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Libertarian League

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A complete history of the Russian Revolution with special accent on the role of anarchists in the revolution, including a full account of the Kronstadt Revolt and a detailed study of Nestor Makhno and the movement he led, by a man who participated in both. (This is a translation of LA REVOLUTION INCONUE)

Goodbye Eyestrain: A Progress Report

After much serious consideration we have gone in debt for a multilith and—as soon as our stock of mimeograph paper is exhausted—we will convert to what we hope will be a much more attractive and easier-on-the-eyes publication.

We hate to keep repeating it, but we need money—now especially. We will be able to produce VIEWS AND COMMENTS cheaper now but the cost of payments on the new machine will more than eat up the difference. Our thanks to those of you who came forward with pledges. How about the rest of you?

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PAMPHLETS

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Announcement

New York
May Day Meeting
At the Libertarian Center, 813 Broadway (between 11th and 12th Sts.)
Wednesday, May 1st, 8 p.m.
Speakers: Conrad Lynn, Sam Weiner
Refreshments will be served following the meeting

Notice

THE DRAWING OF THE LUCKY NUMBERS IN THE RAFFLE BEING RUN TO RAISE FUNDS NEEDED TO SPRUCE UP THE NEW YORK LIBERTARIAN CENTER WILL BE HELD AT THE MAY DAY MEETING. THOSE HOLDING MONEY FOR TICKETS SOLD ARE URGED TO REMIT SAME TOGETHER WITH THE TICKET STUBS NOT LATER THAN APRIL 24th.

Special Notice

Mail for the Libertarian League and for Views and Comments should now be addressed to our recently acquired Post Office Box:
P.O. Box 261, New York 3, N.Y.

The Libertarian Bookshelf

The following books and pamphlets are available through the Libertarian League. Prices are held as low as possible on both pamphlets and books. We pay postage on all orders. Make checks or money orders payable to S. WEINER. Address all orders to
LIBERTARIAN LEAGUE

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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 co-operation from the bottom up.

The Libertarian League will not accept the old socio-political clichés, 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.

”Free Enterprise” in the Labor Field

... For Everyone But The Membership

The marriage of the CIO-AFL is now in its second year. While it would be unrealistic to expect too much in so short a time, the merger must be evaluated in terms of what it set out to do. More important is the new organization moving in the direction of its professed aims?

These aims were: 1) Unity on a local, regional, and national basis within the framework of the autonomous international unions. 2) The settlement of all jurisdictional disputes. 3) Organization of the 45 million unorganized workers. 4) Abolition of race discrimination in the unions. 5) Abolition of racketeering in the unions. 6) Fostering of friendly relations between labor and ”management.” 7) Support of America and its allies in the ”free world” against the totalitarian bloc headed by Russia.

The first five objectives are desirable. Points 6 and 7 however, make their realization impossible. When the leaders of the CIO-AFL proclaim that there is no conflict of interests between the workers and their employers, when they insist that the unions are—and should be—one of the main pillars of the existing social system, the labor movement abdicates its independence and merely reflects all the evils of the society that it endorses, it can no longer act as a lever for social change.

The very nature of such a labor movement makes it incapable of performing even the few constructive tasks that it set out to accomplish. A formal unity from the top does exist, but the unification of city and state bodies in the-most important industrial strongholds—New York, Pennsylvania, Michi-

Defenders Of Freedom

An event of great interest to all who love freedom occurred recently when the so-called Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge presented awards to those who, in their Opinion, had done most to make ”outstanding contributions to a better understanding of the American Way of Life during 1956.”

First prize went to FBI head J. Edgar Hoover, who, to show what a great freedom lover he is, attacked ”pseudo-liberals” who ”have become tools of the Communist conspiracy” in his acceptance speech.

Hoover went on to say that the ”pseudo-liberal has increasingly conceived committees in the name of defending every freedom, but none to uphold authority... Some of them may be honest and sincere, but they are misguided. Others seek the pseudo-liberal cloak to conceal more sinister objectives, because deceit is the very essence of communism.”

Prizes in the ”miscellaneous spiritual values” category went to the Defense Department and International Christian Leadership, Inc., of Washington. The honors were accepted by Charlie Wilson, secretary of defense and multi-billionaire, and Senator Frank Carlson of Kansas, president of the Christian Leadership group.

Need we comment on such an ignominious, cynical farce?

* * *

”No Government is ever really in favor of so-called civil rights. It always tries to whittle them down. They are preserved under all governments in so far as they survive at all, by special classes of fanatics, often highly dubious. The Hon. Frank Murphy, in his days as Attorney-General, announced with a flourish that he was setting up a bureau to guard civil rights, but that bureau, once it began to function, protected the rights of those who favored the government. Its enemies remained *ferae naturae*.”

—H.L. Mencken in MINORITY REPORT

It is not so with the State. I do not hesitate to say that the State is an evil, although a historically necessary evil, as necessary in the past as its complete extinction will be necessary sooner or later, just as necessary as primitive bestiality and theological divagations were necessary in the past.

The state is not society; it is only one of its historical forms, as brutal as it is abstract in character. Historically, it arose in all countries out of the marriage of violence, rapine and pillage—in a word, of war and conquest—with the Gods created in succession by the theological fancies of the nations. From its very beginning it has been—and still remains—the divine sanction of brutal force and triumphant iniquity. Even in the most democratic countries like the United States of America and Switzerland, it is simply the consecration of the privileges of some minority and the actual enslavement of the vast majority.

Revolt against the State is much easier because there is something in the nature of the State which provokes rebellion. The State is authority, it is force, it is ostentatious display of and infatuation with power. It does not seek to ingratiate itself, to win over, to convert. Every time it intervenes, it does so with particularly bad grace, for by its very nature it cannot persuade but must impose, and exert force. However hard it may try to disguise this nature, it will still remain the legal violator of man's will and the permanent denial of his liberty.

Even when the State enjoins something good, it undoes and spoils it precisely because the latter comes in the form of a command, and because every command provokes and arouses the legitimate revolt of freedom; and also because from the point of view of true morality, of human and not divine morality, the good which is done by command from above ceases to be good and thereby becomes evil.

Liberty, morality, and the human dignity of man consists precisely in that man does good not because he is ordered to do so, but because he conceives it, wants it and loves it.

gan, Illinois and other states—has not been accomplished because the rival unions have been unable to iron out their jurisdictional beefs. Disputes as to Who shall control nonunion workers when they are organized has been one of the main obstacles holding up a large scale recruiting campaign. Advances in wages and welfare have been due to high level employment. The biggest increase in wages was made by the United Miners Union, not affiliated with the CIO-AFL. 200,000 miners got an increase of 30 cents an hour, which is 10 cents more per hour than the steelworkers union won after a five week strike. There have been no significant improvements in working conditions.

The jurisdictional disputes between major unions continue. The AFL Teamsters and Building Trades Unions are still fighting with the CIO. The CIO National Maritime Union, headed by James Curran, is feuding with the AFL International Seamen's Unions. A similar situation exists among the longshoremen. The Teamsters and the NMU had even entered the merger reluctantly.

UNIONS & UNITY

The CIO has been called "the United Nations of Labor." The United Nations is an association of sovereign States and not a true unity of the peoples whom these states misrepresent. As in the United Nations, the labor rulers in each union have staked out their fields of particular jurisdiction which they jealously guard. As in the United Nations, every unit tries to grab what it can from the others and power blocs contend for the control of the organization. Behind the artificial "unity" imposed from above is the struggle of bureaucrats for control over the workers and the benefits which that control bestows.

Labor solidarity can rest only on the mutual needs and aspirations of the membership. Until this contradiction is resolved by the workers themselves all talk about "unity" is sheer hypocrisy.

Bureaucracy, graft and corruption, iniquity, all the vices which permeate our exploitive and statist society are faithfully reproduced throughout the labor movement, from the smallest local all the way up to the supreme governing bodies. The exceptions are so rare that they are regarded as sociological curiosities. To say' that management is no better or even worse merely confirms that they are both corrupt.

The relations between the Teamsters' Union and the AFL-CIO makes the nature of the power struggle within the organization clearer, and indicates the extent to which the members have lost control of the unions top officialdom. The Teamsters is the largest union in the country, with a membership of 1,400,000. Its strength lies not only in numbers but in its strategic position.

FEUDAL UNITY

The fate of many strikes depends upon the cooperation of the Teamsters, who control the flow of supplies between commercial and industrial establishments. The head of the Teamsters' Union, Dave Beck, and his associates use this power to the utmost. They have carved out an empire for themselves which they rule with an iron hand. Where there used to be three or four thousand local leaders there are now three or four leaders, each a king in his domain. James Hoffa, ninth vice-president, rules over the East, the South and Canada. Brewster rules the west Coast, and so it goes.

These latter day robber barons regard the unions as their personal property and use its funds freely. Dave Beck, for example, paid \$91,000 in income taxes which is nearly twice his yearly salary of \$50,000. They refuse to recognize any limits to their jurisdiction. They encroach on the empires of the other unions and have openly defied the authority of the AFL-CIO. They even entered into an alliance with a faction of the Longshoremen who were expelled from the AFL-CIO for gangster-

Society and the Individual by Michael Bakunin

Society... constitutes the very essence of human existence. Man is born into society, just as an ant is born into an anthill or a bee into its hive. Man is born into society from the very moment that he becomes a human being, that is, a being possessing to a greater or lesser extent the power of speech and thought. Man does not choose society; on the contrary he is its product, and he is just as inevitably subjected to the natural laws governing his necessary development as to all the other natural laws which he must obey.

Society antedates and at the same time survives every human individual, being in this respect like Nature itself; it is eternal like Nature, or rather having been born upon this earth, it will last as long as our earth itself.

A radical revolt by man against society would therefore be just as impossible as a revolt against Nature, human society being but the final great manifestation or creation of Nature upon this earth. And an individual who would want to rebel against society, that is, against Nature in general and his own nature in particular, would place himself beyond the pale of real existence, would plunge into nothingness, into an absolute void, into lifeless abstraction, into God.

It follows that it is just as impossible to ask whether society is good or evil, as it is to ask whether Nature—the universal, material, real, absolute, sole and supreme being—is good or evil. It is much more than that: it is an immense, overwhelming fact, a positive and primitive fact, having existence prior to all consciousness, to all ideas, to all intellectual and moral discernment. It is the very basis, it is the world in which inevitably, and at a much later stage, there began to develop what we call good and evil.

* * * * *

famous surgeon, who had already spent the last three years imprisoned, and many other years in concentration camps.

”There have been mass expulsions of students from the University. These expulsions still continue.

”We want to appeal again to our comrades throughout the world. The moral and material aid which has been given to the Bulgarian anti-fascists, the victims of Stalinist repression, has been deeply appreciated by the comrades inside Bulgaria. This international solidarity is having a good effect on the morale of these comrades. Now they are making the world-wide appeal, counting on your aid in making the truth known about the so-called Stalinist relaxation period.

”In spite of all the persecutions, the spirit of resistance continues. The regime is vulnerable and unstable. The people are openly showing their resentment and dissatisfaction. The government called for volunteers to celebrate the entrance of the Red Army in Bulgaria, but they couldn’t find even one. Thus is our passive resistance.

”The people and the revolutionary elements are waiting for the slightest relaxation of vigilance on the part of the government so that they can arise and destroy the whole regime. Then great possibilities will be opened up for liberty and the progressive reconstruction of society. It is this hope which inspires our comrades.”

Any who wish to aid the anti-Communist, anti-Fascist resistance movement in Bulgaria may send their contributions to the Libertarian League, marked ”For Bulgaria.”

* * *

”No one ever heard of the truth being enforced by law. Whenever the secular arm is called in to sustain an idea, whether new or old, it is always a bad idea, and not infrequently it is downright idiotic.”

—H.L. Mencken

ism three years ago and offered to lend them \$400,000. It is reasonable to assume that the leaders of the AFL-CIO would welcome the Senate investigation into the affairs of the Teamsters’ Union, not solely for ”ethical” reasons, but primarily because it strikes a heavy blow to a rival faction.

The publicity given to the skullduggery in the Teamsters’ Union by the capitalist press and radio, (for reasons of their own) has fostered the impression that it is an isolated case, and that the labor movement is basically sound. This is not true. The case of the Teamsters’ Union is an aggravated example) a symptom of the disease which is progressively paralyzing the labor movement. The Laundry Workers Union, the Jewelry Workers’ Union—even the Bakers’ Union, to which William F. Schnitzler, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, belongs, are just as corrupt as the Teamsters’ Union.

”The Jewelry Workers told us that they removed this man, James, as secretary-treasurer, and now he is running the largest local in the union,” said Schnitzler. Eugene James is being asked to explain a shortage of \$900,000 in the Jewelry Workers’ welfare fund, and \$23,000 in the local which has been handed to him for his final consultation.

”Bill Schnitzler doesn’t talk publicly about the Bakery Workers, because it is his own union, but its extant president is James Cross. Early this month, Curtis Sims, secretary-treasurer of the Bakers, presented charges that President Cross had (1) made himself trustee of one union local and bought himself a Cadillac at its expense. (2) done the same with another local and bought himself same. (3) spent \$250 a month of union funds on highly personal calls. (4) built himself a \$64,000 home in Palm Beach with funds whose source he refuses to identify.” (Murray Kempton in NY Post, March 26, 1957)

THE MEMBERS PROTEST

Workers are becoming ACTIVELY aware of this situation. There have been numerous unauthorized "wildcat" strikes in open defiance of the leadership. This spontaneous movement in the shops and in the locals and even on a national scale, is gaining momentum, showing that the period of complacency is coming to an end.

"The volume of protest in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters against leadership misconduct increased yesterday from a rumble to something less than a roar" says the N.Y. Times of March 23, proceeding to cite a number of examples.

The Seattle local to which Brewster belongs, Local 174, won a court order to audit the local's books. They tried to do this FIVE years ago but failed. Seattle Taxi Drivers Local 465 hired a lawyer to lift the trusteeship that has been in force since 1945. In Toronto, Local 939 rejected Beck's plea for financial help to aid the Teamsters' officials indicted for contempt of Congress. "We're in the Labor Movement, not the racket squad! declared William Mills, local President. An open letter from a group of members of the large freight Local 208 in Los Angeles opposed any special assessments or contributions to defense funds. Members of Local 30, Teamsters' Union of Salt Lake City, demanded an election every two years and congratulated the committee on "the fine work you are doing in investigating the Teamsters' Union."

Dissatisfaction is by no means confined to the Teamsters. Rebellions have taken place in the Steelworkers' Union. The opposition candidates were defeated by a narrow margin (180,000 to 105,000) in the election for union officials. This is a remarkable showing when we consider that McDonald, the President of the Union, ran unopposed for TWENTY YEARS and had almost unlimited funds at his disposal. In the strategic Pittsburgh area the Opposition slate ran far ahead. McDonald's own local (Jones & Laughlin Southside) voted AGAINST him by a 2 to

workers of Hungary rebelled against totalitarian tyranny, so also, some day, must the workers of our own country resist the forging of the totalitarian chains.

Notice

We have recently been lucky enough to fall heir to a number of copies of Alexander Berkman's NOW AND AFTER, THE ABC OF COMMUNIST ANARCHISM, an extremely valuable basic work long out of print. The copies are unread and in good condition. As long as they last they may be obtained from V. & C. at their original price, \$1.

* * *

"The saddest sight I have seen in my life is false leaders of the people who themselves have no confidence in the people."

—Walt Whitman

Appeal from Bulgaria

The following report has been received by the Libertarian League from the Commission to Aid Bulgarian Anti-Fascists:

"Terror in Bulgaria continues. Contrary to hopes fostered throughout the world that a relaxation of the Stalinist dictatorship was occurring, the repercussions have increased; above all, after the events in Hungary...

"Our libertarian and syndicalist comrades are now, as they always have been, the first victims. Since the second intervention of Russian troops in Hungary at the beginning of November, massive arrests have taken place throughout Bulgaria. Among internationally known militants who previously had experienced Communist brutality and are again being persecuted are Monal Vaseev, Deltcho Vassilev and Stefan Guerguiev of Hascovo, Cristo Kolev of Sofia, Stefan Kotakov of Plovdiv and Dobri Ivanov of Kasanlik.

"At this writing many people are being expelled from Sofia, including many of our comrades. Among them is Dr. Balev,

instead to seek more "over-time." Or else he sends his wife out to work... or both.

SOLUTIONS—OURS

The role of the unions in social change and in the new society which they, together with the other peoples' organizations will build, cannot be discussed in this article. However the first step in this direction—the immediate, practical problem facing the workers—is TO RECAPTURE THEIR OWN UNIONS.

This must be supplemented by a campaign of education as an antidote to the poison of class-collaboration with which they have been brainwashed. Regaining their own unions will mean nothing without recapturing the right to strike when and where they deem it necessary, the right to make their own agreements by DIRECT negotiations on a local and/or regional level. Steps must be taken for the greatest possible decentralization of the administrative apparatus of the unions and strict limitations to the stipend any official may receive which must be in proportion to the wages of the men on the jobs, frequent DIRECT elections, with the right of recall and abolition of all special privileges for everyone. If the present grass-roots movement of revolt is extended and intensified and if it can be developed along the lines indicated, then its enemies can be defeated.

The expelling of a racket-ridden union from the AFL-CIO or the expelling of a handful of chiseling bureaucrats from any particular union is no answer so long as the system that created them continues. Only the members of each union can properly clean their own house.

If the rank and file upsurge should fail to follow through on the objectives outlined above, then the struggles at some future date will be more difficult. But, come what may, the love of liberty and the will to fight for it cannot forever be obliterated from the nature of self-respecting human beings. Just as the

1 vote. McDonald was defeated throughout the same area by local votes running as high as 6 to 1.

Revolts have also taken place in Reuther's United Auto Workers, which is considered one of the most "democratic" unions in America. Chrysler Local 912 has for many years solidly supported Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the UAW. In a unit election for convention delegates, all the candidates who supported Mazey were defeated. In Chrysler Local #7, and in locals in Flint, Pontiac and elsewhere in Michigan, administration candidates or proposals were repudiated. In Los Angeles Chrysler Local 250 staged a one-and-a-half day "unauthorized" work stoppage, and wildcats are a common occurrence in Detroit.

SOLUTIONS—FROM THE TOP

Things had gone so far that there was great danger that the corrupt racketeer elements might take over the entire labor movement. Something had to be done. An "Ethical Practices Committee" was established. Attempts were being made to expel some unions from the AFL-CIO, but it was too late. The corrupt elements were too strongly entrenched. The Executive Council and many local and regional bodies welcomed the governmental investigations and even favored using the police powers of the Government to stop these abuses. If this policy is carried out, the labor movement will lose what little independence it possesses and will come to be openly controlled by the government, which is just what management hopes to achieve by the investigations. In considering such proposals the AFL-CIO proclaims that it cannot control the Frankenstein monster it has created.

Leaders like Walter Reuther are aware of the danger of further government interference. He proposes a Public Review Board consisting of 11 prominent men of "unquestioned integrity," OUTSIDE the labor movement, who will have the full

and final power to render judgment and prescribe punishment for all abuses, a public watchdog whose powers would be in certain respects greater than that of the General Executive Board of the union.

None of the leaders call on the rank and file, the members who suffer and foot the bills. They do not trust the members. They might go "too far" and kick them out of office. They have lost contact with their own membership and prefer to share power with the Government or any other agency.

The attitude of many workers to their leaders is similar to their attitude towards the man in the White House, the Governor of the state, the Mayor of the City or the boss in his office. The fact that millions of workers are so indifferent to the affairs of the very organizations which involve their livelihood shows how deeply the corruption in our society has penetrated. The truth of these contentions is confirmed by Louis Hollander, President of the New York CIO and manager of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union New York Joint Board:

"In Many unions there is little sign that the leaders are even trying to maintain contact with the membership. Some seem to feel that the union shop contract and compulsory check-offs of union-dues have made it unnecessary for them to know what the members want or need. Too many such leaders live in a world apart. A world in which the badges of achievement are high salaries, expensive automobiles, membership in country clubs and other appurtenances of wealth."

The key to an understanding of these developments can be traced to the close connection between governmental "welfarism" and "business unionism." They grew up together, each supplementing the other. A state regulated economy needs a state regulated labor movement. The Government will help the unions so long as the leaders can assure the smooth functioning of a docile labor movement. Thus the "welfare state" has come to assume ever greater social functions and has intervened on an ever greater scale in the regulation of

economic and social life. It regulates and shows an increasing tendency to dominate the whole field of social security, business, labor, crop and price supports, public power projects, housing and innumerable other fields.

This process was expanded and accelerated by World War II, the Korean War, defense spending, foreign aid and the prosecution of the "cold war." The bureaucratic administrative apparatus kept pace with the expansion of governmental power. Individual liberty and local initiative have been shrinking as governmental domination of society has increased. The individual has had less and less to say about his own life and interests as the government prescribes the conditions under which he is forced to live. The foundations of a future totalitarianism are thus being laid.

A similar process has been going on in the labor organizations. As the unions have increased in membership, as they have gone into the field of welfare, they have established a similar system of social security within their own domain. The administrative machinery has grown in proportion. The bureaucracy alone, or in collaboration with the employers, controlled an estimated 35 BILLION dollars in welfare funds which they have used to reinforce their positions and render the membership ever more dependent upon them. The dictatorship of the leadership over the workers was further increased by the vicious practice of industry-wide "collective bargaining" on a national scale, long-term contracts and the power to discipline any dissident elements of the membership.

Just as the citizen's rights are curtailed by the growing power of the bureaucracy of the State, so the workers' rights are curtailed by the usurpation ever more widely practiced by the labor bureaucracy. Subjected to the triple exploitation and suppression by employers, the State and the "labor" bureaucracy, the worker has less and less to say about his wages and his working conditions. Instead of fighting to wrest better conditions of life for himself and family, he is impelled