a critique of State Socialism
by Michael Bakunin

why authoritarian communism leaves us cold
Originally produced by anarchists in Belfast in 1981, this comic juxtaposes Bakunin’s critique of statist revolutionary movements with the events that subsequently confirmed it.

Just as Bakunin’s concerns about power-hungry socialists and communists proved prescient, this comic retains its value today, when new politicians and parties are attempting to co-opt popular movements. We should never forget the hard-learned lessons of the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War: those who would wield state power, whether in the name of the people or any other abstraction, can only be obstacles to liberation, if not actual foes of it.

Readers who lack context for 20th century history may find some passages herein perplexing; if nothing else, this comic provides points of departure to learn about many of the most fascinating and pivotal events of that era. There are plenty of more credible sources out there, should you wish to learn more about any of them!
A Critique of State Socialism
by Michael Bakunin

with drawings by Richard Warren
M. A. BAKUNIN was born on May 30, 1814, in Pryamukhino (Russia). Becoming interested in philosophy at the age of 21, he became a Hegelian and left to study in Germany, which was then the home of philosophical speculation. He progressed from Hegelism to an interest in the pan-Slavic movement, as one of anticolonialism, against Russian autocracy and German imperialism. Through Weitling, pioneer of libertarian Communism, he became acquainted with revolutionary ideas; he moved towards Socialism but with the reservation that there was an absence of freedom in the then current socialistic programmes and ideas. Becoming acquainted with Anarchism through the French school, in particular P. J. Proudhon, he became its most famous exponent of the day. His theoretical development was stopped short by the fact of his participation in the democratic revolution of 1848. He fought on the barricades with Wagner (who is said to have cast his Siegfried in Bakunin's mould); and was arrested, and sent back to Russia.

In 1848 he entered the Peter-and-Paul fortress as a prisoner; later (during the Crimean War) he was sent to Schusselburg, in solitary confinement. Subsequently he was sent to Siberia, from which he escaped in 1861. Arriving in London, he threw himself into the activity of the International Working-Men's Association, the organisation arising out of the London Working-Men's Association. He became within the International the protagonist, indeed the personification, of all the anti-Statist elements, particularly strong in parts of France, the Jura, in Switzerland, in Italy, and he pioneered the movement in Spain. The German party, led by Marx, bitterly opposed the growth of ‘Bakuninism’ and Anarchism. Marx stooped to violent personal attacks upon Bakunin's integrity, which finally succeeded in breaking up the International and driving Bakunin out of public life.

Bakunin died in 1876, in Switzerland. He had already become a legend amongst those who supported libertarian socialism. His character was admired by many even among the supporters of State socialism. He had no personal animosity against Marx, except in reaction to the slanders given out by Marx and his henchmen (‘Russian spy’ etc.) In the essay taken here from Bakunin's writings, Bakunin illustrates what is wrong with State Socialism.
You don't have to be a marxist to recognise that anarchists are a bit short on historical common sense; we tend to trot out the same old pat solutions irrespective of changing times and circumstances—I can recall a comrade sniffing at the suggestion of studying the possible organisation of an anarchist society, for no better reason than that Kropotkin had already done it all. However, some things stay valid, even a century on, and Bakunin's argument against state socialism, as set out in this little essay, is still rightly basic to anarchist thinking.

* This essay was previously published by Coptic Press in 1968, and it seemed a good idea to republish it in a fairly easy sort of cartoon format. (Oddly, no-one could think of a snappier title..) Sorry if it's not easy enough, but almost anything seems better than the patronising 'Lenin-for-Idiots' style of some marxist cartoon books. Like it says, if you don't know what 'hypostasis' means (and I didn't)—look it up!

Bakunin's basic argument is pretty simple, but he does tend to ramble on a bit, so I've cut away quite a lot of the original, especially his pro-slay, anti-German arguments, which no doubt made sense at the time, but are only of historical interest today. The cartoons maybe concentrate too much on the Soviet Union, and not enough on 'socialism' outside Europe, but so many well-intentioned militants still subscribe to some part of soviet mythology that it's still necessary, unfortunately, to put the record straight. The illustrations aren't meant to be comprehensive anyway—there isn't room. If you want any more examples of the accuracy of Bakunin's analysis, get hold of some good history books, or just take a look around the world...

*What's left of Bakunin is typeset throughout; anything written is my addition. Anything with quotation marks is a direct quote (Yes, Lenin did say that!)—at least, according to the sources I used. Anything without is a paraphrase or just pure invention, though still, I trust, truthful.

R.W.
IRELAND, 1798.
A WEXFORD CATECHISM:
"I BELIEVE IN A REVOLUTION FOUNDED ON THE RIGHTS OF MAN, IN THE NATURAL AND IMPRESSCRIPTIBLE RIGHT OF ALL IRISH CITIZENS TO ALL THE LAND..."

"THEY ALSO FOUND THE BODIES OF TWO BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, FANTASTICALLY DRESSED IN GREEN SILK, WHO HAD CARRIED THE REBEL STANDARDS. THEY HAD BEEN KNOWN AS THE GODDESS OF LIBERTY AND THE GODDESS OF REASON, AND WERE APPARENTLY THE TOWN PROSTITUTES."
The French Revolution proclaimed the right and duty of every human individual to be a man... A man, yes - but we still need a God to pull together conflicting social forces and lend our revolution divine approval...

The commune has celebrated an idolatrous festival of Liberty and Reason (Liberty being personified by a rather well-built dancer from the opera - this sort of thing just won't do - I must organize a festival of the Supreme Being!

If the existence of God and the immortality of the soul were mere dreams, they would still be the finest creations of the human spirit.

Father of the universe, Supreme Wisdom...

Having completed his oration, citizen Robespierre will now set fire to the effigy of atheism, from the ashes of which will arise the incorruptible and incalculable image of wisdom, the Supreme Being... Ahem... unfortunately it seems that the Supreme Being is slightly er... singing...

and so arrived at its ultimate conclusion in—

Origins of Socialism
the theories of Babeuf. Babeuf was one of the last energetic and pure-hearted citizens whom the Revolution created and then killed off in large numbers. Seeing that the Revolution was failing for lack of radical change, he conceived, faithful to the statist spirit of the Revolution, a political and social system according to which the Republic, viewed as the expression of the collective will of the citizens, would confiscate individual property and administer it in the interests of all, allotting education, the means of existence and pleasures to all in equal shares, and compelling all, without exception, to do physical or mental labour, in their capacity.
Babeuf's conspiracy failed and he was guillotined.

but his ideal of a state socialism did not die with him.

Taken up by Buonarotti, and fostered by the secret societies which he founded in Belgium and France, these ideas of communism blossomed. Between 1830 and 1848 they were interpreted as the revolutionary socialism of Cabot and Louis Blanc.
Another socialist current, coming from the same source, and tending in the same direction, was founded by Saint-Simon and Fourier.

The merits of Saint-Simonism and Fourierism, often called Utopian and socialism, lie mainly in the profound scientific criticism they made of Christianity and the way in which they shook it in the cause of the rehabilitation of matter and of human passions. They wanted to replace Christianity with a new religion, based on the mystic cult of the flesh, with a new hierarchy of priests, people who would exploit the majority by virtue of their privilege of genius and talent. The Fourierists conceived their ‘phalansteries’ as being governed and administered through universal suffrage. There, they believed, each would find the kind of work and kind of place most natural to his passions. They were mistaken in thinking, firstly, that through the power of peaceful persuasion they would be able to touch the hearts of the rich, who would then come to lay down the surplus of their riches at the doors of their phalansteries.
They made a second mistake in imagining that it would be possible to construct theoretically, 'a priori', a social paradise in which all humanity could settle down forever.

"If the cherrytree series is united in large numbers in its great orchard, a mile from the phalanstery, it should, in the four o'clock to six o'clock evening session, see coming to meet it and its neighbours:

1) A cohort from the neighbouring phalantery, both sexes come to help the cherry gardeners.
2) A group of lady florists of the district coming to cultivate a hundred-foot line of mallow and dahlias forming a prospect for the neighbouring road and a square border for a vegetable-field adjoining the orchard.
3) A group of the vegetable gardeners, come to cultivate the vegetables of this field.
4) A group of the thousand-flower series coming for the cultivation of a seat altar, set between the vegetable field and the cherry orchard.
5) A group of strawberry maidens, coming at the end of the session, after cultivating a clearing planted with strawberries in the adjoining forest.

At a quarter to six, swing-carts from the phalanstery will bring the afternoon snack to all these groups; it will be served in the castle of the cherry-gardeners, from quarter to until quarter past six, then the groups will disperse after forming bonds of friendship and arranging industrial or other reunions for the days to follow..."
In general, regimentation was the passion common to all the socialists prior to 1848. Cabet, Louis Blanc, the Utopians—all were possessed by the passion to indoctrinate and to organise the future. All were authoritarians to some degree. The one exception was Proudhon.

"DIRECT OR INDIRECT, SIMPLE OR COMPLEX, THE GOVERNING OF PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS BE THE CONNING OF PEOPLE: IT IS ALWAYS MAN COMMANDING MAN, FICTION RAPING FREEDOM, BRUTE FORCE SUPPRESSING ISSUES, INSTEAD OF THAT JUSTICE WHICH ALONE CAN RESOLVE THEM, PERVERSE AMBITION JUMPING ON THE BANDWAGON OF SELF-SACRIFICE AND GULLIBILITY ..."

The son of a peasant, and by instinct a hundred times more revolutionary than all the doctrinaire and bourgeois socialists, Proudhon developed a critical viewpoint, as ruthless as it was profound and penetrating, in order to destroy all their systems. Opposing liberty to authority, he proclaimed himself an Anarchist as distinct from the state socialists, and in the face of their deism or pantheism he also had the courage to declare himself an atheist.
Proudhon's socialism was based upon individual and collective freedom, upon the spontaneous action of free associations, obeying no other laws but such general laws of the social economy as had already been discovered or might be discovered in the future. Such a socialism, functioning outside any governmental regulation or State protection, and subordinating politics to the economic, intellectual and moral interests of society, was bound in the course of time to arrive at federalism.
Such was the state of social science before 1848. New socialist ideas penetrated the working class, and when the revolution broke out in France in that year, socialism emerged as a powerful force.

But it was not socialism in general that went under in June 1848, only state socialism, the authoritarian, regimented socialism which believed that the State could satisfy all the needs and aspirations of the working class, and that once armed with unlimited power it would be able to inaugurate a whole new social order. Socialism did not die; on the contrary, it was the State that went bankrupt. Deciding that it was unable to pay off the debt it owed to socialism, the State attempted to kill it off instead, in order to remove the debt.
"You speak well! The people has well chosen its interpreter, but to speak well is not sufficient; we should understand the language of reason, which God has bestowed upon men for mutual explanation, that we might help, not destroy, each other, etc., etc., etc., etc..."

1848: Lamartine, minister of the provisional government of the new French Republic, quells the socialist insurrectionaries by talking down the young worker appointed their spokesman.

This could turn nasty... however, these clouds are easily impressed by big words... besides, they cannot conceive of seizing power, but simply demand that we, the government, should execute their socialist policies for them...

I wish that the people should be obeyed instantly; or, if not, no more words, but billets! I am a simple man, who cannot defend himself with ideas—but I know how to demand, and demand what the people has charged me to say here—the expropriation of property, and of capitalists, the immediate installation of the despotic in the community, the expropriation of goods, the proscription of bankers, the rich, manufacturers, the bourgeois of every condition, the levelling of every supremacy of birth, inheritance and labour, and the immediate acceptance of the red flag...."

The workers fought in June for the emancipation of the people, but they were united by instinct rather than by ideas. This was the main cause of their defeat. But is any reason to doubt the future power of socialism? Christianity, which aimed to found the Kingdom of Justice in Heaven, took several centuries to conquer Europe. Is it any wonder that socialism, which has set itself a more difficult task, to found the Kingdom of Justice on Earth, has not triumphed in just a few years?
Socialists can be divided into three essentially different types. First of all, there are peaceful or bourgeois socialists,

and revolutionary socialists. The latter can be sub-divided into revolutionary state socialists

and revolutionary anarchist-socialists, the enemies of every State and every State principle.
The category of peaceful or bourgeois socialists belongs essentially to the party of reaction. It comprises men of various political persuasions, who are flirting with socialism only with a view to strengthening their own cause.

There are conservatives who are socialists...there are priests who are socialists...

...and there are liberals who are socialists.

Each of them recognises a formidable rising force in socialism, and tries to channel it in his direction, hoping with its help to restore his own sinking and decrepit party. Among these many exploiters of socialism are some well-meaning people who really want to see an improvement in the lot of the proletariat, but who lack the intelligence or the will to see the social problem clearly. They may be sincere, but this sincerity is most harmful, as it disguises the insincerity of the malicious exploiters of socialism.
Bourgeois socialists of all varieties have one thing in common, which determines their reactionary tendencies and dooms even the most sincere among them to merge sooner or later with the party of deliberate and conscious reaction:
Since, by definition, there is a gulf between the bourgeois and the proletarian worlds, one being the exploited and the other the exploiters, it follows that a man born and raised in a bourgeois environment, who sincerely wishes to become a friend and brother of the workers, must renounce all the conditions of his past existence, turn his back on the bourgeois world, declare relentless war upon it, and plunge unreservedly into the world of the workers.

If his passion for justice is insufficient to inspire such resolution, he need not deceive himself, and should not deceive the workers; he will never become their friend. His ideas and dreams of justice may inspire him to join with the exploited in moments of calm contemplation when nothing much is happening in the world of the exploiters, but as soon as there comes a moment of crisis when those two opposing worlds meet in a great social struggle, all his former bonds will pull him back into his former world.
Idealists of all sorts, metaphysicians, those who uphold the priority of science over life, the doctrinaire revolutionaries—all of them champion, with different arguments but with equal zeal, the idea of State and State power, seeing in it, logically enough from their point of view, the only possible salvation of society. Logically, since they start from the assumption, which we think mistaken, that thought is prior to life, and abstract theory prior to social practice, and that therefore sociology must be the starting point for social upheaval and reconstruction.
**Mark's Theory Is Derived from Philosophy:**

It could be argued that dialectical method is purely subjective—just a mode of thought!

However, if I can tack on some stuff about dialectics in nature, our theory will seem scientific, objective, and infallible!

I'll scour the natural sciences for a few instances of dialectics in action—say nature is big enough and varied enough to provide one or two....

...and so—naturals scientists may adopt whatever attitude they please, they are still under the domination of philosophy. The only question is whether they want to be dominated by a bad philosophy or by ours.

And—dialnetics, so-called subjective dialectics, prevails throughout nature, and so-called objective dialectics, dialectical thought, is only the reflection of the motion through opposites we see everywhere in nature....

See? We're not really metaphysicians, we're scientists! We must be right!

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**The Teaching of Marx Is All-Powerful:**

Because it is true...

It is complete and harmonious, providing men with a consistent view of the universe...

**All I Say Is All There Is!**

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**What's All This? Russian Physics: Secrecy of Metaphysics.**

I'm a secret policeman. Call me a thug and a torturer if you like, but I'm just serving the universal laws that govern the development of nature, human society and thought.... O.K.?
Since science and theory are at present, at least, the property of just a few people, they conclude that those few should direct social life, and not only encourage but actually rule all popular movements...
and that on the day after the revolution the new social organisations should be set up not by the free integration of workers’ associations, villages, communes and regions, from below upwards, in line with the needs and instincts of the people, but solely by the dictatorial power of the learned minority, allegedly expressing the general will of the people.
The representation of the people is a fiction. The fact is that the masses are ruled by a small handful of privileged individuals elected (or for that matter not even elected) by crowds herded together on election day, ignorant of whom they elect, and why. Upon this fictitious and abstract expression of the imagined general will of the people, of which the real living people have not the slightest conception, the theory of the State and that of revolutionary dictatorship are based.
POLICIES OF 1917 -

"ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS!!!"

"The entire power in the state, from top to bottom, from the remotest village to every single ward in the city of Petrograd, must belong to the Soviets of workers, soldiers, peasants, and former soldiers' deputies."

"A state which in some respects is vanguards of a given locality..."

"A state which replaces an army, set apart from the people, with an armed people."

"We uphold the right to recall any official at any time, there are for proletarian standards of remunerating officials."

"Freedom of the press means that the opinions of all citizens are given wide publicity, this would be prohibition for all and not for rich people only..."

"Agitation cannot be forbidden. No can only one kind of agitation be imposed upon the people."

"The Kerensky government has introduced the death penalty in the army. We will abolish capital punishment."

"What is demanded in our part is frequent shifts in our line of behaviour."

"We propose programmes and continual promises. After that time it was a real necessity."

"Meanwhile, in preceding years, Comrade Shishov will give you the figures."

"We want programme and continual promises."

"Besides, Comrade, no just opportunism in the pursuit of party political power."

"Well, actually, comrades, no!"

"The Bolshевists! The Bolshevists have!"

"This is what is called dialectics."

"The Bolshевists have!"

"But later..."

"We shall affirm our allegiance to centralism and strong government."

"Our party is to retain political power for itself."

"Our party aims to retain political power for itself."

"How to save the Bolsheviks from the reliance of individual detachments who refuse to obey the dictates of the central authorities..."

"Those that do not support the Bolsheviks, the vanguards of the order and discipline within the army and the party are traitors and must be ruthlessly destroyed..."

"Lenin's idea!"
The doctrinaire socialists who aim to overthrow the existing authorities and regimes, in order to build a dictatorship of their own upon the ruins, never were and never will be enemies of the State, but on the contrary always were and always will be its zealous champions. It is clear why. They are only enemies of the powers-that-be because they cannot take their places. They are enemies of the existing political institutions only because these institutions stand in the way of their own dictatorship, but they are at the same time the most ardent friends of State power. Without such power, the Revolution, by freeing the working masses, would obviously not allow this minority of would-be revolutionaries any opportunity to put the people into a new harness and shower upon them the blessings of their new governmental measures.
The State inevitably means domination...
...which shows that the idea of a ‘People’s State’ is a ridiculous contradiction, a fiction, a falsehood—though doubtless an unconscious falsehood—and a most dangerous pitfall for the proletariat, however popular it might be made in form, the State will always be an institution of domination and exploitation, and therefore a permanent cause of slavery and misery. Consequently the only way to emancipate the people economically and politically, to provide them with well-being and freedom...
... AND NEXT, WE DISPOSE OF THE GREATEST HERESY OF ALL: THE HERESY OF HERESIES — THE VERITABLE ARCH-HERESY — THAT GLASNESS, FOR WHICH THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS.

MENSHEVISM!

SECOND CONGRESS OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-Democratic Labour Party, July 1903

THE BIG SPLIT...

THE MAJORITY (MENSHEVICKS)

THE DEMAND FOR OBEYENCE TO ALL DECISIONS OF THE PARTY IS MONOLITHIC AND BUREAUCRATIC...

"IT IS NOT THE TASK OF THE PARTY TO LOWER ITS LEVEL TO THAT OF EVERY WORKER"

"AMATEURISM! TO BE A PARTY MEMBER, ONE MUST WORK FOR A PARTY ORGANIZATION AND AID EVERY PARTY DISCIPLINE..."

"EVERY STRIKER IS AUTOMATICALLY A MEMBER..."

THE LEADERSHIP ("BOLSHEVIKS")


WE SHOULD NOT IMPOSE IDEOLOGY ON THE WORKING CLASSES — THEY WILL DEVELOP IT SPONTANEOUSLY...

"ECONOMISIT FRACTION"

WE MUST HAVE A BROAD, FLEXIBLE PARTY, INCORPORATING FREE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS...

THE SPLIT IS NOT RESOLVED, BUT THE TWO TENDENCIES DEVELOP INDEPENDENTLY... IN 1912, THE BOLSHEVIKS CONSTITUTE AN INDEPENDENT PARTY... UNTIL, BY 1921...

"WE WILL KEEP THE MENSHEVICKS IN PRISON..."

"WHEN WE TALK OF USING MACHINE-GUNS, WE HAVE IN MIND PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES MENSHEVICKS..."

"AN ADOPTION OF MENSHEVIC VIEWS SHOULD BE PUNISHED BY OUR REVOLUTIONARY COURTS WITH SHOTGUN; OTHERWISE THE LATTER ARE NOT COURTS, BUT GOD KNOWS WHAT..."

THE MENSHEVICS WILL COME TO NOTHING...

WE SHOULD NOT IMPOSE IDEOLOGY ON THE WORKING CLASSES — THEY WILL DEVELOP IT SPONTANEOUSLY...

"ECONOMISIT FRACTION"

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"AN ADOPTION OF MENSHEVIC VIEWS SHOULD BE PUNISHED BY OUR REVOLUTIONARY COURTS WITH SHOTGUN; OTHERWISE THE LATTER ARE NOT COURTS, BUT GOD KNOWS WHAT..."

"DIDN'T I SAY THEY WOULD COME TO NOTHING? WE MADE SURE OF THAT...

AND THAT'S THAT.
During the Civil War, the Ukraine is subjected to fourteen "governments" in four years. Peasant armies, led by the anarchist Nestor Machno, fight off, in turn:

...is to abolish the State, to abolish all States...
...and once and for all to do away with what until now has been called 'politics'.
"The anarchists are strong in ideas about the future—in the present, they don’t have their feet on the ground. Their attitude is deplorable, and because their fanaticism is devoid of content, they are without real links with this future which they dream about..."

"Moscow, June 1918: "

"Your assertion is fundamentally mistaken. The anarchists-communists in the Ukraine have already given many proofs that they are firmly planted in the present. Your Bolsheviks have scarcely any presence in our villages, where they have penetrated. Vladimir Ilyich’s comments are just..."

"All the commune or peasant associations in the Ukraine were formed at the instigation of the anarchist-communists... You know perfectly well, I assume, the fighting capacity of the free revolutionary forces of the Ukraine... Among them, at least one half have fought under the anarchist banner..."

"Perhaps I am mistaken. I don’t dispute it. But anyway, mistakes are unavoidable, especially in our current situation..."

"1920: Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman visit Lenin to plead the case of anarchists in Russian prisons..."

"Anarchists? Nonsense! We do have bandits in prison, and malakhites, but no ideological anarchists..."

"And noticing, I had become a little hot under the collar. He did his best to pacify me in a paternal way, diverting the interview very abruptly onto another subject. But my bad character, if I may call it that, would not allow me to interest myself in further discussions. In spite of all the respect Lenin inspired in me, I felt insulted. Although I knew that in front of me was a man with whom there were many other topics to take up and from whom there was much to learn, my state of mind was altered. My answers were no longer as detailed. Something in me snapped and I experienced a feeling of revulsion..."
which, as we know, does not stand in very great favour with the Marxists, and, finding itself on a lower cultural level, would probably be ruled by the proletariat of city and factory.
The racist terror: the 'liberation' of Transcaucasia

Here in the Caucasus, we've always been what you might call 'subject peoples' - we've been invaded by Vikings, Swedes, Mongols, Turks, the Greeks under Alexander, the Romans under Napoleon, the Byzantines, the Persians, the Huns, the Arabs, the Crusaders and, last but not least...

...the Russians! Under the Tsars, our peoples have been exploited, Russified and, inevitably, exterminated... the Nazis and Rothschilds have been invited in to plunder our oil and minerals.

...until the February Revolution gave us the chance to establish independent governments - the nationalist movements in Azerbaijan...

...and the comrades in Georgia.

THE NATIONALISTS IN ARMENIA.

This is preposterous! We're an independent socialist republic, why should we do this to us?

Quick - send a telegram to Lenin and Trotsky - please do not invade.

There's no reply.

Georgia, 1920

Well, that was a cinch - we've put the usual wheels in motion - rounded up the Bolsheviks and trades unionists - it's not working - I can't blame it on Stalin.

Fine, fine... if anyone complains, I didn't authorize it, ok? We'll blame it on Stalin...

The Bashkirs have invaded - but war hasn't been declared - what can we do?

Nothing changes much in this part of the world.

Get in, Ghanistan, eh?
The proletariat elevated to a ruling class: what exactly does this mean? Will the proletariat as a whole be at the head of the government? Will the whole people govern, and will there be no-one to be governed?
"A salute is the military way of saying "hello"...
A salute is the quickest, easiest way for a soldier to say to an officer: "What are your orders? I am ready to carry them out..."
A salute is not undemocratic...
A salute is a sign that a comrade who has been an egocentric individualist in private life has adjusted himself to the collective way of getting things done..."

"In the People's Army the commissar teaches the recruits that victory depends on carrying out unquestioningly and unswervingly whatever order the military command may issue..."

"1938: The Republican Army experiences the tightening grip of the Communist Party..."

André Marty, Commissar to the International Brigades

"I used my new authority to denounce and even jail men who dared to dispute my word, convinced that this was necessary for military discipline."
John Reed, Commissar, 15th International Brigade

"If anyone loses an inch of ground, he must replace it at the head of his men or be executed..."
General Enrique Lister..."
This dilemma is solved very simply in Marxist theory. By a people’s government they mean the rule of the masses by a small privileged minority. But, they say, this minority will consist of workers. Yes, indeed—of ex-workers, who once they become rulers or representatives of the people, cease to be workers and begin to look down on the toiling masses. From that moment, they represent not the people but only themselves and their own claims to govern.

"CONCERNING SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY", WALL POSTER

YOUR BOOKS ARE BIG POISONOUS WEEDS!!

AS PART OF YOUR RE-EDUCATION, YOU WILL DRAW THE DUNG-CART!!

I DO NOT AGREE THAT THE HONOURABLE TASK OF THE DUNG-CARRIER IS DEGRADING!! IF YOU WISH TO DEGRADE THE DUNG-CARRIER APPOINT HIM PROFESSOR IN MY PLACE... AS FOR ME, I HAVE ALREADY CARRIED MY LOAD OF DUNG AROUND THE LECTURE-HALLS FOR LONG ENOUGH....

WE DEMAND THAT, IN ACCORD WITH THE SCIENTIFIC PREMISES OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S INVINCIBLE THOUGHT, RED SHOULDBE MADE THE COLOUR FOR 'GO', NOT 'STOP', ON ALL TRAFFIC LIGHTS....

"WHY DID CHAIRMAN MAO, WHO STRONGLY ADVOCATED THE COMMUNE, SUDDENLY OPPOSE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 'SHANGHAI PEOPLE'S COMMUNE'? THIS IS SOMETHING THE REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE FIND HARD TO UNDERSTAND... WHY CANNOT COMMUNES BE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY?"

"CHINESE ADVENTURES. SHENG-NU-LIEN RED GUARDS OF HUNAN PROVINCE"

CARRY OUT CHAIRMAN MAO'S INSTRUCTIONS WHETHER YOU UNDERSTAND THEM OR NOT...

(UN PIAO)

1966:

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION!!

IT'S THE LOGICAL SOLUTION, THE DIALECTICAL SYNTHESIS - PERSONAL BUREAUCRATIC POWER ESTABLISHED UNDER THE GUISE OF A FICTITIOUS POPULAR MOVEMENT - AND IF THE FICTIOENS GET TOO REAL, THE MILITARY CAN CALM THINGS DOWN....

"WHY DID CHAIRMAN MAO, WHO STRONGLY ADVOCATED THE COMMUNE, SUDDENLY OPPOSE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 'SHANGHAI PEOPLE'S COMMUNE'? THIS IS SOMETHING THE REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE FIND HARD TO UNDERSTAND... WHY CANNOT COMMUNES BE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY?"
The Marxists recognise this contradiction. Having realised that government by scientists will be, despite its democratic appearance, a veritable dictatorship, and the most offensive and despicable type of government in the world, they console themselves with the idea that this dictatorship will be only temporary and short-lived.
They say that the only concern of this government will be to educate and uplift the people, economically and politically, to such an extent that government will no longer be necessary, and that the State, once it has lost its political character, that is, its character of domination, will transform itself into a completely free organisation of economic interests and communes.
They say that this State yoke, the dictatorship, is a transitional means necessary for the emancipation of the people; anarchy or freedom is the goal, and the State or dictatorship the means. Thus to free the working masses it is first necessary to enslave them. They maintain that only a dictatorship (their dictatorship, naturally) can create the will of the people, but our answer is this:
No dictatorship can have any aim but that of self-perpetuation, or can create anything but slavery in the people who tolerate it.
"These gentlemen the socialists who have forgotten the meaning of socialism if they have ever known it -- will have to answer to the working class...

...They are fooling themselves, because once we, the 'trouble-makers' who get up every morning to go to work, and enter the factory like slaves, will enter them like masters, because the sole owner of all the social riches is the working class.

In every village which we have conquered the inhabitants organize their lives like a community of free men. For us there is no other strategy. The smallest village has a great value for us because workers are living in it who have the right to carry out the idea for which they have fought all their lives. This is the best part of our fight.

"No, no, there is no priest. The priest is in the fields and is working on the land with the other peasants. Why? Why? He isn't dangerous. He is even talking about marrying a girl from the village. He is happy in his new situation, the church? Oh yes, the church, they have burned all the saints. God has been cast out...in the church they have set up the food cooperative, and as there is total collectivization, everyone uses the co-op.

...the committee represents the whole village, so it's necessary to have everyone's opinion, political parties, what for? It is not through party politics that wheat grows...

...the old bosses are not pleased -- you can see it in their faces. Some have entered the collective, others have kept their land, but they must cultivate it alone, because there is no more exploitation of man by man, and if they can't cultivate their land? Then the collective takes over the uncultivated lands because it would be a crime against the community to leave it fallow.

"We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall...we will know how to accommodate ourselves for a time. For you must not forget that we can also build these palaces and cities, here in Spain and in America and everywhere. We, the workers, can build others to take their place. And better ones. We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth. There is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie must first and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world, here, in our hearts. That world is growing in this minute..."
The workers' councils emerged from the revolution as the only organisations commanding the support of the overwhelming majority of the people.

(U.N. Special Committee Report on Hungary)

"The government knows that the rebels are quite sincere..." (Radio Budapest)

"The man from the revolution demands that Russian soldiers who refuse to shoot insurgents be granted asylum in Hungary..."

The Miskolc Revolutionary Council has dissolved all organisations of the Communist Party in the Borsod region...

The Budapest Revolutionary Council demands that Russian soldiers who refuse to shoot insurgents be granted asylum in Hungary..."
In the 'Peoples' Republics' of the Eastern Bloc, the most invisible social force, under 'normal' conditions, is - you guessed it - the people. Except...

The Russian system will of course be the ideal model for these 'democracies'. They'd better need investment in heavy industry, because they're going to get it. Too bad about those needs...

Our first meeting was to protest about some triviality or other. But as soon as we required each other to speak the truth, it became a criticism of the whole regime. In a system founded on a permanent lie, such a requirement is simply revolutionary in itself - protest at the smallest detail and you protest at the total immorality of the whole...

Well... We installed the regime - we have a right to keep it there...

In Poland, 1956...

So much for the workers' councils! We've been reduced to sub-committees of the state trade union...

Gdansk, Gdynia, Szczecin, 1970 - the populace destroy party property, burn and loot, ships, and fight off police and special militia... strikes follow...

I am a union man, not a socialist. A man without religion is a dangerous man, and without religion I would be a dangerous man...

Lech Walesa

600,000 Russian soldiers invade Czechoslovakia...

Solidarnosc

The government must rule, and it must be strong... let's give them a change...

1980

The Polish workers' movement revives with different strengths - and different weaknesses...

Poland, 1956...

But why.COM:KULCA

1970

This is the last straw of the Government makes a show of reform but doesn't deliver the goods...

Price rises, 1970...

Five Year Plan

The Irony of It All (Wince)
THE SPECTACLE

God is alive! Isn't it wonderful...

If I say I'm mad - you're mad.
And I can get certificates to prove it...

Ooh academic standards with discipline with vocational skills.
With examinations with achievement, ooh...

If I'm a psychiatrist, I have to prescribe.
If I'm a psychologist, I have to treat.
If I'm a philosopher, I have to think.
If I'm a physical therapist, I have to manipulate.

The capital spectacles has entered a period of permanent crisis.
I feel insecure.

There's no such thing as madness as the first punk psychiatrist.
We've written books to prove it...

The spectacles of the death of the spectacles...

Of course, we always said that we meant, ahem, that the medical profession suspested to numerous abuses...

God is dead!! Isn't it wonderful?

Bla-bla creativity, blah designing, blah changing, oh, blaa relevance, blah community, blah...

There's no such thing as madness as the first punk psychiatrist.

Even a dead god can still use prose...

Rumble!! Split!! Crash!!

Speechless.

The spectacles are in ruins. They admit it freely, but in their modesty, they aspire to build new specialties from these ruins. Now they suggest to us...

**FIRST EDITION 1981**
ISBN 0-904564-46-0
Belfast, Ireland

Reprinted by Cienfuegos
*Over the Water*
Sanday, Orkney KW17 2BL

**SECOND EDITION 2009**
*Second Verse, Same as the First*
POB 494, Chapel Hill NC, 27514

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Supplementary text authored in the early morning, and set in the Capsa family. Illustrations of Bakunin’s work originally penned by Richard Warren.

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*Never a lot of women in these history books, are there!*

*Don’t worry, honey, we’ll get ours.*
Freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice; socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality

MICHAEL BAKUNIN

Anarchists have long argued that all statist approaches to social change are doomed to authoritarian results. This booklet illustrates how Bakunin’s critique of state socialism, composed a century and a half ago, was borne out by the events of the twentieth century.