

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Cassandras?

► PLEASE ACCEPT my most earnest expression of thanks and felicitation to Edgar Ansel Mowrer for his brilliant and timely "The Third Man" [SR July 5].

Here is a hope that Mowrer, Toynbee, and others like them will not be doomed to the role of modern Cassandras fated to speak the bitter truth, yet unheard and unheeded by softened, luxury loving moderns who are not willing to pay the price of survival. I wish it were possible for you to make reprints of this article and circulate it by the millions.

J. J. STEIN.

Chicago, Ill.

## Tribal Fanatic

► "THE THIRD MAN" is a hodge-podge of historical misconceptions and semantic anarchy which in our time passes for serious thinking. I wish to dwell merely upon one of Mowrer's misconceptions, pacifism, which he variously equates with non-violence, non-resistance, comfort-seeking, draft-dodging, popular anti-war sentiment, desire for peace, and failure of the will-to-war. By failing to understand pacifism, he assigns to it an historical force which it has never commanded.

Pacifism, according to Webster's "International Dictionary," is the opposition to war or the use of military force for any purpose. In almost every example cited by Mr. Mowrer as the enervating effect of pacifism, a purely non-pacifist force was operative. Therefore, when he concludes that non-violence is the quick road to ruin, he means of course that misguided, enfeebled, or defunct militarism is the quick road to ruin for a given nation.

It is most amazing that he gives no worthy thought to the idea that modern efficient militarism, and hardly pacifism, is likely to destroy that world and his really plentiful Third Man who, when the rationalizations of mass-murder are put aside, is a ubiquitous tribal fanatic willing to blow the world apart on a 51 per cent chance that his "moral" judgment is right.

Saline, Mich.

E. R. KARR.

## Robots

► THE THIRD MAN EXISTS, but like so many historians Mowrer neglects to mention that the majority of Third Men get killed off every generation in wars. Who knows how many Third Men were lost by us in our two-and-a-half world wars?

Unfortunately, Mowrer's article is so constructed that readers leaving it without finishing might be led to believe that what we need is to develop more Type One Men. Why assume that the result of a war depends on the personal convictions of the individual soldier? Perhaps in the days of hand-to-hand combat this

was an important item, but in our mechanized wars depending a great deal on air power, the convictions of an individual are nebulous. We have only to compare the Nazi S-S trooper with the soldiers who defeated him. There was a Type One Man, especially trained as such. More are being trained today. He is useless for anything else but for war. What we need to do is reconvert our machinery back to producing Type Three Men. Instead of re-educating the conquered nations, we have left the old machinery still running and the robots are piling up.

SIDNEY E. PORCELAIN.

New York, N. Y.

## Superman

► MOWRER'S "THIRD MAN" is of course the "Superman" of Nietzsche, the man who believed that violence was the only principle worth adhering to. Mowrer weeps for French, English, and American boys who have lost a taste for killing, and thus describes his ideal, his Third Man, his Superman: "They can, when necessary, drop an A-bomb, regretfully but without remorse . . . A few such individuals have headed great states—Marcus Aurelius, St. Louis, Asoka, Skandagupta etc." He forgets Harry S. Truman, who is the only man actually to have dropped the A-bomb which killed hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children. By Mowrer's standard, this should make him the greatest of the great who have inhabited the earth.



"Stop looking innocent! We pleaded guilty!"

Naturally, if Stalin orders a few A-bombs dropped on his own account, this will make him a Third Man, a Superman, too.

I would say that the Mowrer piece indicates almost better than anything you have ever published that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." It is compounded of whole paragraphs cribbed bodily from Gibbon, Spengler, Mommsen, and others, and an inordinate amount of arrant nonsense. It is the kind of piece which has induced me to forget about renewing my subscription to *The Saturday Review*. I want my literary stuff straight.

J. L. BERNSTEIN.

Paterson, N. J.

## Christian Principles

► AS AN ADVOCATE of free speech and free press, I welcome sincere criticism of my statements. But misquotation and misrepresentation are not proper criticism. A letter by Richard Kirk Washburn [SR May 17] commenting on my section of the symposium on textbooks [SR Apr. 19] breaches the proprieties many more times than can be noted here.

True, Communists claim to be democrats, hence rejoice at the confusion resulting from use of their terminology, but clearly I decried calling America a democracy for the reason that our nation is a republic. Also I showed that educators such as Columbia's William F. Russell are guilty not merely of using a wrong word, but of teaching that Amer-

ica is a government by men, not the government of law set up by our Constitution. The issue is between these two types of government: my critic errs; we face no dilemma, with rule by a minority the only alternative to majority rule.

To a denial that the ideology of human freedom is in the Bible, from many possible citations I choose John 3:16, "... whosoever believeth in him shall not perish. . . ." Here is the Christian doctrine of free will under the new dispensation brought to earth by Christ, with no reservations as to race or color—"whosoever" means "any person who."

The Founders knew that they were borrowing Christian principles and writing them for the first time in political documents. John Adams wrote to Jefferson in 1813: "The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity." Tom Paine wrote in 1775: "(Wherefore) political as well as spiritual freedom is the gift of God through Christ."

VERNE P. KAUB.

Madison, Wis.

### *Arjuna, the Warrior*

► PERMIT ME to correct a statement in "The Third Man." Arjuna of the Bhagavad Gita was not the "ruling prince whose country was attacked." The ruling princes at the time were the Kanravas from whom Arjuna and his brothers, the Pandavas, wanted to regain their share of the ancestral kingdom. Actually it was not for reasons of non-violence that Arjuna was unwilling to fight, but because he was afflicted with sentimentalism when he saw his own kith and kin arrayed against him in the battle-line. Arjuna, as a member of the warrior caste, owed his first loyalty to war in the cause of justice and peace, and not to non-violence.

BAIDYA N. VARMA.

New York, N. Y.

### *Focus in Canada*

► THE CANADIAN ISSUE is the only good job of its kind ever published in an American magazine. You could not have been wiser in your choice of contributors.

What makes it hard for a Canadian to write of Canada in such a way as to interest Americans is the problem of focus. The similarities between the countries are greater than between any other two countries in the world. But the differences are also great, and the most important of them are mental. The American public seems to have preconceived ideas about Canada which are utterly wrong. As a result, the writer in Canada finds it almost impossible to hit a satisfactory focus. He knows that both

Americans and Canadians will read his piece. If he writes for one group he is haunted by the feeling that he will fail to reach the other.

One of our difficulties in the past has been the conviction on the part of most American editors that Canada is a country entirely different from what she is. Only a few years ago the editor of a famous American monthly came up here in search of Canadians to write on Canadian topics. He found the writers, but he went home empty-handed. He wanted stories about trappers, Mounted Policemen, and husky dogs "because that's the only aspect of Canada the American people are interested in." In this vast flood of culture, Canada is either not mentioned at all or is generally treated in terms so unreal that no Canadian can recognize either himself or his own country.

The result has been stultifying to Canada's spirit and above all to Canadian literature. Our writers have had to make a tremendous effort of will to convince even themselves that Canadian life is not only interesting, but in many respects more mature than that of the States.

During the past fifteen years, our writers have at last broken through. A good Canadian novel today is likely to outsell a good import in the Canadian market. Our native magazines are clamorous for native material. But the American flood continues, and only recently have American editors realized that if we provide them with such a profitable open market, we are entitled to the same treatment—as regards honesty and interest—that any state of the Union has a right to expect, and in fact receives. Americans have always opposed economic colonialism. It has simply never occurred to them, until very recently, that their magazines and books had staked out Canada as a cultural colony.

So—speaking as a writer—thanks very much for the June 7 issue of *The Saturday Review*. It told the truth and it should help a lot.

HUGH MACLENNAN.

Quebec, Canada.

### *False Prophet?*

► AFTER READING James Soby's essay "The Prophetic Painter" [SR July 5] I tried to clarify the muddled train of reasoning by which he attempted to demonstrate prediction of future occurrences in two specific and in two vaguely outlined examples taken from twentieth-century paintings.

Of the first example, De Chirico's "Portrait of Guillaume Apollinaire," we are told that "it is, of course, a symbolic image. . . ." (Webster: that which sug-

gests something else by reason of . . . association, etc.) The importance of the three objects in the foreground, which immediately suggested a number of things to me, is disposed of in the same sentence—the dark glasses by mentioning them, and the molds by coupling them to the "painter's turn of mind."

On the first reading I was not aware that they had been thus discarded, but soon found that they were not to be mentioned again. Alas, I hoped in vain for the revelation that the poet had blinded himself on a butter mold! Not so; we are next told that the poet's head is encircled by a white line (It is not Webster: to form a circle about, to pass completely around); that a bullet hole appearing on the first drawing is not included, but that this is fortunate since it was not a bullet which did the damage, but a shell fragment. No mention is made of the apparent bullet (or button) hole in the figure's shoulder. In short, it is pointed out, the main content of the picture is insignificant; what proves presage is a thin line in the background. Even this might be acceptable had there been some attached photographs to demonstrate the "amazingly similar" shape of the bandages.

The non-existent logic which connects by hindsight the events of Boccioni's death with his painting "The City Rises" is equally unsupportable. Whether the locomotive referred to exists I am unable to determine from the reproduction. That the "horse" in the foreground is lunging "in the general direction of the culvert" is patently untrue, as can be seen from even a most casual examination. The animal is pulling a heavy load, assisted by two straining figures, in a direction which can at best be said to be obliquely forward from the plane of the picture.

That Kandinsky's cannon foretold World War I or Echaurren's "matter as vapor" the atomic bomb I leave to Mr. Soby's conscience to decide, and ask only where one is to find meaning in his closing sentence, "Presentiment is, I think, a phenomenon to which the imaginative powers of artists gives an exceptionally disturbing validity." This, that it may be the more easily analyzed, I transcribe as follows: "Artists are gifted with imagination; this justifies the assumption that they may be gifted with prophesy." To give validity to is to justify, to support, to demonstrate-the-truth-of. Unfortunately it disguises the non-sequitur only a little if we add the weighted words, "exceptionally disturbing." I do not feel that Mr. Soby has demonstrated the truth of anything. I do not feel that the painter has prophesied anything.

FRANCIS T. CHAMBERS.

Princeton, N. J.

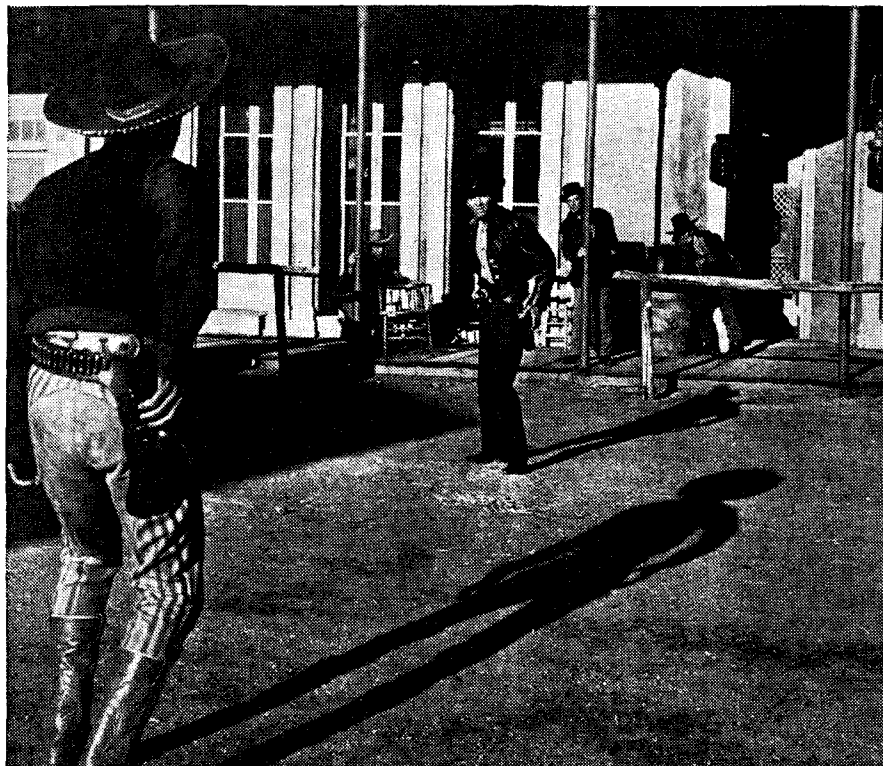


BOLT



# SR Goes to the Movies

NOW THAT SUMMER'S HERE



—From "Duel at Silver Creek."

Audie Murphy draws on Eugene Iglesias—"drinks in the landscape."

FOR most of the year movie people contemplate their grosses and wonder why more folks haven't turned out for their little entertainments. Comes July, however, and it's pretty much taken for granted that practically nobody wants to sit in a theatre in the first place. The big pictures they save for fall, traditionally "the Greater Movie Season," while local screens for the most part play off an accumulation that could only be sold with the extra added attraction of "Twenty Degrees Cooler Inside." Through the hottest months all pictures seem as light-weight as ladies' summer dresses, and often as frivolous. Not all need be written off as total losses, however. Certainly not a picture as frothy and high-spirited as Warner Brothers' musical version of the Broadway success "Where's Charley?" Happily, Warners took over not only the rights to the show, complete with Frank Loesser's appealing score, but most of the principals as well. And best of all, Ray Bolger, making one of his all too infrequent film appearances. Bolger's warm, graceful, intimate form of nonsense proves every bit as likable in pictures as on the stage. He relaxes into a song, slips easily into

a dance, even invites audience participation in his "Once in Love with Amy" number—and all with a quiet charm that throws into startling contrast the frantic dances of the chorus numbers, the feverish activity of the farcical plot. As long as Ray Bolger is on the screen—which fortunately is most of the time—"Where's Charley?" is an undiluted delight. And though everything else seems just a little too obvious, from the old-fashioned song cues to the new-fashioned ballet inserts, a generally cheerful cast headed by Allyn McLerie and Robert Shackleton help Bolger make the most of it.

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Twentieth Century-Fox offers as its favored summer entry "We're Not Married," sporting an impressive and expensive cast and a wonderful basic story idea, the notion that all sorts of people have been married by a justice of the peace a week or so before he had the right to marry anyone. Two-and-a-half years later this error is discovered, and writer-producer Nunally Johnson invites us to look in on the resulting chaos—a Mr. and Mrs. breakfast-program couple who have come to loathe the sight of each other,

a Texas millionaire being framed with an infidelity charge by his beautiful schemer, an expectant father shipping out for Korea, that sort of thing. There are numerous hilarious bits, notably a satire on radio that Fred Allen and Ginger Rogers carry off to perfection. But the variations on the theme soon grow thin, Johnson protracting them with details far less inventive than his original situation, while Edmund Goulding's direction sadly lacks the satiric touch to hold them all together. Victor Moore, however, as the bumbling J. P., is a joy to watch, Louis Calhern obviously savors his role of the worldly Texan, and Marilyn Monroe and ZsaZsa Gabor at least temporarily take your mind off the heat.

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"Duel at Silver Creek" (U-I) is a neat stand-out among recent Westerns—not the big "High Noon" type of Western with top stars and careful production, but that more standard brand of action film that every studio has learned to turn out quickly, efficiently, and profitably. "Duel" has the advantage of a strong story that is logical and direct if not terribly original, something to do with claim jumpers and the fearless frontier marshal who hunts them down. Joseph Hoffman, who collaborated on the screenplay with Gerald Adams, has staged it with a good deal of fancy riding and fancier shooting, and photographed it with a camera that drinks in as much of the handsome landscapes as his rapid pacing will permit. The actors are helpful too. Audie Murphy and Stephen McNally head the cast, while Gerald Mohr makes an unusually attractive villain. And of course it's in Technicolor. It would have been a shame to let all that bright red gore go to waste.

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Technicolor is also a feature in "Lure of the Wilderness" (Twentieth Cent.-Fox), a verbatim remake of "Swamp Water," first done in old-fashioned black-and-white about a dozen years ago. Five years more and it will probably be back again as a musical. In any case, color makes a decided contribution to this story of a man falsely accused of murder who has fled with his daughter deep into the forbidding interior of Georgia's Okefenokee swamp. It sets the dramatic mood quickly as mirror-clear blue water gives way to the dark green tangle of jungle-like foliage with its silent population of alligators, otter, and snakes—all underscored by Franz Waxman's properly ominous music. Walter Brennan, of the original cast, plays the Crusoe-ish fugitive ef-