

**CHICAGO WOMEN'S LIBERATION UNION**

Women Play Key Role in Growing Saigon Peace Movement

A first-hand report by Cynthia Fredrick

Vietnamese women, whatever their social status, have long played a significant role in their society. Throughout history, and especially in times of national crisis, they have risen to prominent positions in the country's struggle for independence. Every Vietnamese child is familiar with the story of the two Trung Sisters who in 4<sup>th</sup> A.D. led a revolt against the Chinese invaders and sacrificed their lives for their country. Their legacy is not forgotten, and such well known leaders as Mrs. Nguyen thi Binh, Ma thi Chu, (a member of the NLF Central Committee) and Nguyen thi Dinh (Deputy Commander of the NLF Armed Forces) are widely regarded in South VietNam as the rightful heiresses to the respect and prestige accorded the martyred first century heroines.

In recent months many new groups of women have taken on the struggle for national honor and independence. When I was in Saigon three years ago (from July 1966 to June 1967) I became acquainted with the work done by various women's groups to provide shelter for the ever-increasing number of war orphans and refugee children. Yet these efforts were still largely confined to alleviating the horrors of fighting. The thought of actually challenging the reasons for this fighting remained unspoken.

Now all this has changed. This November, I returned to Saigon for a brief visit -- briefer than planned, as I, like many other American visitors obviously opposed to the war, was expelled six days after entering the country. Although I had heard a number of very optimistic reports about significant political developments in the South before arriving in VietNam, I was hardly prepared for the changes which have in fact taken place. For Vietnamese public opinion about the war has undergone a radical transformation. While little publicized in the U.S., the events of the past nine months reflect a new and vociferous opposition to the Thieu-Ky-Khieu regime. Of particular significance is the fact that this opposition is no longer centered primarily in the countryside, but has surfaced in the urban areas as well. Students, religious leaders (including several Roman Catholics, who were formerly considered one of the most anti-Communist and pro-war groups in the South), workers, veterans, respected political personalities -- and an important number of women's groups -- have all taken a public stand in favor of hoa binh -- peace. And now, for the first time, the opposition spokesmen have linked this peace with the withdrawal of American and Allied troops from the South and with the ouster of the present military government in Saigon.

A variety of considerations have brought about this widespread and intense revulsion to the fighting. First of all, it is no longer possible for anyone in South VietNam, even in the cities, to avoid the physical and moral damage caused by the war. Hardly a Vietnamese family remains unscathed. Loved ones have been lost, relatives separated, and traditional social values replaced by a foreign, cheapened way of life. Hundreds of square miles of territory have been reduced to wasteland by the bombs and chemical defoliants. Over one quarter of the South Vietnamese population is confined to the refugee camps. An estimated 50,000 persons--many of them homeless youngsters--sleep on the streets of Saigon every night.

Vietnamization is a second factor contributing to the stiffening of Vietnamese public opinion. With the withdrawal of American troops, the Saigon government has been forced to rely on increasingly repressive measures in order to compensate for its rapidly dwindling support. This, in turn, has alienated even larger segments of the urban population. The militarization of Vietnamese society, and the prospect of more Vietnamese killing more Vietnamese (over two million people are now under arms in the South) provide another urgent reason for putting an end to the fighting. Thirdly, the economic situation continues to deteriorate and despite the recent devaluation (which brought even greater hardships to many families), inflation is still rising. Many women--as many as 400,000--have been forced to find work as bar girls or as prostitutes in order to help support their families.

(over please)

Indeed, South VietNam's women have suffered many of the greatest humiliations and personal losses brought about by the war. For with husbands and sons, fathers and brothers far from home or dead, they have been left to shoulder the responsibility of supporting the remaining family members. Not surprisingly, many of these same women were the first to organize against the war. One of the most important women's groups now active in urban South VietNam is the "Movement of Women's Action for the Right to Live," formed on July 26, 1970, in Saigon. Its chairman, Mrs. Ngo Ba Thanh (a lawyer trained at Columbia and in Paris), had recently completed an eighteen month prison term -- for signing a petition early in 1965 protesting the sending of American troops to fight in the South. Her organization not only became actively involved in defending the rights of VietNam's women, but also took a public stand on the war and against the Saigon government.

On October 11, this group joined with three other newly-organized opposition movements (the National Movement for Self-Determination, the High School Teachers Union, and the Student Committee for Human Rights) to lay the foundation for a mass-based peace front. Other women's committees--such as the Vietnamese Women's Association, the Council for the Defense of Women's Human Dignity, the Vietnamese Buddhist Women's Federation, and women representatives of several trade unions--also played an important part in the organization of this significant new front, which was formally introduced on November 7 as the Popular Front for the Defense of Peace. At this time, some 200 Vietnamese activists representing several thousand members of anti-war organizations met in a pagoda near Saigon to officially commit their groups to a united struggle for peace. Not just any peace, and above all, not a Nixon peace, but an "independent peace with national self-determination." They have called for the departure of all U.S. and Allied troops as a necessary prerequisite to ending the war, and the establishment of a "truly representative government so that the South Vietnamese people can establish an end to the war as soon as possible which corresponds to the wishes of the whole people."

The era of attentisme--of non-involvement and noncommitment--which characterized South VietNam's cities for many years, is coming to an end. The struggle against the American and Saigon governments has been taken up with great conviction, enthusiasm, and courage. For the urban activists realize that they are running enormous risks in challenging those in Saigon whose power and influence depend on a continuation of the fighting. Sooner or later, the Thieu-Ky-Khiem regime (undoubtedly, as in the past, with American logistical support) will make even greater efforts to suppress this public dissension by physically liquidating its leadership. Yet the Saigon peace advocates insist that regardless of any temporary success by the government in repressing their organizations, new people will come to the foreground to continue the struggle to end the war. Ultimately, they assure you, an independent peace must come.

This is undoubtedly true, but at what costs? In fact, the anticipated losses could be lessened, and the campaign for self-determination greatly facilitated--with more help from the American people. Now, more than ever, the future course of the war depends on our demands to know the truth about what is really happening in VietNam, and on our success in relating this truth to the need for a change of policy in Washington. It also depends on our support for the Saigon peace movement, and especially, as women, for the various Vietnamese women's associations. Letters, telegrams, and demonstrations of solidarity would all provide crucial encouragement to our Vietnamese sisters--and at the same time, bring to the attention of the American public the fact that their opposition to the war has reached a new and significant stage.

Another exploit of Ut's was the attack on the Ap Ba post. Though pregnant at the time, she asked to join in ambushing an eight-man party from the enemy garrison, who were due to return from Cai Be in the evening. She fought valiantly during the engagement in which six enemy soldiers were killed. But six other militiamen were sent to take their place. A new ambush was laid at Dua hamlet. The escort of the district chief was wiped out and a jeep destroyed.

Ut's third feat was the seizure of the Duong Tran post, which lay midway between the two strategic hamlets of Chong No. Mach, the puppet officer who commanded the post, had begun by sympathizing with the people's cause but was later enticed by the promise of a reward for the arrest of Tich and his wife.

One day, Mach placed his own son as a sentry, laid an ambush with his men, then went to see the Tichs, as he usually did. But Ut, who had her own plan to seize the post, was aware of Mach's scheme. She immediately worked out another plan. While hamlet chief Nam Lien was offering drinks to Mach, Ut and Tich sneaked into the enemy post. They disarmed Mach's son and took away all of the booty they could carry. When the soldiers turned up, the Tichs took Mach's son with them as a hostage, thus preventing the puppet soldiers from using their guns.

Ut was already the mother of five when the N.L.F. decided to destroy the Chong No strategic hamlet. By then she had become expert in agitation work among enemy troops, and could freely move about near the military posts, as all the sentries knew her well. She had in fact saved the lives of many of them when they were captured during the guerrilla's attacks on the posts. She and her husband were charged with getting into contact with Resistance members inside the strategic hamlet. They secretly entered the place, and were given three rifles and a basket of hand-grenades. But seeing that the task was beyond their strength - the hamlet had a garrison of fifty - they went back and asked for reinforcements.

The following night, Ut and her husband, followed by a number of guerrillas, returned to the hamlet during a rainstorm taking the enemy completely by surprise. Throughout that night, Ut helped the inhabitants destroy the strategic hamlet. At dawn she was seen standing guard at the entrance under a heavy rain.

Members of the reactionary "Republican Youth", thinking that our forces had withdrawn, returned to the hamlet. All of them were arrested. One threw a hand-grenade at Ut, the primer of which he had forgotten in his panic to unpin. Ut was going to throw it back at him when he was shot down by a guerrilla. That night, hundreds of hand-grenades had been seized.

The next day, she was back home. Giving the breast to her baby and caressing her hair, she said:

"When my son is old enough to carry a weapon, he will do much better than his parents."

## VI

In July, 1964, guerrilla warfare was greatly intensified. Throughout South Vietnam, hostilities became increasingly fierce.

The Tam Ngai partisans were assigned the task of encircling the Ba Mi post commanded by a self-styled priest who was living in the church with a twenty-year-old concubine. The chancel had been turned into a charnel-house. The military post was defended by a platoon of puppet soldiers assisted by two groups of village militiamen who occupied a blockhouse flanking the post.

To lay siege to the enemy post, the partisans had to block the road, hold off enemy reinforcements, suppress collaborators, immobilize the Cau Ky garrison and surround the church. On the roadblocks Ut laid booby-traps made up of hand-grenades concealed in coconuts.

The enemy post was surrounded with two concentric rings, an inner one of men and an outer one of women guerrillas. In the first engagement against troops from Cau Ky, the women partisans obtained great success. On Ut's suggestion, they had fixed N.F.L. flags on rubber toy balloons which they flew high in the air to attract the attention of the enemy. When the latter came, they fell into a field of booby-traps made up of hand grenades. In their panic, a detachment of enemy troops shot at random, and a second detachment, thinking it was being attacked by guerrillas, fired back fiercely. This resulted in the death of many puppet soldiers without the guerrillas having to fire a single shot. In their retreat, the enemy troops again fell into traps, and 35 in all were disabled.

Ut's activities took all her time. She was never home before midnight and then only to go out again at dawn. Her husband was no less busy, so that their children had to take care of themselves the whole day. But thanks to Be, the eldest child, everything was all right. The children, who hated the Yankees, understood that their parents were out to fight the enemy and drive them away. When they heard shots, they could tell where fighting was taking place. At times, a helicopter flew overhead, and a mercenary using a loudspeaker exhorted soldiers of the Liberation Army to surrender. When they heard this, the children would shout back:

"The Liberation troops are out attacking the military post. Only little Liberation soldiers are at home!"

Besides looking after her younger brothers and sisters, Be had begun to serve the Resistance, as a courier, or a lookout, perched on a tree.

At midnight, when her mother was back, the children would tell her what they had been doing during the day. Often Ut brought home sweets for the children. Sometimes Be had a banana for her mother. Then, Tich would come back to have his share of the joy of home life.

At dawn, Ut and her husband went out again, in different directions. The struggle went on, bringing more trials and more joys. One day, seven enemy troops were shot dead, after they were baited out of their lair by the women partisan's fire. The next day, Thay Muoi, a blood-thirsty enemy agent, was killed when he was crossing a bridge. Sometimes, a party was organized in the evening during which the guerrillas played music, performed folk dances and cracked jokes.

One night, it was decided to tighten the encirclement ring around Ba Mi and to take the Thanh Phu post, with the cooperation of regular troops. The entire population of Tam Ngai took part in the battle. Old people sounded tocsins. Ut's group was charged with immobilizing the militiamen in the smaller post. The operation began at nightfall. Enemy planes coming to the rescue of Thanh Phu machine-gunned the Ba Mi area at random. Ut fought fiercely. She was so exhausted when her group withdrew after midnight that she collapsed after jumping over the last of the ten streams she had to cross on the way home.

The Liberation troops had stormed the post, and Ut's six child chose that night to come into the world.

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A FIGHTING MOTHER by Nguyen Thi, from Vietnamese Studies, Vol.10, on Vietnamese Women, 1967, Xunhasaba distributors, Hanoi, D,R.V.

## THIS IS A WORKING DRAFT OF A WOMEN'S PEACE TREATY

### Preamble:

We believe that no government has the right to intervene by force in the affairs and destinies of other peoples. The military policies of the United States government have taken the lives of over a million Viet Nameese and over 50,000 Americans. The useless expenditure of billions of dollars to serve the military machine has deprived the people of Viet Nam, of the United States, and of the world of desparately needed food, clothing, medicine, schools and health services.

As women living in the United States we have suffered particularly from our governments military priorities . As women and mothers we bear the burdens and suffer o most heavily from inadequate attention to human needs. We know at the same time that the inequality that women experience will not be resolved simply by ending the war. We must fight the secondary status that affects our lives in every way: the way we think of ourselves, the education we receive, the jobs we hold and the role we play in determining our own lives.

The example of dedication and courage of the women of Viet Nam has been an inspiration to the women of the United States. The women of Viet Nam are working heroically in the fight for freedom, independence and neutrality for their country-- in the home, in the work force and as fighters. They have been brutalized, tortured , and forced into prostitution by the policies of the United States armed forces defending a corrupt and dictatorial government in Saigon.

Vietnamese women have been heroines in the struggle for freedom beginning in 40 A.D. when the Trung sisters led their people against foreign invaders; and this proud heritage lives today in the courage of the women who farm the land, care for their children, teach, and fight in the face of foreign military aggression.

Women in this country have expressed their opposition to our governeemnts continued presence in Viet Nam and elsewhere. This has never been our war. Our governeemnthas ignored our concerns. We are united with women in Viet Nam and we commit ourselves to work with them and with all people who ,believing that the resources of the world should be used for the welfare of the people, want to erd this war.

Therefore we are entering into a joint treaty of peace between the women of the United States and the women of Viet Nam (and all of Indochina)

a version of the text of the treaty negotiated by the student dælegation should follow (see the accompanying)

A JOINT TREATY OF PEACE

BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, SOUTH VIETNAM AND NORTH VIETNAM \*

Be it known that the American and Vietnamese people are not enemies. The war is carried out in the names of the people of the United States and South Vietnam but without our consent. It destroys the land and people of Vietnam. It drains America of its resources, its youth and its honor.

We hereby agree to end the war on the following terms, so that both peoples can live under the joy of independence and can devote themselves to building a society based on human equality and respect for the earth. In rejecting the war we also reject all forms of racism and discrimination against people based on color, class, sex, national origin and ethnic grouping which form the basis of the war policies, present and past, of the United States.

1. The Americans agree to immediate and total withdrawal from Vietnam, and publicly to set the date by which all U.S. military forces will be removed.
2. The Vietnamese pledge that as soon as the U.S. government publicly sets a date for total withdrawal, they will enter discussions to secure the release of all American prisoners, including pilots captured while bombing North Vietnam;
3. There will be an immediate cease-fire between U.S. forces and those led by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.
4. They will enter discussions on the procedures to guarantee the safety of all withdrawing troops.
5. The Americans pledge to end the imposition of Thieu, Ky and Khiem on the people of South Vietnam in order to insure their right to self-determination, and so that all political prisoners can be released.
6. The Vietnamese pledge to form a provisional coalition government to organize democratic elections. All parties agree to respect the results of elections in which all South Vietnamese can participate freely without the presence of any foreign troops.
7. The South Vietnamese pledge to enter discussion of procedures to guarantee the safety and political freedom of those South Vietnamese who have collaborated with the U.S. or with the U.S.-supported regime.
8. The Americans and Vietnamese agree to respect the independence, peace and neutrality of Laos and Cambodia in accord with the 1954 and 1962 Geneva conventions, and not to interfere in the internal affairs of these two countries.
9. Upon these points of agreement, we pledge to end the war and resolve all other questions in the spirit of self-determination and mutual respect for the independence and political freedom of the people of Vietnam and the United States.

By ratifying this agreement, we pledge to take whatever actions are appropriate to implement the terms of this Joint Treaty of Peace, and to insure its acceptance by the government of the United States.

\* As negotiated by the National Student Association delegation to Vietnam and Paris, December, 1970, and as adopted by delegates to the Spring Actions '71 Meeting, January 8-10, 1971, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

An armoured battalion was immediately dispatched to block all the streets, and try to disperse the crowd. Policemen struck at people with the butts of their rifles or with cudgels. Promptly, units of the people's self-defence corps showed resistance, pulling at the policemen's coats, snatching back those the puppet agents wanted to arrest. The scuffle became increasingly violent. Some of the soldiers got out of their armoured cars and shouted, pulling at the policemen's coats: "These people are only demanding quite reasonable things, why do you beat them?" Meanwhile, other columns of demonstrators coming from the villages had penetrated into the town; some groups went to see the provincial chief, others, assembly men and other personalities in the town, to show them the damage caused by U.S. chemicals.

The scuffle between the 5,000 women demonstrators and the troops and police lasted over an hour. The puppet authorities, by mobilizing all their forces, managed to arrest several hundred persons, who were put on trucks and taken to the provincial stadium where they were interned. Suddenly, on an order given by the leaders of the demonstration, the 5,000 women stopped the scuffle with the police, and willingly boarded the trucks, almost taking the vehicles by assault, squeezing up against the drivers. The overloaded vehicles could not start. The soldiers and policemen implored the women to get down. The latter finally agreed to go to the stadium, marching in front of the army trucks. The long procession marched through the town, displaying anti-American slogans, which enraged the puppet authorities.

Three thousand persons were interned in the stadium, exposed to the hot sun. It was the provincial chief's intention to reduce them by thirst to surrender. Thousands of persons then assembled around the stadium, trying by all means to supply the internees with food and water. At 3 p.m., the provincial chief came with a loudspeaker to threaten them. A woman snatched the loudspeaker, shouting: "We are only asking the authorities to intervene so that the Americans stop spreading chemicals, why are you torturing us with thirst?" Her protest was followed by an immense clamour from the crowd, and the provincial chief sneaked away.

At 5 p.m., the puppet authorities picked out 100 women from among the oldest, proposing to release them. The women refused, saying they would not leave before all of them were freed. The demonstrators spent the night in the stadium. The puppet officials showed propaganda films, but they turned their backs on the screen, and drowned the propaganda speeches with songs and shouts. Many talked to the soldiers and policemen, persuading them to return to the right path. The next day, several thousand women with their children came from the neighbouring areas, the members of various religious sects in their ceremonial costumes. Frightened, the provincial chief gave the order to release all the women interned in the stadium, and lent them trucks and cars so that they could leave the town as quickly as possible. The population put at the disposal of the demonstrators 200 motor-boats. An impressive procession was formed, with banners inscribed with anti-American slogans. It went through all the localities in the region, enthusiastically greeted by the excited inhabitants.

Such demonstrations demoralized and disorganized the ranks of the puppet administration, police and army. They took place against a background of continual meetings and processions, of lesser importance, but able to mobilize millions of villagers. The military posts and local administrative centres were daily besieged by combative and determined crowds who came to present all kinds of petitions.

*Please return to Marion Nathaniel  
6-2542*

## THE FUTURE OF SEX

By Marshall McLuhan and George B. Leonard

Sex as we know it may soon be dead. But the surprising future will be far from sexless. Generations to come may find all of life more erotic than now seems possible.

"Well, it finally happened," Michael Murphy of California's Esalen Institute recently said. "A young person came up to talk with me, and I couldn't tell if this person was a man or a woman. Now, I've seen plenty of young people of both sexes dressed in slacks, sweater and long hair, but I'd always been able to find some sexually distinguishing clue. This time there was no way for me to tell. I admit it shook me up. I didn't know exactly how to relate. I felt it would take a new kind of relating, no matter if it were a boy or girl."

The episode is extreme, but it points to a strong trend. In today's most technologically advanced societies, especially urban Britain and America, members of the younger generation are making it clear - in dress and music, deeds and words - just how unequivocally they reject their elders' sexual world. It is tempting to treat the extremes as fads; perhaps many of them are. But beneath the external symptoms, deep transforming forces are at work.

Sex as we now think of it may soon be dead. Sexual concepts, ideals and practices already are being altered almost beyond recognition. Marriage and the family are shifting into new dimensions. What it will mean to be boy or girl, man or woman, husband or wife, male or female may come as one of the great surprises the future holds for us.

We study the future the better to understand a present that will not stand still for inspection. Today, corporations, foundations and governments are asking a new breed of experts called "futurists" to tell them how things are going to be. These futurists tend to limit their predictions to things rather than people. Their imaginations and their computers fight future wars, knit future systems of economics, transportation and communication, build future cities of fantastic cast. Into these wars, systems and cities, they place people just like us - and thereby falsify all their predictions. By default rather than design, most futurists assume that "human nature" will hold firm. They ignore the fact that technological change has always struck human life right at the heart, changing people just as it changes things.

This may be especially true of sex. A history of mankind in terms of sexual practices would make wildly variegated reading. Many ancient civilizations, for example, encouraged varying degrees of incest, and the Ptolemies, successors to Alexander the Great, practiced marriage between brother and sister for some three hundred years with no obvious ill effect. Modern anthropologists have brought back stories of present-day primitive tribes whose sex customs confound our traditional notion that there is only one "natural" pattern of relationship between the sexes.

In early man, just as in most of the higher mammals, males and females lived rather similar lives, with little specialization except where childbearing and childrearing were concerned. Life for every member of a primitive hunting tribe was integral, all-involving; there could be no feminist movement, nor any special class of homosexuals or prostitutes. But when mankind turned from hunting to farming, and then to creating cities, empires, pyramids and temples, men and women were split apart in ways that went far beyond biology. Many men became specialists - kings, workers, merchants, warriors, farmers, scribes - in the increasingly complex social machine. Most women fell heir to less specialized, but separate, domestic tasks.

With the coming of writing, it was the manly virtues that were recorded and extolled. As Charles W. Ferguson points out in The Male Attitude, men have kept the records of the race, which may explain why history is a chronicle of war, conquest, politics, hot competition and abstract reasoning. "What survives in the broad account of the days before the modern era," Ferguson writes, "is a picture of a humankind full of hostility and inevitable hate." (LOOK researchers were surprised to find that, until relatively recent times, female births and deaths often were not even recorded.) Ancient writers exaggerated the biological as well as the social differences between the sexes, with the female coming off very badly indeed.

The Romans invented the word *sexus*, probably deriving it from the Latin verb *secare*, to cut or sever. And that is exactly what civilization has done to man and woman. The cutting apart of the sexes rarely has been more drastic than in the industrial age of Europe and America, the period that was presaged by the invention of printing around 1460, and that is now changing into something new right before our eyes.

Throughout the Middle Ages, there had been less separateness between men and women. Privacy, for example, was unwished. Houses

had no hallways; bedrooms served as passageways and sleeping places for children, relatives and visitors, along with married couples. Under such circumstances, the sexual act merged easily with the rest of life. Language now considered intimate or vulgar was part of ordinary conversation. Childhood did not exist as a separate category. At about age seven, children simply moved into the grown-up world; paintings of that day depict the young as scaled-down adults, even to the matter of clothing.

After printing, however, human life became increasingly visual and compartmentalized. Architecture took up the idea of visual enclosure, with private rooms connected by hallways. It was only when this happened that childhood separated out from the rest of life. At the same time, sexual activity went underground. Hidden and mysterious, it receded into a realm apart from ordinary existence, becoming more and more fraught with a special intensity, a vague anxiety. Indecency, pornography and obscenity came into being as a result of specialist stress on separate parts of the body. By the time of Queen Victoria, the split between sex and the proper life was complete. Any wedding night, after a five- to ten-year engagement, was likely to be a trauma.

Freud flushed sex up out of the underground, but he, like his contemporaries, saw it as an explosive, a possible threat to whatever held civilization together. In this time - and even up to the present - the forces of life seemed constantly at odds with one another; since the Renaissance, it has seemed necessary to pen them up in separate compartments. The industrial age built more than its share of these boxes. It split class from class, job from job, profession from profession, work from play; divorced the self from the reality and joy of the present moment; fragmented the senses from the emotions, from the intellect; and, perhaps most importantly of all, created highly specialized and standardized males and females.

The ideal male of the industrial age was "all man." He was aggressive, competitive, logical. This man of action was also an apostle of the abstract. And he feared to show much emotion. The ideal woman, for her part, was emotional, intuitive, guilefully practical, submissive. Maleness and femaleness were separate territories; man and woman shared only a tiny plot of common humanity. The wonder is that the two could get together long enough to continue the race.

When sex - under the influence of Freud, factories, the automobile and world wars - came out into the open to become SEX, a peculiar thing happened: People were supposed to be free and frequent

with their sexual activity. Women were supposed to turn from Victorian propriety to passionate responsiveness. And yet the basic ideals of maleness and femaleness continued unchanged. It was like a revolution without popular support: a lot of slogans, shouting and confusion, but not much revolution.

The only real attempt at change up until the present turned out to be abortive. Women of feminist persuasion, viewing the action and the power over there in the arena of aggressiveness, specialization and hot competition, tried to take on the attributes of maleness. How ironical! They may have been heading in the wrong direction. When the Victorian novelist George Meredith wrote, "I expect that Woman will be the last thing civilized by Man," he was unknowingly describing her fitness for the post-civilized Electric Age. Where the old technology split people and the world apart, demanded human fragmentation, the emerging technology is putting Humpty Dumpty back together again. It is most doubtful, in the new age, that the rigidly "male" qualities will be of much use. In fact, there may well be little need for standardized males or females.

Trying to define a new sexuality in the industrial period, D. H. Lawrence placed his characters against a backdrop of factories, mines, smokestacks. His most successful sexual hero (in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) was a gamekeeper; he may be viewed as the closest Lawrence could get to the primitive hunter. In a sense, the man of the future will be a hunter, an adventurer, a researcher - not a cog in a social machine. The coming age, linked by all-involving, instantaneous, responsive, electronic communication, may seem more "tribal" than "industrial." The whole business of sex may become again, as in the tribal state, play - freer, but less important.

When survey-takers "prove" that there is no sexual revolution among our young people by showing that the frequency of sexual intercourse has not greatly increased, they are missing the point completely. Indeed, the frequency of intercourse may decrease in the future because of a real revolution in attitudes toward, feelings about the uses of **sex**, especially concerning the roles of male and female. What are those young men with long, flowing hair really saying? In what may seem a ludicrous overstatement, they are sending a clear message to all who will listen: "We are no longer afraid to display what you may call "feminine." We are willing to reveal that we have feelings, weaknesses, tenderness - that we are human. And, by the way, we just may be ridiculing all of those uptight movie males with cropped hair and unflinching eyes. We're betting they can't touch our girls." Indeed, the long-haired boys' appeal is not esthetic, but sexual; not private, but corporate.

Bear in mind that the Beatles' dazzling early success, long before their remarkable musicianship came clear, was conferred upon them by millions of young females who were transported by those pageboy hairdos and those sensitive faces. And the Beatles were not the first in a modern lineage of girl-movers. A younger, slenderer, tenderer Frank Sinatra, and then a hip-swiveling Elvis Presley, had reduced earlier sub-generations to squeals and moans. It takes a particularly obstinate blindness not to realize that an ability to free emotions, and not a fragmented "all-maleness," provides today's most compelling erotic appeal.

We might also confess that our reading of the new teen-age "conformity" of dress and hairdo fails to consider the social ritualism of these forms. They express the new desire for depth involvement in social life rather than egotistic eccentricity.

The trend (perhaps without the exaggerated hair style) seems likely to continue. The all-sensory, all-pervasive total environment of the future may be no place for the narrow-gauge, specialized male. Emotional range and psychic mobility may be valued. Heightened intuition may be required. The breed of hombre generally portrayed by John Wayne is already an anachronism. "Be a man!" the hombre bellows, and the more perceptive of our young laugh.

And if the narrow-gauge male is not laughed out of existence, he may, literally, die out. Specialized, competitive man is particularly susceptible to the maladies of the involuntary muscle, nervous and vascular systems. A U.S. male's life expectancy now is seven years less than a female's. Figures on earlier times are impossible to verify, but one thing is sure: the gap has never been greater. Men who operate inside the boxes of fragmented civilization--whether bus driver, production-line worker or professional specialist--die off at an alarming rate from the heart and gut diseases. Figures from the peptic ulcer are particularly revealing: deaths from white men are four times that for white women in the U.S. But the female death rate, as women have started pushing into the man's world, has been rising. And what about today's younger generation, those under 25? Here are the children of TV and science fiction, the pioneers of the Electric Age, the first humans to sample, even briefly and incompletely, the less fragmented, less competitive, more involving future. What of these tentatively retribalized young men? We may predict that their ulcer rate will decline.

No surprise. In the most isolated primitive tribes, those whose members still operate as free-roving hunters, digestive disorders are practically unknown and the usual civilized heart troubles are rare. Significantly, these people make little distinction between the ideal qualities of male and female. As the noted British anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer writes concerning the peace-loving Pygmies of Africa, the Arapesh of New Guinea and the Lepchas of Sikkim: "Men and women have different primary sexual characteristics—a source of endless merriment as well as more concrete satisfactions—and some different skills and aptitudes. No child, however, grows up with the injunctions, 'All real men do...' or 'No proper woman does...', so that there is no confusion of sexual identity: no cases of sexual inversion have been reported among them. The model for the growing child is one of concrete performance and frank enjoyment, not of metaphysical, symbolic achievements or of ordeals to be surmounted. They do not have heroes or martyrs to emulate or cowards or traitors to despise;...a happy, hard-working and productive life is within the reach of all."

It would seem that "being a man" in the usual, aggressive Western sense is, if nothing else, unhealthy. To live an ordinary peacetime life in the U.S.—as a recent Army study of the "nervous secretions" of combat soldiers in Vietnam shows—is as bad or worse for your gut, heart and nervous system as facing enemy bullets. But the present fragmented civilization seems on its way out, and what "being a man" means could swiftly change.

Extremes create opposite extremes. The specialized, narrow-gauge male of the industrial age produced—in ideal, at least—the specialized woman. The age stressed the visual over the other senses; the fast development of photography, and then movies helped pull femaleness up from the context of life, of actuality, and make it something special, intense, "hot."

Grotesque and distorted extremes tend to pop out just at the end of any era, a good example being the recent rash of blown-up photographic nudes. The foldout playmate in Playboy Magazine—she of outsize breast and buttocks, pictured in sharp detail—signals the death throes of a departing age. Already, she is beginning to appear quaint, not sexy. She might still be possible for a while in a wide-screen, color movie (another hot medium). But try to imagine her, in that same artificial pose, on the intimate, involving, "cool" television set in your living room.

Don't throw away your Playboy foldouts, however. Sooner than it may seem possible, those playmate-size nudes may become fashionable as collectors' items, having the same old-timey quality for future generations that cigar-store Indians and Victorian cartoons have for us. This is not to say that nudity is on its way out. On the contrary, it will most likely increase in the neo-tribal future. But it will merge into the context of ordinary living, becoming not so much lurid and sexy as natural and sensuous.

Already, new "sex-symbols" poke fun at the super female. Notable among them is the boyish and gentle young model known as Twiggy. Sophia Loren, for example, is to Twiggy as a Rubens painting is to an X ray. And what does an X ray of a woman reveal? Not a realistic picture, but a deep, involving image. Not a specialized female, but a human being.

It is toward a common humanity that both sexes now tend. As artificial, socially-imposed distinctions disappear, the unalterable essentials of maleness and femaleness may assume that rightful importance and delight. The lusty Gallic salute, Vive la difference!, rings truer about biology than about mores, mannerisms and dress. Even fashion speaks. "Glamour" was a form of armor, designed to insulate, to separate. The new styles, male and female, invite dialogue.

#### The Pill makes a woman a Bomb

While both sexes will probably change, most men will have farther to go than most women in adjusting to the new life. In an unspecialized world of computers and all-enveloping communications, sensitive intuition and openness will win more prizes, if you will, than unfeeling simplistic logic. Right now, it is impossible to guess how many companies are being held together by intuitive and sensitive executive secretaries. Fortunate is the enterprise that has a womanly woman (not a brittle, feminist dame) as a high-level officer. Many forward-looking corporations, especially in the aerospace industry, already are engaged in sensitivity-training sessions for their male executives. The behavior encouraged in these sessions would make a John Wayne character wince: Manly males learn how to reveal their emotions, to become sensitive to others, to weep openly if that is what they feel like doing-all this in the pursuit of higher profits. Sensitivity works. The new technology-complex, interrelated, responsive-demands it.

The demands for new male and female ideals and actions are all around us, changing people in many a subtle and unsuspected way. But

there is one specific product of modern technology, the contraceptive pill, that can blow the old boundaries sky high. It makes it possible for sexual woman to act like sexual man. Just as the Bomb instantly wipes out all the separating boundaries in a flash. The Pill makes a woman a Bomb. She creates a new kind of fragmentation, separating sexual intercourse from procreation. She also explodes old barriers between the sexes, bringing them closer together. Watch for traditions to fall.

Romantic Love seems a likely victim. As a specialty, romance was an invention of the late Middle Ages, a triumph of highly individualistic enterprise. It requires separation, unfulfillment. The chase is everything - the man aflame, the maiden coy. Sexual consummation bursts the balloon of yearning. As in the romantic movies, the significant embrace can hardly be imagined without "The End" printed over it. Indeed, what we have called sex in recent decades may be viewed as the lag end of Romantic Love.

As a way of selecting a spouse, romance ("In all the world, you are the only girl for me") never worked very well. Back in the 18th century, Boswell may have felt some shock at Dr. Johnson's answer to his question: "Pray, Sir, do you not suppose there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy, as with any one woman in particular?" Johnson replied: "Aye, fifty thousand." The future may well agree with Dr. Johnson. It is difficult to play the coy maiden on a daily diet of contraceptive pills. And the appeal of computer dating suggests that young people are seeking out a wide and quite practical range of qualities in their mates - not just romance or high-intensity sex appeal. Here, in fact, may be the electronic counterpart of arranged marriage.

The great mystics have always perceived Romantic Love as somehow defective, as a double ego that selfishly ignores other people. Today's youngsters have a different way of putting it: "Our parents' generation is hung up about sex."

### Youthful sexuality is cooling down

As Romantic Love fades, so may sexual privacy. Already, young people shock their elders by casually conversing on matters previously considered top secret. And the hippies, those brash pioneers of new life patterns, have reverted - boys and girls together, along with a few little children - to the communal living of the Middle Ages or the primitive tribe. It is not uncommon to find a goodly mixture of them sleeping in one room. Readers who envisage wild

orgies just don't get the picture. Most of the hippies are not hung up on sex. To them, sex is merely one of many sensory experiences. It is available when desired - therefore perhaps not so desperately pursued.

Today, sex is returning to the adult world just as childhood is once again becoming enmeshed in grown-up matters. The dream girl or dream guy is becoming as odd an idea as the dream house in a world of integral urban design. Sex is becoming secondary to the young. At the same rate that it becomes accessible, it is cooling down. A couple of teen-agers like Romeo and Juliet would now have some of their most dramatic moments deciding on the kind of education they want for their children, plus a second career for Romeo in middle age.

In future generations, it seems most likely that sex will merge with the rest of life, that it will settle down and take its place within a whole spectrum of experiences. You might not think so, what with the outpouring of sexed-up novels and plays since World War II. But these, like the slickly pictured playmates, bring to mind the death rattle of an era. When a novelist like Norman Mailer contends that man is boxed-in by civilized constraints, he is quite right. But when he goes on to say that the free human spirit can now assert itself mostly through sex and violence, he is being merely Victorian.

The more that modern writers present sexual activity as a separate, highly defined, "hot" aspect of life, the more they hasten the death of SEX. Most "literary" novelists have not yet discovered the present, much less glimpsed the future: which is one reason why so many of the brighter college students have turned to anti-novels and, in spite of its questionable literary reputation, science fiction. Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, a popular underground book, tells of an attempt to set up Martian, rather than the usual human, relationships here on earth. In these relationships, what we term sex is communal and multisensual. There is no sharp, artificial distinction between male and female roles. Sex blends with other activities that might be called mystical. And there is even the need for a new word (Heinlein calls it "growing closer") for this demi-erotic mode of relating. Many young people see something of their own aspirations in the Heinlein book and others similar to it. Norman O. Brown (*Life Against Death, Love's Body*) strikes an equally sympathetic response with his thesis that civilized man has even fragmented his physical person. According to Brown, many people can feel sexual pleasure only in the sex organs themselves; the rich sensory universe of the rest of the body has been deadened.

Just as the Electric Age, with its multitudinous communication aids, is extending the human nervous system outside the body, it is also creating a new desire for exploration inside the self. The inner trip seeks ways to awaken all the senses, to find long-lost human capacities, to discover turn-ons beyond the narrowly sexual. One instance of this new drive for depth involvement is the growing national interest in Oriental religion and philosophy; another, riskier, one is increasing use of LSD and marijuana among young people. These drugs, the experimentalists claim, very quickly "blow your mind," which is to say, they knock out the old partitions within the self, allowing new connections to be made. Some theorists also say that the new rock music with psychedelic light effects can aid the inner traveler.

Serious researchers are looking for means of accomplishing even more without the use of drugs. In several centers throughout the U.S., they are working out techniques for awakening the body and senses, especially those other than the purely visual, and for helping people achieve the unusual psychic states described, for example, in the literature of mysticism. The future will likely demonstrate that every human being has capacities for pleasure and fulfillment beyond sex that the present barely hints at.

In this rich context, those reports on the death of the American family may turn out to have been premature. Actually, the family may be moving into a Golden Age. With so much experiment possible, marriage may come later in life than ever before. Future family units may not be separated from each other in little capsules, but may join together in loosely organized "tribes." As it is now the capsular family often has nowhere to turn for advice and encouragement when in need, except to professional counselors or organizations. The informal tribe of the future can provide a sounding board and a source of support for each of its families, far more responsive and more loving than any professional helper.

#### Homosexuality may fade out

With marriage coming later in life, it may also become a more serious matter - perhaps as serious as divorce. Some couples may even wish to write up a legally binding separation agreement (to be revised when their financial and parental situation changes) as a precondition to marriage. Thus, in a sense, marriage becomes "divorce." With all this unpleasant business anticipated and accomplished even before the nuptial vows are spoken, divorce becomes far easier-and probably far less likely. In any case, the divorce rate will probably fall.

Marriage - firmly and willfully welded, centered on creative parenthood - may become the future's most stable institution. The old, largely discredited "togetherness" was based on stereotyped concepts of each family member's role. The new family, integral and deeply involving, may provide the ideal unit for personal discovery, for experiment in the seemingly infinite possibilities of being human. Each new child can provide a new set of perceptions for all the family. Each develops rapidly, urges change in parents and other children alike. It is possible that the family of the future may find its stability in constant change, in the encouragement of what is unique in each of its members; that marriage, freed from the compulsions and restrictions surrounding high-intensity SEX, can become far more sensual, that is to say, more integral.

What about homosexuality and prostitution? Lifelong, specialized sexual inversion has baffled many researchers. But may it not be viewed simply as a response to sexual overspecialization? Just as men in our society are far more specialized than women, so male homosexuality is far more prevalent. To "be a man" in the narrow sense has often proven difficult and dehumanizing. In certain stressful and ambiguous family situations, some young men have not been able to pull it off. So they flip-flop over to the coin's reverse side, the mirror image of hyper-maleness - even more specialized, even more limiting. If a new, less specialized maleness emerges, it is possible that the need to turn to specialized homosexuality will decrease. There is a striking absence of it among the communal-living young people of today.

As for prostitution, if it is the oldest profession (or, if you will, service industry), it is also one of the most ancient specialties - an early consequence of the creation of man-in-the-mass. Armies, merchant fleets, work forces: Men without women demanded Woman, or at least one aspect of her. So long as men are massed and shipped away from home, this female specialist will likely follow. But, like homosexuality, prostitution may also be looked upon as a response to a certain kind of hyper-femininity. When men, as in the Victorian Age and long after, require sexually-inhibited wives, they create an equal and opposite demand for sexually-uninhibited partners-for-pay. As the first requirement fades, so does the second. Already, call girls are becoming game for the aging. The whole notion seems somewhat ridiculous to the young.

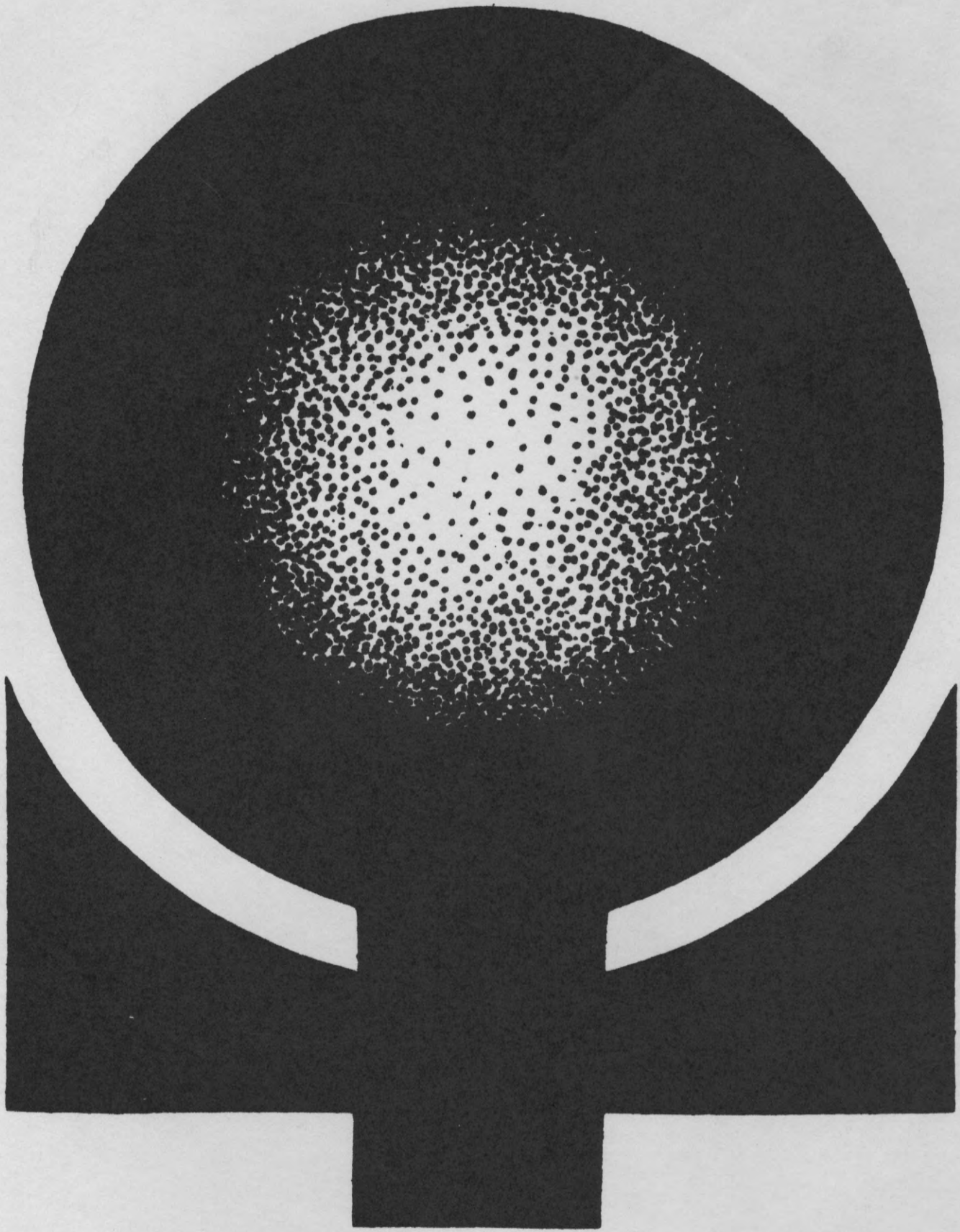
Indeed, the future may well wonder why there has been so much fuss about sex over all these years. Sex may well be regaining some

of its traditional cool. It is still a three-letter word, despite the efforts of its four-letter relatives to hot it up. This is not to say the future will be sexless. Far from it, generations yet to come may very well find all of life far more erotic than now seems possible.

Those who try to puzzle out any single sexual way for the next age will probably find their efforts in vain. Rather, it seems, the future holds out infinite variety, diversity. The search for a new sexuality is, after all, a search for a new selfhood, a new way of relating. This search already is well under way. What it turns up will surprise us all. END

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