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FROM OUR READERS

Morality and "The Moon"

The staff of the Production Code Administration has been made aware of the article entitled "Morality and 'The Moon' " [August 24] and signed by Serge Fliegers.

It is not the policy of this administration to engage in public disputes... It does not hold the brief that it cannot make a mistake. However, we were considerably jolted by the sneering tone of the article.

Mr. Fliegers deals rather familiarly with the Code. . . However the one actual quotation he gives . . . appears nowhere in the document. He gives the impression that we withheld our Seal of Approval for *The Moon Is Blue* without any very clear reason . . . I am now violating no confidence in informing you that we took this action because the picture contains "an unacceptably light attitude towards seduction, illicit sex, chastity, and virginity." In so doing we had in mind the family audience to which the screen caters and by whose patronage it exists.

While we cannot and do not speak for the Legion of Decency, we are surprised that Mr. Fliegers was also unable to obtain their reason for condemning the picture. It was: "The subject matter of this picture seriously offends and tends to deny or ignore Christian and traditional standards of morality and decency and dwells hardly without variation upon suggestiveness in situations and dialogue."

We are not disputing Mr. Fliegers' right to dispute the correctness of our judgment in the case of this controversial picture. We merely want to let you know that we had a specific reason for acting as we did. And furthermore, our judgment, mistaken or not, was unanimously supported, on appeal, by the Board of Directors of the motion picture industry . . .

GEOFFREY M. SHURLOCK
Acting Director, Production Code Administration, Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.
Hollywood, Cal.

Mr. Fliegers Replies

The Motion Picture Association of America seems to have got its transcontinental wires crossed. The quotation from the M.P.A. Code that appeared in my article and which is so unfamiliar to Mr. Shurlock, was obtained from his New York office. Neither that office, nor Father Little, Executive Director of the Catholic Legion of Decency, was able to point to any specific line, scene, or action in *The Moon Is Blue* which might "deny standards of morality" or, in the words of Cardinal Spellman, "incite to juvenile delinquency."

Since my review appeared, *Variety* reports that *The Moon Is Blue* has been seen by more Americans than almost any other picture recently released. The resultant decline in American standards of morality, or increase in juvenile delinquency directly attributable to "The Moon" seem to have been less than negligible. This leaves us with the unavoidable conclusion that, as Mr. Shurlock indicates, there is a possibility that the Motion Picture Association was wrong in condemning "The Moon" and that thousands upon thousands of average cinemagoers who have since seen the picture—and have not found it objectionable—are right.

New York City SERGE FLIEGERS

Long Book Reviews

Re Gilbert M. Tucker's letter in your issue of August 24: Count me as one who thoroughly enjoyed "such a long dissertation on Sherwood Anderson."

Topeka, Kans. ROBERT F. STEINER

Land of Opportunity Still

I am a conservative who thinks he knows why he is a conservative. . . . Our superior standard of living is due not to a basic superiority of intelligence or manual dexterity. Training and education account for a very small part of this superiority. Many other nations could duplicate our general level of training and education in a matter of months, but they would still not be much better off than before.

The reason our living standard (the productivity of the American worker) is higher is because we alone have such a large capital investment in plant and equipment. The reason we have such a large investment is because in times past the government of this country has allowed people to receive the rewards produced by savings and has allowed them to invest their savings in the most remunerative enterprises; and, consequently, people did save and build up this investment in plant and production. Governments of other countries restricted the rewards accompanying savings and/or prevented what savings there were from going into the most economic channels. . . .

Urbana, Ill. RAE C. HEIPLE II

A Revealing Portrait

In my opinion James Burnham's estimate of Eleanor Roosevelt in "A Too Sentimental Journey" in the FREEMAN for August 24 will be a classic. No one else has analyzed her so well, or described her better.

Wyckoff, N. J. MARGARET RAMBAUT

THE FREEMAN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1953

The Fortnight

A meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party, held in July, made important new applications of the present right turn in international Communist tactics. On the "electoral front" the decision is to support the "progressive" forces in the Democratic Party. As one result, party members and sympathizers are going to bat for Robert Wagner in the New York City mayoralty primary. "Wagner's nomination over Mayor Impellitteri," says an official party statement, "would constitute a blow to the Dewey-Farley-Impellitteri conspiracy. . . It would mean that the most reactionary section of the Democratic Party on a state scale, that closest to the McCarrans and Byrneses nationally, had received a serious setback."

The American Labor Party is to be employed as a lever for promoting united front coalitions. The party now criticizes the A.L.P., its own electoral tool, for having done in the past, under a different directive, what the party ordered it to do. "It has followed basically a go-it-alone policy and tends to—wrongly in our opinion—direct its main fire against candidates like Halley and Wagner instead of the main agents of reaction." According to the National Committee resolution, "the perspective . . . is that of the unfolding of important struggles among the masses who form the base of the Democratic Party. The Communist Party and other progressive forces must under no circumstances stand aside from this fight." In other words, the Communist Party is taking as its main domestic objective *the infiltration of the Democratic Party.*

This warm Communist move toward the Stevenson-A.D.A.-Lehman-Franklin Roosevelt Democrats is interestingly balanced by the coolness shown in another quarter toward the Chicago welcoming home party for the defeated but still talking Stevenson. Among the guests who chose not to lend their laughter to the wisecracks and their applause to the political abstractions were to be noted: Governor Shivers of Texas, Senator Holland of Florida, Governor Byrnes of South Carolina, Senator Byrd of Virginia. In general, the responsible conservative wing of the Democratic Party and the nonideological machine leaders are not showing great enthusiasm for their bouncing candidate, who led them on the slipshod crusade that was none of their asking. It is always an error to underestimate the power of a Communist tactic. If these two current developments continue, we may wake up in 1956 to find the Democratic Party transformed into a *de facto* Popular Front coalition, with Adlai Stevenson the front man for "the broad forces of progress."

The Department of the Interior statement on future development of electric power was a masterly example of fence-straddling. The statement was issued with the approval of President Eisenhower and Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay. It was a formal announcement of policy that placed emphasis on decentralization of power. Aside from its commendable tendency to play down federal control, the statement was remarkably inconclusive. Nearly anything and everything seems still possible in the controversial field of public or private power. The statement was a good beginning, but hardly a decisive break with the past.

Against the opposition of the United States and a few other countries, the U.N. Economic and Social Council recently voted to remove from its agenda two items, the discussion of which might offend the delicate and sensitive nerves of the rulers of the Kremlin. One was freedom of information. The other was forced labor. This, along with similar incidents, raises the question what, if any, useful purpose the U.N. is serving. Obviously it cannot keep the peace. On the basis of its record in Korea it is the worst conceivable agency for waging a war. Defenders of the U.N. emphasize its supposed moral authority. But eager desire to appease the notorious worst offender on such matters of international concern as freedom of information and forced labor leaves scarcely a fig leaf to cover the moral nakedness of the sadly divided "United" Nations.

There was an exquisite anti-anti-Communist stiletto-thrust in the news report of Reuters, the