

RESISTANCE



Picnic

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Reforms and Emancipation

The supreme evil of the color-caste system is the hideously self-distorting mirror which blights the lives of the millions of men, women and children who must live with it constantly before their eyes: the crushing image of oneself as less-than-human which the society imposes and no Negro can wholly escape. More even than a "justice" which railroads black men to prison, or an economic discrimination which frustrates the effort to rise from squalor, this violence to human personality is the true barbarity of caste.

This is why each "step forward" is a battle necessary to ultimate victory, but an impossible resting place, and why a new freezing of the present status quo would be a total disaster.

The attitude toward Negroes emerging now in America is one of toleration rather than acceptance as equals; of sufferance because of democratic duty and legal obligation rather than genuine unconcern for color. For American Jews, the status now slowly being conceded to Negroes would signify a return to the ghetto: the freezing of such a status quo would be a disaster. And many tomorrows will pass before Southern courts will (even) begin to dispense equal justice, before the spirit of mob will follow the lynch-mob to oblivion, before the tabu on "intermarriage" will fall and with it the possibility of a new descent to servility.

But these reservations, these looks behind the front pages of progress, do not alter the fact that finally the time can be anticipated when the insult of caste will not be added to the injuries we suffer in common. In the last decade, patterns of persecution that had endured nearly intact since the days of Reconstruction have at last been modified and in some cases wiped away; certainly there is no need to make lists to show that the status of Negroes in industry is more nearly equal, that extra-legal lynching has faded out, that there is fraternizing in the armed forces, that the pattern of segregation in education is gradually being broken up, that Hollywood has changed its stereotype. One does not applaud heartily when, centuries belated, justice finally limps and totters onto the stage; but one does not boo and hiss either, unless one of the public connivers of the long procrastination comes out to take a bow as the stage-manager of progress.

* * *

America's feeble idealistic traditions have withered nearly all away, and the men of the post-idealistic generations would like to believe that the system can gradually be tinkered into reasonable perfection, as men of their modest horizons measure it. Their own shame, and the Communists' exploitive focus on American racism, have led them to believe that this is the "test" of America—as if the empire, and the common status of Americans, did not matter! The nation—the comforting story goes—has outgrown the follies of its

youth, the steady increment of wisdom and self-awareness has burst the shell, the interests vested in the old order resignedly give way to the national wisdom incarnate in the State. The Emancipation Proclamation is fulfilled.

The "men of good will" are pleased to find apparent confirmation of their faith that the State is, in the long run, a repository of justice where their troubles may be carried and their cares laid down. There is much self-congratulation. . . .

* * *

There is no question that the influence of the federal government has been—in these last years, we must not forget to add—preponderantly on the side of "racial progress." To all appearances, this is primarily a reform by law, by judicial-legislative-executive process: the suppression of the racist mores by governmental coercion.

Are we to conclude that the role of the State in society is a benevolent one? Should libertarians co-operate with the State in what is manifestly a good "reform"? Can we work effectively in behalf of this reform, if we do not? Are there alternatives to propose to those who are using government and domestic power-politics to defeat racism?

* * *

We may appear to caricature the believers in the "welfare State" in ascribing to them an absolute trust in the State, for certainly they are aware that the State (in Russia) can be synonymous with terrorism. Their actions are, however, founded on trust that the American State has different dynamics than the Russian; and in practice the trust is absolute because they frankly assume that the urgent social problems are collective, that they can be solved only through the agent of the whole collectivity, the government, and that citizens of a democracy can only hope that the liberal influence will be the dominant one. If the State betrays them,

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they are undone: they might turn against it—for they are not really State-idealists—but they will do so quite impotently, having scorned the anti-collectivist ways of action.

The point of the anarchists' abstraction "the State," signifying something more than "government," is that the actions of government are not the result merely of the interplay of forces within the society, including the enlightened and liberal; they are the result also, and especially, of the independent, objective necessities of the institution as a power-entity and as the nation's self-appointed agent in dealing with the rest of the world. As the government acquires a greater role in society, and as its war-making function becomes more prominent, these objective laws, independent of the will of particular groups, come more and more to determine its actions.

Applying the anarchist theory to the present case, the facts to note are the following: that the first significant intervention of government in race relations (FEPC) coincided with the total mobilization of the American economy, for the first time in history, in the war of 1941-1945; that in a society where all manpower may be needed at any moment to carry on a war, race riots are a menace to the government; that the projection of racist patterns into a mass conscript army is wasteful of manpower and destructive of morale; that in the struggle for the allegiance of the populations on the borders of the empire, American racism has been an asset to Russia.

In emphasizing these facts, these interests of government, we do not mean to write off the idealism and domestic-political "empiricism" of the New Deal-Fair Dealers; or the influence of shifts in population and the economy, the Negro migration to the cities, the rise of a Negro middle class, and such factors; or the militant actions of Negroes; or the myriad educational and community actions that have affected people's thinking; by no means. We mean merely to point to the definite stake, as a world power and warring power, that the American government has in modifying the racist institutions—to suggest that benevolence is not what characterizes its role, and that what we should expect from the State more and more is what its war-making role dictates, which is not likely to be very often of a beneficial nature. (The argument must be left in this theoretical form, because proof of it would require close examination of the public utterances of the powerful individuals who have influenced the government's actions, which we cannot do here, but which would be interesting for someone to attempt.)

* * *

Although fortuitously or self-interestedly, the government is in fact one of the prime instruments of racial reform: perhaps no other events have been so significant as the abolition of segregation in the armed forces and the Supreme Court's preliminary decision on public school segregation. Should we, therefore, as persons deeply concerned, throw our energies into pressure upon the government to extend its attack on the Jim Crow system? Should we have supported FEPC, the legal and lobbying efforts of the Negro organizations, the campaign against armed forces' segregation—and should we support the continuing and analogous moves?

The reason why anarchists object to legal-political methods, and point to and propose alternatives, is that we refuse to isolate the color-caste question from the rest of our problems. We want *this* emancipation, but we also want a *general* emancipation, and the means by which the emancipation of Negroes is fought for will affect the fate of the general struggle, just as does the way we address any problem, day by day, in society.

To Negroes, the status of white American may look glorious but we need only ask the obvious questions:

Racial segregation in the schools may end, but when will compulsory education, with its compulsory indoctrination and caricature of education come to an end? The army is no longer segregated, but when will the government abolish conscription? Negroes have access to jobs from which they were excluded, but when will our industries pass from the hands of corporations to the hands of the workers?

One could go on asking these questions, which to ask is to answer. These are the type of change which cannot be the subject of reform, only of revolution, and the fate of this revolution is decided in our handling of every problem today. To put it sharply: Negroes are not, by the present "race revolution," becoming human, they are merely becoming American like the rest of us, and for them to rise to humanity it is necessary for all of us to rise to humanity, beginning now.

The central equation of the anarchist idea of integral emancipation is this: power, expressed in government, corporations, bureaucracy, tends to isolate the individual, to render him powerless and deprive him of the opportunity for growth, while the magnification of the collectivity and depletion of the individual are expressed in imperialism and wars. To the complex of power and social atomization and war, we see as the only alternative the development among individuals of habits of freedom and sociality, and the ultimate expression of these in a free society.

The tendency of present-day liberal and so-called radical thinking is to abandon all hope for such a way of life, and to abandon the practice of it now, and to pray that the State and the social institutions founded upon its model can be domesticated and harnessed. Extrapolated to its ideal, this is man-protected and not man-alive; extrapolated in its present tendencies, it is man-soldier.

Since reform movements are generally dominated by the State-hopeful persons, the criticisms of anarchists often make us appear to be enemies of *all reform*: we are enemies of reform which strengthens the State, of *methods* of reform which strengthen the State, and advocates of methods which will give habits of sociality and freedom a rooting in our society.

Now, such liberating, libertarian methods are available.

* * *

It may appear extreme to see evil in the use of government to secure racial reform. Let us specify the evil. The characteristic of all governmental action against racism is to employ the threat of punishment against individuals, corporations, etc., who "discriminate," segregate and the like. In addition to its role in individual cases, the government appears as *total* defender of

"civil rights," as placing its prestige against racial persecution. In short, the persecution yields because of the habit of docility to government. (To be more exact: the interest in continuing the patterns of persecution has lessened enough for the habit of docility to be effective: as the Supreme Court decision on the schools wouldn't have been taken seriously in the South 20 years ago.) Similarly, the methods by which governmental intervention is petitioned—lobbying, offers of votes, appeals to police and courts—have the effect of re-inforcing trust in the ultimate righteousness of government, and often of committing oneself to support it. (This was true even of the militant campaign for draft-refusal against Jim Crow in 1948, as well as of the polite campaign that had preceded it: it implied a willingness to support army and government if the demand was granted, and must have had the effect of popularizing the reformed army.)

We do not insist that the "re-enforcement" provided by this type of reform method is fatal: We are happier to see people engage in almost any effective action, on an issue like this, than do nothing. But the point is that a choice exists, and by contrast to what could be done in a liberating way, the legalistic choices are lamentable.

* * *

The alternative course of action—that is both reforming and liberating—consists of methods like civil disobedience, defiance of laws, initiation of raceless institutions parallel to the Jim Crow, boycott of all-white and all-black institutions and organizations; picketing, boycott and strikes to force equality in employment (which certain unions have conspicuously done); defense of the individual's right to hold and exercise his "prejudices" when they are not harmful to others.

To put it in a more general way: to choose those actions which (1) create patterns of social living in which race is ignored; (2) change people's perception of each other and lead *them* to produce solutions; (3) resist persecution with the *fait accompli* of free acts; (4) coerce monopolies (corporate employers, etc.) to allow free access.

These are methods, within everyone's reach, of attacking racism now. They are, in this one area, to the extent they are employed, the libertarian current in American society, so far as there is one. There was an old way of thinking among radicals, which regarded every reform won as a step toward the future emancipation. There have been enough reforms won for us to know better now. What matters is *how* they are won—the habits of freedom and sociality which people acquire in the course of these immediate struggles, or the habits of docility re-enforced. Even in the case of caste persecution—a reform in itself far more liberating than most—the choice of methods is relevant and critical.

These are methods by which the small number of anarchists and unconscious anarchists make their contribution to the movement against racism, the main bearers of which naturally follow methods appropriate to their vision—or lack of vision—of society. In the future, vastly extended, they are the methods by which evolution-by-free action can be completed in social revolution.

DAVID WIECK

Items & Notes

Freedom, the London anarchist weekly, has issued an appeal for financial help, and the San Francisco Committee for Freedom Press sends us the following communication:

"As a result of *Freedom's* recent appeal for funds, we in San Francisco have formed a committee which will contact the various groups in America in a general appeal. It is our intent to enable those of Freedom Press to continue their good work unencumbered by the difficulties of limited finances.

"To start our campaign here, at a recent meeting this committee collected a sum which has been sent to Freedom Press. It is our wish that others will join us to make this a successful effort.

"Anyone interested in aiding *Freedom* through this crisis can send contributions to:

David Koven
1452 Kansas Street
San Francisco, California

"This group will undertake the responsibility of forwarding the funds to Freedom Press."

Stuart Perkoff reports that only individuals, and no groups, responded to his communication in the June *Resistance*, and the idea of an intra-anarchist bulletin has been dropped. *Resistance* will be glad to print any announcements of activity, communications in regard to formation of groups, etc., so far as a bi-monthly can be of service. Occasionally we receive letters asking to be put in touch with other anarchists, or other readers of *Resistance*; or inquiring about forming groups. We do not give *any* name of *any* reader to *anyone* without the explicit consent of that reader; if permission is given, we are willing to try to bring about such contacts.

There was a small and inadequate response to the proposal in the April issue for forming in N. Y. C. a group for study and discussion of anarchist and related ideas. Once again, any persons interested in participating in such a group should write to *Resistance*.

N. Y. readers may be interested in attending the Libertarian Forum held on Friday nights at SIA hall (813 Broadway, between 11th and 12th Sts.)

CNT (Toulouse, France) of July 11 carries the news that *Solidaridad Obrera* has resumed clandestine publication in Catalonia. As reported in the October '53 *Resistance*, the printing press of the organ of the underground CNT had been discovered and seized by the Franco police. The money to buy a new press, and re-establish the paper, was raised by an international campaign.

The second annual "International Anarchist Camp" is being held this summer (July 1st through August 31st) in the province of Livorno in Italy. The camp affords comrades, sympathizers and their families, from many parts of Italy as well as other countries, an opportunity for discussions, art exhibits, social activities and the like.

Heart Attack

by Robert Stock

To swell my heart at cardinal points
I'll swallow images of saints,
burdens from all conflicting whiles
and ways of avoiding flame and stiles.
The heart enlarged by inquietation
is better ordained into compassion,
passion toward at least one person,
someone wasting away hereby,
all ages containing, native in none,
even yielding up as I.
A sacrifice's unfired sun
would scarcely ripen what was won
and in a field contagious sown.
Heart, unknown now, you held
your shield once serried among gods
and beat no faster than a bone.

1953

by John McManis

Sick at mid-century from maladies
Past cure, I sat up as a June night died,
Snuggled in fear's cocoon, while hooded seas
Of darkness lapped my door. When I had shied
From thoughts of death, from night's malicious
qualm,
To dogwatch benzedrine-and-coffee warm,
I walked the breakfast streets with glance uncalm,
Guttering pulse, and watched men's faces swarm,
Climbing from basements up to baser dreams
Than any child could make. The morning reeled.
Seeing the shadows of my people sealed
In their own darkness, lashed by their own
schemes,

I blessed the horror of that sun: not I
But they moved sick under their crawling sky.

Poem

by M. C. Richards

Hands:

birds.

Water and Fire

by Jackson Mac Low

Once there was a flood of images,
And once, blue luminant, a stream of reason.
Now no spring trickles through the droughty
season.
All crumbles to a dust of instances.
Invisible fires flare lower and less.
These violet fires made the whole cohere.
Disjecta membra darker fires sear.
Is it a world these languid flames caress?
An acrid powder. Imprecisely blue
Deluges, invisible azure fire,
Return, re-inhabit and re-knit
White siftings. Angular wind, permit
Coalescence: sharp wing, fan a phoenix-pyre
Tho black flames seek an absent residue.

To Poetize = To Condense

The Zebra Storyteller

by Spencer Holst

Once upon a time there was a Siamese cat
who pretended to be a Lion and spoke inappropriate Zebraic.

That language is whinnied by the race of
striped horses in Africa.

Here now: an innocent zebra is walking in
a jungle and approaching from another direction
is the little cat; they meet.

"Hello there!" says the Siamese cat in perfectly pronounced Zebraic, "It certainly is a pleasant day, isn't it. The sun is shining, the birds are singing, isn't the world a lovely place to live today!"

The zebra is so astonished at hearing a Siamese cat speaking like a zebra, why—he's just fit to be tied.

So the little cat quickly ties him up, kills him, and drags the better parts of the carcass back to his den.

The cat successfully hunted zebras many months in this manner, dining on filet mignon of zebra every night, and from the better hides he made bow neckties and wide belts after the fashion of the decadent princes of the Siamese court.

He began boasting to his friends he was a lion, and he gave them as proof, the fact that he hunted zebras.

The delicate noses of the zebras told them there was really no lion in the neighborhood. The zebra deaths caused many to avoid the region. Superstitious, they decided the woods were haunted by the ghost of a lion.

One day the storyteller of the zebras was ambling, and through his mind ran plots for stories to amuse the other zebras, when suddenly his eyes brightened, and he said, "That's it! I'll tell a story about a Siamese cat who learns to speak our language! What an idea! That'll make 'em laugh!"

Just then the Siamese cat appeared before him, and said, "Hello there! Pleasant day today, isn't it?"

The storyteller zebra wasn't fit to be tied at hearing this at all, because he'd been thinking about that very thing.

He took a good look at the cat, and he didn't know why, but there was something about his looks he didn't like, so he kicked him with a hoof and killed him.

That is the function of the storyteller.

3 Hokku

by Ambrose Turner

Unseen, unheard, the
Dragon of the horizon
Swallows his own tail.
*

Indifferent prey,
If only you gave some sign,
Fled or surrendered.
*

Wild, muddy Eros,
What a mess you've made of things,
You and your mother.

The Binefar Collective

a chapter from a study of the
Spanish Revolution of 1936-1939

Binefar is not—the reader will see—our idea of an anarchist community. It was equalitarian and autonomous—but democratic-majoritarian rather than free. As a product of interaction between anarchists and a non-anarchist majority, it illustrates what anarchists can achieve in a revolutionary situation—but what they must find ways to go beyond.—Resistance.

In the province of Huesca, the town of Binefar was beyond doubt the chief center of collectivization. The qualities of its CNT militants had established them as the guides for a district embracing 32 villages, 28 of them wholly or partly collectivized. In Binefar itself, 700 of the 800 peasant families belonged to the Collective.

There had long been a sizable social movement in Binefar, despite the fact that the small local industries—mills, factories, clothing and shoemaking shops, foundries, farm implement repair shops, etc.—employed only a tenth of the 5,000 inhabitants. In the local CNT syndicate most of the members—whose number had risen to 600 in the first years of the 1931 Republic—were peasants. There were economic facts to account for the peasant predominance. In that part of Aragon nature is favorable, and irrigation well planned, but the land was distributed very unequally. Of the 2,000 hectares of productive land, on which hay, sugar beets, vegetables and olives were grown, all but 800 were held by big landowners. Only about 100 of the small owners were able to make a living from their small plots, and the remainder had to work on the lands of the rich.

The syndicate, founded in 1917, had experienced the typical ups and downs: times of relative quiet, then persecution and suppression and imprisonment of militants. When the fascist threat appeared in July, 1936, our forces were still disorganized from the last persecutions. Nevertheless, the CNT-FAI militants rose to meet the danger, and took the initiative in forming a revolutionary committee on July 18th. (The municipal authorities belonged to the Popular Front and did not like fascism, but they were characteristically incapable of action; two Popular Front representatives did serve, however, on the revolutionary committee.) Within two days the barracks where the Civil Guards had retreated in the first fighting were taken by assault, and our victorious comrades departed to help liberate other villages.

The fields of the big land-owners, who fled to Huesca at the first sign of the anti-fascist reaction, had not yet been harvested. The revolutionary committee took possession of the reapers and mowers, and summoned the peasants who had previously worked on these lands as laborers. The peasants decided they would work in the interests of the whole village. To organize the work they formed groups and elected delegates.

Later, after the harvest, industry was socialized, and eventually commerce was included.

The following are the rules the popular assembly of collectivists approved:

Art. 1. The work shall be carried on in groups of 10, each of which shall name its delegate. [Later modified to seven groups of 100 members, each with a delegate.] The delegates shall plan the work, and preserve har-

mony among the producers, and if necessary shall apply the sanctions voted by the assembly.

Art. 2. The delegates shall furnish to the agricultural commission a daily report on the work done.

Art. 3. A central committee, consisting of one member from each branch of production, shall be named by the general assembly of the Community. The committee shall report monthly on consumption and production, and supply news about other Collectives and events in Spain and abroad.

Art. 5. Directors of labor for the Collective shall be elected by the general assembly of collectivists.

Art. 6. Each member shall be given a receipt for the goods he brings to the Collective.

Art. 7. Each member shall have the same rights and duties. They shall not be compelled to join either union [the socialist UGT or anarcho-syndicalist CNT]. All that is required is that they accept completely the decisions of the Collective.

Art. 8. The capital of the Collective is part of the collective patrimony and may not be divided up. Food shall be rationed, a part being stored away against a bad year.

Art. 9. When needed, as for urgent agricultural work, women may be required to work, and they shall do the work assigned to them. Rigorous control shall be applied to ensure that they contribute their productive efforts to the Community.

Art. 10. No one shall work before the age of 15, or do heavy work before 16.

Art. 11. The general assembly shall determine the organization of the Collective, and arrange periodical elections of the administrative commission.

In Binefar the Collective was all-embracing. Despite its past influence and importance, the syndicate had almost no role: life won out over doctrine. There wasn't even really a municipal organization. As the Soviet was the typical organization of the Russian Revolution, so was the Collective the typical organization of the Spanish Revolution.

It was no longer a matter of fighting employers but of assuring production, and this meant planning and direction and calculation of local needs and exchange needs. Production and enjoyment of goods, labor and distribution of products, are inseparably connected; and they are influenced too by the method of distribution, the moral ideas behind it. Everything is linked as the gears in a machine. In Binefar industry and agriculture had a joint treasury, there was no spirit of craft-separatism, no rivalry, no disparity of wages.

An administrative commission, composed of a president, a treasurer, a secretary and two councillors, supervised all activities and kept daily records. The work-group delegates were in constant touch with two comrades assigned to general supervision of work. Specialized sections—metallurgists, masons, laborers, etc.—met individually to take up their particular problems. These

groups, or their delegates, met with the administrative commission as was necessary. Industrial production was unified, with all men's clothes, all shoes, etc., henceforth being made in one shop.

In case of need the peasants' section could call upon industrial workers, including technicians, to work in the fields, and in the July, 1937, harvest, when labor was short because of war mobilization and it was necessary to save the wheat, the clothing workers took part. As the rules stated, the women comrades were called to help on the farms. There were lists of married and of single women; the former, particularly mothers, were seldom called, while the young women were called in turn by announcement of the town-crier on the preceding evening. To plant the beets, groups of young girls gathered at five in the morning and went off singing. Some would have preferred to stay home but they could do so only if they had old people or very young children to look after.

Each day the delegates of the various farm and industrial groups noted his presence at work in each worker's booklet. In this way control was exercised over everyone, and violations could not be repeated without calling down open public disapproval, or the necessary disciplinary measures.

Food and other goods were distributed in municipal stores. There were wine, bread and oil cooperatives, one for dry goods, three dairy stores, three butcher shops, a hardware store and a furniture store.

Bread, oil, medical care and housing were free. Everything else was bought with wages in local currency. In Binefar, as in many other Communes, the wage scale varied with the number of persons in the family, on the principle that cost per head was less in larger families. In Binefar the scale was 24 pesetas a week for a single person, 30 plus 3 for every child over 10 years old for a married couple. A household of three adults, one able to work, plus two children, got 45 pesetas; the maximum was 70 pesetas for a family of 11. The value of the local money did not fluctuate, as it did in other Communes, with the value of the official peseta.

Previously the average wage had been 7 pesetas a day, or 42 a week, but there were always months of unemployment, especially in winter, and only the hired hands had lived half-way decently. Now bread, oil, medical care and rent did not have to be paid for, each person had a piece of land to raise whatever food he wanted to; and electricity and telephones were installed throughout the region.

As the capital of its district, Binefar centralized trade among its 32 villages. Each informed the office of commerce what surplus food it had. From October to December, 1936, 5 millions pesetas worth of goods were exchanged with other Collectives in Aragon and Catalonia, including 800 thousand pesetas of sugar and 700 thousand of oil.

These figures are somewhat misleading, because meat was very short in Binefar, and sometimes potatoes were also. For this the war, and not the Collective was to blame. The district was extremely generous. Abandoned by the Government, the militiamen lacked food. Binefar gave everything it could, sending 30 to 40 tons of food to the front every week. On one occasion the district gave Madrid 340 tons, in addition to the regular consignments. In a single day, 36 thousand pesetas of oil were sent to the Ortiz, Durruti and Ascaso columns. The generosity of the Collective did not flag.

In June, 1937, I attended a district congress where a grave problem had come up. The harvest was at hand, sacks, wire, gas and machinery were needed to distribute among the villages, and they would cost hundreds of thousands of pesetas that the Collectives did not have. It seemed that the only way to get the money was to sell the foodstuffs normally donated to the soldiers. Either lose a good part of the crop, or else not send the free food. The assembly chose unanimously to try to find another solution. They sent a delegation to the Government in Valencia. This effort was foredoomed: the abandonment of the combatants on the Aragon front was a calculated plan of the cabinet majority (Largo Caballero was in power at the time) who hoped that in desperation the militiamen would sack the Collectives.

The machinations of the reactionaries fell through. *Solidaridad Obrera* of Barcelona published an appeal to the militiamen, advising them of the situation and asking them to send part of their pay to help the peasants. Hundreds of thousands of pesetas were sent to the Collectives, and the harvest was saved.

Though the planting of grain, for example, was increased by 30 per cent, the shortage of some products is not surprising, considering the large number of men mobilized, and the 500 militiamen quartered permanently in Binefar and provisioned by the town.

Solidarity extended to other phases of life. One local doctor had belonged to the CNT, and he was able to persuade the majority of his colleagues in Aragon to go along with him. He put himself at the disposal of the population. The town pharmacy was socialized. A hospital, paid for and maintained by gifts in food and money, was built for the district and equipped with the essentials. Some 40 beds had been installed when I was there. An excellent Catalan surgeon came to help out. They were building a pavillion for general medicine, and one for prevention and hygiene where there were to be pediatric and venereal disease sections. Gynecology was a subject of great interest: till then, births had been attended by women who lacked the technical means for difficult cases. Among his comrades in other Communes, the Catalan surgeon initiated a campaign to have women sent to the hospital when about to give birth, to safeguard the health of mother and child.

The organization of the hospital was, to be sure, the work of the two doctors who dedicated such enthusiasm to it; but it was also the creation of the Collective which took the initiative and supported it financially. Militiamen were cared for the same as civilians—everything was free. The spirit of solidarity extended beyond the district, and sick people came from all over. There was, in addition, a consultation service which handled some 25 patients daily.

The minority of small land-owners who chose to work their own lands were not hindered. None, however, was allowed to own more land than he could work. Like the rest, the individualists had a booklet which recorded their receipts and contributions and how much they were still entitled to purchase. On a large number of articles, there were limits to consumption. In the assembly the individualists discussed the problem of rationing on an equal basis with the collectivists, and thereby convinced themselves that the limits set by the food commission were not invented for their annoyance but were the general rule.

I do not say there were no exceptions to the general spirit of the Collective. I remember a dispute between a

woman of 50 and a comrade assigned to control labor and housing. She lived with her husband, their son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. "My daughter-in-law and I can't get along. I want to live separately!" This comrade had the soul of a child, a voice of thunder, and the heart of a lion. He argued his best to persuade her to give up her demand. Finally she left. I asked the delegate why he had refused. He told me that, since the rate of pay diminished as the number in the family increased, some families in which material interest predominated agreed on a feigned separation in order to

PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION:

The French Anarchist Movement

In the French movement—or, to be exact, in the important segment associated with the French Anarchist Federation—many of the young people who played a very active part in the post-war period were motivated chiefly by negative concerns: particularly, their unwillingness to put up with the discipline the already existing parties imposed. These young people didn't see much worth in the deep unchanging impulses which have been the heart of anarchism. Of the basic anarchist ideas, they assimilated—and badly—only those which seemed somehow to jibe with their passion to lead a political army. Living in a time when authoritarian ideas were ascendant everywhere, they believed—and no doubt many believed it sincerely—that the strength of the movement, and the influence of its ideas on society, depended on its achieving organizational and ideological unity. So they tried to organize the French anarchists, except those who chose to remain in groups outside the FAF, into a centralized structure in which the ideas of a single person, or small group, could prevail. This organization had to be provided also—naturally—with a disciplinary machinery able to assure the absolute fidelity of the members and the exclusion of non-conformists. For anarchism, which demands room to breathe, the broadest possible horizons, and the rejection of fixed structures, all this was the ultimate absurdity.

One more example, really, of the typical Communist splinter-group: Absolutely, they say, the proletariat must be led by a party, but this party must be led by me—or us—as the vanguard Elite.

In this case the elite was very small. To make their will and plans prevail, they took possession of the responsible jobs in the central organization, and gradually transformed these into posts of command. They gained absolute control of the editorial and business management of the newspaper and internal bulletin—of the means, that is, for "tending the souls" of the militants, of domesticating them, of giving them pre-deformed information about events in the FAF, of pushing them into that ideological unity around a new Catechism which was said to be the only way to save the unity and cohesion of the organization. So powerful did this intolerance and sectarianism become, that everybody who disagreed with the tactics and ideology of Quai de Valmy had to go. Those who tried to resist were expelled. All this, to repeat, is the usual story of the political sect, of the Bordighist and Trotskyist

get more income. The case had already been looked into. In the circumstances, the shortage of houses made it out of the question.

The incident was minor, but there were others like it. The directors of the Collective had to face up to all these troubles, to touch-and-go food problems, to the anti-collectivist minority (UGT, Communist, etc.). It is impossible not to admire these men who gave themselves to the cause with abnegation, and knew how to get so much done in a short time and the best way.

GASTON LEVAL

groups and the like. So that finally there was really nothing strange in the decision to change the name of the FAF to the Libertarian Communist Federation (FCL) and in the explicit repudiation of the word "anarchism" in its official organ.

From the premise that *Le Libertaire* was aimed at a non-anarchist public, they had deduced, logically and absurdly, that criticism and challenge of its peculiar official viewpoint could not be printed in it. Writings which contradicted the line of the little équipe were not published. The paper became, therefore, more and more *political* and agitational. Elementary anarchist ideas, such as the need for diversity of opinions and activities, disappeared and were supplanted by propaganda campaigns accompanied by vigorous drum-beating, based on rhetorical slogans, and intended to make people stand up and yell and not to make them think. Exactly the wrong way around. More and more openly, the paper has sought to implant the idea that between the Communist Party's ideology and anarchist ideas there is more affinity than difference, and that divergence in action has been due to human errors and not to differences in theory. Thus the "parallel texts"—very carefully selected—from Bakunin and Engels, etc.; culminating in the recent episode of Jean Masson's article on "the meaning of the Djilas affair."

In analyzing Milovan Djilas' expulsion from the Central Committee of the Yugoslav CP, Masson developed the familiar Leninist thesis of the role of the vanguard party, the revolutionary organization of the masses to wield a dictatorship in the name of the victorious proletariat. One more translation of Lenin into anarchist terms. In this case the protests within the organization itself seem to have been unusually vigorous and numerous, and the incident was closed with an impudent rectification.

This attempt to sell Communist goods among anarchists was so blatant that it couldn't be kept quiet. The CRIA (Commission for International Anarchist Relations) felt obliged to invite the FCL delegate to state his position on Masson's article. *Le Libertaire* then tried to claim that the theses on dictatorship and the party were Tito's and not Masson's: which implied that the heavy thinkers at the Quai de Valmy take all the readers of the paper to be perfect cretins, since one has only to read the article to see that the explanation is utterly absurd.

Another recent incident is one more proof of the sectarian methods and authoritarian purposes of the FCL leaders.

In October, 1953, Fontenis, the little boss of the organization, was invited by the Spanish groups in Paris to present his views on anarchist organization to a meeting of comrades. One member of the audience felt he had to express his disagreement with Fontenis: he felt it a duty, in fact, because he was still a member of the FCL. He said it wasn't right to quote Berneri to justify these Marxist ideas (it's always the same dishonest game: to use Bakunin, Malatesta or Berneri to put over something quite different), and that this kind of distortion of ideas explained why authoritarianism and centralism reigned within the anarchists' organization.

These statements were enough to send Fontenis' critic, together with another comrade who spoke up at the same lecture, before the *Commission de Conflit* (a kind of internal tribunal, or purge commission, of the FCL), which decided for expulsion. Why? Because they had "publicly"—that was not true, since the lecture was in the headquarters of the Spanish organization—criticized the tactical-ideological "line" adopted by the last Congress, a line that responsible members of the organization were obliged to defend whether they agreed with it or not.

From 1950 forward, the bolshevization of the French anarchist organization, by means of intolerance and sectarianism, has progressed steadily and noticeably. Evidence of growing uneasiness in the groups and regional federations has been increasingly present at the annual congresses. The frankly dishonest methods used by the little équipe in its political manoeuvres were becoming known to many militants, despite the efforts to hide and disguise them. The militants began to see that the shadowy doings at the Quai de Valmy were something other than anarchism. Opposition began to develop, until many individuals and even some groups, in Paris and in the provinces, took a stand.

But the thinner the ranks grew (Fontenis' following now seems to be around 250 persons), and the more the circulation of the paper declined (probably 5,000 copies are now printed, many unsold),¹ the more verbally revolutionary has tone of oratory and articles become. Even if—for example—the "third front" campaign, carried on with great furor, has left no trace except in the sensational Jacobin-style headlines of *Libertaire*, in the newspaper files in libraries.

Fontenis' elite guard has itself—it must be said—contributed directly to clearing up the situation. As mentioned, the 1953 Congress of the FAF gave up a word which no longer had any meaning for the leaders of the organization: "anarchist." The FAF designated itself the FCL. Now we have an exact definition of what the little group around Fontenis is. As there are "Catholic Communists," or "internationalist Communists," so in France around Fontenis, holding as gospel the Libertarian Communist Manifesto—a mishmash of a few pages in which all problems and difficulties are disposed of out of hand—there are the "libertarian communists." Now there is no longer even a formal contradiction between the Statutes of the organization, in which the Leninist principles are re-affirmed, and the activities of

¹ At one time, *Le Libertaire* was printing 40,000 copies a week.—Translator's note.

the new "leaders," and the name they have given themselves.

About the work of the group installed in the Quai de Valmy there can no longer be any doubt: they are not working for anarchism but for communism, which means, against anarchism.

At this point the militants who had quit the FAF and had remained apart, and those who had been criticizing the viewpoint and methods of action of the little elite, realized that the only way to deal with the increasingly bolshevik activities of the pseudo-anarchist organization was to re-group themselves and develop their own activity.

On December 25, 26 and 27, 1953, a meeting of opponents of the FCL was held at Paris, and reconstituted the FAF on the basis of clear and honest declarations.

I am not so naive as to base many hopes on the verbal results of a congress. Anyone who has been in the anarchist movement for years, and has taken part in a few congresses, knows the tendency to be satisfied with fine theoretical declarations and to formulate "plans of action" for which means of realization doesn't exist. But the FAF congress of last December, even after minimizing it as much as possible, has meaning and importance.

It is the first attempt on any scale (an Entente Anarchiste had been created among opponents of the FAF at a meeting in Mans in 1952) by militants of frankly differing tendencies to bring back to life the anarchism which, if it is not to contradict itself at the start, must do these things: have absolute faith in liberty, repudiate every expression of the principle of authority within it, and be broad and accepting toward ideas which, though not coming from anarchists, imply desires akin to our own and a direction parallel to our own. These are the characteristics which alone can set our movement apart from the political jungle of our days, from the "left" parties and organizations which are at the service of today's or tomorrow's rulers. This is the only way to free ourselves from the aridity of political action, where we are beforehand condemned to futility, so that we can move forward on the multiple levels—not organizable from a Center—of social, personal and local actions, on the job and with our neighbors, freely and with liberating effects.

The French militants in opposition to the FCL have set to work in the revived FAF. They hope to issue a new publication, and to renew and carry on the spirit and work of Louise Michel, Sébastien Faure and all those who gave themselves to defend and clarify anarchist ideas. We know this won't be easy. In the nearly complete ruin of moral values which authority has brought in our time, anarchism is the last ditch of a radical defense of the remaining vitality, and the beginning of its rebirth. They have to do pioneer work, starting almost from zero (and this is true also for us Italians). Like all pioneer work, it requires clarity and courage, tenacity and uprightness, devotion and sacrifice, and no illusory hope of easy, great, early results.

As I have already mentioned, other groupings within the French movement, but outside the FAF, are active. The existence outside the principal organization of smaller groups, united by affinity of ideas, is characteristic of all anarchist movements. In France there are the groups which publish the papers *Défense de l'homme*, *Contre courant*, *L'Unique*: the first primarily pacifist, the sec-

and more integrally anarchist, the third an expression of a typically French individualist tendency.

We must also mention certain groups in Paris and the provinces which oppose the FCL, but are seeking to draw the conclusions of their experience with the "central," and tend to remain autonomous, that is to belong to no organization but keep in close touch with all. In Paris a noteworthy group is the Kronstadt Group, composed mostly of intelligent young people animated by serious intentions, which may constitute a good promise for the future.

GIOVANNA BERNERI
(*Volontà*, May, 1954)

ON ORGANIZATION: 2

Since Giovanna Berneri's article, the FCL has proceeded (June, 1954) to the farce of a Libertarian Communist International. The following are excerpts from André Prunier's article, "The Anarchist International and its Enemies":

That these conspiracies in the manner of Babeuf or Netchaieff seduced some of the "offended and humiliated" who were willing to become robots for the sake of believing they were "men of iron," one can understand. But all the same we must recall that the Blanquists and Bakuninists, when they resorted to such methods, did so against a hostile environment, and at risk of life: their conspiracy was aimed at a liberticide absolutism, or against the police terror of the bourgeois State, and not against the liberty and equality of a movement which practiced the most complete tolerance of expression.

Once the anarchist principle of independent initiative is discarded, once the "democratic" dictatorship of majorities over minorities is admitted, one must, in order to be "efficient," go the whole way of the authoritarian logic and admit the dictatorship of a single brain over the whole organization.

Not only did the FCL incorporate this unity of thought and action, this ideological monolithism, into its 1953 program, but it has made it a condition for entrance in the Internationale Communiste Libertaire. When I say that the FCL "did" this or that, I am thinking of course of those who speak in its name at the Quai de Valmy, for it is certain that the will of the militants, in France as abroad, has been quite simply ignored.

In reality this is not an International. It is a secret meeting of the Organisation Pensée et Bataille, plus some puppets, held for face-saving reasons, since the OPB lost all hope of controlling the CRIA (Commission de Relations Internationales Anarchistes).

Who was really at this mysterious meeting whose location, composition and decisions *Libertaire* still does not dare state, two weeks after the event, contending itself with declaring that the chief countries of the world were represented and that the ICL will henceforth give each country "direction of the anti-imperialist struggle"?

ON ORGANIZATION: 3

We give this much space to these events in France, not because they are edifying but because the problem of organization is a vexing one, and because the anarchist distrust of political or ideological organizations is not easily understood by persons who have always taken "organization" for granted. The following excerpt from the editorial "Dell'organizzazione" in *L'Adunata dei Refrattari* (New York), June 19, 1954, presents one possible coherent anarchist view:

The main reason for our deep, resolute aversion to the organization of anarchists into a party lies in the history of organization, and particularly of political organization, which has always been a hierarchical, authoritarian institution in which arrivistes at the apex exercise authority over everyone else. It is said that this is authoritarian organization, and that an organization of anarchists would turn out differently. It would . . . except that in three-quarters of a century there has not been a single example of it.

In practice, those anarchists who organize have followed exactly in the tradition of other organizers, creating the organiza-

tion first and the functions to use it for later. Organization without exact and well-defined aims is organization for its own sake—an instrument without a function. The mentality of anarchists being what it is—eagerly desirous of independence, intolerant of dogma, distrustful of power—an organism which sets out to achieve all possible and imaginable goals comes to have a very different meaning for each member. As long as the organization respects everyone's interpretation, it is as if the organization did not exist; and when it requires that someone's interpretation be accepted, the organization becomes authoritarian.

Anarchists have always insisted that the need must create the means to satisfy it, the necessity for the function must create the organ. If they believed organization was needed, they would still never create it except for a precise aim, well-defined beforehand, and explicitly accepted by those who belong. In Italy after the war, the only anarchist activity which prospered, which was widely accepted and supported, was that of aid to the political victims. And it is clear why: this committee answered to a concrete need everyone felt and everyone was interested in. The same may be said of the newspapers, the reviews, the publishing ventures: in each case, temporary or permanent arrangements, according to the circumstances, are agreed to, and the will and energy of many are associated to achieve a single aim.

I don't know if these undertakings can be called organizations; certainly they are not the paternalistic, total, classical party organizations that the "organizing" anarchists want. But they certainly represent an association of energy, in response to a definite need, existing for as long as the individual adherents consider it necessary and opportune. And if they are organizations, they are organizations *sui generis*, as various as the aims they serve, and responding to the changing will of the thinking individuals who create them and keep them alive.

As the writer of these notes sees it, the requisites for active association of anarchists seem to be these: that they be forms of cooperation that satisfy needs felt by all participants, and that the forms be subject to the will of the participants and not impair their liberty. If the aims are varied, such forms can be realized only in limited areas; or they may be realized in the vastest areas, if the aims are limited, precise and well-defined.

To want to create among anarchists a general organization, including everyone and claiming to satisfy all needs, analogous to the political parties and the State-organization the parties aspire to capture and run, is utopian because the anarchists' love of liberty opposes it and because the tendency of a total organization is to become totalitarian.

In Defense of a Sitting Duck

or Dear Dave:

1. I think you were unfair to the Catholic Worker movement, Peacemakers and the Alternative tendency in "From Politics to Social Revolution."¹ In fact, when you write as though they had no concept of social revolution, you write as though you have not read their literature. Recently I have been happy to scatter about the February issue of the CW precisely because the column under the masthead is devoted to their anarchist concept of social revolution. (That I am an atheist is well enough known; I try not to be too defensive about it.) Even Swomley, writing in Fellowship on "post-liberal pacifism," affirms the need for social revolution. What you have done is set up a straw man; great polemical fun, but hardly in touch with the sectarian realities.

2. You write that Militant Pacifism is not a general method of social action but "what some people have to do as a matter of integrity" (emphasis mine). Will the

¹ *Resistance*, April 1954. "Of all radical movements, pacifism is the weakest theoretically, it is a sitting duck."

status quo then be undone by people lacking integrity, or falling short of the integrity the non-violent being develops? As you well know, we are still being visited with the sins of revolutions perpetrated by beings who more or less conscientiously rejected the pacifist standard of integrity.

3. By terming what you call "militant pacifism" as "troublemaking," you tend to overlook its subversive import. Under a Permanent War Economy, widespread boycotting of war work, draft-refusal, tax-refusal and their corollaries would bring the Coca Cola culture crashing to the ground. The American way of life is in want of a wrecking job—it behooves us to "accentuate the negative." It may have a bit in common with nihilism, but considering the pitfalls, obstacles, compromises and indirections that seem to accompany a "positive program" (infra), the way of unarmed disobedience and non-collaboration appears to be the most viable, preserving of principle, and "constructive."

4. You move against the slogan "Wars will cease when men refuse to fight," with the qualification: "only if they re-order the society so as to eliminate the drives to war, the necessity for war." This qualification makes for serious problems of deterministic circularity—chicken-and-egg stuff. It can apply only to those who have not reflected on the interrelation between war and class authoritarian arrangements. If the anarchist intends to re-order society and "abolish war" on behalf of the Great Unthinking, then he is intending to manipulate them. Aside from the ethics of it, this would be a counterfeit social revolution; any people that does not know how to wilfully snatch and secure its own freedom will not know how to maintain it—if, indeed, they have done more than change masters and labels.

The anarchist's interest in re-ordering society is to remove the penalties, punishments and inconveniences that weigh on his refusal to wage war or to be integrated into a war-making system. I submit that there is nothing in any economic, social or political system that can compel any aware, self-governing individual into war against his will.

All talk about "drives to war" and "necessity" is superfluous—except for the Great Unthinking. Need I quote yourself? "Without the idea of the free man, the anarchist idea falls to the ground: because the future society cannot exist, or its beginnings be nurtured, without him. This is the man who thinks . . . who is responsible for his actions. . . ." If the anarchist awaits the re-ordering of society that he may not be "necessitated" to participate in war, then he is manipulating himself, and the whole vicious deterministic circularity of the Qualification becomes manifest. No beginning can be made on a revolutionary reconstruction of society, without persons who are well on the way of revolutionarily reconstructing themselves. Hence the relevance of what you call "militant pacifism" as a general method of social change, as something more than a "propaganda technique" (as you put it). After all, society is but the primary or anonymous interaction of any two or more persons. The anarchist, or whatever, who sits around waiting for "society" to "change" is apt to find himself unchanged when the blessed event transpires or subtly reclothed in the habiliments of an evolving authoritarianism.

Some, especially the lattermost, of the above is probably not your argument, but those deterministic fallacies are inherent in the Qualification and others will be sure to seize on them to the neglect of your "free man" and such like.

5. You would be positive in spelling out areas of action (economics, community, education, etc.) for social revolution. But it is difficult to be "positive" without paying toll to, or genuflecting before, the State. You speak of creating small communities. Are these communities to buy land and hold legal title thereto? The only anarchist basis is to squat and this is hardly a secure basis for founding a community, and the kind of person who would think of "community" is possibly so security-minded that it would never get started on such a basis. Much the same might be said for the school plant or for the co-operative place of work.

In your paragraph on economics, you demonstrate a facility for thinking of work as work, as a thing in itself, but neglect to consider work in terms of the touchstone and common denominator of anarchist philosophies: the State. Without the anarchists' formidable conceptual apparatus, pacifists are much more skilful at divining the relationship between war and employment and income tax. A non-violent revolutionist might point to the need for bootleg economic arrangements to maintain ourselves without maintaining State and war.

You indicate the "vital activity" a teacher might put into a conventional archist school. This rings false because any anarchist worthy of the name either would not get the job—or even preparation for the job—or would get bounced before he had taught very long. What kind of anarchists can salute the flag, give oaths of allegiance, and sing the Star Spangled Banner? I was screened out of teacher training courses at Roosevelt College largely because the education department staff considered me too radical. It is akin to being "subversive" to think that one might attend a job interview wearing Bermuda shorts.

At the top of the column wherein you began "spelling out" areas for socially revolutionary action, you wrote: ". . . the institution [government] can be regarded with no tolerance, the institution has too dangerous a role to permit equivocation." This statement sits ill with the legalitarian accommodations that "community" and "education" can imply.

And that same statement conflicts with another counsel. On page 2 you draw the line against Militant Pacifism that can result in "conscientious citizens spending most of their time in jail," and shun the notion that the destiny of the free man today may lie in prison. Yet on page 5 you write didactically that "He [the free man] lives today as if he were in a sensible society—so far as one can—" I don't know if "so far as one can" is the loophole by which you escape from the jail you flinched from on page 2, for it should be apparent that a man who lives here-now as though he were in a sensible society is a number one candidate for same. The anarchist who conscientiously, prudently, or programmatically stays out of jail may be doing more to uphold the status quo than to undermine it. "So far as one can" can set one on the way to an accommodating relationship to the State—a "right deviation" compared even with "toleration" and "equivocation."

6. You say that the State "dies on the spot." What spot? You might answer that you wanted to denote immediacy, instantaneousness, against the socialistic fallacy of "withering away." But in the next column you write: "As responsibility and initiative and strong primary groups become more common, more elaborate organization becomes possible: finally a free society." On what spot? On the spot where we get economic expropriation, re-organization, independent communal organization, etc.? But this is like the socialist who wants to accomplish everything by organization while remaining secure within the body of the present society, and who gives no attention to the need for working a revolution within himself, for individual-by-individual transformation before meaningful change can even be begun. (Will the status quo be undone by people lacking in integrity?) While you identify the "spot" externally, as re-organization, "militant pacifism" identifies it and cultivates it internally, as the psyche and the manifest behavior flowing therefrom. Law-breaking one-man revolutions are the necessary pre-condition of "re-organization" or social revolution, and until there are more of them, social revolution, your "positive program" will have to wait—or be built out of reformist clay on lawfully possessed soil. Hark back to your own words about faulty revolutionary microcosms foreshadowing disappointing social changes.

I recognize the weight you give to the concept of a "free man." But so far as you move against "militant pacifism" you fail to recognize how urgent is the need for man to cultivate his liberty and freedom out of law-breaking, disobedience, non-collaboration and non-conformity; and the desirability of publicizing such dissent to feed the resistance of others. Revolutionary pacifism is more than "a symbolic gesture of protest."

7. Your point about the fragmentation and de-solidarization of the masses is significant. The solution in your "positive program" is to recoup the lost territory. With me, you seem to share the communist ethic (from each according to ability, to each according to need). But must we always consider the communist mode of anarchy? How about considering some kind of individualism as a means of coping with and resolving the modern situation? Instead of directly wrestling with and opposing, via re-organization, the atomizing devolution of history, might we give a little in order to effect a judo hold and throw it into the individualist mold of anarchy?

8. Semantics: You speak of anarchists' "having politics." If the organized struggle for power (politics) is dependent on a State-structure, and anarchists are opposed to both power and State, how can anarchists have "politics"? As I understand it, anarchists are anti-political.

Or do you use "politics" in the expanded, and possibly condescending, fashion that re-discovers atheists as religionists (therefore dogmatic) and praises agnostics for broadmindedness and wisdom? If so, then Wise and Intelligent people cannot be anarchists, for, as apoliticals (a term correlative with "agnostic") they either would be quiescently unaware that Power and State are socially pathological, or they would not let themselves be bothered with the cares of revolution. It follows that the "total ignoring" of government, which you suggest

as the correct anarchist attitude, cannot suffice to abolish it.

9. What you do with "From Politics to Social Revolution" helps explain why I am a hyphenated breed of anarchist: anarcho-pacifist. The anarchists spend their time talking about what needs to be done and theorizing about "direct action," while pacifists are actually engaged in direct action law-breaking and State-defiance. If I were simply an unhyphenated "anarchist," I imagine I would be but a sterile, sterilized non-doing theoreticker. G. Woodcock in Freedom (Vol. 15, No. 17) speaks of echte, reinische dogmatickers driving Ammon Hennacy into the arms of the Mother Church. And it is with pleasure that I quote G. W. from the same number:

And I cannot help feeling that, instead of sniping at the Catholic Worker, as Freedom very undignifiedly did a couple of years back, it would be better if anarchists were to realize that one of the reasons for the comeback of the church is that everywhere Catholic priests and laymen are getting on with the mutual aid jobs, and doing all the things which anarchists should be doing. . . . What Catholics, with the limitations of the church, can do well in the way of mutual aid, there is no reason in the world why Anarchists as free men should not do better. (Emphasis mine—J. S.)

I hope that these hair-splittings can be of some value to readers of Resistance.

JOFFRE STEWART

In Reply:

Some Remarks on "the Free Man"

From reasons having to do, I suppose, with temperament, personal ways of life, and pleasure in abstraction—not to mention a tendency probably inherent in a philosophy like anarchism to hunt down the essence, the timeless—writings published in Resistance tend to be of a particular kind: which may be defined by contrast to what we ask for in our occasional, what must appear to be pious, suggestions that readers share through these pages their relevant experiences in such situations as schools, communities, the labor movement, to mention diverse enough matters. Perhaps some of these can be followed up?—

As to particular points:

1. "The straw man of Militant Pacifism." I'm quite aware that many pacifists "believe in" and "affirm" social revolution—but in terms of foggy analogies to India or a non-violent '76, and with no suspicion of the critical problem of attitudes toward government and power, or of the need to complete resistance, be it violent or non-violent, with a social revolution in which attitudes toward power are fateful. This is a definition of pacifism so far as it is merely pacifism: obviously a person can both reject violence and be an anarchist (for example).

2. "Integrity." It's probably through a misunderstanding of the non-self-defining phrase "free man" that Joffre likes it and then is shocked by this abstract individual's timidity and apparent inconsistency. Joffre would use this phrase, I am sure, to mean "a person who refuses to co-operate with injustice wherever he encounters it." Since there is only a limited supply of such phrases as "the free man," I'd prefer to use it in a wider sense that would define the anarchist's concern in a more humanly complete way, and in a way that emphasizes the present fulfillment of the revolutionist as person rather than the person as revolutionist; and therefore I describe him as "thinking, initiating, assuming responsibility, etc." and so far as he is a free man inventing appropriate actions with respect to the injustice he en-

counters. Such an ethics-beyond-morality means that one person's integrity is not necessarily another's; "how one would behave in a sensible society," or "so far as one can," would have to be interpreted—one would hope well—by each man and woman. One draws a line—here I agree with Joffre against a certain verbally clever opportunism—but each draws his own, and the exact location is a trivial matter. If a man does not resist, invents nothing, draws no lines, but talks smoothly—this is sad. But if a man who resists does so from guilt-driven consistency, and not with his whole being, I do not think he will move any mountains, and these are truly what have to be moved.

3. As I stated in "From Politics to Social Revolution," "there is a need for trouble-makers"; one can't possibly act in a radical fashion without being a bit of one. But at this late day to look forward hopefully to a smash-up of the status quo is not even romantic; it's either stone-blindness or a point of view that has backed itself into a corner and is desperately seeking to make a virtue of it. That people must eat is the trouble, and the reason why, in industrial society, lacunae in social organization cannot endure. If the people aren't ready to create free social organizations, they will submit, as they always have, to the first tyrant who restores order and the food supply. Malatesta has many fine passages, unfortunately not in English, to illustrate why reconstruction must keep pace with demolition-abolition (by which he meant, it may be worthwhile to add, not prefabrication of the revolutionary institutions, but preparedness and opportunity to tackle the problems). In the present period of national demagoguery, too, superficial and negative propaganda can have quite other results than are intended.

4. The "qualification." This was made, as the context shows, chiefly to point out that abolition of war is not a "reform" that the government can grant in order to be done with the disturbance. Because it is a revolutionary objective that governments will, for the sake of their self-preservation, fight to the end, the negative method of civil disobedience ("men refuse to fight") is not enough. (So the Russians "refused to fight" in 1917, and the war with Germany ended; but the new government brought new wars.)

Joffre sees lurking in this "qualification" those lame and despicable excuses "I merely obeyed orders," "If I don't somebody else will." No. I quite agree that each person has the power to—and I think should—withdraw himself from the war and the rest. But one man's withdrawal plainly does not stop the war, which is a social fact (i. e., involving millions of persons). If one may be impatient futuristically, I am not happy about waiting for the whole population to mature to the heroic stature Joffre seems to demand. The anarchists' traditional alternative is the hope that the Great Unthinking, in a moment of lucidity, inspired but not manipulated or led by those who have already been thinking, will perceive their potentialities, grasp the possible freedom, and create social relationships where the present inducements to docility, manipulated hysteria, irrationality, will disappear.

5. "Positivism" and genuflection. I don't want to minimize the difficulty of positive action within a society intolerant toward conscious non-conformity and revolutionary purpose, and increasingly irascible toward people who call a spade a spade and an informer a stool-pigeon. Radicals have as a kind of habit embellished their criticisms of the status quo with promises that things are getting worse, and by and large things have, most conspicuously in the disappearance in the general population of any concern or immediate capacity to understand the sort of problems radicals raise, to say nothing about the kind of solutions we suggest. But still it is not my impression that our individual lives are brimful of restrictions and demands, even though one may at any moment, so to speak, run right into a concrete wall and find himself surrounded by bars. Perhaps this more hopeful view springs from not finding it fruitful to worry that my rent pays the landlord's taxes; or from seeing no way to escape, in other than token fashion, the war-contributing system without abandoning all intercourse with the cash economy and general market, something that doesn't seem very fruitful either.

Obviously one can teach in this school and not in that; and "that" is the great majority of the cases. In general I would say: wherever you draw the line at "compromise," experiment within the remaining area and see what you can do. (If you don't have a line, by all means find out why.) The prospects are not those of security, which is more degrading than many other things; but

these are the losing battles that are glorious and leave their mark, supposing they are losing.

Just to clarify "so far as one can" a little more: If there are not things a man would suffer death, or imprisonment forever, rather than do—or abstain from doing—then he is either very young or not much of a man. But in most of one's day to day life-encounters with injustice and evil, it would seem awkward to try to introduce such measures of action, and concepts like efficacy from a social revolutionary standpoint, and congruity with one's present life and growth, would seem more relevant.

6. Joffre's web-weaving around "the spot" seemed intended to ask: Is it not more valuable to regard "the revolution" as consisting of each individual's repudiation of the State, than as a kind of popular, collective action? Perhaps it is not unreasonable to say that the revolution is located still more accurately, if one wants to be figurative, in the changing interpersonal relations I referred to in the quotation about gradually unfolding social feelings; before death there is decay, even if rapid, and before birth gestation. But there remains the perhaps too prosaic problem of moving from one form of society to another; and while I think it is one of the great insights of anarchism to see that this must occur in a localistic, autonomous fashion, if it is not to be coercive and self-defeating, I do not see how to avoid regarding it as an interpersonal, in the best sense collective, problem.

7. On the basis of the article in question, the French individualist paper L'Unique identified me as an "individualist," and so far as these classical distinctions seem relevant, it is probably not incorrect. But they don't seem very relevant to me. The general drift of Resistance, I would guess, is to abandon the sterile polemics between the philosophies of rigidly isolated individualism and of rigidly social collectivism; and to think of free individuals in community relations of their own creation and continual revision. To abstract the Individual or the Society is to facilitate certain philosophizing and certain other practical misunderstandings. It seems to me that the Armandist individualists, if the adjective is permissible, recognize fully that there is no real alternative to the choice between the free community and the bureaucracy: for their "egocentric" individual could not possibly be more concerned with the quality of his relations with comrades, friends, co-workers, companions.

8. "Politics." It's probably not wise to use a key word in quite distinct senses, but the context should make clear where I meant (a) politics as the power-goings-on and (b) politics as general ideas of community living and the theory and practice of social change. In the first sense anarchism is clearly and unashamedly anti-political (compared with the socialist movements); in the latter sense political, compared with trade unionism, certain kinds of pacifism, etc.

9. I find it hard to believe that Joffre's activism results from his negation of violence—which is all the addition of the adjective "pacifist" signifies. Anarchists are everything from "theoretickers" to militants and activists. No doubt anarchism offers certain possibilities as a sophisticated banner for a radical in retreat; how can this not be, when one is determined to have no illusions and the non-illusional facts are very grim? To be a pacifist, say, or to engage in different lines of action than a particular anarchist group or publication practices or advocates, certainly does not exclude anyone from the anarchist movement. If it is not a broad fraternity of anarchists of many opinions, it is not a very vital movement. This is why the gradual disappearance of hyphenation among anarchists—I believe it is the case—is a happy thing, emphasizing our faith that the various "tendencies" are striving sincerely in their unique ways for the common goals and our hope that each is working with a unique truth.

I do not see that fraternity is abetted by silence, the only intention I can see, in the context of discussion of ideas, to Joffre's citation of Woodcock re Hennacy. As to Woodcock's remarks about the example of mutual aid set by Catholics, I am frankly puzzled how American anarchists could possibly translate the Abbé Pierre into any action possible here, and being so puzzled I find it hard to have any opinion about it. But the last thing I detect is any kinship between Joffre's suggestion for action, and any sort of adaptation of Abbé Pierre that I can think of.

D. W.

Books

Individualism Reconsidered, by David Riesman. Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois. \$6.00.

Individualism Reconsidered is a large and somewhat diffuse collection of essays and lectures which have been produced over a number of years by the sociologist David Riesman, author of *The Lonely Crowd*. It is something of a mine of observation and information on contemporary American attitudes, and Riesman discourses on many aspects of minority problems, of individualism, of popular culture and of sociological techniques. Some essays, like that on *Football in America*, were fascinating to me, as a man with European background, for the curious insights they revealed into American socialised leisure. And there are four chapters reassessing the social aspects of Freud's ideas which would in themselves make a valuable book for those who, while recognizing the authoritarian elements in the work of that pioneer psychoanalyst, still remember that his influence was largely a liberating one. Two sentences from Riesman seem to me to provide as good a summary of the positive direction in Freud as one is likely to find:

If Freud had been wholeheartedly on authority's side, he would have tended to overlook the extent of its power and the subtle infiltration of its operations, especially in modern society, into the very citadel of the personality. . . . The point is rather that Freud did believe that the *id* was, in the last analysis, ungovernable; that the bureaucratic structure of civilization rested on a precarious foundation, since its agents were at the mercy of the oppressed; and therefore that the last word lay with the revolution.

Riesman has one of the most flexible minds I have encountered in reading the works of modern American sociologists, and his essays are full of agile suggestions that set one thinking in any number of directions. But, as often happens with this kind of mental sharpness, there seems to be a lack of positive fullness in his attitude. Instead of leading one into the sunlight, he illuminates odd corners of the landscape very vividly with brief flashes from an efficient spotlight, and at the end of the entertainment one has seen a fascinating series of sharp vignettes of Riesman's ideas on particular issues, but is left with an extremely misty conception of the general setting in which they are placed.

In some respects I do not find this lack of a "system" wholly bad. I believe that writers like Riesman have a necessary function to fulfil as critics who do not take it upon themselves to offer more than piecemeal suggestions for positive action. The social critic, after all, is important in his own right, and it has always been in this role that the anarchists themselves have been most convincing. The attitude which carps at a critic for not balancing his negative judgments with positive ones fails to take into account that the acts of creation and construction are not necessarily contemporaneous, and that the critical mind is not likely to be well adapted to the task of construction, as the example of Proudhon showed very clearly.

Furthermore, I find myself in basic sympathy with Riesman's contention that society must be a little disorderly in order to be enduring, and that too smooth functioning will eliminate those marginalia of behaviour which often breed the most creative urges and influences. His distrust of the myths of ideologists and the rigid schemes of social planners is also something which I have no difficulty in sharing. But at the same time there is a looseness in Riesman's general point of view which certainly robs his criticism of the direction and point it might otherwise have. I am not talking in terms of a utopian plan, so much as of that intransigence and tenacity of direction which have always produced the best of our social critics. We may find the flexible mind personally engaging, and we may equally well dread the fanatic, but a certain singleness of purpose, a narrowing into focus, is at times necessary if we are to attain an integrated outlook.

Riesman has not this integrated outlook. He is for the individual and for freedom, but with reservations which one cannot disassociate from his legal training, and his whole outlook is weakened by a softening kind of pragmatism which becomes too closely concerned with fitting arguments to the needs and moods of the moment. Historicism, the demanding cult of the future, can become a dangerous intellectual disease, but so also can ad-hocism, that intellectual opportunism which makes us adapt our ideas continually to what seems to us the pressing need of the moment without regard for the future. The man who has his nose right up against his time has rarely as good a view of it as the man who stands away to get the perspective.

Riesman's attitude, which is really a kind of hotted-up nineteenth century individualism, John Stuart Mill in modern dress, flows out into that stream of well-meaning negativism which has swept away so many of our better liberals and radicals in its Lethean waves of disillusionment, and in the following passage he seems to sum up the view of a whole generation of Anglo-Saxon intellectuals:

I suggest that the utopian tradition¹ has gone sour because of collectivist, especially Communist, abuse, and gone stale (especially in America) because so many of our earlier hopes for equality and abundance have been attained—leaving us either to try to put meaning back into outdated struggles or to find a political agenda not in planning for a better future, but in postponing a worse one.

This is an impasse which Riesman clearly recognizes, but which his vague, benign liberalism is not strong enough to lead him away from. And so his work remains suggestive and very little more. But he does make some sharp weapons for a more purposive critic to use, and that, as Herzen once suggested, is something to be grateful for.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

¹ I should remark that Riesman's definition of utopia is somewhat different from the strict one, and it may be interesting and profitable to quote one paragraph in which he makes a distinction between what he means by *ideology* and what he means by *utopia*. Once again, this exercise in semantics is certainly suggestive, even if somewhat arbitrary in its adaptation of meanings.

"The idea of a dialectical opposition between 'ideology' and 'utopia' is suggested by Karl Mannheim's book, though I use the words here in a somewhat different sense from his. A 'utopia' I define as a rational belief which is in the long-run interest of the holder; it is a belief, not in existing reality, but in a potential reality; it must not violate what we know of nature, including human nature, though it may extrapolate our present technology

and must transcend our present social organization. An 'ideology' I define as an irrational system of belief, not in the interest of the holder. It is sold to him by a group which has an interest in swindling him; he accepts it because of his own irrational needs, including his desire to submit to the power of the vendor group. An ideology may contain elements of truth; these serve to lend plausibility, rather than to open the eyes and increase the awareness of the recipient. Contrariwise, a utopia may contain elements of error, initially less significant than its truths, which assist its later conversion into an ideology; in this way, the utopias of one age tend to harden in a distorted form into the ideologies of the next, taken on faith rather than rationally rediscovered."

Notes on REBELS PORKCHOPS HISTORY

Hitherto in the history of human society, the Rebel has risen generously to stir the passive, immobile masses to action against injustice. Later the righteous indignation of the masses has subsided as their limited comprehension of the cry for justice is satisfied. The Rebels are then either liquidated or absorbed into the league of justifiers of the newly re-arisen inequities. Karl Marx said that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggles. In the writer's opinion this hitherto history is a process of circumvoluntary revolts, new wrongs supplanting old inequities, the divine tyrannical monarch yielding his seat of power to the dictatorial and brutish son of the People. Is it not so in the trade union movement?

The trade unions today are a far cry from the times when workmen wrecked machines at the dawn of the industrial age—from the times of the great struggles for the 8-hour day in 1886-87, which culminated in the execution of the Chicago anarchists—from the times of sacrifice of the I.W.W. Could this present spiritual and moral poverty of the house of Labor have gotten its first start the day that the first union man sold himself Judas-like for time-and-a-half after 8 hours' work?

The modern trade union, like the modern bureaucratic state, endeavors to engage in its bureaucratic service the largest possible number of individuals, and thereby transform potential adversaries into defenders and partisans of oligarchy and status quo. The bureaucratic spirit is chain-reactive, it corrupts and it creates a climate of moral poverty no different than in the bureaucratic state. The subversive and non-conformist is ostracized, the subservient and yes-man is rewarded; there is arrogance toward inferiors and servility toward the influential leaders and superiors. It is the Fuehrerprinzip, based on the leaders' conviction that any worker will gladly barter all his liberties for bigger porkchops and double pay for overtime.

Most unions claim to be pillars of democracy, of course. If you are in doubt, they will refer you to their democratic constitutions and by-laws; but if you judge freedom and democracy by a constitution, oppression and tyranny in Bolshevik Russia are imagination.

If the rank and file has freedom of association and expression, why do so many unions ask the employers to check off union dues? How do state politicians rise to fame as union racket busters? Why do state and police authorities and crime commissions have to keep coming in to put the house of Labor in order? To mention a few of the infamies within the house of Labor: the old I.L.A., with its corruption and racketeering; or the new I.L.A.-A.F.L. with its strike-breaking; or the recent scandal of the Operating Engineers-AFL at the Yonkers raceway; or the scandals involving union pensions and welfare funds; or the case of a man named Andrew Mele, in the NMU of the CIO, who confessed to the police that in collusion with a high union official John Hunt he was selling membership books for \$300-and-up to job-hungry seamen, although membership admittance was closed.

Or the manipulations of a certain James R. Hoffar, of the midwest Teamsters Union AFL, who could not make ends meet on his basic union pay of \$21,000 a year. When a congressional committee started to check on Brother Hoffar and another labor

official, Bert Brennan, it discovered that these poor selfless democratic union officials owned a share of a Flint brewery, a boys' and girls' vacation camp in Wisconsin, a harness race track and a car haul-away agency. These union officials engaged their dues-paying members in strikes against business competitors, they paid their own wives \$65,000 in dividends in a few years. If there was democracy in the union, then why did the union membership not clean house themselves?

Some union officials become so obsessed with the fast buck that they see nothing wrong about owning a fleet of trucks or buying into business, such as construction or stevedoring. Some union officials play the stock market, some gamble at the race track. There are approximately 30 to 40 thousand of these paid professional union officials in the U. S. They think of themselves as administrators of an industrial concern, and of the dues-paying members as stockholders. But the stockholder of Bethlehem Steel can sell his stock, maybe at a profit, while the dues-paying member can lose the stock which is his union card, by being expelled from the union and deprived of livelihood, should he fall into the disfavor of the union bureaucrat.

In the late thirties, new young Rebel labor leaders arose spontaneously in the maritime, automobile and transport industries. Soon they also became professional leaders, and by establishing patronage machines they have perpetuated themselves and are now irremovable. Once again Rebels rise spontaneously to stir the immobile, passive mass to action. The aftermath is, the true rebel is liquidated and the phony rebel joins the solidifying bureaucracy.

The trade union structure is a pyramid of the following kind: At the top there is the self-perpetuating leader who is elected but whom nobody dares challenge at elections. Then follow his chosen elected agents and non-elected appointees; followed in turn by the commandos, better known as Goons, whom the machine places at the choice jobs in the trade; followed in turn by the cringers who always vote Aye with the machine in expectation of favors from same. All these are planners of sly innovations for their own preferment. Then there is the mass of full-book members, followed on foot by the permitmen who are required to pay the same dues, assessments and initiation but have no choice of employment, nor rights or recourse if in disfavor with any union official or full member. The permitman's dream is to graduate from his inferior status to full membership. The machine decides. Some unions amassed a great deal of money during the war years by issuing thousands of permits and filling the union treasuries with the tribute; but at the first signs of unemployment the membership books close and the permitman joins the ranks of the unemployed.

The trade union leaders are to a great extent a reflection of the majority of the membership, and it would be demagoguery to chastize the power-madness and calculating self-seeking of the oligarchy without saying anything about the membership itself. Most of the union rank and file are devoid of moral or ethical ideals. Mutual aid, compassion, human dignity, are looked upon as idealistic pipe-dreams incompatible with the ideal of the porkchop tussle. The trade unions are based on the principle of profit and power—culminating in the jurisdictional fight, usually for the sake of monopolizing the jobs in other organized trades and controlling the financial revenues from same. Position, a choice job, an exclusive favor, are the incentive of the trade union memberships, and they are content to have them safeguarded by high initiation fees, labor-legislated rigid technical examinations, closing of the books, etc., etc.

The founder of the A. F. of L., Sam Gompers, once stated that unemployment means that the hours of labor are too long.

At a meeting on March 23, 1954, of the C.I.O. Executive Board, President Walter Reuther opposed the thirty-hour week to check unemployment. Some union brothers seem to feel morally obligated to share what work there is with their unemployed brothers, but Mr. Reuther objected, stating that "a shorter work week would only be a means of sharing the scarcity." Reuther instead expounded the idea that labor's real need "is to increase the purchasing power not to increase the leisure."

Now the question arises, how will purchasing power come to men who are unemployed?

If there is anything about these unions that makes them unfit to become labor fronts in a communist or fascist state, it is not visible to the naked eye of this dues payer.

LEADLINE

Letters

Passive Resistance?

Writing on the Spanish Revolution in the February issue of *Resistance*, George Woodcock deplors the actions of the revolutionary movement as bringing more evil than good, and implies that passive resistance is incomparably the best method.

How could a campaign of passive resistance have caused less suffering for the Spanish people? Spain has always suffered under state, church and chaotic bureaucracy. Its early pacific Christians were enslaved and crucified; the pacific rebels against the Inquisition were burned at the stake; the modern pacifists are tormented and starved in prison. A campaign of passive resistance could eliminate deaths, sacrifices, starvation, etc., by fraternizing with Franco. But it would also eliminate any chance of freedom since Franco still is and would still be the military-minded general. What is a man supposed to do when another man slaps him? Should he turn the other cheek? No! Any man would revolt and slap back, especially a man who sets high value on humanitarian principles.

What does this "argument of common humanity" stand for? Is it to kiss the homicidal hand while trying to determine the psychological motive? Or is it to prevent new victims by eliminating the source of evil? It isn't only a question of which method is more humanitarian, but also of which is more effective. Anarchists are not seeking perpetual passive resistance which might and will allow the world to be enslaved. They want the individual freedom which will eventually free the whole world.

I don't think it is true that "revolutionary theorists . . . are often relatively indifferent to the present misery their favorite solutions may incur." All these revolutionary theorists have seen to it, before putting hand to action, that no innocent people get involved; when this has happened nevertheless, they have expressed their sorrow and assumed full responsibility. I suppose Malatesta is also considered a revolutionary theorist and therefore the argument of "common humanity" wouldn't appeal to him, but here is his opinion about violence:

"Unfortunately, violence is necessary in order to resist violence, and we must prepare and propagate it, if we don't want to perpetuate the disguised slavery we have today. But we must stress the duty to restrain it within the strict limits of necessity, since it might degenerate into a brutal war in which the ideals and possibility of beneficial results are lost. We affirm that violence is justifiable, good, moral, and a matter of duty when used to defend oneself and others against those who use violence. It is wrong and immoral when it violates the freedom of others. . . . We are not 'pacifists' because peace is impossible if not wanted by all . . . and the truly anarchist violence is that which ceases when the necessity for defense and liberation ceases. Regardless of our love for peace and humanity, we must use violence if we want to preserve our dignity as men."

It looks as if this whole business of passive resistance leads to some kind of mysticism, which has lately been discussed abundantly in certain anarchist publications. It would be worthwhile to study the results of passive resistance from time immemorial to the present day when the most horrifying crimes against humanity are still being committed in the names of gods, monarchs, races and nationalisms. And to study how the people were taught to accept them as a necessary evil.

Let's leave this mysticism where it belongs, for we anarchists have no idols whatsoever.

RIBELLE

Note

The poetry page in this issue is edited by Jackson Mac Low. He tries to select poems on the basis of his judgment of their excellence as poems, not as political or philosophical statements. "Social content" or political opinions may in some cases affect such excellence but they are in no sense major determinants of it.

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Resistance &c

As the August-October dateline of this issue suggests, the next issue of *Resistance* will be in December, at which time the regular bi-monthly schedule will be resumed.

This breathing space will allow us to try to secure a backlog of articles, perhaps accumulate a little surplus of contributions to make the financial basis of the paper more secure, and try to devise ways of meeting some of the suggestions for a greater variety of subject-matter. The pressure of bi-monthly deadlines, met with much last-minute activity, has prevented fuller planning, and finally in the case of the current issue proved impossible to meet.

We want to thank everyone who has helped carry *Resistance* through this year—financially, with articles, with letters of encouragement and criticism, with efforts to help distribute the magazine more widely. We hope the next year will see further improvements in the magazine.

If any New York readers would like to help out in the work of the magazine, would they please communicate with us?

The *Industrial Worker* of August 13, in reporting a proposal by a Michael Graine of New York City to form an "Anarchist Federation," states, allegedly on Graine's authority, that "individuals from the Resistance Group" are participating in his project and have accepted his "Manifesto." We want to state that there is not a shred of truth in this. *Resistance* is unalterably opposed to creating paper organizations, and there is absolutely no connection whatsoever between the magazine and Graine's project.

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