

Views & Comments Number 36

Libertarian League

November, 1959

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From the Editors

With this issue we hope to resume our regular publishing schedule. The delay was caused by a number of things, primarily a lack of money with the additional complication of moving the New York Libertarian Center to its new location (see back page). We still badly need money. If you can help, please do. We could also use more material. How about it?

We View and Comment

Russell Blackwell

Over a period of several weeks the front pages of the American press have been dominated by two topics that are not unrelated to each other. One of these is the trans-Atlantic flight and visit to the U.S. of the Russian "Dove of Peace," and the other is the current epidemic of violent outbreaks and killings among New York City's teen-age gangs.

Intelligent people, concerned with the very real problem of human survival in this atomic age, are in a mood to grasp at straws and cannot but welcome any development that may offer even the slightest ray of hope for a lessening of international tensions. On the other hand, those of us with memories as much as three years long are unable to place any real trust or hope in the words or actions of the tyrant who crushed the Hungarian Workers' Revolution of 1956—the same man who, as Stalin's hatchet-man, murdered millions of Ukrainian peasants in the early 1930s.

In most places that he has visited, Khrushchev has been received coolly by the American workers. Wall Street also has been cool fearing the effect that a possible outbreak of peace might have on a profit-based economy supported largely on war industries. Some of the basic contradictions of such an economy have been thrown into bold relief for all who have eyes to see.

The ever-increasing violence among juvenile gangs is—in the opinion of Libertarians—directly related to the attitudes and tensions that have arisen from two decades of international war—"hot" and "cold."

Each time that there is a fresh outbreak of gang violence among the youth of our cities, the social workers, journalists and politicians, the clergymen and the educators, the criminologists and sociologists, the slum clearance experts, the judges and the police commissioners, plunge into a new series of speculations as to the causes of the moral breakdown and decay of values among our young people. The "leaders" of our insane society flounder about in search of a "cure" that ignores the fundamental insanity.

The schools are blamed, the parents are blamed, the parole system is blamed, the Youth Board is blamed, the slums are blamed, the comic books are blamed, the kids themselves are blamed.

All of the secondary contributing factors are ponderously considered while the root causes are generally ignored.

Investigations are called for, appropriations are made for more playgrounds and more policemen. For a period the police institute what amounts to a reign of terror against adolescents in which all too often the innocent as well as the guilty are hounded on the city streets.

The so-called "best brains" of the scientific and political world—in this country as well as abroad—are engaged in the perfection of ever more efficient instruments of destruction and mass-murder. The bulk of the tax burden borne by the people of the United States is used to finance wars, past, present and future.

The boy of school-age is indoctrinated to accept willingly his future role—for several years of his young manhood—of being trained as a killer of his fellow humans. The glories and advantages of "service" in the armed forces are extolled in glowing terms. All the media of mass communication and of the educational system are devoted to thus conditioning the youngster from an early age.

Young people have the need of a sense of participation and of belonging. The structural form of today's society offers but minimal outlets for the satisfaction of this need, which many of them find to some extent through association in youth gangs of their peers. There is no more harm in "gangs" per se than there is in any other form of voluntary social organization. It is the lack of proper ethical and social values of many of the participants that is at fault.

Given the external environment of a society based on the profit motive and the idea of the "fast buck;" given the miserable example set by their elders who either support actively or passively tolerate a politico-economic system, based on human exploitation, war, and the preparation for war; based on competition, fear, suspicion and hatred of that which deviates from the accepted norm, it is rather surprising that so small a proportion of our youth have succumbed to the pressure. It is a tribute to the inherent sense of human solidarity and human decency, that most of our adolescents are able to grow up as reasonably "normal" human beings.

The problem of so-called "juvenile delinquency" can have no solution within the framework of today's society, of which it is a logical manifestation. The propagation of a decent set of ethical values can contribute to turning the natural rebelliousness of youth into socially useful, revolutionary channels where it will be directed towards the building of a better, more rational and more humane social order.

Book Review by rde

Of Dust and Stars: Selected poems by Vernon Ward. Exposition Press, N.Y. 127 pp. \$3.

I think the dedication of this book explains it quite thoroughly:

I shall not enslave myself

I must be free

To see with unprejudiced eyes,

To speak the truth fearlessly.

I must not be deflected from my course.

My life, my living, my idling, my wandering

Are for one purpose:

To know the truth and speak it,

To see beauty and reveal it.

Vernon Ward is obviously a man in love with humanity. His poems sing of love for men-and women, for all mankind. He speaks with a clear, radical voice against war, injustice, intolerance, and for brotherhood and an end to oppression. When an occasional sting of angry satire enters in, even this is mixed with love for that which-he satirizes.

The poems are simple, clean-lined and powerful. He's been compared to Whitman and the style is similar but 100 years separates them in thought and writing, in feeling and "politics"—some of which I don't particularly agree with but that doesn't detract from the beauty of the work.

A moving book. I recommend it.

Pacifist Action by Walter Gormly, Mt. Vernon, Iowa

The following report illustrates one of the many methods of direct action activity available to the determined individual who feels the need to do something more than talk about the need for "doing something."

On Tuesday, June 16th, I drove out to Omaha, the center for an Atlas ICBM base now under construction. The next morning I rented a two-wheeled trailer, bought some linoleum and a few pieces of lumber and went out to a University of Omaha parking lot where I started to construct a King Kong missile, a noncontinental, unguided missile that would never get off the ground. I finished construction by dark and moved to a lighted parking lot to paint it with aluminum paint. That brought on my first encounter with the law. They chased me away.

After finishing the painting the next day, I parked in a residential neighborhood while I used my car as an office to write letters to various news outlets to tell them about King Kong and where they could see it the next day. To satisfy the curious children who wanted to know what King Kong was all about, I handed out a few copies of a leaflet extolling the advantages of the King Kong over the Atlas. Every child then wanted a leaflet. In due time, a couple of cops arrived to see my driver's license and ask various and sundry questions. Their sergeant showed up a little later, and I was told to go down to the station and talk to the head of civil defense. For him I thought I would go, but it turned out he wasn't there, so I talked to a man in the captain's office. After considerable palaver and warming of a bench, I was told I could go and the man apologized for bothering me. I told him to let the day shift know they should not bother me the next day.

Except for interviews with newsmen and posing for TV movies, the next morning was fairly uneventful. In the afternoon I parked the car and trailer with King Kong in front of a repair garage. The proprietor told me to get out or he would call the cops. It took over half an hour for the cop to get there, but nothing much happened as I was just about to move at the expiration of the parking limit. A few minutes after I got set up again in the next block, two more cops showed up. They were going to take me down to the station, but I had been there once and was in no mood to go again. After some telephoning, they said they were going down to the station without me and said their legal department was considering the problem. A while later they came back and said I was "in the clear." About that time two more cops drove up, but they talked with the other cops instead of bothering me. Naturally, this had all attracted considerable attention, and I had been able to distribute more leaflets than I otherwise might.

When the cops had all left, a shopkeeper said he had talked to the other businessmen in the area, and none of them liked my being there. He said he was going to get a bunch together

and throw me out since the cops wouldn't do anything. I didn't move, but the only thing that happened after that was that a boy came and got leaflets saying the barbers in the shop where he worked wanted them.

The next morning I got downtown early enough to find two parking spaces together to park my car and trailer. By feeding parking meters, I was able to stay there until I had passed out a supply of about 500 leaflets.

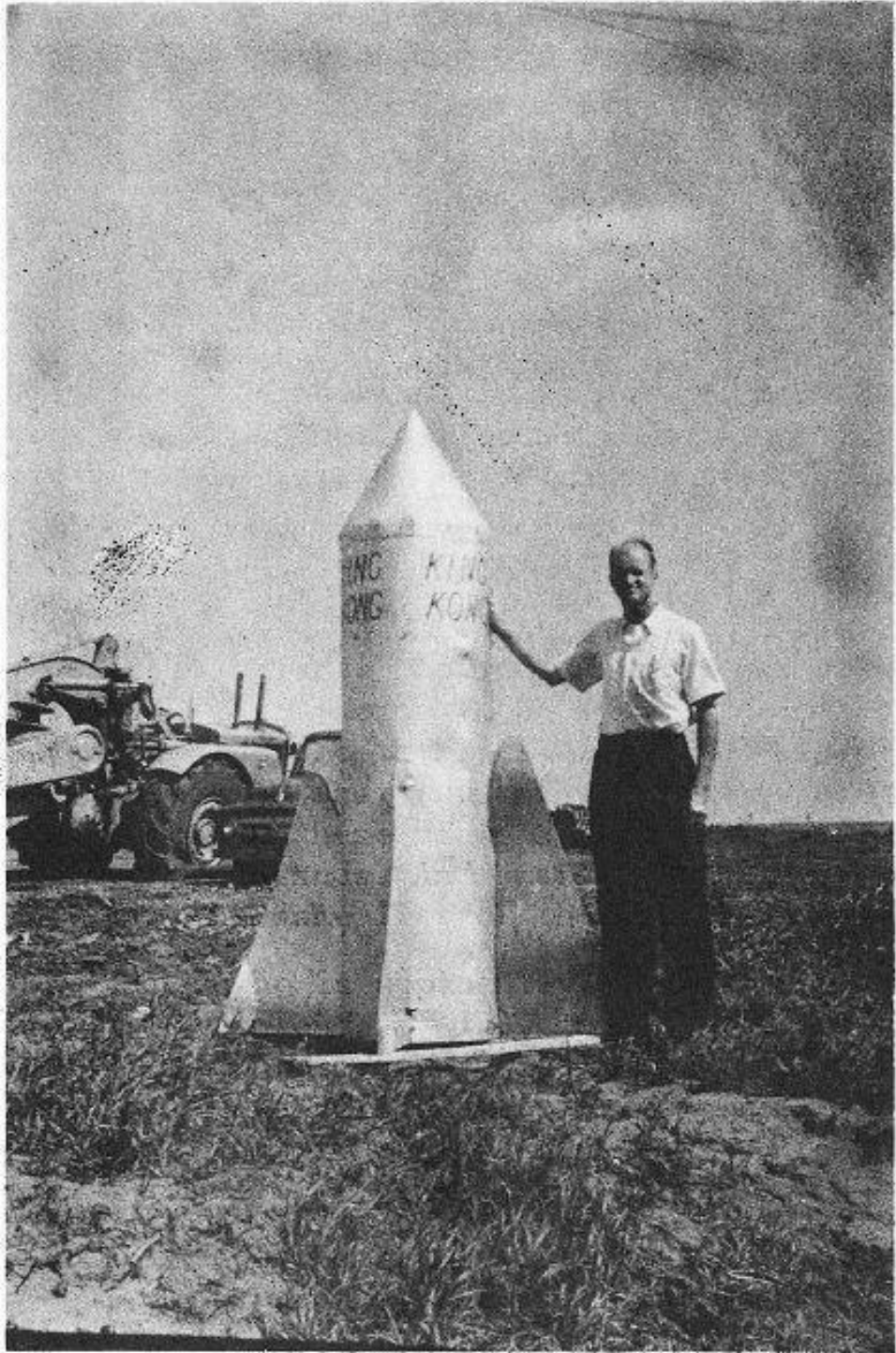
On Sunday morning, I picked up Don Fortenberry, and we hauled King Kong out to "Site C" near Missouri Valley, Iowa, where we set it up so that it could be seen from the road. The area is not yet fenced and there were no guards. We put leaflets in the seat of each earth-moving machine. Site C is one of the Atlas installations that make up the Omaha ICBM base.

At the same time, another pacifist protest against the Atlas base was getting under way under the name of "Omaha Action." I had asked Omaha Action to sponsor King Kong, but some of them did not approve of satire, so I went ahead on my own.

Some things I did were not pleasing to some of my fellow pacifists. When a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald, the mid-west's worst newspaper, asked me if I were a communist, I replied, "If I'm a Communist, then the Communists must be all pacifists." Some fellow pacifists didn't like that answer at all. They thought I should have given the usual denial that I was a Communist. A couple of them opposed my intention of setting up King Kong at Site C. They said I might get shot.

The next three days I participated in a "Walk" from Omaha to the Meade site under auspices of Omaha Action. The advance people had done considerable work in getting out literature, deciding on a "discipline" and other administrative work, but almost nothing in regard to the walk itself. Nothing had been done about sleeping facilities for our group, and we were lucky that a fellow with a car was able to find a store open and buy blankets for us to sleep on the first night.

I am now glad that Omaha Action did not sponsor King Kong and that I did it on my own. I could do better without the millstone of my fellow pacifists. I also feel that I should have displayed King Kong in downtown Omaha: a few days longer instead of going on the Walk.



Walter Gormley and KING KONG set up on Site C

Photo: Walter Gormley and KING KONG set up on Site C

The King Kong Defense System

The following is the text of the leaflet Walter Gormly Distributed:

Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile bases are being built around Omaha. The Atlas will carry hydrogen bombs.

The Soviets believe that American business would collapse and that the U.S. would automatically go communistic if peace broke out. Since they expect to get control of an undamaged U.S., they do not want to mess up with missiles what they expect to be their future property. However, it seems certain they will clobber this country with missiles if they see, or think they see, an Atlas missile on their radar.

The Soviets will not think it necessary to mess up what they expect to be their future property if they know the missiles pointed at them are King Kong missiles!

We don't dare let the Soviets see Atlas missiles on their radar, or they will destroy us with their missiles.

The Soviets will never see a King Kong missile on their radar.

An Atlas missile might take off because someone got tired of sitting in front of the little red button without ever pushing it.

A King Kong missile will not take off if someone pushes the little red button!

Someone might think that meteors on radar are missiles and push the Atlas little red button.

Anyone who pushes the King Kong little red button when he sees spots on radar won't hurt anything!

Why have Atlas missiles when the King Kong is safer, and CHEAPER? Don't go wrong! Defend with King Kong!

I can take only a few days to display the King Kong. By that time I hope the people of Omaha will have made arrangements to use King Kongs instead of Atlas for defense. Will you do your part toward making the necessary arrangements?

The Anti-Peronist Psychosis in Argentina by J. Ballesteros, Buenos Aires

The labor movement of Argentina is divided into three major groupings, that of the "62," Peronist unions; that of the "19," where the Communist Party influence is concentrated; and that of the "32," consisting of the self-styled "democratic" unions, dominated by reformist labor bureaucrats comparable to the professional leaders of the AFL-CIO.

The majority of the Peronist labor officials are corrupt, submissive, and ever open to bribery—a method utilized by the present government when it first came to power—in order to break strikes which had been initiated and then betrayed by the "62." Besides benefiting themselves personally, a practice also indulged in by many leaders of the "19" and the "32," they carry out, insofar as it serves their own interests, the directives that are sent to them from Peron's refuge in Ciudad Trujillo.

When President Frondizi's policy of complete surrender to North American imperialism became obvious, when the most rapid and brutal inflation that the country has ever known got

under way, and when the workers (already beaten down by the previous, openly reactionary oligarchic government of Aramburu-Rojas) really began to feel the economic squeeze, the masses reacted vigorously in opposition to the present government which is nothing but a legal dictatorship based on the armed forces.

Under the pressure of their rank and file, the Peronist and Communist union leaderships have been forced to a position of increasingly militant opposition to the regime. The "democratic" leaders, on the other hand, have chosen a different course, and maintain a more moderate opposition. This position of moderation leads them, as during the last general strike, to what amounts to virtual support of the government and the big capitalists. Although the "32" have lost many of their unions (among them the union of graphic arts and commercial employees) their conduct exercises considerable influence over the rank and file and some lesser leaders of other unions who are restless under their totalitarian-minded top bureaucrats.

Even though it is a minority grouping, the tendency of the "32" is in some ways a better base for the future revolutionary revival of the Argentine labor movement and for contact with those elements that have in the past been less influenced by the governmental fleshpots and the intimidation of the boss-class. But the workers of the "32," like many Other citizens of this country (including some labor militants of Libertarian antecedents), suffer from an anti-Peronist psychosis. Their fanatical identification of Peronism with everything pernicious has caused them to lose their over-all view, the historical frame of reference for the workers' struggle. They ignore the fact that the Peronists (both leaders and rank and file) have been pushed by circumstances into strikes of solidarity with unions such as that of the bank clerks which the government has tried to crush. Such circumstances have also, for example, pushed them into the position of denouncing the surrender of Argentina's oil and the electrical industry to imperialist combines.

On the other hand, when it appeared certain that the last general strike could at best be only a partial success, the "32" issued statements almost identical in tone and even in verbiage with those issued by the "Argentine Industrial Union" and the Argentine Chamber of Commerce, both of which are capitalist associations. During that strike, the "32" acted as open strike-breakers. The anti-Peronist psychosis has converted the union bureaucrats into unconscious—or perhaps even conscious—agents of the boss-class and of the State.

The Argentine proletariat has urgent need of solving the problem of bare subsistence in the face of continued inflation. It must also solve the "political" problem characterized by military mobilizations, summary court-martials, restrictions on public meetings and press censorship that are carried out under the banner of a McCarthy type "anti-communism."

The only way out for the working class is to rise above the disputes and intrigues of the bureaucrats of the three contending labor groups. But it must be recognized that in the present situation, the position of the "democratic" leaders is one of the most reactionary and dangerous, in spite of it being sincerely shared, in many cases, by workers and intellectuals who aspire to a profound renovation in the Argentine social structure.

* * *

Did you hear about the Spanish Freethinker who had a major operation? He had to have a tooth taken out thru the back of his neck...Freethinkers aren't allowed to open their mouths in Spain.

—The American Rationalist

The Libertarian Bookshelf

The following is a selection of items available from the Libertarian League. A complete list will be sent out sometime after the first of the year. Make checks or money orders payable to R. Ellington. Address all orders to:

Libertarian League
PO Box 261 Cooper Sta.
New York 3, N.Y.

BOOKS:

NEITHER EAST NOR WEST by Marie Louise Berneri (hardcover) \$1.00

MICHAEL BAKUNIN AND KARL MARX by K.J. Kenafick (paper). 1.50

MUTUAL AID by Peter Kropotkin (hardcover) 3.00 (paper) 2.00

HOMAGE TO CATALONIA by George Orwell 1.25

WE WHO WOULD NOT KILL by Jim Peck (hardcover) 3.00

LESSONS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION by V. Richards (hardcover) .75

PIONEERS OF AMERICAN FREEDOM by Rudolf Rocker (hardcover) 2.00

NATIONALISM AND CULTURE by Rudolf Rocker (hardcover) 2.50

THE IWW, ITS FIRST 50 YEARS by Fred Thompson (hardcover) 3.00 (paper) 2.00

NINETEEN-SEVENTEEN and THE UNKNOWN REVOLUTION by Voline (2 vols., hard cover)
per volume 3 50

IN THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY by B. Yelensky (hardcover) 2.50

PAMPHLETS:

TENTATIVE DESCRIPTION OF A DINNER GIVEN TO PROMOTE THE IMPEACHMENT OF
PRESIDENT EISENHOWER by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, blank verse .15

By Peter Kropotkin:

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT .10

THE STATE, ITS HISTORIC ROLE .25

THE WAGE SYSTEM, .05

VOTE—WHAT FOR? by Errico Malatesta .05

ANARCHY by Errico Malatesta .15

ANARCHY OR CHAOS by George Woodcock .35

*WHAT IS ANARCHISM? by George Woodcock .05

IWW LITTLE RED SONGBOOK .25

*ETHICS AND AMERICAN UNIONISM by Sam Weiner .10

THE PLACE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY by Emma Goldman .05

* Asterisked items are available in quantities at discount

Don't Walk on the Grass Either by Dave Mason

News Item:

The police of New York City are busily occupied with the latest wave of crime among the notorious gangs of intellectuals that infest the great city. New York's Finest have been forced to

turn their attention from the suppression of grass-erosion and air-raid watching to the recent outbreak of poetry reading and guitar-playing in the Village.

Hardly had the surly mobsters who play their instruments in Washington Square been brought under properly licensed supervision when it was discovered that various coffee houses were permitting these villains to play there, out of regular hours, to the extreme moral danger of their hearers. The fact that these crimes were being committed without payment made the matter worse, naturally, But worst of all, poetry was being read openly, at all hours, by totally unregulated poets, some of whom were probably not even registered as foreign agents.

The law, as read by those few officers of the law who are actually capable of reading, explains that any form of entertainment turns an eating house into a cabaret, requiring special licenses, extra taxes, and police graft in a higher bracket. The weak explanation offered by the coffee houses was that (a) they don't seat more than a couple of dozen people, who weren't there to spend big money a la cabaret, and (b) poetry wasn't entertainment, anyway.

Since the courts seem to agree with the last point, so far, the police have adopted a very interesting tactic. The cop issues a summons to the coffee house and the alleged entertainer. These hapless individuals then go to court, where the judge finds them not guilty of being entertaining. This takes a day, which the judge, bailiffs, elevator operators, clerks, and so on are all paid for, but which is a dead loss to the criminal. Next week, the cop drops by with another summons, and the whole dreary bit gets run again. Sometimes the monotony is varied with a set of tickets to the Policemen's Ball, which, since one doesn't have to attend, is cheaper than a summons.

In addition, the Police Commissioner says, any Muse found weeping in or around Washington Square will be deported back to Greece as an unregistered alien.

Human Automatons by Sheldon J. Deretchin

Those of us who read science fiction have long been used to the concept of "push-button people," wherein the individual is controlled by an outside agency (usually the State) by either psychological or mechanical means. Of course, we have all said that this points out a very good moral but "it can't happen here." Unfortunately, it already has.

Leaving the psychological means aside for the purpose of this article, Newsweek (August 24, 1959) reports on a new device developed by Dr. Jose Delgado of Yale's School of Medicine in which "a bundle of ultra thin, steel wires is sunk permanently through a hole in the skull into the brain. On the top of the head, the bundles end in a tiny electrical plate outlet. Here, Dr. Delgado plugs in 'directions'—mild electrical currents. This stimulus...makes cats and monkeys 'perform like electrical toys' and evokes in humans feelings of fear, friendship, and the memory of things long forgotten."

By utilizing these electrical currents, Dr. Delgado has been able to actually map out sectors of the brain that control various emotions and responses and: "Using this map, Delgado can trigger various complex reactions: Animals have been made to yawn, sneeze, shake their heads, and hop about; lackadaisical cats have been turned into hissing, spitting aggressors; indifferent monkeys have been stimulated by electric current into a state of aroused sexuality. Further studies with human patients who are mental cases or epilepsy victims...seem to support the distasteful conclusion that motion, emotion, and behavior can be controlled like robots by push buttons."

Delgado "reassures" us however, by saying, "Brain stimulation may be able to call forth an unwilling response, but it cannot change the basic characteristics of the...subject."

This all sounds very nice, but when the Pavlovian method of conditioning is considered, then the problem can be seen in its true light. It has been demonstrated in other experiments than the one mentioned here that when a stimulus is received directly by the brain, the corresponding response is so much the greater due to the stimulus not having strength by coming in through the senses. It is, therefore, true that the conditioning response would be so much the greater.

Let us say then, that a person with the control in his skull is shown a symbol (such as a flag) that he should revere and try to protect, according to the State of which he is a subject. A pleasure response would then be keyed into his brain every time that he looked at this symbol until his main uncontrolled response is to the pleasure stimulus. He might also be given a fear stimulus just under the pleasure level, on the theory that one must fear as well as be pleased by the State and-or its symbol(s).

Other responses would be keyed in as well. It is not enough that one love and fear one's State, but one must also have another symbol to hate so that the emotional strength of the original symbol may be intensified by contrast.

And so, the State may have a method of controlling its subjects (in the fullest sense of the term in this case) completely. I can envision in twenty years a mandatory operation to put little boxes in one's skull at birth so that the rulers can control everyone by radio.

Rank—and a Little File by Dave Mason

Playhouse 90, a network drama show, presented Rod Serling's "Rank and File," in May. The play was a 90-minute "fictional documentary," a study of the rise of an American union leader.

According to an interview with Rod Serling (released as a part of a heavy pre-showing advertising campaign by the network), the play was not to be considered as a complete labor documentary. It was social commentary in a dramatic form, but, like Serling's earlier TV plays, it was done as a study of a particular individual in a part of today's world, in a particular class and place.

Serling and his TV plays are, in a very real sense, important. He is, in the eyes of the TV networks, and the viewers, an important playwright, an "intellectual." Where a book may sell, in a good week fifty thousand copies, Serling's play has been seen and heard by at least ten times that many people. His most important previous TV play, "Patterns," was seen repeatedly on TV, and later turned into a film.

All of this adds up to what the Madison Avenue set calls IMPACT. Serling's play, "Rank and File," was propaganda-in-art of the most powerful kind; propaganda in the sense in which propaganda is most effective. In the same sense, his other plays were also propaganda; in the sense of taking vague, unformed thoughts that already existed in the middle class and giving them a clear and dramatic expression. Such writing doesn't change an already formed idea; but it does crystallize what was formless before.

In "Patterns," Serling studied an "organization man," a man of essentially middle class virtues and vices, moving in the midst of the wheels of bigger and bigger business. Artistically, "Patterns" was a success; and it was also popular. It expressed exactly what the mass audience, the "middle-class" who make up the great majority of TV viewers, felt and lived. To them, it was social realism of the highest order. written by one of themselves, from their own viewpoint.

"Rank and File" is, artistically, a failure for exactly the reason that "Patterns" was an artistic success. Serling studied his fictional labor leader in microscopic detail—and entirely from an outsider's viewpoint. There was no trace of real understanding of the major character's motives, or of what he represented. There was no evidence that Serling had the slightest inner knowledge of what that "Rank and File" of which he wrote was all about. The facts were there, in the manner of the careful researcher in history, who gets the information, but not the spirit. But the closeness to his characters that existed in "Patterns" was not in "Rank and File."

Unfortunately, an artistic failure isn't necessarily a propaganda failure. Hundreds of thousands of viewers saw this play; few, if any, among them knew anything about the subject of the play beyond the lies of their daily newspapers. It is to be suspected that the play crystallized opinions among a large number of these viewers, and that, as such, it was very effective propaganda. And, worse, that these opinions were in line with the same lies of those daily newspapers.

Serling, who is apparently a relatively honest man; probably didn't intend it this way. The networks, the sponsors and others concerned—were not so naive. It was evidently quite clear to these various people that this was "timely," meaning that it was propaganda which would work well in this particular climate.

From the first act, it is at once apparent that Serling has no very clear idea of the inner realities of the world he is discussing. The scene is a factory, in the late 'thirties, and a group of workers who are striking for higher wages. Among other minor discrepancies, the workers tend to address their organizer as "Mr.," but this is hardly the worst of these early scenes. It was rather the overall tone, from the over-luxurious appearance of what was supposed to be a worker's home, to the general emphasis on "drama" and "tension" in the union meeting, that grated on the viewer. That is, it grated, if the viewer were a worker and familiar with the life of workers. To the citizen viewing this scene on his unpaid-for 21-inch color set, in his mortgaged ranch house in Levittown, this was Realism. This, to the middle class, was the way it really was.

Now, in a scene before the factory gates, a worker who has been shown as a heavy drinker and somewhat irresponsible, gets into an argument with the company police inside. He is ordered to take his hands off the wire gate, and the cop calls him a "rummy." In a mood of desperate bravado, stung by the word "rummy," the worker keeps his hands on the wire while the cop beats, repeatedly on his knuckles with a stick. Immediately the organizer seizes on this action, and in the rain, right there before the factory gates, puts the "rummy" up for local president. Naturally, the man is at once elected, by acclamation. There seems to have been no necessity to hold anything like a regular election, but who are we to quibble?

From here on, our hero, the "rummy," rises up the piecard tree, relentlessly, interrupted only by Betty Furness or some other unidentified wench with a commercial. (The IMPACT, if the network will please note, was so great that your reviewer clean forgot what it was the sponsor was selling. That's the main reason against these intellectual-type programs, from a sponsor point of view).

At any rate, our hero builds his own union, through a vicious scene in which the Capitalist factory owner expresses himself, somewhat in the manner of an irritated Daddy War-bucks; on to a contract for higher wages, and all that. Then, up in the higher echelons of piecardery, he meets Temptation in the form of a racketeer who owns another union. He surrenders, by absorbing the racketeer, union and all.

When the executive board of his own union protests the association with the racketeer, our hero viciously destroys the man who, as an organizer in the first scene, had given him his first leg up the ladder. He does so by letting it be known that this organizer (a CCNY boy, of course)

was once a Communist. He makes a speech, to the other piecards, about the great disgrace of having a Communist about the premises. Now, while this speech might have gone over well in 1948, it seemed somewhat out of place in the somewhat earlier time in which it was set. During those deer dead days, it is your reviewer's recollection that a party card wasn't any particular liability, particularly on a vote-conscious executive board.

Periodically, the hero bursts forth with remarks of the general class of "The union? I'm the union," and so forth. Beyond this, there's hardly any attempt to fathom what the man's all about, what he wants, or what makes him tick, until the very end. And that attempt proves, to my mind, hideously unsuccessful, in that it makes precisely the wrong point.

After a career of simony laced with a bit of assault, a murder or two, general betrayal of friends, etc., our hero is now a bigger wheel than ever. He is being investigated by a Congressional Committee, which turns up all sorts of financial fiddle-de-dee—but, one notices, says nothing about what, if anything, his union might or might not have done in labor itself.

And then, toward the ending, an incident occurred which made one viewer, at least, momentarily almost change his opinion. A youngish Congressman in a bitter exchange with the labor leader: the labor leader asks the Congressman to show his hands. "Soft, white—those hands never touched a shovel," he says. And what, the Congressman asks, has that got to do with the issue? The labor boss—"You'll never know."

But Serling left it there, lying limply on the ground. It may have been too hot to handle. One more hint occurs, that indicated Serling was at least trying. Someone implies that our labor faker got that way because things were pretty tough back in the mill, in the old days. This, again, is simply allowed to lie on the ground.)

And, for a finale, a quick exchange of conversation between The ruined ex-Communist organizer and the successful labor bandit, who is still being investigated, but who, like Hoffa and others, isn't down, by any means.

The ex-Communist: "They'll get you, sooner or later, boy." A roar of cheers in the halls outside.

The labor leader: "Hear that? That's the workers, cheering for me, my boys etc."

The ex-Communist: "Cheering for you? No...(big, impassioned speech here)...not for you, but for the ones you feed on, the rank-and-file..."

And the labor leader, laughing, "Rank-and-file? I AM THE RANK AND FILE!" Exit, pursued by nobody.

Looking at "Rank and File," up to that amazing last exchange, the watcher is convinced that Serling's intention was exactly what he said it was—a study of a man corrupted and yet powerful, representative of labor bureaucracy, and still originally a part of labor's masses. But, as that, the play is a failure. It has to be. No TV writer could detail the corruption that bosses deliberately and scientifically create in labor and in its leaders; or worse, the corruption that overtakes a man who accepts the basic standards of that same middle class that makes up most of the TV audience.

But, as a documentary, it was not an honest failure. It gave no real information to its audience, which would be the whole essence of a documentary. No one, after these 90 minutes, would know more about the history of American labor unions, what was done, or how, even as little as how a union negotiates or how a meeting is conducted. To have eliminated even the basic material that would have made it at least of documentary significance, and then to call it a "social documentary" is a deeply dishonest thing.

But worst of all will be the effect of this play on the huge audience it had, and will have on the replays it will be certain to get. What this play tells its middle class viewer, and tells the

worker whose views are still basically middle class, is this. All unions are always, and inevitably, crooked from top to bottom, organized simply out of greed: greed on the part of the workers for more money and less work, and greed on a larger scale by the labor bosses. Democratic unions? In this play's field, the possibility of unions under democratic systems, with open books, free of bossism and corruption, simply doesn't exist.

More than that, such a play says to its audience: Men become corrupt out of a kind of original sin—particularly if they've been workers, and have been deprived of the things that make a good middle-class citizen a moral man—such as cars, TV sets, two-dollar ties, and so on. In other words, that evil actions are basically the result of economic deprivation, which is a good old Marxist notion. But the converse, in spite of Mr. Serling, isn't true. Men who haven't ever had to do without anything in their early lives, have somehow succeeded in being just as corrupt as those who have been deprived.

So—to daringly disagree with Marx, Rod Serling, and NBC all at once—it is possible that men are bad to the extent to which they accept the values of a bad society, and that it doesn't matter particularly whether they come from one level or another within that society.

This notion, being one which places the responsibilities on individuals rather than "Society" is one which is difficult for most people to swallow. If I am wicked, the citizen says, it's only because I had a bad childhood, or I'm neurotic, or because the evil world forces me to be so. But the rebel's choice, which is to refuse, consistently, to do what he thinks is wrong, the act of not conforming, is a refutation of the idea that "irresistible social forces" form all of the acts and lives of men.

In other plays as well as this one Serling has implied the basically Marxist idea of the social conditioning of men as being the all-important factor of their lives. In his middle-class hero, in "Patterns," this is an essential ingredient of the work, as in a third play, "Requiem for a Heavyweight." It's a curious, wonderful, and slightly frightening thing to consider how Marxist ideology, mixed with Pavlovian notions of the conditioned reflex as the prime mover of life, have come to rule the thinking of the American middle class as much as that of the Soviet world. Orwell, thou shouldst be living at this hour!

As a matter of fact, there was a thought, as I cut off my TV screen on Playhouse 90. What would George Orwell have done with that theme? Are you listening, Mr. Serling?

* * *

We of the mid-twentieth century live in a most extraordinary time. We are living through that unique epoch in the history of civilization when war will cease to be the means of settling great world problems. We shall soon enter upon the continuing period of peace, a period when there will be no more war, when disputes between nations will be settled by the application of man's power of reason, by international law...The forces that can destroy the world must not be used.

—Linus Pauling in *No More War*

* * *

Crumpets Anyone?

OAKVILLE, June 7—About 200 persons today attended a tea party given by the Oakville and District Humane Society to celebrate the installation of a new animal death chamber at the municipal dog pound.

—*The New Yorker*, quoting from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*

* * *

Cartoon caption: Hero Type No. 3: Union Leader Enjoying the Vacation

The Organization Man is Assailed by Hutchins

CHICAGO, Sept. 21 (AP)—Robert M. Hutchins believes the major social problem today is whether there is going to be any society.

"We are in the position of the little boy who asked Santa Claus for a volcano—and got it," the former University of Chicago chancellor said in an address yesterday in which he assailed organization men, tranquilizing drugs, intellectual laziness and education he considers ineffectual.

Speaking at the 100th anniversary dinner of the Jewish Family and Community Service, Dr. Hutchins declared:

"The gray flannel suit is a symbol of the desire to merge imperceptibly into the environment."

He described today's students as "gloriously contented and willing to conform to the economic status quo. If this continues unchecked, we shall be living a life in which conscious inertia is our aim."

Finances

Beginning next month we will list the exact financial status of Views and Comments each issue, with a complete list of donations received and expenses for the issue and run a regular balance-deficit. Your help is needed badly to sustain this magazine. Please contribute if you can.

Donations received:

APRIL: AB, BC, RC, BD, SW, RF-\$1 each; Youngstown LL-\$24; T&DH-\$5, MH-\$1, BH-\$2.50; LG, DT, MB-\$1 each; TT-\$2, Los Angeles Workmen's Circle-\$24, BR-\$3, DJ-\$15, JN-\$5, TO-\$4.45, AC-\$10, VW-\$10, HH-\$2, DH-\$1, RL-\$5, EG-\$4, PM-\$1, FC-\$1, DB-\$1, Anon-\$10.

MAY: WHD-\$2, GS-\$10, DW-\$1, NP-\$5, T&DH-\$5, TA-\$3, LR-\$2, Anon-\$2.75.

JUNE: JM-\$15, BE-\$3, Dielos Trouda-\$10, DT-\$1, BD-\$5, Canton LL-\$25, ED, RE, CP, BR, DW-\$1 each, B&ST-\$2.

JULY: JF-\$15, BB-\$2.25, BD-\$5, DE-\$28, JB-\$1, DK-\$5, LDI-\$20, AL-\$1, GB-\$2.05, PP-\$3.40, A0-\$5, GL-\$2, R-\$1, DS-\$2, BS-\$1.95, RT-\$2.10, Chicago Free Society-\$15, CC-\$1, Youngstown Picnic-\$25, TH-\$2, TH-\$3, CS-\$1, Refrattari, Mich-\$15, RA-\$1.

AUGUST: IS-\$5, Anon-\$200, AG-\$1, CS-\$10, HP-\$5, ES-\$5, DV-\$5, T&DH-\$5, BK-\$2, CB-\$21.30, MB-\$5.

SEPTEMBER: TP-\$1, RH-\$1, LS-\$3, Penn. collection from Spanish Comrades-\$42.50, Boston Aurora Club-\$35, CC-\$1, Youngstown L'Adunata Group-\$55, AG-\$2, TB-\$21.

What We Stand For

Two great power blocs struggle for world domination. Neither of these represents the true interests and welfare of Humanity. Their conflict threatens mankind with atomic destruction. Underlying both of these blocs are institutions that breed exploitation, inequality and oppression.

Without trying to legislate for the future we feel that we can indicate the general lines along which a solution to these problems can be found.

The exploitative societies of today must be replaced by a new libertarian world which will proclaim — Equal freedom for all in free socialist society. "Freedom" without socialism leads to privilege and injustice; "Socialism" without freedom is totalitarian.

The monopoly of power which is the state must be replaced by a world-wide federation of free communities, labor councils and/or cooperatives operating according to the principles of free agreement. The government of men must be replaced by a functional society based on the administration of things.

Centralism, which means regimentation from the top down, must be replaced by federalism, which means cooperation from the bottom up.

THE LIBERTARIAN LEAGUE will not accept the old socio-political cliches, but will boldly explore new roads while examining anew the old movements, drawing from them all that which time and experience has proven to be valid.

Libertarian League Activities

New York:

The Libertarian Center

12 St. Marks Pl. (3rd Floor) Between Second & Third Avenues

Open Forum every Friday at 8 p.m.

Cleveland:

3705 West Park Road (near Lorraine and Triskett)

Discussions on the last Friday of each month at 8 p.m.

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