

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 goes 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 smidgen 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 Pat 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)

The secretary of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company is Arden E. Firestone.

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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 state, 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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Vote For Proven Constructive Action!

Independent Citizens Committee for the Re-Election of
William Passannante, Democratic-Liberal Candidate.

The Night People:

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Continued from page 3
of a hit tune. Whoever sees the old 28th Parallel on the top shows those days? I wonder if it's still there, or if it ever was. Remember an oldie called the Yalu? Or was it Balu? It's sometimes hard to remember the titles of the old-timers.

Anyway, all of a sudden we were on the runway of the Beirut Airport and were taxiing past a line of white planes marked with huge dark-blue letters: U. N. In front of the terminal that looks like a cross between a Jersey drive-in and a 1939 World's Fair exhibit stood a conglomeration of jeeps, trucks, and DC-3's carrying the green cedar-tree insignia of the Lebanon Airlines. The sun was hot but pleasant and the air seemed almost to hang, as though someone had hit a high fly ball and everyone was waiting for it to come down.

Missed Murrow

This was it. I was in Lebanon and it was at the very top of the hit parade. I had a funny feeling that I should reach out and adjust the FOCUS knob, since the heat was making things waver a bit. The sound wasn't too good, either, because there wasn't much of it. I missed Ed Murrow's comforting grave voice. This seemed too disorganized for a good solid show. Where do you look when

there is no camera to point you? How the hell do I know? Douglas Edwards should have been standing before that doorway saying things to me, but he wasn't. There was only a fat Lebanese soldier who looked like a cartoon character with his billed cap and Sten gun on his back. He was eating a cheese sandwich that he had taken from an old box lunch in one of the planes. Sitting on the concrete walk next to him was an American paratrooper, asleep. They had the feel of old buddies.

No one said a thing to me. Off to the right in the distance were the hills which someone had said were rebel-held. They were lovely, and as still as a lunar landscape. Inside, the terminal was almost the same as a typical Midwestern Greyhound station. Everything slightly insipid, with paper cups on the floor and the inevitable closed-up candy stand.

A man walked by me with what looked like an ice-cream cone in his hand. I asked him where he got it, and without missing a lick he waved toward the other end of the building. Five minutes later I was eating a 25-cent frozen custard cone exactly the same as those that Dairy Queen ladies out to millions of Jerseyites every day. By God, I was in Lebanon. I caught a bus and went to town.



who went where why and with whom

by Bill Manville

I WAS IN ATTENDANCE at the gala at Jean Cullen's Saturday, and left at the point—usually about 2 a.m.—where the manic-depressives begin to break the empty bottles. So it must have been about 2.30 when I got home. No sooner was I safe in bed, though, when the phone rang. "Hey Bill, what you doing there? Man, it disappoints me to find you wasting your Saturday night sleeping."

It was Lou. I yelled at him for a few minutes and then agreed to meet him at the Riviera.

He wasn't there, himself, of course, when I arrived. I met Danny Eastman, who bought me a drink. "What was that?" Danny suddenly said. A woman was shrieking. Then somebody yelled at heads began to turn. A long, beautifully shaped woman's leg was up on the bar, her black pump nestling among the beer glasses. From the angle, she had to have her head on the floor, her skirt tangled in her necktie.

New Number

When I got there, I saw it was Lou, and the leg was his. He owned it: "I bought it from a guy went bankrupt selling cheap rayon stockings on Eighth Avenue. It's a new number," he said. I told him he looked tired. He ignored me. "How about some First Aid?" he said to the bartender. "Bill too."

Red was still laughing about the leg as he poured the stuff for us.

Lou held his glass in his hand, looking around. "Listen to them, the juke box, the laughing. If you listen to the noise, you'd think they were happy." He knocked back his drink in one take, and turned to say something to a tall blonde girl his show had brought over.

A loser whose name I can't tell you came in with his ex-wife. They'd busted up when she'd run off with a Jersey City cop. Lou gave me a fast look through the horn rims. The guy stopped beside us, but his wife walked on to the can. Lou watched her disappear and then said: "Listen, don't wait. Before she comes back, run quick to your analyst and get all your money back."

We had another drink and Lou bought one for the blonde. "My advice to young people," he told her, "is to get married as soon as possible. Then when you get divorced, you're not too old."

She laughed and said some-

thing to him and then he wanted to go to the White Horse. "They haven't seen the number with the leg there yet."

He hid the leg under his raincoat and we left. He was absently holding the blonde's hand, and she came with us.

"You having a good night?" I asked him.

"You should have seen last night. Chinatown, 4 a.m. I got home dead, but then I had to totter out to walk the dog. I met Irene the Hatcheck and that Lela. I had to take them home with me, you understand. So, the records, the guitars, Lela did her number with the bongos. And at dawn—map, the cops, I tell you. I got to get rid of that dog."

When we got to the White Horse, Ernie was at the door. He was barring new people. He wanted to close up.

Lou went up to the glass and yelled so the other people who

had been turned away could hear: "Here she is, Ernie. We brought her back."

Ernie opened the door and we slipped inside. Lou walked a little awkwardly because of the leg under his coat. The blonde blocked him from sight for a moment, and he leaned over and forward over a bar stool as if he were bent over a girl, kissing her like Valentino. The leg was tucked under his armpit, sticking way up in the air behind him. He got a lot of double takes and a pretty good laugh.

Like Valentino

More women came around, drawn by the attention Lou got. The blonde moved a little closer to him. Art Kugelmann stood up with a yell and bought us a round. Lou looked a little less tired. "It's the number," he said. "You got to have a number." The blonde kept whispering in his ear. "No, no," he told her. He looked annoyed.

We went out. "You going home?" I asked.

"No. We're going to the Remo. I want to try the leg out there. They stay open till 4."

He put a hand up and a taxi stopped. The blonde was very pretty and about a foot taller than Lou. He handed her into the car with elaborate formality, and then stood beside me for a moment, neatly buttoning his raincoat over the leg. "I find my pursuit of pleasure is relentless," he said, and winked at me, sighed, got into the cab and drove off.

The New Potemkin

Continued from page 4

tal cancer of the bones for our descendants, is to him but a proof of his personal weakness. For which He must atone. Not until Truth and Righteousness are established forever and ever by Him and our beloved President General Chiang (who is also possessed of a Protestant Righteousness, the worst type of all: a convert and a Methodist) can John the Bull let go. The horrors of atomic warfare? Who more than he is terrorized of them? (and I believe he is, in fact I know he is). Well, one more reason for him to inflict this great punishment upon his soul, and thus atone for his past weaknesses. For he knows that his words express the Truth. Can he betray the Truth and not be punished? (The world, of course, does not exist. Protestant modesty has not been seen as yet.)

Only Chance

Now, of course, we all believe that the Communist world would be a world of falsehood, moral death, degradation, horror, cruelty, and madness. But so would the first atomic world, in which both Wrong and Right would be equally punished. One must have very little faith in the right of our Cause to believe that in a jolping

world of compromise there is to be no chance for the forces of good, of freedom, and of reason, but only a fatal chance for the forces of evil, slavery, and unreason. Compromise is our only chance, has always been our only chance from the day the world began to the day it will end, because the world is not the Bible, and God is more forgiving and less proud than Mr. Dulles. No good man can be ashamed of compromise, unless he be possessed of a Satanic vanity. From which the Compromising Lord deliver us.



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HERBERT H. LEHMAN SAYS:

"Your successful career in the practice of the law and your very useful service in many educational, civic, philanthropic and religious activities give assurance that you are eminently well qualified to serve all the people of the 20th Senatorial District, regardless of party affiliation. You have long been in the forefront of the battle for civil rights and equal opportunities for people of every race, color, creed or national origin, and to break down the walls of discrimination and prejudice."

THOMAS K. FINLETTER SAYS:

"Arthur Glixon's outstanding record in civic affairs will assure the kind of representation in the State Senate that New York City needs."

GEORGE M. BRAGALINI SAYS:

"The fine work of Arthur Glixon among people of all nations make him especially qualified to represent our District in the New York State Senate."

CHARLES ABRAMS SAYS:

"Arthur Glixon has rendered a great service to the people of our State in his work for the State Commission Against Discrimination."

CITIZENS UNION SAYS:

"Mr. Glixon is a lawyer of recognized professional standing. He has also been a leader in civic and philanthropic affairs. He is well qualified to give the District good representation."

ROBERT F. WAGNER SAYS:

"Your continued active leadership and interest in civic affairs is proof of your deep interest in our city. Your background and abilities, which have been known to me for many years, will make you an outstanding member of the State Senate."

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says Citizens Union

"PROGRESSIVE"

says Citizens Union

"WELL INFORMED"

says Citizens Union

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SEYMOUR

for State Assembly

Letters

Continued from page 4

our government. So we, the people, have to make up for the lack.

The Messrs. T. Edward Hambleton and Norris Houghton who run the Phoenix have done a valiant job. They have done the spade-work. Now they need help. It will redound to the credit of the people who live in the shadow of the Phoenix Theatre if it is known that they rallied to the support of so worthy an institution. May I urge them, through you, to do so.

—Lillian Gish
Phoenix Theatre

(Special to The Village Voice)

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Village Voice

The Night People

October 22, 1958

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