

It was probably a mistake to do so, but in more conventional times the system seemed strong enough to accommodate the occasional shell game. If there is one thing political leaders do not need to demonstrate right now it is that they can be terribly clever in bypassing the cumbersome procedures established by law, custom and an elementary sense of honesty.

Present Vietnam policy is based upon the kind of deviousness that has jeopardized whatever remains of public confidence in the effectiveness of our political system. Put quite simply, the Executive has no political mandate for its actions. (Whether it has a legal mandate, the Supreme Court has once again refused to say.) If present policy is to continue, let its managers ask for such a mandate from the people's representatives. They do not ask, because they know they will not receive. Representatives have a lot on their minds these days, not least being the impeachment of a President. They should be reminded, however, that while they are about the business of restoring confidence in the system they might do something about a continuing war against which the great majority of Americans has voted in every way they know how.

Richard John Neuhaus

Worldview's Senior Editor; Pastor of St. John the Evangelist Lutheran Church in Brooklyn.

EXCURSUS III

Social Ethics Montage

One should not read the *New York Times* before breakfast. The impact of the moral sensitivity of one's contemporaries is hard on an empty stomach. It produces visions of our age that seriously hamper getting oneself together for the day's business.

Lieutenant Calley's sentence for the Mylai massacre has just been reduced from twenty to ten years by the Secretary of the Army. The reason is "mitigating circumstances." In the words of the Secretary: "Lieutenant Calley may have sincerely believed that he was acting in accordance with the orders he had received and that he was not aware of his responsibility to refuse an illegal order." The *Times* editorializes on this development under the heading "No-Fault Command."

There is also No-Fault Terrorism in other quarters. Sincere Calley, it may be recalled, was convicted of the murder of "not less than 22 Vietnamese." The score of the black terrorists on the

streets of San Francisco is only twelve to date. Whites in this case, not Vietnamese. Since survivors have given a description, police have begun stopping young black men answering the description. This procedure was characterized by the Northern California Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union as "a racist outrage and a massive violation of the constitutional rights of every black man in the city."

I tend toward paranoia anyway, and doubly so early in the morning. Sometimes I even read items in the *Times* that are Unfit to Print (and that a mentally more balanced reader might deny having seen). It seems that this dumpy woman has been shooting people in Los Angeles. The police are questioning dumpy women. The Southern California Chapter of Angry Women United is protesting unequal law enforcement. . . .

But what is one to expect from liberals? Thank heaven for the conservatives in our midst, who still have sound moral instincts. After all, they're even starting to move away from Nixon. What else are they doing? Well, two major projects right now are the "right to life" amendment, which would prohibit abortions, and the campaign to restore capital punishment. Both projects are being pursued with equal vigor.

There is also the Conscience of the World. It is about to condemn Israel for its raid into Lebanon, following the massacre at Kyrat Shemonah. Remember what happened? Arab terrorists crossed the border from Lebanon and machine-gunned Jewish children. Thereupon the Israelis crossed the border into Lebanon and blew up some houses (a technique, by the way, developed in Palestine by the British, who wanted to discourage terrorism without killing people). The Austrian delegate to the U.N. has drafted a carefully worded statement, which expresses moral disapproval of both outrages (without naming either).

Things in New York are fine. We will soon have data showing that our crime rate is lower than Stockholm's. The gay rights amendment is making headway in the City Council, since its proponents are apparently prepared to exempt transvestites from its protection (what about my right to walk the streets dressed in my grandmother's finery?). Smokers may be segregated in restaurants, to protect the rights of nonsmokers. They will have a red "S" pinned on their lapels.

No essential service is on strike right now, though the United Air Pollution Workers are threatening to release quantities of carbon monoxide into the atmosphere over Staten Island to put pressure on ongoing contract negotiations.

There is enough gasoline. The police are on duty. . . .

Where is the Alka Seltzer?!! (Good news: The printers of the *Times* may soon be on strike.)

Peter L. Berger

Associate Editor of Worldview and Professor of Sociology at Rutgers, Mr. Berger faces each new morning in Brooklyn.

QUOTE/UNQUOTE

Israel was born into the postwar era; its birth occurred in the same year as the postwar constellation emerged in Western Europe. It was born of Zionist hopes and European genocide At the governmental level, Israel is isolated in the world—save for the United States. Its support in the UN has vanished, its standing in world opinion has suffered. It has become Europe's rejected child.

—Fritz Stern, "End of the Postwar Era," *Commentary*, April

A certain witty Irish-American ambassador is rumored to have remarked that Nixon has done for conservatism what Stalin did for Communism.

—Peter Steinfels in *Commonweal*, March 29

In his attempt to defend the unity of God and to reconcile the wars of the Old Testament with the Christian injunction to love one's enemies it was natural for Augustine to insist on the principle that physical death is neither the end of life nor the greatest evil. However, it is a far cry from this doctrine to a lack of concern over the death of innocent people in war. If he does speak of *necessitas* as the wellspring of war and of innocent suffering, this notion is neither a pious spiritual nosegay intended as a sop to troubled consciences nor a bit of wishful escapism. It is a recognition of the dilemma facing every man in the world of time where the boundaries between the City of God and the Terrestrial City are fuzzy and where the inadequacies of the human condition are no justification for abandoning the duties which life in society lays on every man.

—Louis J. Swift, "Augustine on War and Killing," *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 66, No.3

By [Mr. Kissinger's] tactic each negotiating partner is to be given the impression that everyone else is about to compromise and agree Mr. Kissinger has never been noted for letting matters in diplomacy rest. His often-expressed fear is that once at rest, political and bureaucratic forces quickly begin to find reasons to oppose compromise. So he keeps the balls in motion, hoping that he will keep everyone in the audience interested.

—Leslie H. Gelb, *New York Times*, March 23

Neither Nixon nor Kissinger has been fundamentally sympathetic to the idea of a united Europe. Both are Gaullists. The thrust of Kissinger's foreign policy has been away from alliances toward maneuver, toward manipulation This system of surprise announcements was borrowed from de Gaulle. It made sense for the general, as the leader of a small power, to keep the world off balance. But it is inappropriate for a great power."

—George W. Ball, former Under Secretary of State, *New York Times*, March 24

Although it was a passing comment in Robert Lekachman's article on "Nixonomics," (Dec. 2), his statement that atheists make poor clergymen cannot go unchallenged. I am an atheist and I have served four congregations without difficulty. Religion is not so much a matter of belief as it is a matter of mutual respect. An atheist who respects the points of view of his congregation is apt to be a far better minister than a believer who insists on everyone else agreeing with his formulations.

—Letter to the Editor, *New York Times Magazine*

One of the three principal theologians identified with the "Death of God" movement a decade ago preached an Easter sermon at St. Clement's Episcopal Church yesterday that he said represented a change in his thinking.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Van Buren, who heads the religion department at Temple University, said after the service: "Before I was asking, 'How can we make sense out of God?' " Now, he said, he has concluded: "The Christian Gospel is not something that men have to make sense of. It is rather something that makes sense of men."

—*New York Times*, April 15

Vice President Spiro Agnew gave an impassioned speech on how the South Africans, now that they