

Letters to the Editor

Various Authors

1967

To the Editor:

The U.S. Congress is a disreputable club. It's easy to find fault with anybody who's a member. But if you are going to pan a congressman, why pick on the best one in sight?

The question occurred to me as I read Plafkin's silly, self-important, time-serving attack on John Conyers. Let me explain my adjectives. It's silly to yell "Opportunist!" at one of the handful of congressmen with guts enough to oppose Johnson's requests for money for the dirty war, to oppose the jingo flag-burning bill, and to oppose using government money on projects in lily-white towns like Weston, Illinois.

It's self-important to yell "Unprincipled!" at Conyers for refusing to waste time defending his votes in Congress in a TV debate with a white right-wing nut. Why should Conyers give a damn what Durant thinks about his voting record? Conyers isn't responsible to Durant but to the black people and the anti-establishment whites in his district. Plafkin is hurt because Conger didn't go because Conyers didn't go for his debate idea. That's self-important.

Finally, Plafkin's attack on Conyers is time-serving because he puts down Conyers in order to praise a pathetic Reutherite Tom whose latest show of "integrity" was to attack black power in Detroit by opposing the district representation plan for the Common Council. Time-serving is a polite, old-fashioned term for kissing the ass of the Establishment.

David Herreshoff
Highland Park

To the Editor:

John Sinclair's last article (July 15-30) was particularly illuminating—more than usual—in that he hit on certain chords on how and why people stay tied to a Labyrinth of Lovelessness, namely, the link between this Labyrinth and psychiatry.

His article in fact opens up the question: What is this thing psychiatry? Perhaps as many books have been written about it as about Christianity. And like Christianity, its inception was to liberate the human spirit from instinctual destructive irrationality.

But then, again like Christianity, it flip-flopped into a tool for confining the human spirit, keeping it penned up, bound to the Status Quo, to the State. Like priest in medieval times, so psychiatrist today.

Not for nothing is he called a head-shrinker—he and the whole psychiatric-bureaucratic apparatus of hospitals, clinics, out-patient-in-patient, etc. (even Lafayette Clinic).

While some individual psychiatrists are doubtless warm, broadminded, humane (like the one who shared with John the Lou Gordon spotlight), all have this in common—that all, like on the end of a long leash, are tied to the State—and for the simple and obvious reason that all are licensed by the State (to say nothing of tied to a titanic-vested interest known as American Medical Association).

The psychiatrist may thus respect Truth (many really do), but only when it doesn't entail a hassle with City Hall. He may have preference for love, beauty, spontaneity, but only when it doesn't jeopardize his job.

He may even believe in genuinely helping people, but only if it doesn't conflict with owning a home, car, good clothes (he does not after all dress in a Gandhian gown), or with financial protection of wife and kids.

So it all makes sense that "straight people are always" as John puts it, "sending their kids to psychiatrists..." It makes "straight" sense.

And such is this thing psychiatry. And just as one might say "Keep your Christianity, give me Christ," so one might likewise say "Keep your psychiatry, give me Freud"—the Freud non-bureaucratized, non-Statized, non-establishmentized.

The Freud who, in one of his last works (*Civilization and its Discontents*), was at last coming to recognize that which Marx, Bakunin, etc. had taken for granted—that psychic ills are as much rooted in a changeable social system as in a changeless id.

With this kind of Freud, but particularly his successors like Wilhelm Reich and Erich Fromm, the human spirit can yet be liberated.

Sam Cohen

Detroit

To the Editor:

I am very upset with your awful issue. The words are terrible. I think you should be put in jail or shot. I am a well respected sixteen year old boy with a brush cut, I always wear a suit or tie and go to church every Saturday. I bet none of you have ever been to a church. I bet you smoke and drink and even kiss girls. You all are sinners, you're terrible. I told my Rabbi about you, he said sinners, sinners.

Irwin Rubin

Highland Park

To the Editor:

I sent for an interview with Bob Dylan in three back issues of the *Fifth Estate*.

At first glance the interview seemed honestly meaningful with Dylan laying out his attitudes and thoughts. But the further I read, the more it began to sound like the lyrics of his songs and his poems.

"The lamppost leans on folded arms..." a line slightly changed from the song "Gates of Eden." "...there are a lot of people afraid of the bomb, right. But there are a lot of people who're afraid to be seen carrying a Modern Screen magazine down the street..." misquoted from the back of the "Bringing It All Back Home" album.

Practically everything in the interview was covered in something else—his songs, his poems, or easily attainable background information.

For Dylan to be so redundant is indeed laughable, The *Fifth Estate* should have some respect for its readers. Not everyone buys it to appear merely 'hip.'

Sincerely,

Susan Gosper

Detroit

To the Editor:

I'm for this love business, but it demands full cooperation from all people! And those Goddamn Commies aren't cooperating. I'm not gonna say I love you while them bastards are putting a hole in my ass. So until you guys start something "over there" you might as well forget it.

"the Advisor"

Detroit

To the Editor:

I am sure that none of us are surprised at the current turn of events within the past few weeks. The rioting, looting, burning and murder have been in the making for years. I for one feel that this is just the start of years filled with terror and rebellion.

Yes, rebellion, not race riots. The lower classes have been badgered and bullied too long by the system and its brutal methods of enforcement. You are witnessing the crumbling of a society which started with the best of intentions, which class has none, and all were the number, where money was small and people were important.

But that has been changed by the political machine, and so have the people with it. I am glad I had nothing to do with the building of the machines or its bombs, bullets and wars.

Possibly we will have a large commune one day in Michigan or in near Canada, and if it's possible I'd give sweat and tears and blood to see it's creation.

Johnrichard

Detroit

Dear Editor:

I was leafing through the *Fifth Estate* and in the February 15-28, '67 edition I noticed a certain article in the Letters to the Editor. It was from a girl named Sharon Acropolis who lived in Detroit. She told about how she was taken to the office where the male principle pulled up her skirt, pulled down her panties and proceeded to beat her 50 times with a paddle.

This punishment was for (get this) dressing a little too mod. If there was any truth in what she stated in her letter I would like to make a few comments on what I would have done if I were Sharon.

I would have kicked the Dirty Old Man in the nuts and called the police the instant he touched the dress! I would have had him charged with assault and I would have made it stick! Any principal who goes around pulling the panties off of students belongs in Ionia State Hospital, not 'teaching' Detroit's children.

Nothing like this ever happened at Dearborn High, and I hope it doesn't. I would never let it happen to me in the first place.

Thank You,

Steve Stohisz,

To the Editor:

Detroit has grown stagnant within the past four months. Its center seems to be Plum Street. The problem is drop-outs; a group of people who claim to be concerned with world problems but seem to care only about themselves and their immediate needs. They remain totally apathetic to the problems that confront them right in the face.

With the growth of the 'hippy' population, the membership in organizations such as the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam have decreased. Any 'love-peace' activity in Detroit is now almost dead.

"May the baby Jesus open their minds and shut their mouths."

Sincerely,

Eric J. Glatz

Detroit

fifth Estate

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Fifth Estate #35, August 1-15, 1967

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