

Letters

AMERICANS, ITALIAN STYLE

TO THE EDITOR:

I was very happy indeed to read in Mario Puzo's article, "The Italians, American Style," Aug. 6, that the American Italian Anti-Defamation League, headed by Frank Sinatra, plans to raise \$10-million to persuade book publishers, movie studios, TV producers and magazine editors not to call criminals by names ending in "i" or "o." Could I join both Anti-Defamation Leagues?

SHLOMO SHAPIRO.

Wheeling, W. Va.

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TO THE EDITOR:

What do you expect to accomplish by permitting Mario Puzo to circulate so many erroneous and offensive concepts about the Americans of Italian origin? It is most unfair that these good people who, too often, have felt the sting of prejudice and discrimination, should be further vilified by a person who bears an Italian name but, obviously, has none of the warmth, sincerity and generosity of the Italians as a people.

MARY LONGARZO.

New York.

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TO THE EDITOR:

As a fellow American Italian (first generation), I applaud Mario Puzo's "The Italians, American Style." It's unquestionably the finest magazine article on the ethnics of the group I have ever read. Americans of Italian ancestry need no anti-defamation league; the existence of this ill-advised group of do-gooders is the only slur against our people I can recall witnessing in more than 20 years.

PAUL J. GILLETTE.

New York.

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TO THE EDITOR:

As a member of a much defamed group (WASP), I can appreciate the aims of the A.I.A.D.L. I'm sending 10 bucks to "The Boss."

WILLARD J. MORSE JR., M.D.

New London, Conn.

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE ARABS?

TO THE EDITOR:

Sanche de Gramont's "Jerusalem: Experiment in Co-existence," July 30, might be fairly described as "the Israeli viewpoint." It bristled with the usual clichés, apparently implying that Israel is entitled to Jerusalem because it is more modern, progressive,

sanitary, etc., than the Arabs, not to mention their historic claims, etc. Among other things, the article performed the *tour de force* of discussing the Jerusalem question without mentioning the recent U.N. resolutions on Israel's annexation of Jerusalem.

However, the article raises a more fundamental question about your coverage of Arab-Israeli matters. Throughout the long affair you have failed to present a fair and emotionally balanced view. The Arabs' position is seldom presented by you, and when it is, it is usually cast in an unfavorable light.

The Palestine question is not one-sided, and I am sure that your responsible editors and writers know this. At the heart of the problem are the aims of political Zionism, which, since the end of World War II, has been supported by well-meaning but often ignorant Western liberals. If another nation—say Spain—enacted a religious-nationalistic regime such as that of Israel, what would The Times say (and what has it said)? Is there any reason why such a regime should be condoned in Israel but condemned elsewhere?

The fact is that Israel's Zionist leaders do not wish to have a secular state in which Arabs could ever conceivably control the government, and the Palestinian Arabs would outnumber the Jews, even in Israel, had not the 1948 war altered the situation by force. It is fruitless to argue whether the Arab refugees were driven out by the Jews or were led out by their misguided leaders—unless you are prepared to accept as a principle that in time of war civilians must make the right political moves or forever be barred from returning to their homes. Israel must offer some solution to this basic injustice or the Arabs' enmity will continue, if it can ever be ended at this late date.

Perhaps, over a long period, the Arabs can be forced to recognize Israel as it presently exists. The Czechs and French could probably have been forced to accept German domination of the Sudetenland and Rhine if the rest of the world had wanted them to do so. But is this the solution? I think not.

ALBERT R. DOYLE.

New York.

HOT TALK ABOUT DRUGS

TO THE EDITOR:

I was appalled at the misinformation regarding Synanon contained in Dr. Donald R. Louria's "Cool Talk About Hot Drugs," Aug. 6.

Dr. Louria will be interested to learn that Synanon is not seven, but nine years old. As to his statement that Synanon is a "secretive cult," this is absolutely absurd, since thousands of people are welcomed in our seven facilities each year. This, along with the 2,000 or so nonresident Synanon Game players who interact with Synanon residents on a daily basis, makes one suspect that Dr. Louria plays fast and loose with the truth. In our New York City Synanon House, which is just barely one year old, between 75 and 125 people attend our Saturday night open-house parties each and every week. I also wonder if the nearly 100 nonresident N.Y.C. Game Club members might take exception to being considered members of a "secretive cult."

Furthermore, his allegation that Synanon does not return its members to society is completely fallacious, as we can boast proudly of well over 100 of our graduates who have become part of the responsible community residing outside of Synanon.

I cannot help but be of the opinion that Dr. Louria, as so many of Synanon's avowed critics, has never set foot within the doors of a Synanon facility. I would like to take this opportunity to invite him to witness firsthand the inner workings of this "secretive cult."

CHESTER STERN,
Director/New York, Synanon
Foundation, Inc.
New York.

TO THE EDITOR:

Dr. Louria cites the drop in admissions of LSD users to Bellevue Hospital as an indication of diminishing use of the hallucinogen in New York City. Isn't it possible that fewer LSD patients could mean that smaller, and therefore less dangerous, dosages eliminate the need for medical attention? Patients from East Village tell me that experience with LSD invariably results in decreased dosages.

JAMES A. BRUSSEL, M.D.
Assistant Commissioner, Department of Mental Hygiene, New York State.
New York.

TO THE EDITOR:

Articles about Synanon have appeared in the following magazines: Sunday Times, Manas, Look, The Nation, Humanist, Life, Federal Probation, Time, Pageant. Newspapers on the West Coast have been reviewing and reporting Synanon and its activities for years. In New York City, newspapers like The Daily News,

The Times and The Wall Street Journal have done likewise. Synanon has been featured on at least a dozen TV shows and panel discussions and a similar number of radio commentaries. Synanon has also been the subject of the motion picture "House on the Beach" by Rediffusion of London, Ltd., and Intertel; A.B.C. television's "To Slay a White Horse" and a documentary by C.B.S. network television.

Dr. Casriel wrote the book "So Fair a House"; Dr. Lewis Yablonsky wrote "The Tunnel Back." There have been reciprocal lectures between Synanon and U.C.L.A. The Governor of Nevada has publicly thanked Synanon for its part in an amazingly successful penal experiment.

Admit it, Dr. Louria—is it not time to leave your cult and visit the "Open House" at Synanon?

JACK SHAWN.

New York.

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TO THE EDITOR:

For some reason Synanon seems to take on the aura of a cult in the minds of professionals in the drug-rehabilitation business who are conditioned to thinking only in terms of large, government-subsidized, institutional-type programs supervised by themselves or their colleagues.

Synanon is a private enterprise; a nonprofit corporation for the rehabilitation of narcotics addicts, primarily comprised of and administered by ex-addicts. In its short history, it has effected a significant breakthrough in the treatment of addiction and stands as a direct affront to the failure of the professional establishment in this field. Its methods and attitudes may be quibbled about but not dismissed, particularly by a hasty, unsophisticated and inaccurate statistical conclusion.

Dr. Louria's lack of information about Synanon is shocking considering his capacity as president of the New York State Council on Drug Addiction, and the fact that the overwhelming majority of Synanon's members are from New York.

For the record, let me state the basis of my own prejudices, source of information and reason for anger. I am a graduate of Synanon's program, one who "returned to the community" over six years ago after two years' residence in Synanon, which had been preceded by eight years of heroin addiction.

JAMES K. ROSS.

New York.

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TO THE EDITOR:

What Dr. Louria suggests
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as a possible punishment for marijuana abuse seems to me hideously comical. The fact that he considers "forcing" marijuana users to work in Vista-like projects as *punishment* vividly demonstrates how unaware he is of the motivations that drive students today. Dr. Louria should take notice of bulletin boards like the Community Service Bulletin Board here on the Berkeley campus. He would find that a great many students, many of whom take or have taken marijuana, *volunteer* for such punishment.

STEVE ELLIS.

Berkeley, Calif.

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TO THE EDITOR:

The most ironic part of Dr. Louria's article is the final

paragraph, with its pompous rhetoric about involving "our children early in constructive activity and in the problems of our society, for those who are so committed tend not to use drugs." Hell, every honor student and creative person I knew at Boston University had smoked for at least a year.

RAYMOND A. MUNGO.

Washington, D. C.

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TO THE EDITOR:

Dr. Louria's discussion of the British system struck me as violently misleading.

He states that the addict population in Britain has doubled in the last five years without mentioning any actual figures. Britain has gained only 700 addicts in 15 years, so this doubling must boil

Dr. Louria also tells us that the British are planning to enact harsher restrictions without explaining what and why, and thereby leaving us with the vague idea that drugs will soon be outlawed in Britain, too. As I understand it, the new regulations would control dosage more efficiently, as under the present system an addict can sometimes obtain more narcotics than he needs and will then pass them on to curious friends.

Why didn't Dr. Louria also tell us that:

1. There is virtually no traffic in narcotics in Britain.

2. There is no crime rate attributable to addicts in Britain (as opposed to the 20-30 per cent of property crimes in New York City).

3. There are less than 1,000 addicts in Britain (1 out of 50,000 as opposed to 1 out of 2,000 here).

If Dr. Louria believes that some version of legalized heroin will not work in this country by all means let him tell us why.

E. K. THOMPSON.

Carlstadt, N. J.

The author replies: "In regard to Synanon, I fully agree that Synanon has and does cure certain heroin addicts. It has made a laudable and vigorous effort in the field of addiction. However, I would point out the following: (1) In general, Synanon members are voluntary and well enough motivated to remain in the rigidly structured group. (2) Clearly only a relative handful have been returned cured to the community. (3) A large percentage of those entering Synanon have dropped out without completing the program. (4) I used "secretive" not as it relates to Synanon's public interrelationships but referring to their techniques of withdrawing the addict from society into an unusually strict environment.

"I personally have grave doubts that such an approach will be applicable to the majority of addicts who are less well motivated and I feel that return to the community after appropriate therapy is crucial.

"In regard to the English system, their problem is numerically far smaller than ours. However, in the last decade our heroin problem has remained stationary whereas theirs has increased profoundly among young people. Although this is not generally associated with organized criminal elements, the British concern is, correctly, for the damage to individual lives. Not only do they plan to restrict the legal supply but also will probably insist that heroin be dispensed from special clinics."