

On the Line

Please Tell Me, Is Daddy Alive?

By Bob Considine



The case of our prisoners of war passes all frustration, anger and poignancy.

The North Vietnamese have rebuffed every supplicant. They have released only a handful of the nearly 1,500 men listed as captured or missing in action, and then for unstated reasons that baffled the men themselves.

I recently received the following from Col. M. K. Kegley, USAF, Special Assistant on Legislative Affairs, Defense Department:

"Knowing of your interest and past support on the Prisoners of War issue, I felt you might be interested in the enclosed letters.

"These were written by the daughters of Mrs. Arthur Mearns, whose husband has been missing in action since he was shot down over North Vietnam on Nov. 11, 1966. Mrs. Mearns received word this past Christmas through Mrs. Cora Weiss and her committee of liaison that Col. Mearns died during his bombing attack on North Vietnam.

"Neither Mrs. Mearns nor the U.S. government has received any further information that would allow a legal determination of death.

"These two young girls are representative of the hundreds of children that have no idea if their father is alive. I mentioned to Mrs. Mearns that I was sending copies of the letters to you, and she has no objection to your using them in any manner you wish."

"President of North Vietnam.

"Dear Mr. President, I am Frances Elizabeth Mearns. My daddy, Arthur S. Mearns, has been missing in North Vietnam for almost four years now. I love my daddy very much. Every day I get up and know my daddy is not with us. There the miserable long day begins without my daddy.

"I go to a very nice school and I am 9 1/2 years old. Right now I need your help. In my

position you are really the only one that can help me. Please tell me if my daddy is alive or dead.

"Some terrible women came to the United States and they said that they had talked to you and they said that you said that my daddy and four other fathers were dead. Is this true? I cannot believe this coming from them. I don't think that you would do this. But, if it were true I would only hear it from you because you are really the only one I myself can trust. I trust you because you are the President of your country and you would not tell a lie.

"I have written many letters to my daddy and have never gotten any answers. Would you please let my daddy read and answer them? Would you please let me go to your country and visit you and talk to you?"

My mother has tried to see you but nobody would let her come and see you. But if my daddy is dead would you let me come and get his body? I will do this because I honor him, love him, and respect him.

"I hope I can say thank you for doing these things."

The second letter, from 11-year-old Mary Ann Mearns, read:

"I am an American daughter of an American soldier, Lt. Col. A. S. Mearns. He was shot down over North Vietnam in 1966. I have not seen him since then. Please help me. I know that you would not want me to be unhappy because of you. It is because of warfare. I know you do not like the war and neither do I, because it has taken the lives of many, both American and North Vietnamese. It hurts to think that my daddy is not with me but it won't hurt you. You are a new president and a very important man.

"Some lady said that our father is dead. Of course I do not believe that. Just think, there are many more like me. Oh, please confirm that you don't like war, sorrow and death. Please tell me if my father is dead or alive."

Salting the Earth

Hungry Children

By Father John Hempel

A few weeks ago I participated in a walk to raise funds for hungry children. It was an effort to supply a proper breakfast for children attending School 9 in the inner city and migrant children in the Orleans County area. To those who supported us on this walk we are most grateful. At least, for a time, substantial breakfasts will be available to disadvantaged youngsters.

This breakfast program is but a stop-gap, a band-aid approach to the massive problem of poverty that never seems to have long-term solutions. In discussing the walk, so often I was questioned as to why parents of these children could be so unconscious of their needs; why the parents were not providing the proper nourishment for their children.

The answers are incapable of being understood by a society so geared to technological advancement and self gratification—the answer lies only in an honest attempt to understand the neglect and purposeful rejection of a whole race of hu-

man beings. The answer lies in an attitude that would refuse and condemn the burial of a black American soldier within the confines of a "white cemetery."

No, we did not solve the problem of poverty, or the poor, or racism, by our walk. Would that these ugly nightmares could be dissolved so easily, so simply. However, it is hoped that we did indicate that the Horsemen of the Apocalypse still ride; that all is not right with the world; that within the very shadows of our lives there exist hungry children incapable of a much needed education because their basic physiology cries out for nourishment. It is hoped that we have opened the ears of those in the halls of the mighty to these suffering voices.

A privileged society can rationalize its condemnation of the adult black world, but never its children—Christ's words regarding His love for children destroy this misguided rationale.

The Slot Man

Another Facet To Women's Lib

By Carmen Viglucci



Looking at and listening to some of the proponents of the women's liberation movement tends to move one to humor to avoid being uncharitable.

Some of the libbers seem to have the notion that to be equal to men they must have the sex appeal of a bag of Bull Durham. Then to compensate for this disdain for attractiveness, they feel they must be on poor terms with the English language, be humorless, and be as welcome as an Arab guerilla at a Bar Mitzvah.

Most men and a lot of women would gladly grant these fringe women "equal but separate" status.

It's difficult to keep one's mental equilibrium when a liberator in Rochester totes a sign, "S. B. Anthony, where are you when we need you?" Kind of like the ingrate's "All right, okay, but what have you done for me lately."

Aside from the fact that such inanities divert attention from such overpowering issues as the campus crisis, the Vietnam war and rights for minorities, there is an inherent danger in the movement's aims themselves that defies humor. And some far-sighted and co-

gent women have been calling attention to this threat.

For instance, Mrs. Leonor K. Sullivan, a member of Congress from Missouri for 18 years, is firmly opposed to the equal rights amendment recently passed by the House and to be considered in the Senate.

"The amendment would open up a box of mischief," she says. First to come out of the box would be "prolonged and confusing litigation" about existing laws concerning sex.

But, more seriously, is the "deterioration of home life" which may be inherent in such legislation.

Let Mrs. Sullivan tell it:

"I happen to believe in the sanctity of marriage. I believe that the home environment is one of the most important things to civilization. I think that the breakup of home life and the lack of true responsibility by parents in the home is one of the chief causes of the problems of the young people today.

"Laws regarding child support, custody of children, the responsibility of the father as the head of the household and his responsibility for the sup-

port of his family could be completely wiped out.

"And I still feel that the backbone of any country is the right kind of family unity and family life.

"We did amend the Civil Rights Act to give women equal opportunities. We did pass legislation for equal pay for equal work for women. And there are other provisions that could and should be enacted to prevent discrimination along lines where women, despite the new laws, are definitely discriminated against.

"In the field of Social Security, every working person be it man or woman — should have the same benefits.

"What has happened in much of the liberation movement . . . has done more to hurt the image of women than anything I know of."

And all this from a woman whose husband died serving his fourth term in Congress in 1951 and who ran to succeed him in 1952. She ran up a 50,000-vote victory and has been elected handily ever since.

"I've worked all my life . . . I have been treated as a lady because I hope my conduct calls for that," she says. And no one could say it better.

Fight inflation.



Spend 99¢

Are you planning to buy a new car? Are you considering investing extra dollars in stocks? Do you know the difference between Prime and Choice meats? In price? In quality?

In these books you get no-nonsense guidance in buying and financing all sorts of things. You will learn how to shop for real value. How to spot faulty merchandise. How to read contracts and understand them. And, by the time you finish, you will feel fortified to shop anywhere with increased confidence. BankAmericard holders can get these informative books at this once in a lifetime price of only 99¢.

BankAmericard Dept. Lincoln Rochester Trust Company P.O. Box 820 Rochester, New York 14603. Gentlemen: [] Please send me the two books (Consumer's Buying Guide and How to Manage your Money), for 99¢ postpaid, and charge it to my BankAmericard Account. [] I do not have a BankAmericard. Please send me an application. I understand that when my application is approved I will be given the opportunity to order these books at the price of 99¢. Name: Address: City: State: Zip: BankAmericard Account Number: