

OREGON DAILY EMERALD

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University of Oregon, Eugene, Thursday, January 27, 1966

Why They Protest

A great deal of debate has taken place on campus recently concerning the war in Viet Nam. The ASUO Senate is attempting to reach a consensus on the question and has heard opinions from student political groups of widely divergent opinions. Informal groups of students gather in front of the Student Union to argue points of view.

Such a continuing dialogue is not only encouraging but is necessary. Students have both a right and an obligation to keep themselves fully informed, as well as to air their opinions, on a topic that is shaping up to be the most serious situation the present generation of young America has had to face.

The adult public often asks why students spend all their time protesting and arguing instead of sticking to their schoolwork. Middle class America tends to view the contemporary campus as a scene of bearded youths marching with placards and chanting slogans. This, of course, is slightly true. There are some students with beards, some who march with signs and repeat slogans. These students are exercising the same freedoms to which they would be entitled were they away from the campus.

Why do these people, and others, protest and argue? Well, the present generation of college youth was born deep in the bowels of the greatest world war in history. Many of today's college students have no living fathers because of that war, and many have fathers still bearing the lifelong scars of battle.

Five years after that war was settled, when today's students were mostly between the ages of 3 and 10, they knew another major conflict was at hand, this time in Korea. The youngsters saw their older brothers drafted for battle—many right out of college. Some never came back home.

Today, 12 years after the end of the Korean War and fewer years after Quemoy and Matsu, Berlin, Greece, Lebanon, and Cuba, America again faces a major war,

this time with implications that the world has only recently begun to imagine.

Today's college students had little or no contact with the developments that have led to the present situation in Viet Nam. Precious few voices were raised in question when President Eisenhower first committed American troops in Southeast Asia as early as 1956. The adults who today criticize the student for inspecting his government's policies paid pitifully little attention to the warnings sounded a decade ago about America fighting a land war in Asia.

So today the student watches the draft calls rise and wonders who will be next. They watch Sen. Wayne Morse's predictions of massive war in Asia slowly become reality, and they rightfully question Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's three separate and widely-spaced forecasts that American boys would be home from Viet Nam by the end of 1965. Most of all they seriously wonder about the real reasons for this war 8,000 miles from home, reasons that have yet to be fully and clearly explained.

The fact is that many more college students should concern themselves with this war—more even than are now concerned. It may be the most important problem they will ever face. Those students who are vigorously debating the issue, at the University as well as on other campuses across the nation, are asking questions that all Americans should be asking, regardless of political belief. These students are worried. They're not kidding themselves into unthinking acceptance of glib, official answers given by diplomats.

Today's college generation would like a chance to finish school, to perhaps marry and raise a family, and get a job, uninterrupted by a nuclear inferno. If his body is to be committed to a war of another generation's making, then today's student wants some answers, and his right to demand them is implicit.

This, America, is why they protest.

An Important Conference

People who grumble that "student government never does anything" ought to take a look at President Steve Goldschmidt's ASUO-sponsored "poverty conference" here today and Friday.

Goldschmidt has brought three top experts in the poverty problem to the University, added the University's own expert, Arthur Pearl, and will have them discuss their various solutions and approaches to the problem.

The four men who will participate in the conference each represent different views on the question. British economist Robert Theobald has just published a book called "The Guaranteed Income." Robert Lampman was an economic advisor to President Kennedy. Pearl is well-known nationally in the field of education of the poor. And, of course, Saul Alinsky, has been the subject of numerous articles, television interviews, etc., for his efforts in rousing community groups to change poverty conditions in places like Chicago.

With the effectiveness of President Johnson's "War on Poverty" sure to be a major issue this year, this conference has national significance.

And the high number of poverty projects on this campus—VISTA, the ASUO's Migrant Labor Project, Upward Bound, and the Job Corps camp at Tongue Point—makes it especially significant for University students.

It's probably the most meaningful conference ever held on this campus. And it was started by students, is being run by students.

It may be one of the most important conferences ever held on poverty in this country. It's the first time these four experts with differing views on poverty have been brought together to discuss possible solutions.

It's too good a deal for students to pass up.

Two-Thirds vs. Dean

Don't blame Secretary of State Dean Rusk if the world's problems are too much for him. As he said a little forlornly to a Congressional committee the other day, "The world is round. Only one-third of the human beings are asleep at one time, and the other two-thirds are awake and up to some mischief somewhere."



Letters to the Editor

All letters to the editor must be typewritten and double spaced. Letters not over 300 words in length and those dealing with one subject will be given preference for publication. All letters must be signed in ink and must give the class and major of the writer. Letters not meeting these criteria will be returned to the letter writer. The Emerald reserves the right to edit letters for style, grammar, punctuation, and potentially libelous content.

Defends Dimeo

Emerald Editor:

So what if Miss Stettler (letters, Jan. 24) can't get through Mr. Dimeo's labored labyrinth of prodigious prose. There are those of us who can decipher his column each week, and for us pseudo-intellectuals his column has deep symbolic satiric semantic significance. Besides his column is the Emerald's closest rudimentary representation of a feature story.

So if you, Miss Stettler, and the pupils (excuse the pun) that read his column dislike the image upon your retinas, you can direct them elsewhere.

Bill Haslacher
Junior, Journalism

Advertisement or Prank?

Emerald Editor:

Apropos Mr. Bartlett's somewhat desultory remarks in the Emerald Jan. 17:

It would appear upon close scrutiny that Mr. Bartlett is somewhat unnerved by a lack of zealous enthusiasm at such a vital issue as a telegram to the President of the United States informing him that he is doing the right thing and that he is to be congratulated for being intelligent enough to arrive at such a decision . . . signed by University students barely out of minority, if that mature.

To be sure, we University students knew the true path all the while. We simply were waiting until the President, his wisdom somewhat obscured by years and experience, would eventually listen to us. Now that he has, we should reward him with a telegram for, as any psychology student knows, unless a desirable action is reinforced, the desire to be right may be stifled—at least this holds true with children and laboratory animals.

Perhaps the Greeks should not bear the entire shame of this outrageous display of unconcern for the President's need for reinforcement. It was not

mentioned whether other living groups were visited, so one can scarcely make an evaluation as to the relative "patriotism" of the Greeks, can one?

Nevertheless, the possibility remains that those students, male and female, were somewhat wary of signing something thrust in front of them, purportedly for the purpose of generating peace throughout the world, especially after being beleaguered by a host of groups ranging from young student groups advocating a socialist existence to ad nauseum committees to stop the war in East Nokashima or wherever the current protest is centered.

Then again, possibly, and this is only a possibility, of course, the students contacted by Mr. Bartlett and his associates felt that they were hardly qualified to rule on the President's decision. Perhaps they felt it would be rather presumptuous of them to assure the President that he is right because we the student think so, and we congratulate him for making a decision correctly. Perhaps that's it. Perhaps.

Ron West
Junior, English
Gary Kilmer
Sophomore, Accounting
Stacy A. Goff
Junior, General Science

Reply to Bartlett

Emerald Editor:

If the structure in front of the SU has been erected by unknown persons in an attempt to ridicule the ASUO Poverty Conference, we can ignore it as a purile prank or accept it as a valid, if somewhat subtle, criticism.

However, if it is an official advertisement for the Conference, it takes the prize for bad taste of the year. Besides being crude and insensitive, it bespeaks a rather flippant and supersilious attitude.

Who claims it?

Stephen Wennstrom
Junior, English

Editor's Note: The packing crate on the SU lawn referred to in this letter, which was broken up during the all-campus blackout, was official publicity for the Congress.

Oregon Daily Emerald

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