

Alternative

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HOW TO IDENTIFY A RADICAL

There are many people going around these days who like to call themselves radicals. And yet, for all their wonderful ideas, it is very difficult for their fellow men (or even their friends) to identify them as such. They may be nice people in general, trying not to cheat or lie or rob or chisel except in most extreme circumstances. They may be willing to lend a helping hand to friends in time of need. They may have all this and much more in their personal makeup which stamps them (to those who know them) as quite nice people.

And yet there is not much about them to differentiate them from other nice people who are that way for other reasons — religious, humanitarian, etc. — but who are definitely not radicals in their political and economic ideas. If not this way, how then should one be able to identify a radical?

The difficulty with most radicals is that they are content to allow their political, economic (and sometimes ethical) ideas to be the complete extent of their radicalism. Sometimes they are active in a political movement and for a few months, once every four years, can be identified by the campaign button they are wearing. Just as likely, however, they are disgusted with all existing organizations and are able to do nothing but discuss issues with their friends, while waiting for the great, new, wonderful organization to emerge from somewhere.

Clothes

Very few radicals turn their minds toward new ways in the practices of day to day living. From the way they dress, the way they eat, the way they house themselves, the ways in which they get recreation, their attitudes toward sex, there is nothing which identifies them as creative individuals, doing things in strikingly sensible ways, when such ways depart from the established, acceptable standards of respectable society.

Of course, some radicals dress shabbily with an "I don't care what people think" attitude; but there is nothing to distinguish them from the poverty-stricken or from bums. Radicals should dress sensibly and creatively regardless of popular fashion. They should initiate new ideas in design of clothing. In the summer they should

keep cooler than possible under present usage. Shorts are legal in most areas. This is a radical idea only in the United States; in Europe, wearing shorts is acceptable for usual daily activities during the summer. For the upper body, sleeveless, collarless, and backless blouses that really beat the heat (and humidity), that cover the law but little else, can also be made up quite easily from old apparel or new material by any one with an inventive frame of mind. And the sensible radical who wants to live the revolution in his own lifetime should also practice nudism during the summer even if only in his own and friends' homes and in secluded woods, farms, mountains and beaches. For colder weather (or protection from the blazing sun,) attractive one piece zipper coveralls could be made up, as described by Huxley in "Brave New World", and as is already worn by some professional night club dancers. And a few years ago at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a radical designer advocated the toga or poncho-style robe as the most sensible type of clothing for both men and women ever worn throughout the ages. He didn't have the 'guts' however to go around in such a garment himself.

Food

Food is a subject on which some radicals tend toward such frugality and simplicity that they lose one of the great pleasures of life. I believe a sensible radical should go more toward the other extreme and break with the tradition that people eat only what they know, only those foods and recipes to which they are accustomed. A radical should even try to invent new recipes. Lack of experimental attitude in regard to food hardly ties in with the radical's idea of revolution establishing a completely new way of life.

House and furniture ideas continue along the same patterns. Most of us know radical artists who also go in for architecture and furniture; yet how few of us avail ourselves of these new ideas for more functional and often more beautiful and sometimes less expensive things of this sort.

Recreation is a field where so far little of a radical nature has been attempted, and much remains to be done. The competitive, cutthroat

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GARRY DAVIS

When Garry Davis announced last summer that he was going into temporary retirement to think over his views, it was clear that one of two things would happen. Either the World Citizenship movement would collapse for want of a concrete place to go, or else Davis would come to a complete renunciation of war. The decision has now been made and Davis has become a complete pacifist.

Of course the World Citizenship Movement could have become (like most World Government organizations) a paper organization where well-meaning persons could dream and talk, in the safety of numbers. But what distinguished Davis, from the beginning, was that he was interested in more than talking and writing. He took concrete action in accord with his beliefs, *even though he had to act alone*. This reverses the usual policy which is to defer action until some future day when large numbers are ready to act. Interestingly enough it is only those rebels who act alone, as Davis did, who succeed in the end in capturing the imagination and support of large numbers.

Vincent Sheean, another recent convert to pacifism, has yet to prove himself in action. Perhaps that is why *TIME* praises Sheean and ridicules Davis. Talk is respectable, as long as it does not threaten to get down to business. That Davis means business can be seen not only in his actions but also in the letter he wrote to the President of France. Here he says:

"To be a true pacifist today requires real courage and self-sacrifice. It is not a refuge for cowards, a criticism which has been leveled at it in the past. It means swimming against the gigantic and deadly social stream driven by fear-force, hate, and violence. It means not only turning the other cheek, but also loving the enemy, for the enemy is also a part of mankind, however misdirected. I hope I shall always have the courage to resist the evil of division—though I am increasingly aware of my failings and weaknesses — and be prepared to offer, in what little measure I am able, those unifying sentiments which I know fill the core of my being."

There are growing potentialities for a strong non-violent anti-war movement in the United States. If Garry Davis returns to the United States, as he intends, he may play a significant role in its development. The success of the movement will depend, however, not on Garry Davis or any single personality but rather on the ability of many others who see the futility of war to translate their opposition into concrete personal acts. One person who *becomes* a world citizen is worth a hundred who talk and write about how nice it will be when everybody does so.

—R. F. & D. D.

Letters

Philadelphia 23, Pa.

To the Editor:

It is a mystery to me why such liberal periodicals as ALTERNATIVE and THE PROGRESSIVE have given an unfavorable reception to Vincent Sheean's LEAD KINDLY LIGHT, while a magazine like TIME gave it a sympathetic review. It would seem that those interested in non-violence would welcome the addition to their ranks of a man who has a wide audience among liberals who have not heretofore been interested in Gandhian pacifism.

Because Sheean does not go as far as you would like — does not advocate a mass movement for civil disobedience — it seems to me childish, to say the least, to attack the book on the grounds of being "poorly organized," "a hodgepodge," and "artificially" written. I am grateful to the author for an account of Gandhi's life and of Hindu philosophy written in a manner so lucid, understandable and compelling to the reader. . . .

I agree with you in that I was let down by the final chapter of LEAD KINDLY LIGHT. I would have liked to see the author advocate a movement of civil disobedience. He does, however, support individual SATYAGRAHA (which some members of your group are heroically carrying out), and this is going a long way for someone who consistently and over a long period supported a war against Facism. Give him time; he may go farther. Do you remember how long it took to go "all the way" in the thinking out of your pacifist ideas? — it did for me — or perhaps you were born a pacifist. I would never scorn the sincerity of one who has gone this far, as you have done.

—MARY ALICE BENSON

Dear Friends:

In the special mimeographed issue of ALTERNATIVE, containing letters from Sandy Katz there appears the following editorial comment, intended to clarify a reference in the text: "This is comment on an article by Paul Goodman in the March issue of RESISTANCE advocating registration mainly on the grounds that those from 18 to 26 are too young to make decisions on such matters."

This is a plain misstatement of fact: Goodman did not advocate registration for the draft.

RESISTANCE would not print an article advocating registration for the draft. We do not do the work of the government, and ALTERNATIVE should be aware of this.

—DAVID WIECK

Paul Goodman did not advocate registration per se and we regret having said that he did. Apparently what Goodman did imply in his article is that non registrants should not make their position on the draft public, there should be no open movement by non registrants, that jails should not be considered better institutions than the army.

TOTALITARISM: VATICAN STYLE

THE VATICAN IN WORLD POLITICS — Avro
Manhattan, 444 pp., Gaer Associates, \$3.75.

AMERICAN FREEDOM AND CATHOLIC
POWER—Paul Blanshard, 350 pp.,
Beacon Press, \$3.50.

These books are a grim reminder that there exists in our midst the potent remnant of an epoch once commonly regarded as the period of blackest reaction in human history and to which is inextricably associated the terms "Dark Ages" and "Inquisition."

In Manhattan's book (originally published by C. A. Watts, in London) the Church which does not engage in political activities is able to have over 400 pages devoted to just such activities on its part. As glaring as any indictment in a long and grave list would be its support, open and tacit, to the rise of Nazism. At the very outset in March, 1933, the Catholic Party in the Reichstag with the prodding of the Vatican voted for Hitler. In July, 1933, following instructions from Rome the Party dissolved itself altogether, declared in support of Hitler, and thereby assured his ensoncement in power. Even after the purges and the killings, even after Catholic leaders like von Schleicher and Strasser were murdered and all Catholic organizations destroyed, the German Hierarchy and the Vatican continued to support Hitler. "The 'authority' which claims to be the moral authority of the world was practically the only one which did not utter a single word in defense of the persecuted, or of reproach to the Nazis . . . the same 'authority' which asked the Spanish people to disobey their Government." Only when the specific interests of the Church itself were involved were there any signs of protest.

Catholics and Nazism

When the Nazis annexed Austria, Cardinal In-
nitzer welcomed them "with swastikas in the
churches and with the ringing of bells" and
"ordered his priests to do likewise."

"While the horror of the bombing of Warsaw
was going on, and Catholic people were being
massacred by the Luftwaffe . . . instead of pro-
testing to the world against the German attack,
he (the Pope) remained completely dumb. Not
a single word of condemnation, not a hint that
Nazi Germany should have been, at least mor-
ally, condemned by the Seat of Catholic Mor-
ality."

Hitler, a Catholic, was never excommunicated.

Only after more than a month following Ger-
many's complete defeat did the Pope go on re-
cord against Nazism.

It might also be of interest in these days to
note that the Church, once while it was ranting

against Bolshevism, tolerated, and even negotiated
with the Bolsheviks in order to crush the rival
Orthodox Church; and that it *opposed* Soviet
measures directed toward religious toleration out
of fear of a resurgence of this same rival.

Blanshard's book, which bears the endorsement
of John Dewey and Henry Sloane Coffin among
others, is a close study heavily documented —
not always, however, with the help of Catholic
publishing houses, citations from the works of
two of these having to be used without permis-
sion.

Here is delineated the diametrical opposite of
the things we stand for, the antithesis of individ-
ual freedom, conscience and intellectual enlight-
enment. ". . . let those who live in obedience
allow themselves to be disposed of at the will
of their superior like a corpse which permits one
to turn and handle it any way one pleases."
(From the mandate of the Constitution of the
Jesuits.)

For wholesome sexuality, there is the all too
revealing "sublimation" offered nuns: ". . . you
ought to live, breathe and pant for your Celestial
Spouse alone . . . a union with Him, so intimate,
naked, simple, sweet, and so perfect that noth-
ing can be added to it . . . Oh holy inebriation,
which in the holy commerce of prayer transports
a soul into the cellars of divine love . . ."

White Is Black

There is still demanded the intellectual sub-
servance that Loyola once expressed (" . . . if
anything shall appear white to our eyes which
the Church has defined as black, we likewise
must declare it to be black."). As recently as
April, 1948, the official world Jesuit organ ar-
rogantly proclaimed, "The Roman Catholic Church,
convinced, through its divine prerogatives, of be-
ing the only true church, must demand the right
of freedom for herself alone . . ."

And it is perhaps well to be reminded that bar-
baric obscurantism 400 years after the Reforma-
tion still survives in daily practice, that where the
Catholic view prevails even a doomed embryo
may not be removed from the uterus though that
be the only means to save a woman's life, that
sterilization may not be rendered even in cases
where pregnancy means certain death.

But the reception that this sober study has been
afforded is possibly the best proof of the validity
of its thesis, a study that New York publishers
could not print, that the general press cannot re-
view, that New York's largest department store
cannot stock, and for which the publisher's win-
dows were smashed.

It is almost a moral obligation to read it.

—SANDY KATZ

A RADICAL

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nature of modern sports reflect often to the most brutal extent the competitive, cutthroat nature of modern capitalism. Yet, outside of a few play cooperatives and folk dancing groups, nothing much of a constructive nature has been attempted. And it is almost amazing, when you stop to think of it, how many so-called radicals are as wildly enthusiastic about the private commercial baseball team (that makes its headquarters in their area) as are the non-radicals. The same spirit as in nationalism pervades them both.

The attitude of the radical towards sex still needs overhauling. Many radicals are beginning to talk more about the importance of psychology along with economics and politics. And of the various sexual drives and repressions that help make up present society. But mere verbiage on the psychology of sex is not enough to distinguish a radical. The falseness and lack of need for legal and/or religious marriage ties was an idea once so well accepted by radicals that they could be easily recognized by their disdain for that institution and refusal to abide by it. Today, however, the trend in practice is towards the legal and respectable; and most "radicals" who want to share their lives with a member of the other sex are getting married before (or shortly after) the relationship starts.

Sexual Taboos

Many other sexual practices and attitudes still remain under taboo. The practice of extra-marital intercourse is not limited to radicals, as we all know and as is documented by the Kinsey report. So radicals cannot be distinguished there except possibly by their openness in regard to it. And many radicals still shy away from open discussion of some sexual topics. Many shy away from nudism because of the sexual taboo. Many

are still not completely open with children about sex. A very common taboo is the avoidance of using the bathroom while a member of the other sex is in it. Most bathrooms are set up in such a way that while toilet, sink, bath or shower is being used, one of the other facilities could easily be used at the same time. Outside of the odor from defecation (which may some day stop being so objectionable when the taboo is lifted) there should be no rational objection to such use of the bathroom. Familiarity with the human body and its various parts and functions should no longer be taboo for the radical. Another foolish sexual habit is the washing of hands after urinating. Outside of the sexual taboo (or the rare occurrence where hands are wetted during urination), there is no good reason for this practice. The genitals, being covered all the time, are generally quite clean; whereas the hands, uncovered, are getting dirty and picking up germs. So the washing practice should really be before instead of after.

Radicals thus can make themselves known without preaching economics or politics. As their lives are integrated into sensible practice in all life's aspects (instead of just some fine character traits one or another of which may also mark the successful burglar or murderer) so will they become more easily recognizable as radicals. And while the public may be slow in allowing good sense to replace the usual respectable taboos and practices, easily identifiable radicals will be constantly planting seeds of good sense which may win them more converts in time than all the wonderful political and economic ideas which generally lie quite dormant in their heads. Radical changes in the day-to-day patterns of culture should certainly prepare the way, if not the day, for radical changes in the political and economic spheres.

—IRVING RAVIN

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