

DEC. 26, 1963

Kipple, an irregular but frequent journal of opinion and commentary, is edited and published by Ted Pauls, 1448 Meridene Drive, Baltimore, Maryland, 21212. Copies are available in exchange for letters of comment, other periodicals, contributions (articles, verse, inflammatory essays, etc.), or the cash sum of 20¢ per copy. Remember, this is "Help Stamp Out Robert Heinlein Month", kiddies...

jottings

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES of John F. Kennedy's assassination, which were predictable with sickening clarity just a few weeks ago, become increasingly nebulous with the passage of time. When first news of the calamity swept the nation, it was generally concluded that elements of the political right-wing were responsible for the murder. Everyone with whom I spoke during the hours immediately following the shooting of the President voiced the opinion that his assassin was influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the venomous propaganda of the John Birch Society or the various white supremacy groups which infest the South. In view of the vilification directed at the Kennedy Administration from this area of the political spectrum and considering the treatment recently accorded Adlai Stevenson in the Dallas area, this seemed an eminently reasonable conclusion. Everyone who remained capable of articulating a rational opinion--from the many housewives who switched on their television sets in order to escape from their drudgery into the maudlin wonderland of a soap-opera and found instead a genuine tragedy, to the most knowledgeable of political analysts--accepted this premise almost automatically. It seemed so horribly apparent that one of the maniacs who censured the Administration for its allegedly "pro-Communist" leanings or hotly advocated the murder of Chief Justice Warren had finally taken advantage of the necessarily insufficient security precautions of a Presidential motorcade and had translated his convictions into action.

But when it became apparent that the prime suspect, Lee Harvey Oswald, owed allegiance instead to the left-wing of American political opinion, a dark sense of foreboding descended to accentuate my grief. As the evidence against Oswald mounted, and the details of his past political activities were unearthed (his earlier defection to the Soviet Union, his activities on behalf of the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee", etc.), my typically gloomy countenance darkened by degrees until it resembled that of a man awaiting his imminent execution. The average citizen of this nation, I reasoned, is not sufficiently sophisticated to ascribe the assassination to the misplaced passions of an isolated lunatic. The spokesmen for fascism in this country had in the past eagerly capitalized on every incident and subconscious fear in order to perpetuate their paranoid philosophy, and surely the murder of a President by a Marxist provided the ultimate opportunity for these individuals to increase their sphere of political influence. I envisioned a situation in which the passions of the masses, inflamed by the demagogical oratory of a few arch-fanatics, would stop just short of lynching liberals from

the nearest lamp-post. Those who took notice of my morose demeanor probably concluded that I was suffering from paralyzing grief, and my constant glances skyward were no doubt interpreted by the pious as an indication that I was seeking divine reassurance in my hour of sorrow; but indeed, I fancied that the sword of Damocles hung over my head, with General Walker preparing to sever the thread with a single stroke of his rusty sabre.

The expected and dreaded pogrom has not, however, been launched; I seem, certainly not for the first time, to have grossly underestimated the intelligence and level-headedness of the American people. Despite the fact that logic dictated its inevitability, there seems to have been no appreciable outburst of anti-liberal sentiment in this country. Vehement attacks, when they have occurred, have scrupulously attended to the precedent established by the early eulogies, in attacking extremists of all varieties rather than singling out a specific faction. If the reaction to which I have been privy is in any way typical, the man-on-the-street has evinced an astonishingly reasonable attitude with respect to the assassination and the subsequent murder of Lee Harvey Oswald. Some individuals made reference to the international Communist conspiracy, of course; some cheered the announcement of Oswald's demise. But many--by far the majority--accepted the assassination of President Kennedy as the act of a solitary madman, and deplored the assumed assassin's murder as a perversion of justice. Nearly everyone appears to be satisfied by the removal of these matters from the jurisdiction of the Dallas Police Department (the competence of which is in some doubt), and right-wing insinuations directed against the non-partisan Warren Commission have, at least in this section of the country, been conspicuous by their absence.

Because of the generally reasonable attitude which prevails, the occasional inevitable diatribes are rendered even less palatable. An extremely insignificant minority of zealots has been unable to resist the temptation to utilize the assassination as a political weapon. Two or three contributors to the letter sections of the local newspapers have troubled to point out the dubious connection which they believe to exist between Lee Harvey Oswald's political beliefs and the Creeping Socialism of today's liberal school of thought; a single racist attempted to link Oswald with the integration movement. But even these attempts to advance a political goal by ruthlessly playing upon the anger and frustration which the assassination produced in the minds of most Americans have, it seems to me, been rather half-hearted gestures--and they have been soundly ignored by an overwhelming majority of those who voiced their thoughts. One of the most undignified and puerile attempts to capitalize on this national tragedy concerns the controversy growing out of the Supreme Court decision in the case of Murray vs. Curlett (a controversy kept alive largely by the inflammatory editorializing of the Baltimore News-Post). Several of the harridans who march at the forefront of the crusade to legislate against original thought were apparently incapable of resisting the formidable temptation to advance their Holy Cause during a period of national mourning, and so Ruth C. Denner, among others, injected this odious notion into a somber discussion of John F. Kennedy's three years in office:

"I have been wondering, in these past tragic days, if anyone besides me sees any connection between the outlawing of prayer in schools last June and the assassination of our beloved President? Might it not be true that if you reject God firmly enough, He finally rejects you? It certainly bears some thinking."

But such despicable missives were, as I say, notable principally because they constituted such an insignificant minority; hundreds of letters were published in the Baltimore newspapers during the weeks immediately following the Dallas tragedy, and only a relative handful were concerned with either advocating or condemning a particular political position.

The effects of the assassination on the 1964 Presidential election also seemed distressingly predictable on November 23, 1963, but considerable debate has now arisen on this issue. When a violent wave of anti-liberalism seemed imminent, I regretfully concluded that Senator Barry Goldwater's accession to the Presidency was a certainty, the election a mere formality. (Ironically, several readers of this periodical had been discussing only a month prior to the assassination what domestic or international catastrophe might undermine the chances of the Democratic party against Goldwater. It did not occur to anyone to mention the most disastrous possibility of all--i.e., the one that actually occurred.) The most venerable and knowledgeable political pundits, however, are exercising considerably greater caution in estimating the present possibilities for next November--and, indeed, some perhaps overly optimistic liberals are gleefully predicting the eclipse of Barry Goldwater's star. Their reasoning is that Goldwater depended for much of his support upon the South and Southwest, areas which were generally unfriendly to Mr. Kennedy but which might support Lyndon Johnson. I have never been inclined to optimism, however, and this reasoning appears fragile. As it happens, my estimate of Goldwater's chances for victory has undergone drastic revision, but for different reasons. Senator Goldwater's entire campaign to date has consisted of attacking policies of the late President which were so clearly identified with him that all of Goldwater's criticisms seemed to one extent or another personal attacks. These same policies are now inextricably tied to the memory of John F. Kennedy; terming them now "Johnson-policies" or "Rusk-policies" or even "Schlesinger-policies" will not materially affect this, with the result that any effective criticism which Goldwater might voice could be looked upon as an attack against a dead man. The extent to which this affects Barry Goldwater's political appeal will depend upon the extent of his ability to campaign against the Democrats without making any statements which could be construed as blatantly critical of John Kennedy.

The fact that Lyndon Johnson may be popular in certain areas of the South where Mr. Kennedy was not does not seem to me tremendously important, and it certainly doesn't warrant the complacency with which some liberals may be inclined to view the 1964 election. Barry Goldwater possesses personal appeal for many voters quite unconnected to his political opinions; in this respect, he is quite similar to the late President, whose ability to attract support and personal loyalty on a higher plane than mere ideological agreement was axiomatic. But Lyndon Johnson, so far as I can determine, lacks this quality in any significant degree. Observing President Johnson, one begins to realize that the qualities which we took for granted in President Kennedy and which were in large part responsible for his popularity were far from common. It is only in retrospect that it is possible to fully appreciate the quality of John Kennedy's oratory; President Johnson intones a speech as if it were the Roman Catholic liturgy, and manages to project the impression of insincerity even when there are tears in his eyes. Of course, Mr. Johnson is compensated for his stodgy public image by immense political astuteness and a proclivity for pulling strings behind the scenes--but these qualities are unlikely to assist him greatly in the 1964 election.

From where I sit, it appears that next year's Presidential election will not be predictable with any prospect of great accuracy until the ballots are actually tabulated. The assassination does not appear to

have presented any definite advantage to either party; what it has done is to expand the range of possibilities and the number of pitfalls for both factions, thus placing a premium on political alertness. The campaign may not be as interesting as the one which had appeared to be shaping up between John F. Kennedy and Barry Goldwater, but the gyrations engaged in by both parties as each tries to take advantage of the new possibilities without stumbling into the new traps should present a fascinating picture.

THE LITTLE WORLD OF ROBERT HEINLEIN: Several issues ago, a segment of "Jottings" was devoted to a reasonably comprehensive analysis of a newspaper advertisement sponsored by Robert Heinlein, which advocated continued testing by this country of nuclear weapons. Some dispute had arisen over this advertisement, which Walt Willis, writing in a column reprinted in Kipple #44, dismissed as a "crackpot manifesto". Although the ethical system with which such a document would be consistent was dealt with, my principal purpose in that issue was to establish the accuracy of Walt's disputed judgement (with which I fully concurred). The document in question was an appeal to the basest sort of patriotism, couched in emotionalistic terms and incorporating several remarkably fatuous statements. With a couple of notable exceptions, the readers of Kipple appear satisfied that Walt Willis' original opinion of the petition was justified; however, this entire controversy is so crucial that I wish to briefly reiterate my basic argument against the manifesto, before proceeding to discuss my major thesis.

Disregarding out of concern for limitations on space the objectionable tactics incorporated into Heinlein's saccharine appeal to chauvinism, which include the use of guilt-by-association reasoning and a calculated attempt to play upon the honest patriotic emotions of his readers by wrapping himself in the American flag, my primary objection is to the tenet of Heinlein's political ideology which appears in this passage:

"No scare talk of leukemia, mutation, or atomic holocaust will sway us. Is 'fall-out' dangerous? Of course it is! The risk to life and posterity has been willfully distorted by these Communist-line propagandists he refers here to members of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy -- but if it were a hundred times as great we would still choose it to the dead certainty of Communist enslavement. If atomic war comes, will it kill off the entire human race? Possibly--almost certainly so if the Masters of the Kremlin choose to use cobalt bombs on us."

What Heinlein is saying here, baldly and without apparent qualm, is that even if it were absolutely certain that a thermonuclear exchange would entail the utter extermination of the American population, he would nevertheless advocate this course of action rather than accept the alternative of surrender. This sentiment has been justified as being in the grand American tradition of Patrick Henry, which of course it is not: the venerable patriot from Virginia announced only that he was willing to sacrifice his own life in defense of his liberty, whereas the Heinleiners (to use the term popularized by Willis) are demonstrating their willingness to sacrifice the entire population. This constitutes a rather significant distinction, in my opinion. As I have pointed out on previous occasions, life in a Communist society would be extremely distasteful to me; perhaps in time it would become sufficiently intoler-

able to compel me to commit suicide, and almost certainly I would take part in underground activities. Believing as I do that each man's life is his own to dispose of as and when he pleases, I would sympathize with the individuals who could not tolerate the Communist tyranny and quietly opened a vein or attempted to assassinate a government official in order to find release in death. But there is a singular distinction between these varieties of personal sacrifice and the desire of the Heinlein faction to engage in a war which would kill several hundred million persons.

My position in this controversy may be accurately (if rather crudely) characterized as "Better Red than Dead"; Robert Heinlein and his cohorts, of course, advocate the opposite belief. There are two very basic differences which ought to indicate a qualitative distinction between the divergent philosophies displayed by these admitted catch-phrases: (1) Racial suicide is irrevocable, whereas even the most efficient totalitarian society cannot endure indefinitely. The existence of contemporary Americans under a Communist government would doubtless be uncomfortable, but whatever harsh treatment we might be accorded, however we might be repressed, we could at least look forward to the possibility of our children or grandchildren regaining their liberty. Heinlein's alternative offers no such promise of future improvement; our descendants would never be given the opportunity to live at all. (2) Even if the nation were to surrender, each individual citizen retains the option of submitting to the conquerors or resisting, either actively or passively (i.e., by committing suicide). No such choice is offered dissenters under Heinlein's proposal; everyone perishes because of a decision made by a few. On these two arguments, I now rest my case against the concept implied by the slogan, "Better Dead than Red!"

This material has been covered reasonably adequately in previous issues, however. My immediate purpose in this segment of "Jottings" is to determine the nature of the basic philosophy with which such sentiments are consonant. In the original treatise which sparked this discussion, Walt Willis inferred that militarists of the Heinlein stripe were social darwinists (though he did not utilize that particular term). This was at one time an extremely popular social philosophy, though it has fallen on lean days as a result of current humanist influences, and perhaps it deserves a more comprehensive explanation than has heretofore been tendered in this discussion.

Briefly, social darwinism was an outgrowth of Charles Darwin's original theory of evolution. Since the biological system propounded by Darwin was only imperfectly understood at the time, it is not surprising that the social theory which it spawned is untenable. But this fact has not loosened its hold on the minds of a certain class of human beings, in which highly successful businessmen who owe their fortunes to laissez faire capitalism and retired military officers are conspicuously prominent. Biological evolution, it was believed, operated by a process of ceaseless physical struggle between different species and between individuals within a species. Only the strongest, most courageous individuals are allowed to survive and propagate, and only the most able species manage to avoid extinction. Some consideration was given to "gimmicks" of one sort or another (such as the camouflage techniques of certain insects), but "strongest" was defined by the social darwinists remarkably often in terms of actual fighting ability. Evolution, as they pictured it, was competition, usually overt (in the form of physical combat). If this occurred in nature, they reasoned, then did it not also occur in human society? This proposition seemed eminently reasonable in mid-19th-century England, where the unrestricted competition of capitalism had reached its summit and a period of extraordinary financial stability prevailed. And the social darwinists quickly perceived the paral-

lels: all industrialists and merchants competing in the same market are comparable to species of animals attempting to occupy the same environmental niche. The most capable, cunning or ruthless (the "fittest to survive") eventually forces all of his competitors out of the market and achieves a monopoly, just as in biological evolution one species displaces others and may finally eradicate all competition for the resources of a particular environment; as for the less capable, while the penalty for failure was usually not physical death or extinction as in nature, it was often financial and social ruin. A similar set of parallels apply to nations competing for foreign trade and territory, to races competing for the limited resources of a particular area, and even to political parties battling for the control of a government. The strong survive, the weak perish (or at least are removed from the competitive arena). The precise application of these biological principles to a social situation will prove the analogy untenable (whereas, e.g., a minority political party may continue to exist, exert influence, and even regain power at some time in the future, the displacement of one species by another is always total--dissident minorities do not exist in nature); these practical defects are not accounted significant by the social darwinist.

There are certain ethical consequences to such a philosophy. If, in nature, the ultimate criteria for judging species are survival and expansion, so too survival and expansion (read: increase of power) must be the ultimate criteria of morality in human society. There is, under this system, no ethical right or wrong, no good or bad; any individual, race or political doctrine which survives, by any means whatsoever, is justified, any which fails to survive is dismissed as defective. Which-ever faction is successful in waging a war is said to be "right", simply by virtue of having been victorious and without reference to the ideals which may have motivated the opposing armies; any individual who advances in his profession is justified, even if (or perhaps especially if) his advancement occurs at the expense of former colleagues whom he has stabbed in the back. Ultimately, the logic must be carried to this appalling point: Hitler's pogrom against the European Jews was not morally objectionable because it was largely successful, and all of the war-time actions of the Nazis would have been morally justified, had Germany been victorious.

Is Heinlein a social darwinist? It seems perfectly evident to me that he is, despite the claims of some defenders that a writer cannot be held responsible for doctrines espoused by his fictional characters. Perhaps this is true, ordinarily, but in the case of Robert Heinlein there are other factors to be taken into consideration. His "crackpot manifesto" is strong evidence of a predilection for militarist thinking, and his refusal to comprehend the fact that war is no longer an alternative to be preferred above any possible compromise indicates a belief on his part that a "winner" is possible in any future war. Thus, we are admonished to perfect bigger and better thermonuclear weapons in preparation for a conflict--presumably in order that we may be the "fittest to survive" such a contest. Then there is the matter of philosophical opinionating within the body of Heinlein's fictional works. It is true, of course, that a philosophy advocated by a character (or illustrated by a social order) in a single novel is hardly evidence that the author supports such a philosophy, but the constant intrusion of the same doctrine into most of Heinlein's major works is substantial evidence that the author is propagandizing through the vehicle of science fiction. Note also that there is never any indication that the author realizes the stupidity of the ideas espoused by his central characters: the purveyors of this harsh philosophy are always characters whom Heinlein considers his "heroes", never their antagonists, and whenever a

character in a Heinlein novel chooses to question the dominant social structure which is based upon this philosophy, he loses the argument handily. Other authors, endeavoring to describe a society based upon the principles incorporated into the military utopia of "Starship Troopers", have attributed such a social organization to the villains of their epic. When the purpose has been simply to describe the characteristics and shortcomings of such a society, this has been quite irrelevant; it is only when the author is consciously proselytizing that he would find it necessary to consistently ascribe these militarist principles to his "heroes", who are not only praised and admired by the author throughout but also--almost invariably--emerge victorious at the conclusion.

Let us examine a few examples. In "Starship Troopers", Heinlein has Professor Dubois make the following observations:

"Man is what he is, a wild animal with the will to survive, and (so far) the ability, against all competition. Unless one accepts that, anything one says about morals, war, politics--you name it--is nonsense. Correct morals arise from knowing what man is--not what do-gooders and well-meaning old Aunt Nellies would like him to be.

"The universe will let us know--later--whether or not Man has any 'right' to expand through it."

The final sentence expresses the ultimate pragmatism of social darwinism: if it succeeds, it is right.

In "Beyond This Horizon", Mordan, one of the central characters and an official of the utopian government, is discussing a revolutionary cadre with another character. He is asked why the discontented rebels have been allowed to proceed unhindered with their plans for a coup d'état, when the incumbent government is fully cognizant of the movement. Mordan first replies that allowing them to actually attempt the coup will insure that all of the revolutionaries are exterminated when their rebellion fails and eliminate the troublesome formality of trials. But there is another reason, dearer, I suspect, to Heinlein's heart, why the government calmly allows the rebels to strike when they feel that the time is right:

"If the rebellion is successful, notwithstanding an armed citizenry, then it has justified itself--biologically."

In other words, the impending coup (and, by implication, any attempt to overthrow any government) is wrong only if it fails, right if it succeeds, a question which is decided on grounds totally divorced from what Heinlein apparently looks upon as the minor considerations of ideals and principles. It is not considered relevant to ponder whether the incumbent government is praiseworthy or abhorrent, whether the insurgents have valid grievances, or whether the changes anticipated by the usurpers would be admirable or deplorable; the victor is automatically "right", the vanquished automatically "wrong".

Robert Heinlein's preoccupation with the evolutionary concepts of "survival of the fittest" and "survival types" is revealed in several of his important books, but never more clearly than in "The Puppet Masters":

"Once, in a rare mellow mood, the Old Man told me that he did not bother agents with detailed instructions.

Give a man a mission; let him sink or swim. I said his method must use up a lot of agents.

"'Some,' he had admitted, 'but not as many as the other way. I believe in the individual and I try to pick those who are survivor types.'

"'And how in hell,' I had asked, 'do you pick a "survivor type"?'"

"He had grinned wickedly. 'A survivor type is one who comes back.'"

Shorn of its excess verbiage, then, what it would perhaps be convenient to term Heinleinism is simply this proposition: that whatever succeeds is justified, morally. There are no immoral goals, except those which prove to be unattainable; there are no unethical means to an end, save those which fail to achieve that end. There is nothing which can be said to be right or wrong--not murder, not rape, not genocide, not the most hideous torture--; there is only survival and non-survival. The former is by definition the only moral criterion.

It is an appalling philosophy, but perhaps equally appalling is the fact that several extremely intelligent, articulate readers of this periodical refuse to condemn its apostle, Robert Heinlein.

THE TOP SHELF: Brief comments on recently acquired books were at one time a regular feature of this periodical, and my innate conservatism requires only the inspiration of a vacant space at the end of "Jottings" to revive this grand old tradition. The title is no longer appropriate, since new acquisitions are not invariably consigned to the uppermost shelf of my closet as they once were, and the brevity of the comments renders them of dubious critical value. Nevertheless, I retain an almost childish curiosity with respect to what friends and acquaintances have been reading lately, and I suspect that many of Kipple's readers may share this interest.

Winston Churchill's "A History of the English-Speaking Peoples" (Bantam Books #DQ2661-#DQ2664) represents an imposing problem for this segment of "Jottings", since brevity is nearly impossible to maintain when dealing with such a tremendous project. Comprising four volumes and containing over 1300 pages, this is quite probably the finest work of its type available today. The most notable quality of this history, apart from its sheer bulk and exhaustive detail, is the lack of personality displayed by the reasonably lively style. Despite the enthusiastic blurbs, I was aware of Churchill's personality only infrequently, as contrasted to his massive writings on World War Two, where the author is constantly visible behind the printed pages. Only occasionally, as when he is discussing Robert E. Lee's campaign at Gettysburg ("He had lost only two guns, and the war"), does Churchill's impish grin and abrupt manner superimpose itself on the sterile lines of type. But then, Winston Churchill, even when he is mildly stodgy, is a more interesting writer than the majority of contemporary historians.

My tastes in science fiction tend to favor stories centering about social, political or scientific dilemmas, and consequently I am generally poorly disposed toward the more ephemeral epics--the "adventure" stories transplanted into the depths of space for no apparent reason other than to give the author a greater stage on which his mundane conflicts may be enacted. "The Colors of Space", by Marion Bradley (Monarch Book #368), is not even by the most radical extension of that category such a tale; Marion admires and often incorporates into her own work

many of the qualities popularized by the "adventure" school of science fiction writing, but no book written by Marion Bradley could ever be "just" an adventure story. I owe Marion especial thanks for sending me a copy of "The Colors of Space", for not even the name of my old friend and columnist could have impelled me to purchase this book at a newsstand--the executive responsible for the incredibly banal cover illustration and puerile blurb ought to be summarily executed. The author vanquishes the revulsion generated by that hideous painting almost immediately, however, and I found the book a remarkably fine piece of science fiction, perhaps the best story Marion has written.

The "Six Crises" of Richard Nixon (Cardinal Edition #GC-608) interested me primarily because the tome disclosed the surprising fact that not even the biased reporting of Richard Nixon can preserve the aura of integrity and honesty which the politician affects. Staunch defenders of this oleaginous solon (Betty Kujawa please note) should read this book carefully, paying particular attention to the fact that even Richard Nixon's own account of the controversy growing out of his famous "fund" does not manage to entirely obscure the fact that he was caught with his hand in the cookie-jar. Otherwise, the book is not exceptional. It is written reasonably well, and has its amusing moments (viz., when Nixon is being petty, and when he describes the famous kitchen-debate with Nikita Khrushchev), but the saccharine facade of sincerity which the author projects--and which has always been his greatest political asset--becomes tiring after a few hundred pages.

Finally, "Salinger" (Cardinal Edition #GC-169), a collection of critical essays dealing with the work of J. D. Salinger, was purchased because of my great admiration for the subject and with the expectation that a bevy of prominent critics might increase my understanding of his themes. To an extent, this expectation was fulfilled; several of the critics represented in "Salinger" have a splendid insight into his characters and situations, and the incisive writing of Leslie Fiedler and others would be enjoyable under any circumstances. Too often, however, these essays represented the efforts of minor critics to summarize and analyze a major writer, efforts which were by definition predestined to failure. The brief exegesis of Joan Didion, for example, is ludicrous--the effort is comparable to a critique of Sviatoslav Richter composed by a ragtime piano player in the corner saloon. Another unfortunate aspect of such a compilation of criticism is that the widely divergent interpretations of Salinger's work give the impression, when gathered into a single volume, of a discordant assemblage of critics engaged in undignified bickering with each other. The book would be primarily of interest to detractors of J. D. Salinger; as one of the more astute essayists pointed out, it is currently fashionable to dislike Salinger, and consequently fastidious imitators of literary fads will receive a perverse satisfaction by reading the judgements of maladroitness cavers.

--Ted Pauls

"A. N. Whitehead has said, 'Seek simplicity; and distrust it.' It is difficult to imagine a more fruitful guide for scientific research. To see anything at all, we must abstract a few elements from the infinite totality; but when we do, we undoubtedly warp the truth. Therefore we must secondly--and it must be secondly, not at first--we must secondly turn a suspicious eye on the simplicity we have found and see in what way it is false to facts. Then we introduce new elements into the theory, thus complicating it. Then we look for new simplicities. Then...and so the process goes on, indefinitely. Such is the dialectic of intellectual inquiry." --Garrett Hardin, in "Nature and Man's Fate".

THE GREAT

JAMES F. MacLEAN :: P.O. BOX 401 :: ANACORTES, WASHINGTON

Re Civil Defense: I'm neither liberal nor conservative, since a childhood of reading science fiction and cultural anthropology--Mead and Benedict were my heroines at 10; I would have gladly swapped my precious budding library for an hour's conversation with them--with liberal doses of ancient history, kept me from ever getting around to accepting the basic premises of our culture and political system as Universal Truth and led to the development of views on social and political optima that lie completely outside the bounds of the current pigeon-hole labels; but most of my ideas on the best practical approach to immediate domestic issues come close to the liberal position. It's unusual to find myself, as I do here, firmly on the side of the Rabid Right. This apology off my chest, I'll try to point out some of the mind-wrenching untenabilities I find in what I've finally resigned myself to accepting as the normal liberal position.

First, the view of a better thinker (by some margin, I must admit) than I: "As long as there are sovereign nations with great power, war is inevitable"--Albert Einstein. Consider that. The world is apt to last a long, long while and Man as a species will survive any technological holocaust visualizable at present. The problem of nuclear weaponry cannot rationally be viewed and handled in relation to the next few decades, the present generation, alone. Nations and social systems and alliances change very swiftly in historical perspective--they always have, and there's no reason whatsoever to assume that we have coincidentally entered into an utterly atypical era of centuries-long political stasis. The current very severe Russo-Chinese rift is a fine case in point, as is the Cuban Revolution. In centuries past--just a few decades past, for that matter--whole nations have applauded and supported genocidal and/or suicidal programs put forth by paranoid leaders, megalomaniac leaders, hebephrenic leaders, and what-have-you. Currency of the notion of preemptive war amongst our enlightened, moral, and well-educated and -informed citizenry quite proves that genocidal and/or suicidal war is no more unthinkable in the modern era than it ever has been--Good Lord! the situation is so very far from new it's amazing that anyone who has even had enough curiosity to leaf through Wells' History can entertain that view. Time and time again tribes and nations have embarked on wars which very conceivably could have and often did result in their entire extermination, and the frequency with which the deliberate intent has been the complete extermination of the enemy need not be remarked on. The only element of novelty in the current picture is that innocent-bystander groups--the equivalent of the countries marched through and forged off in the good old days--who would be seriously damaged or destroyed now include the whole of the northern hemisphere and at present rates of progress will soon encompass the entire planet. This is hardly a crucial consideration when one can visualize the death of oneself and everyone one has ever known or seen and consider it a tolerable risk, as majorities of populations have from time to time throughout all history. As just one for-instance which I could multiply a dozen times without leaving my seat to crack a book, take the Moros of the Phillipines, who were so impractically and un-negotiatingly jealous of their freedom that they moved by whole villages into their ancestral hilltop forts in defiance of the U.S. Army, knowing fully from the previous experiences of their

countrymen at the same game that they hadn't a chance of surviving that final gesture. At the attack, the women slit their children's throats, the men their women's, and the men fought to the last breath and beyond in the hope of taking one more hated conquerer with them. Human ability to disregard all probable outcomes however horrible in the service of ideals has been adequately demonstrated--that of humans en masse, not just the odd individual. It is beyond the finest flights of science fiction to believe that the multiplicity of current sovereign nations with their variety of social systems and Kulturgeists will never, throughout the long stretch of history before an iron-clad world government can be realistically expected, include one with a leader so dedicated and a populace so enthralled as to again be willing to risk the survival of all they know on a great bid for power or an ultimate rejection of foreign domination. The weaver of dreams may object that world government adequate to maintain peace is perhaps just around the corner if all goes well and men of good will put their shoulders to the wheel. I ask him to read something of the world he lives in and its history, and try to formulate some rational criteria for the judgement of probability and improbability in political affairs. China, Russia, the United States, Ghana, South Africa, willingly submitting to a common government which can enforce its decisions over any objection, with neither veto nor right of secession? Really. Give us another and I'll go to the drinks.

"As long as there are sovereign nations with great powers war is inevitable"--or very nearly so. In acting rationally, one first prepares for the most probable futures, giving precedence to those with spectacularly bad or good features even when less likely than neutral ones. One or more wars before adequate controls can be achieved--perhaps ending the need for controls for some little while--is not only the most probable outcome of the present complex and highly mutable situation but has a number of spectacularly bad features, thus commending it to the close attention of the rational person.

Don't misunderstand me: I believe it's right and worthwhile to do anything one can find to do in support of adequate international controls on weaponry and the powerful if limited world government which in the last analysis is necessary to enforce such controls. My attitude towards the madmen who urge shelter programs so we will feel 'safe' enough from Russian counter-blows to attempt to physically eliminate the "Communist menace" at the first good opportunity is probably less tolerant than your own, if that's possible. But I simply haven't been able to put together a tolerably logical-sounding self-delusive rationale by which I can talk myself into the comforting belief that enforceable disarmament agreement is more likely than not within the thirty or forty years that may concern me personally. I've tried from time to time, and can't help the fact that I have a sort of cerebral censor that chucks out beliefs failing to come up to a certain standard of support by observed data and logically defensible extrapolation therefrom, however comforting they might be; too much physical science training in my mental background, I suppose. Hope in adversity is an evolutionarily positive trait, leading the sapient organism to continue striving to survive even when its calculation of the probabilities on available data indicate survival is very unlikely whatever its course of action--occasion-

ally if rarely the hopeful one wins through in such a circumstance and survives to propagate its trait; while the one going into hopeless apathy at such an unfavorable calculation never (or much less frequently) does. But as a purely emotional bias it should not be allowed to distort one's logical evaluation of likelihoods; its use as a mental defensive mechanism relieving one of the need to contemplate some very unpleasant probability lacks the survival value its use in the last extreme of physical danger possesses.

In my personal view, the standard liberal argument that money and effort spent on shelters is better spent on efforts to achieve disarmament is the manifestation of a defense mechanism. By adopting the belief that disarmament is so high in probability in the near future that a bit more money and effort expended in the U.S. towards achieving it could make it the dominant probability, and simultaneously the belief that civil defense measures which can be taken are of no practical value, and survival after an H-war something to be avoided rather than sought, the mind experiences considerable relief of tensions. It can dwell on the pleasant prospect of disarmament and rational human concord as it guides the person's liberal efforts to help the peace movement; by rejecting CD measures out of hand as useless or undesirable even if successful, there is no need to examine the unpleasantness of a post-war situation in detail to make possible effective planning for survival, there is no need to worry over the extreme difficulty and massive problems of such planning. If the unthinkable but probable comes about and some fine Spring morning sees Larry Liberal and his family up-chucking their guts in terminal radiation sickness, I'm sure he'll be able to find innumerable scapegoats on whom to blame his situation, keeping mental tensions to a comfortably low level as he dies...but mightn't there be that one supremely uncomfortable moment of awareness as he loses his mental grip on himself at the end? Is it worth it? (For the record, let me reiterate this particular liberal's position once again. I am opposed to the aspects of civil defense preparation which possess a low probability of usefulness (e.g., stocking fallout shelters in prime target areas and falsely representing them as protection against direct hits) or the apparent usefulness of which is counter-balanced by disadvantages of a political or psychological nature. I am decidedly in favor of survival after a nuclear war, but extensive study has led me to reluctantly conclude that the effects of a large-scale nuclear war are so long-reaching and widely distributed that most citizens of nations directly involved in the hypothetical conflict have an extremely small chance of surviving. Contrary to what you seem to believe, this conclusion alleviates no mental tensions; it is not what I want to believe, but what circumstances unfortunately compel me to believe. The situation is greatly different in nations which probably will take no direct part in a nuclear war and consequently need not expect to be attacked in earnest should such a conflict erupt, and if I were a citizen of Ghana or Australia (or Sweden) I would support CD precautions energetically. As an American, however, I am forced by the facts as I know them to believe that a lop-sided majority of our population would perish in the event of a nuclear war, and hence I am committed to accept almost any alternative.)

Two major fallacies are the foundation of liberal views on CD: that the problems of survival during and after an H-war are incapable of effective solution, and that survival would in any case be undesirable. Now, let's look at the Swedes. Do you contend that neutral, sane, semi-socialist, prosperous Sweden is motivated by ultra-Rightist anti-peace tendencies in prosecuting its civil defense program? Or just that Swedish scientists and administrators are so inferior in intelligence as to be unable to realize they're just wasting the country's tax money? Think

about Sweden a bit and analyze your reaction to it, eh? (The preparations undertaken by Swedish scientists and administrators are hardly relevant in this discussion, since the eventuality for which these preparations are being designed is not comparable to the situation with which a shelter program in this country would be forced to cope. There is no reason to believe that Sweden will be directly attacked during a nuclear exchange by either faction; therefore, barring accidental explosions of nuclear weapons on its soil, Sweden may be primarily concerned with the problem of fallout. This is a serious but not grave consideration so long as it can be treated in isolation. The Swedish population is able to devote its energies to protecting itself against fallout, without the necessity of simultaneously coping with the loss of most of the population, destruction of centers of industry, disruption of all transportation and communication, destruction of medical facilities, and the chaos which results from the effective disintegration of social and political institutions.) Many of the carved-from-granite Swede population shelters would come through unscathed just outside the rim of an H-bomb crater. Food and water stores for many months, not a couple of weeks, are maintained, and are being increased as weapon stock-piles and delivery systems evolve. The probability of missing one or two crop harvests is being seriously studied, as is the problem of resuming food, clothing, and hardware distribution with the major centers wiped out. Large-scale livestock sheltering has already been provided and is being expanded; radiation-proof seed storage well away from target areas is in the works; methods for decontaminating farmland are under study. The sheltering of Swedish defensive armed forces, to make the country a very prickly little plum to pick indeed even after a war, has been too well publicized for comment; in this as in all but the most urban population sheltering, planning emphasis has been on decentralization so great as to make attack with atomic weapons completely impractical--fighter planes, for instance, are sheltered one at a time along highways which will serve as their runways. (The latter provision concerns military deterrent potential, and is similar to United States efforts to widely distribute individual missiles within continental bases in order to prevent a single nuclear bomb from destroying more than one site. But the decentralization of food and medical stores, uncontaminated water, fuel, and other necessary supplies, while workable in Sweden, would be untenable in this country, for reasons already touched upon. Widely scattering supplies would only tend to make them less useful when transportation and communication systems collapsed.)

All this takes a fair bite out of the Swedish budget, but the population seems to have the curious attitude that they like living and have no intention of calling it quits just because the U.S. and U.S.S.R. have a fracas; they're quite happy with the program. (If any future nuclear fracas were likely to take place between Russia and Sweden, I suspect that I'd be quite happy with our CD program, too...)

What is irrational about the Swedish program? I confess I fail to perceive it. Should we have a 20,000-megaton war--quite improbable with present delivery capabilities but by no means impossible--in the near future, one, that is, that will produce ambient radiation levels high enough to kill all but a very few resistant types of plant and animal life throughout most of the northern hemisphere, a fair number of U.S. and Soviet military will survive, a very small number of U.S. civilians and perhaps a somewhat larger number of Soviet civilians, a very few British and Germans--and the bulk of the Swedish nation, relatively intact and ready for action, with adequate provisions, supplies, and communications to weather the radioactive-decay period in good shape and cope with any emergencies with reasonable efficiency. That's irrational? (Surely you know enough about ecology to realize that one can't kill

off "all but a very few" types of plants and animals and expect the delicate balance of natural food-chains (ultimately culminating with Man) to remain intact. Livestock and seeds can be protected from radiation, but the former at least only in relatively small numbers; besides, as many as forty useless plantings and harvests may be necessary to purge soil of radioactive contamination when the ambient radiation level is as high as that postulated in your observations. What are large populations of survivors to do when their supplies of stored food are exhausted, herds of livestock (which reproduce relatively slowly) are not yet sufficient to sustain them, and soil is not yet productive?}}

It's equally difficult to accuse the Swedish program of selfishness or immorality. Spinoza's argument that survival is one's first moral concern is still as excellent as ever, and I'll let him argue that issue for me.

Such an actually useful program in the United States is unlikely in the extreme, and the type of preparation proposed by U.S. civil defense authorities for private planning would be effective only in the most minor of possible H-wars, one in which enemy strikes were confined to military targets only and the complex food and other commodities distribution machinery of the cities, on which the entire nation is now dependent, remained intact.

It is entirely possible to construct a private shelter and make plans which would make a family's survival through and after a 20,000-megaton war considerably more likely than not; at that level or thereabouts, one can expect the death of most wild plants and trees and almost all wild animals, destruction of major population centers throughout the country and complete breakdown of commodities distribution, the loss of at least two years' crops and the revival of agriculture, when it occurs, on a vastly smaller scale than the present one, complete cessation of commercial meat production for an indefinite period, and a degree of socio-political disintegration the magnitude of which for the first several post-war years is anyone's guess but which seems apt to be extreme. At present levels of preparation this type of war would leave very few survivors after a few months, most of whom would probably be members of the military. The reasonable course of action for a small group of civilians would seem to be travel to an undamaged small seaport and the commandeering of a large sailboat for travel to a hospitable and undamaged South American or South Pacific country rather than an attempt to reconstruct a still-radioactive and almost population-less nation, which in the nature of things could not possibly be defended against the inevitable colonizing efforts of undecimated nations seeking a ripe plum for the picking.

Reasonably adequate preparations for that sort of purely individual survival are possible and need not be particularly expensive if one is willing to make some modifications in his way of life, such as moving to a rural area well away from potential targets, locating and preparing an abandoned mine or prospect tunnel rather than spending much more money for the lesser protection of a CD-type shelter, making imaginative use of surplus, second-hand, and inexpensive materials, building up a two- or three-year supply of foodstuffs from very monotonous but life- and health-preserving items such as bulk unprocessed whole cereal grains, bulk evaporated milk, large packages of vitamin and mineral tablets, and the like. It's a large undertaking, to be sure, and most would doubtless be happier ignoring the problems entirely or throwing their energies into the relatively congenial 'struggle' for world peace and disarmament. It's also an entirely practical one, successfully completed by two acquaintances and partially so by myself, none of whom have more than normal financial means. Many people claim to prefer dying with their country to survival under the conditions apt to follow such a war;

beneath its superficial appearance of extreme patriotism and love of one's countrymen this attitude betrays a gutlessness, a fear of change and deep revulsion towards any sort of hardship, that would have been very surprising to most of our ancestors.

Supporting my contention that such fully adequate sheltering is financially (if not psychologically) possible for the average American, by a detailed examination of the range of possible conditions during and after an H-war and the inexpensive means by which each aspect of the worst likely (not the worst possible--over a range of 30 years that becomes very bad indeed, but never very likely) conditions can be coped with, would require a small book, so I must ask you to take it as a "given" for the sake of discussion.

It is possible for such a limited number of the population as things are, and would require such extensive changes in living pattern in others wishing to make it possible for them, that the most vigorous government campaign imaginable would not move more than a very small fraction of the population to undertake such preparations, and then at the cost of some dislocation in the economy; areas safely distant from potential targets usually have little to offer in the way of employment and can practically accommodate much more than their present population only if the newcomers engage in some subsistence farming and a good bit of bullet-biting, or are independently wealthy. (Eventually, of course, as population gradually shifted away from potential target areas, concentrations of individuals in certain heretofore under-inhabited sections of the country would encourage the movement of commerce and industry into such areas, until they became in their own right prime target areas. This would necessitate repeating the entire evacuation process, with no end to this vicious circle in sight--except perhaps a drastic reduction of population, so as to allow the nation to return to a decentralized, semi-rural social structure and a farm economy.)

The very limited protection offered by current CD-suggested shelters and preparations would, however, save many lives under certain not entirely improbable conditions. It constitutes a chance which, if not a very good one, would still seem better than nothing at all. The facts that a purely exhortative government program, however vigorous, can result in only a small fraction of the population's making the desired preparations, that the preparations desired are entirely inadequate for any but a very mild and rather unlikely war, and that the most vigorous proponents of those preparations are--frankly--nuts who lack even the most basic understanding of the various probable patterns of another war and the conditions following it, these facts, I say, still do not alter the more significant fact that the preparations already made and yet to be made by private citizens do offer some chance of survival under certain circumstances. One is dealing here with life and death, and the vigorous opponent of CD efforts is very apt to be personally responsible for discouraging a number of families from shelter-building. Lacking the gift of prophecy, he cannot be sure that the small chance such measures would have given them might not in the actual event have been the chance that would allow them to finish out their natural life-spans under more-or-less comfortable post-war circumstances rather than dying in agony; the probability of the sort of war which would make that possible is by no means the highest, but neither is it small enough to be discounted. That is a heavy responsibility to take upon oneself. How do you justify doing so? I'd really be interested in knowing, since it's a point I've wondered about for some while. (I do not find it difficult to justify arguing against illusory protection, and I am not immodest enough to believe that the power of my oratory is likely to dissuade very many potential shelter-builders. If anyone has abandoned plans to construct a shelter after discussing the matter with me, it is because

he has been convinced by logic and reason, not by the eloquence of my words. Moreover, it seems clear that any individual who was really convinced that building a shelter was a worthwhile project is not likely to be dissuaded by any arguments, however logical or eloquent. The matter of responsibility for those individuals whom I may have convinced would be relevant if my audience consisted of children or congenital morons, capable of being persuaded or influenced by clever phrases and specious reasoning. Such is not the case. Readers of Kipple and local acquaintances with whom I debate the issue are responsible, mentally aware adults, capable of forming their own opinions after hearing all of the evidence. The government civil defense agency provides them with one side of the question, and I can help to provide them with another; the choice is theirs.))

"Burning witches where witch and witch-hunters agree that witches are in league with the Devil makes a coherent world, in which the next generation retains a choice as to whether to be witches or not. It is when the gentle and the good, who love God after their fashion, are betrayed into burning as witches those who are not witches at all, but merely love God in another way, that the whole ethics of a culture is in danger." --Margaret Mead, in "Male and Female".

A. G. SMITH :: 65 N. FOSTER ST. :: NORWALK, OHIO

My father used to say that he preferred to do business with a crook rather than a fool, for you could watch a crook but God Almighty did not know what a fool would do. Substitute "Communist" for "crook" and you have my idea of such organizations as "SANE". They are just deluded fools, who do not know anything of the realities of life.

Most of these pseudo-intelligentsia cannot understand that the guarantee of peace and personal liberty is not pious words on a piece of paper, but a gun in the hands of a man willing to use it to destroy those who would deprive him of his rights as a free man. Sad but true, no man has any rights, not even the right to live, that he is not willing, able, and ready to defend with arms. ({Are you saying that, e.g., the blind and crippled, who would ordinarily be unable to defend themselves, are not entitled to life or liberty?})

Bob Heinlein is the best friend I have in the world, though we seldom see each other. I know that he is worried over the steady erosion of our liberties, and by the apathy of the vast majority of Americans in response to their loss.

Why do all these custard-heads moan that an atomic war between Russia and ourselves will wipe out the human race. It could very well wipe out the people of North America, but are we the total of the race, is the rest of the world uninhabited? And they all forget one thing: If Russia bombs the United States, the fallout will wind up on Russia; the winds blow from West to East. If Heinlein is a crackpot, we need a few million more like him, who believe and practice the American creed, "My country, may she always be right, but my country, right or wrong." As for "Better Red than Dead", I have punched a few penny-ante traitors, half my age, for carrying that sign or making that remark. ({A lecture on the ethics of replying to an argument of principle with physical brutality would doubtless have little effect on your vermiform mind, so I will simply register the fervent hope that someday you use these tactics against an individual not morally committed to pacifism, and who can teach you to respect his rights in a manner that you will comprehend.}) You can't discuss a question with such morons, you have you appeal to the seat of reason with the toe of your shoe. That is all they are capa-

ble of understanding. I say, "The Red is better dead." Russia today is suffering from lack of food; don't sell them wheat, let them starve, and so cut down the man-power available to our enemies in the Kremlin. Starvation was used as a weapon by the Communists on elements of the population that were hostile to their perverted ideas. In a war for survival, you kill your enemy by any means available, and only fools ever give an avowed enemy a chance, for it is suicide.

Disarmament makes me laugh. We are already thoroughly disarmed, and that is the main reason for the steady encroachments of Big Government. Historically, personal liberty has never existed where the ordinary man was not able to obtain weapons as deadly as his government had. It is an old and true statement, that if a people keeps its government poor and weak, they have a good servant, but if they allow it to become rich and powerful, they soon find they have a tyrannical master. We have a government that is taking nearly 70% of the new wealth produced in the country for taxes, and then without any constitutional permission throwing it away abroad to foreigners. It is odd how the meanings of words change. Today, a "liberal" is not one who wishes to increase the liberties of the people but one who wishes to strengthen the central government's power over the people. A man who wants to put the executive branch of our government in its proper place as defined by the Constitution as a coordinate branch and not the boss of the others, you call a "reactionary". If Goldwater is a reactionary, wanting to turn the clock back to the days of absolute rulers by divine right, then you are the Pope, and a lady as well.

I believe that the law should allow abortions, in order to get rid of unfit stock in the people. It is "immoral", for morality depends on survival of the individual and of his progeny, but it is one way of lessening the number of those who lack the normal desire for children.

Kennedy's death has killed Goldwater's chances, so now the eastern Republicans will nominate and elect some nonentity who believes that the United Nations should govern us. Then there are the Democrats, such as Stevenson, who just last week voted for a U.N. resolution that would destroy our constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press. The quicker we get the U.N. out of the U.S. and the U.S. out of the U.N., the better for us. Advocates of the United Nations are just saying that they are no better than a cannibal from the Congo or a Russian Muzhik or an Egyptian fellaheen. In my opinion, they are right, but instead of elevating the heathen, it just degrades the white man. ((To reply to your specific arguments at any length would dignify them unduly. Let me say only that the brief glimpse of your mentality which this letter apparently provides has disgusted me thoroughly.))

"To arrive at a contradiction is to confess an error in one's thinking; to maintain a contradiction is to abdicate one's mind and to evict oneself from the realm of reality." --Ayn Rand, in "Atlas Shrugged".

CHAY BORSELLA :: BOX 443, TOWSON STATE COLLEGE :: TOWSON, MD., 21204

Your analysis of your "gang" was very insightful. I don't think gang members want individuality so much as they want status. The terms are actually polar, as a real individualist would not care whether he had status or not. Often it is difficult for a young person to achieve status in the regular, adult world--and so he seeks out a gang, an in-group.

A. G. Smith thinks that the parents should be responsible for the delinquency of their children, right up to the point of being forced to

go to jail for them. In this idea I think he has hit upon a fine solution to the world population explosion. I'd stay unmarried forever if I was to be held accountable for the crimes of my children. And even if I did get married and have children, I'd be sure to keep the kids of my own sex locked up in a room for life, because I don't intend to go to jail for anyone. If some brave soul did get married and have a few children, the Smith Plan would promote such tight supervision that the children wouldn't get an opportunity to engage themselves in life and develop their essential human nature. Also, sending the father to jail if, e.g., Sonny got into a street fight, would have a disastrous effect on the rest of the family: the father would of course lose his job, and the children, with an impoverished mother and a jailbird father, would be ideal candidates for juvenile delinquency of a more serious sort. Finally, parents are very imperfect patterns. Too much is wrong with the world right now because of what the "younger generation" has learned from the "older generation". Anyway, I don't think that a parent should sacrifice his or her life to the child; this would prevent the parent from developing his own capacities. His responsibility has to extend outside his narrow family circle.

To advocate raising the standards of television shows and commercials might be to misjudge the qualities of the minds that watch them. One of these "television-minded" persons recently informed me that tobacco, alcohol, lipstick, over-eating and pipes in the mouth were all causes of cancer. There was plenty of testimonial; he'd read this in an article, by a doctor! So he told me he was going to avoid tobacco, alcohol, lipstick, over-eating and pipes, and surely he would thus avoid cancer. There are quite a few of these persons around. Maybe it's best that they stay home watching television instead of going out truth-seeking; maybe it's even best that they go down to the Fundamentalist "Jehovah Yes" meetings on Sunday morning. There is a certain balm for them in their delusions, and I don't think the truth would do a hell of a lot for them.

"It is sometimes suggested that because man has specialized in brains, brains may cause his downfall, just as presumably the over-specialization of external armament contributed to the downfall of certain herbivorous dinosaurs. That argument by analogy is, however, heavily punctuated with fallacies. There is as yet no evidence that mankind is weighted down with a superabundance of intelligence. On the contrary, it is failure to act intelligently that endangers individuals and groups in the midst of competition. To see in advance the remote consequences of contemplated action is an ability that ought to be increasingly cultivated rather than scouted as a menace." --Kirtley Mather, in "The Crust of the Earth".

PAT MacLEAN :: P. O. BOX 401 :: ANACORTES, WASHINGTON

I am becoming more and more interested in this discussion about the pros and cons of abortion. So far, no one seems to have mentioned what I consider to be the most important aspects of the situation, and most of your readers seem rather badly misinformed about the hard facts of life in this context.

Let's speak of the latter--and least important--points first and get them out of the way. Many people state that though they are anti-abortion, they do not consider a two- or three-month foetus to be "human". If that is the case, they can set their minds at rest and cease worrying lest legalized abortion should be simply another name for legalized murder, for after the third month the foetus cannot be aborted except

by an operation in all important respects identical to Caesarian birth. For obvious reasons, this is seldom attempted.

Both you and a number of your readers claim a vital interest in the burgeoning world population, and seem to feel that something (as with the weather, no one seems to know quite what) should be done. Can you be unaware that Japan is one of the few nations that has managed to break that awful exponential curve? That within twenty years the population of that country will level off and begin to decline? Can you honestly believe that any number less-than-three-month-old foeti is too high a price to pay for this state of affairs? (Incidentally, by far the majority of the women availing themselves of this public service in Japan are married, as are most of those who obtain illegal abortions in this country.)

Then we come to the most important part of the question: the individual human factor. Not the mother, the school-teacher, Young Lady of Prominent Family, or whoever she may be--may she burn a good long while in the hereafter for her narrow-minded, cramped, loveless, damnably conventional attitude. I have no sympathy to spare for her. But what if this same twisted woman (twisted by her society, perhaps, but twisted all the same) does not have an abortion but allows the child to be born? What has the child to hope for from her? More than likely, nothing. Is this child likely to get the love, training and attention that he will need to make him a creditable human being? Get your minds off that niggling question of whether or not that two-month foetus is a human being and think for a moment what is in store for the actual human being once he is born under these circumstances. Even if his mother does come around to a more human way of thinking, she will more than likely have to work to support herself and the child. And if she decides not to keep the child? Fine, you say; some yearning, childless family will get him and all will be peachy. The hell it will. Did you know that most states require the knowledge of both parents before a child can be put up for adoption? How likely do you think this woman is to supply that information? By statistics, damned unlikely. Most of these children spend their entire childhood in foster homes, or state or county institutions. Have you read any sociological treatises lately? Do you know what sort of chance these children have of ever being any good to themselves or anybody else?

Finally, I'd like to return to the question that was shelved by implication earlier, to wit, is the killing of the foetus evil? Everyone seems to be agreeing that it is. Why? If you are a believer in the Deterministic Universe you need not worry about the matter of the soul, and surely the world is improved at this point by fewer people rather than more. If you believe in reincarnation, then obviously the soul is not harmed by this temporary set-back. It is only if you believe in Original Sin that you are depriving a soul of the chance of salvation. Actually, it is not quite so simple, but for the sake of argument let us say that this is my position. So far everyone has simply begged the question. Why are you changing your mind, Ted? (Because I am unable, after much soul-searching, to distinguish between a three-month foetus and a newborn infant--because I can discover no logical standard by which one may be considered a human being and the other excluded from that category--I am forced to concede that an abortion is the taking of a human life. The theological concept of a "soul", which I cannot accept, is irrelevant. Your pragmatic justification--viz., that a decrease in population is beneficial--is meaningless in itself; applied in a moral vacuum, it would justify mass murder, an equally efficient method of population control.))

It had long been my opinion that Robert Heinlein was probably a shnook, and needless to say your lead article in #49 does nothing to

mitigate this impression. This is an opinion, I might add, that is not popular with my husband, he being of the Perry/Breen faction. I do not understand the (in my opinion) excessive admiration a good many people feel for Mr. Heinlein. I have noticed before that it occasionally happens that a man is so talented in one field that it causes a good many people to ignore his rather obvious shortcomings. So far as I can see, Robert Heinlein's politics are chauvinistic and his philosophy sophomoric. But perhaps I am uncharitable--it ain't my strongest virtue--and the man actually possesses one or more sterling qualities, to be cherished above all others, that I in my crass practicality am incapable of observing. (Since his name has been introduced, it might be appropriate at this point to mention Tom Perry's sudden disappearance from this debate. Tom is apparently a trifle over-sensitive, and my criticisms in #49 caused him to react rather strangely. He wrote a petulant, bitter letter, accusing me of being incapable of rational and civil discussion, and promised not to write again until I had mended my ways. This reminds me of nothing so much as a furious child, lip pouting and eyes misted, stomping away from his playmates and screaming back, "If you won't play by my rules, I'll quit!" The letter comments only incidentally on the discussion of Robert Heinlein; to a greater extent, it is a personal attack on your obedient servant, and as such does not warrant publication in a letter column which features rational and (moderately) civil discussion.)

"Peaceful partisans in your country France and in other countries are frequently called communists. As a communist I am proud of this. If reactionary forces are to consider every man who fights for peace a communist, by this very act they will be helping to make people aware that the part played by communism is most progressive. All peoples, you see, want peace, and only madmen are capable of wanting war. But it is not madmen who should determine the policy of states! Consequently, if reactionaries identify the word 'peace' with the word 'communism', then that is a compliment to communists." --Nikita Khrushchev, in a speech, August 29, 1958.

HARRY WARNER :: 423 SUMMIT AVE. :: HAGERSTOWN, MD., 21740

Your pre-teen experiences don't sound like juvenile delinquency. They are simply boyhood. It is the nature of the beast to swipe stuff, to rebel against the authority of parents, to run around in groups, to follow the leader in dress and attitude. I didn't steal from stores but there was an auto graveyard several blocks from my home in which I did some grave-robbing. Don't confuse the stories you read about juvenile gangs in paperback books with the realities about juvenile delinquency, or imagine that there is some kind of law of contagion by which you narrowly escaped a career of crime because you behaved like the other kids and that behavior paralleled certain experiences that the real delinquents normally go through. (Our actual deeds may have comparatively innocuous, but the underlying attitude, which I attempted to describe, differed in no significant respect from that of a hardened criminal. Our activities took place in a moral vacuum; our sole reason for refraining from certain classes of activities was fear of the consequences. The consequences of being apprehended while shoplifting were not accounted serious, and so we indulged in that unsavory activity. The consequences of armed robbery were considerably more formidable, and so we refrained from attempting to acquire large sums of money in that manner. I am convinced that there is virtually no crime we would not have committed, had we been assured of evading apprehension. To me, this indi-

cates something a good deal more serious than the normal attitudes of boyhood. Fear is not a sound base on which to construct an ethical system.))

Larry McCombs' letter about the Kennedy death is one of the few sensible summations that I've seen. The manner in which the nation spent three or four days talking and thinking of nothing but the assassination became a case history in pathological necrophilic tendencies rather than any genuine expression of grief. As for the effect of Kennedy's death on the nation, I would say that neither you nor I nor anyone else on the Kipple mailing list is in any position to know if he was a cause or an effect. There are undoubtedly a few persons in Washington today who know whether he was a prime mover or a mouth-piece for the real powers, and it's going to be a quarter-century or longer before the course of events, publication of memoirs, and circumstantial evidence help the rest of us share that knowledge. The one safe assumption is that Kennedy would have been re-elected if he had lived. Otherwise, it is as impossible to deduce the effects of the assassination on the course of history as it is to determine the identity of the boy or young man in the nation today who will be the president 25 years from now. There are too many unknown factors. ((Appropos of nothing, will the President of the United States necessarily be a male 25 years from now?))

It is a curious feeling for me to read elsewhere in his letter about a national figure whom I know. Ben Willis was superintendent of schools in this county back in the 1940's. I was his principal news contact for several years and got to know him pretty well through both long sessions at his office and some day-long excursions visiting many of the county's schools so that the press would have a better idea of their problems and methods of operation. I haven't the faintest notion whether he's bigoted, right or wrong in the present controversy, popular or unpopular with the bulk of Chicago's educators, but I can testify that he is one of the most capable and intelligent persons I've ever spent much time around.

Morris Ernst should have mentioned in that lecture the fact that the nation's press is close to facsimile transmission of press service news in one sense. More and more newspapers have switched to the use of tape in order to get the wire service news set more rapidly. The news arrives simultaneously in the familiar teletype form and as perforations in a roll of tape. The editor picks the stories he wants to use, the linotype operator feeds those sections of the tape into the specially equipped linotype, and the stories are in type much faster and usually with fewer errors than by the hand-setting method. This would be fine if it weren't for the fact that it tends to cause the local newspaper to publish wire service copy exactly as transmitted. Conscientious editors used to change the teletype copy before it went to the composing room to fit local interests, to improve passages that were badly written, sometimes to make one story out of two or three dispatches, and to carry out the other accepted editorial practices. But now there's no way to alter the tape before it goes through the linotype, except to shorten the story by removing final paragraphs, and if the changes are made after the type is set, the labor and time savings created by the use of tape are lost. AP even sends daily a list of the stories that it considers most important, so that lazy newspaper people won't be forced to make up their minds about what should get page one display. The result is a growing standardization of the wire service news in all but the largest newspapers.

If A. G. Smith's plan for curing juvenile delinquency were adopted, who would take care of the brothers and sisters of the guilty child while mom or pop was in jail? All the statistics point to some kind of correlation between parental care and juvenile crime, it is true, but

to take away the care of a parent when a child had gotten into trouble would be about equivalent to punishing a person for getting ill by sentencing him to go naked in the winter air for a few days.

"Winston sank his arms to his sides and slowly refilled his lungs with air. His mind slid away into the labyrinthine world of doublethink. To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget, whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again, and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself--that was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word "doublethink" involved the use of doublethink." --George Orwell, in "1984".

MIKE DECKINGER :: 14 SALEM COURT :: METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY

I recently spent several days in Florida, combining business with pleasure, and while there I noticed something which astonished me to the extent of causing me to check in several places to see just how prevalent was the practice of selling contraceptives in public rest-rooms. Perhaps the southern readership will consider this practice so ordinary as to render it unworthy of special mention, but it was the first time that I had personally observed such a practice. A nicely furnished diner in Clearwater sold several kinds of contraceptives from a handy wall dispenser in their mens room. One brand sold for 25¢ apiece, and the other was priced at 2/25¢--the latter obviously of inferior quality. This liberalized attitude is most heartening to see, and while the chances of adopting such a system in the more victorian-oriented North are poor, it proves that the South is not quite so decadent as headlines would lead one to believe. This was one of the few times I regretted not having any loose change with me.

I can't imagine any situation in which the abolition of public schooling and the increase of private and parochial schools would be beneficial to the students receiving the education. Parochial schools are a farce in themselves. They exist solely on the foundation of brainwashing the impressionable child into the religious thinking of his parents. An individual who receives this sort of mental conditioning for the 10-12 years that compose his childhood is apt to find it a hard shell to crack, when reality shows him the fallacy of his teachings. The best possible manner to operate a public school system is to include no religious instruction or teachings of any kind, and this includes the allegedly "non-sectarian" Christmas celebrations. Despite the hedgings and denials, Christmas is basically a religious holiday, irregardless of the commercial character merchants and businessmen have tacked onto it. The school celebrations and pageants are hardly performed to commemorate the time of year when the aggressive merchant hopes to sell out his stock of items more quickly than at any other time. The carols alone reflect the birth of Christ, the feeling of well-being and safety that is to saturate the world now that a savior has been born, the unescapable Christian tenets of religion, morality, and irrational worship of two incredible superfluous individuals whose existence seems certain but whose divinity is purely a matter of faith.

Therefore, I can't think of anything more frightening than sending my children to a parochial school, when even the public schools are not free from the taint of traditional religious impositions. I don't think it is possible to send a child to a school that does not in some way hinder his free choice and attempt to mold it into some pre-set pattern which antiquity has chosen. I want my children to learn a good set of moral principles and ideals which they can apply to the world today, not a love-thy-neighbor/turn-the-other-cheek outlook which is unrealistic and false. You need not incessantly brainwash a child to distinguish right from wrong by endlessly declaring: This is right, you must always do this, it is the only right way. That is teaching morality by rote, getting the facts down pat but with no attempt at explanation. I'd rather see the child shown precisely what constitutes right and wrong, and have these two factors explained as best they can be to his limited intellect. Then it is up to him to differentiate between the right path and the wrong one. He knows the rules and he knows the principles--it is up to him to apply them and use the intelligence the psychologists say he has. The worst possible conditioning any youngster can receive is the sort of morality a Catholic school teaches him, particularly when he or she has attended the school all his/her life and knows nothing but the indefensible rules and awkward attitudes which are taught. He is in for a bitter jolt when the protective wing is removed and he faces reality alone, and discovers that falling back on the parochial teachings is impractical and disastrous in a world that refuses to recognize such radical and foolish tenets.

James MacLean goes through an awful lot of wordage in an attempt to clarify my disillusionment over the students who traveled to Cuba. At first, I tended to regard them basically as eager young freethinkers who were using the vehicle of a trip to Cuba as an expression of their civil disobedience, in direct defiance of an outrageous and unreasonable State Department ban. Good for them, said I, let them violate the ban, which I too consider basically unjust. The fact that several of them spoke out in favor of Castroism upon their return alters my opinion of them only in that they are not quite the naive, protesting students that I first pictured. I applaud their actions in openly violating the ban but I do not in the least agree with their comments praising Castro. I'm not sorry that the trip was made, since I doubt that a brief stay in even a "worker's paradise" like Cuba could indoctrinate any but the most empty-headed. And those who spoke in praise of Castro were only a small minority. I would like to hear the majority viewpoint. I am not so narrow-minded as to completely preclude the possibility that James advances--viz., that they are depicting conditions unhindered by general sentiment or diplomatic channeling. That indeed could be the case. Russia may, in fact, exist in one happy, anarchistic mass where each individual is perfectly content with his lot, and subject to no controls by government. Siberia may be a vast winter carnival, where skiing, ice-skating, and tobogganing are the only recreations performed in the snowy clime, and those who journey there do so in order to practice for winter sports competition in the Olympics. Let's be even more open-minded and admit the possibility that the universe might very well be an elongated strip of black velvet, dotted with small pinholes behind which fantastically powerful batteries shine enormous colored lights. (I appreciate your sense of humor, of course, but I hope you don't think that you have successfully replied to MacLean's criticisms....?)

It is ironic that this issue of Kipple presents various views unanimously opposing the treatment television affords the viewers, and parenthetically mentions the Kennedy tragedy. The assassination and subsequent events proved that television can be utilized properly, without the jarring mishandling attributable to sponsor bureaucracy. Both radio

and television cancelled all programs as soon as the news was released and immediately switched to extended news coverage of the incident. The live television coverage of Oswald's shooting and the Kennedy funeral was handled in the most tasteful and comprehensive possible manner. There were no sudden commercial breaks, no enthusiastic announcers eager to tell about what was coming next week. Most of the TV and radio commentators were, in fact, visibly hushed and noticeably saddened at what was taking place. This mood was effectively transmitted to the countless viewers who must have felt the same way. The fact that this was handled so competently proves that the television industry can create adequate and worthwhile programs (even though the funeral coverage would come under the heading of "public service"). It is just a matter of once and for all abandoning the timid pussyfooting which TV usually employs when approaching a subject.

I was interested to read your account of the Frostburg State College fiasco. I wonder how a tyrannical sort like R. Bowen Hardesty even attained his post originally, and what the majority of the students think of his dictatorial rulings? I wonder, too, how any of them could possibly care to remain in such a college, since, after all, a college theoretically promotes individuality and leads one a step away from the direction and regimentation that ordinary life tends to impose. Here, too, I think civil disobedience would be justified, and the students would be entirely within their rights to hold some large-scale demonstrations protesting the objectionable policies, regardless of the consequences. What they need right now is publicity, and this would be the best way to get it.

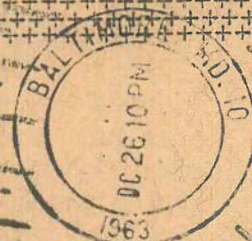
FROM

Ted Pauls

1448 Meridene Drive

Baltimore, Maryland, 21212

U. S. A.



SEND TO:

Dave & Katherine Hulan
17417 Vanowen St., Apt. #21
Van Nuys, Calif., 91406

printed matter only

return requested

may be opened for inspection

harambee!

52 The number in the space to the left is the number of the last issue you will receive; if this space x is marked, we trade periodicals; if anesoteric symbol appears in this space, you are receiving this issue as a sample copy; a check here signifies that you are one of the exotic beauties from Towson State College; and a mark in this space indicates that you should not be receiving this issue, except that I am moved by the Christmas spirit to be generous.