

Pickets Greet What's-His-Name at Cobo Hall Dinner

Edward Rom

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On Thursday, October 6, two people could have gone to Cobo Hall and for one hundred dollars had a dinner and heard Vice-president Humphrey give a speech. If the political viewpoint of the two people was slightly skewed to the right they could have gone down the hall to the "Romney-Griffin Bandwagon Ball" for only one hundred and twenty-five dollars. The difference in price was because the Romney people had to pay the band.

Outside the front entrance to Cobo Hall the Women's March for Peace had a thing going. It didn't cost anything.

In this chilly end of a summer day the women mustered 50 demonstrators. The unofficial spokesman for the group, Naomi Komorowski, explained that 50 people was a good number for the demonstration. They had heard of Humphrey on Monday and only then started to make the telephone calls. Also, she explained, 7:00 o'clock on a weekday evening is not a good time for the women. 5:00 or 9:00 o'clock is better because they are finishing dinner and about to put the kids to bed. Besides, it's cold.

Inside the hall where it's warm, the senseless music can be heard along with the small laughs and the quiet respectability. Standing there, you think the only excitement will be when two women pass each other wearing the same full-length evening gown and the mink stole.

Outside, the women walk in the-familiar oblong circle, their brightly colored cloth coats buttoned under their necks. The official reason for the march is easy. "Humphrey is the outstanding spokesman of the Johnson administration and is aiding the escalation of the war in the guise of a liberal. We choose to expose the sham of his claims of liberalism." So much for the press release.

One lady felt more immediate and practical cause for the expending of energy. She explained that neither Williams nor Griffin would grant an interview to their group.

This was one way to let the "big Dems" and the "big Republicans" know how they feel.

You may describe the last lady as you will. She said the women were there because they think the war should be ended. Specifically, "I'm disappointed in Humphrey. Disappointed is such a mild adjective." Since you're reading this newspaper, you don't have to be told all the other reasons why she was there. You've heard them and said them yourself a number of times.

But she was special.

She felt, as many of us do, there is a potential anti-war feeling in the country. As the war mounts, more young men are drafted, more young American men are killed and wounded, and more money is needed for the same amount of food. People become personally affected by the war.

"Mostly," she said, "people are anti-war but against becoming involved and being uncomfortable." She gave a real sense of hope, this woman with the rosy cheeks. If only the people were not "afraid of being unrespectable or uncomfortable."

It seemed so easy.

But why hadn't any of the peace candidates won an election? Why, when it is so easy and comfortable to pull a lever in an election booth?

We continued to walk in the oblong circle. Neither of us really answered why.

The demonstration ended at 8:00 o'clock. The two ticket tables inside were empty, the checks collected and the money being counted. The big Dems and big Republicans were being preoccupied. Some were eating a late and expensive dinner, and others were pushing their way onto the dance floor.

About 50 people were making their way home in the wind.



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