

Polonsky's Complaint

As the orange falls

The other afternoon, a pretty young lady and I were taking a pleasant stroll out of the Central Plaza, for purposes of obtaining one milk shake for the two of us.

As we sauntered past Vanier Residence, a friend of mine happened to be looking through the window of his 10th floor room. Said friend proceeded to throw an orange down at me for purposes of catching. And not in the true Joe DiMaggio spirit, I missed the orange. Unfortunately, the orange did not miss me. And as a result of this athletic sequence of events, the second to last finger on my left hand is currently constrained within the boundaries of a splint.

As I became more involved with my pain, my thoughts turned to the topic of pain in general and pain over my past weekend in specific. Perhaps the most pain of the weekend was that not being endured by me, but, by a U.S. deserter I met on Friday night.

Here was a kid who probably never even had to shave more than once a week, submerged at the bottom of a stacked deck of generals, lieutenants and sergeants. Here was a kid who really seemed so incredibly down and out, that it was almost sacrilege to show any indication of contentment with one's own lot, in his presence. Here was a kid who had suffered all the slings and arrows of the fun life of a teenager in the United States in 1970 and I could not even begin to comprehend what was going on in his mind. I was presented with a case of anguish, the kind of anguish I have never even come close to experiencing.

From here my non-anguished mind focused on that famous group of conspirators, the Chicago Five. Here were five men who were about to spend five years in

prison, the convicted in a trial whose legality rested on somewhat nebulous foundations. Regardless of how much personal freedom an individual has managed to obtain within himself, five years in a cell constitute a challenge to one's mind and soul that is surely not easily met.

A few other people who may also be given the opportunity to experience that wonderful sense of imprisonment are the West Indian students being tried for the Sir George disruptions a year ago. Here are a group of Blacks going to school in 'free' Canada who could be suffering the products of a racist society while the rest of Canada, especially the rest of Canadian students, remain oblivious to the situation.

We have in this country a trial whose repercussions are probably more horrendous for us than those of the Chicago trial are for the United States. Yet we sit by getting 'into' Jerry Rubin and Company while ignoring a trial of this scope happening in our own nation. It is bad enough going to jail as a martyr, i.e. Jerry Rubin; it is even worse to go to jail for a cause which nobody even cares about. This is a worse sense of anguish.

So as I contemplate falling oranges, I contemplate other pleasantries like deserters and jail. I also contemplate the fact that my country is garnering a reputation as being racist, that my country could possibly be sending to jail students who are the products of this racism, and that my country sleeps throughout the whole affair.

Perhaps to a lesser degree, for myself, this constitutes a very real sense of pain.

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