

rumbles

by C. Frederick Brydon

Sounding the trumpets of retreat and brandishing the flags of defeat, four professors of Monmouth College (Illo, Katen, Pitt, and Wescott) joined in what "The New Republic" has called the style of protest that "is all the rage this month" and called for US withdrawal from South Viet Nam. Like many of you, I've read about the teach-ins and other in-isms being conducted across the country at various colleges on the subject of Viet Nam and looked forward to Monmouth's effort on the subject. I fully expected to hear a balanced analysis of a very complicated and difficult issue at least on the level of that presented by former Ambassador Tran Van Dinh who visited us recently. Certainly an intelligent, unemotional and intellectual approach was hoped for. With the exception of the talk by Prof. Wescott, what the listener received was an emotional diatribe of academic bilgewater totally unbecoming an academicien of any stature.

To give you a sample of what was put across to the moderately responsive audience that packed room 108, I give you the following which has been paraphrased to Prof. Illo's thesis as to why we are in Viet Nam is based on what appears to be his emotional dislike for Capitalism. Prof. Illo contends that we are in Viet Nam due to capitalistic interests and the corporate power that controls the Johnson administration. These capitalistic interests have three reasons for wanting the U.S. in Viet Nam: 1. To test the weapons they've made on real targets, 2. to protect their corporate holdings in S.E. asia, and 3. to stop the spread of communism. Such rantings speak for themselves. Prof. Wescott wasn't all good. He equated the U.S. presence in Viet Nam with that of the British Red Coats here at the time of our Revolu-

tion. I missed the main delivery of Prof. Pitt, but in response to a question, he advocated, without any reference to the recent proposal of President Johnson, that the U.S. use the North Vietnamese plan for peace as the point for negotiations and that representatives of the Viet Cong be invited to discussions in Saigon. The star performance of the afternoon was turned in by Prof. Katen. With rare form he said the U.S should set a high moral example, but instead it follows low level butchery. According to the professor, we have decided to solve the problems of the world by war and violence rather than through peace and law. Pointing to the often stated justification that the U.S is in Viet Nam to defend the Geneva accords of 1954, he claimed we have no right to do this since the U.S isn't a signatory power to the agreement. He charged that the strategic hamlet program is merely a fancy term for concentration camps. He called Defense Secretary McNamara, Assistant Sec- and Ambassador Maxwell Taylor failures and incompetents, degraded the worth of the State Department White Paper on Viet Nam, and wound up by charging the U.S. with trying to solve an extremely complicated social problem from a purely military basis. Prof. Katen was so emotionally charged up that Dr. Riggberg who moderated the panel had to remind him he had more than passed his allotted time. Still worked up, he interjected himself into every question asked from the floor whether it was addressed to him or not.

What disturbs me about the performance just reported is that these men, with once again the exception of Prof. Wescott, appear to be totally misinformed as to what is going on in Viet Nam.

This in and of itself is not alarming. But when they use their prestigious positions as professors on the faculty to spread this misinformation to a large group of students and make not even the most infinitesimal effort to present some other views to balance their distortions, I find it most alarming. The real tragedy is that these men appear to have been duped by our own press, particularly the **New York Times** which was sited over and over again. War news makes very good copy and is a sure shot for the front page. Activities of U.S aid groups such as those sited by former U.S ambassador to South Viet Nam Henry Cabot Lodge in his letter to the editor of the **Times** (April 12) do not make exciting reading and are usually overlooked by reporter and reader when they appear. But these aid efforts are in reality the important effort the U.S. is making in Viet Nam. It isn't all the unpleasanties of war that our illustrious professors would have you believe.

If you are interested in a balanced analysis of what is the reality of the situation in Viet Nam today, you are urged to read the lead article in the April 1965 issue of "Foreign Affairs." Without emotionalism or distortion, Mr. George A. Carver, Jr., a student of political theory and Asian History and former officer in the U.S. aid mission in Saigon, carefully reviews the entire Viet Nam problem starting with the area's ancient history down to the present. His article "The Real Revolution in South Viet Nam" will clear away much of the smoke and fog generated by our own professors and is excellent reading.