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## Views & Comments Number 26

Libertarian League

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”As to Socialists in Parliament, there are two words about that. If they go there to take a part in carrying on Constitutionalism by palliating the evils of the present system, and so helping our rulers to bear their burden of Government, I, for one, so far as their action therein goes, cannot call them socialists at all. But, if they go there with the intention of doing what they can towards the disruption of Parliament, that is a matter of tactics for the time being; but even here I cannot help seeing the danger of their being seduced from their true errand, and fear they might become... simply supporters of the very thing they set out to undo.”

—William Morris in SIGNS OF CHANGE

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## Contents

What We Stand For . . . . .	5
Libertarian Center . . . . .	5
Views and Comments . . . . .	6
From the Editors . . . . .	6
Frank Gonzalez (1893-1957) . . . . .	6
How to Fight the Vote . . . . .	8
Report on "Unionism" . . . . .	11
For a Constructive Libertarian Movement by Gaston Leval . . . . .	13
Bakunin on the State . . . . .	22
Modern State Must Have Centralized, Military Apparatus. . . . .	22
Dynamics of State and Capitalism Are Identical.	23
Monarchy and Republic. . . . .	23
Inherent Antagonism Toward People Leads to Violence. . . . .	24
Special Fund Drive for Franco Exiles . . . . .	24
To be or not to be?—that is the question... . . . . .	25
Ghana—Birth of a State . . . . .	27
MAD Strikes Again . . . . .	30
Freedom and Marxism . . . . .	32
The libertarian bookshelf . . . . .	33

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## Freedom and Marxism

One of our criticisms of Marxian theology (they call it "scientific socialism"), is the dogma that "...the final cause of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in man's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in the changes in the mode of production and exchange." (Frederick Engels in SOCIALISM UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC)

Man's mind, his will, his ideas and ideals are minor factors in social change. What he is and will be, the kind of world he will live in, is determined by "the mode of production and exchange," The economic God of the Marxist religion. The means of production is subject to the will of man and can be manipulated for good or bad purposes. In Russia and other countries the means of production is determined by the political State. The feeling of mutual aid and solidarity, the will to freedom, humanistic ideals, are dismissed as "utopian illusions." "Freedom is a bourgeois virtue," sneered Lenin.

The Marxists have popularized a distorted conception of social change. The economic factor is tremendously important, but it has been grossly exaggerated. The Marxists never understood that these "utopian illusions" provide the incentive for social change. Without these drives progress is impossible. The nature of every movement is shaped by the ethical conceptions of the people who belong to it. The importance of these factors is being understood, not only by more and more people in and out of the Marxist organizations, but also within the Russian absolutist empire. An advanced economic and technological system can exist within a modernized form of serfdom. The Pyramids were built by slaves. The man who lives in an up-to-date, air-conditioned prison still yearns for freedom.

## 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 co-operation from the bottom up.

THE LIBERTARIAN LEAGUE will not accept the old sociopolitical 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 Center

813 Broadway (between 11th & 12th Sts.) New York City  
ROUND TABLE YOUTH DISCUSSIONS EVERY FRIDAY AT

Dinner and social on the third Saturday of every month at 7:30 PM

## Views and Comments

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## From the Editors

On page 28 you'll find a note that we are now able to supply three very fine books by Rudolph Rocker. A very special note of thanks is due to Comrade Yaffe of Los Angeles, who not only made them available to us but made a substantial donation that enables us to supply them at a reduced price.

We're always interested in finding new readers for VIEWS AND COMMENTS. If you know of anyone who you think would like to receive the magazine, send us their name and address and we'll send trial copies.

## Frank Gonzalez (1893-1957)

Our movement lost one of its staunchest militants with the death of Frank Gonzalez in New York's Bellevue Hospital last November 21st. To those of us who knew him and worked with him in New York his Passing is also an acute personal loss.

Frank Gonzalez was born in the Province of Santander, Spain. As a child he accompanied his father to the meetings of the "Republican Federalist" movement. Under the Monarchy, this movement played a militant role in the struggle for the Republic. Often leaflet distributions and street demonstrations were broken up by the police and the hated Civil Guards.

"Seems to us," said "Mad," "that in this era of realism, people ought to be playing realistic games..."

Three games are offered. "Make-Out" (boy chases girl); "Alimony" (player who reaches Reno first wins), and "Draft Dodger."

Two pages are devoted to "Draft Dodger" and the object of the game is "to see who can stay out of the army." By rolling the dice and moving to the lucky squares on the game board you land "safe at home" and you are "a full-fledged draft dodger." Said the directions:

"For membership cards, send name and address to J. Edgar Hoover, Washington, D.C."

This month, J. Edgar Hoover was mad at "Mad." His office was being inundated with cards from teen-agers and others asking for membership cards as draft dodgers.

Hoover wrote to the Agent In Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation office in New York City. "This is a distasteful misuse of my name," he declared. "This should not happen again." F.B.I. agent J. Raymond Kopp was promptly dispatched to the "Mad" offices where he attempted to persuade "Mad" editors not to do it again, after showing his commission book (identification).

The "Mad" editor agreed, not recalling that the next issue—already rolling from the presses—contains a faked letter that says: "Thanks, fellows, for all those cards. My boys are on their way." It's signed: J. Edgar Hoover.

(Meanwhile, John Edgar showed no qualms whatever over the appearance of his speeches in "American Mercury." The "Mercury" is owned by oilman Russell Maguire whose anti-Negro, anti-Jewish sentiments are so strong that the magazine's entire staff resigned following publication of an exposure of Maguire in issue Number 14 of "The Independent.").

is now government, and government handouts, and the party followers are on the political dole or trying to get on it.”

Dr. Apter is sure that if the Nkrumah government held an election it would be defeated. An opposition party consisting of almost all the important liberation movements has been organized. Dr. Apter declares that:

”The merger developed when it appeared the government was planning to ban parties organized along tribal, regional or religious lines. At its October convention the party issued a 12-point manifesto, calling for the preservation of fundamental rights, the preservation of the institution of chieftancy, and the rights of the people to their lands, with chiefs playing a democratic role in Ghana’s development, the building of democracy on the foundations of Ghana’s traditions and culture.”

Fundamentally, this is the pattern of events followed in the so-called liberated colonies. The imposition of an outside institution upon the native culture and society. It occurred in the past and will continue to occur. Such is the nature of the State. It is a parasitic organism that feeds on all that is vital and creative in human life.

## **MAD Strikes Again**

The following is reprinted from the December, 1957 issue, of THE INDEPENDENT.

”Mad’ is a bimonthly humor magazine devoted to lampooning the things which need lampooning in our culture. It is currently the number one success story on the nation’s newsstands, for while ”TV Guide,” ”Confidential,” ”Playboy,” and the other magazines have been declining in newsstand sales, ”Mad” is nearing the million mark.

In the January ’58 issue of ”Mad” is a four-page feature making fun of our game playing habits such as ”Monopoly,” etc.

Peaceful demonstrations of protest were turned into battles in which the fourteen-year old Frank and his comrades tore up paving stones for use as missiles against the armed might of the State, a tradition that is not yet dead in Europe, as witness East Berlin and Budapest in recent years.

With the passing of time, the simple political solutions held out by the Republican Federalists were insufficient for Frank, as for many others, and they went on to join the anarcho-syndicalist movement. Those who were most active were soon known to the authorities and Gonzalez fled to Mexico in time to participate in the Mexican revolution. Later he came to the United States and was for many years active in organizational activities of the Industrial Workers of the World, especially among the sailors where he helped to mobilize the seamen of three coasts against the miserable conditions that then prevailed in the industry.

During the Palmer raids Frank was not overlooked, nor during World War II when, as a consistent revolutionist, he opposed both war camps, but somehow, in spite of constant hounding, he managed to avoid deportation. Those who hounded him when he opposed both Communist and Nazi totalitarianism, at a time when it was the fashion to support the former, never really lost sight of him until his dying day.

For decades Frank Gonzalez and others published the weekly Spanish newspaper, Cultura Proletaria, which was largely instrumental in mobilizing the Spanish minority in this country behind the Spanish Revolution. He was one of the leading spirits of S.I.A. (Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista) through which many thousands of dollars were collected to aid the victims of Franco’s terror.

The Libertarian League was born in the shadow of Frank Gonzalez and his group, which, in the face of adversity, had been able to keep the light burning in a dingy little hall on Broadway. His cooperation and that of others of his group helped give us a start when it was sorely needed.

Many of our younger comrades, newcomers to the revolutionary movement, did not know Frank intimately, failing health and repeated illnesses having taken him out of active circulation. He always continued, however, his voluminous correspondence with his comrades in exile throughout the world and with many of those still working in the underground that will some day put an end to Hitler's Spanish toady, who is today a protege of Dulles.

Those of us who knew Frank Gonzalez never met a person of greater personal warmth and kindness. He lived his ideals. Only those who are capable of this will be able ultimately to achieve those high goals to which our beloved comrade devoted a half-century of life. Already those who must someday fill Frank's shoes are preparing themselves. The world is better for his having lived in it.

## How to Fight the Vote

In the last issue of Views And Comments I discussed the question of voting and elections and tried to show that the exercise of the vote is not only useless but prejudicial within the framework of the existing social order. Since then several persons have asked where they can obtain further information on this question from the libertarian viewpoint, and I would like to suggest VOTE—WHAT FOR? and ANARCHY by Malatesta and THE STATE, ITS HISTORIC ROLE by Kropotkin. All three pamphlets can be obtained from the Libertarian League.

However, it is not enough to know the fallacy of voting and the harm it can cause; we must do something to combat it. In this connection a very interesting job of motivational research was carried out by the American Heritage Foundation and the Advertising Council prior to the 1956 presidential campaign to find out just why people do and do not vote. Their findings are as follows (not necessarily in order of importance):

in their schools, and served their apprenticeship as assistants to the foreign rulers. They soaked up the teachings of their masters like a sponge absorbs water. They were indoctrinated and thoroughly corrupted before they took office. Those who were honest and idealistic and had no previous connection with the old rulers could do one of two things: if they participate in the new government, they will be corrupted by the exercise of that power. If they are able to withstand the temptations of power, if they refuse to prostitute their integrity, they will resign and rejoin the ranks of the revolutionary opposition.

The following quotations from Dr. Apter's article illustrate the points made above:

"There have been disturbing reports in the press about the deportation of Bankole Timothy, the biographer of Nkrumah, and two important members of the Moslem Association Party... the Minister of the Interior has indicated criticism will not be tolerated... A great many people in Ghana are saying, 'I told you so, that Nkrumah was basically a dictator.'...", the official organ of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party has said that what Ghana requires is benevolent dictatorship... he (Nkrumah) wants to use Ghana as a source of power, a kind of private reserve, for his career as pan-African leader... Partly because Nkrumah has cut himself off from his party rank and file and his sources of close contact and communication with the people, he fails to realize the change in the public image of himself. If he did realize this it is doubtful whether he would posture as he does or continue with such programs as putting his head on Ghana coins and his statue in Accra. (Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party has not only lost touch with the public, but has begun to treat the public as an obstacle... C.P.P. is gradually changing from an organization of young, devoted people to a more middle-aged, more cynical and disillusioned group; disillusioned with the consequences of independence and victory, and cynical because they see how some people get ahead in the party and how some people don't... the life of the party



has written an article, "What's Happening in Ghana," which appears in the Nov. 1957 issue of AFRICA—SPECIAL REPORT.

The article is important not only because it shows what happens when a dependent colony becomes an independent State, but also because in the process of erecting the new regime we actually see the State being built, and we get a better insight into its true nature and function.

There are two opposing conceptions of "independence." The people support the independence movement because they do not want to be exploited. They want freedom to lead their own lives. They demand autonomy, the right to form their own organizations, follow their own customs, create their own culture, freely federate and make their own arrangements with other people for their mutual benefit. They hate colonial government because it prohibited or curtailed their rights and liberties. The people thought that National independence meant local and individual autonomy. In this they were mistaken. They found themselves being ordered around by a new boss, who, to a greater or less degree, behaved like the old one.

Behold! A new State is being built! The power of foreign colonial rulers is now wielded by the new native government. The new government makes and enforces the law of the land.. It creates the machinery of domination. It organizes the army, police, jails, judges, courts, schools, radio stations. It appoints swarms of officials who poke their long noses into everybody's business, regulate everything, and exact the tribute (taxes) which supports the parasitic State apparatus.

To the native governing class, independence meant the right to abolish the natural social, cultural and communal institutions that were developed by the people, and impose from above, by force, an artificial scheme of life, which nullifies or distorts their natural development and paralyzes their creative capacities. The new rulers secretly admired the colonial governors and administrators. They envied the easy, luxurious life of their masters, their power, their prestige. They were educated

#### WHY PEOPLE DON'T VOTE

1. My one vote won't count.
2. Personal laziness.
3. Fear of social pressures—voting involves discussion, argument. It may endanger my family relations, group position, even my occupation.
4. Distrust of political and governmental forces.
5. The 'protest' of not voting.
6. Fear of making decisions, and assuming responsibility for them.
7. Emotionally worn out by the long campaign period.
8. Apathy based on cynicism or on native confidence in the basic stability of society.
9. Disfranchised (prisoners, ex-convicts, migrants, moved too recently).

#### WHY PEOPLE DO VOTE

1. Sense of patriotic duty.
2. Sense of participation, of belonging.
3. Sense of power and self-importance.
4. Strong personal feelings for or against candidates or issues.
5. Response to excitement of campaign.
6. First-time voters to whom voting symbolizes coming of age.
7. New citizens to whom voting symbolizes their hard-won citizenship.
8. The discovery of a champion who will represent the voters.
9. The desire to conform to the group.

Thus the two organizations who sponsored this study developed their propaganda in accord with the motives of participation in a group activity, performance of a socially-accepted act and maintaining a desired status in the eyes of family and community. From this came their slogan, "See You at the Polls!"

Surely a revealing glimpse into the mechanics of the fine art of manipulating human beings like pieces of putty! But fortunately motivational research can be a two-edged weapon, and in this case can be used to turn the tables on these stout defenders of capitalism. In our propaganda, both written and oral, we must emphasize, in the first category, points one, four and five, and in the second category, we must counteract all of the points possible and provide compensating motives for not voting.

That is, we must show that not only the individual vote but the collective vote as well doesn't count, since the elections are farces acted out by two parties in complete agreement on the main point: the conservation of an unjust social system. The already existing healthy distrust of political and government forces must be nurtured and given a solid basis by showing the people just what the real role is of these groups in our society. And most important of all, people must be made to see the potential importance of mass no-voting protests. These mass protests can also give people the feeling of group activity which apparently causes many of them now to go to the polls.

As for the sense of patriotic duty, it can easily be shown that the true path for a person who loves his country is that of doing something to better the country, and that this cannot be accomplished by voting; to the contrary, that voting actually harms his country. Those with strong personal feelings for certain politicians or for the "issues" at stake must be clearly shown the sordid role of the politicians in society, and that their "issues" are simply smokescreens thrown up to gain votes and obscure their real reasons for wanting power. The excitement of the campaign can be counteracted by the equally or more intense excitement of an intensive nonvoting campaign. And last but perhaps most important of all, the drive toward conformity must be fought at every turn by showing the cowardly nature of a person who votes (or does anything else) merely in order to conform to the group, like a cow blindly following the herd over a precipice.

der law to prevent aggression, adequate authority to compel and enforce disarmament, adequate authority to settle disputes among nations according to the principles of justice."

These nation states, who, by admission in the first part of the statement, are derelict in the protection of the people to the extent that they poison the very air we breathe, will not suddenly, through their representatives in the United Nations, turn humanitarian. Will these states, so jealous of their power, submit not only to cessation of nuclear testing but later to a larger armaments control? The elephant gives birth to a mouse. So great is the disparity between the sentiment expressed and the solution offered. A great social crisis can be only met by a greater social change. The medicine must fit the sickness. The libertarian concepts expressed in the first part of the statement demand a libertarian solution. A stateless and a classless society is the ultimate solution. The immediate, practical things that can be done were demonstrated by the declaration of the thirty German scientists who refused to participate in any activity which involved the hydrogen or atom bombs and similar weapons. They went on strike. If the workers and scientists of the world will organize an international general strike against war, mankind will be saved. There is no other way.

\* \* \*

"...The state will sell you out, blow you up, knock you down, bludgeon, shoot, stab, hang—in short, abolish you, if you lift a hand against it..."

—G. Bernard Shaw (Essay on Anarchism)

## Ghana—Birth of a State

Dr. David Apter, of the University of Chicago, is a specialist in African affairs. He has closely studied the political life of Ghana and Uganda. He revisited Ghana this Summer and

to do with the safety of the American people or human beings elsewhere.

There is a growing awareness that government and nation are not synonymous with the people in the given territory. There exists a natural cleavage of warfare. This warfare of course is more dramatized where the government infringes most on the natural rights of man. It is continued on an international scale among the various nation states. The Libertarians have always pointed this out. The Mystical concept of State, Government, Nations, is just a coverall for a pyramidal organization of society with the concentration of power in a single institution, parasitical on the creative organs of society. Libertarians have always maintained that man's first loyalty is to himself and to his fellow man. With pleasure, we therefore quote from the statement the following excerpts:

"We are facing a danger unlike any danger that has ever existed. In our possession and in the possession of the Russians are more than enough nuclear explosives to put an end to the life of man on earth... The sovereignty of the human community comes before all others, before the sovereignty of groups, tribes or nations... Man has natural rights. He has the right to live and to grow and to breathe unpoisoned air,... If what the nations are doing has the effect of destroying these natural rights... then it becomes necessary for the people to restrain and tame the nations... there can be no security for America unless we can establish and keep vital connections with the world's people, unless there is some moral grandeur to our purposes, unless what we do is directed to the cause of human life and the free man."

From such a deep understanding of the social problem as these few excerpts indicate, the initial remedial steps should be in the same daring direction. Although the signers of the statement realize that the problem of nuclear weapons and testing is tied to the whole problem of war, they ask support for a demand that the United Nations be given, "...Authority un-

In short, the above list suggests these and a wealth of other ideas for counteracting the powerful pressures being exerted on the people of the United States for the purpose of making them trod to the polls in order to give them a sense of participation in a system which is actually oppressing them. It's our job to make the people see that every step toward those polls is another step toward totalitarianism.

—GWR

## Report on "Unionism"

The scandals in the Teamster and other unions have been well publicized and it is not necessary to repeat what is generally known. We can learn a good deal about the condition of the labor movement when we find out how the Union officialdom and the membership are reacting to the events.

We will begin with the President of the AFL-CIO, George Meany. The N.Y. Times (Nov. 2, 1957) in an article headed "Meany Is Shocked By Rackets Scope" quotes him:

"We thought we knew a few things about trade union corruption, but we didn't know the half of it, one-tenth of it, or the one-hundredth part of it. We didn't know, for instance, that we had unions where a criminal record was almost a prerequisite to holding office under a national union. We didn't know that we had top trade union leaders who made it a practice to secretly borrow the funds of their unions. We didn't know that there were top trade union leaders who used the funds for phony real estate deals in which the victims of the fraud were their own members. And we didn't know that there were trade union leaders who charged to the union treasury such items as speed boats, perfume, silk stockings, brassieres, color TV, refrigerators and everything else under the sun."

Meany was in the old AFL together with the Teamsters. He was no doubt acquainted with Dan Tobin, Beck and Hoffa and

the officials of the other racket-ridden unions. He could not have been elected as president of the AFL without their support. Is it possible that he did not know what was known to any intelligent schoolboy in 1937, when the corruption in the Teamsters and Building trade unions was front page news in almost every paper in the country? Meany is guilty of unbelievable ignorance or he is lying. The chances are that he and the other old timers on the executive board knew all along the true situation and they are now trying to excuse their failure to act by pleading ignorance.

Ethics have nothing to do with it. This is a factional fight. Two opposing blocs are battling for control of the labor movement and the issue of corruption is a weapon of the Meany forces. If Hoffa takes office and the Teamsters are expelled from the AFL-CIO the battle will not be over. The Hoffa faction will have the open or secret support of the Building trade unions and the unions who depend on the Teamsters to honor their picket lines. The Carpenters with 800,000 members voted not to suspend the Teamsters. The Teamsters have mutual aid agreements with the Carpenters, Operating Engineers and Hod Carriers on a national scale, and they are connected with hundreds of regional and local labor bodies. A bitter and protracted struggle is bound to take place. Its results cannot now be predicted. This much is certain. While the labor politicians battle each other, the bosses will take advantage of the growing unemployment, and will succeed in enacting laws which will further weaken the demoralized labor movement. Meany and Co. is making it easy for them. "Mr. Meany said labor was willing to accept reasonable corrective legislation from Congress to protect workers against larceny, thievery and embezzlement." (N.Y. Times, Nov. 2, 1957)

Sooner or later the membership will have to get rid of the fakers and regain control of their organizations. This is why the attitude of the rank and file is crucial. The diseases afflicting the social system have spread to the labor movement. When it

countries willing to accept them as political exiles under the Geneva Convention.

"Their release is the result of many months of work on the part of the Solidarite International Antifasciste, a Spanish Republican refugee committee in Toulouse, France, along with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Red Cross," according to Mrs. Nancy MacDonald, executive secretary of Spanish Refugee Aid.

Morocco has agreed to free the former Franco soldiers, now facing their second Christmas in jail, if they can find other countries to accept them. Belgium and some Latin American countries have agreed to take part of them, Morocco itself will keep a few skilled workers.

"But they will not be free until the funds are raised," Mrs. MacDonald warns.

## **To be or not to be?—that is the question...**

There appeared in the N.Y. Times of Nov. 15, 1957, a full page statement by "The National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy," signed by men whose titles, by way of identification, are impressive. Dr. Erich Fromm, Norman Thomas, Lewis Mumford, Dr. Pitirim A. Sorokin, The Rev. Donald Harrington, are but a few of the signers. It is very heartening to hear men speak out to fellow men about matters of great import. It seems the cloud of fear which enveloped the spirit of the American people during the McCarthy period, when even men of stature were hesitant to take up social problems because they might be linked with the communists, has been somewhat dispersed. There is a realization that the secrecy and witch-hunts instituted by politicians in the various governmental agencies for nefarious policies in the name of "security" have nothing really

dest political republic, which is a people's republic in the same sense in which this falsehood is known by the name of popular representation—can give the people what they need, that is, the free organization of their own interests, from the bottom upward, with no interference, tutelage, or violence from above, because every State, even the most Republican and the most democratic State—even the would-be popular State conceived by M. Marx—are in their essence only machines governing the masses from above, through an intelligent and therefore a privileged minority, allegedly knowing the genuine interests of the people better than the people themselves.

### **Inherent Antagonism Toward People Leads to Violence.**

Thus, not being able to satisfy the demands of the people or to allay popular passion, the propertied and ruling classes have only one means at their disposal: State violence, in a word, the State, because the State denotes violence, rule by disguised, or if necessary open and unceremonious, violence.

The State, any State—even when it is dressed up in the most liberal and democratic form—is necessarily based upon domination, and upon violence, that is, upon despotism a concealed but no less dangerous despotism.

### **Special Fund Drive for Franco Exiles**

A special fund drive for \$17,000 to relocate 149 Spanish soldiers who fled from Franco's army in Ifni, North Africa, is being conducted by Spanish Refugee Aid, Inc., 80 East 11th Street, New York City 3.

The soldiers who left the Franco forces in Spanish Morocco, which nationalist forces are seeking to free from Spanish rule, have been jailed in Casablanca. They will be freed when funds are available to clothe them and pay their transportation to

adopts the standards of the corrupt and predatory society, demoralization is inevitable. The demoralization and apathy are social facts. It affects not only the leadership but also poisons the mind of the average member. Many members say, "I'm working. We have a good contract and welfare. As long as I get mine, I'm satisfied to let the officials get theirs. I'd do the same if I were in their shoes. Why should I stick my neck out? If I lose my job I'm cooked."

It is however encouraging to learn that there is considerable ferment in the Teamsters' Union. Rank and file committees exist in 400 of the 891 locals. 65 members of Hoffa's Local 299 (Detroit), signed affidavits which stated that Hoffa's election was illegal. It is regrettable that they depend on the courts to clean house for them, but it does show that they are beginning to wake up. It takes real courage to stand up against the machine. A healthier reaction was shown by rank and file members from five upstate New York locals. They called a meeting to "throw the racketeers out of our union." Ernest De Mont, shop steward of Syracuse local 317, said that more than 200 members from Auburn, Fulton, Utica, Oswego and Syracuse would attend. Whether these modest beginnings are accidental or whether they indicate a definite trend remains to be seen.

### **For a Constructive Libertarian Movement by Gaston Leval**

This article, a translation from DEFENSE DEL'HOMME, was originally published in VIEWS AND COMMENTS for February, 1956. It was very well received at that time and numerous readers have requested its republication.

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Anyone who, like myself, has been a long time militant in the international libertarian movement and who has studied its history without partisan blinders, cannot ignore the fact that,

with the exception of pre-Franco Spain and of South Korea before the war, the movement has been stagnating in every sense of the word. And anyone who is not blinded by unintelligent fanaticism, is faced with this dilemma, Either the libertarian ideas are in contradiction with nature and human possibilities or, these ideas have not been able to penetrate the consciousness of the revolutionary minorities who influence, and often determine, social evolution.

Were I not convinced that the second of these two hypotheses is the correct one, I would have ceased to struggle for the dissemination and triumph of our ideas a long time ago. But I am too convinced of the social truth in socialist anarchism (using the word "socialist" in its original sense) to take this attitude. Certainly there are things that must be re-examined in the light of new experience, as there are in all systems that are the synthesis of long experience, if the doctrines of liberation are not to become dogmas, stultifying thought and action. But the essentials remain. Unfortunately, the mass, and in this case, the anarchist mass, has too often not understood these essentials. I consider it a grave error for us to have defined ourselves with a negation. Anarchy—the negation of 'archies,' of hierarchies, of diverse social strata, of rich and of poor, of masters and slaves, of government and governed; from which follows equality in law and in fact, in the political and economic spheres, in the pursuit of liberty and in the possibilities of material, intellectual and moral satisfactions.

Such is the theory. The point of departure remains a negation. And, unfortunately, this negation is what has been spiritually, intellectually and practically imprinted on the minds of everyone from the illiterate to the intellectual. It does not make any difference who declares himself to be an enemy of authority, of law, of government, of the boss, of all discipline and of all responsibility. It suffices to deny in order to be an anarchist. Consequently these negators have often distorted the profound

must be a vast and powerful State: only under this indispensable condition can it preserve itself.

### **Dynamics of State and Capitalism Are Identical.**

And just as capitalist production and banking speculation, which in the long run swallows up that production, must, under the threat of bankruptcy, ceaselessly expand at the expense of the small financial and productive enterprises which they absorb, must become universal, monopolistic enterprises extending all over the world—so this modern and necessarily military state is driven on by an irrepressible urge to become a universal State. But a universal State, which of course, can be realized, can exist only in a singular number, the coexistence of two such States alongside of each other being utterly impossible.

### **Monarchy and Republic.**

Hegemony is only a modest manifestation, possible under the circumstances, of this unrealizable urge inherent in every State. And the first condition of this hegemony is the relative impotence and subjection of all the neighboring States. At the present time, most serious in its implications, a strong State can only have one foundation: military and bureaucratic centralization. In this respect the essential difference between a monarchy and a democratic republic is reduced to the following: in a monarchy the bureaucratic world oppresses and plunders the people for the greater benefit of the privileged propertied classes as well as for its own benefit, and all that is done in the name of the monarch; in a republic the same bureaucracy will do exactly the same, but—in the name of the will of the people. But the people will scarcely feel any better if the stick with which they are being belabored is called the People's Stick.

No State Can Satisfy the Aspirations of the People. No State, democratic though it may be in form—and not even the red-

## Bakunin on the State

(reprinted from THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY of BAKUNIN, Compiled and edited by P.G. Maximoff. The Free Press, 1953)

### Capitalism and Representative Democracy

Modern capitalist production and banking speculations demand for their full development a vast centralized State apparatus which alone is capable of subjecting the millions of toilers to their exploitation.

A federal organization, from the bottom upward, of workers' associations, groups, city and village communes, and finally of regions and peoples, the sole condition of a real and not fictitious liberty, is just as contrary to capitalist production as any sort of economic autonomy. But capitalist production and banking speculation get along very well with the so-called representative democracy; for this most modern State form, based upon the pretended rule by the people's will, allegedly expressed by the would-be representatives of the people at the supposedly popular assemblies, unites in itself the two conditions necessary for the prosperity of the capitalistic economy: State centralization and the actual subjection of the Sovereign—The People—to the minority allegedly representing it but actually governing it intellectually and invariably exploiting it.

### Modern State Must Have Centralized, Military Apparatus.

The modern State, in its essence and aims, is necessarily a military State, and a military State is driven on by the very same logic to become a conquering State. If it does not conquer, it will be conquered by others, and that is true for the simple reason that where there is force, it must manifest itself in some form. Hence it follows that the modern State invariably

ideas of our thinkers worthy of the name anarchist—Proudhon, Bakunin, Rocker, Kropotkin—or most often have ignored them.

Internationally then, aside from several exceptions, as in the case of Spain, anarchism has appeared as a collection of negations. It can be said, citing Proudhon, that "all negation implies a subsequent affirmation." In fact, no such implication need exist in the minds of those who would make such a statement. One can theoretically or instinctively deny authority without conceiving of a non-authoritarian society, feeling the need of such a society, or struggling for its realization. One can condemn economic inequality and the exploitation of man by man without considering the ways by which an equalitarian society could be brought into being.

The consequence of negation, or of initial negations as they have emanated from certain thinkers, have not been and are not, compensating affirmations. These affirmations can be found in accidental polemics, but they are absent from the thoughts and permanent attitudes of many anarchists.

This is why the present anarchist propaganda and recruiting techniques are essentially the same as those of fifty years ago. They are anti-authoritarian, anti-militarist, anti-capitalist, anti-God, etc. Most of the time there is a repetition of superficial arguments that tire the intelligent listener and discourage the observer. A serious, profound and documented critique can have a constructive character in as much as it suggests new solutions. But that which has been done by thinkers and sociologists has been too often scorned by their disciples.

The presentation of anarchist ideas has been reduced to a common denominator of negative mediocrity by the law of least intellectual effort, the lack of mental discipline and the confusion between political authority and the necessary influence of knowledge. If we do not know how to leave these swamps in which we are mired, it is useless to hope for the future of our movement or even for the influence of our ideas on human evolution.

Kropotkin wrote a book entitled MUTUAL AID. Up until World War II, this book was very well known to anarchists entering our movement. It was translated into most of the languages of the culturally developed countries and even published by bourgeois publishers who did not wait for the anarchists to give them a sales guarantee.

MUTUAL AID is rightly considered to be the fundamental writing of socialist anarchism. Certainly, Darwin had already suggested in passing, some ideas which showed the way. Certainly, Proudhon, with brilliant clarity, had indicated the importance of the solidarity of the species, in his first writings on the subject of property. And it is likewise true that the very observant Bakunin did not fail to notice the often preponderant character of this factor in the life of all society.

But it was necessary for Kropotkin, a true scientist, a geologist and geographer, who, at the age of twenty-five had gathered all the necessary material for the revelation to the scientific world of the true orographic structure of eastern Asia, and who, at the age of thirty, was offered the presidency of the Russian Physical Geographic Society for his discoveries regarding the importance of the glacial period in Europe, and who later replaced Huxley in the Encyclopedia Britannica—it was necessary, I say, to incorporate the factor of sociability and acquired progress in to the thought of socialist anarchism and to give it an importance that is recognized, alas, by too few of us.

Kropotkin shows mutual aid to be a biologic law of progress. Starting with the insect, and climbing the zoologic ladder up to man and modern civilization, mutual aid is both a need and a necessary condition for evolution. Those species and those segments of humanity who can best practice mutual aid have the best chance of surviving and progressing in this terrible struggle for life, imposed by a blind fate.

Such, in essence, was the refutation that was used against social Darwinism, in the name of which the apologists for a laissez-faire economy had set up the struggle of all versus all

the literary defense of the rights of the individual is little more than a pleasant pastime. On the other hand, the great increase in human needs, the interdependence of men and the resulting need for co-ordinated activity make it necessary to set forth social objectives in a way that will interest serious people.

There are in France, perhaps 100,000 anarchists who don't know it—and they will not be attracted because only "working class" (French: *ouvrieriste*) propaganda is used. This, in substance, is what a comrade recently wrote. I agree with him. But I do not believe they can be attracted by propaganda which concentrates solely on the rights of the individual. We must offer constructive ideas which embrace society as a whole. For the individual is not independent of the group. Without it, he would be nothing—just as the comrade of whom I speak, would not have acquired the culture necessary for the development of his individuality, had it not been for the work of all of humanity.

First let there be constructive work. But it must be the work of true sociologists and economists (of specialists, if necessary)—not of abstract theoreticians, of literary dabblers in sociology or of fabricators of utopias. These things are not absolutely useless, but they are absolutely not enough. By taking the essential teachings of our great predecessors and re-adapting them to our time, we can create an intellectual movement, a sociological school that is attuned to the present evolution of the world, so that our efforts will not be doomed to failure. It is by carrying forward the work of construction, even while destroying that which must be destroyed, that the libertarian current of socialism will bring to humanity a new message, a new faith, a force of resurrection that can save us from statism and capitalism alike.



more and better than Kropotkin, too. If we take the whole body of human activities that have assured the existence, the development and the progress of the species, we can derive the libertarian interpretation of history that I have already mentioned, and use it against the authoritarians.

Agriculture, animal husbandry and domestication—techniques which were at first primitive and later brought to perfection—the building of shelters and then, of dwellings, handicrafts and trades, arts—all of the arts; sciences—all of the sciences, systems of philosophy, primitive methods of land transport, river and ocean transport—the vast majority of these activities and creations have been the work of men who were driven by need and by their inexhaustible desire to know the beyond. Such a study, with all that it entails, would give to libertarian thought an incomparable force. Orientating itself along positive lines, it would create a constructive psychology. It would enrich us with a better understanding of man's efforts.

We could take up the study of the great problems of social undertakings and, instead of repeating our little criticisms, we could propose to our fellow citizens a new organization of society, a conception based on a more profound knowledge of all the economic, human, psychological and, even, ethnic problems—a conception based upon the possession of all the facts concerning agricultural and industrial production, of knowledge of national and international relations, questions of energy and raw materials, transport, economic geography and distribution. In short, we must acquire a training and background which will convince those whom we wish to influence that they are dealing with capable, serious and responsible men—not with simple agitators or dilettantes of revolution.

It is by constructive rather than by negative propaganda that the libertarian movement will attract worthwhile members, without whom it can accomplish nothing. At a time when domination by the state is making such formidable progress,

as the fundamental law of progress and, thus, justified their privileges. This was understood by the anarchists who read this book. Those of them who had not been able to study natural history, went into ecstasies over the revelations of the concerts of the birds, the amusements of colonies of monkeys and of cranes, the beaver villages and the civilization of the termites.

They did not always understand that this book went much farther, that it established a new philosophy of life, that it created new basic theories of socialist anarchism and of socialism itself, and that it was the biologic synthesis of a new humanism.

But, essentially, MUTUAL AID gave to anarchism the basis of a constructive Character. No longer was a dominating negation the sole result of the analysis of history. To the authoritarian interpretation of human evolution and the development of societies, Kropotkin opposed an anti- or an a-authoritarian interpretation; to the belief in the necessity of chiefs and of political frameworks, he opposed the creative effort of man and the self organization of collectivities. The general sense of his book led to the systematization of a pre-existing social conception which he expected us to enlarge and cause to triumph.

In other writings, Kropotkin insists on the historic importance, for the past and the future, of these practices of mutual aid and of anti-authoritarian organization. In his pamphlet THE STATE—ITS HISTORIC ROLE, he is not content with giving the anarchist view of the state and proving that, far from its being merely the instrument of dominant economic forces, as Marx and his followers assert, it is a force that above all, obeys the dictates of its own institutional and caste interests. As examples of non-statist structures and institutions, he cites the corporations and guild associations of the middle ages, the communes and federations of communes—subjects already amply developed in MUTUAL AID. And in THE CONQUEST OF BREAD he gives as examples of "free alliance," organizations among the savages, cultural, scientific and artistic societies, the Red Cross, the boatmen's associations of the Scandinavian

countries and even the great international railway companies which had been able to organize themselves without the State and which showed that such organization was possible.

If one remembers only the bird concerts of MUTUAL AID and, if, after reading THE CONQUEST OF BREAD, one retains only a few ideas which are poorly expressed when taken literally, such as "the citizens of good will" who will come forward to organize things in the midst of the revolution, one is bound to be greatly mistaken. For, in all of his writings, Kropotkin insisted on the responsibility, the essential role and the pre-revolutionary preparation of minorities. But to work in this largely constructive direction does not appeal to the negating spirit of the majority of his self-proclaimed disciples.

Bakunin has suffered the same fate as Kropotkin. Most anarchists who speak of him are ignorant of his constructive thought and work, seeing in him only the Muscovite Satan that too many biographers have stupidly portrayed. From Proudhon, they retain only the slogan "property is theft." They do not know that throughout his works, he has denied this sentence in unmistakable terms, that he defended the individual's possession of property and that his constructive ideas (even where they are contradictory) far outweigh his destructive verbiage.

It is obvious that a social movement cannot live on negation. Life is an affirmation and that which destroys more than it can build, only leads to annihilation. That is what so many people whom we approach, honestly and sincerely tell us. And that is what we must take into consideration. When one thinks of the spirit and the constructive efforts of our predecessors in the First International, and the emptiness of the generations that have followed them, the contrast is as painful as it is glaring.

Today there are many tens of thousands, especially among those having a certain degree of culture, who, confronted by facts, have arrived at conclusions as negative as our own. They consider the laissez-faire economy with its capitalist organization and exploitation, to be justly doomed. They have been

convinced by depressions (particularly the one of 1929-1934), by the general disorder and by the wars for commercial gain or raw materials. Alarmed by the increasing interference of the state in every aspect of social life, and faced by the menace of fascist, bolshevik or pseudo-socialist totalitarianism, they too are forced to the conclusion that man must protest against the universal "governmentalization."

It is useless to talk to these people about the taxes they pay, about the bureaucracy which they see growing before their very eyes, or about their shrinking liberties. If one does this at all, one must show them that all these things are in the very nature of the state as proven by history from the days of the Pharaohs, down to Hitler and Stalin. We must enlarge their vision of society. We must give to their observations of the moment, a permanent significance.

They must be given an overall picture of our system if they are to learn its mechanism and truly understand its evil character. Above all, they must be told what the possible solutions are. Their negative conclusions concerning the state and the so-called free economy, logically lead them toward libertarian socialism. It is for us to show them in what manner libertarian socialism is feasible. We must search along with them but we must, also, guide them—for we have placed ourselves at the head of the task of demolition.

These people who are repelled by demagoguery—demagoguery attracts only imbeciles—must be given something better than a repetition of generalized criticisms which have lost their punch. They need constructive ideas, both at the theoretical and the practical levels.

I have often thought, for example, that we ought to widen and extend the road shown by Kropotkin. We ought to re-examine the history of civilization and from this re-examination, draw conclusions that would give to the libertarian ideas a value without equal. Élisée Reclus has done this in MAN AND THE EARTH, but more could be done, and better—