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FEDERAL PRISON IN THE FIFTIES

I

THERE is one simple fact that makes the prison experience of present-day conscientious objectors rather different from that of the C.O.'s during World War II.

During the last decade there has been a "Cold War" going on between the United States and Soviet Russia.

Obvious? Nevertheless, its implications for prison C.O.'s seem to have escaped most of the writers whose works are read by young pacifists. Perhaps this is because many of the contributors to peace publications had their prison experiences prior to 1948. Since that time there has also been a considerable quantitative change. Conscientious objectors make up a much smaller percentage of the prison population than they did during World War II. But first let's consider the political changes.

I don't believe that being suspected of Nazi sympathies was much of a problem for men who were in prison during the Second World War. I could be mistaken, but this is my conclusion from reading prison literature and talking with many ex-prison C.O.'s. At the present time, however, any person who goes to prison for a violation of the Selective Service Act, and does not have a well documented record of affiliation with a known religious organization, is most likely to be subjected to some sort of political scrutiny.

This scrutinizing takes different forms. For instance, I was not allowed to receive the newsletter of *The Society for Social Responsibility in Science.* It isn't on the approved list. I couldn't receive the *Catholic Worker* for the same reason. But the prison mail officer queried me about whether SSRS newsletter is a "leftist" paper.

More serious, though, was the experience of a socialist C.O. friend of mine. During the period of de-Stalinization following the Twentieth Party Congress in the Soviet Union, Communists made overtures of a united-front nature to many socialists. In a rather innocent letter to my friend, another socialist wrote something to the effect that "they," mentioning some names, wanted to get together with "us"—the "us" being members of the Thomas-led Socialist Party U.S.A.

Now the fact that Norman Thomas is certainly one of America's outstanding critics of communism and that ever since the thirties the Socialist Party has avoided "United Front" activities with the Communists, was of no significance to the eager-beaver official who censored this particular letter. He was confident that he had unearthed some "Commie plot" and immediately called in the FBI. The FBI investigators were sufficiently sophisticated politically, I imagine, not to be upset by this, but they certainly feel no obligation to determine or protest the innocence of a federal prisoner.* The important thing for a man in prison is, that this sort of incident goes on his prison record, and months later some parole judge can read into it entirely different implications. In fact, my friend was denied parole and spent slightly over twenty-four months in prison. At present the more common experience of a C.O. with the same sentence (three years) is to serve twelve to fourteen months.

I was paroled after serving thirteen months of a two-year sentence and consider myself fortunate. Just before I was interviewed by a parole judge I received the cheery news from George Willoughby of the Central Committee for

* No doubt one of the understatements of the decade, but now that I'm out of prison I'm feeling magnanimous.

C.O.'s that the judge who would interview me probably was unable to distinguish among socialists, communists and conscientious objectors. Apparently other parole board members took another view.

Perhaps I was unduly naïve when I entered prison, but I had the simple notion that if I was willing to go to prison rather than into the army, this in itself was proof of my sincerity. It came as a distinct shock to learn that while in prison I might still have to explain, justify, or demonstrate what I had been telling Selective Service and the courts on and off for the last seven years. If you have never been in prison, it's difficult to imagine the degree of distrust and scepticism that gets built in to the personalities of prison officials after ten or twenty years in the business.

They never agreed with me, but I think Selective Service and the Federal judge believed I was being honest with them. This was hardly ever the case in prison. There was always the feeling that the parole officer or educational director or doctor or chaplain (especially the chaplain) was sitting there saying to himself all the time, "Now what is this guy trying to 'con' me into?" For example, the judge, after he said "guilty" and handed down the sentence, allowed my bail bond to run another two weeks so that I could "straighten out my affairs" before turning myself over to the U.S. Marshal for transportation to prison. That a judge, who could in no way control my movements, would do such a thing absolutely dumbfounded my fellow inmates when I told them about it.

Then there's the prison attitude. I was working in the powerhouse at Terminal Island one day when a fellow inmate up on top of a boiler asked me to throw him a file. I did, he missed it, and it clattered to the concrete floor in three distinct pieces and several tiny bits. Being embarrassed about breaking the file I hastily swept up the pieces. I put the largest piece (eight or nine inches) back in the tool box, and without thinking twice, threw the one- and two-inch pieces into the scrap metal barrel.* Two days later, when it was obvious that three or four inches of a file was missing, a real investigation was in progress, and my statement that, "Well, I threw it out with the scrap metal," was hardly an acceptable excuse. I believe that it was only intervention by the Chief Engineer that saved me from the wrath of the associate warden. The Chief Engineer called me into his office as he was making out a written report of the incident for the associate warden. I told him just what had happened. He looked at the floor, shook his head, pursed his lips, and finally said rather desperately, "Martinson, just how long have you been in prison?"

The best I could think of at the moment was to laugh and suggest, "Not long enough, it looks like."

The people who came the closest to being free of suspicion were the Jehovah's Witnesses. The fact that they were in prison as a result of innocent obedience to the dictates of their conscience and their religious counselors was so apparent that not even hardened prison officials could be suspicious of them. But anything short of such clearly defined church affiliation as a basis for objection to war is intellectually beyond the comprehension of most prison employees. So one of the easiest things for the prison official to say when trying to comprehend a non-religious objector is, "He must be a communist."

Even purely religious objectors are not free from suspicion if they do not conform to the prison world. I think of a Molokan who had, I believe, the most abiding religious faith of any man I've ever known. Faced with consecutive terms of four and five years each, he steadfastly

* Why not? I'd have done the same in my home workshop. But the "same as at home" attitude is often disastrous in prison. Orwell in writing of his boarding school days said that not only was it easy to do the wrong thing, it was impossible to know what the right thing was. The significance of that statement completely eluded me until I'd been in prison a few months.

refused to obey rules that would cause him to compromise his beliefs. He had strict dietary laws, was not allowed to shave, and since he wouldn't accept alternative service outside of prison, he accepted no work assignment when in prison. (The Molokans suffer an additional hardship in today's political climate because their sect originated in Russia.)

As a result he spent over 90 per cent of each day in a solitary cell, under what is called administrative segregation. What impressed me (and any number of other prisoners) was the calm and cheerful manner in which he was able to "do time." His good nature and persistent faith eventually won over most of the prison officials, though at first they were utterly confused by this type of behavior and quite antagonistic. One person who never really came to terms with him, however, was the Protestant Chaplain. The Chaplain's appreciation of religious faith was such that he tried to persuade him to conform to prison rules by seeking some sort of "dispensation" that would permit him to forego his dietary laws.

Faith was rewarded, I'm happy to say. The five-year sentence was dropped, and shortly after I left prison I read that he had been paroled after serving something over sixteen months of the four-year sentence.

By contrast, I also knew the son of a well-to-do West Coast family who decided to "sit this one out" by leaving the country to manage one of the family concerns in Mexico during the Korean War. When he returned he was prosecuted as a plain and simple draft dodger. He offered to go into the army at that time but the courts decided he needed punishment. He served six months of an *eight month sentence.* He was hardly politically suspect!

Another product of the Age of McCarthy is the existence in prison, as on the outside, of guilt by association. I became acquainted with an ex-union officer who had been accused of falsifying a non-communist affidavit. But shortly before he came out of quarantine to join the general prison population, word was passed along the grapevine to several of us who would be going up before the next parole board, that it would be unwise for us to associate with him. I didn't know anyone who accepted this advice, but rumors like this naturally increase the feeling that "Big Brother is watching you"—a feeling one must learn to live with twenty-four hours a day.

What might be done to alleviate the kind of suspicion likely to fall on the conscientious objector when he finds himself in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons? This is hard to answer. As long as pressure for conformity exists in the "free world," or "on the bricks," as it's often called, it would be unrealistic not to expect to find it inside prison as well. However, the solution does not lie in the direction of name-calling or protesting our own political innocence by pointing a finger at others. One frustrating aspect of this whole fear-ridden situation is the ease with which well meaning individuals can give the "kiss of death" to a prison C.O. by writing letters or sending literature that is suspect in the reactionary view of prison officialdom.

Strange things happen during an Age of Suspicion. I'm not able to vouch for it, but I was told that the West Coast paper, *The People's World,* published the names of Smith Act victims along with conscientious objectors, suggesting that readers send them Christmas cards.* At Christmas of 1957 I did receive over 500 cards from such unexpected places as South Africa, Israel, Poland, Germany, New Zealand, and many other places. I imagine I have *Peace News* and the War Resisters League to thank for most of these, but if *People's World* readers sent some, I'm thankful for that, too. However, I was interested to learn from a prisoner mail-clerk that a number of cards were being held up because the signers'

* This suggests that Peace organizations might show compassion, though not political solidarity, by distributing the names of Smith Act victims at Christmas time. If they haven't, is that an indication of what the Cold War mentality has done to Peace Organizations?

names were on someone's special list, and they wanted to check my connection with said persons. I'd been in prison too long by that time to be upset by this sort of news. But senders of cards evidently felt subject to some sort of pressure, too. I received a number of unsigned cards—too many to believe they were all accidents.

In this situation it appears that only "respectable" organizations can do much to help the individual C.O. The principal thing they can do is to demonstrate their solidarity with prison C.O.'s by making regular visits to the prison. The presence of a C.O. in prison can be the occasion of such deputations, but it's the prison official, not the prisoner, who most needs to be visited. In this regard I think that the work of George Willoughby and the Central Committee for C.O.'s is of inestimable value. But George can't be everywhere at once. (He and the other crew members of the *Golden Rule* did manage to leave from Long Beach Harbor while I was at Terminal Island. I waved a symbolic *"bon voyage"* through the bars the day they left. There was no way of knowing just what time of day they'd be within sight of the prison.)

If groups like the American Friends Service Committee could regularly make educational visits where C.O.'s are imprisoned, they might impress upon prison officials the fact that many sincere conscientious objectors do not have a conventional religious orientation. Local groups of Quakers might be able to arrange for periodic visits to hold Meeting for Worship in the way the Salvation Army, Mormons, and others come into prison to hold religious services. Also, they might be able to do some useful work with other members of the prison population.

Beyond this it seems to me that what will be of most help to the prison C.O. is solving the perennial problem of giving the Peace movement a more adequate popular base. Perhaps I should say, making the Peace testimony a Peace *Movement.* When a prison official reads in his local paper that a local peace group is supporting a student exchange program, holding a high school seminar, organizing a children's relief drive on Halloween, arranging film showings, as well as writing letters to the editor, demonstrating at missile bases and refusing to pay taxes—then perhaps the lot of the prison C.O. will be easier.

II

MEANWHILE—back at the cell house—life for the prison C.O. in the 50's differs in at least one other respect from that of the World-War-II C.O. Today he is a member of a much smaller group. As a matter of fact, in most cases he's not a member of any group at all. For some wartime C.O.'s the experience of prison resulted in the common conviction that they would attempt to build a new way of life together upon release. Intentional communities were founded largely on this common bond of suffering. (Unfortunately, wives do not have any such common experience, and I think this as much as any other single cause often brings such community efforts to grief.) In another area, the Mental Health Association owes its existence in great part to the shared experiences of men in wartime Civilian Public Service units. But there is no reason to expect any like activities to result from the experience of present-day prison C.O.'s. When you are one of nine or a dozen men in the entire country, scattered in prisons from coast to coast without identification with any sort of movement, prison becomes an intensely *personal* rather than *social* experience.

An isolated and personal experience is not without its peculiar rewards, though. For one thing, lacking group identification within the prison community makes it much easier to become an accepted member of that community. This means that one has the opportunity to make friends and share insights with men that otherwise many of us would never know in a personal way. Most of my friends in prison were pimps, narcotics-users, confidence men of various kinds, marijuana sellers or automobile "dealers." In thirteen months at two institutions I met three

other C.O.'s, and I suspect that was unusual for the time. Since I was able to teach a course in Beginning English in the Education department, I became friends with a number of Mexican nationals imprisoned for illegal entry into the United States.

Prison certainly provides a unique educational experience. At Springfield, Missouri, I felt that the Jehovah's Witnesses often got less out of their prison experience than they might have for being members of such a large group. Out of a total camp population of 150 to 200 men there were always fifteen to twenty-five Jehovah's Witnesses. Their bunks were all together in one part of the dormitory, they were able to have their own basketball and baseball teams, and for the most part they always ate with members of their own group. This is certainly the natural response of a minority group in such a situation. Their behavior was not rigidly exclusive, though. Cheerful and indefatigable proselytizers, they welcomed anyone to their religious meetings and interminable dormitory "bull sessions." But it appeared that the interaction with the general prison population was in one direction only.

This doesn't mean that a C.O. can quickly become assimilated into the "con" fraternity if he so wishes. I was never brought in on any "escape" plots, or plans to smuggle alcohol, narcotics or other contraband into prison. (A state of affairs which didn't exactly cause any tears on my part.) Not being "in the rackets," a C.O. is hardly ever considered reliable enough for such activity. But this doesn't mean that he can't become friends, on an individual basis, with men of a great many different backgrounds.

I never encountered any official (or unofficial) sanction of segregation and felt free to make friends with Negro, Chinese or Mexican inmates at all times. The so-called status classification of the underworld which ranks the "heavies" (gunmen, bank robbers, kidnappers) above petty thieves, confidence men, narcotics pushers, etc., was of no importance that I was aware of. However, I was never in anything but a medium security institution.* At Alcatraz or Leavenworth, this situation may be very different. The general rule was, don't ask anyone why he's here, take him for the way he behaves now, not for what he did to get here. This seemed to apply equally to car thieves, dope pushers or conscientious objectors.

The exceptions to this attitude were the commonly voiced condemnations of drunk drivers and child molesters, especially the latter. This should not be surprising since crimes of this type are not committed by people "in the rackets." I heard some truly grisly tales of Kangaroo Court justice meted out in county jails to child molesters. After a while I came to realize that it would he hard to find a safer playground for children than a prison yard. Inmate houseboys at the prison staff quarters were often in complete charge of officers' children, the grounds crew entertaining and conversing with the children of staff members. At Terminal Island the inmates took up a collection and sponsored a Little League baseball team that played its games on the prison diamond. To paraphrase H. G. Wells, "In the land of degradation, the innocent is king."

Whatever changes may have taken place in the prison world in the last fifteen years, it certainly remains a land of degradation. Methods of control are possibly more refined psychologically, but the philosophy is unchanged. A Dale Carnegie Public Speaking course is offered by teachers from outside. Regular meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous are held under the auspices of members of that group from the outside. Apart from the grossly underpaid and understaffed educational department, these were the only two activities I was aware of that had any

* I often thought it might be better to do time at Leavenworth because in a big institution like that the educational facilities are much better. Also there is not the insistence that every inmate spend six or seven hours a day on a "do nothing" job. In general, I think honor camps are to be avoided if possible, especially the ones in the Southwest.

rehabilitative function at all. Significantly, both were volunteer efforts that received no support from the taxpayers.*

Prison remains dedicated to the traditional principle of *segregation from*, not *integration into*, the normal world of trusting and productive human relations. There is the same old petty restriction of reading material, or correspondence, of visiting time—in short, restriction of all types of normal interaction with society, and at the same time rewards for "adjusting" to prison standards. The ideal prisoner is still the uncomplaining conformist who can easily give up all *adult* sense of personal responsibility and allow Big Brother to make all his decisions for him.

The more things change, the more they remain the same.

San Francisco

JOHN MARTINSON

* Not without significance as well, I believe, is the fact that the thinking of the great American philosopher, Dale Carnegie, guides one of the major rehabilitative efforts in an American prison. One of the warm-up exercises shouted in unison at the beginning of the class meetings was "If you ACT enthusiastic, you will BE enthusiastic!" Ah, shades of William James.

REVIEW
TIME IS A MANY RENDERED THING

IF the title of this review strikes you as a pun on that of a year-before-last popular recording, be assured the pun is purely intentional. Considering the book to be reviewed, however, it's more than a pun. For Hans Meyerhoff's *Time in Literature,* now a University of California Press paperback, is a brief but illuminating philosophical analysis of how time—Thoreau's "stream I go a-fishing in"—is variously rendered in modern literature.

Meyerhoff, a professor of philosophy at UCLA, begins by explaining how he came to be interested in this theme. A colleague and friend of the late Hans Reichenbach, he grew stimulated by a series of Reichenbach's lectures on time concepts in classical physics, thermodynamics, and quantum mechanics. In retrospect he let these lectures recoil upon his long-standing preoccupation with modern writers such as Joyce, Proust, Virginia Woolf, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Mann, and Thomas Wolfe. Gradually he became convinced that scientific, logical constructions of time concepts were, and would probably remain, remote from "certain aspects of time in human experience which literature has often singled out for analysis." From this conviction he developed the fourfold purpose of *Time in Literature:* first, to analyze in detail the major elements of time in literature and experience; then, to show how this literary portrait of time differs from scientific time concepts; next, to give an explanation for the increasing concern with the theme of time in contemporary literature; and finally, to suggest what may be the meaning of the literary and scientific treatments of time for philosophy.

Since these purposes, as achieved in the book, constitute a coherent argument, I will take them up one at a time.

What elements of what may be called "experiential time" does Meyerhoff's analysis expose? Six predominate: *subjective relativity* ("unequal distribution"), *continuous flow* ("duration"), *dynamic fusion of the causal order in experience and memory* ("interpenetration"), *duration and the temporal structure of memory in relation to self-identity, eternity,* and *transitoriness* ("the temporal direction toward death"). Meyerhoff maintains that these elements are explicitly or implicitly "characteristic of literature throughout the ages, including ancient myths and religious texts." He goes on to assert that these elements have been common to literature because "they are attempts to deal with qualities of time which are *significant* within the context of the experience and lives of human beings." He qualifies this assertion, however, by maintaining that the same qualities "are not *meaningful* within a framework of time as an objective property of nature." Here, the italics are Meyerhoff's; they refer to a distinction (crucial for his argument) made earlier between *significance* and *meaning*. I will comment on this distinction in my appraisal of the argument. For now, we need to recognize that in Meyerhoff's terms only the "scientific, logical constructions of time concepts" have *meaning,* whereas literary conceptions of time—extended to the broadly "human," *i.e.,* non-scientific, preoccupations with time—have *significance.*

How do "meaningful" scientific time concepts differ from "significant" literary time concepts? Here, I'll take the liberty of departing from Meyerhoff's exact words in order to summarize his discussion. Scientific time concepts are useful and contextually valid because they concern themselves through and through with man's need to note and measure the passage of time. Literary time concepts, on the other hand, concern themselves with man's need to comprehend "time lived-through." If we follow Meyerhoff's extension of literary time concepts to include the basically "human" time-preoccupations, we can say that the two together comprise "experiential time."

With what is this "experiential time" concerned? Meyerhoff's full answer is his discussion of the six major elements. But again, without using his words I can summarize his discussion. "Experiential time" is felt mainly as an *undergoing* and an *overcoming.* Any man undergoes time in the sheer process of living through it—and being acutely conscious of this. For him time is not an "objective metric," a matter of noting measured and measurable intervals; it is a stream of resistances and compliances, now rushing, now ebbing—and he is in it *all the time.* But a man also overcomes time in his effort to create things, and to set already created things, beyond time—that is, beyond *his* time and within his own awareness of a continuing, unified pattern. And this pattern of co-present memories, perceptions, and expectations—this "manifold of different elements composing the self"—Meyerhoff calls *eternity.*

Why, then, does contemporary literature show increasing concern with the theme of time? Meyerhoff alludes to Wyndham Lewis' protest against the excessive time-consciousness of modern man. He agrees that "time has come to play an increasingly dominant and overwhelming part in the lives of human beings in our age," and gives three reasons why this is so. First, since the Renaissance there has been "a sharp decline or virtual collapse of the dimension of 'eternity,' which had been an integral part of the ancient and medieval picture of the world and man." Second, the adoption of "the quantitative metric of time in modern science" paralleled, but came about independently of, this "decline in the dimension of eternity." Third, as a result of these shifts, "time came to be experienced more and more within the context, order, and direction of human history." Varieties of "historicism" appeared and reached their full maturity in the nineteenth century. Whatever the particular "historicism" subscribed to, history itself "became the only permanent, fixed substratum against which the varying manifestations of truths at different ages in different cultures could be interpreted and evaluated."

What meaning for philosophy does Meyerhoff find in these differences between "scientific" and "experiential" time? To begin with, he stresses the value philosophers of many schools may derive from "truth in literature." In Meyerhoff's account, literary truth may or may not be scientifically meaningful, but it must be experientially significant. He suggests, though he does not say, that the scientist (who is "human" first and most of the time) can appreciate literary truth even when he cannot or will not credit its "truth-claims." Meyerhoff also emphasizes the philosophical value works of literature have in providing concrete instances of recurrent human concerns. Thus the myth of Narcissus, he contends, does not prove the psychological principle of narcissism; it shows it in operation. Similarly, Swann's and Odette's affair in Proust's novel does not prove the sado-masochistic pattern of love, but shows it; and Ivan Karamazov is not a demonstration, but an exhibit, of the conflict between generations. Furthermore, Meyerhoff testifies to the undoubted power of literary truth to shape "ineradicably subjective responses"—a phrase which he apparently intends as a description, not an evaluation.

In concluding with a brief appraisal of Meyerhoff's argument, I must point out again how crucial a distinction he makes between *meaning* (assigned to scientific time concepts) and *significance* (belonging to "experiential" time concepts). Within the context of *Time in Literature* this distinction appears justifiable; it allows Meyerhoff to discern and discuss the major elements of "experiential time." Also, once the distinction is made, he employs the terms consistently. However, I cannot be sure the distinction is semantically fundamental; *relevance* would seem a better term covering both kinds of time concepts, and Meyerhoff could go on to discuss scientific and literary relevance. As it stands, *meaning* and *significance* connote much

the same things to many minds. "After all," someone may say, "isn't *significance* (as you define and discuss it) a kind of *meaning?* Surely you don't intend maintaining that literary truth *is meaningless?"* In bringing up these plausible objections, I am not suggesting that Meyerhoff is maintaining that literary truth is meaningless (or that scientific knowledge is insignificant). I am sure he isn't. I am equally sure he is not assuming a restricted positivist conception of meaning, such as A. J. Ayer's in *Language, Truth and Logic* (and with which Ayer thought he struck a death-blow at all "metaphysical truth").

Although Meyerhoff argues his thesis persuasively, he might have been even more persuasive had he given a wider range of literary examples embodying "experiential time." At the beginning of *Time in Literature* he disclaims any intent to provide "an exercise in literary criticism." However, even with his approach thus circumscribed he might have probed more of the tissues of contemporary literature. In particular I missed a discussion of how modern poetry related to his thesis. It is remarkable, for example, that what many critics take as the two most successful long poems in English of our time (Eliot's *Four Quartets* and Williams' *Paterson)* are each concerned, in diverse ways, with meditations on the experience of time for modern man.

Nevertheless, with these omissions mentioned (and they do not seem fundamental to the acceptance of Meyerhoff's thesis), I recommend *Time in Literature* as an able philosophical analysis. It does not answer all the major questions relating to its vast theme, and it doesn't claim to answer them. But it asks them provocatively; it fishes with sensitivity and reflectiveness in Thoreau's stream.

Davis, California

RALPH S. POMEROY

COMMENTARY
THE UNPRIVILEGED SOCIETY

TOWARD the end of last year (Dec. 9, 1959), MANAS printed John Martinson's account of how he went to prison, and why. Many readers will recall his article, "Always Wear a Suit and Tie," in which he described his relations with the courts, ending in a penitentiary sentence. In this week's lead, Mr. Martinson tells about the life of a conscientious objector in prison. We do not print this article for its adventuresome spirit, but for its simple disclosure of how difficult it is for anyone who has not been in prison to imagine what it is like to spend a year or two behind bars.

It ought not to be supposed, however, that this writer lacked zest for adventure. Actually, you could say that he went out of his way to suffer the penalties of the Selective Service Act. He quit the comparative security of the alternative service assignment allowed to conscientious objectors under the 1948 version of the draft law, in order to challenge the validity of a provision of that law which is interpreted to mean that the United States Government is entitled to decide who is "religious" and who is not.

In other words, Martinson used the Selective Service Act as a means to protest what he regarded as a governmental violation of the principle of Separation of Church and State, in that, as he said, "it sets up an agency of the government to make religious decisions and discriminations." The law, as presently written, declares that to be "religious," under the meaning of the Act, you must believe in a "Supreme Being," and it denies that political, sociological, philosophical reasons or a "merely personal moral code" can be sufficient to qualify a draftee as a conscientious objector.

It was to this religious "test" that Martinson objected, after he had been granted C.O. status by his draft board. He left his assignment of alternative service as an orderly and ambulance driver in a Minnesota hospital, notifying the board that he no longer regarded himself as a conscientious objector, by this restrictive definition. The decision to make this protest came after he had been doing alternative service for almost a year, when he "began to realize how unfair the law is to men who don't possess the proper religious credentials." He noted that "agnostics, socialists, humanists, anarchists as well as religious objectors who don't belong to a particular church, are denied status as C.O.'s and usually spend time in prison." Martinson didn't want to enjoy a privilege or favored treatment in comparison to these men, so he landed in jail.

Cliché, platitude or truism, it remains a fact that if there were more men like Martinson, and if they all did what he did, there would soon be a new kind of prison system, or none at all, and many other aspects of our society would change for the better.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
MORE "QUESTIONS ON WAR"

[Apropos commentary here on material issued by Acts for Peace (Berkeley, Calif.), we reprint an unsigned article from the English weekly, *Freedom.* Its title, "The Awkward Question," is borrowed from Randolph Bourne, who wrote the following, used as a text for the *Freedom* article:]

THE State is the organisation of the herd to act offensively or defensively against another herd similarly organised. The more terrifying the occasion for defence, the closer will become the organisation and the more coercive the influence upon each member of the herd. War sends the current of purpose and activity flowing down to the lowest level of the herd, and to its most remote branches. All the activities of society are linked together as fast as possible to this central purpose of making a military offensive or a military defence, and the State becomes what in peacetime it has vainly struggled to become—the inexorable arbiter and determinant of men's business and attitudes and opinions. The slack is taken up, the cross-currents fade out, and the nation moves lumberingly and slowly, but with ever accelerated speed and integration, towards the great end, towards that *peacefulness of being at war.*

[We now reprint the bulk of "The Awkward Question," a piece somewhat reminiscent of the writings of the late Reginald Reynolds.]

What should I have said yesterday morning when Alan, aged seven, demanded "What is war?"

Never prevaricate, never deceive. But the truth was too untellable and the half-truth was too contemptible. Would it not be pure deception to draw analogies from Cowboys and Indians, from the assortment of toy guns, bows and arrows that lie about the house, or the occasional domestic battles? What have these to do with the extermination campaigns that we know as war?

Should we consult the dictionary together? "Learning can be fun," says the manual. But the dictionary, though post-war, is hopelessly archaic: "War (from Old High German *Werra:* confusion): Hostile contention by means of armed forces carried on between nations, states or rulers." Out of date for a child of the 1950's. To make this clear I should perhaps explain to him the Role of the Child in Modern War ("Make him feel he has a place in the world," says the manual). Should I take him on my knee and tell him of the note left by a child at Auschwitz: *"Nun heisst es abshied nehem. Morgen kommt mutter in die gaskammer und ich werde in den brunnen geworfen."* "Now I must say good-bye. Tomorrow mother goes into the gas chamber, and I will be thrown into the well." Or tell him about the children of Hiroshima: "When picked up by the hand the skin slid off like a glove." Napoleon said that troops are made to let themselves be killed. Should I explain that in our day this privilege is not confined to the army, he shares it too? Shall I tell him of the ninety-nine ways of killing children devised in the last war, from Napalm to starvation, from chopping them in half individually (SS at Yanov, Nuremberg Trial 59th Day), to roasting them *en masse* (RAF at Hamburg; no trial, several medals)?

But perhaps this would be merely sentimental. He might think that war has become "child-centered" like education. Whereas in fact we are all equal in the eyes of the war. Gone are the days when it was a formal contest between professionals and mercenaries. Gone are the days of our fathers, when it was a kind of ritual slaughter of healthy young men at the behest of their elders. That resulted in an ecological unbalance—too many women and an ageing population. But now as the ultimate triumph of democracy, we're all in it, and like a Gallup poll it takes in a representative cross-section of the population. Yes, No, Don't Know, and Don't Care, they all have their place in the struggle for non-existence. And our new knowledge of fall-out will enable the unborn to fall in too.

Tell him as much of the truth as he needs to know. Well, my dear boy, one of the things you need to know about war is contained in those two anarchistic aphorisms: "War is the trade of governments" and "War is the health of the state." But I can't say this to him, not because he must not be exposed to propaganda (except that of the government, the church, and the ad.-men), but because, poor innocent, he doesn't know what the state is.

What is peace? Peace is war carried on by other means, peace is the interval between acts, peace is war in a minor key, peace is the social contract—and a bad bargain too. For the state has inoculated Alan, it teaches him to read and write, and gives him one-third of a pint of milk a day, all in return for his future subservience: a kind of indenture or mortgage which he has later to redeem.

War is not, as the dictionary says, "hostile contention . . . between nations, states or rulers," it is the hostile contention of nations, states or rulers against their populations. The great error of nearly all studies of war, wrote Simone Weil, "has been to consider war as an episode in foreign politics, when it is especially an act of interior politics. . . ." For just as competitive industry, "knowing no other weapon than the exploitation of the workers, is transformed into a struggle of each employer against his own workmen, and hence, of the entire class of employers against their employees," so the struggle between states becomes in the end a war of states against their own peoples. There is a tacit agreement between states that this should be so. . . . The Permanent War of *1984* is carried on, not to lead to the victory of any of the three superstates, but because war conditions make the subjugation of their populations simpler. War is to the state what news is to the journalist. When none exists it has to be invented.

Never prevaricate, never deceive. War, my boy, is a device for keeping you under, and it ends by putting you underground.

How did I answer Alan? I said nothing. I was too ashamed.

[Simone Weil taught philosophy, mathematics, and Greek language and literature in French schools. She died of tuberculosis while still a young woman, in England in 1943, where she had been taken by friends to protect her against the racist laws imposed by the Nazis after the fall of France. Articles written by her during the thirties were translated and printed by Dwight Macdonald in *Politics* for February 1945, March 1946, and December 1946. The passage quoted above is probably from one of these articles.]

FRONTIERS

Hawaiian Lessons in Democracy

MANAS editors, one fears, are sometimes quite apt to overlook occasions of geopolitical moment. For example: the admission of Hawaii and Alaska to the Union of Non-Socialist Republics. At that time the disloyal thought hovered: "What's so great about more of the same?" But we have recently been led to discover that there are quite a few great things about Hawaii—conditions atypical by comparison with ethnic relationships in most of the forty-eight states, and conditions which, when examined, should assist mainlanders toward the practice of human brotherhood.

Our belated enlightenment came by a long and roundabout route. In the (Bombay) *Aryan Path* for July, we encountered Charles A. Moore's article, "Hawaii: Democracy at its Best." Dr. Moore teaches philosophy at the University of Hawaii. He is an editor of *Philosophy East and West* and has been the guiding hand in the annual philosophers' conferences held in Hawaii since 1950, where East and West have met to mingle their philosophical strains to the benefit of human understanding everywhere. But, according to Dr. Moore, the same sort of process has been going on at the level of social interaction in Hawaii for a long while, illuminating the truth of Goethe's saying—"Above all nations is humanity." Dr. Moore writes:

> Hawaii is the "living proof" that peoples of different races and creeds can live in harmony. Hawaii's cosmopolitan population consists of Japanese (35 per cent), Causasian (25 per cent), Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian (18 per cent), Filipino (12 per cent), Chinese (6 per cent), Puerto Ricans, Koreans and Negroes, as well as Samoans and others from the Pacific. And yet, in Hawaii, harmony is the norm; disharmony the rare exception.
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> Hawaii is a unified (and an American) community—not merely a hodge-podge of disparate parts. We have a common way of life in Hawaii today and a great mutual assimilation of the best from all racial sources. The culture of Hawaii is "rich, diverse, unique," providing without discrimination the fullest opportunity for everyone to differ, to give full expression to his own cultural and spiritual heritage—a true unity with rich and healthy human diversity. And that is the essence of democracy.
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> Equality before the law is recognized and lived in Hawaii without any deviation, of course, regardless of race, creed, place of origin, economic status, or any other circumstance. But the harmony which prevails in Hawaii is a matter of the spirit, in the hearts and minds of the people, not in legal or political requirements.

Well-worded testimonials to the success of Hawaiian brotherhood are provided by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, philosopher and Vice-President of India, and by President Dwight Eisenhower. Radhakrishnan said: "Hawaiians, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos and Caucasians live there [in Hawaii] in perfect amity and friendship and, if only the spirit of Hawaii could be expanded to a world scale, many of our problems would disappear. Hawaii is a supreme example of a multi-racial society which is free from any colour prejudice. . . . What prevails in Hawaii does not prevail in many other parts of the world. That is our difficulty." President Eisenhower said: "Hawaii cries insistently to a divided world that all our differences of race and origin are less than the grand and indestructible unity of our common brotherhood. The world should take time to listen with an attentive ear to Hawaii. In the Hawaiian Islands, East meets West. . . a unique example of a community that is a successful laboratory of human brotherhood."

What are the factors which have made the Hawaiian way of life so unique in its harmony? First of all, Dr. Moore speaks of the cultural leadership provided by the University of Hawaii itself and by other active cultural and educational organizations in Hawaii—an ideal locality for this fusion. Then, the day-to-day activities of the Hawaiians bring people of many racial backgrounds into cooperative proximity. But propinquity provides little more than the opportunity for brotherhood. The Hawaiian government and institutions play an enlightened role in seeing that the opportunity is not wasted. These institutions include schools and numerous religious groups. Dr. Moore explains:

> All schools—public, private and parochial—and all churches, hotels, restaurants, residential (with two small exceptions) and business areas, and public

places and functions are fully open to the public, truly "integrated"—although we do not even use the word in Hawaii, where equality is taken for granted and where there is no segregation.

The lists of Hawaii's political officers—both elected and appointed—in the Federal, State and City Governments always include members of practically all races represented in the population. (Nor is there any evidence whatever of racial bloc-voting, which might be expected to exist.) The recent election following Statehood was typical. Hawaii elected a Caucasian Governor, a Hawaiian Lieutenant Governor, one Caucasian and one (the first ever) Chinese Senator and one Japanese member (the first ever) of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress. The Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court and the Attorney General of the State are both Japanese; the State Treasurer, a Chinese. Governmental Boards and Commissions are always cosmopolitan in personnel.

Religion in Hawaii is an amazing and deeply complex phenomenon. The religions—and sects and denominations—of Hawaii are many, Asian, Hawaiian and so-called Western: Buddhist, Confucian, Shinto, Taoist, Jewish and Christian (Catholicism and over thirty denominations of Protestantism). These many religions exist and function in mutual tolerance and respect—often in remarkable co-operation. Religious bigotry is unknown here. Religious freedom is complete. The entire situation is marked by significant fluidity. There is wide-spread free movement from one religion to an other, and the various racial groups are represented in nearly all of the religions, and welcome in all.

No one, including Dr. Moore, believes that Hawaii is a flawless paradise on earth, but on the basis of his article, "Hawaii: Democracy at its Best," it is impossible not to be grateful for the demonstration that enlightened attitudes of mind produce an enlightened social order. His closing paragraphs suggest that an elusive, almost mystical, complex of causes has led to the present conditions in Hawaii—and that the Asian contributions have probably been the most significant:

Social scientists cite many contributory factors to account for this almost unique achievement—"mid-ocean isolation," "equable climate," a relatively small land area, the limited population and certain economic and geographic aspects of the situation. All of these contributed to the final result, no doubt. To many, however, the chief cause is that wonderful though intangible spirit of *aloha* which was here when the White man and later the Asians came to these Islands—a gift of the Hawaiians to the new and future residents of these Islands, and now to the world at large. It is impossible to describe *aloha,* but it encompasses love, cordiality, respect, friendliness, welcome, and certainly the spirit of harmony among peoples. The spirit of *aloha* is the spirit of Hawaii and, whatever the other favourable factors may have been, it is unquestionable that these Islands would not have developed into the greatest example of democracy on earth, a living embodiment of the idea of human equality and mutual respect, without the overpowering effect of the spirit of *aloha* in converting all to equal status as fellow human beings.

This is the destiny of the new State of Hawaii—the Aloha State. As Dr. Radhakrishnan said in the quotation cited earlier, if the spirit of Hawaii could be adopted on a world-wide scale many of the problems of men would disappear. Hawaii's composite culture stands for all the world to see, and to emulate, as a living, breathing, irrefutable demonstration of the possibility of genuine democracy. This is the message of Hawaii for the world—and, to a large extent, the world's only hope. . . .

It is the personal conviction of the writer that neither the geographic, climatic and other "factual" conditions, on the one hand, nor the *aloha* spirit, on the other—alone or together—would have produced Hawaii's unique racial and personal democracy. A third and clearly an important factor may well have been the Asian peoples themselves and the highly developed and welcome cultural, philosophical and religious pattern of life which they brought with them. Their personal dignity and restraint, their family discipline, their law-abidingness, their almost instinctive interest in and respect for education (some parents saw as many as ten children through college although they had had little or no education back home), their high degree of moral character and religious seriousness, their gentleness (still famous here on the part of nurses of Asian racial descent), and even the attractive femininity and exotic beauty of many Asian women and girls—these traits must have played an important part in the Asians' being accepted into the Hawaiian complex and in their winning their place in and contributing significantly to Hawaii's new and unique culture. All three of these sets of circumstances were present and all were important, but surely not the least of these was the highly developed cultural background of the Asians themselves.