

A Post-War American Tragedy—

# Girl's Slaying Feared Sign of Moral Decay In Youth of Nation

Could Have Happened Anywhere, Civic Leaders of Milwaukee Believe

(Editor's note: The Babich case in Milwaukee is already being called "a post-war American tragedy," a symptom of the rising juvenile delinquency worrying parents of teen-agers all over the country. The United Press staff correspondent Robert Musel, internationally famous reporter, there to report on what has happened and what is being done.

By ROBERT MUSEL, United Press Staff Correspondent  
MILWAUKEE, Wis., Mar. 28.—Sixteen-year-old Patricia Birmingham thought it was funny that her 17-year-old sister, Kathleen, was pregnant from an illicit love affair. She joked about it to her own boy friend, confided it to her high school classmates and remarked slyly on her sister's figure in front of her unsuspecting parents, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Birmingham.

Desperate, unable to face a shame he knew must become known in a few weeks at the most, Kathleen's lover, 19-year-old Milton Babich, begged Patricia to keep the secret until he could manage an elopement.

Today, Patricia is dead, her body dragged from the Milwaukee River where Babich confessed he dropped it, wired to a concrete block—a method he read about in a comic book.

Kathleen is on the verge of nervous collapse. And two pleasant middle-class homes are all but wrecked.

THE BABICH case happened in Milwaukee. But it could have happened anywhere in the United States.

"Something has come over our young people," said Mayor Frank Zeidler, "perhaps something has happened to the American home in the aftermath of war."

Mayor Zeidler knows. Last October his city was stunned by the discovery of one of the worst juvenile vice rings in Midwest history—20 teen-age girls, youths and older men who frankly confessed intimacies that police said were almost "beyond belief."

This followed a raid by the morals squad on a party in which eight boys and girls were found intoxicated.

Another teen-age drinking orgy was reported to police who caught 24 boys and girls from 15 to 18 in the home of a woman who said she saw nothing wrong in minors drinking at home—yet Milwaukee's record for a city of its size, 700,000, is not bad. There are worse.

"What has happened here serves to indicate, however, that juvenile delinquency must be a tremendous problem the whole country over," Mayor Zeidler said.

MILWAUKEE'S current sensation, the Babich case, is gruesome enough in its bare outlines but some of its aspects will interest social investigators beyond the scope of the crime itself.

Patricia apparently considered her sister's pregnancy a matter for jest—a curious attitude perhaps indicative of the changing ideas of what is right and wrong among young folk. That is what Milwaukee's church and civic leaders are setting out to fight.

Babich, tall, handsome, honest student, apparently did not find it hard, judging from the way he smiled at photographers, to elope and marry Kathleen in Kalamazoo, Mich. (where the waiting period is waived for pregnancies), knowing he had killed the sister who was worrying about.

And most disturbing of all, the sisters and Babich were reared in good families, the kind which in normal times are expected to supply the type of citizenry.

Indicated she will stand by him, Babich was denied bail.

Attorney Arthur Richter, former Dean of the Marquette University Law School, said he would fight the case "to the bitter end" if the state attempted to prosecute Babich for first degree premeditated murder, despite an unsigned statement Babich gave authorities.

Mr. Richter indicated, however, that he would have Babich plead guilty if the state reduced its charge against the youth. Wisconsin law provides two lesser degrees of murder and four of manslaughter.

The case broke dramatically, confronted with a mounting stack of evidence, suddenly broke down and confessed that he killed Patricia while attempting to divert her from telling that her sister was carrying his child.

He insisted the shooting was accidental and Mr. Richter appeared to be mapping his defense on that contention.

## Navy Rescues 11 Adrift on Pacific Plane

Landing Ship Reaches Craft Afloat 10 Hours

HONOLULU, Mar. 28 (UP)—A rescue ship today saved 11 men who drifted for 10 hours in their Catalina flying boat after an emergency landing in a remote section of the Pacific Ocean.

The freighter Granger, one of two ships that raced to the stricken plane, radioed Pearl Harbor at 5:58 a. m., Indianapolis time, that the landing ship LEM-448 had taken nine crew members and two passengers aboard.

The Granger reported all the survivors were safe and well.

The flying boat, en route from Kwajalein to Johnston Island, was forced down some 650 miles southwest of Johnston yesterday after one engine failed.

The LSM was 75 miles away, but her radio operator happened to be listening off schedule. He heard the Navy relay a broadcast asking all ships in the area to steam to the aid of the stricken plane.

Planes Dispatched

The LSM, under the command of Lt. Floyd McDaniel Furr of Rock Wills, S. C., reached the scene about nine hours later. The Granger arrived shortly afterward.

None of those aboard the plane was reported as coming from Indiana.

After the pilot radioed that one engine had failed, he radioed his position and said: "I am ditching."

Soon afterward came another message reporting that the plane was down in the open sea and apparently undamaged.

Still later came another message from the pilot reporting that the plane was taking water in the radio compartment amidships. The pilot estimated the plane would stay afloat for three hours.

The Navy relayed distress signals to ships in the vicinity. Two Flying Fortresses from Johnston, 11 privateer patrol bombers from Oahu, one flying boat from Midway and two flying boats from Oahu were ordered to the scene.

STOCKY Albert Birmingham, a machine operator, also has worked hard for his children. His wife continued part time work until recently so that she could send both her daughters through a school of nursing.

"We tried our best," she said helplessly, "what more could we have done . . . what more?"

Kathleen, nursing her tragedy, murmured over and over: "I lived with him five days and didn't know he killed my sister."

Leona Adam Re-elected To Head State Nurses

Miss Leona R. Adam, of St. Vincent's Hospital, today began a second year as president of the Indiana State Nurses' Association.

Other officers elected Saturday included Miss Mae C. McCracken, Evansville, first vice-president; Miss Mildred Ellis, Brazil, second vice-president; Miss Thea Kooz, Ft. Wayne, secretary; and Miss Ethel Jacobs, Indianapolis, treasurer.

3 HURT BY CAIRO BOMB

CAIRO, Mar. 28 (UP)—A grenade exploded on a side street in Cairo today. Three persons were injured slightly.

## 'Exemplary'



## Irene Dunne Wins 1949 Laetare Medal

Notre Dame Faculty Honors Film Actress

SOUTH BEND, Mar. 28 (UP)—Film Actress Irene Dunne has been awarded the 1949 Laetare medal as the "outstanding Catholic layman," the University of Notre Dame announced today.

Miss Dunne became the second actress in the 67-year history of the annual medal presentation to win the award. Margaret Anglin won it in 1927.

Rev. John J. Cavanaugh, CSC, president of Notre Dame, said Miss Dunne was "an example of talented Christian womanhood in a profession and community unhampered by religious or the briefness of marriages and careers."

"She has never subordinated her conscience to her art," Fr. Cavanaugh said, "but from the outset of her career has insisted on wholesome pictures. Through 15 years as a top-ranking star she has remained an exemplary wife and mother."

Attends Mass Daily

Fr. Cavanaugh said Miss Dunne had been married to Dr. Francis Dennis Griffin, a dentist, since 1927. He said despite the fact activity on Hollywood movie sets begins at 7 a. m., Miss Dunne attends mass each morning before reporting to the studio.

Warns of Bankruptcy

"With but 6 per cent of the population and 7 per cent of the area of the globe, which we are, we cannot afford to implement such pacts all over the world," Sen. Jenner said in a radio forum last night.

Should Russia attack Western Europe, we would be required to put 60 to 80 divisions on the Rhine. We couldn't do it. Stalin had 600 divisions in World War II and we had only 61."

Spending billions on such pacts will bankrupt a "strong and free America," and then it will be easy for the Communists to take over, Sen. Jenner concluded.

Another speaker against the Atlantic Pact on the radio last night was former Vice President Henry A. Wallace, 1948 Progressive candidate who was backed by the Communist Party.

## Jenner Ready To Blast ECA, Atlantic Pact

Plans to Outdo Capehart's 3-Hour Speech in Senate

WASHINGTON, Mar. 28.—Sen. William E. Jenner (R. Ind.) expects to take the Senate floor today to denounce both ECA and the Atlantic Pact.

He will outdo his senior colleague, Sen. Homer E. Capehart (R. Ind.) by urging that ECA be abolished. Last week Sen. Capehart gave a three-hour speech supporting an amendment he offered to cut ECA funds from the \$5,800,000,000 approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to \$3 billion.

Sen. Jenner will argue "why not save it all?"

The two Hoosiers have assumed the leadership of the Senate isolationist forces. Neither is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee. Both voted against all post-war international participation funds except the Greek-Turkish. Neither supported the original ECA.

Invincible U. S. air power, combined with the atom bomb, is a better "road to peace" than re-arming Western Europe or trying to move enough of our forces there to stop a Russian invasion.

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Cuts Ankle in 'Death Leap'

SAN FRANCISCO, Mar. 28 (UP)—Despondent because she was out of work, Miss Martha Hubert, 47, closed her eyes and jumped from the sixth floor of her downtown hotel yesterday. A ground-floor awning broke her fall. She suffered cuts on her left ankle.

## Wise Pupils Con Dictionary As Spelling Bee Nears

Preliminaries Open Next Week in Contest Sponsored by Times and City Park Dept.

By ART WRIGHT  
Wise grammar school pupils who plan to compete in The Times Spelling Bee will be brushing up on all types of words this week. The contest, sponsored annually by The Times and the City Park and Recreation Department, opens next Monday in six centers. Throughout next week, preliminaries will be staged at 12 centers. The Indianapolis Champion, who will be crowned in the finals May 6, will go to Washington, D. C. May 23 to compete in the National Spelling Bee. The Indianapolis champion could win as much as \$500 in cash and not less than \$40 in the national finals.

The contest is open to every pupil who has not passed beyond the eighth grade and who is not yet 16 years old.

On Even Basis

Contestants should study words of all grades, including high school words. Regardless of the contestant's grade in school he or she will compete on an even basis with students in other grades for they all spell from the same word-list. The younger pupils many times have spelled down the students in advanced grades.

If you haven't sent in your entry blank, clip it and mail it now to The Times.

Contest Schedule

Following is the schedule of first and second preliminary contests. No contests will be held the week of Apr. 11 because of Holy Week.

MONDAY, APR. 4 AND APR. 14  
Christian Community Center, 4300 Englewood Ave.—Schools 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 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