

The myth of Nestor Makhno

Colin Darch

Texts reviewed:

Michael Malet, *Nestor Makhno in the Russian civil war*, Macmillan for the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1982.

Alexandre Skirda, *Nestor Makhno, le cosaque de l'anarchie: la lutte pour les soviets libres en Ukraine 1917-1921*, the author, 1982. (Available from Librairie R. Ribes, 57 rue St.-Jacques, 75005 Paris).

The so-called 'green' peasant rebellions against the Bolsheviks immediately after the revolution in Russia are of some contemporary interest not only within Soviet studies, but also for students of rural revolt in the Third World.¹ This is the case both because the green movements provide a fascinating early case-study of counter-revolutionary peasant revolt, and also because of the light they shed on the origins of modern Marxist-Leninist attitudes towards the worker-peasant alliance in practice. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, these rebellions have not yet received the scholarly attention that they deserve from the left. This is partly because of methodological difficulties; much of the basic material for the history of the Civil War is not accessible, and the documents and memoirs which are available are even more polemical and unreliable than the ordinary run of historical sources. But another and more serious reason is that the terrain has been largely staked out by libertarians, who have mystified the specific history of these revolts in a version which has gained wide acceptance.² Thus we see repeated as fact in the footnotes to which histories of the Russian revolution consign the *atamanshchina*, a series of claims about Nestor Makhno, for example, which can at best only be considered unproven. Both of the volumes reviewed here belong firmly to this tradition of mystification.

The rebellions led by such local chieftains as Antonov in Tambov Province in 1921, by Grigor'ev, by Zelény, Struk and Angel' in the Ukraine, and by various peasant leaders in Siberia, were typical of

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these kinds of revolt. Without question, however, the best-publicized and most widely known of the *atamans*, and the one who, as a result, has received the most attention from historians, novelists, and even dramatists, was Nestor Ivanovich Makhno (1889–1934).³ In his teens, Makhno was a member of a tiny anarchist group which began terrorist activities after the failure of the 1905 revolution, and he was captured and sentenced to imprisonment by the Tsarist authorities. In gaol he attempted to study anarchist theory more systematically. He was released in March 1917 and returned to his home village of Guliai-Pole as something of a celebrity. During the next four years he fought a series of brilliant but erratic guerrilla campaigns, at the head of a largely peasant army, against successively the German forces of occupation, various Ukrainian nationalist groups, the White Guards, and the Bolsheviks. In 1919 and again in 1920 he entered into alliances with the Red Army, and on both occasions broke away amid mutual recriminations. At intervals during this period, but especially in late 1918 and the first half of 1919, he attempted to put into practice his confused ideas about the organization of rural society along anarchist lines. The final break with the Bolsheviks at the end of 1920, led in August 1921 to his being driven from Soviet territory into exile, with the remnants of his supporters.

From the mid-1920s onwards a series of articles and books about Makhno's exploits began to appear in the emigré Russian and Ukrainian press, including some self-serving contributions by Makhno himself (1929; 1936; 1937; and others). At least one serious full-length study was also published in the Soviet Union in this period (Kubanin, 1927), as well as several shorter memoirs in historical and popular journals. But the two key volumes in the creation of the Makhno myth were produced by former members of his entourage, and both are available in English and French, as well as other languages (Arshinov, 1923; Voline, 1947). No other partisan or insurgent movement in the Ukraine received a fraction of this attention. The peculiarity of Makhno's movement was that as an anarchist, with contacts among the anarchist circles of Moscow dating back to his prison days, he was able to attract intellectuals to his cause. Both Arshinov and Voline joined him in the Ukraine from Moscow. These same intellectuals, in the closed world of exile politics, began to use their experiences with Makhno to create the epic history with which we have become familiar.

Thus the appearance of these two more-or-less well-documented studies of the *Makhnovshchina* within the space of a year would have been cautiously welcomed, had they served to clarify some of the more contentious issues concerning Makhno and his role in the Civil War in southern Russia and the Ukraine. The publication of

Michael Malet's doctoral dissertation was awaited with interest by those still concerned with this particular episode of Soviet revolutionary history, but it should be said at the outset that, for several different reasons, his is far from being the definitive account.⁴ Similarly, the French text of Alexandre Skirda poses some serious problems to a proper understanding of *Makhnovshchina*. Both Skirda and Malet are frankly partisans of Makhno, in some instances almost romantically so. Skirda writes, for instance, that

... les luttes et réalisations exemplaires menées par Makhno et les insurgés ukrainiens – tentant de maintenir les acquis de la révolution de 1917 – ont démontré, pour la première fois dans l'histoire contemporaine, la validité du projet communiste libertaire et représentent à ce titre un précieux apport pour le patrimoine révolutionnaire international (p. 427).

... the struggles and exemplary actions conducted by Makhno and the Ukrainian insurgents – trying to maintain the gains of the revolution of 1917 – have shown, for the first time in contemporary history, the validity of the libertarian communist project and represent by virtue of this a precious contribution for the international revolutionary inheritance.

Malet also declares his 'sympathy with Makhno and his ideals' (p. ix). Their partisanship, unfortunately, leads them both to accept unsupported evidence from interested parties as fact, and more seriously, their moralistic problematic avoids questions of class struggle and political economy as much as possible. Both authors, for instance, refer to the Zaporozhian Sich to clarify the rebelliousness of the Ukrainian peasantry in 1917, when the growth of capitalist relations between rural classes provides a much more convincing local explanation (Darch 1978: 15).

Both authors present, in essence, three claims about the nature of the *Makhnovshchina* and the character of its leader, two of which need to be carefully examined; the third is not an historical question at all. The first two claims are that the anarchists in power were able to organize communes for agricultural production, providing an object lesson in the society of the future; and that the economic, social and military decisions of the movement were taken according to a coherent revolutionary ideology which the Makhnovites maintained in a principled way. What the third claim amounts to is that Makhno was an honourable revolutionary betrayed on various occasions by an unscrupulous and ruthless opponent, the Bolshevik party. Let us examine these claims one by one.

The collapse of civil administration and the chaos of military occupation and civil war gave the *Makhnovshchina* a couple of

brief intervals in which to try to organize anarchist production communes. The first of these opportunities occurred in February 1918, when a system of communes got under way for a few weeks, before the Austro-German invasion destroyed for the time being all hope of social revolution.

In his memoirs Makhno devotes little space to the organization of the communes, although they must be the basis for any anarchist claims that he made a 'peasant revolution' in his region. The success or failure of his political, social and economic programme is central to any attempt to evaluate the apologia made on his behalf. Few would claim for him a place in the front rank of anarchist theoreticians and philosophers; on the other hand, it is hard to deny the importance of his military role in 1919 (Arshinov, 1923, pp. 231-2). But if Makhno is to be considered as anything more than an audacious and charismatic partisan general, his anarchist practice must be examined as a possible alternative to the system which was in the event victorious.

In this first period of experimentation little can have been achieved before the arrival of the invaders. Nevertheless, in the only description we have, Makhno makes some far-reaching claims. The redistribution of livestock and farming equipment was undertaken by demobilised soldiers, under the supervision of a committee of anarchists. The goods were placed in a communal fund, but the dispossessed kulaks were generously left with two pairs of horses, one or two cows, and a plough, a mower, a seeder and a pitchfork, and land to work as well; this in an area where the kulaks already owned over 90 per cent of the mowers, and above half of the land area under crops. The former landlords' estates (which in this area averaged four times the size of those in Russia), were occupied by groups of peasants.

On the internal organization of the communes, Makhno unfortunately concentrates on the eating arrangements. Apparently the kitchens and dining rooms were communal, but individuals or families who wanted to eat separately could do so. Similarly, anybody could absent themselves from communal work simply by notifying his or her colleagues. Management was in the hands of a general meeting of the members of the commune, which assigned tasks.

Makhno claims that there were four communes within 15 kilometers of Guliai-Pole, and others in the district, each consisting of ten households, or 100 to 300 individuals. He indicates that there was at least some conflict over the division of livestock and equipment between the communards and other local peasants (Makhno, 1929 pp. 173-5).

Malet quotes selectively from this passage, but omits the princi-

pal details of organization, such as they are (p. 120). He concludes that 'the Makhnovist movement is proof that peasant revolutionaries can put forward positive, practical ideas.' Indeed they can, but what is missing from this account, as from others of the later period (Arshinov 1923: 85–6), is any indication that this was a process of *production*. There is nothing on social relations of production, on the division of labour, on crop selection, on the labour process, on marketing, on the distribution of surplus; simply three hundred undifferentiated anarchists and peasants in a communal canteen, taking a day off whenever they felt like it. And these few weeks in spring were to serve as a basis for a social revolution.

Makhno's second, and more prolonged opportunity to set up agrarian communes came when the Central Powers, defeated on the Western front, began to withdraw their forces of occupation from the Ukraine in late 1918. The Russian communists had signed an agreement with the Ukrainian nationalist government in Kiev, promising non-interference in the affairs of the Ukrainian republic.⁵ But in the complex political and military situation of late 1918 and early 1919 the agreement broke down, and the Ukrainian Directory declared war on Soviet Russia, hoping for support from French forces in Odessa. The French conditions for assistance were so humiliating, however, that agreement was never reached, and the Bolshevik armies occupied Kiev.

The collapse of the Directory gave Makhno and his followers another period of relative stability in the interior of the area under their control around the village of Guliai-Pole in the southeast. They reached an agreement on a *modus vivendi* with the Bolsheviks of Ekaterinoslav, and the Red Army seemed content at the beginning of 1919 to concentrate on seizing the major cities and towns of the northern Ukraine. Makhno knew that the Directory had been negotiating with the nearby Don cossacks, but it no longer had a military presence in the southeast (Makhno, 1937 p. 168). Nor were the communists capable of setting up an efficient administrative system, for they were compelled to concentrate on more urgent military and political problems.

Thus in early 1919 the peasants returned to the system of communes which they had adopted in 1917–18. Anarchist commentators are careful to distinguish these working or free communes, from the traditional *obshchina* or from the Bolshevik exemplary communes, but do so in the vaguest of terms. 'These were real working communes of peasants . . . ' wrote Arshinov,

. . . each found there whatever moral and material support he needed. The principles of brotherhood and equality permeated the communes. Everyone — men, women and children —

worked according to his or her abilities . . . It is evident that these communes had these traits because they grew out of a working milieu and that their development followed a natural course. (1923, pp. 85–6; translation by L. and F. Perlman, from the English edn, Detroit, 1974).

Once again there were few of these communes. One was named after Rosa Luxemburg, and grew from a few dozen members to about 300, but was finally broken up by Bolshevik forces in June 1919, after the split between Makhno and Trotsky (Voline, 1947 p. 543). Similar communes were scattered about in the immediate vicinity of Guliai-Pole, in a radius of perhaps twenty kilometers; yet the sketch map of Makhno's area of operations printed by Arshinov claimed for the 'central Makhnovite area' a radius from Guliai-Pole of about 120 *versts*, or 128 kilometers (Arshinov, 1923 p. 84–5). Skirda repeats this description of the Rosa Luxemburg commune without comment, in a brief discussion of the agrarian policy of the Makhnovites (p. 115).

Malet is even less convincing on the vexed question of the class composition of the Makhnovite movement. He accepts at face value the conciliatory Makhnovite line that 'given time, the Kulaks would be won over to the equalitarian [sic] redistribution of the land brought on by the revolution in general' (p. 118). But in attempting to argue against the idea that the *Makhnovshchina* relied on the support of the kulaks and richer peasantry, Malet fails to consider the specific class structure of the region where Makhno's operations were based. He is aware that the Ukraine and southern Russia were areas in which peasant capitalist relations were highly developed, but his brief and unnuanced account of the late nineteenth century political economy of the Ukraine (pp. xvii–xx) is not called on in his discussion, over 100 pages later, of the nature of peasant support for Makhno's 'united villages' (pp. 117–25). It is easy to see why richer peasants might prefer a movement which proposed that 'the ways and means of the new method of land organization should be left to the completely free and natural decision and movement of the entire peasantry' (p. 118, quoting Kubanin, 1927 p. 112), to the Bolsheviks with their emphasis on the sharpening of class conflict at the expense of the rural bourgeoisie.

In discussing Makhno's attitude to workers, Malet falls back on the defence that Makhno 'genuinely believed' (p. 125) in the worker-peasant alliance, but did not occupy any towns long enough to establish good relations. It does not seem to have occurred to him that systematic commodity exchange between industry and agriculture is the economic basis for the alliance, and that this can-

not be established by bartering train-loads of grain when the peasants happen to have a surplus (pp. 119–20). The problem is precisely that it is the kulaks who are most likely to benefit from such an exchange, since it is they, with their large-scale capitalist production, who dispose of marketable surpluses.

Turning to the second claim, the idea that the anarchism of the Makhnovites was a coherent political ideology, we confront similar problems. The inherent contradictions of anarchism have been amply dealt with by writers from Marx onwards, and there is no need to rehearse them here. But anarchist thinkers such as Bakunin and Kropotkin were at least capable of coherent political thought and action. By contrast, both in theory and practice, the ideology of Makhno and his followers was generally confused and even inchoate.

Unfortunately there is a lack of concrete information on Makhovite political administration. The role of the soviets was outlined in a pamphlet entitled *Osnovye polozheniia o vol'nom trudovom Sovet (proekt)* ['Draft basic statute' on free workers' soviets] (Voline, 1947 p. 542; Arshinov, 1923 p. 176), and Skirda prints a document on 'La conception makhnoviste des Soviets' (pp. 471–3). According to the 'draft basic statute' the soviets should be independent of the political parties, should operate within a socio-economic system based on real equality, and should include only workers, serving their interests and obeying their will. The activists in the soviets should not be trusted with any executive power (Voline, 1947 p. 542; Arshinov, 1923 p. 80).

The document printed by Skirda is a speech given at a meeting of the 'free soviet of Guliai-Pole.' It defines the free workers' soviet as free because it is independent of central authority, and as a workers' soviet because it includes only workers, serves their interests, and allows of no other political influence. But, continues the speaker, revealingly:

En d'autres circonstances, plus calmes, ce même mouvement aurait . . . conduit finalement, il faut le croire, à l'édification des fondements d'une société réellement libre de travailleurs.

Mais, à notre regret, ce ne sont actuellement que des rêves, car la dure réalité se présente sous un aspect bien différent (p. 473).

In other circumstances, more calm, one must believe that this same movement would have finally led to the construction of the foundations of a really free society of workers.

But, to our regret, these are currently only dreams, for a hard reality presents a very different aspect.

It is the tendency to blame adverse conditions for the failure of the anarchist dream which gives the game away. In other circumstances we should have done better; if we had only been able to occupy the towns for longer we should have won the workers over; if the communes had not been destroyed by the war, the kulaks would have been convinced.

Makhno was a dreamer in this sense, as he reveals in an extraordinary theoretical work which was published in German under the title 'The ABC of the Revolutionary Anarchist'.⁶

Anarchism is not the teaching of a theory, nor of programmes artificially built on the basis of such a theory to undertake the attempt to conceive of and grasp the life of man as a totality.

Anarchism is a teaching of life, real life, in all its healthy manifestations, of a life which grows beyond and will not be pressed into artificial norms . . . What is unchangeable in scientific anarchism is its natural being, which basically expresses itself in the negation of all chains and every enslavement of mankind (1926, p. 1).

At all levels of policy except the military, *Bat'ko* Makhno showed himself ill-equipped to deal with practical problems. He declared all currencies, Red or White, Ukrainian or Russian, to be legal tender, and distributed the contents of banks to the population. Malet charitably describes this as 'blissful ignorance of . . . the vicious cruelty of high-rate inflation' (p. 112). There was no attempt at imposing price controls, and when the Makhnovites occupied a town food and money were distributed without question until they ran out. Transport questions, industrial relations, financial policy — any economic problem above the level of family agriculture — were treated in exactly the same cavalier fashion.

But for Malet and Skirda, these are not crippling weaknesses. Indeed, Malet concludes that if the Makhnovites 'helped to create confusion . . . they also alleviated it [sic] by generous grants to those in need, with a minimum of red tape . . .' (p. 113). Skirda quotes with apparent approval the remark made by Voline that 'les anarchistes ne recherchaient pas le pouvoir, . . . les "masses" devaient agir pour leur propre compte . . .' (p. 394) ('. . . the anarchists are not seeking power . . . the "masses" must act on their own account.'). Voline also claimed that the Makhnovite partisans exerted no pressure on the peasants, but confined themselves to propaganda in favour of free communes (Voline 1947: 544). Thus the Makhnovites destroyed the economic structures of their region, and disclaimed responsibility for the consequences.

The idea that Makhno was an honourable revolutionary who was betrayed by less scrupulous opponents has also played an im-

portant part in the building of his historical image. But unhappily, like other elements in that image, it is compounded of a mixture of half-truths. A case in point is the question of Makhno's break with the Red Army at the end of May 1919, which showed at least a certain lack of responsibility on his part.

A violent realignment of forces was taking place in May 1919 to the rear of the Red Army units facing the White general Denikin; at the same time, the situation at the front was worsening. On 14 May the 2nd Army, including Makhno's brigade, together with the 8th and 13th Armies, began the long-awaited attack on the Donbass, and liberated Lugansk. Units of both Armies penetrated deep into the rear, seizing the area around the important railway station of Kuteinskovo. To counter this threat Denikin moved Shkuro's cavalry corps from the front of the Red 9th Army to that of the 13th Army (GVU, 1967, II, p. 786). He aimed his blow carefully, striking at the sector where the Makhnovites held the right flank of the 13th Army. Makhno's forces had been weakened by the assignment of a division to the campaign against Grigor'ev, an important partisan leader who had rebelled against the Red Army.⁷

Between 16 and 19 May Shkuro's units broke through in Makhno's sector of the front. The 13th Army reported on 22 May that Shkuro had taken three villages from Makhno; the White general was also using tanks. Initial attempts to counter-attack had failed, and the local Red commander feared the paralysis of his forces (GVU 1967: II, 70–71). His fears were justified – in the space of one day the White cavalry advanced 45 kilometers to the Red Army's rear. Denikin exploited his success energetically against the under-armed and vacillating partisans, and within three days had opened a gap 35 kilometers wide and 100 kilometers deep in Makhno's sector. By the end of May the Makhnovite rout had exposed the right flank and rear of the 13th Army and thrown the whole front into retreat from Denikin's well-coordinated attacks.⁸

The opening of the front to Denikin by the Makhnovite units, and the subsequent loss of the Ukraine to the Bolsheviks, was at the time and remains to this day the subject of bitter polemics among anarchists and communists.⁹ According to some anarchist accounts Trotsky, who had arrived in the Ukraine in the middle of May, made it impossible for the anarchists to defend themselves by mounting a propaganda campaign against them, and then by refusing them supplies and equipment. Although Malet does not make much of this argument, Skirda rehearses it with some bitterness (pp. 120–5). There is no question that Trotsky's dislike of the insurgent groups led him at times to express himself in violent terms. He called for the 'radical and merciless liquidation' of the

partisan movement, and moved a new commander to the 2nd Army, together with reinforcements from Khar'kov, to discipline Makhno's troops. This was to be done by removing the commanders and disciplining the rank-and-file (Meijer, 1964–1971, I, pp. 460–3).

Trotsky was convinced that Makhno's anarchism was only kulak banditry in fancy dress; he is even alleged to have told his commanders that it would be better to lose the Ukraine to Denikin, whose reactionary views were clear to even the most unsophisticated peasant, than to Makhno.¹⁰ But while Trotsky attacked his ally on political grounds, his field commanders were still trying desperately to plug the gap, ordering reinforcements of infantry and artillery to take over Makhno's former position (GVU, 1967, II, pp. 78–9). On 27 May the Red Army, however, was forced to evacuate Lugansk, which had been captured only two weeks previously.

Skirda follows Arshinov and other anarchist writers in suggesting that the Bolshevik commanders deliberately starved the insurgents of weapons in order that they might be more easily neutralized; but they had not realized just how strong the Volunteer Army in fact was, and were not expecting such a heavy attack. Skirda argues that 'cet approvisionnement au compte-gouttes est prémédité' (p. 121) ('this supplying by drip-feed is premeditated,'); Arshinov cites the unfulfilled promise by a visiting Bolshevik in early May to have ammunition sent from Khar'kov forthwith (1923, pp. 115–17).

This interpretation remains unproven. The Red Army was hampered by the lack of an adequate supply system and of a clear chain of command; there is no need to look for a conspiracy to explain the Bolshevik failure to deliver supplies. In addition, repeated calls for reinforcements in Makhno's sector, from Bolsheviks to Bolsheviks, belie any willingness to see the Insurgent Army annihilated. Simply, and with good reason, the Bolsheviks did not trust the Makhnovites, and both sides seized on any excuse to justify the lack of trust.

Matters reached a head on 29 May. Makhnovite headquarters sent the commander of the front a cable announcing that they had decided to create an independent army, with Makhno at its head. Arshinov omits to mention this. On the same day the Bolsheviks ordered Makhno's arrest (Antonov-Ovseenko 1924–1933: IV, 307–8, and other sources).

At this point it is interesting to compare the treatments of Skirda and Malet, for the chronology of events becomes important. Malet actually prints a chronology where he gives the date of Makhno's resignation as 9 June (p. xii), although in his text he

makes it clear that the first telegram was sent at the end of May. Certainly the Bolsheviks knew of Makhno's resignation by the 30th (Meijer, 1964–71, I, pp. 486–7). If Makhno did in fact split away from the Red Army in May, then subsequent Bolshevik actions can hardly be seen as treacherous. Malet wisely skirts around this issue, but Skirda is not so cautious: he writes that 'les insurgés ont scrupuleusement respecté jusqu'ici l'alliance militaire conclue' (p. 146), 'up to this point the insurgents scrupulously respected the military alliance which had been concluded' and that the Bolsheviks wanted to 'interdire à des révolutionnaires de faire la révolution!' (p. 153) ('prevent the revolutionaries from making the revolution').

The insurgents meanwhile decided to call an extraordinary congress for 15 June, despite previous clashes with the Bolsheviks over such meetings, to discuss the White breakthrough and the crisis in relations with the Reds. The call was addressed to all the districts of two provinces, to all insurgents, and, provocatively, to all Red Army troops in the area (Arshinov, 1923, pp. 117–18).

Not surprisingly, the Bolshevik reaction was harsh. Denikin was moving from success to success; on 1 June he captured Bakhmut, north-east of Guliai-Pole. Makhno was accused of seeking the protection of the Soviet flag, and of then attacking the political organization of the Red Army and Soviet government, while trying to consolidate his own power. On 4 June Trotsky issued Order No. 1824, a document Arshinov prints in full, followed by two pages of exegesis, as proof of Bolshevik perfidy. Skirda also quotes the provisions, if not the preamble (p. 151). But in the circumstances, the order was not unreasonable; it forbade the Congress as an incitement to another anti-Soviet revolt and the further opening up of the front. All delegates were to be arrested, and anybody continuing to distribute Makhno's summons was to be shot.

Despite the exaggerated claims made by Makhno's admirers, two things should be said about Nestor Makhno and his followers, modest points in their favour which are clear from the evidence, and tell us something about the kind of political movement we are dealing with. The first is that the leadership entered into alliances with the Red Army on two occasions to fight the counter-revolutionary forces of Denikin in 1919 and Wrangel in 1920; they refused to contract any such alliance with the counter-revolution *against* the Bolsheviks for tactical advantage. This shows at least a rudimentary understanding of the class forces at play in those critical years. Secondly, and all the serious writing about Makhno which I know is unanimous on this, the accusation of systematic anti-semitism against the *Makhnovshchina* is a canard. Both Malet (pp. 168–74) and Skirda (pp. 395–402) are right to emphasize

that Makhno struggled to eliminate anti-semitism at all levels among his followers, with considerable success.

It is unfortunate that the writing of the history of the *Makhnovshchina* should be left to historians of libertarian tendencies. The failure of the Bolsheviks to effectively mobilize the poor peasantry in precisely that part of the country most heavily exploited by capitalist export agriculture, and bordering on the Donbass, a major industrial area, should be a case study of great contemporary interest to Marxist historians. Of these two books, it is Skirda's which catches the imagination: it is written with passion and scholarship, although it is principally a narrative political and military history, avoiding ideological, social and economic questions. Malet's book is organized thematically, and as we have seen, reveals occasionally nagging doubts about the subject's actions; it is marred by sloppy writing and inadequate references. A truly problematised Marxist history of the *Makhnovshchina* has yet to be written.

Notes

1. Much of this review article is based on research undertaken between 1971 and 1979 and written up in Darch (n.d.) and Darch (1978). I am grateful to Gary Littlejohn for encouragement and useful comments on these earlier papers.
2. Despite claims for Makhno's historical importance from his supporters, who have included such libertarians as Max Nomad (1939) and Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit (1969), the most balanced serious account remains the essay by David Footman (1961).
3. Malet (p. 83, 150–156), denies that the *Makhnovshchina* can be classified as a 'green' movement, because it was far too successful, did not plunder and did not commit pogroms; but this is too formalistic a position. The 'greens' were a loosely defined residual category, not a coherent movement or party.
4. Malet's book is badly flawed by the lack of proper footnotes and apparatus, which seriously reduce its usefulness as a serious interpretation. There is not a single chapter with more than 17 references, and Malet makes no attempt at a critical evaluation of his sources. He refers obliquely in his preface to Michael Palij's work (1976), but neither Palij's book nor the thesis on which it was based appear in the bibliography. If there is no apparatus because the publishers intended this to be a popularization, on the other hand, why are there no translations of Russian and Ukrainian titles in the bibliography, and why is Malet allowed to waver between Russian and the lesser-known Ukrainian transcriptions which he prefers (Skoropadsky, but Hryhoriyiv for Grigor'ev)?
5. For a general version of the confused events of the Ukrainian revolution, see the classic work by Reshetar (1952); on military aspects, especially from the Bolshevik point of view, the best account remains Adams (1963).
6. See Makhno (1926). The Russian original of this text is not known to me. My thanks to Gottfried Wellmer for the translation into English.
7. Malet devotes p. 138 ff. to Grigor'ev, and Skirda p. 161 ff.
8. Soviet and White sources agree on this: see GVU (1967: II, 786); and

Denikin (1921–1926; V, 104). Arshinov (1923: 124) however, claims that the breakthrough occurred on the left flank of the Makhnovite brigade, at the junction of the Red Army's sector, and Malet refers to (without citing) another Soviet source which confirms this (p. 37).

9. See, e.g. Cohn-Bendit (1969: 222–3); Guerin (1970: 101); cf. Yaroslavsky (1937: 69–71): 'Makhno retreated far into the rear, where his men spent their time disarming, robbing and murdering Red Army men.'

10. The sources for this are all anarchist: Voline (1947: 562); Arshinov (1923: 124); Berkman (1925: 189).

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