Retort

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EDITORIAL.....REVIEWS

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EDITORIAL

[This is the first issue of RETORT in over a year; the reason for this extraordinary delay is that the two editors were engaged in two major projects: printing PRISON ETIQUETTE, (See 47) and translating Volin's REVOLUTION INCONNUE (700 pp) from French. This book, a chapter from which is in this issue, is a heavily documented history of the Russian revolutionary movement—dealing mainly with the period from 1917 to 1922. It is perhaps the definitive work on this subject, containing much valuable material that has never appeared in print before. We are now trying to find a publisher for it.]

Ideally, the radical personality should be a blend of cynicism and sentimentality—or, since these words are rather unflattering, perhaps I should say realism and idealism. But the latter words have been misused in so many contexts that they can be taken to mean anything at all, while cynicism and sentimentality, despite their unpleasant connotation, have the merit of being fairly precise. By cynicism I mean a deep mistrust of humanity, a strong capacity to believe the worst about both institutions and individuals; by sentimentality, an irrational regard for certain ideas, customs, traditions. Although the symbols differ, the emotion a radical experiences on hearing the Internationale, for instance, is very similar to that of a patriot when he hears his national anthem, or a lover listening to his favorite waltz or ballad.

The combination is a difficult one to achieve, and even more difficult to maintain, but it is, I believe, a primary requisite for genuine radicalism. What is most important is that both qualities be present in the same individual. Many so-called radical organizations have managed to divide the two among their members—a typical aspect of the division of function that prevails in such groups—so that the leadership have all the cynicism, to such a degree that they are capable of entering into any kind of sordid deal, while the rank and file have all the sentimentality, and feel nothing but tearful reverence for the leadership which systematically betray them.

An individual who is both cynical *and* sentimental is prevented from letting others betray or exploit him by the first quality, and is prevented from injuring others by the second, provided, of course, he is sentimental about the right things—specifically: the ideas of equality, brotherhood and liberty. He looks on the world with a clear and mistrustful eye, he sees the actions of men as they are—to a large extent cowardly, dishonest and opportunistic. But he is prevented by his sentimental regard for the traditions of his cause from acting as he sees others behave. Even though he has to die for it, he sticks stubbornly and irrationally to his code. Since the material rewards for true radicalism have never been great, and the likelihood of achieving a conspicuous measure of influence or renown is at best highly questionable, he has only his sentimental belief in the rightness of his ideas, and the way of life that is implicit in them, to sustain him most of the time.

This is not to say that the radical is a simple madman, as our bourgeois opponents would like to believe. Within the framework of his code, despite the many difficulties, frustrations and defeats he must suffer, he has a much greater chance of achieving a satisfying and enjoyable life than would be possible were he to accept the values of the status quo.

Incidentally, the frequently made allegation that radicals are radical because they are unable to succeed in terms of the values of the commercial world is, by and large, a gross fallacy, as has been demonstrated repeatedly by the many tired or disillusioned radicals who have foresworn their ideas and proceeded to make a considerable fortune in business or an important political career.

The true radical does not stay away from the commercial world because he can't cope with its intricacies. On the contrary, he sees that world too clearly and cynically, and is unwilling to pay the price in compromises and corruption that less imaginative or perceptive men find out too late is the cost of 'success'. Also, his sentimental regard for the potentialities of the human spirit leads him to prefer a life of material privation and persecution, in the perhaps vain hope that he may some day influence enough people to follow his example so that they could make the world into the sort of place where people can really enjoy life. Meanwhile, he gets his kicks from being out of the rat race, and from knowing if only everyone were able to see things as clearly as he does, the world would be a much finer place to inhabit.

THE TWO SOLDIERS

DONALD WETZEL

Martha's old man has got a bad heart, and they tell me I don't think so good any more. And it's a war to the finish, the old man says. He eases himself down into his chair like he fears that at any moment his fat behind might explode and blow out his brains, and he picks up his paper and shakes it like it was something that he had just killed with his bare hands, and it's a war to the finish, he says. When he starts to lower himself he gets a look of humility on his face which always amazes me. It somehow doesn't fit. For a moment he looks so damn sincere, almost prayerful, looking up a little, and then his rear end sinks into the cushion and all his confidence comes back. You can see it come back. To hell with God. He sticks a pipe into his mouth and remembers the imaginary days of Bulldog Simons, and picks up the paper and shakes it once or twice to break its bones and then he settles back to read about the war. It doesn't matter that he was never really Bulldog Simons the terror of the L.Y.U. backfield of '91, that he was only Simons, a flabby second-string guard, or that there isn't really a bloody world-wide war going on at present. He sits there in all his flesh and glory and says by God it looks bad, it sure looks bad, and he smelleth the battle afar off and he heareth the sound of trumpets, and the dark saliva of a fierce and mighty hunger flows again in his sluggish bowels, and he belches and is moved to war-like utterance. It's war to the end this time for sure, he says, to the bitter end. And I sit there thinking, you fat old sonofabitch you, you murderous old bastard. But I don't say a thing. It's a war to the end all right, only he doesn't really know it.

I had two years in college and then twenty missions over Germany and I came back to my wife a mess. They say that I

Donald Wetzel is the author of a novel: 'A Wreath and a Curse.' Crown. $2.50.

don't think too well any more and that I shouldn't get excited. I haven't been excited since I've been home. I take it real easy. I just sit around and watch a lot of fat and ignorant old men pushing and grunting to roll the next big war around before they die. I sit and watch and never get excited.

I still don't sleep as well as the fat men do, but then they know what they want and it looks like they are going to get it, and so I guess, as the Doc puts it, they are psychologically much better adjusted than I am. Like some philosopher said, there are three things you need for happiness. One, you need a purpose, something you want real badly, and two, you need a plan, and three, you need the freedom to work on that plan. When you look at it like that you can see how Martha's old man is what they call happy. And this without ever knowing what the philosopher said about happiness, or that he happens to have the three things you need. He doesn't know what his purpose really is, or that he has a plan which he follows, or even that he is so perfectly free to work at that plan. He just knows that he lives a dull life and dreams an exciting one and nobody ever bothers to tell him which is which; and the exciting thing he dreams about now is war. Like a youth in puberty dreams about sleeping with a girl. Every day in little ways that nobody even notices he works at some dim yet stubborn plan to get a girl, and eventually he does. So a man in his dotage, a man near the end of his wasted years, or simply any man far enough along in decay (he doesn't have to be old in years, I guess) dreams of a war and works at his dim hidden plan for a war, and nobody notices. But finally he gets it. I'm afraid he gets it.

I don't think very good, I guess, but damn it, I know what I'm doing. And I have a purpose. Not like the old man's, not a big war like he wants, but something more modest. And I've got a plan. All I am waiting for is the freedom to carry out that plan. And after, I still may not be well adjusted, but in a way that the philosopher might understand, I'll be happy. I mean to kill the bastard. Just like the old boy says, it's a war to the finish. Only he doesn't really know.

Only it's not me that is actually going to be responsible. The old man is going to do it. Sometimes we argue. He says it sure looks bad and I say I don't think it looks so bad, and this bothers him. But he can't shout like he'd like to because it might

excite me, and God only knows I might throw a fit and jump up and grab him by the throat. He thinks I might do that. He thinks that that would be crazy. That would be only dumb. Somebody should have told him—your son in law was not made stupid by the war, only a little insane.

So then I ask him if he thinks somebody is going to win this next war. Sure, he says, and he looks at me with his bad heart leaking pity that I should be so dumb; sure, he says, we got the bomb haven't we? I don't think anybody's going to win, I tell him. This really gets him stirred. But if he thought about it, and said maybe you're right, then he wouldn't get stirred and his heart wouldn't hurt him, and he wouldn't be doing so much himself by way of disproving his own argument. Because he's going to kill himself trying to prove to a loony that somebody's going to win a war. He thinks I'm crazy when actually I'm in this thing to the finish, the bitter end, and I'll see him dead. He won't win and neither will I, because he will be dead and I'll be crazy, but anyhow, I think I will have made my point.

Nobody wins, I tell him. At least once each evening I tell him this. Martha looks frightened, and I hate to do this to her, but its part of my plan and my plan is difficult and takes more working at than his, and people will have to think I am even crazier than I am. Because with Martha I am sane enough. We're sitting on the couch. Maybe I'm reading to her from some novel and I see the old man go to sit down in the chair across from us and I stop and wait. I never speak to him while he is lowering himself. At such a time he is scared and almost tragic and I almost respect him. But when he picks up the paper and puffs and blows awhile and gets through making a big angry fist of his brain at the news and has prepared and delivered his most fierce and masculine opinions about world events, then I tell him, apropos of what he has said or not. Nobody wins, I tell him. And he blinks and starts to argue with me. And I argue with him until I see that his face is getting red and Martha is telling him to hush and then I start reading the book again. I have just been testing him. And anybody coming into the room would not believe that I am crazy or that the old man thinks that he is going to win war and victory. They would never guess that it's really war to the bitter end.

Because someday Martha is going to be gone for the evening and I am going to throw the Goddamndest fit that fat old bastard ever saw. I mean that he shall have his war and with a vengeance. I'll be an army. I'll be airplanes and battleships and tanks and bullets all at once. And if that doesn't do it, I'll hold a knife to his throat and ask him if he doesn't believe that it's an atomic bomb and a terrible thing to behold. I'll tell him that he is a city of millions and that I am airplane, pilot and bomb, and that what in the hell are a million lives to me when the glory of dear old L.Y.U. is at stake. And then maybe he will know that he made a terrible mistake when he thought that the Bulldog Simons who died in dreams a million times for dear old L.Y.U. was going to dream his way to war and victory again.

Other men may, but Bulldog Simons, soldier, is going to see the light. He's going to see the bright and terrible insane face of war and then he's going to die. That's the face I'll show to him, and it will kill him. I'll be insane. I'll be all the insanity of war and he will see my face and be terrified, and I'll scream at him, war, war to the bitter end, war war war. And he will die and I'll be crazy, all of us, and nobody will have won. But anyhow, I think I will have made my point.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER MOVEMENT CONFRONTS THE MODERN STATE

BYRON R. BRYANT

The Catholic Worker movement, which professes to combine Catholicism and Anarchism, is to many observers one of the most confusing examples of unconventional radicalism which has appeared in a long while. The movement has not been accepted wholeheartedly by either of the two groups with which it claims affinity. A large number of Catholics suspect that the CWs are a subversive group at work in tho Church, but they have not as yet found suitable grounds on which to suppress an organization which, only a short time ago, received a papal blessing. The great majority of those in the anarchist movement, many of whom come from countries where radicals have been forced to fight the Church for generations look with understandable suspicion on a movement which is allied with the most rigidly orthodox and one of the most historically intolerant of churches. A few anarchists, convinced of the deep sincerity and genuine radicalism of some of the leading figures in the Catholic Worker group, believe that a high degree of cooperation between them and the traditional anarchists is possible. That this is not an unimportant or isolated problem can be seen by the fact that the French anarchist periodical *Le Libertaire*, traditionally one of the most anti-religious of anarchist publications, has likewise found it necessary to deal with a similar phenomenon among French Catholics. Gaston Leval in that publication very sensibly summarizes his view in this fashion:

> At bottom it is the reality in which we live and in which we are obliged to live that most interests us. I should prefer to live with one who believes in a superior being and a Master of Life, yet will work with me as a brother, who will not impose his authority upon me nor exploit me and who practices justice and economic equality - I should rather work with him than with one who holds philosophical views much closer to my own, since he does not believe in God, but who exploits me, maintains class differentiation, militarism and the state, and who turns to the policeman and the soldier to impose his beliefs on me.

NOTE: While visiting us, Dorothy Day read throught this article and appended the comments which appear as footnotes. Editors

Such a sensible attitude is not common among anarchists in America. That fact makes an article like this one, which attempts to deal with the problem in a more objective fashion, all the more necessary. Leval points out that even Malatesta admitted the possibility of cooperation between such apparently divergent groups; one wonders how many of his professed American admirers will grant as much.

It is a commonplace of history to say that the Catholic Church reached its greatest heights under feudalism and that it became so completely allied with that system that the rising middle classes thought it necessary to form their own 'protestant' bodies. Feudalism is, of course, basically agrarian; and it emphasizes a concept of society which is, in an outward sense at least, rather static. Because capitalism destroyed (or tried to destroy) the medieval society in which it functioned most effectively, traditional Catholicism has always been anti-bourgeois. A rather muddled understanding of this fact by many Protestants is primarily responsible for their charges that Catholicism is 'un-American'. As a result of their minority position in a Protestant culture, however, American Catholics have, beginning with Isaac Hecker in the nineteenth century, made so many concessions to middle-class traditions that their Church is now almost as bourgeois as any other. Indeed, some organizations such as the Catholic War Veterans seem to outdo all but the worst Protessant groups in taking a super-patriotic and hopelessly chauvinistic stand.

However, beneath this apparent submission of the Church to materialistic forces lies an inherent vitality which reveals itself in the fact that from time to time certain individuals do arise within it and demand that it turn back to its older traditions. Such movements are not as easily suppressed as Protestants suppose; if more people would remain within the Church and fight for such causes, tendencies of this type would have an even better chance. Too many of those who decry the absence of radical thought within the Catholic Church seem unwilling to encourage those of libertarian tendencies to enter the Church or remain within it. The founders of the Catholic Worker movement, Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day, are among the notable exceptions to this otherwise universal state of affairs. Maurin came from French peasant stock which has remained steadfast in the Catholic tradition through many centuries. Dorothy Day was associated with the publication of the

Masses during World War I at a time when that periodical was undergoing a severe attack from the government. About 1926 while ill in a Catholic hospital [1], she became converted to Catholicism. The Catholic Worker movement was launched in 1933 as a result of the conviction which its two founders shared that genuine radicalism might be reconciled with Catholic tradition. One of Peter Maurin's 'Easy Essays' states that the movement's viewpoint

> ...is not a new philosophy
> but a very old philosophy
> a philosophy so old
> that it looks like new.

Although the CWs owe something to the famous *Rerum Novarum* encyclical of Leo XIII [2], which condemns some of the more heartless and obvious injustices of modern capitalism and emphasizes the "obligations" of the capitalist to his employees, the group's real inspiration does indeed go far beyond the implications of that or any other recent papal statement. Its true basis lies in the primitive church and in the extraordinary example of St Francis. Some of the more specific features of its position ought now to be summarized:

Agrarianism should form the basis of any desirable society; it is less hurried, gives greater opportunities for individual development, and avoids the unnatural and unsanitary conditions which urban life inevitably produces for the majority of those who live within it. Such a society would not be wholly without authority. Secular power would be practically or wholly non-existent, but the authourity of the Church would be all-powerful and unquestioned. The priest and 'holy man' [3] would replace kings, presidents and parliaments. The society would practice the communism of the primitive Christians, and its members would live in voluntary poverty. What kind of churchly coercion would be used against those who would not conform to the regulations of the Green Society is a problem which the theoretical literature of the movement can hardly be said to have solved.

The power of the capitalistic (and communistic) state would, of course, be rejected as completely as possible. For this reason, wars fought by such states should be condemned without reservation.

1) When having a baby in Bellevue.
2. More to St. Francis, Eric Gill and Kropotkin.
3) Such as St Francis

Some CWs like Robert Ludlow [4] have advocated that those of draft age should refuse to register. Resistance against the state must, however, always be non-violent.

CWs are somewhat reticent about sexual conduct, but in general they seem to feel that the traditional attitude toward sex is in the long run the most satisfying [5]. They stress celebacy for their more 'spiritual' members and a church-blessed marriage for their other supporters [6]. 'Feminist' agitation, divorce and birth control are specifically denounced. This conventional view of sex is undoutedly the aspect of the movement that most radicals will find least attractive, but it shold be remembered that even an anarchist is free to follow conventional conduct in this regard if he freely chooses to do so. The anarchist does not feel obligated to reject the traditional purely because it *is* traditional; he rejects it purely in terms of whether or not it meets his needs. Obviously, those who feel that the conventional outlook in any matter *does* meet their requirements do not forfeit their anarchism by accepting it.

Education will be carried on, apparently, in Catholic parochial schools, and will be reinforced by emphasis upon the special objectives of the movement. How traditional the disciplining of children would prove to be under such a system is not clear.

It will be seen from this brief and incomplete summary that the authority which the CWs reject is primarily statist—which is, certainly, the essence of modern tyranny. Robert Ludlow summarizes the matter ably in the Spring, 1948 issue of the *Catholic Conscientious Objector*, a paper which he was, ominously enough, forced to suspend for lack of support [7]:

> To me it ('Christian anarchism') would have to be a conception that would in no wise conflict with Catholic teaching. It could not deny, for example, the doctrine of original sin. It would be specifically Christian in that. It would be anarchist in rejecting the modern centralized state. And I felt I had as much right to use this term as did Catholics who called themselves pacifists while rejecting only *modern* war. For as regards the concrete situation today they are pacifists. And as regards the concrete situation today I am an anarchist.

4) Also Peter and Dorothy Day.
5) Based on natural law. See my ON PILGRIMAGE also
6) Each to his vocation. There are saints among married and sinners among celebates
7) CW always supported it and we felt it a duplication. CW circulation is 70,000 We could reach more.

One feels inclined to ask Ludlow what specific states of the past or future he might be inclined to support—since he implies that such states might exist or have existed. That there may be many in the group who would be sympathetic to feudal authoritarianism might be suspected from their discreet silence [8] regarding the evils of medieval society coupled with implications that the miseries of mankind date primarily from the rise of capitalism. It would, I think, be more correct to say that the defects of medievalism differ from those of our own society and because they are more removed from us it may be easier to be more blind to them, but they are certainly not imaginary. No doubt medieval society does have more of a positive nature to teach us than has capitalism, yet we need to remember that, pragmatically speaking, attempts to revive feudalism in our day have come principally from Fascist sources. This does not, of course, mean that such attempts must necessarily take a Fascist turn; and if Ludlow, Day and Maurin have anything to say about it, one may be confident their movement never will. That there are those in the movement who would like to give it auch a slant can be seen in the fact that during the Spanish Civil War some CWs attempted to make the group a vehicle for Fascist propaganda [9]. That they failed ought to impress all skeptical persons that the movement is essentially healthy. In Latin countries where powerful feudal elements remain, the movement would be much more likely to play, if only unwittingly, into Fascist hands. (The group seems to function effectively only in English-speaking countries [10].) In the United States most of the traditional feudal elements are among the Protestants of the Southern states, and in part for that very reason, we may expect that the CWs may avoid such a catastrophic turn in their principles. Of course, if anarchists fail to support the movement wherever possible and if those within the movement who are anarchist-minded are discouraged from continuing the fight within the Church, the group will indeed be lost to the libertarian cause.

There are few organizations with which anarchists may work at all; and cooperation with those few is often made difficult because present day anarchists are still thinking in terms of the struggles

8) Not 'discreet' but lack of space, time, knowlegde etc.

9) Never. Our readers combatted us but all in CW agreed on that. There were splits over pacifism among our groups.

10) Much translated in France.

of the nineteenth century, when the almost universal conservatism of the higher clergy made it necessary for the movement to adopt an anti-clerical tone. There is still a need for opposing the greater part of the clergy today, of course, yet this only makes it the more necessary that anarchists be able to know who what few friends they have are. Our clannishness and our haughty self-righteousness have too often been simply indexes of our sterility. Those anarchists whom I have heard congratulate themselves on the fact that the state left them alone during the last war ought to consider that there is a good reason why they were left alone—because they were too unimportant to bother about! While some of us have been content with outmoded verbalizations, the CWs have quietly and effectively set about discovering genuine alternatives to the national-secular state.

There are no real predecessors of the seriousness and peculiar horror of our immediate situation; for that reason the traditional prejudices and allignments of other times and countries may actually hinder us from meeting the present challenge at all successfully. One consideration is paramount: Our present battle is against the state and the amorality which governs its conduct, and in our rejection of the state many of the Catholic Worker group are with us. Our struggle appears endless, and we will run much less risk of being immediately overwhelmed if those who sincerely advocate the principles of Peter Maurin are battling at our side.

JAIME DE ANGULO

assis sur le roc
près de la source
au fond du bois

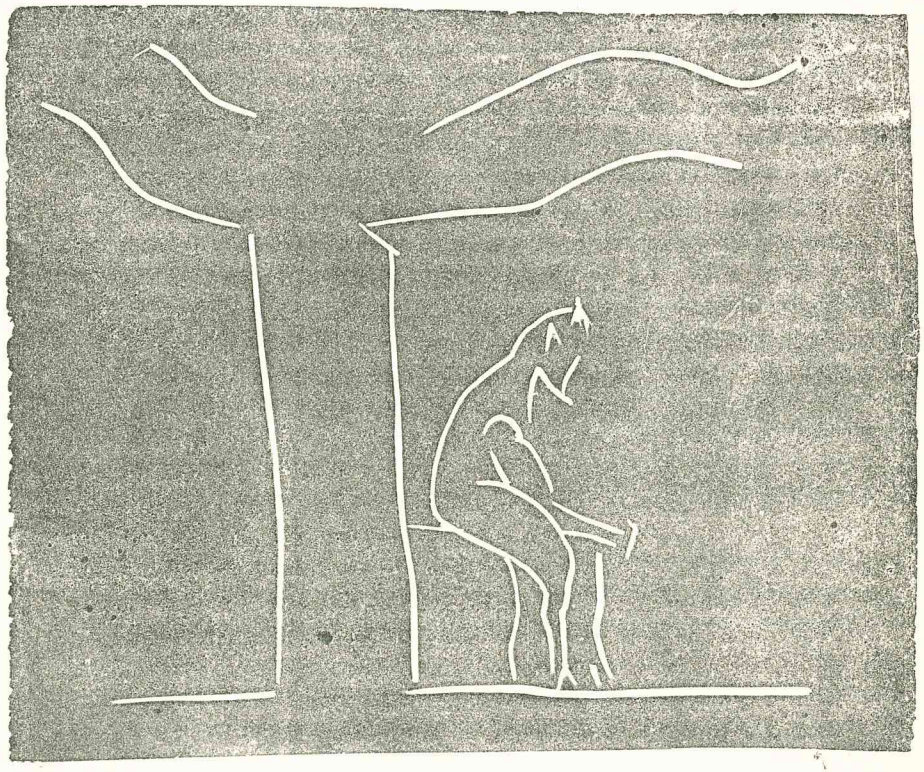
un faune pleure

et ses larmes tombent
entre ses pieds fourchus

on a rock
by the spring
in the woods

a faun sits crying

and the tears fall
between his cloven feet



DACHINE RAINER

MUNDUGUMOR

"The Pace of Life on a Cannibal Isle"

"The Mundugumor ideal of character is identical for the two sexes; both men and women are expected to be violent, competitive, aggessively sexed, jealous and ready to see and avenge insult...holding his own safety very lightly and the lives of others even more lightly..." *Sex and Temperment in Three Primitive Societies* by Margaret Mead

Mundugumor
Mun dug u mor
a ritual word
a fearful place
mosquito net
sago-grub
delectable
stew.

the human
(particularly
the baby
the pregnant woman
the gentle
the generous
the cooperative)
is a misfit.

The Mundugumor
make no bones about *that*!
Mundugumor
Mun dug u mor
a ritual word
a fearful place

fish and snake
crocodile, flute fetish
stiff grass skirted
women
miserable
mosquito-bitten
men
armed

(out of feast days
and diverting head hunts
where all uneasily cooperate)
jealous hostile aggressive
Mundugumor
Mun dug u mor
a ritual word
a fearful place

a maximum amount of excitement
in a minimum amount of time:
scratch, bite
quick, kick
violent love in the bush
in other people's gardens!
hurry back before you're missed!

but absolute silence
virtual immobility
characterizes the tryst
in the mosquito basket
under the hostile eye
of your father
and your elder brother.
Mundugumor
Mun dug u mor
a ritual word
a fearful place
formerly
it was regarded as taboo
for a Mundugumor
to eat anyone who spoke
the Mundugumor language
now who is safe?

Mundugumor—
unlike the muddled Tchambuli,
unlike the gentle Arapesh.

Mundugumor
Mun dug u mor
a ritual word
a fearful place
The Mundugumor make sense
nevertheless
jealous
make as much sense
hostile
as the tribes of
eastern
& western
Europe
aggressive
& of the United States.
Mundugumor
Mun dug u mor
a ritual word
a fearful place

THE SHOOTING

His movements easy, his thoughs gay,
He selected, like us, the urgent matter of life:
Ate, made love, chattered idly with his wife,
The autumn wind shook him, rain halted his way.

The colored mountain, leaf-slurred woods
He climbed and idled as though the mountain and
November woods came to no halting end.
Red green yellow—all came before the brown could.

Improvident and casual, by filching he earned his freedom,
Imagining winter's long grasp, he hoarded.
He was fleet and minute, believed in to what he resorted.
Wildness has its pursuers, beauty wears its grey doom.

Mice fled before the boots, birds flew, leaves swirled,
No longer at home in his customary world—
Hunted by the shouting woods, circled, leaped, climbed, whirled
Dropped heavily from the red maple, an immortal squirrel.

JACKSON MAC LOW

from CELEBRATIONS FOR A MARRIAGE

It is spring again, late spring.
The pigeons, squirrels, fruit-flies
court & fuck in the grass.
They too have plenty of trouble.

Look at a male pigeon—
how much puffing & fanning out his tail,
rustling it along the ground & gurgling
—how seldom he gets anywhere at all!

& when he does get something, once of a while,
when, for a change, he's mounted & starting at it,
he's lucky if he stays on until
the wings-spread-&-flapping stage:

no sooner he gets started
when scores come down from nowhere
—The Pigeons' League of Outraged Decency!—
& push him off & peck him . . .

MARTIN DWORKIN

THE DISCOVERERS

They taught us...
To emigrate from weakness, find ourselves
The easy conquerors of empty bays,
W.H.Auden: *Paid on Both Sides.*

Fill up the great armada's holds
with wishing-wells to barter
with the natives on your savage,
unknown shores; the worms
are shipmates of the dream,
the timbers shred,
the vessels bleed their treasure
as before. This is the tide
of discovery, floating us
into the barren beaches
as debris; I am eroded,
but you are worn down with me—
we could be scenic wonders,
if there were anyone left to see.

PETER RUSSELL

IMAGIST POEM

On the Rialto once—peach stones and sputum
On every step. The tired air clots;
Dust and the signs of rain come from the East.
The city pauses for its evening meal.
—Lights in the shops, a stray cat
—A French letter drifting down the Grand Canal.

Then the distracted female voice
Crying 'Mario, Mario.'
But Mario does not come,

And the next steamer spills
Venetians like water-drops on land,
And it is night.

VINCENT FERRINI

some have their heads
tangled by obsessions
some keep asking
passersby
if they saw
anybody who looked
like themselves

some search in
underground dreams
some in the vaults
of banks
most open doors
that seem familiar
but are wrong
addresses

all
have no time
to stop
and meet their neighbors

they are drowning
or falling down
abysses
unable to bandage
their wounds
desperately hanging
onto newspapers

who have seen
each other
for days & years
are strangers

they are blind
they are searching
for themselves
in the wrong
paths

FRANCIS BARRY

MONDAY MORNING

The factory unfurls its flags
Of steam, symbolic overture
To Monday's comedy
Of dissonance. Wheels turn,
Belts move. The drabber virtues
Prevail. Imagination lags.

And nature, exiled from this place,
Indignantly attempts a strike
With picketing slants of rain
Pacing incessantly
Before this monument to lies,
This parody of grace.

DAVID J. PEAKER

I PUNISH THE WHITE MARINE

I punish the white Marine, he of soft inundations,
for like the hip of a bride, he was like a bruised port
overflowing; in the corner, the masculine sea—its spine gallops
unto silence.
Among dreamlike origins, I withdraw the white Marine
On his dry coral, in his armored throat, placing tears, lightning
wherein the secret flutes emerge, touching the silent South.
Around this grieved archipeligo, I am often, like an atrocious prophet
My marrow curved with the honey and lamb,
With my euphuistic tongue, and with black tempests gathering.

THE EPIC OF FATHER GAPON*

VOLIN

The rapid increase in revolutionary activity from the year 1900 onward greatly disturbed the government. What disturbed it most was the sympathy with which this propaganda was received by the working population. In spite of their illegal, and therefore difficult existence, the two socialist parties had committees, propaganda circles, secret presses and large groups in the big cities. The Socialist Revolutionaries succeeded in carrying out assasinations which, in the brilliance of their execution, attracted attention and even admiration in all spheres. The government realized that its means of defense and repression—surveillance, spying, agent-provacateurs, prison, pogroms, etc.—were inadequate. In order to win the working masses from the influence of the socialist parties, and all revolutionary activity, it conceived a machiavellian plan, which logically should have made it master of the workers' movement. It decided to launch a *legal and authorized* workers' organization, over which it held control. It thus killed two birds with one stone: on the one hand it attracted to itself the sympathies, the gratitude and the devotion of the workers, snatching it from the hands of the revolutionary parties; on the other, it could lead the workers' movement where it wished, under surveillance.

Without doubt, the task was difficult. It was necessary to attract the workers to this organ of the state; they had to overcome their mistrust, interest, flatter, seduce and dupe them without seeming to do so, pretend to satisfy their aspirations. They had to eclipse the parties, render their propaganda ineffectual, bypass them, by concrete acts. To succeed, the government would be obliged to grant certain concessions of an economic and social nature while keeping the workers at its mercy—keeping them where it wanted them.

The execution of such a 'program' required men at the head of the enterprise who were absolutely trustworthy, who at the same time were skillfull, experienced and capable, with a good knowledge

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of workers' psychology, able to impose on them and gain their confidence.

The government's choice finally rested on two men, agents of the secret political police (Okhrana), to carry out the project. One was Zobatov, for Moscow; the other, a priest and chaplain of one of the prisons of St. Petersburg, Father Gapon.

Thus the Tsarist government tried playing with fire. It wasn't long before it burned itself badly.

In Moscow, Zobatov was unmasked soon enough. He didn't accomplish much. But in St. Petersburg, things went better. Gapon, very adroit, working secretly, won the confidence and even the affection of the workers. Endowed with real talent for agitation and organization, he succeeded in setting up the so-called 'Workers' Sections', which he directed personally and inspired with his energetic actions. By the end of 1904, there were eleven of these sections, scattered in different parts of the capital and numbering several thousand members.

In the evening, the workers came very willingly to the sections to discuss their problems, listen to a lecture, read the papers, etc. Admission was rigidly controlled by the Gaponist workers themselves; the militants of the political parties could get in only with difficulty. And even if they did get in, they were soon thrown out.

The workers of St. Petersburg took their sections very seriously. Having complete confidence in Gapon, they told him their troubles and their aspirations, discussed with him ways of improving their conditions, talked over projects for struggling against the bosses. Himself the son of a poor peasant, and having lived among workers, Gapon understood the psychology of his confidants perfectly. He knew admirably how to feign sympathy and approval for the workers' movement. Such, moreover, was his official mission, at least at first.

The thesis that the government was attempting to impose on the workers in these sections was as follows: "Workers, you can improve your situation if you will apply yourselves methodically, within the legal forms, through your sections. To accomplish this you have no need of politics. Concern yourselves with your immediate concrete personal interests and you will soon achieve a happier life. Political parties and struggles, the programs advocated by the bad shepherds—the socialists and revolutionaries—will accomplish nothing to benefit you. Concern yourselves with your immediate

economic interests. This is within your rights, and it is by this course that you will achieve a real improvement in your situation. The government, which is greatly concerned about you, will support you." Such was the thesis that Gapon and his assistants, recruited from among the workers themselves, preached and developed in the sections.

The workers responded to the invitation with alacrity. They began to prepare for economic action. They formulated and drew up their demands, in agreement with Gapon. The latter, in his more than delicate position, had to keep to his word. If he did nothing, he would provoke discontent among the workers; he would certainly be accused of betraying their interests and of helping the bosses. He would lose his popularity. Even more serious suspicions of him might develop. In such conditions, his work would be ruined. In his double role, Gapon, above all and at all costs, had to retain the sympathies he had won. He knew this well, and gave an appearance of supporting the workers unreservedly, hoping to be able to retain control of the movement, to lead the workers where he wanted, to direct, use and channalize their actions.

This was not what happened. The movement quickly went beyond the limits that had been set for it. It soon assumed an unexpected size, vigor and popularity, upsetting all the plans, reversing all the schemes of its originators. Soon it was transformed into a regular tempest which swept along Gapon himself.

In December 1904, the workers of the Putilov works, one of the most important in St. Petersburg, in which Gapon had many converts and friends, decided to begin acting. After consulting with Gapon, they drew up a list of very moderate economic demands to the management. By the end of the month they learned that the management "did not consider it possible to respect them" and that the government was powerless to force it to do so. Furthermore, the management fired several workers considered to be ringleaders. Their reinstatement was demanded. The management refused.

The indignation, the rage of the workers was boundless. In the first place because their long and laborious efforts had come to nothing; in the second place, and more important, because they had been led to believe that they would be successful. Gapon had personally encouraged them and had raised their hopes. And here at the first step on the good legal road, with nothing but a crushing

rebuff that was in no way justified, they felt themselves 'had'. They also felt morally obliged to intervene in behalf of their discharged comrades.

Naturally, their thoughts turned to Gapon. To safeguard his prestige ane position, he pretended to be more indignant than anyone, and urged the Putilov workers to hit back vigorously. They did not hesitate to do so. Believing themselves protected, keeping within the purely economic limits covered by the sections and by Gapon, they decided, after several tumultous meetings, to help their cause by a strike. The government, confident in Gapon, did not intervene. And thus it was that the strike of the Putilov works, the first important workers' strike in Russia was called in December 1904.

But the movement didn't stop there. All the workers' sectoins rose up and acted in defense of the action of the Putilov workers They realized very clearly that a check to the latter would affect them all. Naturally, Gapon had to take the part of the sections. In the evening, he visited them all, one after another, speaking in favor of the Putilov strikers, calling on all the workers to support them by effective action.

Several days passed. An extraordinary agitation overcame the working masses of the capital. The workshops emptied spontaneously. Without a word of command, without preparation or direction, the Putilov strike became virtually a general strike of the St. Petersburg workers.

And this was the tempest. En masse, the strikers rushed to the sections, did away with all formality, threw off all control, demanded immediate and significant action.

The strike was not enough. They had to act, do something —something big, significant, decisive. This was the general feeling.

It was then that the fantastic idea arose—no one ever knew whence or how—of sending, in the name of the downtrodden workers and peasants of *all Russia*, a 'petition' to the Tsar; to go, in support of it, en masse to the Winter Palace; deliver the petition, through the intermediary of a delegation, headed by Gapon, to the Tsar himself; and request that he at long last give ear to the suffering of his people. As naive, as paradoxical as it was this idea spread like wildfire among the workers of St. Petersburg. They all rallied to it. It inspired them, filled them with enthusiasm. It provided a meaning snd a definite goal for thair movement.

The sections joined with the masses. They decided to organize the action. Gapon was given the job of drawing up the petition. Again, he accepted. Thus, he became, by the force of events, the leader of an important, historic mass movement.

During the first days of January, 1905, the petition was readied. Simple and moving, it breathed devotion and confidence. The sufferings of the peeple were laid bare, with much sentiment and sincerity. The Tsar was requested to consider them, to agree to some effective reforms and see that they were accomplished.

A strange thing, but undeniable: Gapon's petition was a work of high inspiration, truly pathetic.

It was now necessary to have it adepted by all the sections, to acquaint the great masses with it, and organize the march on the Winter Palace.

Meanwhile, a new development took place. Some revolutionists belonging to the political parties (the latter had until then kept aloof from 'Gaponism') intervened with Gapon. They sought above all to influence him to make his petition and his action less 'mad', more dignified, firmer—in a word, more revolutionary. The advanced workers' circles put the same pressure on him. Gapon acceded gracefully enough. The Socialist Revolutionaries especially made contact with him. Together with them, in the last few days, he rewrote his primitive petition, enlarging it considerably, and greatly attenuating its spirit of faithful devotion to the Tsar.

In its final form, the 'petition' was the greatest historical paradox that had ever existed. The Tsar is addressed very loyally and is requested to anthorize—and even accomplish—a fundamental revolution, which in the last analysis would destroy his power. In fact, all of the minimum programs of the revolutionary parties figured in it. It demanded, notably, as matters of great urgency, complete freedom of the press, speech, conscience, etc., complete freedom of association and organization, the right of the workers to join unions and to strike; an agrarian law expropriating the big landowners for the benefit of the peasant communities; and finally, the immediate calling of a constitutional convention, elected on a democratic basis. It was indeed an invitation to suicide.

Here is the final text of the petition (translated from Russian)

Sire!

We, workers of St. Petersburg, our wives, our children and our parents, old people without means of support, have come to you,

Oh Tsar, to ask you for justice and protection.

We are reduced to begging. We are oppressed, crushed beneath the weight of exhausting labor, outrageously sweated. We are not considered human beings, but treated like slaves who must endure their fate in silence. We have endured it patiently. But now we are being hurled to the bottom of an abyss where only despotism and ignorance are reserved for us. We are weighted down by despotism, and by treatment contrary to every human law.

We are at the end our strength, Oh Tsar! The decisive moment has come when death seems truly better than the prolongation of our intolerable suffering. That is why we have stopped working and told our employers that we will not go back until they have accepted our just requests.

What we have asked of them is little, and moreover, without this little our lives are not lives at all but hell, eternal torture.

Our first request was that our employers should discuss our needs with us. And they have refused to do this! Even the right to discuss our needs is denied under the pretext that the law does not give us this right.

Our request for an 8 hour day was also rejected as illegal.

We have alse requested the fixing of our wages by collective bargaining, arbitration in case of misunderstanding between us and the management of the works, a rouble a day raise in wages for men and women, the abolition of overtime, improvement of working conditions so that the work does not involve death from drafts, rain and snow. We have also asked for more consideration for those who fall sick, and also that orders given us be not accompanied by blows.

All these requests have been rejected as illegal. The mere fact of our having formulated them is regarded as a crime. The desire to improve our situation is considered insolence by our employers.

Oh, Emperor! We are more than 300,000 human beings. But we are human in appearance only. For in reality we have no human rights. We are forbidden to talk, to think, to assemble to discuss our needs, to take action to improve our situation. Whoever among us dares to raise his voice in favor of the working class is thrown into prison or exiled. To have a good heart, a sensitive soul, is considered a crime. To give evidence of sentiments of fraternity toward an unfortunate who is abandonned, a victim, an

outcast, is an abominable crime.

Oh Tsar! Does all this conform to the commandments of the God through Whom you reign? Under such laws, can life be lived? Would it not be preferable for all of us Russian workers to die, leaving only the capitalists and functionaries alive to enjoy their lives?

Such is the future that awaits us. And this is why we have assembled before the walls of your palace. We hope to find, we wait here for the last life-buoy. Do not refuse to help your people get out of the gulf of illegality where there is nothing but poverty and ignorance. Give them a chance, a means of accomplishing their true fate. Deliver them from the intolerable oppression of the bureaucrats. Break down the wall that separates you from them and call them to rule the country jointly with you.

You have been sent down here to lead the people to happiness. But bit by bit, happiness has been taken from us by your functionaries who have left us nothing but grief and humiliation.

Examine our requests carefully and without anger. They have not been formulated for evil, but for good, for our good. Sire, and for yours. This is not insolence which speaks in us, but the consciousness of the general necessity that the present insupportable situation must end.

Russia is too big, its needs are too varied for it to be ruled by a government composed only of bureaucrats. It is absolutely necessary that the people participate in it, for only they know what they need.

Do not refuse to help your people. Give, without delay, to the representatives of all classes the order to assemble. Let the capitalists and the workers be represented. Let the functionaries, the priests, the doctors and the professors also choose their delegates. Let all be free to choose whomever they wish. For this purpose, permit them to elect a constitutional convention under universal suffrage.

This is our principal request on which all depends. This would be the best thing, the only true balm for our open wounds. Unless it is applied they will remain wide open and we will die.

There is no panacea for all our ills. Several remedies are needed. We will enumerate them now. We speak to you frankly Sire, with open hearts, like to a father.

The following measures are indispensable.

In the first group are the remedies for the lack of rights and the ignorance from which the Russian people suffer. These measures include:

1. Freedom nnd inviolability of the person; freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of conscience in matters of religion. Separation of Church and State.
2. Compulsory universal education at the expense of the State.
3. Responsibility of ministers before the nation. Guarantees of the legality of administrative methods.
4. Equality before the law of all individuals, without exception.
5. Immediate amnesty for all those imprisoned for their beliefs.

In the second group are the cures for poverty:

1. Abolition of indirect taxation. A direct, progressive income tax.
2. Abrogation of rents for redemption of the land. Cheap credit. Gradual return of the land to the people.

The third group includes the measures against the exploitation of labor by capital:

1. Protection of labor by law.
2. Freedom for labor unions established for the purpose of cooperation and the regulating of professional questions.
3. Eight hour working day. Limitation of overtime.
4. Freedom of struggle between labor and capital.
5. Participation of representatives of the working class in the framing of a law concerning the legal rights of the workers.
6. Fair wages.

There, Sire, are our principal needs. Command that they be satisfied. Promise us that they will be, and you will make Russia happy and glorious, and your name will be inscribed forever in our hearts, in the hearts of our children and of our children's children.

But if you will not promise, if you do not accept our petition, we have decided to die here, on this square, before your palace for we will have nowhere to go, and no reason to go anywhere. For us there are only two roads: one leads to freedom and well being, the other to the grave. Show us which road, Oh Tsar, and we will follow it, though it lead us to our death.

If our lives must be sacrificed for Russia in her agony, we will not regret it. We offer them joyously.

It is notable that, despite all that was paradoxical in the

situation, for an informed observer the action that was taking shape was no more than the logical result of the combined pressure of the various influences--a sort of natural synthesis of the different elements present.

In the first place, the idea of a march to the Tsar was, basically, a manifestation of the naive faith of the masses in his good will. The workers, who, in Russia, never broke their contact with the countryside, revived briefly the peasant tradition of going to ask aid and protection of the 'little father'. Taking advantage of the unique opportunity that was presented them, buoyed up with spontaneous, irresistable enthusiasm, they sought, no doubt, to call attention to the evil and obtain a concrete, complete solution. While hoping, from the bottom of their simple hearts, for at least a partial success, they primarily wanted to find out on whom they could rely.

On the other hand, there was the influence of the revolutionary parties, forced to stand apart, not strong enough to prevent the movement or substitute a more revolutionary one for it, but nevertheless able to exercise a certain pressure on Gapon and make him 'revolutionize' his action.

This action was thus the bastard, but natural product of contradictory forces.

As for the intellectual and liberal circles, they could only participate as powerless spectators of the developing events.

The conduct and psychology of Gapon himself, as paradoxical as it seems, has, however, a simple explanation. At first, simply a comedian, an agent in the pay of the police, he subsequently was more and more carried along by the powerful force of the people's movement. He ended by being completely carried away. Events placed him, in spite of himself, at the head of the masses whose idol he had become. An adventurous and romantic figure, he had to let himself be deluded. Instinctively perceiving the historical importance of the event, he got an exaggerated impression of it. He saw the whole country already in revolt, the throne in danger, and himself, Gapon, supreme leader of the movement, idol of the people, borne to the summit of glory. Hypnotized by this dream, which seemed about to become reality, he finally gave himself body and soul to the movement. Henceforth, his job as a policeman did not concern him. He gave no thought to it during these feverish days, dazzled by the lightning of the terrible storm, entirely absorbed

by his new role which seemed almost a divine mission to him. Such was, in all probability, Gapon's psychology at the beginning of January 1905. One may suppose that at this moment, and in this sense, the man was sincere. At least, that was the personal impression of the author of these lines, who made Gapon's acquaintance several days before the events and saw him at work.

Even the strangest phenomenon—the silence of the government and the absence of all police interference during these days of feverish preparation—was easily explained. The police couldn't recognize Gapon's new psychology. Up to the end, they had confidence in him, taking his action for a skillful maneuver. And when, finally, they perceived the change and the imminent danger, it was too late to control the situation. At first but slightly disturbed, the government finally decided to wait for a favorable moment to wipe out the movement at one blow. For the instant, the police, not receiving any orders, did not budge. It should be added that this incomprehensible, mysterious fact encouraged the masses and raised their hopes: "The government doesn't dare to oppose the movement; they will yield." was said everywhere.

The march on the Winter Palace was set for Sunday morning, January 9 (old style). The last days were devoted mainly to the public reading of the 'petition' in the sections. Everywhere, the procedure was virtually the same. During the day, Gapon himself —or one of his friends—read and explained the petition to the masses of workers who filled the meeting halls in rotation. As soon as the hall was filled, the door was closed and the petition was taken up; the audience signed their names on a special sheet and left the hall. It was refilled by a crowd which was waiting patiently in the street and the ceremony began once more. This continued in all the sections until midnight and beyond.

What lent a tragic note to these last preparations was the supreme appeal of the speaker and the fierce, solemn response of the crowd to this appeal. "Comrade workers, peasants and others," the speaker would say, "Brothers in poverty! You all must keep faith with the cause and the demonstration. Sunday morning all come to the square before the Winter Palace. Any weakening on your part will be treason to the cause. But come peacefully, calmly, as befits the solemn occasion. Father Gapon has already warned the Tsar, and promised him, on his personal responsibility, that he will be in no danger. If you allow any untoward act, Father Gapon will

be held responsible. You have heard the petition. Our demands are just. We can no longer continue this miserable existence. We are going to the Tsar with open arms, with hearts full of love and hope. He has only to receive us and listen to our requests. Gapon himself will hand over the petition. Let us hope, comrades, let us hope, brothers, that the Tsar will welcome us, listen to us, and recognize our legitimate grievances. But, my brothers, if the Tsar, instead of welcoming us, receives us with guns and sabres, then, my brothers, it will be too bad for him. *Then we would not have a Tsar any more. Then he would be damned forever, he and his whole dynasty.* Swear, all of you, comrades, brothers, citizens, swear that then you would never forget his treason. Swear that then you would seek to destroy this traitor by every means..." And the whole assembly, carried away by extraordinary enthusiasm, replied, raising their hands: "We swear."

When Gapon himself read the petition—he read it at least once in each section—he added this: "I, Father George Gapon, by the will of God, would absolve you of the oath of allegiance to the Tsar, I would bless anyone who destroyed him. For then, *we would not have a Tsar any more.*" Overcome by emotion, he repeated this phrase two or three times before the silent, muttering crowd.

"Swear that you will follow me. Swear it on the heads of your kinsmen, of your children..." "Yes, Father, yes, we swear it, on the heads of our children," was the invariable reply.

On the evening of January 8, all was ready for the march. All was ready on the government's side too. Certain intellectual and literary circles learned that the government had made its decision: in no case to permit the crowd approach the palace; if it insisted, shoot to kill. In haste, a delegation was sent to the authorities to try to avert bloodshed. The attempt was futile. All arrangements had been made. The capital was in the hands of troops armed to the teeth.

The rest is well known. On Sunday, January 9, from early morning. an immense crowd, composed primarily of workers (many with their families) and also containing other very diverse elements, started to move in the direction of the Winter Palace. Tens of thousands of men, women and children, from all parts of the capital and its suburbs, marched to the assembly-place.

Everywhere, they ran into barricades, manned by police and

soldiers who opened a sustained fire on this sea of humanity. But the density of the compact mass of men, a density which increased from minute to minute, was so great that the crowd moved anyhow, by all sorts of indirect routes, ceaselessly toward the square, filling all the neighboring streets. Thousands of people, dispersed by the fire from the barricades, pressed stubbornly toward the goal, taking detours, driven by enthusiasm, curiousity, rage, by the need to cry aloud their indignation and horror. There were many who still hoped in spite of everything, believing that if they could only manage to reach the square before the Tsar's palace, he would come to them, welcome them and put everything right. Some believed that, faced with an accomplished fact, the Tsar could no longer resist and would have to yield. Others, the last of the naive, imagined that the Tsar was not aware of what was happening, didn't know about the butchery, and that the police, having carefully concealed the facts from him, now wanted to prevent the people from making contact with the Little Father. They were determined to get there at any price. And then, they had sworn to get there. And finally, Father Gapon was there, perhaps, somehow...

Whatever it was, the human flood, rolling in from all directions, finally reached the immediate vicinity of the Palace Square and moved onto the square itself. Then the government could find nothing better to do than to mow down this unarmed, disabled, desperate crowd with salvos of fire.

It was a sight of almost unbelievable horror, unique in history. Machinegunned from all sides, this immense crowd, roaring with fear, grief, rage, unable to retreat or advance, all movement being prevented by its own mass, was subjected to what was later called the 'bloodbath'. Driven back slightly by each salvo, as if by a gust of wind, some trampled, suffocated, crushed; it reformed immediately afterward, on top of the dead, the dying and the wounded; pushed forward by new masses which were constantly arriving. And new salvos from time to time shook the living mass like a death agony. This lasted a long time, until at last the adjacent streets were cleared and the crowd could escape.

Hundreds of men, women and children perished that day in the capital. The soldiers had been gotten thoroughly drunk to deprive them of all conscience, all scruples. Some of them, entirely without conscience, stationed in the garden near the Palace Square, amused themselves by 'bringing down' with bullets the children who

were climbing the trees to get a better view.

By evening 'order was restored.' It was never known, even approximately, how many victims there were. But it was learned that long trains loaded with corpses carried these poor bodies out of the city during the night, to be buried pell-mell in the surrounding fields and forests.

It was also learned that the Tsar was not even in the capital on that day. After giving carte-blanche to the military authorities, he had fled to one of his summer residences, at Tsarkoe-Selo, near St. Peterburg.

As for Gapon, he led, surrounded by bearers of ikons and images of the Tsar, a considerable crowd which approached the palace by the Narva gate. As everywhere, this crowd was dispersed by the troops at the very entrance of the gate. Gapon escaped. At the first burst of fire, he lay flat and did not move. For several minutes, it was thought that he was killed or wounded. He was quickly rescued by friends and brought to a safe place. His long hair was cut and he dressed in civilian clothes.

Some time later, he was out of the country, safe from harm.

On leaving Russia, he directed a short appeal to the workers:

"I, a priest, curse all those officers and soldiers who, in this hour, massacred their innocent brothers, women and children. I curse all the oppressors of the people. My blessings go to the soldiers who made common cause with the people in their effort to achieve liberty. I release them from their oath of loyalty to the Tsar—the traitorous Tsar whose orders shed the people's blood."

Further, he drew up a new proclamation in which he said, among other things:

"Comrade workers, there is no longer any Tsar! Between him and the Russian people, torrents of blood flow today. The time has come for the Russian workers to take up the struggle for the people's liberty without him. You have my blessings on this struggle. Tomorrow I will be among you again. Today I am working for the cause."

These appeals were distributed in great numbers throughout the country,

A few words about Gapon's final fate are in order.

Rescued by friends, the ex-priest finally settled abroad. The Socialist Revolutionaries took care of him for the most part. His future now depended only on himself. He had at his disposal the

means of breaking completely with his past, completing his political education and taking an ideological position, in short, of becoming a real man of action.

But Gapon was not of this stamp. The sacred fire which, by accident, had lighted his shadowy soul was only a fire of personal ambition and gratification; it soon went out. Instead of devoting himself to his education and preparing himself for serious activity, Gapon remained in inactivity, the mother of boredom. Slow patient work was not for him. He dreamed of an immediate and glorious sequel to his ephemeral adventure. But nothing happened in Russia. The Great Revolution did not come. He became more and more discouraged. Soon he sought forgetfulness in debauchery. He passed most of his time in low dives where, half drunk, in the company of loose women, he wept bitter tears over his shattered illusions. Life abroad disgusted him; he was overcome with homesickness. At all costs he wanted to return to Russia.

Then he conceived the idea of addressing himself to the government, asking for pardon and the right to reenter the service and take up his old duties. He wrote to the secret police and renewed relations with them.

His former chiefs received his offer favorably enough. But, before anything else, they demanded material proof of his repentance and his good faith. Knowing of his acquaintance with influential members of the Socialist Revolutionaries, they asked him to furnish them precise information that would enable them to strike a decisive blow against the party. Gapon accepted the bargain.

Meanwhile, one of the influential members of the party, an intimate friend of Gapon, the engineer Rutemberg, got wind of the new dealings between Gapon and the police. He reported to the central committee of the party. The committee ordered him—Rutemberg himself tells about it in his memoirs—to do everything he could to unmask Gapon.

Rutemberg had to play a part. He was successful and ended by winning Gapon's complete confidence, the latter believing that the engineer was willing to betray his party for a large sum of money. Gapon made him a proposition. Rutemberg pretended to accept. It was agreed that he would turn important party secrets over to the police through the intermediary of Gapon.

They bargained over the price. This bargaining, pretended and deliberately protracted by Rutemberg, carried on by Gapon in

consultation with the police, ended in Russia, where Gapon was permitted to return, along with Rutemberg.

The last act of the drama was played in St. Petersburg. On his arrival, Rutemberg told several workers, faithful friends of Gapon who refused to believe in his treachery, that he was about to provide them with irrefutable proof of it. It was arranged that the Gaponist workers secretly attend the last conversation between Gapon and Rutemberg, the conversation in which the price of Rutemberg's supposed betrayal would be definitely fixed.

The rendezvous took place in an isolated villa, not far from the capital. The workers, hidden in a room adjoining the one in which the conversation took place, could thus, without being seen, listen to the conversation in order to convince themselves of Gapon's true role, and could then publicly unmask him.

But the workers couldn't wait for that. As soon as they were convinced of Gapon's treachery, they rushed into the room where the two men were talking. They threw themselves on Gapon, seized him, and despite his supplications (he went down on his knees begging their forgiveness for the sake of his past) brutally executed him. Then they put a rope around his neck and hanged him from the ceiling. This was how his body was found some time later.

Thus ended Gapon's personal epic.

In his memoirs, largely sincere, he struggled, awkwardly enough, to explain as best he could, his relations with the police before January 9, 1905. On this point, he doesn't seem to have told the whole truth.

As for the movement, it ran its course.

The events of January 9, made an enormous impression throughout the country. In the remotest corners, the people learned, with indignant astonishment, that instead of listening to the people, peacefully assembled before his palace to tell of their suffering, the Tsar had coldly given the order to shoot them down. For a long time, peasants delegated by their villages came secretly to St. Petersburg to learn the exact truth.

This truth was soon everywhere. *It was then that the 'legend of the Tsar' vanished.*

Another historical paradox: In 1881 ,the revolutionists assassinated the Tsar in order to kill the legend. It survived. 24 years later, the Tsar himself killed it.

In St. Petersburg, the events of January 9 caused the strike

to spread. It became total. On Monday, January 10, not a shop, not a factory was working in the capital. A movement of blind revolt spread everywhere. The first great revolutionary strike of the Russian workers--that of the St. Petersburg workers—became an accomplished fact.

An important conclusion emerges from the above. It is:

It required a historical experience that was lived through, palpable and of great intensity, to make people begin to understand the true nature of Tsarism, the general situation, and the real tasks of the struggle. Neither propaganda nor the sacrifices of enthusiasts were able to achieve this by themselves.

BOOK REVIEWS

ALEX COMFORT: *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom. Freedom Press., 27 Red Lion St, London, WC 1. England. 3s 6d*

Sexual Behavior in Society. Viking Press. $2.75

Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 8s 6d

It is rare and exciting that Alex Comfort, the radical sociologist, who methodically and unerringly upholds an anarchist position in all his writing—his fiction, his literary criticism--even his poetry—should maintain so conservative, so barbarian, and so controversial a sexology. I say conservative, because he insists on the need for fixed mores and established value-judgments (such as exist in many more stable societies); barbarian as opposed to civilized, for he accepts none of the chaotic abandoned behavior of industrial man; and controversial, for many of the anarchists here are baffled by, or hostile to his ideas on interpersonal relations pertaining to sex.

it is not difficult to see why this last is so. Comfort attacks the two props our lamentable species has erected for itself—the delusion that it has areas of pure freedom, and its lack of imagination. Confusing freedom with abandon, in a confusion that exists almost universally, and that can readily be attributed to the extreme egocentricity of man in authoritarian society one continually fails to recognize the consequences of one's behavior or in more self-conscious individuals, one is deliberately indifferent to these consequences.

The lack of imagination is, in some respects, both a causal and a derivative factor in this process. It is almost as though nature enveloped us in a protective stupor; else how could we function biologically without values, sociologically without morals? What allows so many women to hop into bed with Anyman without

thought of the possible conseqences—(and I do not consider the consequences nearly as possible as Comfort—who as a doctor has an occupational preoccupation with unwed mothers—does)—but a sheer lack of imagination? [And what of support of a war? Is it not attended by the same unreflective process? The other night in the village tavern a young girl, who is generally very gay, sat glumly drinking. She had just come from a movie about paraplegia, and she kept on repeating, "But I never thought of them as people, with problems and everything . " They had been one of the results of war: a collective entity: men-without-arms-or-legs.]

Along with all the other mental and spiritual inadequacies that attends each man on a bomber—or in his less extreme but often equally inhumane behavior—we must include this failure to identify or simple unimaginativeness. Imagination is bred out of modern man by his family in his schools and other institutions, along with consideration, cooperation and rationality.

Aside from the deleterious social effects of promiscuity, Comfort—and I think this isl more to the point—is concerned about the effects on the individuals themselves. These are not good. The breakdown of society creates such insecurity that all change is greeted with justified apprehension, for it is most often change for the worse. Particularly, in the breakup of a relationship which involves children, it is difficult to determine which disturbs them more—a divided family, or a whole one with two unhappy parents. Certainly prolonged adult promiscuity has observable disturbing effects on the children involved.

Alex Comfort attempts to combine the concept of sexual freedom with individual responsibility. This combination is not popular with the philistines (too much emphasis on the sexual freedom) nor with the perennially immature (too much individual responsibility) He believes, e.g. in adolescent sexuality up to the point of actual intercourse. Centrism in such a matter is a difficult and dangerous thing to maintain. Further, the advocacy of it has little to do with its practice. Things like bundling, etc. involve too much control, and probably too much frustration, to be widely utilized. It seems to me that Comfort's thesis ought to have a greater flexibility, depending on the age and sex education of the participants and the chances of their providing a fair environment for a child if necessary (I say fair, for I know of no one who has ever provided a satisfactory one—and it would be unreasonable to limit one's

sexual activities to that utopian ideal).

Sex activity should depend, at least partially, on the general availability of proper contraceptives. Once again, Comfort seems utopian, for this last consideration, at least in many sections of this country, may be considered adequate enough. One must never expect anything 'foolproof' in this world. That is too determinist a concept. We must allow a little leeway to Fate, its wonders to perform.

Despite the lucidity of anarchist thinking in sociology, anarchists are notorious cranks in many departments, like dietetics and sexology. When one considers the quaintly morbid guilt-inspired theories and practice of Thoreau, Gandhi, Tolstoi in these matters, and the hysterical anti-puritanical reaction of Reich, it is good to find someone as nearly balanced as Alex Comfort.

Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State is an examination of centralized society, and of the psychopaths who run it. Coercion as a socializing force—it keeps the set-up going and the delinquents in power—is discussed with considerable thoroughness, and while most of the ideas are familiar to anarchists, particularly those who are familiar with Comfort's other works, it is all worth repeating—for Comfort has that great talent for standing all things right side up again that sociologists have been so long standing on their heads. Who are the delinquents, who the gangsters, who the genuine criminals? They are not the ones the state and its educator-psychiatrist-stooges would have us believe. In their most striking psychotic behavior the situation they inflict on us all, War, it is most clear who they are. Comfort reiterates the credo of Disobedience.—We must learn to disobey all commands against our sanity, our humaneness, our survival. In times of war, like these, we must disobey the state in all things. It is only in a more rational society that genuinely free and healthy behavior will be possible, for ourselves and for others.

DACHINE RAINER

EGO. HUNGER AND AGGRESSION by F. S. Perls. Allen and Unwin. 12s 6d.

It is a great failing of psychologists—a trait that is frequently to be observed in scientists whose special field is still young—

that they tend to assume that their personal discoveries are the fundamental key to the understanding of the subject, and therefore to enlarge the implications of these discoveries out of all proportion to their real significance. Thus, Freud took it pretty much for granted that his researches in the unconscious sexual urges of his patients represented the bedrock of psychological investigation and based his whole theory of human behavior—virtually a whole cosmology—on them. Likewise Reich and his therapeutic discoveries in relation to muscular rigidity...and so on. Each pioneer in the field believes his own discovery the answer to all riddles and tries to relate all phenomena to it.

It is not the least of the merits of Dr Perls' book that he not only recognizes this tendency, but attempts to do something about it: on one hand, to reduce the various theories of human motivation and psychological disorder to some semblance of their true proportions, and further, to arrive at a sort of synthesis of the various schools. He recognizes the importance of the discoveries of the pioneers, but refuses to let the egomania of their discoverers blind him to the merits of other concepts, nor to the limitations of all monolithic theories.

Perls' own contribution to psychological understanding, a contribution which his keen awareness of the folly of monolithic thinking prevents him from exaggerating out of proportion to its probable significance, is the investigation of the hunger instinct and its effects on the human psyche. He started with the assumption that the sex instinct was only one of the several instincts of the human species, and that therefore it was unreasonable that it alone should create psychological disturbances when frustrated, as Freud believed. He therefore proceeded to examine his patients from the standpoint that their difficulties might result from the frustration of other instincts, notably the hunger instinct, and achieved results that seem to justify fully his departure from orthodoxy.

A good part of the book is taken up with a discussion of psychoanalytic technique. Perls finds a great deal to criticize in the "classical" Freudian approach: its overemphasis of the sex instinct, the authoritarian relationship between analyst and patient, and the too exclusive preoccupation with delving into the patients' past. An analysis of this sort can be endless, since the goal of curing the patient is easily lost sight of, and attention becomes absorbed by the analytic process itself.

He also devotes considerable space to practical therapeutic suggestions—what he calls "concentration therapy". The main emphasis of this method is the concentration of attention, by means of exercises, on physical and mental functions which are improperly performed. Perls has found, for example, that most people do not pay sufficient attention to their food while eating, and that making them concentrate on it frequently brings hidden tensions to light. He gives a number of exercizes whereby one can increase his awareness of the workings of his mind and body, thus learning self-mastery and overcoming many neurotic difficulties, like stammering, constipation, etc. Perls believes that concentration therapy, if persisted in, can overcome any neurotic trouble, though in cases of advanced neurosis, it is unlikely that the patients will have enough persistance to follow the exercizes without outside help. In my opinion, this material is of far-reaching importance, both as corrective to the authoritarian approach of many psychologists, who treat their patients as if they were simply spectators of their own cure, and as a practical method for increasing one's self-awareness and enriching one's personality. In general, I found the book very stimulating; it indicates the direction for a much needed revision of Freudian psychology. HOLLEY CANTINE

SOME NEW DIRECTIONS BOOKS

There has not been an issue of RETORT in over a year (See reasons elsewhere in this issue.) Even when we appear more frequently, we fail to mention a good number of the books we receive for review. Sometimes they are books we enjoy and want to suggest to our readers. The following omnibus will include at least some of the books and mags that have appealed to us during the past year. Since RETORT will be coming out more frequently now, we hope to keep abreast more.

We have long planned to write a piece on NEW DIRECTIONS books. For the time being we will limit ourselves to saying that they publish many foreign writers of remarkable stature—Queneau, Michaux, Celine, Cossary, Berto etc.—as well as work by more experimental writers in this country.

The best, and one of the most recent books in this latter category is "The Flea of Sodom" by Edward Dahlberg. Lyrically

written, like some ancient Hebrew chant, rich with imagry, both rural and urban, archaic and modern; sophisticated, sharp, it busies itself with those matters of greatest moment to those who still entertain a concerned and charitable view of the human species. It is a book not of despair, but of catharsis, for we who can feel so keenly the waste of the human potential, bitterly regret the recklessness with which it has been subverted by contemporary mores—by the politics, parasitism, uselessness and bad bread.

"'Where is the street for the baker and the shops of spices? Who weighs the egg and the sweet cakes, and what idol stands guard over the flesh on the table? O defiled flock, take a harp and chant to the ancient relics, lest understanding perish'...my spirit was a mute tomb. Inside the 6th Avenue cafeteria were Andromache, Thais, Golem, Bedlam, Proletcult sitting at a table with the tittering art-hags of Taratus and Pilate Agenda."

These—the mediocrity, the madness, the Communist (or other priestly) politics, the lasciviousness, the perversions, the eco-culturism, the endless sale of talent, integrity, spirit — Edward Dahlberg pictures in his epic complaint "The Flea of Sodom." The second and third parts of this small book, "The Rational Tree" and "The Wheel of Sheol" and the other two short essays, deal more specifically with the wisdom of innocence and the loss of innocence and with those cultures, particularly the Hebrew, where awareness of this process was keenest. "Wisdom is wherever the mule, the goat, and the fig have flourished for a thousand years." "The difference between a civilized and a detestable nation is in its votive fruits, spices, animals." The various ways of life—the diets and attitudes—are considered with the varying degrees or absences of vice, shame, ignorance—all in relation to modesty, contemplation and wisdom. "In Chaucer lewd meant ignorant...In Homer, frugal intelligence and plain feeding are a check against ennui and emasculation. Cyclopes, satisfied with an onion and goat-milk cheese has no ideas."

These quotes might demonstrate the scope and learning of the author. They do not adequately indicate his magnificent style, his language nor the systematic, rational and conscious, imaginative exposition of this gospel. When I read the foreward I was frankly skeptical, but the eulogy is justified; Herbert Read is right: this is "a book...for all time."

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"The House of Certain Death" is a short novel by the Egyptian author Albert Cossary (who lives in Paris and writes in French), about the efforts of the apathetic inhabitants of a crumbling Egyptian hovel to prevent their tenement from collapsing. The story belongs to the genre: literature of extreme situation—it is, however, unlike John Hawkes' "The Cannibal", a fantasy about post-war Germany, in that it is a literal, rather than an imaginative account of the lives of its characters; and it is unlike Giuseppe Berto's "The Works of God" whose situations are atypical and uniquely catastrophic. That is, Berto writes of war on a countryside that enjoys reasonable good living up to the war. Where Berto's situations are temporary and disruptive, Cossary's are static and mouldering. As C. E. M. Kay puts it in the DELPHIC REVIEW, number 2: "Among the stench of excrement and death.. his characters exist in a landscape of starvation and decay. There is no violence of action between man and man for few have the physical or mental strength to initiate it—It is only with the greatest writers that we find the tighrope between compassion and sentimentality successfully negotiated."

Cossary negotiates it successfully. His style is deliberately simple—somewhat reminiscent of Giono's—but infinitely more suited to the portrayal of a people who have to make so herculean an effort to produce the slightest act, the most modest thought. While it is not an impoverished style—it is highly conscious, and as I said, deliberate—its simplicity sets the tone: the sparse, almost bare country-side of the lumpen Egyptian spirit.

I felt anguish and futility, for these people, despite the near-death level of their existence, have a smouldering humor, an intense brutal post-lustful liveliness that keeps them from the certain death society has ordained for them.

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I tried to avoid making the comparison but it returned persistently to mind, as I read Berto's "The Works of God" between this book and Tolstoy's "War and Peace". I have heard comparisons to Tolstoy's novel made with such regular and ill-founded frequency that I hesitate committing a similar error. In this instance it seems well-justified, even obvious.

Usually the comparison is made for any long book--almost irrespective of merit, it would appear, that deals with war. I am more foolhardy for I predicate my claim not on quantity---the book

which is divided into 4 short stories, is a mere 200 pages---but for its quality.

Obviously the scope is different. The title story, for example, is about a small family on the Italian countryside and a few minor characters on "the other side". But one gets the total impact of the war on this family---all the situations that can occur, do, with almost caricaturish regularity, and the consequent demolition---not only the physical, but the moral demolition as well---for some temporarily, others permanently, of the human by the machine, is demonstrated with great talent. Berto's style is subtle and eloquent.

All these books are part of the DIRECTION SERIES, and may be purchased at $1.50 ea. or by subscription--$4 a year for 4 numbers.

POETS

I look out the window as I read "The Signature of All Things" —I have read these poems many times—and I see that an early snow has caught the cedar trees and the wild thyme, the high brush and stiff dead grass in a fine net. The fog settles heavily on the mountain tops. It occurs to me how like Amerindian poem these poems by Kenneth Rexroth are: the same direct physical approach, and the startling insight; the vivid imagry is native to this country --to the country as the Indians knew it, & not as the despoiling mechanical men do. They sing in regular unrhymed cadences, and pack an emotional wallop; they should be read by an open fire as one is drinking hot spiced white wine. (N. D. 2.50)

"New British Poets" (N. D. $3) frequently has mediocre selections but the preface by its editor, Rexroth, is a vastly entertaining piece of creative criticism.

A MAJOR EVENT—THE REISSUE of *PERSONAE* by *EZRA* This is the finest book of lyrics in half a century, & if we leave it to "the technical kids" it will remain the best for the next several hundred yrs. (The CLEANERS' MANIFESTO is our declaration of war vs the crew of university jingoists & versifing advertisers. "1—We must understand what is really happening. 2—we must be vitally aware of the duration of syllables, of melodic coherance, and of the tone leading of vowels. 3—The function of poetry is to debunk by lucidity.") Hurrah! 1912. Noble shades of the Imagists!

Incidentally, POUND's "Pavannes & Divisions" (1918) is the best critical writing since Sam. T. Coleridge.

We're space short and can merely recommend these books of poems:
Basil Bunting, "Poems: 1950", Cleaners Press, Wash.,D.C.$1.50
Gil Orlowitz, "Concerning Man" Banyan Press, $3.
William Pillin "Theory of Silence", George Yamada, L. A., $1
Richard W Emerson, "Symbol and Reality", Glass Hill Buffalo .60

SOME ENGLISH MAGS

Two English magazines, NOW and HORIZON, both recently deceased, have been replaced by two others of similar character, the anarchist, DELPHIC REVIEW. edited by Albert J. McCarthy, and NINE, edited by Peter Russell. There are some good things in the 3rd number of the latter: by Buddhadeva Bose, "The Writer in Bengal Today" and Russell, "The Poetry of Roy Campbell", and a review of Pound's "Pisan Cantos", an amusing little play extract, 'Saint Spiv" by Ronald Duncan; the poetry, some of which is very good indeed, is by cummings, M. Moore, H. D....Quarterly, $2 yr 50 cents a copy. 114b Queens Gate, London. S.W. 7

The 2nd issue of DELPHIC REVIEW is one of the best mags I've read in years. The editorial is memorable, a sophisticated, yet not altogether despairing desperation; despite this recognition of the perilous state of man, a reiteration that we must "help that part of humanity against the warlike State..." because the "silent revolution", although remote, offers the only chance of our survival "Israel" by Saul Suliman is a magnificent piece of political journalism painstakingly observed, beautifully written, astute and lyrical, it shatters any lingering hopes for Israel. There is an excellent piece of critical writing by C. E. M. Kay, "The Cruelly Compassionate, Notes on the Short Stories of Albert Cossary"—see review above —Poetry by Eithne Wilkins, Charles Fox, Alex Comfort, and Dachine Rainer. Charles Fox had a wonderfully amusing piece on corny poetry, "The Muse in a Bowler Hat" in the 1st issue of this mag. [Both these issues are available from RETORT at .50 each]

I cannot leave the subject of English mags without mentioning FDARTS or FTADRS etc. as it is variously entitled. A small mag, a mimeographed 12 pp. it is marvelously funny. It always seems to come when we need it most, and is good enough to read aloud. The "egoteurs" who bear the improbable names of Charlatan and Picklewit are masterful parodists and satirists. Their "Pertry Bubblement Jamboree Euphoria" featured Roy Duller, Dai Gression, Louis Atleast, Marianne Bore...Last issue featured "The Hadley Chase... the outstanding jittery event of 1950" Wild humor, the philistines

are undone. Publ. in Eng. (where, egos?) at some shrine?

DACHINE RAINER

PRISON ETIQUETTE: The Convict's Compendium of Useful Information. RETORT PRESS. $2.50.

PRISON ETIQUETTE is an anthology of essays, poems, & a story, by violators of the selective service act who served prison sentences during the last war. Altho it purports to be by 'The Inmates' it is noteworthy that there are no selections by violators of any other laws. Thus we have here a view of the federal prisons by certain highly atypical, albeit courageous and articulate, inmates. It contains, however, much valuable material.

The essays by Clif Bennett & James Peck altho spoiled by a smart-aleck tone & american-realist diction, contain much information valuable to the convict seeking to resist prison regulations & generally make trouble for the hacks & wardens. The same is true of the longer excerpt from Lowell Naeve's *A Field of Broken Stones*, but its style & general tone is far superior to the other essays of this sort. Similarly, the shorter excerpt from Naeve's book, included among the poems, is the only thing in that section of any aesthetic value—one wonders why a poet of Miss Rainer's accomplishments wd agree to include pieces of so little worth as the other poems.

The most valuable piece is probably Bernard Phillips "Notes on the Prison Community". It is spoiled by an obvious attempt to parody the language of american academic sociology, but the observations of prison life & indeed "Etiquette", are far more penetrating than those in most of the other essays, whose primary subject-matter is the plight of selective-service violators (particularly "conscientious" ones) in the prisons. Phillips' basic observation of the split between the "rats" (habitual criminals) & the "squarejohns" (one-time or impulsive offenders)—large enough to divide the prison community into 2 distinct collectivities—is not even hinted at elsewhere in this book. However, I was abashed at Phillips' observation that sexual offenders were always to be found among the squarejohns. One cannot but think that a certain bias against such offenses has warped this writer's powers of observation. Nearly all of this reviewer's friends & acquaintances are sexual offenders of one sort or another, but very few of them are apt, if imprisoned, to be found among the squarejohns—the patriots, self-justifiers & up-

holders of conventional morality.

Also, one wonders how to reconcile Phillips' observation that "Depersonalization and equanimity are sought for between inmates. Trouble of any sort can only mean trouble for them" with the enthusiasm recorded by Howard Schoenfeld & other Danbury writers as being shown by non-selective-service inmates for certain strikes & other acts of defiance on the part of draft-evaders. This may be due to a difference in prison personnel between Danbury—a prison given, I suppose unavoidably, undue representation here—& Phillips' place of incarceration.

In many ways the most refreshing piece is Jack Hewelike's letter at the end of the anthology. I am completely in accord with him when he says "...the basic issue is individual evasion of service to the state and not what public opinion considers 'conscientious'. The most genuine protests were against imprisonment itself (and the whole coercive apparatus of which prisons are a part.) My own observation convinces me that these protests are constantly being made by inconspicuous prisoners branded as 'criminals' who have no civil liberty groups or clergymen to publicize their feelings, and who, accordingly, bring upon themselves the full measure of psycological and sometimes physical sadism which the state has devised to serve its ends. Inadequate and irresponsible as such protests may be, in contrast to the COs' planned actions, carefully toned down so as not to offend certain sections of public opinion, they do reflect a craving for some kind of freedom which, in many cases, is not even expressed in positive terms. The capitalization of 'honesty', 'sincerity' etc., has tended to alienate me from the majority of COs."

Hewelike also offers the only realistic observation on sex in the whole book—that "some sort of sexual outlet" was provided by inmates in all of the 15 or more jails he attended (including the infamous Springfield—for 'mental cases', i.e., extreme recalcitrants—the function of which is "beating down all resistance and crushing all individuality"). One doubts that such a forthright recalcitrant character as Hewelike had much to do with squarejohns.

JACKSON MAC LOW

A new edition of Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" has been published by the 5x8 Press, Saugatuck, Conn. for 35c.