

Notes from The Cesspool

Larry Talbot

1982

It's said that the mark of good actors and actresses is their ability to portray characters that are completely unlike themselves. Taking that into consideration, it seems to me that Jane Fonda is the perfect example of a good actress, even though many people may carry with them the popular view that she's really quite a stinker. Recently, I saw this crusader of social causes in a very interesting film that depicted the senseless horrors and personal tragedies of war. The film was "Coming Home," and not only did it show the shattered lives of the Vietnamese and Americans who found themselves killing each other in the fields of Vietnam, but the racist war propaganda and empty morals of corporate America.

Fonda portrayed a woman who, through the turmoil of the '60s and the Vietnam War, makes a 180 degree turn not only in relationship to herself and others, but also in her views towards the war: she becomes dead against it. But the irony is that the everyday Jane Fonda has made a 180 degree swing in the opposite direction. Today she is the cheer-leading wife of the lowest form of politician and supports the indiscriminate murder of defenseless men, women and children. It may be hard to believe that this one-time defender of the Vietnamese in their war with the U.S. (Jane as you may remember, visited North Vietnam to show her solidarity in their fight—I wonder if she was acting?), and ardent anti-nuke protester could have blood stained hands, but last July the gloves came off and the truth came through.

The July 4, 1982 (Independence Day) issue of the *Detroit Free Press*, carried a syndicated photo of Jane handing out flowers in an Israeli military hospital. The caption read in part: "Actress Jane Fonda gives roses to a wounded Israeli soldier in Tel Aviv..." Jane was part of a bevy of U.S. entertainers who were asked by the Israeli Association for the Welfare of Soldiers, to go to the Middle East and "boost morale during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon." As we all know, soldiers sometimes start thinking twice about what they're doing after they've seen so many people slaughtered and so many of their friends killed; it was Jane's job to let the soldiers know that theirs was a just cause and not to feel bad about shooting that little kid or old lady in Lebanon.

Her husband, that snake-in-the-grass politician Tom Hayden, who was also in Israel, and I'm sure, well aware that election time is just around the corner, stated that the Palestinians had no one to blame but themselves for this latest invasion, since they refused to recognize Israel's "right" to occupy Palestine. I wonder if this modern, liberated couple is going to write to the surviving relatives of the over 1,000 people who were massacred in the Sabra and Shatilla "refugee camps," and tell them that it was they who killed themselves?!

After her stint in Israel, Jane Fonda rushed back to the U.S. to take on yet another "morale boosting" tour; this one put together by her legal representatives. She's touring the states to promote her new book on aerobic exercise, attempting to make aging middle-class women (many former radicals of the '60s), look like teenagers again, while real teenagers were having phosphorus bombs dropped on their heads by Israeli war planes.

A final note, though. I often wonder—what are the real reasons driving Tom and Jane to be at the forefront of the anti-nuclear movement? Perhaps it's to sell books or maybe buy a government seat? It's all guessing at this point, but one thing I do know, the last time Tom Hayden ran for political office in California, he supported the

U.S. government's building of the B-1 bomber, because it would bring jobs to his state. I wonder if they build cluster bombs in California.

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