

More Phantasmagoria...

Peter Werbe
Fulton Lewis III

1966

Leftovers from the Right-wing Film *Phantasmagoria* [see FE #14, September 15, 1966] came in the form of letters to and from Fulton Lewis, III. Peter Werbe, News Editor of the Fifth Estate and Executive Board Member of the DCEWV, wrote to Mr. Lewis thanking him for his cooperation in helping to raise funds for this paper and the Vietnam Committee. Being the producer of the right-wing films and a key figure in exposing 'communists' and tennis-shoe wearers, Lewis sent a quick reply to Werbe. Both documents are reprinted below.

THE FIFTH ESTATE, 937 PLUM STREET, SUITE 7, Detroit, Michigan 48201

Fulton Lewis III

c/o Newscope

1010 Vermont Avenue N. W. Suite 410

Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear Mr. Lewis III:

On behalf of Detroit Students for a Democratic Society, the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, and the FIFTH ESTATE newspaper, I wish to thank you and your organization for providing us with an amusing and nostalgic evening's entertainment. While it was nice for all of us to see our movement's spokesmen and the events we have participated in, it's difficult for me to see how the film can be considered a good piece of propaganda for your side.

Honestly, if the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam were to make a film, I don't think it would be much different than the one you produced. We might even leave in evil-looking Donald Bruce as an example of war-hawkism. Certainly, the almost unbelievable high camp ending complete with patriotic music, shots of the flag, the Statue of Liberty, and the Iwo Jima statue would be too precious to delete.

The fund raising possibilities for the New Left with your film seem limitless and I am in the process of suggesting to several national anti-war organizations that they purchase a print of your film. Being a devoted capitalist I am sure you would have no objection to selling to any buyer.

Yours for Peace and Freedom,

Peter Werbe

News Editor, the FIFTH ESTATE

Executive Committee Member, Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam

Reply from Fulton Lewis III

NEWSCOPE

1010 Vermont Avenue, N.W. Suite 410

Washington, D. C.

Mr. Peter Werbe

The Fifth Estate

937 Plum Street
Detroit, Michigan
Dear Mr. Werbe:

We, here at Newscope, are delighted that you enjoyed our film production "While Brave Men Die..." and you can be assured that we will be most happy to make prints available to you or your friends in the future—on either a rental or purchase basis. I am sure it was a real thrill for your audience to examine the pictures closely, although it surprises me that they were able to detect familiar faces through the grime and filth and beards. I recall that several of your S.D.S. associates, traveling to Cuba in 1964, enjoyed very much a Communist North Vietnamese film—so much so they cheered wildly scenes showing an American plane being shot down by Communist gunfire. Your audience must have been particularly pleased with the opening sequence of our film, the scenes showing American soldiers being shot and injured on the field of battle.

By the way of contrast to the "evil-looking Donald Bruce"—"an example of war hawkism"—it must have been refreshing for your audience to see "our movement's spokesmen"...the attractive and exceptionally articulate Tom Hayden, the clever Walter Teague, and his Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front, and the young, vibrant Norman Thomas and A.J. Muste. With leadership such as this, it is no wonder that the S.D.S. has been able to muster a national "movement" of a few thousand dissident followers.

Like you, we are indeed "devoted Capitalists." The only difference I can detect is that instead of charging \$1.00 admission fees from those interested in seeing our film, we charge \$25.00 fee from those interested in showing it.

For your interest, I refer you to page 88 of the current issue of Look Magazine, and a statement by a 17 year-old cheerleader at a Maine high school—a member of the Young Democrats: "We saw this movie 'While Brave Men Die...', in school, and it had all these dirty, beatniky types out demonstrating against the war. Yes, they have a right -but I don't know if I would like to call this type of person an American." I might add that this has been the reaction of nearly everyone who has seen this film. The public relations department of S.D.S. must be proud—it has at long last come up with an answer and counterpart to the Dale Carnegie course.

Sincerely,
Fulton Lewis III

fifth Estate

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/15-october-1-15-1966/more-phantasmagoria>
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