

Letters

Various Authors

1970

To The Fifth Estate:

I ask that you print this letter in the next issue of your paper in order to repair some of the damage I fear has resulted, inadvertently, from an inaccurate report of an interview I gave to a *Detroit Free Press* reporter, published after the April 15th anti-war rally.

The article in the *Free Press* was inaccurate in two regards: First, I never said that members of SDS were responsible for the violence which occurred on April 15. I did not lay blame for the violence on any person or group nor was it the purpose of the interview to do so.

What I did say with respect to violence in the movement, is that although I am not a pacifist, I disagree with the tactic of violence for the following reasons:

1. Isolated acts of violence by people in the movement allows the real perpetrators of violence in America—the President, the Pentagon, the big corporations—to focus public attention away from their acts of massive violence in Vietnam and in America's ghettos and to re-focus it on the minor acts of violence by members of the movement.
2. Violence in the movement does not build a mass movement of people against the war; it does not attract larger numbers of people to the movement, but rather alienates them from it. A handful of rock throwers will not build the massive revolutionary movement necessary in the U.S. to win our struggle.
3. Violence in the movement allows the movement to be more easily victimized by the repressive forces of this government; or, as Malcolm X put it, "Make the victim the criminal."

I repeat, I never said SDS was responsible for the violence on April 15. The *Free Press* reporter's error was due to the fact that WSU-SDS had passed out a leaflet calling for a counter-demonstration at the Federal Building on that day and the fact that their efforts to so assemble resulted in a confrontation with the police. This confrontation, in turn, attracted others who were subsequently arrested for alleged acts of violence—violence provoked in the main, no doubt, by Detroit's finest.

The article in the *Free Press* was inaccurate in a second regard. It suggested that I felt SDS was not part of the peace movement and was "parasitic" to that movement. I never made any such statement.

What I did say, and what is a fact, is that those persons or organizations who planned the counter-demonstration at the Federal Building on the 15th are not a part of our Coalition (though they have been invited to join) and are opposed to the Coalition's anti-war work. They hoped, by the counter-demonstration, to draw people away from a demonstration already called for and built by the Coalition. They were unsuccessful, but that was their avowed purpose.

WSU-SDS was given every opportunity to express their views, both within the Coalition and at the April 15 rally. All groups have the right to join the Coalition and are encouraged to do so. WSU-SDS had a speaker at the Coalition rally, even though they are not a member.

Their action in calling for a counter-demonstration was an undemocratic tactic and tended to divide the movement. Two members of SDS were very active in the Coalition, but as a group they neither endorsed nor built the united action on the 15th.

I do not believe that one group on the left should publicly condemn another, which is what the WSU-SDS leaflet did with respect to the Detroit Coalition, and what the *Free Press* article inaccurately suggested I had done with respect to WSUSDS.

However, we must be free to criticize certain tactics which we do not support. In particular, I think the movement should debate the problem of violence and how the movement should relate to such violence. In our efforts (including the efforts of SDS) to bring about a Socialist revolution in this country, no tactic is immune from debate.

Sincerely,

James T. Lafferty, Co-Chairman

Detroit Coalition to End the War in Vietnam Now

To the Staff:

One way to stop the population explosion is hard-sell all the various contraceptives and contraceptive devices, perhaps by using Madison Avenue ploys cunningly adapted to the New Left life style by market-wise account executives. This would appeal to the many members of the Silent Majority who secretly know they could be hip and swingers if only they could get caught up on all their bills.

I suggest a nationally televised Fuck-In. This could be a weekend festival held during one of the mellowest times of the year: June, October or both to promote the widespread use of contraceptives. The chief participants would be teenaged boys and girls selected from high school senior classes across the country for their special nubility and good looks. The cream of the crop, so to speak.

Each morning of the pageant the celebrants would be led onto a stage, naked, before the television cameras and the eyes of amazed throngs in the auditorium to give live demonstrations of all the available effective contraceptives. Mattresses would be strewn around the stage at convenient intervals.

At a signal the seniors would pair off and perform their demonstrations, each couple dramatizing a different device. All the various pills, the different loops and coils, a generous sampling of foams and creams; all would be effectively showcased to a national audience. This would be the matinee.

A quasi-scientific aura, sure to appeal to an audience which hugely believes as an article of faith that hexachlorophene is an essential ingredient in toothpaste, could be added by widely publishing the success of each device ten months after the Fuck-In. This would go far toward convincing the populace, by scientific proof, of the efficiency of contraceptives.

The evening performance, in living color and during prime evening time, would be a celebration of the freedom and joy of care free spontaneous fucking. The vestals, fresh ones, would be chosen for their agility as well as their tumescent good looks.

The emphasis here would not be on the devices themselves, but the appurtenances and comforts of fucking. Perfumes, incenses, lotions and oil, vibrators, candles, erotic music, soft thick rugs and velvet cushions would all be enjoyably illustrated. The new scented and flavored foams could be emphasized as an avant-garde item. The catalogue of the Kuma Sutra would be performed.

Naturally, the audience at home and in the auditorium would be encouraged at all times to join the National Fuck-In, and to stage their own pageants in their home communities and neighborhoods. Hopefully this celebration would soon become a national custom, a source of pleasure and benefit to the nation, and a holiday equal in mass affection and sentimental approval to Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

John Taylor

To the Staff:

We, the undersigned, are soldiers of the United States military Reserve forces. We wear the same uniform as the American troops being killed and maimed every day in Vietnam. We want those soldiers home—alive.

We demand total withdrawal of ALL our fellow American soldiers from Viet Nam now. Not just combat troops, not just ground forces, but ALL troops.

We demand total withdrawal now of all the American soldiers advising the armies of dictatorships throughout Latin America and Asia. We don't want Guatemala, Thailand or Bolivia to become the Vietnams of the 1970s. One Vietnam is enough; too many people have been killed already to preserve America's overseas Empire.

As men who have served in the armed forces, we have seen first hand the dangerous growing power of American militarism. As soldiers and as citizens we believe we have a special obligation to speak out against it.

L/Cpl. Stephen Pizzo, USMC Reserves

AB Chuck Williams, AF Reserves

PFC Robert Domerque, Army Reserve

—and over 250 other National Guardsmen and Reservists from all branches of the U.S. armed forces. Any member of the Reserves or Guard wishing to add his name may write P.O. Box 4398, Berkeley CA 94704

Brothers and sisters:

I am writing you to ask you a favor. We have a problem here that requires some assistance. Our problem is one that is common throughout the entire green machine: Lifer Pigs.

In the past two days we have lost 3 men, and 4 or 5 other guys got messed up. The CO we have now used to be an officer in the Inf. He never did and never will know a thing about running an armored cavalry unit.

Aside from the off-the-wall shit, like White-Wall hair cuts and shined boots (you can get just as stoned with or without your hair) this man is totally unreal. At our platoon meeting before we left for this mission, he said, "Any man that kills a dink I will see to it personally that he gets the Bronze Star."

There is more on him. I have on the back of my steel pot, a patch of the American flag. After reporting to the CO and getting his permission to wear it, our First Sergeant told me to take it off. Well, we got into it, and I had to tell him the only way it will come off is by a court-martial. I also told him that anyone who doesn't want to see the American flag on display has to be a fascist and a pig.

He promptly ordered "at-ease" and told me to leave his orderly room. There are many, many more things going on that shouldn't be. We can get no help here in Nam. A lot of guys want to shoot him (so they say) but I told them we would receive help from people in the world who understand our problem and are willing to help.

As I pulled my buddies charred and mangled body from the burnt-out tank, I realized then that this man doesn't deserve death. We have been and will continue to fight these pigs until we beat them at their own game. I just pray that help reaches us before there is another unnecessary death in this God-Forsaken land.

Peace,

SP4 Name Withheld for the Men of H-Troop,

17th US Cavalry

Chu-Lai, RVN

Dear Fifth Estate,

The enclosed clipping, in which I was retracting a statement I made was not entirely my doing.

When a certain person (of much higher rank) saw my ad in your paper, he got pissed off and made me send a statement retracting my ad. Believe, me, my ad did not cause me or anyone else any embarrassment but I didn't have any choice but to send in the statement of retraction because if I didn't, life could have been made very hard for me.

You may print this letter if you wish but please withhold my name for it could result in hostile action against me if it was revealed.

Peon in Nam

P.S. Thanks for printing my first ad because it got results.

Dear Staff,

Well how's the Land of Milk and Honey? I'm just sitting here in the 'Nam on a pile of sandbags watching these Lifer motherfuckers try to kill us in about 100-degree heat for 12 hours a day.

I really groove on your paper, which a buddy turned me on to. It's got a lot of stuff that we GIs like to see. Peace demonstrations, etc. This fucked up war won't ever end if we don't get some help from you people in the world.

I don't know if you heard it but the Lifers tell people in the world that we are just helping the ARVNs and that they are doing all the fighting nowadays. Well, that's a damn lie. The ARVNs sit on their asses all day or walk around town throwing peace symbols at GIs. We're the ones doing all the sweating and dying and bleeding while these ARVNs get over. (?)

No more paper. Be chilly and keep up the good work.

PFC Rick Winkler

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