

Alternative

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"MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE LAW"

THE AGE OF ESCAPE

THE more confused and turbulent the world becomes the greater is the appeal of pseudo-solutions to our problems. Like medicine men hawking their wares the various radical political parties, church sects and philosophical schools proclaim their offers of salvation and each year more people stumble into these byways to escape their anxiety and to be reassured that everything is all right.

The most attractive way of escape is the way of *authoritarianism*. This is the way of the Catholic Church, the Communist Party and all other groups which demand unquestioning obedience to established dogmas and infallible superiors. It is no accident that Catholics and Communists understand each other so well and that so many people have recently been shuttling back and forth, "converted" first to one and then to the other. Thomas Merton, the young writer who became a Catholic monk after flirting with the Communists, in his recent autobiography praises "the freedom of heart that one can only obtain by putting his whole life in the hands of another, with the blind faith that God wills to use our superiors, our directors as instruments for our guidance." This statement expresses perfectly the authoritarian mentality, the desire to put one's whole life "in the hands of another"—be it Church or Party. If we substitute the word "history" for the word "God" in Merton's statement, what he says might have been said by a faithful Communist.

Catholics and Communists

Catholics and Communists both believe in dogmas which are not open to question, which is why it is almost impossible to discuss fundamental issues openly with either the one or the other. The Communist may pride himself on being "scientific" but his science usually stops short of the Word of Marx or Stalin as surely as the Catholic's stops short of the Bible or the Pope. Those who have already found their haven in the arms of Mother Church or Mother Party have to that extent given up their search for new truth.

continued on page 2

"Brave and Honest" -- So They Send Him Back to Prison

Sander Katz, 24, an editor of Alternative, was sentenced to one year and one day in Federal Penitentiary, November 19th, for refusal to register for the draft. Katz had already spent a month in jail on this charge because he refused to accept bail. He had pointed out that a man's freedom should not depend on the amount of money he can commandeer.

The Judge was impressed by Katz's loyalty to principle. Therefore he offered to suspend sentence—if Katz would abandon his principles by promising to stop his anti-war activities.

When this failed, the Judge questioned Katz's mental stability. (After all, Judges are not used to meeting—either socially or in legal circles—men who refuse to sell their principles for worldly advancement.)

Katz was given ten days to wind up his affairs and to consider the Judge's "offer."

The following notes were taken in the courtroom, November 15, when Katz originally appeared for sentencing. While it was not always possible to get exact quotations, all the statements given below are essentially accurate.

District Attorney: This man Katz is not a conscientious objector within reason of the law.

Judge Harold R. Medina: Well, a man doesn't keep up violating the law and going to jail if he's just a draft dodger.

D.A.: The country needs an army despite this so-called philosophy. A second offender should be treated as a second offender.

Judge: A man may not come within the law, but he still may have principles, isn't that possible?

D.A.: Katz marked on his Selective Service

continued on page 5

THE AGE OF ESCAPE

(Continued from page 1)

Such submission to authority easily passes into fanaticism because difference are seen either as a sign of inferiority or as a threat. The true authoritarian knows of only one way of dealing with differences of opinion and that is, not to accept them, but to convert them to his own way of thinking.

Planned Sin

Along with the escape to authoritarianism is the escape to *pessimism* or defeat which is being canonized as "new theology" by the Protestants, and which appears in another form in the long-winded philosophy called "existentialism." These theologians are so obsessed by the idea of the "sinfulness" of man that they use this as an excuse for lowering their sights so far that they do not expect anything much from human beings any more. Attempts to get at the roots of the issues facing us they attack as "perfectionist" or "utopian." Writers like Reinhold Niebuhr, who claim to be Christian, justify the use of the atom bomb in the last war or the starving of the children of Europe on the grounds that socially man is immoral and in order to be effective in a sinful world we have to be immoral too. *Time* magazine last spring summed up this gloomy brand of defeatism with the slogan "Man's history is not a success story"—which is a dangerous and pessimistic half truth. Niebuhr and his followers who crowd the Protestant seminaries have the words "sin" and "failure" so much on their lips that they create a mood of despair which easily passes into opportunism. And so we have the ignoble spectacles of parsons in mufti and doctors of divinity haggling over political trickery in order to be "effective."

Defeat and Despair

With existentialism, which has been the fad in Europe for some time and which is still the catchword among our bright young intellectuals, defeat and despair are tricked up in the fanciest clothes and made to look actually appetizing. The existentialist glorifies the act of "decision," but his philosophy is completely empty because he has no idea what to "decide." Jean-Paul Sartre, a French writer who has made a business out of this philosophy, has left all others far behind in showing how "lost" and "trapped" human beings are. Sartre appears to believe that man because of his very nature is defeated even before he starts—the trouble is right in the roots of human consciousness. Humanity and existence he regards with disgust or nausea. The truth of the matter is that the existentialist is obsessed with only one thing—himself, his own "subjectivity" and his own misery. His self-pity he has made

into a religion, but he has lost touch with the world and with everyone else. The concreteness of life for him is only "absurdity."

Irresponsible Experts

The most widespread and still the most fashionable of all the ways of escape is the simple expedient of *irresponsibility*—particularly if it can be excused on the grounds of specialization. This is the way out of professional men and scientists who are too busy with their own researches to care about what is going on in the world. These men cannot be classed as callow intellectuals or faddists. Often they know what the trouble is but they say: "That is not my field; leave it to the politicians or the reformers." They put on their professional blinders and go on preparing their bacteria or writing their learned lifeless treatises. The disease which this attitude spreads is particularly virulent. It might be called "expertitis"—the idea that everything should be left to "experts" and we are not really responsible except for our own narrow little lives. Thus the average man comes to think that "experts" in politics and economics know best, forgetting that we are all willy-nilly involved in a common plight from which no one shall be spared. War, poverty and depression are no respecters of persons. The scientists who do not care how their researches are used, the artists who claim "artistic immunity" which is supposed to put them above the common run, industrialists who are not interested in labor or social security, and laborers who do not think about long-range social objectives are all in the same boat. Such "specialization" is an ugly pretension. Aldous Huxley's picture of armies marching to battle, each with their little scientists on leashes like dogs, is a fair description of the way most of our scientists and artists are still behaving. It is not possible any longer to respect science and art which forget their true human bearings.

One Great Issue

The cults of *authoritarianism*, *pessimism* and *irresponsibility* in the end are ways of avoiding issues. Before the world comes to its senses much that we have long held sacred will have to be reappraised and perhaps dismissed. There is no issue that can be sidestepped any more. The one great issue is whether we are determined to live like human beings or not. If to this question we answer *yes* then it is better to make some small beginning on however minute a scale. The truly human beginning of a solution to our problems is to *continue to distrust authority, refuse to give way to pessimism, and to insist on individual responsibility.*

—ROY FINCH

WE'RE MEDICINE MEN, NOT TOBACCO MEN!

In the present stage of world affairs we don't think it makes a great deal of difference whether you light up a Chesterfed, a Lucky Elephant, or a Hi Ho Silver.

But everyone's LIFE, LIFE, LIFE depends on whether we light a Pipe of Peace or an Atom Bomb.

Advertisers seem to be able to sell anything these days — even the U.S. Army. But deep down in their hearts most people realize that armies lead to war and war leads to—curtains. The trouble is that our common sense is continually being shouted down by radio announcers, newspaper headlines and patriotic bugle-blowers.

What the Gallup polls and creators of public opinion couldn't do for Dewey they do for war. They manage to persuade most of us that we think exactly the opposite from what we really think. Or at least they get us confused enough to keep our traps shut and to go along with what they say "every right-thinking American" thinks.

Did you ever hear the story about

the king who appeared in public without any clothes? A trick had been played on him by a tailor who claimed to have clothed the king in a suit which could be seen by everyone except thieves and liars. No one dared admit that the king looked naked until finally a little child cried out: "Why, the king hasn't any clothes on!" Then everyone knew that the king was indeed naked.

Today war appears to everyone to be a naked failure. But a trick has been played on us. We have been told that everyone sees the need for war as a last resort, except cowards and traitors. So most people refuse to trust their own common sense which tells them: **RELIANCE ON WAR CAN NOT LEAD TO PEACE.**

Some people think that LIFE is a picture magazine—or a new cigarette. Some people think it's small change and they do not hesitate to blot out the lives of those whom they are ordered to kill. Nor do they hesitate to turn their own lives over to the orders of a general or a president.

We think LIFE is more precious than that. We shall not help destroy the life of any of our fellow-men. Nor shall we surrender our own lives to the bosses, the politicians, or the generals.

Alternative

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In prison for refusing to register for the draft: Sander Katz.

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

Letters

To the Editors—

I note that a small controversy is going on in your columns about whether the chow in Danbury jug was rotten, or not so rotten, during the period the place was full of draft cases. One says the chuck was terrible, and another says it really wasn't too bad. I say, what the devil difference does it make? I myself did not go in or come out of the clink during the late war with any ideas of reforming it. I thought then and still think now that it is relatively unimportant whether jails are well or poorly operated. I chose not to register and to go to jail because I wanted everybody to know that I was "agin" the late war, "agin" it all the way and from the word go.

A Dead Issue

During my stay I didn't bother myself about prison reform. I thought it was far more important to concentrate on trying to keep the wishy-washy, half-way, pip-squeak resisters (of whom there were far too many) from going soft, trying to get paroled to quack camps, hospitals, etc., and otherwise compromising the whole idea of genuine forthright resistance to war. I think that right now prison reform is a particularly dead issue. The question of the moment is how many good solid blokes are going to go there? I don't mean the kind who out of their bitter opposition to war would allow themselves to be locked up in the Rockebilt for the duration if given a bottle and a bird every night for supper and guaranteed a harem of beautiful dancing hours to while away the dull hours with. I mean good solid guys who will sit the whole time out in the hole on rabbit food if necessary, and who

will not be running up to the parole board all the time.

Try Stalin's Prisons

I suggest that all C.O. activities inside and outside prisons ought to be strictly confined to direct opposition to war and complete non-cooperation with the Government. That's a big enough job in itself. To hell with prison reform! American clinks are cinches anyhow. You ought to shake some time in one of Joe Stalin's as I once did. They solve the food problem there by just withholding it until you get ready to really relish long dead skunk's tail—raw. Or in one of His Majesty's Hotels over in England, where the Limeys once locked me up out of gratitude for my having tried to stop Hitler on the Jarama River a few hundred kilometers south of Dunkirk.

All jugs are jugs, of course, and all screws are screws from the Warden down. Even a "good" screw has to become a screw when the chips are down, or else he won't remain a screw at all very long. As war resisters, it should be a matter of supreme indifference to us whether jails are good or bad, hard or soft. What we need to do is fill 'em up and keep 'em full. If we could go a good long distance in that direction, we soon wouldn't have to worry about prison reform.

Yours,

BILL RYAN

VET REJECTS WAR

WORLD OVER PRESS, Honolulu. Captain Ellsworth W. Taylor of Kapoho, Hawaii, has resigned his commission in the Officers' Reserve Corps and declared his intention never to participate in further military activities, whether in peace-time or war, but to devote himself to pacifism. He is 29; a native of Tacoma, Washington, and a teacher with a wife and two young children. He received his commission in the O.R.C. after honorable discharge from the Army, following five years of service, three of them during the war.

Taylor said he had been studying the writings of religious pacifists and the lives of men like Gandhi, Tolstoy, Kagawa, the Quakers, "and the more than 5,000 men of courage whom the U.S. jailed during World War II because they refused to murder at the command of the state." In a statement accompanying his letter of resignation, Taylor said: "I do not know whether I am beyond the reach of military law, but it doesn't matter. The only important consideration to me is the fight against violence and particularly war. Until war is dead, there is nothing else worth doing."

COURTROOM NOTES

(Continued from page 1)

questionnaire that he was opposed to SS and war because of political views. Violators of price control could have said that they disagreed with the philosophy of the law because it interfered with their economic interests.

Judge to the D.A.: Do you think he wants to keep himself safe and let the other fellows do the fighting? If I thought so, I'd give twice as much as he got last time.

D.A.: No, he's not a coward, but he has a perverted state of thought. He is intellectually unstable and should be under mental observation. However, *the main thing in this case is the maintenance of the integrity of the law*, the integrity of the Selective Service system. An example should be made of Katz.

Jail for Life

Judge: But we may have another draft call; and if we do, Katz would have to spend the rest of his life in jail.

D.A.: The armed services would never use Katz anyway because of physical impairments and his previous sentence.

D.A.: If Katz is probated he will continue to violate the law as he continues to refuse to register for the draft.

Judge: If I probate, Katz might be on a picket line, or speechmaking right after; and I won't permit him to do that.

D.A.: Certainly he'll do that.

Judge: Do you think he's crazy?

D.A.: No, but I doubt his intellectual stability and suggest observation.

Arthur Garfield Hays (lawyer for Katz): The question that Katz requires mental examination is more humiliating than the idea of a prison term; it's not his mentality we're questioning, but his principles. If he's perverted, then I'm probably perverted too. I admire a person who says: "Bring on everything, the police, courts, prison, etc., but I want to maintain my individual and moral integrity."

Judge: I can't alter the law; I have to take it as it is.

Courts Fear Pickets

Hays: Katz is a brave man to have taken the consequences of his convictions. He's acting only out of convictions, even though he is a bad physical case and could be deferred because of it.

Judge: If I let him free, will he picket, and make speeches?

Hays: Katz's voice will be louder in jail than

out free on the picket line. Jail won't deter others who have serious convictions; jail would only serve to advertise the cause. If you free Katz, he will do everything to carry out his principles.

Judge (to Katz): If I suspend sentence and put you on probation would you abide by conditions of not picketing and making speeches?

Katz: I will do everything in my power to stand against injustice; I will not abide by such conditions.

Hays: As an American citizen he is willing to take the penalty, but the court should not impose conditions which impair the freedom of expression guaranteed to American citizens.

"A Judge's Life Is Not A Happy One"

Judge: I don't want to put him in jail, but maybe I'll have to.

Hays: A judge should not impose sentence based only on the legal circumstances, but he should consider the question of the justice of the law.

Judge: The law mayn't appeal to me particularly, but I have to administer the law. I can't change the law in court.

Hays: A judge always draws moral distinctions between criminals and those who have political views. Jails are for criminals and not for honest men.

Judge: If this were the first offense of this nature I would sentence Katz all right, but what is worrying me is putting Katz in jail a second time, where it won't do Katz or society any good.

Osmond K. Frankel (American Civil Liberties Union lawyer): It seems a man can be kept in

continued on page 6

DO IT NOW

HAVE you been procrastinating with your contribution to *Alternative*? We have accumulated a \$65 deficit. Not bad, for five issues, but not quite self-supporting. We plan to publish a full financial statement in the next issue.

There have been many small contributors, which is a good sign.

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We like to get your comments, opinions, or full scale articles offered for publication. Let us hear from you with or without enclosures.

COURTROOM NOTES

continued from page 5

prison for life for his thoughts under the DA's ideas, something which is done for no other crime except for murder.

Judge: Why not have Katz psychoanalyzed?

Hays: I would agree to it since it is just an inquiry.

D.A.: The Katz case is not a *cause celebre*, but just a plain violation of law; what is overlooked is the whole method of inserting these so-called principles.

Judge: But I am impressed by Katz's consistency to his principles.

D.A.: You might as well believe every anarchist or seditionist. They believe what they do, too. Punishment in this case may instill adherence to the law in others.

Government Chooses Victims

Hays: Roger Baldwin and John Haynes Holmes are two persons I have great respect for. Baldwin was in jail as a CO in World War I and opposed World War II and felt that there should be a segment of the populace opposed to war, which segment would keep the light of pacifism burning. Holmes opposed the draft but since he is a prominent minister the government isn't bothering him but is prosecuting Katz for the same thing.

Judge: I don't feel clear what to do. I have no right as a judge to let my personal views enter

the picture. Whether the law is right or wrong is none of my business. As a judge, I have to consider the man, society, family, etc., and then decide what is best.

Judge (to D.A.): If Katz does anything riotous he'd be arrested for it. And about possible speechmaking, maybe it's just big talk on Katz's part.

Hays: Katz could be allowed out on his own recognizance, or at least in my custody.

Judge: I won't let him out, except on bail as usual. And Katz can be psychoanalyzed if he wants to.

Katz: I don't want the court to force my parents to pay for the treatment. If the court makes treatment part of the sentence it should pay for it and not ask my parents to do so. Or else the court should ask whether I can afford it.

Psychological Quickie

Hays: The process takes a long time, perhaps several months. Can Katz be released for the treatment? I thought such an arrangement was in your mind when the question of treatment was first brought up.

Judge: Heavens no! I thought analysis could take place in prison within a short period of time.

Judge: It would be awfully easy for me to impose a long sentence but I can't do so under my conscience until I think things over.

Notes taken by

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