

Vietnam journalist calls for concern

Renewed concern for the Vietnamese people is the key to ending continued fighting and mistreatment of political prisoners in Vietnam, according to journalist Don Luce.

Speaking in the Nebraska Union Ballroom Thursday, Luce said true peace depends on an end to American military aid and the beginning of a "real concern for the Vietnamese people."

Luce said Americans think of the Vietnam War "too much in terms of statistics and kill counts rather than in terms of what it actually did to the people."

"Our major problem is a lack of concern for the culture, people and history of Vietnam," he said. "We've never even had an ambassador there who could say 'hello' in Vietnamese."

Luce has spent most of the 15 years in Vietnam, first as agricultural expert for International Voluntary Services, then as correspondent for ABC News.

In 1970, he and two American Congressmen drew national attention to prisoners confined in tiger cages in one of South Vietnam's largest prisons.

According to Luce, fighting still continues in

Vietnam despite the Paris peace agreement. He said 125,000 have been wounded and 50,000 killed since the ceasefire took effect.

At a news conference Thursday afternoon, Luce said peace depends on "complete respect on all sides for the Paris peace agreement."

"We're still supplying bombs and planes," he said. "Peace will come only when Americans say they're not going to send any more bombs to Vietnam."

Luce said the U.S. currently pays for the 25,000 42-gallon barrels of gas used for military purposes in Vietnam each day. This amounts to 365 million gallons a year or more than 3 billion miles of driving "if your car gets 10 miles to the gallon," he said.

"There are still tiger cages in South Vietnam and there are still political prisoners in those cages," he said. "A lack of concern and the continued flow of U.S. money is why the Thieu government can still keep them in jail."

While the Saigon government



Journalist Don Luce

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Brawl strengthens gay unity; search for 'home' stops short

By Rebecca Britz

Early the morning of Feb. 2, a fight at the Lazy B Lounge on Cornhusker Highway called a temporary halt to an attempt to provide Lincoln with a unique specialty club.

But members of the Lincoln Gay Action Group (LINGAG) and the Lesbian Sisters say the conflict, in which four of their members were injured, only has strengthened their spirit of gay community.

The Lesbian Sisters is a group relatively new to Lincoln. It was decided in September at its first meeting that one of its objectives would be to find a place where gay persons could drink and dance without fear of harassment, member Shellee Botts said.

"We didn't like the traditional model for gay bars," she said, referring to clubs, such as one in Omaha which "is run by a woman hater," and whose clientele is almost exclusively gay.

"We wanted to establish a place where men, women, gays and straights could meet and socialize on equal terms," she said.

The group first looked into buying a bar, but were discouraged by the amount of money needed, Botts said. They then decided to try to find a bar that was losing business.

"We knew we could bring in 200 to 300 people on a weekend night," Botts said. It would be a good business deal for someone who was losing money."

Last December, a member of the Sisters heard of a lounge called the Lazy B, which apparently met their requirements.

"We were told that the bar was good sized, had a dance floor and was in danger of going broke," Botts said.

In January, the group contacted Robert Boeshart, the lounge's owner, and proposed their business deal. Boeshart denied having financial trouble with the bar, Botts said, but still was open to the idea of a gay clientele.

"I warned them that our customers could be kind of rough," Boeshart said, "but I thought they had the right to try it."

The Lesbian Sisters and LINGAG arranged to bring a small group of people to the Lazy B on Jan. 23. About 35 persons turned out, and this initial effort at liberation apparently went well.

"We got some verbal hassle," a Sister said, "but the bouncer took care of things."

On Jan. 25, again by arrangement with bar management, about 125 gay and straight men and women went to the Lazy B. One LINGAG member was harassed physically.

"I was on the edge of the dance floor with a straight friend, a woman," Dan Christensen said, "and two men pushed me down and started kicking me."

"But we had arranged beforehand that if one of us got any trouble, the rest of us would surround the person and escort them to safety," he said.

The plan was carried out successfully in his case, Christensen said, and the bouncer saw that the men left the lounge.

No further trouble was encountered at the

Lazy B until Feb. 2.

At about 12:30 a.m. that morning, five men, who reportedly are members of a local motorcycle club, blocked the bar's exit as the gays and their friends were preparing to leave.

"It seems like a nightmare now," said one of those injured, a Sister. "We were going to leave en masse—safety in numbers, you know—and a waitress warned us that the bikers planned to give us trouble."

Evidently the "bikers" had thought a male member of the gay group was dressed like a woman. The man was wearing white overalls with wide bellbottoms and a satin-lined cap. Witnesses agreed this man was the focus of the bikers' antagonism.

"We were told to leave by the back exit," the Sister continued, "and started moving in that direction."

"Suddenly there was the feeling (in the group) that we shouldn't be doing it this way. I think everyone had visions of how often gays must sneak out the back door."

Rick, the man in the cape, and a woman became separated from the others, Botts said. When the woman realized their position, Botts added, she attempted to talk the bikers out of the confrontation.

However, when the woman tried to shield Rick, she was shoved to the floor and kicked around the face and shoulders.

"And then all hell broke loose," Botts recalled.

According to Botts, Rick was beaten severely and his clothing was ripped. He later discovered his car keys and wallet had been taken, she added. He and the woman who tried to protect him were treated at Lincoln hospitals later that night.

Two other gays, a man and a woman, were hurt in the fight, but did not seek hospital treatment.

The members of the motorcycle club, of whom witnesses agreed about 10 were involved, apparently were not injured.

Christensen said: "We (gays) weren't going to fight back. We had agreed not to return violence with violence."

"At one point, though, after several of us had moved up to the front," he said, "a guy in our group got so mad he picked up a chair and broke it over the backs of the bikers. It didn't stop them."

"The crowd reaction was incredible," Botts said. "A lot of the (straight) customers were trying to stop the bikers. One woman kept saying, 'This isn't right,' over and over."

"Another woman was standing on a chair yelling, 'Get the queers,'" she added, "but most of the straights were really cool, and tried to help."

Christensen said, "There was even a biker in the back—I guess he'd been sent to guard the back door—who was crying. A couple of our women were talking to him, and he was sobbing."

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