



A SALUTE TO JOHN WILCOCK *

"Much of the world's trouble is caused by what I regard as 'The Vertical Alliance' theory, i.e., that one's country is automatically righter than any other country and should be automatically supported in any conflict of interests. And yet how much more logical is 'The Horizontal Alliance' theory which states that the victims of all societies share so much more in common with each other than with their leaders. The difference between LBJ and Mao, and Kosygin and DeGaulle and Wilson and Castro and Sukarno and all the other bullying despots is only one of degree: all rule masses of more or less helpless peasants who have no choice but to obey and fight and die, often for something they don't understand or believe in. What got me to thinking these thoughts was an article, 'Russia's New Class,' in London's NEW SOCIETY magazine (7 Oct. 1965) which describes the privileges and extras available to the administrative class in Moscow. About the men at the top, the article says: 'Giving orders has inevitably become second nature for many of them.' Giving orders. Yes, that's the key. There'll always be two major types of people, of whatever nationality—those that give orders and those that obey them. You'll live longer (and happier) if you can stay out of the game and not join either side." (1)

That is the kind of insight and advice John Wilcock regularly offers his readers. For many years Wilcock wrote a regular column for New York's VILLAGE VOICE. But recently he left the VOICE to become an editor and part-owner of THE EAST VILLAGE OTHER (2) for which he currently writes a column entitled "Other Scenes." To John Wilcock who occupies a position on the hip anti-disciplinarian end of the New Left spectrum, must go much of the credit for the principled individualism now seen emerging in that quarter.

In the first edition of "Other Scenes" he echoed the thunder-tones of Max Stirner and Benjamin Tucker, saying: "So-called 'anti-social' behavior is often the most constructive of all social behavior because it is an affirmation of the individual's right to exist individually in a collective structure. Freedom is obtained only by taking it, without stopping to define its limits (and inhibiting one's actions) in advance. Laws, also, are changed only by defiance—a defiance that creates the climate for legislative change . . ."

"The intellectual's obligation to society approximates that of the artist: to present to it a vision of something that can be rather than what is, assuming, of course, that the 'can be' is based always on a mutual respect for each other's freedom. True morality implies a tolerance for other attitudes and modes of life not necessarily an endorsement of them. The major immorality is in insisting (by coercion, blackmail, or law) that others live and think as you do . . ."

"It is my belief that nothing is holy; nothing is above challenge and examination; and that the most firmly entrenched ideas, institutions and individuals are most in need of it." (2)

Do not look for a consistent libertarian line of reasoning in his thought. Do not look for a formal presentation of ideas or a careful recitation of events in his reporting. Do not expect his reviews to be more (most of the time) than a batch of brief but intriguing notes. What makes John Wilcock inherently worth reading is that he is an intellectual hurricane, spouting ideas and interests in every direction and in vast profusion—blithely leaving his readers to prowl and pick among the litter of trash and treasure as he dashes off once more to challenge and examine "other scenes." RAUL SANTANA

(1) Quoted from "The Village Square" as syndicated in 14 Jan., 1966 issue of the Los Angeles FREE PRESS

(2) THE EAST VILLAGE OTHER

(3) Quoted from "Other Scenes" as syndicated in 4 Feb. 1966 issue of the Los Angeles' FREE PRESS. The EVO has a reciprocal Underground Press Syndicate arrangement with the FREE PRESS, the Berkeley BARB, East Lansing, Michigan's THE PAPER, and Detroit's THE FIFTH ESTATE.

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announcing

"other scenes"

For the past 15 years John Wilcock has studied what we now call "the underground". He has visited 30 countries, lived and worked in half a dozen. One of the original staff of the Village Voice, for which he wrote a weekly column until early 1966, he has recently been editing The East Village Other.

Now, still determined to publish and write without censorship, he turns to the oldest and most personal form of publication:

John Wilcock's OTHER SCENES, a fortnightly gazette will begin appearing twice monthly in January 1967.

It will contain, of course, his famous column with news of the avant garde and sympathetic and sometimes cynical comment on art, politics, pornography, religion, pot, sociology, humor. In addition will be news, pictures and features about the furthest-out and the furthest-in trends all over the world. Other Scenes will not waste its' readers' time covering yesterday whenever it can offer, instead, the news of tomorrow.

Every year its intrepid editor will report personally from most of the following world capitals: Athens, Amsterdam, Budapest, Copenhagen, London, Montreal, Mexico City, Paris, Rome and Tokyo. At least once a year subscribers will receive, instead of the Gazette, some surprise: a rare herb, say, from Jamaica, or maybe a set of postcards from Yugoslavia or a sex magazine from Japan.

**John Wilcock, 39, is the author of "Mexico On \$5 A Day" and similar books on Japan, Greece & California. He lives in Greenwich Village and travels 20,000 miles each year. His column has appeared in the Village Voice, Evo, the Toronto Daily Star, Mainichi Daily News, Los Angeles Free Press, Berkeley Barb, Australian OZ and Paris Gazette.*

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Additional information on John Wilcock is being added posthumously by friends of John at <https://johnwilcock.net/>

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- Sincerely, E Persoff
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