

tages we have forfeited a language that would nourish the relations that we now complain of having lost—to nature, to others, and to ourselves.

But can we have both languages?

In so far as a writer is an artist, he creates a new language that unites the primitive density of meaning and depth of feeling with the civilized man's power of abstraction. So Blake, in the next two lines of his poem, can ask the sophisticated theological question:

*What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

In the simplest metaphor of a poem or in the most developed scenes of a fiction, we find another instance of this strange and healing union of regression and sophistication. Here, in a parallel way, we find not merely a verbal language, but a primary language

of imagery (the image of metaphor or the image of scene), the pre-verbal "language" that reaches back to infancy and the primitive dark; but it still remains the naked language of our emotional life by which we envisage the object of desire, hate, or fear. At the same time, poetry not only utters itself in such a language that reminds us of our deepest being, but embodies ideas and values; and so its images are, in one dimension, a sophisticated dialectic. The poem or fiction eventuates in "meaning"—no, as "meaning."

Literally, the process of composition is, in one degree or another, a movement toward meaning. The writer (like any artist) is not a carpenter who builds the chicken coop according to a blueprint. If the carpenter has a blueprint he knows exactly what kind of chicken coop will be forthcoming. But

the writer, no matter how idea or strong his intuitive projected work, can never know it will "be" or "mean" until word is in place—for every word image, every rhythm participates, "being," and the "being" mately, the "meaning." And is made to share in this process

We are bombarded all day long by abstractions, by the "truths" of the advertising man, the politician, the preacher, and suddenly a good poem or novel reminds us that every truth that is not lived into, not earned out of experience, either literally or imaginatively, is a lie. We are redeemed from all our would-be redeemers—especially from those who would redeem us for their own profit or power—and reminded that we must, after all, redeem ourselves. How? By learning to respect the self and respect experience. Chastened by a keener

Nixon and the prisoners of war

by Jon M. Van Dyke  
The New York Review  
7 Jan 71

into the presence of ourselves."

Am I offering my own version of old-fashioned revivalism and snake oil? Not quite. I am not saying that if we read a few good books we can save the country. But I am saying that they might help wake us to the fullness of our own nature, for good and for evil. To wake us, that is, from the torpor in which we now rest—from what Blake called the "single vision and Newton's sleep."

## FOLLY ON ROYAL STREET BEFORE THE RAW FACE OF GOD

Drunk, drunk, drunk, amid the blaze of noon,  
Irrevocably drunk, total eclipse or,  
At least, almost, and in New Orleans once,  
In French Town, spring,  
Off the Gulf, without storm warnings out,  
Burst, like a hurricane of  
Camellias, sperm, cat-squalls, fish-smells, and the old  
Pain of fulfilment-that-is-not-fulfilment, so  
Down Royal Street—Sunday and the street  
Blank as my bank account  
With two checks bounced—we—  
C. and M. and I, every  
Man-jack skunk-drunk—  
Came.

A cat,  
Gray from the purple shadow of bougainvillea,  
Fish-head in dainty jaw-clench,  
Flowed fluid as thought, secret as sin, across  
The street. Was gone. We,  
In the shock of that sudden and glittering vacancy, rocked  
On our heels.

A cop,  
Of brachycephalic head and garlic breath,  
Toothpick from side of mouth and pants ass-bagged and holster low,  
From eyes the color of old coffee grounds,  
Regarded with imperfect sympathy  
*La condition humaine*—  
Which was sure-God what we were.

We rocked on our heels.

At sky-height—  
Whiteness devoured in dazzle and frazzle of light like  
A match-flame in noon-blaze—a gull  
Kept screaming above the doomed city.  
It screamed for justice against the face of God.

Raw-ringed with glory like an ulcer, God's  
Raw face stared down.

And winked.

We  
Mouthed out our Milton for magnificence.

For what is man without magnificence?

Delusion, delusion!

But let  
Bells ring in all the churches.  
Let likker, like philosophy, roar  
In the skull. Passion  
Is all. Even  
The sleaziest.

War  
Came. Among the bed-sheet Arabs, C.  
Sported his gold oakleaf. Survived.  
Got back. Back to the bank. But  
One morning was not there. His books,  
However, were in apple-pie order. His suits,  
All dark, hung in the dark closet. Drawn up  
In military precision, his black shoes,  
Though highly polished, gave forth  
No gleam in that darkness. In Mexico,  
He died.

For M.,  
Twenty years in the Navy. Retired,  
He fishes. Long before dawn the launch slides out.  
Land lost, he cuts the engine. The launch  
Lifts, falls, in the time of the sea's slow breath.  
Eastward, first light is like  
A knife-edge honed to steel-brightness  
And laid to the horizon. Sometimes,  
He comes back in with no line wet.

As for the third,  
The tale is short. But long,  
How long the art, and wisdom slow!—for him who  
Once rocked on his heels, hearing the gull scream,  
And quoted Milton amid the blaze of noon.

—Robert Penn Warren

# Nixon and the Prisoners of War

Jon M. Van Dyke

President Nixon's decision to send an expedition of commando forces to North Vietnam on a futile mission to rescue American prisoners of war was the climax of an eighteen-month campaign to arouse American public opinion about one of the less significant issues of the war and to divert our attention from the fighting and bombing and killing that are still continuing throughout Southeast Asia.

Since March, 1969, officials in the Nixon Administration have been attacking the North Vietnamese for their treatment of captured Americans in an attempt to revive sagging emotional support for the war. Until November 21, 1970, the attacks were only verbal, portraying the North Vietnamese as evil persons who work unrelentingly to harass American prisoners. The American pilots, on the other hand, were portrayed as virtuous men who found themselves in North Vietnamese prisons through an unfortunate and totally fortuitous series of events. The "prisoner-of-war problem" has been treated throughout as an issue unrelated to the war itself.

It is not, of course, unusual for a nation at war to depict its enemy as inhumane or even subhuman, and Americans seem particularly inclined to believe grisly tales of torture and sadism on the part of people who have the audacity to stand up to our military power. Lyndon Johnson and the other spokesmen for his policies regularly referred to the North Vietnamese as "aggressors" and to the Viet Cong as "terrorists" and "assassins." To their credit, however, they never engaged in an unrelenting hate campaign which cynically distorted the information known about prisoners in North Vietnam in order to promote support for a war that the United States should never have become involved in and should certainly be extricated from by now.

Nixon's attempt to focus attention on the prisoner-of-war issue bears a strong resemblance to his campaign for law and order during the past two elections. The purpose of both attempts is to evoke a simplistic emotional response to what is inevitably a complex problem and to turn our attention away from the deep problems which the President will not or cannot solve.

Still, it must be said that the North Vietnamese have failed to comply with certain requirements of the 1949 Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War. Until December, 1969, the North Vietnamese did not permit regular correspondence between the prisoners and their relatives; they have still not published a complete list of the prisoners; they keep some of the prisoners in solitary confinement and do not provide the men with adequate recreation facilities; and they do not allow inspection of the camps by any official neutral body.

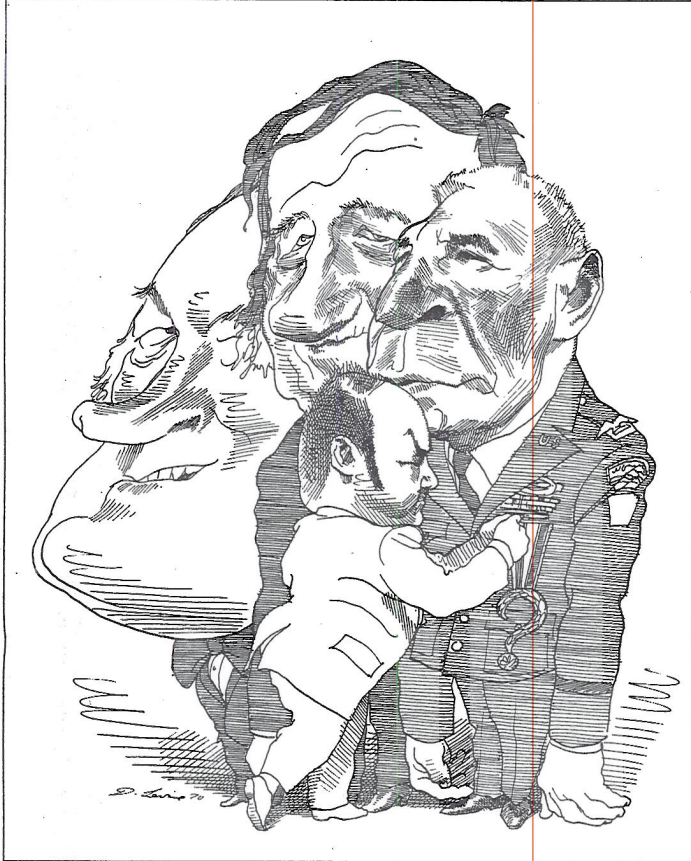
It is also true, however, that for several months before the commando raid on the Sontay prisoner-of-war camp the North Vietnamese were cooperating in the frequent exchange of letters and packages between the pilots and their relatives. They were gradually releasing the names of more and more men who are held in North Vietnam, and were responding to specific in-

quiries about whether missing men are held in the prison camps. Moreover, two released prisoners have charged that the North Vietnamese engage in physical brutality toward the prisoners, but two other freed pilots—who have recently described their captivity after long periods of keeping silent in accordance with the wishes of the Department of Defense—have said that they were protected from physical intimidation once they were in the hands of North Vietnamese guards and when they were at the formal prison camps.

Just before the commando raid, the North Vietnamese—as part of their recent policy of fuller disclosure on

regular reports of such deaths, some as the result of "accidental" shootings by prison guards. Americans who have returned from Vietnam also constantly report episodes of brutality toward Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers both during and after capture, in which torture of captives before they are delivered to the formal prisoner-of-war camps is commonplace. There is no evidence that the Viet Cong have ever attacked a Saigon-run POW camp after such reports.

President Nixon and his aides decided to speak out on prisoners of war shortly after they took office, when popular enthusiasm for continuing the war in Vietnam was at a low point.



prisoner-of-war matters—announced that six men had died during or after their capture in North Vietnam. A subsequent letter, sent a day before the raid but not received in the United States until after the raid, reported that eleven other men had died during or after capture. Other material I have seen indicates that at least seven of these men were captured alive and had died during captivity. This is not a particularly high figure, in view of the fact that many of the men were seriously injured as they bailed out over North Vietnam and that 339 are now listed as alive and most of them are corresponding regularly with their relatives in this country. The figure, in fact, reveals a much lower death rate among prisoners than occurred during World War II, when 27 percent of the soldiers in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps died during captivity.

The Department of Defense has classified as "confidential" the number of prisoners who have died in the Saigon-run POW camps. But in an article that appeared in the December 6 St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, Richard Dudman reported that the figure is in fact over 800, including more than 300 North Vietnamese and more than 500 Viet Cong soldiers. There have been

Secretary of Defense Laird began the assault by charging that there was "clear evidence" that North Vietnam was not treating American prisoners humanely. He charged that the North Vietnamese refused to identify all the captured pilots, refused to permit prisoners to correspond freely, did not provide adequate medical care, and did not permit any neutral organization to inspect the camps. This declaration was followed in quick succession by statements of Secretary of State Rogers before Congress, Henry Cabot Lodge at the Paris Peace Talks, and American delegate Rita Hauser at the United Nations, all calling North Vietnam's attitude toward American pilots "inhumane" and "inexcusable."

At the same time, American military and civilian officials began traveling around the country to meet with wives and relatives of the prisoners. With encouragement from Washington, these women flew to various North Vietnamese embassies throughout the world to beg North Vietnamese diplomats to release the prisoners, or at least their names.

In August, 1969, three more prisoners were freed by North Vietnam (bringing to nine the number that have been released). When they met with the

press just after leaving North Vietnam, they said their food, housing, and medical treatment had been "adequate,"<sup>1</sup> and they "assured relatives of the Americans left behind in the North Vietnamese camps they had no cause to worry."<sup>2</sup>

A month later, however, when the government presented two of them at an elaborate press conference, they had changed their story, and made serious accusations involving torture and physical abuse. Navy Lieutenant Robert F. Frishman and Apprentice Seaman Douglas B. Hegdahl charged that the North Vietnamese had tortured certain prisoners (not including themselves) by pulling out fingernails or tying their hands to the ceilings, and that Lieutenant Frishman was forced (for violating prison rules) to sit tied to a stool in an unbearably hot hut. Frishman also said that the North Vietnamese had neglected persons who needed medical attention and had kept many prisoners in solitary confinement.

Following up these accusations, both houses of Congress in late 1969 and early 1970 unanimously passed a resolution accusing North Vietnam of several violations of the Geneva Convention (the lack of mail, neutral inspection, and medical attention) and calling for increased efforts "to obtain humane treatment and release of American prisoners of war." Several months later, both houses passed a resolution declaring that May 1, 1970, "be commemorated as a day for an appeal for international justice for all the American prisoners of war and servicemen missing in action in Southeast Asia."

The Frishman-Hegdahl accusations also helped to persuade H. Ross Perot, a forty-year-old Texan who has made over a billion dollars selling computer data-processing systems, to try to dramatize the plight of the Americans in Hanoi. Perot calls himself a political independent who has supported both Democrats and Republicans, but his support of President Nixon's actions in Southeast Asia has been intense and unswerving. During the fall of 1969, when demonstrations were being staged across the country to protest the continuation of the war, Perot financed a major advertising campaign calling for support of Nixon's policies and immediately thereafter found himself being invited to White House receptions. He then announced his offer to ransom all Americans captured in Southeast Asia for \$100 million and began organizing a series of guerrilla-theater extravaganzas to arouse public concern.

On December 24, 1969, Perot chartered a jetliner, filled it with fifty-eight wives of missing soldiers and pilots, and ninety-four of their children, and flew them all to Paris to meet with North Vietnamese diplomats. At the same time, Perot sent another jet filled with seventy-five tons of foodstuffs and medical supplies around the world for the stated purpose of persuading the North Vietnamese to receive the plane in Hanoi and distribute the supplies to the prisoners as Christmas presents. The North Vietnamese had already announced their intention to deliver Christmas packages mailed to the prisoners, and had arranged for the

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, August 8, 1969, page 12.

<sup>2</sup> AP report, *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 6, 1969, page 12.

families to send them through Moscow. Perot chose to ignore this channel and instead spent \$600,000 on his plane flight to obtain drama and news coverage. About this time, President Nixon appointed Perot to the advisory board of the United States Naval Academy.

Perot's activities continued undiminished throughout 1970. In April, he spent \$250,000 to fly a group of wives and reporters to the prison camps in South Vietnam run by the Saigon government and financed by the United States. The following month, Perot used his money to generate support for President Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and then in June he financed the installation in the United States Capitol of a life-sized exhibit of what purports to be a realistic depiction of a North Vietnamese prison camp. This tableau is now being erected in state capitols throughout the country.

During the summer of 1970, Perot tried to mobilize the city of Fort Worth, Texas, around the prisoner-of-war issue. He opened storefront offices, placed billboards around the city, and organized volunteers to urge every resident to write to the President of North Vietnam.

Throughout this period, government officials were continuing to meet regularly to consider ways of stirring up concern for the prisoners and to recruit allies in the private sector. In both the State Department and the Defense Department, numerous officials spent all their time on the prisoners-of-war question, traveling, speaking, responding to inquiries, and thinking of ways to promote what has now become a carefully orchestrated campaign to whip up sentiment over the prisoners in North Vietnam. Here are a few of the hundreds of events which have figured in this campaign:

-The American Red Cross has organized letter-writing campaigns in many cities appointing local chairmen and forming youth groups for the purpose of flooding Hanoi with thousands of pleas.

-The delegates attending the American Legion's annual convention in September passed a resolution committing the Legion to embark on a "saturation" campaign to gain public support for the release of prisoners.

-At the very time that all campuses in California were told to take politics out of the classroom, Edwin Reinecke, the state's lieutenant-governor, sent letters to the student government presidents of all the state colleges and universities urging them to mount "Write Hanoi" campaigns.

-The Veterans of Foreign Wars circulated petitions and obtained some four million signatures which they sought to present to the North Vietnamese in October.

-The Jaycees of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, attempted to duplicate this feat on a smaller scale by sending out one hundred scouts, high-school students, housewives, and businessmen throughout the community to collect signatures to a letter asking North Vietnam to release the names of all US prisoners and to permit regular correspondence between the captives and their relatives.

-Some local telephone companies, for example in Minnesota, began circulating messages about the prisoner-of-war issue with their telephone bills. Even the Steve Canyon cartoon strip

began featuring prisoner-of-war relatives in its daily sagas.

President Nixon has also done what he could to focus publicity on North Vietnam's treatment of prisoners. He named Sunday, May 3, 1970—a day that followed by three days his invasion of Cambodia and preceded by one day the killing of four students at Kent State—a national day of prayer for American prisoners in North Vietnam.

Then, on August 7, 1970, the President announced that he was sending former astronaut Frank Borman on a twenty-five-nation tour to try to obtain the release of the prisoners. The following month, Borman, who is now Vice President of Electronic Data Systems, Inc., Ross Perot's computer services firm, and head of American Horizons Foundation, Perot's tax-exempt foundation, reported to a half-empty joint session of Congress that his mission had failed.

On October 24, Nixon addressed the UN General Assembly and urged them to consider the prisoner-of-war issue. He named November 11, which is normally Veteran's Day, "Prisoner-of-War Day." Ten days later, on November 21, the President launched his abortive commando attack on what he thought was a North Vietnamese prison camp, killing some twenty-five North Vietnamese and capturing a few others, and at the same time ordered US warplanes to bomb throughout North Vietnam.

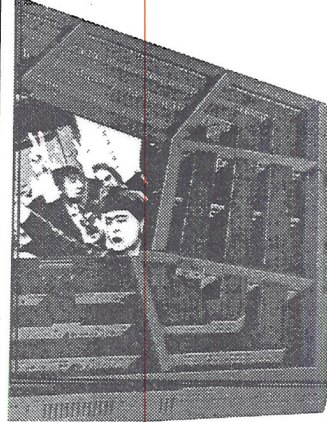
This extensive publicity campaign has not only served to deflect attention from the issues of the war but has also submerged the facts about what is actually happening in North Vietnam's prison camps. The most serious charges lodged against the North Vietnamese are the accusations of physical abuse made by Frishman and Hegdahl in 1969. These charges are serious indeed, but the manner in which the Pentagon has handled public information about North Vietnam's camps and the recent statements by other released prisoners make the accusations difficult to accept at face value. The other seven pilots who have been released by North Vietnam were shielded from the press after their release and have only recently been encouraged to tell of their experiences in captivity. Their stories are significantly less harrowing than those of Frishman and Hegdahl.

Air Force Captain Joe V. Carpenter was interviewed by the ABC television program *Now* on September 14, 1970, two years after his release from North Vietnam. He said that soon after he was shot down he got over fears for his life when he realized that he was being protected from hostile civilians by the militia that captured him, although later some villagers did pull at his mustache. He was kept alone in a bunker and found the isolation hard to get used to, but he was eventually able to establish some rapport with the local people who came to look at him, especially the children, and he thought that their attitude toward him became less hostile and more understanding. He made no charges of brutal treatment by his captors.

In November, 1970, almost three years after his release from captivity, Air Force Colonel Norris M. Overly finally agreed to tell his story, and again it was one without the horrors described by Frishman and Hegdahl. Overly was captured during the height of the bombing of North Vietnam, in October, 1967, in an area just north of

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the demilitarized zone, some 300 miles south of Hanoi. His trip to Hanoi took seven weeks; he traveled only at night, avoiding frequent aerial attacks, and resting for long periods at medical centers because of an infection that developed on his back. He was beaten by villagers at several points on this journey, but apparently was treated well by the military officials when they were accompanying him. Once in the formal prisoner camp, Overly seems to have suffered only from boredom.

Overly said his food, generally soup and bread, was bad by American standards but may have been fairly good by North Vietnamese standards. Crowds of North Vietnamese sometimes gathered around his hut, but they were frequently friendly. After his first month at the camp, Overly was provided with a cellmate. The problems that did exist, Overly said, may have been "logistical rather than diabolical."

Frishman and Hegdahl charged that some of the prisoners are kept in solitary confinement. This is true and in violation of the Geneva Convention. It is difficult to understand why North Vietnam engages in this practice, except to control or to demoralize the pilots. It might be added, however, that solitary confinement is, unfortunately, not an unusual practice in modern penal institutions. When the US Army charged several Green Beret officers with the murder of a Vietnamese in 1969, for example, the officers were placed in solitary confinement in five-by-seven-foot cells with no toilet facilities and only a bare light bulb inadequate for reading. The officers complained that their cells became inordinately hot.

The remaining charges made against North Vietnam involve procedural requirements of the Convention that prisoners be identified and that they be allowed to write and receive letters. North Vietnam has been making dramatic improvements in these respects and now allows the regular exchange of correspondence between the captives and their relatives. The Nixon Administration has been reluctant to acknowledge the improvements because to do so would defuse an issue it has been able to exploit.

This procedural compliance has, to be sure, come later than it should have. Until late 1969, the North Vietnamese had allowed only 115 prisoners to send and receive letters. At that time, however, a group of antiwar activists established the "Committee of Liaison with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam," with offices in New York, and letters and packages have since flowed regularly through the couriers of the Committee.

The Committee of Liaison has compiled from the letters they have received a list of 339 men who are confirmed as captives in North Vietnam. This list may not be complete, but it is virtually so. The North Vietnamese are now regularly responding to requests by the Committee of Liaison about the status of specific men. The lines of communication are often cumbersome but there no longer seems to be a deliberate attempt to withhold information. The North Vietnamese responded, for example, on November 6, to a list of seventeen names sent to them by the Committee. Similarly, on November 20, they wrote

two letters which were received on November 22, commenting on the status of 104 men. On November 26, five days after the raid at Sontay, the North Vietnamese answered requests by the Swedish government for information about 203 men. The status of most of these men had previously been reported to the Committee of Liaison in New York, but some of the information was new.

Between December, 1969, and November, 1970, the Committee of Liaison received and transmitted to the prisoners' relatives more than 2,500 letters, an average of seven-and-a-third letters from each of the 339 confirmed captives. Americans in North Vietnam are now also receiving packages whose contents range from instant breakfasts and medicines to art supplies and games. The rate of letters coming from North Vietnam is still below the minimum of two letters and four postcards per month required by the Geneva Convention, but it is almost equal to the one letter per month that POWs in the camps run by the Saigon government are permitted to send.

There are other respects in which the Americans in North Vietnam need not be envious of their counterparts who are incarcerated in South Vietnam. The International Committee of the Red Cross reported a year ago that seven North Vietnamese prisoners of war were transferred from the formal POW camps to the tiger cages of the prison on Con Son Island because they refused to salute the flag of South Vietnam. In the tiger cages they were kept in their cells twenty-four hours a day, strapped in irons from five in the evening to six in the morning, and never permitted to exercise or have fresh air. They were allowed to wash only twice a week; they were not given enough fresh food or water; and they were only rarely given fresh clothes.

After the existence of the tiger cages at Con Son Island was made public six months ago, some American officials in Saigon conceded that these conditions had been known about since at least 1963 and that there had never been any effort to improve them. Lawyers in the State Department's Office of the Legal Adviser told a *New York Times* reporter that the United States was responsible for the treatment of prisoners at Con Son because there were persons in that prison who had been captured by American troops. Article Twelve of the Geneva Convention states that it is appropriate to turn captives over to another government only if the receiving government is providing treatment that conforms to the requirements of the Convention.

Many of the Americans who have spent time in Vietnam, both military personnel and civilians, have brought back eyewitness accounts of frequent torture and abuse of prisoners committed both by Americans and South Vietnamese. The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Marcel Naville, has, in fact, directly criticized the policies of the Saigon government.

It is profoundly regrettable [he said in Geneva on August 31, 1970] that South Vietnam grants prisoner-of-war status to only a small part of its detainees, and authorizes Red Cross delegates only with many restrictions to make visits to a large proportion of its other detainees.

The faults of the Saigon government

and of our own forces in South Vietnam do not, of course, excuse the failings of the North Vietnamese, but they should cause those government officials who self-righteously condemn the North Vietnamese to consider cleaning up our own house.

One aspect of prisoner treatment on which the North Vietnamese have never altered their position is the question of international inspection of the prison camps. One reason for the rigidity of their position would seem to be that they genuinely doubt whether any international body can be truly neutral in the Vietnamese war. The US has for some time tried to persuade North Vietnam to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the captured American pilots. The ICRC is entrusted with general supervision of the Geneva Convention, and has regularly inspected the formal POW camps in South Vietnam. The United States government views the ICRC, which is composed entirely of Swiss nationals, as a neutral body and cannot see why the North Vietnamese do not similarly view the Committee.

Asian nations were, however, first introduced to the Red Cross by Western countries which brought it along on their colonizing missions, and many Asians still view the Red Cross as an instrument of imperialism. Although the ICRC has tried to be fair to all parties in the war, the Swiss naturally find it easier to communicate with other Westerners and have maintained a close relationship with the United States. The North Vietnamese therefore view the Committee with deep mistrust.

A second and perhaps more important reason why the North Vietnamese do not want any foreign organizations inspecting their prison camps is that they fear a renewed bombing campaign by the United States. If the United States learns the exact locations of all the prison camps, the North Vietnamese reason, the Air Force and Navy would be free to begin a saturation bombing campaign in all other parts of the country, not to mention more commando raids on the camps themselves. The sporadic but intensive bombing attacks on various parts of North Vietnam in January, February, May, September, and November, 1970, provide new reasons for North Vietnam's fears. Indeed, the recent commando raid may end forever the possibility of international inspection.

The North Vietnamese should not, however, be viewed as intransigent on the issue of prisoners of war. On September 17, 1970, the Viet Cong's representative at the Paris Peace Talks, Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, presented—with North Vietnamese concurrence—a new peace proposal that included a remarkable concession on the question of prisoners of war. Madame Binh said that if the United States would agree to withdraw its forces from South Vietnam by June 30, 1971, the communist forces would refrain from attacking the withdrawing US troops and in addition they would begin immediate discussions on the exchange of prisoners. Never before in modern warfare has there been a general prisoner exchange prior to the end of hostilities.

Yet the Nixon Administration virtually ignored this offer, which has been repeated several times since. In-

The New York Review

President Nixon made a much-publicized address on October 7, 1970, in which he said he favored an immediate release of all prisoners. But he would not link this gesture to a withdrawal of all American military forces from Vietnam. It should be clear by now that the only course that will lead to settlement with the North Vietnamese is a convincing announcement

The North Vietnamese should have released the names of their prisoners and permitted correspondence earlier; they should provide the pilots with more recreation and let them out of solitary confinement. But the available evidence indicates they are hardly as inhumane as the Nixon Administration

valid reason for this issue to be receiving the amount of hysteria that is now being devoted to it.

Certainly the United States is not justified in launching commando attacks deep into North Vietnam's territory because of the prisoners. Before the recent raid, the Administration's use of the prisoner issue seemed a cynical attempt to manipulate popular

a war we have no business fighting. But the raid raises even graver questions. Unlike President Johnson, Mr. Nixon has given no assurances against American military expeditions to the North. The possibility cannot be excluded that the Administration's inflammatory use of the prisoner issue may serve as the pretext for yet another expansion of the war. □

## Three Who Didn't Make a Revolution

**Trial**  
by Tom Hayden.  
Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 168 pp.,  
\$4.95; \$1.95 (paper)

**We Have Been Invaded by the 21st Century**

by David McReynolds.  
Praeger, 265 pp., \$7.95

**Revolutionary Nonviolence**  
by Dave Dellinger.  
Bobbs-Merrill, 390 pp., \$7.50

**Murray Kempton**

Very early in Tom Hayden's account of what he endured as a defendant in the Chicago conspiracy trial, the mind ceases to attend to the injury done him by Judge Julius Hoffman and commences to puzzle over some deeper damage, some obscure hurt, inflicted back somewhere on the road when none of us was looking, a hurt felt well before Hayden had ever thought of the Northern Judicial District of Illinois, and likely to last long after he has escaped it.

But then his book gives us very little reason to be distracted by his public trial from the more critical interior one. *Trial* neither evokes the scene nor defines the event; we do not believe what Hayden remembers or have faith in what he promises. It might as well have been written by someone who had not even been there and had nothing more to go on than the imprecations, accurate but unuseful, in the streets. Hayden is callous when he records and only sentimental when he prophesies. The result must be felt not so much as a failure as an attempt never made.

We measure the damage when we read this testament and recognize that it was so unimportant to its creator that there is no suggestion that he brought to it any impulse except for mechanical recitation. Hayden seems, just from carelessness and indifference, to have turned himself, at least for the occasion, into some grand gallery of the warts of all his radical ancestors, showing the worst features of each with none of what redeemed them, being as muddled as Bakunin, as spiteful as Trotsky, as self-absorbed as Emma Goldman, as devious as Johann Most, possessed indeed by every fantasy and denied all the poetry.

But here, as so often before, he holds us. David Dellinger and David McReynolds seem altogether worthier of the attention of persons of serious concern, and yet, even in their company, Hayden commands our notice with his hurt now as much as he first did with his star.

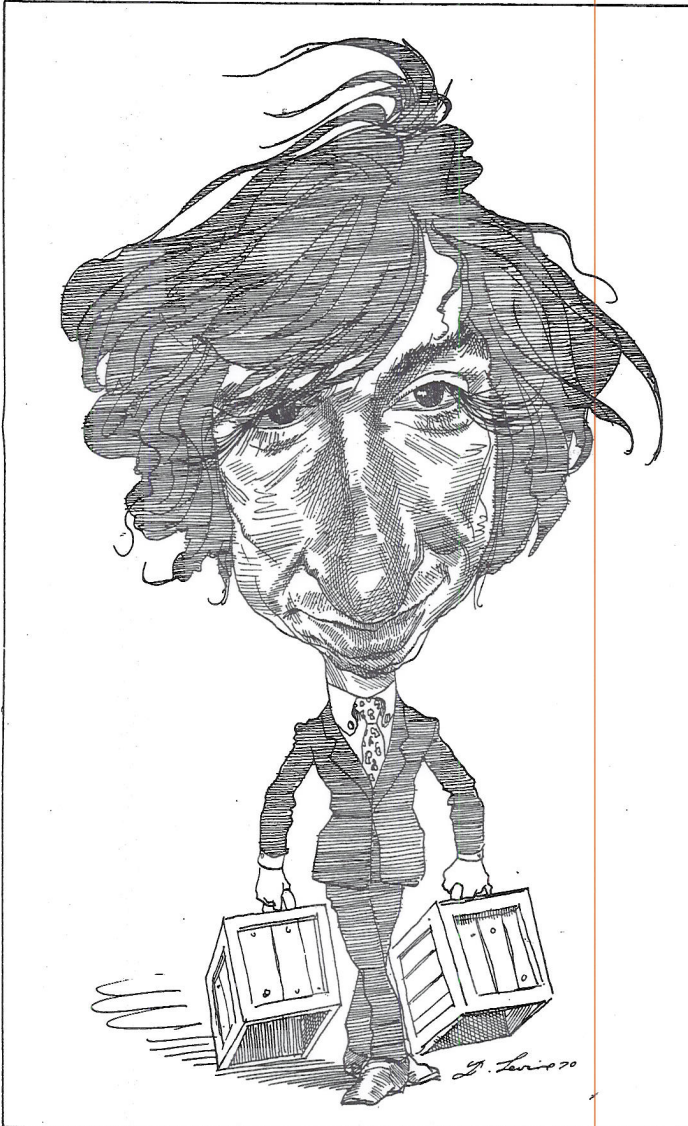
Hayden was anointed as the future of the left almost at first sight ten

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years or so ago. Things had been going badly for a very long time; there were intimations of improvement. Tom Hayden's youth, his origin in the mysterious midlands, his aspiration to be a questing knight all fit the moment of change and promise upon which he appeared. And he had a sense of his star and followed it across disparate and unexplored places—from his dreary

many parts of the solution, you end up part of the problem. But, easier to see, was the wound of the loneliness: Hayden was a candidate, but he had no party.

The only sentence in *Trial* that can fairly be called personal and thus calls us to sadness is an aside, "I have always been more of an independent catalyst than an equal member of any



wrangles with the social democrats as founder of SDS, to his four years in the Central Ward of Newark, where he watched a revolt not of his creation and suffered an exile not his fault, to those pilgrimages to the NLF and the return as its shadow ambassador; and thereafter through a succession of overnight hikes with anything that seemed new and promising. The hurt may have been that, when you try too

collective or group." If his heart faintly cries out only that once, and if every other sound we hear seems so finally unattractive now, it is because the search, with all the good will of its beginning, has been not for comrades but for blocs of voters. Hayden may argue, to be sure, that the times are too awful to indulge in the comfort of comrades; still the damage shows itself most in the effects of this pursuit.

There runs throughout *Trial* the impression of someone busying himself with the small pieces of a jigsaw puzzle after the large ones have been mislaid, of calculation driving away common sense.

Not long ago, to take an instance, Hayden brought *The New York Times* up to date on the coalition which now promises him the formation of the rebellion. He added to its roster, with the women and the students, "the homosexuals." And you can only wish the Gay Liberation Front joy of the march with this new comrade whose mind, on occasions not quite prior enough, can invoke images like this one:

Tom Foran represented the US government for the Northern District of Illinois. A short, squat man in a tight-fitting gabardine suit, he was struggling to retain his 1940s Golden Gloves fighting form. Someone said Foran was Jack Armstrong. Stew Albert, an underground writer, decided that he was a repressed and frightened homosexual. The point is the same. . . . [*Trial*, p. 52].

Or admittedly out of context but evocative of its spirit:

One Chicago psychiatrist told us of several cases in which police wives filed for divorce because their husbands would not even make love to them. [*Trial* p. 40]

For Hayden is the kind of debater who, just to make a point, will invade any privacy on evidence however uncertain; he would, I'm afraid, not long ago have been as lief call a man a queer as a fascist. That he awoke after publication date to appreciate that homosexuals vote too is a compliment neither to the breadth of his social understanding nor to the quickness of his calculation.

But then the Hayden who here emerges would appear to be a poor choice for anyone's comrade, having a deficiency inevitable to anyone who gives way to the illusion that nothing counts in politics more than voting blocs. An example, better thought out, is Hayden's doctrine that, since the Black Panthers are the American Viet Cong in embryo, "they should not even be tried in the courts of the present US government":

As prisoners of war, the Panthers should be freed not by higher courts but through negotiations coming about through public pressure. . . . Many whites cling to the concept of a "fair trial" for the Panthers because they do not want to accept fully the idea of self-determination for blacks. That means that they should examine the "facts" of Panther court cases