

Letters

Nice spoons

KAREN WYNN'S SPECIAL REPORT on the CIA (*ITT*, Mar. 15) is disappointing. Are we supposed to feel sorry for those upper class "old boys" of the CIA? I'm afraid she has swallowed, 101 percent, the self-serving nonsense of her "Connecticut source." (Isn't it possible that he might have his own special axes to grind?)

Furthermore, she tries to convince us that these older "impeccable lineage," "old line" characters were sincere people pursuing idealistic ends. They were "liberal" rather than "conservative" in their "overall outlook." This, or the well-known results of it, conflict with the most casual reading of what the CIA was doing from the late 1940s on, LSD experiments and all. (Even the *New York Times* series was better than this!) Her column belongs in *Dissent* or *The New Republic*, not *ITT*.

-Richard Du Boff
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Read before knocking

WELL YOU FINALLY GOT MY wanger boiling enough to write a letter. As a feminist who reads *Family Circle*, I strongly doubt that the authors of "The House of Mirrors, American Women as Reflected in the Magazines They Read" ever looked inside.

Beyond the "pretty" cover and the misleading name, this magazine has some meaningful content. While it does not have a political orientation, it offers consciousness raising articles to the group it seems to be aimed at—the average North American woman. The non-use of the generic "he" is just one of the attitudes that sets *Family Circle* apart from the other women's magazines in its class. The inclusion of crafts and cooking sections does not preclude it from being a feminist publication. Carol Becker and Janet Stevenson should read *Family Circle* before they judge it.

-Judy Sennett
Ashland, Ore.

It's a hell of a way to write an editorial

I WAS APPALLED TO FIND THIS item tucked into your editorial: "Women Take the Lead" (*ITT*, Mar. 8), "...radical feminism that emerged in the 1960s and, based on biological determinism, defined 'the enemy' historically as nature itself, embodied in maleness..." What gobbledeygook!

If you want to swear at something you should do it in plain English instead of hiding behind this so-called intellectual language. The people who are being insulted and dismissed have the right to at least that much honest decency. A paragraph later you acknowledge the "insights, depth of feeling and militancy" of radical feminism, but your statement that socialist feminism has gone beyond radical feminism is not adequately defended—perhaps because you do not in the first place discuss in a meaningful way what you consider radical feminism to be.

It's a hell of a way to dismiss the most revolutionary thinking this culture has seen in many years. I think you should be ashamed of committing the same sin that good old capitalist academia implanted in your scholarly souls.

-Geoffrey Sweezy
Joffrey, N.H.

Too young to be so cynical?

YOU CHILDREN OF THE '60S had it easy. You had a war in your time to make you strong and rebellious.

But what will become of the passive '70s child? We had no reason to march or even walk. Sure, there was Watergate, but it was rationalized as something every other President did. This one just happened to get caught.

While the '60s raised revolutionaries, the '70s gave birth to worms. We have nothing to do but drive around getting high, looking for something to do. Maybe we have pickled our minds till we see no justice or injustice. We cannot find jobs because we are too young and inexperienced—ridiculous since all we can do is get older and inexperienced. We complete the educational process and perhaps learn to read in grade school, screw in high school, and sodomize in college.

We reject both Christianity and atheism merely because we are unaware of anything beyond ourselves.

Victims of society? Culture? Or well-meaning parents who kissed our ass because they had to work their off in "hard times" thinking we would be made comfortable and secure? Well, we are. So comfortable we will not move off our lazy butts to change channels on the tube.

By the time we are in control of this society our heads will be so fried and our bodies so flabby, we'll simply forget to run the country.

It is distressing to think we will grow older but by no means wiser.

-Kittie Rogers
Paragould, Ark.

Let us be Americans

"JULIUS HOBSON DIED MARCH 23." So began the obituary written by me and published by *ITT* a year ago. That story also quoted Julius: "What too many politicians don't realize is that true home rule" for the District of Columbia, meaning voting representation in both houses of Congress, "would take a constitutional amendment, and that's just too much hassle. Statehood would accomplish the same thing, and all that takes is an act of Congress."

The House has passed and the Senate has before it a constitutional amendment to give the District representation in Congress. It is in trouble getting the required two-thirds vote in the Senate, which wants two new, probably black, members like it wants junkets cut off, and the amendment would be in trouble getting the required three-quarters of states to ratify it.

Well, I hope the amendment goes through. But despite the ill-briefed opposition of Jimmy the Baptist, statehood would do the same thing with, as Julius said, a lot less hassle.

Administratively, the federal government already treats the District of Columbia as a state. Why not let us be Americans at the polling place as well?

-Joe Holt Anderson
Washington, D.C.

Smiles in the corporate boardrooms

I ENJOY YOUR NEWSPAPER BUT I am continually amused as writer after writer parrots the belief that a vote for a Republican is a vote for big business.

For many years I voted Republican when they were trying to run the country and the various states on a business-like basis.

However, about 20 years ago "Big Business" saw the light. While they perform behind a facade of Republicans they would be pretty sad if a conservative group ran the country. They finally realized that their prosperity and very existence, to a great extent, hinged on government spending. So, to fool the naive, they talk Republican while voting and praying Democratic. Why kill the goose that lays the golden eggs?

I, too, realized that my future and retirement depended on Democratic spending and I have seen the light also. Those people with all of the government contracts can't fool me.

You people better consider an adjust-

ment to your thinking. I am sure each edition of *ITT* brings smiles in the plush corporate offices.

-Robert E. Howell
Emilonton, Pa.

Dissatisfied

I WAS VERY DISSATISFIED WITH the political consciousness reflected in Jane Melnick's report on lesbian mothers (*ITT*, Mar 8). A predominant theme in the article seemed to be that the children of lesbian mothers grow up to be heterosexual, so therefore it's OK for these mothers to be granted custody.

The implication of this is the old familiar anti-gay notion that heterosexuality is better than homosexuality. My view on this is essentially a "youth liberation" perspective—children should be free to create and express their own sexuality and the best parents are the ones who offer their children that freedom, not parents (lesbians or otherwise) who think they are more "successful" as parents when their children turn out straight.

I was insulted by the reference to Dr. Richard Green, a California psychologist, whose work in the area of sexual identity has been criticized by radical feminist writers. This man has made himself rich and famous by insisting on the anti-feminist, anti-gay notions that there is such a thing as gender confusion—I feel very sorry for the little sissy boys who are placed in his care for "adjustment." There are many lesbian mothers who hide their own sexuality from their children because of the fears and bugaboos raised in this article; a radical lesbian perspective would not promote these fears. A lesbian mother whose child emerges with a gay identity has at least as much right to be proud and happy as any other mother.

-Allen Young
Orange, Mass.

Jane Melnick replies:

The article gives no indication that I share Dr. Green's political consciousness. An editorial cut, made without my knowledge, may have made it seem, to readers not in tune with the tone of the article, as if I had no opinion about the plight of lesbian mothers forced by the courts to prove that their children won't turn out gay. The excluded sentence was: "Thanks to Dr. Green's remarkable [i.e., weird] research, lesbian mothers have the dubious privilege of proving to judges that they won't 'visit their sins' on their children."

I was upset about this cut before Young's letter, but I do not think its omission creates a "predominant theme" out of touch with the rest of the material of the article. Reading such a political consciousness into it would be similar to concluding from Young's letter that he was launching a campaign against "sissy" boys.

WSP and SALT

EDITH VILLAGRICO'S PIECE ON SALT (*ITT*, Mar. 5) contains several errors.

1. SALT II is not a "treaty limiting strategic offensive weapons." It is a treaty permitting the increase of a number of deliverable warheads, in terms of lethal power—power to kill—it will allow both nations to at least double their strategic capability.

2. SALT I was not only on "strategic defensive arms" it set limits on "strategic offensive arms."

3. The statement that SALT II limits "all" strategic weapons ICBMs and SLBMs and now "heavy bombers, MIRVs, strategic cruise missiles," is misleading. The number of Soviet MIRV weapons is increased from 250 to 1,200, and the Soviets are also permitted to MIRV submarine weapons, which are now single warhead. The U.S. is permitted to have cruise missiles of a certain range, which make it a strategic weapon, including "heavy bombers" doesn't make much difference; the important

thing is the number and power of deliverable warheads. No restriction is placed on lethal power, either on megatonnage or accuracy.

4. The three-year protocol is the most disturbing part of the treaty. Not one weapon covered by that protocol will be deployable in three years. The protocol does not stop development of those weapons.

5. SALT II does not prevent development and deployment of Mark 12a, neutron bomb, cruise missile, or MARV.

6. SALT II will not stop the adding of "7,000 new nuclear weapons." Actually, if SALT II is approved it will increase the U.S. strategic arsenal from 9,000 warheads to 10,154, plus 2,000 cruise missiles, or a total of 12,154; and the Soviet arsenal will increase from 4,000 to 8,124. Total increase is 7,278 permitted under SALT II.

7. SALT II does not commit both powers "for the first time to negotiate substantial mutual reductions in strategic arms." Both powers are committed to do this under the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968. Instead they have escalated, and will escalate again under SALT II.

On Feb. 20 a Women Strike for Peace/Women for Peace regional meeting was held in Philadelphia. It accepted the following statement on SALT.

"We support negotiations for genuine arms reduction between the Soviet Union and the U.S. The current SALT proposals do not accomplish this. Negotiations that allow an increase in weapons systems is not the direction toward peace. We support a disarmament race toward zero nuclear weapons.

"We propose substantive reduction in nuclear arsenals both quantitatively and qualitatively—the elimination of the cruise missile, stopping research, development and production of the MX mobile missile and other new weapons of mass destruction."

-Shirley Lens
Chairwoman of Chicago area
Women for Peace

From Missouri?

"DOES LOW-LEVEL RADIATION kill?" (*ITT*, Mar. 22) only quotes technical and mathematical specialists who have their egos inflated and are serving their own interests.

Statistical correlations never establish cause, they only suggest problem areas. Anything can be proved from a little bit of random data. You would do your readers a service if you would show them how not to be deceived by statistics.

Nature tells us that people living in Colorado receive twice as much natural radiation as people living in Louisiana. Are people leaving Colorado? When the experts explain that, we'll be on the right track!

-William J. Mechem
Chemical Engineer
Argonne National Laboratory

Editor's Note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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Paul Booth

A step or two towards a proper urban policy

The first organization to seize the opportunities of the new sectional politics was the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which guided a Countercyclical Revenue Sharing bill to enactment, over a series of Gerald Ford vetoes. This grant-in-aid program dispenses several hundred million dollars each quarter to states and localities according to their respective levels of unemployment. It is the only grant-in-aid program—of several hundred that redistribute \$60 billion per year—that reverses the market flow of money.

Nixon's "new federalism" basically took all the LBJ Great Society programs that doled out grants at the discretion of politicians and bureaucrats and substituted mathematical formulas. Not surprisingly, the formulas favor places that normally elect Republicans and Dixiecrats.

But some victims of the new federalism have been getting wise to the game, and a struggle for the money between regions has begun. This is nothing new: we once had a War Between the States. As the Supreme Court reminded us when it nullified the law extending the minimum wage to municipal employees (in *National League of Cities v. Usery*), we have a federal system called the *United States*.

Big-city mayors are doing the most talking about regional discrimination. They would have you believe that the urban crisis is its result. A term as vague as urban crisis can mean just about anything, of course. In the '60s it was a code phrase meaning we recognize the existence of racial oppression. After the race riots stopped, you didn't see pictures of Henry Ford II holding hands with Jackie Robinson singing "We Shall Overcome" in those urban coalition ads in *Business Week*. There were some results—Great

Society programs, black representation in politics—but the underlying social problems of the cities (which leftists thought were the urban crisis) persisted.

Since the budget crisis in New York City, the phrase is back in currency, now referring to a financial-economic crisis of declining manufacturing areas, affecting whites as well as blacks and browns. Service cutbacks, plant relocations and neighborhood housing deterioration are all interlocked aspects of the crisis.

The left doesn't have a proper urban program, but only some pieces. Let's look at them to see how they might be advanced by recognizing the politics of sectional rivalry. Some items of the intermediate political agenda are:

1. Full employment—enactment of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill and providing public service jobs to the unemployed to meet the targets.

2. Fighting runaway shops—NLRA reform to facilitate organizing the plants where they relocate, laws imposing severance penalties on companies that move, and repeal of foreign tax credits used by multinational companies.

3. Welfare reform—federalizing the costs and raising the benefits.

4. Anti-redlining—regulation of savings and loans, banks, and insurance companies, and focusing economic development incentives on declining areas.

It should be evident that these issues cause polarization along different lines. Anti-redlining proposals have a fairly narrow base—city residents only. Redlining helps suburbs, hurts cities. Even the Catholic church, whose urban dioceses are the mainstay of the redlining movement, also has parishes in the suburbs it can't offend. Most unions (except AFSCME, AFT, the mailhandlers, and a few others)

are as suburban as they are urban. On the other hand, the black community is stuck. So are big-city politicians.

Anti-runaway proposals pit state against state, instead of cities against everyone else. The NLRA reform that is not in the package before the Senate is repeal of the Right-to-Work section allowing states to ban the union shop. In a state like New York, Illinois or Michigan, which will never ban the union shop, even small town Chambers of Commerce can see their interest in not letting South Carolina ban it. Accordingly, many conservative snowbelt Republicans would vote to repeal 14B, just as Rep. Dan Rostenkowski of Chicago opposes extension of the Investment Tax Credit to new plant construction (although he tends to support business tax breaks) because this one favors new construction against refitting older plants.

Both welfare reform and public jobs are budget issues, exciting the enthusiasm of all governments, with the Youngtowns and Buffalos only slightly more avid than the rest.

For the labor movement, the Democratic Agenda, the networks of community organizations, and the Congressional Black Caucus, these are the bare beginnings of their strategic discussions. The left should take up the responsibility of pursuing these subjects.

Such strategic discussions should also focus on the following considerations that have short-term implications:

1. The President, a Democrat who got electoral votes from South and North, is going to avoid taking sides in these disputes, as he did at the White House conference on Regionalism in late January. Nonetheless, within the bureaucracies that are more influential than Congress



on sewage disposal and transportation planning, pollution standards, energy technology development, and regulation of savings bank investment, these struggles rage, although our movements have rarely succeeded in applying pressure in those arenas.

2. Because the Democrats are more or less the permanent majority in Congress, power in that branch depends more on the balance within their caucuses than between the Democrats and the GOP. Therefore if the number of rural and suburban Democrats from marginal districts is reduced in November as is anticipated, big-city members will be able to act more unhesitatingly on behalf of specifically urban interests.

3. Control of the census is vital in view of the billions of grant-in-aid dollars and the seats in the House that depend on its results. It remains to be seen if efforts will be made to count the millions of blacks and Chicanos who were missed in 1970. If they are, they would more than offset the sun-ward migration in the final numbers. Legalizing of the status of undocumented aliens would also have major impact on census results.

4. The hopes for full employment and all other issues that basically divide along class lines depend on reversing the deep apathy reflected in low voter turnouts. Most of the non-voters are working class. The apathy has to be attacked by a program that appeals to and mobilizes the dropouts. But it would be facilitated by legislation removing barriers to voting participation, such as instant registration and making election day a half-day holiday.

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Richard B. Du Boff

Capitalism, not just the military, is depleting our economy and society

A widely promoted view about military spending is that it "depletes" our civilian economy. The Pentagon, we are told, has drawn scientific talent and critical raw materials away from the "free market," and shunted them toward war industries. It has channeled research and development into corporate and university projects geared to short run military payoffs, thereby weakening the "basic research" that advances our knowledge and improves civilian know-how. Its "parasitic growth" has shackled the economic vitality of the private sector. Urban decay, public-sector squalor, environmental deterioration, and even technological backwardness in key industries are all said to be the result of excessively high military expenditures—and not, presumably, capitalist priorities in American society itself.

This thesis, it seems to me, is based on two false assumptions. First, it assumes that in the absence of heavy military spending, or in the wake of sharp cutbacks in it, the resources it employs would flow—or could be easily redirected into—"humane" civilian spending and into industries whose subsequent expansion would help us solve our social problems. This is why advocates of this view have been hard at work on plans, and congressional bills, for the "conversion" of military facilities to "competitive civilian industry."

Second, it supposes that the lower our military spending the stronger our industrial technology. From this it would follow that our international trade perform-

ance would improve, too.

For economists, "opportunity costs" represent alternatives forgone: the moment our society uses resources to turn out weapons, for instance, those resources cannot go to produce shoes or apples or housing or medical services. To be sure, the Pentagon gobbles up labor, capital, and materials that *could* be used to rebuild our cities—but the same bundles of labor, capital, and materials might just as readily be transferred from the Pentagon to General Motors, Exxon, McDonald's, or Disneyland. Simply denying resources to the military does not guarantee that they will be shifted towards satisfying critical social needs. On the contrary, given the continued domination of private capital over resource allocation, investment, pricing, and income creation, we should assume that such resources probably would flow to other equally wasteful (though possibly less lethal) ends.

In fact, military spending was cut in 1954, 1960, and 1970—with no noticeable increase in our commitments to our cities, our poor, or our public transportation. Instead the result was "transitional"; the resources simply went unemployed for a time as the economy promptly sank into recession. Eventually some of them were re-employed, by the resurgent corporate sector of the "free" economy.

Technological obsolescence is a trickier subject. There appear to be relatively few civilian spillovers from military technology. Political scientist Bruce Russett

has found that "the scarcity of important commercial applications becomes astonishing when one recalls the magnitude of defense R&D." Many of the labor skills are not transferable either; Boston's Route 128 engineers have had rough times finding civilian work after they lost their military-related jobs with the slowdown of Vietnam war spending after 1969. In general, though, despite (and in some small degree because of) the huge allocation of resources to weapons and space, I doubt that the American economy as a whole can be called "backward" or "obsolescent" compared with other capitalist nations. Nor can it be shown that our technologically progressive industries are those that are closely tied to military R&D—that technological advances have been concentrated in military-oriented firms.

The acid test is international trade. Do we enjoy any "comparative advantage" export success, and if so, in what commodities? Are our exports primarily those that embody heavy "military" inputs? The answers appear to be: yes, our exports do fare well in international competition; and no, they are not especially linked to military research, contracts, or spillover.

In the 1970s the U.S. has run trade deficits (merchandise imports surpassing merchandise exports) in every year except 1970, 1973, and 1975. Yet throughout the decade petroleum imports alone have amounted to much more than the trade deficits. Without our oil imports, our export surplus would still be very large; in 1976-77 it would have come to \$16 to \$25



billion (against actual trade deficits of \$9 billion in 1976 and \$26 billion in 1977).

Our successful export industries are principally science-based and skill-intensive—electronics, aircraft, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, agricultural and electrical machinery, engines and turbines, primary fabricated metals and agriculture. Of these, only the first two have benefited from substantial spillover of military technology. Conversely, our backward industries—the ones that are technological laggards and are being assailed by foreign competition—do not suffer because they are "starved" by the military. Steel, automobiles, textiles, shoes, the railroads owe their dismal records to their own complacency and their insistence on higher profit margins than their foreign counterparts (steel and autos in particular)—or to the unimpeded mobility of capital on a multinational plane, where lower labor costs are a prime goal. Railroads represent, along with the urban sector, a case study in the social devastation wrought by the unrestrained proliferation of Detroit's gas guzzlers since World War II.

The swollen military budget must remain a target for the left. It does many things for big corporations, and helps keep federal income tax revenues away from social welfare programs. But military spending is only one reflection of capitalist priorities in American society. The fight over those priorities is the key to shifting resources toward people rather than profits.

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