

# Editorials



## The two wars

It has been two and a half years now since Lyndon B. Johnson declared: "This Administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America." More recently, however, it has been war in Vietnam that has preoccupied Washington, at a cost of some one billion dollars a month. How, then, goes the "unconditional war" on poverty? Two recent news items shed an interesting light:

- Thirty-six percent of all non-white families in

America have an annual income of \$3,000 or less.

- An official check of city food stores shows that prices are markedly higher in the poorest neighborhoods—eggs costing 10 to 20 cents per dozen more than the citywide average, butter 10 to 15 cents more per pound.

Thus, \$3,000 buys even less for a poor family than for a middle-class one. And there are 8 million such families, more than 30 million Americans in all—twice as many people as in South Vietnam.

## Why must the show go on?



Chairman Pool

There are some cynics who argue that the House Un-American Activities Committee's recent "investigation" of student leftists enlivened the dog days in Washington with a relieving touch of vaudeville. All members of the cast certainly did their best to put on a good show—congressmen snorting, students shouting, lawyers gesticulating, policemen strong-arming, with the audience booing and cheering each new comic turn.

We wonder, though, whether it may not finally

be time to drop the curtain on this long-running repertory show. Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate have both expressed doubt that any legislation would ever result from Chairman Joe Pool's latest hearings, and that is probably about par for the committee's work over the past 30 years. The performances have not been particularly edifying, and our enjoyment of comedy is scarcely enough to justify the continued existence of this unnecessary and irrelevant committee.

## Beware of self-censorship



Lee Oswald

In a move that shows more virtue than wisdom, the Toledo *Blade* and Toledo *Times*, the only daily newspapers in that Ohio city, recently announced that they would henceforth follow a self-created code severely limiting their coverage of criminal cases. According to this code, pre-trial stories will not mention such details as whether a suspect confesses, what he says, whether he has a criminal record, what the police say about his guilt and what kind of defense his lawyer plans.

Theoretically, under these rules, the citizens of Toledo might have read the following complete story in their newspapers of November 23, 1963: "Lee Harvey Oswald, 24 years old, of 1026 North Beckley Avenue in Dallas, was arrested yesterday and charged with murder in the death of President John F. Kennedy. He was arrested in the Texas Theater at about 2:00 P.M. by Officer N. M. McDonald. There is no official comment on the arrest."

In actual fact, as the Warren Commission emphasized, the thousands of reporters milling

around in Dallas helped to destroy any chance of a fair trial for Oswald, and they might even be partly blamed for Oswald's death before the TV cameras. Still, those reporters were also carrying out their constitutional obligation to inform the public about a major news event. There is, in short, an irreconcilable conflict between a suspected criminal's right to an impartial trial and the public's "right to know." That "right to know" is not all-inclusive, of course, and the courts are perfectly capable of curbing what they may consider to be excesses—as the Supreme Court did when it threw out the murder conviction of Dr. Sam Sheppard on the grounds that "virulent publicity" had created a "trial by newspaper."

The court wisely refrained, however, from attempting "to place any direct limitations on the freedom traditionally exercised by the news media." It is up to the press to exercise its own common sense and self-discipline, but self-discipline is not the same as self-censorship. It is the press's function to report the news fairly, not suppress it.