

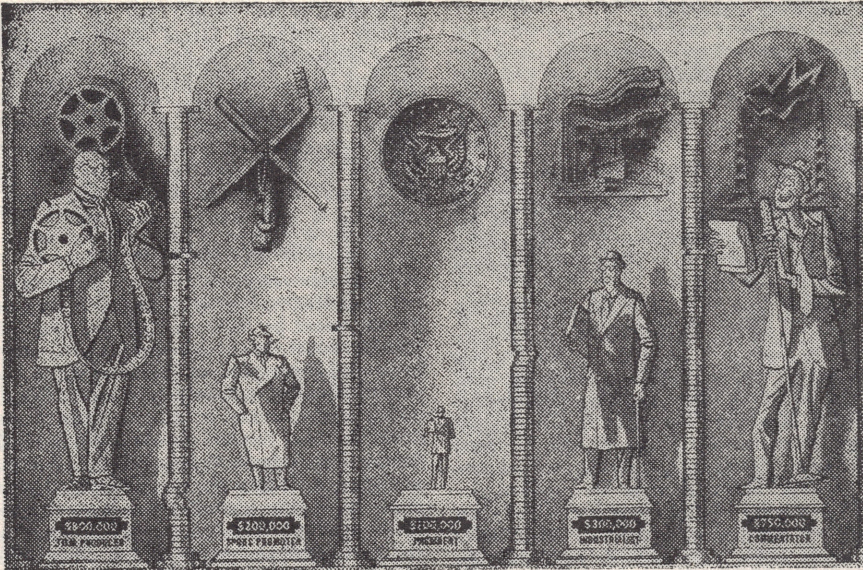
Alternative

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New York, N. Y.

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HOW MUCH IS A MAN WORTH?



Drawing by Jack Ruge from the N. Y. Times

Editor's Note- We would have added a figure to represent the average worker's annual wage (less than \$2500 a year) but it would have been too small to show.

ON JANUARY 30TH the N. Y. *Times* Magazine printed an article by David Cushman Coyle on this subject. With it was a chart showing American salaries from the film producer at \$800,000 down to the U. S. President, at a mere \$100,000.

But the *Times* forgot completely about the "unpublicized" man, the large majority of average men who make less than \$3,000. often far less.

Coyle compares, as his basis, salaries of business and government officials and finds that "the same lines of skill . . . have two separate markets on quite different levels. Probably the reason for the different salary scales in public and private top levels is chiefly that the government is democratic . . . The top management in a big corporation, on the other hand, has no democratic controls to hamper its own estimate of its value to the stockholders."

He also points out that the people who give the world its greatest values, its artists, inventors

and others of creative genius, are not usually paid any where near the value they have created and don't actually even work for the sake of money.

Actually, Coyle is a bit ahead of the *Times*. As he says toward the end of his article, "the conclusion that stands out, now that the article is written, was not anticipated . . . when the editor suggested an article on the value of men." The conclusion is:

"Incomes actually paid . . . above \$25,000 a year after taxes do not seem necessary as a stimulant of genius, and may even cause fatty degeneration of the creative power . . . And the savings in salary, if properly taxed, might help raise the substandard pay of school teachers, who are expected to cultivate the next generation's crop of super-value individuals."

This article fails to follow through on its own reasoning and premises into doing something
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Alternative

Successor to *Pacifica Views and Direct Action*

P.O. Box 827, Church St. Sta., N. Y. 8, N. Y.

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

Letters

Chapel Hill, N. C.

TO THE EDITORS—

I have just read the Santa Claus story in No. 7. I was amused and I was reminded of the economic injustice in our times, but I did not learn any positive alternatives for peace and I wonder how many of your 1500 readers learned anything helpful from it.

In another issue you "shall not surrender our lives to the bosses, the politicians, or the generals." I'm right with you there — but I'm also interested in the alternatives to work on until they get me in the corner to make me surrender. In fact I have some faith that if I work hard enough on alternatives I may be able to forget about being defensive for awhile and disarm my "enemies" before they get me cornered.

So I'll cast my vote for some articles on what people are thinking, or better yet, doing, about alternatives to the ways taken by the bosses, the politicians and the generals.

BOB BARRUS

REPLY BY THE EDITORS

THE MOST COMMON COMPLAINT we receive in our letters is that we are not "constructive" enough. We don't measure up to our name because we don't present enough alternatives.

Perhaps the first thing to be said about this complaint is that it is true.

We don't have enough articles dealing with existing efforts to live a more brotherly, more satisfying life. We are attempting to remedy this lack, and will be grateful for letters and articles from our readers which will help us give more space to constructive alternatives, particularly in the economic realm.

But a second comment should also be made. This type of letter often indicates a peculiar example of subservience to authorities. People who are beginning to see through existing authorities (economic, legal, and military) and who are casting about for freer, more creative methods often try to secure these methods — from authori-

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HOW MUCH IS A MAN WORTH?

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toward getting the big corporations run completely in the public interest, not just in the matter of top salaries. It also fails to take the one step over its border line to the recognizing of the infinite worth and possibilities of every human being, not just the financially proven "super-value individuals". Even the recognition of known artists and inventors doesn't take into consideration the value a society might gain with each individual being free to develop, encouraged to think, act and create as he might.

Nowhere is the thought that all work of a socially constructive nature should be thought of as symbolizing a valuable social contribution; not just that of public figures who, though receiving less pay than they might in private industry, still 'sacrificially' get far more than three quarters of Americans. No consideration is given to the worker in unpleasant or dangerous jobs who should receive much more inducement to work than the executive.

Efficiency Is Not Enough

To provide every one a decent life should be the objective. A yearly maximum far below \$25,000 would be required. And with the wider outlook would be a consideration for shorter hours and more pleasant, more satisfying work for all. But Coyle doesn't think especially of a society adjusted so as to bring the most good or allow the most freedom to the individual. He judges a man's worth by his efficiency. Socialists as well as capitalists are wrong in their worship of efficiency, even when the idea is accompanied by the equal or limited income setup. In human society a stress on freedom makes all the difference in the long run and holds within itself much more in the realm of creative possibility than does a concentration on efficiency.

—IRVING RAVIN

Thanks for the large and generous response to our last financial appeal. From the several letters with 25 one-cent stamps to the one with a \$65 check (to eliminate the deficit with one swipe).

While we got a big spurt of contributions, the great lull in receipts has more than erased the gain. Here is our latest financial report:

	Number of Contributors	Amount	Expenses
Nov. 1, No. 6, Nov.	16	\$ 31.52	\$ 95.51
Vol. 1, No. 7, Dec.	28	109.72	87.01
Vol. 1, No. 8, Jan.	10	29.75	80.18
TOTALS	63	\$170.99	\$262.70
			170.99
			91.71
		Previous Deficit	77.60
		PRESENT DEFICIT	\$169.31

We want to save space and not bother you by repeated financial appeals in each issue. But if you ever wonder if we need money, don't hesitate; send it in. (To Irving Ravin, Treas., Box 827, Church St. Sta., New York 8, N. Y.)

THE POWER-FREE SOCIETY

A GREAT MANY PEOPLE these days like to speak of the core of democracy as the idea of "equality of opportunity." They do not always say precisely opportunity for what and often they take care to explain that they do not mean "equality of outcome." Democracy, they say, is like a footrace. Everyone should get off to an equal start, but what happens after that will depend upon the contestants.

Such a conception of democracy has a wide appeal because it is the American success story which promises every boy a chance to become President — if not of the United States, why then at least of a corporation or a labor union. Persistence and hard work will bring those who are best qualified to the top where the rewards of superiority await them. There is nothing wrong with the race itself; the only trouble is that we have said it was fair when it really wasn't fair.

Is this really all that is wrong with democracy — that not enough people have an equal chance to get to the top? Or is there something perhaps wrong with the idea of *anyone* being on the top?

This is certainly treason, some will say. Why even in Russia people get rewards; they get medals and big houses and titles after their names. What would be the incentive if they didn't?

Yet the true notion of democracy is that no one shall be on top, no one shall have power over others. The root of the idea that some people are destined to have power and rewards and others to lag behind is the belief that some people are by nature superior to others. These are Thomas Jefferson's "natural aristocrats," who will rise if the race is fair (and, some have said, even if it isn't fair).

Idiots and Geniuses

To this we must oppose the idea that *everyone is a natural aristocrat*. The idea is not far-fetched. One of our leading psychologists, C. E. Spearman, who has spent his life studying the human mind and human personality, says:

"Every normal man, woman or child is a genius at something as well as an idiot at something. It remains to discover at what — at any rate in respect of the genius."

Every man is a genius — this comes closer to the democratic idea. And what people are geniuses at they will like to do. They will not have to be told or rewarded or bribed to do. Some of our scientists and artists are the best proof of this.

What then becomes of politics? To this there can only be one answer. Politics in the sense of the wielding of power and the struggle for power must be abolished. Administration and coordination are the only legitimate functions of politics. And some people undoubtedly have

superior ability at this. But the genius of administration and coordination is to find ways of expressing and harmonizing the abilities and wishes of others — not to deny them or to dictate to them. The true administrator does not need or want to have his own way — he wants as many others as possible to have their ways. The better administrator he is the less he will need power.

The fact that there are those who desire power and delight in controlling others must be regarded as a symptom of abnormality and disease. It is by no means inevitable or necessary in human nature. The desire for power like the aggressive urge betrays basic weakness, inferiority and fear. Philosophies based on the assumption that men are essentially motivated by a will to power always result in support for tyranny.

It is sometimes said that the machine age must lead to concentrations of power and that even planning must resort to restricting the individual freedom. But if we can use intelligence to coordinate vast enterprises, we can also use it to make work more interesting and responsible. It is much more important that a job be interesting than that it be lucrative or efficient. We could get on with one tenth of the trivia that is being produced today if people enjoyed their work more. The workers who produce shaving lotion or cheap magazines are dulled to want such things. Their life work fits them only for needing the inferior things they are forced to produce.

The Goods without the Good Life

The world that we live in gives us only an "impooverished reality". We have all the "goods" and they aren't really what we want. Our culture which is supposed to be a source of joy and well-being is as much a source of menace and oppression. Outside there is the great shell of vast machines, giant libraries and universities, complex structures of government and finance. Inside there is confusion, uncertainty, fear and worst of all, emptiness. Only a genuine *community of control* can reestablish confidence and give the substance as well as the appearance of participation.

Those who themselves wield power will try to keep alive the idea that power is necessary — which is fundamentally the idea that most people can't be trusted. They will continue to stimulate the worst motives, urging people to go on acquiring and struggling for power — and so compete with each other for what belongs to all. In doing this, however, they conspire to keep men in ignorance of their true nature — which is to be able to work for each other without desiring to dominate or come out at some end point "on top." A truly radical political movement must renounce all desire for power for itself or for any other group or interest and work to abolish power or to keep it where it belongs — with everybody.

—ROY FINCH

TAX REFUSAL PROGRAM

March 15th is the deadline for filing returns and paying 1948 income taxes. The Tax Refusal Committee of Peacemakers is circulating a statement urging as many persons as possible to refuse to pay their taxes.

Their reasons?

"Believing that men are accountable for their actions, and that laws requiring immoral acts should not be obeyed, we have after serious consideration determined upon a course of civil disobedience with relation to the income tax laws of the United States.

"We are united in affirming the brotherhood of all men, and we are therefore unwilling to contribute to preparations for war. We renounce the ways of war and violence, and call upon our fellow men in all countries to lay down their arms, to renounce forever dependence upon violence and murder to protect their property, their lives, and their ideals. We testify that the methods of violence have failed utterly, and that they have failed because they are morally wrong. We plead with our fellow citizens of the United States to join us in acting for peace by refusing to manufacture weapons of war, refusing to serve in the armed forces, and refusing to finance war preparations. We urge them to join us in working together in love and non-violence for a world in which peace replaces conflict, abundance replaces want, and freedom and equality replace tyranny and injustice."

If you will be refusing all or part of your federal income taxes for 1948 or 1949, or if you want information on tax refusal, methods of escaping withholding tax provisions, possible government action, etc., write Ernest Bromley, General Delivery, Wilmington, Ohio.

LETTERS

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ties. They want papers like *Alternative* to spoon-feed them exact plans and procedures. We submit that a careful reading of this issue (and many others) will show that *Alternative* points the way toward alternatives in a far more constructive way than if we presented a series of dogmatic blueprints.

Principles for Action

In addition we take this opportunity to print five principles drawn up by the Committee for Non-Violent Revolution. The editors of *Alternative* subscribe to these principles and invite comment on them.

1. We urge workers to take control of the factories, mines, shops, and farms in which they work. We should elect our own foreman, management committees, and representatives on planning committees.
2. We advocate equal income for all. We advocate free food, clothing, and shelter, as well as free complete facilities for recreation, education, health, and transportation.
3. We are opposed to all war and all nationalism. We advocate a general strike to prevent this or any other government from carrying on a war. We refuse to serve in the armed forces, to make or handle armaments or to give any support to any war.
4. We believe in such methods as strikes, sit-downs, and civil disobedience, without resort to violence and with respect for human personality.
5. We believe that truthfulness, mutual aid, and respect for those who oppose us are powerful weapons for building a new society. We refuse to use violence, deceit, punishment, or hatred — weapons which have corrupted the revolutionary movements of the past.

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