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John [Johann] Most

JOHAN MOST IS dead, and with his death the movement has lost a most ardent worker. Most was a born rebel, and early in life harnessed himself to the revolutionary movement. He died in his sixtieth year in Cincinnati while on his way to Chicago to speak at the commune celebration.

Most was one of the great individualities the German revolutionary movement has produced. For forty years, with pen and tongue, he has fought the powers of privilege, and so powerful was the force of his words that, for more than twenty-five years he had the honorable distinction of being the most feared and hated individual in the revolutionary movement. A powerful orator, with strong convictions and an undaunted courage he soon brot down upon his head the wrath of the capitalists and their watchdogs - the governments. Jailed and jailed again in every country he has honored by his presence this mouthpiece of the social revolution could not be subdued. The unconquerable could not be conquered, the untameable could not be tamed. Each term of imprisonment, instead of cowering and subduing him, only added fuel to the fire of his revolutionary genius. the terms of imprisonment were mere recreation for him, wherein he recuperated his forces and stored up fresh supplies of energy to renew his masterly attacks upon the system immediately upon his release.

Most always hewed to the line, attacked the enemies of society openly, and chose his words for their force and directness. Like all men of force and genius, he was no respecter of forms of literary expression and where language did not afford him proper vehicles for the expression of his thots he promptly invented words that suited them. He had no liking for the English language, and, altho more than twenty years in this country, his propaganda was confined to his native tongue. With the exception of his autobiography, and a few pamphlets, Most's literary work was confined to the publication of his paper Freiheit. Like all men of worth he was little understood, even by the wage-slaves, for whose emancipation he was among the foremost champions of the age. It is a sad commentary upon men of genius that to be understood they must be dead a long time.

Comrade Most cared nothing for reputation; he hated it. To him the truth was of more value than all the wealth of popularity and gold the world could heap upon him; and truth in John Most had one of the ablest and most devoted champions ever born of woman.

Truth has always been unpopular. Few there can be, even in this age of advancement, who care to hear it spoken. The great mass of humanity moves carelessly along ion the beaten paths of its ancestors, and it looks with suspicion on the man who ventures to suggest the building of a new road. And if he persists it treats him with scorn and derision, if not with the hangman's noose. In spite of the scoffs and sneers of the mob, in spite of the threats of the privileged tyrants, in spite of jails and gallows, men and women are constantly coming to the front with the red flag of truth in their hands and the burning words of liberty on their tongues. It is such men and women that have made the world advance in spite of itself. They prod it in the ribs, and urge it forward, and it hates them for disturbing its sleep. The world has always hated its benefactors. It hated Most; that is his reward. A striking example of the esteem in which he was held by the capitalistic handdogs was given by the New York Times. That slimy sheet, in an editorial comment upon his death, declared him a mad dog in human form, and rejoiced at his death.

Well may The Times rejoice. It knows its enemies well, and the bigger the game the slimier its epithets. No better appreciation of Most and his work could have been written than that vile screed. The Times can croak in perfect safety at a dead man. It may be forced to recant sooner than it thinks.

Most has left his mark on the history of his time, and the influences of his work will be felt for ages. He died in the harness. I honor his memory.

Jay Fox
The Demonstrator, April 18, 1906.
Johann Most died March 17, 1906.

ANTIMILITARIST BIOGRAPHY

NICHOLAS FAUCIER

Having gone to ground right after the mobilisation order and remained there up until 25 September 1939 - long enough for him to take part in drafting the "Immediate Peace!" manifesto - Nicolas Faucier, anarcho-syndicalist militant thereby honoured the undertaking that he had given, along with his friend Louis Lecoin, in their declaration of September 1938, a declaration sent to the military governor of Paris: it read thus:

"Sir

Be informed that, in keeping with my libertarian and pacifist views, I will not be answering the mobilisation order.

Among the reasons that have dictated this decision of my mine, pride of place goes to my hatred of warfare, the murderous methods of which, exaggerated beyond all measure, have spread death and destruction among harmless, peace-loving populations.

In fact I could not be a party to such atrocities which are caused solely by the conflicting interests of competing imperialisms, the growing straits of which spring from the economic contradictions of a capitalist regime that is grappling with a hopeless crisis.

The great blood-letting of 1914-1918, which was supposed to be the war to end all wars, is still too recent and its consequences for the working class too painful for us to be able to forget that it merely accentuated between the rival nations the very antagonisms which have triggered this fresh catastrophe.

I reckon, moreover, that the conditions of a real and definitive peace can only be achieved in a setting from which the root causes of such scourges will have been eradicated. It is to that salutary undertaking that I have devoted all my time thus far. And it is for that alone that I will countenance further sacrifices.

My sense of dignity as a man and my conscience as a militant command me to refuse to participate, in any guise whatever, in the greatest crime that can be perpetrated against humanity.

Believe me, Monsieur the Military Governor, that I have thought long and hard about the possible consequences of this decision. So it is by assuring you that I am determined, come what may, to stand by it that I offer you my greetings." N. Faucier.

Not until the morning of 8 October 1939 was he arrested at his home and taken to the Quai des Orfèvres in Paris and thence, after a short interrogation by the deputy governor, to the Sante prison from where he was moved a month later to the naval prison in Lorient, and thence to the one in Cherche-Midi and finally to the army camp in Avord (Cher) for incorporation into the ranks. Again he refused and again he was jailed and on 14 March 1940 he was brought under escort before the appeal court in Paris to have his appeal heard against a

December 1938 criminal court judgment that had sentenced him in his absence to six months in prison for the crime of "inciting servicemen to disobedience for the purposes of anarchist propaganda", in connection with the declaration that he and Lecoin had signed and which was published in *Le Libertaire* of 15 September 1938.

In short, following a review of the judgement of that court, the court chairman asked Faucier the usual question: "What have you to say in your defence?"

The accused replied: "This, Monsieur le président: that current events are proof of just how right we were in placing public opinion on its guard against the unleashing of the conflict which has - alas! - now become a fact, especially when one notes that, given the terrific means of destruction deployed, this war is going to claim as many victims among the civilian population, women and children, as among combatants.

As a libertarian militant and revolutionary, I have always fought against the businessmen and their politician accomplices whose thirst for profit sparks such calamities, and fought to replace them with a free egalitarian society.

On proletarian class grounds, I have campaigned against Hitlerite fascism, just as I have against the French capitalist bourgeoisie. Which is why I refuse today to fight under the flag of that same bourgeoisie in its phony crusade for democracy against fascism, convinced as I am that once it feels its interests threatened by a new tide of revolution, it will not hesitate to impose a dictatorship of the same ilk as that which it now seeks to topple.

Be aware, therefore, that on the day when the people will have had enough of this and rises up to overthrow a regime that clings on only through war and oppression, I will be in the front ranks of fighters."

After short deliberation, the court brought in this finding: "Given that the accused, in the difficult circumstances through which we are passing, has the effrontery still to admit his earlier attitude, we are increasing the sentence from six to eighteen months in prison."

The following month, on 11 April 1940, he was brought before the military court in Orleans for refusing to answer the draft. After the charges were read out, he was inspired to make the following statement (it was interrupted by the chairman of the court but was recorded in the file):

"Gentlemen:

I appear before you of my own volition. I could have fled and evaded your verdict. But that struck me as neither worthy nor consistent with my convictions.

So here I am in the dock even as the most tragic events that History records are being worked out, at a time when millions of men have for a cause not their own, thrown themselves into a war to the death against

ANTIMILITARIST BIOGRAPHY

the unleashing of which I have fought with all my might, with the firm intention of withholding my direct or indirect participation from this ignominy which will plunge the world back into the most monstrous barbarism.

As a revolutionary militant, right up until I was jailed, I devoted the better part of my activity to making the working class conscious of its role in society which is to replace the war-generating capitalist dis-order with a regime wherein economic and social equality will have done away with the seeds of social conflicts or war.

True, if those conditions could be achieved, if the social transformation to which I aspire was a fait accompli or on the road to certain accomplishment, then I would not have hesitated to add my efforts to those of other fighters and taken up arms in defence of the revolutionary gains endangered by the common enemy: the enemy within and the enemy without.

Unfortunately we have not yet reached that stage, which is why I take the view that it is not for me to become the docile tool of some faction in contention against another, knowing that, whatever the pretexts cited on one side or another to disguise the real motives, war is merely the fruit of imperialist rivalries spawned by a capitalist regime whose noxious system, founded upon selfishness and a privileged class's hunger for profit, has already been behind so many telling misdeeds.

By my reckoning the French worker has no reason to hate the German worker, any more than the latter has to detest the Polish worker. But I also reckon, however, that no fellowship of interest or ideology could tie them (they who are so odiously exploited) to the class that exploits them or the government that is the instrument by which they are oppressed. Thus it is only through lies, carefully distilled by means of the modern agents of corruption - the press, radio, cinema - that those governing the belligerent countries, thereby paving the way for the "mobilisation of consciences", can get their peoples to acquiesce in war.

What is more, it has been amply demonstrated by now that war resolves nothing: quite the opposite. By means of the rapacious treaties that bring it to a conclusion and the impositions of all sorts foisted upon the defeated countries by the victors, it represents the inevitable source of future conflicts. This one will therefore, like all its predecessors, represent a pointless sacrifice of peoples, offered up, yet again, to the squalid interests of the oligarchies who contest mastery of the world.

I ought to add, even were it to be proved to me that it is simply a question of fighting to bring down the mud-and-blood regimes set up by Hitlerism and Stalinism - regimes which I have always despised and fought

against - I should still refuse to contemplate their elimination by means of a fratricidal war with no object other than destroying one form of oppression by another whose mask of democracy covers the very same underlying vices.

So now, gentlemen, you know the reasons behind my pacifist stance. I await your verdict with peace of mind, sensible that I have done my duty towards humanity. I cling to the hope that one day the peoples will at last wake up to the frightful deceit forever practised against them and that they will at last have done with a regime that can only survive by heaping catastrophe upon catastrophe.

Only then will human beings see their way to an age of happiness and work in guaranteed peace towards universal well-being."

The court found Faucier guilty and sentenced him to three years in prison: in his reply, Faucier told the court: "If, as you say, it is cowardice to keep faith with the ideal of peace and brotherhood between peoples such as I have championed all my life, then I am proud to be the coward that you say I am."

He served a month on remand in Orléans and was then transferred to Poissy prison, the political detainees of which were moved after the German invasion in 1940 to Fontevault. Faucier served his full term of penal servitude there up until February 1943, after which he was held longer by the Germans before being sent on to the labour camp from which he managed to escape, thereby avoiding deportation to the Nazi camps.

SOURCE: Nicolas Faucier - *Pacifisme et Antimilitarisme dans l'entre-deux-guerres (1919-1939)*, Paris, 1983



Sound familiar?

ANARCHIST BIOGRAPHY

The KSL was established so that anarchists could access their own history, and in particular so that the unknown many were rescued from the professional historians' desire to concentrate on the famous few. It was for this reason it was named for an unknown World War One anarchist militant.

We found the following piece in *Extremadura Libre*, the paper of the Extremeño region of the CNT. It is a touching and fond obituary to a veteran who clearly taught the post-77 cenetistas in that region a lot.

José Ruiz Jiménez

José Ruiz Jiménez died, aged 96, on the 1st June 2002; With his death, the Extremeño region has lost its oldest militant and its most intimate connection with the origins of anarcho-syndicalism. Those of us who were young in the 70s and 80s in Extremadura, and particularly in the High Plains district, had in him the best history book, which made up for what was stolen from us. To anarcho-syndicalism - or at least to active struggle and organisation - we learnt his lessons well.

He told us that he'd been a member of the CNT since 1922, therefore being younger than those who were listening to him. In Andalusia where he lived the biggest problem was unemployment, in part made worse by incipient mechanisation, and so they did something about those first combine harvesters, which burned very well because everything was made of wood. He laughed like a mischievous child remembering. Then came the Primo dictatorship, the struggle against the Mixed tribunals (jurados mixtos), the day labourers strikes, the republic, Casas Viejas, the war; And around him was gathered a circle who listened with open mouths. (Some of this material we have placed in the Fundacion Anselmo Lorenzo)*.

And even worse than the war was the post war period. He went from one punishment squad to another. First, the Valle de los Caidos, monument to fascist hypocrisy. Later, the Plan of Badajoz, in this way he came to Extremadura. With this Plan Franco set about developing irrigation in the region. In Entrerrios in the province of Badajoz, "Seño José" took root and gave an example of tolerance by becoming a friend of the priest. He came to the local of Villanueva de la Serena, then to the demos of the 80s, and some of those of the 90s. He spoke at May Day meetings, always with one word in his mouth - culture. Soon the years began to show and he had to slow down although he was lucid to the end.

His will was respected and he was given a civil burial, wrapped in our flag and with a pacifist symbol. That the earth is to you slight, we shall not forget you!

* The archive established by the CNT

Anarchist Odyssey, or the Christie File expanded

Stuart Christie, The Christie File volume 2, General Franco made me a 'terrorist'

To say Stuart Christie has had an interesting life would be an understatement. This is his (updated) account of how he came to be smuggling the explosives into Spain that were to be used to kill Franco. His arrest by the feared Brigado Politico-Social and conviction by military tribunal focused the eyes of the world on Europe's last fascist dictatorship and the resistance to it. His sense of humour helps ease the tension - wearing a baggy jumper to hide the explosives he 'looked like Quasimodo's and Esmerelda's lovechild' - but he isn't blind to the 'What if?'s that could have ended his story then and there.

The brutality of state power is brought home in his account of an execution; 'A hellish tympani broke the silence of the dawn. We were the inmates of Bedlam performing O Fortuna from *Carmina Burana*, without music.' Prison also means boredom, but the only glimpse we get of this is when he reads a three volume history of 'Civilisation in England' in a weekend. Rather like Bekman's classic *Prison memoirs of an Anarchist* this is an odyssey, not so much through the prison system as his growth, partly political but also personal as he reacts with his fellow prisoners: 'some with clearly outstanding abilities and highly specialised knowledge coupled with defective morality'

Besides his own story Christie recounts those of other anarchist militants he met: Miguel Garcia, Goliardo Fiaschi, Juan Busquets Verges, filling out the story of the Spanish resistance and his 'obligation of remembrance' with personal details. In his chronology and appendices (including French and Spanish secret police reports) the context of the Spanish resistance (that could hardly be given in the first edition) is set out. But prisons and prisoners are affected by the outside world, and even from his cell he can observe the stirrings that were to make the sixties a period of revolutionary ferment. His informed discussion of politics (left and right) in the sixties also provides a great deal of food for thought.

This is a funny and very human book, and a very thoughtful one. It will be an important source for students of modern anarchism, but it's also an account 'from the inside' that makes you stop and think.

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Thanks to all readers, people who order, send stamps, help, do design, review & promote our stuff (fliers for 'No war but the class war' still available) etc etc.

NEW STUFF

New Publication

Against All Tyranny! Essays on Anarchism in Brazil
Edgar Rodrigues, Renato Ramos and Alexandre Samis, Translated and edited by Paul Sharkey

Emigration was one of the great dreams of nineteenth century European workers, and Brazil was just one of the 'New Worlds' which took them, and showed them that the promise of such promised lands was easily broken. But the anarchist dream of freedom and revolution came with them, and workers - Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Brazilian - fought to make it a reality. And it was not only rampant capitalism they had to fight, but also state-worshippers, both Left and Right. This pamphlet contains an outline of the history of the anarchist movement in Brazil to the present day and records some of the figures who made it what it was.

CONTENTS:

A History of the Anarchist Movement in Brazil, Edgar Rodrigues; Chronology 1823-1937;
Russians Looking for a Brazilian El Dorado and Edgard Leuenroth, 1881-1968, Edgar Rodrigues
Maria Lacerda de Moura, 1887-1944
Domingos Passos - the Brazilian Bakunin, Renato Ramos and Alexandre Samis
Frederico Kniestedt, Edgar Rodrigues
Antonino Dominguez, Edgar Rodrigues
Looking Back After 70 Years on the Rua Frei Caneca Incident, Renato Ramos

"Anarchist Sources" series # 2
ISBN 1-873605-18-8, 36 pages.
Price £5 (£2 to bulletin subscribers)

You Cannot Break Our Movement!

You may persecute, you may suppress, you may imprison - you can not succeed. Our propaganda will go on in spite of all.

We are enlisted in the cause of freedom and individual liberty, and we have dedicated our all to this great cause.

Think you, that you can crush this cause? You do not know its strength, its appeal to the fundamental instincts of humanity.

Our movement is built upon an idea, and the movement will go on because the idea is unconquerable.

Send our young men abroad to kill and be killed. Make the world a bloody shamble. Crush what little there is of democracy at home. Fill your jails. Do your worst.

But remember, the day of reckoning will come.

An outraged people will rise in its power and majesty, and make you pay for the blood and agony that you are now creating.

Our movement springs out of the inarticulate, unexpressed aspirations of our people. And to crush a people is impossible. You may drug them for a while, you may keep them in temporary bondage, - but not forever.

The Inquisition was overthrown. The French Revolution made its reckoning. The Russian Revolution crushed the bloodiest tyranny of modern times.

And so it goes. Your day is coming. And we shall do all in our power to hasten its coming!

The Social War, Volume 1, number 7, Chicago, 1917.

1915 Manifesto

'In 1915 Anarchists made an international call against World War I, pointing to war's continuing inevitability as long as we are forced to live in an exploitative capitalist society. With Bush dictating actions in Iraq for the interests of capitalism all we can ask is what has changed in the past eighty-eight years.

We march, we protest, but the war goes on. So much for democracy. How many more sit-ins? How many more petitions? How many more elections? How many more reasons can you find for letting things carry on as normal?

In the past few weeks we have witnessed the state intensifying its use of armed thugs abroad and at home to control the lives of working people. For many of the working class, life is a continual war. Join their army. Don't be a pacifist.

As long as there is a state, there will always be war. None of their war. None of their 'peace.' Fight for the social revolution in your everyday lives. Carry the new world in your hearts, in your stomach, in your fist, or in your groin. Anywhere you want. But carry it.'

'Distributed by THE DAWN, a forthcoming newspaper from the East Bay [California]. If you would like to contribute articles please write to: our-dawn@hotmail.com'

We have some copies of this 'International Anarchist Manifesto On The War' (1915): send an SAE or mention that you'd like one when ordering.

REVIEW

Obsolete Communism: The Left Wing Alternative

Daniel Cohn-Bendit & Gabriel Cohn-Bendit,
1st Published 1968.

France 1968 created a new chapter in the history of revolution. Although the events of May and June 1968 failed to dislodge the French State, they destroyed the credibility of Communism as a revolutionary ideology. The lesson of France 1968 that we need to remember is that radical egalitarian revolution can occur anywhere at any time. Societies that seem impregnable have the seeds of their own destruction growing within them. Radical revolutionary change is not only desirable but possible, whether it occurs or not depends on people themselves breaking the intellectual, physical and cultural chains which bind them with the forces that oppress them.

France 1968 forever changed the idea that revolution in an industrial parliamentary democracy is impossible. Daniel and his brother Gabriel put their thoughts down on paper in a 5 week period just a few months after the tumultuous events of May/June 1968, to leave a permanent record of why they believed revolution was possible in an industrialised parliamentary democracy and more importantly why May/June 1968 failed. They have convincingly shown that at the very moment the State had been stripped of all its credibility, the traditional Left joined with the State to defeat those who challenged it.

The book was written to expose those who preach radical change but want to seize State power and replace one ruler with another. The State, the Trade Unions and the authoritarian left have much more in common than people realise. The 1st section of the book examines 'The Strategy and Nature of the Revolutionary Movement' looking at the role both the students and workers played in the upheaval. The 2nd section deals 'The Strategy of the State' in dealing with this challenge to its authority. The 3rd section examines the counter-revolutionary role of the French Communist Party, a party that was more interested in securing votes at elections than in joining a movement for radical revolutionary change it didn't control. The final section 4th section deals with 'The Strategy and Nature of Bolshevism' as a political ideology.

"Obsolete Communism" is as important a book in 2003 as it was in 1968. Although Communism is no longer a viable political ideology, the traditional and the post 1968 Left still cling to the idea that revolutionary change comes from capturing State power not abolishing it. "Obsolete Communism" continues to be a useful addition to revolutionary literature because it has shown that there is very little difference between the government, opposition

political parties and institutions and organisations that attempt to represent workers interests. Australian activists only have to cast their minds back to the Crown Casino blockade in Melbourne on Sept 11th 2000, to understand that governments, oppositions, trade unions, the State and corporate sector have much more in common than people realise.

"Obsolete Communism" should be available from your local library. If you can't find it there, try a second hand bookshop or one of those old Left wing bookshops that still manage to eke out a living in Australia.

* Review lifted from the *Anarchist Age Weekly Review*, PO Box 20, Parkville, Melbourne, VIC 3052, Australia.

AK Press have produced a new edition, so you don't need to scout around 'those old left wing bookshops': ISBN: 1-902593-23-1. The only thing outdated is the title when the Communism as a system is dead, even if faith in the state and leaders is still being touted. Surely, no-one would've minded 'May '68 from the inside' or even 'Following Parties Get You Nowhere'? - ed.

Feedback

No War But The Class War: Libertarian Anti-Militarism Then and Now, £2.

"Opponents of war and tyranny are heartily recommended to get hold of a copy" - so says The Pork-Bolter ('Independent Voice of Today's Worthing') number 53, March 2003. PO Box 4144, Worthing, BN14 7NZ and so say all of us!

New Distribution Titles

Stuart Christie

The Christie File volume 1, My granny made me an Anarchist (reviewed in Bulletin 32) and *The Christie File volume 2, General Franco made me a 'terrorist'* (reviewed on page 4) £34 each including post (UK - overseas write and check)

Each is 250-odd A4 pages, illustrated and indexed.

Also

John Barker's *Bending the Bars - Prison Stories*

Reviewed in Bulletin 33 £9.50 plus postage

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