LETTERS

Bing in the Bullseye
Sir: As one who would rather experience a Callas Tosca than an LSD trip, I applaud TIME for daring to like Rudolf Bing and the beautiful new Met [Sept. 23]. It is the latest chic to find the Met somehow appealing or, worse, mundane. It is gaudy (so are diamonds). It panders to popular taste—Chagall, really! It is gimmick-run, unexciting, blah, blah, blah. One wonders what could possibly have pleased its critics. But then, who cares?

If Antony and Cleopatra was a disappointment, the new house, this exceptional season, and your delightfully written cover story are not. You have successfully retitled the cliché that Bing is a stuffy, humorless, inept Austrian tyrant and given us a witty, dedicated, and exceptionally talented human being.

JOHN R. BELDEN
New York City

Sir: I was delighted with the lively profile of Rudolf Bing. With the exception of one or two semantic twisters, I think it is a first-rate job—definitely epi, one and ert. Seeing Mr. Bing a bottle of Moselle; as a preliminary shipboard softener-upper was a touch of genius. Champagne would have been all right for some people, but for Bing a bit gauche and outré. In the words of Talleyrand (almost): He is intolerable, but that is his only fault.

STEPHEN J. SPINGARN
Washington, D.C.

Sir: The article on Bing was great, but it didn’t make me (or any other contemporary composer) love him any better. He is as much a museum piece as the Establishment he represents. His choice of American composers (Barber, for example) certainly doesn’t place him too far out on the limb.

IRWIN BAZON
New York City

Sir: A delightful story about an amazing man. But in an apparent burst of Gesamtkunstwerk the cover artist not only turned Mr. Bing’s parchment-over-steel facsimile into a lumped over oboe; he brocaded him into the background. Holy Schlock!

ARTHUR STONE
New York City

Describing the Puzzle
Sir: Your Bobby Kennedy cover [Sept. 16] did a good job of describing one of our nation’s most complicated and puzzling figures. Because of his family name, his position in society, his brief but interesting Senate investigations and his unpolished charm, whether we like it or not, Robert Kennedy is undoubtedly the man of the future. Let us hope that he uses his talents and stamina for the good of the country and not just for the sake of adding another Kennedy name to the list of U.S. Presidents.

ROLAND BENEDETTI
Long Island City, N.Y.

Sir: Your article shows just how lousy our Senator is. How people could throw away Kenneth Keating is an enigma to me.

LAGAYETTE D. THOMPSON
Buffalo

Wind on Win
Sir: I was in Burma for eight years, and would not hesitate to state that 90% of the people are totally against Ne Win and his government [Sept. 16]. He has antagonized every single sector of the nation. He has been absolutely ruthless, despotic and stupid in bringing chaos to the economy of a wonderful land and a wonderful people.

A State Department official whom I spoke to could not name one single way in which Ne Win had shown neutrality to balance all of the favors that he has shown to the Russians and the Chinese, save that he was coming to visit us. The Burmese themselves know that Ne Win is not neutral. Why should we accept it?

E. J. FARREN, S.J.
University of Scranton
Scranton, Penn.

Chapels Within
Sir: Catholic advocates of “Selective Faith” [Sept. 16] will find an accurate description of themselves in Karl Rahner’s book Nature and Grace. His reason why members of this “new heresy” do not leave the Church: “A man of today is no longer as ready to trust his opinion as he was in the times of self-conscious individualism and liberalism; he is no longer so convinced of it that he could easily set up a religious community himself. When people have this feeling and yet cannot bring themselves to believe unconditionally in the Church, then we get—since the time of modernism—the attempt to build a private little chapel within the big Church, an esoteric sect within the big community.”

TIME has written well about an American version of such an “esoteric sect.” I sympathize with this sect’s impatience.

TIME

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regarding slow-moving American Church reform and renewal but not with its attempt to shape the Church according to its own fancy.

CHARLES J. MEHOK, S.J.
Catholic Information Center
Milwaukee

The Commission's Critics
Sir: Your essay about the Warren Commission [Sept. 16] was sad. Half of the editorial pointed out some of the mistakes and bungling of the commission, and then you congratulate it on a job well done. You did not have the fortitude to call the report what it was: a completely unsatisfactory attempt to explain away the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

The American public has been duped by this august body and the novel of half-truths and suppressed conclusions it presented. If half of the points that Mark Lane brings up in his book Rush to Judgment are valid questions and criticisms about the investigation, then the American public needs to take another look at the findings of the Warren Commission.

CLARK E. McGOON
Riverside, Calif.

Sir: Your essay includes the following statement: "Since tests proved that it took at least 2.3 seconds to operate the bolt action on Oswald's rifle, Oswald obviously could not have fired three times—hitting Kennedy twice and Connally once—in 5.6 seconds or less." This argument, which has appeared in many publications since the assassination, is faulty, and I am surprised that I haven't seen it refuted before.

Assuming that the bolt of Oswald's rifle can, in fact, be operated in 2.3 seconds, then Oswald definitely could fire 3 shots in less than 5.6 seconds, for a stop watch would be started when the first shot was fired; the second shot would be fired when the stop watch read 2.3 seconds, and the third shot would be fired when the stop watch read 4.6 seconds. You have apparently overlooked the fact that, in the time it takes to fire 3 shots, it is only necessary to operate the bolt twice.

FREDERICK T. WEHR
Baltimore

Reverse Racism
Sir: After a long struggle, the Negro civil rights movement has finally won the sympathy and loyalty of the majority of white Americans [Sept. 16]. Now the civil rights leadership has done the one thing that the people of color have called for: They have made a call for racial cooperation. Certain segments of the civil rights leadership seem no longer to be satisfied with equality; the slogan "Black power" reeks of racism.

The white American has a long history of bigotry and ignorance in handling race relations. Does the Negro wish to equal him even in this?

BILL STIMSON
Medical Lake, Wash.

Breath of Fresh Haze
Sir: As a professional forester, I live and work among millions of trees. These, according to Professor Went [Sept. 9], produce an "incredibly toxic" blue haze. I have lived in Pittsburgh before smoke control. I have known gasoline smog in Southern California, and pulp mill smog in the north. I have endured wood "smoke" in mill towns and near forest fires. Somehow, in spite of the "blue haze," the mountain air seems pure, refreshing and invigorating. The action of trees producing oxygen from carbon dioxide and water should outweigh any "arboreal pollution." All pollution should be so bad!

HARRY B. CARSON
Idleyld Park, Ore.

Where the Action Is
Sir: Presby Ronald Nairn of Prescott College [Sept. 23] acknowledges the enduring mystery of his own ignorance when he justifies the absence of education courses with the thought that he "loves to teach education if we could find anyone who knew anything about it." Such tutorial thinking will earn him guffaws only from those mossbacks who believe that there has been no breakthroughs since the time of the Greeks. He might begin his search at Harvard, whose classical curriculum has not suffered from the fact that doctors in education are offered there. All disciplines have advanced in recent years, but education is where the action is.

RALPH W. WALKER II
Jacksonville State College
Jacksonville, Ala.

Fixing the Identity
Sir: Your review of Malamud's The Fixer [Sept. 9] focuses its critical beam upon a nonexistent work: the "contemporary American" novel that the reviewer wishes Malamud had written. The Fixer is judged in terms of what it is not, and therefore is found to have "missed." There is nothing more contemporary than Malamud's theme: that of identity. Within the "innocent-guilty" framework is embedded the search for truth, a solace of Yakov's stubbornness: I am what I know is true. Malamud speaks for contemporary Americans as well as for one Russian Jew. Man's inner quantum soul is reflected in the main character.

M. CARTER
Claremont, Calif.

Fulsome Praise
Sir: Shane on U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge [Sept. 23], who greeted Ky "fulsomely as the election results became clear." According to the ambassador, the Vietnamese were "genuinely happy" and had a genuine "love for their country." You did not have the fortitude to call the ambassador on his face.

CHRIS GARVEY
Omaha

Slug of Bourbon
Sir: About your Art color pages [Sept. 16] Has anyone noticed the visual tension between the Infante Don Luis and Jimmy Durante? What do you bet that our beloved Jimmy is a Bourbon?

HELEN O'CALL
Detroit

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