

VANGUARD

AN ANARCHIST YOUTH PUBLICATION

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A DECLARATION OF POLICY

The issuing of this mimeographed magazine by a new anarchist group will bring forth questions and inquiries from all parts of the country. What sort of a group is it? Wherein will this magazine differ from the other anarchist publications in the English language?

We shall welcome these questions. We shall welcome the opportunity to state before the anarchists of the English speaking world the fundamental principles of our future activity. We shall welcome it, for we believe that the primary task of each and every anarchist group, is the formation of a definite set of principles governing its attitude to all of the most important problems of our movement. Groups are the elementary units of the anarchist movement. It is out of the free combinations of such autonomous units that the life of our movement is woven. And inasmuch as the latter does not confine itself to the mere preaching of a social philosophy, but aims at an active participation in the social struggles of the day, its elementary units must be designed so as to give full expression to this will to creative social historical action. The groups must rise above the level of mere debating societies, they must not confine themselves to the routine work of running tenth rate forums of a miscellaneous character, competing with the metropolitan institutions of a similar educational nature. A sluggish propaganda of anarchist generalities, unrelated to the great struggles of the day, must give place to a well-designed, active policy, based upon far-reaching historical perspectives, in the light of which each and every effort acquires full significance and import as consecutive steps in the realization of an all-embracing program.

And that means that the comonting ideological bond of such a group must become something more definite than a vague adherence to elementary generalities of the anarchist doctrine. A higher degree of unanimity must be reached as to the fundamental principles underlying its activity. The members of such a group must agree upon the general tenets of its anarchist philosophy as well as upon its concrete form of expression in the field of social action; upon the general tactical line coming as the crystallized experience of the anarchist movement as a whole, as well as upon the local strategy, evolved in accordance with the specific needs of each and every place and historical moment. All of it must be formulated, openly stated and embodied in the course of the group's activity. It must become the primary task of each and every group which aims to become an effective force in the life of our movement, and is as such that we want to enter upon the field of action. Not as a heterogeneous collection of individuals, agreeing but upon vague generalities, not as an ephemeral growth without any roots in the past or lasting value for the future. We want to become a power in the life of the struggling masses of the American people; we want to help in the great task of revivifying the great revolutionary ~~headway~~ of American anarchism, of lifting the anarchist movement of America out of the state of impotence and decay into which it has been sinking for the last decade. And as the first step in the realization of this task we find it necessary to give a general

statement of our principles to be embodied in the future course of activity.

or

We are an anarchist - communist group. We are of the opinion that the great struggle for the liberation of the individual from all forms of authority cannot be divorced from the struggle for a socialized economy based upon the principles of human solidarity. We are of the opinion that the ever continuing process of integration of human activities leads inevitably to a form of society in which there will be no place for the institution private property. Our libertarian struggles must therefore be oriented upon this inevitable trend towards a full socialization of our economic life. Of what ever importance the institution of private property might have been in the past of human history, serving as a protection to the individual against the all absorbing power of the community, it is rapidly becoming obsolescent to the extent of losing all potential significance in the libertarian struggles of today. We regard all the attempts to link up the anarchist idea of freedom with the middle class, nineteenth-century idea of property relationships as mere contrivances, ingenious devices, mechanical combinations, ideas possessing but superficial resemblances, all these so called individualistic constructions of the anarchist idea, their claims to 100 percentage notwithstanding, are nothing but vestigial remnants of a rapidly dying liberal movement. The bulwark of defense of the individual against the usurpations of the community does not lie in a definite form of economic relationships but in a living system of rights woven by the individual in his ever expanding struggle for self-assertion. This system of rights finds different forms of expression with each and every changing historical period. Property rights, in as much as they were distorted by the absolute form given to them by State power, were one of these modes of historical expression. And now that the social structure is being profoundly modified in the direction of a greater and greater integration of human efforts, this antiquated mode of self-defense on the part of the individual must give place to a system of rights based upon a communist mode of production and distribution. Our struggle for the liberation of the individual must be oriented upon the extension of the scope of human solidarity and not upon the jungle morality of a competitive system.

We call ourselves a Vanguard group. We want to revive here, in America, the great anarchist idea of a revolutionary Vanguard, the anarchist idea of the role and place of an active revolutionary minority in the great mass struggles of today and the near future. The idea of an active revolutionary Vanguard is not a specifically communist idea. The communists distorted it, degraded it to the level of a hierarchical apparatus. We anarchists also believe in the idea of a revolutionary Vanguard, but we do not claim any divine rights to it. We do not claim to be the only true mouthpiece of the dialectical process of history, or the vicarious representatives of the will of the proletariat. We do not claim any monopolistic power on the grounds of historical infallibility, we want to work in free competition with the other groupings and forces struggling for the emancipation of humanity. We want to hold up before the genuine and sincere elements

of the revolutionary movement of America, the anarchistic idea of such a Vanguard--an association of free, rebellious spirits, united for a common purpose and a common struggle, embodying in their form of association the principles of a free society of the future, breaking away in the most resolute manner from the age-worn pattern of a regimented military order. And it is to fulfil the great role of such a Vanguard that we call upon the anarchist movement of America. We are entering into a period of great social changes, to be ushered in by gigantic mass movements and social struggles, and our place must be in the forefront of these struggles and not at the tail end of it. We must bring to it not only a higher emotional intensity, a greater devotion, and idealistic fervor, a knowledge of fundamental principles but we must also be able to visualize clearly the various stages of the impending social change. We must learn to think in concrete terms of the definite social environment of America, its tendencies and perspectives. And it is such that we hope to become--a true anarchist Vanguard, leading a Vanguard struggle for the realization of our ideal.

We are also a youth group. Not by the mere fact of having a majority of its members made up of young people. We don't set any age qualifications upon entrance into our group; We even welcome older comrades, with a better knowledge of the anarchist fundamentals and a richer experience in the movement. But we do want to orientate our work upon the American youth mainly. We are of the opinion that the anarchist movement of America has woefully neglected the elementary task of building up a youth movement. Cooped up within the confines of little national colonies, broken up and fragmentized into water-tight compartments of national movements, it never rose to the realization of the urgency of the youth movement. It could not think in terms of American life, its future and the place of the anarchist movement in it. It cut itself off from the source of all hope in the life of any movement--and immediate contact with the younger generation. It has, strangely remained oblivious to the most elementary fact--that here in America, work among youth acquires a strategical importance for transcending that of the same type of work in any other country. It ignores all of it--and it is already paying its penalty. The anarchist movement is gradually being relegated to the museum of antiquities, and may soon become a historical curiosity.

We don't believe it is too late to make amendments. There is still enough of vitality left in the movement to make this supreme effort of building up a strong youth movement. We believe that never before in the history of the radical movement of America has there been such an auspicious moment for getting a firm hold upon the rising generation. We see a new type of youth coming to the fore in American life; Rebellious, critical, iconoclastic, and contemptuous of the smug generalities of the older generation. It is growing up in an atmosphere of intensified social struggles, of a manifest disintegration of the old social order. The great historical task of a social reconstruction will be thrust upon him in a much more immediate manner and his interest in the problems of such reconstruction will be much keener and of a more vital kind.

It is upon these perspectives that we orientate our work, per-

spectives giving us the hope of building up a genuine libertarian movement closely related to the realities of American life. The American youth is turning away from the outworn traditions and obsolete values of a decaying social order, and the changes in the direction of a libertarian communism were never as great as now. And the place of a Vanguard must be with them--helping them to grope their way to a higher form of human solidarity, to a higher degree of individual freedom, to a resolute breaking away from all forms of authority and exploitation, to the highest ideal of modern humanity--Anarchist-Communism:

THE PRESENT CRISIS AND ANARCHISM

The present crisis has not only brought to a head the bankruptcy of capitalism, but serves to illustrate the utter inability of government to cope with even the most elementary problems of our time, the problems of providing every man, woman, and child with the necessities of life.

We cannot ascribe this failure to a lack of commodities. On the contrary, we are living in an age whose productive capacity cannot be compared to that of any other age in history.

A large proportion of the energies of mankind is being expended in supporting a tremendous parasitic super-structure. Many millions are not doing any socially useful labor. They are being supported in comfort and even in luxury by those who are engaged in the direct process of production. Huge armies and navies, an ever growing governmental bureaucracy with its ever increasing swarms of officials, a large class of exploiters of all types ranging from the great capitalist combines down to the picayune cockroach variety who exploits only a few workers, a set of subsidiary institutions--the press, the church, the school,--whose function is the perpetuation of the status quo--are draining the workers of the greater part of their earnings. The system of mass production, the highly developed productive capacity and an archaic system of distribution based on merciless competition and profit, are breaking down the capitalist system. The structure cannot support its colossal burden of waste.

The futile attempts of the "leading citizens" and governmental agencies to alleviate the sufferings by organizing "community fund drives," in which workers are compelled to give a part of their meager earnings to a swivel-chair administration of professional charity mongers, have been wholly ineffective. Soup kitchens and bread lines are growing, the unemployed are being reduced to beggary. In this chaos, human values are lost. All the aspirations of mankind, all that goes to make up progress and happiness is being reduced to

the status of the law of the jungle.

The so-called "Social Insurance Schemes" of the liberals are no better. Those schemes aim at making charity a state function and would give those self same blunderers, the bureaucracy of the state, the power to reduce the workers to the position of mendicants, begging at the sacred portals of Mammon. They hope to quell the fires of revolt by pouring a bowl of soup, in the form of a "dole," into the empty stomachs of the unemployed workers.

It is not surprising to us that the so-called revolutionary parties are howling for this new palliative, for it is but the natural result of the worship of State omnipotence. To sidetrack the real solutions and direct the attention of the people towards giving the ruling class and their lackeys, the opportunity to divide more millions in the form of insurance rackets, is--to say the least--impeding the advance of the revolutionary movement.

The facts enumerated lead us to the inescapable conclusion that petty reforms, such as the "community funds" of the philanthropists, the "social insurance" of the socialists and "communists" and any other form of State control can never cope with the problems of the present crisis. The fundamental question facing the working class is that of the organization of the masses in preparation for the social revolution, on the basis of the free federation of producers' and consumers' communes and syndicates which will take production and distribution into their own hands and inaugurate a system of society based upon mutual cooperation without the State and without bureaucracy. To attain this end, pitfalls of collaboration with the State must be avoided. The workers must weld their forces into Unions which will fight capitalism and the State through the only means which will make the ruling class sit up and take notice. That is, the direct economic action of the working class. The slogans of the revolutionary vanguard must be--"For the Abolition of the Wages System!" "For the Social Revolution!" "For the Triumph of Anarchist-Communism!"

---S Weiner

LIBERTY

"Liberty", we are told, "is a bourgeois virtue." In view of the role that the ideal of liberty has played in every revolutionary struggle and in view of the emphasis placed upon it by every radical movement in the past, it is indeed astonishing to witness this communist reaction against it. Although this reaction will certainly prove to be of very short duration, it is, at the present time, fairly definite. Such a statement calls for an answer.

Liberty means the right of an individual to develop and express himself. It means, for the individual, the right and opportunity to form as many varied contacts and interests as he can, to live his life

as he sees fit, without being obliged to mold his thoughts and behavior according to certain arbitrary, inflexible, and externally imposed standards. That the desire for freedom from restraint is fundamental in human nature is exemplified in man's constant rebellion against tyranny of any sort. In times of revolution, especially, when the masses became articulate, the cry of "freedom!" has always been of paramount importance.

The history of revolutionary struggles is, in a large measure, the history of the conquest of greater and greater freedom--whether freedom from the autocratic control exercised by church or State, or from stifling and restraining economic and social circumstances.

It is especially in its social aspects that the importance of freedom in progress and development comes into evidence. Freedom is both a cause and an effect of social betterment. On the one hand, each advance in civilization is characterized by greater and greater liberty, and on the other, the extension of liberty makes possible an ever greater advancement. Social freedom means, specifically, the absence of any centralized, all-powerful ruling body, and its replacement by freely constituted autonomous groups, entering into voluntary associations and federations for the carrying out of the work of society. Such freedom in the organization of society finds its greatest value in the fact that it insures greater interaction among the various groups. It is the extension of this interaction that brings about a more highly advanced culture. John Dewey has pointed out very well the value of such interaction. The worth of social life, according to Dewey, is measured firstly, by "the extent to which the interests of a group are shared by all its members," and secondly, by "the fullness and freedom with which each group interacts with other groups." Such a society "receives flexible re-adjustments of its institutions through the interactions of the different forms of associated life." Such a social organization is precisely that propounded by Peter Kropotkin and advocated by all Communist-Anarchists. It clearly involves the abolition of the State (which would monopolize the control of group relationships), and the liberation of society from all external authority. The "flexible re-adjustments of institutions" and social progress are one and the same thing. These flexible re-adjustments come as the necessary result of the influx, in the social body, of varied points of view, of different attitudes, and of the spontaneous efforts of different individuals and groups in effecting certain ends.

The organization of society along these lines would take the management of industry, commerce, education, and of all other human affairs, out of the hands of the exploiters and the State, and would transfer it to the great masses of the people, relying upon the initiative of those masses to carry out the work of society and to insure social progress.

This principle of the elimination of a central omnipotent controlling agency, and the dispersion of power into the hands of the many has found its expression in modern educational experiments. It is the keynote of all modern progressive school movements. The modern

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advanced schools have taken the responsibility of class management from the teachers and vested it in the pupils. The one time iron "discipline" is eliminated, and all observers agree that the order is splendid. The teacher stands in a purely advisory capacity. The pupils are not required to do anything by the teacher. Naturally enough, these methods have yielded a very superior type of education--more thorough, more effective, and more significant. These experiments have met with universal approval and commendation. Their success is justly attributed to the greater extension of liberty in the schools and to the abolition of the teacher as the single, directing force.

This trend in education takes on a much greater significance when we realize that the school is recognized by all educators as society in miniature form, where the pupils can be said to represent the citizens, and the teacher and school authorities, the government. Apply the spirit and methods of this miniature society to society at large--let those engaged in industry control it directly--and we have before us the prospect of a richer, broader, and more advanced culture than has ever before been seen.

We can conclude then, that social progress, as well as the progress and development of the individual, depends directly upon the degree of freedom in the social body--and by social freedom we understand the abolition of State control and of capitalism, and the establishment of Anarchist-Communism, a socialized Stateless economy.

A glance at history will suffice to show us that our assertions about the place of liberty in social progress are borne out in fact. Even the most superficial examination of history serves to show that those periods characterized by the greatest degree of liberty have made the most advancement. Athens, in which the degree of State control was practically nil, has produced a civilization which is the wonder of the civilized world. Sparta, on the other hand, where individual liberty was practically non-existent, produced a sterile and short-lived civilization which has left little imprint on the course of human progress. Rome, even at its best, with all its tremendous wealth, has given us comparatively few original contributions because of the stifling influence of its highly centralized state. The Renaissance, by freeing itself, to some extent, from the absolute domination of the Church, and by making new contacts with other lands and civilizations, was able to effect a re-birth of culture. The eighteenth century, having rid itself of the autocratic control of Louis XIV and the church, was able to produce the Encyclopedist movement, Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau, and Voltaire, and to formulate theories which still exercise a profound influence on the life of our times. The achievements of the nineteenth century are due, in no small measure, to the greater interchange and interaction of ideas made possible by the growth of communication--that very interaction which we of the twentieth century wish to extend, an extension which can best be accomplished only by the abolition of the State and the establishment of a truly free society.

There can be no doubt as to the tremendous role liberty plays in

the development of the individual and of society. To underestimate its importance, is to shut one's eyes to the nature of man and of society, and is to completely misunderstand, or to completely distort, the history of mankind.--T. Saxon

EDITORIALS

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: S. Morrison
T. Saxon
G. Lowry

To many the Vanguard is a new group. In a sense it is. In reality it is an outgrowth of the Friends of Freedom. When the members of the latter group saw it dwindling in size due mainly to the lack of proper organization they decided to reorganize, sufficiently strong this time, and devote itself entirely to building a strong nucleus. Only then were plans laid out for enlarging itself and collecting for purposes of solidarity all the already existing young Anarchists and forces at hand.

This had to be done carefully. The Friends of Freedom made the mistake of opening itself to every Tom, Dick, and Harry whose search for amusing curiosities drove them to that group. As a result that group was very much handicapped when it wanted to do some serious work. And so risking the inevitable cry of, "Secret - Exclusivo" the Vanguard Group chose its membership carefully, and to its great advantage. Only those who considered themselves Anarchists and were ready to do serious work were invited to join. All others have no place in this group.

An appeal was printed in the various Anarchist publications to which many out of town comrades have already responded. The group itself is growing rapidly and steadily and its activities are filling a wider and broader scope. Among its present activities are debates and lectures, mass meetings and demonstrations, a study group, publishing of literature and this bulletin, the organization of youth groups, the development of a definite Anarchist program and tactics, etc. In the very near future the group hopes to arrange a conference of Anarchist youth groups for the purpose of organizing them into a Federation. Any such groups already existent or any individuals interested in joining or forming such will kindly write us.

The recent suicide of George Eastman suggests certain interesting reflections on the values attached to the accumulation of "wealth".

The institution of private property has been the most significant factor in the development of the acquisitive tendencies so much in evi-

dence in modern life. The growth of Capitalism, together with America's meager cultural tradition, have so altered the psychology of the masses that the acquisition of wealth has become the chief ambition of the great majority of the people. We have manifestations of it in the many stories of poor lads "who have made good", in our motion picture plots, in the attitude of the public schools in regard to "captains of industry," and in the phenomenal growth of large scale racketeering and crime. Someone aptly remarked that whereas a European paranoiac identifies himself with a Napoleon or a Michel-Angelo, an American paranoiac imagines himself a Morgan or a Rockefeller.

Since one man can acquire a fortune only by taking advantage of the poverty of thousands of others, the overwhelming majority of people is doomed to disappointment. Yet, such is the intense desire of man, and so deeply does he still think of himself as the center of the universe, that each is secretly sure that he shall prove to be one of the chosen few.

But even those few who do succeed, by the most unscrupulous exploitation, in amassing great fortunes, the result is usually no less disappointing. To acquire a million dollars, one must sacrifice every interest, one must warp every noble impulse. One becomes so absorbed in the process of making money, and so warped an attitude on life does he develop, that he eventually loses the capacity to enjoy the pleasures that wealth can command. This distortion of human values is well exemplified in Judge Gary's last will and testament to the world--"Never make a loan without adequate security". In the case of most "self-made" millionaires, the means to a fuller enjoyment of life becomes an end in itself and finally renders impossible the realization of the true goal.

But an increasingly large number of intelligent men and women are beginning to realize that this money-getting psychology inevitably leads to a distortion of the finest human values. And we also realize that the advent of an Anarchist society means a change not only in the aims and ideals of the masses as a result of the abolition of private property. From this point of view, Anarchism makes of life a more significant, a more vital and a more worth-while experience.

An appeal for funds and cooperation has been issued by the provisional committee of the proposed new anarchist weekly publication, "Freedom". This action is a crystallization of a tendency which has been growing in the anarchist movement of America for the last few years. The necessity for such an anarchist paper is becoming more obvious to us who realize the urgency of the present economic situation in America. We understand that the American people must be approached in their own language, with consideration of their local background, culture and problems if the ideas and methods of anarchism are at least to be presented and ultimately to be realized.

It is the vast masses of workers and farmers that our propaganda must reach, for they are the ones who will build the new social structure and constantly orientate it to their needs and desires. Therefore, the portrayal of current events, facts and tendencies must be an integral part of our appeal. The inadequacy of the present "Road to Freedom" and the foreign language papers is apparent.

Two thousand dollars must be raised by May 15, on which day a convention will be held in New York City to discuss all details and to make final plans. All anarchist groups and sympathizers are invited to participate. Contributions may be forwarded to the various groups and organizations. The "Vanguard" youth group urges all those who can, to give their utmost support, financial and otherwise, to this great undertaking. It pledges itself to cooperate in it and to support it to the best of its ability. However, we believe that the Road to Freedom should not be forgotten. It must be supported until the new weekly appears.

And we reiterate: The convention on May 15 in New York should be attended by all anarchists who can possibly be there! A MOST INTENSIVE DRIVE MUST BE MADE FOR FUNDS! WE HOPE FOR AND EXPECT THE SUCCESS OF THIS PUBLICATION.

Fifteen years after the U. S. entered the last great war, "to save the world for Democracy," President Hoover called what turned out to be another war preparedness parade. The Army, Navy and the American Legion paraded along Fifth Avenue, ostensibly to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of our entrance into the war, but in reality, to boom up a war hysteria for the approaching one.

The economic crisis, the chronic disease of the Capitalist system, is driving the "captains of industry" to despair, and the masses to starvation. Markets must be found for the "overproduced commodities". The Far East (China) is the only remaining section of the world where any possible markets can be found. For Japan, the key point to China is Manchuria. For this reason, the U. S. is united with the European powers in trying to keep Japan out of Manchuria and thence out of China.

Japan claims she must expand or cease to exist. What she evidently means is that she must find markets or her system of exploitation must collapse. This is true of every Capitalist nation on the face of the earth. But rather than give up their spoils, the capitalists will again dupe the workers into shouldering guns to fight their brother workers in other countries.

But at present, as never before, are we facing a revolutionary period. In the advent of war, this revolutionary situation will become even more acute. Anarchists in every country must prepare themselves and the world proletariat for this fast approaching state of affairs. To cope with the situation, they will immediately have to prepare

slogans and a definite way out that the masses will comprehend. Unless this be done, when the time comes we shall find ourselves powerless to play any decisive role in the coming world revolution.

NOTICES

"It's a crime in Kentucky to give food to hungry children!"-- If such is crime, let's be criminals.... We must do our utmost to alleviate the starvation conditions in this region, and aid the defense of the miners and organizers now facing long prison terms and death sentences on framed-up murder charges. Contributions may be sent to the "Kentucky Miners' Defense and Relief Conference" at 90 East 10th St., New York City. A "Tag Day" will be held on April 23rd and 24th. All should participate!

The situation in Kentucky is but an aggravated symptom of the crisis resulting from capitalist production and distribution; for the dastardly, inhuman actions of the bosses is an attempt to save their existence as bosses, to perpetuate their system, their power, their wealth, and their perverted institutions which are being challenged. In a broader sense, it is an indication of the fact that laws and governments are the voice of the ruling class and that these laws are changed or forgotten to suit the historical occasion. We can now visualize more clearly the nature of that tremendous superstructure, the State, and the role that it plays in society.

On April 24, at 219 Second Ave. the "Vanguard" Group will debate the "Young Peoples Socialist League". Subject: "Is Parliamentary Action of Value for the Realization of the Socialist Ideal?" May 22 at 219 Second Ave., we will debate the "Spartacus Youth" club (Trotskyites). Subject: "Is a Proletarian Dictatorship Necessary?" 8:30 P. M.

May Day is a time for workers to protest! It is a time to gather our forces and to initiate mass movements and struggles for our emancipation! The "Vanguard" group has taken the lead in making plans for a demonstration in New York. Plans have not yet been completed. For details, write to "Vanguard" Youth Group, 185 East Broadway, N. Y. C. This is a fine opportunity to express our views! Don't miss it! Watch for news in the "Road to Freedom" and other papers!

For the benefit of "Road to Freedom" and the new weekly "Freedom", a Costume Ball will be held at the Central Plaza--Second Ave., N. Y. C., on Friday Evening, April 29th--The Play "Dynamite" will be presented. ADMISSION: 75¢ ---- Help spread our Ideas!

Due to exigencies of space and other difficulties, many important and timely subjects have not been discussed in this issue. Several of the points presented have not been analyzed as thoroughly as they ought to be. However, we invite sincere criticisms and suggestions. Our next issue will contain important information on the Spanish Revolution, a satire on reformist politicians, and analyses of many current problems. Watch for the next issue of "VANGUARD"!

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