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Individual Action - 1953, September 14, Monday

John Goldstein

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INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Vol. I, No 16

September 14, 1953

An Anarchist Publication

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GOVERNMENTS PREPARE FOR NEW WAR

John's Corner

Advice to women:

"If you must marry, marry a fool for wise men know what monsters you make of them."

* * *

It was never our intention to promote victriolic quarrels among anarchists, regardless of disagreements. On the contrary, we wish to treat our fellow anarchists with the utmost respect, it is the state and not our comrades who oppress us and who have thwarted the noble propensities of humanity for lo these many years. In fact it would be advantageous for us if we anarchists emphasized our agreements rather than our disputes.

We also feel that decentralization is one of the most basic tenets of anarchist theory. Anarchists believe that the human race should dismantle the cities inasmuch as they have generated monstrous diseases and have otherwise worsened man's lot. On the other hand, Agrarian life promotes good health. Is it any wonder then that anarchists strongly favor a decentralized economy since they consider human betterment of greater importance than "industrial efficiency"?

* * *

Perhaps the Hopi Indians are the best example of a people living anarchistically. It is a salient fact that the Hopi have never committed a theft or a murder. Moreover their property belongs to the whole tribe and not to any particular individual. The Hopi, in other words, are practicing — and have practiced — true communism. In addition to maintaining such marvelous living standards, they refused to fight the white-mans wars and have thus been subjected to great abuse by our "leading" citizens. When an anarchist takes such factors into

Objector

Vern Davidson, former Secretary of the Young People's Socialist League, will be tried for refusing to be inducted into the army on Sept. 18, 1953. If convicted, he may receive a sentence of 5 years. Whether we agree with his politics or not, we admire his courage and fortitude.

consideration, he can not help but admire the Hopi way.

* * *

Both the State and private capitalists have been asserting that they have created great progress — progress measured in human blood and misery. Now the capitalists are producing such progressive weapons as Atom bombs and guided missiles, weapons that are not only likely to annihilate the exploited but also the capitalists themselves. Yes, capitalism has produced great progress for everyone except the living.

* * *

For the past three months, New York Subway riders have been purchasing subway tokens — often called Dewey dimes — that cost \$.15 a piece. Since the token has emerged, there has been no improvement in subway service and as a matter of fact the subways are even more crowded than ever while carrying wage slaves to and from work. In effect, metropolitan workers are paying a higher price for the munificent privilege of working for a boss. Does any non-New Yorker feel like rushing to the city — McCarran still allows a person to travel within the United States provided that he has the funds — for the purpose of taking a ride on New York's glorious Subways?

Alert People

Despite the fervent cries of the common people for peace throughout the world, it is highly possible that the Governments of the eastern and western blocks may initiate a major holocaust within 6 months. The so-called peace conference among "diplomats" of allied and Red nations will probably fail miserably since both American and Russian experts have predicted its collapse. The prospects for continued peace are therefore dim indeed.

Already the American Statesmen are preparing the country psychologically for a renewal of hostilities. At the American Legion convention — one cannot be blamed if he thought that the conclave was fascistic — Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, warned the Chinese Communists that if they renew the Korean War or assist the Indo-Chinese rebels, American bombers will not hesitate to attack Chinese cities... Certainly, peace-lovers do not use language of this sort.

Also at this convention, the legion, an organization that expresses the views of the brass hats candidly passed resolutions urging the United States Government to employ H Bombs and other destructive weapon in the event that the "free World" involve itself in another war. The American Legion, in other words, is beating the drums for a bigger and better holocaust, a holocaust that would precipitate complete and utter chaos.

Even more indicative of American war plans is Sygman Rhee's assertions that if the forthcoming peace conference does not unify Korea under his Government within 90 days, he will invade North Korea. Every person, with a modicum of intelligence, realizes that Mr. Rhee, who is a Washington stooge, could not make such statements without State Department approval. And since it is quite obvious that ancient Sygman Rhee could not possibly fight the Chinese if he did not have material support from these United States, American troops will fight along side the South Korean troops in case of the resumption of the Korean war.

And if the Eastern block and the Western block indulge in a third world imperialist conflict, the results will be disastrous for the human race. Not only will China be invaded by Chiang Kai Chek and American forces in addition to being bombed, but Russian planes will inflict damage on American cities — and they can do so despite the opinions of the complacent American public. Moreover, the Russians could capture Europe in a matter of weeks in view of the fact that the European Red fifth column, the Communist parties, are powerful and most European workers would not fight the Red invaders. The common people will gain nothing from another world war.

Have we not listened to politicians long enough to discern that they will never bring peace and freedom to this troubled world? Is it not time to manage our own affairs instead of delegating our power to authorities who in turn are afflicting us — and have afflicted us — with poverty and violence? We must eradicate the present decaying system before it annihilates us.

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EDUCATION FOR PEACE

concluded from the last issue.

The largest number of teachers is included in two groups: the first group accepts the existing order and approves of it consciously; most teachers, however, are not even aware of what they are teaching. That is, they have never really thought about such questions as wage slavery, white imperialism, monopoly capitalism, free enterprise, and have swallowed these words whole. Such a person cannot encourage students to think about and question the world around him. Teachers are as insecure and frightened as any other group today; they want to practice and believe in freedom of inquiry, but their own training and the pressure to conform exerted on them by the system under whose auspices they teach make this nearly impossible. If a mass meeting is called to end segregation or to place student advisors on faculty committees, the students responsible can expect to be punished without the institution even being aware that it is violating its professed belief in freedom of opinion. Here again is the Grand Canyon between what we Americans do and what we like to think that we do; between what we want the world to believe about the Negro in the South and what we condone by closing one eye.

Education does a great disservice to the student when it gives him a distorted or false picture of what is actually happening in the world. Consider the subject matter taught today. With some exceptions (the big city colleges), socialism is seldom seriously discussed in either the political science or economics courses. These courses are more concerned with processes of law making or theories of rent than with how man secures or fails to secure enough to eat. All theories of how to live must be freely discussed. Freud is too often unrecognized in the psychology department. Our literature and art courses principally glorify our own; they could tell us of the folk expression of the people and help us to understand other people's hearts. Big business dominates our schools of commerce, with a private note not to let the left hand

know what the right is doing. History is too often a justification of national policy or a history of laws and rulers instead of people. We could begin, for example, by telling what white imperialism has meant in the life of a Puerto Rican. Language courses are too frequently required of students with nothing they wish to communicate. Science could give the enquiring mind an idea of the beauty and truth of conclusions and observation based on experimentation. Anthropology is providing useful knowledge of the essential humanness of man, and philosophy and religion usually succeed in giving some glimpse of the aspirations of other peoples. Capitalism, democracy, free enterprise must be taught in our schools, but in such a way as to make it clear to the student that other ideas about the world exist and that there have been, are, and will be new and different ideas about how humans live together.

We speak, some of us, of one world, the brotherhood of all men, and the social revolution of colonial peoples. Where is this taught today? Even the United Nations is under attack today. Perhaps we should be more concerned anyway with informing the heart as well as stuffing the head with facts. Education under our present system is not wrong or evil — if your end design is to produce a standardized product who will do as he is told, value his college degree, and keep reasonably quiet in return for the highest standard of living in the world. But we were talking about free men and education for peace.

What then can be done? We need a climate for peace; we need to change society by non-violent means so that educational forces will encourage freedom of thought and action. The search for new and peaceful methods of social organization, and will aid free men to find satisfying and useful work. Within educational groups there is a nucleus which can help to influence society to accept without fear new ideas. Students must rebel more — and more loudly — and this alone would apply great leverage. The same

fear of job security that keeps teachers docile also paralyzes students. Our desire to be comfortable has grown larger than our need to find freedom to be ourselves.

Teachers should be chosen not on the basis of their knowledge of subject matter but by asking if this person will depend upon classroom authority or will he draw out the best and highest that is in the child. Dictators are all too common in school and college. Prophets will be welcome also if they will not command but rather inspire by their own high example. Children can be encouraged to depend more on their own resources, and their perceptual senses can be heightened so that they learn more at first hand, less from a teacher who has read a book by an author who has read a book. Perhaps a child's curiosity can be nurtured through adult life.

Today we are pushed towards believing that we can choose only two alternatives, one black and one white. Education for peace requires that we are willing to accept the consequences of additional choices, of knowing the suffering that a thought-out decision based on painful inquiry demands; it is so

much easier to agree to what we are told to believe by any one side. We can develop our social conscience and perhaps actually share more of our material possessions with those who are in need. Simpler living may bring us a new sense of security. We can replace the present competitive, acquisitive, exploitative, profit-oriented social order with cooperation, sharing, permissive acceptance of others, and a use-oriented social life. We can set up study groups and work camps around the nation for the purpose of educating for peace. Out of such groups might come cooperative living centers and folk schools which would provide a haven in society. Because the greater part of education today gives a distorted or partial picture of the world as it is, we can work continually to promote truth telling. We need to act in our personal relations with gentleness and good-nature, and we must be peaceful inside. For a peaceful world requires people able to love the world as it is though inspired with a higher ideal — peaceful people who act with mutual trust of one another.

Robert F. Stowell
Calais, Vt.

The Rosenberg Trial

(Concluded from last issue)

DAVID DELLINGER

When the government opened its case it promised to call 118 witnesses, including top nuclear physicists whom it identified by name. It actually called only 20 witnesses, and not a single of the promised top scientists. **It used the prestige of such men as Lieut. Gen. Leslie Groves, head of the wartime atom bomb project, and Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Harold C. Urey to help convict the Rosenbergs, but never dared call them to the stand.**

The reason for this can perhaps be seen in the following public statement by Dr. Urey when he cited 5 powerful points to show why "I cannot put to rest my doubts about the verdict":

"The government's case rests on the testimony of Ruth and David Greenglass . . . The Rosenbergs' testimony flatly contradicted that of the Greenglasses. I found the Rosenbergs' testimony more believable than that of the Greenglasses."

Killing with Kindness

Perhaps one of the most telling points made to convince the American people of the fairness of the legal safeguards provided the Rosenbergs was the number of times their cases was brought before the high courts. In the final tense day of the drama, when all eyes were on the Supreme Court, Justice Clark, speaking for the majority, emphasized: "Seven times now have the defendants been before this court." Surely we are led to believe, they **must** have had a fair trial.

But the fact is that all of these complicated (and vastly expensive) appearances were only to try to get the Court to consider the case. **It never did.** As Justice Black, in dissenting from the majority decision, pointed out:

"It is not amiss to point out that this court has never reviewed this record and has never affirmed the fairness of the trial."

When the 2 orphaned Rosenberg boys, Robby 6 and Michael 10, grow up, it will undoubtedly be great consolation for them (after reading Judge Kaufman's shameful remarks) to know that the Supreme Court met on 7 different occasions **in order to decide not to review** the fairness of their parents' trial. But meanwhile millions of Americans are convinced that we have the fairest system of justice ever conceived by man — and will drop Atom bombs to defend it.

Next Issue: concluding article on The Significance of the Rosenberg Case.

GOVERNMENT AND LIBERTY

One of the most common arguments against the direct struggle for the liberation of man from the tyranny of government is that put forward by those who profess to agree with liberty as the ultimate ideal, but say it is necessary to go through a transition period wherein some form of public authority is maintained. It is their contention that government cannot be abolished overnight and that it could, in any case, serve the purpose — if in the right hands — of educating the people to live without its authority.

No intelligent person would dispute that if the present governments were to mysteriously disappear tomorrow, others would soon be created in their place. The reason for this happening, however, would not be that government is some intrinsic necessity of mankind's existence or that liberty can only be achieved by governmental reformism; the reason would be that the vast majority of the people still believe in the necessity of authority. Until this belief has gone a free society cannot be achieved, since the absence of authority is the basic pre-condition for its realization.

To argue that in order to teach people to dispense with government it is necessary to retain government is rather like arguing that in order to teach a man to dispense with clothes it is necessary to buy him a new overcoat. Our critics often fear that if the people were 'given' liberty too quickly they would abuse it. Our answer is twofold: Firstly, no-one can be 'given' liberty, it can only be taken. Secondly, as Lord Macaulay pointed out, the cure for the abuse of liberty is more liberty. That is to say, any abuse of liberty is an act of oppression, of government — which means that not only is someone prepared to exercise authority, but that people are prepared to obey it, that authority is still believed in and that coercive institutions still exist whereby it can be enforced. Given these conditions it is obvious that a free society has not been achieved and that only a partial liberty exists, not the integral liberty which is our goal and which is the only true liberty.

It is impossible to change the nature of a government since it is its very nature that makes it a government. The nature of government is rulership, is coercion. Therefore the only way it could be changed is from a coercive institution to a non-coercive institution, in which case it

Glorious Victory

French politicians who recently broke a General Strike have announced that they plan to cut consumer prices by 10%. We hope that the French workers are elated over such a magnanimous event. If they are not, though, they may indulge in activities to undermine the status quo.

An Unfortunate Victim

Joseph Jessop, the patriarch of Short Creek colony which was raided by the State of Arizona, died. He was distressed over the liquidation of the peace-loving colony. Sensitive non-conformists are the victims of state oppression.

would cease to be a government and become an advisory, consultative body adhered to by voluntary consent—not enforced obedience.

The institution of government cannot be used for any other purpose than that of governing. It is useless to imagine that one can enter a government in order to render it harmless (i.e., redundant). The highly concentrated environment of ideological and physical authority-enforcing into which such a person would enter, would either crush his will or seduce him into accepting the necessity of its maintenance.

Governments rests upon both coercion and fraud. It will exist as long as people believe in the authority idea and support its coercive forces in protecting it against any minority which threatens it. **When the people no longer believe in the right of one man to rule another and order their loves in accordance with such an attitude then government is finished**, even though it may use those coercive forces which still remain faithful to it in an effort to govern by sheer physical coercion. For government does not wholly exist as a thing in itself, but arises from the particular (class) structure of a society and the submission of the people who compose that society.

Liberty cannot be achieved through government, which has always been the creature and creator of class division and exploitation. It will be achieved by the will of the individual to free himself from submission to authority and to join together in co-operative effort with others of the same principles to create a society of free men and women.

S. E. PARKER

Socialism In Decline

London.

It is pathetic to consider that in countries like the U.S.A., the illusion about British social-democracy can still persist. During the years of office 1945-1951, Socialists and others in many countries were holding forth labourism as a utopia, which is always preferably a far-off land (the British labourites at the same time were still pointing to New Zealand or Scandinavia).

In actual fact the possession of power, with no question of coalition or parliamentary dependence, must be the beginning of the end of the Socialist illusion.

After all these years "Socialism" has come to mean not even reformism but merely the extension of certain measures of nationalisation. Nationalisation of the railways (carried out 80 years before in Germany under the Kaiser) was thus a "socialist measure". The conservatives do not want to sell the railways back, or one thing, the shareholders have been too well compensated; for another, they are really content with the set-up, just as they are with the nationalised Post Office.

The same thing goes for the mines, and the differences between Labour and Conservative parties hinge on such minor matters as to whether the nationalisation of road transport should or should not be undone. An amusing situation arose over television. The Tories proposed "sponsored T.V." as in the U.S. to supplement the State T.V., which Labour naturally opposed. But the Conservative followers all opposed sponsored T.V. — for themselves. The business-men and advertising world wanted it — for the masses, but the middle-class did not want advertising in their own drawing-rooms. It is doubtful if the average labour supporter minded. But the Conservatives, finding themselves losing middle-class support, beat a retreat in this particular na-

tionalisation - denationalisation issue.

How does nationalisation affect the worker? He still works. His pay does not automatically increase, nor does his produce go to the community. The directors usually remain the same. But they are no longer parasitical capitalists, they are (in Tory phraseology) parasitical bureaucrats! The same middle-class provides the same functionaries and directors, but the State is in control.

This has caused considerable dissatisfaction which has been only very partly met by the appointment of trade unionists to the boards to sit alongside directors. These labour leaders then become a part of the boss class, and trade union leadership has to compromise all along the line with the state to keep their jobs. Hence when the Conservative Govt. sets up a board to denationalise iron and steel, they are in a position to invite T.U. leaders to participate even though Labour is against that policy and these leaders are pledged to oppose it. The state becomes their chief concern, and socialism itself is "nationalised" even under the Tories.

Hence the demand voiced by many workers (which is of essence anarchistic though this is still not yet realized) of workers' control as an alternative to both nationalisation and "free" enterprise. The fact that strikes now must nearly always be unofficial — against the T.U. machinery incorporated in the state as well as against the state or private employer — encourages this anarcho-syndicalistic trend.

It is interesting to note that in East Germany, the recent strikes against the ruling class have taken a very similar line: "Communist" party bosses, functionaries and foreman trying to make the worker toe the line and make economic demands the state "can never afford".

The early anarchist criticism of Marxism has been amply justified. Its positive demands should now be heeded.—International

To The People Of England

People of England, ye who toil and groan

Who reap the harvests which are not your own,

Who weave the clothes which your oppressors wear.

And for your own take the inclement air;

Who build warm houses . . .

And like Gods who give them all they have,

And nurse them from the cradle to the grave . . .

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Aiding A Satellite

It is apparent that the United States Government which fostered the revolution in Iran that restored the Shah to power intends to loan the new government over 33 million dollars. We believe that this money will be used for the inhuman purpose of protecting American investments, particularly in Oil.

The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism.

434 pages Edited by

G. P. Maximoff. The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.

Humanity has exiled one of its greatest defenders. There are no monuments that bear his name. No poet has inscribed his name in immortal literature. The philosophers have ostracized him from their realm of Truth. The Church has condemned him to the eternal fire, a special torture chamber reserved only for its most hated enemies. No State has honored him, nor ever will. The rich, if they know of him, abhor him and all he fought for; the poor, and they have forgotten him, now accept, alas, the tyrant and the demagogue, not the libertarian and the seer. Society appears to have chosen doom in the future, a war of germs, of nepalm, of A and H bombs: it does not hark the words of warning. In the nineteenth century, Man did not listen to a prophet, one who could have given so much. But that man, that prophet, left to

Felix says . . .

Society Note: The former wife of Wm. O'Dwyer arrived in N.Y. on Sept. 1. If you don't think this means anything look up the back page of issue No. 14 of I. A.

* * *

Crackpot biology note: A cancerous growth is a healthy growth. If the human sperm and ovum cd be made cancerous without altering the structure or characteristic number of chromosomes we cd have humans of tremendous size and weight. But they wd be unable to reproduce! They wd become extinct like other creatures in the past. Is sexual fertility due to a pathologic condnion? This is the first time the question is posed.

* * *

Whole libraries have been written on how to be happy. Behold! I shall forthwith summarily refute them all! Happiness is a fickle wench that comes unexpectedly for a brief visit and departs just as unexpectedly. If you want her to visit you — and I'm sure you do — don't try to force her to come. Don't run after her and don't try to buy her. In fact, don't even try to find her. For if you do any of these things she will elude you. All other advice on happiness is useless.

* * *

I now cut my column short to make room for other writers and retire for the night so that tomorrow morning I may resume my search for happiness. I am not bound to be consistent.

us his dreams . . . will we listen to them today? Or will we reject them,, will we cease dreaming . . . and end all the tomorrows?

But some of us do dream and we yet remember this resolute visionary, this most indefatigable revolutionary, this ardent seeker of man's destiny, this unwearied inconclast, this — this Michael Bakunin. Needless indeed is it for me to soar into a phraseology that is aloft and strange to Anarchism (and Bakunin himself would surely renounce it). Bakunin was not primarily a man of word, of thought; he was a man of engagement, of involvement. No Anarchist before, and none after, has achieved in direct action as much as Bakunin. Godwin and Stirner were far better writers, and Kropotkin and Tolstoy were more knowledgeable. Deserved as is their renown, not one of them knew the individual of the lower classes, the suppressed and impoverished classes, as did Michael Bakunin. He was not of the studio, or of the lecture hall, or the printed word, although he could remain at ease in any medium of communication. He wrote, it has been remarked, because he could not personally talk to each and every soul in Europe. As an archetype, Bakunin was the soul of the nineteenth century rebel. That is his historical position, and that is his bequest to our times.

Because of the relative obscurity that Bakunin has fallen into, and because of the general apathy of both the thinker and the worker of our day, a day in which the slave does not want — nay, does not know how — to revolt, it is an event of no little satisfaction and importance that we now have, for the first time in English a considerable selection from the prodigious, but discontinuous, writings of the Russian-born rebel. Previous to this work, there have been only two translations from his fragmentary pieces on sundry subjects. We should, therefore, be gratified that the late G. P. Maximoff, who lived and died a firm believer in most of Bakuninist social theorizations, has had singular success in his endeavor, as is amply exemplified in this long awaited book. Since I do not have the original reference and source material at hand, and my own knowledge of the Russian tongue is meagre, I cannot dispute or cavil over Maximoff compilation or the subsequent translation therefrom. However, from past experience

in readings of Maximoff contributions to economics and sociology, I more than trust that Maximoff, who died in 1950 at Chicago, was accurate, impartial, and faithful in his eclectic collection. The volume itself is in every major respect praiseworthy. It may be superfluous of course, but nevertheless necessary I feel, to request that each radical who reads this tome personally thank the Free Press editors — even if, as many occur, the reader finds himself in disagreement with Bakunin or Maximoff. For in the oppressive, hysterical atmosphere of America, which is fast becoming the modern counterpart to Catholic Spain in the worst medieval period, it is a brave — yes, proud — adherence to free expression to put forth this publication of faith in man written by another brave devotee of freedom.

G. P. Maximoff's admittedly difficult feat of gathering together, so as to make presentable in one volume, the essence of Bakuninist Anarchism (the name we presently give to Bakunin's literary utterances) is balanced by an exceedingly interesting, erudite introduction by Rudolf Rocker. There is also a succinct and definitive biographical sketch by Max Nettlau. The book is divided into four main sections: 1) Philosophy, 2) Criticism of existing society, 3) The system of Anarchism, 4) Tactics and methods of realization. For this reviewer, the second section is the most informative.

As for Bakunin himself, who lived from 1814 to 1876, we can both concur with and depart from him. I, as a post-Sartrean existentialist, cannot go along with his rigid acceptance of historical materialism, nor with his worship of Science. Understandably however, I realize that Bakunin lived in an age when the materialists were almost alone in their attack upon organized religions and the fallacies of the dogmas. If he followed too closely the ideas of the early

Comte, Feuerbach, Darwin, and others who fought fiction with fact,, he certainly can be excused; for the battle against myth was the foremost victory of these men. It is a tragedy that some of them forgot that the State also is a myth, but unfortunately one that people still fear and obey.

Bakunin passed through many stages. He was an early Great Russian nationalist, later a Pan-Slavic zealot, and still later a State Socialist. It was not long, however, before he reached a form of non-State collectivism. Some may argue that Bakunin was not properly an anarchist, by modern day criteria. But Bakunin was not one to be confined within any established standards. His life was one continuous rebellion. Years in exile, in prison, as a fugitive from the police made him the leading exponent of revolutionary activity in his day. Whatever the fate of history, I am sure that there will be men who will read Bakunin and be inspired by him, for there will always be men who will not sacrifice their souls, freedom, no matter what the Gods demand.

So let us then listen to Bakunin! And let us revolt. Let us uprise against the high priests of man's destruction. They tell us that we are the sinners that God has condemned, that we are the traitors to Humanity, that we are the evil reapers of man's doom. But we are not the guilty ones! Did we invent the rack, did we invent the H-bomb, did we invent the prisons of the worlds with all their tortures? No we did not; it was the ministers of God, of the State, of Law. We seek not to cleanse the sins from the sinner, but from the priest. The triple symbol of tyranny in the world, imposed upon men everywhere, is the dollar sign, the cross and the red star. Until they are erased from man's mind, he will not be able to find paradise in the heavens. He has to find it here first.

RUSSELL ROEMMELE

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