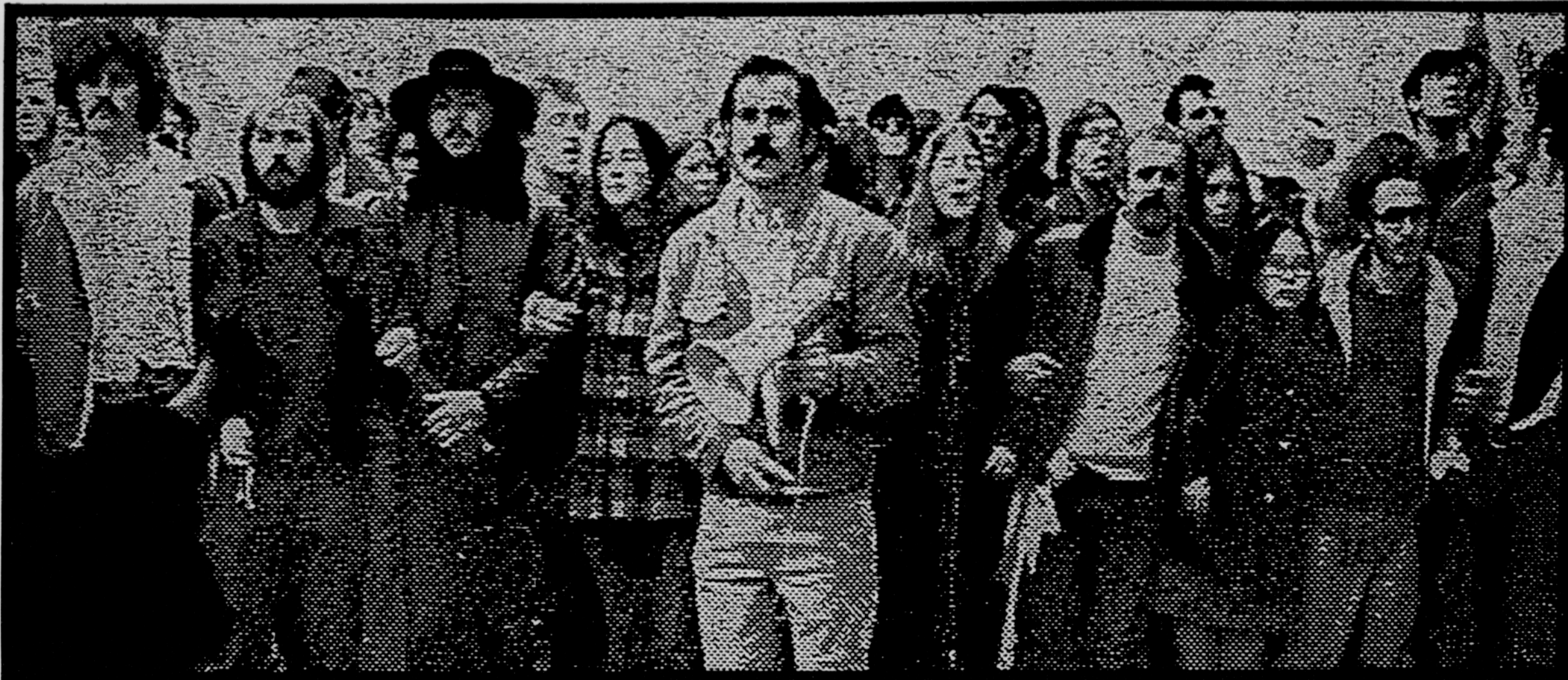




The screams got louder and I heard angry shouts and curses mixed with cries of shock and pain. I saw a man swinging his fists as two cops charged and clubbed him down. I saw a girl fall screaming to the ground. I started for her. "Keep your fucking head down!" a TAC howled running at me with his club. I rolled away and he was gone. I got to the girl who had fallen and wrapped a kotex around her head, and another around a man who was on the ground writhing in pain, his open mouth gasping hoarse moans.

I got up and ran under a forest of swinging hickory to another group laying against the hospital dome. Several cops acted like berserk Vikings, using their batons to beat down the plastic dome. A man ran out and three TACs pounced on him and beat him to the ground. I dragged him away from their feet, tied a kotex around his head, and ran on. Once I stumbled in mud. I had a quick glance of a cop raising a crutch over his head, then he was lost as wrestling bodies cut him off from my view. Later I learned he was beating a crippled man with his own crutch. I saw one of the medics fall, clubbed as he tried to get to the injured. A man ran at a cop swinging a board. It bounced harmlessly off the white helmet. The man tried for the cop's ribs but was beaten down. I pulled him away from the cops and with the help of another man hustled him out of the fight and left him on a sidewalk.

The hospital dome was torn apart. Most of its defenders retreated, screaming insults and profanities, throwing rocks and pieces of the dome's rubble at the cops. The TACs stood over several injured persons near the dome's shambles, finished with their assault but hungry for more heads. Medics made rushes to get people still on the ground to safety. We got stretchers and rolled people onto them and out from under the TACs. A regular cop stood over a large man who was semi-conscious. "Help me roll him over," I said. He bent over and grabbed the man's legs and we flipped him on his back. "I'll watch him," the cop said. "I won't let those bastards get him," he said angrily of his white helmeted peers.

City ambulances came through, sirens shrieking. We shoved as many injured people into them as fit and they raced for whatever hospitals. It was a risk, sending them to hospitals and possible arrest but there was little else we could do. Too many people were hurt, our hospital was demolished.

I joined the rest of the survivors after the last of the badly injured were evacuated. The white helmets were in formation again. I thought they might make another charge. I saw a tall dark medic I called John the Baptist — he was thin, pale with long dark flowing hair and beard that framed a pair of fiery ascetic eyes. Blood dripped from a rag clenched in a fist, his arms were smeared with blood. I looked at my hands and arms and saw they were splotchy red. Blood stained a white sweater I had borrowed from a woman earlier. John walked toward me like the Baptist approaching disciples, unhurried, cool and easy, tall and graceful. He said nothing, there was nothing to say, just waited with me for whatever would happen next.

The screams and shouts were a cataract of frenzy. Rocks and rubble from the dome and dismantled barricades flew toward the cops. So did clumps of mud. The regular cops moved from the flanks and formed up in front of the white helmets, then started forward. They shambled toward us uncertainly, not as anxious to draw blood as the TACs. The crowd moved back, still shouting but no longer hurling rocks and debris. They seemed to recognize the difference between the two forces, or were unwilling to risk shedding more blood.

As the blue helmets shoved us back, the Tactical Squad marched off in the opposite direction toward a college parking lot. They loaded onto buses and drove off. Then the evacuation of the regular cops began. They did it in platoons, walking in files of two toward several buses, surrounded on all sides by howling strikers and the enraged crowd on the sidewalks.

Three of us who acted as medics formed a triangle of sorts, inbetween the crowd and the cops in their retreat to the parking lot. John the Baptist and a man we called Shag because of his wild hair and beard walked on either side of the of the retreating files of cops while I took the center point, each of us close enough to grab for anyone the cops might wish to take along as a souvenir.***

The blue helmets reached the parking lot. Other blue helmets streamed out of the lot and stood along fences that

bordered two sides. The retreating cops walked in and boarded their buses. People stayed outside the parking lot and screamed at them, a few once more throwing rocks and mud. John nodded for me to go back with him to where the last platoon of blue helmets waited for evacuation. On the way I saw a broken-up barricade that had been occupied by a group called the White Panthers, an angry group of hippie anglos who had refused to abandon their position. Several hundred people still stood on the sidewalks. They had watched the Tactical Squad's attack. I saw shock, anger and fear on their faces. The final two files of regular cops were moving when John and I got to them. We changed direction and did the same as before, Shag emerging into place from the crowd. Ahead I saw a few more buses on the street outside the parking lot. Gasmasked cops with pepper gas and mace containers stood around them. I stood in the street, watching up and down the line for trouble. A police lieutenant stuck his baton in my chest. "Get up on the sidewalk," he shouted over the noise. "I'm a very mean man with this club."

"I'm a medic," I said.
 "Not my kind of medic," he snarled.
 "You might not think so if you get hurt," I said.
 He jabbed me again. "Up on the fucking sidewalk," he said. "I'm not going to tell you again."

I shoved past a few people and stood on the curb. The file of cops nearest me moved onto a bus. The other file broke off and formed two shorter ranks that faced outward of each other. Their faces were taut and grim as the crowd, emboldened by the winnowing, shouted louder than ever. Then it was their turn to get aboard a bus. The cops with gas and mace covered

them, with a squad ready with batons standing along one side of the bus. The motors slipped into gear and the drivers honked their way through the crowd, turned right and rumbled off. The covering squad moved back into the parking lot and got into several police cars. They drove out the other side.

It was over.



For a number of years wreaths of flowers were placed each May 11 where the police attacked in the park blocks across from PSU. After awhile, as the war waned and finally ended, Bloody Monday was generally forgotten.

A movie of the attack, *The 7th Day*, was made from television newsclips which I understand won a few documentary awards. A TV camera had focused on me as I dashed under clubs and among cops and injured demonstrators. My mother and sister saw the clip that night. My mother had been certain she would see me die on CBS News while I was in Vietnam. Instead she witnessed me in another form of combat only a few miles from her home, and she averted her eyes, asking my sister over and over, "Has he been hurt yet?"

Twenty-five years after Bloody Monday, a replica of the hospital dome was put up on its former site and a silver anniversary commemoration that only a few attended was held inside one of the university buildings. Among the Bloody Monday alumni for the reunion were the former PSU president who had previously been a CIA agent, the police captain who had vainly attempted to keep the peace, and a few of us who had stood in the front line that faced the TAC squad.

That same year 1995, twenty years after the Vietnam War ended, former Secretary of Defense Robert MacNamara admitted the Vietnam War was "terribly wrong" and that the American public was consistently deceived to justify the deaths and maiming of its young sons and daughters (nearly 60,000 killed in action, perhaps half a million wounded) as well as the deaths of more than a million Vietnamese (Hanoi claimed 3 million), and uncounted Laotians and Cambodians: Viet Cong and NVA casualties will probably never be known, though their body counts were grossly exaggerated and used as the principal measure of the war.

My direct reaction to MacNamara's mea culpa was to send letters to newspapers in every city in the USA where I had taken part in a demonstration against the war and demand an apology from every cop and National Guardsman who clubbed, maced or arrested me for protesting the war, and every politician and "patriot" who called me a traitor and threatened my life. I received no replies.

The day I stood outside PSU at the place the police had attacked us 35 years earlier I was unable to find any sign or plaque that a dramatic confrontation between war and peace had taken place. Gnarled old trees covered the Park Blocks with shade; fresh spring grass curled over my shoes where many had fallen to the police clubs. The parking lot where the cops got off and on their buses was gone, replaced by university buildings.

Nations revere and create hallowed landmarks out of battlefields of war. Perhaps a place where persons of peace were struck down opposing war should also be made a national memorial.

'Bloody Monday' was 5/11 — now there has been 9/11; and I wonder if dissent against the War on Terrorism and its concomitant suppression of Constitutional rights and liberties might have us out on the street again facing armed police and perhaps Marines and soldiers. Will they shoot us this time, like at Kent and Jackson States a week before 'Bloody Monday'? Will they arrest us and hold us without bail? Torture us like the prisoners at Abu Graib and Guantamano? Will we undergo military tribunals? Will our rights to lawyers and even free trials be suspended in the name of the War On Terrorism?

*After my one-year tour in Vietnam I became a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and a year after the strike at Portland State threw my war medals at Congress with a thousand other veterans and gobs of chicken defecation at the Pentagon.

**Hideo Hashimoto, who died a few years ago. He was a world renowned peace activist whose mother died of radiation from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. He spent much of his life teaching at Lewis & Clark College in Portland. His daughter's name is Janet.

*** Shag had been an Army surgical medic in Vietnam. He freaked out a few years after Bloody Monday and the last I heard of him he was a ward of a Florida state mental hospital.

(John the Baptist ran afoul of the local law a few times and vanished south to San Francisco.)

WARTIME DISSENT

Quite often heard lately is the admonition that dissent should be restrained and even prohibited during time of war — that it might be acceptable prior to the start of a war but equivalent to treason once a war has started.

Dissent during wartime is harshly criticized as "aiding and abetting" an enemy. Yet now, when even friends and neighbors disparage dissent, is the essential moment to resist, to question with intelligence and vigorous skepticism the claims of a war's necessity and righteousness, and to protest the curbing of civil liberties that seem corollary to every war.

The primary purpose for dissent in wartime is to discontinue wars inimical to the principles and liberties bedrock to this nation; and to critically scrutinize every stage of a war's conduct.

If there were no dissent the government would not feel compelled to publicly explain or justify its warmaking nor recognize the civil rights of combatants and citizenry, but instead issue repressive edicts disguised as necessities for the war effort. And even with dissent, government generally stonewalls in reaction to public disquiet which imputations of treachery are unable to fully squelch.

Dissent is especially important when it is realized the reasons for war are misleading or hypocritical, which begs the question: is it truly unpatriotic to condemn lies that are as surely murdering Americans as any proclaimed enemy?

It makes little sense to justify the dead of a war by sending more to also die; nor is it reasonable to curb dissent to war with the rationale it would prolong a war rather than pressure its end.

Dissent in wartime is a necessary antithesis to the magnification of militarism war generates. The public is governed more by military doctrines and less by civic principles — militant dominance of government and society erodes democracy to such a point obedience rapidly supplants freedom of thought and expression as permissible patriotism. Wartime is not a time to be submissive or silent — dissent is not a right but an obligation for resolutely demanding veracity and integrity from self-styled war leaders, and scrupulous adherence to constitutional values.

And it might be argued that dissent refutes the claim that an entire society is manifestly responsible for the advent or conduct of a war and policies that lead to it. In a reframing of the concept that all members of a nation are guilty of whatever that nation does on the world scene, the liberties and freedoms within a society such as the USA dispute the contention of universal liability for "total war." In that sense alone, dissent in wartime is our finest beacon.

—MICHAEL McCUSKER
 (NCTE, July/August 2004)

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