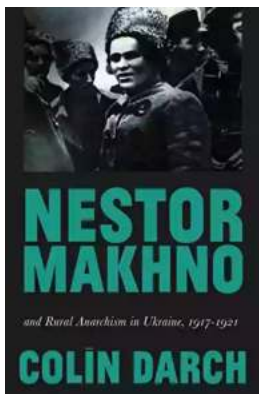


Nestor Makhno: The Champion of Rural Anarchism in Ukraine 1917-1921

When one thinks of revolutions in the 20th century, images of violent uprisings, political upheavals, and tyrannical leaders often come to mind. However, nestled within this tumultuous period, Ukraine experienced a unique experiment in rural anarchism led by a charismatic leader named Nestor Makhno.

Makhno emerged as a prominent figure during the Russian Civil War, which followed the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Born into a peasant family in Huliaipole, Ukraine, Makhno grew up witnessing the struggles of rural communities and the oppressive nature of Tsarist rule. These formative experiences laid the foundation for his future quest for an anarchist society.

With the establishment of Soviet power, Makhno saw an opportunity to bring about a more egalitarian and self-governing society. Inspired by the principles of anarchism, which preached voluntary cooperation, mutual aid, and the absence of hierarchical structures, Makhno began organizing the peasantry against the new Bolshevik regime.



Nestor Makhno and Rural Anarchism in Ukraine, 1917-1921 by Colin Darch(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 2160 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 256 pages



In 1918, Makhno founded the Free Territory, an autonomous region encompassing parts of modern-day Ukraine and southern Russia. The Free Territory aimed to establish a society based on communal ownership of land, direct democracy, and a decentralized economy. It was a bold experiment in self-governance, where peasants and workers were given the power to make decisions that affected their lives directly.

One of Makhno's key achievements was the creation of an efficient guerrilla army, known as the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine (or simply, the Black Army). Composed mainly of peasants and workers, this unconventional force successfully resisted both the Red Army loyal to the Bolsheviks and the White Army representing the remnants of the old Tsarist regime.

The Black Army's military successes were not only a testament to Makhno's strategic brilliance but also the affinity he had developed with the rural population. Unlike the Bolsheviks, who aimed to subjugate the countryside and impose centralized control, Makhno embraced the peasants' desires for autonomy and self-determination.

Throughout the Free Territory, Makhno implemented numerous agrarian reforms to address the long-standing grievances of the peasantry. Land was collectivized and redistributed among the rural communities, and a system of mutual aid and cooperation was encouraged to enhance productivity and ensure a fair distribution of resources.

Makhno's vision of rural anarchism attracted intellectuals, artists, and revolutionaries from all over the world. They believed that the Free Territory

represented a beacon of hope amidst the chaos of the Russian Civil War, where true equality and freedom could be realized.

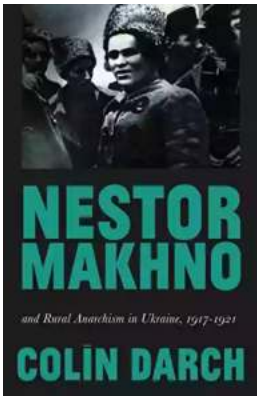
However, the Free Territory's existence was constantly threatened by external pressures. Both the Red Army and the White Army considered Makhno's anarchist experiment a threat to their respective visions of a centralized state. Despite successfully repelling numerous attacks, the Free Territory eventually succumbed to a series of betrayals and military setbacks.

In 1921, the Bolsheviks launched a full-scale assault on the Free Territory, weakening Makhno's forces and forcing him into exile. Makhno spent the rest of his life wandering in exile, never able to fully realize his dream of a society free from oppression and coercion.

Although the Free Territory ultimately came to an end, Makhno's legacy lived on. His fearless pursuit of rural anarchism inspired generations of activists and thinkers who sought to challenge the status quo. Even today, his ideas continue to influence anarchist movements and the fight against authoritarianism.

, Nestor Makhno and his experiment with rural anarchism in Ukraine between 1917 and 1921 represented a remarkable chapter in the history of revolution. His vision of a society based on voluntary cooperation, self-governance, and mutual aid resonated with the rural population, and his military successes against both the Bolshevik and White armies showcased the potential of grassroots resistance.

However, the ultimate downfall of the Free Territory demonstrated the challenges faced by alternative societal models in the face of powerful adversaries. Nevertheless, Makhno's legacy endures as a symbol of resistance and a reminder that the fight for freedom and equality is never truly over.



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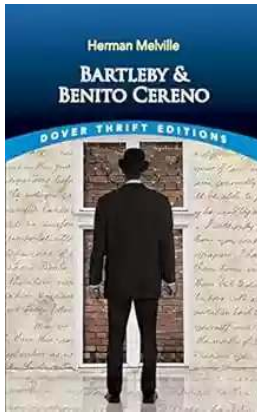


Histories of the Russian Revolution often present the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 as the central event, neglecting the diverse struggles of urban and rural revolutionaries across the heartlands of the Russian Empire. This book takes as its subject one such struggle, the anarcho-communist peasant revolt led by Nestor Makhno in left-bank Ukraine, locating it in the context of the final collapse of the Empire that began in 1914.

Between 1917 and 1921, the Makhnovists fought German and Austrian invaders, reactionary monarchist forces, Ukrainian nationalists and sometimes the Bolsheviks themselves. Drawing upon anarchist ideology, the Makhnovists gathered widespread support amongst the Ukrainian peasantry, taking up arms when under attack and playing a significant role - in temporary alliance with the Red Army - in the defeats of the White Generals Denikin and Wrangel. The Makhnovist movement is often dismissed as a kulak revolt, or a manifestation of Ukrainian nationalism; here Colin Darch analyses its successes and its failures, emphasising its revolutionary character.

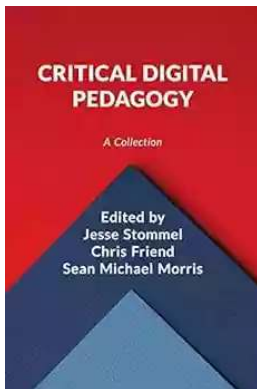
Over 100 years after the revolutions, this book reveals a lesser known side of 1917, contributing both to histories of the period and broadening the narrative of

1917, whilst enriching the lineage of anarchist history.



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