

Other Scenes

John Wilcock

1969

NEW YORK—Strange and very hypocritical how Dwight D. Eisenhower seems to have been loved and revered by everybody. While he was alive one could scarcely hear a good word for or about him; now he's dead the air is full of unctuous, oily tributes to his role as a beloved father figure. Wasn't it he who took over our role in Vietnam from the French? Wasn't it he who blew the whistle on the military/industry cartel? And yet strange, strange, apparently everybody loved him.

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AP ran its annual wire story on millionaires who don't pay taxes (21 of them last year) because of depreciation deals and other swindles, but as usual didn't name any names or follow up on what might be done about it...

*Manhattan Tribune* calls underground papers "semi-pornographic," which is a stupid putdown with about as much meaning as "half-pregnant."

The nearest thing to McCarthyism since the '50s is the Let Freedom Ring commercial when you dial 386-7550. Recorded telephone announcements are second only to book matches as cheap advertising gimmicks. It's not unusual for somebody to rent the machine for their phone (\$20 per month), place a classified ad to publicize the number and then let the phone ring several hundred times per day...

Bill Cosby made some feeble remark on the Tonight show about communion wafers (calling them "individual pizzas") and then felt obliged to apologize the following night. You might expect it from him. Cosby doesn't want any trouble—never did.

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One of the most significant things about the outburst of high-priced (35 cents) sex papers on the New York newsstands is the realization that they don't need advertising and can make substantial profits without it.

When the offset revolution spreads, and structures change, advertising agencies will find themselves in a world where they have to ask papers to take their ads instead of being wooed.

The monthly *Other Scenes*, for example, has existed for more than a year without an advertising dept. and is now making money. In fact it's spawned a 50-cent magazine, also called *Other Scenes*, which can break even by merely selling 10% of its pressrun.

Is Eldridge Cleaver dead, a victim of CIA agents? That's the suggestion made by Chicago's militant *Resistance Press* in the first issue of their new paper, *The Free Chicago Graphic* scheduled for publication next month...

Bill Hutton's *A History of America* (Coach House Press, 671 Spadina, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, \$1.98) will definitely give you a different perspective than you learned at school...

Startling three-color posters displaying the latest casualty figures in Vietnam and concluding with PRAY FOR PEACE are being distributed by the group called "Clergy & Laymen Concerned About Vietnam." Figures are updated with a new poster each month and you can subscribe to a 12-month set for \$3 (475 Riverside Drive, New York 10027)...

Lawyers predict the past and review the future, says Paul Maag. "Result: bleakness"...

As noted in this column before, Meher Baba is likely to be heralded much more dead than alive. His was a rather exclusive cult and very little he did or said (virtually nothing) could shift or alter the allegiance of his disciples. It is interesting, though, that it's easier to sell a dead god than a live one...

The Underground Press Syndicate Directory is the most comprehensive reference book on UPS papers so far. It lists size, frequency, ad rates, etc. and costs \$2 from Orpheus, Box 1832, Phoenix, Ariz. 85001...

First underground paper in Australia, since OZ folded, is the multi-colored *Ubu News* (25 cents from Andrew Read, 54 George Street, Redfern, NSW 2016) which used to be the newsletter of the underground film freaks in that country...

New Zealand booksellers are getting uptight about an underground mag named Cock (50 cents from P.O. Box 2538, Wellington, New Zealand.)

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In the introduction of his book of columns, *Notes of a Dirty Old Man*, (Essex House, \$1.98) poet Charles Bukowski reminisces about turning out his column for LA's late, lamented Open City: "For action, it has poetry beat all to hell. Get a poem accepted and chances are it will come out two to five years later, and a 50-50 shot it will never appear, or lines of it will later appear, word for word, in some famous poet's mouth, and then you know the world ain't much. Of course this isn't the fault of poetry, only that so many shits attempt to print and write it."

That celebrated paper writer George Plimpton has been under fire from Harry Smith's Newsletter for allegedly favoring his own magazine, *Paris Review* (a much overtouted dilettante coffee-table quarterly) with grants he was supposedly administering to benefit little mags and unknown writers. You can bet your hippy that nothing with guts—neither an underground paper nor any truly underground writers—will attract Plimpton's eye favorably; he's too careful of his image to allow that to happen...

Magazine called *The Drunken Boat* (336 Cooper Lane, University Heights, Piscataway, NJ 08854) is sponsoring a poetry contest. Entrants send \$3 and their book of poems which Drunken Boat will return if not used. The winner? He'll have his book published and get royalties if any copies are sold...

Philadelphia's *Distant Drummer* (1736 Pine St., Phila, Pa.) reports that Drew Pearson's column about gangster-tainted Walter Annenberg was blacked out of Philadelphia papers. Annenberg, owner of two Philly papers, plus TV *Guide* and a bookie wire, has been named as ambassador to Britain because he's Nixon's kind of guy...

Two imaginative contemporary artists: Peter Hutchinson deals with "super-saturated chemical solutions that yield crystals; tubes filled with fermenting materials that produce yeasts and moulds" and John Van Saun who specializes in demonstrating the properties and potentialities of fire through burning Sterno cans, sizzling steel wool and melting candles.

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Thousands of people, mostly students, have been officially ordained as ministers in the Universal Life Church. It's within everybody's grasp to become ministers by mail order thereby getting half-priced fares, a break on taxes, exemption from the draft and all those other groovy extras that clergy seem to accept as their birthrights.

Trouble is that when "ordinary" citizens start claiming these benefits the authorities get very uptight. There'll be a test case in San Jose, Calif. when Universal Life Church primate, Rev. Kirby J. Hensley goes on trial for "violating the State Education Code" by issuing doctor of divinity licenses.

fifth Estate

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Fifth Estate #79, May 15-28, 1969

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