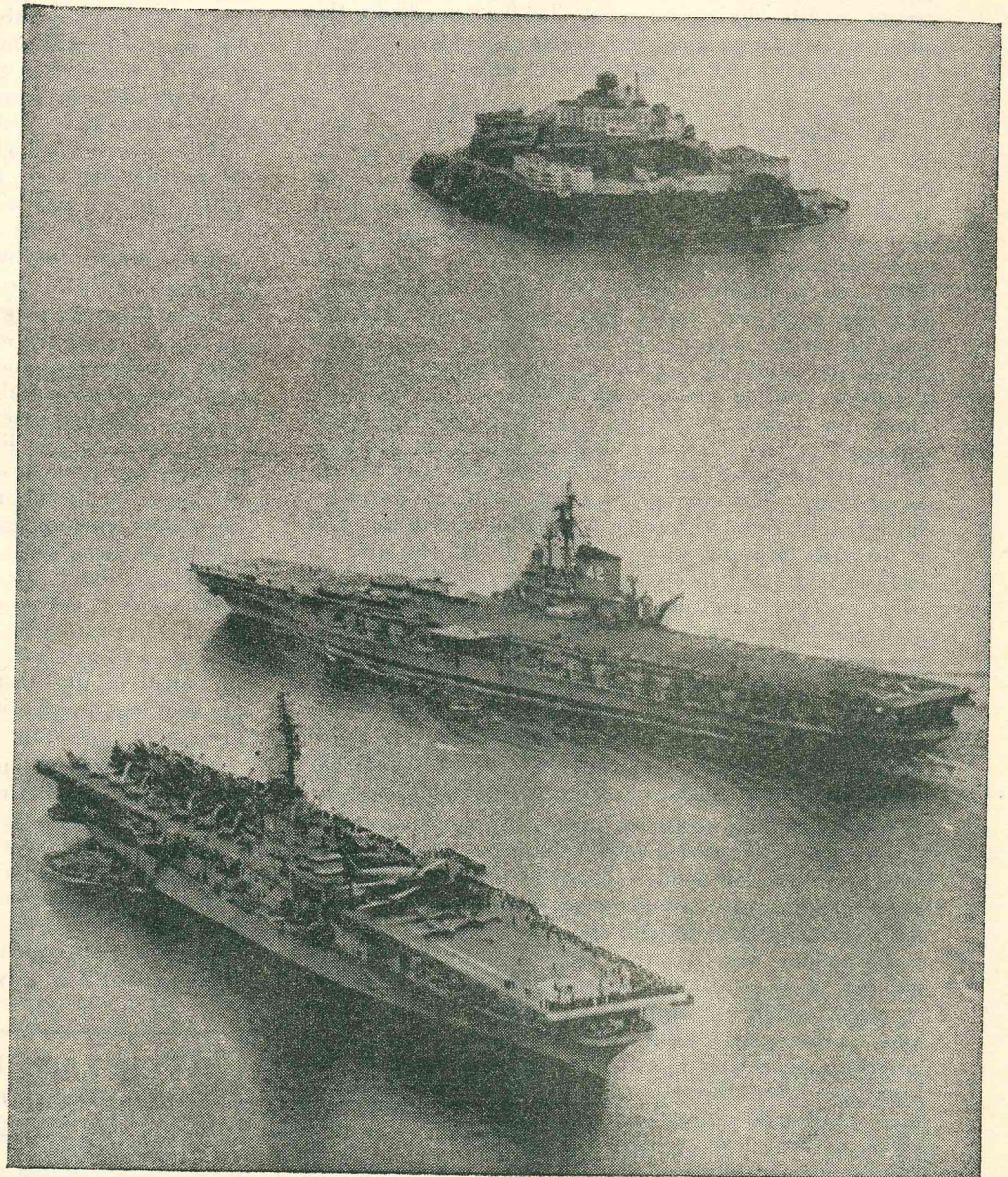


# RESISTANCE

AN ANARCHIST BI-MONTHLY

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Wide World Photo

"PATTERN OF PEACE: U.S. carriers pass each other in San Francisco Bay just south of Alcatraz Island. The 40,000-ton Yorktown, bottom, is on way to Alameda Naval Air Station from Korea. The 45,000-ton Franklin D. Roosevelt is outward-bound for Bremerton, Wash."

from the N.Y. Times, March 4, 1954



## The Individual and World Peace

What is the actual extent of the responsibility which the individual bears for world peace? I do not think I need try to stress the importance of the answer to this problem. Let me put it like this. If we believe that crime is due to a choice of wickedness by individuals we shall try to get rid of it by moral exhortation. If we believe it is hereditary we shall have to rely on eugenics. If we believe that it is a function of environment we shall try to modify the environment. This, after all, is the process of isolating a single contributory cause, to work upon, which we use in tackling any process and modifying it.

At the present time we are just beginning to approach the problems of society, of which war is perhaps the chief, by way of scientific study instead of along the traditional lines of what we can call Western political thought. We want to deal with these problems, if possible, by the same general methods as we have used, with such outstanding success, in dealing with phenomena like smallpox. And I feel pretty certain that the most important addition to our understanding of man and society since the beginning of the century has been the demonstration that human behaviour is comprehensible—not something springing from a mystical background of original sin and original virtue but an intelligible response of an entity, human character, to its environment. Now the progress of sociology has been fairly rapid since it became a separate discipline, and if we wish to apply what we know about man and society to this problem of war, we have reached the stage when we must give some kind of answer to the question of responsibility for war and for peace if we are going any further. If war comes primarily from the aggressive impulses of the public at large, then we have got to begin a widespread and very difficult process of re-education. If not, where does it begin? Or, to put it differently, how much help can we expect from the average member of modern urban societies in getting rid of war?

When sociology began to investigate human conflicts it very naturally started on the limited ones which are most readily to hand, the conflicts between groups. These are pretty general in all countries. It happens that America was, to a large extent, the cradle of this kind of investigation, and America has a particularly large number of classical group conflicts within its borders—class conflicts, conflicts of interest and religion and, particularly, racial conflicts. I think, as I am going to argue later on, the data from conflicts of this kind have been allowed to colour our attitude to war to the exclusion of other factors. The type of mechanisms which have been most studied are probably familiar to you by now—projection, which means, roughly, blaming our own defects on people outside the group; hostility to out-groups, to people who are, or whom we think to be, unlike ourselves; stereotypes, which means the creation of an Aunt Sally—that all Jews are usurers, and that any Jew we meet who is not a usurer is not typically Jewish; and a number of other kinds of emotionally

loaded thinking which go with group conflict. And so a definite picture has been built up of the way in which enmities are built up and maintained.

Parallel with this has been the very large body of psychoanalytical work on the origins of aggression. The two main conclusions, in so far as I can summarise them here, are that aggression in the bad sense is invariably the outcome of the frustration of more positive emotions, such as love and creativity, and that unless it finds harmless outlets it will find harmful and destructive ones. That, of course, is a gross oversimplification, to which I will come back presently. At the same time, it has become increasingly obvious that large centralised urban cultures provide a higher degree of frustration for our co-operative impulses and a far smaller number of socially tolerable outlets than any others of which we have record. They provide an enormous dump of explosive material which can be the fuel of all the types of irrational hostility.

From these data there has come into existence a sociological interpretation of war which is widespread among sociologists and which one could almost call official. It is a reasonably comfortable doctrine, because it does not call in question the political assumptions on which any sociologist living in a Western culture is bound to have been brought up. It is that all human beings are aggressive at times, and all are liable to be irrational when their emotions are involved. In national societies anti-social behaviour arising out of this tendency is curbed by the State. International aggression, on the other hand, is not so controlled, because there is as yet no world government to enforce law and order. So the task of sociology is two fold—to try to educate the public out of its irrationalities and to work for world government equipped with sufficient power to coerce all groups into sociality. Q.E.D.

You see the presuppositions here. First of all, each of us carries a small part of the responsibility for war by virtue of our own aggressive impulses. Second, law is necessary as a means of keeping these impulses under control. Now the first of those assumptions is based on the study of group conflicts, and it is unquestionably true. The second we ought to examine, because it is put forward as self-evident. But if we look at it closely we shall see that it is only a restatement of something which

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Secretary: D. WIECK

has been said throughout the whole history of political science, that power in the hands of government is an instrument, if not the main instrument, through which human beings implement their will to sociality and order.

What I am suggesting to you is that this simple interpretation of the sociology of war has been blown sky-high even before it was formulated in its present shape, and the form of the theory which is replacing it, as the outcome of observational research, is one which has implications far outside the field of international relations. It means that the whole body of assumption on which Western political thought has been founded is called in question. A great many people are going to find that process unpleasant, but it is, in essence, a repetition of the revolution in thought about human status which came from the work of Darwin, and the revolution in thought about human motives which came from the work of Freud. This time it is, I think, a revolution in our thought about power. And the two sets of observations on which it depends are derived one from psychiatry and the other from history.

Let me begin with the historical evidence. It seems fairly clear that any interpretation of war which represents it as a spontaneous uprising of repressed aggression in the public is an overstatement. If we examine recent wars we have an unparalleled body of data about gross acts of delinquency between nations—war crimes, as we now call them. Now there is good evidence that in no single case were the major acts of this kind the outcome of an outburst of any sort of mob feeling. They were without exception the work of individual psychopaths *in office*, carried out, as a rule, by enforcement agencies of government, such as the police and the army, or inched into public acceptance by intensive propaganda. Specific individual acts of aggression which follow the lines of the mob lynchings or mob pogroms which have been studied were limited to minor delinquency—rape, looting, ill treatment of minorities of aliens or prisoners, and so on. Wherever there has been direct personal contact between populations, however hostile they were to each other, the main concern of their governments has not been to prevent wholesale spontaneous massacres, like the Indian communal riots, but to prevent fraternisation. No aggressor nation within the last three centuries, with the possible exception of England during the Boer War, has been able to dispense with military conscription, enforced by the direst punishments. If we look at the history of recent wars, and still more if we select the two most serious single acts of delinquency in the last war, the German pogroms and the Allied policy of indiscriminate bombardment, we shall see that neither originated in the aggressive impulses of the public. Both were imposed from above and cultivated by intensive propaganda from the centre, and both, if we trace them further, turn out to be the work of individual psychopaths in office.

Now that is an observation of extreme importance, because it must radically affect our attitude towards individual responsibility for war. The theory that one can equate modern war with group conflict, such as the Negro problem in America or the communal problem in India, does not fit the observed facts. The part played by factors of this kind has been in enabling psychopathic individuals who have secured office to get the acquiescence of the publics they govern. That acquiescence, even in a regime like Nazi Germany, has been precarious. Reich-

man, in his book on anti-Semitism, points out that at a time when the pogrom was in full swing 'objective' anti-Semitism, due to friction between Jews and Gentiles, was negligible compared with 'subjective' anti-Semitism directed against imaginary Jews and worked up from above. At the height of the bombing of London a Gallup poll showed only a 53 to 38 majority in favour of indiscriminate bombing, and there was an almost complete inverse correlation between keenness to bomb and experience of bombing—London showed 47.45 per cent. against. What all this boils down to is this: under modern conditions there is no will to war among large urban publics. There is the material from which wars can be made, but they originate not in group conflict but in the personnel of government, in individuals who are mentally deranged and who secure office.

That, then, is a possible theory of war, an alternative to the spontaneous aggression hypothesis. How does it square with work in general psychiatry and in anthropology?

If we look at the work which has been done on primitive societies we shall see that they fall pretty readily into two types, with many intermediate gradations. One group of societies is warlike and the other relatively pacific. Within each type, there is substantial consistency in personality-type, which arises from the substantial uniformity of custom and upbringing in a small social group. Now there is a definite set of characters which goes with warlike behaviour in a primitive culture. These are a tendency to rely on coercion as a means of making individuals behave according to the tribal rules, an absence of spontaneity and of free co-operation, an emphasis on punishment and discipline, a deep-seated guilt or fear regarding sexuality, and a particular kind of character-structure in the individual which is very close to that of the compulsive neurotic. The other group tends to rely on public opinion as a source of conduct, and shame, rather than guilt, as a sanction: to value spontaneity rather than discipline, to accept sexuality without any special fear or concern, and to practice co-operation rather than coercion. These two types have been called power-centered and life-centered societies, and though I cannot go into that here in detail, there is a great deal of evidence from psychoanalysis which relates the two types to patterns of parent-child relationship—they are sometimes called patriform and matriform societies. We cannot apply these names to cultures like our own, because large nations are built up from a multiplicity of groups, but we can identify power-centered and life-centered *individuals*, and they show the same characters—the syndromes have been summarised as 'cruelty, chastity and coercion' and 'sociality, spontaneity and creation.'

It is this bimodality, or multimodality, of personalities in large cultures which leads to the contradictory behaviour, the 'double-think,' of these cultures seen as wholes. The patchwork of good and bad, humanity and cruelty, reason and unreason, which is Britain, America or Russia today, arises from the fact that in all such cultures two main forces are at work—the Builders and the Rulers—those who contribute social attitudes based on life, and those who contribute social attitudes based on power, to the pool of social attitude which constitutes a culture. To such diversity of attitude we owe the continuation of growing sexual emancipation (a 'life' character) with growing militarism and fear ('power' character) in the U.S.A. today—or of the emphasis on



construction and work ('life' character) with intense ideological rigidity (a 'power' character) in the U.S.S.R. In every such culture there are two 'peoples', two traditions—as though each were compounded of a small minority brought up in an Aztec culture, a small minority brought up in a Samoan culture; and a majority drawing some attitudes from each. It is characteristic and evident, moreover, that in the machinery of power in all such cultures, it is the Aztecs who will predominate.

While all this work has been going on another large group of psychiatrists has been working on problems relating to crime. At the start of the century the prevailing attitude was that delinquents acted from spontaneous wickedness. Later it came to be believed that crime was innate, and later still that it was always a token of mental disorder. None of those views has survived intact, though we now recognise parts of all three as partially true. But when psychiatrists came to attempt the cure of delinquents, their 'rehabilitation', a huge body of evidence began to grow, and has gone on growing up to the present day, which completely overthrows the older view that laws modify conduct and that punishment effectively limits crime. The movement which, I suppose, began with the Quakers and was continued by people like Anderson and Wehrli has shown that apart from the totally insane almost all delinquents, however violent, and however chronic, can be rehabilitated by permitting them to live in a group which closely resembles in outline the life-centered primitive society. The findings of this research have been summarised by Reiwald as follows: "There is to-day an unequivocal answer to the problem—what can be substituted for coercion and aggression in criminal law? Non-violence and self-government as means of education."

The bearing of this upon the problem of war comes from the last link in the chain of argument, the latest. Psychiatry has come increasingly to recognise that the impulses which lead individuals to acquire power, and to attempt to secure office, are in very many cases closely similar to the impulses which lead other individuals to become delinquent. There is a growing body of evidence to show that the desire to govern by coercion, to control or to rely upon the State machinery, which Western political thought has traditionally regarded as the basis of social order, is in itself an abnormal impulse, an outcome of personality deviation. I need not add that we are, of course, talking about a tendency, not an absolute. But in terms of this tendency it is possible to see that in modern urban cultures government and enforcement tend to select and collect those individuals who conform to the power-centered rather than the life-centered type.

If we test this hypothesis by applying it we shall, I think, find so many points of coincidence that it cannot be dismissed. It fits the psychoanalytical data about the relationship between coercive behaviour and envy of the father, it fits what we know of anthropology, it fits the historical facts about the behaviour of States and of individuals in office, and it fits, finally, the observations which we can make on the origins of wars and of war crimes. Of course it can be amplified enormously. I believe that it provides the theoretical basis for what we must say and do about the responsibility for war, but it also underlines something which most of us already realise, that war cannot be regarded as a problem apart from the larger issues of the form of society, the control of delinquency, and the problem of power. Let us restate

the theory to compare it with that which I called the official view of sociology.

Wars do not originate primarily in the warlike impulses of whole publics. They originate in the warlike impulses of a particular group of personalities which have become deviant as a result of forces acting in childhood. Some of these are personal, others cultural, so that certain nations and cultures may produce more than others. Modern government, so far from being the epitome of a group will to order, is the mechanism through which power-centered personalities obtain the means of working out their psychopathy. Coercion is a wholly ineffective means of modifying conduct. The part played by group aggression in war under modern conditions is a subordinate one. Without a great deal of undischarged aggression in the general public, wars would probably not occur, but aggressive impulses contribute to war by giving the individual psychopath in political office the means of securing acquiescence. In other words, war is a function of the coercive conception of power.

One point of importance is that the tendency for power to select psychopaths is proportional to the size of the community. So also, of course, is the amount of damage that any given psychopath in office can do for a given amount of character deviation. In small communities political power overlaps what we call dominance, the natural tendency of individuals to arrange themselves in a sort of order of forcefulness. In small communities the desire for power itself overlaps the desire for wealth, fame, proficiency and so forth, and leadership is tested by personal contact. At its crudest level the king of a coercive primitive society is the candidate who can fight the best man in the tribe. In large societies political power is an occupation and election is by remote control. Few electors have seen their leaders informally. As a result political power attracts those, and chiefly those, who desire it for its own sake, and who cannot secure dominance in any more personal field. The most imaginative psychopaths seek to control policy, while the aggressive psychopaths who are physically strong or who desire direct powers of coercion over others are attracted by the enforcement machinery, the prison executive, the S.S., and so on, which are such important features of warlike communities today.

Now none of this is new. It has been repeatedly hinted at in political thought since the time of William Godwin, but I think that today is the first time when it could be demonstrated in terms of evidence. Inspection of the behaviour of ruling groups reared in a social-democratic tradition, when, as in Ireland in 1916, or in Kenya or Malaya today, they are faced with insurrection, should remove any doubts we may have concerning the natural reaction of power-centered individuals to opposition. English society traditionally accepts the face-value view of government, particularly since the particular form of our social democracy has mitigated extreme abuses at home, and we tend to recognise them only elsewhere, in Germany, America or Russia: we may find it hard to accept a change of tradition. In fact many sociologists tend still to rely on world government exactly as our forefathers relied on national government, as a means of coercing delinquents. I think you will see the nature of the dangers inherent in any super-government based upon a still larger group, and offering still greater scope for the dramatisation of power, particularly when it is likely to be drawn from existing national governments.

I think that now we can answer my original question about individual responsibility, and we can answer it in practical political terms. It is repeatedly suggested that the individual to-day is powerless to resist government, even when that government is grossly psychopathic. That, I believe, is untrue. One thing which does emerge from modern work is the profound reliance of all orders, including the most tyrannical, upon public acquiescence. Now it is true that totalitarian States can coerce individuals, and, more important, can produce power-centered individuals by tampering with education, but their very extensive enforcement machinery is designed to deal with active individuals, not passive majorities. They have no defence against loss of morale. I would suggest to you that in such societies, and even in our own society, the conscientious objector who really matters is not the man who openly fights against war and goes to gaol for doing so, vitally important as his example is. Far more important is the unconscientious objector, the man who deserts, or goes slow, or even becomes ill with perfectly genuine gastric ulcers as a result of a loss of morale and a growing psychosomatic illness. But psychiatry does, of course, talk in terms of conscious choice, and if we are asked what to do to-day we can answer that question. What is needed in modern societies is not increased government but the growth of rational and responsible disobedience, of an awareness of the existence of a life-centered community which is normal to the human race, and from which the power-centered idea has sprung through maladjustment.

Let me illustrate the practical meaning of that from what is going on to-day. I believe that in America, and possibly also in England, we are on the verge of a widespread withdrawal by scientists and technologists from the support of the kind of psychopathic policy which the atom bomb exemplifies. Some will withdraw militantly, as Dr. Norbert Weiner has done. Others with less insight or courage will suddenly discover pressing commitments outside military research. Others will quite genuinely fall ill. All those reactions will exemplify parts of the same process, a conscious or unconscious re-acceptance of personal responsibility. It is the duty of psychiatry to bring about the same process in the general public. Let me add that these are the weapons which would enable us to defeat not only domestic psychopaths but also foreign ones. I have no space here to go into the psychology of resistance to tyranny, except to say that in order to escape it, whether it comes from inside or outside the community we live in, we have to learn individually the technique of re-asserting life-centered values and obstructing power-centered individuals. The basic problem of war prevention lies, perhaps, in bringing these life-centered values into education and the home—a problem wrapped up with the whole structure of family, sexual, and personal attitude. The immediate problem lies in accepting, individually and without reserve, the need to resist power, to resist war, and to resist the psychopathic pattern of society with every resource of disobedience and mutual aid which is at our disposal.

The task of the 'revolutionary', the individual committed to the purposive changing of the pattern of society toward the life-centered values, can now no longer be treated as a task of political intrigue. It is a branch of medicine—its main weapons are study and conciliation upon one hand, and readiness to disobey, based upon combined love and self-interest, upon the other.

ALEX COMFORT

## WITHIN CIRCLE OF SOVKHOZY

Within circle of *sovkhozy* the smoke  
falls on factoryhand, on boy  
with plow who after "the shortest  
working-day in the world"  
turns to the meal. Gathered  
enchantedly about the board  
they mind not the guiltless rain,  
imprisoned in paper thought.  
After food, talk of forage,  
Feuerbach, polar owl.  
Over them, fear.

Within circle of New England towns  
dusk and steel smoke settling  
men turn (hands washed)  
to hot food they destroy, to  
confluence of kin.—Their words?  
—their words are smoke,  
bolted and bulletined  
of self-weather flowing to steam  
—the shape of fear.

What spell binds these  
in toils that can be crashed only by all—  
you reaching through space to me  
saying,

Yes—  
I love.

HOWARD GRIFFIN

## Books &c

*Nineteen-Seventeen, The Russian Revolution Betrayed*, is now on sale. This volume of 269 pages is Holley Cantine's translation of the second part ("Le Bolchévisme et l'Anarchie") of Voline's *La Révolution Inconnue*. Price \$3.50, obtainable from publisher, Libertarian Book Club, G.P.O. Box 842, New York 1, N. Y., or from Holley Cantine, Bearsville, New York. A second English volume, in preparation, will include the third part, Voline's stirring account of the Kronstadt Rebellion and the Makhnovist movement in the Ukraine.

Occasionally we receive inquiries about other anarchist periodicals. The following are currently published: *Freedom* (weekly), 27 Red Lion St., London, W.C. 1, England; \$3 a year, \$1.50 6 mos., 75¢ 3 mos. (sample copies obtainable from *Resistance*). *Individual Action* (tri-weekly), Apt. 2-F, 15 Sheridan Sq., New York 14, N. Y.; \$1.50 a year, 75¢ 6 mos. *The Struggle* (monthly; "a publication for the expression of existentialist, anarchist and individualist thinking") 40 Darcy St., New York 5, N. Y.; voluntary contributions. *Retort* (Bearsville, N. Y.) has not been published since 1951, but may resume in the future.



## Libertarians and the War

In the first part of my review of the new Cunningham Press edition of Dwight Macdonald's *The Root is Man*, I discussed what seem to me the very rich suggestions Macdonald put forward for a reconsideration of the bases of a libertarian social philosophy. In general, I found myself in agreement with these suggestions. Now I propose to consider the revision of Macdonald's attitude towards war in general, and World War III in particular, which is made evident in the appendices he has added to the original text of *The Root is Man*.

To begin, I would point out that I am not against revision as such. I believe that there is always need for a perpetual re-consideration of the validity of every aspect of our viewpoints. In left-wing circles, and particularly among Marxists, the word "revisionism" has often a pejorative sound; I believe that the attitude which this displays merely shows a resistance to growth among the people who hold it. And I am definitely out of sympathy with the romanticism of those last-ditchers who hold their positions out of an illusion of loyalty and a horror of self-contradiction. Every man whose ideas are living and growing must contradict himself many times during his life, and I am with Whitman and Proudhon in finding no reason for shame in this. But I do see reason for shame in holding on to a position unless I believe that, all things considered, it still remains the best and most reasonable.

Therefore I acknowledge and respect Macdonald's change in his position on war, and I think we should consider carefully what he has to say in his own justification. At the same time I must say that I have found his arguments for radicals to enrol themselves in the cause of the Western states wholly unconvincing.

To begin, Macdonald quotes Karl Liebknecht's World War I dictum, "The main enemy is at home!" He declares that this classic expression of the anti-militarist (though not necessarily pacifist) position does not hold good, and says: "Those who still believe it I must regard as either uninformed, sentimental, or the dupes of Soviet propaganda (or, of course, all three together)."

Let us begin from there. It is true that some pacifists are uninformed on Russia, and that a few of them—particularly among the Quakers—tend to become the dupes of Soviet propaganda about Russia being the representative of world peace. However, I think that the proportion of opponents of war preparations who are in either of these positions is much smaller than Macdonald believes, and I know that it is not true of any of the anarchists, to whatever branch of our very elastic movement they may belong. For more than thirty years we and our predecessors have been insisting on the reactionary character of Russian communism, and when it was considered unpatriotic in Britain and the United States to denounce Stalin as a dictator no better than Hitler, we were among the few who continued to do so. We are the last ever to have been the dupes of Soviet propaganda.

So, since I am sure that Macdonald would hardly persist in bringing these two accusations against the anarchists at least, I will concentrate on the third ac-

cusation, that we are "sentimental". My contention is that we are in fact more realistic by far than those radicals or ex-radicals who have shouldered their harps of peace and, like the minstrel boy of the ballad, are now to be found in the ranks of war.

To begin, let me say that I do not in the least disagree with Macdonald in preferring the West to the East as a place to live in. Nobody but the most idiotic and starry-eyed fellow-traveller would think it better to live in Moscow than in London or San Francisco or Montreal or Paris. There is no comparison between the nature of life in a capitalist democracy at the present moment, despite its manifold injustices and discomforts, and the nature of life in Russia or East Germany. And I would agree with Dwight Macdonald that, *again at this moment*, Soviet communism is "far more inhumane and barbarous as a social system than our own."

But to agree to these points is not to agree that the political aims of the rulers of the Western states are good, or that the superiority of Western culture is a logical excuse for war, or that this superiority will necessarily last for ever—that it will last, for instance, more than a few weeks in the event of an atomic war.

It seems to me, indeed, that far from maintaining those qualities in which Western countries are more advanced than Russia, the kind of war that is likely to ensue under the pretence of defending democracy will be the surest way of all, not of reducing or counter-acting inhumanity and barbarity, but of universalising them. Atomic war, I maintain, is a more certain way of bringing about the collapse of what we regard as civilised values than any amount of Soviet aggression. And for this reason I consider any state that includes in its political and military manoeuvres the threat of atomic war to be as much an "enemy" of mankind in general as any other similar state.

Even without an atomic war, the gulf between American and Russian political life seems to contract with the years. In a little prophetic fantasy which he wrote for the *New York Times*, Bertrand Russell envisaged a future in which the atomic war would be averted because Senator McCarthy would have become President of the United States and would have discovered so little real difference between the outlook of his administration and that of Comrade Malenkov that agreement on spheres of influence would become easy. This may sound far-fetched in fact, but I think that in spirit it is not so, since McCarthy's activities have been consistently directed towards preparing in America a totalitarian atmosphere which a Communist ruler would find congenial.

But I do not think that McCarthy himself is the only sinister portent in the United States today. He is only an extreme example of a general trend among the ruling elite, and even the Republicans who oppose him do so because they consider him too inefficient and too tactless in his job. Behind the lurid facade of the Congressional committees the work of suppressing the minority opinion goes on quite happily in the hands of the administration; even the Army uses its present bout of shadow boxing

with McCarthy as a front to cover a thorough-going plan of discriminating, not only against known Communists, but also against those within its ranks who are merely suspected of left-wing sympathies. Readers of Hannah Arendt's book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which has done so much to mould Dwight Macdonald's recent thought, will remember that she pointed out that one of the most salient characteristics of a totalitarian regime was the creation of a perpetual and persecuted minority. Recent American government proposals to turn Communists or suspected Communists into second-class Americans by depriving them of citizenship are a significant step towards the same process of creating a scapegoat minority, a minority of opinion rather than race. Macdonald asserts that in the United States the reaction is carried on "furtively and apologetically"; in recent months it has not been McCarthy or any of the protagonists of repressive legislation that has been "furtive or apologetic", but rather those so-called liberals who could only muster one vote in the Senate against giving McCarthy the funds to carry on his work of witch-hunting. Here is a situation of liberal spinelessness before reactionary aggressiveness which reminds one forcibly of the situation in Italy before the March on Rome and in the Weimar Republic in the days of Hitler's rise to power during the 1930's. It also reminds one of Trotsky in Russia creating the means of his own destruction by conniving at the persecution of other minorities in the days before his fall from power.

To return to Macdonald's arguments, he accuses the war-resisters of believing that "the world's most chauvinist and militaristic government [i.e. the Russian] is . . . striving for world peace against the evil machinations of the State Department and the British Foreign Office". This, again, the anarchists definitely do not believe. On the other hand, I think I speak for many anarchists when I say that they do not allow a belief in the aggressive militarism of Russia to convince them that it is any greater a threat to world peace than the United States. Recent months have undoubtedly shown an increase in American sabre-rattling which has aroused misgiving, not only among war-resisters, but also among British Conservatives and their French equivalents. It is just as possible that war may come through the blundering blusters of Dulles as through the machinations of Malenkov; in this particular moment, it seems certain that, for purely practical reasons, Russia is even less anxious than the United States for immediate war, but the great danger remains the unplanned one—that the perilous game of bluff and counter-bluff will actually one day spark off a genuine war.

And that war may mean the end of most that we treasure in Western culture—and of much of the good that remains in Russia as well. Macdonald sees the present situation as a "fight to the death between radically different cultures". I personally do not think the contests of states and politicians can have anything to do with cultures (except, of course, to harm or destroy them). Culture is a product of the talents and thoughts and spiritual impulses of individuals and peoples, it thrives on peace, and lives by other means than the political. Certainly the next war will destroy a vast part of the material capital of twenty-five centuries of world culture; what is worse, it will probably encourage the spread of circumstances that will inhibit renewal. Already, the very shadow of the Bomb seems to be causing a drying up of the spontaneity of art that is being felt all over the world; in England and France

alike, for the first time since the middle of the last century, there are no real *avantgardes* in literature and the arts, and all over the world we are dismally lacking in those achievements of renaissance which followed the peace of 1918.

Macdonald seems to find some comfort in the fact that things in the United States are not so bad as in Russia. He is not wholly unjustified. At the very least it means that individuals living in Western countries have a few years more of comparatively spacious living than their unfortunate fellow men on the other side of the various curtains (though it must not be forgotten that some countries within the western orbit, e.g. Spain and Yugoslavia, are not far behind Russia in the degree of their totalitarianism). "Being on the same road is not the same thing as being there already", Macdonald rightly remarks, and it is also true that "this malign trend [towards totalitarianism] can to some extent be resisted". But, to my mind, it can only be resisted by those who are willing to go the whole hog and point out that all and any states are the seedbeds of tyranny and war. The folly is in those who try to pick and choose, who say, like Macdonald, that they wish to support the Western states but to declare objection to certain aspects, e.g. "the Smith and McCarran Acts, French policy in Indo-China, etc." In fact, as events have shown in the last few months, all these things are integral aspects of American policy which cannot be divided from the whole. They are part of the intolerance and aggressiveness which any expansive state has to maintain in order to keep its initiative.

But, the situation being as it is, what is to be done? Macdonald, it is evident, is extremely uneasy in his new-found situation of an unwilling supporter of war against Russia as an eventual possibility, and he admits that it provides no complete solution for the dilemma. But has he in fact examined all other alternatives? There is one significant passage at the end of his Appendices to *The Root is Man*. He says: "The only historically real alternatives in 1939 were to back Hitler's armies, to back the Allies' armies, or to do nothing. But none of these alternatives promised any great benefit for mankind, and the one that finally triumphed has led simply to the replacing of the Nazi by the Communist threat, with the whole ghastly newsreel flickering through once more in a second showing." And if the Communist threat followed the defeat of the Nazi threat, what, one might ask, is likely to follow the defeat of the Communist threat? Is World War III any more likely to produce a peaceful and civilised world than World War II and World War I did? Of course not, unless there is a complete reversal of the attitude of the common people on the question of war. And since that reversal must appear somewhere and at some time, if it is to appear at all, there is no reason why we should not seek for it now just as well as after another destructive war.

When Macdonald says that the third alternative in 1939 was "doing nothing", he is really directing a sneer at the protagonists of the policy of war resistance. He believes that non-militaristic resistance will cut no ice with the Communists and that the triumph which Gandhi won over the British in India would have been impossible if he had been faced by the tougher minded Russian Communists. Indeed, it is evident throughout Macdonald's arguments that he has what seems to me an exaggerated idea of the mechanical perfection of the Communist machine. But no society is in fact, as he would contend, "perfectly dead and closed". This is an abstraction, and



like all abstractions it is riddled with the interstices of contradiction that are opened by the facts of real life. There are in reality well-established instances in which totalitarian governments retreated before movements of non-violent resistance; the recent strikes in Spain, the strikes in Copenhagen during the Nazi occupation, the demonstrations last summer in Berlin and throughout East Germany—all of these had a profoundly disturbing effect on the regimes against which they were directed, and it was found, in Germany at least, that even the trained policemen of the totalitarian order were far from impervious to the example of the resisting people. Furthermore, recent events in Russia have shown that even in the heartland of the Communist order the rulers have found that there can be a limit, even among workers with no civil rights whatever, to the extent to which sacrifices will be accepted. Beyond that limit there begins to appear at least a Schweikian kind of resistance, and concessions are needed; taken together, the recent concessions of the new Russian rulers—withdrawal from collectivity in agriculture, expansion of the supply of consumer goods, softening of cultural controls, and lessening of MVD powers—represent a radical modification of Russian policy which only a consciousness of deep-seated discontent could have induced. Added to such facts as these, there is always the process of softening which all empires in history have experienced when they have spread too far. Indeed, it seems probable that it has been less the threat of American guns than the difficulty of assimilating radically different cultures in Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia that has kept the Russians back in Europe; they probably realise that even many professed Communists in France and Italy would be part of a great movement of non-co-operation if the Russian armies did march further West, a movement so corrupting that the Red soldiers would be no more proof against it than they were against the glamour of a higher standard of living in Germany and Austria in the first months of the occupation of 1944.

One of the reasons why a conscious and closely linked — if not formally organised — libertarian movement should be active against war in all the countries where it can work is the fact that it will be able to provide the nucleus for movements of resistance in the case of the imposition of foreign—or home-grown—totalitarianisms. But I think that it is also just possible that such a movement might play a vital part even in the event of atomic war. Perhaps, when we talk of the entire destruction of civilisation by the Bomb, this is a little on the rhetorical side. Certainly the big centres will go in the event of an atomic war, and most of the population as well, but it is just possible that the rural districts and the small towns will remain, and that a new, decentralised form of society will perforce have to emerge on the ruins of the old. If this should happen, then any man who has chosen a constructive rather than a destructive attitude will find his part to play in preventing the rebuilding of the centralised states which will have brought on their own destruction, and in nurturing the appearance of free and autonomous local societies.

Meanwhile, the war is not yet upon us, and every day that it is delayed should be a day of hope, not a day of despair. For I do not agree with Macdonald that a third front of the people against all the militarists is out of the realms of historical possibility. To later observers it is only the movements which have succeeded that seem to have been historically possible, but it must be remem-

bered that even these movements, in their very beginnings, must have seemed Quixotic hopes to the majority of the people who saw them. Up to 1917, the Bolsheviks were a tiny minority group of exiled plotters and underground labour agitators, and their ascension to power within a few months must have seemed extremely unlikely. The Congress movement of Gandhi started out of minute beginnings, and nothing could have been more pitifully inauspicious than the group of seven fanatics who gathered to form the Nationalist Socialist Party in the dim beginnings of Hitler's rise to power. What negative movements like Communism and Nazism have achieved from infinitesimal beginnings is surely not beyond the power of positive movements. And therefore I still maintain that a movement of the people that will carry through a formidable resistance to the threat of war, that will percolate through the weak points of the iron curtain—East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia—will only become impossible if there are no men to take the initiative, if there are no men with the imagination to conceive the right way to strike the thoughts and hearts of the world. There are those pessimists who contend that such a hope is Quixotic and that the day of movements of enthusiasm and faith is past. I would claim that in such times of crisis as our own we learn that the uncompromising rejection of negative forces—which our critics call Quixoticism—is in fact the only realistic hope of saving ourselves and our culture. And I would also suggest that there are plenty of signs to show that a time of this kind provides the very conditions in which a movement of faith and enthusiasm can take root. Already that are some such movements which have had an amazing amount of limited success; Bhavé's crusade for voluntary land redistribution in India is one example. A dynamic eleventh-hour anti-militarist movement that struck the imaginations of the world's peoples would be thoroughly compatible with the historical needs of our time, and it might run through the channels of our decaying civilisation as the forces of early Christianity burst out from the catacombs into the similarly moribund structure of imperial Rome. More than ever before, such a movement could change the whole character of human social existence.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

## Communication

### An Anarchist Bulletin.

No one knows how many anarchists there are in America today. The editor of *Resistance* knows who is on his subscription list, individual anarchists know other individual anarchists, and that is the extent of our contact. There is a need for some sort of central clearing of activities and information, a coordinating center of some sort. It is possible for anarchists to act, to demonstrate, to work, as anarchists. But only in conjunction with others. I have in mind a monthly or bi-monthly bulletin, informing anarchists and libertarians, friends and sympathisers of what is going on in the anarchist movement today. I believe that this is one way of extending such activities, of possibly bringing some vitality to the movement, perhaps even of building it in strength. I would like all interested individuals and groups to contact me about this, perhaps something can be worked out.

S. Z. PERKOFF, 10 Avenue 19, Venice, Cal.

## Notes on the Boredom of Politics

Even the most politically eager must now admit the evidence that boredom has taken its place among the central facts of political life. The modern passion for organization which began in the last century needs only to administer the finishing touches. We have become organized into a social dreariness approaching inanity. Soon the only remaining free response will be the un-suppressed yawn.

Hints to account for the prevalent boredom with politics . . . The war to make the world safe for democracy to make the world safe for fascism to make the world safe for kremlinism to make the world safe for? The preservation of standards of freedom and fairplay by destroying standards of freedom and fairplay. The vast mediocrity in high places mirroring the vast mediocrity in low places. The diminishing returns of meaning in political language: freedom and peace and justice just broken records on mass media turntables, spinning to the tune of the propaganda wars. The whole gray circle of boom bust boom bust, of war peace war peace, of man's hope becoming man's fate.

The December issue of *Resistance* puts it well:

"One looks frankly at the Nazi atrocities, or the march of Communism in Korea, and one is moved to action. 'Action.' We cannot 'stand idly by.' How often have sympathy and grief and rage moved the 'men of good will' to sponsor crusades of salvation! Action! One cannot stand idly by! But suppose it turns out time and again that the victims are not saved, the roots of the madness remain untouched, and we move on to new catastrophes? What action saves the victims? At what price?"

"First Koreans were saved from the Communists. Now the shattered survivors have had to be saved from the war of salvation, and they are still waiting to be saved from Rhee's government of salvation. And how long ago were American planes liberating Korea by bombing Japan? (Or liberating China—to the advantage of Communism?) Is the case untypical? The Jews of central Europe were 'saved'—how many?—at the cost of millions of people as innocent as the Jews of crimes against humanity: we cannot even be sure that the Nazi death campaign would have reached its ultimate fury, if not for the war and impending German defeat. And now the Russian armies and police are astride the continent.

"Save the victims. By multiplying the victims, and readying the new tragedy?"

The world is really too much with us. We know too much of the troubles of the world. Mass media make available to all the boredom of excessive sensation. It is too much for anyone with any sensitivity to bear with anything but indifference.

Here, perhaps, is the modern variant in the history of boredom. Until now boredom has been the prerogative of those who have too much, a hangover from the excessive sensation of wealth and power. No less apparent now is the boredom of those who have too little in their lives, who feed on vicarious sensation, feeding a boredom sometimes more desperate than hunger. Historians have pointed out that one of the most potent causes of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was the alienation of the better elements from any interest in public life or the conduct of political affairs. T. S. Eliot says somewhere:

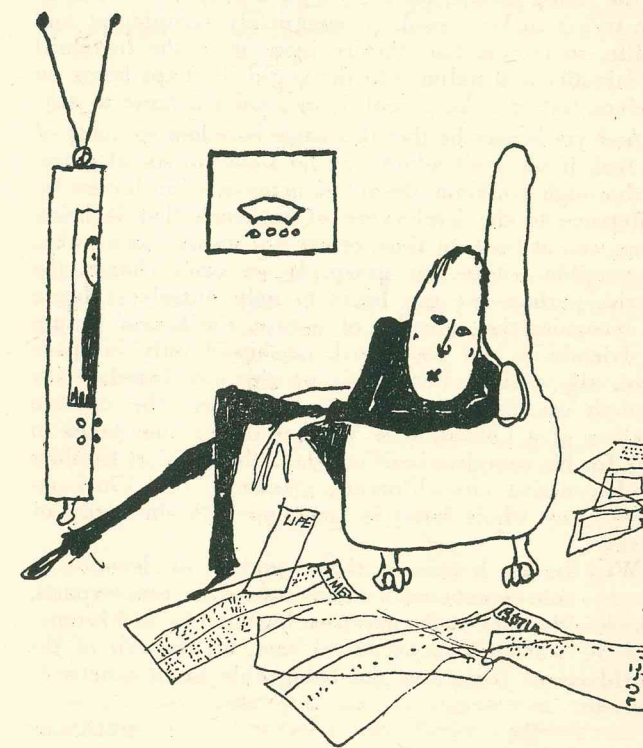
"Evidence . . . that the natives of that unfortunate archipelago (Melanesia) are dying out principally for the reason that the 'Civilization' forced upon them has deprived them of all interest in life. They are dying from pure boredom." But sociologists have yet to estimate the relevance of boredom to the modern condition—in crime, in war, in strikes, in revolution.

There is a beginning, an initial estimate, in Saul Bellow's recent novel, *The Adventures of Augie March*. "Boredom," he believes,

"starts with useless effort. You have shortcomings and aren't what you should be? Boredom is the conviction that you can't change. You begin to worry about loss of variety in your character and the uncomplimentary comparison with others in your secret mind, and this makes you feel your own tiresomeness. On your social side boredom is a manifestation of the power of society. The stronger society is, the more it expects you to hold yourself in readiness to perform your social duties, the greater your availability, the smaller your significance. On Monday you are justifying yourself by your work. But on Sunday, how are you justified? Hideous Sunday, enemy of humanity. Sunday you're on your own—free. Free for what? Free to discover what's in your heart, what you feel toward your wife, children, friends and pastimes. The spirit of man, enslaved, sobs in the silence of boredom, the bitter antagonist. Boredom therefore can arise from the cessation of habitual functions, even though these may be boring too. It is also the shriek of unused capacities, the doom of serving no great end or design, or contributing to no master force. The obedience that is not willingly given because nobody knows how to request it. The harmony that is not accomplished. This lies behind boredom."

The radical, and particularly the pacifist and anarchist, is a more likely candidate for ideological boredom than the conservative who has the consolation that the status quo is always with him. And consequently has more outlets for his boredom.

The radical tradition has fed on superiority over the past, indignation with the present, expectation for the future. An emotionally hollow diet, no wonder the body of radical thought seems so feeble nowadays. This is an indication of the radical's unique boredom. Certainly





a belief in inevitable progress, or the more fashionable belief in inevitable world destruction, weighs heavy on our burden of boredom.

Liberalism and radicalism have become so bound up with idealism, so duty-bound, that it has become difficult for a "man of good will" to breathe without feeling twinges of selfish guilt. An exaggeration, yes, but the tendency is one of the surest mechanisms for ceaseless boredom with an idea. To harp on peace, to harp on community, to harp on freedom, to harp on ethical action tends to substitute belief for the authentic fact. A verbal impasse is set up, which depletes the spirit, the possibility of spontaneity. We must begin to have the courage of our own lack of principles.

And of all the anarchist is most beset by boredom in politics. He doesn't want international conferences to bring peace, even if they could; he wants the people to wage peace themselves: to get out of war industries, to stay out of armies. The anarchist doesn't want freedom and plenty handed down through the benevolence of authorities; he wants people to so arrange their lives that freedom and plenty will come from their own efforts, from self-help cooperation. Of course the anarchist conviction demands the greatest patience and is most susceptible to boredom on that score alone. Anarchists with great sensitivity and little patience have been known to throw bombs in the past, in the face of certain martyrdom. But the governments of the world have shown that no matter how many bombs are thrown (though the old bombthrowers had better aim) the social relief is questionable. So between martyrdom and boredom there is little doubt, though the boredom is a profound ennui for the anarchist who doesn't even have the blandishment of jockeying for power, the racetrack excitement of election day.

In the light, the gray light, of our social boredom, it is not to wonder why the radical youth of this country, and perhaps other countries, is disappearing. Where is the radical youth? Perhaps, as a well-known poet says, they're all on reefer. And if opium is not the religion of the young people, certainly a good proportion of them are trying to keep cool, so completely complacent and polite, so frozen, that they're immune to the treadmill of injustice and ugliness in the world. Perhaps being on reefer, trying to keep cool, is as good a defense as any.

And yet it may be that this same boredom so many of us feel, if we don't admit, can be a way to social grace. A thorough boredom, devoid of arrogance, an honest indifference to the irrelevance of so much that is being done, can at least, in time, center our awareness on what is possible within our grasp. If we can't change the world, perhaps we can begin to help ourselves; begin to recognize the splendor of nature, the honest virtues of friendship and good workmanship if only in spare time, all possible. Perhaps if we ride our boredom far enough we may attain in our own ways the creative realism of a Leonardo da Vinci who was once taken to task for his complete indifference to the political troubles of his native city, Florence. "Indeed," da Vinci replied, "my whole heart is taken up with the study of beauty."

Who knows, it may be this very lack of devotion to beauty, this concern with Florence and its counterparts, which is the core of the never-ending troubles of Florence and the world; that, as Pascal said, all the evil of the world comes from men not being able to sit quietly in a room.

MELEAGER

## Freedom in Action: Suggestions for a Positive Anarchism

The present situation is desperate, we despair of action, love, solidarity, community, etc. For the most part we are occupied with problems of little or no significance, merely because we find it impossible to attack problems of larger scope on anything like a libertarian basis. And so we limit our activities until they become not activities but actions, we limit our actions until they become smaller and smaller, until they finally disappear, and we spent our time talking to each other (to ourselves). There was once a time when an anarchist could act in public, he could take part in organisations—as an anarchist—he could make contact with people. He was, it is true, for the most part ineffective—the present weakness of the anarchist movement testifies to this—but issues were alive, and so were anarchists. It was the day when anarchists capitalised the A in order to indicate that they really stood for something, that there was such a thing as Anarchism, a satisfying social philosophy upon which one could base actions, through which one could express the need for social change, with which one could bring about change.

Now we find ourselves isolated, fragmented, small in number, hopeless, in a word: desperate. We see too much of the consequences of any action, we see that almost anything we do has repercussions of a non-libertarian nature, it builds someone's power, it oppresses some segment of someone's personality.

At first glance it would seem that David Wieck's "From Politics To Social Revolution" is an attempt to seek a way out of this desperation. After an analysis of present political possibilities he offers a program for libertarian action. Precisely what is needed! But on second reading it appears that David's article leaves out large areas of reality, that it is in fact not an answer to despair, but a brilliantly formulated expression of despair.

The anarchist stands today in a society of unfree men, his attempts to be free are looked upon as eccentricities when they are not looked upon as dangerous. Alone, or with other anarchists, he tries to find a way to free himself from the pressures and frustrations which bear down upon him, and in this way to bring about the social revolution. But in his efforts he loses contact with the world, with human beings whose main energies are directed elsewhere, and he eventually evolves into a philosophy of "libertarians face to face": an anarchist daisy chain.

It is, I think, important to try to find out why we are revolutionaries. For most of us, I believe, the driving motive is one of *extreme* identification: an anguish arises in the youth as he sees what the conditions of life are, and he seeks to find methods of alleviating these conditions of horror. If his sympathies are most outraged by the abuses of power and the destruction of human solidarity, he becomes an anarchist. The freedom he desires himself he desires for all men, his vision is one of cooperation and love in a free society, his knowledge of human psychology and desires leads him to believe that basically all men need this, and are capable of it, to this end he works. But the steps out-

lined in David's article are primarily steps to save ourselves, they are not steps for a libertarian revolution, but for a revolution for libertarians. What is needed is not an outline of possible action by which we might become free of the society, it is a program, or perhaps a suggestion of direction, by which society might become free of its oppressors.

Looked at from this viewpoint, I think the steps outlined under the title "The Social Revolution" will be seen to be terribly inadequate, in fact, dangerous to any possible health within the anarchist movement, precisely because they would divert whatever energies we have left away from the world, and towards ourselves. I do not think it is necessary to criticise them one by one, as David does not claim that his examples are the only possible means of social revolution, what is important is to criticise their tendency, their underlying basis. They are all applicable to people who are already revolutionary, vis-a-vis others who are already revolutionary. In this sense they are not at all social, but rather they are personal. They do not answer the problem of isolation, on the contrary, they emphasise it, make a virtue of it, wish to extend this isolation. It is enough to think how this program would look to a citizen of Russia, or of Eastern Germany, to see how inadequate it is. It is true that our situation is not yet their situation, but I think we can safely assume that it will soon enough be so. The revolts in Eastern Germany, the revolts in the Soviet slave camps, these are blows for freedom, for human solidarity and love. But what might have happened to the East German workers if they attempted to form communities, if they shunned the organisations at the work places, if their politics consisted primarily of "warm communities of free men". If they would not have been killed, they would have been imprisoned, if not imprisoned, ineffective.

One of the things the ever growing State does is isolate radicals and free men from the major section of the population, either by imprisoning them, or making it impossible for them to communicate with their fellows. We are not yet in prison, but shall we imprison ourselves? We can still write and publish and talk, shall we then forsake this activity? We have a difficult enough time communicating with people about the problems *they* face, without making all communication impossible by only dealing with our own problems.

The average human being is not concerned with how to live as a libertarian, because he is not a libertarian. If his problems concern us, not in the abstract, but actually, then we must be able to formulate something that will meet them, that will give him satisfaction, and will *still* enlarge an area of freedom. For it is true that the masses are de-solidarised: therefore let us expend our efforts to re-solidarise them! It is true that the various bureaucracies encroach further and further upon any action, no matter how small; if this is the case, we must resist, we must teach others to resist, we must make others want to resist. It is true that the instincts of cooperation are barely visible, let us attempt to bring them to the fore. There can be no free society until all men desire freedom, have the will to freedom. In the face of this it is clear that our object must be to bring forth this desire, to show that libertarian attitudes and actions can solve problems today, here and now. We must try to help people to act freely so that they may become free. "Through freedom to Freedom!" It is more important for us (as an example) to work within our local unions towards shop committee negotiations as op-

Allen says Meleager  
on Jones' reluctance?

posed to business agent negotiations, than it is for us to advocate sincerity in art. Those artists who are really artists will strive for sincerity in their art whether or not they ever hear of anarchists, but workers in a shop have to learn that their problems are solved better in a libertarian fashion than a totalitarian one. They can learn it, but not if all the anarchists are off in communities. On a neighborhood level, a shop level, a school level, people can learn that they have within their hands the power to change their situation. When they learn this, there will be hope. Freedom, once learned, is not easily forgotten.

If we are going to hope that in the long run anarchism will actually be achieved, then we must begin at the beginning: where people are oppressed. We must re-awaken our own solidarity with others, we must go out into the world, as it were, prepared to meet frustrations and power situations, prepared to drop dogmas, change ideas, become fluid, prepared to keep in mind only the libertarian keystone: freedom. The society we live in is complex, pressures are tremendous, we do not really know whether our ideas will bear the pressures and complexities, because we do not put them to the test. If anarchism is really only a social offshoot of neurosis, if it is impossible to attack the world from a libertarian viewpoint, then we must find this out, but if, as we believe and hope, anarchism is a way of life that all men need and are capable of, then we must, as much as possible, deal with all men, with their problems, with their hope and desires. As long as libertarians only program action for libertarians, there is no hope for a free world. Only when libertarians go to those who have no knowledge of freedom, who are trapped in the world as it exists, and attempt to show them a way out, can we move forward to a society of health, freedom, and love.

S. Z. PERKOFF

*Editorial comment on Meleager's and Perkoff's articles must wait for another issue. We hope, meanwhile, that some readers will find, here or in "From Politics to Social Revolution," a framework within which to contribute discussion of problems of day-to-day activity: of how libertarian alternatives can be presented to non-anarchists, and how these alternatives can be actualized.*

DTW

## Books

### Catholic Anarchist

Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist by Ammon Hennacy; 328 Pages, \$2 paper, \$3 cloth. Catholic Worker Books, 223 Chrystie Street, New York 2, N. Y.

Ammon Hennacy's conversion to Catholicism gives occasion to explore the curious phenomenon, this white blackbird, Catholic Anarchism. Let us begin with a brief critique.

The Catholic Anarchist starts with the lofty ethics which can be found in the Sermon on the Mount: love and peace among men, and love of God. Since the political State is the instrument of war and violence—the absolute contradiction of love and peace—a sincere Catholic must disobey the State and strive to abolish it. Theoretically the idea is consistent enough: an ethics of goodness, of known right behavior, implemented by a powerful ideological institution (Church) without intercession of government.

It doesn't take long to say what is too much and what too little in this idea: too much, the idea of the Church, too little, an idea of liberty.

To Catholics liberty has no meaning, except as it refers to freedom from "Caesar" or caesarian, i. e. secular, churchmen. That a man be free to create his *own* ethics and destiny, provided



it allows a similar freedom for others, is for them only freedom to sin. On the other hand, to those like ourselves for whom liberty is a serious value, the distinction between enforcement of righteousness and true belief by the prisons of political government, and their enforcement by ecclesiastical government via excommunication from the spiritual community, indoctrination of children, hierarchy, institutionalized tradition, etc., can seem only academic. From our libertarian standpoint Church and State appear equally inimical, in ideal as well as in their—at least—dismal history.

Nor is it plausible that a dominant Church—to which Catholicism and Catholics ceaselessly aspire—could, any more than the State, permit the dreamed-of sociality, love. Indoctrinated masses, State- or Church-controlled, are notoriously helpless against Caesarian rulers and bishops: and where there is Caesar there is wealth, exploitation and at best the sad fraternity of slaves. There is no reason to believe that ecclesiastical monolithism would be any less oppressive than totalitarian Statism; indeed, in the former case we would expect that the Church would in reality be the State.

Taking this sort of view of Catholicism, we “secular” anarchists would oppose the ideal and ideology of Catholic Anarchism even if it did not have the present effect of strengthening a most secular institution. This should by no means alter our respect for individual Catholic Anarchists—for such altogether remarkable Catholics as Eric Gill and Dorothy Day. But on the other hand it would not be a mark of respect to ignore and be silent about the implications of their ideology. The indivisibility of liberty and sociality is too important an idea ever to be left vague.

Since Hennacy is only lately a Catholic Anarchist, his book is chiefly the story of a Christian Anarchist. He does not offer much material for discussion of ideas; after the splendid section on his CO experiences in Atlanta prison 1917-18 the rest is formless narrative. The book does, however, offer a study of a man who fails to see that his ideology is a *personal* adaptation, and that those who act differently than he may be motivated by something other than want of courage. It is valuable to speak of this, if not very charitable, because the prestige of Hennacy's way in certain radical circles is a source of confusion, guilt and bad action. Along the way we shall have a chance to point out what is unsatisfactory in this Christian ideology.

Hennacy went to Atlanta a Socialist with a vague religious background; it is not clear what Socialism meant to him (I don't think we are required to take literally his self-accusations of romantic violentism). His prison militancy took him to solitary for many agonizing months. There he had to articulate a faith to sustain him; he had to come to terms with a burning rage against his captors, that it would have been suicidal to act on; he had only the Bible to read. “Non-violence” and Christian love answered to his need. He took the success in his later social work of frankness, generosity, fearlessness, non-resistance to violence, as verification of his new philosophy. Since the Catholic Workers were the one movement which stood squarely for this same Christianity, he naturally identified himself with them, long before becoming a Catholic.

But it is not everyone who has had so excessively impressed upon him the dangers of his own violence—who has been so fearfully shut off from all men—or who finds the Sermon on the Mount, however interpreted, a satisfying ethical document. Nor will everyone extrapolate from personal relations to social-political problems, and assume that what works in one case works in the other.

Because we live in a deeply Christian society, Hennacy is used to shaming professing Christians for their hypocrisy, and finally drawing admissions of cowardice. So he thinks that what makes him different from other people, from other radicals and anarchists, is courage. It happens, however, that there are those who differ from Hennacy not from want of courage but, as we have said, from want of shared belief.

As we see it the fatal error of Christian doctrine—regarding it humanistically and leaving theological matters apart, since they have so little to do with Christian Anarchism—is that it is *moralistic* rather than *libertarian*. Schematically: distrust of the instincts (particularly “aggression” and typically sexuality)—education in instinctual renunciation—renunciation of individuality (the “personal conscience” is supreme—but everyone's conscience is the same!)—leading to aggression against the self, to a spiritual rather than deeply social community, and to defeat of the intention of love. By contrast, anarchism makes this assumption: teach man to be good and he will be evil; give him the opportunity to find intelligent ways of striving for what he wants, which is after all not outrageous, and he will be as good as he

has any need to be. This is what makes us hopeful of avoiding repetition of the centuries of unsuccessful moral instruction in goodness, love, sociality.

The libertarian way does not have a very immediate appeal in a nation where the Judaeo-Christian values lie just beneath the surface of materialism, nationalism and the rest. Hennacy, the Catholic Workers and the like achieve the greater “success” that accrues from good works and appeals to guilt. But in the long run theirs is not an ethic of freedom, and *therefore*, we argue, not of love and sociality.

There is also—of course—an unambiguous, distinctly libertarian element in uncompromising assertion of what, by nationalist and commercial standards, is heretical belief. In this sense the *actions* of Christian Anarchists are more revolutionary than their ideals and ideology. This is why we think of Hennacy as a friend.

It is necessary finally to comment on Hennacy's last (Catholic) conversion, because our good friend and printer David Dellinger has found in it (review in *Individual Action*) a heart-warming searching—for spirituality—if a folly of a discovery (the Church). Rather than a positive quest, I see here a flight from a—so to speak—libertarian tension, from the uncomfortable but dignified position of heretical comrade to the Catholic Workers.

There is an important point here. Dellinger misses it, I think, because he fails to appreciate what is so special in men like Vanzetti and Berkman. He refers to them, meaning to ennoble them, as members of a “Church Invisible.” But it was the triumph of these men that they showed how love, peace, and freedom do not depend on a Church, or God, or anything that could be reasonably called spirituality: rather they are specifically human powers, amply justified by desire. No matter how humanistically one interprets Jesus, one does not learn this from him; until it is learned we shall probably never be done with the quest for love and “spirituality” in authoritarian, freedom-denying institutions.

Vanzetti, a great man whom Hennacy admires without, I dare say, understanding, is the key to all this. The quality of Vanzetti that Hennacy fails to perceive is *patience*. Like other anarchists in his tradition who do not happen to be orators or writers, Vanzetti was the most inconspicuous of men, a workingman, not a “leader”; he was a militant, made propaganda, agitated strikes; during the war he “pipsqueaked” (to use Hennacy's term of opprobrium) and went to Mexico to dodge the draft. He was a patient man, who was not looking for martyrdom or anything like it. Yet it happened, and *he knew how to act*; each step of the way, *he knew which step to take next*. This is all his greatness consisted of, that he had the power to act greatly when the occasion demanded it; he had an ideal he believed in it with his life, he was not the first nor the last to die for it. Suppose it did not happen to be his “luck” to be arrested? With unfeigned humility he tells us that he and Sacco would have been nothing, were destined to live out their lives as simple workingmen. We must not believe him; true humility is extremely misleading.

DAVID WIECK

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT, May 17, 1954

CONTRIBUTIONS	
ARIZONA: Phoenix: C.G. 2.00	\$ 2.00
CALIFORNIA: San Francisco: S.C. 3.00, Libertarian Group Dance (Feb. 27) 25.00	28.00
COLORADO: Denver: R.B. 2.00	2.00
CONNECTICUT: Windsor: B. & E. N. 1.00	1.00
ILLINOIS: Chicago: J.S. 2.75; Moline: E.J. 1.75; Oak Park: Mrs. J.F. 2.00	6.50
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MASSACHUSETTS: Framingham: Dramatic Club 5.00	5.00
MICHIGAN: Detroit: I Refrattari 85.00	85.00
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WISCONSIN: Milwaukee: M.K. 3.00	3.00
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