In Defense of a Real American
Joseph Landis

Very recently, there appeared on the editorial page of The Indianapolis News a letter which had been written to the editor. The letter was more than a little disgusting. It began thus:

"Yes, my friends, it's more than ever time for a change.

"Eisenhower should change his tactics and pay attention to the advice of Senators Taft, McCarthy, and Jenner, along with the others who helped to elect him, instead of cuddling up to Democrats and Fair Dealers, as he seems to be doing.

"Eisenhower wasn't elected to placate the Democrats. He was elected to get this country on a sound and stable economy. He has all the tools at hand and tried and experienced men to help him if he will recognize them and give them the support they need. . . ."

In answer to this letter, first let me state that President Eisenhower is a statesman, not a politician. Because of this, he has tried to surround himself with men who are most capable in their respective fields. Some Democrats were included in his choices, which brought vigorous protests from many Republicans who still believe in the Jacksonian spoils system. Furthermore, it is to the advantage of the American people that the President realizes that the Republican Party does not have a monopoly on able men. Yet he is charged with sugaring the Democrats and forsaking his own party, especially Messrs. Taft, McCarthy, and Jenner.

These three men are well known throughout the nation. Part of their renown comes from the radical conservatism they often display. To say that the President has not listened to the advice of these men is to say something which is not entirely true, but which somewhat compliments Mr. Eisenhower's balanced judgment. Further, it would be more nearly correct to say that it was not Taft, Jenner, and McCarthy who elected Eisenhower, but that it was Eisenhower who elected Jenner and McCarthy.

The letter writer (who not very surprisingly calls himself "a Regular Republican") went on to say:

"If he (Eisenhower) insists on letting pseudo-Republicans like Dulles and Lodge hog the limelight, then it will be up to the real Republicans to give him a lesson in practical politics."

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Henry Cabot Lodge have their faults, as do all men; they will make wrong decisions, but they are hardly to be greatly insulted by being called "false Republicans."

Mr. Dulles has initiative which is recognized by both great political organizations. He can not in all fairness be classed as a pseudo-Republican because he negotiated the Japanese Peace Treaty under a Democratic Administration! He is not a great orator, but he is a great man. He will in all likelihood be the best Secretary of State the United States has had since James Byrnes held that position.

True, the Republicans, like the Democrats, will make mistakes. We must forgive them the human element just as the Democrats, who were re-elected continually, were forgiven for it in the past. This man who calls himself a "Regular Republican" should become a real American. He should be more careful in appraising government officials. Doubtless he has never heard Pope's famous words, "To err is human, to forgive, divine."

In the Cathedral
Paul Stricker

Kneeling on the hard wooden prie-dieu he became slowly aware of the heavy atmosphere of quietness and solitude which inhabited the old cathedral. He could still smell the heavy, sweet odor of the incense, and the pungency of burning wax, age, and polished wood seemed to drug him. The huge colored windows suddenly caught his attention, and while he silently gazed at their beauty the late afternoon sun slotted coins of gold through them. Instantly the cathedral was lit in a blaze of color. The sunburst, reflected a hundred fold by the marble mosaic of the floor, was reflected and refracted a million more times by the gold and stone of the high altar. The colors slowly faded from a startling brilliance to a soothing and melancholy tone as the sun began to fail; finally they dimmed, leaving the church cloaked in a cape of ecclesiastical black.

The church was dark, but on the great walls were cast flickering shadows, as hundreds of little votive lamps sent their silent and endless petitions swirling upward.

As he knelt there meditating, a feeling of spiritual quiescence and satisfaction warmed in him. His eyes drifted slowly across the news of the great church, and he suddenly discerned a slight form bent in silent adoration.

Through the darkness he saw the flickering of the tiny rosary beads as they prayed their way through the small, aged hands—"the Lord is with Thee"—"Thy kingdom come." These humble prayers, he reflected, must be pleasing to Almighty God, and He would undoubtedly take this soul unto His Sacred Heart.

While he watched her, he heard the ancient organ, high in the loft of the cathedral, begin to intone the beautiful music of the Gloria from the "Missa Choralis." He closed his eyes, and in his imagination he visualized a legion of angels descending from above the high altar to join the old woman in her adoration.
As the organist completed the hymn, the vision seemed slowly to ascend and he awoke from his reverie. His eyes searched in vain for the old woman, and they turned toward the altar and then slowly upward.

Description of a City

Walter Maynes

It was the midst of summer and the war was over. Eager to get home, we patiently waited for orders that would send us back to the States. We did not mind waiting, because during the summer Italy was the garden of the world. The Mediterranean lulled in its summer sleep and the gentle slopes of the majestic Appennines made this country an ideal place in which to recuperate from the horrors of war. We had nothing to do but relax, until our orders came.

It was on one of these relaxing days that I decided to walk through the hills to one of the neighboring towns. As I approached a road, a wooden sign with black, hastily written figures on it indicated that it was five kilometers to Presna. The air was cool and refreshing. I walked slowly and thought about going home. Then, off in the distance, I heard the faint hesitating music of a mandolin. It could have been a flute, I thought, but it sounded too rough. Then they hesitated a few moments, and they shrieked and squealed again. In the background now and then I could hear a shrill whistle. It could have been a flute, I thought, but it sounded too rough.

“Suddenly, a rumble filled the air. It came from overhead, and that too came at certain intervals. At first, the sound became audible off in the distance, and then it grew louder as it approached. It tugged and squealed and finally came to a halt. I thought this was surely a strange way for a percussion section to sound, but I remembered this was an American concert.

“Then everyone began murmuring something about ‘tall and massive!’ I thought someone exclaimed it was a hundred stories high! Another person explained that every morning at sunrise this colossal being would, upon awakening, stretch his arms toward the sky. He is famous all over the world for his majestic appearance from the ocean. ‘Ah!’ I thought, ‘this at last must be the conductor’.

Gino talked rapidly now, and he smiled like a boy who was just promised a piece of chocolate cake. I listened in silence as he went on.

“When this immense conductor tapped his baton everything grew still. In a moment the orchestral cry of the city rose in a roaring crescendo. The music was strangely beautiful. The tempo was governed by millions of passing footsteps, as they scurried in all directions. The tempo always remained the same, always andante.

“Then, in the back ground, an aria became audible. The tenor’s voice wasn’t of the best quality, but it was lusty and from the heart. He sang in my language. I mean as I would, if I were to sing in English. His song was gay. The lyrics said something about ripe fresh fruit. He sounded as though he was glad to be in the ‘Big City’.

“This concert started at the same time everyday, and everyday the same music was played.”

Gino stopped now and apologized for not giving me an opportunity to speak. We bade each other farewell, and as I began to leave, Gino tugged at my sleeve. Then he pointed to the old hat on the ground.

“Well, as I entered the harbor of the city, I heard people cheering as we passed the Statue of Liberty. I imagined this tall lady in her green flowing garments was ushering us into a huge concert hall. Since we had arrived early, we could hear the musicians tuning their instruments. They were instruments which emitted strange sounds. However, they all went into creating the orchestral cry of the city.

“The first sounds I heard were the deep throated tubas. They sounded vigorously as we entered the harbor. The men who played them must have been big, because they made a tremendous sound. They continued tuning for a long time. Then everything was silent for a while.

“Afterwards, the violin virtuosos placed their instruments on their shoulders and began to tune up. As we approached a busy intersection, we heard their sounds. They shrieked and squealed. Then they hesitated a few moments, and they shrieked and squealed again. In the background now and then I could hear a shrill whistle. It could have been a flute, I thought, but it sounded too rough.

“When I spoke to him, he stopped singing and turned toward me. He was perched on an empty ammunition box, and carefully placed before him, on the ground, was an old cap. Hearing me approach, he struck up a gay peasant song, but somehow his sad voice did not match the lyrics. I stood still and watched him play. He was a handsome boy about eleven years old. His delicate features and curly hair gave him a somewhat regal appearance. He could have passed for a legendary prince, but there was one defect. He was blind.

When I spoke to him, he stopped singing and turned toward me. I learned that his name was Gino. It was Gino Antonio Alfredo De Maria to be exact, for his father, not unlike most peasants believed that this splendid youth would someday need an eminent-sounding name. As we talked I also learned that he was left blind and orphaned by the war. Then he asked me where I was from, and I told him New York City.

New York City? I was there once,” he replied in a heavily accented voice. “It was for my eyes, the doctor said I would never see again. He didn’t charge me for his work. He was a good fellow.”

Eager to discuss my home town, I asked, “What did you think of the big city, Gino?”

“You know,” Gino began, “That town reminded me of a marvelous concert.”

“How so?” I quizzed.