

*News & World Report*, August 28-September 4) than the ads were withdrawn because the advertising "has been misunderstood by some." According to the company the teenage models in various states of undress and suggestive repose were actually meant to show "the spirit, independence, and inner worth of today's young people." How did Leo miss that?

**DOYLE ALSO DOES GOOD** ■ Kevin Doyle, once a *Commonweal* intern and an occasional contributor to these pages, is acting head of New York's Capital Defender Office, established to represent indigent defendants sentenced under the state's new death penalty law. Doyle previously worked in Alabama defending those convicted in capital cases. Fortunately he is on the same side of the issue as the *New York Times* (against), and reporter Jan Hoffman (August 31) found him pugnacious and charming. Bet he, too, still goes to Mass every Sunday.

**BRING BACK MAPPLETHORPE** ■ If you are a New Yorker with a strong yen to gaze upon an art work featuring four dead and decaying cows positioned to look as though they were copulating—well, sorry, not now, maybe next year. The work, conceived by the artist Damien Hirst and titled "No Sense of Absolute Corruption," was to have opened the season at a SoHo gallery, but ran up against the health codes of staid old New York City, even though, according to an account in the *Times* [August 4], the cows "were to have been hermetically sealed in a case of steel and glass, with tubes connected to carbon filters eliminating the smell of decay." The artist explained his work: "It's about sex and death. As the cows continue to decay, the meat becomes visually attractive and very colorful, which I like." His London dealer gave a different exegesis of this and other Hirst works: "These pieces rep-

resent the dark side of humanity." The SoHo gallery owner, commenting on a plan to install a new Hirst exhibit in March of 1996, said, "I didn't want to deflect attention from the fact that Damien is a serious artist." The serious artist told the *Times* what will replace "Absolute Corruption" next March: "Right now I'm working on a piece called 'Physics of Immortality,' which shows cows cut vertically and copulating from behind." What about that pesky health code? "This time the cows will be preserved in formaldehyde."

An artistic compromise. Ruins the whole concept. We won't go. Besides, Damien needs to spend some time on a farm.

**GIVE US THAT OLD-TIME VULGARITY** ■ What was *Commonweal's* approach to the emerging youth and popular culture of thirty-plus years ago? Philip T. Hartung reviews the movie *Bye Bye Birdie* (April 19, 1963) in a critical but unflappable fashion. "Since I didn't see the stage production of *Bye Bye Birdie*, I shall not attempt to compare it to the movie, but surely this popular musical comedy couldn't have been as vulgar as the film version. The idea of kidding teen-agers, their speech, their dress, their persistent telephoning, and their fanatic adoration of a current idol is amusing enough; but the film camera, with its insistence on close-ups and a certain amount of realism, has brought this kidding down to a low level and seems to be pandering to the audience it hopes to kid...."

"Most of the movie is rather old-fashioned stuff concerned with the tiresome devotion of swooning high school girls for Conrad Birdie, who looks even worse than you'd expect in a tight, gold lamé suit....What *Bye Bye Birdie* needs is a little more taste and some light touches to offset its materialism. As it stands, it's for the birdies."

Those were the days. □

## OF SEVERAL MINDS

### ABIGAIL McCARTHY

#### PULLING THE RUG OUT

*Let's end child labor*

**W**e have become a dispirited people because we do not celebrate our victories—or even recognize them. This is the thesis of commentator Mark Shields. He elaborated on it in a summer's talk at a benefit for the Brewster Ladies Library Guild on Cape Cod—not a place where his thesis would attract the media attention it deserved. His talk, appropriately enough entitled

"Optimism," cited one example after another of what our concerted efforts have achieved but of which we seem unaware.

Our effect on the environment is only one example but it is impressive. Twenty years ago the Great Lakes were polluted and dead or dying. Today they are clean. In 1970 three-fourths of our rivers were unswimmable and unfishable. Today they are clear and

fisherman line the banks.

Today 99 percent of the lead that contaminated the air has been removed, largely by the control of auto emissions. When environmentalists first urged controls, both labor and management resisted and made dire predictions. Controls would bring the prices of cars beyond the range of competition. The industry would suffer. Workers would lose jobs. Today, surprisingly enough, despite the controls, Detroit companies, manufacturers of cars, are robust and alive and competing successfully with their foreign challengers.

How did these changes come about? Have we forgotten? First, caring people identified the problems. They gathered in groups and associations to do something about these problems. The groups

coalescing became a movement. National awareness grew and a national consensus was formed. Legislation and regulation followed and things changed greatly for the better. Yet we fail to congratulate ourselves on this progress or take pleasure in it.

When we fail to celebrate what we have done, says Shields, we lose heart for the struggles which must yet come. The faith that we can overcome the injustices and the social ills we still face is weakened. We need the optimism bred by past victories to sustain us in gathering together to attack the evils we face.

It is important that we recover that optimism because common effort unites and inspires people. Who involved can forget the heady days of the civil rights movement or the camaraderie engendered by the sit-ins, the freedom rides, the marches? Even now the heart lifts when we hear it sung again—"We shall overcome, we shall overcome some day!"

A similar cause crying out for our attention and our effort is the battle against worldwide child labor. Because of the globalization of the market place we have become passive collaborators in this widespread exploitation of hapless children. Too often what we eat, what we wear, what we use, is priced as it is because somewhere forlorn little ones drag out their days in dusty fields or in dingy factories and sweatshops.

Our attention has been called to the plight of these children by Robert A. Senser in *Commonweal* (October 8, 1993, August 19, 1994), the occasional television documentary, and by a few public-spirited reporters and columnists. Bob Herbert of the *New York Times* has written several of these columns. In his July 26 column, for example, he lists some of the American companies which benefit from children's sweatshops. They include The Gap, Eddie Bauer, Gap subsidiary The Banana Republic, J.C. Penney, and Levi Strauss—all, alas, outlets favored by liberals. We can refuse to buy but there are other means as well.

The Department of Labor issued a report *By the Sweat of Children: The Use of*

*Child Labor in American Imports* "to identify any foreign industry and their host country that utilize child labor in the export of manufactured products from industry or mining to the U.S." (It also includes underage workers in American-owned companies which assemble goods abroad for export to this country.)

Our indignation and our responses have been slow to rise. But coalitions are forming and their boycotts and protests are beginning to take effect. To our shame, however, the most successful have been initiated not here but in South Asia where a coalition, funded in part by German organizations, is attacking the problem piecemeal, and in Germany itself where consumers have achieved a really significant effect on one of the most ancient forms of child labor—the manufacture of hand-knotted carpets. This industry, once centered in the Mid-East, is now worldwide, extending from Egypt and Morocco to India and Nepal, and blights the lives

of hundreds of thousands of children.

"For the first time ever," says Darlene Adkins of the Child Labor Coalition, "consumers can choose hand-knotted carpets made without child labor." They are made under the Rugmark label in India. A surcharge of 1 percent of the value of the carpet is assessed for a Unicef-administered program to educate and rehabilitate former child workers. Whether we are carpet buyers ourselves or not, those who see the promotion of Rugmark as a giant step in the fight against child labor ask our help. A Rugmark activist's organizer kit is available from the Child Labor Coalition, c/o National Consumer's League, 1701 "K" St., N.W., #1200, Washington, DC, 20006; phone (202) 835-3323. The goal is to convince retailers and importers to make Rugmark carpets available in the United States. Let us summon the energy fueled by our own past victories to join others in liberating the children of the world. Past history shows that we can effect great change if we will. □

## OF SEVERAL MINDS

**DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.**

### **A LIBERAL CATHOLIC TAXONOMY**

*Or was that a Catholic liberal taxonomy?*

**I**n the November 18, 1994, issue of *Commonweal* the editorial was titled "Liberals & Catholics," and its opening words asked this pertinent question: "Can Catholics be liberals?" (The question was especially pertinent since, just a few weeks earlier, the majority of American Catholics had voted Republican in the congressional elections.) After answering, not surprisingly, that Catholics can be liberals, the editors promised to discuss the question again in the future. (See also my column of December 16, 1994.)

If we want to investigate the compatibility of liberalism and Catholicism, it is essential to bear in mind that not all who are both liberal and Catholic are of the same type. It would be help-

ful to sort out these types, to develop a liberal/Catholic taxonomy. So here is a modest contribution toward such a taxonomy. What I offer are "ideal types," Platonic forms as it were. Of course, no individuals perfectly conform to any particular type, only more or less approximate it.

Catholics who are liberal can be divided into two groups: "Catholic liberals" (CLs) and "liberal Catholics" (LCs). That is to say, among people who are both liberal and Catholic, some (the CLs) stress the liberal aspect of their identity, while others (the LCs) stress the Catholic aspect. The former are liberals first and Catholics second, the latter Catholics first, liberals second.

CLs can be divided into two categories according to how they respond