

from the plant and the false attitude manifesting itself in the formulation of 'demands' to be made on somebody 'higher up.'"

The higher-ups, however, found it difficult to mobilize widespread or enthusiastic support for their economic reforms—especially when they explained that as a consequence of the reforms, 300,000 workers would have to be "re-deployed," and that they would receive only 60 per cent of their normal income while they were looking for

other work. And that "lazy workers," of whom the managers estimated there were a considerable number, would find the new work methods and production expectations quite rigorous indeed.

Can we really be surprised then, that it was mainly students, managers and intellectuals who actively supported the New Course? Or that the only "General Strike" which was actually carried out in the factories in the course of the invasion oc-

curred during the lunch hour?

By simply tilting back towards the West, Dubcek, Sik and the others were no more able to redeem the promises the Party made the Czech people in 1948, than were their Stalinist predecessors who faced towards the East. Perhaps the Soviet invasion and the disillusionment with Czech liberalism will breed a generation of Czech rebels who depend on neither East nor West, but rather on the people of their own country.

## Viet-Nam: The Decline and Fall of U.S. Morale

**A**FTER AN ABSENCE OF TWO and one half years, I returned to Viet-Nam this summer, to see for myself what the GI was thinking and how he was performing. Any person who has had a long acquaintance with the military and has been exposed to war is condemned to a lifetime of fascination with both. This is as true for those who have learned to detest militarism as it is for members of the American Legion. The real object of that fascination is the soldier, a man who has been plucked from a familiar environment and plunked down in a foreign and unnatural collectivity.

For some time before I revisited Viet-Nam, whenever my opinion about troop morale was sought I assured my audience that I believed it to be good, that the United States military, like any army, was expending no little effort to assure that our men were sufficiently motivated to make them an effective force and to cushion them against privation and hardship. As time went on, however, despite the prattle of such experts as Bob Hope and Martha Raye, doubts began to form in my mind. In part this was the result of an increase of friendly mail, in response to certain of my articles, from GI's in Viet-Nam. More important, I realized that the government was suddenly expending an inordinate amount of energy and resources to con-

vince the soldiers and the folks at home that troop morale and esprit were high. So I decided to see for myself.

All over Viet-Nam today large columns of odious black smoke rise to violate the once clear blue of the Asian sky. And it's not napalm. It's burning shit. Amid a host of indicators, few symbolize the changed nature of the war and the military in Viet-Nam as do those black columns. From the DMZ to the Delta, on denuded mountain tops and in base camps, each morning hundreds of GI's are detailed to extract thousands of cut-down oil drums from beneath an equal number of privies. After moving the containers a short distance, the unfortunates on the shit detail (men who no doubt arrived in Viet-Nam believing themselves to be the defenders of freedom's frontiers) pour diesel oil on the contents, ignite it and periodically stir the flaming excretion until it is consumed. As he keeps shuffling to windward the individual can contemplate his lot ("And what did you do in the war, Daddy?") or try to calculate the thousands of man hours and gallons of diesel oil expended each week to burn shit.

Although done in the name of sanitation, the point is, of course, that no aggressive, forward-moving army has either the time or the inclination to concern itself with such elaborate housekeeping procedures. Wheth-

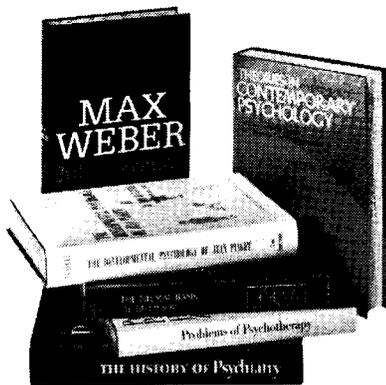
er by design or accident the U.S. military is operating out of what can only be termed enclaves. The fighting continues, the greasy smoke from napalm joins that from the privies, people on all sides are still being killed, but a war in the sense of World War II, or for that matter in the manner of 1967, there isn't.

I found the Army changed. It has changed because there is a new soldier in Viet-Nam, a man who comes from that part of our society which is vital and turbulent. To generalize on the soldier in Viet-Nam would be as unrealistic as generalizing on the youth here at home, but it is safe to say that this new soldier is no more prone to accept officialdom's explanations than he was when he was a civilian. In fact, what may set him apart from the GI's of a few years ago is the fact that he is really still a civilian—his basic training somehow didn't "take." The new draftee or enlistee has been involved passively or actively in the "great debate" for a couple of years now; he is well informed, and information has become an enemy of the military establishment.

Through 1965 and into 1966, soldiers (military personnel of all services, not only the Army) assigned to Viet-Nam were mobile. By mobility, I refer to the individual GI's access to areas outside his normal

*(Continued on page 16)*

by Donald Duncan



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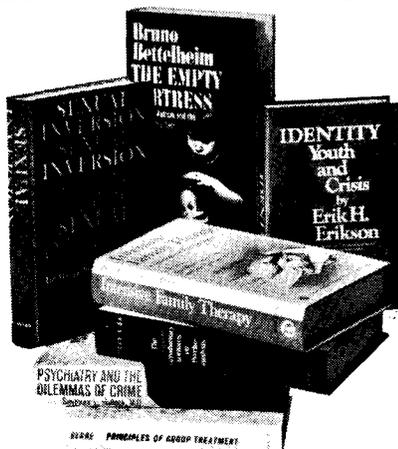
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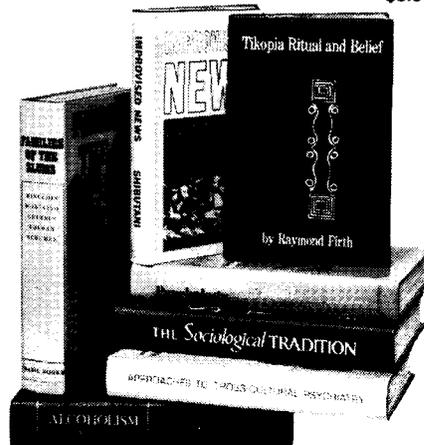
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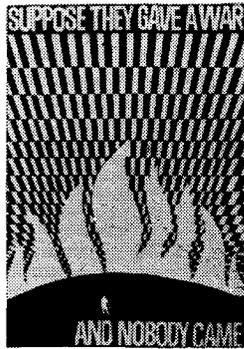
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(Continued from page 12)

workaday environment. Whenever a man's presence was not essential, he was encouraged to go into town and "blow it out." Not only could a field soldier reach his favorite city fairly easily, but city-bound clerks could visit remote camps and get away from the "paper war." This was considered good for morale—and it was. Well into 1965, most GI's were "lifers" (the word now used by short-term soldiers to describe career personnel), and although they had empirical access to the country, could see the contradictions and hear the gripes, for the most part they felt certain they were "doing a job." The militaristic belief that citizens have a duty to serve in the military was well ingrained.

In 1966, with the huge build-up of American forces, came a different soldier—and with him came chaos. The streets of Saigon were choked with GI's; prices soared; there was standing room only in bars and night clubs; incidents among soldiers, and between soldiers and Vietnamese, became all too common. Most importantly, access and mobility began to have an effect on morale opposite to that intended. To correct the situation, the military enacted a crash program to remove all "nonessential" soldiers from the larger towns and cities, and a mammoth "positive information" program. As the number of troops increased, the number of military information specialists and small unit newspapers increased geometrically.

**I**N WHAT APPEARS TO BE a deliberate attempt to isolate as many troops as possible from the Vietnamese, the military has created a series of camps in the Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ), each camp the size of a modest city. Normal procedure has been to select a site which is well removed from population centers but central to an area of operation; to bulldoze the area, surround it with mines and barbed wire and construct camps that closely resemble Camp Funston at Fort Riley, Kansas.

The 4th Division "Highlanders" Camp Enari illustrates the point. The division is responsible for the highlands area of II CTZ, and is homesteading a huge new complex, well outside of Pleiku. The camp is complete with its own water and power supplies, an airstrip, a PX, information offices, a supply depot, a swimming pool, several clubs—in short, it's a self-sufficient city. There are more than 5000 soldiers stationed at this headquarters post—more than one-fourth of the division's total strength. These men, in addition to being "home" guards, support three large forward bases, which in turn support a series of fire bases atop the mountains, which in turn protect the support bases on the valley floors. Indeed, so many troops are occupied with supporting those who are supporting,

that less than one-third of the division can be spared for offensive action. Cam Ranh, Chu Lai and Long Binh are three other similarly isolated enclaves where GI's can be deluged with "positive" information.

Replacements for the 4th Division arrive by jet at Cam Ranh Bay (American); within 48 hours they are flown to an airfield (American) near Pleiku where they are immediately put aboard a bus (American) and driven to Camp Enari (American). There they are given briefings by officers who take turns lecturing them on the typical do's and don'ts: "Take your malaria pills . . . there is a strain of VD here that can't be cured . . . don't mess around with the Vietnamese or Montagnards working around the camp . . . don't be telling the press war stories or how bad things are 'cause things aren't bad. You tell the press stories and they print them and that's what causes all these peace marches and things. . . . If you see something you don't understand ask the cadre to explain it—that's why we're here . . ." Each point is driven home with a horror story, a liberal waving of the Manual for Courts-Martial, the threat of LBJ (Long Binh jail) or the threat of a shit detail—the latter being no idle figure of speech.

After nine days of orientation and training ("to wash off any civilian that might have accumulated while you were on embarkation leave"), each soldier is assigned to what will probably be his job for the next 12 months. If he is assigned to Enari or a forward support base such as Dak To, that is where he will remain; his knowledge of Viet-Nam will be restricted, hopefully, to that area limited by the barbed wire which surrounds the camp. He will be allowed one R&R (rest and recuperation) leave during his 12 months—*out-of-country*. If he is fortunate enough to be assigned to a fire base atop one of the many mountains, he will be allowed one *in-country* R&R—but it cannot be taken in Saigon. The leave must be taken in some place like Vung Tau (formerly Cap St. Jacques), once the playground of the French and now the main in-country R&R center.

Vung Tau is isolated on a peninsula which juts out into the South China Sea at the mouth of the Saigon River. Its once quiet, tree-lined streets are now cluttered with GI's and hundreds of shanty bars. The tranquility of the long white beaches is fractured by the chrome whistles of the Special Services lifeguards who watch over acres of sunburned soldiers water skiing, body surfing and sailboating. The GI's pursuit of happiness is unhampered by the presence of Vietnamese—today in Vung Tau, the Vietnamese are a minority.

This may well be the first time in history that an army has been isolated from the populace not to deny information to the enemy, but to deny information to the

troops. Unfortunately, however, the program hasn't worked, and all the time-proven gimmicks to improve morale seem only to have created more problems.

**A**LTHOUGH CRITICISMS OF OUR Viet-Nam policies and practices can be heard from military personnel all over the country, it does not mean that the soldiers in Viet-Nam are ready to mutiny, throw down their weapons and embrace the enemy. On the contrary. Despite the contradictions, despite the futility of not getting anywhere, most soldiers *want* to believe that they are right, that they haven't been sold a bill of goods, that what they are doing *is* important. Most avoid debating the war at all; when they can't avoid it, they fall back on Ruskisms and emotion. Unfortunately, in spite of themselves and the efforts of the military, information of the unprocessed variety seeps through. It comes from the GI's own observations, or from what another soldier has seen and related, and it is having its effects.

Missing among the troops in Viet-Nam is the sense of union that normally develops among individuals who live and work together. The interests of the black soldier, for instance, are not those of his white contemporary, and he is in Viet-Nam for very different reasons. The military is still an economic refuge for blacks, but the black soldier is becoming aware of what's happening in the cities at home, and the idea of being sent home to fight his own people in the ghetto is beginning to haunt him more and more. In addition, although there is mutual assistance on the job and "soul brother" relationships sometimes develop across racial lines, the difference in backgrounds and interests is still conspicuously present. Complaints are heard about a lack of "soul" nights at the service clubs, and in the rear areas even the camaraderie of the foxhole is sadly lacking.

Fights occur, and with increasing frequency, between the "lifers" and the "short-termers" (the category is determined more by attitude and state of mind than by rank, time in service or means of induction). When off-duty, the two go their separate ways, as do the blacks and the whites. Another division is between the "alkies" (usually lifers) and the "pot-heads" (usually short-termers). The feeling against grass users seems to rise in proportion to alcohol intake. The very sight of a man known to use grass is often enough to send an "alkie" into a blind rage. In one instance near Bien Hoa, a company party turned into a near riot when the "alkies" became infuriated because too many men were not drinking, preferring instead to slip outside and share a joint.

For decades, the Army has managed to control a large number of soldiers with a

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minimum of supervision by exploiting peer group approval. But the new soldier couldn't care less about being accepted by his military peers. He looks elsewhere for respect and he knows that there are any number of people back home whose opinions he values and who think and feel the way he does.

Examples of the changing attitudes are numerous. For instance, in a command bunker at Fire Base 29, a combat medic joyfully announced in front of his commanding officer and his fellow GI's that he had only three days left. Then he started dumping on his unit and the MEDCAP (Medical and Civil Affairs) program. He was obviously the envy of all those present, and the commanding officer walked quietly from the bunker. And in November, when General Westmoreland was calling the battle of Loc Ninh a victory, others were pointing out that the same enemy force "destroyed" at Loc Ninh attacked Bu Dop ten days later. When MACV (Military Assistance Command in Viet-Nam) stated that they had known all along that the Tet offensive was coming, laughter among the GI's was unanimous. No one knows better than the soldier how surprised they were when they realized that the attacks could not have taken place without the assistance of what they had thought were Vietnamese friends. Daily announcements of "imminent" attacks are now greeted cynically as a rather transparent attempt by the brass to avoid being caught again with egg on their faces.

**T**HE VAGARIES OF THE policymakers have even had their effects on the Marines. In November, elements of the First and Fourth Marines were placed in a static position at Khe Sanh; they were told that the losses they took under intense artillery and rocket fire were necessary because Khe Sanh was "essential." Predictably, the defense of Khe Sanh was termed a victory. But in July, the base was suddenly declared nonessential and was evacuated. It is doubtful that there was one Marine who was personally sorry to leave, but the withdrawal created much bitterness. While the bulldozers were ripping up the runways and bunkers, a correspondent asked a "grunt" what he thought about the withdrawal. "Go tell it to the dead" was his snarled reply.

When the story was repeated to Lieutenant Colonel Allen (USMC)—who continually reminds his listeners that he is a PhD with an IQ of 180—he responded: "The trouble is the grunts just can't understand a war of attrition." And perhaps they can't. To a man helplessly crouching day after day watching his buddies being killed and wounded, questionable kill-ratio statistics inflicted on an unknown, unseen enemy are small consolation. And after so much

suffering, to turn around and admit it was all a mistake, "But with this new plan. . ."

The lethargy, lack of aggressiveness if you like, is not restricted to enlisted personnel. Except in "elite units," a junior officer seldom gains the confidence of his men by endangering them with "gung ho" acts. Time and again I heard lieutenants state that they were getting out and going back to school to become teachers. "I'd like to stay in until I make captain, for reserve purposes, but if I do I'll end up back here, and I'm never coming back to Nam."

Mass firepower, originally used to offset a shortage of line troops and to forestall outraged cries over high casualties, has become the young officers' out. This is not a comment on bravery but rather on attitude. Because of the junior leaders' attitude, the military has had to replace leadership with technology. This in turn has resulted in increasing hostility on the part of the Vietnamese toward the Americans. Vietnamese reaction to the wholesale destruction of Saigon's District VIII is typical: "How many of our innocent people's lives were taken in exchange for one VC body, and how many hundreds or thousands of their houses were burned or destroyed in exchange for an AK-47 [rifle] . . . This is not fighting, this is merely destruction for enjoyment's sake. . . ." These are not the words of an NLF propagandist but of the man who was almost single-handedly responsible for making District VIII a strong government enclave—Ho Ngoc Nhuan, a member of the National Assembly, who uttered these sentiments in a speech he gave before that body.

In an interview, Mr. Nhuan added: "I can no longer control my people because I cannot control the destruction. I am not their representative; because I am of the government, to my people I now represent only destruction."

**O**NE AFTERNOON WHILE I WAS grabbing a hamburger at the USO, two GI's from a "log" command were at the next table going through the Stars and Stripes. Turning to the centerfold, one soldier suddenly burst out with, "Sons of bitches!"

"What is it?" asked the other.

"This, that's what," The soldier showed his companion a two-page spread. Most of the pictures were of damaged houses and rubble that had once been houses. The captions said that, whereas the allies had been taking great pains to avoid excessive damage in the house-to-house fighting in Cholon, the VC hadn't been quite so considerate. The destruction was the result of wanton enemy acts.

"Oh, man, that's a batch of shit."

"Whaddya mean? There's the pictures."

"Lookit. I was here all last week working

the shuttle. Those buildings were destroyed by American planes and ARVN tanks. It wasn't even house-to-house fighting, it was more like urban renewal. ARVN was too busy looting to do any serious fighting."

"You mean the Army's put this story 180 degrees?"

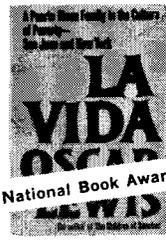
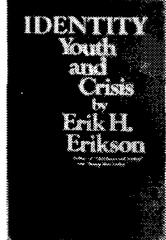
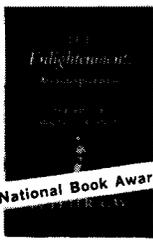
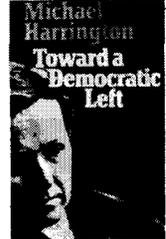
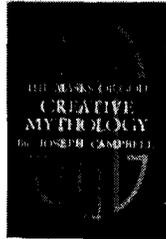
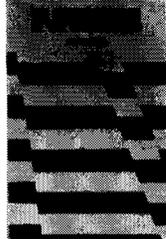
"Exactly. Hell, how do you think those colonels got killed in Cholon last Sunday? Tanks and choppers had been hitting that area all afternoon."

The incident the GI's were referring to created such an outcry that a decision was made to use "actual" house-to-house fighting techniques to rout the holdouts in Gia Dinh, another Saigon suburb. To find troops that still knew how to fight that way, the military had to bring in American and Vietnamese Special Forces all the way from Nha Trang.

The battle for Hill 875 last November was one of the rare times the Army has launched an assault without first "softening" the objective with massive firepower. Two U.S. battalions were decimated in order to gain a hill which nobody needed. Although Westmoreland called it a victory, today even the brass concede that it was a disaster.

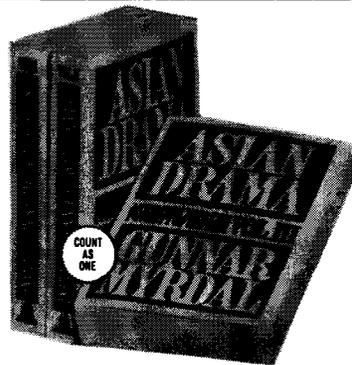
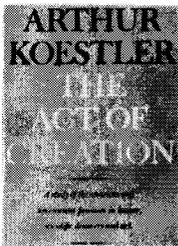
The military's efforts to overcome the prevailing attitude have been impressive if not successful. To restrict healthy, virile young men to the monotony of base camps or mountain tops, months on end, can of itself destroy morale. The military, in its infallible wisdom, has decided that hot food and hard work can take the place of freedom of movement and women. To provide the food, each morning the 4th Division dispatches helicopters to its base camps. For the remainder of the day, the copters shuttle groceries, beer, gumdrops, mail and ammo from the valley floor to the surrounding peaks. On Colonel Tambaugh's hill behind Dak To, those men not burning shit or unloading groceries are busy tearing down old bunkers and building new ones. In accordance with the military precept that men don't think while they're working, everyone in Viet-Nam works at least a 12-hour day. This means somebody has to keep thinking up things for the GI's to do—housekeeping chores, inspections and the like. The meaningless work only reinforces the new soldier's knowledge that his presence in Viet-Nam has no real value.

I have already mentioned the plethora of small unit information papers created to present the GI with "positive" stories. Many of the reporters for these papers have been selected from among the short-termers because of a shortage of qualified personnel among the lifers. Men are chosen for the job because they have a command of the language, powers of analytic observation and the ability to translate their observations into language. To perform his mission, the

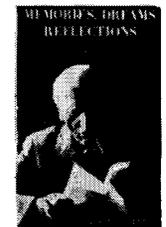
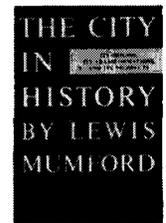


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reporter has to move around, have access to what's happening, and talk with many people. He writes his "positive" stories, but he offsets what he considers hypocrisy by talking to as well as with other GI's. As a group, I found the information specialists second only to the junior officers as the most cynical and dissident element in Viet-Nam.

Another part of the military's problem is mail from home, traditionally a high priority item. Logistics aside, mail is now presenting the military with a new problem. Many GI's, aware that they are being systematically propagandized within a limited frame of reference, deliberately seek out sources for divergent views. One such source is the small tabloids put out by various groups in the States and sent free to the GI's.

When these tabloids first started showing up in the GI's mail, they were so obviously written by people with no conception of the dilemma of their target audience that the military gleefully allowed them to be distributed. But new tabloids have appeared, and at least one, "Viet-Nam GI," is written solely by Viet-Nam veterans. At least two pages in each issue are devoted to letters from GI's expressing their frank opinions on the war, the lifers and the military. The reception has been such that "Viet-Nam GI" is now publishing two separate editions, one for the overseas GI's and one for those Stateside. Now the heretofore silent soldier in Viet-Nam knows he not only has a peer group back home, but also one in Nam—and they seek each other out. The military's problem is how to allow one publication to get through and embargo another without making manifest that it is denying information to the troops.

**T**HE ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM, while welcome, certainly has not had the expected results. Typical fare on the Armed Forces TV network is Lucille Ball, Danny Thomas, or a "Clean-Cuts in a Beautiful America" special. The time normally devoted to car and soap commercials is filled with U.S. Savings Bonds appeals, Your American Heritage, Military Courtesy bits, and so on. Not surprisingly, the most popular shows are the news and sportscasts.

Radio is a little better. Among the lifers the hillbilly music programs are the most popular. "Matt Dillon, the first man they wanna know, and the last man they wanna meet" is probably second. For the short-timers, a "rock" program featuring a DJ who has a penchant for "Haight" and "soul" talk is the most popular—a phenomenon which probably had much to do with the decision to "can" (pre-record) all future programs from the States.

The military also makes transport to even the most remote enclaves available for live entertainers and daily distributes

thousands of cans of film which are shown even in covered bunkers atop the mountains. Both are welcomed by the soldier—but they also remind him of where he is not. The USO-sponsored entertainers, who come in varying shades of mediocrity, come back extolling the high morale of the men on the field, marvelling that the men seldom complain. Of course—who wants to talk about the charming bunker he's occupied for three months? The entertainer represents the other world, the one he wants to hear about. Reporters (especially women) receive the same response as do the Red Cross Do-Nut Dollies who, although they don't entertain per se, are always welcome. The soldier doesn't want sympathy or a pat on the head. He wants information and a girl (not necessarily in that order).

Other indicators of the efforts to motivate the GI are the increase of on-post clubs, swimming pools, theaters, water skiing at places like Cam Ranh Bay, fast promotions and the old favorite—the passing out of numerous awards and decorations. Though welcome, they only add to the homesteading appearance of the U.S. military.

It would be interesting to have a breakdown on the amount of money spent for all these items, plus make-work equipment and housekeeping materials, homesteading facilities, etc. The determination that our boys will lack for nothing has, of course, resulted in huge excesses. In the past year the U.S. Army has shipped over 200 million pounds of supplies out of Viet-Nam. The total includes 34.76 million pounds of equipment issued to troop units which are returned to base depots, unused, for lack of need. Much of the remaining equipment never gets off the beach, much less out of the crates. Yet excess material continues to pile up on those same beaches.

Hundreds of supply specialists have had to be sent to Viet-Nam just to identify the material in the piles—the labels have long ago bleached out or washed away in open storage. Equipment not rusted or rotted away is "retrograded" to Japan, Okinawa or Thailand. To the original cost of these excess supplies must be added the shipping, reshipping and handling costs, and the cost in terms of extra men and equipment needed to handle such bulk.

The culprit, the Army says, is that infallible money-saver, the computer. The computer has been programmed for automatic requisitions—supplies to be shipped whether asked for or not. Left unexplained is why the dastardly cards that keep cranking out unneeded shipping orders cannot be found and removed.

**I**N AN EFFORT TO FIND some reason for the overall lethargy, I considered the peace talks. After all, the leaders of any army take a gamble when, while exhorting

their troops to maximum effort, they indicate a willingness to settle for less than ultimate victory. It was logical to assume that, as in Korea, the peace talks might result in psychological letdown; that a "who-wants-to-be-the-last-man-killed-in-a-war" syndrome would manifest itself. But after countless talks with lifers and short-termers alike, it became obvious that the threat of peace was having more effect on the stock market than on the GI. Though most hoped for the best from the talks, not one soldier believed anything would happen to effect his DEROS (Date Estimated Return from Overseas).

The feeling is that even if a cease-fire occurred right now, most GI's would be stuck in Viet-Nam for their full 12-month tour anyway. And since only a relatively small percentage of the troops are engaged in actual combat, a cease-fire would have little effect on the majority of GI's.

The 12-month rotation plan has a positive effect on morale in that it eliminates the individual's feeling that the war could last forever for him—an important factor in an unpopular war where only the smallest percentage of our populace is actually exposed to the threat of being killed. This positive aspect, however, is partially offset by an inherent "short-timers" syndrome effect—the tendency for individuals to grow more cautious as their tour gets short. The military feels the subsequent loss in combat efficiency is worth it in order to get the optimum number of troops "blooded"—a circumstance considered to be a great asset by the militarists. In General Westmoreland's words: "I bet the Russian Army is jealous as hell. Our troops are here getting all this experience. . . . Those Russian generals would love to be here. . . . Any true professional wants to march to the sound of gunfire."

The only way the military could stop the growing dissent and the flow of information would be to come down hard on those spreading it. But those responsible are an amorphous group; there is no plan, no program, no organization. Thus, the military would have to pick off each individual and stick them in the already overcrowded stockades. Few things, however, are as devastating to the morale and esprit of a unit as a high incidence of courts-martial.

Huddled over our drinks in an on-post bar at Qui Nhon, I asked my Spec Four companion what he thought the effect of drafting graduate students would be. A graduate himself, his face broke into a wide grin.

"For the Army, it's going to be a disaster," he replied. Leaning back, he raised his glass and, oblivious to the NCO's and officers alike, he proposed an increasingly popular toast: "Fuck the Army."

Selections  
from the  
Biography  
of  
HUEY P. NEWTON  
by  
Bobby Seale,  
with an  
Introduction  
[and an Aside to Ronald Reagan]  
by  
Eldridge Cleaver

**Huey P. Newton.** A narration and commentary by those who know him. Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party, the baddest motherfucker ever to set foot inside history. Huey P. Newton, the brother, black man, a nigger, the descendant of slaves, who stood up in the heart of the ghetto, at night, in alleys, confronted by racist pigs with guns, and said: “My name is Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party. I’m standing on my Constitutional rights. I’m not going to allow you to brutalize me. I’m going to stop you from brutalizing my people. You got your gun, Pig, I got mine. If you shoot at me, I’m shooting back.”

## [An Aside to Ronald Reagan]

I HAVE NEVER LIKED Ronald Reagan. Even back in the days of his bad movies—bullshit flicks that never turned me on to any glow—I felt about him the way I felt about such nonviolent cowboys as Roy Rogers and Gene Autry: that they were never going to cause any action or allow anything to happen. They were just there, occupying space and wasting my time, my money and my sanity. There was a sort of unreality in their style. One knew that movies were into a make-believe bag, but the unreality espoused on the screen by the flat souls of such Pablum-fed actors as Reagan reflected to me—black ghetto nigger me—a sickening mixed bag of humorless laughter and perfect Colgate teeth, with never a hint of the real funk of life. Inspid, promising nothing and delivering even less, a Reagan movie was nothing to get excited about. There would be no surprises.

But what happened was that Ronnie landed a TV show. Equipped with opulent sponsors and some slick script writers, the mediocrity of his grade-B spirit was glossed over and concealed by the make-up of a rhetoric fashioned by a committee of crew-cut wordmongers. With all this going for him, it was natural for him to turn to politics when Hollywood's keenest make-up artists began to find it increasingly difficult to deal with the wrinkles that were slowly turning his face into a replica of well furrowed, depleted single-crop soil.

He was in the best of all states to get into his thing. California had demonstrated its ability to relate to the politics of the absurd by electing to office such blobs of political putty as Richard Nixon and Max Rafferty. And having picked the proper place, he could not have chosen a better style. Ronnie used a pat formula that said: pick the toughest problems confronting the people and launch blistering attacks upon all sincere efforts to come to grips with these problems; offer as an alternative a conglomeration of simple-minded clichés and catch phrases that go back to the Mayflower; sing The Star-Spangled Banner and smile broadly, effusively, as you wave the flag at the people; use a fighting "I'm fed up" form of delivery, and always remember that when nothing else works, there is always the tried and proven gambit of demagogic politicians, especially in California—viciously at-

tack the perennial whipping boys of the American Dream: subversion concealed in the words of textbooks, the "decadence of universities and the misguided students being duped by a handful of professors who are under the subtle influence of the Communist Conspiracy."

Well, it worked. Mickey Mouse is governor and Donald Duck is a candidate for the U.S. Senate. That is what we have to worry about. And deal with.

It has been said that the people get the rulers they deserve. I do not believe, however, that America has the rulers it deserves. The State of California, emphatically, could not deserve the rulers it has. Yet we have them, and this is an election year. And what an election year: this is the nightmare election year of the American Dream.

Everything is out in the open this year. Nobody is trying very hard to conceal anything. As usual, the key issue in the election is what to do about the niggers—only this time, the question is being rewritten to read, what to do *with* the niggers. From the point of view of the niggers themselves, the question has also been rewritten and now reads, what are we going to do about this shit?

A surprising development—one which offers the possibility, perhaps the only possibility, of a monkey wrench being tossed into the smoke dreams of the racists—is that a sizable portion of white Americans are in revolt against the system. So the issue of Law and Order, or Crime in the Streets, becomes key.

IN CALIFORNIA, MICKEY MOUSE looked out from his perch in Disneyland for an opening to get himself back into the act, having been kicked off the stage in Miami by a pig who had been in the game a little longer. From where he lurked, Mickey Mouse fixed his blank stare on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. He had received a tip that a situation tailored to his needs existed on that campus. Eldridge Cleaver, the apotheosis of the American nightmare: loudmouthed nigger, ex-convict, rapist, advocate of violence, Presidential candidate—retained by the Berkeley subversives to teach a class on the University campus, *i.e.* to corrupt the morals of lily-white American youth. So Ronnie Baby, doing his Republican duty, emerged from his pen to take up the cudgels of battle: "If Eldridge Cleaver is al-

lowed to teach our children, they may come home some night and slit our throats. Therefore, the *people* of the State of California will not stand for this!"

Right on, Mickey Mouse. There are those of us who know what you are into, and we don't like it. Furthermore, we are going to deal with it, with you, to put an end to your absurd oinking in the faces of the people. So that all those bullshit changes that you went through with the Board of Regents, forcing them to emasculate the course in which I was to participate as a guest lecturer, don't mean shit. It displeased you, I understand, that even the Board of Regents did not buy you whole hog; that, in fact, they agreed to allow me to deliver one lecture.

Big deal. Who in the fuck do you think you are, telling me that I can't talk, telling the students and faculty members at UC Berkeley that they cannot have me deliver ten lectures? I'm going to do it whether you like it or not. In fact, my desire now is to deliver 20 lectures. You, Donald Duck Rafferty, Big Mama Unruh, and that admitted member of the racist John Birch Society who introduced that resolution into the Legislature to censure those responsible for inviting me to lecture in the first place—all and each of you can kiss my black nigger ass, because I recognize you for what you are, racist demagogues who have their eye on the ballot box come November. The students and the faculty members at Berkeley are trying to salvage the American people from the brink of chaos that you pigs have brought on. Your thirst and greed for power is so great that you don't care whether or not in your lust you destroy the vital processes of a barbaric society that is trying in its parts to become civilized.

I don't know what the outcome of all this will be, but I do know that I, for one, will never kiss your ass, will never submit to your demagogic machinations. I think you are a cowardly, craven-hearted wretch. You are not a man. You are a punk. Since you have insulted me by calling me a racist, I would like to have the opportunity to balance the books. All I ask is a sporting chance. Therefore, Mickey Mouse, I challenge you to a duel, to the death, and you can choose the weapons. And if you can't relate to that, right on. Walk, chicken, with your ass picked clean.