

Engels

THE BAKUNINISTS AT WORK



Workers of All Countries, Unite!

F. Engels

The Bakuninists at Work
Review of the Uprising in Spain
in the Summer of 1873



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Ф. ЭНГЕЛЬС

БАКУНИСТЫ ЗА РАБОТУ

На английском языке

Foreword ¹

A few chronological data may help to make the following review ² more easily understood.

On February 9, 1873, King Amadeo, tired of wearing the Spanish crown, abdicated, thus becoming the first king ever to go on strike. On the 12th, a Republic was proclaimed, and immediately a new Carlist revolt broke out in the Basque Provinces.

On April 10, a Constituent Assembly was elected which met at the beginning of June, and on June 8 proclaimed a Federal Republic. On the 11th, a new government was formed under Pi y Margall. At the same time a commission was elected to draw up a new constitution, but the radical republicans, the so-called Intransigents, were excluded from it. When the new Constitution was announced on July 3, it did not go far enough for the Intransigents as regards the dismemberment of Spain into "independent cantons". The Intransigents therefore at once organised uprisings in the provinces. Between July 5th and 11th, the Intransigents triumphed in Seville, Córdoba, Granada, Málaga, Cadiz, Alcoy, Murcia, Cartagena, Valencia, etc., and set up an independent cantonal government in each of these towns. On July 18, Pi y Margall resigned and was replaced by Salmeron, who immediately sent troops against the insurgents. The latter were defeated in a few days after slight resistance; by July 26, with the fall of Cadiz, government power was restored throughout Andalusia and, almost simultaneously, Murcia and Valencia were subdued. Only Valencia fought with any energy.

Cartagena alone held out. This naval port, the largest in Spain, which had fallen to the insurgents together with the Navy, was defended on the landward side by a wall and thirteen separate forts, and was thus not easy to take. The government being not at all eager to destroy its own naval

base, the "Sovereign Canton of Cartagena" survived until January 11, 1874, the day on which it finally capitulated, since in fact there was absolutely nothing else left for it to do.

All that concerns us here in this whole ignominious insurrection are the even more ignominious actions of the Bakuninist anarchists; only these are presented here in some detail, as a warning example to the contemporary world.

The report just published by the Hague Commission on the secret Alliance of Mikhail Bakunin* [see the article *El Cagliostro Bakunin*³ in Nos. 87-90 of *Volksstaat*] has brought to the attention of the labour world the intrigues, villainies and empty phrases by which it was intended to place the proletarian movement in the service of the swollen ambition and selfish designs of a few misunderstood geniuses. Meanwhile, these megalomaniacs have given us the opportunity in Spain to see something of their practical revolutionary activity. Let us see how they put into practice their ultra-revolutionary phrases on anarchy and autonomy, on the abolition of all authority, especially that of the State, and on the immediate and complete emancipation of the workers. We are at last in a position to do so now, since, apart from the newspaper reports on the events in Spain, we have before us the report sent to the Congress of Geneva by the New Madrid Federation of the International.

It is common knowledge that in Spain the schism in the International gave the upper hand to the members of the secret Alliance; the vast majority of Spanish workers joined them. When the Republic was proclaimed in February 1873, the Spanish members of the Alliance found themselves in a serious predicament. Spain is such a backward country industrially that there can be no question of *immediate* and complete emancipation of the working class. Spain will first have to pass through various stages of development and remove a considerable number of obstacles from its path.

* *L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste*, London 1873. The German edition was published under the title: *Ein Komplott gegen die Internationale* (Buchhandlung des "Vorwärts").

The Republic offered a chance of passing through these stages in the shortest possible time and quickly surmounting these obstacles. But this chance could only be made use of through the active *political* intervention of the Spanish working class. The working masses sensed this: everywhere they pressed to participate in events, to take advantage of the opportunity to act, instead of leaving the owning classes a clear field for action and intrigues, as had been hitherto the case. The government announced that elections were to be held to the Constituent Cortes. What stand should the International take? The Bakuninist leaders were in a quandary. Continued political inaction became more ridiculous and impossible with every passing day; the workers wanted "action". On the other hand, the members of the Alliance had been preaching for years that it was wrong to participate in any revolution that did not have as its goal the immediate and complete emancipation of the working class; that to undertake any political action implied recognition of the State, the source of all evil; and that, therefore, participation in any form of elections was a crime worthy of death. How they resolved the dilemma is recounted in the above-mentioned Madrid report.

"The same people who rejected the resolution of the General Congress at The Hague on the political action of the working class and trampled on the Rules of the International, thereby introducing division, conflict and disorder within the Spanish Federation; the same people who had the cheek to present us to the workers as ambitious power-seekers, who, under the pretext of bringing the working class to power, wish to seize power themselves; the same people who call themselves autonomists, anarchist revolutionaries, etc., have on this occasion thrown themselves enthusiastically into politics, but into the worst kind, bourgeois politics. They have worked not to give political power to the working class—an idea which they view with horror—but to help a bourgeois faction to gain control, a faction composed of adventurists, and ambitious power-seekers who call themselves Intransigent Republicans.

"On the eve of the general election for the Constituent Cortes, the workers of Barcelona, Alcoy and other places wanted to know what policy they should follow in the parliamentary and other struggles. Two large meetings were held for this purpose, one in Barcelona and the other in Alcoy. At both the Alliance made every effort to oppose a decision being reached on what policy the International" (their own, mark!) "should adopt. It was resolved that *the International, as an Association, should undertake no political action whatsoever; but that its members, as individuals, could act as they wished and join any party that suited them*, according to their famous prin-

ciple of autonomy! What was the result of the application of such an outlandish doctrine? That the majority of members of the International, including the anarchists, took part in the elections with no programme, no banner, and no candidates, thereby contributing to the fact that almost exclusively bourgeois republicans were elected, with the exception of two or three workers who represent absolutely nothing, whose voice has not once been raised in defence of the interests of our class and who calmly vote for any of the reactionary proposals advanced by the majority."

This is what Bakuninist "political abstention" leads to. In peaceful times when the proletariat knows in advance that the most it can achieve is to get a few deputies into parliament and that it has no chance at all of gaining a parliamentary majority, it may be possible to convince the workers here or there that it is a great revolutionary action to stay at home during elections and, in general, instead of attacking the concrete State in which we live and which oppresses us, to attack an abstract State that exists nowhere, and therefore cannot defend itself. This is a magnificent way of playing the revolutionary for people who are easily disheartened; and just how much the Alliance leaders belong to this kind of people is shown in detail in the report on the Alliance mentioned at the beginning.

However, as soon as events themselves push the proletariat into the foreground, abstentionism becomes a tangible absurdity, and the active intervention of the working class is an unavoidable necessity. This was the case in Spain. The abdication of Amadeo ousted the radical monarchists⁴ from power and from the possibility of recovering it in the near future; the Alfonsists⁵ were for the time being in even greater disarray; the Carlists,⁶ as they almost invariably do, preferred civil war to an election struggle. All these parties abstained in true Spanish style. Only the Federal Republicans, divided into two groups, and the bulk of the workers took part in the elections. Given the tremendous fascination that the name of the International still exerted at the time on the workers of Spain and given the excellent organisation which, at least for practical purposes, the Spanish Section still preserved, it was certain that in the factory districts of Catalonia, in Valencia, in the towns of Andalusia, etc., all the candidates nominated and supported by the International would have achieved a brilliant vic-

tory, producing a sufficiently strong minority in the Cortes to decide the issue every time it came to a vote between the two republican groups. The workers felt this; they felt the time had come to set their still powerful organisation in motion. But the honourable leaders of the Bakuninist school had long been preaching the gospel of unconditional abstention, and could not suddenly reverse course; and so they invented that lamentable way out of having the International abstain as a body, but allowing individual members to vote *as they liked*. The result of this declaration of political bankruptcy was that the workers, as always in such cases, voted for those who appeared to be the most radical, the Intransigents, and thus, feeling themselves more or less responsible for the subsequent steps taken by their deputies, became involved in them.

II

The members of the Alliance could not possibly persist in the ridiculous position in which their cunning electoral policy had put them; it would have meant the end of their current domination of the International in Spain. They had to act for appearance sake. Salvation lay in a *general strike*.

In the Bakuninist programme, a general strike is the lever for unleashing social revolution. One fine morning, the workers in all the industries of a country, even of the whole world, stop work and, in four weeks at the maximum, oblige the ruling classes to surrender, or to attack the workers, thereby giving the latter the right to defend themselves and use this opportunity to tear down the whole of the old society. The idea is far from new; the French socialists, and later the Belgian, have ridden this horse repeatedly since 1848. Actually, however, it is originally English-bred. During the rapid and intense development of Chartism among the English workers following the crisis of 1837, the "holy month" of national strike was preached as early as 1839 (see Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Second Edition, p. 234); and the idea so resounded that the factory workers of Northern England tried putting it into practice in July 1842. At the Alliance Congress held in Geneva on September 1, 1873,⁷ also a major role was

attributed to general strike, although it was recognised by all that a complete organisation of the working class and a full kitty were necessary. This indeed was the problem. On the one hand, the governments, especially if encouraged by political abstentionism, will never allow the organisation or the funds of the workers to go so far; and on the other hand the political actions and abuses of the ruling classes will promote the emancipation of the workers long before the proletariat manages to achieve this ideal organisation and this vast reserve fund. And if it did have them, then it would not need to resort to a general strike to achieve its purpose.

Anybody who knows anything at all about the secret intrigues of the Alliance cannot doubt that the idea of using this well-tried method emanated from the Swiss centre. Be that as it may, the Spanish leaders saw it as a means of doing something without turning directly "political" and seized it with delight. Everywhere the miraculous properties of a general strike were being preached and preparations were at once made in Barcelona and Alcoy to begin it.

Meanwhile, political affairs were relentlessly developing towards a crisis. Castelar and company, the old federal republican boasters, were frightened by the movement which had outgrown them; there was nothing left for them to do but to surrender power to Pi y Margall, who attempted to come to an agreement with the Intransigents. Of all the republican officials, Pi was the only socialist, the only one who understood the necessity for the Republic to rely on the workers. He also at once presented a programme of social measures for immediate implementation, which were not only directly beneficial to the workers, but whose results would entail further steps and would thus at least set the social revolution in motion. But the Bakuninists in the International, who are obliged to reject even the most revolutionary measures when these emanate from the "State", preferred to support the biggest swindlers among the Intransigents rather than a minister. Pi's negotiations with the Intransigents dragged on. The Intransigents began to lose patience; and the most passionate of them began the cantonal uprising in Andalusia. The time had come for the leaders of the Alliance to act too if they did not want merely to be towed along by the bour-

geois Intransigents. They thus ordered the general strike.

In Barcelona the following poster, among others, appeared on the walls:

"Workers! We are calling a general strike to show the profound repugnance we feel on seeing the government send in the army against our brother workers, while hardly bothering about the war against the Carlists", etc.

In other words the workers of Barcelona—the most important industrial centre in Spain, which has seen more barricade fighting in its history than any other city in the world—were invited to confront the armed power of the government, not with arms in their hands, but with ... a general strike, with a means that only directly affects individual bourgeois, but not their collective representative—state power. The workers of Barcelona had been able, in the inactivity of peacetime, to listen to the militant phrases of docile men like Alerini, Farga Pellicer and Viñas; but when the time came for action, Alerini, Farga Pellicer and Viñas first announced their famous election programme, then attempted to calm passions, and finally, instead of issuing a call to arms, declared a general strike, provoking the general contempt of the workers. However, even the weakest of the Intransigents showed more energy than the strongest member of the Alliance. The Alliance and the sections of the International it had deceived lost all their influence, and when these gentlemen called for a general strike, on the pretext of paralysing the government, the workers simply laughed at them. But one thing at least which the activity of the false International achieved was to ensure that Barcelona took no part in the cantonal uprising. In Barcelona the working-class element was strongly represented everywhere; and Barcelona was the only city whose participation could firmly back up this working-class element, thereby giving it the opportunity of eventually becoming master of the whole movement. Moreover, the participation of Barcelona would have made its triumph as good as certain. But Barcelona did not raise a finger; the Barcelona workers, who knew the Intransigents only too well and had been deceived by the Alliance, did nothing, thereby ensuring the ultimate triumph of the Madrid government. All of which did not prevent Alerini

and Brousse, members of the Alliance (details about whom are to be found in the report on the Alliance), from declaring in their newspaper *Solidarité révolutionnaire* ⁸:

"The revolutionary movement is spreading like wildfire throughout the peninsula.... In Barcelona *nothing has yet happened, but in the market place the revolution is permanent!*"

But it was the revolution of the Alliance, which consists in keeping up an oratorial barrage, and for this reason remains "permanently" in the same "place".

The general strike was on the agenda at the same time in Alcoy. Alcoy is a recently created industrial centre with a population of some 30,000, in which the International, in the Bakuninist form, had only penetrated a year before and at once developed apace. Socialism, in any form, was well received by these workers, who had hitherto remained outside the movement, as is sometimes the case in certain backward places in Germany, where the General Association of German Workers suddenly acquires a large number of ephemeral adherents. Alcoy was thus chosen for the headquarters of the Spanish Bakuninist Federal Commission, and it is this Federal Commission that we are here going to see in action.

On July 7, a workers' meeting voted in support of the general strike, and the following day sent a deputation to the alcalde (Mayor), asking him to summon together the factory owners within twenty-four hours and present them with the workers' demands. Alcalde Albors, a bourgeois republican, stalled off the workers, sent to Alicante for troops and advised the factory owners not to give in to the workers' demands, but to barricade themselves in their houses. As for himself, he would remain at his post. After a meeting with the factory owners—we are following the official report of the Alliance Federal Commission, dated July 14, 1873—the alcalde, who had originally promised the workers to remain neutral, issues a proclamation in which he "insults and slanders the workers and takes the side of the factory owners, thus destroying the rights and liberty of the strikers and challenging them to do battle". Just how the pious wishes of a mayor could destroy the rights and liberty of the strikers is not made clear. Anyway, the workers led by the Alliance informed the municipal council,

via a commission, that if it did not intend to uphold its promised neutrality in the strike, it had better resign to avoid a conflict. The commission was turned away, and as it was leaving the town hall the police fired on the unarmed people peacefully assembled in the square. That was how the struggle began, according to the Alliance report. The people armed themselves, and a battle began that was to last "twenty hours". On one side, the workers, which *Solidarité révolutionnaire* numbers at 5,000; on the other, 32 gendarmes in the town hall, and several other armed individuals, barricaded in four or five houses round the market place, which the people burnt down in good Prussian manner. Eventually, the gendarmes ran out of ammunition and had to surrender.

"There would have been less misfortunes to lament," says the Alliance report, "had not Alcalde Albors deceived the people by pretending to surrender and then treacherously murdering those who entered the town hall, trusting his word; and the alcalde himself would not have perished as he did at the hands of the justly indignant people, had he not fired his revolver point-blank at those who went to arrest him."

What were the casualties in this battle?

"Although it is impossible to calculate exactly the number of dead and wounded" (on the people's side), "they certainly amount to *no less than ten*. On the part of the provokers, there were no less than *fifteen* dead and wounded."

This was the Alliance's first street battle. For twenty hours, 5,000 people fought against 32 gendarmes and a few armed bourgeois, and beat them after the latter had run out of ammunition, losing *ten men* in all. It would appear that the Alliance has successfully taught its followers to be guided by Falstaff's wise words "the better part of valour is discretion".

Naturally the terrible reports in the bourgeois press of factories burnt down for no reason at all, gendarmes shot en masse, people having petrol poured over them and being set ablaze, are pure inventions. The victorious workers, even when led by the Alliance, whose motto is "Break, destroy!", are always far too generous with their defeated opponents to act thus, so that the latter accuse them of all the atrocities they never fail to commit themselves when they are victorious.

And so victory was achieved.

"In Alcoy," *Solidarité révolutionnaire* declares jubilantly, "our friends, numbering 5,000, are masters of the situation."

Let us see what these "masters" did with their "situation".

At this point the Alliance report and the Alliance newspaper leave us completely in the lurch and we have to rely on ordinary press reports. From the latter we learn that a "Committee of Public Safety", that is to say, a revolutionary government, was immediately set up in Alcoy. Although at the Alliance Congress held at Saint-Imier (Switzerland) on September 15, 1872, it was agreed that "any organisation of a political power, so-called provisional or revolutionary power, can only be a new fraud and would be just as dangerous to the proletariat as all existing governments". Moreover, the members of the Spanish Federal Commission, meeting in Alcoy, did their utmost to get the Congress of the Spanish Section of the International to adopt this decision as its own. Yet, in spite of all this, we find Severino Albarracín, a member of that commission, and, according to some reports, its secretary Francisco Tomás, too, becoming members of this provisional and revolutionary government, the Alcoy Committee of Public Safety!

And what did this Committee of Public Safety do? What measures did it adopt to bring about the "immediate and complete emancipation of the workers"? It forbade any man to leave the town, allowing women to do so, provided they ... had a *pass*! The enemies of all authority re-establishing the pass system! What is more, there reigned complete confusion, complete inactivity and complete ineptitude.

Meanwhile, General Velarde was advancing from Alicante with troops. The government had every reason for wishing to put down the local insurrections in the provinces quietly. And the "masters of the situation" in Alcoy had every reason to wish to extricate themselves from a situation in which they were at a loss as to what to do. Thus, deputy Cervera, acting as mediator, had an easy time of it. The Committee of Public Safety resigned, and the troops entered the town on July 12 without encountering the slightest resistance, the only condition made by the Committee of Public Safety being ... general amnesty. The Alliance

"masters of the situation" had thus avoided the issue once again. And this marked the end of the Alcoy adventure.

At Sanlúcar de Barrameda, near Cadiz, the Alliance report relates,

"the alcalde closed down the International's premises and by his threats and incessant attacks on the personal rights of the citizens provoked the anger of the workers. A commission demanded of the minister observation of the law and the reopening of the premises which had been arbitrarily closed down. Señor Pi agreed in principle but refused to comply in practice; the workers saw that the government was systematically trying to outlaw their Association, and dismissed the local authorities, replacing them with others who ordered the reopening of the Association's premises".

"In Sanlúcar ... the people are masters of the situation!" *Solidarité révolutionnaire* declares triumphantly. The Aliancistas, who here too, contrary to their anarchist principles, formed a revolutionary government, did not know what to do with their power. They wasted time in empty debates and paper resolutions, and on the 5th of August, after occupying Seville and Cadiz, General Pavía sent a few companies from Soria's brigade to Sanlúcar and ... met with no resistance whatsoever.

Such were the heroic deeds performed by the Alliance where it had no competition.

III

Immediately after the street battle in Alcoy, the Intransigents rose up in Andalusia. Pi y Margall was still in power and engaged in continuous negotiations with the leaders of this party with the object of forming a ministry with them. What, then, was the point of beginning an uprising while negotiations were still in progress? It has not been possible to determine the reason for this haste; one thing is certain, however, and that is that the Intransigents were eager to establish the federal republic in practice as quickly as possible, in order to seize power and the many new governmental posts that would be created in the separate cantons. In Madrid, the Cortes were delaying the dismemberment of Spain too long; and so it was time to take matters into one's own hands and proclaim sovereign cantons everywhere. The attitude hitherto maintained by

the members of the International (the Bakuninists), deeply involved since the elections in the actions of the Intransigents, made it possible to count on their support. They had, after all, just seized power in Alcoy by force, and were thus in open conflict with the government. Moreover, the Bakuninists had been preaching for years that all revolutionary action from above was pernicious and that everything should be organised and carried out from below. And here they were with the opportunity to implement the famous principle of autonomy from below, at least in a few towns. It could not be otherwise; the Bakunist workers swallowed the bait and began to draw the chestnuts from the fire for the Intransigents, only to be rewarded later by their allies, as ever, with kicks and bullets.

What was the position of the Bakunist International in this whole movement? They helped to give it the character of federalist atomisation and realised their ideal of anarchy as far as was possible. The same Bakuninists who a few months before in Córdoba had pronounced anathema on the establishment of revolutionary governments, declaring such to be treason and a swindle for the workers, now participated in all the municipal governments of Andalusia, but always in a minority, so that the Intransigents were able to do exactly as they wished. The latter monopolised the political and military leadership of the movement, dismissing the workers with a few fine speeches or a few resolutions on social reforms of a most crude and ridiculous nature, which anyway only existed on paper. Whenever the Bakunist leaders requested some real, positive concession, they rejected it scornfully. On being questioned by English newspaper correspondents, the Intransigents who led the movement hastened to declare that they had nothing at all to do with the so-called "members of the International", were in no way responsible for their actions, and that they were keeping its leaders and all the fugitives from the Paris Commune under strict police surveillance. Finally, as we shall see, in Seville, during the battle with the government troops, the Intransigents also fired on their Bakunist allies.*

* *Volksstaat* printed the following three paragraphs at the end of Section III.—Ed.

Thus, within a few days, the whole of Andalusia was in the hands of the armed Intransigents. Seville, Málaga, Granada, Cadiz, etc., fell to them almost without resistance. Each town declared itself an independent canton and set up a revolutionary junta. Murcia, Cartagena and Valencia followed suit. A similar attempt, but of a more pacific nature, was made in Salamanca. Thus the majority of Spain's large cities were in the hands of the insurgents, with the exception of the capital, Madrid—simply a city of luxury, which hardly ever assumes a decisive role—and Barcelona. Had Barcelona revolted, ultimate success would have been almost certain, and at the same time it would have ensured solid support for the worker element in the movement. But we have already seen how in Barcelona the Intransigents were practically powerless and the Bakuninists, although very strong there at the time, chose general strike as a means of *avoiding the issue*. Thus, this time Barcelona was not at its post.

Nevertheless, this insurrection, although begun in a hair-brained manner, would have had a good chance of success if only it had been conducted with some intelligence—if only in the manner of Spanish military revolts, in which the garrison in one town rises, marches to the next town, talks over the garrison there and leads it away with it, and, growing like an avalanche, advances on the capital, until a fortunate engagement or the desertion to its side of the troops sent out against it decides the victory. This method was especially suitable to the present occasion. The insurgents had long been organised everywhere into volunteer battalions, whose discipline was, it is true, pathetic, but certainly no worse than that of the remnants of the old, largely demoralised Spanish army. The only troops on which the government could rely were the gendarmes (*guardias civiles*), and these were scattered all over the country. The main task was thus to prevent the gendarmes from concentrating, and this could only be done by assuming the offensive in the open field. There was little risk involved in this since the government was only able to oppose the volunteers with troops as undisciplined as they themselves. This was the only way to win.

But no. The federalism of the Intransigents and their

Bakunist appendix actually consisted in leaving each city to fend for itself, insisting on the importance not of co-operation with the other towns but separation from them, thus preventing any possibility of a general offensive. What was an unavoidable evil in the German Peasant War and the German uprisings of May 1849—the disunity and isolation of the revolutionary forces, which enabled the same government troops to go around suppressing one revolt after another⁹—was here declared to be the principle of supreme revolutionary wisdom. Bakunin had this satisfaction. Back in September 1870 (in his *Lettres à un français*¹⁰) he had declared that the only way of driving the Prussians from France by a revolutionary struggle was to abolish all centralised leadership and leave every city, every village, every community to wage war for itself. One had only to oppose the Prussian army with its single command, with the outburst of revolutionary passions, and victory was certain. Faced by the collective intelligence of the French people, finally restored to it, the individual intelligence of Moltke would, naturally, vanish. The French just would not understand that then, but in Spain Bakunin had achieved a brilliant triumph, as we have already seen and shall yet see.

Meanwhile, this rash uprising, sparked off without any motive at all, made it impossible for Pi y Margall to continue negotiations with the Intransigents. He was forced to resign, and was replaced by pure republicans like Castelar, undisguised bourgeois, whose first aim was to crush the workers' movement, which they had formerly made use of but which was now a hindrance to them. One division was formed under the command of General Pavía to be sent against Andalusia, and another, under General Campos, to be sent against Valencia and Cartagena. The nucleus of these divisions were gendarmes drawn from all over Spain, all old soldiers whose discipline was still intact. As was the case in the attacks of the Versailles army on Paris, the gendarmes were once again called upon to hold together the demoralised military forces and to always take the head of the attacking columns, tasks which they accomplished to the best of their abilities. Apart from these, the divisions contained some composite line regiments, so that each of them numbered some 3,000 men.

This was all the government could mobilise against the insurgents.

General Pavía set out by July 20. On the 24th, Córdoba was occupied by a detachment of gendarmes and troops of the line under Ripoll. On the 29th, Pavía launched an attack on barricaded Seville which fell to him on the 30th or the 31st (the telegrams are contradictory). Leaving a mobile column to put down the surrounding countryside, he advanced on Cadiz, whose defenders only fought on the approaches to the city, and even then with little spirit, and then, on August 4, allowed themselves to be disarmed without resistance. In the next few days, Pavía disarmed, also without resistance, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, San Roque, Tarifa, Algeciras, and a multitude of other small towns, all of which had set themselves up as independent cantons. At the same time he sent detachments against Málaga and Granada, which surrendered without firing a shot on the 3rd and 8th of August respectively; so that by August 10, in less than a fortnight and almost without a struggle, the whole of Andalusia had been subdued.

On July 26, Martínez Campos mounted his attack on Valencia. Here the insurrection had been started by the workers. When the schism in the Spanish International took place, the real International had obtained the majority in Valencia and the new Spanish Federal Council was transferred there. Shortly after the proclamation of the Republic, when revolutionary battles were clearly imminent, the Bakunist workers of Valencia, mistrusting the Barcelona leaders who masked appeasement with ultra-revolutionary phrases, promised the real International that they would make common cause with them in all local movements. When the cantonal movement broke out, both immediately struck together and, making use of the Intransigents, dislodged the government's troops. It is not known what the composition of the Valencia junta was; however, from the reports of English press correspondents it is clear that in it, as in the Valencian Volunteers, the workers were definitely in the majority. These same correspondents spoke of the Valencian insurgents with a respect which they were far from according to the other rebels, predominantly Intransigents. They praised their discipline and the order that reigned in the city and predicted protracted resistance

and a fierce struggle. They were not mistaken. Valencia, an open city, resisted the attacks of Martinez Campos' division from July 26 to August 8, that is to say, for longer than the whole of Andalusia put together.

In the province of Murcia, the capital of the same name was occupied without resistance. After the fall of Valencia, Martinez Campos marched on Cartagena, one of the best-defended strongholds in Spain, protected on the landward side by a wall and a series of separate forts on the dominating heights. The 3,000 government soldiers, without any siege artillery, were naturally powerless with their light field weapons against the heavy artillery of the forts, and had to limit themselves to laying siege to the city from the landward side. This did not mean much, however, as long as the people of Cartagena dominated the sea with the warships they had captured in the port. The insurgents, who while the struggle had been going on in Valencia and Andalusia had only bothered about themselves, began to think about the outside world after most of the revolts had been quelled, when they began to run short of money and provisions. Only then was an attempt made to march on Madrid, which lay at least 60 German miles away, more than twice as far as, for example, Valencia or Granada! The expedition ended in disaster not far from Cartagena; and the siege put an end to any further attempts at a land sortie. They then took to making attacks with the fleet. And what attacks! There could be no question of inciting the recently subdued coastal towns to a fresh revolt with Cartagenan warships. The Navy of the Sovereign Canton of Cartagena thus limited itself to threatening to bombard most of the coastal towns from Valencia to Málaga—which according to the Cartagenan theory were also sovereign—and when necessary to actually bombarding them, if they failed to bring on board the requested provisions and war contribution in hard cash. While these cities had been up in arms against the government as sovereign cantons, the principle of "every man for himself" reigned in Cartagena! Now that they had been defeated, the principle of "everyone for Cartagena" was proclaimed. That was how the Intransigents of Cartagena and their Bakuninist associates understood federation of sovereign cantons.

In order to reinforce the ranks of the freedom fighters,

the government of Cartagena set free 1,800 prisoners from the town gaol, the worst thieves and murderers in all Spain. In the light of the information revealed in the report on the Alliance, there is no doubt at all but that this revolutionary measure was suggested to them by the Bakuninists. The report shows how Bakunin dreams of the "releasing of all evil passions" and how he presents the Russian robber as a model for all true revolutionaries. What is alright for the Russians must do for the Spaniards. The government of Cartagena was acting completely in the spirit of Bakunin when it freed the "evil passions" of 1,800 locked-up thugs, thereby taking demoralisation among its troops to the limit. And when the Spanish Government, instead of pounding its own fortifications to dust, awaited the fall of Cartagena through the internal disintegration of its defenders, it was following a perfectly correct policy.

IV

Let us now take a look at what the report of the New Madrid Federation has to say of the whole of this movement:

"The Congress was due to be held in Valencia on the second Sunday in August. Among other things it had the important task of determining the attitude of the Spanish Federation towards the serious political events taking place in Spain since February 11, the day on which the Republic was proclaimed. But the scruffy cantonal uprising, so pathetically abortive, in which members of the International took an active part in almost all the insurgent provinces, has not only paralysed the Federal Council, by dispersing most of its members, but has almost completely disorganised the local federations, drawing upon their individual members—and this is the worst part about it—all the hatred and persecution that a clumsily handled and defeated uprising always entails....

"When the cantonal movement broke out and the juntas, or cantonal governments, were set up, those same people" (the Bakuninists) "who cried out so strongly against political power and accused us so violently of authoritarianism, lost no time in joining those governments. And in such important towns as Seville, Cadiz, Sanlucar de Barrameda, Granada and Valencia many of those members of the International who call themselves anti-authoritarians participated in the cantonal juntas, with no programme other than the autonomy of the province or canton. This is officially proved by the proclamations and other documents issued by the above-mentioned juntas, which bear the names of well-known members of the International.

"Such a flagrant contradiction between theory and practice, between propaganda and action, would not mean much if such behaviour had led, or could have led, to any advantage for our Association, any progress towards the organisation of our forces, or have brought us any nearer the achievement of our basic aim, the emancipation of the working class. But in fact the contrary happened, as it was bound to, in the absence of collective action on the part of the Spanish proletariat, which could have been so easily achieved by acting in the name of the International, in the absence of agreement between the local federations, with the result that the movement was abandoned to individual or local initiative, with no leadership *other than that which could be imposed on it by the mysterious Alliance, which unfortunately still rules the Spanish Section of the International*, and with no programme other than that of our natural enemies, the bourgeois republicans. Thus it was that the cantonal uprising succumbed in a shameful manner, almost without resistance, dragging with it in its fall the prestige and organisation of the Spanish International. There is no excess, crime or act of violence that the republicans today do not lay at the door of the International; we are even reliably informed that in Seville, during the battle, the Intransigents fired on their own allies, members of the International" (Bakuninists). "Reaction, taking clever advantage of our follies, is inciting the republicans to persecute us, at the same time arousing impartial people against us; what they were unable to achieve in the time of Sagasta they are accomplishing now. Today, the name of the International in Spain is abhorred even by the working masses."

"In Barcelona, many workers' sections have withdrawn from the International in protest against the men of the newspaper *La Federación*" (main organ of the Bakuninists) "and against their inexplicable behaviour; in Jerez, Puerto de Santa Maria and other places, the federations have dissolved themselves; in Loja (Granada Province) the few members of the International that lived there have been expelled by the local population; in Madrid, where the greatest freedom is enjoyed, the Old Federation" (Bakuninist) "shows not the slightest signs of life, while our own is forced to remain inactive and silent in order to avoid taking the blame for other people's sins. In towns in the North the increasingly bitter Carlist war prevents us from undertaking anything. Finally, in Valencia, where the government won after a two-week siege, members who did not flee are forced to remain in hiding. The Federal Council has completely dissolved."

So much for the Madrid report. As we see, it fully coincides with the above historical account.

Let us now look at the results of our investigation.

1. As soon as they were confronted with a serious revolutionary situation, the Bakuninists were compelled to throw their whole previous programme overboard. To begin with they sacrificed their dogma of political, and above all electoral,

abstention. Then came the turn of anarchy, the abolition of the State; instead of abolishing the State, they tried, on the contrary, to set up a number of new small states. They went on to abandon their principle that the workers must not participate in any revolution that did not have as its aim the immediate and complete emancipation of the proletariat, and took part in a movement whose purely bourgeois character was patently evident. Finally, they trampled underfoot the principle they themselves had only just proclaimed—that the establishment of a revolutionary government is but a new deception and a new betrayal of the working class—by comfortably installing themselves in the government juntas of the separate towns, moreover almost always as an impotent minority, paralysed and politically exploited by the bourgeois.

2. Denying the principles they had always preached, they did so in the most cowardly and false manner and under the pressure of a guilty conscience; neither the Bakuninists themselves nor the masses they led joined the movement with any programme, or any idea at all of what they wanted. What was the natural outcome of this? It was that the Bakuninists either obstructed any movement, as in Barcelona; or found themselves drawn into isolated, unplanned and senseless uprisings, as in Alcoy and Sanlúcar de Barrameda; or that leadership of the insurrection fell into the hands of the bourgeois Intransigents, as happened in the majority of cases. Thus, when it came to action, the ultra-revolutionary cries of the Bakuninists gave way to evasion, uprisings doomed to defeat in advance, or adherence to a bourgeois party which not only subjected the workers to the most shameful political exploitation but even rewarded them with blows.

3. All that remains of the so-called principles of anarchy, free federation of independent groups, etc., is the boundless, senseless disintegration of the revolutionary means of struggle, which enabled the government to subdue one town after another with a handful of troops, practically unresisted.

4. The final outcome of this whole farce is that not only has the once so numerous and well-organised Spanish International—both the false and the authentic—found itself involved in the collapse of the Intransigents so that

it is today *de facto* dissolved, but, moreover, that all sorts of invented crimes without which the philistines of all countries cannot imagine a workers' revolt are being heaped upon it, thereby making impossible, at least for many years to come, the International reorganisation of the Spanish proletariat.

5. In a word, the Spanish Bakuninists have given us an unsurpassed example of how *not* to make a revolution.

Notes

¹ Engels wrote the *Foreword* at the beginning of January 1894, for the republication of *The Bakuninists at Work* as part of the collection of articles *Internationales aus dem "Volksstaat" (1871-1875)*.

The *Foreword* contained several minor inaccuracies as regards the dating of events. The Republic was proclaimed in Spain on February 11, 1873, and the elections to the Constituent Cortes were held on May 10, 1873. p. 5

² *The Bakuninists at Work*, first published in Nos. 105, 106 and 107 of the newspaper *Volksstaat* on October 31, and November 2 and 5, 1873, was written by Engels immediately after the events of the summer of 1873 in Spain, which marked the culmination of the Spanish bourgeois revolution of 1868-1874. Engels took his facts from the daily newspapers and various documents of the Spanish Sections of the International, and especially the report submitted by the New Madrid Federation to the Geneva Congress of the International, held on September 8-13, 1873.

After its appearance in the newspaper, Engels's article was published as a booklet under the title *Die Bakunisten an der Arbeit. Denkschrift über den letzten Aufstand in Spanien* (Leipzig). In 1894 it was included in the collection of his articles *Internationales aus dem "Volksstaat" (1871-1875)*, published in Berlin by *Vorwärts*. Engels added a short *Foreword* and made certain editorial corrections.

The first Russian translation of *The Bakuninists at Work* was edited by Lenin and published as a separate brochure by the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P. in Geneva in 1905, and in St. Petersburg in 1906. p. 5

³ A series of articles by Engels constituting a short summary in German of the work "The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association" was published in Nos. 87, 88, 89 and 90 of *Volksstaat* on September 19, 21, 24 and 26, 1873, under the title *El Cagliostro Bakunin*. In the 1894 edition, Engels replaced this reference with a reference to the complete German translation of the work, which had appeared in 1874. p. 6

⁴ This refers to the constitutional monarchists who supported King Amadeo, placed on the Spanish throne by the European powers. p. 8

⁵ The *Alfonsists*—a group connected with reactionary sections of the big Spanish landowners, the clergy and the higher layers of the bourgeoisie, who supported the Bourbon pretender to the Spanish throne, proclaimed King as Alfonso XII in 1874. p. 8

⁶ The *Carlists*—a reactionary, absolutist and clerical group who in the first half of the 19th century supported the claim to the Spanish throne of Don Carlos, brother of Ferdinand VII. Relying on the support of the military and the Catholic clergy and also on that of the backward peasantry in several regions of the country, in 1833 the Carlists began a civil war that lasted until 1840 and developed into a struggle between Catholic and feudal elements on the one hand, and bourgeois liberals on the other. After the death of Don Carlos in 1855, the Carlists supported his grandson, Don Carlos the Younger. In 1872, in a situation of political crisis and exacerbation of the class struggle, the Carlists intensified their activities, leading to another civil war that lasted until 1876. p. 8

⁷ Reference to the anarchist congress, held in Geneva, September 1-6, 1873. p. 9

⁸ *Solidarité révolutionnaire* (Revolutionary Solidarity)—an anarchist weekly in French published in Barcelona from June to September 1873. It was the organ of the Committee of Socialist Revolutionary Propaganda for the South of France, founded by Alerini and Brousse for the purpose of propagating anarchist ideas in France and among the émigrés of the Paris Commune. p. 12

⁹ See *The Peasant War in Germany* and *The German Campaign for the Imperial Constitution*, both by Engels. p. 18

¹⁰ Engels is referring to Bakunin's pamphlet *Lettres à un français sur la crise actuelle* ("Letters to a French Friend on the Present Crisis"), published anonymously at Neuchâtel in 1870. p. 18

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