

In the



MERCURY'S OPINION

A Retraction

IN THE OCTOBER issue of the MERCURY we published an article entitled *The Flying Saucer Hoax*. It was a facetious bit, about a subject which we find difficult to take seriously.

Since publication we have heard from lawyers employed by Ed J. Sullivan, of Los Angeles, the founder and head of Flying Saucers Investigations, which was discussed in the article, as well as from lawyers representing Dr. Lincoln LaPaz, whom the article describes as an associate of Mr. Sullivan in Flying Saucers Investigations.

Both Mr. Sullivan and Dr. LaPaz complain that the article contained several misstatements of fact and inaccurate implications. A more careful reading of the article indicates that they have some cause for complaint.

Mr. Sullivan is described by his

attorneys as a reputable business man with a sincere interest in the mystery of flying saucers. Dr. LaPaz is a distinguished mathematician and astronomer. He has been head of the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy and Director of the Institute of Meteorics at the University of New Mexico since 1945. He has taught at Fairmont College, Harvard University, Dartmouth College, University of Chicago, Ohio State University, and in the U. S. Air Force. He has been consulted by the armed forces on meteorites and is a member of several scientific societies.

We regret any statement or implication in the article which may have offended Mr. Sullivan or Dr. LaPaz or any other individual connected with Flying Saucers Investigations. We intended no slight to the reputation of either man, and if any was inferred, we wish to retract it.

EUGENE LYONS

IS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION REALLY THREATENED?

The Hysteria Over Hysteria

THE RECENT ELECTION campaign was not exactly an inhibited, tongue-tied and fear-ridden affair. Speech was as lustily free-for-all as ever in our history and opinions as unbridled. The Democratic candidate did not hesitate to accept the support of the left-wing Americans for Democratic Action or to surround himself with brain-trusters of pinkish hues. The Progressive Party put up a noisy fight on its Communist line, and the Communist Party proper ran candidates. Not only was there no clamor for repression of unorthodox views, but the major candidates inveighed repeatedly against any tendency to cheat the Bill of Rights.

Yet the campaign — if our em-

battled “liberals” are to be believed — took place in the midst of anti-Red hysteria amounting to a reign of terror, marked by black fear, witch hunts, character assassination, and thought control. Lamentations on this score could be heard even above the tumult of the electioneering.

The theory that these United States are in the throes of unlimited hysteria, trampling wildly on customary freedoms, is no longer a matter of surmise in certain intellectual precincts. It is a fixed article of faith, impervious to contrary evidence or argument. Declamation against “the terror” is the shortest road to acceptance by the “progressive” brethren and denial of its prevalence is, by the same token, the shortest road to damnation as a hopeless reactionary. The circumstance that the American people seem blissfully ignorant of their nervous disorder is brushed aside

Eugene Lyons, a former Editor of THE MERCURY, is now a senior Editor of Reader's Digest. Among his latest books are Our Unknown E.-President, and The Red Decade.