

Bombing, the police report, is no longer fashionable on the right, and most of the leftists who do it are white (black radicals prefer sniping)

The Militants Who Play With Dynamite

By WADE GREENE

BEHIND locked sliding doors, suspended in antiseptic array on white pegboard are bulbous black bottles, cylinders, wires, timing mechanisms—among them a watch with its face impaled by makeshift terminals. Infernal devices, the bombs. They decorate one wall of the corridor leading into the New York City Police Department's bomb-squad headquarters in the Police Academy building on East 20th Street. They look like antique gadgetry out of a sunless corner of the Victoria and Albert Museum. They conjure up dim images of anarchists, extortionists, madmen.

Some of the bomb squad's memorabilia are intensely timely, however.

Pegged to the board are sections of pipe plugged at both ends (to be filled with black powder) and bundles of simulated dynamite sticks—the sort of things that are going off all over the country these days.

Bombs are back. Bombing has reached "gigantic proportions," former Police Commissioner Howard Leary told the U.S. Senate's recently concluded hearings on bombings. Senator John L. McClellan's Perma-

nent Subcommittee on Investigations, which conducted the hearings, has given some measure of the proportions: From January, 1969, to April 7, 1970, the country suffered 4,330 bombings—3,355 of them incendiary, 975 explosive—resulting in 43 deaths and \$21.8-million in property damage. In addition, there were 1,175 attempted bombings and 35,129 bomb threats. And the trend has shown no sign of abating. Indeed, after a brief late-summer lull, bombs have been going off in possibly record numbers of late, heralded by an underground warning of a fall revolutionary offensive.

McClellan's subcommittee has further fleshed out its arithmetic with a chronology of major incidents and attempts that will be part of its report, due soon. A sample:

Jan. 5, 1969: Two Molotov cocktails thrown into offices in R.O.T.C. Building at University of California, Santa Barbara. Jan. 20-29, 1969: Four electric-transmission towers of Public Service Company of Colorado damaged by dynamite explosions. June 9, 1969: The Slovak Civic Club and private residence dynamited in Cleveland. Dec. 10, 1969: Two fire-bombs damage Rutgers University building. Feb. 24, 1970: Bomb damages home of Negro who instituted

school-integration suit in Denver. April 26, 1970: Dynamite explodes in Senate chambers at the Louisiana State Capitol. May 14, 1970: Fire-bomb explodes in R.O.T.C. headquarters at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, causing \$50,000 in damage. June 12, 1970: Explosion damages community cultural center operated by a black nationalist organization, U.S.

The calendar of destruction goes on for 97 pages, a dull catalogue in which words soon obscure events. Indeed, by now the events themselves, the bombings throughout the country, have achieved almost as much of a numbing habituality as bombings in Vietnam, and only the superboom reminds us that anything very unusual or sorrowful is happening at all—the blockshaking explosion of the Greenwich Village townhouse in which three of five youthful bombmakers blew themselves to bits; the blast in the heart of New York Police Headquarters, operational center of the world's largest police force; the immense explosion at the University of Wisconsin's Mathematics Research Center in which a physics researcher was killed and property damage was estimated at more than \$6-million, the biggest bomb blast yet.

Why? Why the bombs and the

bombers this time? I groped for answers, mainly in New York, because this city of good and bad superlatives has experienced more bombing of late than any other place east of the South China Sea. In the last two years, department stores have been bombed, consulates bombed, corporate headquarters bombed, police stations, high schools, churches, synagogues, libraries, R.O.T.C. offices, government buildings, draft centers, hotels, homes, automobiles, even a few police call boxes. Since January, 1969, there have been 370 bombings in New York alone, an average of more than one every other day. In the last five years four times as many bombs have gone off in New York as in the previous five years. A real boom town. Who said it, or who hasn't by now?

IT was a relatively quiet day when I arrived at the bomb squad's headquarters to talk to Lieut. Kenneth W. O'Neil, head of the squad for the last dozen years. Incidents number 6407, 6408 and 6409, the then latest entries in the squad's log (which is already twice as thick for this year as for all last year), involve an explosion in a police call box, an anonymous warning that a bomb had

been placed in the Chemical Bank at Broadway and William Street, another anonymous warning of a bomb aboard T.W.A. Flight 303 at La Guardia Airport. No bombs were found as a result of the threats.

O'Neil, just back from vacation, is a lean, almost dapper cop sporting a trim gray mustache that he grew on vacation and is planning, he says, to shave off. He considers the current epidemic of bombings philosophically, as befits a man who has dwelled in the company of dynamite for a dozen years.

Of course, he says, we've had waves of bombing before. The bomb squad got started in the days of the Black Hand extortionists from Italy who were using bombs to terrorize their fellow immigrants in New York. "The thing got to such proportions that the police commissioner at the time decided to form a special unit of detectives, and he set up this squad. The 'Italian Squad,' it was known as then. The first head of the squad was sent to Italy on one of his investigations and he was killed in a town square, in Sicily, I believe, in Palermo, and they made a movie of this with Ernest Borgnine.

"After that they concentrated on

the investigation of anarchists just before World War I, saboteurs during the war, then after the war, there was the Wall Street explosion [outside the Morgan Bank, in which 30 people were killed]. From that they went into Prohibition, when racketeers began throwing 'pineapples' at one another out of cars. And in the fifties you had the Mad Bomber [George Metesky, whose 16 years of bomb-planting around New York ended with his arrest in 1957].

"This particular year is by far our busiest. What seems to be new at this point is that these are a wave of political bombings or bombings inspired by political bombings. You have to understand a couple of things here. One is that bombings, like anything else, are fashionable or non-fashionable, in vogue or not in vogue. It's a little more serious than that. They're catching. So if you have a series of bombings, they encourage further bombings. People who are a little mentally unstable or perhaps inclined to this sort of thing say, 'Now is the time, everybody's doing it.' So they get out and do their thing. I think this is what we have at this time, a series of political bombings and a lot of people getting into the

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act who have been caught up in this sort of hysteria or whatever, enthusiasm—it depends on your point of view.”

THE police, I found, were generally reluctant to discuss the bombers in terms of their political points of view; a cherished if somewhat tattered image of U. S. law enforcement is that the police are apolitical. Several acknowledged, however, that in New York, at least, the current wave of political bombings seems to be coming almost exclusively from the left. Very possibly, though, this wave was inspired by a rash of bombings from the right. O’Neil talked of a series of bombings by anti-Castro Cubans a few years ago, adding: “We haven’t heard from them as far as I know in a couple of years.” And though in the Senate hearings the militant right Minutemen were frequently referred to, it was usually in the past tense.

Leaving O’Neil’s inner office, I passed a bulletin board in the bomb squad’s main room. On it, next to a printed sign that says, “If your [picture of a heart] isn’t in the U.S., you had better get your [picture of a donkey] out,” are tacked two wanted circulars bearing the pleasant young faces of Cathlyn Platt Wilkerson, 25, and Bernardine Rae Dohrn, 28. Both circulars bear the warning, “Has been associated with persons who advocate use of explosives . . . consider dangerous.” It was Miss Wilkerson, of course, whose parents’ 11th Street townhouse went up as she and her comrades, all members of the militant Weatherman organization, tinkered with dynamite in the basement. She and Kathy Boudin, 26, survived the explosion and fled; the New York police say they have no idea where the girls are, though there are the inevitable rumors of Canada, Cuba, Algeria. Bernardine Dohrn, formerly interorganizational secretary of the Students for a Democratic Society, now a member of the Weather Bureau, the Weathermen’s elite corps, was the author of a “Declaration of a State of War” against “Amerikan imperialism” issued by tape recording and by mail, postmarked New York, in late May. The declaration threat-

ened to attack a “symbol or institution of Amerikan injustice” and the subsequent bombing of police headquarters on June 9 was, initially at least, considered to be the carrying out of that threat. It was Miss Dohrn whose disembodied voice—on a tape recording reportedly mailed to Yippie headquarters—warned early this month of a fall offensive by young revolutionaries that would “attack the enemy around the country.” Miss Dohrn is under indictment in Chicago for her part in the Weathermen’s window-smashing rampage there a year ago and in Detroit for an alleged bombing conspiracy. The F.B.I., which has not been very successful in penetrating the left’s “underground” of late, has also been unable to find her.

Miss Wilkerson and Miss Dohrn are clearly public enemies No. 1 and No. 2 as far as the bomb squad is concerned. And it is just as clear that the police in general consider the white radicals to be the most menacing of the leftist political bombers. Not that they are ignoring other groups. The supercharged revolutionary rhetoric of the Black Panthers makes them automatic suspects in many bombing cases, and more than suspects in some. The Panther 13 on trial in New York are accused of conspiring to bomb police stations, a department store and a school. Two young blacks linked by the police to the Black Panthers were said to have been operating a “bomb factory” in an East Fifth Street apartment when an explosion occurred there in March, killing one and blowing off two arms and a leg of the other. Still, there has been only a relative handful of bombings in New York that the police confidently attribute to black militants, compared to a far larger number of political bombings by whites. Sniping appears to be the preferred style of violence for black militants. At least, as an assistant district attorney put it, if black militants are doing a lot of bombing, they aren’t taking credit for it as readily as militant whites.

IN bombings, of course, much or all of the evidence is destroyed in the perpetration of the crime and the perpetra-

tor can be hours away from the scene when the blast occurs. So the police are not really sure who is responsible for many of the blasts. Speaking in discreet generalities a few days before he announced his departure from the New York Police Department, Commissioner Howard Leary theorized that "a great number of groups and individuals" were doing the bombing. Ultimately, though, our discussion focused on the likes of Bernardine Dohrn and Cathlyn Wilkerson and Sam Melville. The police say Melville confessed to a number of the major bombings in New York, one in Chicago and one in Milwaukee; he recently received a 13- to 18-year prison sentence upon pleading guilty to some of those bombings. Commissioner Leary's high-ceilinged, carpeted office was only about 50 yards from the point where the police headquarters bomb went off, demolishing several rooms, blowing out walls, injuring eight people and causing immeasurable embarrassment to New York's finest. I had been escorted to the office by a Police Academy trainee after having presented identification and having had my briefcase inspected, with apologies, at the building's entrance, precautions that were inaugurated after the blast.

Commissioner Leary talked about the "revolutionaries in our midst"; at the same time he said that "principally small groups are suspect" of the political bombings. Was there any evidence that the groups were linked in a centrally di-

rected revolutionary conspiracy (the Detroit indictment against Miss Dohrn and others spoke of plans to set up a "central committee" to direct bombing in several major cities)?

The police haven't totally discarded that possibility, said Leary, whose resignation a few days later was rumored to have been related to clashes with Mayor Lindsay, one of which was said to involve Leary's unhappiness over City Hall's refusal to acknowledge and investigate a conspiracy to harm policemen. We didn't discuss antipolice plotting as such, but Leary expressed his doubt that a bombing conspiracy existed in any strict sense of the word:

"If you're talking about everyone in a sense knowing and being in sympathy with, let's say, the overthrow of the government, then there is that intercommunication . . . The thought and philosophy is organized, but the deed, when the deed is to be done, it's only organized within the immediate group . . . We don't believe there's total integration and intelligence within their system."

Their system? For all the recognition of what has come to be conventional intelligence in the left—that the ultramilitants have split up into tiny, autonomous "affinity groups"—the police still tend to think in terms of at least a vaguely unified enemy out there. Commissioner Leary, a man who is very careful with his words, even talked of "them" in referring to a recent bombing that appeared, he

said, to be the work of a single individual.

From public pronouncements that by now have become almost ritualized in content, it is clear that to a considerable number of officials throughout the country, and presumably to a sizable share of the citizenry as well, the "they" doing the bombing are not only organized, but are under the direction and control of the Communist party. But it takes only a little poking around the fractured left to realize that whoever the bombers are, they aren't Gus Hall's boys. In fact, bombing receives anything but unanimous approval from the radical left as a revolutionary tactic, and the Communists, who these days sit near the right end of the left, are about as happy with bombing as are Onondaga County Republicans.

A VISIT to the "independent radical newsweekly," The Guardian, on West 22nd Street. Past a message in chalk on a building wall, to whom it may concern: "Your [sic] Next." Up three flights, ring outside a bolted door. A girl considers me as she slowly swings the door open. "Carl Davidson," I explain. She points to a sad-eyed mustached young man in a cluster of desks at the street end of the cluttered loft. Davidson is a former S.D.S. leader, a revolutionary Socialist and one of the chief people on The Guardian, which avoids staff titles. He has already said on the phone that he doesn't want to talk about bombing.

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Almost everyone of any prominence on the left says he won't talk about it, at least not for attribution. However divided the left finds itself on the issue, its members try to keep their differences out of the aboveground press; those who tend to question bombing as a revolutionary tactic would prefer that a good deal less attention be paid to bombing itself.

Davidson does, however, hunt up a copy of a Guardian editorial that, he says, pretty well expresses his viewpoint on bombing. As for the Communists, he suggests that I get a new booklet written by Gil Green, a stalwart of the party who was chairman of the New York State party a while back. Davidson, pulling at his mustache, offers one personal observation: "My objections are tactical, you understand, not moral."

From The Guardian's editorial: "Within the movement . . . we believe it is necessary to argue against and thoroughly discredit the tactic of individual terrorism. We believe it is retrogressive and harmful to the developing revolutionary movement. We believe it bespeaks a fatal lack of understanding of how socialist revolutions are brought about. Never in history has terrorism led to socialist revolution. It never has and it never will . . ."

From Green's booklet, "Terrorism—Is It Revolutionary?" which I picked up later at the Jefferson Book Shop: "It is true, unfortunately, that there has been an excessive preoccupation with rhetoric about violence in a few sections of the new radicalism. There is also a recent inclination on the part of a small number of young people to play the dangerous game of individual counterterror." Green's booklet is thick with what has become a growing leftist jargon used to denounce leftist violence: "individualistic and emotional," "bravado," "discredited panacea," "self-defeating," "romantic." The tract quotes Marx, Lenin and even Che Guevara, whose militant gospel is not often recited by the Communists, in presenting the case that ter-

rorist violence is not the proper path to revolution in the United States and in fact is likely to botch the long, organized revolutionary education of the masses by scarring the hell out of them.

Bombing has been widely scorned in old-left circles as "instant revolution," and a newer leftist offered his own variation on this theme, calling bombing "the heroin of the radical movement." Possibly the ultimate scorn for bombers comes from the ranks of the Trotskyites, or "Trots." Marxist theorist George Novack, writing in a recent issue of the International Socialist Review, a Trotskyite publication, brands the bombers liberals in wolves' clothing. "Marxism long ago disclosed the underlying kinship between liberalism and anarcho-terrorism," he declaims. "Both repudiate reliance upon the independent revolutionary organization . . . the erstwhile liberals turned terrorist, though thoroughly disillusioned with the old methods, are nevertheless still contemptuous of the masses and rely on conspiracy and dynamite to do the job. Terrorism is *petit bourgeois* liberalism temporarily gone berserk."

THE leftist objections to leftist bombings are, as Carl Davidson put it, entirely strategic, not moral. While factions may battle over the revolutionary efficacy of such tactics as ardently, as theologically, as ever, they are virtually unanimous in attacking what they consider the hypocritical outrage of middle Americans. "You should be writing about bombing in Vietnam," one radical told me in refusing to discuss the subject. Sanford (Sandy) Katz, a radical-minded lawyer for the Panther 13 and for Jane Alpert, who pleaded guilty to conspiring to bomb with Sam Melville, allowed that he had "personal qualms about terrorism in advance of raising political consciousness," but quickly added: "Bombing has been going on in the South for years and nobody gave a damn . . . It was unfortunate that somebody got killed at Wisconsin, but Americans are kill-

ing each other by the hundreds every day. All the bombs that have gone off don't even begin to add up to what one B-52 does in Vietnam."

THE positive case for bombing—the rationale of the bombers—is a more difficult matter to find clearly articulated these days. "Exemplary action," some say. The idea behind this pet phrase is that bold, heroic acts such as bombing can be used to inspire the workers to take mass revolutionary action. Since the hardhats' forceful suggestion that they would be on the other side of the barricades come a revolution, the scenario has shifted somewhat, and it may be that the exemplary-action bombers now have the young—high-school age and even younger—primarily in mind. "Kids dig this John Wayne kind of stuff," a participant exclaimed at a recent radical gathering, and a notable increase in high school bombings may suggest he's right. A source with close contacts among the bombers says 9-, 10- and 11-year-olds "are potentially even more revolutionary than teen-agers."

Many radical critics of bombing fear that extreme violence will bring repression. "You know, these phony revolutionaries are doing us all a great disservice that probably is going to result in each and every one of us being rounded up by the pigs," declares a college drop-out who knew some of the people in the 11th Street explosion. And there are radicals who suspect that some major bombings attributed to leftist militants may have been engineered by the right, or even the Administration, to serve as excuses for suppressing the left. Yet it is precisely this repression that some bombers evidently hope to achieve. Stern repressive measures, they feel, would drive liberals into radical ranks and radicals into militant radical ranks, in much the same way that many were supposed to have been radicalized by free-swinging police responses in the streets of Birmingham and Chicago and on campuses from Berkeley to Cambridge.

The possibility that Spiro Agnew may be right and that, "confronted with a choice, the American people would choose the policeman's truncheon over the anarchist's bomb," does not seem to faze some apostles of dynamite in their march toward revolution. "If it will take fascism," said Theodore Gold, one of the three dead bomb-makers found in the 11th Street ruins,

"then we'll have to have fascism."

Some of the revolution-minded see bombing as more an effect than a cause of repression. This spring, before many of the biggest bombs went off, a former S.D.S. organizer told me as we discussed the "movement": "We had power in the streets, but the police came in and the National Guard. You just can't stand up against police every day. I think it's important that the movement have available to itself not just—you know—tactics, on their turf, but we're going to have to carry it to them on our terms if we're serious. We're going to have to do things like planting bombs . . ."

Bombing is also advocated, or justified, by militant leftists in terms of "bringing the war home." I encountered two variations on this theme. One, expressed by Sandy Katz, the lawyer, is that a taste of violence may be good for a society that abhors it at home but has "great toleration in terms of what we do abroad." "Perhaps it's good to see what it looks like," says Katz. In another, more literal sense, "bringing the war home," is seen as the actual onset of revolutionary warfare in the U. S. Bernardine Dohrn's "Declaration of a State of War" was mentioned by a radical source as a particularly lucid presentation of this rationale. The declaration speaks of "the frustration and impotence" that comes from trying to reform the system. "Tens of thousands," it says, "have learned that protest and marches don't do it. Revolution is the only way. We are adapting the classic guerrilla strategy of the Vietcong and the urban guerrilla strategy of the Tupamaros to our own situation here in the most technically advanced country in the world."

This would suggest that bombing, at least in the eyes of Bernardine Dohrn and her crowd, is part of a paramilitary attack. Yet this is the same message that carried the

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threat to attack a "symbol or institution of American injustice." It may be inappropriate or positively inflammatory to compare attacking symbols with tilting at windmills; in any case it is hardly the usual road to military victory. So far, however, the major bombings attributable to white radicals have amounted mainly to attacks against symbols, damaging corporate headquarters, for instance, instead of blowing up factories. Even Commissioner Leary, who described the bombings as "out-and-out criminality," recognized that there was something less than a warlike abandon to them. "The fact that so many of the bombings occur with a minimum of physical injury and fatality," he said, "points up, I think, the want to express and call attention to the cause rather than hurt people. For instance, take this building. If they really wanted to hurt policemen, they certainly could have detonated at a more advantageous time." (The bomb went off at 6:57 P.M., when relatively few policemen were in the building.) In New York, at least, the only deaths from the current crop of bombings have been of the bombers themselves — some measure, perhaps, of the radicals' amateurism in both bomb-making and war-making.

SO far, it would seem that the white radical bombers are engaged more in guerrilla theater than guerrilla warfare. That is how Dr. John P. Spiegel, director of the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University, tends to regard the bombings—as dramatic rather than militarily strategic acts. Dr. Spiegel is a psychiatrist who went into sociology a number of years ago, and he speculates on the bombers' motivations in terms of broader social factors as well as internal hang-ups. He talks, sympathetically, of youthful idealists' frustration over the war and domestic problems, and (less sympathetically), about how

the loss of faith in verbal persuasion has turned some of them to violence. "They have just kind of flipped—words are the least effective instrument. When people turn against what they've been doing all their lives, they turn violently against it. They undergo a conversion process. I think that's what's happened to these people. Words aren't going to do it. Only violence is going to do it."

Why bombing as a particular form of violence? "Because you can attack property rather than people," he says. "I mean you have to snipe at a human object whereas this is a way of symbolically attacking the Establishment without attacking human beings." He also suspects a less conscious motivation: "There is something symbolically satisfying about a pure explosion, the emotional satisfaction and drama attached to it, calling everybody's attention to the fact that something has been done."

We discussed the fact that a good number of bombers, at

least the known or suspected white bombers, appear to have come from affluent, middle-class or upper-middle-class homes. Why would they of all people turn to such an extreme form of anti-Establishment violence? "They have probably identified with their parents' power," he says. "Now the children, because of idealism, are buying a different set of values and a different dream about what America should be. They come from a background where people did get their way, and when they don't get their way because they're outside the mainstream, they decide the heck with all that. The only way to get change, the only new source of power, is violence."

Dr. David Abrahamsen, a New York psychiatrist who is also associated with the Lemberg Center and is the author of "Our Violent Society," says he has seen some of those responsible for recent bombings. He cannot discuss those cases, he says, but, speaking generally and somewhat re-

luctantly, he says that bombers feel "threatened" by society "to the point of survival." He talks of their frustration and sense of helplessness. He also refers to his book, in which he describes "suicidal tendencies," "poor marital relationships," and "absent fathers" as common to many assassins.

I THINK of Sam Melville. Samuel Joseph Melville has been New York's principal bomber so far in the sheer scope of his activities. He was arrested last November while putting a knapsack full of dynamite into an Army truck outside the 69th Regiment Armory and subsequently confessed, F.B.I. agents testified, to bombing the United Fruit Company, Marine Midland Bank, Chase Manhattan Bank, General Motors Building, R.C.A. Building, the Whitehall Street Induction Center and the Federal Building in New York, the Civic Center in Chicago and another building in Milwaukee. He pleaded guilty

to the Federal Building and Whitehall bombings and to the attempted bombing of the Army truck and began serving his 13-to-18-year sentence in June, making him one of the very few persons in the country to have been caught, convicted and imprisoned as a major "political" bomber.

Because Melville pleaded guilty and there was no trial, his private world received very little public exposure. New York State prison authorities do not allow inmate interviews. So the glimpses I was able to get into the life and character of Sam Melville came from people who knew him. At first glance, Melville, now 35, couldn't be a less likely candidate for blowing places up. By all accounts, he was a popular, quiet, gentle young man whose principal pleasures were playing a guitar and singing Old English rounds with a group of friends or strolling in a woods. For most of his adult days, he was married and a father, an attentive and loving father, it is said. On weekends, he frequently sang in church choirs around New York. During the week, he worked as a plumbing draftsman.

On further inspection, the image starts crumbling, however. Melville's parents were divorced when he was a boy; when he was older, he cast off his father's name, Grossman, for that of his favorite writer. From boyhood, he loved music and dreamed of a career as a music teacher, but the need to help support his mother and two sisters thwarted that ambition. His marriage was a rocky proposition, marked by frequent public squabbles with a strong-willed wife. And there were some signs that beneath Melville's apparent gentleness raged a "fury," as one acquaintance put it. A friend recalled: "When we played basketball, which we did a lot on Saturdays in Riverside Park, Sam would get into fights." The same friend said that Melville was an "absolutist." "When he saw evil, it was total evil. He couldn't just see things in degrees."

About four years ago, Melville left his wife and son and took up with a string of girl friends, ending up with two of them in a *menage à trois* in an East Village apartment. One girl eventually moved out, and Melville was left with the other, a pretty Swarthmore graduate, feminist and political radical named Jane Alpert, who was later arrested, pleaded guilty to being part of Melville's plotting

and skipped out on a five-year prison sentence.

Militant friends of Melville refused to talk about him, but a leader of the Women's Liberation movement who knew Sam through mutual friends said he seemed to turn more and more militant and become less and less light-hearted every time she saw him during the year or so before his arrest.

The last time he saw Melville, said Phil Marowlansky,

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a friend for 15 years, was four or five months before the arrest. They met near the Public Library at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, said Marowlansky, a film editor who helped round up respectable friends to vouch for Melville at his bail hearings. "Sam was coming from a demonstration at Times Square," explained Marowlansky. "He said he felt like all the things he knew were like a thousand years ago. I don't want to talk about schizophrenia, but Sam said: 'When are people going to learn?' He couldn't believe that people didn't see what was happening. He was totally frustrated and very angry. He talked about oppression. I got the impression that he was going to do something violent—violent to himself. My wife and I talked about it that night. I had a feeling he was going to hurt himself."

Though Melville may conform somewhat to a type often predisposed to violence, there is nothing to suggest that his bombing can be explained away as simply the warped behavior of a severely troubled man. In fact, these glimpses of Melville suggest as much as anything how perilously close today's political bomber may be to the solid citizen, which may say more about our society than it does about individual idiosyncracies. "None of the bombers I've known," says Sandy Katz, "were salivating at the thought of setting off bombs. They were extremely reluctant to do so."

I should add that at the same time I came away from my explorations with the firm impression that some of the bombers and those who applaud them are supremely self-indulgent, hysterical or certifiably mad and would be a menace to any society, not least of all the utopias under whose banners they so proudly detonate.

THE making of a bomber these days is evidently a very complex matter. The making of a bomb is much simpler, as Melville's example also suggests. From the list of books found by F.B.I. agents in his East Second Street apartment: "Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operation," "Irregular Forces," "Booby Traps" and "Explosives and Demolitions," all U.S. Army manuals.

One area the Senate hearings focused on was the wide availability of literature on how to make and use bombs. The public reading room at the Library of Congress, testified one witness, lists 850 titles under "Explosives," 250 under "Blasting" and 34 under "Incendiary Bombs." Army manuals are available for the asking (the Army promised to look into the possibility of restricting the distribution of certain manuals). Mail-order houses specializing in books on guerrilla warfare distribute, with a free enterpriser's impartiality, to left and right alike. One of the favorite tracts, which has cropped up in Minuteman, Weatherman and Black Panther circles, is "150 Questions for a Guerrilla," which contains detailed diagrams and formulas for making bombs at home.

In New York, both the Black Panther newspaper and Rat, a militant leftist paper, have printed formulas for explosives. There are perils in such journalism. In an April issue, Rat printed a recipe from a Weatherman leaflet for a self-igniting Molotov cocktail. In the next issue, the newspaper included a box declaring: "Do Not Follow Recipes on Weatherman Leaflet in Last Rat." It explained the dangers of doing so and apologized: "It was a serious political mistake for Rat to print this leaflet without a postscript explaining that its contents were not checked out by the staff and were not intended as a recipe for Rat readers."

If there is something unreal about do-it-yourself bomb-making, the unreality seems to have pervaded the militant left's playing with dynamite from the start. The S.D.S.'s first public expression of in-

terest in the subject, for instance, amounted to a purposeful joke. Two years ago, S.D.S. ranks were heavily infiltrated, and in an effort to draw the infiltrators away from serious workshops at the 1968 mid-year convention at East Lansing, Mich., Workshop 10, "Sabotage and Explosives," was set up. The ruse worked. Lawrence I. Kihnel Jr., who, as a young undercover agent for the Jefferson Parish (La.) sheriff's office, attended the workshop, says: "It seemed that everyone who didn't fit the mold, who appeared to be agents, undercover workers, F.B.I. or local police units, all went to the workshop. They all wore sunglasses. The thing to do was look funky."

But the idea of sabotage seemed good in itself to some real S.D.S. members who also showed up, and they decided to hold a serious workshop on explosives the next day. Kihnel managed to attend it, too. The talk was casual, even jovial, as the young people discussed the use of violence to make a community more responsive to demands and the role of violence as a last phase in a revolutionary overthrow. Kihnel told of the workshop in a Senate hearing last year. He is now in basic training in the Army in California. I phoned him at his company headquarters and asked if any of the better-known bombing suspects at large had attended the explosives workshops. There was one person, he recalled — Cathlyn Wilkerson.

MANGLED bodies and ruined property are evidence that dynamite or black powder or a simple bottle filled with gasoline can become intensely real with the application of a match or an electric charge. Perhaps they're a good deal more real than some of their youthful, middle-class users appreciate. Real, but in ultimate political and social terms, how serious?

Albert Seedman, chief of detectives for southern Manhattan, where most of the bombs in the city have gone off, regards the incidents as very serious indeed. "Suddenly it's become a big problem, not only dangerous—you know, a threat to life and property—but it creates a feeling of helplessness in people. Calls come in by the hundreds after a major bombing wanting the police to search their premises. People are afraid." With police stations and cars among the major targets, policemen themselves are undoubtedly among the most uneasy people around. A mark of their

anxiety is the fact that since the bombing of Police Headquarters 600 patrolmen and trainees have been assigned on each shift to guard police stations and screen visitors.

The Weathermen's ambitious and perhaps somewhat romantic idea of guerrilla warfare—into which they lump not only bombings but ghetto assaults on policemen and sometimes broader, vaguer visions of world revolution—has been accepted, even amplified by some aboveground publications and officials. Senator McClellan, who has presided over the Senate's bombing hearings as one of the patriarchs of that patriarchal body and who clearly represents an older order, told me that he thought the roots of bombing lay in the faltering moral leadership of the churches and the breakdown of parental discipline. If the phenomenon continued and grew, he said, it could lead to the imposition of martial law, at least on a local basis.

Yet indications are that only a small number of young people are involved in the political bombings, and the possibility exists that, cut off from other sectors of the left, these numbers may be shrinking. The Lemberg Center's Dr. Spiegel says that the bombing may represent the disintegration of the militant left. If so, bombing may be a dead end in the escalation of radical violence. Then again, there are those, including Jerome S. Adlerman, general counsel on the Senate's Subcommittee on Investigations, who think that an ultimate, bloodier stage of guerrilla-style violence may lie ahead—the U.S. may follow Latin America, and now Canada, in experiencing the kidnapping and possible assassination of prominent public figures.

The New Yorker to whom bombing is of the most direct professional concern admits that he isn't at all sure what its course will be. "I wonder if we're in some early stage of some well-thought-out plan," says Lieutenant O'Neil of the bomb squad. "It doesn't seem to me that these people have gone into this aspect of it. The amount of thought that has gone into this is childish. It's not a good revolution. It's too haphazard." Still, O'Neil isn't ruling out a possibility that many bombers themselves must be fervently clinging to: "Maybe this is the way revolutions start. I don't know. Are they haphazard at first and then does some genius come along and put all this together? I don't know." Who does? ■



Wreckage. A chemistry stockroom damaged last August in the explosion at the University of Wisconsin's Mathematics Research Center, the biggest blast so far, in which one person died.

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3016
Live
Exploded Pipe Bomb. Chase Manhattan Bank E. Tremont & Washington
6, 1970 18 West 11 St. Bomb Sect. # 816

577 EXPLOSION 6TH ST. STATION HOUSE

Record. Part of the "active file" of the New York Police Department's bomb squad. The squad's log is already twice as thick for this year as it was for all of last year.