subject of the article is human conscience and the diversity of its manifestations concerning obligations imposed by the state.

In *the Opponents of War*, the Tolstoyans argued that Soviet power, like any other form of government, carried out its functions through violence. At the same time, they claimed that the Russian people, in their majority, did not sympathize with any authority based on violence and were unwilling to sacrifice themselves to support or defend any system of government. The authors linked conscientious objection to a growing self-awareness among the Russian people,

which had developed “through their independent inner evolution” and ultimately led to the revolutionary events of 1917. “When the patience of the people runs dry,” the Tolstoyans admonished, “no threats or enticements can stop the surge of the popular will. What happened under previous governments can always be repeated under any government that neglects the spiritual needs of the masses.”<sup>92</sup>

One of the central ideas articulated by the Tolstoyans in their writings during the First World War and the Russian Civil War was the justification of widespread desertion and the recognition of deserters as proto-pacifists. They regarded desertion as “a great popular movement” and wrote that, although deserters were not idealistic objectors, their unwillingness to participate in the war, regardless of the motives behind it, was understandable and natural. Such sentiments, they believed, pointed to the possibility of ending the war “as a result of the exhaustion, within our troops, of the military zeal necessary to continue it.”<sup>93</sup>

In Soviet times, deserters were contemptuously referred to as *shkurniki* (“self-seekers” or “cowards”), and the Bolsheviks’ brutality toward them became one of the central themes in a collection of Tolstoyan essays criticizing the Russian Revolution,<sup>94</sup> which was prepared for publication in galley proofs but ultimately remained unpublished. In the *Opponents of War*, the Tolstoyans set themselves the task of understanding “what inner spring drives desertion.” They described deserters as ordinary people who “dream only of escaping the hell that surrounds them as soon as possible and returning home to their families and to peaceful, meaningful work.”<sup>95</sup>

The reasons for desertion, wrote the Tolstoyans, though not as lofty as those guiding conscientious objectors, are nonetheless entirely understandable and natural – a revulsion at the horrors of war, unwillingness to submit to authority, homesickness, fear of death, and so on. They wrote that the reason for desertion is not so important, because “to condemn a person for wanting to live would be supremely unjust and cruel.” Moreover, the authors of the article asserted that deserters “often differ from other conscripted soldiers only in that they are more sensitive and freedom-loving, and therefore less capable of passively accepting their painful and humiliating condition as military slaves.”<sup>96</sup>

In the writings of Muratov and Chertkov,<sup>97</sup> as well as in the *Opponents of War*, the “simple-hearted and kind-spirited Russian people” are contrasted with the people of Western Europe, who, according to the authors, have already been affected by “the superstition of materialism” and corrupted by “the notion of state law.” They argue that the Russian people, on the whole, have preserved “their spiritual sensitivity, their faith in a higher principle of life, and in the belief that the purpose of human existence lies in serving this Principle of goodness and truth.” While for centuries these better instincts of the Russian people were subordinated to the “superstitions” of official religiosity, the authors now observe “a growing development of rational consciousness among the people,” one sign of which is the refusal of military service. The Tolstoyans interpreted Russia’s leading role in desertion as a form of spiritual leadership.<sup>98</sup>

After the closure of OIS and OSROG, the Tolstoyans continued their work of defending COtors and collecting materials about them underground. They maintained their connection with WRI and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) and continued publishing their pacifist *samizdat*. The WRI received regularly “scarce and saddening” news from Russia, mostly information on the Russian COtors’ persecution. They published in the *WRI Bulletin*, continued as *The War Resister*, the lists of prisoners, the letters about them and from them, concerned with the conditions in which they served their terms in prisons and prison camps. At the same time, like-minded people abroad received information about the tragic situation with the oppression of freedom of conscience in Soviet Russia, about how repressive legislation in the USSR was developed and administered.<sup>99</sup>

In 1928, the WRI published a brochure titled *Modern Martyrs*, simultaneously in English, French, and German, with a foreword by Runham Brown (1879–1949) and an introduction by Martha Steinitz (1889–1966).<sup>100</sup> The book contained letters, poems, and appeals from imprisoned conscientious objectors from eleven countries. Based on materials received from Soviet Russia, Martha Steinitz wrote a play about the death of the young Christian Vasily Tarakin (c. 1899–1919), who was executed by the Revolutionary Tribunal for refusing military service.<sup>101</sup>

As Soviet censorship and repressions intensified, less and less information was sent to the WRI, and by around 1934, the exchange of information had ceased entirely. From that time on, the circulation of materials on conscientious objection in Soviet Russia also came to a complete halt, although it continued abroad.

### **Valentin Bulgakov and the International Movement for Christian Communism**

The issues of conscientious objection and nonviolent revolution were taken up by the young Tolstoyan Valentin Bulgakov. He studied at the Faculty of History and Philology at Moscow University but left before completing his degree, proclaiming that an academic scholarship failed to meet his existential needs and did not seem to him like “a living force capable of transforming life.”<sup>102</sup>

At the same time, Bulgakov did not abandon his goal of pursuing a scholarship, as he believed that “the very ability to methodically expand one’s knowledge and to systematize it can successfully be developed outside the university as well.”<sup>103</sup> Bulgakov became acquainted with Tolstoy’s ideas, and soon after, with Tolstoy himself, which led him to leave university, to refuse military service, and to engage in compiling a systematic account of Tolstoy’s worldview. In 1910, Bulgakov became Tolstoy’s secretary, ultimately, the last one.

Bulgakov was an active participant in both the Tolstoyan and the broader European pacifist movements in the period before the Second World War. He was a member of the MVO and OIS, published in Tolstoyan periodicals, gave lectures, and took part in public debates.<sup>104</sup>

In 1922, Bulgakov published the first volume of his book *Opomnites’, liudi-brat’ia!*” *Istoriia vozzvaniia edinomyshlennikov L.N. Tolstogo protiv mirovoi voiny 1914–1918 gg.* (*Come to Your Senses, Brothers! The Story of the Appeal by Leo Tolstoy’s Like-Minded Followers Against the World War of 1914–1918*).<sup>105</sup> The author, who had himself taken part in drafting and the signatures collection, wrote that his book “offers the history of the first attempt at organized protest against the

World War in Russia.” Two other volumes, prepared for publication (one on the behavior of pacifists in prison, the other on their acquittal in trial), remained unpublished due to censorship restrictions and are preserved in his archive at RGALI. This archive also contains preparatory materials for the book, a large body of carefully **recorded fresh data**: transcripts of advocates and witnesses’ statements during the preliminary investigation, secret correspondence between gendarmierie departments, letters exchanged between the accused and their families, the defendants’ prison diaries, **transcripts of the trial**, newspaper articles, and oral accounts recorded specifically for the book, including testimonies from the advocates, the presiding judge, and some witnesses.<sup>106</sup>

Bulgakov regarded his book as “research”: the notion of “conscience” being its central subject. He provided a detailed account of the drafting and signing of the appeals, as well as the views and motivations of the signatories, demonstrating the diversity of individual conscience among people with a “free-religious” worldview. He meticulously reconstructed the behavior of the Tolstoyans in prison and the positions of all participants in the trial, where the pacifists were supported by an outstanding team of lawyers. Bulgakov did not attempt to define conscience; instead, he described its many manifestations in Tolstoyan anti-militarism during the First World War through numerous examples and extensive quotations from documents.

Bulgakov considered conscientious objection to military service to be the most vivid expression of an individual’s inner freedom. In his 1923 article *Toward a Characterization of the Spiritual Image of the Russian People*, he wrote that members of the free-religious movement, under conditions of extreme governmental and societal oppression, demonstrated “the remarkable vitality of their spiritual ‘self’” and showed “the ability for independent religious and social creativity.”<sup>107</sup> They were firmly opposed to all forms of authority and violence, refusing military service, refusing to pay the grain tax (*prodnalog*), and independently organizing nonviolent religious communes. Bulgakov emphasized that Bolshevik accusations that Tolstoyan “propaganda” incited people to protest against the army and the grain tax were unfounded. He argued that “the Bolsheviks,

in their characteristic crudeness and primitiveness of thought, imagine that such things as passive ... resistance to governmental plunder and the unwillingness to voluntarily give up the fruits of one's labor to support and organize the evil business of killing must necessarily be the product of propaganda and cannot simply be inspired by common sense and the dictates of conscience." He insisted that "the religious peasantry acted in this regard entirely on their own initiative."<sup>108</sup>

After being exiled from Soviet Russia, Bulgakov settled in Prague, where he became the founder and director of the Russian Cultural-Historical Museum at the Russian Free University, working closely with many social and cultural organizations and periodicals. Abroad, Bulgakov continued to be actively involved in pacifist activities, giving lectures and writing articles. He was curator of the Slavic sections of the WRI and a member of the leadership group of the IFOR. His goal was to expose the violent nature of Bolshevik socialism and to promote the further development of peaceful communism.

In 1926, Bulgakov and the Czech writer and leader of the religious commune "New Jerusalem", Přemysl Pitter (1895–1976), attempted to create the International Movement for Christian Communism (IMCC). They fully rejected the Bolsheviks' violent methods of establishing communism and declared themselves the supporters of a "nonviolent, Christian revolution" or "non-cooperation in violence", in the meaning proposed by Tolstoy and the French writer Romain Rolland (1866–1944), and in the way it was introduced by Gandhi through the Indian lawyer's activities.<sup>109</sup> The leaders of the IMCC dreamed of initiating a new movement, particularly in Russia, other Slavic countries, and further abroad, where the traditions of Tolstoyism would live on. They activated the grassroots network of personal connections to promote the ideas of Christian communism.<sup>110</sup>

In emigration, Bulgakov gained the opportunity to freely disseminate his views. His works on Tolstoy's religious and ethical legacy, the anti-militarist movement, and the martyrs for faith in Soviet Russia, as well as on the theory of nonviolent revolution, were published in

Russian, Bulgarian, German, English, Czech, French, and Esperanto.<sup>111</sup> Bulgarian Tolstoyans published a particularly large number of his articles and books.<sup>112</sup> Thus, at least some of the ideas developed by Russian radical pacifists entered the transnational space.<sup>113</sup>

In 1937, Bulgakov received the Continental Prize Paper for Europe-award in a competition held by the Society for the New History in New York (a Bahá'í organization) under the leading question *How Can the People of the World Achieve Universal Disarmament?* Bulgakov's winning essay entitled *Individual Refusal to Bear Arms Will Lead to a Mass Movement Against War*<sup>114</sup> was based on the idea that militarism is a function of any state, regardless of how it defines itself, whether bourgeois or socialist. Therefore, the principal means of achieving universal disarmament is a "non-violent, peaceful revolution against war," to be carried out by a nationwide anti-war movement of conscientious objectors, whose goal is the spiritual rebirth of humanity in line with absolute pacifism.

This publication became the last in a series of works by the Tolstoyans on conscientious objection to military service. Soviet society would only discover the pacifist legacy of the Tolstoyan movement during *Perestroika*, when secular and religious dissidents, hippies, and anarchists once again attempted to create an independent peace movement based on spontaneous acts of conscientious objection and the highest humanistic aspirations of ordinary people.

Thus, in the work of the Tolstoyans on the study of conscientious objection and "popular anarchism" in the first third of the twentieth century, we can see the emergence of themes that would later become typical for the academic field of Peace Studies in the second half of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century: the study of conscientious objection, grassroots nonviolent movements and nonviolent methods of protest, and the diversity of motives and forms in which pacifism and anti-militarism are expressed. The Tolstoyans compiled a large archive (what would today be called a *counterarchive*) of records on the history of conscientious objectors in Russia. Using this archive and drawing on the ideas of Tolstoy and global nonviolence traditions, they explored the diversity of conscience within the

Russian anti-militarist movement, developed the concept of nonviolent revolution, studied passive forms of protest, and reframed the issue of desertion as a socio-psychological phenomenon. Although their research took place outside academia, it effectively combined scholarly problem-setting with innovative and radical methods of data collection. The intellectual pursuits of these radical pacifists were closely tied to the practice of social struggle, the defense of freedom of conscience and human rights, and a form of soft, collaborative enlightenment aimed both at society and at those in power.

The Tolstoyans' focus on history from below, on the people as subjects of history and their experience of nonconformity, belief in their revolutionary potential and capacity for social creativity, as well as their emphasis on the feelings and experiences of ordinary people, the oppressed, and marginalized, anticipated many of the ethical and methodological principles of democratic historiographical trends in the second half of the 20th century, such as the anthropologically oriented Annales School, the new social history, people's history, peasant studies, and also civic-oriented archival practices.

After the Tolstoyans, representatives of Soviet civil society would return to addressing such a large-scale academic and social task only during *Perestroika*, when Soviet historians and philosophers in several academic institutions, together with foreign scholars and peace activists, began to develop issues related to the history and theory of nonviolence, as well as the history of the pacifist movement in the Russian Empire and the USSR.

## Notes

- 1 Boris Mazurin, "Rasskaz i Razdum'ia ob Istorii Odnoi Tolstovskoi Kommuny 'Zhizn' i Trud'", in *Vospominaniia Krest'ian-Tolstovtsev* (Moscow: Kniga, 1989), 205.
- 2 Irina Gordeeva, "The evolution of Tolstoyan pacifism in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, 1900–1937", in *The Routledge History of World Peace since 1750*, ed. Christian Philip Peterson, William M. Knoblauch and Michael Loadenthal (Routledge, 2018).
- 3 Manuscript Department of the Russian State Library (OR RGB. Fond 345).
- 4 Peter van den Dungen, "Peace Research & the Search for Peace: Some Critical Observations," *International Journal on World Peace* 2, no. 3 (July-September 1985): 42–44.
- 5 Denis Sdvizhkov, "Idei nenasilia v obrazovannykh sloiakh Germanii i Rossii nakanune Pervoi mirovoi voiny," in *Nenasilie kak mirovozzrenie i obraz zhizni: Istoricheskii rakurs* (Moscow, 2000), 137–138.
- 6 Mark Popovsky, *Russkie muzhiki rasskazyvaiut: Posledovateli L.N. Tolstogo v Sovetskom Soiuse, 1918–1977: Dokumentalnyi rasskas o krestianakh-tolstovakh po materialam vyvezennogo na Zapad krestianskogo arkhiva* (Overseas Publications Interchange, 1983).
- 7 Vasilii Yanov, "Kratkie vospominaniia o perezhitom," publ. I. Krivin, in *Pamiat'*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1977–Paris, 1979), pp. 83–159; Boris Mazurin, "Rasskaz i razdum'e ob istorii odnoi tolstovskoi kommuny 'Zhizn' i trud,'" prepared by A. Roginskii, *Novyi mir* no. 9 (1988): 180–226.
- 8 *Vospominaniia krest'ian-tolstovtsev. 1910–1930-e gg.*, comp. Arsenii Roginskii (Moscow: Kniga, 1989).
- 9 *Memoirs of Peasant Tolstoyans in Soviet Russia*, trans. and ed. William Edgerton (Indiana University Press, 1993).
- 10 William Edgerton, "The Social Influence of Lev Tolstoj in Bulgaria," in *American Contributions to the Tenth International Congress of Slavists (Sofia, Bulgaria, 14–22 September 1988)*, vol. 2, *Literature*, ed. Jane Gary Harris (Slavica, 1988): 123–38.
- 11 Peter Brock, *Freedom from War: Nonsectarian Pacifism 1814–1914* (University of Toronto Press, 1991), 185–246; Peter Brock, *Testimonies of Conscience Sent from the Soviet Union to the War Resisters' International 1923–1929* (Toronto: Printed privately, 1997); Peter Brock, *Soviet Conscientious Objectors, 1917–1939: A Chapter in the History of Twentieth-Century Pacifism* (Toronto, 1999); Peter Brock, *Against the Draft: Essays on Conscientious Objection from the Radical Reformation to the Second World War* (University of Toronto Press, 2006), 155–171, 301–364.
- 12 Peter Brock, *Testimonies of Conscience Sent from the Soviet Union to the*

*War Resisters' International 1923–1929* (Toronto: Printed privately, 1997), 1–3.

13 Peter Brock, *Against the Draft: Essays on Conscientious Objection from the Radical Reformation to the Second World War* (University of Toronto Press, 2006), 374–75.

14 Antonella Salomoni, *Il pensiero religioso e politico di Tolstoj in Italia (1886–1910)* (Firenze: Olschki, 1996).

15 Antonella Salomoni, “Emigranty-tolstovtsy mezhdru khristianstvom i anarkhizmom (1898–1905 gg.),” in *Russkaia emigratsiia do 1917 goda – laboratorii liberal’noi i revoliutsionnoi mysli*, ed. Iutta Sherrer and Boris Anan’ich, (Sankt-Peterburg: Evropeiskii dom, 1997), 119–20.

16 Abdusalam Gusseinov, “Tolstoy, Leo Nikolaevich,” in *Protest, Power, and Change: An Encyclopedia of Nonviolent Action from ACT-UP to Women’s Suffrage*, ed. Powers, Roger S; and William B. Voge (Garland Publishing, 1997), 528–529.

17 Peter Ackerman and Christopher Krueger, “Russian Revolution of 1905,” in *Protest, Power, and Change: An Encyclopedia of Nonviolent Action from ACT-UP to Women’s Suffrage*, ed. Powers, Roger S; and William B. Voge (Garland Publishing, 1997), 450–453. One new work on this topic is noteworthy: Kirill Solov’ev, *Vyborgskoe vozvzvanie: teoriiia i praktika passivnogo soprotivleniia* (Moscow: Kuchkovo pole; Muzeon, 2021); Joshua Sanborn, “Non-violent protest and the Russian state: the Doukhobors in 1895 and 1937,” in *The Doukhobor Centenary in Canada: A Multi-Disciplinary Perspective on their Unity and Diversity*, ed. A. Donskov, C. Gaffield, and J. Woodsworth (Slavic Research Group, University of Ottawa, 2000), 83–102. <http://hdl.handle.net/10385/1295>.

18 Charlotte Alston, *Tolstoy and His Disciples: The History of a Radical International Movement* (I.B. Tauris, 2014).

19 See, for example, one of their first statements on the subject: Pavel Bir’ukov, “Ob anarkhizme: [Referat, chitannyi P.I. Bir’ukovym v g. Bornmaute 25 sentiabria 1901 g.],” *Svobodnoe slovo*, no. 1 (December 1901): col. 5–7 (Christchurch).

20 Peter Brock. *Freedom from War: Nonsectarian Pacifism 1814–1914* (University of Toronto Press, 1991), 197.

21 Leo Tolstoy, *Collected Works in 90 Volumes. Vol. 35* (Moscow, 1950), 148.

22 Isaiah Berlin. “The Hedgehog and the Fox.” *Russian Thinkers*, ed. Henry Hardy and Aileen Kelly, (Penguin Books, 1978), 22–81.

23 Richard V. Sampson, *Tolstoy: The Discovery of Peace* (Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1973), 162–167.

24 Leo Tolstoy, “Konets veka,” In L. N. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*

- L. N. Tolstoho, t. 36: *Proizvedeniia 1904–1906 gg.* (Moscow, 1930), 257.
- 25 Konstantin Solov'ev, "Ia skazal: vy — bogi...": *Religioznoe techenie v osvoboditel'nom dvizhenii 70-kh gg. XIX v.* ("bogoche lovechestvo") (Moscow: MGU, 1998); Irina Gordeeva, *Zabytye liudi: Istoriia rossiiskogo kommunitarnogo dvizheniia*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Common Place, 2017).
- 26 Christian Bartolf and Dominique Miething, "'Flame of Truth': the global significance of Doukhobor Pacifism." *Russian Journal of Church History*, Vol 4, No 4 (Special Issue: History of Christian Peacemaking and Pacifism) (2023): 6–27.
- 27 *The Archive of L. N. Tolstoy* was a collection published in Moscow between 1894 and 1896. It was reproduced on a typewriter and a mimeograph. A total of 12 issues were released. Editors: F. A. Strakhov, P. I. Biryukov, V. G. Chertkov. The publication was carried out on the initiative of I. I. Gorbunov.
- 28 The life and public activity of Chertkov and his wife are well-documented. Chertkov's materials are stored in OR RGB (fond 435), RGALI (joint fond 552 of Vladimir and Anna Chertkov), the department of manuscripts of the State Museum of L.N. Tolstoy (Fond 9314), as well as in some archives abroad, for example, Leeds Russian Archive (Tuckton House archive: [https://explore.library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-explore/20011/tuckton\\_house](https://explore.library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-explore/20011/tuckton_house)).
- 29 Pavel Bir'ukov, "Obraschenie k chitateliam," *Svobodnoe Slovo* 1 (1898), 1.
- 30 OR RGB. Fond 369. Carton 31. File 38. L. 13.
- 31 Vladimir Chertkov, "Predislovie," *Listki Svobodnogo Slova* 8 (1899): 1–2.
- 32 Ivan Tregubov, "O vseobshchei mirnoi stachke," *Svobodnoe slovo / Parole Libre* [Christchurch], no. 7 (1903), 25–26.
- 33 Gapon was Tregubov's former student at the Poltava public school.
- 34 Ivan Tregubov, "Georgii Gapon i vseobshchaia stachka," *Osvobozhdenie*, no. 66 (1905): 264–265.
- 35 Vladimir Chertkov, *O revoliutsii: Nasilstvennaia revoliutsiia ili khristianskoe osvobozhdenie?* (Christchurch: Hants, 1904), 10–12.
- 36 This book developed out of the pamphlet *Non-Resistance in Relation to Human Governments* (Boston: Non-Resistance Society, 1839).
- 37 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 39 Vladimir Chertkov, *Nasha revoliutsiia. Nasilstvennoe vosstanie ili khristianskoe osvobozhdenie?* (Moscow: Tip. A. P. Poplavskogo, 1907), 90–91.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 42 Russian State Archives of Literature and Arts (RGALI). Fond 122. In-

vent. 1. File 38. L. 42 rev.

43 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 1. L. 1,4,5.

44 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 1. L. 6, 32–33.

45 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 95. File 8.

46 Tat'iana Petukhova, *Kommuny i arteli tolstovtsev v sovetskoï Rossii (1917–1929 gg.)* (Ul'ianovsk, 2008), 45–46.

47 Mikhail Krapivin and Arkadii Leikin and Artur Dalgatov, *Sud'by Khristianskogo Sektantstva v Sovetskoï Rossii (1917- Konetz 1930-kh Godov)* (Sankt-Petersburg, 2003), 171–172.

48 Alexander Etkind, “Russikie Sekty i Sovetskii Kommunizm: Proekt Vladimira Bonch-Bruevicha,” *Minuvshee* 19 (1986): 275–319; more details on this project see: Alexander Etkind, *Khlyst: (Sekty, Literatura i Revolutsiia)* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie), 1998.

49 Mikhail Krapivin and Arkadii Leikin and Artur Dalgatov, *Sud'by Khristianskogo Sektantstva v Sovetskoï Rossii (1917- Konetz 1930-kh Godov)* (Sankt-Petersburg, 2003), 268–269.

50 Antonella Salomoni, “Emigranty-tolstovtsy mezhdū khristianstvom i anarkhizmom (1898–1905 gg.),” in *Russkaia emigratsiia do 1917 goda – laboratoriia liberal'noi i revoliutsionnoi mysli* (St. Petersburg, 1997), 119.

51 Some of the material has been published in nine volumes of the “*Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i raskola*” (Christchurch (Hants): Hants, A. Tchertkoff, 1901–1905).

52 Among them the largest repositories of the records on the conscientious objectors, religious anarchism and transnational pacifist movement are in the Chertkov Archives at the OR RGB (Fond 435) and RGALI (Fond 552), archives of Mikhail Muratov in OR RGB (Fond 486) and RGALI (Fond 1435), as well as fonds 2226 (Valentin Bulgakov), 41 (Pavel Bir'ukov), and 122 (Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov) in RGALI. The archives of NIA GMIR also hold a large number of Tolstoyan records and entire collections gathered by V. Bonch-Bruevich, a Bolshevik, and a researcher of the history of Russian sectarianism, and Tolstoyan's closest collaborator and rival in establishing links with religious dissidents. His collection in OR RGB (Fond 339) also contains an extensive collection of documents on the history of CO and the Tolstoyan pacifist movement. The collections of the GMT and GMIR were not accessible to me during my research.

53 For more information on this, see: Irina Gordeeva, “Otkazy ot voennoi sluzhby i formirovanie patsifistkogo dvizheniia v Rossii v kontse XIX – nachale XX veka,” *Krest'ianovedenie* 3, no. 4 (2018): 78–104.

54 Peter Brock, “*Russkie sektanty-patsifisty i voennaia sluzhba, 1874–1914 gg.*,” in *Dolgii put' rossiiskogo patsifizma* (Moscow: IVI RAN, 1997) 117–121.

55 Ibid., 117.

- 56 See the articles on conscientious objection in Russia by Peter Brock, Walter Sawatsky, Lawrence Klippenstein, Daniel Heinz, Bruno Coppieters, Svetlana Inikova, and Elena Getel, published in the “perestroika-era” collections *The Long Road of Russian Pacifism* (1997), *Nonviolence as a Worldview and Way of Life* (2000), and *Pursuing the Ideal: From the History of Peace-making and the Intelligentsia* (2005).
- 57 Kirill Chistov, *Russkaia narodnaia utopiia*. (St. Petersburg, 2003), 284.
- 58 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1985), 292–293; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale University Press, 1990), 29–30.
- 59 James C. Scott, *Iskusstvo byt' nepodvlastnym: Anarkhicheskaia istoriia vysokogornoj Iugo-Vostochnoi Azii*. (Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2017), 8 [Foreword to the Russian edition].
- 60 James C. Scott, *Two cheers for anarchism: six easy pieces on autonomy, dignity, and meaningful work and play* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 12.
- 61 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 22. File 2.
- 62 RGALI. Fond 122. Inv. 1. File 38. L. 43–43 rev.
- 63 OR RGB. Fond 197. Carton 1. File 1, 7,8, 10, 24, 33,34, 52; Carton 2. File 10, 11; Carton 3. File 42.
- 64 OR RGB. Fond 345. Carton 1. File. 4. L. 27.
- 65 Dushan Makovitsky, *U Tolstogo. 1904–1910. “Yasnopolyanskie zapiski” D. P. Makovitskogo*. Four volumes. Ed. by G.P. Berdnikov, D.D. Blagoi, A.N. Dubovikov (Moscow: Nauka, 1979).
- 66 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 2. File 4. L. 4.
- 67 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 44.
- 68 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 9.
- 69 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 2.
- 70 OR RGB. Fond 345. Carton 41. File 6. L. 3–4.
- 71 Howard Zinn, “Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest,” in *The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy* (Seven Stories Press, 1997), 522–523.
- 72 OR RGB. Fond Ф. 435. Carton 78. File 4. At the same time, several other Tolstoyans also submitted their statements, including I. Tregubov (OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 78. File 5,6). Tregubov also collected materials on cases of refusal; he maintained close contact with sectarians and attended court hearings where conscientious objectors were tried (Ivan Tregubov, “Sektanty i voennaia sluzhba.” *Vestnik Evropy*, no. 12 (1913): 194–212).
- 73 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 49–65; OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 78. File 14.

- 74 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 50–52.
- 75 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 51 rev. The decree of 4 January 1919 provided for the possibility of such release without any consequences for the objector.
- 76 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 53.
- 77 Valentin Bulgakov, “*Deiatel’nost’ Obshchestva istinnoi svobody v pamiat’ L.N. Tolstogo v 1917–1918 godu. Otchet Soveta Obshchestva,*” in *Ezhegodnik Obshchestva istinnoi svobody v pamiat’ L. N. Tolstogo za 1917–1918 god* (Moscow, 1918), 3.
- 78 Valentin Bulgakov, *Kak prozhita zhizn’: Vospominaniia poslednego sekretaria L.N. Tolstogo* (Moscow: Kuchkovo pole, 2012), 495.
- 79 Konstantin Shokhor-Trotsky, “*Deiatel’nost’ Obshchestva Istinnoi Svobody v pamiat’ L.N. Tolstogo za 1918–19 god. Otchet Soveta Obshchestva,*” in *Ezhegodnik Obshchestva Istinnoi Svobody v pamiat’ L. N. Tolstogo za 1918–1919 g.* (Moscow, 1919), 21.
- 80 Mikhail Muratov, “Itogi (1912–1957),” in *Pamiat’: Istoricheskii sbornik*, vol. 5, ed. S. Lindina. (Paris; Moscow, 1981–1982), 320; OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 1. File 5. L. 2.
- 81 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 2. File 8, 12, 13; Carton 4. File 4; OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 67. File 23, 27.
- 82 Mikhail Muratov, “K izucheniiu staroobriadchestva i sektantstva v Sibiri.” *Sbornik trudov professorov i prepodavatelei Irkutskogo universiteta*, vyp. 5 (Irkutsk, 1923). Muratov’s research on Russian religious dissent was completed by the time it could no longer be printed, so he published only a number of fragmentary observations, but not works of an academic nature.
- 83 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 4.
- 84 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 6.
- 85 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 4. File 4. L. 13.
- 86 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 2. File 8. L. 12.
- 87 OR RGB. Fond 486. Carton 2. File 22. This copie does not have indication of authorship.
- 88 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 11, 12. These copies are also anonymous.
- 89 International Institute of Social History, War Resisters’ International Archives, Box 497. This copy is signed by Chertkov, though the signature appears to have been added by hand on a typescript.
- 90 Quoted in: M. Yu. Krapivin, A. G. Dalgatov, and Yu. N. Makarov, *Vnutrikonfessional’nye konflikty i problemy mezhkonfessional’nogo obshcheniia v usloviakh sovetskoi deistvitel’nosti (oktiabr’ 1917 – konets 1930-kh gg.)* (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg University Press, 2005), 391.
- 91 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 11. L. 1.

- 92 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 11. L. 2, 56.
- 93 Vladimir Chertkov, "O prekrashchenii voiny." *Golos Tolstogo i Edinenie*, no. 2 (1917): 8.
- 94 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 95. File 8.
- 95 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 11. L. 27.
- 96 OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 19. File 11. L. 27.
- 97 We have no data on whether Shokhor-Trotsky shared this view.
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- 99 Devi Prasad, *War is a Crime against Humanity: The story of War Resisters' International* (War Resisters' International, 2005), 101–103.
- 100 Translation from the collection into Russian: OR RGB. Fond 435. Carton 60. File 3.
- 101 Publication in Bulgarian: Marta Shajmits, *Tarakin: Säbitie meždu 2 epokhi: Ednoaktna p'sa* (Sofia: Posrednik, 1934).
- 102 Valentin Bulgakov, *Universitet i universitetskaia nauka (Pochemu ia vyshel iz universiteta?)* (Moscow: Novyi mir, 1919).
- 103 Ibid.
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- 108 Valentin Bulgakov, "K kharakteristike dukhovnogo oblika ruskogo naroda za vremia revoliutsii," in *Krestianskaia Rossiia: Sbornik statei po voprosam obshchestvenno-politicheskim i ekonomicheskim*, no. 4, ed. A. A. Argunov, A. L. Bem, S. S. Maslov, and P. A. Sorokin (Prague: Izdatel'stvo "Krestianskaia Rossiia", 1923), 144.
- 109 Vojtěch Pícha, "Stát v Křesťansko-anarchistické Ideologii Tolstojovce Valentina Bulgakova. Dějiny Jednoho Pacifism," *Slovanský přehled: historická revue pro dějiny střední, východní a jihovýchodní Evropy* 103, no. 2

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110 Valerii Cherepitsa, *Schast'e zhit' dlia drugih: zapadnobeloruskie posledovateli religiozno-filosofskogo ucheniia L. N. Tolstogo, 1921–1939 gg.* (Grodno, 2007), 147.

111 The reference is to three major texts by Bulgakov, which were published in various versions and in different languages: *How They Die for the Faith, Leo Tolstoy and the Fate of Russian Antimilitarism*, and *Tolstoy, Lenin, Gandhi*.

112 Valentin Bulgakov, *Lev Tolstoi i bolshevizma: Publ. rechi v S'üvetska Rusiia: 1918–1922 g.* (Sofia: Posrednik, 1924); Valentin Bulgakov, *Dukhobortsy: Edno veliko rusko selsko dvizhenie* (Sofia: Posrednik, [1933]).

113 See, for example: Valentin Bulgakov, “Leo Tolstoi und die Schicksale des russischen Antimilitarismus,” in *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit. Handbuch des aktiven Pazifismus*, ed. Franz Kobler (Rotapfel Verlag, 1928), 233–244.

114 Valentin Bulgakov, “Individual Refusal to Bear Arms Will Lead to a Mass Movement Against War: Continental Prize Paper for Europe,” *New History [New York City]*, vol. VII, no. 5 (February 1938): 3–7.



# “War against War”: the Anti-War Museum in Berlin, its founder Ernst Friedrich, and his Strategies for Peace in the Weimar Republic<sup>1</sup>

Julian Nordhues

## Introduction

In their evaluation of the First World War, anti-war activists were confronted with an entirely new experience of violence. The totalization of a mechanized war fought by mass armies, the extensive media propaganda and the inclusion of the “home front” required a new form of articulating and presenting criticism of war.

In the political culture of the Weimar Republic, the interpretation and meaning of the First World War were the subject of intense and controversial debate. Political and social factions waged the “cultural struggle over collective memory in the Weimar Republic”<sup>2</sup> in public media such as newspapers, periodicals, brochures and official document collections as well as in literature and illustrated books. This debate was a battle over terminology and key concepts<sup>3</sup> as well as over image politics and collective visual memory<sup>4</sup>.

The photo book *Krieg dem Kriege* [War against War]<sup>5</sup>, published in 1924 by the anti-militarist and anarchist Ernst Friedrich, presented one of the most important contributions of the anti-war faction in this socio-political debate<sup>6</sup>.

Today it is best known for its photographs of soldiers with severe and extreme facial injuries: these shocking images, taken by Friedrich from a medical context<sup>7</sup>, are symbolic of the horrors of the First World War. Yet this article is not primarily concerned with the “war-maimed” and Friedrich’s “visual shock rhetoric”<sup>8</sup>. *Krieg dem Kriege* covers a much broader spectrum of topics and can be used as a

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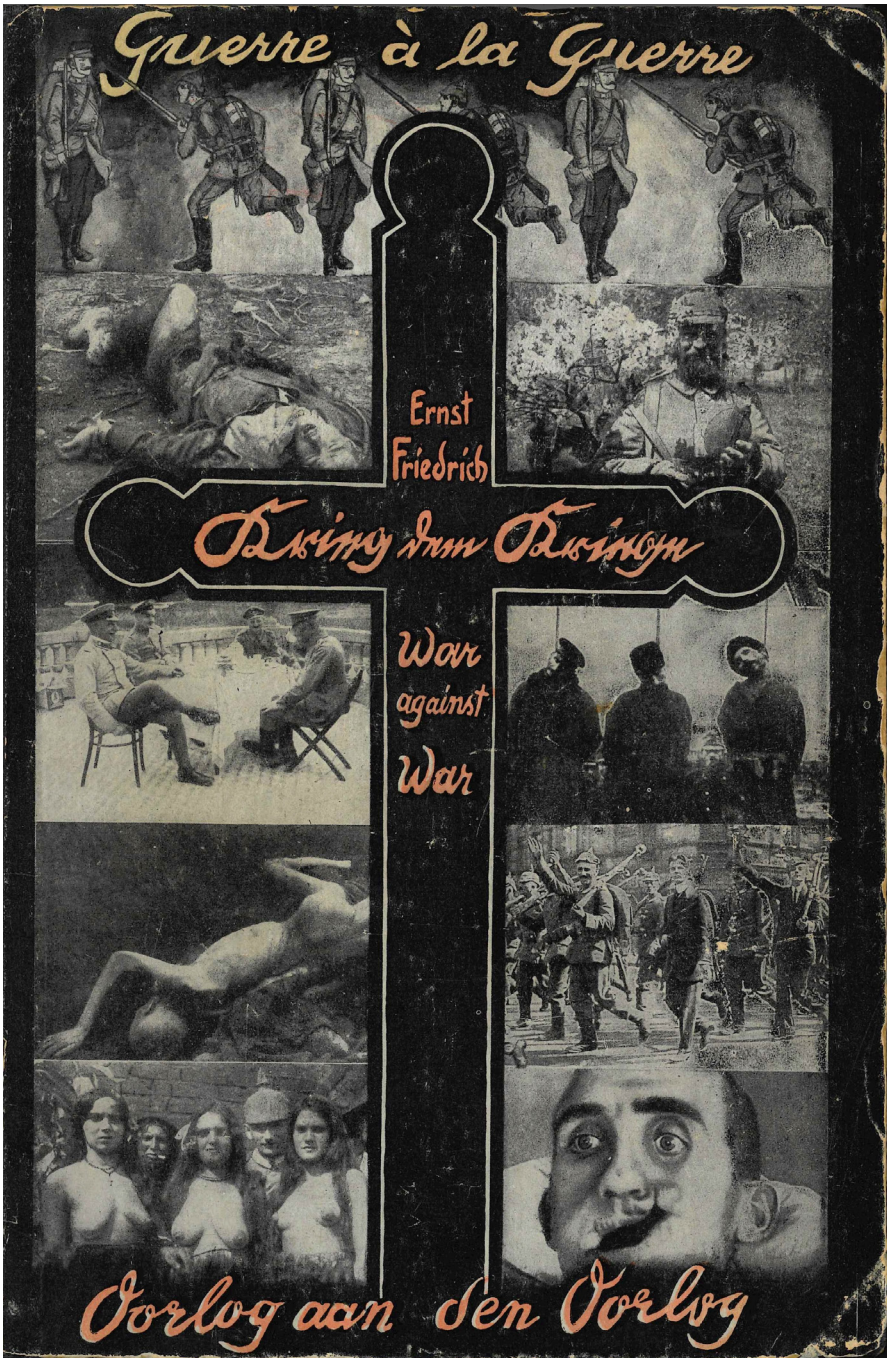


Figure 1a. Cover of *Krieg dem Kriege*, Vol. 1 (Verlag Freie Jugend, 1924).

source of information on the culture of war and social history<sup>9</sup>. In the vehemence of Friedrich's denunciation of the war and condemnation of militarism, Ulrich Linse sees a correspondence with Karl Kraus' pacifist and anti-militarist commitment:

“But [Ernst Friedrich] also bore painful witness, as perhaps only Karl Kraus besides him, to a ‘sick people’: instead of repressing what had been, he played the midwife in the anamnesis of the forgotten: In his works ‘War Against War’ and ‘From Peace Museum to Hitler Barracks’, Friedrich, like Kraus (‘The Last Days of Mankind’ and ‘The Third Walpurgis Night’), revealed the colossal painting ‘In This Grand Time’ (Karl Kraus) in a tableau that extends from the First World War to the prehistory of the Second World War.”<sup>10</sup>

In this article, Ernst Friedrich's work in the Weimar Republic will be presented particularly regarding the local and regional press reception, which has received little attention in the literature to date. The embedding of Friedrich's photo book *Krieg dem Kriege* in his overall oeuvre in the Weimar Republic allows for the examining of intermedial themes and motifs within the contemporary anti-war discourse, beyond the considerations of the photo book from an imagery or photo-theory perspective.

### **Ernst Friedrich's political activities in the Weimar Republic**

Ernst Friedrich<sup>11</sup>, born on February 25, 1894, in Breslau, is known today for his anti-war book *Krieg dem Kriege* published in 1924 and the founding of the Berlin Anti-War Museum in 1925. Around 1916 he was a member of the anti-militarist revolutionary youth group in Breslau. To avoid service at the front lines, he committed an act of—in his own words—sabotage, for which he was imprisoned and only released in the course of the November Revolution<sup>12</sup>:

“When I too was chosen to put on the murderer's smock to fight against my English and French brothers, when I could no longer ‘shirk’ the state-ordered murder of human beings, I decided prison was more pleasant than the battlefield.”<sup>13</sup>

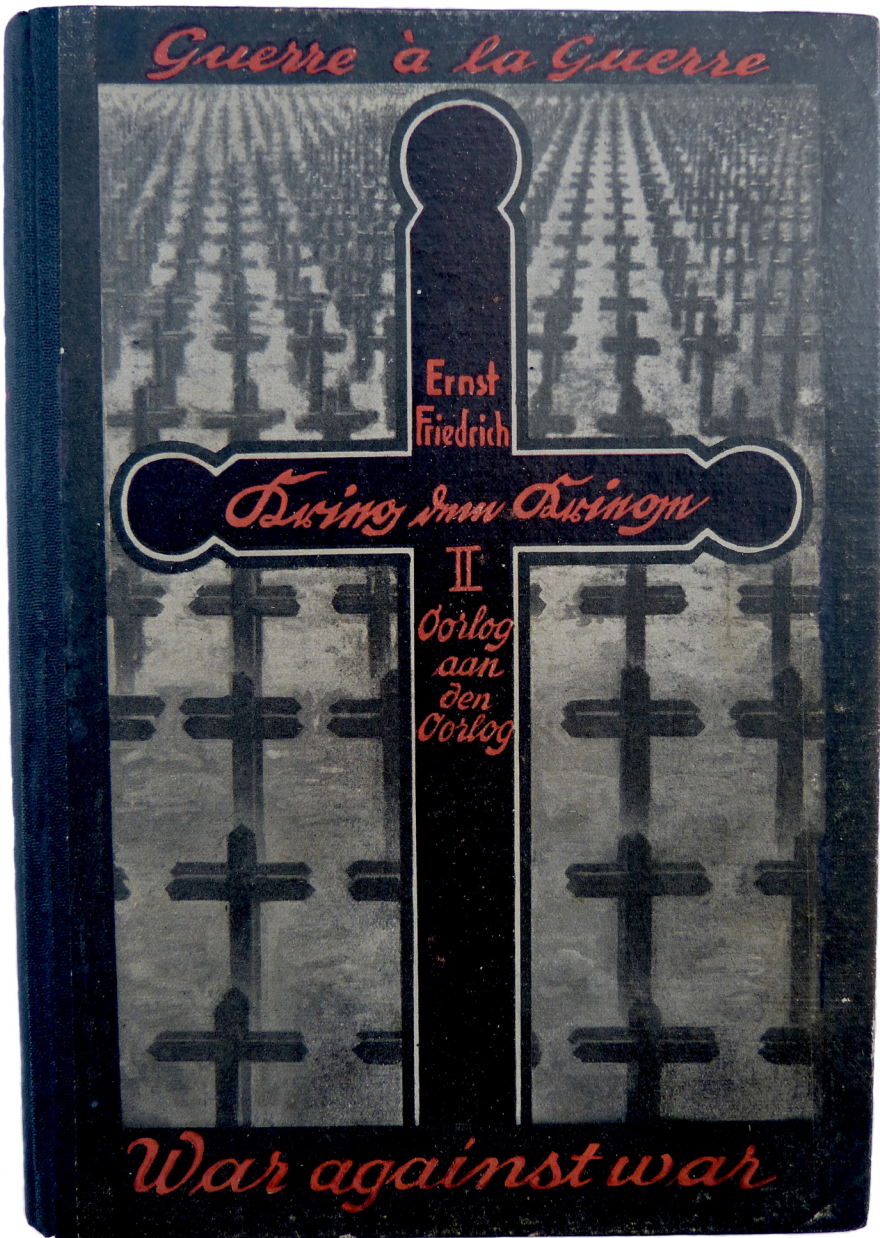
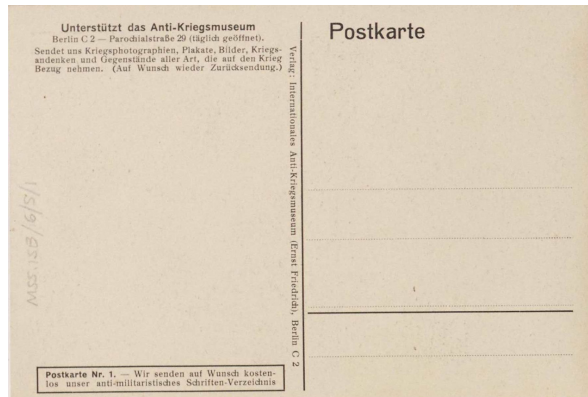


Figure 1b. Cover of *Krieg dem Kriege*, Vol. 2 (Verlag Freie Jugend, 1926).

In the Weimar Republic, Ernst Friedrich achieved prominence through a wide range of political activities and in doing so developed his own, remarkable media strategy. Friedrich founded several newspapers such as the anti-militarist-anarchist youth movement paper *Freie Jugend* [Free Youth] (1919–1926) and *Schwarze Fahne* [Black Flag] (1925–1929). Moreover, he organized the Arbeiterkunstausstellung [Workers’ Art Exhibition] and created the Anti-Kriegsmuseum [Anti-War Museum]. He distributed books, brochures, and leaflets, organized exhibitions, literary evenings, slide shows, and led a spoken word choir.<sup>14</sup> Friedrich’s poems were broadcast on the then-new medium of radio.<sup>15</sup> In a nutshell: “He is a master of what would be called cross-media today.”<sup>16</sup> In all these activities, he focused on working with children and young people in the spirit of an anti-militarist and non-violent education. “Friedrich tried to create a counterworld to Wilhelmine Germany, which was still overpoweringly present in many areas after 1918.”<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 2 a & b.** “Unterstützt das Anti-Kriegsmuseum” [Support the Anti-War Museum], Postkarte Nr. 1. Papers of Henry Sara and Frank Maitland, Warwick University Digital Collections, MSS.15B/6/5/1. Friedrich issued six postcards (c. 1925) with different motifs depicting his museum, asking international sympathizers for donations, in this case the English anarchist Henry Thomas William Sara (1886–1953).

In the early 1920s, Ernst Friedrich, who dropped out of an apprenticeship as a printer in his youth to train as an actor<sup>18</sup>, made a name for himself primarily as a reciter. The democratic and left-liberal press in Berlin regularly announced events at which Friedrich presented anti-militarist and revolutionary texts and poems. Particularly the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* (BVZ)<sup>19</sup>, but also the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Weltbühne* reported on Friedrich's activities in Berlin. The *Berliner Tageblatt* described Friedrich's appearance at a festivity organized for the anarchist Erich Mühsam (1878–1934) in September 1919 as follows: "Ernst Friedrich, a reciter with a strong, metallic voice that asserts itself powerfully and yet possesses a delicate suppleness."<sup>20</sup> Friedrich subsequently spoke at events such as the summer festival of the Internationale Bund der Kriegsoffer [International Association of War Victims]<sup>21</sup>, the Christmas party of the Friedensbund der Kriegsteilnehmer [Peace Association of War Participants]<sup>22</sup>, rallies of school reformers<sup>23</sup>, to commemorate the Sunday of the Dead<sup>24</sup>, or art events he organized<sup>25</sup> at Berlin's Old City Hall (Klosterstraße) or in the Anti-War Museum, where Friedrich recited works by Ernst Toller,<sup>26</sup> Erich Mühsam,<sup>27</sup> Kurt Tucholsky<sup>28</sup>, and Karl Kraus<sup>29</sup>. He also spoke at the great "Nie wieder Krieg" [Never again war] demonstrations, including on the steps of the Berlin Cathedral in front of thousands of people on July 31, 1921<sup>30</sup>.

The foreign press also registered Friedrich's activities. In a portrait of German pacifist organizations, the newspaper *Le Petit Parisien* mentioned Ernst Friedrich alongside Ludwig Quidde, Siegfried Kawerau, Lydia Stöcker, Franz Hilker, and Harry Graf Kessler in connection with his commitment to reformist and anti-militarist education.<sup>31</sup> During the 1920s, Friedrich's commitment led to many lawsuits against him, including for "publicly insulting the colors of the Reich"<sup>32</sup>, "blasphemy"<sup>33</sup>, or various insults<sup>34</sup>. In July 1926, two trials were held against him on the same day in the same court: in the morning Friedrich had to answer for having described the Reichswehr [German armed forces during the Weimar Republic and the first two years of Nazi Germany] as "Mordbuben" [cutthroats] and "Mörder" [murderers]<sup>35</sup> in a leaflet, followed in the afternoon by a trial charging him for "insulting the Catholic Church"<sup>36</sup>. The legal costs and prison sentences resulted in financial hardship for Friedrich and his family.

The *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* called for donations under the headline “Ernst Friedrich in need”: “We have learned that Ernst Friedrich, the excellent speaker of revolutionary literature and leader of the brave workers’ art exhibition, is in danger of starving to death. Quick help is needed!”<sup>37</sup> The opening of the Anti-War Museum at Parochialstraße 29 in Berlin in 1925 also posed a financial risk. The building was up for auction several times but was always rescued by friends.

Not only the democratic and left-wing press followed the opening of this extraordinary museum with great interest.<sup>38</sup> In his memoirs of the 1920s in Berlin, the German writer Max Fürst (1905–1978) noted: “Who in our neighborhood at that time did not know the house at 29 Parochialstraße? Ernst Friedrich’s Peace Museum.”<sup>39</sup> A visit to Friedrich’s Museum left a lasting impression, especially among young people and children. The Austrian journalist and futurologist Robert Jungk (1913–1994) reports:

“Shouting, laughing, singing, we stormed into the museum, which was empty except for one attendant, and fell silent. For our gaze had fallen on a large framed photograph from which a black, charred skull stared at us: the mortal remains of one of the Richthofen squadron fighter pilots we so revered. [...] The memory of that dark grimace of the downed pilot has suppressed all other images. For me, it had become a great warning sign on the threshold of my own life.”<sup>40</sup>

The threats against and arrests of Ernst Friedrich continued to increase and in April 1930 he was arrested on “suspicion of involvement in highly treasonous activities.”<sup>41</sup> The charges concerned the printing and distribution of “subversive pamphlets”, which were allegedly intended for “smuggling into Reich army barracks”.<sup>42</sup> “Friedrich took on printing jobs for the Communist Party, probably to keep his head above water”, reported the *Hamburger Anzeiger*.<sup>43</sup> The international press<sup>44</sup> also commented on Friedrich’s arrest.<sup>45</sup> In the subsequent treason trial, Friedrich was sentenced to one year in a fortress prison.



**Figure 3.** A corner in the exhibition hall of the Berlin Anti-War Museum, taken from: Ernst Friedrich, *Das Anti-Kriegsmuseum* (Self-published, c. 1925), p. 19.

At the beginning of the 1930s, attacks by National Socialists on Friedrich and the Anti-War Museum became more frequent. The *Sturmabteilung* (SA [Nazi Storm Troopers]) physically abused him several times and smashed the museum's windows. Due to the worsening situation, Friedrich brought his archived material, the printing blocks of his anti-war books and the photographic plates to safety by distributing the material among friends and acquaintances all over Berlin. After the Reichstag fire in February 1933, Friedrich was taken into so-called "Schutzhaff" [protective custody] from which he was released in September of the same year. In the meantime, Nazi Storm Troopers had destroyed the Anti-War Museum and from then on turned the building into one of their barracks where, among other things, political opponents were tortured. On December 20, 1933, Ernst Friedrich fled to Czechoslovakia with his wife Charlotte and their children.



**Figure 4.** Trial against Ernst Friedrich in 1930 for descriptions deemed immoral in his story “Menschen im Käfig” [People in a Cage] in his journal *Die schwarze Fahne* [The Black Flag]. In the middle: defendant Ernst Friedrich, on the left: defense attorney Hans Litten (1903–1938), on the right: witness for the defense Erich Mühsam. Photograph by Leo Rosenthal. Landesarchiv Berlin, F Rep. 290-02-06 Nr. 28/1–5.

### **Photographs and visual sources in Ernst Friedrich’s anti-militaristic propaganda**

Earlier than other anti-war organizations and activists, Ernst Friedrich integrated photographs and other visual sources from the war period into his public media strategy, which depicted the horrors of war in an unembellished way. In 1921, Friedrich created the Arbeiterkunstausstellung [Workers’ Art Exhibition] at Petersburger Straße 39, where exhibitions by Käthe Kollwitz, Otto Nagel, Hans Baluschek, and Paul Eickmeier, among others, were displayed. Friedrich also used the space for reading evenings and presentations at which photographs from the First World War were displayed and commented on by him.<sup>46</sup> In 1921, Friedrich produced an anti-militarist brochure with texts and photographs, which he distributed as a provocation at the dedication of a war memorial in Hörlitz-Flur [a town the State of

Brandenburg, south of Berlin]. The nationalistically minded participants were outraged to discover that the brochure, despite its patriotic presentation (Title caption: “Deutsche Helden” [German Heroes], black-white-red cover edge, the image of an Iron Cross)<sup>47</sup>, contained statements such as “The whole fatherland is a lie!” and “Soldiers are murderers!” and even displayed photographs of killed soldiers.<sup>48</sup> Photographs also became increasingly important in the magazines he founded, *Freie Jugend. Jugendschrift für herrschaftslosen Sozialismus* [Free Youth. Youth publication for non-authoritarian Socialism] and *Die Schwarze Fahne* [The Black Flag].<sup>49</sup> In addition to anarchist and anti-militarist texts, Friedrich repeatedly published war photos from *Krieg dem Kriege*. The pacifist Kurt Kretschmann (1914–2007) describes the effect of the photos from *Krieg dem Kriege*:

“We were on friendly terms with a worker who owned the two volumes by Ernst Friedrich, *War on War*. [...] Once I saw these volumes – with some 250 photos and legends in three [sic!] languages: German, French and English – I was so moved that from then on I opposed all war. I have felt the same ever since.”<sup>50</sup>

Friedrich wanted to confront the public with the less glorious side of war through photographs of the dead and mutilated soldiers, the executed along with their proud executioners, the displaced and refugees. In addition to works by Otto Dix and Käthe Kollwitz, the exhibition of the Saxon Peace Cartel in Dresden also showed greatly enlarged photographs from *Krieg dem Kriege*.<sup>51</sup>

Not only did Friedrich publish the photos in *Krieg dem Kriege* and his newspapers but he even displayed them in his Anti-War Museum. Particularly the Berlin police had a problem with the display in the museum’s front window and so they ordered that the photos with the provocative anti-militarist captions be removed. The Königsberger *Volkszeitung*’s bookshop suffered a similar fate. Nationalist groups protested against the public display of the photos and quotes<sup>52</sup>. The manager of the social democratic bookshop received a complaint of criminal activity. Complying with a police order, the bookshop of the well-known Malik Publishing House also had to take down a poster with photos from *Krieg dem Kriege*.<sup>53</sup>

## Breaking taboos in *Krieg dem Kriege*

“I approach my readers today with a request.” This is the introduction to Kurt Tucholsky’s article “Waffe gegen den Krieg” [Weapon against war] (1926) in the weekly magazine *Die Weltbühne*, a review of Ernst Friedrich’s photo book *Krieg dem Kriege*<sup>54</sup>:

“The photographs of the battlefields, of the debris of war, the photographs of the mutilated are among the most horrible documents I have ever seen. There is no criminological work, no publication that offers anything similar in cruelty, in ultimate truthfulness, in instruction. [...] To those who have listened to me so often with approval, I suggest that you buy one or more copies of the book and see to its distribution.”<sup>55</sup>

Tucholsky’s recommendation refers to the first volume of *Krieg dem Kriege*. Published in the “anti-war year of 1924”<sup>56</sup>, the annotated book of photographs, illustrations, texts, and captions bears witness to the horrors of the First World War. The photographs and photo series are often arranged as contradicting pairs on a double page – Karl Riha calls this the “Technik der Bilder-Kontrafaktur” [technique of image contrafact]<sup>57</sup> – illustrating the “contradiction between war propaganda and war reality”.<sup>58</sup> Depictions of the misery of refugees, executions of civilians by military personnel, mutilated dead soldiers and war-disabled are placed in relation to each other to unequivocally condemn the war. Furthermore, Friedrich accuses those he sees as responsible for and profiting off of the war, by, for example, quoting national-chauvinist statements by social and military elites and counteracting them with his own provocative comments on photographs.

For the public on the “home front” between 1914 and 1918, the experience of war was completely mediatized, as “a linguistic and visual staging overgrown with propaganda”.<sup>59</sup> Even in the post-war period, the old style of imagery from the war period dominated. Ernst Friedrich broke away from the “traditional iconography of war”<sup>60</sup> by violating several taboos with his photo book.

It was unusual for the media of the warring nations to show photos of the dead from their army. If the dead were displayed, they belonged to the enemy. There were virtually no close-up shots showing the mutilations of the soldiers of their army. With *Krieg dem Kriege*, these images of the dead, severely injured soldiers and mass graves were made accessible to a wider audience for the first time.

Another breach of taboo that characterized the book as a radical memorial of the war with worldwide recognition was the depiction of severe facial injuries.<sup>61</sup> Under the heading “The Face of War”, Friedrich collected 24 close-ups of soldiers whose faces had been horrifically disfigured during the war. Alongside artists such as Otto Dix and George Grosz, Friedrich also drew attention to the suffering of the wounded who were isolated from the outside world in hospitals and contributed to the fact that “the figure of the war cripple [...] became part of a new social iconography in the art of the 1920s.”<sup>62</sup> For Friedrich, the destroyed man became the “denouncer of war”<sup>63</sup> and was thus able to “symbolize the crippled worldview of militarists and reactionaries.”<sup>64</sup>

The third taboo concerned a particularly critical point in the early years of the Weimar Republic. Not only were the Germans confronted by the Allies with the accusation that they were “guilty of starting the war”, but Ernst Friedrich also pointed out that they had incurred “guilt in the war”.<sup>65</sup> Friedrich published photos that were intended to make it clear that the accusation of “German war atrocities” was not just a fabrication of Allied propaganda. Photos show, for example, “Belgian deportees forced to work in German munitions factories”, starving prisoners of war in a mass grave from a prison camp under German administration,<sup>66</sup> a “defiled woman’s corpse”<sup>67</sup> and several executions of civilians by members of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies.

## Visual strategy in anti-war discourse: parallels in Ernst Friedrich's *Krieg dem Kriege* and Karl Kraus' *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* [The Last Days of Mankind] (1922)

Photography enabled the pacifist-antimilitarist movement to develop its own visual strategy from the 1920s onwards. The condemnation of war, the clarification of its causes and reasons and the attack on the militaristic conditioning of the mind were at the forefront of anti-war media agitation. In the early years of the Weimar Republic, the journalistic distribution of photographs with pacifist and anti-militaristic connotations led to the formation of a “visually influenced so-called counter-public”.<sup>68</sup> However, it was only through contextualization and re-symbolization that photographs became accusatory and explanatory documents. Rearranged and provided with captions and texts, the photographs were intended to represent the author's political stance and, as “visual statements”<sup>69</sup>, find their way into the social-political debate on the meaning of the war.<sup>70</sup>

The context of the photos presented, the accompanying texts, the juxtapositions and arrangements all serve as the key to interpreting anti-war visual representations, especially photographs.<sup>71</sup> The success of political campaigns depended decisively on the ability of the activists involved to convey desired themes, (sub)discourses, motifs and symbols in textual and visual media and make patterns of interpretation derived from them available in “symbolically compressed form”.<sup>72</sup>

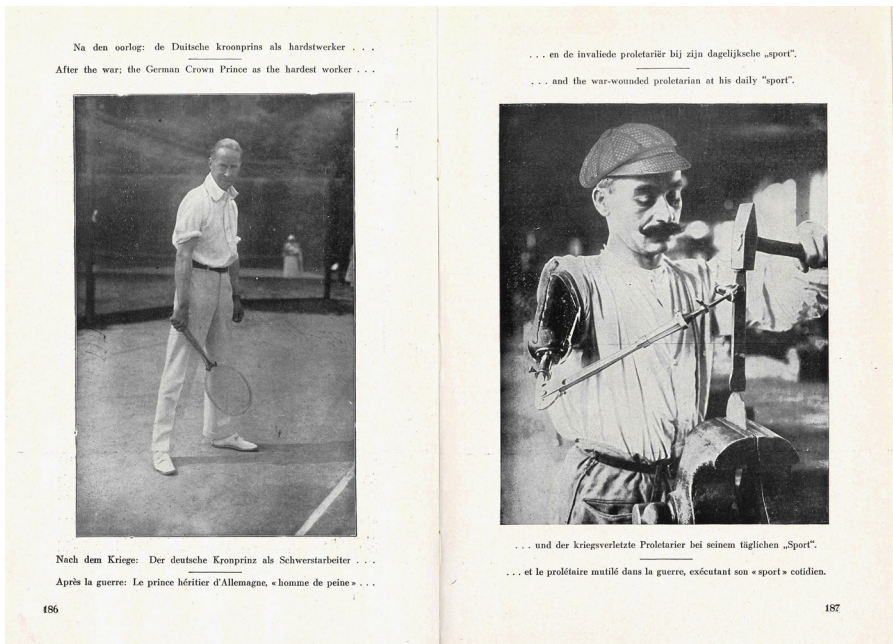
For a contextualization of *Krieg dem Kriege*, identifying parallels in the setting of themes and motifs can represent a first step towards examining Friedrich's photo book within a broader discursive structure of war criticism in the Weimar period. Thus, according to Leo A. Lensing, *Krieg dem Kriege* bears “some striking similarities with the word and image quotations in Kraus' drama”.<sup>73</sup> In Karl Kraus' *The Last Days of Mankind*<sup>74</sup>, “photographs are in the structural and thematic focus”.<sup>75</sup> Kraus integrated visual documents textually within the scenic plot<sup>76</sup> and also transferred the process of contextualizing textual documents to photographs.<sup>77</sup>

Friedrich and Kraus used journalistic and literary means such as satire, collage techniques, image contrafact, and photo-text combinations to disavow the myths and phrases of war and post-war society. This demystification was intended to contextualize the language distorted by war propaganda and the trivializing imagery of the war in an enlightened pacifist sense. Individual examples of thematic parallels in Friedrich's *Krieg dem Kriege* and Kraus' anti-war drama *The Last Days of Mankind* will be explained below.<sup>78</sup>

Particularly Kraus' descriptions of execution scenes show strong references to photographs and accompanying captions in *Krieg dem Kriege*.<sup>79</sup> Ernst Friedrich devoted a lot of space to executions in his photo-book. Sixteen photographs alone show executions on the gallows, and four show shootings or the bodies of the executed. The photos of the executions in *Krieg dem Kriege* particularly show the war against civilians in the areas occupied by the Austro-Hungarian army. Two figures mentioned by Friedrich are particularly interesting for comparison with Kraus' *The Last Days*. Friedrich captions one execution photo: "In the Austrian army during the World War, several thousand men were executed by hanging from the gallows."<sup>80</sup> The opposite page shows an execution scene and is captioned with: "In the army of the Grand Duke Friedrich alone, 11 400 gallows were erected. (According to other statistics: 36 000!)" These figures have a direct link to *The Last Days*. There, the figure of the "Nörgler" [grumbler] informs the "Optimisten" [optimist]: "Consider that under the army command of Archduke Frederik alone [...] 11,400, according to another version 36,000 gallows were erected."<sup>81</sup> Friedrich's choice of words here coincides remarkably with Kraus' and suggests a direct reference to the content.

Another parallel between a caption in *Krieg dem Kriege* and a scene in the *Letzten Tage* concerns the Austrian General Pflanzer-Baltin. Ernst Friedrich captions a photo of killed soldiers with a quote from the general: "Leave it to me to teach my men how to die. (Pflanzer-Baltin, Officer of the Austrian army.)"<sup>82</sup> In the *The Last Days*, Karl Kraus puts that quote in the mouth of a general who made Pflanzer-Baltin his role model: "My high role model, His Excellency Pflanzer-Baltin (*cheers*) coined the phrase: 'I will already teach my people how to die! That's what I believe! And what do people actually want? Do they want to live forever?'"<sup>83</sup>

Further references to content can be seen regarding the figure of the German Crown Prince Wilhelm. He plays a role in both Kraus' *The Last Days* and Friedrich's *War against War* in various scenes and photo-text combinations. In *The Last Days* the crown prince appears in a scene set during the Battle of the Somme. A company of soldiers marches past a villa "with death-stricken expressions" on their way to the front. The crown prince stands at the gate in a tennis suit, waves to the soldiers with a tennis racket, and says: "Do it well!"<sup>84</sup> In *War against War*, Ernst Friedrich presents a photograph of the crown prince standing on a tennis court holding a tennis racket in his right hand.



**Figure 5.** Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege*, Vol. 1 (Verlag Freie Jugend, 1924), pp. 186–187.

The study of *Krieg dem Kriege* as an album and document of a visual strategy within the anti-war discourse is not yet complete. Friedrich's allusions are too diverse, resulting in particular from the interplay between the photographs and the accompanying texts and captions. A more detailed examination of the overall impact of Ernst Friedrich and his network or the discovery of thematic and motivic parallels in

other contemporary anti-war works can reveal concrete influence on *Krieg dem Kriege* and place Friedrich's criticism of war and his photo book in a larger discursive context.

## Conclusion

“Neither written testimonies nor pictures, nor films can convey what wars were like, but they do show how wars were seen,”<sup>85</sup> writes Manuel Köppen in his study *Das Entsetzen des Beobachters* [The horror of the observer]. The depictions of Ernst Friedrich's *Krieg dem Kriege* are based on pacifist-antimilitaristic criticism, which is reflected in the choice of themes and motifs as well as the overall realization of the work. Friedrich chose the strongest images for his political confrontations and anti-war strategy. This refers not only to the photographs but also to the combinations of photography and text that address very specific anti-war themes and motifs. All elements and statements in the work *Krieg dem Kriege* are eminently political and as such part of social discourses and counter-discourses on the interpretation and remembrance of the First World War.

It was precisely the sarcasm of Ernst Friedrich's captions, in which quotes from the powerful and alleged war heroes are contrasted with the medium of photography, that enraged the political right. Friedrich documented several angry newspaper articles and letters from readers in his magazine *Freie Jugend*. According to the Präsidium des Bayerischen Kriegerbundes [Executive Committee of the Bavarian Warriors' Association], *Krieg dem Kriege*

“represents the most abysmal slander of the old army and, by means of a mean-spirited juxtaposition and compilation of some perhaps genuine pictures and the accompanying texts, pursues the intention of disparaging the old army and making individual personalities of it contemptible.”<sup>86</sup>

The reactions of the nationalist press and the nationalist associations show that the photographs of death and injury in *Krieg dem Kriege* caused hardly any outrage. The visual presentation of death in war

could be integrated into the right-wing masculinity discourse about strength and the resurrection of the nation. In photo books by right-wing authors such as Ernst Jünger, Hermann Rex and Franz Schauwecker, dead soldiers were shown without embellishment. The difference to Friedrich's book lies in the message of the captions and the arrangement of the photographs. Friedrich's provocation against the political right lay in his attack on "honor". He depicted the "heroes" with their absurd and exposing statements, the world war generals, aviation heroes, monarchs and officers were confronted with sarcastic captions and photos of war victims. Friedrich commented on a pile of dead soldiers with "slaughtered proletarians", Hermann Rex captioned the same photograph in his photo book *Der Weltkrieg in seiner rauhen Wirklichkeit* [The World War in its harsh reality], published in 1926, with "heroic German sons".<sup>87</sup>

*Krieg dem Kriege* is not just an illustrated condemnation of the First World War. Friedrich's techniques of deconstruction and contextualization of textual and visual media material should allow him to be placed in the tradition of Karl Kraus.<sup>88</sup> Both deliberately criticized their own country and created a characterization of victims and perpetrators in the war-society. The alienated, satirically exaggerated and sometimes surreal scenes from *The Last Days* should not conceal the fact that in the drama real people were accused and that Kraus was one of the first to deal with the war crimes of the Central Powers in a journalistic manner. Walter Benjamin already noted that reducing Kraus to his satirical significance could lead to him being "relegated to this dead track in order to be able to incorporate his work into the great storehouse of literary consumer goods."<sup>89</sup> If one follows Ekkehart Krippendorff's interpretation of *The Last Days* as a political work,<sup>90</sup> it can be seen that Kraus' satirical criticism of the military principle was ultimately aimed at denouncing the inherently violent character of the state. Kraus' drama preserves "the memory of a historical truth that is suppressed under the pretext of 'objectivity' and 'balance'."<sup>91</sup>

The same applies to Ernst Friedrich's *Krieg dem Kriege*: an interpretation under the slogan of "shock rhetoric" or the focus on a debate about the authenticity of (war) photographs largely fails to recog-

nize the book's potential as a document of the Weimar Republic's critique of war and power. What Friedrich achieved with *Krieg dem Kriege*—and herein lies the real 'scandal'—was the dissemination of a subversive book against the dehumanization and anti-civilizational nature of the war, against authoritarianism and the standardization of thought.

## Notes

1 This article was first published as: “‘Krieg dem Kriege’: Die kriegskritische Strategie Ernst Friedrichs in der Weimarer Republik,” in *“Maschine zur Brutalisierung der Welt?": Der Erste Weltkrieg – Deutungen und Haltungen 1914 bis heute*, ed. Bernd Hüttner, Salvador Oberhaus, Detlef Nakath and Axel Weipert (Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2017), 331–348. The original article was written in German using predominantly German sources. All translations of passages quoted from foreign languages are my own. The facsimiles and photographs included here have been added and chosen for the purpose of this article’s English language reprint.

2 Markus Pöhlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik: Der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militärgeschichtsschreibung 1914–1956* [War history and historical politics: The First World War. The official German military historiography 1914–1956] (Schöningh, 2002), 248.

3 See Thorsten Eitz and Isabelle Engelhardt, *Diskursgeschichte der Weimarer Republik* [History of discourse in the Weimar Republic], vol. 1, (2015), 22.

4 See Gerhard Paul, “Der Kampf um das ‘wahre Gesicht’ des Krieges. Der Erste Weltkrieg in der Bildpublizistik der Weimarer Republik“ [The battle for the ‘true face’ of the war. The First World War in the visual journalism of the Weimar Republic], in *Fotografie und Bildpublizistik in der Weimarer Republik* [Photography and visual journalism in the Weimar Republic], eds. Diethart Kerbs and Walter Uka (Kettler Verlag, 2004), 48–78, here 54.

5 Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege* [War against War] (Verlag Freie Jugend, 1924). The second volume, which has not yet been sufficiently acknowledged in research, was published in 1926: Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege* [War Against War] vol. II, (Verlag Freie Jugend, 1926).

6 “Krieg dem Kriege” is constantly being reprinted, most recently in 2015 by the Christoph Links publishing house, Berlin. This edition has also been released by the Federal Agency for Civic Education in Bonn. In 2014, Spokesman Books, Nottingham published an English edition. In the Weimar Republic, the first edition from 1924 sold 10,000 copies. In research literature, the figures regarding the number of copies sold differ considerably in some cases. Dora Apel speaks of 70,000 copies sold in the first few months after publication, see Dora Apel, “Cultural Battlegrounds. Weimar Photographic Narratives of War,” *New German Critique*, no 76 (1999): 49–84, here 53. This corresponds to figures given by Astrid Deilmann, who speaks of a total print run of 50,000 copies by 1930, see Astrid Deilmann, “Grenzen des Darstellbaren in der Fotografie. Anmerkung zu Ernst Friedrichs “Krieg dem Kriege!” von 1924” [Limits of the representable in photography. Comment on Ernst Friedrich's “Krieg

dem Kriege!” from 1924], in *Bildpropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* [Image propaganda in the First World War], ed. Raoul Zühlke (Verlag Ingrid Kämpfer, 2000), 397–430, here 398. Wilfried Knauer indicates to the abridged version of both volumes published by the International Trade Union Confederation, which is said to have comprised another 50,000 copies by 1930, see Wilfried Knauer, “Ernst Friedrich,” in *Die Friedensbewegung Organisierter Pazifismus in Deutschland, Österreich und in der Schweiz* [The peace movement Organized Pacifism in Germany, Austria and Switzerland], eds. Helmut Donat and Karl Holl (Econ Verlag, 1983), 152–154, here 153.

7 See Annelie Ramsbrock, “Verwundete Gesichter, verhindertes Sehen. Medizinische Fotografien des Ersten Weltkriegs [Wounded Faces, Prevented Vision. Medical photographs of the First World War],” in *Fotografien im 20. Jahrhundert. Verbreitung und Vermittlung* [Photography in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Dissemination and mediation], ed. Annelie Ramsbrock, Annette Vowinckel and Malte Zierenberg (Wallstein Verlag, 2013), 175–201.

8 See Astrid Wenger-Deilmann, “Die ‘Kriegszermalmten’. Die visuelle Schockrhetorik des Antikriegsdiskurses” [The ‘war maimed’. The visual shock rhetoric of the anti-war discourse], in *Das Jahrhundert der Bilder. 1900 bis 1949* [The Century of Pictures. 1900 to 1949], ed. Gerhard Paul (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 308–315. In more recent publications on the visual culture of the world war and on war photographs, the focus in relation to Friedrich’s book is on the face-wounded, see Gerhard Paul, *Das visuelle Zeitalter. Punkt und Pixel* [The visual age. Point and Pixel] (Wallstein, 2016); Bernd Hüppauf, *Fotografie im Krieg* [Photography during war], (Wilhelm Fink, 2015).

9 See Gerhard Hirschfeld and Gerd Krumeich, “Wozu eine ‘Kulturgeschichte’ des Ersten Weltkriegs?” [Why a ‘cultural history’ of the First World War?], in *Durchhalten! Krieg und Gesellschaft im Vergleich 1914–1918* [Hang in there! War and society in comparison 1914–1918], ed. Arnd Bauerkämper and Elise Julien (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 31–53, here 31.

10 Ulrich Linse, “Der unzeitgemäße Ernst Friedrich” [The untimely Ernst Friedrich], in Ulrich Linse, *Ernst Friedrich zum 10. Todestag* [Ernst Friedrich on the 10th anniversary of his death], *Europäische Ideen*, Issue 29 (1977): 1–3, here 3.

11 The most up-to-date biographical essay on Ernst Friedrich can be found in the new edition of “Krieg dem Kriege”, see Tommy Spree and Patrick Oelze, “Ich kenne keine ‘Feinde’. Zur Biografie Ernst Friedrichs (1894–1967)” [I know no ‘enemies’. Biography of Ernst Friedrich (1894–1967)], in Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege* [War Against War], 2015

edition by the Anti-Kriegs-Museum Berlin, 110. Further information on Friedrich's biography can be found in Ernst Friedrich, *Vom Friedensmuseum zur Hitlerkaserne. Eine Tatsachenbericht über des Wirken von Ernst Friedrich und Adolf Hitler* (1935) [From Peace Museum to Hitler Barracks. A factual report on the effect of Ernst Friedrich and Adolf Hitler (1935)] (Libertad Verlag, 1978); Linse, *Ernst Friedrich zum 10. Todestag*; Walther G. Oschilewski, *Auf den Flügeln der Freiheit. Zur Sozial-, Kunst- und Literaturgeschichte Berlins* [On the wings of freedom. On the social, artistic and literary history of Berlin] (Verlag Europäische Ideen, 1984); Ulrich Klemm *Anarchisten als Pädagogen. Profile libertärer Pädagogik* [Anarchists as educators. Profiles of libertarian education] (Edition AV, 2002).

12 See Ernst Friedrich, *Festung Gollnow* [Fort Gollnow] (Kultur Verlag, 1932), 141.

13 Ernst Friedrich, "Offener Brief an den Ozean-Flieger [Open letter to the ocean flyer]," *Die Schwarze Fahne*, no. 20 (1927). In this article, Friedrich goes on to say, that during his prison sentence he had received the "mobilization order," but actively refused to do military service. An article in the "Berliner Volks-Zeitung" from 1924 mentioned that Ernst Friedrich was "von der Haft als Kriegsdienstverweigerer her magenleidend." [suffering from stomach pains due to his imprisonment as a conscientious objector], *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 14.08.1924, evening edition.

14 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 08.01.1922, morning edition.

15 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 12.11.1926, morning edition, supplement "Illustrierte Haus- und Garten-Zeitung".

16 Spree and Oelze, "Feinde" ["Enemies"], 58.

17 Ernst Piper, *Nacht über Europa. Kulturgeschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* [Night across Europe. Cultural history of the First World War] (Allitera, 2013), 472.

18 Ernst Friedrich first made his debut as an actor in Breslau in 1914 and shortly afterwards moved to the Royal Prussian Court Theater in Potsdam. In honor of his tenth anniversary of being on stage in 1924, Friedrich performed in Anton Wildgans' play "Armut" ["Poverty"], *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 08.04.1924, morning edition.

19 On the "Berliner Volks-Zeitung" as an "offenes und breitgefächertes Forum für linksliberale und radikaldemokratische Vorstellungen" [open and wide-ranging forum for left-liberal and radical-democratic ideas], see Benjamin Ziemann, *Veteranen der Republik. Kriegserinnerung und demokratische Politik 1918–1933* [Veterans of the Republic. War memory and democratic politics 1918–1933] (Dietz, 2014), 34 f.

20 *Berliner Tageblatt*, 16.09.1919, morning edition.

21 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 18.07.1920, morning edition, first

addendum [“erstes Beiblatt”].

22 See *Hamburger Anzeiger*, 27.12.1921.

23 See *Berliner Tageblatt*, 30.09.1921, morning edition.

24 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 04.11.1922, morning edition.

25 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 06.12.1921, evening edition.

26 Ernst Friedrich, for example, read from Ernst Toller’s drama “Der deutsche Hinkemann” [The German Hinkemann]. Performances of the play sometimes had to take place under police protection, since National Socialists tried to disrupt them. At Friedrich’s reading evening, a workers’ boxing club took over the protection of the event: “Von Hakenkreuzstudentlein und Stahlhelmjüngern war demzufolge nichts zu sehen.” [As a result, there was nothing to be seen of swastika students and Steel Helmet disciples]. *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 10.03.1924, evening edition.

“The Steel Helmet, League of Front-Line Soldiers” was a revanchist ex-serviceman’s association formed in Germany after the First World War.

27 “Eine öffentliche Kundgebung für Freilassung des schwer erkrankten Dichters Erich Mühsam [...]. Es sprechen Frau Mühsam, die Gattin des gefangenen Dichters, und der Schriftsteller Ernst Friedrich.” [A public rally for the release of the seriously ill poet Erich Mühsam [...]. Mrs. Mühsam, the wife of the imprisoned poet, and the writer Ernst Friedrich will speak], *Berliner Tageblatt*, 14.07.1924, evening edition.

28 See *Die Weltbühne*, 09.10.1928.

29 “Ernst Friedrich spricht am Sonntag, den 4. Oktober im Berliner Rathaus [...] ‘Die letzten Tage der Menschheit’ [...]” [On Sunday, October 4, in the Berlin City Hall, Ernst Friedrich recites [...] ‘The last days of mankind’ [...].], *Die Schwarze Fahne*, no 5 (1925).

30 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 01.08.1921, evening edition.

31 See *Le Petit Parisien*, 02.05.1922.

32 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 01.03.1923, morning edition. Friedrich was sentenced to four weeks in prison during this trial. In an article, the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* stated that “Reaktionäre” [reactionaries] insulted the republican form of government in a similar way “ohne dafür bestraft worden zu sein” [without having been punished for it].

33 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 10.04.1926, morning edition; *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 30.06.1926, evening edition.

34 In March 1929, the former Reichswehr Minister Gustav Noske filed a libel lawsuit against Ernst Friedrich because Friedrich had insulted him in his newspaper *Die Schwarze Fahne* by describing him as “Lump” [rascal] and “Schurke” [scoundrel]. Friedrich’s lawyer Hans Litten invited as witnesses and experts Wilhelm Herzog, publisher of the magazine *Forum*, and Emil Julius Gumbel, author of the book *Vier Jahre politischer Mord*

[Four Years of Political Murder], see *Altonaer Nachrichten*, 13.03.1929.

35 In the article “Der bewachte Kriegsschauplatz” [The Guarded Theater of War] from 1931, Kurt Tucholsky wrote: “Sagte ich: Mord? Natürlich Mord. Soldaten sind Mörder.” [Did I say murder? Of course murder. Soldiers are murderers.], Ignaz Wrobel [i.e. Kurt Tucholsky], “Der bewachte Kriegsschauplatz [The Guarded Theater of War],” *Die Weltbühne*, August 8, 1931.

36 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 06.07.1926, evening edition. In the trial for insulting the Catholic Church, Friedrich was granted mitigating circumstances “wegen seiner politische Unreife” [due to his political immaturity] and sentenced to three months in prison. The description of the Reichswehr as “Mörder” [murderers] ended with Friedrich being sentenced to six months in prison, see *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, 08.07.1927, morning edition.

37 *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 22.09.1923, evening edition. The magazine *Die Weltbühne* campaigned for Friedrich, especially since the end of the 1920s. Not only did it regularly refer to his events, but it also organized a fundraising campaign, the “Antikriegsanleihe” [Anti-War Loan], launched to save the Anti-War Museum, see *Die Weltbühne*, 23.12.1930; *Die Weltbühne*, 13.01.1931; *Die Weltbühne*, 08.09.1931. The list of donations shows how widespread Friedrich’s network of supporters was in Europe. For example, donations came out of Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.

38 The “Berliner Tageblatt” reported in detail on the exhibits on display, see *Berliner Tageblatt*, 01.11.1925, morning edition; *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 09.10.1925, evening edition; Franz Leschnitzer “Ein Anti-Kriegsmuseum” [An Anti-War Museum], *Die Weltbühne*, August 2, 1927. Through printing quotes from the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* in his own *Die Schwarze Fahne*, Friedrich illustrated the reaction of the right-wing press. The *Deutsche Zeitung* described the museum as “öffentlichen Skandal” [a public scandal] and “Schamlosigkeit” [shamelessness]. By displaying a photograph of the coffee-drinking general alongside one of mutilated people, Friedrich “in unerhörter Weise herabgesetzt” [disparaged in an unheard-of manner] Hindenburg’s reputation, see *Die Schwarze Fahne*, no 19 (1927).

39 Max Fürst, *Talisman Scheherezade. Die schwierigen zwanziger Jahre* [The difficult twenties] (Hanser Verlag, 1976), 335. See also the memoirs of Kurt Wafner, *Ausgeschert aus Reih’ und Glied. Mein Leben als Bücherfreund und Anarchist* [Out of rank and file. My life as a book lover and anarchist] (Edition AV, 2001), 44 f.

40 Robert Jungk, “Und wieder wird marschiert ...” [And again they march ...], in Linse, *Todestag* [Anniversary of death], 39f., here 39.

41 *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 06.04.1930, morning edition.

42 Ibid.

43 *Hamburger Anzeiger*, 08.04.1930.

44 See *Le Matin*, 08.04.1930; The Estonian newspaper *Kaja* ran the headline “Saksamaal ei sallita patsifiste” [Pacifists are not tolerated in Germany], *Kaja*, 09.04.1930.

45 The “Hamburgische Correspondent” criticized the lurid reporting on Friedrich’s arrest under the title “Der Bratkartoffelrevolutionär” [The baked potato revolutionary] – alluding to Friedrich’s poor living conditions, see *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 17.04.1930, morning edition.

46 The *Berliner Film-Zeitung*, a supplement to the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, wrote on 31.07.1923 about one of Friedrich’s photographic lectures: “Ernst Friedrich sprach die begleitende Worte zu den Lichtbildern, die furchtbar verstümmelte Kriegsoffer zeigten. Die voll besuchte Versammlung folgte den Ausführungen Friedrichs mit starker innerer Bewegung. Einige Störungsversuche rechtsorientierter Elemente wurden mühelos unterdrückt.” [Ernst Friedrich spoke the accompanying words to the photographs, which showed terribly mutilated war victims. The fully attended gathering followed Friedrich’s remarks strongly moved. A few attempts at disruption by right-wing elements were easily suppressed.]

47 A reproduction of the brochure “Deutsche Helden” can be found in *Freie Jugend*, no. 29–30 (1921).

48 In its evening edition from 05.07.1921, the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* reported under the headline “Ein Radikalinski” [derogatory term for “radical leftist”]: “Der in Berlin sehr bekannte Anarchist Ernst Friedrich [...] hat jüngst von Bergarbeitern aus dem Braunkohlenrevier die Einladung erhalten, bei der Einweihung eines Kriegerdenkmals in Hörlitz-Flur zu sprechen. [...] Friedrich ließ unter anderem eine Broschüre verteilen, in der sich Abbildungen aus der ‘großen Zeit’ befanden, die damals nicht in die illustrierten Blätter gelangten, aber für die vaterlandsparteilichen Stammtischkrieger äußerst lehrreich gewesen wären, zum Beispiel wie auf einem Bretterwagen der Abtransport ins Massengrab erfolgt.” [The anarchist Ernst Friedrich, who is very well known in Berlin, recently received an invitation from miners from the brown coal district to speak at the dedication of a war memorial in Hörlitz-Flur. Among other things Friedrich had a brochure distributed, in which illustrations from the ‘great era’, which did not make it into the illustrated papers at the time, but would have been extremely instructive for the patriotic, partisan regulars, for example how the transport to the mass graves takes place on a plank wagon.]

49 Issues of *Die Schwarze Fahne* in the Digital Library of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bibliothek/bestand/xx->

[00457/index.html](#) (last viewing: 25.02.2025).

50 Kurt Kretschmann, “And you are still alive? A German pacifist remembers 1914–1949,” *The Iowa Review*, no.3 (2001): 1–25, here 2. Kretschmann misremembers the number of languages here: a fourth language, Dutch, was included by Friedrich. In some later editions, Dutch was replaced by Czech.

51 See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 28.02.1928, morning edition.

52 Friedrich’s magazine *Freie Jugend* quotes from several articles in the Königsberger *Volkszeitung* that documented the incident. What the nationalist press found particularly outrageous about the exhibition of photos from “Krieg dem Kriege” in the display window was that they were accompanied by the quote from Paul von Hindenburg, “Der Krieg bekommt mir wie eine Badekur” [The war feels like a spa treatment to me], see *Freie Jugend*, no. 3 (1925).

53 “Yesterday, officials from the Department Ia of the police headquarters had a poster on the display window of the Malik bookstore, Köthener Straße 38, which was composed of a picture excerpts from the recently published book Ernst Friedrich, “Krieg dem Kriege”, removed, presenting a written order that frightening photographs of war wounded, which could have a repulsive effect on the public and give rise to gatherings and traffic disturbances, are to be removed.” See *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, 30.09.1924, evening edition.

54 On *Krieg dem Kriege* in general, see Deilmann, “Grenzen,” 397–430; Gabriele Forberg, “‘Krieg dem Kriege’ Wie man imperialistische Kriege fotografiert [How to photograph imperialist wars],” *Tendenzen*, no 86 (1973): 26–33; Gerd Krumeich, “Ein einzigartiges Werk. Einführung zur Neuauflage von “Krieg dem Kriege” [A unique work. Introduction to the new edition of “Krieg dem Kriege”],” in “*Krieg dem Kriege*” [War against War], ed. Anti-Kriegs-Museum Berlin (Christoph Links Verlag, 2015), VII-XXXVII. On the subject of “shock photography”, see Annegret Jürgens-Kirchhoff, *Schreckensbilder. Krieg und Kunst im 20. Jahrhundert* [Images of horror. War and art in the 20th century], (Reimer, 1993), 241 ff.; Susan Sontag, *Das Leiden anderer betrachten* [Regarding the Pain of Others, 2003], 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Fischer 2010), 21ff. For a comparison of *Krieg dem Kriege* with other photo books, see Apel, *Battlegrounds*, 49–84; Sandra Oster, “Das Gesicht des Krieges. Der Erste Weltkrieg im Foto-Text-Buch der Weimarer Republik” [The face of war. The First World War in the photo-text book of the Weimar Republic], in *Fotogesichte* [Photographic history], no. 116 (2010): 23–32. On the photographs of facial injuries, see Leo van Bergen, Heidi de Mare and Frans Meijman, “From Goya to Afghanistan – an essay on the ratio and ethics of medical war pictures,” *Medicine, Conflict and Sur-*

- vival, no. 26 (2010): 124–144; Sabine Kienitz, *Beschädigte Helden. Kriegsinvalidität und Körperbilder 1914–1923* [Damaged heroes. War invalidity and body images 1914–1923] (Schöningh, 2008), 11–29.
- 55 Ignaz Wrobel [i.e. Kurt Tucholsky], “Waffe gegen den Krieg” [Weapon against the war], *Die Weltbühne*, February 2, 1926.
- 56 Annegret Jürgens-Kirchhoff, “Kunst gegen den Krieg im Antikriegsjahr 1924” [Art against the war in the anti-war year 1924], in *Der verlorene Frieden. Politik und Kriegskultur nach 1918* [The lost peace. Politics and war culture after 1918], ed. Jost Dülffer and Gerd Krumeich (Klartext Verlag, 2002), 287–310, here 287.
- 57 Karl Riha, “Den Krieg photographieren” [Photographing the war], in *Kriegserlebnis. Der Erste Weltkrieg in der literarischen Gestaltung und symbolischen Deutung der Nationen* [War experience. The First World War in the literary design and symbolic interpretation of nations], ed. Klaus Vondung (Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1980), 146–162, here 157.
- 58 Deilmann, *Grenzen* [Limits], 418.
- 59 Gerd Krumeich, “Konjunkturen der Weltkriegserinnerung” [Cycles of remembrance of the world war], in *Der Erste Weltkrieg 1914–1918. Ereignis und Erinnerung* [The First World War 1914–1918. Event and memory], ed. Rainer Rother (Minerva, 2004), 68–73, here 68.
- 60 Manuel Köppen, *Das Entsetzen des Beobachters. Krieg und Medien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* [The horror of the observer. War and the media in the 19th and 20th centuries] (Winter Verlag, 2005), 242.
- 61 In psychological experiments on the connection between adrenaline and emotions in the early 1930s in the USA, test subjects were confronted with the shocking photos of severely injured faces from *Krieg dem Krieg*, see Hadley Cantril, “The Rôles of the Situation and Adrenalin in the Induction of Emotion,” *The American Journal of Psychology*, no.4 (1934): 568–579, here 569.
- 62 Kienitz, *Helden* [Heroes], 13.
- 63 Karlheinz Lipp, *Friedensinitiativen in der Geschichte* [Peace initiatives in history] (Centaurus Verlag, 2002), 89.
- 64 Sven Reichardt, “Gewalt, Körper, Politik. Paradoxien in der deutschen Kulturgeschichte der Zwischenkriegszeit” [Violence, body, politics. Paradoxes in the German cultural history of the interwar period], in *Politische Kulturgeschichte der Zwischenkriegszeit 1918–1939* [Political cultural history of the interwar period 1918–1939], ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2005), 205–239, here 215.
- 65 See Alan Kramer, “Versailles, deutsche Kriegsverbrechen und das Auslieferungsbegehren der Alliierten 1919/20” [Versailles, German war crimes and the Allies’ request for extradition in 1919/20], in *Kriegsverbrech-*

- en im 20. Jahrhundert [War crimes in the 20th century], ed. Wolfram Wette and Gerd R. Ueberschär (Primus Verlag, 2001), 72–84, here 79.
- 66 Friedrich explicitly refers here to the treatment of Russian and Romanian prisoners of war. For example, 28.9 percent of Romanian prisoners died in German captivity, see Alan Kramer, “Combatants and Noncombatants: Atrocities, Massacres, and War Crimes,” in *A Companion to World War I*, ed. John Horne (Blackwell, 2010), 88–201, here 193f.
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- 68 Paul, *Kampf* [Battle], 54.
- 69 Anton Holzer, *Die andere Front. Fotografie und Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg* [The other front. Photography and propaganda in the First World War] (Primus Verlag, 2007), 312.
- 70 See Thomas F. Schneider, “Narrating the war in pictures. German photo books on World War I and the construction of pictorial war narrations,” *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, no. 1 (2011): 31–49, here 33.
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- 72 Wolfram Pyta, “Die Privilegierung des Frontkämpfers gegenüber dem Feldmarschall. Zur Politikmächtigkeit literarischer Imagination des Ersten Weltkrieges in Deutschland” [The privileging of the front-line fighter over the field marshal. On the political power of the literary imagination of the First World War in Germany], in *Politische Kultur und Medienwirklichkeit in den 1920er Jahren* [Political culture and media reality in the 1920s], eds. Ute Daniel et al. (Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 147–180, here 148.
- 73 Leo A. Lensing, “‘Lebensstarre’ – Bewegende Bilder. Fotografien und Film in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit von Karl Kraus” [“Rigor mortis” - Moving images. Photographs and film in The Last Days of Mankind by Karl Kraus], in *Fotogeschichte* 30, no. 115 (2010): 5–24, here 23, fn 34.
- 74 Karl Kraus, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* [The Last Days of Mankind] (Suhrkamp, 1986).
- 75 Lensing, *Lebensstarre* [“Rigor mortis”], 5.
- 76 See *ibid.*; see also Leo A. Lensing, “„Photographischer Alpdruck“ oder politische Fotomontage? Karl Kraus, Kurt Tucholsky und die satirischen Möglichkeiten der Fotografie” [“Photographic nightmare” or political photomontage? Karl Kraus, Kurt Tucholsky and the satirical possibilities of photography], *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 107, (1988): 556–571; Leo

A. Lensing, „Kinodramatisch“: Cinema in Karl Kraus’ *Die Fackel* and *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*,” *The German Quarterly*, no. 4 (1982): 480–498.

77 See Irina Djassemey, *Die verfolgende Unschuld. Zur Geschichte des autoritären Charakters in der Darstellung von Karl Kraus* [The persecuting innocence. On the history of the authoritarian character in the portrayal of Karl Kraus] (Böhlau, 2011), 163.

78 For an extended and more detailed description of the parallels in the context of themes and motifs, see Julian Nordhues, “Erster Weltkrieg und Pazifismus in den Anfangsjahren der Weimarer Republik. Dispositive in Ernst Friedrichs ‘Krieg dem Kriege’ und Karl Kraus’ ‘Die letzten Tage der Menschheit’ [The First World War and pacifism in the early years of the Weimar Republic. Dispositives in Ernst Friedrich’s ‘Krieg dem Kriege’ and Karl Kraus’ ‘Die letzten Tage der Menschheit’], unpublished master’s thesis, Gießen 2013.

79 See Holzer, *Front* [front], 254–258; Anton Holzer, *Das Lächeln der Henker. Der unbekannte Krieg gegen die Zivilbevölkerung* [The smile of the executioners. The unknown war against the civilian population] (Primus, 2008), 149.

80 Friedrich, *Krieg* [War], 134.

81 Kraus, *Tage* [Days], 505.

82 Friedrich, *Krieg* [War], 106.

83 Kraus, *Tage* [Days], 685.

84 Kraus, *Tage* [Days], 413. Kraus added this scene to the book version (1922) of *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit*, which was expanded by 47 scenes in contrast to the so-called act edition. The act edition of *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit* was published from December 1918 to September 1919 in four special issues of Kraus’ magazine *Die Fackel* [The Torch]. Kraus may have based the concept for the scene on an article by Hans Glenk [i.e. Martha-Maria Gehrke] in the *Weltbühne* from 16.09.1920. It describes how “den todtgefaßt Marschierenden, der Kronprinz, der, im Tennisanzug, an ein Parktor kam, mit dem Racket ein leutseliges: ‘Machts brav!’ zuwinkte ...” [the death-bound marchers, the crown prince, who, in a tennis suit, came to a gate, waved an affable: ‘Do it well’ with the racket ...].

85 Köppen, *Entsetzen* [Horror], 1.

86 *Freie Jugend*, no. 3 (1925). In this issue, Ernst Friedrich also printed articles from the social democratic *Königsberger Volkszeitung*, which dealt with the reactions of politically right-wing Königsberg newspapers such as the *Ostpreußische Zeitung*. The “Anpöbelung Hindenburgs” [mobbing of Hindenburg] by the “Badekur” [bathing culture] quote in *Krieg dem Kriege* was particularly heavily criticized in these papers, see also footnote 52.

87 The photograph reproduced by Friedrich and Rex appeared during the

war in the French magazine *Le Miroir*, see *Le Miroir*, 19.03.1916.

88 See Paul, *Zeitalter* [Age], 192f.

89 Walter Benjamin, “Karl Kraus,” in *Walter Benjamin: Gesammelte Werke* [Collected works], ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. II/1, (Suhrkamp,1977), 334–367, here 354.

90 Ekkehart Krippendorff, *Politische Interpretationen. Shakespeare, Stendhal, Balzac, Wagner, Hašek, Kafka, Kraus* [Political interpretations. Shakespeare, Stendhal, Balzac, Wagner, Hašek, Kafka, Kraus] (Suhrkamp, 1990), 141–177.

91 Djasemy, *Unschuld* [innocence], 164.



## Why War? Debating Pacifism during the Spanish Civil War: Herbert Read, John Middleton Murry and the ‘Necessity’ of Anarchism<sup>1</sup>

Mark Antliff

When Herbert Read (1893–1968) formally announced his conversion to anarchism in 1937 he did so in a lengthy article published in three installments over the course of the Autumn in the British journal *The Adelphi* (1923–1955).<sup>2</sup> At the time Read was a poet, a novelist, a major art and literary critic, and a champion of Surrealism who subsequently rose to international fame as a prodigious advocate of avant-garde art.<sup>3</sup> His polemic carried the commanding title, “The Necessity of Anarchism,” and was then incorporated into the first manifesto showcasing his anarchist creed, *Poetry and Anarchism* (June 1938).<sup>4</sup> Scholars have rightly identified that book as charting Read’s initial, complex effort to position his thought in relation to pacifism, an orientation that proved to be fundamental to his anarchism following World War Two.<sup>5</sup> Central to Read’s pacifism at this early juncture was his response to the ongoing Spanish Civil War, which began in July 1936 and came to a cataclysmic end in April 1939.

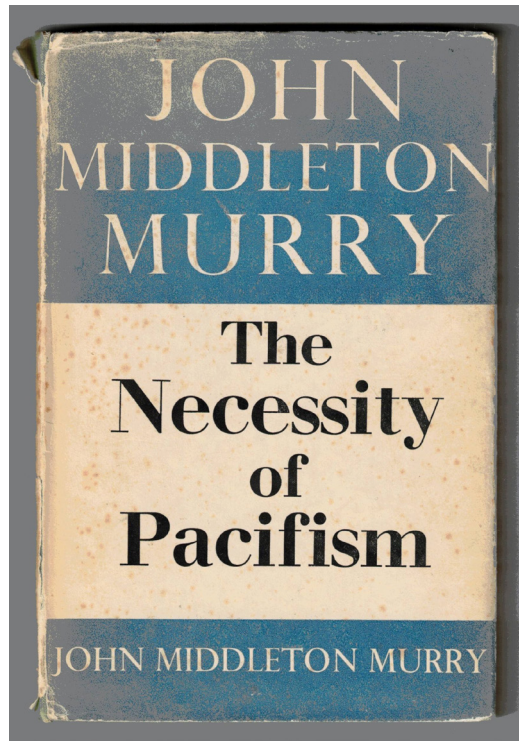
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However, what has gone unnoticed is that Read's foundational manifesto was not developed in intellectual isolation, but instead in response to the political theory of John Middleton Murry (1889–1957) a leading doyen of the pacifist movement in Britain before and during the Second World War. I would argue that Murry and Read's positioning of their pacifism during this fraught historical moment throws light on troubling issues that are still relevant today. Although he is now largely forgotten, Murry was a highly respected public intellectual, activist, journal editor, and literary critic whose writings reached a broad audience.<sup>6</sup> Murry was an important early mentor for Read and their personal correspondence from 1920 to 1948 attests to a cordial, but intermittent relationship that lasted almost three decades.<sup>7</sup> Murry was among the early sponsors of Britain's largest pre-war peace movement, the Peace Pledge Union (founded in May 1936).<sup>8</sup> Shortly after he joined the PPU in October 1936 Murry became a key intellectual voice for that organization, contributing regularly to the PPU's flagship newspaper *Peace News* (1936–present), and then serving as editor from 1940 to 1946. At its peak in 1940 the PPU membership numbered 136,000, but slowly fell to 98,414 by 1945, and declined precipitously to 16,000 in 1947 in the war's aftermath.<sup>9</sup> Murry was also the founding editor of *The Adelphi*, and from 1937 onward the journal became a key intellectual forum for the PPU's pacifists. Read's choice of *The Adelphi* for "The Necessity of Anarchism" indicates that he crafted the essay with this audience in mind; and he underscored the point by deliberately echoing the title of Murry's major political statement, *The Necessity of Pacifism* (June 1937) (Fig. 1).<sup>10</sup> Tellingly, Read retained a copy of Murry's book in his personal library throughout his life.<sup>11</sup>

Murry described *The Necessity of Pacifism* as a "sequel" and "complement" to his earlier closely-related text, *The Necessity of Communism*, dated to 1932,<sup>12</sup> which Read was also familiar with. The *engagé* theory of communism espoused in Murry's earlier book led to an exchange of letters between Murry and Read in March and April 1933, wherein Read held that writers should remain aloof from political engagement, whereas Murry argued that they "must be organised" and that the challenge was to develop "an appropriate form of organisation" dedicated to "revolutionary change."<sup>13</sup> *The Necessity of Pacifism* charted

Murry's attempt to achieve that goal through the establishment of a series of summer schools where "Adelphi Socialists" could congregate to discuss an alternative vision of socialism to that propagated by extant political parties.<sup>14</sup> In 1934, 1935 and 1936, summer school meetings were held at Glossop in Derbyshire, at Caerleon in northern Wales, and finally at the newly established Adelphi Center, in Langham, Essex, which also operated as a cooperative community and educational center. Murry had envisioned the Center as an educational forum for the "making of socialists" run by a core group committed to communal living, and his summer schools attracted progressives from across the socioeconomic spectrum.<sup>15</sup> Murry and Herbert Read both attended and gave talks at the August 1936 gathering: Murry's address subsequently appeared in the September 1936 edition of *The Adelphi* under the title "Socialism, the State and Violence."<sup>16</sup> Thus Read was acutely aware of and responsive to Murry's evolving politics.



**Figure 1.** Cover of John Middleton Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 1937.

## Defining Pacifism

Scholars have shown that Read's pacifism evolved from a general opposition to war before and during the initial stages of the Second World War, to a principled commitment to non-violence in the late 1940s, when he was finally won over to Tolstoy's and Gandhi's precepts.<sup>17</sup> Historians of anarchism and of the pacifist movement have frequently cast this broader dichotomy as a more *pragmatic* pacifism, characterized by ethically circumscribed and historically contingent forms of non-violence, in contrast to an *idealist* prefigurative pacifism that rejects violence in all its manifestations, past, present and future. It was this prefigurative orientation—dictating that the non-violent ends sought should be consonant with the means for achieving them—that came to define the confluence of anarchism and pacifism, especially in Britain, from post-1945 to the present.<sup>18</sup> Another closely related theoretical subcategory pertinent to Murry and Read's early pronouncements, revolves around responses to the particular issue of state-sponsored armed warfare per se, rather than non-violence writ large. Martin Ceadel in his analysis of the pacifist movement in Britain separates advocates of circumscribed "pacifism" from those adhering to a more expansive "pacifism": whereas circumscribed pacifists allow that war is "sometimes necessary", even as they call ardently for its prevention, expansive pacifists believe that war is "always wrong, and should never be resorted to, whatever the consequences of abstaining from fighting."<sup>19</sup> The PPU tried to incorporate all these positions under its organizational umbrella, with the result that it was periodically riven by internal debate. David Goodway, in his wide-ranging study of left-libertarian thought in Britain, has addressed the issue of war and pacifism from yet another perspective, arguing that one should distinguish between:

"those pacifists (or indeed pacifists) whose opposition to war is at root *moral*, usually on account of religious belief, and those whose outlook is *socio-political*, believing that war is merely a symptom of a fundamentally unjust society ... and that its elimination can only be achieved as a result of revolutionary change."<sup>20</sup>

Thus, historical pacifism, like anarchism, was not a singular monolithic creed, but instead a multivalent conceptual frame in which primary and secondary elements overlapped and sometimes came into contradiction.<sup>21</sup>

While scholars have identified Christianity as key to Murry's pacifism, they have uniformly categorized Read's orientation as firmly in the socio-political rather than religious register. For anarchists like Read, armed conflict was integral to the very existence of the bureaucracies, economic systems, and governance of nation-states, and it was such centralizing entities and forces that needed to be destroyed if armed conflict were to cease.<sup>22</sup> On this basis Read could declare his opposition to all state-sponsored wars, while continuing to either justify or not preclude the use of violence in other circumstances. Historian Matthew Adams specifically points to Read's chapter "The Prerequisite of Peace" in *Poetry and Anarchism* for evidence of Read's pre-war definition of this version of pacifism.<sup>23</sup> Here Read asserted that recourse to reason and its ideological bedfellow, revolutionary anarchism, would sweep away both capitalism and centralizing political bureaucracies, which were the economic and instrumental catalysts for armed conflict between nations. An abbreviated version of "The Prerequisite of Peace" had first appeared in May 1938 in the anarchist journal *Spain and the World* (1936–39); in the September and November issues of that journal Read made clear that this notion of anarchist revolution required that "the control of the State must be ceased violently, catastrophically."<sup>24</sup> Adams rightly concludes that *Poetry and Anarchism* is therefore "not a rejection of violence *in toto*, but a repudiation of war."<sup>25</sup>

I would argue that we cannot fully understand the import of Read's position without considering his relation to John Middleton Murry, whose pacifist theory was a major catalyst for Read's own ideological transformation. In my analysis of Read and Murry's competing notions of pacifism, I will take up three interrelated themes: their contrasting assessments of Marxist, democratic, fascist, and anarchist ideologies; their differences over the role of culture and rationalism within the pacifist matrix; and their surprising confluence around the issue of Christian ethics. My analysis of this unstudied dimension

of Read's and Murry's emerging theories of pacifism reveals for the first time the complex and contested role anarchism played within the broader pacifist movement on the eve of World War Two. I will also point to the various ways in which these debates throw light on complex issues that continue to animate the anarchist and pacifist movements up to our own day.

### **Murry's Christian Communism and the Creative Imagination**



**Figure 2.** John Middleton Murry, 1935.

In 1931, Murry underwent a dramatic and controversial conversion to Marxism, resulting in his 1932 polemic *The Necessity of Communism*, in which he forged a peculiar brand of socialism, based on the merger of Marx's tenets with Christian ethics.<sup>26</sup> Murray's book was greeted with skepticism and sometimes ridicule by his literary peers (Fig. 3). His central claim in the book was that,

“the distinctive ethical passion of the epoch to which we belong is the Judeo-Christian passion of disinterested sympathy. To this passion, primarily, Marx made his appeal; this passion he conspicuously inherited. Whether or not he consciously acknowledged his derivation from Jesus, it is manifest.”<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 3.** Thomas Derrick, “Mr. Middleton Murry embraces Communism,” *The Bookman* (April 1932).

Murry then asserted that Marx was not only the genuine inheritor of Christ’s teachings—in contradistinction to the institutionalized Church—but that “the paradox of Marxism” meant that vulgar forms of that ideology ignored the core spiritual message and values of Marx himself.<sup>28</sup> By contrast Marx’s altruistic “detachment” was premised on a “radical affinity between true spiritualism and true materialism” and based on indifference towards oneself combined with “concern with the fate of others.”<sup>29</sup> The dialectic of historical materialism was in turn rooted in that fusion. Marx, according to Murry, rec-

ognized that self-interest was at the heart of capitalism, and that the proletariat's "serene impartiality"<sup>30</sup> in sweeping away capitalism in favor of a classless, communitarian society made that group the historical repository and agents of Marx's "ethical passion of disinterestedness."<sup>31</sup> When Murry turned his attention to contemporary Britain he saw the Labour Party as the agent for this radical transformation, asserting that "within ten years from now the Labour Party will come into full power in this country" and that in the interim period "it can set itself in order, and become compact, coherent, and unashamedly revolutionary." Murry thus agreed with Engels' in his preface to the English translation of Marx's *Das Kapital* that "*England is the only country where the inevitable social revolution might be effected entirely by peaceful and legal means.*"<sup>32</sup>

By 1937 Murry's faith in both the Labour Party and a revolution by means of the ballot box had totally evaporated. In *The Necessity of Pacifism* the "revolution of Jesus" now required a full scale rejection of all political parties; a recognition that war is a necessary product of state capitalism; a comprehension that the ethics of Christian socialism were diametrically opposed to those of capitalist democracy, fascism, and to a lesser degree the Soviet Dictatorship of the Proletariat; that anarchism and Christian socialism are incompatible; and a realization that the only ethical position in 1937 fully conducive to Christian socialism was that of "absolute Pacifism." "By an absolute Pacifist," Murry proclaimed, "we understand a man who is committed to an attitude of non-violent resistance to the capitalist state in time of war."<sup>33</sup> As part of that new attitude, Murry called for a rejection of individually-oriented, "bourgeois" culture in favor of an allegiance to the collective, as the cultural complement to this absolute pacifism. Murry boldly proclaimed that "the creative impulse in art can no longer manifest truly through individualized consciousness."<sup>34</sup> But at the same time Murry cautioned us not to "sink back from individualization, either politically into mass-movement, or religiously into an embrace of venerable institutions, or artistically into the darkness of the unconscious: but consciously to seek beyond the individual, to surpass the individual, in the realization of a communal imagination." Murry thereby rejected class-based forms of "proletarian" art as well as the Surrealists' Freudian-inspired exploration of the unconscious, in

the name of a new collective consciousness comparable to that found within monastic communities.<sup>35</sup> There is no way forward for us “but that which leads to the revolution of Jesus—towards a Socialism of voluntary community and absolute non-violent resistance to war.”<sup>36</sup> These particular declarations seem to place Murry’s pacifism within the parameters of Ceadel’s more expansive version of anti-war pacifism, but as we shall see Murry’s doctrine proved to be more complex.

### **Murry’s Politics of the Unpolitical**

The first three chapters of *The Necessity of Pacifism* address the socio-economic, historical and sociological reasons why Murry’s vision of the “revolution of Jesus” was stymied under the British political system. Key to this was the Labour Party’s failure to disavow capitalism and fully embrace the ethical and material consequences of a socialist outlook. “I have met few Socialists who *believed* in any practical sense, in the complete abolition of private ownership of the instruments of production and exchange.”<sup>37</sup> From an ethical standpoint “communal ownership” is a prerequisite for Murry’s vision of universal brotherhood, however, “economic individualism ... is rooted in the habits of life and thought of every member of an advanced capitalist society,” including Britain’s self-professed socialists. Christian socialism necessitated a transformation of the self as part of a larger socio-economic transformation. But these same British socialists are unwilling to admit that “the ethos of economic individualism ... is largely present in themselves,” and as a result they attribute “the responsibility for the injustice and squalor of capitalism” to a reified abstraction “called the capitalist class” caricatured as *Les Gros* in socialist propaganda.<sup>38</sup> Murry claims that such hypocrisy is at the heart of the Labour Party, which pays lip service to the concept of revolution while safe-guarding capitalist democracy and the privileges which come with dutiful parliamentary service and devotion to King and country.<sup>39</sup> Having become “a piece of polite constitutional machinery” the Labour Party had forsaken any pretense to true socialism and instead declared its loyalty to “His Majesty’s Government” and “minimum disturbance of the delicate structure of capitalism.”<sup>40</sup> Such thinking also undermined the British proletariat’s class identity, for having gained “the privileges of political status” under Labour

Party leadership, “the working-class loses class-consciousness” and “is now integrated into capitalist democracy.” For this reason, the British proletariat “disowns the general strike” which constitutes a true challenge to “the very existence of an integrated capitalist society.” The proletarian “is not a working-man who feels a prior loyalty to the working-class, as against the national state,” instead “he is a mass-man first and proletarian afterwards; just as the Labour Party is a party of mass-man first and proletarians afterward.”<sup>41</sup> National identity trumps class allegiance. Parliamentary democracy itself was the perfect vessel for this concept of an abstracted “mass man” devoid of class consciousness. This is because capitalism’s development “necessitates compulsory education and universal suffrage” that are the ideological tools for the psychological fabrication of “mass-man.”<sup>42</sup> In England “Capitalism and Democracy are complementary” for “the freedom of the individual which is the ethical impulse of Democracy is a necessary condition of capitalism.”<sup>43</sup> Murry’s disillusionment with political parties on the left even included the diminutive and marginalized English Communist Party, whose “submission to the abstract dogmas of the Comintern” led it to endorse some far off, chimeric revolution à la Russe, “in complete abstraction from the economic realities and the political habits of a capitalist democracy like ours.”<sup>44</sup>

### **The Soviet Grand Inquisitor and Fascist Barbarism**

In a bold move for a self-declared communist, Murry extended his critique to include the Soviet Union by virtue of that government’s failure to fully align its economic communism with an ethical emancipation of its citizens. The Soviet Union, in Murry’s estimation upheld the ethics of Christian Socialism even as it destroyed the Church as an institution. Soviet Russia, “while repudiating the forms of Christianity, is making an unprecedented effort to embody its essence: in the establishment of real social justice and a narrow, but authentic internationalism.” However, this effort fell short because the Bolsheviks retained a dictatorship out of concern that “the political freedom of democracy will jeopardize the socialist economic structure of the country.”<sup>45</sup> Those in charge of the Soviet Union’s governmental hierarchy reportedly feared that their citizenry was not sufficiently infused with the very ethos they possessed as an elite

leadership. Drawing on Dostoevsky, Murry likened the Bolshevik dictatorship under Joseph Stalin to the well-intentioned Grand Inquisitor who judges humankind to be “incapable of receiving the gift of freedom” rather than following Christ’s example in practicing “the love of man, which has faith in man.” “If the Russian government is not to remain a beneficent autocracy it will have to realize the Christian dream of human brotherhood.” The Bolshevik hierarchy must be capable of shirking such doubts in order to reconcile “a Socialist economy with the spiritual and political freedom of the individual.” Only by passing beyond “benevolent autocracy to a society of real human brotherhood—what I have called the society of Jesus” – will the Soviet example have “any dynamic power in Europe.”<sup>46</sup>

Murry further held that the Bolsheviks’ violent overthrow of the Czarist regime in favor of a dictatorship was still a justifiable, interim step on the path toward full Christian socialism. Just as the English Civil War (1642–51) and dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell was executed on behalf of the ideal of religious toleration,<sup>47</sup> the Bolshevik revolution was likewise fought in the name of communitarian values grounded in Christian ethics. Moreover, this recourse to violence did not obliterate the message of Christ, which was the ultimate aim of both dictatorships, even as they both, in their own ways, took up arms and suppressed individual freedoms. Thus, Cromwell’s means did not wholly negate the ends sought. “It is unimaginative and ungrateful in the pacifist,” Murry proclaimed:

“to say that this [curtailment of freedom] proves that violent revolution is always wrong, because the end is lost in the means. It was temporarily obscured by the means. Had not that revolutionary battle been fought and won, there would be no such freedom as there is in the country to-day for the absolute pacifist himself.”<sup>48</sup>

Cromwell’s successful fight for religious tolerance was the kernel in England for still greater forms of acceptance, culminating in the contemporary recognition of religiously-grounded conscientious objection as a basis for a refusal to engage in war. To Murry’s mind the

Bolshevik revolution held the same promise, and while the existence of that dictatorship meant that the end sought may have been ‘temporarily obscured by the means’ the arc of history would ultimately justify the sacrifices made. Thus, when Murry later cites the Belgian socialist Henri de Man’s postulate that “the end must be implicit in the means” he does so not with reference to a condemnation of violence per se, but with regard to the Christian zealotry Cromwell’s New Model Army (formed in 1645) embodied.<sup>49</sup> “Revolution without religion is impossible,” for religious ethics must be the *raison d’être* for any true revolution.<sup>50</sup> Murry’s notion of prefiguration exempted revolutionary violence from the equation even as he condemned war between capitalist states.

Murry saw no such ethical promise or redeeming features in the case of fascism, which he defined as qualitatively different from Soviet Communism, and as an extreme version of the moral corruption, militarized nationalism and tribalism latent in capitalist democracies. But what made Nazi Germany the unique progenitor of “complete spiritual barbarism” was its attack on the very existence of Judeo-Christian ethics and “its deliberate extirpation of the Jewish race.” “The whole spiritual tradition of Jewry,” Murry declared, “is to be expunged from the German book of life.” “Soviet Russia may have persecuted the form of Christianity; but it has not betrayed its essence” whereas Germany “is bent on extirpating the very possibility of Christianity.” Judeo-Christian values embodied “an international idea,” the “ideal of human brotherhood—which Fascism seeks to annihilate forever.” Russia by contrast “tries to live—and it is the only existing society that does try to live—by the idea of human brotherhood,” an idea that is “racially incorporate in Jewry” and “the spiritual internationalism of Jewish genius.” “When today in Germany, Christianity is compelled to become wholly national, the last vestige of spiritual significance and humane value disappears from it.” The rise of fascism in Germany therefore signals “the lapse at the heart of continental Europe into spiritual barbarism.”<sup>51</sup>

## Irresponsible Anarchism

Murry took comparable aim at anarchism, decrying that ideology as likewise devoid of communitarian Christian ethics. In his opening salvo in *The Necessity of Communism* Murry favorably cited Engel's description of Max Stirner's anarchist individualist manifesto *The Ego and His Own* (1845) as proselytizing an arid "egoism of intelligence alone" that failed to recognize "that the human heart is by nature and immediately, in its egoism, disinterested and self-sacrificing." For Murry it is this "egoism of the heart," which Engels aligns to a "love of humanity," that served to differentiate Christian communism from the cold rationalism and ultra-individualism of Stirner, which resembled that of the capitalist in its rapaciousness.<sup>52</sup> As a life-long admirer of Stirner and as an anarchist individualist, Herbert Read would have registered such slights.<sup>53</sup>

Murry carried this opprobrium forward in his 1936 address at the Adelphi Center and in *The Necessity of Pacifism*, condemning anarchism for being an overly individualistic ideology that betrayed what he now cast as a life-affirming ethics, by rejecting all forms of government as intrinsically corrupt.<sup>54</sup> However, he simultaneously approved a version of "anarchy" if one meant by that an equally life-affirmative, conscientious objection to a "deathly social order" that demands our participation in the atrocities of armed conflict or the capitalist system that fosters it.<sup>55</sup> A contradiction therefore emerges in Murry's thinking as he seeks to define anarchism as by turns ethical or socially irresponsible. Regarding the former position, Murry claims that his own era is colored by the emergence of a pervasive "life-instinct" among "mass man" when faced with the apocalyptic threat of a global war that would annihilate civilization itself. A pacifists' recourse to conscientious objection is the principled expression of such "anarchic" resistance to the capitalist state yet Murry still insists that *anarchism as an ideology and a movement* betrays the pacifist ethics he embraces. According to Murry an individual inspired by his vision,

"must assert his freedom against his enslavement by society to degradation and death. Such an assertion of freedom, i.e., the reality, of the individual, is bound

to be, in its immediate effect, anarchic. But ‘the order’ of capitalist society is now totally anarchic, and suicidal. The only escape from this unconscious and suicidal anarchy is conscious anarchy, which alone contains the germ of a new social ‘order’. The Pacifist is an anarchist in relation to the existing and deathly social order, in the interests of a new social order to be. Hence the form assumed by a socially conscious Pacifist tends to that of voluntary community [Murry’s Adelphi Center is cited as exemplary<sup>56</sup>] with a high degree of organisation and discipline.”<sup>57</sup>

However, “the immediate anarchy of Pacifism” in confronting existing society “is irresponsible, unless the balance is positively restored by the creation of a nucleus of a new ordered and disciplined society.”<sup>58</sup> Murry then makes clear that this ‘new order’ cannot include the anarchism of his own era, due to that movement’s soulless endorsement of violence as a tactic, and more fundamentally due to the anarchists’ principled opposition to the very idea of the state.<sup>59</sup> “A movement”, Murry declared, “which aims at paralysing the activities of the state, and stands a fair chance of accomplishing its aim, must be prepared to accept a further responsibility for the ordered government of society. If it is prepared to paralyse the existing state, it must also be prepared to replace it by another state which will secure the existence of its members.”<sup>60</sup>

This thesis is even more forcefully conveyed in Murry’s September 1936 essay in *The Adelphi* on “Socialism, the State and Violence,” first delivered on August 7th as a lecture at the Adelphi Center. Herbert Read was among those listening in the audience. Murry pillories fellow Peace Pledge Union sponsor Aldous Huxley for being categorically opposed to the very idea of the state, concluding that Huxley’s “individualistic pacifism means anarchy;” and is mere “social sabotage” with no greater aim than the chaos it engenders.<sup>61</sup> However he also acknowledges that states can be detrimental to the pacifist cause. Drawing on anarchist thought, Murry critiques Marx for not recognizing that the state would not spontaneously wither away following a revolution, but instead generate a new bureaucratic class, fully

dedicated to its self-perpetuation, due to a love of “power.”<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless Murry sees value in a retention of the state, if its bureaucratic members can be ethically transformed to perform the state’s “many vital and beneficent functions.” Murray acknowledges that “the State is based on force” but he nevertheless argues that such force can be benign if “the power of the State falls into the hands of decent men.”<sup>63</sup> To achieve this aim a state bureaucracy needs to be educated “more or less as the Jesuits were trained three centuries ago, and perhaps the Communist Party in Russia is being trained today.” In both this text and *The Necessity of Pacifism*, Murry places individualist, soulless anarchism outside the orbit of collective, ethical responsibility.<sup>64</sup>

### **Faith-Based Pacifism**

Murry’s conclusion in the closing pages of *The Necessity of Pacifism* that “Pacifism reveals itself to be a Faith”<sup>65</sup> emboldened him to forthrightly address the most challenging question of his era: what if Nazi Germany were to declare war on the United Kingdom? In Murry’s estimation fascism’s success is based on the inculcation of fear, “and German mass-man turned to Fascism because he was afraid of social disintegration, for the menace of which the moral treachery of the Allied Powers at Versailles was largely responsible.”<sup>66</sup> But one should not mistake the German mass-man’s fearful retreat into “a stifling and monstrous national cohesion” in the face of comparably fearful and hostile nations as evidence that “the German mass-man wants war.”<sup>67</sup> Instead we should recognize that the same life-affirmative instinct and ability to embrace the “revolution of Jesus” central to Murry’s pacifist vision also exists as a potential within the German people. Pacifist socialism, nurtured by Christian love and compassion, knows no borders. Were the English as a nation to undergo the spiritual and social transformation outlined in *The Necessity of Pacifism*, Murry predicts that Germans too would awaken to the possibility of throwing off their collective fear and undergoing a comparable revolution. Such conditions would even pertain were the Nazis to invade this newly pacifist Britain. “Let Germany conquer Great Britain, and learn by experience what will happen to its Fascist army of occupation when it is spread through the cities and shires of this country. It would be completely disintegrated within a year; and long before that

time the Fascist regime in Germany would collapse in ignominy.”<sup>68</sup> But to achieve this, one country must “take the risk” of undertaking Murry’s pacifist leap of faith. A repeated refrain in Murry’s book is D. H. Lawrence’s dictum, written in November 1915 during the darkest days of World War One: “The good will not be long in coming all over Europe, if we trust it in ourselves.”<sup>69</sup> By trusting the good in ourselves we will trust in the good of others: this is “the hardest thing an individual is called upon to do; it is infinitely harder for a nation.” But in so doing we will collectively create “a different, a higher, a more human order of existence altogether.”<sup>70</sup>

In sum Murry seeks to justify two very different types of pacifism, both animated by his version of Christian ethics. The same “revolution of Jesus” that motivated Cromwell’s New Model Army and the Bolsheviks to take up arms is now evoked to justify the giving up of armed conflict altogether in a benevolent act of total acquiescence to an invading force. In contrast to the previous two examples, Murry now claims that the altruism of Christian love and compassion that is nascent within us all is sufficient in and of itself to overcome any adversary. One is left to wonder why this thesis holds true for historical circumstances in 1937, but not for those that pertained in 1645 or 1917.

### **Read’s Riposte: Why Anarchism is Still Necessary**

In his two-pronged rebuttal, “The Necessity of Anarchism” (*The Adelphi*, September–November, 1937) and the “Prerequisite of Peace” (*Spain and the World*, May 1938), both of which were incorporated into *Poetry and Anarchism* (1938), Read recast and subverted Murry’s article of faith by folding Christianity and a critique of Murry’s acquiescent pacifism into a strident argument in favor of militant anarchism. From a historical perspective the contrast between Read and Murry over anarchism’s merits is nowhere starker than in their respective attitudes towards what was arguably the most portentous conflict of their era, the Spanish Civil War. *The Necessity of Pacifism* only mentions the Spanish conflict in passing, dismissing it as an “anti-feudal” agrarian-based revolution that has no relevance for Murry’s Marxist-informed attempt to define a fully industrialized “capitalist



**Figure 4.** Gregorio Prieto, *Portrait of Herbert Read*, 1943.

democracy” like England’s “path towards social revolution.”<sup>71</sup> Having renounced anarchist violence tout court as soulless, Murry judged the conflict in Spain to be both anachronistic and irrelevant to his pacifist agenda. Read forcefully opens *Poetry and Anarchism* declaring the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 was the galvanizing event that renewed his commitment to the movement. Furthermore in his Introduction “No Programme” he pointedly rejects Murry’s Marxist assumptions concerning the backwardness of the peasantry, by *identifying* with Spain’s agrarian laborers:

“In spite of my intellectual pretensions, I am by birth and tradition a peasant. I remain essentially a peasant. I despise the whole industrial epoch—not only the plutocracy, which it has raised into power, but also the industrial proletariat which it has drained from the land and proliferated in hovels of indifferent brick. The only class in the community for which I feel any real sympathy is the agricultural class, including the genuine remnants of a landed aristocracy. This perhaps explains my attraction to Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy, who were also of the land, aristocrats and peasants. A man cultivating the earth—that is the elementary economic fact; and as a poet I am only concerned with elementary facts.”<sup>72</sup>

Read’s eulogy to Russia’s iconic ‘peasant’ anarchists—the aristocrats Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy—deliberately flew in the face of the Marxist orthodoxy that Murry endorsed. In his three-part *Adelphi* article, “The Necessity of Anarchism,” Read further developed this critique in a fierce defense of the very form of anarchism Murry had condemned as “irresponsible”: anarchist individualism. Read’s *Adelphi* article trod carefully around the issue of pacifism; by contrast, “The Prerequisite of Peace,” originally published in the *engagé* anarchist journal *Spain and the World*, unveiled a critical evaluation of the precise version of pacifism promoted in Murry’s book and even more explicitly, by the Peace Pledge Union. Read originally targeted different audiences for these essays, but they became part of a unitary argument in *Poetry and Anarchism*. Read’s recourse to Freudian analysis looms large as his primary means of critiquing Murry’s faith in humankind’s innate goodness, and with it, his vision of pacifism.<sup>73</sup>

### **Critiquing the Revolution of Jesus**

Read’s opening salvo in the September 1937 issue of *The Adelphi* called into question Murry’s claim that the Soviet Union’s compassionate leadership is, like the Grand Inquisitor, guided and united by the spirit of Christian ethics.<sup>74</sup> Speaking of contemporary events Read noted the “disillusionment” or “secret embarrassment” among Eu-

ropean socialists when confronted with the infamous Moscow Show Trials (which began in August 1936) of supposed traitors among the Communist Party elite. The “inescapable dilemma” that the Soviet Union’s apologists were left with was that either those on trial were treasonous, and the country was in the midst of a “widespread revolt against the policy of Stalin,” or they were innocent, “in which case Stalin becomes a sinister dictator in no way distinguishable from Hitler or Mussolini.”<sup>75</sup> He then contrasted this situation with the civil war in Spain, where a leftist coalition was resolutely united in opposing “a fascist revolt against a democratic socialist government.” “These parties of the left,” including “federalists and anarchists” are “overwhelmingly opposed to a totalitarian state on the Russian model.” Read predicted that even if the Bolsheviks “gain eventual control of the machine of government” in Republican-controlled Spain their hegemony will cease once the conflict is won. “The demand for provincial autonomy, for syndicalist autonomy, for the abolition of the bureaucracy and the standing army springs from the deepest instincts of the Spanish people.”<sup>76</sup> Read then argued that the example of Spain had proved as disconcerting for Europe’s socialists as the Show Trials, for far from having been “buried when Marx defeated Bakunin at the Hague Conference of 1872,” the Spanish Civil war demonstrated that anarchism was very much alive.<sup>77</sup>

Read then addressed the heart of Murry’s critique of anarchism in *The Necessity of Pacifism*, namely his defense of the ethical and practical viability of the state. Murry had acknowledged that state bureaucracies seek to perpetuate themselves, but the anticapitalist “Revolution of Jesus” would reportedly transform state institutions into a force for good, and he cited the Communist Party in Russia as a model for such enlightened governance. In Murry’s view the “irresponsible” anarchists’ call to abolish the state altogether was the product of a nihilistic individualism that relished social chaos. Read, in response, mocked the Bolsheviks for seeking to maintain their state power at any cost, which entailed reintroducing capitalist modes of production, such as piece-work; the retention of a standing army; and stultifying the creative freedom of those they claimed to have liberated.<sup>78</sup> In short Murry’s “revolution of Jesus” was nowhere in evidence. Read then utilized Marx to further turn the tables on Murry.

The Bolsheviks' ossified state stood in stark contrast to the anarchist call for its dissolution following the dictates of Marx and Engels, who had pilloried the state as an instrument of oppression and inequality, while claiming that it would spontaneously "wither away" in the wake of a communist revolution.<sup>79</sup> Read mocked the Soviet leadership for paying lip service to Marx's vision, while generating an ever-growing, parasitic bureaucracy that held its citizenry under the state's increasingly totalitarian control. As proof Read cited Stalin's perverse declaration, at the Sixteenth Congress of the U.S.S.R. in 1930 (Fig. 5), that the Bolshevik leadership must "keep on developing State power in order to prepare the way for the withering away of State power."<sup>80</sup> Soviet Russia, opined Read, is now "a scarcely disguised system of state capitalism, with a bureaucracy as the privileged controlling class." "It is certainly difficult," Read asserted, "to justify such measures as the rehabilitation of the rouble, the new laws protecting private property, the revival of military titles and decorations, the establishment of separate military colleges and special schools for the children of the privileged classes."<sup>81</sup> This ballooning bureaucracy became increasingly indifferent to the freedom and rights of the population it governed, as it sought to maximize economic production for its own benefit. Contra Murry, Read held that it is the very existence of a state that guarantees such corruption.

### The Leadership Cult

His next gambit in the October installment of the article was to mobilize Freudian psychoanalysis to challenge what he evidently viewed as Murry's overly simplistic conception of human nature and optimistic faith in a magnanimous political elite.<sup>82</sup> Murry had made plain his disdain for the application of Freudian analysis by Marxists in his April 1937 *Adelphi* review of Reuben Osborn's recent book, *Freud and Marx: A Dialectical Study* (1937).<sup>83</sup> Read in turn cited that very text in his Freudian-inspired critique of what he characterized as a leadership cult upheld by fascists and Bolsheviks alike, and by implication, Murry himself.<sup>84</sup> Read thereby marshaled Freud not only to overturn Murry's qualitative distinction between these two movements, but to challenge the ethical assumptions undergirding his pacifism. Such a calibrated critique would not have been lost on Murry.



**Figure 5.** Aleksandr Mikhailovich Gerasimov, *Stalin at the Sixteenth Congress of the All-Union Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)* (1930), 1935, 106 x 140 cm, State Lenin Museum, Moscow, Russia.

Read's article totally upended Murry's thesis by interpreting Soviet communism through the lens of psychoanalysis. He argued that contemporary communism, by virtue of its "concept of leadership—a concept which it shares with fascism, let it be noted" was "in complete contradiction with the principles of anarchism." "Lenin and Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini. ... communists as well as fascists never doubt the necessity, nor even the desirability of such a leader."<sup>85</sup> Read examined the underlying psychology that produces this leadership cult with reference to Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), citing Freud's prognosis that "the uncanny and coercive characteristics of group formations" have their origins "from the primitive horde." "The leader of the group," asserts Freud, "is still the dreaded father; the group still wishes to be governed by unrestricted force; it has an extreme passion for authority." While members of the group "stand in need of the illusion that they are equally and justly loved by their leader ... the leader himself need love no one else, he may be of a masterly nature, absolutely narcissistic, but self-confident and independent."<sup>86</sup> Read then exalts the anarchist as one who

has transcended this infantile, pathological condition. “I would identify the anarchist as a man who, in his manhood, dares to resist the authority of the father; who is no longer governed by a blind, unconscious identification of the leader and the father and by uninhibited instincts which alone make such identification possible.”<sup>87</sup> The modern-day anarchist is one who “disowns the father; he lives in accordance with his own ego-ideal. He becomes conscious of his individuality.”<sup>88</sup> Far from being the nihilistic progenitor of societal chaos envisioned by Murry, the anarchist individualist is here cast as the mature adult, liberated from the primeval, behavioral forces that give rise to a Hitler or a Stalin.

Moreover, Soviet communists, like their fascist counterparts, were guilty of self-consciously manipulating this leadership cult to their own benefit. Exaltations of leadership appear “in monotonous regularity in the communist press”—but Read is especially appalled by Osborn’s *Freud and Marx: A Dialectical Study* for its “deliberate adoption of the leadership principle.” Read quotes Osborn’s conclusion that, “if Hitler and Mussolini, by deliberate publicity and propaganda methods, can be presented as saviours of the people, so too can communist leaders,” thereby, in Read’s estimation, reducing our humanity to that of a “dumb horde” in the worshipful thrall of “a modern day and scientifically concocted equivalent of the primitive tyrant.” Referring to anarchism, Read rhetorically asks whether, “it is not rather time that we grew up, became individually conscious of our manhood, asserted our mutual interdependence?”<sup>89</sup>

Whereas the submissive relation of the people to a leader results in tyrannical impulses, akin to “the spectacle of the bully goaded into sadistic excesses by the very docility of his victim,” anarchism nurtures an alternative psychology of “cooperation and mutual aid,” premised on “the relationship of brotherhood” that “the events of the last twenty years” have shown to be “the only hope of civilization.”<sup>90</sup> Nothing could be further from Murry’s vision of the wholly self-regarding, amoral anarchist. For a contemporary example of such leaderless cooperation Read had only to point to the economic success of “anarcho-syndicalism” in Spain, which reportedly existed in embryonic form in the “shop-stewards movement” in Britain, and “even in

the constituency groups of the Labour Party.”<sup>91</sup> “These developments are devolutionary—revolts against centralization and bureaucratic control” for “the anarchist objects not merely to the personal tyranny of a leader like Stalin, but still more to the impersonal tyranny of a bureaucratic machine.”<sup>92</sup> Murry held that this bureaucratic machine could be transformed into a benign instrument when guided by a virtuous party leadership—a supposition Read emphatically rejected. As a “rational ideal” anarchism advocated “individualization, independence, and freedom,” whereas contemporary apologists for Soviet-style socialism such as Murry have been “moving towards centralization, concentration, depersonalization.” This causes Read to lament that “except perhaps in Spain,” the world is “moving in the wrong direction.”<sup>93</sup>

### **Reason, Religion and Romanticism**

In his final installment in *The Adelphi* (November 1937)<sup>94</sup> Read then administered the *coup de grâce* to Murry’s Protestant notion of pacifist ethics by proclaiming anarchism’s dialectical and rationalist precepts to be synonymous with the teachings of Catholic scholasticism. In so doing Read brashly countered Murry’s correlation of anarchism with soulless rationality by declaring it the very repository of the Christian tradition. Our recourse to anarchist rationalism, asserted Read, is “a reaffirmation of certain metaphysical doctrines which Europe possessed in the Middle Ages.” Thus, the medieval scholastics’ belief in the “universalism of truth” and the ordering of their lives in response to “the rule of reason” were in fact central to the anarchist creed. Like their scholastic brethren, anarchists champion dialectical thinking that they identify as the sole means to ascertain universal truth. Moreover, “this universalism and this reason, as Catholic philosophers insist, are aspects of realism.” “There can only be one kind of reality because there is only the single reality of our experience, and we arrive at the true nature of that experience by the process of reasoning.” Read then boldly aligns anarchism’s version of “dialectical materialism” and its “negation of the idealism of Hegel,” with the “realism of Aristotle, of Albertus [Magnus] and [St Thomas] Aquinas” which he sees as continuous with “the realism of the empirical tradition of modern science.”<sup>95</sup> While he acknowledges

that anarchists would adamantly reject any return to “the religious formulas of the Middle Ages,” or “a revival of Catholicism” or of the “organised Church,” he nevertheless maintains that the anarchists’ mode of dialectical reasoning, combined with their belief in empiricism and universal truth, are the hallmarks of this Catholic legacy.<sup>96</sup> Given *The Adelphi’s* status as one of the principal intellectual forums for Christian pacifists, Read’s concluding remarks would have attracted a good deal of attention. “When we follow reason,” Read asserted, “then, in the medieval sense, we listen to the voice of God: we discover God’s order, which is the Kingdom of Heaven.” Such “realistic rationalism” thereby “establishes a universal order of thought” that rises above “the subjective prejudices of individuals ... inflated to the dimensions of nationalism, mysticism, megalomania, and fascism.”<sup>97</sup> Forms of collective identity that are the trademark of irrational, infantile or pathological disorders are thereby transcended. By means of this mode of thought anarchism “rejects the man-made systems of government, which are instruments of individual and class tyranny; it seeks to recover the systems of nature, of man living in accordance with the universal truth of reality.” Anarchism therefore “denies the rule of kings and castes, of churches and parliaments to affirm the rule of reason, which is the rule of God.”<sup>98</sup>

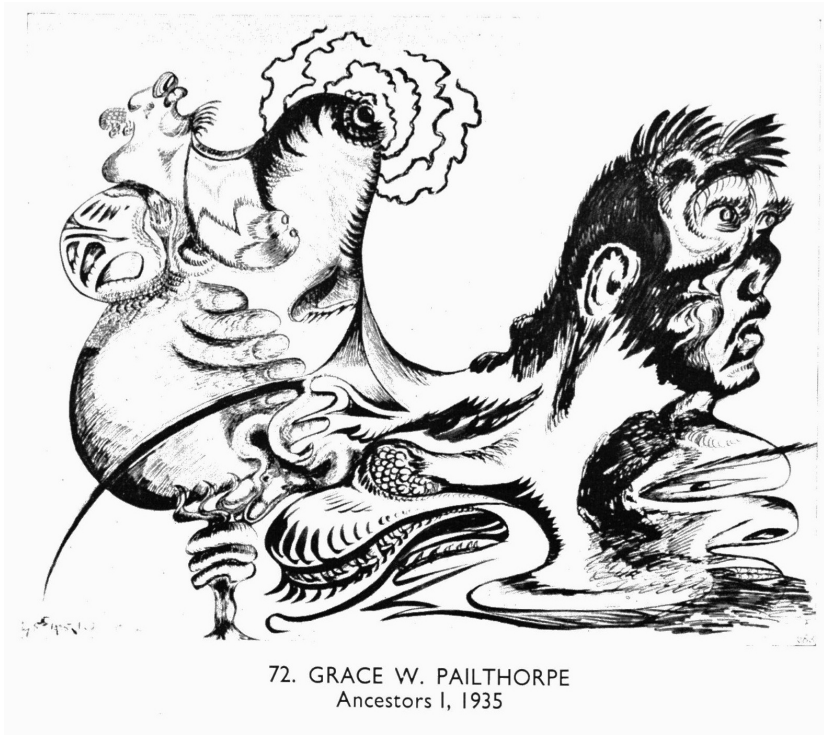
Read most likely took the *Adelphi’s* readers familiarity with scholasticism’s tenets for granted, thus it is only in *Poetry and Anarchism* that he informed a more general audience of the specific author who had inspired his newfound enthusiasm for medieval scholasticism. Read cited the French philosopher Étienne Gilson’s polemic *Medieval Universalism and its Present Value*, given as a public address at Harvard University in September 1937, as the “brilliant restatement of Catholic doctrine” that had won him over.<sup>99</sup> Gilson’s timely lecture called for a revival of the spirit of medieval scholasticism as a bulwark against the irrational forces of extreme nationalism, racial tribalism and totalitarianism sweeping across Europe. Having identified the Université de Paris in the thirteenth century as the epicenter of medieval scholasticism, Gilson concludes that one has only to look at the foreign origins of the scholars who gathered there, none of whom were French, “to realize the non-national and non-racial character of medieval thought.”<sup>100</sup> What reportedly held these cosmopolitans to-

gether was “an ideal, high and strong enough to hold in check national pride,” namely their revival of Aristotelian dialectics and their “belief in reason as the key to making faith acceptable to others and therefore universal.”<sup>101</sup> “Hence the remarkable emphasis laid by medieval theologians on the rational aspects of religious truth, as well as on the universal character of rational truth itself.”<sup>102</sup> It is that belief, stated Gilson, that “could be fruitfully upheld and, if need be, revived in our own times” if we are to avoid the exchange of “state-controlled dogma” for the impartiality of “our common science.”<sup>103</sup> Further, such scholasticism, in contrast to “idealism” always “went hand in hand with some form of realism,” for its practitioners “always stood firm on the Greek platform that the human mind is right when it conforms to reality.”<sup>104</sup> “The mental liberty” achieved through dialectical thought “consists in a complete liberation from our personal prejudices and in our complete submission to reality. This is the true spirit of scholasticism.”<sup>105</sup> Gilson argued that, “against the encroachments of the totalitarian state in its various forms, our only conceivable protection, humanly speaking at least, is in a powerful revival of the medieval feeling for the universal character of truth.”<sup>106</sup> Read evidently thought that his clarion call on behalf of anarchism fulfilled Gilson’s urgent mandate.

This theological vision also transformed Read’s conception of the role of art and creativity within his anarchist dialectic. “Imagination renders a man incapable of determinant action; determinant action inhibits imagination—such is the dialect of the human personality.”<sup>107</sup> On the basis of this framework Read attempted to reconcile reason with imagination, exemplified at this juncture in his ideological and aesthetic trajectory by what he held to be Romanticism’s latest cultural manifestation, Surrealism. Read began championing the movement in 1936, when he co-curated the *International Surrealist Exhibition* at London’s New Burlington Galleries (June 12 to July 4), and edited an accompanying book, simply titled *Surrealism*.<sup>108</sup> In that earlier text Read had condemned Christian “piety and asceticism” and its “rationalizing itself in the form of moral precepts and social conventions” as resulting in “masochism and sadism” and “the bloodiest epoch in world history.” Read then declared that “war, in theory as in fact, is the correlative of religion,” and that such collective forms of neurosis were comparable to those now manifest “in such a nation as Germany.”<sup>109</sup>

His pronouncements a year later in favour of Catholic scholasticism were thus indicative of a dramatic volte-face. This reconfiguration in 1937–38 also signaled Read’s ideological break from his claim, in 1936, that the spirit of unfettered individualism and creativity intrinsic to Surrealism’s romantic principle had a political corollary in “the dictatorship of the proletariat.”<sup>110</sup> In Read’s anarchist inflected interpretation of Surrealism, that spirit is not antithetical to reason, instead it is its dialectical outcome. “The rule of reason—to live according to natural laws—this is also a release of the imagination.”<sup>111</sup> Thus the creative impulse of the Surrealist has nothing in common with a crippled mind captive to pathological forces as analyzed by Freud. Freeing our imaginations by way of psychoanalysis thus amounts to a form of liberation. Grace Pailthorpe’s drawing *Ancestors I* (1935) (Fig. 6), which Read reproduced in his edited volume *Surrealism* exemplifies his thesis. Pailthorpe was a medical doctor trained in psychoanalysis, who in 1935, began exploring her own unconscious together with that of her patient-artist Reuben Mednikoff. They spontaneously created a whole series of automatic drawings and paintings, which they then subjected to psychanalytical interpretation to discover the possible implications of the work. *Ancestors I*—a monstrous combination of a hairy male face, a swollen breast and various biomorphic, wiggly forms—apparently welled up in her imagination at the thought of fathers. As historian Michel Remy aptly puts it, Pailthorpe’s and Mednikoff’s experimental drawings and paintings “are the best examples of psychoanalytical examination becoming a means of liberation, based on a spontaneous outpouring of feelings, design and colour.”<sup>112</sup>

But we should also recognize that reason and imagination serve very different functions in the dialectic of the fully mature personality. As Read states, it is by means of reason that we “discover truth” whereas imagination enables us to “create beauty.” Presumably Read had other works of art than Pailthorpe’s unsettling *Ancestors I* in mind when he contemplated this aesthetic category. Beauty cannot be discovered “for it cannot be found—in reason, in logic, in experience”; likewise, we cannot “create truth” for such delusional thinking results in us “imposing on our fellow men an arbitrary and idealised system which has no relation to reality.” “Truth is in reality, in the visible and tangible world of sensation; but beauty is in the unreality, in the subtle and



72. GRACE W. PAILTHORPE  
Ancestors I, 1935

**Figure 6.** Grace W. Pailthorpe, *Ancestors I*, 1935. Reproduced in *Surrealism*, ed. Herbert Read (Faber & Faber, 1936).

unconscious world of the imagination.”<sup>113</sup> To confuse the “two worlds of reality and imagination” would be, for instance, to reduce art to a didactic, instrumentalist tool of state propaganda. Such is the case with Soviet Socialist Realism, and the doctrinaire realism of Nazi art, both of which are modeled after “the dead art of the academies” (see Fig. 5).<sup>114</sup> By contrast stated Read though “we must surrender our minds to universal truth,” our imagination must be likewise “free to dream.” To achieve “happiness, peace, contentment”—the hallmarks of psychological health and sanity—one must nurture both reason and its offspring, the creative imagination. As Read concluded, “I balance anarchism with surrealism, reason with romanticism, the understanding with the imagination, function with freedom.”<sup>115</sup>

## **Anarchism, the necessary prerequisite for peace**

Perhaps the most pressing issue remaining in Read's analysis was how he defined his version of pacifism within this matrix. Murry had conjectured that any nation-state that shook off the politics of fear, and had the confidence to embrace the intrinsic good in human nature, would reject all modes of armed conflict and instead counter military violence through an appeal to the ethical goodness nascent in their erstwhile adversaries, including the Nazis. Armed aggression by another nation-state in other words would be met with acquiesce, even to the point of accepting a military invasion. Read by contrast critiqued the very existence of the nation-state as at the root cause of all wars, and he therefore called for its dissolution—by violent means if necessary—as a prerequisite for peace. It is on this basis that Read equated anarchism with pacifism. However, the creation of this anarchist community did not preclude such a collective from taking up arms to defend itself. As Read put it in the October 1937 installment of "The Necessity of Anarchism":

“Even if one non-governmental community could be established, it is said, some predatory tribe or nation would descend on it and annex it. To that objection we must reply that anarchism naturally implies pacifism. I would propose to avoid the issue for the moment. I do not shirk the question: I merely note that it is being settled in another court. For whilst all pacifists need not be anarchists, all anarchists must be pacifists. If pacifism is not possible, then anarchism is not possible.”<sup>116</sup>

The court in question was the Spanish Civil War, wherein anarchists were engaged in a pitched battle to defend their notion of a stateless community, not only against Franco's fascists, but against the Soviet Union, which sent military and economic advisors as well as shipments of arms to the Popular Front government beginning in October 1936, and then orchestrated the purging, secret imprisonment, and assassination of anarchists. This internecine campaign culminated in open conflict in May, 1937 between the anarchists and dissident Marxists and the Communist-controlled police in the streets of Bar-

celona.<sup>117</sup> Concurrently anarchist modes of self-organization in the rural countryside and in industry, and in the guise of militias at the front, were systematically curtailed in favor of the centralization of state authority, and the creation of unified command structures, military discipline and conscription. These sorry developments were fully documented in *Spain and the World* and were familiar to Read.<sup>118</sup> The question therefore arose: why was armed conflict in the name of statelessness any better than armed conflict in the name of the state, whether fascist, communist or democratic? What distinguished the ethics of the former combatants from the latter? In Read's view that distinction resided in the very nature of the anarchist principles that motivated the former. Murry in *The Necessity of Pacifism* held that pacifist ethics ultimately precluded engagement in the wars of his era; Read by contrast sought to define such armed conflict as acceptable if it was motivated by the ethics of anarchism—the prerequisite for pacifism as well as peace. In other words, a 'war to end all wars' (originally coined by H. G. Wells' 1914 book: *The War That Will End War*) may be won if it is fought not to preserve nation-states but on behalf of their destruction.



**Figure 7.** Peace Pledge Union Camp (Murry seated center front), Swanwick, England 1937.

Read did not address this subject in the October 1937 edition of *The Adelphi*, but instead seven months later, in his May, 1938 article “The Prerequisite of Peace”, published in the anarchist journal *Spain and the World*, which he expanded into a chapter under the same name in *Poetry and Anarchism* (June 1938).<sup>119</sup> Read now directed readers to this chapter for his views on pacifism without referencing the Spanish Civil War.<sup>120</sup> Read’s initial essay in *Spain and the World* was a generic critique of the pacifist movement, but in *Poetry and Anarchism* he explicitly extended that criticism to include the Peace Pledge Union—the very organization Murry had publicly sworn allegiance to in 1936 (Fig. 7).

Read made clear that in his view the “attitude of non-resistance” professed by “the Peace Pledge Union” evidenced that movements’ willful ignorance of “the psychological problem” integral to the warlike *mentalité*.<sup>121</sup> By treating pacifism as if it were an “abstract ethical question” the Peace Pledge Union reportedly showed no regard for the psychological motivations and material conditions that fostered war. Such ignorance ironically accounted for the existence of unhealthy psychological tendencies within the pacifist movement itself, for as Read states, “some of the most aggressive and egotistical people I know are active pacifists.”<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, anarchism—by virtue of its grounding in the rationalist legacy of scholasticism and psychoanalysis—enabled us to overcome such limitations. Psychoanalysis liberates us from the forces of the unconscious, and reveals that “the psychology of mankind is not inalterable,” and that “the important psychological factors which dispose the individual and the nation to a state of war mindedness” can be overcome. Following the logic of anarchism, Read held that the very existence of the nation state was itself the principle catalyst for the pathological impulses that result in war. Anarchist ideology enabled Read to develop a more complex critique of the concept of the state, and of how pacifism relates to the states of mind fostered by such geopolitical entities: a discourse that was absent in his 1936 tract on Surrealism.<sup>123</sup> National boundaries are abstractions that *ipso facto* generate competition for resources and a tribal *mentalité*, and it is the accumulation and concentration of capital and power under the auspices of the nation-state that makes war inevitable. “Government is force; force is repression, and repression leads to reaction, to a psychosis of power, which in its turn

involves the individual in destructive impulses and nations in war.”<sup>124</sup> As we have seen, Read held that such “unconscious forces” accounted for the leadership cult, but in *Poetry and Anarchism* Read extended his thesis to include Murry’s version of acquiescent pacifism, as theorized by the English psychoanalyst Edward Glover in his book *War, Sadism and Pacifism*, published in London by Allen & Unwin in 1933.<sup>125</sup> Following Freud, Glover asserted that the human psyche is made up of two tendencies—the life-affirmative will to create and the pathological will to destroy—but he claimed that the “driving energy” behind “the impulses promoting peace and the impulses giving rise to war” both originated in “*the destructive group of instincts*” alone.<sup>126</sup> Acquiescent pacifists, in Glover’s view, were in the thrall of the very destructiveness they claimed to oppose. Paraphrasing Glover, Read concludes that “when the destructive instinct is suppressed in our psyche”, then “we are liable to get psychological reactions of two kinds: sadistic when the destructive impulse is turned outward and fused with the erotic impulse, masochistic when to some degree the destructive impulse is turned inward against the self.” Thus, the destructive impulse is manifest in both an active form, in the guise of sadism, and a “passive form, namely masochism, in which destructive impulses are fused with passive love components.” Such “*passive destructive impulses*” asserted Read, “*contribute considerably to the unconscious readiness to tolerate or even welcome situations of war.*”<sup>127</sup> “This thesis,” Read concluded,

“has done much to discredit the present methods of pacifist propaganda; moreover, it explains why some of us, who are pacifists in reason, have never been able to be pacifists in practice. We have been aware of the fact that most of our fellow-pacifists are actuated, not by rational motives, but by an obscure perversion of the very instinct which should be recognized and rationally controlled.”<sup>128</sup>

“Let Germany conquer Great Britain”: we can surmise that, to Read’s mind, Murry’s declaration in *The Necessity of Pacifism* in favor of an extreme interpretation of the Peace Pledge Union’s doctrine of non-resistance would have been nothing more than “a typical

product of the death instinct.”<sup>129</sup> Similarly the Peace Pledge Union’s unquestioned support of the state, and in Murry’s case, of one to be governed by a “benevolent autocracy,” was evidence of their having unwittingly endorsed the very structural conditions that generated the destructive impulses and pathologies they claimed to oppose. Only anarchist pacifism—by virtue of its grounding “in reason”—is able to free us from this conundrum.

Murry initially responded to Read’s anarchist thesis with deafening silence, but when that reaction came it was in the elliptical form of a January, 1939 review of Read’s *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism*, published in 1938 as a kind of companion volume to *Poetry and Anarchism*. Here Murry took direct aim at Read’s supposed belief that “psycho-analytical theory is henceforward to be the most valuable instrument of literary criticism,” stating unequivocally, “I don’t believe that.” Murry condemned psychoanalysis as “reductive,” for “it reduces variety to sameness, multiplicity to uniformity” and therefore cannot grasp “the Christian doctrine of the person, which is the product of the tension of a peculiar personal relation between creature and creator.” Marx was now viewed as guilty of the same reductive denial of individual personhood, “in the name of collectivity.” Murry, though fearing that he might be accused of “anti-Semitism,” went so far as to conclude that Freud and Marx’s application of this “process of reduction” to “human history and the human soul” amounted to a “rejection of Christ” that was reportedly “inevitable in Jewish thought.” Murry evidently no longer believed in the Judeo-Christian synthesis that had defined his socialism in *The Necessity of Pacifism*. Since such “Christian psychology” is ubiquitous among writers throughout the history of European literature, the inability of Read’s psychoanalytic method to account for Christian personhood was damning. “If this reductive psychology is allowed to operate autonomously, the critic’s art, or his science as Mr. Read prefers it, will dissolve into nihilism. It will at once devastate the object on which literary criticism is exercised and the mind that exercises it.” As a result of having endorsed a “psychology without theology,” Read was reportedly unable to ascertain or even comprehend the Christian *mentalité* animating writers such as Wordsworth, Blake, Shakespeare or Murry himself. Thus, Murry pointedly undermined Read’s inclusion of psychoanal-

ysis under the broader frame of his rationalist version of Christian anarchism. Presumably Murry felt that the same criticism pertained to Read's Freudian analysis of the Christian pacifism that demarcated his version of pacifism, and that of the vast majority of those affiliated with the PPU. In a letter dated 25 January 1939, Murry expressed relief that Read had written to him claiming to have not been offended by his review—however, their correspondence then abruptly ended, which most likely indicated that their dialogue had reached an impasse.<sup>130</sup> Murry later affirmed that standoff in a 1941 article dismissing Read's anarchism as hopelessly naïve and riddled with internal contradictions, as manifest in Read's pamphlet *The Philosophy of Anarchism* (1940) when compared to his recently published polemic, *To Hell with Culture* (1941).<sup>131</sup>

### **Conclusion: reconfiguring pacifisms**

As I have demonstrated, we cannot fully understand Read's foundational manifesto on anarchism—written while the Spanish Civil War hung in the balance—without accounting for his critical engagement with Murry and the broader pacifist movement. Perhaps the most surprising dimension of that discourse concerned Murry and Read's respective views on rationalism and religion, which has broader implications for our understanding of the role of religious discourse in the anarchist movement as a whole.<sup>132</sup> Both thinkers developed theories of pacifism grounded in Christian ethics in tandem with socio-economic and political critiques of armed conflict, thus conflating two conceptual frames that some scholars have treated as mutually exclusive. Murry's thinking was clearly the key catalyst for Read's exploration of the Christian tradition in "The Necessity of Anarchism" and *Poetry and Anarchism*. Murry in his writings on pacifism posited a schism between rationalism and faith whereas Read boldly sought to reconcile these two categories through his endorsement of medieval scholastics. Murry's position is stated most clearly in the Introduction to his 1938 book, *The Pledge of Peace*, which brought together short essays that he had written for the PPU's flagship journal *Peace News* and for *The Adelphi*, between May 1937 and February 1938.<sup>133</sup> In that text, Murry unequivocally declared that if one were to embrace "the cause of absolute pacifism" as a force for

“good” in the world one “must finally be grounded in faith.” “Purely rational considerations are not enough” for to hold that pacifism “is worth so great a sacrifice” requires that we “pass out of the realm of rationality into that of religious faith.” Thus, in Murry’s view there is “a necessary progression from rational pacifism to religious pacifism” and the two categories were qualitatively distinct.<sup>134</sup> Read, as we have seen, deliberately combined them when he declared anarchism to be based on scholastic dialectics, thereby asserting that it is by following reason that we in fact fulfill God’s purpose. In effect Read’s argument in favor of anarchism was also an open appeal to Christian pacifists like Murry to join him. Read’s definition of ‘scholastic anarchism’ adds a new dimension to our understanding of the relation of Christianity to anarchism, while also making plain his studied engagement with the pacifist movement.<sup>135</sup>

Read regarded recourse to psychoanalysis as integral to this anarchist project, by virtue of its ability to free us from harmful pathologies unwittingly embraced by Murry and the PPU in order to achieve a healthy and harmonious relation between our rational mind, our behavioral urges, and our creative imagination. Pathologizing acquiescent pacifism, Read anticipated contemporary critiques of that strategy.<sup>136</sup> Read’s method also made for an unwieldy synthesis within his discourse, for while anarchism was fundamentally grounded in reason, the artistic imagination was rather weakly described as an inchoate byproduct of the healthy psychological disposition that anarchism nurtured. As Read put it in *Poetry and Anarchism*, under anarchism “our imagination is free to dream, is as free as the dream; is the dream.”<sup>137</sup> Artistic autonomy and unfettered freedom are here valued in their own right, for “the free development” of each individual “is the condition for the free development of all.”<sup>138</sup> At this juncture in Read’s trajectory, reason was clearly central to his definition of anarchism; whereas the role of aesthetics within that matrix was still embryonic. It was around this same time that Read integrated Peter Kropotkin’s anarchist interpretation of organic evolution into his concept of ‘open form’ in abstract art, but it was only with the wartime publication of Read’s groundbreaking manifesto *Education through Art* (1943) and its companion volume *Education for Peace* (1950) that he was able to definitively integrate anarchist pacifism into his theory of aesthetics.<sup>139</sup>

Read's postwar evolution was just one example of a larger shift among radical pacifists towards an endorsement of prefigurative forms of non-violent resistance, which, in the 1960s, precipitated a schism within the Peace Pledge Union between proponents of anarchism and those who continued to accept the legitimacy of the state.<sup>140</sup>

These issues had been anticipated by Murry and Read before the Second World War, for a crucial dimension of their respective theories of pacifism concerned means-ends congruity as it related to the troubling issue of armed conflict and violence. Read was more consistent in as much as his version of pacifism allowed for armed conflict if its practitioners were animated by the ethical spirit of anarchism, with the destruction of the state as their end goal. Such violence "is consistent with our love of justice and our need for freedom."<sup>141</sup> Since the state was the root cause of all armed combat, its dissolution would necessarily spell the end of any future military belligerence. With regard to the issue of prefiguration, conflict could be sanctioned as a means integral to the ends sought if an anarchist ethic—presumably that of Read's wholly mature rationalist—was the animating prefigurative force shaping this recourse to violence. Read's argument affirms Uri Gordon's contention that "anarchist violence against the state *is* precisely prefigurative of anarchist social relations" and runs counter to blanket claims on the part of some historians of anarchism "that violence and prefiguration are inherently incompatible."<sup>142</sup> The latter position only holds true if one narrowly reduces the history of anarchist pacifism to this nonviolent, idealist configuration. It is in this regard that Read's prognosis most resembled that of Murry, who likewise held that armed conflict was justifiable if it was animated by salutary ethics—in Murry's case by the "revolution of Jesus." The soldiers who made up Cromwell's New Model Army were infused with the Christian ethics of religious tolerance, which ameliorated English society for centuries to come; in like fashion the Bolsheviks were the righteous bearers of Marx's "Judeo-Christian passion of disinterested sympathy" in their battle to establish the Soviet Union, which now served as a beacon to the world. Read and Murry's paradigmatic efforts to ethically elevate those engaged in armed conflict is part of a venerable history that encompasses all ideological categories, including that of fascism.<sup>143</sup> However, Murry ultimately broke with

this notion of virtuous warfare when contemplating his own moment in history. Murry in *The Necessity of Pacifism*, argues that England should peacefully acquiesce to an invasion by Hitler's Nazis, precisely because he thought that recourse to armed conflict was no longer justifiable. This was due to the technological capacity of military force in 1937, which now constituted an existential threat to global civilization. However, Murry combined this pragmatic message with an idealist, prefigurative one: the ethical power of non-resistance on the part of Britain would set an example that was so persuasive that other nations would feel compelled to follow suit, even in the case of an invading army. Paradoxically, this appeal to the 'goodness' in us all now transcended history as a living potential intrinsic to the human condition. Such transcendent politics were already nascent within the pacifist movement of the 1930's due to the influence of Gandhi's doctrine of *swaraj*, which gained wide currency within the PPU following the 1935 publication of Richard Gregg's espousal of Gandhi's technique, *The Power of Non-Violence*.<sup>144</sup> Thus it is not surprising that Gregg took issue with Murry's justification of armed warfare in a critique of *The Necessity of Pacifism*, published in the same issue of the *Adelphi* including Read's manifesto.<sup>145</sup> Murry's Christian variation on Gregg's theme folded non-violence and the politics of bearing witness<sup>146</sup> within the matrix of his means-ends blueprint, thereby partially anticipating the forms of prefigurative (and anarchist) pacifism exemplified by wartime conscientious objection as well as strategies of radical non-violence in Europe and North America following the advent of the Atomic Bomb.<sup>147</sup> Read by contrast pointedly rejected Gregg and other advocates of "non-resistance" due to their failure, in his view, to acknowledge Freud's theory "of the destructive instinct" lurking within us, and the role of the state in fostering that pathology.<sup>148</sup> Read's Freudian model for the human condition likewise transcended history, but it constituted an altogether darker vision. For Read an anarchist revolution remained a prerequisite for peace. "Only a non-governmental society can offer those economic, ethical and psychological conditions under which the emerging peaceful mentality is possible." Only then, "will the desire to create finally triumph over the desire to destroy." "We must be at peace with ourselves," Read concludes, "before we can be at peace with one another."<sup>149</sup>

## Notes

1 This essay derives from my keynote lecture given at the University of Copenhagen for a conference series focusing on *The 1930s Today – The Avant-Gardes in Times of Political Escalation*. It forms part of my book project, *Radical Pacifism and Aesthetics in the Crucible of War, 1936–1950*. My thanks go to Dominique Miething for his editorial suggestions, and to Andrew Rigby for his additional assistance and insightful scholarship on the Peace Pledge Union and the journal *Peace News*. My thanks also go to Lara Wilson, Heather Dean and the Special Collections staff at the MacPherson Library, University of Victoria (Canada) for their assistance in my research for this article. Herbert Read's papers and correspondence form part of the Special Collection's developing Anarchist Archive. <https://anarchistarchive.uvic.ca/>

2 Herbert Read, "The Necessity of Anarchism (I)," *The Adelphi* (September 1937), 458-463; Herbert Read, "The Necessity of Anarchism (II)," *The Adelphi* (October 1937), 12-18; Herbert Read, "The Necessity of Anarchism (III)," *The Adelphi* (November 1937), 44-48.

3 For biographical studies of Read, see George Woodcock, *Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source* (Faber & Faber, 1972); and James King, *The Last Modern: A Life of Herbert Read* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990).

4 With the exception of two important modifications which I will address below, Read's essay was reproduced in its entirety. See Herbert Read, *Poetry and Anarchism* (Faber and Faber, 1938), 66–98.

5 Carissa Honeywell has provided us with a cogent analysis of Read's complex political evolution, with special attention to Read's endorsement of anarchist pacifism following World War Two. See Carissa Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition: Herbert Read, Alex Comfort, Colin Ward* (Continuum, 2011), 51-71; also see Matthew S. Adams, *Kropotkin, Read and the Intellectual History of British Anarchism: Between Reason and Romanticism* (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2015), 130–37.

6 See F. A. Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (Oxford University Press, 1960).

7 Read and Murry's fragmentary correspondence attests to Murry's initial role as Read's mentor, and to their subsequent lively exchange of books and ideas, as well as Murry's role in encouraging Read to publish in the *Adelphi*. Letters dated from 1920 to 1931 chart the initial stages of their emerging relationship, wherein Murry expresses admiration for Read's literary writing (11 June 1920), agrees, as journal editor, to publish essays by Read for *The Athenaeum* (20 July 1920) and *The Adelphi* (18 November 1927), and gifts to Read his various literary publications. Letters dated to 1933 record what was perhaps their first in person meeting (in May, 1933), as well as their

debate over the merits of political engagement on the part of writers (1 March and 4 April, 1933). A letter from Murry to Read dated 25 January 1939 further attests to their ongoing debate over the merits of Freud, Marx, and Christian ethics. There is then a lacuna in their correspondence, which resumes in 4 August 1944, with Read's acceptance of Murry's invitation to renew his contributions to *The Adelphi*. Read's final letter to Murry dates to March 13, 1948, and alludes to the latter's repudiation of pacifism in his book *The Free Society* (Andrew Dakers Limited, 1948). The letters are held in the Herbert Read Archive, MacPherson Library, University of Victoria, Canada.

8 The Peace Pledge Union was officially launched on the 22 May, 1936. It replaced the Sheppard Peace Movement, founded by the charismatic Canon, Dick Sheppard, in July 1935. See Martin Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Clarendon Press, 1980), 222.

9 Lea charts Murry's central role in the Peace Pledge Union, from his conversion to the cause in October 1936 to his withdrawal from the PPU in 1946. See Parts III and IV in Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry*. For statistics on the Peace Pledge Union, see Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, 222–23, 312–13, 230–43, 318–20.

10 John Middleton Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism* (Jonathan Cape, 1937). See George P. Lilley, *A Bibliography of John Middleton Murry* (University of Toronto Press, 1974), 32.

11 Read's copy of the book is in the Herbert Read Collection, Brotherton Special Collections, University of Leeds. Other books by Murry owned by Read are *Cinnamon and Angela: A Play* (1920), *The Problem of Style* (1925), *Studies in Keats* (1930), *Countries of the Mind: Essays in Literary Criticism* (1931), *William Blake* (1933), *Shakespeare* (1936), and *Katherine Mansfield: and other Literary Studies* (1959).

12 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 7.

13 For Read and Murry's debate over the merits of activism, see Herbert Read to John Middleton Murry 1 March, 1933; and John Middleton Murry to Herbert Read, 4 April, 1933 (Herbert Read Archive, University of Victoria).

14 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 68–88.

15 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 82–85; John Middleton Murry, "Thoughts on the Summer School," *The Adelphi* (October 1936), 25–37.

16 On the *Adelphi* summer schools, see Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 68–88. Also see John Middleton Murry, "Socialism, the State, and Violence," *The Adelphi* (September 1936), 321–29; and Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry*, 233.

17 Matthew Adams, *Kropotkin, Read*, 130–137. Carissa Honeywell and

David Goodway have additionally shown that the existential threat posed by the atomic bomb, combined with the impact of Tolstoy, played a decisive role in Read's turn to non-violence following World War Two. See Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition*, 56–57; and David Goodway, "Introduction," in *Herbert Read: A One-Man Manifesto and Other Writings for Freedom Press*, ed. David Goodway (Freedom Press, 1994), 11.

18 For a provocative history and critique of the conceptual role of prefiguration in alliances between pacifists and anarchists, see Frankie Hines, "Against Prefiguration: An Anarchist Iconoclasm," *Anarchist Studies* 31:1 (2023), 25–45.

19 Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, 1–8.

20 David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (2006; revised edition, PM Press, 2012), 203–204. Emphasis in the original.

21 For an analysis of anarchism that addresses this conceptual approach, see Mark Antliff, *Sculptors Against the State: Anarchism and the Anglo-European Avant-Garde* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), 1–13, 183–205.

22 Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds*, 204.

23 That essay first appeared in abbreviated form in the anarchist journal *Spain and the World*, and is reproduced in *Herbert Read: A One-Man Manifesto and Other Writings*, 27–29. See Herbert Read, "The Prerequisite of Peace," *Spain and the World* (Supplement, May 1938), 2.

24 Herbert Read, "The Method of Revolution," *Spain and the World* (16 September 1938), 2; "The Method of Revolution: An Answer," *Spain and the World* (12 November, 1938), 3, reproduced in *Herbert Read: A One Man Manifesto and Other Writings*, 31–37, 37–39.

25 Adams, *Kropotkin, Read*, 132.

26 John Middleton Murry, *The Necessity of Communism* (Jonathan Cape, 1932). A Leaflet included in the book identified *The Adelphi* as a companion forum for Murry's effort "to give a specifically English intelligence to the Communist movement in England."

27 Murry, *The Necessity of Communism*, 22.

28 *Ibid.*, 27–28.

29 *Ibid.*, 31–32.

30 *Ibid.*, 113.

31 *Ibid.*, 59–67.

32 *Ibid.*, 127. Emphasis in the original.

33 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 107.

34 Murry, *Ibid.* 86–87.

35 *Ibid.*

- 36 Ibid., 22.
- 37 Ibid., 8. Emphasis in the original.
- 38 Ibid., 9-10. On the mythic representation of Big Capital, see Pierre Birnbaum, *Le Peuple et les gros: Histoire d'un mythe* (Bernard Grasset, 1979).
- 39 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 11–12
- 40 Ibid., 30-31.
- 41 Ibid., 42-43.
- 42 Ibid., 32.
- 43 Ibid., 32. Murry's assessment of the corrupting effects of parliamentary democracy on working class consciousness echoes that of the anarchist syndicalist Georges Sorel, who had marshaled a similar critique of the Socialist Party in France and the atomizing individualism resulting from democratic ideology in his two books, *Reflections on Violence* (1908) and *Illusions of Progress* (1908). See chapter two in Mark Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism: The Mobilization of Myth, Art and Culture in France* (Duke University Press, 2007), 63–110.
- 44 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 12.
- 45 Ibid., 20.
- 46 Ibid., 21–23.
- 47 Ibid., 18–19, 72–77.
- 48 Ibid., 18–19.
- 49 Ibid., 76–77.
- 50 Ibid., 72.
- 51 Ibid., 15–16.
- 52 Murry, *The Necessity of Communism*, 16.
- 53 Adams, *Kropotkin, Read*, 173–179; Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds*, 177-195.
- 54 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 107–118; Murry, “Socialism, the State and Violence,” 321–29.
- 55 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 41, 127.
- 56 Ibid, 85–87.
- 57 Ibid., 127–28.
- 58 Ibid., 128.
- 59 Murry cited with approval William Morris's formal severing, in the 15 November, 1890 edition of *The Commonweal*, of “his connections with the Socialist League, which had fallen under the control of irresponsible and terroristic anarchists.” Ibid. 129–130; on Morris's condemnation of the anarchist tactic of propaganda by the deed and his severing of relations with the Socialist League, see Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (PM Press, 2010), 171–175.
- 60 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 109.
- 61 Murry, “Socialism, the State, and Violence,” 321–329

- 62 Ibid, 327–28.
- 63 Ibid., 329.
- 64 Ibid., 328.
- 65 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 116.
- 66 Ibid., 114–15.
- 67 Ibid., 115.
- 68 Ibid. 114.
- 69 Ibid. 59-60, 65, 115; the quote is taken from D.H. Lawrence, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley (Heinemann, 1932), 60.
- 70 Murry, *The Necessity of Pacifism*, 115.
- 71 Ibid., 24. Murry had first broached this thesis in the February, 1937 issue of *The Adelphi*. See John Middleton Murry, “Barbarism or Simplicity,” *The Adelphi* (February 1937), 225–228.
- 72 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 16.
- 73 For a perceptive analysis of Read’s uses of psychoanalysis, with special attention to his interpretations of both Freud and Jung, see John R. Doheny, “Herbert Read’s Use of Sigmund Freud, in *Herbert Read Reassessed*, ed. David Goodway (Liverpool University Press, 1998). 70–82.
- 74 Read, “The Necessity of Anarchism (I),” 458–463; Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 66–77.
- 75 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 66.
- 76 Ibid., 67.
- 77 Ibid., 68.
- 78 Ibid., 74.
- 79 Ibid., 71–72.
- 80 Ibid., 73–74.
- 81 Ibid., 76–77.
- 82 Read, “The Necessity of Anarchism (II),” 12–18; Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 77–89.
- 83 J.M. Murry, “Freud and Marx, or Super-Ego and Super-Structure,” *The Adelphi* (April 1937), 315–18.
- 84 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 79.
- 85 Ibid., 77.
- 86 Ibid., 78. Read cites Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Authorized Translation James Strachey (The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1922), 99–100, 93 and passim.
- 87 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 78.
- 88 Ibid., 78.
- 89 Ibid., 79–81.
- 90 Ibid. 81–86. Read documents those events, including the decline of the Soviet Union into a bureaucratic tyranny; the rise of fascism in Italy and

Germany; and the pernicious impact of competing nation-states in undermining the League of Nations.

91 Ibid., 82–83.

92 Ibid., 83.

93 Read, “The Necessity of Anarchism (III),” 44; Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 89–90.

94 Read, “The Necessity of Anarchism (III),” 44–48; *Poetry and Anarchism*, 89–98.

95 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 95–96.

96 Ibid., 95.

97 Ibid., 96.

98 Ibid. 96–97.

99 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 95; and Étienne Gilson, *Medieval Universalism and its Present Value* (Sheed and Ward, 1937)

100 Gilson, *Medieval Universalism*, Ibid., 4–5.

101 Ibid., 11.

102 Ibid., 13.

103 Ibid., 14.

104 Ibid. 17–18.

105 Ibid. 19.

106 Ibid., 16.

107 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 89.

108 See Michel Remy, *Surrealism in Britain* (Ashgate, 1999), 73–100. The book included a fulsome essay by Read, and additional essays by André Breton and other leading Surrealists. See Herbert Read, “Introduction” in *Surrealism*, ed. Herbert Read (Faber & Faber, 1936; reprint: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 19–91. Herbert Read’s 1936 polemic identified surrealism with the liberating, organic, and individualist impulse of romanticism, and condemned classicism as the ossification of this creative spirit into fixed forms expressive of authoritarian repression in society. “There is a principle of life, or creation, of liberation, and that is the romantic spirit; there is the principle of order, or control and of repression, and that is the classical spirit.” The classic and romantic correspond “to the husk and the seed, the shell and the kernel” and therefore do not represent the “contradiction” fundamental to dialectics. Classicism represses the romantic impulse “in the interest of some particular ideal or set of values; but on analysis it always resolves into the defense of some particular structure of society, the perpetuation of the rule of some particular class.” Read, “Introduction,” 26.

109 Read, “Introduction,” 33–34. Read claimed that “rationalizing” had deprived Christianity “of a ritualistic and occult indulgence of the senses” which he equated with a damaging form of Freudian repression. Christian

moralizing and repression reportedly had a contemporary correlation in the “mass hysteria” induced by the Nazi Regime in Germany.

110 Read, “Introduction,” 89–90. As Matthew Adams notes “this was a timorous endorsement of Communism, and once the Spanish Civil war raised awareness of anarchism’s past, it was one that Read jettisoned.” Adams, *Kropotkin, Read and the Intellectual History of British Anarchism*, 43.

111 *Poetry and Anarchism*, 97.

112 Remy, *Surrealism in Britain*, 85–94. In his Introduction to *Surrealism*, Read likewise argued for Surrealism’s ability of liberate ourselves from pathological impulses, but in that text, it was Marxist rather than anarchist dialectics that were key to this process. “It is only now, with the aid of modern dialectics and modern psychology, in the name of Marx and Freud, that they [Surrealist artists] have found themselves in a position to put their beliefs and practices on a scientific basis, thereby initiating a continuous and deliberate creative activity whose only laws are the laws of its own dynamics.” Read, “Introduction,” 28.

113 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 97.

114 *Ibid.* For Read’s critique of the Bolshevik and fascist reduction of art to an instrument of state propaganda, and the Bolsheviks’ condemnation of creative freedom and originality as no more than “petty bourgeois individualism,” see Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 21–30.

115 *Ibid.*, 97.

116 Read, “The Necessity of Anarchism (II),” 18.

117 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*; 465–67.

118 See for instance, Editorial “Barcelona May 1937” *Spain and the World* (19 May 1937), 1-2; Vernon Richards, “Camillo Berneri: An Appreciation,” *Spain and the World* (19 May 1937), 1; Emma Goldman, “Political Persecution in Republican Spain,” *Spain and the World* (10 December 1937), 5; Herbert Read, “The Method of Revolution” *Spain and the World* (16 September, 1938), 2; and Vernon Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution, 1936–1939* (PM Press, 2019), 123–155.

119 Herbert Read, “The Prerequisite of Peace,” 2; Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 99–120.

120 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 87.

121 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 116–117. Read refers to leading pacifists Richard Gregg, Bart De Ligt and Aldous Huxley as representative of such willful ignorance, despite De Ligt’s anarchist affiliation and Huxley’s open sympathy for the movement.

122 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 99

123 Read’s brief discussion of pacifism in the “Introduction” to his 1936 edited volume *Surrealism*, contained no blanket analysis of the deleterious

function of the state. Instead, he simply asserted that “the only absolutely pacifist races (if any still exist) are those which live in the golden age of hedonism, such as, apparently, the Minion civilisation enjoyed for many centuries.” He then conjectures that it is our suppression of “certain primitive impulses during childhood” which results in the “adult codes of morality” manifest in “religion” and the “mass hysteria” of Nazism, that are at the root cause of war, rather than the existence of the state per se. Read, “Introduction,” 33–34.

124 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 119–120.

125 Read had briefly referred to Glover’s book in his Freudian critique of religion, morality and rationalism in his 1936 essay in *Surrealism*. See Read, “Introduction,” 33–34.

126 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 114–15. Emphasis in the original. Read cited Glover as taking up the question of why we should “stand against” our “aggressive impulses” as described by Freud in terms of the “death instinct.” Read accuses Freud of being “evasive” about the issue, referring to the latter’s meditation on war in his dialogue with Albert Einstein. See Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud, *Why War?* (Allen & Unwin, 1933); and Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 112–114.

127 *Ibid.*, 115. Emphasis in the original.

128 *Ibid.*, 116.

129 *Ibid.*, 117.

130 “Thank you very much for your letter. I am very glad to know that you did not take my essay amiss.” Read’s letter has been lost. See John Middleton Murry to Herbert Read, 25 January 1939 (Herbert Read Archive, MacPherson Library University of Victoria).

131 John Middleton Murry, “The Anarchism of Mr. Herbert Read,” *The Adelphi* (August 1941), 369–75; and (September 1941), 401–05). This cooling of relations lasted until August 1944, when, under vastly different circumstances, Murry invited Read to once again contribute to *The Adelphi*. See n. 7.

132 I will be examining the fuller implications of Read’s evolving response to Christian thought during the Second World War and its aftermath in a forthcoming article, and in my book manuscript *Radical Pacifism and Aesthetics in the Crucible of War, 1936–1950*.

133 John Middleton Murry, *The Pledge of Peace* (Herbert Joseph Limited, September 1938).

134 Murry, *The Pledge of Peace*, 9.

135 Read’s version of Christian anarchism is unacknowledged in the extant literature on Read and the broader history of religion and anarchism; see for instance, *Essays in Anarchism and Religion Vols I and II*, eds. Alexan-

der Christoyannopoulos and Matthew Adams (Stockholm University Press, 2017–18); Alexander Christoyannopoulos, *Christian Anarchism: A Political Commentary on the Gospel* (Imprint Academic, 2010); A. Terrance Wiley, *Angelic Troublemakers: Religion and Anarchism in America* (Bloomsbury, 2014); and Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 74–95.

136 See for instance Ward Churchill and Michael Ryan, *Pacifism as Pathology: Reflections on the Role of Armed Struggle in North America* (PM Press, 2017). For a critical response to Churchill's thesis, see George Lakey, *The Sword that Heals: Challenging Ward Churchill's 'Pacifism as Pathology'* (Training for Change, 2001). For an overview of psychoanalytic studies of war and violence, and their rejection, beginning around 1980, in favour of theories based on evolutionary psychology, see Richard Overy, *Why War?* (Penguin, 2024), 44–77.

137 Read *Poetry and Anarchism*, 97.

138 Read, in *Poetry and Anarchism*, highlighted the plight of Soviet artists like the poet Mayakovski, who had committed suicide in 1930 when faced with the “liquidation” of his artistic freedom under the Bolsheviks. Advocates of creative freedom such as Mayakovski “were accused of formalism, individualism, and subjectivism, and all true communist poets were required to subscribe to a doctrine of realism, naturalist, and objectivity.” Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 69–70. On Read's Bakunin-inspired anarchist formulation that individual freedom is a condition for the freedom of all, see Herbert Read, “Why I am a Surrealist,” *The New English Weekly* (4 March 1937). 413–14. My thanks go to Allan Antliff for alerting me to this text.

139 On Read's theory of ‘open form’, see Allan Antliff, “Open Form and the Abstract Imperative: Herbert Read and Contemporary Anarchist Art,” in *Re-Reading Read: New Views on Herbert Read*, ed. Michael Paraskos (Freedom Press, 2007), 34–43; on Read's theory of education, see Malcolm, Ross, “Herbert Read, Education and the Means of Redemption,” in *Herbert Read Reassessed*, 196–214, and Matthew Adams, “Art, Education, and Revolution: Herbert Read and the Reorientation of British Anarchism,” *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 39: no. 5 (2013), 709–28.

140 This trend culminated with the break, in 1961, of pacifists affiliated with the PPU's flagship journal *Peace News* from the Peace Pledge Union, and the journal's editorial declaration in 1968 in favour of a fusion of the anarchist critique of the state and the pacifist critique of violence as a means of revolutionary transformation. See Andrew Rigby, “Peace News, 1936–1986: An Overview” in *Articles of Peace: Celebrating Fifty Years of Peace News*, eds. Gail Chester and Andrew Rigby (Prism Press, 1986), 7–26.

141 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 15.

142 See Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics From Practice to Theory* (Pluto Press, 2008), 99; and Hines, “Against Prefiguration,” 33.

143 Antliff, *Sculptors Against the State*, 183–205, where I also address the encoding of violence as ‘legitimate’ or ‘illegitimate’ by state actors and their opponents. For an additional analysis of such issues, see Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!*, 78–108.

144 See Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, 248–61.

145 Richard Gregg, “Pacifism and Non-Violent Resistance,” *The Adelphi* (October 1937), 28–31.

146 Martin Ceadel addresses this precise issue with reference to Murry’s 1938 book, *The Pledge of Peace* (10–12); see Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain*, 289.

147 See Geoffrey Ostergaard, “Liberation and Development: Gandhian and Pacifist Perspectives,” in *Articles of Peace*, 142–68. A similar strategy was taken up by Read’s close ally Alex Comfort during the Second World War. See Mark Antliff, “Pacifism, Realism, Pathology: Alex Comfort, Cecil Collins and Neo-Romantic Art during World War II,” *Modernism/Modernity* (September 2020), 519–49.

148 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 116–17. Murry and Read’s efforts partially presaged contemporary theories of evolutionary psychology, which claim that a perennial cause of war is “in-group” formation requiring the definition of an outside ‘other,’ subject to hostile denigration that frequently culminates in genocidal violence. Murry and Read both posited a psychological transformation able to transcend geopolitical borders as a cure for such in-group dynamics, but Read alone targeted state-formations as integral to such destructive psychology. For a concise analysis of the literature on evolutionary psychology and theories of war, see Overy, *Why War?*, 44–77.

149 Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*, 120.





## Judith Malina's Beautiful Nonviolent Anarchist Revolution: the May 1968 Diaries

Kate Bredeson\*

Stage director and activist Judith Malina's life and work reveals a deep devotion to anarchism and pacifism. Born in 1926, at age twenty-one she co-founded with her first husband, Julian Beck, the experimental New York theatre company The Living Theatre. A Jewish German-American woman director at a time when such was unheard of, Malina co-ran the company until her death in 2015. While The Living Theatre started as an endeavor to showcase avant-garde and classic plays, it evolved over its first twenty years into a more explicitly activist effort. As Malina's discovery of and commitment to anarchism ignited, the company became a means to instigate and uphold what Malina and Beck called the "Beautiful Nonviolent Anarchist Revolution"<sup>1</sup>. Malina believed that theatre holds a singular force to stimulate the bodies and minds of onstage artists and offstage audience members alike, and thus is a powerful tool in activism. Erwin Piscator (1893-1966), who initiated the idea of the expressly socio-political Epic Theatre, which Brecht went on to develop, taught Malina at The New

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**Figure 1.** Collage from Malina's diary, 14 July 1971. The Living Theatre Collection. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. Courtesy of the Malina Estate.

School, and served as a strong influence on her in her acting, directing, and politics. She took inspiration from German Marxist stage director, playwright, and dramaturg Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), who saw theatre as a way to stimulate activism through activating revolutionary thinking. She felt influence from French theorist and writer Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), who sought, via his Theatre of Cruelty, to stir change via the use of shock and upheaval, and the idea of infecting the body. In her union of dramatic theories of the brain and the body, Malina developed her singular approach to making theatre in service of the peace revolution.

Malina recorded her vision for her personal and professional life—for her, they were the same—in tight cursive in her often daily diary entries. When she died at age eighty-eight, she left behind hundreds of diaries dating back to her youth. An observant chronicler, she writes about politics, culture, spirituality, travels, romance, motherhood, and the daily operations of The Living Theatre. She charts her growing political consciousness and her drive for an anarchist world. For Malina,

anarchism was directly related to peace work and nonviolence. Her political views and approach to activism developed during the 1950s. In 1955 she attended a protest action against air raids, where she met peace activist and Catholic Worker cofounder and journalist Dorothy Day (1897–1980); they quickly became friends. In 1957, they shared a cell in the New York Women’s House of Detention, where they were transferred after their arrest at a peace protest. Malina felt deep inspiration from Day, whose anarchism was entwined with her pacifism, and who practiced nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience. She also found inspiration in fellow peace worker Bayard Rustin (1912–1987) and in the many comrades she met in peace actions around the world, including the 1958 Peace Walk to Washington D.C. Her diaries invite readers to walk alongside her, to meet her friends and comrades, and, with her, to observe and practice her art and activism.

In Dorothy Day, Malina found a colleague and friend whose work and life were one and the same, a model that defined Malina as well. As early as March 30, 1952, Malina observed in her diaries a dissolution of boundaries between areas in her life: “Where are the lines I used once to divide one portion of my life from the other portions?” Her art, activism, anarchy, and peace work were, to her, all one. She would go on to stage plays with explicit themes of nonviolence. These works included her own translation of Brecht’s *Antigone* (1967), which she worked on while in prison for tax evasion, and The Living Theatre’s most recognized work, the collective creation *Paradise Now* (1968). Her company’s structure—a collective where members lived and ate and worked together in an attempted horizontal structure, and used talk as a strategy to work through problems, though not always successfully—mirrored the anarchy and peace that members of The Living Theatre devotedly sought as a means to transform the world. Though Malina and Beck were always the group leaders shaping the vision and practices of the company, they sought to work as non-hierarchically as possible. Malina fulfilled the necessary role of stage director in the group, while Beck served the required administrative and financial role. Malina’s vision for nonviolence, peace work, collectivity, and anarchism would converge in France during May 1968, when students and workers engaged in historic protests. She was both spectator and participant in these events.



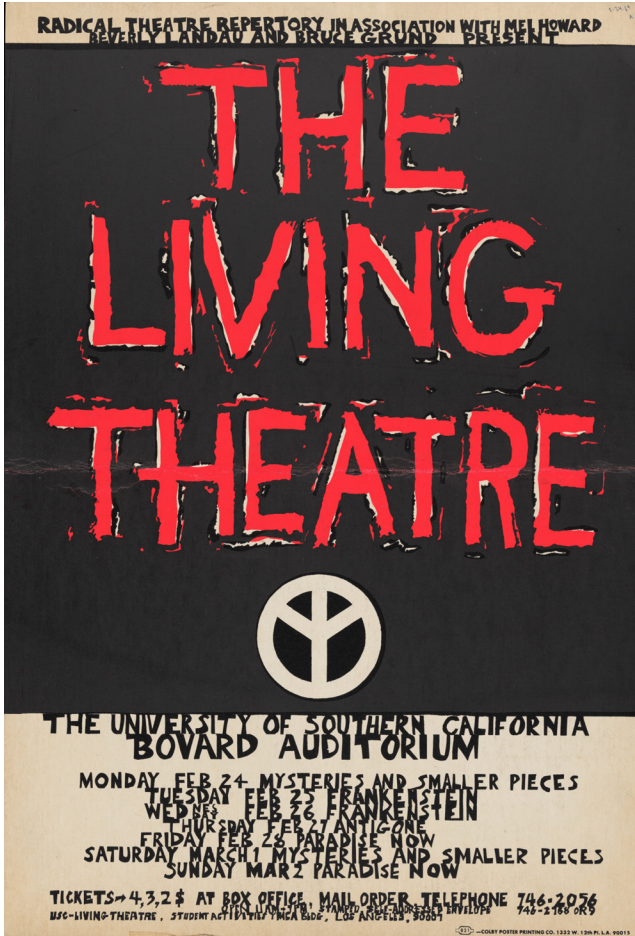
**Figure 2.** Malina as Antigone, Taormina, Italy, September 1969. Photograph by Monika Plenk. The Living Theatre Collection. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. Courtesy of the Malina Estate.

The following excerpts from Malina's diaries detail her reflections on the May 1968. She, Beck, and her lover Carl Einhorn (1941-2011) were in France when the May '68 events, initially set off by the administration shutting down Nanterre University, and protests spreading to the Sorbonne, where the Rector called the police onto campus, erupted. These early actions inspired a series of marches,

strikes, occupations, and actions, culminating in a series of student and worker strikes that disrupted life in France for most of May and June. Malina, Beck, and Einhorn arrived in Paris right in the middle of the events' escalation. They were already en route to Paris, where they had an appointment "on business, to try to arrange a television contract." (Diary entry: Undated, 1968, Paris) They arrived by Monday, May 13, when over one million people marched through Paris during a demonstration and one-day general strike that instigated the occupation of the Sorbonne. On the following day, workers at the Sud Aviation plant began an occupation of their workplace, two days later workers had occupied dozens of factories. Malina and Beck ended up participating in the Left Bank political conversations that led to the occupation of the Odéon Theatre—at the time the "Theatre of France." On May 15, the Odéon emerged as the symbolic center of the protests when artists, students, and workers occupied it. Many students, along with some artists and others, remained in the occupied theatre until the police forcibly evacuated it in mid-June. While she exaggerates Beck's importance and role in the decision to occupy the theatre—they were, after all, outsiders to this revolution, much as they wanted to be at the center—Malina's vivid description of the occupation and its aftermath both in Paris and in Avignon at the summer 1968 Avignon theatre festival beautifully captures the swirl of politics and culture that moved not only France, but Mexico, the United States, the Czech Republic, and Japan, among other countries, during the turbulence of 1968. Her words convey the widespread possibility for revolution that had finally arrived.

When I interviewed Malina in 2004, she held my hand, looked in my eyes, and told me that during her time in Paris in May '68, she felt the world was "on the brink of a volcanic revolution," and that this moment was the closest she ever came to the revolution she spent her life working to enact.<sup>2</sup> Here, I share her diary entries from this period as a window into her commitment to nonviolence, which was entwined with her anarchism. These entries have never before been published together, and are part of my larger project to edit Malina's diaries from 1958-1968 and 1969-1971. Northwestern University Press will publish these diaries, alongside my newly edited collections of Malina's two previously published diary editions (which cover

1947–1957 and part of 1968–69). This four-volume set, which spans 1947–1971—the most important years of her career—will be published during Malina’s centennial in 2026.



**Figure 3.** Poster, *Paradise Now*, 1968. The Living Theatre Collection. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. Courtesy of the Malina Estate.

In her May ’68 diaries, Malina comments on the links between non-violence and anarchism, and how spectacle and performance work in revolutionary actions. On May, 31, she writes that the anarchist revolution is explicitly anti-violence, and that recreating “civility” will not lead to any transformation and way forward. For Malina, “The revolution/ turns against all violence”:

“The purpose of the revolution is to free all workers from slavery to systems and all of us from hunger and fear of hunger.

[...]

The revolution will depose economic violence, serial violence, cultural nullity, police, legal moral politics, bureaucratic educational and sexual violence, and physical violence, which is the product of all the others. You can't transform civility by imitating it.”

(Diary entry: May 31, 1968. Avignon, 5:30 a.m.)

Throughout, in her diary entries, Malina offers greater clarity into her beliefs for how the world

might be, and how nonviolence, anarchism, and theatre are core to her vision.

What follows are excerpts from Judith Malina's unpublished diaries. I have added definitions for French words, and selective contextual information for references, especially for those that held significance for Malina and her company. Malina's May '68 diaries outline her vision of the relationship between theatre and activism, and nonviolence and anarchism. They offer her perspective as both witness and participant in this crucial time in activist history. When looked at as a whole, her lifetime diaries serve as a map of the Beautiful Nonviolent Anarchist Revolution and the role of theatre in it. They hold the power to spark such work today, when we are in urgent need of collective work against the far right and towards peace.

\* \* \*

## May 11, 1968

Student uprising in Paris. Horrendous news of street battles on the radio; we hear it between Branges and Tours. Driving again through château country. Barricades on the rue St. Jacques, cars overturned to use as barricades. Burning cars. 15,000 students battling the police. At the core, an anarchist group insufficiently devoted to pacificism but stirring the youth to action.

“For everything, for everything,” replied Paul Goodman’s<sup>3</sup> gladiator when the Stoic emperor asked him what he was weeping for.

And, “Why is he crying out?” Aurelius asks as a tortured man screams.

“If you were in such a case, you too would cry out,” answered the sage.

Said the emperor, “I am in such a case. And I am crying out.”

Vehement signs are written on all the walls.

## May 12, 1968

On the road between Tours and Paris we listen to the radio news. Will there be a strike, or a grève Générale,<sup>4</sup> in Paris? Will the workers and the students for the first time get together in a solid “show of strength”?

We visit the Tours Cathedral.

We drive to Chartres.

Here the cathedral is closed as they are rehearsing a concert for this evening.

Descend to the crypt

Where our Lady of the Underground

Reigns in the cold dark corridors,

Surrounded by her votives.

The news says there will be a strike.

We drive to La Picasette; for thirty years this couple worked with bits of stone and glass and plaster to make their small house a masterpiece of the Cathedral City. Isha<sup>5</sup> with probing and curious fingers touched the stonework of the ancient masters, felt the textures of their masonry, and with the same pleasure ran her hands across the bits of pottery that make the mosaics of these intricate walls.

The old lady stands at her decorated stove in the kitchen marked with saints and beasts and cities.

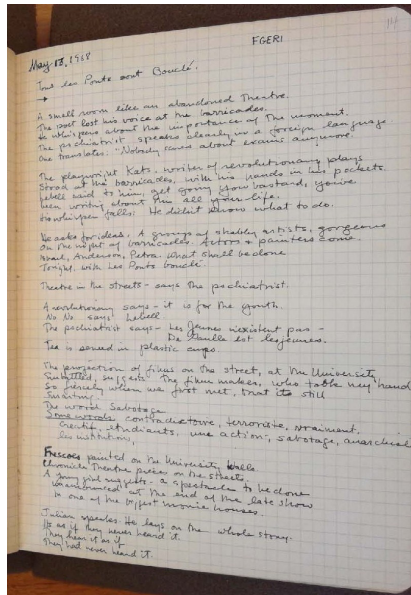
“Do you live here?” asks Petra.<sup>6</sup>

“Naturally, I have lived here for thirty-three years.”

“It is magnificent, truly magnificent,” Julian<sup>7</sup> says.

“That’s true,” says the old artist at her stove.

The news says the workers are putting the paving stones down on the Boul’ St. Mich, but they won’t finish in time—they go on strike at midnight.



**Figure 4.** Page from Judith Malina’s May 1968 diary. The Living Theatre Collection. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. Courtesy of the Malina Estate.

May 13, 1968. FGERT<sup>8</sup>

*Tous les ponts sont bouchés.*<sup>9</sup>

A small room like an abandoned theatre. The poet lost his voice at the barricades. He whispers about the importance of the moment. The psychiatrist speaks clearly in a foreign language. One translates: “Nobody cares about exams anymore.”

The playwright Kats, writer of revolutionary plays, stood at the barricades with his hands in his pockets. Lebel said to him, “Get going, you bastard, you’ve been writing about this all your life.” His whisper falls; he didn’t know what to do. He asks for ideas. A group of shabby artists, gorgeous on the night of barricades. Actors and painters come. Israel, Anderson, Petra.<sup>10</sup> What shall be done tonight with *les ponts bouchés*.

Theatre in the streets—says the psychiatrist.

A revolutionary says—it is for the youth.

No no, says Lebel.

The psychiatrist says—*les jeunes n’existent pas*.

*De Gaulle*<sup>11</sup> *est les jeunes*.<sup>12</sup>

Tea is served in plastic cups.

The projection of films on the street, at the university, embattled, suggests the filmmaker, who took my hand so fiercely when we first met that it’s still smarting.

The word *sabotage*.

Some words: *contradictoire, terroriste, vraiment, créatif, étudiants, une action, sabotage, anarchiste, les institutions*.<sup>13</sup>

Frescoes painted on the university walls chronicle theatre pieces on the streets.

A young girl suggests a spectacle to be done unannounced at the end of the late show in one of the biggest movie houses.

Julian speaks. He lays on the whole story.

It’s as if they never heard it.

They hear it as if

They had never heard it.

They come in from the manifestation. Their flag furled up. They look wilder than we. The room fills with wild ones. They are flushed by the night air. They come from the bridges. Julian talks historically.

When I say to the revolutionary:

“You can’t do a street-play next to a barricade unless it has concrete, practical, and immediate end goals, without belittling the barricade thereby.”

He says—“the barricades are over.”

I: “Are they over?”

He: “They are a climax.”

Julian says we cannot do a little action beside the great action that the students are taking. He complains that neither English nor French has a word for nonviolence.

He is asked to second the motion. He pauses and agrees.

D: “*Ce n’est pas une révolution.*”

*C’est une situation révolutionnaire.*”<sup>14</sup>

The room is crowded.

Jean-Jacques<sup>15</sup> finds his voice.

He is carried away.

There are those who want much

And those who want little.

And those who want everything.

A boy with flashing eyes and a batik scarf suggests invasion and taking over of ORTF,<sup>16</sup> the television and radio. Cries of “That’s concrete.” A beautiful blond girl with a face flushed with excitement says excitedly: “The left-wing students were fighting right-wing students, the left-wing artists should fight the right-wing artists.” Steve<sup>17</sup> speaks in broken French boldly. He can speak French because he wants so much to speak. Of confronting the police with human moments.

Suggestion for sabotage of movies and plays.

Assault on the culture.

Here in the 2 a.m. university, the halls teeming with people. In some rooms, committees meeting. Discussions. Some rooms marked *Salle de Repos*.<sup>18</sup> Here, the Red Cross room. All the doctors in dirty smocks with red crosses painted on them put on white crash helmets and split with several students wearing Red Cross armbands. On the night walls: posters and posters.

*Aux Examens: Répondez pas des questions.*<sup>19</sup>

And long tirades about “Total Revolution.”

Public letters learned from Peking.<sup>20</sup>

Red flags on the walls. Exhaustion and Excitement.

*Je m'en vais.*<sup>21</sup> I am going away.

I'm tired. Carl's<sup>22</sup> not yet heard from.

He was last seen under the Eiffel Tower.

With Police blocking all the routes.

To get here we passed through corridors of police vans.

They walk through the halls pasty-faced with tiredness. They somnambulate.

Upstairs they are arguing about how to occupy the Théâtre de France.<sup>23</sup>

To break up Paul Taylor's<sup>24</sup> performance.

I have no taste for this. *Je m'en vais.*<sup>25</sup>

But the beautiful long-haired students  
who believe they have in their hands  
the fruits of the revolution  
will remain in my forebrain.

Even after the posters are forgotten  
by the doctors and lawyers and judges  
that they will become by degrees  
they are earning.

## Undated, 1968. Paris

The Occupation of the Ex-Théâtre of France

We came into Paris on May 12, on business, to try to arrange a television contract. There was a plan for ORTF to film a series of improvisations on the streets of Paris with The Living Theatre. It was being called Street Theatre, but among ourselves we referred to it as

Guerilla Theatre. The company was in Avignon waiting to recommence rehearsals for *Paradise Now*. For a week we had been reading and hearing news of the student rebellion in Paris, as we had been hearing news for months in Sicily about the student actions in Italy and the angry scenes in Germany a year ago. The Living Theatre already played in the Occupied (Faculty of Sociology) in Trento, playing the *Mysteries*<sup>26</sup> in the hallway of the school, surrounded by the rolls of barbed wire that the police had put up to “protect” the school from the striking students who occupied only one part of the building. We slept in a classroom with mattresses spread on the floor, and in the center was a table, on which I found a copy of *The Revolt at Berkeley*.

On May 6th, crossing the Tyrrhenian between Palermo and Naples we saw the “Paris Students Riots” on the television news, which chose to show the students in the tear gas-filled streets throwing stones.

On May 11 between Bourges and Tours the radio brought up news, though too scantily of the uprising and the barricades.

On May 12, driving from Tours to Paris we listened for news of the General Strike, and arrived in Paris at midnight, just as the strike was to go into effect. There was talk of great support by the unions, but on the Champs-Élysées there was no sign of anything amiss, the Paris night sparkled as usual. One knew that in other quarters there were broken heads, visible by only an unusual amount of movement of large numbers of police vehicles and rare wall inscriptions.

May 13 marked the General Strike. There was only a slight disruption on the Right Bank, no taxis, etc., but hardly a shred of the tension that the word *General Strikes* implies. But in the Latin Quarter the rubble of the barricades of May 11 was still being cleaned up.

On the rue Gay-Lussac the students had erected their barricades against the police and been attacked by a gas used heretofore only in Vietnam and by the American police against demonstrators. Among the burned-out cars that lined the streets, the students were distributing leaflets. The leaflets described the gas, its effects, its

history, its chemical makeup, and the medical problems presented by the fact that there seems to be no antidote or treatment known for blindness and eye damage caused by its use. Stories circulate about the gas rising up to the third floor of the five-story houses that line the street and of the danger to children and infants evacuated to the lower floors while the occupants of the houses, who, as I heard it, were sympathetic to the students, poured water into the street to dispel and weaken the gas's toxic effects.

One hundred fifty cars, gaping burned-out hulks, like bits of setting for *The Automobile Graveyard*, line the sides of rue Gay-Lussac for blocks. These cars were used by the students as the body of their barricades against the police whose aggressive and brutal behavior on this occasion became a focal abuse to be redressed by the strikes to come.

The newspapers say that the students overturned them and set them afire.

The students say that they overturned them and that the police set them on fire.

The street is littered with paving stones ripped up by the students who answered violence with violence. The stones look huge and lethal. They are the square, rough kind of cobble, heavier than a brick and made of cutting edges. It seems either miraculous that no one was killed, or else there was an edge of humaneness, even beneath the hatred that mis-aimed so many lethal stones. The stones lie in great disorder in the dusty street, and it is two days later that we see it. Curiosity seekers and tourists gape at the gasping cars. A joker has placed a tin can on his car with a sign asking for aid for a "victim" of the barricades.

Walking from the rue Gay-Lussac towards the Sorbonne more and more of the damage is visible. Everywhere there are human notes.

A small sign on a boarded-up storefront says: "This store is closed because my parents have ulcers on their eyes from the gas used by the police."

Torn-up traffic lights being replaced by workers.

A travel agency window displays the dreaded tear gas barrels, awful little metal containers in various spaces with signs made by the students describing the chemical makeup of the poison and its physiology and effects.

**May 31, 1968. Avignon, 5 a.m.**

One life  
What shall we do with it  
Comrades  
Comrades of the barricades of France in 1968  
Or was it 1848

Comrades  
We taught you what to destroy  
Instead of what to create

**May 31, 1968. Avignon, 5:30 a.m.**

Comrades  
I am a foreigner  
Your excellent language works clumsily on/off with my tongue  
And I don't understand all the words I hear and read  
So I refrain from talking directly about current events,  
but it doesn't matter that I'm a foreigner  
I am as responsible to France as I am to the United States  
There are no nations, frontiers, that we revolutionaries reorganize  
There is one revolution, and that I can talk about.

The purpose of the revolution is not higher wages and not a new king, and not a workers' syndicate in power.

The purpose of the revolution is to free all workers from slavery to systems and all of us from hunger and fear of hunger.

The purpose of the revolution is to supply each one of us with food, shelter, clothing, and enough time to liberate our spirit to experience life and explore its mysteries

to create each moment, limiting the corruption, which is death,

and is proven not intrinsic to reality.

It is a revolution for life exactly

and not for the power to waste time in terrible houses.

The revolution

turns against all violence.

We want something else, comrades, than to make ourselves victims of authority's oppressive invention.

The revolution will depose economic violence, serial violence, cultural nullity, police, legal moral politics, bureaucratic educational and sexual violence, and physical violence, which is the product of all the others. You can't transform civility by imitating it.

The revolution is beautiful. It is a new state/being. Sexually limited people are naturally violent. That's why the real revolution, the one that isn't fake, fucks its only world.

And I must go to sleep because Isha will wake soon and must be fed.

And if the purpose of the revolution isn't to feed all the people and stop all the violence, it isn't revolution. It's just a reaction formation, a psychological spiritual assault on oppression, which is not enough, and belittles the effort and the glory of many.

### May 31, 1968. Avignon

à bas la police		vive la liberté
à bas la violence	R	vive l'amour
à bas l'état	E	vive l'anarchisme
à bas l'argent	V	vive la gratuité
à bas le capitalisme	O	vive l'unité des classes
à bas l'armée	L	vive la foi
à bas la bourgeoisie	U	vive les ouvriers libérés
à bas les bourgeois	T	vive le nouveau monde
à bas les prisons	I	vive la propriété commune
à bas la répression	O	vive la tolérance
à bas la tyrannie	N	vive l'humanité
à bas la guerre		vive la paix
à bas les frontières		vive la terre <sup>27</sup>


## June 4, 1968. Avignon

“And you take it  
And you let him shut you up  
It will be remembered”

Many of the workers vote to “*reprise de travail*,” to go back to work. The police and army help to break the strike, but there are no major incidents. The workers who return to work are coming out of it with some advantages but nowhere near what they asked for. A small increase in wages and an unheard of 30% back pay for the time of the *grève*, to bribe them back to work.

At noon I take a birthday walk through Avignon. The stores are open, the traffic crowds the main street. The shoppers throng in and out of the open banks. I say to Carl, “See, the strike is over, and I thought they were going to give me the French Revolution for my birthday.” Carl: “That’s what they want you to think. These little stores, these busy streets are a show. The workers in the heavy industries are not going back. The railroads are not running. It’s not the percentage of the strikes that stays out that counts but in which industries.” I accept his more sophisticated analysis of the cheerful action on the street. A display of normalcy.

Carl: “And what do you think that is?”

In the statue in the middle of the main square, the symbol  hung from the neck of La France, or Victoire, or St. Martha, or Alma Mater, or whoever that is in the post of “La Gloire,”<sup>28</sup> banners flying.

Everywhere in Avignon, “Vive La Gaulle” is written on the walls, whereas a few days ago the walls were covered with the emblems of the Revolution. Julian says they must go back and plan the real revolution. But Dany Cohn-Bendit<sup>29</sup> condemns those who go back to work on the one hand and admits the unreadiness of the revolutionary action.

Those who have cried *Now, Now* are frightened at how soon *Now* can be.

At rehearsals the Company quarrels about the enactment of violence. Sandy<sup>30</sup> weeps that he must enact a violent gesture in the Wheel of History.

## June 5, 1968

News of the assassination attempt on Robert Kennedy. He is still in the operating room. They have removed a bullet from his brain.

A woman from the festival comes to talk about “the situation,” but they are still acting as if everything will take place as usual. She says we will talk about a new plan for the festival so that it meets the “new revolutionary spirit.” Meanwhile, the kids at the school say there will be no festival. Meanwhile Puaux, who is the manager of the festival here, is in Paris with Vilar,<sup>31</sup> whose actors are on strike and who is not rehearsing his play for the festival. We are dependent on the money to be received from them (“the festival”) on June 15. Otherwise, we have to find some other way to live. We should ask the students what they want.

News every few minutes. Between songs.

News of the operation.

Heart stops.

Heart massage.

Heart recovers.

Second operation commences.

Stop operation because heart fails.

Condition grave.

Mixed with descriptions of the family's and the personages' reactions. “Oh my God, it's impossible”: Jacqueline K. “Pray for his life”: Pope Paul VI.

What is happening to the American temperament, on the eve of election and revolution, a hot summer ahead, restless students, rebellious oppressed peoples, and the violent, the desperate ones? Being put through this Artaudian suspense drama. With the brother of the victim as the ghost in the repeated nightmare.

**June 6, 1968**

He died this morning, heavy in honors and young in years, with the world at the bedside of his agony. The French radio brings a replay of his last interview (in English and French) and his last public speech (. . . we are a nation of compassion . . .) followed by Joan Baez's singing of "We Shall Overcome." It is assumed that after his victory in the California primaries, on the night of his murder, he would have been the next president of the United States. He is being painted as the Great Friend of the Black Man and the advocate of nonviolence.

Nonviolence? All the politicians are speaking of Kennedy's assassination, even more than King's, as an act of "deplorable violence," the same horrible fuss is being made. Kennedy's speech at King's funeral is quoted: the word *nonviolence* is misused, and the word *violence* is misused. Mme. John Kennedy and Mme. King are arriving together. The widows of the assassinated men gather in poignant groups, beautiful goddesses of sorrow and loss, and everyone is moved. And nobody multiples their indignation by the numbers of the casualty lists, because those wives and widows are not photographed in their daily sorrow.

And the intensity of the General Strike is forgotten in the new headlines, and the new topic, the new distress. Last night Julian went to the nightly forum in the Occupied Collège Littéraire. The students argue and wrangle and discuss. A crackpot gets up and reads his letters to the heads of state. The Socialists, Anarchists, Communists, Maoists grind their axes fine. Assuredly everyone is learning more than at classes.

A poster outside the school impressed Julian particularly. It accuses the press of not printing a truthful picture of the strike news. It blames the reporting of the "*reprise du travail*"<sup>32</sup> for the broken spirit of the strikes. It was as though they announced, "The strike's over," and everyone believed them. There are still large numbers of workers occupying the factories. The students are still waging further action and still holding the schools, but press and radio speak of normalization. For instance, everyone says, "The mails are moving."

But neither trains nor planes are moving, and mail is sent only within the province (local mail).

The Kennedy tragedy takes the sting of news out of the hard part that forces the workers into groups, often groups opposing one another. That old word from the labor strikes in the thirties reappears: solidarity.

No one speaks of the strike, everyone speaks of the assassination.

An angry Arab boy.

A call from Paris. Vilar's office: only The Living Theatre and the Béjart company<sup>33</sup> will play at the Avignon Festival. The other companies probably cancelled because of the Strike. Vilar's TNP<sup>34</sup> company is not rehearsing. Julian tells them of the threat of occupation. They say they intend to make the big theatre (the Palace of the Popes?) into a "Tribune for Discussion of Revolutionary Action and Art." Julian and Carl say: "It isn't enough."

## June 7, 1968

We discuss a play about the revolution as the first steps of the revolution seethes, bursts, and simmers down around us. The part of the play that we call "the actions" concerns our direct contact with the audience. We plan to put groups of them through "didactic plays" in which they, as a group, are the protagonists. Then to send them with the work plan amongst the rest of the audience to perpetrate and perpetuate the work.

We talk so much about Guerilla theatre, which we, and everyone, knows so little about. We hear that they are acting out the story of the Paris Commune of 1871 in the plazas of Paris. After ten years of talking about doing theatre in the streets, others are doing it. We hear of Richard Schechner's<sup>35</sup> Guerilla Theatre in New York City, which is a fulfillment and not a fulfillment (even in the noblest sense, a failure, though in a nobler sense a success). It must be almost five years ago that he interviewed us for the *Tulane Drama Review*. At that time he was, so far as I know, a non-activist intellectual radical, and we were then admired for being the most activist committee among the artists in New York (for the General Strike for Peace, air-raid protests, arrests, organizing demonstrations, committing civil

disobedience, etc. . . .) and saying: what we really want to do is street theatre, but we don't know how to get started: how to approach it: technically, legally, financially, and above all, artistically.

Bob Nichols<sup>36</sup> wrote a street theatre play for us to do. A parable about Everyman in the Atomic Age to be performed at various places in Greenwich Village. It was later performed under his direction after we had left America. Then Peter Schumann<sup>37</sup> took his Bread and Puppet Theater into the streets. Its naïve style is especially effective in the busy atmosphere. In California, there were many experiments. And now it is being said—in the company, by Julian, by friends—that only street theatre makes sense in these times. In Paris, Julian said—I think to a journalist—that our “improvisation” with Béjart’s company would be done in the streets of Avignon. A promise rashly made in the excitement of the night at the occupation of the Odéon. But probably to be kept.

#### The Irony of the Agony.

The man who would have been President of the United States lies dead, his body in a glass-topped coffin is being viewed by the people in St. Patrick’s Cathedral.

Sirhan<sup>38</sup> doesn’t speak. His mother wires: May Peace, true Peace, soon enter the hearts of men. But alas, his father in Jerusalem says, no punishment is too severe for such a crime. He stays mute. The last thing he was heard to say was “For my country. The President of the United States, known to many as ‘Assassin’ (you can see it written on the walls of every city in Europe, and I’ll bet in Asia too), forms a commission to study the causes of “violence.” It is already called the “Anti-Violence Commission.”

At the same time: the head man of the chic hippies of the pop-op-underground lies dying (a fifty/fifty chance to live) shot down by an assassin in the other kind of war. A girl named Valerie Solanas<sup>39</sup> shot Andy Warhol<sup>40</sup> through the gut (in a lung, through the stomach, out the other side) and gave herself up to the police.

She's a playwright, who some years ago sent us a play, a very super-dirty play called *Up Your Ass* about a scene of tough-jargon lesbians in their bitter antagonism against the men, and their pursuit of each other. A play totally in the dialect of graffiti. Not a bad play either as I remember it, though loaded with the pathos of hatred and violent anger, and without any redeeming tenderness. With it was a very personal note. I heard from her again in Berlin; she wrote me that she had found financial backing for her play and wanted me to come and direct it, or if I couldn't, did I know of a beautiful, cruel, brilliant girl directress who "would know how to handle the male actors." She had a pistol in each pocket of her coat when she was booked. She belongs to, or has organized, a "group" called "SCUM: Society for Cutting Up Men." She says: It is not true that I killed him because he would not produce my play. There were reasons. It isn't every day that I shoot someone.

The Anti-Violence Commission could learn more from her than from the "studies" they will make. She knows more than they about the roots of violence.

Disturbances at the Renault Factory. Workers and students against the police, who are trying to re-occupy the factory. Tear gas is thrown by both sides. Geismar,<sup>41</sup> head of the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail), the Communist union, is inside. At least that's what's reported.

### **June 8, 1968. Avignon**

At the Festival d'Avignon office we are shown plans for rescheduling the plays between our company and Béjart's. Waiting for the call to come through to Paris to confirm new plans. There is much joking about "la situation." The girl who runs the office is cheerful: "It's all the fault of Cohn-Bendit" and everyone laughs as if it were absurd that this is true.

Jacques, Puaux's young assistant, is somewhat more ironic. I suspect him of being far more revolutionary than he will express there in his "job" as Festival assistant. He says: "The real Festival is taking place in the Latin Quarter." Everyone laughs. But the technician (in shirt and tie, everyone else in casual clothes) is not finding it

so funny. “That’s a circus” he says. And a while later points out that the cancelling of the major part of the Festival has put 250 people out of work this summer.

There’s the crux of it.

When De Gaulle spoke he said nothing but “Go back to work.” And why should his saying that change anybody’s mind?

Because they divided the people.

In giving each *usine*<sup>42</sup> the suggestion that they should go back to work, and destroying the bond between the workers, from factory to factory, and industry to industry, the strike is broken at its weakest point. Wherever there is a group, even one or two who will vote to return to work; they will break the spirit of the strike, and others will follow, and the revolutionary trend will be reversed. Just as the example of Renault and Billancourt inspired the strike, so the example of the weakest and least can deplete that inspiration.

Now the few who hold out against the pressures of a return to “normalcy” must do so under the pain of knowing that they must fight though their cause is lost, because it is needed as an example for the next time. But this is true too at the beginning of movements, when one battles windmills (like the General Strike for Peace in the United States) like the Peace Movement, or the beginnings of the Black Revolution when it was still the Civil Rights Movement.

Fighting and losing, in order to set an example.

Béjart is thrown out of Portugal. In Lisbon last night he asked for a minute of silence after his performance to commemorate Robert Kennedy, “killed by international fascism.” And the audience, aroused, sang the “Internationale” and shouted “Down with Salazar”<sup>43</sup> till the police broke it up with tear gas; and Béjart may not play there anymore.

And in Geneva, and in Brazil, and in Yugoslavia the students are occupying the universities. Yesterday in Paris a movie house is occupied to become a “Cinéma Libre” and tonight two performances in Paris theatres were stopped: at the Vieux-Colombier and at the Lutèce, two small houses where we have played and which are sentimental landmarks in The Living Theatre’s history.

And though the “big shows” did open on the Right Bank, there is still a spirit moving.

## June 9, 1968

Julian returns exhausted at 5 a.m. from Marseille, where he spoke to the students occupying the university. All Maoists and/or what he calls Ubuists. (Ubuism: “I want to take the power and shit on everyone and everything.” JB) Angry, he says, above all, and confused about their own aims and philosophies. Two crackpot Nihilists heckled him, calling out *rien à faire*—“There is nothing to do,” and holding up a blank piece of paper in front of his face to demonstrate the “nothingness.” There was also a Pacifist from Lanza del Vasto’s<sup>44</sup> group who helped support Julian against the advocates of violence. He brings back Maoist literature, damaged by fire in an attack on the communist headquarters. And these students are not communists, nor are they devoted to any other philosophy or position, they are angry, and rightly so, and the expression of their anger is in joining “the opposition.” To what? Why to everything?

Gianfranco<sup>45</sup> says Julian was led into the lion’s den, as though there were a plot to put him down, but this kind of encounter, for all its frustrations has its rewards. Having this ability, it is theft not to use it. One cannot always be surrounded by admirers.

Petra comes from Stuttgart. It will never happen in Germany, she says, of the Revolutionary Movement. Yet she was with a group who went to the theatres and asked (demanded?) to speak to the audience after the performance about the hated “*Notstandsgesetze*,” the emergency laws, which would in any crisis put Germany under a kind of martial law very closely resembling the fascist state of recent memory. And just such a series of strikes and occupations as are happening in France would plunge Germany into an utter darkness. The German protests by the youth has made itself felt but has not prevented the law from being passed: now, before its final ratification, the last desperate manifestations are taking place.

The two theatres Petra’s group went to agreed with the students and after the plays (one was John Cranko’s<sup>46</sup> ballet), a debate was set up which lasted long into the night about “what can be done?”

J: “But you never used to be political.”

Petra: “In my dreams, always, there is only the Revolution.”

It’s all “political”: in Belgium, Hugo Claus is sentenced to four

months in prison for representing the Holy Trinity by four nude men; and Jean-Jacques Lebel is sentenced to seven months for directing a happening in which three nude people appeared in the foyer of the casino. That was at Knokke le Zoute during the festival. The charge in both cases is “offending the public morals.” In Berlin the Mayor’s son, Peter Brandt, is sentenced to fifteen days in prison for his part in the demonstrations that followed the Dutschke *attentat*.<sup>47</sup> The charge is “refusing to obey.”

On the surface, the strike seems over, the stores are open and the telephone works, trains are moving, but not yet interurban mail, nor the planes. The banks were the first to open. Yet many factories are occupied, and the students are still holding the schools. The important thing to the government is the metal industries, which are firmly occupied, and not yielding. This constitutes the government’s and money interests’ financial loss. Then there are dramatic incidents. The most dramatic being at the Renault plant where the strong communist influence of the workers and the activist ardor of the students make for daily police/worker-student clashes, and tear gas and violence scenes that make the headlines and front-page pictures. But it has become “old news,” another event, the Kennedy assassination has taken over the public interest.

It is to be feared that only new violence will renew the fervor of the strike.

### **June 9, 1968. Avignon**

Serve the people  
Says Mao

But I don’t want to serve anyone  
I am not a maid

I am the people  
And we do what we need to do  
And we work

For what we desire  
And it’s really unknown

Food clothing shelter heat  
After that it's all unknown

Serve the people?

We are the people  
And we are not maids.

### **June 11, 1968**

The radio reports new outbreaks of violence in the Latin Quarter. The sound of the exploding grenades is transmitted to the quiet of Avignon. Paul is in Paris, to photograph again the walls and posters with the “handwriting on the wall” that has scrawled its revolutionary message all over the city. He had a gorgeous set of negatives of that scene which the developer “spoiled.” I suspect a nasty political motive, that just these particular photographs should be destroyed for this precious loss the photography store offers him a free roll of film.

They speak of one dead in Paris. I can't quite make out the reports. A big demonstration is planned for seven o'clock tonight at the Gare de l'Est.

Another night of violence. Barricades in many quarters. Terrible reports on the wounded. These many barricades, their blazing fires, casualties, now even deaths have a startling effect on the people. Everyone asks, Why? What are these barricades for?

We have seen a great spontaneous strike for all the human freedoms degenerate into a pointless demand for higher wages. Pointless only because it will be countered by a rise in prices and living costs; a big idealistic battle that has diminished to the proportions of a political debate.

As a strike it is—in spite of its widespread reaction—not successful, but as an outcry!

And that's what these barricades are for, as Paul's hapless gladiator said when he was asked why he was crying: “For Everything! For Everything!”

A twenty-four-year-old worker is shot to death, a sixteen-year-old schoolboy is drowned in the Seine in an encounter with the police on a bridge in front of a factory where students and workers were battling the police at a striking plant. In protest the powerful leftist unions call a one-hour strike and the lights go out in Avignon for an hour. Meanwhile in Paris, they are tearing down the trees and setting fire to the police lorries, all over the city in the *Places* and the *Boulevards*, and tearing up the paving stones, and the people, astonished say “but why” because the distinction has not been made clear.

Carl calls from Paris, the message reads, “Be back Thursday. Missed my train. All is well.” He will have his story to tell.

### **June 12, 1968**

A new stage is reached. The French government has officially “DIS-SOLVED” all the extremist student groups, including, and above all, the Mouvement du 22 Mars,<sup>48</sup> made them illegal and made any continued participation in their activities punishable by two years in jail. What does this mean? It means of course that this vigorous revolutionary movement has been driven underground. A demonstration planned for yesterday evening to protest against the expulsion of the foreign students arrested in the demonstrations, was hastily cancelled in favor of a meeting at the Cité Universitaire. Surely this could not be cowardice. One imagines them gathering to plan an entirely new strategy. Now that they are an underground, there are whole other viewpoints. It has become, suddenly, something else.

Can you call thousands upon thousands of students (of young people that is) an underground, or does it constitute rather a resistance movement? The communists, the official party communists, the leftist press, the communist unions, are vehemently angry at these disorderly anarchists, with the hated black flag, and the Maoist kids, with their flashing anger and their little red books, and the Trotskyists and the far-out ones. So the government knows it cannot fear the large unions and the masses of leftist workers, only a few violent students. Everyone whispers “fascism!” but no one shouts. There were no demonstrations in Paris last night.

### **June 15, 1968. Avignon**

The Odéon has fallen. We hear the news yesterday on the train to Geneva. Already early in the morning the news came of the “cleansing” of the Sorbonne. The word “cleansing” was used (“*nettoyage*”) in both the physical sense of disinfecting the premises and of eliminating some “personnel.”

The word “Katangais”<sup>49</sup> was new to me. How could the students be fighting Katangais? Who were they? That was yesterday. Today the whole world knows that this gang of Parisian kids, these roughnecks, call themselves Katangais because some of their leaders are former “mercenaries” in the Congo wars. They are ultra-long-haired and ultra-beat and ultra-rightist. They came to help the students fight the cops whom they hate. But they began to substitute an atmosphere of violence for the atmosphere of revolution. The students tried to cope, tried to fight them, and finally were, as it were, forced out by them.

### **July 3, 1968. Avignon**

Isha = 50 weeks!

Bookshop: two anarchist books.

JB: Types of “theatre”

Free theatre

Street theatre

Dance theatre

Lyric theatre

Didactic theatre

Open Forum theatre

Representational theatre

Political theatre

Dumbshow

Religious theatre

Psychodrama

Film (images) theatre

Farce theatre

Choral (Chant) theatre

Tribal (Trance) theatre

Puppet theatre

**July 12, 1968**

And the “Revolution of Mai” is over.

**July 14, 1968**

Last year this day we watched the tricolor painted in the sky by the army’s planes across the Arc de Triomphe.

## Notes

- 1 Judith Malina's diary, July 29, 1968. The Living Theatre Collection. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. Courtesy of the Malina Estate.
- 2 Judith Malina, interview with the author, New York City, May 22, 2004.
- 3 Paul Goodman (1911–1972). American playwright, poet, social critic, psychotherapist, and close friend of Malina and Beck.
- 4 French: “general strike.”
- 5 Isha Manna Beck (1967–). Daughter of Judith Malina and Carl Einhorn. Raised by Malina and Julian Beck, who took on the role of father.
- 6 Petra Vogt (1943–). German actor who joined The Living Theatre in 1962.
- 7 Julian Beck (1925–1985). Judith Malina's husband and cofounder, with Malina, of The Living Theatre. Malina sometimes refers to him as “JB.”
- 8 Fédération des groupes d'études et de recherches institutionnelles, a radical group founded by French activist and philosopher Félix Guattari and other militants in France in late 1965.
- 9 French: “All the bridges are blocked.”
- 10 Living Theatre company members Steven Ben Israel (1938-2012), Jim Anderson (1929-1975), Petra Vogt.
- 11 Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970). French military leader and president of France from 1959 to 1969.
- 12 French: “The youth don't exist. De Gaulle is the youth.”
- 13 French: “contradictory, terrorist, truly, creative, students, an action, sabotage, anarchist, institutions.”
- 14 French: “It's not a revolution. It's a revolutionary situation.”
- 15 Jean-Jacques Lebel (1936–). French writer, activist, translator, scholar, and artist known for producing happenings in France. He worked closely with The Living Theatre company members during their time in France in the late 1960s.
- 16 Office de radiodiffusion-télévision français. French national public radio and television agency between 1964-1975.
- 17 Ben Israel.
- 18 French: “break room.”
- 19 French: “In examinations, do not answer any questions.”
- 20 Peking (now Beijing), China.
- 21 French, “I'm leaving.”
- 22 Carl Einhorn (1941–2011). American actor who acted in the European tour of *The Brig* in 1964. Einhorn was Malina's partner and the biological father of her daughter, Isha Manna Beck—though, with Malina, Julian Beck raised Isha and cared for her as a father.

- 23 The Odéon Théâtre de France.
- 24 Paul Taylor (1930–2018). American dancer and choreographer who, in 1954, founded and led the Paul Taylor Dance Company, based in New York City. His company was in Paris performing at the Odéon Theatre at this time.
- 25 French: “I’m leaving.”
- 26 The Living Theatre’s 1964 work *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*.
- 27 down with the police/ long live freedom  
 down with violence/ long live love  
 down with the State/ long live anarchism  
 down with money/ long live free  
 down with capitalism/ long live class unity  
 down with the army/ long live faith  
 down with the bourgeoisie/ long live the liberated workers  
 down with the bourgeois/ long live the new world  
 down with the prisons/ long live common property  
 down with repression/ long live tolerance  
 down with tyranny/ long live humanity  
 down with war/ long live peace  
 down with borders/ long live the earth
- 28 French, “The Glory.”
- 29 Daniel Cohn-Bendit (1945–). German-Polish Jewish student activist who became a leader during the May 1968 events in France and was known as “Dany le Rouge” (Danny the Red).
- 30 Sandy Van der Linden, (1948–). Dutch actor who joined The Living Theatre in 1966.
- 31 Paul Puaux (1920–1998), and Jean Vilar (1912–1971). Vilar was a French director and actor who founded the Avignon Theatre Festival 1947 and served as its inaugural artistic director. Puaux—a French resistance fighter, activist, teacher, and arts advocate—was his longtime administrator.
- 32 French: “return to work.”
- 33 The dance company of Maurice Béjart (1927–2007), Belgian dancer and choreographer.
- 34 Théâtre Nationale Populaire.
- 35 (1934–). American performance scholar, professor, and director.
- 36 Robert Nichols (1919–2010). American playwright, poet, and novelist who cofounded the Judson Poets’ Theater in New York.
- 37 (1934–). German theatre director, artist, and puppeteer who cofounded, with his wife Elka Schumann, the experimental activist company Bread and Puppet Theater in 1963.
- 38 Sirhan Sirhan (1944–). Palestinian-Jordanian man convicted of mur-

dering Robert F. Kennedy due to his support of Israel.

39 (1936–1988). American writer, artist, and radical feminist.

40 (1928–1987). American pop artist and film director.

41 Alain Geismar (1939–). French politician who was a student leader during the May 1968 events.

42 French: “factory.”

43 António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970). Portuguese dictator in the role of Prime Minister of Portugal between 1932 to 1968.

44 Lanza del Vasto (1901–1981). Italian activist, poet, and philosopher who practiced nonviolence.

45 Gianfranco Mantegna ((1939–2001). Italian photographer who joined The Living Theatre and documented the company members and their work between 1965 and 1969.

46 John Cranko (1927–1973). South African ballet dancer and choreographer.

47 French: “attack”

48 French student movement started at Nanterre University in March 1968 that led to the student occupation of the university administrative building, which was one of the many sparks that led to what became known as the May 1968 events. Daniel Cohn-Bendit was one of the group’s leaders.

49 An armed student group that participated in the occupation of the Sorbonne University.





## Book Review

Charles F Howlett, Christian Philip Peterson, Deborah D. Bufton, and David Hostetter, *The Oxford Handbook of Peace History*, (Oxford University Press, 2023)

Jerry Elmer, *Conscription, Conscientious Objection, and Draft Resistance in American History*, Studies in Peace History 1, edited by Michael Clinton and Scott H. Bennett (Leiden, 2023)

Anarchism's presence is everywhere felt but nowhere seen in Peace History. It is not hard to understand why. Even now, anarchism in public perception is synonymous with chaos, disorder, violence and terrorism. Alternatively, but no more accurately, anarchists are naïve idealists with an exaggerated faith in human goodness or reason. Yet, even in its most caricatured forms anarchism is always, at heart, a profound meditation on authority, on the sources of power, coercion, and, in consequence, on the internal structure of the concept of peace.

Randolph Bourne (1886-1918), a progressive writer with sympathies for the anarchists (his essay "The War and the Intellectuals" appeared in Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* 12, no. 4 and 5 [June and July 1917], for example), captured their view of things when just after the First World War he remarked: "War is the health of the State."<sup>1</sup> By this he meant that a capacity to wage war is what grants a small group of men (very occasionally women) authority over others. On the one hand, authority is justified by a promise to protect people from the threat of violence. On the other, it is underwritten by the capacity to fulfil that promise, namely, to mobilize excessive force, not just in terms of military might, but as a total mode of social and economic organization. In any conflict situation, then, part of the state's armory is a capacity to dissolve civil liberties and divert all resources, including human, to the war machine.

The grounds for this vicious circle are not obscure but proudly proclaimed in the foundational texts of Western political philosophy. Even under supposedly benign 'progressive' administrations, war is

always both a rationalization for the state and its principal resource for self-maintenance. We give up our natural freedom to the authority of the state because we wish for protection from the natural belligerence of others. To maintain that authority, the state must wield the power of violence. The state can only remain legitimate if it protects you. The only way it can protect you is to threaten you.

For anarchists, while there are states, governments or other hierarchical structures imbuing a ruling elite with equivalent access to power, there is no peace. We are never not at war; if we are not actually fighting then we are waiting for the ceasefire to end. Only the dissolution of the state, indeed of all hierarchies, can permanently end war, not necessarily conflict, and definitely not violence, but war as a collision of more-or-less organized political bodies.

Given this, anarchists find peace a relatively unambiguous term. It describes a set of structural conditions under which war becomes impossible because no single group controls the amount of force necessary for conducting war or compelling obedience. How that point is reached, or what exactly it looks like on arrival, is a matter of intense and ongoing contestation, but that is the bottom line. A full-blooded anarchist history of peace, then, must also be a history of contesting but also of removing power from the state and its attendant apparatus—the army, the police, courts and judiciary—and redistributing it among more and more people until no group commands any more advantage than any other.

Following the definition above, the two books under consideration here, *The Oxford Handbook of Peace History*, and *Conscription, Conscientious Objection, and Draft Resistance in American History*, are not, or not consciously, anarchist histories of peace. At the same time, both inevitably must address similar questions about the intersections of the state, power and war. The pair approach this task in very different ways. *The Handbook* maps the terrain of peace history, or at least a version of it, through chapters representing what the editors believe constitute the discipline's chief themes, problems, questions, methods, and developments. By contrast, *Conscription*, is a focused study of one particular aspect of peace history in modern American

history. In their distinct ways, both illuminate aspects of the complex but sustained dialogue between anarchism and peace studies, albeit by accident rather than by design.

### **The Oxford Handbook of Peace History**

“Historians have not reached an easy consensus on the definition of peace history” (p. 2) say the editors in their introduction (pp. 1-68) to this collection. Despite this nod to the field’s conceptual confusion, they go on to state their own terms. For them, peace history must contain some combination of the following elements:

1. Conflict Management—direct efforts to stop or ameliorate conflict.
2. Social Reform—indirect efforts to adjust social, cultural, and economic environments toward promoting peace.
3. World Order Transformation—direct efforts to curate international political, economic, and environmental relationships that promote peace.

From an anarchist perspective, this does not resemble a vibrant history of power contestation and dispersal. Rather, it aligns with a conventional ‘Liberal Order’ account of peace as a rules-based procedure of consensus production.

Certainly, these categories are reflected throughout the chapters. Sections one to three escorts the reader from the ancient world to the modern globalized one, providing snapshots of the shifting status of peace in foreign and domestic policy. Nuances notwithstanding, peace here is top-down: the revelation of religious doctrine, the idol of intellectual elites, a virtue of leadership, a shrewd political calculation, a timely accord, treaty, or a prudent alliance.

Later chapters refresh other old refrains. In a chapter on “Trade, Insecurity, and the Costs of Conflict” (pp. 609–628), Michelle Garfinkel and her co-authors examine the claim that war makes countries rich-

er and find data to show it does not (although they were not counting political capital). Turning to Adam Smith (1723–1790), they investigate his theory of peace as free trade between small states made up of self-interested, high consuming individuals. Contrasting the wealth and security interface of small states with that of large states pursuing economic autarky or protectionism, the former fares better (pp. 622ff.). Smith is found to be sound in theory but what the authors do not address is whether we have had or could ever have ‘free’ trade and genuinely ‘open’ markets. Nor do they tell us much about who counts as a self-interested, high consuming individual and what happens to those who do not.

Elsewhere, John Gittings (pp. 629–649) surveyed the “epic journey” of “International Law, International Institutions, and the Pursuit of Peace” (well, some of it, the chapter only starts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and looks exclusively at Europe). Gittings takes us from the founding of the Red Cross to early pan-European peace conferences and the creation of international peace organizations like the Women’s International Peace Congress. He notes how ambition flourished with the League of Nations and faded with its demise. Most of his account is reserved for the United Nations (1945–), a triumph, he notes, but one instantly besieged by difficulty. It fought to assert universality during the Cold War, grappled with “third world development” and liberation movements in the 1960s–1970s, and was forced to improvise a peacekeeping operation to keep world superpowers at bay. Now it faces a chaotic, multi-polar landscape of threats including a new cold war, climate change, pandemics, as well as the continued danger of nuclear catastrophe which its systems are struggling to contain. Still, Gittings concludes, such existential risks only heighten “the need for stronger international institutions and laws to defend the long-term interests of the world’s population.” (p. 644)

Occasionally, faint cracks in the consensus appear. In their chapter on “Addressing Inequality in Peace Studies: How the Peace-Development Nexus Is Driving a Needed Transformative Turn” (pp. 739–769), Erin McCandless and Mary Hope Schwoebel come close to dissent by regretting how traditionally peace studies overfocuses on peace as realpolitik, neglecting how social and environmental precarity drives

conflict. But what they condemn with one hand, they replace with the other. Their long and detailed list of “peacebuilding-development praxis nexus paradigms” (p. 745) turns the problem of precarity into a policy puzzle resolved by making the minimal number of adjustments necessary to preserve order. Kathleen Kennedy (“Gender, Sexuality, and Peace”, pp. 703–722) and Michael Goode’s (“The Future of Peace History”, pp. 847–865) respective chapters push further in highlighting how peace history viewed through prisms of gender, race, and class looks much less settled and far more disruptive, not least when one reckons on how upholding ‘liberal’ balances of power and trade depended on the mass exploitation and political marginalization of women, the poor, and people of color. Yet while Goode acknowledges these tremors as vital future directions for the discipline, this collection as a whole shows little enthusiasm for probing them further.

What is most surprising about *The Handbook* is that it is not more surprising. At a time when thinking about peace has never been more urgent or interesting, it feels strangely subdued. Even a chapter on Mohandas Gandhi written by Gail Presbey (pp. 538–558) is curiously flat. Gandhi’s theory of satyagraha, truth force, remains as relevant and complex as it ever was, and as such the anarchist-pacifist reception of the same would certainly merit attention.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, it was a strategy for non-violent militancy through partial self-sacrifice. This idea alone is paradoxical, demanding closer consideration of the peace-violence nexus, but his significance goes further still. Satyagraha was also a revolutionary philosophy advocating a form of radical egalitarianism many found (ironically) despotic. Despite this, Gandhi emerges here strained of these difficulties, diluted for inclusion in a mainstream pantheon of saintly icons. Controversial tactics are blamed on followers who, we are told, misinterpreted his meaning.

*Oxford Handbooks* are not in-depth studies. They provide state-of-the-discipline reviews. As such, *Handbook* chapters need to indicate the breadth of content, methods, and debates within a given field to fulfil their brief. In this case, however, excessive fidelity to the conventional ‘liberal’ scripts of peace fails that brief by reducing peace history to a backdrop for an increasingly unconvincing normative

theory. The fact that anarchism, anarchist-pacifist or anarchist anti-militarist traditions warrant only a glancing reference (and then only to Leo Tolstoy in the index), let alone more serious, detailed consideration, only confirms the *Handbook's* limitations. The failure to even acknowledge anarchist critiques of conventional theories, despite their clear relevance to the problems of peace discourse unnecessarily contracts this collection's richness.

### **Conscription, Conscientious Objection, and Draft Resistance in American History**

By contrast, Jerry Elmer's monograph is not broad but emphatically specific. Up front he tells us his book is a study of conscription legislation from the Civil War to Vietnam, not a history of US peace movements, anti-militarism, or military strategy. While this seems a narrow and technical focus, he uses it to illuminate the same state-war-power equation that preoccupies anarchists. Elmer sees conscription as a key mechanism through which the US state extended its control into civilian life from the Civil War onwards. His history, then, is a lens into production, and contestation of that control in politics and law.

Two aspects stand out. First, Elmer treats conscription as something far broader than the recruitment of civilians for military service in war time. He shows how, early on, conscription statutes also allowed governments to direct men towards work deemed in the "national interest". Recalling the outrage in 1967 over General Hershey's "channeling" memorandum outlining this "direction" policy, Elmer demonstrates how Hershey, far from innovating, was just repeating a mantra common within military and government circles since the First World War.

Second, Elmer, the only convicted felon (for draft resistance) to graduate from Harvard Law School, is a diligent legal scholar. This allows him to plot the course of the legislative process with precision and insight. In the chapter on the First World War, for example, he opens with Woodrow Wilson's speech to a joint session of Congress in April 1917 seeking a formal declaration of war against Germany.

During his address, the President asked for authorization to increase the size of the US army. Over the next few days, the request was hastily shaped into a Bill, passing into law in May 1917. The May draft statute granted the government power to raise the full increment of forces by drafting state militia like the National Guard. It made further provisions for exempting government officials and granted that conscientious objectors would only be exempt if they came from a recognized religious organization. Significantly, it also added that objectors would not be exempt from noncombatant work. The statute created draft boards to administer recruitment and district boards to hear exemption appeals. Later, two further acts, the espionage act (1917) and the sedition act (1918), made it illegal to “incite, provoke, or encourage resistance to the United States.”

Reconstructing the journey from political intention to legal fact, Elmer shows how, with each subclause, supporting act, and new administrative agency, the government’s advanced into private life and held its gains. The most chilling instance of this was the Selective Service Act of 1948, the first *peacetime* draft, which required all men aged between 18-26 to register with draft boards. Theoretically, they could then be called for 21 months active service at any time, with a further two years in the Reserves. The Act, Elmer notes, was passed by Congress without murmur. Less than half a century earlier, most Americans would have found it inconceivable.

At the same time, Elmer is too good a historian to reduce law to crude state apparatus. It has also been a resource for contesting and resisting power. Again, this is complex and multi-faceted. First, and at a basic level, draft resisters have been able to exploit technicalities like omissions in the statutes, thus forcing the hand of otherwise reluctant courts. We are offered the example of *Billings v. Truesdale* for illustration. Arthur Billings refused induction into the army and was imprisoned in military jail. He sued on the basis that he had not completed induction, was not technically in the army and was therefore only subject to prosecution by a civilian court, not a military one. Despite having his case twice rejected by the trial court and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, it was finally upheld by the Supreme Court, which agreed there was nothing in the text statute providing

for those who refused induction. The precedent this set forced the military to release many other conscientious objectors from military prison. But Billings' tale was ultimately a cautionary one. He got his day in civilian court where he was found guilty and sentenced to two years in a civilian prison (the Justice Department being keen to make an example of him).

Second, Elmer points to the unrealized *potential* of the law to keep power in check, especially when positioned as a mediator between the government of the day and the US constitution. In his careful analyses of statute language, he identifies legal challenges that *could* have stood some chance of success. In the case of Wilson's draft act, he argues, a study of the two "Dick" Acts (referring to the 'Efficiency in Militia Acts of 1903 named after Charles Dick, chairman of the Militia Committee) it was based on would have shown that in 1911 a US Army Judge had already ruled the use of seconded militia men outside of the United States was unconstitutional.

The third method of mobilizing the law against conscription was civil disobedience. Here, Elmer acknowledges different kinds of disobedience with varying types of relation to the law. During the Civil War and the First World War, organized, armed draft resistant groups not merely refused the draft, but openly defied the law by killing conscription officers, blowing-up bridges, and destroying railway lines. By contrast, conscientious objection, as a matter of private conscience, defied the law but broadly accepted the consequences of doing so, despite their severity. Objectors whose reasons for exemption went unrecognized by appeal boards or whose commitment to pacifism forbade them from contributing to noncombative war work regularly faced extended jail terms. Some accepted this as a public proclamation of faith through self-sacrifice. Others preferred quieter strategies of non-cooperation, simply evading the law by not registering or going into hiding.

Civil disobedience technique evolved again during the Vietnam-era protests with seemingly dramatic effects. The late sixties draft resistance benefited from a convergence of factors. First, the Vietnam conflict was deeply unpopular. Second, the Selective Service Act

was outdated and badly administrated. Third, the younger generation lacked the deference of their parents and were more confident in their actions. Capitalizing on this, draft resisters combined the militancy of the previous armed groups with the moral protest of the conscientious objectors to devise large-scale, widespread protests which cut across generations, classes, faiths, genders, and races. These were often spectacular, like the mass draft card burning in Washington, April 1967, but strictly non-violent (which is not to say that everyone was a pacifist). By avoiding aggression, organizers engineered a no-win scenario against the authorities. Protestors *wanted* to fill the jails to prove the complicity of the courts with state belligerence. If they were arrested, they got their wish. If, on the other hand, they were not arrested, the authorities seemed to condone their case. Caught in a bind, the US justice department responded by pursuing random but excessively vicious prosecutions.

Vietnam draft resisters also diversified and devolved their methods of resistance. Alongside the mass protests, individuals or small groups found theatrical ways to ensure that authorities looked foolish if they overreacted. One man ate his draft card, another had his girlfriend cut it up (she could not be prosecuted), another woman handcuffed herself to her husband when officers tried to arrest him. Despite the innovation and enterprise, Elmer reminds readers that 1960s resisters probably looked more radical than they really were, especially when compared to the organized Civil War resistance. Reflecting on why sixties radicalism remains such a prevailing popular myth, he suggests this owes something to the contraction of liberty in the public imagination. Through mechanisms like conscription, the US state advanced a sustained and systematic attack on civil liberties throughout the twentieth century. As a result, the depth of antagonism towards the state shown by earlier resisters, their confidence in defying it and willingness to oppose through force, became unthinkable.

Elmer's account of how conscription legislation facilitated the US state's colonization of civil life will hold no surprises for anarchists although it provides a nice substantiation of their old maxim "War is the health of the State". Similarly, his analysis of how state colonization has been consistently challenged naturally resonates with the

anarchic spirit of direct-action resistance. Arguably, Elmer dwells too much on the missed potential for legal contestation but this is balanced by the book's court case studies, which show how rarely such actions succeeded (and how often they were weaponized against the people who brought them when they did).

The real anarchism in *Conscription*, however, is the social creativity which draft resistance unleashed: the makeshift alliances and improvised associations that brought unusual combinations of people together to fight for each other's freedom. They are all there, threaded throughout the book's pages—the inter-racial sharecroppers from Oklahoma who collaborated against the draft during the First World War, the co-operation between faith groups and the Union of farmers to oppose the Second World War draft, the partnership between anti-Jim Crow activists and draft evaders in the Korean War-era—but their significance is downplayed in favor of the court room vignettes. Once again, anarchy is the poltergeist, rattling noisily in the background.

If we are ever to live in a world beyond draft resistance, it is here, in these ad-hoc configurations, that the long-term future of peace depends. As Elmer has ably showed, it is no small thing to keep the belligerent apparatus of government at bay, but if we are to hold that space, or even to increase it, we must fill it with new kinds of social relationship that secure our personal independence by dissolving our dependency on that state and inventing new ways to meet our needs without its protection.

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## Notes

1 Randolph Bourne, “Unfinished Fragment on the State [Winter, 1918],” in *Untimely Papers*, edited by James Oppenheim (New York, 1919), 140–230 (145).

2 See, for instance, the recurring interest of anarchists in Gandhi’s philosophy, from Leo Tolstoy, Bart de Ligt, and George Woodcock to Geoffrey Ostergaard and April Carter.



## Book Review

William Marling, *Christian Anarchist: Ammon Hennacy—A Life on the Catholic Left* (New York University Press, 2022)

One of America's greatest soapbox orators and streetcorner proselytizers, Ammon Hennacy (1893–1970) was a failure as a high school debater. At Lisbon High in rural Ohio in the years before World War I, all students were required to join one of three debating societies; Hennacy later recalled that he was often tongue-tied and that his team lost every debate. He also took public speaking, “but I was the worst in each class.”<sup>1</sup>

There might have been a trace in pride in this, since, 50 years later, when he was writing his second autobiography, *The Book of Ammon*—which had an introduction by TV talk-show host Steve Allen—he was a national celebrity of sorts, an absolute pacifist, war-tax resister, anti-nuclear agitator, Christian radical, and sworn enemy of the state who tapped into a deeply American vein of individualist anarchism. “No one on the pacifist Left—not Dorothy Day, his colleague Dave Dellinger, or his friend Claude McKay—sacrificed personal freedom as Hennacy did,” his biographer, William Marling, writes, capturing one of the great paradoxes of his subject's career: the obligation Hennacy felt to live a life of denial in the cause of universal freedom.

Just as remarkable is how he overcame his tongue-tied-ness and launched his long career as a public persuader. Ammon Hennacy was a salesperson—a traveler in sales, as they were sometimes called—and a very good one.

Still in high school but soon after his debating debacle, he got a summer job in 1912 selling cornflakes—the health food fad of the day—across the Midwest, door to door. “Gradually he acquired a pitch, his fluency improved, and he began to feel at ease cold-calling on strangers.”<sup>2</sup> The next summer, he and his crew trudged across Iowa, Minnesota, and as far east as Massachusetts selling cornflakes. At 19, he already identified as a Socialist, but saw no problem hawking a breakfast cereal, since corn flakes at the time were associated with vegetarianism, a practice he also espoused.

Several years later, when he and his wife, Selma, were traveling back and forth across the US on a years-long journey to discover America, he got a job selling Fuller Brushes in Atlanta. “I led the office [in sales] for the first 2 ½ months,” he boasted in a letter to his father, who was himself selling brushes in Toledo. Over the next few years, whenever he needed money, Hennacy went back to brushes: in San Francisco and Oakland, and in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, when he and Selma were trying to make a go of it as farmers. Some 40 years later, in Salt Lake City, by which time he was one of America’s most famous pacifists, he needed money again, and again he picked up a Fuller Brush route.<sup>3</sup>

Always, he excelled at the job. And just as with cornflakes, he did not think it went against his principles. Alfred “Dad” Fuller, founder of the company, was a member of the Christian Science church who allowed his people to control their own hours and sales techniques and encouraged them to innovate. He hired the handicapped and was the first to hire women as door-to-door sales representatives. He engaged his salespeople as “dealers” rather than employees, which meant their wages were not subject to withholding tax, which fitted Hennacy’s desire not to feed the war machine.<sup>4</sup>

“Dad” Fuller was no anarchist: he laid off thousands of his dealers during the depths of the Great Depression, including Hennacy. But the niche he created for people who did not fit into the standard working world suggests the social and ideological fluidity of early and midcentury America, when hoboing was common and a freelance radical like Hennacy could crisscross the country, working odd jobs, agitating, and finding sympathetic communities as well as eccentric farmers and business owners who felt an affinity with him even if they did not agree with his politics.

His life reads at times like one of Jack Kerouac’s novels, with politics thrown in: the same constant motion, appetite for talk and experience, and vast network of oddball friends, acquaintances, and mentors. His faith in the cultural power of personal transformation through fellowship has echoes in the philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous, whose principal founder, Bill Wilson, was born just two years after him.

An enemy of capitalism and all forms of economic exploitation, Hennacy's essential political compass was moral, not ideological, which was probably why he left the Socialist Party early on and never joined another. His most consistent guiding principles throughout his adult life he derived from the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, Gandhian non-violence, and the personalist Christian anarchism of Leo Tolstoy, yet he bounced around spiritually between the Baptist and Quaker faiths to atheism to a flirtation with Christian Science to Hopi religion to Catholicism to a late flirtation with Mormonism.

Whether they are selling brushes, corn flakes, or peace, love, and anarchy, salespeople depend for their livelihood on a talent for connecting with people: with a line, an offering, an instinct for spotting what the individual on the other end of the conversation wants, needs, feels is missing from their life. In the '50s, when he was living at the Catholic Worker movement's Chrystie Street House in New York City, Marling writes, Hennacy was an "all-occasions rhetor, preaching on streetcorners from Wall Street to the Bronx, giving each passerby his full attention, his full presence: just as he did, we can be sure, when he brought his case of brushes to a new prospect's front door." Later, a friend remembered, "he walked into college classrooms already talking, and they listened."<sup>5</sup>

A salesperson does not need a thorough or perfectly coherent philosophy or political program to achieve that effect; it can be a liability, in fact, because too detailed a belief system can turn the buyer off. "His moral framework was personal responsibility," Marling writes. "If you do not trespass against your neighbor, your neighbor will not trespass against you. He presses us to add this uncompromising quality to our daily appreciation of the joy and discovery of God, or the good, as he liked to quip."<sup>6</sup>

Hennacy's mission was to convince the people he encountered that war, nuclear weapons, capital punishment, animal slaughter, and the destruction of the environment were a catastrophe and a betrayal of their humanity. This necessitated declaring their autonomy from the state, which sanctioned or even committed such crimes, but that step could come later. As an agent in this process, Hennacy's most im-

portant contribution was to bear witness, in the sense of stating and embodying his beliefs. This could take the form of a liquid-only fast, picketing, providing shelter for the destitute, or just standing in front of a public building carrying a placard. But never violence. A quintessential Hennacy photo shows him standing on a sidewalk in Phoenix, carrying a sign that reads, “75% [OF] YOUR INCOME TAX GOES FOR WAR AND THE BOMB! I have REFUSED to pay my income taxes for the past EIGHT YEARS.”<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 1.** Ammon Hennacy. Photograph by Rik Anderson, a Phoenix Quaker. Reproduced with permission from Marling 2022, p. 159.

What he offered, in other words, was not a doctrine but an invitation: to consider another way of thinking about the world we have made that enables us to reclaim our humanity and be at one with nature and the good (or God). That invitation was always from one individual to another, because Hennacy believed that change in society had to originate within the individual, and so he worked to bring about that change, one individual at a time. He called the Golden Rule his “celestial bulldozer” and himself a “one-man revolution.”

This suggests the tension that marked his entire life. Throughout, Hennacy sought a community or organization that conformed to his individualist Christian-anarchist philosophy, and periodically he thought he had found it: in the Socialist Party, in the I.W.W., briefly in Christian Science, in the Doukhobor (“spirit-warriors” or “spirit-wrestlers” in Russian) community, and for the longest stretch, in the Catholic Worker movement (hence the full title of Marling’s biography).

Always, however, he moved on. A one-man revolution, as the designation implies, operates essentially alone, and while he sympathized with radical labor, the Hopi communities he became close to in his middle years, and the Catholic Worker, his politics were too personal for him to devote himself entirely to one collective approach. This constant oscillation or balancing between the individual and the collective was one of the qualities that made him fundamentally an anarchist and such a fascinating figure to Americans—and not just leftists—for so long (his 1970 obituary in the *Salt Lake City Tribune* was headlined, “An American Legend”). But it also complicates the question of what his legacy really is.

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Hennacy’s life extended from the days of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, both of whom he knew, Joe Hill and Mother Jones to the anti-draft and anti-war campaigns of the ’60s, when figures like David Dellinger and Daniel Berrigan were counterculture heroes. Arguably, his brand of activism was more influential during the latter period than at any other time of his life. As a young man, he sampled

a cornucopia of radical groups and subgroups, from the Socialist and Communist parties to the Wobblies to the Anti-Rent Payers League. The '30s—the heyday of the Old Left—were lonelier. It was during the postwar decades, when the less doctrinaire New Left was taking shape and he was in his fifties, sixties, and seventies, that he became a nationally known figure, although his frugal manner of living never changed.

Every year, he fasted and picketed against war and, later, the atomic bomb, sometimes for weeks. He first prepared a carefully worded leaflet explaining his reasons for not paying income tax, printed as many copies as he could, and distributed them to every public official and influential person he could think of. The rest he gave out by hand, in whichever city he happened to be when he commenced. By the early '50s, his fasts were attracting wide attention in the media; when he finished, he would call the wire services to let them know how long he had gone—his record was 48 days—how much weight he had lost, how many leaflets and copies of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper he had given out, and how many people had stopped and greeted him: or else spoken harsh words.

This once-a-year routine was a constant, but Hennacy was a savvy strategist as well as a great salesperson and soapbox orator. He was not America's first tax resister—the first well-known advocate in the US was one of his heroes, Henry David Thoreau—but he inspired others to make refusal to fund war a widespread practice in the '60s, including as a means of compelling oneself to build a life outside the state.

In 1955, he persuaded Dorothy Day, Bayard Rustin, A. J. Muste, and other New York activists to refuse an order from the mayor to evacuate to fallout shelters in a nuclear drill, arguing that it was an attempt to normalize nuclear war. They were arrested, receiving suspended sentences, but more importantly, their protest made national headlines, opening up another line of argument about the authority of the state and the insanity of “preparing” for a nuclear attack. When compulsory air raid drills were finally abandoned in 1962, it was at least partly their work.<sup>8</sup>

None of this quite captures Hennacy's extraordinarily busy life, however. He often worked backbreaking menial jobs during the day and then spent the nights writing articles, answering letters from like-minded radicals and anarchists, somehow making time to sell newspapers, agitate, challenge the authorities, and engage with whoever happened to stop to speak with him, all the while struggling to send money and maintain a presence in the lives of his two daughters after his marriage to Selma ended. Throughout, he developed his personalist anarchist philosophy, which he laid out in three books: *Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist* (1954), *The Book of Ammon* (1964), and *The One-Man Revolution* (1970).

The most formative period of Hennacy's life was the two and a half years he spent in federal prison in Atlanta, starting at age 24, for staging an antiwar rally, eight and a half months of which he spent in solitary confinement. There, he met Berkman, who was serving two years for conspiracy against the draft and would be deported to Russia after his release. "His kindly smile made me feel that I had a friend," Hennacy later wrote, and Berkman, who had spent a total of 14 years in prison, explained to him "how to get letters out, how to speak without moving your lips, and that on rainy days they could meet in the Catholic chapel, for the chaplain was a sympathetic ex-boxer," Marling tells us.

In prison, Hennacy read the Bible and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is within You* (1893), which he later called the second most influential book in his life.

"I felt that it must have been written especially for me, for here was the answer already written out to all the questions I had tried to figure out for myself in solitary. To change the world by bullets or ballots was a useless procedure.... Therefore the only revolution worthwhile was the one-man revolution within the heart. Each one could make this by himself and not need to wait on a majority. I had already started this revolution in solitary by becoming a Christian. Now I had completed it by becoming an anarchist."<sup>9</sup>

He wrote this many years later, and it probably reflects a good deal of hindsight. Hennacy was already a vegetarian, for example, so he did not need Tolstoy to argue for it. But Marling notes that Tolstoy convinced Hennacy to make absolute non-violence—which Berkman did not endorse—and small-scale farming core parts of his anarchism. Once he had absorbed some of Gandhi’s life and thought, and particularly the idea that “my life is my message,” his political education was nearly complete. The first great “jolt” of his life, he later wrote, was when he realized, in solitary, that he must love “my enemy the warden.”<sup>10</sup>

He never developed a clear-cut social analysis, and while he admired Joe Hill and the I.W.W. and once, as a social worker in Milwaukee, persuaded his co-workers to form a union, he seldom engaged directly with organized labor. He understood class warfare but rejected organizing along class lines, a position that many of his anarchist heroes, like Kropotkin and Berkman, would not have understood.

The only extended period when Hennacy attached himself to an established movement was his years with the Catholic Worker community. In Milwaukee during the Depression years, he agitated on Saturdays, selling radical newspapers including *Conscientious Objector* and *Social Work Today*. In the process, he got to know a growing community of Catholic leftists who introduced him to another newspaper, the *Catholic Worker*. Soon he was selling it, too, writing for it, corresponding with its editor, Dorothy Day, and even distributing the paper to his co-workers’ desks.

In 1951, he formally converted to Catholicism, and in a book he published three years later, *The Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist*, he attempted to explain his reasons for doing so. For the most part, his arguments are superficial and not very coherent; he never engages with the authoritarian, hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church and what it meant for an anarchist to submit to such an institution, for example. The closest he comes to a straightforward explanation of his decision is earlier in the text, when he describes a Sunday in Phoenix when “I went to mass with Dorothy, not because I believed in the mass, but because I believed in Dorothy.”<sup>11</sup>

Hennacy was in love with the charismatic leader of the Catholic Worker collective in New York, and the bond and the tension between them is one of the most fascinating aspects of the story Marling tells. His writings in the *Catholic Worker* newspaper played an important role in building the movement's following in the postwar years, and the Chrystie Street house gave him a home base for his activities in New York in the '50s. The partnership with Day could not last, because Hennacy was a compulsive syncretist, finding and blending elements of different faiths as it suited him, while Day was deeply and exclusively devoted to Catholic dogma.

But she exemplified the kind of life Hennacy was trying to live, and the Catholic Worker, better than any other community he had encountered, combined pacifism, political radicalism, and spirituality. He began attending mass several years before he converted, and kept attending for years after he left the community and stopped being an avowed Catholic because it gave him the feeling of being connected with something eternal.<sup>12</sup> Just before he died in 1970, he received the last rites of the church.

But elements of Catholicism resonated strongly with Hennacy's individualist approach to activism as well, particularly the individual believer's search for a kind of personal perfection. This helps clarify the purpose of his annual picketing-and-fasting campaign, which by the '60s encompassed the atomic bomb and the death penalty along with the draft and war taxes. Patrick G. Coy, a Catholic Worker community member and longtime peace activist, captured Hennacy's intention neatly in a 1988 essay:

“He did not fast against the Atomic Energy Commission, but rather as a penance for his own sins of complicity in Hiroshima, atomic testing, and the arms race. He fasted not so much to change others—that was impossible given his understanding of human nature—but rather to deepen his own resistance and to offer a witness to truth. In this way, his fasting was an invitation to others to change.”<sup>13</sup>

At least one close associate from his Catholic Worker days—the painter Mary Lathrop—thought he might have been a saint.<sup>14</sup>

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Marling's book—the first full-length biography of Hennacy—does an excellent job of communicating the texture of his life: his incessant physical as well as spiritual journeying, his difficult but compelling personality (“I love my enemies, but I'm hell on my friends”<sup>15</sup>), his fraught relationships with women and people in authority. Hennacy's last partner, Joan Thomas, helped Marling research his biography, and her voice and perspective come through strongly in the picture it paints of Hennacy as an individual. But there are gaps, partly because, while Hennacy wrote about his life as an activist and his spiritual quest at length, he seldom wrote about his personal life. I wanted to know more about his family, including a brother, sister, and cousin who were also radicals, and his mother, who gave him moral support as long as she lived, whatever position he was taking. The book, from New York University Press, could also have done with a better index than the sketchy one provided.

The larger problem is that Marling never addresses directly the legacy of Hennacy's message: an important omission in writing about a person whose whole life was devoted to delivering his message. The Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount inspired him to advocate absolute non-violence, as they do many pacifists. But this blurs the important distinction, for an anarchist, between state and non-state violence. It complicates any strategy of insurrection against the state, which might or might not include the use of force. And it ignores how cultural or physical conditions can determine what kind of revolutionary tactics can work and which cannot.

It is possible that Hennacy followed the only path he could, given the strictly moral lens through which he understood humanity's problems. But it is hard not to wonder what his life might have been if he had stuck with labor organizing after he left the penitentiary in Atlanta: if he had become more of an anarcho-syndicalist and less of a Tolstoyan, in other words. Would his impact as a speaker, writer, and

thorn in the side of capitalism and the state have been greater? Could he have helped to keep the labor movement in the US from turning rightward after World War II, moved it to support the Civil Rights movement more fully and oppose the Vietnam War?

The fact that he, or somebody, did not do these things reveals how much is lost due to America's rejection—so far—of any kind of socialism, including anarchism. Hennacy's influence will survive if only because the US makes it easier to follow his path than a more collectivist one: to be a Christian anarchist rather than an anarcho-syndicalist, for example. But I do not mean to dismiss his achievement by saying so, only to say that I try to follow a different path of resistance and revolt.

One response to Hennacy's message—his example—is the one Orwell made to Gandhi's after the Mahatma's death. Orwell disliked a lot about the “other-worldly, anti-human tendency in his doctrine,” but considered Gandhi to have been an honest person. “Regarded simply as a politician, and compared with the other leading political figures of our time, how clean a smell he has managed to leave behind!” Moreover, with the brand-new threat of nuclear war overhanging the world in 1948, “it is at least thinkable that that the way out lies through non-violence.”<sup>16</sup>

Hennacy would have replied that a revolution of the heart is required to make non-violence a political force, and therefore is essential if humanity is to avoid its own destruction. Examining his life at a time when the “modernization” of nuclear arsenals is moving forward and the state is devising ever more devastating ways to control and/or wipe out populations, I have to agree. Hennacy understood that without the transformation he hoped to sell, any kind of revolution, proletarian or other, could only substitute a new oppressor for the old one. The “one-man revolution” he preached aimed to avoid that by convincing us to live a fully conscious life differently *in the moment*, not when the present social system is ready to let us.

Eric Laursen, Independent journalist, scholar, and anarchist organizer and activist

## Notes

- 1 William Marling, *Christian Anarchist: Ammon Hennacy—A Life on the Catholic Left* (New York University Press, 2024), 19.
- 2 Marling, *Christian Anarchist*, 21.
- 3 Marling, *Christian Anarchist*, 246.
- 4 Marling, *Christian Anarchist*, 29.
- 5 Marling, *Christian Anarchist*, 254.
- 6 Marling, *Christian Anarchist*, 254.
- 7 Marling, *Christian Anarchist*, 159. Emphasis in the original.
- 8 William O. Reichert, *Partisans of Freedom: A Study of American Anarchism* (Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1976), 506.
- 9 Ammon Hennacy, *Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist* (Catholic Worker Press, 1954), 55.
- 10 Hennacy, *Autobiography ...*, 287.
- 11 Hennacy, *Autobiography ...*, 147.
- 12 Hennacy, *Autobiography ...*, 298.
- 13 Patrick G. Coy, “The One-Person Revolution of Ammon Hennacy,” in *A Revolution of the Heart: Essays on the Catholic Worker*, ed. Patrick G. Coy (Temples University Press, 1988), 156-57.
- 14 Marling, *Christian Anarchist*, 229.
- 15 Coy, “The One-Person Revolution ...”, 153.
- 16 George Orwell, “Reflections on Gandhi,” *Partisan Review* 16, no. 1 (January 1949): 85–92.