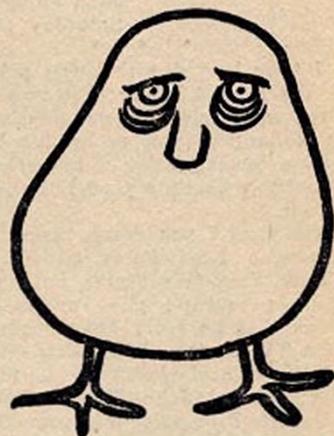


*freethought criticism and satire*

# The Realist

No. 40

35 Cents



the magazine of  
sex and violence

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## *An Impolite Interview With Norman Mailer*

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This interview is not a verbatim record of the tape. Paul Krassner gave me the option to go through the transcript, edit it for repetitions, and add material where I chose. I did this. I did not try too much to round off my remarks or write little essays but did my best to keep the additions in the rough style of the original. While it would give a false impression to pretend that the interview as printed here is faithful to the original, I would like to think it is true to the mood of what was said, to the sound of our voices, and to three-quarters of our literal speech.

N.M.

*Q. When you and I first talked about the possibility of doing an impolite interview, we kind of put it off because you said: "I find that when I discuss ideas, it spills the tension I need to write." Which seems like a very Freudian explanation. Does it still apply?*

A. It does. Sure it does. I think putting out half-worked ideas in an interview is like premature ejaculation.

*Q. Then why bother?*

A. I got tired of saying no to you.

*Q. That's all?*

A. I'm beginning to get a little pessimistic about the number of ideas I never write up. Perhaps the public is better off with premature ejaculation than no intellectual sex at all. I'm just thinking of the public, not myself.

(Continued on page 13)



## SIR REALIST:

### The Coloring Book Issue

... Those coloring books—horrifyingly brilliant.

John Fuller  
Saturday Review

I have long felt that you published in the *Realist* humor that was excessively crude, obscene and offensive. But in issue #35 you really hit bottom with a demonstration of hypocrisy that completely shatters your self-righteous facade.

On page 7 you decry, properly, the American Nazi Party ad for Anne Frank Soap Wrappers; but in that same paragraph you say that you think that an Ivory Soap sponsorship of a TV version of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* is a "funny" thought, and John Francis Putnam's "Modest Proposals" on page 10 includes George Lincoln Rockwell's *Jew Bastard Coloring Book* and the *Auschwitz Cooking and Coloring Book*. Such "humor" is, to my mind, thoroughly and completely disgusting.

Also on page 7, you list what you consider items that are in "bad taste." These include "An ad (showing) a drug addict going through contortions with the accompanying text (reading), 'Withdrawal Symptoms? Bank at...'"

Yet, another of Mr. Putnam's "Modest Proposals," which you as editor have allowed to appear in your magazine, is *The Spastic Coloring Book*. Are we to understand that you feel that drug-addiction contortions are in bad taste but that spastic paralysis jokes are quite all right? ...

George Friedman  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Editor's note: The very ingredient that gave a bad taste to the drug-addict ad was also the basic target of the Coloring Books feature. Namely, exploitation—by the bank in the former case; by the publishing industry in the latter. Our use of outrageous special-interest groups, from Nazis to spastics, was simply the most powerful vehicle to convey the coloring book ad to its Swiftian conclusion.*

Saturday night I was at a party at the Greenwich Village Peace Center, and a mime did an act entitled *The Police Kicking Shit Out of Non-Violent Ban the Bomb Demonstrators Coloring Book*.

Incidentally, the last issue of the *Realist* missed an interesting aspect of space flight which came out during the Carpenter countdown. It was announced that the astronauts are on a "low-residue diet." No shit?

Also, now that the Catholic Church has decided that it is "criminal" to abort a fetus deformed by drugs or radiation, I am going to design a new crucifix. It will have a crown of thorns on each head, and the flippers will be nailed to the cross.

Next time you're on a farm, ask a cow who she'd kick out of her pen—Bull Durham or a Papal Bull.

John Boardman  
Jamaica, N. Y.

### Strike for Piece

I very much enjoyed finding my name in Sally Baldwin's new bedroom game, "Who Would You Kick Out of Bed?" (issue #35). You had, as the alternative bed partner for me, Lord Bertrand Russell. Interestingly enough, we are about to become bedfellows of sorts in the near future—we are planning a Playboy Interview with Lord Russell for an early issue of *Playboy*.

Hugh M. Hefner  
Playboy Magazine

*Editor's note: And Margaret Sanger will be Playmate of the Month.*

### Guilt by Non Sequitur

I have just received this week's copy of the *Village Voice* and I am reading with some amazement an ad for the Socialist Workers Party which lists you as a speaker. Have you joined the socialists? ...

Mrs. Pat Fellman  
Flushing, N. Y.

*Editor's note: No. Likewise, when I accepted an invitation to speak before the Mattachine Society, it didn't mean I was joining the homosexuals.*

### The \$6 Misunderstanding

Funny note on "Tropic of Schizophrenia" (issue #35)—and very true. Donovan Bess says that during the trial he got "converted" and came to like Henry Miller and his books.

Barney Rosset  
Grove Press, Inc.

### Ellipsis Complex

I read with interest your story about the alleged first marriage of John Kennedy.

When I read the *Time* story describing the *Realist* as a "shabby Greenwich Village periodical," I wrote a letter to the Editor of *Time* protesting the use of the word "shabby." I received a reply from one of those editorial assistants they have (I can see her now, Miss Porter's School accent et al) informing me that you wrote to the Editor also, agreeing that the *Realist* is shabby, and she quoted your letter to me thusly: "You are ... correct in describing the *Realist* as shabby. ..."

Now, after reading your latest story (issue #39) I find out that the first set of dots stands for "condescendingly," and that your letter was less complimentary than the *Time* Editorial

Assistant would have me believe.

What disturbs me is that I received my reply, not in print, under *Time's* usual space provided therefor, but in a private, personal letter; that even in such inviolate circumstances, I am given the standard *Time* magazine treatment of half-truths, the whole bit. ...

Harmon S. Spolan  
Philadelphia, Pa.

### A Challenge to Consistency

George Lincoln Rockwell's cup of venom that spilled forth in your delightful magazine (issue #39) was in the finest spirit of freedom of speech.

Guy A. Coparelli  
New York, N. Y.

... Commander Rockwell read his article in the *Realist*. He says you're one of the Jews that is going to make it hard to gas the rest of them.

Seth D. Ryan, Capt.  
American Nazi Party

### Department of Warmth

This letter is in reference to the article by Madalyn Murray in the #39 issue of the *Realist*. We are deeply concerned by her situation and have come up with an idea which we think may help her.

We are three young people, two men and a woman, self-supporting, who are willing to go to Maryland at our own expense and help Mrs. Murray in any way we can. This would include housework, repairing her damaged property (Joel in particular is quite adroit in carpentry and electric work), escorting Mrs. Murray and her children when they have to leave the house, and absolutely anything else she could use us for. ...

Jan Armstrong  
Joel A. Zimmer  
Irwin Licker

### Rebuttal

Re: Letter from Thomas Lippman in issue #39 [which complained, "It's one thing to print a factual report about the use of contraceptives by nuns in danger of being raped. But ... a 'rumor' about diaphragms being dropped by nuns on their way to heaven (as an explanation of flying saucers) may be intended as a joke, but it's not funny. ..."]—the quip in question could have been written by Balzac; satirized in one brief joke are:

1. The flying saucer phenomenon. Some Air Force explanations based on "scientific fact" are almost as hilarious.

2. The use of contraceptives by those who support a religion condemning birth control.

3. Heaven [Mark Twain's satire on this subject points out the absence of celestial sex].

Evelyn Bessette  
Springfield, Mass.

The Realist

## editorial type stuff

### Romance Among the Realists

Early last year, Sally Baldwin left the glamorous surroundings of the American Broadcasting Company—and took a pay cut in the process—in order to be my office assistant. Immediately, there were those who were morbidly curious as to whether or not Sally and I were, as the saying goes, making it.

Let it now be known that Sally and I have always been like brother and sister . . . which may be a misleading description, though, since I've been making it with my sister for years.

When it was decided to institute a Personal Propaganda section in the *Realist* (see page 4), Sally and I agreed—arbitrarily, if you will—that it would not be unethical for either of us to answer any ad before publication.

And so it came to pass that Bob Conlin, a subscriber whom I'd met on a couple of occasions, sought to advertise himself. I matchmook (past tense of matchmake, like shake and shook) him with Sally.

It was love at first sight.

A week later, Sally called me in Chicago to tell me they were engaged. They plan to be married on February 22nd. I suppose I'll just have to be philosophical. You know: Don't think of it as losing a scapegoat, think of it as gaining a renewal.

Anyway, the job is open.

### The Locust of Day

Trouble with the Post Office is that you can't take your business to a competitor if you're dissatisfied with their service or if you want to protest their policies.

Recently, the Post Office misprinted the color on a commemorative stamp which was ostensibly dedicated to the late UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, but which in effect cut right to the heart of bureaucratic meanness.

Leonard Sherman of Irvington, N. J. happened to purchase a sheet of the misprinted stamps—there were only three such sheets originally issued—and now he stood to become a semi-millionaire merely through the sale of his 50 stamps to mistake-hungry collectors.

Then the Post Office ruled against good luck.

Postmaster General J. Edward Day ordered a million of the misprints produced in order to "prevent inflated value of the few accidental inversions from depriving the average collector of the opportunity to purchase the unusual stamp."

The Post Office's "Neither rain nor sleet nor snow nor gloom of night . . ." slogan has been replaced by: "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em."

Now, what seems to have gone entirely unnoticed in this whole sticky mess is its sad little commentary on the state of human pride—pride in the ownership of a misprinted 4-cent stamp; pride in one's own lack of creative achievement; pride in some anonymous printer's error (God knows how many civil service employees have been bribed to make similar mistakes in the past).

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And consider the sheer ludicrousness of the fundamental concept that an item becomes more valuable because there's something wrong with it . . . if Postmaster Day ever gets into the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, watch out he doesn't start putting thalidomide extract into the reservoirs.

### The Black Caucasian

The New York night court judge was a Negro. The defendant before him was a Negro. The charge: disorderly conduct. He had been arguing with a lady. He had yelled at her, "No white bitch is gonna pick on me!" He admitted that he was drunk at the time. The judge said that this was no excuse. "In your subconscious mind," explained the Negro judge to the Negro defendant, "you always wanted to use that kind of language." The verdict: guilty.

Then there was the James Meredith press conference in Chicago. His parents' home in Kosciusko, Mississippi had been shot into and, I swear to Chet Huntley, a reporter asked him: "Do you like it or don't you like it?" Much of the questioning centered around Meredith's grades. "Someone shoots at my home and a newsman asks me about my grades," said Meredith, shaking his head. Nevertheless, that line of inquiry continued . . . and the Negro reporters in the room were part of it. Meredith handled himself with great dignity and humor and firmness of purpose, but he finally had to tell a Negro reporter that his grades "aren't any of your business." Another Negro reporter was told: "I'm rather embarrassed at a Negro asking me that question." Members of his own race were missing the point all over the place; what James Meredith wants is the right to flunk out.

Finally, we come to a nationwide television program. Louis E. Lomax, Negro writer, is a guest. He is telling America why it's important for us to do away with segregation in the schools. It's important, he says, because equality in education will mean that this country will have a better chance of beating the Russians in the race for outer space.

### Ah Sordid Announcements

- The ten most offensive back issues of the *Realist* are available for \$2. All available backs cost \$6.50. And the plastic dashboard-desk Saint *Realist* is yours for \$1.
- This is the December issue of the *Realist*, coming out in the beginning of February. We don't publish a January issue, so the February issue will be out in the beginning of March. I have a vague feeling that if the *Realist* ever gets going on a regular publishing schedule, people will think we've sold out.

The *Realist* is published monthly, except for January and July, by the *Realist* Association, a non-profit corporation founded by William and Helen McCarthy, to whom this magazine is dedicated.

PAUL KRASSNER, Editor  
SALLY BALDWIN, Scapegoat

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## Department of Personal Propaganda

Editor's note: As announced in issue #39, here begins an experimental feature, free of charge to Realist readers . . . and I can't begin to tell you how embarrassed I am by some of it.

I hadn't counted on adolescent refugees from *The National Enquirer*. Phrases like "Open-minded attractive females only" and "Will answer every letter" and "Photo (optional) returned" make my editorial psyche itch all over.

My first inclination was to apply the Realist's usual standard of trying to avoid the obvious. I was, for example, going to edit out the word "sex"—it seems to me as superfluous to mention as any other natural appetite; I had hoped it would be taken for granted within the context of more individualistic factors and played by ear from there.

But I finally decided that it would be an unethical distortion of someone else's self-presentation for me to impose my own subjectivity. The ads, therefore, remain as submitted.

Thus, one reader chooses to offer only a resemblance to Harry Belafonte—and that's his privilege.

Similarly, a "Realist writer desires to make it with [a] reasonably good looking Realist-type chick." Now, I happen to be the goddam editor and I'm not even sure what a Realist-type chick is, but she may very well be a girl who wouldn't want to make it with a guy who chooses to sum up his personality as a "Realist writer."

For all she knows, he could be George Lincoln Rockwell.

Because I believe that any relationship seeks and finds its own level according to the needs and hang-ups of the persons involved, I have no qualms (but would appreciate being kept informed) about the good, bad and indifferent developments that will stem from these bits of Personal Propaganda

Would like to hear from Realist readers who live in Ann Arbor. In return I'm delighted to have any such people around here know of me. I'll take my chances with the schmucks, both ways—do I not do so daily? Don't we all? Box 40-1.

Manhattan man, 24, 5'7", private pilot, writer (mediocre), sculptor, skier (advanced intermediate), ex-teacher, publisher, presently Human Factors Analyst (hybrid: psychologist & E. E.) for military electronics firm. Box 40-2.

Female, 30, 5'8", school teacher, folk-singer, folk-dancer, non-religious, drinks & smokes (but only a little), subscribes to *Village Voice*, *Esquire* & the *Realist*,

just finished with analysis, free enough now to enter into stuff like this & say "Used to watch Jack Paar!" Box 40-3.

Bastard professional, early 40's, attractive male. Interests: sex, animals, literature, plantlife, art, sex, contemporary music, agnostodeism (whatever that is!), sex, films (not in that order). Open-minded attractive females only, please! Box 40-4.

Female, 27, 5', long blond hair, addicted to folk dancing. Looking for mate, must be: tall, slim, black hair, moustache, folk dance, have Morris Minor convertible. Box 40-5.

Man, 33, 6'1", 185 lbs., presentable, articulate, own business, loves children, hiking, cycling, squaredancing, Gandhi, Tolstoy, Jesus, Thoreau; doesn't smoke or drink. Will answer every letter. Box 40-6.



Female, 28, 5'9", crooked teeth, messy hair, slightly bow-legged, otherwise attractive; ceramist; active in Women for Peace, Democratic Party; often dress up in disguises. Box 40-7.

Young Chicago Realist reader wants to meet intelligent female reader who likes the arts and talking on the telephone. Ages 16-20 or so. Box 40-8.

Lesbian: young, attractive, fearless and friendly; interested in knowing other lesbians who like myself don't consider themselves unnatural or items for sexual pathology textbooks; interested in writing a defense of Lesbianism somewhat a la Corydon; love men and don't wish to be one; love life, cats, children, musicandart, sex, Pogo, A. S. Neill, toys, my parents, laughterandcontemplation, poetry, the *Realist* and Bertrand Russell; also interested in knowing homosexual men who don't consider themselves abnormal or unnatural. Box 40-9.

Male; 25; looks younger; 5'8"; interest in satirical and imaginative ideas; dis-

taste for authoritative control over any individual; zany disorganized approach to living and loving; ambivert; once described as "real-life Holden Caulfield." Box 40-10.

Female; 26; 5'1/2"; 98 lbs., petite & attractive; musically oriented (pianist, harpsichordist, & choral participant) yet interests have varied from field hockey and softball (participant) to folk dancing. Maternal instincts being made use of by 2 lovely children (male, one yr.; female, 4 yrs.). Am currently unattached (i.e., husband is no longer part of this scene). Box 40-11.

Boy friend available: act fast—only one of a kind. Manhattan male, 36, 5'6", educated, loving, experienced, stable but not square, seeks compatible bright pretty liberal feminine Manhattan girl. No time for phonies. Photo (optional) returned. Box 40-12.

Female, college age (physically only!); 5'5"; religion—sensitive intellectualism; witty; part-time "last angry man"; philosopher; combines Snow's "two cultures"; keys: Mensa, "Beyond the Fringe," D. Thomas, H. James, S. Crane, Mose Allison, early Mulligan, Bach, Handel, Vermeer, Degas, Hopper. Box 40-13.

Male, 19; humanist; student of physics, philosophy (Columbia Univ.) people, and life (accent on latter). Believes purpose of life is to live it, and that ones horizons are as broad as one makes them. Box 40-14.

Female, 21, 5'2", attractive college senior; reads, writes, knits, lives, loves, laughs, talks; happily single; enjoys conversation, most music, anything fun(ny); copious letter-writer; collects Wilcock-like trivia; will like you unless you're too neurotic. Box 40-15.

Male, 27; people-shy; newspaper reporter, immobilized by alienness of world-environment; a "what if . . ." speculator, escaping into addiction of films, science fiction, other vicarious imaginative structures. Box 40-16.

Divorcee & kids; 25; attractive; iq+2.5; intuitive-correlative & abstract-objective thinking-wise; can & do recondition self at will; extreme (& controlled) emotional range; culture-free to great extent. Like: SF, horsing, sensual music, learning, individuals, sex, creating, existence. Dislike: cold, Literature, past & present history, people en masse, boundaries. Want mate sans legality, equal or superior in sanity, freedom, potential. Box 40-17.

Male, 29, 5'11"; nice looking; computer programmer; would sincerely like to be first Jewish President; uninhibited; loves sick humor; loves "humanity" but indifferent to most people. Box 40-18.

(Continued on Page 10)

## People: progress report #2

by George von Hilsheimer

There are 70 Volunteer Workers For People (Volwops) registered on cards in the little grey can tonight. The sanctity of several is not attested to by the blessed state of cardedness, however: 24 others have adopted Hungry Families; another 20 have been introduced to *bona fide* book starved colleges.

But where is Murray Meyer? We think he is maybe in Toronto since his postmark we kind of remember being there, but they ain't no returnable address. This is a sneaky way of telling you that *People*, unlike that shabby Greenwich Village magazine, answers mail promptly. And to urge anyone our inefficiency overlooked to write or call again (506 E. 6th Street, New York 9, CA 8-8967) because, man, we are *current*.

### The Strange Career of John Davis, Teacher

*People's* attitude is nowhere better illustrated than in the series of misadventures afflicting John Davis shortly after *People* opened its 6th Street door this October.

John, as those of you who read issue #31 know, is a teacher par excellence—the kind of guy who can, after six months with a delinquent class, say “Cut it out, or you don't get your usual two hours of homework tonight,” and make it stick. He was fired two years ago because he is “an agitator.” Which is to say he brought Puerto Rican parents into the PTA, nasty man.

John got another teaching job this Fall. He was given a class in a Harlem school that no one had ever been able to work with. With his usual humanity and skill he quickly established rapport with the class and had them learning something for the first time in school. At 11:45 one bright morning, his principal, a Mrs. Murphy, called him into the hall. “Get your things, Mr. Davis, you're fired.”

Why? John is “incompetent.”

Well, I am a suspicious bastard, and uncommonly naïve at the same time. Could a school just up and fire a guy who'd been doing a superb job? Would they be so arrogant as to jerk him out of a class with which he had developed a good rapport? And could they so violate the children as to do it in the middle of the day, and not even let him go back to ease the children, and finish the day?

So I told John that I was going to investigate him to his eye teeth (old FBI von H, they call me) and then, data in hand, I was going to jump somebody (hah!).

The cat, of course, had Mrs. Murphy's tongue. Her supervisor, Mr. Scalea, was equally uncommunicative. Well, figures I, maybe a visit to the Mayor's Assistant on Education, Jerry Wilson, could free up this little nest. Add in a City Councilman to make the tea piquant, call the NAACP and the Commission on Human Rights, and the great defender of Puerto Rican liberty, Mr. Joe Monserrat, and surely there will be something popping.

In the meantime I flatfooted my way, dressed in mufti, to the Reading Clinic neighborhood and I learned some interesting things about Mr. Davis. Then up to P.S. 109's area to study the impact of Mr. Davis on

Mrs. Murphy's turf. I asked a few Volwops and others to make their inquiries. In short we did everything possible to ferret out information about John and his work, officially and unofficially.

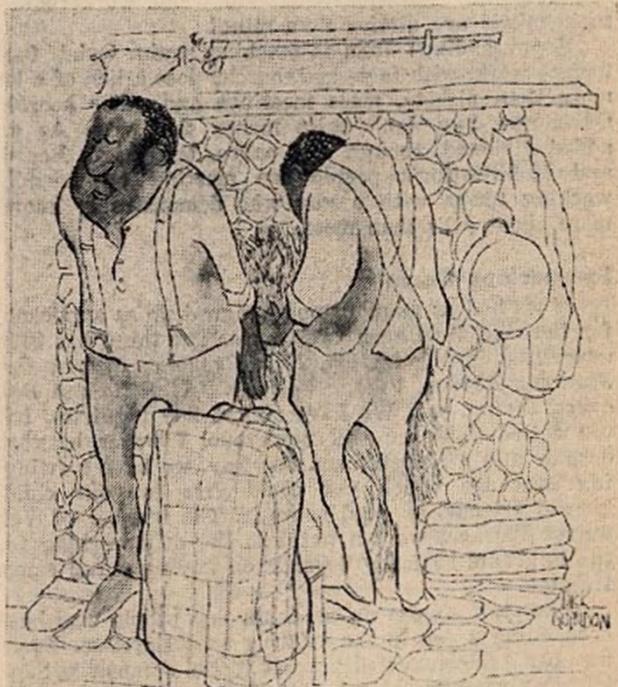
John's colleagues, a brae and bonny bunch of character molders, were almost unanimous in their (quiet) respect of his work. He was, indeed, the first teacher who ever had touched this class. As a matter of fact, they have found no one just to *stay* with the class since the “incompetent” Mr. Davis was fired; a terrorized procession of per diem substitutes have the honor of keeping the peace.

The kids—well, they think John was fired because *they* were bad . . . and this is calculated to make *them* better citizens, too. To make this short, John Davis is a fine fellow, who knows what he is doing, and who does it well. Mrs. Murphy is a poor fool who was threatened by Mr. Scalea, who is, dear friends, nothing short of an egregious ass.

It is apparent that John was fired because Scalea or his staff recognized in his name that notorious “agitator” who used to help Negro and Puerto Rican parents become a real part of the American dream.

In passing, I will comment that what I learned about the segregated school system in New York City curdled my Southern blood. I've lived amongst the boobery of the South for most of my life, but I have never seen a Negro child disciplined in the South by denying him his lunch. It is almost incidental that the children usually so afflicted are on the free lunch program, and often eat only at school.

What of the noble defenders of Right? ACLU? NAACP? Mr. Monserrat? Well, Puerto Ricans aren't really Colored People, so we can't really Advance them. And Puerto Ricans have enough trouble without an-



“As Ah was sayin' to Steban Foster de othah day, Ah said, ‘A wisht Ah libbed in de land o' cotton.’ Ah said, ‘You see, Stebe, folks down dere are not forgotten—look away . . . look away . . .’”

other agitator. The City Councilman was not hopeful: "The Board of Education is the most arrogant, power-hungry bunch of bastards in the City." The Teachers Union? Don't make me vomit. John is on a substitute's license. And he isn't nice. Why, he says the schools create juvenile delinquency. My!

The interesting bit of news for the edification of *Realist* readers is the fact that another substitute, fired about the same time, has become a cause celebre in New York. Mr. James Council refused to participate in a civil defense drill. He was fired. Here is an issue all little liberal lights can get their teeth into. Even Jimmy Wechsler's tender sensibilities were sufficiently offended for a biting N. Y. *Post* editorial. Meetings, fund-raising, the whole bit, have transpired.

But who cares about a guy like Davis who is not interested in mere political gestures, but in building peaceful relations with the blood and balls of his life? If anyone wants to know why *People* takes the whole peace movement with a large dose of salt, let them ponder the ironies of these two cases.

At one point in a talk with a Negro social worker who works for Mobilization for Youth, the worker said "Davis is white? Hell, I'd heard so much crap about him I thought he was colored!"

Among that crap lovingly circulated by most respectable people were: "Davis seduces the girls, the boys, the workers (everyone, it would seem, but the rumor-mongers and the cops); Davis generals the Untouchables in their gang wars (even though they haven't bopped for months); Davis turns the kids on with pot, hash, horse (they all know the jargon); Davis is a junkie himself."

One hell of a lot of therapy is an absolute priority for a lot of educationalists and social workerists—their minds are dirtier than mine!

Happy ending: John is teaching again. Quiet, face to face work, with facts and muscle, does a hell of a lot more than pickets, mass meetings and other hoorah. Of course, you don't raise money that way. As an added dividend, though, the police, the Youth Board, and Mobilization's people are meeting on friendly working terms with a guy who demonstrably knows more about JD's than most.

### Summerlane Camp

If we had as many campers signed up as applicants for the staff we'd open two camps. The thing has been advertised in the *Nation*, *New Republic*, *Progressive*, *Saturday Review*, *Village Voice*, *WBAI Folio* and *Balanced Living*, yet. We have almost 200 inquiries, but the dotted lines are still numerous. I waver between despair and wild optimism. Anyway, we have a swinging brochure which you could give to your child-blessed friends, or read yourself. The number of Volunteer Workers we can put into the field working for the migrants basically depends on having a full camp. Help!

The staff shapes up as damn fine people who have been doing a job in the existing school system. Every member has committed himself to the summer without knowing what his or her pay, if any, will be.

Summerlane School has been put on a back burner while we work helping the Summerhill Society open a school in New York this September. Although *People* is not seeking to revolutionize the world, education,

social work, or anything, we readily see that more freedom schools will more readily arise if a good school makes it in New York. And, like all the rest of our projects, we ain't building no empire . . . we just want to see things done.

### The Street School

Several Volwops also active in the Summerhill Society are working up a rambling city school. Kids and parents assemble at various points to take adventurous, questing strolls through the city. New Yorkers who are interested should call CA 8-8967.

### Community Action Projects, Inc. and LEAP

One of our neighbors appeared in early December to tell us of a good storefront nearby for only \$40 a month. Paul and I couldn't resist the chance to expand (if only to get the office out of my living room) and took the place. Next day in walks Larry Cole, a Ph.D. candidate in Psychology among more important things, with a dream for a program for gang kids built around Judo.

By dint of strenuous Volwop activity the store is now ready to open for a full program of Judo training, with remedial reading and other goodies attached. During the repairing of the store several neighborhood kids wandered in and carried their curiosity into working. So program started early.

This project, like the other *People* activities, is directed to strengthening individual human ties . . . building groups from the bottom up. *People* is knowing that people can be trusted. Knowing that hateful, destructive living springs out of lack of love, respect and trust for oneself. Nowhere is this better seen than in gang life.

Kids who have been taught their worthlessness from birth find in the gang a rigid, violent sort of exoskeleton. This stereotyped armor replaces the power, the potency, that has been stolen from them. Kids who learn to love themselves; to know their potency; who come to see themselves as more than the powerless refuse of society—lose the needs for gangs.

Because they have become individuals they can become members of a community rather than a gang.

Workers trying to help gang kids must realize that it is not the kids' power they are struggling against (the common reaction to the Judo program is: "Mygod, it's like giving them a loaded gun!")—but powerlessness. Give a gang kid a gun and it is indeed power. But it is external, and only an artifact of the fantastically rigid rules of the gang.

Judo, then, is not just a gimmick to get kids into a program. The concept of Judo (its Japanese translation is "the gentle way") is based on individual confrontation. Cooperation is essential to its learning. Awareness of the flesh and the power of flesh is necessary. As the pupil learns to identify himself with the graceful, ballsy, powerful elements of himself, he loses his terror of himself and the world. Through the intensely personal instruction he learns, step by step, a natural control.

Combined with this new learning about himself (not just about Judo) is a whole new society of people (the Volwops and instructors) who cooperate, who listen, and who can make available other kinds of instructions as the pupil comes to see the value of other skills.

Hoping that this project will develop support for

others, we have separately incorporated it under the name of Community Action Projects, Inc. The first project will be known as the Lower East Side Action Project (LEAP).

Anyway, Dian didn't really want the office out of the living room.

### Yorkville Action Project (YAP?)

People move in mysterious ways. The above was all written yesterday. Tonight (January 10th) a young lady name of Elaine Waldman appears. When she moved into her Yorkville (rapidly becoming East Harlem) apartment a few months ago six kids asked if they could help her. They found out she is a teacher, and nice, and would talk to them.

Nightly now 20 or more kids pack into her apartment to talk, sing, get help with reading and writing and numbers, tear up the place, play Charades, and generally find a place where someone treats them as human beings.

Elaine is trying to find a place to transfer all these activities so the neighbors will stop calling the cops, so she can have some privacy (if she locks the door they jimmy the windows . . . see, the social workers are right, don't get too close to your "cases"), and so some bigger and better programs can be run.

The nearby University Settlement House is understaffed and overcrowded; the community center room in the school, with typical middleclass foresightedness, won't let kids under 14 in after 5 PM (that is, when they are open, which they aren't). At least we will be able to help her out with Volwops; maybe go to court with her. She carried two big bags of clothes home with her tonight—all the kids are shabby.

Anyway, you live in New York and want to help her out one night a week or more, call her at TE 1-5597 (or call us). And if you are a generous soul send us \$600 or a part of it and we'll rent another storefront. Paul can't rent the whole city; after all, *Playboy* isn't that rich.

[Editor's note: On January 21st, Elaine was handed a summons to appear in Criminal Court on a charge of disorderly conduct and having children in her apartment.]

### Hunger Hurts Americans Too

Frost in Florida killed all the crops. Half a million people, already hungry, will be even more deprived. One of our Volwops tells us of a kid in his New York school who faints. Diagnosis? No food. And when he tells it, others chime in with added horrors.

Someone wrote to ask us how we screen these here families. Like everything else in *People* we trust some of our friends who are close to the situation to tell us about hungry people. That's all. We aren't concerned if they are "worthy" or not. We do see to it that money and stuff goes to the kids, and not to Sneaky Pete.

Gene Brooks, who teaches the senior class at the Westchester Ethical Society, called the other day to ask where to send the stack of goodies they've collected. One reader sent in the names of ten or so prospective adopters of hungry families. Another Volwop started a collection drive in Queens.

Today's mail brought a nice letter from Gerald Foote who teaches in Great Falls, Montana. He discussed Hunger Hurts with a History class and they want to adopt a family. His letter says he'll discuss

Hunger Hurts with five Social Studies classes next day. So maybe Great Falls will make the difference between constant pain and a minimum subsistence for six families. Didn't take much effort. Anyone else?

We have printed Hunger Hurts flyers and will send them to any reader who wants to spread the idea. They come equipped with a return coupon. We don't expect them to be cast to the winds, but used as the basis of conversation with congenial friends. After all, they cost 2½ cents apiece.

### Books South

Yesterday a CCNY student, Arthur Traum, came in to say that a group of CCNY students were organizing a book drive in all the New York colleges. Another volunteer has made an exhaustive survey of the Southern Negro colleges so that we have a factual priority list based on need.

Many inquirers have found it difficult to believe that *any* books can be used. This is not flamboyant hyperbole. There are colleges that have one book for every three students. They exist in communities where reading as a leisure habit, or as a tool for working, cannot be developed because there are no books. Any book is an educational tool when you have nothing else to read.

New York students who want to help the New York drive call us or Arthur Traum, LU 3-0049.

### College Groups

Harry Adler of Drury College in Missouri wrote to ask:

"The question is: should the students at our school try to work through New York *People* or try to start on their own? I have a hunch that the latter would be better since there would be more of the personal involvement that seems to be the heart of the program. Do you agree? And if so, how do we set the program up?"

"Is it safe to have the leadership among students? Or would we be too idealistic and not practical enough? What would be some likely source of money? What are the major problems that you have run across that might come up in our efforts?"

My answer follows:

"I don't quite know what would be involved in working through the New York *People* other than what you have already initiated through writing. If you ever need impressive-letterhead-type support from a national organization against the administration we can provide same (as soon as we get the letterhead); and if the colleges, as colleges often do, requires you to have a formal organization with a national affiliation in order to have meetings, publicity, etc., then we can provide you some sort of charter or something.

"I don't see why students can't give responsible leadership. I organized a radical group at the Univer-

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● On December 17th, George and Dian von Hilsheimer became the parents of George Edwin von Hilsheimer IV. He shall not be circumcised. That, despite the warning of Dr. Benjamin Spock in *Baby and Child Care*: "I think circumcision is a good idea, especially if most of the boys in the neighborhood are circumcised—then a boy feels 'regular.'"

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sity of Miami in Florida many moons ago; it still lives, it still agitates, and it still lurks behind the respectable form we developed for it. We did involve as many faculty as would be involved, always introducing the involvement as only a sponsoring thing in which you will be kept fully informed (and making it clear that we would welcome greater participation if they wanted—they usually don't). If you like I can even dig up a model bylaws and such if it proves necessary on your campus.

"We try to develop programs that don't cost much money—if you can get ten students who will kick in a buck apiece you'll have enough for rudimentary communications and publicity if you exploit the school paper wisely, and find someone with the use of a mimeograph. As a start I suggest you take the enclosed ten flyers for Hunger Hurts and give them to ten congenial persons you might know, first discussing the idea and then saying, 'Let's do it ourselves.' We can send you names. Preferably you would go out and find some hungry people yourselves and then find them some friends on the campus or elsewhere.

"The problems depend on whether you will be a loosely associated group of people, or have to organize to work effectively on your campus. We prefer the former, but the latter is often necessary. If the latter, you must do it well.

"For a second project you might make posts for Books South (make the college specific—the Lincoln Junior College, Fort Pierce, Florida), also talk it up, etc., etc.

"A letter to the editor might spark it. But we have found that two or three students can talk up a good idea in a very short time if they keep at it. You might try a co-op book buying project in your spare time; we did that to good effect at the U. of Chicago."

And Harry wrote me that Chicago students who had been in some sit-ins had started teaching slum kids how to read in response to a challenge that they do something constructive for Negroes.

### Mothers Co-op

Yesterday Janet Newton, who has been doing the leg work for the Co-op, talked to a mother who moved to New York last year with her 1½-year-old child. There is no place for this girl, who makes \$60 a week, to leave her child. When she called the Health Department, that disembodied voice said, "Go back to Chicago."

We have been meeting with the Board of Health and Mobilization for Youth to try to hammer out a program that will fit the real needs of poor people, while avoiding pauperization and strengthening the real neighborhood values of cooperation that now exist.

You know, it is quite strange, but all of these awful bureaucrats turn out to be people when you meet them.

The ladies at the Health Department were utterly different in their real interest and desire than the disembodied voice which harassed Dian when we started the Mothers Co-op. It seems that people become artifacts of their organization.

Today a call came in from the Upper West Side. All it takes, there or any city area, are forty or so signs, a telephone, and one willing worker with patience, love, and stamina.

(Continued on page 10)

## modest proposals

by John Francis Putnam

Despite the newspaper strike, the biggest thing on Broadway today is a musical called *Oliver!*—based on Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*—and sooner or later this show is going to end up as a ten million dollar "limited-engagement-reserved-seat" movie. It wasn't for nothing that Sergei M. Eisenstein once remarked that Dickens wrote as if he were preparing a shooting script for a movie.

Ironically, Eisenstein's own silent film version of *Oliver Twist* has never achieved the critical recognition and public acclaim accrued by his classic, *Potemkin*. For, at the going cultural rate, the least challenging mystique around is that of the Art Film Goer.

You might be in danger of finding yourself put down if you venture into Zen, Poetry or Abstract Expressionism, but you're perfectly safe to come on strong with Movies. Everybody likes movies and even likes you for liking movies. As for cults, there's the "Hollywood 'B' Pictures as Unconscious Filmic Folk Poetry" cult; there's the "Take a Teen-Age Date to See *Beat the Devil* and Introduce Her to Humphrey Bogart" cult; and the exquisite snobbery of the "Frankly, I Walk Out on Any Foreign Film That's Dubbed" cult.

Flickniks who have seen the rare Russian print of *Oliver Twist*, however, recall with unrivalled compassion the immortal "Please, sir, I want some more" scene. For those who wish to compare the movie version with the original, we herewith reprint the actual Dickens' text:

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbors nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:

"Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralyzed with wonder; the boys with fear.

"What!" said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; pinioned him in his arms; and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

And now, an excerpt from the shooting script of the Sergei M. Eisenstein silent film version, produced by Artkino in Moscow in 1923:

Caption:

ENGLAND, 1836

1. London slums. Mob of starving poor rush towards a line of redcoats who await them with bayonets at the ready. Caption:

"BREAD! WE WANT BREAD!"

2. Matching shot. Mob of beautifully dressed children

The Realist

on lawn of Blenheim Palace rush toward a line of redcoated footmen who await them with trays filled with goodies. *Caption:*

"CAKE! WE WANT CAKE!"

3. Long shot, main dining hall of orphanage. A beautifully appointed dinner is set on a raised platform at one end. Eight very fat bourgeois are eating. Below them, in two facing rows, seated at bare board trestle tables, are the orphans.
4. Closeup of bourgeois eating soup.
5. Stout bourgeois leans back as liveried servant pours wine.
6. Gross board member attacks turkey drumstick.
7. Bourgeois hides mouth with napkin as he belches.

*Caption:*

TO PROVIDE A VIRTUOUS EXAMPLE  
THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE  
ORPHANAGE DINE ONCE A MONTH  
WITH THEIR YOUNG CHARGES

8. Board member in No. 6 finishes turkey bone, tosses it over his shoulder. Camera pans to show bone land in space between tables where orphans sit.
9. Fat, pug dog waddles in to snatch up bone.
10. Pug dog eating bone.
11. Oliver Twist looks up to see dog.
12. His hungry wistful expression.
13. Orphans reacting.
14. Closeup of Oliver Twist. He is angry.
15. Shot of Oliver's bowl. Worms crawling in it.
16. Dog eating bone, oblivious.
17. Oliver looks towards platform.
18. Matching shot with 16. Bourgeois eating bone.
19. Long shot from 30 feet up looking down on Oliver as he walks up towards platform where bourgeois are eating.
20. Orphans reacting, laying down their spoons.
21. Pick up from 19. Oliver moves nearer to platform.
20. Closeup of Oliver speaking.

*Caption:*

"PLEASE, SIR, I WANT SOME MORE."

22. Stout bourgeois looks up sharply.
23. Lean bourgeois pauses with win glass halfway to lips.
24. Porcine bourgeois chokes and sputters on his food.
25. Chairman of the Board continues eating, ignoring all the others who have stopped. He finishes his mouthful, carefully wipes his mouth, smooths napkin tucked under his chin, leans forward, speaks deliberately.

*Caption:*

"MORE WHAT, BOY?"

26. Oliver, closeup. Backlighting brought to full so that he glows. He speaks impulsively, eyes shining.

*Caption:*

"MORE FREEDOM!"

27. Pick up orphan's face at table. Slow take, then backlighting as he leaps to feet.
28. Accelerated pick up of another orphan.
29. Fast cut to excited orphan.
30. Extreme closeup of open orphan mouth.

*Caption:*

"YES! F R E E D O M !"

31. Orphans overturning benches and table, surging forward.
32. Tiny Tim in orphan garb waving crutch.
33. Extreme angle ground level upward shot of Oliver

with both arms upraised, shouting.

*Caption:*

"ORPHANS! BROTHERS!"

34. Worried and uneasy bourgeois.
  35. Forward surge of orphans.
  36. Pug dog flees under table.
  37. Cowardly bourgeois flees under table.
  38. Angered bourgeois grabbing silver candlestick as a weapon.
  39. Lean, clever bourgeois with obscenely ingratiating expression stretches forth sensitive hand with lace cuff, speaks.
- Caption:*
- "IF YOU WOULD ONLY LISTEN TO REASON!"
40. Grand melee as orphans reach platform.
  41. Cascade of richly appointed platters and food.
  42. Wine bottles falling, smashing.
  43. Terror stricken bourgeois.
  44. Turkey carcass crashes to floor.
  45. Bourgeois in flight.
  46. Closeup of orphans' feet as they rush forward, crushing and trampling silk hats.
  47. Orphan filling silk hat with fruit, nuts, food. Pick up his exultant expression.
  48. Tiny Tim brandishing crutch in one hand, turkey bone in other.
  49. Closeup of glass bowl filled with fruit.
  50. Orphan looking at it in wonder. He stretches out his hands.
  51. His hands reach the fruit.
  52. Extreme closeup of his hands fondling grapes.
  53. His full face, his moist lips.
  54. Comic orphan beats silver ewer with a spoon.
  55. Oliver raises hand for silence.
  56. Pick up orphans as they react, stop eating, turn to watch Oliver.
  57. Oliver, with stern, righteous expression swivels a look around the group.
  58. Closeup to show latent socialist fire in Oliver's eyes.
  59. Oliver speaking.
  60. Oliver in haranguing pose.
  61. Closeup of Oliver's speaking mouth.
  62. Pick up enraptured listeners among orphans.
  63. Oliver gesturing rhetorically.

*Caption:*

AN ACTIVIST COMMITTEE IS FORMED

64. Applauding orphans.
  65. Closeup of jolly applauding orphan. He claps, laughing, looks about to share his joy. Sudden double take. His eyes glaze over. Trickle of blood from corner of his mouth. He has been shot.
  66. Group of armed Beadles in slick hats and gaiters appear as smoke blows away from volley they have just fired.
  67. Another volley from Beadles.
  68. Pick up on orphans being hit, falling.
  69. Glass bowl of fruit shatters.
  70. Candle in silver candlestick guttering out.
  71. Oliver is hit. He falls.
  72. Impassive faces of Beadles as they reload slowly, raise their muskets. Mr. Bumble bids them lower guns.
  73. Closeup of evil-featured Mr. Bumble speaking.
- Caption:*
- "ENOUGH! THE MONGRELS ARE DEAD!"
74. Tiny Tim's broken crutch.

December 1962

## GEORGE VON HILSHEIMER

(Continued from Page 8)

Perhaps 40 mothers are swapping babysitting through our Cooperative. A few of them have organized so that they have 5 children one day, and four days off. Some Volwops have volunteered for a day or some hours of babysitting so Mama can go off and be human for a while.

### Gentle Pieties

The world is still the same damned place it was October 1st, when we started to work on all this. But old Saint George ain't. Too many moving letters and conversations—too many wonderful people reaching out to people have appeared—to fail to dissolve a residual cynicism. We may not change the world, but by damn, we are finding some elbow room.

You want work? Write: 506 E. 6th Street, New York 9, CA 8-8967.

## WILLIAM WORTHY

(Continued from Page 12)

In this country of unscrupulous pressures and arm-twisting, even those lecture bureau managers with guts and principles have difficulty "selling" a speaker to colleges, universities and civic organizations if the local Birchites can haul out a decade-old newspaper clipping or merely one appearance by the speaker before a smeared group. Am I rationalizing, or have I accomplished more by lecturing, under the auspices of several hundred college administrations, to audiences unfamiliar with the realities in China and Cuba, than I would have achieved if self-limited to soapboxing before Left groups with experience enough to read more widely than just our own dishonest press?

In my sophomore Psychology class I learned that

you must deal with people as they are, not as you'd like them to be. If the American people are superficial, immature, gullible and misguided, if they are going to mistrust me and close their ears to first-hand reports because of their guilt-by-association mind-sets, do I accept these facts and act accordingly? Or do I become blindly moralistic, ignore reality and end up with the neuroses of frustration and isolation that I observe in many who share my views?

## NORMAN MAILER

(Continued from Page 23)

Now, for all we know, that god may well have existed. We don't know that he didn't exist any more than we know that beauty is not absolute.

The savage didn't say to himself, "I'm a mystic who is now thinking that the God of the East Wind is stirring. Therefore I'm engaged in a mystical transaction." He was just having a simple, animal experience.

Any mystic who's worth a damn is animal. You can't trust a mystic who gets there on drugs. I had mystical experiences on drugs, and great was my horror when I discovered I couldn't have them without the drugs.

What it meant to me was that the experiences were there to be had, but that I wasn't sufficiently animal to have them, not without having a chemical produced by a machine to break down the machine in me.

But I don't like to call myself a mystic. On the other hand, I certainly wouldn't classify myself as a rationalist. I'm not altogether unhappy living in some no-man's-land between the two.

*Q. Okay, final question: You beat me two out of three times in thumb-wrestling matches; would you care to expound briefly on Zen in the art of thumb-wrestling?*

*A. They are the same.*

## PERSONAL PROPAGANDA

(Continued from Page 4)

Female; 24, hip; tall; blonde; talented—first novel near completion, pianist, sometimes artist; M.A. candidate in literature; atheist; humanist; naturalist; tectotaler; mother of 19-mo.-old son; exotic way-out tastes; admires philosophy of the 'Pataphysicians and Paul Krassner; digs such miscellany as beards (with men in them), swimming nude, Harlem night life, uninhibited sex, the novels of Alex Trocchi, any kind of music; dislikes shoes, short hair, breakfast, most women, girdles, folk-singers, togetherness; has no personal ambitions so would be ideal helpmate to hip, intelligent soulmate with heart and a good sense of humor as well as cojones. Box 40-19.

20-year-old male, ex-YPSL, considers himself writer of plays, intelligent, bearded; all questionable. Accepts reality for time being. Politically afield of everyone. Smokes Kents. Box 40-20.

Female, 27; 5'5", with Egyptian cat; lover—of freedom, flamenco, and all

living things; empathetic — with the refugee, the expatriate, and creative artist; cannot consider life apart from music and color, hunger and love. Box 40-21.

Male, 28, resembles Harry Belafonte, desires to meet Realist-reading females who desire to meet Realist-reading males. Box 40-22.

Woman, 25, attractive, sometime-painter, little self-confidence, wishes marriage, babies, friend, lover, gentle man with beautiful name. Box 40-23.

Realist writer desires to make it with reasonably good looking Realist-type chick. Box 40-24.

Critical, negative, married couple with 3 kids would like to meet similar couple for casual drinking and bullshitting evenings (radical politics, gossip, literature, arts): Hyde Park, Chicago. Box 40-25.

Male, 34, 6', steadily employed, reads Time, Newsweek, Village Voice and the Realist whenever he can find an issue, non-smoker, social drinker, tells all

he listens to WBAI but spends most of his time with WQXR; excellent ping-pong and pool player looking for real woman not aged child. Box 40-26.

Punchy redhead, 25. Ex-psych major: got fed up with fuzzy generalities, while admitting they're better than no clues at all to human behavior. Immediate goals: finish degree in science-math, and job in that field. Sincere and congenial coward whose ideals are forever getting me into situations calling for moral courage. Got an 18-mo.-old daughter who won honorable mention in a nationwide baby contest, by God. Motherhood's a gas. I'd like 4 more, at least. Music knocks me out. Looking for a soulmate, congenial friends, and meaningful work to do. Box 40-27.

Handsome Negro Executive, 44, has lifetime income, property, car, seeks rapport with cultured inter-racially minded lady 25-40 years. Box 40-28.

Let us love each other totally, holding back nothing (sex included), and extend that love in an ever-widening circle, until all men are united in brotherhood. Box 40-29.

## The Moral and the Tactical

by William Worthy

During the mid-fifties, when the McCarthy stench was much more awesome than it is now—because it was then an insurgent force not yet incorporated into the fabric of American life—a *New York Times* survey revealed that many U.S. college students were politically fearful of taking courses in the Russian language.

In late 1955, on my return from five months in the Soviet Union, a clerk in Macy's or Gimbel's stamp department informed me that most American stamp collectors were afraid to buy Russian stamps.

In December 1962, en route back from the West Coast, I spoke in Denver at a house meeting of about fifty persons. Amid citations of news items in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, I referred to a very funny anti-colonial cartoon in the current issue of *Muhammad Speaks*, the Black Muslim newspaper.

The cartoon was not an original; it was a reprint from a paper in Ghana. It shows two African "natives" suddenly revolting against their lot because they are weary of carrying Western imperialism on their backs. They simply walk off and leave in mid-air a typical helmet-cloth colonialist whom they have been bearing through the jungle in a chair held up by parallel poles. The still-pointing index finger of the directions-giving colonialist is the cartoon's most hilarious feature. In his centuries-encrusted arrogance he doesn't realize (because he can't conceive of) the abrupt termination of his power. The reader sees that in a split second he and his pretentious empire will go crashing to the ground.

During our break for refreshments and before the question period, a woman approached the chairman to ask if I was a Black Muslim.

Here, in these three episodes, is the twisted American mentality at work. If in my remarks to the Denver group I had praised *Muhammad Speaks* as a newspaper containing much useful information not otherwise available—which happens to be the case—the woman might have had some slight basis, however cockeyed, for inquiring about my affiliations with or sympathies toward the Muslim movement. But not even the editor himself, a very competent and knowledgeable journalist, is a Muslim. Nor are several of the reporters whom I have met.

(Mr. Muhammad is out to build an able staff on what is already an influential publication with a circulation of 400,000. Being the highly intelligent man that he is, he has sense enough not to make membership or slavish loyalty a prerequisite for staff positions. The impact of *Muhammad Speaks* can be seen in the growing pattern of police harassment of the Muslim members during their twice-a-month nationwide street hawking and their house-to-house sales in Negro neighborhoods. In December, two Muslims were arrested at gunpoint and roughed up while selling the paper, altogether legally and peaceably, in broad daylight in Times Square.)

Ever since my three-year China passport fight (which was essentially a fight for freedom of infor-

mation), I have faced a continuing problem and dilemma because of Americans' proclivity to attribute a joint and binding political commitment to ideological outsiders enjoying even the loosest of personal ties. The problem is to surmount and get around this country's elaborate propaganda apparatus and to communicate censored information, challenging theses and dissenting ideas to a sluggish, indifferent and largely inaccessible public. The dilemma is to carry out this difficult mandate while not perpetuating, through my own actions, McCarthyite methods of emoting.

Example: Shortly after my return from China in 1957, Dr. Willard Uphaus invited me to speak at World Fellowship in Conway, N. H. At that time, the loathsome Attorney General of New Hampshire, depicting Willard as a security threat and virtually a bomb-thrower, was busily sending this gentle Christian pacifist to jail for having refused to turn over the World Fellowship guest list to witchhunting investigators.

Question: With a not dismissable portion of the headline-scanning public then regarding me, or at least inclined to regard me, as a Communist just for having visited a forbidden Communist country, how much would I becloud the important right-to-travel issue and garble the freedom-of-information battle lines by becoming identified, at that particular time, with a "subversive" camp tucked away in the White Mountains? And, by the gesture of a speech to like-thinking campers, what significant good would I do Willard, whose fate was sealed by the climate of the country and by the Uncle Tom sophistry of Mr. Justice Frankfurter? (My fellow Bostonian, a no-good lifelong operator, reversed himself and cast the deciding vote in the 5-4 decision.)

It would have been easy to tell Willard that my schedule of cross-country engagements made it impossible to get to New Hampshire. I must confess that for others, whom I don't know personally or who wouldn't be capable of understanding, I have used that diplomatic excuse. But after consulting friends whose judgment I respected, I told Willard frankly that Bayard Rustin's advice to me had clinched my own inclination not to speak.

In effect, Bayard had said:

A year ago, before you were embroiled in battle with the State Department, this invitation would have confronted you with a moral decision. At this moment it's purely a tactical decision. To win your fight, you've got to have public opinion on your side. Don't hand your adversaries a weapon they can beat you with. No one can play God and take on every good fight simultaneously.

In July 1962, I spoke at World Fellowship and apologized to the campers for coming five years late. Long before 1962 Willard had served his year in jail, and the truth about his political position had seeped down into the public consciousness. It was now "safe" to appear on his platform, even though by then I was under federal indictment and was facing trial in Miami three weeks later.

It only highlights the political lunacy in this society of ours to point out that I've spoken, for example, before the Women's Republican Club of Worcester, Mass., without risking the charge of being either a woman or a card-carrying member of the Republican Party. I can (and do) quote extensively from the *Wall Street Journal*—and my case could be (and was) re-

ported objectively on their front page on January 23, 1963—without my being asked if I am now or ever have been a stockbroker.

Sometimes, of course, my dilemma is eased when politically un-kosher groups that urge me to speak don't offer even travel expenses. But I always become uneasy when, deprived of that convenient "out," I nevertheless decline an invitation. Do these self-imposed restrictions on my freedom to speak and write wherever I please lump me in with the numerous professed civil libertarians who have refused to touch my "illegal re-entry" case because the Cuba overtones scare them off? Am I being as cowardly as these phony liberals?

The dilemma is heightened by a simple fact. As my present case now reaches the level of an international cause celebre which the "respectable" press and groups can no longer afford to ignore, thanks for the steady publicity build-up must go to a handful of publications and to segments of the political Left. Week after week, month after month, aside from my own paper, the *Baltimore Afro-American*, and the powerful overseas transmitters of Radio Havana, it has been the *National Guardian*, *The Militant* and *Muhammad Speaks* that have kept the case from being buried and forgotten. They regularly reported the mounting Negro and foreign protests—probably the principal factor that saved me from the maximum five-year sentence. Out of gratitude, if not out of the compulsion to exercise my freedom, should I at this point have the slightest hesitation to speak or write for any of them?

Yet, with a troubled mind, I do. Off in the wings I can sniff the official witchhunters and the vigilantes, poised to pounce at my first misstep. (When I say "misstep," I am momentarily accepting the screwed-up premises of a nation that is in bad shape.) There is no mystery about my stands on public issues. But my relative invulnerability to direct political attack has been due to the free-wheeling and unattached observer role that I have consistently played. When Fulton Lewis Jr. attacked me last May in his syndicated column, the entire piece consisted of extremely thin and unconvincing innuendo because he couldn't cite a single "wrong" petition I'd ever signed or one "wrong" group with which I'd ever been affiliated.

With the unintentional self-exposure of the wicked, the FBI and Department of Justice were reduced last April to the absurdity of their "illegal re-entry" indictment when, after diligent search, they couldn't find anything more substantial with which to discredit and silence me. The fact that I had been reaching not the isolated and impotent Left, but university and Negro audiences, with the truth about Cuba impelled the government to act—and act stupidly, as it quickly turned out.

It might be assumed that the indictment itself would have knocked me off all respectable lecture platforms and out of all widely-read magazines. Ironically, the effect on invitations to write and speak has been the opposite. If I lose the first appeal this Spring and the ultimate appeal in the Supreme Court, the opportunities (after serving three months in jail) to reach meaningful audiences will be more than I can cope with.

Within the last couple of months, apparently out of impatience and despair at destroying me through self-

committed errors, the gentlemen with the long knives—the starve-'em-into-submission gang—have manufactured and circulated two rumors: (1) that I am on Fidel Castro's payroll; (2) that, for my recent West Coast speaking tour, I picked up a travel expense check from the national office of Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New York and then collected money for the same trip from the Fair Play chapters in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Neither rumor has caused me to lose my sleep. Time has a way of disposing of lies. The second one is laughable to anyone familiar with the financial status of the Fair Play national office. The unfounded tale can be easily checked out by a simple request to see the non-existent cancelled check or the cash voucher. I cite the rumors only to show skeptical readers that it is not any paranoia that conjures up the immediate and severe consequences of a political miscalculation.

If a reader is inclined to come up with a short, easy, pious answer for my dilemma, let him look inward and perceive how he too is, from time to time, a child of circumstances. The main circumstances here are the desire to be effective on the American scene and the practical necessity of earning a livelihood from speaking and writing. Except for the egomaniac it is not enough to thrive on the applause of politically insignificant dissenters in some dingy little hall where half the audience is FBI agents.

I am also forced to weigh the fact that it is not only the sick and vicious Birchites who trade in guilt by association. Early in 1955 I ran up against an instance of this. My politically self-righteous friend and longtime neighbor, Samuel H. Friedman, who lives and breathes the anti-communist preoccupation of many in the Socialist Party, made a crack that implied certain automatic sympathies on my part just because I was one of the first Americans to apply for and obtain a Soviet visa at the beginning of the post-Stalin thaw. Sam knew better, yet he said it and, with one part of his mind, apparently meant it.

A week ago, again to my face, Sam made a crack about how frequently news of my current case has appeared in *The Militant*. Since he listens only to himself, I knew how futile it would be to nail him with his topsy-turvy logic. If Sam were to sit down with these political litmus tests of (a) hard-to-get visas, (b) sojourns abroad (the 46 countries I've been in cover the political spectrum and (c) comparative column inches in widely differing publications, what would he think of a Trotskyite Khrushchevite Maoist Afrikaner\* Muslim National Guardian-type socialist who at one and the same time enjoys the editorial support of a liberal Negro weekly and membership in the ACLU, NAACP, League for Mutual Aid (founded by anarchists), the Workers Defense League (founded by Sam's kind of liberal and Socialist, and supporting my legal defense), consumer cooperatives and the property-owning Sportsmen's Club of Greater Boston?

(Continued on Page 10)

\*With this one, Sam would have real trouble. When the South African government denied me even a transit visa, I flew in from Leopoldville anyway (another illegal entry). They didn't arrest me, which is more than can be said for my own government, and I broadcast without hindrance from Pretoria for CBS News. What additional evidence is needed to create a cloud of suspicion that either I am soft on apartheid, or that South Africa is fuzzy on me?

## NORMAN MAILER

(Continued from Cover)

*Q. Now, whereas J. D. Salinger stays in his little fallout shelter and writes, you seem to relish a certain public involvement, sometimes to the point of notoriety. Do you think that, as far as devotion to your work is concerned, you should be more like Salinger, or vice-versa?*

A. I would guess Salinger and I are not the least bit alike. I think I'd go mad if I worked up in New England, in Maine, or Vermont. I tried it, you know; I did live in Vermont during two separate winters. I went back to *Barbary Shore* in Jamaica, Vermont, and I finished it in Putney, Vermont. I guess I did a lot of work up there, but I wasn't happy. I felt I belonged in the city. Of course, you can't tell. In twenty years I might become a hermit, and Salinger might be picked up drunk and disorderly for going ape every night at eleven o'clock. Think of it. J. D. Salinger eighty-sixed from the Colony.

*Q. How do you differentiate—what distinction do you draw—between a creative artist's exhibitionism and his communication?*

A. I don't draw the line. Once you become a small legend, you need do very little, and it still will become a new part of the legend. Even if you're doing something simple, the result tends to become large and complicated.

On the other hand, exhibitionism also becomes one of the ways in which you can manipulate the world, one of the ways in which you live with the world—it's part of the game.

The thing is, as you get older you begin to enjoy it just a little less. I love certain kinds of stunts, but I'm getting wary of the aftermath. Somebody I know said after one caper, "You're going to end up getting 50 letters for this stunt over the next two years." Not all the letters are that interesting to answer.

*Q. All right, this is a question which I'm asking in the context of the cold war and the possibility of a hot war: Isn't there a basic dichotomy between creative artists who express themselves in their work—there's a definite excitement in their life—as opposed to the average person whose days are filled with boredom—in the factory, in the office—and who can almost find a sort of pleasure in identifying nationalistically with international tensions? And so the people who are happy in their own creative outlets are the ones who write poems about peace . . .*

A. First time I've heard you talking like a totalitarian. Very few artists I know are happy. The kind of artist who writes a poem about peace is the kind of guy I flee.

There's something pompous about people who join peace movements, SANE, and so forth. They're the radical equivalent of working for the FBI. You see, nobody can criticize you. You're doing God's work, you're clean. How can anyone object to anybody who works for SANE, or is for banning the bomb?

*Q. You're not questioning their motives, are you?*

A. I am questioning their motives. I think there's something doubtful about these people. I don't trust them. I think they're totalitarian in spirit. Now of course I'm certainly not saying they're Communist, and they most obviously are not Fascists, but there

are new kinds of totalitarians. A most numerous number since World War II.

I think, for example, most of the medical profession is totalitarian by now. At least those who push antibiotics are totalitarian. I think the FBI is totalitarian. I think pacifists are totalitarian. I think *Time* magazine is a Leviathan of the totalitarian. There's a totalitarian *geist*, a spirit, which takes many forms, has many manifestations. People on your own side are just as likely to be totalitarian as people on the other side.

*Q. Yes, but totalitarian to me implies force—*

A. A dull, moral, abstract force. There is just such a force in the campaign for "Ban the bomb." It's too safe. That's the thing I don't like about it. You don't lose anything by belonging to a committee to ban the bomb. Who's going to hurt you? Is the FBI going to stick you in jail?

*Q. There are certain employers who frown upon it—*

A. Which employers? I think many good people are beginning to get a little complacent. The sort of good people who are militant and imaginative and active and brave, and want a world they're willing to fight for; if there were a revolution they would carry a gun; if there were an underground they would fight a guerrilla war. But there is no real action for them, and so they end up in what I think are essentially passive campaigns like "Ban the bomb."

I'm against sit-down strikes. I'm against people sitting down in Trafalgar Square, and cops having to carry them off. I think if you're not ready to fight the police, you musn't sit down and let them carry you off. You must recognize that you're not ready to fight to the very end for your principles. I was carried off in a chair not so long ago and I'm not proud of it.

*Q. Well, extending this to its logical conclusion, then, would you say that Mahatma Gandhi was a totalitarian?*

A. I think so. He was a fine man, a great man, etc., etc., but many totalitarians are fine men. Sigmund Freud, for example.

For all we know—I don't know anything about Albert Schweitzer—Schweitzer might be totalitarian. How do you know? He seems too safe. The kind of people who seem to love Schweitzer are the sort who work on telethons for incurable diseases. They take a pill if their breasts hurt. Anybody who wants a quick solution for a permanent problem is a lowgrade totalitarian.

*Q. At the risk of making you seem totalitarian, what would you substitute for sit-down strikes and other passive forms of protest?*

A. Sketch the outline of a large argument. What I don't like about the "Ban the bomb" program, for example, is that it is precisely the sort of political program which can enlist hundreds of thousands, and then millions of people. Half or two-thirds or even three-quarters of the world could belong to such an organization, and yet you could still have an atomic war. I'm not saying the "Ban the bomb" program would cause an atomic war, but there's absolutely no proof it would prevent it. If you have people who are evil enough to lust for an atomic war, they are even more likely to force that war if there looks to be a real danger that they will never have a war.

The world exists in profound insecurity; everybody willy-nilly has become an existentialist; one is face to face with the continuation of the universe every breath one takes; those questions usually delegated to Sunday now obsess us seven days a week; our best hope for no atomic war is that the complexities of political life at the summit remain complex. The hope is that the people of Russia and America express themselves enough to keep their societies complex.

One has to assume such men as Kennedy and Khrushchev are *half-way* decent, you have to assume they are not necessarily going to blow up the world, that indeed if everything else is equal they would just as soon *not* blow up the world. So I say create complexities, let art deepen sophistication, let complexities be demonstrated to our leaders, let us try to make *them* more complex. That is a manly activity. It offers more hope for saving the world than a gaggle of pacifists and vegetarians. The "Ban the bomb" program is not manly. It is militant but it is not manly. So it is in danger of becoming totalitarian.

*Q. Joe Heller told me that he admires you for—and may join you next time—just standing in City Hall Park and not taking shelter during the Civil Defense drill. Why is this any more manly than other activities?*

A. I didn't stand there because I was a pacifist, but because I wanted to help demonstrate a complexity. It's a physical impossibility to save the people of New York in the event of atomic attack. Anyone who chooses to live in New York is doomed in such a case. That doesn't mean one should not live in New York, but I think it does mean one should know the possible price. Air raid drills delude people into believing that they're safe in New York. That's what I object to, rounding up the psyches of New Yorkers and giving them mass close order drill to the sound of an air raid siren. It's piggish. It makes cowardly pigs of people.

*Q. You once referred in passing to the FBI as a religious movement; would you elaborate on that?*

A. I think a lot of people need the FBI for their sanity. That is to say, in order to be profoundly religious, to become a saint, for example, one must dare insanity, but if one wishes instead to flee from insanity, then one method is to join an organized religion. The FBI is an organized religion.

The FBI blots out everything which could bring dread into the average mediocrity's life. Like a weak lover who rushes to immolate himself for love, since that is easier than to fight a long war for love, the mediocrity offers the FBI his complete conformity. He gives up his personal possibilities. He believes he is living for the sake of others. The trouble is that the others are just as mediocre as he is. Such people not only use themselves up, their own lives, but if there is a God, they use *Him* up.

Naturally these lovers of the FBI can't even think of the possibility that they've wasted themselves. Instead they believe rabidly in that force which agrees with them, that force which is rabidly for mediocrity. The only absolute organization in America, the FBI. At bottom, I mean profoundly at bottom, the FBI has nothing to do with Communism, it has nothing to do with catching criminals, it has nothing to do with the Mafia, the syndicate, it has nothing to do with trust-busting, it has nothing to do with interstate commerce,

it has nothing to do with anything but serving as a church for the mediocre. A high church for the true mediocre.

*Q. In terms of the mass media being a force to which one subjects oneself more voluntarily than to the FBI, isn't it possible that the mass media which you call totalitarian are a reflection rather than a cause of this condition in society?*

A. A reflection of what people want? No, I don't think so. That's like saying that the United States Army was a reflection of what the soldiers wanted.

*Q. But they were drafted—*

A. And you're not drafted—your eye is not drafted when you turn on that TV set?

*Q. There's a free choice involved—*

A. The fact that I don't have a television set makes me no more than a conscientious objector.

*Q. But there's no punishment. Not having a TV set is like being a member of SANE.*

A. That's your point. I'll retreat to a new line of defense. To assume that people are getting what they want through the mass media also assumes that the men and women who direct the mass media know something about the people. But they don't know anything about the people. That's why I gave you the example of the Army. Because in the Army, what happens?—the officers who run the Army are not all vicious, miserable, horrible Generals of the sort somebody I know wrote about.

Some of them are men who, you know—good family men, decent, they care terribly about their country, they want to be good to their men, they'd just as soon have their soldiers happy as unhappy. But they don't have the least notion of what goes on in the mind of a Private. It's like Greek to them, what the psychology of a Private is. They can't get close to them. Then of course you have all the Generals who are bad, who don't give a damn for the Private, who couldn't care less, who are out there to enrich themselves in the war.

Well, of course, the Private exists in a world which is hermetically alienated from the larger aims of the Generals who are planning the higher strategy of the war. I mean part of the tragedy of modern war (or what used to be modern war) is that you could have a noble war which was utterly ignoble at its basic level because the people who directed the war couldn't reach the common man who was carrying the gun. As for example, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the average infantryman.

And the reason they can't is because they don't know anything about him. Because there is such a thing as classes, finally. And the upper classes don't understand the lower classes, they're incapable of it. Every little detail of their upbringing turns them away from the possibility of such understanding.

The mass media is made up of a group of people who are looking for money and for power. The reason is not because they have any moral sense, any inner sense of a goal, of an ideal that's worth fighting for, dying for, if one is brave enough. No, the reason they want power is because power is the only thing which will relieve the profound illness which has seized them. Which has seized all of us. The illness of the twentieth century. There isn't psychic room for all of us. Malthus's law has moved from the excessive procreation of bodies to the excessive mediocrization of



This Christmas past, in keeping with the spirit of the season, a certain select many received a particularly unimaginative gift. "This," they were informed in depth, "is one of a Limited Edition of playing cards created especially for the friends of TIME The Weekly News-magazine." The deck was stacked with blatant promotional messages containing typical Time puns—a bean in every macaroni, pasta fazool-wise. Blurted out the 3 of spades, for example: "Defense bidding? In Washington, D.C. TIME outsells U.S. News, Newsweek and Business Week combined."

psyches. The deaths don't occur on the battlefield any longer, or through malnutrition; they occur within the brain, within the psyche itself.

Q. *There's a certain indirect irony there. I'm under the impression that you have almost a Catholic attitude toward birth control.*

A. I do. In a funny way I do. But I've come a long way to get there. After all, if my generation of writers represents anything, if there's anything we've fought for, it's for a sexual revolution.

If you compare America to England, it's incredible. We've gotten things printed here that twenty years ago would've seemed impossible for a century or forever. I can name them. Not only *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Tropic of Cancer*, but little things like "The Time of Her Time"; extraordinary works like *Naked Lunch*.

We've won this war, or at least we're in the act of winning it. You might say that the church and the reactionaries are in long retreat on sex.

It's altogether their fault, as far as that goes. They flirted with sex. They used sex in order to make money or gain power. It was the Church, after all, who dominated Hollywood. They thought they could tolerate sex up to a point in Hollywood, because there was obvi-

ously a fast buck if you used sex in the movies, and they didn't want to alienate the producers of movies. So the Church compromised its principles.

What happened was that they set something going they couldn't stop. And then people came along who were sincere about sex, and idealistic, naive no doubt like a good many of us, innocent sexual totalitarians, we felt sex is good, sex has to be defended, sex has to be fought for, sex has to be liberated. We were looking for a good war. So we liberated sex.

The liberation goes on now. It's going to keep going on. But the liberation's gotten into the hands of a lot of people who aren't necessarily first-rate. A crew of sexual bullies may be taking over the world. Sexual epigones. Corporation executives who dabble.

The fact of the matter is that the prime responsibility of a woman probably is to be on earth long enough to find the best mate possible for herself, and conceive children who will improve the species.

If you get too far away from that, if people start using themselves as flesh laboratories, if they start looking for pills which prevent conception, then what they're doing, what really at bottom they're doing, is acting like the sort of people who take out a new automobile and put sand in the crank case in order to see if the sound that the motor gives off is a new sound.

Q. *You're forcing me to the point of personalizing this. Do you use contraception? Do you put sand in your crank case?*

A. I hate contraception.

Q. *I'm not asking you what your attitude toward it is.*

A. It's none of your business. Let me just say I try to practice what I preach. I try to.

Q. *Then you believe in unplanned parenthood?*

A. There's nothing I abhor more than planned parenthood. Planned parenthood is an abomination. I'd rather have those fucking Communists over here. Will you print fucking?

Q. *You said it, didn't you? Just tell me if you want it spelled with two g's or a c-k.*

A. Those fucking Communists.

Q. *You want a 'g' on the end of it, or just an apostrophe?*

A. No, I want a 'g' on the end of it.

Q. *In "The Time of Her Time," the protagonist calls his penis The Avenger. Doesn't this imply a certain hostility toward women?*

A. Of course it does. Is that news?

Q. *All right, why is the narrator of your story—or why are you—hostile toward women?*

A. If you're assuming there was an identification with the character, I can only say I enjoyed him. He was not altogether different from me. But he certainly wasn't me. I thought The Avenger was a good term to use. I think people walk around with terms like that in their unconscious mind. There're a great many men who think of their cock as The Avenger.

But O'Shaugnessy happened to be enormously civilized. So he was able to open his unconscious and find the word, find the concept, and use it, humorously, to himself.

Q. *If there was any hostility beneath the humor, would you say it was justified?*

A. I would guess that most men who understand women at all feel hostility toward them. At their worst,

women are low sloppy beasts.

Q. Do you find that men and women have reacted differently to "The Time of Her Time"?

A. I've found that most women like "The Time of Her Time" for some reason. Men tend to get touchy about it. They feel—is Mailer saying this is the way he makes love? Is he this good or is he this bad? Is he a phony? Is he advertising himself? Does he make love better than me? To which I say they're asses.

Q. Oh, so you're hostile toward men!

A. I'm hostile to men, I'm hostile to women, I'm hostile to cats, to poor cockroaches, I'm afraid of horses. You know.

Q. Several months ago (issue #32) I mentioned, in order to make a very definite point, a Cuban prostitute—this was the first prostitute I'd ever gone to, and I had been asking her all these questions about the Revolution—and she stopped later in the middle of fellatio to ask me if I was a Communist.

A. You were in Cuba at the time?

Q. Yes. And she was anti-Castro.

A. Because he was cleaning them out of the whorehouses?

Q. Well, there were no more tourists coming to Cuba, and it was ruining their business. Anyway, I described this incident in the Realist, and was accused of exhibitionism by some friends of mine. And I'm secure enough in my life that I had no need to boast about this; but it was a funny, significant thing which I wanted to share with the readers.

A. Oh, I remember that, I remember reading your piece now. I was a little shocked by it.

Q. You're kidding.

A. No, I was shocked. I wasn't profoundly shocked. It threw me slightly. I had a feeling, "That's not good writing." And the next thought was, "Mailer, you're getting old." And the next thought was, "If you're not really getting old, but there is something indeed bad about this writing, what is it that's bad about it?"

Q. And?

A. A whore practicing fellatio looks up and says, "Are you a Communist?"—that's what the modern world is all about in a way. Saying it head-on like that probably gave the atmosphere honesty. But, in some funny way, it didn't belong. I don't want to start talking like a literary buff, because I dislike most literary language, Hemingway's perhaps most of all (it was so arch), but still in a way a good writer is like a pitcher, and a reader is happy when he feels like a good batter facing a good pitcher. When the ball comes in, he gets that lift.

But writing it the way you did, Krassner, you were in effect hitting fungoes. You were making the reader feel it, which is less agreeable than batting. If the reader had been able to guess that this was what was going on with the whore—I don't know how you could have done it; that would have been the art of it—to phrase the language in such a way that the reader thinks, "Oh, Jesus, she's sucking his cock, and she asks him if he's a Communist." If it had happened that way, it might have been overpowering. What a montage.

Maybe it was the use of "fellatio," maybe you just should have said, "I was having my cock sucked and she said, 'Are you a Communist?'" If you're getting into the brutality of it, get into the brutality of it.

Throw a beanball. Don't use the Latinism. Maybe it was the Latinism that threw me. All I know is that there was something bad about it, the effect was shock.

Q. So you were shocked by a euphemism . . .

A. Shock is like banging your head or taking a dull fall; your wits are deadened.

Q. That's what I wanted to do in the writing, because that's what happened to me in the act.

A. Then you're not interested in art, you're interested in therapy. That's the trouble—there are too many people writing nowadays who give no art to the world, but draw in therapy to themselves.

Q. No, not in my case. It didn't change me one way or the other, writing it. I just wanted to put it into the consciousness of the reader. That's not therapy for me.

A. Well, then you should've said, "She was sucking my cock." I mean that's my professional opinion.

Q. It wasn't in Roget's Thesaurus. . . . Would you agree that you have an essentially biological approach to history?

A. I think I do, but I could never talk about it. I don't know enough history.

Q. To narrow it down to the present, if you were a future historian of sex, how would you look upon the Kennedy administration?

A. I'd say there's more acceptance of sexuality in America today than there was before he came in. Whether that's good or bad, I don't know. It may be a promiscuous acceptance of sexuality.

Q. Are you saying it's because of . . .?

A. Because of Kennedy—absolutely. I mean, Jesus, just think of going to a party given by Eisenhower as opposed to a party thrown by Kennedy. Do you have to wonder at which party you'd have a better time? I'm not being facetious.

The average man daydreams about his leader. He thinks of being invited to his leader's home. If he thinks of being invited to Eisenhower's home, he thinks of how proper he's going to be. If he thinks of going to the Kennedys for a party, he thinks of having a dance with Jackie. Things liven up.

Why do you think people loved Hitler in Germany? Because they all secretly wished to get hysterical and stomp on things and scream and shout and rip things up and kill—tear people apart. Hitler pretended to offer them that. In some subtle way, he communicated it. That's why they wanted him. That's why he was good for Germany—they wanted such horror. Of course, by the end he didn't tear people apart, he gassed them.

If America gets as sick as Germany was before Hitler came in, we'll have our Hitler. One way or another, we'll have our Hitler.

But the point is, you see, the political fight right now is not to deal with the ends of the disease, but the means right here and now. To try to foil the sickness and root it out rather than calculate political programs for the future. One can have fascism come in any form at all, through the church, through sex, through social welfare, through state conservatism, through organized medicine, the FBI, the Pentagon. Fascism is not a way of life but a murderous mode of deadening reality by smothering it with lies.

Every time one sees a bad television show, one is watching the nation get ready for the day when a Hitler will come. Not because the ideology of the show is

So you're against testing?



Are you or aren't you against the Russian bomb?



Are you for American testing?



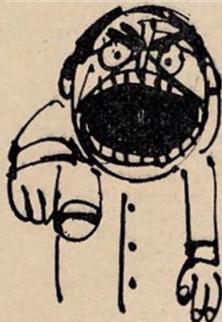
The Russian bomb doesn't bother you as much as our bomb does it now?



You're against all testing you say?



Now isn't that the new 'party' line?



Only here in the United States can you say that.



you say that's why you're saying it?



You Communists are all alike.



LOUMYER

Fascistic; on the contrary its manifest ideology is invariably liberal, but the show still prepares Fascism because it is meretricious art and so sickens people a little further. Whenever people get collectively sick, the remedy becomes progressively more violent and hideous. An insidious, insipid sickness demands a violent far-reaching purgative.

*Q. When I interviewed Jean Shepherd (issue #20) he made the point—sarcastically—how come it's always the Bad Guys who become leaders?*

A. Lenin wasn't a Bad Guy. Trotsky wasn't a Bad Guy. I don't think Napoleon was such a Bad Guy. I don't think Alexander the Great was such a Bad Guy. Bad Guys become leaders in a bad time.

One can conceive of a man who's half-good and half-bad who comes to power in a time of great crisis and great change, a time when awful things are going on. He's going to reflect some of the awfulness of his time. He may become awful himself, which is a tragedy.

A man like Danton begins as a great man, and deteriorates. Castro may end badly, but that will be a tragedy. No one's ever going to tell me he wasn't a great man when he started. He reminds me of Cortez who was one of the greatest leaders who ever lived.

*Q. Then you're saying it's bad times which result in bad leaders.*

A. Well, if a time is bad enough, a good man can't possibly succeed. In a bad time, the desires of the multitude are bad, they're low, they're ugly, they're greedy, they're cowardly, they're piggish, shitty.

*Q. Let's get into this, then. How do you sap the energy of bad leaders who are caught up in their own bad time?*

A. In a bad time, a leader is responsible to his own services of propaganda. He doesn't control them. In a modern state, the forces of propaganda control leaders as well as citizens, because the forces of propaganda are more complex than the leader. In a bad time, the war to be fought is in the mass media.

If anyone is a leftist, or a radical, if a man becomes an anarchist, a hipster, some kind of proto-Communist, a rebel, a wild reactionary, I don't care what—if he's somebody who's got a sense that the world is wrong and he's more-or-less right, that there are certain lives he feels are true and good and worth something, worth more than the oppressive compromises he sees before him every day, then he feels that the world has got to be changed or it is going to sink into one disaster or another. He may even feel as I do that we are on the edge of being plague-ridden forever.

Well, if he feels all these things, the thing to do, if he wants political action, is not to look for organizations which he can join, nor to look for long walks he can go on with other picketeers, although that's obviously far better than joining passive organizations, but rather it is to devote his life to working subtly, silently, steelfully, against the state.

And there's one best way he can do that. He can join the mass media. He can bore from within. He shouldn't look to form a sect or a cell—he should do it alone. The moment he starts to form sects and cells, he's beginning to create dissension and counter-espionage agents.

The history of revolutionary movements is that they form cells, then they defeat themselves. The worst and most paranoid kind of secret police—those split per-

sonalities who are half secret policemen and half revolutionaries (I'm talking of psychological types rather than of literal police agents)—enter these organizations and begin to manufacture them over again from within.

It's better to work alone, trusting no one, just working, working, working not to sabotage so much as to shift and to turn and to confuse the mass media and hold the mirror to its guilt, keep the light in its eye, never, never, never oneself beginning to believe that the legitimate work one is doing in the mass media has some prior value to it; always knowing that the work no matter how well intended is likely to be subtly hideous work. The mass media does diabolically subtle things to the morale and life of the people who do their work; few of us are strong enough to live alone in enemy territory. But it's work which must be done.

So long as the mass media are controlled completely by one's enemies, the living tender sensuous and sensual life of all of us is in danger. And the way to fight back is not to look to start a group or a cell or to write a program, but instead it is to look for a job in the heart of the enemy.

*Q. How do you personally wield whatever power you have?*

A. It's possible I have no power which would not vanish with fashion.

*Q. Would it be the kind of power which would be diluted by the revelation of it?*

A. All power is diluted by the revelation of it. That's why people who run things are secretive. That's why we have few good novels on how things really work. Nobody knows how anything works in this country.

Can you name me one good novel that'll tell you how a President is picked out of a national convention? No, you had to wait for Theodore White's book, which is not a novel, therefore not as good, because there's a limit to how deeply a writer of non-fiction can go into these things.

*Q. How did you feel about *Advise and Consent*?*

A. I read a part of it. Not a good novel. It did not tell very much which was true, not really. Nor have I read a major novel by a major novelist, about the news magazines. I think most young men who want to write want really to do no more than rush post-haste into the literary life.

You know, they get known well enough to have a short story or two in one or two particular magazines, they attend the proper cocktail parties slavishly, they take pains to entertain the hostess, they acquire a fellowship or a grant, they do reviews, they build up slowly. By the time they do a novel they belong to the Union of High Mediocrities, the book reviewers welcome them, their reputations are suddenly large. It's a terrible, terrible way to become a writer. Because once you're successful that way, the only material you have to draw upon is your past—you have no present, except that omnipresent damned idiotic literary life.

But if a young writer passes through occupations which are difficult or ugly (if complex), if for example they work their way through a national news magazine, or if they rise so high as to be in on the editorial meetings at *The New York Times*, and yet manage somehow to keep themselves alive as a writer, there comes a time when they can write a book or many books, when they can write something which can have

enormous value.

England has a C. P. Snow. I think if America had a C. P. Snow, he'd have to be twenty times greater. But just think, we'd have a writer greater than Balzac. Jim Jones could become that kind of writer if he'd get his head out of the hog trough.

Q. In *The Naked and the Dead*, there was a theme about the futility of violence on a grand scale; and yet, in "The White Negro," there's almost a justification of violence, at least on a personal level. How do you reconcile this apparent inconsistency?

A. The ideas I had about violence changed 180 degrees over those years. Beneath the ideology in *The Naked and The Dead* was an obsession with violence. The characters for whom I had the most secret admiration, like Croft, were violent people.

Ideologically, intellectually, I did disapprove of violence, though I didn't at the time of "The White Negro."

But what I still disapprove of is inhuman violence—violence which is on a large scale and abstract. I disapprove of bombing a city. I disapprove of the kind of man who will derive aesthetic satisfaction from the fact that an Ethiopian village looks like a red rose at the moment the bombs are exploding. I won't disapprove of the act of perception which witnesses that; I think that act of perception is—I'm going to use the word again—noble.

What I'm getting at is: a native village is bombed, and the bombs happen to be beautiful when they land; in fact it would be odd if all that sudden destruction did not liberate some beauty. The form a bomb takes in its explosion may be in part a picture of the potentialities it destroyed. So let us accept the idea that the bomb is beautiful.

If so, any liberal who decries the act of bombing is totalitarian if he doesn't admit as well that the bombs were indeed beautiful.

Because the moment we tell something that's untrue, it does not matter how pure our motives may be—the moment we start mothering mankind and decide that one truth is good for them to hear and another is not so good, because while we can understand, those poor ignorant unfortunates cannot—then what are we doing, we're depriving the minds of others of knowledge which may be essential.

Think of a young pilot who comes along later, some young pilot who goes out on a mission and isn't prepared for the fact that a bombing might be beautiful; he could conceivably be an idealist, there were some in the war against Fascism. If the pilot is totally unprepared he might never get over the fact that he was particularly thrilled by the beauty of that bomb.

But if our culture had been large enough to say that Ciano's son-in-law not only found that bomb beautiful, but that indeed this act of perception was *not* what was wrong; the evil was to think that this beauty was worth the lot of living helpless people who were wiped out broadside. Obviously, whenever there's destruction, there's going to be beauty implicit in it.

Q. Aren't you implying that this beauty is an absolute? Which, beauty is never . . .

A. Well, you don't know. How do you know beauty is not an absolute? Listen, you guys on the *Realist*—I read you because I think you represent a point of view, and you carry that point of view very, very far, you're true to that point of view—but I think you're

getting a touch sloppy because you get no opposition whatsoever from your own people; you'll get your head taken off at its base some day by a reactionary. He'll go right through you, because there are so many things you haven't thought out.

One of them is: How do you know beauty isn't absolute?

Q. Recently I referred in the *Realist* (issue #35) to Sonny Nunez, a dead prizefighter, and Sherri Finkbone, a pregnant woman, and I suggested that if she really wanted to get a legal abortion, she should just sign up for a boxing match—to point out the irony that it's legal to kill a man in the ring, but it's illegal to remove a fetus from a woman. Would you like to attack that comparison?

A. Ah, yes. Atrocious. I think that's taking a cheap advantage. In one case a man is killed who is able to defend himself. In the other, an embryo who may have voyaged through eternity to be born again is snuffed out because of his mother's cultural propensity for socially accepted drugs like the limb-killer thalidomide.

Q. Both incidents took place in Arizona, and I just felt it was a dramatic way—

A. If somebody takes a handful of shit and throws it against the wall at a party, that's dramatic, but it's distasteful. Your example is distasteful. You were appealing to the low emotions in your readers. You have a terrible responsibility in the *Realist*, because your readers have low emotions too. Just because nobody could find the sort of stuff that's printed in the *Realist* except in the *Realist*, there is a danger that the people who read the sheet are going to begin to think there's something superior about them, just from the sheer fact they're reading the *Realist*.

Q. Well, I want to get this away from the *Realist*. Whom do you prefer—a cruel hipster or a compassionate square? Let's say you're in a plane that's overloaded, and you have to lessen its weight by one passenger . . .

A. Square. The answer is simple. The one you push out would be the one. What I mean, your *body* would tell you which one to push out. The whole of hip is right at this point. I can't keep emphasizing it too much: the notion is that when it comes to matters of life and death, the instinct *must* take over.

The instinct knows more about life and death than the mind. The mind has been subject to every foul educational system which every authority and every class oppression has evolved over the years. Our minds have been poisoned. But what happens, I think, is that deep at the bottom of all this, the instinct keeps fighting its long, dreary, trench war against all the foul habits of thought, all the vocabularies of jargon.

It's a sad, dreary war. Each year our perceptions tend to grow a little more dull, our instincts become less happy, less quick. But the one thing the instinct has to hold on to, and will hold on to, involves its understanding of life and death. You understand of course that I advocate the life of instinct because I think man is more good than bad. If it's not so, if we're more bad than good, then who's going to save us? Do you think some government is going to come along and work up rules for a good society out of polluted, dull, fouled-up minds?

Q. You believe man is basically more good than evil?

A. I don't know. I'm saying the only possibility is

if man is more good than bad. Then the next step is to help the instinct to express itself more and more.

*Q. Do you think it's possible you take the orgasm too seriously?*

A. It's a disagreeable subject. I used to talk about it in the days when I had a torpedo and went charging up the hill. But Bangalore blew up.

I suppose I'm also guilty of deadening the written word.

*Q. Forget about the word itself, but what about taking the occurrence of the orgasm too seriously, giving its role in human relations too much emphasis?*

A. I still think the orgasm is the final measure of a relation. It's not the only measure—for a good many people, it's not the critical measure; in fact for most married people the orgasm is often accepted as much less significant than money—but I still insist that for a man at least—I can't speak for women—it's the greatest single illumination of his being. Or at least it is if he can get the illumination in the act and without drugs.

*Q. Let me approach that sideways; do you think you're something of a puritan when it comes to masturbation?*

A. I think masturbation is bad.

*Q. In relation to heterosexual fulfillment?*

A. In relation to everything—orgasm, heterosexuality, to style, to stance, to be able to fight the good fight. I think masturbation cripples people. It doesn't cripple them altogether, but it turns them askew, it sets up a bad and often enduring tension. I mean has anyone ever studied the correlation between cigarette smoking and masturbation? Anybody who spends his adolescence masturbating, generally enters his young manhood with no sense of being a man. The answer—I don't know what the answer is—sex for adolescents may be the answer, it may not. I really don't know.

*Q. Well, there's Life magazine with its set-up but toned-down version of teenage sex—*

A. The moment *Life* starts pushing for sex among the young—

*Q. They're not pushing for it—*

A. They're pretending not to. But they gave Junior Sex a great spread. I suspect the fact of the matter is the authorities have decided more or less unconsciously that sex among the young may not be such a bad idea. If the authorities come to that conclusion, however, I begin to get suspicious.

*Q. If you were a psychiatrist, how would you describe your attitude toward authority?*

A. I'd say authority is that force emanating from institutions and government which tends to give me cancer.

*Q. Cancer, figuratively?*

A. Literally. I would guess cancer comes from having to submit that little bit too much over and over to authority. It doesn't matter how much of a rebel you are—the most individual of rebels may still have had to submit more to authority than he cared to.

*Q. But can't one kid start young with heterosexual relations and yet develop all the wrong kinds of attitudes—while another kid will go through his adolescence masturbating and yet see the humor of it, see the absurdity of it, know it's temporary?*

A. I wouldn't dream of laying down a law with no variation. But let me say it another way. At the time

I was growing up, there was much more sexual repression than there is today. One knew sex was good and everything was in the way of it. And so one did think of it as one of the wars to fight, if not the war to fight—the war for greater sexual liberty.

Masturbation was one expression of that deprivation. No adolescent would ever masturbate, presumably, if he could have sex with a girl. A lot of adolescents masturbate because they don't want to take part in homosexuality.

*Q. There are certain societies where masturbation—*

A. All I'm talking about is the one society I know. I'll be damned if I'm going to be led around with a ring in my nose by anthropologists. I mean the few I've known personally have always struck me as slightly absurd. They're like eccentrics in a comic English novel. I won't take any anthropologists as a god, I won't take any psychoanalyst as a god. I'm sure they don't know A-hole from appetite about "certain societies."

But we were talking about masturbation as the result of sexual repression. I don't see any reason to defend it. If you have more sexual liberty, why the hell still defend masturbation?

One has to keep coming back to one notion: How do you make life? How do you *not* make life? You have to assume, just as a working stance, that life is probably good—if it isn't good, then our existence is such an absurdity that any action immediately becomes absurd—but if you assume that life is good, then you have to assume that those things which keep life from happening—which tend to make life more complex without becoming more useful, more stimulating—are bad.

Anything that tends to make a man a machine without giving him the power to increase the real life in himself is bad. Take some kid who's got a pretty good brain. He goes to college, he comes out; his brain is no better, but his language is heavier and more complex. He talks like a jargon machine. He doesn't have a new idea, he had the same ideas that he had before, he has the same common sense he had before, but now his common sense, instead of being salty, is laden with terms like "I'm aggregate-oriented." When he was in high school, he used to say, "I like to think about big complicated things."

*Q. Is it possible that you have a totalitarian attitude against masturbation?*

A. I wouldn't say all people who masturbate are evil, probably I would even say that some of the best people in the world masturbate. But I am saying it's a miserable activity.

*Q. Well, we're getting right back now to this notion of absolutes. You know—to somebody, masturbation can be a thing of beauty—*

A. To what end? To what end? Who is going to benefit from it?

*Q. It's a better end than the beauty of a bombing.*

A. Masturbation is bombing. It's bombing oneself.

*Q. I see nothing wrong if the only person hurt from masturbation is the one who practices it. But it can also benefit—look, Stekel wrote a book on auto-eroticism, and one of the points he made was that at least it saved some people who might otherwise go out and commit rape. He was talking about extremes, but—*

A. It's better to commit rape than masturbate.

### Love Song

Dorothy,  
Last night  
I made love to you  
Without you,  
Sitting on the toilet.

God, you were great!  
You were so great  
That . . .

Excuse me, I have to  
Go to the bathroom.

—Jonathan Ballard North

Maybe, maybe. The whole thing becomes very difficult.

Q. *But rape involves somebody else. The minute you—*

A. Just talking about it on the basis of violence: one is violence toward oneself; one is violence toward others. And you don't recognize—let's follow your argument and be speculative for a moment—if everyone becomes violent toward themselves, then past a certain point the entire race commits suicide. But if everyone becomes violent toward everyone else, you would probably have one wounded hero-monster left.

Q. *And he'd have to masturbate.*

A. That's true . . . But—you use that to point out how tragic was my solution, which is that he wins and still has to masturbate. I reply that at least it was more valuable than masturbating in the first place. Besides he might have no desire to masturbate. He might lie down and send his thoughts back to the root of his being.

Q. *I think there's a basic flaw in your argument. Why are you assuming that masturbation is violence unto oneself? Why is it not pleasure unto oneself? And I'm not defending masturbation—well, I'm defending masturbation, yes, as a substitute if and when—*

A. All right, look. When you make love, whatever is good in you or bad in you, goes out into someone else. I mean this literally. I'm not interested in the biochemistry of it, the electromagnetism of it, nor in how the psychic waves are passed back and forth, and what psychic waves are. All I know is that when one makes love, one changes a woman slightly and a woman changes you slightly.

Q. *Certain circumstances can change one for the worse.*

A. But at least you have gone through a process which is part of life. You were part of a chain, just as life is part of a continuing chain, let us say, part of a dance. Part of whatever you want to call it.

One can be better for the experience, or worse. But one has experience to absorb, to think about, one has literally to digest the new spirit which has entered the flesh. The body has been galvanized for an experience of flesh, a declaration of the flesh.

If one has the courage to think about every aspect of the act—I don't mean think mechanically about it, but if one is able to brood over the act, to dwell on it—then one is *changed* by the act. Even if one has been *jangled* by the act. Because in the act of restoring one's harmony, one has to encounter all the reasons one was jangled.

So finally one has had an experience which is

nourishing. Nourishing because one's able to *feel* one's way into more difficult or more precious insights as a result of it. One's able to live a tougher, more heroic life if one can digest and absorb the experience.

But, if one masturbates, all that happens is, everything that's beautiful and good in one, goes up the hand, goes into the air, is *lost*. Now what the hell is there to *absorb*? One hasn't tested himself. You see, in a way, the heterosexual act lays questions to rest, and makes one able to build upon a few answers. Whereas if one masturbates, the ability to contemplate one's experience is disturbed. Instead, fantasies of power take over and disturb all sleep.

If one has, for example, the image of a beautiful sexy babe in masturbation, one still doesn't know whether one can make love to her in the flesh. All you know is that you can violate her in your *brain*. Well, a lot of good that is.

But if one has fought the good fight or the evil fight and ended with the beautiful sexy dame, then if the experience is good, your life is changed by it; if the experience is not good, one's life is also changed by it, in a less happy way. But at least one knows something of what happened. One has something real to build on.

The ultimate direction of masturbation always has to be insanity.

Q. *But you're not man enough to take the other position, which is sex for the young. Except for petting, what else is there between those two alternatives?*

A. I'd say, between masturbation and sex for the young, I prefer sex for the young. Of course. But I think there may be still a third alternative: At the time I grew up, sex had enormous fascination for everyone, but it had no dignity, it had no place. It was not a value. It had nothing to do with procreation, it had to do with the bathroom—it was burning, it was feverish, it was dirty, cute, giggly.

The thought of waiting for sex never occurred—when I was young my parents did not speak about sex, and no one else I knew ever discussed the possibility of holding onto one's sex as the single most important thing one has. To keep one's sex until one got what one deserved for it—that was never suggested to me when I was young.

The possibilities were to go out and have sex with a girl, have homosexual sex, or masturbate. Those were the choices. The fourth alternative—chastity, if you will—was ridiculous and absurd. It's probably more absurd today. If you talked to kids of chastity today, they would not stop laughing, I'm certain.

But the fact of the matter is, if you get marvelous sex when you're young, all right; but if you're not ready to make a baby with that marvelous sex, then you may also be putting something down the drain, forever, which is the ability that you had to make a baby; the most marvelous thing that was in you may have been shot into a diaphragm, or wasted on a pill. One might be losing one's future.

The point is that, so long as one has a determinedly atheistic and rational approach to life, then the only thing that makes sense is the most comprehensive promiscuous sex you can find.

Q. *Well, since I do have an essentially atheistic and more-or-less rational approach to life, I think I can speak with at least my individual authority. As a mat-*

ter of fact, the more rational I become, the more selective—

A. You know, "selective" is a word that sounds like a refugee from a group therapy session.

Q. I've never been in any kind of therapy—

A. No, I know, but there's a plague coming out of all these centers—they go around infecting all of us. The words sit in one's vocabulary like bedbugs under glass.

Q. But I can't think of a better word. "Selective" is a word that means what I want to communicate to you.

A. Selective. It's arrogant—how do you know who's doing the selecting? I mean you're a modest man with a good sense of yourself, but suddenly it comes to sex and you're selective. Like you won't pick this girl; you'll pick that one . . .

Q. Exactly. It's arrogant, but—

A. Yeah, yeah, yeah—but the fact that one girl wants you and the other girl doesn't—I mean, that has nothing to do with it?

Q. Well, they have a right to be selective, too.

A. Then it's mutually selective. Which means you fall in together or go in together. Now, those are better words than "selective." They have more to do with the body and much less to do with the machine. Electronic machines select.

Q. Well, what I'm saying is you make a choice. A human choice. It has nothing to do with a machine . . . I'll tell you what's bugging me—it's your mystical approach. You'll use an expression like "You may be sending the best baby that's in you out into your hand"—but even when you're having intercourse, how many unused spermatazoa will there be in one ejaculation of semen?

A. Look, America is dominated by a bunch of half-maniacal scientists, men who don't know anything about the act of creation. If science comes along and says there are one million spermatazoa in a discharge, you reason on that basis. That may not be a real basis.

We just don't know what the real is. We just don't know. Of the million spermatazoa, there may be only two or three with any real chance of reaching the ovum; the others are there like a supporting army, or if we're talking of planned parenthood, as a body of the electorate. These sperm go out with no sense at all of being real spermatazoa. They may appear to be real spermatazoa under the microscope, but after all, anybody who's looking at a man from Mars through a telescope might think that Communist bureaucrats and FBI men look exactly the same.

Q. Well, they are.

A. Krassner's jab piles up more points. The point is that the scientists don't know what's going on. That meaning of the ovum and the sperm is too mysterious for the laboratory. Even the electronic microscope can't measure the striations of passion in a spermatazoa. Or the force of its will.

But we can trust our emotion. Our emotions are a better guide to what goes on in these matters than scientists.

Q. But in the act of pleasure—go back to your instincts, as you say—in the act of sex, you're not thinking in terms of procreation, you're thinking in terms of pleasure.

A. You are when you're young. As you get older,

you begin to grow more and more obsessed with procreation. You begin to feel used up. Another part of oneself is fast diminishing. There isn't that much of oneself left. I'm not talking now in any crude sense of how much semen is left in the barrel. I'm saying that one's very being is being used up.

Every man has a different point where he gets close to his being. Sooner or later everything that stands between him and his being—what the psychoanalysts call defenses—is used up, because men have to work through their lives; just being a man they have to stand up in all the situations where a woman can lie down. Just on the simplest level . . . where a woman can cry, a man has to stand. And for that reason, men are often used more completely than women. They have more rights and more powers, and also they are used more.

Sooner or later, every man comes close to his being and realizes that even though he's using the act, the act is using him too. He becomes, as you say, more selective. The reason he becomes more selective is that you can get killed, you literally can fuck your head off, you can lose your brains, you can wreck your body, you can use yourself up badly, eternally—I know a little bit of what I'm talking about.

I think one of the reasons that homosexuals go through such agony when they're around 40 or 50 is that their lives had nothing to do with procreation. They realize with great horror that all that wonderful sex they had in the past is gone—where is it now? They've used up their being.

Q. Is it possible that you're—pardon the expression—projecting your own attitude onto homosexuals?

A. You can see it in their literature, you can see it in the way they get drunk, you can see it in the sadness, the gentleness, that comes over a middle-aged homosexual. They could've been horribly malicious in the past—bitchy, cruel, nasty—but they become very, very compassionate. There comes a point where they lose their arrogance; they're sorry for themselves and compassionate for others. Not one-half their lives are behind them, but nine-tenths.

Q. Isn't it something of a paradox that your philosophy embraces both a belief in a personal God on one hand and a kind of existential nihilism on the other hand?

A. I've never said seriously that I'm an existential nihilist. I think I've said it facetiously. I am guilty of having said I'm a constitutional nihilist, which is another matter. I believe all legal structures are bad, but they've got to be dissolved with art. I certainly wouldn't want to do away with all the laws overnight.

The authorities, the oppressors, have had power for so many centuries, and particularly have had such vicious and complete power for the last fifty years, that if you did away with all the laws tomorrow, mankind would flounder in *angst*. Nobody could think their way through to deal with a world in which there were no laws.

We've got hung up upon law the way a drug addict depends on his heroin.

Q. There's a certain irony in this thing about laws. Do you think that if you weren't a famous writer—if one weren't a famous writer and one had stabbed one's wife, would one have gotten a sentence which you escaped?

A. I have no desire to comment on that. It's a private part of my life. I don't want to talk about it. I'll just say this. As far as sentencing goes I think it would have made little difference, legally. If I had been an anonymous man, the result, for altogether different social reasons, would have been about the same.

But for that matter the law reacted to me more as a notorious man than as an intellectual. I don't think most of the people I dealt with had the remotest idea then of what I said in my books; their idea of me was picked up out of what they read in the *Daily News*. The thing that's worst about the law is the dullness of it. Anyone who's ever had anything to do with a lawsuit goes through a deadening period of dullness.

Q. How can you say that incident I just referred to is "a private part" of your life when you seem to refer to it yourself in *Deaths For The Ladies*—in a poem called "Rainy Afternoon With the Wife," you have the lines:

So long  
as  
you  
use  
a knife,  
there's  
some  
love  
left.

A. One can talk about anything in art. I wasn't trying to reveal my private life in that poem, I was trying to crystallize a paradox.

Q. Do you think that creativity—art in general—is an effective force in society, or is it in the end, you know, a sop to the individual artist's ego, and maybe entertainment for—

A. Art is a force. Maybe it's the last force to stand against urban renewal, mental hygiene, the wave of the waveless future.

Q. In his book, *Nobody Knows My Name*, James Baldwin—referring to your essay, "The White Negro"—complained about "the myth of the sexuality of Negroes which Norman Mailer, like so many others, refuses to give up." Are you still denying it's a myth?

A. Negroes are closer to sex than we are. By that I don't mean that every Negro's a great stud, that every Negro woman is capable of giving great sex, that those black people just got rhythm.

I'm willing to bet that if you pushed Jimmy hard enough, he'd finally admit that he thought that the Negroes had more to do with sexuality than the white—but whether he really believes that or not, Baldwin's buried point is that I shouldn't talk this way because it's bad for the Negro people, it's going to slow them up, going to hurt them; talk about Negro sexuality hurts their progress because it makes the white man nervous and unhappy and miserable.

But the white man is nervous and unhappy and miserable anyway. It's not I who think the Negro has such profound sexuality, it's the average white man all through the country. Why deny their insight? Why do you think they react so violently in the South to having their little girls and boys go to school with Negro kids if it isn't that they're afraid of sexuality in the Negro?

That's the real problem. What's the use of avoiding it?

Q. Are you saying that, whether it's a myth or not, in effect—

A. First of all, I don't believe it's a myth at all, for any number of reasons. I think that any submerged class is going to be more accustomed to sexuality than a leisure class. A leisure class may be more preoccupied with sexuality, but a submerged class is going to be more drenched in it.

You see, the upper classes are obsessed with sex, but they contain very little of it themselves. They use up much too much sex in their manipulations of power. In effect, they exchange sex for power. So they restrict themselves in their sexuality—whereas the submerged classes have to take their desires for power and plow them back into sex.

So, to begin with, there's just that much more sexual vitality at the bottom than there is at the top. Second of all, the Negroes come from Africa, which is more or less a tropical land. Now I don't care to hear how many variations there are in Africa, how complex is its geography, how there's not only jungle but pasture land, mountains, snow, and so forth—everybody knows that. Finally, Africa is, at bottom, the Congo. Now tropical people are usually more sexual. It's easier to cohabit, it's easier to stay alive. If there's more time, more leisure, more warmth, more—we'll use one of those machine words—more support-from-the-environment than there is in a Northern country, then sex will tend to be more luxuriant.

Northern countries try to build civilizations and tropical countries seek to proliferate being.

Besides the Negro has been all but forbidden any sort of intellectual occupation here for a couple of centuries. So he has had to learn other ways of comprehending modern life. There are two ways one can get along in the world. One can get along by studying books, or one can get along by knowing a great deal about one's fellow man, and one's fellow man's woman.

Sexuality is the armature of Negro life. Without sexuality they would've perished. The Jews stayed alive by having a culture to which they could refer, in which, more or less, they could believe. The Negroes stayed alive by having sexuality which could nourish them, keep them warm.

You know, I don't think "The White Negro" is not vulnerable; I think it can be attacked from every angle—there's hardly a paragraph that can't be attacked. I would love to see some first-rate assaults in detail upon it. Occasionally I'd like to be forced to say, "This argument is more incisive than mine."

I honestly don't believe I mind an attack on "The White Negro," but I think an attack at a low level is dim. Jimmy knows enough to know that "The White Negro" is not going to be dismissed. When he stands there and in effect says, "I as a Negro know damn well that Norman Mailer doesn't know what he's talking about when he talks about Negroes"—well, he's being totalitarian. Even Jimmy Baldwin can be totalitarian.

Q. Would you say that your conception of life is mystical as opposed to rationalistic?

A. I would assume mystics don't feel mystical. It's comfortable to them. When the savage was paddling his canoe, and a breeze entered his nose from the East, the savage said to himself, "The God of the East Wind is stirring"—he felt that god stirring. He could picture that god in his mind.

(Continued on Page 10)

## Two Can Play the Same Game

By Saul Heller

One of the notable characteristics of this great land of liberty is the difficulty of enjoying its most-advertised feature. It always seems to be just out of stock, even though there are models continually on display. Anyone who reads a newspaper even casually has noted how much trouble can be stirred up when some citizen uses a little liberty, instead of leaving it in its showcase, as every patriotic American has learned to do. The trouble that descends on the unhappy man who indulges in an activity, or professes a belief, not in accord with the views of the professional watch-dogs of the community, quickly demonstrates that if there is any freedom left, it is only because it has wisely kept out of sight.

Americans' habit of threatening or coercing people into conforming with patterns of behavior that are always irrational and often illegal as well, seems too ingrained to be changed. Those of us who don't like being bullied and coerced, however, might wish to consider whether anything can be done about the matter.

One remedy that may seem unpleasant, but should be given consideration, lies in enlisting the assistance of criminals. Criminals have become indispensable in the conduct of business and the management of labor, and are potent forces in political affairs. They are certainly neither less ethical, nor more criminal, than the respected business people who deal with them. Their cooperation cannot be sneezed at.

There is no valid reason why individualists who live within the law should not join forces with individualists who live outside it, against a common enemy who is more destructive than any criminal could possibly be. People with convictions should stick together.

Let's consider how such a partnership might work out. Suppose a Southern white man is arrested for eating at the same table as some colored people. This seems to be a not uncommon occurrence down South. The arrest violates Federal laws, Christian principles and common decency, but what of it? All three are so used to being violated, it almost seems as if they sit back, relax, and enjoy it when it happens. Usually the white man would go to jail.

Let's assume, now, that the white man, along with others who share his sentiments, has become affiliated with a gang of criminals. The gang has been paid to come to the assistance of their legit pals in such cases. Or maybe they do it simply from a sense of civil responsibility.

Two gang members, let's say, are present in the cafeteria when a policeman comes up to arrest the white man. One hoodlum says nonchalantly to the cop:

"It ain't healthy to distoib people who are eatin' and mindin' their own business, Buster."

The policeman, who isn't used to meeting resistance in such cases, hesitates.

"What are you talking about?" he says, nervously.

The goon replies, polishing his nails: "I mean, Buster, ya might get that stupid Southern face of your'n rubbed in the sawdust if ya don't get outa here fast."

The policeman will probably leave at this point,

Southerners accustomed to hundred-to-one odds when they beat up non-resisting Negroes or whites are not going to be rash enough to make a stand against overwhelmingly superior forces. Perhaps the policeman is thinking of coming back with the whole police force behind him. But the goons know something about human psychology, and are not unprepared for such developments. A gang member at this time pays a visit to the Chief of Police, and explains very carefully and precisely what will happen to him, his house, and his wife and children, if he and his men don't stop hounding law-abiding people.

Fantastic? It's no more fantastic that criminals should act decent than that cops should act criminal. Cruel? Unethical? Certainly. And effective. If we can go to war, and kill millions of innocent bystanders in the name of justice or self-defense, why can't we threaten a stupid and vicious police chief for the same reasons?

Take another instance—the case of the Bremerton, Wash. high school Government & World Affairs teacher, who was discharged after one of his classes sent a telegram to then-President Eisenhower, suggesting he apologize to Russia for the U-2 spy-plane flight.

Let's assume a sophisticated crime syndicate man visits the principal who fired the teacher.

"I hear you fired Jones," says the syndicate man casually. "Good teacher, wasn't he?"

The principal admits he was.

"Didn't violate any rules, did he?"

The principal agrees.

"The class was within its rights expressing its opinions in that telegram, wasn't it?" the syndicate man continues.

Again the principal is forced to agree.

"Then why did you fire Jones?"

"You see, it's like this," the principal says lamely, "the Board of Trustees thought it was desirable we let him go."

"And you're afraid of the Board, aren't you?"

The principal admits it.

"Whatever the Board of Trustees can do to you, is nothing compared with what me and my buddies are going to do to you if you don't reinstate Mr. Jones," comments the syndicate man very quietly. He explains what.

Visits to several members of the Board of Trustees are also made, with conversations running along the same lines. The upshot is, Mr. Jones is miraculously reinstated the next day. The principal makes a speech telling how, on reconsidering the matter, it seemed to him that our precious heritage of liberty requires us to protect the free speech of teachers, even though we don't agree with what they have to say. And although the relevance of this statement to either Mr. Jones' dismissal or his subsequent reinstatement is obscure, nobody notices it, the townspeople applaud, and another little island of liberty has been successfully defended against its worst enemies—the citizens of our democracy.

I think the point is clear. Americans who use intimidation to prevent fellow citizens from enjoying their legal rights and privileges are essentially criminals. Since the law won't do anything about these amateur dabblers in crime, why not let the pros take care of them?