

No Harmless Power

The Life and Times of the Ukrainian Anarchist Nestor Makhno

Charlie Allison

Illustrated by Kevin Matthews and N.O. Bonzo

Lively, incendiary, and inspiring, *No Harmless Power* follows the life of Nestor Makhno, who organized a seven-million-strong anarchist polity during the Russian Civil War and developed Platformist anarchism during his exile in Paris as well as advising other anarchists like Durruti on tactics and propaganda. Both timely and timeless, this biography reveals Makhno's rapidly changing world and his place in it. He moved swiftly from peasant youth to prisoner to revolutionary anarchist leader, narrowly escaping Bolshevik Ukraine for Paris. This book also chronicles the friends and enemies he made along the way: Lenin, Trotsky, Kropotkin, Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman, Ida Mett, and others.

No Harmless Power is the first text to fully delve into Makhno's sympathy for the downtrodden, the trap of personal heroism, his improbable victories, unlikely friendships, and his alarming lack of gun safety in meetings. Makhno and the movement he began are seldom mentioned in most mainstream histories—Western or Russian—mostly on the grounds that acknowledging anarchist politics calls into question the inevitability and desirability of the nation-state and unjust hierarchies.

With illustrations by N.O. Bonzo and Kevin Matthews, this is a fresh, humorous, and necessary look at an under-examined corner of history as well as a deep exploration of the meaning—and value, if any—of heroism as history.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Charlie Allison is a writer, researcher, and storyteller based in Philadelphia. Charlie has worked as a gardener, tutor to children with learning disabilities, an English teacher, chess instructor, and as a bureaucrat. He has published short stories in Pickman's Press, Podcastle, and Sea Lion Press. He currently runs his own website at charlie-allison.com, where the genesis for this book was formed as a series of YouTube videos with the help of Sewer Rats Productions. He is active in the Philadelphia storytelling and mutual aid communities. Charlie is frequently bullied by his cat in the small hours of the morning.

N.O. Bonzo is an anarchist illustrator, printmaker, and muralist based in Portland, OR. They are the creator of *Off with Their Heads: An Antifascist Coloring Book* and illustrated *Mutual Aid: An Illuminated Factor of Evolution*.

Kevin Matthews is a computer networking expert and avid gamer. He began digital art during the COVID pandemic to increase his friends' engagement in online tabletop games. It was only later that he proceeded to do professional work.

ACCOLADES

"A biography that reads like a great adventure story, this tale of freedom-fighting and myth-making in early-twentieth-century Eastern Europe is as entertaining as it is necessary."

—Stephanie Feldman, author of *Angel of Losses* and *Saturnalia*



SUBJECT CATEGORY

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