

Wargasm in D.C.

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

Almost exactly two years ago, tens of thousands of demonstrators came down on Washington, D.C., to let the Pentagon feel the force of their opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Few of them got inside the Pentagon, nearly a thousand were arrested on the steps outside, beaten with clubs and rifle butts, gassed.

But they were not defeated.

Out of that demonstration came a new fighting spirit for the movement, a spirit that made itself felt in numerous actions across the country including the Columbia rebellion and the demonstrations at the Chicago Democratic Convention and played a major part in forcing Johnson out of the White House.

And even if they did not take over the home of the Defense Department, they made their presence felt deep inside, in the top-secret "war room," where for a few days attention was focused not on maps of Vietnam and China but on a huge map of Washington itself.

Now, on November 15, we are returning to Washington. Again the people are bringing their anger and frustration home. And again the military planners will be forced to turn their attention to the defense of their own capital.

Like two years ago, we're bringing it back home to Washington.

But it isn't two years ago. Times have really changed and a lot more people have learned what this war is all about.

They have learned that the government in Saigon is run by a corrupt and brutal clique of petty tyrants who serve my the Americans, the rich Saigon landlords and themselves.

They have learned that the common people of Vietnam protect and cooperate with the NLF, and hate the Americans who are supposed to be there to defend them. And they have seen more than 40,000 American men die in Vietnam, while a few American corporations have made fortunes manufacturing weapons and other war materials.

The leaders of the Moratorium understand this. They have pitched their campaign at the millions of Americans who are tired of having to read about Vietnam, argue about Vietnam, think about Vietnam. Their program is one for the war weary, for people who simply cannot swallow years more of confusion and suffering.

These people are important. It is for them that the Nixon administration is playing its shell-game with peace as the hidden prize. It is for their benefit that Agnew brands the Nov 15 demonstration as the brainchild of "hard-core dissidents and professional anarchists."

The war-weary may be swayed by such accusations for a while. They may also follow the lead of the liberals for a while and waver back and forth between protesting and blindly hoping that the government is on the level.

What the government, and the liberals and the Moratorium people are really afraid of is seeing those millions of people slip over into the other camp, the war-angry.

All the people who have seen their brothers die for something they could not understand and could not believe in. All those who understand in their guts that an entire people cannot fight with the unity and courage that the Vietnamese have displayed unless they believe in their cause and love that cause.

The war-weary may be important. They may well play an important part in getting the American troops out of Vietnam and bringing victory to the Vietnamese people.

But the war-angry are even more important.

Because they are the ones who will not be taken in by Nixon's games, or Fulbright's games, by the Moratorium's assurance that the government will change its mind if you just approach it in the right, respectful way.

They are the ones who will forge ahead and show the war-weary that there is another side, that there are steps to be taken. A lot of these people will be in the streets of Washington. Do it!!

Plans for the Washington march at this point run as follows.

Nov. 13, 8:00 p.m. March Against Death Begins—Arlington cemetery. (Symbolic march of 46,000 people representing the 46,000 American dead in Vietnam.)

Nov. 14, all day, March Against Death Continues.

Nov. 15, 9:00 a.m. Assemble for main march—Mall between 3rd and 6th streets.

11:00 a.m. Mass March to the White House led by GIs and March Against Death Participants.

2:00 p.m. Rally at Ellipse (park behind White House), speakers and entertainment.

6:00 p.m. Meetings to discuss possible continuing activities.

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