

# Alternative

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## THE WAR-- AND YOU

THERE are many today who agree that humanity cannot afford another total war. But many who believe this also consider that their responsibility in fighting against war ends when they have exhausted every social weapon to prevent it. They feel a tie to their country which is sufficient to take them along into war, even though they feel it may be disastrous. If the nation goes to war, they feel obligated to support it. They cannot visualize any other course.

But there is another course—a course which is more and more justified by the character of war. This is the course of *refusing to support war individually*. It is the course adopted historically by all those who have opposed unjust laws and vicious traditions.

### War Is an Atrocity

War today has become such a clear atrocity that as human beings the best way open to us is to refuse to participate in it—even if the government orders us to do so. The fact that a government—any government—orders people to commit atrocities does not make the atrocities any more right or any less disastrous.

Resort to war today is a resort to savagery—to brute forces which have absolutely nothing noble about them. The attempt to employ such viciousness for good ends has become self-defeating. It is only the power of tradition and the illusions of patriotism which prevent men from seeing this.

For the same reason that we would refuse to commit the atrocities of the Nazi concentration camp system, *so we must refuse to commit the atrocities of armies—even if ordered to do so!* Refuse to join the army—regardless of what reasons are given or what pressure is brought to bear. The army has become in our time the chief means for the perpetration of atrocities.

Military men have in the past been able to regard themselves as defenders of national honor and guardians of peace or freedom. But what sort of peace or freedom is to be won by atomic bombs or disease? National honor has turned into blueprints for mass slaughter. Science has now

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## FREUD AND GANDHI

FREUD tells us in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" that Europeans, such as he, had anticipated future wars "between the primitives and the civilized peoples, between those races whom the color line divides . . . and among the undeveloped nationalities of Europe . . . We had expected the great ruling powers among the white nations upon whom the leadership of the human species had fallen . . . to succeed in discovering another way of settling misunderstandings and conflicts of interest."

So impressed was he by the white man's civilization that if there was to be a war at all, he and his circle imagined that it would be "a chivalrous crusade . . . with the least possible infliction of dire sufferings . . . with complete immunity for the wounded . . ." In short it was to be a perfect war. Such was the dream doctor's dream.

Then the war in which he and nobody (he uses the editorial "we") believed, broke out, and brought—disillusionment.

Freud saw that "The warring state permits itself . . . every such act of violence as would disgrace the individual man. It practices . . . deliberate lying and deception . . . It makes unabashed confession of its rapacity and lust for power, which the private individual is then called upon to sanction in the name of patriotism."

### A Pious Hope

Observing this, it did not enter Freud's mind to oppose such a state, much less to urge his fellow citizens to do so. He merely contented himself with the hope that his side "was the one which least transgressed the laws of civilization."

Gandhi, however, took a different path. He warned his people not to "*follow in open blindness of spirit the path which has been taken by the West—the soul of materialism.*" (Gandhi's italics.) If India wishes to see the Kingdom of God established on earth, instead of that of Satan which has enveloped Europe, then I would urge her sons and daughters to see what is happening today in Europe and from it understand that we must go through suffering even as Europe has gone through, but not the process of

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# **SEX** is here to stay -

## **and so is opposition to war!**

### **An Open Letter to Young Men**

You all know parents who try to keep their children ignorant about sex. They figure that what their children don't know won't hurt them. If they consent to recognize that sex exists, they tell only the ugly or dishonest things about it.

So it is with opposition to war. The government doesn't want us to know about it. The big trusts that control our newspapers and radio don't want us to know about it. The politicians want us to think it is something cowardly or unpatriotic. They figure that what *we* don't know won't hurt *them*.

But it's time you took a good look at the Facts of Life and Death and made up your own mind about whether or not to help blow up the world in the next war.

#### **try these on for size:**

#### **1. MILITARISM WON'T WORK**

Ours is a world of power politics in which every country is trying furiously to get "stronger" than the other countries. But every war-like act we commit (such as passing the draft, piling up armaments, etc.) is used by Stalin as an excuse for forcing another war-like act on his people. *We* are arming because Russia is arming. *Russia* is arming because we are arming. And the whole world is going to be blown up because we both are arming.

#### **2. APPEASEMENT WON'T WORK**

If the State Department makes concessions to Stalin and the Russian leaders without making friends with the people of Russia and Europe, nothing will be gained. In other words, if American Business Imperialism and Russian Political Imperialism divide up their conquered territories a little differently so that Russia gains a little and the United States loses a little, the same basic conflicts will exist. The people of Europe and Asia will continue to hate the tyrannies of Russia and the United States.

The Marshall plan is a good example of the futility of appeasement. We are sending food to some of the people of Europe. But only as a bribe. And our military leaders, Business representatives and State Department officials are busy trying to maintain Puppet Governments, censorship and "order." So not even our food can overcome the hatred and suspicion of the Europeans for the occupying forces of American Imperialism.

#### **3. NON-VIOLENT TOTAL BROTHERHOOD WILL WORK**

To withdraw our occupying forces and our interfering officials would remove the greatest source of hatred. To abolish the draft and disarm would gradually

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## An Open Letter to Young Men

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remove the suspicion and fear. To share our food and natural resources with *all* the people (not just our stooges) would foster good will. To let the displaced and unhappy come freely to our shores would prove our sincerity. If by these and other methods we really set out to win the *peoples* of the world to be our friends, we can do it. Then no dictator anywhere will be able to force or persuade his people to wage war on us.

#### **4. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IS NEEDED NOW**

Our forefathers in the Boston Tea Party and in the Underground Railway, which carried slaves to freedom, set examples of Civil Disobedience of which we are proud today. The Allies in the Nuremburg Trials of War Criminals stated that individuals are responsible for their actions in wartime. As Justice Musmanno stated, on his return from Nuremburg, "No military man can hide behind the order issued by a Superior." This duty to disobey the military rather than to commit a crime is especially important today when our Superiors will start an atomic war *unless* we disobey.

#### **5. IT IS BRAVER TO RESIST TYRANNY THAN TO SUBMIT TO IT**

It took more courage for a young German to resist Hitler than it did for him to put on a Nazi uniform. Now that the United States is striding down the same path of militarism and totalitarianism, it takes more courage to resist the draft than it does to go along. This is not to deny the bravery of many individual soldiers in wartime. But today a new type of bravery is needed—the bravery to resist public pressure and to pioneer for peace—the bravery to refuse to give over our lives to the orders of Hitler-like Generals and Statesmen—in other words, the bravery to say NO to conscription and war, and to carry on a non-violent struggle for total brotherhood.

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# Alternative

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Letters and articles are welcome. They should be kept brief, if for publication.

## Letters

To the Editors—

Howard Schoenfeld's article on U. S. prisons impressed me as able to do some good, but also some disservice. It is a fine "shocker." But as one who, even as the author, spent time both in West Street and at Danbury, I fear that the impact of the shock may backfire when one discovers how carefully selected and concentrated are the items (I do not question the truth of any of them) he has chosen to present.

Apparently I was at Danbury after Schoenfeld left. Mr. Gerlach was still warden, but during my stay, was replaced by Myrl E. Alexander. I remember the attitude of the prison doctor, ever suspicious of "gold-bricking." And I remember the food. It was monotonous. The diet was limited in scope. We seldom had fresh milk or dairy products, or eggs. We were surfeited with "pasta e fasule" and other starch foods. Everything tasted about like everything else. But while I was at Danbury we had no "foul" food, or "poisonous."

I saw cruelty on the part of one of the officers, both to a c.o. and to another inmate. But that officer was removed from the staff. Others in the "mass treatment division" and even in the "individual treatment division" might be suspected of covert inclinations to bully. But against this I remember several officers I met who were widely respected and liked, by c.o.'s and non-c.o.'s alike.

I could speak of the imposition of censorship, of the indignity of segregation, and other inanities of prison life. And there was always the shadow of transfer to less gentle surroundings. The experience of Louis Taylor at Springfield surely is one to chill the blood.

Still, I feel that an impartial investigator going to Danbury in search of "atrocities" occurring "regularly" will be disappointed, and that he will be tempted to feel that such protests as are made like Schoenfeld's are misleading. We must not be lulled into complacency by the fact that in some institutions like Danbury conditions are far superior to others. They are still not good enough, and far ahead as they are, have not overcome

certain inherent defects, in forceful humiliation of individuals, destruction of self-respect, inculcation of wooden obedience, etc. This is neither correction nor rehabilitation. The goal is not "freedom from atrocity," but freedom for the cultivation of mature citizenship. It is by this standard that even our "best" prisons fall so short of the desired mark.

WALTER ROYAL JONES, JR.

## Reply by David Dellinger:

*I was at Danbury when Howard Schoenfeld was there. The incidents that he mentions occurred often enough to be a menace to the physical and mental health of the inmates.*

*During the war, most of the so-called "regular criminals" were shipped to other prisons and Danbury gradually became a concentration camp for war objectors. Unlike the other prisoners, many war objectors had important publicity contacts on the outside, and were able to arouse protests on the part of outside groups and individuals against the worst abuses. As this happened, discipline was gradually relaxed and the abuses occurred less frequently.*

*During this later period, I was imprisoned at Lewisburg where we used to be amazed at the stories told by men who were transferred from Danbury about the easier, freer life there. Apparently it was during this period that Jones was at Danbury. As he says: "Apparently I was at Danbury after Schoenfeld left."*

## Psychological Brutality

*As the letter suggests, it is true that the Federal Prison System has reduced some of the physical abuses which have always characterized prison life. But the main result has been that psychological brutality has become an even greater menace than physical brutality. Thus, when a group of us went on strike against certain abuses, we were not beaten up. But each of us was put in solitary confinement, without books, paper, mail, or other objects which might relieve the intended monotony. Even our toothbrushes were taken away from us, and I used to ask the guard how*

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## THE WAR AND YOU

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made the military the enemy of all mankind. It has made it impossible any longer to distinguish between the generals of our own country and those of any other country—who all wield these satanic weapons.

It is possible to start a genuine counterforce to war, by refusing to join the army or to have anything to do with the draft—and urging others to do the same. In taking this action we link ourselves to the tradition of Thoreau, who advocated civil disobedience of evil laws. Of John Brown who spoke out against the evil of slavery. The impact of civil disobedience has a chance of success out of all proportion to the numbers involved.

### Religious Objection Only

It is a reflection of the weakness of orthodox religion that religious objection to war is the only kind which the army will recognize. However strongly individuals may oppose war, however good their reasons, if they are not expressed in conventional religious terms the government will not recognize them. Those who express their objection on the grounds of simple humanity will be treated as criminals. The most effective objections to war *must* be expressed in simple ways that all humanity can understand. And this the government is genuinely afraid of—and with reason!

### Our Forefathers Were Draft-Dodgers

America is a nation which was founded by draft dodgers and people who were seeking to escape from the political and religious oppression of many lands. It is traditionally a country which has distrusted both government and the military. At the times of the Civil War and World War I there were draft riots, indicating the reluctance with which people in the New World took to such Old World methods.

It is not too much to hope that a similar but stronger opposition to the draft may develop in connection with the new draft which goes into effect on August 30th. *Each man who refuses to register or to join the Army strikes a blow against war.*

It is not possible to oppose war within the army. The experience of war resisters in the past war indicates that any acceptance of the draft blunts our opposition. The entire draft is part and parcel of war and has only one function—to prepare for war. The place to draw the line is as far back as possible—even before registration.

## FREUD AND GANDHI

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making others suffer. Germany wanted to dominate Europe and the Allies wanted to do likewise by crushing Germany."

Freud regarded it as "disadvantageous . . . for the individual to conform in wartime to the customs of morality and refrain from brutality and arbitrary conduct . . ." Gandhi on the contrary believed that "Non-violence is the law of our spirit as violence is the law of the brute . . . The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit."

"Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant . . . It is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honor, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration."

Freud brooded, "It is a debatable point whether a certain degree of civilized hypocrisy be not indispensable for the maintenance of civilization." Gandhi lived openly in a glass house. He dared to dispense with the shackles of hypocrisy. He believed that human passions can be controlled, and himself acted on that assumption up to the very hour of his death when his last action as he fell under an assassin's bullets was the Hindu gesture of forgiveness of enemies.

### Honesty in Politics

Freud modestly asked for "a little more truthfulness and upright dealings." Fearlessly honest himself, he did much to smooth the way for a transformed world. He was no hypocrite. But it was Gandhi who conceived of the revolutionary idea of injecting honesty into politics, and demanding of his followers a morality of which he was always a model. He preached that acceptance of truth must be accompanied by rejection of untruth. Gandhi said, "If a father does an injustice, it is the duty of the children to leave the parental roof . . . If the chairman of a corporation is corrupt, the members thereof must wash their hands clean of his corruption by withdrawing from it; even so, if a government does a grave injustice, the subject must withdraw cooperation . . ."

The psychoanalyst dreamed of an ideal war. The non-violent leader dreamed of an ideal world. Both Freud and Gandhi served truth heroically. Both were themselves men of peace. Both aroused intense antagonism. Both suffered from tyranny. One died in exile. The other stood his ground, waging his non-violent battle to the end. But which of the two was finally the happier man, the disillusioned pessimist who (far more honestly than most) acknowledged that it was impossible for him to love his neighbor as himself, or the one who as he fell dying was able even to forgive his murderer?

—ANNE E. MOFFETT



## LETTERS

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they decided when a man's crime was great enough that his teeth should decay.

Finally we went on a hunger strike, to try to publicize this type of abuse and to try to push through some prison reform. At the time of this strike, my wife was nearing the end of a difficult pregnancy. The prison authorities knew this, and they also knew that she had been seriously ill in a previous pregnancy, which had ended in a miscarriage. For three weeks they kept all mail from me. Then the acting Warden came in to my cell and told me that my wife was dying. She had sent word that I must abandon the strike. If I did not stop at once, he said, I would kill her. Later the prison Doctor came in and told me the same thing. It was not until many weeks later that I found out for sure that she had not been ill at all, and had been writing me encouraging letters all the while that they claimed she had been beseeching me to abandon the strike.

On this occasion the prison authorities told us that we could go on refusing to eat until we died. They didn't care. After about three weeks, one of the fellows, Paton Price, who had not been in good health, fell unconscious. Suddenly our cells were unlocked and we were herded into his cell. "There," screamed the Warden. "You see what you have done. You've killed. You've killed him." And he certainly looked dead.

### "Keep It Up"

We were made to stand there while the hospital orderlies came and carried him away in a stretcher. Just as they were leaving, he rolled his head a little, opened his eyes, and whispered, very distinctly, "Keep it up, fellows. We'll win." The enraged guards shoved us into our cells, clanged the doors shut, and left us to wait our turn.

On another strike (at Danbury, while Schoenfeld was there), the Warden went to my parents'

home, 150 miles away, late at night, got my parents out of bed, and told them that I had "broken" under the strain of prison. He said that I would have to be committed to an insane asylum unless they could persuade me to go off the strike.

It is true that we had no bed bugs in our cells. It is true that most of us never had our heads bashed in (though non-war objectors got much rougher treatment for similar offenses). It is true that the prison had a ball field, a gymnasium, a library, and a weekly movie (for those who were currently on good terms with their keepers). But for those who are acquainted with the real situation, it's just as true now as it was 50 years ago, when Oscar Wilde wrote it, that "one is absolutely sickened not by the crimes that the wicked have committed, but by the punishments that the good have inflicted."

I know that it is not enough merely to expose the evils of the prison system. But that is an important task, nevertheless, in view of the smooth and efficient public relations work of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. In a future issue, I hope to write on non-punitive methods of dealing with anti-social activities.

"...The only way to be positive vis-a-vis the modern State is to be negative, i.e., refuse to do what it wants one to do. The situation might be compared to a group of people being driven in a highpowered automobile along a road that ends in a precipice. They see the Radicals sitting by the side of the road—just sitting. "Yaahh, negativists!" they cry. "Look at us! We're going somewhere, we're really doing something!"...

Dwight Macdonald, *The Root Is Man*.

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