



William F. Buckley, Jr.

Hanoi's little helper

But let him introduce himself. "My name is David Ifshin, and I'm president of the National Students Association of the United States, and I was student body president at Syracuse University last year. I just graduated. I came to North Vietnam after being denied admission to South Vietnam, where you are right now. We had hoped to go to South Vietnam to meet with the students there and to discuss, find out the situation regarding the Thieu-Ky regime and their oppression of the Vietnamese people...."

Ifshin to Hanoi

Having been denied entry into South Vietnam where he was determined to "find out the situation," young Ifshin apparently realized that what the hell, he knew the situation anyway, so he went on to Hanoi and explained the situation, over the radio, beamed to United States troops in South Vietnam. South Vietnam's ability to see through this preposterous little phoney speaks well for it. One cannot easily imagine General MacArthur granting an interview to Tokyo Rose.

There are various available levels of indignation. 1) By siding thus directly with the enemy, he becomes an enemy of the United States. It is one thing to argue against the Vietnam War in the United States. It is another to attempt to demoralize American troops on the field. Psychological warfare is a recongnized branch of - warfare. There is no philosophical difference between what Ifshin did during the broadcast from Hanoi, and the firing of bullets at American soldiers.

Then, 2), there is the effrontery of the thing. He might have begun his broadcast by saying, "I'm David Ifshin, and although I'm president of the National Students Association, I am a member of a tiny minority of American students who believe the Communist Party line on all matters that relate to North Vietnam." G.I.'s listening in might at least have respected the auspices of the speaker. Or if he had said, "Although I am president of the National Students Association, I must confess that Wall Street imperialists so greatly dominate American colleges and universities that the overwhelming body of the students are blinded to the

truths."

But no: he simply presents himself as president of the National Students Association; which is as representative of American students as Charles Manson is of American boy scouts. But that is for the National Students Association to fret about, and one doesn't particularly care what they do about it, because, long since, no one has particularly cared what the National Students Association does or says about anything.

3) But in a sense the worst is to come. Young Ifshin has had so many political roles in his young career, that one can only assume he has not had time to study. Presumably, as a freshman, he set out for Syracuse University to "find out the situation." The authorities at Syracuse were at once misguided in letting him matriculate, because clearly he did not want to "find out the situation" in the world of learning; and misguided in letting him graduate, in view of the fact that clearly he had not learned anything.

Rhetoric revealing

Listen: "The Thieu-Ky regime is one of the most oppressive regimes in history." Could Ifshin have studied any history, ancient, medieval, or modern? Any political science? Economics? "I realize especially after this trip, that the U.S. Government does not go to South Vietnam to fight for democracy, or to defend the right of the people, but they go there and send us to murder the people of Vietnam in order to make South Vietnam into one large U. S. military base, not to defend the United States but to aggressively threaten other countries. The fear is that if the people of Vietnam are allowed to have their own country, are allowed to determine for themselves their own interests, they will not support the investments of private capital."

As though American capital, bleeding from the expenses of the war, needs support from "the people" of South Vietnam! Probably the young man's teachers thought better of trying to teach him anything, and sent him off instead to serve as president of the National Students Association, for which his ignorance qualifies him.



Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden

Not cool, but sullen

WASHINGTON--"The cooling of America," Time calls it, and when anything makes the cover of Time, you know it has been around for a while. On college campuses across the country and in the streets of a hundred towns, it has been visible for months. But "cooling" is the wrong word-- "cooling" suggests peace and open spaces and calm.

Whither Spring, 1970?

What has happened to last spring's voices of anger? It is the difference between a World Series game, with largely non-fun spectators cheering openly and unashamedly at every pitch, at Shibe Park in Philadelphia and a Phillies' game in September. Philadelphia's baseball fans are famous for their belief that their team is going nowhere, and badly, and it has made them sullen and mutinous. The mutter that comes from the grandstand may be less frightening to the listener than the full-throated roar of the Series crowd, but only those who don't know anything about baseball, or crowds, would call it "cooler."

Dissent Not dead

Opposition to the war has not diminished where it was strong, despite the decline in its decibel-count; the silence on the campus is the silence of despair and disillusion. The very phrase "opposition to the war" is no longer descriptive, for it seems to set forth a rational position, modifiable in the face of new developments, as one might say "the opposition to revenue sharing."

The feeling about Vietnam is no longer rational, no longer one of "opposition." It is one of hatred and loathing, of a moral revulsion so great that it is turning a whole generation to a morose, sour and uncaring view of America itself. Melvin Laird may grin at the latest semantic nuance that permits a "Cambodian Military Development Team" of 60 American combat soldiers from Saigon to go into the field with the Cambodian army to show them how to use U.S. weapons--"ground combat troops" are forbidden, but the students and their allies are not amused. Worse, they are not even angry.

They expected it, as they expected the invasion of Laos, as they expected the claim that "casualties are diminishing" even as we kill more Asians than before, just as they expect an invasion of North Vietnam and the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

They expect these things because their belief about their country is that it is a country which would do those things, and somehow lie about it to make it seem connected with "freedom" and "peace with honor."

True, there may be more peace marches, there may be more political activity by the young, but the sense of possibility of change, of participation in a "movement," is gone, at least for now. What passes for silence and acquiescence on the campus and in the peace movement-- "coolness,"--if you will--is the calm of introspection and an attempt at self-knowledge.

Up with Middle America

This all comes through in the music. So-called "hard-rock," with nearly mindless and largely destructive themes, closely connected to hallucinatory drugs, is almost gone, to be replaced by what is now called "country" or "folk" rock.

It is a part of the movement back to the farm, or the urban commune. It includes a great increase of concern in personal health, in baking one's own bread and making one's own preserves, in avoiding the chemicals and preservatives that "they" put in foods. It presages, of course, a turn from chemical drugs, but that may be the only hopeful sign.

A visit to any campus--whether Ivy or "square"--would yield the same report. Those who see silence on the campus as some kind of "victory" for the war policy, or as "agreement" that the war is not an issue, deceive themselves badly. Consider the words of John Viscount Morley one-hundred years ago: "You have not converted a man," he wrote, "because you have silenced him."

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