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WOKLpress

#### THE EDUCATION OF MORTIMER T. QWERTY

Sizable chunks of this magazine have recently been devoted to decrying the sad state of education in this nation, an institution which lends itself readily to criticism. However, excessive criticism is not necessarily nor inevitably constructive, and I fear that I have at times been guilty of educational nihilism. Vituperative comments directed against current practices are in themselves only partially effective; such polemical fireworks, if they are to be taken seriously, ought to be accompanied by suggestions for workable alternatives. Hence, it is my purpose at present to continue the discussion of education in this country by briefly describing the sort of public education system which I would propose to supplant the system currently in use. This article is partly an attempt to bring up to date a much earlier essay on this question (see Kipple #22, February 1962), but it is also partly an effort to correct the apparent identification of my ideas with the educational philosophy of Dr. Max Rafferty. (In Kipple #39, I praised Dr. Rafferty's program of return to traditional methods as a decided improvement over the currently-accepted pattern of education, which masquerades under the misnomer of "progressive education". Unfortunately, I failed to explicitly state that Dr. Rafferty's program does not mirror my own; I simply consider it somewhat of an improvement over the now-dominant "conform-to-the-group" school of thought.)

Before undertaking to comment upon what I would consider an adequate program of public education, it is necessary to briefly dispose of the utopian ideals which might otherwise intrude into the discussion at a later stage. Ideally, the instructor should be a gentleman (or woman) of formidable intellect, warm, able to communicate, yet at the same time objective, rigorously fair and intellectually honest. He should receive a salary befitting his honorable profession, and be absolutely immune from any sort of political, social or economic pressure. The ideal pupil-teacher ratio is 1:1, and instruction should take place in pleasant surroundings comfortable to both parties. The pupils, ideally, should learn easily and voraciously, possessing minds which are not only intellectually eager, but also completely immune to the prejudices, misconceptions and misinterpretations of their parents and other adult acquaintances. Indeed, to carry the ideal to its limits, each child should be instructed by his or her parents, a situation which presupposes the parents to be: (1) intellectually capable of the task, (2) willing, and (3) physically able (i.e., possessing sufficient leisure time).

Such ideals constitute fantasy, however. Vast improvements over current practices are certainly contemplated, but suggested programs aimed at securing these improvements must be tendered in the face of certain realities. Parents are not now capable of competently instructing their offspring, and may never be. (The problem is circular in na-

ture: parents would only be capable of properly educating their children if they themselves were properly educated.) It seems unlikely that any large-scale educational system could be devised in which the pupil-teacher ratio is less than 15: or 20:1. Teachers will not themselves become perfect instructors regardless of the rigor of their training, and, in addition, it is unlikely that a school system could be initiated within our democratic structure in which instructors would not be subject to a certain degree of coercion from politically-motivated administrators or pressure-groups of parents. Finally, pupils cannot be segregated from the moral, ethical and intellectual prejudices of their immediate environment (viz., their parents--and, to a certain extent, the entire community) except within small-scale private educational institutions, which necessitate prohibitive expense if undertaken on a large scale.

Even working within these restrictions, however, I believe that several quite impressive improvements could be initiated in the American public school system. My educational philosophy generally favors homogeneous grouping, with, however, a distinction. This device will partially alleviate the problem of an inequitable pupil-teacher ratio, since it is not so much the number of students to be instructed which restricts the effectiveness of the teacher, but rather the fact of their individual and differing abilities. I also favor the return of emphasis to subject matter, a goal which has been unfairly stigmatized as a result of its attraction to political conservatives. My proposed school system would, perhaps predictably, eschew religious indoctrination, artificial Americanism, and non-essential activities which tend to limit academic study.

The first of these programs has been adopted to some extent by numerous school systems throughout the nation, where in reaction to its initiation conservatives have pointed with alarm at the apotheosis of IQ and other test results. My own alarm is somewhat qualified, but in general I tend to the position that the value of such tests has been greatly overemphasized in recent years. It is a reasonable assumption that a student with an IQ of 156 could more fruitfully study advanced calculus than another student whose IQ measured 85. However, the information to be derived from this and similar tests is considerably less helpful when the differences between individuals are less gross, and I therefore feel that test results should not stand as the sole criteria for placement in an homogeneously grouped school system. My view on this specific point has changed little since composing the aforementioned essay in Kipple #22. At that time, I proposed that the first three years of elementary school be left virtually unchanged, with students graded (as is now done) in accordance with their ages. This period would be utilized to teach the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as serving the secondary purpose of allowing children to display to some extent their ability. At the conclusion of this third year, the observations of the instructors as to the ability of each child would, in conjunction with the results of various tests, determine the subsequent "grade" of the pupil. Beginning with the fourth year, students would be separated into ability-groups; subsequent progression of each child from one grade to the next would depend entirely upon the individual's ability. The child would be taught each subject just as quickly--or as slowly--as he could learn. It would be necessary, at the same time, to divide the school day into separate periods for each subject, since obviously the ability of any given child will vary with the subject matter.

A similar system is already in operation in certain isolated institutions, notably University School in Tallahassee, Florida. Under such a system, a student will progress at his own level in each indi-

vidual subject, not "failing" in any subject but remaining at each level until the material has been mastered. The same student might be simultaneously studying, say, sixth-grade history, eighth-grade English, and fourth-grade arithmetic.

The second area of concern to this writer is that of subject matter, with regard to which my projected educational system includes numerous innovations and renovations. The basic classifications of learning in the classroom as I envision it would not be strikingly different from those in use today, but the material to be taught under the headings incorporates numerous distinctions--and, I dare hope, improvements. Perhaps, in order to conserve space, it might be useful to give here a list of subjects to be taught in the classroom as envisioned in this educational philosophy, accompanied by a few brief explanatory comments. It should be realized in order that this resume be intelligible that the same classifications would suffice throughout elementary and secondary school (with a single exception, discussed below), with only the complexity of the material included under the heading varying. Here, then, is the curriculum for public school students in grades four through twelve, in that hypothetical school system which adopted what we may immodestly refer to as the Pauls Plan:

English--Reading; writing, with the emphasis less on penmanship than on grammar, sentence structure, organization and logic; spelling; diction.

History--The history of civilization, commencing with outstanding events and eras (the signing of the Magna Charta, Alexander's conquests, the Mongol surge of the 13th century, the discovery of America) and filling in details gradually.

Mathematics--Basically much the same as currently taught, beginning with basic arithmetic and progressing to the more complicated facets.

Physical Sciences--Physics, with heavy emphasis on simple experiments in the elementary grades; geology; astronomy.

Biological Sciences--Biology, botany; elementary chemistry; zoology; evolutionary theory; anatomy.

Social Sciences--Cultural anthropology; sociology; psychology.

Philosophy--Initially, the comparative study of political systems, and a thorough study of our government, its processes and departments; later, courses in comparative religion, and in philosophy.

This schedule seems intellectually burdensome, but it is not; only the headings are ostentatiously academic. "Philosophy", initially, would consist of little more than a course in government; "Biological Sciences" would, in elementary grades, consist merely of instruction in fundamental biological concepts, a little taxonomy, the basic concept of evolution, and a good deal of hamster-watching and frog dissecting of the type which currently passes for "science" in the lower grades of school. "Physical Sciences" would primarily consist of the sort of kitchen-table experiments most children appear to so thoroughly enjoy, followed by a simple explanation of the principle involved in each experiment. "Social Sciences" would not become a part of the curriculum at all until secondary school. In other words, there is no attempt here, implicit or explicit, to promote the welfare of the academically-gifted student at the expense of the "average" student. My intent is to intro-

duce students to individual subjects in such a way as to eliminate the abysmal practice currently rampant in our public school systems of teaching the same event four years in a row, each year adding a few of the more obscure details. This system would hope to eliminate the need for such repetition, by teaching the basic premises of each subject early and building gradually upon that foundation. Thus, a student in such a school might not study the evolution of Homo sapiens until his final year of high school--but when he did engage in this fascinating topic, he would not need to backtrack in order to study the evolution of the image-forming eye, or to discover the meaning of "notochord"; he would already possess this information.

The school day would probably be seven hours in duration (8:30-3:30), with six one-hour periods and one hour for lunch--although such details are, of course, fairly insignificant and subject to adjustment. Given a five-day school week, this would imply thirty periods of study per week. In elementary school, the emphasis would be on English, Mathematics and History, with the remaining subjects occupying subordinate positions; in junior high school, the emphasis would be more evenly divided between the first five subjects, with Social Sciences and Philosophy assuming subordinate roles; and in high school, History, Mathematics, Biological Sciences and Philosophy would be of prime concern, with English (which we assume to have been learned reasonably thoroughly in past years), Social Sciences and Physical Sciences assuming subordinate positions.

Most of the deletions from this academic schedule are self-explanatory. "Geography" is an anachronism, since all of its important components may easily be taught within other categories; "Music" is a fine extra-curricular activity, but not important enough to consume valuable time in the course of the academic day; foreign languages are utterly useless to 95% of the student body of any school in the nation, and my proposed school system would more profitably seek to teach its charges to speak English properly (a feat managed by only a relative handful of Americans).

For academically retarded pupils, there would, under this system, be special vocational schools, similar to those which exist today in most public school systems.

The third area outlined above is that of religious observance, patriotism, and non-essentials (cooking classes, sheet metal working, potholder-weaving, etc.), and their place in my proposed school system. Vocational guidance would be limited to specifically constructed and designated schools and strictly omitted from the academic curriculum. "Home economics" and "physical education" would likewise be discarded. I am willing to concede to Mr. Kennedy the value of physical fitness, but the pursuit of rigorous exercise may as easily be undertaken as an extra-curricular activity, rather than intruding upon the academic schedule. Religion would be introduced within the fabric of other subject matter, where it was relevant, but my school system would tolerate no religious indoctrination of any kind. Similarly, there would be no patriotic indoctrination, no symbolic ceremonies, and no subtle propaganda within the body of any course. The government of the United States would be objectively compared to other political systems (including communism) under the heading of "philosophy", as noted above; if it fared well in that comparison, this would be because it was objectively shown to be the more valid system of government, not because its practitioners held the advantage of a captive audience of immature minds, which they could guide and mold at whim. Super patriotism, "let-'em-all-go-to-hell-but-us" Americanism would have no place in such an educational system. It must be recognized that a school system, by its very nature, tends to inculcate ethical and moral premises, and the only real ques-

tion becomes: which premises are to be stressed? In accord with the general mode of thought set forth in Kipple #37 (see "A Footnote on Truth and Reason"), pupils would be encouraged in every way to question accepted authorities, criticize accepted customs, and examine traditional ideas in order to determine for themselves the value of those ideas. This basic principle--to accept no statement or idea without first subjecting it to rigorous and critical examination--would be central to the entire system of values to be imparted to pupils. This concept has been espoused at some length in the essay referred to above, so I shall not here engage in the redundancy of a full explanation.

No doubt many readers will disagree with elements of this hypothetical educational system; if so, I welcome their comments. My own ideas on this subject have not yet crystallized, and I stand prepared to scrupulously re-examine them if reasonable objections to the theories are introduced.

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"There is something feeble, and a little contemptible, about a man who cannot face the perils of life without the help of comfortable myths. Almost inevitably some part of him is aware that they are myths and that he believes them only because they are comforting. But he dare not face this thought, and he therefore cannot carry his own reflections to any logical conclusion. Moreover, since he is aware, however dimly, that his opinions are not rational, he becomes furious when they are disputed. He therefore adopts persecution, censorship, and a narrowly cramping education as essentials of statecraft. In so far as he is successful, he produces a population which is timid and unadventurous and incapable of progress. Authoritarian rulers have always aimed at producing such a population. They have usually succeeded, and by their success have brought their countries to ruin." --Bertrand Russell, in "Human Society in Ethics and Politics".  
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#### MARION BRADLEY HAS A FEW WORDS ABOUT EDUCATION

"I'd like to point out that the point of my article was not to indict progressive education, but to point out that progressive education is the only salvation for our schools. (It was pointed out in #39 that you did not oppose the theory of progressive education, but you did attack a number of current practices which masquerade under that title. Actually, this entire discussion has consistently been confused and complicated as a result of the unfortunate misapplication of the term "progressive education" to current practices, and the subsequent perpetuation of that error through wide usage. You wrote a long (and superb) treatise advocating the initiation of progressive education, yet criticizing just those practices which are currently widely associated with the term; I wrote an article dissecting progressive education and pronouncing it disreputable, while my own educational theories as outlined above are, broadly speaking, progressive in nature. It seems apparent that this entire discussion would be greatly simplified if we somehow manage to separate classical progressive education from what-is-now-called-progressive-education.) 'Progressive education,' I said, 'has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and not tried.' I do not--emphatically not--feel that we can return to conventional lecture-recitation-and-teacher-yakking types of schools. If this is 'basic education', include me out; that kind of 'good, old-fashioned, basic' education is dependent on total regimentation and teacher-deciding-what's-good-for-the-kids-to-do.

"To me, progressive education means: (a) kids are not manipulated, but a climate suitable for learning is created; (b) each student

learns according to his own aims and abilities, rather than everybody being force-fed with one academic program; (c) teaching methods are unconventional and suited to the individual group and teacher rather than to some preconceived notion of what a 'teacher' and a 'classroom' ought to be like.

"I don't go all the way with this, though. Because--as one of your correspondents pointed out--schools today, in spite of their emphasis on socialization courses, 'do not ask whether the kids want to learn all this stuff'--but survey after survey turns up with the same unhappy situation: The average group of high school students does not want basic education. Kids of high school age (according to statistics) seem to want to learn (1) how to drive a car, (2) for girls--how to dress and act, (3) for boys--how to get laid younger (which is a forthright way of stating the interest in sex) and (4) some training that will get them a good job, and money to spend. (If students of high school age do not wish to learn, I suggest that this is caused by a basic failure of the educational system. Most children are unusually curious, and the school system which encourages this quality in the early grades will not be afflicted with apathetical pupils in secondary grades. First and foremost, this entails enthusiastic, scintillating instructors; if all schoolteachers were interesting, more students would tend to be interested.)

"The question, then, is an insoluble one. Trying to give students 'practical life-situation courses', based on adolescent interests (and remember, Ted, the average IQ is about 100; kids in your bracket, the minority, have academic interests, but you can't run majority-schools for minority-interests), has created a situation where the schools are criticized for not giving the students an education.

"On the other hand, if you insist that a good academic education is everything, and demand that all 'social' courses be abolished, and everybody must study the basics--language, science, mathematics, etc.--then the program is too stiff for a majority of the youngsters, and they drop out. Or else they complain bitterly because the adults are stuffing them with 'all that stuff nobody is interested in', and here we go round the (regimented) mulberry bush again.

"Solution? God knows. The minority wants, with bitter passion, a chance to get a basic education, and resents the 'average clod' who clogs up the school and keeps him from getting it. (I did.)

"But the majority cannot profit from that academic education. It's the same problem I outlined in my Day-Star article, Ted--people keep insisting that there will be fewer and fewer jobs for the untrained worker, and that kids must stay in school and graduate.

"But what do we do with the kid who, ten years ago, had just enough brains to be an elevator operator, now that we have automatic elevators? Urge him to stay in school and graduate? Sure--but when he graduates, what then? You can't make him into a brain capable of being an electronics-repair expert. He probably can't absorb technical training. What do you do with him? After four years of high school, the 85-IQ person is just as unemployable in our present society as he was after the third grade, because he just cannot soak up the education.

"Maybe differential birth control would solve the problem--I don't know. The facts of the matter are, that in our society we are reaching a point where the moron and the dull-normal (45% of the population, remember), once the backbone of the labor forces, are unemployable; everyone below the bright-normal is handicapped, and the 'backbone' of the working class now is roughly the range from IQ 115-130. The professionals now must be educated to graduate level, not college level, and so it goes. There used to be a place for even the trainable imbecile--farm work and the like. Now the imbecile and the moron are

permanently unemployable, the dull-normal is at a major disadvantage, and even the bright-normal is getting bypassed.

"Answers? You tell me." (1674 Simmons Ave., Abilene, Texas.)

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"In our civilian life, we start teaching the no longer operative sex taboos of a dead age both at school and in Sunday School. The white in our flag is still presumed to stand for purity and it is given out discreetly that 'purity' means sexual chastity, although it was Christ himself who pointed out that, to the pure, all things are pure--a proposition no longer comprehensible to the self-styled followers of Christ. Our Protestant churches, and, even more especially, the Catholic Church, devote an incredible portion of their political energy--perhaps most of it--to interference with the sex mores of the great non-Protestant and non-Catholic majority. Such religious enterprises are therefore essentially fascistic and in no way democratic. But it is a fact that no law which runs counter to the exact level of medieval Catholic dogma can be passed in any of our states, and if a sensible law infringes on the archaic attitudes of Protestantism, it cannot be offered in a state legislature." --Philip Wylie, in "Generation of Vipers".  
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#### DAVE MASON COMMENTS ON RELIGION AND RACE RELATIONS

"Naturally, Madalyn Murray is a bit of a crackpot, and probably very annoying in some ways. I have never met the lady personally, and if I did, I'm sure we'd be clawing each other's eyes out in no time. But no matter how lousy her manners, or how arrogant her ways, she is acting on something which she believes, and has thought about. The opposition is a crew of mindless Neanderthals who are kicking and screaming by a kind of reflex action; they're led by the businessman types who operate American religion for profit. There are no real religions in this country except for the store-front Evangelisticas among the Spanish, and the same thing among Negroes. The respectable American's spiritual bowels are too clogged for any real religion. He goes to church as a precaution, like going to his dentist

"Of course, I wouldn't bother to contribute a dime's worth of money or time to Mrs. Murray's cause. Removing the school prayer is like taking a small mole off a terminal cancer case. The school system has a million other ways of squashing the young animal into shape. The most useful thing anyone could do about the whole problem is to discover some way of not sending the kids to school at all, or to remove the crap from their little systems as fast as it's pumped in, if possible.

"Teach them disrespect for their teachers, if you have to; most children only have to take one look at the miserable human failures who man our school system to realize that disrespect immediately. In fact, most modern kids despise adults--for which one can hardly blame them, can one? Until the last century or two, we managed to keep from the kids the big secret that the adult world was a mess. They only found out when they got tossed into it, when it was too late.

"But don't worry, if they mutter some imbecile prayer in church, that won't make Christians out of them. It may help in the other direction, in fact. Some of these wise brats may begin to figure out that if this is a Really Truly Godly nation, the way teacher says, and yet somehow the nasty old Reds always manage to get their rockets up first, and always manage to beat us at all sorts of other games--well, damn it all, what's that Yahveh person good for, anyway, if having him on your side doesn't help?

"So, vide Madalyn Murray, I can't get too excited.

"But Dave Hulan, now... I wonder if this lad will feel just a

bit confused by the current events, after his objective, balanced, leave-us-all-be-logical letter in Kipple #40.

"It's nice that he has complete sympathy with the aims in Birmingham. Some of his best friends, no doubt... Of course, I'm a little prejudiced myself. Southern liberals have been saying 'I'm in complete sympathy with your aims, but we must go slowly,' ever since the late lamented President Andrew Johnson's day. Where were you nice fellas when the CORE demonstrations started? Where were you union liberals for the last few years, while the current segregated employment situation was being built up? And who the hell are you, white, washed, and safe, to tell any Negro to be patient?

"Medgar Evers was patient, for the last eight years. It got him a bullet--in the back, you'll notice; a typical example of Southern bravery and chivalry. I have yet to see the cracker who would be able to shoot anybody in broad daylight, face to face with another armed man. The Southerner's most prominent characteristic is cowardice; pure physical yellowness. He's afraid the Negro is a better man than he is. He's damn sure his white wife or daughter would be attracted by a male Negro if they had half a chance--and if that fear isn't characteristic of a man who isn't sure of his maleness, I'd like to know what it is.

"Friend Hulan drags out all the old phrases. The leaders of the movement are really harming the movement by bad timing...more respectable actions by Rev. King...they aren't really seeking their legal rights...and so on. And of course, the new city government of Birmingham would make 'concessions' out of 'good will' if them lousy Northern agitators wuzn't stirrin' up our Negras.

"Come on, Hulan, whose leg are you pulling?

"Let's take up the matter of violence, first: Hulan implies that the white population of Birmingham was out of it, and the Negroes began by attacking police. This is a half-truth, or a half-lie, whichever you like. The white cop is always and forever the Negro's enemy in the North as well as the South. After years of injustice and terror, I am astonished at the Negro population's forbearance. 'A dozen police injured...' Aw, the poor fellas. Why in God's name haven't they been killed? What's keeping the bullets from flying? I don't know. But I know that as of this week, the non-violent period is over. Your Southern liberals have had their chance to prove that human justice could be achieved with argument and reason and law. Now, the blood's going to flow, and I'm not particularly displeased.

"In Jackson, Mississippi, the local fuzz hinted broadly that some Negro group may have killed Evers. They know better, but it all fits the 'outside agitator' plaint. Hulan will probably utter dulcet sounds of sweet reason about how the late Rev. Evers was 'ill advised' or 'not responsible'.

"Then, someone potted a cracker youth, riding past the funeral building with several other young hoods. Nobody mentions that the brats in question were playing the usual Southern cavalier's game of riding in cars through Negro districts, attempting to run down demonstrators, jeering and so on. This again is an example of Southern bravery; if you put the usual yellow Southerner in a car, he feels safe, because he can run away fast after throwing his gasoline bottle.

"Now, the only criticism I have about the shooting of the young rat in Jackson was that the shooter's aim was lousy. The ofay is still alive. Tsk tsk.

"Incidentally, I love that line of Hulan's about the Negro not seeking legal rights. The Southern liberal's mind always leans heavily on the matter of legality, like 'separate but equal'--unless the law becomes inconvenient, as it often does when it runs into constitutional interpretation. That's right, the Negro doesn't have any legal rights

to speak of in the South. If he had, he'd better not try using them, or he's liable to get the hell beaten out of him, just to teach him not to be an uppity n-----. And if he wants any more legal rights, he'll just have to wait till white folks vote to give them to him, on account of he can't vote himself. So he's illegally demanding his rights as a human being.

"The law is an ass, sir.

"And so are the people who try to make smokescreens with it.

"Now, we're in trouble, all over the country, not just in the South, and it's the fault of the lipwaggers, the let's-wait-a-bit boys, the political expediency crew, and the bumbleheads of the left and the right, whites generally, who didn't want to rock the boat, who were too busy elsewhere, who had other fish to fry. By the time you publish this letter, New York city may be just as hot as Birmingham.

"The hot issue here will be jobs, of course. And it's all so damn simple--and so inextricably messed up. The unions are a sacred cow to some leftists; the unions couldn't do anything really wicked, now could they? Only, the modern union is a super-employment agency, run by businessmen in a capitalist way, selling job security to the membership and labor to the bosses. The rich, fat-job unions, building trades for instance, haven't got any jobs to spare; they've literally invented the jobs their members currently perform, by holding back building methods to a nineteenth century level, by padding and featherbedding to the utmost. And they're still afraid of automation.

"So there are no new jobs for Negroes there. And white members aren't going to hand their union books to Negroes and step out of their cushy jobs to give them to Negroes.

"But the Negro movement isn't going to back down either. It's already picketing the building sites. It's the irresistible force meeting the immovable object all over again. They are going to bust heads--and worse--before it's over.

"What will happen? The unions will be broken, as unions. When they built them, they left this huge crack in the foundations; they forgot that if you want to build a solid structure, you don't leave out half the materials; they left out Negroes, and that's it. The capitalist world will chortle with joy, and a whole lump of us, black and white together, will slide into the 'labor pool' of permanently unemployed... automated out. Of course, maybe some of us, the Negro part, will remember the tools of violence that got them their rights in the '60's, and maybe we will try for a batch of human rights for all of us with those same tools." (316 Rutland Rd., Brooklyn 25, New York.)

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"On the black earth, say some, the thing most lovely  
Is a host of horsemen, or some, foot-soldiers,  
Others say of ships but I--whatsoever  
Anyone loveth."

--Sappho

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#### CHAY BORSELLA DISCUSSES MAN, EMOTION AND RELIGION

"The animal called man never reaches the state where he can be labeled 'evil' or 'good'. These adjectives are worthless. Man is a mere pawn of whatever realities happen to blow his way, as a result of interactions of heredity and society. We are not really justified in praising a man for his intelligence or admiring him for his decorum--he has no control over his attributes. Yet we do admire certain traits, disdain others. If life's dilemma is a tragedy, it is because the various parts of man's brain have not evolved on an even keel. The intellect

area of the brain, far from being perfect, is nonetheless well enough developed to justify man's claim of superiority. The emotions, conversely, have not evolved so well. Their nature is such that they often cancel out the intellect. Their sensibility is such that it has been necessary to concoct fantastic dreams of immortality--truly an emotional appeasement.

"Last week a woman asked me to differentiate between a Communist and an Atheist. She thought they were about the same! Reading over recent letters in the newspapers, I've noticed that many people think almost the same thing. I believe I know where they acquire this notion--from Christian newsletters and magazines. Not infrequently do these magazines rant on about the 'evils' of Atheism, only to mention Communism in the next sentence. The two terms are usually used interchangeably throughout the articles. Actually I have never seen a religious publication discuss Atheism without including Communism. This, despite a remark I once heard a priest utter from the pulpit to the effect that 'Religion and politics do not mix.' (I consider Atheism a religion.) No wonder people confuse the meanings." (26 Cedar Ave., Towson 4, Md.)

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"A third characteristic of Athenian democracy was freedom of speech. This was regarded as fundamental and interpreted in a generous manner. The Athenians had almost no laws of libel or slander, and their political debates were as candid and vituperative as their private and forensic quarrels. They seem to have welcomed a remarkable degree of outspokenness, and to have felt that it was part of the game to vilify one's opponents. In politics, of course, this had its dangers, when demagogues like Cleon and Hyperbolus carried the assembly of citizens with them by the crude violence of their words, and we can understand why they provoked answers in a like spirit, as when Andocides says of Hyperbolus: 'I am ashamed to mention the name of Hyperbolus; his father is a branded slave, who up to the present day works in the public mint; he himself is a foreigner, a barbarian, and a lampmaker.'" --C.M. Bowra, in "The Greek Experience".  
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#### ANITA SIMON EXPLORES AMERICAN EDUCATION

"As a teacher, I was naturally very interested in your well-written article on progressive education. It is just the kind of article I would have written last year when I had 160 theories about education and no students; now I have 160 students and no theories about education.

"I doubt that you could get any kind of consensus among educators agreeing that "progressive" education, oriented toward "adjustment", dominated the educational pattern of this nation...(and) if it has not succeeded in entirely extinguishing individual initiative, it has at least made impressive inroads in approaching that goal."

"It is perhaps flattering to think of the schools as having as much influence as you imply in your article, but it is simply not the case. McCarthy was, I should guess, not a product of 'progressive' education, yet his influence, as symbolic of the political atmosphere of the country at that time, would be a much more likely candidate to blame for 'conformity'--if, indeed, it can be shown that the present generation is more herd-like than preceeding ones.

"I think I had best begin by putting the quotation from Marion Bradley in a meaningful context. The quotation expresses Mrs. Bradley's sentiments while she was still a junior in college, presumably before she ever taught school. Inherent in the position of being a junior in college--and particularly one as literate as Mrs. Bradley appears to

be--is the probability that she had had very little contact with students less academically capable than she was. Despite all of the education courses one is exposed to in which it is stressed that there is no such thing as 'the student' about which one can speak meaningfully and to which one can posit certain characteristics which will apply, prospective teachers still interpret statements about education as applying to all students. Now, while I do believe that professors of education are a pretty un- if not anti-intellectual group, I doubt that you could quote one as saying that 'mediocrity was never to be disparaged'. (If the sentiment were implicit in the current educational philosophy, the fact that no educator could be quoted as directly and explicitly acknowledging the attitude would not necessarily be relevant.)

"The words 'mediocrity' and 'excellence' were bandied about the article freely, without any identification of these words as being heavily value-laden. One should not say with disdain that excellence is dangerous to the educator (as Mrs. Bradley seems to imply) without stating what excellence means to her and what she thinks it means to the educator. Also, I could make a case for excellence being dangerous: if one thinks that the excellent student is one who is extremely proficient in math and science (as does Rickover and everybody's-favorite-exterminator, Teller), then it could be said that 'excellence' is bad if it meant excluding such 'frills' as literature, sociology, anthropology, etc. And I should scream even louder if it meant excluding such 'frills' as showing the connection between history and geography, between economics and sociology, and between psychology and mathematics--as has happened in California. Returning to a 'subject matter only' curriculum is a giant stride backwards. It assumes that a logical presentation, let us say in terms of a chronological or historical development, is psychologically the best way to present materials to a child; that what is the best (i.e., easiest and most straightforward) way for a teacher to present the material is perforce the best way for a child to learn it.

"Let me discuss for a moment the several kinds of curriculum extant. The traditional one, dating from the Middle Ages, is the kind under which most of us were raised. It divides the school day into certain clearly marked segments, separated by the ringing of bells, and what occurs in one has very little connection with what is occurring in any of the others. Thus, science papers can contain atrocious grammar and spelling errors and still rate an 'A' (sometimes because the science teacher knows too little to correct them, more often because he is just not interested in such frills), and English papers can contain ridiculous statements of mis-fact and still rate an 'A' for stating the absurdities in proper form. Such is the system Dr. Rafferty wishes to reinstate. (This unfortunate effect is due to simple laziness on the part of teachers and students, or (less often) the stupidity of the former. It is not unreasonable to expect an instructor to be an intelligent person, and thus to possess certain basic knowledge in all important academic fields. The English teacher who is unaware of scientific mis-statements of the general variety that are likely to appear in English compositions is not, in my opinion, a very good teacher; the science teacher who cannot recognize improper grammar and spelling is completely indefensible.)

"Merely instructing the science teacher, for instance, to grade-off for improper spelling is no solution to the problem of getting students to see an interconnection between these subjects. The student may watch his spelling (for the purpose of a better grade), but he will still ask, when he gets a teacher friendly enough to talk to, why the science teacher is so unfair; after all, 'this isn't an English class.' (I am quoting from scores of students who have asked me this question

already this year.) (I trust you have explained, with suitable enthusiasm, that it is not unreasonable to expect even science students to be fluent and articulate in their native language.)

"Also, the subject matter curriculum requires a teacher who is the authority for that classroom, who can teach, usually in the form of a lecture, to rather passive students who are supposed to absorb her words and give them back in the form of a pencil and paper test. In the 'good' subject matter school without frills, the successes are those who can master this technique of verbalization and the failures are the others, the ones, if you will, who cannot or will not conform to the system.

"Although I am not willing to admit that the school structures the society, I am willing to agree that the child's twelve-or-so years in school (and particularly the first eight years) do structure his ideas of himself as a success or failure. What, then, gives those of us who are verbal and have successfully conformed to the expectation of our teachers somewhere along the line, the right to say that these 'non-excellent' students are in fact mediocre? Where the hell does anyone get the right to create failures merely because of their own definition of excellence? The end results of Dr. Rafferty's structure will be, as you say, a return to the school of forty years ago. But do you realize that forty years ago about 20% of our population graduated from high school? You say there will be 'modifications to meet our current needs'. They will have to be some modifications, with a capital S, to fit a system designed for educating the academically elite into one which is to aid 85% of the population through high school and send 40% through college.

"It is impossible to ignore the fact that the U.S. today is not at all the same as the U.S. of forty years ago with respect to education. Most theorists would agree, as would I, that every child should have a chance to get a full education, quite the opposite from the situation forty years ago. Therefore, our definition of what is an excellent student must undergo radical revision. It is now in the throes of this redefinition, and people who remove themselves from the teaching process because they see no way to make themselves effective in my mind disqualify themselves from being influential in the field.

"A large experiment in the field of curriculum development came in the 1930's with the idea that although instructors were teaching subjects, not very many people were learning them. It was thought, based on the newly developing concepts of learning theory, that more students would learn more material if they--the students--saw some reason for learning it. Thus students were encouraged to develop their own interests fully, in the process of which, it was thought, they would develop the skills necessary for carrying out their project. This Activity Curriculum, it is now generally conceded, was not an overwhelming success. For one thing, the system was forced on completely unprepared teachers, and it doesn't take much genius to predict that one cannot force someone to teach something successfully if the teacher has no idea of what she is supposed to be doing.

"Another reason for the failure of the activities curriculum was the isolation into which it threw the student. Individual projects require a tutorial sort of system, and our country is not prepared to support this sort of education. Also, the students developed no sense of social awareness, which is my own major objection to this type of curriculum.

"The most influential--and, to my mind, the best--type of curriculum extant is one strictly in the experimental stage, and the more publicity it gets the better I like it. Its most common names are Core curriculum, or Block-of-time curriculum. Used particularly in the lower

grades and junior high school; before the need for specialization of course material occurs with a great deal of pressure, the curriculum is based on the idea that a student is not going to learn to think rigorously simply because he has had geometry, nor is he going to be good in English simply because he has studied Latin, nor is he going to be able to understand the scientific method nor be able to apply it merely because he has studied science. More important, he will not be able to analyze propaganda, for instance, because the subject matter curriculum does not have a place for this topic, nor will he learn to disagree with others in a constructive and useful manner (without withdrawing from the dialogue in which he is engaged) because this topic is a frill in the subject matter curriculum.

"When we talk about the students who by our definition are mediocre, let us not forget that this group represents the vast majority of students. They are failures only in the school situation. On the whole, once they get out of school they meet almost any standard definition of success you care to name, even so far as (according to one study on the subject which I read recently) having an average income higher than their high school teachers.

"I'd like to cite an example of the kind of student Dr. Rafferty's system is sure to brand as a failure. Stack him up in your own mind with the good students in this system, and then try to talk to me about progressive education being the system which creates conformity. Only by being a failure under the subject matter curriculum can this boy be a non-conformist. The Core curriculum, which stresses the idea that the school should act as a source of reconstruction, of questioning the current value system, would allow this boy to continue to non-conform and yet be a success.

"Jim is now just 15 years old. He's about six-feet tall and very handsome in an assumed Marlon Brando fashion, with blond hair and soft-blue eyes. He cannot read, he cannot write, nor can he spell past the third grade level. He cannot speak two successive sentences without connecting them with 'ya see' or 'ya know'.

"When Jim was twelve-years-old, he ran away to Florida, found work and supported himself for five months before he was discovered and sent back to his 'annoyed' family. The next year, he made it all the way to San Diego, California, where he found work again for six weeks until he was sent back. When I entered the classroom last year, I found this 'failure', this very mediocre student, waiting for me. Sure, I could listen to Dr. Rafferty and teach him math, but he wouldn't learn anything--nor would the others in his class, for the class is homogeneously grouped, which means that all of the potential leaders are hauled out as soon as they show any spark of 'excellence' and the 'Jims' are left together in one motley heap. This is fine for a subject matter curriculum because the 'stupid' ones don't hold up the 'bright' ones, with the admirable results that we can turn out better engineers to staff Cape Canaveral at a much faster rate than under a system where the math honor student is going to have to take the Jims of this world into his system of consciousness and come to terms with them. Naturally, I am not saying that Jim should take the same math course as a kid with a bent for math, but I don't think that mathematics should be a terribly important part of pre-high school schooling, whereas learning to accept 'foreigners' into one's life-world should be. Why do I feel this? Because, despite the appropriation given to the 'bright' students by their teachers and parents because of their good grades, I'm convinced that grades are earned for their extrinsic worth (viz., the very rewards of parents and teachers) rather than for the acceptance of their intrinsic value--the subject and its necessity for living in today's world. I shall give you one guess as to who is the real culture hero of

this school, and so long as that is the case, the isolation of the brights from the stupid is not a success. What is going to happen when the external restraints of school administrations are removed from the 'excellent student'? Look to the riots last month at Princeton for an answer. Jim would never think of anything as juvenile as panty raids, not when what goes inside is his for the asking. He has much to offer the excellent student, but not inside of a subject matter curriculum. (As a result of either obscure communication on your part, or my native stupidity, I am totally unaware of your intended conclusion from this illustration. You appear to be saying that Jim is only a mediocre student by my particular definition of that term--but surely such an illiterate individual would be considered a failure by any reasonable standard. He may, as you point out, be capable of holding a job, and he may have a talent for seducing girls. But an individual who can neither read nor write, and who is inarticulate, cannot properly function in this society. Your earlier reference to non-conformism--and the fact that Jim can non-conform only by being a failure--strikes me as totally irrelevant. Surely you don't mean to justify garden-variety stupidity by elevating it to the level of conscious non-conformity? If these comments are supercilious in tone, it is only because your letter is constructed, accidentally or otherwise, in such a way as to force just such a reply. I genuinely sympathize with the 'Jims' of this world, but I would not care to structure the American educational system in such a way as to cater to these individuals--who are, in all probability, beyond help. It is vastly more imperative to realign the school system in such a way as to encourage the superior student, who might otherwise be severely restricted by incompetent instructors, banal textbooks, and a curriculum geared to their intellectual inferiors. It is this problem which my proposed school system (see above) is primarily aimed at defeating; within this system, if Jim could not read a third-grade textbook at the age of fifteen, he would still be studying that third-grade textbook. Unless he is an actual moron, it should certainly be possible to teach him to read in twelve years. Meanwhile, the superior students in my school would also be progressing at their own level, being taught exactly as fast as they could learn, not faster or slower.)

"A comment or two about a topic that seems to make most of your readers see red--social adjustment. Social adjustment, to me, implies the ability to live in peace (not harmony, necessarily) with your neighbor. It implies taking upon one's self certain responsibilities (asked for or not) of being human. Youngsters have no instinctive sense of responsibility; they must be taught. And they do not learn this merely from a study of what happened historically when a people refused to accept the consequences of their own actions. One learns responsibility by being responsible, and this takes time and practice. If one feels, as I do, that the home is not giving this training, then the schools must give it. Students must be forced to accept the responsibility for questioning the values of their society, of their community, of their own psyche. Time must be allotted for this in the school program as part of the evaluation of projects relevant to the student's life (not the teacher's). You can't make a student responsible by failing him if he doesn't turn in a project on time, for instance. Group pressure is needed at the age of adolescence for effective change of behavior, and if the group is submerged by the authority of a teacher, no real behavioral changes occur. This is precisely the situation in most schools. Even the excellent students learn merely to verbalize, which is why I am hardly surprised at studies describing the apathy of today's citizens. At this point, I am almost prepared to say that group adjustment is a positive value of mine, if one defines one's group as one of one's own choosing after a conscious evaluation of the values involved. No

man is an island, and I don't think very many want to be. This insistence on individuality seems a bit suspicious when voiced by the people whose science fiction and politically oriented magazines I receive. The science fiction crew, in particular, since I don't know many of the others or even much about them, seems to be one in which an extremely large percentage are those who, for one reason or another, have not been able to make a successful commitment to another person. There seem to be relatively few marriages of long duration, and even fewer progeny. Coming from one-half of a childless couple--childless by choice--this is hardly a holier-than-thou proclamation by any means, but merely a question of sorts as to the value of such inability to accept and be accepted by at least one other person on a long term basis; an inability to adjust.

"I think it is obvious that my definition of adjustment has very little in it that overlaps with my definition of conformity. My kitten and I have adjusted to each other, but I'm not about to chase mice on all fours and she's not about to study Sartre at college." (Fourth and High Avenues, Philadelphia 26, Pennsylvania.)

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"A political struggle is in its essence a struggle of interests and forces, not of arguments. The quality of the leadership is, of course, far from a matter of indifference for the outcome of the conflict, but it is not the only factor, and in the last analysis it is not decisive. Each of the struggling camps moreover demands leaders in its own image." --Leon Trotsky, in "The Revolution Betrayed".  
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#### DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH

Although the recent Supreme Court decision in the case of Murray vs. Curlett did not inspire a national outcry as vigorous as that which followed the ruling in the Regents Prayer case, the local reaction has been one of unqualified bitterness. Since it was generally conceded that Madalyn Murray would win her case seeking to remove religious ceremonies from the opening exercises of Baltimore's public schools, venomous protests began appearing in the pages of the city newspapers well in advance of the landmark decision. The illogical tone of many of these protesting epistles, coupled with their deplorable disregard for good manners, renders them absolute gems of ignorance, perfectly tailored for inclusion in the exhibits of any future museum of human stupidity. Some of these testaments of misplaced zeal are rudely derogatory, others nauseatingly maudlin, still others contemptuously pious, but all share alike the common fault of utterly misunderstanding the issue at hand.

The controversy is actually a narrow one, revolving wholly around the issue of sectarian religious ceremony in institutions of learning supported by public funds. The constitutional question decided by the venerable Supreme Court was equally simple; viz., may a school system utilize such sectarian religious ceremonies as part of its teaching program without being said to violate the "establishment clause" of the First Amendment? It seems quite apparent that the answer to this query must be negative, and it came as a surprise as almost no one when the Supreme Court, in an 8-1 decision, officially affirmed this premise. (Francis B. Burch, Baltimore City Solicitor and the attorney representing the school board in this case, contended that the Lord's Prayer and selections from the Bible which were part of the opening exercises in the schools of this city were not intended as religious instruction, but rather as moral guides. Mr. Justice Goldberg delivered a telling blow during the presentation of the case, when he asked Mr. Burch if the Baltimore School Board would consider using the Koran for the same

purpose--the reasoning being that if the Bible was actually intended as a moral rather than religious guide, any moral tome would serve the same purpose regardless of its religious connotations. When Mr. Burch admitted that this would not suffice, the issue was resolved in my mind: it was then apparent that the religious bearing of the texts utilized in the opening exercises was not, as had been claimed, irrelevant. That being the case, the ceremonies in question were therefore plainly sectarian in nature, and hence in violation of the First Amendment.)

These are the only relevant points. The fact that Madalyn Murray is a militant and somewhat obnoxious atheist is irrelevant; had she not contested the legality of these religious practices in public schools, somewhat else certainly would have done so eventually. Her cohort in this specific matter, Edward Schempp, who contested similar practices in Pennsylvania, is, in fact, a devoutly religious man. Indeed, I would myself have initiated legal proceedings on this point, if at some time in the future a child of mine were to have attended the public schools of Baltimore. Equally irrelevant are other manifestations of religiosity in our society, such as the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, or the saccharine motto which decorates our legal tender. But the emphatic zealots whose bitter protestations and fiery oratory excites the passion of the masses are apparently incapable of separating any one of these matters from the others. Any curtailment of the theist's valued freedom to impose his doctrine on others is looked upon as a direct attack on God, Flag and Mother. In his eagerness to right this imagined wrong, this appalling individual is capable of crudely vilifying virtually every intelligent element of our society. In my position as an agnostic, I find it satisfying to dwell upon the possibility that if there is a God, he may, in his infinite wisdom, send these egocentric fanatics to roast in the lowest level of Hell. Finally, the sanctimonious protector of Christianity displays, as Chay Borsella earlier pointed out, a morbid fascination with the idea that godless Communism is gaining control of the United States, aided and abetted by liberals in general and the Warren Court in particular. Fully one half of the letters written in opposition to the decision refer in some manner to the supposed gain of Communism as a result of this attack upon the basic precepts of our spiritual heritage.

Whatever talent I may possess as a writer is wholly inadequate to describe the effect of these individuals on the letter sections of the metropolitan newspapers. The litany of panic chanted by this incorrigible band of self-styled crusaders pervades the atmosphere of the entire state, causing opportunistic politicians, ever-attentive to the whims of their more verbose constituents, to draw out scalpel and probe, don the gauze mask of a public servitor, and attempt an impromptu operation on the Constitution. Fortunately, the relative calmness of the national reaction is such as to leave cause for optimism. The atmosphere of general sanity which prevails outside of this state may assist reasonable persons in their attempts to deprive the unlicensed butchers of their rusty implements and prevent them from performing an unjustified lobotomy on one of the great legal documents of mankind.

Having given at some length (and, I would hope, with a certain eloquence) my opinion of the value of these tortured epistles, frantically decrying our Godlessness, which represent the less subtle stings of the hornets nest stirred up by the Supreme Court decision; it might now be entertaining to quote extracts from some of them:

"In these times when the threat of Communist domination is ever present, when is God's guidance needed more? If we take all thoughts of God from our young generation, communism and its atheistic beliefs will more easily be

instilled in the hearts of the young, who are ever so eager to learn." (Signed: Bernadette Giza.)

"That the U.S.A. is romping down the primrose path to Socialism is crystal clear. Now the Supreme Court has chased God out of the public schools, and it seems to me that He won't be around a lot of other places very long." (Signed: Pleasonton L. Conquest III.)

"This court decision should make the godless communists happy." (Signed: William V. Albaugh.)

"How dare the people who do not believe in God try to disprove the theory that there is a God to people who believe. Has it ever been proven as a fact that there is or isn't a God? Meanwhile, isn't faith a wonderful thing to hold onto in time of trouble? Since you can't always trust your friends, neighbors, or even yourself for that matter, isn't it nice to trust in something?" (Signed: Trudy Drumendorf.)

"Rule by ukase or fiat of some monarch is, of course, very ancient. Absolute monarchs have always exercised the right of such rule. And the right of inheritance made such rule, generally, not too unsavory-- unless tainted by insanity. But it is very difficult to make any such plea for the U.S. Supreme Court to exercise any such right. Although these gentlemen hold life tenure, they are not at all hereditary monarchs; and no one today can be quite certain that they are completely free of the taint of insanity." (Signed: C.V. Baker.)

"I've watched children of all ages, of all creeds, religions and color recite the Lord's Prayer in their respective schools. I've seen in their faces, if only for a few minutes, a sense of spiritual uplift, and humility before God that every child needs as an aid to build better moral standards and as a lasting foundation for good character building." (Signed: Natalie Le Schack.)

"The Supreme Court decision is without a doubt the most unfair, unreasonable, and inhuman deed I have ever seen." (Signed: Catherine M. Carroll.)

Uninformed laymen were not, of course, the sole objectors. The Baltimore News-Post, that mainstay of the Hearst empire and veritable paragon of insipid thought, has launched an energetic campaign to amend the Constitution. Typically, the yellow-tinged sheet did not confine its editorializing to the editorial page. Using not only the printed word, but also the news facilities of its television outlet, the News-Post has contributed grandly to the general atmosphere of emotionalistic foaming at the mouth. The inquiring reporter feature of the newspaper was utilized on one occasion to ask a half-dozen children their opinion of the Supreme Court decision. The little tykes dutifully presented their maudlin reasons for enjoying the religious observance, and no doubt caused many readers (hatchet-faced women gracelessly slipping into old age and longing for a Holy Crusade) to sob angrily at the unfairness of one dirty old atheist depriving these innocent children of

their right to worship. The entire feature was a blatant attempt to play upon such sympathetic emotions in order to incite parents to anger, whereupon it was doubtless hoped that they would join the crusade to amend the Constitution, aligning themselves under the vomit-yellow-with-blue-hyenas-rampant banner of the News-Post. In the normal course of events, the newspaper would not query school children with regard to controversial issues, simply because the News-Post realizes the truth of the basic principle that children are not competent to render ethical, moral or political judgements. The same children, of course, would very likely be equally enthusiastic with regard to a proposal to extend the summer vacation an additional two months--but this does not mean that their opinions are valid or necessarily worth considering. In this case, however, it was useful to question youngsters, whose predictable replies were intended to spur the apathetic public into taking some form of action.

A yet more invidious tactice was utilized by the newspaper's local television outlet. As a portion of the station's regular news broadcast on the day following the Court decision, a ten-minute "special report" was presented, ostensibly dealing with the ruling. Actually, the entire report, except for a brief explanatory reference to the Supreme Court ruling of the previous day, consisted of leading questions: Would the Pledge of Allegiance be outlawed next? Will the motto "In God We Trust" be stricken from our currency? And so on. The mere asking of questions seems innocent enough on the surface, but this "special report" was in fact an exercise in demagogical fear-mongering. Persons predisposed to be suspicious of the Supreme Court would assume the answer to all of these questions to be "Yes", and consequently such crusading theists would be whipped into a frenzy by the repeated implication of attacks on their beliefs.

Francis Burch is another supporter of the campaign to amend the Constitution in such a way as to legalize sectarian religious ceremonies in public schools. Mr. Burch, having lost his case and soon to lose his position as City Solicitor, has stubbornly gotten a death-grip on the religious exercises in Baltimore's schools and has refused to surrender. Mr. Burch's obstinacy in this matter has so impressed me that I have suggested striking a medal for this conscientious public servant. Few other politicians so richly deserve the Order of the Corpulent Cranium, which is the specific decoration recommended...

O Tempora! O Mores!

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"No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent." --Abraham Lincoln.  
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#### MIDGE WEST TELLS ABOUT AN ALDERMASTON MARCH

"The recent article of yours describing the effect certain works of art and music have upon you has prompted me to relate the experience I had on an Aldermaston March a few years back.

"For anyone who has not been on one of these Marches, it is difficult to describe the emotionally draining experience. Nowhere else have I seen people of such diverse opinions and backgrounds meet to demonstrate for a given cause. The Bands, the uninhibited spontaneous singing of ban-the-bomb songs by the hitherto reserved British creates a good feeling such that no one bothers about their aching, blistered feet, the rain, or how long it is to the next stop for grub stake. The evenings, when the marchers can get the satisfying experience of cleaning a pub out of beer, are in a queer way rewarding. You can pass groups squatting on the pavement having highly intellectual discussions on

such themes as 'I think, therefore I exist', 'Where was God before he was God', the current world situation, etc. All this serves to restore one's faith in the human race, and shatters, for a while at least, the belief that people in general are a load of morons. Even the second day of marching, which is the hardest--entailing real foot slogging--does not dampen the spirit of cameraderie. When it comes to kipping time, the organization is such that you are billeted according to where you came from, each area being given a color whereby they can identify the lorries carrying their gear and also their eating places. The North London group--known as Magenta--was housed in a large school hall with a small section from the Welsh tough district of Tiger Bay one year, and this brings me to the experience I want to relate. We had all settled down in our sleeping bags for the night, the lights were out and the general hum of conversation had ceased, when suddenly a young Negro with a Paul Robeson type of voice started singing the spiritual 'Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?' Slowly everyone in that darkened hall sat up, as if hypnotized by this scruffy, sweaty Negro lying flat on his back and singing just for the hell of it. Nobody wanted to shout him down or interrupt him; we just heard his song out, then quietly laid down again. The emotion this lad had moved in all of us did not need applause, and I defy anyone to attempt to put it into words. I just felt at that moment that the world was a bloody marvelous place to be in." (12, Parkhurst Rd., Wood Green, London, N. 22, England.)

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"The basis of a democratic state is liberty, which, according to the common opinion of men, can be enjoyed only in such a state. This they affirm to be the great end of every democracy. One principle of liberty is for all to rule and be ruled in turn, and indeed democratic justice is the application of numerical not proportionate equality. Whence it follows that the majority must be supreme, and that whatever the majority approves must be the end and just. Every citizen, it is said, must have equality; and therefore in a democracy the poor have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme. This, then, is one sign of liberty which all democrats affirm to be a principle of their state." --Aristotle, in "Politics".  
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#### ALVA ROGERS COMMENTS ON LEFT-WING POLITICS

"I get a most uncomfortable feeling of deja vu every time I hear or see the name John Boardman or read something by or about him. There was a time, twenty or so years ago, when I had the same obsessive fear of fascism or the extreme right, and the same impatient desire to see some sort of left utopia in this country. I, too, believed that the American communists were fighting the same good fight I was trying to for Negro equality, the rights of the working man, and the end to poverty and war. Not only were they fighting for the same things, we were convinced, but they had a militant organization backing them up and giving them guidance. In those days a lot of us were so blinded by youthful idealism--and so blind to the truth--that we believed that only by directly affiliating with the CPUSA could we hope to see our country cleansed of its virulent diseases--bigotry, poverty, exploitation of the working man, of women, of children, war, colonialism, lynchings in the South, etc., etc. It didn't take long for most of us to have our eyes brutally opened to the truth as it actually was. I won't go so far as to say that idealism and a genuine desire to achieve a better world didn't motivate most individual communists, but this idealism was cynically and expertly used by the party to achieve its own

goals--and those goals had nothing, as far as I was able to discern, to do with any idealistic crap. I saw the party take a sincere, honest liberal, Henry Wallace, whose major fault was an almost pathetic belief in the goodness of all men, use him in the most appallingly callous fashion in the 1948 election, and then kick him aside as a no longer useful sucker. I, myself, was ordered in no uncertain terms to get with it in organizing veterans on the San Diego State College campus, just after the war, into the AVC and to see that control of the chapter was firmly in the hands of the party. When I rebelled, disciplinary action was threatened. And so, deciding the whole party was nothing but a bunch of fuggheads and pimps, I kissed it goodbye.

"My brief flirtation with the party taught me one thing. If the cause you're interested in also has the active interest of the CPUSA, don't give up the cause just because of that--as most right-wingers would insist you do because that automatically makes it a communist cause--but watch your marbles carefully, because they play a sneaky game and play by their own rules. Another thing I learned is that their literature is just about the most dismally boring writing in the world of letters. Dismal because it's predictable and boring because it uses the same old timeworn cliches that have been around since Marx and Engels. The American communist writer is a hack who hasn't had an original thought since he was in high school, and he has the most limited vocabulary of anyone practicing the writing game.

"Another thing I learned about the CPUSA is that their vaunted strength is largely illusory. They were the Vanguard of the Working Man, only with the Party's guidance and militant program would the Worker better his lot; only through the Party would the Negro in America be able to achieve equality; only through the Party could this program be accomplished, could that goal be attained. The American communist is a great kidder, and pathetic. (This line of thought brings to mind an extract which I have been meaning for some time to quote. The following paragraph, next to which I have penned an appropriate expletive referring to the faeces of a male bovine, is quoted from "The Negro Today", a pamphlet written by Herbert Aptheker: "Today, too, the Negro people in the United States, and in the South certainly, know of the heroic struggles of their African and Cuban brothers; they know of the titanic struggles of the Arab peoples; they know of the world-shaking events in Asia, and especially of the great leap forward of the multi-millions in China. They know, too, of the Bolshevik revolution, of how the Soviet Union, above all others, saved humanity from the racist monstrosity of Hitlerism, and how that multi-national and multi-colored enormous land has leaped forward into the front ranks of powers and into the front ranks of rational and just social orders, after less than fifty years." If Aptheker were a mere charlatan, this passage would be merely amusing. But it is pathetic as a result of the abjectly depressing thought that the poor fellow very probably believes every word.))

"I feel the same way about militant atheists as I do about American communists--they're crashing bores. The militant atheist has the same disgusting gleam of dedication in his eye as the fervant communist; and nothing disturbs my metabolism more than eyes gleaming with dedication. I get this same feeling when I watch or listen to Dr. Fred Schwartz. Right or left or battling God, they're all alike--incapable of seeing virtue in any cause but theirs.

"Me, I'll stay a slightly left-of-center liberal and an agnostic and a pox on the house of all extremists." (5243 Rahlves Dr., Castro Valley, California.)

#### HARRY WARNER DISCUSSES AGNOSTICISM AND MARXISM

"Your insistence that you are an agnostic continues to puzzle

me. Everything you say about religion indicates that you're an atheist. You seem to be saying that you're an agnostic so that people won't get the idea that you believe people should be converted to either faith or atheism. But the term agnostic shouldn't be a synonym for toleration. An agnostic wouldn't find Marty Helgesen's statement about what Christ said after his execution 'humorous when casually dropped in the context of this discussion'. Since the agnostic does not have either faith in the existence of some kind of deity or confidence that there is no god, he can hardly see humor in a remark attributed to an individual who, he concedes, may have been the son of God, for whom resurrection would not have presented any difficulties. (You are probably correct in stating that I do not qualify as an agnostic by the majority of accepted definitions of that term. I do, however, prefer the term, inasmuch as "atheist" is a loaded word, stigmatized by its association with communism and "Madalyn-Murrayism". But your reasoning is specious as re the resurrection. The fact that I do not claim the non-existence of God is not to be taken as an indication that I am willing to accept all precepts of religion. Indeed, there are many theists who do not happen to credit the divinity of Jesus; they are not on account of this dismissed as atheists.) Too, an agnostic shouldn't be scandalized at the fact that both sides in the fights started by the Crusades believed they had higher powers behind them. In fact, the agnostic is the only one who can approve of such a circumstance, because he concedes that either of the opposing forces may have had justification for faith in that particular deity. The atheist and the believer are the ones who should be disturbed when both sides pray beforehand. (The observation to which you allude was not intended as a comment upon religion, and I was not particularly scandalized by it. My purpose was merely to show that Martin Helgesen's contention that morality ought to be determined by "the will of God" was worthless, since it is by no means clear just what constitutes the will of God.)

"If that open and thorough quest for a political philosophy produces inevitably a temporary adherence to Marxism, it's certainly odd that this form of socialism didn't turn up until a century ago. Why wasn't it invented at least as early as ancient Greece? (Plato's communism, although restricted to a certain class of people, is quite similar to classic Marxism. An even more striking parallel to classic Marxist doctrine is the proposal of Phaleas, an obscure Greek thinker, for the elimination of all civil strife through the equalization of property and wealth.) And what did thinkers choose as a false solution in all the centuries before Marx?" (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland.)

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"Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to men, if they have souls that understand not their language." --Heraclitus.  
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#### KATHERINE HULAN COMMENTS ON RELIGION AND INTEGRATION

"Is Marty Helgesen a Catholic? He seems to be aware of Catholic theology, but the statement, 'According to Catholic theology...one cannot sin accidentally or through ignorance' is misleading. According to 'The Baltimore Catechism No. 2', we are all guilty of original sin, which is a result of Adam's and Eve's weakness, not yours or mine. Nevertheless, it deprives us of 'sanctifying grace, the right to heaven... (we become) subject to death, to suffering, and to a strong inclination to evil.' I submit that if I were born in that state, as Catholic theology holds, it is through no knowledge or deliberation or willfulness of my own. Besides, one type of actual sin (willful sin) is venial sin; 'A sin can be venial in two ways: first, when the evil done is not seri-

ously wrong; second, when the evil done is seriously wrong, but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong, or does not give full consent to it.' Note the last, remembering that 'Venial sin is a less serious offense [as opposed to mortal sin, like killing someone]... which does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and which can be pardoned even without sacramental confession.' Now what teenager thinks going steady is very wrong (if they think it wrong at all?) It seems the Church is speaking with a forked tongue here, or at least their prelate is.

"Many churches, notably the Quakers, and at least one of the Anglican clergy, have recently stated that they more or less condone premarital sex. This is, of course, impossible for the Catholic Church, which still insists that sex is for reproduction and therefore belongs only within the bounds of marriage. Personally, I think everyone should read the July issue of Playboy for Hefner's article on the double-standard of this so-called Christian nation.

"We live in the South, know both Negroes and whites well, and are involved to a great degree in the present turmoil (my father-in-law is about to lose his pulpit in Jackson, Mississippi, because he defended Negro rights). I say John Boardman knows not whereof he speaks. For instance, the lunch counters, etc., of Huntsville were recently totally integrated without fanfare (for which reason I doubt it was heard of outside Madison county)--but this was all agreed upon six months prior to Birmingham. We had a few demonstrations at that time; they were quite peaceful, nobody was hurt, the Negroes just weren't served. An inter-racial group met and agreed that after a six-month 'cooling-off' period (Huntsville is plagued with a few 'red-necks'), all facilities would be integrated. And they were. I never heard a word about it, except a brief favorable editorial mention the day the last sign was removed." (3806 Pinedale Drive, Huntsville, Alabama.)

#### DEREK NELSON COMMENTS ON #40

"Your attempt to draw a parallel between the Rebellion by the Thirteen Colonies and the present strivings of the American Negro for equality is, I believe, unfortunate. The situations are not parallel. The colonists, as British subjects, had possessed all the rights of British citizens since almost the first days of settlement. In fact, by the 1750's they not only held the prescriptive rights of free Englishmen, but also certain extensions of these rights peculiar to America. And herein lies the difference between the American Negro and the American colonial. The former is fighting for rights he never had, while the latter rebelled against attempts by an absolutist king to take away the rights he already had, and that his ancestors had had for generations. In other words, the colonists fought to keep what they had; the Negro fights for what he wants (and, of course, should have).

"The first and perhaps greatest modern conservative, Edmund Burke, fought long and hard in Parliament against George's heavy-handed tyranny, which assaulted English rights as much as American. So, too, those conservatives in America who did not remain loyal to their king supported and helped mold the Revolution (or, as some prefer, the 'Conservation'). And when it was over in 1783, it was the conservatives who pushed most for a Federal Republic, and who partially kept the radicals in check.

"These conservatives, men like Galloway, Duane, Bland, Wilson, Kent, John Adams, John Jay, Livingston, Washington and Hamilton, made the American Rebellion a political revolution. The radicals like Paine and Revere rarely attained their social and economic aims; even Jefferson was blocked in many ways. (Goodnessgracious, conservatives have been obstructionists a long time, haven't they?) (It was 1840 and Jack-

son before mass plebian democracy finally triumphed. In 1783, only six percent of the population formed the electorate.) Incidentally, the rebels did not follow the tidy progression of steps you outline in their complaint against the Crown. As early as 1765, the Sons of Liberty and the Sons of Neptune, together, were committing acts of violence in their opposition to England.

"The Negro revolution today is social and economic, not political. This one fact, together with the lack of prescriptive rights, are the two great differences between the American Revolution and the Negro Revolution. Such major points would seem to invalidate a parallel between the two. (No exact parallel exists, nor was it ever claimed that this was the case. Your too-literal interpretation of my article is apparently responsible for what now appears to be conspicuous quibbling on your part. The first two paragraphs of the article in #40 were really little more than an attempt to write a rather more original opening to an article on race relations than had heretofore appeared in these pages. The opening was never intended as a precise comparison between the Revolution and the current integration struggles, and, in fact, is not even necessary or particularly relevant to the remainder of the article.)

"The Buckley-Goldwater conservatives, who feel they harken back to Burke, seem to agree that since the Negro never had any rights (i.e., prescriptive as opposed to the non-existent natural), they can only attain these rights if the Southern whites give them to them. (That's pretty blunt, but probably accurate.) Other conservatives, however, remember Burke's support of the Irish, Catholic and similar oppressed minorities, and believe that the Negro must be aided in his fight against segregation. (I'm leaving the particular status of schools out of this.)

"But, as many writers in Kipple have stressed, legislation alone is not enough. A change in attitudes by the Southerner is essential; yet no one explains how this can be brought about. (Such a change will inevitably come about as a result of education, but I believe complete legal integration to be imperative in the meantime.)

"I know of no way. So all I can suggest is that as the continual, slow, plodding march of equality goes on, violence should be kept to a minimum (by both sides), and that no one else must die in the struggle.

"Thus I happen to agree with Dave Mulan's comments on Birmingham, and stand aghast at your willingness to demonstrate '...or a good deal more', because Connor's government 'was apparently illegal'. The key word is underlined. First of all, it is not up to you to decide whether the government is illegal or not, but up to the Courts. By demonstrating, 'or a good deal more', you are re-enacting the Old West by taking the law into your own hands. The issue was for the Courts to decide, not King, Connor, Boutwell or you.

"And secondly--and most important--violence and force should always be the last resort for a man, a people, or, for that matter, a nation to take. Your rather emotional description of the Birmingham police ('sordid legions of uniformed hoodlums') is unjustified. Connor, from his television appearances, is an ignorant, arrogant arch-segregationist, but he has several points in his favor. His police never let whites gather in groups, never resorted to their pistols even when attacked (Wallace's state troopers had pulled them within a couple of hours after entering town), and were rarely vicious in the performance of their duty. (Would I be considered an impolite debating opponent if I inserted at this point a rather clamorous horse-laugh? More seriously, one might wonder from where you acquired this seemingly thorough knowledge of the activities of the Birmingham constabulary.) Above all, nobody was killed. For this I credit both Connor and his police, as well as Rev. King's preaching of non-violence in churches and poolrooms.

"Wylie's comments on criticism, doubt and progress intrigue me. I always have the image of a new house being examined by a liberal and a conservative. The latter looks at the plans, then looks at the house, and lastly sits back to enjoy it. The liberal, however, isn't quite sure its safe or finished and starts prodding there, hammering here, until the entire structure comes tumbling down around his ears. Change because of inadequate conditions, yes; but please, not change for the sake of change.

"I note that the Supreme Court has let less than five percent of the population tell the other 95% what they cannot do. Even more interesting is the basing of some of the judgement on the intent of Madison and Jefferson. My already poor estimate of these two men has sunk a little lower.

"Have you read that anti-Catholic hate sheet, The Free Humanist? Does anybody still say that atheists don't have a dogma-religion?" (18 Granard Blvd., Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.)

...AND IN CLOSING

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Held over until next issue are scintillating epistles from Enid Jacobs, Bill Christian, Bill Plott, Dave Hulan, and Vic Ryan. Thanks also to those who wrote notes and cards for one reason or another, viz. John Boardman, Madalyn Murray, Joe Pilati, Fred Galvin, Mike Deckinger (new address, effective August 3rd: 14 Salem Court, Metuchen, N.J.), Les Nirenberg, Betsy Sanders, Tom Armistead and Pete Singleton.

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