

Alternative

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AGAINST THE RACE TO DEATH

Against this frenzied spiraling toward annihilation, against this almost pathological insistence on suicide, — what answer can we give other than an equally total RESISTANCE? (resistance with a determined grit and an unyielding passion that must know no bounds.)

More incumbent than ever before upon us is the SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION — objection to war and the regimentation for war. We must REFUSE to make these bombs and this poison, REFUSE to carry them and to finance them, and we must urge others similarly to REFUSE. We must do this concretely and specifically. To the worker in the plant, we must tell him to get out; to the carrier, to examine every cargo to see that he is not carrying death in his litter; to the science worker, to balk; to the soldier, to desert. We must at least make the gesture to stop remitting taxes for death.

There must be one voice for LIFE, however minuscule that voice. Now is not the time for apathy and abdication, but for resolution and responsibility. Not despair and timidity, but resourcefulness and daring. Not the time for succumbing to inertia and death, but for asserting action and life. Now is the time for renewed vigor and effort. Now is when we MUST be articulate.

That social idealism that cannot stand in opposition now is worthless.

—S. K.

What Now? Two Views on H-Bomb

1. The question asked is: What can be done about the H-Bomb?

It falls into two parts: (1) Assuming we prefer the imperfect democracy of the West to the perfect totalitarianism of Russia, how can we be reasonably assured that if the USA does not make the H-Bomb, the USSR won't either; or, failing that, that if it comes to a world victory of the USSR, Soviet totalitarianism can be overthrown, or at least effectively resisted, by non-violent means? (2) If this question is either satisfactorily answered or believed to be not necessary to answer, how can we prevent the making of the H-Bomb?

(1) I am as unable to answer the first question as I was a year and a half ago, when I confessed my inability to resolve the dilemma: either Russian world victory with slight chance of effective non-violent resistance, or a probable World War III, with universal and perhaps total destruction even more likely today than it was then, when we only had to worry about the dear

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2. What — if anything — shall we do about the H-Bomb? In deciding, I think we should consider the following:

1. It has now become ridiculous to speak of preferring the imperfect democracy of the West to the totalitarianisms of Europe — particularly if by "preferring" Western Democracy we mean supporting its armies and acquiescing in its H-Bombs.

Who of us can weigh either the morality or the practical effects for good and evil of one side of the cold war against the other? Of course it is more pleasant for us to live in the U. S. (particularly if we are white and relatively conventional) than to have been a Jew in Germany or to be a dissenter in a Russian dominated country. But what worse could Hitler have done than we did to the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? What worse could Russia do to the world than we have done by developing the H-Bomb and by preparing to use it?

Even if we take our much vaunted internal

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Open Letter

MOTHERS AGAINST WAR
117 Nassau St. — Rm. 1028
New York, N. Y.

Dear Friend:

If you are a mother, you must realize with apprehension that some day your children may be called to fight in a third world war. It is terrible that for two generations women have been raising their sons only to be slaughtered. You, like many other mothers, must wish that you could do something about it.

That is why we are organizing Mothers Against War and are asking you to sign the pledge below. The Committee is being formed initially from the ranks of mothers in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peacemakers and the War Resisters League. We will welcome all mothers who wish to join with us. As soon as we receive the signed pledges of mothers in a number of communities, you will hear from us again. Keep in touch with us and let us have your suggestions.

We hope to get as many signatures as possible and to present the signed pledges to President Truman on this coming Mother's Day. We thus hope to make Mother's Day meaningful — not merely an occasion for wearing carnations.

Will you sign the pledge below, and return it as soon as possible?

Sincerely,

Jean Houser, Bertha Fox, Paula Peck,
Janet Lovett, Pauline Garvin, Esther
Eichel, Betty Dellinger, Marion Bromley,
Mary Etter, Helen Smiley.

For the Committee

Faced with a threat of a third world war which would destroy mankind, we mothers feel a responsibility to take the strongest action in our power to avert it. We have not brought children into this world to be cannon fodder. We hate the thought that they may become mass murderers. We therefore pledge to do all in our power to persuade our sons and daughters to refuse to take part in war, or in any phase of the militarization of America. In making this pledge, we hope to set an example for mothers throughout America, Russia and every country of the world.

Name

Address

City State.....

WAR, SADISM & PACIFISM

WAR, SADISM AND PACIFISM — Edward
Glover, 292 pp. enlarged edition, Allen &
Unwin, \$2.00.

The only thing that might be of more interest than why men war — after you strip the economic, political and religious rationale — is why some will not. In this book, by a renowned English Freudian-analyst, despite the promising title there is only a little that is important or new on either.

Perhaps of most interest to us is his suggestion that there is too much pacifist preoccupation with ethical and economic factors of war to the neglect of psychological causes. He is saying — and I am but paraphrasing him — that we overlook the passive destructive impulses, the unconscious masochism, in man; that these contribute considerably to an unconscious readiness to tolerate or even welcome situations of war; that they do so not merely by paralyzing the operation of self-preservative impulse but because the acceptance of suffering in addition to being a primary form of gratification represents a primitive method of overcoming "unconscious guilt."

Man must be liberated from within as well as from without. The quest for economic security is not enough — only if it is combined with psychological stability and satisfaction in love, family life and work can it be expected to bring about that deeper tranquility that is necessary to maintain a peaceable community.

We must above all bring up children free from the avoidable anxieties, guilts and despairs that breed unconscious hostilities and so promote war-readiness. In particular, we must reduce the specific stress due to the close relation between the sexual impulses and the impulses of aggression. We must try to reduce the tangled mass of superstitions and conventions that obstruct all rational adaptation to sexual life. Thus, sex reform becomes an aspect of the struggle for peace. As conversely, opposition to sex radicalism is anti-pacifist. We are also referred to primitive peoples who in many respects have a sense of human values superior to ours and who in many instances treat their children and their children's problems in a natural and sensible way.

Though it is held unlikely that this change by itself would be radical enough to reduce decisively war-readiness, yet combined with other and more radical procedures it might have the desired effect.

Glover may not be putting it too strongly when he suggests that in a very real sense we follow a reactionary policy to the extent that we shy away from these issues.

—S. Katz

Libertarian Press, Glen Gardner, N. J.

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democracy at its face value (and forget that preparation for another war may well destroy it entirely), our best virtues simply elevate us to the category of the model boy who sang in the church choir and bludgeoned his girl friend with an axe.

2. Some Senators and scientists are sincerely alarmed—but their alarm won't lead to anything.

We have grown so used to crass militarism in high circles the last few years that it comes as something of a shock to have Senator McMahon (for example) express his fears of the H-Bomb and urge that the U. S. Government devote 50 billion dollars to a peace program. Similarly, some pacifists consider it a hopeful sign that a lot of prominent scientists question the value of the new bomb and issue a public statement urging that the U. S. not be the first to use it.

But these soul-searchings in high places should not fool us into thinking that the Senators and scientists are going to do anything useful for peace. The vital question to be decided at the moment was — should we *make* the H-Bomb? It was only natural that those who decided in favor of making the most terrifying weapon the world has ever known should assuage their troubled consciences by saying "BUT we must also spend 50 billion dollars for peace"; "we must promise not to be the first to use it", etc., etc.

When the time comes that the vital question is — Shall we *use* the H-Bomb, most of these same gentlemen will be in favor of using it, however reluctantly and with however many reservations.

The real significance of these senatorial outpourings is that they indicate the extent to which *all* men are shocked by the horror of our present path. This means that despite appearances to the contrary (see point 3,) the time is ripe for a radical peace offensive. The obvious monstrosity of the war machine makes people a little readier to listen to alternatives. No longer can opposition to war be dismissed so easily as the stock-in-trade of cranks, cowards, and traitors.

3. Most people feel overwhelmed by the hopelessness of the situation.

Only a superficial observer would say that people are basically apathetic. People appear apathetic because there seems to be nothing we can do. After all, in a world of H-Bombs, what good is it for me, John Jacobs, to say "I won't join the army" or "I won't kill anyone"? How can we ask the U. S. to resist totalitarianism non-violently when a dictator needs only to persuade a few pilots to drop H-Bombs on us in order to wipe out all resistance, whether non-violent or not? The main problem then is not that people are incapable of concern but that they do not see alternative methods that offer any hope of success. If we have such methods — and are willing to dramatize them through personal sacrifice—we will find that there are countless examples where apparent apathy will turn into revolutionary action.

It is also worth noticing that if all those who abandon the struggle (one by one throughout the years) "because the situation is so hopeless" would unite in revolutionary action, the situation would no longer be so hopeless.

4. In addition to the horror, the hopelessness, and apparent apathy there is a "big thrill" in the H-Bomb.

The mass suicide drive of a frustrated civilization finds its most thrilling outlet in contemplating the H-Bomb. But a civilization haunted by its own emptiness and captivated by the death-wish is also a civilization capable of a revolutionary about-face. The surge of animal life can transform the death drive so that it becomes not suicide but death to all the old ways which have frustrated and hampered life.

5. To some extent the awesomeness of the H-Bomb can produce a period in which the heroism of war-time can come into action under the more fruitful conditions of relative peace-time.

No war has ever been fought in which there were not countless examples of heroic action by soldiers and civilians alike. But the futility of the over-all war method has rendered these sacrifices relatively useless (and often downright harmful) — and when the war has ended the man who braved enemy shells to rescue a wounded buddy has been afraid to face the idle gossip that is brought to bear upon "idealists" and non-conformists.

In recent wars, pacifists have similarly been stimulated into acts of heroism which they have not been capable of duplicating in peace-time. Imprisoned war objectors went a month or more without eating and many additional months being force-fed, in order to hunger strike against the draft. But the value of their fight was lessened by the fact that it was their own imprisonment that spurred them on. And since the end of the shooting war, most of the same men have not been able to lose a day's pay in order to speak on a street corner or to demonstrate against the "cold war." Those who are active in the anti-war fight for the most part confine themselves to relatively "safe" activities. They lack the drive that could make themselves "expedible."

The ominousness of the present situation may well provide the emotional impact to spur acts of peace-time devotion similar to those of war-time and capable of making non-violent warfare a political factor for the first time in the U. S.

6. Acts of limitless self-sacrifice have almost limitless possibilities for transforming the historical situation.

The greatest self-sacrifices cannot turn the clock of history backward. For instance, the frantic acts of handweavers could not stem the mechanization of industry for long. But when a new social idea is needed, it seems to require acts of extreme devotion and self-sacrifice before it can come to birth. The extreme self-repudiation of a rather confused and naive World Citizen, Garry Davis, achieved for the idea of world citizenship results that had eluded the highly financed efforts of "more intelligent" and personable campaigners.

An age which has seen the fanaticism of the

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Nazis and the wasted sacrifices of two generations of American soldiers is rightly skeptical of unrestrained acts for any cause. But the great injury comes only when such acts are accompanied by violence. Personally I expect that the horror of the present situation will produce in the next few months many fanatical acts that will be ridiculed into oblivion. The hope is that in addition there will be some acts of extreme devotion which are historically valid and will create a new historical situation in which war will be first challenged and then eliminated.

7. There are a number of such acts which could be undertaken today, some one or two of which could penetrate to the public conscience and help stimulate the growth in America of a mass, non-violent movement against war, similar to the Gandhian non-violent movement in India against British nationalism.

Naturally it is hard to know in advance which specific acts can strike home to people. It is only through experimentation by a number of persons of different temperaments and different approaches that the discovery can be made. But to achieve the level required by the present situation, it is necessary to go beyond the publicity stunts and picketing demonstrations that have characterized the more aggressive side of the anti-war movement in the last few years. There must be acts of self-sacrifice that obviously stem from a deeper concern — and reveal a more universal love, even for our "enemies" — than is ordinarily required for such demonstrations.

One area worth exploring is that of the hunger fast. Despite the prevalent idea that fasting appeals only to "Orientals", the fact is that the hunger-strikes of Gandhi in India and of McSweeney and others in Ireland had a powerful appeal to Westerners. In prison during the war we discovered that hunger strikes against the prison administration won more respect and interest from the "tough", worldly-wise convicts than anything else we war resisters said or did.

I think it would be worthwhile for a group of aroused persons to gather in a central location for a joint hunger-strike of at least ten days duration, and preferably longer. Our "demands" could be: 1) an appeal to individuals to renounce the war method and to join a campaign of non-violent resistance against all preparations for war. 2) a demand that the U. S. Government suspend plans for making the Hydrogen bomb.

DAVID DELLINGER

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old familiar humane and picturesquely ineffectual A-Bomb. (See *Politics*, Summer 1948.)

(2) Even if I could answer the first question, I should be stumped by the second. Things just seem to have gotten out of control. The scale is too big, the levers of power too far removed from people like us (and perhaps from people like Stalin and Truman), the mood of the general population, after generations of Pavlovian conditioning by industrialism, world wars, and state bureaucracies, too demoralized and apathetic to respond to our appeals. Even if we could make them with the old fervor and rationality. Which we can't. For fervor we now have routine numbing; for reason, the old stock of antiquated abstractions. For we, too, are affected by the common lot. The pacifist and socialist writings of today are to those of two generations ago as hay is to grass. Which is why I am no longer a pacifist, a socialist, or any kind of ist. I suggest that, instead of chewing over this un-nourishing fodder, instead of making ourselves feel guilty about crimes we cannot prevent, instead of wasting our limited brain-power on problems we cannot solve, instead, in short, of asking ourselves foolish question like "What can we do about the H-Bomb?", I suggest we try to live better our own personal lives as craftsmen, friends, lovers, fathers, husbands, teachers, artists, or however we feel our own deepest individual means to be expressed. Pacifism might be one of these meanings, but not the kind of pacifism that asks frivolous questions about the H-Bomb.

—DWIGHT MACDONALD

History is Subversive

The result of the battle disappointed everyone's expectations. Almost the whole (of the people) had mobilized on one side or the other, and it was taken for granted that if it came to an action, the victors would be able to do what they liked and the vanquished would be at their mercy. But Providence so disposed it that both sides . . . claimed the victory and yet neither had gained a foot of territory, a single city or a particle of power beyond what they had possessed before the battle. On the contrary there was more unsettlement and disorder . . . after the battle than before it.

XENOPHON
(362 BC)

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