

Editorial

Kennedy's image blurred by myths

Tuesday will mark the 20th anniversary of the death John F. Kennedy.

Even today, 20 years after his assassination, Kennedy still holds the imagination of the American public. It's almost impossible this month to watch television, or read a newspaper or magazine without seeing something about Kennedy.

Somehow during the last 20 years, the image of Kennedy the man has become blurred with the myth of Kennedy and Camelot.

Some see him as the ultimate Cold Warrior, others as the greatest president of the 20th century. Neither label is accurate or fair.

The truth is that Kennedy falls somewhere in between. The man who ordered the invasion of the Bay of Pigs in 1961 is the same man who negotiated the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963.

The man who was accused of bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war over the Cuban missile crisis was the same man who, after forcing the Russians to back down, was wise enough not to embarrass them further, recognizing the fact that we have to live in the same world with the Russians.

The man who had never known poverty laid the groundwork for the war on poverty that later bloomed into a full-scale assault under the Johnson administration.

Perhaps what distinguishes Kennedy the most from the presidents who followed him was his sense of responsibility.

When he made a mistake, as at the Bay of Pigs, he had enough confidence in himself to admit it and accept the blame. Other presidents, from Johnson to Reagan, have found it easier to blame the press or Congress when their policies failed.

Kennedy's personal life also has come under criticism. At times it seems that every girl who ever kissed him under the mistletoe has called a press conference to tell the world about it. But not many people's personal life would be able to withstand the microscope that Kennedy's has been put through.

If the policies of Kennedy remain shrouded in controversy, one thing, at least, seems clear. Kennedy was a reflection of his time. He was a product of the Cold War. But, by the time of his death, he had started to move in other directions, away from the confrontations of the past.

Today, 20 years later, the plea he made to the nation at the signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty still has not been answered: "Let us, if we can, step back from the shadows of war and seek out the way of peace. And if that journey is 1,000 miles, or even more, let history record that we, in this land, at this time, took the first step."

— Jeff Goodwin



Protest challenges Reagan

For Americans who object to the militaristic and anti-social turn the Reagan administration is taking, the protest demonstration on Central America last weekend in Washington, was heartening and important because it focused a broad and vehement protest — and protest is not something which President Reagan has really had to deal with in a meaningful way.



Eric Peterson

With the exception of the nuclear freeze movement, most challenges the President has seen have been relatively small: inappropriate staff choices and changes were approved by Congress for the most part and despite a lot of Congressional noise, Reagan got his MX missiles and his nerve gas. Although many congressional Democrats pointed out that tax cuts which Reagan proposed were ill-conceived and bankrupting, the tax cuts still passed. Much of this might not have happened if Democrats in Congress had been united and unyielding.

What this rally on Central America and others (like the memorial march for Martin Luther King) mean is that for the first time Reagan's reaction is being attacked on all fronts. People in Washington this weekend didn't talk only about El Salvador and Nicaragua, but also about unemployment and govern-

ment which favors the rich.

Organizers in the Nov. 12 Coalition tried to further this advance-on-all-fronts impression with speakers on peace, figures important in alternative culture from Peter, Paul and Mary to Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert and an appearance by presidential candidate Jesse Jackson.

To call up all the old images of 1960s counter-culture and invoke new ones created by feminist singers Near and Gilbert is a strong and deliberate challenge to an expansionistic mainstream in American society. Newsweek, a model of presumption in its coverage of Central America, reveals a similar presumption in current public opinion. According to a Gallup poll in Newsweek, 53 percent of respondents approved of the invasion which, in Newsweek's words, was a cooperative venture between U.S. military forces "along with those of several Caribbean nations."

As a symbol and support of this new kind of political movement, Jackson leaves something to be desired. His presidential candidacy is unquestionably a way to bring interest and a new agenda to this election; Jackson's own lack of clear ideas on issues other than domestic and economic ones is a problem.

In contrast to candidates who may change their minds from week to week and group to group on an issue, Jackson changed his position on Lebanon within the space of moments in front of the protesters Saturday.

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Campus Quotes

How do you think the Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance has handled the Commonwealth situation?



Barb Smith
sophomore
Arts and Sciences
"The finance department should have been more aware of what was going on. I do feel sorry for the people who had money in the bank."



Dale Dinnel
graduate student
educational psychology
"I think they were aware of what was happening and hid it from the public more than they they should have. I felt (Paul) Amer's (director of the Nebraska Department of Banking) resignation was appropriate because of that."



Jane Zumpfe
graduate student
pre-physical therapy
"I don't think they were informative and open enough from the beginning. After it happened, then we were told about it."



Claire Mattern
professor
English
"I think that they were turning their head the other way. They knew that Commonwealth was in trouble. I think that it was unfair to the depositors because they thought their money was secure. The state banking department fell down on the job."



Ah Hing Ang
senior
engineering
"On the average, they are OK, but they should be more careful next time to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Photos by Amy Larson