

As Others See Us

LONDON:

A Kennedy in the Future?

HAS YET another Kennedy drive for the White House been launched? That is certainly what most politicians now believe—including the man Teddy Kennedy dislodged as assistant Democratic leader in the Senate. . . .

The American people have seen him elected to the Senate at the minimum age of thirty, and now as the Democratic party's youngest Senator, to the assistant leadership. So there is no sense in rushing them toward contemplation of the idea of having in four years a President aged just forty.

But as a result of his triumph probably nothing can save him now from being propelled into the Presidential stakes. . . .

He has recently come to be seen by quite hardheaded political observers as the most formidable politician of the three Kennedy brothers. "He has," they like to say, "the charm of Jack without his frivolity, the drive of Bobby without his ruthlessness." And certainly in the Senate he has flourished where both his brothers languished.

What does he really want now? Most of those closest to him believe he would like to come to the Presidency—say, in

1976 or even 1980—not as the heir of the family legend but rather on his own merits as a successful legislative leader with a solid record behind him.

—*The Observer*.

MANCHESTER:

Post-election Tasks

. . . THE WAVES of alternate internationalism and isolationism in American history have all been in relation to Europe. But the intervention in Vietnam was new and different, an attempt to engage unilaterally on the mainland of another continent in a civil war. The Americans have had their fingers burnt. They will be less ready in the future to involve themselves in new areas, such as the Middle East. But as yet there is no evidence that they want to disengage where they are already committed, as in Europe. If there is a new feeling of isolationism, it seems to be more selective than in the past.

At home Mr. Nixon's great task is to unite the country. He avoided the word "consensus" yet he knows that he came in with only 43 per cent of the poll with almost no votes from the Negroes or other minorities. . . . President Nixon comes into office as the victorious candi-

date of the white, middle-class, affluent suburbs. Like all incoming Presidents he can expect something of a honeymoon for the first few weeks. By the start of the long, hot summer, we should know whether he will be hard on the other America or not.

—*Manchester Guardian Weekly*.

DUESSELDORF:

Problems in America

. . . PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY realize full well that America has more serious problems to master at home than abroad. In the past few years, particularly since the Cuban crisis, the world has learned to live with the bomb. It is no longer worried to the same extent that major catastrophe might strike as a result of defiance or carelessness. What the civilized world, particularly the West, has yet to learn is to live with itself in reason and order. . . .

Every little success President Nixon achieves in the way of integration in the United States itself will be a triumph. Even the most powerful man in the world is bound to appear small and helpless in the face of challenges of this order. As John Adams, George Washington's successor as President, once said: "No one who has himself been President would care to congratulate a friend on being elected." —*Handelsblatt*.

TAIPEI:

Confidence in Nixon

PRESIDENT NIXON is, happily, a good friend of the Republic of China and a long-time supporter of President Chiang Kai-shek. He backs our policy of mainland recovery and has said so on many occasions. We should not make the mistake of concluding, however, that he is going to pledge American support of counterattack as soon as he enters the White House.

Richard Nixon's first task will be to bind up some of America's domestic wounds and to determine whether the Communists are prepared to let South Vietnam decide its own destiny. Once he has proved himself, once he has developed into the leader that Dwight Eisenhower foresaw when he chose him as a running mate back in 1952, Nixon may have the opportunity to assert his determinedly anti-Communist sentiments both domestically and internationally. . . .

Richard Nixon . . . is the choice of a minority of the American voters. But the free world can be confident he will be a good President—just as Hubert Humphrey would have been—and can hope that he will be a great one. His experience and his statesman-like campaign



"Didn't anyone ever tell you you don't ride side-saddle on a Western saddle?"

give every indication that the "new Nixon" is ready for world leadership.

—*The China News.*

TOKYO:

U.S. Bases in Japan

THERE SHOULD be no question about working out a mutually acceptable formula and timetable with the United States for the return of Okinawa to Japanese administration. That "mutual trust" between Japanese and American governments is the key to the whole problem of reversion should be obvious to all concerned.

And it is on this basis that the problem of security, not only for Japan but also for other Asian nations which depend upon the American military "keystone" on Okinawa, can be discussed honestly. This then brings up the question of what "security requirements" Okinawa should provide, once administrative rights are returned to Japan.

Leaving aside the emotional and ideological arguments that military bases are not needed, it leaves several alternatives. One is that the U.S. will be asked to retain its bases on Okinawa in their present form—whereunder they are free to maintain nuclear weapons. Another is that the American bases there will be on the same footing as in Japan, meaning that nuclear arms will not be brought in, stored, or transmitted through Okinawa.

Another possibility, seldom mentioned but which should be considered more fully, is that the Japanese Self-Defense Forces will gradually replace and maintain the present U.S. bases. . . .

—*The Japan Times Weekly.*

MADRID:

Peaceful Coexistence

SPAIN DOES NOT arouse any war stimulus in her American ally. But, once again, through a Spanish minister, she invokes the imperative of a peaceful coexistence in order to ask that the latter shall commence with a slackening of the tension which is involved in that dangerous patrolling of the Soviet and United States fleets in the waters of a sea which was the cradle of culture in the ancient world. If the "pax Romana" was based on the sheer power of Rome, today the "pax Mediterranea" which Castiella postulates can only be consolidated if the menace of an act of force between nations jealous of each other's power can be removed from those waters. The countries which limit their ambits will then be able to undertake a coordinated task of economic exchange, of mutual aid, or, which amounts to the same thing, of peace.

—ABC.

Letters to the World's Editors

The Voice of the People in the Foreign Press

Frustrated Women

WITH REFERENCE to the current discussion on women, we should note the peculiar position in which they now find themselves.

This was summed up by Mrs. A. M. Cheetham of the National Council of Women (Great Britain) in an interview recently. Pointing to the fact that in some religious groups women may still not be ordained and that they are also denied membership in the Stock Exchange, she said: "We can serve neither God nor Mammon."

—C. Wallace,

The Toronto Telegram.

On Growing Old

WHAT SORT of a mad society do we live in when a paper such as *Colour* magazine, with pretensions to intellectual standards, can unashamedly encourage women to spend £ 300 (\$720) for the pernicious purpose of looking, but not *feeling*, younger.

I speak as a widow of fifty-three whose face is aging at the normal rate, and would suggest that if we were not worried and harassed into trying to compete with our younger sisters by means of hair-dyes and face-lifts, we might be able to relax in the light of our superior wisdom and experience. . . .

—Bella Costello,

The Observer, London.

ONE SO OFTEN hears the platitudes that one should learn to "grow old gracefully" and that "one is only as old as one feels." Both these statements are absurd. Since the war, the *average* working woman of my generation has had a very tough time of it. How can she "be as old as she feels" when every time she catches sight of herself in the glass she feels two hundred and seventy?

It would be a lot nearer the truth to say that one feels as old as one looks.

—Valerie Taylor,

The Observer, London.

Keeping Peace

SO NOW our peace keeping is served by supplying Jordan with arms. It's interesting to note how the Christian West piously tells the Jews of Israel to turn the other cheek and encourages the Arabs to test out the effect of this preaching by supplying them with weapons. Yes, I know that this latest batch was for "defense," but, of course, Arabs never attack, do they?

—Ronald H. Lewis,

Manchester Guardian Weekly.

Dealing with Dogs

IN A CASE some years ago, damages were refused a man who had been bitten by a neighbor's dog. The judge was alleged to

have said that this was an avoidable hazard. All you had to do, if a dog threatened to bite you, was to hold out a clenched fist. Invariably the dog would calm down and nuzzle your hand, and probably lick it. The next day I tried it on a singularly nasty indeterminate pooch. This one never heard of the judge, or of his remarks, and fastened his teeth on my clenched fist. I bear the scars to this day.

—Taidg Ocailliagh,

New Statesman, London.

Presidential Indulgence

I BELIEVE that in a country such as ours, where justice is measured out in accordance with the law pertaining to the crime . . . and where, through our freedom of expression, all opinions are heard, it should be enough that decisions of impersonal justice are handed down and verdicts executed.

I further believe that it is truly cruel to submit to the President of the Republic a matter for personal decision that will provoke nights of moral inquietude.

... Therefore I call upon the representatives of all parties to free the President of this moral torment and to make judicial decisions definite and final; making the verdict rest not on the conscience of one individual but rather on the impersonal codification that has been developed and accepted by the citizenry.

—R. L. L.,

El Mercurio, Santiago, Chile.

—Compiled by NICHOLAS G. BALINT.



TV-Radio

Robert Lewis Shayon

"Can This Be America?"

ESTABLISHMENTS tend to overreact when confronted by challenges of the younger generation. It happened in Chicago; it happened more recently when the nation's television critics reviewed *Can This Be America?*—a package of five short films presented by the Public Broadcasting Laboratory (PBL). Independent film-makers were invited to contribute personal statements about America during the 1968 election campaign; they represented clashing political views, from revolutionary to ultra-conservative. Each camera artist also exhibited a sharply different cinematic technique.

The critics (to generalize from a dozen newspaper reviews in major cities) were, with one exception, intellectually and emotionally repelled. Among their epithets were "psychedelic field-day with no redeeming features," "stupid," "distorted," "tedious," "flip-flop hodge-podge," "eye-strain," and "throbbing headache." One critic accused the film-makers of "downright dishonest intentions"—"they didn't merit such a nationwide video soapbox for their chintzy wares." Each critic merits his own peculiar soapbox, a perch he cannot escape; but in encounters with the new and unfamiliar in the arts, the burden of openness, at least of respectful curiosity, ought to rest more heavily upon the critic than upon the artist, our friend the explorer. Maturity, in its own way, takes care of most rebels, although in that taking care, small measures of progressive light and freedom may be made manifest.

All six film-makers (two worked as a team) were given generous budgets, adequate lead time, and complete freedom. Begin your film on the Capitol steps—that was the only request made (a stricture honored by all save one). The major failing of the critics was their reaction to the film by Jonas Mekas, movie critic of *The Village Voice*, editor of *Film Culture*, self-described "promoter of the Underground Film (Minister of Propaganda, Defense, and Finances)." This iconoclastic film-maker, who has such an enormous knowledge of film that he can turn it on its head when he wants to, sassed his subject and the audience. He found more of importance to show at a gaudy, rich Newport society wedding than he did in Washington, using his frame-by-frame technique reminiscent of old newsreels. Subject and style re-

called to one viewer the classic footage of the court of Czar Nicholas II in the days before the Russian Revolution. The critics missed the history and the jest. They complained that the film was jerky, fragmented, made from within the punch bowl. They failed to perceive Mekas's lack of anger: his young couple was lovely; their decadence delightful; his irony loving. The critics were kindest to LeRoi Jones, poet-playwright-novelist, and not an established film-maker, who contributed a segment showing black militants organizing in Newark.

The craftsmanship was poor, but Jones communicated a sense of real power as he brought viewers very close to the consciousness of revolutionary blacks. Complained the critics: he never came close to penetrating journalism; rather, he raised questions that he didn't answer. Ricky Leacock's film was also attacked as "biased, unfair, savage." He attempted to convey the mood and preoccupation of police chiefs at a convention in Honolulu—their professional minds on new Mace weapons and riot-control guns, while their wives funned in the sun. It was reliable film-making, neither hot nor innovative. But one critic said that it lacked balance—it did not make plain that the police were merely agents of higher authority, the public.

Wendell Niles, Jr., a right-wing film-maker, answered the question—*Can this be America?*—with an unabashed idolization of H. L. Hunt, the very rich man, narrated by Walter Brennan, the actor. The latter called the former, "the greatest living example of what our free enterprise system can produce." It was standard, old-time film-making with incredibly bad structure—its ideology and technique probably embarrassing even to conservative-minded viewers. Still, it was valuable as an insight into an important part of the national mentality. The critics accused it of leaning too far to the right.

Ed Pinkus and David Newman made a film about a McCarthy supporter (Pinkus's father-in-law). It showed generally where film is at among the independents these days—snappy cutting, some freedom, but only a slight break with tradition. The subject, a wealthy fabric manufacturer, was exhibited as a smug, hypocritical liberal—demonstrating that meaningful change is impossible within the system. One critic said the film was "superficial . . . with a modicum of awareness of today's economic and social problems."

Can This Be America? was not a reassuring exhibit: the independents spared no point on the ideological map. Perhaps this is why the critics overreacted, and their professional faculties were dulled, for they faulted the films on two unsupportable grounds—lack of technical adequacy and journalistic balance. Three of the films, had their makers wished, could easily have been drawn to acceptable technical specifications. But these people are scouts, exploring the medium's potential, not quartermasters dealing out general issue cinema. As for "journalism," did the critics forget that the film-makers were invited to contribute "personal statements," which are not judiciously balanced analyses, or even editorials? A personal statement is an expression of how one person feels about a subject, without reference to anyone else's feelings. Have we all been so conditioned by television's dance of "objectivity" that we are uncomfortable in the presence of any viewpoint that does not come to us agreeably honed down to a balanced blandness?

Analysis is one good part of the forest; personal statement is another. The latter affords viewers the opportunity to develop their own sense of freedom and openness to different attitudes by seeing the same subject treated freely and differently by film-makers of divergent styles and philosophies. As for "art vs. journalism," who can any longer draw hard boundary lines between the two? Their worlds are moving closer to each other all the time under the impetus of the avant-garde: barriers are being broken; limits are being pushed back. We are in a period of self-examination in every way—condition fractious but healthy for society.

Young film-makers are very vulnerable; it is hard to trust oneself when moving against the grain of tradition. They need a sympathetic environment, encouraging, characterized by the respect and open-mindedness that ought to mark the democratic society.

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