

The First Socialist Schism

Bakunin vs. Marx in the International Working Men's Association

Wolfgang Eckhardt

The First Socialist Schism chronicles the conflicts in the International Working Men's Association (First International, 1864–1877), which represents an important milestone in the history of political ideas and socialist theory. In defending their autonomy, federations in the International became aware of what separated them from the social democratic movement that relied on the establishment of national labor parties and the conquest of political power. This can be seen as a decisive moment in the history of political ideas: the split between centralist party politics and the federalist grassroots movement. The separate movements in the International—which would later develop into social democracy, communism, and anarchism—found their greatest advocates in Mikhail Bakunin and Karl Marx. However, the significance of this alleged clash of titans is largely a modern invention. It was not the rivalry between two archenemies or a personal vendetta based on mutual resentment that made the conflict between Bakunin and Marx so important. What was significant was that the conflict heralded the first socialist schism between parliamentary party politics aiming to conquer political power and social-revolutionary concepts.

Instead of focusing exclusively on what Marx and Bakunin said, many other contributions to this debate are examined, making this the first reconstruction of a dispute that gripped the entire organization. This book also provides the first detailed account of the International's Congress of The Hague (September, 1872); including the background, the sequence of events, and international reaction. The book sets new standards when it comes to source material, taking into account documents from numerous archives and libraries that have previously gone unnoticed or were completely unknown.

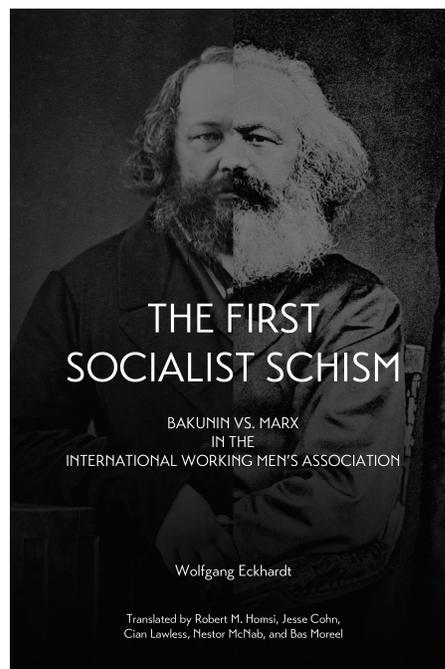
ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Wolfgang Eckhardt, who works for the Library of the Free (Bibliothek der Freien) in Berlin, has been actively researching anarchism since the 1990s. His publications include the German-language *Bakunin Ausgewählte Schriften* (Selected Works) series, of which six volumes have been published so far under his editorship (1995–2011).

ACCOLADES

"Wolfgang Eckhardt has been doing outstanding research on Mikhail Bakunin and the First International for years, unearthing precious materials in archives across Europe and documenting them in various German-language publications. His work now being available in English means a tremendous contribution to the international historiography of the anarchist movement and its origins."

—Gabriel Kuhn, editor of *Gustav Landauer: Revolution and Other Writings*



SUBJECT CATEGORY
Politics-Anarchism/Politics-Socialism/
History-Europe

PRICE
\$38.95

ISBN
978-1-62963-042-7

PAGE COUNT
624

SIZE
9x6

FORMAT
Paperback

PUBLICATION DATE
08/2016

DISTRIBUTED BY
Independent Publishers Group
(312) 337-0747
www.ipgbook.com

DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK/EUROPE BY
Turnaround Publisher Services Ltd
t: 020 8829 3000
orders@turnaround-uk.com

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