

## A Few Words

It may not be the kind of thing you notice, but we thought you might be curious about the double cover date on RAMPARTS this month. It is designated the May/June issue. In this particular case, it is strictly a formality, and a confusing one at that, more connected to the metaphysics than the meat of publishing. It doesn't mean there are more pages in the book this time—there aren't. Nor does it mean we're going through a lapse of publication—we're not.

Earlier in the year RAMPARTS was coming out a bit erratically, and that did throw things off. But we are pleased to note that this is the third issue in three months, once every thirty days or so, which is just as things should be for a monthly. The magazine is back on track in frequency, and has been for a while.

So what's in a date? Well, there's a tradition of nominal prescience built into the magazine newsstand business. We have been putting out the issue dated "March" in March, the one dated "April" in April, and so on. And that means, like the punctual rabbit in Wonderland, we're late for a very important date. As far as distribution goes, the ideal cover date is always one month off. The custom on the newsstands is that, as a magazine gets deeper into the month printed on the cover, it starts to be considered stale. And then it is liable to be prematurely removed from sale—which can hurt. To stay current, you must affect to put out next month's issue this month. Now that the magazine's actual frequency is back on track, we are setting the cover date ahead of itself, which is where it is supposed to be.

So here is the May/June RAMPARTS. We'd like to think that the issue makes up for some of this confusion of formalities by being jam-packed with content. Now if only it were a bit more packed with advertising . . . But that takes us into a different paradox of publishing, and that's another story for another time.

# Letters

## [JUNKIE PROPHET]

### Editors:

Concerning Kopkind's eulogy of Lenny Bruce (RAMPARTS, March 1975). I agree that Bruce made important contributions to the radicalization of American culture, including his popularization of black language and his gutty ethnicity, unlike a score of other Jewish comedians who played down their ethnicity and remained mainstream.

However, to recognize the radical impulse of Bruce is one thing, to praise him as a revolutionary is another matter. Bruce did not manifest such a love. His biggest obstacle was his persistent degradation of femininity-woman as the "other", as sex object. The repertory of a revolutionary does not include such brutal verbal attacks on half of the human race.

James Gerharter  
Minneapolis, Minn.

### Editors:

What can be said about the glimpse you gave me of Lenny Bruce except that I'm sorry I missed him along the way.

Michael L. Smith  
Vancouver, Wash.

## [PARANOIA]

### Editors:

Allow me to share yet an alternate view to those presented by Carl Oglesby and David Horowitz "In Defense of Paranoia," (RAMPARTS, March 1975). Take heart,

The revolution begins at home. Not in power trips with police officers and politicians, but in the willingness of each of us to change our life styles, to give up the trappings of the materialistic economy and to build a network of independent self-sufficient citizens who, when the time is here will be ready to rewrite the contract. I am an American of the Grass Root. My democracy is the democracy of the town meeting and the coop collective. The pain of Watergate and reactionary politics are the growing pains of this democracy.

Diane Pierson  
Charlotte, Vt.

## [BOYCOTT THE JUNTA]

### Editors:

The Big Three automotive companies — Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler — recently submitted bids to the Chilean military regime for expanding their auto assembly operations in Chile, at a time when automotive plants are being shut down all over the U.S. and unemployment lines grow daily. In the 1960's, while the U.S. government pumped large sums of money into Chile to bolster the pro-American government of Eduardo Frei, the companies prospered and expanded their operations. But

with the election of Salvador Allende, the three companies adopted a different posture.

Committed to a program of deep-seated social reforms, the Popular Unity government of Allende wanted to work out a new series of arrangements with many of the multinational industrial corporations operating in Chile. Regarding the automotive companies, the Popular Unity adopted an especially lenient posture, urging them to remain in Chile and continue their operations. General Motors and Ford, however, chose to close down their Chilean operations at the first opportunity. Their abrupt actions helped create the climate of economic fear and chaos which led to the military coup of September 11, 1973.

Now with the brutal overthrow of the Allende government, the permanent postponement of democratic elections, and the abolition of trade unions, the Big Three automotive companies apparently feel that conditions are more favorable for making a profit in the Chilean market. When GM resumed operations in its truck plant in Chile, a high level GM representative stated bluntly that the junta "is offering security for work and investments."

These new investments will help buoy up one of the most repressive regimes in the Western Hemisphere. Due to the international outcry which the military regime has aroused by its actions, some foreign governments have cut off their economic and military assistance programs, while many foreign corporations are holding back on new investment plans for Chile. The U.S. automotive companies, however, appear deaf to these international protests. Only a concerted protest in this country can halt their drive to maximize profits at the expense of both the American and Chilean peoples.

Charles Briody  
Ecumenical Council of  
Concern for Chile  
Berkeley, Calif.

## APOLOGIES

In the April 1975 RAMPARTS we inadvertently omitted credit to *Working Papers for a New Society*, which published the original version of Andrew Kopkind's "Lowndes County: The Great Fear Is Gone" in its Spring 1975 issue.

*Working Papers* is one of the best Left publications in the United States. We read it regularly and recommend you do the same. Their address is 123 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

In our March issue, a typographical error garbled the credit line for Erica Jong's poems. It should have read as follows: Copyright ©1975 by Erica Mann Jong from the forthcoming book *Loveroot*, to be published by Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.

# VIETNAM

## I. Why the Refugees?



*"The fact that almost the entire population tried to get away from the Communists is an extraordinary indication of their belief in freedom, of the fact that they don't want to live under a Communist regime."—Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, April 2, 1975.*

As a result of the latest setbacks for the Thieu regime, large numbers of civilians have abandoned their homes in different parts of South Vietnam. Such movements are usually described by the United States and Saigon governments as refugees "voting with their feet" because of their abhorrence of living under Communist control.

Additional requests for U.S. aid to Saigon are often justified by citing these refugee movements as illustrations of the South Vietnamese peoples' "resistance to Communist aggression." Statements by both President

Ford and Vice President Rockefeller leave little doubt that the current flow of refugees in South Vietnam will again be used to argue for more aid to Thieu. U.S. Ambassador to Saigon Graham Martin, quoted in a letter written by Thieu's Deputy Prime Minister, makes explicit the hope that "the millions of refugees abandoning Communist-controlled zones will help create a shift in American public opinion in favor of the Republic of Vietnam."

Based on my own personal experiences of working with refugees in South Vietnam, I discovered this notion of a political motivation for the movement of refugees to be pure propaganda. In fact, after extensive contact with many hundreds of refugees over a period of close to two years I met few who had left their homes out of fear or dislike of the Communists.

There are a number of causes for the sudden flow of refugees we are now witnessing in Vietnam, including

panic, anarchic conditions in cities abandoned by Saigon officials, and fear of being left behind. However, a major reason is fear of the fighting, desire to find relative safety within the Saigon-controlled enclaves. Refugees are afraid that once Saigon forces are gone, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) takes over, the PRG-controlled areas will be subjected to massive bombing attacks and artillery fire.

Indeed, recent events show these fears to be fully justified. In their latest attempt to recapture the coastal city of Nha Trang, on April 6, Saigon forces paved the way by dropping 15,000 pound "daisy cutter" bombs which exploded directly on the city (*Chicago Tribune*, 4/7/75). Missionaries and other relief workers in South Vietnam report that two thirds of Ban Me Thuot, the capital city of Darlac province in the Central Highlands, has been destroyed, at least half of it by Saigon bombing. And Kontum and

by Edward Block