

# Saturday Review

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## Behind the Headlines

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following guest editorial is by Robert Stein, editor of Redbook magazine.*

ON THE afternoon of October 15, the front pages of American newspapers provided a rare glimpse into the underlying realities of the nuclear age. The headlines told of two surprising events: In Moscow, the Soviet leadership had been changed without warning or explanation; in Washington, the resignation of a White House staff member after his arrest on a morals charge had introduced a new element of uncertainty into the Presidential campaign.

Superficially these events were unconnected. But both testified to the relative instability of national politics—in the Soviet Union, the dangerous concentration of power in the hands of a few men; in the United States, the less likely but equally ominous possibility that the choice of American leadership could, in certain instances, be determined by irrelevancies. Yet the men chosen under these circumstances may, within minutes, have to make decisions that could result in worldwide annihilation.

As if to underscore this point, within the same forty-eight-hour period, the government of a third nuclear power, Great Britain, was changed by the smallest of possible margins and a bomb test announced the nuclear emergence of Communist China, whose leadership represents a distant but dark threat to the peace of the world.

It has become commonplace to point out that our collective capacity for de-

struction has far outdistanced our ability to manage human affairs. Even the most responsible of citizens may find his mind glazed with fatigue as he listens to the irrefutable but familiar argument that control of nuclear weapons must be taken out of the national realm and put in the hands of a responsible international body. In our own country, there is very little disagreement about the ultimate need for supranational authority over the means of destruction; even such certified realists as Herman Kahn and Edward Teller agree.

IN the face of such general agreement and clear necessity, coupled with such paralyzing inertia, it may be helpful to review the slow progress that is being made toward world order and world law, both within the context of conflict among nations and beyond it. In the first regard, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 clearly awakened the nuclear powers to the need for reducing the possibility of conflict, and several small but significant steps have been taken—the limited test-ban treaty, the Washington-Moscow hot line, the agreement to reduce stockpiles of fissionable materials. The continuing search for such agreements, while it does not contribute directly toward the elimination of national control over nuclear weapons, serves two constructive purposes: first, it establishes precedents for restricting the development and use of weapons; second, it “buys time” in which the real work of building world order can go on.

With very little public attention, that work has been going on. In the summer

of 1963, lawyers from 105 nations met in Athens for the first World Conference on Peace Through Law and made plans for continuing cooperation. The following month, in the *American Bar Association Journal*, Henry R. Luce, of Time Inc., quoted an authority to the effect that “more has been constructively written and said about a world rule of law in the last six years than in the whole history of man.” Such achievement, Mr. Luce added, is “not the kind of thing that makes front-page headlines. . . . It is not yet as dramatic as it may become in the next few years.”

In the area of public education, the World Law Fund in New York City has been carrying on a broad campaign that embraces everything from the establishment of courses on world law in universities and communities across the country to the commissioning of an eighteen-minute animated color film, *The Hat*, which won a Venice Film Festival prize and is now being shown in American art theatres.

THESE are, of course, very small beginnings to the solution of a very large problem, and the question of time is crucial. “I am haunted,” President Kennedy said shortly before his death, “by the feeling that by 1970 . . . there may be ten nuclear powers instead of four and by 1975 fifteen or twenty. I regard that as the greatest possible danger and hazard.”

In view of the capriciousness of internal politics in such relatively stable nations as the United States and the Soviet Union, it is indeed haunting to contemplate the reliability of the men whose fingers may be on the nuclear buttons in fifteen or twenty countries by 1975. Is the safety of mankind going to depend on the sense and sanity of such national leaders as Nasser, Sukarno, Castro, Nkrumah, and Tshombe — or their successors?

For the time being these are still distant fears. What the responsible citizen has to remember, however discouraged or exhausted he may be at the prospect, is that the next five or ten years may represent man's best—and possibly last—hope of creating rational, responsible control over the means of mass destruction. Our own national leaders acknowledge this and so do those of many other nations. What is needed to help them act on this knowledge is active, dedicated public support, not necessarily by millions but by thousands of Americans who understand the issue and who will continue to provide intelligent advocacy until the time comes for government action. If and when discouragement sets in, it might help to look back at the headlines of October 15 and 16. The alternative is clearly written there.

—ROBERT STEIN.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Telltale Taste

IF OUR SOCIETY speaks through the shallow, insignificant tastes such as wine, food, fashion, and cars, as your October 24 issue would have history believe, we dare not ask your question, "What are our weaknesses?" Such monetary and worldly tastes only reflect that in our nation wealth is the key to happiness, sophistication, and taste.

The person who prefers the Beatles to Beethoven is one step closer in possessing some kind of taste than the one who argues that Burgundy 1962 is superior to Burgundy 1959.

HAROLD E. LONGLEY, JR.  
Westerville, O.

I WAS PLEASED to find *SR*'s excellent "Taste for Living" section. As an art student I am often dismayed by the lack of taste found in contemporary life. The series would have been very encouraging were it not for the completely tasteless cover design on that issue. You came so close, yet by that flaw you missed your goal by a mile.

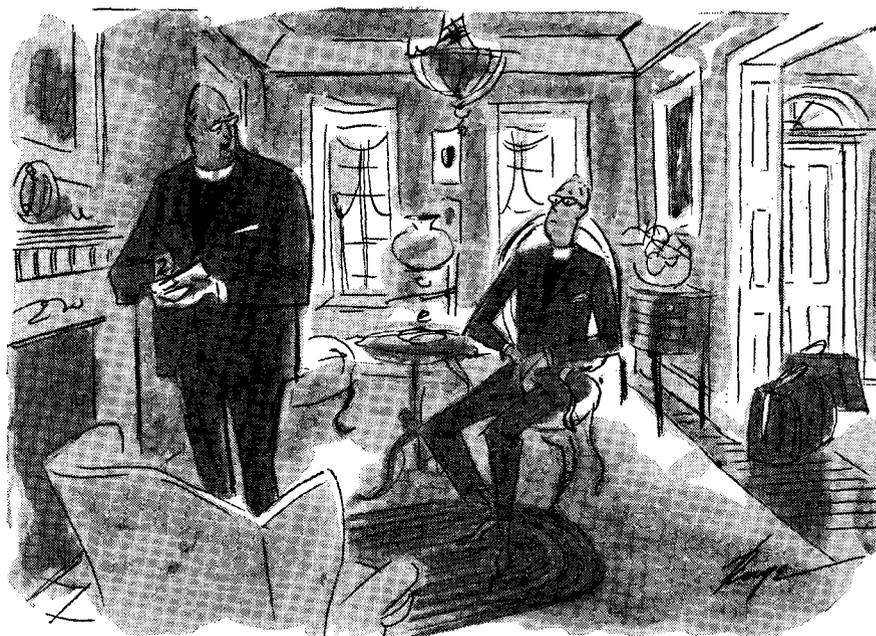
RHONA MARKS.

Dayton, O.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that your "Taste for Living" section stressed only the physical senses—with greatest emphasis on the tongue. By the very omission of the *proprieties*, you reveal more of man's values and attitudes in today's world than does any amount of words on wine, food, fabrics, and fabrications.

Why not take an even longer view of contemporary archeology (really cultural anthropology) and explore society's evident "taste" for the grotesque—as best exemplified by a television newscast? The news of the day is no longer measured by significance; it is "rated" by the number of deaths and maimings that can be illustrated on the screen. (And when an audience can view a corpse covered by a sheet being wheeled into a funeral home—as was recently shown on the ABC station in Los Angeles—it's impossible to compete.) The newest gambit of the television news program is to rush to some scene of tragedy and ask the remaining victim (e.g., a mother whose child has just drowned or burned to death; a husband whose wife was fatally injured in their auto accident, etc.): "How do you feel about that?"

Frankly I, for one, feel terrible about it. But I feel even worse about the fact that tragedy is today's television star performer. In spite of all your pages devoted to a "Taste for Living," you obviously excluded the common touch by not having another section twice as large entitled "Taste for Dying." Even though I am well aware of the average American's sordid stopping on the highway to view tragedy, I would be interested to know if the perpetual projection of suffering is 1) news; 2) necessary; 3) what the public really wants or what the sponsors feel will best attract viewers; or 4) really the result of deliberate psychoanalytic perversions by those who influence (not interpret) the entertainment



*"I think you'll like it here, but I should warn you that about ten per cent of the congregation has been fooling around with Zen."*

(communications) world? Since death is news, must such incredibly bad taste be shown in the exploring of it; cannot it once again be relegated to the unobtrusive obituary page?

EDWARD R. PINCKNEY, M.D.  
Beverly Hills, Calif.

## Diagnosing the Critic

LAURENT LESAGE's meretricious review of Sartre's *Words* [*SR*, Sept. 12] is a splendid illustration of a malady currently afflicting an alarming number of American book reviewers. If you don't like the book (or author) you don't really review it but indulge your own personality at the expense of the author. Three examples:

Lesage claims that the book is "an embarrassment of riches" for a psychiatrist. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who instead of becoming an internist, cardiologist, or podiatrist spends several years after medical school acquainting himself with certain textbooks and journals, the contents of which consist, for the most part, of fairly common psychological insights, and familiarizing himself with the behavior and symptomatology of the patients in a mental hospital—whereupon he becomes specifically licensed to treat the mentally deranged. The invocation of this word—which has taken on all sorts of murky connotations since this group's self-glorification of itself into a new priestly caste—is deliberate cheap suggestiveness.

Lesage invokes the expression "neurotic wail" to describe the book; I have no idea what a "neurotic wail" is and I suspect that Professor Lesage would have difficulty bringing real light to his exegesis.

He suggests that Sartre is "more pathological case than prophet." This, too, is

merely a matter of definition, in this case Lesage's—who plainly is floundering about in his own semantic limbo.

ROGER JOHNSON.  
Jamaica, N.Y.

## From Start to Finish

YOUR CHOICE of Elizabeth Janeway to review Arthur Koestler's book [*SR*, Oct. 17] was priceless. There was no need for her essay: the masthead told the whole story. Koestler's book is *Act of Creation*, and Janeway's latest is *Accident*. What more is there to say about mankind?

WAYNE ADAMS.  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## Toward Ethical Codes

ERWIN N. CRISWOLD, reviewing relations between the mass media and the law in Dallas [*SR*, Oct. 24], urges tighter ethical codes for lawyers and stricter rules for law enforcement officers. Why not ethical codes for both, and for the mass media as well?

How can we have a decent press or humane law enforcement if the people most directly involved are insensitive to ethical restraint? Occupational and professional self-regulation is spreading widely into American life. What is now required is more critical study of what is required to make the regulatory mechanisms more effective and more deserving of public confidence. Two effective steps would be inclusion of junior members of the professional group in the regulatory apparatuses (which now tend to be dominated by very senior and conservative men) and inclusion of some "outsiders" who clearly represent the public that is being served.

LAWRENCE CRANBERG.  
Charlottesville, Va.



## No Argument with Success

"I'M STILL trying to find someone to agree with me about *My Fair Lady*," a friend who had seen the film said, glancing at me hopefully, as though I might be able to sustain him in his uninfluenced, uncorrupted opinion that the movie was not all *that* good. The newspaper reviews in New York, on its opening, were a barrage of raves, and to certain sophisticated moviegoers that in itself can be grounds for suspicion. For these people I can't be of any help at all. I thought the movie was fine, I enjoyed it hugely, and whatever critical caution I brought with me was soon lulled into extinction by the stylish, witty, elegantly entertaining show, bigger and much more handsome than life, accomplished in all its elements.

I'll admit that I was a bit dubious at first when I heard that Jack L. Warner was personally producing the movie, mainly because I didn't know much about his qualifications for such a job, but he seems to have limited himself largely to supplying the lavish amounts of money needed to bring it to the screen. I'll admit, also, to having my doubts about the wisdom of employing Audrey Hepburn as Eliza Doolittle, when the incomparable Julie Andrews was willing, ready, and available. But the finished product reveals that Miss Hepburn was able to rise brilliantly to the occasion in what could have been

her most critical three hours. And credit should at once be given for a rare stroke of casting genius when Rex Harrison was chosen, instead of Tony Curtis or Rock Hudson, for the Professor Higgins role.

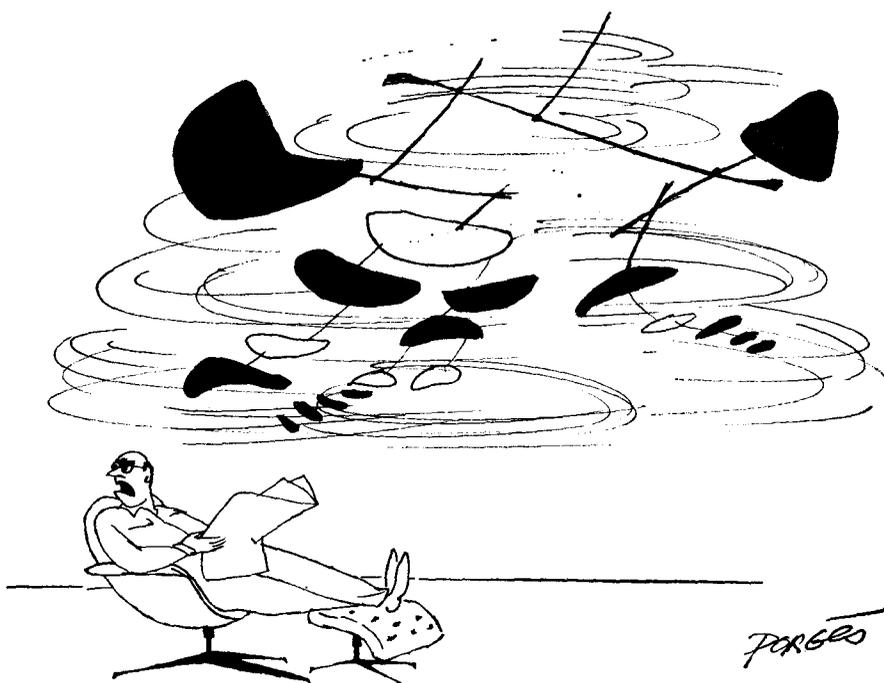
Guided surely, expertly, and tastefully by director George Cukor, these two principals turn in bravura performances. Harrison bellows and crackles in the truest Shavian manner, his spoken-singing is a delight, and the large screen reveals some pleasurable nuances that were not always discernible on the stage. Miss Hepburn, looking slightly scrawny but lovely nevertheless, ranges unexpectedly from the raucous to the delicate. She is anguished and regal, laugh-provoking and throat-catching in a role that seemingly can stand differing styles of interpretation. She even appears to be belting out her songs, although our mind does inform us that it can't be, that it is Mamie Nixon, Hollywood's most unsung singer, who is being used for what is politely termed augmentation. This is to say that Miss Hepburn may begin a song on a note she can handle, but it is Miss Nixon who finishes.

Problems of esthetics may well be involved here, but they are complex problems, and if we are going to argue about the propriety of dubbing in Miss Nixon's singing voice for Miss Hepburn's, then we also ought to take up the matter of some unknown Italian actress supplying the voice for the won-

derful Jean Moreau in Antonioni's *La Notte*. I remember hearing no complaints at that time. I'm inclined to view it, where Hollywood musicals are concerned, as one of the facts of movie life and to allow the theorists to work it all out, but only as long as I am having a good time. When the practice becomes jarring or obtrusive we may then righteously complain. Here there is very little sense of jar, at least for my relatively untrained ears, and for this the Warner sound department deserves much credit. Both Stanley Holloway, as Doolittle, and Mr. Harrison have tricky numbers to perform, but Harrison does his "live" with the aid of a little microphone hidden in his tie, while Holloway records his in the traditional playback technique. Without being told, we wouldn't have known the difference.

In redoing the musical for the screen, Cukor was obviously in no mood to argue with success, for the Cecil Beaton costumes have been carried out much as on the stage, the difference being that more attention has been paid to the working out of each fine detail and more magnificence was made possible. Realism, too, was possible for the film, but this Cukor has eschewed, wisely building Covent Garden rather than going to the grubby original, and even running race horses through a sound stage instead of redressing Santa Anita or mounting an expedition to Ascot. Thus we stay in the format of the show, and proponents of the *auteur* theory of film direction will have some explaining to do when they tell us this is a Cukor film, instead of one conceived by Lerner and Loewe from what the title credits inform us is "a play by George Bernard Shaw." And if *My Fair Lady* is not exactly an example of "pure cinema," it moves along with no discernible grinding of gears, free of intrusive directorial effects. Cukor is not only capable; he is a modest man. He has modestly allowed each of his players to turn in ebullient, top-notch performances, seen to it that they are photographed winningly and warmly, made sure that the musical and dance elements blend appropriately. Stanley Holloway is back as Doolittle, Wilfred Hyde-White, Theodore Bikel, and Gladys Cooper have been added, and the whole show blazes brightly in the finest of color. There's only one thing to do about it: line up and buy tickets.

CURRENTLY playing in two New York theaters is a premeditated double feature called *The Anatomy of a Marriage*, designed to be seen more or less back to back, although each is a complete feature in itself. One ticket buys the two shows. Aside from the gimmicky method of presentation, something new in film exhibition, Andre Cayette has achieved a veritable tour de force. One



"Shut that door!"