

Disneyland East

Fifth Estate Collective

1966

According to *Time* Magazine, prostitution has always been part of the American soldier's life. It is a continuation of a grand tradition going back to the Crusades and extending through the vivandieres of World War I to the B-Girls called tea girls in Saigon today. After dysentery and other intestinal diseases had multiplied fourfold in four months and venereal disease had afflicted one-third of the 21,000 troopers of the U.S. first cavalry (Airmobile) in the small town of An Khe in the central highlands, the local commander acted. He made the town off limits. Prices, which the soldiers had forced up, and disease rates soon fell but, as *Time* puts it, "In March the first cases of 'battle fatigue' showed up."

Time claims that it was the village elders who first suggested the solution—the first brothel quarter built exclusively for American soldiers in Vietnam. "Disneyland," as the soldiers call it is a 25 acre park of concrete block "boum-boum" parlors surrounded by coils of barbed wire bearing such names as Parades, Carabelle, Golden Hind, and Hill Billy.

Time describes the following situation with subtitles of "Moderate Tearoom" and "Least Harm": "In the bars already open, teenage boys serve as waiters, carrying bottle openers tied to the ends of rags. The panache with which they knock the cap off a bottle of beer, sending the top sailing to the ceiling, lends lively contrast to the slithlike movements of the bar's eight girls, shuffling from soldier to soldier." Business is carried out in eight little cubicles opening off the back with a "short time" costing \$2.50 to \$5.00.

Time claims that the An Khe Plaza is a creation of the Vietnamese and run by them even though American MPs do patrol the compound, checking the pass of each G.I. entering. Vietnamese women who want to work in Disneyland need a special card and get a weekly inspection by Vietnamese doctors and a U.S. supplied penicillin shot. Of official attitudes, *Time* says, "Forced to choose between morality and the morale of their men, the divisions' officers are clearly troubled by Disneyland." "But," *Time* goes on, "as one colonel exclaimed, 'we wanted to get the greatest good for our men with the least harm.'"

Text box: What We Propose

An immediate cease fire and withdrawal of all forces from Vietnam.

Related

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

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