

No War But The Class War!

Libertarian Anti-Militarism Then and Now

Edited by Anna Key

This pamphlet presents 110 years of anti-militarist propaganda, from Spain's last imperialist adventure in 1893, through the First World War right up to the 'War on Terror'. It includes Randolph Bourne's classic analysis of why war is the 'health of the state' and a recent dissection of the myths of Remembrance Day.

Libertarians have opposed the armed forces as the ultimate prop of the state, a pool of scab labour and the place where the authority principle (orders, not logic) runs rampant. Anarchists have always argued that the alternative to dying for our leaders is fighting for a new world. There's a brief glimpse of how this looks in practice, from the Ukraine's Makhnovist insurgents to Spain's revolutionary militias.

Libertarian anti-militarists don't want the kind of peace that is only a breathing space between wars but peace from below. To get all leaders and bosses off our backs, no war but the class war will do!

Including material from: Ricardo Flores Magon * Gustave Herve * 'Mother Earth' * Randolph Bourne * The Iron Column * Alexander Berkman * John Olday

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Introduction

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Governments dislike having their war plans being criticised, but they really hate having their armed forces subverted. This pamphlet examines how both of these have been done before. We don't encourage anyone to live in the past – even historians. Nobody now says 'be a man' for 'do the right thing' but almost everything else remains the same. The working class do the dying in wars for the benefit of those with money and power. And these same soldiers are the final line of defence for the state. Every war is camouflaged by big or little lies – peace, civilisation, honour: any word that stops people thinking will do. Films, dodgy analogies, everything up to God and the angels gets conscripted. Even old wars are turned into myths to make new ones. Lets nominate a 'new Hitler'! Lets avenge the Battle of Brisbane!

The army is the state in miniature. Once you're in – by force of law or force of circumstances – they want you to play by the rules. You can complain (through the proper channels, so nothing changes.) You can be ambitious (ooh, to have Sgt. on your headstone.) And, of course, obedience to the officers, despite the fact that it's your initiative which will get you out of the shit they drop you in – or your lives which will make their career.

There are a hundred and one sorts of anti-military action, depending on what situation you face. Publicly oppose the military? Subvert it from within with idleness and 'dumb insolence'? Destroy it completely? You choose.

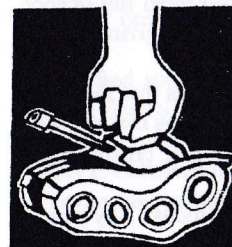
Since Vietnam, since the horrors of the first World War, since always, politicians have pretended that they know wars are bad news, but oh, this one is necessary. They usually are – to keep the wheels of capitalism turning.

Not all anti-militarists are libertarian: some will oppose capitalist war but gladly use the bayonet and machine-gun to impose their will on behalf of the 'workers state.' Revolutions always throw up such parasites. Though they justify their militarist programme by the urgency of the situation, both the Russian and Spanish revolutions show that it leads to the defeat – either open or disguised – of any idea of freedom. Equally, anti-militarism is not pacifism: not that we 'believe' in violence, but we disagree as to whether violence or power is the ultimate problem.

'Do not confound us with the pacifists. We believe in fighting. Aye, we have been fighting all our lives – fighting injustice, oppression and tyranny. Almost single handed at that.

We are not pacifists. But we want to know what we are fighting for, and we refuse to fight for the enemies and the exploiters of humanity.' – Alexander Berkman

We are not just opposed to war. Oppression, authority, the suffering of the many for the benefit of the few: these are the principles of our enemy. We have always been clear that as we aim for freedom and equality, they should also be the principles on which we organise. That's another story, but in the meantime we hope you enjoy these counterblasts to military and militarist madness.



Down with war!

Listen up, mothers! Proletarian mothers, mothers of those uniformed children of the people who pay the demanding blood tax, listen, listen to what we are telling you! Listen for a moment and ponder. Listen:

Where are your sons off to? To Cuba, right? And why are they bound there? To defend the fatherland, they tell you, right? And why are they going? Because they are being ordered and coerced into going, right?

Well then: you need to know the whys and wherefores of their going. Listen.

On the Island of Cuba there is a war between the Spanish government, the government that lives off the sweat-become-money with which you pay the purchase tax and a thousand other levies that leave you shirtless and without a crust of bread to feed yourselves, and the Cuban people. The former seeks to govern the island at any cost, to fleece and tyrannise the inhabitants, whereas the latter is reluctant to go on letting itself be governed by it any longer: it wants a government of its choosing, one not imposed by anyone: it wants an end to being robbed and enslaved and, wearying of lobbying for administration and government rather than robbery, weary of pressing for political reforms that might grant them the rights enjoyed by every Spaniard, since the Spaniards are its rulers, and tired of enduring all this vexation and contempt, it has risen in arms to drive out those who are the cause of its afflictions. And the children of that people are over there fighting in the countryside with other sons of the people, your sons, whom the government has sent there to fight.

In its support, the government cites the fact that it discovered and conquered the Island in question, as if finding something that has an owner affords some entitlement to possessing it contrary to the wishes of the owner himself: as if a neighbour stronger and craftier than the next fellow were to enter his house, drive him out and set about taking over everything found within and, what is more, punishing the owner because the evicted one complains about such an offence. It also invokes love of country in order to get the workers to trot off like sheep to defend it whilst the rich stay here to taste the pleasures afforded them by those of us who earn our bread by the sweat of our brows, and could not give a fig for the country: which is to say, what matters to them is that we should go off and defend it so as to guarantee them a morsel of land and a few thousand more men to rob.

Oh, if it were up to them to defend this territory, you would see how this war would not only be over and done by now, but indeed would never have been provoked. Can you not see that? Not one of them is on his way over there. They send your sons because they are the plebs – as they describe them – and they have every confidence that they have not forgotten what the priest and the schoolteacher, the boss and the employer have taught them: in short, that they have not moved on, that they are today what they were yesterday, not having absorbed a single atom of the doctrines of regeneration and that they are, as a result, lacking in courage and dignity and awash with patriotism.

Patriotism! The patriotism of petty lies, for if a decree were to accord them full licence, temporarily or whatever, they would not so much race as fly to your side, not giving a damn whether Cuba is ruled by this government or some other.

Young and lacking in experience, born to education, all of the slavishness that they have received from the society that exploits them blinds them to a clear sight of this matter which costs them and costs you so dear, and in the name of the fatherland that crushes them underfoot, they readily or through force offer up their blood and yours.

The love of country invoked by those who send them is a nonsense today. Any one of you knows that if we do not work, the country is not going to support us: that the country

maintains only the rich who steal our sweat: that many a time we have had to leave her because, even straining like beasts of burden, we cannot survive here and so we have left for the Americas “in search of better fortune”. And if even the least education understands that, then, strictly speaking, to what does country amount to those of us who live by our labour? Nothing: or rather, it is a phrase that serves to fire the blood of the unwary, filling their breasts with war-like enthusiasms and, like hungry wolves, they turn on their brethren who have not only done them no harm but whom they do not even know.

Ponder, mothers and sons, upon the meaning of country and ponder, o youngsters! It forces you to leave your beloved families at home in order to go off to fight like wild animals with men who have done you no wrong and who, like you, have mother, sons and brothers yearning for their imminent success so that they may rejoin them and share in their disappointments and their pleasures. Think of your mothers, your brothers, your entire family flooded with tears as you depart, perhaps never to return. Come back, ye sons of the people marching to the slaughter and see in your mind’s eye the home that you leaving behind you, devastated. There are your mothers weeping over your departure. Can’t you see them with their heart torn asunder by the pain caused by your absence and, more than that, by the thought that you are bound for suffering in that deadly climate, sweating and crestfallen, with a gnawing thirst, wearied to death from so much foot-slogging through the immense countryside: stretched out on a hospital bed, suffering cruel pain, sad and sobbing, without a friendly glance to offer you solace and none of the caresses you so sorely need to ease such torment?

Listen to us and listen to us well! Is there a single one of you that owns a yard of ground, a copper coin or the merest trifle on that Island? Not one: you have not so much as laid eyes on it, nor have you as yet any notion as to where it is or how far away it may be. All that you know is that it is several days’ sailing away: that some ships carry you there in their holds, packed in like sheep: that the swell has you sick for most of the crossing, and that, boxed in there, you have no option but to grin and bear it. But you do not even know how many millions are made by the company of these giants who bring you to that land which you find so inhospitable, in that even nature herself seems to want to drive you out by afflicting you with a thousand diseases.

A further forty thousand men!

Listen, mothers and listen, expeditionaries, listen. You are about to set off. Remember and do not forget that the only ones going are you who have no fortune, you who are bereft of all possessions, material, moral or intellectual, you who after toiling like animals cannot raise a few pesetas to buy yourselves out of the hated blood tax, or those without friends to redeem you .. the poor in spirit and pocket! The rich stay here to take their pleasures and sample the fleshpots ... content and happy to walk at *paso doble* pace ...

They are leaving, mothers! Leaving with a heavy heart .. but leaving all the same: they have their orders and must obey. Yours and that of the people gazing on impassively is a sad lot.

Wretched sons of the people, bereft of the courage required to turn your heart’s yearnings into deeds! Wretches! Raise your spirits and look your enemies in the face! ... Do not stifle the anguish in your breasts!

HAVE COURAGE!

For the sake of humanity, mothers, LET US PUT PAID TO WAR!

From No 245 of *El Corsario* (La Coruña) 22 August 1896, (Cuban war of independence.)

The Soldier

The labourer and the soldier met each other along the way.

– Where are you bound? the soldier asked.

– Off to the factory, answered the labourer. – And yourself, where are you bound?

– I'm off to the barracks: the village of Jalapa has revolted and we have orders to go there and crush the revolt by fire and sword.

– Could you just tell me – the labourer pressed him – why those folk revolted?

– Certainly, I'll tell you as best I can: all of a sudden these folk refused to pay their house rent, the rent on their land, their government taxes and when the authorities turned up to evict the tenants and drive the share-croppers off the land whilst at the same time collecting the taxes, the villagers resisted, stabbed the magistrate, the notary, the gendarmes and the chairman of the town council and all of the officials: they set the archives on fire and atop the tallest building they erected a red flag bearing the inscription in white lettering: "Land and Liberty".

The labourer shuddered. It occurred to him that these were folk from his own class, the poor and the disinherited, the proletarians who had revolted.

– And you're off to fight them? – he asked the soldier.

– Naturally – answered the uniformed slave. These villagers have trespassed against the right of private property and the government has a duty to protect the interests of the rich.

– But you aren't rich – the labourer told the soldier – What interest have you in killing these folk?

– I have to enforce respect for the law – the soldier dryly responded.

– The law? – cried the labourer. – The same law that upholds privilege! The law that is an oppressive burden to those at the bottom and an assurance of freedom and well-being for those on top! You are poor and yet you support the law that grinds down those of your own class. Your relatives, your brothers, your family are all poor: the folk who have revolted in Jalapa are poor who suffer just as you do, as your relatives, and there may well be a member of your family among the rebels!

The soldier shrugged his shoulders, spat on to the grass along the roadside and threw the labourer a look of scorn and haughtily shouted: – The law comes before all else! If my own father were to break it, I will kill my own father, because those are my orders!

– Fine – said the labourer. – So go and kill the flesh of your flesh, the blood of your blood!

The labourer and the soldier continued on their way in different directions: the former was off to toil for the greater enrichment of his master: the latter to kill so as to see that his master might enjoy "his" wealth in peace.

Jalapa was a hub of activity, of rejoicing, of boundless enthusiasm. The sad faces of the evening before had disappeared. All of the villagers were on the streets celebrating the day of freedom. One old man was haranguing the crowd like this:

– Comrades: now that every one of us is his own master, let us celebrate our victory: let us draw up an inventory of everything in the village and its environs so see what we can call upon in terms of provisions and tools and then, like brothers, and once we have celebrated our success, let us set to work to produce what is useful for all and ...

Not that he got to complete that sentence. A shot rang out and the old man, mortally wounded, fell, never to rise again, his face turned towards the sun.

The soldier had killed his own father..

Ricardo Flores Magón, *Regeneración*, 1 June 1912

To the Conscripts

– Little conscript, son of the people, why are you off to the barracks?

– For fear of the gendarmes who would send me to Biribi should I refuse.*

– Little conscript, child of the people, why do you hate the barracks?

– Because I find it repugnant that I should let them dress me up like a clown: because I have no taste for acting the puppet in the streets and squares; because I am afraid lest I might not be able to endure without flinching and without reply the reprimands of a foul-mouthed superior: because I have more useful things to be doing than acting as flunky, groom, coach-driver, ostler, cook, batman or children's maid for my officers and their wives: because I am not happy as the turkey that has to serve three years whilst the children of the rich, who have had the means to polish their backsides on school benches up until the age of twenty serve only one: because I know that, on our doorstep, in Switzerland, intelligent, economical and democratic organisation has seen to it that they have a solid army of citizen-soldiers that requires only six or eight weeks' service at most from everyone: because I realise that such an organisation would free us from the likelihood of any offensive war – and I want no truck with offensive war – whilst remaining formidable should the need arise, when faced with the unjustified aggression of some neighbouring despot, in defence of our Republic and our meagre freedoms, the only things that I am resolved to defend to the death. I hate the barracks, finally, because if, some day, I find myself in the sad position where I need to use my rifle, I want it to be against my real enemies: for, above all else, what I would hate would be to turn into a machine killing to order.

– Little conscript, child of the people, what are you going to think in the barracks when your officers tell you that you owe them supine obedience, that you must carry out their orders, their every order, without a second thought and without argument.

– I will let them talk, but to myself or aloud in the company of my comrades I will be thinking that there are circumstances in which I acknowledge but one commander, but one master: my own conscience.

– Little conscript, child of the people, what would you think if some strutting peacock, urged on by some Déroulède,† were to try to turn you, you and your comrades, against the Chamber of Deputies, the cabinet or some prefect in order to overthrow the Republic?

– I would think that twice so far the army has destroyed the Republic: that on the first occasion it forced upon the country a thug by the name of Napoleon who brought France to Waterloo: that on the second occasion, on 2 December, it mowed down the people in order to hoist into power a second Napoleon and that he too led the country to ruination and invasion: I would think that those two experiences were enough: that the general who would deploy his troops to attempt a third experiment would thereby be stepping outside of the law: I would think it my duty to take respectful aim at him and drop him like a mad dog.

– Little conscript, child of the people, what will you do if some day your officers lead you, with rifle at the ready, against the striking workers?



– I will patiently bear the insults and the odd stone that the famished strikers may throw our way and tell my comrades that in the event of their being ordered to open fire the duty of poltroons is to fire into the air, that of men to gumption to refuse bluntly to open fire upon their brothers, the workers in their overalls.

– Little conscript, child of the people, what will you do should your officers seek volunteers to go to the Madagascar, Tonkin, China or elsewhere in order to defend ‘our’ interests and the ‘honour’ of the flag?

– I will at first try not to laugh in their faces when they come along to treat us to their patriotic rants, then I will say to the hot-heads or to the poor in spirit who might be tempted to enlist that one would have to be stupid, when one is oneself impoverished and exploited, to go over there to a death from fever or dysentery just to allow a few gold braids to go fishing through the gore for braid and decorations, for some big business house to earn millions through exploitation of the natives, for a handful of missionaries to plant their brutalising and dangerous dogmas on the far side of the world. I will tell them that the very last resort is the trade of venturing, armed with repeating rifles and explosive guns, into the homes of poorly armed peoples unable to defend themselves just so as to steal their country away from them: that all such expeditions, no matter the hypocritical pretext that may be cited in an attempt to justify them, are simply acts of brigandage unworthy of civilised peoples.

– Little conscript, child of the people, what are you going to do if, in a few months, affairs in China have precipitated a conflict between European nations, it boils down to marching to the slaughter just to defend our glorious ally, the Tsar of all the Russias? What will you do when, in the town where you are on garrison duty, you see thousands of republican and socialist workers march through the streets to cries of: “Down with war!” What will you do if they try to use you against such folk, whom they will represent to you as traitors in the pay of the Prussians and the English?

– I will tell my comrades that these folk are right not to want to be led to the slaughter for the sake of the Tsar or to preserve his large slice of the Chinese cake: that they are right to refuse to fire, for the sake of such interests, upon English or German workers, our brothers in toil and wretchedness: and like the demonstrators I myself will cry out: ‘Long live peace! Long live worldwide peace! DOWN WITH WAR!’

Un Sans-Patrie (One Without a Homeland) – Gustave Hervé

From *Le Pioupiou de l’Yonne*, a provincial newspaper whose director, Gustave Hervé, lost his teaching post for this article which appeared in No1, first quarter of 1901

* Biribi – the disciplinary battalions

† Déroulède – notoriously nationalistic politician

Insurrection Rather than War

What is a Country?

For anybody who is not satisfied with words, or anybody who wants to forget for a moment the fantastic definitions of the Country which have been taught him at school, a Country is a group of men living under the same laws; because they themselves or their ancestors have been brought willingly or by force, more often by force, to obey the same sovereign, the same government.

Patriotism groups men according to their land of origin, as decided by the vicissitudes of history; within every country, thanks to the patriotic link, rich and poor unite against the foreigner. Socialism groups men, poor against rich, class against class, without taking into

account the differences of race and language, and over and above the frontiers traced by history.

To the poor, to the crowds of lesser civil servants, small traders without credit, peasants without capital, the propertyless mass and the multitude of domestic servants of both sexes, falls the lot of ignorance, painful or loathsome toil, dangerous or unhealthy trades, long hours which make one disgusted with work and drive men to drink and women even lower still. To them starvation wages or insignificant profits; to them the insecurity of the morrow, the rigours of the law at the slightest fault, and if illness, old age, or unemployment comes, privations and dark misery with, especially for women, its procession of sorrows and shame.

That’s what a Country is – a monstrous social inequality, the shameful exploitation of a nation by a privileged class!

There is nothing more natural, more logical, than that in every Country the rich should be patriots! Nobody would wonder at *their* fighting and getting killed occasionally for *their* country. Yet, even so, in France ever since the reign of Napoleon they have found means to avoid conscription.

But what confounds intelligence is that in all countries the beggars, poverty-stricken, disinherited, the overworked beasts of burden, ill-fed, badly housed, badly clothed, badly educated, as are three fourths of the inhabitants of every country, march like one man at the first call, whatever may be the cause of war.

It is good, it is useful, it is indispensable for the leading classes that the pariahs whom they shear be profoundly convinced that the interests of the rich and of the poor are identical in every nation. It is good, it is useful, it is indispensable for the leading classes that pariahs of every country consider the rich countryman who exploit them, not as enemies, but as friends, and on certain days as brethren.

Patriotism in every nation masks the class antagonisms to the great profit of the leading classes; through it, they prolong and facilitate its domination. But patriotism is not only at the present hour the moral upholder of the capitalist system; it serves as a pretext for the keeping up of formidable permanent armies, which are the material upholder, the last bulwark of the privileged classes.

The pretext, the only avowable and avowed aim of the army, is to defend the country against the foreigners; but once dressed in the country’s livery, when the barrack training has killed in him every intelligence, every consciousness of his own interests, the man of the people is but a gendarme in the service of the exploiters against his brethren of misery.

The proletarians have no country. The differences which exist between the present countries are all superficial differences. The capitalist regime is the same in all countries; and as it cannot work without a minimum of political liberties, all countries which live under a capitalist system enjoy elementary liberties which cannot anywhere be denied any longer to the proletariat. Even in Russia, the autocratic regime is today beaten to death.

The proletarians who give their lives for the present countries are dupes, stupid brutes.

The only war which is not a deception is that at the end of which, if they are victors, proletarians may hope by the expropriation of the capitalist class to put their hands on the social wealth accumulated by human genius for generations past.

There is only one war which is worthy of intelligent men, that is civil war, social revolution.

Whoever be the aggressor, insurrection rather than war!

By Gustave Hervé.

From *The Revolutionary Almanac*, Rabelais Press, New York, 1914.

War on War

At last the military monster broke loose. Drunken with lust for power, the despots and oppressors of mankind have given the order for general slaughter. Today we are witnessing a paroxysm of insanity such as the world has not seen before. Millions of crazed men are marching to destroy each other. What will be the result of this tremendous self-annihilation: the triumph of militarism and continuation of slavery for another century, or a breakdown of despotism and capitalism? The outcome will largely depend on the energy of the social revolutionists of the world.

Political Socialism is responsible for this outbreak of barbarism. The German exponents of political Socialism and their adherents in other countries, and all those who used to sneer at the anti-militarist propaganda of the Anarchists and other social revolutionists have helped to strengthen the power of despotism and exploitation, and now we see these famous leaders ordering their followers to defend 'their' Fatherland. We have no sympathy with these political cattle. We admire the deed of our Italian Comrades who shoot down their officers rather than murder their fellow-beings. *They* are the real exponents of revolutionary action.

Though we get no real news about the events now going on in Europe, we know that the boasting of the German Social Democracy of being able to prevent a European war has proved to be an empty phrase. And the same man who had once proclaimed "insurrection rather than war" now exhorts his comrades to defend the 'civilization' of their exploiters. What a deadly farce!

The revolutionary movement of the world is now in great danger of being swept away in the general conflagration. Let us foresee this danger. Let us combine for concerted action. Let us take up the slogan betrayed by the renegades: we proclaim the INSURRECTION AGAINST THE WAR.

From *Mother Earth*, August 1914.

Don't become a Murderer!

Young Man! You whom the government is trying to entice into the army and navy, beware! Bethink yourself before taking the step. Consider what you are about to do, and the purpose you are to serve. Ask yourself the meaning of military service and of war. Do you want to prepare for murder? Do you want to be trained for wholesale slaughter and, when ordered, to kill your fellow-men, men like yourself, whom you have never even seen and who never did you any harm? Think of it, and if there is a spark of manhood in your heart, you will be filled with horror and disgust at the very thought of military service.

You may be one of the unemployed, without money or friends. But better a hundred times to suffer need and hunger than to don the uniform that stands for cowardly obedience and the murder of your brothers. Consider that it is this military power which you are asked to join, that is upholding the conditions which are keeping you and thousands of others in starvation and misery. If you put on the uniform, you help to strengthen and perpetuate this power and you become the blind tool of the class that robs and kills under the guise of patriotism. It pays them well. They even instil the little schoolchildren with the spirit of boastful jingoism and murderous hatred because patriotism enlarges profits and increases dividends. Do you want to help them?

It is unworthy of a thinking man to be a blind, obedient tool. But still more unworthy it is to train oneself for the purpose and to subject oneself to humiliation and inhuman treatment in order to learn how to kill and murder.

Young Man! You are a poor man, a child of the poor. It is a terrible and shameful spectacle that in every land the sons of the workingmen constitute the army whose purpose it is to perpetuate the slavery of labour. Can you complain of oppression and exploitation if you lend yourself to uphold the system of economic robbery, if you take up arms to defend it? As long as there are enough young men who permit themselves to be driven to slaughter like a herd of sheep and who are willing to participate in expeditions of robbery and murder (for that's what war really is), just so long the possessing classes will continue to rob and to murder, to slaughter by the wholesale and decimate whole countries. You the sons of the people, you young workingmen of the land, you alone can put an end to these terrible things and their frightful consequences, by refusing to join the army and navy, by refusing to be used as hangmen, manhunters and watchdogs.

Already 'great' generals and other well-paid patriots speak of conscription. They want to introduce forced military service in this country, as has been done by the tyrannies of Europe. It is time to show them that the people see through their infamous schemes. Let the young generation remain away from the recruiting offices and refuse to be used as food for cannon.

Other patriots for revenue, rich land grabbers and high finance swindlers, greedily hunger for a favorable moment to let loose the army of the United States against the Mexican working people who are growing tired of starvation and oppression and are beginning to rebel. The plutocrats are ravenous for profits wherever gained, at whatever cost of human liberty and life. The great natural wealth of Mexico has long been whetting the tiger appetites of the American monopolists and finance monsters. Now they are ready to grab it, and the American army is to be used to do their dirty work. In their opinion the army and navy exist only for the purpose of enriching them and finding new markets for their shoddy wares and bibles.

You, sons of the people, do you want to give your strength and lives to fill the coffers of the wealthy parasites? Do you want to sacrifice yourselves for their filthy, despotic objects? Will you help them, for a few Judas pennies, to enslave a neighboring people that is heroically striving to free itself from its tyrants and bloodsuckers?

Great strikes are taking place in the West. Blood has already been shed, but not enough to satisfy the magnates who are good patriots, of course. Police clubs and Pinkertons are not sufficient defense for the high dividends of the speculators and brokers. They call for the soldiers. With Winchesters they want to make the workingmen realize that it is their sacred duty to suffer hunger and be treated like slaves, in order to enable a handful of parasites to roll in luxury. But these strikers are lawless it is objected. Is it lawlessness for the toiling masses to want a decent living, to demand the right to organize with their fellow-workers in order to save their families from hunger?

The mission of the soldier is no different from that of the professional cut-throat who kills a man to order, except that the soldier receives less pay for his services though he must be prepared not only for one murder but for wholesale killing. In bitter irony of his position, he is even commanded to sing the praises of the Lord who is supposed to be love and justice personified, and who is said to have commanded, 'Thou shalt not kill.'

The military uniform that seems so gay holds nothing but subjection and humiliation for the common soldier, and only a very meagre existence. He gets the mere crumbs when the glory and the profits of the bloody game of war are distributed. For the glory is all for the generals, the diplomats and statesmen, and the dollars are pocketed by the swindling suppliers of provisions, the cannon makers and manufacturers of arms, the ship builders and steel trust magnates. Young man, can you not understand why all these people with their hired slave drivers and paid newspaper writers are so patriotic? They are at all times ready to sacrifice the

lives of poor devils for 'the honor of the country.' It means profit for them, and for that they cheerfully send to slaughter thousands who have been careless enough to fall into the net spread by the gaily decked agents of hell.

Beware of their traps! Too late will be regret when you are already caught. According to statistics about five per cent of the men desert from the United States Army. It is a striking proof that the fine promises of the merry and happy life of military service are nothing but a lie and a snare. Don't be duped, young man. Your true interest lies with the great body of the toilers, in solidaric effort with the producers to possess themselves of the land and tools of production for the use and benefit of all.

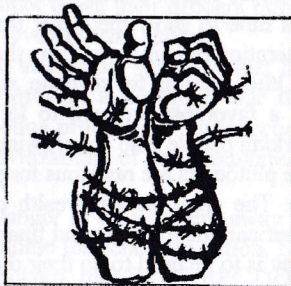
Down with the slaughter of mankind!

Long live humanity!

From *The Revolutionary Almanac*, Rabelais Press, New York, 1914.

Voices From Prison

The following manifesto was written in prison by two Anarchist comrades, who were the victims of the French Government in 1912. At that time, during the Balkan War, they were members of the Anarchist Federation of Paris, and were collaborators with H. Combes and others on *Le Mouvement Anarchiste*. The strong anti-militarist attitude of that paper, almost the only one opposed to the Balkan War, roused the wrath of the Government. The paper and press were seized, some of the comrades sentenced to twenty-five years' imprisonment, and others expelled from the country; while their organisation lost its best and most devoted members. The comrades who have written this manifesto give us an example of courage and self-sacrifice by issuing it for publication at a time when they are still in the hands of the tyrants who oppress them and also the people of France.



To Anarchists, to Syndicalists, to Men!

For a year already, thirty millions of men, provided with the most perfect instruments of murder, have been thrown one against the other. For a year there has been over all of Europe an unheard-of slaughter before which the most frightful records of history pale. More than seven million corpses have already strewn the gigantic field of carnage. More than seven millions of invalids embarrass the hospitals, or are brought back with their flesh mutilated, a living witness of this infernal fight.

Everywhere, mourning, misery, suffering. Everywhere, mothers, wives, and children with hearts tortured with anguish, or ravaged by sorrow. Everywhere eyes full of tears. Everywhere, distress, desolation, and death.

And why? Because it was expedient for Governments, our masters, to send their human herds to this execrable butchery. Because the politics, the interests, the ambitions of the dominant classes demanded it. Because capitalist barbarity, the rivalry of plutocrats for conquest and the exploitation of the world, made this fearful conflict necessary. Because the States to-day engaged in war are all a prey to enormous internal difficulties – economic, financial, political, or social – which it is necessary for them to elude at any cost. Also, and above all, because it is necessary to save the masters from the threatening demands of the

international proletariat. Favoured by years of peace, the people begin at last to know themselves and to respect themselves; national hatreds and prejudices are disappearing. The proletarians of all countries are more and more conscious of the identity of their own interests, of the community of their ideals. And the time seemed to be approaching when the pariahs of the whole world, attacking and overturning bourgeois order, were going to establish a more humane and harmonious society.

The privileged class have decided otherwise. To the sane thoughts of their slaves they oppose the most frightful diversion by imposing this war.

To avoid disloyalty amongst their troops – revolts always possible – to create a fictitious enthusiasm in favour of their sinister enterprise, the French, German, or other Governments have carefully deceived and perverted public opinion. An easy thing to do, when one has prudently abolished all freedom of the Press and of speech, and proscribed all independent thought. Ah! one does not tell the mob the real capitalistic reasons for the war. But one muddles it up with sonorous words and audacious lies. Orations by Poincaré or William II, by Viviani or Bethmann-Hollweg – the same phrases, the same invocations to Right, to Justice, to all complacent entities. All rulers throw upon their enemies the responsibility for the drama. And all of them prove their fierce love of peace and humanity by absolutely refusing to interrupt the carnage until "Justice" shall have triumphed – and also certain more concrete interests!

Certainly there are men who have their reasons, very good reasons, for desiring the continuation of the war – war 'to the finish.' There are all those who draw enormous advantages from universal misfortune. The Schneiders and the Krupps, whose amount of business is becoming prodigious. All the gang of more or less conscientious Army contractors. The speculators who monopolise corn, meat, and all commodities, and resell at famine prices. The large bankers, to whom the issue of colossal loans brings tremendous commission, the rate of which will grow the more thousands of millions shall be thrown into the whirlpool. Politicians – necessary accessories to stock-jobbers and other financial sharks. Also the small fry of opportunists, intriguers, and journalists who manufacture heroism with the skins of others and who maintain lucratively the business of patriot.

But the disinherited, the workers, the revolutionists, what have they to expect in return for the monstrous sacrifices, for the fratricides, that have been exacted of them? Nothing but an increase of misery and humiliation; crushing taxes; the condition of the wage-earner aggravated by the fact that very many women, deprived of their supporter, will be forced to work very cheap in order to live. Workers' organisations reduced to skeletons; a set-back to all ideas of emancipation; mistrust and rancour between workers of different countries. Behold the benefits of war for the proletariat!

Revolutionists have neglected their duty, have failed in their pledges, in not opposing this dreadful scourge, in not rising in insurrection against those who have dared to inflict it. But if there is much that is irreparable, at least let us have enough energy to put an end to this work of extermination.

Comrades of France, we must regain possession of ourselves!

In all other countries the workers' protest has already been heard.

In Russia, revolutionists and nearly all Socialists are against the war; also thousands of them are languishing in the prisons of Siberia.

In England, the underhand dealings of the capitalists are opposed by strikes, and a large section of the Socialist Party resist the bloody politics of the governing classes.

In Germany, Anarchists, faithful to their principles, have nearly all paid with their liberty for the cleanness of their attitude. From the Socialist side, eloquent and vehement interventions are made against this bellicose folly and patriotic corruption. And we must recognise that the Social Democrats, so severely blamed, so decried, and sometimes so much to be criticised, have attempted repeatedly to lead the Socialist Parties of other countries to plan together in favour of peace, and that these appeals have been, until now, rendered vain by the rabid Jingoistic passions of our own Socialists.

In France, Socialists have accepted every compromise, including the participation by three of them in a Government of dictators, and have become the warmest defenders of warlike politics. The CGT has also failed to justify its past. Those who should have given the example of courage, and of sacrifice have betrayed their organisations and have violated the meaning of Syndicalism by putting it under the guardianship of politicians and at the service of Jingoistic passions.

Shall it be said that all have submitted to the influence of such impulses? We know that the Syndicalists who do not conspire with power are numerous. That Anarchists who have renounced nothing of their ideas are numerous, and also that there are numerous revolutionists who have ridiculed the sophistical arguments of a certain Press. But it is not sufficient to deplore in the depths of one's conscience the abominations of the present time. We shall all be equally responsible for these calamities with those who are the direct instigators if by weakness and cowardice we fail to make the voice of humanity and reason heard.

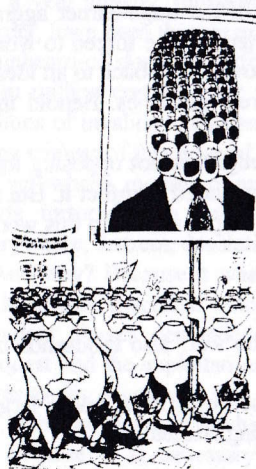
Militants of France, let us at last combine our efforts with those of our brothers who in Germany, in England, in Russia are fighting courageously, often heroically, against this abominable war. Let us unite our efforts, so that thousands of workers may cease to slaughter each other; so that the Workers' International, whose death the reactionaries proclaim, may come to life again with the glory of having saved the world from the cataclysm born of bourgeois appetites.

Enough barbarity! Enough blood!

Let us demand peace! Let us impose peace!

Louis Lecoin, Pierre Ruff, Political Prisoners. Caen Prison, August, 1915.

From *Freedom*, December 1915.



War is the Health of the State!

War is the health of the State. It automatically sets in motion throughout society those irresistible forces for uniformity, for passionate cooperation with the Government in coercing into obedience the minority groups and individuals which lack the larger herd sense. The machinery of government sets and enforces the drastic penalties; the minorities are either intimidated into silence, or brought slowly around by a subtle process of persuasion which may seem to them really to be converting them. Of course, the ideal of perfect loyalty, perfect uniformity is never really attained. The classes upon whom the amateur work of coercion falls are unwearied in their zeal, but often their agitation instead of converting, merely serves to stiffen their resistance. Minorities are rendered sullen, and some intellectual opinion bitter and satirical. But in general, the nation in wartime attains a

uniformity of feeling, a hierarchy of values culminating at the undisputed apex of the State ideal, which could not possibly be produced through any other agency than war. Loyalty – or mystic devotion to the State – becomes the major imagined human value. Other values, such as artistic creation, knowledge, reason, beauty, the enhancement of life, are instantly and almost unanimously sacrificed, and the significant classes who have constituted themselves the amateur agents of the State are engaged not only in sacrificing these values for themselves but in coercing all other persons into sacrificing them.

War – or at least modern war waged by a democratic republic against a powerful enemy – seems to achieve for a nation almost all that the most inflamed political idealist could desire. Citizens are no longer indifferent to their Government, but each cell of the body politic is brimming with life and activity. We are at last on the way to full realization of that collective community in which each individual somehow contains the virtue of the whole. In a nation at war, every citizen identifies himself with the whole, and feels immensely strengthened in that identification. The purpose and desire of the collective community live in each person who throws himself wholeheartedly into the cause of war. The impeding distinction between society and the individual is almost blotted out. At war, the individual becomes almost identical with his society. He achieves a superb self-assurance, an intuition of the rightness of all his ideas and emotions, so that in the suppression of opponents or heretics he is invincibly strong; he feels behind him all the power of the collective community. The individual as social being in war seems to have achieved almost his apotheosis. Not for any religious impulse could the American nation have been expected to show such devotion en masse, such sacrifice and labor. Certainly not for any secular good, such as universal education or the subjugation of nature, would it have poured forth its treasure and its life, or would it have permitted such stern coercive measures to be taken against it, such as conscripting its money and its men. But for the sake of a war of offensive self-defense, undertaken to support a difficult cause to the slogan of 'democracy,' it would reach the highest level ever known of collective effort. [...]

The gregarious impulse keeps its hold all the more virulently because when the group is in motion or is taking any positive action, this feeling of being with and supported by the collective herd very greatly feeds that will to power, the nourishment of which the individual organism so constantly demands. You feel powerful by conforming, and you feel forlorn and helpless if you are out of the crowd. While even if you do not get any access of power by thinking and feeling just as everybody else in your group does, you get at least the warm feeling of obedience, the soothing irresponsibility of protection. [...]

There is, of course, in the feeling toward the State a large element of pure filial mysticism. The sense of insecurity, the desire for protection, sends one's desire back to the father and mother, with whom is associated the earliest feelings of protection. It is not for nothing that one's State is still thought of as Father or Motherland, that one's relation toward it is conceived in terms of family affection. The war has shown that nowhere under the shock of danger have these primitive childlike attitudes failed to assert themselves again, as much in this country as anywhere. If we have not the intense Father-sense of the German who worships his Vaterland, at least in Uncle Sam we have a symbol of protecting, kindly authority, and in the many Mother-posters of the Red Cross, we see how easily in the more tender functions of war service, the ruling organization is conceived in family terms. A people at war have become in the most literal sense obedient, respectful, trustful children again, full of that naïve faith in the all-wisdom and all-power of the adult who takes care of them, imposes his mild but necessary rule upon them and in whom they lose their responsibility and anxieties. In this recrudescence of the child, there is great comfort, and a certain influx of

power. On most people the strain of being an independent adult weighs heavily, and upon none more than those members of the significant classes who have had bequeathed to them or have assumed the responsibilities of governing. The State provides the convenientest of symbols under which these classes can retain all the actual pragmatic satisfaction of governing, but can rid themselves of the psychic burden of adulthood. They continue to direct industry and government and all the institutions of society pretty much as before, but in their own conscious eyes and in the eyes of the general public, they are turned from their selfish and predatory ways, and have become loyal servants of society, or something greater than they – the State. The man who moves from the direction of a large business in New York to a post in the war management industrial service in Washington does not apparently alter very much his power or his administrative technique. But psychically, what a transfiguration has occurred! His is now not only the power but the glory! And his sense of satisfaction is directly proportional not to the genuine amount of personal sacrifice that may be involved in the change but to the extent to which he retains his industrial prerogatives and sense of command.

From members of this class a certain insuperable indignation arises if the change from private enterprise to State service involves any real loss of power and personal privilege. If there is to be pragmatic sacrifice, let it be, they feel, on the field of honor, in the traditionally acclaimed deaths by battle, in that detour to suicide, as Nietzsche calls war. The State in wartime supplies satisfaction for this very real craving, but its chief value is the opportunity it gives for this regression to infantile attitudes. In your reaction to an imagined attack on your country or an insult to its government, you draw closer to the herd for protection, you conform in word and deed, and you insist vehemently that everybody else shall think, speak, and act together. And you fix your adoring gaze upon the State, with a truly filial look, as upon the Father of the flock, the quasi-personal symbol of the strength of the herd, and the leader and determinant of your definite action and ideas.

Extracts from *The State* (1919) by Randolph Bourne.

The Makhnovists against Red Militarism

The Makhnovist army is not an anarchist army, not made up of anarchists. The anarchist ideal of happiness and general equality cannot be attained through the strivings of an army, any army, even if it were made up exclusively of anarchists. At best, the revolutionary army can serve to destroy the despised ancient regime; any army, which by its very nature can rely only on force and command, would be utterly impotent and indeed a hindrance to constructive endeavour, elaboration and creation. If the anarchist society is to be made possible, the workers themselves in their factories and firms and the peasants themselves in their districts and villages must set about constructing the anti-authoritarian society, awaiting decrees and laws from nowhere.

Neither anarchist armies nor isolated heroes, nor groups, nor the anarchist Confederation will introduce a new life for the workers and peasants. Only the toilers themselves, through their deliberate efforts, can build their well-being, free of State and seigneurs.

The 'Makhnovitsi' appeal to their Brethren in the Red Army

Stop! Read! Reflect! Red Army comrade! You have been despatched by your commissar-commanders to fight the *makhnovitsi* insurgents and revolutionaries.

On the order of your commanders you will bring ruination to peaceable areas, you will carry out searches, make arrests and murder folk whom you personally do not know, but who will have been pointed out to you as enemies of the people. You will be told that the

makhnovitsi are bandits or counter-revolutionaries. They will order, not ask, but make you march like a humble slave to your commander. You will arrest and you will kill! Who? Why? On what grounds?

Reflect, Red Army comrade! Reflect, toilers, peasants and workers forcibly subjected to the new masters who go by the ringing title of the 'worker-peasant authorities'!

We are the *makhnovitsi* revolutionary insurgents, peasants and workers like you, our Red Army brethren!

We have risen up against oppression and degradation; we fight for a better and more enlightened life. Our ideal is to attain a community of toilers, with no authority, no parasites and no commissars.

The government of the Bolshevik-Communists sends you to mount punitive expeditions. It is in a hurry to make peace with Denikin and with the wealthy Poles and other White Army scum, so that it may the more easily harass the popular movement of revolutionary insurgents, of the oppressed risen up against the yoke of authority, all authority.

But the threats from the White and the Red commands do not scare us! We will answer violence with violence!

If need be, we, a tiny handful of men, will rout the divisions of the government's Red Army. Because we are free and enamoured of liberty! We are insurgent revolutionaries, and the cause we champion is a just cause.

Comrade! Reflect upon whose side you are on and against whom you fight. Do not be a slave. Be a man!

The *Makhnovitsi* Revolutionary Insurgents
From their paper *The Road to Freedom*.



Militarism – the end of the revolutionary militias

Anybody, captive in prison or captive in the world, who has not understood the tragedy of men condemned to spend their lives blindly and silently obeying orders, can ever know the nether regions of pain or the terrible scar it leaves in those who must drink, touch, and feel the pain of silence and obedience. Wishing to speak and keeping quiet; wishing to sing and remaining hushed; wishing to laugh and having to strangle the feeblest impulse with brute force; wishing to love and condemned to swim in the slime of hatred!

I have lived in barracks, and there I learned to hate. I have been in prison, and it was there, strangely enough, in the midst of tears and torment, I learned to love, to love intensely. [...]

Our past opposition to militarisation was founded on what we knew about officers. Our present opposition is founded on what we know about them now.

Professional officers form, now and for all time, here and in Russia, a caste. They are the ones giving orders, while the rest of us are left with nothing but an obligation to obey. They hate with all their might anything connected with civilian life, which they consider inferior.

[...] The 'proletarian' army is not calling for the kind of discipline that would mean respecting war orders; it is calling for submission, blind obedience, and the obliteration of men's personalities.

I experienced the exact same thing in the barracks. I experienced it again, later, in the prison.

We used to live happily in the trenches. It is true that we saw comrades fall at our side who had been in the war with us from the beginning; furthermore, we were aware that at any moment a bullet might leave us stretched out in the middle of a field – the reward expected by a revolutionary – but we used to live happily. We used to eat when we could, and fast when rations were in short supply. And everyone was content. Why? Because none of us was superior to the other, all of us were friends, all comrades, all guerrillas of the Revolution.

The delegate of a group or century was not imposed on us, he was elected by us. He did not regard himself as a lieutenant or as a captain, but as a comrade. Nor were the delegates of the Committees or the Column colonels or generals; they were comrades. We used to eat, fight, laugh and swear together. For a while we received no pay, and they received nothing either. Later our pay was ten pesetas, and they too received, and still receive, ten pesetas.

The one thing that we do accept from them is their proven ability, which is why they were chosen; they are also of proven bravery, which is why they are our delegates. There is no hierarchy, there are no superiors, there are no harsh orders, but rather camaraderie, goodness and friendship among comrades, a joyful life amidst the disasters of war. And so, surrounded by comrades who believe that the struggle is for and about something, war seems gratifying and even death is accepted with pleasure. But when you find yourself surrounded by officers and everything is hierarchy and orders; when in your hands you hold the wretched soldier's pay, scarcely enough to support your family in the rearguard, while the lieutenant, captain, commander and colonel are all receiving three, four, ten times as much – without contributing one whit more enthusiasm, knowledge or courage – life has a bitter taste to it, for you realise that this is no Revolution, but a few individuals taking advantage of an unfortunate situation at the expense of the people.

I don't know how we shall live now. I don't know whether we shall be able to accustom ourselves to abuse from corporals, from sergeants, and from lieutenants. I do not know whether, after having felt ourselves to be men in the fullest sense of the word, we shall get used to being domestic animals, for that is what discipline leads to and what militarisation implies.

Extracts from *A Day Mournful and Overcast* by an 'Uncontrollable' from the Iron Column.

Protest or Resistance?

The pacifists have no realistic view on the causes of war; their superficial reasoning that violence can be eliminated by campaigning against its weaponry is naive to say the least and has been formulated more out of a sense of paranoia. In the end their campaigning may actually lead them to believe that they are moving towards a greater degree of self-security. A sense of security is what the bourgeois get when they know that the police are around to protect them from the violence of the outside world. They are moved by fear, or a sense of moral 'duty'.

Through history struggles of one sort or another have often followed a single issue approach and the pacifists of today are no exception. They succeed in only providing a focus of the lowest common denominator around which the widest number of supporters can offer the least form of solidarity. CND, for example, perceives itself as being a movement that can

effect change because of the sheer number of those who support its aims. They, like all pacifists of today, believe that by the sheer weight of their moral stand, the forces of authority will crumble and wither. Why else did it take the Greenham women 18 months, at the point where the arrival of Cruise was imminent, to attempt to systematically tear down the fence surrounding the airforce base? And even then there was no real effective plan to make the base inoperative. Their gesture, as all other protests that today go under the term 'direct action', nevertheless provide valuable psychological support for any wider resistance. But if, at the end of the day, the achievement of such gestures is nothing more than the creation of a false sense of security, brought about by mass solidarity, then the protests will in themselves only provide a counter to any real possibility of tackling militarism.

Nor can libertarians completely absolve themselves. It's true that 'every little bit helps.' But taking on the state is no game. For the moment things are easy, but if we really were to score a few points, then we'd soon know about it. Stop 'n' Search would seem mild, the Waldorf incident ['accidental' killing by armed police] commonplace, raids and cell deaths an everyday occurrence. We've never had it so good! For the radical chic, the anti-nuclear issue is a god-send. What better way to spend a Sunday than to go out on demonstration and meet a few friends or even get into a good argument. *If symbolic protest can take over where resistance is left behind, who needs a police force?*

'Disarming the State' by 'Mahatma Ghandi' *Black Flag Quarterly*, Vol 7 no. 5, Winter 1984.

Remember the Heroes

Every year on Remembrance Day, November 11th, when official ceremonies honour (or claim to honour) the memory of the millions who died in two World Wars, some of us refuse to be party to the whitewash job...

It's not that we don't remember the millions who died. We do. In fact we ask ourselves what did they die for? What was a whole generation of young men in Europe cut down for in 1914-18? In a war 'to end wars' they were sometimes told – in reality for 'King and country' (i.e. the King's country), and in defence of the old power blocs of Europe.

And some of them knew the truth. You won't find their names on your local war memorial, but tens of thousands went to jail rather than join up, mutinied at training camps and at the front, or deserted. Some even had the good sense to shoot their own officers when ordered over the top.

The Second World War was belatedly turned into an 'anti-fascist' crusade by the predecessors of the ruling class who today lead the Remembrance Day ceremonies every November 11th, despite the fact that large parts of the British ruling class were *pro-fascist* in the thirties (until Hitler started to threaten their interests). We on the other hand like to recall the Italian anarchists who were fighting Mussolini in the early twenties, when Churchill is on record as an admirer of the dictator. We also remember the Spanish workers (anarchists to the fore) who initially defeated the fascist coup there in 1936, only to see the 'democracies' abandon the Republic, while Mussolini and Hitler armed and supported



General Franco. Fascism could have been stopped in Spain, sparing Europe a lot of the grief to come in 1939-45, but the bourgeois democracies (and Stalin) were more afraid of the Spanish Revolution than they were of fascism.

We also remember the countless millions of unknown civilians who die in all wars when politicians and generals decide on a Guernica, Coventry, Dresden, Hiroshima etc. Despite the propaganda about 'smart bombs' and limited 'collateral damage' (human beings), tens if not hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Civilians were killed during Operation Desert Storm. But a few captured allied pilots slapped around a bit by the Iraqis are probably better remembered by the patriotic British public.

But it's a not simply a matter of historical accuracy in the face of a State that wants a to honour only a few old men with medals on their chests. Anti-militarism is an issue today. That's why we've been saying that lads from the shitty ends of Tyneside and Teesside had no business carrying a gun on the streets on Belfast and Derry for the last 25 years in the interests of the UK ruling class. (And private Lee Clegg is no hero or 'victim' by the way, despite the Establishment-supported campaign for his release.)

In Spain in 1994 (according to 'The Guardian'), 100,000 young men declared themselves conscientious objectors and refused to do their military service, opting instead to do some form of substitute community works. In addition some 5,000 'total objectors' (the anarchists amongst them) refused to do either military or the substitute 'Civilian' service and risked jail. (Total objectors are committed anti-militarists rather than mere pacifists. For the total objectors refusal of military service is the chance to make a stance against militarism *and* the State and capitalism that spawn it.)

In Russia in 1993 40% of eligible conscripts failed to report for service in Moscow. The 1994 figure was said to be even worse (or better, depending on from which stance you look at it). No wonder, given the poignant images of captured teenage conscripts sent by the Generals to capture Grozny.

In a world where new wars seem to be breaking out every week, this is the only hope: that young people will realise, as some always have in the past, that *the only war worth fighting is the class war.*

'Percy' from *Anarchy – Northeast Libertarian Broadsheet*, Issue 3. (1995)

Against War and Capitalism

The civilian death toll mounts in Afghanistan, to be added to the thousands who died in New York. The refugee crisis grows daily, with millions more facing starvation. Ground troops are sent in and we are warned to expect a long drawn out bloody conflict. War certainly lays bare the horrors of capitalism.

Anti-War Demonstrations

We are heartened by the fact that reasonably large, and growing anti-war demonstrations have taken place both in this country and elsewhere. We share the view that, despite the massive propaganda effort, only a minority of people actively support the war effort. The effects of the war will be increasingly felt. The war is being used as a cover for the deepening economic crisis but also contributes to it, leading to more sackings, increasing racism, additional draconian laws and further cuts in social spending. This will in turn lead to more and more opposition to the war. The important question will be the form this opposition takes.

Anti-Capitalism

Over the last few years, since at least June 18th 1999, we have witnessed the growth of a global anti-capitalist movement. Through a series of international gatherings beginning with

Seattle and most recently at Genoa, this diverse movement succeeded in questioning the viability of capitalism. Many commentators are now seeking to write off this movement, suggesting that September 11th changes everything. But war and capitalism are inseparable. Nation states and would-be states (like *al Qaida*) fight each other for control of both resources and the right to exploit our labour power. This is the normal mode of functioning of capitalism – since the First World War barely a day has passed without war being waged somewhere in the world. The struggle against the war and the struggle to replace capitalism with a classless world human community are the same.

Pacifism

The overwhelming urge for peace is an understandable response to the war. The ideology of pacifism is, however, a completely reactionary basis for opposition to the war. Most pacifists seek an alternative method to resolve the conflict, the favourite being that bin Laden should be tried before an international court, whilst others look to UN intervention. Even if we ignore the often tragic failure of such initiatives in the past, this can at best lead only to capitalist peace. Capitalist peace means death by starvation, lack of shelter or healthcare, by environmental poisoning, overwork, hopelessness and alienation, in short terror and death by other means.

Anti-imperialism

The response of the left to the war is to drag out the tired old formula of 'anti-imperialism' in which the USA is the imperial power to be opposed. This in turn means giving support ('conditional' or 'critical', it matters not) to the barbarous misogynist pro-capitalist regime of the Taliban. Not surprisingly this quickly develops into anti-Americanism, which writes off an important section of the working class as irredeemingly reactionary. The Stop the War coalition, formed by the left, is a cross-class alliance with religious leaders, MP's and other enemies of the working class. That the left performs such a counter-revolutionary role does not surprise us – they are after all the left wing of capital. To the members of such groups, among whom we know that there are decent people, we must pose the question: How can you stomach such reactionary nonsense?

No War but the Class War, [2002]

c/o BM Cat, London, WC1N 3XX.

http://www.geocities.com/nowar_buttheclasswar/index.html

Anti-Militarism and Social Insurrection

Of course, as an anarchist, I am opposed to all of the state's wars. If, historically, particular anarchists have supported certain wars (Kropotkin's support of the Allies in World War 1, for example), this has shown a lack of coherence in their analysis and a willingness to allow political and strategic thinking to take precedence over a principled attempt to create the life and world one wants here and now. Wars of the state can never increase freedom since freedom does not simply consist in a quantitative lessening of domination and exploitation (what Kropotkin perceived as the outcome of the defeat of imperialist Germany), but in a qualitative transformation of existence that destroys them, and state wars simply change the power relationships between those who dominate.

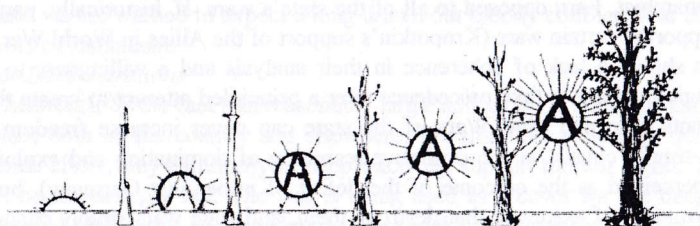
So the anarchist opposition to state wars is, in fact, opposition to the types of social relationships that make such war possible. In other words, it is opposition to militarism in its totality. And militarism is not just war as such. It is a social hierarchy of order givers and order takers. It is obedience, domination and submission. It is the capacity to perceive other

human beings as abstractions, mere numbers, death counts. It is, at the same time, the domination of strategic considerations and efficiency for its own sake over life and the willingness to sacrifice oneself for a 'Great Cause' that one has been taught to believe in.

Considered in this way, anti-militarism carries within it, not just the opposition to the state's wars, but also a conception of how we wish to carry out our revolutionary struggle against the state and capital. We are not pacifists. A qualitative transformation of life and relationships capable of destroying the institutions of domination and exploitation will involve a violent upheaval of conditions, a rupture with the present – that is to say a social insurrection. And here and now as well, as we confront these institutions in our lives, destructive attack is a legitimate and necessary response. But to militarize this struggle, to transform it essentially into a question of strategies and tactics, of opposing forces and numbers, is to begin to create within our struggle that which we are trying to destroy. The essence of militarization is, in fact, the essence of the society of the market and the state: quantification, the measuring of all things. The anarchist ideal of the freedom of every individual to fully realize herself in free association with those of her choosing without interference from ruling social institutions or lack of access to all that is necessary to achieve this aim is, in fact, the very opposite of such a measured existence.

Armed struggle is likely to be part of any social insurrection, but this does not require the creation of a military force. Such a formation could even be considered as a sign that the far more significant movement of social subversion is weakening, that the transformation of social relationships has begun to stagnate. From an anarchist perspective, the specialization inherent in the formation of a revolutionary army has to be considered as a contradiction to anarchist principles. If, in the midst of social insurrection, the insurgent people as a whole arm themselves with all they need for their struggle, this would undermine the tendency toward militarization. When we remember that the primary aim is social subversion, the transformation of social relationships, that this is the real strength of the movement because it is in the process of this practice of subversion that we discover our indomitable singularity and that arms are simply a tool among many that we use in this project, then the importance of rejecting militarization should become quite clear. There is no joy in militarism. Armed joy is found in the collective project of individual self-realization finding its means to destroy all domination with every tool to hand, transforming life arm in hand.

Neither pacifism, nor militarism, but social insurrection.
Willful Disobedience No. 12



ALEX BERKMAN'S WAR DICTIONARY

CONSCRIPTION – Free men fighting against their will.

FREE SPEECH – Say what you please, but keep your mouth shut.

HUMANITY – Treason to government.

LOYAL CITIZEN – Deaf, dumb and blind.

SEDITION – The proof of Tyranny.

PATRIOTISM – Hating your neighbor.

TRENCHES – Digging your own grave.

UN-AMERICAN – Independent opinion.

UNIFORM – Government strait-jacket.

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Tell the Marines

'I spent thirty-three years and four months in active military service as a member of this country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps. And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street.' – Major General Smedley D. Butler.

Apologies if your anti-militarist favourite wasn't included. You could always volunteer to edit volume two – on this or any other topic.