

Property Tax Ruling

The Supreme Court's ruling on the property-tax-school-financing issue surely surprised many people. Use of the property tax for public schools has been struck down as unconstitutional by state courts in California, New Jersey, Michigan and by a federal court in Texas. The "court of last resort," in effect, said all those lower court judges were wrong.

The ruling was 5-4. The dissenters being Justices Marshall, Brennan, Douglas, and the "swing-man" on the tribunal, Justice Byron White. Supporting Justice Lewis F. Powell, who wrote the majority opinion, were Chief Justice Warren Burger, Justice Potter Stewart, Rehnquist, and Blackmun. It will not go unnoticed that four of the five justices in the majority are Nixon's appointees.

At the same time, it may go unnoticed that the Administration is on record opposing exclusive use of the property tax to pay for schools. This is basically the position of the Court, too.

In his opinion, Powell said "the need is apparent for reform in tax systems which may well have relied too long and too heavily on the local property tax. And cer-

tainly innovative new thinking as to public education, its methods and its funding, is necessary to assure both a higher level of quality and greater uniformity of opportunity."

Powell added that the "ultimate solutions must come from the lawmakers and from the democratic pressures of those who elected them" and not from the Supreme Court.

Many people who haven't ever looked into a law book will disagree, and strongly, on the Court's declaration that financing schools with property taxes does not discriminate against the poor. Perhaps not on paper, but the result has been discriminatory because revenues collected from wealthier neighborhoods are greater than those collected from poor neighborhoods. Consequently, there's an imbalance in funds spent per pupil.

These is obviously a need to make spending per pupil more equal within each state. Virginia Gov. Linwood Holt has signed a bill that will increase state aid per pupil to \$628. Other states may follow Virginia's example, depending upon their resources and their leadership.

Latin Drug Funnel

One reason that putting an end to international drug traffic is so difficult is that the two main areas of activity happen to be Indochina and Latin America where official corruption is endemic.

How can you kill the drug octopus when its tentacles reach into government circles? You keep trying, plugging away at the sources that are the most visible. And you hope that governments, of whatever country, will finally get around to cooperating with the United States in its efforts to smash the evil.

Two Congressmen, Reps. Morgan Murphy, D-Ill., and Robert Steele, R-Conn., have unveiled an important study of the drug menace and pinpointed Latin America as the main conduit of a majority of the drugs smuggled into the United States. In fact, say the congressmen, "drugs have become the United States' biggest single import from Latin America." They estimate the value of the in-flow to be in the billions of dollars.

Only about 15 percent of the heroin smuggled into the United States is produced in Latin America. Mexico, Panama, Colombia and other countries are simply the

"funnel" for the stuff from Europe and Asia.

As American troops are being withdrawn from South Vietnam, there is a tremendous backlog of heroin in Indochina, Steele reports. "This is now being channeled by China through Latin America" and also through the Dutch ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Government officials in Latin America and Indochina, including the police, are notoriously unamenable to bribe considerations.

Louisiana and Texas police authorities should be particularly on the alert for "Latin Connection" drug hauls due to the air, sea, and land proximity. There isn't much anybody can do about official corruption in a foreign country except try to twist arms at the national level, one government to another.

Steele and Murphy have asked that the President invoke the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and cut off foreign aid to countries that refuse to cooperate with the U.S. on the drug problem. That could very well be the most effective kind of arm-twisting available to us.

Profanity Growing

Anyone who watches television even occasionally must have noticed the increase in the use of profanity on prime-time shows. There was a time when you only heard foul language on the late programs. All that has changed. And you can bet it has changed for the worse.

It appears that profanity has now joined sex and violence as a chief ingredient of commercial television. More often than not, you get all three in one package. Mark our word. Nudity will be next and from there, it's anybody's guess.

Parents should be concerned about the sudden barrage of programs which have succumbed to the use of profanity. You can be sure that the more that it is heard on television, the more it will be spoken on the school ground, from elementary grades up.

What is happening is that we are being slowly conditioned to accept any and all conduct, no matter what effect it may have on small children. And the sad thing is, some actors and singers whom adolescent children hero worship are among the most conspicuous violators of good taste.

Of course, you can get into a hot argument over matters of "taste," and everyone to his own. But the

disgusting thing is that the networks, by pushing all this objectionable stuff onto its viewers, are saying they are the arbiters of taste and everyone should say "hurrah" when someone Carol Burnett uses barracks language or takes suggestiveness to extremes.

Parents used to be the major influence in the home, at least in the formative years of their children. Now it is the television set. Its impact is immeasurable. Parents who do not use foul language can set a good example, but the Carol Burnetts and "Maudes" may undermine them in their own home.

There should be a letter-writing campaign undertaken by all parents who object to the degrading trend in television. We are being bombarded with junk that used to be confined to the burlesque houses. The least the networks could do is get them off so-called prime time.

There's no question that much that is being shown today has a corrupting influence on the young. It corrupts their attitudes, their language, and feeds them a lot of misinformation about life. And things were supposed to get better, remember?



7th Fleet Placed On Alert

By Rowland Evans And Robert Novak

WASHINGTON—Despite caution in the State Department, President Nixon is now preparing secret orders for a return to North Vietnamese waters of the full Seventh Fleet complement of aircraft carriers.

That is the most dramatic step now under top-level consideration here to impress on Hanoi the gravity with which President Nixon views continuing movement of troops and arms from North Vietnam in direct violation of the Jan. 27 peace agreement.

Some experts in the State Department worry that U.S. threats of new bombing attacks on North Vietnam before all American prisoners of war have been released risks reprisal from Hanoi. The reprisal: holding up the release of the last batch of POWs (all of whom must be freed, under terms of the Jan. 27 agreement, by March 31). The U.S. has disagreed with the State Department, believing that bombing retaliation before all the POWs are released would be effective in demonstrating to Hanoi the President's determination.

Only one full complement of carriers to the Gulf of Tonkin would be the President's unmistakable warning that, if infiltration does not stop, bombing of North Vietnam will almost certainly resume—and, as now being pressed by Pentagon strategists, resumed with far more ferocity than even last December's B-52 raids. In January, the U.S. had four carriers on regular duty in waters off North Vietnam. Today, there is only one with aircraft flying occasional re-

connaissance missions. The second carrier is helping clear Haiphong harbor of American mines. The third and fourth carriers are in Japan and the Philippines respectively, days away from possible action over North Vietnam.

The White House & Bush. The fact that Republican national chairman George Bush named White House—favored political operative Ken Rietz to a key staff job for the 1974 campaign after a conversation with H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, major donor of the White House palace guard, has deeply disturbed many Republican leaders.

Bush did not deny the talk with Haldeman but told us that naming Rietz as director of the New Majority Campaign for 1974 was his own idea, conceived in at the White House. Throughout the party, however, leaders believe that Bush was instructed by Haldeman to make the appointment. The appointment March 5 of Rietz, a 31-year-old protégé of Sen. William Brock of Tennessee who ran the Youth for Nixon campaign last year, did not go over well originally with state chairmen who view him as an agent promoting Brock's presidential ambitions. But when they learned of the Haldeman-Bush conversation, they were even less happy—contending the White House staff should not run the Republican party.

Clarke Reed of Mississippi, one of the most senior and most influential of the Republican White House staff, has defended both Bush and the Rietz appointment in conversations with his colleagues. Reed does not deny that House influence in Rietz's ap-

pointment but argues Mr. Nixon has every right to participate in his party's affairs.

CDM'S TROUBLES. The new Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM), trying to drive the Democratic party back toward the center, has suffered two quiet setbacks.

Setback No. 1 is Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey's refusal to become national honorary co-chairman (with Sen. Henry M. Jackson) of CDM. In a meeting with CDM leaders, Humphrey delayed a decision. However, although he supports the CDM and offered to participate in a scheduled issues conference, friends say Humphrey feels it would be inappropriate for the party's 1968 presidential nominee to be chairman of such a group.

Setback No. 2, while involving a less prestigious name, is more damaging to CDM. Patricia Roberts Harris, chairman of the 1972 Democratic credentials committee, has "quietly withdrawn" (her words) from the new organization. She suggested to us she disagreed with CDM's challenge to some party reforms and fears the organization could be a polarizing influence.

Without national prestigious figures such as Humphrey and prominent liberals and blacks such as Mrs. Harris, CDM could become a politically powerless collection of intellectual power-erates located to the right of the party's center.

A footnote: Some CDM founders privately concede that the organization's reason for being was undercut when Robert Strauss, a moderate, was elected Democratic national chair-



The Pentagon Papers: Dynamite Or Dud?

By Roscoe Drummond

Dr. John Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard, Prof. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. of New York University and Theodore Sorenson, now a New York lawyer—former aides to President Kennedy—have all been testifying at the Pentagon Papers trial.

The nub of what they have been telling the jury is that the Pentagon Papers contained little that was new, nothing that was very important.

But the nub of what has often been cited as justification for Daniel Ellsberg appropriating the government documents and releasing them to the press is that it was urgent for the public to know what they contained.

Draft Evaders. PUBLIC OVERHELMINGLY REJECTS GENERAL

AMNESTY. All the polls show this to be true. But if forgiveness is the main ingredient of amnesty, then substantial forgiveness is already being practiced. Evidence: More than 70 per cent of the convicted draft evaders last year got only probationary sentences.

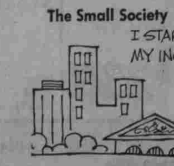
The Abraham Lincoln precedents are usually cited to support general amnesty. The fact is that Lincoln never gave amnesty to draft evaders and required Union Army deserters to return to their units and serve out their enlistments without pay or allowances.

CONGRESS CALLED IN THE WRONG DOCTORS! A group of Senate and House Democrats recently invited leading political scientists to meet with them in the expectation that they would advise how to

cut the President down to size. They gave no such advice. Historian James MacGregor Burns reminded the group that the liberals helped promote the presidential power of F.D.R. when he was carrying out New Deal reforms. Burns warned them they would regret trying to diminish presidential power just because Nixon is presently using it in ways they don't approve.

The political scientists urged the congressmen to concentrate on using their powers to make Congress stronger, not to make it weaker by explaining itself.

NIXON NOT BLUFFING ON HANOI CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS. The President has never bluffed in warnings of this kind. The North Vietnamese know it.



I STARTED TO PREPARE MY INCOME TAX TODAY—

by Brickman

I HIRED AN ACCOUNTANT TO PROVE I DIDN'T MAKE THE MONEY I DID—

Washington Star Staff Writer, Inc.

BRICKMAN

Last Tango Of Porn

By Jeffrey Hart

It is clear that the struggle on the long road back against pornography is just beginning. Actually, it's not that long a road. Until rather recently, American society actively censored pornography of all sorts, and no one thought that this was totalitarian in any way, or feared the knock upon the door. But during the last ten years the dam has cracked and broken.

A recent Criminal Court decision in New York City, however, has succeeded in closing down "Deep Throat," which the judge accurately characterized as "indisputably and irretrievably obscene," and the Supreme Court is also expected to act soon on the pornography issue. Most people close to the matter are predicting that the Court will find a way to pick its way through recent sophistries and move in the direction of greater restriction.

If so, none too soon. The differences between "Deep Throat" and the latest "aristocratic" "breakthrough" strike me as marginal. "Last Tango in Paris," starring Martin Brando and Maria Schneider, surely qualifies as obscene, and does so on a variety of grounds.

First of all, it raises the entire question of the explicit depiction of sexual acts. At this level, it seems to me, the arguments are conclusive: human sexuality is, by its very nature, a private thing, and this being so, to render it as a public exhibition is a violation.

The argument in a nutshell: Sex is an activity both animal and human. But what is distinctively human occurs in the thoughts and feelings of the participants. This human aspect is invisible. The effect of publicly exhibiting sexual acts is therefore almost always to degrade man, to thrust into the foreground his animal nature.

To this there may be a theoretical exception. A very great

artist might, somehow, communicate the visible emotional realities, place them—despite the visible animal activity—somewhere in the foreground. But this is theoretically possible, it is highly unlikely; and our civilization, until recently, has wisely consigned public representations of sex.

The violation of the distinction between the public and the private by movies like "Last Tango" therefore is prima facie an attack upon human dignity and upon the distinctions that are fundamental to civilization. For what it is worth, I would judge the attack in this case to be conscious and intentional.

A Sado-Masochistic Movie. But there is another serious objection to "Last Tango." This particular movie is very special in its handling of sex. The relations between Brando and Schneider are almost entirely sado-masochistic in character. In other words, sick. And nothing can be clearer than that the three principals involved, a sado-masochistic director, Brando, and Maria Schneider, have used the movie as an opportunity to impose their private perversities and fantasies upon an agog public. And what a crew they are. Brando apparently springs from the psychiatric hospital to the set, seething with irrepressible conflict. Maria Schneider is an avowed bisexual. Brando's reputation is hard-core production. The movie involved extensive improvisation by a nutcase. Encounter Session. No one need be startled by the results.

Nor will the argument that art is harmless hold water. The very people who are hailing "Last Tango" want violence banned from TV. Everyone knows that art has a moral and psychological impact. If it can elevate, it can also degrade. If you don't believe it, drop in on "Last Tango."

Safe, Unsafe Etcetera

By Nick Timmesch

WASHINGTON—Now, after two-and-a-half years of investigation by auto safety experts on Sen. Abraham Ribicoff's special committee, the report of the engine, but defunct, Corvair is regarded as safe.

Ralph Nader, the evangelist who ran the Corvair off the road, immediately denounced the report as "one-sided." "Egads," isn't this where we came in years ago—when had old General Motors was saying charges against the controversial car were one-sided? Which makes me think: Who killed the Corvair?

I said Ralph Nader? With anger and flair, I killed the Corvair. Who saw it die? I said GM. With sad corporate eye, I saw the thing die.

Already Dead. The Corvair was already dead in September, 1970, when Nader wrote Sen. Ribicoff, charging that GM spokesmen misled his subcommittee on the safety of the 1960-63 models of Corvair and urging an investigation. Ribicoff, no fan of the auto industry, ordered a thorough inquiry.

It backfired on Nader. Instead of GM coming out the villain on the Corvair, Ribicoff's investigators concluded that it fulfilled its "corporate responsibility" because it believed the Corvair's handling and stability made it "reasonably safe for driving on American roads." The investigators said the "clear preponderance of the evidence, much of which was unavailable to Mr. Nader," was on GM's side of the Corvair argument.

Unsafe Car. Thus the credibility of the very case which made Nader a powerful, national figure in 1966, as enunciated in his book, "Unsafe At Any Speed," is undetermined by Ribicoff's report. In those days, the Corvair was bad and Nader was good. Now Nader is good (and dead), and where is Nader?

Nader's original charges amounted to an indictment of GM for knowingly building an unsafe car, the Corvair, making big profits and suppressing damaging information about it. Through the mid-Sixties, Nader was a drumbeat against the Corvair, and the more GM tried to explain itself, the worse the huge corporation looked, especially after it pled guilty to hiring a detective to spy on Nader.

The Corvair, first introduced in the 1960 model year, was an instant success, selling 359,000 units. Its sales peaked was 1962 with 303,000 units. In 1965, faced with competition from many still sold 230,000 units. Then, Nader's charges and the great wealth of publicity. In 1966, Corvair was down to 111,000 sales, and in 1967 dwindled to 30,000. Its last model year of production was 1969, when only 3,826 Corvairs were sold. By then, people were convinced you would be injured or killed riding in this truly different machine. Nader's crusade instigated the Corvair helped instigate hundreds of damage suits.

Even with the Corvair dead in 1971, Nader demanded as

surmise that the 600,000 1960-63 Corvairs still on the road would not cause "new deaths or injuries," and he berated GM for "rewarding the rich person rewards," for shielding this corporate crime. "Right on."

Did GM knowingly put a killer on the road in the Corvair? Answer: No. In 1959, I put the Corvair through high-performance driving tests on the GM test track for Sports Illustrated magazine and experienced no difficulty. But neither that test drive nor other approving test drives of that time were proof enough. Any rear-engine car has a weight-stability problem, usually overcome by careful tire inflation and a special suspension system. Unlike conventional cars which understeer, the Corvair oversteered (responded faster), an unfamiliar trait to most drivers, but not inherently dangerous. If a Corvair owner, in those days, read his manual, kept the tires inflated, and took to the road, he was all right. Nader said later that was too much to expect of an ordinary driver.

Before Nader emerged, GM improved the rear end by adding a leaf-spring stabilizer and later a fully independent suspension system to further ensure handling. Corvair, before Nader, had been criticized by automotive engineers, particularly at keenly competing Ford, stuck with Bob McNamara's dogma.

All this and the information that GM's top management bought Corvairs for themselves, their wives and children—all driving them for many years—has to be some kind of evidence that Nader's own loved ones killed.

Epilogue to the Corvair drama? Well, it shows how a crusader can wipe out a product. If Corvair had been produced by a relatively small corporation, the corporation might well be bankrupt today, no matter what the merits of the car.

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