

General Hershey Bar's Conspiracy of Love

"Kiss—Don't Kill"

John Bryan

1967

(Underground Press Syndicate) An inspired madman whose bright blue eyes halt now and then in their rapid pantomime to beam upon you with benevolent love and pity, has rediscovered the ancient secret of the court jester.

General Hershey Bar (an absolute ringer for a great freak-out dancer named Calypso Joe) is the court jester to the War in Viet Nam. For a year and a half now he has appeared at every major protest meeting, on the streets, anywhere a crowd is on hand to listen. He has a strangely ingratiating way of telling the truth to people who would not listen to a serious presentation of the war horrors they would rather forget. And his mannerisms and costume allow you to pretend it's all a joke. (But later that night, you begin to think, to wonder, and then...)

He is a one-man peace crusade.

The General—who has now become something of a public monument in Los Angeles—has adopted a worn uniform which once belonged to the customs inspector. He has added a half dozen campaign ribbons, fanciful love medals, sewn on plastic airplanes of the military variety in place of epaulets, coated the brim of a military-style hat with gold braid and adorned its front and peak with more rocket and gun-laden plastic jets.

The uniform is a bit too large. (The sleeves have a habit of covering the hands.) The jets tilt out into the sky at crazy angles, angry blood-seekers roaring out of a mad head. The General's style is pure Stan Laurel and he manages to get a smile from the most grim-lipped war lovers. His aphorisms on the Johnson Administration, the war and human stupidity in general tend to be a bit extravagant. but, then, the soul of great satire has always been exaggeration.

General Hershey Bar's best known slogan is "Draft Beer—Not Students" and it has appeared on thousands of signs and bumper-stickers seen around Detroit.

"One of General Hershey Bar's activities is to introduce new legislation in Congress, like HR 1776–1967, which says briefly:

"No young man will have to go to Viet Nam unless accompanied by his parents." It's a togetherness bill. If your parent's don't feel like going, you don't have to go either.

"It's lonely for a young man to be crawling out there in the swamps of Viet Nam all by himself. How beautiful and sentimental if you have Dad, Mom and Son all crawling together in the swamps of Viet Nam. The Family That Wars Together Dies Together.

"I'm often asked how to beat the draft. As you know, the best way to beat an ordinary draft is to close all the windows and doors and, therefore, the best way to beat the military draft is to close all the doors and windows on that too.

"The quickest way for all the young men and their parents to beat the draft is to go all out against the war. By stopping the war completely, you stop the draft. We all declare peace.

"My mission is to spread the Love Conspiracy. I'm the first General to say 'Kiss—Don't Kill.' But not the only one and not the last one. I'm the first general to say, 'Let's Legalize Love and Ban the Obscenity of War.'"

General. We salute you.

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