

LIBERATING SOCIETY FROM THE STATE

A Political Reader

Erich Mühsam • Edited by Gabriel Kuhn

Erich Mühsam (1878-1934), poet, bohemian, revolutionary, is one of Germany's most renowned and influential anarchists. Born into a middle-class Jewish family, he challenged the conventions of bourgeois society at the turn of the century, engaged in heated debates on the rights of women and homosexuals, and traveled Europe in search of radical communes and artist colonies. He was a primary instigator of the ill-fated Bavarian Council Republic in 1919, and held the libertarian banner high during a Weimar Republic that came under increasing threat by right-wing forces. In 1933, four weeks after Hitler's ascension to power, Mühsam was arrested in his Berlin home. He spent the last sixteen months of his life in detention and died in the Oranienburg Concentration Camp in July 1934.

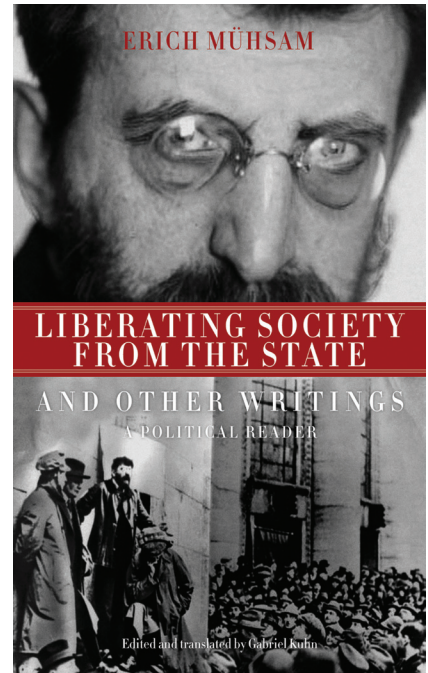
Mühsam wrote poetry, plays, essays, articles, and diaries. His work unites a burning desire for individual liberation with anarcho-communist convictions, and bohemian strains with syndicalist tendencies. The body of his writings is immense, yet hardly any English translations exist. This collection presents not only *Liberating the State from Society: What is Communist Anarchism?*, Mühsam's main political pamphlet and one of the key texts in the history of German anarchism, but also some of his best-known poems, unbending defenses of political prisoners, passionate calls for solidarity with the lumpenproletariat, recollections of the utopian community of Monte Verità, debates on the rights of homosexuals and women, excerpts from his journals, and essays contemplating German politics and anarchist theory as much as Jewish identity and the role of intellectuals in the class struggle.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Gabriel Kuhn (born in Innsbruck, Austria, 1972) lives as an independent author and translator in Stockholm, Sweden. He received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Innsbruck in 1996. His publications in German include the award-winning *'Never Anarchismus' in den USA: Seattle und die Folgen* (2008). His previous publications with PM Press include *Life Under the Jolly Roger: Reflections on Golden Age Piracy* (2010), *Sober Living for the Revolution: Hardcore Punk, Straight Edge, and Radical Politics* (editor, 2010), *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader* (Gustav Landauer) (editor/translator, 2010), and *Soccer vs. The State: Tackling Football And Radical Politics* (2011).

ACCOLADES

"It has been remarked before how the history of the German libertarian and anarchist movement has yet to be written, and so the project to begin translation of some of the key works of Mühsam – one of the great names of German anarchism, yet virtually unknown in the English-speaking world – is most welcome. The struggles of the German working class in the early 20th century are perhaps some of the most bitter and misunderstood in European history, and it is time they were paid more attention. This book is the right place to start."
–Richard Parry, author of *The Bonnot Gang*



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