

Saturday Review

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Patriotism and Vietnam

TWO WEEKS AGO in this space we commented on the absurd accusations made by some speakers at peace rallies. These speakers charged that the United States was engaged in the deliberate and systematic extermination of colored races, citing the Vietnam war as a prime example. They also asserted that U.S. actions in Vietnam were indistinguishable from the actions of Nazi Germany. The point we tried to make was that there were ample grounds for criticism of American policies in Vietnam without recourse to lamentable nonsense.

Now comes dangerous nonsense from the opposite direction. General William C. Westmoreland has used the blanket adjective "unpatriotic" to characterize American critics of U.S. policy in Vietnam. The General did not particularize. We are left to assume that the more severe the criticism of the war, the more open to question is one's love for country. Whom did the General mean to include in his indictment? Did he have in mind, for example, observers like Mr. Walter Lippmann? No one has written more severely or effectively about the war in Vietnam, nor has any analyst of U.S. foreign policy served the American people with greater distinction over so long a period of time. Did the General mean the editors of *The New York Times*? No publication has questioned more sharply or knowledgeably the dangers of escalation. No journalist has pointed more insistently to the inconsistencies and contradictions in U.S. statements about Vietnam than has James B. Reston of the *Times*.

Did the General mean military men like Marine General David M. Shoup, commander of all U.S. Marine forces in Vietnam from 1960 to 1963, who has described as "shallow and narrow" the official arguments used to justify U.S. policies in Vietnam?

Did the General mean private citizens like the late Grenville Clark, distinguished advocate of world law and adviser to five Presidents? Shortly before his death last year, Mr. Clark said the U.S. Government had not told the American people the truth about specific opportunities for getting into negotiations—despite the President's own emphatic statement that the only rational way to end the war was through a negotiated settlement. Did the General mean historians like Mr. Henry Steele Commager, Pulitzer Prize winner, who has not hesi-



tated to apply the yardstick of American history and traditions to American policy in Vietnam?

Did the General mean United States Senators like J. William Fulbright, Ernest Gruening, George McGovern, Vance Hartke, Joseph S. Clark, and Robert F. Kennedy, who have consistently called attention to actions and policies that are alienating the United States from a large part of the world, quite apart from the specific danger of a generalized world conflict?

Did the General mean the hundreds of thousands of Americans who came to the peace rallies in New York and San Francisco and who responded most strongly, not to extreme statements by a few speakers, but to reasonable arguments by speakers like the Reverend Martin Luther King, who called on the United States and all parties concerned to accept the proposals of U.N. Secretary General U Thant for ending the war?

General Westmoreland says he is opposed to a cease-fire. How can there be a negotiated settlement without a cease-fire? President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk have called for a negotiated settlement. Does General Westmoreland see any implications of unpatriotism in a military leader who runs counter to the proclaimed policies of his Commander-in-Chief?

To what degree is Washington policy being vetoed or modified on the spot by the U.S. military in Vietnam? In mid-November, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge approached representatives of a central European nation and requested that they use their good offices to persuade Hanoi to come to the negotiating table. On November 29, the United States received word that Hanoi was ready to begin secret exploratory talks. While arrangements for such talks were going forward, Hanoi was bombed and the talks were cancelled. The United States sent a private message to Hanoi saying the bombing was accidental and urged Hanoi to proceed with the arrangements for exploratory talks. While this approach was being pursued, Hanoi was bombed again. That was the end of the exploratory talks. In all, there were four bombings of Hanoi during that critical period. Who authorized the bombings? Who is making U.S. policy in Vietnam? If the essential question is how best to preserve American institutions, then one of the most important of those institutions—control of foreign policy by the Chief Executive and not by the military—may now be in jeopardy.

Why does General Westmoreland believe that his critics are any less concerned than he is about stopping aggression or containing Communism? Does he not find it strange that his distaste for a cease-fire is shared by the Com-

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Letters

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interested in receiving examples of such misunderstandings that SR readers have encountered.

Readers are cordially invited to write to: International Committee for Breaking the Language Barrier, 268 West 12th Street, New York 10014.

SOICHI KATO,
Executive Director,
International Committee for
Breaking the Language Barrier.
New York, N.Y.

WHEN I READ N.C.'s editorial, I thought of Milton's *Il Penseroso* where in connection with the "divinest Melancholy" (black bile) Milton's conception is of the goddess

Whose Sainly visage is too bright
To hit the Sense of human sight;
And therefore to our weaker view,
Ore laid with black staid Wisdoms hue.
Black, but such as in esteem,
Prince Memmons sister might be-
seem. . . .

Com pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestick train,
And sable stole of Cipres Lawn [black
lawn],
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.

Here are noble connotations of black. In my English class we thought of other attractive black things—black evening gowns, men's black evening clothes, black horses, birds of black plumage, etc. If *Il Penseroso* is still taught in school, it can bring forceful ideas of different conceptions of words.

As Hamlet says, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Even in such a simple way the English class can sense the purpose of helping make "the world a neighborhood."

ELIZABETH CONKLIN.

Bloomfield, N.J.

What She Has Learned

AFTER READING "The Dangerous Lure of Parrotland" by Salvador de Madariaga [SR, Apr. 22], I cannot begin to express my deep appreciation for your excellent WHAT I HAVE LEARNED series by some of the most imaginative and understanding men of our day. The only better thing is more.

MARGI ZABOR.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Lucidity in Travel Books

PAUL FRIEDLANDER's article, "Michelin, Baedeker, or Bust" [SR, Apr. 22], on the type of travel guides being written today, deserves fizzes. Mr. Friedlander's ideas and inimitable way of writing form a delightful oasis in the desert of cynicism and cuteness which surrounds us today.

A. PEPPIN.

San Francisco, Calif.

Monkeyhood

GOODMAN ACE in his column, "Turning

Mother On" [TOP OF MY HEAD, Apr. 22], comments that "all these new discoveries seem to be making a rhesus monkey out of motherhood." It seems to me *everybody* is making "a monkey out of motherhood." What the sociologists and psychologists haven't done in that direction, husbands and fathers have. For example:

1) If a mother stays at home and takes care of her children she is lazy and does nothing but push buttons all day in her perfectly mechanized home. If she works outside the home she is ambitious and self-seeking, caring nothing for her family.

2) If she attends such organizations as PTA, she is a social climber interested in furthering her career as a clubwoman; if she doesn't, she is stupid, not interested in community affairs, and doesn't care for her children for whose benefit the PTA presumably exists.

3) If she loves and protects her children, she is overprotective, possessive, and in great danger of becoming a "Mom." If she doesn't, she is unnatural, and has no motherly instincts.

A better way for these scientists to spend the time they waste trying to do away with the mother instinct would be for them to implant some of their little radio gadgets in the brains of the politicians, labor union leaders, the Vietcong, etc., and see if they couldn't accomplish something constructive in the way of changing the "natural" cupid-ity of some of them.

(MRS.) MARGARET KELLY.

Farmington, N.M.

Reprint Salisbury?

HARRISON SALISBURY's splendid article, "Is There a Way Out of the Vietnam War?" [SR, Apr. 8], should be made available in reprints. The issue of political settlement versus escalating war involves so many dangerous implications, not only for the United States and Vietnam but for the entire world, that this article should be very widely read.

GEORGES M. WEBER.

Carmel, Calif.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Salisbury's article is included in his new book, "Behind the Lines—Hanoi," published by Harper & Row.

Who Was "Memorable"?

IF ROBERT BENDINER thinks that "the memorable names connected with the WPA Writers Project can be counted on the fingers" ["When Culture Came to Main Street," SR, Apr. 1], he will have to use other people's fingers as well as his own.

In my capacity as National Coordinating Editor of the WPA Writers Project, 1937-39, I observed a number of memorable writers other than those listed by him and by Curtis D. MacDougall and Anthony Net-boy [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, Apr. 29]. Among those that readily came to mind: Kenneth Rexroth, Harold Rosenberg, Lionel Abel, Nathan Asch, Miriam Allen De Ford, Gorham Munson. . . .

JERRE MANGIONE,
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of English

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Philadelphia, Pa.

Editorial

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munist Chinese? All the arguments advanced by the General for pressing toward military victory—privately as well as publicly—are even more rigorously espoused by the Communist Chinese on the other side of the war. The Chinese Communists believe that the longer the war in Vietnam continues, the greater the strain will be on the United States, internally and externally, and the greater the chance that other Vietnam-type situations can erupt throughout the world, bleeding the United States.

The General talks about the threat of world Communism. If the General can look beyond Vietnam, surely he must see that Vietnam is having a unifying effect on the Communist world, making it stronger, not weaker. Few factors affecting the security of the United States are of greater significance than the ideological split between the Soviet Union and Communist China. But the kind of policy the General advocates is doing far more to narrow the split inside the Communist world than anything the Communist statesmen have been able to do by themselves.

There is no indication in anything General Westmoreland has said that he recognizes any danger to the United States, or to the human race, in a course of action that would involve the American people in a war against China—a land war that could chew up millions of lives, a war that could touch off a needless nuclear holocaust. It is because of this real and present danger that President Johnson has repeatedly declared in the past that the United States has limited objectives in Vietnam and intends to pursue them by limited means. But the General has made statements against that policy that have the effect of raising the question whether he is making decisions in the field that can commit U.S. policy to a contrary course.

The fundamental issue is not between General Westmoreland and those who are opposed to the war in Vietnam. The fundamental issue is between General Westmoreland and those who have accepted the President's stated aims in Vietnam. The President has said he is opposed to unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam. Most Americans will agree. He has said he feels the best way the war can end is through a negotiated settlement. Most Americans will agree. Does General Westmoreland agree?

Finally, the issue has to do with what is being said and what is being done. If the announced policy of the United States is no longer the real policy, then what is happening in Washington is of even greater consequence than what has been happening in Vietnam. —N.C.

SR/May 13, 1967