

The Night People:

In Beirut, When It Was on the Hit Parade

by Jean Shepherd

One way to get to Beirut is to fly in a 15-year-old Navy transport plane by way of Naples and Crete. It is not necessarily the most comfortable, but it has its compensations. For one thing, it is direct and going from Point A to Point B and then on to Point C. The fact that they happen to be Naples, Crete, and Beirut is incidental. No one aboard attempts to sell the next point as being "colorful," "traditional," or any of the assorted well-worn clichés that are invariably involved in travel today.

How the hell do you prepare for Beirut? Read the Times? National Geographic? Whatever way you choose, it will be wrong, or at best only a smidgeon right. For that matter, I feel that in this age of communication we have only succeeded in blurring whatever vision we might have had. We look at the world through Ed Murrow or John Daly or the back pages of whatever paper we read, and go away with the highly dangerous illusion that we know about these places and the problems involved.

There were only five or six of us plus the crew of four in that old ship headed for Lebanon, which for a moment in history had made the big time. Big time in the sense that every TV show or news media of any kind was using Lebanon "material." News has become part of show biz, and hot spots in the world are very much like hot performers or acts that

JEAN SHEPHERD has just returned from Crete and Lebanon, where, travelling under Navy credentials, he was on a writing assignment for a forthcoming movie.

suddenly catch on. The moment the public shows the slightest hint of tiring of the latest hit trouble spot, the news media drop it like an agent who has an act that hasn't cut a hit record in six months. And for precisely the same reason.

Lebanon had become commercial. It was on the news hit parade. Today, like an old Patii Page record of last year, Lebanon is dead and uncommercial. Matsu and Quemo are near the top now, and they are swinging. But already they show signs of slipping, and in a few weeks will quietly drop out of the Top 10.

When a trouble drops out of the news hit parade, what happens to it? What happens to all the hit records of last year? Where do the big acts of five years ago go when they die? Do they still exist? Is Lebanon still out there, quietly festering in the sun, or did some one put it up in an attic with those old Kay Kyser discs?

Some Come Back

Occasionally an old-favorite trouble spot makes a comeback and gets back on the big-time shows. Quemo is a case in point. A couple of years ago, old-news fans will recall, Matsu and the Offshore Islands (the new hit title of the current shows) had a brief flurry in the Big Time, but they didn't stick up there for long. What happened to that act in between times? It's good to see an old tune come back with a new arrangement. It's a warm thing when an old favorite like Quemo begins to sell again. By the way, is there anyone in the crowd who remembers another old news hit-parader that stuck up there in the Top 10 for a long time—the good old Indo-China Crisis? I always like troubles that have the word "crisis" in the title. "Crisis" is as commercial as "love" in the name

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Harriman, Hogan In Village

Governor Harriman and Frank S. Hogan, Democratic candidate for the U. S. Senate, will be guests at a cocktail party in the Village on Sunday, October 26, from 3.30 to 7 p. m.

The "Meet and Greet Your Candidates" party is being sponsored by the New York Chapter of the Americans for Democratic Action at the Albert Hotel, 23 East 16th Street.

Mayor Wagner and Thomas K. Finletter will also attend, as well as other ADA sponsored candidates.

Free cocktails until 4.30 p. m. Contribution \$2.

'Should Accept Anti-Bias Law,' Says Passannante

Assemblyman William F. Passannante yesterday stated his position on the actions of a real-estate broker in his district who had posted a sign in his window indicating that he will not show apartments to prospective Negro tenants.

"Everybody knows that the record of the Democratic Party in New York State is in favor of legislation prohibiting discrimination in the renting of apartments in private dwellings. The Democratic proposals for legislation of this nature, which I have consistently supported, have been repeatedly killed by the Republican majority. I also enthusiastically endorsed the City Council's enactment of the Sharkey-Brown-Isaacs Bill, which is now the law of New York City, and I will continue to do everything within my power to extend its provisions throughout the entire state.

Should Accept It

"I strongly believe that people of all political faiths, including real-estate agents, should wholeheartedly accept the spirit of this law and foster a program that will further its objectives. Certainly I disagree with anyone opposed to this law, and I shall continue in my efforts to persuade such persons that their discriminatory attitudes are not only in violation of our Democratic principles but are also against the long-range interests of our own community.

"I shall not, however, engage in any grandstand plays with respect to specific actions of individuals such as my opponent has done. I do not believe that such coercive and politically motivated tactics are the effective way to deal with this very complex problem. The specialized agency (Commission on Intergroup Relations) working under procedures established by law to deal with complaints of this nature should not be hampered by issues manufactured solely for purpose of political campaigning.

Mr. Passannante's opponent in the November 4 elections is Whitney North Seymour, Jr., who last month called on realtor Edmond Martin of Christopher to change his policy on renting to Negroes

(Special to 'The Village Voice')
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'Idealists Best Vote Getters,' Finletter Says

by Mary Perot Nichols

"The idealist is the best vote getter," Thomas K. Finletter told a local audience last week. The former Secretary of the Air Force, who was edged out of the Democratic Senatorial race by the party machine, expressed a belief that the liberal Democratic clubs would be the party organization of the future.

He spoke at an open meeting of the Tilden Democratic Club, 18th Street and Sixth Avenue, last Wednesday evening. The Tilden was one of the four Tammany clubs that supported him in Buffalo. Mr. Finletter, now chairman of the Citizens Committee for Harriman-Hogan, indicated that he was not bitter about his defeat.

'We Have Ideals'

Calling on the group to work hard for the Democratic slate, he said that such clubs as his own Lexington Democratic and the Tilden could really get out the vote because "we have ideals about the kind of party we want." "What happens in advanced political clubs, like this one, is very important," he said.

The Republican Party, Mr. Finletter remarked, is in a situation where it looks to the "present and sometimes to the past." It is "conservative," he pointed out. "I'm not using the word as an epithet, but the party that is static today

cannot keep up with the speed of change nationally and internationally."

Creeping Socialism

To illustrate the thesis that the Republican Party was "static if not reactionary," he mentioned the GOP manifesto, two weeks ago with the concurrence of the President and Vice President, which equated the Democratic Party with "creeping socialism."

In referring to the recent nominating convention, Mr. Finletter said "I may not be fully satisfied with what happened in Buffalo, I'm certainly not going to talk about that until after election. I may possibly have something to say then."

When asked by a member of the audience about his views on practical politics, Mr. Finletter remarked drily, "I'm not very good at that, you know." The questioner then remarked, "We could all learn from your experience," and Mr. Finletter replied, "Yes, we all could."

He said he thought the New
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This is What Thomas K. Finletter Says:
October 16, 1958
"Dear Bill,
I am happy to endorse an intelligent, courageous, and liberal Assemblyman — one who has worked so hard for his community for so many years. I just wish there were more Bill Passannante's whom I could endorse."
—/s/ Thomas K. Finletter

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