

in his right to live and work without fear of seizure or slaughter. The Biafrans are worried about a recurrence of the 1966 massacre in the north that resulted in the death of 40,000 Ibos. They fear that integration into Federal Nigeria will impose on them the status of a subjugated people.

Of course, there are other issues on both sides, but these problems are the ones that call most insistently for sustained and objective attention. Inasmuch as American history has become a standard point of reference for both sides, it may be pertinent to point out that for four years after the end of the successful American Revolution the states were in a condition of increasing disarray and even open conflict. The political arrangements of 1783 did not fit the existing situation. The Philadelphia Constitutional Convention was not the next step after freedom from Great Britain but the culmination of a long period of recriminations and hostilities among the sovereign American states. What the Philadelphia Convention tried to do was to arrive at a workable balance between the insistence of the individual states that they retain essential sovereignty and the recognition by individual statesmen that the relationships of the states to one another had to be carefully defined and ordered in the common good.

It is quite possible that none of the terms or concepts used to describe the relationship of closely connected states will fit the requirements of Nigeria and Biafra. No matter. New concepts and terms to fit can be devised. Biafra cannot exist as a walled-in entity. Neither can Nigeria survive as a Federal government if any of its citizens have to live in constant terror. The challenge, therefore, is to begin serious talks about specific problems rather than to carry on volatile debate over terms that have become catchwords, and that can only obstruct workable answers.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the search for peace lies only with the leaders of the contending forces. Great Britain and the Soviet Union, which have been maintaining the military forces of Nigeria, and France, which has been supplying Biafra, have a crucial role to play in making talks possible. Great Britain especially is in an excellent position to help bring about a non-military resolution of the war. The United States may be too involved in the effort of extricating itself from the Vietnam war to feel it can play a major part in the Nigerian conflict. But it would be a mistake for Americans to underestimate the extent to which the African peoples continue to look to them on any questions involving national independence and individual freedom.

—N.C.

Letters to the Editor

Lack of Goals?

A GAP, MORE TELLING than the distance between the generations about which he wrote, occurred in Harrison Brown's editorial "Why the Generation Gap?" [SR, July 19] when, of the young, he said: "The rebels lack goals . . . in general, they really do not know what they are for. They are rebels with a cause, but without a program." From that point on I was sure the article had fallen mysteriously into the hands of a less sensitive writer.

The thrust of the same issue's article "Ivan Illich: The Christian as Rebel" makes it abundantly clear that *program* and *goals*, at least in the sense in which we have learned to think of them, offer no solution to the students' dilemma. In the article, Peter Schrag has discerned what Mr. Brown has missed, namely, that the aspirations of the young probably cannot be programed, certainly not to the satisfaction of their elders, at least not in this provisional era in which we now live.

EDWIN E. BEERS,
Campus Ministry,
United Church of Christ,
University of Wisconsin,
Madison, Wis.

HARRISON BROWN repeats the absurd rumor that the young rebels lack goals, and

that they know what they are against but not what they are for. He evidently has not been listening.

They are for peace and against war, for love and against hate, for people and against things gained at their expense. They believe violence and warfare over land and materials is absurd, childish, and obscene—and that sex is not. They believe in survival rather than in "profits." If this is not a cause and a program, then none exists.

If he means that programs of love and peace are not compatible with our way of life, or that they are not economically viable or possible in our greedy world, he is on firmer philosophical ground, but why doesn't he say so, and consequently carry the argument forward to a new dimension?

What he is really saying is that love is not practical. What could possibly be more practical than survival?

CLYDE MARTIN,
Chelmsford, Mass.

I AM APPALLED at Harrison Brown's naïve conclusions following such a thorough catalogue of causes for youth's current discontent. What good is it to state one's objection to violence when youth (and blacks) regularly find that violence makes government listen when it has theretofore



"When we get there, let me do most of the pontificating."

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been deaf? What good to bemoan the "rebels'" lack of goals?

Mr. Brown's very lack of faith in youth's ability to find new goals is an apt illustration of the generation gap itself. And how can he be so confident of our "getting ourselves out of this mess"? He bets all his money on the very science and technology which he has earlier shown to be so overwhelmingly preoccupied with military needs. Nowhere does he (or could he, I believe) demonstrate that either the public attitude or our primary institutions are responsive to the drastic change in priorities he would envision.

MRS. SUZANNE M. BROWN,
Sacramento, Calif.

MR. BROWN obviously has not listened as critically as he should have. The young rebels are *not* attacking the ideals and goals of American democracy—they want them realized. That's substantially what their primary goal is. The truth of the matter is that American society has failed to legitimize itself on its own terms, it has failed to do what its own rationale calls for it to do.

HENRY D. ALBERTS,
San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Behind the Brain Drain

NURI EREN in "Supply, Demand, and the Brain Drain" [SR, Aug. 2] states the nature of a very real problem, but the reasons he cites are not, I believe, the most cogent. In fifteen years as a student and teacher in colleges and universities, I have known a large number of foreign students from all over the world. They have been almost unanimous in telling me that they did not intend to return to their native lands upon completion of their education, and they overwhelmingly gave three reasons:

1) Greater freedom in the U.S. Many foreign students come from societies where a repressive police-state, military dictatorship, or monarchy has conditioned them to an atmosphere of restricted choice and constant uneasy fear. From this to the comparatively free life-style of the American university is a leap which not many foreign students wish to reverse.

2) Security from social turmoil. Most of the "third world" is fantastically unstable, with juntas and coups overturning a life's work in hours. In a revolutionary situation, those unfortunate enough to have "an American education" are often quickly singled out for elimination.

3) Adoption of American life-style. During four or more years of study in this country, the foreign student absorbs much in addition to official course work. He is exposed to all the attractions of the mass media, and, no matter how much he attempts to maintain his cultural integrity, he meets the same pressures toward conformity as does the American sitting next to him in class.

The first two circumstances are in the power of the students' home-country to change, to make it a society that the trained young will want to come home to.

The third is probably the inevitable result of transplanted education, and this will continue as long as the rest of the world values an American education above whatever is available in their own countries, regardless of its actual relative superiority.

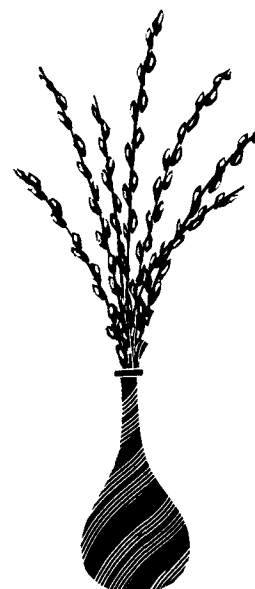
THOMAS J. CUMMINS,
Barstow, Calif.

Late Date

ONE OF YOUR correspondents evidently has sources of information that would be of more than ordinary interest to historians and theologians when he says that "when Calvin burned Servetus, Luther approved" [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, Aug. 2].

Servetus was burned in 1553. Luther died in 1546.

CECIL L. FRANKLIN,
Acting Chairman,
Department of Religion,
University of Denver,
Denver, Colo.



No "Plastic" Panacea

WE WERE GRATIFIED to read Arthur Knight's favorable review [SR, July 19] of our film, *The Fantastic Plastic Machine*. He did, however, suggest that the film pretends to offer a cure for society's ills. We do not believe there is anything in the film, verbal or visual, to support this conclusion.

We have used the specific experience of three disillusioned champion surfers as a simile for the universal condition of youth in ferment. The pulse of our film belongs to this accomplished trio who have given up the financial rewards and ego boosts which come from competitive success for something more meaningful and personally fulfilling. To us, this situation parallels the "dropout" situation which is occurring throughout the world on both scholastic and societal levels. Many young people upon perceiving that "making it" is a hollow ideal are withdrawing contemplatively in search of an equilibrium.

Our film offers no cures; it merely focuses on an alternative life-style, one which is growing proportionately to the growth of disaffection.

LOWELL AND ERIC BLUM,
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Why Isn't Melville for the Masses?

by HENNIG COHEN

Herman Melville is no doubt the most famous but least celebrated writer in the history of American literature and the evidence received up to now does not indicate that the 150th anniversary of his birth, which occurred August 1, was an occasion for popular commemoration.

The reasons are almost Melvillian in their ambiguities. First, Melville is a writer who arouses intense but private responses. It is not easy to share him because this means sharing one's privacy, and the sum total of many intensely personal responses does not equal mass popularity. Though he identified with the outcasts and wanderers, the Ishmaels, Melville himself was no escapist fleeing the drudgery and frustrations of civilization for high drama aboard whaling ships and exotic adventure on the South Sea islands. He was deeply committed to the world in which he lived and in his fashion a sociable man. Moreover, he was involved in significant manifestations of American destiny as both sailor and writer—to such an extent that the subject matter, even the style of his life and books exemplify the national character, and the metaphysical themes that engrossed his thinking are expressions of the national mind.

So it is in a complex and rather limited way that Melville is a public figure, and if there are no Presidential proclamations or postage stamps embellished with white whales to commemorate the sesquicentennial of his birth, there are more solid albeit less

conspicuous indications of his place in American culture. As Melville says, having landed us on one of his tantalizing Pacific islands, "Let us to particulars"—here the particulars of his public recognition and the solid indications.

In his own day Melville was never a best-seller. *Typee*, the sailor narrative of adventure in Polynesia, was his first and in his lifetime his most popular book. It made him the bright young author of the season and gained him entrance into New York literary circles, but earned him only about \$2,000. In fact, Melville did poorly in the marketplace with all his eleven books of prose fiction—from *Typee* in 1846 to *The Confidence-Man* in 1857—as well as with his verse, which in the end he had printed in editions limited to twenty-five copies and privately circulated. Money and public acclaim may not be equivalents but neither are they unrelated.

Melville did acquire, however, the esteem of a small group of devoted readers in England and the United States, and they remained faithful even after 1866, when he broke away from the literary world and submerged himself in the routine of family life and a minor post in the New York Custom House. He slipped so quietly into privacy that when he died in 1891 the obituary notices conveyed a suggestion of surprise that he had been living all those years in New York.

For the last twenty-five years of his life and until his "revival" in the 1920s, Melville had an underground reputation; though out of joint with the times and not a profitable commodity, he endured. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between private appreciation and public indifference has persisted even though the appreciation



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HENNIG COHEN, who is professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, editor of *American Quarterly*, and secretary of the Melville Society, has edited editions of the novels and poetry of Herman Melville.