

# WHY?

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## WHY?

These are times for firm, realistic thinking.

What price this bloody mess? That's the big question we must keep thinking about—we people who have to work for our living—we people who do the dying. Is this to be just another war: you pay the taxes, you get killed, maybe you get a medal? Is humanity, so trampled upon through the ages of exploitation, to build the new world at last? Or will it again be made the prey of the wolves of war, the sheep of new tyrannies?

Thinking people certainly can't stomach the "New Order" poison of axis propagandists. But neither can they afford to lull themselves to dumb stupor with the vague promises of atlantic chartists. The thinking that will build the world of peace and plenty will not be the thinking of those who have privileges, profits, power to protect. History warns us. And more and more people are coming to realize this truth—that they must not trust themselves or the sources of economic power to any self-appointed savior or any gang of bosses. But what sort of social organization to put in place of them? Furthermore, how?

These are times for firm, realistic thinking—the thinking of little people.

This little magazine is devoted to the purpose of understanding what is happening, how it came to happen, and what must be done.

The group of people who write and support this publication number among themselves needleworkers, seamen, office-clerks, machine-shop workers, the jobless . . . The only axe we have to grind is a basic belief in the liberty and dignity of the individual, and his right to control equally with his fellows the wealth of society. And that belief isn't just an axe. It's the brick and mortar out of which the new world and new life must be built: the new world of men and women at work—peaceful, dignified work; the new life, a life worth living.

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NATIONAL SEARCHLIGHT:

## THE GREAT SURRENDER

When the history of the modern labor movement will be written by some future chronicler, this tragic period will be called the **GREAT SURRENDER**.

There is hardly a labor movement anywhere which can boast of a more glorious tradition of militancy and struggle for workers' rights than ours. There have, of course, been dark spots in this picture, but none of the betrayals of the past can hold a candle to what is being pulled off right now.

It all started quite innocently. Realizing that the time had come to rake in the shekels of the vast masses of unorganized workers, John Lewis bolted the A.F. of L. and formed the C.I.O. This organization campaign coincided with the tendencies toward State Capitalism in America as represented by the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The theory that underlies all this is, that the labor movement is a necessary part of the machinery of State Capitalism. Not a militant labor movement, but one that will work with the State, will act as a sort of police force to prevent the workers from doing anything to upset the delicate mechanism of the administration. The attempts of the government to hogtie the workers began with the enactment of the wage hour law. This law was, and still is, held up to the workers as evidence of the good intentions of the State Capitalists. Why strike for better conditions or higher wages if you can get this by law? Do not hesitate to organize the workers, for the government will see to it that a fair election is held and the right union given the power.

Having once accepted the principle that it is the proper sphere of government to regulate labor, the rest follows as a matter of course. The labor leaders were assured that their power and prestige would be protected by the government if they "played ball." "Playing ball" meant that they were not to allow strikes or stoppages and were to capitulate to arbitration. As a matter of fact whenever the workers in various plants did strike the labor leaders faithfully fulfilled their agreements with the government by dubbing the strikers outlaws and stopped the strikes.

Gradually there developed a subtle partnership, Industry, Labor, Government. The betrayers of labor were given influential posts or treated with special consideration. Hillman, Lewis, Dubinsky, Antonini, Green and all their campfollowers, the Socialists, Lovestones, liberals, Communists, etc., etc., all flocked to Washington, there to wheedle out of the administration whatever favors they could. (P.S.—Lewis didn't get this.)

The labor unions, far from having a life of their own, are in effect a government agency. Thus have the labor unions, voluntarily renouncing the right to strike, submitted to government regulation. The implications of this policy are dreadful to contemplate. As the tendency towards fascization of American life goes on apace, the role of the emasculated labor movement becomes more and more obvious. The hierarchy of the unions will see to it that their organizations toe the mark like the "unions" of Italy, Germany, Russia and the rest of the totalitarian powers. Can such types of



labor regimentation be properly called a Labor Movement in the traditional concept of that term? The answer is, **NO**.

Already the blackest forces of reaction are making themselves heard. They say, "Government regulation has not yet gone far enough. Strip the unions of what little power they still have and so finish the job started so innocently with the enactment of the Wagner Act."

Wherein lies the true function of the labor movement? In the fact that it is an organ for the attainment of better conditions for the workers; that it has enormous potentialities as a training school for the workers in the task of administering their own affairs; and also as one of the organs that will supplant the capitalists and the state socialists in the building and running of a new social order.

It is indeed extremely difficult to see what resistance to Fascism the present labor movement can offer. While the war is being fought for democracy, the fascists are still active. While the American capitalists may not like fascist competition on the foreign market, they have nothing against the idea of establishing a fascism "à la Americaine." And when is the best time to slip this fascism in through the back door? Why, **NOW**, while the nation is at war, while the labor movement is mesmerized.

**"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."**  
No truer words were ever penned. **NOW** is the time for labor to guard jealously its rights to maintain its identity and prepare for the great struggles that are bound to come. Enough of this policy of retreat. Let labor clean house of its pests and return to those glorious traditions of struggle that have been so basely betrayed by Labor's Misleaders.  
—Bill Young

## BAKUNIN ON FEDERAL UNION

*[Michael Bakunin was one of the leading revolutionary thinkers of the nineteenth century. The following excerpts are taken from proposals which he presented to the League for Peace and Freedom, a republican organization he tried to radicalize. We believe these ideas are significant towards the building of a reconstructed world on the basis of freedom and justice.]*

We must proclaim:

That the only path of freedom, justice, and peace in the international relationships in Europe, the only means of preventing civil war among the various peoples of the European families is the establishment of the United States of Europe.

That these states can never be formed from the states as they now exist on account of their great dissimilarities in size and power . . .

That no centralized, bureaucratic and therefore militaristic state, even though it calls itself a republic, can enter sincerely and earnestly upon an international confederation. Its constitution, which means negation of internal freedom, would of necessity be a permanent declaration of war. It would be a threat at the existence of neighboring countries. Such a state is formed primarily upon an act of violence, of conquest, or of theft, blessed by all forms of religion and consecrated by custom. Upon this divine consecration of triumphant force the centralized state stands as the negation of the rights of all other states, which it recognizes only from political interest.

That all the participants of the League must therefore seek to change the lands to which they belong in order to replace the old organization founded upon force and



the principles of authority into a new organization whose only foundations are the interests, needs, and natural power of attraction of those nations whose principles are the free federation of the individual into the community, of the community into the province, of the province into the nation, and finally of the nation into the United States of Europe and of the whole world.

Consequently there must be an absolute rejection of all that is called the historical right of the states; all questions concerning natural, political, strategic, commercial boundaries must from now on be viewed as belonging to the history of the past, and must be rejected with energy by all the participants of the league.

Recognition of the absolute right of the complete autonomy of each large or small nation, each weak or strong people, each province and community provided that its internal constitution is not a threat and danger for the autonomy and freedom of neighboring countries.

The fact that a country has once entered the League does not force upon it the obligation always to remain a member. Human justice, the only authority we recognize, cannot accept eternal obligations; and we shall never recognize other rights and duties than those founded upon liberty. The right of voluntary separation are the most important of all political rights. Without these fundamental rights our confederation would be merely a mask for a centralized state.

All this proves that the league must cast aside the alliance of any national fraction of European democracy with the monarchical states (read dictatorial) even though it should have as its aim the rewinning of the independence or liberty of a suppressed country, since such an alliance could only lead to deception and would be a betrayal of the Revolution.

For this reason, the League must fight against nationalistic instincts, and must support each insurrection based on our principles and the political and economic interests of the masses.

The League will fight to the utmost everything that may be called the renown, greatness, and power of the states. For all those false and harmful idols for whom millions of human beings were sacrificed, we shall substitute the glory of the human spirit as it manifests itself in science and the glory of a common well-being founded upon work, justice, and freedom.

The League will recognize nationality as a natural fact possessing the right of existence and development. But the League will not recognize nationality as a principle. The so-called Principle of Nationalism . . . is only a means of diversion set up by reaction to offset the growing spirit of Revolution . . .

Unity is the goal toward which humanity unresistingly strives. But unity becomes a menace destroying reason, dignity, and well-being if it is achieved through the authority of a theological, metaphysical, political, or even economic idea. A unity so achieved is harmful to the real interests of the people it seeks to elevate and serve. Such a unity is a friend of reaction and an enemy of revolution. The League can recognize only one unity; it is a unity which grows freely through the development of autonomous parts into a whole which is not the negation of the special rights and interests of a part, is not the burial place of each local prosperity, but which is, on the contrary, the confirmation and source of all these autonomies. The League will therefore attack each religious, political, economic, and social organization which is not completely permeated with this great principle of freedom. Without this principle of freedom there is no intelligence, no justice, no well-being, no humanity . . .

—V. F. Calverton's translation.



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCHLIGHT: (PART I)

## WHAT ABOUT RUSSIA?

Now that Hitler has placed Russia, much against her will, in the camp of the defenders of democracy, a host of new friends and old are singing hosannas in her name. From the rockribbed reactionaries to the most scarlet "radicals", paeans of praise rise in honor of the almighty Stalin.

Can the still small voice of reason be heard amidst the clamor of the multitude? Is Russia truly the champion of the liberty, or merely an unwilling ally placed on the side of the democracies by the chicanery of politics and the fortunes of war?

Liberty, like charity, begins at home. It is well known that Russia is and has been the most perfect example of dictatorship in the history of modern times. She has set the standard for others to follow. Hitler, Mussolini, and the rest follow the road laid down by the great pioneers, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. Nor is it necessary, at this late date, to repeat the tragic tale of the atrocities that the dictatorship of the proletariat committed, and still commits against all who disagree with its decrees, of the absolute lack of those basic freedoms without which no form of advanced society is even thinkable.

The surprising stand of the Red armies, the splendid equipment, and the tremendous productive capacity of the U.S.S.R., have led many an alleged radical to say, "Only a socialist society with a planned economy could muster such strength. That is why no capitalist country can do likewise." If this is true, then both Russia and Germany have something in common, that 'something' is

the ability to dictate to and compel all the people to follow the leader. Refusal to do so means only death, imprisonment, or starvation. All the people in a dictatorship behave as **ONE** simply because they are subject to the will of **ONE** man or party.

We do not and cannot accept the notion that military prowess or the ability to administer the knout is the measurement of an advanced society. No system of economic slavery flying the banner of socialism, devoid of every attribute of political liberty, will command our approbation or support.

The observations made above have a great bearing on the sinister role that Russia (if the Allies win) will play in the post-war period.

The enormous influence wielded by a victorious power will be exploited to the hilt by the commissars. What they did to the valiant revolutionaries in Spain, as well as their record at home, is a fair sample of what we can expect. The dread G.P.U. will stretch its tentacles into every nook and cranny. Secret arrests and assassinations, ruthless suppression of all opinion, will follow. The system of absolutism will be foisted on the population; life will take on the dismal character of hopeless regimentation. Can the spark of liberty survive in such an atmosphere? The answer is obvious.

It may be said that neither England nor the U.S. would allow Russia to proceed in this manner. Vain hope! Certainly they would not like to see Russia cutting in on the spoils. They would fear a genuine revolutionary movement even more. If they



could not intervene in Russia in 1917, the chances of doing so at the close of this war would be even more doubtful because of strategic considerations, questions of morale, and the support which the "liberated" peoples of Europe would lend to Russia. Possibly due to long years under fascism, the workers of Europe will reject any form of dictatorship, and the libertarian, syndicalist and other anti-authoritarian tendencies—long dormant, may, as in Spain, spring to life. In that case, the policy of Moscow would remain unchanged.

We have so far assumed, 1. Russia will play the leading part in Europe in case the United Nations win the war, and what the workers can expect; 2. The attitude of the

U.S. and Britain relative to Russia and towards a real revolutionary movement. Another possibility must be considered. As a result of the exhaustion and discontent, which would develop in a protracted struggle, ALL people in ALL the countries would revolt and begin a series of titanic struggles for a new way of life. We have reason to expect in such a case that the house that Lenin built will topple. If our predictions fail to materialize, one thing is certain—the wolf must be stripped of his sheep's raiment.

The principles of **TRUE** socialism must be expounded and the workers must be warned against the dangers of dictatorial socialism.  
—Ivan

#### LOCAL COLOR:

## ON THE WATERFRONT

While this is being written, shipping on the waterfront is excellent. There are all kinds of jobs but many a sailor is reluctant to ship on these old rust pots. The owners, however, would welcome a torpedoing for the nice piece of insurance they could collect—while the seamen get a nice restful place in Davey Jones locker.

Another question asked is where did Portugal, Spain and Switzerland get so many bottoms ever since the war began, and where are those innocent cargoes that are stowed in the U.S.A. going to?

The U.S. Navy in order to cover up its own incompetency in Pearl Harbor—is threatening the merchant seamen with regimentation by abolishing their hard-earned rights of the union hiring hall. The merchant

marine, in spite of loose discipline, is more competent than the Navy because, after all, any able-bodied seaman will disobey a mate who doesn't know the difference between a doughnut and a hole in the ground, if his orders are dangerous to the welfare of ship or crew. Not so in the Navy; if your superior is just some young gold braid, no matter how green he may be, you have to salute and say "aye, aye, Sir!" — or else!

Pretty soon every merchant marine seagoer will need a spare sea-bag in order to carry his identification papers. Until the U.S. entry into the war the identification papers issued by the Department of Commerce Bureau of Navigation was good enough. These papers carried the seaman's fingerprints and picture. Now you have to get fingerprinted and mugged again in order



to get a ship's pass from the U.S. Coast Guard. To top this off, soon every seaman will have to carry a seaman's passport which will mean fingerprinting, mugging and proof that once upon a time you were born and where. Here's some more opportunity for people to get in on defense work. What a great joke, ha, ha.

There is a great difference between Bridge's union on the West Coast and Ryan's I.L.A. on the East. Bridges, since June 22, when the commy party line changed, is now trying to introduce the Stakhanov speed-up system among West Coast longshoremen. Ryan's I.L.A., on the other hand, is lousy with fascists, nazis, coughlinites and common Jew-baiting trash.

The stooges of Joseph Dzugashwilli, better known as Holy Joe, who before June 22, 1941, were fanfaring that the "Yanks Are Not Coming" are now ready to sell the seamen down the river to prove their consistent patriotism. But their only stumbling block is the militancy of the I.W.W., S.U.P., and S.I.U. seamen. So the Stalin dupes have arranged a slanderous trial against S.U.P. secretary, Harry Lundberg, charging him with spending \$150,000.00 of the union's money for goons and strong-armed men. Thus far, this, as all other commy accusations, has been proved a lot of bunk; but the comrats will be sorry for starting this because "people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones."

Why isn't shore leave allowed to commy crews in Russian ports while other crews are allowed this leave? Is it because the party is afraid that the good stooges will be disillusioned once they see the worker's paradise?

The life-saving gear on merchant ships is as old as the shipping business itself. Mod-

ern inventions penetrated all fields where money could be made, but I guess equipment to save a dirty old merchant sailor's life, is not money worthy. The result is the same useless century-old cork life-jacket. There are, however, some up-to-date life-saving suits being used by the Norwegians. To get these would mean spending money on the part of John-shipowner and direct action on the part of the seamen to force owners to buy the same.

The slogans of direct action, though, would interfere with the Curran-skies and the "Yanks are coming" policy of the Com-mies to keep 'em sailing.

Enough said.

**Lead Line**

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**New York:** Armando Borghi, anti-fascist militant, former secretary of the Italian Syndicalist Union, has been released from Ellis Island on \$5,000 bail. The bail asked for fascist sympathizers is only \$500. Furthermore, Borghi was interned for over three months before bail could even be considered. No comment necessary.

**Mexico:** Add to the list of C.P. treachery the Third International's current drive to smear as "fifth columnists" anti-fascist left wing refugees now in Mexico. Such well known anti-fascists as Victor Serge, Marcceau Pivert, Julian Gorkin as well as libertarian militants are the targets. The stalinist scribblers are trying to have these men jailed by the authorities or, failing that, assassinated "with justification." Thus once more, the Communist Party's pretense of being the vanguard of socialism is unmasked, the face of the bureaucrat revealed.



**Barcelona, Spain:** A second group of Spanish workers, numbering 600 have been sent to Hannover, Kiel, Lubeck and other German cities.

Jose Juan Gil, member of the Bakers' syndicate Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo,\* was given a 30-year prison term.

Pascuala Pastor, member of the Patrol and Control Committee during the Spanish Revolution, received a life sentence by a war tribunal for her revolutionary work during that period.

The brothers Joaquin and Juan Caballero Albar were brought before the same tribunal for having belonged to the above mentioned Committee of Control during the Spanish revolution. The prosecutor demanded thirty years penal servitude.

**Oran, French Africa:** Franco's government has asked Vichy to extradite to Spain the well-known militant of the C.N.T., Cipriano Mera, who, during the revolution, was the commander of one of the divisions that contributed greatly to the defeat of the Italians in Guadalajara.

**Casablanca:** Permits have been granted to about 600 Spanish refugees to leave French Colonial Africa for Mexico in the near future if the Vichy government, as on previous occasions, does not change its mind.

**Buenos Aires, Argentina:** The Libertarian Youth of Argentina are conducting a vigorous campaign against the ever-increasing fascist tendencies of the government of the active president Castillo.

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\* The C.N.T. is the anarcho-syndicalist union which played the most militant role in the Spanish Civil War.

## AFTER THE WAR

You must have heard about it all—magic! Just plain magic: after the war . . . *after the war* any of labor's gains lost "because of the need of increased production" will be handed back intact; any liberties gone by the wayside because "we must have unity at all costs" are in the safe trust of a growingly more powerful bureaucracy until—*after the war*; a free India—*after the war*; after the war more concrete peace aims. Like magic. Just plain capitalist magic.

With this hypocritical phrase thrown in the faces of peoples still smarting from the "grand illusion" of World War I, our ruling classes seek to convince us of their purely unselfish motives in the fight against fascism. *Now* to the scrap heap with overtime, with the forty-hour week. *Now* deals with Franco Spain, with Petain France. *Now* all out for profits. And when will the war barons be brought to justice for extracting their toll "at the expense of the war effort?" *Now* while ordinary people have to bear with higher prices, harder working conditions, death in one of the four corners of the earth? *Now?* Sorry, the war barons are too busy making profits to waste time in anti-trust suits. Listen to Thurman Arnold, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Anti-Trust Division. March 20 he wrote in a memorandum to the President:

"In the present all-out effort to produce quickly and uninterruptedly a maximum amount of weapons of warfare, such court investigations, suits, and prosecutions unavoidably consume the time of executives and employees of those corporations which are engaged in war work. In those cases we believe that continuing such prosecutions at this time will be contrary to the national interest and security."

In plain words: profits now, justice after the war.

Peoples' action in all countries against fascism and imperialism in all its shades whenever and wherever it shows itself—no lesser evil; people's action toward the building of a non-profit society under direct control of the people; that is our program now and until achieved. The people must not deceive themselves with this capitalist mirage: after the war. Disillusion after the war may come too late to galvanize effective action. Awareness now. Preparedness now. V for Vigilance now.

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