

Alternative

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THE NEXT ISSUE OF *ALTERNATIVE* WILL BE A SPECIAL ISSUE DEALING WITH THE WAR. MEANWHILE WE ENCLOSE A LEAFLET WHICH WAS PUT OUT BY THE GLEN GARDNER WORLD CITIZENS COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO THE KOREAN FIGHTING

Don't Let Unemployment Drive Us To War Again!

A recent account in the New York papers tells of more than 3000 unemployed who answered an ad in New York City for 110 laborer's jobs. One married man with a family — who has been without work for nearly a year — waited in line from midnight Sunday till noon Tuesday, even though it rained for more than 24 hours of the time. He paid \$1.12 application fee and was told that if, after processing, he receives a job, work will not begin until the fall.

"Processing" includes a character test—which is a polite way of saying that you must give up the right to strike and must demonstrate that you are unthinkingly "patriotic". We know this latter to be true because an editor of *Alternative* lost his job for the same employer (the City of New York) when a character test revealed that he had enough character to state honestly that he would not participate in the mass murder of modern warfare.

So far, "unemployment is not a major problem". This is what the economists tell us and

it must be very comforting to read so if you are one of the 3,500,000 unemployed or one of their approximately 12,000,000 dependents.

But the economists do know some things that most of the unemployed don't. They know, for instance, that *not fear of Russia but fear of unemployment* is the greatest single factor underlying the Cold War, the \$15,000,000,000 arms budget and the anti-Red hysteria. The only way that the capitalist system can provide enough jobs to stave off revolution is through tremendous governmental spending. Governmental spending for useful things, like slum-clearance, rural communities with modern houses and comfortable workshops, would not be "good politics". It could be attacked as un-American, it would involve a frank admission of the need for propping up the sagging system, and it would antagonize too many social interests.

But whipping up a cold war kills two birds with one stone — not to mention, of course the millions of humans it will kill later. It provides an outlet for vast expenditures, thereby postponing the worst unemployment, and it provides the emotional setting for fascistic suppressions of civil liberties.

We Have Another Solution

If all the proceeds of industry and agriculture were considered community property to be shared equally amongst all the members of the community, there would be no more unemployment. Whatever work was performed would always add to the total of goods available for community distribution.

It is not lack of human needs to be filled that causes unemployment. Neither is it lack of raw materials nor lack of work to be done. It is simply lack of private profit. Lack of private profit causes some men and corporations to shut down their "privately owned" factories.

If we make the factories, mines, farms, and workshops community property, then no one will have any reason to shut down the various enterprises — at least not until there are more goods available than people need. Then it will be a pleasure to reduce the hours of work all around and to increase the possibilities for creative leisure.

Russia has apparently solved the problem of unemployment by "nationalizing" its industries. In this case, the cure is worse than the disease because the enterprises are under the control of the State. But decentralist, democratic control by the persons who work in them can solve unemployment AND IN ADDITION solve many of the frustrations and conflicts caused by inequality of power.

It should be obvious that "democracy" is a farce so long as our whole economy is dominated by the profit motive — the motive whereby some people try to make more money than others and have the power to throw other people out of work in order to protect their financial investments. Only by introducing equality into our economic system can we become democratic in a sense that means anything. And only through such equality can we gain the economic security which will do away with the drive to war.

D. D.

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

The Action which we can take can begin at any time in our lives. The One Man Revolution does not depend upon any organization, or upon gaining a majority. The most hopeful thought along this line has been expressed by John Dewey:

"A bad man is one, who, no matter how good he has been, is getting worse, and a good man is one, who, no matter how bad he has been, is getting better."

The Great Illusion of this age is that of Bigness of Quantity instead of Quality. When I was picketing the local tax man, a friendly columnist asked me if I thought I could change the world. I told him, "No, but I am sure it is not going to change me." If we feel that we are right it does not matter that we are alone for as Ibsen has said, "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone." Radical and pacifist groups have sinned very much on this score for most of their efforts have been as Pressure groups toward pussyfooting politicians, when the fact is that they should put the pressure in the one place where it might have some effect: on themselves. The classic statement of this idea is given by Tolstoy:

"The alteration of the character of men must begin in THEMSELVES and demands much struggle and labor; whereas the alteration of the FORMS of life of OTHERS is attained easily without inner effort over oneself, and has the appearance of a very important and far reaching activity."

—AMMON HENNACY

The following letter appeared in the French Press from a young man of 19 "lying in jail under sentence of death for murdering and robbing a taxi-chauffeur and awaiting trial on a charge of having similarly killed and robbed another taxi-chauffeur."

"The public prosecutor demands my head, but he is very careful not to demand accounts from society, from the times that made me what I am.

"Is it the fault of us youngsters if our parents were disunited and lived apart?

"Is it our fault if our fathers, fighting, prisoners, or deportees, were not there to guide our young footsteps?

"Is it our fault if we had, under the menace of the invader, to leave our homes and wander about the country as refugees?

"Is it our fault if under the occupation we were taught that to break laws and defy regulations was praiseworthy?"

Peace News

WHAT A & P FORGOT TO MENTION IN ITS ADS

. . . The next item of A & P's planned profits for the year 1939 was a sum of \$2,400,000, which the chain expected to collect as so-called overage.

I invite your careful attention to one of the most shocking stories of corrupt imposition upon the consuming public that has recently come to light.

Every businessman knows that he cannot expect to sell all that he buys. There will inevitably be loss from shrinkage, pilferage, spoilage, and other unavoidable causes between the receipt of goods in his store and their sale to his customers. He expects to suffer a 2 to 5 percent stock loss.

A & P knew that stock gains were an impossibility in a legitimately conducted business. Such gains could result only from short weighting, overcharging, and similar frauds upon customers which resulted in the customers paying for something which they did not get.

Yet in 1939, and indeed as a matter of year-in-year-out policy, A & P planned not to suffer stock losses but instead to make substantial sums of money from stock gains — or overages. In 1939 A & P planned that A & P customers would pay for all normal stock losses in A & P stores, plus another \$2,400,000 for goods that A & P never had in stock and which, necessarily, A & P customers did not get in return for their money.

It is not possible, for instance, for an honest merchant to measure out a hundred pounds of sugar out of a hundred-pound sack in small quantities. The same applies to meats, lard, and many other commodities that are received in the retail store in bulk and parceled out in small quantities. There is heavy shrinkage and spoilage in fresh fruits and vegetables. Under the A & P chain store system, the local manager is charged at their full weight or retail value. During a 7-year period the A & P stores received in stock gain profits of \$21,000,000, or \$3,000,000 a year. Managers of stores who could not sell more than they received were fired or demoted. Managers of stores that had substantial stock gains were promoted. Ask any honest grocer and he will tell you that he never had a stock gain in his entire life.

Congressman Wright Patman of Texas in the House of Representatives, Oct. 6, 1949.

Religion and Pacifism

Because many pacifists are religious people and nonviolence has been an element in some of the world's religions, there is a popular misconception that pacifists must be religious. This idea is an obstacle to the growth of pacifism, which is available to everybody whether they are religious or not. Religion is now no longer a help to pacifism but in the main an impediment—for reasons which we should understand.

(1) There has never been any *intrinsic*, necessary connection between pacifism and religion. Any religion in fact can be and has been used to justify anything and everything. Even murder can be made a religious principle, as for example, by the Mohammedan Assassins, who murdered for the glory of Allah, or the Hindu Thugs, who murdered for the goddess Kali, not to mention the Inquisition and modern clergymen who lend religious support to war. Religions will incite arson, riot, witch-burning and heresy persecutions. Pacifism is an *ethical principle* wider than any religion. Dostoevsky's character who says: "I feel so religious I think I'll go out and burn down the town" has something in common with the bloodthirsty chaplain who "loves a fight".

Even the teachings of the various religions are by no means undeniably pacifist. There is certainly no question that the Sermon on the Mount is pacifist, but other parts of the New Testament are open to doubt by intelligent persons. And the fact remains that there is no place where Christ condemns war in so many words. Whether the "spirit" of the New Testament is "social" enough to be specifically pacifist is another point upon which a great deal of pacifist energy has been expended in debate. It might be better to let the point go. Pacifism does not need even this religious support.

(2) Insisting on the connection between religion and pacifism closes off pacifism to those who cannot accept religion. And this covers a great many people today. Pacifism becomes less urgent by introducing this additional qualification without having any effect on the already convinced religious non-pacifists. The pacifist is then in the position of having to oppose the secular tide as well as militarism and national violence. The average person can shunt pacifism aside as the private possession of a few initiates — like the beards worn by the House of David. To be relevant today pacifism must be a secular movement in every respect. Whatever our private feelings about religion, they should be kept strictly private and not allowed to intrude upon pacifism and particularly upon the pacifism expressed to the public.

(3) Religion tends to be conservative while pacifism is necessarily radical. Hence religious

pacifists are continually talking to the wrong audience. To make the existing religions pacifist is a virtual impossibility. Religions are among the last things in society to change. It would be a safe prediction to say that the entire labor movement would probably go pacifist before the vast majority of American clergymen do. Churches are traditionally supported by those who have the most stake in the status quo. Pacifists have frustrated themselves by continuous appeals to the churches as if the churches might be expected to listen more. The audience for pacifists is more likely to be outside the churches than within them. The unorthodox religious people who cannot support the churches tend to drift away from religion altogether or to group up in new sects, but few of these even dare to take the pacifist line. The important distinction is in no way between the religious and the irreligious. If anything, the natural ally of the pacifist lies among the irreligious — the outcasts and the independents.

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The more publications fall into the cold war, stop-Communism, militarize-America pattern, the more important we feel it is that independent papers like ALTERNATIVE should continue to appear. We have already met one repressive action by the government. Some of our March-April issue was seized by the Post Office. At least the reason given was not our opposition to the cold war but the fact that in one of the articles the sex act was referred to in a simple, "clean", unashamed way. If you did not receive that issue, please let us know.

We need support from our readers both in the form of money and articles. We feel that the paper has been written to date too much by its editors, a small group in New Jersey and New York. This has been because not enough outside material has been submitted. If you have something to say, however controversial, write it down and send it in.

As for money, you know that our policy is to send ALTERNATIVE free of charge to those who cannot afford their share of the printing and mailing costs. Apparently some of our readers think that this — plus the fact that we don't scream HELP in each issue — means that we don't need money. The fact is that we are running at a loss and those who can afford it and want to do so should pay not only for their own copies but also for some of the free ones.

In addition to one cent stamps, dimes, and dollar bills, we need a few gifts of twenty-five and fifty dollars apiece to finance street distributions. Please make checks payable to Irving Rabin.

RELIGION AND PACIFISM

Continued from page 3

(4) Religion is in fact one of the forces which divides the world today. Protestants are set against Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses against both, Mohammedans against Hindus, Jews against Mohammedans, etc. There does not exist a genuinely universal religion. Each religion claims universality but on its own terms. To all this is added the clamor of the non-religious. The forces which tend to unite the world (even to the slight extent to which it is united) are not religious. They are mostly scientific and economic. Whatever true uniting of the world takes place will have to be on the basis of universally accepted ethical principles similar to the ethical principles on which the American government was founded. It is narrow and hopeless to think that there could be a true union on the basis of any existing religion. All existing religions are partial, and no synthesizing world religion is in sight.

It is sometimes said that religion must furnish the "dynamic" for pacifism. People who say this evidently mean that pacifism would not have enough inspiration and vision without religion. But it is just as possible to reverse the idea and say that religion and everything else will become more and more meaningless without pacifism. In this case it is pacifism that furnishes the "dynamic". Certainly we have to believe in the possibility of a warless world and that humanity is worth saving to enjoy it. But these are not "religious" truths. Individuals can hold any views they wish in conjunction with them — that

is not in question — but no religious view should in any way be a part of official pacifism. We need a total separation of pacifism and religion.

Pacifism, which has cut its teeth on religion, actually rests on an ethical idea which goes further than the specific teaching of any religion. (even Hinduism with its doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-violence) justifies war in the *Bhagavad-Gita*.) Pacifism will not get out of swaddling clothes until it can develop in its own way without being impeded by appeals to the past and half apologetic connections with religion. It is time now for pacifism to come of age.

ROY FINCH

Alternative welcomes and recommends to its readers two new contemporaries both named *Libertarian Socialist*. One is published by the Libertarian Socialist League P. O. Box 770, G. P. O. New York 1, N. Y. The Winter issue which recently appeared contains articles by Virgel Vogel on the third camp position on war and by Robert Bone on Workers Control at the Shop Level. The LSL was organized last summer mainly by persons who found the Socialist Party going too far to the right.

The other magazine, the Jan.-Mar. issue of which just arrived, is published by the Libertarian Socialist Institute, Arya Bhavan, Sandhurst Rd., Bombay 4, India. The first issue contains articles on *What is Anarchism?* and *Economic Planning without Statism* by Lewis Corey. The LSI has as one of its aims, "We refuse to take part in war, conquest, exploitation, imprisonment, and other crimes of the present-day State."

Each magazine is a quarterly and sells for \$.20 per copy or \$.75 per year.

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