

Views & Comments Number 14, June 1956

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Views & Comments Number 14, June 1956
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What We Stand For

Two great power blocs struggle for world domination. Neither of these represents the true interests and welfare of Humanity. Their conflict threatens mankind with atomic destruction. Underlying both of these blocs are institutions that breed exploitation, inequality and oppression.

Without trying to legislate for the future we feel that we can indicate the general lines along which a solution to these problems can be found.

The exploitative societies of today must be replaced by a new libertarian world which will proclaim—Equal freedom for all in a free socialist society. “Freedom” without socialism leads to privilege and injustice; “Socialism” without freedom is totalitarian.

The monopoly of power which is the state must be replaced by a world-wide federation of free communities, labor councils and/or co-operatives operating according to the principles of free agreement. The government of men must be replaced by a functional society based on the administration of things.

Centralism, which means regimentation from the top down, must be replaced by federalism, which means cooperation from the bottom up.

THE’ LIBERTARIAN LEAGUE will not accept the old socio-political cliches, but will boldly explore new roads while examining anew the old. movements, drawing from them all that which time and experience has proven to be valid.

Libertarian Forum

Round Table Youth Discussions every Friday. At 8

Libertarian Center, 813 Broadway (between 11th & 12th Sts.) New York City

The Voice of the Spanish Resistance: The National Confederation of Labor Speaks Out

To the International Working Men’s Association.

To the Workers of Every Land

TO ALL WHO LOVE LIBERTY.

Twenty years have passed since the forces of international reaction, spearheaded by nazi-fascism, foisted Franco and the Falange upon us. Never for an instant, in all this time, have we stopped fighting them. We have been sparing in the use of declarations, manifestos and appeals for international solidarity. Our actions must speak for us instead. Knowing something of our struggle, both present and past, you are able to judge of its nature and results, of its drama and its importance to the whole of humanity. Neither the gallows nor the governmental reign

of terror, nor its methodical and cold-blooded massacres have been able to smother the spirit of rebellion in this land.

Brother workers—free men of the world—WATCH SPAIN! The battle to overthrow this loathsome regime becomes daily more intense. And our struggle is bound to take on new dimensions of tragedy for the Franco government sees death staring it in the face. It senses its doom in the swelling tide of revolt among workers, university students and all decent Spaniards. The action of the people will, indeed, culminate in final victory—but it will have to overcome the ferocious resistance of a tyranny which is fighting for its life.

We realize that we ourselves must effect our own liberation and the C.N.T. is prepared to do its duty.

Feeling that you will not fail in yours, we now appeal to your solidarity. Now is the time for this solidarity to translate itself into actions. What is needed is an intensification of anti-Franco propaganda in all free countries, a new and more forceful assertion of moral boycott against the regime which now martyrizs Spain.

In Spain there is a fundamental struggle for liberty under way. It is a conflict affecting all men everywhere who love freedom. They cannot remain indifferent.

National Committee of the C.N.T.

Spain, April 1956

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The following is from a Manifesto of the C.N.T. Regional Committee of Catalonia:

TO THE WORKERS. TO THE PEOPLE.

Workers in every branch of industry—peasants, technicians, manual and intellectual workers—we must unite to strengthen the structure of the underground labor organization. We must maintain close contact with each other in all circumstances.

In Catalonia, there is but one clandestine labor organization—the C.N.T. We, its militants, have neither slackened our activity nor backslid—this in spite of constant persecution, arrests, beatings and long periods of captivity in prisons and fortresses. Seventeen years of dictatorship by a military clerical captain of industry coalition have failed to destroy our confederation. This is proven by our daily activity which the police are powerless to halt. This is proven by the continuous appearance of our propaganda as well as by the appearance of our organ, Solidaridad Obrera.

We must not be passive, workers, exploited brothers. We must not continue to work the present hours of slave labor, hours which are double or triple the normal work day and which yield us the barest pittance. There is nothing ambiguous about the problem facing us. It is the problem of our daily bread, of the necessities of home and family, of the lack of freedom in every phase of our lives. We must pose the problem directly and attack it, not only by isolated acts but by concerted mass action. Our weapons in the struggle continue to be the strike, the boycott and sabotage, in other words, direct action by ourselves, the workers...

The C.N.T. calls upon you not to lose contact with it. Swell its ranks, work consciously and effectively so that you may achieve a decent level of existence, so that you may put an end to all this misery and injustice.

But What Can We Do?

When one reviews the problems confronting society today, it becomes increasingly obvious that the Libertarian living in that society is faced with a dilemma. Adhering to a philosophy which advocates mass direct action and finding the masses unwilling to act—directly or otherwise—the American Libertarian must not only fight against the encroachments of the state and impending world disaster, but against an ever increasing sense of frustration and a vast feeling of helplessness. The question then presents itself: WHAT CAN WE DO?

Before even an attempt can be made to answer this question adequately perhaps it would be best to eliminate some of the more tempting and less practical solutions. It is doubtful if any thoughtful person seriously entertains hope for an imminent social revolution. However, many radical groups seem to be unaware of the futility of action taken in this direction and, consciously or unconsciously, orientate themselves around this assumption.

Even if, by some miracle, the efforts of one or more of these groups met with success, any social upheaval so engendered would be premature and probably abortive. I think that it must be stated here that we are not living in a revolutionary period. All attempts to interpret our situation within such a frame of reference can only lead to confusion and wasted effort. In order for a revolution to be more than a mere coup d'etat, it is necessary for a sizable majority of the people to be sufficiently educated in a political sense to carry out those functions which are now the monopoly of the state. Needless to say, the people of America are unprepared to undertake such responsibility.

Perhaps an even more seductive path for radicals in general and Libertarians in particular, is that of inaction. The tendency to withdraw into an ivory tower of cynicism and despair or to an incessant round of coffee klatches and bull sessions. Whatever can be said for coffee klatches and bull sessions, I doubt if it can be contended that many radical movements have been built or many utopias constructed through the sole use of such institutions.

Unfortunately, the tendency to evolve into static social groups is one that exists in almost every radical movement and is one that neither solves nor attempts to solve any of the problems that face us. Which brings us back to where we started.

Since the field for mass direct action has all but disappeared, and with the State firmly in the saddle, is it possible for the Libertarian to accomplish anything at all? Has the radical any function whatever in a society that is almost completely unaware of his existence? These are not easy questions to answer and yet they are not insoluble.

Although the American radical movement has lost much of its influence and, to a great extent, lost touch with the masses, it is far from dead. Already new groups with programs suitably altered for the times are beginning to appear, radical journals and periodicals seem to be riding on a slow upsurge, meeting halls are beginning to be full again.

However, it would be a serious mistake to interpret this activity as an imminent rebirth of popular radicalism. What it does mean is that people are becoming interested again—and thereby hangs the clue.

In order for a radical organization to survive in our generation, it must function primarily as a propaganda group. Which is to say that our touchstone must be: "How many people can I reach and influence favorably by taking such and such an action?" It might be a good idea if all of us put the revolution and the barricades temporarily aside and concentrated seriously on making contacts.

We must accept the fact that we are dealing primarily with ideas and suit our actions to that fact. Unlike the Marxists, we have no assurance that ultimate victory is inevitably ours, and if we wish to continue to exist at all we must learn to change our approach as conditions warrant. H.G. Wells, in his *Outline of History*, called human history a race between education and catastrophe. If catastrophe should win let it not be because we didn't try.

The “Workers’ State” Fallacy

Most Marxists either claim that Soviet Russia is a Workers’ State, or that it was one for a number of years following the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917.

The following remarks, from his book *Statism and Anarchy* were written by Michael Bakunin in 1873 and show this great Russian Libertarian as the realistic thinker he was. It is clearly the “materialistic” Marxists who were and are the impractical visionaries, while the Libertarians consistently pointed out through the years that from vultures’ eggs, vultures, and not birds of paradise are to be expected. We quote:

“We already have expressed our abhorrence for the theories of Lasalle and Marx, advising the workers, if not as their ultimate ideal, at least as their chief immediate aim, to form a Peoples State which, according to their interpretation, will only be ‘the proletariat elevated to the position of the ruling class.’

“One may ask, if the proletariat is to be the ruling class over whom will it rule? The answer is that there will remain another proletariat which will be subjected to this new domination, this new State. It may be, for example, the peasant ‘rabble,’ which as we know, does not stand in great favor with the Marxists and who, finding themselves on a lower level of culture probably will be ruled by the city and factory proletariat...

“If there is a State, there must necessarily be domination, and therefore slavery; a State without slavery, overt or concealed, is inconceivable—that is why we are enemies of the State.

“What is meant by ‘the proletariat elevated to the position of the ruling class?’ Would the proletariat as a whole head the government? There are about 40 million Germans. Would they all be members of the government? The whole people would then govern and there would be no one to be governed. But then there would be no government, no State, for as long as there is a State there will be people who are governed and there will be slaves.

“This dilemma is solved very simply in the Marxist theory. By a people’s government they mean the government by a small number of representatives elected by the “people.” Universal suffrage—the right of the whole people to elect its so-called representatives and rulers of the State. This is the last word of the Marxists as well as of the democratic school. And this is a falsehood behind which lurks the despotism of a governing minority, a falsehood which is all the more dangerous in that ostensibly it appears as the expression of a people’s will.

“From whatever angle we approach the problem, we arrive at the same unhappy result: the governing of great masses of the people by a small, privileged minority. But, the Marxists say, this minority will consist of workers. Yes indeed, of ex-workers perhaps, who, once they become rulers or representatives of the people, cease to be workers and see the workers from the summits of State power. From that time on they will not represent the people but will represent themselves and their own pretensions to rule over the people. He who doubts this knows nothing of human nature.

“But these elected representatives will be convinced socialists, and scientific socialists at that. Use of the term “scientific socialists,” which is found repeatedly in the works and speeches of the Lasalleans and Marxists, only proves that this would-be people’s State will be but the despotic administration over the toiling masses of a new, numerically small aristocracy of genuine or sham savants. Since the masses lack learning they will be freed from the cares of government and will be completely regimented. Emancipation indeed.

“The Marxists are aware of this contradiction, and, realizing that government by scientists (the most unbearable, onerous and despicable type of government possible) will be, notwithstanding its democratic form, a veritable dictatorship—console themselves with the thought that this dictatorship will be only temporary and of brief duration. They say that the only preoccupation and objective of this government will be to educate and uplift the people—economically and politically—to the point where a government will no longer be necessary. Then the State, having lost its political character, that is its character of rule and domination, will transform itself into a completely free organization representing the economic interests of the communes.

“But here we have a flagrant contradiction. If their State is to be a genuine people’s State, why need it then dissolve itself—and if its rule is necessary in order to achieve the real emancipation of the people, then how dare they call it a people’s State? Our polemic against them had the effect of making them realize that freedom or Anarchism, that is to say, the free organization of workers from below upward, is the ultimate aim of social development, and that every State, their own people’s State included, is a yoke that begets despotism and slavery.

“They claim that this Statist yoke—the dictatorship—is a necessary transitional means in order to attain the emancipation of the people: Anarchism or freedom is the goal, the State or dictatorship is the means. Thus to free the working masses it is first necessary to enslave them.

“That is as far as our polemic went. They maintain that only a dictatorship—their own dictatorship of course—can fulfill the will of the people, to which we answer that no dictatorship can have any other aim but that of self-perpetuation, and it can only create and develop subservience in the people tolerating it; freedom can be created only by freedom, by a universal rebellion on the part of the people and by the free organization of the toiling masses from the bottom up.

“The basic point of Lasalle’s politico-social program and the communist theory of Marx is the (imaginary) emancipation of the proletariat by means of the State and State alone. But for that it is necessary that the State assume the task of emancipating the proletariat from the yoke of bourgeois capital. How can the State be imbued with such a will? There are only two means whereby that can be done.

“The proletariat should wage a revolution in order to capture the State—a rather heroic undertaking. In our opinion, once the proletariat captures the State, it should immediately proceed with the destruction of this everlasting prison of the toiling masses. However, according to the theory of Mr. Marx, the people not only should not destroy the State but they should strengthen and reinforce it, and place it in the hands of its benefactors, guardians and teachers, the chiefs of the Communist Party—in a word, to Mr. Marx and his friends, who will then proceed to emancipate—in their own fashion.

“They will concentrate all the powers of government in an iron grip, because the very fact that the people are ignorant necessitates strong solicitous care by the government. They will create a single State bank, concentrating in its hands all the commercial, industrial, agricultural and even scientific production; and they will divide the mass of people into two armies—one industrial and

the other agricultural—under the direct command of the engineers of the State, who will then become the new scientific-political class.”

The Death of Simon Radowitzsky by Hipatin

Our beloved comrade Simon Radowitzsky died recently in Mexico, where he had been living since 1939.

Many will still recall the big international campaigns for his release when, having executed Lieutenant Colonel Falcon, murderer of so many workers in Buenos Aires, he had been sentenced to life imprisonment in the prison at Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego.

During the years of Simon’s incarceration at Ushuaia, the international libertarian movement never ceased its agitation for the freeing of the man who had, by his own act, come to embody the sentiment of people’s justice. This campaign was carried forward unremittingly by the Argentine Regional Federation of Labor (FORA), by “La Antorcha,” “La Protesta,” and the whole of the Argentine Libertarian press, seconded by the anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist papers throughout the world. Public opinion in Argentina was mobilized. People of all tendencies and leading intellectuals of all countries added their voices to those of our comrades. Finally, during the last presidential administration of Irigoyen, the Argentine government pardoned Radowitzsky, who left prison after having served 22 years.

He was a man of strong character, and the highest anarchist ethical standards, with a spirit of abnegation and generosity only comparable with that of Fermin Salvoechea. The personal sympathies that he aroused made him dearly beloved by all. Even the common prisoners in the penitentiary itself came under his moral influence and would have gone to any lengths for him. While in Ushuaia he was able to maintain contact with the Argentine comrades, who twice tried to arrange for his escape. On one of these occasions he was able to reach the Andes, where he was caught by the Chilean police who turned him over again to the Argentine authorities. Back in the pen, after undergoing brutal beatings, he spent 30 months in solitary confinement on bread and water.

The years of torment and suffering broke Simon Radowitzsky’s health and he contracted tuberculosis while still in prison, which still further weakened him physically. But his morals never slackened. The messages which he sent to his comrades and which were published in “La Protesta” and “La Antorcha” are inspiring prose, reflecting the temperament of the fighter and the character of the man.

Freed at the beginning of 1930, he lived in Uruguay and Brazil until the outbreak of the Spanish revolution. He was then one of the many comrades who rushed to Spain to join the armed people in the struggle against Franco and for the Social Revolution.

In spite of his very poor health, Radowitzsky spent many months at the front. He shared all of our sufferings and dangers in Spain, and stuck there with us until the very end. Together with the mass of exiles he went to France and thence to America, where he lived in Mexico under the name Raul Gomez, and where he died.

In the ideological struggles of recent years, whenever the problems of the CNT and Spanish Anarchism were under discussion in the fight against the reformist tendencies, Simon’s voice was always heard, his clear, heartening understanding and vision were always raised in defense of the purity of the cause to which he had dedicated his life.

Simon Radowitszky was of Russian origin. He was born in Ekaterinoslav (Ukraine) in 1890. He was barely fifteen when he took an active part in the first Russian Revolution of 1905. Fleeing Tsarist persecution, he was able to reach Argentina, where he immediately entered the labor and anarchist movement around the FORA, which at that time was very influential.

In 1909 great strikes were led by the FORA in Buenos Aires and these were drowned in blood by Lieutenant Colonel Falcon, chief bloodhound at the service of the Argentine bourgeoisie. Simon Radowitszky decided to avenge the thousands of victims on the person of Falcon himself. He met him with a bomb at the door of his house and the deed was done. He had taken the care and had had the patience to wait until the execution could be carried out without there being any innocent victims.

Here, in bold strokes, is the biography of the man who has left us and who has found his final resting place in the Spanish cemetery of Mexico City, together with a number of other exiles who were his comrades of struggle in Spain, many of whom have died prematurely, their health broken by a lifetime of struggle and suffering that has been the lot of so many militants of the CNT and the FAI.

May he rest in peace, this fine man, this tireless fighter for liberty, this comrade admired and loved by all who knew him.

Report on the I.L.G.W.U. by S.W.

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union has just concluded its fifth annual convention in Atlantic City. The proceedings and especially the concluding remarks of President Dubinsky are important because they illustrate the degeneration of the American labor movement.

A suspicious and extremely unhealthy unanimity pervaded the assemblage. The well-oiled machinery functioned without a hitch. There were no serious disagreements with any of the tailor-made resolutions which were presented by the official family to the delegates. The men who had been running the union for more than twenty years nominated each other for office and were all elected by acclamation. This included President and secretary-treasurer Dubinsky, Luigi Antonninni, first vice-president and the 22-man General Executive Board. A per-capita of fifty cents a month was slapped on the members and Dubinsky's raise of \$2,500 making his salary \$25,000 a year. There were no opposition candidates.

The union spellbinders made it plain that they were out to wage the battle of the ballots by endorsing New Deal candidates and promising to use their considerable influence in getting the 450,000 members to subscribe at least three million dollars for that purpose. The Truman-Achison foreign policy was re-endorsed and full loyalty to the so-called "free world" bloc was re-pledged.

They applauded the remarks of a whole batch of assorted politicians who were invited to address the delegates. The welfare program was extended. Fifteen million dollars was invested in housing, thus binding the membership even closer to the clique that disposes of their money.

The gang that controlled the union locals, and with it the delegates to the convention, did what they pleased. The membership had nothing to say.

The delegates were not instructed, nor were any of the acts of the convention submitted to the consideration of the membership. Dubinsky, in his closing speech, boasted of the popularity and size of the union and expressed his pleasure because famous people addressed the meeting, people like the Governor of Puerto Rico, Senator Lehman, and Gaitskill of the British Labor Party.

The delegates paraded around the hall honoring the re-elected officials and singing patriotic and union songs. How can this deplorable situation be explained?

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union is world famous. It is regarded as one of the most enlightened and democratic unions in existence. On this “everybody” agrees. Its relations with management are excellent. The bulk of the employers declare that “it is a pleasure to do business with this reasonable and responsible organization.”

In the field of welfare unionism, its record is outstanding. Long before the Roosevelt era it had already established the health clinics, schools, vacation resorts, insurance, pensions, burial plots and all the other services which are now part of the programs of other unions and which have received the enthusiastic endorsement of the “liberal” capitalists, enlightened government officials, and even a goodly portion of the conservative press.

The crisis of American capitalism found the union prepared. Together with Roosevelt the liberals, the state socialists, the liberal capitalists and the bankrupt middle class, it laid the foundations for the “New Deal” variety of state capitalism.

Officially, the crisis found the unions without influence, greatly reduced memberships, depleted treasuries and a panicky officialdom who were on the verge of losing both their power and their paychecks. The “New Deal” changed all this. Truly a miracle! It gave the union status and encouraged the initiation of thousands of new dues payers who filled the exhausted treasuries. At the same time the administration of accumulating welfare funds vastly increased the power of the ever-expanding union bureaucracy. In exchange for these benefits the nascent welfare state demanded the political support of the union in the form of votes, and its full cooperation in furthering the domestic and foreign policies of the administration.

The leadership was psychological and, from motives of self-interest, willing to act as the labor front in the “new capitalism.” Here they feel at home. They fit comfortably and snugly into the scheme of things. Their paltry ideal is a super-new dealism. All events are judged by that yardstick. Their battle-cry is “Elect new dealers to office!” They think that all the great problems facing humanity in this crisis will be solved within the limits of the social system that breeds them!

Therein lies the tragic contradiction. The situation calls for a solution that can be found only outside of and in opposition to the existing system, in the creation of a new and free life. To re-kindle this spirit in the ranks of labor is the great task facing all of us.

More on the Terror in Spain

With regard to the letter published in our last issue about the attempted escape of two Spanish comrades from the prison of San Miguel de los Reyes and the brutal beating they received at the hands of the Guardia Civil when they were recaptured, we reprint the following item from Solidaridad Obrera of France:

The Savage Fascist Repression

(Received from the interior)

The comrade Juan Gomez Casas, savagely beaten when he attempted to escape from the prison of San Miguel de los Reyes in the month of February, afterwards severely punished in the dungeons of that fateful prison, has gone mad.

Juan Busquet, the comrade who broke his leg when he leaped from the wall and also horribly beaten, is still in the hospital.

There is now a rule of terror in the prison of San Miguel de los Reyes and in Valencia several persons have been arrested. Nevertheless, despite severe police measures, propaganda of the C.N.T. was amply distributed during the Fallas (an annual festival in Valencia) and was favorably received.

In Albacete, at the end of April, a court-martial will be held to judge comrade Pascual Diez de Bonanza. The prosecutor has asked for the death penalty.

The sentence of comrade Vicente Gurrea Raga, condemned to death by a court-martial in Valencia, has been changed to 30 years in prison.

In a typical gesture of defiance against Franco and his flunkies, the clandestine edition of *Tierra y Libertad*, organ of the F.A.I. (Anarchist Federation of Iberia), has been received here, mailed directly from Barcelona. This paper is one of several clandestine organs edited and printed in Spain itself, under the very nose of the Dictator, by the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., the only anti-Fascist organizations that print their organs inside Spain.

One of the articles in *Tierra y Libertad* is the following:

The Strike, Weapon of the Workers

Only the workers know fully the joke that the well-publicized raise in salaries, so acclaimed by the repulsive official press, represents. But the raise in salaries must not be a parody. It must be real. It will be if the workers move energetically. The strike is our effective weapon. It must be spread.

Let us be united and active in the fight for a salary that will make possible a decent standard of living and in the combat against the tyranny.

“Suffer The Little Children...”

Philadelphia, May 21 — A clergyman who turned his own son over to police for stealing \$200 in church funds said today he would ask that the boy, 13, be sent to jail for rehabilitation and treatment.

“Somebody has got to teach him respect for law and decent behavior,” the Rev. Clarence L. Taylor Sr. told *The Post*.

“I’ve done everything to be a good father,” Rev. Taylor said. “I’ve whipped him and punished him, but he don’t seem to learn. Maybe an institution can teach him something.”

Rev. Taylor said the boy took the money from its hiding place last week and spent \$120 before it was missed. The boy bought a bicycle, a baseball glove and a set of mambo drums.

“He belongs to a gang known as the Flamingos,” said Rev. Taylor, pastor of a small church, Shiloh temple. “I think my older boy, who’s 15, does too. That’s the trouble, my older boy is setting a bad example for my younger boy.”

Rev. Taylor, who turned his son over to police yesterday, said a hearing would be held today in Youth Court.

“I have a daughter, 14,” Rev. Taylor said, “who’s just the sweetest girl. She never does anything wrong.”

— *New York Post*, May 21

Notice!

The Libertarian League is supporting the
MEMORIAL AND PROTEST MEETING
for
JESUS DE GALINDEZ

Our co-worker of many years in the struggle to defend the Labor Victims of Franco Spain.
Kidnapped and murdered by terrorist agents of the tyrant, Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic.

To be held at:

Community Church
35th St. near Park Ave.

New York City

TUESDAY NIGHT, JUNE 12, 8 P.M.

The Literature Shelf

The following books and pamphlets are available through the Libertarian League.

Prices are held as near to cost as possible, except for bound books which are sold at publisher’s price.

We pay postage on all orders. Make checks or money orders payable to S. Weiner.

Address all orders to:

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“In general the art of government consists in taking as much money as possible from one part of the citizens to give it to another.”
—Voltaire

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