

Vietnam: Where Is the Passion?

Does anyone remember Vietnam? It's still there, you know. We haven't sunk it to the bottom of the Sea of Japan yet, though we're making a noble effort.

It seems that too many people have shoved the war to the most distant corner of their minds; have become numb to the fact that the killing and the maiming and the destruction — if there is any thing left to destruct — is still going on at a more rapid pace than ever.

True, the politicians and the clergymen and the professors and the college students still are talking and writing about the necessity for peace.

But some of the passion is gone. Seldom is Vietnam the subject of a magazine cover story anymore. News of the battles is more often on the inside pages of the newspapers.

Most people probably don't bother to read the articles anymore. It all begins to sound the same after a while. So many North Vietnamese or Viet Cong were killed at such and such an obscure place in the jungle. Of course, ten times fewer Americans and South Vietnamese were also killed. The "enemy" is about to launch a new offensive. Captured documents reveal that the "enemy" is in trouble. And on and on.

Most of the people seem to agree by now that we were wrong to get into the war and that we are doing ourselves and the South Vietnamese more harm than good by pursuing it.

But no one bothers to verbally defend it or deplore it. The old arguments for both sides seem dry and sterile. The people just want to get it over with and forget it.

The photographs and newsreels depicting the horror are no longer horri-

fyng. The pangs of guilt or pity are not so sharp when we see the bullet-ridden body of a young Vietnamese girl, or the emaciated lump of napalm scorched flesh that once was a child, or the rows upon rows of mangled dead boys, Vietnamese and American.

We have placed a psychological protective shield between ourselves and Southeast Asia. The depressing and frightening details of battle only come bursting through when a student receives his draft notice or his orders to report to Vietnam.

For those who are too old or too young or too female to comprehend the horror through direct participation, the message is delivered in a pine box when relatives or their remains are sent home.

But perhaps it is better that the people at least partially block the horrible scene from their minds. Perhaps to describe the sordid details of the war is skirting the issue, missing the point. While a knowledge of the suffering may serve as a catalyst toward attaining peace, it is irrelevant to that peace.

All of the nation's intellectual resources must be directed toward ending the war, not describing it. And it is also missing the point when the politicians harangue about ending the war "honorably" or "justly."

A war that had a dishonorable beginning and a dishonorable middle can have no honorable end.

The influence and prestige of this country have been damaged irreparably by the irrational and monumental series of mistakes which thrust us into Vietnam. The black mark in our history which is Vietnam will not soon be erased no matter how or when—or if—we end it.



"If it please the court, I'll stand for the first few sessions!"

Collegian Invites Faculty Writers

University faculty are invited to submit articles to Collegian's "Faculty Forum." Columns of opinion from all members of the faculty are welcome.

The articles should be typewritten and triple-spaced and should not exceed 75 lines in length. Interested faculty should bring their articles to Collegian office, 20 Sackett Building.

PEANUTS



Collegian Letter Policy

The Daily Collegian welcomes comments on news coverage, editorial policy and campus or non-campus affairs. Letters must be typewritten, double spaced, signed by no more than two persons and no longer than 30 lines. Students' letters should include name, term and major of the writer. They should be

brought to the Collegian office, 20 Sackett, in person so proper identification of the writer can be made, although names will be withheld by request. If letters are received by mail, Collegian will contact the signer for verification. The Collegian reserves the right to fairly select, edit and condense all letters.

Letters to the Editor

Realism and the Big 3

TO THE EDITOR: I compliment the Collegian as a type of forthright, tempered avant garde of reporting. Presumably I am in the minority of freshmen students who do not find the Collegian guilty of "left-wing crap."

Yet I find the political stance of the editorial board in respect to the current political year to be contradictory, illogical and, to a great extent, irresponsible.

With the satirical comments of editor Levine (Oct. 4), concerning the possibility of Wallacian neo-nazism, my views are in accordance. The possible summum bonum of a Wallace election would be the political revisionist minority groups have been awaiting.

Nevertheless, radicalism has not matured to the extent to which it can take on a President Wallace and win, and I am sure that you will agree his crypto-facism shall void American political democracy as no other, save perhaps Richard Nixon's "let free enterprise do it" nonsense.

Yet you advocate vote abstention from the three candidates who have a reasonable possibility of being elected. I laud your morality, yet I find you unrealistic, and therefore, irresponsible.

Richard Nixon shall be elected in November unless we are moved to mobilization for a sometime liberal and political hasbeen, but nevertheless, the only candidate who comes close to being able to avoid political stagnation and degeneration.

HHH, if nothing else, can give us four years of a political nihilism in which to attempt to effect a reformation of the system, which we need so desperately. Which ain't so bad, considering...

I allegorize your position to be that of a convicted man already in the noose, who, being granted a stay of execution, rejects it, saying "I am innocent; a full pardon or nothing."

Come on, fellas. Be realistic. Name Withheld By Request

Do the Freshmen Care?

TO THE EDITOR: There is a somewhat familiar adage, when referring to the Presidency, that the times and the environment somehow produce the right man to fill the bill. From my observations thus far, the Class of '72 will have to rely greatly on this belief.

In a college which stresses and supports free speech and scorns student apathy, I believe the manner in which the campaign for freshman class president was handled is deplorable.

The only means of being able to vote knowledgeably was to have one of the candidates residing in your hall or house; even then it was still up to the voter to search out the candidate and personally question him concerning his policies. Consequently, the majority of the votes cast in the last few days was the result of the advice of a friend, nocturnal deliverance of pamphlets and a series of posters presumably placed in "key" areas.

It doesn't seem too far fetched that the Administration could have reserved a night, a time and a place at which those students interested could have heard exactly what the candidates had to say. Before I pursue what may be an area of false accusation, it is also a strike against all of the candidates if they did not attempt to initiate such action.

Granted, in all probability, the turnout would not have been massive, but if we are truly interested in erasing apathy, we must establish some starting point. I think we could feel far more confident of progress if, after having read the election results in the Collegian, we knew what our leaders stood for and not just their names.

We have been persistently plagued with the poster: "We care if you do." Believe me, we care; we're just not sure about whom or what.

Can Apathy Give a Damn?

TO THE EDITOR: Re Mr. Harvey's response to my letter in Thursday's Collegian: — I am attending Penn State for two reasons: to prepare myself educationally for a role in my chosen vocational area; and to reach a point of maturation where I can shape my ideals and values as I prepare to enter an adult society as a responsible individual.

I find that trying to accomplish these two goals doesn't leave me much spare time. Perhaps this is why I don't spend my Sunday afternoons down on the Old Main lawn.

In the letter immediately preceding mine, a music department faculty member wrote, "I think that a young person with the opportunity to attend Penn State has much to think about, to be thankful for, and damned little to bitch about." I could not agree more wholeheartedly.

It seems to me that "student activism" has become a magic term — a sort of catch-all phrase used to describe what, surely, must be becoming a full-time curriculum. Granted, Penn State is not a utopia. There are issues which are important to all students and should be dealt with accordingly, including housing on

and off-campus, student bookstores, and curriculum revision.

But I maintain a co-operative attitude is required. Daily blasts of condemnation for those who "sit in" nowhere other than the classroom is not the way to gain support for these reforms. Vociferation itself is only a word, not a virtue. What the "shouting" students have to say is the important thing.

Perhaps the fact that Judy Rubin and Jeff Shear suffered defeat in the election, while Alan Krivoy won a race contested only by two last-minute "write-in" candidates says something for my "apathetic" majority. Maybe they do "give a damn" after all.

SDS: A Social Fraternity

TO THE EDITOR: I, as many others, have been watching the growth of the SDS at Penn State, their meetings, their activities, and the presentation of their ideas.

I have come to the conclusion that the Students For A Democratic Society is misnamed. In my opinion, this group is sheltered under the guise of a political organization, but is, in fact, a social fraternity for people who can successfully relate to no one but each other. While I am glad these people are finding an identity, it is unfortunate that this is being done under a pretense of politics.

Ironically, politics, their purported purpose, appears to be the subject upon which they least agree.

Thus far, the SDS's most conspicuous action has been to impede and seriously damage the Free Speech Movement by attaching their unfavorable name to it.

Solution to Housing Mess

TO THE EDITOR: The subject of discussion is: solution of student housing by the scientific method.

How grave is the shortage of housing in State College? By American standard — middle class of 1950-60's — the problem of housing shortage is real. However, since no student is sleeping in the street, the problem is really nonexistent in the physical sense.

The picture will be different if one wants to plug in two constraints on the problem, such as, cost and service. The abuse among some landlords is genuine. Perhaps they don't give a damn to public relations. The self-righteous individuals would wonder how these nasty landlords can get away with what they are doing. In the last analysis, it is the "marketplace" that determines the interplay between service-goods and the consumers. Before stating my specific solutions to the problem some background of the American business should be presented.

It is generally recognized that the optimum level of a business operation is between 80-90 per cent of its capacity. If we can't keep the downtown housing occupancy maintain a rate of no more than 90 per cent, then all the landlords would smile and try their best to keep the tenants happy.

Under such conditions, the student tenants would obviously be pleased both in terms of cost and service. For the knowledge of the newcoming students, the shortage of housing has been publicly acknowledged since the fall of 1966. It may be added that the "tight-money" situation in the American economy has existed simultaneously.

The first specific solution to the problem would demand the good-natured and self-righteous students, say representing 10 to 20 per cent of the student body, to sacrifice their comfort and conveniences by crowding themselves in downtown apartments. Or, this may be implemented by the help of the University Administration to provide "dirt-cheap" dormitory facilities, for example, at \$5 per person per week for occupancy of four to six persons in the same room. Thus, the pressure of over-occupancy (above the 90 per cent mark) among the commercial apartments is released. The marketplace will keep the landlords in line.

The second solution to the problem would require the assistance of the benevolent organizations, particularly the Church groups. In the heat of housing complaints last week, the well-informed would know that a million-dollar church is going to be completed in the Borough soon.

Don't we wish that the Church had just delayed their project and, instead, in the same place stood a complex of 200 units of decent apartments renting on a non-profit basis.

It appears that the above two solutions are workable only if the public-spirited individuals and groups are willing to step in and rectify the housing problem. Otherwise, one would have to live with the prerogatives of the American capitalistic system. The writer wishes to conclude by invoking the maxim: you get what you pay for.

H. S. Liu, Graduate student.

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1968

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