I think that we are now in a mood, determined by the present conditions produced by social development, to look more objectively, without taking sides, at that contest between two great revolutionaries that dominated the revolutionary movement in the 19th century; to appreciate that we have both of them, and to understand their difference and opposition. Both they took part in the revolution of 1848, as committed to it; but then their ways parted; they were indeed products of entirely different social milieus. B. came from Russia where absolutism held down all social and spiritual progress; Marx was formed by the rising Western industrial capitalism. To Bakunin, therefore, did liberty the great idea. The saw in state power the basis of the slavery and poverty of the masses. Marx saw in capitalist exploitation the cause of misery and slavery; political freedom he saw present in England, where, however, the workers' misery was greatest; and since at that time capitalism was a mass of separate competing small business, unorganized, he considered organization as the chief demand, which could only be ascertained by a central dominating power, a democratic state power, dominated by the working class. To their basic ideas stood against one another; B. saw that Bakunin's political freedom was not sufficient (read England); B. said that Marx's organized state power would bring world slavery. Bakunin had studied and animadverted as many Russians, Western science and knowledge and different from other Russians, applied them to the struggle of the exploited masses in Western Europe, thinking that their grievances were the same as his. Marx's revolution in Western science and put in this way, his Historical Materialism and his Economic Theory of Capitalism, a new basis to all further class struggle. Their clash in the 1st International has been treated from both sides, by socialists and anarchists, each defending their great forerunners, repeating mostly all the old arguments and accusations. You know the work of the Swiss author Brihpacher on Marx and Bakunin; when the well-known German historian and socialist Tranz Mühring then confirmed his point of view and expressed his own critical attitude to many of Marx's assertions, he found much echo among his socialist party-comrades. I think I remember that Pissaroff, certainly one of the best experts in socialist history, criticized Mühring thereon.

It was not simply the clash of two opposite characters, here the fiery spirit who appealed to the rebellious feeling to fight for freedom, there the fundamental scientist trying to organize the awakening working class. It was the problem how to unite organization and freedom into one form and method of revolutionary action. It could not be solved at that time, because the solution demands a higher stage of proletarian consciousness than was present in the 19th century. Capitalist development has since changed these conditions. Organization has become a weapon of capitalism, and in its hands state power became, in Germany and in Russia, a crushing instrument of despotic suppression of all freedom. Now that socialists calling themselves followers of Marx in unilateral distortion of his views, acts as agents of state capitalism, now it is natural that the attention turns, in wide circles, to the writings of Bakunin. And so I think that a book explaining his views will find much interest among the workers.
We should not forget, however, that thereby the problem is not solved. This solution can only proceed from the action of the working class, when it has to fight against worsening conditions under a more powerful state dictatorship.

I think it must be clear that council organisation forms the synthesis of the views that in the preceding century seemed to complete antagonism. Therein the goals of organisation and freedom are combined into a harmonious unit. It first appeared spontaneously on the streets of the Russian revolution, but was there soon suppressed and distorted by state capitalism. Then in Germany 1918-19 it sprang up as Arbeittsräte, and there and in Holland, in the splinter groups opposing the development of the CP, the idea of workers' councils found ever more a clear expression. By this new point of view I think we will be able to understand better the work of our great predecessor.

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