Retort

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SPRING 1948 VOL 4 NO 2

RETORT

An ANARCHIST Quarterly of Social Philosophy and the Arts

VOLUME 4, NO. 2 SPRING, 1948

Editors: HOLLEY CANTINE *and* DACHINE RAINER

RETORT is hand-set and hand-printed by the Editors

RETORT, Bearsville, N.Y.
Single Copy: 40c, Subscription: $1.50 a year [four numbers] Foreign: $1.75.
Retort does not pay for contributions. Manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.

EDITORIAL

The general strike against war* was, not so very long ago, widely advocated by radicals, but today it is seldom mentioned. In view of the current condition of the labor movement, which has become little more than an agency of the State in most countries —especially in wartime—the abandonment of this policy may seem no more than a realistic concession to the existing situation, but there is much more involved than this. The general strike against war is a natural corrolary of the fundamental assumption underlying all genuine radical thought: that the working class is capable, under certain circumstances, of acting according to its own interests. If after a hundred years of radical agitation, circumstances still do not permit one to believe in the possibility of the workers acting to prevent so self-evident a catastrophe as another war, then clearly the whole basis of radicalism is seriously challanged. It is a matter of considerable importance to discover the reasons why the general strike against war has proven so unrealizable.

In theory, the idea of preventing a war by means of a general strike is obvious enough. Moreover, the few times the political strike has been attempted at all seriously—as during the Kapp Putsch** in Germany—it has worked quite as well as its most enthusiastic advocates could have hoped. Why then has it been so thoroughly neglected by the workingclass movement that today it is like a sort of fairy tale, and its concrete successes of the past are looked upon more as museum relics of a vanished era than as examples of practical achievement which it is still possible to duplicate?

The present day 'realistic radicals' (like the Communist and Socialist Parties) have repeatedly demonstrated by their actions that they do not function according to the fundamental radical premise, however much they may pretend to revere it. For it, they have substituted their version of the elite theory of social change,

* See the article by Anton Pannekoek in this issue. Pannekoek is the leading figure of the Dutch Council-Communists, a group of followers of Rosa Luxumberg, and one of the few genuinely radical Marxist organizations. Their program leans heavily toward syndicalism and they emphatically repudiate both Bolshevism and Social-Democracy.

** An attempt by a group of monarchist army officers to overthrow the German Republic in 1920. It was defeated primarily by a general strike of all the workers.

considering themselves the new elite. Their program consists essentially of establishing themselves in control of the State, as the Labor Party has done in England and the Communist in Russia, Poland, Hungary, the Balkan countries and Czechoslovakia, whereupon they propose to bring about a new society by governmental action. The working class has no function in this scheme but to put the new elite in power and keep them there; everything else is to be done from above. To realize this program, it is not only unnecessary to encourage fundamental radicalism among the workers—it is important to keep the workers from becoming too radical. A really radical working class would be naturally too disrespectful of established institutions to take orders from the *new* State, and would tend to act for itself. Therefore, the political program of Socialist and Communist parties must make a delicate adjustment between radical slogans and authoritarian practices. These programs must *sound* radical enough to attract the support of as many militant workers as possible, but must avoid concrete radical proposals—except when there is no immediate likelihood of their being called upon to put them into practice—in order not to build up the initiative of the rank-and-file to unmanageable proportions. The general strike against war has been advocated, from time to time, by Socialist Parties—during peace time—but when the possibility of war became imminent, it has invariably been quietly shelved. The Communists, by and large, have not favored this policy at all, preferring the more demogogic slogan: "turn the imperialist war into a civil war". Since their insurrectionary approach to achieving power depends in large part on the existence of a state of confusion and disorganization in society—a state most likely to exist after a period of warfare—they have found it most useful to their purpose to foster the idea that war is inevitable.

Since either Socialism or Communism have dominated the working class movement in most countries during the past fifty years, it is therefore hardly surprising that the general strike against war has not been given much opportunity to demostrate its effectiveness. (In the United States, where the labor movement has been dominated by even less radical elements, the same situation has prevailed.) The question remains however: Why have the workers permitted themselves to be dominated by careerists and politicians whose interests have required the suppression of the one weapon that might have prevented the enormous suffering of two world wars?

While no complete answer to this question can be made, to a large extent this situation has existed because the workers have, as the cumulative effect of centuries of oppression, come to take authoritarianism for granted. Even in the act of rebelling against their exploiters, they seem to find it more 'natural' to be bossed. This does not mean that they are actually incapable of acting resolutely and resourcefully without direction from above. On the contrary, the leadership's most usual influence is to curb the initiative and militancy of the rank-and-file—as is indicated by the many 'wildcat strikes' and other demonstrations of spontaneous working class action that take place in defiance of the leadership. The workers could make out very well without authority, either in their own organizations or in society at large—much better than they do with it, but they are either too timid, apathetic or unimaginative to take such a drastic step. Potential leadership is always present replete with arguments to 'prove' its indispensibility to the furthering of the workers' interests, and the workers all too readily accept them. Once they have submitted to some group—either because it claims to possess special theoretical knowledge which the workers lack but believe to be essential to the proper conduct of their affairs, or because it has a 'talent for organization' (which usually means a talent for entrenching itself in the supervisory jobs)—they very often refuse to pay any attention to its orders. In fact, it is very likely that the only way a leadership can actually lead a labor organization—that is, inspire the members to carry out its objectives enthusiastically—is by anticipating what the workers are about to do spontaneously, and advocating it before they get around to doing it. Thus, Lewis has built up his power in the coal miners' union, and won the loyalty and respect of the miners, primarily because he is always ready to call a strike when the objective and subjective needs of the miners call for one. However, whether or not a leadership can positively lead the workers anywhere but where they would go by themselves, it certainly can effectively act as a brake on the workers spontaneous activity, and thereby prevent them from successfully carrying out a difficult enterprise like a general strike.

In an industrial society, where all the economic pressures tend to enhance the workers' ingrained reluctance to assume full responsibility for their actions—reinforcing in a thousand subtle ways the myth that centralization and authority are absolutely essential for getting things done—the domination of labor organizations by leaders

reaches a maximum. It is almost impossible to imagine a labor movement being run by its members under this system. The IWW, for instance, which has always stood for this principle, has found its main following among non-industrial workers like lumberjacks and migratory farm laborers, men who are but recently 'emancipated' from the comparatively self-reliant life of independent farming. The major examples of revolutionary spontaneity in history—like the Russian and Spanish revolutions—have occurred in countries which had barely emerged from feudalism, in which the working class was composed predominently of peasants and craftsmen. While they eventually succumbed to centralized leadership and lost their fundamentally radical character, they remain as classic examples of spontaneous workers' action; in the more fully industrialized countries workingclass spontaneity has occurred only in brief spurts—a kind of letting off steam—after which the workers reverted to their customary apathy.

It seems to me therefore, that our whole perspective on such questions as the general strike against war will have to be altered. Instead of trying to radicalize the existing labor movement—either by renovating the old organizations or setting up new unions in industry—the workers should be encouraged to withdraw gradually from industry into a new, decentralized, self-governing *economy*. In this economy—a real 'new society within the shell of the old'—the workers would provide their own needs, and it could serve as the material base and spiritual fountainhead for a *permanent* strike against the whole industrial system. If such an economy could reach sizeable proportion it could seriously interfere with the war plans of the State and eventually cause the State itself to collapse from lack of support. As long as the workers remain enmeshed in the complexities of industrialism their militancy and spontaneity will be syphoned off in short and essentially futile sporadic outbursts. What is needed to build up the resourefulness and initiative of the workers is an economy of their own—a permanent underground—underlying, and ultimately undermining the status quo.

NOTES ON SANCHO PANZA

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Don Quixote, that undisputed and indisputable master work of Spanish literature, has often been taken as an allegory portraying the two extreme types of human being. Don Quixote himself is said to be the fine idealist who despite his frequent failures, his apparent follies and madnesses, remains a type of human aspirations and virtues carried to their purest and most selfless degree. Sancho Panza, on the other hand is held to represent the lower human desires and emotions; he is regarded as the clown, the glutton, the coward, a clod whose only emotions are greed and fear. Thus according to this popular idea, we have in Don Quixote the higher man, in Sancho Panza the lower man, and in these two can be found the opposites that are mingled in the human race.

In fact, however, as Cervantes realized perhaps more clearly than any other writer up to his day, no man is pure idealist or pure materialist. We are all strangely compounded of the gold and the dross. And for this reason Cervantes gives to both Don Quixote and Sancho Panza qualities which do not fit readily with the commonly accepted simplification of the book.

Don Quixote may indeed be the pure idealist, but his acts are often described in such a way as to show that fantasy detached from concrete reality can breed more harm than good; in some moods, Don Quixote is a precursor of those modern myth-makers who have re-edified the mock heroism he represented on a large and catastrophic scale. Hitler, for instance, was nothing if not Quixotic in his dreams of a resurrected Holy Roman Empire, and all the great imperialists of the last three centuries were prefigured in this strange knight with his mad dreams of dominion. Don Quixote is, among other things, a lesson in the evil results that can ensue from ideals which are not based in facts and which fail to consider the actual benefit of individual men and women rather than some mythical general good.

But if Don Quixote is not wholly the disinterested benefactor of humanity, Sancho Panza is not wholly the pusillanimous glutton. He too has his idealism, and his sense of his master's errors is linked with a deep personal devotion towards Don Quixote as a man. Too much has certainly been made of Sancho Panza's cowardice and self-seeking. In fact, an even better case could be made out for his good, downright sanity in practical affairs, and there is no doubt that in drawing him Cervantes sought to show that, even under the apparent stupidity and credulity of a Spanish peasant, there exists a fund of soundness and good sense that is more beneficial than the highest knight errantry detached from the earthy life of men. We might remember in this connection Sancho's own justification of his discretion in trying to avoid becoming involved in the consequences of Don Quixote's escapades, which were usually none of Sancho's seeking, yet which frequently involved him in the most painful consequences. After the Don had accused him of cowardice in advising a retreat, Sancho remarked:

"If it may please your worship, to withdraw is not to run away, and to stay is no wise action when there is more reason to fear than to hope. It is the part of the wise man to keep himself today for tomorrow, and not to venture all his eggs in one basket. And though I am but a clown, or bumpkin, as you may say, yet I would have you to know I know what is what, and have always taken care of the main chance; therefore do not be ashamed of being ruled by me, but even get on horseback if you are able: come, I will help you, and then follow me, for my mind plaguily nforms me that now one pair of heels will stand us in more stead han two pair of hands."

On this occasion Don Quixote allows himself to be persuaded by Sancho's practical wisdom, and the two are saved from what might have been the fatal circumstance of their apprehension by the officers of the Holy Brotherhood.

But perhaps the most interesting aspect of Sancho Panza is to be found in the story of his tenure of the government of Barataria, which is used by Cervantes in the most open way to illustrate the hostility towards authority displayed by the Spanish peasants. I can think of no book of the same period, with the exception of the Digger pamphlets of the English civil war, in which there is such a strong tendency to hold government in contempt and to elevate the individual and independent man above this collective machine.

There are times when even Don Quixote in a sense represents

this protest of the individual standing on principles of mercy against the indiscriminate barbarity of the law, as was illustrated in his freeing the galley slaves from their guards, and I think that the evil wrought by his love of fantasy is almost outweighed by the strict regard for ethical principles shown in such actions. His self-justification is worth recalling as an example of real Christian thought set against the cruelty of contemporary Spanish Christianity with its inquisition and racial suppressions:

"Is it for a knight-errant when he meets with people laden with chains, and under oppression, to examine whether they are in those circumstances for their crimes or only through misfortune? We are only to relieve the afflicted, to look on their distress and not on their crimes. I met a company of poor wretches, who went along sorrowful, dejected, and linked together like the beads of a rosary; thereupon I did what my conscience and my profession obliged me to do. And what has any man to say to this?"

Don Quixote's reasoning is unanswerable, and it seems clear that Cervantes, who had himself known what it was to be a slave, was using this apparantly ridiculous tale to register his protest at the whole sytem of punishment that sent men into slavery for faults committed as much through misfortune as through ill intent. One feels that in this particular incident Don Quixote is doing what Cervantes would willingly have done to every chain gang in his unfortunate country.

But, while Don Quixote's demonstrations of sound sense are occasional, it is in Sancho's conversations and experiences that we get the real Spanish attitude towards government and individual dignity shown most clearly. Sancho begins by wanting to be a governor, because he is taken up with the glamour of the position; his very concept of government is clearly that of a man whose life has always been remote from the exactions or experience of authority. But even while Sancho has his ideas of becoming a governor, we are regaled with the shrewdness of his wife's cautioning attitude:

"Do thou live, and let all the governments in the world go to the Devil. Thou camest out of thy mother's belly without government, thou hast lived hitherto without government, and thou mayest be carried to thy long home without government, when it shall please the Lord. How many people in this world live without government yet do well enough, and are well looked upon."

Sancho, however, insists on continuing his pursuit of a governorship, and eventually is installed by the Duke in the governorship of Barataria, an appointment which is designed as a burlesque to

take advantage of his supposed peasant stupidity for the amusement of the court. But Sancho turns the tables on his tormenters by a series of judgments based on a commonsense consideration of each case brought before him, which make the codes of the legalists appear ridiculous. Very soon, however, he realizes the evils of government, and one day goes out, saddles his ass, and departs, having made to the dignitaries of his government a speech which can well be taken as the common man's condemnation of power and its burdens:

"Make way, gentlemen, and let me return to my former liberty. Let me go, that I may seek my old course of life, and rise again from that death that buries me here alive. I was not born to be a Governor, nor to defend islands nor cities from enemies that break in upon them. I know better what belongs to ploughing, delving, pruning and planting of vineyards than how to make laws and defend countries and kingdoms. St. Peter is very well at Rome, which is as much as to say, let everyone stick to the calling he was born to. A spade does better in my hand than a Governor's truncheon; and I had rather fill my belly with a mess of plain porridge, than lie at the mercy of a coxcombly physic-monger that starves me to death. I had rather solace myself under the shade of an oak in in summer; and wrap up my corpse in a double sheep-skin in the winter at my liberty, than lay me down with the slavery of a government in fine holland sheets and case my hide in furs and richest sables. Heaven be with you, gentle-folk, and pray tell my Lord Duke from me, that naked I was born, and naked I am at present. I have neither won nor lost, which is as much as to say, without a penny I came to this government, and without a penny I leave it, quite contrary to what governors of islands use to do when they leave them."

In this speech Sancho rises above those who have sought to mock his stupidity, into the full dignity of an independent and sane human being, and for the rest of the book, in spite of his follies, his clowning behavior, his sententious proverbs, his gluttony and his discretion in the face of danger, Sancho remains the better for his experience, which has shown how even a rude and credulous peasant, if he be only an honest and shrewd man, can show more sense and wholeness of personality than all the products of court and governors' palace.

Sancho has discovered the sovereign nature of the individual, and at last, when Don Quixote's extravagences impinge too much on his own comfort, he makes the revolt of the common man against the man who would subordinate all to visionary delusions, and shows in this incident that the dignity of an ordinary man defending his freedom is in the end greater and more powerful than the idealist

who tries to submit other people to his own dream. The incident arises out of Don Quixote's idea that Dulcinea will become disenchanted if Sancho inflicts 3300 lashes to his own buttocks. Annoyed at Sancho's unwillingness to perform what seems to him an urgent and necessary task, the distracted knight errant takes the opportunity when Sancho is sleeping to attempt the punishment himself. But Sancho resists and overthrows him.

"Don Quixote, overpowered thus, cried, 'How now, traitor! what, rebel against thy master, against thy natural lord, against him that gives thee bread.' 'I neither mar king, nor make king' quoth Sancho; 'I do but defend myself, that am naturally my own lord.' "

In thus declaring himself "naturally his own lord", Sancho reaches the logical end of his experience of the folly of government. From wishing to govern others, he comes to the conclusion that to be his own lord, and to attend to the things of his own vocation, his ploughing and vine-tending, is the only destiny that he desires.

Here Sancho is typical, not only in his petty faults, but also in his virtues of independence and good sense, of that kind of common, unlettered man who wishes to be left to his own resources, to live his life in full freedom from authority and interference.

This is an attitude to be found perhaps more in Spain than elsewhere in the world. It has inspired the hundreds of Spanish communal villages which have lived from ancient days in virtual independence from feudal lords, basing their lives on sensible coöperation among ungoverned equal. It has inspired the anarchism of the landworking masses of Andalusia and Galicia and the industrial workers of Barcelona. It has inspired millions of Spaniards to distrust government as a natural enemy and to seek to assert the independence and wholeness of their own selves in the face of some of the most atrocious tyrannies that have afflicted the earth. Some of the spirit of Don Quixote may have entered into the madness with which half-rogues, half-fanatics have governed Spain in the past, but the spirit of Sancho Panza has lived wholly in this earth-rooted dignity of the individual Spanish peasant, who wishes to acknowledge no lord and to be left to till his fields in peace. In creating Sancho, Cervantes became more than any other writer the true interpreter of the Spanish common people.

JOHN B. L. GOODWIN

MEET MY FRIENDS

This is the Man with the interpreted eyes.
This is the Man with the elucidated fingers.
This is the Man with the recommended perversions.
This is the Man who knows insects by name
And this is his Dog:

This is the Dog with the provocative anus.
This is the Dog with the apple orchard eyes.
This is the Dog with the soluble paws.
This is the Dog who smells ghosts at thirty paces
And this is his Toy:

This is the Toy with the parallel whistles.
This is the Toy with the ice-cream flavour.
This is the Toy with hair at its angles.
This is the Toy that bears the stigmata
And this is its Vision:

This is the Vision with the chlorophyll words.
This is the Vision with the humorous love.
This is the Vision with the fluorescent tongue.
This is the Vision that lies in an urn
And this is its Song:

This is the Song with the stalactite crescendo.
This is the Song with the militant saddle.
This is the Song with the Roman endeavour.
This is the Song that lies down in the air
And this is its Singer:

This is the Singer with the punctillious teeth.
This is the Singer with the amorous argument.
This is the Singer with the elusive betrayal.
This is the Singer with her hair in a sling
And this is her God:

This is the God with the pensioned retainer.
This is the God with the blue-buttoned boots.
This is the God with presumtuous humility.
This is the God who lurks in the lampshade
And this is His World:

This is the World with the telescope scrotum.
This is the World with the impossible name.
This is the World with the catapult eyes.
This is the World that eats its own fingers
And this is its End:

J. C. CREWS

HOW HAPPY THE PRECOCIOUS CRAB

It moved, and moving, was said to be
denial was left to the saints
but their calculations were less than conclusive

Thus it was said to be
though many doubted
and their figuring was less than calculation

It was said to be for a time
and the saints declared it dead
denying it had ever lived
though this
was too sharp for the subtlest wits they
were dispelled and deflected
from the questioning of questions
to the questioning of fate asking mercy

Even conceding that to doubt might not be
too great a price for a bed
they were too sorely beaten to lie upon
conceding
that movement conclusively must be
a function of demented sight demoniac fear
in no case *prima inter pares* being

for look at sin without body without motion
but besetting as the demon
besetting as the eye

CHARLES MISSON: LIBERTARIAN PIRATE

BYRON R. BRYANT

Anarchistic ideas did not, of course, begin at any particular time in man's history, even if it is true that a clear-cut and consistent libertarian philosophy has appeared only within the last hundred years. A mist of silence and misrepresentation covers the earlier and less forthright attempts to create societies based on the dignity and freedom of the individual. The novels of Howard Fast, although badly marred by Stalinist propaganda, have helped to open our eyes to the many occasions in history when efforts for greater liberty have been ruthlessly curbed and the facts about them falsified or buried in documentary archives. Probably the strangest and most interesting of all such buried episodes is the attempt of the French pirate captain, Charles Misson, to found a free society on the island of Madagascar in the first quarter of the 18th century. It is a story at present to be found only in certain rare books of piracy and travel. It is worth retelling.

Misson was one of those younger sons of an aristocratic family upon whom the navies of his day depended for officer material. When the young volunteer embarked on the warship La Victoire—his Provençal father had pulled a good many strings to get the post for him—there was nothing unusual about him except his exceptional intelligence and his lack of snobbishness toward the common sailors. It was not until the ship docked at Rome and he had met an adventure-craving Dominican friar, Caraccioli, that he revealed philosophical interests. For some time Caraccioli's rather curious occupation had been expounding deistic propaganda to frequenters of taverns. He did not hesitate to accept Misson's invitation to join him as an officer on board La Victoire; Italian churchmen in those days could be surprisingly versatile. In the months that followed, while the ship cruised in search of Turkish privateers, Caraccioli took advantage of the opportunity to convert Misson to the doctrine that Reason is the only God and that "every man was born free and had as much right to what would support him as to the air he respired." Such novel arguments convinced young Charles and several members of

the crew. By a stroke of luck, a battle with an English ship off Martinique in which all the high-ranking ship's officers were killed gave Misson the captaincy of La Victoire and an opportunity to attempt to put his new convictions into practice.

It was a decisive moment when the new captain addressed his crew, inviting them to share with himself and Caraccioli the new life of brotherhood and freedom which they were prepared to begin. The crew accepted to a man. There was little in the service they were leaving to give them any regrets; a century after their time the life of a sailor was still a slavish and unrewarding existence. Enthusiasm was now high aboard La Victoire. Should they hoist the black flag of piracy? Caracciolli was instantly on his feet, profuse with objections. Although they admittedly intended to prey on the shipping of all tyrannical governments—which meant all those in existence—they were not to regard themselves as mere freebooters, but as forerunners of a great movement for human freedom which would soon sweep the earth. Their banner should be white as an indication of the purity of their intentions; on it should be inscribed the words *Deo e Libertate* as a further clarification of their position. The crew agreed and proceeded to elect several of their number who were to exercise the functions of the deceased officers and to serve as advisors to the captain. With a new purpose, the men of La Victoire continued their cruise. They had gone as far as the limitations of their background permitted; they had thrown off all national and ecclesiastical allegiances and were in search of genuine freedom.

The first ship to attack the new, independent floating society was, ironically enough, a privateer. She was soundly beaten, but in the flush of their idealism her conquerors took only her small arms and ammunition, then allowed her to proceed. From that time onward, engagements were frequent, since every vessel La Victoire met was regarded as a real or potential enemy. 12 French prisoners were freed from a British warship and allowed to join Misson's crew; 14 Huguenots were added fron another vessel. When La Victoire docked at Carthagena, the unsuspecting governor entertained the crew and then invited the party to serve as an escort for his ship, the St. Joseph, which had 800,000 pieces of eight on board. But the St. Joseph sailed ahead of schedule and was thereby saved from what would have been a surprising sort of 'protection'.

After repairing La Victoire in an inlet on the north coast of Cuba, the majority of those on board voted to sail for the West

African or Guinea coast where they expected to seize some of the ships loaded with merchandise from the Orient. They had barely reached their destination when a Dutch vessel with 17 slaves aboard fell into their hands. The Negroes were glad to join such remarkable white men who condemned all racial prejudice. (Misson's tolerance did not, however, extend to the swearing of their captured Dutch masters; he threatened to 'whip and pickle' them if they did not cease their 'blasphemy'.) From another Dutch ship came a group of tailors; soon afterward the entire crew, except the officers, of an overpowered Englishman cast their lot with Misson. Defiance of the established governments of the world seemed to be progressing smoothly.

A land base for La Victoire was now needed, so the party sailed for Madagascar where most of the successful pirates of the age maintained their headquarters. They were hospitably received by the queen of the island of Johanna—so hospitably, in fact, that in a short time Misson married her sister and Caraccioli accepted the offer of her brother's daughter. The numerous petty African kingdoms, of which Johanna was an example, were often at war with each other; in a short time conflict arose with the neighboring island of Mohila. In order to protect the colony which they proposed to found nearby, Misson and Caraccioli decided that it was essential to discourage too great a sense of unity between the neighboring kingdoms—a Machiavellian purpose which was, nevertheless, probably necessary for the new colony's existence. Any effort to found libertarian colonies in one country or in a small area must always be modified by the nature of surrounding opposition—a factor which too many would-be builders of a free society tend to ignore. The Johanna-Mohila war, after several instances of treachery on both sides, resulted in a stalemate. It was varied by a battle between La Victoire and a Portuguese ship which resulted in a gain of £250,000 by Misson's party—and the loss of Caraccioli's right leg.

While his lieutenant was recovering, Misson cruised along the coast of Madagascar and found a secluded bay, beyond which stretched a pleasant, well-wooded country. Here the ideal society was to be established. After persuading the queen of Johanna to give him the aid of 300 of her subjects to assist in the colony's erection, Misson returned to the chosen site accompanied by the now-recovered Caraccioli. It was proposed and agreed to that the forthcoming settlement should be called Libertatia, and that its inhabitants should forget their former national affiliations and should call themselves Liberi.

Their first problem, that of defense, was solved by building two forts, one on each side of the harbor. Under their protection the streets and houses of the land of Libertatia began to appear. Natives from nearby portable villages wandered curiously but amiably about the infant colony, and it did not occur to builders to create defenses against an assault by land—a natural but serious error.

With the building under way, the colony needed wealth, manpower, and manufactured goods; to obtain them Misson departed on another buccaneering voyage. After capturing a Portuguese merchantman with £200,000 in gold aboard her, La Victoire met a fellow pirate vessel commanded by one Captain Tew. Tew had been commissioned by the governor of Bermuda, who was working hand-in-glove with the British Royal African company, to destroy a French trading settlement on the west coast of the Dark Continent. While sailing for their destination, Tew and his men decided that the expedition offered nothing of any real value to them, so they decided to venture on their own. The ship had just returned from a lucrative voyage to the Red Sea, and Tew was glad to accept the diversion offered by Misson's invitation to visit Libertatia. The colony proved to be beyond the expectations of Tew and his men. They lost no time in joining the promising society; the security which it offered was particularly appreciated after many unsettled months of wandering from place to place.

The colony's next problem was what to do with their prisoners. Although much effort had been exerted to convert as many captives as possible to the ideals of the Liberi, the prisoners were almost as many as the citizens. They were finally loaded en masse in the captured Portuguese ship and were allowed to sail in whatever direction they chose. As the craft disappeared, the colonists felt greatly relieved; such a large unfriendly element had been a serious hindrance to the development of the colony.

While Misson and Caraccioli remained behind to direct the work of construction, Tew departed in his ship in search of more men who might wish to join the pioneers at Libertatia. 240 slaves taken from a Englishman captured off the Cape of Good Hope joyfully accepted his invitation. They needed little persuasion to decide that a society "where everything was in common and no hedge bounded any particular man's property" would be a welcome haven. Meanwhile, the progress of building construction at Libertatia had advanced so far that the colony was able to dispatch two sloops to map the Madagascar coast for navigation purposes.

Life in Libertatia was now becoming settled. There remained the double task of enlarging and beautifying the colony while sending forth naval expeditions against ships manned by those who lived in the 'unliberated' lands. The formidable character of the colony's two forts was increased by a number of large guns from captured ships; even seeds for planting were obtained from some of the prizes. Five Portuguese warships which attempted to wipe out the settlement were utterly routed and three were lost. Among the men taken from one of the ships were two former prisoners of the colony who had sworn when they were released that they would never bear arms against the Liberi. The two were hanged as perjurers, but many of the colonists expressed doubt that such treatment was in keeping with their ideals. Caraccioli pacified them by declaring oratorically that "there was no rule could be laid down which did not allow exceptions," but some of the discontent remained. From this point onward, the libertarian nature of the colony began to be curtailed. Shortly after the hanging, a quarrel on nationalistic lines broke out between Misson's and Tew's men. Again Caraccioli prevented a serious division, but the episode was made an excuse for adopting more stringent and authoritarian measures. Up to this time, the colony had had no settled organization. Land, as we have noted, was communally held; the exact degree of individual freedom permitted in the society is difficult to ascertain, but, except for the fact that everyone was expected to participate in establishing Libertatia, very little coercion seems to have been used. The location of the colony seemed unusually happy; the rolling green fields and the giant forests alive with birds and game made it an almost elysian world. But the problem of human relations remained as difficult as ever.

Libertatia now became a 'representative republic' as the result of a convention composed of men each of whom was elected by ten inhabitants. The evils of parliamentarianism had arrived. Misson was elected Lord Conservator with the title of 'Supreme Excellence'. He was to rule the colony with the assistance of an elected council meeting once a year or more often. The fluent Caraciolli became Secretary of State and Tew received the title of Admiral. Such thermidorian procedures had not even been dreamed of when the colony was established. But Libertatia was not to last much longer.

Tew once more sailed forth to recruit inhabitants. He stopped this time at a settlement farther down the coast which had been established by some former members of his crew before the meeting with

Misson. Tew invited them to move to Libertatia. They answered that they had devised a system which allowed each man in turnto govern the whole settlement for three months and that they failed to see that Libertatia's new government could prove in any way superior to such a procedure. While Tew was conferring on shore, his ship was suddenly dashed againt the rocks of the shoreline and sunk with all the crew on board. Tew was helpless and cut off from communication with Misson.

It was not until four months later that Tew learned that his own disaster was small compared to that which had befallen Libertatia. When Misson finally joined him, he was informed that, with two ships absent from the colony, the Negroes of the surrounding country had fallen upon Libertatia without warning and had destroyed it. Caraccioli had been killed in the action; only Misson and 45 men had escaped in the two sloops built for the mapping expedition. The dream of a free society, already somewhat shattered, had perished in the roar of flames and the yells of savages. Two such unprecedented pieces of bad news convinced the survivors that there was nothing left to do but to return to the hated lands of tyranny which they had so hopefully renounced.

It was settled that Tew should take one of the sloops and sail for America where his past would be forgotten. Misson would take the other and return to France to see his relations; he did not know what he would do after that. The two ships waited for some time expecting to be joined by the other vessel which had been absent from Libertatia at the time of the Negro uprising. It failed to appear in what was thought to be a reasonable period, and the two sloops began their long voyages.

Misfortune had not left them. A violent storm swept huge waves over the unprotected craft as they feebly tried to hold their own in an enveloping world of maddened waters. Misson and his small crew perished. Tew's battered vessel finally reached Rhode Island, and Tew himself was killed some years later when he again attempted to become a pirate.

Libertatia, at the time of its founding, was one of the most promising ventures of its type. It was not in any literal sense an 'anarchist' colony, but in its earlier period it came remarkably close to a libertarian ideal Scarcely any work of romantic fiction can compare with its remarkable and swashbuckling story. The 'land of Libertatia' seems a most visionary concept to us today. One wonders if it must always be so.

REVOLT OF THE SCIENTISTS

ANTON PANNEKOEK

Panic pervades the intellectual layers of American society. Whereas the peoples of Europe were used to war and damage, to destruction and insecurity in life, Americans felt safe in being separated by oceans from dangerous foes, until the atombomb fell upon Hiroshima; the first scientists, realizing what it meant, called themselves 'frightened men'.

There is no secret; and there is no defense. Within some few years Russia and many smaller countries can have their installations ready to make atombombs by the hundreds, just like America. Atom bombs are the cheapest means of town-destruction; General H. H. Arnold computed that destruction per square mile by means of B29 bombs costs 3 million dollars, by means of the Hiroshima bomb only half a million (destroying a value of 160 millions). Carried by airplanes or rockets, they can cross tho ocean in numbers, and by agents of foreign powers—Russia has numbers of devoted agents in every country—they can easily be smuggled in and hidden, to destroy everything for miles around at the fixed moment. An immense army of security officers and spies will be needed, continually to inspect every box or case in any house. In penetrating words Urey, one of the foremost physicists in America, points out how the deadly fear of annihilation will destroy all the liberties of American citizens. Nor will an attempt to forestall the danger through world conquest by America be a way out. "Not only may our own culture be destroyed by these weapons of mass destruction, but all civilizations, as they exist in the world may be retarded and weakened for centuries to coma. It all adds up to the most dangerous situation that humanity has ever faced in all history."

In this all his colleagues agree, and they rebel. They refuse now that the German war is over and won, to take part in further research for military use, to construct and perfect weapons. [The government, to break this strike, has already imported hundreds of German Nazi-physicists.] The atomic scientists propose international

control of all atomic technics and research, and give out the slogan: no more war. An extensive propaganda is put out to impress the American people that a new age, 'the atomic age' has begun, and that it is incumbent upon them all to fight the impending danger. Professor Langmuir explains that America must come to an understanding with Russia and overcome the mutual mistrust. "We don't like their form of government and they don't like ours", but he adds, quoting the Atlantic Charter, "we have to respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." Manifestly, he thinks that the Russian people have deliberately, by preference, chosen their dictatorship.

There is now, ever again, talk of an understanding between Russia and America. Certainly, between the peoples, the working masses, there would be no difficulty, if only they could reach one another. But 'Russia': that is the group of dictatorially ruling officials, for whom the chief thing is to keep their power over the exploited, gagged masses. Or 'America': that is the group of millionaires, ruling by means of their agents, senators, presidents, congressmen, editors, for whom the chief thing is to keep their power over the exploited, fooled masses. And to extend their power over the world; American capitalism, as the more powerful, aspiring to complete world-domination, Russian state-capitalism as the more advanced economic organization, expecting superiority by delaying the conflict. Theoretically it does not seem entirely impossible that these two groups of exploiters should come to an agreement of uniting into one, though not homogeneous, world-dominating class; just as now within one political unit the capitalist groups compete and fight one another without killing and shooting. In America many voices are raised already, demanding one supreme world-goverment ("One world or none!") —they feel quite sure that it would mean an American world-government; of course the Russian rulers refuse. But as long as there are large populations and countries still to be conquered by capitalism —as in China—by destruction of old settled conditions and heavier suffering of the masses, violence and bloodshed will not disappear from the earth, and passionate greed will engender a warlike spirit. Moreover in world-war capital makes the biggest profits; 19 shipbuilding companies with a total capital of $23,000,000 made profits amounting to $356,000,000 in the last war. So it does not seem probable that world peace and unity of the ruling classes will be reached.

Capitalist society with its mighty technical and its entirely

inadequate spiritual and moral powers is often compared to a powerful racing car with a baby at the wheel. Now the car is seen steering downright towards the abyss. President Truman a year ago in a message to Congress said: "the release of atomic energy constitutes a new force too revolutionary to consider in the framework of old ideas." What we see in politics and international talk is the steadfast, nearly invariable dominance of the old ideas. The Army, here and yonder, prepares in secret more and more destructive atomic weapons, performing their narrow duty in accordance with civil government; international talk goes on in the old frame; the mutual proposals of the governments have the old-fashioned sound of war-threats and peace-phrases. Is that mere clumsiness of thought? No, the still reigning 'old ideas' represent the still existing old foundations of society, the mastery of rapacious exploiters. The words of the president were idle words. The atombomb surely is a revolutionary factor. But it has not revolutionized the basis of society.

Will the 'revolting' scientists change this basis? They do no more than try to impress the danger of atomic war upon the citizens. They cannot do any more, they are only learned physicists; they are not social guides; they are not acquainted with the real nature of social relations. Learned societies in different countries now demand for the scientists control of and a say in politics, part of the responsibility in government. They are not aware that the right of governing is not given but must be conquered. In one of the pamphlets issued to rouse the people, the question asked by the readers: what can I do?—is answered thus: "Let your Congressmen know that you expect them to find a way to banish from the world both the causes and the weapons of war, regardless of how many precedents and prejudices must be set aside." That will do it! Indeed, tens of thousands of letters were received already by Congress [from among tens of millions of voters, hence 99.9 percent showed no interest]. Probably the Congressmen receiving such letters went to their party bosses inside or outside of the Administration to take counsel and instructions: and so everything remains in the same hands, directed by the 'old ideas' of politics. World-threatening dangers cannot be averted by means of unimportant trifles.

II

Could anything otherwise be done, then, to prevent atomic war? Certainly. But in order to see this, the question must be put in a wider context. Can the people, in extreme cases, force its will upon

the rulers—directly, hence otherwise than by the long, notoriously illusionary way of electing an entirely new and new-minded Congress? Suppose an immediate danger of war threatens, have the working masses, provided they have a decided will to prevent the war, any possibility of enforcing their will upon an unwilling war-preparing government? They have, if they are really prepared to uphold their aim resolutely.

It must be borne in mind that a government, a ruling class cannot go into a war if the people is unwilling and resisting. Therefore a moral and intellectual preparation is no less necessary than a technical and organizational preparation. They know intuitively what Clausewitz, the well-known German author of 'On War' expressed in this way: that in every war spiritual forces play the main rôle. Systematic propaganda in the press, on the radio and in movies, must awaken the patriotic bellicose spirit and suppress the instinctive but unorganized resistance. So it is certain that a decided, conscious refusal by the masses of the people, manifested in an outspoken, widely heard protest, is a first-rank political factor and can have a determining influence upon governmental policy. Such protest can assume different forms of increasing stringency. It may appear first in mass meetings voting sharp resolutions. The protest will be more effective, if—in tens and hundreds of thousands—the masses go into the streets in endless processions; against such numbers all riot-acts and court-injunctions are meaningless. And if these are not sufficient, or are suppressed by military force, the workers and employees in transport and industry can strike. Not for wages, but to save society. A mass political strike is not a mechanical impediment to war, but a means of moral pressure. It is the most serious admonition to government of the resolute will of the people for peace. Surely it would be a revolutionary action; but, as Truman said, the atombomb is a revolutionary factor.

Such an action is not lightly to be entered upon. Government and the ruling class will try to break this resistance with all means of moral and physical suppression. So it will be a hard fight, demanding sacrifices, steadfastness and endurance. The psychological factors for such a fight are not at once present in full vigor; they need time to develop under heavy spiritual strain. As long as citizens cad be lulled by an appeal to nationalism—even in the illustrated leaflets against atomic war the star-spangled banner made its appearance—and listen to the promise that the big profits of Amercan world-domination will pour out over the entire business world; as

long as the workers go on strike and go to work at the command of some union chieftain, instead of taking action and decision over their lot entirely into their own hands—the psychological conditions for such actions of protest will be lacking. But it must be emphasized that in them lies the only warrant of world peace.

Will not such actions, by laming the war-preparations, play into the hands of the foe and prepare for the defeat of the home country? Everybody in America knows that Russia is a dictatorship able to go its course unimpaired by the powerless masses. But in Russia the workers, to the last child, know that the USA is ruled by big capitalism aspiring to world-domination, and to that end is able to muster the entire American people, workers as well as middle-class. At least up to now. Will they, then, blame their rulers for preparing for a war of defense? Thus the ring of fate, fettering each working class to masters is closed. How can it be broken?

In Russia the workers are powerless, kept in spiritual as well as physical bondage. The American workers are free to take up the fight, free to act, to read, to publish, to discuss, to instruct themselves, to combine in unions, to assemble in meeting, to strike. Hence it is only here that the fight for peace can begin. If there is any way to encourage, from the outside, resistance of oppositional elements among the Russian masses against the dictatorship, it consists in mass-actiens of American workers againt capitalist power. If they should proceed to wrench the decision on policy from big capital, the most essential step to deter the threat of atomic war would be made.

At the same time such action would be the first step towards social revolution overthrowing capitalism itself. Then the atombomb would be a revolutionary factor indeed, revolutioniizng the basis of society. Then the 'atomic age' would inaugurate the age of freedom.

Of course nobody expects the atomic scientists to go that far. They have given their expert warning, as physicists. More they cannot do. It is up to others to take the warning.

THE EMPEROR'S NEWEST CLOTHES: EXISTENTIALISM

DACHINE RAINER

...One day two swindlers arrived who said they knew how to weave the most beautiful materials imaginable...the clothes were made of stuffs that had the peculiar quality of becoming invisible to every person who was hopelessly dull or unfit for his office...

The emperor ordered stuff to be woven and paid handsomely —in advance. The weavers, demanding the finest silk and gold, set about weaving.

After a time the emperor sent his faithful minister to see how they progressed, but to his surprise he saw no cloth on the looms.

"Isn't the color beautiful?" asked one weaver.

"And the design! Absolutely original!" said the other.

The poor minister thought himself a fool; he agreed, however, with the weavers, and praised the clothes highly to the emperor. He sent other ministers and finally went himself. They all saw nothing, but could not confess that they were unfit for the office they held, or that they were fools. So they praised the stuff highly and the emperor conferred on each rogue the Order of the Knight and Gentleman Weaver, and ordered a procession held in which the emperor would wear his new clothes.

...The procession travelled the city street, the emperor proud in his imaginary clothes, his sceptre raised.

"How beautiful are His Majesties' clothes!" cried the women.

"And how well they fit!" cried the men.

"But he has nothing on!" shouted a child.

"Hush!" said his father.

"Listen to the innocent!" said his mother.

"But he's got nothing *on*!" repeated the child.

The emperor winced, for he knew it was true, but he thought: "The procession must go on."

adapted from *The Emperor's New Clothes*
by Hans Anderson

Ever since the pre-Platonists, Western man has been concerned with the loss of the dual-reality: the loss of the world and the loss of the self. This has been an ambivalent process. That today Western philosophy has achieved the Nothing is a rather fortuitous

achievement, for Nothing is not to be confused with the conscious rejection of All Things, but with the conspicuous absence of Anything. Existentialism is not a positive Negativism, it is a negative one. It is, in the simplest sense, nothing.

Philosophic assertion methodically vacillates between two extremes: between the *I* as center of the universe—(which, all things considered, is the more popular of the two)—and the external world as the true measurement of phenomena. Pre-Christian thinking had a difficult time attempting to reconcile these two concepts. Inhabitants of the spirit world of most pagan philosophies had egos and all the animated paraphenalia that accompanies human existence but they unfortunately lacked absolute power. While it is true that there existed a considerable hierarchy of power with epitomes like the Egyptian sun godess, it was not until the prevalent philosophy was monolithic, that is, not until Jehovah, that a scapegoat had been found to reconcile the ambiguity: God created man *and* God created the universe.

Actually this served to complicate the dilemma in several ways—altho superficially, it provided and continues to provide a satisfactory solution for countless people. It brought the confusion of genesis and identity into sharper focus. By the time of the Rational revolution, the hypothesis of the first cause had become untenable. But long before that the irreconcilability between the the soma and the psyche the world and each subjective ego-interpretation of phenomena had given each succeeding generation of philosophical enquiry a thrashing.

God was not invulnerable. Only those, who like the Christian mystics, denied the outer world and in subtle or direct ways sought and achieved through martyrdom a direct communication with the Absolute Entity, or more in our time, the logical positivists who repudiated the intervention of any divine interference, and mechanistically refused to recognize the existence of the subjective or individual perception of "reality", who resolved the problem by failing to see it.

But from Descartes on, the problem existed. Descartes had a wretched time of it until he seated the spirit or divine light in the pineal gland, and suggested this area as the mediating ground between matter and spirit. This was unsatisfactory, and the two mutually exclusive concepts remained: matter wandering about in a spiritless world, colliding with other matter in a purely mechanical

manner, or spirits floating through space and not colliding at all. Anyone who has ever had a metaphysical collision repudiates both: "what profit it a man if he gain the world and lose his soul?" but what profit it a man to gain his soul if he lose the world?

Lately man comes more and more to function as the former and rationalize by the latter: the more the world is with him, the more he pretends that he cannot quite escape it, but *would* if he *could*. This type of rationalization is now less acceptible to the European who is on the run continually from the world. The new world is the concentration camp; the new world is almost totally uncontrollable, and very seldom immediately predictable. It is this world, where the possibility of human intervention into the collective human process has become limited and frequently altogether impossible, where any system of values, long denied by all mechanistic and rationalist views of the world, has become too hazardous for most men to live by, where society has propelled itself into that estate that bridges a lack of understanding with the neurotic infallability of invariably choosing or creating that which men fear most, that existentialist philosophy is heir to.

It is heir also to Kant, Kierkegaard and the Kremlin, to Hegel, Heidegger and Hell, to Freud, and to some badly mangled Eastern philosophy (e.g. the subtle concept of Nirvana and the Wheel becomes the crude despair of the "death-wish"). But it is an heir without clothes, without matter or spirit and certainly without courage.

II

Until Kant, the postulation of the existence of God created a slumbering feeling in the region where man's conscience is generally believed to reside, for with the concept of original sin, man's fallability was assured. Man had erred in the Beginning and with almost unerring instinct continued to err throughout historical time. Given this condition, that only the Absolute Entity, that abstraction of the integrated Mind and Matter which possessed exclusive monopoly on Good, was responsible for Man, men could no longer feel obligated to maintain any system of values that would hold them responsible for either individual or collective behavior. This myth did not enjoy undisputed reign, for there was always the Sermon on the Mount which *did* relegate to man moral prerogatives, and on which Kant's Categorical Imperative is based.

Actually this has been called a "failure of nerve", a desire to

shed one's responsibility that creates the discrepancy between the thinking and behavior of modern men. This ambiguity exists in the doctrine as well. Yet man requires some concept of ethics to serve as conscience or restraint altho moral behavior does not necessarily derive from the greatest abstraction, The Sermon on the Mount.

Since the first schizoid God! He who was totally responsible for the welfare of His people, yet who chose for Whimsical reason to punish, and to burden good men (how could "good" have any meaning in an irresponsible being?) with meaningless evil (c.f. Job) and the God who exhorted men to *be* good, the interpretation of individual responsibility remains a divided one The major difference between the Old Testament and contemporary version exists in the rôle of Prime Mover; the State has assumed the overt leadership of the myth.

Men have delegated by devious ways their right to the State. Sometimes these rights have been usurped, but more often men have been hysterically eager to rid themselves of any vestige of responsibility.

It is as tho the evolution of man's consciousness and the consequent development of the conscience has been too unpremeditated: there has been the maddest rush to divest himself of any remnants of freedom—of free choice—and to approximate that condition of man that is automaton rather than autonomous. In all things from the most petty to the most portentous man has given himself away. He has "delegated" to an abstract concept, "the democratic state", and the institutions of his culture, all items involving his immediate welfare—his *kind* of life: his food, his house, his clothes, his travel-rights, his work, his play—and as a consequence the totalitarian State has usurped the minor alternatives left him, so that it no longer determines the *kind* of life he shall have, but whether he shall *live* at all.

Conversely, the State controls man's very Absence of Being, for even suicide in most prisons and all camps no longer belongs to the realm of free choice. The State controls his Being and Non-Being and all transitions, and catalogs his remains in a manner in which the earlier God, despite his absolute power hardly thought possible.

It is true that the death-consolation or loss-reconciliation of even things lesser than death was: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away". But what Lord was ever so avaricious, so ver-

satile, so unreliable as the modern State? Perhaps not unreliable, for the State will certainly take everything away. It is this knowledge, that the State is a poor substitute for that other Divine Power in running the universe, that has produced the frenzied and belated affirmation of individual rights, and a warmed over philosophical hash on which to feed this belief; man must wrest some area in which he is free from the tyranny of the State—even if that area is only, as Heidegger maintains, the freedom Not to Be.

The period that God controlled the universe, if only as a concept in the mind of men, happened to be coincidental with a period in the West with a tolerable world. The world is no longer tolerable, and since Kant, man has begun to entertain grave doubts whether the delegation of his individual power to *any* force outside himself is a desirable thing. (Some peoples—peasants invariably, the Til Eulenspiegels of the world—have translated their doubt into chronic mistrust and perpetual warfare against the State; others, more particularly, victims of the Industrial Revolution have had their rising skepticism assuaged by the myth that democracy equals freedom, that government is a social contract.)

For Kant there still remained a sphere of reference outside the individual in which phenomena were morally evaluated; there remained a gauge for determining individual behavior that involved the external world as well: the referral of the behavior to the societal need by the categorical imperative. Kant is the bridge between moral and amoral man. His was the first philosophical return in the direction of moral relativism.

Actually the return started earlier with protestantism, and in England, Germany and later America, where protestantism gained a strong following, the literary and political movements emphasized this subjective responsiblist revival. It is in France, dominantly Catholic, that this idea has been delayed, and only with the increasing secularization of the country, and with the continual infiltration of of protestatant ideology from Germany, that we see the historically cliché revival of the individual: existentialism!

Like Catholicism before it, existentialism fails to resolve the dilemma of relativist ethics. Man cannot be made responsible any more than God could be. For if *all* value judgments reside in the individual, none resides there at all. Unless there is some non-subjective measurement of behavior, responsibility is an uncomfortable myth, since anything goes!

Man is psychologically inept at considering himself a scoundrel; since he is a rationalizing animal, he need never do so, for if behavior is an affair of the individual conscience, it becomes an affair of no conscience at all. This is only a seeming paradox, readily dissoluable when one considers that man, on his present level of moral consciousness, is largely an asocial animal, responsible to no coercive restraints. To the stone club he has added deceit. The atombomb is comprehensible only as an evasive development of the stone club. Any whim as well as any opportunistic need is capable of fulfillment.

The shelter the existentialists hover under as protection against the psychological duress attendant upon acknowledging the dilemma of relativist ethics is despair and guilt. Man may behave freely, and thus badly, they allow—if only he *feel guilty* about it! That is all the "meaning" that existentialism has. Anyone who can doubletalk around this one point is pretending to see clothes on a fad that simply isn't wearing any.

III

Existentialism maintains the same dualism as does the Catholic Church in its vacillation between its ideology of sainthood and its material political corruptibility. While for Catholics like Léon Bloy "the greatest despair is not to be a saint", for most layman there exists the historically consoling concept of fallability. For the latter the external world in the institution of the church still covers up for their lack of individual responsibility. Chaucer's reproach: "Al is fee simple in effect" is applicable almost 600 years later to Believers of any determinist dogma who think that for a small non-spiritual price or a meaningless psychological whitewash, salvation is bought. Individual responsibility is absent, save in those of evangelical spirit, who in each generation, like the Catholic Workers in America today pattern their lives after the Sermon on the Mount.

Existentialism parallels much of Christian dualism in a startling way: for Man's Fall it substitutes the given and uncontrollable universe; (what can man do about Adam's sin? and what can man do about the state of the world? Both are given). Man's fallibility is thus for the existentialists the unpredicatable universe; suppose man chooses freely—and both ideologies maintain that man has free choice (altho the existentialists modestly claim its discovery) —this free choice that is so gratuitously given man will invariably

result in frustration, since either man errs, or altho he may have chosen well, failure will result because God's Will has chosen another outcome. The existentialists follow this "line" save that the atheists among them substitute for God's Will the external world, which since the concentration camp and atombomb seems sufficiently less predictable than the progressive nineteenth century held, and is as available as Adam's Sin as agent in a "gumming up the works" theory.

However, where man's ego is involved, a system cannot stop with the prospect of resolving man's affairs into continual and relatively inexplicable failure. Since the world is by a long margin as badly off as the earlier Catholic world, it is from the Catholic concept of confession and penance that the existentialists derive their right to despair, anguish and guilt. This absolves them from any complicity in the state of the world.

Yet while for the Catholic prayer absolves him from the sins the Will of God committed personally, like an earthquake, or permitted him to commit, like eating meat on Friday, there exists no such absolution for the existentialist; there is only his despair and his guilt, which with a petulant querulousness proclaims that the world is "against him"—or more grandiously, "against man".

The individual's area of free choice has always been restricted by the world's unpredictable sequence of events. Today this freedom may be entirely abrogated, which gives the existentialists cause to feel that much guiltier. This has manifestly little to do with personal responsibility for one's behavior, but the existentialists have not adopted an ethics except for this concept of guilt, which *moral behavior, even if the world does compromise it, does not require.* Fatalism is not a new philosophy. The pre-Socratic Greeks ranted against the inability of man to control the forces of nature. The Romantic poets of the nineteenth century reversed the complaint —against the stifling control of man *over* nature, and consequently over his fellow-man, that had been evident since the Industrial revolution. The greatest delimitation has come in our time, where man's freedom, restricted as he is both by nature *and* other men in compounds like the State, is relatively nil.

The parallel between Catholicism and existentialism is most apt because both the State in Europe today, and the Church at the height of its power were approximately absolute. It may therefore be distressing, but it should not be altogether surprising that

the same philosophy has been generated, each in its totalitarian atmosphere, by two such superficially dissimilar movements.

Actually the older movement is more worked out, and maintains inside itself a perpetual resistance group. There is no resistance to the status quo in existentialist thinking. The saints, uncompromising in their system of ethics were not infrequently rewarded by excommunication. The existentialists are not characterized by opposition to Statism, as are so many radical groups, and it is in this aspect, the one moral quality of Christianity—resistance! that the parallelism between Catholicism and existentialism cannot be drawn: for it is the resistance to the State that parallels the saints' unorthodoxy to the Church, and it is the excommunication of the saints by the Church that resembles the State's prisons and deaths for political martyrs.

In all matters, even in the canonization of the saint years after his death in order to vitiate and distort his meaning, is parallelled by the history of Statist culture, that has made of an anti-Statist like Thoreau a national hero. But this is a parallel radicalism, and existentialism by taking over the vices and neglecting the significent contribution of an earlier radical movement, fails to make any contribution to either the philosophical or practical problem of resistance. This is particularly outrageous when one considers the extravagant claims of the French existentialists to the Resistance movement. Resistance remains our main concern in a world where collective resistance might mean survival.

IV

Existentialism differs from most other philosophies in its hysteria and bravado. It succeeds in reflecting a world that substitutes motion for reflection and amorality for courage. It is a true "philosophy of the times"! But what is it that existentialists think of their philosophy?—

"Most people who use the word (existentialism) would be", writes Sartre, "rather embarrassed if they had to explain it..." His only amplification of this "definition" is: "Actually it is the least scandalous, the most austere, of doctrines. It is intended for specialists and philosophers."* Perhaps that is so, and philosophers *are* so specialized as to confuse description with meaning and circumlocution with precision.

Despite his specialization, Sartre blunders in this essay* from

*EXISTENTIALISM. Jean Paul Sartre. Philosophical Library, N. Y.

which the above and following remarks are taken into two thousand years of philosophical controversy of which the very existence as well as the essence seems entirely to escape him:

"What they (the existentialists) have in common is that they think that existence precedes essence, or, if you prefer, that subjectivity must be the starting point. ...Subjectivity of the individual is indeed the point of departure, and this for strictly philosophic reasons. Not because we are bourgeois, but because we want a doctrine based on truth and not a lot of fine theories, full of hope but with no real basis. There can be no other truth to take off from than this: I think; therefore, I exist."

There follows the usual diatribe against materialism—that all men become objects. Sartre wishes to establish the human realm. This is a venerable and ancient wish. He is unsuccessful, perhaps as much because he does not try as thru genuine incompetance. He asserts that all men—and we presume, objects as well—exist as conditions of each self. He does not even attempt to determine whether objects have an existence apart from man's perception of them. E. M. Forster, for example, in the opening paragraphs of *The Longest Journey*, raises the problem in a manner that might give Sartre considerable difficulty—to judge by his own handling of the subject—and Forster raises it for the benefit of college sophomore characters...ah, but there is nothing like the specialist!

"Man is at the start a plan which is aware of itself, rather than a patch of moss, a piece of garbage or a cauliflower; nothing exists prior to this plan;...there is nothing in heaven...man will be what he will have planned to be..."

This last phrase is a magnificent illustration of the ambiguity between essence and existence, object and subject. It remains an illustration never amplified, a difficult idea unresolved, and one, of which to the best of my understanding, Sartre is unaware: He is quite content to "at once announce the discovery of a world which we shall call inter-subjectivity; this is the world in which man decides what he is and what others are..." What frivolity! a child playing semantics, discovering and naming worlds, and not a grown specialist at all!

Sartre appears to accept and reject Kant's Categorical Imperative simultaneously: in the hypothetical case of a young boy who can't decide whether to stay with his mother or go to war, Sartre claims that there is nothing that could help him determine what to do; there are no *a priori* values. He continues to assert however: "we define man only in relationship to involvement." Unless we are to

believe that man functions entirely haphazardly, we believe that man has values. While it is true that man is not free if his values are historically circumscribed, it is equally true that man is not free if he is not conscious. Consciousness implies will, and will, choice. Something or combination of things determines what this boy will do. His decision might result in a draw between the two possible courses of action if it went something like this: if each person stayed at home we would have no war, no resistance... perhaps no freedom? yet if we all joined the resistance, there would be none, for if we all resisted injustice there would be nothing to resist! —provided all men had the same value judgments. That's the question! But Sartre stops far short of this. And as luck would have it, the problem of behavior derivation is precisely what the philosopher must concern himself with. *Is* there a universal condition of man? —beyond that made explicable by personal history, interpersonal relations, and the culteral context in which these occur? Our increasing knowledge of other cultures denies it. If moral judgments like aesthetic values are not *a priori*, upon what considerations is man's involvement based? How is any act, any particular course of action—even for the satisfaction of his most urgent needs—determined?

V

It is so simple to say we do not know anything about morality. It is so uninformitive. It is also untrue. If it were, true, we should be at a loss to account for the phenomenal number of colossal guilt complexes wandering about; we should be at a loss to understand the existentialists.

There is such moral ambiguity in causalities however, that if we consider what a man *does*, what he *is* becomes more clearly elucidated; the *why* is descriptive and interesting, but speculative and inconclusive. A man may for example, never lie or kill because he loves Christ and considers all men part of the Divine Body, but most men who love Christ support cataclysmic killings. Conversely, a man whose behavior is moral may also be an atheist, and derive his behavior from seemingly rational considerations.

It is thereby regrettable, but pertinent to consider what the leading existentialists do and exhort others in contemporary affairs. It is not adequate to point out that as a guide to either a view of the world or towards moral behavior their medley of abstract ideas and attitudes is sadly wanting: since behavior is rooted in

obscure or ambiguous psychological causes, it would be conceivable that despite the failure of the existentialists to provide us with an adequate philosophy of despair and passion, that their politics may not have suffered appreciably from this lack. This however, does not appear to be the case.

The following observations do not profess to be concerned with more than certain activities and contemporary attitudes of leading existentialists that have come to my attention; they obviously do no comprise an exhaustive study of existentialist activities, but neither are they isolated incidents chosen to prove a point; they seem to represent the general attitude and ideas of these people. Illustrating the dillema of moral relativism, these stand out with distressing clarity.

A) *Karl Jaspers.* The best that Professor Jaspers can muster up on the reopening of Heidelberg University is a curious mixture of guilt and bootlicking. The former feeling is a comfortable retrospective one because there is apparently nothing that can assuage Jaspers guilt than to *feel* guilty, just as there appears to be nothing in his obscene acquiescence to the America occupation in Germany than the preparation for future guilt feelings.

About the former he writes: "That we are still alive is our guilt...We the survivors did not seek death. When our Jewish friends were led away, we did not go into the streets and cry out until they killed us too. We prefered to remain alive with the weak but justifiable excuse that our death would not have helped any."*

Obviously Jaspers' death would have done no conceivable good —but he cannot be oblivious to the forms of protest that are available without a consequence as drastic as death; he could have registered his opposition to the regime by self-exile, for the prestige given to the Nazi State by the tacit support of a man in Jaspers' position is not inconsiderable and is as well known to the rulers as to everyone else—withholding this approval provides, for example, the theme of an excellent book by Vladimir Nabakov (*Bend Sinister*). That would have been easiest. Then he could have helped the Jews illegally (if *only* to assuage his guilt, although many persons were engaging in this practice for more praiseworthy reasons). That would have required some effort. Finally, if many men in Jaspers' position cried out in overt protest, if *all* men did,

* from the speech made at the re-opening of Heidelberg University by the leading German existentialist.

the protest could conceivably have been more than the State could effectively have coped with—oh long IF, and well seasoned example of the categorical imperative: but the existentialists do not inquire after the salutory affects of an action if everyone were to engage in it, if the initial exemplary act on their part required any moral exertion.

"We owe it to the occupation authorities that we are allowed to resume our work. We have no lawful claim in this respect, after the unconditional surrender, after the silent disappearance of the leaders of the regime...after the end of the end of any German statehood. However, we face not barbaric peoples but nations who base their lives on human rights—those Rights of Man which they once solemnly proclaimed. It is thanks to their active belief in these rights that they permit us, the vanquished, to enjoy the tolerance and perhaps even the aid of the victors in our task of reconstruction"*

No person of integrity could ever speak that way; the only "right" any occupation force ever has is to get out, just as the only obligation one has to onesself and one's neighbors is oppoition to such a regime. The "rights" the various occupation armies actually stand for in Germany, as elsewhere, is to use the country as a pawn in international politics, dismantle its industry, destroy whatever internal order, if any, is left, starve the people, and rehabilitate her quislings, one of which Jaspers must, at least tacitly, have been.

From the sentence: "We do not want to draw our strength from the No opposing the evil, but from a Yes to the good..."* stem Jasper's present plans for feeling guilty after War III.

For weak-kneed academicism, quasi-intellectuality, existentialism appears as a post War II dada, and a pre War III guilt. It is a sell-out philosophy, a justifcation for surviving corruptly in a corrupt world, an opportunistic double-talk for supporting the status quo, at any time, in any place.

B) *SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR* who has the death of at least one man on her conscience (if one believes in individual responsibility) for when given an opportunity to sign a petition commuting Robert Brassilach's sentence, she refused it, is at her most sophistical in defending the retaliatory trials of the war "traitors". Although she professes some transient concern with such matters as: "Can

* from Jaspers speech at the reopening of Heidelberg

vengeance or hatred be truly satisfied?... and indicates that from a psychological point of view such emotions cannot be properly gratified owing to the passing of time and altering situation, she regrets that punishment is so frustrating to the judge of evil! While she wonders whether official courts are "objective" and whether "the right person (is) being punished? or was there a real wrong?" she succeeds in confusing the issues sufficiently to justify *her own vindictiveness* and desire for power: "for punishment constitutes an acknowledgment of man as free in evil as in good;...To punish is to desire the good."* (!!)

If our goodness depends on the penalizing of other people for what we consider to be their wrong-doing, we would forever be sitting in on trials that would punish vast numbers of people so the few upright could manage to achieve the satisfaction of vengeance, and incidentally, in some mysterious way, the ability to exercise their freedom and goodness.

Actually the problem of power, not of freedom, is what is involved, although they are mutually exclusive aspects of the same phenomenon. I obviously do not mean by freedom what Simone de Beauvoir can twist it into meaning: "This is what revenge is striving to reëstablish against the tyranny of a freedom that wanted to make itself supreme"* where revenge becomes a commendable quality and freedom a "tyrannical" one!

Apart from the commission and acknowledgement of particular evil, it is apparent that evil resides in all men save saints. Where then is the moral prerogative to judge men—the right not the power? We know where the power comes—belonging to the side of the victors—force and circumstance distinguishes the Nürmburg judges from their victims. What quisling far removed from the actual participation in the Terror is more guilty than many ex concentration camp prisoners who are still alive? Survival exacted an exhorbitant price from morals in the camps, and what Communist has Beauvoir *not* asked the death penality for, who as prisoner-burocrat in the camp got the head of others in exchange for his? What determines guilt?—the power of the "good" to mete out punishment?

Hatred and vengeance are properties of evil, not good. One is free to work with or against his total environment in making each choice. Given the nature of this civilization, moral choices

* from 'Eye for Eye' translated for POLITICS by Mary McCarthy from an essay in LES TEMPS MODERNES

are generally at variance with the status quo. Simone de Beauvoir had an opportunity to further the good in herself—and society, for what, after all, constitutes the good society but the continual private practice of each man's goodness?—by refusing to support so brutal a circumstance as a public execution. Instead she regrets that these executions are not satisfying enuf. Who will judge the evil in her? Other power and other evil? Goodness requires no vengeance; indeed it is incompatible with vengeance. Neither does the good in any man require anything for its furtherance than forgiveness for wrong he may commit. There is nothing so distressing and reformatory to a man than to be confronted by exemplary behavior in those from whom he expects ill treatment. There is nothing so gratifying to the forgiver. While such behavior is too much to expect of everyone, it should be approximated by self-proclaimed knowers and practitioners of the good.

VI

Of Sartre's opportunistic relationship with the Communists in France, little need be added to the following: "I don't know what will become of the Russian revolution; I may make an example of it to the extent that at the present time it is apparent that the proletariat plays a part in Russia that it plays in no other country. But I can't swear that this will lead to a triumph of the proletariat. I've got to limit myself to what I can see."*

It does not take an existentialist to know that Russia has the most existentialised proletariat in the world. *They* know of forlornness and despair. And for *them* existence precedes essence, alright. It precedes it right into non-existence—several million non-existing non-essences every year. But Sartre seems concerned only with the idea of forlornness and despair—and not the actuality.

It is not necessary to continue—we see that all existentialism serves to point out—and that only by its arrogance, is that humility is required of those who wish to convince us that they have found

* from the speech EXISTENTIALISM translated for the Philosophical Library, N.Y. ---a lecture given for a prominently Marxist audience, which badgered him continually during the question period into sophistries like the above. Sartre appeared for a time to be playing with the Stalinists; one does not offend the pretenders to power of the new State. But the influence of the French Communists is waning, and Sartre is currently engaged in writing manifestoes in collaboration with old left socialists like M. Pivert, who instead of serving as an educative influence, seem to have been whirled off into a land on which the banal never sets.

The Way. For it is not those who succumb to every passing fad, but those who like the child in the tale see no clothes, and courageously and simply speak and act the truth as they perceive it, without concern for consequences, who resolve the dilemma of values. The truth outside them is corroborated by their recognition of it. All others, like Jaspers or any Emperor's scurrilous ministers who are concerned with the attributes or consequences of truth, are not free to choose it. Our philosophical and political problem is no longer concerned with the *perception* of truth; it is concerned with the *acknowledgement* of truth.

It is a strange morality, indeed, that is so preoccupied with the tautological rehashing of the genesis of values, of "discovering" that "no general ethics can show what is to be done"* that it leaves the feeding of the hungry, the clothing of the naked, and above all the resistance to totalitarianism to others, whose ethics might not preclude the acknowledgement of the differentiation between good and evil.

* Sartre: op. cit.

SELECTED DREAMS

From The Mexican Journal

MICHAEL FRAENKEL

Have you ever gone to bed and suddenly received a glimmering of a dream you had the night before, of which you were entirely unaware during the day, but which now, in some, strange compulsive way, forces itself on your attention and try as you will you cannot recall? A little more pressure of the will, you think, another heave or tug of the mind, and it will flash open, give itself up. But no, like a word on the tip of the tongue that refuses to shape itself, it resists all effort of the conscious memory. Finally you resign yourself and relax; you will fall asleep, you say to yourself. Now you are about to drop off to sleep when suddenly it makes itself felt again, a hard knot or core of something, like the point or head of a sharp pain, in an all pervasive awareness; now it is almost as if you had grasped it; you feel its presence, the breath, aura weight and texture of some vague sense or other; you come a little closer, and again it escapes you. It refuses to enter on the mental plane; remains stuck on the bodily and physical. As if the body thought, the physical senses, not the mind. Again you relax, again you are about to fall asleep, and again it insinuates into consciousness, the mind straining and laboring to materialize it, to think, to make thought, but to no avail. And so you lie there, for miutes and minutes on end, the mind groping for meaning, helpless and frustrate, the body all the while suffused with meaning.

●

I am afraid to entrust myself to too long a state of well-being lest terrible reprisals follow...the innate superstitiousness of our emotions.

●

I dreamed that I was in the living room of Dr. B., waiting for him to appear, when his wife entered. She looked gray, thin and very tall. I was suprised to see her so haggard-looking and I was on the point of saying to her: "You look very gray and worn, what is the matter?" but before I could say it, she said: "The doctor will be down in a minute, there has been a great change in him. I can do nothing about it." She dropped her voice to a whisper on the last words, then stopped and screwed up her face in a suggestive way which meant to me that something had come apart in the doctor. Suddenly it occurred to me that the doctor was a psychoanalyst, and I was rather pleased to know that his wife could not put him together again. "What the psychoanalyst's wife cannot put together," I said to myself, "the psychoanalyst never will." Then the doctor appeared, and his wife slipped out of the room quietly. He failed to greet me, just sat down in the easy chair opposite me and grinned. I said: "How do you do, doctor?" He did not reply, simply looked at me and grinned. Now it seemed to me that I understood everything. I looked at his jet black toupee with the sharp, unnatural part in the middle, and understood, the contrast between it and his face was so great. "There lies his madness," I said to myself, "between the sharp part in the jet-black toupee and the light, grey texture of the face the madness lies." He fixed his green eyes on me and grinned suggestively, as if to say: "What can you do now, what can you say now, when I am young and dark as a March hare in a dark wood?" I wanted to tell him, take your wig off, Doctor, and you will be well again." But I dared not. I could not presume to tell the psychoanalyst how to cure himself, he would never forgive me for that. Then he got up and playfully poked me in the ribs, and I said: "Well, Doctor, we'll begin all over again. This time you will analyze me with the toupee on, and we'll see what happens then."

●

Strange, every time I dream about Robin, he always appears in the rôle of a madman. In the dream I had about him last night he was peddling dead pidgeons, and claiming they were alive. "Why look," he says, holding up one of them by the leg, and muttering some abracadabra under his breath, "they can even talk."

●

Mrs. S. gave me a little book to read which she brought with her from New York and which she keeps under lock and key. No doubt she does not want her husband to see it, he would hardly understand it, and much less her interest in it. Mr. S. is a smooth, unseeing little man—"the egg" D. calls him—who goes through his daily activity with the quiet unaware methodicalness and precision of a sleepwalker or one in a trance. A trader in buttons, he came to Mexico many years ago and fell into it as down a chute and stayed there.—The little book is about spiritual truth, the ways of the mind and mental health—*Lessons in Truth*—I think it's called. In format and style it reminds one of those little uplift or inspirational manuals so popular today, about how to succeed, or how to gain or lose weight, or how to overcome constipation, etc. *Watch your mind!* it is saying over and over again. This conscious, deliberate effort to "control" one's thoughts, emotions, this playing warden to oneself! It's a sickness in itself, as grave as the underlying one of which it is an expression. Watch your mind! Does one watch his walking? Watch your walking and you'll walk into one hell of a hole: you'll walk into a problem. This whole approach smacks of the quick, ready-made, mechanical solutions we bring to everything else nowadays from government and society to marriage, family, love, sex, what not. It is characteristic of people who have grown accustomed to see and deal with symptoms rather than with causes. Causes lie deep down, in the living, plasmic substance, in life, they are hard to get at, but symptoms are surface things which we carry in our head and hands, they are easily accessible, and one thinks a bit of mental tinkering or manipulation, a bit of osteopathic magic, is all that's necessary to put things right again. People who go in for these "repair-while-you-wait" cures exhaust themselves piously in treating symptoms, while the disease continues to thrive lustily underneath. For the disease is nothing less than the arrest of life, the damming-up of the life-flow, and a real cure would have to open up the whole personality and allow it to flow; it would mean the fullest kind of self expression. But it is precisely self expression that is closed to these people, closed becsuse they are afraid, afraid of themselves, the world and life. That's really the crux of the matter. They have to be thrown wide open to life, and nobody can do it for them but themselves. Only you yourself can open yourself up; "you yourself must make the effort", as the great Buddha said. Outside assistance, however

well-meaning and intelligent, unless accompanied by the realest kind of self-effort and self understanding, can prove at best only a temporary help. It acts in the nature of the familiar "shock principle" in mental therapy—a foreign element or presence is introduced and one braces and bucks up a bit to present a better face. When the shock or newness wears off, which is soon enough, the good effects wear off too; one slinks back into himself. What's been gained? Nothing. In fact, there has been a loss. In the degree that one gets used to turning to outside help, it's like a habit-forming drug, stultifying and destructive of all personal initiative. In the end most popular so-called mental and spiritual healing only succeeds in driving the sufferer more to cover, deeper into himself. He'd be better off if he were left entirely to his own devices.

●

We are all in some sort of classroom. Seated on a very long bench, way up in front, M. and myself; facing us, students, not very old, not very young. The teacher seemed absent. M looked very old and haggard, terribly shrunk; he huddled toward me as if he wished to settle in my lap. All strength, manhood and pride seemed to have left him; he was utterly helpless and woebegone. His work was a thing of the past, his career, all his ambitions. My heart was full of sadness and pity for him. At this point the dream becomes a complete blurr...a dark haze in which classroom, students, M, and myself have all disappeared, and there's just a voice sounding faintly like a cracked bell in an empty room: "Take to the analyst, the anal...Who is there to stop you from flowing?..."

●

Become the least bit self-conscious about sleep, and you'll have difficulty in falling asleep. Sometimes I wonder that civilized, self-conscious man is able to sleep at all. There is no doubt that the appearance of self-consciousness in man must have had the most radical effects upon his entire nervous system, rendering sleep, as well as his other natural functions, extremely susceptible to mental and emotional disturbance. And yet I can quite conceive how a further refinement of development of consciousness, instead of making sleep more difficult, may on the contrary make it that much easier. A continuing developing state of sensibility may very well bring with it its own type of corrective or stabalizing technique.

It is interesting to note in this connection that there are people who claim they can fall asleep at will. There is the story about Theodore Roosevelt, how he was able to drop off into profound slumber at any time he wished. Who knows, perhaps in time there will be evolved a very definite, conscious method of sleep control.

●

D. asked the new maid if she can cook.

Nicolasa smiled apologetically: "Well...no...we don't cook."

"No? But you must know a little?"

"Well...no, *Senora*,...we don't really cook."

"What do you mean you don't really cook? Who did the cooking in your house? For your husband, your children? You said you had other children besides Teofilia, didn't you?"

Yes, *bendito sea Dios*, I have three, but, you know, *Senora*, we don't cook."

"But, Nicolassa, tell me, what do you eat if no one cooks?"

Well, *Senora*, we put a few *frijoles* (beans) on in the morning, and we have that during the day, and of course we have our *tortillas* and some *chiles*, but you understand, *Senora*, we don't cook, we, *la gente humilde* (the humble folks), we never have anything to cook. *Gracias a Dios*, I had a good husband, and we never really felt hunger, but many of them, *en mi tierra*, they eat *nopales* (cactus leaves) and nothing else, they don't have to buy them, and they eat that for years and years. You know, *Senora*, I can tell you're not from Mexico, because ladies of Mexico, when they know we come from the State of Hidalgo, they never ask us if we can cook, they know the people from Hidalgo don't cook, they never have anything to cook."

●

RETORTING

An article in your publication (Vol. IV No.1) entitled "Michael Bakunin" contains a sentence reading as follows: "To all this could be added [from such varied sources as Marx, Engels, the bourgeois journals of his time and Max Nomad of our own]: embezzler, tsarist police agent, a monster bent on world destruction and anarchist dictator." The implication of this passage—whether intended by the author or not—is that I too called Bakunin "an embezzler, tsarist police agent, monster etc." At least that's how it was understood by everyone to whom I showed the sentence. The fact is that I defended Bakunin against these slanderous accusations—though I must plead guilty of having presented the documentary evidence demonstrating Bakunin's belief in revolutionary dictatorship. MAX NOMAD

The sentence to which Mr Nomad refers was poorly phrased. The author, presumably for the sake of economy, neglected to link the various individuals with the specific charges they made; he should have said that Marx and Engels called Bakunin a tsarist agent and an embezzler; the bourgeois journals called him a monster; and Nomad, a dictator. Our apologies to Mr Nomad for a misleading impression of his attitude.

We have received other communications about the Bakunin article, charging it with presenting a false picture of Bakunin's character, since it did not discuss the less savory aspects of his life and thought. We feel that the article was a trifle too partisan, but on the whole we think that it conveyed a reasonably accurate impression. Bakunin, at his best, was one of the most original and penetrating thinkers of his time, and the radical movement can still learn a great deal from his creative ideas. Also, his life was one of great devotion to the cause of radicalism, and his example of courage and integrity is worth recalling. It is quite true that his thinking was not always on the highest level; he had some serious prejudices, aod he was sometimes too impetuous in coming to conclusions. However, since his real contributions to revolutionary thought are in no way invalidated by his lapses, we can see no particular value in cataloguing the latter, except as a further demonstration that no man is infallible and therefore should never be accepted uncritically—a viewpoint that Bakunin himself frequently stressed.

BOOKS

CHRIST STOPPED AT EBOLI by Carlo Levi. Farrar, Strauss. $3.

Carlo Levi, an Italian painter and medical school graduate, was exiled to the remote southern province of Matera for his opposition to the Fascist regime during the Ethiopian War. *Christ Stopped at Eboli* is the account of this year of exile, spent in the two villages of Gagliano and Grassano, with emphasis on the former.

There were other political exiles in Gagliano when Dr Levi was there, but he was forbidden by the terms of his confinement —zealously upheld by the local schoolmaster-mayor—from having any contact with them. He was, however, free to associate with the local inhabitants: the 'gentry' because his own middle-class background, and particularly his medical degree, made him a person of considerable social consequence in so small and primitive a community, despite his political status as an exile; and with the peasants because they themselves had no more status than animals, and were hence not considered susceptible to his 'dangerous' political ideas.

He managed to keep his relations with the gentry to a minimum—although he was in the mayor's custody, and thus found it necessary to make a few concessions to social conventions in order not to have his liberty completely curtailed. These people, however, with very few exceptions, both bored and repelled him. Like the village gentry in Silone's *Seed Beneath the Snow*, they were entirely preoccupied with family quarrels, most of them going back several generations, and their chief interest in Levi was as a possible ally in these feuds. Thus the mayor's sister—the real power in the village—hated the local doctor, and hoped to be able to take advantage of Levi's medical training to drive her enemy out of business.

The peasants were another matter. Levi was drawn to them out of compassion for their poverty and degradation, and fascinated by their attitudes and beliefs. They still seemed to be living in the pre-Christian era—their religion consisting almost entirely of

magic and witchcraft. To them the Fascists were simply the most recent of a long series of conquerors—going back at least to the Roman Republic—to exploit them. They had been overcome so frequently that they had given up hope of ever being free, but they had never been really assimilated. The State existed for them as a kind of natural force. "...There are hailstorms, landslides, droughts, malaria and...the State. These are inescapable evils; such there have always been and there always will be..." The State, including the local gentry, belonged to another world, a hostile and all-powerful world from which there was no escape. From time to time these peasants rose up against their condition; killing the local officials, burning the government buildings and taking to the hills—Levi had to discourage such an uprising when, as the result of intrigue by the local doctor, he was finally prohibited to practice medicine. His sympathies were all with the peasants, but he felt that the revolt would accomplish nothing. These uprisings, a legacy of the days of the bandits, were the peasants' only tradition of active resistance. For the most part, they accepted their condition with fatalistic resignation or tried to escape by emigration. More than half of the original population of Gagliano had gone to America, and a surprising proportion of its inhabitants in 1936 were former 'Americans'. They had been brought back to their native village either by trickery (during the depression, Fascist agents in New York had spead the report that conditions in Italy were prosperous, and had thereby lured many emigrants home) or nostalgia, and had not been able to get away again. They all bitterly regretted their return. "...You could tell these Americans of 1929 by their whipped-dog expression and their gold teeth..."

The exact nature of the political activities that caused Dr Levi to be exiled is not revealed, but he does make it clear that after spending a year among the peasants of Gagliano and Grassano, he had become a full-fledged anarchist: "...The State...cannot solve the problem of the South, because the problem which we call by this name is none other than the problem of the State itself. There will always be an abyss between the State and the peasants, whether the State be Fascist, Liberal, Socialist, or takes on some new form in which the middle-class bureaucracy still survives.:. Plans laid down by a central government, however much good they may do, still leave two hostile Italys on either side of the abyas...

"...The State can only be a group of autonomies, an organic federation. The unit or cell through which the peasants can take part in the complex life of the nation must be the autonomous or self-governing rural community...This is what I learned from a year of life underground."

Stylistically, Levi does not compare with Silone, but in its subject matter, point of view and humor *Christ Stopped at Eboli* is highly reminiscent of the latter's novels.

HOLLEY CANTINE

THE GREAT PRISONERS Selected and Edited by Isadore Abramowitz. Dutton. $4.95.

Some of the finest contributions to man's intellectual growth have come from those human beings who were sealed within prison walls. It is an ironical reflection on the story of man that from the early beginnings of Western civilization, when man became concerned with extending the areas of human consciousness, up to our own time, man has devised means to imprison, and thus limit, individuals who dared set out on the adventure of free inquiry. It is another irony that these individuals who were vitally interested in the loftiest of man's aspirations were generally kept under lock by the dregs of society. In this magnificient volume, the first anthology of literature written in prison, the editor has attempted to trace the curious and fascinating tradition: the black flower of prison.

The book has a tremendous scope. It contains the writings of an imposing list of sixty-four "jailbirds" among whom are such great minds as Socrates, Galileo, Bruno, John Donne, George Fox, Babeuf, Tom Paine, Balzac, Dostoevsky, Bakunin, Lenin, Debs, Rosa Luxemburg, Ernst Toller, Gandhi, and Nehru. These individuals who shared prison experiences come from all the walks of life. Included in the astonishing "rogue's gallery" are philosophers, agitators, revolutioneries, statesman, soldiers, theologians, literary figures, explorers, scientists, and simply victims of social injustice. The materials have been taken from journals, confessions, trials, letters, inquiries, manifestoes, poetry and other written records. The editor has dug up some pieces that were nearly lost and forgotten, and has a number of truly rare items. He has done invaluable work in making so easily accessible so much material.

The historical and biographical notes with which Abramowitz prefaces the contribution of each of the prisoners are scholarly and interesting, and of a caliber worthy of the individuals to whom they relate.

As an anthology, the volume ably fulfills its requirements and accomplishes its purpose of presenting the non-conformist tradition in history.

The writings of these great prisoners form a veritable pageant of the struggle for freedom and human dignity, of impassioned protest and rebellion down through the centuries. Yet there is more to discover in these gems. Deprived of freedom, subjected to scorn, suffering abuse, existing under tortuous conditions, the prisoners nevertheless reveal a marvelous ingenuity of mind, an inspiring nobility of spirit, an indestructible integrity. Living in isolation and thus living with themselves, the prisoners come close to the essence of their being, their soul, the hidden dynamo deep within which drives them through the world. It reaches poignant expression in their writings.

Senancour once said: "It may be that after this life we shall perish utterly, but if that is our fate, let us so live that annihilation will be unjust." So lived these great humans.

It appears that our time is witnessing the collapse of human consciousness. Capitalist society is evolving into a world-wide prison: over one area of the world in the name of 'History', over another area of the world in the name of 'Biggest and Bestest'. Shall we be worthy of the tradition of the great prisoners?

ALEX LANG

REPORT ON PRISON ANTHOLOGY OF WAR II:

A couple of months ago we sent a notice to our readers:

700 WAR OBJECTORS ARE STILL IN AMERICAN PRISONS
WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO GET THEM OUT! BUT WE CAN HONOR THEIR COURAGE & RESOURCEFULNESS & BY ROUSING THE PUBLIC, WORK FOR THEIR RELEASE

We are publishing a PRISON ANTHOLOGY of WAR II

Several thousand Conscientious Objectors did time in jails in this country. Many of them salvaged from their years of captivity ideas and experiences of immeasurable value to all of us who contemplate in the coming totalitarian days a continual warfare with the state both in and out of its prisons.

Prison etiquette is a learned art for the radical. Its technique varies with country, time, and political set-up. These young men deal with a prison system that except for recent foreign examples, is unknown to us. We must be equipped to evade it, to survive in it if caught, to resist it in the most psychologically economical and politically effective way. That is, we must learn to remain sane, to survive physically, and at the same time to continue resisting.

We went on to ask for funds to buy materials for this book. Our readers' response has been very generous, both in written matter and money. As soon as we complete editorial work on the book, we start printing. We expect a late fall or early winter publication date. We shall consider manuscripts received by June 1. Eligibility consists only in being an ex-con. Any form—article, story, poem—that deals with some aspect of prison is welcome.

ORDER YOUR BOOK(S) NOW AT ANY PRICE!

URGENT: German readers inform us that there are no first-aid supplies in sections of Germany and ask us to donate some.

If any of our readers can either donate such supplies, money to buy them, or information about where they can be procured cheaply please write us immediately.

P.S. The need for food is still great: those readers who have not the name and address of a European family and can now afford to send food to one, write us please.