

# Vanguard

a libertarian communist journal

## AN INTERVIEW WITH LENIN

BY NESTOR MAKHNO

FOR FATHER-THE SON-THE HOLY GHOST



FOR BREAD, LAND AND LIBERTY

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# MAKHNO INTERVIEWS LENIN

In Spain the Communist Party is compelled to pay tribute to the memory of a great anarchist fighter, Buenaventura Durruti. But in Soviet Russia everything possible is done to extirpate the memory of just as great an anarchist revolutionary, Nestor Makhno. Monstrous slanders of the vilest sort are spread about him by the Soviet authorities even now, 17 years after the historic struggle waged by him on the revolutionary fronts of Ukraina.

The difference is due to the simple fact that in Spain the anarchists are incomparably stronger than in Soviet Russia of 17 years ago. They are stronger not only in point of numbers, but by their realistic approach to problems of organization and revolutionary reconstruction.

The portions of Makhno's interview reprinted here are of great interest now in connection with the leading role played by the Spanish anarchists in the present struggle. Lenin's ideas of anarchists were highly unjust even in relation to the Russian anarchists of that period (and Makhno pointed it out to him in description of the role of the Anarchists in Ukraina), but they sound as a sheer anachronism when applied to the present day. And with all that the communists of all factions (Trotzkyites included) are guided by those outworn ideas in their attitude to the present day anarchist movement of the world.

There is another point to be noted in this connection. In the course of this interview (it took place in the summer of 1918) Lenin paid high compliments to Makhno. Lenin was not given to personal flattery and there was no reason why he should have indulged in such in regard to a rank and file revolutionary such as Makhno was at the time of the interview. The tribute was heartfelt and was based upon the direct impressions given him by Makhno.

But only 7 or 8 months later Trotzky was thundering (not without Lenin's blessing) against Makhno, branding him in his infamous circulars sent out to the army as a "counter-revolutionist and bandit".

Was it that Lenin's famed perspicacity failed him in respect of this man Makhno? Or did the Communist Party proceed so rapidly in its dictatorial course that the criterion of revolutionary integrity changed radically in about 7-8 months? A counter-revolutionist was no more one that fought the reactionary forces but one that dared to look for solutions of his own without taking the last word of the Party as the ultimate truth.

The portions of the interview reprinted here were taken from Makhno's book "Revolution and Counter-revolution in Ukraina". The first volume was issued several years ago and was translated into several languages. The second volume dealing with the early period of German occupation and Makhno's wanderings in the various parts of Soviet Russia appeared recently in the Russian language. (the other volumes will follow soon.)

Makhno makes his last preparation for his underground work in Ukraina. Sverdlov, the first secretary of the Communist Party, who took some interest in Makhno's preparations arranges for him an interview with Lenin. After having plied him with questions as to his intentions, plans of work and the attitude of the peasantry to the occupationists, Lenin passes to a general discussion of the anarchists.

## MAKHNO'S STORY

... "Turning to Sverdlov, Lenin said: Anarchists have something of the self-denying heroism about them, they are always ready for sacrifices; but withal they are myopic fanatics, they ignore the present for the far away future.

But then, asking me not to take it as a personal reflection upon myself, he added: You, comrade, I hold to be a man belonging to real life, responding to the living actualities of the day to day struggle. Were even one third of the Russian anarchist-communists like you, we, communists,

would be ready to go in for certain agreements with you and work together for the benefit of a free organization of producers. (Ed. note: emphasis is ours) ... I shot back at him: Anarchist-communists hold the interests of the revolution near to their heart. And that shows that in this respect they are all the same.

— Well — said Lenin, smiling thereby — We know the anarchists no less than you do. Most of them think very little about the present. But far a revolutionist not to think of it, not to define his attitude toward it is more than shameful. Most of the anarchists think and write about the future, without understanding the present: this is what separates us, communists, from them.

Having spoken his last phrase, Lenin rose from his chair and, pacing up and down the studio room, he added:

— Yes, yes, the anarchists are strong by their thoughts of the future; but in the present they are uprooted, pitiful, and that is so because their empty fanaticism prevents them from establishing any links with that future.

Sverdlov turned in my direction, saying — You can hardly deny that the remarks of Vladimir Ilyitch are quite correct.

— Did the anarchists ever realize their lack of roots in the life of this "present". They never even think of it — said Lenin, taking up the thread of the same conversation.

I answered to them both, saying that I am only a semi-literate peasant and am hardly capable of taking up Lenin on this involved idea about anarchism which he had just expressed to me.

But — I said — your statement, comrade Lenin, that the anarchists do not understand the "present", and are not linked with it in a real sense is basically wrong. The anarchist-communists of Ukraina gave too many proofs of their close ties with this present. The struggle of the revolutionary peasantry against the Ukrainian Central Rada (the petty bourgeois, chauvinistic government of Ukraina during the first period of German occupation) was taking place under the ideological leadership of the anarchist-communists and partly of the Russian social-revolutionists. You bolsheviks were conspicuous by your absence as far as the villages were concerned.

— Almost all the agricultural communes and cooperatives in Ukraina were created by the initiative of the anarchist-communists. And the armed struggle of the working population of Ukraina against the counter-revolution as a whole and the expeditionary armies of Germany and Austro-Hungary in particular — wasn't all that started by anarchist-communists? True, party interests dictate to you the policy of ignoring all that, but those are facts which you yourself cannot refute.

— You, I suppose, know well the number and the fighting ability of the revolutionary columns of Ukraina. Well, a good half of them fought under anarchist banners. All the commanders of those columns, the very naming of whom would take away so much of our time, all of them are anarchist-communists.

— All that tells quite convincingly how much you, comrade Lenin, erred in stating that we anarchist-communists are helpless, pitiful in the "present", although we do like to think about "the future". What I told you now is above any doubt and it points to a conclusion opposite to the one you arrived at. It tells that we, anarchist-communists, are deeply immersed in the "present", that we work in it and seek to find through it a road to the future, of which we keep on thinking in a very serious manner...."

The failure of Russian Anarchism in 1917 cleared the road for the victory of a dictatorial party. The triumph of Spanish Anarchism will render Russian road as obsolete as the religious forms of the social upheavals of the 17th Century.

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## War on the Waterfront

A study of the great Maritime Strike is of supreme importance because it reflects the deep stirrings and changes that are taking place in the American labor movement. The significance of this strike is twofold. On the one hand it is a test of strength between the organized workers and the capitalists of the Pacific Coast. The California Packers Association, The Standard Oil Co., and the ship-owners have been taxing themselves huge sums for the past three years in preparation for the showdown, for they realize that nothing less than the unionization and radicalization of all the workers on the Pacific Coast is involved. On the other hand the strike is a struggle between various forces, reactionary, liberal and radical, in the labor movement. Many important lessons will be learned from this battle and may be used to advantage by the working class in the coming class struggles.

A strike of such magnitude would have been impossible four or five years ago. Before such a widespread demonstration of labor solidarity could take place, it was necessary to oust the entrenched corrupt bureaucracy, which for years has made — and is still making — common cause with the capitalists and state officials of California. It was necessary to radicalize and enthuse vast masses of workers who came to the maritime industry from farms and transient camps and were new to the labor movement. This alone amounts to a veritable revolution. Much of this radicalization has been accomplished, much remains to be done.

The initiative in this task was taken by the advanced workers of the rank and file of the seamen who are enlisted in the powerful Sailors Union of the Pacific, with a membership of over 18,000.

Since the membership of all the unions on strike is about 37,000, it can readily be seen that the S. U. P. wields the greatest influence in the struggle. Because of its militancy the charter of the S. U. P. was revoked by the A. F. of L. The organization

is now an independent union. The leadership of the organization, its most militant fighters, are for the most part ex-members of the I. W. W., trained in the great struggles of the I. W. W. and capable of applying the lessons they learned to the problem of winning the strike and radicalizing the membership. Harry Lundberg, president; Ward, secretary; Housen of the Strike Committee; all are ex-members of the I. W. W. The S. U. P. is non-political and carries on intensive propaganda for revolutionary industrial unionism. The organization acts as the vanguard and watch-dog of the strike, and has time and again prevented politicians of all shades from dominating the movement.

The strike is being conducted by the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, which consists of seven unions: The Sailors Union of the Pacific; International Longshoremen Association of the Pacific; International Seamens Union of the Pacific; American Radio Telegraphers Association and affiliates; Marine Engineers and Beneficial Association; N. O. M. M. and P. of the Pacific; and the International Association of machinists, locals 68 and 284. The conflict is centered upon the fundamental proposition of union control of the hiring halls for maritime workers. Unless the unions control hiring, they will

lose all gains made in years of bitter struggle which culminated in the General Strike of 1934. The idea of a federation of craft unions was tried for many years in Australia, and was introduced here by Harry Bridges of the Pacific I. L. A., who comes from Australia. This is an outworn form of organization which failed in Australia. The S. U. P. sponsors industrial unionism as a more effective form of organization in the struggle against the capitalist class.

Bridges, while disclaiming any connection with the Communist Party, nevertheless follows the basic trade union policies of the C. P. — Labor Party; endorsement of the C. I. O.; remaining within the framework of the A. F. of L.; etc. A



staunch believer in the efficacy of arbitration of labor disputes, Bridges was to a great extent responsible for the delay in calling the strike which was to have taken place in September. Apparently he was motivated in so doing by the fear that the strike would transcend the limits set for it by the Communist Party policy. He hoped that by arbitration the demands of the seamen would be won and that he could avoid the dangers involved in the possibility of the strike turning into uncontrollable channels. Bridges therefore confines the strike to the capture of the I. L. A. and is averse to allowing the strike to pursue its natural course towards a new type of revolutionary unionism. He favored the handling of perishable cargo by the strikers and it was only the action of the S. U. P. and the rank and file workers (San Pedro for example) that prevented the capitulation of the union on this vital issue.

It is quite plain that the influence of the Communists has been considerably exaggerated when we observe that in practice most of their proposals have been overridden by rank and file action. The undue delay in calling the strike, in handling of perishable cargo, the opposition to job-action strikes, the fact that all strikes have to be sanctioned by the executive committee of the I. L. A. because of the fear of breaking the sacred contract — all this and more give ample proof of the incompetency of the Bridges clique.

Although these policies and tactics were successfully combatted by the rank and file together with the clear-sighted vanguard, there is no force sufficiently well-organized to do likewise on the East Coast, especially the New York area. The desire to remain officially in the I. S. U. on the East and Gulf ports tends to render the strike ineffective, and acts as a brake on the progressive unfoldment of the strike. Thus, on the East Coast, it has been confined to the status of an I. S. U. affair. Because of the fear of antagonizing Ryan of the I. L. A., and also officials in other "respectable" unions, the so-called "Rank and File Committee" has made no

attempt to call out the membership of the longshorements union or the tugboat men to strike against the will of their leaders and join the ranks of the strikers. They have done nothing to prevent Ryan and his bureaucratic clique from doing things in their own sweet way even to the extent of refusing solidarity to the French longshoremen. Unless the base of the strike is extended to include the rest of the marine workers on the East Coast it cannot be effective.

The extent to which the "Rank and File Committee" is willing to go in preserving its pro I. S. U. policy can be readily ascertained from its decree that only "good" I. S. U. members would be allowed to take an active part in this strike. This command (it was not submitted to the membership) was directed against the I. W. W. in Philadelphia and on the Gulf Coast whose influence among the workers challenges the control of the "Rank and File" bureaucracy. This order, incidentally, was rescinded as a result of the protest of the membership and of the S. U. P.

A large section of the working class, both here and abroad, is being inspired with a new sense of power and faith in their own strength as a result of the spontaneous solidarity of the men who left their ships and by the widespread support given to this struggle by marine workers throughout the world. The present conflict is exposing the true nature of the strike-breaking officialdom of the A. F. of L. unions and of the A. F. of L. as an organization. Moreover, the stranglehold of the bureaucrats and racketeers on the labor movement is being broken. A new revolutionary type of labor unionism is being hammered out in the great class struggles of which the present maritime strike is only the beginning.

Despite all the obstacles, both internal and external, the ranks of the workers remain unbroken. The splendid solidarity of the workers surmounts the clash of opposing tendencies and factions. The maritime strike is a living monument to solidarity.

—SAM WEINER

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## The Other Face of Fascism

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Several months have passed since Mussolini made that startling announcement which sounded somewhat like a return to his discarded socialist ideas of twenty years ago. On its face it was merely a matter of taking over all the heavy industries which one way or another may play an important part in the forthcoming new world war. Yet in order that there should be no misunderstanding Arnaldo Cortesi, the Italian correspondent of the New York Times and Mussolini's semi-official mouthpiece in the United States, expressly pointed to the socialist, anti-capitalist character of that measure, and even drew rather astonishing comparisons. Russian communism and Italian fascism, he said in so many words, were now going to meet half-way, the former moving towards capitalism, while the latter was

veering in the opposite direction.

So far nothing has been heard about any steps being taken towards the actual execution of that plan. As a result there could be room for suspicion that it was merely bluff. Mussolini has always been a master in the performance of revolutionary make-believe. His threatened return to Marx, so to speak, might have been a piece of blackmail that would induce the powers to lift their economic sanctions. It might also have been directed against certain "rightist" or "leftist" elements within his own party (in matters of fascist policy it is hard to determine what is "right" and what is "left"). For as the *Libre Belgique* of Brussels reported at the time, a serious attempt was made by some of the Duce's number two men to limit his absolute power and

to introduce near-constitutional methods of strengthening the prerogatives of Parliament. The sudden abolition of the shadowy Chamber of Deputies and the challenge to the principle of private ownership of big industries that followed shortly upon the appearance of the article in the Belgian paper, might have been Mussolini's reply to the "liberals" within his party and at the same time a gesture calculated to win a considerable part of Italy's dissatisfied elements — both fascist and non-fascist.

Yet, in spite of the doubtful sincerity of his "conversion" Mussolini's pronouncement gave the jitters to his recent admirers in the capitalist camp. In an editorial written immediately after that momentous statement, the New York Times drew hardly any distinction between fascism and communism, as far as their ultimate intentions with regard to the capitalist system are concerned. The editorialist even saw the present Roosevelt administration succumbing to the same trend, and had a nightmare about the Government "taking over all business" — which apparently would mean a denial of all our most glorious traditions of liberty and fair play.

That argument came ridiculously close to the anti-New Deal lines of talk of the Liberty Leaguers to whom communism, fascism and Roosevelt are only three different aspects of the same evil. Yet it was more than mere anti-F. D. R. propaganda. It was rather a cry of distress. It had begun to dawn upon that authoritative defender of the status quo that Marx's prediction of the inevitable doom of the capitalist system was even more sinister in its implications for its beneficiaries than the prophet of socialism himself had anticipated. The author of *Das Kapital* had visualized a process of incessant capital concentration, accompanied by the complete submersion of the middle classes in the mass of pauperized workers. As the inevitable reaction of this downtrodden mass he saw the rise of a revolutionary proletarian party that would seize power and organize a new non-capitalist world. On one sixth of the globe's surface something of the kind has actually taken place, — even though that performance has not been in every respect strictly in accordance with his theoretical specifications. But in various other countries something altogether unexpected happened. There the avowed enemies of capitalism were all but exterminated; yet the growing disintegration of the capitalist system forced its very hirelings who had done that hangman's job, to adopt measures of government interference, such as have always been decried as "socialistic". Those hirelings had in the meantime become the masters of the country's administrative, educational and military machine. They were chiefly interested in keeping their power, that is, their countless jobs, and in filling their deep pockets. And this involved not only an increased exploitation of the workers, but also a considerable reduction of their former paymasters' dividends, — the capitalists facing the prospect of being gradually taxed out of existence.

The editorialist of the N. Y. Times knows, of course, the difference between the communist and the fascist methods of getting at the capitalists'

throats. The communists, Russian style, would simply give them short shrift without a penny of compensation, and reserve the highest positions for the militants and technicians who had been either active in, or in sympathy with their movement. They would also introduce — at the beginning at least — reforms in the interest of the working masses which raised them to power. And they would do it all in the name of a social philosophy which to the traditionalist Babbitt sounds like certain passages of Voltaire to an embattled Spanish or Irish Catholic.

The fascists would proceed gradually; they would show their capitalist ex-masters all due respect and compensate them through very soft jobs, and even with cash payments, if possible. They would reduce still more the workers' standard of living, and lock up all preachers of radical or progressive ideas. It would all be much less painful to the capitalist reader of the Times. Yet he realizes that essentially it would only be a milder form of his inevitable extinction as the aristocrat of the modern age. For he would have to disappear in the vast sea of the new nobility of office-holders.

And it is for the same reason that his class-honor, so to speak, is hurt as he beholds the various reforms adopted by the New Dealers. For these unheroic politicians, having seen the writing on the wall and realized that old-time capitalism is past recovery, are anxious to prevent the catastrophic implications of a complete breakdown, and are ready to sacrifice some of the venerable taboos of traditional individualism. They are even prepared to initiate — if need be — a very slow transition to a system of collectivist economy, managed by old time politicians and high class executives; in a word, to a sort of socialism for millionaires, which would secure for the Fords and Mellons salaries of bank directors and railway presidents, but, Oh horror! would deprive them of the right of being the sole "masters in their own house".

The painful surprise which Mussolini gave to his former backers and admirers has not come altogether out of a clear sky. Only a few weeks prior to his announcement a decision of the Italian government placed the entire credit system of the country in the hands of the State. Measures have been on the way for quite a while which will gradually place the entire foreign trade of the country under the direct supervision of the government. Serious apologists of the capitalist system, such as Lucien Romier in the Paris *Figaro*, saw the impending danger. "If capitalism", he wrote, "means free exchange of capital, represented by securities and currency, then capitalism has ceased to live in Italy".

The forthcoming evolution of fascism has been foreshadowed by many other unmistakable symptoms. There has been for years a definite left wing tendency within the ranks of Italian fascism to follow the Soviet example in the basic matter of public ownership. There is a similar perfectly serious current in Germany as well, as represented by Otto Strasser's outlawed "Black Front". So strong is that trend in Italy that some time ago Rightist elements within the Fascist party felt constrained to issue a special pamphlet entitled "Is Fascism on the Road



to Moscow?"

That "Road to Moscow" has been persistently advocated by a number of heterogenous elements. There was the following of the unspeakable weathercock and turncoat Edmondo Rossoni, in 1915 editor of the I.W.W. *Proletario* published in New York, and head of the fascist trade unions after Mussolini's seizure of power. Almost from the beginning of the new regime he has been the exponent of the "syndicalist" false face of fascism, advocating the policy of nationalization through the instrumentality of the trade unions. This advocacy aroused capitalist apprehensions, and though not causing him the "difficulties" he might have met with in Germany, led to his temporary eclipse as chief of the official trade unions. It matters little that on occasions, whenever it was necessary, he could also come out with definitely anti-collectivist statements in defense of private property. Dictatorial regimes have been known for such brazen self-contradictions on the part of their leaders.

There is another group which, though not calling itself fascist, has nevertheless been working within the framework of the fascist state. These are the former leaders of the socialist trade unions who went neither underground nor into exile and preferred to make peace with the new regime without officially renouncing their socialist faith. In their monthly *Problemi del Lavoro*, published in Milan, they openly discuss socialist theories and enjoy a liberty of expression unthinkable under any other dictatorial regime. In a personal conversation, the present writer heard the managing editor of that magazine express the opinion that, to be consistent fascist totalitarianism should make a further step and take over the management and ownership of all the country's economic wealth. That publication does not conceal its enthusiasm for the anti-capitalist aspects of the Soviet regime, and in an article published in November, 1933, the author, in referring to the Soviet Republic, speaks approvingly about "the workers being the masters for the first time". The mere permission for this publication to exist is an indication that Mussolini has for a long time had his eyes fixed on the socialist safety belt, should a system of government ownership become necessary for the maintenance of his power.

At the end of 1933 one of the noted fascist philosophers, Ugo Spirito, published in Florence a book entitled *Capitalismo e Corporatismo* in which he advocated the elimination of private ownership and the substitution of the so-called "corporations" as the real owners of the nation's wealth. The bulk of the fascist leadership, taking it for granted that Mussolini was opposed to this idea, violently attacked the author as a "boishevik". However, they had the surprise of their lives when shortly afterwards Il Duce, in his own daily *Popolo d'Italia*, in the special column printed in italics which is written by himself, published the highlights of Spirito's book offering them to his party for contemplation. (It may not be amiss to mention that on page 120 of his book Ugo Spirito even uses the time-honored Marxist expression of "disappearance of classes"

which would be the consequence of the system which he proposes).

The economic distress caused by the world crisis and sharpened by the African adventure; the ensuing restlessness of the masses and particularly of the younger generation of fascist "white collars" and intellectuals for whom no jobs could be provided under the existing system; the curtailment of foreign trade brought about by the sanctions; the dread of a complete breakdown that would bring to the helm the outlawed radicals or the dissenting younger "bolsevizanti" fascists — all of these circumstances no doubt compelled Mussolini to make his surprising announcement. At the time it meant killing two birds with one stone: stealing a march on his enemies and competitors at home, and driving the fear of a spread of fascist "communism" into the hearts of those imperialist powers that would still persist in opposing his expansionist ambitions. Only the future will show whether he will be able to dismiss the demons he has called. (Anti-capitalist tendencies of a similar sort are now unmistakable within the militarist caste of imperial Japan; and the Spanish officers fighting against the Leftist government have recently likewise resorted to a "socialist" line of talk.)

There are sensitive souls who loathe the idea of applying the name of socialism to a system that ultimately may be inaugurated by the cut throats and bureaucrats of the various fascist denominations. Yet, though it will be hardly a pleasant place to live in, the "Corporate State", in its ultimate form, will be a socialism of sorts. For the essential feature of socialism is public, i.e. government ownership of industries and land — regardless of the method of distribution or the official philosophy or terminology adopted by the administration.

In other words, socialism may mean a great variety of things. It may mean the millennium — that is, the greatest possible amount of happiness for everybody under a democratic equalitarianism which secures to everybody an equal share of the good things of life and complete freedom to read and to print what he pleases — even heretical deviations from the sacred scriptures of recognized authorities. It may mean a rigid dictatorship, Russian style, by a well-oiled bureaucratic hierarchy of super-commissars, commissars and sub-commissars, combining many progressive ideas and reforms with an ever growing inequality of incomes and a merciless intolerance of any non-conformist views. It may look like an extension of the W.P.A. over the entire economic fabric, with the management in the hands of high-powered executives and specialists of the Brain Trust type. Or it may assume the shape of a super-totalitarian hell, a combination of barracks, prison, workhouse and graveyard, that would eventually destroy our civilization through a series of imperialist adventures and bring mankind back to the level of the dark ages.

With the present system condemned to go, it will be the merciless struggle between the followers of these various forms of "socialism" that will shape the future destinies of the human race.

—MAX NOMAD

# Towards Libertarian Communism

## SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS ARTICLE

Until the October revolution the Socialist ideal was not regarded as an immediate possibility. It is only in the last two decades that it began to emerge as the central task of the social struggles of today. This led to the shifting of the social forces around a new axis, the new lines of division into right, center and left now being taken in accordance with the position taken by every social force in regard to the task of realizing the Socialist ideal.

A new right is being formed by the solidification of the bourgeois parties into a single counter-revolutionary block. The new center that is coming into existence is made up of the Marxist parties of the Second and Third Internationals. And in measure that the latter are vacating their former positions at the left of the arena of social struggles, new forces are taking their places. These are the forces battling for the ideal of libertarian communism; that is for a socialism which aims at the full integration of the great libertarian heritage of the past into the political and economic program of socialism.

That a new alignment is now taking place is best illustrated by the disintegration of the bourgeois democratic parties and the phenomenal sweep of the Fascist counter-revolution. The mass support, which forms the chief mark of distinction of Fascism, as opposed to the older type of counter-revolution, comes mainly from these parties and forces which formerly held the center of historic struggles. The crumbling and melting away of the central force in the face of the Fascist avalanche is one of the most striking phenomena of our day. It can be explained only by the general displacement taking place as a result of the emergence of Socialism into the position of a central task. And it is only when we view it in this light that we can understand why big, powerful parties, which only a few years ago were grounded in the loyalties and traditions of large sections of populations, dissolved so rapidly into a few scattered groups of uprooted intellectuals. And, as it is known, even the latter, insofar as they remain loyal to their democratic principles, are driven farther and farther away from their former social base.

The road followed now by all sincere anti-fascists is the one pointing to the general line of movement of the actual struggles of today. It is the road leading to the immediate realization of socialism, which is the only guaranty against a possible Fascist victory. But it is only in the most general manner that we can speak of one single road leading to socialism. In reality the latter splits off into two byways, both of which are now followed by the main forces occupying the forefront of social struggles.

One is the road of confused historic vision, of concentration upon a few bare essentials to the exclusion of the larger humanistic aspects, which in the long run impart to socialism its dynamic power.

This is the road now followed by those who for the moment refuse to see anything beyond the immediate tasks which history forces upon them as the bearers of the Socialist ideal. Socialism, thus conceived, reduces itself to the task of nationalizing the wealth of the country, of organizing a planned economy and raising the productive level of the country so as to insure a certain amount of welfare to every member of the community.

But Socialism is something more than that. It also implies new forms of political life based upon the principle of full equality and utmost freedom for every member of the community. It is also predicated upon the cultural liberation of the individual, the expansion of his rights in every field of social endeavor. And what is even more important: socialism cannot be dissociated from a basic equality in the distribution of the nationalized income. A steep gradation of incomes in a socialist society will in the long run defeat its underlying aims and transform it into a variety of a feudal regime.

It is the approach to these larger problems of socialism that distinguishes the new center parties from the emerging left. To the former, now represented by the Marxists of the Third and Second Internationals (those of the Second International, inasmuch as they break away from their former attitude to socialism as a distant ideal, tend in the direction of the Communist party; their democratic principles are of the thinnest variety, extending only to the capitalist system of economy. The merger of the socialist and the communist parties in revolutionary Catalonia points the way for a more general tendency in that direction) the larger aspects of the socialist ideal flow inevitably from its economic essence. They do not deny that socialism stands for something larger than economic planning and nationalization of wealth. To do so would be to efface the line dividing socialism from a left fascism (Fascism has "socialistic" tendencies and with all that there is an impassable gulf between real socialism and the "leftist" kind of fascism).

But the Marxists do believe that the humanist implications of the socialist ideal will unfold automatically from its economic premises. The sharp differentiation of income between the various groups of population will be levelled down to the vanishing point in the coming economy of abundance. The dictatorship will vanish in a society normalized by an expanding economic order. And the normal course of cultural growth made possible by a higher economic order will automatically lead to the widening of the sphere of individual liberties.

Were such an automatic realization of the larger aspects of socialism possible, there would be no need, of course, of forces other than the ones occupying now the central position in regard to the main tasks of our period. We would have to grant the communists their claims of being the sole factor in carrying the socialist ideal to its completion. But

the history of the Russian revolution has already proved the preposterous nature of such claims. Socialism in Soviet Russia does not roll on to its logical completion. The larger humanistic aspects of the socialist ideal become more obscured with the passing of time. The success of economic planning led to a progressive curtailment of liberties, to the stultification of the individual, to the degradation of the political life and a general impoverishment of the ideal content of the socialist forms erected by the revolution.

The clogging up of the forward course of the revolution happened not only because of the pressure of the forces of inertia present even in a revolutionary society. What this explanation fails to account for is that fact that it is the Communist party that became the leverage of those forces. Those that made the revolution became the conservative force, raising the greatest obstacle to the unfolding of the revolution into a higher phase. That could not have happened were they consciously oriented upon the full values of the socialist ideal. It is because they were fully indoctrinated with the ideas of economic determinism that they hardly left any room for the factor of conscious striving in the transitional

forms built up by them in the first years of the revolution. A system calculated to develop automatically into its higher phases does not stand in need of special connivances to allow full play to the human factor of conscious striving.

The forward course of the socialist revolution will sweep away this system just as it removed other hindrances on its way. But the propelling force of this new revolution will not be represented by the Marxist International. It is those that realize that socialism cannot be separated from its ideal aspects even for the first period of transition that are emerging into the position of a new left. To weave into the emerging social structure the rich heritage of the libertarian traditions of the Western Culture, to start out with an expansion of individual rights and not with their sharp curtailment, to transcend the limitations of formal democracy not by doing away with it altogether, but by broadening it so as to include the whole sphere of social activity, — those will be the elementary tasks of the new libertarian forces coming to the foreground of historic action with the emergence of socialism as a practical task of the daily struggles.

—SENEC

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## The A. F. of L. Convention

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Ed Note — The writer of this article does not need any introduction on our part. One of the leading figures of the Communist Party at the time the latter gave the appearance of speaking the language of revolutionary intransigence, he has been following since that time the familiar road of many a sincere revolutionist. Expelled from the Communist Party because of his opposition to the reformist line adopted by the Party in regard to the trade unions, he chose the Workers Party (Trotskyites) as a temporary resting point in his searchings, to become convinced only that the difference between the two was a matter of phraseology when it came to such fundamentals as trade union policies. Toying around with small split-offs and revolutionary "vanguards" did not satisfy one who has been linked up all his life with mass activity.

It is because of his roots in such mass movement that he began of late to think along the lines of syndicalist implications of his own experience in struggling against the "revolutionary vanguards" for a revolutionary industrialist movement. How far he is ready to go, we cannot tell yet. The article printed here, apart from the general interest presented by it — (and there is a great deal we anarchists can learn from it: our supine policy toward the A.F.L. can stand the same severe castigation which comrade Zack meted out to the political parties), also serves as an indication of the course followed by many a revolutionist in the direction of revolutionary syndicalism.

Needless to say, we disagree with comrade Zack in his attempt to represent Marxism as the logical ideology of revolutionary syndicalism. Neither the history of revolutionary syndicalism, nor an analysis of its theoretical premises warrant such hopes on the part of comrade Zack. Revolutionary syndicalism can survive and triumph as a movement only if it becomes clearly aware of its anarchist matrix, anarchist spring source of its existence and the wider libertarian implications of its tactics and concrete programs

of action. Revolutionary syndicalism without an anarchist ideology and an anarchist spirit will shrivel up as surely as the dying down of the revolutionary fever of political parties.

Usually, such conventions as the one held recently in Tampa, Florida, have the more or less exclusive purpose of concentrating the spotlight of publicity upon the fact that the A. F. of L. exists as a general body. Second in the aims of these annual conventions is for the fat boys to have a hilariously happy time, and to iron out some minor misunderstandings among themselves.

The publicity experts of the A. F. of L. continually ballyhoo these conventions as the great parliaments of labor. The truth, however, has continually refused to jibe with these boasts. Few of the major delegates are elected by the membership of the Federation; the great majority represent big craft unions some of which have not held conventions for the past thirty years. Illustrations in point are the Brotherhood of Hod Carriers and Common Laborers; The Boot and Shoe Unions, etc. The convention delegates are simply appointed by the president of an international, or else, the president himself, acting as delegate, casts one vote for every one hundred members in block. Thus a dozen or so of the big boys will cast a majority of votes at any one sitting. For sheer democracy, the U. S. Congress is a paragon beside this "Parliament of Labor".

The resolutions passed are not commonly without good sound, if alas they are almost uniformly



without any applicability or content: the union label must be continued, wages should go up and hours should go down, etc., etc. Had the Tampa Convention been marked by nothing else than good-sounding resolutions there would be little to say of it. But this convention was different.

#### ■ A BLACK RECORD BESMIRCHED

The grand dukes of craftdom met at Tampa after having excluded one third of their total membership, in violation of their own constitutional rules; then in the absence of the excluded declared their deeds as conforming to all established precedent of legality. They met too, it is to be recalled, after the people of the U. S. had voted by overwhelming majority for certain social reforms under capitalism. The convention voted down the people by rejecting the idea of an amendment to the U. S. Constitution that would authorize these reforms. Acting as if in total oblivion to all the changes going on in present-day society, these historical relics of capitalism proceeded as if there was not the sight of a ruffle on the scene of class struggle. They suspended the regular order of business in order to pass a resolution outlawing the Seamen's Strike and authorizing "union" strike-breakers. The problem of the rapidly rising cost of living, the most immediate and pressing problem for the American proletariat, was no source of argumentation to these boys whose official income runs from \$10,000 to \$25,000 a year.

#### ■ WILL THERE BE A NEW LABOR FEDERATION?

Judging by the activities of the Tampa Convention, the lords of craft-unionism want a split, while the nobility of the suspended C. I. O. unions are entirely undaunted by such a prospect. It is quite true, the convention elected a "Peace Committee". True also that William Green, President of the A. F. of L. shed heart-rending tears for unity. The one thing he asked was the capitulation of the C. I. O. unions singly or as a body, in a word, he wanted, innocently enough, the decapitation of the opposition. Much as a baby cries for a rattle. As for "unity" as an ideological war-cry, the convention echoed with the word, embracing thereby the trust, historical interests of the American proletariat. This at least, is what we are asked to believe. But it is necessary to examine the relation of forces, to have a grasp of the difficulty of this problem of "unity".

The craft-union dukes around William Green feel themselves to be quite strong, having two-thirds of the Federation membership, plus the backing, direct and indirect, of the most reactionary "old deal" capitalists in the United States. The C. I. O. unions, on the other hand, with only one-third of the Federation membership, have the favor of the Roosevelt Administration plus the unorganized masses in the large basic industries. These unorganized masses of workers desire organization into industrial unions, the craft unions being inapplicable in the basic and mass production industries. Another factor in favor of the C. I. O. is the rise

in the cost of living and the pick-up in production. These factors the C. I. O. can utilize for they entail the inevitable development of new strike waves, struggles that may permit catching up and outstripping the A. F. of L. numerically and even breaking away hundreds of thousands from that organization.

#### ■ TWO TYPES OF CLASS COLLABORATION

Capitalism, having entered its stage of decay or permanent crisis, has now not only the function of safeguarding the usual capitalistic relationship but unusual problems as well, corresponding to the present period.

Mass unemployment cannot be reduced by one union or another, by strikes, or by otherwise reducing the hours of work a little. Unemployment is now a social problem not a craft nor even an industrial union problem. It is a problem of capitalist society as a whole. Now the state is obliged to step in and by generally reducing the work-day to perhaps six hours, absorb thereby, at least for a few years, the ten million unemployed.

If the wages are not to be driven down below subsistence level as a result of the savage competition for jobs created by present conditions, minimum-wage legislation becomes necessary. Therefore, the unionism "needed" today is of the type that would, on a mass scale, collaborate with the government and, through the government with the employers, to dominate this social problem i.e. the masses, in the interests of capital as a whole. Craft unionism based on collaboration with the individual employer or group of employers cannot be far-reaching enough under present conditions of capitalism. It is now even more outmoded than "old deal" capitalism as a whole.

Roosevelt's "New Deal" is the application of state-capitalist tendencies, prevalent now in all capitalist countries, particularly in Russia, Italy and Germany to the conditions in the United States, viz., which has thus far democratic forms. The C. I. O. conforms to this tendency, the A. F. of L. still depends the methods of collaboration of private pre-war capitalism. The fight in the A. F. of L. is a reflex of the fight amongst capitalists on a low-brow level. Both sides in the dispute are unconditional upholders of capitalism, both sides are equally reactionary. The difference between Green and Lewis is the difference between Roosevelt and Hoover with specific relation to the labor problem.

Industrial unionism, long a necessity because of high technological development, is thus brought forward not in order to accommodate the masses, to give them more strength but in order to insure their subjection under present conditions. Unorganized masses, not dangerous at all under the formerly relatively healthy conditions of capitalism are so much loose dynamite under decay conditions. This explains why state-capitalist nations do not allow the masses to roam about in unorganized manner, but on the contrary thoroughly regiment (organize) in order to more completely dominate them.

If, as it said, the "old deal" capitalists are gra-

(Continued on page 15)

# November, Now, Has Come and Gone Again . . .

"This is my time!" said Pushkin "What is Spring to me? Thaw is a bore: Mud running thick and stinking. . . . Spring makes me ill: my mind is never free from dizzy dreams, my blood in constant ferment. Give me instead Winter's austerity . . ."

November, now, has come and gone again. Month of hate; month when assassins flourish; month when the hangman's noose is doubly strong, and the traitors bullet speeds more swiftly to its mark; when in the cold brisk air of November, the slashing crack of the despot's whip comes more clearly to the ear.

Look back. It is November. We are witnessing a spectacle in the streets of Barcelona. We are told it is a funeral cortege. Feel now, in truth, the limitations of language, the incompetence of ink, the two dimensional black on white serves to reproduce a scene etched with acid on the tissue of memory.

This scene we look upon might well be many other things: a huge general strike, a revolutionary uprising. . . . was there ever such a funeral in our time? A million people gathered, marching, marching for the last time behind Buenaventura Durruti. A million people from all parts of Spain, the craven as well as the brave, all marching this one day behind the body of a simple metal worker draped with a red and black flag.

Close behind the coffin walk Durruti's wife and his dearest comrades — Liberto Callejas, Garcai Oliver, Joaquin Ascaso, Aurelio Fernandez. Durruti's wife walks clothed in thought: Durruti, comrade, lover, dead? Can such a one as he die as others die? Comrades never die! Death is a word that marks the end of shopkeepers and slaves; the slow decay of brain tissue that never really lived in life; the rot of flesh worn thin by greed and lust; the halting of a heart that never beat to the poetry of men marching toward freedom. . . . such is death! But comrades never die.

His friend Joaquin Ascaso thinks of the years when Durruti and his brother Ascaso fought side by side. As boys together in their teens they had first experienced a term in a Spanish Jail. This was for participation in the Railroad strike of 1907. He remembers how they escaped from jail and fled first to Leon and then to Paris pursued by the police. In Paris, although suffering hunger and police persecution, they continued their anarchist activities and were finally forced to flee to Argentina. Here too the jail awaited them and they were forced to flee again first to Paraguay and then to Chile, Cuba, Mexico and finally back to France where they served a year's imprisonment. Released from jail they could not remain on foreign soil. Spain was their homeland. A free Spain was their dream. They returned in 1921 to Barcelona where they threw themselves into the battle raging against the "Sindicatos Libres" an organization sponsored by industrialists and Jesuits. Durruti's bravery made him almost a legendary figure. When Spain fell into the hands of Primo de Rivera Durruti was forced to leave again for France.

The revolution of 1931 drew Durruti back to Spain like a magnet and as an organizer and fighter he added to his already widespread reputation. When, on July 18th, 1936, the



Fascists rose in Barcelona, the workers under Durruti, put an end to them in two short days. A terrible blow fell on his heart at this time, however, for his dearest friend Francisco Ascaso fell in battle.

When the situation became acute in Madrid the politicians called for Durruti and he came. The mere presence in Madrid of Durruti and his column was sufficient to turn the tide of battle. The people had new hope; here was a man to lead them; not a political quack but one of their own, a man they could love and understand. With Durruti at their head they fought like tigers.

But a bullet from a fascist assassin's gun cut him down as he stepped from his car at the Front and now a nation sorrowfully marches.

Look how solemnly they march by. Here are the militia men from the columns "Libertad", Ascaso" and "Durruti". Listen. . . the bands are playing. They are playing "Los Hijos del Pueblo" (Sons of the People).

The legions of his comrades from the CNT and FAI come next: the men he led into battle, his brothers in Anarchism.

The poltroons and the knaves are also marching today, their heads bared to the November winds. How viciously they persecuted Durruti during his lifetime! But today they dare not show disrespect for this hero of Spain's millions.

There is a heavy silence today in Barcelona. A plain man, wrapped in his flag of Anarchism, is being lowered into a tomb and the people ponder on an irretrievable loss. This is November 22nd, 1936.

Let us turn the clock back to the November of another year in another part of the world, Chicago, 1887. Black death again. . . the gallows tree, like some foul bird of prey has just filled its caw. Four victims; four Anarchists, August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolf Fischer, and George Engel have just been done to death. They were not exhibitionists but they knew how to die. As the noose was placed about his neck Spies said, "The time will come when our silence in the grave will be more eloquent than our speeches". Fischer exclaimed, "This is the happiest moment of my life".

These men were hanged as bomb throwers by the State of Illinois. But the records of the farcical trial prove that these men were hanged not for the crime with which they were accused, but for a much greater crime in the eyes of the Chicago bourgeoisie. . . the State of Illinois thought that when they hanged four men they were strangling Anarchism.

After a bomb had exploded during a demonstration against police brutality in Haymarket Square, the police rounded up seven anarchists who were in the forefront of the labor movement at the time. They were Spies, Engels, Lingg, Neebe, Fielden, Fischer and Schwab. Parsons, whom the police did not arrest, walked into the courtroom to stand at the side of his comrades. The trial lasted almost two months before a handpicked jury.

The speeches of the eight comrades infuriated the court; for when a true revolutionist appears before the "Bar of Justice" it is never he who is tried but always the system. The jury gave the verdict expected of it: five men were to

die and three were to get prison terms.

Appeals to higher courts, were, of course, of no avail.

And so these men came to die in November, 1887 at the expense of an extravagant state.... Louis Ling, just before the hand of the hangman reached out to seize him, showed his hatred for the state for the last time, by taking his life with his own hand.

Let us simply remember this: These men are part of our heritage; they gave their lives that other men might one day be free. Their monument is a bleak November gallows tree set in the heart of a nation; their reward.... a worker on a Spanish hilltop with a musket in his hand.

What have we now? We are in a little town in Washington. Everett is a lumber town. It is November, 1916. A river runs by the town and on the river is a boat carrying some 250 members of the I.W.W. They are coming to Everett to speak on the streets of the city, to talk to the lumber workers of Everett about bread and the right to a decent life. It is Sunday and the men on the boats are carefree and gay. They drink pop and sing their songs of labor. Perched high on a mast sits a Wobbly waving a flag.

The Lumber barons who own the Town of Everett have ways of stopping these militant workers from soiling the air of this free American city.

As the boat pulls up to the dock, the Sheriff with a band of gunmen fires point blank into the crowded boat. Some tried to escape by jumping overboard but they were shot as they swam and their bodies carried out to sea by the swift stream. The deck is soon covered with dead and wounded. Only five of the dead are recovered by their comrades: Felix Baran, a Frenchman; Hugo Gerlot, a German; Gustav Johnson, a Swede; Abraham Rabinowitz, a Russian Jew and John Looney, an Irishman. Death knows no race distinctions. This was a fine November day in the U.S.A.

A poet died in November. Beauty comes so seldom to the hearth and workbench of labor. But Joe Hill, a young Swede, came and sang his songs and workers listened and loved him and his songs. They were songs of hard lives and beautiful visions, songs of striving and rebellion, the bitter salt of defeat, the exultant thrill of victory.

In 1914, Joe had a job with the Utah Construction Co. Apparently he could teach as well as he could make melody for he had not been employed long when he organized under the banner of the I.W.W. The strike was a success. Joe Hill rejoiced and sang more songs. His comrades rejoiced too. Joe was probably the best loved man in Salt Lake City.

But the bosses sang another tune. Joe Hill was a danger to their way of life; Joe Hill must be silenced.

A grocer by the name of Morrison was killed in Salt Lake City. This was the chance that the Utah moguls were looking for. Joe Hill was convicted of the crime and shot against a wall. He left a brief message: "Don't mourn for me, organize".

He instructed that his body be sent to Chicago for cremation and his ashes be distributed over the wild flowers. So passed a man with a soul of beauty. There were poets who came to worse ends.

It is November 11th, 1917. Down the main street of

Centralia, Washington a parade is snaking its way. The parade is in honor of the first anniversary of the signing of the Armistice. Let an eyewitness tell you what happened: "The parade formed and passed down the main street as was the custom for all parades to do. But, it did not stop as it was customary, it went several blocks further, and the line of march took it past the I.W.W. Hall. Then they returned, and on the return trip the Centralia contingent broke ranks and attacked the hall. Someone fired a shot after the invaders had broken in the door and windows of the hall. A parader lurched heavily and staggered away. A fusillade of shots followed, and the affair in the immediate vicinity of the hall was over with. However, one man, Wesley Everest, himself a returned soldier and a member of the I.W.W., ran from the rear of the hall which he had manfully tried to protect and made for the river, firing as he ran at those who pursued him. Finally the river bank was reached, but the water was too high to make crossing possible; he turned in his tracks and waving his gun shouted that he would give himself up to any officer of the law but he would shoot any of the mobsters that tried to take him. The mob came on and a shot from Everest's gun stopped the foremost, Dale Hubbard. Everest was finally taken. He was beaten to the ground, his face stripped of flesh by the blood-crazed mob, bayonets jabbed into him, gun butts rammed his face. Someone placed a rope around his neck, but then lost his nerve. Finally he was dragged half dead to the jail where he was thrown in with his comrades who had all been rounded up by this time".

Apparently the good bourgeoisie of Centralia when once they had a taste of blood simply dropped the pretense of humanness and became beasts.

Late that night at an appointed hour when all good men were comfortable in their cozy beds with their good wives or the wives of their neighbors all the lights in the town went out. An expensive touring car drove up to the jail. Men leaped out and snatched Everest from the willing hands of an officer of Justice. Battered and bleeding, he was thrown into the back of the car where a few fine specimens of manhood proceeded to sever Everest's sex organs from his body while he was still conscious. One of the perpetrators of this ghastly crime later boasted that he had washed his hands in Everest's blood that night. Apparently the difference between a Roman Senator and a Centralia business man is not as great as the span of years that separates them.

When the car reached the Chehalis River, Everest was dragged from it and hanged, not once, but three times for good measure. Then spotlights were played on the corpse and all the best credit risks in the town were given the opportunity to take a pot shot at it with high powered rifles.

The corpse was finally tossed back into the cell where Everest's comrades were allowed to grieve over it.

A year before Everest had returned from fighting the Huns, because you see, the Boches committed outrages.

Now, November has come and gone again, and there will be many more Novembers, good men will die and scoundrels will flourish, yet men still dream and will fight for their dreams and will remember in the Springtime of victory those who fought in the austerity of Winter.

CHICAGO  
NOVEMBER  
MARTYRS



ENGEL  
FISHER  
LING  
PARSONS  
SPIES

# War and Revolution

Ed. Note — L. Bertoni is one of the best known figures in the anarchist movement. For years he has been editing a French-Italian anarchist weekly in Geneva, contributing a great deal toward the concretization of the basic anarchist tenets.

His recent trip to Spain enabled him to make a first hand study of the situation. This, coupled with a thorough permeation with the anarchist philosophy; gives great weight to his ideas expressed on the tactics pursued by the Spanish anarchists. And we especially draw the attention of our readers to Bertoni's reference to the ideas expressed by Malatesta on the mixed nature of the system lying within the realm of concrete revolutionary possibilities.

The entrance of four of our comrades into the Madrid cabinet confronts us anarchists with a serious question. What are the implications thereof and what must our view of this be? Moreover, what are the consequences of this step both in Spain and outside of it?

Our enemies of all shades have seized upon this fact in order to proclaim the failure of anarchism and the triumph of their "marxist" theories.....

Let us then examine the facts so that we may properly answer the criticisms of others as well as those which may come from our own ranks....

Our comrades have made good progress in the elimination of authority; in order to effect its disappearance from social life today they have organized production through the workers syndicates, they have, to the greatest extent possible, engaged in contractual relationships amongst themselves without governmental intermediaries, they have replaced sovereignty exercised thru delegation of powers by a system of direct decisions of those concerned with the matter to be decided upon. This, undoubtedly, is as yet imperfect: they were obliged to take into account the existence of foreign-owned property which they had to respect, besides innumerable oppositions and difficulties of all kinds. Nevertheless, they have created the main outlines of a social and non-statist economy.

It is remarkable that each of the (socialized) enterprises has met, more or less, with great success; but even more so is the fact that the new type of management (workers' ownership and control) has demonstrated its feasibility and has produced none of the catastrophic consequences of Lenin's well-known "war communism" which had to be replaced by the emergency NEP in order to keep millions of people from starving to death.....

Anarchism, therefore, in its social and economic attempts has not failed, contrary to the pretensions of certain critics who aim to dominate and confuse the situation by means of a dictatorial state.

## ■ DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTION

It was above all the direct action of the workers and not the efforts of the state which spiked the military coup... The Generalitat (Catalonian government) nevertheless represented a force and an organization that our comrades could not entirely do away within a short time. It would have been absurd to declare war on the Generalitat and thereby increase the number of our enemies. Our comrades, therefore, had to come to some agreement with the Generalitat; but at the same time they created alongside the governmental machine an organism of their own which could win out by virtue of its usefulness....

Our comrades were able to form a voluntary militia, to arm it and quickly dispatch it to fight against the Fascist invasion.... Certain reverses, such as the defeat at Irun;

were due to lack of sufficient munitions which were detained on French territory; likewise, the evacuation of San Sebastian took place against the wishes of the anarchists, — it was a veritable betrayal.

But on the whole, even from a military point of view, the initiative of the anarchists was quicker and more effective than the work of the Madrid government.

## ■ REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT

... The situation in Spain was complicated by the fact that there existed a central power in Madrid. The fact that Catalonia had a certain degree of autonomy contributed towards its greater progress during the first period, but money is needed to conduct a war, and Madrid was in possession of the treasury. For three months Barcelona was able to satisfy its own needs independently, but finally they were faced with a shortage of arms and money. In vain did they ask Madrid for their share of the funds. They even offered as security for a loan all the credit Catalonia had with the Bank of Spain. Their request was refused.

The situation was becoming alarming; in Barcelona, because of lack of funds and in Madrid, because of lack of energy to conduct the war and repress Fascist intrigues.

The CNT had put forth the proposition of leaving the central government as it was and creating a Defense Council for all Spain composed of delegates from the various political parties and trade-union organization, this Council to devote itself exclusively to the conduct of the war.

Madrid would have none of this because it wanted all power to remain with the central government. Moreover, the latter nourished a profound hostility towards the CNT and FAI who, nevertheless, represented a force they could not dispense with, especially in view of the growing pressure of the Fascists on Madrid.

Regional and party conflicts threatened to endanger the whole situation and produce a veritable catastrophe. At that moment our comrades had to choose between being left powerless because of lack of resources, giving up all control and direction of public affairs on the one hand, and, on the other, of becoming ministers. They, therefore, accepted four ministerial portfolios and I feel that they cannot be reproached for that.

... If I had been asked to advise them on this matter I would have told them to accept.

The present Spanish government does, indeed, differ considerably from any ordinary government; this is especially evident from the hostility shown towards it on the part of governments all over the world. But it is still essentially and practically a government and must therefore contain to a considerable extent the faults inherent in it. Thus, it is not without apprehension that I view the discharging of ministerial functions on the part of four of our comrades, despite the complete confidence we have in them...

Rather than "governmental anarchists", I should call them "revolutionary anarchists"....

## ■ REVISIONIST ANARCHISM?

Are we then, as some seem to think, obliged to revise our theory and practice? I certainly see no need for it, even in view of the Spanish events....

Let us not forget that Malatesta had always predicted an eventual system which would be partly governmental and partly anarchist. Our task then is constantly to build more and more anarchism, on the basis of free experimentation and to minimize step by step the role of the government until it finally no longer exists.

It would be absurd, however, to deduce principles and rules for the future from the exigencies of the moment. We must, therefore, always be anarchists to the best of our ability and expound our aims in their entirety, even though we may be compelled at times to deviate from them.

(From "Le Réveil Anarchiste" November 28, 1936)

# Spanish Revolution From an Ivory Tower

The course now followed by the Spanish anarchists is the concern of the libertarian movement of the whole world. Everyone realizes that the success or failure of the anarchist policies in Spain will affect in a decisive manner the destinies of the anarchist international movement for a whole generation.

Hence the serious manner in which this discussion is carried on in the anarchist international press. Whatever disagreements there are — and they are surprisingly few taking into consideration the unorthodox tactical line of the Spanish anarchists — they are voiced with full regard to the intricate situation with which the Spanish comrades have to cope. No attempt is made to “talk down” to them, to lecture them on the ABC of anarchist theory and to uphold the purity of one’s anarchist ideas by ignoring the realities of the situation and escaping into the untroubled world of doctrinaire constructions.

Unique in this respect, however, is the attitude taken by “Man”, a magazine that never misses the opportunity of demonstrating to the world the purity of its anarchist convictions. And what better opportunity could there be than the Spanish revolution with the rather startling line of action pursued by the anarchists? Anarchists entering the government, compromising with political parties, grappling with realities and not just sweeping them away in a Don Quixotian gesture; anarchists building up a new world by starting first to lay foundations for it and not building the roof for a structure that is yet to arise, — how different all that is from the world of simple and easy solutions of our “purists”. The “books” don’t say anything about it and it is surely not a part of the ivory tower of the beautiful dreams about the perfect world of Anarchy which is to issue Minerva-like from the raging chaos of our present life.

And so, we are told in a leading article in the magazine of the ivory tower anarchism that “we must not imagine that they (the Spanish anarchists) are building the Anarchist form of Society in anything approaching the ideal we have often read in our literature” (“Man” October-November-) But if the work done now by the anarchists does not even “approach anarchism”, why should it be singled out for our support? Is it because the Spanish anarchists are fighting Fascism? But so do the other sections of the anti-Fascist front. If the socialization of industries, workers control of factories, expropriation of land and building up of communes in a vast number of villages, the decentralization of political power and granting the municipalities the wide autonomy of a semi-independent commune, — if all that does not even constitute an “approach to anarchism”, why draw any line of distinction between the anarchists and the right sector of the present United Front, the socialists and communists, who stubbornly resist any attempt to expand the present anti-Fascist struggle into an attack against capitalism? And inasmuch as one does believe in the possibility of “approaching” anarchism in a revolutionary period and not starting out with a full hundred per cent realization of it at once, in other words saying, if a system of transitional measures is necessary in a revolutionary period, can there be any other approach but the one chosen now by the Spanish comrades in response to the given situation of a ferocious civil war, the imminent danger of foreign invasion?

Or is this situation just accidental, as the same writer of the editorial in “Man” suggests in his attempt to explain why the “work of the Spanish anarchists does not

even approach anarchism?” “This is so — he writes — because their revolution, having been brought about by a Fascist attempt July, 18, has the disadvantage of having started at a time not chosen by them but imposed upon them”.

But even granting the possibility of revolutionary forces “choosing” the moment for decisive action, (great revolutions are always spontaneous in their first phase of development: they are not “chosen” and set for a definite time by their leading elements) can it be done so as to avoid “a civil war which is atrocious and absorbs the best of their time, men and of resources?” Is it the dreamland of the escapists and maudlin visionaries that the writer is referring to? Where else is there a social revolution which does not lead to an atrocious civil war and a tremendous waste of human and material resources?

“War always has been a tomb, never a means of revolution” proclaims to us the voice of the same maudlin dreamland. Think only! War against Fascism (and is this war that the “Man” refers to in accounting for the “fall” of the Spanish anarchists from the pristine purity of the ivory tower) “is the tomb of the revolution”. Can revolutions in our time be made without declaring war against Fascism? Or will Fascism dissolve into dreamy nothing at the time the revolutionists from the “Man” will set their date and choose their opportune time for a social upheaval that will not be threatened with foreign invasion, with the most frenzied resistance of all the reactionary elements within the same country?

No one who takes his revolutionary convictions seriously has a right to ignore the inevitability of such a war. It is a fool’s world that does not contain for the present those sordid realities. To wish them away by a mere effort of our imagination does not bring us any nearer to the ideal world for which we are struggling. The new society that we are going to build up will be born out of the chaos of a most ferocious war with international Fascism and we must mold our libertarian strategy in line with such a perspective.

Our Spanish comrades are doing it now. They are grappling with a situation which places them before the necessity of not only conducting war according to the latest technique, but also arriving at some understanding with the other sector of the labor movement which is in the majority in some provinces of Spain. To call them “Anarchists but in name” as the “Man” does, to say that theirs is a case of “conversion from Anarchism to Statism” is to indulge in the same kind of phrase-mongery which is so popular in the bohemian fringe of the revolutionary movement to which this sort of anarchism has been catering.

And, surely, it is nothing but a bohemian gesture of self-grandeur to attribute the alleged “failure” of the Spanish anarchists to the fact that “their (that of the Spanish anarchists) ideal of Anarchist Society, or Libertarian Communism, may be very different from ours” (that of the “Man”, of course). That is the first reason adduced by “Man” in explanation of the other statement that the “Spanish anarchists are not building the Anarchist forms of Society in anything approaching the ideal we have often read in our literature”.

That the Spanish anarchists differ profoundly from those that write editorials in the “Man” we have no doubt. It would be a sheer impossibility to build up the great historic movement they have, to saturate millions of men and women with their libertarian spirit and ideas and to emerge into the position of a decisive historic force were they of the same ivory tower school of Anarchism. We would only like to suggest a much more fruitful field of inquiry to the editors of “Man”. Instead of harping on the failure of Spanish Anarchism would it not, perhaps, be more appropriate to go into the reasons which brought about the parlous state of the movement right here in this country?



# Spain's Lessons Ignored by French Popular Front

It was already pointed out in the local capitalist press that in case of fascist victory in Spain the fascists of France would attempt an attack along the same lines against the democratic regime of their own country. Vague hints were given out by some papers of sinister preparations going on in Morocco, of mysterious trips of some of the leaders of the French Fascist organizations to Rome and Berlin.

## ■ FASCISTS PREPARE FOR REVOLT

The French left press contains a great deal of information on this matter, showing that the preparations have already far advanced in the direction of a planned coup along the Spanish lines.

Discovery of hidden Fascist armories has become almost a daily occurrence; so much so that it ceased to be an important news item. The Swiss border has now become an open road through which arms are smuggled in increasing quantities. Arms are also given out freely at the meetings of the Fascist "Croix de Feu" (officially, of course, this organization is dissolved by now. But this is as far as Mr. Blum went to appease his democratic conscience). The central organ of the same Fascist organ "Flambeau" calls to revolt against the democratic regime.

And as it was the case in Spain, the African colonies are serving now as the springboard for the planned attack. In Algiers the Croix de Feu organizations have their aeroplanes and supplies of arms. They display it openly because the police, army officers and higher officials are in league with the Fascist plotters. Franco's revolt was greeted with joy by the leading army officers. They delivered congratulatory addresses and are conducting now a pro-Franco campaign among their troops. A number of mayors and other high officials are members of Fascist organizations. Prominent among them is the mayor of the city of Oran, a character of the mentality and moral level of the Nazi underworld, who openly incites to Jewish pogroms, advocates fascism in its extreme pathological form and keeps in close touch with Italian and German envoys.

Another centre of Fascist activities is the Province of Alsace where Nazi assistance has been especially strong. The close ties of the Fascist organizations with their German backers are a matter of daily comments in the French press. Emissaries of both organizations keep shuttling back and forth and, in spite of all alleged precautions, an ever growing stream of German arms keeps flowing to the numerous supply bases of the Fascist organizations. The army officers pursue the same tactics which the Spanish officers followed in isolating the soldiers from revolutionary influences. No papers are allowed into the barracks outside of the most outspoken Fascist press. The reading matter supplied to the soldiers is carefully sifted and a constant stream of Fascist propaganda is being skilfully directed into the barracks by frequent "educational" discourses and official addresses delivered by the officers.

## ■ FRENCH POPULAR FRONT FOLLOWS THE FATAL ROAD OF AZAÑA GOVERNMENT

Why does the semi-socialist government of the People's Front tolerate it? For the very reasons which made the Azaña government a plaything in the hands of the Spanish reactionaries. The state apparatus and the army staff are honeycombed with Fascist influences. And back of those influences are the powerful groups dominating the economic

life of France. To tackle them in a serious manner is a task much exceeding the power and will to struggle on the part of the Popular Front. All the parties comprising the Front have been thrown into a panic by the wave of strikes sweeping France a few months ago. And it is only by fostering the radical militant mood of the masses manifested by those strikes that a bulwark of sufficient strength could be built up against the advancing reaction.

Far from fostering this mood, however, the Popular Front parties have been discouraging it in a manner which, were it not for the classical pattern followed by all the political parties of that sort, would almost suggest the uncanny idea of direct betrayal. The policy pursued by the Blum government in regard to the economic movement of the working masses of France plays directly into the hands of the Fascists, who thus far have been its main beneficiaries.

The Communist Party, as it is known, is now subjecting all its policies to considerations of Soviet diplomacy, which means that it is tied firmly to the General Staff of the French army. It was frightened by the strike wave in the same measure as the socialist and radical-socialist parties, whose only reaction to the strike movement was a panicky outcry about "the sovietization of the French factories". Joseph Caillaux, a leading figure in the radical-socialist party exhorts the employers to show organized resistance and the socialist minister Salengro (committed suicide recently) promises the radical socialists to take "appropriate measures" against the stay-in strikes.

Those measures were taken, much to the amazement of the workers whose battle cry was "the police are now with us". Police and soldiers were used by the socialist government to eject strikers from the factories. And being that this measure could be used against the strikers rather sparingly, a campaign was raised by the parties of the Popular Front and by the trade union bureaucracy to "neutralize" the factories by having soldiers occupy the factories instead of workers and passing a law making arbitration compulsory. The Communist Party is playing the same hypocritical role in regard to this measure as in regard to the Spanish blockade. It is supporting this measure in the Chamber, while playing up to the workers by shouting defiance to Blum's government.

And, as it was to be expected, this "neutralization" and compulsory arbitration worked chiefly to the benefit of the employers. The occupation of the factories by the soldiers did not extort a single concession from the employers, and the fatal effect of governmental arbitration is too well known to lead to any other results than weakening the fighting spirit of the workers. Numerous strikes of a partial nature conducted recently have already demonstrated the impotence of governmental arbitration agencies. In the preponderant number of cases the latter pronounced themselves against the workers ("La Lutte Ouvriere" Dec. 14).

## ■ THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE OF THE EMPLOYERS

And in the meantime the powerful organizations of the employers backed up by the leading financial groups, have unfolded a vigorous counter-offensive against the workers. A policy of economic sabotage, of slowing down on production, encouraging the flight of capital, is being pursued with a growing boldness. Agreements signed by them are openly flouted with a view of provoking conflicts. A blacklisting campaign of wide scope has been undertaken by the big enterprises. Militants are being forced out of the factories in ever increasing numbers. Under the pretext of "shortage of skilled labor", the 40 hour week is disregarded in an ever increasing number of industries. And what is more disquieting: Fascist nuclei, financed by the employers, are now being set up in a number of factories and offices. The workers

run up against such Fascist formations more and more often, having to fight those "company unions" whenever any movement of protest develops.

The cowardly policy pursued by the trade union bureaucracy, the feeling of being fettered and hamstrung by their own officials and those "radical" parties which they trusted so much, has already produced a mood of discouragement among workers. In a number of factories workers began to tear up their union cards ("Libertaire" Nov. 20). Many of them stopped paying dues.

The Fascist company unions are playing upon this mood very skilfully. The instinctive and traditional disgust which the French workers have toward politicians is now being skilfully directed against the Popular Front parties and the trade-union bureaucracy which has become the tail-end of the Left politicians. The Fascist organizations "Croix de Feu" are now campaigning very vigorously against "hyper-capitalism".

And, as the French anarchist weekly observes, the "leading elements of the syndicates sense the danger of such a Fascist propaganda coinciding with the falling off in the militancy of the workers. But they dare not stir up again the spirit of revolt after having done everything possible to stifle it, out of solidarity with 'comrade' Blum's government".

## Conference of Polish Anarchists

A conference of anarchist organizations of Poland took place recently in one of the big cities. The conference lasted three days and was represented by delegates from various parts of the country.

The reports submitted showed that the anarchists are beginning to play an increasing role among the working masses of Poland. The several stay-in strikes of the last period were actively participated in by the anarchists. The latter were also prominent in the numerous clashes taking place recently between workers and the police.

The reports also revealed the picture of rapid revolutionization of the masses of workers and peasants taking place as a result of the sharpening of the economic crisis. Of late there have been numerous cases of seizures of land, factories and shops. The workers and peasants revert more and more often to the tactics of direct action advocated by the anarcho-syndicalists. This led to bloody encounters with the police in which the masses displayed a high measure of heroism.

The government has no support among the masses. Even the impoverished middle classes are disappointed with the government. And as it happens elsewhere, the reformist leadership of the trade unions and of the Socialist Party (P. P. S.) come to the rescue of the semi-Fascist government. The breaking of the general strike in Lemberg is their own handiwork; they started negotiations with the Fascist authorities and relied upon their promises instead of expanding the strike to national dimensions. That is the general policy pursued by them at every critical moment threatening the country with a revolutionary emergency.

The Communists are not any better. Their "new line" is to play up to the Socialist Party and the reformist leadership of the unions. The suppression of the general strike in Crakow was the joint work of both parties.

The resolutions adopted at this conference reflected the need of the Polish working masses for an uncompromising revolutionary policy. They called upon the workers and peasants to struggle against the state and capitalism, for Councils of workers and peasants and for Libertarian Communism.

They recommended an intensive work of propaganda in the reformist trade unions with the view of activating the

## The A. F. of L. Convention

(Continued from page 9)

dually coming over to Roosevelt's point of view and Roosevelt is willing to meet them half way, the labor lieutenants of capital on each side will listen to their masters' voice. The question will be settled with little loss of face to the craft-nobility but upon the basis of industrial unionism. If the reports of peace between Roosevelt and the "old dealers" is unfounded, the fight will continue with undiminished sharpness.

### ■ IS THE C. I. O. PROGRESSIVE?

As a Marxist, I have held to the view that anything which gives aid to capitalists or their representatives, more especially in this day, is reactionary. My conclusion must accordingly be that the only thing progressive in this conflict between the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. is the split amongst the bureaucrats, which by the breach in the solid wall of reaction permits indirectly the flow of the class struggle for some time. And it is this very danger of honest class struggle which drives the capitalists and labor fakery to an early compromise.

Peculiar in this connection are the antics of the so-called Leninist and Marxist parties, which all without exception declare the C. I. O. per se. progressive. This is particularly true of the Stalinist "Communist" Party which tells its unions to support the C. I. O. program *within* (note well) the A. F. of L. and at the same time not to affiliate to the C. I. O. While inside the C. I. O. unions the Stalinists act as barkers for Green & Co. and shriek "Unity" within and into the A. F. of L. "Unity" the best possible cloak for treachery!

With all this phenomenal deception and decay of the "Marxist Vanguard" parties, the revolutionary syndicalist elements have the opportunity they have not had for a long time. And this, in my opinion, is but slender cause for shedding tears. A Marxist is not one who pins a label on himself but rather one who acts in conformity with reality, acts militantly and consistently in line with the historical tasks of his, the working class. The others may be theorists, or traitors or simply waste-matter — Marxists they are not.

masses for a revolutionary struggle along the lines of direct action.

A line of distinction was drawn between the Fascist and the democratic State. The organization went on record in suggesting an active defense of democratic liberties when threatened by the Fascists. The struggle, though, should be carried on under revolutionary banners. Any merger with popular fronts of any variety was rejected.

The conference also upheld the tactics of an uncompromising struggle against war, calling upon soldiers, workers and peasants to take up arms against their own government in case the latter launches upon its planned course of military adventures.

The VANGUARD Hall at 22 West 17th Street is in need of a piano. Anybody who can donate one should please notify VANGUARD GROUP, 45 W. 17th St., N. Y. or phone CHelsea 3-9567. We will pay the moving expenses.

## "MOSCOW TRIALS" ON TRIAL IN NEW YORK

An extremely successful meeting was held Friday night, December 18, at the Center Hotel, under the auspices of the League for the Defense of Trotzky. The subject discussed at the meeting was the Moscow trials of a few months ago.

The speakers — Suzanne Lafollette (chairman), James T. Farrell, Max Eastman, Max Schachtman and Norman Thomas — all evoked great applause when hitting out at what all of them termed "the greatest frame-up in history, surpassing even the infamous Reichstag trial". They all pointed out that the trial was not fair in any respect, that it was preceded and accompanied by a lying campaign of propaganda in the Soviet press, that the defendants were deprived of a legal defense of their own. The speakers also commented upon the fact that no proper testimony was presented at the trial, documentary evidence lacking altogether, while the evidence brought up in the court consisted mainly of depositions and confessions bearing clearly the mark of extortion by some terrible means at the disposal of an uncontrolled agency like the Soviet G. P. U.

It was also emphasized at the meeting that the trial was no accidental occurrence: it flowed from the policy of extirpation of political opponents pursued by the Stalin government (It sounded rather strange to hear that statement coming from Trotzkyite speakers. After all this policy was initiated by Trotzky himself and we have not heard any repudiation of it coming yet from Trotzky or his followers.)

A sharp note of warning at Soviet Russia was issued by all the speakers stating that henceforth the Stalinist campaign of slander, distortion will not go unchallenged and that a vigorous campaign of protests will be unloosed against the flouting of elementary rights of asylum for political refugees of which the Soviet government has been guilty to the same measure as any fascist government.

The resolutions adopted by the meeting pledged to continue the work for the asylum of Leon Trotzky and to attempt to set up an international commission for the purpose of reviewing the whole case. A letter of thanks was also pledged to the CNT (anarcho-syndicalist Confederation of Labor) and POUM of Spain for their efforts to establish an asylum for Trotzky in Spain.

One could not, however, help wondering whether those resolutions of thanks to the CNT were anything but a matter of form to the Trotzkyites. The same Mr. Schachtman goes around the country branding the CNT as "a counter-revolutionary" organization. And, of course, we don't hear them protesting against the terrible persecutions of anarchists in Soviet Russia. Is it because the man who bore the greatest guilt in unloosing this policy of persecutions was Leon Trotzky himself? —E. M.

## LIBERTARIANS IN SUPPORT OF SPANISH REVOLUTION

All over the world the libertarians of all schools and shades of opinion are banding together in defense of the Spanish revolution. Money is collected for the heroic fighters and wide educational campaigns are launched to acquaint the working masses with the achievement and aspirations of the leading revolutionary force of Spain — the C.N.T. and the F.A.I.

Here in America important steps have been taken in this direction. Federations of libertarian organizations have sprung up in the larger cities of the country. Already they are moving toward a closer form of collaboration around the principal tasks of such organizations. Such are: 1) a vigorous drive for material aid for the Spanish revolutionists, 2) active support of the present publication "Spanish Revolution" with the view of making it a large weekly, 3) publishing propaganda literature on the present situation in Spain, the history of its revolutionary labor movement and 4) sending speakers on extensive tours.

This work requires the cooperation of all the libertarian forces we have in this country. No one has a right to stand aside when the destinies of the international proletariat are being decided upon in the blood-drenched fields and mountains of Spain.

Form United Libertarian Organizations. Read and support the "Spanish Revolution"!

## VANGUARD GROUP EXPANDS ACTIVITIES

We are pleased to announce the opening of the new headquarters for the Vanguard Group at 22 West 17th St., New York City. Readers of the Vanguard are welcome to visit us at our new quarters and to attend our forums, lectures, courses, parties, etc.

The Vanguard Forum will continue to meet every Friday evening beginning January 8, 1937. During the past month our forum has conducted a series of successful lectures at the new hall with such speakers as Edward Dahlberg, Sam Weiner, Vincenzo Vacirca, M. Schmidt and others. Among the speakers scheduled for January and February are Sidney Hook, Ludwig Lore, Max Nomad, Arturo Giovannitti, Paul Mattick and others.

All those interested in learning the principles and history of the libertarian movement should not fail to register for one or more of the courses to be given in the new Vanguard School. The first course, a series of four lectures by Sam Weiner on "The History and Problems of the American Labor Movement", will begin January 3, 1937 at 8:30 P.M. and continue for three Sundays thereafter. The second course, to begin about the middle of January, will consist of ten lectures on "The History and Theory of Libertarian Socialism" by M. Schmidt.

Another valuable feature of the Vanguard Hall is our collection of libertarian literature and periodicals. The Vanguard library is open several evenings a week for readers and those who wish to borrow books.

## ANOTHER IMPORTANT CENTER OF LIBERTARIAN ACTIVITIES

The Freedom and Libertarian groups of New York are now carrying on a series of educational activities in their new center at 221 Second Ave. Prominent among them is their regular Sunday evening Forum, a growing center of attraction for workers and students. Topics, pertinent to the actualities of daily struggle and interesting speakers have contributed to its success.

Among the speakers were: Dr. Henry David (of City College), H. Bran, A. Bluestein, L. Genin and others.

Watch the libertarian press for further announcements.

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