

RESISTANCE

In Lieu of a Happy Editorial

Sometimes one wonders what anarchist writers might try to do—that is, an anarchist editor wonders, when he is faced by a deadline. He knows that the contents ought at least to be “interesting,” and he would like a lot of people to read the magazine, and he would like it to be of some use to them. But almost anything whatever might fall into these categories. A friend who—formerly—edited a psychoanalytic magazine told us that he learned from the editor of a—former—political magazine, that this editor had learned from someone’s survey of his readers that what *they* wanted was . . . short articles. In such ways does knowledge get around; but it is not clear what use could be made of it.

After the last issue we said to our artist, “Please! A *happy* cover!” And our artist replied, “Please! A happy editorial! If *you* made things look like they weren’t *awful*, and the good people losing all the time, maybe the artists could do something happy for you . . . Maybe I could trace a photograph of a glass of beer?”

We don’t have much good news, but it seems shameful to spread bad ones all the time. Anyway, if you can make your way through a daily paper, or *Life* or *Time*, and don’t find enough horror there to unstring your knees for the rest of the day, then it’s doubtful

if we can scare you into your wits. If you don’t know all about the bombs and all such, please, we will not even tell you where you can read all about it. (Not today anyhow, maybe two months from now we will be angry.) It’s a purely arithmetical question—after a particular quantity is reached, particular excuses simply have no weight—and if you’ve never bothered to total it up, well . . .

Besides, while preparing this issue of *Resistance*, the editor delivered a talk to a mass-meeting of 20 anarchists (including friends) in New York City; and in this talk he played the small “literary” gambit of twice announcing he was going to conclude pessimistically—he would fool them, and cap the conclusion with a coda of optimism! But it was a debacle. Everyone—everyone who cared—was furious, not at being deceived, which no one noticed, but for being told that things are real bad, that at least nine times in ten our small efforts to “create anarchy” in the day-to-day will end in chaos. It was no satisfaction to them if the speaker thought it was a rather benevolent sort of chaos, of which no one need really be afraid.

But why is the good news so scarce? Well, we believe something like this, and is it newsy?

“The libertarian is rather a millenarian than an utopian. He does not look forward to a future state

of things which he tries to bring about by suspect means; but he draws now, so far as he can, on the natural force in him that is no different in kind from what it will be in a free society, except that there it will have more scope and be immeasurably reinforced by mutual aid and fraternal conflict. *Merely by continuing to exist and act in nature and freedom, the libertarian wins the victory, establishes the society*; it is not necessary for him to be the victor *over* anyone. When he creates, he wins; when he corrects his prejudices and habits he wins; when he resists and suffers, he wins.” (Paul Goodman, *Art and Social Nature*, page 2).

So in the inside pages of this magazine there is a grab-bag of this and that—of how people struggle to live in communities and be free, of how some people of olden times tried to change things in this country, some political philosophy, some poems, some reviews . . .

Nobody here says what you “ought to do”—or what will “save” you—or us. Sometimes it seems doubtful, but we think that the humans *will* some day come to their senses; so we publish a magazine which says so. Maybe there is a hint, here and there, of how it may be done?

DTW