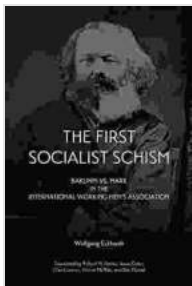


Bakunin vs. Marx: A Clash of Ideologies in the International Working Men's Association

The International Working Men's Association (IWMA), also known as the First International, was a global organization of workers' associations that played a significant role in the development of the international labor movement. Founded in London in 1864, the IWMA brought together socialists and labor activists from across Europe and beyond. However, the organization was plagued by ideological divisions, primarily between the followers of Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin.

This article delves into the conflict between Bakunin and Marx within the IWMA, exploring their contrasting ideologies and the impact of their rivalry on the organization's trajectory.



First Socialist Schism: Bakunin vs. Marx in the International Working Men's Association by Wolfgang Eckhardt

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported

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Mikhail Bakunin: Anarchist and Collectivist

Mikhail Bakunin was a Russian anarchist and revolutionary. He believed that the state was inherently oppressive and that it should be abolished. Bakunin advocated for the creation of a decentralized society based on self-governing communes. He also supported the use of violence as a means to overthrow the existing order.

Within the IWMA, Bakunin and his followers formed the anti-authoritarian wing of the organization. They opposed Marx's authoritarian tendencies and his belief in the necessity of a centralized state. Bakunin believed that workers could only achieve liberation through self-organization and direct action.

Karl Marx: Socialist and Revolutionary

Karl Marx was a German philosopher, economist, and revolutionary. He is best known for his analysis of capitalism and his belief in the inevitability of a communist revolution. Marx argued that the state was a tool of the ruling class and that it would eventually be abolished under communism.

Within the IWMA, Marx and his followers formed the authoritarian wing of the organization. They believed that a strong and centralized state was necessary to guide the transition to communism. Marx also advocated for a gradual revolution through the organization of the working class.

Ideological Differences

The fundamental difference between Bakunin and Marx lay in their views on the state. Bakunin believed that the state was inherently oppressive and should be abolished, while Marx believed that the state could be used as a tool for the liberation of the working class.

Bakunin was also critical of Marx's emphasis on economic determinism. He argued that political and cultural factors played a significant role in shaping human history. Marx, on the other hand, believed that economic relations were the primary determinant of social and political structures.

The Conflict

The conflict between Bakunin and Marx reached a boiling point in 1872 at the IWMA's Hague Congress. Bakunin and his followers introduced a resolution calling for the abolition of the organization's General Council, which was dominated by Marxists. The resolution was defeated, and Bakunin and his supporters were expelled from the IWMA.

The expulsion of Bakunin and his followers marked the end of the IWMA as a united organization. The organization continued to exist, but it was now divided into two competing factions: the Marxists and the anti-authoritarians.

Impact on the Labor Movement

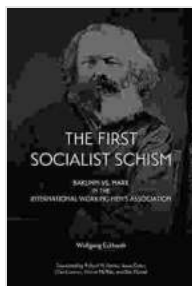
The conflict between Bakunin and Marx had a significant impact on the development of the labor movement. The expulsion of the anti-authoritarians from the IWMA led to the formation of separate anarchist and socialist organizations.

The anarchist movement, inspired by Bakunin's ideas, continued to advocate for the abolition of the state and the creation of a decentralized society based on self-governing communes. The socialist movement, inspired by Marx's ideas, continued to work towards the establishment of a centralized state that would control the means of production.

The division between anarchists and socialists continues to shape the labor movement to this day. The debate over the role of the state remains a central issue in the struggle for workers' rights and social justice.

The conflict between Bakunin and Marx in the International Working Men's Association was a clash of ideologies that had a profound impact on the development of the labor movement. The expulsion of Bakunin and his followers from the IWMA marked the end of the organization as a united front against capitalism.

The legacy of this conflict continues to shape political and social movements today. The debate over the role of the state and the best path to social change remains central to the struggle for a more just and equitable world.



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