

Title: Anarchism's Pessimistic Hero: Aleksey Borovoy's Tragic Sensibility

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Abstract:

My paper will be dedicated to Aleksei Borovoy – a crucial, yet largely forgotten figure of Russian twentieth-century Anarchism. A thinker, a lawyer, a philosopher, and a pedagogue (for example, Borovoy taught in VKhUTEMAS in 1920), Borovoy attempted to reconcile Western irrationalist philosophy (Bergson and Lebensphilosophie) with political anarchism and apply it to Russian revolutionary reality. Borovoy criticized Kropotkin's scientific optimism and offered a vision of anarchism that was based on a re-evaluation of Bakunin through Bergsonian and Sorelian prisms. Social as well as personal contradictions were viewed by Borovoy as ultimately irresolvable and unsurpassable—yet instead of hindering a revolutionary impulse, this negativity propelled it further.