

Entertainment

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HOLLYWOOD (AP) — Item 1:
"Support Our Boys in Canada."

The reference is to Americans who cross the border to dodge the draft. Where does the placard appear? Not in a peace march, but on a network television screen so rapidly that most viewers couldn't read it.

Item 2:

On the Smothers Brothers Show, Tom and Dick are discussing the offering of London Bridge for sale. Tom says he would like to buy it, and Dick asks what he would do with the bridge.

Tom: I'd give it to President Johnson.

Dick: What for?

Tom: To bridge his credibility gap.

Item 3:

Pat Paulsen, avowed noncandidate for president on the Smothers Brothers Show, comments: "As a comedian, I think I could be just as effective as President Johnson." Cut by the CBS censors was his following line: "But I don't think I could run the country as funny."

Item 4:

Tommy Smothers, by a curious pattern of cross-pollination, appears on the Rowan and Martin "Laugh-In" and delivers the one-line blackout: "Let's all

get behind President Johnson—and push!"

These items offer evidence of the New Dissent that has appeared in the entertainment medium during the past year. Dictionary definition: Dissent—to differ in sentiment or opinion from the majority.

Political satire has been a part of the American entertainment scene from Will Rogers to Bob Hope. Comedy makers from the time of Aristophanes have used those in authority as the butt of their jokes, usually to the glee of those who are governed.

But in recent times the tone of the satire has become more strident, the attacks more bitter. They range from the antiestablishment humor of The Smothers Brothers Show and "Laugh-In" to the sledge-hammer blows of the off-Broadway play, "MacBird."

The remarkable aspect of the New Dissent is the availability of mass media. When Harry Belafonte took over the "Tonight" show in place of Johnny Carson this month, he not only sang calypso songs; he also used the NBC program as a forum for his views on Vietnam.

In interviewing Dr. Martin Luther King, Belafonte declared: "All of us here feel very strongly on the war, and we oppose it." The singer added his support of the protest vote for Sen. Eugene McCarthy. No demand for equal time to register

opposing views has been reported.

Recently Tommy Smothers, who opposes President Johnson both on and off the television screen, was asked about the issue of equal time for Democratic loyalists.

"We feel the administration's views on Vietnam get plenty of airing on television," the comedian replied. "The Bob Hope Show, for example." His argument is that Hope, with his Christmas special based on his entertainment tour of Vietnam, gives wide circulation to the hawkish side of the war. Hope and John Wayne are the most vocal of the show-business hawks; Wayne recently directed and starred in the first major film about the Vietnam war, "The Green Berets."

Comics Dan Rowan and Dick Martin of "Laugh-In" acknowledge that they are doves on Vietnam and they wear peace emblems on their jackets as proof. They say they think most of the people in the country are for peace.

Dissent from the administration's Vietnam policies is being expressed in film theaters as well. United Artists is releasing "Live for Living," in which Claude Lelouche ("A Man and a Woman") inveighs against the American position in Vietnam. The film was financed by U.S. money and stars Yves Montand and Candice Bergen.

Another American distributor, the Walter Reade Organization, is releasing "Tell Me Lies," a film version of Peter Brooke's London stage play attacking the Vietnam war. The movie features members of the Royal Shakespeare Company, as well

as comments by Stokely Carmichael, and clips on the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk.

On the American entertainment scene, the issue of the Vietnam war has brought the kinds of dissent that celebrities haven't dared for almost 20 years.

During the Depression and war years, show business personalities often lent their names and financial support to causes that were at variance with majority opinion. The ascent of Sen. Joseph McCarthy changed that. Many actors, writers and directors found they were unemployable because their names had been linked by congressional committees or private organizations to causes that proved to be unpopular.

The result was a long period in which entertainment figures refused to engage in any political activity.

In recent years they have been slowly returning to the political arena. The success of George Murphy and Ronald Reagan proved to many actors that political activity should not be precluded because of their profession.

Now the Vietnam war has prompted many performers to speak out in a manner they would not have dared a few years ago.

"I'm just not a political fellow," says actor-director Carl Reiner, "and I've never been politically active before. I never dared, because I saw too many of my friends ruined during the McCarthy era."

"But now I'm taking a position. I'm too disturbed about what might happen in Vietnam to stand by and do nothing."

Last month Reiner acted as emcee for a "Broadway for Peace" benefit at Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall in New York City.

The program featured two dovish senators, Gruening of Alaska and Morse of Oregon, plus an assemblage of show business figures: Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Harry Belafonte, Barbra Streisand, Tommy Smothers, Eli Wallach, Anne Jackson, Leonard Bernstein, Diahann Carroll, Robert Ryan, Tony Randall, etc.

Noting the turnout, Variety quoted an observer: "I don't think I've ever seen so many popular entertainers supporting a minority view."

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