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THE WELFARE STATE: A DEFENSE

In examining specific areas in which the liberal is engaged in battles to initiate relevant policies, it is to be understood that it is not possible to speak of that monolithic entity, the liberal. Indeed, it is often necessary to consider several different policies and solutions for the same situation, all authored and advocated by liberals, so the policies of which I will speak can only be said to be advocated by that hypothetical creature, the average liberal. This occurs most frequently in regard to those policies concerning public welfare, the entire body of which may be considered under the collective heading, "The Welfare State". This includes established policies such as Social Security, federal relief, unemployment compensation, and the designating of disaster areas eligible for federal assistance, as well as such planned innovations as extensive federal aid to education, medical care for the aged, etc. The average liberal may be depended upon to heartily support these and other measures, with some degree of disagreement with regard to specific elements of the program. All, it must be pointed out, are necessary within the framework of a society which seeks to eliminate poverty and needless suffering.

Most of these policies are strongly objected to in part or in whole by opponents of the liberals, often for specious reasons. The entire concept of the Welfare State, a term of contempt coined in the distant past by the right-wing of Anglo-American politics, is highly repugnant to the conservative, who normally objects on the grounds that feeding, clothing and sheltering those who refuse to work for a living simply leads to further procrastination; and that, in any event, it is not the province of the federal government to indiscriminately grant handouts. Finally, welfare programs are objected to on the grounds that they inevitably lead to government controls, which the conservative is anxious to avoid.

The first argument is totally specious. Most liberals will grant the proposition that the welfare lists contain their quota of lazy people who refuse to shift for themselves as long as they can get a free handout. However, most of the indigents on the welfare rolls are people genuinely unable to find work (or unable to work at all for one reason or another), and without more prosperous relatives from whom to borrow money. Their choice, under present conditions, is either the Salvation Army, the government welfare rolls, or starvation. To remove from existence the greatest barrier between a certain body of unfortunates and literal starvation simply because some recipients of its services are dishonest and slovenly is a conspicuous instance of throwing out the baby with the bath water. Despite the desire on the part of many Americans to ignore this unfortunate fact, there remains the obvious truth that a certain number of citizens have recourse to only three alternatives in their struggle for survival: (1) accept charity, primarily

from the federal government; (2) steal; (3) starve. Humanity alone dictates the course for this government; it is grossly cruel to withdraw from the populace the services of the government welfare agencies merely because a certain percentage of the recipients of those services abuse them.

The second objection, that free handouts are not the province of the federal government, is well-taken and, I dare say, few liberals would really disagree if they considered carefully this point. Unfortunately, the federal government appears to be the court of last resort in this matter, since the vaunted generosity of the individual is not conspicuously in evidence here. Ideally, no man should starve while another has many times the necessary food for his own sustenance. Perhaps the most attractive facet of a Marxist/anarchist society is that, in theory, no man eats his fill while another lacks the bare essential nutrition. In practice, of course, this is not the case. Nor is it the case in this capitalist society: there has been no noticeable stampede on the part of the American wealthy to dole out their bounty to the impoverished elements of society. Until such time as such notably well-to-do conservatives as William F. Buckley or Adolph Menjou decide to use their wealth to support a few hundred welfare recipients, thereby freeing the federal government of at least a portion of the burden, the government will have to continue legislating charity. If the federal government ceases to legislate charity, there appears to be little chance that it will come from another source. So, while free handouts are probably not the province of the government, only the government is available to perform this function.

The final objection, that welfare programs lead, in the long run, to controls, is a weak one. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the bare mention of whose name will incite to riot the conservatives in the audience, tendered the classic reply to this point when he commented, "People don't eat in the long run; they eat today and tomorrow." But this, in actuality, is not a relevant reply to the current objections, since it concerns expediency rather than denial of the projected outcome. That is to say, if welfare programs will actually come to have the eventual result envisioned by the conservative, then it is no real defense to claim that they are necessary. But--and here stands the weakness of the objection--it has never been satisfactorily proven that the moderate welfare programs in which we are engaged could lead to eventual dictatorial controls, or, even if they could, that they inevitably must. As a matter of actual fact, no amount (within reason) of welfare programs can lead to anything approximating totalitarian controls, provided they are instituted within our present form of government. Controls may be levied; but as long as the government is merely an extension of the people, they will be controls levied on the people by themselves. Opponents of welfare programs or any other variety of government intervention uniformly fall into the error of thinking of the government as some abstract entity, blundering its way here and there of its own accord, completely out of control. This has often been true of governments in the past; it is true of some today. But the government of the United States of America does not happen to be one of these.

So long as the people retain the control over the government which they now possess, the abstract entity known as "the government" cannot come to control the people. Giving a few dollars per month to the widowed mother of eight children who cannot possibly work for her and her childrens' sustenance, is not going to magically transform our free, democratic republic into a totalitarian oligarchy. Paying the medical bills in whole or in part of the indigent aged is not going to miraculously create a slave state out of this country. Granting a monthly pension from the federal government to those Americans fortu-

nate enough to reach the age of sixty-five is not going to suddenly toss out the practice of free elections. The only freedoms likely to be impaired by our welfare programs are the freedom to starve and the freedom to die for lack of medical attention. These "freedoms", I dare say, we can well do without.

One further genuinely significant objection to a portion of the welfare plans previously mentioned remains: the objection to compulsory Social Security. This is usually raised by conservatives, but there is also a minor body of liberal opinion (of which this writer is a part) which tends toward the proposition that a portion of the value of Social Security is negated by the fact that it is compulsory. It is plainly unfair, the arguments against it say, to force anyone to subscribe to Social Security or any other program which is produced for the ultimate benefit of the individual. The individual should have the right to decide for himself whether or not his paycheck is to be dented by the "withheld" Social Security subscription. Granted, the individual should plan for the future, but if he doesn't care to exercise foresight, that is his concern and his alone.

Opposing this viewpoint within the liberal structure, the greater number of liberals will point out that it is the duty of the government to do for the individual not only what he can not do for himself, but also what he will not do for himself. If Social Security were not compulsory, they point out, not only the relatively small percentage of people who presently oppose it, but also a vast number of others, would fail to subscribe. Nevertheless, they would expect the government to support them in their old age; and the government would be forced to oblige, since we obviously cannot allow people to starve. Voluntary Social Security, in short, entails letting a great majority have their cake and eat it too--spend their own money recklessly, and still receive handouts from the government later. Since the government is, after all, merely an extension of the people, and since it has not a single dollar of its own to spend, this means simply that we shall be eternally saddled with the care and feeding of pensioners who unwisely spent their own money rather than saving it for the traditional "rainy day".

Despite the logic of this rebuttal, the disgruntled minority of the liberal camp may be seen stomping off, muttering, "But it just isn't right to force a man to 'save' his hard-earned money."

The conservative apparently looks upon welfare programs as being another step in the road toward Socialism. This, of course, is absurd. The liberal establishment does not advocate a socialist society for this country (although individual liberals may also be Socialists, they are a minority even within the liberal structure). The Marxist concept of absolutely equal class and wealth has a certain fascination, on the surface; however, there are many faults in this system, the greatest of which is that it effectively destroys initiative, without which a society cannot operate. (This is one of the major reasons by Soviet Russia, supposedly solidly based on the principles of Marxism, almost immediately abandoned those principles once the control of the Communists had been assured.) For this and a variety of other reasons, Marxist Socialism is unacceptable to the vast majority of liberals. We are not attempting to equalize all wealth with welfare programs; we are simply attempting to impose a limit near the bottom of the poverty/prosperity guage. We are saying, in effect, "You may become as rich or stay as poor as you like within the limits of the law. But no one will drop below this limit; no one will starve."

The remaining major component of the welfare system, extensive federal aid to education, has not been previously commented upon because its conditions are slightly different. The purpose of the program is much the same as the purpose of any welfare program: to insure the

public good. But the objections to it slightly different, being based almost entirely on consideration of the possibility of government control. And in this instance, the possibility is somewhat more realistic. If the federal government is to grant funds to public school systems, the conservative prophecies, then there is a danger--a very real danger--that the federal government will come to insist on a certain degree of control over the uses to which this assistance is put, and, hence, over the specific content of the instruction. The liberal replies that he is cognizant of this danger, but that once again he does not wish to discard the baby with the bath water. He believes that federal aid to education is an absolute necessity for the public welfare, and since he realizes that control over instruction is a possibility, he wishes to insure that infinite care is taken that this does not occur.

This avowal, not unexpectedly, does little to soothe the anger of the conservative. He is usually willing to admit that a program which will not give control over instruction to the federal government is possible, but since he opposes federal aid to public education as a matter of principle, this alone does not convince him that such a program should be undertaken.

Thus, it is necessary to ask, does the necessity for such a program justify its existence? The answer to this most liberals would consider obvious. In our head-to-head competition with the Communist bloc of countries, knowledge must rank as our single most important commodity. (Knowledge is, of course, desirable as an end in itself, but since this argument is unlikely to impress a conservative, I have chosen to contemplate only the practical advantages.) Protecting and increasing this commodity is not simply a matter of insuring sufficient colleges and universities, however important such excellent schools may be. No college will be of assistance to a student whose academic life by incompetent public education systems, employing insufficient equipment and incompetent instructors, as are those in some areas of this country. It is necessary to improve virtually the entire educational system in many cities and states. To do this requires money. In some instances, the individual states are unable to supply sufficient funds; in other instances, they are simply unwilling to do so. Under the protective banner of "States' Rights" the conservative and the reactionary defend the latter group of states (or even individual cities within states), protesting that the federal government has not the right to do for them what they will not do for themselves, but only what they can not do for themselves.

This argument neglects the very basic point that the damage is done only indirectly to the "state" itself, and more directly to the children (who, by virtue of being unable to vote, are not properly responsible for decisions of the state). Of course, this in turn will affect the state, but the voters who turn down appropriations for education are apparently incapable of this foresight. But because it is the future adult generation, not the present voting generation which is harmed, it is not only unfortunate, but grossly criminal to allow this situation to continue. If the states or cities shirk the responsibility of providing for the education of their own children, then it is obvious that some other agency must usurp that function. The federal government is the logical agency for this purpose; it and only it possesses the necessary funds to undertake the task of educating our children on a national basis.

However, we must never forget the warning of the conservative not to allow control of instruction by federal authorities to take place. There are several programs with built-in systems of protection, but all such suggested plans suffer by virtue of being excessively com-

plicated. Actually, simplicity would appear to be the most efficient watchdog: a simple plan by which money is presented to the individual states with the proviso that it is to be utilized for school facilities, educational equipment, school administration, or the training and salarizing of instructors, with no other restrictions. This leaves no possibility for accusations of control against the federal government. The only control inherent in the plan is that the federal money granted must be used for education, hardly an unreasonable demand under the circumstances. No government edicts outline on what subjects emphasis is to be placed, there is no provision--indeed, no possibility, if the bill is properly worded--for any specific demands or "requests" accompanying the grants; in short, no controls.

Of course, such a plan is subject to local abuses by individual cities and states; as within any such loose framework, corruption and mismanagement of funds are ever-present possibilities. But the only foolproof method by which to prevent such local abuses in any program channeling federal money into state coffers is absolute, rigid federal control. And this cure, of course, is worse than the disease.

"Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. The Party intellectual knows in which direction his memories must be altered; he therefore knows that he is playing tricks with reality; but by the exercise of doublethink he also satisfies himself that reality is not violated. The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity and hence of guilt. Doublethink lies at the very heart of Ingsoc, since the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception while retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies--all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth." --George Orwell, in "1984".

A FOOTNOTE ON TRUTH AND REASON

Much has been written in this magazine regarding moral conduct, the value of justice (and the desirability of an ultimate just society, however much an unapproachable ideal that may be), ethical premises, and the projected improvement of the American society. All of this may be considered under the collective heading of the just society. But what of the individual in all of this? After all, changes in the social pattern and refinements of the law are not alone sufficient to institute any higher order in this civilization. Ultimately, the improvement must come from the population itself; no improved laws, no shift in the social pattern will suffice to take the place of individual enlightenment. But this lofty goal is perhaps the least approachable ever conceived: promoting the enlightenment of humanity entails something more than achieving universal literacy, and it appears obvious that we have come a depressingly short distance towards this goal in the last two thousand years. I do not presume to know how this evolution may be ac-

accomplished, but perhaps it will be of some assistance to realize what is necessary.

First, as I have already implied, any further improvement in what we might term the "national conscience" or "racial enlightenment" is unlikely to take place as a result of legalistic devices. The United States Constitution is perhaps the most perfect document of its kind ever devised, and yet it hardly approaches insuring anything approximating true justice. (The fact that our system is probably better than any other on the face of the earth is not necessarily cause for shouting from the rooftops. After all, even a very inferior stalk of wheat stands out in a field of wiregrass. Or, to shift to a metaphor popularized by Winston Churchill, a glow-worm is a worm nevertheless.) There are, to be sure, individual laws which are unjust, stupid or otherwise unacceptable. But the legal system as a whole is hardly subject to further large-scale improvement; we have gone an absurdly insufficient distance along the road to improvement, and there is not in our laws the mechanism for further advance. Plainly, then, we must look elsewhere for advance.

Elsewhere, in this instance, is simply to the people, the individual components of society. This is an extremely ancient concept, but no less true because of this. Again, I do not presume to know how this feat is to be accomplished; nor am I certain that it can be accomplished. But of this I am certain: if the human race is to make further advance, it must be accomplished. Perhaps I may be so bold as to presume to know also what form this advance must take. If I say that I am concerned with increasing the intellectual capacity of the average citizen, it will be, in a broad sense, true. But this is an objective open to much misinterpretation. I am not particularly concerned with making every man a scientist; nor does it seem necessary to me that governments be ruled, as Plato wished, by philosophers. The great necessity, in my view, is that the people become sufficiently aware to adequately rule themselves. There is nothing particularly original about this concept, either: men have been saying for uncounted years that democracies are workable only with a politically and ethically enlightened populace. I am not at all certain that our populace possesses those qualifications in sufficient quantity.

This failing of our society has been commented upon frequently by certain enlightened elements of our society, but in such a way as to amuse me with their misapprehension of the problem. One often hears comments to the effect that an "alarming tendency is developing" in our society towards conformity of opinion, blind faith in the revelations of lofty Authority. To comment with shocked realization that such a horrid tendency is now coming into being is to needlessly insult our current society, which thereby is implied to have caused the ignorance. Of course, this dependence upon "blind faith" is no innovation of contemporary American society; it has been with us (and by "us" I refer to the human race) since our beginnings. Without it, organized religion could never have developed. Without it, most wars throughout history could not have been fought. Without it, Hitler could not have risen to power in Germany. What is alarming to me is that despite our technology and supposedly vast knowledge, we have done so little to eradicate this quality of Homo sapiens.

Blind faith is capable of doing more damage than a nuclear bomb, if wielded properly by a demagogue. It has been responsible throughout history for the greatest abominations on the name of Man, from the Crusades through the Inquisition to the Third Reich. All of these hideous ventures received support from a populace which failed to exercise the human property of thought, but instead chose to rely unquestioningly on the rumblings of Authority--divine, papal, and governmental, respec-

tively. To those of you who say that this could not happen in this country and this century, I say to you that you have been victimized by this self-same human failing: believing, accepting, without thinking.

Knowledge is the antithesis to blind faith; truth destroys falsity. If the greatest fault of man is his willingness to accept without question the pontifications of a supposed Authority, then the obvious solution to this is to instill in the individual a questioning, critical faculty. The method by which this is to be accomplished, however, presents a problem. Virtually every organization of any power depends in part for its support and existence upon this self-same blind faith, and therefore discovering an agency which will support such a program is a virtual impossibility. As Philip Wylie has commented, "Schools don't teach a child to think, because a thinking child wouldn't think much of school." Likewise, both government and religion must be opposed to such a program, since both would be in very dire straits were it not for blind acceptance. (Government and, no doubt, religion, would continue to exist in an enlightened society, but they would both find themselves virtually powerless, mere vestiges of their former splendor.) This, the initiation of such a program, is one of the problems which this minor thinker could not even begin to solve.

The nature of such a program, however, is less difficult to imagine, and an examination of this aspect might be interesting. First of all, such a program would most profitably be instituted in the public schools. Minds which have already matured and have embraced one or more of the many blind faiths are virtually impossible to change. This fact is well known to anyone who has ever attempted to utilize logic and reasoning against the arguments of, say, a person who believes the world to have been created in 4004 BC. The net effect of even the most lucid argument is precisely nil when directed against the sort of mindless vegetable likely to advance such an unreasonable opinion; it is as pointless as throwing pebbles at a 37,000 pound mass of primeval protoplasm. Children, however, are less subject to dogmatism; they are, in a word, "impressionable". This quality lends itself well to indoctrination, and on an abstract plane, I suppose, the indoctrination I propose is no less unethical than any other type (although it is indoctrination against indoctrination, as it were). The purpose of the program, quite simply, would be to teach agnosticism in the broadest possible sense of that word; each and every child in each and every school would be taught to accept nothing without subjecting it to critical examination. Currently, the intent of our instruction seems to be precisely the opposite of this: children are taught, actively or passively, to conform intellectually as well as physically, to believe what "everybody else" believes, to believe unquestioningly that which is stated by supposed Authority, divine or national. This is an extremely unhealthy tendency, and one which desperately needs to be reversed. There are no doubt other faults in our schools, but they are by and large academically adequate. It is to the destruction of this single tendency that our energies should be largely directed.

What I propose will no doubt be attacked in some quarters as atheistic and unpatriotic, when in point of fact it is neither. I am not particularly interested in promoting atheism; but I am interested in protecting children from the grasping talons of religion until they are mature enough to make their own decision. I am equally interested in protecting them from atheism, until they are capable of deciding for themselves, for atheism is, after all, merely another dogmatic doctrine of blind faith. As for the program being unpatriotic, I suppose that depends upon one's point of view. The only group to which I feel that I belong, and to which I owe allegiance, is the human race; patriotism to something less, at the expense of the larger group of people, is des-

picable.

The basic premise to be taught in an effort to create enlightened individuals is simply that truth is a desirable quality, and therefore ought to be actively pursued by every man. Nothing less will suffice. Anything which seeks to deny or distort truth is inherently immoral. It is equally immoral to accept an assertion without first subjecting it to critical inquiry to discover its truth or lack thereof. G.G. Simpson, who agrees with this philosophy, has phrased it much better than I am able to: "Among other consequences of this morality, it follows that blind faith (simple acceptance without review of evidence or rational choice between alternatives) is immoral. Such faith is immoral whether it is placed in a theological doctrine, a political platform, or a scientific theory." Another noted scientist, Julian Huxley, appears to share this philosophy. With regard to the lack of validity of the Catholic pronouncements on birth control, Dr. Huxley notes: "But to me they are also wrong because they are asserted absolutely and dogmatically, instead of being conclusions arrived at by free inquiry as to what is best to do in particular circumstances."

That most persons or organizations would refuse to allow their children or members to be instructed in the development and use of the critical faculty is, I believe, a sign of basic cowardice. They are admitting a depressingly small degree of faith in their religion and political system by refusing to allow them to be examined in the light of reason and logic. This idiocy may have been justifiable in the superstition-ridden Middle Ages, but there are no longer any sufficient excuses for a refusal to search for truth. The greatest gift we can give our children is the right to question and criticize, and from there to improve and refine what the light of truth has shown to be faulty.

Truth cannot be harmed by subjection to critical inquiry; it is only falsity which can be demolished by inspection.

"Criticism is the examination and test of propositions of any kind which are offered for acceptance, in order to find out whether they correspond to reality or not. The critical faculty is a product of education and training. It is a mental habit and power. It is a prime condition of human welfare that men and women should be trained in it. It is our only guarantee against delusion, deception, superstition, and misapprehension of ourselves and our earthly circumstances." --William Graham Sumner, in "Folkways".

HARRY WARNER JR. COMMENTS BRIEFLY ON #35

"In this latest issue I liked best your semi-fiction sandwich. It's a gratifying relief from the truisms and bombastic statements of the obvious to which most of your current collection of letterhacks confine themselves. I don't know if you dreamed up this future because you believed it's liable to happen or simply through the science fiction writer's favorite tactic, that of seizing upon any trend and imagining what would happen if it continued to the ultimate end imaginable: Bradbury's future in which walking is so rare that a man can get arrested for it or Leiber's little story about the girl who ruined the post office system by writing a personal letter to someone in a day when nothing but advertisements and other third class mail was being posted. I believe that this procedure is more likely to create an entertaining story than to turn into accurate prophency. However, you've done it pretty well except for a few details in the action narrative that suggest unfamiliarity with real violence. A man in that mess would be more likely to be trying to keep his bowels under control than to be

worrying about trembling hands, and an individual who is being beaten to death does not normally go to the trouble of closing his eyes before dying.

"Catholic authorities have come out with several statements in recent years, explaining that there would be no conflict with Christianity if intelligent life were found on other planets. (I think it may be more accurate to say if intelligent life were found on any planet, because there's some doubt about whether it exists on this one.) The reasoning is that Christ came to save this world's men and it would not conflict with theology if we found intelligent life on another world which had no record of a visit from a son of God. However, I haven't yet seen any explanation of how the Vatican will squirm out of the situation if these promising dolphins do turn out to have intelligence approximately the same as man and the atheists start to ask embarrassing questions about why Jesus didn't save them while he was here.

"I am surprised to find so many of your contributors using 'theist' so uniformly and consistently. I know that it's a perfectly good word and they're using it correctly, but it's still a rather neglected word in most circles. You'll find 'believer' or 'religious person' or 'Christian' more popular. Maybe this is happening all over the world and I'm not aware of it, instead of being a Kipple phenomenon. I woke up one morning to discover that medication had taken the place of medicine during the past two years and I hadn't been aware of the change-over at all." (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland.)

LOFTUS BECKER JR. SAYS A FEW WORDS ABOUT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

"Two additions to my last letter--one, the conclusion that you say I have 'surreptitiously introduced' about the efficacy of capital punishment as a deterrent to crime is a conclusion that I was doing my best not to introduce--the point I was trying to make was that the abolition of capital punishment, as far as one can tell from the statistics, has no effect one way or the other on the crime rate.

"The second is on the 'capital punishment is discriminatory' subject. I'm still not convinced that it is, though I make no claim that the research I have done is definitive. But a search through the last few years of New York Times indices revealed no instances of a rich person committing murder, rape, or even armed robbery, which is a capital crime in some places--with the one exception of Suzanne Clift, a Boston girl who shot her boyfriend last year. As I remember, she was allowed to plead guilty to manslaughter by the local prosecutor, and with fairly good reason--the defense could have made a good case for temporary insanity, and she had just found out she was pregnant and her lover had some days earlier (not knowing she was pregnant) mentioned that he had no intention of marrying her. The chances of a jury convicting anyone of first-degree murder under such circumstances are, I think, quite slim. The point is still, then, that murders among the rich are rare enough that even the chaplain and warden at San Quentin might never have run across a rich murderer or rapist. (A couple of rich murderers, by the way, were executed in England over the last five or ten years for killing relatives in order to get inheritances more quickly.) (Unless I misremember badly, Cheryl Crane (daughter of Lana Turner) was accused of stabbing to death her stepfather a couple of years ago. I don't recall the disposition of the case, but I'm certain the sentence was light--in fact, I believe the girl is currently free. Somehow, I doubt that a penniless, gum-chewing kid from Brooklyn who knifed her stepfather would have been so fortunate as to be out of jail in four years or so. Of course, I may be sticking my foot in my mouth, since I recall so little about this case.)

"I will admit that my case is weak. The New York Times does not

specialize in reporting murders, and the American Bar Association has just published a report showing that in general poor defendants receive stiffer sentences than even moderately well-off ones. The ABA report, though, based most of its conclusions on non-capital crimes (robbery, arson, etc.) and since I have read only a digest of the report and not the original, I don't know how much relevance to the argument at hand the report has." (Winthrop F-24, Harvard, Cambridge 38, Mass.)

"Hermotimus, I cannot show what truth is, so well as wise people like you and your professor; but one thing I do know about it, and that is that it is not pleasant to the ear; falsehood is far more esteemed; it is prettier, and therefore pleasanter; while Truth, conscious of its purity, blurts out downright remarks, and offends people." --Lucian, in the dialogue "Hermotimus".

LEN MOFFATT EXPLORES HIS AGNOSTICISM

"As a fire-baptized agnostic I suppose I should say a few words in defense of agnosticism. Actually, I don't feel that agnosticism needs defending, and if it did I'm not sure I'm the ideal defender. My definition of the term may be different from that of other agnostics, not to mention the definitions provided by all-out atheists, church-going Christians, et al.

"To begin with, my attitude regarding religions, faiths, philosophical beliefs, etc., is--for the most part--live and let live. I'm not the least bit interested in converting others to my way of thinking or believing, and by the same token I expect others to respect my attitude by not forcibly (with word or deed) trying to convert me to their belief. I'm willing to discuss such subjects with others if they wish; I'm always willing to look at new evidence for or against my belief or their belief--but be damned sure it's new evidence, i.e., evidence or arguments that I haven't already heard or investigated. The people who come to my door with self-righteous preachments and Bible-quoting tracts are wasting their time and mine. I'm usually polite, even respectful, but our conversations are usually of short duration. These poor people are working with a handicap, of course: not only the handicap of being able to see only one side of the subject, but also the handicap of not knowing that once upon a time I too believed that there was only One Way, and that all other Ways led to eternal hell-fire and damnation.

"Since I no longer believe in a sadistic God, why then am I not an atheist instead of an agnostic? The answer is simple. I rather like the way H. Allen Smith puts it in his autobiographical 'To Hell in a Handbasket':

'I have no religion, unless you consider agnosticism to be a religion. I do not know. That is all. I do not know as passionately as Bishop Sheen and Billy Graham and Norman Vincent Peale say that they do know. I have a strong suspicion that there is no such creature as an angel, but I do not know because I have no evidence.' (The italics are Smith's.)

"And that's a pretty good definition of my own agnosticism: I do not know. Nobody has presented irrefutable proof that God does--or does not--exist. Perhaps there is a God, a super-being beyond the limits of our imagination, who created or somehow put into existence the original material out of which the entire known and unknown universe, including

both the animate and inanimate, evolved, grew, or was formed, Perhaps this theoretical 'original material' is God. Perhaps it isn't. Perhaps there is no super-being. Perhaps the so-called 'original material' always existed, and chance, coincidence or what-have-you caused it to explode, implode, reform, evolve, grow, split, produce, you-name-it... Perhaps, maybe, could be; but who knows? Not I, nor Mr. Smith, nor the Shadow, for that matter.

"That's why I consider the compleat atheist to be as much of a prejudiced, narrow-minded fanatic as the prejudiced, narrow-minded Fundamentalist. I think it's more fun my way. I can get along with my fellow man, not because I year for an unearthly paradise, not because I fear eternal punishment, but simply because it is the practical thing to do. And I can defend myself, my loved ones, and my home against those who haven't learned to be practical, without having to rationalize my defense by claiming that 'God is on my side'.

"If there is a Creator (or Creators, for that matter--when discussing the unknown, why limit one's imagination?), I'm reasonably certain that he, it, or they would have to be somewhat on the omnipotent side--obviously. I don't build limiting fences around my imagination, but I do realize that my capacity to imagine is inherently limited. So I have to use such terms as omnipotent to symbolize what such a Creator might be like. And realizing that I am a mere speck of dust in the big old universe, I can arrive at the conclusion that interest in me, as an individual, on the part of a Creator or Creators is--in all probability--nil. I can accept probabilities, but I do not accept them as facts until they are proven to be facts.

"I do believe that anything is possible--possible, mind you, not probable. For instance, it is possible that the desk lamp beside me will speak to me. Perhaps it will say, 'I am Flim, son of Flam, and a Special Messenger from the Cause of all other causes and effects. You are an effect, as well as a cause, and the time has come for you to see the light and give all that you have to the John Birch Society.'

"Naturally, my first reaction would be to fall out of my chair, or give what is known in song and story as a 'start'. My next reaction would be to assume that it was some sort of trick, that somebody, somehow, had wired my desk lamp for sound, and was speaking to me through a hidden microphone, or through a radio broadcasting unit. I would then examine the lamp very closely, and finding nothing that looked suspicious, I would probably go on to the assumption that it was a freak radio broadcast. After all, people have picked up broadcasts with their tooth-fillings, and I once picked up a local dance program on an old wire-recorder. So why not a lamp? This would be my final conclusion--unless something else happened. If the lamp continued to speak, and addressed itself directly to me, mentioning things in my personal life (or perhaps discussing the contents of this letter), and if it then started to float in the air and follow me around--would I be frightened?

"You bet. But I'm afraid I start talking back, trying to find out what it was all about, what was in store for me, etc. Of course, I might flip my lid--one must assume that hearing the lamp and seeing it float isn't an indication that I had already flipped. Let's assume that Anna hears and sees it too, that we call in the neighbors and they observe the same phenomenon--in short, that there is no question that the lamp is indeed talking and floating. We would suspect extraterrestrials, even if we couldn't at first bring ourselves to believe that this little old lamp had turned into a messenger from God. But we might come to that conclusion, given further evidence. Now I submit that such an event is possible. Prove to me that it isn't and you may very well have the proof that the atheists I have known lacked.

"Such an event is possible--yes. But probable--no. I cannot accept it as a probability. This lamp has been setting on my desk for several months now, and it hasn't once said a word or made any attempt to rise and float in the air. It jiggles a little while I'm typing, but I rather believe that this is caused by certain physical vibrations. I could be wrong of course. Maybe the jiggling is an indication that it is working up to its talk-and-float routine, and maybe it jiggles only when I type so I'll think that it is my heavy-handed typewriter pounding that is causing the jiggle. But somebody--or the lamp--will have to prove it to me. I'm an agnostic; I'm willing to listen and to learn, and in the meantime--I do not know." (10202 Belcher, Downy, Calif.)

JOHN BOARDMAN COMMENTS ON #36

"I enjoyed the lead article in #36. But Goldwater as an integrationist is a portrait that somehow does not ring true. If a man announces his support for a certain policy, and opposes the steps which are need to effectuate this policy, he is effectively opposing that policy despite his words to the contrary. Since, in practice, the federal government is the only body that can defend the rights of southern Negroes, integrationists, and liberals against the conservative governments of those states, no sincere integrationist can consistently oppose the use of the power of the federal government in enforcing these rights.

"The troubles of Baltimore's Murray family, strength to their elbows, have all been well and fairly reported in what's left of New York's press. And yet the really tragic thing is that the Christians who have been hounding the Murrays are not un-Christian, but are following in the traditions of their religion. In every country in Europe you will find a national saint, a man of war through whom Christianity is focused and made an instrument of armed conflict: St. George in England, St. Jeanne in France, St. David in Wales, St. Jaime de Compostella in Spain, St. Alexander Nevsky in the Old Russia, St. Vartan in Armenia (to extend this to Asia), etc. The Christian faith has been spread through century after century of slaughter, torture, and compulsion.

"Anti-Semitism, so often condemned as alien to true Christianity, is actually an integral part of it. In Matthew xxvii, 25, Governor Pilatus is asked by the leaders of the Jewish community to execute Jesus. He is alleged to ask them if they really want this man put to death. Matthew, whose words have with most Christians the sanction of absolute divine authority, makes the Jews reply, 'His blood be upon us and upon our children.' That Jews through all generations are guilty of the murder of Jesus is basic Christian doctrine.

"Joe Pilati condemns the fact that I cite Mike Newberry's pamphlet 'The Fascist Revival' as a source of information on the John Birch Society. I expected him to go on with an analysis of the book, and a refutation of the points it raises. Instead, he gives no indication that he has even read it. I am not concerned with Newberry's organizational affiliations, or the fact that he has written for the Worker. If you have refutations to make of his position, let's hear them; if not, keep silence. If the John Birch Society ever comes to power, then Newberry, Suall, Pilati and I will all be in the same concentration camp. If people representing this ideological spread want to prevent being thrown together in such a manner, they'd better start cooperating to prevent it now.

"The network analogy of conservatism specifically rejects the imputation, of which Joe accuses me, that conservatives are centrally controlled. Each node of the network is linked with those adjacent to it. There is no intention of cooperation among nodes as far apart as

Barry Goldwater and Gerald L.K. Smith; in fact, many conservatives would firmly reject the idea of putting the grandson of Moritz Goldwasser of Bialystok in the White House. But Goldwater is supported by National Review; National Review prints and agrees with the views of Re-vilo Oliver, A.G. Heinsohn, and other John Birch Society members; the JBS, though against Robert Welch's will, attracts many anti-Semites; and Smith's writings are circulated through right-wing bookshops which have JBS support. No central nexus for these linkages is suggested--just a syndrome of overlapping interests in common. (Larry McCombs is a high-school teacher with a good deal of influence over the thinking of his charges; McCombs reads and agrees with most of the views presented in Kipple; Bill Donaho is an occasional contributor to Kipple; Donaho is an anarchist; Dave Rike is a friend of Donaho's, and a rather overzealous Socialist; some proclaimed Socialists are members of the Communist Party; therefore, the teaching contract of McCombs ought to be terminated before he converts his students to Communism. No central nexus for these linkages is suggested, but...))

"Chay Borsella: Don't knock the Roman Catholics with regard to integration. They're practically the only Christian denomination which has clean hands on the race issue. An Episcopal school in Atlanta turns away Rev. King's son; the Methodists have a separate diocese ('jurisdiction') for their Negro churches; what the Baptists are, Harry Golden will tell you in any Israelite. But the first and only integrated school in Alabama is a Jesuit college, and the weapon of excommunication has been used against Catholic racists in Louisiana. (No, Kipplers, to their everlasting credit I do not consider the Unitarians to be Christians.)

"Larry McCombs: Brooklyn College's dress regulations are hitched to the temperature. Girls are permitted to wear slacks only when the thermometer falls below 20° F. I've never made an issue of this to my classes; as I tell them, that's not the end of them in which I'm interested.

"Ted: How is T.R. McKeldin going to become the next mayor of Baltimore? Unless urban voting patterns in Baltimore differ violently from that of most other cities, or unless McKeldin has changed parties since last I encountered his name in the public prints, a Republican will have a hard row to hoe. Though, if Caroline Ramsay is any example, you grow a decidedly different brand of Republican down there. (The voting patterns aren't unusual, and Baltimore Republicans hold meetings in cigarette boxes as in other large cities, but Mr. McKeldin has always won a large percentage of the Democratic vote away from the Democratic machine. He was mayor of Baltimore in 1943-1947, later twice governor of Maryland, and the political analysts give him a fair to even chance of becoming mayor again this year, provided enough people bother to vote. His greatest asset (aside, perhaps, from his personality and talent for oratory) is his attitude on integration: McKeldin was promoting integration as mayor of Baltimore in 1943, when Brown vs. Kansas City was a basketball game and Martin Luther King delivered newspapers door-to-door. His liabilities include two running mates of whom no one has ever heard (Mr. Dempsey and Mr. Gerstung), and the fact that he must defeat four--count 'em, four--Democratic political machines: the Goodman faction, the Kovens faction, the Pollock faction and the D'Alesandro faction. Of course, another problem he faces is that the Democrats are (like most politicians) damned hypocrites: during the primary, each of four major candidates called the other three incompetent, but now they are slapping each other on the back and preparing to battle the Republicans. My "prediction" was actually more or less a wishful desire; I'd vote for almost anyone to prevent another four years of Boss Tweedism. And perhaps I should explain for the benefit of readers not acquainted with local politics that Mrs. Caroline

Ramsay is indeed an extraordinary Republican. Last year, she lost her bid for election to Congress to the incumbent Democrat, Samuel Friedel (sp?), a non-entity who apparently never says or does anything of particular significance. Among other things that endeared Mrs. Ramsay to me was her belief in the futility of any civil defense measures, and her outspoken opposition to the HUAC.))

"Joe Pilati: Lindsay is no hero by me. I endorsed his opponent in Pointing Vector #12. I was at the Liberal Party convention that endorsed Donovan over the objections of a few delegates, and I have never heard so unenthusiastic an endorsement. He lost votes in Liberal strongholds, and hurt the whole ticket. And Javits is getting restive over the actions of his southern and western fellows. He has stated that if Goldwater is nominated in 1964, he will have to do some 'soul-searching'. (Translation: The conservatives who have been asking Javits to leave the Republican Party may get their wish.)" (Box 22, New York 33, N.Y.)

"Rasmussen tells of the blankness with which the Eskimo met his exposition of our custom [of warfare]. Eskimos very well understand the act of killing a man. If he is in your way, you cast up your estimate of your own strength, and if you are ready to take it upon yourself, you kill him. If you are strong, there is no social retribution. But the idea of an Eskimo village going out against another Eskimo village in battle array or a tribe against tribe, or even of another village being fair game in ambush warfare, is alien to them. All killing comes under one head, and is not separated, as ours is, into categories, the one meritorious, the other a capital offense.

"I myself tried to talk of warfare to the Mission Indians of California, but it was impossible. Their misunderstanding of warfare was abysmal. They did not have the basis in their own culture upon which the idea could exist, and their attempts to reason it out reduced the great wars to which we are able to dedicate ourselves with moral fervor to the level of alley brawls. They did not happen to have a cultural pattern that distinguished between them." --Ruth Benedict, in "Patterns of Culture".

A FEW MALTHUSIAN THOUGHTS

Two tremendous problems face Twentieth Century man, one a relatively new innovation which was not even dreamed of fifty years ago, the other a problem which has, theoretically at least, been with us for several centuries. The first of these, the possibility of world-wide nuclear destruction, has been discussed at considerable length in the pages of this magazine, and I will not reiterate any of this discussion at this time. The second problem, however, has been largely ignored, not only in the limited context of Kipple's discussions, but also to a great extent on a world-wide basis. This second problem, as you may have guessed, is simply that of over-population. Several enlightened scientific groups, and many individuals of some learning, have given a great deal of thought to this problem, but it has received no genuine acknowledgement to the extent that nuclear destruction has been acknowledged as a problem. The reason for this is probably that over-population, in most countries of the world, is not imminent, whereas the threat of nuclear warfare is a problem of current danger. However, the mere threat that over-population poses no immediate threat to our generation does not render it any less a danger. If anything, it is more of a problem precisely because of this.

The threat of nuclear warfare, no matter how serious a problem

it might be (and I certainly do not wish to underestimate its gravity), is at least one of which the human race is genuinely aware. Both parties in the balance-of-power struggle probably realize that they cannot survive a modern war, and so, despite bluffs, propaganda, threats, and harsh words, neither side is likely to be careless in its dealings with the other. This in no way makes nuclear war less a problem, but it does introduce a certain margin, wherein both sides know their limitations and will only under extreme provocation bypass them. So long as one side or the other retreats from the final confrontation, the world is relatively safe from a nuclear holocaust. Since both parties seem to be aware of the danger, and since both are guided nominally by reason (within limits) and intelligence (within limits), the possibility of nuclear destruction is not so great as it might otherwise be.

Unfortunately, none of these conditions and safety-valves are operative in the case of the over-population problem. Too many people are unaware that there is an over-population problem, and too few fully comprehend its ramifications. The problem of nuclear warfare is acknowledged largely because it is our problem, that is to say, the problem of individuals circa-1963. The fact that it is entirely conceivable that we could all be killed tomorrow by an international incident which failed to resolve itself serves to bring the problem into sharp focus for even the so-called "average" man. But the problem of mass starvation due to excessive population is not, in most areas of the world, the problem of the individual of this decade. He may, particularly if he is an American, look about him and see vast expanses of fertile land, millions of bushels of surplus grain, thousands or tens of thousands of grazing animals. He cannot comprehend the brutal fact of over-population, although he might feel sympathy for the Chinese or Indians who are now experiencing the problem; he cannot identify himself with such a situation. This is an old story, the lack of foresight on the part of the prosperous. It is a situation which has been with the human race since earliest recorded history, and probably before that. Man has habitually over-planted and over-grazed his land, destroyed his forests, reduced his herds to serve his current needs, with no thought to the future. In a sense, the entire human race subscribes to the philosophy of blind hedonism: enjoy life and to hell with tomorrow. The average man is sensitive to the needs of his children, less so his grandchildren; but descendants of the fourth or fifth generation are incomprehensible non-entities. It is simply not the nature of most human beings to seriously consider the welfare of their descendants after 150 years or so. Most people, when confronted with a description of the population problems in the year 2163, will simply laugh rather vaguely and comment, "Hell, what'll I care; I won't be here." This sounds unbelievably cruel and callous, but on reflection it is really neither: cruelty implies comprehension, and this is what is lacking; such people are not being intentionally cruel or malicious, but simply do not believe that such a situation will ever come to pass.

This non-comprehension, non-awareness is what makes the over-population problem equally dangerous with the threat of nuclear destruction: most people consider it unreal and, hence, unworthy of serious concern. But the human race--and particularly Twentieth Century man--had better be concerned, because time is running out. It is still possible to shrug our intellectual shoulders and foist off the problem on our descendants, but those descendants are no longer so distant as they once were. And as the decades pass, the problem itself increases in complexity as well as in urgency: it is quite obviously easier to initiate a workable birth control program in a smaller population. So this--not merely this century, but this decade, this year--is definitely the best time to begin.

Before continuing this discussion, there are two points which should be made clear. A great many partial solutions, the greater majority of them ludicrous and incompetent, have been put forward by well-meaning individuals who did not comprehend the true situation. It ought to be immediately made clear that partial solutions are worthless. First of all, each and every one of the grandiose schemes suggested to relieve the pressure of population, from "farming" the seas to interstellar colonization, are merely temporary, stopgap measures. At very best, they will move the problem a few years into the future. The gravity of the problem can be stated most succinctly, I believe, in this brief aphorism: An expanding population cannot indefinitely exist in a finite area. The second point to be made is that contraceptive programs intended to slow the rising birth-rate are valuable, at this time, but they are equally temporary measures. In the end, nothing less than a static (i.e., non-increasing) population will solve the problem. Stated baldly in this fashion, these statements seem ominous and unattractive; they are.

The schemes heretofore advanced to solve the population problem are too numerous to mention, but several representative, persistent ones ought to be examined. First, in line with the ten-word aphorism (which is self-evidently valid), it is obvious that there are only two roads open to solutions for the problem: (1) prevent the population from expanding; (2) increase, constantly, the finite area (and hence the equally finite food supply). As I have already implied, I advocate the first of these solutions. The second, if not theoretically impossible, is for all practical purposes absolutely unworkable.

I may be considered quite a wet blanket for stating that the second line of thought, which encompasses virtually every solution heretofore considered by scientists and laymen alike, is improbable. But although that conclusion may be inconvenient, it is unfortunately also realistic. Let us examine, very briefly, some of the more common methods which have been suggested for solving this problem. A certain body of thought, best exemplified by Harry Golden or the Roman Catholic Church, simply prefers not to worry about the problem at all, on the assumption that something will come up at the last moment. Mr. Golden points to the fact that agriculture was "invented" at just about the time human numbers were becoming too great to economically exist by foraging. This, combined with several further (though less revolutionary) advances, leads him to assert that if we simply forget about the problem, Mother Nature/God will solve it for us. The Catholic Church takes a similar position. This is an absolutely unacceptable position, the epitome of all that is wrong with dogmatic, unreasoning "faith". Even if we are to grant the questionable premise that there exists a God, there is no particular reason to assume that He will necessarily intervene to save our lives if we are too stupid to take precautions. In any event, the premise that God will intervene is highly questionable; He never has before. The only other justification for this position is Mr. Golden's casual observation that, in the past, something has "come up" when it was necessary. It goes without saying that there is no reason to believe that this will necessarily continue to be true. We cannot, therefore, credit a position that might be true, when the stakes are as high as the survival of billions.

Increasing the food supply through more efficient methods sounds reasonable, particularly if you consider that only a small percentage of this planet's land is being farmed and that the food taken from the sea represents hardly a drop in the bucket when compared to the amount of protein potentially available from that source. It is this fantastic abundance which has led even scientists into the error of terming the sea an "inexhaustible larder". There is a difference, however incompre-

hensible in our time scale, between "fantastic abundance" and "inexhaustible"; no finite food supply is inexhaustible. This strikingly obvious fact is apparently not so obvious to a certain body of otherwise intelligent persons. (It should be pointed out, parenthetically, that in point of time, the protein supply of the sea is potentially inexhaustible. That is to say, if we remove only a relatively moderate amount each year, there is no reason to assume that the supply would become rare in the foreseeable future, since biological organisms do, of course, reproduce themselves. Unfortunately, this entails removing only a limited amount in a certain period of time; and this is just what does not happen when a geometrically-increasing population begins to feel the pangs of starvation.) Efficient methods of procuring food from heretofore untapped reserves will, of course, be of considerable assistance in feeding a large population. But these are, again, temporary solutions; they will delay, but not prevent, the inevitable day of reckoning.

Another persistent suggestion (particularly among the more imaginative segments of the populace) is that of emigration to other planets. A little thought should suffice to show the faults of this plan. First of all, none of the other planets of our solar system is suitable for large-scale human habitation, so emigration necessarily assumes interstellar travel. It would be fairly pointless to state here that this is impossible, since I cannot be at all certain of that statement. It is, however, reasonable to state that there are several reasons why the plan is impractical. The initial stumbling block is that we currently lack the means to travel to even our own satellite, less than 240,000 miles distant, much less to other planets and still less to other stars. Not only that, but interstellar travel assumes a qualitative improvement (or rather, a number of them) rather than a quantitative one: we need an entirely new concept of propulsion, to name just one item, since no currently available method, even if improved to its ultimate efficiency, would suffice. Assuming we had the method for interstellar travel, and the financial capability to construct spaceships capable of carrying large numbers of colonists, we would need some place to take them. The number of existing planets within range of our telescopes is so great that, even assuming only a fantastically small percentage of them to be habitable, there are still several millions of potentially habitable planets. But this represents, I wish to repeat, only a small percentage of existing planets, so that it might take a great deal of time to discover one of these millions of habitable spheres. The nearest star (save the sun) is so far away that the number of miles, if written here, would be a meaningless row of digits. The nearest habitable planet, since only about one in one hundred thousand are (by the law of probability) capable of supporting human life, might be immensely farther away. Given an infinity of time, many habitable planets would be discovered; but this is just what we do not have. The population increases geometrically, and a special Committee of the United Nations has estimated that at the present rate of increase, the situation in six hundred years will be such that each human being on earth will have precisely one square meter of land on which to live. Naturally, it goes without saying that this situation will not actually come into being, since the food supply will have been exhausted in less than that number of years.

Even if all the prior conditions of emigration to other stars could be met in the limited period available, however, one final, insurmountable difficulty remains: the impossibility of building and equipping enough spaceships to remove from earth enough people to make an appreciable difference in population.

It is fair to say, then, that increasing the food supply in our

finite area is only a temporary putting-off of the inevitable problem; and that expanding the area by extensive emigration to other stars is improbable, expensive, and inefficient. Obviously, the only remaining method by which to attack the problem is to prevent the population from expanding beyond its capacity to procure sufficient foodstuffs from the earth. Since there are extremely efficient birth control devices currently in existence, this presents no physical problem. The only difficulty is in realizing the necessity; acting upon it thereafter will be considerably less difficult. The initiation of absolutely free distribution of contraceptive devices, perhaps accompanied by governmental urging of their use by all couples, would considerably slow the increase of population. Later, perhaps, compulsory contraception may be found necessary. As a liberal, I find this alternative unpleasant; unfortunately, there is no real choice in this matter, and compulsion in this case is the lesser of two evils. In any event, it is not the province of this article to discuss the practical aspects of such a program. These are widely known and easily decided upon once action has been initiated. The only real problem is to recognize the need for widespread contraception, despite current surpluses of food and available space. A callous lack of foresight on our part now could result in suffering and misery among our descendants the like of which has not been seen throughout all recorded history. This we cannot allow to happen.

"/In the Arapesh society/ small children are not required to behave differently to children of their own sex and those of opposite sex. Four-year-olds can roll and tumble on the floor together without anyone's worrying as to how much bodily contact results. Thus there develops in the children an easy, happy-go-lucky familiarity with the bodies of both sexes, a familiarity uncomplicated by shame, coupled with a premium upon warm, all-over physical contact." --Margaret Mead, in "Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies".

MIKE DECKINGER COMMENTS ON #36

"Your lead article in Kipple #36 touched on most of the significant and pertinent factors in the conditions surrounding inter-racial friction, but as with most such articles, the majority of your remarks could be summed up under the general heading of 'ignorance' and 'stubbornness', with a few side headings under which we might stick 'gullibility', 'determination', and 'irrationality'. Basically, the question is one of colossal stupidity on the part of many of the southern die-hards responsible for maintaining forced segregation. I say this not on heresay alone, but after reading numerous articles on the matter, several books, and listening to a number of unrehearsed interviews with the leading proponents of segregation on television. These men appear to be thoroughly convinced that separation of the races is the right way and the only way. To them, any intermingling denotes anarchy and disaster. They proudly point to their respective states' shameful histories of discrimination and Ku Klux Klan-ism, and on the basis of these prior unpleasanties, rest their cases. It's frightening to hear a white southerner of 35 (as I did on a recent radio broadcast) tell the announcer of his firm conviction that Negroes are so far inferior to whites that he will go to bloodshed and beyond in order to further segregation and see that his people in no way associate with non-whites. This represents an allegedly intelligent man of the twentieth century, displaying the type of uninformed ignorance and stupidity that flourished in the Dark Ages. As long as the integrationists have these sort

of people to contend with, there is definitely a tough battle ahead.

"I would assume that one reason for the general acceptance of an 'agnostic' over an atheist again has to do with ignorance. Most people are unfamiliar with the former term, and while they may find it a trifle distasteful, it clearly indicates that the person must have some deist convictions, since he is not one of those nasty atheists. Ergo, agnostics are looked upon with suspicion, but accepted, while atheists are just looked upon with suspicion.

"The Realist #35 had an account by Madalyn Murray of her trials and tribulations as an atheist, and the sort of abuse and harassment she and her son are receiving. Among other things: she mentions that she lost her job, and was refused work elsewhere, her son Bill was badly beaten, and never without bruises during his entire school term, their car was vandalized, Bill received a tremendous overload of homework and was forced to take all his tests over again. In addition: their home and car were stoned and egg-splattered, people stopped them on the street to spit at them, their cat was stolen, their flowers were trampled, and they received bushels of abusive and threatening letters. So once again dear old Homo sapiens displays the acute degree of tolerance and sensibility that philosophers have so long maintained he has. In the case mentioned above, colored people are prosecuted under the delusion that they are clearly inferior to whites, and in the other case, the loyal and God-fearing of He Who Controls All and Kills All come out and do their master's work by mistreating one who would use common sense and intelligence. It's a hell of a world.

"Joe Pilati's short appraisal of New York politics stopped short of someone who may well become a symbol of the sort of person who can effectively use his Negro ancestry as a weapon. I refer of course to Puerto Rico's gift to commerce, Adam Clayton Powell, who has used the rejoinder that his opponent is prejudiced so often that one may well conclude that he is fronting for a black muslim movement. Powell is the sort of individual despised by colored and white alike. By white, because any opponent is condemned on some trumped-up charge of being anti-Negro, and by colored, because Powell is, in a sense, declaring that he is black, and because of that unfortunate condition, he should have that excuse to fall back on whenever someone criticizes him. He therefore parries by stating that so-and-so criticized him because he is black, and so-and-so does not like black men, a charge which is denied but never totally absolved in the eyes of his followers. I thought Powell's conduct upon the accusation that he was squandering taxpayers' money in Puerto Rican jaunts worthy of enscription in a special edition of the Congressional Record. Powell first retaliated with his overworked claim that his opponent was anti-Negro. ("Unequivocally... unequivocally... unequivocally...") Then to further justify his rules infringement, he declared that he was not the only one who abused the privilege. In this I tend to agree with him--there undoubtedly have been other clowns in Washington who have appropriated tax money for their own use. But how can Powell, in any sense of fair play, back up his own guilt by stating that others did it too, so it wasn't as bad? (Tomorrow Adam Clayton Powell will give a speech in Harlem on why Mike Deckinger is prejudiced toward Negroes.)

"Chay Borsella's suggestion that one million Catholics unite in marriage with a million Negroes has horrendous implications. My God, Ted, do you realize that means a million more Catholics, at the very least? At the Disclave, Ted Johnstone proposed that all male Catholics be sterilized, and several people heartily seconded his massive proposal. I suppose you know of the Pope's plan to render contraceptives acceptable to the mass media, by riddling them with pinholes and then stamping 'In God We Trust' on each one. (Our modern medical technology

has caused that remark to become obsolete. It may now mean something as ludicrous as a little green pill full of holes, with that cryptic message stamped on its surface...}) President Kennedy has also gotten into the act, by suggesting that everyone send him bowling balls so that he can build a string of rosary beads for the Statue of Liberty." (31 Carr Place, Fords, New Jersey.)

BEN ORLOVE OFFERS A FEW THOUGHTS

"To begin on a cynical note: If an area secedes from or revolts against an enemy, it is considered being right or at least on 'our' side of the political fence; areas seceding from or revolting against a political ally are considered wrong.

"The school authorities are in control, with governmental approval; they can enforce their decisions. If they are interfering with the rights of the students to any large extent, they can be taken to court, as was done in the Regents Prayer case. I doubt if the school boards are intellectual bullies, as you imply, although some teachers are. The French teacher Carl Lazarus, Ronald Sverdlove and I have is a perfect example. He is afraid that he will lose his position of authority and will yell at students for looking at him when they should be studying. Naturally, everyone hates him and doesn't learn much French.

"Mrs. Murray is indeed admirable; we need more gadflies like her. It's fortunate that we were never declared an officially theistic country--though I imagine that if such a referendum were proposed, it would be passed. (During the presidential campaign, Nixon said something to the effect of: I don't care what Kennedy's religion is. I don't care what any presidential candidate's religion is, as long as he is not an atheist.)" (845 E. 14th St., Brooklyn 30, New York.)

CHARLES WELLS COMES OUT OF HIDING

"...No one should be denied their freedom solely on the basis of a biological trait for which they are not responsible': well stated and undoubtedly true, with the provision that the 'biological trait' isn't something obviously harmful like homicidal mania (which, of course, may or may not be a 'biological trait'). I'm inclined to agree with your program for solving the race question, as far as it goes. Legislation providing for complete integration of public-service establishments of all types would, as you suggest, go far toward counteracting prejudice by exposing the races to each other. It has actually done so, in fact. However, discrimination would not completely disappear under such a process, since a person who thinks in terms of groups rather than individuals is inevitably going to hold prejudices for and against various groups. This is where education comes in. I don't advocate indoctrination or forced acceptance; all I advocate is that the humanistic notion of judging a person on his individual merits be one of the ideas (not the only one) that children are exposed to in the process of their education, and that the idea be presented effectively. For the children to understand what is behind the idea, it is necessary to do more than simply talk about it in abstract and general terms. It must be presented with examples, with discussions about what it means in everyday life (is it right for the man behind the counter to call the businessman 'mister' and the colored handyman by his first name?). But it must not be forced on the child; it must be presented as a widely-held attitude and the fact that some people do judge people by the group to which they belong must also be presented, with examples and discussion. For integration to be accomplished by law without making the pros and cons of it a part of the educative process would only be a half-solution.

"In all this, as an integrationist I count on the fact that the

discussion and presentation would take place in an integrated classroom, amongst children who see persons of various races every day. This would result in two or three generations in the eradication of race prejudice. Both education and physical integration are necessary.

"In view of the above, I can't agree that 'contact with Negroes will teach the individual that, contrary to what he has been taught, they are just like everyone else....' A person who habitually thinks in terms of groups, when he is made to mingle with Negroes who are statistically (I mean 'on the average') of a lower economic class than he is and who have different standards of appearance and even of personal cleanliness than he has, is not going to arrive at the conclusion that Negroes are just like everyone else. The mingling is necessary to the advancement of integration, but it will not work wonders by itself; a change in attitudes of thought (not merely 'attitudes toward the Negro') is necessary, and to preserve our liberal heritage it is necessary to change these attitudes of thought, if we can, without resorting to indoctrination or brainwashing.

"How's that for a difficult undertaking?

"Referring to Boggs' letter, some agnostics go considerably further out on a limb than either theists or atheists do. There is a whole school of philosophy which asserts that not only do we not know whether there is a God or not, but that it is logically impossible to know. This, to my mind, is a stronger assertion than either the affirmation or denial of God's existence.

"Eric Weitzner asserts 'No one is being harmed by its practice [abortion] and surely in some cases it is necessary and helpful....' and also, 'Infanticide, in my opinion, boils down to plain murder....' Presumably he doesn't think of the foetus as a human being, but he does think of the baby as one. Well, I'm not sure whether I agree or disagree with him, but surely he can't just slide over the issue without even mentioning it, can he? Also, why is the assumption that matter has been here for an infinite length of time 'rather silly'? I wish he would explain these things.

"I think Pilati oversimplifies when he says, in regard to the notion that an individual's beliefs consist of a structure of opinions logically based on a foundation consisting of one or a few unproven notions, '...the foundation itself is unproven and unprovable, and which foundation is chosen by a given individual is pretty much a result of which agrees with his mental vagaries, prejudices, enthusiasms, etc....' (Pilati didn't say that, Chuck; I did.) It could easily be the other way around. Often a person will examine his opinions rather deeply and discover that most of them, or many of them, can be deduced from a few basic ones. He then adopts the basic ones as his beliefs and calls them 'fundamental', which they may very well be logically, but not emotionally. This can be seen sometimes when it is pointed out to such a person that one of his fundamental beliefs logically implies a certain consequence which he strongly disagrees with. Often, in such cases, instead of swallowing hard and accepting the disagreeable consequence, he will give up his fundamental belief and look for a new one... Somehow, 'fundamental' does not seem the right word for that sort of thing.

"Perhaps the freedom to dress as you please should be pushed and fought for but I can't help thinking it's rather trivial in view of the attacks on freedom of speech and press, religion, and the right to equal treatment under the law which must be met. My attitude is that I will not hesitate in agreeing that requiring certain styles in dress is wrong, but I have more important things to fight for... (Well, I thought I succeeded in showing that this control of attire, while not particularly significant in itself, led to restrictions not as easily dismissed. Also, it seems to me rather foolish to heartily agree that

something is wrong but to excuse oneself from actively opposing it on the grounds that it isn't important. Any tampering with our freedom is important.))

"I'm tired of this talk that 'all religions agree on the existence of some sort of God...' What's the justification for this statement? Is Buddhism not a religion? Is Ethical Culture not a religion? Is animism not a religion? And what does it prove, anyway? It doesn't say anything about what sort of God exists even if it is correct." (Apt. #1, 200 Atlas St., Durham, North Carolina.)

A BRIEF TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN SOCIETY

Maarten Abeln was a Dutch exchange student who was one of those fortunate enough to be chosen to study in this great country of ours. Maarten, however, was not quite the ordinary foreign exchange student. Instead of being overwhelmingly impressed by such fine American institutions as television commercials, public education, baseball games and five-cent cigars, Maarten had the temerity to criticize. He was also, apparently, a non-conformist. These two qualities, as we all know, are definitely frowned upon in most social circles, particularly if the individual involved is also a foreigner. So Maarten, who was categorized as "odd and aloof" (though not a disciplinary problem), was removed from the student exchange program and sent back to Holland. Among his heinous crimes while in this country was the authorship of a series of newspaper articles for an Amsterdam paper, calling United States television "a horror of commercials" and terming our education standards "absurdly low". Maarten was also an atheist, thereby completing the process of alienating himself from normal, red-blooded, Christian Americans.

I think a round of applause is in order for the Youth for Understanding Committee, who removed young Abeln from the exchange program. They have done an exceedingly fine thing in ridding this country of the influence of such critical ideas which, after all, might actually have made some Americans dissatisfied with the status quo. The Youth for Understanding Committee is well aware that only through blind conformity can we defeat the revolutionary forces which seek to destroy our perfect society. Dissension cannot be tolerated; it is un-American, Communistic, and un-Godly.

JEROME McCANN COMMENTS ON "OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE"

"I found the story 'Our American Heritage' in #35 very enjoyable and well-written; however, while being good science fiction, I don't think it will ever become a reality. True, our country, both the general public and the government, contains all the elements necessary to make this story come true. True, there are similar active groups in the United States operating on a very small scale right now. And also true, if left to their own destiny these groups might well develop such a situation as existed in the hypothetical world which you created. But I have enough faith in both human nature and in the safeguards of our form of government to believe that this will never happen. (I share your faith in the American democratic republic, but I'm afraid that a study of history does little to improve my opinion of human nature. The Inquisition is the historical equivalent of the situation I hypothesized in Kipple #35, and human nature seems to have been perfectly compatible with that tragedy.)) Too drastic a change in our government would be necessary to accomplish such a dictatorial rule over the people. Our two party system allows the opposition to get away with only so much before it is used against the party to unseat it from power. Thus each party must watch what it is doing so that the other doesn't use its actions as evidence to the public to show how corrupt it is. Naturally,

this isn't done out of desire for justice but for more selfish reasons. Still, as long as the balance of power is kept, that is what counts. Another point that makes your story improbable is that the people of the U.S. take pride in their heritage, which includes the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution--although most people have read neither. Nevertheless, if they were told such and such was against these, they would be concerned. Of course, someone or some group would have to present the evidence to the public with authority, but I hope there is nothing to worry about here. Also, it is people like yourself who insure a well-informed public--intelligent discussion is the best weapon against any of the enemies of society." (1453 N. Harding Ave., Chicago 51, Illinois.)

"How unsound and insincere is he who says, 'I have determined to deal with you in a fair way.' What, do you have to give notice of fairness? It will show soon enough in action. Truth will be plainly written on your forehead. A man's character shows itself in his voice and eyes, just as lovers may read everything in each other's eyes. The man who is honest and good ought to be like a man who has a strong odor: anyone who comes near must smell whether he choose or not." --Marcus Aurelius, in "Meditations".

SHORT NOTES ON LONG SUBJECTS

Since I am not noted for modesty, the cliché that "I am my own worst critic" would seem strikingly out of place if I attempted to apply it to myself. There is, however, a grain of truth in that--I am my own most discriminating editor. While I rarely have difficulty in having an article accepted by another magazine, at least half of the material which I write for Kipple is never published. All of this is by way of a roundabout apology for the "Footnote on Truth and Reason" which appears in this issue. I did not (and do not) care for this article, but I published it nevertheless, largely because several unsuccessful attempts convinced me that any attempt to rewrite it negated whatever small value it may have as social commentary. Its major fault appears to be that it is disorganized, lacking both beginning and end, as if it were excerpted from the middle of a much longer essay. However, since Kipple is little more than a newsletter circulated to some friends and correspondents, I suppose I can get away with publishing an article with which I am not satisfied. And I trust that this paragraph will suffice to convince any eager readers that pointing out these faults to me is pointless and redundant...

Religious tracts have generally merely annoyed me, but John Boardman forwards one which seems to me to deserve some sort of award for Unintentional Humor. It is entitled "How Corn, Birds and Babies Grow: A Purity Tract for Children", and outstanding among its many enlightening paragraphs is this brilliant one on "how babies grow": "God has given men baby seeds. When a man and his wife want a baby, he plants a seed in the little garden in his wife where it grows in the nice nest God has made for it under mamma's heart, where she can keep it warm and protected until it is ready to open the door and come into the world all finished except teeth and clothes. This nest is called a womb." It is really a pity that such tracts were not in general use when I was ignorant of these matters; I'm certain I would have been a better man today if someone had taught me about mamma's little garden...

A correction is in order with regard to one of my comments to John Boardman earlier in this issue. I stated that all of the candidates in Baltimore's primary election were hypocrites. This is not en-

tirely true: Hyman Pressman, Baltimore's civic watchdog and a recent unsuccessful candidate for comptroller in the Democratic primary, has bucked the Democratic machine and endorsed Republican Theodore McKeldin for mayor. This may mean a good deal, for Mr. Pressman is extremely popular for his work in exposing and condemning the waste, petty politics, and questionable integrity which characterizes the current administration of this city. He was actually the only more-or-less independent candidate to run a close race with the monolithic Machine--or rather, coalition of Machines--a rather remarkable achievement in itself.

Within the next month or so, the Supreme Court will hand down its decision in the case of Murray vs. Baltimore Board of Education. Odds-makers are giving Mrs. Murray a clear edge over Dr. Brain and the other school officials. If the disposition of this case does favor Mrs. Murray, there should be a coast-to-coast explosion of even greater proportions than the School Prayer case of last year. I would greatly appreciate receiving any and all material on this subject from your local newspapers--straight stories, features, letters to the editor, etc. All postage on such material will be happily paid by your humble servant.

As a matter of fact, all clippings relevant to subjects discussed in this magazine are solicited, with the same offer of paying postage on bulk shipments. All clippings may not be mentioned in print, but they are nevertheless appreciated, and all are carefully filed in the famous Archives of Idiocy.

The same esoteric code is being used to inform you of your status on the mailing list once again this issue, but I suppose it should be briefly explained for the benefit of new readers. If there is a number in the upper-right of the address box, it is the number of the last issue you will receive under current circumstances. The letter "C" indicates that you have a contribution in this issue. "T" means that we exchange magazines. The letter "P" indicates your place on my permanent mailing list. And "S" means that this is a sample copy.

And I Also Heard From Department: Carl Lazarus, Bob Brown, Norman Masters, Dorothy Braunstein, Bill Plott, Dave Keil, Joe Pilati, and Frank Daly. Some will appear next issue.

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This issue is dedicated to Larry and Noreen Shaw, having been published on Their Day, 1963.