

awaiting either the obvious further bans on earplugs, nose plugs, eyeshades and diet pills—or a much closer look at logic by Rome.

RUTH WALKER ALBERS

Portland, Ore.

Sir: As an ardent music lover, I want to know if it is too much to hope that His Holiness will confirm another tradition of the church and reintroduce the castrati, who contributed so much unearthly beauty to the church choirs of Rome, and elsewhere in Italy, in the 17th and 18th centuries. They were abolished for humanitarian reasons.

J. HAROLD DOUGLAS

Dublin

Who, Me?

Sir: Reading about the 58th annual convention of the National Urban League [Aug. 9] reminded me of an Akron Urban League member's answer to my question, "Why don't you Negroes of the middle class get more involved in the slums?"

"Why the hell should I? I'm a Phi Beta Kappa, raised in an upper-middle-class area of Akron, star football player, National Honor Society member, top of my class in high school, graduate of Duke University. What the hell do I know about the slums and its problems? Why don't you go help out in the slums?" There you have it, I think.

BETTY CARROLL

Albuquerque

The Meaning of It All

Sir: Even in the much-maligned academic journals, I have never read such solemn nonsense as the allegedly "lucid pessimism" of your Cioran Sampler [Aug. 9]. I really don't think the man is either a philosopher or an intellectual; just a manic-depressive lucky enough to have a publisher.

ROYAL K. BODEY

Colon, Mich.

Sir: Nice of you to give a moment to M. Cioran and his lyrical pungencies, but he ought not to be compared with Nietzsche *et al.*, if for no other reason than Cioran has not yet dared to question the basis of his own sense of futility, as obviously he must. Formal logic should not be dismissed without taking gratefully in hand the single legacy of great value it has willed to us: the challenge of the premises.

Having concluded that order, reason, and time are nothing more than nominalistic nonentities in the chaos of the ineluctable human paradox, but that life insists upon being lived nevertheless, he stopped, breathless in adoration at his own poesy. He failed to continue to the inexorable conclusion that meaning will insist upon inserting itself into the human condition, whether it has realistic application or not—and that the search for specific meanings is the inescapable course of every man's life. What Cioran is suffering from is lack of belief in the conferring of his own thought. Inasmuch as meaning, like murder, will out, each of us has only the choices of seeking it out for oneself or letting it passively happen.

J. G. TURNER

Chicago

Description Challenged

Sir: In the article "Building a Biography" [June 21], TIME characterized Brit-

ish Journalist Jon Kimche unfairly. Mr. Kimche was for 15 years editor of the Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, the official organ of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. However, to my knowledge, he is not, as you state, "known mainly for his sensational anti-Arab diatribes." During the many years that he has reported Middle Eastern affairs, he has never, to my knowledge, published anything that could be so described.

JAMES BELL
Bureau Chief

TIME Magazine
London

How They Died

Sir: Your footnote on the rather bizarre deaths of famous composers [Aug. 16] has made me recall some others: Ernest Chausson (1855-99) died when he drove his bicycle into a wall. Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) died from a carbuncle on his upper lip. César Franck (1822-90) died from complications arising from a mishap in which Franck was run over by a bus. It has never been decided whether Alban Berg (1885-1935) died from complications due to his bad teeth or from an insect bite on his back. And Marc Blitzstein (1905-64) was killed when several men robbed and beat him.

CHRISTOPHER ROUSE

Baltimore

Read It Like It Is

Sir: In regard to the National Education Association's compilation of controversial literature [Aug. 9], you state, "Surprisingly, many of the books were condemned by teachers themselves." There is nothing surprising in this when one considers the lack of progressive and realistic attitudes inherent in the N.E.A. As a high school English teacher, I have used three of the questionable texts in the room with considerable success. Perhaps the N.E.A. should concentrate its own national image rather than attempting to meddle in literary matters.

(MRS.) VIRGINIA K. SAPONE

Malvern, Pa.

Sir: I am a ninth-grade student, and I have read Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Orwell's *1984* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, and these are only a few of the "dirty books" I have read. I found nothing at all wrong with them, except they told me a lot about life, which I eventually would have had to learn anyway.

DEBORAH RECHNITZ

Denver

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TIME, AUGUST 23, 1968

A letter from the PUBLISHER

James R. Shepley

COMBAT reporting is never a safe or simple job. But even for case-hardened veterans, the Nigerian civil war presents one of the meanest assignments yet. Merely getting in and out of Biafra is a dangerous and doubtful proposition. The irregular airlift from Lisbon flies through Nigerian anti-aircraft fire to reach a makeshift airstrip that is only open at night. When correspondents finally manage to get in, they are shuttled off to quarters in the Progress Hotel in Aba, the country's provisional capital. When they are not in the field, they face the hazards of the Progress menu. This consists of yams—fried for breakfast, boiled for lunch, baked for dinner.

For TIME Correspondent James Wilde, a veteran of Algeria and Viet Nam, and for Photographer Priya Ramrakha, such hardships are hardly unusual. On and off, they spent four days with a Biafran commando unit behind enemy lines, crawled through the brush with a Biafran sergeant on a reconnaissance mission, joined white mercenaries leading a dangerous ambush. What really troubled Wilde about this assignment was what he saw happening to Biafra and its people. "A chaplain travels from village to village administering last rites to the dying and blessing the heaps of the already dead," wrote Wilde. "Vultures screech in the brooding, muggy sky. The air is fetid with despair and death. Reporting this story is depressing beyond description."

Covering the federal side of the conflict was rarely more pleasant for Paris Correspondent Friedel Ungeheuer. But as TIME's former West Africa correspondent, Ungeheuer was fortunate to find some old beer-drinking buddies among customs officials at Lagos airport to help him past the red tape and get him on a flight to Enugu, former capital of the Eastern Region, for an eyewitness report of relief operations.



COMBAT CORRESPONDENT WILDE

Cover Writer William Doerner and Associate Editor Jason McManus also had valuable background files from TIME's Nairobi Bureau Chief Edwin Reingold and Ottawa Bureau Chief Alan Grossman. During two years in West Africa, Grossman covered the Ibo massacres that led to the present civil war. Among his more vivid memories, Grossman recalled walking along the platform at the Kano railroad station, "a handkerchief clasped to my nose to dull the lingering stench of more than a hundred Ibo corpses." For him, too, it was all a depressing experience.

Artist Jacob Lawrence, who is making his first appearance on a TIME cover, has been the recipient of a long list of honors since his apprentice days at the Harlem Art Workshop in the 1930s. His paintings now hang in many of the world's major museums. His cover painting reflects the observations of eight months' of living and traveling in Nigeria in 1964. Of the war, he says: "After talking to Nigerians from the east and west, we were not surprised when the conflict broke out."

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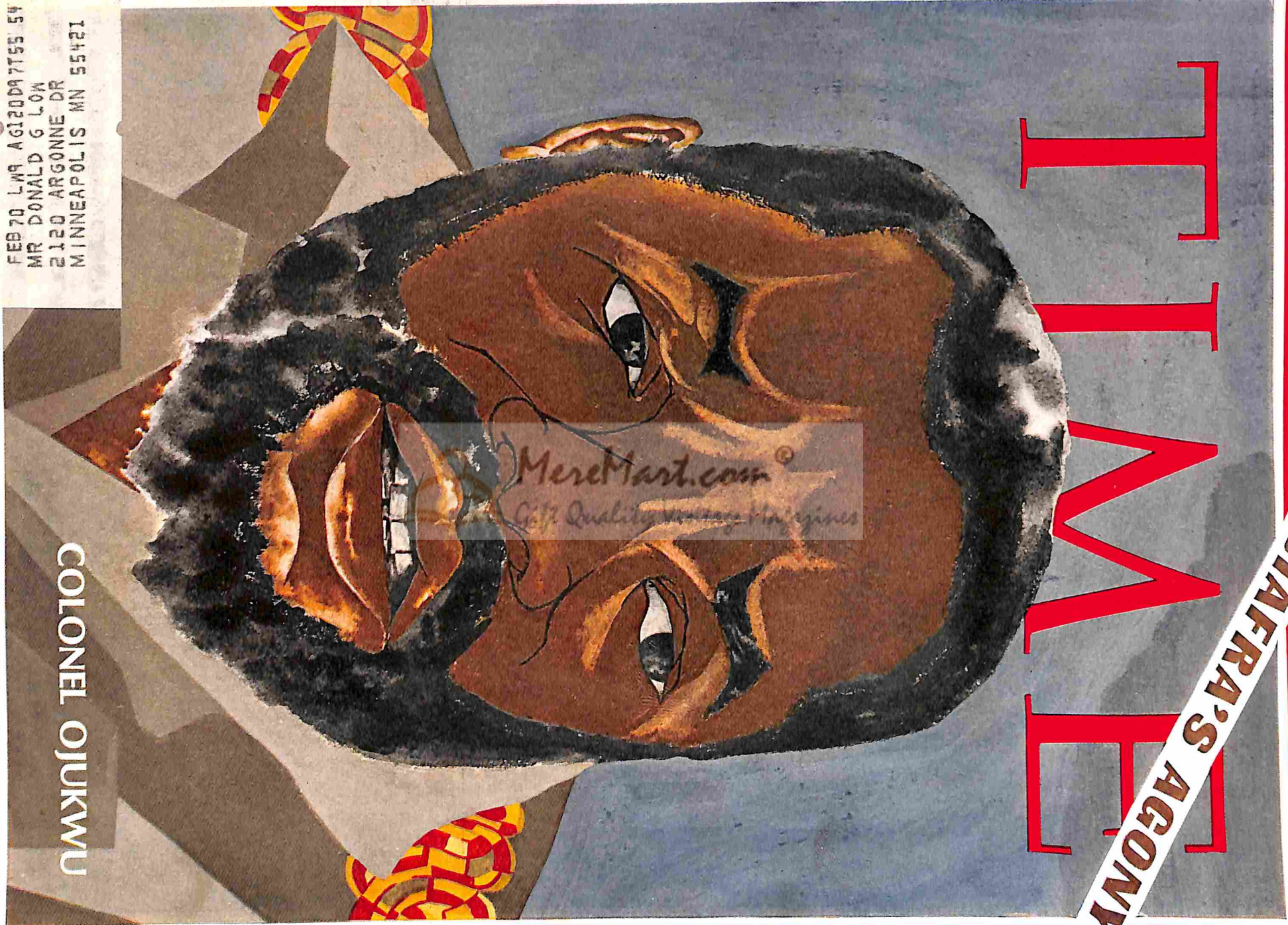
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