LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Time-Ponder

I was in the beginning very fat, with no nose whatsoever. That sounds incredible now. I jurther had, when I was three years old, a deep basso voice with which I frightened people who forgot to look into the baby buggy. I further liked to bite little girls.

Many of you have had a good word to say about the art that accompanies these letters, and others have asked who the artist is. Having no reason for keeping him under cover. I can say that he is a tall, gangling, affable young man named Richard Erdoes, and let him continue his story:

"I was born shortly before the outbreak of World War I in Frankfurt am Main. The place was accidental. My father was an opera

singer and happened to have a contract with the Frankfurt Opera at the time. He was Hungarian; my mother was Viennese. My father died by accident four weeks before I was born. My mother lived henceforth with her two sisters, who were actresses and very beautiful.

"I became sickly and measly and, when I was seven, a doctor recommended that I be sent to the Odenweldschule, a very modern and experi-

mental school in the woods. I arrived there in midwinter, and was led into a snow-covered enclosure where many little boys and girls hopped around merrily in the nude. I had on a heavy overcoat, a sailor suit, a flannel shirt, a union suit. I was peeled out of all this after a heroic fight and was left in the snow, naked and howling. My health improved from there on, and I spent most of the time making surrealistic paintings, once it was discovered that I liked to draw.

"When I was about 14 and going to school in Berlin, I came for the first time into contact with a Nazi belonging to the Hitler Jugend. He went to school with me and once invited me up to his place. His father, who had been an officer in the German Imperial Navy, had transformed the best room of the apartment into a replica of a U-boat. Each evening a sacred ritual took place. The father would assemble the whole family to "sink Englishmen." Through a circular hole (all that was left of the window) he would push a kind of telescope; bells rang, red and green lights flashed, and everybody roared commands through megaphones. When it was over and three English cruisers were sunk, I was asked how I liked it. I told them, frankly, that I thought they were crazy. Whereupon the whole family fell upon me and beat me up. I had the satisfaction of wrecking most of the U-boat in the process.

"At 17 I entered the Berlin Academy of Art. It was the time of the reactionary Papen government, which prepared the way for the Nazis, and the behind-the-stage work to make Hitler chancellor was already in full swing. A group of us who were united in our opposition to the Nazis decided that we regime

James a. Linen



ERDÖS Richard artist



Remember . . this is

Time, 1947, april 21.