

Lessons Learned

The Daily's columns and letters in the past week have helped many of us to reflect further about "free speech," war protest, and the role of the university. I am prompted to try to sort out some of the underlying questions with which we all still need to grapple.

1. Rachele Marshall is right that the "liberal" community must be faulted for having done nothing to express its moral indignation at the kinds of policies Mr. Lodge has approved and sponsored in southeast Asia. There ought to be ways to express not disapproval over Lodge's being asked to speak, but disapproval of the position he represents.

There could have been teach-ins before and/or after the meeting, massive picketing outside the auditorium, or any number of other devices that would have made our point but would not have denied other people the right to hear a point of view with which we disagreed.

We need to remember that evil spreads not only when evil men gain power, but also when other men remain silent. And we also need to remember that when those who feel their cause is right fight evil by repressive means, they become transformed into the likeness of what they are trying to oppose.

2. I believe that the air could be cleared of a great deal of misunderstanding if there were agreement on some clearly understood groundrules for public appearances on campus. Perhaps the university ought to stipulate that anyone who speaks under its auspices must be willing to open himself to questioning, so that there can be queries, challenges and rebuttals, under some well-defined procedures, to ensure that there is a significant exchange of opinion and not simply a one-sided presentation.

Many formats would be possible: a student panel selected to represent a variety of viewpoints, questions from the floor relayed by a chairman able to ensure that one point of view

does not monopolize the question period, and so on.

3. Those who believe that people such as Lodge do not have a "right" to be heard, need to ponder the implications of introducing such a calculus onto the university campus. Shall one segment of the community determine whom the rest shall hear? According to one viewpoint, Lodge cannot speak on campus but Angela Davis can, McNamara cannot but Rap Brown can, Kissenger cannot but Castro can. But what is to prevent another segment from deciding to reverse the calculus?

I would submit that the university ought to be the place open to both viewpoints. Two years ago I had the privilege of introducing Daniel Berrigan from the very platform on which Lodge was denied a hearing last week. There are surely members of the Stanford community who feel that a convicted criminal should not have the "right" to speak, but no attempt was made to disrupt Berrigan's presentation. Instead, he was sharply questioned in the discussion following the talk, and all gained from the exchange, which sharpened the issue of war protest in an important way for many who were present.

4. Some have argued that to opt for "free speech" in the fashion I am proposing is the engage in a moral neutrality that the times do not permit. I agree with Mr. Melinkoff's thoughtful point in Friday's Daily, that free speech is not neutral, but from that shared premise I draw a different conclusion. It seems to me that the concept of free speech is indeed biased: it is biased in the direction of truth. It is based on the glorious and precarious assumption that truth can make it against error without cheating, that if people are confronted with truth and error they can, if they choose, opt for truth.

To deny that risky assumption is, however, to affirm an even riskier one: that people must be protected from certain kinds of error, and have their truth presented to them in contrived and manipulated form. When Hubert Humphrey spoke on this

campus three years ago, I convicted himself out of his own mouth, so that students who heard him could hear for themselves at first hand how bankrupt and wrong was the Johnson policy in Vietnam.

Without intending to do so, M. Humphrey struck a great blow for war protest. To be sure, there are no automatic victories for truth but there will be no victories at all if truth is to be purchased only by the route of suppressing error.

5. On the level of tactics, those who decide to disrupt a speech need to be clear what they are and are not, doing. If the purpose of Monday's disruption was to downgrade Mr. Lodge in the eye of the nation, it certainly failed. He emerged across the lane smelling like a rose.

If, on the other hand, the purpose was to downgrade the university, there was surely some

Ep

cowell

Editor, THE DAILY:

A further example of the kind of discrimination directed toward women students by the Cowell Health Center concerns the obvious follow-up to hasseling over contraception: namely, pregnancy. While Cowell Health is quite willing to give a woman a pregnancy test, if the test is positive and the woman is intending to have the child (as in the case of many women graduate students) Cowell Health refuses to have anything to do with the pre-natal care of the woman.

She can go to the Stanford Clinic or to a private physician. And when it comes time for the child to be born, the woman is not covered by any health insurance offered by school—pregnancy and childbirth is a specific exclusion. The bill for private services will be well over \$500. It is difficult enough to finance tuition, with its presumed attendant medical services, without having to be personally responsible for the high cost of hospitalization which could be provided by the Health Center.

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From Lodge

robert mcafee brown

success. We emerged smelling like something else. Those who disrupted in the name of the first alternative need to be aware that in fact they achieved only the second alternative. The message the nation got was not that Lodge was a war criminal, but that a university appeared afraid to hear a certain point of view. Here is a point at which a consideration of ends and means involves not only moral but also pragmatic considerations.

6. Does the university have a special role in relation to free speech? I believe it does. I believe that in a society that increasingly resorts to the repression of unpopular viewpoints, it is even more the role of the university to refuse to do so. We are those, in an increasingly irrational society, who need to cling to - and embody - the audacious and foolhardy and seemingly

outdated notion that men's differing convictions can be ventilated and not merely violated, and who dare to believe that something as frail and precious as a mere idea can be a powerful force for good.

If we fail to demonstrate, on the campus, that such a vision can prevail, then we can be very sure that it will not long prevail elsewhere, and that issues will increasingly be decided not simply by who shouts down who most vociferously, but by who can most effectively keep a viewpoint opposing his own from being heard. That is not a definition of a university or a democratic society, but it describes what will happen to us if we try to limit those to whom our community can be exposed.

(Robert McAfee Brown is a Professor of Religion.)



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istles To The Editor

Ask any woman student with children whether she feels the university is supportive of her education—she can only reply that the university, like every institution in the society forces a woman to choose between career and parenthood, rather than help make the two compatible.

Marlaine Lockheed Katz
graduate, education

unemployed summer. Just those that come most comfortably to mind. Service and political groups in many communities need the help of those with time on their hands.

Bill Behn

little ego

Editor, THE DAILY:

This is a very sincere letter from one of us "frustrated little egos bumping heads" with another ego called Capitalist Amerika. Unlike nature, I am hung up on something, but it's only the survival of my tube-shaped-pattern—and maybe the tube-shaped patterns of my brothers and sisters—and the survival of other assorted organisms and vapors.

Listen to Agnew say "...the nation's welfare dilemma can only be solved completely when someone is willing to make tough decisions such as... whether a man or public health insurance... should be kept alive an extra month at the cost of \$20,000 to \$30,000 to the taxpayers." Listen to Reagan insist that balancing the state's budget is more crucial than food and shelter for a welfare mother. Watch Downtown Palo Alto, Inc., drive people out of their homes and small businesses in the name of progress.

Wars are bloody, horrible hate trips and Ph.D. degrees and Chryslers are useless status trips, to be sure. But I urge you not to label all struggles—even struggles to maintain decent housing and clean air, et cetera—as abstract ego-trips. When a child is hungry, shouldn't all of nature hurt for

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miscast

Editor, THE DAILY:

It is unfortunately typical of Stanford students to miscast alternatives remaining to them when their preferred option is thwarted in some manner (whether it be in seeking a job, or political activity, or just in the more general use of their time.)