

Kipple is an amateur journal of social/political commentary, distributed to friends and acquaintances of Ted Pauls, 1448 Meridene Dr., Baltimore 12, Maryland. Copies are generally available for letters of comment, exchange with your magazine, contributions (articles, verse, etc.), or the cash sum of 20¢ per issue. This periodical is partially subsidized by the Western Maryland League of Baptist Ditch Diggers (WMLBDD), which, however, denies responsibility for its contents. -WOKL-

BIGOT, BIGOT, WHO'S GOT THE BIGOT?

Outspoken opposition to bigotry is worthwhile as both a vocation and an avocation, and Kipple has denounced its share of bigots, both subtle and fanatical, in the past couple of years. But as with any Cause, there is in the opposition of bigotry a very real danger of becoming over-zealous. In this case, the excess zeal takes the form of fiercely denouncing bigotry even where it does not exist. Regretfully, a staunch ally and old friend has recently tumbled into this yawning pit, and in the process his foot has become lodged in his mouth.

In The Panic Button #12 (an excellent satire and social commentary magazine published in Toronto), Betty Kujawa casually related an example of what is termed "sick humor". In this particular case, the appellation is descriptive as well as generically identifying: "Question: What is black and white and red that crawls? Answer: A wounded nun." This singularly unfunny quip inspired no reply from the magazine's editor in that issue, but in the following issue the very able editor of the publication, Les Nirenberg, decided to comment on Mrs. Kujawa's sense of humor. In doing so, I am afraid that Les committed the cardinal sin of writing his reply while in an emotional state, for I refuse to believe that he would commit such an argument to print in a calm, rational state of mind.

He begins the diatribe by noting that his sense of humor is apparently different in structure and attitude from that of Betty Kujawa. "You see," he explains, "I have a strange sense of humor in that I feel a joke should say something useful, and not serve as a vehicle for hate as this one did. It was definitely anti-Catholic." Needless to say, I agree that jokes should "say something", and that they should not serve as vehicles for hate, even of the casual type ("Three Jews were walking down the street in a Spic neighborhood..."). But this accusation of bad taste is particularly indicative of an overly sensitive disposition, coming as it does from the editor of a magazine which on many occasions comes dangerously close to overstepping the bounds of good taste, and which must at least be acknowledged as insensitive to the feelings of others. (I hasten to add that this insensitivity is neither gross nor constant, but it does exist. The particular ill-timing of a cartoon dealing with thalidomide is a case in point, as is the use of "shine" and "n-----" in cartoons by Skip Williamson. While the intent of these is quite plainly sympathetic, they are every bit as likely to be considered "objectionable" as Betty's joke.) Even more to the point is another cartoon by Skip Williamson, depicting various members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy being ordered by the Pope to "get Lenny Bruce!" I consider none of this material objectionable in any manner or form, but I feel that Mr. Nirenberg ought to be consistent: if he is concern-

ed sufficiently to term Betty's quip a "vehicle for hate", then he has no business publishing material of a similar nature.

After a few additional comments on Betty Kujawa (including the flat accusation that she is a bigot), Les points out that jokes about organized religion are acceptable to him if they point out flaws in the organization. But: "I use the term 'organized religion' completely apart from 'individual faith' which cannot be joked about or criticized ever." The attempt to elevate something (whether religion, the State, or the natural superiority of one's race) to the point where it is beyond criticism is totally alien to the liberal philosophy, and can lead only to the idiocy of dogmatism and fanaticism. It is perhaps the greatest virtue of classical liberalism that nothing is beyond criticism, and thus that all institutions, opinions, and organizations may be productively examined and re-examined in the revealing light of ever-changing knowledge. It is distasteful to see a liberal advocating a reversal of this position such as is entailed in interdicting criticism of any institution or opinion by the unqualified assertion that it "cannot be...criticized ever."

As his parting shot in the discussion, Mr. Nirenberg manages to easily surpass his previous fumbling and inane remarks with a comment the like of which it would be difficult to match without a conscious effort towards applied non-think. After commenting that Betty Kujawa's sense of humor is simply different from his own, and that he is not as a result less mature than Mrs. Kujawa, he ends with: "I know I'm right because there are plenty of other people who feel the same way I do about this subject." Comment by your humble servant on the ignorance of this remark is totally unnecessary; it speaks for itself.

If I am in error in any of the above, I trust that Les will correct my misinterpretation. If, as I suspect, his comments were the ill-considered result of momentary anger, I trust that he will acknowledge this error in a future issue of The Panic Button. In either case, I sincerely hope that my criticism will be accepted in the spirit in which it is offered--that of criticism offered by a friend who is saddened by a momentary lapse in Les Nirenberg's usually formidable intelligence.

"So tenaciously should we cling to the word revealed by the Gospel, that were I to see all the Angels of Heaven coming down to me to tell me something different, not only would I not be tempted to doubt a single syllable, but I would shut my eyes and stop my ears, for they would not deserve to be seen or heard." --Martin Luther.

JOE PILATI COMMENTS ON #38

"A few months ago in Kipple I mentioned the formation here of People of Rockland to Affirm Your Essential Rights (PRAYER), a pressure group composed of various infuriated true believers. I had hoped to pass on progress reports--preferably negative ones--but I have been deprived of even this function. PRAYER has lately become complacent and seems to have withered considerably. After one dreary rally outside the county office building just before Christmas, it seems that the group has gone underground. Perhaps they are preparing to take over the nation after Madalyn Murray wins her case. I witnessed the rally, although the gathering hardly deserved to be called such. There was a procession of speakers, the most prominent of whom were Representative Katharine St. George (Old Ironarse, as the more iconoclastic Democrats call her) and various dignitaries from veterans organizations. One American Legion type stood up and recited 'the prayer' with appropriate piety and then

gazed at the crowd in his best Billy Graham manner and announced that the godless Warren court had outlawed this declaration of faith--'and I for one am proud to break the law!' This from a supposedly well-informed man in his fifties; his denseness was appalling. The crowd was then exhorted by the President (or Chairman--I forget his title; maybe it was Cardinal...) of PRAYER, a Mr. Tomicki, to get up at parent-teacher meetings and other such occasions, and to grumble about Earl Warren and Hugo Black and the rest of the names which he literally spat out. Mr. Tomicki also thought it necessary to castigate President Kennedy for his lily-livered ('temperate', to us) statement on Engel vs. Vitale. The President, you will remember, stated simply that we should all abide by the decision and that those who disagreed vigorously had a simple enough remedy--to pray more at home and in houses of worship. It is interesting to note that Mr. Tomicki also happens to be quite a Big Name in local Republican politics. At any rate, this rally was PRAYER's most recent venture into public agitation; since December there have been only a very few brief fillers in newspapers and an apparent rounding-up of straggling potential draftees to the Cause.

"On the Nature of Artistic Appreciation" was partially successful in conveying your overwhelming reactions to certain musical performances, or at least it seemed to be. I know what you mean, but there is always the damned communication problem, and I would very likely be only half as successful as you were in writing about the matter. I was surprised by your offhand negation in the second paragraph of the possibility that a book could have the same encompassing effect of a musical performance; actually, I believe you might even now regret your inclusion of reading in the same 'close-but-no-cigar awareness' category as playing checkers and analyzing problems in logic. Surely you have been utterly devastated by some portion--even a single paragraph--of a book, and this has brought about the same blockage of distractions which you spoke of referring to music. (Yes, I have been "utterly devastated" by passages in books--in fact, I have been quoting some examples in recent issues--but it was not the same feeling. The "blockage of distractions" which you mention was not the most important part of the feeling which I attempted to describe, though I notice that I wrote about it as if it were. This is very probably because it was something concrete which I could put into words and reasonably expect to be understood, whereas an attempted description of the actual emotion which is felt would have been doomed to failure for lack of the proper terms. Incidentally, perhaps I should mention while discussing this subject that I experienced a similar feeling at least once in the recent past, after my article was written. It was during a performance of a folksong named "Payday at Coal Creek" (or something very similar) by a splendid singer whose name is new to me: Helen Chester.) I can recall many such instances, from such things as 'Civil Disobedience' and Joyce's 'Portrait of the Artist' to an obscure Realist article by Robert Anton Wilson. (The latter was called 'Letter to a Lady in Iowa' and should be read aloud.) At the age of eight I first heard Beethoven's Seventh and it was indescribably overpowering; of course this is much less the case now because repetition has dulled by sensitivity. I also remember that 'Off Minor' by Theolonius Monk had a similar effect.

"We have exchange students, too. Ours are from West Germany and were sent in exchange for a pair of Good Scout types, so predictably enough we got back a pair of Good Scout types with German accents. Last Autumn there was a minor 'incident' when the German boy made a bland, innocuous speech to a Rotary Club or some such organization, and mentioned casually that Dr. Adenauer was almost 90 and certain inferences could be drawn from this. The next day, one of the local dailies came out with a blazing page three story with a three-column head proclaiming 'ADEN-

AUER ON THE WAY OUT, SAYS P.R.'S GERMAN VISITOR'. No one was very happy about it...

"In #38 you quote me as calling the papal encyclical Mater et Magistra 'basically a social-economic document.' I'm sure I said 'social-democratic', meaning the encyclical adhered generally to democratic socialist positions on land reform and human rights. (The secretary responsible for the error has been quietly shot...) The whole point was, of course, to emphasize the absurdity of Madalyn Murray's self-proclaimed opposition to all of religion and her contradictory conviction that something called 'the American Left' is beyond reproach.

"John Boardman and I have discussed for at least two months now the implications of my distaste at his citing of 'The Fascist Revival' in Kipple's pages. John had mentioned this pamphlet and made a tacit recommendation of it in a published letter concerned with the American Right. I pointed out in a letter published in #36 that the Communist affiliation of Mike Newberry, author of the pamphlet, was well known, and one could hardly expect objective or detached analysis of the right wing by the likes of Newberry. I still stand by my assertion, and I want to reiterate it rather than appear as though I were publicly evading the subject. To re-rake the warmed-over coals John and I have been utilizing in personal correspondence, I am continually startled by John's naive belief that CPUSA hacks are beneficent and willing compatriots in battles against reaction. (The old saws and chestnuts about Communists being basically progressive rather than regressive have been effectively demolished by dozens of articulate liberals; very recently, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has done so in 'The Politics of Hope'.) John has told me that he is just as willing to accept Mike Newberry's interpretations of rightist rumbles as he is willing to accept the findings of a Polish physicist (I forget the name he gave me) who happened to be a Communist. I'm still dismayed at the analogy, if any, between a scientific paper written by a Communist scientist because he is a scientist, and a political polemic written by a Communist journalist because he is a Communist; it is, of course, the assumption of roles that is important. Now in #37 John notes that '(Joe Pilati) gives no indication that he has even read' the essay. I confess that I haven't read it, but John has been kind enough to tell me where I can order it, and I have done so. I'm ordering it mostly out of courtesy to John, because I can't expect any great revelations from Mr. Newberry. The man has advertised his lack of perspective in any number of drab Red periodicals, and I can no more hope for objectivity from him on the Right than I can expect the Archdiocese of Boston to start selling prophylactics next week. Despite all of John's pained wails to the effect that my attitude is basically 'I know what he's going to say, so why should I bother to read it', John is well aware that people of various persuasions, especially those who dogmatically follow the 'line' of their particular philosophy, are incapable of detachment. We all know what Senator Eastland will say tomorrow about integrating schools; we also can predict with a good deal of self-assurance what Mike Newberry will say tomorrow about any anti-Communists. His pamphlet's title is symptomatic: 'The Fascist Revival'. Who is a Fascist to a Communist hack? Well, Franklin Roosevelt for one, Norman Thomas for another, ad infinitum.

"But there is the difference between John and myself: John is an unreconstructed 'United Front' man. That phrase was discredited, of course, but I like it myself--but my 'United Front' would shun totalitarians whose avowals of progressivism are a mockery and a farce. If John and I had been active in New York City's Left in 1943-1944, we would have fought in opposing factions of the then very significant American Labor Party. In 1944, the ALP, which had more than 500,000 supporters, split down the middle. The dominant faction believed it was

wonderfully pragmatic to work with the Communist Party USA; the 'right-ists' formed today's Liberal Party and barred Communists from membership. (This is analogous to the situation in 1947 when the Communist-front Progressive Citizens of America turned itself into Henry Wallace's hapless Progressive party, while the 'right' became the nucleus of Americans for Democratic Action.) Happily, the American Labor Party became the 'Incredible Shrinking Man' of New York City politics after 1948, and lost its legal status as a party after a miserable showing in 1954. The Liberal Party has continued to be a potent force. Cooperation in liberal movements with the local Bolsheviks is a self-defeating game; so it is to invest Newberry's penny-(actually 35¢)-dreadful with any significance except as agitprop." (111 S. Highland Ave., Pearl River, New York.)

"To the child, Nature gives various means of rectifying any mistakes he may commit respecting the salutary or hurtful qualities of the objects which surround him. On every occasion his judgments are corrected by experience; want and pain are the necessary consequences arising from false judgment; gratification and pleasure are produced by judging aright. Under such masters, we cannot fail to become well informed; and we soon learn to reason justly, when want and pain are the necessary consequences of a contrary conduct.

"In the study and practice of the sciences it is entirely different; the false judgments we may form neither affect our existence nor our welfare; and we are not compelled by any physical necessity to correct them. Imagination, on the contrary, which is ever wandering beyond the bounds of truth, joined to self-love and that self-confidence we are so apt to indulge, prompt us to draw conclusions which are not immediately derived from facts; so that we become in some measure interested in deceiving ourselves. Hence it is by no means surprising that, in the science of physics in general, men have so often formed suppositions, instead of drawing conclusions. These suppositions, handed down from one age to another, acquire additional weight from the authorities by which they are supported, till at last they are received, even by men of genius, as fundamental truths." --Antoine Lavoisier, in the "Traité Elementaire de Chimie".

BILL CHRISTIAN COMMENTS ON #38

"You claimed that the question of the existence or non-existence of God has been pronounced unanswerable by the finest minds of the past several thousand years. This excellent debating trick should not work. Some of the greatest minds in the past millenium have sought to prove the existence of God--Kant, St. Thomas Aquinas, Berkeley, St. Anselm. Moreover, Hegel, a rationalist, contended that there is no question which reason cannot answer that reason has raised. His argument could be summed up as follows:

"Hegel believed that God was immanent, that the universe in its totality was what we meant by God. Since God is defined as Absolute reason, the universe is an absolute system; and thus, whatever is in it is in some way an expression of reason.

"To understand what Hegel meant, we must first understand what is involved in knowledge. Every act of knowing requires a subject and an object. I can only know a copy of Kipple because there is the 'I' to know and the 'Kipple' to be known. But what is the 'I' which knows? Can this 'I' be known as a 'Kipple' can be known? No. No one ever knew himself as he knew a copy of Kipple. For if I say that I know myself, then I am left with an object known and a subject that knows; the knowing

subject can never be an object. And yet without the knowledge of the self all other knowledge is meaningless. All knowledge is really self-knowledge, but the self can only be known by means of something other than the self. The self is equivalent to self-consciousness. There must be, therefore, an ultimate self or God. On the basis of what we have said, this self must be self-conscious. But there can be no self-consciousness other than through the knowledge of that which is other than the self. God depends on His otherness. Since there is really nothing other than God, God must manifest Himself in that which is other than Himself. If God is spirit, He must manifest Himself in that which is other than spirit, or matter. But otherness must be brought back into the self to provide self-consciousness. Hence the whole story of nature and science and philosophy is the story of the God who has manifested Himself in nature returning to Himself. (At the risk of betraying my ignorance, may I say that Hegel's philosophy reminds me of nothing so much as an intersection with a broken traffic light where every vehicle and pedestrian moves erratically in a direction of its own... Of course, your presentation may be at fault, too, since other digests of Hegel's philosophy which I've read have been by no means so confusing.)

"An intriguing doctrine, you must admit, although I must confess that I owe something of a debt to my philosophy professor, without whom I could never have understood what Hegel was driving at. And to protect myself before someone accuses me of being a Marxist, I ought to say that even if you agree with Hegel, it does not follow that you have to accept Marx's modifications and corruptions. I am no rationalist, but I thought that Hegel's argument would give whoever is interested a banquet upon which to feed his mind.

"Kant's argument from faith is also interesting--and strong.

"Now we can turn to the matter of the poor school teacher who was foully victimized by hyper-nationalistic, totalitarian religious zealots. I take no pity on this man who stands for his 'principles' against the well-being of the nation. (Oh, come now; I hardly think the refusal of a single man to utter a portion of a rather innocuous oath represents a grave threat to the well-being of the nation.) What makes this man's oath binding if he does not admit the existence of God? (Precisely the same things which make it binding if he does admit the existence of God.) Surely only the fear of punishment for a treasonable and dishonorable act. But this punishment is feared by all, both citizens and non-citizens alike. I have no wish to limit religious freedom, but even atheists should be willing to take an oath of allegiance which mentions God, if only for traditional and symbolic reasons. (Why is the inclusion of "under God" in the pledge "traditional"? Surely you know that the phrase has been a part of the oath for less than a decade. And what are these "symbolic" reasons? Are you advising the compromise of principles to expediency?) No one expects a thunderbolt to come hurling out of the sky if you break your oath. This situation is quite similar to the one in which the Christians were persecuted by the Romans: the Christians refused to place a pinch of incense in front of an image of the god-emperor. The Romans accepted this as a patriotic duty, not as a religious observance. Just so today. Placing the words 'under God' in the oath of allegiance does not mean literally that one believes in a benevolent God protecting one if he falls into any adversity, but rather symbolically means that he holds Christian ethics and the Western way of life holy. Because the Christians in Rome would not tolerate other religions, they were persecuted. Present day atheists and agnostics are practically unanimous in decrying the stupidity and ignorance of those who believe in God. Human nature has not, nor will it probably ever, change. As long as non-believers persist in stupid stubborn resistance to the mores of their environment, they must expect to be

crushed, for three hundred years of history and tradition is a citadel strong enough to withstand the strongest catapults of a priori reasoning." (112 Birch Cliff Ave., Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.)

"Recent studies at the University of California have explored the contrast in character structure between those who show themselves to be actively partisan towards all underprivileged groups (labour, Jews, Negroes, and so on) and those who show themselves to be actively anti-minority. In the pro-minority group are found those who would be classified as neurotics; that is, those who have faced and incorporated in their own characters the discrepancies present in the culture. In the anti group are found those whose need for consistency is very great, who cannot tolerate ambiguities, who have smoothed out their perception of reality into a tight and perfect structure, which presents a smooth extra-well-adjusted aspect, but which contains the possibility of a psychotic break." --Margaret Mead, in "Male and Female".

DAVE HULAN COMMENTS ON THE BIRMINGHAM SITUATION

"Since I imagine you'll have some comments on the Birmingham mess in Kipple, I thought I'd drop you a few comments from an observer fairly close to the firing line.

"Of course, I'm in complete sympathy with the aims of the Negroes in Birmingham; anyone who has any concern for civil rights and decency would be. However, I disagree strongly with their timing and more than a little with their methods. I don't know how much of the background of this case has gotten into the Northern press, so I'll fill you in. In the last election, the citizens of Birmingham voted to change the form of their city government from commission to mayor-and-council. A special election was then held in March to elect the new mayor and council, who were supposed to take office on April 15th. The two mayoralty candidates were Eugene 'Bull' Connor, incumbent Police Commissioner and a rabid segregationist of the worst sort, and Albert Boutwell, a moderate who pledged that the first order of business for his city administration would be conferences with Negro leaders to try to work out a mutually satisfactory modus vivendi between the races. Boutwell won by a large majority, but when April 15th came the incumbent commission refused to surrender their offices on the grounds that they had originally been elected to serve until 1965 and that by God they'd serve out their terms. The case was then taken to court, but pending a decision the old administration is still holding onto their offices. Everyone is quite certain that the court will rule that the new government should take over, and that the ruling will come soon (probably within the month), but meanwhile Connor and Co. are still in power. Do you see why I say the timing was bad? It gives one reason to think that in this case the Southern press might be right for once--that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference is more interested in creating a big interracial incident than it is in actually securing its stated aims. Surely it wouldn't have hurt to have waited a month or so until the Boutwell administration had had a chance to demonstrate whether it intended to make good on its word or not, would it? (It would have been reasonable to wait, yes, but under the circumstances I can hardly condemn the Negroes for demonstrating. After April 15th, they found themselves being subjugated by a government which was apparently illegal, having been voted out of office by a "large majority". I daresay I would have demonstrated--or a good deal more--under similar circumstances.))

"As for methods, this series of demonstrations has been different from the usual one that you hear about in two respects: the white

population of the city has not been involved (except for the police and other constituted authorities), and the demonstrations by the Negroes have not been peaceful and non-violent. There haven't been any white mobs attacking Negroes for protesting; any force applied has been legal and restrained (fire-hoses and dogs are forcible, but--they are less violent than mobs, and in my opinion less violent than night-sticks and gas, which are the alternatives). (I admit that it is a quibble, but it is my considered opinion that high-pressure hoses are a good deal more violent than tear-gas bombs, and I, for one, would prefer being struck with a night-stick to being hit in the face with a stream of water from such a hose.) Conversely, there has been considerable mob violence on the part of the Negroes against the police--at least a dozen police have been injured enough to require hospital treatment by thrown rocks and bottles and by cinder blocks dropped off roofs.

"John Boardman is probably delighted at this development; I find myself considerably less enthusiastic. The leaders of these demonstrations are really harming the Negro cause by their bad timing and violence; such relatively liberal Southern newspapers as the Huntsville Times and the Nashville Tennessean, which agree in principle with their demands, are becoming irritated by their lack of judgement. They're just

SPLIT PERSONALITY

BY LES SAMPLE

I awake at break of dawn,
And groan, as I think of all the madness
Through which I must bide my time.
The light brings forth utter chaos,
And highlights the degeneracy of mankind.
People--people are everywhere--
Screaming, dirty, nasty, selfish people--
Ignorant people who live, and hate, and die
In the filthiness of city streets,
Uncaring people, blind to all the world.
I am stifled in the dust and smog
Of ridiculous manufacturing plants
And automobiles; and everywhere, the people!
The noise, the unbearable noise they make!
Never are they quiet; they drive one to insanity!

Eagerly I await the coming twilight;
The darkness is a balm to troubled nerves,
And the Earth is transfused with a radiance
So beautiful as to defy description.
And too, with night comes a near quietus--
The cessation of all but the barest human doings--
A mere pittance of the earlier hours
Now prostitutes the purity of the atmosphere.
For the first time, now, the world is sane,
And the beauty of the night sky
Is revealed in all its splendor--
A beauty unmarked by smoke of steel mills.
The maddening noise has abated somewhat;
All the Earth lies dreaming,
And rational thought is almost possible.

--Les Sample

making it that much harder for the Boutwell administration to help them when it takes office, because it is much easier to make a concession in a spirit of good will than it is to knuckle under to force. I am in favor of the Negroes getting what they say they want; I am not in favor of deliberately trying to embarrass a city government which hasn't yet had a chance to show how it would react to calm reason.

"Don't get me wrong--I'm not trying to condone the actions of the old Birmingham city government with their thousands of arrests, fire hoses, dogs, etc. This is unquestionably wrong. However, the conflict so far has been entirely between the old city government and the Negroes--the calm exhibited by the rest of the city is, I feel, a sign that there is no widespread diehard opposition to the aims of the Negroes, and the whole city doesn't deserve the excoriation it has received. The people of Birmingham did their best by voting Connor and Co. out; more responsible actions on the part of Rev. King and the SCLC could probably have saved all this trouble without delaying the achievement of their aims one bit. The thing is, they aren't seeking legal rights, so legally they can be arrested for what they're doing without expectation that they will succeed in forcing a court decision in their favor. And Connor won't back down, so it will have to await Boutwell to accomplish anything anyhow." (3806 Pinedale Drive, S.W., Huntsville, Alabama.)

"The Nazis are regarded as animals in human form because they gassed, shot or burned perhaps as many as six million Jews. Today the people of the United States are quite prepared, if provoked, to actually burn alive hundreds of millions of innocent men and women, young and old. I deliberately put the matter in such blunt terms because it is long past time to do so and because there is apparently no other way to start people thinking of the moral questions raised by nuclear weapons." --Steve Allen, in "God and the H-Bomb".

The following section is a verbatim reproduction of an unsigned leaflet forwarded by John Boardman. It is the most thoroughly fantastic religious tract I have ever encountered:

GOD IS ANGRY

He is angry because He loves us, but we do not return His love--we prefer things of no account. I am not telling you this, fellow citizen, because I like telling you this--I fear His anger, too--but because it is true. I should like to tell you why.

He is angry because we put our trust in missiles and bombs. It is not because our enemies are better than us, for they aren't, that we should not build bombs. It is because whatever happens to them happens to us, and since we ourselves do not wish to be killed--we should not even think about killing them.

He is angry because we are proud of our wealth, although He has given all of it to us. He is angry because we give our children things they don't need--cokes, watches, cars, etc.--when other children have neither clothes nor food nor a home. He is angry because we spend our money on travel, expensive sports, books, drinks and churches. He is angry because we wear such expensive clothes to the synagogues and churches that the poor are afraid to enter. He is angry because we don't let our children go to school, live, play or worship with people of other creeds and colors.

He is angry because we are proud of our country, because we do not give thanks to Him, who created all countries equal before Him. He

is angry because we say we are defending freedom when we support tyranny in Spain, Formosa, and South Vietnam. He is angry because we talk about our compassion for the people of Cuba when we try to starve them. He is angry because we talk about defending the Constitution when we deny its provisions to Communists, pacifists, and Negroes. Don't you know, my reader, that if others aren't free, then neither are you?

Finally, God is angry because our churches and synagogues do not preach the gospel or the word of God. Many even say that He will torture some of His own children after they die in a place called hell, which is a lie. Others speak of the Bible's or Church's infallibility, which reveals they do not understand that the Bible and the Church witness to God's infallibility. God is especially angry because we do not love or learn from heretics and unbelievers, for He speaks to us through them. We needn't worry because they sometimes deny His truths--Truth can defend itself without our help. What we need to do is to start speaking it ourselves!

Please don't be angry with me, my fellow citizen, because I tell you that God is angry with the United States, after all, we are not the first country to incur His wrath. He is certainly going to take away our wealth and our arms, so we might as well give them up peacefully. I realize, my reader, that you don't want to give up your comforts, your friends, and even your job--it costs a lot to do any good these days--but for everything you give up you will receive a hundredfold in the end. Besides, if we don't start sacrificing for the sake of the United States, there may not be any United States left!

"For a little thought will show that no improvement can be made in any object or idea until a criticism has first been made. If there is no criticism, if no fault is found, the object or idea will be regarded as perfect, or as not subject to favorable alteration; its status quo will thus be assured automatically. A better mousetrap, or a better automobile, or a better concept of freedom, may seem to occur as inspiration; but no such 'inspiration' is possible unless the inspired mind has first perceived the existing mousetrap, automobile or concept to be inadequate.

"Criticism, that is to say, and the doubt out of which it arises, are the prior conditions to progress of any sort." --Philip Wylie, in "Generation of Vipers".

WALTER BREEN COMMENTS ON #38

"Even the current system of amending the Constitution isn't stringent enough. Look at the history of the prohibition amendment. Were this states' rights program to succeed, we might have not only prohibition back, but Sunday blue laws and God knows what else.

"Atheists and morality: Horace M. Kallen, in 'The Education of Free Man', cites some Franciscan's researches which showed that atheists, humanists, agnostics, etc., are very rare in prison, and that devout Catholics are by far the largest group. The figures were so overwhelming, as I remember the summary, that even correcting for the proportions of Catholics, Baptists, etc., and nonbelievers in the social strata from which prisoners came, it was still remarkable that so many prisoners were True Believers. I do not pretend to know why this result held good.

"Perhaps some of the confusion between atheism and communism is explained by the communists' several-times-revived leagues of militant atheists. How distinguish communist-inspired atheists from other? The True Believers aren't interested in doing research; they are interested

in removing a threat to their own peace of mind, however misguidedly and stupidly they are going about it.

"Joe Pilati: The sects which would be offended by discussions of the skeletal system are presumably the extreme fundamentalists who hold that the male has one less rib than the female because God took one rib from Adam to make Eve.

"Steve Stiles: In arguing with the True Believers--something I gave up years ago for my health--I found that the only way to establish in their ironclad skulls any distinction between an agnostic and an atheist was to make some witty version or other of this: 'An atheist is a guy who shouts There Is No God! so loudly that even if there were one, he wouldn't hear him talk. An agnostic is someone who says calmly that there may or may not be a god, but that the believers haven't proved their case any more than the unbelievers have.' This maligns atheists as being closed-minded, but it seems a necessary first step. (And anyway, many atheists are so militantly averse to anything that bears any relation to religion, however remote, that they lump agnostics with religionists--a closed-minded attitude, I think.)

"Jerome McCann: What is the matter with illegitimacy? The reproductive delinquency is, if anything, bringing a lot of kids into the world without forethought as to how to take care of them, or what kind of kids they will be--i.e., what heredity and environment one is providing for them--and it is distressing regardless of the ethnic origin of the mothers (or fathers). But this kind of reproductive delinquency often occurs among devoutly churchgoing, lawfully married Boston Irish, N.Y. Puerto Ricans, and many other groups.

"The trance you derive from certain works of art (?) may also mean that some element or elements in those performances trigger off a memory of a reaction in you earlier stimulated by something quite different, but the memory of the earlier reaction in turn stimulates you to relive that earlier reaction. I have had the same type of experience, though less passively, and what brought it on was invariably something of outstanding aesthetic quality: van Gogh's 'Starry Night', Tchelitchev's 'Hide & Seek', Mozart's g-minor quintet, Schubert's G-major quartet op. 161, certain Bach organ works, certain Mahler and Schubert songs, etc. Walter Kaufmann, in 'Critique of Religion and Philosophy', said that those who distinguished between the aesthetic experience on its very highest levels and the mystical experience were making a distinction that the great mystics themselves would not have held with. So maybe you and I have gotten a taste of it...but only a taste, as I doubt your life has been permanently changed by it, and I know mine wasn't.

"'God exists' and 'God does not exist' are mutually exclusive if and only if the term 'God' is assumed by both parties as having the same meaning in the two statements. That I disbelieve in the Jewish Jahweh is no reason to call me an atheist (were one so inclined); I maintain what I fondly hope is an open mind on the question of the existence of any other occult superhuman force or forces, and consider a kind of pantheism as not automatically excluded." (2402 Grove Street, Berkeley 4, California.)

CHAY BORSELLA COMMENTS ON ARTISTIC APPRECIATION AND RELIGION

"The strongest emotion I have ever felt in connection with any of the arts is boredom, but I do know what you mean with regard to that self-hypnotic effect; I've noticed it on others. Some of us can concentrate so intensely that we are unaware of someone's calling our name. This has always interested me, because even when I read, I am aware of every little pinfall. I think it depends on the individual's personality type. Of art itself, I think its value is overestimated. All the

pains, precautions and troubles that accompanied the Mona Lisa's visit to the U.S. was, to me, a sneering situation. Another fad is the sticking of paintings on the walls of restaurants; it seems a guy can't walk into even a greasy-spoon type of joint without being 'exposed' to 'art'.

"I had a real treat in my mailbox this week: some literature from the headquarters of the one and only Madalyn Murray, requesting money! Now, I agree with the woman in principle, and I think freethinkers should be treated equally, i.e., just like anyone else. Mrs. Murray is planning on starting a magazine--and she plans to call it Other Americans. From what I could make of it all, she also wants to build some sort of an old-age home for atheists. (That is her word and I don't know if agnostics would be allowed, but I gather that the purpose of this is to prevent unbelievers from recanting on their deathbeds.) To lend a concrete element to this project, she enclosed a map of the building and grounds. She delineates three sections of this complex: Ingersoll Pavillion, Darwin Pavillion and Jefferson Walk. I am sure that Darwin, that goodly man of science, would turn over in his grave at such a scheme! Jefferson, the man of the people and the great fighter for equality--his name linked onto an institution that apparently plans to exclude 98% of the population because of their religion...! Included in the same charming packet of papers was a monthly weep-all report. Their family car, it seems, was badly abused. Net cost: \$54. This is quite sad, but I am inclined to chalk the damages up to her negative personality--not her negative religious views. I wonder who contributes the \$54 for damages brought on by said personality? Finally: Other Americans are also raising money for a special radio station for atheists. I am truly torn in conflict; after all, some of my best friends are believers..." (Box 443, Towson State College, Towson 4, Maryland.)

"Those who repudiate political revolution as the principal means or social transformation or wish to confine this to such measures as have been granted by the ruling class are social reformers, no matter how much their social ideas may antagonize existing social forms. On the contrary, anyone is a revolutionist who seeks to conquer the political power for an hitherto oppressed class, and he does not lose this character if he prepares and hastens this conquest by social reforms wrested from the ruling classes. It is not the striving after social reforms but the explicit confining of one's self to them which distinguishes the social reformer from the social revolutionist." --Karl Kautsky, in "The Social Revolution".

THE NEW AMERICAN REVOLUTION

In the latter portion of the eighteenth century, a group of New World colonists consisting in about equal proportions of sincere idealists and rowdy malcontents, rebelled against the abuses of the British rulers of this country. This rebellion first assumed the form of legal and peaceful protests, through diplomatic channels, in newspaper editorials, in political speeches; when these protests were ignored, the colonists went farther, demonstrating their defiance of abusive authority by clandestinely circulating revolutionary and inflammatory publications, and by such heralded actions as the Boston Tea Party; and finally, these more or less passive means of resistance having failed to curb the callous and unsympathetic rule of the English sovereign, the demands of this upstart horde of Americans were satisfied by recourse to a protracted and unpleasant war. This rebellion is looked upon with pride by virtually every American, and rightly so: the idealists and the malcontents together fought for the freedom to which the former believed all

were entitled.

Here in the middle of the twentieth century another revolution is occurring, one which may best be termed the Negro Revolution. Its battlefields are the bastions of Southern bigotry, the Birmingham, the Hattiesburgs, the Gadsdens--American towns only superficially different from Lexington or Concord or Boston. Its heroes are named King, Moore, Kearsse, Shuttlesworth, Baldwin and Peck, rather than Henry, Allan, Paine, Washington, Hale and Jefferson--again, a distinction of no great significance. Its methods are strikingly similar: first the legal protest, later the actively aroused demonstration, and finally--invariably--the recourse to overt violence and bloodshed. The speed with which the third alternative is reached apparently depends upon the zeal with which the earlier courses of action are repressed. In the North, where demonstrations and legal protests are normally successful (albeit painstakingly slow to show such success) and where extraordinary brutal methods of controlling demonstrations are rarely utilized by police authorities, the Negro rarely succumbs to the temptation to take violent action. But in the South, where such disreputable demagogues as Ross Barnett and George Wallace set the current style for ardent racists who fanatically cling to the doctrine of white supremacy, violence is an ever-present danger. The nation is shocked when that inescapable possibility erupts into an actuality, and the comment is invariably heard, "Why can't the Negroes wait?"

Admittedly, to the Northern liberal that seems a reasonable question. It is apparent, from our detached vantage point, that the inequality gap is gradually being closed, largely by the process of law but also partially by a new enlightenment on the part of the younger generation in both North and South. To resort to violence at a time when progress is being made seems obviously foolish, particularly if its practical propaganda significance is considered: if a picture is worth one thousand words, then surely a photograph of a grimacing Negro brandishing a knife at a white youth in Nashville is more effective in promoting the sordid cause of racial distrust than ten thousand speeches by the likes of Leander Perez or Orville Faubus. Bearing this in mind, it would appear wise to eschew violence for this reason, even if moral or ethical reasons were deemed insufficient.

But the Southern Negro does not see the situation from this point of view; subjugation, like a pit of quicksand, is a good deal more unpleasant if you happen to be on the inside looking out. It is an unfortunate fact that the legal progress of which the liberal is so proud has been more apparent than real. True, the Constitution was amended so as to grant to the Negro the right to vote; but Negroes are nevertheless prevented from exercising this right in the Deep South by discriminatory literacy tests, by legal technicalities, by intimidation, or by a combination of all. True, the law gives Negroes the right to use restaurants and waiting rooms of interstate travel facilities; but few Negroes are foolish enough to attempt this in, for example, Mississippi, despite their legal right to do so. True, the Supreme Court struck down school segregation in 1954, but the Negro in Alabama (or South Carolina, etc.) has noticed little or no difference in local policies. The list is practically endless. In the course of our vaunted progress the Negro has been given rights on paper, but unless he lived in the more liberal Northern states, he found that his lot changed but little.

To claim that integration is now merely a matter of law enforcement is of no genuine assistance, for the Federal Government refuses to enforce these laws except under extreme pressure. The Negro cannot find solace in the assertion that he is now being deprived of his rights illegally, whereas previously it was done in accordance with the law, for

his tormentors are not apparently bothered by the fact that they are committing illegal acts, and those who should restrain them refuse to do so.

The result: violence. The apathetic white Northerner is astonished to unfold his morning newspaper and abruptly encounter a headline detailing a violent protest in Nashville or Birmingham. He ponders, amazed: "And just when everything was going so well, too...."

Then we are asked to condemn the Negro of these cities, for erupting under the repression of the organized discrimination and maltreatment to which he is subject in those abysmal havens of bigotry and diseased racial pride. The liberal press mumbles apologetically that the Negro should not be repressed, but, after all, fellas, rioting isn't cricket, either.

Violence is always unfortunate, particularly mob violence of the sort which occurred in Birmingham, Alabama; arson, indiscriminate destruction of property, physical brutality exercised against innocent bystanders--all of these reprehensible actions must be attributed to the Negro mob which shattered the quiet of a Birmingham night. I am greatly saddened by these actions, but I cannot condemn the Negroes of Birmingham as a result of them, because, to me, the most surprising facet of this entire situation is that the Negro population of that city was able to control for so many years the impulse to rebel. Birmingham is known to many Negroes facetiously as "Bombingham", as a result of the extraordinary number of bombings directed against Negro residences and churches which occur in that city. Eugene "Bull" Connor and his sordid legion of uniformed hoodlums have haunted the Negroes of Birmingham for many years, physically molesting them whenever possible and threatening them constantly. I have read some of the vile and disgusting remarks made by Connor and his fellow bigots in the Birmingham city administration; I have seen his men subduing Negroes during demonstrations (see Time, May 17, 1963, which publishes a photograph of three Birmingham police officers holding a Negro woman on the pavement, one of whom is kneeling on her throat); I have seen, most saddening of all, a white youth who, when questioned by a West German journalist about the demonstrations and the Negro demands, replied, "Well, I'd like to kill 'em all."

But even under this extreme provocation, building up month after month, the Negroes of Birmingham did not resort to mob violence. It was a fairly recent event which set the stage for rioting. The current city administration, composed largely of rabid segregationists, had been defeated in an election by a moderate ticket under Albert Boutwell. The old administration refused to step down, however, and is continuing as the government of Birmingham until such time as a court decision forces them to resign. This refusal was, to perpetuate a cliché, the straw that broke the camel's back. Now the Negroes were in the rather incredible position of being victimized and terrorized by a city government which even the majority of white citizens had acted to unseat, but which had refused to resign and thus had taken on the form of a dictatorship. The situation, to reiterate as succinctly as possible, was one in which illegal measures were being implemented in a vicious and brutal manner by a dictatorship.

Under those circumstances, some of us may still feel inclined to condemn the Negro population for resorting to mob violence. But can any one of us honestly say that in similar circumstances we would not have acted in precisely the same manner--or worse? I think not. Certainly I would resist in every possible way the attempts of an illegal government to oppress and enslave me.

Unless the Negro is truly freed--in practice, as well as in writing--Birmingham is going to be merely the first in a long succession of

racial disasters, some of which could make the riot in that city look peaceful by comparison.

"There are several reasons why, in recent years, the discussion process in America appears to have broken down. The principal reason is the emphatic indisposition by those whose views prevail in critical quarters to accept any challenge to their intellectual hegemony, to recognize dissent from their conformity as serious. But another factor that militates against purposive discourse is the developing taboo first on strong opinions, second on their expression in relentless language. Ours is becoming a land of lotus-eaters, the gates to which are guarded by the dragons I have described. The tendency, these days, is to yield to the passion for modulation. Even in literature, one does not often find oneself concerned with kings and knaves, fair maidens and heroes, treachery and honor, right and wrong; one speaks in greys, and muted hues, of social-problems, and life-adjustment, and co-existence and inter-credal amity. Increasingly, we are called upon to modulate our voices. Increasingly, the convention of tact brings us to modulate not only our voices, but also our dogmas." --William F. Buckley, in "Up From Liberalism".

ENID JACOBS HAS A FEW THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND IRRELIGION

"'Progressive Education: An Obituary' was well-written and pertinent. The question of whether it's particularly desirable to be 'adjusted' to life and society--this being the ideal the schools have been trying to foist on unsuspecting youth--was well-taken. There does seem to be some sort of insipid 'ideal' student: bright, friendly, full of bonhomie, good at sports, and wary of any ideas deeper than, 'Should I save up for a car, or not?' (This business--fetish, almost--of the Almighty Automobile as the ideal, the goal toward which every normal American youth is striving, is an interesting comment on our value-system. Well-meaning people of all ages have bumbled to me, on learning that I will eventually become a teacher (if I don't get kicked out of the college for heresy or asocial tendencies), 'Oh, then you'll be able to buy a car. A foreign car, even. Teachers make good money.') The situation that Larry McCombs described is horribly true. At the teachers college, we are constantly being reminded that it is part of our job as teacher to help the student 'adjust'; one book solemnly warns us to be on guard against--or, at least, on the lookout for--such disturbing symptoms as 'religious doubts' in students. Then, in high-school, there was a thing called a 'trait-rater', on which teachers marked students on the degree to which they displayed the given trait: Leadership, cooperation, sociability, etc. Of course, there was the tacit agreement that it was somehow 'good' to be a leader, 'bad' to be uncooperative and so on. Students even frantically joined clubs so that they might seem more 'well-rounded' and sociable. The student that really suffers from this system is not necessarily the highly intelligent student--for, to quote from my psychology textbook, 'the gifted who are able to make desirable occupational adjustments and who are given adequate concepts of home relationships develop desirable attitudes and achieve vocational success and become well-adjusted husbands and wives'--as much as the highly original one. The individualist is usually considered some kind of social pervert and treated as such--unless, of course, he also manages to be a 'nice, ordinary' fellow in other respects. The real irony of it all is that Dewey, the much maligned father of Progressivism, wanted to promote the emphasis on the individuality of every child. His theory had a multitude of holes in it--but the basic idea had all sorts of possibilities. Unfortunately, his followers somehow twisted 'educate the whole

child--learn by doing' into 'educate the group--conform or else!' I for one would love to see this system shrivel and die, but am wary of Dr. Refferty's efforts to drive a few nails into the coffin. Too many people think that a simple return to the 'good old days' of drills and 'formal discipline'--learning Latin to cultivate the memory, geometry to exercise the reasoning faculty (if such a critter exists), etc.--will solve all our problems. However, educational psychologists seem to agree that these methods of teaching are not especially effective--drills do stabilize a given response, but that's about all, and the practice of learning one subject to develop a portion of the thinking process is fairly useless, for it seldom works. Progressivism seems to be more an attitude than anything else. My high school was a curious mixture--they went in for Latin and the rest of it, but were progressive to the extent that they rated traits, encouraged 'adjustment' to the group, and made it hot for any individualist. I'd like to see this state of mind done away with--and such a practice would have to start in the teachers' colleges, most of whose students seem to be recruited in the first place from a well-adjusted, bright, but wary-of-seeming-unconventional reservoir who allow themselves to be indoctrinated. On the unscientific basis of the one I've observed at close range, I'd say that these institutions are drumming a doctrine of ferret-out-that-idiosyncrasy into their future educators--who are accepting it.

"Whatever respect I've had for Madalyn Murray has rapidly crumbled. Her reply to you and Joe Pilati was not particularly witty, but fallacious and downright ignorant. What really drove me to the brink of regurgitation, besides that remark about your ages, which was illiterate enough, was the reference to Hitler. That's dirty arguing--to drag in the name of the arch-fiend in the implication that since you're against the arguer, and he's against Hitler, then you're for Hitler--even if being pro or con the Nazis has nothing to do with the argument. (You have misinterpreted Mrs. Murray's point in this instance. I had commented that I would not be a party to any 'fight against religion' because I had no wish to impose my standards on others. Mrs. Murray then questioned (by sarcasm) whether or not I felt that I had a right to impose my standards on Hitler; it was not 'dirty arguing', although the comparison is invalid, since organized religion in this country is hardly comparable to Hitler's Third Reich, except perhaps in the dusty recesses of Madalyn Murray's mind.) Incidentally, the good lady has my name on some sort of a little list--I've been receiving illiterature from them for the past two months or so. It seems that she's got a scheme to start some kind of a retreat for Atheists (note capital A) where they can be free of the contaminating influences of theists. (I wonder if they'd want me there--I'm just a lowly agnostic...pardon me, Agnostic.) The whole affair is repugnant to me. Of course, atheists and other unbelievers should have equal rights in this supposed democracy (which, at the present, they do not have). The fact that many states do not allow freethinkers to serve on juries, testify in court, work for the state government, etc., constitutes an outrage and an injustice, and I sympathize with the aims--though not necessarily the means--of any group that is against these practices. But to isolate yourself from the rest of society because you are atheistic in religious beliefs is to assume that atheists and theists can never reach any sort of agreement, that the religious question is of such paramount importance that the only way to surmount it is to retreat from it. This is ridiculous. A better aim, in my opinion, would be a minimizing of the question of religion, until it dwindles to such an extent that one can say to anyone, be he future employer or mere acquaintance, 'I don't believe in any god; I'm an atheist,' and evoke no reaction at all, except perhaps a polite, 'Oh, really. I'm a Methodist myself.'

"I wonder how many years I'll be dead before this happens?" (3914 Brookhill Road, Baltimore 15, Maryland.)

"During the years of doubt in evolution, most skeptical biologists became (like Morgan) simple agnostics. But biologists, like all groups of humans, include among their members some of that tribe of men whom Eric Hoffer has called the 'true believers', the men who must believe one positive dogma or other, men for whom agnosticism is impossible. Some of these, in their attempts to 'explain' evolution, created transparently primitive gods, like Henri Bergson's 'élan vital', a non-material something that shoved the evolutionary cart along in a rut, ever onward and upward. Julian Huxley pithily pilloried this modern attempt at theogenesis: why not, he asked, explain the movement of a locomotive by postulating an 'élan locomotif'? Gods, even when spelled é-l-a-n, are not part of scientific explanation. Biologists have largely ignored the creations of Bergson and his ilk." --Garrett Hardin, in "Nature and Man's Fate".

HARRY WARNER COMMENTS ON #39

"I hope you're not trying to say in the first item that schools promoted conformity in a less vigorous way 30 or 40 years ago than they do today. Think about all the non-conformists you know who are more than 45 or 55 years of age and decide accordingly. (Statistics based on this point would be irrelevant, partly because older people have a tendency to be conservative and conventional even when they may have been non-conformists as teenagers, but primarily because the term "non-conformist" is ambiguous. I admitted that schools have always promoted conformity; it is the degree to which this is currently done which is appalling to me. While students of 30 or 40 years ago were no doubt restricted by certain limits of convention, I don't believe those limits were as narrow. There was also this basic academic difference: competition was encouraged 40 years ago, whereas today cooperation is the keynote. An academic atmosphere which was highly competitive may have had harmful psychological effects on those students unable to successfully compete, but it accomplished at least one attitude which ought to stand as a decided advantage over today's classroom attitudes: it encouraged individual students to be outstanding, rather than "average".) And wouldn't it be more effective if you quoted as authorities on the problems of teaching someone who had had at least one year of experience? (Would it be more "effective" to quote Eugene Connor on the subject of segregation? Or Nikita Khrushchev on the merits of communism? Or Van Cliburn on the superiority of the piano as a musical instrument?) Larry probably wrote his remarks partway through his first semester, Marion before she had done any teaching at all. I don't dispute that schools turn out conforming students but I do deny that the general atmosphere and philosophy that you lump as progressive education is responsible for this. It's the social pressures on the school system, not the school system's intentions, that does it. Just let a faculty announce that the graduates this year will wear normal clothing for commencement instead of the caps and gowns that makes each senior indistinguishable from the others, and listen to how the parents scream.

"John Trimble disappointed me by making the same confusion evident that so many persons possess over social security. It has nothing to do with unemployment insurance (although in Maryland there are some legal tie-ins, like the one that requires a person on social security to receive less than the normal amount of unemployment insurance payments). And the trouble with attempting to integrate 'over a long peri-

od of time' is that every year that passes widens the gulf between the white and the Negro in this country. Right now, it's quite difficult for some whites to understand the statements of some Negroes in Maryland, and vice versa. The Negroes who have spent their lives in Baltimore's main Negro areas and have had little association with whites speak an English that is almost as remote from my brand of English as Spanish from Portuguese. Another century and there will be a definite language barrier between the races.

"You seem to approve the measures that the youth legislature adopted. I've never seen any statistics to back up the contention that annual inspection of automobiles cuts the rate of serious accident. I think that the small value that the inspection system provides could be greatly topped by a law requiring a much more rigid inspection of any car offered for sale as a used motor vehicle. I don't know if I like the idea of a psychiatric board for judging insanity in criminal cases. Maryland is one of the two remaining states in which the jury judges not only the facts but also the law and I'd just as soon have a dozen of my peers decide on the amount of sanity I possessed at the time of my crime as a group of specialists who would undoubtedly base their opinion on the degree of my sanity at the time they examined me. I think that circumstantial evidence and the actions of the accused are the only dependable criteria for deciding on the degree of sanity when someone got shot or the defendant set fire to city hall: the effect of his action is too likely to unbalance in either direction a person who is on the brink of going crazy or getting rid of a repression that had kept him crazy.

"It's uncomfortable to me to be in agreement with Madalyn Murray on anything. But I feel that she is justified in citing youthfulness as a reason for being dubious about wisdom. There are many reasons why a young person is likely to make incomplete or unsound judgments. He is much less likely to have encountered as yet certain severe emotional storms, he is still apt to be rebelling for the sake of rebellion, he hasn't been mature long enough to undergo changes of outlook on many issues and feels scorn for the middle-aged persons who have had the courage to alter their opinions, he probably has nobody solely dependent upon him for livelihood, he hasn't been out of school long enough to realize how rapidly an older person forgets unimportant facts and he knows so many of these unimportant facts that the important facts don't loom large enough in his thoughts, and there are many other important relevant points. I don't imply that all these considerations apply to you personally. (The form of myopia which generally leads to the conclusion that wisdom accompanies age is an affliction peculiar to those approaching middle age.)

"If Charles Crispen wants us to stop referring to God as him, because God isn't 'a biological organism capable of sexual reproduction', what should we call males under the age of 13 or thereabouts and those past the age of potency and the assorted individuals in between who just haven't got it, when we need a pronoun?" (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland.)

"Stand with anybody that stands right while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong." --Abraham Lincoln.

LARRY MCCOMBS COMMENTS ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS OF CURRENT INTEREST

"The argument that integration must proceed slowly was eloquently answered by Mauldin in a Sun-Times cartoon that was reprinted in the May 17th issue of Time. A tattered Negro boy is nearing the top of a

huge thorn bush, reaching for a rose labeled 'Equality', and inquiring angrily, 'What do you mean, not so fast?'

"And yet, one cannot argue with the statement that opinions must be changed as well as laws. This paradox is eloquently expressed by James Baldwin in his New Yorker essay, now in book form as 'The Fire Next Time'. By the way, Time dismisses Baldwin as a darling of the white intelligentsia and remarks that most Negroes have never heard of him. One educator whom I know inquired of every Negro whom he met during a day in downtown Chicago. A sampling of fifteen Negroes, mostly hand laborers, revealed that every one of them knew not only who Baldwin was, but could summarize his ideas. And a few of these people could not even read!

"Incidentally, with all the fuss over Birmingham and the South, it seems to pass generally unnoticed that segregation in the North is increasing. For instance, in 1950 89% of Chicago Negroes lived in predominantly Negro districts. In 1960 the figure was 95%. In Hyde Park, Chicago's much-bragged-about 'model' slum clearance project, 14,000 Negroes were evicted from condemned property. There are now 250 town houses and two apartment buildings on the cleared land. The rest of it went for institutional and commercial use, parking lots, parks, and much is still unused. Twenty-seven of the town houses and 14% of the apartments are occupied by Negroes. In other words, 20,000 low-income families were moved out, 70% of them Negro. Well under 10,000 middle-income families have moved in, about 10-15% of them Negro. Property values in the area have risen, as have rents, and the Negro district has effectively been shoved back into the already overcrowded slum area. This is how Chicago solves its Negro problems. More efficient than dogs and fire hoses--and yet it looks like progress!

"You entirely missed my point on the question of clothing in school. The law does not state what is 'indecent' clothing--that decision is up to the arresting officer and the judge. What is decent on Miami Beach is indecent in downtown Oak Park, not because of differences in the wording of the law, but in the prevailing dress and attitudes. Who is better qualified than the school authorities to decide who is decently dressed for school and who is not? If they flagrantly abuse this power, they may be taken to court. Sure, some men and women go out of their way to be nasty--but most are fairly reasonable.

"Now, I agree that in the abstract Ideal Society, each individual would be allowed to say anything he pleases, wear anything he pleases, read anything he pleases, etc. We do not live in that Ideal Society. If our rights are to be limited, then I prefer it to be done by someone who clearly states what the limits are. Ten simple rules suffice to outline Oak Park's code of dress--a nuisance, sure, but far fairer than allowing each teacher to arbitrarily decide whether dress is decent or indecent. You say that laws should be simplified by the same argument, though you say it sarcastically. I agree. I would prefer a law which clearly outlines the extent of 'obscenity' rather than the present vague definition which any censor can warp to his own ends. Of course, I'd prefer no law at all about obscenity, but we may have to get to that goal through several intermediate steps. The first step in the school case is recognition that students have rights and are entitled to a clear statement of what the rules are before they can be convicted of infringing them.

"I apologize to Martin Helgesen for misinterpreting the Catholic point of view about forcing others into their church--but the use of the word 'Catholic' was totally irrelevant to my argument and may be deleted therefrom without changing the hypothetical situation. I introduced it only to force Ted to admit, as he quite honestly did, that he must eventually make the judgement that his moral precepts are superior.

to those of others. There is no outside objective authority that can prove it--he must decide that himself. My chief argument against religions is that they try to provide such an infallible authority to back up their own prejudices.

"As for my remarks in Bane which you quoted in #39, I think I'm slightly more optimistic now. There are still a vast majority of students being brainwashed into conformity, but there are a few (particularly the near-geniuses) who can be saved. And there is enough freedom in this school system to allow a minority of the teachers to encourage this minority of students. Again--not the ideal situation, but a step on the way.

"Madalyn Murray's letter in #39 finally decided me on a point that I've been hesitating over for some months. I've recently been getting her newsletters and had considered sending her some money to help with expenses, though her belligerent and all-knowing attitude bugged me. Her sarcastic response to criticism in Kipple convinced me that my meagre funds can be better used elsewhere. I admire her courage and sympathize with her troubles, but I cannot agree with her moral stance. And I certainly am not interested in supporting her militant atheistic religion.

"It's too bad that Father Schneider considers 'The Last Temptation of Christ' to be obscene. That's about the only book I've ever read that made me believe that there might have been such a person as Christ after all, and that I could sympathize with him if there was. But then, that's why I'm not too gungho about organized Christianity--it has rejected just those parts of Christ's teaching that I agree with." (Apt. 407, 238 N. Pine Ave., Chicago 44, Illinois.)

"Those who insist that one cannot legislate morality should bear in mind that immorality has been legislated. Those who insist that one cannot, by law, fight against social customs, should bear in mind that social customs, and most certainly, the present Jim Crow set-up in the South is dependent upon the existence of particular laws. In fact, those who say that laws are irrelevant, at best, and harmful and provocative at worst, when it comes to dealing with matters of morals, mores and customs, may well be challenged: All right, if laws cannot or should not be used against Jim Crow, then repeal all laws supporting Jim Crow. If law is irrelevant, then let us have no laws of any kind--pro or con--dealing with racism!" --Herbert Aptheker, in "The Negro Today".

VIC RYAN COMMENTS BRIEFLY ON #38 AND #39

"That item about the abolition of steady dating in one high school is highly amusing, to say the least. Other than the obvious authoritarianism of the act, I'd question it on the grounds of pragmatism as well: just how the hell would it be enforced? Best eliminate dating altogether, and see to it that youngsters meet only at adult-organized functions with proper adult supervision. (See to it, too, that couples don't dance to the exclusion of cutting in and mixing...) For, with the curtailment of steady dating, with its security and its mild tension release, I'm sure that we'll have a real growth of animalistic urges in young men--and perhaps young ladies, too. Who knows what a two-month dateless satyr will do?

"I question Bill Plott's ascription of liberal policies to Trinity University simply because 'Long Day's Journey Into Night' was presented there; hell, it was even done at Northwestern, with all the 'profanity' and such--but just because lucrative interests prevail and such material can be presented, this doesn't atone for the cancellation of

one speech by even a man like Lincoln Rockwell.

"Your post hoc 'passing' in the case of your artistic appreciation article was a little frightening, partially because it was tinged with probably deserved sarcasm, and partially because I don't really have anything to say about your feelings on the matter. If you are actually losing contact with reality, I'd like to petition to join you, since I think I approached your feelings on 'High Noon' and probably at least equalled them on 'On the Beach'. I wouldn't completely reject the element of tragedy from my aesthetic enjoyment of the latter, but I'd pretty much ascribe it to what I thought was a brilliantly-done soundtrack.

"I'd like to object to two facets of your reply to my hypothesis on drinking in good clothing: the first is that I made it clear that the students in question were not my 'friends', but rather my roommate and some of his friends; and, secondly, I doubt the logic behind your statement regarding children standing behind the breaking windows--at four o'clock in the morning? That isn't to excuse the action, by any means--but I think you're making a moral issue out of simple drunken childishness, and that was hardly the point at all.

"Probably needless to say, I appreciated the better part of your 'obituary' for progressive education, although it seems premature; I suspect the theory and the practice will linger on as long as parents are convinced that the way in which they were educated--resulting as it did in such a fine generation--cannot be bettered. Irregardless, I appreciated such phrases as 'academically retarded', in lieu of some of the less pleasant alternatives: 'mentally retarded', 'retarded' or, in view of the general socialization outlook of progressive educational theory, 'biosocially retarded'. However, I find myself once again in the somewhat unenviable position of having to defend, to a very limited extent, the worth of 'conformity'.

"You'll remember I defended conformity before, simply because in an unstructured situation, logic usually favors the group opinion. Here I'll have to disagree with your hypothesis that conformity stifles the superior individual. In a system in which conformity is a dominant value, the overriding characteristic is one which devalues mediocrity. If every individual acted as such, there'd be a staggering amount of crap in the world--almost certainly, more than there is now. In any event, the superior person makes himself known. To me the only danger seems to be that the 'superior' individual may devote his talents to ridiculing the massive conformity which in part is responsible for his individual growth. This strikes me as being pretty wasteful, for what remains to be said that hasn't been well said by Mencken? Damned little, I'd say.

"Al Kracalik's lamentation that students seldom are asked what they 'want' from education is answerable easily enough on the grounds that asking would be largely worthless, since most people either don't know or don't care. I'll agree with his observation that high school teachers, at least, seem generally to have an exaggerated opinion of their own importance. At best, this results in hours of drudgery at home, doing the work assigned by four or five teachers, each of whom believes his subject to be of paramount importance. At worst, it might mean the discouragement of potential teachers--or, at least, the ones who might conceivably make a positive contribution to education." (2160 Sylvan Road, Springfield, Illinois.)

MIDGE WEST COMMENTS ON MADALYN MURRAY

"I have been reading with increasing anger the various comments and opinions on the fight of Mrs. Murray in the pages of Kipple. I have also--though I don't know why--been receiving news letters from the said Mrs. Murray, informing me of the progress of her struggle to get prayer

reading banned in schools, and the resultant hardships she and her family have suffered. My anger is aroused not through disagreement with her views, but because I get an irritating impression that I am being bludgeoned into thinking the way Mrs. Murray does. If Mrs. Murray wants to be an Atheist, the best of British luck to her, but, if the good lady thinks that should her ideas be accepted by every school board, everyone will automatically become an Atheist, I've a feeling she will be greatly disillusioned.

"Though as far as I am concerned, Mrs. Murray is preaching to the converted, at the same time I recognize--and in a way admire--the fact that some people derive a tremendous solace from their religious belief. In this world so full of care, where we have no time to stand and stare as one poet put it, surely this is not to be sneered at. I wonder if I would be more content, had I some belief in the existence of a God, and thereby gain the same solace. A scientist friend of mine once gave me two reasons for his believing in God, which, although I could not bring myself to agree with them, seemed to me the best I have heard to date. One was that although there exists a vast array of living matter on this earth, it all conformed to a strict pattern, i.e., it was made up of cells, had to feed in some way, and eventually die. For such a great amount of matter to conform to these patterns, there must, he felt, be a guiding force which set them. His second point was that there had always been an inherent knowledge of what was right and wrong; whilst this changed in some details over the centuries--i.e., in Roman times love between men was considered more noble than love between man and woman--nevertheless, this knowledge was an accepted value of civilization, and he could not credit mankind with its introduction, so therefore believed some greater force to be responsible.

"To conclude, while I like to consider myself enlightened as far as religion is concerned, I do not consider anyone not so enlightened to be a fool. Religion is a personal matter, and so long as those who practice their religious beliefs by praying, etc., do not interfere with those of us who are non-religious, I cannot see what harm it does. In this respect I support Mrs. Murray's attempt to get collective prayer reading banned in schools, but when it comes to having my papers, radio and television deluged with her writings and talks, which--it seems to me--have the purpose of pushing her belief in Atheism like the policies of a political doctrine seeking to canvass support, I am opposed. I feel that religion is too personal a thing to be used in that way, and surely Atheism is a religion for the irreligious." (12, Parkhurst Rd., Wood Green, London, N. 22, England.)

"Whenever someone speaks with prejudice against a group--Catholics, Jews, Italians, Negroes--someone else usually comes up with a classic line of defense: 'Look at Einstein!' 'Look at Carver!' 'Look at Toscanini!' So, of course, Catholics (or Jews, or Italians or Negroes) must be all right.

"They mean well, these defenders. But their approach is wrong. It is even bad. What a minority group wants is not the right to have geniuses among them but the right to have fools and scoundrels without being condemned as a group." --Agnes Elizabeth Benedict, in Saturday Review.

REDD BOGGS HAS A FEW WORDS ON PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

"I might be more excited about the 'death' of Progressive Education if I had experienced Progressive Education myself. Despite the fact that I certainly went to school 'since the 1930's', I don't recognize

the educational system you describe as the one that taught me. There was little emphasis on 'life adjustment' in the schools I went to (five cities in two states, primary and secondary schools). I might even have used some of that. The only near equivalent of 'applied sandbox' I remember, outside of the universal 'manual training' courses, were some classes in social dancing, given in the Physical Education hour in high school.

"The main attempts to keep everybody on the same mediocre level when I went to school were made by the students themselves. I have no recollection of any teacher implicitly or explicitly upholding mediocrity as an ideal. I was constantly embarrassed in school by ending up each six-weeks period on the 'honor roll'. This was a horrible thing because only girls ever appeared on the honor roll. I sought to avoid it but seldom succeeded in doing so. When I tried, the earnest teacher would counsel me to be sure and study a little harder so I would make the honor roll. They couldn't understand that I didn't want to. But the point is, the school and teachers strongly desired the interested student to succeed and be recognized as successful.

"On the other hand, I see nothing so horrible about the tenet that 'mediocrity was never to be disparaged'. A school system in a democracy should certainly be oriented to take care of the mediocre student because that's what nearly all of us are: mediocre. I can honestly state that I have never met or known anybody I'd consider much above average--certainly I have known nobody, in school or college that I'd presume to be of the genius level. Most people who weep over the school system's emphasis on teaching the 'mediocre' student are actually bewailing the fact that the schools seem not to be interested in the sort of learning the person who is wailing is interested in. This is usually the academic subject, the humanities. It may be true that the schools underrate these studies and even discourage excellence in them. But I suspect that it is an unusual school that discourages 'the superior and interested student' in football. (That statement is both true and unfortunate. Perhaps now I will be accused of bewailing the fact that the schools aren't interested in the sort of learning I consider important, but it seems to me obvious that there is something very wrong with a school system which is more anxious to train its charges in the fine points of football or tennis than in logic or physics.) Excellence in 'practical' and useful arts is also encouraged in most schools. It is certainly okay to be an above-average athlete or automobile mechanic in school. Both the school system and the student body approve of such superior students. I'm not saying that the same attitude shouldn't apply to superior students of English and philosophy, but I do say that the fact that superior achievement in these fields is seldom popularly honored shouldn't be allowed to obscure the fact that schools do encourage exceptional students of certain kinds.

"Any system that encourages conformity equally encourages non-conformity. The more conformity one sees around one, the more he recognizes himself as an individual, and the more he tends to act as an individual in ways that are important to him. The outward signs of non-conformity one sees about him--beards, beatnik garb, ostentatious reading of Kant and Freud on the bus, etc.--is encouraged by the system. (It should be recognized that ostentatious non-conformity, as opposed to individualism, is not necessarily meaningful. I find more cause for optimism in a single sit-in demonstration by white and Negro students than in the entire history of the "beatnik" movement.) I wouldn't be surprised if there were far more non-conformity, eccentricity, and generally individualistic behavior now than there was 50 years ago. It has become valuable and worthy of pursuit for the same reason that a (misprinted?) sheet of 50 stamps in a press run of 50 million is valuable:

every little difference from the norm is worth a premium. If every postage stamp were drawn and painted by hand, probably most of them would look similar because they'd be drawn to a pattern, but there'd be wide differences and mistakes wouldn't be unusual. In the same way, in a society in which nobody paid any attention to conformity/non-conformity, nobody would bother to wear a beard or beatnik clothes, and--since, as you say, 'it is...the nature of Homo sapiens to conform'--everybody would more or less conform as a natural thing." (270 S. Bonnie Brae, Los Angeles 57, California.)

SHORT NOTES ON LONG SUBJECTS

Occasional facetious digressions throughout the past twenty issues of this magazine have referred to the disgraceful condition of my desk. Given the light nature of these irrelevant asides, it is quite possible that those of you who have never visited the mansion at 1448 Meridene believe my descriptions to have been exaggerated. But that this is not, in fact, the case may best be shown by referring to the verse which appears in this issue. The contribution by Les Sample, along with its covering letter dated September 23, 1961, was discovered quite by accident while I was searching for something else in the assorted rubble which decorates the top of my desk. I had completely forgotten ever having received the material; I am quite certain that Les has forgotten having written it. He will receive a copy of this issue when someone provides me with his current address; it should be quite a surprise...

Your beloved editor offers for sale the following issues of Mad, all in extremely good condition: #1-3, 8-10, 12, 15, 17-19, 22-23. All reasonable offers for any or all will be considered.

Lack of space precludes an extensive list of people whose letters will appear next issue; suffice it to say that many others wrote, and at least some of these epistles will appear in #41. And here are the many changes of address which I predicted last issue: Bill Plott, P.O. Box 654, Opelika, Alabama; Mark Owings, 3731 Elkader Rd., Baltimore 18, Md.; Dave Hulan, 3806 Pinedale Dr., SW, Huntsville, Alabama; Enid Jacobs, 3914 Brookhill Rd., Baltimore 15, Md.; Arnold Kruger, P.O. Box 247, Islington, Ontario, Canada. Don't you want to join the legion, Chay Borsella, Bob Underwood?

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