

Dr. Spock, President Nixon, and the Campus

An old man is sitting at a table in the lunchroom of the Student Union. He wears a blue shirt, but a white collar shows around his neck. He is balding, with wavy white hair, a high forehead. His glasses have dark rims; the lenses are large, oval-shaped. He has a dark tie on, slightly darker than his dark-blue suit. From the breast-pocket of his suitcoat is showing the edge of a white handkerchief.

As he speaks, his hand, his right-hand, moves continually, gripping, releasing, picking up and putting down the styrofoam cup of coffee on the table before him.

Behind him, near the wall, is a trash-can cover, presumably covering a trash-can. It is painted white. Sketched on the round top of the cover, in black magic marker, is the pointed face of a mouse--"Mescaline Mouse."

In the background, "Hey Jude" is playing from the loudspeaker, being broadcast by radio WMCJ.

Nine students are sitting around the table with the old man. Of the nine, only one is wearing a suit and tie. Of the nine, the one with the suit and tie is asking most of the questions.

"I'm just a pediatrician who at one time was co-chairman for the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy," says the old man.

The talk revolves around politics, campus dissenters, Viet Nam.

A straight-looking chick walks in, wearing a mini-dress, heels, with combed hair and powdered face. The old man gets up and smiles, and offers his hand to the straight-looking chick, and says, "Hello. I'm Dr. Spock."

Other students drift into the room, and, probably sensing that "something is happening," sit down at the edge of the group, and listen. Three more suits and ties appear.

At 6:30, the group breaks up. The straight-looking chick, the suit-and-tie boys, and Dr. Spock leave together. The others drift away. In two hours, Dr. Spock will speak to the students of Monmouth College, to those who will listen. In two and a half hours, President Nixon will

address the nation, and speak to those who will listen.

In the TV room of the Student Union, three students are watching the Dick Van Dyke Show. In front of the Union, about twenty-five students are sitting on the steps, in two's and three's. On the lawn, three or four students are throwing a blue frisbee around. They throw it well, but they catch it less well, because it is getting dark. On the wall near the steps is a plate with the remains of a cheeseburger being attacked by ants. On the side-walk near the plate is an empty milk container.

Slowly, painfully slowly, a 707 jet glides over-head, passing across the face of the half-moon seen above the trees.

It is 7:15. The dining hall has closed, but some 35 students are still inside, finishing their meals. A lady, about 50, walks out of the cafeteria, which is still open, carrying a container of coffee. The container has no lid, and she walks slowly, carefully, up the path from the dining hall, past the end of Wilson Hall, across the Great Lawn toward the New Buildings.

Inside Wilson Hall, about fifty students are studying, scattered throughout the hall. They look up briefly as some classes end and students pour out into the hall noisily. I wonder again, as I have before, if the Organ in Wilson has been played recently, if I will ever hear it played.

In the basement of Wilson Hall, Pollak Auditorium is empty. There is a table and three chairs on the stage. A lone student sits outside the auditorium, sits on a table, reading a tabloid newspaper called "The AQUARIAN."

Upstairs in the Great Hall there is a poster on a table announcing: the October 7 deadline for Student Government petitions. Today is October 7. The deadline has passed. On another table lies a crumpled, empty Cracker-Jack box.

Behind Wilson Hall, the floodlights have been turned on, the two bright flood-lights that illuminate that part of Wilson Hall that faces the Great Lawn. As the evening comes on, the edifice will begin to take on its nocturnal image -- the image of some great, massive ship,

passing in the night.

Sometimes when I see that Hall at night like that, I think of that survivor of the Andrea Doria who stood on the deck of his ship in shock and awe as the hugh hulk of the Stockholm loomed out of the fog, dead to port-side.

In an hour, Dr. Spock will speak to the students of Monmouth College. In an hour and a half, President Nixon will address the nation.

In the Smoke House, a jazz-band is setting up. In the Monmouth Letters Office, the editor shares a cup of coffee with me and complains that, while he had too few people at the beginning of the year, he now has too many. "I don't know what to do with them!" And he says that he wished he had time to write.

Seven students are crowded together, seated on the back steps of the Student Union. They reluctantly shift aside a little as I try to climb the stairs. Inside the Union, three students are watching the Danny Thomas Show. Seven students are in the pool room, playing billiards.

In the Union Hall, a girl is in ecstasy, shrieking, and shouting, and laughing. She had pulled the knob on an "out-of-order" cigarette machine -- and five packs of cigarettes had come out.

In the basement of Wilson Hall, a student is playing on a piano in W-2, one of the practice rooms. In the john in the basement of Wilson Hall, the hot air machine is stuck: Instead of turning off when my hands aren't quite dry, as it usually does, it just runs on and on.

A man is standing by the door of Pollak Auditorium. Two children are more or less with him. He asks if he can sit anywhere. He is obviously puzzled because no-one else has come. I check with the receptionist upstairs, who says that it had been changed to the gymnasium. I tell the man downstairs, and he rushes off with his kids, and I set up a sign at the top of the stairs: "GYM," and I walk off toward the gym.

It is 8:30. In a moment, Dr. Spock will speak to the students of Monmouth College, those who can find him. In a half-hour, President Nixon will speak to the nation, to those

who will listen.

I am in the gymnasium, seated near the top of the stands, which have been pulled out from the wall on one side of the room. The stands are nearly full. Another hundred students are sitting on the floor in front of the stands. Another hundred people are crowding in from the hall. I make an off-the-wall-guess that there are about a thousand people in the gym. But it's only a guess.

Dean Lambert and his wife walk in from the hall, walk across the gym floor to the other side, and sit down on the floor, up against the wall. Dr. Ficca, chairman of the department of Psychology has entered the gym carrying a portable chair. He sets up the chair and sits down--facing the audience.

Amid sudden applause, Dr. Spock walks into the gym, approaches the podium, flashes the peace sign, smiles, and sits down. Someone else walks to the podium, and announces that smoking is not permitted, and that there will be a question-and-answer period following Dr. Spock's talk. Between the announcements and introductions, the playing of the National Anthem is forgotten.

Dr. Spock carried the audience along a brief history of Viet Nam, from 1954 to the present.

The audience applauded when Dr. Spock declared that "Viet Nam has been the dirtiest war in history. Dean Lambert, his wife, and Dr. Ficca did not applaud.

The audience applauded again when Dr. Spock asked "What justice for the poor when it costs \$80,000 to defend one C.O.?" Dean Lambert, his wife, and Dr. Ficca did not applaud.

I ask a student what time it is. He says it is 9:06. A moment later President Nixon's voice is piped into the gym, cutting off the voice of Dr. Spock. Nixon outlined his cease-fire proposals, and talked about his European trip. The general noise-level in the gymnasium increased, as many people left, and as many others discussed the words of Spock and the words of Nixon.

"The time has come for North Viet Nam to quit making war, and start making peace," says President Nixon. And I

wonder, is he for real? Is it not we, the Americans, who have been making war?

Dr. Spock argued, in three cases, that when "prescribed means" of getting changes don't work, then "other-than-prescribed means" may work, and may even be called for. He cited the women's suffrage movement, the labor movement, and the American Revolution itself.

Dr. Spock talked of Chicago, of the Chicago 8, of Columbia, of Harvard. And it occurred to me that Dr. Spock was painting a rosy, very one-sided portrait of the students, their motivations, their causes, their methods.

He suggested letter-writing campaigns, supporting political campaigns, and picketing--"make a fool of yourself" for peace. And I thought of the long hours and nights that I had spend in vigil and picket lines, on Times Square, in Washington, D.C., in Greenboro, North Carolina.

And I thought again of the hour I had spent in worship one afternoon in Canada, after walking across the border with others to donate money for medical supplies for North Viet Nam, for the Viet Cong, and for South Viet Nam.

In the gymnasium, a note is passed to Bruce Landis, seated behind Dr. Spock. He hands it to Dr. Spock, who reads it, and continues speaking. I get up to leave.

It is 10:00. Dr. Spock is still speaking. President Nixon has spoken. As I think of Nixon's words, declaring or proposing a cease-fire, I am reminded of the words of another, spoken during the Anti-Inaugural ceremonies in Washington, D.C., in January of 1969. Some fellow got up to the microphone and began singing: "I declare the war is over. I declare the war is over."

On the patio in front of the Student Union, five students are still tossing a blue frisbee back and forth.

In the Smoke House, the Zazz band is still jazzing, and I try not to listen, for they are loud, too loud. I think it a crime that two or three people should be able to make so much noise with so little effort.

It is 10:45. The crowd in the Smoke-House applauds. Dr. Spock has just walked in.

By JOHN G. ADAMS