

NEW KENNEDY LORE

Folklore after J.F.K.'s assassination, perhaps spurred on by a rage of controversy over the murder "plot," and certainly fed by the existing Kennedy mystique, centered around the "myth" of the fallen hero who in reality still lives. John Kennedy, however, was not asleep in a cave awaiting return in time of need, but was existing in a vegetable-like state, in Parkland Hospital or on a Greek island, presumably awaiting a more prosaic end. In this his "legend" picked up motifs which had earlier circulated about Franklin Roosevelt and actor James Dean. With his widow's remarriage to Aristotle Onassis, probably a factor in the "Kennedy is alive cycle" [see FORUM II, no. 2], the lore also took a more cynical, obscene turn in a spate of Jackie-Ari jokes [FORUM I, no. 4]. Now, after Senator Edward Kennedy's unfortunate implication in the tragic death of Mary Jo Kopechne, new folklore of a cynical nature and in the form of jokes and at least one "traditional manuscript" and a "broadside" have come to light.

The jokes run along the lines of Mary Jo's telling Ted she's pregnant and wondering what to do about it, to which he replies, "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." Several are in question-answer form, as:

Do you know why it took Ted Kennedy over eight hours to report the accident?
Have you ever tried to put a sweater on a dead body at the bottom of a creek?

The "broadside," entitled "Tales of New, New England; or The Kennedy Ferry Tale," was turned in to an instructor in an introductory folklore class at Indiana University at Kokomo and includes such stanzas as:

Six men took their bunnies
For a night of misleadin'
In the Vineyard of Martha
(Not the Garden of Eden).
.....
RIGHT TURNS are unknown
To the Kennedy mind;
But he saved his own life
And left bunny behind.

and carries on in a moralistic tone truly in the tradition of late American balladry.

Perhaps the most remarkable piece of anti-Ted propaganda is a "traditional manuscript" collected in Massachusetts and kindly sent us by Professor Robert A. Barakat of Clark University. It consists of mock newspaper headlines and was apparently run off on rather sophisticated duplicating equipment. It runs as follows:

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of "The Mysterious Madame Blavatsky." There are also articles on the tarot deck (scary) and "Seances in Suburbia" ("What happens when respectable matrons start dabbling in the spirit world?"). A photographic section covers various occult practitioners and workshops and British astrologer Maurice Woodruff is asked for his hottest predictions.

According to the Indiana Daily Student "Polish-Americans" are launching an offensive against Polack jokes. Leading the campaign is Chester Grabowski, editor of the Clifton, N.J., Post-Eagle, who claims the backing of such organizations as the Polish Veterans' Association, the Polish Paratroopers' Association ("What do you call Polish paratroopers?" "Air pollution.") and other groups. He plans to apply pressure to firms which sponsor TV shows on which the offensive jokes have been told. According to Grabowski, the Polish-Canadian Youth Association lodged a similar protest against the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation last year.

We recently received a letter from Darrell L. Gray, James Alton Whitley and Mark Wingate, organizers of the Union Grove, N. C., Old Time Fiddlers' Convention, noting that a rival convention has apparently been set up this year. At the time of writing they had no further facts, but we pass on this information to our readers who can write to 1431 East 7th Street, Apt. 2, Charlotte, N. C. 28204.

And just to prove that folklore is still alive, all pervasive and DANGEROUS, we pass along this latest bit of children's lore, overheard by one of our editors on a Bloomington street (chanted rhythmically, of course):

Marijuana, marijuana
LSD, LSD
Hippies take it, hippies take it
Why can't we, why can't we?

NEW KENNEDY LORE (continued from p. 65)

DUBLIN DISPATCH
Irish Free World

GOD SAVES SENATOR KENNEDY
AS CATHOLIC GIRL DROWNS

Devout Pair Believed to Be
On Way To Midnight Mass

Ted Prays for Almost Nine
Hours Before Leaving Scene

Irish Government Blasts Italian
Builder of Faulty Bridge