

Inasmuch as I don't always bother to put a colophon on this endless fanzine, people are continually receiving it and wondering what the hell it is and what it means.

FIRST DRAFT #191

Vol. 32, No. 5

10 Nov 67

Damned if I know what it means.

But what it is, is written on-stencil by Dave Van Arnam, of 1730 Harrison Ave, Apt 353, Bronx, NY 10453, for his own amusement. Recently it has become available as a free rider with Andy Porter's SF WEEKLY, q.v.

St Louis in '67 -- for the Archetypical Worldcon.....

I HAVE BEEN STUDYING the popular press, and other associated phenomena grouped these days under the general heading 'Media', and their treatment of the hippies (and associated phenomena).

People over 30 (I by the way am 32 *sigh*) are frequently puzzled by the antipathy these days of the young toward the old. If you follow the Media, it shdn't be difficult to see why.

Lies.

The Media consistently misrepresent simple facts, and frequently lie directly. They do this with politics, with psychedelics, with the hippies, and, in fact, with anything new or different -- or old-and-different, for that matter.

The NEW YORK TIMES lies, frequently and directly. The NEW YORK TIMES is widely regarded as the great public keeper of the true records of our society. "All the news," its masthead says, "that's fit to print." Either they mean 'all the news, whether true or false', or they mean 'some news that's true isn't fit to print'. (In a sense, of course, the latter version is justifiable, as, for instance, Gov. Reagan wd agree -- he chose not to have printed the information that members of his staff long since fired were actually homosexuals; his obvious reason was that there was no point in ruining these men's further career potential, and their position in society, by doing anything more than quietly dismissing them, a point of moral nicety obviously far beyond the grasp of, for instance, Drew Pearson.)

There are many ways in which the TIMES lies, and over the years I've noticed quite a few of them. I'd like to keep this simple and clear-cut in the present remarks by pinning down one case in which they consistently lie.

It is true that marijuana is legally described in this country as a "dangerous narcotic." It is equally true that even those medical men who are violently opposed to marijuana are quite clear on the simple fact that marijuana in no conceivable way can actually be described as a 'narcotic.' Narcotics are opium and the opium derivatives -- heroin is the gaudiest and most familiar. Narcotics are undeniably and viciously dangerous (at least in our society; it is also true that in itself heroin causes no provable direct damage to the body apart from addicting the body to it, but I'm damned if I'd defend it on such grounds in this society, in which heroin is justifiably considered an ultimate evil).

Null-Q Press
Undecided Publication #289

Marijuana, as I said, is legally classed as a narcotic, and has been since Harry Anslinger's puzzling and hysterical campaign against it succeeded in the 1930's in imposing a new prohibition on the country only five years after it gave up on the last one. But it is not a narcotic, and everyone knows it.

And every time the NY TIMES talks about marijuana and the people who use it, it calls them addicts and consistently uses the term "narcotic" as completely interchangeable with the word "marijuana." It doesn't take a member of LEMAR to see that this is manifestly unfair, to say the least; I myself call it lying.

There was a letter in the TIMES a week or so ago, in which someone quite properly brought up the question of "if they legalize marijuana, aren't tons of people going to start driving cars while high?" This letter was headed by the TIMES "Addicts behind wheel?" ((Actually, the first word in the heading was 'addict', but I must quasiquote the rest of the phrase because I don't recall it at the moment.))

Now, people who use marijuana are simply not addicts. Dr Donald Louria, head of a state antinarcotics board in NY, is opposed strongly to the legalization of marijuana -- but he admits that the substance is not addicting, and in fact he has come out for lessening possession penalties from a felony to a misdemeanor, on the grounds that it is simply not dangerous enough to be classed a felony.

But the NY TIMES consistently refers to users as "addicts." They had a writeup a couple of months ago on "Narcotics In Germany," in which they were speaking only of marijuana. It was a full column, and the words "addict" and "narcotic" were almost as frequent as punctuation marks.

This is lying, and it is an excellent example of what the adult, established world -- almost the enlightened world, since the NY TIMES has occasionally seen fit to run pro-marijuana pieces -- tells the young people in this country. They lie, and the kids see this, and they very quickly realize that the adult world lies to them all the time. It tells them poor old harmless pot is as dangerous as heroin, it tells them onehanded readers will turn them into sex-crazed criminals, it tells them married monogamy is the only proper way of life, it tells them they must be motivated to Succeed, make money, become popular and rich, and it tells them that the most important people in the world are the Joneses next door, whom it is vitally important to keep up with.

Sounds pretty silly, right? Some of those things at least? Well, that's because the kids did see through it. Monogamy is all very well, they say, when you're old enough to appreciate it; when you're young, that's the time to use what you were born with -- and they do. I won't multiply examples at this point because I'm almost out of space; but if you think the younger generation, and that part of it called the Love Generation, the Flower People, have Gone Too Far, pause to consider that it is just precisely because they have seen that the old lies are lies.

Perhaps not all they've been told is a lie; but they have been given no way to test this out other than to try, and to see, for themselves. And when no harm comes of it, they go on to the next. There is only one way to prevent them from harming themselves on the genuinely bad things (heroin, speed). That is to stop lying to them. Tell them the truth. Or lose them. Hoping you are the sane... -- dg